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**«ԱՐՄԵՆԻԱ» ՊԱՐԲԵՐԱԿԱՆԸ  
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## THE PERIODICAL “ARMENIA” AT THE SOURCES OF LIBERATION IDEOLOGY

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The Armenian national liberation struggle experienced an unprecedented rise at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the national, economic, political, international, cultural, ideological impulses that generated a demand for changes. A great number of facts resulted in the rise of the national liberation struggle and undoubtedly prove that it was a direct consequence of the Turkish government's inhumane policy.

After the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Berlin Congress, the revolutionary groups “Sev Khach” (“The Black Cross”), “Pashtpan Hayrenyats” (“The Motherland's Defender”), “Poqr Haik Organization” (“Armenia Minor Organization”) came into the arena one after the other in Western Armenia. Later the political parties came to birth successively: the Armenakan Party in 1885, the Hnchakyan Party in 1887 and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in 1890. All of them had as a main goal the liberation of Western Armenia and long-suffering Armenian people from the Turkish repressive dictatorship. The differences of their programs on liberation of Armenia were only in the means of achieving the freedom of the Armenian people

The firstborn of the Armenian political press, the newspaper “Armenia”, spread the ideology of the Armenakan Party - the first and the only party established in Western Armenia which became its speaker. Though the history of the newspaper has not become the object of a separate investigation, many scholars, while touching upon the perturbing period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century's last quarter, spoke also about “Armenia”. The distinguished historians J.Kirakosyan, A.Hambaryan, H.Ghazaryan, H.Vardanyan, S.Poghosyan, L. Aloyan, Diaspora Armenian prominent public figures such as A. Darbinyan, V. Ghazaryan, H. Ouzounyan, G. Aharonyan, A. Yekaryan, M. Tamatyan, Mik. Natanyan were among them. The memoirs of Ruben (Ruben Ter-Minasyan), Koms (Vahan Papazyan), H. Gangrouni, R. Khan-Azat, A. Kitour, S. Sapah-Gyuelyan, P. Terlemezyan, H. Poghosyan, H. Yeramyan and others, as well as the works of K. Sarafyan, N. Akishyan, P. Tepoyan, M. Chizmechyan, S. Izmirlyan, A. Tiran and others positively contributed to the investigation.

The publication of “Armenia” started on August 1, 1885 (old calendar: July 20) in Marseille. Before that, on June 18 (old calendar: June 6) the newspaper's editorial staff published the “Circular” on the future goals and direction of the newspaper. The “Circular” stressed that the newspaper through its publications about world-spread Armenians would be a connecting link “leading to union and solidarity”. Taking the opportunity of the French Republic's free and humane laws, it would “unite their forces

in favor of pro-Armenian activities". For that purpose the newspaper's free access to all Armenian-populated countries would be provided. It was announced that "Armenia" would be an ardent defender of freedom, equality and fraternity. It was not a religious newspaper. "Armenia" condemned the anti-humane policy of the Turkish government.

During 38 years of its existence "Armenia" had not changed and allways remained the staunch advocate and defender of the Armenian Cause. The newspaper had different permanent headlines and sections. **Editorials**, written, with few exceptions, by M.Portougalyan, that were analyses of the social, political and international situation. The section **Letters** was the coziest, most favorite and painful part of the newspaper in which the peasants from Western Armenia and other places populated by the Armenians informed about their pain, daily injustices, sufferings and pariah status. The section **The Armenian Cause and the European countries' attitude towards it** pictured with true colors all developments in the diplomatic and other spheres referring to the Armenian question, every time thrilled with the pro-Armenian statements of some politicians, or disappointed by the other failures. The section **The Colonies** was the newspaper's main target in terms of the material expectations to help the Armenians; various appeals were addressed not to forget the Motherland and help it in everything. In the section **Press** various issues concerning the Armenians were discussed often through disputes with the other periodicals, references to them and reprinting from them. The **Philological** section was quite rich in not voluminous fiction works and, especially, review-analyses. There were announcements of different kinds and contents in the section **The Advertisements**.

Soon "Armenia" was banned first in Turkey and then in the Russian Empire because of its liberal ideas and uncovered presentation of desire for realization of the Armenian people's aspirations to live in conditions of human dignity. It was a great surprise to the incurable romantic M. Portougalyan, who was not familiar in full with the real colors of the world.

Avoiding many obstacles, "Armenia" was publishing until 1923. The newspaper had the difficult and complex path. There was always lack of financial resources. The members of the editorial staff worked as the correspondents, proofreaders and typesetters at the same time, they did not even avoid to do different kinds of physical work. As for salary, it was as much as they could barely survive. There were cases that even without receiving their small salaries they continued to work because they were devotees of their work and as the guideline and purpose of life had the consciousness of making a contribution to their Motherland. M.Portougalyan's former pupil, the founder and leader of the Armenakan Party M. Avetisyan-Terlemezyan had an active role in the organization of the works for the newspaper's publication.

"Armenia" provided a great service. The newspaper openly reflected the way of thinking of the social and political circles of the mentioned time, their desire to see the freedom of the Motherland, their efforts in searching for the strategic means and finding answers to them. It should be noted that some researchers, who have tried to

overshadow the important place of "Armenia" in the history of Armenian political thought and represented as though the newspaper's goal was to achieve the liberation of the Armenian people exclusively by the help of European diplomacy, are not right. In fact, M. Portougalyan was not against the European help but he called to rely first of all on the Armenian people's own forces. This shows that the newspaper's history has not been objectively elucidated and its role in the period of the rise of the Armenian liberation movement of the 80s of the XIX century has not been properly evaluated. It was a period when the new phase of struggle started in the life of the Armenian people, completely new situations were created, the world was bifurcated for redivision. "Armenia" was one of the important and guiding phenomena that left an indelible mark on Armenian political thought. The newspaper remained like that during the all years of its existence.