Constructing the New Armenian Woman: Health and Hygiene in the Soviet Armenian Women's Magazine *Hayastani Ashkatavoruhi* (1924-1927)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how the Soviet gender policy was narrated in *Hayastani Ashkatavoruhi* [Armenian Female Worker], the women's magazine, during 1924-1927. The main focus of the thesis is the "Health" section of the magazine because this is one section amongst others that was aimed to construct the New Armenian Woman's body in a desirable way. This thesis aims to examine the impact of hygiene on body formation. It also attempts to open up conversation about hygiene as a neglected component left out of scholars' attention.

The main question of the thesis is: what messages did HA's "Health" section convey to Armenian women? An important component to approaching this question was to understand how the Soviet gender policy constructed the Armenian woman's body through hygiene directives. My analysis led me to finally argue that the "Health" section was shaping Armenian women as subordinate to Armenian men, as well as subordinate to Russian women.

The thesis demonstrates this subordination as a result of the translation of health and hygiene directives by the "Health" section's authors for the Armenian audience. This translation had two dimensions. First, it turned out that even though the magazine promoted public infrastructures to organize domestic work and childcare, the "Health" section authors delegated these issues to women. Second, while translating, the authors referred to Moscow and the Russian woman as an example to follow, thus, shaping the New Armenian Woman as secondary to her Russian counterpart. This was also visible in the vision of the editor in chief of the magazine, who located the New Armenian Woman's place between "the West" and "the East".

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH AND THE WORD COUNT

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

Body of thesis (all chapters excluding notes, references, appendices, etc.): **20 648** words.
Entire manuscript: **28 033** words.

Signed _____ Anna Muradyan

(Signature appears on the hard copy submitted to the library)

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: The Path to the Research Question

In the middle of the school year in 1983, when I was a pupil[1] in the primary school, a woman in a white coat entered our classroom and started to check our heads. It was a usual procedure, and once or twice a year somebody would come to check our heads. They would also "ask" us to put our hands with opened fingers on the desk, and they would pass one by one next to us and would attentively check our nails to see if anyone had dirty under their nails; sometimes, teachers also would do that. Very rarely, some of the teachers would have the entire class stand in front of the blackboard and check if our shoes or boots were muddy or not.

After this particular check, I was told to ask my mother to visit the school and see my teacher. It turned out that I had lice on my head, and it took my mother three years to rid my head free of lice. Each summer they would shave my head and I would go to school in September with semi-grown hair along with many other pupils; nonetheless, as my mother would put it, my hair would grow with the nits on their roots. Finally, she found out the solution. She made a mixture of oil and insecticide that was used to kill insects found on grape leaves, greased this mixture onto my head, wrapped it with a chunk of fabric and left it for a night. This was the way to get rid of lice.

Having a louse on the head or dirt under the nails were not merely matters of our appearance or body conditions. They were signifiers: signifiers of being a good or a bad pupil. It was in the air, and all of us knew that because teachers all the time reminded us of the importance of being clean.

[1] In Soviet textbooks on the English language, anybody studying at the school was called a "pupil", and "student" was used to refer to the ones who studied in universities. Thus, I would like to keep the term pupil as I learnt it at my school.

It was unimaginable that any good pupil, let alone excellent ones, would have dirty nails, disheveled hair, or would attend the school with a crumpled uniform, no matter female or male.

While the stress was on cleanliness and tidiness, there was no official way to learn anything about how we should treat our bodies as female. Yet, when I grew to my teenage years and got my first menses, I had already learnt some amount of information through private "sources" but not any official discourse. One of my "sources" was my semi-Russian cousin who was younger than me by three years. My uncle's wife was Russian and, consequently, his two daughters attended Russian-oriented school. In each of the biggest cities of Armenia, there used to be a Russian-oriented school intended for the local Russian population but the children of high-ranking officials also attended that school. We knew that this school was somewhat different from other, ordinary Armenian schools.

The difference was not only in the language or the level of knowledge pupils learnt in that Russian-oriented school. We knew that this school was considered as the best one in our city, and merely being a pupil of that school already assumed a huge context. However, the matter I am interested in stressing here was that they had more freedom in a number of things. For instance, as we sometimes met during the school Olympiads, we saw that they were more courageous to speak to the organizers; female pupils managed to wear more feminine clothes; their haircuts were sometimes modern; and what is more important, in the higher grades, they started to slightly use makeup. It was unthinkable to see any female pupil at our school in makeup. In other words, pupils of the Russian-oriented school seemed more "advanced" than we.

My cousin told me that her mother advised her to wash her face with milk because it kept the skin look smoother. She wore a special kind of underwear and told me that it helped the skin and muscles of her hips grow tighter. In general, she paid more attention to her body than I did. Both of us shared the same understanding about cleanliness of the body, but nonetheless, if keeping

my body clean was the only necessary condition for my welfare, for her it was also necessary but not sufficient.

When I grew a bit older, I realized that my body condition and surroundings had direct influence on me. I realized that I am dependent on whether my body was clean or in need of bathing; whether the house, the room, or the table where I live, work, or eat were clean or not. I believe that hygiene and ideas of cleanliness are important dimensions of subject formation, and different perspectives on these issues construct different kinds of identities.

I found out that this field was not studied well. There is a huge body of literature examining different aspects of the Soviet Union as a kind of organization of power. The impact of the Soviet gender policy on women has also been studied significantly; a considerable amount of attention has been paid to the creation of the New Soviet Woman from different perspectives as well.[2] Whilst the construction of the New Soviet Woman was studied in terms of taking into account her role in nation building or representation in women's magazine, body construction has been paid less attention. As such, the impact of health and hygiene directives on the body construction is almost neglected. The absence of research in this area is all the more puzzling because these directives were one way in which the Soviet New Woman's body was intended to be constructed.

The formation of the body is a fundamental dimension of any political order. American theorist David Halperin claims in his work "The Democratic body: Prostitution and Citizenship in Classical Athens, 1990" that the man's body in ancient Greece was a symbol of citizenship.[3]

[2] Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53* (New York: Palgrave, 1999).
Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989).
Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).
Wendy Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[3] David Halperin. "The Democratic Body: Prostitution and Citizenship in Classical Athens," in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 88-113.

Examining the concept of the body formation in fascism ideology, George Mosse, known for Nazi studies, points out that the man's body should be appropriate to fascism ideology of male beauty: "The true fascist man must through his looks, body, and comportment, project the ideal of male beauty."[4]

Body construction in the Soviet Union for the Russian case was studied by Tricia Starks. In looking for appropriate anglophone and Russian language literature, this was the only work that I was able to find. In *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* Starks shows how the Soviet regime specifically shaped hygiene policies to move its citizens toward a desirable ideal of the purified body.[5]

In case of Armenia, there is a significant dearth on women's history in terms of both pre-Soviet and Soviet time periods in general. For a long time the only Anglophone literature on early Soviet Armenia was American-Armenian historian Mary Matossian's monograph, *The Impact of Soviet Polices in Armenia* (1962), in which she evaluates the impact of Communist policies on Armenia within three distinct periods: 1921-1929; 1929-1936; 1937-1953. And even though other scholarly written literature became available later, her book still remains the only source to have even one small subchapter on Armenian women and the *Kin bazhin* [the local branch of the *Zhenotdel*] of those years. Construction of the New Armenian Woman was also discussed in a recently written article, in which authors claim that Soviet gender policies were not uniform across the Soviet Union.[6] They challenge the perception that "the history of gender in the South Caucasus is a straightforward narrative of Soviet "modernization" versus indigenous 'tradition.'"[7]

[4] George L. Mosse "Fascist Aesthetics and Society: Some Considerations," *Journals of Contemporary History* (SAGE, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi,) vol. 31, issue 2 (1996): 247.
[5] Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).
[6] Jo Laycock and Jeremy Johnson. "Creating 'New Soviet Women' in Armenia? Gender and Tradition in the Early Soviet South Caucausus." in *Gender in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe and the USSR*, ed. by Catherine Baker. (New York: Palgrave, 2016).
[7] Ibid., 65.

Yet nothing is written about the Soviet Armenian body construction or about the impact of hygiene on this construction. Thus, the significance of my work is, first, to contribute to literature about the formation of the New Soviet Woman in terms of body construction, generally, and second, to fill the existing gap in the history of Soviet Armenian women, particularly. This present thesis, also attempts to open up conversation about hygiene as neglected component left out of scholars' attention.

1.2 Sources and Methodology

In my thesis, I will explore how the Soviet gender policy was narrated in *Hayastani Ashkatavoruhi* [Armenian Female Worker, hereafter HA], the women's magazine, during 1924-1927.[8] I will be focusing on the "Health" section of the magazine because this is one section amongst others which was aimed to construct the New Armenian Woman's body in a desirable way. The section not only gave specific advice to women on how to take care of their bodies, house, clothes, and children's hygiene, but also paid considerable amount of attention to how to prevent diseases. While my focus is the "Health" section, I will also examine other sections because health and hygiene issues are intertwined within the whole magazine.

[8] *Hayastani Ashkatavoruhi* (1924-1998), a socio-political, literary illustrated magazine. Initially it was a publication of the *Kin bazhin*, Armenian branch of the *Zhenotdel*, attached to the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party. After the abolition of the *Zhenotdel* in 1930 and the *Kin bazhin* in 1929, the magazine was attached to the Mass Section of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party. The publication frequency was irregular during 1924-1926 with overall number of 18 issues; within 1927-1928 period it was published monthly; during 1930-1932 – twice a month; within 1933-1941 period – monthly, and from July of 1941 to August of 1958 the periodical was not published.
With the beginning of the Great Patriotic War in 1941, publication of all women magazines in Soviet republics apart from *Rabotnitsa* and *Krest'yanka* was ceased, but soon after it started again in different years.
The source: Victoria Smeyukha, *Отечественные Женские Журналы: Историко-Типологический Аспект* [Domestic Female Journals: Historical-Typological Aspect] (Rostov-on-Done: North-Caucasian Scientific Center of Higher School of Southern Federal University, 2011), 114.
HA started to be published again in September 1958 until 1998; it was awarded the "Badge of Honor" in 1974. The magazine was published in A4 format and the number of pages varied from 22 to 65 depending on the issue. Most of the issues used for this thesis consisted of around 40 pages.

The main question of my thesis is: what messages did HA's "Health" section convey to Armenian women? I seek to understand how the Soviet gender policy constructed the Armenian woman's body through hygiene directives through HA during 1924-1927. My analysis leads me to finally argue that the "Health" section was shaping Armenian women as subordinate to Armenian men as well as subordinate to Russian women.

In order to answer my central question, I examined 29 HA issues published between 1924 and 1927. Exploration of this period enabled me to trace the narration of the health and hygiene component of the gender policy from the beginning of the magazine's publication in 1924. Prior to this, no other magazine/newspaper in Armenia published any content about women since the establishment of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia in 1920. There are several reasons why I narrowed my research down to 1927. One reason is the time limitation inherent in writing a thesis. Another reason was that in 1927 Lyusi Targyul supposedly became the editor in chief of the magazine.[9] Thus, a question is whether any changes regarding HA's content occurred during that year.

I am doing textual analysis based on the "examining around" method since health and hygiene issues are narrated not only in HA's "Health" section, but also are intertwined in the whole content. This is almost similar to what U.S. historian Sherry J. Katz's calls "researching around our subjects."[10] In order to explore political activities of socialist-feminist women in Progressive Era California, she had to mine newspapers, manuscript collections, and various types of materials such as government documents, collections of individuals and organizations, because only few of those

[9] Lyusi Targyul is a writer, originally from Western Armenia. There is contradictory information about the year 1927 in the Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia (1974-1986). According to Lyusi Targyul's page in the encyclopedia, she was the editor of the HA magazine in 1927; however, her name is not included in the list of editors on the page of the magazine in the same encyclopedia. Because she was originally from Western Armenia which implies different culture and context from those of Eastern Armenia, I found it interesting to include this year in the present research.

[10] Sherry J. Katz ""Researching around Our Subjects": Excavating Radical Women." *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 1 (2008): 168- 183.

women left archival materials. According to Katz, "researching around" method can be widely used by women's historians to "excavate 'marginalized' or little-known women who left few of their own records."[11] While "researching around subjects," she had to deal with different kinds of materials in "piecing together the whole fabric of early-twentieth-century socialist-feminism in California," however, I remain in the frames of HA, yet, extract the information I am looking for from different sections of the magazine.[12]

While analyzing the articles, I consider them "social events" as suggested by Norman Fairclough. He claims that texts are elements of social events and "bring about changes" by means of processes of meaning-making.[13] Fairclough writes that meaning-making consists of three separable elements: "the production of the text, the text itself, and the reception of the text", and the meanings are constructed through the interaction of these elements.[14] I applied this approach while reading the sources, namely, in order to interpret the articles (reception of the text) I consider the intentions of the Soviet (Armenian) authorities and authors (the production of the text) who published HA (the text itself). Additionally, such a process of interpretation is complex since "meaning-making depends upon not only what is explicit in the text, but also what is implicit."[15] Thus, analyzing the articles, I shall read not only what was directly printed in the text, but also what was assumed and implied.

I will also reflect on the nature of the analyzed source. Historian John Arnold suggests thinking about "bias" in terms of something unavoidable. In *History: A Very Short Introduction* he writes: "Looking for 'bias' (the prejudices of the author, and the way they distort the account) may

[11] Ibid., 170.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Norman Fairclough, *Analyzing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 10.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 11.

suggest that an 'unbiased' position can be found. This is a problem."[16] He claims that all sources are biased, hence, bias is something that has to be embraced rather than eradicated in order to interpret the messages it conveys.[17] Thus in analyzing the content of the magazine I will pay attention to its language considering that it was an official source. Additionally, Arnold suggests thinking about what the document/source provides and what it does not.[18] Hence, examining the content, I will pay attention to not only what the articles tell, but also what they do not.

All the translations from the primary sources, unless otherwise mentioned, are mine. I also use the terms "the West" and "the East" as they were written in the magazine. I would like to make it clear that I am aware of their homogeneous meaning. Also, in my use of the terms Soviet modernity, modernization, modernizer, I would like to explain them according to Ronald Suny's definition. Thus, by saying the Soviet modernization, I understand the process through which an agrarian country grew into an industrial one and the shift from traditional values based on religion to secular ones.[19]

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis will proceed in the following way. Following the Introduction, in the second chapter, I will provide historical background that underpin my analysis of data and will define my theoretical framework. Namely, I will draw brief picture of the history of Armenia and Armenian women's history in the beginning of the 20th century and will present the main features of the Soviet gender policy, its health and hygiene component, and implementation of the gender policy in

[16] John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 67.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ronald Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 135.

Armenia. Next, I will introduce my theoretical framework which is based on several theories, models, and perspectives.

In order to localize the "Health" section within HA, I will devote the third chapter of my work to briefly summarize the main features of the magazine, including main themes. By doing so, my aim is to identify new desirable features directed to shape the New Armenian Woman. I will also provide various statistical data concerning the target group of the magazine, the number of copies published monthly, and the dynamics of increasing of HA's circulation.

The fourth chapter will be devoted to the first editor and founder of the magazine, Flora Vardanyan, one of the heads of the *Kin bazhin*. My aim is to examine the role of her agency in translating Soviet policies for a local audience through the magazine.

The fifth chapter will represent actual textual analysis of the "Health" section. In three subchapters, I will identify the messages that the "Health" section conveyed to Armenian women at two different levels and will interpret their symbolical meaning. In the Conclusion, I will answer the central question of my thesis and discuss my findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

"The lion is a lion, no matter female or male."[20]

In this chapter I will introduce literature which I use in my thesis. I will review here only the publications that provide historical background that underpin my analysis of data and also shape my theoretical framework. Thus, the literature I am reviewing here can be divided into two groups: historical background and theoretical framework.

In the beginning of the first part, I will make a historical excursion in Armenian history in the beginning of the 20th century and Armenian women's history. Then, I will outline the main features of the Soviet gender policy and will narrow down discussions to its health and hygiene component. Finally, I will present how these policies were implemented in Armenia.

In the second part, I will introduce my theoretical framework which consists of several theories and concepts that can be divided into two groups. The first group includes a theoretical framework (Lynne Attwood) and models (Marianne Kamp, Sara Ahmed that I need for my analysis of HA's main features and the editor in chief. In the second group, I advance a theoretical framework to examine health and hygiene issues. It combines two different theoretical perspectives: Tricia Starks's theory on Soviet health and hygiene directives and Orientalism.

[20] A famous quotation from Սաս ն ա ծ ո ե ր ը [The Daredevils of Sasun] Armenian heroic epic poem in four parts. The theme of the epos is the struggle of four generations of Sasun's warriors against Arab rule in the 8th to 10th centuries. Sasun was a region and a city in Western Armenia, currently Batman Province, eastern Turkey. The story of the epos was written down in 1873 by a bishop Garegin Srvandztiants. Its first publication held in Istanbul in1874. *The Daredevils of Sasun* was translated into the languages of all fifteen republics of the Soviet Union, as well as into French and Chinese.

2.1 Historical Background

2.1.1 History of Armenia

The history of Armenian people dates back to the third millennium BC.[21] On the eve of the First World War, Armenia had been divided into two parts between the Ottoman and Russian empires. Around two million Armenians were dispersed in different provinces of the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia in different proportions with Russians, Georgians, and Muslims.[22] The highest concentrations of Armenians were in "Yerevan, 669,000 (60 percent), Elisavetpol,[23] 419,000 (33 percent), Tiflis,[24] 415,000 (28 percent), and Kars,[25] 119,000 (30 percent)."[26] Yerevan was not the cultural center for Eastern Armenians, but cities as Tartu, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Baku, and Tbilisi. This was natural for Russian Armenians, for Yerevan was understood as a relatively unimportant part of their homeland; the focus was on the "eastern Ottoman provinces—Turkish Armenia—the cradle of the nation."[27] Approximately two million Armenians were even more spread in the Ottoman Empire rather than those of the Russian Empire.[28] They were in Istanbul, Cilicia[29], yet, they were mostly concentrated on their historical lands, which formed six eastern Ottoman vilayets [provinces] of Sivas, Erzerum, Kharput, Diarbekir, Bitlis, and Van.[30]

[21] John W. Mason, "Living in the Lie: the Armenian Intelligentsia in the Soviet Union," *Oral History*, vol. 33, no. 2, *Memory Work* (Autumn, 2005), 59.
[22] Richard G. Hovhannisian, *The Republic of Armenia: The First year, 1918-1919* (Los Angeles, Berkley, and London: University of California Press, 1971), 4.
[23] The former name of Ganja, the second largest city of Azerbaijan.
[24] The former name of Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia.
[25] Kars is one of the largest cities of Turkey, around 7-10 km from the North-West border of Armenia. It was one of the capitals of Armenia in the AD 880s. In the beginning of twentieth century it was included in the Russian Empire.
[26] Richard G. Hovhannisian, *The Republic of Armenia: The First year, 1918-1919* (Los Angeles, Berkley, and London: University of California Press, 1971), 4.
[27] Richard G. Hovhannisian, *The Republic of Armenia: The First year, 1918-1919* (Los Angeles, Berkley, and London: University of California Press, 1971), 4.
[28] Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 267.
[29] Cilicia was the south coastal region of Asia Minor and existed as a political entity from Hittite times into the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia during the late Byzantine Empire. Cilicia is due north and northeast of the island of Cyprus and corresponds to the modern region of Çukurova in Turkey.
[30] Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 267.

The crucial moment of history of Turkish Armenians, and overall, history of Armenians, was the Genocide of 1915, the Ottoman government's systematic extermination of Armenians, an estimated million and a half Armenians.[31] The Genocide had enormous impact on constructing Armenian identity and, also, understanding of their past. As Canadian-Armenian political scientist Razmik Panossian explains, the Genocide was a sort of "prism, through which national identity is seen, politics interpreted and culture redefined."[32]

Armenians in the Russian Empire managed to get temporary independence called Democratic Republic of Armenia which existed from 1918 to 1920. This was differently interpreted by Armenian historians. American-Armenian historian Vahan Kurkjian (1863-1961) claims that "The Armenian people was like a mother who had brought a sick child into this world."[33] But according to another American-Armenian historian Richard Hovannisian (born in 1932), "its very existence, was, nevertheless, an amazing accomplishment."[34] However, invasions from Turkish side were continued, and they paved the way for joining Armenia to the Soviet Union. As Mason claims, Russian Armenians perceived Soviet authorities "as protectors rather than conquerors."[35] By 1920 the population of Armenia decreased by 30 percent becoming around 720,000.[36]

In the 1920s, in Soviet Armenia cultural and economic revival started off, initiated by the government of Soviet Armenia which aimed at modernizing and renationalizing Armenians, as American-Armenian historian Ronald Suny points out.[37] He claims that "Soviet modernization

[31] Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia: The First year, 1918-1919* (Los Angeles, Berkeley, and London: University of California Press, 1971), 10; dadrian, 1995, 195.
[32] Razmik Panossian. *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (London:Hurst, 2006), 228.
[33] Vahan M. Kurkjian, *A History of Armenia* (Michigan: Armenian General Benevolent Union, 1958), 477.
[34] Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia: The First year, 1918-1919* (Los Angeles, Berkley, and London: University of California Press, 1971), 38.
[35] John W. Mason, "Living in the Lie: the Armenian Intelligentsia in the Soviet Union", *Oral History*, vol. 33, no. 2, Memory Work (Autumn, 2005), 59.
[36] Ronald Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 137.
[37] Ibid., 145.

constituted an attack on many traditional Armenian mores and institutions".[38] But another policy called *korenizatsiia* [rooting] or "nativization" which impacted on territory, demography, culture, and politics, had a goal to make Armenians more Armenians.[39] Territorially, the implementation of *korenizatsiia* meant guarantee for the security in terms of borders: though Armenia had lost territory, the piece of land where Soviet Armenia was established became a secure place to live; demographically, it meant that Armenia became a heaven for Armenians being spread all over the world: caravans with Armenian refugees arrived from Greece, France, and elsewhere; culturally, it entailed prosperity of Armenian language, art, music, theater, and science; and politically, *korenizatsiia* meant that the government of Armenia would be run by Armenians. All these factors jointly paved the way for the foundation of a new nation, Suny points out.[40] By the end of the 1920s, it was clear that not only Armenia would survive but will also prosper.[41]

2.1.2 Armenian Women's History

The famous Armenia quote: "The lion is a lion, no matter female or male," from Armenian national epos *The Daredevils of Sasun* is always brought as a proof of gender equality that existed in Armenia back in the eighth to tenth centuries when the events described in the epos happened.[42] Armenian national heroes in the epos were identified with a lion, and both men and women were endowed with courage and bravery regardless of gender. One of the main female heroes objected to the male hero: "I am a person in no way inferior to you."[43] The medieval sources on jurisprudential and historiographic literature testify that "the medieval Armenian laws were quite

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 147.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 148.
[42] Gohar Shahnazaryan, "The Engagement of Women in Armenian Political Organization: Obstacles and Perspectives." in *Representation and Participation of Women in the Political Parties and Political Initiatives in Armenia: Gender Analysis* (Yerevan: Women's Resource Center NGO, 2016), 61.
[43] Garegin Srvandztiants, *Սասն ծռեր* [The Daredevils of Sasun]. (Istanbul: 1873).

progressive in terms of the protection of women's freedom, life, health, honor, and dignity."[44] However, gender equality discourse was strong in Armenia only up until late Middle Ages, sociologist Gohar Shanazaryan points out.[45] She claims that "women lost their rights and freedom because of the constant fear of assimilation of Armenians with other nation."[46]

In the beginning of the 20th century, there was an understanding that Armenian women were in "slavery" situation.[47] However, Armenian philologist Anahit Harutiunian argues that this is a myth, and it started to be constructed by foreign travelers from the beginning of 18th century.[48] She identifies two types of travelers, the ones who "saw silent creatures [Armenian women] that were relegated to a secluded life within the confines of their homes with their faces covered" and the ones "who made efforts to get to the essence of things."[49] Harutiunian points out that the situation of women in Armenia in the 18th century was not homogeneous, but rather it depended on various factors such as geography, close contacts with neighboring nations, or age.[50] In mountainous districts where Armenians constituted majority and were not influenced by Muslim population, women's rights were more respected than those of living with close contacts with Muslim population.[51] Besides, an Armenian young woman had freedom with a man prior marriage, then "her rights were severely limited and then were entirely restored at an elderly age, when she would become the oldest woman [of the family]."[52]

[44] Anahit Harutiunian, *The Age of Notable Women: Public Activities of Armenian Women in the 19th Century and in Early 20th Century* (Yerevan: Spiritual Armenia, 2005), 13.
[45] Gohar Shahnazaryan, "The Engagement of Women in Armenian Political Organization: Obstacles and Perspectives." in *Representation and Participation of Women in the Political Parties and Political Initiatives in Armenia: Gender Analysis* (Yerevan: Women's Resource Center NGO, 2016), 61.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ashot Hovhannisyan, "Հ այ Կն ո ջ ազ ատագ ր մ ան խն դ ի ր ը" [The Issue of Armenian Woman's Emancipation] in *Ն ալ բ ան դ յ ան ը և ն ր ա ժ ամ ան ակ ը* [Nalbandyan and his Time] (Yerevan: State Publisher, 1955), 170.
[48] Anahit Harutiunian, *The Age of Notable Women: Public Activities of Armenian Women in the 19th Century and in Early 20th Century* (Yerevan: Spiritual Armenia, 2005), 15.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 16.
[51] Ibid., 17.
[52] Ibid.

This was the situation, when in the 19th century Armenian women's movement began. It commenced in Istanbul, and at the end of the 19th century, out of 630 Armenian organizations operating in Istanbul 60 were women's organizations.[53] The role of printed media had a huge impact on bringing the woman question to the fore.[54] Interestingly, the woman question was brought by men.[55] Besides, this movement did not ground on feminist ideology because "Armenian women's movement did not emerge as women's struggle for political and civil rights."[56] The main goals of women's organizations were education, charity and orphan relief. However, as Shahnazaryan puts it, "they created a space for women's civic and political activism."[57] The main centers of activities of Armenian women's organizations took place were in Istanbul (for Turkish-Armenians) and in Tbilisi (for Russian-Armenians). Armenian women had received the right to vote in the first republic of Armenia (1918-1920); there were three women elected in the first Armenian Parliament.[58]

2.1.3 The Soviet Gender Policy

Though in Russia, the woman question did not emerge when the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, on the eve of the revolution, it was not a priority addressed by any political force such as radicals or liberals; but with the arrival of the Soviet regime in 1917, it was brought to the fore.[59] Thus, a number of laws in 1917, 1918, 1920, 1922, and 1926 were accepted to regulate different aspects of the newly constituted society, women and men being equal before the law. Labor Law

[53] Gohar Shahnazaryan, "The Engagement of Women in Armenian Political Organization: Obstacles and Perspectives." in *Representation and Participation of Women in the Political Parties and Political Initiatives in Armenia: Gender Analysis* (Yerevan: Women's Resource Center NGO, 2016), 63.
[54] Babayan, Anna. "«Կան ան ց ի ար ց ի » ս կ զ բ ն ավ ո ր ո ւ մ ը հ այ պար բ ե ր ակ ան մ ամ ո ւ լ ո ւ մ ." [The Origin of the Woman Question in Armenian Periodicals]. http://armsociology.com, 12 June 2011.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Anahit Harutiunian, "Lessons of history: Public Activism of Armenian Women in 19th and early 20th Centuries." in *Manifestation of Women's Movement in Armenia at the end of 20th Beginning of 21st Century***,** ed. by Gohar Shahnazaryan. (Yerevan: Women's Resource Center NGO, 2015), 25.
[57] Gohar Shahnazaryan, "The Engagement of Women in Armenian Political Organization: Obstacles and Perspectives." in *Representation and Participation of Women in the Political Parties and Political Initiatives in Armenia: Gender Analysis* (Yerevan: Women's Resource Center NGO, 2016), 61.
[58] Ibid., 62.
[59] Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 33.

guaranteed equal rights of men and women in terms of various fields such as wage, financial support in case of illness, annual holiday, etc. Marriage was transformed from a religious union into a civil cohabitation based on mutual consent of the couple. Divorce also became a subject of regulation, and in general, women were no longer legally subordinated to men. They had the right to vote, own property, and access to education. Abortion, although controversial, nevertheless was a part of the new legislation. As Mary Buckley point out: "Emancipation from restrictions was the sentiment which underpinned new Bolshevik legislation."[60]

No matter how good the legislation was for women, there was a huge gap between the laws and their practical implication, Buckley argues. She claims that de facto, the 1926 Code of Laws on marriage and divorce failed to protect women.[61] Inessa Armand[62] and Alexandra Kollontai,[63] who were the most important figures of bringing the new policies into existence, realized that emancipation was not a simple consequence of legal changes but rather it had to entail fundamental transformations within the traditional family institution which relegated women to maternity, household chores, and child.[64] They came up with suggestions to open communal kitchens, dining rooms and laundries in order to address domestic work and child rearing issues.[65] Before the revolution, both Armand and Kollontai did not favor having a separate organization on the grounds that it could detract from the class struggle, but by the end of 1918 both were convinced that there was a need to establish an organization that would deal with women.[66] As far as this organization

[60] Ibid., 35.
[61] Ibid., 43.
[62] For more about Inessa Armand see Natalya Pushkareva, "Armand, Inessa-Elizaveta Fiodorovna." in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminism: Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. by Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova and Anna Loutfi. Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2006, 33.
[63] For more about Alexandra Kollontai see Natalya Gafizova, "Kollontai Alexandra." in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminism: Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. by Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova and Anna Loutfi. Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2006, 253.
[64] Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 44.
[65] Ibid., 45.
[66] Ibid., 55.

was not understood to be grounded on feminism, or to put it in Lenin's words: "this is not feminism" and, hence, was not separate from the Communist Party, it was possible to create it.[67]

Thus, in 1919 the *Zhenotdel* was established. It had three main goals: "First, to expand the influence of the party over a large number of working-class and peasant women through enlightening them about politics and life; second, to draw these women into the party, trade unions, cooperative organizations and the soviets; and third, to liaise with other organizations, such as trade unions, to promote the construction of nurseries and public dining rooms since these were necessary for women's liberation."[68] The *Zhenotdel* had different sections that dealt with various tasks such as organizational-instructional work (organizing meetings), agitprop work (agitation amongst women), publications (literature about women), and work amongst women of the East.[69] Armand, with the help of her staff in Moscow, created a network of local *zhenotdels*.[70]

2.1.4 Health and Hygiene Directives

The Soviet program of public health was influenced by Western tradition.[71] As the U.S. historian Tricia Starks etymologizes the word "hygiene," it derived from the name of Greek goddess Hygeia and contained the meaning of "the Greek emphasis upon balance and reason as the basis for personal and societal health."[72] Starks points out in *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene and the Revolutionary State* that the Soviet programs of health and hygiene in the 1920s "mirrored programs in the U.S. , Britain, France, and Germany."[73] In terms of the program on the body hygiene, Soviet hygienists' recommendations regulated food, body hygiene, physical activities, as

[67] Clara Zetkin, "Women, Marriage, and Sex." in *Reminiscences of Lenin* (London: Modern Books Limited, 1929).
[68] Ibid., 66.
[69] Ibid., 66-67.
[70] Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 33.
[71] Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 6.
[72] Ibid., 4.
[73] Ibid., 6.

well as refusal to alcohol and tobacco.[74] Starks defines the term "hygienists" as a group of experts and theorists who closely worked with Narkomzdrav [the Peoples' Commissariat of Public Health]. All of them were revolutionaries who were concerned with the idea of health as a matter of political change and "considered clean living part of their own utopian projects."[75] Strong discipline and cleanliness were two dimensions of the health and hygiene directives: Soviet hygiene ideology emphasized a close link between behavior and health.[76] Soviet hygienists were inspired by Russian revolutionary, poet and writer Aleksei Gastev's (1882-1939) idea of mechanized body programmed like a clock. Repetition was a key action to bring the programmed schedule into existence. Each minute and hour of a day was programmed: when, where and how much to sleep, as well as food intake including the portions and even the process of eating and chewing.[77] Cold water, as a means to strengthen health and calm the nervous system, was seen as an inbuilt component for forging the new citizen, especially male one, in terms of both mental and physical health; *bania* [bath] became a symbol of civilized way of living, and everybody was advised to go to *bania*.[78] Due to menstruation, women's bodies were understood as dirtier than men's; therefore, standard means of cleansing were not efficient for them, and women including those in pregnancy, instead of cold water, were prescribed hot water, and were recommended to go to *bania* twice a week.[79]

Makeup and jewelry were seen as unnecessary since they were considered attributes of bourgeois life, and therefore were commented to be a vehicle of hiding bourgeois women's ill appearance. For keeping healthy skin, socialist women needed merely to wash their faces with warm water and "expose their skin to clean air and sunlight"; in other words, beauty was equated with

[74] Ibid, 170-171.
[75] Ibid., 4.
[76] Ibid., 171.
[77] Ibid., 172-173.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid., 177.

cleanliness, Starks points out.[80] Smoking, drinking alcohol, keeping clothes and body dirty were seen as degrading the body; hygienists thought that comfortable and clean cloths made work easier while dirty and torn clothes could have negative impact on work productivity. Thus, clothes were recommended to be very simple; fashionable dress, high heels, as well as long skirts were not advised to wear.[81] Strong commitment to physical activities was a pillar of hygiene ideology since they were seen as the fastest and cheapest way to improve health. Women especially were encouraged to exercise as a means of liberation envisioned by Lenin.[82]

2.1.5 Implementation of the Gender Policy in Armenia

In early 1920s, in Armenia the Communist regime identified the traditional Armenian family as a "backward" institution and in need of transformation.[83] Evaluating the impact of Soviet policies in Armenian in the 1920s, the American-Armenian historian Mary Matossian claims that the Bolsheviks had modest success: the "cake of custom" began to break in pieces.[84] Traditional Armenian family was one of the significant threats to resist the new policies implemented by the Communist regime.[85] It was targeted as a "backward" institution; Armenian women became a subject to be "emancipated" by means of education and engagement in work outside the home.[86] A number of Soviet laws were translated and were applied in Soviet Armenia. As a consequence, marriage and divorce became subject to a mutual consent; arranged marriages were formally banned; the age of marriage became sixteen for girls and eighteen for boys; abortion was legalized;

[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., 178.
[82] Ibid., 192.
[83] Armine Ishkanian, "En-gendering Civil Society and Democracy-Building: The Anti-Domestic Violence Campaign in Armenia," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* vol. 14, no. 4, (Winter 2007): 505.
[84] Mary Matossian, *The Impact of Soviet Policies in Armenia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962), 59.
[85] Ibid., 63.
[86] Ibid.

women obtained right of ownership; if parents were cruel with children they might deprived of parental rights; single mothers and illegitimate children were protected by law.[87]

In order to bring these laws into existence, a secondary institution, the *Kin bazhin* was created. Matossian points out that it "sought to indoctrinate women with Communist principles, to enroll them in the Party, to train them for government service, and to help them advance on the job."[88] The *Kin bazhin* had power to assist women in marriage related issues; it helped homeless women and children; established nurseries, playgrounds, and arranged cooperative workshops to provide women with job. The *Kin bazhin* also recruited *delegatki*[89] [female delegates] who would visit women to "give instruction in the 'scientific' raising of children and the simple rules of hygiene," try to engage them into public life, also make reports on child and wife beating, or forced marriage.[90] They would also go about the countryside and give lectures to women about these issues. Matossian indicates that these activities had a huge potential of shaking the basis of the traditional family.[91]

Though the *Zhenotde*l was abolished in 1930, the *Kin bazhin* was dissolved in 1929 with the explanation that the woman question solved.[92] The functions of *Kin bazhin* after its abolishment in 1929 were transferred to the Sector of Mass Work Among Worker and Peasant Women. Besides, in 1923 *Kanants kentsagy barelavogh handznazhoghov* [The Commission for the Improvement of the Way of Life of Women, hereafter KKBH] had been established to address women related issues alongside the *Kin bazhin*. It was an official agency with functions similar to the *Kin bazin*. KKBH

[87] Ibid., 63-65.
[88] Ibid., 65.
[89] The institution of *delegatka* was meant to involve non-party women into political activities. After being trained by the *Zhenotdel* representatives, *delegatkis'* main responsibility was to involve the masses of women into the building of socialism. For more about *delegatki* see Mary Buckley, "Women's Organization: Bolshevik Theory and Practice" in *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union (*Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 71-73.
[90] Ibid., 66.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., 67.

central office was in Yerevan but it had branches in Leninakan[93] and all regional centers. They organized clubs to conduct different courses on raising literacy level of women, propagate the Communist principles, advice on child rearing, and overall, their aim was to break down the old customs; in 1926, there were twenty-six such clubs throughout Armenia.[94]

Nevertheless, Matossian claims that in the 1920s the impact of the Soviet policies on the traditional family was not tangible. Remoted regions were practically untouched; early marriages were still happening; divorce rate was low: in 1926 there were 7563 marriages and 576 divorces, and in 1927 marriages increased to 8110 and divorces decreased to 550.[95] In terms of abortion, the situation also was not changed much, largely because it was not approved by custom; attempts to push women into paid work also seemed to have limited success because, first there were not enough jobs, and second, employers preferred men: in 1925 women constituted only 20.6 percent of all workers employed from the labor changes in Yerevan, when 41.4 percent of total unemployed were women.[96] Women in politics also were rare though women representatives of village Soviets increased from 6.6 percent in 1925 to 16.2 percent in 1929; in 1926, only 15 percent of women who had the right to vote did so; overall, in 1927 only 5.3 percent of Communist Party members were women; the rate of literacy remained low: in 1926, only 15.4 percent of all Armenian women were literate, and only 8.7 percent of women in villages were literate.[97] Thus, as Matossian writes, the impact of Soviet polices on Armenian custom and the position of women remained rather limited.[98] Ishkanian indicates that Soviet leaders' attempts to transform the family and local tradition met with resistance, and "they had the paradoxical effect of strengthening family and kinship

[93] Armenia's second largest city located in the North-West of the country and only 7-10 km from the border with Turkey. From 1924 to 1990 it was called Leninakan after Vladimir Lenin.
[94] Mary Matossian, *The Impact of Soviet Policies in Armenia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962), 67.
[95] Ibid., 69.
[96] Ibid., 71.
[97] Ibid., 72.
[98] Ibid., 73.

networks."[99] She points out that family became not only a mode of resistance to the state, but also remained as the primary means of identification, support, and advancement throughout the Soviet period.[100]

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Framing HA's Main Features and Editor in Chief's Vision

To frame the chapter devoted to HA's main features, I use Lynne Attwood's framework, which suggests considering women's magazine as a vehicle to shape the New Soviet Women. In her book *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53*, which explores *Rabotnitsa* [female worker] and *Krest'yanka* [female peasant, hereafter: R+K], she argues that the magazines were aimed to reach the most uneducated and politically undeveloped female masses.[101] The goal was "to promote an image of the woman as a confident, self-reliant person with a wide range of abilities which she could put to use in a variety of settings."[102] R+K conveyed a clear message that work, education, and involvement in politics were highly appreciated.[103] While examining HA's content, I will seek to identify the main messages that HA conveyed to its audience in order to show how HA constructed The New Armenian Woman.

Furthermore, in the chapter "Variation in the 'New Woman'" Attwood points out the central idea about a single type of Soviet woman throughout the whole country, from the West to the East, which the magazines made clear by emphasizing the term "new woman" rather than "new

[99] Armine Ishkanian, "Gendered Transitions: The Impact of the Post-Soviet Transition on Women in Central Asia and the Caucasus," *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, vol. 2, no. 3-4, (2003): 480.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), 26.
[102] Ibid.,13.
[103] Ibid., 27.

women".[104] For the time being, as she points out, it was accepted that there were differences amongst women in terms of opinion, behavior, or life style. Yet, it was envisioned that over time these differences needed to be eradicated.[105] Attwood discusses these differences in terms of the dichotomy of the West versus the East, positioning Central Asia as the representative of the East. This is a very homogeneous picture and leaves no space to discuss complexities within the East. In order to explore some of these complexities in the Armenian context, I will devote a chapter to Flora Vardanyan, HA's first editor in chief, in order to understand her vision of creating the New Armenian Woman. As I will demonstrate, she did not see the New Armenian Woman as the Woman of the East, nor did she see this New Woman as a representative of the West; rather she imagined her somewhere in-between.

In order to frame the chapter on Flora Vardanyan, I will also apply Marianne Kamp's model. In *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism*, Kamp analyzes five editors' biographies in order to examine the role of their agency in translating messages of the Soviet gender policy through the Uzbek magazine *Yangi Yol* [New Path].[106] In the chapter "New Women", Kamp argues that the content the magazine produced was a kind of synthesis of Communist and traditional ideas on constructing the New Uzbek Woman.[107] Examining five editors' life experiences in relation to defining the content of the magazine, she concludes that they "did not share a single vision for the modern Uzbek magazine."[108] However, all of them truly wanted Uzbek women to be aware of their rights, be educated, and enter public life, Kamp claims.[109] But while some of them were strong advocates of the Communist Party and promoted its program

[104] Ibid., 72.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2006), 6.
[107] Ibid., 17.
[108] Ibid., 122.
[109] Ibid., 107.

for women's transformation, others saw "education as women's greatest need and as an end itself."[110] Whereas Kamp analyzed the diverse approaches applied by five editors in shaping the New Uzbek Woman, I will focus solely on interpreting Flora Vardanyan's vision on the New Soviet Armenian Woman.

Additionally, I will use Sarah Ahmed's model on an affective economy to explain the increase of HA's production and the impact that active women's reports had in the dissemination of the new Soviet rules. Ahmad claims that emotions are not private matters and they do not "simply belong to individuals", but they "create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds."[111] She explains this by using the Marxian model of surplus value. As she shows, emotions tend not to stick to the subjects; through circulation in "sideways and backward", they tie subjects together.[112] And in the process of circulating from subjects (bodies) to objects (signs/images creating emotions) or amongst them (subjects) over some time, emotions gather more value. Ahmed points out that the more the signs circulate, the more "affective they become, and the more they appear to contain 'affect'."[113] She calls this surplus value of emotions the "accumulative affect".[114] I will use this model to explain how the HA's production was increasing due to this "accumulative affect" created through accepted challenges that one group of activist women posed to another. After subscribing to HA, one group of women published a report in HA and invited another group to subscribe, thus invoking a widespread circulation of the idea of subscribing to HA. This entailed a snowball effect on the increase of HA's circulation. The reports of the active women had the same effect. Published reports about life in a village or a city were not merely matters of a particular community or the women themselves. These reports shaped a collective body about changes that

[110] Ibid., 122.
[111] Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social text*, 79, vol. 22, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 117.
[112] Ibid., 120.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.

the Soviet authorities wanted to bring into existence. My examination of four years' worth of HA's material shows that this body gradually grew, thus entailing an "accumulative affect" and, hence, facilitating the process of dissemination of the new values.

2.2.2 Orientalism

In the second group of theories, I construct a framework that is based on Tricia Starks's perspective on health and hygiene issues honed by the theoretical lens of Orientalism. Tricia Starks explores the Bolshevik agenda on health and hygiene issues, which used "the language of hygiene as a symbolic system to create and define the revolutionary state and citizen."[115] Due to lack of financial resources in the 1920s, Starks claims, it was admitted that "the battle for better health would be largely symbolic rather than coercive, but this should not be gauged as lack of importance."[116] Starks claims that this symbolic system was laid on the basis of the newly constructed society. She examines this system in frame of six aspects: the revolutionary ideology, the state, the city, the home, the family, and the body.

In the revolutionary ideology, symbolism of health and hygiene was identified with order and cleanliness. For Soviet hygienists, dirt bred disease, hence preventing disease could be achieved by transforming the society appropriately.[117] Furthermore, institutions like the dispensary and consultation[118] were invoked to monitor and treat the population, thus addressing public health at the state level.[119] In order to propagate healthful ways of living, including cleansing, physical activity, and a correct regimen, sanatoriums were designed. Besides, all kinds of worker clubs and

[115] Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 22.
[116] Ibid., 6.
[117] Ibid., 8.
[118] Dispensary is a kind of clinic funded by public or charitable funds. In the Soviet Union, it was funded by the state aimed to provide medical consultation and treatment to the population.
[119] Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 9.

red corners were also aimed to address those questions.[120] This was done at the city level. When it comes to the home, Starks points out that Soviet hygienists' recommendations on maintenance of a clean home were not distinctively different from those of Western or prerevolutionary Russian approaches.

Despite the Soviet promise of the liberation of women from domestic work, "hygienists increased the chores of women, more firmly connecting housework to women's responsibility."[121] Within the family sphere, the importance of natal health, child care, and dependence on medical support were highlighted. Turning to the hygiene of the body, Starks highlights that hygiene rhetoric was gendered and positioned the Russian male body as normative.[122] Desirable features for individuals to adopt were "orderliness, abstemiousness, and physical conditioning".[123] Starks claims that cleansing and purifying the individual body were not merely matters of body condition.[124] A healthy body was understood as an embodiment of the new political order, for which work was a central idea. The Soviet hygienists imagined a body that would work as a machine—the "ultimate symbol of the modern age."[125] In order to optimize this machine, they created an accurately designed model, which was meant to produce a perfect and modern individual. This individual, as both a citizen and a worker, was believed to be productive, enlightened, happy, and had a strong body that generated a balanced mind that would choose the most rational political structure: socialism.[126] While examining the magazine and the "Health" section itself, I will be looking for these six aspects to understand if they were represented in HA, and to what extent they were represented.

[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., 10.
[122] Ibid., 163.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 4.
[125] Ibid., 164.
[126] Ibid., 4.

In order to employ the theoretical lens of Orientalism, I need to explain what historicism is, define the broad idea of Orientalism and then situate Armenia within the Oriental context. Historian Dipesh Chakrabarty defines the term "historicism" as a mode of thinking that explains the nature of any entity as historically developing over time.[127] As he writes, historicism was the reason that allowed Marx to claim that the "country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future."[128] Writing about the history of colonialism, he claims that the European idea of history and modernity was rendered to non-Western countries as universal: "'First in Europe, then elsewhere' structure of global historical time was historicist; different non-Western nationalism would later produce local versions of the same narrative, replacing 'Europe' by some locally constructed center."[129] Thus, as follows from Chakrabarty's work, historicism positioned "Europe" as an exhaustive subject, whereas other countries' history was understood in relation to the West. Hence, while analyzing HA's content, I will seek to identify any "locally constructed center replacing Europe" for Armenia.

Furthermore Edward Said, a founder of postcolonial studies, argues in *Orientalism* that the Orient was created by a whole range of disciplines produced by groups of scholars/writers/researchers—basically anybody who wrote about the Orient.[130] He names them Orientalists and defines the Orient as an "integral part of European material civilization and culture", which helped to define Europe as its "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."[131] As Said points out, in the work of the Orientalists, the West was portrayed as modern and powerful, as opposed to the East, which was portrayed as being dominated and backward.[132] Said explains that

[127] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 23.
[128] Ibid., 7 (quoted from Marx).
[129] Ibid.
[130] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 2.
[131] Ibid., 3.
[132] Ibid.

form of knowledge enables a specific relation to the pre-existing content and external reality, and this relation is necessarily political because the form is structured by the social-political context in which one writes.[133] Therefore, the Orientalists, in prescribing meanings to the East as being "backward and dominated" and thus creating the Orient, were dictated by their positionality in the West. Said defines Orientalism as a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[134] This understanding of the East always assumed inferiority to the West, in other words, the Orient was imagined as always secondary to Europe in every possible way.

There is a tendency amongst scholars to consider the Caucasus and Central Asia in the frame of Orientalist discourses.[135] Madina Tlostanova argues that the classic Orientalism coined by Said cannot be applied to the Russian case directly because "Russia itself is a form of mystique and mythic Orient for the West."[136] She coins the term "secondary Orientalism" and claims that even though Russia did not have a tradition of othering the East, nonetheless, being Orientalized by the West, it developed this tradition toward its colonial others, which were Central Asia and Caucasus.[137] Thus, following Said and Tlostanova, I will examine HA's articles considering Armenia within the Oriental discourses to see how HA represented the relationship of Armenia and Soviet Russia.

In addition, I will rely on Nicholas Dirks and Dipesh Chakrabarty's analysis of British colonizers' strategy of the policing of tradition. Examining how British colonizers modernized and recodified Bengal native society in the late 19th century, Dirks argues that they imposed certain ideas on how to organize the body, family, home, and state institutions by opposing them to local

[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Madina Tlostanova, *Gender Epistemologies and Eurasian Borderlands* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), 63.
[136] Ibid., 64.
[137] Ibid., 65.

custom.[138] The laws defined specific ways in which those entities needed to be reconstructed. In colonial Bengal, modernity was understood through Victorian fetishes of discipline and order, as Chakrabarty argues.[139] Textbooks were propagating the need to create new women, alike to Soviet women magazines. Similar to the Soviet case examined by Starks, here also "the individual was a physical embodiment of the nation and the latter improved only if the individual had undergone all-round improvement."[140] As Chakrabarty points out, a critical task for creating new "civilized" women was to teach them the new rules of the body.[141] But if Bengal "civilized" new women were constructed as a "bourgeoise project in order to allow them into the modern and male public sphere" and were understood as being physically weak because they were not supposed to do hard work, this was not the case for Soviet women.[142] As Starks claims, Soviet hygienists adapted Western models of public health policies for their ends – the Soviet body was an embodiment of socialist utopia.[143] Whereas for Bengal new women work was seen as not valuable, for Soviet women it was a central pillar of the constructed new identity. While reading recommendations of the "Health" section authors for Armenian women, I will seek to identify what kind of new rules they recommended Armenian women to employ for taking care of their bodies, and how much important the work was on them.

Dirks also pays attention to how British colonizers reconstructed agency. He claims that individual agency was only allowed within the colonial modernity, which strived to create subjects

[138] Nicholas B. Dirks, "The Policing of Tradition: Colonialism and Anthropology in Southern India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 01 (1997): 182-212.
[139] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Deferral of a Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal." *History Workshop Journal* issue 36, no. 1 (Autumn 1993):5.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid., 6.
[142] Ibid., 27.
[143] Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 4.

of the law from oriental bodies.[144] Policing practices of colonial Bengal were justified by identifying them with barbarity, which was in contradiction to modernity.[145] Hook-swinging, *sati* and other local practices were banned because they were seen as not rational and in maximum deviation from Western modern cultural norms. Discussing the ban on hook-swinging, Dirks asserts that the British determination of agency was "inextricably mixed in with the question of pain: it seemed unlikely that any agent would willingly subject himself to extreme pain."[146] While before the British colonizers, kings approved and cultivated this custom, it turned out that British colonizers did not sanction it. And while previously hook-swingers' agency had been a matter of pride and power, now it became "the index of individual criminal culpability."[147]

Thus, recodification of local tradition/custom was done in order to cultivate new, desirable social forms to be reproduced. I will apply this perspective to look at the "Health" section to show how local practices were recodified for the sake of producing a new social form, which was based on socialism. Namely, I want to demonstrate how Soviet authorities reconstructed the agency of the (both the woman's and the child's) body through recodifying custom. If previously the practice of using soil for child care was in circulation, now it turned out that it did harm to the child's body. Pregnant women or menstruating women were advised to avoid hard work because it could have bad consequences for their body. But prior to the Soviet order there was a different understanding about this. Bodies were not understood as being harmed in case of hard work. Thus, with the new recommendations, agency was constructed according to the Soviet determination of modernity.

[144] Nicholas B. Dirks, "The Policing of Tradition: Colonialism and Anthropology in Southern India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 01 (1997): 183.
[145] Ibid., 184.
[146] Ibid., 188.
[147] Ibid., 201.

CHAPTER 3: MAIN FEATURES OF *HAYASTANI ASHKATAVORUHI*

In this chapter I introduce the magazine, its mission and the main themes covered in 29 issues during the four examined years of 1924-1927. The main question I try to answer in this chapter is: what features of a new identity did HA suggest Armenian women to adopt? I will devote a subchapter to the sections "Our Reporter" and the "Post-Box" to reinterpret Attwood's perspective on these sections. Attwood argues that R+K recruited ordinary active women to contribute to the magazine by disseminating new values to other women. As she writes, these reports were meant to "demonstrate 'popular support' for a change in government policy."[148] But my reading of these sections, based on the concept of citizen journalism and Ahmad's model on an affective economy, shows that some of those women embraced new policies themselves because they considered them reasonable. By doing so, they contributed to the dissemination of the new values propagated by HA.

Having a core mission to "emancipate" Armenian female workers and female peasants, HA was launched in March of 1924 with 1000 copies per issue. Its mission statement read:

> HA teaches female workers and female peasants how to rear their children and take care of them;
> HA introduces laws on the family and the protection of labor;
> HA teaches how to partake in social-political activities and to organize the household;
> HA supports creating a new way of life.
> FEMALE WORKERS, FEMALE PEASANTS, AND ACTIVE DELEGATKIS!
> SUBSCRIBE! READ AND DISSEMINATE YOUR ORGAN.[149] [Capitalized emphasis and smaller font in original]

HA was published in Armenian, and the target group of the magazine, as stated by Flora Vardanyan, the magazine's editor in chief, were Armenian female workers and female peasants. In different sections, HA promoted various aspects of a new lifestyle for its female audience to adopt.

[148] Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), 17.
[149] HA, 1927, no. 1, 36.

The new lifestyle was based on the legal changes that Soviet leaders introduced after coming to power in 1917. A number of laws, accepted in the 1920s in Russia, guaranteed equal rights for men and women before the law. The new legislation regulated various fields, such as marriage, labor, divorce, voting system, right of property, etc.[150] The laws were translated into Armenian and applied in Soviet Armenia.[151] As Attwood writes, print media was seen as the main tool to communicate with the population and to disseminate new rules, propagate new behavior, and construct a desirable female identity.[152] In Armenia, this function was implemented by HA. Before describing HA's main sections, I would like to briefly outline the main important features and themes.

During the first two-three years, HA's cover mostly presented an Armenian woman in traditional clothing, with a red flag in her hand, her head covered by a red scarf and some industrial buildings on the background.[153] The style changed in 1927, depicting a binary opposition of old and new values in different aspects of life: a new woman in new clothes giving HA to an old woman in traditional Armenian clothes; a traditional family versus communist society; or a literate *delegtaka* teaching literacy to an illiterate woman.[154] In general, showing a binary opposition was the approach used by HA to produce its content in terms of developing attitudes towards both abroad and within the country. The external dichotomy was produced by opposing socialism and imperialism/capitalism. The internal dichotomy was built around the encounter of old and new values, and this was a theme that underpinned the rhetoric of HA: articles, pictures, and slogans promoted new rules explaining their advantages based on communist ideology and banning

[150] For more about the Bolshevik legislation see Mary Buckley, "Marxism, Revolution and Emancipation in the 1920s" in *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 18-57.
[151] For more about Bolshevik policies in Armenia within the examined period see Mary Matossian, "The Years of Experiment, 1921-1928" in *The Impact of Soviet Policies in Armenia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962), 35-78.
[152] Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), 12.
[153] See Picture 1.
[154] See Picture 2.

different aspects of existing lifestyle, naming them as "backward" and "ignorant". While addressing the issues of backwardness and ignorance as things that needed to be eradicated, HA identified them as Eastern features. On R+K pages, as Attwood claims, "'women of the East' were considered to be the most backward and "treated as chattels rather than human beings."[155] HA did not identify Armenian women as women from the East, but rather defined their location as somewhere between the East and the West. I shall come back to this issue at length later, in the chapter on Flora Vardanyan.

Though HA was for and about Armenian women, the male presence in the magazine was noticeable. Almost half of the articles in different sections were written by male authors, and many male communist leaders got a considerable amount of coverage. Male presence in HA showed the anxiety of Soviet leaders who were concerned by the woman question not being considered as a separate issue. As Attwood concludes for R+K, even though the new regime promoted female activism, the Soviet leaders "felt uncomfortable at the prospect of women themselves producing appropriate models of womanhood."[156]

It is worth mentioning that HA's staff had a sense of authorship. Apart from photos, all small illustrations that accompanied articles or opened the main sections were signed. One of the issues contained a note, informing the readers that the article published in the previous issue signed by Lisa, was a translation of Krupskaya's article entitled "*Delegatka*".[157] This means that they knew what plagiarism was.

It is also interesting to pay attention to the way in which texts and announcements were written. While written in lowercase, some paragraphs or separate sentences were capitalized and

[155] Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), 75.
[156] Ibid., 30.
[157] HA, 1925, no. 8, 37.

some words were italicized. HA used this technique to attract its readers' attention and stress the importance of what was signified. Most of the time capitalized/italicized excerpts, paragraphs and sentences emphasized either the old or the new practices/rules/advice. Thus, attracting readers' attention to emphasized parts, HA strengthened the meaning-making process, as follows from Fairclough. This approach was applied throughout the whole magazine whether it was an editorial, an announcement, or an article within different sections. Being published almost 90 years ago, the magazine used some tools that are believed to be corollaries of modern technologies or new media usage. I shall come back to this feature later in this chapter.

The year 1927 was not different from other years in terms of HA's official line. The only difference was that throughout the year Lyusi Targyul herself published six long stories, which was not the case for the previous years. I assume that in 1927 she was in charge of the "Short Stories" section. Some guiding articles, signed as L. or L.G., were possibly written by her; however, the language and rhetoric of these articles were in the same style as the rest of the magazine.

"Politics", "Short stories/Poetry", "Health", "Agriculture", "Cooperation", "Literacy", "Our Reporters", and "Legislation" were the main sections that were constantly updated from the beginning. Some of the other sections, such as "Humor", "Science and Religion", "Advice for Housekeepers", "Environment" or "Economics", were not. Very rarely, some short texts were devoted to dressmaking or knitting.[158] Sometimes the role of HA was also covered.[159]

- **Politics**

The "Politics" section was meant to raise women's political awareness and familiarize them with communist principles. Usually guided by Flora Vardanyan's editorials, it emphasized the role of women in building the country and the building of socialism in general. Covering her attendance

[158] HA, 1927, no. 2, 36.
[159] HA, 1927, no. 4, 2-3.

at the 3rd International Conference of Communist Women in Moscow in 1924, Vardanyan stressed: "It was clear for everybody this incontestable truth, that no revolution can happen without women's participation, half of mankind.", the famous quote from Lenin.[160]

Literacy was the issue that was emphasized on every possible occasion. Activities of the *Kin bazhin*, greetings on the occasion of the 8th of March, International Workers' Day, or the anniversary of the October Revolution, were covered under this section. Greetings on these occasions were placed in a patriarchal order with Vardanyan's greetings following those of local or regional male officials. The section was constantly raising the question of women's involvement in local Soviets. Sometimes some statistic data was also provided. In 1925 and 1926 there were 1166 (8 percent and 20 percent respectively) Armenian women in local Soviets. The magazine proposed the goal to double and triple this number in 1927.[161] According to the results of the first all-Union census, the population of Armenia in 1926 was around 880,000. [162] The breakdown of this figure was as follows: "The villagers were 713,000 and 167,100 – city dwellers. Women were 51 percent and men – 49 percent. Ethnically, 84.4 percent were Armenians, 8.7 percent – Azerbaijani, 2.2 percent – Russians, 4.7 percent – other nationalities. Workers and officialdom were 13.2 percent, peasants – 79.1 percent, and rural and urban capitalistic elements – 7.6 percent."[163]

- **Legislation**

The "Legislation" section informed women about their rights, stressing on every possible occasion that women and men were equal before the law. One article mentioned: "The woman's rights in the Soviet Republic are protected by Soviet law: the woman has the same rights as the man.

[160] HA, 1924, no. 3, 9.
[161] HA, 1926, no. 10, 10.
[162] The first all-Union census in the Soviet Union was conducted in 1926. It started on December 17 and lasted two weeks. The full results were available in 56 volumes from 1928 to 1933.
http://elib.shpl.ru/ru/nodes/16539-vyp-3-naselenie-sssr-1927#page/35/mode/inspect/zoom/4
[163] KH. A. Avetisyan, "The Dynamic of the Population of Soviet Armenia for 50 Years," *Historical and Philological Journal*, no. 4 (1970), 45.

The woman and the man are equal before the law."[164] One high-ranking official, writing about the stereotypes prevailing amongst men, encouraged women not to pay attention to men who contended that women were supposed to do a certain kind of work. "There is no work that women are not able to do", he asserted.[165] It is interesting to notice that sometimes articles in this section were narrated in the question-answer format:

> **Question**: - Do female workers have benefits during their pregnancy?
> **Answer:** - Yes, they do. They have a number of privileges, and most of them are the following:
> 1. Pregnant female workers are free not to work two months before and two months after the giving birth, and during those four months they keep on getting their salary.
> 2. […][166]

- **Cooperation**

This section promoted the establishment of a work organization where people who shared the same interest joined together. Along with other sectors in HA, like agriculture or finances, the "Cooperation" targeted domestic work and childcare as issues to be addressed publicly. Particularly, the authors of this section encouraged women to be organized and to open nurseries and laundries. Interestingly, here they did not ban the local custom but rather embraced it order to explain the new way of organizing child care:

> Often you leave your children with your female neighbor when you do not have anybody to take care of your children at home. Sometimes a few families leave their children with a woman or an old woman who does not work and is free. This is also one way of cooperation, and is so called simplified way of a nursery. But currently it is not possible to satisfy all the needs with this simple way of cooperation.[167]

As we see, the section "Cooperation" articulated suggestions made by Kollontai and Armand, namely, to open communal kitchens, dining rooms, and laundries in order to set women free of

[164] HA, 1924, no. 3, 33.
[165] HA, 1924, no. 5, 4.
[166] HA, 1926, no. 3-4, 27.
[167] HA, 1924, no. 1, 27-28.

domestic chores.[168] Thus, these infrastructures were meant to liberate women from family responsibilities and provide them with equal possibilities with men in the building of socialism.

- **Our Sisters Abroad**

A section entitled "Our Sisters Abroad" emerged in 1926 and informed Armenian women about their sisters' conditions and struggle against capitalism in different foreign countries. While there were reports about England, Switzerland, Austria and other countries, China received a considerable amount of attention. Almost every second HA issue had some material regarding China; it appeared on one of the covers and even served as a theme for a poem published in two issues.[169] This means that China, as a bordering country with a huge population (more than 400 million in 1926, as stressed one of the articles), was of paramount importance for the Soviet Union. And most of the time the articles stressed the necessity of emancipating Chinese workers from the yoke of capitalism:

> The workers' situation was very bad. They start working from the age of seven or eight years and could not eat enough. […] The workers and peasants are dissatisfied, and the bourgeoise are satisfied. […] But within last twenty years, the Chinese people is woken up and learns how to struggle. […] Our workers are sincere friends of Chinese workers. In some years, the Chinese workers also will be emancipated.[170]

- **Short Stories**

Short stories and poetry told women about the advantages of the new values and rules, encouraging them to avoid the old lifestyle. The stories had different themes such as marriage, divorce, work, religion, illiteracy, etc. But the main theme within this section was ideological, encouraging sacrifice in the name of the Revolution and the new values. Telling the story of a man

[168] Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 44-46.
[169] HA, 1926, no. 3-4, 11-15; HA, 1926, no. 5-6, 16-20; HA, 1927, no. 6-7, cover (see also Picture 3).
[170] HA, 1926, no. 3-4, 8-10.

called Levon who was killed during the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, the author concludes: "By the blood of thousands of Levons this victory was won."[171]

3.1 *Our Reporters and the Post-Box: Promotion and Dissemination of HA*

The "Post-Box" and "Our Reporters" sections deserve more attention because of some features that resemble what we nowadays call the new social media. Both sections were available from the beginning of HA's establishment, updated regularly and occupied more and more space. Lots of active women, local contributors (both female and male), and former and present *delegatki* reported about issues covered in different sections of the magazine. The "Post-Box" had a role of giving feedback from HA to its reporters and contributors.

Occasionally, both sections provided guidelines with strong and clear instructions on what to write and what not to write. HA delegated to *delegatki* reading and writing for the magazine: "Report about the work you have done. Do you have a club, hut, or female peasants' corner at your village or not?"[172] Due to the high level of illiteracy amongst local women, *delegatki* and other active women were supposed to read out HA in clubs or hut-reading rooms. Periodically, the "Post-Box" section provided feedback about the reports of HA's contributors. Notes in the "Post-Box" informed the readers that some of reporters described their personal lives, while they were expected to report issues concerning their villages:

> There is no need to write about any kind of small, unworthy things like biographies, the story of a marriage, or how one spent good time and what she was treated, etc. It is clear that these kinds of reports are non-worthy for our newspaper and our readers. […] A good reporter should follow to the community events, get interested in what kind of work is being done and write about it.[173]

Notes addressed contributors personally. For instance:

[171] HA, 1924, no. 5, 11-15.
[172] HA, 1924, no. 4, 22.
[173] HA, 1926, no. 7, 28.

> To comrade Zari Sargsyan, Zangezur, Goris [a region and a town, respectively, in the Southern-East of Armenia]: Your article about women's emancipation will be published on the next issue. Write about the women's life of your town and what kind of work is being done for them.
> To Female workers Anush and Bobe: The same. [as for Zari Sarsgyan][174]
>
> To Azganush, Ijevan [a city in the Northern part of Armenia]: Your biography will not be published. Write about *delegatkis*' meetings.
> To Vanush: Go on writing.
> To Satik, Meghri [a town in the Southern-East of Armenia]: Write but not poetry.[175]
>
> To S. Ohanyan, Goris [a town in the Southern-East of Armenia]: Your article on the conference will not be published. Write about other works.
> To Serine, Yerevan: Your article "Female Communist" will not be published. Come to the editorial.[176]

Instructions were narrated in strict language: "Each of you must[177] write for HA about the work you have done, the problems you face."[178] HA also obligated local contributors to sign their reports, otherwise they would not be published.[179] Despite encouragement to sign reports, there were some unsigned articles (mostly opening editorials of different sections) throughout the magazine, or signed by initials, which made the gender of the author indiscernible.

The "Our Reporters" contained numerous reports devoted to different aspects of social activities in the country. Giving space and voice to discuss local life and promote local reporters resembles what presently is called citizen journalism. There are a number of ways to be a citizen journalist today, one of which is to report for a well-known media outlet.[180] People report from different parts of the world/country about issues they see as important. And if the reports do not contradict the policy of the media outlet, they are published/broadcasted; moreover, media outlets

[174] HA, 1924. no. 4, 36.
[175] HA, 1925, no. 8, 38.
[176] HA, 1926, no. 1-2, 63.
[177] There is no mild verb in Armenian to convey the differences between "must" and "should". The degree of obligation is understood from the context, thus, whenever "must" is used, it means a strong obligation.
[178] HA, 1924, no. 4, 5.
[179] HA, 1926, no. 5-6, 32; HA, 1927, no. 5, 28.
[180] Nowadays, many media outlets have a special edition for citizen journalists called ireporter, for instance: http://edition.cnn.com/specials/opinions/cnnireport

themselves encourage people to report for them. Sometimes, trainings for citizen journalists are organized to teach them basic principles of writing or making a video or photo.

This is exactly what HA was doing almost 90 years ago. It recruited contributors from all over the regions and villages of Armenia as far as possible. Recruitment was done through announcements urging current reporters/*delegatki* to find new contributors: "Try to bind as many reporters to HA as possible."[181] HA also had a policy: there were some photos and reports that HA's staff was meeting its contributors from Yerevan; and provided feedback through "Post- Box". [182] And even though HA published reports promoting the new Soviet lifestyle in a positive light, it did not disregard discussions of difficulties and problems. Below are some examples of both approaches.

An article in HA in 1926 praised *delegatka* Mariam for her efforts to organize the cleaning of creeks in her village, so they could be used for drinking water. Previously women used to wash laundry in creeks and throw their litter there. "Thanks to Mariam, now women do not do that anymore, creeks are clean and villagers can drink from them. They are thankful to Mariam", the article concluded.[183]

One woman from Dilijan, a small mountain resort town located in the Northern part of Armenia, reported that changing the representatives of the local *Kin bazhin* had a negative impact on their work:

> We barely got acquainted with the new representative of the *Kin Bazhin*, when all of a sudden, the *Kin Bazhin* would send her to another region. This phenomenon has a negative impact on our work. If the *Kin Bazhin* wants us to work more organized, they should think about it.[184]

[181] HA, 1926, no. 7, 17. Binding somebody to HA transfers meaning of one's obsession with reading for HA or writing for HA.
[182] HA, 1927, no. 4, 14.
[183] HA, 1926, no. 7, 18.
[184] Ibid., 14.

A *delegatka* reported about a heating problem in a hospital in Yerevan. She wrote that if a hospital worker complained, the administrators would reply that there was no budget available to install an oven. As she reported:

> Both patients and staff suffer from the cold. 200-300 patients attend the hospital daily and wait for 3-4 hours to get medical help: poor and barefooted children come to be cured, but instead they catch a cold and most probably become sick after going back home. The bureau's alleged savings harm both the staff and the public. We attract the local authority's attention to this."[185]

Another woman from Sanahin, a village situated in the North of Armenia, wrote that the local *Kin Bazhin* had a budget of approximately 240 rubles. During meetings with women it had been decided to launch a school to teach women to sew. She indicated a problem:

> However, this decision has not been implemented yet. Apart from women, there are also teenage girls willing to learn. We attract the regional *Kin Bazhin's* attention to this issue."[186]

In one of the issues HA asked its readers for opinions regarding the published stories: "HA wants to know which stories you like and for what reason."[187] In its fourth issue, HA published its first review of three previously published stories, written by a reader, thus revealing a clear connection between the magazine and its audience. [188]

Some of the examples show that women-reporters considered HA as a tool to raise problems and discuss them publicly. This is a distinctive feature of citizen journalism. Citizen journalists report problems and address them to an appropriate governmental body, just as Armenian women-reporters were doing back then. Moreover, they realized that it was appreciated. Women-reporters saw their photos and reports published in the magazine disseminated within their villages and regions; they read feedback in the "Post Box", which encouraged a certain type of reports, some of the notes even addressing women personally. While not everybody would like to write for HA

[185] HA, 1927, no. 2, 27.
[186] HA, 1927, no. 5, 21.
[187] HA, 1927, no. 8, 28.
[188] HA, 1927, no. 12, 22.

because of dominant social attitudes that considered women's place to be at home, for some women reporting for HA was an indicator of their agency. For, if some women could resist, some would simply be indifferent, women-reporters did embrace the new rules promoted by HA, thus disseminating new values through their reports. Women-reporters' capacity to act was expressed in the form of reports. They raised issues that they regarded as vital for the well-being of their life, family, and community. These reports also could be considered as "social events" bringing about changes, mentioned by Fairclough.[189] The number of "social events" was growing during the examined years, thus, invoking more changes. In a number of issues, "Our reporters" could occupy one quarter or even the half of the magazine.[190] The numerous the reports become, the more they contained "accumulative affect" suggested by Ahmad thus, involving new and new women in partaking in dissemination of new values. The "Post Box" section was also gradually getting bigger. Initially consisting of only 3-4 sentences, it gradually turned into a half, sometimes a full page, personally referring a certain reporter and giving a thorough feedback on specific topics by valorizing or devaluating them.

Another feature that reminded me of the new media phenomenon is the distribution of HA. An annual subscription fee to HA for examined years was 1 ruble and 20 kopek; a single issue cost 15 kopek.[191] Initially HA was also delivered abroad for 3 dollars per year, most probably for the Armenian diaspora, but from the middle of 1926 this announcement was no longer there. Distribution was also a part of *delegatki*'s and active women's responsibility. An announcement stated: "*Delegatka*! Report to yourself! How many HA did you disseminate and how many female peasants did you bind to it?"[192] From 1926 onwards the magazine started to campaign for a wider

[189] Norman Fairclough, *Analyzing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 10.
[190] HA, 1925, no 1.; HA, 1925, no 6-7; 1927, no. 3.
[191] According to Archive of Central Bank of Russian Federation, one Soviet Union ruble in the 1920s cost around $1.95; one ruble consisted of 100 kopek.
[192] HA, 1926, no. 5-6, 33.

distribution, offering different packages for prizes. On the page opposite to the cover, an advertisement announced a prize of 10-meter canvas and 10 pieces of soap for purchasing an annual subscription of 100 copies; 50 copy subscribers could receive a 5-meter canvas and 5 pieces of soap, etc.[193] The first HA issue of 1927 reported that meeting organizers for *delegatki* of Yerevan Kayaran subscribed to HA's 100 issues annually and won the prize: "WHO IS THE NEXT? HURRY!"[194] [emphasis in original]

Whether this was the reason or not, reports similar to the phenomenon inherent in social networks, like Facebook or other new media platforms, followed. Sometimes on Facebook some users can post a status invoking people to spread it. Depending on information contained in the status, users can challenge others by mentioning their names. They themselves take on the challenge and continue challenging others, thus entailing a snowball effect for the spread information. Likewise, a woman from Sanahin reported that following an explanation by a local representative of the *Kin bazhin* on HA's importance, 15 *delegatki* decided to subscribe to HA. Then, she challenged *delegatki* from a nearby village: "We invite you for a competition."[195] This kind of reports can be considered as analogues of Facebook statuses that took place on HA's pages. Accepting the challenge, women subscribed to HA and then reported about it in the next issue, this time challenging the women of another village. Thus, the challenges circulating on HA's pages had an accumulative affect on the increase of the HA's edition in the same way as emotions, explained by Sara Ahmed. For, As Ahmed claims: "words generate effect."[196] There were a number of challenges reporting an increase of HA distribution. Starting from 1000 copies per issue in 1924, HA achieved 3000 copies in 1927, setting a goal to reach 6000 by 1928.[197]

[193] HA, 1926, no. 10, 32.
[194] HA, 1927, no. 1, 19.
[195] HA, 1926, no. 10, 9.
[196] Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social text*, 79, vol. 22, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 122.
[197] HA, 1927, no. 12, 28.

To sum up this chapter, HA was creating the New Armenian Woman as a literate, socially and politically active one. She was aware of her rights being equal to men, free of family chores, and a part of the huge international workers' family. HA conveyed these messages by using tools such as stressing some parts of the text to fortify the meaning-making process and engaging active women in the development of the content. My reading of the "Our Reporters" section showed that some women did embrace these features and went on circulating them. In addition, HA clearly located Armenian women not in the East, but also not in the West.

CHAPTER 4: FLORA VARDANYAN, HA's EDITOR in CHIEF

This chapter is devoted to Flora Vardanyan and her agency in defining HA's content. My analysis relies on a small page of her biography in the Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia and her editorials, which opened most HA's issues of the examined years. I apply Marianne Kamp's model, which suggests explaining life experiences of editors of Uzbek magazine for women to interpret their vision on creating the New Uzbek Woman through *Yangi Yol* magazine. I will also use historian John Arnold's method by taking into account not only what the sources contain, but also what they do not.

"Flora Vardanyan (1881-1942) was born in Akhalkalaki.[198] Vardanyan graduated from the female gymnasium in Tiflis (1897) and the Pedagogy department of London University (1901). Since 1901 she was engaged in propaganda amongst workers in Baku, and was exiled to the Russian Mariupol region. In 1915 in Baku, she established an organization called "An Organization Helping Refugees without Ethnic Discrimination", which supported agitation within Bolsheviks. She was a participant in the revolutionary movements in Transcaucasia. Before joining the Communist Party in 1917, Vardanyan was a member of the Social Democrat Hynchakian Party (SDHP).[199] After the Revolution of 1917, Vardanyan was elected as a committee member of the Russian Social

[198] Akhalkalaki is a predominantly Armenian populated town in Georgia's southern region. According to the 2014 census the district had 45,070 inhabitants, of which 41,870 were Armenians (92.8 percent) and 3,085 (6.9 percent) were Georgians. The town is located about 30km from the border with nowadays Turkey. It is part of Samtskhe-Javakheti, a Georgian region with the largest Armenian population, amounting to around 160,000. Javakhk was part of Great Armenia until 387 AD. In 428 it was annexed to Georgia, then under Persian control, and from the 16th to 18th centuries it was part of the Ottoman Empire. After the 1828-29 Russian-Turkish war, Javakhk came under Russian control. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, tens of thousands of Armenians left (present day) Turkey and settled in Javakhk
In the beginning of the 20th century, the Armenian population of Akhalkalaki formed over seventy per cent of its total population. Stephen F. Jones, "Georgia: the trauma of statehood" in *New States New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations* ed. by Jan Bremmer and Ray Taras, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 506.
See also Vahan Ishkhanyan, "Javakhk: The "Third" Armenia", November 1, 2004
https://agbu.org/news-item/javakhk-the-third-armenia/

[199] SDHP was the second oldest Armenian political party, founded in 1887 by a group of seven Russian Armenian Marxist students (one of them was a woman) in Geneva, Switzerland. According to their site, SDHP was the first socialist party to operate in the Ottoman Empire and in Persia. http://www.hunchak.org.au/aboutus/historical_nalbandian.html

Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). Since 1918 she was a committee member of the same party in Georgia; she did propaganda work, and transferred weapons, money and literature. After the establishment of the Soviet order in Georgia, Vardanyan worked as one of the leaders of the propaganda section attached to the Georgian Communist Party. Since 1923 she was the deputy head of the *Kin bazhin*, of which later she became the head. In 1924, she became HA's responsible editor. Vardanyan conducted a considerable amount of educational work with homeless children. Starting from 1927 she was a Member of the Presidium of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) Central Executive Committee."[200]

Following Kamp's model to explore editors' life experiences and considering Flora Vardanyan's meager biographical details, I will try to suggest some basic assumptions about her. Most probably she was from a middle or upper middle-class family. The fact that she was born in Akhalkalaki means that most probably her ancestors were from Western Armenia (Erzurum Vilayet), which implies a different culture and context.[201] However, taking into account what is absent in the magazine, following by Arnold, namely, Western Armenian theme including Armenian Genocide which happened in 1915, this meant that she had been influenced by Russian Armenian culture. There is only one article by Zapel Yesayan (1878-1943),[202] a prominent Ottoman

[200] Konstantin Khudaverdyan, "Սովետական Տիեզերք." [Soviet Cosmos], vol. 11 in Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia. (Yerevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1985), 323.
Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia (1974-1986, overall 14 volumes).

[201] Between the 4th and the 20th centuries, Armenia was partitioned several times, and the terms Eastern and Western Armenia were used to refer to its respective parts under foreign occupation or control, although there was not a defined line between the two. Western Armenia is a term used to refer to eastern parts of Turkey (formerly the Ottoman Empire) that were part of the historical homeland of Armenians. Eastern Armenia is a term used to refer to the eastern parts of the Armenian Highlands, the traditional homeland of the Armenian people. The term Eastern Armenia is mostly used to refer to Russian Armenia (1828 to 1917) and Soviet Armenia (1920 to 1991), which included Armenian populated areas under the control of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, respectively.
Brief summary of "Sultans, Tsars, and Tyrants" of Simon Payaslian, *The History of Armenia from The Origins to the Present* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 103-125.
The fact that Western Armenia was included in the Ottoman Empire implies influence of Muslim culture; there was always a huge resistance from Armenian population to the Ottoman Empire because of the religion. Thus, generally speaking, Western Armenians are understood to be more devoted to national-ethnic issues than Eastern Armenians.

[202] In 1933, accepting the invitation of the Soviet Armenian government, Yesayan moved to Yerevan. But in 1937, during Stalin purges she was blamed in nationalism and exiled to Siberia. She is believed to have died in prison, the exact circumstances or the

Armenian novelist, translator and professor of literature, written in classic Armenian grammar. Most probably it was published because Yesayan emphasized that Armenian women needed to be civilized, and finished her essay by delegating the role of educator to HA.[203]

The fact that before joining the Communist Party in 1917, Vardanyan was a member of SDHP means that she was a true follower of socialist ideology and was not interested in national-ethnic issues. In one of her editorials she called local parties chauvinistic:

> While workers of Russia, fighting ceaselessly for four years, broke down its enemies and stepped on the way of the building socialism, workers of Transcaucasia still were under the yoke of *dashnaks*, *musavatists*, and *mensheviks*.[204] These chauvinist parties were hand in hand with predatory imperialistic Englishmen, Frenchmen, and German, shedding Transcaucasian workers' innocent blood. They were obscuring Transcaucasian workers' mind with the idea of "independent state".[205]

Also, since she worked a great deal with homeless children, it was expected to see this theme covered in the magazine. However, this theme was missing. Most probably they were orphans from Western Armenia left parentless as a result of the Genocide. Leninakan, from where numerous reports were available in the magazine without any reference to orphans, was known as a city of orphanages.[206] In one or two articles/reports the issue of homeless children was vaguely touched

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place are not known. For more information regarding Zabel Yesayan see Victoria Rowe "Exile and Genocide: Zabel Yesayian" in *A History of Armenian Women's Writing: 1880-1922* (London: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2003), 196-234.

[203] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 17.

[204] *Dashnaks* and *Musavatists* were members of Armenian and Azerbaijani national parties, respectively. The *Mensheviks* were a faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP). Due to disagreement between Julius Martov (the leader of the *mensheviks*) and Vladimir Lenin, the Party split into two factions, one being the *Mensheviks* and the other being the *Bolsheviks*. In this particular article, by saying *Mensheviks*, Vardanyan meant only Georgian *Mensheviks*. *Menshevik* and *Bolshevik* are Russian words meaning minority and majority, respectively.

[205] HA, 1924, no. 5, 17.

[206] The orphanages of Alexandrapol (this is the old name of modern Gyumri; during the Soviet order, it was called Leninakan after Lenin) operated during 1914-1930. Until 1918, orphan care was supported through the local charitable organizations, but the locals had poor funding and had to appeal to the international community for help. In 1918 Armenia declared itself an independent state, but was not yet a part of the Soviet Union. The Amercom (American Committee for Relief in the Near East, http://www.neareast.org/who-we-are/ responded to the appeal and a three-party agreement between Robert Hover (USA), Poghos Nubar (representative of the Armenian delegation in Paris), and Avetis Aharonyan (Republic of Armenia) was signed. In 1920, Armenian authorities vacated military settlements built by Russian base where the refugees from Western Armenia were sheltered. They transferred around 170 buildings to Amercom. Around 20000 orphans found shelter in these orphanages, and their lives were saved. When Armenia joined the Soviet Union in 1920, in the first years, Armenian authorities did not interfere with Amercom business as they were unable to tackle the problems. However, once the country became a part of the Soviet Union and gradually recovered, Amercom's presence was considered unnecessary, and it was closed in 1930.

upon, but nothing was mentioned about their origin.[207] If Armenian-Turkish relations were touched upon, they were introduced as Armenian-Turkish clashes where "Armenians would kill Turks, and Turks would kill Armenians."[208] Conversely, the magazine actively covered Turkish women's life in Yerevan, and proudly announced that a newly appointed minister of culture in Turkey was a woman.[209] This meant that Vardanyan was inclined to follow the Soviet official line.[210]

Moreover, Vardanyan's loyalty to Moscow was visible not only regarding Armenia, but also regarding the Russian context. As seen from her biography, she was politically active and occupied high rank ranking positions; in 1927, at the fifth conference of Armenian Soviets, she was the only woman amongst twelve members of the Armenian Central Executive Committee.[211] This means that she was definitely aware of the founders of the *Zhenotdel* and Communist ideologists Alexandra Kollontai and Inessa Armand. Inessa Armand's photo alongside Russian revolutionary women was published in an article about female workers' participation in the Revolution written by Varduhi Tarakhcyan's (1894-1980) , who was the head of the *Kin bazhin* and HA's editor in chief from 1928-1929. While subtitle under Artyukhina's (1889-1969), the fifth and last head of the *Zhenotdel* (1927-1930), photo introduced her as the head of the *Zhenotdel*, comrade I. Armand was presented

For more see Karine Aleksanyan, "Արևմտահայ գաղթականները Ալեքսանդրապոլի գավառում Առաջին համաշխարհայինպատերազմի Տարիներին" [Refugees from Western Armenia in Alexandrapol Province during World War I], *Bulletin of Armenian Archives* 2 (112), (Yerevan 2008): 40-56.

[207] HA, 1924, no. 3, 21; HA, 1925, no. 8, 23.

[208] HA, 1924, no. 3, 15-17; HA, 1925, no. 8, 20.

[209] HA, 1926, no. 10, 25.; HA, 1925, no. 8, 21.

[210] Until the 1960s there was no official discourse about the Genocide. Large demonstrations with up to 100, 000 people participating on April 24, 1965, during the fiftieth anniversary of the Genocide, made Soviet authorities bringing up this issue to the fore. But there was a political context related to Turkey's membership to NATO in 1952.
At the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, held on 3 March 1918, the Bolsheviks ceded the Kars province to the Ottoman Empire. There had been developed warm relations with Turkey and the Soviet Union regulated with the 1925 Soviet-Turkish Friendship. This treaty was annulled by the Soviet Union in 1945 since Turkey hold neutral position during World War II. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov announced that the Soviet Union was claiming the Eastern Turkish provinces Kars and Ardahan which were part of the Russian Empire until 1918. In 1952, Turkey joined to NATO. In 1967, the statue of the victims of the Genocide was built in Yerevan.
For more see Thomas de Vaal, *Great Catastrophe: Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015),126-149.

[211] HA, 1927, no. 4, 5.

as an "active participant of the October Revolution."[212] On the occasion of Aleksandra Artyukhina's visit to Yerevan and Leninakan in 1927, Vardanyan wrote a report and published her biography.[213] On another occasion, Artyukhina's report on results of some Party work was published.[214] Yet, no information about Alexandra Kollontai was available.

In one of the issues from 1924, writing about the need for organizing domestic work publicly, including laundry, cooking or water carrying, P. Abelyan (gender is not discernible) encouraged women to organize and run a cooperative.[215] But s/he did not inform the readers that these suggestions were offered by Kollontai and Armand.[216] In another HA issue, Liza Grigoryan assigned these suggestions to Lenin: "Lenin taught us that the woman herself should support opening kindergartens, nurseries, canteens in order to set her free of family chores."[217] On every possible occasion, there were references to Lenin. The magazine's pages were full of different slogans propounding ideas of communism with the majority of them referring to Lenin. Some slogans were literally suggesting women to enter "Lenin's Party". In one of her editorials, Vardanyan, for example, wrote: "Female workers and female peasants, enter Lenin's Party!" or: "Armenian female worker, strengthen the link between the city and the village, enter Ilyich's Party."[218] This is exactly what Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovski (1893-1930) wrote in his poem entitled *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*: "We say party, we understand Lenin, we say Lenin, we understand party."[219] Lenin's phrase "Each cook must govern the country" was cited almost in every issue under different sections or articles. Although the involvement of both Russian and foreign

[212] HA, 1927, no. 10, 5-7.
[213] HA, 1927, no. 1, 10-13.
[214] HA, 1926, no. 7, 5-7.
[215] HA, 1924, no. 3, 22.
[216] For more on Kollontai's and Armand's contribution to communist ideology see Mary Buckley, "Women's Organization: Bolshevik Theory and Practice" in *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union (*Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 44-57.
[217] HA, 1925, no. 1, 9.
[218] HA, 1925, no. 2, 4.
[219]*Vladimir Ilyich Lenin* is an epic poem written in 1923-1924.
Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Владимир Ильич Ленин* [Vladimir Ilyich Lenin] (Leningrad: State Publisher, 1925).

communist women, such as Zetkin, Krupskay and others, was visible, Kollontai did not figure in HA. This meant that Vardanyan was aware of Kollontai's not being in favor with the Party. Thus, Vardanyan was a strong advocate for the Communist Party, "Lenin's Party", as she put it many times. She also authored a book, *Paris Commune*, some excerpts of which were published in HA under the name Flora.[220] As defined by Chiara Bonfiglioli, Vardanyan could be well described as a "meaningful agent" in her belief in communist ideas.[221]

It is also important to understand Vardanyan's approach regarding women in general. A closer look at her editorials shows that in her understanding women who were followers of communist principles were not victims:

> Today, on the 8th of March, the female workers' international communist day, in all corners of the world, thousands and millions of female workers gather under red flags. They gathered not as poor oppressed slaves, but as resisting, fighting power.[222]

While writing about women in the West, she highlighted that they were oppressed and over exploited, but did not speak about them as "slaves":

> In England, France, Germany, America and other capitalist countries women's and children's exploitation reached critical proportions. […] Those countries who consider themselves civilized and enlightened, did not recognize women's equality so far.[223]

Meanwhile, when it came to the women of the East, Vardanyan named them "slaves" and "ignorant":

[220] Flora Vardanyan, *Փարիզի կոմունան* [The Paris Commune] (Yerevan: State Publisher, 1930).
[221] Bonfiglioli, Chiara. "On Vida Tomsic, Marxist Feminism, and Agency." *Aspasia* 10, no. 1 (2016), 148.
[222] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 4.
[223] HA, 1926, no. 3-4, 7.

> Today the oppressed and repressed female slave of the East in China, Iran, Tajikstan[224] also raised her voice of complaint against veiling, *kalim*[225] and, in general, against all kind of religious prejudices.[226]

Reporting on comrade Varya Gasparyan's speech, an Armenian woman participant at the 3rd International Conference of Communist Women in Moscow in 1924, Vardanyan cited her:

> The comrade described the slavery situation where the woman of the oppressed countries of the East was. […] She is an absolute slave. For instance, in China the female worker obeys the factory manager not only during the working hours, but also after work, during the time of rest."[227]

Armenian women in Vardanyan's understanding were located somewhere between the West and the East, though in her editorials this assumption was not articulated explicitly. In one of her greetings she wrote:

> Armenian female worker! Today, on the 8th of March, join your voice with that of female workers of other Soviet republics, read an invitation of your *Western and Eastern* [emphasis added] sisters to stand under the Red flag of the Communist International.[228]

Following Fairclough and taking into account what was assumed, it is possible to conclude that in her vision the Armenian woman was in-between, especially given the fact that the phrase "Western and Eastern" in her editorials was used in abundance.[229] However, in one article signed by Liza (an author, writing for the "Politics" section), this assumption was explicitly articulated:

> The Armenian emancipated female worker stands on the threshold of the Eastern people. Let us not forget our Muslim sisters who are not emancipated yet and who have been oppressed and enslaved for centuries.[230]

[224] Though Tajikstan sounds like Tajikistan, the former amongst Armenians at the beginning of the last century was understood as Turkey. The term Tajik was used to signify explicitly Turk and implicitly Muslim. Though now in Armenia the term Tajik is no longer used in this sense, amongst Turkish Armenians it still signifies Turk.
[225] Bride-price.
[226] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 4.
[227] HA, 1924, no. 3, 12.
[228] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 5.
[229] 1926, no. 3-4, 7; 1927, no. 2, 2.
[230] HA, 1924, no. 1, 8.

Vardanyan's another editorial indicating literacy as an issue that had to be achieved in order to hasten the building of socialism helps to specify the exact location of Armenian women in her vision:

> Today, on the 8th of March, the Armenian female worker and female peasant who are more backward than their sisters of other Soviet countries must think about it [literacy].[231]

The other Soviet countries were definitely not the Soviet Muslim republics in her vision. First of all, it was Russia, and this is what was assumed. Vardanyan constantly mentioned Russian sisters' role and importance during the October Revolution:

> The Russian female worker who was the first one to ring the bell during the Revolution in the February days, could not remain indifferent to the militant struggle of the proletariat. The civil war history is full of brilliant examples that are living witnesses of the heroism and selflessness that Russian female workers and female peasants showed during the proletarian Revolution of that period.[232]
>
> Our eyes witnessed the big role and strong participation that the Russian female worker had in the proletarian Revolution.[233]

Thus, in shaping the New Armenian Woman in HA, Vardanyan defined her as more "backward" than her Russian sister but already on the way to "emancipation": "The majority of the Armenian female workers *still* [emphasis added] are in the paw of illiteracy and ignorance."[234]

Nevertheless, Vardanyan promoted modern education and the adoption of public roles for Armenian women, similar to the editors of the Uzbek magazine *Yangi Yol* examined by Kamp. One of the main themes of Vardanyan's editorials was the encouragement of Armenian women not only to partake in elections for local Soviets, but also to be elected. During the elections of local Soviets in 1924, while writing that various social-economic problems needed to be addressed by both men

[231] HA, 1927, no. 2, 2.
[232] HA, 1924, no. 5, 16-17.
[233] HA, 1924, no. 3, 9.
[234] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 4.

and women, she stressed that women, by virtue of being mothers and giving birth, had specific problems and only by their representation in authorities could these issues be solved. "Besides, the most important issue you are interested in is to be emancipated from domestic work," Vardanyan emphasized, citing Lenin.[235] Apart from paying attention to her imperative language ("you are interested in"), her concern in involving women in Soviets tell us that she truly wanted Armenian women to be socially and politically active, free of unpaid domestic work. Similar to how Natalia Novikova understood Kollontai's principles and actions, my reading of Flora Vardanyan's editorials reveals that she "regarded the communist transformation of society as a means towards women's emancipation."[236] Vardanyan did not see Armenian women as separate from the Party. On the contrary, she identified herself and her audience as an inseparable part of the Communist Party and the building of socialism:

> The October Revolution that crushed the female worker's [Armenian female worker] chains of slavery, announced her as an owner of equal rights in the big family of workers, and, at the same time, delegated to her responsibilities so that she had to take care of family needs and *govern the country along with a worker*.[237] [emphasis added]

In sum, though in Flora Vardanyan's vision the New Armenian Woman was behind to that of her Russian counterpart, this new woman was free of domestic work, and equal with the man in all rights. Vardanyan was a strong modernizer and truly wanted Armenian women to be educated, enter public life, partake in the political life of the country and be the owner of their lives. Defining the content of the magazine, Vardanyan was inclined to follow the Soviet official line. Nevertheless, HA did not produce homogeneous content, and the gender policy messages were translated in a complex way, and I will show this in the next chapter.

[235] HA, 1924, no. 4, 1.
[236] Natalia Novikova, "Communism as a Vision and Practice." *Aspasia*, ed. by Francisca de Haan, Maria Bucur, Krassimira Daskalova, (New York and Oxford: Berghan Journals 2007), 204.
[237] Ibid., 2.

CHAPTER 5: THE "HEALTH" SECTION

In this chapter I do textual analysis of articles in HA that dealt with health and hygiene issues. Namely, I consider articles as elements of social events that bring about changes by means of meaning-making, suggested by Fairclough, in order to interpret the intentions of the Soviet Armenian authorities and the "Health" section's authors.[238] I will also try to read not only what the authors directly wrote but also what I think they assumed. I examine articles at two levels: through analyzing the "Health" section as a mean to convey the gender policy messages to readers and authors as agents who translate these messages. My analysis shows that the "Health" section was shaping Armenian women to be subordinated to Armenian men and subordinated to Russian women.

Overall, I read 52 articles closely connected to health and hygiene issues: 32 of these were in the "Health" section, 15 were from reporters/*delegatki*, and five were stories. While indicating the need for the education of Armenian women in a broad sense, Vardanyan and other commentators also touched upon health and hygiene issues, but I did not count them since they did not address the topic specifically. Prevailing theme within the "Health" section itself was preventing diseases such as smallpox, malaria, typhus, etc.; one article was about eye diseases. Midwifery was under attack, addressed mostly by reporters and covered in short stories but it got also some space in the "Health" section. Special attention was paid to the hygiene of childcare and pregnant women. Only one article explicitly discussed woman's body hygiene. Cleanliness was a central idea that underpinned all these themes. There was no article devoted to fashion or makeup in the "Health" section or in the magazine.

[238] Norman Fairclough, *Analyzing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 10.

The chapter will develop in this manner: in the first subchapter, I will identify the messages on health and hygiene directives of the Soviet gender policy that the "Health" section conveyed to Armenian women. In the second subchapter, I will point out the authors' role in translating these messages for the Armenian audience. In the third subchapter, I will interpret the symbolic significance of this translation for the body hygiene.

5.1 *Construction of the New Narrative*

In this subchapter, I look at the "Health" section through Stark's framework, which examined health and hygiene issues of the Soviet gender policy in the 1920s -1930s focusing on six themes: "the revolutionary ideology", "the state", "the city", "the home", "the family", and "the body".[239] Then I will hone in on using the theoretical lens of Orientalism. While some of those six themes were distinctively visible in the "Health" section itself, others were visible throughout in the whole magazine. Besides, there were no clear boundaries between these themes; for example, one article could address issues that represented "the revolutionary ideology", "the home", and "the family". Hence, it was difficult to establish how many of the articles that I closely examined represented any one particular theme.

Guiding articles opening the "Health" section, as well as the main editorials, discussed ideological issues on the victory of medicine and its connection to order and cleanliness. Taking into account that preventing diseases was also included in this aspect, it is possible to say that "the revolutionary ideology" was the most represented theme. Furthermore, articles covering dispensary and consultation issues were meant to represent "the state". This aspect was clearly visible in the "Health" section: three articles and two *delegatkis'* reports were devoted to this theme. "The city"

[239] See Chapter 2; pages 25-26.

was intertwined within the whole magazine. Workers' clubs, which were called hut-reading rooms in Armenia, received a considerable amount of coverage. Besides, three reports of local contributors discussed issues related to sanatoriums and to correct eating regimens. "The home" and "the family" were mostly covered in the "Health" section, covered considerably, and were mostly intertwined within other themes. "The body" received the least attention. There was only one article that specifically addressed the woman's body hygiene. I shall discuss this article in the third subchapter. There were not any articles about either makeup or fashion.

Because the focus of this present work is hygiene issues, I analyze the examples that are closely connected to it, and will not discuss all themes separately. First, I will show how the idea of cleanliness was represented in the "Health" section, and then I will demonstrate how it was applied in the case of hygiene of childcare and pregnant women.

5.1.1 Defining Cleanliness

As Starks claims, for Soviet hygienists, dirt was the reason for diseases, and, hence, cleanliness could prevent infections. In an article entitled "The Role of Cleanliness for Health Care" P. (the author) reflected on this theme at length and indicated what was to be avoided:

> It is said that 'the cleanliness is the key factor for health'. Indeed, if we closely examine the reasons of diseases, we shall see that the main role is played by dirt and uncleanliness. […] First of all, people must keep thinking of cleanliness of their body, clothes, and underclothes. […] In order to be free of diseases, *one must bathe once a week; wash hands with soap and clean water before each meal and change underclothes once a* week. […] *The house must be swept with a wet broom every day* and if the floor is wooden – *with oily cloths* in order not to make dust. […] *It is forbidden to jolt clothes in the room* in order not to make dust. […] *It is not allowed to wash laundry* or *dry clothes* in the room since it makes air harmful. […] Every *morning and evening before sleeping it is necessary to ventilate the room for half an hour*. […] *It is not allowed to keep animals* such as a dog, a pig, a lamb or a calf in the room. […] In every house, *there must be boiled water for drinking* in case they are not taking water from a clean source but from the river, well, creek etc.[240] [emphasis in original]

[240] HA, 1926, no. 3-4, 36-38.

As is visible, the main message that P. conveyed to the audience is that by maintaining a certain level of cleanliness diseases could be prevented. She used strong language. Verbs "forbidden", "not allowed", "must" were in abundance not only in this article but throughout the whole content of the magazine. While informing about the new rules, she used such phrases as "of course it is clear that…"; "for sure, it is understandable that this must be refused", etc. It is interesting to notice that although the adjectives "backward" and "ignorant" were used throughout the magazine, the authors did not directly name the women as such. Nevertheless, sometimes women were directly called "backward" and "ignorant." For example, Dr. Allahverdyan, (another author) wrote:

> It is observed that the mother, due to her ignorance and partly also poverty, does not take care of her children as is needed. […] ignorant mothers use even more unacceptable means, for instance, giving children poppy."[241]

Most of the time women were named by the adjectives "backward" and "ignorant" when they did not follow the new rules:

> Each civilized and educated woman must fight against prejudices and their dissemination. Backward and ignorant women, who participate in the dissemination of gossips, lessen the belief in doctors, health care, and hospitals.[242]

But even here, it is visible that the target was not the woman herself but the custom that was under attack everywhere. As P. advised: "Emancipated female peasants must turn their back to the remnants of old, backward, and ignorant stuff."[243] Thus, if the woman obeyed the new rules of hygiene, not only would be she "emancipated", but she would also play a great role in preserving health. In other words, the new rules were constructed as opposing to the local "backward" practices.

[241] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 25.
[242] HA, 1924, no. 1, 30.
[243] HA, 1924, no. 2, 27.

5.1.2 Hygiene of Child Care

The hygiene of childcare was one of the practices that was targeted as being in need of total reorganization. It was considerably covered in eight articles. P., for example, wrote that there was a bad custom in Armenian villages; allegedly to calm down the child or to feed, mothers chewed a piece of bread, rolled it in a piece of cloth and put it on child's arm. P. wrote:

> Each mother must know that by doing so, she endangers her child's health and life since not only bread itself is harmful, but also a vast quantity of microbes penetrates the child's stomach through the bread and cloth.[244]

An unsigned poem-like text entitled "If I Could Speak" in the very first issue of HA in 1924 thoroughly described the new and old practices of childcare:

> Do not kiss my lips and do not cough on my face otherwise I can fall sick and be harmed
> not give me sweat candy, beer, wine, cognac, vodka or coffee: I want to be healthy
> Do not give me poppy for sleeping
> Do not give me a nipple and do not allow me to suck my fingers
> When I cry, do not cradle me and do not throw me up and down on your hands
> I want to take regular food and at fixed times
> While eating, sometimes I want boiled and fresh water because I feel thirst
> I want to be bathed every day and dressed in clean clothes
> I want my bed to be separate, the windows of my rooms opened; I need enough time to have quiet sleep because I must grow healthy
> Every day take me to the fresh air for promenade and do not take me to visits otherwise I sleep badly
> I want my mother, father, and everybody to love me and treat me well
> I want to be a good child[245]

Dr. Allahverdyan, in the article entitled "Mistakes of our Mothers", apart from things that were already mentioned as harmful practices in other articles, stressed that mothers sprinkled soil in pleats of children's skin and, sometimes, they covered children's body with soil in other to absorb pee and not to make the swaddling bands wet. Dr. Allahverdyan explained that mothers should use powder because "soil irritates the gentle skin of the child, besides, remaining long and being mixed

[244] HA, 1925, no. 4, 29.
[245] HA, 1924, no. 1, 34.

with pee, it could be a cause for various skin diseases".[246] Dr. Allahverdyan mentioned this practice several times in different articles, and he named it as extremely harmful and in need of total eradication. It is interesting to notice that a similar practice was in circulation in the villages of Western Armenia. But instead of soil they used sand: "most households, simply lined the cradle with fine absorbent sand, which might be covered with a cloth."[247]

Following Dirks's interpretation of British colonizers' policy on the body, by claiming that soil harmed the children's bodies meant that their bodies were denied agency. In this particular case, the magazine represented the childcare in opposition to the local custom, interpreting them as coercive and not agential – soil had to be replaced with powder because soil harmed the child's body. As is possible to see, both P. and Dr. Allahverdyan, portrayed the agency of the child's body different from that of existing local one. Thus, with the new rules, the agency of the body was constructed according to the Soviet understanding of modernity.

5.1.3 Hygiene of Pregnant Women

Hygiene of pregnant women was also a focus of the "Health" section authors. Being interwoven within different themes, it was discussed in five articles to different extents. But in one article P. gave lengthy explanations on various aspects of the hygiene of pregnant women:

> The developing embryo is fed by the mother's blood; hence she must eat so much to satisfy both herself and the embryo. […] she should avoid using spicy food such as pepper or mustard. Dairy and especially yoghurt are very useful. […] The pregnant woman must pay great attention to the cleanliness of her body and especially to sexual organs, she should bathe more often and wash them, but it is needed to be cautious and do not bathe with cold water or water which is too hot as she may be harmed and the pregnancy can be interrupted. […] The pregnant woman must not wear a too tight dress, it should be wide and should not have ties or belts on clothes in order not to press her breasts or belly. […] Every pregnant woman should visit a doctor not in the case of getting sick but frequently in order to get advice on how to take care of herself, dress, food, and other issues. […] It is absolutely

[246] HA, 1925, no. 4, 29.
[247] Susie V. Hoogasian and Mary K. Matossian, *Armenian Village Life before 1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1982), 109.

> necessary to avoid services of midwifes because due to their "support" both the mother and the child can be harmed. [248]

Again, here we can see that apart from maintaining a level of cleanliness, the new way of taking care of the pregnant woman's body in very specific ways reconstructed agency according to Soviet modernity. P. stressed that the pregnant woman should not wear tight dresses or have a belt on it because Armenian traditional cloths had all these elements on them. The emphasis on avoiding midwifery was pointed out to advise women to visit doctors and attend consultation services in case of health problems. As Dr. Allahverdyan reported, 298 women were examined in the Yerevan Consultation center in the year of 1923.[249]

Midwifery was under strong attack and was covered in eleven articles, reports, and stories. The propaganda against it was so strong that one of the women-reporters, writing about the harms that midwifes could cause, advised women not to use their services even if there were no doctors available.[250]

Both Dr. Allahverdyan and P. strived to create certain type of identities to make society easily governable. Their aim was to shape malleable and healthy bodies in order to build socialism. As one slogan propagated: "Mothers! Take care of your children: only a healthy generation can be useful for the building of socialism."[251]

In sum, the authors of the "Health" section recodified local tradition and custom through health and hygiene directives in order to cultivate a new, desirable social form based on socialism. This new form meant to produce women who were "enlightened" and did not believe in prejudices; they believed in the power of medicine and science; they had clean bodies that did not need any

[248] HA, 1924, no. 5, 34-36.
[249] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 24.
[250] HA, 1927, no. 3, 15.
[251] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 24.

kind of perfume or makeup; and they knew how to take care of themselves, their home, and their children in a new way.

5.2 *HA's Authors as Agents between the Soviet Authorities and Armenian Women*

Articles in the "Health" section either were not signed (nine), or signed by several doctors. Amongst them, Dr. Allahverdyan published several articles (five); Dr. S. Tarkhanyan published two articles, and each of the other doctors, such as, A. Harutyunyan, S. Lazaryan, etc., published only one article each. Most of the articles were signed by P. (thirteen). It is impossible to discern the gender of any of the authors but probably P. was a woman and the others were men. This is not only because of the low probability of doctors being female at that time, but precisely also because the articles signed by P. touched upon specific issues, such as menstruation, that could plausibly be written by a female author.

At a quick glance, it seems that the authors remained in the frame of the general line of the magazine and disseminated messages in accordance with the gender policy, as I demonstrated in the previous subchapter. However, further analysis of the articles shows a complex translation of these messages that sometimes conflicted with the general line of the magazine.

As I showed in the third chapter, the section "Cooperation" promoted the opening of nurseries, laundries, and kindergartens to find solutions of organizing domestic work and child care publicly.[252] Flora Vardanyan also stressed this issue, citing Lenin, who said that women should be free of domestic chores:

> On the occasion of the 8th of March in 1927, I refer to all Soviet, public and cooperative offices and trade unions and suggest all of them to organize offices liberating women aimed to set the worker women free of domestic and child chores. Creating free time for them [women], they will have opportunity to be involved in public life and the building of socialism in greater strength. […] Today, on the 8th of March, apart from the offices

[252] See Chapter 3, pages 36-37.

> mentioned above, every Party member, komsomol, even pioneer, and every conscious individual should report herself/himself what they have done for emancipating women and what they can do for that.[253]

There were a number of reports and articles addressing the need for opening nurseries and gardens for children.[254] One of her editorials entitled "The Nurseries and Gardens for Children", Vardanyan devoted to this issue and explaining the positive impact that they could have on the children, stressed that the goal was also the emancipation of the women: "It was clear for each and every female worker and female peasant that nurseries and gardens for children are necessary both for the education of their children and for their emancipation."[255]

However, the "Health" section authors, narrating the rules of hygiene of childcare and of maintaining the home and family, unanimously delegated these issues to women. Dr. S. Tarkhanyan, in emphasizing the role of women in taking care of people's health, enumerated a number of things that a "smart" woman should follow:

> A smart woman, working continually at her home, takes care of the house in order to have clean laundry and clothing on time, in order to have the members of her family bathed on time. […] Keeping her house clean and in order, she saves her family from various diseases. […] The smart, conscious mother is feeding her child after the birth regularly, taking care of the child can prevent her/him from getting diseases. […] People's health is dependent on eating healthy dishes and on getting food on time and regularly. The conscious woman's role here is huge. The conscious, smart woman understands the dangers of alcohol and should try to remove wine and vodka from the table, she should fight against drunkenness.[256]

Discussing practices of childcare that were in circulation, and indicating what needed to be done, Dr. Allahverdyan concluded: "It is needed to fight against this endlessly in order to make the mother clear what is necessary for the health of her family."[257] As is visible, Dr. Allahverdyan did not think that conducting the health of the family was the father's business. Starks points out that

[253] HA, 1927, no. 2, 2.
[254] HA, 1926, no. 9, 12-13.; HA, 1927, no. 2, 24-26.; HA, 1927, no.3, 6-11.
[255] HA, 1927, no. 3, 2.
[256] HA, 1924, no. 1, 29.
[257] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 25.

Soviet propaganda on theme of "the home" was also delegating domestic work and child care to women; however, "posters urged husbands and children to lobby women."[258] Meanwhile, in the frame of HA no single article or report with this message was available. In fact, only one (unsigned) article commented on childcare as a responsibility of parents, though emphasizing the mother's important role, stating: "Both parents must take care of their children, especially the mother."[259]

The above-mentioned examples are indicators of authors' agency: they translate the rules based on their specific/local context. For them it is *natural* that women should do that. As Dr. S. Tarkhanyan stressed: "It is *natural* [emphasis added] that every woman is interested in it [child care] because it is close to her heart."[260] In another issue, discussing the role that workers had to preserve public health, P. stressed that women's role was major:

> […] the woman has more to do here than a man since, *usually* [emphasis added], she is in charge of housekeeping, cooking, child care etc. Therefore, the woman must know well from where dangers come that menace her family's health and how she should fight against them.[261]

As is evident, P. thinks that *usually*, it is the woman who should take care of domestic chores. In the Armenian traditional family, women were always in charge of maintaining the home and children, and men abstained from it. Dr. S. Harutyunyan, for example, even advised women to take their children with them to the fields with them in order to look after them better.[262] Hence, no matter how well the authors tried to translate the health and hygiene directives of the Soviet gender policy, and no matter how many times Vardanyan stressed that the Revolution announced the woman to be equal to the man in all rights,[263] the "Health" section authors shaped the New Armenian Woman as subordinate to the Armenian man.

[258] Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 97.
[259] HA, 1927, no. 4, 32.
[260] HA, 1926, no. 3-4, 39.
[261] HA, 1926, no. 3-4, 37.
[262] HA, 1926, no. 5-6, 34-36.
[263] See Chapter 4, page 53; also footnote 274.

Furthermore, the point of departure for the "Health" section authors was not in Armenia. Despite the fact that HA continually emphasized the advantages of the socialist society over the capitalist one, all "progressive" and "advanced" practices that the authors suggested their audience to follow were mentioned to have been originated in the West and then practiced in (Soviet) Russia. References to the West were not frequent but they were repeated from time to time in different sections. Dr. Allahverdyan, pointing out the importance of children's health for future generations, cited a French professor as a source: "It was French professor Budin who noticed it *first*. After that fights against child mortality commenced *first* by European *then* [emphasis added] by Russian doctors."[264] This is an example of articulation of historicism discussed by Chakrabarty, and one corollary of historicism is the production of local centers replacing Europe. If we look at Russia and Armenia through the lens of Orientalism, the former being Orientalized by Europe and the latter by Russia, as was claimed by Tlostanova, in the above-mentioned example Russia was positioned as a local center.

Indeed, some articles referred to Moscow as an example to follow: "The example of our big centers (for instance, Moscow) shows that there is nothing wrong to wrap babies freely; on the contrary, it will help her/him to grow better and sleep quieter."[265] Not all the articles had a direct reference to Moscow; some simply dictated new rules. However, it is important to contextualize articles and locate the "Health" section within the magazine. HA, under Vardanyan's guidance, sometimes stressed Russian female workers' role in the Revolution and recommended Armenian women to follow their path.[266] In her editorial about the need for opening nurseries, Vardanyan also emphasized: "let the Russian female workers' and female peasants' example *guide* [emphasis

[264] HA, 1925, no. 2-3, 26.
[265] Ibid., 22-23.
[266] See Chapter 4, page 52; also, 1925, no. 2-3, 26; 1926, no. 3-4, 36.

added] you."[267] Contextualizing Armenia in the Oriental discourse, followed by Said and Tlostanova in the light of what is visible in the given examples, we see that the "Health" section authors positioned health and hygiene directives in relation to Moscow, hence shaping Armenian women as secondary to their Russian sisters.

To sum up, the "Health" section authors, in translating health and hygiene directives of the Soviet gender policy, represented the New Armenian Woman as subordinate to the Armenian man and also as subordinate to the Russian counterpart.

5.3 *Marginalized Body as Indicator of the Secondary Role of the Building of Socialism*

In this subchapter, I analyze how the Armenian woman's body was represented in the HA's "Health" section and to what extent it was considered important for the building of socialism. In a few articles, the hygiene of a pregnant woman's body was discussed, as I showed in the previous subchapter, but the point of departure of those articles was not the body itself but the child the woman carried.[268] P. discussed the body hygiene for the menstrual period in one relatively short article (approximately one page), in comparison to other articles in the "Health" section, which were usually two to three pages. After explaining the role of menstruation, its relation to the sexual organs and its importance, and informing that it might start between the ages of 13 and 17 years, she gave the following recommendations:

> During menstruation, the womb becomes like a wound and its hole gets bigger hence the possibility that dirt can easily go inside and cause this or that disease is high. Therefore, it is needed to be extremely clean. In general, every woman must try to wash her sexual organs as often as possible, and during the menstruation she must be doubly clean. On a daily basis, it is necessary to wash the bloody parts of the body with warm water and a clean chunk of cloth, and put a new, clean piece of fabric. From 3 to 7 days, depending how many days it lasts, it is not allowed to do hard work or take a long walk. It is also forbidden to have a

[267] HA, 1927, no. 3, 3.
[268] See footnote 248.

> sexual relation during this period, otherwise it is possible to get harmed. Women should avoid also having sexual relations three days before and after the menstruation.[269]

As is possible to identify, P. conveyed the same messages for the cases of hygiene for pregnant women and for childcare, namely, maintenance of cleanliness, and reconstruction of agency. Previously there was no understanding that during the menstruation women should avoid hard work, walk less, or do not have sexual relation. But P. explained them that these activities could harm their body. Thus, P. represented different kind of body agency, the one in accordance with the Soviet modernity.

Furthermore Starks claims that Soviet hygiene rhetoric was gendered and the woman's body was portrayed as inferior to that of the man, which was considered normative.[270] Due to menstruation, which was seen as something that needed extra cleansing, Soviet hygienists understood women to be dirtier and therefore more vulnerable to infection: "The blood flowing from the womb, serves as a kind of bridge for microbial infection."[271] Nevertheless, this inferior (woman's) body, alongside other themes, was covered in Soviet (Russia) propaganda prescribing lots of rules on how to take care of it. As Starks asserts the body was understood as a signifier of the political order and therefore socialism. Building a body was meant to build socialism – and work was a central pillar for the building of socialism. Therefore, it needed thorough care. But in HA, we see that the (woman's) body was neglected and was paid the least amount of attention in comparison to other themes. Yet, it was in the beginning – this article was published in the very first year in 1924 alongside other themes that needed to be covered. This means that body hygiene was at stake only in the beginning. Childcare, housework, struggle against diseases, and other themes got

[269] HA, 1924, no. 3, 31-32.
[270] Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 163.
[271] Ibid., 176.

continuous coverage, yet, the attention to woman's body hygiene decreased. But taking care of the body does not only imply to take care of it during menstruation period. Starks points out that Soviet hygienists had lengthy recommendations on other aspects, for instance, how to keep healthy skin.[272]

British colonizers recodified local customs and practices, as Dirks claims, and Bengal women were taught new practices for taking care of their bodies, as Chakrabarty showed. While HA and the "Health" section carefully recodified some practices, as shown in the previous subchapters, the body hygiene was left out of the attention. Thus, the question should be posed: why is it that recodification of body hygiene practices was neglected and what it could mean?

The assumption is that this is also an indicator of the "Health" section authors pointing out that the rules were not imposed directly but were translated by authors. In the beginning of the 20th century in Armenian traditional society publicly discussing woman's body, even if it was about hygiene, was probably perceived as something unacceptable. P. mentioned also the topic of sexual relations which might be considered as too much. It can be speculated that the authors decided not to cover it, or at least, not to make the body as a separate topic of discussion.

But neglecting the body meant neglecting the work it signified – body was constructed as an embodiment of socialism. As seen from the excerpts of the article given above, even though P. advised menstruating women not to do hard work, she did not say that they should not work at all. In the case of pregnant women, P. had the same advice:

> The pregnant woman must carry on doing her everyday work: by not working the woman does not gain anything valuable, let alone losses. But they should avoid doing hard work. Carrying on her shoulders buckets of water, or riding a horse may cause premature interruption of pregnancy and other bad consequences.[273]

[272] Ibid., 177.
[273] HA, 1924, no. 5, 34-36.

The direct result of the relative neglect of the body hygiene implies the relative neglect of the work that the women did since body was signified to express the political order as mentioned above. Symbolically this means that the "Health" section authors, leaving out the body hygiene from their attention, constructed the New Armenian woman's body as secondary to that of the Armenian man and the Russian Woman.

CONCLUSIONS

"The October Revolution announced to the whole world for the first time that the w o m a n is e q u a l to the m a n in a l l r i g h t s. […] W i t h o u t the w o m a n's p a r t i c i p a t i o n, s o c i a l i s m w o u l d not be a c h i e v e d [emphasis in original], says one of comrade Lenin's commandments. At the same time, it announces that socialism is not a decree that can be achieved by a command from the top but should start from the bottom when all the working masses, ready as participants, will come out as builders of the new life."[274] This is an excerpt from Flora Vardanyan's editorial entitled "Comrade Lenin" on the occasion of the first anniversary of his death in January 1925. It is evident that Flora Vardanyan believed in women's equality with men and truly imagined the New Armenian Woman as a builder of that new life as an equal partner with the man. However, my analysis of 29 HA issues, published between 1924-1927, showed that this new woman was being constructed as subordinate to the Armenian man and as subordinate to the Russian woman.

I demonstrated this in four chapters. First, I provided appropriate historical background that served as the foundation for my analysis of data and defined my theoretical framework. Next, in the third chapter, I made a descriptive analysis of the magazine in order to provide an appropriate context for the "Health" section. In the fourth chapter, I analyzed the editor in chief's vision on the creation of the New Armenian Woman and the influence on defining the content of the magazine based on her editorials and a small page in the Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia. In the fifth chapter, I proceeded with a textual analysis of HA's "Health" section.

While analyzing the issues, I faced two main problems. First, I had a hard time in translating evidence from primary sources. The language that HA used was old and contained some stylistically

[274] HA, 1925, no. 1, 6.

complicated structures that did not sound good in modern Armenian. Thus, it was difficult to translate the chosen excerpts into English to clearly convey the nuances that the authors implied. Second, I was not able to find more information either about Flora Vardanyan or the *Kin bazhin*. I had to rely on what was digitalized and was available online. For instance, I could not find out when Vardanyan became the head of the *Kin bazhin*, who the founder of the *Kin bazhin* was and to what extent the body hygiene was considered important to cover or highlight. I believe that having access to archival documents I would have been able to draw a wider picture of the issue I researched.

Analyzing the "Health" section, I found out that the authors strived to construct the New Armenian Woman's body as healthy and clean which was secondary to the Armenian man's and the Russian woman's body to a some extent. I demonstrated this through several points. First in the examples of childcare and pregnant women I demonstrated how important cleanliness was for HA in constructing the New Armenian Woman. HA's goal was to construct an "enlightened" woman with a clean, makeup free body, who knew how to take care of her home and children in a new way, and who believed in the power of medicine and science and was free of religious or other prejudices. Secondly, I demonstrated the role of the authors' agency in translating health and hygiene rules for the Armenian female audience. This translation had two dimensions. First, it turned out that even though the magazine promoted public infrastructures to address domestic work and childcare, these issues the "Health" section authors delegated to women. Second, while translating, the authors referred to Moscow and Russian women as an example to follow, thus, shaping the New Armenian Woman as secondary to her Russian counterpart. This was also visible in Flora Vardanyan's vision, in which she located the New Armenian Woman's place behind her Russian sister. Finally, I interpreted the comparative neglect to the body hygiene from the symbolical perspective. Relying on Starks's definition of the building the body as the building socialism, I translated this relative neglect as reducing the role of the New Armenian Woman in the building of socialism.

Furthermore, I demonstrated that not only the women-reporters writing for "Our Reporter" considered HA as a means to raise their problems and seek for solutions publicly, but they also themselves propagated the new lifestyle as important for their wellbeing. A group of revisionist scholars also argued that in the Soviet Union the new policies had support from the population.[275] The new value I added to the existing scholarship is that through the concept of citizen journalism and Ahmed's model on affective economy I tried to draw a mechanism to explain how the messages of the Soviet gender policy gradually disseminated more and more, thus involving more and more women into the process. Along with other examples, I showed how the women disseminated the idea of subscription to HA and, thus, contributed to the increase of HA's circulation.

Finally, I find it important to emphasize whilst capitalization, italicization, or visibly stressing some sentences, paragraphs, or separate words, are believed to be corollaries of modern technologies such as internet and social networks, in fact, HA applied these techniques around 90 years ago. By doing so, HA meant to strengthen the meaning-making process in promoting the new lifestyle. As an announcement for *delegatki* and active women read: **"COMRADES!** YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE MORE FEMALE WORKERS AND FEMALE PEASANTS READ **HA**, THE EASIER WILL BE WORK WITH THEM."[276] [emphasis in original]

[275] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," *History and Theory*, vol. 46, no. 4, (December 2007): 77-91.
[276] HA, 1927, no. 9, 25.

CODA: The Question Still Remains Open

I started this work by describing a small incident from my own life that shaped my path to the research question. I came up with a question that hygiene was not a merely matter of taking care of the body but a way of influencing subject formation. I wanted to examine this issue in my thesis, and I planned my thesis to consist of two parts: to examine the official discourse on hygiene through HA in 1924-1927 and its practical implication during the same period. Therefore, I needed to conduct an oral history project, which, in fact, is history "from below", offering new possibilities and new frontiers for history, as defined by historian Antoinette M. Burton.[277] I conducted five Skype interviews with women being born in the 1940s to inquire what they remember of their mothers or even grandmothers telling them about body hygiene practices during their adolescence. Three central questions that I hoped to address in greater detail in conducting oral histories were:

- How did women in early Soviet Armenia understand what it meant to take care of their bodies?
- What kind of practices did women employ?
- Were some changes observed in hygiene practices after the new hygiene directives were brought into existence?

Due to time and space limitation, I could not include the second part in my thesis; thus, I remained in the frame of the official discourse. However, I would like to stress some points in the interviews that I found important.

Because no research is available about hygiene practices either in pre-Soviet or early Soviet times, I cannot compare what the women said in their interviews to any research. However, I found

[277] Antoinette M. Burton, Dwelling in the Archive: *Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 139.

out that the new hygiene practices that the Soviet authorities put into circulation were competing with that of other practices apart from the local ones.

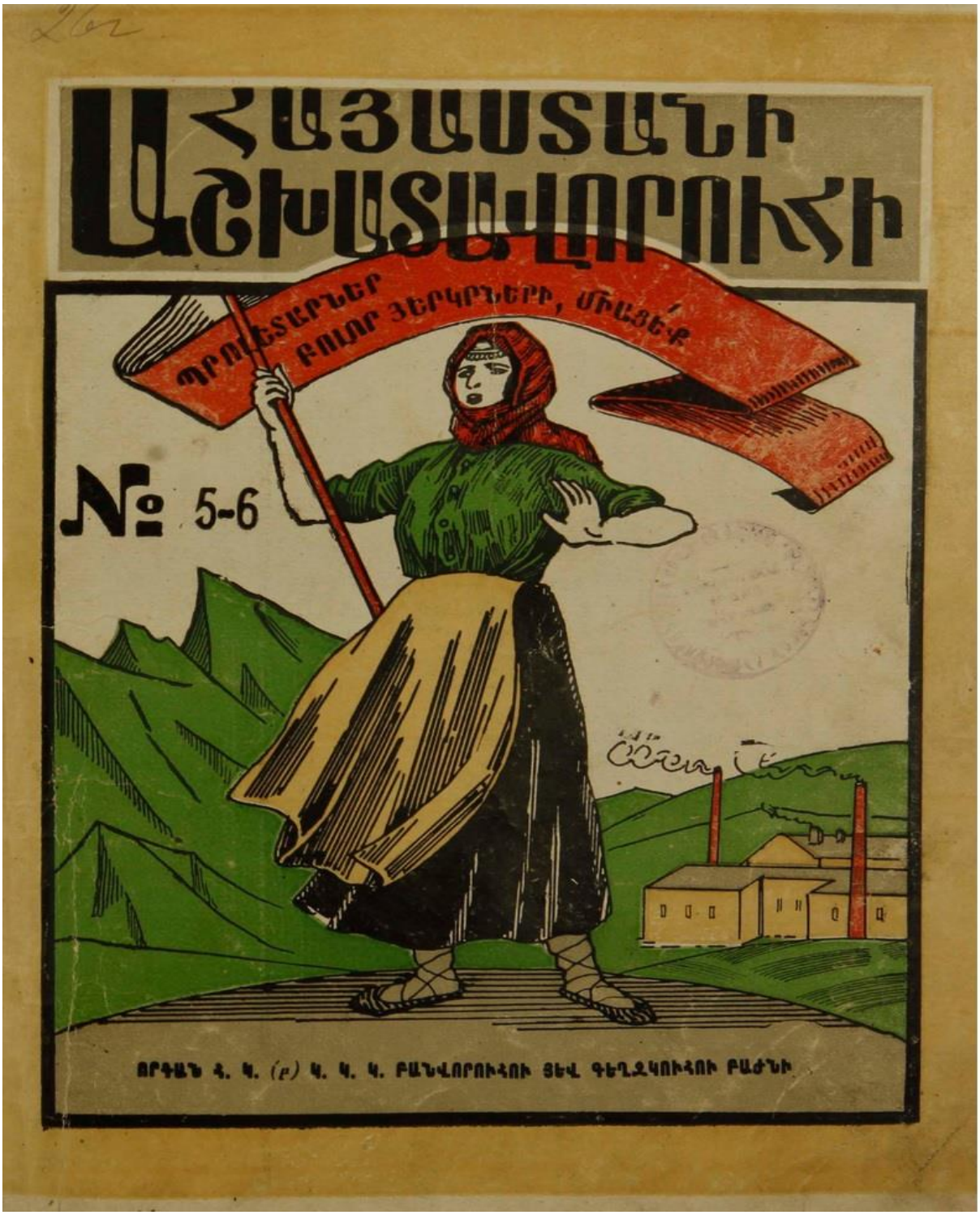
During the interviews, I identified two distinct and clear influences of different sources. First, during the repatriation that took place from 1946 to 1949, around 100,000 Armenians from Diaspora migrated to Armenia.[278] They came from different countries and, hence, they had been exposed to a different culture. The female population of repatriate Armenians had different understanding of femininity and how to take care of their bodies. When the local and repatriate pupils encountered each other in the school or in the neighborhood, the exchange of knowledge happened. The second influence had American origin. During the period of 1914 to 1930, around 20, 000 orphans found shelter in orphanages run by American missionaries in present-day Gyumri.[279] Thus, when these orphans were brought up, they had distinctively different understanding of femininity and gender equality than what was propagated in Soviet Armenia.

It was difficult to find out what kind of hygiene practices were in use at the beginning of the 20th century in Armenia. All the women were different regions of Armenia and different classes. Therefore, the picture I had was very diverse. One thing was the same for everybody. Their bathing was strictly connected with bread making. Whenever they cooked bread, they used the fire for making hot water. In different regions bread-making process occurred at different frequencies. It could vary from once every two or three days to once every month or month and a half. There was also a practice of removing of pubic hair and underarm hair. One of the women mentioned that her

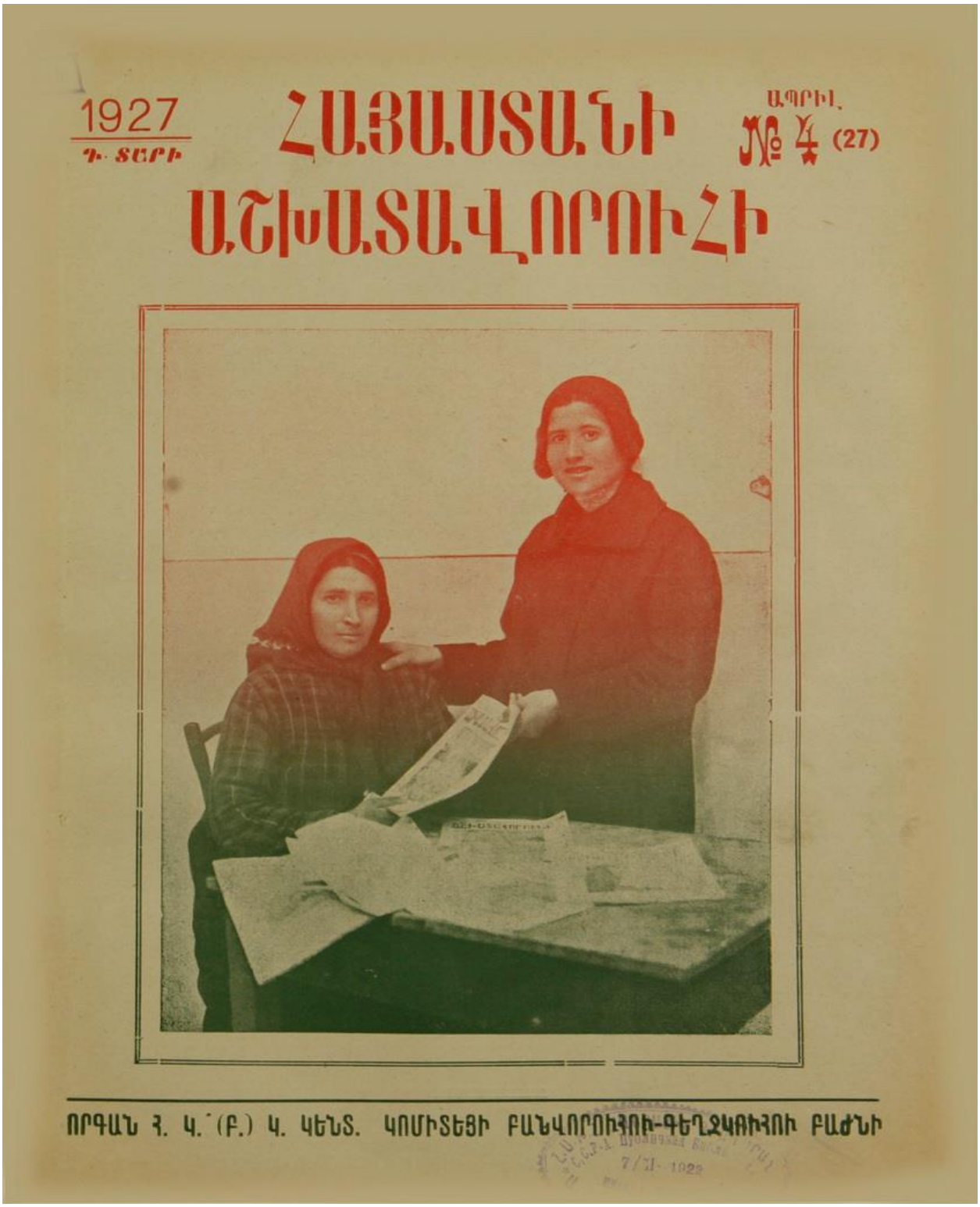
[278] In 1945, Stalin declared a decree to invite Armenian people of Diaspora to come and live in Armenia. From 1945 to 1949, more than 100,000 Armenians repatriated to Armenia from the Middle East, Greece, the Balkans, France, and the US.
Ronald Suny, Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 162-178.
The breakdown of this figure was as follows: In 1946, Armenia accepted 50,918 individuals from six countries – Syria, Lebanon, Bulgaria, Iran, Romania and Greece. In 1947, 35,422 individuals repatriated from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Greece, France, Egypt, Palestine and the U.S. In 1948, 3,092 individuals repatriated from Romania and Egypt. In 1949, Armenia accepted one convoy of 162 individuals from the U.S. Source: "Towards the Fatherland" http://www.hayrenadardz.org/en/history/1946-49
Also, between 1921 and 1936 around 40,000 Armenians migrated to Soviet Armenia from France, Irak, Turkey, and Greece.
Anahide Ter Minassian, *Histoires croisées: Diaspora, Arménie, Transcaucasie, 1880-1990* (Marseille: Parenthèses, 1997), 39.
[279] See Footnote 206.

grandmother (born in the 1880s) was doing it and very visually described the plate in which her grandmother was preparing some puree, a mix of some sort of ash and apple vinegar, and by greasing this mixture onto her hair to remove them. The woman told me that it was meant for the purpose of hygiene. Hair for them was identified with dirt.

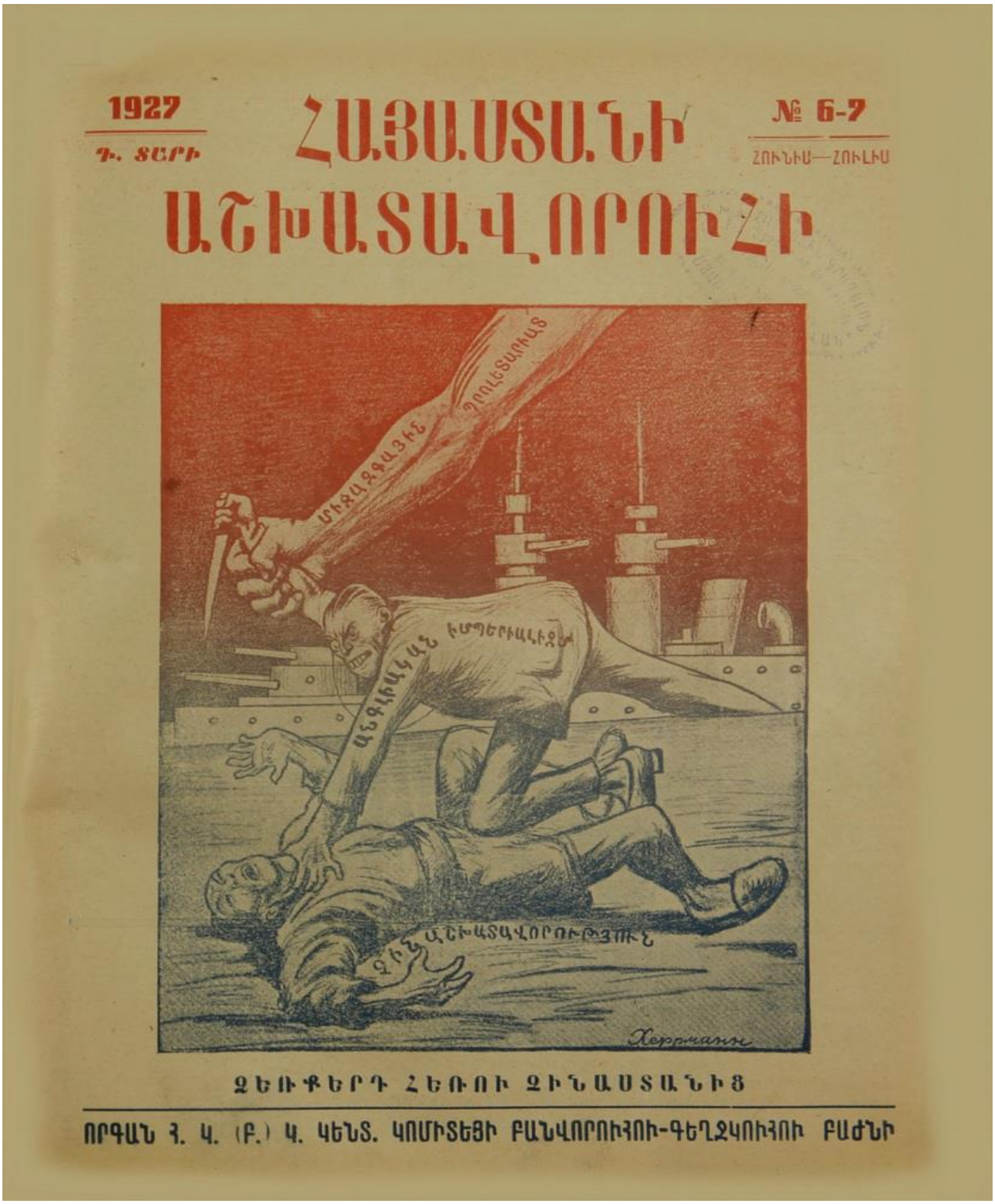
I think that the question I raised in the beginning of my work still remains open. I could not find the answer in the interviews. I believe that a thorough investigation, including both archival and oral history projects is needed in order to address it in a greater detail. I also believe that talking to people and listening to their stories can help reveal the actual changes in no less important extent than researching policies.



Picture 1: HA's cover throughout first two-three years.



Picture 2: HA's cover 1927 (4) the New Woman gives HA to the old Woman.



Picture 3: HA's cover 1927 (6) Chinese&International Proletariat vs UK imperialism.

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