

# ARMENIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE LEBANESE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF ELIAS HRAOUI (1989-1998)

(Part I)<sup>1</sup>

ZAVEN MESSERLIAN

## INTRODUCTION:

After three years of the legislative elections of 1972, the Lebanese crisis erupted in what some termed the Lebanese Civil War and others the war of foreigners on the soil of Lebanon. It lasted from 1975 to 1990. The war involved opposing Lebanese sides and Palestinians. Unlike most of the Moslems who supported the Palestinians, most of the Christians did not want the armed presence of the Palestinians and rejected the Cairo Agreement of 1969, which compromised Lebanese sovereignty. However, there were some Moslems who supported the Christian stand, as well as Christians, mostly leftists, who supported the Moslems' political stand. The Armenian political parties opted for positive neutrality and dialogue.

The first phase of the war was over when, on November 15, 1976, the Arab Deterrent Forces entered Beirut and the environs. The Syrians constituted the bulk of these troops. After the Egyptian-Israeli peace negotiations, the war was rekindled in July 1978. Israel invaded Lebanon in June 1982 and forced the Palestinian militia and their leader, Yasser Arafat, out of Beirut. The Syrian forces also withdrew from West Beirut. Multinational forces led by American, French, British, and Italian troops came. But within a short period they were, in a way, forced out or decided to withdraw. The country was not pacified and Beirut was virtually divided by a green line. The Lebanese Forces, a Christian militia, dominated East Beirut, and Moslem militias controlled West Beirut. Between factions of each area, also, armed conflicts took place.

The Shiite Amal Movement, the Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and the Sunnite Mourabitoun militia fought bloody fights against each other. Syrian forces entered West Beirut once again to stop the fighting. Political meetings to put an end to the war between the so-called East and West continued, but no agreement was reached, until November



1989. More than 150,000 lost their lives during the war; thousands left Lebanon for good.

Due to the impossibility of holding elections, the MPs elected in 1972 extended their mandate several times. Nevertheless, despite the war conditions, parliament elected three presidents. As the term of president Suleyman Frangieh (1970-1976) was coming to its end, Elias Sarkis was elected president (1976-1982). Before the latter's term was over, during the Israeli occupation, Bechir Gemayel was elected as president, but he was assassinated before taking office. His brother Amin was elected as president (1982-1988). During the latter's term of office PM Rashid Karame was killed by a bomb, and a government was formed by Dr. Selim Hoss. The Armenian deputies had voted for each elected president and PM.

On the last day of his presidential mandate President Gemayel appointed Army Commander in Chief, General Michel Aoun, as PM, as no successor had been elected to Gemayel because of disagreements. West Beirut refused this appointment. All Moslem ministers resigned from this government. They considered Hoss as the legitimate PM of the country. East Beirut considered Hoss's term as over along with Gemayel, who had the right to appoint a PM of his choice.

The 1988-1990s were troubled years. The Lebanese Army led by Aoun fought the Lebanese Forces for control of East Beirut. In 1989, after a bloody war between Syrians and the Lebanese Army led by Aoun, Arab and major powers intervened and called the MPs to Taef, in Saudi-Arabia, where, after lengthy discussions, an agreement was reached. On this basis, Rene Moawad was elected as President of the republic, but he was assassinated by a roadside car bomb. Parliament soon elected Elias Hraoui as President. He served from 1989 to 1998. Aoun who had dissolved the parliament rejected this election. Eventually, with the help of Syrian troops Aoun was ousted from the Baabda presidential palace on October 13, 1990. He took refuge in the French Embassy and the Lebanese War came to a close.

The war of 1975-1990 had a serious demographic impact particularly on two communities, the Armenian and the Jewish. The Jews of Lebanon, some of whom had already been leaving Lebanon as of 1975, left their Jewish quarter, Wadi Abou Jamil en masse, some time after the Israeli invasion of 1982 and their withdrawal from Beirut. There were 6326 Jewish voters on the voting lists of 1992, but no one voted as they had left Lebanon. Only a few opted to remain in East Beirut.



Thousands of Armenians left Lebanon for the USA and other countries. *L'Orient-Le Jour*, on August 17, 1992, based on information from two deputies from Soviet Armenia, wrote that half of the 200,000-strong Armenian community had migrated to safer countries.

Armenian inter-party meetings that had started in September 1974 and had concluded in an agreement regarding the joint commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide went on.<sup>2</sup> The Armenian Communists too participated in these meetings.<sup>3</sup> Benefiting from a lull and ceasefire in the initial days of the Lebanese war, on May 6, 1975, the parties organized a 100,000-strong march from Bourj Hammoud to the Martyrs' Square.

Despite the pressures of attacks, killings and kidnappings (by Christian militias in September 1979 and by unknown Moslem elements in May 1986), Armenians maintained positive neutrality and stressed dialogue as the means of resolving differences between warring sides. Armenian MPs served as intermediaries between the warring factions. Nevertheless, it is estimated that more than 500 Armenians lost their lives to bombardments, killings and stray bullets. Many lost their livelihood; they saw their factories or shops, especially in downtown Beirut or the industrial sector, burned to ashes or robbed. The Armenians of West Beirut, who were estimated at 42,000 before the war, were reduced to 2,000. Gradually most Armenian schools in West Beirut either closed or were moved to the eastern sector, except for the Armenian Evangelical College and the Neshan Palanjian School. Haigazian University, the only Armenian University in the Diaspora, was also relocated to East Beirut. Some Armenian theatres, clubs, and offices were closed or moved too. The Orthodox Armenian Prelacy was transferred to the eastern section as well.

The Armenian community also witnessed the emergence of a non-partisan, paramilitary organization, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). Soon other armed groups like the "Fighters for the Armenian Genocide" and later the "Armenian Revolutionary Army" was formed, supported by the Tashnag Party. They all targeted Turkish diplomats and interests. These armed groups were active within Lebanon and the West, between 1975 and 1986, though with less intensity at the later years. In addition the ASALA acted in Turkey as well. Their acts contributed to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.



The ASALA and the Tashnag-supported groups' antagonism led to mutual assassinations in the Armenian Diaspora, particularly in Lebanon which peaked in January 1986, when several Tashnag leaders were killed.

During 1975-1990, there were also changes in the religious hierarchy of the Armenian communities. Catholicos Khoren I (1963-1983), due to his poor health, asked for the election of a coadjutor Catholicos in 1977. Archbishop Karekin Sarkissian was elected to the position and served as Catholicos Karekin II (1977-1995). All Armenian political parties welcomed his election. Likewise, Rev. Hovhanness Aharonian was replaced by Rev. Hovhanes Kardjian as President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East in 1979. Hovhanness Bedros XVIII Kasparian was elected to replace Hmayag Bedros XVII Gedigian as the Armenian Catholic Patriarch. He was enthroned in 1982.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the people of Soviet Armenia voted in a referendum on September 21, 1991 and proclaimed the independence of Armenia. The Republic of Armenia was recognized as an independent country after the break-up of the Soviet Union. In March 1992, Armenia joined the United Nations and restored the national anthem, flag, and coat of arms of the independent Republic of Armenia of 1918-1920. In the presidential elections Levon Der Bedrossian of the Armenian National Movement was elected. He got 82% percent of the popular votes. Among his opponents was the candidate of the Tashnag party, who got 4% of the votes.

With the reemergence of independent Armenia, a major point of discord between the Armenian political parties of the Diaspora disappeared.

#### THE NOMINATION OF DEPUTIES IN 1991

The Taef agreement, in whose formulation the Armenian deputies had had a role, considered the Armenian Orthodox community as the seventh most important community of Lebanon and promised them two seats in any cabinet of 30 members and one seat in any cabinet of 24 or fewer members. The Agreement had stipulated that until parliamentary elections were conducted, the government would nominate deputies to replace those who had passed away or resigned. This nomination was rendered possible after the ousting of Aoun.

Within the Armenian community Joseph Chader, the Armenian Catholic MP, had passed away in 1977 and Ara Yerevanian, the Armenian



Orthodox MP from Metn, had resigned on September 7, 1990, when there was increased talk of forthcoming nominations.<sup>4</sup> He had sent his resignation from Toronto, Canada, where he was residing, having left Lebanon years before.<sup>5</sup> According to Dr. Yeghia Djeredjian,<sup>6</sup> Tashnag Bureau representative Hrair Maroukhian had persuaded Yerevenian, in Canada, to resign.

*Zartonk* criticized his belated resignation, and said that he had left Lebanon without anyone forcing him to do so and without any explanation<sup>7</sup>.

All the Armenian political parties that had maintained close contact and held more or less regular meetings with each other, tried to benefit from the new opportunity created by the vacant seats. They submitted separate candidates for the Armenian Orthodox seat. The Tashnag Party nominated a candidate for the Armenian Catholic seat as well. The parties contacted the leaders of the country in order to secure their support for their nominee.

In the government of PM Omar Karame, the Armenians had two ministers, Khatchig Babikian (Armenian Orthodox) and Hagop (Jacques) Joukhadarian (Armenian Catholic), both Tashnag sympathizers. Naturally, their voice would have its role within the authorities, who were to approve on the nominations.

The deadline to submit candidacies was June 2, 1991. On May 24, 1991 MPs Dr. Melkon Eblighatian and Babikian visited PM Karame and presented to him the name of the Party candidate for Metn, Shahe Barsoumian, a young lawyer and Tashnag Party member.<sup>8</sup> Barsoumian was born in Beirut in 1952, had graduated as a lawyer from St. Joseph University in 1978, and held various committee positions in the Armenian Orthodox community.<sup>9</sup>

Joukhadarian on the other hand, submitted his candidacy for the Armenian Catholic seat. The Tashnag Party Lebanon Central Committee (TPLCC) supported Joukhadarian who was an active lawyer in his community.<sup>10</sup>

The Hunchag Party, which had welcomed the election of Ara Yerevanian, whose father was a prominent Hunchag and who had been nominated by the Tashnag Party, adopted the candidacy of the former vice-governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon, Meguerditch Bouldoukian.<sup>11</sup> The latter was a graduate of the AGBU Hovagimian-Manougian Secondary School for Boys, a former member of the University Students Association



of the AGBU Armenian Youth Association (AYA), and a graduate of AUB in Business Administration. He had been appointed to the Central Bank post through the efforts of the Tashnag Party.

The Hunchag Party had informed President Hraoui, PM Karame and Speaker Hussein Husseini, ministers Nabih Berry and Ali Khalil and political circles of their nominee.<sup>12</sup> The Hunchag Party declared it based its nomination on the grounds that:

a) Bouldoukian was not a party member and could be a candidate of concord for all Armenian factions, as was MP Ara Yerevanian.

b) The Party believed in the pacification of Lebanon based on the Taef agreement, according to which all sides would have the possibility of participating in the political life of the country.

c) Participation is not limited to political life. The reconstruction and the recovery of the economy of the country would demand long time and effort. During this period of recovery and pacification, Bouldoukian could make useful contribution, bearing in mind that for five difficult years (1985-1990) he had held the post of the vice-governor of the Central Bank. Besides, in the field of economics he had broad Arab and international connections and had represented Lebanon in a number of conferences.<sup>13</sup>

The Ramgavar Party presented the candidacy of Dr. Prof. Krikor Krikorian, a party member, for the Metn seat on June 1, 1991. Dr. Krikorian had been a teacher of Arabic in the AGBU Hovagimian-Manougian Secondary School and later professor of Arab history in the Lebanese University. He had been in the sphere of education for 30 years.<sup>14</sup>

The Ramgavar Party Lebanon District Committee (RPLCC) visited president Hraoui, Speaker Husseini, PM Karame, Minister Berry, Walid Jumblat, Mohsen Dalloul, George Saade, Michel Sassin, Abdallah Amin, Marwan Hamade, Emir Talal Arslan, other ministers and political organizations requesting their support for their candidate.<sup>15</sup>

However, everything was decided beforehand and outside the Cabinet, the body that was supposed to select future MPs from the 348 candidates officially registered. The decision-makers convened at the residence of the Syrian Brigadier Ghazi Kenaan, in Shtora, on June 5. Present alongside Kenaan were President Hraoui, PM Karame and the chief of staff of the Syrian Army, General Hikmat Shehabi. The nominations were agreed upon, preference was given to former militiamen or candidates of parties, which had militias.<sup>16</sup>



The Tashnag Party tried in vain to have their candidate, Joukhadarian appointed as Armenian Catholic MP. They sent the Armenian MPs to raise the issue with President Hraoui. Ministers Babikian and Joukhadarian delayed for an hour their entry into the Council of Ministers meeting of June 7, 1991, which was dedicated to the nominations.

In accordance with article 24 of the constitution, the Cabinet appointed 40 deputies. Of these 31 replaced the deceased or resigned MPs, and 9 new were added to establish fifty-fifty parity between Christians and Moslems in the 108-seat parliament. Voting during the nomination was by raising hands, and not by secret ballot. The President of the Republic read the names of the appointed MPs and the ministers voted.<sup>17</sup>

Shahe Barsoumian was appointed unanimously as Armenian Orthodox MP.<sup>18</sup> Antoine Chader was appointed as the Armenian Catholic MP, thus succeeding his father.<sup>19</sup> Ministers Babikian, Elie Hobeika and Asaad Hardane voted against Chader.

The Hunchags were displeased.<sup>20</sup> A high-ranking authority in the party, Bebo Simonian, complained that the spirit of the 1972 elections, which had created a sort of national concord (despite some reservations), was not maintained. He said what had been gained should have been maintained and the national interest should have been given preference over partisan interests. The Hunchag leader added "the state with the friendly neighbor state [i.e. Syria] could not implement the democratic principle and fair equilibrium for the Armenian community by disregarding the Armenian candidate [i.e. Bouldoukian] who could have been a national concord MP who was out of the circle of one party..." Simonian also blamed, the Tashnag Party without naming it, claiming that the nonpartisan candidate was not adopted due to a lack of spirit of tolerance. He concluded that the defense of the rights of the Armenian community would be overtaken by an unhealthy totalitarian trend.<sup>21</sup>

## THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OF 1992

The Taef agreement of 1989 stipulated that the *Mohafazas* (provinces) were to be the base of the electoral districts, unlike the 1960-1972 era, when each *Mohafaza* was subdivided into several electoral districts, most of them based on *cazas*. However, in line with the deliberations on the elections, due to various considerations, there was a lot of speculation about changes to the electoral law as of March 1992.



In view of the forthcoming elections, the President charged former PM Rashid Solh to form a new government, after PM Hoss resigned.

The Electoral Law of April 26, 1960 was changed. Some important elements of the Taef agreement were disregarded. On July 22, 1992 President Hraoui published the new electoral law 154, after it had been approved by the parliament. It stipulated that the parliament elected in 1972 and completed by nominations in 1991, would end its term on October 15, 1992 instead of December 31, 1994, as was decreed on December 7, 1989.<sup>22</sup> Besides, it raised the number of MPs from 108 to 128. Beirut was to become one electoral district, while the *Muhafazas* of Mount Lebanon and the Beka were to be based on smaller districts, the *cazas*. The 10 million Lebanese pound registration fee was to be refunded if the candidate received ten percent of the votes. Exceptionally, voters could vote with their identity cards.<sup>23</sup> The elections in the Beka were to be held on August 23, and those of Beirut and Mount Lebanon on August 30.

The new electoral law granted the Armenian communities six seats, 3 Orthodox and one Catholic seat in Beirut, and one Orthodox seat in each of Metn (Mount Lebanon) and Zahle (the Beka). Nothing was changed regarding the Armenian Evangelicals who, as usual, could contest the Protestant seat in Beirut.<sup>24</sup>

Practically speaking, however, thousands of Armenians had migrated from Lebanon during the Lebanese War of 1975-1990. Yet, according to a list issued by the Ministry of the Interior, the number of eligible Armenian voters was as follows:

	Orthodox	Catholic	Evangelicals <sup>25</sup>
Beirut	46726	9523	2786 <sup>26</sup>
Northern Metn	19694	5615	----- <sup>27</sup>
Beka	8877	1916	1815 <sup>28</sup>
Total	82655	18659	

No sooner was the new electoral law promulgated than a general strike was materialized on July 23 in the Christian areas of Lebanon. The Christian parties, the Lebanese Forces, the National Bloc, the National Liberal Party, and the Kataeb Party (KP), demanded the postponement of the elections and threatened to boycott it. The Assembly of Maronite Bishops was against holding elections in the prevailing circumstances and doubted the legitimacy of the forthcoming parliament.<sup>29</sup>

President Hraoui promised a "free, fair and safe" atmosphere. He stressed that holding legislative elections had become possible after



restoring security in the country and declared that the Lebanese army was at the service of all, both opposition and loyalists. Hraoui reminded the Lebanese that during the 1991 nominations many had requested proper elections, and he implied that now was the time for such an election and reiterated his promise to work for a free electoral process.<sup>30</sup>

The US ambassador, Ryan Crocker, met with PM Solh and reminded him that Washington had not given its green light for holding elections. Crocker said the elections should be conducted in the spirit of Taef, in a climate of consensual agreement between all Lebanese factions.<sup>31</sup>

Earlier James Baker, the US Secretary of State, had met President Hraoui, PM Solh, and minister of foreign affairs, Fares Boueiz. According to newspaper reports, he had threatened not to recognize the forthcoming parliament.<sup>32</sup>

Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Ignace IV Hazim, criticized the government's rush in holding the elections. The Greek Catholic Superior Council demanded the postponement of the election. The Armenian Catholic Patriarch, Hovhanness Bedros XVIII Kasparian, supported the position of the Maronite Patriarch and the Assembly of Maronite Bishops, who opposed the holding of elections.<sup>33</sup>

Sheikh Akl Bahjat Ghaith of the Druze community criticized the electoral law. Former speaker Kamel el-Asaad and former PM Hoss expressed reservations.<sup>34</sup> Former PM Saeb Salam requested the postponement of the elections. However, the large majority of the Moslem community were in favor of the elections.

A meeting of Christian political leaders, ministers and MPs took place in Bkerke, seat of the Maronite Patriarchate, on August 10, 1992. Among those present were MPs Souren Khanamirian and Chader.<sup>35</sup> The Christian opposition spokesman, former Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Farouk Abillama, announced that the gathering had decided to abstain from the electoral process both as candidates and as voters. It blamed the government for undermining national unity by insisting on the elections despite their refusal by a crushing majority of the population.<sup>36</sup>

The Cabinet disapproved the attitude of the opposition and adopted a series of measures to guarantee the fair running of the electoral process. The President reaffirmed his commitment to free and honest elections.<sup>37</sup>

Former President Gemayel, who returned to Beirut for a short visit, declared that KP leader Georges Saade's view of postponing the elections was not enough and that the electoral law should be changed.<sup>38</sup> The KP



MPs had voted against the electoral law in parliament. In a joint declaration, all the opposition parties and currents called for a three-day general strike on August 21, 22 and 23.<sup>39</sup> Saade's trip to Damascus to dissuade the Syrian leaders did not succeed and consequently the KP decided not to participate in the elections and called on party members to withdraw their candidacies. The declarations of the opposition had not yet escalated to calls for a boycott.<sup>40</sup>

The National Bloc leader, Raymond Edde, declared from Paris that President Hafiz Assad of Syria would gain the sympathy of the Lebanese if he advised President Hraoui to postpone the elections until the term of the parliament originally fixed at December 31, 1994 was over, particularly since the Taef Accord did not call for early elections.<sup>41</sup>

Berry, leader of the Amal Movement, warned that the postponement of the elections was a danger to the Taef Accord and national concord.<sup>42</sup> Jumblat, leader of the PSP, noted that boycotting the elections could lead the Lebanese into the unknown.<sup>43</sup> Hezbollah announced its opposition to the postponement.<sup>44</sup> The Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) criticized the repressive attitude of the government and the "negative positions of the opposition."<sup>45</sup>

Within this political context the Armenian political parties had to decide on their participation to the elections.

The intention of the Tashnag Party to submit the candidacy of Minister Joukhadarian for the Armenian Catholic seat held by Chader was known as early as August 1991. Chader warned, however, that this act "would put the old alliance between them and the Phalangists [Kataebs] in question."<sup>46</sup>

During the 1975-1990 Lebanese War, Armenian inter-party meetings were held regularly, and the positive neutrality policy was more or less maintained. However, as of November 1990, the meetings had stopped.<sup>47</sup> In early-1992, the Hunchag and Tashnag Parties supreme bodies met and discussed the prospects of cooperation in certain areas.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, contacts between the local party authorities resumed.

Both the Tashnag and the Hunchag Party local authorities had decided to participate in the elections. The Ramgavars met the Hunchags but did not join in the Tashnag-Hunchag consultations. The parties intensified their meetings with political leaders as the election dates got closer.

In an article entitled "The Armenian parties are in favor of elections and wait for the publication of the law to nominate their candidates," the Lebanese daily *Al-Diar* in its July 5, 1992 issue highlighted the views of



the Armenian parties. The Tashnag representative stressed that the Party was in favor of the Lebanese state and its legality and that if the elections were for the benefit of the country, then the party would participate. The final decision was to be based on the final assessment of the benefits of the elections. The source added that the elections were to take place and that the party would participate. The Hunchag party representative, Dr. Yeghia Djeredjian, said that in recent years the Lebanese Armenian Community had had a unified point of view, and that the party was trying to create a united point of view regarding the elections, which have become a sensitive issue and needed studying. He concluded, "If elections are held, we shall participate." RPLDC chairman, Aram Djerahian, said, "As a democratic party we are in favor of democratic elections held in a free atmosphere. However, without a national concord we cannot have positive results. At this stage we can not decide whether we are with or against elections." He concluded that the prevailing conditions in the country were unsuitable for elections and that the Ramgavars were against holding elections before late 1993 or spring 1994, when conditions would be more suitable.<sup>49</sup>

However, once the electoral law was promulgated, the political consultation of the Armenian political parties increased. Minister Barsoumian and a TPLCC delegation met PM Solh on August 13, 1992 and discussed the preparation of the Beirut list of candidates.<sup>50</sup> The Minorities' candidate, Habib Afram, visited the Tashnag Party Sardarabad club in Bourdj Hammoud and requested their support for his candidacy.<sup>51</sup> An LPC delegation composed of Party chairperson Georges Haoui, Barouyr Yeretsian and Maurice Nohra discussed the forthcoming Zahle, Metn and Beirut elections with the Tashnag Party leaders.<sup>52</sup> Later on a Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) delegation led by Inaam Raad, studied the possibility of electoral cooperation with the Tashnag Party leaders.<sup>53</sup>

The process of selecting the candidates was set in motion ahead of time.

On August 11, 1992, the Tashnag Party announced the candidacy of Vartkes Khoshian for the Armenian Orthodox seat in the Zahle constituency.

Khoshian was born in Anjar in 1958, had studied in the local Armenian schools and had succeeded in the Baccalaureate part II official examinations. Since 1982, he had been a teacher and active member in the



Tashnag Party. After getting onto the "Popular Front" List of Elias Skaff<sup>54</sup> Khoshian visited Bar Elias and Majdal Anjar and met with political figures.<sup>55</sup> Khoshian and the Zahle Greek Orthodox seat candidate, Nicolas Fattoush visited the Zahle Greek Catholic Prelate, Bishop Antoine Haddad. Later on, along with the other six members of the List he visited Karak, Ferzol, Ablah, Kfar Zabit, Deir Ghazal, Koussaya, Delhaunie, Terbol, Rayak, Nasriyeh and other villages<sup>56</sup> for electoral campaigns.<sup>57</sup>

On August 16, 1992, all seven candidates of the "Popular Front" visited Anjar. A public gathering was held in the presence of Minister of Petroleum and Industry, Barsoumian, representatives of the TPLCC, Skaff, and Khoshian. The President's son, Roy Hraoui, gave a speech.

The Tashnag Party Beka District Electoral Committee (TPBDEL) appealed to Armenian voters to vote for Khoshian and the "Popular Front" List. The Party called on the voters to head for the courtyard of the Armenian church of Zahle and the Hamazkayin club of Anjar for assistance in reaching the polling stations to vote.<sup>58</sup>

George Raymond Kassardji, a native of Zahle, born of a Chaldean Catholic father and an Armenian mother, officially a member of the Chaldean denomination, contested the Armenian Orthodox seat in Zahle. He converted to the Armenian Orthodox denomination and applied to the Armenian Prelacy of Lebanon. Rev. Father Varoujan Hergelian baptised him as an Armenian Orthodox.<sup>59</sup> Kassardji's brother was a Tashnag Party member while he was a sympathizer of the same party and an active member of its affiliate sports organization, Homenetmen.<sup>60</sup> He was born in Zahle in 1938, to a family originally from Dikranagerd, in south east Turkey. He attended the Zahle Armenian Catholic School, later on the Armenian Orthodox School, and eventually a local school. After completing his studies, he started working in 1957 in the private sector and ran his own business. Kassardji was well known in the region of Zahle and had the support of the Syrians.<sup>61</sup>

Kassardji applied to the TPLCC in Beirut and proposed his candidacy, as a native of the Beka. The Committee, however, noted that they had already decided in favor of a candidate from Beirut.<sup>62</sup>

As an electoral opponent of Khoshian, Kassardji got the unofficial support of the members of the Zahle AGBU and AYA.<sup>63</sup>

A second independent candidate, Vartkes Chaparian contested the same seat. He, however, did not have any significant support from the Armenians.



While *Aztag* campaigned for Khoshian, *Ararad*, as an electoral ally, mentioned Khoshian, giving his name in capital letters alongside the other Armenian candidates of the Tashnag-Hunchag electoral agreement, without mentioning their political affiliation. *Zartouk* did not mention at all.

The elections of the Beka were held in a peaceful atmosphere.

The "Popular Front" List was composed of Elias Skaff (Greek Catholic), Roy Hraoui (Maronite), Nicolas Fattoush (Greek Catholic), Shawky Fakhoury (Greek Orthodox), Mohsen Dalloul (Shiite), Mohammad El-Meiss (Sunnite) and Vartkes Khoshian (Armenian Orthodox). The rival list<sup>64</sup> was headed by Khalil Hraoui (Maronite) and included Elias Skaff, Ali Mita (Sunnite), Ahmad El-Mazbouh (Shiite), Georges Kassardji (Armenian Orthodox), Walid Shoueiry (Greek Catholic) and Youssef Maalouf (Greek Orthodox) who were running independently. Thus, Skaff was on both lists and was not contested.<sup>65</sup>

Out of 118986 registered voters, 41886 voted, which constituted 35.2% of the total.<sup>66</sup> The official results were as follows:<sup>67</sup>

Elias Skaff	32749
Georges Kassardji	21387
Youssef Maalouf	20432
Khalil Hraoui	19375
Nicolas Fattoush	17741
Roy Hraoui	17602
Walid Shoueiry	17390
Shawky Fakhoury	16175
Ali Mita	14900
Mohsen Dalloul	14761
Ibrahim Shahin	13625
Mohammad El-Meiss	13197
Vartkes Khoshian	13127
Ahmad El-Mazbouh	9539
Najah Kazoun	5574
Omar Araji	2066
Khalil El-Harati	1799
Zahmoul El-Meiss	1309
Joseph Chamoun	1124
Vartkes Chaparian	670



Skaiff, Fattoush, Dalloul from the "Popular Front" List, and Khalil Hraoui, Kassardji, Maalouf and Mita from the independently running but allied candidates, were elected.

Roy Hraoui was defeated. His presence on the list of Skaiff had given strong hopes to the TPBDEC, for the success of their candidate Khoshian.

Kassardji claimed 80 percent of the Armenians of Zahle voted for him.<sup>68</sup> Naturally the bloc vote of Armenians of Anjar was in favor of their native son, Khoshian.

Under the title "Georges Kassardji gets elected by 23748 votes", *Zartonk* wrote that, despite his being an independent candidate, Kassardji registered "a resounding victory against the Tashnag candidate Khoshian". The paper added, "Kassardji is well known in the business circles of Zahle and enjoys good credit. His victory is significant as he got the highest number of votes after Skaiff."<sup>69</sup>

Only 8 days after the elections of the Beka, on September 2, 1992, under the title of "The Armenian community representatives in the new parliament", *Aztag* wrote, "Let us remind you that George Kassardji has won the newly created Armenian seat of the the Zahle constituency." The newspaper added, "The Zahle elections raised a big outcry due to news of corruption and cases of fraud."<sup>70</sup>

Later on *Spurk*, the monthly of the Armenian Popular Movement (APM) and *Khosnag*, the monthly of AGBU Lebanon Chapter, had interviews with Kassardji.<sup>71</sup> The AGBU-AYA leadership of Lebanon congratulated Kassardji on September 14, 1992 through its Zahle branch, and gave a Dinner-Ball under his auspices on October 30, 1992. Kassardji and his brothers Hanna, Joseph and Edward were present as well as deputies Adib Ferzli and Maalouf and the AYA Central Committee chairman Garbis Markarian.<sup>72</sup> Much later, on April 27, 1993, the Ramgavar Party, in their headquarters of Tekeyan Center, in Beirut, invited Kassardji to a public Q & A session.<sup>73</sup>

As for the elections of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, on August 14 Najah Wakim, Hussein Yetim, Bassam Abou Fadel and a delegation of the Supreme Council of the Evangelical Community visited the TPLCC separately.<sup>74</sup> Minister Barsoumian and a TPLCC representative visited Albert Moukheiber and Michel Murr.<sup>75</sup> MP Khanamirian, and representatives of the Tashnag and Hunchag parties visited former PM Hoss.<sup>76</sup> At night, before submitting the names of their candidates, Minister



Barsoumian, MP Babikian and a representative of the TPLCC visited President Hraoui to discuss on the situation.<sup>77</sup>

Outgoing Evangelical MP Dr. Antranig Manougian declined running for the seat again. He was requested to submit candidates' names to the TPLCC, which would select one. Dr. Manougian submitted the names of Haygaz Yardemian, Jacques Ekmekdjian, Apraham Dedeyan and Col. Dr. Nourijeane Demirdjian. Unlike the first, all the others were in Beirut. Of these only Dr. Demirdjian agreed to run for the seat.<sup>78</sup> The TPLCC previously had conveyed the list to the Hunchags, who agreed upon Dr. Demirdjian.<sup>79</sup>

Dr. Demirdjian was born in 1952; after his graduation from the Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut, he studied medicine in AUB between 1972 and 1974. He graduated from the State Medical Institute of Yerevan (Soviet Armenia) in 1980 as a physician and specialized as a radiologist in 1982. He served in the Lebanese Army from 1983-1991, as a physician with the rank of Colonel. In 1992 he was elected chairman of the Lebanese Armenian Physicians' Union. He was a member of the Armenian Evangelical Community Council, advisor to its Religious Court of family law, the chairman of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Youth and member of the Board of Managers of Shamlian-Tatigian Evangelical School.<sup>80</sup>

In a joint communiqué, the Tashnag and Hunchag Party leadership of Lebanon, represented by their respective committees, announced that on August 14, 1992, in a joint meeting they had taken into consideration the positions of various Lebanese factions and decided to submit the names of their candidates for the Armenian MP seats of Beirut and Metn. The communiqué noted that both parties believed that peace should be consolidated, and that they should share in building the destiny of the country. Furthermore, they appealed to the state authorities to take measures to dissuade the factions that declined participating in the elections. They suggested that an acceptable solution could be the extension of some deadlines, which could facilitate the participation of all, satisfy all factions and strengthen national unity.<sup>81</sup>

Under the headline "6 Armenian candidates for Beirut and Metn", *Aztag* announced that after several visits and negotiations, the names of the three Armenian denomination candidates were submitted to the Ministry of the Interior, before the deadline of midnight August 14, 1992.<sup>82</sup> *Ararad* announced the news under the title "Six Armenian Candidates."<sup>83</sup>



The candidates for the Armenian Orthodox seats in Beirut were MPs Babikian and Khanamirian, Dr. Djeredjian, Joukhadarian, and Dr. Demirdjian. Minister Barsoumian's name was submitted for the Metn Armenian Orthodox seat.<sup>84</sup>

Dr. Djeredjian was born in 1957 in Beirut. He graduated from the AGBU Hovagimian–Manougian Secondary School for Boys in 1975. He graduated as a dentist from the State Medical Institute of Yerevan. He joined the Hunchag Party in his youth and held responsible posts. At the time of his candidacy he was the chairman of the Lebanon Executive Body of the party.

On August 15, 1992 the Hunchag Party Lebanon District Executive Body representatives met a delegation of LCP led by Haoui. That same day they also met PM Solh,<sup>85</sup> while an RPLDC delegation met the Armenian Orthodox Community Prelate, Archbishop Aram Keshishian on August 5, 1992,<sup>86</sup> Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir of the Maronite community<sup>87</sup> on August 10, and on August 11, Archbishop Elias Audé of the Greek Orthodox community<sup>88</sup> to discuss economic, political and electoral issues. That same day the delegation met former PM Hoss for the same purpose, after meeting his councilor Mohammad Kabbani.<sup>89</sup>

Members of the RPLDC, who lived or worked in West Beirut, decided to participate in the elections. Dr. Hoss agreed to include them on his list. The proposed candidates were Dr. Krikorian, Barouyr Aghbashian, and Haroutiune Magarian for the Armenian Orthodox seats, Dr. Haroutiune Yozgatlian for the Armenian Catholic seat and Arthur Vayejian for the Protestant seat.<sup>90</sup>

However the Party chairman Djerahian, who lived in East Beirut and had wide connections with Lebanese political circles, especially the Lebanese Forces, along with others, decided, and announced through a communiqué published in *Zartonk* in the name of the RPLDC, that the Party was not going to adopt candidates of its own and was not going to participate in their electoral campaign.<sup>91</sup> Eventually, their candidacies were not registered, nor were they mentioned in the press after this decision. The communiqué argued that, although in principle the Party favored democratic elections, unlike others it had decided that it was out of place to take a clear stand. Taking into consideration the interests of the Lebanese Armenian Community the Party avoided committing itself at the expense of securing parliamentary seats. It tried to maintain a balance and to keep the community away from blame for taking sides. The Party was convinced



that the Lebanese crisis was not over yet and that the united Armenian position of the last 15 years should be maintained.<sup>92</sup>

With no other independent Armenian candidates running for the seats in Beirut and Metn,<sup>93</sup> the candidates proposed by the Tashnag-Hunchag alliance were unopposed, except for that of the Protestant seat. Several candidates contested the latter, however, including Dr. Demirdjian, Minister Samir Makdissi, Pastor Fadi Dagher, and Emile Shehadeh.

On August 14, 1992, by the time of the registration deadline, all in all there were 98 candidates for the 19 parliamentary seats of Beirut and 108 candidates for the 35 seats of Mt. Lebanon.<sup>94</sup> On August 19, the deadline for the withdrawal of candidates, only a few withdrew from the race. 97 candidates in Beirut and 101 candidates in Mt. Lebanon continued the electoral race.<sup>95</sup>

As the Armenian candidates, except for Dr. Demirdjian were unopposed, there was no serious Armenian campaign, and the whole election was presented in a low-key manner. Only *Zartouk*, in a series of editorials severely criticized the decision to participate in the elections, without mentioning the names of the parties. The paper noted that there was not a united and collective front and that the candidates absolutely did not represent the Lebanese Armenian Community. The Ramgavars were undisputedly with the legislative elections, yet, in view of the conflicting situation, they could not disregard the view of the crushing majority of the community and acted accordingly.<sup>96</sup> In a later editorial *Zartouk* commented that cheap advice on unanimity should be given to those who broke it.<sup>97</sup>

Nevertheless, two articles in *Zartouk* were more explicit. In an article entitled "Can a mouse be born from the mountain?" the newspaper said: What is noteworthy in the Tashnag-Hunchag joint list is that the first has tied the second to its carriage. The latter knows neither who will move the carriage nor when nor its destination. The Hunchags seem like a tail, as they are in the margin, while the name of the Tashnags is given everywhere.<sup>98</sup> The second article argued that there was not an Armenian Bloc of deputies but a Tashnag Bloc and that the Armenian Evangelical candidate had signed a document that within the parliament he would obey the directives given by the TPLCC.<sup>99</sup>

*L'Orient-Le Jour* noted that the Syrian leaders reiterated that the elections were purely a Lebanese matter, never mind the fact that all official or non-official, satisfied or dissatisfied personalities paid visits to



Damascus. The paper was alluding to the Syrian leaders' intervention or influence.<sup>100</sup>

On August 18, in a joint communiqué, the Tashnag and Hunchag parties Lebanon leadership appealed to Lebanese official and political circles to opt for a tolerant and circumspect approach, and to avoid extremist steps, which would not help the supreme interest of Lebanon. They demanded that the Lebanese government find a dignified solution and seriously think of extending certain deadlines, to guarantee the participatory right of all the Lebanese in deciding the fate of Lebanon. The parties did not see any obstacles in postponing the elections if the government saw this act as a means to strengthen the internal situation and national concord. They reminded that the situation was delicate and warned of extremist steps. In conclusion, the parties noted that no matter what their position on the elections, the opposing sides had to take peaceful steps and opt for the path of national concord, in order to retain whatever had been achieved so far.<sup>101</sup>

After his father's call, Tamam Salam, son of former PM Salam, suspended his candidacy, on the grounds that most of the Christians were not participating in the elections. He warned of the repetition of the 1957 experience, when leading Moslem figures were left out of parliament, which led to the 1958 civil strife.<sup>102</sup> MP Moukheiber, who had demanded the postponement of the elections, called for the resignation of the government,<sup>103</sup> while Edde threatened to lead a political campaign against president Hraoui if he did not postpone the elections.<sup>104</sup> The LCP asked for the postponement of the elections too.<sup>105</sup> MP Boutros Harb called on the government to postpone the elections, which would be beneficial for national concord.<sup>106</sup>

Berry said, "the demand of postponement is a pretext. The opposition wants to undermine the Taef Accord, to achieve a Syrian withdrawal and to undermine the government."<sup>107</sup>

In Beirut efforts were made to convince Hoss to join the list, but to no avail.<sup>108</sup> Hoss faced difficulties in completing his list and thought of withdrawing his candidacy.<sup>109</sup> It was speculated that many of the Armenian voters might abstain due to the fact that the Armenian MPs, except for the Protestant candidate, were de facto elected.<sup>110</sup> Armenian abstention could benefit Hoss.<sup>111</sup> This apparently led him to maintain his candidacy.

On August 20, 1992, before the official proclamation of the list, Minister Barsoumian and a TPLCC delegation visited President Hraoui and



PM Solh. They assessed the results of political contacts and the likelihood of bringing together differing views for a consensus.<sup>112</sup> On August 25 Babikian and a TPLCC representative met Solh for a final consultation prior to the announcement of the list.<sup>113</sup>

On August 24 Hoss announced his list for Beirut, called "The Constructive Opposition". It was headed by himself and included Oussama Fakhoury and Mohammad Kabbani (Sunnites), Mohammad Yousef Beydoun (Shiite), Najah Wakim and Robert Debbas (Greek Orthodox), Isam Naaman (Druze) and Joseph Moghaizel (Greek Orthodox).<sup>114</sup>

Hoss left 3 Sunnite, 1 Shiite, 3 Armenian Orthodox, the Armenian Catholic, the Maronite, the Protestant and the Minorities' seats vacant on his list.

On August 25 PM Solh, announced his list for Beirut headed by himself. It included Zaki Mazboudi, Mohammad Amin Daouk, Adnan Arakji and Bahaeddin Itani (Sunnites), Babikian, Khanamirian, Dr. Djeredjian (Armenian Orthodox), Dr. Demirdjian (Protestant), Joukhadarian (Armenian Catholic), Abdel Majid Zein and Ali Jammal (Shiite), Michel Sassin and Beshara Merhej (Greek Orthodox), Raymond Naccashe (Maronite), Nasri Maalouf (Greek Catholic) and Habib Afram (Minorities).<sup>115</sup>

Solh left one Sunnite and the Druze seat vacant on his list.

There was a third list led by Adnan Traboulsi that included Habib Zeidan, Wahaj Moussa, Hussein Yatim, Raja Wahab and Georges Kazan. SSNP candidate Ghassan Matar ran for the Maronite seat independently.<sup>116</sup>

As the Beirut Election Day approached, Minister of Foreign Affairs and son-in-law of President Hraoui Fares Bouiez resigned. KP leader, Minister Saade, followed suit. By then the Christians in general had decided to boycott the elections.

The opponents of the legislative elections called for a meeting on August 27 in Parliament. 45 deputies, including Dr. Manougian and Chader attended this meeting which was presided by vice-speaker Michel Maalouli. 42 of the MPs withdrew their confidence vote from PM Solh and demanded a suspension of the electoral process, however at least 53 votes were needed for the motion to pass.<sup>117</sup>

On the eve of the elections Tamam Salam, president of the Makassed Association, and Mohammad Mashnouk, a member of the Makassed Board of Managers, asked Beirut inhabitants to remain united and abstain from voting.<sup>118</sup>



An agreement was reached after consultations with Hoss to add Dr. Demirdjian's name on his list.<sup>119</sup> Hoss apparently agreed to this inclusion in the hope of neutralizing the effects of a massive Armenian vote in favor of Solh or to motivate the Armenian voters to vote also in favor of his list or a part of it.

Prior to Election Day there was speculation whether the Armenians would vote massively, or would vote in a mixed manner or would vote for individuals on both lists. Many thought Armenians might abstain from voting, as the Armenian candidates, except Dr. Demirdjian, were de facto elected. Newspapers claimed many of the candidates on the Hoss list were more popular than those on Solh's list, and the extra votes they would get in the Western sectors of Beirut would compensate for the Armenian votes, especially if the latter voted massively for Solh's list.<sup>120</sup>

*Aztag* and *Ararad* called upon their followers to vote. Both published the picture of Solh's list on the front page and the biographies of the Armenian candidates of Beirut and Metn. *Aztag* published the electoral program of Hoss, while *Ararad* published that of Solh, in their issues of August 29, 1992.<sup>121</sup> *Zartonk* was indifferent; the Ramgavars had boycotted the election. The Armenian Communist mouthpiece *Azkayin Mshagouyt* said Armenians, while maintaining their independent position should not provoke other sides by avoiding demonstrative acts, such as a low turn out, and should avoid concentrating their votes on candidates of one list in order to avoid any blame that the failed candidates might place on them because of massive Armenian votes. The newspaper said it was preferable that Armenians voted for members on both lists. It suggested voting for democrats and friends of the Armenians too. In any case, the paper concluded, Armenians had to be very cautious in East Beirut where an atmosphere of general strike prevailed.<sup>122</sup> The APM distributed a statement in Armenian that said: "If you have decided to vote, alongside the Armenian and Evangelical seats, vote also for the seats of the other denominations." The Movement called upon its sympathizers to vote for Matar, Wakim, Jebran, Mohammad Ali El-Tell and Mohammad Al-Berjawi. Later on they added Hoss as well to their list.<sup>123</sup>

In the Metn constituency Michel Murr, who headed the only list, announced it on March 27. It included Murr, Riad Abou Fadel (Greek Orthodox), Habib Hakim, Ghassan Ashkar, Auguste Bakhos, Nasib Lahoud (Maronite), Michel Samaha (Greek Catholic) and Barsoumian (Armenian Orthodox).<sup>124</sup>



All the other candidates withdrew and on Election Day Murr's list was not contested.

On the eve of the election at Bkerke, Ernest Karam of the Maronite League appealed to the Armenian candidate to withdraw and for the Armenians not to vote.

Elections in Beirut and Mount Lebanon took place in a calm atmosphere. There was intense electoral activity in West Beirut, compared to the calmness in the East, where the great majority of voters abstained.

PM Solh declared the elections were free and fair but the turnout was excessively low.<sup>125</sup>

*L'Orient-Le Jour* headlined "The 2<sup>nd</sup> stage confirms the phenomenon of rejection." *Aztag's* headline was "The Armenian candidates elected,<sup>126</sup> the success of the lists is sure."<sup>127</sup> *Ararad's* title was more reserved "In Beirut and Mt. Lebanon, the second stage of the legislative elections was held in general security."<sup>128</sup> *Zartonk's* headline was "The second stage of the elections also signified large popular abstention".<sup>129</sup> *Azkayin Mshagouyt's* headline was "'The Ups and Downs' of the Beirut Elections...Money, Power, Change, Absentees and Abstainers. The Lebanese Armenian Voters Knew to Maintain their Particular Stance."<sup>130</sup>

Out of 343362 voters only 55913 voted, a mere 16.28%.<sup>131</sup> Most of the voters were residents of West Beirut. The official results of those elected were as follows:

Selim Hoss 30990 (Sunnite)  
Zouheir Obeidy 12570 (Sunnite)  
Mohammad Kabbani 12285 (Sunnite)  
Ousama Fakhoury 12122 (Sunnite)  
Adnan Traboulsi 11819 (Sunnite)  
Rashid Solh 11438 (Sunnite)  
Mohammad Yousef Beydoun 23559 (Shiite)  
Mohammad Berjaoui 12666 (Shiite)  
Issam Naaman 13725 (Druze)  
Ghassan Matar 9720 (Maronite)  
Najah Wakim 22952 (Greek Orthodox)  
Beshara Merhej 10576 (Greek Orthodox)  
Khachig Babikian 7015 (Armenian Orthodox)  
Souren Khanamirian 6392 (Armenian Orthodox)  
Yeghia Djeredjian 5941 (Armenian Orthodox)  
Joseph Moghaizel 10734 (Greek Orthodox)



Hagop Joukhadarian 6051 (Armenian Catholic)

Nourijeane Demirdjian 12313 (Protestant)

Asmar Asmar 8645 (Minorities)<sup>132</sup>

The results of the defeated candidates were as follows:

Zaki Mazboudi 11210, Saadedin Khaled 10859, Bahaeddin Itani 10432, Nasri Maalouf 9953, Robert Debbas 9573, Abdel Majid Zein 9547, Michel Sassin 9308, Adnan Arakji 8028, Ali Jammal 7394, Chafik Wazzan 6675, Mohieddin Doughan 6093, Saab Matraji 6043, Nader El Jammal 5976, Raymond Naccashe 5746, Habib Afram 5383, Hasan Sabra 4824, Wahaj Moussa 4598, Georges Kazan 4590, Kamal Shatila 4278, Adnan Shaaban 4156, Nabil Senno 4014, Raja Wahab 2958, Jihaz Zheiry 2757, Mohammad Tell 2712, Hussein Yatim 2487, Habib Zeidan 2115, Mohammad Rez 2098, Emile Shehade 2074, Mohammad Rifai 2023, Fakhri Allame 1899, Samir Traboulsi 1766, Hamze Shatila 1744, Imad Akkaoui 1736, Samir Sabbagh 1676, Farid Jebran 1631, Toufic Yamout 1557, Mounir Sayyad 1528, Akram Oud 1147, Yassine Moussalli 1145, Sinan Barrage 1115, Fady Dagher 1088, Assaad Zebiane 1072, Moustapha Beydoun 939, Abdel Kader Kabbani 915, Hussein Kouatly 891, Hisham Baba 862, Omar Omran 732, Abdel Razzak Doughan 677, Moustapha Hakim 677, Ali Yetim 530, Nassim Khoury 384, Ali Hassan 311, Ryad Abdel Jalil 277, Bedri Abdel Dayem 266, Khaireddin Tabbara 252, Moyassar Hamouch 154, Samir Makdissi 147, Ahmad Yassin 138, Kamel Mehanna 135, Asaad Sharafeddin 93, Antoine Bechara 48, Kamal Rebeiz 37, Ibrahim Abou Ayashe 31, Rashid Kadi 26, Maroun Feghali 17, Asaad Shaftari 16, Jamil Kebbe 16, Abbas Hamiye 12, Ismet Saab 7, Osman Dana 5, Mohammad Matar 5, Asef Yafi 4, Farouk Jaber 3, Nabil Imad 1, and Tamam Salam 1.<sup>133</sup>

Hoss, Kabbani, Fakhoury, Beydoun, Wakim, Moghaizel, and Naaman from Hoss's list, Solh, Merhej, Babikian, Khanamirian, Dr. Djeredjian, Joukhadarian, and Dr. Demirdjian from Solh's list, Traboulsi and independents Berjaoui, Obeid, Asmar, and Matar were elected as MPs.

The defeat of Solh was crushing, as the Armenian Orthodox and Armenian Catholic candidates were not contested and were de facto considered elected. Dr. Demirdjian was elected, while 7 out of the 8 candidates of Hoss's incomplete list were elected.

All observers noted that the Armenian electorate's participation was timid. Armenians did not participate en masse as they used to.<sup>134</sup>



There was no electoral contest in the Metn constituency. The list headed by Murr was unopposed.<sup>135</sup> The boycott led by Albert Moukheiber and others was in full swing.

Out of 132650 voters 18927 voted, a mere 14.26%.<sup>136</sup> Those elected received the following number of votes.<sup>137</sup>

Michel Murr 17029

Michel Samaha 15567

Nassib Lahoud 15465

Ghassan Ashkar 15049

Habib Hakim 14715

Riad Abou Fadel 14594

Shahe Barsoumian 14538

Auguste Bakhos 13711

It was estimated that more than 3000 Armenians voted in the Metn constituency, particularly in Bourdj Hammoud.<sup>138</sup> This number was less than that of the 1972 elections.

Given the very low turnout of the elections, on August 30, Sami Khatib, the Minister of Interior, declared, "if the rate of participation does not exceed 50%, the next parliament may not be legitimate but remains legal".<sup>139</sup> However, after the second round of the elections, he reversed his earlier position and announced on September 4, 1992 that the newly elected "Parliament is legitimate and legal 100 per cent".<sup>140</sup> The Minister also pointed out the neutrality of the authorities, citing the defeat of the President's son, and the lists of the Speaker Hussein and PM Solh.<sup>141</sup>

*L'Orient-Le Jour*, however, considered the newly elected parliament illegitimate, due to the very low turnout.<sup>142</sup>

Recriminations started among politicians and newspapers concerning Armenian participation.

*Zartouk* wrote the Armenian deputies received less than 2.5% of the registered votes. The newspaper added that the Armenian allies of Solh, instead of providing the expected 10000 votes, had given 3000 votes.<sup>143</sup> In later editorials the *Ramgavar* daily said, Armenians are being blamed for benefiting from the votes of others, but they were not able to respect their promises as only 2 percent of the Armenians had voted. However, their candidates were considered elected as they were not contested.<sup>144</sup> The newspaper complained that these accusations were being addressed to all Armenians, while it would have been correct to address them to the parties concerned (i.e. the Tashnags and Hunchags).<sup>145</sup> The paper's editor,



Aghbashian, said in an article, "the elected Armenian MPs represent themselves and their organizations and not all the Lebanese Armenian Community."<sup>146</sup>

PM Solh bitterly declared, "We were wrong in our calculations. We relied on the Armenians and their leaders, but their leaders failed for the first time. They promised to give the Beirut list more than 5000 votes, but the surprise was that only 950 Armenians voted."<sup>147</sup>

The failures of Sassin and Maalouf particularly, were attributed to the Armenian allies of Solh. They were considered to be the two "victims of the Armenians."

Newly elected Hunchag MP Dr. Djeredjian, who was on Solh's list, replied in an interview that the PM was the victim of a misunderstanding in claiming that the number of Armenian voters in Beirut was 2400. He ascribed the low turnout to the absence of an electoral atmosphere in the Armenian quarters, the de facto election of the Armenian candidates, the cautious atmosphere that was created (in East Beirut) and the influence of the Christian opposition's propaganda.<sup>148</sup>

Later on, it was mentioned that out of the 2500 Armenians who had voted in Beirut, 900 had voted for Hoss.<sup>149</sup>

*Zartouk* replied to Solh that instead of blaming his electoral allies (i.e. the Tashnags- and the Hunchags), he was ascribing blame to all Armenians and their leaders in general. The PM should call to account those with whom he allied. The newspaper added that the Lebanese Armenian Community was not related to this agreement and with those who made promises in its name.<sup>150</sup>

The Armenian Communist weekly noted the failure of the Tashnag candidate Khoshian, the first such failure in the post-war period. Furthermore, it rejected the blame addressed to all the Lebanese Armenians "in a factional and non-friendly manner", especially by *Al-Shark* newspaper.<sup>151</sup>

*L'Orient-Le Jour* wrote that out of 344350 voters, only 34700 had voted, a mere 10.1%. According to the newspaper, Hoss had received the votes of 9% of the total eligible voters, Beydoun had received 6.8%, Wakim 6.6%. The Armenian MPs had received even less: Dr. Demirdjian had received 3.6%, Babikian 2%, Khanamirian 1.8%, Joukhadarian 1.7%, and Dr. Djeredjian 1.7%.<sup>152</sup>

The difference in votes between the Armenian candidates was explained by *Spurk* as the mutual obliteration of names by Armenian party



members. Hunchag Party members had deleted the name of Babikian, while Tashnag Party members had deleted that of Dr. Djeredjian.<sup>153</sup> The same source mentioned that Sunnite and Shiite voters deleted Babikian's name. It added that the Armenian Communists voted for Dr. Djeredjian, Dr. Demirdjian, Hoss, Tell, Wakim, Zeidan, and Jebran. However the crushing majority of the Armenians had not voted.<sup>154</sup>

In a press communiqué released on September 15, 1992, the TPLCC replied to the comments made by personalities, candidates and mass media regarding the Tashnag Party attitude and the turnout of the Armenians in the elections. It stated that, as always, it considered the legal authorities as the base of a unified state and necessary to consolidate peace in Lebanon. It supported the legislative elections based on this approach. It reminded people that their parliamentary bloc had tried to extend the deadline to secure the participation of all sides. It added that every citizen had the right to vote without any pressure. The propaganda of the opposition had influenced the attitude of some Armenians. It suggested that those who had lost their electoral campaign should look for the causes of their failure outside the Armenian and Tashnag circles and should not consider the reason of their failure the low turnout of the Armenians. The communiqué hinted that the published numbers of Armenian participation were not accurate.<sup>155</sup>

The RPLDC visited Hoss,<sup>156</sup> Speaker Husseini<sup>157</sup> and Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah<sup>158</sup> and searched for ways of solutions to the crisis in the post-election period in order to create national concord.

On October 31, 1992, after the new parliament assumed its task, the wellknown philanthropist Rafik Hariri formed a new government. The Armenian Bloc proposed two ministers, but Hariri partly disregarded the proposal<sup>159</sup> and included Hagop Demirdjian (AGBU active member) and Barsoumian in his cabinet of 30 ministers.<sup>160</sup>

## ENDNOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> This study is the sixth in a series of articles by the author on Armenian participation in successive Lebanese legislative elections since 1943. The first five previous articles were published in volumes 22, 23, 24, and 26 of the *Haigazian Armenological Review*. Part II of this current article which will cover the elections of 1996 during the presidency of Elias Hraoui shall be given in volume 27.

<sup>2</sup> These interparty meetings went on more or less regularly at each other's clubs until November 1990.



- <sup>3</sup> The Armenian Communists are part of the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) and do not form a separate party. However, during the Lebanese war, Haroutioun (Artin) Madeyan, Karnig Attarian and Barouyr Yeretsian, on behalf of the Armenian Communists, participated in the meetings of Armenian political parties held, alternatively in the Yerevanian and Alec Manougian Centers (according to *Gantch* weekly, 23 April 2005).
- <sup>4</sup> *Zartonk*, Beirut, 53rd year, №120 (15774), 13 September 1990. However, there was talk that Yerevanian had submitted his resignation after the Tashnag Party demanded it, to pave way for a new Party nominee.
- <sup>5</sup> According to Dr. Yeghia Djeredjian (correspondence August 2006), TheTashnag Party Bureau representative Hrair Maroukhian had persuaded Yerevanian, in Canada to resign.
- <sup>6</sup> Correspondence, August 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, №121 (15775), September 14, 1990.
- <sup>8</sup> *Aztag*, Beirut, 65<sup>th</sup> year, №64 (17882), May 25, 1991.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 65<sup>th</sup> year, №75 (17893), June 8, 1991.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 65<sup>th</sup> year, №67 (17885), May 30, 1991.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ararad*, Beirut, 54<sup>th</sup> year, №14346 (92), June 5, 1991.
- <sup>12</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, Beirut, № 7178, June 5, 1991.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ararad*, 54<sup>th</sup> year, № 14340 (86), May 29, 1991.
- <sup>14</sup> *Zartonk*, 54<sup>th</sup> year, № , June 2, 1991.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>16</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, Bierut, № 7180, June 7, 1991.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>19</sup> Joukhadarian had withdrawn his candidacy at the last moment.
- <sup>20</sup> According to the correspondence of Dr. Yeghia Djeredjian, August 2006, the Hunchag Party Lebanon District Administrative Body chairman, who participated in the inter-party meetings, he met Tashnag Party Lebanon Central Committee (TPLCC) representative Yervant Monofarian in the latter's office. Dr. Djeredjian proposed, in order to retain Armenian concord, that the three Armenian political parties announce the candidate of the nominated Armenian Orthodox seat. Monofarian replied that the proposal was a sound one and he would put it on the TPLCC agenda, but he added the candidate had to be proficient in Arabic. The Hunchag proposal did not materialize.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ararad*, 54<sup>th</sup> year, № , July 18, 1991.
- <sup>22</sup> Majed Khaled Majed, *Intikhabat Lubnanniyya 1861-1992: Qawanin-Nata'ij* (Lebanese elections 1861-1992: Legislation-results), (Beirut, 1992), pp. 203-4.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 204-205.
- <sup>25</sup> The Armenian Evangelicals were counted as part of the Protestant community (which numbered 8377); their voter's number was not given (*Ibid*, p. 208).
- <sup>26</sup> Most of them were Armenian Evangelicals (*Ibid*, p. 210).
- <sup>27</sup> The number of the Protestants (including Armenian Evangelicals) was not indicated as such (*Ibid*, p. 212).
- <sup>28</sup> It included all the Protestants (*Ibid*, p. 209).
- <sup>29</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, № 7514, August 6, 1992.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, №7515, August 7, 1992.



- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid, №7516, August 8, 1992.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid, №7519, August 11, 1992.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №126 (18242), August 14, 1992.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, № 7523, August 15, 1992.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid, №7524, August 17, 1992.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> *Monday Morning*, weekly, Beirut, №1804, August 26-September 1, 1991, p. 13.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №14828 (252), October 11, 1992. According to *Zartouk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №235 (16392), October 27, 1992, p. 2. In the early months of 1992, a meeting was held between the Hunchag Central Council and the Tashnag Bureau. The meeting discussed the likelihood of a certain "cooperation". It ushered in the resumption of contacts between the Lebanon chapters of the said parties, as stated in *Al-Diar*.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №14661 (181), July 10, 1992.
- <sup>50</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №126 (18242), August 14, 1992.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №123 (18239), August 11, 1992.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid, №126 (18242), August 14, 1992.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid, №128 (18244), August 17, 1992.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid, №127 (18243), August 15, 1992.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid, №132 (18248), August 21, 1992.
- <sup>59</sup> *Spurk*, №8, August 1992, p. 4.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid, №9, September 1992, p. 10.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup> It was rumored that the seat was aspired by Hagop Pakradouni; however in the end Khoshian was selected (*Khosnag*, monthly, Beirut, November 1992, p. 32).
- <sup>63</sup> *Spurk*, № 9, September 1992, p. 7.
- <sup>64</sup> The 1992 Beka 2<sup>nd</sup> list was composed of individual candidates. The list had no name.
- <sup>65</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, № 7530, August 24, 1992.
- <sup>66</sup> Majed, p. 214.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid, pp. 214-215.
- <sup>68</sup> *Khosnag*, November 1992, p. 33.
- <sup>69</sup> *Zartouk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №188 (16343), August 28, 1992.
- <sup>70</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №142 (18258), September 2, 1992.
- <sup>71</sup> *Spurk*, №9, September 1992; *Khosnag*, November 1992.
- <sup>72</sup> *Zartouk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №201 (16357), September 15, 1992; *Khosnag*, December 1992, p. 43.



- <sup>73</sup> *Zartong*, 56<sup>th</sup> year, №92 (16536), April 29, 1993.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, №127 (18243), August 15, 1992.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid*; *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №14691 (211), August 16, 1992.
- <sup>77</sup> *Aztag*, №127 (18243), August 15, 1992.
- <sup>78</sup> Telephone conversation with Dr. Nourijeane Demirdjian, November 9, 2006. Haygaz Yardemian, in a brief talk on February 2, 2006 told the present writer that the list comprised three names: his name, Ekmekdjian and Dedeyan and, when they refused, Dr. Demirdjian's name emerged.
- <sup>79</sup> According to Dr. Djerredjian (correspondence August 2006) the sympathy of the Hunchag Lebanon District Administrative Body went to Dr. Demirdjian, as he had graduated from the State Medical Institute of Yerevan and, therefore, many in the Administrative Body knew him on a personal basis. However, Dr. Djerredjian and Sebouh Kalpakian had earlier met Dedeyan, with whom they had friendly relations, and had proposed that he submit his candidacy. He informed them that the Tashnag Party had proposed the same and he had had a family meeting and the family members were not in favour, which was the reason to decline from running for the seat.
- <sup>80</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №139 (18255), 29 August 1992. Shahe Aharonian informed the present writer and later made covert allusions in his articles in *Zartong* (August 22, 1992 and October 10, 1992) that the TPLCC had originally decided to submit the name of Committee member Yessayi Yessayan, principal of the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian-Tatigian Secondary School in Bourdj Hammoud, as Protestant candidate. However, his candidacy was dropped and MP Dr. Manougian submitted four names, Yardemian, Ekmekdjian, Dedeyan and Demirdjian.
- <sup>81</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №127 (18243), August 15, 1992; *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №14691 (211) August 16, 1992.
- <sup>82</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №127 (18243), August 15, 1992.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №14691 (211), August 16, 1992.
- <sup>84</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №7523, August 15, 1992.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №14691 (211), August 16, 1992.
- <sup>86</sup> *Zartong*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №173 (16329), August 11, 1992.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №174 (16330), August 12, 1992.
- <sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №173 (16329), August 11, 1992.
- <sup>90</sup> Discussion with Aghbashian, editor of *Zartong*, on January 20, 2006.
- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid*; *Zartong*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №178 (16334), August 16, 1992.
- <sup>92</sup> *Zartong*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №178 (16334), August 16, 1992; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №7524, August 17, 1992.
- <sup>93</sup> On August 13, 1992, after the withdrawal of the Ramgavar Party candidates, Dr. Krikorian approached me, and inquired about the possibility of my candidacy as an independent on Dr. Hoss's list, to whom he would introduce me. My reply was that as an educator (Principal of the Armenian Evangelical College since 1967), I was not interested in active politics. In my latter capacity I had already met Dr. Hoss on 23 March, 1988 in his residence.
- <sup>94</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №7523, August 15, 1992.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, № 7527, August 20, 1992.



- <sup>96</sup> *Zartonk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №179 (16335), August 18, 1992.
- <sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №185 (16340), August 25, 1992.
- <sup>98</sup> *Zartonk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №213 (16369), August 29, 1992.
- <sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №182 (16338), August 22, 1992.
- <sup>100</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №7527, August 20, 1992.
- <sup>101</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №130 (18246), August 19, 1992.
- <sup>102</sup> *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №14693 (213), August 19, 1992.
- <sup>103</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, Jan №. 7528, August 21, 1992.
- <sup>104</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>105</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>106</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>109</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>110</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>111</sup> Dr. Djeredjian (correspondence August 2006) said a meeting took place between Hoss and a delegation including himself, Pakradouni and MP Khanamirian. They proposed him not to include any Armenian or Evangelical candidate on his list; otherwise the Tashnag-Hunchag front would lead a fierce electoral campaign and bring Hoss's rival list large numbers of votes. They said Armenians who joined him couldn't bring more than 10% of their Front's votes. If the Armenian candidates were unrivaled, the campaign would be soft and his opponent's list will not get a lot of Armenian votes which would benefit him by default.
- <sup>112</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №132 (18248), August 21, 1992.
- <sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №. 136 (18252), August 26, 1992.
- <sup>114</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №7531, August 25, 1992.
- <sup>115</sup> *Aztag* 66<sup>th</sup> year №. 136 (18252), August 26, 1992.
- <sup>116</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour* №.7534, August 28, 1992.
- <sup>117</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, №.7535, August 29, 1992.
- <sup>119</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year №.138 (18253), August 28, 1992. Telephone conversation with Dr. Demirdjian, November 9, 2006. The TPLCC met Dr. Hoss and proposed including Dr. Demirdjian on his list, to which he agreed. In return they would vote for Dr. Hoss, as one Sunnite seat was left vacant in Solh's list.
- <sup>120</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №.7535, August 29, 1992.
- <sup>121</sup> *Aztag* 66<sup>th</sup> year №139 (18254), August 29, 1992; *Ararad* 55<sup>th</sup> year №.14702 (222) August 29, 1992.
- <sup>122</sup> *Azkayin Mshagouyt* weekly, Beirut, №.455, August 29, 1992.
- <sup>123</sup> *Spurk* monthly, Beirut, №.8, August 1992, p. 5.
- <sup>124</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №.138 (18254), August 28, 1992.
- <sup>125</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, № 7537, September 1, 1992.
- <sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, №7536, 31 August 1992.
- <sup>127</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №.140 (18256), August 31, 1992.
- <sup>128</sup> *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №14704 (224), August 31, 1992.
- <sup>129</sup> *Zartonk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №.191 (16346).
- <sup>130</sup> *Azkayin Mshagouyt*, №. 456, September 5, 1992.



- <sup>131</sup> Majed, p. 222.
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid, pp. 222-223; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №7537, September 1, 1992; *Aztag* 66<sup>th</sup> year, №141 (18257) September 1, 1992; *Zartouk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №. (16 347), September 2, 1992.
- <sup>133</sup> Majed, pp. 222-223; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №. 7537, September 1, 1992.
- <sup>134</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №.7536, August 31, 1992.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid, №.7537, September 1, 1992.
- <sup>136</sup> Majed, p. 225.
- <sup>137</sup> Ibid. Some candidates, who did not withdraw by the deadline, had their names on the candidates list, like Antoine Dagher who received 138 votes, Fadi Gemayel 63, Massoud Al-Hijal 32, Mounir Moukarzel 13, Mitri Bitar 6, Antoine Haddad 3, Wadih El-Hajj 2.
- <sup>138</sup> *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №.14828(258), September 11, 1992.
- <sup>139</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, № 7536, August 31, 1992.
- <sup>140</sup> Ibid, №7541, September 5, 1992.
- <sup>141</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>142</sup> Ibid, №7547, September 12, 1992.
- <sup>143</sup> *Zartouk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year №.192 (16347), September 2, 1992.
- <sup>144</sup> Ibid, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №. 194 (16349), September 5, 1992.
- <sup>145</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>146</sup> Ibid 66<sup>th</sup> year, №195 (16350), September 6, 1992.
- <sup>147</sup> *Nahar*, 60<sup>th</sup> year, №.18322, September 5, 1992; *Zartouk*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №. 194 (16349), September 5, 1992.
- <sup>148</sup> *Ararad*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №.14828(258), September 11, 1992.
- <sup>149</sup> *Aztag*, 71<sup>th</sup> year №139 (19449), August 21, 1996. p.3.
- <sup>150</sup> *Zartouk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №. 194 (16349), September 5, 1992.
- <sup>151</sup> *Azkayin Mshagouyt*, №. 457, September 12, 1992. *Al-Shark* wrote under the title "Ayb ya Baron," (shame o baron) that the Armenian parties had cashed \$200000 to give 5000 votes to Solh and had not held to their promise.
- <sup>152</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, №. 7547, September 12, 1992.
- <sup>153</sup> *Spurk*, №8, August 1992, p. 5.
- <sup>154</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>155</sup> *Aztag*, 66<sup>th</sup> year, №. 154 (18270), September 16, 1992.
- <sup>156</sup> *Zartouk*, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №.205 (16361), September 29, 1992.
- <sup>157</sup> Ibid, 55<sup>th</sup> year, №. 213 (16369), September 29, 1992.
- <sup>158</sup> Ibid, 55<sup>th</sup> year №.215 (16371), October 1, 1992.
- <sup>159</sup> According to Dr. Djeredjian (correspondence August 2006) during the Armenian Bloc meeting it was decided to inform the appointed PM, Rafik Hariri, that any two names from the Bloc were acceptable. Later on the names of Babikian and Barsoumian were proposed, outside the Bloc meeting. The Bloc, after the appointment of Minister Demirdjian, had one Hunchag member, one newly elected MP (Kasardji) who did not join the Bloc, and a new minister who was not a Bloc member, nor was he proposed by them.
- <sup>160</sup> The Armenian Bloc had designated Babikian and Barsoumian as its candidates for the new government (*L'Orient-Le Jour*, №.7587, October 30, 1992).



**ՀԱՅՈՑ ՄԱՄՆԱԿՑՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ ԼԻԲԱՆԱՆԻ  
ԷԼԻԱՍ ՀՐԱՌԻԻԻ (1989-1998)  
ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀՈՒԹԵԱՆ ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱՇՐՋԱՆԻ  
ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԸՆՏՐՈՒԹԻՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՆ (Ա.)  
(Ամփոփում)**

**ՋԱԿԷՆ ՄՍԸՐԼԵԱՆ**

Հեղինակը՝ հիմնուելով ժամանակակից լիբանանահայ, առաւել՝ Լիբանանի մէջ լոյս տեսնող մի քանի արաբատառ ու ֆրանսատառ լրագիրներու նիւթերուն, լիբանանահայ քաղաքական գործիչներու յատուկ ասուլիսներու ընթացքին հաղորդած բանաւոր վկայութիւններու, ինչպէս նաեւ անձնական հաղորդակցութեամբ կուտակած տեղեկութիւններու վրայ, հանգամանօրէն կը ներկայացնէ լիբանահայ քաղաքական տարբեր խմբաւորումներու կեցուածքը 1991ին կատարուած նշանակումներուն եւ 1992ին կայացած երկրի խորհրդարանական ընտրութիւններուն ընթացքին Հայ Առաքելական ու Հայ Կաթողիկէ Համայնքներուն յատկացուած երեսփոխանական աթոռներուն, ինչպէս նաեւ Լիբանանի Աւետարանական Համայնքի երեսփոխանական աթոռին շուրջ ծաւալած պայքարին: Այս կապակցութեամբ, կը քննուին նաեւ Լիբանանի միւս Համայնքները ներկայացնող թեկնածուներու հետ հայ քաղաքական հակամարտ հոսանքներուն հաստատած ընտրական դաշինքները՝ տիրող քաղաքական վիճակի տուեալներու լոյսին տակ:

Հեղինակը կ'անդրադառնայ 1975-1989 երկարած Լիբանանի Պատերազմին եւ հայ կուսակցութեանց Դրական Չէզոքութեան քաղաքականութեան որդեգրումին եւ անոր շուրջ միասնական կեցուածքին, որ զարկ տուաւ հայ միջ-կուսակցական կանոնաւոր եւ արդիւնաշատ գործունէութեան: Սակայն, այս գործակցութիւնը իր ամբողջական վիճակով չի շարունակուիր 1989ին Թաէֆի Ազգային Ուխտով կայացած Լիբանանի Բ. Հանրապետութեան չրջանին: Արդարեւ, հայ կուսակցութիւններէն իւրաքանչիւրը կը փորձէ երեսփոխանական առաւելագոյն աթոռներու տիրանալ: Սակայն, եթէ 1991ին կայացած նշանակումներուն հայ քաղաքական երեք կուսակցութիւնները չեն յանգիր Համաձայնութեան, ապա 1992ի ընտրութեանց ՀԵԴ եւ ՄԴՀԿ ընտրութեանց կը ներկայանան միասնական ճակատով մինչ ՌԱԿ չի մասնակցիր ընտրութեանց՝ ընդառաջելով Քրիստոնեայ մեծամասնութեան՝ ընտրութիւններուն չմասնակցելու կոչներուն:

Յօդուածը շարունակութիւնն է Հայկազեան Հայագիտական Հանդէսի ԻԱ., ԻԲ., ԻԳ., ԻԴ., ԻԵ. հատորներուն մէջ, նոյն հեղինակէն լոյս տեսած ուսումնասիրութեան:



