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**THE ARMENIAN QUESTION AND THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN  
REPORTS OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT IN FEBRUARY - APRIL, 1920\***

MAKHMOURIAN G. G.  
(Republic of Armenia, Yerevan)

One of the important negative peculiarities of the Armenian Question was, that it had been settled in the frame of the most complicated and the least favorable for us multilateral diplomatic negotiations. From the very beginning, this question rather served as an instrument to pave the way for international compact, than as an object of main concern. In the process of negotiations, all leading European Powers, so spontaneously and to the uttermost, subordinated solution of the Armenian problem to their own needs. In the second half of the 19th century Armenians as a nation neither exercised their franchise, nor possessed any possibility to impact on the whole course of backstage talks. Besides, N. Adontz pointed out, that European multilateral diplomacy contained inner contradictions and activity decays, but its Ottoman adversary led its course with unswerving determination and rigidity<sup>1</sup>.

At the beginning of 1920 situation had changed to some degree. Armenians had created republic, and their Government had been recognized de facto on January 19. At the same time, exhausted nation restored economy of the new State under unspeakable trying conditions, and the Western Armenia was practically wiped out and annihilated, with native population massacred or exiled. Revival of this country required military and economic assistance of some principal Allied Power; because Armenians agreed to collaborate with either mandatory without restrictions. However, the problem was channeled time and again into realm of multilateral talks. And if the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference confined itself to three principal parties (England, France and the USA), then their new establishment, the League of Nations, was envisaged for much wider circle of participants. This standing body for multilateral cooperation still should be created, it had possessed neither money, nor armed forces; the USA declined its membership on November 19, 1919. Nevertheless, the Armenian problem was entrusted to the League at once.

Official representatives of the Republic of Armenia were apparently confined in their ability to track and to effect discussions; they had not yet got a chance to divide multilateral talks into several pairs of bilateral British-Armenian, French-Armenian and American-Armenian work. Without due experience and sufficient information, spokesmen of the Armenian national interests once and again found themselves in the most intricate and the least favorable for them sphere of the multilateral politics.

In 1920, when the London conference (February 12 - April 10) tackled the

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\* Текст этой статьи на русском языке см. в: <http://research.sci.am/gmakmourian>

<sup>1</sup> Աղոնց Ն., Հայկական հարց, Ե., 1996, էջ 66:

Turkish peace agreement in real earnest, members of the House of Commons - this distinctive and ponderable government body of the British Empire - frequently specified state of Armenian affairs, situation in Russia, role of Great Britain and resources of the League of Nations. Debates in this House of Parliament from February 10 till April 16 form volumes 125-127 of the 5<sup>th</sup> series of Official Report; they were used at the present article as the main research issue.<sup>2</sup> It should be emphasized, that interpretation of the Armenian Question in the context of Russian and Turkish affairs was an important trait of debates. When it was a question of the Republic of Armenia, its new boundaries or refugees, debates often concerned future treaty with Turkey, the Straits, Kemalists, or English policy towards Russia.

It was only two days before the London conference of the Allied Ambassadors and the Foreign Ministers, when D. Lloyd George had announced to legislators on February 10, that his soldiers were out of the whole Russia except Batum; although authorities of independent Georgia and Azerbaijan prayed to evacuate this city.<sup>3</sup> The Prime Minister withdrew forces to the Straits' area. With regard to the Soviet power, chief of the Government admitted, that they could not restore Europe without natural resources under Soviet control<sup>4</sup>. And although he pronounced, that horrors of Bolshevism and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk prevented him from restoration of trade, the orator stressed: Bolshevism was not democracy, but it was efficient. They could not crush this regime by force of arms. New Russian rule would be consolidated as early as 1919, - confessed the Welsh, - it was only British equipment that made further struggle of all anti-Bolshevist factions possible<sup>5</sup>.

It was quite achievable to relight the fires of civil war, but regiments of the Red Army were more formidable, more numerous and better equipped; they were better led and better disciplined. Besides, the Volunteer detachments managed to alienate the population of the Southern Russia<sup>6</sup>. And who was to pay for their waging war? France and America had refused. British taxpayers had a lot of problems, too. It could well be, that they should resist Soviet rule not by force, but by means of trade<sup>7</sup>. Machinery, locomotives, lorries and wagons could be given in return of wheat, timber and other raw materials; that was what both sides needed. And the civil strife had taken away as many Russian lives, as World War I did. New fights in Europe could not bring any success because Poland and Central Europe were deprived of provisions<sup>8</sup>. The East was devastated; people starved in the mountains of Armenia. No one was

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<sup>2</sup> *Great Britain Parliament. House of Commons. The Parliamentary Debates, 1920. Official report, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vols. 125-127. Lnd., HMSO, 1920 (following: Hansard).*

<sup>3</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 42.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 43.

<sup>8</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 44.

obliged to wage war for the oil of Baku, this fuel could be simply bought. More remote places, such as Persia, were in similar conditions. So, there was no reason to conquer them.

Before the War, Russian export had constituted one-fourth of the wheat trade of the world, 80 per cent of the flax sale, one-third of the total supply of imported butter to Great Britain. Without this delivery, prices in the foreign market were constantly growing, while suitable for removal goods remained intact<sup>9</sup>. D. Lloyd George had confessed, that it was not a question of recognizing or not-recognizing the Soviet power; England was merely compelled to deal with the people, who were ready to sell and to exchange. Our Government, - responded H. Cecil, - had been following ambiguous policy, and he hoped that it was high time to make choice and consistent actions<sup>10</sup>. A. Balfour replied to his accusations, that in permanently and sharply changing circumstances the Government didn't have any alternative. The British had never been the masters of the internal fortunes of Russia; but they had considerable effect on events, when supported anti-German elements there. Their involvement had surely intensified Russian disorder; however, Bolshevism had not been exclusively an internal affair of this vast Power, it was closely linked with its foreign policy<sup>11</sup>. In a month, on March 9, the Prime Minister added to their controversy, that disregarding Russia, Britain was contributing to high prices and augmented profits of the U.S.<sup>12</sup>.

As R. Cecil had observed at the opening day of the London conference, since April 1919, the House supported the anti-Soviet offence of White armies<sup>13</sup>. He was not of the opinion, that foreign policy of the Crown should depend on capability of foreign armies; therefore, the vacillation between support of these forces and non-intervention should be at an end<sup>14</sup>. After all, the Paris Peace Conference had already greatly lost its prestige in Europe; and had not got, as before, the same degree of obedience<sup>15</sup>. To get out of Russian, and many other difficulties, the English needed new international authority with a kind of universal esteem. Such an authority could be invested into the League of Nations. This institution should be charged to define the boundaries between Russia and the border States<sup>16</sup>.

After retort by W. Mitchell-Thomson on behalf of new organization, A. Balfour reminded, that leaders of the main Powers had agreed in Paris to settle Near Eastern problems by the use of the League's mandatory principle. Everybody hoped there that America would accept full burden; now that hope

was shattered. Waiting for America was one of the weighty reasons of so

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 45.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 308.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 126, col. 1167-1168.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 125, col. 282.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 283.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 284.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 285.

harmful delay with negotiations; however, it was wholly America's responsibility<sup>17</sup>.

Could the League be more effective in improvement of existing conditions? - asked the deputy. - It was filled up by the same participants of the Paris Peace Conference. They had the same objects, the same intentions, and the same scarcity of funds<sup>18</sup>. We had heard, - noticed S. Hoare, - that delay with the Turkish treaty was inevitable. And, although at the outset we had decided that the principle of self-determination would not be applied to Allied terrains, later we did apply it to Russia, and now it was extended to the enemy - Ottoman territories<sup>19</sup>.

Besides, - put in J. D. Rees, - we manipulated emotions of the Indian Moslems. Actually, they cared nothing about possible enlargement of Armenia<sup>20</sup>. They fought in the British ranks; and now they were merely asking, if the British were to move Sultan from Constantinople, just in order to please Montenegrins, Armenians and other small peoples. The delay in negotiations was dangerous in the East. Members of House had no confidence in America as Armenian mandatory a long time ago, since there should be implemented direct administration and permanent occupation. "The attitude of the United States [toward Armenian problem was] one as to which there ought to be no excuse"<sup>21</sup>. Some single Power should be charged with Armenian Question; while international per se League could not be of use<sup>22</sup>.

Lieutenant-Colonel A. Murray agreed with his colleague when he talked about no excuse for diplomatic delays. He acknowledged that there was very little hope of the American mandate. Besides, implementation of the British foreign policy should be removed from the Cabinet (i. e. D. Lloyd George) under the jurisdiction of G. Curzon<sup>23</sup>. Our trade with Russia, - had entered Lieutenant-Commander J. Kenworthy, - would compel our Army to cease operations against Soviet power. However, in order to halt its advance into the Caucasus, would our country recognize the independence of Georgia and Azerbaijan without restrictions?<sup>24</sup>

As to the Turkish themes, then W. Ormsby-Gore had inquired in the House of Commons, how much weapon was kept in the forts on the Gallipoli and Dardanelles, and what amount of arms had been stolen by the Nationalists. W. Churchill mentioned guns with removed breech-blocks; he told that 8,5 thousand rifles, 30 machine guns and 0,5 million rounds of small arms ammunition were stolen from under French guard<sup>25</sup>. J. D. Rees had immediately asked about the state of Armenian refugees in Bakuba; he had learned from the

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<sup>17</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 307.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 312.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 324.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 329.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 330.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 330-331.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 336.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 344-345.

<sup>25</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 261.

Secretary of State for War, that they would not be repatriated till spring, and, in general, their fate was entirely humanitarian question, not a political one<sup>26</sup>.

With respect to Armenia and Turkey, A. Herbert envisioned two possible policies that might have been pursued: Turks could be told that they fought the Allies and committed atrocities in their country. England had won; and Turks were obliged to quit Constantinople<sup>27</sup>. On the other hand, as early as on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1918, D. Lloyd George promised freedom for the Armenians, but present capital and Asia Minor were at that time called the homeland of the Turks. The second version led to no trouble in the area. However, the Prime Minister said neither of these two things. He delayed in signing peace treaty, that's why society was accumulating disadvantages of both possible, but unfinished policies<sup>28</sup>.

The next day Sir A. Steel-Maitland had reverted to the cost of the British war with Turkey. He had equated this sum with the amount spent up on A. Denikin, i. e. to £100 million a year<sup>29</sup>. That was the cost of diplomatic ambages. Then, on February 16, J. Swan and J. Wedgwood asked in vain the head of the Cabinet, what steps in particular would be taken by the Allies to encourage the border states to come to agreements with Soviet power; and whether Britain would defend them, if these republics under her surveillance would begin war on Bolshevism<sup>30</sup>.

On the same February 16 A. Williams for the first time asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs C. Hardinge whether he has received news of the massacre of Armenians, organized by Nationalists in Marash on January 21 - February 11, 1920; and of two Americans, murdered on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February near Aintab<sup>31</sup>. H. Greenwood confirmed data adequacy; however, he could say nothing bearing protection against these continued outrages. T. P. O'Connor tried to extort, whether English and French authorities at the spot were not warned about impending massacre; whether they were not asked for armed support or provision for self-defense. These appeals were addressed to, and neglected by the authorities of both countries. Whether these assaults had not confirmed, continued the member of Parliament, "that none of the Christian subjects of Turkey, like the Armenians, [should] be any longer under the new arrangements with Turkey, be subjected to the possibility of massacre as in the past?"<sup>32</sup>. Was "it not a fact, - continued A. Williams, - that Armenians went back to these districts under the encouragement of the British authorities?"<sup>33</sup>. Both members of the British Armenia Committee had not got an answer. A bit later, and with the same result, R. Cecil by private notice had asked the Prime Minister whether it was true "that the Allies have decided to leave the Turks in

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 122, col. 428.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 125, col. 348.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 349.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 401.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 502.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 503.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 504.

<sup>33</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 504.

possession of Constantinople and a large part of Armenia including Cilicia?”<sup>34</sup>.

This enquiry had been made the next day after the resolution of the London conference, and at the same moment when this resolution was wired to the British Commissioner at Constantinople<sup>35</sup>. Nevertheless, A. Bonar Law alluded to a secrecy. This wording put his audience on its guard: victors were afraid of informing their deputies, the whole society and defeated enemy on dimensions of future losses. Meanwhile, members of the House of Commons openly claimed that saving of some reinforced the nationalists much more than the Republic of Armenia. W. Ormsby-Gore mentioned that only the previous week 1,5 thousand people had been killed. His interlocutor did not see “how a discussion on a possible treaty was going to help” those, who were threatened by massacre<sup>36</sup>.

The next day A. Williams (in writing) and D. Maclean (verbally) made a quotation from the morning “Times” that 50-thousand troops of M. Kemal attacked the Armenians at Findijak, Zeitun and Frnouz, bringing the number of victims till 7,000<sup>37</sup>. Events in the case had taken place 115 kilometers from the French troops at Alexandretta<sup>38</sup>; and on February 18 J. Wedgwood inquired about a prospect to take several British battleships from the Black Sea and send them to the Cilician coast, so as to save thousands of lives there<sup>39</sup>. First Lord of the Admiralty W. Long said no: his 12 battleships and one sloop should protect Batum<sup>40</sup>. In the course of discussion it turned out that the House desired to discuss the issue of Constantinople, which “of course linked up the Armenian question”<sup>41</sup>. S. Hoare and Colonel P. Williams had addressed the head of the Cabinet inviting him to reassure the inviolability of all those pledges of freedom, which were given to Armenians and other Christian nations of the Turkish Empire. Were recent massacres and expulsions of Armenians sufficient reasons for leaving their districts under the Turkish sway?- jointed his colleagues T. P. O’Connor. And of course, all Christians, which were to be left in former subjection, should be secured the right of carrying arms and protecting themselves, as part of the treaty, - insisted A. Williams<sup>42</sup>.

As Leader of the House of Commons had narrated, following the tragedy of Marash the British Commissioner at Constantinople was authorized to announce that the Great Powers meant no alteration in political affiliation of that city. However, “unless the massacres ceased, the decision of the Peace conference

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* col. 520.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1681.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 521.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 718.

<sup>38</sup> *Now: Iskenderun.*

<sup>39</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 865.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 866-867.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 867.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 868.

would probably be modified, to the detriment of Turkey”<sup>43</sup>. W. Ormsby-Gore had specified that the massacre was being carried by detachments of M. Kemal, and heard of “connection between the Nationalist movement and the Turkish Government”<sup>44</sup>. Wouldn’t it be appropriate to announce the fate of metropolis form here, from the Parliament, demanded R. Cecil; after all, declaration at issue was cabled to the Viceroy of India just on the same February 18. It was at Constantinople alone that such announcement could prevent the massacres, his opponent retorted. Did this announcement really restrain Turks in the interior of the Empire, the matter is not revealed. However, it undoubtedly had appeased metropolitan folk and facilitated the landing operation, accomplished by Englishmen on March 16, 1920. And the fact, that later D. Lloyd George was not in a hurry to leave the Straits’ zone and did his utmost to secure it for the British Empire, is beyond any doubt.

On February 19 the delegates reverted to the problems of A. Denikin. D. Lloyd George arrived at the House and notified all present that military supplies for the South Russia would be sent up to March 31<sup>st</sup>. As regards the Ottoman Empire, Britain spent for its occupation £3 million a month<sup>45</sup>. The Prime Minister had responded to interpellation on conditions of the Cilician Armenians by a request not to discuss that subject at once; and on February 23 Major R. Glyn brought the head of the Cabinet back to his Turkish policy once more. A. Bonar Law had commented that the Government based itself on the Anglo-French declaration of November 8, 1918. Sir F. Hall specified that if that was the case, shouldn’t they make arrangements for the surrender of Turkish war criminals? More so, since the Government Committee had drawn up four reports on the breaches of war laws.

This subject, had explained the Leader of the House, was to be incorporated as part of the Peace Treaty. Otherwise, nobody would surrender specific persons<sup>46</sup>. His remark meant that Turkey was not respecting the Mudros Armistice any more; and the Allies as a whole, including England, could do nothing about that. W. Ormsby-Gore attempted to precise anew, will the status of Constantinople be modified, if Turks continue to assault Armenians?<sup>47</sup>. The reply was confirmative; although the legislator was reminded that England had been expressing the general opinion of all Allies.

Any pressure on the Turks, had noticed A. Herbert, was immediately crea

ting danger for Armenians in Asiatic part of Empire, because they were the weakest and the least protected segment of society. A. Bonar Law had admitted that the Allied forces were insufficient to stabilize situation in the area<sup>48</sup>. “*We do not know when peace with Turkey will be made,*” and what degree of consent

<sup>43</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 868.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 869.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1023, 1026.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1278.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1279.

<sup>48</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 1290.

it will command from the Ottoman society, added W. Churchill: “*We do not know what aggressive action the Russian Bolsheviks may take in this sphere*”<sup>49</sup>. If we talk about strategy, amplified F. Acland, the British Empire has two solutions: to restrict itself to the Mesopotamian oil, or to expand till the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian and beyond, into Persia and Central Asia. To expand northward of this line was unreal. Could the Parliament “push [British] forces forward until they got into contact with the Bolsheviks who [were] pressing around Caucasus?”<sup>50</sup>. Such a task was beyond their strength, had confessed the talker.

New topic had appeared in the House debates on February 24. W. Ormsby-Gore tried to determine: did his Government give de facto recognition to the republics of Transcaucasia; and whether *the boundaries of these States were fixed provisionally*?<sup>51</sup>. If it is so, he would like to see the corresponding map. Sir H. Greenwood advised that a telegram was sent to Yerevan on January 21. All three republics had their accredited representatives in London. They had provisionally defined the border lines between themselves; although “a great deal of territory was in dispute”<sup>52</sup>. Regarding the map, it would be exhibited, showing approximately defined borders. J. Kenworthy had immediately asked about the attitude of his Government towards the Treaty of London, 1915, published by Bolsheviks. Had its text been accurate; and would Britain respect it? (The last circumstance implied that Italy should join in the partition of Ottoman Empire, too)<sup>53</sup>.

A. Bonar Law had validated the Treaty; and passed to the Russian question. Amenably to his report, the Allies had decided to convey to the Transcaucasian nations that their aggression or waging a war against Bolsheviks would be detrimental to the Republics at a spot. If however these Republics are attacked, they will be promised every possible support, although “commerce between Russia and the rest of Europe, which is so essential for the improvement of economic conditions... in the rest of the world, will be encouraged the utmost degree”<sup>54</sup>.

In a day, D. Maclean had repeated R. Cecil’s question, “whether it was true that the Allies had decided to leave the Turks in possession of Constantinople

and a large part of Armenia including Cilicia?”<sup>55</sup>. May be yes, may be no – answered the Leader of the House. “We owe nothing to the Turks,- he continued. - They came into this War gladly with no provocation from us”<sup>56</sup>. Every effort was made to prevent such a development; however, 10 years of

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1346.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1372.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1467.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1485.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1502.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1949.

<sup>56</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 1952. Similar appraisal by D. Lloyd George see: col. 1998; speech by C. Oman: col. 2026.



German policy brought their results. “Probably it [was] no exaggeration to say that the alliance of the Turks with the Central Powers put a year or two on to the War. What happened, as a consequence, with regard to the alien races under Turkish domination? As soon as the Turks were reasonably certain that the menace of the British fleet need not be feared, in 1916 Talaat and Enver started, with, as far as I can gather, the glad acquiescence of the Kaizer, to massacre the Armenians. In round figures, about one million of them were swept out of human existence”<sup>57</sup>. For generations past the Ottoman Empire had dilapidated all subjugated peoples and withered the most beautiful regions of the world. And with entering into war “the Turkish Empire had committed suicide”<sup>58</sup>.

In a dispatch with covering note to the United States the Foreign Secretary E. Gray had written: “A Turkish Government, controlled, subsidized and supported by Germany, has been guilty of massacres in Armenia and Syria more horrible than any recorded in the history of those unhappy countries. Evidently the interests of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races shall, if possible, be brought to an end”<sup>59</sup>. D. Maclean concluded, that, since the genocide of Armenians, hostilities of the Turkish army and blocked up Straits had substantially prolonged the world war fighting, Turkish rule over the victimized nation must be brought to an end. Besides, the Straits should get some reasonable status<sup>60</sup>.

On the eve of the war, had returned E. Carson, we all knew that Russia was to gain foothold at the Straits. But who would take her place now? Who should drive the Turks out? If the situation becomes acute, it will pose new hazard to Armenians and will require to commence another, not a local war. Meanwhile, the Parliament demands to cut down the Army, though it would like to obtain Constantinople. And who could govern this city?<sup>61</sup> D. Lloyd George added that, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had freed the Allies from all their Russian commitments. The fact was not merely that the British were not ready to entrust the Straits to Bolsheviks. The fact was that they were not prepared to undertake such responsibility<sup>62</sup>. Meantime, the Prime Minister by no means backtracked on his pledge of December, 1919, that the sea “gates will never be closed by the

Turk in the face of a British ship again”<sup>63</sup>. The Straits themselves should become internationalized and neutral. Though the USA was not included in a list of claimants to this area or upon the guardianship of the Armenians any more<sup>64</sup>.

Then, the head of the Cabinet used an interesting technique: as far as India had sent nearly 1,5 million volunteers into the Imperial Army, and without them the British “could not have conquered Turkey;” and as far as among them “there

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1952. See also: col. 2014, 2048.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1952. Similar thesis by W. Ormsby-Gore: col. 2008.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1953.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1954.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1956-1957. See also: col. 2006, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1959-1960.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1960. See also: col. 1967.

<sup>64</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 1968.

were Mahomedan divisions that fought brilliantly through the whole of the Turkish campaign”<sup>65</sup>, - now everybody ought to care for Ottoman adherents of Islam, who would lose more than half their Empire. At the same time, it was not mentioned that all losses covered those regions, which Britain took an interest in; and these losses very little protected or helped Armenians. Wasn't it, that according to D. Lloyd George's elucidation, only those areas would be freed now, where Greeks, Armenians or other communities had *a majority of population*<sup>66</sup>. And what depended on Cilicia, that issue was totally out of discussion.

At the same time, the subject of genocide was not concealed at all. The Prime Minister shared A. Williams's and R. Cecil's appraisals, that “every one of the Armenian massacres and other Turkish outrages has been carried out by direct orders from”<sup>67</sup> the Ottoman capital. What depends on assaults in 1896, added the head of the cabinet, “there was no doubt at all”<sup>68</sup>. where the orders came from. And perhaps the British fleet could prevent the Abdul Hamid's decree for the massacre. In this case, would the Turkish authorities order again “massacres and murders and outrages, Constantinople could be laid in ashes”<sup>69</sup>. That was the main guarantee of safety for Armenians. What depended on liberty, it could be obtained only by separate, compactly residing communities.

Nevertheless, R. Cecil reminded, there is a great Armenian population in Cilicia. Meanwhile, its destiny remained obscure. And no one succeeded in finding out whether there was going to be an enlarged Republic of Armenia, or not. As to the talker himself, he had demanded a considerable expansion of border lines of the Republic, and its access to the Black Sea. Otherwise, it would have noticeable difficulty in living<sup>70</sup>. Besides, an outlet to the sea had also implied free access of the British fleet to the new State. What was more, the deputy had added that both Armenians and Greeks did not consider auditing

of the capital to be an effective measure of their guard.<sup>71</sup> Who could pin his hopes on Western influence, if preceding centuries of that influence resulted in the genocide of 1915?<sup>72</sup> Formerly used methods will result in new assault,- asserted Sir Robert.

Still, if E. Carson with E. Bonar Law didn't believe in efficacy of the League of Nations concerning Ottoman problems, then R. Cecil, T. P. O'Connor, E. Winterton, W. Adamson, H. Nield, S. Hoare, J. Seely and J. Kenworthy would

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1964. See also: col. 1983-1984, 2002; appreciation of General J. Seely: col. 2047-2048; remark of C. Edwards: col. 2057.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1966. See also a statement of A. Bonar Law: col. 2052.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1969. See also speeches of T. P. O'Connor: col. 1984-1985; W. Adamson: col. 2018; A. Williams: col. 2030.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1969.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1970.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1971. See also speech of S. Hoare: col. 2039.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1980.

<sup>72</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 1980.

direct to this organization the future of the Straits<sup>73</sup>. Let's remark, that likewise the Armenian Question, the Straits' issue hadn't benefited of transition to the methods of multilateral diplomacy, too. At that, the latter of the listed deputies had noted, that Russia could not be ignored. Otherwise the sea route would lose its economic worth.

It is notable, that when estimating general alignment of forces, T. P. O'Connor pointed out a prevalence of Young Turks in the Sultan Cabinet; and a fact that they gave new orders to attack Armenians. Who would be consoled by the explanation that England could do nothing in 1896? The reluctance of Russia and the hostility of Germany had created an easy-to-use triangle for Abdul Hamid. The very same factors played their part in 1915. Hereafter, they could exert their ability, too<sup>74</sup>. England saved the Turkish regime "after the Crimean war; ...in 1878 and now we [were] saving [it] a third time, ...taking a very grave responsibility upon ourselves"<sup>75</sup>, - established the member of the House.- It was necessary to make "a really powerful, independent and autonomous Armenia"<sup>76</sup>. This opinion had been supported by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Guinness and General H. Surtees. The first of them had drawn the audience's attention to the Turkish dominions in Asia. As this deputy had reported, Christians lived everywhere, but it was "only in the Eastern part of Armenia that they ever in recent times outnumbered the Moslems. The Armenian plateau, with its civilization, [was] to be united to Russian Armenia as the Republic of Erivan"<sup>77</sup>. And as to Cilicia, it was detached for the French mandate.

Lieutenant-Colonel had learned at first hand that by 1920 Catholics, Jacobites, Chaldeans were living as slaves in Kurdish villages of Asia Minor and in the South of Empire. Besides, "before the War everywhere there were large numbers of Christians of the Armenian and the Greek race; they lived in their separate villages and towns in the mountains of Cilicia"<sup>78</sup>. W. Guinness, then A. Herbert and S. Hoare had reminded that Allies had never supervised inner districts; and "the control of the Central Turkish Government, owing to

the delay in the announcement of the Peace terms, [was] very rapidly decreasing"<sup>79</sup>. To a certain extent, owing to this delay 17-thousandth contingent under M. Kemal gained a foothold in the interior and had already proved itself by the massacres in Marash, Hajin and Zeitun. As to the victors, they had so limited potentialities, that could not keep under their control anything but the railway line and would only watch manoeuvres of their adversary<sup>80</sup>.

We should hurry, had appealed the first deputy, otherwise the situation would be beyond control. "After the Armistice it would have been compa-

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1982, 1986, 2015, 2017-2018, 2028, 2041, 2043, 2045, 2054-2055, 2059.

<sup>74</sup> *bid.*, col. 1985-1986. *Similar opinion of Young Turks was expressed by S. Hoare: col. 2040.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1987.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1988. *See also: col. 2019.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1991.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1991, 2002.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1992.

<sup>80</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 1992, 2002. *See also: col. 2040.*

ratively easy to ensure drastic reforms in Turkey”<sup>81</sup>. that’s why it had been essential to collaborate with its War Office and to encourage Armenians to join Kemalists, - was heard in the House. As A. Williams objected to W. Guinness, England had announced it would yield in Constantinople issue on the very day after the Marash massacre<sup>82</sup>. Our adversary would take this announcement as a result of its attack. Meantime, he had been committing its assault just to intimidate the Allies. It had been heard at first about 15 hundred killed. Afterward it was 2,000 and 7,000. Then the deputy pointed to a telegram, he had obtained from A. Aharonian that crimes were going on. 20 thousands had already been slaughtered in the district of Marash, evacuated by the troops; the city of Adana was in imminent danger<sup>83</sup>. And now, after an attack, the Prime Minister seemed ready to declare that Armenians were not in a majority any more; and that Cilicia would not be separated. “We are not going to put a premium on clearing countries by means of massacre. The Christians in that part of the country... were the great majority and the Turks themselves were only about 15 per cent of the population, although the Moslems, as a whole, may have been about 30 per cent”<sup>84</sup>.

“Neither in Cilicia, nor in the other part of Armenia do the Armenian people ask for any special privilege for men of their race”, - continued A. Williams<sup>85</sup>. They asked for decent government and equality for all races and religions. Besides, they requested that “districts of Van and Erzerum, and others round about, should be attached to the Armenian Republic of Erivan, which is on what was formerly Russian territory”<sup>86</sup>. These people need that the two great

fortresses, of Erzerum and Erzinka<sup>87</sup>. which are distinctly Armenian places, should be made part of the new Armenia”<sup>88</sup>. Passing ahead of Armenian proposals and memoranda, submitted to the Foreign Office on March 8 and 20; A. Williams correctly pointed out that the Republic of Armenia invited British military advisers of the higher rank; while it provided sufficient personnel of soldiers and gendarmerie. Noteworthy, that in memorandum by G. Korganian, written somewhat later, in March, he stated that Army of the Republic of Armenia needed foreign specialists only in the Air Forces, motor detachments

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1994.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2032; including tragic march of the refugees from Marash to Islahie on February 11-14, 1920.

<sup>83</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 2033. See also: col. 2040; A. William’s reference to a telegram, sent from Alexandria on 24.04.1920 and offered him by the head of delegation of the Republic of Armenia at the London conference A. Aharonian: col. 2061, D. Lloyd George’s response: col. 2062. Additional data is available in the memorandum by the Chief British Commissioner in Transcaucasia J. Wardrop of 7.03.1920: *The Republic of Armenia. The National Archives (Yerevan)*, fund 200, register 1, file 556, part 1, folio 29 (following: NAA).

<sup>84</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 2034.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> In the text: *Erzngan*, now: *Erzinjan*.

<sup>88</sup> **Hansard**, vol. 125, col. 1991, 2034.

and at wireless telegraphy. It could accept artillerymen only in the case if new, modern guns would arrive with them. Therefore, advisers were invited merely to join the War Ministry and to serve as observers in acting forces, so that the aforesaid units would not be charged of war crimes<sup>89</sup>.

And second, A. Williams had been talking about historical obligations of England and France towards the Armenian nation from 1853-1856 on. He had reminded how the French asked Armenians to provide volunteers for recent fighting, not in Cilicia but in Palestine. During negotiations Foreign Ministry of this country pledged to liberate Armenia, and “that pledge, he believed, existed to-day still in writing”<sup>90</sup>. Only four days before R. Cecil had reminded Boghos Nubar that the latter did not have any written document at his disposal<sup>91</sup>. Nevertheless, retrial, made by his colleague, could scarcely be assumed as an isolated instance.

(To be continued)

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<sup>89</sup> NAA, fund 200, reg. 1, file 556, pt. 1, fol. 151-153.

<sup>90</sup> Hansard, vol. 125, col. 1991, 2035.

<sup>91</sup> Ահարոնյան Ա., Մարդարապատից մինչև Սևր և Լոզան: Քաղաքական օրագիր 1919-1927, Ե., 2001, էջ 55: