

OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE STATEHOOD OF ARTSAKH AND THE CENTURY OF THE KARABAKH MOVEMENT

Yu. M. Suvaryan

Academician of NAS RA

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Abstract

The problem of Nagorno-Karabakh is topical not only from the scientific point of view, but most of all because of the need for practical recommendations on the fate of Artsakh and the indigenous Armenian population inhabiting it for thousands of years. The claim of Azerbaijan that Artsakh is an internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan has no legal, historical-geographical and ethno-cultural basis, since it seceded from the Azerbaijani SSR according to the law of the USSR "On the procedure for resolving issues related to the secession of a union republic from the USSR" dated 04/03/1990.

Keywords: Nagorno-Karabakh, Republic of Artsakh, self-determination

The problem of Nagorno-Karabakh is indeed topical not only from the scientific point of view, but most of all because of the need for practical recommendations on the fate of Artsakh and the indigenous Armenian population inhabiting it for thousands of years.

Finding any fair and legally justified solution to this problem is complicated by at least two circumstances:

– Azerbaijan's disregard for the historical, ethno-cultural and legal objective realities concerning the problem of Artsakh, the only purpose of which is to seize its territory by any means.

– For the same purpose the imposition of the unlawful verdict on some countries, which make political difference in the world, that Artsakh is an internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan, without taking into account the fact of the centuries-old existence of this region as part of the Armenian state for 1300 years, as well as the fact that from the V century to 1813 Artsakh had various relatively independent state formations (kingdom, principality, melikdoms), while the Azerbaijani statehood is just over 100 years old, 70 of which it was part of the USSR.

Below we will try to substantiate some theses, which, in our opinion, will be useful for developing a strategy for effective solutions to the Artsakh issue.

1. A brief outline of the history of Artsakh, its ethnic composition and cultural heritage reasonably proves the inconsistency of the assertion that Nagorno-Karabakh is an internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan. According to scientists (Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Movses Khorenatsi, etc.), Artsakh, as well as Utik, were part of the Kingdom of Van (IX-VI centuries BC), the Kingdom of Armenian Yervandids (VI-II centuries BC), the kingdom of Greater Armenia (the Kingdom of Artaxiads and

Armenian Arshakids) (189 BC - 428 AD) [1, p. 72, 2, pp. 43-63]. The history of Artsakh from the V century to 1813 will be discussed later.

Now let us present some statistical data on the ethnic composition of the population of Artsakh (within the boundaries of the NKAO) in the period from 1823 to 1914 [2, p. 564].

Year	Population	Armenians	%	Tatars	%	Others %
1823	Rural	27500	97.5	700	2.5	-
	Shushi city	3350	41.0	4670	56.0	3.0
	In total	30850	84.6	5370	14.7	0.7
1850	Rural	29886	97.3	900	2.7	-
	Shushi city	6355	50.0	6370	50.0	-
	In total	36241	83.3	7270	16.7	-
1886	Rural	83919	93.2	5839	6.5	0.3
	Shushi city	15188	56.6	11595	43.3	0.1
	In total	99107	84.8	17434	14.9	0.3
1897	Rural	91943	89.5	9631	9.4	1.1
	Shushi city	14420	55.8	10778	41.7	2.5
	In total	106363	82.7	20409	15.9	1.4
1914	Rural	113210	90.6	11013	8.8	0.6
	Shushi city	22004	52.3	18864	44.8	2.9
	In total	135214	80.9	29877	17.9	1.2

From the above data it is evident that in the XIX century and at the beginning of the XX century the predominant part of the population in Artsakh - 81-85% were Armenians, and in the rural population this figure ranged from 91 to 97%.

In 1914, 90.6% of the rural population of Artsakh, 52.3% of the population of the city of Shushi were Armenians. Tatars accounted for 17.9% of the total population of the region, and in the city of Shushi - 44.8%.

Shushi received the status of a city in 1847, it began to develop intensively and became a major Armenian spiritual and cultural center.

In an attempt to change the demographic composition of the population of Artsakh and the city of Shushi and in order to expand the territory, on March 23, 1920 (a month before the Sovietization of Azerbaijan) the entire Armenian part of the city was burned and destroyed. During the fire and massacre, around 10 thousand Armenians died, the rest fled the city, leaving all their property [2, pp. 258-259]. Thus, in an artificial barbaric way, the Armenian city was "transformed" into an Azerbaijani one. This situation continued until 1992 - only 70 years of the thousand-year history of this Armenian settlement of Varanda.

Recently, on September 7, 2022, in his speech in Vladivostok the President of the Russian Federation, esteemed V.V. Putin attached great importance to the right of nations to self-determination. It is noteworthy that the self-determination of the people of

Artsakh took place twice: in 1991, and for the first time in the distant V century. After the fall of the Armenian kingdom of the Arshakids in 428, the kingdom of Artsakh and Utik was created in 485 (V-VII cc) [3, pp. 150-151, 2, pp. 70-72, 8, pp. 426-433].

Moreover, in 488, under King Vachagan III (the Pious), the first Armenian canonical constitution was adopted, which contained 21 articles. Then the principality of Khachen was established (X-XV centuries) [4, pp. 114-119]. Since the XVI century, five well-known melikdoms were formed in Artsakh (Varanda, Dizak, Khachen, Jraberd, Gulistan) [5, pp. 27-38, 64-69]. Thus, statehood in Artsakh in various forms and levels was preserved until 1813 - the year of the conclusion of the Treaty of Gyulistan between Russia and Iran on the handover of Artsakh to Russia.

2. Basically, 1918 should be considered the beginning of the Karabakh movement, because under the leadership of Turkey the Tatars started their struggle for the inclusion of the territory of Artsakh into the Republic of Azerbaijan newly created by Turkey. During 1918-1920 the Armenians of Karabakh heroically resisted and Nagorno-Karabakh did not become part of the Republic of Azerbaijan, not recognized by the League of Nations. A detailed analysis of this resistance is given in A. Ter-Sarkisyants' work [2, pp. 226-265]. However, later, under the Turkish-Azerbaijani pressure, the Bolsheviks included Artsakh into Soviet Azerbaijan. On July 7, 1923, Azerbaijan announced the establishment of the autonomous oblast of Nagorno-Karabakh on the territory of 4.4 thousand square kilometers, which comprised 38.2% of the total historical territory of Artsakh [2, pp. 326, 5, p.65]. Thus, most of the territory of Artsakh was torn away and was made part of Azerbaijan SSR as an administrative region, and the NKAO turned into an enclave - without direct communications with Armenia. Again, the ultimate goal is obvious - the expansion of this territory through the ethnic cleansing of the indigenous population. Recall that in 1923 the population of Nagorno-Karabakh was 157.8 thousand people, including 149.6 thousand Armenians, with the share of 91.8% in the total number. Of course, as a result of the intentional discriminatory policy of the Azerbaijani authorities during the Soviet era, the share of the Armenian population decreased and in 1989 it was 76.9% [2, p. 356].

Here are some facts to prove the discriminatory policy of the authorities of Azerbaijan SSR: according to our calculations, the industrial load of the territory of the NKAO was 2.6 times lower than the average indicator of Azerbaijan; the volume of per capita capital investments in the region amounted to 37% of the average republican level. In 1971-1987 capital investments aimed at economic and social development were 3.6 times higher per unit of the territory of Azerbaijan SSR than in the NKAO [6, pp. 263-264].

The struggle of Armenians for the reunification of Artsakh with Armenia has always continued. G. Harutyunyan and A. Kochinyan, the First Secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, twice appealed to the central authorities with a request to transfer the Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh to the Armenian

SSR, but to no avail. Apparently the elder brother-moderator forbade the younger one to agree with such a decision.

In 1988, a new active stage of the Karabakh movement began, and its results are well known.

Thus, at the first stage of the Karabakh movement Artsakh could not be reunited with Armenia. The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was formed, which was a state structure with minimal powers. The second stage of this movement ended in 1991 with the establishment of the Republic of Artsakh on the basis of the right of nations to self-determination. Trying to keep Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan by force, Baku launched an aggression against the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, which ended on May 5, 1994 with the conclusion of the Bishkek Protocol, a ceasefire agreement in the conflict zone. The result of Azerbaijan's aggressive war against the NKR was not only the defense of the independence of Artsakh, but also the liberation of the original historical part of its territory, conquered by the Azerbaijan SSR in 1923 during the establishment of the NKAO (Karvachar, Kovsakan, Kashatagh, the seized territories of Varanda and Dizak, among others). A modern democratic state was created - the Republic of Artsakh with a total constitutional area of 12.02 thousand square meters. [7, pp. 961-969]. But such a course of events was not part of the plans of the Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem. Thus, taking advantage of the international situation which was favorable for them and due to other circumstances, 100 years after the beginning of the Karabakh movement and the Turkish-Armenian war of 1920, they captured most of the Republic of Artsakh, created the necessary conditions for the complete capture of Artsakh and Turkish dominance in the South Caucasus [7, стр. 961-969]. As Turkish President R.T. Erdoğan has stated, they carry on the work of their ancestors. In order to ideologically substantiate and justify their invasive actions and military aggression, since the 60s of the previous century Azerbaijani historians and politicians have been falsifying the history of Artsakh in an organized and purposeful manner, as ordered by state bodies. They are trying in every possible way to present the Armenian cultural heritage as Albanian, and the religion and world-famous Armenian temples as Udi. By order of the authorities, anything Armenian, the Armenian trace, including objects of culture and religion, cemeteries are being destroyed in the occupied territories.

It is obvious that the establishment of the state of Azerbaijan, the inclusion of the Armenian regions of Artsakh and Nakhijevan in it, were the primary elements to serve the purpose of the strategy.

As a conclusion it should be mentioned that it is necessary to achieve the following generally accepted goals:

– It is reasonable to deny the assertion imposed by the Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem on some countries that Artsakh is an internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan, since it has no legal, historical-geographical and ethno-cultural basis.

The integrity of this approach is confirmed by the above-mentioned historical and demographic realities. In addition, the NKAO seceded from the Azerbaijan SSR

according to the law of the SSR “On the procedure for resolving issues related to the secession of a union republic from the USSR” dated 04/03/1990 and, as noted, Nagorno-Karabakh was not part of the Republic of Azerbaijan, whose successor was independent Azerbaijan, which seceded from the USSR according to the declaration of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan SSR on 08/30/1991. The denial of the mentioned unlawful assertion will pave the way for international recognition of the independence of the Republic of Artsakh.

– Develop measures to strengthen the Republic of Artsakh with the restoration of the territory and border of the NKAO and ensuring all reliable communications with the RA.

– Together with the Russian Federation and other friendly countries, ensure the proper solution to the security problems of the Republic of Artsakh.

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