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**THE ERZRUM PROCLAMATION
OF INDEPENDENCE OF ARMENIA (FEBRUARY, 1918)
IN THE US SENATE (OCTOBER, 1919)**

Key words: *Armenia, Erzurum, Colonel, Torgom, independence, proclamation, USA, Senate.*

The final year of WW I outlining the end of the war and imminent changes in the world was a year of diverse events. Pivotal changes took place in the life of the Armenian people as well.

The successes of the Russian troops at the early stages of the war heartened the Armenians. At the end of 1916, when the whole territory of Western Armenia had been conquered by Russia, the Armenians' cherished that their dream for restoration of statehood could come true. Their hope was getting more feasible after the February Revolution in Russia in 1917. The Provisional Government established a special form of administration under its jurisdiction i.e. General Commissariat for the Western Armenian territories occupied by the Russian troops during the war. The latter, along with the principle of self-determination of peoples, proclaimed by the new government of Russia, created the possibility of a national revival. Thus, the Armenians expected a positive resolution of the issue of Western Armenia.

However, the course of political events in Russia took an unpredictable turn. As a result of widespread desertion in the Russian Army from December 1917, the Caucasian front was completely fallen apart by the beginning of 1918. Although the

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small Armenian armed forces, thanks to great efforts, tried to hold the front and protect the Armenian territories, it was obvious that the Turks, feeling the breath of defeat in the war, tried in every way to use the favorable opportunities created by the situation.

Taking advantage of the truce, the Turks regrouped their forces and prepared for the offensive. Starting local offensive from the end of January 1918, the Turks moved into a general attack on February 12.

On February 13, they reached Yerznka, from where on the same day the small detachment, actually consisting of the Armenian volunteers, under the command of Colonel N. Morel left as it was unable to organize resistance and had not received any order or support from the Command. Some days later N. Morel's detachment, having fought with the Kurds, reached Erzurum and as a regiment of Yerznka participated in the already started self-defense battle of the city.

The fighting for Erzurum, which began on February 12, was futile.¹ The chaos reigning here deepened so much² that the commander Andranik's "efforts were powerless to save the created difficult situation, which from the bad came to the worst. The course of events led to the downfall."³

The small Armenian forces, having no support from Tiflis, had to leave the strategic city-fortress on February 27. Following the defenders of Erzurum the Armenian military units of Manizkert, Khlat, Alashkert, Van also retreated – opening the way to Eastern Armenia for Turks. It seemed that the military-political program of the Young Turks was implemented – to return Western Armenia back and continue offensive actions beyond its borders – in Eastern Armenia, after the capture of which the conquest of the entire Transcaucasus was to be carried out.

However, in the nearest future, the heroic May battles would change the course of events. A small part of Historic Armenia - Eastern Armenia was declared independent. Western Armenia being deprived of its Armenian population again appeared under the Turkish rule.

¹ Հայոց պատմություն, հ. III, գիրք երկրորդ, Ե., 2015, էջ 618:

² **Դարբինեան Ա.**, Հայ ազատագրական շարժման օրերին (յուշեր 1890-ին 1940), Փարիզ, 1947, էջ 371:

³ **Ջարլգ Ղ.**, Յուշամատեն Բարձր Հայքի, Կարինապատում, Պէյրուս, 1957, էջ 503:

Having described the created situation of those days very aptly, Andranik said that the body of the Caucasian Armenians was too weak to defend Western Armenia that had been seized from Turks, while the soul was ready to do it.⁴

It was thanks to that spirit that the Armenians dared to declare the independence of Armenia, despite the situation in Erzurum in February 1918, in the face of the imminent danger of the Turkish conquest of the city. We refer to the Proclamation Act of Independence of Armenia announced on January 31 (February 13), 1918 in Erzurum.⁵

The special written Proclamation⁶ on the restoration of the Armenian statehood was announced by the commandant of Erzurum Colonel Arsen Torgom.⁷ Thus, in the bright and cold morning on 30 June (old calendar), 1918 “The

⁴ Դարբինեան Ա., op. cit., p. 370.

⁵ On the Proclamation of Independence see Թորոմենց Վ. (Ա. Մարմարեան), Զոր. Անդրանիկ եւ իր պատերազմները, Կ. Պոլիս, 1920, էջ 311–312, 315–316: Թէրզիպաշեան Ա., Անդրանիկ, Փարիզ, 1942, էջ 332–333: Կարինեան Գ., Ազգային հերոս Զոր. Անդրանիկ եւ իր պատերազմները, Փարիզ, 1953, էջ 71: Փափազեան Վ., Իմ յուշերը, հ. Բ., Պէյրուս, 1953, էջ 467: Զարրզ Դ., op. cit., p. 502–503. Armenian Review, Watertown, Massachusetts, 1980, vol. 33, N4, էջ 441–443: Հայկական Հարց Հանրագիտարան, Ե., 1996, էջ 136: Այվազյան Հ., Զորավար Անդրանիկ և Հովհաննես Թումանյան, Ե., 2004, էջ 133: Հովհաննիսյան Ռ.Գ., Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն, Վերսալից-Լոնդոն 1919–1920, հ. II, Ե., 2014, էջ 455: R.G. Hovannisian From Versailles to London, 1919–1920, vol. II, Berkley-Los Angeles-London, 1982, p. 381; Ованисян Р.Г. Международные отношения Республики Армения 1918–1920, Е., 2007, p. 277; Մախմուրեան Գ., Նախիջեւանն ըստ Մ. Նահանգների Պետքարտուղարության և Հայաստանի ազգային արխիվի փաստաթղթերի (1918–1920), Հայկազեան Հայագիտական հանդես, Պէյրուս, 2017, հ. 37, էջ 210–211; see also <https://sci.academia.edu/GayaneMakhmoryan>՝ Махмурия Г.Г. Армения в политике США 1917–1923 гг., ред. А. Гамбарян, Е., 2018, p. 251–252:

⁶ Various sources, including the ones cited above, contain certain data on the mentioned act on the restoration of the Armenian statehood. However, we did not find detailed information about the content of the declaration in none of the Armenian-language sources, neither in the published work, nor in the archival materials. During our research on the topic under study, the original or a copy of the Armenian version of the text of the Proclamation was not found either. The English translation of the text of the Proclamation is preserved in the records of the hearings of the Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate of 1919. On the Armenian translation of the English version of the Erzurum Declaration of Independence of Armenia (February 1918), see Դամբարյան Ա., Հայաստանի անկախության Էրզրումի հռչակագիրը, Ե., 2019, ՊԲՀ, № 33, էջ 258–263:

⁷ Arsen Torgom (Arshak Yervandyan), designated by Andranik and H. Zavriev the commander of the regiment “A” of the Yerkrpah military unit, was sent to Erzurum in early 1918.

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Torgomian independence” was announced by a written Proclamation. Independent and free Armenia, Karin is the capital of Armenia.”⁸

Soghomon Tehlirian recollected Torgom’s words on the eve of the proclamation of the independence, “The situation is more than complicated as they fight with us not only using weapons but also politics. Thus, if we cannot counterattack with weapons we have to counterattack with politics. We need to change our orientation – not rely on the Russians and proclaim our independence.⁹ To the question “whether the Turks would take into consideration our independence” Colonel Torgom shouted infuriated, “If we had carried out that act two months ago when our issue had not been settled in Brest our state would have been quite different. I called the National Council, talked to Murad, Sepooh, but they thought me to be mad. Still it is not late. It is necessary to put the enemy before the implemented fact an hour earlier. After that they will not dare to set foot in the borders of independent Armenia.¹⁰ His confidence was based on the firm conviction that in the near future the Turks would have to report to our allies – France and England, as these countries undoubtedly would win.”¹¹

According to the aforementioned and other sources¹², the independence of Armenia, proclaimed in Erzurum, took place on January 30 (February 12), 1918, but this seems to be untrue, since it is highly unlikely that Colonel Toghoh presented a declaration’s English written translation in the US Senate in the autumn of 1919, mistakenly recorded the wrong date, January 31 (February 13) in a copy of the declaration.

Anyhow the Independence was surely proclaimed when

1. the headquarters of the Caucasian Army having been in Erzurum by February 9, had already left the city;
2. the Commander of the Erzurum detachment Colonel Torgom had assumed the command of all military units;

⁸ Չարրզ Դ., op. cit., p. 502–503.

⁹ Թեհլիրյան Ս., Վերհիշումներ, Թալեաթի ահաբեկումը, գրի առավ Վահան Մինախորյան, Ե., 1993, էջ 89:

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 90.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² See Հայկական Հարց հանրագիտարան, Ե., 1996, p. 136.

3. Colonel N. Morel did not reach Erzurum with his detachment yet and, thus, the latter did not replace Colonel Torgom on the mediation of the Military Council of Erzurum;
4. Andranik, who in addition to being in charge of separate shock troops was to assume the responsibilities of Erzurum commandant, was not in Erzurum either.

The proclamation of Armenia's Independence was announced in the presence of the troops, Erzurum population and delegations from the Armenian provinces. In those days, the troops concentrated in Erzurum were composed of various local Armenian military units, among which were infantry and reserve regiments of Erzurum, fortress artillery, mounted police and Torgom's cavalry regiment, etc.¹³

The proclamation was signed by the Armenian Priest in charge of Karin A. Arshagouni, President of the Council for the Defense of Armenia at Karin S. Ananian, members of the Council or the Defense of Armenia, Provincial, Delegates, members of the various Armenian Committees as well as by representatives of the Turkish population, namely, the Vice-President of the Municipal Council Hakki Pasha and member of the Municipal Council Hamdi Effendi put their signature to the proclamation.¹⁴

The true copy of the original in Armenian was signed by Lieutenant-Colonel D. Davitian, the Chief of the Chancellery of the Armenian Military Mission.

It is noteworthy that right at the bottom of the text of the proclamation Arsen Torgom's name is written as **Colonel** Torgom. The latter is followed by a brief post scriptum in which Torgom mentions that, immediately after the ceremony of reading the proclamation act, the soldiers of his corps hailed him as "The First General of Armenia."¹⁵ Continuing the post scriptum Torgom wrote that he accepted that title with joy and pride. Consequently, after the post scriptum, before the abovementioned officials' names and signatures, Torgom's name written in the text of the proclamation for the second time, was mentioned as **General** Torgom.

¹³ Կարինեան Գ., op. cit., p. 79–80; Չարլզ Ղ., op. cit., p. 502; Հայոց պատմություն, հ. III, գիրք երկրորդ, էջ 617:

¹⁴ Maintenance of Peace in Armenia. Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relation. United States Senate. 66th Congress. First Session On S. J. R. 106, A Joint Resolution for the Maintenance of Peace in Armenia. Printed for the use of Committee on Foreign relations, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1919, p. 62, (from now on Maintenance of Peace in Armenia).

¹⁵ Maintenance of Peace in Armenia, p. 61.

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The proclamation, which in fact is Torgom's enthusiastic and striking speech dedicated to the glorification of the Armenian people, introduces the Armenians' history, in a succinct and at the same time pithy manner, starting from their origin which was based "on the concepts of freedom and justice" up to the beginning of 1918. It was emphasized that "The Armenian nation inspite of all the injustice it has undergone, in spite of all the massacres, all the betrayals, all the abandonments, was not willing to die."¹⁶

It was the Armenians' desire to survive that made them "to rush forth, a few from every where, to the soil of our old Fatherland, to defend the sorrowful remnant of our people, of that people which would not despair, and which has been waiting during five hundred and fifty years, suffering and bathed in blood, for the hour of its final deliverance."¹⁷

The proclamation ends in the following appeal, "Today that hour has, at last, struck. In the name of the Armenian people, in the name of all the martyrs who have suffered in our land, in the name of the most sacred principles of justice, of right, and of liberty, I, Colonel Torgom, Commanding the Armenian Corps, and Chief of the Garrison of Garine (Erzeroum), today your head, tomorrow your equal, proclaim the independence of Armenia. Woe to those who should dare to raise their hands against our nascent liberty."¹⁸

General Torgom was so enthusiastic and confident that later, in 1919, he noted in the US Senate that it was done for the moral effect of it, in the name of history and for the future generations.¹⁹

However, the Proclamation of independence of Armenia was not accepted with great enthusiasm and unanimously. The reasons were both objective and subjective. And, in fact, did the declared proclamation have any significance or play any role in the chaotic situation that Erzurum was going through? In addition, the personality of Torgom itself played a certain role in the matter.²⁰

Torgom came to Erzurum as the commander of the regiment "A" of the Yerkrpah military unit in the beginning of February 1918. Upon arrival, he immediately acquired the enemies in the person of the Military Union headed by

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Maintenance of Peace in Armenia, p. 61.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 57.

²⁰ Կարինեան Գ., op. cit., p. 51–66; Այվազյան Հ., op. cit., p. 133.

the Colonel of the Russian Army Sergey Garaqeshishev²¹ (Qeshishev, Garaqeshishyan) and the commander of the Erzurum garrison General I. Odishelidze.²²

Torgom managed to uncover²³ Odishelidze's anti-Armenian collaboration with Vehib Pasha which led to the escalation of their relationships. Their tense relations grew into a real confrontation on the basis of the Proclamation of independence. In response, Odishelidze took measures to bring Torgom to justice and surrender him to the military authorities.²⁴ "At the end of the celebrations when people and soldiers dispersed the fight escalated to the extent that Torgom was summoned to Tiflis for trial."²⁵

Torgom's self-righteous and self-willed actions became a serious reason for discontent among the Armenians, especially among the figures of the ARF (Armenian Revolutionary Federation). It was for this reason that, overwhelmed with anger and, in turn, the ambitious Zavriev was against the proclamation of independence and argued that "as a Commissioner of Armenia" (*italics A.G.*)²⁶, only he had the right to declare independence and no one else."²⁷

The conversation between Torgom and the head of the Security Council Vagram Papazian in Tiflis before Torgom's arrival in Erzurum testifies to the willful decisions and actions of the latter.²⁸

The Colonel enthusiastically stated that "Western Armenia should be independent" and that he intended to declare the Independence in Erzurum during the solemn military parade. In honor of that memorable day Torgom had already prepared the medals, orders and a seal. There was an inscription "The Armenian Military Government" around the symbolic design in the center of the seal, medals were decorated with the image of two Ararats. At the end of the conversation,

²¹ **Զարրգ Ղ.**, op. cit., p. 502; **Թեհլիրյան Ս.**, op. cit., p. 88.

²² Ծաղիկ, 14 մարտ, 2016:

²³ Զորավար Անդրանիկի Կովկասեան ճակատի օրագրութիւնը 1914–1917, Պոսթոն, 1924, էջ 78:

²⁴ **Կարինեան Գ.**, op. cit., p. 68–69.

²⁵ **Զարրգ Ղ.**, op. cit., p. 503.

²⁶ It is common knowledge that H. Zavriev was not the Commissar of Western Armenia, he was just Commissar Averyanov's deputy on civil questions.

²⁷ Ծաղիկ, 11 մարտ, 2016:

²⁸ **Փափազեան Վ.**, op. cit., p. 462.

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Torgom told V. Papazyan that he had ordered a thousand medals for awarding officers and warrant officers during the parade.²⁹

When on February 15, Torgom met with Andranik in Sarikamish³⁰ and told him about the parade in Erzurum and the Proclamation of independence, the reaction of the commander was definitely not positive. “Andranik was not pleased with Torgom as he had proclaimed independence in Karin without the approval of any national authority. Torgom gave quite convincing, but not justifying, explanations.”³¹

Torgom’s explanations were as follows: the independence was proclaimed to hearten not only the soldiers of Karin but the whole front in general; that would also enable him to fight against Odishelidze who, besides his anti-Armenian stance and conspiracies, had stolen 5.000.000 rubles and was about to flee from Erzurum.³²

Freed from the burden of accusations and discontent thanks to Andranik³³, Torgom returned to Erzurum together with the Commander and heroically participated in the tragically completed defense of the city.³⁴

More than a year and a half later, in the autumn of 1919, the “Erzurum Proclamation” of independence of Armenia was presented by Torgom in the US Senate, where the extremely urgent issue of maintenance of peace in Armenia was under discussion. Back then, ensuring of peace for Armenians was again of vital importance for them. The newly created Republic of Armenia was on the way of formation and strengthening. The Allies who won the war tried to fulfill their promises of assistance given to the Armenian people through a new force involved in the post-war settlement – the United States. The latter was proposed to accept a mandate over Armenia within the framework of the Paris Peace Conference. In the conditions of political turmoil of that time, the final position of the USA matured gradually. Thus, the issue of maintenance of peace for the Armenians was included in the US foreign policy agenda.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Torgom was in Sarikamish under Odishelidze's coercion and supervision.

³¹ Ծաղիկ, 14 մարտ, 2016:

³² **Կարինեան Գ.**, op. cit., p. 68.

³³ Oghishelidze reversed his accusations against Torgom.

³⁴ **Կարինեան Գ.**, op. cit., p. 68.

In the period between September 27 and October 10, 1919, the hearings on the issue of maintenance of peace in Armenia were held in the Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations US Senate.³⁵ The Subcommittee, presided by senator Warren G. Harding, included senators Harry S. New and John Sharp Williams as its members. The Senate Subcommittee had under consideration the resolution on assistance to Armenia by troops, weapons and ammunition presented to the Senate by senator John Sharp Williams at the beginning of September 1919.³⁶ Thirteen witnesses, among them Armenians, spoke about the resolution. The witnesses, among whom was William Phillips, Assistant Secretary of State, supported the resolution and argued that assistance to Armenia was necessary and urgent.

A participant in the defense of Erzurum Colonel Arsen Torgom, who arrived in the United States on September 3³⁷, 1919, also testified at the hearings as a witness.³⁸ On October 2, he introduced himself to the Subcommittee as General Arsen Torgom. Torgom, who did not speak English fluently, was introduced by the head of the Armenian National Union of America Miran Sevasly (Mihran Svazlyan) who also testified at the hearings. M. Sevasly, with the permission of the Subcommittee, assumed the responsibility for translating Torgom's statement from French into English.

The Subcommittee made an exception to listen to Torgom. According to the USA General order, no one but the citizens of the United States could testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senators John Sh. Williams and Warren G. Harding, after a brief discussion, came to an agreement and, based on the seriousness of the matter under discussion and in view of extending the scope of the inquiry, decided, as a rarely used phenomenon, to suspend the rule and take General Torgom's testimony.

³⁵ On the records of the hearings see Maintenance of Peace in Armenia, pp. 1 – 125; “Armenian Review”, 1980, vol. 33, N 4, pp. 441–443; 1981, vol. 34, N 1, pp. 46–79; N 2, pp. 199–217; N4, pp. 412–427; <https://ia700408.us.archive.org/19/items/maintenancepeace00relagoog.pdf>.

³⁶ United States Congress. Congressional Record, 66th Congress, 1st Session, 1919, Washington, DC, 1919, vol. LVIII, pt. 5, p. 5067; Maintenance of Peace in Armenia, p. 3; **Կիրակոսյան Ջ.**, Հայաստանը միջազգային դիվանագիտության և սովետական արտաքին քաղաքականության փաստաթղթերում (1828–1923), Ե., 1972, էջ 566:

³⁷ Կոչնակ Հայաստանի, XIX, 13. 09. 1919, էջ 1201:

³⁸ Maintenance of Peace in Armenia, pp. 53–62.

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It was also taken into account the fact that the person translating the General's testimony, M. Sevasley was an American citizen. However, during the testimony, Torgom presented part of his speech in English.

General Torgom began his testimony with the presentation of some autobiographical data, which were closely related to the history of the Armenian people of recent decades and in their own way elucidated the period under consideration.

Briefly describing the massacres of the Armenian people during the World War and the deprivations of Armenians, General Torgom touched upon the events of February 1918 and the declaration of independence of Armenia in Erzurum. He submitted to the Subcommittee the translation into English of the Armenian Independence Proclamation Act for the record of the hearings.³⁹ General Torgom stated the following, "Having regard to the fact that we were surrounded on all sides by these different enemies, that I have mentioned, and that Russia had abandoned the front, the reply to the Armenians was a terrible one. We realized in January, 1918, that perhaps our only ally at those times was the snow that was covering the Armenian plateaus, because no country was coming to help us."⁴⁰ It was under these conditions that we got together – collected, as it were – all the Armenians or troops available in Erzeroum, and we proclaimed the independence of Armenia. We did that notwithstanding the fact that we were placed in such a disadvantageous condition; but we had to do that for the moral effect of it. We had to do that for the future generations, and in the name of history, and we did that with arms in our hands. We did that because, although much inferior to the enemy, we did not want to have any dealings with the enemy, because we knew that here in America we would some day find friends who would see that that independence is duly respected.

All I wanted to say was this, now, at this juncture, that the Armenians have done all they possibly could, and they fought very valiantly, having regard to all the surroundings."⁴¹

Answering the questions of the members of the Subcommittee, Torgom focused their attention on the urgent assistance to Armenia and offered a number of options for this assistance, starting with the provision of funds by the US

³⁹ Maintenance of Peace in Armenia, pp. 60–62.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 56.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 57.

government and directly sending American troops and ammunition to Armenia, ending with the formation of a division of Armenians living in the United States and other countries.⁴²

The Chairman and members of the Subcommittee took the following decision on the testimony of General Torgom as follows: the latter was to prepare and submit his statement in writing in French or Armenian, which would later, after translation into English, be handed over to the Subcommittee stenographer.

General Torgom, assuring that he had all the necessary documents for this, argued that he hoped that the American government in the person of the Subcommittee would give him an opportunity to work in the US – with the Americans for Armenia. He assured that all he needed was a small office with two or three collaborators.

Subsequently, the above-mentioned report was not submitted to the Subcommittee by General Torgom. As for the English translation of the Erzurum Proclamation of independence of Armenia submitted for the record, it was printed in full in the record of the hearings of the Subcommittee. In the same 1919, the materials of the hearings were published as a separate brochure. Thus, the text of the Proclamation of Independence of Armenia declared in Erzurum on February 13, 1918 found a place in the published documents of the US Senate.

**ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԱՆԿԱԽՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԷՐԶՐՈՒՄԻ
ՀՌԶԱԿԱԳԻՐԸ (1918, փետրվար)
ԱՄՆ ՍԵՆԱՏՈՒՄ (1919, հոկտեմբեր)**

ՂԱՄԲԱՐՅԱՆ Ա.

Ամփոփում

***Քանակի բառեր՝** Հայաստան, Էրզրում, զնդապետ Թորգոմ, անկախություն, հռչակագիր, ԱՄՆ, սենատ:*

Հայ ժողովրդի պատմության 1918 թ. փետրվարյան իրադարձությունների՝ թուրքերի կողմից Արևմտահայկական տարածքների վերագրավման, այդ թվում Էրզրումի ինքնապաշտպանության մասին հարուստ տեղեկություններ

⁴² Ibid, p. 58–59.

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կան հայ պատմագրության մեջ: Սակայն նշված օրերին Էրզրումում ազդարարված Հայաստանի անկախության ակտի մասին տեղեկությունները սակավաթիվ են:

Այդ իրադարձությանը 1919 թ. աշնանն ԱՄՆ սենատում անդադարձել էր Էրզրումի պաշտպանության մասնակից գնդապետ Արսեն Թորգոմը: Վերջինս՝ Հայաստանի խաղաղության պահպանման խնդիրների քննարկման հետ կապված, վկայությամբ հանդես էր եկել ԱՄՆ սենատի Արտաքին հարաբերությունների հանձնաժողովի ենթահանձնաժողովի լսումներին:

Ենթահանձնաժողովի լսումների արձանագրության մեջ ներառվել և պահպանվել է Ա. Թորգոմի կողմից՝ անգլերեն թարգմանությամբ ներկայացրած Հայաստանի անկախության Էրզրումի հռչակագրի տեքստը:

ЭРЗЕРУМСКАЯ ДЕКЛАРАЦИЯ НЕЗАВИСИМОСТИ АРМЕНИИ (февраль 1918 г.) В СЕНАТЕ США (октябрь 1919 г.)

ГАМБАРЯН А.

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Армения, Эрзерум, независимость, полковник Торгом, декларация, США, Сенат.

В армянской историографии имеется огромный массив материалов о февральских событиях 1918 года, касающихся захвата турками западноармянских территорий, в том числе Эрзерума. Однако при всем при этом сведения об акте провозглашения независимости Армении в дни самообороны Эрзерума в феврале 1918 года довольно-таки немногочисленны.

Осенью 1919 года это важное историческое событие было представлено участником обороны Эрзерума полковником Арсеном Торгомом в Сенате США. Арсен Торгом озвучил этот вопрос на слушаниях подкомитета комитета по международным отношениям Сената США в связи с дебатами по вопросу сохранения мира в Армении.

В протокол слушаний был внесен и сохранен представленный А. Торгомом текст Эрзерумской Декларации независимости Армении на английском языке.