

On the issue of origination and location of the Armenian National Home (in 1920-1922)

By the end of 1920, an essentially new political situation had emerged for the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Question at large. The Turkish-Armenian War triggered by the Treaty of Sevres had resulted in the heavy defeat of the Republic. "Armenia is finished, - wrote on November 30 the U.S. High Commissioner in Constantinople to the Secretary of State. - The Armenian troops at Kars and Alexandropol were superior in forces; however, they were defeated and in many cases run away. The Turks have captured Igdır and are only a few miles from Karaklis. General Dro [Kanayan] is now in command of the Armenians and appears to be holding his lines. A second armistice is in effect and a treaty of peace is being negotiated. The Americans are reported all safe within the Turkish lines. The Bolsheviks and Nationalist Turks are in accord. There is no foundation in reports that Alexandropol and Kars have been retaken by the Armenians and there is no likelihood of their being retaken."¹

Although the U.S. President W. Wilson had made an arbitration award regarding the Armenian-Turkish border on November 22, his verdict only complicated the reality on the ground. There was no one available to demarcate the new frontier and to actually allot the arbitrated area to the Republic of Armenia. None of the concerned Powers was interested in such a solution of the problem. The Treaty of Alexandropol, as well as the Armenian-Soviet agreement, both signed on December 2, 1920, had further complicated the situation, since as aftermath, the R.A. changed its social model, ideology and Allies. Besides, the Republic lost a lion's share of its independence, too. As a way out, W. Wilson and the lobbyist Armenia America Society put forward the idea of a National Home. //76 They had also raised the issue as to who exactly could represent Western Armenians apart from the new Soviet authorities in Erevan. The official Washington had no wish to do favors to the Soviet regime and was inclined to assist the anti-Bolshevik forces and thus offering the National Delegation headed by Boghos Nubar to establish a Government in exile, formed by refugees.

The National Home was conceived to be either independent or an entity under the trusteeship of the League of Nations. Later on, having met with a stubborn Kemalist opposition, an independent National Home proposal was rapidly downgraded to "an autonomy" or even to a mere habitat for populations of the same religious designation, if not of the same ethnicity. The National Home concept called Cilicia or Western provinces on the border of the Republic of Armenia, including some newly occupied by Kemalists parts of Eastern Armenia (lost in the war of 1920) as the most suitable regions for repatriation. In this case the would be territory of the National Home had no longer been attached to the R.A. The Home was rather considered to be either a separate entity or an entity within Turkey.

¹ United States National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, class 760J.67/document 39:Telegram (following: US NA, RG); see: Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920, in 3 vols, vol.III. Wash., US GPO, 1936, p.805 (following: Papers Relating).

On November 27, 1920, P.Hymans, President of the Council of the League of Nations, asked the President W.Wilson to mediate in the Armenian-Turkish confrontation. On November 30, he obtained W.Wilson's reply. The host of the White House appeared to be "without authorization to offer or employ military forces of the United States in any project for the relief of Armenia, and any material contributions would require the authorization of the Congress which is not now in session and whose action [he] could not forecast. [He] was willing, however, upon assurances of the moral and diplomatic support of the principal powers, ...to proffer [his] personal mediation through a representative whom [he] may designate."

Concluding his letter, President Wilson expressed a rather derisive hope that the Council of the League of Nations would "suggest to [him] the avenues through which [his] proffer should be conveyed and the parties to whom it should be addressed."² The U.S. Administration had diplomatic staff on the ground in Tiflis, Tabriz and Constantinople; they were in touch with the R.A.'s envoys in Washington and with officers of the Near East Relief on both sides of the front line. However and strangely enough, W.Wilson didn't know how to convey his design. On December 2, P.Hymans thanked his partner for the readiness "to participate //77 in any action of a moral and diplomatic character... in putting an end to the present situation in Armenia."³

On December 5, 1920, Boghos Nubar responded by a wire to W.Wilson. He asked solely for Cilicia to be designated as a Home place and maintained that local autonomy in combination with the protection of the non-Moslem, Christian community by French detachments would suffice. At the same time, reverting to the Ottoman system of millet, Boghos Pasha had cautioned: "Should French troops withdraw, fatal consequences would follow." Nevertheless, the official Washington strictly limited its role to the exertion of influence on Europeans which de facto translated into appealing to London and Paris with requests and/or mediations. To illustrate: according to the Secretary of War N.D.Baker, even refugees' supplication for their fast removal from the Republic of Armenia had demanded lengthy discussions.⁴

Time played against the Armenian Question and once again it did not do Armenians any good. Allocation of additional time had prolonged the mortal combat but failed to improve the situation on the ground. To the extent that the Acting Secretary of State N.H.Davis had enquired with his Ambassador in Paris by an urgent and strictly confidential wire, if the details pertaining to the arbitrated

² US NA, RG 59, 760J.67/39a:Telegram and Papers Relating, 1920, vol.III, p.805. In detail: Г.Г.Махмурян, Лига Наций, Армянский вопрос и Республика Армения. Ер., Артагерс, 1999, с.127.

³ US NA, RG 59, 760J.67/42½:Telegram and Армения в документах Государственного департамента США 1917-1920 гг., 2-е изд. Сост. и пер. с англ. Г.Г.Махмурян, Ер., Ин-т истории НАН Армении, 2012, с.429.

⁴ US NA, RG 59, 860J.4016P81/130/f.1, T1192 Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Armenia, 1910-1929/Roll 6, Microfilm publications, Wash., National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1975; deposited at the National Archives of Armenia, Yerevan (NAA), collection of microfilm rolls № 46 (following: MR); Ibid., 860J.48/63, T1192/Roll 7/MR 36.

border should be made public at all. It implied that the President could alter its description on the basis of the Article 89, reworded by the Europeans, “in case the Allies decide to revise or to negotiate with Turks a modification of the Sevres Treaty.”⁵ Had that border solution become applicable, W.Wilson would have immediately designated his intermediary between the extremely fragile Soviet power in Erevan and Kemalists.

On December 15, 1920, the State Department had informed P.Hymans about the appointment of the well-known ex-Ambassador H.Morgenthau, as U.S. //78 President’s personal representative. Meanwhile, the head of Administration was still awaiting advices “as to the avenues through which his proffer should be conveyed and the parties with whom his representatives should get in contact, as well as assurances that he may count upon the diplomatic and moral support of the principal powers.”⁶

Following the presidential designation, Director of the Armenia America Society (AAS) G.R.Montgomery had addressed Boghos Nubar on December 20, 1920. As it turned out, the Western Diplomacy had been considering the next possibility of a recurrent bargain about and at the expense of the Armenian interests. The long-lasting disparity between Armenian people’s social vulnerability and enormous benefits under consideration led to the situation, when politicians began to regard our “no man’s” Armenian Question as a convenient property to be used for territorial partition or for mutually beneficial concessions. To all evidence, both the concerned Powers and the Republic of Armenia in the person of A.Khatisian started to reduce the whole solution of the Armenian issue to the land distribution. Moreover, this distribution was perceived as the essence of the international talks.

Reliability-control measures as well as peace keeping, repair of economic and political damage sustained by our people; migrations and livelihoods of minorities; owners’ rights and actual possibility to exercise those rights in an adjacent State; trade regulations and preservation of the cultural heritage - all these issues were either not prominent on or totally left out of the diplomatic agenda.

Due to our disastrous defeat in the war, the gist of the Western diplomacy in December, 1920, and in 1921-1922 consisted in offering Turkey something at our expense so that European Powers and the USA could derive an additional benefit from such bargains. By that time, the Paris-based National Delegation of Boghos Nubar (AND) had remained the sole and quite complaisant representative of Western Armenia. Therefore, W.G.Smith as a member of the Organizing Committee, thereupon the Chairman of the AAS sought to consult with Boghos Pasha there. In his turn G.Montgomery (with W.Wilson behind his back) had inquired if H.Morgenthau could at least engage in the evacuation or repatriation of refugees.

The question remained: what exactly would Boghos Pasha agree to cede, to keep the ratification of the Treaty of Sevres afloat? For as the AAS Director pointed //79 out, the Europeans were unable to impose the Treaty’s text. Besides,

⁵ US NA, RG 59, 760J.6715/61/f.2, T1193 Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations Between Armenia and Other States, 1910-1929/Roll 2/MR 35.

⁶ Ibid., 760J.67/47a:Telegram; see also: 760J.6715/66:Telegram; 70:Telegram; 72:Telegram.

Western Powers didn't restrict themselves to the isolation of Russia. They demanded non-interference of the Soviet Armenia too and rejected its title of national representation.⁷ On December 21, 1920, in his next letter to Boghos Nubar Pasha, G.Montgomery added: "It is difficult to believe that Western Europe would be willing to assign territories to augment a Soviet Administration."

He questioned neither legal capacity nor real ability of the AND to administer the arbitral zone. The reporter had instead proposed to set up a provisional national Cabinet in Constantinople or Paris. Later on, the Cabinet administered territory might have been united with a non-Soviet Eastern Armenia. At such an outcome the Society could try to secure a loan in Washington.

This phrase on the AND-administered territory and American funding had a tragicomic sounding indeed. However, the U.S. and Britain had always preferred Western Armenians, their own reliable men, to Erevan. G.Montgomery was doubtful about his idea's success, but saw no harm in it either. He proposed to include in a projected provisional Government not only Turkish Armenians, "but also those Russian Armenian elements who dared to come out against Soviets. It could be a rallying center for patriotism and would facilitate a coup when the time come to oust Bolsheviks from Erevan." That was the matter W.G.Smith wanted to talk about. Besides, G.Montgomery didn't fail to allude that such a Cabinet "would increase the chances of pushing the mediation plan under which President W. Wilson has named Mr.H.Morgenthau."⁸

On December 24, 1920, the Society Director had received Nubar's approval and immediately sent a similar note to the French Ambassador in Washington. According to his report, H.Morgenthau could intervene between the Turkish Nationalists and both the Western Armenians and the League of Nations, while sovietization of the Armenian Republic should not wipe out the arbitrated boundary. Europe, however, had to support the U.S. President now that he did his share.⁹ Two days later P.Hymans responded, that "the best course would appear to be the President W.Wilson should telegraph his instructions direct to American High Commissioner at Constantinople," as far as "Armenia was at present... under // -80 the control of Soviet Russia and the advanced Dashnak Party."¹⁰

The new year 1921 began with heavy correspondence on the issue of Western Armenian Government. On two occasions (on December 17 and 23), Boghos Nubar had expressed his reservations about the representative capacity of the proposed Cabinet. He did not want to follow the American advice and to abandon Paris or Geneva for the shores of the Bosphorus. Consequently, on January 7, 1921, G.Montgomery pushed aside the matter of the loan. He rather urged the other side to seize the lead, so that he could continue his work.

The Armenia America Society anticipated neutralization of the Soviet influence and got involved France. It hold several meetings and prepared a memo-

⁷ NAA, fund 430, registry 1, file 1008, folio 1.

⁸ NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1008, f.2.

⁹ Ibid., f.3-6.

¹⁰ US NA, RG 59, 760J.67/56½:Telegram.

randum for the President-elect W.G.Harding.¹¹ This memorandum of January 7, 1921, offered a standard draft of resolutions, that would be adopted at the mass rallies, sent to the State Department or become the addresses to Congressmen and Senators. The text of the AAO reminded of Armenian military in the Russian Army, who fought both Germany and Austria. However, it withheld the R.A. defense at the Caucasus Front. The Memorandum's author offered the USA a program to adopt (either alone or jointly) a protectorate over "those portions of Armenia that have been parts of the Ottoman Empire."¹² The arbitral zone itself had been called an Armenian Home which might in time become an Armenian Commonwealth.

Then the AAS submitted the British Prime Minister an indignant letter. The Society wondered, why London preferred M.Bristol to H.Morgenthau. The latter represented the U.S. President in person and strove to collaborate with the League of Nations while the first one acted as an official of the Government which refrained from the joint actions in the Middle East. The U.S. High Commissioner at Constantinople had been noted for his pro-Turkish views. He was aided by the Brazilian, Spanish and other European assistants. The official Washington reiterated however since the Europe gained most by the Ottoman disintegration, it was up to her to protect the fellow-fighter in the recent war.

Perhaps, "the British representatives at Constantinople and Tiflis, who recommended the course" of events, did want to deprive Armenia of Sevres, making profit from "the misfortune which befell [this country] of being conquered by the //81 Bolsheviks." Yet, it is the arbitral zone and the Kemalists that were the root problem of Sevres. That stands to reason why W.Wilson offered to establish a protectorate under the League of Nations; it would be formed as an Armenian Home which could later become an Armenian Commonwealth. The U.S. President had always refused multilateral policy in the Orient, so, it was "even less likely to take [such a course] with the approaching change in administration."¹³ Let me observe that the USA didn't entangle in multilateral talks because they either wanted to lose nor wanted to be used in the European team play. At the same time, they did participate in the multilateral maneuvering as a special partner using their bilateral relations with the Great Britain. It was the United States, who had offered on January 7, 1921, the wording of an Armenian Home. The concept of such a protectorate had been authored by the departing President while its concrete wording could have been coined by G.Montgomery or his team-mates.

The letter by G.Montgomery to P.Hymans was a concluding element of this package of documents. That epistle reiterated the plan once designed in Tiflis and on the Bosphorus to encourage anti-Bolshevism (read the pro-Turkish policy) in Erevan and thus to deprive the Soviet R.A. of all rights with regard to the Treaty of Sevres. At the same time, Erevan was being excluded from the forthcoming international talks. Moreover, owing to D.Lloyd George and the wide press coverage, on January 4, 1921, this approach had become a common knowledge for

¹¹ NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1008, f.10.

¹² Ibid., f.11.

¹³ Ibid., f.14 & 13.

all and sundry including the Ottoman chieftains, the Kemalists and Moscow's Bolsheviks.

While the Director of Armenia America Society described the U.S.'s discord with such interpretations of the arbitration, Great Britain tried to seize the opportunity presented by the sovietization of R.A. in order to push through her own political agenda. In doing so London ignored the key contradiction which consisted in the antagonism between the Kemalists and the Republic of Armenia, regardless of the nature of the regime in power in Erevan. G.Montgomery outlined as an alternative the possibility to set up a would be provisional national Armenian Cabinet, resident in Geneva, and to recognize this body by the League of Nations. He had also told, the official Washington was "astonished" by an invitation to collective security outside the League and placed the main responsibility for this //82 faux pas on Europe.¹⁴

On January 13, 1921, this letter had been supported with an appeal to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations H.C.Lodge alongside with an information note for Boghos Nubar as well as with the declaration to all concerned citizens and organizations. H.C.Lodge familiarized himself with the project of a joint protectorate which could be financed by the USA should its Government prefer not to intervene directly on the ground. The project read that a New Home or Commonwealth, located in the arbitral zone, would exceed the territory of the Republic of Armenia and as such these unites could restrain Russia's further expansion. G.Montgomery and his patrons including W.Wilson asked the Senate to, at least, share this idea with London and Paris. At the same time, Boghos Nubar was reading laments over his inertia regarding his "Cabinet" and learned that France, allegedly, "ought to welcome a neutral sate in the Taurus region."¹⁵

It is noteworthy that the appeal to general public's opinion had remarkably reduced the official anti-Soviet rhetoric. In the Society's mind "the passing of the Armenian Republic into the control of Moscow had not been an unmixed evil. It had put a stop to the advance of the Turks and had protected the Armenians against the Tartars. The misery and starvation continued but... the massacres were interrupted." Though "the passing... into the control of the Bolshevik troops changed the character of the political aid that the United States could render."¹⁶ And if we look to the Secretary of War N.D.Baker, who together with the Secretary of State B.Colby examined the problem of repatriation (which in fact was evacuation of the Western Armenians from the R.A.), the U.S. Army officials presumed that "no further action by this Department were desired."¹⁷

All of the above prompted feedbacks by two persons based in Paris. In the first case, A.Aharonian, the Chairman of the ex-Republican Delegation, called the situation appalling and begged for help. In the second case, on January 15, 1921, Boghos Nubar had finally succeeded in taking revenge on the Republic of Armenia's diplomats. He asked, why the Allies would not continue their work with

¹⁴ NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1008, f.15-16.

¹⁵ Ibid., f.17, 20.

¹⁶ NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1008, f.18.

¹⁷ US NA, RG 59, 860J.48/73, T1192/Roll 7/MR 36.

the National Delegation as a sole representative of the Western Armenians? The //83 Patriarchate at Constantinople, the National Assembly or the Congress of Western Armenians could assign new delegates. It was also possible to postpone the problem till the next meeting of the specified representative institutions was summoned.

Boghos Nubar evaded the term “Government,” since he didn’t want troubles with its legitimacy and had no wish to become the ultimate puppet of the Western Powers. Obviously delighted, he questioned if A.Aharonian and the R.A. Delegation could negotiate without up-to-date credentials. “We are too weak to be in open conflict with Moscow and in so doing we might even endanger the cause of Turkish Armenia.” That’s why the eminent reporter preferred to leave the problems of the Republic “to better times and to more favorable circumstances.”

Boghos Nubar also wondered, would his Western associates focus on the National Delegation, “or else, would they keep on their relations with the Delegation of the late Government?” In such an instance the Allies would obtain “powerless [persons] of no practical use.” Personally, Boghos Pasha hoped they would choose the first option, so that he alone could manage any financial assistance on his own. The funds, “that we knew America was willing to grant.”¹⁸ He even proposed to cede territories in Smyrna and Thrace to Turks. In this event the Kemalists could accept the arbitral award, coined by W.Wilson. On his own behalf, the writer of the paper could only promise the mass participation of his compatriots in the international volunteer forces of occupation.

Thus, with all the aforementioned at hand, G.Montgomery got a solid ground to address the Secretary of State B.Colby. The Society sought to bring up conversations about Sevres in order to obtain means of pressure on the Kemalists. His associate, the Department of State, “was downgrading the Armenian Question to a useful rhetorical tool for larger issues,” too.¹⁹ Then, the AAO didn’t wish the final stage of the transaction would be carried out without the United States. Its office for the foreign relations could at least ask France to support a neutral protectorate.

Appealing to B.Colby, the head of the Society observed that only one and a half years ago the Kemalist leaders had personally agreed to modify the border in //84 the vicinity of Erzerum. AAO’s leader’s anxiety was natural: on January 24-30, 1921, the European diplomats had convened the II London Conference; still, the American part had not published its arbitral award. Its map permanently remained strictly confidential; and it meant that its border-line was not put into barter yet.

During the time when London sessions went on and preparations for the 3rd conference on the road to Lausanne were in process, G.Montgomery continued to press Boghos Nubar for the provisional Government, even if it were to hold a neutral position in regard of Bolsheviks for a time.²⁰ On January 27, 1921, he regretted that the Europe took no interest in the Armenian side. The European

¹⁸ “East Oregonian,” Daily, Pendleton, Oregon, 22.02.1921, p.8; NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1008, f.22-23.

¹⁹ L.Marashlian, *The Armenian Question From Sèvres to Lausanne. Economics and Morality in American and British Policies 1920-1923*. PhD dissertation, Los Angeles, UCLA, 1992, p. 164.

²⁰ NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1008, f.24-25 and 28; US NA, RG 59, 760J.6715/61/f.4, T1193/Roll 2/MR 35.

Prime Ministers had to gather in a month, because they had to revise the suspended Treaty with the Turkish and Greek officials. The Director of AAO wanted to know if it was prudent to propose them any separate French mandate for the Cilicia on the borders of Syria? Say, it could stretch from the vicinity of Adana to Kharberd. And this region did not affect the Wilsonian territories.

On January 31, 1921, G.Montgomery spoke with the Director of the Press Bureau under the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA) V.Cardashian. The latter met the R.A. mission as well as with the participants of the influential anti-wilsonian ACIA; then he made a tough statement. Diplomats of the former Armenian Government and the Committee didn't wish to substitute fabulous Homes and trusteeships for independence. They harshly restrained the AAO leader and threatened him with a public statement in the Press, since he "had no right or authority to speak in the name" of the tormented country. The viewpoint of the Society was "mischievous and opposed to the best interests" of the nation. "The Turks would join us in advocating that Russian Armenia were separated from Turkish Armenia, because they knew that would be the end of independence."

Adversaries of the National Home explained that every European protectorate under the Kemalist suzerainty had been discredited long ago and unacceptable. It was preferable "to have the territories which President Wilson delimited remain in the hands of the Turks"²¹ as an outcome of aggression. G.Montgomery took into consideration objections of the milieu, led by the ex-envoy of the Republic of // -85 Armenia in Washington G.Pasdermajian. With an intent to disarm this sharp criticism, on February 6, 1921, the lobbyists gathered in New York, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

They delivered orations there; while W.G.Smith demanded a State loan for maintenance of the French troops in Cilicia. Besides, he urged an official pressure upon London, where the AAO would submit his new conception of the Home. G. Montgomery had defined in his next letter to J.Gerard the vote on the resolution, taken at the Cathedral, to be a good cause for their further activity. On February 7, 1921, he had dropped a line for Paris. This time our reporter complained about V. Cardashian, who had no policy to suggest. Nevertheless, the AAO didn't endeavour to manipulate the Armenian interests and "was sorry [his adversary] attempted to discredit the sincerity of the American friends."²²

In fact, Armenians accepted every judgement under consideration, when it envisaged complete separation from Turkey. Were it a unit neighbouring the R.A. or in Cilicia, would they form two separate regions or three, independent or protectorates, with an expansion of the Eastern Armenia, either unification of Western areas with it or their separate existence - all of these options did not matter much for the national security; and all were equally eligible for the Armenian Delegations. They did not restrain the West in any way. Separation from Turkey had been the core issue, since remaining there precluded every national, civil and

²¹ NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1008, f.30, 33; file 1012, f.31-32. See also: L.Marashlian, op.cit., p.156-157.

²² NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1008, f.33; L.Marashlian, op.cit., p.157-159.

even religious activity for the ancient indigenous nation, which was wiped out on the basis of militaristic ideology and wars.

As to the AAO, it was not embarrassed by the lack of its representative powers and continued to manage the Armenian Question as a no man's issue. On February 21, 1921, when the III London Conference began,²³ G.Montgomery sent a memorandum to all participant Prime Ministers. His paper reminded of the density of Armenians in Cilicia, where the Europeans urged them to gather. The memorandum supported a separate French mandate in Cilicia, though the revising Treaty of Sevres transferred a part of this area into the Syrian mandate.

On February 22, 1921, H.Hoover, the Director General of the American Relief Administration,²⁴ backed up the U.S. Consul in Constantinople, when the latter //86 made complaints against the sharp deterioration of the relief situation in Turkey. H.Hoover issued an emotional wake-up-call for the next wave of charity. As far as Alexandropol remained under the Turkish occupation until April 22, 1921, the U.S. President-to-be repeated the worst descriptions, similar to the Summer of 1918. "The Armenians presented the most desperate situation in the world." They suffered of starvation and new torments. "Appalling. Pitiful. The horrible conditions of the Armenian children were beyond description and belief... It is up to us who are fortunate enough to claim America as our home to extend a helping hand. Go the limit!"²⁵

Meantime, the Paris-based Delegation of the R.A. worked without subordination to the Soviet Armenia. Its members organized an anti-Soviet mutiny as soon as December 18-21, 1920.²⁶ Their enterprise emanated from Armenia and Tiflis. A. Khatisian, who left for that city, had confessed that local political circles "first of all, tried to establish contacts with their political comrades in Europe, Constantinople and Erevan." J.Randolph, the U.S. Consul at Tiflis, with the British Commissioner in the Transcaucasia Lieutenant-Colonel C.B.Stokes had been busy in this venture, too.

On February 18 A.Khatisian hastened to Constantinople. "An extremely grim situation prevailed" among the Armenians there. The circles close to the Patriarchate and the National Assembly "bitterly condemned the Government of Armenia and Dashnaks for the defeat of the Armenian Army, the surrender of Kars and conclusion of the Treaty of Alexandropol." A.Khatisian "had been particularly criticized as the head of the Alexandropol peace delegation."²⁷ On February 21 he had visited the U.S. High Commissioner M.Bristol, who uttered: "You suffered great losses but the Europe and America never budged. Now the Turks listened to nobody and nothing and thought they were the strongest in the world."²⁸ It was on this note that the ex-Premier had left the shores of Bosphorus to arrive to London on

²³ It was in session till March 14, 1921.

²⁴ Herbert Clark Hoover had been the Secretary of Commerce from March 5, 1921 till August 21, 1928; as well as the 31st President of the USA in 1929-1933.

²⁵ "East Oregonian," 22.02.1921, p.8.

²⁶ Գ.Ստեփանյան, Համազասպ Սրվանձտյանց, Երևան, Լուսակն, 2016, էջ 744:

²⁷ Ա.Խատիսեան, Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան ծագումն ու զարգացումը, Բ տպագ., Պէյրուս, Համազգային, 1968, էջ 330, 334:

²⁸ Նույն տեղում, էջ 335:

February 28, 1921.

G.Pasdermajian, A.Aharonian, H.Bagratuni, M.Varandian, Sebouh, S.Araratian and H.Khan Masseghian gathered there, too. Boghos Nubar personificated //87 the National Delegation. It seemed, the newcomers had ensured their legitimacy, since the successful military anti-Soviet action had been organized in Armenia on February 16.²⁹ It certainly couldn't cancel the the Russia's recovery in Transcaucasia, but gave Europe, U.S. and the Sultan's Cabinet as well as Bolsheviks and Kemalists a free hand in negotiations. It had been advantageous to all Diplomats, but for the Armenian side. The London talks, as it might be guessed long ago, didn't provide a substantial military or another support to the aggrieved party. The Bolsheviks' dictatorial methods of the ruinous seizures of belongings and mass repressions indicated, that they instigated the society to the civil war.³⁰ Such domestic conduct helped them to detect entirely all elements liable to purges.

On February 26, 1921, Boghos Nubar and A.Aharonian, accompanied by H. Bagratuni, had spoken to the Conference of London. The leaders of the Delegation "United" two days ago, demanded to preserve the Sevres text without alterations. In the last resort, they consented to cede the Trebizond. In spite of the previous arrangement, Boghos Nubar had immediately specified his leadership and stressed that he was the only one responsible for Western Armenians. The spokesman told that the essence of the Armenian Question consisted in the deliverance of his nation from the Ottoman yoke and it had nothing to do with the Eastern Armenians. The latters stole the scene owing to the breakdown of the Russian Empire and the subsequent declaration of independence in the Caucasus. However, Russia was an Ally of the Entente, wasn't she? Thus, her partners should not engage in her problems or settle the Armenian-Turkish dispute at her account. Boghos Nubar Pasha focused the attention of his audience principally on Cilicia.³¹

Malcontent A.Aharonian had proclaimed an independent and unified State. He recalled the success of the Erevan mutiny that signified the restoration of the bourgeois system in the Republic. The speaker fervently denounced the Treaty of Alexandropol and admitted a direct link between the K.Karabekir's assault in September, 1920, and the Sevres Treaty as such. He threatened to find other assistants, means and ways, if Europeans would disappoint his hopes again. In its turn, the audience cast his mind back to the R.A. border of 1921. They reminded //88 him that establishment of the arbitral lines was no practicable.

Having heard this judgement, co-chairmen of the "United" Delegation admitted that the restored petty bourgeois rule in Erevan was precarious. In contrast with present and self confident Bekir Sami Bey, Boghos Nubar and A. Aharonian didn't know, that on March 15 and 18, the member of the Erevan Committee S.Vratzian would base just on the Treaty of Alexandropol and ask Turkey for military aid.

²⁹ Գ.Ստեփանյան, նշվ.աշխ., էջ 810:

³⁰ Геноцид армян: ответственность Турции и ответственность мирового сообщества, Документы и комментарии, в 2-х т., ред. и сост.Ю.Г.Барсегов, т.2, ч.2, М., Гардарика, 2003, с.380.

³¹ Ա.Ահարոնյան, Սարդարապատից մինչև Սեփր և Լոզան, Քաղաքական օրագիր 1919-1927, Երեվան, ԵՊՀ, 2001, էջ 146-147; and NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1007, f.2.

Armenian speakers had also hushed up the fact that on February 5, 1921, the Joint National Assembly of the Western Armenians in Constantinople had formally recognized the National Delegation of G.Noradounghian to be their sole representative, thus having disavowed all Armenian participants in the London diplomatic debate.³²

The latter actors were frankly informed that the Europeans wouldn't despatch troops to protect their countrymen, though the Russian Armenia proved to be "under the threat of new aggression."³³ Besides, as Boghos Pasha and A.Aharonian were told, their compatriots in Cilicia were getting the status of "a minority," instead of earlier supposed autonomy. When half a month later, on March 12, 1921, the Kemalists were confronted with ten proposals prepared for incoming agreement with their State, the ninth of those referred to an autonomous "National Home on the Eastern frontier of Turkey in Asia."³⁴ A commission of the League of Nations would examine the question of the territory to be transferred to it. The author of this concept G.Montgomery had been stationed in London, too.

The fact that concept of independence was replaced with autonomy was determined by several new circumstances. First, on February 23 the Turkish side demanded of Europeans to recognize the Treaty of Alexandropol. Second, on February 26 Bekir Sami asserted that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation had returned to power and would affirm the Alexandropol text within the few days. Then, of March 4 he promised D.Lloyd George to cede the Bosphorus and Dardanelles in exchange for the Caucasus, the British responded that Turkey // -89 would retain all lands, which remained in its possession after the war. Afterwards, on March 9 Prime Minister A.Briand signed an agreement to withdraw French troops from Cilicia. Finally, on March 1, 1921, the Kemalists forces occupied Ardahan, Ardvin, and entered Batum on March 11. In this context, the politicians of the London Conference offered men of Angora to create inner administrative unit, the equitable delimitation of which would provide the League of Nations. That was how the III London Conference had discarded the notion of the Armenian independence and abandoned the Treaty of Sevres. The latter one prescribed unity of the arbitral zone with the Republic of Armenia.

Since the Conference failed to obtain a consent of the Greeks, the Sultan delegate and especially of the Kemalists, who proclaimed they had to report on all about to Angora, the London negotiations had been ceased. They would be resumed later on, in Paris and Lausanne. As to Americans, they put aside the idea of a National Home on the frontier of the Republic of Armenia and focused their attention on Cilicia instead. It explains why the AAO's telegram sent to their new head of the State Department C.E.Hughes on March 28, 1921, was in tune with

³² That's why former Ottoman Foreign Minister G.Noradounghian replaced Boghos Nubar as a head of the National Delegation at the Lausanne Conference. Ս.Վրացյան, Կյանքի ուղիներով: Դեպքեր, Դեմքեր, Այրույններ, 6 հատ., հատ.2, Կահիրե, Յուսաբեր, 1967, էջ 66, 68; NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1222, f.21. See also: Г.Г.Махмуриян, Лига Наций, с.130-131; i.e., Политика Великобритании в Армении и Закавказье в 1918-1920 гг., Бремя белого человека, Ереван, Лусакн, 2002, с.242.

³³ Ա.Խատիսեան, Ըշվ.աշխ., էջ 340:

³⁴ L.Marashlian, op.cit., p.265, 230.

Bogos Nubar's demand to separate the Armenian Question from the Erevan Republic. The referred wire suggested the creation of an autonomy in either Erzerum region or, preferably, in Cilicia. At the same time a letter addressed by the Executive Committee of the Society to the recently inaugurated W.Harding, asked him to insert the issue into the Presidential Message to Congress and solicited for a loan that would serve as an inception for the new independent formation.³⁵

As to Cilicia, on April 1, 1921, Boghos Nubar had been compelled to attest: the agreement signed by the French Premier A.Briand with the Kemalists impelled the withdrawal of the French troops from Chork Marzban (Dortyol), Aintab, Urfa and sanjak of Jebel-Bereket. For this appeasement, i.e. "à nos dépens,"³⁶ they have traded a promise of concessions. No doubt, Angora would become unyielding during the future talks. It was on May 5, 1921, when Boghos Pasha affirmed his consent to the National Home in writing. It met with the sharp rebuff from the Chairman of the ACIA Executive Committee J.Gerard. The latter drew a picture of absolutely fictitious readiness at Washington D.C. to join "with nine other Powers, for the immediate occupation by an international force of Turkish Armenia, and the inauguration of a provisional administration there." In contrast to these gigantic //90 plans, the ACIA didn't cherish any hope "for [its] Government to lend material or other aid to an Armenian district, such as a "Home."³⁷

In general terms, J.Gerard described the whole business, as if the U.S. longed to establish and protect the new State. And it was solely the "closed minds" of persons in their care that the realization of the wonderful American schemes slowed down. Mr.J.Gerard ignored the fact that the socialist Republic of Armenia was unable to liberate the occupied territory, more so - to unite with the arbitral zone. And Armenians had no other Army at their disposal, but these defeated and discouraged troops.

As a follow up, on May 28, 1921, W.H.King had submitted to the Senate the resolution № 81. It closely tied the Treaty of Sevres with the Republic of Armenia, thus disregarding the political right of the entire nation. Senator W.King had reminded of the Genocidal acts in the Western Provinces and especially in Cilicia, perpetrated since August 10, 1920. He insisted on the recognition of the R.A. as a single legal authority in the arbitral zone. In the views of W.H.King, of the Armenian National Union of America and W.Wilson, this measure should "protect the frontier established between Turkey and Armenia pursuant to said Treaty [of Sevres] and to secure the evacuation by the Turks of any and all parts of Armenia, occupied by them."³⁸ It is evident that W.King's resolution had actually contested the decision of the National Assembly on the role of its Delegation taken in Constantinople, on February 5, 1921. In fact, it imposed on Erevan a constant threat of war, i.e. the resolution deprived the Armenians of the possibility to maneuver.

Against this gloomy background, the II Assembly of the League of Nations, summoned on September 21, 1921, turned to be the only "bright spot" when on

³⁵ NAA, f.430, reg.1, file 1012, f.3, 7.

³⁶ At our expense. Ibid., f.10 reverse.

³⁷ Ibid., file 1003, f.4.

³⁸ Ibid., file 1012, f.50-53, 52.

September 22 its member States unanimously voted a resolution where the Assembly “demanded that the Armenian territory be independent of Turkish domination as a “National Home.”³⁹ However, as soon as October 20, 1921, the French had reinforced A.Briand’s initiative and signed the Angora Accord. Their published document informed about concessions, tangible investments in banking, Turkish ports and railways, which compensated France’s abdication of Cilicia.

In spite of so explicit deal, on November 26 the President of the USA calmed //91 down the leader of the ACIA J.Gerard: “I am very happy to reply that the Cilician situation has been given attention, and we have had assurances from the proper authority that those stricken will not be left without military protection. I had the matter taken up through Secretary [C.E.]Hughes and he assured me only yesterday that everything has been done that seems necessary to do. And he has the most gratifying assurances from spokesmen for our former allies abroad. Very truly yours, Warren G.Harding.”⁴⁰

During the same time-frame, the ACIA reduced its maximalist policy to the habitual sphere of philanthropy. From the 5th of October till the 22nd of December, 1921, the managers of the Committee wrote to the Secretary of Commerce H. Hoover about famine in the Republic of Erevan, which could be compared with starvation in the Volga Basin. At first, the Secretary replied on October 12, saying he would be glad “to render aid to Russian Armenia, if at any time the situation should be developed as to make it possible for him to do so.” On December 31, the President-to-be had added: he “sent a cable to Colonel W.Haskell, a copy of which [he] was enclosing herewith, whereby he was requested that a competent observer be sent immediately into Russian Armenia to determine the relative needs of the population in that district as compared with those of the people in the Volga Basin.

...We are begging the shipment of foodstuffs purchased by the Congressional Appropriation to-day, the first ship sailing for Novorossiysk. Further cargoes will be going forward during January, at a rate, probably, of over one day; at the moment we receive word from investigator we will be able to divert to Russian Armenia such a proportion of supplies as can care for the situation in the same measure as the Volga situation will be cared for. I am sure that this will be satisfactory to you.”⁴¹

When on January 31, 1922, the ACIA had abandoned its political activities and appealed to H.Hoover again, on February 1 activists received his reply. The Secretary of Commerce responded: “In fact, taking an outside estimate of the Armenian situation it amounts to less than one and one-half per cent of that in Russia. Even if I accepted statements made with regard to Armenia, I could not justifiably set aside more than one and one-half per cent of food supplies on such information as we have now. In fact, if I approach it wholly mathematically it would //-92 come out less than one per cent.”⁴²

³⁹ L.Martin, *The Treaties of Peace, 1919-1923*, in 2 vols., vol.I, NY, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924, p.XXXVIII.

⁴⁰ NAA, f. 430, reg. 1, file 1003, f. 15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, f.16, 18.

⁴² *Ibid.*, f.27.

On February 23, 1922, H.Hoover added: “We have just received a wire to the effect that [L.]Hutchinson, accompanied by Prof.F.A.Golder has passed through Tiflis in making their inspection in the Caucasus. I presume that this means that we will be receiving a report from them very shortly. We will, of course, keep you advised, immediately on receiving of any such report.” Just a month later the National Delegation was informed that inspectors estimated 6.000 tons of foodstuff were appropriate for Armenia.⁴³

Actually, wheat had replaced political assistance, and this reality corroborated during the hearings of March 7, 1922, in the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives. Its members discussed and stalled the House Resolution № 244 “In Behalf of the Armenians;” the document, which enabled W.Harding to impart to M.Kemal “the moral protest of the United States against the persecution of Armenians and other Christian peoples.” W.Harding should also raise this point in common with the Europeans at the International conference; so, that they could take it up “for the purpose of considering methods by which the Armenian may be given an opportunity to establish themselves a nation.”⁴⁴

On March 15 H.C.Lodge enquired of the State Department if the Senate should join to the protest of the Congressmen. He wrote to C.E.Hughes: “I know you feel that... the Armenians have been badly treated... They have as good a right to independence as the other subject races of the former Turkish Empire. ...A somewhat perfunctory resolution might be suggested which would simply state that the Government of the United States hopes that in the approaching Near Eastern settlement the Armenian nation will not be ignored.”⁴⁵

On March 21 and 23 the Senator had a negative response. Every such initiative would be countered with Europeans’ invitation to direct and unacceptable for the U.S. interference. As to the borders, on the eve of the Lausanne Conference convened on November 20, 1922, the Armenian United Delegation had transferred to the Allied Secretariat at Paris their memorandum. The makers //93 of the document offered the western borders of the R.A. with an outlet to the Black Sea, or suggested an area in Cilicia. They would not refuse the expansion of the existing Republic up to the Black Sea littoral either. However, as the first sort of retribution, the writers insisted on the Home outside Soviet Armenia’s frontiers, because “it was impossible to settle the Armenian Question outside of Turkey.”⁴⁶

On December 12, 1922, Chairman of the 1st Commission on Territorial and Military Questions of the Lausanne Conference G.Curzon and the American observer R.Child had confirmed the “two areas approach,” the one being in the south-eastern Cilicia, around Alexandretta, while the other laid on the borders of the

⁴³ NAA, f. 430, reg. 1, file 1003, f.33, 39.

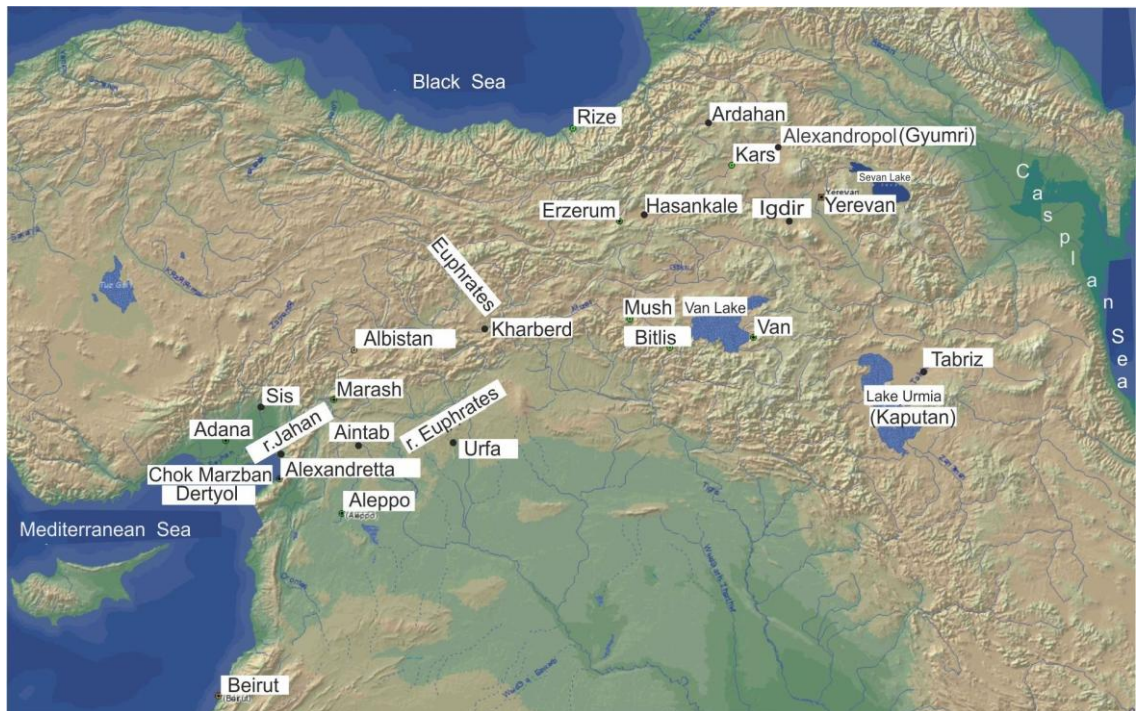
⁴⁴ U.S. Congress Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, on H.Res. 244 In Behalf of the Armenians. March 7, 1922, Wash, GPO, 1922, p.1-2, 16, 18-19. In detail: America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915, ed. by J.Winter, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.292-293.

⁴⁵ US NA, RG 59, 860J.01/516.

⁴⁶ Ա.Խատիսեան, Աշխարհ, էջ 367-370, 373:

R.A.⁴⁷ On December 26 G.Noradoungian and A.Aharonian had specified in the Sub-commission on Minorities of the 1st Commission the frontier lines and possible location of the Home. The first speaker read out a memorandum that assented to any location with a status, similar to a British colony. He had also required a special territorial regime as the compulsory condition for the repatriation of 700,000 Western Armenians.

Then A.Aharonian took the floor demanding an independent region in Cilicia with an outlet to the Mediterranean Sea. When he was returned to the borders of the R.A., he drew a line from Rize to Hasankale with the Erzerum City left westward. To continue, the line had been trailed to Mush, then it skirted the lake of Van and reached the Persian border.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, G.Noradoungian and A. Aharonian always brought the audience back to Cilicia. On the Chairman's demand, G.Noradoungian marked the basin of the Jahan river (Piramos) between Syria and Euphrates. Sis was defined as the south-western foothold of the region, with Marash as the north-eastern one. This area of 20,000 square km. easily provided essential needs and well-being of 500-600,000 toilers. //-94



Places of concentration of the survivals and key points in two regions envisaged for allocation of the Armenian National Home

The AAO and leaders of the charitable Near East Relief backed such an approach. Thus, the memorandum by the AAO, examined in the sub-commission on December 29-30, 1922, included Sis and Albistan in the Mediterranean Home. Its territory reached the very source of Jahan and covered 46,000 sq. km., being

⁴⁷ Great Britain, Parliament, Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs 1922-1923: Records of Proceedings and Draft Terms of Peace, Turkey, № 1 (1923), Command Paper 1814, Lnd., HMSO, 1923, p.178-179.

⁴⁸ Ա.Խատիսեան, ԵԶՎ.աշխ., էջ 384:

twice as big as the region proposed by G.Noradoungian.⁴⁹

It is generally known, that Kemalists who were confident of their military, made no concessions. So the concept of the Home didn't bring the Armenians any good. It had merely facilitated the Turkish rapprochement with Europe and the USA. Owing to American public initiative and right after the hearings of the Armenians in the sub-commission, the U.S. High Commissioner on Bosphorus had been invited on December 28, 1922, to conclude a separate peace. Though the officials at Washington intended to examine this issue only after the Conference of Lausanne.

As to the Armenian Question by itself, its weakest point had been the existing disparity between the available Armenian capabilities to control or protect, and vast expanse of territories or the enormity of problems that confronted them. //-95 Armenians, being the main party concerned, didn't carry on negotiations. They had no appropriate means of defense either and were easily turned into a plaything for all interested actors. As a result, every participant country profited from the situation, except our people, who remained in the state of a victim and an object of international manipulations. //-96

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«Բանբեր հայագիտության», Երևան, 2017, № 3 (15), էջ 76-97:

⁴⁹ Ա.Խատիսեան, ԵՊՀ. ԵՊՀ., էջ 397: