

Bütün Dünya, 1 September 2015

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF ERROR
ATATÜRK, BIRDWOOD, HARINGTON AND ÇANAKKALE 1915
by Cengiz Özakıncı

“One Hundred Years of Solitude” is Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s novel; what I am about to tell you here is not about “solitude” but an “error”, though an “error” that knocks spots off many novels.

First, let’s go 50 years backwards. Let’s read, Sadi Borak’s article entitled: “Çanakkale Olayları Arasında: Mustafa Kemal ve Birdwood - Mustafa Kemal and Birdwood: Among Çanakkale events” published on November 10, 1964 in Cumhuriyet newspaper:



Sadi Borak, 10.11.1964, Cumhuriyet Newspaper.

Commander of the ANZAC Forces, General Birdwood, had fought in 1915 in Arıburnu, the same year in August, once again in the same region and in Conkbayırı against Mustafa Kemal and was defeated. This very same General made a remarkable speech during the Armistice (of Moudros, concluded on 30 October 1918-C.Ö.) with Mustafa Kemal at the Pera Palas Hotel. According to what Doctor Râsim Ferit (Talay), told Hikmet Bayur, this is what happened:

As the Occupation Forces Commander of Istanbul[i], General Birdwood had settled with his headquarters at the Pera Palas Hotel. Mustafa Kemal who had returned from Çanakkale[iii] was also staying there. One day, Birdwood’s escort officer, sportsman Sedat Rıza Bey, consulted Dr. Râsim Ferit Bey telling him that ‘Birdwood wants to talk to Mustafa Kemal and asking him to act as a mediator to ensure this meeting’. The doctor conveys the General’s request to Mustafa Kemal

– “Let him come,” says Mustafa Kemal.

The British General acts very politely and after pronouncing a few words of courtesy, the conversation proceeds as follows:

– “Your Excellency, how did you defeat us?”

Mustafa Kemal: "Both of us have historical records: history writes it."

Birdwood: "I want to hear it from you."

On this, Mustafa Kemal, asks for a pen and a piece of paper from Dr. Râsim Ferit Talay. And the doctor offers him a paper napkin and his golden pencil. Mustafa Kemal draws a sketch and tells him:

- "You made your military landing on this date; until so and so hour we were here and you were here. All conditions were in your favor. Why did you stay there and did not move along?"

- "Our soldiers were exhausted."

Thereupon, Mustafa Kemal draws a map of Conkbayırı and says:

- "You took off towards this direction on so and so day and took this position. Why did not you proceed?"

Birdwood: "As we moved along, we ran out of water. Our soldiers were left without water and stopped"

- "So you see, **I actually did not do anything; it was first the exhaustion, then the shortage of water that stopped your army.**"

Birdwood stands up and says:

- "I have never met a General as brave and as gallant as you."

The two generals get to their feet, embrace each other and sit again.

Upon leaving Birdwood says:

- "If you allow me, I wish to keep this paper and pencil as a souvenir.

And he keeps them.

* * *



General Birdwood.

If this conversation reflects the truth, it means that it wasn't our Mehmetciks who defeated the armies of occupations in Çanakkale; it also means that Atatürk did not do anything either as a commander, to defeat the intruders; the intruders were defeated as a result of fatigue and thirst; moreover Atatürk was voluntarily admitting this.

Sadi Borak narrated this quoted passage from Yusuf Hikmet Bayur's book entitled "Atatürk, Hayatı ve Eseri – Atatürk, His Life and Work" that was published exactly a year ago, on **November 10, 1963**. During Atatürk's presidency, Bayur was appointed important missions such as Secretary General of the Presidency, Ambassador, and Minister of the Embassy and was sentenced to 4 years and 2 months imprisonment after being trialed in Yassıada during the 27

May coup. He was “Professor of History” and not an ordinary one, his title was "Professor Ordinarius" which signifies “Professor of the Professors”. And he had published this book on **November 10, 1963**, right after he got out of prison with the 1963 amnesty and made it coincide with Atatürk’s death anniversary.



Yusuf Hikmet Bayur and his book “Atatürk, His Life and Work” (first print November 1963)

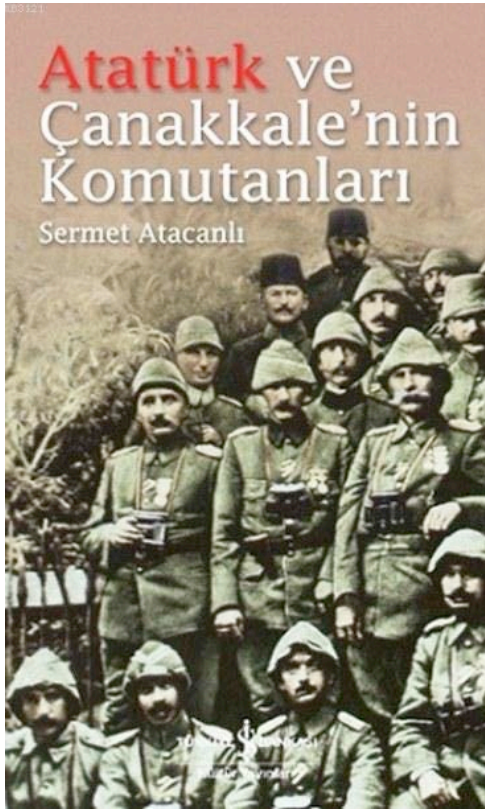
From that day on, giving Bayur as reference this narrative between **Mustafa Kemal and Birdwood** would appear in other writers’ books, articles and columns for 50 years and would be taught in history classes at schools. Sadi Borak must have enjoyed this narrative very much as 16 years after his first article, he published it again in Cumhuriyet newspaper on **April 25, 1980** coinciding it to the **anniversary** of occupation forces’ landing in Galipoli. In 1983, he published it once again in his book “*Ata and Istanbul*”. After this fictional “**Mustafa Kemal-Birdwood**” meeting was shown as an “actual fact” in 1983, in U. Kocatürk’s book’s: “*Atatürk ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi Kronolojisi – Atatürk and the Historical Chronology of the Turkish Republic*” published by the **Turkish Historical Society** in 1983, it would be gradually spread over other publications.[iii]

However, **Birdwood and Mustafa Kemal had never met.**

This truth was revealed for the first time in **Sermet Atacanlı’s** book entitled: **Atatürk ve Çanakkale’nin Komutanları – Atatürk and the Commanders of Çanakkale**”, first published in 2006. In the chapter named “**A Correction on the Atatürk-Birdwood Meeting that is said to Take Place in Istanbul**”, **Mr. Atacanlı** makes this mention:

*“There is an error in this narrative, because **Birdwood was not in Istanbul on this date**, he was leading the army that was fighting at the Western Front with the Germans. This point is also stated in his detailed autobiography. **His first trip to Istanbul, as stated in his memoirs, in the Turkish press during his visit, and in his speech which was provided much later in 1935.** With respect of this view, there is a possibility that either Hikmet Bayur or Dr. Rasim Ferit probably confused **Birdwood** with the Allied Occupation Forces Commander, **British General Charles Harington.**” [iv]*

* * *



Sermet Atacanlı, "Atatürk ve Çanakkale'nin Komutanları – Atatürk and the Commanders of Çanakkale", İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015.



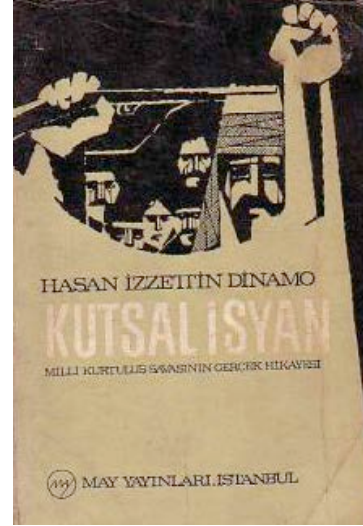
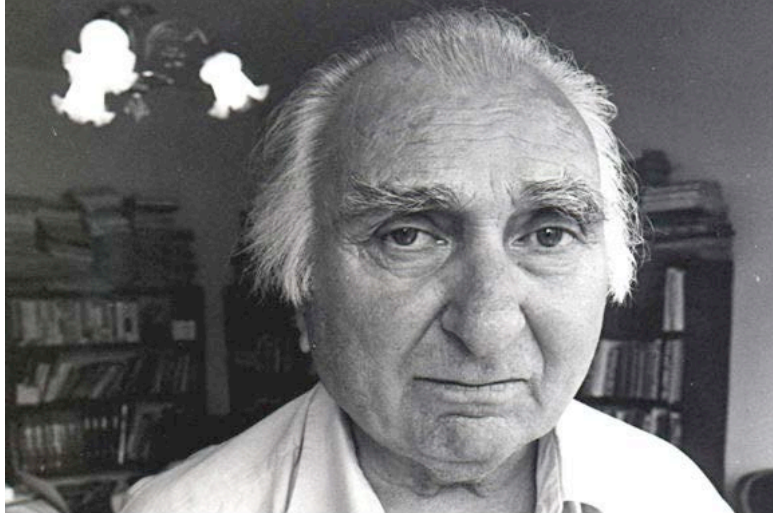
Sermet Atacanlı, "Arıburnu Müdafası – Arıburnu Defense" İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015.

Well then,

- If the conversation mentioned in Bayur's book was introduced to have happened between Harington and Atatürk, rather than Birdwood; would they still be able to declare that the words: *the invading armies were "defeated by fatigue and thirst" rather than the Turkish army*, belonged to **Atatürk**?
- Why don't they think that the people who could confuse Birdwood with Harington could also narrate Atatürk's words in an **incomplete or inaccurate way**?
- How come an **Atatürk-Harington Discussion** happening in 1918 in Pera Palas seems plausible?

The answers of these questions that prepossess us are as follows:

In his novel "Kutsal İsyan – Holy Rebellion" published in 1966, novelist Hasan İzzettin Dinamo, made up a **Mustafa Kemal - Harington Encounter**. According to the novel; *in 1918, during the time that Mustafa Kemal was staying at the Pera Palas, while he was having dinner at the hotel's restaurant, Harington who was sitting at another table, sent a note with a waiter to invite him to his table for a coffee; Mustafa Kemal claiming that he was the host and Harington the guest, refused the invitation and asked the waiter to tell Harington to come over to his table...* From 1966 since the novel was published, many writers who "thought that the novel was genuine"(!) have written that Mustafa Kemal met, the Commander of Occupational Forces, Harington in 1918 at the Pera Palas and snapped at him.[v]



Hasan İzzettin Dinamo and his novel "Holy Rebellion" where the Atatürk-Harington fictional meeting first appeared (1966).

Just like Mr. S. Atacanlı had determined that they never met, Atatürk could not have spoken to Birdwood as quoted in Bayur's book; but considering that many writers, mentioned that *Atatürk encountered Harington at the Pera Palas*, it will be suggested that Atatürk had spoken to Harington, rather than Birwood.

However, this argument has two important obstacles.

First: Between the dates 24.05.1981 and 06.06.1981, the Chief Editor of our Magazine, Mr. Mete Akyol, published in Milliyet newspaper, a long interview he made with Atatürk's adoptive son, Abdurrahim Tuncak.

01.06.1981, Milliyet, Sayfa 7

METE AKYOL
ŞİMDİYE KADAR
GİZLİ KALMIŞ BİR GERÇEĞİ
AÇIKLIYOR

31 Ocak 1981'de İstanbul'da "İstiklal" adında bir toplantı düzenlendi. Bu toplantıda Atatürk'ün hayatını anlatan bir kitap yayımlandı. Kitabın yazarı Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün torunu Mustafa Kemal Paşa'nın oğlu Mustafa Kemal Paşa'dır. Atatürk'ün hayatını anlatan bu kitap, Atatürk'ün hayatını anlatan bir kitap olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

İngiliz generalleri Pera Palas'ta Mustafa Kemal'i masalarına kahve içmeye çağırdılar. Ama Paşa'dan şu cevabı aldılar:

«ONLAR BU ÜLKEDE MİSAFİR, EV SAHİBİ BENİM, ONLAR GELSİN BENİM KAHVEMİ İÇSİNLER»

Atatürk'ün Pera Palas'ta kahve içtiği oda bugün müze haline getirildi.

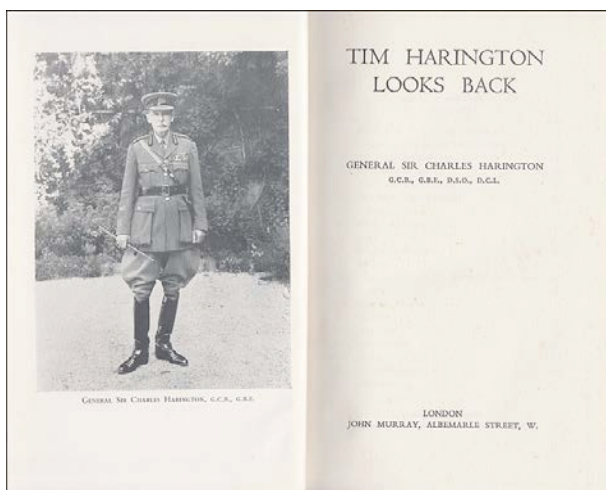
Atatürk'ün hayatını anlatan bu kitap, Atatürk'ün hayatını anlatan bir kitap olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

The relevant section head of the interview that Chief Editor of our Magazine, Mr. Mete Akyol made with Atatürk's adoptive son, Abdurrahim Tuncak, dated 01.06.1981.

In this interview, Tuncak indicates that, in 1918 during the time Atatürk was staying at Pera Palas, he was occasionally visiting the house where Tuncak was living together with Atatürk's mother and sister. He states that Atatürk had told them laughingly the event that took place in Pera Palas, that the British officer invited him to his table for a coffee and that he in return told the waiter: **“they are guests in this country, I am the host, let them come over and drink my coffee.”** One can notice that while Atatürk is describing the event, he does not mention the name of the **Commander of Occupational Forces, Harington**. The one who added Harington's name in this event is Hasan İzzettin Dinamo, the writer of “Holy Rebellion”.

Second: It is impossible for Atatürk to meet **Harington in 1918 at the Pera Palas**. I have read Harington's autobiography that was published in 1940 in the United Kingdom [vi] and I have compared his writings with the Harington news published in “The Times” newspaper between 1915 and 1923. As a result: Harington is inexistent in the Çanakkale Battle. He was in England until November 2, 1920. [vii] While he was in England he was assigned as *Commander of Occupational Forces* and arrived to Istanbul, precisely on **November 8, 1920**. [viii] He settled in the **Huber Mansion** that was priorly prepared for him and that belonged to the Krupp Agency; so he did not stay at the Pera Palas Hotel. [ix] On **October 2, 1923**, he left Istanbul to return to London. [x] Whereas Atatürk went from Istanbul to Anatolia on **May 16, 1919** and returned to Istanbul long after Harington departed; **they've never been both in Istanbul during the same time frame**. Just as Mr. Atacanlı accurately determined in his very important and valuable books, Atatürk and Birdwood have never met; also, as confirmed by documentation, **Atatürk and Harington have never actually sit together and talk**.

Thus, words such as: *the occupation army during the Çanakkale Battle was defeated because of “their exhaustion and lack of water”*, could not be said to Birdwood by Atatürk, neither could they be told to Harington.



...with two sons, Mr. and Mrs. Hammond with one son, Mr. and Mrs. Levons with two daughters.—*Reuter*.

THE BLACK SEA COMMAND.

Lieutenant-General Sir C. H. Harington left London yesterday morning to take up his appointment as General Officer, Commanding-in-Chief, the Army of the Black Sea. He is expected to arrive at Constantinople on Friday.

It is understood that, in addition to the ordinary military duties attaching to the command, General Harington will be largely responsible for putting into force the military terms of the Turkish Treaty of Peace.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

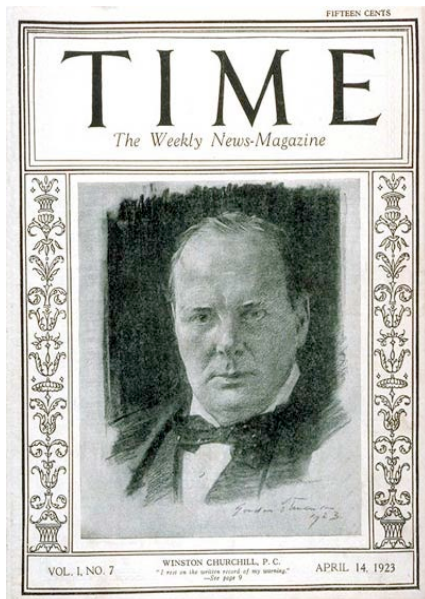
CONSTANTINOPLE, Nov. 1.

General Sir Charles Harington, the new British Commander-in-Chief, will temporarily occupy the **Maison Krupp**, a fine house belonging to Krupp's agent in Constantinople, in the picturesque suburb of Yenikeui, on the European side of the Bosphorus, but is expected to move into Pera in the winter. The **Maison Krupp** is at present occupied by General Sir G. F. Milne.

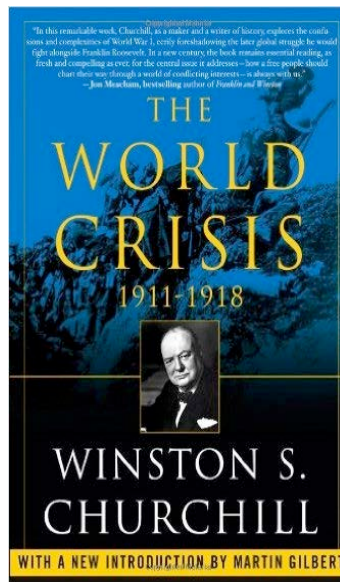
The autobiographical narrative of General Sir Charles Harington who was the Occupation Forces Commander in Istanbul from 1920 to 1923 and the news that appeared in *The Times* newspaper dated 11.03.1920, announcing the appointment and the departure of Harington and that he will be staying at the *Huber Mansion* in Istanbul.

The moment that started the defeat process of the occupation army in the Çanakkale Land War is on the first day – that is to say when the **landing parties' flasks were full with water that would suffice them for two days** – when their **rapid advance towards the water resources of Gallipoli Peninsula** was stopped by Atatürk's bayonet thrust and then when they were repulsed to the shore they landed. Atatürk emphasizes the importance of this moment

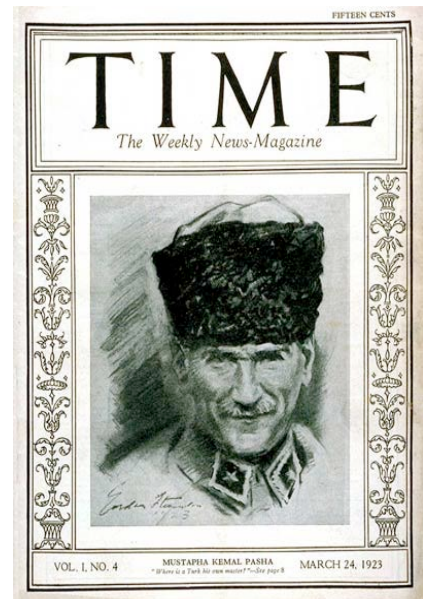
with his words: **“that was the moment we won”**. If the occupying troops would not be stopped by Atatürk on the first day and at that very moment, **they would, from day one take hold of the places where water resources were located from day one**. It is a fact that the occupying army **had water shortage**; but the main reason for that is that they came face to face with a soldier – **Atatürk** – who on the very first day of their landing predicted their route and **duly stopped their march toward the water resources**. That’s the main reason why Atatürk was defined as the **“Man of Destiny”** in the battle report of the occupying states and in British War Minister Churchill’s book.



Sir Winston Churchill
Time magazine cover
14 April 1923



Sir Winston Churchill says: Mustafa Kemal was **Man of Destiny** in **25 April 1915** Gallipoli Landing.
"The World Crisis - 1911-1918",
FreePress, 2005, p.439.



Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk)
Time magazine cover
24 March 1923

A substantial amount of people who are trying to come up with a reason for Anzac soldiers’ defeat in the Gallipoli Peninsula on the morning of April 25, 1915 connect the result with the incompetence of the British commanders; some historians praise the **Anzacs** mentioning that they were **“lions led by donkeys”**. In this comparison, the British commanders are the **“donkeys”**, and the Anzac soldiers **“lions”**. Whereas in Çanakkale, neither British commanders were **“donkeys”**, nor Anzacs **“lions”**; they were just confronted by the **“Man of Destiny” (Atatürk)** and the faithful Mehmetciks who would defend their land until their last drop of blood; that’s it...

Historian Yusuf Hikmet Bayur’s **Mustafa Kemal - Birdwood dialogue**, published in 1963, makes use of a **Psychological Warfare Tool** that is intended to clear the British from Anzac accusations and disregard Atatürk’s victorious achievement in the Çanakkale Battle – *with words that he supposedly uttered* –

Using history as a **Psychological Warfare** is as old as **“the world’s oldest profession”**. Our only consolation is the existence of **honest historians** –*although their number has decreased* – who avoid being a tool of propaganda.

[i] General Birdwood was **never** the **Occupation Forces Commander of Istanbul**.

[ii] In 1918 Mustafa Kemal, had returned to Istanbul from **Adana**, not from **Çanakkale**.

[iii] Some examples of books that show the **Birdwood-Mustafa Kemal meeting** as a **“fact”**: Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, **“Atatürk - Hayatı ve Eseri”**, 1963, p.230-231. / Die Welt des Islams, 1964, 9-10th volumes, p.106. (giving Bayur as reference.) / Sadi Borak, 10.11.1964 Cumhuriyet newspaper. /

Sadi Borak, "*Bilinmeyen Yönleriyle Atatürk*", 1966, p.29. / Sadi Borak, 25.04.1981, Cumhuriyet newspaper. / Utkan Kocatürk, "*Atatürk ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kronolojisi*", 1983, p.8 [Source: 16 Kasım 1918: Atatürk's meeting at Pera Palas with British General William Birdwood who waged at the Çanakkale Battles (Sadi Borak, "*Ata ve İstanbul*", 1983., p.88-89)] / Jak Deleon, "*İstanbul'un Yaşayan Tadı*", 1989, p.19 / Alev Coşkun, "*Samsun'dan Önce Bilinmeyen 6 Ay*", 2008, p.58 (could not be Birdwood, could be Harrington (sic), provided that we'll not mention his name) / Erol Mütercimler, "*Fikrimizin Rehberi*", 2008, p.439, 440 - 2014, p.462./ Sinan Meydan, "*Atatürk'ün Gizli Kurtuluş Planları*" "*Parola: Nuh*", 2009, p.191.

[iv] Sermet Atacanlı, "*Atatürk ve Çanakkale'nin Komutanları*", Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, February 2015, p.320.

[v] Some examples of books that indicate the Harrington - Mustafa Kemal meeting as "real": Hasan İzzettin Dinamo, "*Kutsal İsyan*" January 1966, v.1, p.206. [In Şemsi Belli's book: "*Makbule Atadan Anlatıyor: Ağabeyim Mustafa Kemal*" (Selis Kitaplar publ., 2005) In Abdurrahim Tunçak's *Dün ve Bugün* magazine published on 2 Maech 1956 (issue 18, p.23-25) he mentions that his interview entitled "*Atatürk'ün de Makbule Hanımın da Manevi Evladıyım*" was published. (a.g.e-p. 63, fn.20)] / Celal Bayar, "*Ben de Yazdım*", 1972, v.8, p.2549-2550. / Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, "*Tek Adam*", 1974, v.1, p.357. / Jak Deleon, "*Eski İstanbul'un Yaşayan Tadı*", 1989, p. 18. / Şerafettin Turan, "*Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: Kendine Özgü Bir Yaşam ve Kişilik*", 2004., p.171. (with the mention: "according to a source".) / Erol Mütercimler, "*Bu Vatan Böyle Kurtuldu*", 2005, p.173. / Erol Mütercimler, "*Fikrimizin Rehberi*", 2008, s. 439. (2014, p.461-462.) / Sinan Meydan, "*Atatürk'ün Gizli Kurtuluş Planları*" "*Parola: Nuh*", 2009, p.192.

[vi] General Sir Charles Harrington, "*Tim Harrington Looks Back*", John Murrey, 1940. (See: Appendix 1, p.81., 83., 86., 100., 101.)

[vii] The Times, 03.11.1920.

[viii] The Times, 10.11.1920.

[ix] The Times, 03.11.1920.

[x] The Times, 12.10.1923.