New Sheet, Old Ink

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> *If ever again, gentlemen, you are put in a position where you yourselves can draft a constitution, you will know how to go about it and how the task is really accomplished only through the changing of the actual relation of forces and not through the filling up of a sheet of paper.*
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> *Ferdinand Lassalle. On the Essence of Constitutions. 1862*

After a five-year dog-and-pony show, the Turkish satrap's administration has published the draft of a new Turkish constitution for the 'Republic of Armenia'. It contains nothing groundbreaking. The collaborationists, as promised, are removing the Declaration of Independence from the Preamble; redefining the bearer of the 'statehood' of geographical Armenia as a territorial community from which they exclude not only the Armenian ethnos and the global Armenian world but also a considerable number of Armenian citizens; erasing the

description of the state coat of arms, which depicts Mount Ararat; deleting the reference to independent Armenia as the fulfilment of the sacred vow of our freedom-loving ancestors, and so on.

Behind all the legal terminology and euphemisms of the new edition lies nothing more than the five Ds from the checklist of the Turkish-subject administration that we published earlier: de-sovereignisation, de-sacralisation, de-ideologisation, de-Armenisation, and de-Spyurkisation. Armenia is officially renouncing its claims and rights to independence of its own, its sacred symbols, its obligation to defend its own civilisational heritage and values, and, finally, its sole natural ally — the Armenian world. All of this was announced long ago by the Turkish satrap Pashinyan himself, who considers the Third Republic's Declaration of Independence an 'anti-state' document. He was equally candid ahead of the 'elections' of 2026, which effectively became a plebiscite on granting a mandate for the colonisation of Armenia.

The new 'Constitution' is a mere formality, intended to give legal shape to the Turkish colonisation of what remains of Armenian territory. It hardly matters any longer whether Pashinyan manages to secure six votes for holding a referendum from among the 'opposition'. **First**, many of the provisions of the new text are already being implemented in practice and have been codified in legislation. **Second**, a referendum is merely a means of shifting responsibility for the liquidation of the remnants of Armenian statehood onto the Armenian people. With the Constitutional Court under his control, Pashinyan has other avenues for adopting the Turkish constitution. **Third**, by participating in the 'elections' and accepting parliamentary mandates, the 'opposition' has backed itself into a corner, effectively recognising the legitimacy of the existing rules of the game.

The minority parties will now either suffer further discredit if defectors are found in their ranks — whether motivated by financial considerations or having succumbed to blackmail — or expose themselves as 'unconstructive' by refusing to leave the choice to the people and thereby forcing a snap election. This is all the more likely given that the supposedly detested satrap promises, in exchange for approval of the referendum, not to stand for prime minister again. The outcome is, in either case, one and the same: the Young Janissaries will complete the clearing-out of formal opponents who have now become superfluous. Parliamentary privileges will pass to a more grateful 'opposition' in the shape of pseudo-liberal and 'pro-

Western' forces, whose differences with the Turkish administration are purely aesthetic.

Finally, any discussion of the Constitution and its true value, purpose, and functions is out of place in the realities of a feudal-clan system. Every amendment to the Constitution during the Third Republic merely formalised a new balance of forces and a status quo favourable to the ruling faction of the day. From the ban on dual citizenship under Ter-Petrosyan, through the strengthening of presidential powers under Kocharyan, to the 'transition to parliamentarism' under Serzh Sargsyan, the Constitution remained merely an instrument for holding on to power, rather than the foundation of a genuine social contract between the authorities and the people. It is precisely this historical pattern that the Turkish satrap Pashinyan exploits today, while omitting to mention that his own draft is a continuation of the same tradition. Each of the four opposed the changes introduced by his opponents, only to reap their benefits once in power and subsequently introduce changes of their own. The Turkish satrap, for instance, would have been in a difficult position had the constitution drafted to mini-sultan Aliyev's dictation fallen into Kocharyan's hands when the latter commanded a parliamentary majority. Unsurprisingly, the reverse holds true as well.

In a feudal-clan system, the Constitution cannot, by definition, serve as a source of law. One may therefore rewrite the Constitution as many times as one likes; if it actually worked, it would not be rewritten by every man who comes to the helm of the Third Republic. The Turkish satrap does not need it even as an instrument: all he needs is to prove to the metropole that he can still be of use to it. He knows perfectly well that, having served his purpose, he too will be discarded — just as the 'opposition' was before him — and that the Porte will appoint a younger, quicker-witted Young Janissary in his place.

Even without a new constitution, Pashinyan is rewriting Armenian history: dismantling the display boards of photographs of Armenian heroes in schools; casting doubt on the Armenian Genocide and the sacredness of the Armenian Church; removing Ararat from the state insignia, and reducing the inhabitants of Armenia to the contents of their stomachs. Without a new constitution, he has already restricted the voting rights of Armenian citizens residing abroad, thereby securing the level of support he needs at the 'referendum'. The procedure for ethnic Armenians to obtain Armenian citizenship has likewise already been made more onerous, even as the proposed constitutional text retains the article providing for a 'simplified procedure'. Even the provision concerning the 'special status' of the Armenian Church, which

the Turkish collaborationists are persecuting, has been retained — with a ‘collision’ over the secular character of the state built into the text for future exploitation.

Indeed, with the new text it will become *somewhat easier* for the satrap to shut down political parties and mass media; deprive undesirable Armenians — whether they come from the communities or from geographical Armenia — of their political rights and liberty; dismiss disobedient judges; and alter the symbols of the state.

Yet, in focusing on procedural detail, we seem to forget that we are dealing with a creature and an administration that surrendered Artsakh with impunity and were twice re-elected thereafter.

It is foolish to assume that they will now stumble over six recalcitrant ‘oppositionists’ or some sudden wave of public discontent. With their blessing, hundreds of monuments of our heritage have already been destroyed in Artsakh; yet we spend our time discussing precisely how they will remove Ararat from the coat of arms, depose a particular Catholicos, and reduce Armenians to second-class residents in their own homeland. Is it worth recalling that the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire was preceded by the adoption of an ‘Armenian National Constitution’ by the Ottoman authorities? In the end, the promise *‘to strengthen the might of the state’* in earlier versions of the Constitution did nothing to prevent successive administrations from steadily weakening that very state to its present condition — one in which this wording can now be removed with impunity.

The real tragedy is that we have reached a point where such a text can be published and debated, having lost sight of what Armenian statehood was born out of: the collective feat of the Armenian world that enabled Armenia to hold out in the early 1990s and earn the right and privilege of becoming a state for all Armenians. Today’s ‘Real Armenia’ is not a state; it is not merely a state that does not belong to all Armenians — it is a state that does not belong to Armenians at all. It belongs to those who, at some arbitrary moment in history, happened to find themselves within what remains of its territory. All of this is evidence of the profound immunodeficiency of the Armenian ethnos, incapable of recognising alien and hostile elements.

The Turkish colonisation will therefore continue at any cost, and fresh bribes in the form of pension increases, medical insurance, tax deductions, or yet another round of ‘elections’ are the least — and cheapest — of what the Turkish world and its viceroys are prepared to deploy

in pursuit of the final closure of the Armenian Question and the liquidation of the Armenian factor. Forming a healthy alternative and mounting resistance on occupied territory and the infected soil of the Third Republic is impossible by definition.

One hundred and sixty years after the speech cited at the outset, the German jurist and classic of constitutional thought Ferdinand Lassalle would describe Armenia's constitution today as consisting of Pashinyan, Aliyev, Khachatur Sukiasyan (*Grzo*), corruption, the pseudo-opposition, online casinos, and moral and physical degeneration. These are the forces that will continue to be inscribed, time and again, on a fresh sheet of paper in the form of eloquent formulations — even as the previous sheet burns to ashes and disappears from our memory.

Only a true national aristocracy is capable of breathing new life into the Armenian world, establishing new, Armenian-centred principles of Armenian existence, and defending them against narrow internal interests and external upheavals for generations to come.

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