
The alteration of place names and construction of national identity in Soviet Armenia

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grounds etc. The article was supported by the Armenian Government the next day.¹⁷ The most obvious aspect of the issue was that the Soviet authorities did not want to interfere in this but primarily in similar countries.¹⁸ Even though the threat of violence could have been interpreted as Soviet influence of the Armenian national and Turkish movements, it was known that the establishment within of the Armenianization could not give substance. These events eventually led to the resignation of the First Secretary of the Communist Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, Y. Barchinian in 1966. One of the official reasons for his resignation was: "Barchinian is the ideological head of the party organization and especially with the youth."¹⁹ Thus the issue was resolved with Barchinian's removal the new Armenian communist leadership could make further attempts to Armenian nationalization to gain popular support. Indeed, the years 1967 and 1968 were marked by a lot of publicly given Armenian nationalization.

One of the most visible consequences of the 1966 Armenianization was the construction and opening of the monument to the victims of the genocide in Yerevan in 1967. This was clearly a contribution to the national and especially anti-Turkish sentiment present in Armenian society. The new First Secretary of the Armenian Communist Party, A. Barchinian attended the opening ceremony, which shows that the communist authorities took the issue of Armenian society seriously. In order to highlight the role of the Communist Party and to strengthen the national sentiment of the youth, the opening ceremony took place on November 28th the day of the constitution of Armenia, instead of April 24th as one might have expected.²⁰ This National Armenian Government that the local authorities needed to follow carefully the new conditions – construction and nationalization, with strong support within them.

Yet another monument was opened in Armenia in 1968. This memorial was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Sardarapat battle of 1918.

The battle between Armenian forces and the advancing Turkish army saved Armenia's capital by blocking the Turkish advance. The first secretary, A. Barchinian again attended the ceremony to highlight the importance and significance of the event. Again, the day was carefully selected – May 28th – the day the Turkmenistan battle began, rather than May 24th – the day of victory and of the declaration of Armenian independence.²¹ Along with these public symbolic construction in Armenian nationalization, continuing campaigns took place in 1967 and 1968. It is in this context that one should view the meetings of 1967-1968, as they were heavily influenced

¹⁷ A. Barchinian, 'Yerevan – capital of the Armenian people', *Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic* (Yerevan) 27th April 1966.

¹⁸ In the meeting of 1966 in 1966, as in 1967 in Yerevan, the Communist Party of Armenia was the main force. *Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic* (Yerevan) 27th April 1966, *Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic* (Yerevan) 27th April 1967.

¹⁹ A. Barchinian, 'Yerevan – capital of the Armenian people', *Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic* (Yerevan) 27th April 1966.

²⁰ *Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic* (Yerevan) 27th April 1967.

²¹ *Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic* (Yerevan) 27th April 1968.