

THE PRESS OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE SURVIVORS IN SYRIA (1916-1919)

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The year 2005 marks the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Even so, and despite the numerous monographs and articles that have been published on the topic, there remain many aspects of this calamity that need to be probed. The current article attempts to address one such gap, that of the Armenian press published by survivors in Syria between 1916 and 1919. The newspapers and one periodical covered herein both reflect the prevalent mood among the living as well as constitute an invaluable primary source regarding the process and consequences of the genocide. For the purposes of this article, the term "Syria" denotes the territory of the modern state of Syria.

Syria constituted the largest dumping ground and killing field of Ottoman Armenian citizenry during the World War I genocide.¹ A substantial segment lost its life in the wilderness as a result of outright massacre, while others perished due to exposure, starvation, and diseases. Not all died, however, as many women and children were sold to or abducted by Muslims, becoming their concubines, wives, servants, and/or adopted children.² Other Armenian deportees dragged out a bare existence in towns, villages, and elsewhere. In Damascus, for example, some found employment in government factories, while others engaged in small businesses and the trades in the marketplaces of Hamidiye, Marji, Saman Pazar, and Bab Tuma.³ There were also among the exiles clergymen of all ranks who were banished from their seats in Constantinople, Sis, Jerusalem, and elsewhere.⁴ For our purposes, the significance of such a presence in Damascus rests in the fact that someone associated with the Armenian Apostolic Church dared against all odds to publish a clandestine periodical.

At the end of the war in late 1918 many survivors from the Syrian hinterland converged on the larger cities, particularly Aleppo, hoping to regain their homes expeditiously. During the interlude between liberation and repatriation (1918-1919) the refugees tried to create a semblance of

normalcy in public life by forming voluntary associations, organizing cultural programs, and publishing newspapers, among other activities.⁵ This study explores the press.

PRE-GENOCIDE ARMENIAN NEWSPAPERS IN ALEPPO

The first paper that had anything to do with Armenians in Syria was the *Al-Furat* (The Euphrates), the official journal of the government of the Ottoman province of Aleppo. First published in 1867, *Al-Furat* appeared in Turkish, Arabic and, for a while, Armeno-Turkish (i.e., Turkish in Armenian characters), issuing communiqués, decrees, etc.⁶ However, the earliest exclusively Syrian Armenian periodical, which existed roughly from 1911 to 1914, was *Aghbiur*, literally meaning “water spring” or “source,” but actually so called after Serob Vardanian, the late nineteenth-century Armenian revolutionary figure in the Ottoman Empire, known by his *nom de guerre* of Serob Aghbiur. *Aghbiur* was *khmoratip*, that is, handwritten and copied through a process utilizing dough. It constituted the organ of the synonymous youth organization of Aleppo, an affiliate of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-*Dashnaktsutiun*.⁷ The next known Armenian paper in Syria, which falls within the scope of this study, is *Pordzank*.

In 1983, while on a research trip to Europe, I discovered the *Pordzank* collection at the library of the Mekhitarist Order in Vienna. At the time, the collection was squeezed in with other periodicals in a common hardbound volume (which was/is the case with some other collections); only a careful perusal of many such bound volumes (which do not necessarily contain an index of their contents) made such an unearthing possible. This periodical is not mentioned either by Artashes Ter Khachaturian in his article on the Armenian language press in Syria or in the two major recent bibliographies (by Babloyan and Kirakosyan) pertaining to the Armenian press.⁸ One reason may be because *Pordzank* was handwritten and not printed. As for the other papers covered in this study, with the exception of *Gaghtakan* and *Pitsak*, about which I have gleaned information from one study and two memoirs, I found their partial collections at the same Mekhitarist Library in Vienna and/or at the Violette Jebajian (Chepechian) Library in Aleppo (copies of extant issues from the latter place were sent to me). Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to view issues of *Hay Dzayn* and/or *Taragir* deposited at the Armenian General Benevolent Union

(AGBU) Noubar Library in Paris and at the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran) in Erevan. Therefore, my conclusions concerning the latter two newspapers are based only on issues found in Vienna and Aleppo. A review of issues found in Paris and Erevan in the future may reinforce, refute, and/or expand on some of my current conclusions.

PORDZANK

The Armenian word "*pordzank*" means, among other things, "misfortune," "peril," "disaster" or "tribulation," all fittingly describing the tragedy that befell the Armenian people during World War I. The newspaper's title, *Pordzank*, and other editorial and commercial information occupy the upper third of the front page; information in French covers the upper left quarter of this section. Here we learn that "the editorship is found in Sham [i.e. Damascus - V.Sh.], in the barrack of Hamidiye." The annual subscription rates were 30 *kurush* (piasters) for the Ottoman Empire, \$2.00 for the United States of America, and 10 French francs for everywhere else.⁹ These rates must have been printed according to the standard procedure of normal times and not realistically to attract potential subscribers because, in the chaos of conflagration and genocide, people would hardly have been able to spend money on papers. At any rate, as indicated below, only a handful of Armenians read *Pordzank*, and secretly at that.

The incomplete extant collection of *Pordzank*, a paper published twice a month (*kisamsea*), begins with issue number 9 and ends with number 24. Number 9 carries the date of First Year, Friday, 2/15 December 1916, whereas number 24, which in fact is a combined issue including numbers 21-24, was published on 31 July 1917. It is difficult to determine whether other issues appeared thereafter. Each issue consists of eight pages, numbered successively throughout the entire collection; for example, issue number 11 begins with page 85 and ends with page 92, and so forth. One or some of the first eight issues must have been more than eight pages long, because the earliest issue that is preserved, i.e., number 9, begins with page 69 instead of page 65. As for the combined issue of numbers 21-24, it consists of ten pages, ending with page 176. *Pordzank* is handwritten by the publisher. The size of the utilized paper is that of a standard letter, without horizontal lines. The articles are arranged in two columns separated by a vertical line drawn in pencil. The pages devoted to poetry do

not follow this rule. Number 9 has low-quality, yellowish paper; the rest, off-white, clean paper.

The owner-manager-editor of *Pordzank* was a certain Armyov Bedlevma (Petlevma) Fatimi. The person behind this pseudonym cannot be readily determined, although there is a hint that helps to partially unmask his true identity. Thus, Catholicos Sahak II Khapayan of Cilicia, then residing in exile in Jerusalem, writes a letter dated 22 November 1916 to the publisher, granting him the right to wear a stole (*urar*). In his response, the publisher thanks the Catholicos for this grace that the Armenian Brotherhood of St. James in Jerusalem had previously denied him (the publisher). Here it becomes clear that the latter had gone from Egypt to Jerusalem three years before, had received "four ranks of priesthood" (*kahanayakan chors astichan*), and had been subsequently sent to Damascus.¹⁰ Therefore, the publisher appears to be someone serving the Armenian Apostolic Church in some capacity.

What was *Pordzank's* purpose? Responding to those who wondered about his audacity to publish a paper in such dangerous times, the publisher states that he was originally from Egypt, separated from his loved ones and friends due to special circumstances, and that, finding life meaningless in the face of danger, he wants to tell truths.¹¹ He then adds: "This publication in itself, released through simple, manuscript, [and – V.Sh.] a few rare copies, is our reflection and outburst of the mind and emotions, and we think also of those of this suffering [,] sorrowful, and oft-tortured people."¹² Naturally, in a time of war and genocide, such an Armenian paper could not have been granted permission for publication and/or published openly. Referring to its underground nature, the publisher writes: "As for our readers, even from the [first – V.Sh.] day of undertaking this task, we were certain of the confidentiality and cordial-heartedness of a small number of readers that we would have, and we are glad to say that our opinion was not misplaced and was safeguarded with reverence."¹³

Pordzank claims to be a "Moral, Literary, Scientific, and Satirical Bimonthly Journal" (*Kisamsea Handes Baroyakan, Grakan, Gitakan ev Zaveshtakan*). In actuality, however, it contains editorial, literary, descriptive, topographical, and fun sections. The editorials carry such titles as "A Decade" (dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the AGBU), "The New Year," and "Easter." The combined issue of numbers 21-24 is devoted to women, while nine issues deal with the new Regulation imposed by the Ottoman government upon its Armenian *millet* (civic-religious community)

during the genocide, replacing the Armenian National Constitution of 1860. The pertinent headings read: "The New Nat[ional] Regulation" (criticizing the government's decision), "The Introduction to the New Armenian Regulation," "Elucidations on the Introduction to the New Armenian Regulation," and "The Armenian Catholicos and Patriarchal Regulation."

The literary section consists of poems, all composed by the publisher. The poems appearing in the combined 21-24 issue are devoted to women and carry such titles as "The Woman," "Oh Eve," "Love," "She," "To the Feminine Gender," etc.¹⁴ In the descriptive section there is one article, "From Bir Saba to Sham [i.e. Damascus – V.Sh.]"¹⁵ The topographical section contains a series entitled "The Armenians in Damascus."¹⁶ As for the fun section, it includes stories and anecdotes entitled "An Arabic Folktale," "A Sage Saying," "A Farmer's Intelligence," and others.¹⁷ In fact, our knowledge of the paper's contents would have been more complete had page 175 of the combined 21-24 issue not been left blank, for it is titled "Pordzank, First Year 1916-1917, Table of Contents."¹⁸ Fortunately, though, on page 167 we come across the following poem, which qualifies "Pordzank's Year":

I herald to you oh readers
That our *Pordzank*
Is completing its entire year's cycle
Demonstrating that it always had [a – V.Sh.] firm will to survive
and come out of the struggle alive.

Despite the fact that, both the State
And the circumstance
Is [*sic!* – V.Sh.] unfavorable, horrific and dangerous.
Nevertheless, the smiles of luck came to us
And we really complete one year today.

Congratulations to You [*sic!* – V.Sh.]
This one year,
For walking straight on the road of suffering
And withstanding that big, heavy struggle of life
Always being the person cognizant of [his or the paper's? – V.Sh.]
purpose.¹⁹

In conclusion, the naming of *Pordzank* was an appropriate selection, given the horrors that the Armenian people endured during the genocide. But unfortunately the publisher does not provide any eyewitness account or news regarding the condition of deportees in Damascus, thereby depriving us of very important and insightful information. The only exception, which has to do with the general Armenian situation, is the discussion of the new Regulation, because the series entitled "The Armenians in Damascus" mentioned above deals with the old days, not the war years. Even so, despite contents and qualitative shortcomings, the appearance of *Pordzank* in a center of deportees at a time when the genocide was still in progress must be viewed as a unique phenomenon.

HAY DZAYN

Hay Dzayn (Armenian Voice) constitutes "the first printed newspaper of the Syrian Armenian press," having seen the light of day on 13 November 1918.²⁰ Sometime before mid-March 1919, after ninety-seven issues, it was transferred from its birthplace of Aleppo to Adana in Cilicia to serve the needs of repatriated genocide survivors.²¹ The Aleppo collection reportedly "contains the black events of the deportation period and especially the heartrending stories of the last days of [intellectuals and activists Grigor – V.Sh.] Zohrap, Vardges [Serenkiulian – V.Sh.], Dr. [Nazaret – V.Sh.] Taghavarian, Aknuni [Khachatur Malumian – V.Sh.], Khajak [Garegin Chagalian – V.Sh.], [Ruben – V.Sh.] Zardarian, Minasian, [Harutiun – V.Sh.] Jihankiulian, Hambartzum Poyajian (Murat), the detailed description of the deportation of the Armenians of Kastamuni, etc."²²

A four-page—and eventually two-page—"national, political, literary daily" printed on light green paper, *Hay Dzayn* was owned and edited by Sedrak Kepenlian. He ran both the editorial office and the print shop at No. 3, Zebbal Street in the Jideydi neighborhood of Aleppo.²³ Unlike *Pordzank*, which was a one-man production, *Hay Dzayn* solicited or received articles and/or letters from special contributors and the general public. These were reminded to submit their writings in a concise and legible manner and on one side of the paper. Those who used pseudonyms had to give their full name on a separate sheet. Articles of a personal nature and ones deemed unimportant would not be printed and/or returned to their authors.²⁴

A single copy initially sold for 20 *paras* and later for 40 *paras*, and different bulk rates existed both for Aleppo and overseas subscribers on annual, semiannual, and trimester bases. Interestingly, a special deal of 20 piasters per month only was offered to refugees sheltered in Aleppo.²⁵ *Hay Dzayn* likewise had distribution agents in Damascus, Homs, Hama, Adana, Tarson (Tarsus), Mersin, and Kilis, as well as in Tanta, Alexandria, and Port Said in Egypt.²⁶ After relocating to Adana, the paper kept an agent by the name of Michel Saman in Aleppo.²⁷

A perusal of the four extant Aleppo issues of *Hay Dzayn* provides a more detailed, albeit partial, idea about its contents. Issue number 20, dated 11 December 1918, for example, includes a front page "Appeal to the Armenian Refugees Found in Aleppo" in which they are asked to furnish British and French military representatives in town on official business any information respecting the wartime atrocities and other hardships. Particularly, it stated, knowledge shared on locations of deportation and massacre, lists of perpetrators and prominent victims, numbers of those killed among the general Armenian populace, accounts of abductions, rape and torture, incidents of burning of children, names of Muslims holding Armenian women, girls, and children against their will, and methods of butcheries would be most useful. Ultimately, "all this information would constitute [the - V.Sh.] basis of a special report, which would be presented at the Paris Peace Congress" for the promotion of the Armenian cause and national demands. The British and French military representatives similarly requested the names of those Armenians who had played a sinister role throughout the ordeal by "torturing their compatriots, throwing Armenian women and girls into the lap of Turkish officers and others, or embezzling public funds." Such proven cases would be prosecuted by a special tribunal. The written and oral testimonies should be expeditiously submitted to intellectual-activist Aram Antonian (Andonian) at room no. 5 in Hotel Baron for translation into French.²⁸ The same issue likewise covers world news, Armenian news gleaned from the Constantinople Armenian press, advertisements, announcements both by the Armenian and Arab authorities, and cultural events.²⁹

Other items of interest, such as the situation of Armenians in Damascus, Armenian voluntary associations in Aleppo and their cultural and charitable activities, and the offering of parenting classes for interested young women in the newly established Armenian Catholic school for girls fill the pages of issue no. 69.³⁰ In issue no. 71, *Hay Dzayn* becomes quite

critical of the lack of initiative on the part of the Armenian National Union (ANU) of Damascus respecting the rescue of Armenian women held captive among the indigenous populations of Syria, despite the fact that the local Arab government had given strict orders for the release of such cases.³¹ Similarly, the newspaper chastises the various Armenian compatriotic associations in Aleppo for failing to furnish lists of needy survivors outside the refugee camp for relief distribution purposes. Finally, the paper informs the public of the creation of a special committee, whose task it was to manage repatriation to Cilicia in an orderly fashion.³² Last but not least, issue no. 92 contains only two articles. The first, entitled *Haynotse* (The Armenian Place), provides pertinent information on the former Turkish military barracks of Aleppo, now serving as a refugee camp. The second, discussing "The Armenian and Arab Relationships," tries to respond to the inflammatory remarks leveled by the editor of a local Arab newspaper at "Armenian soldiers" (in the *Légion d'Orient* commanded by the Allies now occupying Syria), who had allegedly been treating Turkish travelers—and Arabs mistaken as Turks—strictly in search of Armenian women that might be in their custody. While exhorting the Arab editor not to generalize isolated incidents as caused by the entire Armenian community, the editor of *Hay Dzayn* invites the attention of Armenian soldiers manning check points in the North Syria-Cilicia region, as well as the Armenian authorities, to be circumspect in order to avoid such frictions and also to continue to cultivate friendly and good neighborly relations with the host country of Syria.³³

TARAGIR

Taragir constitutes another Armenian newspaper that was published in Aleppo in the wake of the genocide. Its name, meaning "deportee," fittingly describes the wartime state of survivors. The first issue appeared on Sunday, 8 December 1918; henceforth it would be released thrice a week, that is, on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, although it must have skipped either Wednesday or Friday of the first week, for issue no. 3 appeared on Sunday, 15 December.³⁴ On Sunday, 12 January 1919, *Taragir's* editorship announced that the newspaper would henceforth have various sections, including summary features taken from European papers, extracts of all national news from the Armenian press of Constantinople and Egypt, and daily telegrams from the Reuters News Agency. "With this proposition 'Taragir' becomes [a - V.Sh] daily" (*ays arajadruteamb*

"*Taragir*" *k'ella amenorea*).³⁵ Earlier, in order to mark the first New Year (1919) of "peace and freedom," the newspaper had decided to publish an almanac that would include "personal impressions ... of our era of exile." Accordingly, it had solicited articles from intellectuals who might have notes depicting "those black events."³⁶ The Vienna and Aleppo collections that I have consulted do not include such a compilation.

A two-page "political-literary-social Armenian paper," *Taragir* was first printed at the Al-Taqaddom (Progress) Press at Khan al-Harir (Silk Inn),³⁷ then at the Maronite Press and sold at the Shuha Brothers bookstore on Tilet Street.³⁸ Beginning on 26 January 1919, the address was changed from that of the Maronite Press to Saha Hall.³⁹ Permit owner and managing editor Benjamin Miltonian remained as such throughout the life of the newspaper, with the name of a certain Hovhannes Khacherian added as "responsible director" (*pataskhanatu moren*) beginning on Wednesday, 12 February 1919.⁴⁰ The last known issue of *Taragir* (from the Vienna collection), number 50, is dated Friday, 22 February 1919.⁴¹ Sometime before 14 March 1919 it ceased to exist.⁴²

The first issue of *Taragir* carries a front page leading article entitled "The Arab Awakening." Written in Armenian as well as in Arabic in two separate columns, it briefly touches upon the "glorious past" of the Arabs in terms of achievements in architecture and other cultural domains. It then hails their newly-acquired "political freedom" after centuries of subjugation, and finally draws a parallel between the suffering of the Armenian and Arab peoples, concluding:

We carried the yoke of servitude and persecution together.

We emptied the cup of tear and suffering together.

Let us welcome the new Sun of Freedom together....

A SALUTE TO NEWLY-FREED ARABIA

A SALUTE TO THE FREE ARAB.⁴³

In the editorial that follows, Miltonian first maintains that Arab freedom had given hope to "our national liberation," although Armenians, "wrapped up in a fog of hesitancy and suspicion," rightly did not get carried away by illusions. Since the Armenians still bore deep wounds, they had to control their emotions and act according to "cool reasoning." And when "we are barely granted a moment to breathe," *Taragir* "comes to have its say to its deported compatriots." "That say—Miltonian continues—at once as

modest as it is sincere, we hope will have its place in the reformation of our uncertain, formless Nat[ional] condition that we are in today."⁴⁴

From a reader's perspective, G. Anparchian, a former president of Aleppo's Court of Commerce, salutes the emergence of *Taragir* as a provider of intellectual nourishment, while at the same time sharing his expectations: "You are called upon to illustrate the Armenian mentality, lead its movement, encourage the hopeless deportee, [and - V.Sh.] spread light to dark and confused steps."⁴⁵

Judging from the contents of twenty issues of *Taragir* (found in Vienna and Aleppo), it can be maintained that the newspaper covers virtually all aspects of the lives of the survivors. To begin with, it reports on conditions in the refugee camp, which had an Armenian director with a staff, a hospital section, and a ladies' guild whose task it was to collect garments from homes in the city and distribute them among the camp residents on a daily basis. Since there were numerous other uprooted Armenians scattered in various parts of town, succor in the form of food and clothing was extended to them as well by the Armenian authorities (and other non-Armenian relief agencies).⁴⁶

The Aleppo orphanage, which had been established in 1915, likewise figures in *Taragir* in its various facets: administration, staff, numbers, education, hygiene, clothing, nutrition, sources of income, etc.⁴⁷ As for the dealings of Turkish functionaries vis-à-vis the orphanage during the war, the following quotations are telling.

First,

In Nov[ember] nine[teen] hundred and fifteen the Muhajir Müdürü [i.e. the Director of Refugees - V.Sh.] Shukri Bey visits the orphanage and recognizes [it - V.Sh.] as an official institution.

In Aug[ust] nine[teen] hundred and sixteen Jemal Pasha affirmed the existence of the orphanage with a special decree. Despite this, myriad difficulties were created by various functionaries. There have been frequent supplications to demand girls, and at one time three majors came and took girls from the orphanage.

Second,

"[new - V.Sh.] Muhajir Müdürü Hakki Bey in the month of February [1916 - V.Sh.] demanded the relinquishing of one hundred orphans to be sent to Constantinople, [and - V.Sh.] we were compelled to relinquish [7]5 [?] orphans[,] as a result of which many orphans began to escape."⁴⁸

And third,

“A lawsuit having been filed by the [Armenian Church – V.Sh.] locum tenens [of Aleppo – V.Sh.] against the former orphanage director Nazim Effendi, he [i.e. the locum tenens – V.Sh.] had him imprisoned; whether male or female, those who have complaints against him or proofs against his actions, let them present themselves to the Prelacy promptly...”⁴⁹

The ANU is also a fixture in the pages of *Taragir*. The purpose of the ANU, the paper wrote, was “to be the center of consolation for the Armenian deportees in Aleppo and immediate surroundings, and to cater to their moral and material needs, pursue their political aspirations, [and – V.Sh.] provide for the means of repatriation and, to this end, establish communication with general Armenian National Union president Poghos Pasha Nubar [i.e. Boghos Nubar – V.Sh.], sister associations found overseas and in Syria, and respectable representatives of Allied states.” The newspaper likewise publishes the names of ANU members and mentions the famed Hotel Baron as the site of their meetings. In a letter dated 21 December 1918, the commander of British forces in Aleppo, Major-General MacAndrew, congratulates the ANU on its formation and wishes it success.⁵⁰ Thereafter, the reader is apprised of the various activities of the ANU.⁵¹

Taragir from the outset opens its columns to the repatriation movement. According to the 12 January 1919 issue, “it has been decided for the males to go to Cilicia on foot; every Armenian is invited to participate in this repatriation.” The first group, the reader is then told, would be composed of 250 persons and would gather at a designated location on Monday, 13 January, at 3:00 p.m. in order to depart on the following day, 14 January, at 7:00 a.m. sharp. Each person would receive a certain ration of food and pocket money and would carry his own pack. “Absolute discipline and military punctuality” were required.⁵² And from the 26 January issue we learn that by then two foot caravans had already left for Cilicia.⁵³

As soon as the war ended and the survivors could associate freely, natives of the same geographical area in the homeland formed compatriotic unions as support mechanisms. *Taragir* mirrors their activities. By 12 February 1919 there existed twenty-eight such parochial organizations (and more later on), which, after three consultative meetings, formed the

Armenian Inter-Provincial Union (AIPU). It proclaimed itself as the "sole legitimate representative body of the refugee population, having as its goal the defense of the people's material, moral [and - V.Sh.] political interests." The newspaper also provides the roster of committee members and hints at the opening of an office to serve as an information bureau and a place where pressing issues could be resolved expeditiously.⁵⁴ However, the dealings of the AIPU did not proceed smoothly, as bickering caused rifts among constituent members.⁵⁵

One of the most urgent questions faced by the Armenian authorities in Aleppo, indeed in the entire Middle East, was that of Armenian women and children sequestered among Turks, Kurds, Arabs, and other Muslims as a result of the genocide. On 3 January 1919, in an editorial addressed "To the Attention of the Armenian Nat[ional] Union," *Taragir* reminds the latter of the numerous supplications made to the newspaper's office by relatives who knew exactly where and by whom their loved ones were kept against their will, pleading for their rescue. This, the editorial states emphatically, had become a demand that could not be postponed any further.⁵⁶

Finally, through *Taragir* one also learns of the various cultural activities that took place at the time for merriment, to boost morale, and to raise funds to alleviate the financial hardships of the refugees. Thus, we are told that the first Armenian concert was scheduled to take place on 8 December 1918 at the Al-Arab Theater under the direction of Barsegh Kanachian and Gh. Ghazarosian.⁵⁷ A week later Ashot Matatians would stage Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, his own *Ir Pative* (His Honor) operetta on 4 January 1919, and Alexander Shirvanzade's *Patvi Hamar* (For Honor's Sake) with the Melpome theatrical troupe sometime in February 1919.⁵⁸ In the same vein, the choir of the Armenian Recital Organizing Committee raised 22,315 piasters for charity in a performance that was held sometime before 25 December 1918.⁵⁹ Finally, the Veratsnund (Rebirth) troupe entertained the refugees with at least two dramas.⁶⁰ In order to maintain order, prevent financial irregularities, and fend off criticism, the Aleppo Prelacy required that each and every ticket sold "in the name of the Nation" must bear the Prelacy stamp.⁶¹

GAGHTAKAN

Another Armenian paper that surfaced in Aleppo at the end of World War I was *Gaghtakan*, meaning, appropriately, "refugee." Its logo depicted "a few tents and refugees." Only the year of publication (1918) is given;

the specific dates and the number of issues thereof remain obscure, although we are told that they appeared happenchance. Interestingly, each issue of this two-page, manuscript paper was released in a single copy and "posted on the wall of the Holy Forty Martyrs church for the public to read." Because its publishers, namely, Grigor Angut (Ebranosian), Matteos Eretsian, Khachik Inkilizian, and Georg Chekichian, not only wrote about the pressing national issues of the day but also criticized the abuses suffered by the refugees, the church authorities forced the paper to close down.⁶²

PITSAK

Like *Pordzank*, *Pitsak* (Wasp) had hitherto remained unknown to bibliographers and experts of the Armenian periodical press. It was a satirical, "underground" weekly published in Aleppo by four friends, namely, John (Hovhannes) Minassian, Haroutoun (Harutiun), Onnig, and Haygaz (no surnames given), the first three being survivors from Gurun, and the fourth from Shabin Karahisar.⁶³ Thus describes Minassian the purpose and circumstances surrounding the publication of *Pitsak*:

An [anonymous – V.Sh.] organization funded by Armenians from abroad began to trace and locate the scattered members of [deported – V.Sh.] families, often with the help of the new government [in Aleppo – V.Sh.].

Haroutoun and I worked to do our share. We wanted to bring the attention of the organization to some of the irregularities of operations, discrimination and partiality. We asked Onnig and Haygaz to join us in publishing a weekly paper, *The Wasp*. We put our pennies together for mimeographing and Haygaz drew a picture of a wasp with its wings spread for our logo. On the first page, we printed a warning—"Watch out for the Wasp—it might bite you!" We worked in a single room at an inn, and each of us contributed a column. Unfortunately, political unrest in the city forced us to close down after the third number. Yet we had brought about many improvements for the orphanage. The children calmed down, became more disciplined, and learned to play harmoniously.⁶⁴

A reduced and somewhat blurry photographic reproduction of the front page of the third issue of *Pitsak* furnishes the following additional information. First, the third issue appeared either on Sunday, 12 January

1919 or Sunday, 19 January. If the former were the correct date, and if the paper appeared at its stated weekly interval, then the first issue must have been released on Sunday, 29 December 1918, otherwise, on Sunday, 5 January 1919. Second, the title *Pitsak* and those of the two articles (including the editorial) are handwritten; in fact, a closer look at the entire text reveals with relative certainty a mixture of printed and hand-scripted letters. Third, the "warning" mentioned in the above quotation actually reads: "ZGUSHATSEK, PITSAKI ACHKER KAN..." [Beware, there are wasp eyes...]. Fourth, a copy was sold for 40 *paras*. Fifth, the *khmbagrakan* (editorial), entitled "Gifts at the New Year Cold" (*Nor Tarvo Paghin Armaghanner*), is rendered as *khndaberakan* (carrier of happiness), for it pokes fun through good wishes at organizations, individuals and the two existing Armenian newspapers at the time, namely, *Hay Dzayn* and *Taragir*. Sixth, the only other article, which makes critical observations regarding a public meeting held by an association, bears the title "KHMBAKTSUTIUN kam Gita-ksutiun?" [Cliques-formation or Consciousness?].⁶⁵ Information is lacking as to the number of pages, circulation, etc.

John Minassian makes two other references to *Pitsak*. Without mentioning a specific date, he recalls that "the editors of *The Wasp* had a meeting to discuss future plans," ones that had nothing to do with the weekly itself but rather the personal lives of the four editor-friends, who contemplated going their separate ways.⁶⁶ As Minassian prepared to travel to Constantinople, en route to his ultimate destination, the United States of America, he took with him, among other belongings, "copies of the three issues of *The Wasp*."⁶⁷

EPRAT

The phenomenon of *Eprat* (Euphrates) is at once unique and somewhat confusing. It is unique, because it was the only Armenian paper in Aleppo during the period under study that was published, separately, both in Armenian and in Arabic. In fact, the Arabic version, called *Al-Furat* with its French subtitle of *L'Euphrate*, appeared first, on Wednesday, 8 October 1919. The phenomenon of *Eprat* is also somewhat confusing, however, due to the following reasons. First, the two-page *Al-Furat* advertised its single copy price to be one small *barghut* for local purchases and one Egyptian piaster for external purchases, irrespective of whether it was the "Arabic or Armenian" version,⁶⁸ when, in actuality, the Armenian version had not yet been published. This would occur later, in December, from which time two

issues have survived—numbers 2 and 3. The stated date on number 2 is Wednesday, 3 November 1919. “November” is a mistake; it should be December, because 1) on page 2 there is information on the Republic of Armenia dated 12 November, 2) a letter from the Board of Trustees of the mixed national schools of Aleppo to the editorship of *Eprat* carries the date of 3 December, and 3) the listed exchange rate of the day is also from 3 December.⁶⁹ These facts strongly suggest that issue number 2 must have been released on 3 December, a Wednesday, not 3 November, a Monday.

Second, it is still a mystery as to whether there was in fact a number 1 issue for the Armenian version. This suspicion arises from two facts: 1) *Al-Furat* ceased to exist after the first issue;⁷⁰ 2) the front page of the number 2 issue of *Eprat* carries an editorial, entitled “Our Guideline,” which explains the paper’s purpose.⁷¹ Normally, such a statement is made in the first issue of any given paper. Therefore, it would not be altogether illogical to assume that the number 2 issue of *Eprat* was the numerical continuation of the number 1 (and only) issue of *Al-Furat* but in reality the first issue of the Armenian version. As for number 3, it appeared on Monday, 8 December. Here, too, one is able to discern an irregularity, because, as announced, *Eprat* would be released once every two days, whereas there is a discrepancy of five days between numbers 2 and 3. Finally, in the absence of a complete collection, it is impossible to know the exact lifespan of *Eprat*. In this context, two Arab historians of Aleppo claim that the newspaper was relocated to Adana after a few issues appeared in Aleppo.⁷²

Eprat’s address was Mesudiye Street, across from the American cinema. Each copy was sold for 2 silver piasters, with bulk rates in different currencies offered for 150, 100 or 50 issues to potential subscribers in Aleppo, America, and elsewhere. There are also per-line advertisement rates for first-page and second-page placements, with special deals available for long-term business. All this information is furnished in Armenian, Arabic, and French.⁷³

Two reasons spurred on the publication of *Al-Furat/Eprat* in Aleppo in late 1919, that is, at a time when the last caravans of survivors were heading home. As “Our Guideline” mentioned above states,

We conceived the idea of publishing *Eprat* in Aleppo with the following dual goals.

First, to solidify the Arab and Armenian rapprochement that has emerged lately. Second, to contribute to the reawakening of the

national culture and customs among Aleppo Armenians who have migrated to Aleppo from the interior provinces of Armenia at various times and have under the influence of long years lost much of the native land's consecrated influence and development.⁷⁴

The introductory article in *Al-Furat*'s first issue, apparently written in lieu of an editorial, underscores the importance of the first reason. Penned by Butros Mu'awwad, the editor-in-chief of Aleppo's *Al-Sa'a'iq* (Thunderbolt) newspaper, it addresses "Arabic speakers" of both nationalities, Armenian and Arab, exhorting them to cooperate despite their linguistic and religious differences, because the two religions, in particular, did not prohibit friendly relations and fraternization. Furthermore, the literary and economic ties that existed between the two peoples were mutually beneficial. Therefore, neither side should lend credence to rumors fabricated and circulated by the common (Turkish?) enemy, rumors that "feed on the ignorance, darkness, and the stupidity of the past."⁷⁵

The first issue of *Al-Furat* also contains information concerning the Armenian Question, the Syrian Question, Turkish affairs, politics on the European and Russian fronts, and domestic events such as those occurring in Beirut, Damascus, and Hama.⁷⁶ In addition to the editorial entitled "Our Guideline," the second issue of *Eprat* likewise includes political, local, and "national" news (particularly about Armenian orphans), a list of survivors arriving in Aleppo from Der el-Zor, the day's money exchange, etc.⁷⁷ The third issue bids farewell to the refugees stationed at the former Ottoman military barracks of Aleppo as they prepared to return home after years of tribulation; places appeals on behalf of people in search of their relatives who might have survived the wartime ordeal; keeps the public posted of events involving repatriation, insecurity in Kharpert and Diyarbekir, and stranded Kharpert Armenians at Mardin; and publishes the first installment of an account by a certain Dr. H. Davitian entitled "Travel Notes To Der Zor," in which the author describes his emotional encounter with an Armenian girl who had lost her ethnic identity among desert Arabs as a result of the deportations.⁷⁸

CONCLUSION

In addition to the above papers, there appeared in Armenian in Aleppo a leaflet disseminating worldwide Reuters news exclusively.⁷⁹ Since it had

nothing to do with Armenian issues per se, the Reuters leaflet falls outside the scope of this study.

What is interesting, however, is the fact that there were two more attempts to publish Armenian newspapers in Syria that remained stillborn. Not much is known about the first effort, which involved a certain pastor by the name of Khachatur Gruzian, who consulted with activist Hayk Aramian respecting the release of a yet-unnamed paper in Aleppo.⁸⁰ As for the second project, it was conceived in Damascus by A. N. Kenchian, a leader among Armenian refugees, who had even obtained permission from the local Arab government to publish a newspaper called *Hay Keank* (Armenian Life), provided that it was bilingual, that is, Armenian and Arabic. However, this condition could not be met, because 1) no person in town was well enough versed in both languages to be able to assume editorship, and 2) the enterprise would thus entail a double expense.⁸¹

To conclude, generally speaking, *Pordzank* did not feature articles or news items pertaining to the Armenian deportees in Damascus, perhaps in part because the war and the genocide were still being waged and therefore did not allow for regular news coverage. The same cannot be said about the Armenian press in Aleppo during 1918-1919, that is, at the end of World War I. It more than anything else performed a utilitarian function by recording eyewitness accounts of the atrocities, posting announcements released by the Armenian, Arab, and Allied authorities, uplifting the community as it endeavored to recuperate from the horrendous impact of the genocide, informing and educating the public, and providing guidance to the survivors who yearned to go home as soon as possible.

It has been maintained that *Hay Dzayn*, *Taragir*, and *Eprat* were affiliated with or actually constituted the mouthpiece of various Armenian political parties.⁸² The consulted issues do not bear out this claim manifestly or directly.⁸³ What is significant here is the fact that none of those newspapers displayed any partisanship or inflamed ideological passions that would charge the atmosphere and cause undue polarization.

Because the Syrian Armenian press at the time by necessity pursued functional rather than artistic or creative goals, as a rule paper quality and color, consistency of font shape and size, correctness of language, and layout took a back seat, not to mention the fact that some of the shortcomings could have resulted from the scarcity of resources. Similarly, no pictures or caricatures whatsoever adorned the pages of the newspapers. Moreover, perhaps due to financial hardships and not-so-advanced

technology, they often appeared irregularly even within their short lifespan. Some of these defaults would be rectified with the advent of new Syrian Armenian newspapers and periodicals beginning in the 1920s, following the second exodus of the Armenians from Cilicia.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See, for example, *L'extermination Des Déportés Arméniens Ottomans Dans Les Camps De Concentration De Syrie-Mésopotamie (1915-1916): La Deuxième Phase Du Genocide*, a special issue of *Revue d'Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine*, vol. II (1998), prepared by Raymond H. Kévorkian.
- ² For the fate of Armenian women and/or children during the World War I genocide and its aftermath, consult Vahakn N. Dadrian, "Children as Victims of Genocide: The Armenian Case," *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 3 (September 2003), pp. 421-437; Vahram L. Shemmassian, "The League of Nations and the Reclamation of Armenian Genocide Survivors," in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, USA, and London, UK: Transaction Publishers, 2003), pp. 81-112.
- ³ Bishop Eghishe Chilinkirian, *Nkaragrutiunk Erusaghemi-Halepi-Damaskosi Gaghtakanakan ev Vanakan Zanazan Dipats ev Antskeru 1914-1918* [Descriptions of Miscellaneous Refugee and Monastic Incidents and Events at Jerusalem-Aleppo-Damascus 1914-1918] (Alexandria, Egypt: A. Stepanian Press, 1922), pp. 29-30; Manase Sevakian, "Damaskos ev Hayere Kaghakin Ankumen Arach" [Damascus and the Armenians before the Fall of the City], *Arev* [Sun] (Alexandria, Egypt), 8 November 1918, p.1; "Damaskosi ev Shrchakayki Hayots Katsutiune" [The Situation of Armenians in Damascus and Environs], *Arev*, 29 November 1918, p. 2. The latter article is gleaned from a letter dated 13 November 1918 sent by the AGBU chapter of Damascus to its Central Board in Egypt.
- ⁴ For a list of Armenian clergymen in Damascus during the war, see Chilinkirian, pp. 54-55.
- ⁵ Mihran Nacharian, *Hushagirk 1918-1948. Eresnamea Azgayin Iradartzutiunner Surio Ev Libanani Hay Keanken Arnavdz* [Memorial Book 1918-1948: Thirty-Year Events Gleaned from Armenian Life in Syria and Lebanon] (Beirut: Masis Press, 1949), pp. 19-22; Hayk A. Aramian, *Medz Egherni Patgam. Hayots Tanteakan, Kavaran Ev Hrashali Harutiun* [Message of the Great Catastrophe: The Armenian Inferno, Purgatory, and Miraculous Resurrection] (Beirut: Tonikian Press, 1970), pp. 193-194.
- ⁶ Artashes Ter Khachaturian, "Surihay Mamuli Patmutiun" [History of the Syrian Armenian Press], *Haigazian Armenological Review*, vol. 3 (1972), pp. 196, 205; Zhirayr Danielian, "Aknark Libananahay Mamuli Patmutedan" [A Glance at the History of the Lebanese Armenian Press], *Haigazian Armenological Review*, vol. 4 (1973), pp. 242-246. According to Mihran Minasian, "Hay Parperakan Mamuli 33 Norahait Anunner" [33 Newly Discovered Titles of the Armenian Periodical Press], *Haigazian Armenological Review*, vol. 21 (2001), p. 358, numbers 50-101 of the Armeno-Turkish edition of *Al-Furat* were published over a period extending between six and ten months. In a related matter, Minasian, pp. 357-358 adds that an Armeno-Turkish translation of volume 3 of

the Aleppo province yearbook (*salname*) was also published for the year 1285 AH (corresponding to 1868-1869 AD) and that a copy of this yearbook is found at the Eghishe Charents Museum of Literature and the Arts in Erevan.

⁷ Vardi Keshishian, *Halepi Haykakan Gaghtochakhi Hasarakakan-Mshakutayin Kazmakerputiunnere (1846-1915)* [The Social-Cultural Organizations of the Armenian Community of Aleppo (1846-1915)], (Antelias: The Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia Press, 2001), pp. 158-163; Ter Khachaturian, p. 205.

⁸ Ter Khachaturian, pp. 195-230; Amalya Kirakosyan, *Hay Parperakan Mamuli Matenagitutiun (1794-1967)* [Bibliography of the Armenian Periodical Press (1794-1967)] (Erevan: Armenian SSR Myasnikyan Republican Library, 1970); Manvel A. Babloyan, *Hay Parperakan Mamule. Matenagitakan Hamahavak Tsutsak (1794-1980)* [The Armenian Periodical Press: A Comprehensive Bibliographical List (1794-1980)] (Erevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences, 1986).

⁹ *Pordzank*, no. 9, 2/15 December 1916.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* In the case of married priests, there are three honorary ranks in the Armenian Apostolic Church. First, a married priest receives the chest-cross as a recognition for his many years of service. Secondly, he gets the right to put on a special mantle decorated by flowers (*tzaghkea pilon*) as a higher honor, and, finally, he is elevated to the rank of *Avag* (Senior) priest. This third rank was, in the past, given only to the priest, who was the senior by ordination among the other priests serving in the same church. Nowadays, it is simply a honorary title bestowed upon married priests after long years of service. As for celibate clergymen, the first four ranks of Armenian Church priesthood are: (1) *kahana*; (2) *abegha*; (3) *vardapet*, and (4) archpriest (*tzayraguyn vardapet*). A *vardapet* has to wear, as we shall see below, a stole (*urar*) during mass. However, a *sarkavag* (deacon), who is one rank below a *vardapet*, is also entitled to carry a stole on his left shoulder and he can serve before the altar of God without taking the oath of celibacy. When a deacon is elevated to priesthood (celibate or married), the stole, that he usually wears on his left shoulder, is hanged during the ordination from his neck (*porurar*). Without the *porurar*, no one can preside over the Holy Mass. Our thanks go to the Rev. Father Krikor Chiftjian who clarified for us these issues.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 14, 28 February 1917.

¹² *Ibid.*, no. 15, 15 March 1917.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Pordzank*, nos. 21-24, 31 July 1917.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 9, 2/15 December 1916.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 10-20, 31 December 1916-31 May 1917.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, nos. 9-13, 2/15 December 1916-15 February 1917, nos. 21-24, 31 July 1917.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 21-24, 31 July 1917.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Ter Khachaturian, p. 206.

²¹ In a correspondence dated 14 March 1919 printed in the Armenian language newspaper *Armenia* (Marsilles), 9 April 1919, M. S. N. (Mihran S. Nacharian) maintains that "week ago ... we had two newspapers [*Hay Dzayn* and *Taragir*]" in Aleppo that he "temporarily" ceased to be published. Without providing a specific date, *Kilikia* [Cilicia (Adana), 14 March 1919, too, indicates that both *Hay Dzayn* and *Taragir* "have ceased

to exist, that is, in Aleppo. The fact that ninety-seven issues of the *Hay Dzayn* appeared in Aleppo is stated in *Hay Dzayn*, no. 100, 16 April 1919, at which time the newspaper was being published in Adana. Issues no. 20, 11 December 1918, and no. 92, 23 February 1919, are found at the Jebejian Library in Aleppo, whereas issues no. 69, 31 January 1919, and no. 71, 2 February 1919, as well as the Adana issues, are located at the Armenian Mekhitarist Library in Vienna.

²² *Hay Dzayn*, no. 100, 16 April 1919.

²³ *Ibid.*, no. 20, 11 December 1918. The last four-page issue at hand is dated no. 71, 2 February 1919, whereas issue no. 92, 23 February 1919, is two pages long.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 69, 31 January 1919. See also Ter Khachaturian, p. 206.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 92, 23 February 1919. The latter issue, although two pages long, was sold for 40 *paras*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 20, 11 December 1918. The agents were: in Damascus, Hakob Hakobian; Homs, Vahan Macharian; Hama, Mkrtich Guyumchian; Adana, Karapet Grasharian; Tarson (Tarsus) and Mersin, Sargis Simeonian; Kilis, Davit Adamian; Tanta, Ervand Togatlian; and Port Said and Alexandria, Grigor Gutulian.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 100, 16 April 1919.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 20, 11 December 1918.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 69, 31 January 1919.

³¹ *Ibid.*, no. 71, 2 February 1919. The Armenian National Unions (ANU) were formed in Syria and Lebanon (as well as in Cilicia and elsewhere) at the end of World War I to deal with and coordinate the affairs of genocide survivors, to serve as liaison between the survivors and the ruling authorities in respective locations, and to pursue Armenian national aspirations by organizing rallies and sending petitions to the victorious Allies. Depending on place and circumstances, the ANUs were appointed or elected. Similarly, the ANUs had close relationships with the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) headquarters in Egypt and local chapters, as well as with the Armenian National Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, headed by Poghos Pasha Nupar (Boghos Nubar), the chief founder and president of the AGBU.

³² *Hay Dzayn*, no. 71, 2 February 1919.

³³ *Ibid.*, no. 92, 23 February 1919.

³⁴ *Taragir*, no. 1, 8 December 1918; no. 3, 15 December 1918. The Jebejian Library in Aleppo holds the following *Taragir* issues: No. 1, 8 December 1918; no. 8, 29 December 1918; and no. 19, 16 January 1919. The Armenian Mekhitarist Library in Vienna holds the following issues: No. 3, 15 December 1918; no. 5, 22 December 1918; no. 6, 25 December 1918; no. 7, 27 December 1918; no. 9, 1 January 1919; no. 10, 3 January 1919; no. 11, 5 January 1919; no. 17, 12 January 1919; no. 20, 17, January 1919; no. 27, 25 January 1919; no. 28, 26 January 1919; no. 39, 9 February 1919; no. 41, 11 February 1919; no. 42, 12 February 1919; no. 44, 14 February 1919; no. 48, 20 February 1919; and no. 50, 22 February 1919.

³⁵ However, *Taragir* must have begun to appear as a daily, at least unofficially, during the week between Sunday, 5 January and Sunday, 12 January 1919, because whereas the 5 January issue is numbered 11, the 12 January issue is numbered 17, that is, some five

- issues (nos. 12-16) must have been released during the six days from Monday, 6 January through Saturday, 11 January.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 3, 15 December 1918.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 1, 8 December 1918.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 5, 22 December 1918.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 28, 26 January 1919.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 42, 12 February 1919.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 50, 22 February 1919. According to Kirakosyan, p. 178, the Noubar Library in Paris has issues 1-32, 36-52, and 54-55 of *Taragir*.
- ⁴² See note 21 above. According to Babloyan, p. 124, the newspaper *Kilikia* (Cilicia), published in Adana, was the continuation of *Taragir*.
- ⁴³ *Taragir*, no. 1, 8 December 1918.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 27, 25 January 1919; no. 39, 9 February 1919; no. 41, 11 February 1919; no. 50, 22 February 1919.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 3, 15 December 1918; no. 5, 22 December 1918.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 3, 15 December 1918. The number 7 placed in brackets by me appears to be that number in the vague original print. The number that follows is clearly printed as 5, hence I have written "[7]5" followed by a question mark in brackets.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 6, 25 December 1918.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, no. 8, 29 December 1918; no. 17, 12 January 1919; no. 27, 25 January 1919; no. 39, 9 February 1919.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, no. 17, 12 January 1919. However, the no. 19, 16 January 1919 issue maintains that the first caravan left for Cilicia on New Year's Day 1919. The confusion concerning the actual departure date remains to be resolved.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, no. 28, 26 January 1919.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 42, 12 February 1919.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 48, 20 February 1919.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 10, 3 January 1919.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 1, 8 December 1918. See also Aramian, p. 193.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 8, 29 December 1918; no. 42, 12 February 1919. See also Aramian, p. 193.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 6, 25 December 1918.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 19, 16 January 1919.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, no. 7, 27 December 1918.
- ⁶² Ter Khachaturian, p. 207. Another source, without referring to a newspaper, maintains that Grigor Angut used to post "inflammatory writings on the church door, against National bodies." See Guzhkan Sebasdio (K. Gabikian), *Eghernapatum Pokun Hayots Ev Norin Metsi Mayrakaghakin Sebastio* [History of the Catastrophe in Armenia Minor and Its Great Capital of Sebastia] (Boston: Hayrenik Press, 1924), p. 544.
- ⁶³ John Minassian, *Many Hills Yet to Climb: Memoirs of An Armenian Deportee* (Santa Barbara, California: Jim Cook, 1986), pp. 104-105, 189. The fact that *Pitsak* was a satirical paper (*ergitsatert*) is indicated on the upper right hand corner of the front page of the third issue. See Minassian, unpaginated photograph between pages 124 and 125.

Similarly, the paper's underground nature is mentioned in the caption of the same photograph.

⁶⁴ Minassian, p. 189.

⁶⁵ Ibid., unpaginated photograph between pages 124 and 125.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 198.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 201.

⁶⁸ *Al-Furat*, no. 1, 8 October 1919. This issue as well as issue no. 3 (8 December 1919) of *Eprat*, that is, the Armenian version, are found at the Jebejian Library in Aleppo. Issue no. 2 (3 November [must be December] 1919) is found at the Armenian Mekhitarist Library in Vienna.

⁶⁹ Ibid., no. 2, 3 November [December] 1919.

⁷⁰ "*Eprat' Erkoriat*" [*Eprat Tri-Daily*], in R. Chepechian (ed.), *Geghard Suriahay Taregirk* [*Geghard Syrian-Armenian Yearbook*], vol. 5 (Aleppo: n. p., 1996), p. 209, post script.

⁷¹ *Eprat*, no. 2, 3 November [December] 1919.

⁷² Muhammad Fu'ad 'Aintabi and Najwa 'Othman (eds.), *Halab fi mi'at 'aam 1850-1950* [Aleppo in A Hundred Years 1850-1950], vol. 2 (Aleppo: Aleppo University Press, 1993), p. 213. According to Babloyan, p. 122, eight issues of *Eprat* were published in Aleppo. Similarly, Babloyan states that *Eprat* was a weekly, which is incorrect.

⁷³ *Eprat*, no. 2, 3 November [December] 1919. The no. 1 issue in Arabic provides the same information in Arabic and French only.

⁷⁴ *Eprat*, no. 2, 3 November [December] 1919.

⁷⁵ *Al-Furat*, no. 1, 8 October 1919. For the Arabic language and French language press in Aleppo during the period under study, see 'Aintabi and 'Othman, vol. 2, pp. 175-178, 207-213.

⁷⁶ *Al-Furat*, no. 1, 8 October 1919.

⁷⁷ *Eprat*, no. 2, 3 November [December] 1919.

⁷⁸ Ibid., no. 3, 8 December 1919.

⁷⁹ Ter Khachaturian, pp. 206-207.

⁸⁰ Aramian, p. 192.

⁸¹ *Eritasard Hayastan* [Young Armenia] (Providence, Rhode Island), 19 November 1919.

⁸² Nacharian, p. 21; Ter Khachaturian, p. 208; Aramian, p. 193.

⁸³ According to Babloyan, p. 116, *Hay Dzayn* was an "independent Armenian paper" which was later published in Cilicia as the official mouthpiece of the Ramkamar Party. On the other hand, if we assume, as Babloyan states (p. 124), that *Kilikia*, an Armenian Revolutionary Federation-*Dashnaksutiun* (ARF) organ, was the continuation of *Taragir*, then the latter might have had an ARF orientation. Guzhkan Sebastio, p. 544 and Aramian, p. 192 also assert the Ramkavar orientation of *Hay Dzayn* and the Dashnak orientation of *Taragir*. Finally, Babloyan, p. 149, maintains that *Suriakan Mamul* [Syrian Press], published in Aleppo from 1922-1927, was the continuation of *Eprat*. Since the former was the organ of the Social-Democratic Hnchakian Party, and because some of its editors were also the editors of *Eprat*, it can be surmised that *Eprat* could have had a Hnchakian orientation.

ՀԱՅՈՑ ՑԵՂԱՄՊԱՆՈՒԹԵՆԷՆ ՎԵՐԱՊՐՈՂՆԵՐՈՒ
ՄԱՄՈՒԼԸ ՍՈՒՐԻՈՑ ՄԷՋ (1916-1919)
(Ամփոփում)

ՎԱՀՐԱՄ ՇԵՄՄԻՍԵԱՆ

Յօղուածը կ'ուսումնասիրէ Հայոց Յեղասպանութեան օրերուն եւ այդ արհաւիրքի անմիջական վաղորդայնին՝ 1916-1919ին, Սուրիական Արարական Հանրապետութեան ներկայ տարածքին վրայ, մասնաւորաբար՝ Դամասկոսի եւ Հալէպի մէջ լոյս ընծայուած հայերէն պարբերականները՝ Փորձանք, Հայ Զայն, Տարագիր, Գաղթական, Պիժակ եւ Եփրատ Հիմնուելով այդ պարբերականներու Հալէպի Վիոլէթ Ճէպէճեան եւ Վիեննայի Միխիթարեան հայրերու գրադարաններուն մէջ գտնուող ոչ-ամբողջական հաւաքածուններուն վրայ, հեղինակը կը ներկայացնէ անոնց մասին մատենագիտական տուեալներ, անոնց բովանդակութիւնն ու ծանօթ աշխատակիցները՝ այդ մասնակի հաւաքածուններուն ընդմէջէն հետաքրքրական տուեալներ մէկտեղելով Մեծ Եղեռնէն վերապրած հայորդիներու ամէնօրեայ հոգսերուն մասին՝ 1918ի վերջին եւ 1919ի սկիզբը՝ մինչեւ վերջիններուս մեծագոյն մասին Կիլիկիա վերադարձն ու այդ պարբերական հրատարակութիւններուն դադրիլը կամ Կիլիկիա տեղափոխուիլը: