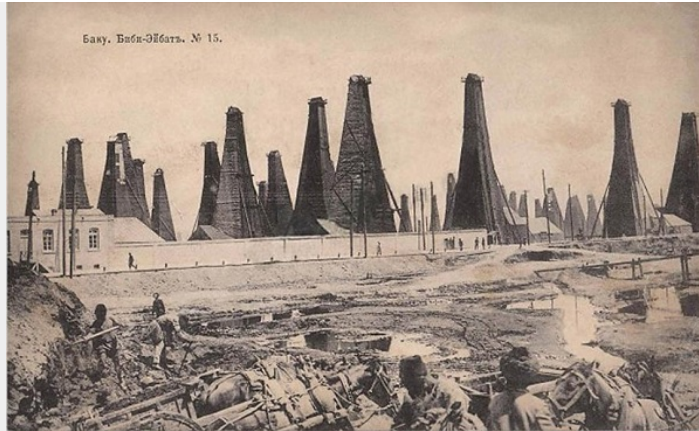


# "TO PUT BAKU UNDER ARMENIA'S SUBORDINATION"

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Category: [Opinions](#)



**By Artsvi Bakhchinyan**, Yerevan, 31 March 2023

On May 28, 1918, the National Council or Constituent Assembly of the Tartars (*today's Azeris*), declared the independence of Azerbaijan with a capital, first at Ganja (Elizavetopol) and later at Baku. After the reduction of Russia's influence in the region, the oil-abundant Baku became an "apple of discord between Western superpowers. At the time a French mining engineer, geologist, and archaeologist Jean-Jacques de Morgan (1857-1924) made an unusual suggestion. He was one of leading specialists of West Asia who published, among many studies, a volume analyzing oil prospects for potential petroleum development in Persia and book *"The History of the Armenian People, from the Remotest Times to the Present Day"* (1917). According to him, Baku is *"not Georgian, not Armenian, not Cossack, not Slavic; Baku is international, and with its international location it is out of the direct control of the peoples, who are called to rebuild it from its ruins."* (As we see, de Morgan did not use the word "Azeri" in his enumeration, as that word did not exist at that time, and no one knew that region as "Azerbaijan" - actually, the name of a Persian northern province).

De Morgan continues: *"Except of Armenia, not any single nation living on Apsheron peninsula, is able to provide various working and practical mind, which are necessary for rebuilding this big city of the oil. Before the war, 30,000 Armenians were working in mines and factories, the rest were Russians, Tartars and Caucasians (the author means the people North Caucasus - A. B.). Moreover, huge Armenian capitals, more important than provided by Russians, were used in this enormous industry. Afterwards French, German, Swedish and other companies come, gaining big importance recently."*



*Thus, it seems both logical and practical to put Baku under Armenia's subordination, meanwhile subordinating it to the control of the states. It should be done so because the Armenians have personal*

*interests to protect there. ...To give Baku Russians - a city, that does not belong them in the sense of location - means to encourage them to cross the border of Great Caucasus, intervene into the issues of Western Asia, realize their expansible wishes (the time of which has been passed) and dominate the peoples, the liberty of which, according to our engagement, we obliged to provide and protect."*

Among number of suggestions, de Morgan suggests:

*"To make Armenia (the strongest country in this region), both Russian and Turkish, autonomous.*

*To make Baku neutral, and their land, extending until Arax river, put under the control of states and under Armenia's administration."*

Jacques de Morgan concludes that if *"England, France and Italy take under their protection the countries who are very young for flying with their own wings and guide them into the independence, then peace will rule in whole East, and in one century Western Asia will be the part of Europe with its moral and material development."*

The quotations from de Morgan's article have done from its Armenian translation, published in "Zhoghovrdi dzayn" (People's Voice) newspaper of Constantinople (23 December, 1918).

De Morgan was not a politician, and while protecting European interests in Western Asia and knowing and appreciating the Armenian people, however, his desire to see a peaceful Western Asia under the protection of Western powers was quite honest, yet not practical. Especially his vision to put Baku under Armenia's subordination seems not real. It is true that the Armenian capital was essential in Baku oil industry, there were many Armenian oil-producers and shareholders (even tycoons) in there, but that was not enough for political involvement. On the other hand, great powers (including Caucasian Tartars' big brother, Ottoman Turks), having great appetite for Baku's oil, would never put that "tidbit" under subordination of a newly independent unknown country, which was under the constant physical threats and the part of its people were subjected to genocide recently (and thousands of Armenians has been brutally massacred in the same year of 1918 in the same Baku).

More than a century passed after de Morgan writing the aforementioned lines. Unfortunately, the peace in Western Asia and the involvement of that region in Europe still remain a distant dream.

**There are no comments yet.**