

“Cigarette Paper” produced by the National Hospital

Hratch Tchilingirian

Recently, while searching for an article, I came across this rather curious 1901 advertisement for “cigarette paper” produced by the Surp Pirgic [Holy Saviour] Armenian hospital in Istanbul (Constantinople) to augment the income of the hospital. Today, it would not only be scandalous – even libellous – for a hospital to sponsor such a product, it is unthinkable. Indeed, over the last century medical science and technologies, especially research on the effects of smoking, have advanced so much that reading such advertisements today is amusing. Another idea that would seem exploitative today is the claim in the advertisement that “orphans” under the care of the hospital were used for “quality assurance” of the product. Here is the translation of the advertisement that provides a glimpse of Armenian life a hundred years ago.

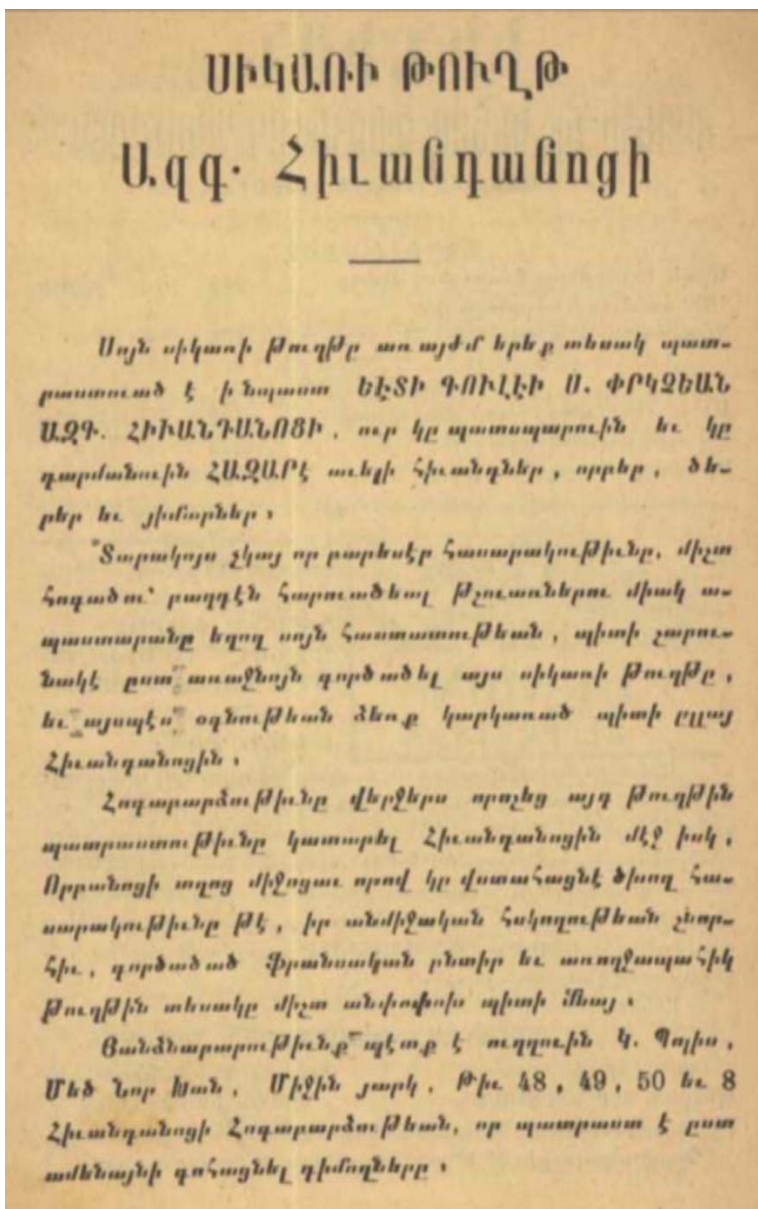
Cigarette Paper of the National Hospital*

“This cigarette paper is currently produced in three kinds by the Holy Saviour National Hospital in Yedikule (Surp Pirgiç Azkayin Hivantanots), where more than a thousand patients, orphans, elderly and mentally ill people are sheltered and treated.

“No doubt, the generous public, always showing care towards this institution that provides the only shelter to the destitute stricken by misery, will continue as before to use this cigarette paper, and thus, lend a helping hand to the hospital.

“Recently, the Trustees decided to produce those papers in the hospital itself. Through the children of the orphanage, [the hospital] assures the smoking public that under its immediate supervision, the quality of the utilized type of the selected and healthy French paper will always remain unchanged.

“Orders should be sent to Constantinople, New Big Khan, Middle Floor, No. 48, 49, 50 and 8 Trustees of the Hospital, who are ready to fully satisfy the demand of the applicants.”



* Published in 1901 Extensive Calendar of the National [Armenian] Hospital. Constantinople.