

ՀԱՊԱՐԱԿՈՒՄՆԵՐ PUBLICATIONS

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ARSHAK SAFRASTYAN'S ARTICLES ON THE ARMENIAN ISSUE PUBLISHED IN BRITISH NEWSPAPERS

Since the 70^s of the 19th century, the issue of carrying out reforms in Western Armenia, which was under the rule of Ottoman Empire, has been a subject of international diplomacy. The Armenian Question, being an integral part of the Eastern problem, was regularly manipulated by the great powers. The Armenian issue became the subject of international diplomacy in the international agreements adopted at the San Stefano Conference and the Berlin Congress. It was put forward in order to improve the situation of Western Armenians, to guarantee their security and to ensure a certain political and legal status.

The great powers were interested in the Armenian issue to the extent that it could serve the interests of their conquest policy. That was the reason why the diplomatic struggle over the Armenian issue, which was reopened during the Balkan wars, intensified even more on the eve of the First World War, when the issue of world repartition was put on the agenda. The Armenian question had become one of the points of conflict between the great powers in Asia Minor.

England was also guided exclusively by its state interests in the Armenian issue. The tragic fate of western Armenians was not really of any interest to the English government, although it often acted as a defender of Armenians and a supporter of the implementation of reforms for the Armenian vilayets. That

"concern" was almost always a means of putting pressure on Turkey to solve this or that issue.

At the end of 1912 – at the beginning of 1913, England was against the reopening of the Armenian issue. This was explained by the fact that the discussion of the Armenian problem was not an issue of the day for the British government. For the implementation of England's strategic and trade-economic plans in Turkey, it was not necessary to carry out improvements in the Armenian vilayets. Moreover, the discussion of the Armenian issue could hinder the aspirations of deepening the influence of England in Turkey, which was still preserved to some extent, and the further development of relations with Turkey.

The English were convinced that addressing the Armenian issue would further complicate the difficult situation of Turkey and could also contribute to the separation of the Asian territories of the Ottoman Empire. The dismemberment of Turkey and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at that time did not correspond to England's interests, because as a result, Germany's aggressive aspirations would become stronger, and Russia's position would be strengthened in the entire Middle East, because the newly independent states that would be created in the event of the collapse of the Turkish Empire could come under the influence of Russia.

Contrary to that, the progressive society of England, represented by parliamentarians N. Buxton and A. Williams, believed that the British government should show activity for the solution of Armenian reforms, based not only on humanitarian ideas. As A. Williams noted, the problem was related to England's good reputation, because it was England that blocked the solution of the Armenian problem more than 30 years ago.

On December 12, 1912, Lady Frederic Cavendish, the president of the "Friends of Armenia" organization, appealed to Foreign Minister of Great Britain Mr. E. Gray with a request to help Western Armenians. She stated that in the current situation, it was necessary to appoint Christian governors for the Armenian vilayets, who would be independent from the High Door and would be controlled by the great powers. On January 15, 1913, many English newspapers published the appeal of the "Friends of Armenia" organization. The "Friends of

Armenia” appealed to the English society with a request to collect benefits for the people condemned to starvation because of two wars¹.

The proposals of pro-Armenian public organizations were rejected by the British Foreign Ministry. Such a manifestation of official England had its influence on the English press, which in fact was silent about the Armenian problem during the days of the reopening of the Armenian issue².

“Morning Post” specifically stated that none of the Armenians believed that the Turkish government would ever improve their situation, because the repeated promises were never fulfilled³. In September, 1912, the “Times” wrote that the situation of Armenians was getting worse. The number of murders, robberies, and kidnappings increased, but the Young Turk authorities did not take any action and ignored even all the complaints and appeals of the Armenian Patriarch⁴.

The English press regularly addressed the Armenian issue. The interest of the English press in it, as well as the content of the printed materials, was mainly determined by the position of the British government. English newspapers reflecting the official position mainly published informative articles. But even so, in the articles, letters and applications of the representatives of the English progressive society that appeared in the press, there were not only demands, but also accusatory reminders to the Great powers, particularly the British government, about their responsibility and duty, regarding the Armenian issue.

Western Armenia and the Armenian issue were also often presented by Arshak Safrastyan. His articles were published in the following newspapers: the “Daily Chronicle”, the “Manchester Guardian”, the “Liverpool Daily Courier”, the “Westminster Gazette”, the “Pall Mall Gazette”, the “Daily Herald”, the “Christian World”⁵.

¹ Ղամբարյան 2006, 198:

² Ղամբարյան 2006, 198:

³ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 412, ց. 1, գ. 606, թ. 34:

⁴ Ղամբարյան 2006, 198:

⁵ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 412, ց. 1, գ. 674, թ. 1-29:

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№ 1

Below will be introduced the articles from the above-mentioned newspapers.

The Daily Chronicle

Fleet Street, London, E.C.

Cutting from issue dated Jan 4, 1917.

THE RUSSIAN ANNEXATION OF ARMENIA

To the Editor Daily Chronicle.

Sir,- In today's issue of your paper Mr. Noel Buxton writes that there is wide sympathy in the United States with the Russian ambition to annex the Armenian provinces.

Last September the "Kavkasskoe Slovo," a Russian daily paper of Tiflis, published an article violently denying all Armenian claims to any special privileges being granted to the Armenian provinces.

In reply to this article the Turkish Armenian Press in the Caucasus burst out in great feeling - though unduly violent, one must admit - asserting the rights and claims of Turkish Armenians as a compensation for the sacrifices they have suffered.

Apparently this is sufficient to show that the latter are not in sympathy with the Russian annexation.

In view of the constant propositions of settling causes of various nationalities in accordance with the wishes of the nationalities concerned, Turkish Armenians, however scattered and paralyzed they may be for the present, will oppose the idea of the Russian annexation in so far as it lies in their power to do so, though they feel very grateful to Russia for conquering those Armenian provinces, an achievement in which they themselves have played a part.

A. S. SAFRASTIAN.

47a, Redcliffe square, S.W., Jan. 2, 1917.

№ 2

Manchester Guardian

3 Cross Street, Manchester.

Cutting from issue dated 29 June 1917

ARMENIA AND THE SETTLEMENT

To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian.

Sir,- Since the outbreak of revolution in Russia, Armenians in the Caucasus and elsewhere, realizing the gravity of the situation created by the movement, have carefully refrained from pressing forward any demands for Turkish Armenia, so as not to embarrass the Provisional Government with new problems. Telegrams from Armenian officers in the Caucasian army published in the Tiflis press show that they have concentrated their efforts on the successful prosecution of the war in the hope that a final victory over the enemy and the complete occupation of Armenia would be the only desirable solution of the Armenian question itself.

But while the Armenians are keeping silent the whole world seems to be discussing the position and the future of Armenia in connection with the formula of "no annexations, no indemnities" propounded by the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates. Various interpretations have been placed upon that formula in Russia. It is gratifying to note that the "Pravda," the "Novaya Jisn". and other papers, as well as the "Edinstvo," published by Plekhanov, have definitely and unambiguously stated that the formula does in no way mean the restitution of Armenia to Turkey, but that in the cases of Armenia and Poland it means the right of self-determination of the people of those countries.

In order to make the Armenian claims clear under the new circumstances, M. Mamikonian, President of the Armenian Committee of Moscow, addressed the following telegram to Prince Lvoff, the Prime Minister of Russia. After congratulating the success of the revolutionary movement the telegram goes on to say that:

As Russian citizens, however, our joy is blighted by the consciousness that just beyond the frontiers of Russia we have a motherland which is laid waste by the war. That bitter memory still fresh in our minds, we think it our duty to utter a word of truth to the people of free Russia: that under the century-old yoke of the enemy every inch of our fatherland's soil is soaked with the blood of our people - martyrs of freedom and warriors; it has abundantly been saturated by the tears of the submerged Armenian peasantry; and that soil, which is sacred for every Armenian wherever he may be at present, belongs by right to our people. By sacrificing millions of lives our nation has secured its right to that historic land, whereas in spite of international agreements to which Russia is also a party, in spite of promises given to the head of our Church, the old Government made attempts to annex the Armenian provinces. We declare that Armenia must be free in accordance with international treaties, and we request that measures of annexation and colonization of Armenia undertaken by the agents of the old regime be discontinued in our country, and we ask you to defend our claims in regard to a complete political autonomy of Armenia.

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The same appeal is now being addressed to the Western Allies by the Armenian people. A redefinition of the peace terms of the Allied Powers seems to be forthcoming in a few weeks. If that be the case Armenians are looking forward to a clear and unambiguous statement of the future of their country.

-Yours, &c., A. S. SAFRASTIAN.
London, June 27.

№ 3

Liverpool Daily Courier
Victoria Street, Liverpool.

"DASHNAKIA."
The Strife in Armenia.

To the Editor of the Courier.

Sir, -I have read Mr. Scotland Liddell's communication from Baku in your issue of February 9th with mingled feelings of interest and amusement. In his report of a conversation with an Armenian family he quotes the statement: "There is today no Armenia; it is Dashnakia." This is one of those flourishes of rhetoric in which imaginative correspondents delight to base a general statement on one particular case.

No sane person would find a conclusion about any country merely on the opinion of a particular family, or of several families, which may be impelled by various motives to make wrong statements.

Many Armenians may have good reasons for criticizing the actions of the Dashnakzutiun Party, and some of them, like the family referred to above, go so far as to say that most of the evil deeds committed are due to this Party, but, on the other hand, Mr. Scotland Liddell is fundamentally wrong in his account and seems to have derived most of his information from Tartars, who have every reason to misrepresent the facts and hold Dashnakzutiun responsible for more of the mischief which really originated among themselves.

This Party began its activities thirty years ago, and not sixty, as Mr. Liddell asserts, and its founders were great Armenian patriots (Zavarian and Rostom) who devoted their lives entirely to the defense and welfare of the Armenian people. I myself, Armenian though I am, have criticized some of their questionable proceedings, but I believe Mr. Liddell is mistaken in regarding them as a band of terrorists and

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ascribing to them an insatiable greed of violence and revenge. If Turks massacre thousands of Armenians in Asia Minor, the Great Powers are to blame for it, for it is they who arm and finance the Turks, thus enabling them to commit acts of unexampled savagery.

Mr. Liddell speaks about an Armenian Bolshevik combination and its action against the Musulmans in March, 1918. Had your correspondent been fully acquainted with the facts, he would not have given a distorted version of them. At the date to which he refers Armenians had either to join the Bolsheviks in order to save themselves or to join the Tartars, thus placing themselves under Tartar rule. Their past experience recommended the adoption of the first course in the same way as circumstances compelled Great Britain to join hands with Tsarist Russia against Germany.

It is not true that Dashnakzutiun is alone responsible for the strife now raging in Transcaucasia.

-Yours, &c., A. SAFRASTIAN,

The Armenian Bureau, Regent-street, London, Feb, 17, 1920.

№ 4

ARMENIA AND THE TURKISH TREATY.

Cutting from the Westminster Gazette

Issue dated 21.2.1920

To the Editor of the "Westminster Gazette."

Sir,-You are voicing the feelings of the Armenian people in your editorial note under the above heading.

Since the day of the armistice France has insisted on joining Cilicia to Northern Syria under her own mandate.

Leaving the ultimate settlement of the fate of Cilicia to the Peace Conference, although never renouncing their historic right to that region, the Armenians did everything in their power to co-operate with the French in assuring at least the security of about 150,000 Armenians who flocked to Cilicia after the collapse of Turkey.

But France, according to the declarations of her own representatives, has pursued, and still continues to pursue, an Islamic policy, which consists in favouring the Turk as against the Armenians, and heterogeneous Mohammedan minorities as against the Turks.

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The Armenians of Cilicia have asked the French for months past to supply them with arms with a view to preparing them for emergencies, and, when the French consented to arm an Armenian village, they at the same time armed several Mohammedan villages.

This favoritism shown to the Turk, however, was of no avail. As soon as the Turkish Nationalist bands saw any opportunity, they attacked the French troops first and next the Armenians.

It is now feared that Cilicia may, after all, be left to the Turks. There is a written agreement between the French Government and the Armenian Delegation, dating back to October 1916.

This agreement was concluded with the approval of the British Government. The fundamental point of it was that the Armenians were to raise a volunteer corps under French officers to fight against the Turks for the liberation of Cilicia, and the French were to grant autonomy to the Armenians in that region.

-Yours, &c., A. SAFRASTIAN.

№ 5

THE FUTURE OF ARMENIA. FULFILMENT OF PROMISE DEMANDED. PLIGHT OF A PEOPLE.

Cutting from the Pall Mall Gazette
Issue dated 4.3.1920

Nubar Pasha, Chief Armenian delegate to the Peace Conference, son of the late Nubar Pasha, the famous Prime Minister of Egypt, was interviewed at the Carlton Hotel by a correspondent of the "Pall Mall Gazette". with whom he discussed the Armenian question from the European and American angles.

The Turks' Past.

"The news of the new massacres in Cilicia have thrown us into consternation," he said. "If the Turks are so audacious even before peace is signed, one can imagine what they would do if Cilicia were restored to Ottoman domination."

"Past experience has made quite obvious the utter worthlessness of guarantees. as the Turks will never miss an opportunity to recommence their atrocities, as they are doing now. According to what has been published in newspaper, the Supreme Council would settle the Turkish problem thus: Turkish sovereignty to cease over Syria,

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Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Arabia but Cilicia to remain under Ottoman domination, France contenting herself with only preferential rights therein."

Contrary to Allies' Principles.

"This is contrary to the principles proclaimed by the Allies during the war, to the principle of liberation of oppressed peoples, and, above all, it is in opposition with the promises made by them to liberate Armenia."

"I must add, in consideration of our supplying volunteers to fight against the Turks, we were promised a wide measure of autonomy in Cilicia under French protection, there being no question of a mandate."

"We did supply the volunteers who fought bravely in Palestine and earned high praise of the French commanders and of Lord Allenby. We are, therefore, justified in demanding the fulfilment of the promise, otherwise it would be most iniquitous to liberate Arab Musulman countries and to restore Turkish rule Cilicia, where the Christian Armenian population was in majority before the war".

"We Have Fought Loyally."

"We have fought loyally on the side of the Entente, and we cannot believe, in spite of alarming rumours, that we may thus have deserved to be treated like enemies."

"Armenia has always been the dividing line between the civilizations of the West and the East.

It is precisely for this reason that the great nations of the Occident and the Orient have attached so much importance to the domination of our highlands, which have been torn from us and changed hands in numberless wars.

It is indeed the geographical situation of Armenia which would allow this State to frustrate the Turanian danger by separating the future Ottoman Empire of Anatolia from the Turanian peoples of the Caucasus and beyond".

Nº 6

ARMENIAN MASSACRES.

To the Editor of the Pall Mall Gazette

Sir,- Your correspondent Mr.Pickthall clamours for "the names of any English, French, or American officials who have held an inquiry into that question (i.e., of the Armenian massacres) on the spot.

Had Mr.Pickthall given to the Bryce Report the attention which it merited he would have seen that it contained the testimony of such witnesses as the Italian Consul

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at Trebizond, the American Consul at Erzeroum (Mr. Stapleton), the American Consul at Aleppo (Mr. Jackson), and the American Consul at Kharput (Mr. Riggs).

He would, further, have seen that the information in it was not exclusively derived from Armenians, missionaries and other "prejudiced" witnesses. I now come to the German White Book, which your correspondent has obviously neither read nor digested. To his sneer that it is based upon the reports of local missionaries and Armenians "arranged" by Dr. Lepsus.

I may retort that in the whole 580 pages of that book there is not one solitary document of Armenian origin. The bulk of the contents consists of diplomatic communications exchanged between the German Government, the German Embassy in Constantinople, and the German Consulates in Turkey. It, therefore, follows that the letter of Mr. Pickthall is half compounded of "inconsequences" and half of "downright lies."

As to the Armenian propaganda to which he refers, let me admit that in having our case before the civilized world we neither gloss over its horrors nor minimize its urgency; the course which we follow is surely an obvious and legitimate one. It is a little difficult to conjecture the motive of Mr. Pickthall's chivalrous advocacy for those Turkish Pashas whom the unanimous verdict of unbiassed observers has branded as "the most inhuman type of humanity." It is notorious, however, that simple souls can be found to sign petitions pleading for the reprieve of condemned murderers.

A.SAFRASTIAN.

153, Regent-street. W. 1.

Nº 7

Daily Herald

2 Carmelite Street, E.C.

Cutting from issue dated 6.3.1920

THE TURKISH PROBLEM

To the Editor of the DAILY HERALD.

Sir, -The legend of the massacre of Turks by Armenians at Van, Bitlis and Tavskerd (?) during February, 1915, has become nothing less than an obsession with your correspondent, Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall.

These massacres are not less mythical than the city of Tavskerd, which does not exist and never has existed in Armenia or anywhere else. It will be interesting to know

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why this quixotic champion of the Turkish Pasha draws no distinction between him and the Turkish peasant.

The distinction exists and is a very decided one. Had Mr. Pickthall been responsive to the wrongs and claims of the Turkish masses, it would not have been on behalf of their age-long oppressors that he would have broken a lance.

The Turkish peasantry of Anatolia have been absolutely exhausted in manpower and in economic resources during the past 10 years of incessant war, and yet their inexorable tyrants are at the present moment commandeering the last remnants of their flocks and stores preparatory to goading them once more into the shambles. And this is the system that finds such a vehement champion in your columns.

-Yours faithfully, A. SAFRASTIAN.

№ 8

The Westminster Gazette
Victoria House, Tudor Street, E.C.
Cutting from issue dated Nov.6.1920

THE MASSACRE OF HADJIN.

To the Editor of the "Westminster Gazette."

Sir, - In the excitement caused by the Greenwood trial and the American Presidential election, it seems almost impossible to expect that the massacre of 10,000 Armenians would make any impression except among those who have been closely following the gallant stand made by those Armenians against the enormous number of Turkish Regulars and Irregulars. It is futile to attempt to trace the responsibilities in this new tragedy which has fallen upon the remnant of these sturdy mountaineers.

Soon after the armistice the British and French military authorities encouraged the Armenians deported by the Turks to Syria and Mesopotamia to concentrate in Cilicia. For the Armenian people in those circumstances and every other circumstance this encouragement given by the Allied Powers was naturally regarded as a safeguard of the development and security of the Armenian people in Cilicia. More than 150,000 Armenians gathered within the borders of Cilicia in a few months after the armistice. Under British military occupation the Armenians of Cilicia practically recovered their former economic position in the course of a few months. Then, in November 1919, British troops were replaced by the French, in accordance with a Military Convention signed between the two Powers. In February of this year about 20,000 Armenians were massacred at Marash.

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As far as it is possible to judge on the merits of the case, the policy followed by France in Cilicia for the last year has been a sublime masterpiece of muddling and inconsistency. The French authorities on the spot, with an eye on Damascus, have alternately pursued a policy of conciliation and a policy of pin-pricks towards the Turkish Nationalists, who apparently do not bother their heads to understand the motives of the French, for they have massacred the French as brutally as they would massacre anybody else.

The city of Hadjin, about eighty miles due north of Adana, had been isolated since last March owing to the muddled policy of the French. These hardy mountaineers of Armenia Cilicia have been accustomed to long sieges and stout self-defense ever since, the appearance of the Turks in the West of Asia. In July last the women of Hadjin, despairing of the masterly inactivity of the Allied Powers, appealed to the women of the civilized world, asking their intervention on their behalf. In the meantime, however, the French authorities allowed the Armenians to supply the garrison of Hadjin with flour and munitions by aeroplane.

At the beginning of September last General Gouraud visited Cilicia, and as a result there was a volte-face in the French policy towards the Armenians. The Armenian local authorities were suppressed; the 500 Armenian volunteers who were on their way to rescue Hadjin were disarmed and disbanded, and the supply of provisions to Hadjin was stopped.

In the House of Commons last week Mr. Harmsworth stated that Italy had supplied arms to Turkish Nationalist forces. Italy could supply these arms from her zone of influence at Konia, and the Turkish Nationalists seem to have made use of the arms supplied by Italy against the beleaguered garrison of Hadjin.

It is in this way that some of the Allied Powers have begun to precise their rights according to the Tripartite Agreement signed at Sevres on August 10 in their respective zones of influence. It is to be hoped that those Powers will put a better interpretation on the terms of the Turkish Treaty respecting the rights of minorities, and thus prevent further outrages similar to that which has been inflicted on the brave people of Hadjin.

- Yours faithfully, ARSHAK SAFRASTIAN.

November 4

№ 9

"Christian World"

47, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER,
LONDON, S. W. I.

Cutting from issue dated 16.5.1929

FRIENDS OF ARMENIA
Missionary and Relief Society.

President: The Right Hon. Lord Radstock, C.B.E.

Vice-Presidents: The Hon. Montagu Waldegrave, Chairman.

S. E. Hurnard, Esq., J.P., Hon. Treasurer.

The Right Hon. Viscount Gladstone.

Leonard Gow, Esq. Lady Bryce.

Mrs. T. Wakefield Richardson.

Hon. Editor: Miss E. Cantlow.

Hon. Secretary: Miss D. M. Redgrave.

General Secretary: Capt. Geo. F. Gracey, D.S.O.

DESPOILED ARMENIANS

£11,500 Needed

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Friends of Armenia, held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on Thursday afternoon, Admiral Sir. Richard Webb said he came to have some knowledge of the Armenian people while he was at the High Commission in Constantinople, and what he saw and heard there of their sufferings had left an indelible impression upon him. "For these unfortunate sufferers the Treaty of Lausanne spelt a doom which we cannot adequately realize".

The Armenians have been despoiled of their lands, their hard-earned wealth, their churches and their schools; they are strangers and wanderers in foreign lands.

Had it not been for the stupendous blunder of the fatal descent upon Smyrna of the Greek Army in May, 1919 – the blame for which lies primarily at the door of some of the Great Powers – events would have been very different, and both Armenians and Ottoman Greeks might now have been living in their old homes in Anatolia."

Miss Redgrave (hon. secretary) and Mr. Hurnard (hon. treasurer), who have both visited the Near East during the past year, spoke as to their experiences. Mr. Hurnard testified that the present was pre-eminently a time of opportunity for real constructive

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work. He reported an income for the year of just upon £10,000, and forecasted the need for £11,500 in the present twelve months. Captain Gracey (general secretary) presented a report full of interest and encouragement as to the past year's work. "Settlement work", he said, "seems to have taken a new lease of life, and excellent progress has been made".

NAA, f. 412, L. 1, work 674, p. 1-29.

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