

ԲԱՆԲԵՐ ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԻՆՍՏԻՏՈՒՏԻ

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# ԲԱՆԲԵՐ

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#### **ԻՐԱԿԼԻ ԻՐԵՄԱՁԵ**

Վրաստանի Ժողովրդական հանրապետությունում (1918-1921թթ.) համընդհանուր նախնական կրթական համակարգի ձևավորումը ..... 41

#### **ՔՐԻՍՏԻՆԵ ԿՈՍՏԻԿՅԱՆ**

Այսրկովկասի հայ մելիքներն ու խոջաները Նադիր շահի իշխանության շրջանում..... 63

#### **ԳԱՌ ԶԻԱՆԺԻ**

Երկյակ դաշինքը երկընտրանքի տեսության տեսանկյունից. Մակեդոնական բարեփոխումների վրա (1903-1908 թթ.) հենվող քննություն .... 88

#### **ՅԱՆ ՄԻՆ-ՉԻՆ, ՎԱՆ ԼԻ, ՀԱՄՓՐԻ ՌԱՍՍԵԼ**

Հետազոտություն Չին-ռուսական համագործակցության վերաբերյալ աշխարհաքաղաքական հեռանկարի տեսանկյունից..... 125

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Տարածաշրջանային կերպափոխումները և Հայաստանը. անվտանգային տեղաշարժեր (Միջազգային գիտաժողով)..... 140

## CONTENTS

### ARTICLES

#### **RUSLAN KOBZAR**

Partia During the Time of Mithridates III (58/57-56 B.C.). An Attempt to Reconstruct Historical Events ..... 14

#### **IRAKLI IREMADZE**

Establishment of Universal Primary Education System in the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921).....41

#### **KRISTINE KOSTIKYAN**

Armenian Melik's and Khojas of Transcaucasia during Nādir Shāh's Rule ..... 63

#### **GAO JIANZHI**

The Dual Alliance Under the Perspective of the Theory of Alliance Dilemma: A Study Centered on Macedonian Reforms (1903-1908)..... 88

#### **YANG MING-XING, WANG LI, HUMPREY ARNOLDO RUSSEL**

An inquiry into China and Russia strategic partnership from geopolitical perspective ..... 125

### SCIENTIFIC LIFE

"Regional Transformations and Armenia: Security Shifts" (International Conference)..... 140

# PARTHIA DURING THE TIME OF MITHRIDATES III<sup>1</sup> (58/57-56 B.C.). AN ATTEMPT TO RECONSTRUCT HISTORICAL EVENTS

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## **Abstract**

In the huge number of scientific works on the history of Parthia, there are no special studies devoted to the activities of the Parthian king Mithridates III (Mithridates IV – according to Assar’s chronology [4:96-97])<sup>2</sup>. The exception is the scanty lines (5-10 sentences) in generalizing works on the political history of Parthia [7:83-83;6:42-44;22:31], a number of scientific articles [12:2211;17:57-58:19:168;39:211;4:96-97;44:442-443; 11:212-213] and dissertations [18:108;30:75], which in passing refer to the period of the reign of this king or his action. In all these studies circulates one and the same point of view that the Parthian king Phraates III was killed by his sons – Mithridates and Orodes, after which Mithridates III ascended the throne and started a war with Great Armenia. At the end of the war with Great Armenia, Mithridates III was sentenced by the Parthian Council of Elders to banishment from the kingdom of the “cruelty” he had shown. In his place, his brother Orodes II was appointed king, who was returned from exile by Surena. Interpreting the data of the sources in this way, the researchers did not try to find out what Marcus Justinus meant by Mithridates’s III “cruelty” and what

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<sup>1</sup> Mithridates IV – according to G.R.F. Assar’s chronology [4:96-97]

<sup>\*\*</sup> With love and respect, I dedicate this work to my mother – Kobzar Tetiana Volodymyrivna

<sup>2</sup> G.R.F. Assar had intentions of devoting a separate study to Mithridates IV biography in his future publication [4:96]. But as far as I know, he has not yet published anything on this subject, with the exception of a small note about the coins of Mithridates IV [4:96-97].

meaning contemporaries of the events put into the notion of “exile”. Meanwhile, a thorough analysis of sources and the correct interpretation of these terms allows us to doubt Orodes II involvement in the murder of his father. Unsolved problems require solutions. At the same time, the lack of detailed studies on the biography of the king Mithridates III and the political history of Parthia in the era of king Mithridates III make this study quite timely.

**Keywords:** Mithridates III (or Mithridates IV), Orodes II, Phraates III Teos, Tigranes II the Great, Artavazdes II, Great Armenia, Parthia, “cruelty”, “excessive cruelty” (“overkill”), “exile” (“outlaw”).

Around 58/57 BC serious upheavals occurred in Parthia. As Dio Cassius testifies [8:390-391], Phraates III Theos, who had previously ruled Parthia, was treacherously killed. Rumors about this, which reached Rome, said that, most likely, this was the work of the king’s sons [8:390-391]. Dio Cassius himself, mentioning this, does not say which of the sons was suspected of this incident, but the mention of murderers in the plural suggests that there were at least two of them. We know the names of three people involved in the murder of Phraates III - Orodes II, Mithridates III and Orsanes. Two of them, Mithridates III and Orodes II, are directly named in the sources as the sons of Phraates III. As for Orsanes, the degree of his relationship to the murdered king will become clear as the story progresses.

Marcus Justinus, citing information relating to the murder of the Parthian king Orodes II by his son Phraates IV, briefly notes that in Parthia it has already become a tradition that pat

ricides become kings [28:360;32:629;33:417]. And since in the history of Parthia, before the murder of Phraates III, such incidents were not recorded by sources, this allows us to assert that one of the murderers of Phraates III is his immediate successor on the throne. However, the inconsistency of sources regarding his successor does not immediately make it possible to clearly answer this question. A detailed analysis is needed here.



This inconsistency is due to the fact that the sources at our disposal, which in this matter are “The Philippic History” by Pompeius Trogus (as summarized by Marcus Justinus), “Roman History” by Dio Cassius, “Roman History” by Appian of Alexandria, “The Jewish War” and “Jewish Antiquities” by Josephus Flavius interprets the development of events differently.

As Gholamreza Assar correctly noted in his work, the issue is complicated by the fact that we do not have at our disposal late Babylonian cuneiform sources from 255-262 SEB (57/56-50/49 BC), which forces us to reconstruct the events of the reign of Mithridates III (IV) based on his coins and a small number of fragmentary information from classical sources [4:96].

The first of these sources is an extremely difficult work to interpret, if only because it is a short version of the once more extensive work of Pompeius Trogus. By abridging it, Justinus chose at his own discretion those subjects from it which he considered most worthy of attention. Naturally, the criterion of selection was entirely Justinian's own inference. From the work of Pompeius Trogus the prologues to his books have also been preserved, but the name of their creator is still unknown.

A comparative analysis of Justinian's epitome and the prologues from the work of Pompeius Trogus shows inconsistencies in many details and allows us to conclude that the epitomator omitted too much information. In view of this, one must sincerely regret the loss of the work of Pompeius Trogus himself.

Marcus Justinus claims that the immediate successor of Phraates' III was Mithridates III, who “after the war with Armenia was expelled by the Parthian Council of Elders for his cruelty” [28:357]. Justinus does not directly say what this “cruelty” was for which the king was sentenced to expulsion from the kingdom, but if we turn, once again, to the part of his epitome that deals with Parthia, we find another reference to “cruelty”, which he characterises as “excessive cruelty”. Note that the described case is also related to patricide, and the underlined “excessiveness” is a reflection of the particular burden caused by the number of victims, because in addition to his father, Phraates IV killed his thirty brothers and even children [28:360]. Seeing that he was hated by the nobility for the crimes he was committing, he ordered his adult

son to be killed as well, so that there would be no one to be made king in his place [28:360]. Note that Marcus Justinus, narrating this incident and knowing that this is already other case of patricide known to him, does not say a word that Orodes II suffered the same fate that he had previously prepared for his father. Although if Orodes II had been involved in this murder, he could have said that this was a well-deserved punishment. This suggests that the tradition mentioned by Marcus Justinus (the having patricides as kings), direct evidence that the son of Phraates III who was involved in the murder, also ruled in Parthia. And since it could not be Orodes II, then the “shadow” of Phraates III Teos’ murder directly falls on two other persons – Mithridates III and Orsanes. It is them, as fugitives, that Josephus Flavius mentions [14:54-55;13:84-85]. Marcus Justinus clearly says that Mithridates III, for his cruelty, by which, as it turns out, is meant the patricide, was expelled by the Parthian Council of Elders outside the kingdom, and the empty throne was taken by another king, Orodes II. Dio Cassius, narrating about the accession of Orodes II, says that the latter, occupying the Parthian throne, expelled one of his brothers, whose name was Mithridates III, from Media, where he ruled [8:390-391]. Dio Cassius does not say what was the reason for the expulsion, but if we remember that his sons were suspected of Phraates III death [8:390-391], and take into account that Mithridates III fled with Orsanes [14:54-55;13:84-85], then the reason why Orodes II pursued them becomes clear. Taking into account that Dio Cassius suspected several sons in Phraat III Teos’ murder, it is highly probable that Mitridates’s III companion Orsanes, mentioned by Josephus Flavius, is also Phraates III Teos’s son, and taking into account their joint escape, their mutual involvement in his father’s murder increases.

It is important to note that Dio Cassius, narrating the murder of Phraates III, has some doubts about the absolute involvement of the king’s sons in the murder, as evidenced by his phrase “most likely” [8:390-391]. It is difficult to say what cast doubt on this matter and made Dio Cassius hesitate. But here it is important to remember that after the Parthian Council of Elders decided to expel Mithridates III from the kingdom, the outcast fled to Babylon, whose inhabitants sheltered him. Orodes II, who had already become king, was

subjected to a long siege of Babylon and only the hungry forced the Babylonians to surrender. Because of what or because of whom the Babylonians endured a long siege and months of hunger, it is known of certain. But there can hardly be any doubt that the support of the residents of Babylon provided to Mithridates III came from the personal benefit that the citizens could have from this conflict. Otherwise, why would the inhabitants of Babylon and Seleucia, whom Plutarch calls “invariably hostile to the Parthians” [32:617;34:366-367], endure so many hardships for the sake of a Parthian? It is hardly worth believing that the Babylonians knew any details about the murder of Phraates III, which allowed them to come to Mithridates III defense, because then another completely logical question arises: why was the information known to them not used by the accused in their justification?

According to a number of sources, Mithridates III, after his exile, found refuge with the proconsul of Syria, Aulus Gabinius. During his stay, Mithridates III persuaded Aulus Gabinius to help him restore himself on the Parthian throne, with the help of Roman troops [2:287;3:199-201]. I believe that in the question of restoration of Mithridates III hardly there was a question about its statement on the Median throne, where it, judging by information of Dio Cassius, ruled before his expulsion by Orodes II. For in this case, he would have to get along with the immediate Parthian king in the person of Orodes II. Consequently, Dio Cassius’ mention of Media, where he ruled before his expulsion by Orodes II, requires another explanation. It is important to remember that the city of Ecbatana – the capital of Media, was the summer residence of the Parthian kings [42:493], and previously provided the same amenities and security to the Seleucids and Achaemenids, but only in winter time [42:494]. Isidore of Charax clarifies that the residence of those who sat in Ecbatana was the Adrapanana fortress [15:6-7;16:410]. This allows us to understand another important detail – summer, like the time of year in which Mithridates III was exiled. It is also possible that the reign of Mithridates in Media is an echo of his governorship during the reign of his father. Here it is necessary to remember that the same Dio Cassius mentions a certain Mithridates from Media, who courageously defended the interests of his

father-in-law Tigranes II the Great in his fight against the Romans [8:20-21]. It is quite possible that this is the same person. And although this assumption is not without a certain portion of speculation, it can explain a lot in the network of data from other sources.

According to Memnon, it is known that Tigranes II the Great sent an embassy to Phraates III, inviting him to join the anti-Roman alliance on the side of the Armenians, promising to cede to him Mesopotamia, Adiabene and Great Glen<sup>3</sup> (Μεγάλους Αυλώνας) [29:283-316]. It is not known for certain what Phraates III responded to the proposal of Tigranes the Great, but if it can be proven that Mithridates of Media, the son-in-law of Tigranes II the Great and the Parthian king Mithridates III are one and the same person, then it will turn out that Phraates III and Tigranes II not only concluded this union, but also sealed it with a dynastic marriage. Naturally, with this scenario, Tigranes II the Great was obliged to transfer the promised territories to the Parthian king Phraates III, since the newly-minted son-in-law zealously defended the interests of his father-in-law in the fight against Lucullus. When Lucullus was dealt with, the kingdom of Tigranes II plunged into a new round of problems. The youngest son of Tigranes II the Great from Cleopatra of Pontus, who was also called Tigran, dissatisfied that his father gave him only Sophene to rule, and probably counting on more, rebelled against his father. When the uprising was suppressed, Tigran the Younger went over to the Parthian king Phraates, who married him to his daughter, and then, on the side of his son-in-law, invaded Armenia with an army and besieged Artashat. The siege dragged on, and soon Phraates III and part of the army returned to Parthia, which Tigranes II the Great took advantage of and defeated his son's troops. The latter went on the run and decided to turn to Pompey for help, who in 66 BC. was appointed to replace Lucullus. In fact, Tigran the Younger brought Pompey to Armenia, and he, before the invasion of Tigran's kingdom, previously agreed with the Parthian king Phraates III on his neutrality.

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<sup>3</sup> Great Glen (Μεγάλους Αυλώνας) – according to translated by Andrew Smith from Jacoby's text FGrH. 434 (Memnon: History of Heracleia), <https://bit.ly/42tDfvr>.

Phraates III did not hesitate for a long time, since his relationship with Tigran the Great was already damaged. Deprived of allies, Tigran came to Pompey's headquarters and admitted defeat, but retained Armenia itself and was included in the number of allies of Rome. The neutrality of Phraates III in this war led to the fact that Tigranes II refused to give him all the previously promised territories, which led to an even greater complication of the Armenian-Parthian relations. In 64 BC, when Pompey was in Syria, ambassadors came from Tigranes and Phraates who asked to resolve the border dispute between Armenia and Parthia. To resolve this issue, Pompey sent three representatives. From the data of Pompey's dedicatory inscription, which was preserved in the work of Diodorus Siculus, it is known that Pompey "... defended Armenia, ... Mesopotamia, Sophene and Gordiene [10:286-289]. If we compare these data with the information of Memnon [29:283-316] about the promises of Tigranes II, it turns out that as a result of the dispute, Phraates III received only Adiabene, while Gordiene and Mesopotamia remained with Tigranes II. After this, Tigranes and Phraates concluded a general non-aggression pact between themselves, since they understood that the war between them would be exhausting for both sides, and the weakened winner would appear as easier prey for the Romans. However, by the beginning of the 50-s BC. most of Mesopotamia, right up to Zeugma on the Euphrates, as Aulus Gabinius and Crassus were able to verify in turn, was already under the control of the Parthians. It is important to note that the ruling Abgar of Osroene, whom Plutarch calls the leader of the Arabs, adheres to a pro-Parthian orientation in the Roman-Parthian contradictions, although during the time of Pompey he took the exact opposite position. In this regard, one can completely agree and support the opinion of S.D. Litovchenko [18:108;19:168], who believed that "the likelihood of a clash between Armenia and Parthia in northwestern Mesopotamia around 57 BC is quite high." It is logical to believe that the tacit consent of Phraates III to the result of the verdict of the judges sent by Pompey to resolve the border dispute is explained by the existing facts of personal mistakes of Phraates III, who, through his actions, first spoiled family relations with Tigranes II the Great, supporting his son-in-

law Tigranes the Younger, and then took a neutral position in the struggle of the Armenians against the Romans. Understanding all this, Phraates III easily agreed to normalize relations with Tigranes II the Great. However, the dissatisfied party in this balance of power remained Mithridates, the son-in-law of Tigranes II and the son of Phraates III. As heir to the throne, he understood that Parthia, which he would inherit, would be deprived of control over Mesopotamia, both through the fault of his father-in-law and the fault of his father. It is quite possible that this pushed him to end his life with his father and go to war against his father-in-law. And for the latter it was necessary to seize the throne.

The fact that such a scenario could well have taken place is clearly demonstrated by the example of the relationship between Orodes II and his son Phraates IV. Let us recall that the latter killed his father, since his, in his opinion, “could not possibly get ready to die” [28:360]. Plutarch claims that at first Phraates IV tried to poison his father and gave him aconite, but this had the opposite effect on Orodes II, who was suffering from dropsy, the poison acted like a medicine, after which he chose a more effective method and simply strangled him [32:629;33:417]. The possibility that he would have killed his father so that his brother Orodes II could become king is hypothetically possible. It could have taken place against the background of personal or mutual hostility, hatred, envy, especially considering that the shadow of involvement in the murder of Phraates III falls on his two sons - Mithridates III and Orsanes, although Orsanes did not rule, but he committed the murder. But in reality, it is minimal, especially considering the nature of the relationship between Mithridates III and Orodes II. Let us remember that the latter considered him “rather his enemy than his brother” [28:357]. If he were not the main contender for the Parthian throne, then there would be no point in killing his father in order to quickly take possession of it. After the murder of his father, he ruled Parthia for a short time [2:287;3:199-201;28:357], until irrefutable facts of his involvement in the murder of his father came to light. We have to talk about “irrefutable facts” because when the charges were considered by the Parthian Council of Elders, Mithridates

III, even if he was not actually involved in the murder, for some reason could not prove the opposite.

In view of this, one has to believe that the “cruelty” mentioned by Marcus Justinus, applied as a characteristic to the personal qualities of Mithridates III, was given to him precisely for the murder of his father. It was precisely because of this reason that he was sentenced by the Parthian Council of Elders to expulsion from the kingdom, which had never happened before.

According to Posidonius, the Council of the Parthians consists of two groups, one part includes the king’s relatives, and the other that of wise men and Mags. Kings are chosen (appointed) in both groups [42:487]. From the context of Marcus Justinus’ message [28:357], with the comparison of information preserved by Posidonius (in Strabo’s retelling), it appears that the Parthian Council of Elders, could not only elect kings, but also depose them.

After his exile, Mithridates III stayed in Babylon for some time. However, it is not clear from the context whether this was before he appeared in Syria with Aulus Gabinius or not. It all depends on how to interpret Marcus Justinus information “was banished by the Parthian Council of Elders outside the kingdom”, about what we are talking about before his appearance in Babylon. If these words are to be taken literally, as a *fait accompli*, i.e., a court decision with the carrying out of the sentence in a traced execution, it would clearly indicate that must be connected with the events after his stay in Syria with Aulus Gabinius. But if we interpret it simply as the verdict of the council of elders mentioned by Justin, which Mithridates III had to fulfil on his own, then his stay in Babylon can be either before his appearance in Syria or after. We know only that Orodes II took the already empty throne, i.e., after Mithridates III had been deprived of legitimacy [28:357]. But he managed to leave the territory of the kingdom before Orod II became king, or he took refuge in Babylon wanting to continue the fight, we don’t know for sure. Sources are conflicting about this. If we proceed from the information of Justin, it turns out that Mithridates III was expelled not by Orodes, but by the Parthian council of elders, and that Orodes “took possession of the kingdom that was left without a ruler.” [28:357].

Therefore, if we follow the Justinus presentation, it would be logical to place the Babylonian period of Mithridates III life after his stay with Aulus Gabinius. But according to Appian of Alexandria and Dio Cassius, Mithridates III was expelled by Orodes II himself, after the latter's accession to the throne [2:287;3:199-201;8:390-391]. It is also possible that both information took place and simply reflects the phased result of the development of events, between which there is a difference of several months. It is important to note that Appian of Alexandria and Dio Cassius place the expulsion of Mithridates III by Orodes before the appearance of Mithridates in Syria by Aulus Gabinius [8:390-391]. However, the problem is that neither Justin nor the surviving prologues to the books of Pompeius Trogus mention the stay of Mithridates III with Aulus Gabinius, and in view of the absence of the work of Pompeius Trogus himself, it is difficult to say whether it contained information about the stay of Mithridates III with Aulus Gabinius in Syria. It is also strange that neither Josephus Flavius, nor Appian of Alexandria, nor Dio Cassius report anything about the stay of Mithridates III in Babylonia and the long siege of the city. A strange picture is emerging. Three ancient authors (Flavius Josephus, Appian of Alexandria and Dio Cassius) know about the stay of Mithridates III with Aulus Gabinius and know nothing about his stay in Babylon, while Justin, on the contrary, knows about the stay of Mithridates III in Babylon, but says nothing about his stay in Syria.

Here it is important to remember that according to Plutarch [32:619-620], Orodes II himself had been in exile before, but was returned to the Parthians by Surena, who enjoyed the ancient and hereditary privilege of being first to set the crown upon the head of the Parthian king at the time of accession. Having brought Orodes II back to power and restored him to his throne, Surena captured for him Seleucia the Great, having been the first to mount its walls and having routed with his own hand his opponents [32:619-620]. Who these opponents were is not known? Plutarch does not name them. However, it can hardly be doubted that these are Mithridates's III supporters, at least, this conclusion is suggested by an analysis of the iconography of coins minted during this period.



On the city coins of Seleucia of the era of Mithridates III, the patron goddess of this city is depicted with a palm of victory in her hand, greeting Mithridates III, and after the capture of the city by Surena and the transfer of power over it to Orodes II, the iconography of the coins of Seleucia of the era of Orodes II changes dramatically, now the patron-goddess of the city, depicted kneeling before Orodes II seated on the throne [17:58].

Plutarch does not disclose the reason for the expulsion of Orodes II, but it clearly has nothing to do with the murder of Phraates III Teos, because what was the point of enthroning his accomplice instead of Mithridates III, who was found guilty of murdering his own father and was sentenced to exile because of this, and if not an accomplice, then a man with the reputation of a patricide. It is important to note that Mithridates III, who was expelled from the kingdom, is replaced on the throne by Orodes II, who was previously in exile. So, the term “exile” equally applied to both Mithridates III and Orodes II, has a different meaning. A contemporary of the events, Cicero, in “The Speech concerning his House delivered before the College of Pontiffs”, dated September 29, 57 BC, gives a clear explanation of the term «exile». He says it can have “shameful” and “not shameful” meaning. “Not shameful” (not disgraceful) in itself means “misfortune”, but “shameful” (disgraceful) “when it comes as a retribution for misdoing, and according of common opinion (in the eyes of society), as well when it is the punishment that follows upon an adverse verdict” (condemnation, judgement) [26:79]. It is clear from Cicero explanation that the “non-disgraceful” meaning of the word was applied to Orodes II and the “disgraceful” meaning of the word was applied to Mithridates III, which was a “punishment” for the offence of condemnation.

It is also necessary to thoroughly check whether this Orodes, who is traditionally considered Orodes II, as well as Orodes I, who previously judging by the cuneiform tablets, ruled in Parthia for a short time (from April 80 BC to 76 BC), be one and the same person. This thought is suggested by the fact that Orodes II, at the time of his death in 38 BC, was of advanced age. And 15 years earlier, he already had an adult son, Pacorus, which allowed Orodes II to marry him to the sister of the Armenian king Artavazdes II, i.e., daughter

of Tigranes II the Great [32:629]. At that time (53 BC), judging by the information of Plutarch [32:617-618;34:368-369] Orodes II was younger than Crassus, for he was lenient about his age, and Crassus at this time was already over 60 years old [32:617;34:364-365]. Even if we assume that at the time of his death, he was not a long-liver, like Tigranes II the Great or the Parthian king Sinatruk (Sanatruk), who lived 85 and 87 years, respectively [20:234-235;21:717], and let's say he was even 60 years old, then this is quite enough that in 80 BC., at the age of 18, he fought for the Parthian throne. It is important to emphasize that on these cuneiform tablets, he is mentioned under his personal name, which suggests his conflict with the reigning Arsaces (probably Gotarzes I), about whom we know nothing from this time. If it turns out that Orodes I and Orodes II are the same person, then it will be possible to connect his short reign with the fact that he was in exile and returned from there by Surena. It is important to recall here that Orodes II is the grandson of the aforementioned Parthian king Sinatruk, who was returned to the kingdom by the Sakavrak Scythians when he was 80 years old, and he reigned for another 7 years [20:234-235;21:717]. According to the chronology clarified by Assar, he ruled until 69/68 BC [4:56-62]. Therefore, he was born around 156/155 BC, and Orodes, if he was born around 100 BC. could very well be his grandson. So, the question of identifying Orodes I and Orodes II as the same individual may well have a basis.

If the information mentioned by Appian of Alexandria, Dio Cassius and Plutarch reflects the real development of events, then the following must be stated. First, Mithridates III, together with his brother Orsanes, killed their father and took possession of the kingdom. Soon after this, he started a war with the Armenian king Tigran, thereby violating the Armenian-Parthian non-aggression treaty of 64 BC, which was concluded by Phraates III and Tigran II the Great. Shortly after this, he was convicted of murdering his own father. The accusation was considered by the Parthian council of elders, where he could not prove his innocence and was sentenced to exile from the kingdom. After his removal from the throne and deprivation of legitimacy, his brother Orodes II, returned from exile by Surena, takes possession of the empty

throne, but Mithridates, instead of leaving the borders of Parthia, gradually takes refuge in Media, then in Seleucia, then in Babylon. Orodes II subjected Babylon to a long siege for this. From the besieged city, Mithridates and Orsanes flee to Syria to Aulus Gabinius; this is precisely the conclusion that can be drawn if we combine the information of Justin and Appian of Alexandria, for the latter clearly says that it was Orodes who expelled Mithridates [2:287;3:199-201]. It is important to note that since it is logical to see Mithridates and Orsanes as the opponents of Orodes indicated by Plutarch in the rebellious Seleucia, it must be emphasized that their flight to Syria, to Aulus Gabinius, does not fit in with this episode, since the capture of Seleucia was carried out by Surena without the participation of Orodes II himself. Consequently, the information preserved by Justin about the hiding of Mithridates in Babylon and the long siege of the city by Orodes II must be separated in time from the decision of Mithridates to surrender to the mercy of Orodes II, since between these events there should be chronologically the flight of Mithridates with Orsanes to Syria to Aulus Gabinius. Now it is clear that even after the court verdict, Mithridates III did not immediately leave the territory of Parthia, but continued to fight. It is not known exactly how long he shared the hardships of siege and famine with the besieged Babylonians. But Babylon itself was subjected to a long siege and famine. The inhabitants probably resisted, expecting Mithridates to come with a Roman army. This fits especially interestingly with the initial scope of powers that Aulus Gabinius was endowed with as proconsul of Syria.

After this, we already meet Mithridates in the camp of Aulus Gabinius. At the time of his arrival, Gabinius was preparing to go on a campaign against the Arabs, but Mithridates, deprived of power by his brother Orodes II, began to encourage him to go on a campaign not against the Arabs, but against the Parthians [2:287;3:199-201]. According to Appian [2:287;3:199-201], Mithridates' request, supported by money, prevailed. Even one of the dependent kings, Archelaus, king of Comana, appeared to participate in the supposed war [42:523-524]. However, the Senate did not allow him to do this, and Archelaus decided to abandon this hope, but found another, even greater

one. It so happened that at this time the Alexandrians expelled Ptolemy XII Auletes, the father of Cleopatra, and his eldest daughter, whose name was Berenice, Cleopatra's sister, ruled the kingdom. Since they were looking for a husband of royal origin for her, Archelaus proposed himself to her as a candidate, claiming that he was the son of Mithridates VI Eupator. Secretly from Gabinus, some people brought him to the queen. His proposal was accepted [42:523-524], and he was proclaimed king [42:734-735].

Usually, when interpreting this passage, researchers believe that we are talking about the decision of the Senate regarding the intentions of Aulus Gabinus [39:210;30:75]. However, we believe that they are mistaken; they were clearly talking about a ban on participation in the Parthian campaign for Archelaus. This is indicated primarily by a chronological gap of approximately six months, meanwhile, when the ban came from the Senate, Archelaus departed for Egypt, Aulus Gabinus was preparing for the Parthian campaign, crossed the Euphrates (or reached it) and was caught up with a letter from Pompey and Ptolemy Auletes. Even if we take into account that the senate's ban concerned Aulus Gabinus or both of them, it must be admitted that, unlike Archelaus, Aulus Gabinus was not at all worried about the decision of the senate. If it were otherwise, he would not have started either the Parthian campaign or the Egyptian one. Judging by further events, information about which is described in the sources, Gabinus continued to prepare for the Parthian campaign for almost the entire period while Archelaus ruled Egypt (about six months). The seriousness of Aulus Gabinus's intentions regarding Parthia is also supported by the information of Josephus that he crossed the Roman-Parthian border - the Euphrates [13:84-85], and in another book reached it [14:54-55]. In any case, the answer to the question of whether the Senate's decision to ban the Parthian campaign was intended for Archelaus or Aulus Gabinus depends on what initial powers Aulus Gabinus was given in Rome before being sent to Syria. Cicero, in his speech "On His House," says that Aulus Gabinus received "unlimited empire" [26:64].

It should be recalled that at the end of his Syrian activities, Aulus Gabinus arrived in Rome, where he was brought to trial on the basis of the Lex Cornelia

de maiestatis in connection with his campaign in Egypt [39:204]. The law for violation of which Aulus Gabinius was tried, among other things, implied punishment for recruiting troops and unauthorized initiation of military actions against another state [5:186], which suggests that even “unlimited empires” had limitations. That is, without the permission of the Senate, Aulus Gabinius did not have the authority to recruit troops and begin military operations against another state. But the absence of powers due to the existence of the law, of course, does not imply the absence of the right to choose. And the right to choose allows you to break any laws, albeit with the caveat that you will have to answer for breaking the law. It should be noted that Aulus Gabinius, in addition to the perfect Egyptian campaign, was actively preparing for the Parthian campaign: he recruited troops and crossed the border. But in Rome, he was tried specifically for the Egyptian campaign; he was not charged with the Parthian campaign as a violation of the law, which can have a double interpretation. Either this was due to the fact that Aulus Gabinius had the right to do so (and the ban on participation in it entirely and completely without reservation was intended purely for Archelaus), or the lack of real clashes with the Parthians, despite the preparations, did not have sufficient grounds for accusations. The final answer to the question of which option should be chosen is decided on the basis of information from Cicero, who twice names the territories subject to Gabinius. Addressing Clodius, he says: “You gave up for plunder... Syria, Babylonia, Persia...” [26:74]. And then he claimed that Clodius gave Gabinius “all the Syrian, Arabian and Persian kingdoms” [26:94]. This list gives a clear idea of the scope of the borders and powers of Aulus Gabinius - Syria, Arabia, Persia (Persian kingdoms) and Babylonia.

The writing of Persia and Babylonia in an archaic guise, put E. Smykov into a perplexity and misconception [39:203], which can be easily removed thanks to Pliny who in his Natural History, writes: “The kingdom of the Persians, which we now know as Parthia, lies between the two seas, the Persian and the Caspian, on the heights of the Caucasus range” [31:366-369]. The list of sources is easy to continue. Ammianus Marcellinus in his

information identifies the Persians and Parthians [1:350-353;1a:309]. But, even if there was no direct information from sources, then we, one way or another, would have to mean Parthia by the Persian and Babylonian kingdoms, since the territories of both kingdoms in the realities of that time were part of it.

That is why there is every reason to say that, unlike Egypt, Aulus Gabinius initially had sufficient grounds to act in the territory of Syria, Nabatea and Parthia. That is why, preparations for the Parthian campaign (for almost another 5-6 months after Gabinius left Archelaus), as well as the crossing of the Roman-Parthian border, had legal grounds and for the same reason were not taken into account during the trial of Gabinius in Rome. Without these permissions, Gabinius would have had to justify himself in Rome from these accusations. Consequently, the Senate's ban on participation in the Parthian campaign was intended specifically for Archelaus, and not for Gabinius.

Ptolemy Auletes, meanwhile, headed to Rome. Pompey the Great accepted him, recommended him to the Senate and achieved not only his restoration to the throne, but even the death of most of the ambassadors who were sent by the Egyptians against him. Having received the necessary sums and a letter from Pompey to Aulus Gabinius, he left Rome and headed to Syria.

Aulus Gabinius, meanwhile, having completed preparations for the Parthian campaign, set out from Syria and crossed the Euphrates [13:84-85]. On the way, he was overtaken by a letter from Pompey, which was brought by Ptolemy XII. He said that he would provide large sums of money to both himself and the army, part of which would be paid immediately, and the rest after the restoration of Ptolemy to the Egyptian throne. Having sold his services at a higher price [2:287;3:199-201], at the very height of the Parthian campaign, [13:84-85;14:54-55;8:390-391] Aulus Gabinius turned from the Euphrates towards Egypt [13:84-85;14:54-55]. Although the law prohibited the governors from intruding beyond the boundaries of their powers, he crossed them, although the Senate and the Sibylla declared that Ptolemy XII should not be restored to his rights [8:390-391;2:287;3:199-201]. But this did not

stop Aulus Gabinius. This further confirms that the abandonment of the Parthian campaign was not due to a senate ban, but to a letter from Pompey, backed by larger bribes received from Ptolemy [2:287;3:199-201;8:390-391].

As we can see, Strabo's information that the Senate banned Gabinius from the Parthian expedition contradicts the available data from other sources. It is clearly visible that he not only prepared for the campaign, but also began it and even crossed the Euphrates. That Pompey had influence on Gabinius and that Aulus Gabinius acted on his instructions in the matter of the Egyptian campaign can hardly be doubted, especially after the words of Plutarch, who characterizes the latter as "the most unbridled (extravagant) of Pompey's flatterers" [33:91-92;35:240-241]. If we add to this the epithets that Cicero did not skimp on in his "Speech" "On the Consular Provinces" (*De Provinciis Consularibus*), the second half of May 56 BC) - "monster", "gravedigger of the state" [26:205], "destroying consul" who caused as much evil as Hannibal would not have wished for" [26:206], "the worst of all scoundrels", [26:209], "the worst enemy of the equestrian class and all honest people," "a two-faced evil for the allies," "the destroyer of our soldiers," "the ruiner of tax farmers and the devastator of provinces", "a shameful stain on our empire", [26:209], "a man who has stained himself with the most vile crimes and atrocities", "the dirtiest and most vile person", "recognized as a traitor and enemy of the state", [26:209], as well as a list of such personal qualities and deeds of Aulus Gabinius as: "unreliability", "greed", "arrogance", "insatiable cruelty", [26:205,208], "insolence" [26:210], a list of which he also lists in "The Speech concerning his House delivered before the College of Pontiffs" on September 29, 57 BC: "shamelessness from childhood, debauchery in his youth", "robbery during the consulate" [26:95] and in the same "Speech" he recalls that the post of consul of Syria was bought by him from Clodius for a huge bribe [26:63-64], then there is hardly any doubt that everything this man did, was aimed at his personal enrichment and saturation of his own ego, and not at caring for the state.

According to Strabo [42:524], Archelaus of Comana managed to reign in Egypt for only six months before the return of Ptolemy XII. Gabinius, during the restoration of Ptolemy to the throne, killed him in some skirmish [42:524].

The date of the restoration of Ptolemy XII to the throne is established on the basis of a letter from Cicero to Atticus, which dates back to April 22, 55 BC, in which he reports that, according to rumors circulating in Puteoli, Ptolemy reached Egypt [27:254]. For some time, it was necessary for the rumor to reach Rome, so the return of Ptolemy itself can be attributed to approximately the end of March - beginning of April. Archelaus's journey to Egypt itself must have taken some time, from the time he said goodbye to Gabinius (approximately September 56 BC). Consequently, approximately from the end of September to the beginning of October 56 BC. Archelaus already ruled in Egypt. And the ban that Archelaus received from the Senate was received even earlier, when he was still under Gabinius and preparing for the Parthian campaign. Thus, the height of the beginning of preparations for the campaign falls in the summer of 56 BC. That is, at least from the middle of 56 BC. Mithridates and Orsanes were already in Syria with Aulus Gabinius. However, it is difficult to agree with E. Smykov, who believes that at this time Gabinius moved to Parthia [39:211]. It was Archelaus who moved to Egypt, and while he ruled it (about 5-6 months), Gabinius continued to prepare for the Parthian campaign and even crossed the Euphrates. Later, he would be condemned to exile by the Roman Senate for attacking Egypt without a Senate resolution, starting a war that was considered fatal for the Romans, for there was a certain Sibylline prediction that forbade them to start this war (Appian of Alexandria, XI, 51). It is important to note that before going to Aulus Gabinius in Syria, where his stay is recorded from mid-56 BC, Mithridates must have spent some time in besieged Babylon. And even if we assume that Babylon recognized the exile as a legitimate king for some reason, even despite the verdict of the council of elders, we have no reason to see Mithridates III as king after mid-56 BC. It is unlikely that the Babylonians would have continued to confront Orodes II in a besieged city and suffer hunger after they learned that Aulus Gabinius, having crossed the Euphrates, turned



to Egypt (February 55 BC). Thus, it is easy to establish that Babylon was under siege for at least 7-8 months, therefore the expulsion of Mithridates by the council of elders must have taken place somewhere in late 57 - early 56 BC. Thus, the war with Armenia, if it took place, would have occurred in 57 BC. When starting it, the Parthians, of course, had to take into account the climate of Armenia, the mountainous terrain of the country and the fortification system, which it was necessary to take by storm. Therefore, it was logical to do this from the onset of warmth until the onset of frost, which, if it took place, was from the end of spring to mid-autumn of 57 BC. Justin, mentioning the war of Mithridates III against Armenia, does not say which Armenian king Mithridates III fought with. However, given the fact that according to late Babylonian sources [36:418-419;36:422-423] and Plutarch [32:565], Tigranes II the Great came to the throne in the middle of 96 BC, and the presence of coins of Tigranes dating to the 41st year of his reign (55 BC) [38:86-87, pl. I, 4b], as well as the mention of Tigranes II as reigning king in a speech Cicero, dated March 56 BC. [26:122-123], there is no doubt that Mithridates III fought with him. This means that the treacherous murder of Phraates III occurred before the war with Armenia, and it can be dated to the end of 58 - beginning of 57 BC.

There is every reason to believe that from the time of their flight to Syria to Aulus Gabinius, Mithridates III and Orsanus were with him for more than a year. During this time, Aulus Gabinius restored Ptolemy XII Auletes to the Egyptian throne, fought at Mount Itavirion with Alexander, son of Aristobulus, and after defeating him, entered Jerusalem, where he changed the government structure at the will and desire of Antipater. From here he went against the Nabateans and defeated them completely. Only after this did he help Mithridates III and Orsanus, who fled from Parthia. He sent them ahead, announcing to his soldiers that they had disappeared [13:84-85;14:54-55], and he himself, after some time, departed for Rome. We do not know where Aulus Gabinius sent them. Josephus Flavius, Appian of Alexandria and Dio Cassius are silent about their future fate. And only Justin claims that after all his wanderings, Mithridates III, counting on family relations, surrendered to

the mercy of Orodes II, but he ordered to kill him, considering him more of an enemy than a brother [28:357]. We don't know what Orsan'es' future fate was.

Concluding the analysis of information from narrative (classical) sources concerning the biography of Mithridates III (IV), let us move on to the analysis of numismatic monuments, and especially to the interpretations on them and their iconography. A summary analysis of the inscriptions on the Mithridates III (IV) coins, in comparison with the information from classical sources ordered above, allows us to draw important observations and conclusions.

After the accession of Mithridates III (IV) to the throne after the physical removal of his father, coins with the inscription "Great King Arshak" were initially minted in his name. This conclusion comes both from the analysis of narrative sources and the coinage of the king of Great Armenia, Tigranes II the Great, with the title of "king of kings Tigran."

Soon, after establishing himself on the Parthian throne, Mithridates III (IV), judging by Justin's information, started another war against Armenia, grossly violating the terms of the Armenian-Parthian non-aggression treaty concluded between Tigranes II and Phraates III in 64 BC [8:110-113]. The specific reasons (objective or subjective) that prompted Mithridates III (IV) to attack Tigranes II the Great are unknown to us. But the presence of coins of Mithridates III (IV) with the legend of the "great king of kings Arshak", the attribution of which to Mithridates III (IV) is not controversial, as well as the absence of the title of "king of kings" from Tigranes II (judging by its absence on the coins of the last years of his reign Tigranes [38:86-87, pl. I, 4b] and in the first years of the reign of his son Artavazdes II [23:18-21;43:26] suggests that as a result of a military defeat, the title of "king of kings" passed from Tigranes II to Mithridates III (IV). The coins of Mithridates III (IV) with the legend of the "great king of kings Arshak the founder" also belong to the same period. One can fully agree with the point of view of Sellwood, who believed that the appearance of the epithet "Ktist" on coins. Mithridates III (IV), is associated with the restoration of the power of Parthia and its role in

the region, after a long period of superiority of Armenia and Rome over Parthia [37:131;4:97].

After this came the era of the exposure of Mithridates III (IV), his trial and the sentence to expulsion from the kingdom. As mentioned above, after the verdict was passed, Mithridates III (IV) spent some time in Babylon, where he was attacked by the commander of his brother Orodes II, who tried to finally put an end to him. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that it was during this same period that coins with the inscription “King Arshak Philhellen, called Mithridates” were minted and put into circulation in his name. The appearance on this type of coin, in contrast to previous issues, of the king’s personal name with the epithet Philhellene, is intended to clearly demonstrate that in the Parthian state, in addition to King Orodes II, there is also King Mithridates III (IV), who, despite the court decision, supports the Greek population of Seleucia and Babylon.

Thus, the above-described biography of Mithridates III (IV) clearly shows that the foreign and domestic policy of the Armenian king Artavazdes II on the eve of and during the Parthian campaign of Crassus was entirely developed and implemented not on the basis of the Armenian-Parthian non-aggression treaty of 64 BC [8:110-113;23:8], as Manaseryan R.L. believed in his work [23:8-9], and taking into account the gross violation of this agreement by the Parthian side during the reign of Mithridates III (IV).

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**ՊԱՐԹԵՎԱԿԱՆ ՏԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՄԻՆՐԴԱՏ III-Ի  
(Ք.Ա. 58/57-56 ԹԹ.) ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱՇՐՋԱՆՈՒՄ: ՊԱՏՄԱԿԱՆ  
ԻՐԱԴԱՐՁՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՎԵՐԱԿԱՆԳՆՄԱՆ ՓՈՐՁ**

**Ռուսլան Կոբզար**

**Հիմնաբառեր.** Միհրդատ III, Օրոդես II, Տիգրան II Մեծ, Հրահատ III Թեոս, Մեծ Հայք, Հռոմ, Պարթևական տերություն, «դաժանություն», «արտակարգ մեծ դաժանություն», «արտաքսման», «արտաքսյալ»:

**Ամփոփում**

Անտիկ աղբյուրները վկայում են որ Ք. ա.՝ մոտ 58 թ. պարթևական Հրահատ III Թեոս արքան սպանվեց իր որդիների կողմից, որից հետո գահին անցավ նրա որդի Միհրդատին: Հաստատվելով գահին Միհրդատ III-ը պատերազմ սկսեց Հայաստանի դեմ, դրանով իսկ խախտելով Տիգրան II Մեծի և պարթևական արքա Հրահատ III Թեոսի միջև Ք. ա. 64 թ. կնքված հայ-պարթևական խաղաղության և չհարձակման մասին պայմանագիրը: Դատելով դրամագիտական տվյալներից Միհրդատ III-ին անցավ ոչ միայն «արքայից արքա» տիտղոսը, որը մինչ այդ կրում էր Տիգրան II Մեծը, այլև որոշ տարածքներ Միջագետքի հյուսիս-արևմուտքում: Կարճ ժամանակ անց պարթևական ավագների խորհուրդը «դաժանության» մեղադրանքով «արտաքսման» դատապարտեց Միհրդատ III-ին: Նրա փոխարեն գահակալ նշանակվեց եղբայրը՝ Օրոդես II-ը: Մանրամասն վերլուծության ենթարկելով անտիկ աղբյուրների հաղորդած տեղեկությունները և Հուստինիոսի կողմից կիրառված «դաժանություն» ու «արտաքսյալ» տերմինների ենթատեքստը, հեղինակը փորձ է արել պարզելու թե ինչու՞ արտաքսման դատապարտված երկու եղբայրներից Միհրդատ III-ին զրկեցին գահից, իսկ մյուսին՝ Օրոդես II-ին, կարգեցին գահին: Վերլուծության արդյունքում հեղինակը պարզում է ոչ միայն Հրահատ III արքայի սպանությանը մեղսակից անձանց շրջանակը և ապացուցում իր հոր սպանության մեջ Օրոդեսի մասնակից չլինելու հանգամանքը, այլև վերականգնում է այդ ժամանակաշրջանի պատմական իրադարձությունները և Միհրդատ III-ի կերպարը:

# ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA (1918-1921)<sup>4</sup>

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## **Abstract**

The access to education as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of social and political rights represents one of the most significant achievements for the contemporary world. However, until 1917 citizens of Georgia and the broader Caucasus region were denied access to these fundamental rights.

After the declaration of Georgia's independence in 1918 efforts were initiated to establish the universal education system within the newly formed state. This research aims at studying and analyzing the multifaceted process of educational reform during a period marked by military, political, and economic instability. This research addresses the following questions: How were such reforms implemented within the conditions of instability? What forms of political and economic will, as well as the financial resources were requisite for the introduction of a universal education system?

Drawing upon archival materials and existing scholarship, this article seeks to explain the dynamics of educational reform, not merely as the construction of an autonomous system, but as an integral component of broader social policymaking. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the historical evolution of education policy in the Caucasus region, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of universal education.

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**Keywords:** Democratic Republic of Georgia, Educational System Reform, Universal Educational System, Social Policy, Caucasus, the Russian Revolution.

## **Introduction**

The Democratic Republic of Georgia, founded in 1918, has been widely regarded by both Georgian and foreign scholars as a pioneering laboratory for reforms across various dimensions of social and political life. Among these reforms, the transformation of the education sector stands out as particular for its scale, systemic nature, and success.

Scholarly literature, both local and international, has extensively documented the educational reforms undertaken during the period of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Notable works include Dodo Chumburidze's book *Ganatileba 1918-1921 Ts'lebshi* [Education in 1918-1921] (2000), which provides a detailed examination of the educational reforms implemented during this era. Similarly, Aleksandre Bendianishvili's *Sakartvelos P'irveli Resp'ublik'a (1918-1921)* [The First Republic of Georgia 1918-1921] explores the challenges and deficiencies encountered in the reform process.

This research aims to analyze the broader context of reform within the Democratic Republic of Georgia, focusing specifically on the political instrumentalization of the universal education system and its integration into the social and political fabric of the nation. Employing a content-analysis methodology, the study refers archival materials from the Central Historical Archive, as well as approximately 500 articles from periodical press sources. By engaging with a diverse array of literature, including scholarly articles and monographs, the research seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the educational reform during this period.

Through addressing these key issues, research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding educational reform in the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its broader implications for the social and political landscape of the time.

### **Russian Imperial Education Policy in its imperial peripheries**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Western and Central European countries had largely completed the establishment of universal education systems. However, the literacy rate in the Caucasus of the Russian Empire remained significantly low. According to the 1897 census only 26% of inhabitants reported as literate [16: 245].

In the Georgian context, widespread educational initiatives began to take shape in the 1860s and 1870s, driven by the advocacy of intellectuals such as Niko Nikoladze and Ilia Chavchavadze, alongside ideological counterparts known as the *Tergdaleulebi*.<sup>5</sup> Recognizing education as crucial for regional development and the consolidation of Caucasian nations, these intellectuals advocated concrete policy measures to promote literacy and access to education [2: 82].

Official efforts to formalize educational initiatives commenced in 1879 with the establishment of the *Society for Spreading Literacy among Georgians*. Over the four decades, this society succeeded in opening numerous schools, providing thousands of young individuals with primary and secondary education opportunities. However, access to basic education remained large upon the state funding and political support [11: 292].

The pursuit of universal education and accessibility was inspired by the activities of social-democratic groups and political movements. Notably, these movements were often spearheaded by educators who were aware of the challenges within the education system. A prominent publicist Giorgi Tsereteli highlighted the efforts of social democrats in 1894, underscoring their commitment to educating the illiterate masses and disseminating scientific knowledge.

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<sup>5</sup> *Tergdaleulebi* –the term refers to young Georgian intellectuals and public figures who graduated from various universities of the Russian Empire in the 1860s-1870s. They left Georgia, crossed the Caucasus Mountains - the "Terek" River, and traveled to get an education.

*The Third Group (Mesame Dasi)*<sup>6</sup> includes village teachers, intellectually advanced seminarists [students of the religious school] and graduates of the Pedagogical Institute, which have set themselves an objective to teach the uneducated people how to read and write, to acquaint them with the clear and argumentative views of scientists and to teach them how to follow the world developments”[4: 2-4].

From 1890s the social democrats established informal and underground educational institutions, including literacy, and reading circles in cities such as Tchiatura, Batumi, and Tiflis. Additionally, after the 1905 revolution systemic reforms were initiated, and legal people’s universities and theaters were established by the Trade Unions of the Workers and other institutions affiliated with social-democratic party.

Under Russian imperial governance, the dominance of the Russian language within the education system was mandatory. Despite the existence of small national schools, Russian-language institutions predominated, particularly in the peripheries. From September 1917 the OZAKOM (Special Committee of Transcaucasia), created by the Provisional Government of St. Petersburg, made some efforts to encourage opening national schools for the Caucasian nationalities. As a result of this activities, local language schools have been established, Russian-language institutions were transformed into

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<sup>6</sup> *The Third Group (Mesame Dasi)* – Political group: The journalist Giorgi Tsereteli (1842-1900) classified the social and political groups that emerged in Georgia from the 1860s into three distinct categories. The “*First Group*” represented the initial generation of “*Tergdaleulebi*” primarily dedicated to cultural and educational activities. This group was led by prominent writers and public figures such as Ilia Chavchavadze, Jacob Gogebashvili, etc. Their political outlook was largely aligned with cultural nationalism. The “*Meore Dasi*” comprised a radical-democratic faction within the first generation of *Tergdaleulebi*, focusing primarily on the economic and political development of Georgian society. Ideological leaders of this group included prominent publicists and public figures like Niko Nikoladze, and Giorgi Tsereteli. The “*Third group*” consisted of young individuals who emerged in the public sphere around the 1880s-1890s. They were influenced by the cultural and educational ideals of the *First Group* while sharing the economic development and radical-democratic political ideas of the second troop. Members of the *Third Group* were politically aligned with European socialists.

Georgian ones, as well as Georgian and Armenian sectors were introduced in gymnasiums [23: 4].

However, significant educational reforms were impeded by the bureaucratic inertia, and the OZAKOM, the Transcaucasian Commissariat<sup>7</sup>, and the Transcaucasian Sejm<sup>8</sup> failed to implement profound reforms. Until May 26, 1918, the official declaration of Georgia's independence, the eclectic nature of governance in the region rendered substantial reforms unattainable.

During this transitional phase, educational institutions and schools struggled with severe financial constraints. Data from October 1917 indicates that the average monthly salary for teachers was insufficient, with primary education teachers receiving no more than 80 Ruble, while seminary schoolteachers earned a mere 40 Ruble per month, and village teachers a paltry 100 Ruble. Against the backdrop of escalating inflation, these inadequate salaries left educators unable to meet even their basic needs [7: 3].

### **Ministry of Public Education: Pioneering Educational Reform Initiatives**

On May 26, 1918 declaration of Georgia's Independence was a watershed moment for the development of Georgian education system. The establishment of the Ministry of Public Education in the Democratic Republic of Georgia, under Giorgi Laskhishvili, a prominent figure within the Social-Federalist Party, signified the government's commitment to developing a universal education system. Laskhishvili played a central role in spearheading educational reforms during his tenure from May 1918 to March 1919. Subsequently, from March 1919 to December 1920, Laskhishvili was

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<sup>7</sup> Transcaucasian Commissariat was founded by Transcaucasian political forces in November 1917, in the wake of the Russian October Revolution. This entity served as a de facto replacement for the Provisional Government, as the authority of St. Petersburg did not reach into the Caucasus.

<sup>8</sup> The Transcaucasian Sejm was founded in February 1918 by the political factions of the region as a temporary representative legislative body. It was predominantly composed in proportion to the outcomes of the Constituent Assembly elections held at the end of 1917. The Sejm functioned as the legislative authority of the region until May 26, 1918.

succeeded by Social-Democrat Noe Ramishvili, who, alongside his party mate Noe Tsintsadze, continued to advance educational reforms and oversee administrative duties. The appointment of Grigol Lortkipanidze, a teacher and Social-Democrat, as the new Minister Public Education on December 3, 1920, underscored the government's commitment to education reform [26: 248].

During the period from 1918 to 1921, the Ministry of Public Education comprised three principal structural units: Higher and Secondary School Departments, the Public-School Department, and the Vocational School Departments. These entities worked in tandem to address various facets of educational development. Despite the significance of educational reform, salaries within the ministry and other associated entities remained disproportionately low. For instance, in September 1918, the Minister's salary stood at 1500 Ruble, while the Deputy Minister received 1350 Ruble, and the lowest-paid position, that of the housekeeper, was remunerated with 350 Ruble [32: 1].

Wage growth has been prevalent since 1914. Between 1914 and 1920, workers' wages increased on average by 50-100 times. However, this apparent increase was effectively nullified by the enormous rise in food prices. For instance, between 1914 and 1920, the prices of essential food products increased by 100-300 times [12: 8]. Financial allocations for education witnessed a notable increase over the period, with expenditures from the state treasury rising from 2.73% of the total budget in 1918 to 4.7% (approximately 37.6 Million Ruble) in 1919-1920, and further to 5.2% in the budget plan of 1921 [12: 172]. This resulted in doubling the expenditures on education underscored the government's growing commitment to the sector amid broader economic expansion [12: 177-178].

### **The Genesis of the Development of National School**

In June 1918, the question arose regarding the ideal educational paradigm for Georgia: what kind of schools did Georgia need? One of the initial responses posited that the new Democratic Republic should be grounded on the principles of equality and egalitarianism, as well as should confront the colonial legacy and experience inherited from the Russian Empire. This legacy was characterized by systemic constraints on social mobility, limited access to education, and institutional closure, and incompatible to the principles promoted by the new republic [11: 292].

The imperial regime's legacy manifested in the scarcity of educational institutions and a correspondingly low literacy rate, with estimates suggesting that no more than 20% of the population possessed basic literacy skills in regions such as Tbilisi and Kutaisi Governorates (Batumi and Sokhumi Provinces are included), and there were only 864 schools during the period spanning 1914 to 1917 [1: 266]. By 1917, Kutaisi and Tbilisi Governorates collectively accommodated nearly 80,000 enrolled school students [1: 266-267].

In the summer of 1918, the Ministry of Public Education issued a statement evaluating the imperial legacy, articulating the imperative for transformative change. However, a more detailed examination of the statement's content and context is warranted to elucidate its academic significance further.

*Our Education system should be changed in parallel with the inequality-based authorities. All the barriers, which hinders the primary school students continue their education after the graduation, should be abolished and the school should be socially united [34: N/A].*

The imperative to fundamentally reorganize the education system necessitated thorough planning and the development of comprehensive political documents, a process inherently time-consuming. Consequently, to expedite progress, incremental reforms were initiated within schools during the summer of 1918. Among these reforms was the transition of the majority of schools into state institutions, with religious schools reconstituted as public schools. Despite encountering some discontent from Russian and Armenian



National Assemblies,<sup>9</sup> the Ministry affirmed the rights of ethnic minorities to pursue education within the state's framework [18: 4]. Notably, the Ministry embarked on a robust initiative to nationalize schools, a cornerstone effort aimed at transforming them into public entities [25: 112]. Throughout the summer of 1918, the Ministry swiftly collaborated with local governments to establish new schools.

The primary objective of the school reform initiative was the implementation of a universal and free primary education system, necessitating the creation of over 1500 new schools [3: 8-9]. The principal obstacle hindering the establishment of a universal education system in the republic was the scarcity of teachers, school supplies, and textbooks [10: 7]. To facilitate the realization of this ambitious goal, the Minister of Public Education convened a special council comprising representatives from the Ministry, professors from Tiflis State University, schoolteachers, members of self-governing bodies, and members of parliament (MPs) [3: 16].

In the fall of 1918, the Ministry published a report detailing the geographical distribution of schools, revealing significant disparities between regions. Notably, Kutaisi Governorate featured a substantially higher number of primary schools compared to Tiflis Governorate, underscoring the urgent need for equitable resource allocation. This disparity was particularly pronounced concerning higher-ranking schools, with Kutaisi Governorate exhibiting a far more favorable ratio of upper primary schools to the population compared to Tiflis Governorate [30: 6-8].

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<sup>9</sup> Prior to 1917, the majority of schools operating in Tbilisi were predominantly Russian- and Armenian-speaking. From 1918 Tbilisi City Hall initiated the introduction of Georgian sections within these Armenian and predominantly Russian-speaking schools, the majority of which were designated as state schools. The Armenian and Russian national councils protested the decision of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry assured these councils that ethnic groups would retain the legally guaranteed right to be instructed in their native languages. Furthermore, the establishment of Georgian sections was intended to fulfill the demands of the citizens, as the existing Georgian-language schools and separate sections were insufficient to accommodate the increasing Georgian-speaking population of the city.

Amidst challenges related to the inadequate school infrastructure and financial resources, a critical impediment to introduction of universal education was the shortage of qualified teachers. To address this shortfall, the Union of Teachers and the Ministry jointly embarked on teachers training initiatives. Beginning in the summer of 1918, comprehensive teacher training courses were established in Tbilisi, led by esteemed professors such as Ivane Javakhishvili, Dimitri Uznadze, and Giorgi Akhvlediani [15: 3]. These courses continued in subsequent years, with special decrees issued to expand their scope. Moreover, these training programs covered diverse linguistic communities within the republic, encompassing Armenian, Turkish, and Greek-speaking schools [22: 3]. By August 1920, teacher training courses were extended to numerous cities across the republic, reflecting a concerted effort to address the multifaceted challenges impeding the introduction of universal education [14: 2].

### **Preliminary Results of the Eclectic Reform**

During the transitional period of 1918-1919, the curriculum in Georgian-language public two-years schools encompassed a range of subjects, including arithmetic-geometry, Georgian language, science, the Motherland, History of Georgia, singing, drawing, physical training, and handicrafts. Higher primary schools, meanwhile, offered additional courses such as foreign languages, including Russian, Algebra, World History, Physics, and Geography alongside the fundamental subjects [31: 18].

Schools covered ethnic minority languages followed a similar curriculum, with the substitution of Georgian language with the native languages of the minority groups. Additionally, students in these schools were required to study Georgian language and history, reflecting the state's emphasis on fostering national cohesion and cultural integration [29: 5]. Despite aspirations for free and universal education, students were still obliged to pay annual tuition fees averaging 400-500 Ruble during 1918-1920, although these fees became largely symbolic in light of rampant inflation. Notably, tuition fees and

donations collectively covered only a fraction of school expenses, with the majority of funding from central and local government budgets [35: 17].

Efforts to introduce free education intensified from 1919 onward, with market and city self-governments assuming pivotal roles in this endeavor. A meeting convened in May 1919 underscored the collective commitment to accelerate the transition to free universal education.

### **Social-economic conditions of the teachers**

In the Fall of 1918, Social Revolutionary Party's newspaper, *Shroma (Labour)* discussed the severe conditions of the schools teachers:

*Everyone should acknowledge the fact that teachers have a greater impact within rural communities than both the commissars and five militiamen combined, who collectively receive an allocation of approximately 1850 Ruble per month. While the village militiamen command a salary of 220 Ruble and commissars are afforded 300, the remuneration for teachers stands at a meager 210 Ruble. Amidst the myriad deviation prevalent within our republic, the plight of teachers emerges as particularly dire. Hence, it is imperative that adequate attention be directed towards addressing this issue, akin to dismantling the proverbial 'wall of Jericho [24: 3-4].*

In 1919, there was a substantial increase in teachers' salaries, with monthly earnings ranging from 1,600 Ruble to 3,800 Ruble, depending on the caliber and level of the educational institution. By the spring of 1920, teachers' wages saw an average increase of 30-50%. It is interesting to compare the salaries of teachers with those of individuals employed in other sectors. For instance, in 1920, a metal worker in Tbilisi earned an average of 4,650 manats, a woodcutter 4,140, a railway worker 2,630, a builder 3,330, and a tailor 4,350. Consequently, the salaries of educators, varying depending on their position, averaged around 4,700 Ruble [9: 531]. Moreover, teachers working in marketplaces typically received salaries ranging from 2,000 to 2,500 Ruble on average.

### **Fundamental school reform**

June 17, 1919, marks the inception of the new Georgian school system, with Deputy Minister of Public Education Noe Tsintsadze submitting the Ministry of Education's program for school reorganization and reform to the government.<sup>10</sup> In the report and document "On the Reorganization of Secondary Schools," Tsintsadze articulated on the very first page:

*The old school, in its direction and content, is the offspring of the old reality, and it cannot meet the current challenges and its goals. It needs to be transformed, reorganized [36: 6].*

The essence of the reform was encapsulated in the following paragraph: *Democracy intertwined with social inertia serves as the foundational principle upon which our new school system must be built, aiming for the holistic development of individuals, and nurturing their potential. In a democratic state predicated on the principle of equality, it is inconceivable that each societal segment, socially and hierarchically segregated, pursues an independent trajectory of development. Equality transcends merely a legal concept; it inherently entails cultural parity, demanding equitable opportunities and conditions for societal advancement. Hence, a single educational institution is imperative, standardized both in curriculum and composition [37: 6-11].*

According to the reform, the unified school system comprised of three layers. The first level was the public school, akin to preparatory (primary) classes. The second level included upper primary schools encompassing four grades, while the third level comprised four-class secondary schools, commencing from the fifth grade. Initially, the secondary school level adhered to a uniform curriculum, with provisions for future differentiation based on student preferences. From 1920 onwards, students could pursue further studies in agricultural (science) high schools, specializing in specific disciplines. Agricultural secondary schools fell under the jurisdiction of the

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<sup>10</sup> Noe Tsintsadze was appointed as a Deputy Minister of Public Education on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1919.

Ministry of Agriculture, in coordination with the Ministry of Education, with their purpose delineated by specific legislation [17: 433].

The reform stipulated that secondary schools would adopt a bifurcation method, fostering individual talent development. Drawing upon European educational models, the document underscored Georgia's aspiration to adopt best practices. Spanning four years, the secondary school reform aimed for implementation from 1919 to 1923. Classical language instruction (Latin, ancient Greek) was eschewed in favor of intensive study in German, French, and English languages, with an emphasis on bolstering natural sciences education. The curriculum also incorporated psychology, political economy, logic, legal history, physical education, and handicraft courses [37: 6-11].

The government endorsed the reform introduced by Noe Tsintsadze, forwarding it to the Constituent Assembly for approval. The draft law "Regulation on Reorganization of Secondary School" stipulated that all government-funded secondary schools in Georgia adhered to a uniform standard, while those established with external support required specific charters approved by the Ministry of Education. The primary objective of general education secondary schools was to provide comprehensive secondary education and prepare students for higher learning [33: N/A]. Subsequent to regulatory approval, efforts focused on implementation. A dedicated department—a study committee—was established within the Ministry, chaired by renowned psychologist Professor Dimitri Uznadze, tasked with orchestrating reform initiatives. For realization of the method the Ministry aimed to introduce Montessori methods, prompting official correspondence with Maria Montessori in 1919. In the summer of 1920, Georgia hosted its first Montessori student cohort, initiating specialized teacher training courses [5: 2].

Between 1919 and 1921, in collaboration with numerous educators and scholars, new textbooks and curricula were developed [21: 2]. For the first time, the Georgian language, along with the languages of ethnic minorities (with the exception of Russian), became the medium of mass education. Georgian literature, spanning from hagiographical works to contemporary literature, took precedence in the newly devised curriculum for Georgian-

language schools. Textbooks for various subjects were systematically produced in the Georgian language on a large scale. Furthermore, a commission for terminology development was established, initiating the translation of scientific and terminological literature. Concurrently, with the establishment of Georgian as the language of education and academia, the history of Georgia was integrated into school curricula, becoming mandatory for ethnic minorities.

By September 1919, educational programs were refined, facilitating structured instruction [40: 4-5]. Pressing issues such as insufficient learning facilities and infrastructural challenges persisted, with reports indicating inadequate heating during winter months, resulting in student illnesses and health concerns for educators [13: 52-53]. To mitigate these challenges, central and local governments often requisitioned properties formerly owned by nobility to establish new schools.

From the fall of 1919 onwards, the majority of primary schools were established and materially supported by local self-governing bodies, albeit with educational oversight and partial funding from the Ministry. Community announcements in central press outlets sought teaching staff for Georgian, Armenian, and Turkish-speaking primary schools [6: 1]. However, due to financial constraints, communities often struggled to employ suitable personnel, leading to teaching quality issues. Since 1919, the Ministry of Public Education initiated evaluations of operational schools, establishing a dedicated auditing institute. Auditors assessed Georgian, Armenian, Russian, Azerbaijani, Ossetian, and Greek language schools across the country evaluating school administrations and teaching processes [38: 4].

### **Results of the Education Reform**

Until January 1921, comprehensive reports from the Ministry of Education were absent, yet glimpses of educational developments can be pieced together from scattered reports preserved in the press and archives. Individual schools also furnished reports to the Ministry. For instance, in March 1920, the high-primary school in the village of Bakhvi, located in the *uezd* of Ozurgeti,

disclosed a tuition fee of 400 Ruble, with a total enrollment of 221 students [39: 32]. In Tskhinvali tuition fee was 200 Ruble for 97 students although these fees were nominal considering the prevailing inflation, with the price of 1 British pound sterling ranging from 900 to 1400 Ruble between March and May 1920 [39: 53]. In October 1920, 1 Pound equaled to 4400 Ruble, while in December it increased to 18 000 Ruble [12: 72].

At a teachers' congress in Tbilisi in January 1921, Minister of Public Education Grigol Lortkipanidze hailed schools and teachers as pivotal to state and nation-building:

*For many centuries, there existed the Georgian tribe, a state of Georgia ruled by Georgian kings and chieftains, a Georgian culture, and Georgian people who lived, fought, and thrived. However, despite these historical realities, there was no Georgian nation in the true sense of the word. This is because in ancient and medieval times, there were people, not nations. The true Georgian nation began to form in our contemporary historical era. We are witnessing the greatest event of our lives - the transformation of the Georgian people. One aspect of this significant event is the empowerment of the entire populace, the creation of a unified body politic that embraces democracy. Yet, the second and more crucial half of this historical transformation remains incomplete. To achieve this, it is imperative to fully develop Georgian science, education, and culture, thereby shaping the Georgian people not only as bearers of political power but also as vessels of cultural heritage. When every member of society, not just rulers and intellectuals, but the entire population, becomes a custodian of culture, then the Georgian people will truly embody the spirit of the Georgian era. The cultivation of national identity and the realization of genuine national culture form the cornerstone and main foundation of this endeavor. Indeed, a new, robust, and beloved Georgia is emerging today, and the architects and artisans of this vital transformation are the Georgian teachers [27: 3].*

At the same congress, Noe Tsintsadze delivered a comprehensive report detailing the reform's progress and geographical impact:

*Universal education is becoming standard in Guria, Senaki, Kutaisi, and Zugdidi markets, albeit less so in Sukhumi district. In Eastern Georgia, school expansion is notable in the markets of Gori, Telavi, and Signaghi. However, despite increased enrollment, teacher shortages persist [28: 3-4].*

In January 1921, Tsintsadze presented statistical results to the teachers' conference, revealing that excluding Batumi Province, 1,924 schools served 162,342 students. Western Georgia housed 1,261 schools with 110,375 students, while Eastern Georgia had 663 schools with 51,967 students. By comparison, August 1918 figures indicated 790 teachers in East Georgia and 1936 in West Georgia [19: 1-2]. In February 1921, statistics indicated 2,034 functioning schools nationwide, including Batumi Province. During the Democratic Republic of Georgia's 1028-day tenure from May 26, 1918, to March 18, 1921, over 1100 new schools were opened [19: 3]

Following the statistical presentation, Tsintsadze outlined plans for new schools in the coming years:

*If we calculate an average of 100 students per school, about 2,100 schools would be needed to implement universal education in the Republic (excluding Batumi District). Thus, if the growth of the public school system proceeds at the same rate as it has during the last two years, the system of schools for universal compulsory education by 1923, as projected, must be considered accomplished [19: 3].*

According to Ministry reports, by the end of 1920, the Democratic Republic of Georgia had schools operating in various languages, including 60 Russian-speaking, 81 Armenian-speaking, 31 Turkish-speaking, 66 Greek, 48 Ossetian, and 20 Abkhazian. Additionally, there were Estonian, German, and Assyrian schools established within the republic [20: 3-4].

The Republic of Armenia faced a shortage of schools, exacerbated by the use of existing schools as temporary shelters for citizens displaced by war and forcibly expelled from the Ottoman Empire. Around 300 schools began operating in September 1919, but according to the plan of Minister of Education Nikol Aghbalian, the republic needed over 900 primary schools to achieve universal education [8: 310]. Despite challenges, the Republic of



Armenia expanded its educational system somewhat by 1920. Professor Hovanisian's data showed that in 1920, Armenia had 420 Armenian-language primary schools with approximately 1,000 teachers and 38,000 students. This represented a significant increase compared to 1919, with 14,000 more students enrolled. By 1920, there were also 25 Muslim, 22 Russian, and 10 Greek schools operating in the Republic of Armenia [8: 311]. Articles 110 and 111 of the Constitution of Georgia, ratified on February 21, 1921, delineated the fundamental principles of universal education and the state's responsibility toward education. Specifically, Article 110 stipulated that primary education was universal, free, and mandatory. It emphasized the interconnectedness of the public-school system, where the primary school serves as the foundation for middle and high school education. Additionally, it underscored that education at all levels in schools is non-religious. Article 111 outlined the state's commitment to providing free food, clothing, and educational materials to the neediest children attending primary school. To achieve this objective, both the state and local self-governments allocate a portion of their annual income [17: 476].

### **Conclusion**

The reform of universal school education in the Democratic Republic faced constraints that prevented its full implementation within the allotted time. However, reports from early 1921 indicated substantial progress toward achieving the reform's objectives. Despite limited resources, the republic's government diligently pursued the goal of establishing a system of universal and free school education.

Fundamentally, the reform aimed not only to elevate the overall education level of society but also to fulfill a crucial social function: eradicating existing systems of educational inequality and introducing a framework that would afford all citizens equal opportunities for development and social advancement. Central to the new education system was the principle of accessibility and the aspiration to build a more egalitarian society. Education

was no longer viewed as a privilege but rather as an inherent right for all, with the state assuming responsibility for its provision and safeguarding.

The success of the reform can be attributed to several factors: the comprehensive nature of the reform program itself, the mobilization of intellectual resources, and a willingness to embrace contemporary global practices. The reform's architects demonstrated ambition and adaptability in introducing and implementing innovative approaches that were prevalent worldwide at the time.

The reform of the education system, like other transformative initiatives, took into account the local context and the diverse composition of the state. It addressed the multi-ethnic nature of the Republic, considering the interests of national minorities, the status of their native languages, and the broader state objectives related to the teaching of the national language and core subjects.

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**ՎՐԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՈՒՄ  
(1918-1921ԹԹ.) ՀԱՄԸՆԴՀԱՆՈՒՐ ՆԱԽՆԱԿԱՆ ԿՐԹԱԿԱՆ  
ՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳԻ ՁԱՎՎՈՐՈՒՄԸ**

**Իրակլի Իրեմաձե**

**Հիմնաբառեր.** Վրաստանի ժողովրդական Հանրապետություն, կրթական համակարգի բարեփոխում, համընդհանուր կրթական համակարգ, սոցիալական քաղաքականություն, Կովկաս, Ռուսական հեղափոխություն

**Ամփոփում**

1918թ. մայիսին Վրաստանի անկախության հռչակումից հետո քայլեր ձեռնարկվեցին հանրապետությունում համընդհանուր կրթական համակարգի ստեղծման ուղղությամբ: Բարեփոխումներն ընթանում էին բարդ ռազմաքաղաքական և տնտեսական խոր ճգնաժամի պայմաններում: Հոգվածում ներկայացվում է բարեփոխումների ընթացքը և ծագող խնդիրները:

Բարեփոխումների նպատակը համընդհանուր անվճար կրթական համակարգի ձևավորումն էր, որը խիստ բարդ գործընթաց էր պայմանավորված հանրապետության ֆինանսական ծանր վիճակի հետ: Հիմնական բարդություններից էր երկրում գոյություն ունեցող ոչ միօրինակ կրթական համակարգերի գոյությունը, կայսերական կրթահամակարգի հետ մեկտեղ ազգային դպրոցների առկայությունը, դրանցում գործող կրթական ծրագրերի բազմազանությունը:

Նոր համակարգի ներդրման նպատակը կրթությունը սոցիալական և ազգային սահմանափակումներից դուրս բերելն էր, բոլոր քաղաքացիների համար հավասար հնարավորությունների ներդնումը: Այսուհետև կրթությունը չէր դիտվում որպես այս կամ այն սոցիալական խմբի մենաշնորհ, այլ յուրաքանչյուր քաղաքացու անվիճելի իրավունք: Այդ գործում իրենց խոշոր ավանդն ունեցան հանրապետության կրթության նախարար Գ.Լասքիշվիլին, հասարակական-քաղաքական գործիչներ Ն.Ռամիշվիլին, Ն. Յինցաձեն, Գ.Լորթքիփանիձեն և այլք:

Հաշվի առնելով հանրապետության բազմաէթնիկ կառուցվածքը, բարեփոխումներում կարևոր տեղ էր հատկացվում արդեն գոյություն ունեցող ազգային փոքրամասնությունների շահերին, նրանց լեզուների կարգավիճակին: Չնայած ակնառու հաջողություններին, կրթական բարեփոխումների ամբողջական ներդրումը մնաց անավարտ պայմանավորված հանրապետության գոյության կարճ ժամանակահատվածով:

## ARMENIAN MELIK'S AND KHOJAS OF TRANSCAUCASIA DURING NĀDIR SHĀH'S RULE

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### **Abstract**

After the wars waged against Ottomans in 1734-1736 Nādir Shāh succeeded in the annexation of the greater part of Transcaucasia to his state. The elite of the local Armenian population consisted of hereditary landlords (melik's) and wealthy merchants (khojas and bazzazes)<sup>11</sup> once again after the fall of the Şafavid rule appeared under the rule of an Iranian state. Being representatives of a similar social group of Iranian society, Armenian meliks were acknowledged by Persian government and encouraged by Nādir to render him assistance during his wars against Ottoman forces in Iran and Transcaucasia. Nādir Shāh rewarded their major assistance with confirmation of their rights as meliks of some regions of Eastern Armenia and also few of them were appointed to high posts in local administration. However, Nādir's generosity ended shortly after his unsuccessful campaigns in Daghestan and western Transcaucasia in 1740s. The heavy taxes and tax extortion, also great fines put on wealthy Armenians and the Armenian Church resulted in their later estrangement from Nādir's enterprises and lack of any cooperation with him. Inability to pay great fines and extra taxes was observed as signs of disobedience and resulted in persecutions exercised in respect of some representatives of the mentioned social groups.

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<sup>11</sup> As the article refers to the mentioned social groups of Armenian people, we preferred to transcribe the words 'ملک - malik', 'خواجه khvājah' and 'بزاز - bazzāz' borrowed in Armenian from Persian in the way as they are pronounced in Armenian.



Due to the economic decline observed during Nādir's reign Armenian merchants faced the difficulties of the unfavourable conditions for trade: insecurity of the trade routes, high taxes and extortion, heavy fines put on the rich merchants with the purpose to take as much money as possible and severe punishments in case of inability to pay the assigned fines and tributes. We have the evidence of contemporary sources about the Armenian wealthy merchants of New Julfa as well as those functioning in the regions of Eastern Armenia in the period that reveal some peculiarities in their activities.

**Keywords:** Armenian melik's, khoja, Nādir Shāh, Persian documents, post, rights.

### **Introduction**

The elite of Armenian society living under the rule of Nādir Shāh consisted of the rich and noble landlords (melik's) and merchants (khojas and bazzazes). The two groups of wealthy Armenians had similar characterizing features, like involvement in trade, having significant private property and land estates, also holding some administrative posts and duties. However, they also had distinct differences.

Since Nādir Shāh's state was a military empire where frequent wars were waged against its neighbours with the purpose of expansion and plunder, the melik's having armed detachments, were in high respect and often held administrative posts. However, for any act of disobedience they were punished with all strength of the sovereign's order. The merchants of Nādir's state like its economy were in a worse situation as they were observed exceptionally as a source of income for financing the sovereign's military enterprises. The excesses and extortion of officials were widespread in Nādir's empire, and, usually, high taxes were imposed on the merchants and they were often fined under any pretext.

### **Armenian Melik's as remnants of princely families and military landlords of Armenia**

The word “melik” is the Turkish version of the Arabic word “malik” having the meaning of “master, prince, landowner” and derives from the general Semitic root “mlk”, “own, have, possess” [4: 294]. The word has a direct tie with its meaning in Persian (malik): the hereditary governor of a province or region who had not entirely independent and paid taxes to his sovereign [17: 1087]. The researchers of Soviet period considered melik’s as representatives of the group of old local sovereign, landlords, one of the four groups of feudal lords in Transcaucasia in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries [51: 89].

There is information on the maliks of Iran in the Persian historiographical works of already in the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries. There were landowners-maliks in the Ilkhanid state and also later states including the territory of Iran within their boundaries<sup>12</sup>. In Armenian environment the title of ‘Paron’ was used with the equivalent meaning of ‘melik’, and it is mentioned already in the Armenian inscriptions of the 13<sup>th</sup> century [48: 65]. In the case of the Melik’ Šahnazaryans of Geğark’uni, usually both titles were used in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Armenian inscriptions on the walls of monasteries and epitaphs of the representatives of this family [16: 291, 293, 339-340].

The term ‘malik’ was not usually used in regard to the Armenian noble and wealthy landowners living under Ottoman rule and there was no such position in the elite (ayan) of the Ottoman society [61: 434]. Although there was the institution of ‘malikane’ as a form of landownership, confirmed as the property of some rulers, princes and statesmen, there were few cases of use of the title ‘malik’ with the name of some persons in the state of the Ottomans. “Paron Melik’ Gulijan’, mentioned in 1564 in Van for his donations to various monasteries around the town [62: 28] and also some others [14: 146, 147], in our opinion, were the remnants from the times of Qarā Quyūnlū and Aq Quyūnlū Turkoman rulers, since their states included almost the whole territory of historical Armenia. Thus, we observe mentions about the melik’ of

<sup>12</sup> See the names of Malik Shams ad-Din Kurd, Malik Mansur, Malik Rāstdil mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn Hamadānī [53: 25, 27, 46, 57, 67, 195] Malik Qubad Garmrudi, Malik Ahmad Esfahbod-e Gilan, Malik Ashraf mentioned by Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, 14<sup>th</sup> century historian [18: 221, 251, 392, 393, 772, 999, 1001, 1005, 1009, 1060, 1063].

Sasun, also the names of Malik Aslan Zu-l-Qadar and other maliks in the 15<sup>th</sup> century historiography written by Abū Bakr-i Ṭihrānī [3: 229, 303, 369, 395]. Besides we should consider also that in Ṣafavid times, periodically Persian rule had been established over the bordering regions of the Ottoman Empire. As observed by Dina Rizk Khoury 'on the one hand, the Ottoman state needed the cooperation of the local elites to maintain order in its provinces; on the other, it was at all times acutely aware of the tenuousness of its alliances with them' [26: 137]. So, the local elites managed to keep their ownership and power under Ottoman rule as well. However, we haven't come across any Ottoman document authorizing the position of 'a melik' in Eastern Armenia, which means that this title and its position had no official recognition under Ottoman rule. There we frequently meet the title of 'mir' or 'amir' applied as regards some Armenian landowners and wealthy people [14: 142-144]. So, no wonder that the melik's of Eastern Armenia were strongly opposed to the Ottoman predomination established temporarily in the region, which officially did not recognize their rights, wealth and privileges.

Although the Ottoman government usually tried to forge alliances with local powerful elites of the newly conquered regions [26: 137], however the melik's in Eastern Armenia often were depressed as Aṛakel Davrizhets'i gives evidence about some Armenian Melik's (Melik' Sujum of Dizak, Melik' Pašik of Kočiz, Melik' Babe of Bretis and Melik' Haykaz of K'ašatagh) and other civil and religious leaders (Oghlan keshish, Jalal Beg, Melk'isedek bishop) having visited Shāh 'Abbas I before his campaign in 1603 to express their complaints against the oppressions of the Ottoman rule, and request for shāh's advance, promising him their assistance [6: 19].

Melik's had definite and firm ownership rights as regards their 'mulk[s]' under Persian rule [48: 86]. The verbose texts of *sharī'a*<sup>13</sup> documents, containing deeds of purchases (qabālah) of the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, fixed and legally confirmed that "the bought estate entirely within its borders and with

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<sup>13</sup> Sharī'a, the canon law of Islam, by which the highest religious – judicial instance (shar') of the clergymen was guided. This establishment was often called by the name of these laws, but usually it was called "shar'".

all that belonged to it, was the indisputable property and wealth of the buyer, as the landowners (*maliks*) have their property (*mulk*), or the landlords – their rights and they can deal with it anyway they like’ [47: doc. 8, 11-14, 18]. This formula phrase with slight changes is present also in the deeds of purchase of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries [31: doc. 2, 3, 5]. This right is confirmed and formulated in the decree issued by Shāh Isma‘il II in 1577, the subjects of ‘a malik’ had to pay ‘*mālikāna*’<sup>14</sup> to him for cultivation of the land belonging to him [44: doc. 19]. Thus, the property of a melik’ was a *mulk* which belonged to him and he had the right to receive its *malikānah*.

The preserved decrees of Şafavid, Afshārid and Qājār shāhs confirming the rights of the Armenian melik’s as regards their property and authorizing their role as the civil leaders of the people, living in the villages belonging to the melik’s, allow us to draw some other peculiarities of their rights, functions and duties<sup>15</sup>. According to the decree of Shāh ‘Abbās I ‘the subjects had to acknowledge him as their malik and rīshsafīd, and obey to his will’ [28: 316]. The same statement is present also in the decrees of later Şafavid Shāhs, which instruct the malik to keep control ‘so that no misappropriation and injustice’ happened in his domain. He had ‘to revive the region and make it prosper’. His subjects in their turn were to ‘obey to his reasonable words and will, perform no deals out of his awareness, and concede the rights and duties of that position (of a malik) to him’ [28: 320-321]. So, we may conclude that the melik’s had some judicial rights over their subjects and kept control over their trade and deals.

Apart of this melik’s had also other rights and administrative duties under the rule of the Qarā Quyūnlū, Āq Quyūnlū Turkomans, Şafavid, Afshārid and Qājār dynasties of Iran, which may be observed in the Persian documents and other contemporary sources.

<sup>14</sup> *Mālikāna*, the land tax paid to the landlord or *mālek*, synonym to “*bāhricha*, *mulk*”. Its size varied from 1/10 to 2/10 of the crops, depending upon agreement signed between the owner and cultivators of the land.

<sup>15</sup> Some documents had been preserved in the Archive funds of the Matenadaran and National Archive of Armenia and most of them are published [45: doc. 9, 15], [28].

'*Maliks*', alongside with "*kadkhudās (village-elders), shāhnas* and *dārughas*<sup>16</sup>" of Yerevan and Ğarabağ provinces are mentioned already in the decrees of Qarā Quyūnlū and Aq Quyūnlū rulers granted to the Armenian monasteries of Tat'ev and Gandzasar in the 15<sup>th</sup> century as those who were responsible for the execution of the order [44: doc. 1-4, 6, 8]. Melik's had administrative duties in the regions allotted to them, as Zak'aria of K'anak'er mentions about a 'melik' Davit' being appointed at the head of a region (*maḥāl*)<sup>17</sup> by Amīr Gūna Biğlarbiğ of Yerevan province<sup>18</sup> [60: 63]. We meet the names of Melik' Hakob and Melik' Simeon as the '*maliks of the maḥāls of Karpi and Abaran*', confirming the document on the boundaries of the land-estates of Sağmosavank' Monastery in a *sharī'a* document composed in A.H. 1082 (AD 1671/2)<sup>19</sup>. So, some of the *maḥāls* of Yerevan province as well as the *maḥāls* of Ğarabağ were headed by the Armenian melik's.

In Armenian reality melik's were the leaders and owners of one or more villages in a region, and, most likely, the remnants of the Armenian noble families having dynastic origin as stated by R. Hewsen [22: 285, 292], although the ties of many of them with the old princely families of Armenia are very vague and can be traced only in few cases: those of the Hasan-Jalalyans of Khaçen and Melik'-Šahnazaryans of Geğark'uni [57: 44]. The Persian documents confirming the rights of melik's, always state about their hereditary rights to the post coming from their parents and relative ties with the family of melik's [47: doc. 12; 27: doc. 37]. In case of the absence of such ties the position of a melik' usually was not legalized. A similar case is found in Nādir's decrees addressed to the priest Davit' of Dovšanlu (Arajadzor) village. In

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<sup>16</sup> *Shāhna* and *Dārūgha* were the head of the local police, who took an active part in the realization of the taxes received from the population.

<sup>17</sup> *Maḥāl*, region, district. In the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries it was an administrative unit.

<sup>18</sup> Yerevan is mentioned as Irevan, Iravan and vilāyat-i Chukhūr Sa'ad in contemporary sources. Chukhūr-i Sa'ad was a term applied to the regions of Ararat and Yerevan in the 14<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. As considered by H. P'ap'azyan, the term had originated from the name of Amīr Sa'ad, the 14<sup>th</sup> century leader of Turkoman tribes living in Eraxadzor, Surmali and adjacent regions [46: 25].

<sup>19</sup> Matenadaran, Archive of Catholicosate (hereafter MAC), f. 1b, doc. 167.

autumn of 1734 in accordance with the Persian document expressing common consent of the village elders (*kadkhudās*) of 15 villages of the Khačen *maḥāl* [29: 266-267] and his petition, the priest Davit' was appointed as their leader (*rīshsafīd*) [30: doc. 2]. Although he uses the title 'malik' with his name in the petition, Nādir's decrees entitle him with the position of 'village elder [*rīshsafīd*]' and 'leader [*pīshvā*]', and none of the high orders addresses him with the title 'malik' [30: doc. 2, 3, 4]. Whereas the documents, expressing the common consent to his leadership (*malik* and *pīshvā*), contains also the evidence of 'Malik Egan' about the rightness of the statement.

Another characteristic feature of the Armenian melik's was the existence of armed forces at their disposal, which allowed them to keep control over their people and protect their rights and position in case of various encroachments. Although under Islamic rule *zimmīs* were freed from military service, however Iranian rule, very flexible in the historical circumstances, allowed the existence of small quantity of armed people in service to the melik's, as they were needed also during their wars against the Ottomans.

### **Armenian melik's and the rulers of Iran: from cooperation to acknowledgement of their rights and high appointments in local administration**

Due to their social economic position acknowledged by the rulers of Iran, the Armenian melik's of Eastern Armenia had natural inclination to Iran and often, till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century they cooperated with them against the Ottomans. The provident rulers of Iran like Shāh 'Abbas I and Nādir Shāh encouraged Armenians and received the military assistance of the Armenian melik's, reflected in the contemporary historiography as well as documentary sources. Fazli Beg Isfahani speaks about 'Malik Yavri', the son of 'Malik Shāhnazar' of Geğark'uni, who had joined Shāh 'Abbās I's army with his military detachment consisted of 300 Armenian warriors during his campaign in Yerevan province in A.H. 1012 (1603/4). He mentions also 'Malik Haykāz' and 'Ughlān Kishish', who with their 500 warriors had joined Shāh 'Abbās I's commander Ḥusayn Khān fighting against Ottomans in Ğarabağ in A.H. 1013

(1604/5). At the same time 'Malik Yādgar' and other melik's of Šamkhor came to the Persian military camp at Ganja to serve the shāh [19: 357, 360]. Shāh 'Abbās I in his turn rewarded the Armenian melik's with confirmation of their rights with royal decrees [45: doc. 9, 15; 29: 310-311, 318) and even granted some of them high positions in local administration, like Melik' Yavri Melik'-Šahnazaryan who was appointed as *kalāntar*<sup>20</sup> of Yerevan [19: 356].

In the later period the Armenian melik's kept their armed regiments and had their *yūzbāshīs*, the commanders of groups consisted of 100 warriors. According to the Persian historiographer they were subordinated to Ṭahmāsb Qulī, the khān of Yerevan [19: 1003] in 1625-1635 [49: 33]. These armed regiments were the main core of the forces fighting against the Ottoman troops after the fall of the Šafavid state in Transcaucasia, and which offered a rather strong resistance to Ottoman attacks in the regions of Arts'akh and Siunik' in 1720s. The general number of their forces in that period is counted to be about 20000-30000 [13: 582]. The historical sources have kept evidence about cooperation of the Armenian armed forces of Syunik' and Ğarabağ with those of Ṭahmāsb II Šafavid in the wars against Ottomans attacking the south-eastern regions of Armenia and Tabriz [54: 59, 63; 35: 178). Ṭahmāsb II even had acknowledged Davit' Beg, the leader of the Armenian troops as the head of the region of Kapan giving him the right to mint coins in his own name [54: 59].

Armenian melik's and their subjects joined Nādir's troops and assisted him not only during his wars in Transcaucasia but also in the inner regions of Iran. Abraham of Yerevan gives evidence about the considerable number of Armenians lead by six Armenian *yūzbāshīs* in the army of Nādir Shāh fighting against Ottomans in early 1730s [2: 80]. Nādir, aware of the moods among

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<sup>20</sup> *Kalāntar* is a Persian word with the meaning of "an elder, greater". In Safavid period it started to be used as a term for mayor, the official at the head of town administration. According to "Dastur al-muluk" *kalāntar* appointed the *kadkhudās* of the town blocks and masters (*ustāds*) of the handicraft guilds. He also regulated civil matters and problems, allotted the taxes of the artisans, merchants and trade companies. *Kalāntars* had several officials in their disposal to help them manage all these affairs and functions [41: 240].

Armenians, inclined to cooperation against Ottomans, encouraged them with his special attention and precious gifts granted to catholicos Abraham of Crete and Holy Ējmiatsin [42: 310b]. Consequently, Nādir received the important military assistance and supply in food needed for the success of his forces against the Ottomans in Transcaucasia and it is well attested in Persian and Armenian sources [42: 310b; 1; 30: doc. 1-4]. Afterwards, Armenian melik's were rewarded with not only confirmation of their rights, special tax exemptions, but also special honor granted to some of their representatives and their appointment to some administrative posts<sup>21</sup>. Thus, Melik' Allahquli of Ćaraberd (or Jraberd) was granted the title of a *sulṭān*<sup>22</sup> for his courage shown in Nādir's war against Ottomans [41: 43].

We have information about the following posts run by the Armenian melik's during Nādir Shāh's rule. The melik's of Ćarabağ lead by Melik' Egan of Dizak were able to achieve a kind of autonomy under the rule of Nādir Shāh. They were separated from the *bīglarbīgī* of Ganja in a special administrative unit called '*maḥall-i khamsa*' run by Melik' Egan, who was assigned as the *zābiṭ*<sup>23</sup> and 'head (*rīshsafīd*) of all Armenians of Aẓarbāyjān'<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See some of the documents published in [30: doc. 13; 56: 67, 68, 71]. See below about the offices held by the meliks.

<sup>22</sup> In Safavid period *sulṭān* was a title of the rank higher, than that of a malik and lower than khan, and may be considered as deputy governor [39: 25, 43]. *Sulṭāns* had domains smaller than *khāns* and after Nādir's death there were several *sulṭānates* formed in Transcaucasia with small territories, like the *sulṭānate* of Shuragyal included in the territory of Yerevan khanate. There were also semi-independent sultanates of Elisu, Kutkashen, Aresh, Ghazakh and Shamsadil [51: 134-138].

<sup>23</sup> Revenue collector, controller; bailiff. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century *zābiṭs* were the tenants, who paid some money to the state treasury in order to have the right of getting the taxes of a certain object. In wartime *zābiṭs* were responsible for the food and arm supply of the troops as well [43: 296b]. *Zābiṭs* like the other administrative officials of Nādir Shāh received salary from state treasury and could not have portion from the income and profits of the region [43: 12a].

<sup>24</sup> Aẓarbāyjān was the administrative unit with its center in Tabriz formed during Nādir's rule, the governor of which was his brother Ibrāhīm. The regions of Yerevan, Nakhijevan, Gharabagh, Shirvan and Eastern Georgia were included in the boundaries of that administrative unit [1: 96].



[42: 310b]. There are two royal decrees confirming this statement: one was issued in 1736 on passing of the villages Kavart (Qabārtū) and Aradjadzor (Dovshanlu) to the *zabiṭ* of Melik' Egan and the other - confirming Melik' Šahnazar as melik' of Varanda in 1743 according to the petition of Melik' Egan, *zābiṭ* of Khamsa *maḥāls* (*zābiṭ-i mahall-i khamsa*)<sup>25</sup>. As stated in the inscription on the stone above the entrance of Melik' Egan's house, he was equal to a khān and a biglarbīg and five melik's of Tališ, Čaraberd, Khačen, Varanda, and Kočiz were subject to him [50: 76-77]. Consequently, he was responsible for the levy of taxes from six melikdoms of the *maḥall-i khamsa*: those of T'ališ, Čaraberd, Khačen, Varanda, Kočiz, Dizak, to be delivered to Ibrāhīm Mirzā, the viceroy of Azarbayjan having his seat in Tabriz.

The seal of Melik' Egan is stamped on many deeds of purchase and deals from Ğarabağ witnessing of his high position as the head of the named administrative unit (*maḥall-i khamsa*) and keeping control over the trade and deals in the region.<sup>26</sup>

Melik'jan, a representative of the family of Melik'-Šahnazaryans of Geğark'uni held the post of the *kalāntar* of Yerevan during Nādir Shāh's rule. He has been mentioned for several times in the history of Catholicos Abraham Kretats'i as *kalāntar* of Yerevan, and was present during the coronation of Nādir as Shāh of Iran in Mughan Steppe in March 1736 [1: 29, 59]. The catholicos gives a very distinct definition for the position of *kalāntar* Melik'jan as he notes that the Armenian melik's of Yerevan province, which are melik's Hakobjan and Mkrtum, also those of 'the nine mahals of Karbi, Ğirkbulağ, Šoragel, Igdir, Gaṛni, C'ağknaydzor, Geğark'uni, Aparan, Širakovan are under the rule of the *kalāntar* and tremble in his presence like servants' [1: 103]. An Armenian equivalent for the position of a *kalāntar* is in the epitaph

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<sup>25</sup> The document is kept now by the scions of Melik' Šahnazaryan family and was presented to us by Rafael Abrahamyan. The document we have published with its Russian translation in another article already in 2021 [32: 79], but considering its importance for the theme of this article and history of Armenia we included the document with its English translation as a supplement to this article.

<sup>26</sup> See in the following documents: MAC, f. 2b, doc. 175, 178, 184b, 189a, 208a.

of Melik' Yavri: as “paronats paron” [16: 341], where “paron” is the Armenian equivalent for both melik's and rich merchants (khoja), and consequently the meaning is: “the head of melik's and merchants”.

The considered functions and the rights of melik's show that they had close ties with trade and merchandise, so no wonder that Melik' Hakobjan, also held the post of the head of the mint (*žarrābī bāshī*) in Yerevan during Nādir Shāh's reign [1: 49].

### **Disobedience and persecution of melik's in the final phase of Nādir's rule**

As it was mentioned above, the state of Nādir Shāh was a typical military despotism and the military elites were the main support of the ruler [7: 105], so no wonder that the Armenian melik's, who rendered him significant assistance during his wars, were rewarded with special attention of Nādir and were in high esteem. However, whenever they took a false step (fell short in their service and showed any kind of disobedience), they were severely punished.

Most featuring is the case of Melik' Mirzabeg of Varanda, who was killed by Nādir's order in 1744 because of his refusal to pay the taxes [36: 67]. The same year is also the time when Melik' Egan, the head of the '*maḥall-i khamsa*', died. Melik' Aram, Melik' Egan's son and successor held his father's post only for one year. As stated in his epitaph he had paid a fine of 6000 *tūmān* and assumed the post of his father, but died a year later, in 1745 [15: 199]. We don't know whether Esayi, his brother and successor held the same office as his father during Nādir's reign. We have an obscure information about a decree on his rights, preserved in the archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which is mentioned in the article of F. Poğosian with the following statement about Esayi: “[He] was appointed as the malik and governor of Dizak, who had to comply with all his [Nādir's] demands, follow the state interests and show his devotion to the government” [52: 204]. The phrases about melik's compliance with all demands of Nādir Shāh and devotion to his

state are unusual for the decrees on the rights of the melik's<sup>27</sup>, because in other decrees it is not stressed and it stands to reason. Most likely, these duties are emphasized in the decree because of Nādir's displeasure with the activities of his brother and predecessor, Melik Aram, who was fined as mentioned above and died (or maybe murdered for political reasons?) only after a year of his appointment.

For the same period we have also the case of Melik'jan Melik'-Šahnazarian, the *kalāntar* of Yerevan, who was dismissed and executed in result of some intrigues by Nādir Shāh's order. We don't know anything about the circumstances and the time of his death, but it should be after Nādir's Indian campaign and during or after his unsuccessful wars in the Caucasus against North Caucasian tribes and Ottomans in 1741-1744 [8: 44-46]. After Melik'jan, his son Manučar was appointed at the same post of *kalāntar* of Yerevan<sup>28</sup>.

These dates are not a mere coincidence as in that period are attested heavy taxes and fines levied from not only Armenians, including New Julfa and Holy Ējmiatsin [58: 65] but also other subjects of the state [24: 536-537]. There were also persecutions of Catholicos Ghazar of Ējmiatsin who was fined with 24000 dīnār in 1742 [25: 265] and then - with 5000 tūmān in 1745 and dethroned by Nādir's order [5: 639-40]. There should be disappointment and complaints among the Armenians of Transcaucasia and elsewhere, unable to pay the heavy taxes and fines. Consequently, they would have tried to avoid any support or cooperation with Nādir Shāh and his administration; therefore, there were persecutions and repressions as regards some of their leaders.

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<sup>27</sup> Compare with the decrees published in [28: 318, 321].

<sup>28</sup> Matenadaran, ms. 2888, 341a [23].

### **The decline of Armenian merchandise in Iran during Nādir's rule**

Armenian merchants who had trade as their main occupation formed a rather big social group since several transit trade routes passed through the territory of Armenia connecting the countries of the East, like China, Iran and India with the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Europe. The wealthy merchants who had significant trade capital held the title of a *khoja* [44: 111]. This title was very frequent among the Armenian merchants of Nakhijevan and Yerevan provinces<sup>29</sup> and some of them occupied the posts of local *kalāntar* and *zarrābīs* in Şafavid period. According to Zakariya of Agulis in the short period of 1663-1664 two Armenian merchants (Khoja Sark'is of Anapat and Khoja Sarkis of Dzoragegh) managed the mint for rent, in 1670-1674 Khoja Aghabeg of Jahuk held the post of *zarrābī*, then - Khoja Sarkis of Dzoragegh till 1679 [59: 128, 129]. Khoja Sahak was the *kalāntar* of Yerevan in mid-seventeenth century [33: 87].

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the development of manufactory production in Europe, there were manufactories also in some places of Transcaucasia [21: 25-37]. The Armenian merchants, involved in the trade of manufactory products, were called 'bazazes'<sup>30</sup>. We see the names of 'former *kalāntar* Avi, Khoja Nikoghos, the son of Pedros, Bazzāz Avan and Bazzāz Hayrum' and over 40 other persons signed as witnesses of a deal recorded in a Persian document from Agulis dated 1711 (MAC, f. 1b, doc. 237).

Nādir's indifference towards economic situation in Iran and increased insecurity on the roads resulted in the decline of trade there in general [7: 227]. Although there is evidence about special attention of Nādir as regards foreign merchants and he granted some privileges to them with the purpose to encourage their trade with Iran, however, at the same time hard taxes and fines were put on the merchants with the purpose of getting as much as

<sup>29</sup> The title of *khoja* is often written with the names of the Armenian merchants in their epitaphs on the tombstones (*khach'kars*) of the many villages and towns of Nakhijevan [9-12].

<sup>30</sup> 'Bazzāz' is a Persian word meaning the merchant engaged in the trade of manufactory products.

possible from them for the state treasury [7: 241-246]. Thus, the trading conditions were unfavourable in Iran during Nādir's reign [20: 351].

If earlier, under Šafavid rule we have information about the Armenian khojas, who held the posts of the *kalāntar* and *zarrābī*, during Nādir's reign they were kept away from the high posts, except for the post of *kalāntar* of New Julfa. The contemporary sources have kept evidence about Nādir's unfair treatment with the Armenian merchants already during his rise and struggle against Ottomans, when he appropriated their robbed property in Hamadan [2: 59-60]. Then the merchants of New Julfa suffered hardships because of tax excesses, heavy fines and severe punishments exercised as regards some of them [5: 649-652]. Unable to pay the great fines put on them, some of the wealthy merchants of New Julfa such as Emniyaz Ağa of Khoja Minasean family and Harut'yun Šahrimanyan were burnt alive by Nādir's order [25: 269].

There is evidence about widespread corruption and heavy fines put on the merchants of New Julfa [56: 253] as well as on the wealthy merchants in the other regions of Nādir's empire. There was a practice of putting additional taxes, extortion named *shiltāq* and *zīadat* attested in many complaints and petitions addressed to the Shāh [34: 173-174].

The research on some Persian documents (letters, various shari'a-notarial documents, bills, receipts, orders, etc.) of the Matenadaran dating 1699-1755 reveals the details referring to the life, different aspects of trade and social activities of some wealthy merchants of Agulis, and also other social-economic realities of the town and the region around it [34: 171]. The documents have kept information about the involvement of Khoja Hovhannes and his brother Martiros in the international trade by the continental transit trade routes connecting their homeland with the ports in Aleppo, Izmir and Constantinople and presence of their companions at various spots (Ganja, Šaki and Ğabala) of Eastern Caucasus by which the northern transit trade route passed. Khoja Hovhannes and his brother were wealthy merchants and landlords, having bought land estates in Agulis and nearby villages, and they had also their share from the exploitation of a caravanserai, a manufactory of calico production and a mill in Urdūbād [34: 171]. As evident from some documents of the

Matenadaran Khoja Hovhannes was involved in the tax levy from several villages of Nakhijevan region. The duty was put on him by the order of Ibrāhīm, the governor of Azerbaijan<sup>31</sup>. Other documents show that he often paid the taxes instead of the cultivators as they had debts to him<sup>32</sup>. This secured the regular entry of the revenue into the state treasury, and at the same time freed the local cultivators from the oppression of local officials in case of delays and their inability to pay the taxes.

In mid-eighteenth century the merchants of Agulis like the other inhabitants of the region faced the hardships of Nādir Shāh's rule characterized with increase in abuses and tax-extortion of state officials. Khoja Hovhannes even applied to Nādir Shāh with a petition on account of the unlawful tax demands and encroachments and received a decree protecting his rights [34].

Thus, Armenian merchants suffered much more difficulties during Nādir's rule than melik's, as they were considered as a source of income and money needed for the military campaigns. As a result of Nādir Shāh's mistreatment of the Armenian merchants, many of them left Iran for the countries where they had already established commercial ties and network. Many merchant families left the territory of Nādir's empire with their finances for the other countries, such as India, Russia and European states.

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<sup>31</sup> MAC, f. 1h, 1216.

<sup>32</sup> MAC, f. 1h, doc. 1209, 1232.

## Conclusion

The social groups of Armenian melik's and merchants were treated in different ways during Nādir Shāh's rule. Armenian melik's as military leaders had been considered as elite needed for the expansionist policy of Nādir Shāh and they were encouraged to extensive cooperation with his forces. Consequently, the rights of the melik's were confirmed and some of them received high titles (*sulṭān*) and posts (*kalāntar*, *ẓarrābī bāshī*, *ẓābiṭ*) in local administration. The six melikdoms of Ğarabağ attained a kind of autonomy in a separate administrative unit of '*maḥall-i khamsa*', governed by Melik' Egan, the *ẓābiṭ* of that unit. However, there was also oppression and punishment exercised as regards some of them in case of any disobedience or false step.

Nādir's rule furthered the economic decline in Iran, which worsened the economic climate needed for trade. The sources of the period have kept evidence and facts about high additional taxes and fines put on them, and severe punishments executed by the high order. As a result, Armenian merchants faced difficulties to continue their trade activities and preferred to migrate to other countries with their families and finances.

## Supplement

The decree of Nādir Shāh appointing Melik' Šahnazar as melik' of Varanda  
Dated February 12, 1743

[*Persian text*]

هو 1

بسم الله خير الاسماء 2

مهر: بسم الله. نکین دولت و دین رفته بود چون از جا بنام نادر ایران قرار داد خدا 3  
اعوذ بالله تعالی فرمان همایون شد آنکه درینوقت حسب الاستدعاء عارض ملکی محال ورنده را

بدستوریکه 4

با ملک حسین بوده بشاهنظر ولد او شفقت فرمودیم که متوجه امر مزبور بوده بلوازم و مراسم آن قیام و  
اقدام نماید. تحریرا" ۱۷ ذیحجه الحرام سنه ۱۱۵۵. 5

عرضه داشت کمترین بندکان یکن ضابط محال خمسه ارامنه بذروه عرض حجاب درگاه فلک اسا [اقدس]  
 اعلى ميرساند که 6  
 چون ملک حسين ملک محال ورنده بتصدق فرق فرقدان سان مبارک اقدس اعلى کردیده و شاهنظر ولد  
 مشاراليه 7  
 قابليت ملکی دارد استدعا آنکه رقم مبارک اقدس اعلى شفقت و مرحمت کردد که بدستور سابق 8  
 ولد مشاراليه ملک محالمزبوره و بامور ديوانی اشتغال نمايد. چون واجب بود جرئت عرض کردیده  
 كما امره العالی جر [یان]. 9

[English translation]

He is

In the name of Allah, the best of the names

[Seal]: In the name of Allah; the gem of the state and faith was lost, when God established Iran under the rule of Nādir.

I seek refuge in God Almighty. A royal decree was issued on the following: on the following: at this time, according to the request of the petitioner, *malikī* of the *maḥāl* of Varanda we granted to Shāhnaẓar, the son of Malik Ḥusayn, in the same order as it had been with the latter, so that he could be occupied with the duties and matters of the pursuit.

Written on 17 of the sacred month of Zī ḥajja in the year 1155<sup>33</sup>.

The petition of the most humble servant Egan, *zābit* of the Armenian *maḥāl* of Khamsa

[He] brings to the notice of the threshold of the Highest and Holiest palace, reaching the heaven, that since Malik Ḥusayn, the *malik* of Varanda *Mahāl*<sup>34</sup> had been honoured with graces of the blessed Most High [had passed away] and his son Shāhnaẓar deserves the position of a *malik*, the request is to grant a blessed sacred order (*raqam*) in order that he could fill the post of the *malikī* of the mentioned *maḥāl* and be occupied with the affairs of the *divān*. Since it was necessary [I] had the courage to apply. Due to the highest order.

<sup>33</sup> February 12, 1743.

<sup>34</sup> Melik' Huseyn of Melik' Šahnazaryan family was appointed as melik' of Varanda in 1730 by the decree of Shah Tahmāsb II Safavid [27: doc. 87].



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## ԱՅՍՐԿՈՎԿԱՍԻ ՀԱՅ ՄԵԼԻՔՆԵՐՆ ՈՒ ԽՈՋԱՆԵՐԸ ՆԱԴԻՐ ՇԱՀԻ ԻՇԽԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՇՐՋԱՆՈՒՄ

### Քրիստինե Կոստիկյան

**Հիմնաբառեր.** Հայ մելիքներ, խոջա, Նադիր շահ, պարսկական փաստաթղթեր, պաշտոն, իրավունքներ.

### Ամփոփում

Հոդվածում քննվում են 18-րդ դարի հայ հասարակության վերնախավը ներկայացնող մելիքների և խոջաների սոցիալ-տնտեսական ու իրավաքաղաքական պատմության մի շարք հարցեր. սկսած այդ եզրույթների ծագումից մինչև հայկական իրականության մեջ դրանց գործառական նշանակությունը, այդ սոցիալական խմբերի ներկայացուցիչների կապը և փոխհարաբերությունները պարսից իշխանությունների հետ և նրանց սոցիալ-քաղաքական դրության առանձնահատկությունները, դրանցում եղած փոփոխությունները տարածաշրջանում Նադիր շահի իշխանության հաստատումից մինչև անկում:

Հայ մելիքները հիմնականում հանդիսանալով հայ իշխանական տների հետնորդները իրենց կարգավիճակով և սոցիալական-տնտեսական դրությամբ սերտորեն կապված էին իրանական պետականության հետ, ունեին իրենց համարժեք (մելիքական) խավը իրանական հասարակության մեջ, որի մասին փաստերը արձանագրված են արդեն 13-14-րդ դարերի պարսկական պատմագրության մեջ: Որոշ հայ մելիքների առկայությունը նաև Օսմանյան կայսրության տարածքում կապվում է նորից իրանական պետականության հետ, որը Իլխանության շրջանից առկա էր տարածաշրջանում և այնուհետև իր դերը չի կորցնում նաև Կարա Կոյունլու և Ակ Կոյունլու թուրքմենական պետություններում:

Այն հանգամանքը, որ այդ հասարակական խավը բնորոշ էր Օսմանյան կայսրությանը և այդ պետության օրենքներով պաշտպանված էր, ցույց է տալիս, որ Այսրկովկասում Օսմանյան տիրապետությունը չէր համապատասխանում տեղի մելիքների շահերին: Այս հանգամանքը

մղում էր Այսրկովկասի հայ մելիքներին աջակցելու իրանական իշխանություններին տարածաշրջանում Օսմանյան կայսրության դեմ նրանց մղած պայքարում: Ուստի պատահական չէր հայ մելիքների ռազմական համագործակցությունը թե՛ Նադիր շահի և թե՛ ավելի վաղ շահ Աբբաս Ա-ի գլխավորած իրանական զորքերի հետ: Իրանի շահերն էլ համապատասխանաբար հաստատում էին նրանց մելիքական իրավունքները հրովարտակներով և երբեմն խրախուսում նաև որոշ բարձր վարչական պաշտոնների շնորհմամբ: Այս համատեքստում լիովին պատճառաբանված էր հայ մելիքների դիրքերի ամրապնդումը և նրանցից մի քանիսի բարձր դիրքը Նադիր շահի Այսրկովկասում տիրապետության սկզբնական շրջանում. Մելիքջան Մելիք-Շահնազարյանը դառնումը է Երևանի քալանթարը, Մելիք Հակոբջանը՝ դրամահատարանի ղեկավարը (զառաբի), Մելիք Եգանը՝ Խամսայի մահալի ղեկավարը (զաբիթ), որը փաստացի նաև ամրապնդում էր շահական իշխանությունը տարածաշրջանում:

Նադիր շահի անհեռատես տնտեսական քաղաքականությունն ու մշտական պատերազմները, սակայն, կործանարար հետևանքներ են ունենում իր իսկ ստեղծած կայսրության համար: Ծանր հարկային բեռը անընդունելի էր հասարակության բոլոր խավերի համար և դրդում էր անհնազանդության տարբեր դրսևորումների, որը իր հերթին պատժվում էր բռնապետի ողջ խստությամբ և որի զոհն են դառնում անգամ որոշ հայ մելիքներ: Անարդար հավելագանձումների ու դրամաշորթության թիրախում են հայտնվում նաև Ամենայն Հայոց կաթողիկոսությունը, ինչպես նաև թե՛ Նոր Զուղայի, և թե՛ Արևելյան Հայաստանի հայ հարուստ վաճառականները:

Մատենադարանի պարսկերեն որոշ փաստաթղթեր պահպանել են տեղեկություններ Ագուլիսի հայ խոջաներ Հովհաննեսի ու նրա եղբայր Մարտիրոսի գործունեության վերաբերյալ, որոնք ընդգրկում են Նադիր շահի տիրապետության շրջանը և բացահայտում են նրանց դերը տեղի Նախիջևանի որոշ հայկական գյուղերից կատարվող հարկագանձումներում: Այդ պարտականությունը տեղի հայ վերնախավի անդամների վրա դրվել էր Թավրիզում նստող կառավարիչ Իբրահիմի հրամանագրով

և միտված էր պետական գանձարանի օգտին կանոնավոր հարկագանձումները ապահովելուն: Այն միաժամանակ նաև պաշտպանում էր հայ գյուղացիներին՝ հարկերի վճարումը ուշացնելու դեպքում պաշտոնյաների կողմից հնարավոր բռնաճնշումներից ու պատիժներից: Փաստաթղթերի տվյալների համաձայն հայ վաճառականները նրանց փոխարեն վճարում էին բոլոր հարկերը պետական գանձարանին և այնուհետև ըստ պարտամուրհակների ստանում իրենց հասանելիք գումարները պարտապաններից:



# THE DUAL ALLIANCE UNDER THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE THEORY OF ALLIANCE DILEMMA: A STUDY CENTERED ON MACEDONIAN REFORMS (1903-1908)

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## Abstract

The Dual Alliance was an important achievement of Germany's proactive diplomacy, which eliminated the hidden security risk of Austria-Hungary's fall to the hostile countries, and restored Germany's position of restraining the Austro-Russian relations and its position as a mediator between the two countries. Austria-Hungary improved its relatively fragile position as a Great Power in Europe through the alliance, but at the cost of its foreign policy that was to some extent subject to Germany's control. The Dual Alliance was in a dilemma at the very beginning. Both Germany and Austria-Hungary had the fears of "abandonment" and "entrapment", and there were the risks of détente and conflict with hostile countries. In order to improve the internal relations of the alliance, the Austria-Hungary took advantage of Macedonian reforms to adopt a proactive foreign policy. In order to maintain the stability of the alliance, Germany repeatedly supported the policies that carried out by Austria-Hungary at critical moments in the process of Macedonian reforms to show its loyalty to the ally. The relationship between Germany and Austria-

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Hungary in the alliance gradually changed, which in turn pushed the Austria-Hungary to implement a more aggressive foreign policy.

**Keywords:** Glenn H. Snyder, Alliance Dilemma, the Dual Alliance, Macedonian Reforms, Diplomatic Games.

### **Introduction**

The Dual Alliance was the result of a proactive diplomacy in which Germany attempted to establish a system of European states under its control after the Congress of Berlin, when the Concert of Europe was deeply divided, the Three Emperors' League was no longer in place, and German-Austrian relations were in a state of extreme instability [2: 212]. The Dual Alliance, as the first cornerstone in the construction of the deadly and conflicting alliance system that led to the outbreak of the First World War, the first of a series of secret treaties that divided the European Great Powers into two hostile camps, was one of the long-term causes of the outbreak of the First World War [15: 54].

For a long time, academic research mostly focuses on the background of the establishment of the Dual Alliance and its relationship with the Otto von Bismarck's alliance system, while the discussion of the changes in the internal relationship of the alliance is less involved. In fact, the Dual Alliance was plagued by alliance dilemmas from the very beginning: both Germany and Austria-Hungary were worried about being "abandonment" and "entrapment" by each other, and there was a risk of *détente* and conflict with hostile countries or alliances. In addition, the relationship between Germany and Austria-Hungary within the alliance gradually changed due to the influence of many factors, and continued until the eve of the First World War.

This paper intends to apply Glenn H. Snyder's theory of alliance dilemma, combined with the archives of Britain, France, Germany and other countries, to conduct a case study on the diplomatic game of the Great Powers around the Macedonian reforms, to analyze in depth the gradual change of the relationship between Germany and Austria-Hungary within the alliance due to

deepening of the Macedonian reforms process. It also explains why the foreign policy of Germany, as a stronger party in the alliance, was gradually “implicated” by the weaker Austria-Hungary and became a staunch supporter of the alliance, which greatly affected the adjustment of the relationship among the Great Powers before World War I and contributed to the outbreak of the First World War.

### ***The Establishment of Alliance: The Explanatory Power of Alliance Dilemma Theory on the Dual Alliance***

As one of the important contents of international relations, alliance theory has experienced the research process of classical realism, neorealism, liberal institutionalism and constructivism, and its content is constantly being enriched and deepened. Among them, the theory of “alliance security dilemma” put forward by Snyder is of great significance for the academic research on alliance theory. According to Snyder, alliances and coalitions, as one of the most central phenomena in international politics, mainly refer to formal alliances of countries on the use or non-use of force for the purpose of safeguarding the security or expanding the power of member countries, which are directed against other specific countries [5: 104]. The security dilemma between allies mainly refers to the fact that, in order to avoid being “abandonment”, a country needs to support its allies in order to gain the latter’s trust, and this kind of strengthening of alliances may arouse the hostility of hostile countries, thus increasing the risk of being “entrapment”. If one country chooses to weaken the alliance in order to avoid the rise of hostile countries’ hostility, the result may be that the country avoids being “entrapment” by its allies, but it also increases the risk of being “abandonment” by the allies and of condoning the expansion of hostile countries.

According to Snyder, the security dilemma in the alliance game is divided into two stages. The first stage occurs during alliance formation. In a multipolar system, countries have the choice to enter into alliances or to renounce them, and the motivation for a country to adopt an alliance policy is

either to significantly increase its security through alliances if other countries abandon them, or to avoid isolation and prevent cooperating countries from entering into an alliance against itself. The main purpose of each country's accession negotiations is to be in the strongest alliance and to maximize its share of the net benefits of the alliance, which are the so-called national interest. National interests are categorized into general interests and special interests. General interests stem from the anarchic structure of the system and the geographical location of the country, which do not involve a conflict with a specific country and are also called strategic interests because of the importance attached to their function and security contents. Special interests refer to conflict or intimate relations with specific countries, stemming from ideology, ethnicity, economy or prestige. National interests help to reduce the uncertainty of the architecture. During alliance negotiations, national interests become an important factor in the alliance bargaining process.

The second stage occurs after the formation of the alliance. At this stage, a country's choices are about how loyal it is to its allies and how much support it can provide them in its interactions with an adversary in a particular conflict. Snyder uses the concepts of "abandonment" and "entrapment" from Michael Mandelbaum's analysis of the impact of nuclear weapons on international politics to illustrate the results of the internal game among allied countries. The logic of "abandonment" is that a country fears betrayal by its allies, including: re-alignment with rivals, unilateral dissolution of alliance, abrogation of alliance agreements, inability to fulfill explicit commitments, and failure to provide support in the event of a contingency that requires it. Among them, the suspicion that its allies are contemplating realignment may motivate it to realign before its allies do [6: 466-467]. The logic of "entrapment" is that a country is drawn into a conflict because of the interests of its allies that the country cannot or only partially share. Alliances often have divergent interests, and "entrapment" occurs when a country believes that the value of preserving the alliances is more important than the cost of fighting for the interests of the allies. "Entrapment" is more likely to occur when the allies are

uncompromising with the adversary because of their trust in their supporters. The more dependent a country is on the alliances, the stronger its commitment to the alliances and the higher its risk of being “entrapment”. The risks of “abandonment” and “entrapment” tend to be inversely proportional, that is, reducing one risk will increase the other. Therefore, the strategic choice for resolving the alliance security dilemma needs to weigh the costs and risks of “abandonment” and “entrapment” [6: 467].

The degree of a country’s dependence on an alliance, the differences in strategic interests between the allies, the degree of clarity of alliance agreements, and the degree of benefit-sharing between the allies in conflict with an adversary are the four determinants of benefits, costs and risks. First, the more dependent a country is on the alliance and the less dependent its allies are on the alliance, the greater the costs and risks of the country being “abandonment” than of being “entrapment”; second, differences in strategic interests help explain why the most powerful country in an alliance often has little influence over its allies, especially when the strategic interests of the more powerful country are well known, and it cannot credibly threaten its allies not to resort to a policy of betrayal or renegotiation; then, unclear alliance agreements tend to maximize a country’s fear of “abandonment”, but make it less likely that it will be “entrapment” by its allies, whereas clearly defined agreements minimize the fear of being “abandonment”, but increase the risk of being “entrapment”; finally, if the allies share similar interests in a conflict with an adversary, the risk is minimized, but if allies share very different interests, the country that shares fewer interests will not only worry about pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for others, but also worry about whether allies will take a firm stand in support of it if its interests are threatened [6: 472-474]. Thus, if a country feels a high degree of dependence on its allies and a low degree of dependence on itself, the alliance agreements are ambiguous, the allies’ recent behavior suggests that their loyalty is questionable, it will fear being “abandonment” rather than “entrapment”. To ameliorate the dilemma, the country will reaffirm its commitment to its allies, choose to support them in their games with their adversaries and avoid

cooperation with allies' adversaries [6: 475].

In the alliance security dilemma, the alliance game and the adversary game are carried out simultaneously, and the strategies and tactics adopted in the alliance game have a direct impact on the adversary game. In the adversary game, a country taking a tough stance against the adversary can play a role in consolidating the alliance, but it will also increase the risk of being "entrapment" by the allies, because the allies may become uncompromising towards the adversary due to its support, which will also reduce the country's ability to bargain with the allies in the alliance game and the option of re-establishing an alliance with the adversary will not be realized. If a country adopts a cooperative strategy with its adversary, it can reduce the risk of being "entrapment" by the allies, because the allies observe the country's improving relations with its adversary that increase their concern about whether the country will stand firmly behind them in a possible crisis. Consequently, allies will be more cautious in playing with their rivals, and may become more submissive in order to prevent themselves from being "abandonment" by the country. However, cooperation with an adversary can also increase the risk of being "abandonment" by allies, who may preemptively re-align alliances. In addition, cooperation with an adversary may have a "falling domino effect", in which the adversary perceives the country's cooperation as a sign of weakness and pushes the adversary to be more assertive in its dealings with each other [6: 470-471]. Furthermore, in the adversary game, taking a firm stance in the belief that the other has potentially aggressive motives increases the insecurity spiral. A country that reduces the concerns of its allies by taking a strong stance against its adversary also increases cooperation between the adversary and its allies, and the insecurity spiral rises when both alliances take a firm stance. Thus, the increased internal solidarity of one alliance, as well as a rise in the insecurity spiral in the game with the adversary, increases the cohesion of the other alliance [6: 477-478].

During the formation of the Dual Alliance, both countries had the autonomy of choosing their allies, and there were several reasons for Bismarck to take the initiative to conclude the alliance.

Firstly, Bismarck was dissatisfied with Russia's attitude towards Germany. The Tsar had complained that the Congress of Berlin was a European Union organized under the leadership of Bismarck against Russia, that the intention of German policy was intended to benefit Austria-Hungary [16: 3]. Although Russia fully understood Germany's intention to maintain good German-Austrian relations, Germany could not do so at the expense of German-Russian relations [16: 15-16]. The Three Emperors' League had brought not gains but disadvantages to Russia [16: 7]. Bismarck refuted this by saying that Russia had gained a great deal from the Three Emperors' League and instead of being grateful, it resorted to threats of war, which was unacceptable to Germany [16: 18]. In a conversation with the French ambassador to Germany, de Saint-Vallier, Bismarck indignantly remarked that Russia was not only threatened German ambassador to Russia in the unofficial newspapers, in the official telegrams, but also threatened war, this was the reason for signing the Vienna Settlement. Russian policy towards Germany had changed, and the old friendship had been replaced by an unusual degree of Russian jealousy and distrust [23: 580-581]. Since the War of German Unification, the friendly German-Russian relations had drifted apart, and the possibility of arch-enemy France seeking Franco-Russian amity in Europe to get rid of its isolation would have made Germany's situation more difficult. Therefore, concluding an alliance with Austria-Hungary, controlling the development of Austro-Russian relations, forcing Russia to back into the camp of the Three Emperors' League, and maintaining Germany's position as the dominant power on the European continent was an effective way. Bismarck's real purpose was to prevent the Austro-Russian conflict by means of Austria-Hungary dependence on Germany, so that it could at the same time prevent the mutual destruction of the two autocracies [31: 72]. The Dual Alliance concluded in 1879 was not intended to prepare for a military conflict with Russia; on the contrary, its purpose was to demonstrate political power in order to bring Russia to the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and thus to secure peace in Europe [22: 91].

Secondly, Bismarck believed that Germany and Austria-Hungary were

closely linked in terms of ideology, national history and other aspects, which helped the two countries to forge a strong alliance. Bismarck had stated that there was more in common between Germany and Austria-Hungary than between Germany and Russia. The Germanic races were closely related in terms of blood ties, historical memories, and language, etc., which helped the German population to be more inclined to enter into an alliance with Austria-Hungary and to believe that an alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary would be more durable than an alliance between Germany and Russia [16: 20]. Therefore, when Germany had to choose an ally between Austria-Hungary and Russia, Austria-Hungary should be chosen [12: 35]. In addition, Germany and Austria-Hungary had memories of friendly relations. After the Austro-Prussian War, Prussia did not punish Austria severely, and in return, Austria-Hungary gave up the opportunity of allying with France to take revenge on Prussia during the Franco-Prussian War, and chose to maintain strictly neutrality. This fond memory provided an emotional bond for the two countries to conclude the alliance.

Finally, Bismarck feared that Austro-Hungarian foreign policy was moving in a direction unfavorable to Germany. In 1879, Bismarck learned that the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Andr ssy, who had supported the maintenance of friendly relations between Germany and Austria-Hungary, was about to leave his post, and he feared that this might signify that Austro-Hungarian policy would shift to an alliance with Russia or even France [2: 212]. In order to avoid isolation or the conclusion of an alliance against Germany by Austria-Hungary, Bismarck decided to remove this danger and speed up the process of concluding an alliance between the two countries. In persuading Kaiser Wilhelm, I to conclude an alliance as soon as possible, Bismarck stated that if the alliance was rejected, Austria-Hungary would sooner or later seek an alliance with France and Russia, and then Germany would have to face the danger of being isolated on the continent by the alliance between Russia, France and Austria-Hungary. The less powerful Austria-Hungary, which Germany despised, could be enlisted by Russia to counter Germany, and the loss of its ally would leave Germany open to attack by Russia, which, if



victorious over Germany, would dominate Eastern Europe and the Near East with its power [16: 80].

For Austria-Hungary, the Dual Alliance was directed against Russia [41: 378]. It was essentially an anti-Russian tool rather than a German-led anti-French tool. Austria-Hungary believed that it should stay away from all situations involving Franco-German conflict and, above all, refrain from any policy that would enhance the relationship between the Three Emperors' League and not jeopardize the partnership between Austria-Hungary and Britain and France [2: 213]. Andrassy had explicitly stated that the Dual Alliance was the tombstone of the old Three Emperors' League, not a stepping stone to a new one [15: 58]. Moreover, Germany, as the new hegemon of continental Europe, entering into an alliance with it would help to improve Austro-Hungarian declining Great Power status since the Austro-Prussian War, as well as to increase the discourse of Austria-Russia in the struggle for dominance in the Balkans.

In short, the estrangement of German-Russian relations since the Congress of Berlin, the bad German-French relations due to the Franco-Prussian War, and the isolationism of Britain, made Germany, which had fewer choices of allies, attach great importance to Austria-Hungary, with which it had special interests in terms of ideology, racial composition, and economic interoperability. As a result, Germany's initiative of alliance appeared to be stronger than Austria-Hungary's. Throughout the contents of the Dual Alliance, Germany's responsibility to defend Austria-Hungary could not be compared with Austria-Hungary's responsibility of defending Germany, and Germany made more commitments [32: 123-124]. Austria-Hungary, which had been on good terms with Britain and France before its alliance with Germany, was more selective in its alliances than Germany, and thus did not value the Dual Alliance as much as Germany did, and even questioned it slightly. For example, Rudolf Franz Karl Joseph, Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary, argued that the Dual Alliance was contrary to the best interests of the dynasty and the country, that Bismarck harbored ambitions to use the alliance to carry out the annexation of the Germanic provinces of Austria-Hungary, and that Austria-

Hungary should be allied with Britain and could not side with Germany in carrying out its anti-French policies [13: 274-275]. Bismarck himself confessed that Austria-Hungary neither proposed nor sought an alliance with Germany, and Germany's idea of having Austria-Hungary on its side against attacks from France was repeatedly rejected by Austria-Hungary [16: 118]. Therefore, Germany dominated the formation of the alliance by virtue of its great power, but there was a clear difference in the degree of reliance on the alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary. Germany attached more importance to the alliance than Austria-Hungary, and even after Bismarck's departure, the alliance served as the cornerstone of Germany's diplomacy [41: 356].

After the establishment of the Dual Alliance, the internal game of the alliance and the adversary game coexisted, and both countries were at risk of being "abandonment" and "entrapment". Germany was afraid of being involved in the Austro-Russian conflict, facing the dilemma of an alliance between Austria-Hungary, Britain and France. De St. Vallier stated that with the dissolution of the Three Emperors' League, Germany aimed to reduce Austria-Hungary to a satellite role in its policy by aligning itself with the latter, and that neither Britain nor any of the other Great Powers would be allowed to become a third party to the Dual Alliance [24: 71]. Thus, for Germany, the Dual Alliance served a dual purpose: on the one hand, Germany could use the alliance to restrain Austria-Hungary from provoking Russia in the future. On the other hand, if the restriction failed, Germany had to secure the support of Austria-Hungary in the face of a Russian attack [37: 37]. Although Austria-Hungary feared that German-Russian coordination would limit its expansion in the Balkans, it was more concerned about being "entrapment" by Germany in the German-French conflict. In order to maintain its diplomatic flexibility, Austria-Hungary told France that there was no need to worry about the intentions of the Dual Alliance as it was not directed against France, and France was satisfied with Austria-Hungary's statement [24: 11-12]. Both Germany and Austria-Hungary were highly dependent on the alliance, yet there were differences in their strategic interests. Germany's strategic interest as the dominant power in the alliance was to maintain its continental

supremacy while avoiding a two-front war between East and West. Austria-Hungary's strategic interests were to improve its fragile great power status, maintain friendly relations with Britain and France, and compete with Russia for dominance in the Balkans. According to A. J. P. Taylor, the Dual Alliance was the result of Bismarck's efforts to prevent Austria-Hungary from seeking support from Britain and France, and to provide a stable basis for Habsburg foreign policy [39: 155]. The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister stated that Germany would take Austria-Hungary's interests into account to the greatest extent possible in all Eastern questions [24: 251]. In addition, the clarity of the German-Austrian alliance agreement and the obvious differences in the shared interests of the two countries put both countries at risk of being "entrapment".

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as the Balkans, which were not covered by the German-Austrian alliance agreement, became an arena for the Great Powers to play their diplomatic games, the differences in German and Austro-Hungarian governance on the Near East gradually affected the transformation of the status of the two countries within the alliance.

### **The Trade-off between being "Abandonment" and being "Entrapment": the Austro-Italian Disagreement over the Reform of the Gendarmerie and Germany's Choice**

In February 1903, the Austro-Russian "Vienna Scheme" for the Macedonian issue, which involved the appointment of an inspector general and the reorganization of the gendarmerie, etc., marked that the Macedonian issue had become a European issue [7: 51-53; 26: 115-118]. In October of the same year, the Austro-Russian "Mürzsteg Programme" was formulated with an even broader scope [9: 96-98]. Since then, the Great Powers engaged in a series of diplomatic games around the Macedonian reforms, which contributed to the fragmentation of interests and the reorganization of power of the relevant countries, including the transformation of German-Austrian relations and status within the alliance.

The building of a strong gendarmerie was a guarantee of security, stability and social order in Macedonia and a prerequisite for other reforms

undertaken by the Great Powers. The British Ambassador in Constantinople stated that no provision of the Mürzsteg Programme was more important than the reorganization of the Gendarmerie. A very difficult task can be accomplished only with the support of the Gendarmerie, and if the Gendarmerie was not able to provide practical help, the implementation of the reform program would be impossible [9: 156]. On the issue of the reorganization of the Macedonian Gendarmerie, the Great Powers disagreed on who would be responsible for the reorganization and on the partition of the Macedonian region.

The British proposed an Italian general to reorganize the gendarmerie, but Austria-Hungary disagreed. Austria-Hungary argued that the decision on the choice of personnel should rest with the Turkish Empire [9: 157]. The reasons for Austria-Hungary's position were: firstly, Austria-Hungary wanted to maintain the Austro-Russian domination of the Macedonian reforms and did not want to cede this power to a third country; secondly, the reorganization of the gendarmerie by an Italian general would tend to tilt the Macedonian reforms in Italy's favor, facilitate the expansion of Italy's power in the western Balkans, and harm the interests of Austria-Hungary in the region. Finally, giving the right to appoint a foreign general to the Turkish Empire would not only allay its persistent fears of interference by the Great Powers in its internal affairs, but also win Austria-Hungary the goodwill of the Turkish Empire, which in turn would serve to gain more rights and interests in the future.

Germany was pleased to see Austro-Russian cooperation in the Balkans. Germany stated that it had no other interest in the Near East than the maintenance of peace, and was satisfied with its position in the second or third tier. If Austria-Hungary and Russia were to support the British proposal, Germany would not object it [9: 151-152]. Later, through British efforts, Austria-Hungary finally agreed that an Italian general would be responsible for reorganizing the gendarmerie. Britain's behavior won the favor of Italy, while Austria-Hungary's needs were constrained. Although Germany wanted to stay out of the reform issue, with the active involvement of Austria-Hungary in the reform, Germany was "entrapment" by its ally and could not stand alone.

On the case of the partitioned occupation of Macedonia, it was not only a measure of the Six Great Powers' intention to take advantage of the reforms to strengthen their respective positions in Macedonia, but also a manifestation of the conflicting interests of the Great Powers in the Balkans, with the Austro-Italian conflict being particularly prominent.

Austria-Hungary was deeply concerned about the expansion of Italian power in the Balkans. Agenor Maria Goluchowski, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, stated that Italy harbored greed for Albania as well as a desire to interfere in everything [27: 442]. Calice, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Constantinople, believed that Italy was seeking to occupy Monastir (Macedonia had three provinces: Monastir in the west, Kosovo in the north, and Salonica in the south), because of its proximity to Albania and it could become the headquarter of Emilio Degiorgis (who was in charge of reorganizing the gendarmerie). If further gendarmerie battalions were established in the region, Italy would be able to do whatever it wanted, and this was not allowed by Austria-Hungary. The best choice for the Italian occupation would be Serres in the province of Salonica, with the British occupying Monastir instead [19: 102]. Austro-Hungarian opposition to the Italian occupation of Monastir was based on the following considerations: it was believed that the reorganization of the gendarmerie by Italy would help Italy to increase its influence in western Macedonia and Albania. Once Italy controlled the entire Adriatic Sea, it would block Austria-Hungary's sea trade routes. In addition, the exclusion of Italian influence in the Western Balkans would facilitate the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Üskub (Skopje) adjacent to the Serbian border, which would not only allow for the monitoring of Serbian policy, but also link up with Novibazar, blocking Serbia's alliance with Montenegro in the western sector, and thus facilitating the advancement of its own power into the Salonica and even the Aegean region. "In view of Austria-Hungary enjoying garrison rights in Novibazar, this was able to embed a wedge between the two Serbian states (meaning Serbia and Montenegro), severing Serbia from the Adriatic completely and opening up forward routes to Salonica and the Aegean Sea, something that the Austrian imperialists haunted" [33: 111].

Italy's opposition to Austro-Hungarian expansion into the southern Balkans, coupled with the existence of a marriage union between Italy and Montenegro, led Italy, whose power extended into Albania and Macedonia, to hope to secure its control over Albania by occupying the Monastir region in western Macedonia. Tommaso Tittoni, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, said that Italy would have to occupy the Adriatic coast in order to protect its interests in case of an Austro-Hungarian military offensive in the Balkans. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Empire, in his analysis of the Austro-Italian relations, stated that at this moment the relations between the two countries were in danger and that Austria-Hungary would never allow Italian officers to be sent to the Albanian settlements [19: 108-109]. In order to achieve its aim of containing the power of Austria-Hungary, Italy actively sought the support of Britain and France. Tittoni mentioned to the French ambassador in Rome that, given Austria-Hungary's tendency to play a dominant role in the Balkans, it was hoped that France and Italy could reach a consensus and work together to prevent such a possible outcome [27: 409]. France showed its support for Italy by rejecting the Austro-Hungarian proposal for a partitioned occupation [27: 431]. Britain, on the other hand, was firmly in favor of Italy, hoping to use the opportunity to disrupt Austro-Italian relations and thus break up the Triple Alliance. This made it extremely difficult to reach an Austro-Italian consensus on Macedonian reforms. Britain stated that if Austria-Hungary insisted on the partition of Üskub, this would be opposed by Italy, and Britain would support Italian possession of Monastir [27: 454-456]. Russia, trapped in the war in the Far East, supported Austria-Hungary in the division of the occupation zone, but agreed in principle that Austria-Hungary's power should extend only to the province of Kosovo and not to Salonica. In the end, Britain, France, Russia and Italy reached a consensus on the issue of limiting the expansion of Austria-Hungary, and Austria-Hungary could only rely on its ally Germany.

Germany's position is particularly important at this time. On the one hand, Austria-Hungary and Italy were both allies of Germany, and thus Germany was caught in a dilemma when both countries sought its support. Given the need

to maintain the stability of the Dual Alliance and the need to harmonize the differences among the Triple Alliance in order to avoid its disintegration, Germany's dilemma was that choosing one side might be detrimental to the interests of the other. On the other hand, Germany was reluctant to get too involved in the Balkans to avoid intensifying its conflicts with Austria-Hungary, Russia and Italy. Bismarck had mentioned several times that Germany was unwilling to waste a single Pomeranian bombardier in the Balkans [38: 263]. However, in the face of the aggravation of the Austro-Italian differences, it became inevitable that Germany, which was in urgent need of easing the relationship between the two allies, would be "entrapment" in the Balkans. However, in order to satisfy the demands of the two allies, Germany finally came up with a compromise that supported the Italian occupation of Monastir and met Austria-Hungary's demand to exclude the Albanian region from the reform of the gendarmerie.

On the issue of gendarmerie reform, Germany's choice was more or less hopeless. As the dominant power in the Dual Alliance and the Triple Alliance, Germany was in principle less dependent on the alliance than Austria-Hungary and Italy from the point of view of power alone, but as Austria-Hungary invested more and more in the reform of the Macedonian gendarmerie, Germany, for the sake of maintaining the cornerstones of its foreign policy, had to do its utmost to avoid the situation of being "abandonment" by the ally. After all, Austria-Hungary had a far greater choice of allies than Germany. Moreover, at the end of the nineteenth century, Italy began to negotiate with its former enemy, France, for the conclusion of a commercial treaty and the possibility of political cooperation [20: 276]. In November 1902, France and Italy concluded the Entente, which weakened the position of the Triple Alliance in Italy's foreign policy. Even if the Triple Alliance had been renewed, it could not have prevented the Franco-Italian approach. Italy had assured France that it would not sign any military agreement or treaty involving a German attack on France [36: 91]. The French Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé stated that there was no need for the French government to ask for explanations and assurances from the Italian government on the renewal of the Triple Alliance,

as Italy's loyalty was unquestionable [20: 335]. The reorganization of Italy's foreign policy made it less dependent on the Triple Alliance than in the past, and Italy had the right and the possibility of "abandonment" the Alliance at any time, which was obviously less important to Germany than the Dual Alliance at this time. Moreover, Germany chose to support Austria-Hungary diplomatically because of the stimulus brought by the coordinated action of Britain, France, Russia and Italy. Germany feared that if the four Great Powers were to act together, the space for its diplomatic activities would be greatly reduced. Under the combined effect of the alliance game and the adversary game, Germany, after weighing the "abandonment" and "entrapment", chose the Dual alliance as well as the Balkans, where Austria-Hungary's interests were at stake.

### **The Trade-off between "Abandonment" and Self-interest: The Contest over the Austro-Turkish Fiscal Reform and Germany's Choice**

The reorganization of the Macedonian gendarmerie was a prerequisite for ensuring regional stability, while the stability of the Macedonian finances and the perfect order were the guarantees for the proper functioning of the administrative and judicial system [10: 4]. The fiscal reform program was first proposed by Russia, and then jointly developed by Austria-Hungary and Russia, and implemented by the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which was mainly controlled by the French [19: 205].

German-Turkish relations had been slowly moving in a friendly direction since the Congress of Berlin. The Treaty of Berlin dismembered Greater Bulgaria, placed Macedonia back under the rule of the Turkish Empire, Eastern Rumelia became autonomous, Russian expansion on the Black Sea and in the Balkans was limited, and although the Turkish Empire was no longer a de facto Great Power, at least it prevented the expansion of Russian power into the Balkans and preserved the Turkish Empire's temporary stability and the prestige of the Sultan. Germany's original intention was not to preserve the Turkish Empire, but its behavior objectively won the latter's favor. Thus, when Germany attempted to develop its power in the Turkish Empire, the



Turkish government and the Sultan responded by encouraging Germany to develop a friendly influence within its borders. The Turks believed that the Germans would provide protection from the Great Powers, would allow the Turkish Empire to continue its domestic reforms, and would eventually become strong enough to survive without the protection of the Great Powers [30: 132-133].

With Britain's decision to limit further financial intervention in the Turkish Empire, the Germans realized that they could facilitate the development of German interests in the Turkish Empire by means of trade, commerce, and peaceful penetration [30: 127]. In 1888, the Deutsche Bank made the first major loan to the Turkish Empire. For Germany, the loan was intended to facilitate the entry of the Deutsche Bank into the financial sphere of the Turkish Empire, and it would also enable the Deutsche Bank to quickly rise to a position comparable to, if not higher than, that of the Imperial Ottoman Banks [30: 144]. According to statistics, from 1888 to 1913, German investments in the Turkish Empire rose from £166,000 to £20,653,000. These investments were in the fields of railways, ports and public works construction, banking, industry and mining. Among them, Germany had the greatest impact in railways and ports construction as well as banking investments [35: 64-66].

As German-Turkish economic ties grew closer, so did German political influence in the Turkish Empire. In 1895, when British Prime Minister Salisbury proposed to the Kaiser a division of the Turkish Empire to solve the Eastern Question, the Kaiser was not only lukewarm, but also believed that it would be better to support the Turkish Empire and to allow the Sultan to carry out appropriate reforms for the protection of his Christian subjects [17: 109-111]. At this time, Germany had already shown gestures of developing friendly German-Turkish relations. In 1898, against the backdrop of the Turkish Empire's oppressive policy against the Armenians and the support of numerous anti-Turkish Empire organizations by the major European Great Powers, especially Britain and France, the Kaiser became the first head of a European Great Power to visit the Turkish Empire and convey a message of

support for the Sultan's regime. Bernhard von Bülow recalled that during his visit to the Turkish Empire, the Kaiser assured His Majesty the Sultan and the 300 million Muslims who regarded him as their caliph that he would always be their friend, no matter where on earth they lived [3: 254]. Behind the improved relations between the two countries was Germany's intention to expand its influence in the Turkish Empire.

Furthermore, the relationship between Germany and Ottoman Turkey was further brought closer as there was a good basis for cooperation in the military field. On the one hand, Germany sent several military delegations to the Turkish Empire to help modernize the latter's military system. Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz and Otto Liman von Sanders were the most prominent members of these military missions. For example, during his tenure in the Turkish Empire, Goltz served as the army inspector of the Turkish Empire and an instructor at the war college, established friendships with some of the key leaders of the Turkish Empire, trained a large number of officers, and established a formal staff college, and so on. Goltz had expressed his satisfaction with his work by stating that after the reforms of the German officers, the Turkish army was ready to help the Germans in the war and to ensure the survival of their country in the war, if not its revival [30: 191-192]. On the other hand, the process of reforming the Turkish Empire according to the German military model created a new class of officers, who had close relations with German instructors. Many Turkish officers believed in the German military doctrine and intended to rely on the German military model and power to reconstruct their own weak military system, and their admiration for Germany led to the latter's great influence in the political and military spheres of the empire, Germany gradually assumed the role of protectorate of the Turkish Empire [30: 197-199].

Thus, as German-Turkish relations continued to develop and intensify since the Congress of Berlin, Germany realized that the Turkish Empire was its necessary ally, and that without this collaborator Germany could neither compete with Britain and Russia in the Orient and Asia, nor obtain the benefits it desired [33: 127]. Therefore, when the Macedonian fiscal reform was put on

the agenda, Germany was caught in a dilemma of choosing between Austria-Hungary and the Turkish Empire. In order to avoid being “abandonment” by the ally, Germany mostly chose to support Austro-Hungarian claims. At the same time, Germany hoped to gradually change the passive situation of being “entrapment” by Austria-Hungary in the Near East, and to enhance its own voice in the alliance, so as to become a party guiding Austria-Hungary’s policy making. In view of maintaining the deepening German-Turkish relations, Germany put many obstacles in the way of Macedonian financial reform in order to protect the interests of the Turkish Empire and minimize the latter’s losses.

In order to better balance the Austro-Turkish relations and to increase its voice in the Macedonian reforms, Germany changed its negative attitude during the reorganization of the gendarmerie and became “more proactive on the issue of fiscal reform. The main reasons were as follows:

First, Germany believed that the Imperial Ottoman Bank, an institution run by the French, was in competition with German enterprises in the Turkish Empire, and thus did not agree to give the Imperial Ottoman Bank any more fiscal control. Second, Germany feared that the Austro-Russian dominated model of international control had the potential to be extended to other provinces of the Turkish Empire, jeopardizing the latter’s national interests and increasing the intensity of the latter’s resistance to the reform process [19: 207-214]. Third, if fiscal reform under international control were inevitable, Germany needed to take its place in the soon-to-be-established finance committee and try its best to play a leading role in the fiscal reform. Mühlberg, Undersecretary of State at the German Foreign Office, claimed: “If international fiscal control is to be exercised over Macedonia, we need to consider the possibility of extending such control over the entire Turkish Empire, and Germany must insist on a seat on the finance committee.” [19: 216] Fourth, the contradictions among the Great Powers provided the conditions for Germany to undermine the Concert of Europe. First of all, Britain opposed the Austro-Russian fiscal reform program, arguing that it could result in local Macedonian authorities with insufficient funds for regional

development and the payment of salaries to public officials [7: 76]. In addition, Britain stated that the Austro-Russian program gave too much power to the representatives of Austria-Hungary, Russia and the Turkish Empire in charge of fiscal reform, who were not financial experts, and therefore Britain would not support the Austro-Russian resolution until it fully understood the program [10: 16]. Secondly, Italy was dissatisfied with the fact that Austria-Hungary and Russia had not consulted it before proposing the reform, and believed that the two countries had acted without taking Italy's interests into account, and therefore wanted the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin to appoint representatives to supervise the fiscal reform together with the Austro-Hungarian and Russian representatives, with the intention of transforming Macedonian reforms from Austro-Russian domination to co-management by the Great Powers [19: 206]. Italy had proposed to Britain that the situation in Macedonia was critical and that it was important for the Western Great Powers to agree on concerted action [28: 79]. Again, France hoped to use its opposition to the Austro-Russian reform program as an opportunity to mediate Anglo-Russian relations. On the one hand, on the grounds of maintaining friendly French-Turkish economic relations, France indicated that it did not want the Imperial Ottoman Bank to be responsible for Macedonian fiscal reform in order to negate the Austro-Russian reform program [19: 224]. On the other hand, France reminded Russia that the continuation of the present predicament in Macedonia would only be conducive to the expansion of Austro-Hungarian influence [28: 79]. Germany and Austria-Hungary might take advantage of Russian internal and external difficulties to seek hegemony in the Balkans, and that Austria-Hungary, as an instrument of German policy, pursued policies in the Balkans and the Near East that were strictly Germanic in nature. Therefore, France had every reason to frustrate the Austro-German policy in certain ways [28: 79-80]. Lastly, Russia, distracted by the Russo-Japanese War, intended to shift her diplomatic center of gravity to the Near East in order to get out of the dilemma in the Far East. Russia had declared that it would "never abandon the Christians of Macedonia" [19: 234]. Russia was prepared to formulate a financial commission consisting of Austro-Russian

representatives and one financial expert from each of the other Great Powers as the basis of a new program of fiscal reform, tired of having Austria-Hungary play a dominant role in the Balkans and its own subordinate role [19: 248].

In view of the change in Germany's attitude, Austria-Hungary also began to consider adjusting its strategy towards the Turkish Empire. Austria-Hungary believed that although it had maintained good diplomatic relations with Britain and France for a long time and both of them were potential allies that it could strive for, the Franco-Russian alliance had already been concluded, and France was pushing for a *détente* between Britain and Russia, while Austria-Hungary, Russia and Italy had irreconcilable contradictions in the Balkans, as well as Britain was trying to internationalize the Macedonian reforms and break Austro-Hungarian dominance in the matter of the reforms, these factors forced Austria-Hungary to pay attention to the reality that its ally Germany's intention to develop German-Turkish friendship. Goluchowski, in criticizing the British proposal to internationalize the reforms, stated that the British move would only anger the Turkish Empire and increase its resistance, as well as encourage a desire for rebellion in the Macedonian region, which would ultimately hamper the reform program being implemented by Austria-Hungary and Russia [28: 87-88]. France also analyzed Germany's behavior and stated that Germany's reluctant support for the Austro-Russian reform program was obviously to win the favor of the Turkish Empire, yet its behavior was in no way driven by sympathy for the Turkish Empire, but was merely a manifestation of its desire to maximize its own gains [28: 153-154].

Despite Austria-Hungary's fear of being "abandonment" by Germany, with the development of the Concert of Europe towards pressuring the Turkish Empire to accept the fiscal reform program, Austria-Hungary and Russia took the opportunity to propose a new reform program. Fearing "abandonment" by its ally, Germany, after weighing the importance of the Dual Alliance against German-Turkish interests, chose to support Austria-Hungary rather than the Turkish Empire. Germany indicated to the Turkish Empire that some of the initial clauses involving infringement of the latter's sovereignty had been eliminated under its influence, that it was certain that the other Great Powers

would not agree to abandon the proposal for the establishment of a finance committee, and that if the Turkish Empire rejected the proposal, the Great Powers would probably make further demands [19: 258]. In the end, the Turkish Empire, which had lost the support of Germany, was forced to accept the Austro-Russian fiscal reform program under the coercive measures of naval demonstrations taken by the Great Powers.

In short, the change in Germany's attitude before and after the fiscal reform showed that the deepening reform had jeopardized its interests in the Turkish Empire. Germany changed its policy of staying out of the gendarmerie reform and became actively involved in the process of fiscal reform in order to increase its own voice in the process, to improve its unfavorable situation in the alliance, and to reshape its dominance in the alliance politics. In fact, Germany was facing with the dilemma of choosing between Austria-Hungary, Italy and the Turkish Empire. In the alliance game, Austria-Hungary had a stronger sense of autonomy, and Germany more often took a supportive position, which made its diplomatic flexibility greatly reduced. The fact that Italy coordinated its actions more often with Britain, France, and Russia than with Germany and Austria-Hungary further aggravated Germany's worries. The Italian prime minister told Bülow that Italy would be spiritually loyal to the Triple Alliance, rejecting French advice to leave, but would not strain Franco-Italian relations, which were not in Italy's interests [4: 57]. In addition, although the Turkish Empire, as a potential ally, was more inclined to take the initiative to cooperate with Germany, Germany more often than not took the option in favor of Austria-Hungary due to the great divergence in German-Turkish strategic interests. In the adversary game, the conclusion of the Franco-Russian alliance, the Anglo-French Entente, and the diplomatic isolation in the First Moroccan Crisis reinforced Germany's concern about its own environment. Bülow had analyzed that the world was currently filled with hostility, hatred, and envy toward Germany: Britain's dislike and envy of Germany had not been eliminated; France's vengeful ideology was still alive and hoped to revive its European hegemony; Russia's anti-German tendency toward democratic revolution was high; Italy would always be an uncertainty;

and Austria-Hungary would be forced to deal with its own internal problems for a long time to come [4: 218-219]. This unfavorable international environment forced Germany to weigh the “abandonment” of the ally against the growing interests of Germany and the Turkish Empire. In the end, the fear of “abandonment” led Germany to choose the Dual Alliance.

### **Being “Abandonment” beyond being “Entrapment”: the Austro-Russian Dispute over Judicial Reform and Germany’s Choice**

The Macedonian judicial system was characterized by its imperfections, lack of clarity of competences and internal contradictions [40: 301]. In view of this, the growing dissatisfaction of the Christian population with the existing system, the judicial reform was put on the agenda.

The judicial reform program was first proposed by Russia for the following reasons: First, after the Russo-Japanese War, in order to get rid of the domestic pressures brought about by the loss of the wars in the Far East, the Near East and the Balkans again became the center of Russian intrigues and aspirations [4: 163]. Second, the replacement of the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Constantinople with someone less knowledgeable of Macedonian affairs facilitated Russia’s acquisition of dominance over the judicial reform. Third, Russia hoped to use the opportunity of judicial reform to improve relations with Britain and France, to gain financial support from both countries, and to alleviate the domestic political crisis. Fourth, the Russian officers in charge of reorganizing the Macedonian gendarmerie repeatedly reported that the Turkish imperial judiciary had released the guilty and convicted the innocent people, which aroused the discontent of the Christian population [19: 403]. In order to continue its role as protector of Christians, Russia needed to take the initiative in judicial reform.

Austria-Hungary changed its positive attitude towards the Macedonian reforms and reacted to the Russian proposal in a lukewarm manner. The main reasons for this were: First, despite a certain degree of Austro-Russian cooperation over the reorganization of the gendarmerie and fiscal reforms, there were irreconcilable structural contradictions between the interests of

the two countries in the Balkans. Second, the anti-Austrian government established after the Serbian coup d'état of 1903 intensified the Austro-Serbian rivalry in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which reduced Macedonia's position in Austria-Hungary's foreign strategic deployment. Third, Austria-Hungary wanted to make some concessions to the Turkish Empire on the issue of judicial reform in order to seek more rights and interests in the future, which included the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, Germany's attitude on Macedonian reforms influenced the adjustment of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy. Germany expressed a desire to leave more initiative in the matter of judicial reform in the hands of the Turkish government, to give the Sultan sufficient time, and not to put further pressure on him [19: 404]. Finally, the drawbacks of the dual rule model of Austria-Hungary became increasingly apparent as an important factor limiting its foreign policy, which in turn weakened its position on judicial reform [8]. It can be said that the establishment of the dualism became a permanent obstacle to systematic change in the Empire [1: 12].

At a time when Austro-Russian cooperation on judicial reform was being severely tested, Germany was also caught in a dilemma. With a constant sense of encirclement and concern for competition with its neighbors, Germany's national policy was to reduce the pressure on its eastern borders so that it would be free to deal with its other European neighbours [14: 4]. In 1887, Bismarck, in order to please Russia and continue to play the role of Austro-Russian coordinator, replaced the unsustainable Three Emperors' League with the German-Russian Reinsurance Treaty. However, the Reinsurance Treaty aroused the suspicion of Austria-Hungary, was detrimental to the stability of the Triple Alliance and did not necessarily lead to a permanent understanding between Germany and Russia [37: 73]. As a result, the treaty was soon abrogated in the context of Bismarck's fall from power in 1890 and Germany's implementation of a new diplomatic line. An atmosphere of mistrust developed between Germany and Russia, and it was from this moment that Russia began to turn to France [11: 177].

The establishment of the Franco-Russian alliance was the inevitable result



of the suspicion and dissatisfaction of the two countries towards Germany and their feeling of isolation [36: 66]. It was also the product of Germany's miscalculation of the international situation and its diplomatic choices. These reasons made Germany realize that it might be caught in the dilemma of fighting on two fronts in the future. In order to change this unfavorable situation and consolidate the existing alliances, Germany took advantage of the contradictions between Britain and Russia, Japan and Russia to dismantle the Franco-Russian alliance and strive for the return of Russia to Germany's diplomatic orbit. Bülow had told the Kaiser that Germany had already torn up the German-Russian treaty, and that the Russian government, based on the sentiments of the domestic population, was not prepared, let alone to formally sever the alliance with France in order to ally with Germany again. It was impossible to put back together what Germany had broken in 1890, but it was feasible for Germany to achieve, through a steady and skillful policy, the goal of promoting peace and increasing friendship between the two countries [4: 59].

In the first place, Germany strongly encouraged Russian action in Asia and prevented Austria-Hungary from taking any action in Europe that would provoke Russia [11: 192]. On the one hand, Germany told Russia that it would not allow anyone to hinder the latter's operations and would be responsible for securing Russia's back in Europe from attack [11: 203-204]. On the other hand, Germany hoped that the intensifying contradictions between Japan and Russia would lead to the fulfillment of Russia's demands. Bülow told the Japanese Ambassador to Germany that he would not intervene in the Russo-Japanese conflict, and that there was not a single agreement between Germany and Russia concerning East Asia. If a conflict broke out between Japan and Russia, Germany would remain strictly neutral. Indeed, Germany would not undermine Japanese self-confidence and initiative because a war in the Far East would eliminate the potential danger of war for Germany in Europe [3: 618]. Germany's move was intended to free Japan to compete with Russia and to help Russia when it was deep in the quagmire of the Far East.

Secondly, Germany was proactive in negotiating cooperation with Russia with the intention of playing the role of a counterweight. Bülow suggested to

the Kaiser that it would be a great mistake to allow Russia to bring Germany to the forefront as a buffer against Japan and even Britain in German-Russian relations, and that Germany should be careful to avoid such a danger [3: 62]. The Treaty of Björkö, signed secretly in July 1905 after a long exchange between the Kaiser and the Tsar, was one of the manifestations of the restoration of the traditional friendship between the two countries. In the Kaiser's view, the establishment of a Triple Alliance between Germany, France, and Russia, even if it did not directly create a favorable military advantage for Russia in East Asia, would serve as a check on Japan's behavior [18: 438]. Although the treaty was later abrogated due to excessive opposition from both Germany and Russia and Russia's reduced dependence on Germany after the end of the Russo-Japanese War, Germany and Russia did not cease their attempts to establish friendly relations. While the negotiations for a German-Russian friendly understanding were deepening, Austro-Russian contradictions on the issue of judicial reform were becoming increasingly apparent, and Germany was once again left with a dilemma of choice.

In January 1907, Austria-Hungary and Russia sent a joint draft of judicial reform to the Turkish government, which, in order to avoid further erosion of its sovereignty, draw up a plan for the improvement of the Macedonian judicial system [19: 409]. Austria-Hungary welcomed the move as a favorable opportunity for the Turkish Empire to exercise its autonomy. In May 1907, Austria-Hungary told Russia that it hoped that Russia, France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary would support the reform program of the Turkish Empire, and that under the influence of the Concert of Europe, even Britain and Italy which were in disagreement, might reach a consensus with Austria-Hungary [40: 51-52]. Russia, while recognizing the great success of the cooperation between the two countries in improving the situation of Macedonian Christians, was skeptical about the possibility of winning the support of the more conflicted France and Germany. Russia believed that delaying the judicial reform might provoke discontent among the Macedonian Christians, and supported the British proposal for implementation of the reform program immediately [40: 55-57]. In June, Russia presented Austria-Hungary with a

final plan for the reorganization of the judicial system. The plan recognized the differences between the Muslim and Christian judicial systems; completely rejected Austro-Hungarian attempts at Austro-Russian domination of the judicial reform, accepting instead the co-management of the Great Powers; and strengthened the role of the finance committee in the issue of judicial reform. Austria-Hungary modified the Russian plan by suggesting that the Turkish government should be given full authority to choose the officials responsible for the judicial reform, and that these officials, once appointed, should be absolutely protected by law against dismissal by the Turkish government [40: 59-61]. In essence, Austria-Hungary's move was aimed at winning the favor of the Turkish Empire and improving relations between the two countries in order to pave the way for its eventual annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Russia insisted on its position in the original draft reform and said that if Austria-Hungary did not compromise on the issue, it would be left to the ambassadors of the Great Powers in Constantinople to decide [40: 61-63]. In addition, Russia actively sought the support of Britain. Britain, for its part, based on its global strategic interests, realized that the rising Germany was attempting to disrupt the existing power structure, and that the European balance of power, as well as the broader geographic balance of the British Empire, had been upset by the emergence of Germany, which had become a competitor rather than an ally both in Europe and abroad. The desire to restore the balance of power necessitated adjustments in the empire's foreign relations that would reduce its vulnerability [14: 9]. The internal and external difficulties of Russia after the Russo-Japanese War rendered her incapable of posing a substantial threat to British interests in the Far East and Central Asia, and with the mediation of France, Britain gradually improved her strategic concern for Russia. Thus, in the face of Russia's overtures on the issue of judicial reform, Britain indicated that it would stand firmly by Russia and seek to develop the relationship between the two countries in the direction of concluding the entente [19: 419; 29: 235]. Germany lamented the rapid development of Anglo-Russian relations, "no trace of Russian distrust of

Britain could be found.” [19: 413] At this point, the Austro-Russian domination of Macedonian reforms since the Vienna Scheme was broken, the co-management of the Great Powers became a *fait accompli*. The mutual political trust that Britain and Russia accumulated during the process of Macedonian reforms contributed to the two countries eventually conclude an agreement to adjust their colonial differences.

In view of the friendly cooperation between Britain, France, Russia and Italy on the question of Macedonian juridical reform, and in order to win Russia’s support on the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to restore the prestige of the Empire, to free itself as far as possible from its dependence on Germany, and to carry out a more autonomous foreign policy, Austria-Hungary decided to support the Anglo-Russian reform proposal. Austria-Hungary stated to Germany that if the Turkish Empire rejected the Anglo-Russian proposal, it would have the most serious consequences and jeopardize its sovereignty, it would be wise to accept the Anglo-Russian proposal in a friendly manner. [19: 450] Germany expressed its deep surprise at the change in the attitude of Austria-Hungary. Germany stated that the Turkish government would accept the Anglo-Russian program only under extreme pressure, otherwise it would be resisted by the Turkish side. In order to support Austria-Hungary, Germany had already supported all the measures taken by Austria-Hungary and Russia, but Austria-Hungary in return supported the Anglo-Russian proposal, which was bound to put Germany in a dilemma and jeopardize German-Turkish relations [19: 451-453]. In addition, the analysis of the situation by the German ambassador in Constantinople made Germany realize the severity of the circumstances in which it found itself. According to the ambassador, judicial reform had become the touchstone in the current relations among the Great Powers: Britain had acquired a leadership role that was not its own; France had clearly expressed its support for Britain so as not to jeopardize the Entente with Britain, even if the British proposals were directly contrary to French interests; Italy was reluctant to leave the ranks of the British followers and repeatedly emphasized that it would do everything in its power to persuade Austria-Hungary and

Russia to accept the British proposals; Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, as a novice, was entirely at the mercy of the experienced Russian Ambassador in the preparation of the reform program, and to some extent voluntarily yielded to Russian influence; since the signing of the Anglo-Russian Entente, the British influence on Russian foreign policy decisions had been very great, and the Anglo-Russian position on the question of the judicial reform tended to be the same. In view of this, the relations between the ambassadors of Constantinople created a situation of confrontation between Germany and the other five countries, and Germany was in the awkward position of insisting on the Concert of Europe or maintaining friendly relations with the Turkish Empire [19: 453-455].

In the end, Germany agreed to make concessions on the issue of judicial reform, said that it would act in coordination with the other Great Powers and recommended that the Turkish Empire should accept a joint note from the Great Powers. In 1908, Austria-Hungary announced the implementation of the Novibazar Railway Project, which temporarily eased Germany's dilemma on the issue of judicial reform. However, with another international crisis caused by the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, Germany was not only "entrapment" in the new crisis, but also became more determined than ever to support its ally.

All in all, since the establishment of the Franco-Russian alliance, Germany realized it was in a dilemma of fighting on two fronts. In order to get out of such an unfavorable situation, Germany took advantage of the conflicts between Britain and Russia, Japan and Russia, and made many attempts to restore the traditional friendship between Germany and Russia. In the Macedonian reforms, Germany had always supported the principle of the Austro-Russian-led reforms, with the intention of maintaining the stability of the Austro-Russian Entente concluded in 1897 and re-establishing the Three Emperors' League. However, with the intensification of the Austro-Russian differences over judicial reform, the synergy of Britain, France, Russia and Italy, and Austria-Hungary's desire to promote an Eastern policy that would lead Germany rather than be led by Germany, Germany, deeply isolated, fell

into the fear of being “abandonment” and “entrapment” by the ally [34: 174]. On the one hand, Germany needed to restrain Austria-Hungary from pursuing an offensive foreign policy in the Balkans, to avoid the risk of the Near East problem, and to avoid being “entrapment” by the ally in the dilemma of bad relations with Russia. On the other hand, the negotiation of understanding between Germany and Russia had become extremely difficult because of the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Russia. If Germany chose to remain loyal to its ally, it would not only mean that its efforts to improve German-Russian relations would be in vain, but also contribute to the consolidation of the relations between Britain, France, and Russia, thus worsening the environment around it. If Germany chose to continue her attempts to restore friendly relations with Russia, it would provoke resentment from Austria-Hungary and jeopardize its loyalty to the alliance, even worse, Austria-Hungary might choose to “abandon” Germany and cooperate with Britain and France. Therefore, with the Triple Entente a fait accompli, Germany could only choose to continue to support Austria-Hungary’s Balkan policy in order to avoid isolation, and this firm support for the alliance in turn reinforced Austria-Hungary’s pursuit of a more offensive foreign policy.

Looking at the Macedonian reforms process, it can be found that the dilemma that existed at the beginning of the establishment of the Dual Alliance became more and more obvious at this time. Austria-Hungary used the Dual Alliance to pursue a proactive foreign policy in the Balkans with the intention of acquiring more imperial rights and interests. In the alliance game with Austria-Hungary and the adversary game with Britain, France and Russia, Germany, out of loyalty to the alliance obligations, avoided being “abandonment” by the ally as well as self-isolation of the dilemma, and was constantly “entrapment” in the Near East affairs by the ally. When faced with Austro-Italian, Austro-Turkish, and Austro-Russian differences, Germany could only choose to side with Austria-Hungary. Germany’s increasing dependence on the alliance and the clarity of its strategic interests led to a gradual change in the relationship of priority within the alliance. Austria-Hungary, rather than Germany, slowly became the guiding force in the direction of alliance policy.

## **Conclusion**

In order to ensure the maximization of national interests since the reunification, to continue to isolate France, and to control the Austro-Russian relations, Germany chose to conclude an alliance with Austria-Hungary, with which it had a strong geopolitical, ideological, and racial connection. Austria-Hungary, in turn, wanted to serve to limit rival Russia through its alliance with Germany. There was a marked difference in the dependence of Germany and Austria-Hungary on the alliance, as Germany had always regarded the alliance as the cornerstone of its foreign policy, while Austria-Hungary had greater diplomatic autonomy. After the establishment of the alliance, both Germany and Austria-Hungary were troubled by the idea of being “abandonment” and “entrapment”. Germany tried hard to mediate the Austro-Russian conflict and avoid getting involved in the conflict between the two countries. Austria-Hungary did not want the alliance to become a tool for Germany to pursue its interests against France and to limit its diplomatic autonomy.

With the establishment of the Franco-Russian Alliance, in order to avoid a two-front war, Germany intended to restore the friendship between Germany and Russia, encourage the reconciliation between Austria-Hungary and Russia, and revive the Three Emperors’ League. With the strong support of Germany, the Austro-Russian Agreement was signed in 1897, in which the two countries agreed to maintain the balance of power in the Balkans with the aim of achieving peace in the region [32: 164]. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the internationalization of the Macedonian issue led to a complex diplomatic game of Macedonian reforms among the Great Powers. Austria-Hungary and Russia initially dominated the Macedonian reforms, and Germany was pleased with this situation. However, as the reform process progressed, Austro-Italian differences over the reform of the gendarmerie, Austro-Turkish rivalries over fiscal reform, and Austro-Russian contradictions over judicial reform emerged, and Germany was gradually caught in a dilemma of choice. Austria-Hungary and Italy were both allies of Germany, and no matter which side it favored, it would be hated by the other side. Although Germany appeased the two allies with a compromise plan,

considering Italy's close relationship with Britain and France, Germany preferred Austria-Hungary in its future choices. Germany had great political, economic, and military influence in the Turkish Empire, and the latter had always sought friendly relations with Germany. However, on the issue of Macedonian reforms, despite the fact that Germany had repeatedly put-up obstacles to block the reform process and safeguarded the interests of the Turkish Empire, when it was necessary to choose between Austria-Hungary and the Turkish Empire, Germany mostly chose to stand on the side of the ally. Germany had been trying to restore friendly relations with Russia, but as the Austro-Russian conflict in the Balkans intensified, Germany finally gave up the idea of German-Russian *détente* in favor of Austria-Hungary.

In the course of Macedonian reforms, the primary and secondary relations between Germany and Austria-Hungary in the alliance changed significantly. As Austria-Hungary sought to eliminate the dependence of the Dual Monarchy on Germany, to maintain Austria-Hungary at the forefront of the European powers, and to vigorously pursue an expansionary Near Eastern policy, Germany was already deeply "entrapment". Germany's fear of being "abandonment" by the ally was evident in the Bosnian Crisis of 1908-1909. Bülow stated that there was no need for Germany to kick Austria-Hungary directly into the hostile camp, and that Germany would always stay together on the issue of Bosnia according to the treaty of alliance, and that Germany would never abandon Austria-Hungary [4: 332]. After the change in German-Austrian relations, the Austro-Hungarian press excitedly stated that, after a long period of neglect, Austria-Hungary had now risen to its feet in Europe and had become a real Great Power with its own foreign policy in the future, that the European Great Powers would have to consult it on international issues [21: 303]. Austrian Chancellor Bienerth also stated that Austria-Hungary had for a long time irrefutably accepted the assertion that the Dual Monarchy existed only because of a European necessity, but after the Bosnian Crisis this contemptuous notion of Austria-Hungary should be discarded and the Dual Monarchy was once again full of vitality [21: 309]. After the Bosnian Crisis, Britain, France, and Russia further strengthened their relations with each



other; Italy was further alienated from the Triple Alliance and became closely involved with the Triple Entente; the completely broken Austro-Russian relations could not be repaired; and Germany's choice to staunchly support Austria-Hungary during the Crisis completely deprived it of the opportunity to restore friendly relations with Russia. While the rivalry among the Great Powers before the First World War became increasingly intense, Germany, which had dominated the Dual Alliance, eventually became the strongest supporter of the alliance.

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**ԵՐԿՅԱԿ ԴԱՇԻՆՔԸ. ԵՐԿԸՆՏՐԱՆՔԻ ՏԵՍՈՒԹՅԱՆ  
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ՀԵՆՎՈՂ ՔՆՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ**

**Գառ Ջիանժի**

**Հիմնաբառեր.** Գլեն Ս. Հ. Սնայդեր, Կոնֆեդերացիայի երկընտրանք, Գերմանա-ավստրիական դաշինք, Մակեդոնական բարեփոխում

**Ամփոփում**

Գերմանա-ավստրիական դաշինքը Գերմանիայի ակտիվ դիվանագիտության կարևոր ձեռքբերումն էր, որը վերացրեց Ավստրո-Հունգարիայի՝ թշնամական երկրի վերածվելու ռիսկը: Գերմանիան վերականգնեց ավստրո-ոուսական հարաբերությունների զսպումը և Ավստրիայի և Ռուսաստանի միջև միջնորդության կարգավիճակը: Այս դաշինքի շնորհիվ Ավստրո-Հունգարիան բարելավեց իր դիրքերը որպես համեմատաբար փխրուն մեծ ուժ Եվրոպայում, սակայն Գերմանիայի հետ իր արտաքին քաղաքականության վրա որոշ սահմանափակումներ դնելու գնով: Գերմանա-ավստրիական դաշինքը հենց սկզբից գտնվում էր ծանր կացության մեջ: Գերմանիան եւ Ավստրիան անհանգստացած էին «մեկուսացված» լինելու հեռանկարի պատճառով: Կար նաև թշնամական երկրների հետ մերձեցման և հակամարտության վտանգ: Դաշինքի ներսում հարաբերությունները բարելավելու նպատակով Ավստրո-Հունգարիան օգտվում էր մակեդոնական բարեփոխումներից՝ ակտիվ արտաքին քաղաքականություն որդեգրելու համար: Դաշինքի կայունությունը պահպանելու համար Գերմանիան աջակցում էր Ավստրո-Հունգարիայի վարած քաղաքականությանը Մակեդոնիայի բարեփոխումների գործընթացում բազմաթիվ վճռորոշ պահերին՝ դաշնակիցների հանդեպ իր հավատարմությունը ցույց տալու համար: Գերմանիայի եւ Ավստրիայի միջև դաշինքի առաջնային և երկրորդական հարաբերությունները աստիճանաբար փոխվեցին, ինչն էլ իր հերթին դրդեց Ավստրո-Հունգարիային ավելի ակտիվ և ինքնավստահ արտաքին քաղաքականություն վարել:

# AN INQUIRY INTO CHINA AND RUSSIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FROM GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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## **Abstract**

Since the 1990s, China and Russia have come to forge strategic partnership which is seen as the counterbalance to the U.S. hegemony. Yet, the solidarity between the two largest powers in Eurasia is under the question since the Ukraine crisis has not only caused the unexpected impacts on the global energy and food security, but also the geopolitical dimensions now and beyond. What can Russia expect from China during the ongoing conflict, and how can China offer to Russia's urgent needs as it has fought alone against the U.S.-led allies? Regarding the question if Beijing has tried "to keep its distance" from Moscow now or afterward, this study asserts that there is a profound historical logic for China-Russia relationship to reach where it is today. As the largest neighbours to each other and the high-level strategic partnership, China and Russia have strong internal dynamics to facilitate the comprehensive strategic partnership in rebuilding a multilateral world order. Beijing is aware of the consequences if China losses Russia as the most effective strategic partner given the prospect of the Global NATO pivoting to

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the Asia-pacific to merge with the U.S.-Japan axis, AUKUS and the Quad security dialogue. Thus, the rationale behind the policy-making elites in Beijing remains that China-Russia relations is a strategic choice that Beijing has made to realize national rejuvenation and support world multi-polarity based on international laws and the authoritative role of the U.N.

**Key words:** China, Russia, *Realpolitik*, Ukraine crisis, sanctions, NATO

There have been meaningful discussions on the bilateral relations between China and Russia since the end of the Cold War. Due to the sea-changes domestically and globally, Beijing and Moscow made the efforts to urge a transition from constructive partnership to strategic one during the 1990s that eventually paved the way for the treaty of good-neighbourhood, friendship and cooperation between the two sides in 2001. The treaty is legally accredited as the cornerstone of the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination between China and Russia while their relations are literally based on “non-alliance and non-targeting of any third party” [23].

Internationally, the most vital reason for China and Russia to have upgraded their strategic partnership is the U.S. prior unilateral world order. Since the end of the Cold War, Washington has acted as the saviour of the world now and in the future [22]. Their arrogant rhetoric and awkward deeds have revealed a prejudice that there are serious obstacles to form a conventional alliance between China and Russia given the divergent views on the bilateral relations in modern history and the growing asymmetric demographic and economic factors that had caused growing anxiety in Moscow. [4] All the factors would undercut mutual trust between Beijing and Moscow and then hinder the shared visions of the world order [14: 25].

In fact, although China and Russia don't declare a formal alliance, the U.S. and its allies are aware of the two Eurasian powers becoming the strongest competitors and the systemic rivals in the region and the world at large. In 2020, a group of leading experts from the Atlantic Community issued a report asserting that the rise of China and its deepening solidarity with Russia had contributed to the global equilibrium in favour of their geopolitical

designs and acts in Europe and Asia [33: 35, 39]. Due to this, the U.S.-led allies has listed China and Russia as the pacing challenge to the rules-based and shared-values world order.

Over the past decades, China and Russia have extended their supports to mutual core interests including the legitimate claims and security concerns. To further cement the geostrategic partnership in terms of *Realpolitik*, started in 2013, China has called for “standing back-to-back” relations with Russia to jointly address common challenges and looming risks in Eurasia and beyond. In term of geography, Eurasia refers to the “Heartland” of the world stretching from the Volga to the Yangtze and from the Himalayas to the Arctic Ocean, which is primarily under the jurisdiction of Russia and China [13: 127,179]. Yet, geopolitically, the United States has coveted Eurasia as the key to its global hegemony now and in the future. During the 1990s, Kissinger and Brzezinski alike asserted that “no matter which power, either of Europe or Asia, dominates Eurasia, that danger eventually leads the U.S. to see it as a structural threat to its primacy in the world” [9: 813; 2: 27]. Yet, the United States has often ignored the legitimate rights and security concerns of China, Russia and Iran, etc.

The Ukraine crisis broke out as a turning point in the post-Cold War era. Since the launch of “Special Military Operation” in February 2022, the United States led NATO allies to respond with a proxy war with Russia. As Condoleezza Rice and Robert Gates acknowledged, Washington’s efforts to arm and train the Ukrainian military and to integrate it into NATO systems “aimed to sustain the most intense and costly military entanglement in the global competition between the United States and Russia” [7]. Yet, China opines that the Ukraine issue was rooted in the NATO eastward expansions over the past decade and its refusal to consider the legitimate security concerns of Russia in Europe. [15] At the SCO Summit in 2022, Xi and Putin then reaffirmed the mutual support to a multipolar world order in the post-crisis era [34]. Geopolitically, now China and Russia can’t afford to lose each other as the strategic partner. In response to the growing solidarity between China and Russia, the NATO-EU has seen Russia as the severe threat to Euro-Atlantic security and China as



systemic competitor globally [24]. Such mental rigidity of NATO was reiterated at the Vilnius Summit. [16]

This study focuses on the central question why China and Russia must maintain ever high-level strategic coordination during the Ukraine crisis and afterwards. Some scholars and politicians in the West and China have questioned China's neutrality stance on the Ukraine issue. They argue that China's trade-off between standing with Russia and being isolated by Western block does not worth it. But the fact is that U.S. hostility towards China is obviously beyond the Ukraine issue. Historically, the row between the ruling power and the rising power is a fundamentally structural issue of the international system. Now that the U.S.-led allies have seen China as an assertive power to challenge their interests, security and values, China and Russia have no options but work together as a *de facto* ally to assure each security interests and sustain domestic development.

To make a sound argument on the issues as follows, the article uses the classic realism to analyse the rationales behind the policy-making elite of China. Three sub-hypotheses will be dissected like: first, what are the key factors that have driven China and Russia to forge strategic partnership since the 1990s? Second, why has China adopted the principled neutrality during the Ukraine conflict at the risk of being sanctioned by the U.S.-led allies? Third, how will China and Russia practically and effectively push forward a multiple and balanced world order in the post-Ukraine crisis era? What follows is the normative analysis of the questions aforementioned.

### ***Strategic solidarity to counter the U.S. hegemony***

With the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1992, neither Russia nor China wanted to challenge the United States since they were more concerned with their own domestic issues, e.g., social-economic inertia and science-technology stagnation. [4] For China lagged far behind international development trend due to its radical policies, it was more anxious to join the world economy as it was urged by the reform-minded leadership. Russia which was led by the liberal-minded elite, was deeply involved in the internal

transition in the post-Soviet era. This scenario required both Beijing and Moscow to look to the West for the necessary help in political restructure and economic reform. However, for the sake of its primacy, the U.S. was reluctant to take either Russia or China as equal partner then. As national strategy report argued that the U.S. should make all practical efforts to prevent the emergence of peer competitors [22]. Such narrow-mindedness only aroused Washington to pursue the goals that were predestined to antagonizing, offending and alienating Russia, China and other countries globally.

For sure, some scholars urged the U.S. policy-making elites to make practical efforts to restore a new kind of the concert of major powers involving Russia and China, like the Concert of Europe after 1815 [6]. Yet, the paradox of America's hegemony remains that, on the one hand, Washington opined that it would outmatch Russia and China as it did to the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. On the other hand, the U.S. and its allies were aware that Russia and China had been not only the nuclear powers but also possessed the resources to re-emerge as the great powers sooner or later even though they are not as affluent as the G-7 members in terms of the total GDP per capita. First, Russia has been one of the leading powers of Europe and the world as well. And China has also been in the seminal transition from a developing country to a major player since the 1980s. Second, both countries have shared the visions for regaining national glory and greatness respectively in a multipolar world order. In a long run, it requires the U.S. and its allies to integrate China and Russia into the post-Cold War world order other than rejecting their legitimate claims and security concerns. [10:117]

Moreover, the U.S. was obsessed with the primacy that has made the post-Soviet Russia frustrated to find allies or partners in Eurasia and beyond. Similarly, the U.S. has steadily trespassed the "One-China policy" which is defined by Beijing as the red-line of the bilateral relations. Under such circumstances, China and Russia have limited options to expect developing a sound relationship with the United States. Thus, they started the strategic dialogues throughout the 1990s and came to finalize the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in 2019. [5] It is the strategic choice

made by the two countries in light of mutual geostrategic concerns and reciprocal needs, e.g., political consultation, diplomatic coordination and strategic-economic cooperation [25]. There are the logics that China-Russia strategic partnership has been integral in the global systematic transition. Now the question arises on how China and Russia would continue maintaining high-level strategic synergy while legitimating respective security claims internationally?

With the start of the war in Ukraine, China sincerely appealed to holding peace talks between Russia and Ukraine which has been backed up the U.S.-led allies. Since then, Chinese President Xi and top foreign policy advisor Wang Yi have reiterated that all states' legitimate security concerns must be taken into consideration and the peace talks are urged between Russia and Ukraine, and also dialogue between the U.S.-led NATO and Russia [26]. What China has expected is obvious to restore an effective and concerted European security framework that involves Russia as a major player as usual. According to *realpolitik*, it is extremely fatal for a nation to act in the total want of consideration of what others will naturally hope or fear [13: 587]. Now it seems that the U.S.-led NATO has deliberately moved away from this maxim.

While China declines taking sides in the Ukraine crisis, it has commended Russia for its efforts to resolve the crisis through political dialogues. In addition, amid the vexing international issues in 2022, bilateral trade between China and Russia has grown steadily and covered major areas from investment, the use of local currency settlement to key highway-railway hubs put in operation. In a long run, what China and Russia need to be aware during the uncertain era is how to earnestly thwart external attempts to drive a wedge between the two great powers in Eurasia. [5]

### ***The rationales behind China's position on the Ukrainian crisis***

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched military operation against Ukraine. The U.S and its allies around the world immediately denounced it as a flagrant invasion of a sovereign state. They have also criticized China for refraining from condemning Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine while

adhering to neutrality or independent stance on the Ukraine crisis. For example, the U.S. and its EU allies raised the question that the Presidents of China and Russia held an in-depth talk on February 4, followed by a joint statement that reaffirms “mutual support for the protection of their core interests, state sovereignty and territorial integrity” [27]. In addition, Chinese supports to the security concerns of Russia were well-written between the lines of the text, like “new inter-State relations between Russia and China are superior to political and military alliances of the Cold War era”. [15]

Under such circumstances, more outrageous rebukes against China came as a few media and politicians in the West have taken the joint statement to verify China’s making a secret deal with Russia during the Summit in Beijing, just three weeks prior to the start of the war in Ukraine. Despite China’s tireless efforts to explain the key points of the joint statement, it works little if not nothing in alleviating the public opinions and suspicions on the role of China in Russia’s war against Ukraine. One of the EU leaders Ursula von de Leyen criticized China not to use the term of “invasion of Ukraine” other than “SMO” in state media and formal talks. The U.S. and EU have gone further to warn China “abstaining from aiding Russia’s war effort in any way” [28]. Otherwise, Beijing would be responsible for the consequences that followed.

However, the U.S. has since assembled more than 50 states around the world to launch a hybrid war against Russia with a geopolitical pulse to deprive Russia of the status as a major power of the world. [16] The people of the world were even astonished by Lloyd Austin’s rhetoric of weakening of Russia through “helping the Ukrainian soldiers to fight until the last one.” [8] If this happened, it would allow the U.S.-led allies to resolve the “Russian question” for good and then overwhelm China. [20] Yet, China’s stance on the Ukraine issue has affected its already strained ties with the Western bloc, most of which are also China’s major trading partners, let alone Ukraine having been a major trade partner and a participant of the BRI in Eastern Europe. Then during his talks with the EU leaders, Chinese leader revealed that “China finds it deeply regrettable that the situation in Ukraine has come to where it is today” [29].

Despite this, China has been firm and transparent in justifying its

judgements of the Ukraine issue in light of the merits of the issue itself. As in foreign affairs where sovereign states have reacted with each other in terms of *Realpolitik*, China has argued that a country can't build its own security at the cost of others. Given this, China has taken "principled" neutral policy and urged Russia and Ukraine to have direct dialogue to end the war while not labelling Russia as the aggressor in the ongoing war. [5] In fact, China is relieved to see that India, Indonesia and Turkey along with many states of the Global South have not acted in line with the West at the United Nations to condemn Russia on the Ukraine issue [19].

For sure, negative opinions on Russia's war in Ukraine have existed in China. Yet, the mainstream line goes that even if Russia suffers temporary failure in the battle fields, it would be able to re-emerge as a formidable military power sooner or later due to its possession of remarkable natural resources and human wisdom, let alone its overall military and industrial capacities [31]. In a long term, Europe has no other options but to work with a strong Russia if it claims for its strategic autonomy. As history displays that Russia's might has dwarfed those of the rest of Europe combined. [8] Although the regimes in Moscow changed, the rhythm has remained extraordinarily consistent in seeking for the national greatness [11:50]. Due to this, the rationales behind China's stance on the Ukraine issue can be understood as follows.

First, like many other countries in the world, China's national power is shaped by its geography as it constitutes the permanent part of the tenet of geopolitics. With 14 neighbouring countries surrounding it, the policy-making elites in Beijing decided to adopt the "NEWS" doctrine in 2014 which refers to China's neighbouring areas such as north, east, west & south, and is based on a strong strategic partnership with Russia. In doing so, China is able to make its North borders secure, while concentrating its military forces on countering the threats over the Taiwan Straits and in the South China Sea. Otherwise, China will be alone to deal with the challenges from the AUKUS, the Quad security dialogue and a looming NATO establishment in Asia, all of which aim to forge the geopolitical containment of the rise of China. As a

result, without a strong Russia as the strategic partner, it is only a matter of time that the U.S. and its allies will take on China mercilessly. [20]

Second, since the U.S.-led allies have applied the containment and deterrence doctrines in a much more irrational way than they did to the rivals during the Cold War, China and Russia are aware of the necessity of maintaining a geostrategic environment in a more effective and practical way, such as a range of cooperation from energy, agriculture to strategic synergies between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative, which is supposed to link the Asian-Pacific with the Eurasian region. On the one hand, China requires long-term and steady flows of energy from Russia to sustain its rapid economic growth. On the other hand, Russia needs to receive substantial amount of foreign direct investment and digital technologies to upgrade its traditional industries and civil infrastructure—remoulding. Except China, other states of the Global South like India, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are also the partners.

Taking a look at what happened in 2022 and then look into what is going on in 2023, it is worth to note that China-Russia strategic partnership has withstood the test of the Ukraine issue. As Xi talked to Medvedev in December 2022 that China and Russia had not only consolidated political trust but also extended mutual support for the long-term and stable bilateral relations [26]. With regards to the post-crisis Ukraine and many other issues concerned, China vows to hold the stance that the international community and the major powers particularly should urge the peace talks between Russia and Ukraine while making room for political settlement, rather than adding fuel to the fire for the geopolitical end.

### ***China and Russia relations in the post-war era***

Now the quest ahead remains how China and Russia will continue strengthening the strategic partnership to pursue common interests and shared vision on the world order in the post-Ukraine war era? Like any decisive war in history, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine is no exception since it is one of the most costly and cruel test of national endurance, social cohesion and

overall strength involving the calibre of leadership on each sides—Russia and Ukraine which was backed up by the NATO. From now on to one decade or more, Russia will be in a *de facto* state of war with the U.S.-led NATO and their partners around the world. Although the U.S. and its allies have failed to achieve two of three objectives: to ruin Russia economically and kick Russia out of the rank of global power, the third objective—to turn Ukraine into a devastated NATO bastion—is being realized according to the strategy outlined by the Anglo-American axis. [19] As a result, Russia has to take on all the geopolitical pressure from the West since the bilateral relations may take years or decade to be normal as before [17]. It is not what Russia really wants, but the NATO has defined its goal as a strategic defeat of Russia which was incredible during the Cold War. [8]

In January 2023, the EU and the NATO Joint Declaration reaffirmed Russia an immediate threat to the world order while China was seen as a growing assertive power in an era of growing strategic competition. China is aware of the extreme uncertainties ahead as President Xi spoke to the senior cadres of China that the peaceful rise of China is not granted freely. Given the challenges and risks ahead more vexing and uncertain than the previous decades, he has called for more strenuous efforts to realize the rise of China and set “the next decade (2035) as crucial for national rejuvenation” [32]. It requires that China and Russia will continue strengthening the strategic cooperation in the areas from energy, food to new-technological applications to large-scale transfer. They have geared for the joint strategic research involving satellite navigation and joint construction of outer space monitoring stations that will serve compatibility and interoperability of the global satellite navigation systems of each country. Moreover, to respond increased pressure from the United States and its allies aiming to decouple China and exclude Russia from the international system, Beijing and Moscow have vowed to develop domestic replacements for certain imported high-technological items to meet their urgent needs through applying the dual-use technologies [1].

According to what have been discussed previously, China and Russia need to be more earnest and trustful to tackle their differences on several issues.

First, China is a rising power to shrug off its inferior status for only 73 years, while Russia has been a major power in Europe for 400 years and lost its superpower status only 30 years ago. As a result, China is much keen on how to advance its social-economic progresses and technological innovation while Russia is more anxious to restore its old-time prestige in history. Due to this, they have different priorities yet not opposite in respective foreign policy-makings.

Second, China is now climbing up to the second largest economy in the world in terms of GDP in total. Yet, it has still lagged behind some advanced and sophisticated military technologies and capacities. Given this, China sees science and technology cooperation with Russia as the next focus of the bilateral relations as the latter has possessed unique advantages in primary research and original innovation. But some uncertainties exist among Russian elite regarding how to identify the role of Russia in terms of strategic partnership with China as it has nearly 10 times of the total GDP and population than those of Russia. Both sides are aware of the remaining asymmetric economic and demographic factors that will cause anxiety and misperception of each other in the future if they could not handle wisely and efficiently. [34]

Despite all this, the geopolitical scenario requires China and Russia to sustain ever close solidarity in the post-war era: from consolidating political trust and extending mutual efforts. In doing so, the two countries need to consult with each other through what Stephen Walt said of “geopolitics of empathy” to enhance respective core interests and common security concerns. [18] For example, China supports Russia’s Greater Eurasian partnership since it has a prior role in Central Asia in terms of geography to cooperate security-wise with the CSTO and economically with the EAEU. In addition, Russia has been a major power with much valuable experiences in dealing with the EU and the U.S.-led NATO since the end of the WWII. [8] Due to this, China, as a rising power, has to drive on a bumped road for at least one or two decades.



In history and in reality, today alliances can be formal or informal collective security arrangements between two or more sovereign states [3: 174]. This remark helps to identify what China and Russia refer to the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era. The bilateral relations are literally based on the principles of non-alliance, non-confrontation and the non-targeting of any third party. Yet, in a show of strategic dimensions, China and Russia revealed in 2022 that their relations are more flexible than conventional alliances of the Cold War era. In terms of *Realpolitik*, friendship between them has no limits; accordingly, there are also no “forbidden” areas of practical cooperation [33: 27].

As for the role of the SCO where China clearly holds the leading position in terms of economic and financial clouts, Russia has been the co-founder and bi-driving force behind it. Thus, China and Russia can exert mutual leverage in Central Asia in the SCO as multilateral mechanism. As the most ascendant of all emerging countries in the world and in Eurasia particularly, China and Russia do hold the key to the success of constructing the economic corridor in the region and a multipolar world order based on international laws and the central role of the United Nations. Accordingly, it requires the policy-making elites in Beijing and Moscow to agree tacitly to start from what they are able to do and on what has been agreed. [15]

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**ՀԵՏԱԶՈՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ՉԻՆ-ՌՈՒՍԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԳՈՐԾԱԿՑՈՒԹՅԱՆ  
ՎԵՐԱԲԵՐՅԱԼ ԱՇԽԱՐՀԱՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆ ՀԵՌԱՆԿԱՐԻ  
ՏԵՍԱՆԿՅՈՒՆԻՑ**

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Համփրի Ռասսել**

**Հիմնաբառեր.** Չինաստան, Ռուսաստան, *Realpolitik*, ուկրաինական ճգնաժամ, պատժամիջոցներ, ՆԱՏՕ

**Ամփոփում**

1990-ական թվականներից սկսած Չինաստանի և Ռուսաստանի միջև սկսվեց ռազմավարական համագործակցության գործընթացը, որի նպատակը ԱՄՆ-ի հեգեմոնիայի դեմ հակակշռի ստեղծումն էր: Երկու խոշորագույն եվրասիական ուժերի համերաշխությունը որոշակիորեն սասանվեց պայմանավորված ուկրաինական ճգնաժամի պատճառով, քանի որ այն հանգեցրեց անկանխատեսելի հետևանքների: Ինչ կարող էր ակնկալել Ռուսաստանը Չինաստանից ԱՄՆ-ի գլխավորությամբ գործող դաշինքի դեմ միայնակ պայքարելու պայմաններում:

Չինաստանը և Ռուսաստանը հակված են խորացնելու իրենց ռազմավարական համագործակցությունը բազմակողմ աշխարհակարգ ստեղծելու նպատակով: Պեկինը գիտակցում է, որ իր առավել էֆեկտիվ ռազմավարական դաշնակից Ռուսաստանին կորցնելու դեպքում կկանգնի ՆԱՏՕ-ի դեպի ասիական-խաղաղօվկիանոսյան տարածաշրջան առաջխաղացման վտանգի առջև: Այդ պատճառով չին-ռուսական ռազմավարական հարաբերություններում Չինաստանը պետք է ընտրություն կատարի և աջակցի բազմաբևեռ աշխարհի ստեղծման հեռանկարին:

## **"REGIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND ARMENIA: SECURITY SHIFTS" (INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE)**

On November 28, 2018, the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (NAS RA), with the support of the All-Armenian Foundation for Armenian Studies, organized the international conference entitled "*Regional Transformations and Armenia: Security Shifts*." The event brought together notable researchers from various countries for the first time, including Dareskedar Taye from the Institute of Foreign Affairs in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Hamsa Al-Kasir from Damascus, a PhD candidate at Yerevan State University. Additionally, the conference featured a prominent American expert in international relations and security, Dr. Bahgat Gawadat from the Near East and South Asia Center for Strategic Studies in Washington, D.C.

After the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, a new security environment has continued to evolve in the South Caucasus. The ongoing transformation processes and extra-regional military-political developments in the three countries of the region have introduced numerous security challenges, prompting the formation of new military-political alliances and geopolitical realignments. On June 15, 2021, Azerbaijan and Turkey formalized their strategic partnership by signing the Shushi Declaration, which includes a collective security component. In response, the Republic of Armenia has sought to counterbalance the Azerbaijani-Turkish alliance through military agreements with France and India. Meanwhile, Georgia, despite its aspirations for Western integration, has entered a new phase of relations with Russia—an outcome previously considered highly improbable following the 2008 Russo-Georgian War.

The security shifts in the South Caucasus are also unfolding in the broader context of major infrastructure projects, such as the North-South Corridor, which aims to connect the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, and the Middle Corridor, which seeks to link Central Asia to Europe. These initiatives have significant implications for regional security and economic dynamics. The

international conference organized by the Institute of Oriental Studies, NAS RA provided a critical platform for discussing the ongoing regional transformations, development trends, and key foreign policy challenges facing Armenia. The conference held both scientific and practical significance, bringing together diplomatic and academic circles to engage in comprehensive analyses of these pressing issues.

The conference focused on the evolving security challenges in the South Caucasus and their impact on Armenia's foreign policy. The reports presented at the event offered a wide range of perspectives, covering multi-sectorial and multi-vector topics. Notably, participants explored the Ethiopian and Moroccan perspectives on African security issues and the Syrian viewpoint on the ongoing crisis in Syria. Additionally, the complex dynamics of bilateral relations involving Azerbaijan were examined, including Russia-Azerbaijan, France-Azerbaijan, Pakistan-Azerbaijan, and Saudi Arabia-Azerbaijan ties.

Further discussions delved into the regional interests of key players such as Israel, Turkey, Iran, and the Gulf Arab states. The conference also addressed the strategic interests of global powers, including China, the United States, India, Japan, and the Russian Federation, within the broader context of regional transformations and the emerging trends toward a new multipolar world order. The comprehensive nature of these discussions underscored the multifaceted and interconnected nature of contemporary security challenges in the South Caucasus.

In his opening remarks, Grigor Vardanyan, Senior Researcher of the Department of Arab Countries at the Institute of Oriental Studies emphasized the importance of the conference, both from scientific and political perspectives. He underscored the relevance of the topics discussed in addressing contemporary regional transformations and security challenges.

The conference's inaugural session featured welcoming speeches by several distinguished figures, including Yuri Suvaryan, Academician-Secretary of the Department of Armenian Studies and Social Sciences of the NAS RA, Gohar Iskandaryan, Acting Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the NAS RA, and Ruben Melkonyan, Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at

Yerevan State University. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Syrian Arab Republic to Armenia, Nora Arisyan, also delivered remarks. Additionally, a message from Arshak Poladyan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to Morocco, Tunisia, and Mauritania, was read during the opening session.

The speakers collectively highlighted the importance of the conference as a platform for discussing critical issues pertaining to Armenia's foreign policy in light of ongoing regional transformations. They noted the value of engaging both diplomatic and academic circles in addressing these challenges through scientific discourse.

Gohar Iskandaryan, Acting director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, elaborated on the Institute's role in shaping national security discussions and its efforts to foster international collaboration. She expressed gratitude to Grigor Vardanyan and Araks Pashayan, Head of the International Relations Department of the Institute, for their contributions to the successful organization of the conference.

The conference attracted a wide range of participants, including researchers, postgraduate students from the Institute of Oriental Studies, as well as representatives from other academic and educational institutions such as Yerevan State University, the Vazgen Sargsyan Military Academy of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, the Institute of History of the NAS RA, the National Defense Academy of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, and the Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University.

The primary objective of the conference was to examine the evolving geopolitical landscape of the South Caucasus in the context of dynamic shifts in the interests of regional and extra-regional power centers. The discussions aimed to analyze the implications of these transformations for Armenia's security and foreign policy.

The conference also explored broader geopolitical and geo-economic developments in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Far East, assessing their impact on the South Caucasus region. Particular attention was given to the aftermath of the 2020 Artsakh War, which has fundamentally altered the

security environment in the region. The internal political dynamics of the three South Caucasus countries, changes in the regional balance of power, and intensified international competition were identified as key factors reshaping security considerations.

Additionally, the conference examined strategic projects such as the North-South Corridor, which connects the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, and the Middle Corridor, linking Central Asia to Europe. These initiatives were discussed in the context of their potential to redefine regional connectivity and security alignments.

The participants regarded the conference as a success, noting the depth of discussions and the active engagement of attendees. The event provided a valuable forum for the exchange of ideas and perspectives on the evolving security challenges facing Armenia and the broader South Caucasus region.

In conclusion, the "Regional Transformations and Armenia: Security Shifts" conference succeeded in facilitating meaningful discussions on Armenia's foreign policy and security challenges in a rapidly changing regional environment. It highlighted the necessity of continued academic research and international collaboration in addressing the shifting geopolitical realities of the South Caucasus. The conference not only deepened the understanding of regional security issues but also underscored Armenia's critical role in navigating these transformations to ensure stability and national security in an increasingly complex world.

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Հայերեն եվ ռուսերեն այբուբենների լատինատառ գրադարձումներ  
 THE LATIN TRANSLITERATION OF THE ARMENIAN AND RUSSIAN  
 ALPHABETS

Հայերեն	Armenian Transliteration	Русский	Russian Transliteration
Ա ա	A	А а	A
Բ բ	B	Б б	B
Գ գ	G	В в	V
Դ դ	D	Г г	G
Ե ե	E	Д д	D
Զ զ	Z	Е е	E
Է է	Ē	Ё ё	Yo
Ը ը	ə	Ж ж	Ž
Թ թ	t'	З з	Z
Ժ ժ	Ž	И и	I
Ի ի	I	Й й	Y
Լ լ	L	К к	K
Խ խ	Kh	Л л	L
Ս Տ	c'	М м	M
Կ կ	K	Н н	N
Հ հ	H	О о	O
Ձ ձ	Dz	П п	P
Ղ ղ	Ĝ	Р р	R
Ճ ճ	č'	С с	S
Մ մ	M	Т т	T
Յ չ	Y	У у	U
Ն ն	N	Ф ф	F
Շ շ	Š	Х х	Kh
Ո ո	Vo	Ц ц	Ts
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Պ պ	P	Ш ш	Š

Ջ ջ	J	Щ щ	Šč
Ռ ռ	ř	Ъ	“
Ս ս	S	Ы	Y
Վ վ	V	Ь	‘
Տ տ	T	Э э	Ē
Ր ր	R	Ю ю	Yu
Ց ց	Ts	Я я	Ya
Ու ու	U		
Փ փ	p’		
Ք ք	k’		
Լ	Ev		
Օ օ	O		
Ֆ ֆ	F		

**ԲԱՆԲԵՐ ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԻՆՍՏԻՏՈՒՏԻ**  
**(պարբերականը մինչև 2021թ. կոչվում էր «ՄԵՐՁԱՎՈՐ ԵՎ ՄԻՋԻՆ**  
**ԱՐԵՎԵԼՔԻ ԵՐԿՐՆԵՐ ԵՎ ԺՈՂՈՎՈՒՐԴՆԵՐ») ՄԱՏԵՆԱՇԱՐ**  
**BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES (Until 2021 the**  
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