

Fact Sheet #1

Soviet Armenia in 1987

- Politics
 - o Armenia had been a “republic” of the Soviet Union from 1920. (It had been under Russia before that but was independent for a short time when the Bolshevik Revolution through Russia into chaos. But it didn’t take long for the new Russian “Soviet” government to reassert its power in Armenia.) Thus, Armenia had its own local government but was ruled by a central Soviet Russian national government. It was subject to the same economic policies and limitations on freedom of speech as were other areas of the Soviet Union.
 - o As part of the Soviet Union, Armenia has shared in Soviet advances and triumphs too (eg. the victory of World War II, being part of the biggest country in the world and one of the two superpowers).
 - o In 1987 the Soviet Union (and thus Armenia) was still at war in Afghanistan.

- Population
 - o About 3.6 million people lived in Armenia.
 - o About 96% of the people were ethnically Armenian and speak Armenian as their primary language.

- Culture
 - o Armenia was the first country to have Christianity as the official religion (301 AD). But in the Soviet period, people weren’t allowed to practice any religion.
 - o Armenia has its own language and a distinctive alphabet that was invented in 405 AD. People still speak primarily Armenian though they are fluent in Russian too (which they use for communicating with people from other parts of the Soviet Union).

- Economics
 - o Armenia didn’t have its own oil fields. This was not a problem since, as part of the Soviet Union, Armenia got oil at low prices from other parts of the country.
 - o Kirovakan had chemical and textile industries – and other industries too.

- Kirovakan
 - o The third largest city in Armenia.
 - o Population of about 175,000 people.
 - o Full employment (Soviet policy).
 - o Fairly well-off – though not as high a standard of living as in the West.

- Schools
 - o Schools co-ed (boys and girls together in one class).

- Grades 1-10 in the same building. Students graduate after 10th grade.
 - Standardized curriculum throughout the Soviet Union, so students all study the exact same thing. For example, students study Soviet history but not their own, Armenian history.
 - All students learn Russian as well as Armenian in school. People are bilingual, fluent in Russian and Armenian (though they speak Armenian at home).
- After graduation:
- All males had to serve 2 years in the army (or 3 in the navy). They would usually be stationed far from their home.
 - People could go to a university, specialized institute, etc. Women made up 56% of the student body. Tuition was FREE.
 - Men could get a deferment of their military service in order to study.
 - Everyone in the Soviet Union was guaranteed a job.