

ARMENIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF MICHEL AOUN (2016-)

ZAYEN MESSERLIAN

After the legislative elections of June 7, 2009, MP Saad Hariri was appointed Prime Minister by the obligatory expressed opinion of members of parliament. On November 9, 2009 he formed a cabinet of 30 ministers, in which there were two Armenian Orthodox ministers, Jean Oghassapian (Mustaqbal/Future Movement (candidate of the Ramgavar Azadagan Party in the legislative elections of 2009) and Apraham Dedeyan (independent candidate of the Tashnag Party).¹ This cabinet lasted until January 11, 2011.

The March 8 coalition demanded that the government reconsider its position on the International Special Tribunal dealing with the assassination of Rafiq Hariri. March 14 forces refused this demand, and when PM Saad Hariri travelled to Washington DC "to seek western backing for his government", just as he was to meet president Barak Obama, the March 8 ministers plus the supposedly neutral so-called 'king minister' resigned, despite the Doha Agreement in 2008 not to do so, bringing down the Hariri cabinet.²

The internal situation in Lebanon became very tense. Walid Jumblat, with his bloc of MPs, decided to support the nominee of the March 8 coalition for the post of Prime Minister, Najib Miqati. The latter formed a government of 30 ministers on June 13, 2011 with ministers from the March 8 coalition, Jumblat's bloc, and President Michel Suleiman's own supporters. In the cabinet the Tashnag Party, as they were with the March 8 forces, had two ministers, Vrej Sabounjian and Gen. Panos Manjian.³

Soon after the vote of confidence (68 in favor and 53 against) granted to PM Miqati's cabinet in parliament,⁴ the President of the Republic expressed his opinion that an electoral law based on a proportional system would produce true representation.⁵

Minister of Internal Affairs Marwan Charbel presented to the Council of Ministers a project based on the proportional system, dividing Lebanon into 15 electoral districts.⁶ The Future Movement, the Lebanese Forces and Jumblat's Socialist Progressive Party rejected the proposal. The March 14 coalition declared the new electoral law would give an advantage to Hezbollah and thus give political control of the country to the March 8 forces. In spite of the opposition's objections, in August 2012 the cabinet approved the electoral law based on proportional representation, with 13 electoral districts. In the new law, the district of Bashura in Beirut (mainly Muslim) was linked to Beirut's Ashrafieh district (mainly Christian), and Northern Metn (mainly

Christian) to the district of Baabda (mixed denominations).⁷ President Suleiman signed the decree to transfer the cabinet-approved electoral law to parliament for approval. Speaker Nabih Berri called a parliamentary committee to discuss the new law.

The Mustaqbal Current, the Kataeb Party, and the Lebanese Forces favored smaller electoral districts, while the Free Patriotic Current and the March 8 coalition wanted larger districts.

Extensive debates ensued, and there was the feeling that the electoral law of 1960, as amended by the Doha Agreement, would still be the only law when elections were to be organized for 2013.

As the debates went on, other proposals were set forth. The so-called Orthodox Meeting project maintained that each community should elect its MPs to represent it. Gen. Aoun's Current, as well as Hezbollah, were in favor of this law and, with some reservations, the Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb Party. However, each party presented its own draft electoral law. The Musaqbal Current and Speaker Berri's Amal party each separately favored a law that would allow deputies to be elected by both majority and proportional systems, dividing the seats almost equally. The President of the Republic objected to the new Orthodox law under discussion as it was against the pact of coexistence of communities guaranteed in the constitution's preamble.⁸

As the parliament's term was nearing its end, and no electoral law had been voted upon in parliament, the Minister of Interior Affairs published a circular on March 8, 2013 and said the elections would be held on June 9, on the basis of the existing electoral law (i.e. the law of 1960, as amended in Doha). Candidates were to be presented from March 11 to April 10. The last day to withdraw candidacies was set for April 25.

Due to disagreements with Hezbollah and Amal, PM Miqati "reached a deadlock with the Hezbollah ministers over the issues related to [internal security forces chief general] Ashraf Rifi and the approaching legislative elections"; Miqati resigned on March 22, 2013.⁹

President Suleiman, after the obligatory consultations with MPs, appointed Tamam Salam as Prime Minister on April 6, 2013.¹⁰ Salam could not form a government soon due to dissensions. As the law required, Miqati and his cabinet ran the affairs of state on a caretaker basis.

Parliament, called to meet on April 10, 2013 by the Speaker Berri, extended all the deadlines related to the elections to May 9, 2013.¹¹ Jumblat and his bloc objected to the constitutional court, which, after deliberations, said the delay was constitutional.¹²

On May 26, 2013 General Aoun said he was in favor of holding elections on the basis of the law of 1960 as amended in Doha. He said it was a bad

choice, but far worse was the prolongation of parliament or a vacuum.¹³ Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea said this was 'supreme treason.'¹⁴

706 candidates were registered for the elections to be held on June 16, 2013 as decided by the caretaker government.¹⁵

Armenian Orthodox candidates in Beirut I were: Vrej Sabounjian (Tashnag), Hagop Terzian (Tashnag), Avedis Dakessian (Ramgavar), Albert Gosdanian (Kataeb), and independents Carole Khachig Babikian, Sebouh Mekhjian, and Haroutiun Arkanian. Armenian Catholic candidates in Beirut I were Serge Toursarkissian (Henchag), Serge Joukhadarian (Tashnag), and Richard Kouyoumjian (Lebanese Forces).

In Beirut II Armenian Orthodox candidates were: Sebouh Kalpakian (Henchag), Panos Manjian (Tashnag), Jean Oghassapian (Future),¹⁶ and independents Hrair Khatchadourian, Vache Kasemjian, Laury Haytayan and Garabed Salikhanian.

In Northern Metn Armenian Orthodox candidates were: Hagop Pakradouni (Tashnag), Nareg Aprahamian and Yeghish Andonian. The last, a former security general officer, had changed his denomination from Protestant (Evangelical) to Armenian Orthodox in order to present his candidacy.

In Zahle, the Armenian Orthodox candidates were: Shant Chinchinian (Lebanese Forces), George Pouchigian (Tashnag) and independents George Kassarji, Boghos Kurdian and Eddy Demirjian.

None of the candidacies was announced in the Armenian papers. All the electoral decisions were for form only, as the Free Patriotic Movement, Amal and Hezbollah would not allow the formation of the committee that would control the elections. There was no electoral atmosphere in the country, and while candidates were being registered, there was already talk of the prolongation of the mandate of parliament. In fact, upon the proposal of MP Nicolas Fattoush on May 31, 2013 parliament extended its term till November 20, 2014 due to the political and security conditions in Lebanon.¹⁷

Tamam Salam continued to have difficulties forming a government due to conditions put forth by the political factions. Finally, as the president's term of office was ending on May 24, 2014, Salam formed his cabinet of 24 ministers on February 15, 2014. Arthur Nazarian represented the Tashnag Party in the government.¹⁸

On March 28, 2014 a meeting was held in the Maronite Patriarchate at Bkerke, where four Maronite presidential candidates were selected: Amin Gemayel, Michel Aoun, Sleiman Frangieh and Samir Geagea.¹⁹

However, there was no agreement in parliament on a new president of the republic, as the first voting indicated on April 23, 2014. 124 deputies were present. There were 52 blank votes, Geagea received 48 votes, Henri Helou, presented by Jumblat's bloc, received 16, Amin Gemayel 1, there was one

empty envelope, 2 for Tarek Dani Chamoun, and 4 others, each to a different person.²⁰ The election was postponed to April 30, but the required two-thirds majority did not attend. Several subsequent sessions also failed to materialize.

The parliament's extended mandate was coming to its end on November 20, 2014. Prime Minister Salam by decree No. 321 of August 19, 2014 set the date of new legislative elections on November 6, 2014, in accordance with Law No. 25 of 8 October 2008, in other words the electoral law of 1960 as amended in Doha, as there had been no agreement on a new electoral law.²¹

The deadline for candidacies was set at September 16, 2014.²² Once more candidacies were registered, just in case elections were to be held. Once again people did not believe the elections would be held. There was no electoral atmosphere.

The Armenian Orthodox candidates in Beirut I were: Hagop Terzian (Tashnag), Hagop Loussararian (Tashnag), Avedis Dakessian (Ramgavar), Albert Gosdanian (Kataeb), and independents Sebouh Mekhjian and Harout Arkanian.

Armenian Catholic candidates were Serge Toursarkissian, Patrick Farajian, Serge Joukhadarian, Hovhannes Taslakian and Richard Kouyoumjian.

The Armenian Orthodox candidates in Beirut II were: Sebouh Kalpakian (Henchag), Sebouh Hovnanian (Tashnag), Laury Haytayan, Jean Oghassapian (Mustaqbal), Hratch Chilingirian, Vache Kasemjian and Alexander Mradian. (Perhaps this last surname should have been Matossian; however in the official website Mradian was the indicated name.)

In Northern Metn the Armenian Orthodox candidates were: Hagop Pakradouni (Tashnag), Yeghish Andonian and Nazareth Sabounjian.

In Zahle, the Armenian Orthodox candidates were: Shant Chinchinian, Eddy Demirjian, Lena Geokjian, Boghos Kurdian, Levon Pouchigian and Setrag Havatian.

None of the candidacies was publicly announced by the respective Armenian political parties or by their daily organs.

Although the former chairman of the Ramgavar Azadagan Party's Lebanon District Council Dr. Avedis Dakessian had presented his candidacy in Beirut I, the Party's District Council, in a communique published on September 18, 2014, declared that it saw fit not to register any candidates in the party's name. It was waiting for the right to register candidates, a better deadline and legitimate conditions, remaining faithful to the 14 March Forces.²³

However, these candidacies were pure formalities as there was no consensus among political factions on holding elections and as there was no agreement on the electoral law. Parliament met on November 5, 2014 and extended its term until June 20, 2017.²⁴

Furthermore, parliament was unable to elect a new president of the republic and agree on a new electoral law. The discussions on electoral law proposals dragged on but proved to be futile.

Meanwhile the Lebanese Forces and the Free Patriotic Current held long discussions and eventually came to an agreement on common principles on June 2, 2015.

Saad Hariri proposed as presidential candidate MP Sleiman Frangieh of the 8 March Coalition. However, Samir Geagea, who had a reciprocal contention with Frangieh, made an agreement with the Free Patriotic Current on January 17, 2016 and declared Michel Aoun as presidential candidate. Aoun visited Meerab, the Lebanese Forces center.

Amidst the futile presidential election sessions called for by the Speaker of parliament, the government of Salam held municipal elections on May 8, 2016.²⁵ The Ramgavar District Council representatives along with former MP Hagop Kassardjian met Hariri on April 8, 2016.²⁶ The latter formed a list in agreement with all the major parties (Mustaqbal, Free Patriotic Current, the Lebanese Forces, March 8 Forces, etc.). Beirut was considered one electoral district. The candidates on Hariri's list were 50% Moslem and 50% Christian. As for the Armenian candidates on the list, they included Tashnag and Henschag candidates, like in the 2010 municipal elections, but did not include a Ramgavar candidate. Unlike their stand in 2010, when the Ramgavars agreed to a similar joint list, this time the party declared it had been marginalized and decided to present a candidate, although they knew he would not win.²⁷ *Aztag* and *Ararad* urged followers to vote for the joint list,²⁸ while *Zartouk* asked followers to vote for all the Armenian candidates, who numbered nine, no matter to which party they belonged.²⁹

The only opposition was from Beirut Madinati (Beirut, My City), a civil society movement. The joint list won, with the highest vote being 47,361 and the lowest vote 39,173. Beirut Madinati's highest vote was 31,848 and the lowest 28,185.³⁰ Many of the Christian voters had voted for Beirut Madinati, particularly in Ashrafieh, Rmeil and Saifi, except for the Tashnag and Henschag parties which had voted for the joint list.³¹ Hariri thanked the Tashnags in a phone call.³²

The major Armenian candidates scored the following results: Aram Malian (Henschag) 42,854, Hagop Terzian (Tashnag) 42,596, Sahag Keshishian (Armenian Catholic, Tashnag) 41,379, Maria Manouk (Beirut Madinati) 29,386, Levon Telvizian (Beirut Madinati) 28,475, and Ara Koyounian (Ramgavar) 738.³³

In the municipal elections held in Jebeyl, Baushrieh, Hazmieh, Zalka, Antelias, Debaye, Beit Shaar and Mezher, Tashnag candidates won municipal seats on lists formed by the Lebanese Free Patriotic Current and other

parties. The elections in these localities were not contested, except in Sin El Fil, by the other Armenian political parties. In Bickfaya the Tashnag candidate won on the Kataeb list. The Henchag Party allied with Nabil Kahhale, who was supported by Michel Murr, and won a seat in Sin El Fil. The Tashnag candidate lost the election.³⁴

After the municipal elections, once more attention moved to the presidential vacuum. The March 14 coalition kept attending the successive meetings called by the Speaker, Berri, whose Amal Party MPs and Jumblat's Progressive Party MPs also attended, but never achieved the required two-thirds majority. At one point, when Hariri made a special effort, the number of attendees reached 72. Finally on October 20, 2016 Hariri, in a move not so well received by some of his own Mustaqbal Current MPs or followers, endorsed Michel Aoun as his candidate. Therefore, on October 31, 2016 in the presence of 127 MPs, in the fourth round of voting, Aoun obtained 83 votes. There were 36 white ballots, 7 cancelled votes and one vote for Sethrida Geagea; Aoun was elected president.³⁵

On November 3, 2016 after mandatory parliamentary consultations, Saad Hariri was appointed Prime Minister, and on December 18, 2016 he formed a cabinet of 30 ministers, including Jean Oghassapian (Mustaqbal Current) and Avedis Gidanian (Tashnag).³⁶

Minister of Internal Affairs, Mohammad Mashnouk, announced on January 20, 2017, that by law he had to call the electorate to vote in legislative elections 90 days before the deadline for elections, i.e. February 21, 2017. This was on the basis of the law in existence, i. e. the law of 1960 as amended in Doha in 2008.³⁷ In fact, when the deadline came, PM Hariri and Mashnouk signed the decree and sent it to President Aoun to sign. The latter, however, refused and later suspended parliamentary sessions for one month, as there was talk that around April 15 parliament would extend its term of office for the third time.

Eventually the Free Patriotic Current's president, Gebran Basil, proposed a new electoral law in March 2017. After long consultations and discussions, on June 14, 2017, six days before its term would end, parliament agreed upon a new electoral law, 44/2017, and in order to allow for the elections to be held between March 2018 and May 19, 2018, parliament extended its term until May 20, 2018.³⁸

* Under the new law the number of MPs would remain 128. However, in the next legislative elections 6 extra seats would be reserved for the Diaspora Lebanese. The term of office remained unchanged, i.e., four years. The country was divided into 15 major electoral districts made up of 27 sub-districts.³⁹

The new law was a complex law, based on the proportional system, however, with a 'one person one preferential vote'. That is, voters would be entitled to cast one preferential vote for a candidate of the same list as they had chosen.

Beirut was divided into two districts: Beirut I (East) and Beirut II (West) with the civil wartime former green line prevailing. Beirut I, which included four Armenian seats, was to have the Mudawar, Ashrafieh, Rmeil and Saifi quarters.

Each voter would elect one list on a preprinted ballot including the names and photos of the candidates, who had to form lists. Other than the list, the voter, if they wished, would choose one candidate from the list as their preferential vote. The overall percentage of votes the list received would determine the number of candidates elected from the list, in accordance with an electoral quotient and the candidate's religious denomination based upon the number of preferential votes given. Only the voters' choice of the list would be counted if no preferential votes were marked. However, if a voter had marked only his preferential vote, the list would get the vote too. The vote would be annulled if two preferential votes were given or if there were cross-selection from different lists.

Diaspora Lebanese, if they registered within a given time, would be able to vote in Lebanese embassies, consulates or other localities to be designated by the authorities.

Candidates who were municipality members had to resign within a month of the elections. The candidates' non-refundable registration fee was 8 million Lebanese Pounds, and they had to register 60 days prior to the election date. Political financial contributions over one million LP had to be made by cheque. It was decreed it would be illegal for candidates to accept funding from a non-Lebanese national or a foreign state.⁴⁰

Ziad Abdel Samad, executive director of the Arab NGO Network for Development, wrote, "The law adopted the single preferential vote applied within minor constituencies, which explains the gerrymandering of minor and major constituencies. So, minor constituencies were grouped into major ones to raise the electoral quotient without affecting the preferential vote and to prevent opposition lists from 'infiltrating' the results. The political forces had to join unprincipled alliances to raise the quotient and accordingly the competition for the preferential vote turned into competition within the same list and even within the same party, confusing the voters and complicating the electoral process."⁴¹

Beirut I had eight seats, three Armenian Orthodox, one Armenian Catholic, one Maronite, one Greek Catholic, one Greek Orthodox and one

Christian minorities. The Protestant (Evangelical) seat, much to the regret of Armenians, was set in Beirut II.

In Metn the eight seats were for four Maronites, two Greek Orthodox, one Greek Catholic and one Armenian Orthodox.

In Zahlé, the seven seats were for two Greek Catholics, and one each for Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Shiite and Sunni.

Soon after the electoral law was passed, TPLCC representative MP Hagop Pakradouni and Minister Avedis Gidanian met ministers Mashnouk and Basil and discussed the electoral process.⁴²

The Nashra website published an analytical article stressing that the new electoral law was in favor of the Tashnag Party, which after the elections would have a minimum of four and a maximum of five Armenian MPs, three of them in Beirut I and one in Metn. The uncertain seat was that of Zahlé.⁴³

On September 14, 2017 the government of Hariri appointed the Electoral Supervisory Body of eleven personalities, headed by Judge Nadim Abdel. Dr. Arda Ekmekji (Armenian Evangelical), Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Haigazian University, was on the committee.⁴⁴

For the diaspora Lebanese living in forty countries, the time limit of October 1 to November 20 was given for registering at Lebanese embassies or consulates in order to be able to vote on April 27 and 29, 2018. However, overseas votes would be counted with the votes of the Lebanese voting in Lebanon on Election Day.

The pre-electoral period had not really begun when PM Hariri was summoned to meet King Salman of Saudi Arabia. He went there, and soon after created a shock when he announced his resignation on November 4, 2017 in Riyadh. Almost all pre-electoral activities and discussions ceased at this unexpected development. News spread that the resignation was at the insistence of Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman. On November 6, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Adel Al-Jubeir, declared that his government would consider Lebanon a hostile state as long as Hezbollah was in power. *Time* magazine wrote, "The Saudis may have been hoping to provoke conflict between the group and its opponents on Lebanese soil, thus striking a blow against Iran's regional dominance," and added, "if that was the plan, it has backfired badly." Lebanon stood united. All, including Hezbollah, called for the immediate return of Hariri and revocation of his resignation. President Aoun met Lebanese political party leaders and told foreign ambassadors that Hariri had been "kidnapped."⁴⁵ While in Saudi Arabia on November 12, Hariri gave a TV interview to Paula Yacoubian on a Lebanese TV station. Eventually French President Macron personally intervened, and Hariri returned to Beirut via Paris. On November 22, 2017, in the Presidential Palace in Baabda,

after attending the Independence Day military parade, Hariri revoked his resignation and resumed office.

Once more the pre-electoral situation was revived. On December 15, minister Mashnouk set the date of the elections as May 6, 2018.⁴⁶ President Aoun approved this on January 22, 2018.⁴⁷ This delay caused newspapers to speculate that except for Amal and Hezbollah, all parties wanted to delay the elections. Philippe Abi Akl, who was on the Electoral Supervisory Body, wrote his view that "control over parliament by Hezbollah has created fears."⁴⁸

Later on researcher Aurélie Daher wrote in *L'Orient Le Jour* that the Christian seats held by March 14 Forces were at risk of being significantly diminished due to the new electoral law.⁴⁹ While Joseph Bahout in the same newspaper wrote, the resignation of Hariri in Saudi Arabia and its consequences have caused a further closeness of Aoun and the Lebanese Forces to miscarry. The 8 March coalition was more resilient and capable of limiting its fragmentation, compared to the March 14 Forces.⁵⁰

Once the Election Day was set, it was announced that candidacies would be registered between February 5 and March 7, 2018. The last day for withdrawal would be March 22. Lists had to be formed by March 26. No individual candidacies were to be accepted; however, mini-lists could be formed. Lebanese abroad could vote on April 27 in Arab countries and on April 29 in other countries.

As to the conditions prevailing in Armenian communities, the Lebanon leadership of the Henschag, Tashnag and Ramgavar Azadagan parties often met together after the legislative elections of 2009 and up to the legislative elections of 2018 in Lebanon. Meetings between the worldwide top leadership of the parties were held in Yerevan. The Armenian political parties' international or local leaders met with the spiritual heads of the Armenian Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical communities.

The annual commemorations, the centenary of the Armenian Genocide (April 24, 2015) and the centenary of the first Republic of Armenia (in May 2018) were organized by central committees appointed with the agreement of the three communities and the three parties.

Only once, the Henschag party mildly criticized in its daily organ, *Ararad*, a visit by Catholicos Aram I, who was accompanied by the Prelate of the Orthodox Armenians of Lebanon, Archbishop Kegham Khacherian, Ministers General Panos Manjian and Vrej Sabounjian and MP Hagop Pakradouni, to the President of the Republic, Michel Suleiman on April 27, 2012. During the meeting the internal situation of Lebanon and the proposed electoral law were discussed. The Henschag daily wrote if the delegation had included personalities representing all the community, this would have proved that the Catholicosate of Cilicia is a Pan-Armenian center.⁵¹ The allusion was clear; it

deplored the absence of the other non-Tashnag MPs. However, the Henschag party leadership continued its visits to Catholicos Aram I, for example those on September 24, 2012 and March 15, 2013.⁵²

Within each Armenian political party in Lebanon new developments were registered.

In the first quarter of 2013 when Tashnag Party's Lebanon Central Committee chief Hovig Mekhitarian was confident of his re-election by the delegates of the party general assembly, the party's top leadership representative, Hrant Markarian, arrived from Yerevan, and on the basis of authority granted by party regulations, appointed a new central committee for Lebanon headed by Hagop Khacherian. After two years Khacherian was elected a member of the Bureau (the top leadership of the party), and in Lebanon MP Hagop Pakradouni was elected as chief, or representative, of the Central Committee of Lebanon, TPLCC.

The Henschag Party's daily, *Ararad*, ceased its publication between 3 and 9 May, 2012, and its editor, Aharon Shekherdeman, was discharged. Mrs. Ani Yepremian was appointed as the newspaper's director.

Regular Henschag Party internal elections for the Executive Body took place according to the rules of the Party, and new chairmen were elected at the designated times. However, a dissenting group that did not support MP Sebouh Kalpakian continued to exist. These were mainly people in the Massis Club of Bourj Hamoud, but their dissent did not reach the level of public disputes or communiques in the press.

The Ramgavar Azadagan organ *Zartontk* became a daily newspaper again as of June 1, 2010. The party's internal conflict worldwide and in Lebanon persisted. On November 15, 2015 former District Committee chairman Haroutioun Yerganian and Ardavazt Melkisetian were left out of the Central Council of the party by a communique of the Central Council.⁵³ The opponents of the Central Council of the party created a Supreme Council of the party, and a Central Council, and resumed the publication of *Baikar* as a weekly and the organ of the party beginning January 1, 2017. The weekly is printed and widely distributed in Lebanon, although it is edited in the USA. Both sides claim the leadership of the party. In Lebanon the first group mentioned above prevails and controls *Zartontk* and the Tekeyan Cultural Union.

Despite the serious public split of the party, the leadership of both groups agreed on matters related to the cultural association of the party, the Tekeyan Cultural Union, and its Vahan Tekeyan School in Bourj Hamoud. Meetings to this effect were held, and the resulting communiques were published in both *Zartontk* and *Baikar*.⁵⁴

The AGBU Lebanon District Council stressed its independence, particularly as far as its links or areas of cooperation with the local Ramgavar Azadagan Party were concerned. Significant was the visit on January 24, 2017 of Free Patriotic Current president and foreign minister Gebran Basil to the AGBU Demirjian Center, where he was received with full honors by the AGBU Central Committee President, Berge Setrakian, and the AGBU-AYA leadership of Lebanon.⁵⁵ *Zartouk* did not report the meeting but *Baikar* did.⁵⁶ However, Ramgavar District Central Committee vice-chair Mikayel Vayedjian, along with the wife of the late former minister and MP Souren Khanamirian, Mrs. Mireille Khanamirian, were appointed by Berge Setrakian as members of the AGBU Lebanon District Committee.⁵⁷

Furthermore, the AGBU *Khosnag* monthly had reported the appointments of Jean Oghassapian and Avedis Gidanian as ministers in Hariri's cabinet and congratulated both.⁵⁸

Within two Armenian communities some changes had occurred since the previous parliamentary election.

Within six months of the change of TPLCC, the Prelate of the Armenian Orthodox community, Archbishop Kegham Khacherian, was asked to resign in a petition signed by the majority of the members of the Armenian Orthodox Community Representative Council in Lebanon. This he did on September 10, 2013, effective October 2, 2013. A new prelate, Bishop Shahe Panossian, was elected by the Communal Representative Council on October 7, 2013.

In 2011 the Communal Council (*Kavaragan Joghov*) had changed its name to National Representatives Council (*Azkayin Yerespokhanagan Joghov*). The Council has 36 lay representatives who are elected, though uncontested in practice, by each Armenian Church's parish members who have paid their dues and six clerical representatives. Without any competition, contest or electoral campaign, the majority of the lay membership continued to be from the Tashnag Party or affiliated independents. However, two Henchag, one Ramgavar and one AGBU-AYA representatives were elected.

The Armenian Catholic Catholicos-Patriarch, Nerses-Bedros XIX, passed away in late June 2015 and Krikor-Bedros XX succeeded him after his election by the synod of bishops. The assistant Bishop of Beirut residing in the Patriarchate was Bishop Kevork Assadourian, who succeeded Bishop Vartan Ashkarian.

LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OF 2018

After approval of the new electoral law on June 26, 2017 the Ramgavars were the first to announce the setting up of their electoral machine.⁵⁹ Others followed soon after.

In appeals to Armenians living abroad, the Tashnag Party was the first to take the initiative and inform Diaspora Lebanese Armenians that they could register until November 20, 2017;⁶⁰ they were followed by the Henchags and the Ramgavars. *Aztag* reported Armenians were registering in Cyprus, Greece and Australia. Later on, the same was done in France, the USA and Canada. Once the deadline had passed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that 92,800 Lebanese of all denominations had registered in the Diaspora communities.⁶¹

After the 59th Henchag representatives meeting of Lebanon, the party declared they supported Aoun and Hariri and announced the reelection of MP Sebouh Kalpakian as the chairman of the Executive Body of Lebanon.⁶²

Hagop Pakradouni, the representative of TPLCC, declared during the 127th anniversary celebration of the Tashnag Party on December 9, 2017 that they wanted to see the Armenians united in the forthcoming elections.⁶³

The TPLCC was very active in making and receiving visits in relation to the elections. On October 16, 2017 and January 24, 2018 they visited the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mashnouk.⁶⁴ On November 1, 2017 they met with Gebran Basil, stressing their strong ties with the Free Patriotic Current.⁶⁵ On December 6, 2017 and March 11, 2018 they met PM Hariri, discussing possible alliances in Beirut I, Zahle and Metn.⁶⁶ On January 10, 2018 they met President Aoun.⁶⁷ *Aztag* announced visits by the Syrian Popular Party,⁶⁸ the Hezbollah Mount Lebanon representative,⁶⁹ Mustafa Hamdan, leader of the Independent Nasserites and Mourabitoun⁷⁰ and others. The ambassador of Armenia, Samuel Mgrdchian, met Hagop Pakradouni on February 5, 2018. During the meeting the legislative elections were discussed as well.⁷¹

The three Armenian political parties' top leadership had met on September 8, 2017 and had discussed various matters including those that concerned the Armenians of Lebanon.⁷² Nothing specific was mentioned in relation to the elections. The next meeting, after a gap of five months, was held on February 7, 2018. The communique mentioned that the spirit of unanimity was important so that true representation of the Armenians in parliament could be secured.⁷³

However, the Ramgavar Azadagan Party had already made an alliance with the Lebanese Forces on February 6, 2018 and had announced it the next day in *Zartouk*. The party Lebanon District Committee chairperson, Dr. Avedis Dakessian, had met Samir Geagea in Meraab and signed an agreement of cooperation especially for the election of 2018.⁷⁴ So *Zartouk*, while giving the joint communique of the parties, stressed that each party could make alliances to secure the meeting's goals; it was not possible to present candidates in a joint list due to the new electoral law.⁷⁵ Later on Dr. Dakessian explained that in the period preceding his candidacy he had not

received any clear answers from Hagop Pakradouni to his calls aimed at finding possibilities of cooperation and coordination in the elections.⁷⁶

The Ramgavars had indicated their intention of participating in the election with a party candidate as early as December 3, 2017.⁷⁷ On February 16, 2018 *Zartok* had given the biography of Dr. Dakessian, without mentioning that he was a candidate.⁷⁸ The Ramgavars announced their candidates on March 9, 2018. These were: for Beirut I, Dr. Avedis Dakessian, Mrs. Alina Clonsian-Dakessian, and Diran Sarkissian and for Metn, Ara Koyounian.⁷⁹

The Tashnag Party's *Aztag* mentioned in its electoral news information that after the presentation deadline of candidates was over, electoral alliances would be clarified and announced in one sentence of three lines that TPLCC representative Hagop Pakradouni had presented his candidacy for Northern Metn on March 5, 2018.⁸⁰

The Henchag Party's MP, Sebouh Kalpakian, declared during the celebration of the Party's 131st anniversary on December 3, 2017 that the party was in favor of national concord.⁸¹ On February 17, 2018 Kalpakian declared that their party, which had been the ally of the Mustaqbal Current for the last 25 years, would participate in the elections.⁸² On March 6, 2018 they declared their candidate to be Sebouh Kalpakian and announced consultations were underway with Armenian political parties for the formation of lists.⁸³

When it became apparent that Paula Yacoubian of civil society would be a candidate, this fact was not received well by the TPLCC. When questioned on the "distance" created between the Tashnag Party and Yacoubian, Hagop Pakradouni replied, "We have never decreed one's being Armenian or non-Armenian. Mrs. Paula Yacoubian is a dear and respected personality. Recently under her patronage Hamazkayin's choir sang at St. Nishan Church. She had an interview on 'Vana Tsayn' radio."⁸⁴

On March 6, the Ministry of Interior Affairs announced the list of candidates.⁸⁵

The Armenian candidates were:

Beirut I, Armenian Orthodox: Avedis Dakessian, Sebouh Kalpakian, Paulette (Paula) Yacoubian, Laury Haytayan, Sebouh Mekhjian, Carole Babikian, Hagop Loussarian, Levon Telvizia, Garbis Kalfayan, George Tashjian, Alina Clonsian and Diran Sarkissian.

Beirut I, Armenian Catholic: Serge Toursarkissian, Jean Talouzian, Serge Joukhadarian, Yorgui Teyrouz, Nazareth Izmirlian and Antoine Kalaydjian.

Northern Metn: Hagop Pakradouni, Yeghish Andonian, Lena Demirdjian Nazareth Kaprielian and Ara Koyounian.

Zahlé: Boghos Kurdian, George Pouchigian, Lena Geokjian, Marie-Jean Bilezikjian, Eddy Demirjian and Raffy Madeyan.

Although there had been talk of the Lebanese Forces presenting the candidacy of Richard Kouyoumjian⁸⁶ for the Armenian Catholic seat in Beirut I with the support of the Ramgavars, this did not materialize.

It was only on March 22, 2018 that the Tashnag Party officially announced its four candidates: Hagop Pakradouni in Northern Metn, Hagop Terzian, Alexander Matossian and Serge Joukhadarian in Beirut I.⁸⁷

Below are brief biographical notes on the major candidates standing in a legislative election for the first time, in alphabetical order.

Dr. Avedis Dakessian was born in Beirut in 1957. He was educated at the AGBU Hovagimian-Manougian Secondary school, then graduated as a dentist from Yerevan Medical University in 1983. He was active in AGBU-AYA, Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Ramgavar Azadagan Party. He was Ramgavar District Committee chairman between 2005 and 2008 and again from 2016. In 2015 he was elected as a member of the Armenian Orthodox community's Representative Council. He was vice-chair of the Armenian Dentists Union of Lebanon 1993-97.⁸⁸

Serge Joukhadarian, born in Beirut in 1976, is the son of former minister and MP Hagop Joukhadarian. He graduated as a lawyer from St. Joseph University, and from 2003 he was the lawyer of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate. He has been very active within the Armenian Catholic community. For two terms he was a member of the Beirut Municipal Council, elected by Beirut voters.⁸⁹

Mrs. Alina Gulvanessian, by her ID name, Clonsian, is married to Dr. Antranik Dakessian, chair of the Armenian Diaspora Research Center at Haigazian University. She was educated at the AGBU Tarouhy Hagopian Girls' School and in 1996 graduated from the Musicology Department of Kaslik University as a pianist. From 1986 to 1990 she gave piano lessons at Hamazkayin Ganachian Music School, 1996-1998 at Kaslik, and since 1996 has been teaching music at St. Mary's Orthodox College and Annunciation Orthodox College. In 2015 she founded a female readers' ABC Book Club.⁹⁰

Ara Koyounian, born in 1973, attended various Armenian schools. In 1991 he went to Nigeria, where he worked and received higher education in purchasing and supply management and a civil engineering diploma. He worked in a responsible position in Nigeria's AIM Consultants. In 2013 he returned to Lebanon and established a company, Ara Steel Manufacturing. He has been active in AYA, Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Ramgavar District Committee of Lebanon.⁹¹

Alexander Matossian was born in 1969 in Beirut. He is president of the Al-Machreq insurance company and also heads an insurance company in Egypt.

He is a member of the Lebanese Insurance Companies Council, Cedar Pick Holdings and St. Nicolas Development. He participates in the Lebanese Credit Insurance Company and other Arab insurance companies. He is a member of the American-Lebanese Trade Palace and the TPLCC Economic Council.⁹²

Jean Talouzian is the son of an Armenian refugee from Djebel Moussa, who died when Jean was a child. His Lebanese-born mother raised him, so he did not learn Armenian. He studied at the Ecole des Frères, later at the Lebanese Military War School and at St. Joseph University, where he studied law. He was a general in the Lebanese Army, and was in charge of the security apparatus at Rafik Hariri Beirut International Airport. He belongs to the Armenian Catholic community and sympathizes with the Lebanese Forces.⁹³

Hagop Terzian, born in Beirut in 1966, is the president of Hampi 1921 Company, established by his father Hampartsoum Terzian. He was a member of the Armenian Orthodox Prelacy's Residence Committee, 2001-2014, and a member of the Civil Council of the Armenian Orthodox Community, 2012-2014. He has been very active in Homentmen Sports Union, a member of its Lebanese District Council and a member of the Lebanese Basketball Federation (2007-2010). In 2010 he was elected a member of the Beirut Municipal Council by Beirut voters.⁹⁴

Paula Yacoubian, was born of an Armenian father, a survivor of the Genocide from one of the four princely families of Zeitoun, and a Lebanese mother. She was educated at first at the Mekhitarist Armenian School, then an Arab school. In 1997 she obtained a degree in political sciences from the Lebanese University. Afterwards she worked as a political commentator on Lebanese and foreign TV stations, namely LBC, MTV, ICN, ART, AlHurra (US) and, particularly, Future TV.⁹⁵ She was married to a non-Armenian and later divorced him. Ms. Yacoubian was invited to introduce the Armenian choir of Hamazkayin in 'Beirut Chants' in December 2017. On January 26, 2018 she resigned from Future TV. Soon after she was decorated with a medal of distinction granted by the King of Belgium in an official reception held in her honor at the Belgian Embassy.⁹⁶

Once the candidacies were announced the official formation of the lists started, to be completed by the deadline of March 26.

As early as February 2018, in Beirut I it was clear that there would be a fierce campaign after the failure of the efforts of Michel Pharaon to create cooperation among all the forces present there, like in the 2016 Municipal elections. Nadim Gemayel of the Kataeb Party was against such a list.⁹⁷ Eventually, Pharaon and the Lebanese Forces, who had allied with the Ramgavars and the Kataeb Party, would form a list, although Nadim Gemayel had initially envisaged forming a list of his own. At this early stage Richard

Kouyoumjian's name was mentioned as the Lebanese Forces Armenian Catholic candidate. Eventually he was replaced by banker Antoun Sehnaoui's own candidate, Jean Talouzan, for the Armenian Catholic seat.⁹⁸ AGBU-AYA also supported Talouzan, without a public declaration, after receiving financial support for its schools. The Ramgavars gathered around *Baikar* supported him as well. Pharaon said he had insisted on leaving a vacant place for the Henschag-Mustaqbal candidate, as it was normal to group the March 14 Forces and it was not natural that the Henschag candidate would ally with the Free Patriotic Current as the Henschags were their electoral ally in 2009. He added the electoral atmosphere in Ashrafieh tended to support 14 March. The Armenians would have increased the electorate coefficient and favored their candidates.⁹⁹

Diran Sarkissian, the third Armenian Orthodox Ramgavar candidate, was asked to withdraw. Instead, Carole Babikian, daughter of the former minister and MP, the late Khachig Babikian, was taken on. The Beirut I list was thus formed as follows:

Michel Pharaon (Greek Catholic), Nadim Gemayel (Maronite), Imad Wakim (Greek Orthodox), Avedis Dakessian, Alina Clonsian and Carole Babikian (Armenian Orthodox), Jean Talouzan (Armenian Catholic) and Riad A'kel (Minorities).¹⁰⁰

Samir Geagea, the leader of the Lebanese Forces, advised his followers to give their preferential vote to Imad Wakim.¹⁰¹

On the opposite side, the Free Patriotic Current and the Mustaqbal Front had come closer, since the presidential election agreement and decided to form a joint list. The Tashnag Party was an ally of the Free Patriotic Current, and the latter decided they should join forces once Alexander Matossian was agreed on as a joint candidate of the Free Patriotic Current and the Tashnag Party.¹⁰² On March 26, the Henschag Party candidate Sebouh Kalpakian joined the list.¹⁰³ On April 12, Saad Hariri adopted and supported his candidacy during an electoral gathering of the Mustaqbal Current.¹⁰⁴

At this juncture Tashnag reserve potential candidate Hagop Loussarian, who had also been a candidate in the never-held elections of 2014, withdrew his candidacy. Soon after, on April 27, 2018, *Aztg* announced that, as proposed by the Tashnag Party, he had been appointed as a member of the State Administrative Council of Sports, Youth and Scout Organizations public service.¹⁰⁵

The Beirut I "Strong List", as it called itself, was formed as follows: Nicolas Sehnaoui (Greek Catholic), Massoud Achkar (Maronite), Hagop Terzian, Alexander Matossian and Sebouh Kalpakian (Armenian Orthodox), Nicolas Shammass (Greek Orthodox), Serge Joukhadarian (Armenian Catholic), and Antoine Pano (Minorities).¹⁰⁶

Civil society's Koullouna Watani List was formed as follows: Ziad Absi (Maronite), Yorgui Teyrouz (Armenian Catholic), Gilbert Doumit (Greek Orthodox), Paula Yacoubian, Laury Haytayan and Levon Telvizian (Armenian Orthodox), Lucien Bou Rjeily (Greek Catholic), and Joumana Haddad (Minorities).¹⁰⁷

Teyrouz is a pharmacist and founder of an NGO "Give Blood Counts."¹⁰⁸

Haytayan was previously a reporter for 1990s TV political news programs that have since gone off the air. She is the manager of the international nonprofit National Resource Governance Institute¹⁰⁹ and is the wife of TV commentator Zaven Kouyoumjian of Future TV.

Telvizian is an engineer and university instructor who was on the Beirut Medinati List during the municipal elections of 2016.¹¹⁰

On April 6, 2018 the AGBU-AYA Mothers' Committee had a ladies "tea time" gathering in the presence of 200 invitees. Three female candidates, Yacoubian, Haytayan and Clonsian, were among the guests. Only *Baikar* alluded to their presence, while *Zartok* and *Khosnag* published AGBU-AYA Committee information and refrained from doing so.¹¹¹

A fourth list led by *An-Nahar* newspaper's editor Michelle Tueni (Greek Orthodox) was formed. On the list Sebouh Mekhjian (Armenian Orthodox) and Serge Toursarkissian (Armenian Catholic)¹¹² had places.¹¹³ The other candidates were George Sfeir (Maronite) and Rafic Bazerji (Minorities). The list was called "We are Beirut."¹¹⁴

Mekhjian was in social work, worked for Pharaon, and was helpful in social welfare. He was a member of the AGBU and once close to some Ramgavars.¹¹⁵ The AGBU-AYA Antelias Antranik Club organized its traditional Palm Sunday Banquet under the patronage of Mekhjian on March 25, 2018. He donated 5 million LL on this occasion to the organization.¹¹⁶

Pharaon opposed Mekhjian's candidacy as he would take many Armenian preferential votes for himself since he distributed Pharaon's financial aid to those in need. Mekhjian resigned from his highly paid job to join Tueni's list and ran against Pharaon's list.

In the Northern Metn area, the TPLCC representative, Pakradouni, said the party had good relations with the Free Patriotic Current, Michel Murr and Sami Gemayel, but the latter preferred to run on a purely Kataeb list. The party tried to form an alliance with the Free Patriotic Current and Murr. So on February 19, 2018 Pakradouni, Gidianian, Murr, Elias Bou Saab and Eddy Maalouf of the Free Patriotic Current (FPC) met at the Tashnag party headquarters.¹¹⁷ Later on Pakradouni declared there was no veto by Murr on an alliance with the Free Patriotic Current, so they were trying to bring their two allies together. However, the efforts of the TPLCC failed, as Murr preferred to run with a separate list of his own due to the new electoral law

conditions. Al-Jadid TV Station in its 11:30 pm news broadcast on March 12 said the Tashnag had left Murr after 60 years of alliance. TPLCC declared the arrangement was by mutual agreement.

When the FPC announced its 46 candidates on March 16, it had for Northern Metn an Armenian Orthodox candidate, Lina Demirjian.¹¹⁸ All the major newspapers gave the complete list, except for *Aztag*. It gave the names of 45 candidates, leaving out the name of Demirjian.¹¹⁹ We presume this was done by the FPC just in case the Tashnags were to join Murr's list. However, when the break with Murr became apparent, Demirjian's candidacy was withdrawn, and the FPC, Tashnag and Syrian Popular Party list was formed.

This list, entitled Strong Metn List, included Ibrahim Kanaan, Ghassan Achkar, Sarkis Sarkis, Corine Achkar (Maronites), Elias Bou Saab, Ghassan Moukhaiber (Greek Orthodox), Eddy Maalouf (Greek Catholic) and Hagop Pakradouni (Armenian Orthodox).¹²⁰

On March 27, 2018 Sami Gemayel visited Catholicos Aram I of the Cilician See. Only *Ararad* among the Armenian daily newspapers gave this news,¹²¹ along with *Hask* the official publication of the Catholicosate, when it was later issued.¹²²

Sami Gemayel fixed a list of his own. It included Yeghish Andonian, a former colonel in the Security Services. Together they visited the Armenian Genocide memorial at the Armenian Catholicosate of Antelias on April 23 and placed wreaths.¹²³ This information was not published in any of the Armenian dailies of Beirut.

The Ramgavars, as they had allied themselves with the Lebanese Forces, had Ara Koyounian placed on the list led by Eddy Abillama.¹²⁴

Murr did not have any Armenian Orthodox candidate on his list, in a tacit agreement with the TPLCC.

In Bekaa's Zahlé district, the Tashnags and Ramgavars showed an early interest.

The Ramgavar Lebanon District Committee led by Dr. Avedis Dakessian visited Zahlé on September 10, 2017. Later MP Shant Chinchinian joined the delegation. Together they visited the Zahlé Lebanese Forces Center, and possibilities of electoral cooperation were examined. The delegation also visited the Armenian Church pastor, met with the local church council and met Kataeb MP Eli Marouni at his residence.¹²⁵

• The Tashnag Party's Pakradouni and Gidanian and Prelate Bishop Shahé Panossian had a dinner gathering in Zahlé, in the Diwan Omara restaurant, in the presence of 700 Armenians from Zahlé, Shtora, Rayak, Ablah, Jalala and Baalbek. Minister Gidanian said, "since 2000, politically speaking, the rights of Armenians have been taken away; instead of six we have two seats, but still on the political scene the Tashnag Party is the strongest."¹²⁶

On December 16, Minister Gidanian, accompanied by George Poochigian and the Anjar vice-mayor, visited Zahlé and toured the Armenian marketplace.¹²⁷ When Anjar mayor, Vartkes Khoshian, on the occasion of Christmas, visited former MP Salim Aoun, former ministers Eli Marouni and Nicolas Fattoush, the Lebanese Forces Center, and the Assyrian Orthodox community's prelate, he had in his delegation George Poochigian.¹²⁸

On March 22, when MP Pakradouni announced the TPLCC candidates, he said the "Zahlé candidate's case is still being examined."¹²⁹ However, parties and candidates strong in Zahlé had their own candidates.

Fadi Eid wrote in *Diar* the Armenian votes in Zahlé electoral district were 5000 and not all were Tashnag voters.¹³⁰ Mustaqbal had its candidate, Marie Jean Bilezikjian, a pharmacist and a women's rights activist.¹³¹ The Lebanese Forces had Boghos Kurdian, a jeweler and former candidate. He put a paid advertisement in *Zartouk*, in a special Armenian Genocide 103rd anniversary issue, in which he declared "he would continue to remain around the three Armenian political parties gathered under the shelter of the Catholicosate of Cilicia."¹³² Nicolas Fattoush had Eddy Demirjian, who had registered himself as a candidate in the never-held elections of 2013 and 2014. George Poochigian, who is not a Tashnag Party member, had no other choice than to be on Myriam Tok-Skaff's list as an individual candidate tacitly supported by Anjar Armenians.

On March 30 MP Pakradouni said the TPLCC wished to have Poochigian as their candidate since he had a presence in Zahlé, Anjar and elsewhere in the Bekaa in Armenian and local circles. But as the number of Armenian votes was not sufficient for eligibility, an electoral alliance was made with a political force that could secure a large number of votes for the Armenian candidate, on condition that Armenians would support them in other electoral districts. However, the Mustaqbal Current insisted on Bilezikjian, who was not a candidate of the TPLCC.¹³³ In April Pakradouni added that there was discontent amongst the Armenians of Zahlé and Anjar concerning the Armenian candidate on the Mustaqbal-Free Patriotic Current list. However, the TPLCC remained firm on the alliance.¹³⁴ Later on Minister Gidanian said the Tashnag party had 3500 votes in Zahlé and Anjar; despite this fact Mustaqbal saw fit to select another Armenian candidate.¹³⁵

Therefore, the following major lists were formed:¹³⁶

Zahlé for all of the Mustaqbal, FPC and Tashnag alliance: Salim Aoun (Maronite), Michel Daher and Michel Skaff (Greek Catholic), Assad Nakad (Greek Orthodox), Assem Araji (Sunite), Nizar Dalloul (Shiite), and Marie-Jean Bilezikjian (Armenian Orthodox).

Zahlé, Our Cause List, supported by the LF and the Kataebs: George Okeis and Michel Fattoush (Greek Catholics), Elie Marouni (Maronite), Cesar

Ma'alouf (Greek Orthodox), Mohammad Mita (Sunite), Amer Sabouri (Shiite) and Boghos Kurdian (Armenian Orthodox).

Zahlé, the Choice and Decision List, sponsored by Nicolas Fattoush, Hezbollah and Amal: Nicolas Fattoush (Greek Catholic), Khalil Hraoui (Maronite), Masif el Tiné (Greek Orthodox), Najib Araji (Sunite), Anwar Jomaa (Shiite) and Eddy Demirjian (Armenian Orthodox).

In the Popular Bloc of Myriam Tok-Skaff, George Poochigian was included as the Armenian Orthodox candidate. In the All Patriots List formed by Ghassan Ma'alouf there was no Armenian Orthodox candidate.

Raffy Madeyan withdrew his candidacy as he could not enter any list.

In *Diar Fadi* Eid wrote Mustaqbal was going to distribute its preferential votes to the Sunnite and Armenian Orthodox candidates of their list, while the LF were going to distribute their votes to the Greek Catholic and Armenian Orthodox candidates of their list.¹³⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour's* Anne Marie El-Hage wrote the Tashnags would support Bilezikjian according to their alliance with the MC in Beirut I and Zahlé.¹³⁸

On April 4, 2018 the Henschag and Tashnag local leadership met at the Tashnag headquarters and discussed the efforts in Beirut, Metn and Zahlé. In a joint communiqué the parties announced that they would support the candidates of both parties in all the electoral districts.

Once the lists were formed, public meetings took place. The Tashnag Party held meetings between April 5 and 18 successively in the Bourj Hamoud, Raouda, Fanar, Zalka, Ashrafieh, and Arakadz areas.¹³⁹ Some significant declarations were made in the speeches of the candidates. Pakradouni said on April 15, while Lebanese MPs tended to all problems, even minor ones, of their constituents and districts, the Armenian MPs tried to preserve Armenian identity and the political independence of the community.¹⁴⁰ On April 18 he said if the Tashnag candidates won, it was very good; it was as good if the Henschag party candidate won; it was similarly good if the Ramgavar candidate on the opposite list won. He added, "At least they are comrades, Armenians, who are in parties and represent parties."¹⁴¹ On April 20 he said candidates proposed by others, would serve others, but not us, not the Armenian community.¹⁴² On April 26 he declared, "If you are not going to vote for the Tashnag candidate, vote for the Ramgavar and Henschag candidates, but do not vote for candidates who are friends, kind, but do not represent us." The allusion was to the individual non-partisan Armenian candidates.¹⁴³ In the meeting-dinner of May 1 in Leylavan, he alluded to the individual candidates without mentioning their names. He said one was accountable to Société General [allusion to Talouzan]. Individual candidates were Armenian by ID card but did not speak nor comprehend Armenian. One of them constantly talked about the garbage problem, mixing the honor of

our people with garbage [allusion to Yacoubian]; another worked 25 years with his boss [Michel Pharaon] and wanted to run in the elections, but his boss forbade it, so he resigned from his work [allusion to Mekhjian]. He used to distribute financial aid to Armenians, but his boss got upset and the aid was stopped. Both the boss and he got upset.¹⁴⁴

The last meeting organized by the party was held on May 4 in the presence of thousands, judging from the pictures; former Ministers and MPs Gen. Panos Manjian, Nourijan Demirjian, Shahe Barsoumian, Vrej Sabounjian and Sebouh Hovnanian were present. Pakradouni declared, "A strong Armenian community in Lebanon is a thorn in the eye, as our strength is not digestible by local people, because if the Lebanese Armenians are fractured and weak, it would be easy to surround them and build a state based on personal interests, an idea always refused by the Tashnag Party." He said "A weak Lebanese Armenian community, means a weak Diaspora; a weak Diaspora means a weak Armenia and Artsakh [Karabagh]." He also complained about electoral bribes.¹⁴⁵

Joint meetings of the Beirut I Strong list took place on April 19 and April 29 in Ashrafieh. Gebran Bassil, Serge Joukhadarian, Nicolas Shammas, Massoud Achkar, Sebouh Kalpakian, Alexander Matossian, Hagop Terzian and Antoine Pano spoke in the latter meeting.¹⁴⁶

The Henschag Party participated to an electoral gathering in Jnah's Jamila Hotel on April 15 in the presence of some Beirut I inhabitants. Kalpakian declared that during the civil war the Henschag Party had had constructive relations with the inhabitants of the area. He stressed the party's alliance with the Mustaqbal Current (MC).¹⁴⁷ On the morning of April 15, a breakfast was held in Mar Mekhayel region of Beirut I with the participation of local notables and inhabitants.¹⁴⁸

On April 15, Kalpakian visited the Ashrafieh office of the MC, accompanied by Ahmad Hariri. He declared the Henschag Party had stood with Rafiq Hariri and then Saad Hariri and said, "You should make your voices heard on May 6." Ahmad Hariri reiterated that Kalpakian was the ally of the MC, the only candidate adopted by the current in Beirut I and to vote for him on May 6 was to vote for Saad Hariri.¹⁴⁹

At a breakfast organized by the Ramgavar ladies Shushan-Varteni club on April 8, the party candidates spoke, presented their plans and said if elected, they would serve the community, without bragging and factionalism.¹⁵⁰ On April 29, an electoral meeting of the Beirut I List took place in the Tekeyan Center. The speakers were Carole Babikian, Riad Akl, Nadim Gemayel, Imad Wakim, Michel Pharaon, Dr. Avedis Dakessian and Alina Gulvanessian-Dakessian (Clonsian).¹⁵¹ On May 1, a meeting was held at Rmeil, where all candidates spoke.¹⁵²

On April 22, a meeting was held in Baushrieh by the “Metn in Lebanon’s Heart” List. Candidates spoke, among them Ara Koyounian, who spoke against factionalism and pressed voters to vote according to their choice.¹⁵³

Paula Yacoubian held a commemoration of the Armenian Genocide on April 21, 2018 at 5 pm, in one of the ABC venues.

The Tashnag Party held meetings with Lebanese voters abroad, in particular in the USA, Canada and France. Minister Gidanian met Lebanese Armenian voters in the USA and Canada. Gidanian declared on March 9, 2018 there were 7000 Lebanese Armenian voters, and the Tashnag Party needed these votes for electoral success in Beirut I and Metn.¹⁵⁴ In Canada in an interview with *Horizon* in March 2018, he said the party wanted to secure 2000-2500 votes from abroad to bring¹⁵⁵ their candidates success. Melik Karakavorian, of the TPLCC, visited cities in France where there were Lebanese Armenians and held public meetings with them stressing the importance of their votes.¹⁵⁶

The registered Diaspora Lebanese voters participated in the elections on April 27 and 29. Although the Ministry of Internal Affairs announced the percentage of voters in major centers, it said votes would be counted in Beirut at the end of Lebanon’s voting, on May 6.¹⁵⁷ The boxes containing the votes, locked and sealed, were brought to the Central Bank.

Of those who had registered, the percentages of participation given were: Saudi Arabia 62.4%, Egypt 51%, Qatar 76.5%, Koweit 69.1%, UAE 62.8%, Armenia 42%, Belgium 65.62%, Sweden 49.79%, Holland 52.63%, Romania 64%, France 45%, Australia 50%, Greece 59.77%, Germany 36.27%, United Kingdom 37.34%, and Ivory Coast 63%.¹⁵⁸

Just three days before the elections, Raffy Demirjian wrote in *Aztag* a short article, entitled “We Heard, Couldn’t Believe and Need Clarification”, saying that they had heard with surprise that the AGBU had decided to vote in Metn in favor of Michel Murr; Jean Talouzian in Beirut I, then inquired whether this was the decision of the Union or a few individuals. If so, why would the AGBU support a non-Armenian candidate and vote for an individual candidate when Armenian parties had candidates?¹⁵⁹ On May 5, *Zartontk* reprinted the article, with some editing.¹⁶⁰ The decision caused the Ramgavar candidate to suffer in preferential votes, which would go to the Armenian Catholic candidate on the list, on which they were together.

During the electoral campaigns, unlike in previous elections, there was almost no polemic of significance. *Aztag* and *Zartontk* had a minor one on a secondary matter, which did not continue for long. *Zartontk* published the electoral program of the Ramgavar candidates. Furthermore, it published alternately articles by each of the party candidates on their political views, proposals and future plans, if elected.

During the campaigns Laury Haytayan complained, "Who can pay \$20,000 these days for half an hour on air beside the traditional parties that we have known for years. Only the wealthy can afford it."¹⁶¹

Sylvana Lakiss, who represented civil society in the Electoral Supervisory Committee, resigned on April 20, 2018 as she refused to be a "false witness" to the inability of the Committee to carry out its duties.¹⁶² The Interior Ministry declared that from April 26 to May 7 special temporary army, internal security, general security and security of state authorities and forces would control the elections on the ground and would see to the complaints addressed to them.¹⁶³

The European Union Election Observation Mission deployed 24 long-term observers at 12 different locations in Lebanon to begin "their efforts to support credible, transparent and inclusive parliamentary elections." Chief of the European Observers in Lebanon was Elena Valenciano. Other than the observers, there were forty European diplomats following the electoral process.¹⁶⁴

The government decided to close schools from May 4 to 7; night clubs would close on May 5; restaurants and cafés would close on the eve of the elections at 1 am; public administrations would close May 4 to 7; and banks would close on May 7, with the exception of the Central Bank, which would close May 6 and 7. Use of all motorcycles would be forbidden on Election Day from 7am to 4 pm. Heavy load trucks would not be allowed to circulate from May 4 noon to May 7, from 7am to 9pm.¹⁶⁵ All these were precautionary measures to prevent any incidents.

The elections were held on Sunday, May 6, in a calm atmosphere. There were no incidents of significance. However, election turnout was low. 51% of the Lebanese voters did not participate in the elections. The next day *L'Orient-Le Jour* wrote: "Ou était donc la moitié des Libanais?" (Where were, therefore, half of the Lebanese?)¹⁶⁶ *The Daily Star* headlined: "Lebanon vote peaceful; turnout low."¹⁶⁷

While *Ararad* and *Zartontk* wrote about the parliamentary elections in general terms, *Aztag's* headline was: "Thanks to the Lebanese Armenians. The Armenian electoral mass proved its strength; 3 of the 4 candidates proposed by the Tashnag Party, Hagop Pakradouni, Hagop Terzian and Alexander Matossian, were elected deputies."¹⁶⁸

Zartontk's headline was: "After a nine year wait the Lebanese elected a new parliament composed of 128 members. The participant voters in the 2018 elections in the final count constituted 49.2 percent."¹⁶⁹ *Ararad's* headline was the modest: "Parliamentary elections in Lebanon."¹⁷⁰

On May 13, 2018 *Baïkar* weekly published the pictures of all six new Armenian MPs in the following order: Talouzan, Yacoubian, Pakradouni,

Terzian, Matossian, and Demirjian, congratulating them.¹⁷¹ AGBU's *Khosnag* did likewise in its May issue, but the pictures were placed in the following order: Talouzian, Pakradouni, Terzian, Matossian, Yacoubian and Demirjian.¹⁷²

Beirut I had 133,733 voters on the list of those eligible to vote. The number of eligible Armenian voters was as follows:¹⁷³

Quarter	Armenian Orthodox	Armenian Catholic
Ashrafieh	7292	2443
Saifi	559	663
Medawar	26037	2952
Rmeil	758	1411
Total	41774	7469
Percentage	31.3%	5.6%

The number of all Protestants (Arab, Armenian, Assyrian, etc.) in the above four quarters was 3900.¹⁷⁴

In Beirut I only 44,714 persons voted, thus 33.4% of the electorate.¹⁷⁵

The official results were announced by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on their official website and in the media.¹⁷⁶

Below are the results of the three lists from which there were winners. First the total number of votes per list is given, followed by the votes of each candidate, starting with the top preferential vote obtainers:

Beirut I Strong List: 18,373		
Nicolas Sehnaoui	Greek Catholic	4788
Massoud Achkar	Maronite	3782
Hagop Terzian	Armenian Orthodox	3451
Alexander Matossian	Armenian Orthodox	2376
Sebouh Kalpakian	Armenian Orthodox	1566
Nicolas Shammas	Greek Orthodox	851
Serge Joukhadarian	Armenian Catholic	717
Antoine Pano	Minorities	539

Beirut The First List: 16,772 votes		
Jean Talouzian	Armenian Catholic	4166
Nadim Gemayel	Maronite	4096
Imad Wakim	Greek Orthodox	3936
Michel Pharaon	Greek Catholic	3214
Avedis Dakessian	Armenian Orthodox	437
Riad Akl	Minorities	428
Carole Babikian	Armenian Orthodox	124
Alina Clonsian	Armenian Orthodox	23

Koullouna Watani List: 6842 votes		
Paula Yacoubian	Armenian Orthodox	2500
Ziad Abs	Greek Orthodox	1525
Gilbert Doumit	Maronite	1046
Yorgui Teyrouz	Armenian Catholic	536
Joumana Salloum Haddad	Minorities	431
Loucién Abou Rjeily	Greek Orthodox	328
Laury Haytayan	Armenian Orthodox	218
Levon Telvizian	Armenian Orthodox	114

Out of 137,733 registered voters 44,714 voted. There were 313 blank ballots and 1048 cancelled votes, so the expressed votes were 43,666. Of the two smaller lists, "We are Beirut" got 1272 votes, and "Fidelity to Beirut" list got 94 votes. The electoral coefficient was 5458.25. After the elimination of the smaller lists this became 5287.5. Beirut Strong list got 3.47, and Beirut I List, got 3.17. Those elected were Nicolas Sehnaoui, Hagop Terzian, Alexander Matossian and Antoine Pano from Beirut I Strong List. Jean Talouzian, Nadim Gemayel, and Imad Wakim from the Beirut First List, and Paula Yacoubian from the Koullouna Watani List.¹⁷⁷

Although the following table does not give the actual preferential results of the Armenian candidates and possibly the Armenian Orthodox and Catholic votes in Beirut I, we are giving it below as it is the only table we could secure and it gives the overall picture.¹⁷⁸

Note: From various other countries Armenian candidates received 406 votes.¹⁷⁹

The Sunnites who supported Hariri gave only around 300 votes to Kalpakian. Most voted for Talouzian. Dissident Henschag voters, particularly of the Massis club of Bourj Hamoud and Goujouni club of Antelias, voted for Paula Yacoubian. About 100 Armenian communists of the Ararad Sports Club of Khalil Badawi quarter voted for Talouzian. By noon May 6, when it became clear Serge Joukhadarian was losing, Tashnag supporters gave their preferential votes to Matossian along with Terzian.¹⁸⁰

Minister Gidanian announced during an interview on MTV that 11,700 Armenian voters had voted in Beirut I; in other words of the 33% of voters the proportion of Armenian voters had been 27%.¹⁸¹

In Northern Metn the number of voters was 187,740 of whom 32,500 were Armenian Orthodox and Catholic registered voters. 92,446 voted. 2044 votes were cancelled. Koullouna Watani List obtained 5027. All in all 10,672 votes were left out in determining the electoral coefficient, which became 11,300 votes. The percentage of voters was 50.31%.¹⁸²

Strong Metn List: 38,897 votes; preferential votes		
Name	Denomination	# of votes
Elias Bou Saab	Greek Orthodox	7299
Hagop Pakradouni	Armenian Orthodox	7182
Ibrahim Kanaan	Maronite	7179
Eddy Maalouf	Greek Catholic	5961
Sarkis Sarkis	Maronite	4337
Ghassan Achkar	Maronite	2759
Ghassan Moukhaiber	Greek Orthodox	2654
Corine Achkar	Maronite	696

Official results		Non-official results		
Name	Preferential votes	Preferential votes	Of which Armenian votes	Votes in Yerevan
Jean Talouzian	4166	3573	538	2
Hagop Terzian	3451	3160	2805	37
Paula Yacoubian	2500	2178	755	2
Alexander Matossian	2376	2114	1875	2
Sebouh Kalpakian	1566	1349	568	3
Serge Joukhadarian	717	626	500	2
Sebouh Mekhjian	554	489	273	2
Yorgui Teyrouz	536	476	75	0
Avedis Dakessian	437	440	374	6
Laury Haytayan	218	203	78	1
Carole Babikian	124	102	20	0
Levon Telvzian	114	96	44	0
Serge Toursarkissian	43	42	24	0
Alina Clonsian	23	21	10	0
Antoine Kalaydjian	17	17	7	0
Total		14886	7946	57

Pulse of Metn List (Kataeb): 19,003 votes; preferential votes		
Name	Denomination	# of votes
Sami Gemayel	Maronite	13968
Elias Hankache	Maronite	2583
Joseph Karam	Maronite	580
Mikhael Romanos	Greek Catholic	532
Mazen Skaaf	Greek Orthodox	366
Nada Ghorayeb	Maronite	246
Violette Ghazal	Greek Orthodox	178
Yeghish Andonian	Armenian Orthodox	160

Metn in the Heart of Lebanon List (Lebanese Forces): 13,138 votes; preferential votes		
Name	Denomination	# of votes
Eddy Abillama	Maronite	8922
Michel Mekattaf	Greek Catholic	1222
Jessica Azar	Greek Orthodox	1030
Razi Hajj	Maronite	1018
Gisele Hashem	Maronite	185
Lina Moukhaiber	Greek Orthodox	178
Shukri Moukarzel	Maronite	171
Ara Koyounian	Armenian Orthodox	156

Michel Murr had also formed a list. He obtained 11,945 votes.

The elected MPs from Northern Metn were, in descending order of preferential votes: Sami Gemayel, Michel Murr, Eddy Abillama, Elias Bou Saab, Hagop Pakradouni, Ibrahim Kanaan, Eddy Maalouf and Elias Hankache.

As the number of Armenian voters was less than in the elections of 2009, and the number of Armenian votes for Hagop Pakradouni was almost halved, in his interview on MTV Minister Gidanian, on the assertion that the Tashnag votes were around 7000, said he would like to ask the FPC why their votes in 2009 had been 30,000 and in 2018 they had dwindled to 20,000. In response to a question, he revealed that only 200 to 300 votes were cast in Bourj Hamoud voting centers in favor of Michel Murr.¹⁸³

In Zahlé, the number of voters on the electoral lists was 190,000, of whom 10,500 were Armenian voters. The number of actual voters on Election Day was 94,082, i.e. 49.1% of the electorate. 2414 votes were cancelled. There were 545 blank ballots. The electoral coefficient was 13,095. However, after taking away the votes received by Myriam Skaff's list, 10,855 in number, and Koullouna Watani lists votes, 1599, the electoral coefficient was reduced to 11,312 votes.¹⁸⁴

The Zahlé for All List, an alliance of the FRC and FC, with which the Tashnag Party had allied, obtained 36,391 votes.

Name	Denomination	# of votes
Michel Daher	Greek Catholic	9742
Assem Araj	Sunnite	7284
Salim Aoun	Maronite	5567
Assad Nakad	Greek Orthodox	4138
Nizar Dalloul	Shiite	3947
Marie-Jean Bilezikjian	Armenian Orthodox	3851
Michel Skaff	Greek Catholic	987

Zahlé's Choice and Decision List obtained 23,546 votes. The List was sponsored by Fattoush, Hezbollah and Amal.

Name	Denomination	# of votes
Anwar Jomaa	Shiite	15601
Nicolas Fattoush	Greek Catholic	5737
Wajih Araj	Sunnite	592
Nassif El-Tiné	Greek Orthodox	528
Khalil Hraoui	Maronite	343
Eddy Demirjian	Armenian Orthodox	77

Zahlé's Our Cause List, I, supported by the LF and the Kataeb Party, obtained 18,702 votes.

Name	Denomination	# of votes
George Okeis	Greek Catholic	11363
CesarMaalouf	Greek Orthodox	3554
Mohammad Mita	Sunnite	1370
Elie Marouni	Maronite	1213
Michel Fattoush	Greek Catholic	552
Boghos Kurdian	Armenian Orthodox	142
Amer Saboui	Shiite	111

George Pouchigian was also initially favored by the Tashnag Party, but in the end officially not adopted or promoted as a candidate, as his chances of succeeding were not secured. He obtained 1850 preferential votes, almost all in Anjar, on the Myriam Skaff list.

On the eve of the elections instructions came from the TPLCC to the Anjar committee to give their preferential votes to Samir Aoun. Similarly, the pro-Tashnag Armenians in Zahlé, as well as AGBU members, cast their preferential votes for Samir Aoun. Only 1850 votes were cast for Pouchigian in Anjar, which had 3000 votes. 400 votes were cancelled in Anjar as there was no checking for a list or a preferential vote. The Sunnites, particularly of Kab Elias, voted for Bilezikjian, while some LF supporters cast votes for Kurdian.¹⁸⁵

Those elected were: Anwar Joumaa, George Okeis, Michel Daher, Assem Araj, Salim Aoun and Eddy Demirjian.

A week after the elections Eddy Demirjian declared he had been supported by Nicolas Fattoush, who had taken him on his list.¹⁸⁶ Demirjian, although a candidate in the never-held elections of 2013 and 2014, was virtually unknown in the Armenian community of Lebanon.

Eddy Demirjian, born in Zahlé in 1969 of an Armenian father and a non-Armenian mother, had studied in Zahlé's Kalbeyn Gadisseyn School. He had attended St. Joseph University in Beirut. He has a Ph.D. in Public

Administration, a diploma in Finance, an MA in marketing, and a License in Public Administration. He has been an instructor of Public Administration at St. Joseph University since 1995 in Beirut and Zahlé. He has been elected 7 times to Zahlé's Traders Union, 1993-2017, and he is the author of several articles in his field. He is married to Ighnar Saade, has business establishments in Zahlé and is a member of social groups.¹⁸⁷

On the eve of the elections, Hariri had warned of "dire consequences" if Mustaqbal failed to win a large bloc in the new parliament. In fact, his bloc fell from 32 seats to 20 seats. This was mainly due to the new electoral law and also because in some electoral districts he abandoned former Mustaqbal Current allies (Michel Pharaon, Nadim Gemayel, LF, Ramgavars, in Beirut I) and allied with the FPC against the LF (for instance in Zahlé). *L'Orient-Le Jour* wrote concessions by the March 14 Forces strengthened the March 8 Forces. Yara Abi Akl wrote the return of personalities close to Damascus in parliament was a slap in the face of the sovereigntist camp and added that personalities hostile to Hezbollah criticized the behavior of components of the March 14 camp.¹⁸⁸

General Kasem Suleimani, Chief of the Iranian Al Qods Brigade, declared after the elections that Saudi Arabia had spent 200 million US dollars in support of its friends; however, Hezbollah and their friends had obtained 74 out of the 128 seats in the new parliament.¹⁸⁹ Nehmet Frem of the FPC rejected this statement.¹⁹⁰ However, a careful examination of the seat holders of the new parliament indicates that March 8 Forces had more MPs, but not an absolute majority. Due to new electoral alliances, March 14 Forces, as such, did not exist. Furthermore, the Mustaqbal Current had lost its multi-denominational aspect. Its elected MPs were mostly Sunnite.

After the elections, Koullouna Watani objected to the results of the Minorities seat in Beirut I. Michelle Tueni and Serge Toursarkissian, both on the "We Are Beirut" List, which had obtained 1272 votes, requested a manual recount of the votes in Beirut I, saying that the Ministry of Interior's official results did not correspond to the results gathered by their electoral machine.¹⁹¹

On May 9, 2018 each Armenian Party leader and district committee published a communique commenting on the election.

Hagop Pakradouni of the TPLCC said the Tashnag Party came out victorious from the elections, but added, as they had said in their meetings with voters, if voters did not wish to vote for the Tashnag candidates, they should have voted for the Henschag or the Ramgavar candidates. They had wished to see along with their MPs the other Armenian party MPs.¹⁹²

The Henschag Party Lebanon Executive Body declared: First, a lot of electoral bribes were paid by individual candidates, which caused a negative

result. Second, many Lebanese Armenian voters voted for non-Armenian parties' candidates. Third, the Henschag Party would continue its role. Fourth, thanks to all the party members who worked hard in the elections and voted for their party candidate.¹⁹³

The Ramgavar Party Lebanon District Committee thanked all those who had supported their candidates. However, they deplored the fact that Armenian unions (allusion to AGBU) had sold their votes to persons who had no role in the community. Some who could not speak Armenian and had had no connections with the Armenian community had been elected as MPs. The Armenian community faced a challenge of reviewing its relations. The party invited its members to assume their duties towards the nation and fatherland.¹⁹⁴

Aztag deplored the fact that two Armenian parties had been deprived of their chance to reach parliament. The editorial said the Tashnag representative always said if voters did not want to vote for the Tashnag Party, they should vote for other Armenian party candidates.¹⁹⁵

In the Ramgavar weekly *Baïkar*, Barouyr Aghbashian wrote the Henschags and Ramgavars had not got into parliament due to the new electoral law, which did not allow the Armenian parties to unite and cooperate, as votes were dispersed, and due to the voters' disharmony and disorientation. The Tashnags secured three seats as they had strong cooperation from their voters. The most sensational result was the election of three Armenian MPs who were not members of the Armenian political parties, nor active in the community.¹⁹⁶

After the elections were over the three MPs of the Tashnag Party formed the Armenian Bloc and on May 10, 2018 visited Catholicos Aram I of the Cilician See. The Catholicos told them he was happy about the formation of the Armenian Bloc; however, he added it would have been stronger had the Henschag and Ramgavar party candidates succeeded too. He stressed that the three Armenian political parties should cooperate with mutual understanding to continue to defend the rights and interests of the Lebanese Armenians.¹⁹⁷

The next day the Armenian Bloc members along with Minister Gidianian received congratulations in the Armenian Prelacy's Yercho Samuelian Tricolor Hall. The heads of the three Armenian denominations in Lebanon were among those who offered congratulations.¹⁹⁸

The Henschag Party had a meeting with their electoral machine members. Kalpakian thanked them for their work and discussed political and internal difficulties that had resulted in his failure to regain his seat.¹⁹⁹

On May 22, 2018 the AGBU, under the leadership of its Lebanon District chairman Gerard Tufenkjian, held a reception in the Demirjian Center in honor of MP Jean Talouzan, whom they had supported. . The ambassador of

Armenia, along with the AGBU-AYA leadership, was there.²⁰⁰ In its issue of June 3, 2018 *Baïkar* weekly wrote Vartan Nazirian, Ramgavar Supreme Council president, had met Paula Yacoubian and congratulated her on her election.²⁰¹

On May 14, 2018 Paula Yacoubian had received congratulations. Among those who congratulated her on her election was the delegation of the Armenian Popular Movement of Lebanon.²⁰²

The Ramgavar Party Lebanon District Committee led by Dr. Avedis Dakessian visited LF leader Samir Geagea on June 11, 2018 and congratulated him on the success of the LF in the election. The delegation mentioned the right of the Armenian community to have two ministers in a government of 30 ministers.²⁰³ On June 20, the RLDC, led by Dr. Dakessian, visited Catholicos Aram I, an analysis of the legislative elections was carried out, and points to take into consideration in the future were stressed.²⁰⁴

On June 23, 2018 the AGBU-AYA Zahlé Antranik Club local committee organized a family dinner in the Antranik Sports field of Zahlé in the presence of 200 members and friends, amongst them the newly elected MP Eddy Demirjian, the former MP Shant Chinchinian and George Pouchigian.²⁰⁵

After the elections and obligatory consultations with the newly elected MPs, Saad Hariri was entrusted with forming the new government. This proved to be very difficult due to conflicting demands.

At one juncture in mid-October 2018, there were persistent reports that the Armenians would be given one seat in a 30 member cabinet. On October 18, 2018 the Armenian political parties met and insisted on two ministers as per the Taef Agreement.²⁰⁶ Their demand was met. The Tashnags asked for the re-installation of Minister Gidanian and the LF presented Richard Kouyoumjian as their candidate. In a communique the RDCL saw this as the crowning of their alliance with the LF.²⁰⁷

Finally, on January 31, 2019 the government was formed. As foreseen Gidanian and Kouyoumjian were in the new cabinet.

After the formation of the cabinet Hagop Pakradouni revealed that in the preceding 48 hours an attempt had been made to move their ministerial candidate from the Ministry of Tourism to another ministry. However, due to the firm stance of the TPLCC and his calls to the Speaker of the Parliament, the PM designate and the Free Patriotic Current, this was avoided and Gidanian was appointed Minister of Tourism.²⁰⁸

Right after the first session of the cabinet on February 2, 2019, Minister of Social Affairs Richard Kouyoumjian visited the Armenian Catholic Patriarch-Catholicos Krikor Bedros XX and the Catholicos of Cilicia, Aram I.²⁰⁹ On February 7, 2019, accompanied by a delegation of the RDCL, he visited Rev.

Mgrdich Karageozian, President of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, at the Union's headquarters.²¹⁰

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Roupen Avsharian, *On the Record. Armenian Deputies in the Lebanese Parliaments, Volume II, 1972-2017*, Beirut 2017, p. 284.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 288.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 289.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 290.
- ⁵ *Aztag*, Beirut, July 13, 2011.
- ⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, Beirut, August 11, 2012.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, January 8, 2013, and February 16, 2013.
- ⁹ Avsharian, p. 298.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 299.
- ¹³ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 27, 2013, p. 4.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lebanon; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 28, 2013.
- ¹⁶ In late December 2012, when the possibility of 2013 parliamentary elections was much talked about, Oghassapian, to put an end to rumors that he would change his political affinities, declared that since 2000 he had been with the Mustaqbal Current. However, he would not be a candidate in Ashrafieh as he had ceased to be in the bloc of Free Decision, nor would he be the candidate of the Ramgavar Party. His candidacy in any other district would be determined by the Mustaqbal Current and its chief (*L'Orient-Le Jour*, December 29, 2012).
- ¹⁷ Avsharian, p. 299; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, June 1, 2013.
- ¹⁸ Avsharian, p. 303.
- ¹⁹ LBC TV broadcast of March 24, 2014.
- ²⁰ Avsharian, p. 306.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 307.
- ²² Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lebanon. (May 15, 2018).
- ²³ *Zartonk Daily*, Beirut, September 18, 2014, p. 1.
- ²⁴ Avsharian, p. 309.
- ²⁵ *Aztag*, March 4, 2016.
- ²⁶ *Zartonk*, April 8, 2016, p. 1.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, May 4, 2016, p. 1. *Aztag* in its local news section informed readers of the Ramgavar Party's objections to its marginalization.
- ²⁸ *Aztag*, May 5, 2016, p. 1; *Ararad Daily*, Beirut, May 6, 2016, p. 1.
- ²⁹ *Zartonk*, April 29, 2016, p. 1.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, May 11, 2016.
- ³¹ *Ararad*, May 11, 2016.

-
- ³² *Aztag*, May 16, 2016.
- ³³ Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lebanon. (May 15, 2018).
- ³⁴ *Ararad*, May 17, 2016, p. 1.
- ³⁵ Avsharian, p. 313 fn99.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 314.
- ³⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, January 21, 2017, p. 2.
- ³⁸ *The Daily Star*, Beirut, June 15, 2017, p. 2.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Ziad Abdel Samad, "Citizenship as a Doorway to Civil Peace, Security and Social Stability," *The Peace Building In Lebanon*, news supplement, Issue # 19, August 2018, p. 3.
- ⁴² *Aztag*, October 17, 2017, p. 1 and November 2, 2017, p. 1.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, July 5, 2017, p. 10.
- ⁴⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, September 16, 2017, p. 2; *Zartontk*, September 15, 2017, p. 1; *Aztag*, September 15, 2017, p. 10. While all the newspapers gave this information, *Zartontk* congratulated Dr. Arda Ekmekji on her appointment.
- ⁴⁵ *Time*, magazine, New York, November 27-December 4, 2017, p. 8.
- ⁴⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, December 16, 2017, p. 3.
- ⁴⁷ *Zartontk*, January 23, 2018, p. 1.
- ⁴⁸ Philippe Abi Akl, "La Perspective d'une Mainmise du Hezbollah sur le Parlement suscite des craintes," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, January 13, 2018, p. 2.
- ⁴⁹ Aurelie Daher, "Le Retour de Hariri a Riyad, Symbole d'un ajustement Saoudien?" *L'Orient-Le Jour*, March 3, 2018, p. 9.
- ⁵⁰ Joseph Bahout, "Beaucoup de Bruit pour Rien," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 5, 2018.
- ⁵¹ *Ararad*, May 1, 2012, p. 1.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, September 25, 2012; *Ararad*, March 16, 2013.
- ⁵³ *Nor Or Weekly*, Los Angeles, November 19, 2015, p. 1.
- ⁵⁴ *Zartontk*, November 24, 2017; *Baikar Weekly*, November 19, 2017, p. 1.
- ⁵⁵ *Khosnag Monthly*, Beirut, January 2017, pp. 23-25.
- ⁵⁶ *Baikar*, January 29, 2017, p. 1.
- ⁵⁷ *Khosnag*, February 2018, p. 19.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, December 2017, p. 19.
- ⁵⁹ *Zartontk*, June 28, 2017.
- ⁶⁰ *Aztag*, October 18, 2017, p. 4.
- ⁶¹ *Ararad*, November 22, 2017, p. 1.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, October 21, 2017, p. 1.
- ⁶³ *Aztag*, December 9, 2017.
- ⁶⁴ *Aztag*, October 17, 2017 and January 25, 2018, p. 1.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, November 1, 2018, p. 1.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, December 7, 2017, p. 1 and March 11, 2018, p. 1.
- On February 26, 2018, at the Boustros Palace, Foreign Minister Bassil, Pakradouni and Nader Hariri examined the electoral situation and the possibility of concluding electoral alliances (*Aztag*, February 27, 2018, p. 1).

-
- ⁶⁷ *Aztag*, January 11, 2018, p. 1.
⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, November 2, 2017, p. 1.
⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, January 11, 2018, p. 1.
⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
⁷¹ *Ibid.*, February 6, 2018, p. 1.
⁷² *Ibid.*, September 9, 2017, p. 1.
⁷³ *Ararad*, February 8, 2018; *Aztag*, February 8, 2018.
⁷⁴ *Zartonk*, February 7, 2018, p. 1.
⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, February 8, 2018, p. 7.
⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, April 12, 2018, p. 2.
⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, December 4, 2017.
⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, February 16, 2018.
⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, March 10, 2018.
⁸⁰ *Aztag*, March 6, 2018, p. 1.
⁸¹ *Ararad*, December 4, 2017, p. 1.
⁸² *Ibid.*, February 17, 2018, p. 1.
⁸³ *Ibid.*, March 6, 2018, p. 1.
⁸⁴ *Aztag*, February 12, 2018.
⁸⁵ Website of the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Lebanon. (May 15, 2018).
⁸⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, February 7, 2018, p. 3.
⁸⁷ *Aztag*, March 23, 2018, p. 1.
⁸⁸ *Zartonk*, February 16, 2018; March 29, 2018, p. 1.
⁸⁹ *Aztag*, March 23, 2018, p. 1.
⁹⁰ *Zartonk*, March 29, 2018, p. 3.
⁹¹ *Ibid.*
⁹² *Aztag*, March 23, 2018, p. 1.
⁹³ *Baïkar*, April 8, 2018, p. 11.
⁹⁴ *Aztag*, March 23, 2018, p. 1.
⁹⁵ *Baïkar*, March 4, 2018, p. 12; June 17, 2018, p. 13.
⁹⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, January 27, 2018, p. 8.
⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, February 14, 2018, p. 2.
⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 20, 2018, p. 3.
⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, May 3, 2018, p. 3.
¹⁰⁰ *Zartonk*, March 26, 2018, p. 1.
¹⁰¹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, April 6, 2018, p. 3.
¹⁰² *Aztag*, April 14, 2018, p. 1.
¹⁰³ *Ararad*, March 27, 2018, p. 1.
¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, April 13, 2018, p. 1.
¹⁰⁵ *Aztag*, April 27, 2018, p. 1.
¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, March 26, p. 1.
¹⁰⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, March 10, 2018, p. 3.
¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Yorgui Teyrouz remarked on social media that the Armenian Genocide had not succeeded, that he is a living proof that the Armenian spirit continues (*The Daily Star*, April 25, 2018).

¹⁰⁹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, March 10, 2018, p. 3; *The Daily Star*, May 3, 2018.

¹¹⁰ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, March 10, 2018, p. 3.

¹¹¹ *Baïkar*, April 8, 2018; *Khosnag*, April 2018, # 4, p. 75; *Zartouk*, April 12, 2018, p. 4; *Ararad*, April 13, 2018.

¹¹² Before Hariri's support for Michel Aoun, Serge Toursarkissian had visited Aoun and later, after the latter's election, he attended the consultations for the nomination of a new PM as an independent MP and not with the Mustaqbal Current. The last time he was with the Henchag MP in an official visit was their visit to the Mufti of the Republic in November 2017, after Hariri's resignation and forced stay in Saudi Arabia.

¹¹³ *Diar Daily*, Beirut, April 4, 2018, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, April 18, 2018.

¹¹⁵ The Ramgavar Baïkar Club had held a social event under the patronage of Mr. and Mrs. Sebouh Mekhjian at Nakhil Restaurant in Dbaye on January 6, 2013. Mekhjian's presence was noted at the 95th anniversary of the Ramgavar party celebrations at the Tekeyan Center.

¹¹⁶ *Khosnag*, April 2018, p. 75.

¹¹⁶ *Aztag*, February 20, 2018, p. 1.

AnNahar wrote on February 20, 2018 that a Murr-Tashnag and Free Patriotic Current alliance was being formed in Northern Metn. Voice of Lebanon Radio Station (92.3) also said the same in its broadcast.

¹¹⁸ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, March 17, 2018, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ *Aztag*, March 17, 2018, p. 2.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, March 26, 2018, p. 1.

¹²¹ *Ararad*, March 31, 2018, p. 2.

¹²² *Hask*, March-April 2018, p. 196.

¹²³ *The Daily Star*, April 25, 2018.

¹²⁴ *Zartouk*, March 19, 2018, p. 1; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, March 19, 2018, p. 3.

¹²⁵ *Zartouk*, September 11, 2017, p. 1.

¹²⁶ *Aztag*, December 4, 2017.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, December 18, 2017.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, December 27, 2017, p. 1.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, March 23, 2018, p. 1.

¹³⁰ *Diar*, April 18, 2018, p. 5.

¹³¹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, April 6, 2018, p. 2.

¹³² *Zartouk*, April 24, 2018, Special issue, p. 20.

¹³³ *Aztag*, March 30, 2018, p. 2.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, April 3, 2018, p. 2.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, April 11, 2018, p. 5.

¹³⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, April 11, 2018.

¹³⁷ *Diar*, April 18, 2018, p. 5.

-
- ¹³⁸ Anne Marie El-Hage, "Zahlé, une Bataille Charnière qui gagne tous les jours en Fièvre", *L'Orient-Le Jour*, April 6, 2018, p. 5.
- ¹³⁹ *Aztag*, April 2, 2018.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, April 16, 2018.
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, April 19, 2018.
- ¹⁴² *Ibid.*, April 21, 2018.
- ¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, April 27, 2018, p. 2.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, May 2, 2018.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, May 5, 2018.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, April 20, and April 30, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ararad*, April 16, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁰ *Zartontk*, April 13, 2018, p. 4.
- ¹⁵¹ *Zartontk*, April 30, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁵² *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 3, 2018, p. 3.
- ¹⁵³ *Zartontk*, April 23, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Baikaar Weekly*, April 8, 2018, p. 10.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Aztag*, March 13, 2018.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Aztag*, April 20, 2018, p. 3, and March 23, 2018.
- ¹⁵⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, March 30, 2018, p. 2.
- ¹⁵⁸ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, April 28, 2018, p. 2; *Aztag*, April 30, 2018.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Aztag*, May 3, 2018, p. 3.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Zartontk*, May 5, 2018, p. 7.
- ¹⁶¹ *The Daily Star*, April 26, 2018.
- ¹⁶² *L'Orient-Le Jour*, April 21, 2018, p. 2.
- ¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, April 11, 2018, p. 2.
- ¹⁶⁴ *The Daily Star*, April 11, 2018, p. 2.
- ¹⁶⁵ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 3, 2018, p. 1. On election eve, May 5, 2018, the Horizon program of Shant Armenia TV Station in Yerevan mentioned in its news the Tashnag and Henchag alliance with Mustaqbal and the Free Patriotic Current and added "the Ramgavars have allied with the extreme rightist Lebanese Forces." Two individual candidates, Paula Yacoubian and Sebouh Mekhjian, were given particular attention.
- ¹⁶⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 7, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁶⁷ *The Daily Star*, May 7, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁶⁸ *Aztag*, May 7, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Zartontk*, May 7, 2018. The newspaper mistakenly printed May 1.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Ararad*, May 7, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁷¹ *Baikaar Weekly*, May 13, 2018, p. 1.
- ¹⁷² *Khosnag Monthly*, # 5, May 2018, p. 4.
- ¹⁷³ Roupen Avsharian lecture at the Tekeyan Center on January 24, 2018.
- ¹⁷⁴ *Aztag*, June 17, 2017, p. 1.

Hagop Pakradouni in vain asked the parliament to have the Protestant (Evangelical) seat moved to Beirut I, as it had 3900 Evangelical votes, while Beirut II had 2968 votes (*Aztag*, June 17, 2017, p. 1).

¹⁷⁵ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 11, 2018, p. 3.

¹⁷⁶ Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lebanon. (May 15, 2018).

¹⁷⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 11, 2018, p. 3 gave Alina Clonsian 123 preferential votes.

¹⁷⁸ It was generally assumed by well-informed sources that between 2000 and 3000 Lebanese Armenians from abroad voted for candidates in Beirut, Metn and Zahle, in Lebanese embassies or in Lebanon, to which they had traveled through the efforts of, essentially, the Tashnag Party.

¹⁷⁹ The above results were received from the Ramgavar electoral machine, through Dr. Avedis Dakessian. The present writer tried to secure the preferential results of the Tashnag party in Beirut, through MP Hagop Terzian and the Henchag Party results from the Henchag Executive Body member Paul Yacoubian, but could not succeed in obtaining them.

¹⁸⁰ Discussions with Mr. Paul Yacoubian and Mr. Jirayr Tanielian.

¹⁸¹ *Aztag*, October 1, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁸² *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 16, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁸³ *Aztag*, October 1, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 12, 2018, p. 3.

¹⁸⁵ Discussion with the president of the municipal council of Anjar, Mr. Vartkes Khoshian, on November 9, 2018.

¹⁸⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 11, 2018.

¹⁸⁷ Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lebanon, biographies of all candidates. (May 15, 2018).

¹⁸⁸ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 9, 2018, p. 4.

¹⁸⁹ Voice of Lebanon Radio broadcast news, June 12, 2018, 8:15 pm.; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, June 13, 2018.

¹⁹⁰ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, June 13, 2018.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, May 12, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁹² H. Pakradouni, "Bidi Sharounagenk Dzarayel Ampoghch Lipananahayoutian [We shall continue to serve all the Lebanese Armenians], *Aztag*, May 9, 2018, p. 1.

¹⁹³ *Ararad*, May 9, 2018, p. 1.

¹⁹⁴ *Zartouk*, May 9, 2018, p. 3.

¹⁹⁵ *Aztag*, May 8, 2018, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶ Barouyr Aghbashian, "Nor Khorhertarane Gerna Ellal Joghovertagan Yev Joghovertamadouyts?" (Can the new parliament be popular and people serving?), *Baïkar*, June 10, 2018, p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ *Hask*, # 5-6, May-June 2018, p. 300; *Aztag*, May 11, 2018, p. 1.

¹⁹⁸ *Aztag*, May 12, 2018, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹ *Ararad*, May 12, 2018, p. 1.

²⁰⁰ "Reception in Honor of Lebanon's newly elected MP General Jean Talouzzian", *Khosnag*, # 5, May 2018, p. 15.

²⁰¹ *Baïkar*, June 3, 2018, p. 3.

- ²⁰² "Paula Yacoubian," *Spurk*, January-December 2018, p. 16.
²⁰³ *Zartontk*, June 12, 2018, p. 1.
²⁰⁴ *Zartontk*, June 21, 2018, p. 1.
²⁰⁵ *Khosnag*, June-July 2018, p. 73; *Baika*, May 27, 2018, p. 12.
²⁰⁶ *Aztag*, October 19, 2018, p. 1; *Ararad*, October 19, 2018, p. 1; *Zartontk*, October 19, 2018, p. 1.
²⁰⁷ *Zartontk*, November 2, 2018, p. 1.
²⁰⁸ *Aztag*, February 2, 2019, p. 1.
²⁰⁹ *Aztag*, February 2, 2019, p. 1.
²⁰⁸ *Zartontk*, February 4, 2019, pp. 1-2.
²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, February 8, 2019, p. 1.

The RDCL delegation did not include Dr. Avedis Dakessian, the party candidate in the elections, as he had apparently resigned from his position as co-chairman of the RDCL and from membership in the RDCL, since his name did not appear on the new list of the RDCL published in *Zartontk* on January 29, 2019, on page 2.

**ՀԱՅՈՑ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ԼԻԲԱՆԱՆԻ ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀ ՄԻՇԷԼ ԱՌՆԻ (2016-)
 ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՇՐՋԱՆԻ ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ
 ԸՆՏՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՄ
 (Ամփոփում)**

ԶԱԽԷՆ ՄԱՐԸՐԼԵԱՆ

Նախքան 2018ի խորհրդարանական ընտրություններուն անդադառնալը, հեղինակը տոած է ընթացքը 2009ին ընտրոած խորհրդարանին պաշտօնավարութան երկարածգումին եւ 2013 ու 2014ին ծրագրոած ընտրութիւններուն, ուրոնք չկայացան: Իվերջոյ նախագահ Միշէլ Առնի ընտրութենէն ետք, գրեթէ մեծաւանեերորդ ժամուն, համեմատական դրութեամբ եւ մէկ թեկնածուի քուէարկութեան դրութեամբ ընտրական նոր օրէնքի մը շուրջ համաձայնութիւն գոյացաւ:

Ընտրական նոր օրէնքը արգելք եղաւ հայկական միասնական ցանկի մը Պէյրութի մէջ: ՀՅԴ եւ ՍԴՀԿ գործակցեցան Պէյրութի Ազատ Հոսանք-Մութաքապալ ցանկին հետ: ՌԱԿ գործակցեցաւ Լիբանանեան Ումէրու հետ Պէյրութի եւ Մեթնի մէջ: Իսկ ՀՅԴ Մեթնի մէջ գործակցեցաւ Ազատ Հոսանք եւ Ղովմի Կուսակցութեան Դաշինքին հետ:

Ընտրական նոր օրէնքին բերումով անհատ թեկնածուներ տեղ գտան քաղաքացիական ընկերութեան եւ Զախլի մէջ հակընդդէմ ցանկերու վրայ: Ընտրութեանց արդիւնքն այն եղաւ, որ ՀՅԴ ունեցաւ երեք երեսփոխաններ (Յակոբ Բագրատունի, Յակոբ Թերզեան եւ Ալեքսանտր Մաթոսեան) եւ վերակազմեց Հայկական Պլոքը, գործակցելով Ազատ Հոսանքին կազմած «Հզօր Լիբանան» խումբին հետ: Հայկական աւանդական միա երկու կուսակցութիւնները այժու չունեցան: Երեք անհատական թեկնածուներ՝ Ժան Թալուզեան (որ տաքաւ ՀԲԸՄ-ՀԵԸԻ նեցուկը), Փոյա ետգրպեան եւ Էտի Տեմիրճեան ընտրուեցան:

Նախորդ ընտրութիւններուն նման, միթինկներ եղան, բայց բոլուն վեճեր ու կծու ընտրապայքար չմղուեցաւ:

Ընտրութիւններէն ետք կառավարութեան կազմութիւնը ձգձգուեցաւ: Նոր կառավարութեան մէջ մտան Աւետիս Կիտանեան (Դաշնակ) եւ Ռիշար Գոյումճեան (Լիբանանեան Ումէր): ՌԱԿ այս վերջինին դաիւիճ ընդգրկուիլը նկատեց Լիբանանեան Ումէրու հետ իր համաձայնութեան դաիւնեպակը: