

Section I. An Introduction to the Armenian Party System

Introduction

Political parties are vital for the functioning of a healthy democratic political order. In the strictest sense this is only an assumption, albeit one that most political scientists would agree with. Larry Diamond's observation is apt: "Political parties remain important if not essential instruments for presenting political constituencies and interests, aggregating demands and preferences, recruiting and socializing new candidates for office, organizing the electoral competition for power, crafting policy alternatives, setting the policy-making agenda, forming effective governments, and integrating groups and individuals into the democratic process" (1997:xxv).

Like party politics in other postcommunist states, on the surface, Armenian party politics can be somewhat confusing, especially to the uninitiated. Hopefully this essay can clear the ground a bit. It examines party politics in Armenia and assumes, like Diamond, that the consolidation of a functional party system is crucial to Armenia's continued transition to democracy. It also assumes that the reader knows little, if anything, about Armenia politics or political parties. The essay is, by design, rather long, as it is intended to be a fairly comprehensive source of information for Armenian party politics.

A few notes about the essay are appropriate before the subject matter is addressed. First, because the essay is intended for a general, as well as a scholarly audience, citations have been kept to a minimum and are included in footnotes (rather than in text). Along these lines, I have avoided the common practice of using acronyms or abbreviations for party names, so as to avoid confusion. Second, there are few, if any, citations about the subjects of Armenian politics, history, as well as party politics more broadly.¹ In this respect it is important to note that this paper does not pretend to be an authoritative source on Armenian politics, nor is it necessary to have a great deal of knowledge about Armenian politics prior to reading it.

It also appropriate to include a word about naming conventions here. Although perhaps not quite as confusing as transliterating other languages (e.g., Russian), there are some differences in the way Armenian is translated to English. In this text I have followed what seems to be the most common, and have tried to be consistent throughout the essay in that regard.

Finally, although regional and local politics form a vital part of party politics in most countries, this level of analysis will for the most part be ignored in this essay; the assumption is that it is enough for the present study to address party politics on the national level. In addition, party politics within the self-declared Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, with whom Armenians feel an almost visceral tie, are also ignored.

The essay is divided into four parts. In section two the major political parties are presented and

¹ In the "Sources" section at the end I include some general sources on party politics which readers who are interested may consult.

profiled. Section three looks at elections and party government in Armenia throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium; section four offers some conclusions and directions for future research. Section one (this section) presents an overview of the Armenian party system and who its major players are.

As of June 1, 2002, according to the Armenian Ministry of Justice, there were 126 registered political parties in Armenia. Naturally not all of these parties are major players; in fact, the number of significant political parties in Armenia has remained fairly static (about 10-12, depending on who is counting) throughout the past decade. In this section, three indicators are introduced for measuring party significance: Age, institutionalization, and electoral relevance. Any one of these indicators alone could open the analysis up to criticism and debate; by combining the three, we end up with a fairly good picture of which parties are significant actors in Armenian party politics.

In the first part of this section the history and formation of Armenian political parties is examined, in both the pre- and post-Soviet eras; this gets to the question of age. The section also serves as an introduction to the main Armenian political parties. The second part looks at the organization and institutionalization of Armenian political parties, trying to discern which of the dozens are in fact viable and vibrant organizations. Following this is a discussion of the electoral relevance of Armenian political parties and the ideological contours of the party system is presented. It is hoped that what results from this section is a good overview of the party system in Armenia.

History and Formation of Armenian Political Parties

It is virtually impossible to discuss Armenian political parties without an understanding of Armenia's independence movements and more generally, nationalism; this is true whether one looks at the first Armenian parties or the present-day party system. We can group political parties in Armenia according to three distinct periods in which they were formed. Specifically, we can identify "Traditional/Historic" parties, "Independence and Founding Elections" parties, and "Third Generation" parties. Each of these periods is discussed briefly below.

Traditional/Historic Parties. Throughout much of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century the territory that is now Armenia was controlled by the Russian and Ottoman empires. The Armenian nation, as a collective sharing a variety of characteristics, dates to well before the birth of Christ. By 302 the country had adopted Christianity as the official state religion (the first people to do so), and by the early fifth century (A.D.) Saint Mesrop (known today as Mashtots) had devised an alphabet for the Armenian language.² The point is that the Armenian people have a rich and well-established understanding of what it means to be an Armenian. Until fairly recently however, that understanding was not necessarily fully self-conscious in the sense that Armenians saw themselves as a nation; moreover, throughout history, the territory (as such) of Armenia was neither well established nor always under Armenian control.

The drive to establish an independent Armenia began in the late nineteenth century. Under the

² Much of the material in this section is from "History of Armenia" (1994).

influence of both Western and Russian ideas, Armenian leaders began lobbying European leaders for assistance in their drive for reform as early as 1878 at the Congress of Berlin. Initially the movement was tied fairly closely to liberal democratic ideas as well as a desire for some degree of autonomy. By the mid-1880s, these moderate national intellectuals were replaced by more radical groups lobbying for independence. It was in this context that the first Armenian political parties emerged, well before the founding of the first Armenian Republic.

The first Armenian political party, the Armenian Party, was founded by students in 1885 in the city of Van under the leadership of Megerdich Portukalian, who published a newspaper titled Armenia in Marseilles. This party, the predecessor of the Liberal Democratic (“Ramkavar Azatakan”) Party of Armenia,³ was active in the diasporas of Egypt, Persia and the United States throughout the subsequent Soviet era, and was re-established in 1990.⁴ The second party, founded in Geneva in 1887 under the leadership of Nazarbekian, Khan-Azad, and Sabah-Gul,⁵ was also started by university students, was known as the Social Democratic (“Hnchak”) Party. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (also known as Dashnaktsutiun, or “Dashnak”), was founded in 1890 under the leadership of Christapor Mikaelian, Simon Zavarian, and Stepan Zorian,⁶ in Tbilisi (Georgia) as a confederation of various action groups fighting for Armenian liberation.

Unlike the Liberal Democratic Party, whose ideas were somewhat less radical, the goal of the Social Democratic Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation was nothing short of creating an independent Armenian state. In addition to political means, the latter was also willing to resort to armed struggle to achieve their ends. Another difference between the Liberal Democratic Party, and the Social Democratic Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, was the embrace of socialism, as opposed to liberal democracy, by the latter two. Like the Liberal Democratic Party, both parties were, and continue to be, active in the diaspora.

The increasingly Western orientation of the Armenian elite led, in 1895, to the massacre of some 300,000 Armenians by the Ottoman government; similar pogroms were conducted in Russia throughout the next dozen years or so. Then, in 1908, a group known as the Young Turks staged a successful revolution within the Ottoman Empire; this group, initially promising better treatment of ethnic minorities, was supported Armenians. Shortly after the revolution, however, the Young Turks began planning the complete elimination of the Ottoman Armenian population. In the spring of 1915, “the Ottoman government ordered large-scale roundups, deportations, and systematic torture and murder” of what is variously estimated to be between 600,000 and 2 million Armenians - of a population that at the

³ Actually, the Armenian Party merged with the Liberal Democratic Party in 1908; see Armenian Youth Federation, 1998.

⁴ As noted, a more detailed discussion of this and other parties is presented in the second section of this essay.

⁵ Armenian Youth Federation, 1998.

⁶ *ibid.*

time numbered roughly 3 million.⁷ In short, the population was devastated. The impact of the genocide (capitalized as “Genocide” in most Armenian discourse) on contemporary Armenian politics and political rhetoric is difficult to overestimate.

The Armenian part of the Ottoman Empire was occupied by the Russian army from about 1915 until 1917, when, as the result of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, troops were withdrawn. A short-lived Transcaucasian federation with Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan was followed by the declaration of an independent Armenia in May of 1918. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation was instrumental in the push for independence and claimed with posts of Prime Minister and foreign ministers in the new government. Independence was, however, not to last. Under pressure from Turkey in the West and the Russian Red Army in the north, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation entered into a coalition with, and virtually ceded power to, the Armenian Communist Party in 1920.

The Armenian Communist Party is the anomaly in this group of traditional/historic parties. Founded in 1920, unlike the other three parties in this group, the party did not share the goal of Armenian independence, but rather was internationalist in its orientation. More specifically, it was amenable to the incorporation of independent Armenian Republic into the Soviet Union. This led, in 1922, to the formation of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (TSFSR) which combined the territories of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. The TSFSR lasted until 1936, when it was dissolved and each of its constituent units given republic status.

Independence and Founding Elections Parties. Open political party activity was banned throughout the Soviet period. This said, all of the traditional/historic parties (except, of course, the Communist Party, which was in power throughout the period) continued their activities during this time, primarily in the diaspora. The second phase of political party formation in Armenia lasted from the late 1980s until independence from Soviet rule in late 1991. The political nucleus of the Armenian independence movement at that time was the Karabakh Committee, formed to contest control of the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Since the Karabakh Committee spawned a number of political parties, it can be thought of as the godfather of party politics in this period. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine it in some detail.

In 1924 the Soviet government declared Nagorno-Karabakh, which was at the time overwhelmingly populated by ethnic Armenians (200,000, or better than 90 percent of the total population), an autonomous region under the control of Azerbaijan (which surrounds the territory). By the late 1980s the percentage of Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh had declined considerably (to roughly 76 percent), and this fact, coupled with the Azerbaijan government’s restrictive language and culture policies in the region, led to a fear that the region’s Armenian heritage would be irreparably eroded or lost. Since the 1960s there had been conflict between Karabakh Armenians and Azerbaijanis, with Armenian leaders looking to Moscow to intervene in the situation.

Mikhail Gorbachev’s policy of openness (*glasnost*) in the late 1980s opened the way for new

⁷ Ibid. (*The Young Turks*).

protest. The first protests of this period by Soviet Armenian intelligentsia trace back to 1987, when the Ecology movement was established, comprised of journalists, writers, painters.⁸ But, as in many of the former Soviet Republics, protest in Armenia was mainly oriented around national issues, specifically, the Karabakh situation.⁹ A number of new political unions and public organizations emerged at this time, many previously having being banned, persecuted, and driven underground. These included the groups Struggle for the Existence, Mashtots, Hay Dat, Gtutyun, The Federation of Armenian students, and others - better than fifty in all.¹⁰ The first new political party to be formed in this period was the Union of Self-Determination under the leadership of Soviet dissident Paruyr Hairikian, which demanded immediate referenda for Armenian independence and secession from the Soviet Union.¹¹

On February 20, 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh Regional Council adopted a resolution which appealed to Moscow to include Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia. In support of this appeal, mass demonstrations took place in Yerevan; shortly afterwards, the first meetings in Yerevan occurred which called for the creation of Karabakh movement committees in all villages and enterprises. Three days of ethnic cleansing of the Armenian population in the industrial town of Sumgait, Azerbaijan, at the end of February and beginning of March resulted in the aggravation of public opinion about the Karabakh issue and increased tension in relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In March of 1988 the Karabakh Committee was officially born.¹² The Committee saw as its task the dissemination of information to the outside world concerning the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, warning of the dangers of Pan-Turkism (understood more generally as including threats from Azerbaijan) and Pan-Islamism. Its first leaders included Igor Muradian and Vache Sarukhanian; it also created a fifty-member Council of Elders headed by the President of Armenian Academy of Sciences, Viktor Hambartsumian.

The initial Karabakh Committee was composed of famous Armenian intellectuals which had, in general, good relations with Moscow, but was unable to affect any substantive change. Later in 1988 a group of younger intellectuals (the so called “long-lasting Karabakh Committee”) assumed leadership of the Committee. These leaders, unknown to the public at that time, included Levon Ter-Petrossian (historian and philologist), Vazgen Manukian and Babken Ararktsian (mathematics professors from Yerevan State University), Hambardsum Galstian (ethnic anthropologist), Rafael Khazarian (physicist), Armenian Comsomol leader Ashot Manucharian, novelist Vano Siradegian, and others. This group took up the political and organizational leadership of the movement; most subsequently became leading figures in Armenian party politics.

An earthquake in northern Armenia in December of 1988 took 25,000 lives. While the world

⁸ Sargsyan, 2001.

⁹ This section draws heavily on the contribution of Vahe Isahakian.

¹⁰ Tadevosyan, 1998.

¹¹ Because of this, Gorbachev exiled him to Ethiopia; only after he became a deputy of the Supreme Council of Armenia in 1990 was he allowed to return to Armenia.

¹² Sargsyan, 2001.

focused on this tragedy, Communist authorities in Moscow and Yerevan arrested much of the Karabakh Committee leadership and interned them in Moscow jails;¹³ under domestic and international pressure the arrested members were released in June of 1989.¹⁴ Shortly afterwards the Committee came to the conclusion that it should take on the responsibility of pressing for Armenian independence; it continued its activity and constituted the core of what was to become the leading force in Armenian democratic politics for at least eight years, the Armenian National Movement (also known as the Armenian Pan-National Movement). The Armenian National Movement was originally an umbrella organization conceived of as supra-party body of sorts; its strategy was to be as inclusive as possible. After the May 20, 1990, elections to the Supreme Council of Armenia the movement transformed itself into a political party. Personal as well as ideological differences eventually led to various groups splintering off of the Armenian National Movement to form other parties.¹⁵

This period of party formation and activity was characterized by the emergence of several political parties, many of which are still significant in Armenian politics. Many, like the Armenian National Movement, started as political movements, and include the Union of Constitutional Rights, founded by Hrant Khachatrian (1989), the Republican Party of Armenia, founded by Ashot Navasardian (1990), Mission and Free Armenia Mission (1990), the National Democratic Union and the Democratic Party of Armenia (1991), as well as others. As in the earlier period, party formation centered largely, although not exclusively, independence and/or nationalism, and was facilitated by the new openness of Gorbachev's reforms. The parties in this group were all created prior to or around the period of what may be referred to a founding elections in Armenia, or those elections which framed independence and the formation of the new Armenian Republic on September 23, 1991.

Third Generation Parties. The parties in the second phase of party formation emerged under conditions of intense, and in some senses, extraordinary political activity. These parties, along with the legalized and revitalized traditional/historic parties, contested the parliamentary elections of 1990 and the presidential elections of 1991. Subsequent to these elections a new generation of parties emerged to enter the political fray. This phase of party formation follows the pattern of other post-communist states, almost all of which have seen a proliferation of political party formation shortly after independence. Since the primary defining characteristic of parties that emerged in this period is the relative ease with which they form, little will be said here about them, other than to note that some of these parties would attain some significance, while others, formed immediately for a particular election, would fade into obscurity shortly afterwards. Table 1-1, below, summarizes the three phases of party formation in Armenia.

¹³ Jailed were Babken Araktsian, Hambartsum Galstian, Samvel Gavorkian, Rafael Ghazarian, Samson Ghazarian, Alexan Hakopian, Ashot Manucharian, Vazgen Manukian, Vano Siradeghian, Levon Ter-Petrosian, and David Varanian (Dudwick, 1997a:499, note 100).

¹⁴ About these events, see Hambardzum Galstyan's *The Convicted*.

¹⁵ See Dudwick, 1997.

Table 1-1. The Formation of Political Parties in Armenia

<i>Party Name: English (Armenian)</i>	<i>Founded</i>
Traditional/Historic Parties	
Liberal Democratic “Ramkavar Azatakan” Party of Armenia (Hayastani Ramkavar Azatakan Kusaktsutiun)	1885
Social Democratic “Hnchakian” Party (Sotsial Demokratalkan Hnchakian Kusaktutiun)	1887
Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Hay Heghaphokhakan Dahsnaktsutiun)	1890
Communist Party of Armenia (Hayastani Komunistakan Kusaktsutyun)	1920
Independence and Founding Elections Parties	
Union of Self-determination (Inqnoroshum Miavorum)	1987
Armenian National (Pan-National) Movement (Haiots Hamazgain Sharzhum)	1989
Union of Constitutional Rights (Sahmanadrakan Iravunqi Miutiun)	1989
Republican Party of Armenia (Hayastani Hanrapetakan Kusaktsutyun)	1990
Mission (Araqelutiun)	1990
Free Armenia “Hayk” Mission (Azat Hayq Arakelutyun)	1990
Democratic Party of Armenia (Haiastani Demokratakan Kusaktutiun)	1991
National Democratic Union (Azgayin Zhoghovrdavaran Miutyun)	1991
Third Generation Parties	
National State (Azgain Petutiun)	1993
Intellectual Armenia (Mtavorakan Hayastan)	1994
Union of Intellectuals (Mtavorakanneri Miutsiun)*	1994
Women of the Armenian Land (Anayk Hayots Ashkhari)	1994
Shamiram	1995
Rule of Law (Country of Law) (Orinants Erkir)	1998
United Progressive Communist Party of Armenia (Hayastani Arajadimakan Miatsial Komunistakan Kusaktsutiun)	1998
People’s (Popular) Party of Armenia (Hayastani Zhoghovrdakan Kusaktsutyun)	1998
Democratic Homeland (Motherland) (Zhoghovrdavaran Hayreniq)	1998
Motherland-Diaspora Union (Hayreniq- Spiorq Miutiun)	1999
Powerful Motherland (Fatherland) (Hzor Hayrenik)	1999
Dignified (Worthy) Future (Arzhanapative Apaga)	1999

* First founded as a political organization in 1992.

The Institutionalization of Armenian Political Parties

Most of Armenian many political parties are still to a large degree disconnected from a shifting electoral base, are still rather ideologically amorphous, and, relatively underdeveloped organizations. They are, in other words, primarily personalistic organizations.¹⁶ The concept of party institutionalization is designed to capture the idea that a political party should be more than simply an extension of the individual who founds it. This is important simply because most of our understanding about how political parties contribute to the functioning of democracy assumes that parties have a certain independence, consistency, and continuity, both of which are less likely if the party is simply a vehicle for a charismatic leader.

There are a variety of measures one can employ to illustrate aspects of party institutionalization, but for the purpose of presenting an overview of the organizational landscape, we will look at mainly at party membership, scope of the organization, as well as territorial penetration.¹⁷ Number of members is,

¹⁶ See Dudwick, 1997.

¹⁷ The age of a party, at least partly a reflection of its adaptability, is also germane to a discussion of

(continued...)

at best, a rough measure of the extent of party institutionalization, since many parties do not actively recruit members; party membership in Armenia as a whole is under ten percent of the entire population.¹⁸ Moreover, party membership in most countries has been steadily declining in the past few decades. This said, all other things being equal, the more members that a political party can claim, the greater the chance is that the ideas which the party espouses have found a certain resonance among the citizenry. It must be also be noted however that membership figures are typically supplied by the parties themselves, and there is every incentive for parties to inflate these numbers; therefore, we should view these figures with some caution.

Scope of party organization is measured by the number of offices the party maintains. Here again, unless we were talking about an extremely well-funded individual, the greater the numbers of offices a party maintained, the more it would likely represent the views of a decent number of citizens. Territorial penetration is measured by looking at the number of *marzes* (regions) the party has a presence in, as well as whether they are represented in regional or local government structures. This, like the previous, also goes some way toward reflecting broad-based support and reach. Table 1-2, below, presents data on the institutionalization and organization of the main political parties in Armenia.

¹⁷ (...continued)

institutionalization; for measures of this, see the previous section, as well as the following section on electoral relevance.

¹⁸ Freedom House (1998:65).

Table 1-2. Institutionalization and Organization of Political Parties in Armenia^a

<i>Party Name</i>	<i>Number of Members</i>	<i>Number of Offices</i>	<i>Marze Organizations</i>	<i>Regional / Local?</i>
Armenian National Movement	8,500	30	10 ^b	Yes
Armenian Revolutionary Federation	5,000	74 ^c	10 (and Yerevan)	Yes
Communist Party of Armenia	53,000	35	10 (and Yerevan)	Yes
Democratic Homeland	1,762	N/A	10 (and Yerevan)	Yes
Democratic Party of Armenia	2,851	28	10 (and Yerevan)	No
Free Armenia Mission	N/A	N/A	10 (and Yerevan)	No
Freedom	2,000	20	5 (and Yerevan)	No
Intellectual Armenia	N/A	1	6 (and Yerevan)	Yes
Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia	1,128	5	10 (and Yerevan)	No
Motherland-Diaspora Union	1,200	15	4 (and Yerevan)	No
National Democratic Union	3,100	36	10 (and Yerevan)	No
National State	376	2	4 (and Yerevan)	No
People's Party	30,000	50	10 (and Yerevan)	No
Republican Party of Armenia	7,000	68	10 (and Yerevan)	Yes
Rule of Law Country	30,000	160	10 (and Yerevan)	No
Social Democratic Party	3,000	3	5 (and Yerevan)	No
Union of Constitutional Rights	820	10	8 (and Yerevan)	No
Union of Intellectuals	650	11	10 (and Yerevan)	No
Union of Self-determination	9,236	42	10 (and Yerevan)	No
United Progressive Communist Party of Armenia	3,000	24	9 (and Yerevan)	No
Women of the Armenian Land	375	1‡	3 (and Yerevan)	No

^a Most information as of 1999, from "Political Parties of Armenia" (1999).

^b All of these parties also have separate offices in the capital of Yerevan.

^c Also has offices in the diaspora.

A few things stand out with respect to party membership. First, the Communist Party of Armenia has, by far, the largest number of official members. This follows the pattern of mass-based communist parties in most other countries; in this sense they enjoy a clear advantage. Second, recalling that most of this information comes from the parties themselves, it is a bit hard to believe that both the People's Party and Rule of Law Country can claim 30,000 members, especially considering that these data were collected in 1999 and both parties were formed in 1998. Considering that no other party besides the Communist party of Armenia can claim even 10,000 members, this figure likely reflects a desire to appear to enjoy broad-

based popular support. The closest contenders after these three parties are, without exception, the older parties (the Armenian National Movement, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Republican Party of Armenia, the Union of Self-Determination, and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the National Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party). This makes fact makes the membership claims of the People's Party and Rule of Law Country more dubious, at least on the face of it.

We can simplify our picture of scope and penetration by specifying the following. Looking at the table we see that 10 of these parties have greater than 20 offices (remember, these are only the major parties); 13 have a presence in all 10 *marzes* as well as Yerevan; and, only six were, in 1999, represented in regional or local government. Only four parties satisfy all three of these conditions (the Armenian National Movement, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Communist Party of Armenia, and the Republican Party of Armenia); another six meet two of these conditions. In almost all cases those parties which claim larger memberships also have a wider organizational scope and deeper territorial penetration. Thus, while inexact, the table provides us with a rough measure of which parties represent more than just the interests of its leaders and his (or her) close followers.

Electoral Relevance of Armenian Political Parties

The age of a political party and its institutionalization are important when discussing party significance, but it is electoral performance that is, in the end, vital. There were a total of six multi-party, competitive elections in Armenia between 1990 and 1999. The first, an election to the still-Soviet Supreme Council (parliament), was in May of 1990; closely following this, and shortly after Armenian independence, was the presidential election of October 1991. The first parliamentary elections of independent Armenia were held (along with a referendum on a new constitution) in July of 1995; four years later, new parliamentary elections were held in May of 1999. Finally, presidential elections were held in September of 1996, and again, after President Levon Ter-Petrossian's resignation, in March of 1998.

Table 1-3 (below) presents an overview of the number of elections in which a political party is deemed as having garnered a significant share of the vote. With only two exceptions, parties were not included in the table if they were only electorally relevant in one election; the exceptions, Rule of Law Country (1999) and Shamiram (1995) garnered five percent of the vote in a parliamentary election. A "significant share" of the vote is defined as follows:

- * 1990: The party received three percent (roughly eight) of the seats in parliament, where seats were awarded by single-member district/plurality winner rules;¹⁹
- * 1991: The party's presidential candidate received four percent of total vote;
- * 1995 & 1999: The party received five percent of the party list vote (the minimum for a party to gain representation in parliament);
- * 1996 & 1998: The party's presidential candidate received five percent of the first-round vote.²⁰

¹⁹ Sometimes referred to in the literature as "first-past-the-post," or "winner takes all."

²⁰ Parties are counted as significant in an election if they met the criteria as a member of an electoral bloc.

As a final note, it should be mentioned that a majority of the seats in the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections were awarded on the basis of single-member district, plurality winner rules; the majority of these seats were won by independent candidates, who joined parliamentary factions after the elections.²¹

Table 1-3. Political Parties in Armenia: Electoral Relevance

<i>Party Name</i>	<i>Number of Elections in Which Party Was Relevant (Years)</i>
Armenian National Movement	4 (1990, 1991, 1995 ^b , 1996)
Armenian Revolutionary Federation ^a	5 (1990, 1991, 1996 ^c , 1998 ^d , 1999)
Christian Democratic Union	2 (1995 ^b , 1996 ^b)
Communist Party of Armenia	4 (1995, 1996, 1998, 1999)
Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia	2 (1990, 1991)
National Democratic Union	5 (1990, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999)
People's Party	2 (1998, 1999 ^e)
Republican Party of Armenia	3 (1995 ^b , 1996 ^b , 1999 ^f)
Rule of Law Country	1 (1999)
Shamiram	1 (1995)
Scientific Industrial and Civic Union	2 (1996 ^c , 1998 ^d , 1999 ^e)
Social Democratic Party	3 (1995 ^b , 1996 ^b , 1998 ^d)
Union of Intellectuals	2 (1995 ^b , 1996 ^b)
Union of Self-determination	4 (1991, 1995, 1996 ^c , 1998)

a The Armenian Revolutionary Federation was banned from taking part in the 1995 parliamentary elections.

b 1995 and 1996, as part of the Armenian National Movement-led Republic bloc.

c As part of united opposition (National Alliance) backing National Democratic Union candidate Vazgen Manukian.

d As part of Unity and Justice bloc, which backed the candidacy of Robert Kocharian.

e As part of the Law and Unity (A.K.A., Right and Accord) electoral bloc.

f As part of the Unity electoral bloc.

Several parties, as seen in the table, have been significant players in almost all elections. The Communist Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation have done well in four or five elections, respectively, and, considering that the Communists did not participate in the 1990 (formally) and 1991 election (in protest, or so it was claimed) and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation were banned in 1995, one would expect them to have done reasonably well in those elections as well. The National Democratic Union has also been a major electoral presence throughout, placing well in five elections. The

²¹ This is dealt with in more detail in the section on elections.

Armenian National Movement has done well in four elections, having controlled government for the first seven years of independence. The Social Democratic Party enjoys a reasonable amount of support, though they are, in the end, a very minor player at best. The People's and Republican parties have seen a surge in support in the latest election (as partners in the governing Unity bloc which won in the 1999 parliamentary elections), and will also likely continue to be significant.

Although it is premature to draw any conclusions, what at first may seem to be a confusing picture of party politics in Armenia is actually far less so in reality. Although there are dozens of registered political parties, few are actually significant political actors. The fact that the electorally significant parties are those who also enjoy a greater degree of institutionalization and are familiar names by virtue of their age and history bodes well for the consolidation of the party system. The list of these parties includes, at minimum, the Armenian National Movement, the Communist Party of Armenia, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Union of Self-Determination, and the National Democratic Union; the Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia, and the Social Democratic Party, because of their status as traditional parties who carried on their activities in the diaspora throughout the period of Soviet rule; and, the People's Party, the Republican Party of Armenia, by virtue of their current position in government. In the next section, each of these parties (and a few others) will be examined in greater depth.

Section II. Armenian Political Parties: Profiles

Introduction

In this section the history, leadership, social base of support, organization, and electoral success of the major political parties of Armenia are examined in more detail. Some of the information presented in this section has already been introduced in the previous section, but is presented again here in order to round out the picture of individual parties. Unfortunately, it must be noted that because of data collection limitations, coverage of all of the parties presented in this section is not equal.

The parties are presented according to their ideological leanings, which, although imprecise, allows us to gain an initial understanding of some of the differences that exist between party programs. In fact, in terms of ideology and party programs, there is relatively little to distinguish Armenian political parties. Most, for example, support the transition to a market economy, normalizing relations with Turkey, continued support for Nagorno-Karabakh, and the “special relationship” status of relations with Russia.¹ Generally speaking Armenian parties attempt to present themselves as representing the entire nation rather than any particular constituency. As mentioned in the previous section, issues revolving around national identity and statehood dominate the political landscape in Armenia; these include the question of allowing members of the diaspora to have dual citizenship, what to do about impelling Turkey to admit to the 1915 genocide, and the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

In fact, one analyst has suggested that the real political cleavage in Armenia, at least since 1998, is one between the “nationalists” and the “pacifists.”² The former see every political issue through the lens of national self-interest; in economic terms, this means greater support for state intervention in critical areas of the economy; it is a generally anti-Western and pro-Russian orientation, this out of a sense of pragmatism more than anything else. While national issues form the core of their consensus, it is Nagorno-Karabakh that is the issue around which they rally, since many are veterans of the war. It is the “nationalists” who were responsible for removing (legally) President Levon Ter-Petrossian from power in 1998. The “pacifists,” on the other hand, see all of the national issues as important, but adopt a more conciliatory stance on them; they might, for example, be willing to abandon the defense of Nagorno-Karabakh if it continued to prove as costly as it has in terms of relations with their neighbors (Azerbaijan and Turkey) and the West. They, as a rule, are more concerned with bringing Armenia and themselves into the modern, Western world, which of course includes a market economy.

This division of Armenian politics into two separate and easily understood categories oversimplifies the situation, but in the end, it remains the case that “national” issues seems to be an overwhelmingly dominant force in Armenian politics. Put a different way, compared with other countries’

¹ This was true at least until 1998 (Dudwick, 1997:85), but has changed somewhat since.

² See Ter-Gabrielian, 1998.

political parties, all Armenian political parties are very nationalistically oriented; this throws a monkey-wrench into the works, so to speak, since in most countries strong nationalism is associated with parties of the right. Having said this, we can proceed place Armenian political parties along the same ideological spectrum used to classify parties in other political systems. More specifically, parties of the far left, meaning communist parties, will be presented first, followed by social democratic parties; following this, the discussion will turn to centrist parties of the left and the right (in that order); finally, conservative and extreme right parties will be introduced and examined.

Far-left Parties: The Communist Party of Armenia

If one discounts the fact that in 1991 the party ceased to function (formally resuming operations again in 1994), the Communist Party of Armenia is one of the oldest parties in Armenia.³ The party's origins date back to the late nineteenth century, when groups were organized and formed to study Marxism in Stepanakert and Shushi (in 1889 and 1895, respectively) in Nagorno-Karabakh. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, various cells were formed in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and in the summer of 1920, the Communist Party of Armenia was formed.⁴ It was this first incarnation that the Communist Party of Armenia that was in power from 1920 until the first multiparty elections to the Supreme Council in May of 1990.

Although the party declared these elections fraudulent, they did well, at least partly because competition in the elections was severely restricted. In addition, the party's relatively unpopular first secretary, Suren Harutiunian, had resigned in April, after having served a little less than two years. However, since many party members supported Levon Ter-Petrossian of the Armenian National Movement for the presidency of the Council (and thus, in effect, the Republic) rather than the new party secretary, the party was officially in opposition when Ter-Petrossian assumed that post in August 1990. Armenian independence was declared on September 21, 1991, and in early October (after the 26th Party Congress), the Communist Party of Armenia ceased to function. Thus, they did not participate in the October 1991 presidential elections. The party was re-created (formally at their 31st Party Congress) in August of 1994, under the leadership of Sergey Badalian, who served as Chairperson until his recent death. The party is now headed by Vladmimir Darbinian.

The Communist Party of Armenia is organized according to the traditional model of communist party organization, meaning that it is rather hierarchical; party congresses officially govern the party, while a Central Committee takes care of actual day-to-day party business. At present the party has 50 regional committees in both urban and rural areas, and claims roughly 50,000 members. In this respect the party enjoys several advantages. First, the communist model of party organization is mass-oriented and generally highly disciplined and organized; second, the party inherited a pre-existing organizational

³ This section draws heavily on contributions by Nairah Tonoyan, and Gevorkian, 2002.

⁴ Some of the more prominent leaders involved in the founding of the party included Stepan Shahumian, Bogdan Knuniants, Alexander Miasnikian, Stepan Alaverdian, Sargis Kasian, Askanar Mravian, and Arshavir Melikian.

base from the previous regime; finally, in their attempts to recreate and rebuild, the party was able to draw on its name recognition and a certain nostalgia among the populace for better times past, admittedly a double-edged sword, but one that is not without its benefits. The party publishes two newspapers, each of which has a circulation of about 2,000 copies.

Although the party has softened its hard-line rhetoric somewhat, especially with its acceptance of a mixed economy, it basically remains a traditional communist party with respect to its ideology and program. For example, it opposed the mass privatization of industry, maintaining that heavy industries, chemical industries, telecommunications, and electricity are of sufficient strategic importance to warrant state ownership. It take a similar position with respect to the ownership and control of certain commodities, such as fuel, wheat, alcohol, cigarettes, and coffee. It favors Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination, being critical of the international community's efforts to resolve the issue. The party also favors a constitutional division of power in which the president would be chosen by the parliament and subservient to it.

As in most other post-communist countries, the party's main base of social support comes from "poor intelligentsia, unemployed people, pensioners, and people living in villages," in other words, those who "lived well during communist times [and] who are now suffering."⁵ The party enjoys a modicum of success at the polls, having garnered twelve percent of the party list vote in both the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections,⁶ while the party's presidential candidate in both 1996 and 1998, Sergey Badalian, received seven and eleven percent of the vote, respectively. The party's parliamentary faction, as of August 2001, claimed eight members.⁷

The Communist Party of Armenia, like other unreformed communist parties in the world, probably has two options for its long-term future: Either adapt further to the realities of a free market democracy, or accept the fact that their support base will continue to dwindle as it, to put it plainly, dies off. The party is also beset with some factionalism, which has caused a few groups to splinter off and form new parties in the past few years (e.g., Vazgen Safarian's United Progressive Communist Party, formed in 1998), each, of course, claiming to represent the true faith.

Social-democratic Parties: The Armenian Revolutionary Federation

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, also known as Dashnaktsutun (or "Dashnaks"), was founded in

⁵ Gevorkian, 2002.

⁶ According to electoral rules for party list voting in both 1995 and 1999, a party needed five percent of the vote to win seats in the National Assembly.

⁷ Data throughout this section concerning faction membership, as of August, 2001, are from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) *Caucasus Report*, August 13, 2001; a summary of these data are presented in Section Three.

1890 by Christapor Mikaelian, Rostom Zorian and Simon Zavarian in Tbilisi.⁸ The party started out as a confederation of various action groups using all available means (including armed struggle) in their struggle for Armenian national liberation from the Ottoman Empire. The group has from the very beginning embraced the socialist ideology along with its vision of an independent Armenia, and it was with this orientation that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation participated in various social movements active in Transcaucasia (where a part of Armenian was situated) at the beginning of the twentieth century and made alliances with various groups in other countries.

It was the Armenian Revolutionary Federation that led the effort which established the first Armenian Republic in 1918; they also concluded the power-sharing agreement with the Communist Party which led in time led to the party being banned and its leadership exiled in 1920. Active in the diaspora (United States, Canada, Lebanon, Israel, Syria, Greece, Argentina, Australia, France, and more) throughout the Soviet period, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation again took up the cause of Armenian independence in fighting Soviet rule. In addition, the party (along with the other diaspora parties, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party) played an active role in organizing a social and cultural framework aimed at preserving Armenian identity. At the end of the 1980s the party concentrated on the organization of self-defense structures in Nagorno-Karabakh and officially returned to Armenia in 1990.

Like the Communist Party of Armenia, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation is a mass-based organization. It is a member of the Socialist International, and so has various ties with other international organizations. Internally, it is decentralized, with elective legislative assemblies and executive bodies that funnel power upwards from the base to the summit. Its present chairperson is Hrant Markerian. The party has organizations in all ten marzes of Armenia and Yerevan and has seventy-four offices, and claims roughly 6,000 members in Armenia.⁹ The party has a well-organized network of cells in practically all countries where there is a significant Armenian population. Through various organizations and associations (the Hamazkayin Cultural Association, the Armenian Relief Organization, the Armenian General Union of Athletics and Sports Homenetmen), the party coordinates and directs a variety of political and cultural activities of Armenians in the diaspora.

Sources of funding for the Armenian Revolutionary Federation within Armenia include membership fees and other donations. In the diaspora, support comes from a number of well-educated and wealthy individuals. The party's social base of support within Armenia is varied. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation publishes an official party organ as well as a newspaper in Armenia, and maintains its own World Wide Web site (<http://www.arf.am>).

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation did reasonably well in the parliamentary elections of 1990, capturing 17 of the available 260 seats; in 1991 the party's presidential candidate (Sos Sarkissian) polled a little more than four percent of the vote (which placed him third). On December 28, 1994, the

⁸ This section draws mainly on a contribution by Linda Aghabegian.

⁹ 10,000 if one includes members in the diaspora.

activities of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation were “temporarily suspended” by the President Ter-Petrosian, who accused the party of involvement of criminal activities. It was widely believed that the move was made to pre-empt an expected strong showing by the party in the parliamentary elections in the spring. The party, predictably, categorically denied the charges, but they were banned from public life nonetheless; they did not participate in the 1995 parliamentary and 1996 presidential elections (however, the party endorsed the candidacy of Vazgen Manukian of the National Democratic Union).

In February of 1998, less than a week after the resignation of Ter-Petrosian, the Justice Ministry, at the behest of President Kocharian, lifted its ban on the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and released prominent party member Hrant Markerian. The party reciprocated by backing Robert Kocharian’s candidacy in the presidential election shortly thereafter. Following Kocharian’s election, two members of the party (Levon Mkrtchian and Roland Sharoian) were appointed to Prime Minister Armen Darpinian’s cabinet, and Vahan Hovhanissian was appointed to the post of Advisor to the President. In 1999 the party received almost eight percent of the party list vote, and as of August, 2001, has eight deputies in parliament. The party currently has two ministries in the cabinet, Minister of Education and Science (Levon Mkertchian) and Minister of Urban Planing (Davit Lokian).

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation may not be the most dominant actor in Armenian politics, but they have demonstrated an institutional continuity that makes them a powerful force to ignore. Their status as a political party, as opposed to a revolutionary group, is still not clear; their involvement in a few high-profile murders in the 1990s is still a question mark. And, since 1998, it has moved from opposition status to that of supporters of the current government, which bodes well for the party, at least in the short run.

Social-democratic Parties: The Social Democratic “Hnchakian” Party

The Social Democratic (“Hnchakian,” or “bell” in English, denoting “awakening, enlightenment and freedom”) Party was founded by a group of university students in 1887 who wanted to awaken national and social-democratic ideas in Armenians of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰ It was, in short, a revolutionary organization whose immediate objective was the political and national independence of Turkish Armenia. With the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Liberal Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party is known as one of the “diaspora” parties, meaning that throughout the period of Soviet rule, they operated mainly abroad. When the country gained its independence in 1991, the party resumed operations in Armenia.

The Social Democratic Party has organizations in five of the ten marzes in Armenia, as well as in Yerevan; it claims to have 3,000 members. The current chairperson is George Hakobian, elected in 1999. The party does not publish a newspaper. It did not gain any seats in the 1990 parliamentary elections, and did not field a candidate in the 1991 presidential elections. As a minor partner in the Armenian National

¹⁰ Founding members included Roupen Khanazad, Boghos Afrigian, Avedis Nazarpegian, Maro Nazarpegian (Vartanian), Manuel Manuelian, Kevork Gharachian and Kapriel Gafian. This section relies on information from the party’s web site (<http://www.hunchak.org.au/>) and from “Political Parties of Armenia,” 1999.

Movement-led Republic bloc, it won two seats in the 1995 parliamentary elections. As part of the same electoral coalition, the party backed the candidacy of Levon Ter-Petrossian in 1996, while in 1998 they backed Robert Kocharian. The Social Democratic Party has no representation in national or regional government to speak of.

Were it not for their prominence in the diaspora and their institutional continuity, one would be hard-pressed to make a claim that the Social Democratic Party was a significant political party in Armenia. That said, it is unlikely that a party with such a long history will disappear from the scene anytime soon.

Social-democratic Parties: People's Party

The People's Party (A.K.A. Popular Party of Armenia) was established in May of 1998, officially founded by Karen Demirchian; in actuality, the party was formed just prior to the 1998 presidential elections.¹¹ Demirchian, former First Secretary of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia from 1974 through 1988, had just completed an almost-successful bid for the presidency in March, running (officially) unaffiliated with any party; the creation of the party was to provide political support for Demirchian, who been in the private sector for about a decade. Demirchian, elected to parliament in May of 1999 and subsequently named parliamentary speaker, was among those killed in the attack on parliament in October of that year by armed gunmen. Other prominent individuals associated with the party include Sergey Israelian, a famous movie director, and Vladimir Nazarian, the author of the present Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. The current chairperson is Stepan Demirchian, eldest son of Karen.

Although largely made up of wealthy and well-connected individuals,¹² the People's Party is a mass party with fairly extensive regional representation. The party had 53 constituent units throughout the country, having established a presence in all of the marzes of Armenia. The party claims to have roughly 30,000 members, a claim that was questioned in the previous section of this essay; it should be noted here that conditions for membership are quite lax, and thus the claim might be credible. One condition for membership are the payment of dues, from which the party derives much of its official funding. In terms of a support base the party tries, as most Armenian parties do, to be as inclusive as possible, attempting to appeal to the entire electorate.

The party's electoral history is brief, having been formed less than a year before the May, 1999, parliamentary elections. With an newly energized and strengthened (by defections of deputies previously aligned with the Armenian National Movement to the party) Republican Party, the party formed the Unity electoral bloc, led by powerful Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and Demirchian. The bloc polled 41.7 percent of the party list vote, receiving 29 seats; the Peoples' Party received 20 of those 29. Moreover, the party elected seven deputies on the basis of plurality winner, single-member district rules. The

¹¹ This section draws on a contribution by Anna Stepanyan.

¹² Zakarian and Kalantarian, 2002.

number of deputies owing allegiance to the party has been reduced since then, but the party still has a commanding presence in parliament, and, has done respectably in regional and local elections.

The People's Party was considerably shaken by the loss of its leader, Karen Demirchian, who was the heart and soul of the party. It was further weakened by its separation from its electoral partner, the Republican Party. At present the party is gathering momentum, trying to reassert its position in a new alliance with (up to, according to various reports) 13 opposition parties.

Left-centrist Parties: Rule of Law Country

The Rule of Law Party (A.K.A. Country of Law) was founded in of 1998 by Arthur Baghdasarian. The party grew out of an existing political organization, the Union of Lawyers and Political Scientists, which specialized in legal affairs.¹³ Although Baghdasarian remains at the helm of the party and is fairly popular among in Armenian society, Rule of Law, unlike some other parties, has grown past the ideas and leadership of its founder; others in the party figure prominently in formulating party idea and positions. Some of these other prominent leaders include Tamara Poghosian, Mher Shaghaldian, and Gegham Gasparian, all of whom serve as co-chairpersons. Although a left-centrist party (by its own definition), Rule of Law is mostly an issue-oriented party, and cooperates with those parties with whom its viewpoints coincide; it also has close links with many non-governmental organizations that are aimed at the promotion of balanced legal and public mechanisms. The party is one of the several parties closely linked with the current President.

In spite of its relative youth, Rule of Law has full-time leadership and a functioning bureaucratic apparatus;¹⁴ within the party organization are various unions (a Women's Union, Youth Union, Union of Teachers, Union of Small Entrepreneurs, Union of Doctors, etc.). The scope of the party's organization and activities is wide; the party has 160 regional organizations in Yerevan and each of the ten marzes, many of which provide legal, financial, and medical assistance to the population free of charge. Rule of Law Party is a broad-based, mass-membership party, claiming a membership of 30,000, of which most are better educated (53%) and employed in a profession.¹⁵ Initially the party was financed in part by the head of President Kocharian's National Security Council, former Interior and National Security Minister Serzh Sarkisian; it now relies mainly on private funding, most of which comes from membership dues (collected on voluntary basis). The party publishes its own newspaper.

In terms of its electoral record, the party did not field a presidential candidate in the 1998 presidential election for the simple reason that its choice, founder and chair Baghdasarian, did not meet age requirements (35 years) to be eligible for candidacy; for the same reason the party will probably not

¹³ Diana Danelian contributed materials used in this section.

¹⁴ This includes a Political Council, which consists of 15 members, a Managerial Council, which consists of 30 members (mostly leaders of headquarters), and a Republican Council, which consists of 200 members.

¹⁵ According to the party, the social structure of the membership is as follows: Doctors (11%), teachers (24%), businessmen (17%), lawyers (7%), other specialists (22%), and unemployed (19%).

field a candidate in 2003 either. In the 1999 parliamentary elections the party did surprisingly well for a newer party, polling 5.28 percent of the party list vote, for which they received four seats in the National Assembly, and won two single-member district races as well. The party, in spite of its influence, is not represented in the cabinet, having refused all opportunities to participate in government. They do, however, actively participate in parliament; according to a party spokesperson, roughly 30 percent of the laws that have been adopted by the current parliament were initiated by the Rule of Law party. They hold no positions of power in local and regional governments.

Center-right Parties: The Armenian National Movement

In November of 1989, building on the Karabakh Committee's organizational platform and the electoral success of some of its members in the elections to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies earlier that year, the Armenian National Movement was founded. To oversimplify, the Armenian National Movement was the party of power in Armenia from 1990 through 1998. President Ter-Petrossian, leader of the party, resigned the post of presidency in 1998 after mass defections from the parliamentary party, and since then the Armenian National Movement has been fairly marginalized, although this may not be permanent. Instrumental in the founding of the party was its leader for the first nine years, Levon Ter-Petrossian. In spite of its name, the party originally was fairly moderate in its relations and attitude towards Moscow, although it was, as might be imagined, one of the parties lobbying for self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh and of course, Armenian independence. The current chairperson is Vano Siradeghian, re-elected in 1999.

The Armenian National Movement is a well-organized party which is national in scope. The party maintains 30 offices throughout the country (in all ten marzes and in Yerevan) and claims 8,500 members. Although it is not represented in national government at this time, it does retain some influence at the regional and local levels. It has also published a weekly newspaper since 1989. The party draws its support mainly from those who have, or continue to, benefit from the transition to a market economy.

Electurally, the Armenian National Movement was dominant until 1998. In 1990 the party won 52 of the 260 seats being contested in the parliamentary elections; this, coupled with the fact that the Communists, who commanded a clear plurality (125 seats) had been discredited and were in disarray, led to Ter-Petrossian's election as Chairman of the Supreme Council (as the parliament was called then). In effect, this made Ter-Petrossian leader of the country. Leadership status became official for Ter-Petrossian the following year when he, running as candidate of the Armenian National Movement, won the presidency, taking 83 percent of the first round vote (with a first-round majority, there was not need for a second round of voting).¹⁶

In the 1995 parliamentary elections, as head of the Republic electoral bloc (which included the Liberal Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the Christian Democratic Union, the Union of Intellectuals, and the Social Democratic Party), the party received a total of 63 seats in a National

¹⁶ Ter-Petrossian was also officially endorsed by the Liberal Democratic Party.

Assembly (the new parliament's name) which had a total of 190 seats; the bloc garnered a total of 43.9 percent of the vote for which it received 20 seats for the party list vote, and 159 total seats. In short, the Armenian National Movement completely dominated the election. This was less the case by the following year, however, when official results claimed that Ter-Petrosian received 51.75 percent of the first-round vote; although he was declared the victor, it is widely acknowledged that votes were tampered with and that his main opponent (Vazgen Manukian, of the National Democratic Union) received at least a plurality of the votes.¹⁷

It was the outrage produced by this election that seriously eroded Ter-Petrosian's authority; disenchantment with the slow pace of reforms and other policies added to that, and when in the fall of 1997 he made a speech in which he seemed to take a "soft" position on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, the stage was set for the defections from the party which led to his resignation. This devastated the party, and it has yet to fully recover. In the special presidential election of 1998, the Armenian National Movement candidate Ashot Bleyan received less than one percent of the vote, and the party polled just over one percent in the 1999 parliamentary elections as well. In short, after 1998 the party virtually fell off the radar screen. Throughout 2001-02 there has been speculation and reports of what the Armenian National Movement is doing, or is planning to do, in order to regain a place in public life, including reports that Ter-Petrosian, who has been publicly silent since his resignation, will be attempting a comeback.

Center-right Parties: National Democratic Union

The National Democratic Union, one of the more outspoken opposition parties, was founded in 1991 by prominent Karabakh Committee member Vazgen Manukian, the party's chairperson from its founding until the present time.¹⁸ In February 1988 Manukian became a member of the Karabakh Committee, and on December 10 of that year he was arrested (along with other Committee members) and spent six months in detention in Moscow. As a member of the Armenian National Movement, in May of 1990 Manukian was elected Deputy of the Supreme Council, and in August was appointed Prime Minister. In 1991 he resigned from this post and founded, with other Supreme Council deputies (David Vardanian, Arshak Sadoyan, Lyudvik Khachatrian, Tigran Sargsyuan, Seyran Avazian) the National Democratic Union. The party, as other opposition parties do, presents itself to the public as carrying on the original goals and ideals of the Armenian National Movement, which it claims has deviated from the path; it emerged in opposition to what it saw as the growing corruption and authoritarian tendencies of the Ter-Petrosian regime. Of course this opposition earned Manukian and the party the animosity of Ter-Petrosian and consequently made it difficult for the party to raise funds.

The National Democratic Union is a well-organized party and national in its scope and

¹⁷ Some analysts suggest he may have received as many as 60% of the vote; more about this, and other election irregularities, in the next section.

¹⁸ Information in this section contributed by Lilit Mkrtychyan.

penetration. It claims 3,100 members and operates 36 offices throughout all ten marzes and in Yerevan; from these offices the party attempts to provide various social services to citizens. It has from time to time been represented in the cabinet, although currently it is not; it has little or no representation at regional and local levels of government. Unlike most other parties, the National Democratic Union does not publish its own newspaper. The party is opposed the idea of privatizing larger industries and its appeal is based on its opposition status, both to the Ter-Petrosian regime as well as the current Kocharian administration.

The National Democratic Union has demonstrated a significant and consistent electoral appeal throughout the years of Armenia's democratic existence. In the 1990 elections to the Supreme Council the party won nine seats; in 1995, the party polled 7.5 percent of the party list vote to receive three seats, adding two more (for a total of five) from single-member districts. In 1996, Manukian, as candidate of the National Democratic Union-led National Alliance (including the Union of Self-Determination, Assembly of Armenia, the Democratic Party of Armenia, and the Armenia Revolutionary Federation) officially polled 41.29 percent of the first-round presidential vote; as mentioned, it is widely understood that this announced figure was considerably less than the percentage of votes he actually received. Violent demonstrations took place outside the National Assembly the next day, and later that evening, several leading members of the National Democratic Union were arrested and jailed (Manukian was in hiding and was not arrested). In the 1998 special presidential elections Manukian received 12.2 percent of the vote, coming in third behind Kocharian and Demirchian.

Finally, in 1999, the National Democratic Union obtained a total six seats in the National Assembly based on 5.17 percent of the party list vote (which netted them four seats). As of August, 2001, the party's faction in parliament has four deputies; two members defected after debates within the party over whether to support the current government (it does not).

Center-right Parties: Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia

The Liberal Democratic (Ramgavar Azatakan) Party traces its roots to the formation of the Armenian Party, founded in 1885 in the province of Van by a group of students inspired by Mkrtich Portugalian. Its ninety regional subcommittees quickly spread party ideas among Armenians in other provinces of Western Armenia as well as among diasporans in Egypt, Persia and the United States.¹⁹ After the Soviet takeover in 1920, the Armenian Party merged with several smaller parties²⁰ as well as the Liberal Democratic Party and was known by that name thereafter. Of course by this time the activities of this traditional party were prohibited in the country. However, the party continued in the diaspora, and with the other two diaspora parties, played a significant role in sustaining Armenian cultural traditions.

Reestablished in 1991, the party has no official affiliation with the original diaspora party; leaders claim they are ideologically close to the "mother-party" and share their goals and principles, but they are

¹⁹ Hamlet Mirzoyon contributed much of the material in this section.

²⁰ The Western Armenian People's Party, the National Liberal Union party and General Andranik Movement, as well as some other national movements.

not of it nor are they sponsored by it. The current chairperson of the Liberal Democratic Party is Rouben Mirzakhanian, elected in February of 1999; other prominent members include Frunze Dovlatian, Vardkes Petrossian, and Yervand Kochar.

The organization of the Liberal Democratic Party is national in its scope (international if one counts the party's organization in Nagorno-Karabakh) and fairly centralized. The party has chapters in all 10 marzes of Armenia and has more than 4500 members.²¹ The basic unit of the party is the local level "clubs, comprising of at least five members for villages and ten members for towns; these then feed higher level regional-level chapters, and in turn, the Central (National) committee. The party is a center-right party and thus finds its social base among entrepreneurs, small and medium businessmen and the middle class. The Liberal Democratic Party has little or no regional or local governmental presence, but does have one member in the national executive (Ms. Shamiram Aghabekian is Deputy Head of the Commission on Television and Radio). As a centrist party the party is open to cooperation with other centrist forces and parties.

The party's electoral history is mixed, but on the whole it does not command a large amount of support. In the 1990 elections it earned 17 seats in the Supreme Council. As part of the dominant Republic bloc in 1995, it earned a total of only six; in the 1996 presidential elections membership in the Republic bloc led to the endorsement of the candidacy of President Ter-Petrossian. In the 1998 presidential elections the party's candidate, Vigen Khachatrian, garnered less than one percent of the vote (although the party backed Kocharian), and in the 1999 parliamentary elections the party's support plummeted, as it received only .69 percent of the party list vote.

Center-right Parties: Union of Self-determination

The Self-Determination Union was founded in 1987 under the leadership of famous Soviet dissident Paruyr Hairikian. In contrast to Armenian National Movement, which at that time had adopted a more moderate "wait-and-see" attitude to relations with Moscow, the Self-Determination Union demanded immediate referenda for independence and separation from the Soviet Union. Because of this, Gorbachev exiled him to Ethiopia; only after he had become a deputy of the Supreme Council of Armenia was he allowed to return to Armenia. In 1992 the party added the word "Christianocrat" to its official name to signify its commitment to Christian principles.²²

The Union of Self-determination was and is centered around the person of its leader, Hairikian, who in 1998 was re-elected chair of the party. The party claims 9,236 members and has 42 offices in all ten of Armenia's marzes as well as Yerevan; the party circulates a newspaper internally (founded in 1987). It has no representation in regional or local government, but is represented in the executive, as its chairperson Paruir Hairikian is the Chair of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights as well as the

²¹ Figures from 1999 put party membership at roughly 1,100; according to party chair Mirzakhanian, in 2002, membership is rising significantly, registering on average 150 new members weekly.

²² It also signifies a commitment to democracy, as Christian principles encompass democratic ones as well.

Chair of the Presidential Commission on Constitutional and Government Reform.

The party's electoral record is mixed, but it has never threatened to be a dominant force in this regard. In 1990 the party won a single seat (of 260) in the parliamentary elections. In the 1991 presidential elections, party founder Paruyr Hairikian won 7.2 percent of the first-round vote, a fairly respectable showing considering that the winner, Ter-Petrosian, won over 80 percent; in 1998, he received 5.4 percent, placing fifth. In the 1995 parliamentary elections the party earned three seats in the National Assembly for its 5.6 percent of the vote, but in 1999, as part of the "AIM+" bloc (with the Motherland—Diaspora Union) it garnered only 2.29 percent, thus failing to win any seats.

Conservative Parties: Republican Party of Armenia

The Republican Party of Armenia was founded in 1990, by Ashot Navasardian, who had been repeatedly imprisoned for his struggles for a free and independent Armenia, along with a number of like-minded individuals (Levon Hakobian, Norayr Zurabian, Ara Hakobian and others).²³ Actually, in terms of its organizational lineage, the party traces its origins to 1968, when Navasardian became a member of the United National Party and the "Independence Army," both of which served as a base for the Republican Party (which actually splintered off of the United National party) years later. The party sees itself as a follower of the ideas of the Armenian national hero Gareghin Nzhdeh. The Republican Party's current chairperson is Andranik Markarian, elected in 1997, and also currently Prime Minister.

The Republican Party underwent a fairly dramatic transformation in 1997-98, when many members of the Armenian National Movement defected; most of these members, as well as members of the Yerkrpah Union of Karabakh War Veterans, under the leadership of Albert Bazeyan and Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, essentially took the small Republican party over, bolstering its size and dramatically increasing its influence. Although Sarkisian was assassinated during the attack on the Armenian Parliament in October of 1999, the party has been transformed from a minor to a major player, being one of the two parties in government at the moment.

The Republican Party is a mass party with extensive membership and practically no restrictions to enrollment; it claims over 7,000 members. With respect to its social profile, it is quite diversified. Since it is a mass party, it encourages the growth of party regional representation; thus, the party has 68 offices in all of the marzes of Armenia and Yerevan. The party is represented in regional and local governance as well (for example, the governorships of the districts of Malatia, Nork-Marash, Davitashen, and Shengavit, as well as multiple village governorships).

Electorally, the party was able to elect a single deputy to the Supreme Council in 1990, founder and chairperson Ashot Navasardian. In the 1991 presidential elections the party did not field a candidate, but supported the Armenian National Movement's Levon Ter-Petrosian. In 1995, as part of the Armenian National Movement's Republic bloc (which won control of two-thirds of the seats), the Republican Party managed to win five seats in the new National Assembly. In the 1996 presidential

²³ Thanks to Anna Stepanyan for her contribution to this section.

elections, again as part of the Republic bloc, the party backed Ter-Petrosian again; in 1998, they backed Kocharian. In 1999, as part of the Unity bloc (with the People's Party), the party won a total of 40 seats (nine by way of the party list vote, 31 in single-member district races).

As noted, the current Prime Minister is from the Republican Party, as are several other ministry heads. The Republican Party is clearly a significant force in Armenian politics; what remains to be seen is what happens to the remains of the Unity bloc, since the coalition seems to have fallen apart.²⁴

Extreme Right Parties: Union of Constitutional Rights

The Union of Constitutional Rights, another “founding elections” party which came out of the Karabakh movement, was founded March of 1989 by Hrant Khachatrian. Khachatrian was elected chairperson the same year and remains the chairperson today. In general terms, the party is not major influence, but has been a consistent source of opposition (meaning it has fairly consistently opposed the parties in power, the Armenian National Movement and the Unity bloc) throughout the past decade.²⁵

The Union of Constitutional Rights is a fairly well institutionalized party with ten offices in Yerevan and eight of Armenia's ten marzes; 820 people claim membership in the party. It does not have representation in central, regional, or local government. The party does publish a weekly newspaper (Iravunq) that has a fairly high circulation for a party newspaper (18,000) which was founded in 1989.

The party's electoral history is fairly unimpressive: One seat in the 1990 parliamentary elections; the party backed Republican Party of Armenia candidate Ashot Navasardian in the 1991 presidential elections who received a dismal 0.16 percent of the vote; it participated in the 1995 parliamentary elections but failed to win any seats; it neither proposed nor backed a candidate in the 1996 presidential elections, but in 1998, Hrant Khachatrian ran and received 0.28 percent of the votes; finally, it was a member of the Law and Unity (A.K.A. Right and Accord, with National Unity, Artsakh-Armenia, and the Scientific Industrial and Civic Union) bloc in 1999, which received 7.97 percent of the party list vote, for which the bloc received 6 seats. The party currently has four deputies in parliament.

Summary

In this section we have profiled the roughly one dozen or so major political parties in Armenia. As was evident, there are gaps that remain to be filled with in order to round out our understanding of these parties, but, on the whole, we are better equipped to now look at political parties as they relate to elections and governance in Armenia. The next section turns to this task.

²⁴ More on this in the following section.

²⁵ Hripsime Harutyunyan contributed material for this section.

Section III. Party Politics, Elections, and Governance

Introduction

In this section we look at what is arguably the core of party politics, namely, elections and government. There have been, as mentioned, five elections in Armenia since independence; we will also examine the election just prior to independence. This means that this section will examine the parliamentary elections of 1990, 1995, and 1999, and, the presidential elections of 1991, 1996, and 1998. Each will be discussed in terms of history and background, issues, the campaign, prominent parties and political leaders, and of course, the winners.

In one sense, we can divide the electoral history of post-independence Armenia into two distinct periods, pre- and post-1998. In the period prior to 1998, the Armenian National Movement, under the leadership of President Levon Ter-Petrossian, rose a wave of popular support which dated at least to the emergence of the Karabakh Committee and the independence movement, in actuality earlier. The point is that Ter-Petrossian and the Armenian National Movement won the elections of 1990, 1991, 1995, and 1996, and thus, dominated government for the first seven years of Armenia's independence.

Ter-Petrossian's electoral mandate, weakened by a fraudulent re-election in 1996, crumbled in late 1997; the catalyst was his speech outlining a conciliatory approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. His party suffered mass defections shortly afterwards, and he resigned. His prime minister, former President of Nagorno-Karabakh Robert Kocharian, won the special election in early 1998 for the presidency. A year later, voters gave the electoral bloc Unity (comprised of the Republican and People's parties) a clear plurality in the party list vote; the popular leaders of both parties were slain in October of that year, and after a substantial amount of maneuvering, Kocharian installed a government which he can effectively dominate.¹ Behind much of these formal changes was the almost-hidden influence of the Yerkrpah Union of Karabakh War Veterans. Whether Yerkrpah actually wields the amount of political influence that is sometimes attributed to them is debatable, but it seems clear that they now are a major player, if often behind the scenes. This then is the story of the post-1998 period.

One major caveat is in order, which needs to be kept in the mind while these elections are being discussed, and that is simply that there has been no shortage of irregularities in several of Armenia democratic elections. In some cases the irregularities were more blatant than in others (1996, for example); few have been free of them. International observers and much of the scholarship on Armenian elections in the 1990s place great emphasis on these irregularities; this continues to be a sore point for many Armenians. I do not downplay the importance of free and fair elections, and, an overview and assessment of the fairness of several will be presented, but this is not the focus of this essay, which is about party politics, not the quality of Armenia's democratization. For this the reader is referred to the

¹ Armenia's constitution is, in any event, heavily weighted in favor of the president.

reports listed at the end of this essay.²

1990 Parliamentary Elections

On May 20, 1990, elections to the Supreme Council of Armenia were held.³ Although there had been a degree of political competition for elections to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies in the spring of 1989 and in run-offs to the Armenia Parliament later that summer, the 1990 election marked the first time that elections to a national governmental institution had been open to any meaningful degree of party competition.⁴ These were the also last elections held in Armenia during the Soviet era. A total of 260 seats (of which 13 were set aside for Nagorno-Karabakh) were contested by 1,511 candidates (an average of almost six per district), on the basis of plurality-winner, single-member district rules.⁵ Candidates were nominated by parties, citizen groups, and residents' meetings; many were former members of the Communist Party (for example, 73 percent of Armenian National Movement candidates were former Communists).

The main qualifications for office in the eyes of the electorate seemed to be former dissident activity. The campaign was primarily one between the Communist Party of Armenia and the opposition, the Armenian National Movement. A group of party members split from the Communist Party and formed a separate Democratic Party under whose label they ran; the name change did little to help them. The Armenian National Movement dominated the field, having benefitted from momentum gathered as the result of contesting run-off elections to the Congress of People's Deputies and the (Soviet) Armenian Parliament in the spring and summer of 1989. The Armenian National Movement campaigned on a program that called for democratic reform, environmental protection, marketization, and re-unification with Nagorno-Karabakh.⁶

Given the heightened amount of civic activity which characterized the late Soviet period in Armenia (and elsewhere), interest in the election was surprisingly low. Although later acknowledged as an important milestone in the country's history, newspapers and television in Armenia devoted little attention to the election. Only 60.19 percent of eligible citizens turned out to vote on election day. In fact, primarily (not exclusively) because of low voter turnout, only 37.4 percent of the total number of deputies were elected after the first round of voting;⁷ it took four more rounds (over the course of six months) to

² For example, OSCE, IFES, BHHRG, Eurasia.net, Freedom House.

³ Material in this section was provided and prepared by Anna Vasilyan.

⁴ See Dudwick, 1997:80.

⁵ In 215 precincts ballots listed 3 or more candidates; in 36 precincts, ballots listed 2 candidates; in the rest of the precincts ballots included 1 candidate.

⁶ Dudwick, 1997:81.

⁷ To be elected in first-round voting, a candidate must have received a majority of votes in the district in which they ran, and, total voter turnout must have been at least half of the registered voters.

fill the remaining seats.⁸ The final results of the election (the first round and all subsequent run-off races) are reported below in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1. Parliamentary Elections in Armenia: May 20, 1990*

<i>Party Name</i>	<i>Number of Seats</i>
Independents	125
Armenian National Movement	52
Democratic Party of Armenia	23
Liberal Democratic Party	17
Armenian Revolutionary Federation	17
National Democratic Union	9
Christian Democratic Union	1
Union of Constitutional Rights	1
Union of Self-Determination	1
Republican Party of Armenia	1
Nagorno-Karabakh Representatives	13
<i>Total Number of Seats</i>	<i>260</i>

From <<http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/facts/armenia.html>>, accessed on August 20, 2002.

* These totals reflect the final results, not those from May 20.

Having secured a plurality (though by no means a majority), the Armenian National Movement were the clear winners in the elections, and on August 4, 1990 the Supreme Council elected the party's leader, Levon Ter-Petrossian, as its chairman. For all intents and purposes, power had, in other words, shifted from the Communist Party to the Armenian National Movement. In the next year, this shift of power at the national level was reflected in changes in party control of government at the regional and local levels as well. The 1990 elections set up Ter-Petrossian's ascension to national leader. This sets up the discussion of the 1991 presidential election, which follows next.

1991 Presidential Elections

The year 1991 was turning point in history of Armenia.⁹ In August of 1991 Ter-Petrossian proposed, and the Supreme Council adopted, a law instituting a presidency, to be popularly elected. There had been no

⁸ The first run-offs were held on July 15, as a result of which a quorum of 195 deputies had been elected.

⁹ Thanks to Aghvan Aidinyan for the materials in this section.

serious debate about the idea, primarily because by this point, political debate was dominated by the Armenian National Movement; the Communists had fallen from grace, and the other nascent parties had yet to find a strong voice. The Armenian National Movement realized its advantage and was sure that if the law on the presidency was adopted they would have little trouble winning a presidential election.

With the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union in September of 1991, Armenia held a referendum which overwhelmingly (99.31 percent) supported independence for the Republic. On October 16 of that same year, Armenia held its first presidential elections, in which Levon Ter-Petrosian emerged as the clear winner, receiving over 83 percent of the votes. Like the 1990 parliamentary election, the 1991 presidential elections are considered to have been relatively free and fair. Thus, Ter-Petrosian, formerly chair of the Armenian Supreme Soviet, became the first popularly elected president of the new republic.

Nomination of candidates for the presidency started on August 17. To be nominated, a candidate could be put forward (registered) by a party or on the basis of a civic initiative, which required that 5,000 signatures be collected and submitted to the Central Election Committee.¹⁰ After registration, an additional 15,000 signatures were necessary to make the candidacy official; Ter-Petrosian collected three times that amount.¹¹ The first candidate registered was Prime Minister Vazgen Manukian of the National Democratic Union, who later refused to take part in the elections. On September 16 submission of signatures was closed; a list of candidates was published on September 17, and the campaign was officially started.¹² The final list of candidates included:

- * *Levon Ter-Petrosian*: Chairman of the Supreme Council; former research fellow in Matenadaran (a depository of ancient Armenian manuscripts; nominated by the Armenian National Movement (in the third extraordinary session of the party, 614 voted for and only one opposed), the Liberal Democratic Party, as well as by the civic initiative procedure;
- * *Paruyr Hairikian*: Member of the Supreme Council, leader of the United National Party since 1968 for which he spent over 17 years in prisons, camps and exile; in 1988 was exiled from the USSR; nominated by the Union of Self-determination;
- * *Sos Sarkisian*: Artistic manager and director of the National Theatre of Union of writers; nominated by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation as well as by the civic initiative procedure;
- * *Zoriy Balayan*: Reporter for the Moscow (All-Union) newspaper Literaturnaya Gazeta (literature newspaper); prominent figure in the Karabakh movement; nominated by the civic initiative procedure;
- * *Rafael Kazarian*: Physicist, and member of Academy of Science of Republic of Armenia; deputy in the Supreme Council;
- * *Ashot Navasardian*: As a dissident, spent many years in prisons, camps and exile; deputy in the Supreme Council; nominated by the Republican Party of Armenia and the Union of Constitutional Rights.

¹⁰ The procedure for becoming a candidate for presidency was regulated by Article 9 of the “Law on Presidential Elections.”

¹¹ Respublika Armenia, September 20, 1991.

¹² On September 26 the Central Election Committee ended registration.

The programs of most of the candidates were very similar: All claimed they were in favor of an independent Armenia, democratization, free market etc. In fact, Ter-Petrossian seemed to have no distinct or clear program, a fact other candidates tried to use against him. Each candidate was granted a set amount of free television time and could receive an additional (limited) amount of paid time. There were also round-table debates, although Ter-Petrossian did not participate in these debates. The election was held on October 16;¹³ voter turnout was 70.4 percent of the voting age population. On October 18, two days after the election, the Central Election Committee announced the results, which are presented below in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2. Presidential Elections in Armenia: October 16, 1991

<i>Candidate (Party)</i>	<i>Percentage of Votes</i>
Levon Ter-Petrossian (Armenian National Movement) ^a	83%
Paruyr Harikian (Union of Self-determination)	7.2
Sos Sarkisian (Armenian Revolutionary Federation)	4.33
Zoriy Balayan (No Party)	0.45
Rafael Kazarian (No Party)	0.39
Ashot Navasardian (Republican Party of Armenia) ^b	0.16

^a Also backed by the Liberal Democratic Party.

^b Also backed by the Union of Constitutional Rights.

In accordance Article 22 of the Law on Presidential Elections, the Central Election Committee declared Levon Ter-Petrossian president and Gagik Harutyunian as vice-president. His overwhelming margin of victory can be explained by his position as the leader of the independence movement as such (the Armenian National Movement) and the timing of the vote (shortly after independence was declared).¹⁴ In addition, having been seen in the post of president of the Supreme Council for better than a year gave him a certain name recognition and stature that other candidates lacked. Paruir Hairikian, leader of Union of Self-determination gained a mere seven percent, while the candidate of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Sos Sarkisian, was only able to gain about four percent.

The presidential elections of 1991 were in one sense an extension of the 1990 parliamentary elections and a culmination of the political activity that led up to the drive for Armenian independence, in the end, validating and rewarding one of the more prominent leaders of that movement. The election solidified the position the Armenian National Movement had taken as leader of the country and set the tone for the next few years.

¹³ Polls were open from from 7:00 A.M. until 10:00 P.M.

¹⁴ It must be mentioned that according to an opinion poll conducted in 1996, very few respondents admitted to having voted in the 1991 presidential elections for Ter-Petrossian.

1995 Parliamentary Elections

The period between the elections of 1991 and 1995 in Armenia were nothing if not eventful. The government pursued market reforms with some vigor, privatizing most sectors of the economy, instituting tax reforms, introducing an Armenian currency (the dram, in November of 1993); these market reforms, of course, had the expected effect of displacing many, a source of discontent with the administration. Moreover, what had been a rough consensus over relations with Turkey had broken down, with Ter-Petrossian taking the position that normalization of relations should proceed with no preconditions (i.e., without the requirement that Turkey recognize its prosecution of the Armenian genocide in the early twentieth century). Ter-Petrossian's belief was that to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh's independence would lead to a formal state of war between Armenia and Azerbaijan; others opposed his refusal to do so.

By 1995 the conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh had taken its toll on Armenia. Fighting in the region, which had begun as early as 1988 and had been exacerbated during the last years of Soviet rule by pogroms against Armenians, had been covertly, then openly supported by Armenia. The region, which had elected its own legislature in 1989, declared its independence in January 1992. In spite of Russian and Western efforts to resolve the dispute, fighting continued until a cease-fire took effect in May of 1994, by which time a corridor had been carved out of Azeri territory linking Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. The price of victory, however, was high. Specifically, the conflict led to a trade blockade on the part of Turkey and Azerbaijan, which in turn meant that Armenia suffered severe energy shortages throughout the early 1990s. By itself this was bad enough (Yerevan residents took to cutting down trees in the winter of 1993 to keep warm); the effect on the economy made it worse.

Finally, a series of political assassinations between 1992 and 1994, including the former Mayor of Yerevan, Hambartsum Galstian, a former ally turned critic of Ter-Petrossian, in December of 1994, contributed to already strained relations between the administration and opposition leaders. Ter-Petrossian subsequently worsened things by refusing to address parliament about the assassination and the tense situation; many opposition parties (including the National Democratic Union and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation) stopped participating in the work of parliament after December. The summer of 1994 saw mass demonstrations in Yerevan's central Opera Square, calling for the resignation of the government.

In this context, on July 5, 1995, Armenians went to the polls to elect a new National Assembly as well as vote on a new constitution.¹⁵ In the case of the latter, the electorate was given the choice to ratify the draft constitution that the government put forward; although the opposition had a draft constitution of its own, it was not put forward as an alternative to voters. The government used its control of television and radio to obfuscate the issue before voters, suggesting that the vote was whether to have a constitution or not, rather than which draft ought be adopted. President Ter-Petrossian went so far as to warn voters the day before the election that failure to ratify the constitution put Armenia at risk of civil war. Although some have questioned the validity of the vote count (actual precinct-level figures were never published by

¹⁵ Much of the following draws on Dudwick, 1997:92-98.

the Central Election Commission [CEC]), the constitution was ratified by a margin of 68 to 28 percent (55.6 percent of eligible voters turned out for the vote).

The election of the 190 deputies to the new parliament, which is our focus, was conducted according to mixed electoral rules. Forty deputies were to be chosen for four-year terms according to proportional representation from national party lists, with a five percent threshold requirement (i.e., parties that received under five percent received no seats in parliament).¹⁶ One hundred and fifty additional deputies were to be chosen from single-member districts. Winning rules for the district elections mandated that a candidate needed to receive a plurality of the votes, as long as that plurality exceeded 25 percent of valid votes cast (if a candidate was running unopposed, he or she needed at least 50 percent of the vote). If no candidate won 25 percent, a run-off election was to be held between the two top vote-getters. The law governing the electoral process was passed less than three months prior to the elections, was fairly vague, and in some places inconsistent. This allowed for a variety of ways in which the election could be manipulated by the government, and there is a broad consensus that it was.¹⁷

One of the more obvious manipulations of the election by the government was the ban imposed on the Armenian Revolutionary Federation by the government in late December of 1994. Charging that the party had within its organization a secret arm called DRO which engaged in assassinations (specifically, the president implicated DRO in the assassination of Hambartsum Galstian), drug trafficking, and other illicit activities, President Ter-Petrosian suspended operations of the party; in January the Supreme Court upheld the ban. The Court stated that the party had violated two stipulations of the law on political parties, that non-citizens cannot be members of Armenian political parties, and that party leadership cannot be in a foreign country (recall that Armenian Revolutionary Federation is one of the three diaspora parties). The ban, upheld by the Court on January 13, was to remain in place for six months, in other words, until after the election. Although there was (and is) widespread suspicion the president's claims about illegal activities might have been at least partially true, the timing of the move created the appearance that the president was trying to eliminate a source of opposition. This impression was reinforced by the subsequent banning of eight other opposition parties and one bloc, as well as 36 percent of all candidates (under various pretexts) in June.¹⁸

And by this point, as alluded to earlier, there was substantial opposition in the form of new, as well as older, political parties. In fact, over forty political parties contested the May 1995 election. Laws governing ballot access were fairly loose; a political party, public organization, or coalition (bloc) of parties needed at least 10,000 signatures, while a candidate needed 500, to be officially registered (as a

¹⁶ Requirements were that a candidate has to be an Armenian citizen, 25 years old, and a resident for at least three years.

¹⁷ Candidates were disqualified by district election committees packed with Armenian National Movement members; voting was allowed at military installations, opening up the possibility that recruits were influenced in their votes; local leaders, controlling all or most of the industry in the area, pressured employees to vote for their candidate; see OSCE 1995 for more.

¹⁸ Bremmer and Welt, 1997.

party list, or, as a candidate in a single-member district, respectively). The relatively small number a candidate was required to gather was thought to benefit independent candidates, who, if elected are typically loyal to the president. In addition, each (party, bloc, candidate) was required to deposit a nominal fee¹⁹ with the CEC; this fee would be refunded in the event that the party or candidate received five percent of the vote.²⁰ According to these rules, the CEC registered 1,369 candidates (about 9 per district) for the single-member district races and thirteen parties for the proportional race (about 570 candidates). Access rules for electronic media were similar to previous races; candidates and parties were formally insured equal time and were allowed to buy additional time, said time not to exceed twice the amount of free time which was allocated. To state it briefly, although the rules were fair, their implementation was uneven at best, and opposition candidates and parties often found it difficult to get their message out.²¹

The campaign featured the Armenian National Movement-led Republic bloc (including the Democratic Liberal Party, the Republican Party, the Christian Democratic Union, the Union of Intellectuals, and the Social Democratic Party) backing the program of the administration, calling for ratification of the constitution and a continuance of Ter-Petrossian's leadership and policies. Other parties opposed the passage of the draft the constitution, fearing it centralized too much power in the presidency (as indeed, it very arguably does). Other notable sources of contention between the administration and opposition included criticism by the Communist Party of Armenia of Ter-Petrossian's economic reforms; the Communists also called for closer ties (actually, a confederation) with Russia.

One interesting twist to the election campaign was the entrance of a new political party, Shamiram, only two months before the election. The party, whose name is derived from a mythical Assyrian princess who had fallen in love with an Armenian king, was founded by the Minister of the Interior, and was comprised of the wives of government officials and other prominent women. The party clearly had official backing of some sort: It gathered its 10,000 signatures in only four days and quickly flooded the country with colorful campaign materials. The party was centrist in orientation and focused on women's issues; interestingly, it passed the five percent hurdle and gained entrance into the National Assembly.

Fifty-four percent of eligible voters cast their ballots for a new parliament on July 5; of these, some 411,000 votes (roughly a third) were declared invalid by the CEC.²² No reason was given, although many voters appear to have crossed off the names of all parties as a sign of protest. Another ten percent of the party list votes were "wasted," inasmuch as they went to parties which failed to cross the five-percent threshold. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Republic bloc dominated the field. Also noteworthy were the 45

¹⁹ Ten times the official minimum monthly salary, which, at the time, was about 1,000 Armenian drams.

²⁰ Details about the formation and composition of the CEC, which is at the root of it a political struggle unto itself that has serious implications for how fairly elections and conducted, can be found in the OSCE Reports of 1995, 1996, 1998, and 1999.

²¹ See OSCE 1995:10.

²² Bremmer and Welt, 1997.

independents who entered the legislature after winning in single-member districts. Results are below in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3. Parliamentary Election in Armenia: July 5 1995

<i>Party</i>	<i>Party List Vote: Percentage (Seats)</i>	<i>Total Number of Seats</i>
<u>Republic bloc</u> , including:	42.7% (20)	119
Armenian National Movement		(65)
Democratic Liberal Party		(6)
Republican Party		(4)
Christian Democratic Union		(3)
Union of Intellectuals		(3)
Social Democratic Party		(2)
Independent & Others		(36)
Shamiram	16.9 (8)	8
Communist Party of Armenia	12.1 (6)	7
National Democratic Union	7.5 (3)	5
Union of Self-Determination	5.6 (3)	3
Democratic Liberal (Ramgavar-Azatakan) Party	2.5	1
Armenian Revolutionary Federation	2.0	1
Others Failing to Win Seats*	10.0	0
Independent	N/A	45

From Dudwick (1997:97).

* Includes Will and Dashnaksutiun, Armenian Democratic Party, Armenian Agrarian Democratic Party, Mission, Armenian Scientific-Industrial Civic Union, National State, People's Party.

While Ter-Petrossian's Republic bloc retained its control over the new legislature, their numerical superiority, at least on paper, was diminished. But many of the parties remained sympathetic to Ter-Petrossian; for example, the pro-business Reform bloc, formed after the elections of 31 deputies elected as independents, were widely understood to be in the president's camp, as was Shamiram, which (as noted) consisted of the wives or friends of government officials.²³ In all, up to 156 deputies could be counted as being in the president's camp; the elections clearly consolidated Ter-Petrossian's control of the legislature. But, the credibility of the administration was seriously eroded by the ways in which the election was manipulated. In one sense this set the stage for the 1996 presidential elections, against which the electoral irregularities of 1995 paled by comparison.

1996 Presidential Election

²³ Dudwick, 1997:96.

On September 22, 1996, Armenia held its second presidential election since gaining its independence.²⁴ The incumbent President Levon Ter-Petrosian ran against three opposition contenders, and, according to official figures published by the CEC, received 51.75 percent of the vote share, barely passing the 50 percent figure required to avoid a runoff. His closest rival, Vazgen Manukian (National Democratic Union), former Prime Minister and Defense Minister, won 41.29 percent. This result, though official, is now (as it was then) widely believed to have been falsified.²⁵

Under the constitution of 1995, the president (who must have been a resident for a minimum of ten years) serves a five-year term, and is eligible for re-election once. President Ter-Petrosian signed the law on the presidential election in June of 1996. Parties, blocs and individuals could nominate candidates, who needed to gather 25,000 signatures and deposit two million drams (about \$5,000) with the CEC; those who won at least five percent of the vote would have their electoral deposit refunded. Expenses for the election were covered by a fund under the management of the CEC; candidates could use their own resources to campaign as well as funds accumulated in their campaign account. Ter-Petrosian was reported to have had at his disposal over \$400,000 by mid-September.²⁶

The CEC was to give all candidates 90 minutes of free air time on state television (the order determined by lottery) as well as 120 minutes of radio time. Candidates were also allowed to buy an addition 180 minutes of television air time and 240 minutes of radio time. All opposition candidates received their mandated 90 minutes television, although two complained that they were shorted. More, Manukian and Ashot Manucharian attempted and failed to purchase air time during the last week of the campaign; authorities insisted that the candidates were in violation of campaign law, and programming could not be re-scheduled on such short notice. Coverage of the candidates by state-run television (news, etc.) was, simply put, heavily weighted in favor of Ter-Petrosian.²⁷

The deadline for candidate registration was August 22; on August 23 the CEC announced the registration of seven candidates. Of these, only three had a realistic chance of victory; they were:

President Levon Ter-Petrosian was the candidate of the Republic bloc, led by the Armenian National Movement, including the Democratic Liberal Party, the Republican Party, the Christian Democratic Union, the Union of Intellectuals, and the Social Democratic Party. His platform and

²⁴ This section draws heavily on OSCE, 1996.

²⁵ As the result of criticism after the 1995 elections by political parties and international observers alike, the CEC was restructured in 1996. Members of the new CEC, 20 in all, were chosen by parliament, with each parliamentary faction nominating two candidates. But although an opposition leader (Khachatour Bezirjian) was appointed Chairman, supporters of President Ter-Petrosian held a large majority in parliament and their nominees thus controlled the newly restructured CEC. Moreover, eleven regional, 930 community, and 1,598 precinct-level election commissions were dominated by supporters of the president as well.

²⁶ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), 1996.

²⁷ The Media Monitoring and Assistance Unit of the European Institute for the Media and the Yerevan Press Club reported that "Ter-Petrosian received 1,050 minutes on Channel One, while Manukian got 65 minutes, Manucharian 48 minutes, and Badalian 37 minutes 30 seconds. On Channel Two, Ter-Petrosian received 98 minutes 20 seconds, compared to Manukian's 4 minutes 40 seconds" (OSCE, 1996).

positions differed little from his 1995 package. While acknowledging a serious drop in standards of living and an ongoing exodus of the citizenry, he stressed the idea (hope) that the worst of the reform period was over and that he was the right person to complete the reform process.

Vazgen Manukian, Ter-Petrosian's main opponent, was the candidate of the National Democratic Union, that party's chairperson, a former member of the Karabakh Committee, Prime Minister, and Minister of Defense. Once an ally, by then chief critic of the president, Manukian's differences with the president were mainly in the economic sphere, where he took a more leftist approach to a market economy. He, like others, also felt the constitution was in need of amendments designed to make the system less "presidential" and was also in favor of allowing greater cooperation between Armenians in Armenia and the diaspora, including allowing dual citizenship for diasporans (a policy which Ter-Petrosian opposed).

Sergey Badalian, candidate of the Communist Party of Armenia, also centered his criticism of the president on economic policies that had devastated the country, leaving the majority of people in need of employment and the country's once-vibrant industrial plant idle; in his view, unsurprisingly, the answer was to be found in the principles of socialism; he was not opposed to market reforms, but also opposed radical marketization. He also advocated the creation of a New Union of independent states, which would have included closer ties with Russia.

Throughout the campaign Ter-Petrosian's adopted a classic presidential incumbent campaign strategy, meaning that he generally ignored the opposition. He was in a position to do this, as he was widely expected to win easily. However in mid-September, four opposition candidates (Paruir Hairikian, Rouben Hakopian, Lenser Aghalovian, and Aram Sarkissian) formed a united opposition to back the candidacy of Manukian. It was widely believed (correctly, as it turns out) that Manukian, with this support - and perhaps without - stood a good chance of defeating Ter-Petrosian. Moreover, Badalian and Ashot Manucharian (the other minor candidate) had promised their support to Manukian in the event of a run-off. Ter-Petrosian changed his campaign tactics at this point, focusing several attacks on Manukian, warning that if he were not elected, Armenia faced any variety of real dangers;²⁸ in his view, the election was a choice between stability or chaos. Just prior to the vote, in a violation of election law, Minister of Internal Affairs Vano Siradeghian and Minister of Defense Vazgen Sarkissian also went on state television warning of the dangers of a Manukian presidency.

Voting took place on September 22; voter turnout was 58.25 percent. The CEC released the results on September 29, declaring Ter-Petrosian the victor (see Table 3-4, below).

Table 3-4. Presidential Elections in Armenia: September 22, 1996

²⁸ These included the danger that Russian relations, including military cooperation, would worsen; use of Armenia's atomic energy plant would be questioned by the international community; energy supplies from Turkmenistan would be in danger; international financial aid would be cut; relations with Georgia worsen; military capabilities would decrease; and more. See OSCE, 1996.

<i>Candidate (Party)</i>	<i>Percentage 1st Round Vote^a</i>
Levon Ter-Petrosian (Republic Bloc) ^b	51.75%
Vazgen Manukian (National Alliance) ^c	41.29
Sergey Badalian (Communist party of Armenia)	6.34
Ashot Manucharian (Scientific-Industrial and Civic Union)	0.60

From Dudwick (1997:104).

^a Since announced results gave Ter-Petrosian an absolute majority, there was no second round of voting held.

^b Led by the Armenian National Movement, and including the Democratic Liberal Party, Republican Party, Christian Democratic Union, Union of Intellectuals, Social Democratic Party.

^c Led by the National Democratic Union, and including Union of Self-Determination, Assembly of Armenia, Democratic Party of Armenia, and the Armenia Revolutionary Federation.

After the results were announced, Manukian and other opposition leaders confronted the CEC in the National Assembly; a short while afterwards, hundreds of supporters forced their way into the building, and violence ensued. A state of emergency was declared by Ter-Petrosian; opposition parties and newspapers were closed, and many leaders were jailed (Manukian himself went into hiding). On October 24, Vazgen Manukian and Ashot Manucharian filed appeals with the Constitutional Court, asking for an annulment of the election and a new vote. Ter-Petrosian indicated a willingness to abide a Court decision, which in the end, ratified his re-election.

1998 Presidential Election

The extraordinary Presidential Election of 1998, called following the resignation of President Levon Ter-Petrosian, marked the end of Ter-Petrosian's (and the Armenian National Movement's) seven-year domination of Armenian national politics.²⁹ Since the Speaker of the Parliament (who, according to the constitution, is next in the line of succession) resigned shortly after Ter-Petrosian, Prime Minister Robert Kocharian served as acting president during the transition period leading-up to the elections. Kocharian won 59.5 percent of the second-round vote to become Armenia's second president.

Ter-Petrosian's policies had for some time been subject to criticism and he had gained a reputation for corruption and cronyism, but the impetus for his resignation can be traced to the disputed 1996 election as well as the rigged parliamentary election of 1995. As the result of each, Ter-Petrosian suffered a loss of political legitimacy. Moreover, in both cases, political unrest followed the election, and the president was forced to rely on the military to quell these disturbances; this in turn shifted the balance of power to those in control of the security ministries. In the spring of 1997, disagreement over both policies and party reform led ten high-ranking members of the Armenian National Movement, led by Eduard Yegorian, to quit the party and form their own (Homeland); another party leader, Hrand Bagratian

²⁹ Thanks to Armine Petrossian for her contribution on this section.

did the same, forming the Freedom party.³⁰ Ter-Petrosian's power base, in other words, was slowly eroding.

On September 26, 1997, Ter-Petrosian made a speech in which he endorsed a step-by-step approach to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issues which had been proposed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Minsk Group; this plan had been harshly criticized and rejected by many, including hard-line nationalists, the security forces, Nagorno-Karabakh, the intelligentsia, and many in the diaspora. His reasoning was that the conflict was the root cause of Armenia's economic distress (the cause of the blockades), and that its resolution was a precondition for economic recovery.³¹

As reasonable as this logic may have sounded (and most have since embraced it), the speech created a firestorm and was severely criticized by all of the major opposition parties, who called for his resignation.³² Perhaps most importantly, Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, one of the most powerful behind-the-scenes individuals in Armenia, openly called on the president to change his policies on January 28; Prime Minister Robert Kocharian, the former president of Nagorno-Karabakh, echoed his call.

On February 2, 1998, forty deputies defected from Ter-Petrosian's Republic bloc parliamentary group; twenty-seven subsequently joined the Yerkrpah parliamentary group. Previously a public organization of Karabakh War veterans (as parties are generically referred to as in Armenia) begun in late 1994 with Defense Ministry backing,³³ and controlling better than 3,500 chapters across the country, Yerkrpah had gained a certain notoriety for allegedly providing and then helping to quell the attack on parliament after the 1996 elections. Under the control of Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisian, Yerkrpah was subsequently transformed into a parliamentary group after several deputies from the Republic bloc split with the party in October of 1997 (shortly after Ter-Petrosian's Nagorno-Karabakh speech). The point is that the February defections, the resignation of Mayor of Yerevan Vano Siradegian (and chair of the Armenian National Movement), and the alignment of Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and Interior and National Security Minister Serzh Sarkisian (no relation) with Prime Minister Kocharian left Ter-Petrosian politically isolated. He was left with little choice but to resign, which he did on February 3, 1998.³⁴

Given the manner in which the previous two elections had taken place, people in 1998 were especially sensitive to the issue of conducting a free and fair presidential election this time. Their hope

³⁰ Astourian, 1999a:49-50.

³¹ See Astourian (1999) for an examination of the history and causes of Ter-Petrosian's resignation (or expanded in Astourian, 1999a).

³² Including the Communist Party of Armenia, the National Democratic Union, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and others.

³³ Freedom House, 1998.

³⁴ There is still some question as to whether Ter-Petrosian's resignation should be viewed as a military (given Sarkisian and Yerkrpah's influence) or more generously as a "velvet" coup. It remains the case that it was in fact a non-violent change of leadership, which speaks well for, at minimum, Armenia's commitment to democratic principles, as well as to Ter-Petrosian's statesmanship.

was displaced. The leading candidate, Kocharian, was the acting president and had all of the advantages an incumbent typically enjoys, even in advanced democracies; he made full use of these during the campaign. A native of Nagorno-Karabakh, Kocharian had occupied various positions in Komsomol and Communist organizations throughout the 1980s, and in 1989 and 1990 was elected to the Armenian parliament. In 1991, he was elected to the National Assembly of Karabakh, and since February of 1989 had been among the most active leaders of the Karabakh Movement. He later served as Chairman of the State Committee of Defense as well as Prime Minister, and in 1996, was selected as President of Nagorno-Karabakh; in March of 1997 he was chosen to be Prime Minister of Armenia. His support came mainly from center-left parties (mainly the Armenian Revolutionary Federation), but also, importantly, from Yerkrpah.

Interestingly, Kocharian's citizenship and eligibility to run was challenged, given his Nagorno-Karabakh (technically, according to international law, Azeri) origins. In the end he finessed the issue, noting that he had already been prime minister, and that in any event, no citizen in Armenia could meet the ten-year residency requirement, since Armenia's independence only dated back seven years.³⁵ On February 24 he told reporters:

“the Republic of Armenia has not existed for 10 years. Besides, I was a deputy to the Armenian parliament for seven years. I have served as Armenian prime minister for one year. If I'm not eligible, then who is?”

Kocharian's chances of victory were improved by the legalization of the nationalist Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the release from prison of its leaders; the party is, needless to say, takes a hard-line on the Nagorno-Karabakh question. Finally, most of the forces which were arrayed against Ter-Petrosian supported Kocharian.

For the sake of simplification, Kocharian faced serious opposition from only one candidate, which turned out to be one of the more interesting stories of the campaign. This was the candidacy of the former First Secretary of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Armenia (1974-1988), Karen Demirchian. Having resigned his post in 1988, Demirchian had quit politics altogether and been working in private industry. Although as recently as 1996 he had given his tacit support to the Ter-Petrosian regime,³⁶ his candidacy in 1998 was a return to politics, seemingly from nowhere. Demirchian was remembered by many Armenians as a kind and just Soviet leader during whose term in office the country enjoyed stability and economic self-sufficiency. Although at the time of the election Demirchian was not a member of a political party (he was formally nominated by the group, Citizen's Initiative), he was seen as the nominee of the People's Party, which had been formally established immediately after the election but actually existed beforehand. Importantly, Demirchian had the backing of an intellectual elite that had long been disillusioned with, and even more to the point, shut out of, Ter-Petrosian's regime.

Two other candidates, Sergey Badalian (Communist Party of Armenia) and Vazgen Manukian

³⁵ Article 3 (3.2) of “The Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Elections of the President.”

³⁶ Sanamyan, 1998.

(National Democratic Union) also did respectably well; minor candidates included Paruir Hairikian (Self-Determination Union), Ashot Bleyan (Armenian National Movement), Artashes Geghamian (independent, later, Law and Unity), Hrant Khachatrian (Union of Constitutional Rights), Vigen Khachatrian (Liberal Democratic Party), Yury Mkrtchian (independent), Aram Sarkisian (Democratic Party of Armenia), and David Shahnazarian (21st Century).

The campaign was one in which voters were actually faced with a clear choice, that between a former Communist appealing to memories of better days in the past against a younger, reform-oriented leader committed to the Nagorno-Karabakh cause. The campaign officially started on March 7, the day after registration of all candidates was completed; it ended on March 15. There were a variety of documented reports of illegal campaigning and some campaign violence. At one point, for example, the Kocharian campaign was caught distributing kerosene outside of campaign headquarters in Yerevan. Another incident involved the distribution of Kocharian campaign literature along with customs forms on incoming Armenian Airlines flights from Amsterdam and Moscow just prior to the first round of voting. Violence erupted on March 8 at a rally for Vazgen Manukian; the aim was to disrupt the meeting (eight people were injured, two requiring hospitalization). Since the police had reportedly been on hand and did not stop the incident, the Ministry of Interior responded by arresting four people and dismissing the police chief for “failing to keep public order.”

Analysis by the European Institute for the Media (EIM) suggested that while there was more balance in coverage of the campaign than had been the case in 1996, the state-run media were still skewed in favor of the incumbent Kocharian. In first-round campaigning they noted that there was far more news coverage of candidate Kocharian on Channel 1 of State television than any other candidate, and the official Armenian-language newspaper Hayastani Hanrapetutyun devoted upwards of four times more editorial coverage to Kocharian than to any other candidate. EIM’s report on the second round showed that “the first channel of State television devoted 42.2 percent of its editorial coverage to candidate Kocharian and 16.7 percent to Demirchian. The rest of the time was devoted to the election process as such.” Hayastani Hanrapetutyun devoted 53.3 percent of its coverage to Mr. Kocharian as compared to 37.8 per cent to Demirchian. Finally, state-controlled media referred to Kocharian in positive terms far more frequently than to Demirchian (for example, 130 of 577 references by national radio Channel 1 to Kocharian were positive, while only 58 of 460 references to Demirchian were positive and 64 were negative). It should also be noted that Demirchian declined the opportunity to debate directly with his opponent on State television.

First-round voting took place on March 16, 1998, and Kocharian won a plurality of the vote (38.8 percent) with Demirchian coming in second (30.7 percent). Since neither candidate won an absolute majority (greater than 50 percent) of the votes cast, a run-off was held between the two on March 30. Minor first-round candidates Hairikian, Sarkissian, and Khatcharyn publicly threw their support to Kocharian for the second round (the first two were later rewarded with posts in his administration). Not surprisingly, Manukian pointedly refused to back either candidate. In the second round of voting Kocharian won fairly convincingly, 59.5 to 40.5 percent. See Table 3-5.

Table 3-5. Presidential Elections in Armenia: March 16 & 30, 1998

<i>Candidate (Party)</i>	<i>Percentage 1st Round Vote</i>	<i>Percentage 2nd Round Vote</i>
Robert Kocharian (No Party) ^a	38.8%	59.5%
Karen Demirchian (No Party) ^b	30.7	40.5
Vasken Manukian (National Democratic Union)	12.2	
Sergey Badalian (Communist Party of Armenia)	11.0	
Paruir Hairikian (Union of Self-Determination)	5.4	
David Shahnazarian (XXI Century)	0.49	
Artashes Geghamian (No Party)	0.45	
Others (Total 5 Candidates) ^c	0.98	

First-round turnout was 68.14% of registered voters; second-round turnout, 63.48%.

^a Although formally unaligned with any party, Kocharian had the support of the Unity and Justice Bloc, which included the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Yerkrpah Union of Karabakh War Veterans, the Social Democratic Party, the Scientific-Industrial and Civic Union, and the Union of Industrialists and Businessmen of Armenia.

^b Later, the People's Party

^c Includes Ashot Bleyan (Armenian National Movement), Hrant Khachatryan (Union of Constitutional Rights), Vigen Khachatryan (Democratic Liberal Party), Aram Sarkisian (Democratic Party of Armenia), and Yuri Mkrtchian (No Party).

The conduct of this election, like others previous, was marked by irregularities (e.g., ballot stuffing);³⁷ in fact, Demirchian never officially acknowledged the results, although unlike others in the past, he called on his supporters to refrain from violence afterwards.³⁸ The election signaled the end of the era of dominance by the Armenian National Movement. This, at minimum, gave the country an opportunity to escape the specter of one-party rule and opened the political spectrum up to the potential for meaningful party competition in the future. How this competition played out in the 1999 parliamentary elections is the subject of the next section.

1999 Parliamentary Elections

Parliamentary elections for a smaller 131-member National Assembly (the previous National Assembly had been a 190-deputy body) in Armenia took place on May 30, 1999.³⁹ According to the Electoral Code (Chapter 9) that was adopted on February 5, 1999 and amended on March 23, 1999, 75 seats were allocated to deputies elected in single-member districts; in addition, 56 seats were allocated by proportional representation. This election featured the emergence and dominance of a new governing

³⁷ OSCE, 1998.

³⁸ RFE/RL Causcuses Report, 1999.

³⁹ Ani Dallakyan contributed materials used in this section.

coalition, the electoral bloc Unity, consisting of an enlarged (by virtue of its takeover by Yerkrpah) Republican Party and the new People's Party. The bloc won 41.67 percent of the proportional vote, which, coupled with their single-member district wins, gave them 55 seats in the National Assembly.

The election, while not free from irregularities,⁴⁰ was conducted in a manner that, according to the OSCE Election Observer Mission, “demonstrated an improvement over prior elections”; it was generally peaceful, orderly, and free of government intimidation. Parties, including the previously-banned Armenian Revolutionary Federation, were generally free to compete and had access to print and electronic media, under rules similar to those governing previous elections. Observers from Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights noted that

“All political forces appeared to enjoy an adequate opportunity to represent their points of view through the printed and broadcast media, via posters, rallies and other meetings with the electorate. Freedom of assembly, association and expression were respected. Parties, candidates and citizens were able to campaign openly in an environment generally free of intimidation. Even those few parties and individuals who chose to boycott the elections were able to promote their point of view.”⁴¹

The European Institute for the Media that monitored media coverage during the four weeks immediately prior to the elections claimed that no major violations of the Electoral Code and other relevant regulations were present during the pre-election period. Coverage of political parties on state television and in other media was generally balanced and largely neutral. Despite this, differences existed: The Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnakstutiun, the Unity bloc, the Country of Law party and the Law and Unity bloc received more overall coverage during the monitored period, according to the OSCE/ODIR Final Report on Parliamentary Elections. “The most active advertisers were the Country of Law party (23 hours), the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (over 22 hours) and Unity (over 18 hours). News and information programs led with reports on Unity (nearly 4 hours), Rule of Law (3.5 hours) and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (nearly 2 hours).⁴²

Parties and blocs were required to collect 30,000 signatures for registration; the deadline for registration was March 30. In all, 717 candidates were registered for single-member district races, while a total of 21 blocs and political parties (15 parties and six blocs of parties; 1002 candidates) competed in the party list vote (eleven of these, the Unity bloc, the Law and Unity bloc, the AIM+ bloc, and the Motherland bloc, as well as the National Democratic Union, Communist Party of Armenia, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Armenian National Movement, Mission, Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia,

⁴⁰ In what is probably a testament to improvements in the conduct of elections, Vano Siradeghian, a close ally of Ter-Petrosian, leader of the Armenian National Movement, and at that time a fugitive being sought for the murder of two police officers five years previous, returned to Armenia in the spring of 1999; within three days he was released by authorities, since under Armenian law he enjoyed conditional immunity as a candidate. This said, it is believed in many quarters that the charges were politically motivated.

⁴¹ ODIR, 1999.

⁴² OSCE/ODIR Final Report on Parliamentary Elections, 1999.

Powerful Motherland, Democratic Party of Armenia, and Worthy Future, fielded greater than 40 candidates in the proportional list portion of the election). The number of candidates each party or bloc fielded in each district was fairly uneven; only the Communist Party of Armenia, Republican Party of Armenia, National Democratic Union, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Union of Self-Determination, People's Party, and the Democratic Party of Armenia, fielded candidates in more than 15 districts; about 15 parties had candidates in only a relatively few districts. The number of independent candidates running in single-member districts was overwhelming: About 230 candidates spread out over all districts.⁴³

As noted, there were a total of six electoral blocs, or coalitions of parties, competing for proportional list seats in 1999. Although electoral blocs had formed and competed in 1995 (notably, the Armenian National Movement-led Republic bloc, which did not compete in 1999), this was a full-scale strategic adaption for those smaller parties who, facing the five-percent threshold, hoped to gain party-list representation. Of course, in an electoral environment where there are scores of parties, only a few⁴⁴ can realistically hope to do so. The four blocs who did not cross the threshold were the (1) Union of Communist and Socialist Parties, comprised of the United Progressive Communist Party of Armenia and the Women of the Armenian Land; (2) "AIM+" bloc, including the Union of Self-Determination and the Motherland-Diaspora Union; (3) the Motherland bloc, which counted as members Democratic Motherland and Intellectual Armenia; and, (4) the Union of Socialist Forces and Intellectuals bloc, which included Kaissa, the Social Democratic Party of Armenia, and the Union of Intellectuals.

A somewhat more successful coalition attempt was the Law and Unity bloc. A total of four political parties and political organizations came together in 1999 to form the leftist electoral bloc Law and Unity, including National Unity, the Union of Constitutional Rights, Artsakh-Armenia, and the Scientific Industrial and Civic Union; the first two are the main partners in the coalition. The main candidates for the bloc were Artashes Geghamian, the founder and chair of National Unity,⁴⁵ a second-tier party begun in early 1997, and Hrant Khachatryan and Haik Babuchanian from the older Union of Constitutional Rights. The bloc, openly supported by Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Minister Samvel Babayan, received eight seats by garnering 7.97 percent of the vote.

In addition to the smaller parties who hoped to gain representation by pooling resources, a few larger parties joined forces in hopes that by doing so they might dominate the field. This was the case for the electoral bloc Unity. The initiative for the creation of the Unity bloc, comprised of the center-right Republican and Party and its junior partner, the center-left People's Party, came from Vazgen Sarkisian, the popular creator of the Armenian National Army and leader of the Republican Party, and Karen Demirchian, presidential candidate in 1998. Both parties were prominent players (through their candidates) in the 1998 presidential elections. The history of the formation of the alliance dates back to

⁴³ See Appendix for a detailed breakdown of the number of proportional list candidacies and single-member district winners.

⁴⁴ Actually, assuming no wasted votes and a five-percent threshold, 20.

⁴⁵ He is also the head of the bloc in parliament.

the end of 1998 and the beginning of 1999 and, according to members of both parties, was induced and driven by electoral necessity. The bloc was more leftist in its orientation, calling for an increased role of the state in the economy.

Voting for the parliament took place on May 30, 1999; turnout, according to the CEC, was 55% of registered voters. Results are presented in Table 3-6.

Table 3-6. Parliamentary Elections in Armenia: May 30, 1999

<i>Party</i>	<i>Party List Vote: Percentage (Seats)</i>	<i>Total Number of Seats</i>
<u>Unity Bloc</u> , including: People's Party of Armenia Republican Party of Armenia	41.67% (29)	55
Communist Party of Armenia	12.1 (8)	10
<u>Law and Unity (A.K.A. Right and Accord) Bloc</u> , including: Union of Constitutional Rights National Unity (A.K.A., Accord) Artsakh-Armenia Scientific Industrial and Civic Union	7.97 (6)	8 0 2 0 0
Armenian Revolutionary Federation	7.83 (5)	8
Rule of Law	5.28 (4)	6
National Democratic Union	5.17 (4)	6
Dignified Future	3.27 (0)	0
<u>Union of Communist and Socialist Parties</u> , including: United Progressive Communist Party of Armenia Women of the Armenian Land	2.49 (0)	0
Powerful Motherland	2.31 (0)	0
<u>"AIM+" Bloc</u> , including: Union of Self-Determination Motherland—Diaspora Union	2.29 (0)	0
<u>Motherland Bloc</u> , including: Democratic Motherland Intellectual Armenia	1.24 (0)	0
Armenian National Movement	1.17 (0)	1
Freedom	1.03 (0)	0
Democratic Party of Armenia	0.99 (0)	0
Mission	0.76 (0)	1
Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia	0.69 (0)	0
Free Armenia Mission	0.61 (0)	0
National State	0.54 (0)	0
Youth Party of Armenia	0.53 (0)	0

Table 3-6. Parliamentary Elections in Armenia: May 30, 1999

<i>Party</i>	<i>Party List Vote: Percentage (Seats)</i>	<i>Total Number of Seats</i>
<u>Union of Socialist Forces and Intellectuals Bloc</u> , including: Kaissa Social Democratic Party of Armenia Union of Intellectuals	0.24 (0)	0
Shamiram	0.19 (0)	0
Independents	—	36
“Wasted” Party List Votes	18.35	—
<i>Total Number of Seats</i>	56	131

A total of six parties or blocs crossed the five-percent threshold required to win seats decided by party-list voting. Behind the Unity bloc was the Communist Party of Armenia, which received 12.1 percent of the proportional vote and was awarded a total of ten seats in parliament. Two parties, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Law and Unity bloc each won 8 seats. Another two parties, Country of Law and the National Democratic Union also crossed the five-percent barrier needed to gain party representation in the National Assembly; each won six seats. The number of “wasted” votes, meaning votes for those parties which did not pass the five-percent threshold, increased in this election to 18.35 percent, up from ten percent in 1995. Another interesting development in the 1999 elections was the thirty-six seats won by independent candidates; this pattern mirrors the 1995 parliamentary elections. Most of these deputies eventually aligned, informally, with Unity, giving that bloc close to an outright majority. Significantly, the president was left with little or no formal parliamentary support, being able to count on only Country of Law and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (who he re-instituted after they had been banned).

Toward 2003

The two leaders of the Unity bloc wasted no time in forming a government that reflected a new power alignment in Armenia, an alignment that only loosely followed party patterns. In early June Republican Party leader Vazgen Sarkisian was selected as prime minister, while Karen Demirchian, by then leader of the officially-formed People’s Party, was tapped as Speaker of the Parliament. The gap between the president and the government, composed mainly of those who had helped the president to power, continued to grow.

In mid-June, Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian removed Serzh Sarkisian (leader of Country of Law, and Kocharian’s closest party ally) from his post as Interior Minister; Sarkisian was left with his

post as National Security Minister.⁴⁶ The Prime Minister then intervened in Nagorno-Karabakh in a power struggle between its president, Arkady Ghukasian and its defense minister, Samvel Babayan; the latter is believed to have backed the formation of the pro-presidential Law and Unity electoral bloc (which included Country of Law) in 1999 and is thought to have a great deal of influence in Armenia. Sarkisian also announced a tough anti-corruption plan in October, differed openly with Kocharian about ties with Russia (Kocharian is more European-oriented),⁴⁷ and, participated in secret discussions with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot over the fate of Nagorno-Karabakh. Substantial differences, in other words, existed between the president and his prime minister; moreover, the president's support in parliament was crumbling. In fact, in October, opposition deputies introduced a measure that would have made it easier to impeach a sitting president; although the measure failed, it was clearly aimed at Kocharian's removal.⁴⁸

The preceding set the stage (or at least many analysts believe it to be relevant) for the events of October 27, 1999, when armed gunmen, led by one Nairi Hunanian, burst into the National Assembly building, killing both Sarkisian and Demirchian, as well as seven others, and wounding about six others. Hunanian's motives have been, as one might imagine, the cause of a great deal of speculation ever since, and we will leave such speculation to those better qualified to engage in it; the investigation into the incident has been rife with controversy, and the trial, as of July, 2002, has yet to begin.

For our purposes what is important is that the popular leaders of the two most successful parties in the 1999 elections were murdered, leaving those parties, and their future as an electoral alliance, uncertain (recall that the coalition was basically held together by these two personalities). Moreover, it had the potential to alter the executive-legislative power balance, and eventually did so, to the advantage of the former. Immediately after the attacks Kocharian named Sarkisian's brother Aram, also of Yerkrpah and the Republican Party, as prime minister; their relationship was strained at best. What followed was about six months of political disarray and mistrust between the president and Unity.

While a question remains as to whether Kocharian was behind the attack on parliament, prosecutors officially cleared Kocharian allies (in particular, Aleksan Haratiunian, a close presidential aide, arrested in December of 1999) of any involvement. The president used this opportunity to co-opt part of the opposition by giving several Yerkrpah members military promotions in the spring of 2000. In May of 2000 he dismissed Prime Minister Aram Sarkisian (along with Defense Minister Vagharshak), naming Andranik Markarian, Republican Party leader, as his replacement (a move their coalition partner, the People's Party, objected to). Markarian has proven to be generally pro-Kocharian in his orientation; since then, Kocharian seems to be in control once again. He has, however, since made an attempt to make

⁴⁶ There are many sources one can consult for the following events; I have drawn heavily on Astourian, 2000.

⁴⁷ Some analysts suggested that Unity was created under the impetus of then-Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov and elements of the Russian military, who feared that Kocharian would disrupt the Russo-Armenian "special relationship"; see RFE/RL 1999.

⁴⁸ RFE/RL Caucuses Report, 1998.

the government more inclusive, offering government posts to leaders of many opposition parties (e.g., the National Democratic Union, the Communist Party of Armenia, more).⁴⁹ The situation remains, however, fluid.

Elections both for the presidency and a new parliament are expected to take place in Armenia next in 2003, in March and May, respectively. After two years of haggling, as of this writing the new parliament will consist of 75 deputies elected by party list and 56 elected from single-member districts. There will also be a new CEC appointed, this one with nine members (down from 13), three by the president, and six appointed by parties in parliament. As is the case in trying to follow party politics in all post-communist countries, it is difficult to make predictions; parties and alliances form and disintegrate seemingly overnight; what is fact today is fiction tomorrow. This said, some things seem to be clear.

In September of 2001, the day after 13 opposition parties (including the People's Party) called for his impeachment, President Kocharian announced he would seek re-election. It is all but certain that the Unity alliance will not be running in 2003. The 13-party opposition referred to above, which includes the People's Party, plans to contest the elections as a bloc. Several of the other leading opposition parties, including the Republican Party, have also indicated a willingness to back a single opposition candidate. Who that candidate might be, if anyone, has yet to be decided. For its part, the Republican Party has been weakened by the defection in February of 2001 of several deputies (all members of Yerkrpah), including Aram Sarkisian, in protest against the actions of fellow party member, Prime Minister Markarian. Rumors have circulated throughout 2001-02 that Ter-Petrossian might be setting the stage for a comeback; even if Ter-Petrossian does not run, the Armenian National Movement has active busy trying to forge alliances with several right-center parties (Armat, Freedom, 21st Century, and the Liberal Democratic Party) in order to again become a relevant force in Armenian politics. Other parties are also contemplating alliances as well, having, it seems, learned the lessons of 1995 and 1999, where large numbers of parties running by themselves were shut out of parliament by not clearing the five-percent barrier.

⁴⁹ See Appendix for factions in parliament as of August, 2001.

Section IV. Some Conclusions

Party Politics in Armenia

There are any number of symptoms we can identify to suggest that party politics in Armenia are less than fully institutionalized or consolidated. In fact, democracy itself seems less than stable; political actors, in other words, have yet to fully accept the rules of the game. This is suggested by a long litany of examples. Consider: There have been better than ten prime ministers in as many years in Armenia, and top government officials (including one president) regularly resign before their term is over; others have been assassinated, and there was serious talk of presidential impeachment in both 1998 and 2001. There is continual talk of early elections, both presidential and parliamentary. Electoral laws for the parliament have changed for every one of four (one upcoming) parliamentary elections. In virtually every election there have been charges of electoral manipulation, and there is good reason to believe many of these charges. In some cases these elections are followed by violent protest. Finally, with respect to party politics, the number of political parties registered in Armenia continues to grow: In 1996 there were roughly 50; in 1998, almost 70; as of summer 2002, 126. This, in one sense, is hardly a surprise, since none of the above suggests a stable environment for party consolidation.

Some suggest that the acceptance of basic democratic principles in Armenia is in doubt. One of the things these analysts point to is the growing role of the military, Yerkrpah, and its leader Vazgen Sarkisian, in politics and government. To borrow from one of these analysts:

“a political party led by a defense minister [Sarkisian] can in no way contribute to the establishment of civil society . . . in the conditions existing in [Armenia] a party wielding such force and military levers can be *a priori* be considered the winner of parliamentary elections. Parties without those levers cannot compete with it.”⁵⁰

Moreover, there seems to be little by way of other democratic principles like trust, tolerance, or compromise. “In the prevailing atmosphere of mutual demonization, there appears to be a total absence in Armenia’s political class of trust or willingness to give the other side the benefit of the doubt on any issue of policy or politics”⁵¹

What do we, or should we expect, from political parties? At minimum, parties should offer clear and distinct policy alternatives that citizens can understand, should do so with some degree of consistency and continuity, and should work to implement those policy alternatives when in office. Only in this way can parties develop and function as the linkage institutions they are ideally supposed to be in a democratic political order. Here Armenian political parties fall short. Most Armenian parties are ideologically weak, appealing to the nation as a whole and claiming to present a national ideology, which translates to defense

⁵⁰ As quoted in CSCE, 1999:12.

⁵¹ OSCE, 1995:17.

of Armenian territorial integrity and culture both from “Turks” (from Turkey and Azerbaijan) and from the west. Virtually all analysts agree that there is a lack of clear differences in party programs, that left-right differences are blurred, and that political alliances cut across ideological lines. This state of affairs hardly provides voters with clear-cut choices.

Parties, as noted previously, form, exist, and function around powerful leaders and their followers. Most observers suggest that Armenian party politics are, at root, clannish in nature.

“The formation of political groups and alliances . . . does not follow or reflect the interests of existing social strata: It rather centers on certain political figures, acquiring a clannish nature. The prevalence of patron-client relationships in society might encourage the formation of petty economic and political elites along the lines of the redistribution of wealth.”¹

Of course the clannish nature of Armenian party politics follows a pattern seen in most post-Soviet, Central Asians states, but at minimum it impedes or slows the formation of lasting institutions (parties) based on policy programs.

There also seems to be a great deal of mistrust of or indifference to political parties by the public; there is little sense that parties are their representatives or channels of communication to government. As of 1998, only three percent of the citizenry identified with a political party.² To be fair, like many post-Soviet societies, there is a certain anti-party bias in politics, this based on the 70-year rule of the hegemonic Communist Party. In addition, a middle class, the classic breeding ground of parties in other countries, has been slow to emerge in Armenia because of poor economic conditions. In fact, in the eyes of some analysts, most voters seem to cast their votes based either (1) on a desire to maintain the status quo, for the candidate who is most likely to win or to maintain a certain political stability (unlike Armenia’s neighbors, plagued by internal wars, etc.), or (2) conversely, against the status quo power arrangements, meaning that they are simply casting a general protest vote.³ There is, in other words, little sense of connection between citizen and party.

Other factors which likely inhibit the development and consolidation of the party system in Armenia include the fact that constitution is heavily weighted in favor of the president, the fact that elections to parliament and the president are not concurrent, and opposition parties still have difficulties gaining meaningful access to finances and media.⁴

On the other side of the coin, there have been six elections in Armenia since 1990 which have, formally, been competitive multi-party elections; two more are scheduled for 2003, and there is little reason to believe they will not be held as scheduled. Moreover, there has been a regime change brought about, at least in part, by these elections, that being the election of President Robert Kocharian in 1998

¹ “Armenia Human Development Report” 1996; see also Bremmer and Welt, 1997, Dudwick, 1997.

² “National Human Development Report, Armenia,” 1998.

³ RFE/RL Caucuses Report, 1999.

⁴ Bremmer and Welt, 1997.

and the Unity bloc in 1999. There is also evidence that parties are undergoing some amount of political learning, meaning that with each passing election, although there are more parties, there are also more electoral blocs. One would hope that this trend continues, since the percentage of the “wasted” party-list vote almost doubled from 1995 to 1999 (from 10 to 18 percent); this has huge implications for representation, linkages, and trust in government. Finally, as we have seen, there are a few political parties in Armenia which have indeed developed beyond their leaders and can be thought of to some greater or lesser as being institutionalized.

Future Research Directions

As a comprehensive picture of Armenian party politics this essay is incomplete; more research is needed to round out our understanding. In particular, survey research, one of the staples of party politics scholarship, is sadly lacking. This would give us a clearer picture of how parties as linkages (the party-in-the-electorate) is developing. More work is also needed to illuminate the organization and mechanics of party politics; in particular, campaign and party finances are still rather opaque.

Finally, one issue that has been an undercurrent throughout Armenia’s democratic history is the relationship between Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh politics. In 1991, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation controlled the government in Nagorno-Karabakh; did this affect President Ter-Petrosian’s Nagorno-Karabakh policy? The current president is a Nagorno-Karabakh native and her former president; some have suggested that the 1999 Armenian parliamentary elections were in actuality a smoke screen for a power struggle between the leaders of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, many political leaders in Armenia (and one would presume, in Nagorno-Karabakh as well) rose to prominence on the shoulders of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Future research on this subject has the potential for parsing out what role parties have and will play in the greater scheme of things. This is critical, since, as was suggested previously, a major assumption guiding this essay is that party politics matters, especially in a democracy. Armenia’s democratic future depends in large part on the development of parties and the party system.

Appendix

Table A-1. 1998 Presidential Election: First Round Voting by District

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Robert Kocharian</i>	36.0	40.8	45.5	34.2	37.4	37.0	40.1	34.3	55.2	44.9	38.7	37.3
<i>Karen Demirchian</i>	39.0	29.5	14.4	22.6	30.1	35.3	28.0	27.5	17.0	21.5	39.9	52.5
<i>Vazgen Manukian</i>	13.8	10.3	17.5	13.2	9.9	5.6	10.5	13.3	14.8	13.6	6.8	5.4
<i>Sergey Badalyan</i>	3.5	13.8	16	21.9	16.6	12.1	15.2	15.8	9.5	13.7	6.7	0.9
<i>Paruir Hairikian</i>	5.3	4.1	4.6	6.6	4.5	8.4	4.6	7.2	2.3	4.8	5.2	1.2
<i>David Shahnazarian</i>	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.9
<i>Artashes Geghamian</i>	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.5
<i>Hrant Khachatrian</i>	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2	1.2	0.3
<i>Vigen Khacharian</i>	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
<i>Aram Sarkisian</i>	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6
<i>Yuri Mkrtychian</i>	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
<i>Ashot Bleyan</i>	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: The Central Electoral Commission <www.elections.am>.

Key to districts: 1, Yerevan; 2, Aragatsotn; 3, Ararat; 4, Armavir; 5, Gegharkunik; 6, Lori; 7, Kotayk; 8, Shirak; 9, Syunik; 10, Vayots Dzor; 11, Tavush; 12, Abroad

Table A-2. 1998 Presidential Election: Second Round Voting by District

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Robert Kocharian</i>	56.4	55.4	77.3	55.7	61.1	55.0	56.7	55.7	73.1	68.5	56.6	52.2
<i>Karen Demirchian</i>	43.6	44.6	22.7	44.3	38.9	45.0	43.3	44.3	27.0	31.5	43.4	47.9

Source: The Central Electoral Commission <www.elections.am>.

Table A-3. 1999 Parliamentary Elections: Political Parties and the Number of Their Candidates Running for SMD Seats

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Number of Candidates</i>
<i>Communist Party of Armenia</i>	60
<i>Republican Party of Armenia</i>	42
<i>National Democratic Union</i>	42
<i>Armenian Revolutionary Federation</i>	41
<i>Union of Self-Determination</i>	32
<i>People's Party of Armenia</i>	21
<i>Democratic Party of Armenia</i>	19
<i>Armenian National Movement</i>	11
<i>Democratic Motherland</i>	11
<i>Powerful Motherland</i>	9
<i>Country of Law</i>	8
<i>Social-Democratic Party of Armenia</i>	7
<i>Worthy Future</i>	7
<i>Freedom</i>	7
<i>Scientific Industrial Civic Union</i>	7
<i>United Progressive Communist Party of Armenia</i>	6
<i>Intellectual Armenia</i>	4
<i>Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia</i>	4
<i>Union of Constitutional Rights</i>	3
<i>National Unity</i>	3
<i>Social Democratic "Hnchiakian" Party</i>	3
<i>Others</i>	3

Table A-4. 1999 Parliamentary Elections: Political Parties/Blocs and the Number of Their Candidates on Proportional List

<i>Political Party/Bloc</i>	<i>Number of Candidates on Proportional List</i>
<i>Unity Bloc</i>	143
<i>Law and Unity Bloc</i>	96
<i>National Democratic Union</i>	75
<i>Communist Party of Armenia</i>	72
<i>Armenian Revolutionary Federation</i>	70
<i>AIM+ Bloc</i>	58
<i>Armenian National Movement</i>	49
<i>Mission</i>	47
<i>Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia</i>	47
<i>Union of Intellectuals and Socialist Forces Bloc</i>	47
<i>Powerful Motherland</i>	45
<i>Motherland Bloc</i>	42
<i>Democratic Party of Armenia</i>	40
<i>Worthy Future</i>	40
<i>Country of Law</i>	31
<i>Union of Communist and Socialist Parties Bloc</i>	23
<i>Freedom</i>	28
<i>Youth Party of Armenia</i>	15
<i>National State</i>	12
<i>Free Armenia Mission</i>	11
<i>Shamiram</i>	11

Table A-5. 1999 Parliamentary Elections: Candidates Who Won by Majority System (75 Deputies)

Vano Siradeghian (Armenian National Movement)	Hrant Grigorian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Harutyun Pambukian (Non-partisan)	Leonid Hakobian(Communist Party of Armenia)
Napoleon Azizian (National Concord Party)	Alexan Hakobian (Non-partisan)
Eduard Madatian (Non-partisan)	Armenak Armenakian (Non-partisan)
Henrik Abrahamian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Mourad Mouradian (Non-partisan)
Martin Hovhannisian (Non-partisan)	Shavarsh Kocharian (National Democratic Union)
Samvel Avetisian (Non-partisan)	Armen Mkhitarian (Non-partisan)
Zhirair Gevorgian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Haroutyoun Gharagyozyan (Republican Party of Armenia)
Melik Gasparin (Non-partisan)	Gagik Melikian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Khachatur Sukiasian (Non-partisan)	Manouk Gasparian (Non-partisan)
Hakob Hakobian (Non-partisan)	Hakob Hakobian (Non-partisan)
Levon Sarkisian(Non-partisan)	Hovhannes Hovhannisian (Non-partisan)
Manvel Ghazarian (Non-partisan)	Andranik Markarian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Vahan Hovhannisian (Armenian Revolutionary Federation)	Robert Amirkhanian (Non-partisan)
David Lokian (Armenian Revolutionary Federation)	Yerem Karapetian (Non-partisan)
Sasoun Mikaelian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Souqias Avetisian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Myasnik Malkhasian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Rouben Gevorgian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Vrezh Shahgeldian (Non-partisan)	Samvel Saghatelian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Hovhannes Kochinian (Non-partisan)	Vardan Ayvazian (Non-partisan)
Karen Karapetian (Non-partisan)	Vram Gyoulzadian (Non-partisan)
Ghoukas Ulikhanian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Andranik Manoukian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Zhora Galstian (Non-partisan)	Paruyr Karapetian (Non-partisan)
Hakob Hakobian (Non-partisan)	Samson Sarkisian (People's Party of Armenia)
Grigor Haroutyounian (People's Party of Armenia)	Vardges Matevosian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Vardevan Grigorian (Mission)	Samvel Balasanian (Non-partisan)
Hranoush Hakobian (Non-partisan)	Moushegh Movsisian (Non-partisan)
Gagik Voskalian (Communist Party of Armenia)	Gagik Kostanian (Non-partisan)
Samvel Avetisian (Country of Law party)	Vahram Baghdasarian (Non-partisan)
Gagik Khachatrian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Nahapet Gevorgian (Non-partisan)
Gevorg Davtian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Aram Hovhannisian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Alexan Poghosian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Martin Sukiasian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Souren Avetisian (Armenian Revolutionary Federation)	Taron Sahakian (Non-partisan)
Martoun Matevosian (Armenian Revolutionary Federation)	Misak Mkrтчian (People's Party of Armenia)
Aram Haroutyounian (Non-partisan)	Haroutyoun Mouradian (Non-partisan)
Viktor Dallakian (Republican Party of Armenia)	Souren Khachatrian (People's Party of Armenia)
Arshak Sadoyan (National Democratic Union)	Vahan Zatikian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Artour Baghdasarian (Country of Law Party)	Lernik Alexanian (Republican Party of Armenia)
Vahagn Grigorian (Non-partisan)	

Source: International Foundation for Electoral Systems <www.ifes.am>.

Table A-6. Faction Size in the Armenian National Assembly (August 2001)

<i>Faction</i>	<i>Number of Members</i>
<i>Unity</i>	46
<i>People's Deputy</i>	16
<i>Hayestan</i>	12
<i>People's Agro-Industrial Union</i>	11
<i>Communist Party of Armenia</i>	8
<i>Armenian Revolutionary Federation</i>	8
<i>Law and Unity</i>	7
<i>Rule of Law</i>	6
<i>National Democratic Union</i>	4
<i>Non-aligned</i>	11

RFE/RL Caucuses Report, August 13, 2001.

Sources

1996. "Armenia Human Development Report." Chapter Three. United Nations Development Programme. Available at <<http://www.undp.am/archive/Nhdr/nhdr96/page4.htm>>. Accessed on August 20, 2002.
1998. "National Human Development Report, Armenia." Chapter Two. United Nations Development Programme. Available at <http://www.undp.am/archive/Nhdr/nhdr98/chap3text/2_2.htm>. Accessed on August 20, 2002.
- "Armenia." ND. Available at <<http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/facts/armenia.html>>. Accessed on August 20, 2002.
- Armenian Youth Federation. 1998. "The Origin and Development of the Armenian Revolutionary Movement." Available at <http://www.ayf.org/fom/dec_98_arfhist/arfhist.shtml>. Accessed on August 20, 2002.
- Astourian, Stephan. 1999. "From Ter-Petrossyan to Kocharyan: Causes and Prospects of the Transition in Armenia." Contemporary Caucasus Newsletter. The Berkely Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies. Issue 7, Winter, 1998-99:3-6.
- Astourian, Stephan. 1999a. "From Ter-Petrossyan to Kocharyan: Causes and Prospects of the Transition in Armenia." The Berkely Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies Working Paper Series.
- Astourian, Stephan. 2000. "Killings in the Armenian Parliament: Coup d'Etat, Political Conspiracy, or Destructive Rage?" Contemporary Caucasus Newsletter. The Berkely Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies. Issue 9, Spring, 2000:1-5, 19.
- Bremmer, Ian, and Cory Welt. 1997. "A Break with the Past? State and Economy in Post-communist Armenia." *Helsinki Monitor*. 8(1).
- British Helsinki Human Rights Group. Available at <<http://www.bhhrg.org>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Diamond, Larry. 1997. "Introduction: In Search of Consolidation," in Larry Diamond, et al., eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*. Baltimore: John Hopkins.
- Central Election Commission of the Republic of Armenia. Available at <<http://www.elections.am>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). 1995. "Report on Armenia's Parliamentary Election and Constitutional Referendum, July 5, 1995." Washington, D.C. Available at <<http://ww.house.gov/csce>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- CSCE. 1996. "Report on Armenia's Presidential Election, September 22, 1996." Washington, D.C. Available at <<http://ww.house.gov/csce>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- CSCE. 1998. "Report on Armenia's Presidential Election, March 16 and 30, 1998." Washington, D.C.

- Available at <<http://ww.house.gov/csce>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- CSCE. 1999. "Report on Armenia's Parliamentary Election, May 30, 1999." Washington, D.C. Available at <<http://ww.house.gov/csce>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Democracy Union. 1997. *Republic of Armenia: Public Political Organizations*. Yerevan: Van Ariyan.
- Dudwick, Nora. 1997. "Political Transformations in Postcommunist Armenia: Images and Realities," in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, eds., *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University.
- Dudwick, Nora. 1997a. "Independent Armenia: Paradise Regained or Paradise Lost?" in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds., *New Politics, New States: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University.
- Eurasianet.Org. "Armenia Election Watch." Available at <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/election/armenia/index.shtml>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Freedom House. 1998. "Nations in Transit: Armenia." Available at <<http://freedomhouse.org/>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Freedom House. 2002. "Nations in Transit: Armenia." Available at <<http://freedomhouse.org/>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Gevorkian, Arshak. 2002. "Red or Dead? Communism in Armenia Is Strong Nostalgia, Weak Politics." *ArmeniaWeek*. January 11, 2002. Available at <<http://www.armeniaweek.com/jan112002/communist.html>>. Accessed on August 10, 2002.
- "History of Armenia." 1994. The Library of Congress Country Studies. Available at <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>>. Accessed on August 1, 2002.
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. 1999. "Final Report on the May 30, 1999 Parliamentary Elections in Armenia." Available at <<http://www.ndi.org/>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. 1999. "Parliamentary Elections, May, 1999." Warsaw, July 30, 1999. Available at <<http://www.ifes.am/elections>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- "Political Parties of Armenia." 1999. Center for Policy Analysis, American University of Armenia. Available at <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/election/armenia/partpro1.html>>. Accessed on May 15, 1999.
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. *Caucasus Report*. Available at <<http://www.rferl.org/>>.
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). *Daily Digest*. Available at <<http://www.rferl.org/>>.
- Respublika Armenia, September 20, 1991.

- Sanamyan, Emil. 1998. "On the Eve of the Crucial Choice." Armenian News Network / Groong: Review & Outlook. Available at <<http://groong.usc.edu/ro/ro-19980312.html>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Sargsyan, Lusine. 2001. "The Karabakh Movement." Armenian Center of National and International Studies. *Hayatsk Yerevanits, Monthly Journal of Public Policy*. Year 4, No. 8 (41) November 2001 p. 53-55.
- Tadevosyan, Aghassi. 1998. "The Peculiarities of Ethnopsychological Changes During the Transition Period in Armenia." Armenian Center of National and International Studies, Occasional Paper Series.
- Ter-Gabrielian, Gevork. 1998. "Explaining Armenia: an Insider's View." Armenian News Network / Groong: Review & Outlook. Available at <<http://groong.usc.edu/ro/ro-19980207.html>>. Accessed July 1, 2002.
- Zakarian, Armen, and Karine Kalantarian. 2002. "Pro-Kocharian Parliament Forces Discuss Election Deals." *Armenia Report*. Available at <<http://www.armenialiberty.org/fullreport>>. Accessed on August 20, 2002.

Readings on Party Politics

Dix, Robert H. 1992. "Democratization and the Institutionalization of Latin American Political Parties." *Comparative Political Studies*. 24:488-511.

Duverger, Maurice. 1965. *Political Parties :Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. Translated by Barbara and Robert North. Second Edition. New York: Wiley.

Epstein, Leon D. 1980. *Political Parties in Western Democracies*. Second Edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Dalton, Russell J. 1996. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Second Edition. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.

Janda, Kenneth. 1993. "Comparative Political Parties: Research and Theory," in Ada W. Finifter, *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington, D.C.: APSA.

Kitschelt, Herbert, Zdenka Mansfeldova, Radoslaw Markowski and Gabor Toka. 1999. *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation and Inter-Party Cooperation*. Cambridge.

Sartori, Giovanni. 1976. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ware, Alan. 1996. *Political Parties and Party Systems*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University.

Other Internet Sites Related to Armenian Politics

- * Armenian Revolutionary Federation Site: <<http://www.arf.am>>
- * The Diaspora: <<http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/history/index.html>>
- * Armenian National Movement Paper: <<http://www.aravot.am/>>
- * Asbarez Armenian Daily Newspaper: <<http://www.asbarez.com>>
- * Noyan Tapan Information Center: <<http://www.nt.am/>>
- * Armenia Week: <<http://www.armeniaweek.com/jan112002/communist.html>>
- * Democratic Party of Armenia: <http://dem_party.tripod.com/>
- * Social Democrat Hunchakian Party: <<http://www.hunchak.org.au/>>

The single best way (and still free) to follow Armenian, as well as other post-Soviet politics, remains the listserv Daily Digest distributed by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, available at <<http://www.rferl.org/>>.