

The Press and the Sword: Armenian Journalism Since 1512

Among the first to use the press to fight for nationalism, these freedom-loving pioneers founded printing in the Near East; influenced Soviet journalism; and despite war, genocide, and persecution, operated an effective international communications net across five continents.

► The Armenians have set up in the world's four quarters perhaps more journals per capita than any other people. Their press network numbers in the thousands and extends from the Far East to North and South America and from Europe and the Near East to Africa and Oceania. It has been operating for 459 years.

Mysterious Armenia—land of the Tigris and Euphrates, Mount Ararat and Lakes Van, Seven and Urmia, the biblical Eden—is the only country which helped create both Near Eastern civilization and the U.S.S.R. The Armenians were international pioneers of journalism with a strong desire for freedom: they fought 2,000 wars, one for every two years of their domestically recorded history, and outlasted 30 empires including those of the Pharaohs, Babylonians, Assyrians,

Persians, Alexander and Caesar, the Byzantines and Arabians, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, and the Turks and Tsars. They founded printing and journalism in the Near East, influenced Soviet journalism, and quite possibly were the first to use the printing press as a purely nationalistic vehicle.

Though the Armenoid Sumerians in 3500 B.C. invented writing, the earliest school, and the cylinder seal which might rank as the initial form of printing, the Armenians adopted these 1500 years later at a time when other Armenoid relatives (Subarians, Elamites, Minoans, Kassites, Hurrians, Mitanni, Urartians, Hittites, Phrygians, Lycians, Lydians, Etruscans) had either begun writing or were about to. Distinct stages of Armenian proto-journalism led to the dawn of the Armenian printing age.

The *Beveragir*, or cuneiform recording era (2000-600 B.C.), systematized recording and education and created an alliance between scribes and empire. The *Hinagir*, or old alphabet recording era (600 B.C.-A.D. 396) perpetuated the alliance, heightened nationalism, and saw the emergence of the Armenian Apostolic Church, earliest in Christendom. The *Noragir*, or new alphabet recording era (396-1512), witnessed advanced literacy and an alliance between recording and church.

The Armenians entered the press era in 1512 when they founded the first printing press of any Near Eastern nationality and introduced presses to the Ottoman Empire in 1567, Persia in 1639, Asia Minor in 1676, and Armenia

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and the Caucasus in 1771. In 1794 the Armenians founded the first newspaper of any Near Eastern people.

About a century later in 1902 they became the first Near Easterners to enter communism by developing Bolshevik journalism in the Caucasus through such revolutionaries as Stepan Shaumian, Suren Spandarian, Kamo der Bedrossian and Anastas Mikoyan. Stalin, a fellow Caucasian, was himself a disciple of Shaumian and Spandarian, and the Caucasian mountaineering background they shared ruled Communism for decades.

Since the late 18th century, Armenian journalism has been mainly revolutionary. It survived the genocide policy of the Turks who massacred almost the entire nation in World War I. In 1920 East Armenia became Soviet; West Armenia, now largely populated by Turkified and Kurdified Armenians, remains under Turkish and Iranian rule.

Gautahai Presses

Those remaining in Armenia are called *Haik* (Armenian) and form the majority of the world's seven million Armenians, but there is a tradition of migration as forced exiles, missionaries and adventurers. These latter are termed *Gautahai*, literally *Outside Armenians*, or colonists. They have played a key role in journalism since, with the fall of the Crusading Kingdom of Lesser Armenia on the Mediterranean in 1375, the country's independence ceased until 1918. Often living in lands freer than their tragic homeland the *Gautahai* were able to keep Armenia abreast of foreign developments long after the Fertile Crescent was no longer the hub of world civilization.

¹ Garegin Levonian, *Hayotz Barperagen Manula* (Yerevan, Armenia: HSKhH Lusavorudyan Zhoghovurdagan Gomisaryat, 1934), p. xvii, col. 1.

² *Ibid.*, p. xvii, col. 2.

³ H. Kurdian, "A History of Armenian Printing," *Armenian Review* (Boston: Summer 1955) p. 115, col. 1.

⁴ G. W. Abgarian, *The Matenadaran* (Yerevan, Armenia: Armenian State Publishing House, 1962), p. 28.

⁵ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. xvii, col. 2.

16th Century Presses

During this period the *Gautahai* established six printing presses in Italy and the Ottoman Empire. Venice, Rome and Constantinople had been ancient *Gautahai* centers especially since early Christian times when Armenian dynasties (Heraclian, Isaurian, Macedonian) ruled the Byzantine Empire for centuries, and Armenian soldiers, artisans and traders settled the Empire in great numbers.

The father of Armenian printing and thereby the father of Near Eastern printing was the *Gautahai* merchant of Venice Hakop Meghabardian who printed, 1512-1513, five Armenian books illustrated in black and red: *Barzadumar* (Calendar), 118 pages; *Badarak* (Mass Ritual), 88 pages; *Urpatagirk* (Friday Book), 108 pages; *Aghtark* (Astrology Horoscope), 384 pages; and *Yerkagirk* (Song Book), 160 pages.¹ The deacon Abgar Tokatian also printed in Venice, 1564-1565, two more Armenian Church books.²

An engraver named Hotorian became father of Ottoman or Turkish printing when he set up an Armenian press in 1567 in Constantinople, 56 years before the Greeks. But the Turks, fearing an Armenian revival, soon shut it down for its emphasis on freedom.³ Italy's greater hospitality encouraged Hovhanes Derzenian to set up Armenian presses in 1584 in Venice and Rome.⁴ However the daring Tokatian, who had set up the 1564 Venice press, moved to Constantinople where he established another Armenian press in 1587.⁵

Because most Armenian books printed on these six *Gautahai* presses were religious, their underlying theme remained patriotism: the Armenian Apostolic Church was a national institution geared toward preserving Armenian consciousness.

17th Century Presses

The *Gautahai* during this era established 17 presses in Poland, Italy,

France, Persia, Holland, the Ottoman Empire and Germany.

The first Armenian presses in Poland were set up in Lvov in 1616 and 1640 for the nearly half-million Gautahai living in the region as forced exiles from the great Armenian medieval capital Ani, destroyed by the Turks in the 11th century. Jesuit suppression of the Apostolic Church created further migrations to western Europe and the need for more presses.⁶ Italy, the oldest center of Armenian printing, witnessed new presses in Rome in 1623, Milan in 1624, Leghorn in 1640 and 1643, and Padua in 1690.⁷ In France the Gautahai established presses in Paris in 1633 and 1653 and Marseilles in 1640 and 1673.⁸ More Armenian presses saw light in Amsterdam, Holland, in 1655 and 1660,⁹ and in Leipzig, Germany in 1680.¹⁰ Books dealt with Armenian patriotic history, Apostolic theology, Armenian-Latin dictionaries, rhetoric and freedom from Turkish oppression for Armenia.

But Gautahai pioneering proved most significant in the Near East. The first press in the history of Persia (Iran) was established in 1639 in the Armenian language by the priest Khatchadurian in Nor Jougha (New Julfa), the city founded near Ispahan by forced Armenian exiles. Khatchadurian thereby became the father of Persian or Iranian printing.¹¹ Further west in Smyrna (Izmir), Ottoman Empire, Armenians set up in 1676 the first press in Asia Minor or Anatolia,¹² and in 1677 another Armenian press was born in Constantinople.¹³

18th Century Presses

The 13 Gautahai printing presses of this period were set up in Italy, England, India, Austria, Russia and Persia. Purchase of San Lazaro island in Venice in 1717 by the Armenian religious Mekhitarian Brotherhood set off a printing chain reaction. Presses saw light there in 1717 and 1788 and upon establishment of another Mekhitarian branch in Vienna, Armenian

presses were born in the Austrian capital in 1774 and two years later in Trieste, then under Austria.¹⁴ When Lord Byron in 1816 decided to learn the Armenian language, then considered by fundamentalists to have been the tongue of Adam, he studied under the Mekhitarians on their Venetian island.¹⁵ Today the artistic qualities of the Mekhitarian presses are among the finest in Venice and Vienna. They are also the third largest of the Armenian religious presses of the world, ranking after the Armenian Apostolic Throne of Ejmiadzin in Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate of Jerusalem.¹⁶

England's first Armenian press was established in London in 1736 as a Gautahai conduit but proved insignificant since the Teutonic countries seldom attracted the people of Ararat.¹⁷ However in 1772 wealthy Hakop Shahamirian founded an Armenian press in British-ruled Madras, India, where Gautahai had lived since the 8th century. Shahamirian, who blamed much of Armenia's historic woes on its selfish monarchies, published works calling for creation of a democratic Armenian republic centered first in East Armenia, then gradually emancipating West Armenia from Turkish rule "because there is nothing sweeter among the sayings of men than the word freedom."¹⁸ A second Armenian press was set up in the Indian city in

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ O. Schutz, "Nicholas Misztotfalusi Kis and the Armenian Book Printing," *Nor Ashkhar* (New York: Sept. 17, 1960), p. 4, col. 2.

⁹ Vahan Kurkjian, *A History of Armenia* (New York: Vantage, 1958), p. 454.

¹⁰ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. xvii, col. 2.

¹¹ Kurdian, *op. cit.*, p. 115, col. 2.

¹² Abgarian, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹³ Joseph Shipley, *Encyclopedia of Literature* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946) p. 60, col. 1.

¹⁴ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. xviii, col. 2.

¹⁵ Kurkjian, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁷ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. xviii, col. 2.

¹⁸ Vartges Aharonian, "The Armenian Emancipatory Struggle," *Armenian Review* (Boston: Spring 1954), Part II, p. 56, col. 1-2.

1789 by the priest Harutyun Shmavonian whose fame later rested on founding the first Armenian newspaper;¹⁹ a less important Gautahai press was born in Calcutta in 1796.²⁰

Archbishop Prince Hovsep Arghutian, scion of the royal Zakarian dynasty and primate of all Armenians in Russia, established the first Armenian press in that land, 1783, in St. Petersburg (Leningrad). In 1784 he also set up a Gautahai press in Nor Nakhichevan (Rostov-on-Don) on the Russian sea of Azov, a city he founded for the thousands of Armenians who lived in the Crimea as exiles from Turkish oppression; it received another press in 1787.²¹ Astrakhan, Armenian Apostolic diocesan headquarters in Russia, obtained an Armenian press in 1796. Prince Arghutian, decorated by Catherine the Great for war services against the Turkish invaders of Armenia, printed patriotic and Apostolic works and negotiated for re-creation of an Armenian royal state, centered in East Armenia. Its flag would be red, green and blue with a coat of arms consisting of an Armenian eagle flanked by two lions, but the plan evaporated upon Russian involvement in European affairs.²² Birth of a second Armenian press in 1787 in Nor Jougha, Persia, completed the century's Gautahai printing network.²³

The Haik Press

Armenia, lagging behind the Gautahai in printing, received its first press 259 years after Meghabardian's pioneering achievement in Venice in 1512. Five factors forced such unprecedented delay. First, Armenia during the 16th,

17th and 18th centuries was a war-ravaged battleground put to the sword by the Turks and Persians. Second, it did not exist as an independent political country, hence lacked city, provincial and national backing for presses. Third, Armenia was under the rule of alien Turkish Moslems whose religion barred the new art of printing, especially when drawings were reproduced, since Islam maintains stipulations against human representation in art. Fourth, the Turkish rulers sensed that printing would heighten Haik nationalism at a time when the sultan wanted to assimilate the Armenian Christians. Fifth, printing was linked to urbanization and the invading Turks, finding the large technological cities of imperial and medieval Armenia incompatible with their nomadic way of life, denuded the forests and essentially converted the cities into ghost towns and grazing lands through destruction. While the West experienced economic and scientific advances, Armenia under the Turks was pushed back into a retrogressive feudalism which sapped urban vitality.

Under such conditions the first press in Armenia was founded in Ejmiadzin in 1771, by Simyon I, Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, who thereby became father of the press in Armenia and the Caucasus. Lacking support from any Christian country and partitioned by the two Moslem empires of Turkey and Persia, Armenia, he reasoned, must seek reassurance from within and a Haik printing press could help. Since deliveries of paper from Europe to Armenia were often confiscated by the Turks, Simyon called upon the Gautahai of India and Persia to aid the Haik in building a paper factory in Armenia. The project began on June 28, 1775, and by 1777 Armenia had its first paper factory. Shortly after Simyon's death in 1780, however, Moslem hordes destroyed both the printing press and the paper factory and the Haik again had to re-

¹⁹ Hovhannes Bedrossian, *Hai Barperagan Mamuli Bibliografia* (Yerevan, Armenia: Bedagrabalad, 1956), Vol. I, p. 1, col. 2.

²⁰ "First Armenian Presses," *The Armenian Church* (New York: Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, August 1959), p. 1, col. 4.

²¹ Dikran Boyajian, *The Pillars of the Armenian Church* (Watertown, Mass: Baikar 1962) pp. 256-7.

²² *Ibid*, pp. 259-60.

²³ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. xviii, col. 1.

linquish the printing baton to the Gautahai.²⁴

*Analysis of Armenian Presses,
1512-1796*

This 284-year period saw 37 Armenian presses established in 22 cities in 12 countries at the rate of one every eight years as cultural-nationalism vehicles. Conditions in the homeland proved so inhospitable that the Gautahai set up 36 printing presses whereas the Haik could establish only one. (See Table 1).

Each succeeding century saw Armenian presses distributed further east and west of Armenia. The widest geographical extent of presses was from Italy to the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century when six presses were set up, France to Persia in the 17th century when 17 presses were founded (the most prolific century), and England to India in the 18th century when 14 presses were established.

Urban distribution was relatively balanced: one city (Venice) had five Armenian printing presses; one (Constantinople) had three; nine (Rome, Lvov, Paris, Nor Jougha, Marseilles, Leghorn, Madras, Amsterdam, Nor Nakhichevan) had two; and 11 (Milan, Smyrna, Leipzig, Padua, London, Ejmiadzin, Vienna, Trieste, St. Petersburg, Calcutta, Astrakhan) had one. National distribution proved less even: one country (Italy) had 11 Armenian printing presses; three (Ottoman Empire, France, Russia) had four; one (India) had three; four (Poland, Persia, Holland, Austria) had two; and three (Germany, England, Armenia) had one.

As missionaries of the press to the Near East, the Armenians provided a link between East and West, and this early golden age saw such a firm base laid for the modern Armenian international press network that a 20th century historian could write:

Subsequently, all great cities of the world have come to have their printing establishments equipped with Armenian

TABLE 1

Expansion of Armenian Press Network,
1512-1796

Region	Presses	Cities	Countries
West Europe	21	12	6
Near East	7	4	3
East Europe	6	4	2
Far East	3	2	1
Totals	37	22	12

type, and there is hardly a country today where a book in that language could not be turned out.²⁵

Gautahai Journalism, 1794-1858

Suffering in Armenia again forced the Gautahai to outdistance the Haik in journals as had been done in printing presses, and 46 newspapers were rapidly established in 13 cities in India, Italy, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Georgia, Austria, Malaya and France at the rate of one every 16 months. Average life-span during this 64-year period was 11 years, ranging in longevity from one year to 128. Their generally short existence was due to political oppression, lack of funds, and in the case of some poorly geared newspapers lack of readership. Nonetheless several stand out.

On October 16, 1794, Harutyun Shmavonian, the priest who inspired the 1789 Madras press, printed in the same city the first newspaper in Armenian history, the monthly *Azdarar* (Intelligencer). As this was also the first newspaper of a Near Eastern people, Shmavonian is considered the father of Armenian and of Near Eastern Journalism. It featured news from Armenia and the freedom movement; births, baptisms, marriages and deaths of Gautahai; items on the French Revolution; and commodity prices. It even took an editorial stand supporting

²⁴ Boyajian, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-51.

²⁵ Jacques deMorgan, *A History of the Armenian People* (Boston: Hairenik, undated), p. 364.

George Washington and the American experiment.²⁶

The Mekhitarian publications of Venice also set trends: *Daregrutyun* (Year's Writing) became the first annual in 1799²⁷ and the erudite 1843 monthly *Bazmaveb* (Polyhistor) remains the oldest continuously published periodical in Armenian history and the era's sole survivor.²⁸ The significance of another Venice monthly, *Didak Buzandian* (Byzantine Telescope) lies in its founding in 1808 by an *ungerutyun* or comraderie, a fraternal organization that became characteristic of some Gautahai journalism. These cultural clubs, drawn from prominent and nationalistic Gautahai, entered the newspaper field as sponsors of publications, sometimes becoming parties of revolutionary activity. It became the first bi-monthly in 1814, the first bi-weekly in 1815, and the first journal to be written in vernacular as opposed to classical Armenian.²⁹

In 1815 *Arevelian Dzanutzmantz* (Eastern Acquainter) of Astrakhan, Russia became the first weekly.³⁰ The first Armenian daily appeared in 1840 when Ghukas Baldazarian founded in Smyrna, Ottoman Empire, one of the century's most influential Gautahai papers, *Arshaluys Araratian* (Dawn of Ararat). Originally conservative and carrying on its nameplate the motto "Patriotism-Scholarship-Brotherhood," the paper took on a decidedly revolutionary cast when Harutyun Svajian became its editor in the 1860s and set up a network of foreign correspondents in

Turkey, Persia, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Italy and India. When he died in 1887 at the hands of the Turks the paper fell with him.³¹ But it contributed to the Armenian reader's interest in foreign affairs.

Another innovator was the republic-minded *Banaser* (Philologist), born in Madras in 1848 as the first tri-monthly.³² The first migratory journal, a peculiarity of Armenian journalism, was the 1855 monthly *Masyatz Aghavni* (Dove of Great Ararat), established in Paris, then moved to Feodosia on the Crimean shores of the Black Sea.³³ The migration or moving of the editorial offices of such journals from one city or country to another resulted from oppression or nostalgia. The provocative 1858 monthly *Husisapail* (Northern Gleam) of Moscow was printed by the Lazarian Academy and inspired a generation of progressives. Its leading writers, Stepanos Nazarian who felt Armenia's future lay in capitalism, and Mikayel Nalbandian who preferred revolutionary socialism, both advocated anti-feudalism and a revamping of church conservatism, but their ideological differences caused a split and the subsequent demise of this 64-80 page newspaper.³⁴

Gautahai Analysis, 1794-1858

Using 1794 as the base year, it required five years for the Gautahai to launch the first annual, 20 for the first bi-monthly, 21 for the first bi-weekly and weekly, 46 for the first daily, and 54 years for the first tri-monthly. Frequencies of four of the 46 newspapers remain unknown as they were suppressed by authorities. There were 15 weeklies, 13 monthlies, eight bi-monthlies, four annuals, one daily and one tri-monthly. The Gautahai had once again become the first journalistic missionaries among the Near Eastern peoples. (Table 2).

Conditions for some newspapermen were so severe that the city and frequency of the 1830 Gautahai journal *Diyezerk* (Cosmos) of India are un-

²⁶ Richard Hovanesian, "Armenian Communities of Southern and Eastern Asia," *Armenian Review* (Boston: Autumn 1962), p. 36, col. 1.

²⁷ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. 3, col. 1.

²⁸ Grikoris Kalemkarian, *Badmutyun Hai Lragrutyun* (Vienna, Austria: Mekhitarian, 1893) p. 99.

²⁹ Bedrossian, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 16, col. 1-p. 17, col. 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 13, col. 2-p. 15, col. 1.

³¹ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. 5, col. 1.

³² Bedrossian, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 135, col. 2-p. 136, col. 1.

³³ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. 9, col. 2.

³⁴ Bedrossian, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 228, col. 1-p. 236, col. 2.

TABLE 2

Armenian Contributions to Near East Journalism

Year	Pioneering Achievement	Armenian Journal	City	Country
1794	First Newspaper	<i>Azdarar</i>	Madras	India
1794	First Monthly	<i>Azdarar</i>	Madras	India
1799	First Annual	<i>Daregrutyun</i>	Venice	Italy
1814	First Bi-monthly	<i>Didak Buzandian</i>	Venice	Italy
1815	First Bi-weekly	<i>Didak Buzandian</i>	Venice	Italy
1815	First Weekly	<i>Arevelian Dzanutzmantz</i>	Astrakhan	Russia
1840	First Daily	<i>Arshaluys Araratian</i>	Smyrna	Ottoman Empire
1843	Oldest Living Publication	<i>Bazmaveb</i>	Venice	Italy
1848	First Tri-monthly	<i>Banaser</i>	Madras	India
1855	First Migratory Journal	<i>Masyatz Aghavni</i>	Paris/Feodosia	France/Russia

known.³⁵ The center of Gautahai journalism became Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire. Urban distribution saw 14 Armenian newspapers in Constantinople; six in Venice; five in Smyrna; three in Calcutta, Tiflis and Vienna; two in Madras, Singapore, Moscow, and Paris; and one in Astrakhan, Bombay and Nicomedia. Nationally there were 20 Armenian newspapers in the Ottoman Empire; seven in India; six in Italy; three in Georgia, Russia and Austria; and two in Malaya and France.

During the Gautahai printing press era (1512-1794), the network hub rested in west Europe. In contrast this early Gautahai journalistic period (1794-1858), saw the Near East become the newspaper lodestone. (Table 3).

Thus, by 1858 the Near East had become the dominant region of Armenian journalism, for in that year the trend of Gautahai periodicals to close in on the heartland at last reached fruition: Armenia itself received its first newspaper.

Haik Journalism, 1858-1920

Several factors consumed the Haik with a spirit of journalism during these 62 years. The vernacular revolution

witnessed the spread of greater literacy. Armenia's salvation was viewed as stemming from the Haik within rather than from the Gautahai without. There was a rise of ideological socialism and nationalism linked to the printed word, followed by growth of revolutionary parties which needed newspapers to reach the people. And the public, traditional lovers of education, recognized in the printed media avenues of further enlightenment. Main parties included *Miutyun i Purkutyun* (Union of Salvation) and *Armenakan* (Armenists), born in Van in 1872 and 1885 respectively; *Bashdban Hairenyatz* (Defenders of the Fatherland), born in Erzerum 1880; *Hunchak* (socialist democrat) of Geneva, Switzerland, 1887; *Dashnak* (national socialist) of Tiflis, Georgia, 1890; *Hai Gomunisdan Gasmagerbutyun* (Armenian Communist Party), born 1902; and *Ramgavar* (capitalist) of Alexandria, Egypt, 1908.³⁶

Factors negative to journalism's rise were burning of cities and massacres by the Turks of the Armenians who be-

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 24, col. 1.

³⁶ Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1963), pp. 80-131, 151-78.

TABLE 3

Expansion of Armenian Newspaper Network,
1794-1858

Region	Armenian Journals	Cities	Countries
Near East	23	4	2
West Europe	11	3	3
Far East	9	4	2
East Europe	3	2	1
Totals	46	13	8

came modern history's first victims of genocide: 2,500,000 Armenians or 75% of the population perished along with journalists and presses from 1914-1917. Armenia's wounds remained open after World War I when the country was instantly plunged from 1917 to 1920 into three more wars with Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, and lastly a civil war which saw Communism triumph.³⁷

Non-Communist Journalism

Despite genocide and destruction, the Haik in their journalistic passion established 126 newspapers in this category in 21 Armenian cities during the period at the rate of one every six months. Average life was three years.

Mkrdich Khrimian became the father of journalism in Armenia when in 1858 he moved his migratory monthly *Ardzvi Vaspurakan* (Eagle of Vaspurakan), founded in Constantinople in 1855, to the ancient Armenian city of his birth, Van.³⁸ Its pages announced his beliefs:

Has there ever been a kingdom or nation on earth which has gained an easy medal for victory without a revolution, without the willingness to

give up lives, without progressing forward.³⁹

Khrimian, eventual Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, founded in similar vein the 1863 monthly *Ardzvik Darono* (Eaglet of Daron) in ancient Moush and entrusted its editorship to his former pupil Garekin Servantzdian.⁴⁰

Thereafter newspapers sprouted throughout the country. Typical of the bloody history of Haik journals was the 1909 Van bi-monthly *Van-Dosp* which ceased publication in 1917 when the Turks massacred the Van Armenians. A year later it was resuscitated in Tiflis with the announcement:

The aim of *Van-Dosp* is to resurrect the tragic and suffering voices from under the ashes of the fatherland and to bring them to the hearts and minds of the living Armenians and their friends. *Van-Dosp* was born in the reality of Turkish Armenia and as a true inheritor of the tradition of the newspaper, which was the voice of Turkish Armenians, it will always mirror and echo their tragedy and sufferings.⁴¹

War forced it to move again in 1919 to Yerevan, the Armenian capital, where it died in the year of its final migration, a victim of renewed warfare.⁴²

The massacres, wars and ensuing famine of the era proved so detrimental to Haik journalism that 62 of the 126 newspapers survived only one year, seven were migratory journals, and the frequencies of 39 are unknown. Forty-eight newspapers were party organs. Only the 1920 monthly *Ejmiadzin* still exists. Exactly two-thirds of the known-frequency newspapers, numbering 86, fell into the weekly, bi-weekly and daily categories, an indication that ambitious editors tried to satisfy an audience seeking to read as many journals as conditions allowed. Distribution among cities was widespread, both in East Armenia and West Armenia.

Yerevan led Armenian cities with 30 newspapers, followed by Gumri

³⁷ V. A. Barsamian, S. B. Boghosian and Sh. R. Harutunian, *Hai Zhoghovurd Badmutyun* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haibedusmanghrad, 1962), pp. 159-70.

³⁸ Bedrossian, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 177, col. 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 178, col. 1.

⁴⁰ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. 14, col. 1.

⁴¹ Hovhannes Bedrossian, *Hai Barberagan Mamuli Bibliografia* (Yerevan, Armenia: Bedagrabalad, 1957), Vol. II, p. 234, cols. 1-2.

⁴² Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. 70, col. 2.

(26); Shushi (13); Adana (10); Trebizond (9); Van (5); Kars, Ejmiadzin and Gesarya (4); Kharpert, Goris and Sebastya (3); Gandzak, Erzinjan and Erzerum (2); and Moush, Vagharshapat, Ashdarak, Tarsus, Aintab and Girason (1). There were 31 weeklies, 17 bi-weeklies, 14 monthlies, 11 bi-monthlies, 10 dailies, three tri-weeklies and one quarterly.

Pre-Soviet Communist Journalism

Communism was introduced to Armenia and the Near East by Stepan Shaumian in 1902 when he founded the Armenian Communist Party and established in Tiflis that year the newspaper *Broledariad* (Proletariat). This was the first in the Near East. Shaumian, most powerful figure in 20th century Armenian journalism, also founded Bolshevism in the Caucasus. He was chief of the Georgian Party and creator of the Azerbaijan Party, a member of Lenin's ruling central committee, Extraordinary Commissar of the Caucasus, and created and ruled in 1918 the Baku Soviet or Baku Commune, first Communist government in Caucasian and Near Eastern history. Later that year he died in battle.⁴³ As Lenin's advisor on the Caucasus, Shaumian joined the Bolshevik faction at its birth in 1903 and organized Armenian and Georgian revolutionary publishing committees. In antiquity Georgia had been Armenia's northernmost province and therefore the two peoples were closely related. In 1903 Shaumian printed *Broledariad Terikneritz* (Proletarian Pamphlets),⁴⁴ and that year combined the Armenian *Broledariad* with the Georgian *Bretzela* (Fight) to form the new Caucasian Party organ, *Broledariad Grive* (Proletarian Fight). In 1904 Stalin joined the paper's editorial staff as Shaumian's lieutenant.⁴⁵

Shaumian founded the 1906 Tiflis dailies *Gaidz* (Spark) and *Nor Khosk* (New Voice), aided by Suren Spandarian.⁴⁶ The latter, termed the "Un-

tamable" by Trotsky for his Bolshevik zealotness, came from a journalistic Armenian family: his father had edited, 1884-1908, the Tiflis Armenian political-literary journal *Nor Dar* (New Day).⁴⁷ Spandarian, also in Lenin's ruling central committee, subsequently became Bolshevik leader of Siberia where he was Stalin's superior. He too died in battle.⁴⁸

The Armenian Party often obtained printing presses and equipment through the efforts of Bolshevism's famed revolutionary guerrilla leader, Simyon Arshak der Bedrossian (fighting name Kamo), whom Soviets admire as a "medieval hero."⁴⁹ Born in Stalin's home town, the Armenian Kamo remained, according to some, the only person for whom the Georgian truly cared.⁵⁰ Kamo's exploits were admired by Lenin, whose wife Krupskaya wrote in her memoirs:

Dressed in Caucasian costume, with rows of white-tipped cartridge cases, he carried some spherical object in a napkin. Every one in the restaurant left off eating . . . "He has brought a bomb!" . . . But it turned out to be a watermelon. Kamo had brought the melon and some sugared nuts as a present for Ilyich (Lenin) and me. "My aunt sent them," he explained rather shyly. This fighting man, with his colossal courage . . . Kamo often traveled between Finland and Petersburg, always going fully armed. Mother used to tie his revolvers on his back each time with particular care.⁵¹

The 1918 Tiflis weekly *Baikar*

⁴³ Kh. Barseghian and B. Ohanianian, *Sd. Shahumian* (Yerevan Armenia: Haibedhrad, 1955), Vol. I, pp. 10-13.

⁴⁴ Hovhannes Bedrossian, *Hai Barperagan Mamuli Bibliografia* (Yerevan, Armenia: Bedagrabalad, 1954), Vol. III, p. 2, col. 2-p. 3, col. 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 3, col. 2-p.4, col. 1.

⁴⁶ Levonian, *op. cit.*, p. 49, col. 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 26, col. 1.

⁴⁸ Marietta Shahinian, *Journey Through Soviet Armenia* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), p. 58.

⁴⁹ Bertram Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution* (Boston: Beacon, 1955), p. 391.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 390-5.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 465.

TABLE 4

Armenian Communist Newspaper Network,
1902-1920

Year	Journals Founded	Frequency	Journals
1902	1	Irregular	11
1903	3	Daily	6
1906	3	Weekly	4
1913	1	Bi-weekly	1
1914	3	Tri-weekly	1
1917	4		
1918	4		
1919	1		
1920	3		

(Struggle) had on its staff another Armenian revolutionary journalist, Anastas Mikoyan, who assisted Shaumian.⁵² Mikoyan helped to establish the Armenian S.S.R. and the Azerbaijan S.S.R., and became architect of Soviet trade, a Politburo member, and eventually President of the U.S.S.R. His brother Artem Mikoyan, once a journalist also, designs the MIG fighter planes which bear his name. In 1917 Shaumian and Anastas Mikoyan founded the Baku Armenian daily *Sotzial Demograd* (Social Democrat).⁵³

Characteristically those Caucasians who played major leadership roles in the Soviet Union (Shaumian, Spandarian, Kamo, Stalin, Mikoyan, Beria, Ordzhonikidze) had been molded by a unique journalism. Caucasian history with its suffering and violence, its simultaneous antiquity and modernity, produced a breed of activist revolutionary journalists, warriors in the literal sense.

During the 18-year period, 1902-1920, the Armenian Communist Party established 23 newspapers in seven cities in three countries at the rate of one every nine months. (Table 4).

The Armenian Emperor of Byzantium, Maurice, in A.D. 575 placed

upon the Georgian throne Guaram Bagradunian of the royal house of north Armenia, and this Armenian dynasty of the Bagradunians ruled Georgia for more than 12 centuries until 1801 when Russia annexed it. Thus Tiflis, the Georgian capital, figured prominently in Armenian journalism because Armenians outnumbered Georgians there and controlled it, making the city the largest Armenian colony in the Caucasus.

The Armenian Communist Party established 13 newspapers in Tiflis, three in Yerevan and Baku, two in Gumri, and one in Shushi and Haghbat. Georgia had 13 Armenian Communist Party newspapers, Armenia had seven and Azerbaijan three.

Journalism in the Armenian S.S.R.

The Transcaucasian Federation consisting of East Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan was established on September 20, 1917, by anti-Communists, and on May 28, 1918, the Haik segment of it declared itself the independent Republic of Armenia, largely ruled by the right-wing Dashnak party. During the ensuing civil war the Armenian Communists defeated the Dashnaks and on November 29, 1920, established the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic which eventually became part of the U.S.S.R.

Recognizing the importance of journalism in the spread of Communist ideology, the Armenian Party leader

TABLE 5

Book Publishing in the Armenian S.S.R.

Year	Titles	Copies ⁵⁴
1947	301	2,353,000
1948	342	2,500,000
1949	501	3,755,000
1950	608	4,000,000
1951	870	4,532,000
1961	2,500	6,832,000
1965	3,700	10,000,000
1968	4,600	14,000,000

⁵² Bedrossian, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 283, col. 2.

⁵³ Bedrossian, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 58, col. 1.

TABLE 6

Circulation of Periodicals in the Armenian S.S.R.

Year	Newspapers	Newspaper Annual Circulation	Magazines	Magazine Annual Circulation ⁵⁸
1940	56	49,000,000	37	700,000
1961	90	86,000,000	71	2,500,000
1968	115	126,000,000	106	5,000,000

TABLE 7

Circulation Trends of Three Largest Dailies in the Armenian S.S.R.

Year	Sovyetagan Haitsdan	Yerevan	Avangard ⁵⁹
1961	125,000	40,000	35,000
1965	170,000	56,000	49,000
1968	210,000	78,000	67,000

Aleksan Miasnigian in September 1921 signed a government decree making it mandatory that illiteracy be wiped out. Initially every man and woman between the ages 16-50 had to learn to read and write Armenian. Later this was expanded to include children, and the literacy drive became so intense that by 1940 Armenia achieved 100% literacy. The Communists claim that Georgia, largely because of its huge Armenian urban population, and Armenia lead the world in higher education with 38 and 32 college graduates respectively per 1,000 population.⁵⁴ Armenia has 2,500,000 population and its capital Yerevan, 800,000.

Books in Armenian S.S.R.

Armenia maintains five major printing establishments:

1) *Hai Bedagan Hradaragchutyun* (Armenian Government Publishing House), also known as *Haibedhrad*, is the nation's largest, and produces books dealing with fine arts, politics, history and science. It was founded in 1920 and maintains 45 printing plants throughout the country, each equipped with rotaries, lithographic equipment and offset machinery for color.

2) *Usumnagan-Mangavarzhagan Hradaragchutyun* (Scholarly-Pedagogical

Publishing House), also called *Usmanhrad* Publishes textbooks.

3) *Gidutyuneri Agademiayi Hradaragchutyun* (Academy of Sciences Publishing House), also known as *Gidaghrad*, prints books written solely by Armenian scientists.

4) *Giughadundesagan Hradaragchutyun* (Rural Economics Publishing House), also called *Giughrad*, publishes books dealing with the rural economy.

5) *Hamalusarani Hradaragchutyun* (University Publishing House), also known as *Hamhrad*, prints the works and lectures of its own scientists and professors.⁵⁵

Detailed figures for book publishing in both Armenias prior to World War I are unavailable because of the massacres and general chaos of the period. East Armenia in 1913 printed 80,000 copies of books; there are no statistics for publishing in West Armenia. (Table 5).

Journals in Armenian S.S.R.

The aspirant in journalism in Armenia must enter the *Haduk* (special) department of the university in that profession and upon graduation begins work on the particular periodical of his academic specialization. Every newspaper and magazine has its own *Golegia* (staff), normally consisting of

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⁵⁴ Barsumian, Boghosian and Harutunian, *op. cit.*, pp.287-8.

⁵⁵ Letter to author, May 29, 1969, from Ado Grikor Adoian, Union of Armenian Journalists, Yerevan, Armenia.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Interview by author with Badrik Selian, editor, *Sovyetagan Haitsdan*, Yerevan, Armenia, Oct. 20, 1966.

⁵⁸ Adoian, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ Adoian, *op. cit.*

other determinants affect the voter's decision. Such factors as incumbency, partisanship and the amount of attention given candidates and issues by radio, television and the news columns of newspapers all tend to diminish the influences of newspaper editorial endorsements.⁷

It appears that a newspaper with a reputation for forthright editorializing on local politics (eg. the *Bridgeport Post*), will probably be more influential on its readers than those papers which avoid local controversy. "By failing to editorialize on local problems . . . newspapers forfeit the opportunity to exercise a vital journalistic function."⁸

Another point to be considered is the fact that in the evening newspaper market in Bridgeport, the *Post* has no competition. ". . . a socially responsible publisher, with a competent staff, can win increasing public acceptance, even though his papers have a local 'monopoly' . . ."⁹

Finally, are there any major differences in the content of "monopoly" dailies resulting from a lack of local competition? Two researchers say No.

. . . the results of the present study support the hypothesis that, in cities of less than 400,000 population, there are no significant differences between competitive and non-competitive dailies in the proportions of non-advertising space devoted to various categories of news, editorial and feature material.¹⁰

It is the author's hope that similar studies be undertaken by others to test the findings of the Bridgeport survey.

⁷ James E. Gregg, "Newspaper Editorial Endorsements and California Elections 1948-62," *JOURNALISM QUARTERLY*, 42:4 (Fall 1965), p. 535.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 538.

⁹ Raymond B. Nixon, "Changes in Reader Attitudes Toward Daily Newspapers," *JOURNALISM QUARTERLY*, 31:4 (Fall 1954), p. 428.

¹⁰ Raymond B. Nixon and Robert L. Jones, "The Content of Non-Competitive vs. Competitive Newspapers," *JOURNALISM QUARTERLY*, 33:3 (Summer 1956), p. 314. (Emphasis added.).

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5-11 persons in addition to its editor-in-chief. All *Golegia* are controlled by the Armenian Communist Party central committee's press section which appoints and discharges its members.⁵⁷

At year's end new subscriptions for periodicals are accepted for the coming year. These can be for time intervals of three, six and 12 months; 85% of magazines and newspapers are delivered by subscription, 15% are sold at book stands. The Armenians emphasize aggregate annual circulation figures for their periodicals. These are compiled by the following formula: annual circulation = number of journals x number of issues per year x circulation per issue. (Table 6).

The three largest Armenian dailies are *Sovyetagan Haiasdan* (Soviet Armenia), official organ of the Armenian Communist Party central committee and the Armenian S.S.R. Soviet of Workers Deputies; *Yerevan*, organ of the Armenian Communist Party Yere-

van city committee and city Soviet of Workers Deputies; and *Avangard* (Vanguard), organ of the central committee of Armenia's Young Communist Union. The Armenian Communist habit of lumping circulations makes it difficult to view their general press in a meaningful Western context. (Table 7).

Though the Gautahai still maintain a widespread international press network, it remains small when compared to that of the Haik today. The great Armenoids of the past—Sumerians, Hittites, Lydians—have long since perished. Only the enigmatic Armenians have survived to continue the ancient ways of the mountainous Fertile Crescent, albeit in modern garb. In the columns of their unique newspapers Communists mingle freely with Apostolic saints and imperial pagan heroes in a strange blend of the old new. And out of the ashes of a brutal history the tiny Armenians rose to make a contribution to the world of journalism.