

ASHOT A. MELKONYAN

*Institute of History of the NAS RA*

*Dr. of Sci. in History, Professor, Academician of the NAS RA*

ashamelk@yahoo.com

## THE HISTORICAL STAGES OF THE ARMENIAN STATEHOOD IN THE NEW ERA (MID-17<sup>TH</sup> C. – 1918)\*

**Key words:** Artsakh, Israel Ori, liberation program, semi-independent principalities, Shahamir Shahamiryan, sovereignty, statehood, Syunik.

### *Introduction*

A new period of Armenian history took place from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century to 1918 when the Armenian liberation movement was experiencing a new revitalization. The Armenian Apostolic Church had become the head of that struggle. At the initiative of the Armenian spiritual and secular elite, plans for liberation from foreign rule with the help of Christian states were discussed. On this occasion various delegations were sent to European countries in order to obtain assistance.

From the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the leaders of the Armenian liberation struggle connected the problem of the liberation of Armenia with the Russian Empire. In the 1720s - 1740s the

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struggle for liberation gave its result in Artsakh and Syunik: Armenian formations were officially recognized by Persian authority.

After annexing Eastern Armenia to Russia in the first thirty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian authorities formed an administrative unit named “Armenian oblast (district)” in order to create an illusion of restoring Armenian statehood. It is no coincidence that this unit dissolved 12 years later.

Along with the idea of liberation of Western Armenia, the Armenian national parties that were formed in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century considered the issue of the restoration of Armenian statehood as a key point in their program documents.

The history of statehood in modern times (mid 17<sup>th</sup> c. – 1918) demonstrates its own peculiarities. In the first stage (mid 17<sup>th</sup> – early 18<sup>th</sup> cc.), which can be called a period of local offshoots of the statehood, there exists no pan-Armenian statehood, but it appears in different regions of Armenia: Artsakh, Syunik, Gegharkunik, Moks, Shatakh, Sasun, the mountainous areas of Cilicia with various manifestations of self-governing formations (syghnakhs: defensive castles, melikdoms, principalities, self-governing communities).

The secret liberation meeting convened by Catholicos Hakob Jughayetsi in Ejmiatzin in 1677 announced the beginning of that stage. The delegation, headed by the Armenian Patriarch, arrived in Constantinople, and addressed King John Sobieski of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with plans for the liberation of Armenia. After the death of Hakob Jughayetsi, Israel Ori, a young member of the delegation, journeyed to Europe and first turned to Johann Wilhelm – the Elector (Grand Prince) Palatinate of Germany and to

King Peter I of Russia in 1701 with interesting plans for the liberation and restoration of the statehood of Armenia. It is noteworthy, that in order to arouse the interest of the abovementioned rulers in his plans (Palatinate and Moscow), Ori diplomatically explained them that after the liberation of Armenia they could become the king of Armenia. However, in, as Academician Ashot Hovhannisyan rightly noted while interpreting the Armenian version of the letter addressed to the Russian Tsar from the Syunik meliks descending from the Proshyan kin, “For a moment Ori imagined himself in the role of the leader of the future Tsar-sponsored and Russia-liberated Armenia”<sup>1</sup>.

### *The period of local (localized) offsprings of statehood*

From then on, the practical steps for the restoration of statehood in the general chain of the national liberation struggle continue to be taken in Syunik and Artsakh. Thereby, the stage of practical steps towards the restoration of statehood (1722-1747) launched. The liberation struggle led by Davit Bek in Syunik was crowned with success: in 1724 Shah Tahmasp II of Iran recognized the Armenian principality of Syunik, taking into account the aspirations of the Armenians for liberation, aiming to use the princely state of David Bek against a common enemy – the Ottoman Empire.

As a result of the Armenian-Iranian cooperation in the 1730s, through the efforts of Nadir Khan (Shah), the Armenian melikdoms extended their power not only over the mountainous regions of Eastern Armenia (Syunik, Artsakh, Gegharkunik), but also the plains. Already by his decree of 1734, David, the high priest of Dovshanlu

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<sup>1</sup> Հովհաննիսյան 1959, 498:

village in Artsakh, was appointed as the village elder and melik of that and several other villages of Khachen. “The order should not be opposed” the document instructed, “and by accepting it as a strict order, they should spare no effort [in carrying it out]. Let them consider it their duty”<sup>2</sup>.

In another edict, Nadir “gave the power back to Manuchar – the son of the melik of Gegharkunik Melikjan Melik-Shahnazaryan, received him in his hall..., and gave him the title of mirimir or beylerbey over the land of Ararat and a part of Syunik”<sup>3</sup>. By a special royal decree of the Shah in 1738, the rights of muafs were granted to meliks Hakobjan and Mkrtum of Yerevan, “for the good service among the best petitioners, just as previously the royal decree had established their muafs and other [rights] in accordance with the order...”<sup>4</sup>.

Numerous Armenian meliks, allied with the Persians, fought against a common enemy – the Ottomans. In that struggle, especially the meliks of Artsakh, headed by melik Yegan of Dizak, gained de facto autonomy, and Nadir’s cooperation with their armed forces rose to a higher level. In Artsakh, in the cantons of Varanda, Dizak, Jraberd, Khachen and Gulistan, which were dependent upon Gandzak’s former beklarbekdom, a new Armenian autonomy – the melikdoms of Khamsa (Arabic: khamsa – five), was established in 1736. Nadir, strongly highlighting the important role of the

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<sup>2</sup> Մ. Մաշտոցի անվան մատենադարան, Կաթ. Դիվան, թղթ. 2բ, վավ. 182: Կոստիկյան 2005, վավ. 2:

<sup>3</sup> Մելիք-Սիլիսեանց Հ. Զմիռնիացի, Համառոտութիւն պատմութեան Հայկազեանց, Մ. Մաշտոցի անվան մատենադարան, ձեռ. 2888, էջ 341ա, cf. Հայոց պատմություն 2010, 55:

<sup>4</sup> Մ. Մաշտոցի անվան մատենադարան, Կաթ. Դիվան, թղթ. 2գ, վավ. 1032:

Armenians in the anti-Turkish struggle, did not hesitate to recognize this unique statehood of Artsakh. In fact, he ratified the true story created as a result of the 15-year heroic struggle of the Armenians<sup>5</sup>.

*The stage of practical steps towards restoring statehood (1722-1747)*

The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. was the stage of elaboration and partial implementation of the new plans of liberation of Armenia. It began with the intense activity of the famous Indian-Armenian figure Joseph Emin<sup>6</sup>. The Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1764 and the acceptance of Russian patronage of Georgia, under the Russian-Georgian Treaty of Georgievsk in 1783, were new impetuses for the development of more substantial liberation plans. In 1769, the plans drawn up by Movses Sarafyan – an Armenian figure living in Astrakhan envisaged the restoration of the Armenian Kingdom with the help of Russia. In the reconstruction of the statehood, attention was given to the experience of the regions of Armenia, which from time to time were autonomous formations and were perceived by the Armenian people as regions worthy of imitation and the most possible regions for the restoration of the kingdom. Particularly, Artsakh and Syunik were mentioned. It is not accidental that among the candidates of future Armenian kings, M. Sarafyan considered one of the meliks of Artsakh. It is obvious that the reality of statehood restoration in Artsakh in 1722-1747 and the offshoots of the melikdoms had clearly

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<sup>5</sup> See Հայոց պատմություն 2010, 64-65.

<sup>6</sup> On Joseph Emin's plans and liberation activity, see in detail Иоаннисян 1945.

left their stamp on the similar mindset of the leaders of the liberation struggle.

It is remarkable that at that time the meliks also realized their mission in the restoration of the kingdom, did not forget their Armenian royal origin and occasionally mentioned it in official correspondence. Hence, in regular letters addressed to the great Russian general Alexander Suvorov and Empress Catherine II on September 2, 1781, asking for military assistance in the unequal struggle against the Muslims, the meliks of Artsakh (Adam, Beglar, Israel) wrote about themselves: “We are from the Armenian nation, from the house of the Arsacids and from Caucasian Albania, from the royal throne, the heir meliks of honest soldiers inherited from the remaining, our whole country with rulers...”<sup>7</sup>.

The joint anti-Persian and anti-Turkish struggle of Armenians and Georgians was also especially important at that time, and, as a result of which, the idea of creating an Armenian-Georgian Christian state under the auspices of Russia. For example, in the 1750s and 1760s, Joseph Emin was fully aware that the Georgian Bagratids descended from the Armenian Bagratids, linked the issue of creating an Armenian-Georgian state with the name of King Heraclius II of Georgia<sup>8</sup>.

In 1783, the project of Joseph Arghutyan and Hovhannes Lazarev consisting of 18 points outlined much more clearly the way

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<sup>7</sup> Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке (1760-1800) 1990, 179, 181. By the way, in the Russian translations of those letters, the part about the meliks, being descended from the Armenian kings, is removed, and the word “king” is replaced by the word “chief” (ibid., 180, 183-184). On the struggle for national liberation and statehood in Artsakh, see also Բալայան 2012, Բալայան 2013.

<sup>8</sup> See Иоаннисян 1945, 48-49.

to the restoration of the Armenian Kingdom. Ancient Ani or Vagharshapat was to become the capital of liberated Armenia. The program, entitled “A Way of Confederation between Two Nations: Russians and Armenians”, presupposed horizontal relationships between liberated Armenia and its ally Russia. An Armenian-Russian military alliance was to be signed, the Russian troops stationed in Armenia were to protect the country from the encroachments of the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Armenia was to become a taxpayer to Russia, in case of need it was obliged to provide military forces to the Empire. Russian Empress Catherine II reserved the right to elect one of the Armenians or one of her relatives as king of Armenia<sup>9</sup>.

Prominent Indian-Armenian figures Shahamir Shahamiryan and Movses Baghramyan raise the ideological vision of Armenian state-building to a new height. In the printing house founded by them in Madras in 1771, M. Baghramyan’s works entitled “New Booklet of Exhortation” and Sh. Shahamiryan’s “Snare of Glory” were soon published, in which reference was made to the difficult situation of the Armenian people, and instead of a monarchy, which according to the authors was one of the main reasons for the collapse of the Armenian statehood, was proposed to create a democratic state. Unlike all previous programs, Shahamiryan’s project, known as the “Southern Plan”, put forward the idea of creating Republican Armenia formed on the bases of common suffrage, which was extraordinary for the given period. In future Armenia, not the will of the monarch, but the law would be above everything. According to the “Snare of Glory”, it is necessary to “remain dependent on your

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<sup>9</sup> See Հայոց պատմություն 2010, 168-169.

own laws, for there should be no one to rule over you but your laws”<sup>10</sup>.

Academician V. Barkhudaryan, referring to the liberation programs of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c., emphasizes that “the most significant and remarkable thing is, that both in Armenia and in the Russian and Indian colonies, along with the liberation of the country, the task of restoring the independent Armenian statehood was set in unison and in full force”<sup>11</sup>.

Occupying Eastern Armenia in the first thirties of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., the Russian court did not want to, or rather could not, impose imperial regimes in the Caucasus for some time. Thereby, for the time being, certain elements of local self-government, that existed during the Persian influence, were preserved. Moreover, in order to create the illusion of backing the liberation plans<sup>12</sup>, developed particularly in late 1827 by the Armenian public circles, Kh. Lazaryan, K. Arghutyan and A. Khudabashyan, an administrative unit called<sup>13</sup> the “Armenian Province” was established by a decree of Nicholas I of March 21, 1828 in the territory of the former khanates of Yerevan and Nakhichevan. In order to point out the “grace of statehood”

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<sup>10</sup> Գիրք անուանեալ Որոգայթ փառաց 1773, 15-16:

<sup>11</sup> Հայոց պատմություն 2010, 178:

<sup>12</sup> According to the plan presented by Khachatur Lazarev, the Armenian kingdom was to include all the territories of Eastern Armenia under the rule of the Russian Empire: the regions of Yerevan, Nakhichevan, Karabakh, Shaki, Shamkhor. Armenia should have its own armed forces, Armenian laws had to operate in the country, etc. (see Հայոց պատմություն 2010, 262).

<sup>13</sup> See Собрание актов, относящих к обозрению истории армянского народа 1833, 278-279. In the Armenian version of this decree, Armenian politicians used the word “Haykazants canton” instead of the “Armenian Province”, most likely perceiving the very administrative unit as a fact of restoration of the Haykazuni state of Greater Armenia (see *ibid.*, 278).



showed towards the Armenians in the Tsar's decree, it was emphasized that the government of the newly created region was passed under the titular power of emperor<sup>14</sup>.

Certainly, this administrative unit did not differ much from other administrative units of the Russian Empire in its system of government, but some of its features, especially among the Armenians, created a deceptive image of the Armenian statehood. Thus, the name "Armenian" of the unit was a source of inspiration for some circles of Armenians, while other administrative units of the Empire were not distinguished by national names. The region had its own flag, coat of arms, etc. According to the decision of the Russian Senate of March 25, 1833, in the center of the coat of arms of the Armenian Province was to be depicted the snow-capped Ararat, Noah's golden ark on the top, the crown of the Armenian kings in the lower right corner, and Holy Etchmiadzin in the left. The coat of arms would feature the Russian imperial symbols– the eagle and the imperial crown<sup>15</sup>.

For eight of the 12 years of its existence (1830-1838) the region was ruled by the prominent Armenian state-military figure Vasil Behbutov, Melik Sahak Melik-Aghamalyants was to represent the Armenian population of Yerevan in the governing department of the province. Historian Leo noted that the abovementioned "privileges" made to Armenians created the illusion of statehood restoration among certain segments of Armenian society, so there were calls

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<sup>14</sup> See the document: "Hereafter, we command in all matters to name it the Armenian Province and include it in the title of Ours". (ibid., 278) (in Russ.).

<sup>15</sup> See Собрание актов, относящих к обозрению истории армянского народа 1838, 280.

everywhere to return to the homeland “liberated” with Russian help<sup>16</sup>.

However, considering even this temporary “concession” dangerous, on April 10, 1840, the Armenian province was abolished and other administrative units were created in Transcaucasia. Before that, by the Tsarist decree adopted on March 11, 1836 (Polozhenie), the Armenian Church was banned from engaging in state-political activities.

At the same time, the rights of the Armenians and other peoples of the region were completely ignored by the administrative redistributions carried out in other regions of the Cis-Caucasus and Eastern Armenia. With the creation of the governments of Tiflis in 1846, Yerevan in 1849, and then of Elizabetopol, the Armenian districts became part of different territorial units. This put an end to the stage of elaboration and partial implementation of new programs for the liberation of Armenia. In fact, the Armenian statehood, which had existed for thousands of years with various manifestations, completely collapsed at that time, particularly in Eastern Armenia,. It is noteworthy that this circumstance is also mentioned in Russian official documents. “The Armenian Kingdom,” we read in one of such documents, “which existed for almost 4000 years, either independently or dependent on other nations..., experienced a decline”<sup>17</sup>.

From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., a period commenced when almost all the germinations of sovereignty disappeared in Eastern

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<sup>16</sup> See Lkn 1927, 133.

<sup>17</sup> Собрание актов, относящих к обозрению истории армянского народа 1838, 281.

Armenia after the establishment of Russian regimes, and in Western Armenia, except for Sasun, in Cilicia, Zeytun<sup>18</sup>, the struggle for statehood, conditioned by the heaviest political situation for the Armenian people, was replaced by the vision of simply achieving Armenian autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.

During that period, the Armenian question, the reform program in Western Armenia under the control of European powers, perceived by a significant part of the Armenians as a question of liberation, became commonplace among international diplomatic circles. It is noteworthy, that according to the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin, the objective of achieving autonomy through reforms prevailed, and in its turn, the idea of independence was not included<sup>19</sup> in the program documents of the Armenian national parties created during 1885-1890. Thus, the Armenakans, the Hunchakians and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and the lofty ideal of statehood were replaced by vain notions of autonomy.

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<sup>18</sup> These two mountain communities, with astonishing perseverance, did not retreat from the encroachments of the Ottoman authorities. Zeytun in 1862 and in 1895-1896, and Sasun in 1894 and in 1904 due to self-defense fights, in fact, retained many elements of their autonomy, remaining the last islets of the Armenian liberation lust in modern times. Moreover, at every opportunity, the brave mountaineers did not miss the moment to make the autonomous status independent. For instance, after expelling the Turks from the canton during the uprising of 1895, they raised a flag with the inscription "Independent Government of Zeytun" and were in fact in a state of independence for three months (see Մկրտչյան 1995. On the semi-independent status of Zeytun see also Պողոսյան 1969).

<sup>19</sup> In that sense, perhaps the program of the Social-Democratic Hunchakian Party can be singled out, according to which the liberation of the Western Armenians was to be followed by the liberation of the Armenians subjected to Russia and Persia. After the unification of these three parts of Armenians, in the distant future it was planned to create a socialist state – a democratic republic (see «Հնչակ» (Լոնդոն), 1888, թիվ 10, cf. Հովհաննիսյան 2012, 23).

This stage of modern times, which lasted until the end of May 1918, can be conventionally called the stage of decline of the last offshoots of statehood and, at the same time, the stage of creation of preconditions for the restoration of statehood.

*The stage of creation of prerequisites for restoration of statehood*

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., the rise of the Armenian liberation movement against Ottoman and Russian hegemonies (new manifestations of the Hayduk movement, speeches against the Tsarist law on confiscation of Armenian church property, formation of self-defense detachments during the Armenian-Tatar clashes, etc.) in the Armenian socio-political circles led to the idea of both the joint struggle of the two parts of the Armenian people (East and West Armenians) and the need to create Armenian autonomy through the unification of the Armenian-populated districts of the Transcaucasus. This approach was especially noticeable in the Central Parliamentary Assembly of the Armenians of Russia convened in Etchmiadzin on August 17, 1906<sup>20</sup>. It is not accidental that the authorities assessed that assembly as an activity aimed at the restoration of the Armenian statehood and soon dissolved it.

The intensification of the colonial policy of tsarism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. and the rise of the general liberation struggle of the two segments of the Armenians, raised the need to review the approaches of Armenian political parties on a number of important issues. The IV General Assembly of the ARF convened in Geneva made some changes in the party program. If the plan of 1892 envisaged autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire only for

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<sup>20</sup> See Հայոց պատմություն 2015, 22, cf. Մինոյան 2003, 767-786.

Western Armenia, then here was also added the issue of the autonomy of Eastern Armenia and the Armenians of the whole Transcaucasia within the Russian Empire: “The Transcaucasian Democratic Federal Republic should be an integral part of the Russian Federation (should be understood as federal – A. M.) in connection with the issues of state autonomy, monetary system, customs and foreign policy”<sup>21</sup>.

The movement for autonomy among the Western Armenians gained new momentum on the eve of the First World War. In some circles of the Armenians, A. Mandelstam’s Russian program of Armenian reforms (1913) aroused some enthusiasm, which, envisaging the creation of one of the six Western Armenian states, created the illusion of united Armenia. This explains the negative attitude of Germany, an ally of the Ottoman Empire, towards the project, which led to its rejection and the signing of the Russian-Turkish agreement of January 26, 1914 instead: the latter did not contain any trace of Armenian autonomy.

In the summer and in September of 1914, long before the opening of the Russian-Turkish Caucasian front, emphasizing the position of the Armenians in the war, both the Young Turks and the Russian court did not hesitate to make lavish promises to the Armenians. It seems odd that in case of occupying Eastern Armenia with the support of the Armenians, the Turks promised to allow the

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<sup>21</sup> The program of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Constantinople, 1908, p. 26, cf. Hambaryan Azat, *Liberation Movements in Western Armenia*, Yerevan, 1999, p. 165. According to Khudinyan G., “Thus, for the first time on the political ground, “The program of the ARF outlined the issue of establishing a separate Armenian territory in Transcaucasia and on the basis of it, in the future, also the issue of statehood.” (Խուդինյան 2003, 108).

formation of “Armenian autonomy” there, and the Russians, after occupying Western Armenia, to reward them with the creation of an autonomous Armenia under the auspices of Russia. Time has shown that those bilateral promises were only aimed at using Armenians for the implementation of their political programs.

The victories of the Russian troops in the war, in which the Armenian volunteer detachments also had a significant contribution, raised hopes for liberation from the Ottoman rule and the establishment of Armenian autonomy in Western Armenia, so most of the Armenian socio-political forces supported the Russian authorities by all possible means<sup>22</sup>. And in early May 1915, when about a month of heroic self-defense ended with the liberation of Van, the dream of thousands of Armenians to restore the ancient kingdom seemed realistic.

Russian army officer, Cossack F. Eliseev, who was well aware of the Tsarist plan to create a “Euphrates Cossack” in Western Armenia, wrote about those naive plans of the Armenians in his memoirs: “Unfortunates ..., they were certainly convinced that at least now, with the help of the victorious Russian troops, their Greater Armenia will be liberated and built”<sup>23</sup>.

Among the Armenian figures, especially Aram Manukyan, the de facto head of Van self-defence, took practical steps to achieve Armenian autonomy, the seeds of which he had sown during the days of the April wars. Being appointed the governor (prefect) of Van

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<sup>22</sup> Շիրազյան 1965, 174-190. In November 1914, Nicolas II “promised” Armenian politicians in Tiflis that “the Armenian question would be resolved in accordance with the expectations of the Armenians” only that they would not be as ungrateful to Russia as the Bulgarians after liberation (see *ibid.*):

<sup>23</sup> Елисеев 2001, 102.

province by General A. Nikolaev, he soon established local authority<sup>24</sup>.

The process of the establishment of the Armenian statehood started to become a reality day by day, so it could not go unnoticed not only from the sight of the Tsarist authorities, but also from the attention of the adolescents of Van who witnessed the battles. 11-year-old Grigor Grigoryan from Van Diocesan School, mentioned in his memoirs written at V. Teryan's request in the Yerevan orphanage at the beginning of 1916: "After the glorious battle of Van, we lived happily in Van, completely cleansed of the Turks and under a purely Armenian government... We lived with hopes for the future. ... But suddenly a misfortune happened: the Russian soldiers retreated, and we were forced to emigrate to Russia"<sup>25</sup>.

The Armenian Genocide and the catastrophic retreat of Van in July 1915 only temporarily ceased the steps for independence of the Armenians. After the February Revolution of 1917, the Interim Government's incomparably friendly attitude towards the Armenian question, in particular the establishment of a General Commissariat in the Western Armenian districts taken from the Turks by the ordinance of April 26, brought the issue of establishment an autonomous state in Western Armenia back to the agenda. Thanks to the efforts of Deputy Commissioner-General Hakob Zavriyan, other Armenian figures appointed to various positions in place (Murad Sebastatsi, Sepuh, K. Hambardzumyan, Hamazasp, etc.) and numerous Armenian organizations operating in the Cis-Caucasus,

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<sup>24</sup> See Մահալյան 2015, 178-215.

<sup>25</sup> Էմին-Տերյան 2016, 30:

particularly the national councils<sup>26</sup>, numerous Western Armenian migrants returned to their homeland and set about rebuilding it. S. Vratsyan wrote about the prevailing enthusiasm: “A kind of extraterrestrial state was being created with central and local authorities. In the future, when Turkish Armenia would have become free, the government machine was already ready”<sup>27</sup>.

Even after the Bolshevik coup in 1917, when the new Russian authorities did not stand out with their “Armenophilia” and their policy led to the disintegration of the Caucasian army and front, Armenian political circles continued their efforts in establishing an autonomous state in Western Armenia. One of its vivid expressions was the “Decree on Turkish Armenia” that was created with the participation of figures representing different political parties and views and was adopted on December 29, 1917 by the government of Bolshevik Russia (People’s Council), which nominally recognized the right of the Armenian people to self-determination in Western Armenia.

Another similar manifestation took place a month after the adoption of the abovementioned decree, on January 30, 1918, when one of the Armenian figures, Colonel Torgom (Arshak Yervandyan), issued a special proclamation announcing the restoration of Armenian statehood with capital Erzurum. However, the Russian

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<sup>26</sup> National councils, established in different regions of Transcaucasia in 1917, became centers for the organization of Armenian political life. The Eastern Armenian National Council in Tiflis stood out among them, which played an important role in the preparation and restoration of the Armenian statehood due to historical events (Պետրոսյան 2016, 51-57).

<sup>27</sup> Վրացյան 1993, 33:



military authorities took that step with hostility and, by arresting Torgom, filed a lawsuit against him<sup>28</sup>.

In January 1918, discussions launched in Tiflis between the ARF members (R. Ter-Minasyan, H. Zavriyan and others) and the Armenian Bolsheviks (S. Shahumyan, D. Shahverdyan, S. Kasyan, etc.) to clarify approaches towards the future of the two parts of Armenia. The parties came to the conclusion that the creation of an independent state in Western Armenia and an Armenian canton in Eastern Armenia with Russian-sponsored autonomy should be fought for.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, this program was not implemented for various political reasons.

Due to the rapid developments (deepening process of disintegration of the Russian Empire, collapse of the Caucasian front, etc.), the Armenian national figures were forced to voluntarily secede from Russia joining the Transcaucasian Commissariat that was established on November 15, 1917 and later also to the Transcaucasian Seim.

Realizing the whole complexity of the military-political situation, in December 1917, the Armenian National Council sent Aram Manukyan to Yerevan who had gained considerable experience in state-building in Van in 1915. Assuming the duties of the chairman and dictator of the National Council of Yerevan, Aram carried out hard work in Eastern Armenia, particularly in establishing order in the province of Yerevan, in organizing the defence, thus creating preconditions for the restoration of statehood. It is not accidental that at the end of May 1918, during the heroic battles of Sardarapat,

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<sup>28</sup> See Մելքոնյան 1996, 136.

<sup>29</sup> See Մելիքյան 2010, 242.

Bash Aparan, Gharakilisa, when the Seim – the authority body of the Transcaucasian Federal Democratic Republic – collapsed, a few days later the Armenian National Council declared Armenia an independent republic. Therewith, the contemporary era of the Armenian statehood began.

### ***Conclusions***

The misconception spread in Armenian historiography and political science literature that the Armenian people did not possess statehood for centuries, especially refers to the new era. A detailed study of the facts allows to conclude that after the fall of the kingdom in Cilicia in 1375 until 1918 Armenian statehood had continued to exist in various places of Armenia in various forms. During the liberation struggle the Armenians in the mountainous regions (Artsakh, Syunik) had occasionally achieved international recognition of the right to live sovereignly. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> – at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the Armenian political elites ideologically prepared the process of restoration of Armenian statehood.

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## ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ

Հայոց պետականության պատմությունը շարունակվում է նաև նոր դարաշրջանում՝ ունենալով նոր դրսևորումներ ինչպես Արևելյան, այնպես էլ Արևմտյան Հայաստանում և Կիլիկիայում: Շատախում, Մոկսում, Սասունում, Համշենում, Զեյթունում, Սյունիքում, Արցախում, Գեղարքունիքում և այլուր ձևավորվում են կիսանկախ լեռնային համայնքներ, որոնք լեռնաշղթաներով կտրված հարևան գավառներից, ունենալով ինքնաբավ ապրելու

համար նպաստավոր բնակլիմայական պայմաններ, օսմանյան և պարսկական իշխանություններին որոշակի քանակությամբ հարկեր վճարելու դիմաց տեղերում ձեռք են բերում ինքնիշխանություն: Այդ փուլը, որը տևում է մինչև XVIII դ. սկիզբը և կարելի է անվանել պետականության տեղական (տեղայնական) շառավիղների ժամանակաշրջան:

XVIII դ. սկիզբը նշանավորվում է ազատագրական պայքարի վերելքով: 1722-1730-ական թթ. Արցախի և Սյունիքի ազատագրական պայքարի շնորհիվ հայկական այդ երկու երկրամասերը որոշակի ժամանակով ձեռք են բերում ոչ միայն փաստական ինքնիշխանություն, այլ նաև իրավական ճանաչում Պարսից արքունիքի կողմից: 1724 թ. Թահմասպ II շահը ճանաչում է Դավիթ Բեկի իշխանությունը, իսկ Նադիր շահը 1735 թ. Արցախում ստեղծում է Խամսայի մելիքությունների դաշնությունը: Ուստի, պայմանականորեն դարի առաջին կեսը պետականության վերականգնման գործնական քայլերի փուլն է:

Նոր դարաշրջանի պետականության հաջորդ ենթափուլն ընդգրկում է XVIII դ. երկրորդ կեսն ու XIX դ. առաջին կեսը՝ Հայաստանի ազատագրության նոր ծրագրերի մշակման ու մասնակի գործադրման ժամանակահատվածը, երբ հայ ազգային գործիչների կողմից մշակվում և Ռուսական կայսրության արքունիքին են ներկայացվում Հայաստանի ազատագրության մի շարք ուշագրավ ծրագրեր:

Նոր դարաշրջանի պետականության պատմությունը եզրափակվում է պետականության վերականգնման նախադրյալների ստեղծման ենթափուլով (XIX դ. երկրորդ կես – XX դ. սկիզբ):

Բանալի բաներ՝ նոր դարաշրջան, պետականություն, Սյունիք, Արցախ, մելիքներ, Իսրայել Օրի, Հովսեփ Էմին, Մովսես Սարաֆյան, Շահամիր Շահամիրյան:

**Ашот А. Мелконян, *Институт истории НАН РА, д.и.н., профессор, академик НАН РА, Исторические этапы армянской государственности в новую эпоху (половина XVII в. – 1918 г.).***

### Резюме

История армянской государственности в новую эпоху проявляется как в Восточной, так и в Западной Армении и Киликии. В Шатахе, Моксе, Сасуне, Амшене, Зейтуне, Сюнике, Арцахе, Гегаркунике и других регионах армяне, отрезанные горными хребтами от соседних провинций и имевшие благоприятные климатические условия для самообеспечения, начинают создавать полунезависимые горные общины. Уплачивая определенную часть налогов османским и персидским властям, армяне обретали фактический суверенитет. Этот этап, который длится до начала XVIII века, может быть охарактеризован как период локальных проявлений государственности.

Начало XVIII века отмечено подъемом освободительной борьбы. В 1722-1730-е гг., благодаря освободительной борьбе армян, Арцах и Сюник получили не только фактический суверенитет на определенный период времени, но и юридическое признание со стороны персидского двора. В 1724 г. персидский шах Тахмасп II признал правление Давид-бека, а Надир шах в 1735 г. в Арцахе создал федерацию пяти княжеств Хамса.

Поэтому первую половину XVIII в. можно рассматривать как этап практических шагов по восстановлению государственности. Следующий подэтап государственности нового времени охватывает вторую половину XVIII – первую половину XIX вв. Это – период разработки и частичного осуществления новых программ освобождения Армении при помощи Российской империи.

История государственности новой эпохи завершается подэтапом создания предпосылок для восстановления государственности (вторая половина XIX – начало XX вв.).

**Ключевые слова:** Новая эпоха, государственность, Исраэль Ори, полунезависимые княжества, суверенитет, Арцах, Сюник, программа освобождения, Шаамир Шаамирян.