The Impacts of Lausanne Treaty on British Colonialism

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Abstract

This study analyses the impacts of the Lausanne Treaty upon the British colonial rule. So far, much has been discussed about how the Turkish War of Independence between 1919 and 1922 and the conclusion of Lausanne Treaty in 1923 influenced anti-imperialist or anti-colonial movements on the Middle East. That means the issue was usually studied from the perspective of the colonized. However, the colonizer side of the issue is often neglected. Whereas the British Parliamentary discussions during the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty expose that this Treaty posed serious questions for the British colonial administration. Specifically, Canada's challenge to the British colonial rule concerning the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty provoked heated debates in the British Parliament. British colonies' contribution to the imperial military campaigns and their role in the peace settlements were open to debate. Besides, the administrative approach to the colonies created a dispute in the British domestic politics between the liberals and the conservatives. Thus, it is argued that the Lausanne Treaty generated an immediate impact on the colonial administration and the domestic politics of the British Empire as well. From this point of view, the Lausanne Treaty as a special post-First World War (WWI) agreement is formulated here as a critical stage in the de-colonization movement, which is usually taken as a post-Second World War phenomenon.

Key words: Lausanne Treaty, British Colonialism, British Parliament, First World War, Decolonization

Introduction

British imperial rule was preoccupied with so many questions concerning the dominions and colonies at the beginning of the twentieth century. Moreover, managing these entities at the brink of a world war and mobilizing them for a common imperial cause was not an easy task at that period. In addition, the British imperial rule was still striving to capture new colonies to advance, or at least to sustain, its position against the other Great Powers in the international order. At the end of the First World War, the British Army was evacuating from the Caucasus, however it got its share from the falling Ottoman Empire under the League of Nations' Mandate System and extended its imperial rule. Territorial expansion of the Empire and the post-war difficulties levied an extra burden on the British colonial rule and gave way to critics not only in the dominions but also in the domestic politics.

The economic and human resources of the British colonies were exploited during the WWI and these exploitations gave way to discontents in the colonies.[2] The British dominions and colonies demonstrated their discontent in diverse ways in the postwar period. Over 2.5 million

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[2] Christian Koller, "The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War", *Immigrants & Minorities* 26, no. 1-2 (2008), p. 3.

men had served in the armies of the Dominions, as well as many thousands of volunteers from the Crown colonies.[3] It is understood from the British Parliamentary debates that drafting these colonies into a peace agreement was more problematic than mobilizing them for the imperial war effort. The colonies supporting the imperial war effort enthusiastically at the beginning of the war changed their minds during the war because of the calamities they experienced on several fronts. Their enthusiasm at the beginning of the war was replaced by a more sober attitude against the British imperial rule. Although the colonies were contended with the conclusion of the WWI, the bitter war memories,[4] isolation from the peace settlement arrangements and frustrating postwar migrations to England, the heart of the Empire,[5] led them to question their role in the British Empire. After the WWI, the dominions and colonies[6] asked greater autonomy and real authority in the war and peace decisions beyond formality. Relying on the Parliamentary debates, this study proposes the period following the conclusion of the Lausanne Treaty as an antecedent of the decolonization movement for the British Empire. Although the WWII is usually taken as the key turning point for the decolonization movement,[7] the immediate aftermath of the WWI is suggested in this study as one of the initial stages of decolonization.

The challenges from the colonies were debated in the British Parliament during the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty. Specifically, Canada's rejection to sign the treaty compelled the British government to revise its colonial administration approach and policy-making methods especially regarding the war and peace decisions.[8] Lausanne Treaty as the last one of the series of treaties concluding the WWI generated a formal ground where the critics of the colonies were crystallized.

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3 Peter J. Marshall, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 151.

4 Santanu Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 127-142.

5 Jacqueline Jenkinson, "All in the Same Uniform? The Participation of Black Colonial Residents in the British Armed Forces in the First World War", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 2 (2012), pp. 207-230.

6 Dominions refer to the privileged colonies of the British Empire having greater autonomy in comparison to the dominions. This status was formally accorded to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon. For further information, see S. H. Steinberg, "The British Commonwealth and Empire" in The *Statesman's Year-Book,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1948), pp. 54-71.

7 Robert Pearce, "The Colonial Office and Planned Decolonization in Africa", *African Affairs* 83, no. 330 (1984), pp.77-93; Antony G. Hopkins, "Rethinking Decolonization", *Past & Present* 200, no. 1 (2008), pp. 211-247.

8 George M. Wrong, "Canada and the Imperial War Cabinet", *Canadian Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (1920): 3-25.

In this article, the British Parliamentary minutes are taken as the key source to analyse the position of the colonies and the British rule regarding the ratification of this treaty. The Parliamentary debates were centred on the ratification procedures. These procedures revealed the question of the isolation of colonies from the most critical decisions of the British Empire. For this reason, these procedures were deemed more essential than the provisions of the treaty.

After the WWI experience, the fundamental question was to what extend the colonies should have a say in the most critical decisions of the British Empire. The below sections analyse this key question from the point of the colonies and the British colonial administration. To start with the position of the colonies, it is observed that not only the greater dominions like India, Canada, Australia, South Africa, but also the newly obtained smaller colonies of the Empire were challenging to the British rule in their own ways. Therefore, a general overview of the state of the British colonial administration at the end of the WWI helps to see the whole picture. Given the integrity and interdependence of the British imperial rule, as was underlined by the British colonial administration on many occasions, a challenge by a colonial entity can only be comprehended regarding the state of the colonial rule in general.

The State of British Colonial Rule at the end of the First World War

Although the decolonization notion entered to the lexicon in the 1930s and became popular after the WWII,[9] the WWI experiences laid the ground. The WWI had done much to alter the tone of colonialism.[10] While the war mobilization efforts at the beginning of the war, especially the soldier recruitments, might have generated a consolidating effect on the colonial empires by extending a common sentiment of belonging to the same polity, the later stages of the war unravelled the dissociating forces. Especially the battles in which the soldiers from the colonies were killed in large numbers forged the bitter war memories and prompted the colonies to revise their role and significance for the empire. For example, the losses of Australian and New Zealand troops, namely the ANZAC forces, during the 1915 Gallipoli Campaign against the Ottoman Empire had a significant impact on the national consciousness at home, and marked a watershed in the transition of Australia and New Zealand from colonies to independent nations. The Battle of Vimy Ridge, where the losses of the Canadian troops were innumerable, made a similar impact upon the Canadian national consciousness.[11] Therefore, especially the dominions like Canada, Australia and New Zealand started to develop a more reserved attitude against the British rule after the WWI experiences. Moreover, not only the human resources but also the economic

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[9] Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonization*, (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 1.
[10] Prasenjit Duara, *Decolonization Perspectives, Now and Then*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 98.
[11] Trevor O. Lloyd, *The British Empire 1558–1995, (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 277.

resources of the colonies were exhausted during the war, which was another source of discontent in the colonies. In addition, the critical circles at home were complaining about financing the war spending of the colonies and meeting their economic restoration costs in the aftermath of the war. In short, the dissociating factors came to the surface in the immediate aftermath of the Great War.[12]

The ill effects of the war were further deteriorated by the ongoing challenges from the colonies. Ireland and India questions were already occupying the agenda of the British colonial administration even before the war. According to Thurlow, the colonial matters of the Empire always had a certain influence on the domestic politics of Britain. The British Home Office was at odds with the Colonial Office for this reason. The Home Office complained many times about the Colonial Office for occupying the domestic agenda. However, the long-established determination of the British Home Office that the questions of Colonial Office should not influence the way how Britain was governed, did not practically make sense in the post-war period. Parallel to the raising challenges from the colonies in the post-war period, the colonial questions went beyond the domain of the Colonial Office and turned to a critical issue of domestic party politics between the liberals and the conservatives. Consequently, the British governments had to develop a more consensual approach to the colonies in the post-WWI period.[13] Although some of them were just on paper, the British administration had to assign self-governing status for some dominions and the colonies in the aftermath of the Great War, as part of an appeasement policy.

Declaration of Irish Independence in 1919 and the following guerilla war frustrated the British administration.[14] A similar struggle started in India when the Government of India Act (1919) failed to satisfy the demand for independence.[15] The India Office demanded autonomous enclaves or statelets under the British rule. Moreover, the British-Turkish relations found direct resonances in India. Especially, the Muslim population of India was very closely watching the Turkish Struggle against the Great Powers.[16]

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[12] Chris Wrigley (ed.), *British Industrial Relations*, (Cheltenham: E. Elgar, 1996), pp. 28, 40.

[13] Richard Thurlow, *The Secret State: British Internal Security in the Twentieth Century*, (Oxford: Wiley, 1994), p. 75.

14 Judith Brown, *The Twentieth Century, The Oxford History of the British Empire,* Volume IV, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 127-135.

[15] See Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power,* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

[16] Alp Yenen, "The Other Jihad: Enver Pasha, Bolsheviks, and Politics of Anticolonial Muslim Nationalism during the Baku Congress 1920" in *The First World War and Its Aftermath: The Shaping of the Middle East*, edited by Fraser T. G., (London: Gingko, 2015), pp. 275-276.

Not only the British dominions, but also the A category mandates under the League of Nations' mandate system like Iraq and Palestine posed challenges to the British government in the same period. In Palestine, Britain had a problem of maintaining the balances between the Arabs and Jews. The 1917 Balfour Declaration, started a century-long Arab-Israeli conflict.[17] On the other side, the treaty signed between Britain and Iraq in 1922 was challenged soon both in Iraq and in Britain. The Iraq administration realized that this treaty envisaged the reproduction of the mandate rule, and it was far from achieving the independence of the country. Therefore, the Iraq Parliament refused to ratify this treaty. On the other side, the British public was not satisfied with this treaty either. A press campaign was organized against the British expenditures in Iraq. This campaign made an impact on the British general elections in 1922.[18] In 1922, British administration granted another unsatisfying formal independence for Egypt this time.[19]

The British colonies in Africa were also frustrated. Black colonial people volunteered for the British Army and the Royal Navy during the WWI, because they regarded themselves as part of the British Empire. Nevertheless, their enthusiasm for the British Empire was replaced by frustration at the end of the war. On their return from the war front, demobilized African navy personnel intended to settle in Britain. However, the white crowds that attacked black colonial war veterans during the Seaport riots of 1919 manifested that they were not regarded as Briton as they assumed by some white Britons. These Black veterans were repatriated to their home after the war to give the message to the potential emigrants from the African colonies that they would not be welcomed by London.[20]

All these postwar developments in the colonies indicate that the British administration was having difficulties in meeting the demands of the colonies in the post-war period. Some colonies believed that they deserved a greater autonomy or independence; some others asked better life standards in Britain in return for their war services. On the face of these post-war demands from the colonies, it is observed that the British administration had to follow an appeasement policy to maintain its power.

Although the British administration still stood as a powerful force over the colonies, it had to give some concessions to be able to maintain its power. The admission of formal self-

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17 W. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization, (*London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 73-75.

18 https://www.britannica.com/place/Iraq/British-occupation-and-the-mandatory-regime, retrieved on 14.3.2021.

19 Simon Smith, *British Imperialism 1750–1970,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 86.

20 Jenkinson, pp. 207-230. See also, Michèle Barrett, "Subalterns at War: First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission", *interventions* 9, no. 3 (2007): 451-474.

governing status was not the only concession given by the British colonial rule; some economic concessions were also offered in the aftermath of the war. For example, the British administration had a little desire to establish arbitration services in the dominions, but it had to do so after the war.[21] In addition, India and the other dominions got tariff autonomy in 1919.[22] However, this appeasement policy of the British colonial administration helped to save the day until the WWII.

On the other side, the forces of Turkish nationalism posed a different kind of challenge to the British colonial rule. The Turkish War of Independence fought between 1919 and 1922 instilled hope and constituted an ideal model for the nationalists of the colonized world.[23] This enthusiasm was explained concisely by Sonyel:

> "The repercussions of this Turkish victory found an echo outside the boundaries of Turkey, throughout the dependent and oppressed countries, which now looked to Mustafa Kemal for liberation. Muslims all over the world hailed this Turkish success as the greatest victory of Islam over Christendom, of the East over the West, of Asia over Europe, and of Nationalist Turkey over Imperialist Britain."[24]

Nevertheless, the Turkish military success over the Greek army in Anatolia was viewed differently in Britain. Some authors like Davison regarded the victory of Turkish nationalism as comparable to the similar developments in the other countries of the region like Iran and Afghanistan.[25] According to this view, Turkey was not the only country waging a national war in the post-WWI period. Afghan national forces also had got their independence in 1919 by the Anglo-Afghan Rawalpindi Treaty.[26] Although, the international resonances of the Lausanne Treaty concluding the Turkish War of Independence were more extensive and influential in the larger framework of the Great Power politics, the British administration undermined this fact. The British Delegation in Lausanne followed the same unrecognition strategy. Nevertheless, the British imperial administration could hardly evade from the consequences of the Lausanne Conference upon its colonial rule. The developments leading to the convention of Lausanne Conference, especially the Chanak Affair, and the strategy of the British Delegation in the

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[21] Thurlow, p. 36.

[22] John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: the Retreat from Empire in the Post-war World*, (London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 1988), p. 9.

[23] George W. Gawrych, "Kemal Atatürk's Politico-Military Strategy in the Turkish War of Independence, 1919–1922: from Guerrilla Warfare to the Decisive Battle", *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 11, no. 3 (1988), p. 318.

[24] Salahi Sonyel, "The Anglo-Turkish Conflict Fifty Years Ago", *Belleten* XXXVII, no. 8, (1972), p. 116.

[25] Roderic Davison, "Middle East Nationalism: Lausanne Thirty Years After", *Middle East Journal* .7, no. 3 (1953), p. 325.

[26] Gregory Fermont-Barnes, *The Anglo Afghan Wars, 1839-1919,* (Oxford; New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), p. 198.

Conference should be explained at first to understand how the dominions came at loggerheads with the British administration at the conclusion of the Lausanne Conference.

The Chanak Affair and the British Strategy in the Lausanne Conference

Turkey was a significant gateway for the maintenance of the British colonial empire and the British strategy against Turkey was largely shaped by this geostrategic concern during the WWI. The British strategy at the end of the war was summarized in a memorandum by Harold Nicolson, an official at the Foreign Office's Eastern department, well-acquainted with Greek affairs as well. He said: "The idea which prompted our support of Greece was no emotional impulse but the natural expression of our historical policy — the protection of India and the Suez Canal."[27]

The key concern of British administration was territorial, since Britain's economic stake in Turkey was relatively small in comparison to France and Italy.[28] The caliphate status of the Ottoman Sultan in İstanbul was another concern for the British administration. As was emphasized by the State Secretary for India, Edwin Montagu, a humiliating peace treaty imposed upon the Caliphate as the highest-ranking Islamic leader might have made things harder for the British administration in India and other Muslim populated colonies.[29] That means the British strategy upon Turkey during the WWI was largely determined by the maintenance of the colonial rule, both territorially and socio-politically. Therefore, it can be expected that the peace conference strategy would be based on the same determinant.

Lord Curzon was holding the Foreign Secretary post during the Lausanne Conference and acted as a remarkably determinant actor of the British policy during this peace settlement process. The State Secretary for the Dominions, Sir Winston Churchill, was another influential figure. Both figures were trying to mobilize the British dominions to wage another war against the Turks for the maintenance of the Straits. After the takeover of Smyrna by the Turkish forces, the British Cabinet was alarmed for the safety of the Straits. Then Curzon took initiatives to give an end to this prolonged chapter of the WWI on Anatolia by a final strike on the Straits. He threatened the victorious troops of Mustafa Kemal not to advance to the neutral zones on the Straits. Although Curzon found it as "a gross and ridiculous exaggeration to suppose that Mustafa Kemal would

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[27] Theo Karvounarakis, "End of an Empire: Great Britain, Turkey and Greece from the Treaty of Sèvres to the Treaty of Lausanne", *Balkan Studies* 41, no. 1 (2000), p. 173.

[28] Michael Dockrill, "Britain and the Lausanne Conference: 1922-1923", *The Turkish Yearbook*, XXIII, (1993), p. 4.

[29] Hazal Papuççular, "For the Defence of the British Empire: Edwin Montagu and the Turkish Peace Settlement in a Transnational Context", *Journal of Anglo-Turkish Relations* 1, no. 2, (2020), pp. 30-42.

dare fire a single shot at the allied detachments"[30] on the neutral zone protecting the Straits, the French Prime Minister Poincare reminded him about the consequences of such an adventure. Curzon argued that "a triumph over the Greeks is not necessarily a triumph over the Allies."[31] Both Curzon and Churchill would not concede before taking the control over the Straits. So that, they forged ahead for a military operation for this purpose. However, they did not directly target the Bosporus but preferred Dardanelles Strait to relieve the national memory from the burden of the defeat at Gallipoli in 1915. Left alone by the French and Italian forces, the British army came at the brink of war with the Turkish forces for the Dardanelles shortly before the Mudania Ceasefire, which was known as the Chanak Affair. Despite the incessant calls of its allies, the British administration did not approach to the diplomacy table before a last military attempt to change the course of the war for the safety and prestige of its imperial rule. For the Chanak operation, Churchill made a call to the dominions to recruit soldiers. He appealed to the dominions saying that:

> "…the foundation of British policy in that region, was the Gallipoli Peninsula and the freedom of the Straits. It was of the highest importance that Chanak should be held effectively for this. Apart from its military importance, Chanak had now become a point of great moral significance to the prestige of the Empire… we cannot forget that there are 20.000 British and Anzac graves in the Gallipoli Peninsula and that it would be an abiding source of grief to the Empire if these were to fall into the ruthless hands of the Kemalists."[32]

The responses of the dominions to this call were frustrating for the British Cabinet. New Zealand alone replied with an immediate declaration of support and the offer of a detachment. Canada and Australia took a reserved stand replying that they could offer their support under certain circumstances. General Smuts of South Africa did not reply at all.[33] Consequently, the British administration had to accept the diplomacy table at Lausanne after a military show off at Chanak to save the face. The Chanak affair indicated that the British cabinet and the dominions were not on the same page. The gap would be broadened after the Lausanne Conference.

The British Delegation at Lausanne headed by Curzon approached the Turkish delegate by a denial strategy. The betrayal of the French and Italian administrations was underlined to undermine the military success of the Ankara government.[34] However, the Turkish case was unique in the sense that a national war was fought to challenge the Sèvres Treaty concluding the

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[30] A. L. Macfie, "The Chanak Affair, September-October 1922", *Balkan Studies* 2, (1979), p. 310.
[31] Ibid., p. 312.
[32] Ibid., p. 323.
[33] Ibid., p. 318.
[34] Dockrill, p. 8

WWI. Among the treaties concluding the WWI, only the Sèvres Treaty was replaced by a new one upon a national war fought against the Allies. However, the Lausanne Conference was commenced by a view denying the Anatolian chapter of the WWI. The British policy was reluctant to accept this last battle changing the course of the war to the detriment of Britain and the Allies. From the British point of view, Turkey was a defeated enemy. For this reason, at the beginning of the Lausanne Conference, the British policy turned a blind eye to the most recent facts about the war and tried to adopt the 1919 Paris Peace Conference spirit to Lausanne. As Hayes put it, the British policy during the Conference was pragmatic in concept if unrealistic in execution, being an attempt to match the commitments of 1919 to the facts of 1922.[35]

The British administration might have expected a diplomatic advantage over this denial or unrecognition of the factual situation in an authoritative peace conference setting. As Zvi suggests, Turkish delegation in the Lausanne Conference was confronted with a powerful, coercive coalition comprising all or most of the Great Powers.[36] The diplomatic disparity between the negotiating parties was observable in almost all of the stages of the Conference starting from the commencement ceremony.[37] The American journalist following the Conference, Joseph Grew, reported İsmet Pasha's unsolicited inauguration speech as a "tactless attitude ridiculing the Turkish delegation at Lausanne."[38] Grew's observation as a diplomat attending the Conference as the USA delegate directly reflected the general sentiment dominating diplomatic atmosphere in Lausanne. The underlying fact was that the Great Powers were unwilling to negotiate with the newly established Ankara government on equal terms. As Bush notes, the Lausanne Conference was the only post-war conference in which the Allies met the defeated enemy on anything like equal terms.[39] On the face of this fact, it seems that the Allies resorted to an undermining and unrecognition approach in Lausanne.

The challenges from the British colonies at the end of the Lausanne Conference imply that not only the military success of the Ankara government, but the negotiation capacities of the colonies were also denied. The greatest dominions of the British Empire reacted to this isolation from the peace settlement during the ratification process of the Lausanne Treaty. The ratification

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[35] Paul M. Hayes, *The Twentieth Century 1880-1939*, (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 1978), p. 212

[36] Abraham Ben-Zvi, *Between Lausanne and Geneva: International Conferences and the Arab-Israeli Conflict,* (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 6-7.

[37] Nimet Beriker and Daniel Druckman, "Simulating the Lausanne Peace Negotiations, 1922-1923: Power Asymmetries in Bargaining", *Simulation & Gaming* 27, no. 2 (1996), pp. 162-183.

[38] Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era; A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945,* Vol. 2, (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), pp. 489-490.

[39] Briton C. Bush, *Mudros to Lausanne,* (Albany: Suny Press, 1976), p. 365.

discussions in the British Parliament after the conclusion of the Lausanne Treaty unravels this legitimacy question in detail.

Ratification of Lausanne Treaty in Britain and the Discussions over the Imperial Governance

Much has been written about the negotiations and provisions of the Lausanne Treaty so far. As Toynbee noted after the conclusion of the Treaty as a contemporary observer, "The Treaty of Lausanne will be judged in history by its effect upon the internal development and the mutual relations of the nations between whom it has been made."[40] It is a fact that the domestic impacts of this treaty upon the signatory states have not been thoroughly discussed, although its bilateral consequences were debated so much in the literature. Since the fate of the newly established regime in Turkey was largely dependent on the durability of this treaty, domestic repercussions of this treaty were usually examined in reference to the Turkish politics. However, it is argued here that the impacts of this treaty upon the British politics was not negligible at all, especially concerning the colonial administration. The below section concentrates on the British Parliamentary discussions on the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty and its relevance for the British colonial administration.

As a general principle of international law, the treaties should be put to the vote of the legislative bodies of the signatory countries for assent. Only after this assent procedure, which is called ratification, the treaties can be put into force.[41] Comparably, a more complex assent procedure was in operation in the British Parliament due to the colonial rule. Since the British colonies were mobilized for the Great War, it became an ethical burden for the British Cabinet to involve the colonies somehow into the peace settlement as well. The way the British colonies were represented in the Lausanne Conference and the role of the colonies in war and peace decisions of the Empire were discussed in the British Parliament following the conclusion of the Lausanne Conference. The debate triggered by Canada Prime Minister Mackenzie King's rejection to sign the treaty. King declared that Canada cannot undertake all the obligations deriving from the Treaty. The Prime Minister was anxious since these obligations deriving from the guarantor status of Britain on the Straits, might have given way to another war mobilization for Canada. This challenge by Canada generated hot discussions in the British Parliament. The liberals and conservatives criticized one another's approach to the colonies and tried to find a way out of this deadlocking situation because it was necessary to ratify the treaty properly with the signatures of all the dominions.

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[40] Arnold Toynbee, "The East After Lausanne", *Foreign Affairs,* 2, no. 1(1923), p. 84.
[41] See also, Gerald G. Fitzmaurice, "Do Treaties Need Ratification", *Brit. YB Int'l L.* 15 (1934), p. 113.

The ratification of the Lausanne Treaty came onto the agenda of the House of Commons on 6th June 1924. One of the Liberal Party members, who was also a private secretary to the Prime Minister Lloyd George, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Edward Grigg[42] raised the point for the first time saying that they assumed that the Treaty of Lausanne had been accepted and welcomed by the whole Empire until the challenges from the Canada Prime Minister. Grigg claimed that from the very outset Canada called attention to changing procedures. He followed that the constitutional procedures applied in the Treaty of Versailles and all the other Peace treaties were not followed for the Lausanne Treaty. In sum, as a liberal MP Grigg questioned the role of the colonies in the treaty negotiation and signature procedures. He considered the absence of the plenipotentiaries from the colonies in the Lausanne conference as a fatal initial error. He noted that the dominions were informed that the British government reached an agreement with the French and Italian governments that each Power would be represented by two plenipotentiaries. He emphasized that the opinions of the dominions were not asked, but they were merely informed about the decision of the British Cabinet. He argued that the British Cabinet sacrificed its own dominions for the sake of the French empire. He claimed that the French government suggested disregarding the colonial delegates in Lausanne because they would have to invite the Sultan of Morocco as well. The presence of a Muslim ruler would not strengthen their hand in Lausanne, but quite the contrary. Nevertheless, he argued that the British administration's relations with its own dominions were strained because of the French position. He made the point that "If Canadian lives, Australian lives and the blood and treasure of all the other Dominions are to be sacrificed, that can be done only by the decision of their own elected representatives sitting in their own parliaments, and not by the representatives of the British Isles in this Parliament.[43]

Then, Mr. Ronald McNeill from the Conservative Party replied Grigg pointing out that the Lausanne Treaty was a modification of the Sévres Treaty that the dominion representatives already signed as a matter of formality without complaining. Upon this reply Grigg directed a critical question; "how it comes about that the Dominions quite willingly signed the Treaty of Sèvres, and refused to sign the Treaty of Lausanne?"[44]

Although, the British Cabinet might have undermined what happened between the Sèvres Treaty and the Lausanne Conference, the dominions who actively participated to the war were very well aware of the fact that they lost the Anatolian section of the WWI despite all their efforts

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[42] Kenneth Rose, "Grigg, Edward William Macleay, First Baron Altrincham" in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 1.

[43] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521617

[44] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521617

and losses. While the British Cabinet was striving to change the course of the war by a final attack to Chanak, the British dominions had already concluded that the war was over. However, the British Cabinet and the British delegation in Lausanne denied this fact.

This ratification challenge by the dominions was brought onto the agenda by the Liberals in the Parliament as a critique against the Conservative Party in power at that time. However, the liberals, especially Lloyd George leading the coalition government until the 15th of November elections, shortly before the commencement of the Lausanne Conference, was also questioned in the Parliament. In so far as they had started to search a political faction to blame for this colonial crisis, the issue turned to a domestic party politics debate. The problematic side of the issue is that all these questionable communication with the dominions took place during the transfer of the Liberal-Conservative coalition government led by Lloyd George to Bonar Law of the Conservative Party. Lloyd George explained in detail how his cabinet approached to the dominions on the Lausanne conference issue. He underlined that their Cabinet sent a telegram to the dominions to inform them that about the Lausanne Conference procedures not to ask their opinions. Then he added that "if another Die-Hard Conservative Government comes into power, they will do exactly the same thing again." Nevertheless, he rejected the claims that the dominions were not consulted at all. He said:

> "I will give you an account of how the Turkish Treaty was negotiated…The main principles of that Treaty were discussed in Paris by the British Empire Delegation…I say that the main principles were discussed during that British Empire Delegation, where the Prime Ministers of the Dominions were present….Mesopotamia was discussed, Palestine was discussed, Armenia was discussed, Cilicia was discussed, Smyrna was discussed, and Thrace was discussed. The Dardanelles were also discussed. All these vital questions were discussed at Paris, at the meetings of the British Empire Delegation…What is the good of saying that the Dominions were not consulted?"[45]

From Lloyd George's point of view, the large gap between what they had decided in Paris and how the Treaty was concluded in Lausanne was more upsetting than the challenges by the colonies. He emphasized that the treaty terms that the new Conservative government accepted in Lausanne was a complete reversal of the decisions taken in Paris. He listed his objections to the concluded treaty saying that:

> "Does he realise that in three important parts it is a complete departure from the decisions taken in Paris? What were they? First of all, with regard to Smyrna and South Eastern Anatolia, that was a reversal. The Straits is another. You had a decision there, and you had a demilitarised zone, to be occupied and garrisoned by the Allies. Now, you have a demilitarised zone depending entirely upon Turkish Declarations. What were their declarations worth in the late war? Then there is a guarantee of

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[45] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521632

Turkish neutrality by the British Empire. Surely that is a vital distinction. If there is any attack upon their zone, upon Constantinople, upon the Straits, the British Empire by this Treaty is bound to come in—horse, foot and artillery, with all its resources — to defend them from whatever quarter the attack comes. Is not that a vital difference? What is the third departure? The surrender of the capitulations. You surrendered there, British rights which had been enjoyed by the traders of this country for centuries. That was not in the Paris arrangement. That was not in the Treaty of Sèvres."[46]

Lloyd George's challenges to the Lausanne Treaty were taken by the conservatives as a partisan score against his former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Curzon, who was a conservative. A Conservative MP Mr. Ormsby Gore criticized George with threatening the peace. He also added that the dominions turned away from the British Cabinet in the Chanak affair because of this fanatical approach of George threatening the peace.[47] Concerning the colonial question, he emphasized the integrity of the British Empire, noting that it was not just a matter between the British Cabinet and Canada but concerned the Empire as a whole. He said:

> "I believe that, with the possible exception of Canada, at this moment the majority of the Dominions are anxious that the Treaty of Lausanne should be ratified at the earliest possible moment. It is of enormous importance to the Empire and to the Dominions. I believe it is quite as important to Canada as to Australia and New Zealand… Canada will inevitably realise that in the event of the British Empire being involved in difficulties in the Near East, she will be involved as an Empire."[48]

Then, the Prime Minister Bonar Law came onto the stage and involved in the debate. He started his speech by acknowledging that it was the time to consider what machinery was to be created for the conduct of a unified imperial policy. He suggested sending weekly telegrams to the dominions on the foreign policy matters so that they would be able to express their opinions. He also related this challenge by the dominions to the Chanak affair saying that: "The whole question is now, after the War, there has been a tremendous change in the minds of the Dominions, made by what is known as the Chanak telegram."[49] Finally, he announced to the Parliament that Canada accepted to sign the treaty and pointed out that they had to return immediately to the Irish question.[50]

This issue was closed in the Parliament by the final remarks of radical liberal Captain Benn, who joined the Labour Party later on.[51] Supporting the Canadian Prime Minister's objection, he

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[46] House of Commons Hansard Archives (HC)
https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521635, (accessed, 9 January 2021).
[47] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521644
[48] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521647
[49] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521649-1650
[50] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521651
[51] Percy Harris, *Forty Years in and out of Parliament*, (London: Read Books, 2006).

said; "After all, the important thing in this Debate is not our view of what Mr. King should think, but what Mr. King does think."[52] He criticized the conservative approach to the dominions that opposed granting Constitution to South Africa. He also criticized using force against Ireland. Concerning the Lausanne Treaty, he said: "It is too late now to destroy the Treaty of Lausanne. It is the presentation of the two conceptions of Empire. If right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite suggest that the Empire is to be founded upon tariff, we reply that the true foundation of Empire is liberty."[53]

Above Parliamentary debates manifest that the colonial administration approach of the British Empire came under question due to the procedures at Lausanne. Content of the treaty were overshadowed by the colonial problems of the British Empire. In a sense, the Lausanne Treaty constituted a ground for the British Cabinet and the dominions to renegotiate their roles and expectations from one another.

The Consequences of the British Colonial Crisis

The important contribution of the Dominions to the war effort was recognized in 1917 by the British Prime Minister Lloyd George when he invited each of the Dominion Prime Ministers to join an Imperial War Cabinet to co-ordinate imperial policy.[54] However, the later stages of the war proved that the role of the dominions was diminished in time. Finally, the Lausanne Treaty setting exposed that they were isolated from the decision-making venues when it comes to the peace settlement. Their role was reduced to a commanded signatory who signed a treaty merely as a formality. Such an approach dragged the British administration into a legitimacy crisis.

Australia and Canada were the most developed British colonies, which were called as the dominions.[55] The dominions had more say in the imperial politics in comparison to the colonies. In return, they were usually placed on the fore fronts in a war situation. Britain did not deploy any African troops on European battlefields at first in the WWI. Then, some politicians like Churchill deemed the mobilization of all the dominions and colonies into the imperial war effort as being necessary for the integrity of the Empire. Churchill claimed in a House of Commons speech in May 1916 that not only ten to twelve Indian divisions, but also African units should be

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[52] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521652

[53] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521652

[54] Lloyd, p. 277.

[55] Matthew Lange, *Lineages of Despotism and Development: British Colonialism and State Power*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 3.

trained for deployment in Europe.[56] As a result, as was mentioned above in reference to Jenkinson's work, the African volunteers joined the navy during the WWI. Contributions of all the colonies were crucial for the maintenance of the imperial rule. By the same token, objection by any colonial entity was taken as a threat to the unity of the empire. Then, one can ask why Canada was the forerunner of the challenges to the British administration. As a prompt reply, it can be suggested that the public opinion factor might have been influential in Canada to develop such a resentment against the British administration. The famous novelist Ernest Hemingway's role was important in the development of this public opinion in Canada.

It was not until May 1917 that the journalists and reporters were able to move close to the war fronts, in an attempt to deflect mounting criticism of the casualty lists.[57] As a young reporter, Hemingway visited Istanbul and the Thracian part of Turkey between 29 September and 18 October 1922. During his stay, he closely followed the military and political consequences of the Turkish Great Offensive, which was a major stage in the Turkish War of Independence and witnessed at first hand the Greek evacuation of eastern Thrace.[58] His impressions of Istanbul under occupation and his observations of the events and developments at the time were published in a popular magazine in Canada called Star. His novel, *A Farewell to Arms* published in 1929 denounced the war. This piece relying on the direct observations can be regarded as a manifestation of the growing anti-war sentiment since the later stages of the WWI.[59]

Both the Chanak Affair and the ratification crisis revealed that the British colonial administration was undergoing a management crisis in the immediate aftermath of the WWI. The challenges to the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty unravelled a legitimacy crisis concerning the British colonial administration. A year after these Parliamentary debates, a separate Dominions Office was established in 1925 to handle relations with Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Irish Free State.[60] The establishment of this special office can be evaluated as a concrete outcome of these negotiations between the dominions and the British administration. However, the effectiveness of this new office is questionable. It should have been still unsatisfying for the Canada Parliament. In 1936, Canada Premier Mackenzie King stressed

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[56] Christian Koller, "The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War", *Immigrants & Minorities* 26, no. 1-2 (2008), pp. 111-133.

[57] David Reynolds, "Britain, the Two World Wars, and the Problem of Narrative", *The Historical Journal* 60, no. 1 (2017), p. 199

[58] Himmet Umunç, "Hemingway in Turkey: Historical Contexts and Cultural Intertexts", *Belleten* 69, no. 255 (2005), pp. 229-242.

[59] Linda Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide to Ernest Hemingway,* (Oxford, New York: 2000), p. 24, 31.

[60] David Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century,* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 43

that only the Canadian Parliament could decide, "To what extent, if at all Canada would participate in conflicts involving other Commonwealth countries."[61] The sequence of these challenges exposes that these post-WWI discontents can be evaluated as an antecedent of the post-WWII decolonization movement. In this continuous process of decolonization since the WWI, the Turkish War of Independence and the Lausanne Treaty concluding the last chapter of the WWI war in an unusual way constitutes a critical turning point for the British colonial administration.

Lausanne Conference constituted a break also in the diplomatic representation customs and privileges of the British Empire. The British Empire was the only League of Nations member that was officially represented together with its dominions. The glorious British Delegation attended by the representatives of the dominions was dissolved for the first time in the Lausanne Conference. As was criticized by the liberal MP Mr. Grigg in the Parliament, the isolation of the dominions from the British delegation in Lausanne was considered as a concession from the imperial prestige of the Empire on the international arena.[62] According to the liberal opposition in the Parliament, not only the imperial prestige but also the democratic legitimacy of the British rule was eroded in the Lausanne peace process. The British rule had a claim to generate a microcosm of the League of Nations with its dominions and colonies. Since the British administration presented itself as an ideal form of a League of Nations acting in harmony with the territories and people that it governed by liberal principles, the objections from the dominions eroded the legitimacy of its power. Grigg expressed this view of the British Empire saying that: "Great Britain and the self-governing Dominions at this moment constitute an actual League of Nations acting together on the very principles to which the wider League of Nations aspires. It is a family of free nations."[63]

Grigg pointed out to another important consequence of this colonial crisis, which was the loss of prestige against other Great Powers. The dissolution of the British Delegation for the first time in Lausanne was regarded as a loss of status against the French Empire. Although the British Empire was given the right to be represented as an Empire with its dominions according to the League of Nations Covenant, French Empire was deprived of such an imperial representation in the League. Therefore, reaching an agreement with France for the exclusion of the dominions

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[61] Reynolds, p. 123.
[62] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521619
[63] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521621

from the Lausanne Conference practically meant to surrender of this privileged imperial status of Britain.[64]

Concluding Remarks

This study revealed that the Lausanne Treaty between the Ankara government and the Allies generated significant impacts on the British colonial administration in the post-WWI period and constituted an antecedent stage of the decolonization movement. Britain was not only one of the signatories to this Treaty but also the key influential actor of the peace conference. The British delegation in Lausanne approached the Turkish delegation by a strategy denying the diplomatic consequences of the military success of the Turkish army in Anatolia. Not only the Ankara government, but also the British dominions were undermined during the Lausanne peace settlement process. The peace settlement procedures that the British administration agreed upon to follow with other Great Powers resulted in the discontent of its colonies. The British delegation made up of the representatives of the dominions together with the British cabinet was dissolved for the first time in the Lausanne Peace Conference. This change in the peace-decision procedures were criticized by the British dominions and the issue was taken to the British Parliament.

In a sense, the Lausanne Treaty constituted a ground for the British Cabinet and the dominions to renegotiate their roles and expectations from one another. Long undermined colonial questions reached its climax when the Lausanne Treaty was presented to the dominions for signature. The accounts of the Lloyd George government suggest that the starting point of this climax was the Gallipoli battle, where so many dominion soldiers lost their lives. Then, the discontent between the dominions and the British Cabinet became explicitly visible during the Chanak affair, when the dominions were called to wage another war in Anatolia to conclude the war with British victory against the Turkish troops on the Straits. Contrary to the expectations of the British government, all the dominions except New Zealand rejected to wage another war in Anatolia. Discontent of the dominions lasted during the Lausanne peace conference as well. Even though the dominions did not hesitate to make their utmost efforts during the war, they were isolated from the peace settlement. Then, they criticized the British administration at the ratification stage of the Lausanne Treaty in the British Parliament.

Canada as one of the greatest dominions took the lead to challenge the British Cabinet by rejecting to sign the Lausanne Treaty not to come under any military obligation especially for the defense of the Straits as Lloyd George aspired. Thanks to the Conservative government that

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[64] HC Deb 06 June 1924 Vol 174 cc1617-521619

replaced Lloyd George government, so that the dominions were relieved from another war threat. However, conservative and liberal approaches to the colonies were principally the same. As was clearly expressed by George, there was no difference between the liberal and even die-hard conservative governments in their approach to the colonies. Only the radicals within the Liberal Party, who would later establish the Labour Party, took side with the dominions, and supported greater autonomy for the dominions.

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