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THE GRECO-TURKISH WAR OF 1919–1922: CAUSES, COURSE, EFFECTS

Abstract

The Greco-Turkish war, in its strictest sense, was a multifaceted conflict characterized by the varied actions of the combatants. Even though there were not any coalitions comprising military contingents, joint command structures, or coordinated military forces between the Greek, Armenian, and French nationalist factions, one can argue that each theatre of warfare – Armenian, Cilician, and Greek (Anatolian) – operated as a cohesive strategic unit. For many Greeks and Armenians, this conflict represented an extension of their national liberation effort, driven by territorial aspirations, a quest to realize their national vision, and an ambition to humble a longstanding adversary. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Anatolia and the Muslim refugees who had sought sanctuary in the region – individuals who increasingly identified as Turks rather than Ottomans – were motivated by their pursuit of national sovereignty and independence.

Keywords: war of independence, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Ottoman Empire, Kemalist movement, modern Turkey, Asia Minor, Megali Idea, Elefterios Venizelos

Introduction

Many accounts that delve into the concluding moments of the First World War terminate their narratives on October 30, 1918. This date marks the end of the Armistice of Mudros. However, this armistice did not settle the Turkish question; rather, it led to numerous misinterpretations, sparking subsequent crises and confrontations. The rights to Anatolia and the Aegean coast became contentious after the Great War. Several “players” wished to partake in the division of territories belonging to the “sick man of Europe”. The conflict is denoted by the Turks as *İstiklâl Harbi* (War of Independence) or *Millî Mücadele* (National Struggle). In Anglo-Saxon historiography, it is commonly termed the “Turkish War of Independence” or simply the “war of national liberation”.



Between 1919 and 1922, the Kemalists found themselves in battles of diverse nature and type. If one were to use modern military terminology reflective of the 21st century, it would be fitting to say that the Greco-Turkish war had elements typical of hybrid conflicts. As Professor Konstantinos Travlos aptly described, it was essentially “this is nothing more than a war made of wars”¹.

Turkey, within its borders of 1914, was strategically positioned at the confluence of three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. It lay at the intersection of vital sea routes that connected the Black Sea through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to the Mediterranean and onwards to the Suez Canal or the Strait of Gibraltar. Similarly, it bridged important land routes connecting Europe to Asia and Africa. The Ottoman expanse ranged from the Maritsa River in the west to the Indian Ocean in the southeast, encompassing Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, the Arabian Peninsula and Armenia and Kurdistan in addition to European Turkey and Anatolia (Asia Minor)².

Before the outbreak of the First World War, Turkey spanned an area of 1,786,716 km² across Asia and Europe, with a population of 21 million. These areas included European Turkey (27,206 km²), Anatolia (476,000 km²), Syria and Mesopotamia (644,450 km²), the Arabian Peninsula (434,500 km²), and Armenia and Kurdistan (204,560 km²). As a result of the agreements reached after the end of the Greco-Turkish War, Turkey’s territory was reduced to 732,000 km² with a population of 15 million³.

The Political Landscape of the Ottoman Empire post the Great War

Following the setback in the 1914–1918 war, Turkey signed an armistice with the Entente powers on October 30, 1918, in Mudros⁴. Consequently, Entente forces took over fortifications on the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, which were subsequently made accessible to Allied vessels⁵. Turkey was mandated to demobilize its army, retaining only those forces essential for border protection and domestic order. It was further obligated to hand over all warships within its waters to the Allied forces, recall its occupying forces from Persian (now Iranian) territories and sections of Transcaucasia, and relinquish garrisoned cities in Arabia⁶.

The Entente was granted the authority to:

- Occupy any strategic locales “in case a situation threatening the security of the allies occurred”⁷;

¹ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence. A Military History, 1919–1923*, Santa Barbara Denver 2021, p. XVI.

² T. Lychowski, *Turcja. Rys stosunków geograficznych, gospodarczych, politycznych i wojskowych*, Warszawa 1924, p. 5.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 5–7, 10.

⁴ J. Dąbrowski, *Wielka Wojna 1914–1918*, vol. II, Warszawa 1937, p. 946.

⁵ Mudros Agreement: Armistice with Turkey (October 30, 1918), German History in Documents and Images, Volume 6. Weimar, 1918/19–1933, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/armistice_turk_eng.pdf, [accessed: 12.03.2014], p. 1; H. Howard, *The partition of Turkey*, Norman 1931, pp. 195–198; 206–209; M. Tanty, *Bosfor i Dardanele w polityce mocarstw*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 328–329; T. Wituch, *Tureckie przemiany. Dzieje Turcji 1878 1923*, Warszawa 1980, p. 248–250.

⁶ Н.Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война 1919–1920*, Москва 1940, p. 2.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

- Control parts of the six vilayets of the erstwhile Turkish Armenia in the event of civil disturbances;
- Take over Batumi, which was then under Turkish control⁸.

Entente oversight was extended to Turkey's railways, radiotelegraph stations, communication lines, and the Ottoman Ministry of Supply. The Allies were given the privilege to dock at ports under Turkish governance and utilize all repair facilities within Turkish ports and arsenals. Turkey committed to severing ties with the ex-Central States and prohibiting their vessels from accessing its ports⁹.

The Armistice of Mudros signified the complete surrender of the Ottoman Empire to the Entente, and concurrently, set the stage for the disintegration and downfall of the imperial state¹⁰. The territories of Turkey were carved up among the triumphant nations: England, France, Italy, and Greece. Additionally, its population was subjected to profound exploitation. The Ottoman regime, under the ineffectual leadership of Sultan Mehmed VI Vahdetin, was essentially powerless against the victors, bringing an end to the independent statehood of the empire. The Entente forces first moved to occupy the strategic Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits. Within this framework, Britain assumed a predominant role, both in diplomatic negotiations and military operations within Turkey. They further emerged as the key supporters of Greece's territorial ambitions¹¹.

Driven by its interest in the newly unearthed oil fields in the Mosul vilayet, Britain orchestrated the withdrawal of Ottoman military contingents from the area¹². France, safeguarding its stakes, took control of Cilicia. Under British pressure in April 1918, the Turks reluctantly ceded Kars, Batumi, and Ardahan to the Republic of Armenia.

By March 1919, following prior agreements, the Italians annexed a segment of the Asia Minor coastline, encompassing the port of Antalya (Adalia) and the Dodecanese islands¹³. In the ensuing months, Turkey witnessed the further loss of territories to the Entente, all the while receiving no opposition from the Ottoman government. The general sentiment within Turkish society was one of resigned acceptance, holding on to the belief that the occupation was bound to conclude eventually.

The fluctuating governments in Istanbul were largely symbolic, as the occupying forces orchestrated the real power dynamics and internal policies of Turkey. To safeguard their vested interests, these forces delegated some authority to the Christian populace, who reciprocated with active collaboration. An open preference for Armenians and Greeks in

⁸ Mudros Agreement: Armistice..., http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/armistice_turk_eng.pdf, [accessed: 12.03.2014], p. 2.

⁹ J. Dąbrowski, *Wielka Wojna...*, vol. II, p. 946; M. Dymarski, *Wojna grecko-turecka 1921–1922 i jej dalekosiężne konsekwencje*, "Prace Komisji Historii Wojen i Wojskowości PAU", 2016, vol. X, p. 80.

¹⁰ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *Historia Imperium Osmańskiego i Republiki Tureckiej. vol. 2 1808–1975*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 502–504; T. Wituch, *Tureckie przemiany. Dzieje Turcji 1878 1923*, Warszawa 1980, p. 248; *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor 1919–1922*, Athens 2003, pp. 3–5.

¹¹ H.N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey. A Diplomatic History 1913–1923*, Oklahoma 1931, pp. 257–262 et passim.

¹² To ensure lasting dominion over the annexed regions, the British conceived the establishment of a buffer zone, encompassing Kurdistan. This zone was envisioned as a British protectorate spanning parts of northern Iraq and southeastern Anatolia, D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turecja*, Warszawa 2000, p. 88.

¹³ This was in line with the agreement concluded at Saint Jean-de-Maurienne on 18 April 1917 between Britain, France and Italy, according to which Italy was to receive the south-west coast of Asia Minor, T. Wituch, *Tureckie przemiany...*, p. 250.

disputes against the Turks ignited a burgeoning conflict between these nationalities. The documented atrocities perpetrated by the Turks against Christians only intensified the thirst for retribution¹⁴. The final factor contributing to Turkish resistance was the introduction of Greece into the equation. In early May 1919, the decision by the Entente to authorize Greece's occupation of Smyrna brought tensions in Turkey to a peak¹⁵.

On May 15, 1919, the initial troops of the Greek First Infantry Division, supported by British and French ships, arrived in Smyrna¹⁶. The Turkish military authorities instructed the soldiers to retreat to their barracks. However, a provocation occurred when a shot was fired from a barracks building towards the Greek troops. This act incited a severe backlash against the Turkish population, leading to the deaths of approximately 400 Turks and causing nearly 150,000 to leave the city and surrounding areas out of fear of Greek retaliation¹⁷. In retaliation, numerous self-defense and resistance groups emerged, and the Turks commenced a fight for independence that spanned several years. At first, the people's reactions were spontaneous self-defense actions, but on May 19, 1919, Mustafa Kemal Pasha (later known as Kemal Atatürk)¹⁸ arrived in Samsun accompanied by several comrades¹⁹. He was one of Turkey's most accomplished generals, a vanquisher of the British. He was designated as the inspector of the 3rd Army in 1919. He was also a co-founder of the Associations for Defense of National Rights of the Eastern Vilayets. It was not a significant organization, as a considerable number of associations of a similar nature were established during that period, but they had a limited reach²⁰. Mustafa Kemal, with the charisma he held as a war

¹⁴ D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja...*, p. 89.

¹⁵ It has also provoked opposition from Italy and the US.

¹⁶ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość (1919–1922)*, "Bellona", November – December 1932, vol. XL, p. 424. Greek sources state that the landing took place on 2 May 1919 which is most likely the result of recording the date according to the Julian calendar, *A History of The Hellenic Army 1821–1997*, Athens 1999, p. 162; *An Index of Events in The Military History of The Greek Nation*, Athens 1998, p. 483.

¹⁷ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 424.

¹⁸ Mustafa Kemal Pasha (1881–1938), known as Kemal Atatürk from 1934 onwards, was a Turkish general and statesman, actively involved in the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, the 1912 Italo-Turkish War, and the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars. From 1921 to 1922, he spearheaded the driving out of the Greco-British forces from Turkey (with a significant victory at the Sakarya River in 1921), earning him the title "Ghazi", meaning "victorious". He was the leading figure of the national movement that dethroned the sultanate in 1922, subsequently turning Turkey into a republic in 1923, and served as its inaugural president from 1923 to 1938. In 1923, he established the Republican People's Party and assumed its leadership. He introduced and executed reforms aimed at state modernisation, including the abolition of the caliphate, feudal titles, polygamy, the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, the Latin alphabet, and universal education. He also championed the growth of the industry. In international relations, he fostered amicable ties with neighboring countries, as evidenced by the neutrality treaty with the USSR in 1925 and the Balkan Entente of 1934. In 1934, the parliament bestowed upon him the name Atatürk, translating in Turkish to "father of the Turks", Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History*, London 2004, s. 142; *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, http://web.archive.org/web/20070927211519/http://www.turkishembassy.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=300&Itemid=317, [accessed: 1/12/2014]; И.Г. Дроговоз, *Турецкий мари: Турция в огне сражений*, Минск 2007, p. 299; *Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN*, Warszawa 1983, vol. I, pp. 165–166; Jerzy S. Łątka, *Ojciec Turków. Kemal Atatürk*, Kraków 1994, pp. 15–21, 36–48, 67–73, 77–100 et passim; D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja...*, pp. 94–96; L. Kinross, *Atatürk. The Rebirth of a Nation*, Nicosia 1981, pp. 153–157; B. Lewis, *Narodziny nowoczesnej Turcji*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 290–297 et passim.

¹⁹ Necati U. Ucuzsatar, *Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the Foundation of Modern Turkey under the Leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, "Journal of Istanbul Kültür University", 2002, vol. 2, p. 61; Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey...*, p. 149.

²⁰ The centres of resistance against the occupation became the increasingly prominent Turkish Associations for the Defense of Rights, T. Wituch, *Turkish Transition...*, p. 255.

hero from the Great War, was able to transform an initially modest movement into a national organization uniting all factions pushing for the restitution of the Turkish state.

In the summer of 1919, Mustafa Kemal Pasha promulgated the “Declaration of Independence”, which he had drafted with fellow comrades. This became a manifesto calling for the struggle for independence. He rapidly garnered the support of ordinary citizens and local Young-Turkish activists. On July 23, 1919, a congress of representatives from the eastern provinces convened in Erzurum²¹. Initially, its purpose was to protest against the surrender of the provinces of Kars and Ardahan to Armenia, but it soon became a focal point for the consolidation of the Turkish national movement. The deliberations, which lasted until August 7, culminated in the adoption of a ten-point program. This became the foundation for the “National Pact”, the cornerstone document of the Kemalist movement. It asserted that the Turkish people would defend the indivisibility and independence of Turkey, and no foreign state could strip the Turks of their right to independence²². The congress recognized itself as the representative of the Turkish people. Another act of defiance against the Sultan’s policies was the National Congress in Sivas from September 4–11, 1919. Delegates from nearly all provinces endorsed the previous decisions. Furthermore, they rejected the establishment of a Greek occupation zone²³. The congress concluded with the formation of a Representation Committee led by Mustafa Kemal²⁴. This resulted in two power centers in Turkey: the Sultan’s in Constantinople and the insurgent center in Anatolia²⁵.

On January 28, 1920, the newly established parliament approved the 6-point National Pact. This recognized the indivisibility of the Turkish state, assured equal rights for all ethnicities and religions, and declared that referendums would be held on territories outside Turkey at the start of the First World War²⁶. The British occupation authorities responded sharply to these resolutions, compelling the Sultan to oust the Ali Rıza government. The parliament was subsequently dissolved, and several MPs and nationalist movement supporters were detained.

Nonetheless, some MPs from the dissolved parliament relocated to Angora (now Ankara), where the Representative Committee was situated. In March 1920, the Grand National Assembly, a reconstituted parliament, was established with Mustafa Kemal Pasha as its president²⁷. Concurrently, a government named the Executive Committee was formed. The creation of power structures and an army commenced, led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha’s close ally, General İsmet Pasha (Mustafa İsmet İnönü)²⁸. In retaliation, on April 11, 1920, Grand Mufti Abdullah Efendi issued a fatwa calling for the elimination of the rebels. A week

²¹ B. Lewis, *Narodziny nowoczesnej...*, p. 298; Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey...*, p. 150.

²² T. Wituch, *Tureckie przemiany...*, p. 257.

²³ E. Mears, *Modern Turkey*, New York 1972, pp. 623–628; Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey...*, p. 151; Jerzy S. Łątka, *Ojciec Turków...*, pp. 121–122; *Information Desk dated 25 November 1919*, Military Historical Office (Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne), Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe [Central Military Archives], Second Department of Polish General Staff 1921–1939 (hereafter: Second Department of Polish General Staff), Ref. No. I.303.47178, pp. 8–9; B. Georges-Gaulis, *Angora Constantinople Londres. Moustafa Kémal et la politique anglaise en Orient*, Paris 1922, pp. 42–45;

²⁴ B. Lewis, *Narodziny nowoczesnej...*, p. 298.

²⁵ *Information Desk dated 2 December 1919*, MHO, CMA, Second Department of Polish General Staff, Ref. No. I.303.4.7178, p. 3.

²⁶ D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja...*, p. 99; B. Lewis, *Narodziny nowoczesnej...*, p. 300.

²⁷ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 57–59.

²⁸ D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja...*, p. 100.

later, troops were assembled to confront the Kemalists²⁹. In response, the Kemalist parliament deposed the Istanbul government³⁰.

The decisive event that shifted the balance in favor of the Kemalists in their conflict with the Sultan's regime was the signing of the peace treaty with the Entente by the padishah at Sèvres on August 10, 1920. This treaty not only approved the division of Turkey but also imposed substantial war reparations³¹. The Grand National Assembly responded by declaring the treaty null and void, and its signatories were branded as national traitors. The mobilization and establishment of armed forces commenced. The Kemalists' primary objective was to defeat the Armenians, drive out the occupying forces from Anatolia, and rejuvenate the state.

By the end of 1919, there were multiple revolts against the Greek forces, who proceeded to suppress the protests with ferocity. The emerging military wing of Mustafa Kemal's supporters, the National Forces, evolved into his primary army. Alongside actions against the Greeks, operations were launched against French forces in Cilicia and Armenians in eastern Anatolia. With the backing of commanders from the remnants of the Turkish armed forces, especially Mustafa Kemal's fellows – a commander of the 20th Army Corps, General Kâzım Karabekir and a commander of the 20th Army Corps, General Ali Fâud³², the fight for independence ignited.

The military progression of the Greco-Turkish War can be segmented into five phases (May 15, 1919–June 22, 1920; June 22–July 11, 1920; March 1921–August 1921; July 8–September 9, 1921, and from October 1921 until the Armistice Treaty on October 11, 1922)³³.

First and Second Phases of the Greco-Turkish War (May 15, 1919 – June 22, 1920; June 22, 1920 – March 1921)

The initial phase of the war was marked by the expansion of the Smyrna zone occupied by the Greeks. By December 1919, they had stationed two army corps in the Smyrna region³⁴. Due to the efforts of the Greek units, by the summer of 1920, they had expanded the occupation zone to include areas stretching south to the town of Aydın, east to Kassaba, and north to Ayvalık. Simultaneously, as new areas of Anatolia were occupied, resistance from the local population against the Greek armed forces and occupation authorities intensified. This resistance was bolstered by volunteers from regions under the control of

²⁹ B. Lewis, *Narodziny nowoczesnej...*, pp. 301–302.

³⁰ Necati U. Ucuzsatar, *Dissolution Of The Ottoman Empire...*, p. 61.

³¹ T. Wituch, *Tureckie przemiany...*, p. 263–264; B. Lewis, *Narodziny nowoczesnej...*, p. 296; F. Çiloğlu, *Kurtuluş, Savaşı Sözlüğü*, Istanbul 2004, p. 317; M. Llewellyn-Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919–1922*, New York 1973, pp. 127–128; see: *Arbitral Award of the President of the United States of America Woodrow Wilson, Full Report of the Committee upon the Arbitration of the Boundary between Turkey and Armenia*. Washington, 22 November 1920, ed. Ara Papian, and Davit O. Abrahamyan, Armenia 2011.

³² These two Turkish generals were close allies of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and co-drafted the “Declaration of Independence”. They also participated in the 1919–1922 War of Independence.

³³ British intelligence from that era offers a different chronology of the Greco-Turkish War. They categorised it based on the Greek offensives, identifying six major campaigns, as documented in *The Situation In Turkey*, The National Archives, Kew (hereafter: NAK), War Office (hereafter: WO), Reference Number (hereafter: Ref. No.) 106/1493, p. 1.

³⁴ Army Corps A and Army Corps B (hereinafter: AC A and AC B respectively).

Mustafa Kemal Pasha's forces. Notably, there were no significant confrontations between the Greek units and the Kemalist army during this period.

In the war's second phase, the Greek army in Asia Minor, commanded by General Leonidas Paraskevopoulos and comprising approximately 90,000 troops, was organized into two corps, each with three divisions:

- Army Corps A in the Meander River area (Turkish: *Büyük Menderes Nehri, Maiandros*),
- Army Corps B in the Smyrna region.

During this time, the situation for the new Turkey was challenging. Kemalist military units were dispersed and primarily consisted of volunteers. There was a significant shortage of uniforms, equipment, and weapons. The territory of the new republic was encircled by occupation forces and troops loyal to the Sultan. Kemal Pasha's dispersed forces faced battles on multiple fronts³⁵. In total, the Turkish army, which included under-equipped volunteer troops, numbered around 60,000 soldiers³⁶.

On June 22, the Greeks initiated operations towards Alaşehir and Soma, intending to divert the Turks from the primary attack direction. However, only after three days of overcoming Turkish resistance did the Greek forces manage to occupy Alaşehir. After securing the area east of Alaşehir and sending reinforcements north, the Greeks moved towards Balıkesir, capturing it within two days and then advancing to Panderma. On July 8, an English squadron disembarked at Mudanya, facilitating the Greek capture of Bursa (also known as Prusa or Brussa)³⁷.

Consequently, the inadequately armed and trained Turkish troops, despite their valiant resistance, were repelled across the front by the better-equipped and more numerous Greek army.

By the end of August 1920, the Greek army recommenced offensive operations, targeting Uşak and the plateau in the Simar region. They quickly achieved success, with their three infantry divisions taking Uşak on August 29. However, they could not defeat the main Turkish force, which fell back to a fortified line at İnönü-Kütahya-Dumlupınar. From this position, the Turkish army mounted a counter-offensive in October, but it was unsuccessful. After suffering substantial losses, they were compelled to retreat³⁸. In 1920, the Greeks established a frontier stretching southwards from the Marmara Sea in the Brusa region to

³⁵ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 426.

³⁶ A significant portion of these soldiers in Kemal Pasha's army were volunteers, as well as demobilized soldiers and officers from the Ottoman army. One of the most prominent organizations that rallied volunteers was the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, as mentioned in a 1920 Information Desk from the Second Department of Polish General Staff. According to the information therein, this organization was expected to consist of several tens of thousands of volunteers funded by the republican authorities, *Information Desk dated January 1, 1920*, CMA, Second Department of Polish General Staff, Ref. No. I.303.4.7178, pp. 15–16; Edward J. Erickson, *Decisive Battles of the Asia Minor Campaign 1921–1922*, [in:] *Salvation and Catastrophe The Greek-Turkish War, 1919–1922*, edited by Konstantinos Travlos, Lanham Boulder New York London 2020, p. 207; By the end of 1920, Mustafa Kemal's armed forces had grown to 86,515 soldiers, Philip S. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish War 1919–22*, Oxford 2015, p. 17.

³⁷ T. Lychowski, *Turcja. Rys stosunków geograficznych...*, p. 41; *Cipher M.I.2 19th July, 1920 from War Office*, NAK, WO, Ref. No. 106/1493, p. 1.

³⁸ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, pp. 428–429.

Uşak and Gediz³⁹. Concurrently, Greek forces overran Eastern Thrace, defeating the under-strength Turkish units there.

The Anatolian front was not the sole battleground for Republican forces. While Kemal Pasha resisted the Greek corps' advances, the Kemalists and their allies were simultaneously combating the French in Cilicia and the English in Kurdistan, among other regions. Furthermore, the Kemalists had to deal with internal rebellions and uprisings. Ultimately, they overcame Armenia and concluded an agreement with Soviet Russia, terminating hostilities in eastern Anatolia.

Third Phase of the Greco-Turkish War (March 1921 – August 1921)

In 1920, the Greeks took the lead in expanding their foothold in the Smyrna (İzmir) region. This endeavor was sanctioned by the Allied agreement, which was endorsed during the San Remo Conference held from 19 to April 26, 1920. The Allies finalized the mandate system and granted permission to occupy the provinces of Aydin and eastern Thrace. On June 22, the Greek army initiated an offensive campaign, seizing control of Thrace and compelling the garrison at Edirne/Adrianople to surrender⁴⁰.

Concurrently, Greece underwent a significant political transformation. In the November 1920 elections, Venizelos lost power to the royalists, leading to King Constantine's return to the throne from exile⁴¹. Simultaneously, there was a change in the leadership of the armed forces, which, under political pressure, devised a plan for offensive operations in Anatolia⁴². During this period, Greek army units in Asia Minor were reinforced, and the Greek army underwent a reorganization. Meanwhile, the Turks were actively enhancing their combat capabilities⁴³.

As of the beginning of 1921, the respective troop numbers for both armies were as follows: the Greeks had 100,000 troops⁴⁴, whereas the Turks had 50,000 troops. The Turkish troops were inadequately equipped but reasonably well-trained⁴⁵.

³⁹ Turkey. *Changes in the situation 27.8.1920 to 7.9.1920*, NAK, WO.; Ref. No. 106/1493, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, p. 84; Edward J. Erickson, *Decisive Battles of the Asia Minor Campaign...*, p. 207.

⁴¹ J. Bonarek, T. Czekalski, S. Sprawski, S. Turlej, *Historia Grecji*, Kraków 2005, pp. 545–546.

⁴² *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, p. 84; Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 74; Philip S. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish War...*, p. 7.

⁴³ *Türk İstiklâl Hâribi İnci Cilt, Batı Cephesi, 3ncü Kısım (9 Kasım 1920–15 Nisan 1921)*, Ankara 1994, pp. 39–40, 48–50, 52–53; Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *Historia Imperium Osmańskiego Tom 2...*, p. 543; This was made possible, among other things, by the treaty with Soviet Russia signed in March 1921. Under the agreement, the Nationalists received substantial military and financial assistance, NAK, WO, Ref. No. 106/1507, p. 1.

⁴⁴ In Asia Minor, the Greeks had, according to some sources, six divisions comprising the 1st Army Corps (AC) (1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions (ID)), the 2nd Army Corps (formerly the 3rd and Cretan Division), the Cretan Division (it was merged with "Kydonia" to form the new 5th Division) "Smyrna" Army Corps (13th Infantry Division, "Archipelago", "Smyrna" and "Kydonia" Infantry Divisions), Philip S. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish War...*, p. 12.

⁴⁵ On the eastern front, the 15th Army Corps, comprising three divisions and commanded by General Kizim Kar Bey, had approximately 27,000 troops. In the Adana area, the Kemalists had two divisions, the 48th and 50th Infantry Divisions, along with volunteers, totalling around 9,000 troops. On the Smyrna front, the 12th Army Corps and the Reserve Corps (according to archival sources from the Second Department of Polish General Staff, they

First Battle of İnönü (January 7–10, 1921)

On the morning of January 6, 1921, the Greeks launched an offensive in two directions. Army Corps C (hereafter: AC C) operated in the north, while AC A carried out supporting operations in the south. The offensive was initiated by the Greeks, who on January 6, using the strength of two divisions (3rd and 7th Infantry Divisions⁴⁶), advanced from Bursa towards Eskişehir⁴⁷. The Turks, in response to the Greek attack, deployed 24 infantry divisions but were unable to halt the advancing Greek forces. Under pressure from the Greek troops, the Turks retreated to the İnönü hills. To prevent a breach in the front line, Kemal redeployed the 4th and 11th Infantry Divisions (the latter under the command of General İsmet Pasha) to the threatened section of the front⁴⁸. Simultaneously, Turkish forces engaged Greek units in the southern sector. By January 10, the 24 infantry divisions had effectively slowed down the Greek offensive. Meanwhile, from subdivisions of the 4th and 11th Infantry Divisions (TUR), İsmet Pasha formed a divisional battle group reinforced with artillery⁴⁹. On January 10, fierce fighting continued, with the Greek divisions (3rd and 7th Infantry Divisions) unsuccessfully attempting to breach the Turkish defenses. The Turks, however, bravely repelled the Greek troops, causing them to retreat. On the night of January 10 to 11, the Turks disengaged from the advancing Greek regiments and took positions to defend themselves on the next frontier, based on the hills in the İnönü area. Simultaneously, the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions (2nd, 3rd Cavalry Divisions (TUR)) came into play. The following day, the Turks launched a counterattack, which proved successful. They inflicted significant losses on the enemy and forced them to retreat to their initial positions⁵⁰.

Second Battle of İnönü (March 30 – April 1, 1921)

Despite their defeat, three months later, on March 23, 1921, the Greek army (AC A, B, C), consisting of six infantry divisions⁵¹ and bolstered by British supplies with a significant amount of modern equipment and provisions, was organized into two battle groups: Northern and Southern. The objective of the new offensive was to capture the railway hubs of Eskişehir and Afyonkarahisar⁵².

numbered around 70,000 fighting men). The commander of these forces was General İsmet Pasha. In the area of Bursa and Izmit, the Turks had the 44th and 46th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Infantry Regiment – with a combined force of nearly 18,000 soldiers. Kemalist units were also stationed in the Kastamonu and Trebizonda areas, numbering more than 10,000 soldiers, *Information Desk dated 15 February 1921*, Archiwum Akt Nowych [Central Archives of Modern Records], General Staff, Ref. No. 616/18, pp. 1–2.

⁴⁶ It numbered 11,000 soldiers and 28 cannons.

⁴⁷ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 76–78.

⁴⁸ *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, p. 88.

⁴⁹ Z. Ryniewicz, *Leksykon bitew świata*, Warsaw 2008, p. 217.

⁵⁰ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 77–79; *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, pp. 90–91.

⁵¹ The actual Greek forces numbered some 52,000–54,000 men armed with 636 machine guns and 260 cannons, Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 232; *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, p. 108.

⁵² Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 179.

During this period, the Turks were able to counter the attackers with a force of around 60,000 soldiers under the command of General İsmet Pasha. Five Turkish infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions defended the western border of Eskişehir. Another grouping of Turkish troops was stationed in the Dumlupınar area under the command of Refet Pasha⁵³.

Despite challenging terrain and weather conditions, the Greek operation under the command of General Alexandros Kontoulis initially progressed successfully. On March 24, the Greeks breached the Turkish defenses but encountered fierce resistance in the Dumlupınar area the very next day. By March 28, they managed to capture Afyonkarahisar, but failed to achieve their primary objective, which was to disperse the main Turkish force, leading to their retreat to Kütahya.

On the northern front, the operations were not going well for the Greeks. The Greek divisions faced strong Turkish resistance in the Kovalıça-Avgin area, organized by units under the command of General İsmet Pasha (approximately 40,000 troops). Initially, the Greeks enjoyed success, taking Ada Bazar and, after a fierce battle, Avgin⁵⁴. However, this marked the limits of the Greek army's capabilities. The Hellenic troops were exhausted, facing shortages of food and ammunition.

Under these conditions, the Turks launched a counterattack in the İnönü Hills area. The Turkish divisions initially succeeded, compelling the Northern battle group units to withdraw⁵⁵. The Greek front subsequently collapsed, leading to the withdrawal of units in the southern sector. Ultimately, by April 5, the Greeks had returned to their initial positions in the Bursa area⁵⁶, signifying the failure of the Greek offensive. The Turks decided to capitalize on their success and initiated a counter-offensive.

Starting in April, they conducted several operations in the southern sector. On April 13–15, Refet Pasha fought the Battle of Dumlupınar, which, however, ended inconclusively, resulting in his removal from command of the Southern Front. Despite multiple attempts to break through the Greek front, the Turks ultimately could not succeed. On May 4, 1921, General İsmet assumed command of both fronts. Troops of the Army of Asia Minor (hereafter: AAM(GR)) withdrew to the west of Dumlupınar and to the border of the Murat-Dagh hills⁵⁷. The Greek army suffered more than 8,000 casualties as a result of the fighting at İnönü⁵⁸.

Battles of Kütahya-Eskişehir (July 10–24, 1921)

Despite their defeat at İnönü, the Greeks decided to launch another offensive against the Turks. They concentrated the majority of their forces at their initial bases. They had

⁵³ The second grouping consisted of three infantry divisions and a cavalry division, Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 433.

⁵⁴ T. Lychowski, *Turcja. Rys stosunków geograficznych...*, p. 42.

⁵⁵ Z. Ryniewicz, *Leksykon bitew...*, p. 217.

⁵⁶ T. Lychowski, *Turcja. Rys stosunków geograficznych...*, p. 42.

⁵⁷ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 434.

⁵⁸ Z. Ryniewicz, *Leksykon bitew...*, p. 217; According to alternative sources, the Greek casualties amounted to 5,000 soldiers, I. Nioutsikos, *The Greek Military Strategy in the Asia Minor Campaign, 1919–1922: An Application of Clausewitz's Theory on Culmination [in:] Salvation and Catastrophe The Greek-Turkish War, 1919–1922*, edited by Konstantinos Travlos, Lanham Boulder New York London 2020, p. 192.

a total of eleven infantry divisions, comprising 120,000 troops in the battle⁵⁹. General Georgios Polymenakos assumed command of the Greek forces in Anatolia⁶⁰.

The Turks, although they had also suffered significant losses, managed to rapidly rebuild their military capabilities. Furthermore, with assistance from the USSR and acquisitions made in France, they acquired a substantial amount of armaments, ammunition, and equipment⁶¹. Ultimately, they were able to field approximately 70,000 troops, organized into four Army Corps under the leadership of General İsmet Pasha⁶².

The Greek forces' actions were preceded by two strikes: one originating from the Brusa area (comprising two infantry divisions) in a south-easterly direction, while the other was executed at the center of the grouping (also involving two infantry divisions) heading towards Kütahya. Their primary objective was to engage the Kemalist forces. The assault on the southern section of the front was executed by six divisions from AC A and B, commencing from their initial bases in the Dumlupınar area.

The Greek assault was launched on July 10, targeting the center and north sections. However, it proved to be unsuccessful. The Turks halted the Greek advance, establishing defensive positions in the Kovalıça area and to the west of Kütahya. Two days later, operations also began in the southern sector. AC A and B managed to break through the Turkish defenses, capturing Afyonkarahisar and continuing their offensive⁶³. They renewed their assault on Kovalıça and Kütahya while simultaneously executing a flanking maneuver towards Eskişehir. Kemal Pasha was compelled to withdraw his divisions⁶⁴.

On July 17, the Greeks occupied Kütahya, and the situation of the Turkish troops became critical. Subsequently, the Greeks, capitalizing on their success, pursued the retreating Turkish forces. Mustafa Kemal ordered the withdrawal of his troops from contact with

⁵⁹ A. Baran Dural, *The Leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: Turkish Independence War*, "European Scientific Journal", 2012, vol. 8, No. 21, p. 188.

⁶⁰ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 435.

⁶¹ The Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Brotherhood was signed in March 1921. Through this treaty, the Russians provided Kemal with significant aid in the form of cash, arms, ammunition, and military equipment. Notably, the text of the agreement did not include any provisions for military aid at the request of the Communist government, and it was governed by separate secret agreements. It is worth mentioning that as early as September 1920, Soviet Russia had provided the Kemalists with one million golden roubles in aid. According to Sevket Süreyya Aydemir, the Turks were expected to receive five million gold roubles by the end of 1920 and an additional ten million by 1922, *Moskova hatıraları*, (21/11/1920 – 2/6/1922), by Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Istanbul 1955, pp. 82, 102–103, 137, 144–145; *History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–1945*, by B. Ponomarev, A.A. Gromyko and V. Khvostok, University Press of the Pacific, 2001, pp. 164–3; B. Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1920–1991. Soviet foreign policy, Turkey and communism*, New York 2006, pp. 27–29. The first major arms shipments arrived on 30 March 1921. The total aid package included: 100 artillery pieces, 15 four-barrel 105mm mountain artillery batteries, 100,000 rifles, 24 aircraft, five batteries of anti-aircraft guns, telephone equipment, uniforms, millions of rounds of small arms ammunition, thousands of artillery shells, hundreds of heavy and light machine guns, Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 193; C. Timur, R. Atakan, A. Berktaş, and V. Ertekin, *Türk İstiklâl Hürbi VIIinci Cilt, İdari Faaliyetler (15 Mayıs 1919–2 Kasım 1923)*, Ankara 1975, pp. 266–269; A. Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey*, New York 1999, pp. 309–310.

⁶² In total, the Turkish forces were expected to number around 122,000 troops. Their equipment included: 160 cannons, 700 machine-guns and 4 aircraft, Philip S. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish War...*, p. 8; Erickson reports that İsmet had a force of 47,000 men, 636 machine-guns and 137 cannons, Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 193.

⁶³ A. Шталь, *Малые войны 1920 – 1930-х годов*, Москва 2003, p. 17.

⁶⁴ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 193–195.

the Greek forces, directing them towards the Ankara area. The following actions involved the combined Cavalry Corps (CC), which effectively delayed the Greek troops' advance. Despite these efforts, AAM(GR) troops occupied Eskişehir on July 19⁶⁵, leading the Turks to retreat to the Seyitgazi area. Greek divisions attempted to outflank the main Turkish army grouping by striking on the right wing in the Kirghiz-Dogh area. However, this maneuver was halted by the CC. Fighting in the area continued until July 21, when the momentum of the Greek strikes began to wane, and the Hellenic units, exhausted and low on ammunition, came to a halt⁶⁶.

Throughout the operation, the Turks suffered losses exceeding 12,000 troops and 50 cannons. During the night of July 22, they relocated to the east bank of the Sakarya River, retreating towards Ankara, with the CC providing cover⁶⁷. Given the critical situation, the parliament entrusted Mustafa Kemal Pasha with the command of the army, granting him full authority for the duration of the war⁶⁸.

The Fourth Phase of the Greco-Turkish War **Battles on the Outskirts of Ankara (August 1 – September 9, 1921)** **Battle Of Sakarya (August 23 – September 13, 1921)**

Under political pressure, the AAM(GR) commander initiated plans for another offensive operation in late July 1921. General Anastasios Papoulas, along with several senior commanders, believed that the Greek army had reached a state of exhaustion. Soldiers were grappling with shortages of supplies, particularly in artillery ammunition⁶⁹. However, these concerns were not acknowledged within royal and political circles. Consequently, it was assumed that the Greek troops would crush the Turkish forces west of the Sakarya/Sangarius River by launching a major strike from the exit points south of Eskişehir and Afyonkarahisar towards Ankara. Three Greek army corps, designated as AC C, A, and B from north to south, were to advance eastward and then northward towards Ankara in a wide-ranging offensive across the upper Sakarya/Sangarius River. This maneuver was intended to lead to the encirclement and subsequent annihilation of the Turkish forces. Meanwhile, the Turks mobilized their entire population for defense. The outskirts of Ankara were fortified, creating multiple fortified defense lines⁷⁰. Just before the fighting began, the Turks received

⁶⁵ Eskişehir was occupied by the Greeks at the end of February, A. Шталь, *Малые войны...*, p. 17.

⁶⁶ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 197.

⁶⁷ И. Г. Дрогозов, *Турецкий марш...*, pp. 226–227.

⁶⁸ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey...*, p. 155.

⁶⁹ Additionally, the Greek supply lines were extended, limiting General Papoulas to using only around 70% of his total forces for offensive operations at a strategic level. In contrast, the Turks utilized 85% of their combat potential for defense, D. Akyüz, *From the Western Front to the Heights of Ankara. Implementing the German Defence in Depth Doctrine in the Battle of Sakarya (1921) in the Greek-Turkish War of 1919–1922*, “International Journal of Military History and Historiography”, 2022, p. 18.

⁷⁰ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Turkey's War of Independence...*, pp. 438–439; I. Nioutsikos, *The Greek Military Strategy in the Asia Minor Campaign, 1919–1922...*, pp. 192–193; According to British intelligence, the Turks had 46,000 troops and 161 cannons under arms. The Greeks, on the other hand, concentrated around 76,000 troops and 350 cannons and howitzers, *Turco-Greek operations 9th July to 23rd Sept. 1921 (The following notes have been received from Constantinople*, NAK, WO, Ref. No. 106/1496; Slightly different data is provided by

substantial military aid from Soviet Russia, which included 5,000 artillery shells, more than 5,000 boxes of small arms ammunition, 12 aircraft, 80 cannons, and 18 machine guns⁷¹.

On August 1, 1921, the Greek army, operating from Asia Minor, launched an offensive. Within seven days, they had advanced to within 50 km of Ankara, putting the Turkish forces on the defensive. This Greek advance continued until August 17. However, the flanking manoeuvre planned by AC B failed as it could not breach the Turkish defenses, and the Turkish CC, under the command of General Fakher Eddin Pasha, struck at the Greek flanks and rear⁷².

Meanwhile, by August 23, Greek AC A and C were engaged in fierce battles as they moved up the branches of the Sakarya River, attempting to breach the Turkish fortifications on the river's east bank. After intense fighting, Greek soldiers managed to cross the river, breaking through the defensive perimeter on August 27. However, the Turkish troops withdrew to another fortified defensive line. The Greeks persisted in their assault, approaching the primary hub of the Turkish defense. Nevertheless, their attack no longer possessed the same force as it did two weeks earlier⁷³. Despite facing exhaustion and mounting supply difficulties, the Greek divisions pushed forward, compelled to breach successive segments of fortified Turkish army positions⁷⁴. On September 8, the Greek troops were ultimately compelled to halt their advance.

Capitalizing on the Greek army's diminishing offensive capabilities, Mustafa Kemal Pasha issued orders for a counterattack, deploying the Reverse Combat Group's forces, including the 6th Division. On September 11, this division moved to launch an assault on the weakened left flank of the Greek forces in the Polatli region⁷⁵. This tactical move proved to be decisive. During the night of 11 to September 12, AC A and B disengaged from the Turks, retreating under the cover provided by AC C, which was engaged in battle⁷⁶. On

Murat Köylü. According to him, the Western Front Command had 6,855 officers, 122,186 infantry, 63,416 rifles, 344 light machine guns, 524 heavy machine guns, 181 cannons, and 2 aircraft.

On the Greek side during this period, there were 5,500 officers and 178,000 soldiers armed with 2,768 machine guns, 286 cannons, and 18 aircraft. M. Köylü, *The Causes of Failure Greek Minority Army in the Battle of Sakarya*, "Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences", 2023, 22, p. 530; Fortification development on the Turkish side was limited to basic field fortifications due to time and resource constraints. However, the challenging terrain and irregular operations carried out in the rear of the Greek forces largely offset the disadvantages faced by Kemal Pasha's troops, D. Akyüz, *From the Western Front to the Heights of Ankara...*, p. 18.

⁷¹ Supplies were delivered from Odessa to Kemalist-controlled ports from August 11 to 15. According to intelligence from the Second Department of the Polish General Staff, the Russians were also expected to transfer five warships to Turkey, including two submarines, *Information to the Polish Military Attaché in Prague of 22 November 1921*, CMA, Second Department of Polish General Staff, Ref. No. I.303.4.7616, p. 4. According to Russian historian I. Drogovoz, in 1921. Turks received from Soviet Russia more than 33,000 rifles, 327 medium machine guns, 54 cannons, in addition to 58,000,000 rifle cartridges, 130,000 artillery shells and significant amounts of military equipment, И.Г., Дроговоз, *Турецкий марш...*, p. 306.

⁷² Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 209.

⁷³ It proved exceedingly challenging for the Greeks to provide the fighting troops with essential supplies such as food and ammunition, particularly for their artillery. By 26th August, some artillery units had depleted their ammunition for heavy cannons, and the field artillery had an incomplete firing unit, Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 442.

⁷⁴ *Battle of The Sakaria*, NAK, WO, Ref. No. 106/1496.

⁷⁵ Heinz A. Richter, *The Greek-Turkish War 1919–1922*, Wiesbaden 2016, pp. 123–124.

⁷⁶ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 228–230; *15th Summary of Greek-Turkish Operations (During period Oct. 8th – Oct. 15th, 1921)*, NAK, WO, Ref. No. 106/1496, pp. 2–3.

September 13, the Greek army abandoned its bridgeheads on the east bank and crossed the Sakarya River, having suffered over 23,000 casualties, including killed and wounded⁷⁷. On September 15, the Turkish forces pursued the retreating Greek army, reaching the border of Eskişehir-Kütahya-Afyonkarahisar⁷⁸. By mid-October, they continued their efforts to breach the defensive perimeter held by the Greeks but achieved little success⁷⁹.

The Battle of the Sakarya River held immense significance in the Greco-Turkish War. Apart from the heavy losses sustained by the Greeks, this battle marked a turning point where they lost both strategic and operational initiative⁸⁰. The clash also served as an exemplary demonstration of a well-coordinated battle on a fortified defensive line, systematically wearing down the enemy's capabilities until the Greeks' previous efforts were nullified with a decisive blow from a concentrated force⁸¹. It is noteworthy that the Turkish victory had a profound impact on public morale and the morale of Kemal Pasha's army⁸². Following the Battle of the Sakarya River, which concluded with the Greeks retreating, military actions between the two sides were suspended for nearly a year.

Fifth Phase of the Greco-Turkish War (October 1921) End of the Fight

Following the defeat of the Greeks at the Sakarya River, the Greeks found themselves in a precarious political and financial situation. The expensive war led to significant public discontent. Athens' international stance was further complicated when, on October 20, 1921, the Turks signed an agreement with France⁸³. Under this agreement, Paris recognized the Turkish government and, additionally, provided the Kemalists with equipment, arms, and ammunition to reinforce their army. Italy also extended military aid. Thus, on the eve

⁷⁷ Idem, *Decisive Battles of the Asia Minor Campaign*..., p. 211; Heinz A. Richter, *The Greek-Turkish War*..., p. 125; Philip S. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish War*..., p. 8; *Battle of...*, NAK, WO, Ref. No. 106/1496, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Ibidem.

⁷⁹ *Information to the Polish Military Attaché in Prague*..., p. 1; Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence*..., pp. 231–236.

⁸⁰ T. Wituch, *Tureckie przemiany*..., p. 265.

⁸¹ The mistake of the Greek command was their lack of a reserve force that could have been brought into the battle when the Turks attacked the wing of the Greek troops. In addition, General Papoulas' assessment that more time should have been devoted to preparing the operation, and most importantly, ensuring adequate supplies, proved correct. The fortification of the terrain, coupled with the excellent deployment of artillery and machine guns, played a pivotal role in the Turkish defense plan, I. Nioutsikos, *The Greek Military Strategy in the Asia Minor Campaign, 1919–1922*..., pp. 192–193; *Saved by Turkish Weakness*. "Daily Express" Special Correspondent, NAK, WO, Ref. No. 106/1496.

⁸² The National Assembly in Ankara conferred upon Kemal the rank of Speaker and the title of Ghazi. The victory at the Sakarya River resonated both in Europe and the Middle East, where Muslims commemorated it as a celebration of the Turks' triumph over the infidels, D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja*..., p. 109.

⁸³ The Treaty of Ankara, also known as the Ankara Agreement or the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement (named after the French diplomat who signed it), concluded the Cilicia War and laid the groundwork for establishing diplomatic relations between the Kemalists (the government in Ankara) and France. The Franco-Turkish agreement of 1921 allowed the Turkish forces to control resource-rich areas that were previously in the French occupation zone. This strategic move enabled Kemal Pasha to bolster his armed forces and secure a base that could supply his expanding military, Peter K. Jensen, *The Greco-Turkish War, 1920–1922*, "International Journal of Middle East Studies", 1979, Vol. No. 4, p. 561.

of decisive operations against Greece, Turkey managed to secure its eastern, southern, and south-western borders.

After the Battle of Sakarya, the AAM fielded about 220,000 soldiers, of which only approximately 80,000 were in active line units. Their equipment comprised 264 cannons, 980 machine-guns, and 55 aircraft⁸⁴.

Based on the line from the Marmara Sea coast to Eskişehir-Afyonkarahisar, the main frontier of Greek defense was divided into two sectors: south and north⁸⁵. The southern sector covered the defense belt from Afyonkarahisar to Uşak and was defended by AC A units. Conversely, the northern sector stretched from the Marmara Sea coast to Eskişehir and was manned by divisions of AC C. AC B remained in reserve, positioned behind the lines of AC A, bridging the roughly 50 km gap between the two sectors⁸⁶. The Greek strategy essentially involved defending the occupied frontiers halting the Turkish offensive actions. This would enable them to amass additional forces and initiate a counter-offensive deep into Turkey⁸⁷.

During this period, the Turkish command underwent a reorganization of its armed forces, adopting a new structure: regimental-divisional-corps. By the concluding phase of the combat, the Turks had amassed significant forces to establish the Western Front, consisting of two armies (First and Second Army) as well as independent units and battle groups. This Front's forces comprised 18 infantry divisions⁸⁸ and five cavalry divisions, equipped with 380 cannons (including 40 heavy ones) and 29 aircraft. In total, approximately 110,000 troops were mobilized against the Greeks⁸⁹. In the direction of the main strike, the Turks had up to fifteen infantry and four cavalry divisions, amounting to 75,000 bayonets and 12,000 sabers. Two-thirds of all artillery, i.e., 200 cannons, was concentrated in the primary striking zone of the Turkish army⁹⁰. The Turkish strategy entailed shifting the entire force southwards, positioning opposite the fortified AC A and B perimeter in the Afyonkarahisar area. They then planned to breach the Greek defense with a direct strike using two-thirds of the force. Concurrently, the 1st and 4th AC were to encircle the city from

⁸⁴ According to Jerzy S. Łątka (who cites the findings of Turkish scholars), the Greek army had nearly 220,000 soldiers armed with: 1280 machine-guns and 418 cannons, Jerzy S. Łątka, *Ojciec Turków...*, p. 164; Hinterhoff reports that the Greeks had more than 220,000 troops in the front line and about 380 cannons and 30 aircraft, Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 444; However, slightly different figures are presented in a study of the Greco-Turkish War by the Russian military historian N. Korsun. According to his research, during the relevant period, the Greek army consisted of 12 infantry divisions with 10,000 men each, 10 independent infantry regiments, one cavalry division with 3,000 sabers, 380 cannons (including 48 heavy ones), and approximately 30 aircraft. In total, the Greeks could deploy around 120,000 troops against the Turks, Н.Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, p. 15. According to other sources in Anatolia, the Greeks had about 140,000 troops, Philip S. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish War...*, p. 9.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 8–9.

⁸⁶ *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, pp. 355–359.

⁸⁷ Н.Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, p. 19; *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, p. 360.

⁸⁸ A standard Turkish infantry division consisted of 5,000 men, while a cavalry division had 3,000 sabres.

⁸⁹ According to Turkish sources, the Western Front had a force of about 140,000 soldiers, *Türk İstiklal Harbi, Büyük Taarruza Hazırlık ve Büyük Taarruz (10 Ekim 1921–31 Temmuz 1922)*, C. II, VI. Kısım, 1. Kitap, Ankara 1967, s. 24; *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, pp. 363–369; Edward J. Erickson, *Decisive Battles of the Asia Minor Campaign...*, p. 213; *From Empire to Republic: The Turkish War of National Liberation, 1918–1923: A documentary study, vol. 2*, by Stanford J. Shaw, Ankara 2000, p. 1682.

⁹⁰ Н.Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, pp. 22–23.

the south and west, while the 1st Cavalry Division would encircle it from the north. On the left flank, the 5th CC aimed to launch a raid and seize Uşak, thereby severing the supply lines for the Greek troops. The subsequent phase of the plan was to neutralize the encircled Greek forces⁹¹.

The Turkish offensive commenced on August 26, 1922, preceded by an artillery barrage lasting one and a half hours, targeting the fortified hills at the forefront of the Greek defense and the communication lines to their rear⁹².

The First Army spearheaded the offensive. The Turks made notable progress, penetrating a 15 km-wide section of the Greek defense perimeter. The defensive positions of the 1st and 14th Greek Infantry Divisions were bolstered by a regiment from the 7th Infantry Division. Nevertheless, the Greeks' situation grew increasingly precarious due to the maneuvers of the Turkish Cavalry Corps towards the flanks of AC A(GR)⁹³.

The Greek troops resisted fiercely, yet the Turks methodically drove them from their positions. By evening, the situation for the Greek forces had turned critical⁹⁴.

General Trikoupis recognized the need for a strategic regrouping to enable the Greeks to reclaim the initiative. Accordingly, the right-wing and center of AC A(GR) were tasked with halting the Turkish advance west of Afyonkarahisar, allowing AC B(GR) units to simultaneously launch an attack from the north of the Akar River. However, the instructions came too late, and no Greek units managed to ready themselves for a counterattack. As a consequence, the commencement of offensive operations was delayed until August 28⁹⁵.

Yet, these plans were disrupted both by Turkish advances and internal Greek challenges, as Kemal Pasha's forces started to disassemble the Greek defensive positions within the strike zone. Before midday, the Turks had broken through the Greek defensive lines and bypassed Afyonkarahisar from the west, which subsequently fell to the 6th AC(TUR)⁹⁶. This shift allowed the Turkish forces to seize the operational initiative, persistently targeting the frontier held by the Greeks. By outmaneuvering the main Greek defenses, the Turks positioned themselves to strike at the flanks and rear of the Hellenic army⁹⁷. The achievements of Kemalist forces necessitated the Greek units' withdrawal to their subsequent line of defense. This retreat, marked by a lack of coordination and disarray, spanned several hours. Several divisions forfeited parts of their heavy equipment during this withdrawal, including artillery pieces⁹⁸. Lieutenant General Georgios Hatzianestis, the Greek commander-in-chief, repeatedly urged General Nikolaos Trikoupis to reclaim the lost territories. Yet this proved unfeasible as the primary Greek forces found themselves encircled, with their tactical situation worsening with each passing hour. Furthermore, the AC B divisions retreated westward rather than initiating a counterattack⁹⁹.

⁹¹ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 251.

⁹² Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 448.

⁹³ Н. Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, pp. 27–28.

⁹⁴ Edward J. Erickson, *Decisive Battles of the Asia Minor Campaign...*, p. 213.

⁹⁵ *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, pp. 378–382.

⁹⁶ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 448.

⁹⁷ *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, pp. 382–385.

⁹⁸ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 253–258; Heinz A. Richter, *The Greek-Turkish War...*, p. 143.

⁹⁹ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 448.

In these dire circumstances, General Trikoupis ordered a withdrawal of forces (including the 1st Infantry Division, 7th Infantry Division, 4th Infantry Division, and 12th Infantry Division) to a fresh defensive line near Dumlupınar. However, only a portion of his division heeded this command¹⁰⁰. This reshuffling of Greek forces positioned the Turkish Cavalry Corps units deep within the Greek rear¹⁰¹. Consequently, the Turks embarked on operations to disrupt the southern Greek formations. While the Greeks did manage to repel the Turks at Bal Mahmud, Kemalist forces prevailed in other sectors. Compounding the Greeks' precarious tactical situation were the raiding incursions of the Turkish Cavalry Corps, instigating widespread panic in the Greek rear and formations¹⁰².

Demoralized by previous setbacks, the Greek 1st Infantry Division, led by Major General Athanasios Frangou and pressured on its left flank by the 1st Cavalry Division, unilaterally vacated its positions north of Ayvalı village. This retreat drew the 7th Infantry Division with it, subsequently leading to the 4th Infantry Division's withdrawal. Upon learning of the movements of Turkish troops, the 12th Infantry Division also abandoned the battlefield¹⁰³.

From August 29 to September 2, the Turkish command embarked on the final stage of the operation, aiming to dismantle the isolated southern Greek contingent¹⁰⁴. Their initial attacks yielded moderate success. Only the cavalry from the Cavalry Corps managed to flank the combined "Trikoupis" Battle Group, which comprised survivors from the 1st, 7th, 4th, and 12th Infantry Divisions. After consolidating his forces, General Trikoupis aimed to disengage from the enemy and join forces with the "Frangou" Battle Group, consisting of remnants from other Greek divisions¹⁰⁵. However, his units only began to reorganize at dawn on August 29¹⁰⁶. By then, the Turks had recommenced their assault. The Greeks retaliated, but their ammunition started depleting by the afternoon. Ultimately, they opted to retreat¹⁰⁷. General Frangou then ordered a dual-division assault (with the 1st and 7th Infantry Divisions) on the Turkish flank. But the disorganized subunits of the 1st Infantry Division faltered mid-assault, forcing a Greek withdrawal. As these subunits retreated, the remaining Greek divisions followed suit¹⁰⁸.

The Turks responded with a counter-offensive, seizing the fortified position at Dumlupınar that was previously held by the Greek right wing and center. Given these circumstances, the outcome for the Trikoupis group seemed inevitable. The isolated Greeks, having lost their artillery and running low on ammunition, capitulated to the Turks. Consequently, an army battle formation was shattered. Two corps commanders, 500 officers, and 5,000 privates and non-commissioned officers were captured, along with thousands of

¹⁰⁰ Н. Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, pp. 31–32.

¹⁰¹ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 450.

¹⁰² Heinz A. Richter, *The Greek-Turkish War...*, p. 145.

¹⁰³ Н.Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, p. 3 Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 287.

¹⁰⁴ The southern grouping consisted of the "Trikoupis" and "Frangou" Battle Groups.

¹⁰⁵ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 450.

¹⁰⁶ Н.Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁷ Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 450.

¹⁰⁸ Heinz A. Richter, *The Greek-Turkish War...*, pp. 147–148; Philip S. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish War...*, p. 9.

weapons and pieces of equipment¹⁰⁹. Remnants of the AAM retreated chaotically towards the coast. The Greek command endeavored to establish a defensive line around Banaz, but mentally exhausted troops from the 1st and 7th Infantry Divisions declined to continue the battle¹¹⁰. General Athanasios Frangou also initiated delaying tactics, but his forces also relinquished their posts. On September 1, Uşhak fell to the Kemalists. General Frangou, in one last effort, sought to mount a defense along the Alaşehir River, east of the town bearing the same name. His primary goal was to buy time to evacuate as many soldiers as possible to the port of Smyrna¹¹¹.

From September 4 onwards, the Turkish First Army engaged in intense combat with the forces under General Frangou and Colonel Nikolaos Plastiras' Battle Group. On September 5, the Greeks continued to fiercely resist the Cavalry Corps. However, the situation at the front became dire as the tactical units of the Turkish Second Army entered the fray. By the subsequent day, the Turkish forces pressed on with their advance, managing to penetrate the Greek defenses. The newly-appointed Greek commander-in-chief, Lieutenant General Georgios Polymenakos, opted against defending Smyrna and instead commanded a swift evacuation of the remaining AAM troops. On September 9, units of the First Army took control of the town.

Up until September 15, the combined forces of General Andreas Plates' Division A, Colonel Plastiras, and troops under Odysseas Maroulis held rear-guard positions on the Erithea peninsula (west of the Lestren Dâg line) up to the Alaçatı plateau, centered around the port of Çesme. They safeguarded the embarkation of the remnants of the AAM onto vessels from both the British and Greek navies¹¹².

Fighting in the Central and Northern Sector

From August 26 onwards, intense fighting erupted in these sectors as the Turkish offensive engaged the Greek AC C forces. On August 27, the AAM command instructed General Petros Soumilas to direct his divisions to initiate a series of counter-offensives to support AC A and B. However, this order was later rescinded, and the AC C was instructed to retreat to the historical defensive lines east of Bursa. General Soumilas directed his units to regroup at Panderma/Bandırma (3rd and 10th Infantry Divisions) and Mudanya (11th Infantry Division)¹¹³.

Concurrently, after capturing Kütahya on August 30, the Turkish Independent Cavalry Division pursued the Greek troops. On September 1, upon seizing the city of Eskişehir, they united with the "Kocaeli" Battle Group. The Greek 3rd, 10th and 11th infantry divisions moved to a fortified position near Bursa. On September 7, the Turks launched an attack, but the Greeks repelled it. However, fearing a flanking maneuver from the south by the 3rd Division of the Turkish Cavalry Corps, they retreated from their positions and began a march

¹⁰⁹ As per Turkish records, they captured 391 officers and 4,385 soldiers, Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 287.

¹¹⁰ H.Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, p. 40; Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 287–288.

¹¹¹ Heinz A. Richter, *The Greek-Turkish War...*, pp. 150–151.

¹¹² Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 453.

¹¹³ Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 296; *A Concise History of the Campaign in Asia Minor...*, pp. 455–456.

towards the coast for evacuation¹¹⁴. The 11th Infantry Division advanced to the town of Mudanya but was captured by the Turks on September 10th¹¹⁵.

The 3rd and 10th Infantry Divisions, with support from the Greek fleet, attempted to defend the defensive perimeter around Panderma. However, units from the 3rd Turkish Cavalry Corps and the 18th Infantry Division managed to penetrate the Greek defenses. Subsequently, between September 13 and 18, the 3rd and 10th Infantry Divisions embarked onto ships while engaging the Turks. By September 17, the Turks had taken control of Panderma¹¹⁶.

Over a month of Turkish operations, the Greek army was decisively defeated and driven to the sea. Only a third of the Asia Minor Army's forces were successfully evacuated. In the ensuing battles, the Turks captured 40,000 prisoners, 284 cannons, 2,000 machine guns, and 15 aircraft. The Greeks suffered total losses of 75,000 men, while Turkish casualties ranged between 12,000 and 18,000 troops¹¹⁷. The war had come to an end.

Treaty of Armistice (Mudanya) and Peace (Lausanne)

The defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor spurred a surge of frustration and indignation within Greece. Calls for accountability for those responsible for the disaster grew louder. The commanders and King Constantine faced particularly severe criticism. By the end of September, the Salonian garrison mutinied, drawing support from other military units. This prompted the formation of the Revolutionary Committee under the guidance of General Stylianos Gonatas and Colonel Nikolaos Plastiras, one of the foremost commanders during the latter stages of the Greco-Turkish War¹¹⁸. Despite the declaration of a state of emergency, the insurrection continued to grow. The government found itself cornered and resigned, leading King Constantine to abdicate. Subsequently, the military assumed control of the government. A Military Tribunal was convened. Three former prime ministers, including Dimitrios Gounaris and Nikolaos Theotokis, two ministers, and three former commanders of the Asia Minor Army were arraigned before it. Six of them were condemned to death, with the execution taking place on November 28, 1922¹¹⁹.

On October 11, 1922, an armistice was inked in the city of Mudanya. As a result, Turkey reclaimed Eastern Thrace and Adrianople (Edirne)¹²⁰. Furthermore, the occupying forces vacated Constantinople, and Sultan Mehmed VI Vahdetin abdicated, leaving Turkey¹²¹.

¹¹⁴ *Rough Notes on the Turkish Situation 10th Sept. 1922*, NAK, WO, Ref. No. 106/1505, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ 200 officers and 6,000 Greek soldiers, along with their equipment and armaments, surrendered to the Turks, *Türk İstiklal Harbi: Büyük Taarruzda Takip Harekatı (31 Ağustos–18 Eylül 1922)*, cilt II, kısım 6, kitap 3, rd. Kemal Niş, Ankara 1969, pp. 207–208.

¹¹⁶ According to Turkish accounts, only the units from the 3rd and 10th Infantry Divisions managed to embark onto ships; soldiers from other formations were captured, Certified Captain E. Hinterhoff, *Wojna Turcji o niepodległość...*, p. 453; Heinz A. Richter, *The Greek-Turkish War...*, p. 151; Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, p. 298–299.

¹¹⁷ H.Г. Корсун, *Греко-турецкая война...*, p. 45.

¹¹⁸ T. Czekalski, *Pogrobowcy Wielkiej Idei. Przemiany społeczne w Grecji w latach 1923–1940*, Kraków 2007, p. 20.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁰ E.G. Mears, *Modern Turkey. A political-economic Interpretation 1908–1923*, New York 1924, s. 658; D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja...*, p. 110; Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 316–318.

¹²¹ T. Wituch, *Tureckie przemiany...*, p. 268.

The Mudanya agreement paved the way for the Lausanne peace talks, commencing on November 21, 1922, and culminating on July 23, 1923, with the ratification of the peace treaty¹²². Under the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty: Constantinople and the Dardanelles were ceded to Turkey, as was Thrace, including Adrianople. Turkey's debt was considerably reduced. The matter of the Turkish Straits would be overseen by an inter-allied commission under the aegis of the League of Nations. The Turks' bid to reclaim Mossul was unsuccessful. By a resolution of the League of Nations, endorsed by the International Tribunal in The Hague, Mossul was incorporated into Iraq in December 1925¹²³. Subsequent discussions between Greece and Turkey culminated in an agreement for a population exchange¹²⁴.

Summary

The Greco-Turkish War in Asia Minor between 1919 and 1922 stands as the most significant military confrontation in the history of Turkish-Greek conflicts. It began with the landing of the Greek army in Smyrna (İzmir) in May 1919, seemingly bringing to fruition the possibility of the Megali Idea, particularly given the weakness of the Ottoman Empire at the time. In the shifting geopolitical landscape, Greek politicians, sensing an opportunity to realize their aspirations, believed that Greece could fulfill the goals espoused in the national ideology, which called for the creation of a Greater Greece (Megali Idea)¹²⁵. However, they overlooked the fact that they had become somewhat of a pawn for the British government. To Britain, tiny Greece was a convenient instrument for furthering the Crown's ambitions in Turkey, Asia Minor, and the Middle East. As David Lloyd George articulated, the role envisaged for Greece was as follows, "...it seemed both fair and expedient that the Greeks should serve Britain's interests by replacing the Turks as guardians of her imperial communications with India."¹²⁶. Despite reservations from Lord Curzon and the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who proposed awarding Turkish territories in Thrace to the Greeks as recompense, the British government still backed Greece. Military commanders' concerns, deeming the expedition to Asia Minor as unrealistic and even reckless, were similarly overlooked. Even a veto from President Wilson did not deter them. Lloyd George, prioritizing the interests of the Crown in British policy, chose to support the Greek claims in Asia Minor¹²⁷. This decision instigated a war marked by immense human casualties and paved the way for the resurgence of the Turkish state.

This conflict indelibly altered the geopolitical dynamics of the region. The Greek defeat led to the signing of a peace treaty that favored the emerging Turkish state. The 1923 Treaty had profound and lasting implications. Firstly, it marked the end of the military confrontation

¹²² M. Tanty, *Bosfor i Dardanele...*, p. 342.

¹²³ T. Wituch, *Tureckie przemiany...*, p. 268; Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence...*, pp. 329–333.

¹²⁴ More than one million Greeks had to leave Anatolia, while more than half a million Turks were displaced from mainland Greece (excluding Western Thrace), D. Kolodziejczyk, *Turcja...*, p. 113.

¹²⁵ Herbert Adams Gibbons, *Venizelos*, Boston, New York 1923, p. 304.

¹²⁶ Lord Kinross, *Ataturk: A Biography of Mustafa Kemal, Father of Modern Turkey*, New York 1965, pp. 164–165.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*.

and effectively quashed the Megali Idea. Secondly, the Ottoman Empire disintegrated, leading to the rise of the Republic of Turkey, which, under the stewardship of Kemal Pasha Atatürk, underwent transformative reforms to become a regional power. Thirdly, it instigated an unprecedented population exchange between Greece and Turkey, the repercussions of which resonated in Greece until the 1960s. Fourthly, it settled the matter of the Turkish Straits, opening them for maritime traffic. The regulations governing this sea passage were later defined in the Montreux Convention of 1936, which remains applicable today. Fifthly, even though relations between the warring parties have normalized (the Greek-Turkish conflict should be considered frozen), for almost 100 years since the end of the war, crises between the two states continue to occur, even though both Turkey and Greece are members of NATO.

The war brought about significant shifts (overlooked at the time) in military strategies, contrasting with practices from the Great War. This was not a trench warfare but one characterized by extensive manoeuvres across the vast expanse of Anatolia. In a challenging environment marked by rugged terrain, extreme climate, lack of communication routes and transport infrastructure, and limited economic and food resources, both sides grappled with additional obstacles. The Greco-Turkish war presaged a total war where civilians faced atrocities from adversaries. Furthermore, the Turkish resistance, by engaging significant portions of the Greek army through large-scale irregular tactics, played a pivotal role in the Kemalist's military triumph.

References

Abbreviations

AAM(GR) – Troops of the Army of Asia Minor
 AC A, B, C – Army Corps A, B, C
 CC – Cavalry Corps
 NAK – The National Archives, Kew
 WO – War Office

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