

KAZAKHSTAN: TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY?

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To my country

KAZAKHSTAN: TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY?

A Master's Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on the Kazakhstani way of transition to democracy. After having analysed the history of Kazakhstan, the author examines social, national, political and state structures, political leaders and international factors have affected Kazakhstan's transition to democracy. However, the thesis encompasses future perspectives of the Republic and includes suggestions on what should be done on the subject as well.

Keywords: Former Soviet Union, Kazakhstan, Democratic transition.

ÖZET

Kazakistan: Demokrasiye Geçiş Mi?

Tokhtarbayev, Ozat

Master, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu çalışma Kazakistan'a özgü demokrasiye geçiş yolu üzerinde yoğunlaşmaktadır. Tez yazarı, Kazakistan tarihini inceledikten sonra, Kazakistan'ın demokrasiye geçiş yolunu etkileyegelen toplumsal, ulusal, siyasal ve devlet yapılarını, siyasal liderlerini ve uluslararası etkenleri ele almaktadır. Bununla birlikte, çalışma Kazakistan'ın gelecek perspektifleri de kapsamakta ve konu üzerinde nelerin yapılması gerektiği ile ilgili önerileri de içermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eski Sovyetler Birliği ülkeleri, Kazakistan, Demokrasiye geçiş

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy... Although this term may mean different things “depending on the individual, ideology, paradigm, culture, or context”¹, maybe, it has been the most popular term of 20th century. I want to clarify the meaning of the term “democracy” in the way adopted in this work, for its “changeability”. It was used in the way defined by Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz and Seymour M. Lipset in their “Politics in Developing Countries”:

The term *democracy* is used... to signify a political system, separate and apart from the economic and social system to which it is joined. ... [D]emocracy-or what Robert Dahl terms polyarchy-denotes a system of government that meets three essential conditions: meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; a “highly inclusive” level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair elections, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded; and a level of civil and political liberties-freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations-sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.²

The path to be followed in order to reach “democracy” has not always been easy to cover and different countries have experienced different experiences before reaching the aim, i.e. democracy. Some of them are still trying to reach it or have

¹ Diamond, L. et al (eds.). 1990. *Politics in Developing Countries*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 4.

² Ibid, 12

reached it partially (the term “*pseudodemocracy*” or “*semidemocracy*” is used to describe such kind of political systems³).

Former Soviet Union countries are unique ones. The socialist past provided them with well-educated citizens; literacy is at the highest level in the world. But the cost of the lack of democratic experiences was high for them: some turn their backs to democracy, like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan did, some after considerable time of authoritarian rule announced their commitment to democracy accepting it as a universal value, like Kazakhstan, others are still in chaos, e.g. Tajikistan. All these cases require specific attention and careful studying, since each of them has been shaped by many internal and external factors – each case is original in the sense of democratic experience; but what is the truth – especially Central Asian states have not been subjected to careful examination. Many Western political scientists are aware of this: “The time is clearly now ripe for a comparative study of transition from communism”.⁴ Also a lack of case studies, especially on FSU (Former Soviet Union) countries’ experience of democracy confirms this statement.

It needs courage to state that Kazakhstan is a democratic state in a full sense, actually it never was. Kazakh intelligentsia, mostly pro-governmental ones, although define the existing system as authoritarian regime, seem it as a necessary link between totalitarian past and democratic future.⁵ Although existing political parties represent pro-governmental as well as oppositionist interest groups, leader

³ Ibid, 20.

⁴ Ibid, 23.

of the main oppositionist party (Republican People's Party) Akezhan Kazhegeldin is in "self-made exile" in England.⁶

Kazakhstan regained its statehood again in 1920, which was lost with the abolition of the institute of *khan* in 1820s, as Kyrgyz⁷ (Kazakh) Autonomic Soviet Socialist Republic within Russian boundaries. Soviet experience did a lot for Kazakhs: industrialization was undergone, new schools, health care organizations as well as higher educational institutions were opened, state boundaries were marked etc.

However, what lied beyond seventy years of communist rule was disastrous: mass collectivization in the 30s that led to a 40% loss of Kazakh population; Stalinist repression; establishing of a totalitarian regime etc. All of these factors have played very important role in the shaping Soviet as well as Kazakh mentality. I think, this point should always be remembered, because transitional processes towards democratic society which post-Soviet countries are undergone are unique ones in historical, political, societal and economical contexts and are dependent on the historical legacy of a considered nation(s). In addition, world has never witnessed transition of a country from communism to democracy before.

Nowadays independent multiethnic Kazakhstan is territorially the second largest country in post-Soviet area and ninth - in the world thanks to Soviet delimitation policies implemented in 1924. It has vast natural resources, but the

⁵ See for example Zhusupov, Sabit. 2000. "Demokraticeskie preobrazovaniya v Respublike Kazahstan: real'nost' i perspektivy" (Democratic transformations in Kazakhstan: the reality and the future). *Tsentrāl'naiia Asii i Kavkaz*. 4: 24-40

⁶ See following chapters about the motives of his "self-made exile".

problem is how to sell them to world markets. For example, in the case of petroleum, several pipeline routes have been introduced⁸ but few of them seem to be feasible. Although Kazakhstani transitional (from central planned to market-oriented) economy has faced with the serious problems such as slow privatization, interruption of previous economic relations and building up completely new market-oriented ones, government managed to overcome them, and in the year 2000 GDP rose by more than 10 percent first time after the collapse of the USSR.⁹ Privatization completed by more than half.¹⁰ GDP per capita, based on purchasing power parity is 3,200 USD (2000)¹¹ which seems to increase in the nearest future.

In addition, Kazakhstan is stable state in the political sense – what has been the result of authoritarian rule, government members are appointed by the President according to his own criteria which have always been the subject for doubting.

In sum, current issues include: establishing of a democratic state, speeding up market reforms, establishing stable relations with Russia, China and other foreign powers; developing and expanding the country's abundant energy resources, etc.

⁷ In the following the October Revolution of 1917 years the Soviets firstly misnamed Kazakhs as Kyrgyzs and Kyrgyzs as Kara Kyrgyzs.

⁸ For example see Kubekov, Mikhail. 1997. "Problemy eksporta Kazahstanskoi nefti: pochemu Kazahstanu nuzhna energeticheskaya nezavisimost'?" ("Problems of exporting Kazakhstani petroleum: why Kazakhstan needs energetic independence?"), *Tsentral'naiia Azia i Kavkaz* 9: 8-35.

⁹ For more information see [http://www.worldbank.kz/content/econ_ind_eng.html]

¹⁰ See [<http://www.ipanet.net/documents/WorldBank/databases/plink/factsheets/kazakhstan.htm>]

¹¹ CIA World Fact Book. 2000. [<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kz.html>]

This work tries to show the path towards democracy of the Kazakh Republic. The main question to be discussed is: what are trends in democracy in post-Soviet Kazakhstan? It is a case study on the concept of democracy adopted by Kazakhstan: is it the Western style or something different?

A nation cannot be examined apart from its past since many historical factors determine a nation's "today". Therefore, first part of the work is devoted to the history of the Kazakh nation: how the Kazakh nation was formed, how it became the Russian subject, what were major changes during the Soviet era, and what significant events took place in post-Soviet period – these are topics that briefly discussed in this part. However, this part did not encompass all historical developments of the Kazakh nation and tried to show the history of the nation in general frames. Second part is about today's Kazakhstan, its class, national, state and political structures; development performance and international factors have affected it. Third part is concerned with the future prospects of the Kazakh Republic, where three possible scenarios of Kazakhstani future development are examined; relevant suggestions are made and arrived at some conclusions on the democratization project of the country.

In order to give a whole picture the author used sources in Kazakh, Turkish, English and Russian focusing on primarily articles and books on the matter. The author preferred to take into account reports provided by international organizations such as OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), HRW (Human Rights Watch), IFES (International Foundation for Election Systems) etc where official information was needed.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL REVIEW

There are different views on the formation of the Kazakh nation. Some historians claim that the Kazakh nation was formed passing three stages: (i) age of Turkic-Mongol tribes and families, (ii) emergence of Eastern (Mongols, Buryats and Oyrats) and Western (Tatars, Kazakh-Noghay-Uzbek, Sarts and Tajik) groups, (iii) collapse of Kazakh-Noghay-Uzbek unity and settlement of Kazakhs in the territory of present Kazakhstan, Noghays – in Northern Caucasia, and Uzbeks – in Southern Turkestan as a result of tribal migration in the Great Steppe. According to this view, although Kazakhs appeared in the historical arena 15-16th centuries, “independent history of Kazakhs” as a nation began only in the late 16th – beginning of 17th century.¹² Another view accepts Kazakhs as one of the old nations whose ancestors were known in 5th century BC as *alazons* (who are claimed to be ancestors of the Kazakh tribe *alshyn*) as described by *Herodot*.¹³ But the common view is that nomadic tribes separated from *Uzbek Khan* and united under the leadership of *Zhanybek* and *Kerey Khans* in the middle of 15th century became the Kazakh nation.

¹² Asfendiarov, Sandjar. 1993. *Istoriia Kazakhstana (s drevneishich vremen)* (The History of Kazakhstan (from early times)). Alma-Ata: Kazak Universiteti, 94, 99

Therefore, I prefer the common view, according to which the first Kazakh State that was established in 1465 resulted in the formation of the Kazakh nation uniting some nomadic tribes.

1.1 The First Kazakh State

According to this view, the process of the formation of the Kazakh nation was completed in XIV-XV centuries.¹⁴ *Kerey* and *Zhanybek* Khans, who splitted from *Uzbek* Khan, a successor of *Dzhuchi* Khan, established Kazakh Khanate in the middle of the 15th century. Turkic tribes, such as Uysun, Naiman etc. who joined under the Kazakh Khanate had become Kazakhs. However, scholars' view about the real meaning of the word “*Kazakh*” differs. Some think that it comes from the Turkish verb *qaz* (to wander), because the Kazakhs were wandering steppemen; others - that it is possibly the result of the joining of two Kazakh tribal names, *Kaspy* and *Saki*.¹⁵ Another “theory” has been put forward by well-known scholar A. Zeki Velidi Togan, according to whom the term “Kazak” was firstly attributed to Sultans and afterwards to tribes under the auspices of Sultans. The term was used to characterise adventurers who separated from their traditional society and tried to gain power from the outside of the society, generally using force. On the other hand, Turkic tribes used to send armed adolescents to deserts or other

¹³ Tynyshpayev, M. 1925. *Materialy k istorii kirgiz-kazahskogo naroda* (Materials on the history of Kyrgyz-Kazakh people), Tashkent: Vost. Ord. Kirg. Gos. Izd-va. In Asfendiarov, Sandjar. 1993, 98.

¹⁴ For example see Olcott, Martha. 1987. *The Kazakhs*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

uninhabited areas to teach them how to survive; this practice was called “Kazaklık”.¹⁶

From the beginning the Kazakh nation was consisted of three associations – Great, Middle and Lesser *Juz* or Hordes. There are different views on the formation of these three Hordes. One version related the formation to geographical and “historical conditions of nomadic economy”.¹⁷ Kazakhstani territory has three large natural regions suitable for cattle breeding, therefore tribes had to choose one of them to feed their animals becoming members of one of three associations. Another view explains the formation of three associations by relating leaders of each *Juz* to different Chinghizids finding out direct relationship between Dzhuci – his son Ezhen – Great *Juz*, Dzhuchi – his son Tokai-Timur – Lesser *Juz* and Batiy – Middle *Juz*.¹⁸

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the territory of Kazakhstan was a political formation divided into separate khanates, but without fixed territorial divisions. The khanates, ruled by a khan, were a system of administration that was headed by an elected judge or official called a *Biy* (see below for social structure of those times). Khanates were made up of several clans. A sultan was the head of more than one clan.

The 2nd half of the 16th century witnessed extension of the territory of the Kazakh Khanate, as a result of need for additional territory to feed livestock.¹⁹

¹⁶ Togan, Zeki Velidi. 1981. *Bugünkü Türkili (Turkestan) ve Yakın Tarihi*. İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 37.

¹⁷ Asfendiarov, Sandjar. 1993, 101.

¹⁸ See Tynyshpayev, Mukhamedzhan. 1925.

¹⁹ Pishulina, K. 1994. “Territoria: qadym zamanindagy jane orta gasyrlardyg erte shagyndadagy Qazaqstan jerindegi bolgan etnikaliq qybylystar” (The Territory: the ethnic events happened in the

Borders of Kazakh khanates extended to the left bank of the Jayiq River in the mid of 16th century. One of the successful Kazakh Khans – Esim Khan (1598 - 1628) established his control over Syr Derya region including the town of Tashkent. Kazakhs migrated with seasons. Each clan had its own routes on which other clans had no right to infringe. In terms of the seasons, the winter months were the hardest. Livestock when unable to feed off the land because of severe winter conditions, starved severely damaging nomadic economy. Eventually, farming which employed methods of irrigation started again to develop in the basins of the *Syr Darya, Talas, Chu* rivers and in other regions. From the late 18th century, however, nomadic livestock continued to be a mainstay throughout the territories.

Several khans played very important role in progressing the Kazakh society, For example, the period of Qasym Khan (1455- 1518) witnessed introduction of a new set of laws named the *Qasym Hannyng Qasqa Joly* (the Straight Custom of Qasim Khan) that established “the rule of law” in the steppe, the rule of *Tauke Khan* (1680-1718) was marked with compiling a code of rules of common law - "*Zhety Zhargy*" (Seven Canons) which specified basic principles of social law and social order as well as state structure.

However, efforts towards political disunion in order to gain independence made by certain khans and sultans, lack of internal market - all these as well as other factors weakened the Khanate making it helpless in the face of external enemies. In order to prevent Kazakh lands from enemy intervention, particularly of *Jungars*’, whose raids into Kazakh lands become more frequent

early and middle ages on nowadays Kazakhstani territory). In Kasymzhanov A, Naribayev K, et al. *Qazaq*, Almaty: Bilim, 47-65.

than ever in the beginning of the 18th century, *Tauke Khan* made an effort of uniting three hordes but with a little success.

The years of the war with *Jungars* were known in the Kazakh history as "the years of the great disaster" ("*Aktaban shubyryndy*"). A decisive role in countering the *Jungar* aggression was of All-Kazakh Congresses, where such measures as forming volunteer corps, a unified front of defense to counter *Jungar* raids were discussed. Indeed, All-Kazakh Congresses contributed to the formation of the corps to a great extent which successfully challenged the *Jungar* forces (1727 - at the river of *Bulanty*; an *Anrakai* battle in 1729). However, internal disagreements paved the way to suffering a number of severe defeats that led, according to common view to seeking protection of Russia.

After briefly explaining the political situation in the Kazakh Steppe and main events happened before the Russian colonization the work will focus on the societal structure of the Kazakhs of that times to complete a picture.

The traditional Kazakh society was based on nomadic values and divided into two "classes" called "*aqsuyek*" – aristocrats (white bones) and "*qarasuyek*" (black bones). First "class" was closed to representatives of the another one since was a privileged one, only who were "*tore*" (descendants of Chinghiz or Chinghizids) or "*qoja*" (missioners of Islam, who believed to be Arabs and followers of A. Yassawi) could exercise privileges of this "class".

"*Qarasuyek*" consisted of "*biy*", "*batyr*", "*aqsaqal*" and "the others". "*Biy*" were elites of this stratum; they were a kind of judges. "*Biy*" were, in today's words, a kind of self-made man, since every judge could not be titled as a

“*biy*” by people, only who showed his superior abilities and talents in dealing with problems was accepted as a “*biy*”. Every Khan had a respectful “*biy*” in his palace, who played very important role in shaping Khan’s internal as well as external policies.

Second group in “*qarasuyek*” “class” was consisted of “*batyr*”- military leaders who proved their military abilities in a battle, therefore who were respected according to their personal characteristics. However, the word “*batyr*” sometimes was used for brave, gifted and experienced militants from “*aqsuyek*” too.

Another group of this “class” was of “*aqsaqal*”s, who regulated all kinds of social as well as political relations in the nomadic society. Kazakhs called “*aqsaqal*” those who had intellectual capability and deep empiric knowledge on various subjects.

“The others” were dependent and free men. Dependents were “*tulengut*”, who served in a Khan’s palace, and “*qul*”, who were slaves, i.e. prisoners of war. The institution of slaves was not widespread; “*qul*” could be seen only in the houses of “*aqsuyek*” as a servants.

As we see, there was not clear distinction among some social groups of “*qarasuyek*” since specific character of social development did not need deep specification in carrying out social, military, political etc. functions, therefore, formation processes of social institutions and stratum had a superficial character. The main difference was between “white” and “black bones”.

According to Irina Erofeeva, a specialist on Central Asian nomads, Khan was recognized as “*primus inter pares*” in contrast to neighbor states where ruler

was accepted as an absolutist one. Khan was known not as a charismatic “superman” but as a “first among equals”. Such judgments of Irina Erofeeva were based on oral literature of that period and information gained from stone monuments of 18th-19th centuries.²⁰

In everyday life, this kind of understanding of the institution of Khan was materialized in closely established relations between “*aqsuyek*” and “*qarasuyek*”. Representatives of “*qarasuyek*” could publicly criticize “*aqsuyek*”, or give up relationship with one ruler and go under patronage of another one.²¹

One may claim that Kazakh nation has never exercised democracy. But as we saw, some elements of democracy as pluralism and responsibility of the ruler before his people were practiced in the traditional Kazakh society.

1.2 Russian Colonization

Why *Abu'l Khair*, Khan of the Lesser Horde, decided to join Russia? Some claim that he wanted only military alliance with Russia, not total patronage of it, and later was deceived by Tsaritsa. Others considered this process as an expansion of the Russian Empire and as product of “conspiracy” between the Russians and the Kazakh feudals.²² Thirds state that Kazakhstan did not join Russia voluntarily but

²⁰ Erofeeva, Irina. 1997. “Politicheskaya organizatsiia kochevogo kazahskogo obshestva” (The politic organization of the nomadic Kazakh society). *Tsentral'naiia Asii i Kavkaz* 12: 23-45.

²¹ Ibid, 39.

²² Asfendiarov, Sandjar, 1993.

was captured by force.²³ Representatives of generally accepted view on the Lesser Juz's joining Russia, argue that *Abu'l Khair* requested Empress *Anna Ioannovna* to become Russian subject in order to escape mainly from *Jungar* raids.²⁴ A representative of the last view, Olcott wrote in her book called "The Kazakhs":

This agreement was mutually advantageous. To Abu'l Khair it offered the possibility of improving his political position as well as of increasing economic stability, for the Kazakhs and their neighbors saw that Russia was the superior military force in region.(...) For Russia's part, the treaties with Abu'l Khair and those with the Khans of Middle Horde (Semeke in 1732, Ablai in 1740) gave added security to the fortified line along the Irtysh River.²⁵

Beside security of the southern borders, this agreement created new opportunities for Russian merchants as well by opening safeguarded doors towards the East.²⁶

Notwithstanding what the real story was, Kazakhstan's joining Russia implied incorporation, both peaceful and military colonization and a naked conquest.

The year of 1732 highlighted formal incorporation of certain parts of the Middle Horde's territory by Russia. The oath sworn by a group of sultans and elders of the Lesser and Middle Horde's (*Abu'l Mambet, Ablai*) in 1740 stipulated joining of only a part of the Middle *Juz*, but the wheel of Russian colonization was fully on its way.

²³ "Canibek". 1982. "Current Kazakh Language Publications in the People's Republic of China," *Central Asian Survey* 2/3: 131-133.

²⁴ For example, see Olcott. Marta. 1987.

²⁵ Ibid, 31.

²⁶ Hauner, Milan.1989. "Central Asian Geopolitics in the Last Hundred Years: A Critical Survey from Gorchakov to Gorbachev", *Central Asian Survey* 1, 1-19.

Political and economic status of Kazakhstan in the middle and the end of the 18th century featured the following: deterioration of internal accord in the Lesser *Juz*; deepening of economic relations with Russia; development of barter trade.

The second half of the 18th century is marked with the formation of *Ablai's* Khanate, the very person who was one of the organizers of effective rebuff against *Jungar* aggressors. “Ablai was assuredly as astute politician”.²⁷ He pursued a policy of double citizenship - that of both Russia and China and was “generally able to emerge on the winning side”.²⁸ He played a very important role in consolidating Kazakh feudal statehood.

By the beginning of the 19th century, Russia began to be concerned with the governing of the Kazakh Steppe. Russia had interest in regulating local relationships “since Russian trade interests in the area had increased. (...) Trading caravans to Persia, China, India, and the Central Asian khanates had to pass through the Kazakh territories, but their safety could not be guaranteed”.²⁹ In order to solve it, Russia abolished the institution of khan and introduced a new form of administration. After *Bukey* (1817) and *Uali-Khan* (1819) died, Russia no longer appointed new khans. In 1822 by virtue of introducing the “*Charter on Siberian Kyrgyzes*” Khan's power in Kazakhstan was officially abolished.

A new Russian system of administration was faced widespread protest of the Kazakh population - that subsequently - expressed itself in a national-

²⁷ Ibid, 41.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 57-58.

liberation war of Kazakhs within the Russian empire. But leaders of Kazakh liberation war like *Mukhammed Otemis*, *Syrym Dat*, *Kenesary Kasym* etc. did not succeed in uniting regional revolts into a wide-spread one, therefore were defeated. Colonization of major regions of North-East and Central Kazakhstan was eased by the defeat of national-liberation war in the 20s -40s of the 19th century.³⁰

South part of Kazakh Steppe was a part of *Kokand* Khanate when Russian troops put off moving towards southern borders of the Empire. Seizure of *Turkestan*, *Shymkent*, *Aulie-Ata* and other settlements by tsarist troops in the 60s of the XIX century, which required participation of quite powerful armed forces, completed the conquest of the territory of the Great *Juz* by Russia. Thus all territory of nowadays Kazakhstan came under Tsarist rule and starting from the second half of the 19th century Kazakhstan represented a colony completely shaped up by the Russian Empire according to its administrative system.

Further process of colonization was characterized as the intensification of colonial forms of administering the Kazakh territory, the creation of military settlements of Russia in the steppe. Between 1867-1868 Alexander the 2nd performed another administrative reform.

Agrarian policy of tsarism implemented in the Kazakh Steppe in the late of 19th century led to change of the proportion of nomadic and settled people. Thus new forms of economies had emerged: a settled cattle breeding and a settled farming economies. Social differentiation of the Kazakh society became clearer. Economy was partly involved in market relations. Kazakhs, impoverished as a

³⁰ Asfendiarov, Sandjar. 1993, 126-294.

result of implementation of tsarist land policy³¹, had begun to work in various industries that emerged in Kazakhstan in the last quarter of the 19th century. Local merchants initiated a new trade practice - they started arranging fairs. Over the last decade of the 19th century, some 482 km of railway lines were built. Development of transit trade was also underway. In context of the *Kuldzha* Treaty of 1851, trade links with China were based on a closer base. Usury and private entrepreneurship had begun to be more common in the entire Kazakh Steppe.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the territory of Kazakhstan constituted from the following regions: *Syr Daria* and *Semirech'e* (Turkestan general-governorship with the center in *Tashkent*), *Akmolinsk*, *Semipalatinsk*, *Uralsk*, *Turgay* (Steppe general-governorship with the center in *Omsk*); *Mangyshlak* – Transcaspian region; Inner (Bukeyev) Horde (in the Astrakhan province).

Further colonization of Kazakhstan was closely related with the capitalist practices that were relatively common in Kazakhstan at that time. It brought along sharp class differentiation in the countryside, mass impoverishment, and involvement of people in various industries. Naturally, protests as well as rebels against colonial and social policies of the Tsarist regime became more widespread than ever.

³¹ Beginning from the mid of 18th century (the 1756 Russian imperial degree) Russia began to define the lands that could be used for grazing by Kazakhs gradually decreasing pastureland of the nomads. Kazakhs were forced to move into less fertile areas. By 1917, about 17 million *desyatina* of land has been distributed to 3 million Russian peasants. For more information historical developments see Kırımli, Meryem. 1999. *The genesis of Kazak nationalism and independent Kazakstan: a history of native reactions to Russian-Soviet policies*. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation. Ankara: Bilkent University.

First uprisings were of spontaneous and uncoordinated nature, though. In 1905-1907 some social-democratic groups were established (mostly on the initiative of political exiles). The year of 1907 was known as a year of adoption the "Law on election to the State Duma", result of which was depriving the nations of Siberia, Central Asia and Kazakhstan of their electoral rights. The number of immigrated peasants from the inner Russia was growing since Tsarist regime initiated this process in order to solve so-called "land problem". Consequently, Russian administration began to seize pasture areas from nomadic cattle-breeding economies.

Colonial policy affected the living standards of the Kazakh people; cattle breeding economy was in a crisis. Ever growing taxes and duties, land seizures resulted in conflicts between Kazakhs and Russian peasants.

On the other hand, Russian colonization had changed the structure of the Kazakh society. "Aqsyuek" that first was favored by Russian administration, had lost their importance as a part of society, which would help to implement Russian policies in the Kazakh Steppe since the middle of 19th century. Tsarist administration began to prefer loyal individuals of "qarasuyek" instead.

"Biy" lost their significance in the eyes of Tsarist regime as well as lost their importance in everyday life. In the second half of the 19th century whole Kazakh Steppe was incorporated with Russia and, as it was mentioned above, Russian administrative system was imposed. The Kazakh Steppe was divided into 6 regions (*oblasts*), each of them-into districts (*uezds*), the latter-into smaller districts (*volosts*) and they into counties (*auls*). Oblasts and uezds were governed by appointed Russian administrators (*gubernatory* and *uezdnye nachal'niki*);

administrators of *volosts* were selected from loyal to Russian Empire Kazakhs and those of *auls* were elected by *aul* inhabitants among *aul* elders – *aqsaqals*. Thus only “*aqsaqal*” continued to keep their status among Kazakhs; however, their status was limited.

Nevertheless, the most affected group from joining Russia were those who were in category of “*batyr*”. From the second half of the 19th century, with the imposing Russian administrative system, *batyrs* had not existed any more as a social group, their traditional military functions were transformed to corresponding institutional structures of Russia’s colonial agencies.

The February revolution of 1917 in Russia was welcomed by the population of Central Asia³², for indigenous population was suppressed by colonial policy of Tsarism, which took extreme forms since the late 1916 when Tsar issued decree calling indigenous population aged from 18 to 43 of the Caucasian oblasts, *Turkestankaya* and *Stepnaya gubernii* for conscription into labor brigades; “this was at a time when the Russian army was seriously understaffed and the front was collapsing”³³. This decree (*ukaz*) naturally was resisted by Kazakhs. Resistance, which once was seen only in some parts of steppe, turned into general uprising of indigenous population, which was widespread and well organised.³⁴ Although this uprising of 1916 was harshly put down, the legitimacy of Tsarist regime was badly damaged.

In sum, political as well as social structure of the Kazakh society had

³² For more information see Çokay, Mustafa. 1988. *1917 yılı hatıra parçaları*. Ankara: Şafak.

³³ Olcott, Martha. 1987, 119

³⁴ *Ibid*, 121.

witnessed significant changes due to Russian policies and reforms implemented in the Kazakh Steppe. Russia was not interested in keeping political and social structures of the Kazakhs alive, since Russia saw Kazakhs as a nation needed to be “civilized”. It is generally accepted that Russian colonization policy was different in the Central Asia than in other parts of the Empire in the sense that Russia did not prefer to assimilate Kazakhs as well as other nations of the Central Asia in a full sense. For example, Russia did not try to change religion of Kazakhs, as it did in the Siberia. Russians, including immigrated peasants, tried to be introduced as representatives of a “civilization”. Russia was believed to fulfill her *Mission Civilisatrice* in the East.³⁵

1.3 Alash-Orda Government

Inevitably, insufficient and discriminatory social and economic policies of the Tsarism had created prerequisites for a national movement. Nevertheless, the Kazakh intelligentsia, educated in various Russian institutions, tried to change the existing situation, to liberalize the Kazakh society. Guided by such principles they had become adherents of the Constitutional Democratic Party (KADET) of Russia at the beginning of 1900s, since KADET suggested liberal reforms to be undertaken in Russia.

The Kazakh elite got political experience in the Russian school of the political thought and was affected by its ideals, therefore the fact that the elite had

³⁵ Hauner, Milan.1989, 1-19.

become politicians who tried to consolidate traditions of the Kazakh society with the principles of western democracy was not surprising.³⁶

However, by the year 1917 Kazakh intelligentsia had no more sympathy for KADET since their views differed in several issues.³⁷ It is worth pointing out their main differences because it will help us to understand their principles as well as mentality: (i) right of self-determination (KADET safeguarded the principle of only cultural autonomy, whereas Kazakh elite's aim was establishment of autonomous Kazakh state within Russia: "Russia should be democratic federal republic"³⁸); (ii) secularism (KADET emphasized that religious and state affairs had to go hand in hand, whereas Kazakhs wanted them to be separated from each other); (iii) land problem (KADET put forward the idea of private ownership of the land, which was, according to the Kazakh leaders not acceptable for the Kazakh steppe).³⁹

Having understood that national interests could be protected only by their own the Kazakh intelligentsia proposed establishment of the Party "Alash" during the First All-Kazakh Congress in Orenburg in July 1917. According to prepared program of the party only in a democratic society and in the frames of a legal state, a society would be in harmony. The Program of the Party "Alash"

³⁶ Ismagambetov, T. 1997. "Razvitiye kazahskogo establishmenta v kontse 19-seredine 20 vekov" (The Development of Kazakh establishment between the end-19 and mid-20 centuries), *Tsentral'naiia Asiiia i Kavkaz*, 11: 2-32.

³⁷ For example, Alikhan Bokeykhanov left KADET in Autumn 1917. See Togan, Zeki Velidi. 1969. *Hatıralar*. İstanbul: TAN, 184.

³⁸ Martynenko, N. 1992. *Alash-Orda: sbornik dokumentov* (Alash-Orda: document files), Almaty: Aiqap.

³⁹ Ismagambetov, T. 1997, 11.

emphasized the importance of free elections and of presidential form of government, freedom of press and freedom of associations.⁴⁰

Thus the Party “Alash” was a representative of the idea of organizing socio-political life in accordance with western democratic values. However, this did not mean undermining of the relations with Turkic and Islamic countries.⁴¹

October Revolution was not favored by “Alash” leaders, since they were not persuaded by Bolsheviks’ populist ideas. On December 5-13, 1917 in Orenburg they convened the second All-Kazakh Congress that announced formation of an autonomy called "Alash" and of a government represented by a "provisional people's council" named "Alash-Orda”. Among Kazakh intellectuals-organizers of the Kazakh autonomy, we can emphasize names of Alikhan Bokeykhanov, Mir Zhakyp Dulatov, Ahmet Baitursynov, Mustafa Chokay, Mukhamedzhan Tynyshpayev etc.

Upon the overthrow of Tsarism, Bolsheviks started organizing Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in Kazakhstan, too. It went on hand in hand with the emergence of bodies of old regime: all sorts of "executive committees", "civil committees", regional or district commissars appointed by the Provisional Government. Therefore, it was a period of dual power in the country.

Victory of the February revolution and the development of revolutionary movement during the year 1917 triggered a tendency when various strata of the Kazakh society came to actively participate in politics, in setting up all sorts of political, professional and youth organizations. Thus, some followed the banner

⁴⁰ For the draft program of the Alash-Orda see Martynenko, N. 1992.

⁴¹ Ismagambetov, T. 1997, 23.

of Bolshevism and Socialist revolution; others the banner of the "Alash" to uphold the idea of shaping up a Kazakh national autonomy within the framework of a bourgeois-and-democratic Russia.

There were other parties such as "*Ush Juz*" (Three Hordes) and "*Shura-i Islam*". But they did not play a significant role in the political life of the Kazakh society, as "Alash" Party did.

To sum up, the unique chance to establish independent Kazakh statehood under the leadership of "Alash" elite was not realized, partly because "Alash Orda" had not enough financial resources in order to implement its own policies. Other reasons are seem to be as follows: (i) "Alash" was not supported by masses; (ii) Kazakh intelligentsia had not exact program of how to express their political demands. Alash was established in 1917, and it was too late since Bolsheviks began to gain respect among masses due to their populism and discipline; (iii) regional differentiation impeded the formation of the national unity. Representatives of different regions had not same opinions on some issues such as timing of declaration of independence, the position of minorities etc. To put shortly, Party "Alash" tried to adopt and implement democratic values in the Kazakh Steppe but was not successful. What is important, the existence of such a liberal-oriented party in 1910s shows us that the ideas of a democratic society has not been alien to the Kazakh nation since the beginning of the 20th century.

1.4 Joining the USSR

1.4.1. The Initial Years

1.4.1.1. The General Trends

During the period between October 1917 and March 1918 Soviet power was established mostly in cities and other more or less significant settlements of Kazakhstan. However, this process was not simply one, since the process of establishment of Soviet Power in most of the Kazakhstani countryside was completed only near the end of the Civil war, when Bolsheviks could send troops to pacify units of “Alash Orda”.

In March 1919 *VTsIK* (All-Russia Central Executive Committee) of the RSFSR announced amnesty to the “Alash Orda” members, after that Turgay group of the "Alash-Orda" headed by A. Baitursynov decided to support Soviet power which stimulated “Alash-Orda” members’ decision to work on the side of Bolsheviks. An Autonomous Kyrgyz (Kazakh) SSR within the RSFSR was formed on August 26, 1920.

The economy of the country was virtually destroyed as the result of the First World War and the civil war. Furthermore, a serious jut in the winter of 1920-21 resulted in the loss of more than half, and in some place as much as of 80%, of all livestock. On top of that, a poor harvest in 1921 resulted in famine. Only by the end of 1928 had Kazakhstan’s economy recovered. All sectors were producing in excess of the level of output of 1913 and industry comprised 21% of

the GNP.⁴² The situation was partly recovered due to the new economic policy that enhanced development of agriculture, but the recovery was not long standing – the program was ended in 1924.

In the year of 1929, by the initiative of Stalin, the Central Committee of the Communist Party discussed problems of the “development” of rural parts of the USSR and decided to take measures on improvement the management of rural restructuring, i.e. on speeding up the collectivization. A month later the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan issued a degree on settlement of nomadic people in order to implement party decisions. The collectivization proceeded in a rapid tempo. By February (1930) the percentage of collectivized population was 35.3 percent and by March 42.1 percent.⁴³ The intervention into traditional nomadic life of Kazakh society and collecting livestock by the state led to wide-scale tragedy never seen before in the Kazakh Steppe.

It is needless to say that as a result of such policies, the end of the 20s-30s witnessed peasant uprisings to counter forced collectivization that resulted in mass deaths of people.⁴⁴ “*Kazakhstani tragedy*” - such is the name of this man-made disaster in history.

In these years the economy of Kazakhstan underwent a rapid transformation. Over the course of several years in the 1930s the focus of

⁴² 1995 Human Development Report prepared by the United Nations Development Programme. [<http://www.undp.kz/undp/index.htm#NHDR>]

⁴³ Olcott, Martha. 1987, 180.

⁴⁴ It is estimated that about forty percent of the total Kazakh population was died due to implementation of collectivization policies. See Tatimov, M. 1994. “Demografiialyq Keskin” (Demographic outlook). In Kasimzhanov, A, Naribayev, K et al, *Qazaq*. Almaty: Bilim.

Kazakhstan's economy changed from agrarian, to agro-industrial (1932), and to industrial-agrarian (1938). The country was rapidly industrialising.⁴⁵ By the 1941 the volume of industrial production had grown eight times compared to 1913. Thus by the end of 1930s Kazakhstan was transformed into one with large-scale and diverse industry, advanced crop-growing and animal husbandry.⁴⁶

In December 1936 Kazakhstan was announced as a full member of the USSR.

1.4.1.2. The Kazakh Soviet Apparatus

Former members of Alash Orda and the new Soviet activists among Kazakhs formed the first Kazakh Soviet apparatus. Ex-Alash Orda members were employed in educational and cultures spheres apart from political issues; they never gained trust of the Soviet leadership. So, it is not surprising that the death date of many of Kazakh intelligentsia, if not all of them, coincides with the end of 1930s, ie with Stalinist purges. Even Kazakh communists like Turar Ryskulov, were victims of this Stalinist repression policy. As a result of widespread purges the percentage of Kazakhs in the Communist Party dropped from 53.1 percent in 1933 to 47.6 percent.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Togan, Zeki Velidi. 1940. *1929-1940 Seneleri Arasında Türkistan'ın Vaziyeti* (The Situation in Turkestan Between 1929-1940). İstanbul: Türkiye Basimevi, 7.

⁴⁶ 1995 Human Development Report prepared by the United Nations Development Programme. [<http://www.undp.kz/undp/index.htm#NHDR>]

⁴⁷ *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Kazahstana v dokumentah i tsifrakh* (Communist Party of Kazakhstan in documents and data). 1960. Alma-Ata.

It was clear that a new loyal Soviet apparatus, which was not supported by local population, was needed in Kazakhstan. Therefore, the party began to employ new members who had not any ties with “Alash-Orda” and whom could be trusted. As a consequence, many of new members recruited in those years were “who carried out the collectivization drive, with responsibilities far beyond their training”.⁴⁸

In sum, the `30s were the period of establishment of totalitarianism in Kazakhstan that entailed massive political repression which led to “purifying” Kazakh Communists from the ones with pre-revolutionary political experience like old Alash Orda members as well as from ones who oppose central policies like Turar Ryskulov.

1.4.2. The Hard Decades

1.4.2.1. The General Trends

Between 1939-1941 Kazakhstan was transformed into a major production base of non-ferrous metals, coal and oil; it became a region of developed agriculture.

As a result of migration policy implemented by Stalin, about 800 thousand Germans, 18.5 thousand families of Koreans, 102 thousand Poles, 507 thousand people from North Caucasia were deported to Kazakhstan as well as thousands of Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Kalmyks. Just during the years before

⁴⁸ Olcott, Martha. 1987, 220.

World War II, Kazakhstani population was increased by 1 million 200 thousand people deported from European part of the USSR.⁴⁹

During the World War II, as many as 150 thousand people were sent to Kazakhstan to work at military plants. On the other hand, 25 million people were evacuated, principally to the Urals, Siberia and Central Asia; as a result of this sudden influx, number of Kazakhstani cities grew up from 29 (1939) to 39 (1945), and the number of urban-type settlements from 53 to 100.⁵⁰ Even according to rough calculations undoubtedly Kazakhstani population during these years increased at least by 1 million people.

This war costed to Kazakhstan too many lives. On the one hand, over 450.000 Kazakhstanis lost their lives in battlefields, on the other hand, the rest of population remained in the countryside worked on two or three shifts providing necessary for army goods.⁵¹

The end of 1940s - early 1950s were the years of recovery. The republic, as well as other ones-members of the USSR, was recovering after the war economy.

Another important policy effects of which, maybe, could be compared only to collectivization of Kazakhs was the Policy of Virgin Lands of 1953-1965. As a result of such policy, over 25 million hectares of land were planted with cereal crops and over 10 million hectares are sown with forage crops annually in

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Bater, James. 1980. *The Soviet City*. USA: SAGE, 63.

⁵¹ Tatimov, M. 1994, 66

the late 1980s, which meant an increase of 422 percent and 806 percent respectively since 1950.⁵²

On the other hand, the Virgin Lands Policy affected the traditional Kazakh livestock- breeding economy into a more scientific and centrally directed type of animal husbandry. The project of settling new lands (“*osvoyeniye tselinnih zemel*”) of North Kazakhstan initiated by N. Kruschev, brought about another 1.5 million people into Kazakhstani land⁵³ – a fact that played an important role in decreasing of the ratio of native population of Kazakhstan against other nationalities.

Also during the 1950s the Soviet authorities established a space center – the Baikonur Cosmodrome – in the East Central part of the Kazakhstan. In addition, the Soviets created nuclear testing sites near Semipalatinsk in the East and huge industrial sites in the North and East. The first testing of nuclear bomb was carried out on 29 August 1949.

A new wave of Slavic immigrants flooded into Kazakhstan to provide a skilled labour force for the new industries. As a result of this policy, Russians surpassed Kazakhs as the republic’s largest ethnic group, a demographic trend that held until the 1980s.

⁵² Olcott, Martha. 1987, 238.

⁵³ Satiyev, H. 1998. *Kazakhstan v mirovom soobshestve* (Kazakhstan in the World Community), Chimkent: Yuzhno-Kazahstanskii Otkrytyi Universitet, 3.

1.4.2.2. Soviet Policy towards Intelligentsia

Leaders of the Soviet Union wanted to “employ” loyal to “communistic ideas” leaders among the indigenous population of national republics. The purges of the late 1930s played a very important role in creating leaders that suit the Soviet leaders’ wishes: ones who without any objection will implement the policy of the Center, since all the old “national-bourgeoisie”, ie many members of Kazakhstani Communist party with “doubtful” past, were executed as “people’s enemies”. The Center never trusted in the local population, therefore, appointment of a Kazakh to the position of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakh SSR always followed by the appointment of a Russian as the Second Secretary and vice versa.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, generally, the process of creating loyal leaders among the locals was successfully completed and the new generation of Kazakh politicians that obediently implement Moscow’s directives was introduced.

During the implementation of the Virgin Lands’ Policy many members of Kazakh party leadership were removed accusing of opposing this policy. Brezhnev, who would become the First Secretary of CPSU, was appointed as the Kazakh Party First Secretary. On the other hand, major industrialization drive based on local natural resources and Russian expertise strongly contributed to the urbanization of Kazakhstan, and at the same time it strengthened the Russian dominance in the cities. This fact evidenced that although so-called new generation of loyal politicians was created, the Center continued practising a non-trust policy towards local leaders.

⁵⁴ Ismagambetov, T. 1992, 27.

1.4.3 Decades of Economic Revival

1.4.3.1 The General Trends

1.4.3.1.1 The Economy of Kazakhstan

The 1960s were the years when Kazakhstan was rapidly industrializing. Only between 1961-1965 the investment volume into Kazakhstani economy exceeded total investment made in previous years of Soviet rule, thanks to which the industrial capacity of the Republic doubled.⁵⁵ The economy of the Soviet Union was restructuring according to the principle of division of labour among 15 Soviet republics, from which Kazakhstani economy was affected as well. Such spheres of heavy industry as production of steel and iron, petrol and gas, chemical industry and petrochemistry, etc could be shown as examples of rapid developing sectors of that period. The number of big and small plants of heavy industry constructed and began to function in the 1960s was 1174.⁵⁶

As a result of this industrialization policy the industrial output of the Republic surpassed agricultural one in 1970 and reached 48% of GNP.⁵⁷ During 1970-1985 industrial potential of the Republic was slightly on increase, but Kazakhstani industry was mainly consisted of extracting industry and Kazakhstan lacked its own light and food industries, for example, nearly 60 percent of all

⁵⁵ Asylbekov, M. H., Nurmuhamedov, S. B. and Pan, N. G. 1976. *Rost industrial'nih kadrov rabocheho classa v Kazahstane* (The growth of working class' industrial cadres in Kazakhstan) Almaty, 21.

⁵⁶ Drobjeva, L. I. (ed.) 1993. *Istoriia Kazakhstana s drevneishih vremen do nashih dnei* (The history of Kazakhstan from early times to present). Almaty: Daur, 343.

(non-food) goods consumed in Kazakhstan was imported from other Soviet republics.

However, the Soviet central planning system lacked efficiency. From one five-year plan to another the Soviet leadership reported about gigantic plants began to function in the Republic. The situation in Kazakhstan as well as in other Soviet republics was determined not by high living standards of its people but by the volume of investment, tonnes of extracted coal etc. The local problems were solved by central authorities lacking any experience and knowledge on the matter. Consequently, as a result of the insufficiency of the command economy, tempos of development of the economy began to decrease. Average annual increase of industrial production decreased from 8.4 % in 9th five-year plan (1971-1975) to 3.8 % in eleventh five-year plan (1981-1985). The growth of GNP was decreased from 4.4 percent to 1.4 percent at the same period.⁵⁸

The end of 1980s was characterised by shortage of food as well as other consumer goods. The Centre failed to provide the Soviet people with everyday goods such as bread, soap, tooth paste, detergent etc; shortly, system was in turmoil.

Facing with such a crisis, Russia announced that on 1st January of 1991 the market economy would be introduced within its boundaries. Kazakhstan had no other alternative but to adopt market relations too.

⁵⁷ *Ekonomika Kazahstana za 60 let (1917-1977)* (Kazakhstani economy of 60 years [1917-1977]).1977. Almaty, 73.

⁵⁸ *Narodnoye hosiyaistvo Kazahstana v 1985 g* (Kazakhstani economy in 1985). 1986. Almaty, 31-32, 192.

1.4.3.1.2 The Kazakhstani society

1960-1970s were the years when Soviet policy to create “Soviet man” thought to be successfully implemented. But as we will see later it failed to do so. Russian language was becoming the main language of the Soviet people at the expense of national languages. In the case of Kazakhstan, as many as 60 percent of Kazakhs were fluent in Russian, whereas the number of Kazakhstani Russians who could speak Kazakh language was less than 1 percent of the total Russian population of Kazakhstan. 95 percent of books published in Kazakhstan were in Russian as well as 70 percent of TV programs translated in the Republic.⁵⁹

However, Kazakh students made some efforts to change this situation. For example, in 1963 Kazakh students in Moscow formed one of the first unofficial young organizations – civil society of Kazakh youth called “*Zhas Tulpar*” (Colt), the number of its members exceeded 1000. Youth-members of this group organized lectures, concerts and expeditions to different parts of Kazakhstan, delivered their suggestions on existing problems of Kazakh society to high officials.

Naturally, the officials’ reaction to the activities of this youth organization was negative, its activities were always under the surveillance of the KGB. Leaders of “*Zhas Tulpar*” were claimed to be nationalists, therefore, the end of 1960s was the end of “*Zhas Tulpar*” too. Many members of this organization (M. Auesov, M. Aitkhozhin etc) have played an important role in the life of the Kazakh society.

⁵⁹ Drobjeva, L. I. 1993, 376.

Another attempt of the Kazakh youth to put forward their interests was “*Zhas Kazakh*” (Young Kazakh) of 1974-77; it would not be hard to guess that this attempt was resulted in failure too.

1970s – the middle of 1980s was the period of repressing every kind of thought different from “Soviet”, ie official ideology. It was not till the middle of 1980s when the values of democratic society, rights and freedoms to Soviet citizens, which although were written in the Constitution never realised into life, were introduced to the Soviet society by Gorbachev’s “*perestroyka*” and “*glasnost*” policies.

The year of 1987 was a kind of starting point for the Kazakh NGOs (non-governmental organizations). The main ones were “*Initsiativa*” (Initiative), and “*Obshestvennii Komitet po problemam Balhasha i Arala*” (Public Committee on the problems of Balkash and Aral), both of them focused their activities on ecological issues. Further democratisation of society and deorganising of administrative system based on central planning stimulated the establishment of new non-governmental political organisations. The formation of “*Nevada-Semipalatinsk*” anti-nuclear movement with broad mass support among Kazakhstanis signed a new phase in Kazakhstani society’s life.

1.4.3.2 The Kazakh Apparatchiki

The “socialist” construction of the 1960s was faced with some problems related to the central management of the whole Soviet economy. The Soviet leadership wanted to bring the impossible into being: to unite administrative and economic

methods of management. This policy led to strengthening of bureaucrats, to backwardness in technological sense and to limiting of the self-management. Additionally, economic development slowed down, the main reason of which was limiting reforms only to economic sphere thus not touching the political although attempting to unite both administrative and economic areas. Reforms did not encompass the political structure, ownership principles, but carried on the monopoly of the state ownership and rejected free market relations. Brezhnev and his circle supported the old central planning system based on plans imposed to related subjects (plant managers etc) from top without any consultations with them.

In such conditions the ruling of the Republic was “given” to Kazakh – Dinmukhambet Kunayev – who was the first Kazakh-member of Politburo and close friend of L. Brezhnev. With coming of D. Kunayev to the power Kazakh membership in the Communist party was increased as well as Kazakh participation in the government (in 1964 only 33 percent of the members of the Council of Ministers were Kazakh, by 1981 Kazakhs held 60 percent of the posts⁶⁰). Moreover, *obkom*'s (*oblastnoi komitet partii* – regional party committee) first secretaries were appointed from local ones, and mostly from Kazakhs (before Kunayev, the Soviet leadership was accurate at appointing to these positions Russians outside of Kazakhstan. Later Kunayev wrote that

many times we discussed this theme: why the Center stubbornly appoints as a First Secretary of Central Committee of the republic its own “cadres” thus ignoring many talented local administrators? Such a cadre policy has nothing in common with the Leninist principles. Moscow

⁶⁰ Olcott, Martha. 1987, 244.

adopted imperial ambitions, which could be formulated as “We appoint those whom we want”⁶¹).

We can call this process as Kazakhization of governmental structures of the Republic, which formed a necessary base for the formation of the local political elite. What is more, Kunayev used his position of the First Secretary of Kazakh Communist party and of full member of Politburo to bring his supporters to Moscow. Martha Brill Olcott claims that

there were ten Kazakhs on the Central Committee elected at the Twenty-sixth Party Congress, including six obkom first secretaries and two senior Russian officials from the republic apparat. At least five other Russians on the Central Committee had long associations with Kazakhstan and may well owe their subsequent promotions to Kunayev.⁶²

Here we should remember his close friendship with L. Brezhnev, on the other hand, L. Brezhnev himself was not stranger to the Kazakhstani Communist Party and this fact may play a very important role in the promotion of pro-Kunayev *apparatchiki*.

The year 1983 was the turning point in Kunayev’s career since was the year of the death of his mentor – L. Brezhnev. Next first secretaries of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Andropov and M. Gorbachev were not so Kunayev-friendly, with the exception of Chernenko who was not healthy enough to be busy with D. Kunayev. Kunayev was seen responsible “for advocating the continuation of the Brezhnev policy lines”⁶³ which according to latecomer rulers of the USSR was the policy that led to the stagnation of the Soviet economy. The years under

⁶¹ Kunayev, Dinmukhammed. 1992. *O moyem vremeni* (On my times), Almaty, 100.

⁶² Olcott, Martha. 1987, 245.

⁶³ Ibid.

L. Brezhnev's ruling were referred as "*gody* (or *vremena*) *zastoya*", ie "the years (or times) of stagnation".

Kunayev was replaced by Kolbin, Russian who had no experience with Kazakhstani realities from Ulyanovsk district of Russia in December 1986. This led to a large demonstration of Kazakh students in Almaty, which is known as "*Zheltoksan* (December in Kazakh) *Riots of 1986*". Moscow tried to show this peaceful demonstration as a nationalistic, chauvinistic one, and officially marked all Kazakh nation as chauvinistic. Demonstration was a kind of protest to the appointment of Kolbin as a First Secretary, Kazakh students opposed not to his ethnic background but to the general policy of the Center, its approach to the matter. Kazakh youth made such a demonstration trusted in Gorbachev's "*perestroyka*", "*pluralism*" and "*glasnost*" policies, but were threatened in a very hostile way: the masses of Kazakh university students were dispersed by using military force. The official figure given in "*Pravda*", which was accessible only after several years, was 60 deaths⁶⁴ and many injuries. However, estimations of death casualties were as much as 280.⁶⁵ According to a very optimistic source the number of jailed was up to a thousand.⁶⁶ This merciless reaction of the Center showed once more the policy of Moscow toward democratization of the Soviet society.

⁶⁴ Pravda, 19 December 1991. I think that the official figure of Kazakhstan was much more lower.

⁶⁵ "*Samizdat*". 1987. *Central Asian Survey*: 3, 73-75.

⁶⁶ Olcott, Martha, 1987, 256.

Kolbin had been on the position of the First Secretary for three years when N. Nazarbayev, the Head of the Kazakh Council of Ministers of that time was appointed as a new First Secretary.

1.5 After the Collapse of the Soviet Union

1.5.1 General Trends of 1990s

After the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union it became clear that the political as well as economic grounds of the society had to be changed. Former economic relations were broken; the republic faced crises in all spheres of societal as well as economic life. The government was expected to take immediate measures. As a way of dealing with these crises, government began to introduce free market-oriented policies, which have been implemented in two stages: (i) 1992-November 1993 and (ii) November 1993-today.

Between 1992-1993 Kazakhstan was fully dependent to Russian Central Bank's monetary policies, to other social and economic policies which were implementing in Russia.⁶⁷

January 1992 has been associated with the liberalization of consumer prices. Considerable difference between official and unofficial exchange rates, and other factors led to high inflation (up to %2000⁶⁸). In the republic with the population of about 17 million, the number of unemployed reached 40,514 in

⁶⁷ Berentayev, K. B. 1998. "Osnovniye etapy i rezultaty reformirovaniia ekonomiki Respubliki Kazahstan" (Main periods and results of reforming Kazakhstani economy), in *Tsentral'naiia Aziia i Kavkaz*: 14, 88-97.

⁶⁸ Detailed information on the inflation in Kazakhstan can be obtained from the Website [<http://www.nationalbank.kz/EconFinRep>]

1993, which was 4,031 in 1991⁶⁹. In the same period (1991-1993) social stratification came about and real wage was gradually decreasing (See Table 1).

Table 1 Changes real in average wage between 1990-1993, (Ruble)

Indicators	1990	1991	1992	1993
Nominal wage	265.4	440.8	4625.3	63750
Real wage	265.4	238.5	265.1	228.5

Note: The year 1990 was taken as a base.

Source: Paramonov, V. V. 2000, 38.

Table 1 clearly shows that although nominal average wage was sharply increasing in this period, real average wage decreased, and this was reflected in living standards of population. High quality food products such as meat, dairy products, and sugar were replaced by bread and made-from-flour products, consumption of which were increased by %23 in 1993 compared to 1990.⁷⁰

Table 2 Changes in nominal average wage in Kazakhstan between 1994-1998

Indicators	1994	1994	1996	1997	1998
Nominal average wage*	1725.7	4786	6840.9	8541	9682
Nominal average wage**	48.4	78.5	101.64	113.2	123.6

Source: Paramonov, V. V. 2000, 177.

*Tenge

**US Dolar

In November 1993 national currency called *Tenge* was introduced, which led to adoption independent fiscal and monetary policies backed by IMF and

⁶⁹ Paramonov, V. V. 2000. *Ekonomika Kazakhstana (1990-1998)* (Kazakhstani economy [1990-1998]), Almaty: Gylym, 38.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

World Bank, and to laying the foundation of independent macroeconomic policy. International financial organisations' suggestions could be summarised as follows:⁷¹

- limitation of the role of a state in social and economic spheres;
- liberalization of foreign trade;
- liberalization of prices and wages;
- formation of necessary for development of the private sector conditions;
- rationalization of state expenses;
- minimization of the state budget deficit;
- formation of effective financial sector;
- implementation of consistent anti-inflationist policy.

The “mass privatization” program began in 1994. This program was motivated not by economic reasons but by the principle of social justice. All population, including children received equal amount of privatization coupons; extra ones were given according to such criteria as employment record, living in rural parts etc. Privatization coupons were expected to be invested by their holders in investment funds. Investment funds, in turn, had to use coupons when privatizing state enterprises.⁷² Thus, all population was considered taking a part in privatization process. But this program ended with a failure, since investment funds did not have sufficient financial sources and could not participate in privatization. Moreover, an investment fund could buy maximum 20 percent of shares of an enterprise.

⁷¹ Berentayev, K. B. 1998, 88-97.

⁷² Half of a price of a state enterprise's shares had to be paid in money and other half in privatization coupons.

During 1992-1995 more than 15,000 state enterprises were privatized, about half of which were small-scale ones.⁷³

In July 1994, implementation of a new anti-crisis policy was begun, the aim of which was reaching macroeconomic stability at the end of 1995. After its implementation ended a new governmental program encompassing the formation of a market infrastructure, new fiscal and monetary policies, liberalization of foreign trade and privatization has been consistently implemented. As a result of this program state budget has been reduced at the expense of social security and other expenses. The first steps taken towards formation of a strong bank system and a securities market, development of insurance sector, low inflation rates were among other consequences of this program.

Generally, macroeconomic indicators have been improved as a result of this program. According to data provided by the National Bank of Kazakhstan,⁷⁴ in 1996 GDP increased by 0.5%-it was the first positive result since the year 1991. Inflation rate was decreased to 11.2 percent in 1997 from 60.3 percent and 28.7 percent in 1995 and 1996 respectively. State budget deficit was decreased from 3.9 percent of GDP to 3.6 percent in 1997 (-3.7 in 1998). (See Table 3)

In 1997 the percentage of GDP increase was 1.7 percent, but decreased in 1998 by 1.9 percent due to crises in Russian economy. In 1997 industrial output increased by 4% (-2.1 in 1998), whereas investments by more than 20.2% (12.8% in 1998). (Table 3)

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ All data on macroeconomic indicators was provided by the national bank of Kazakhstan. For more information see Website www.nationalbank.kz/EconFinRep/Show_tb101.asp?From=01.01.1993&To=01.04.2001

Table 3 Macroeconomic indicators (1994-2000)

	GDP change, %	Industrial output change, %	Inflation rate, %	Investment change %	Budget deficit or profit, %	Wage change, %
1995	-8.2	-8.2	60.3	-43.0	-4.0	16.7
1996	0.5	0.3	28.7	-39.9	-2.6	18.1
1997	1.7	4.0	11.2	20.2	-3.7	16.4
1998	-1.9	-2.1	1.9	12.8	-3.7	6.1
1999	1.7	2.2	17.8	3.8	-3.5	–
2000	9.6	14.6	9.8	29.4	0.1	19.2

Source: www.nationalbank.kz/EconFinRep/Show_tb101.asp?From=01.01.1993&To=01.04.2001

It is seen that in the year of 2000 all indicators regarding economy of Kazakhstan were positive. But economic stability was reached at a high cost. In the period between 1994-1998 the number of unemployed reached 1 million, whereas population was significantly decreased and totalled 15.5 million⁷⁵. On the other hand, in these years consumption of food products was gradually decreased⁷⁶.

These market-oriented policies resulted in disproportion of incomes, ie. inequality among Kazakhstani population, which was not so sharply seen before reforms.

⁷⁵ Paramonov, V. V. 2000,163.

⁷⁶ *Statisticheskii Ejegodnik Kazakhstana za 1994-1997gg* (Statistical Yearbook for 1994-1997). 1998, Almaty.

Table 4 Distribution of real income among Kazakhstanis (after taxation), (%)

Monthly income per person Tenge	Total population, %		Urban population, %		Rural population, %	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
Up to 1000	20.6	20.6	11.9	6.8	31.9	35.5
1001-3000	42.1	41.9	39.6	36.7	46.2	47.9
3001-4000	11.8	12.4	14.3	17.2	8.4	7.2
4001-10000	21.8	21.8	29.5	34.0	11.4	8.5
10001-19000	3.0	2.9	4.0	4.7	1.6	0.8
Over 19000	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.1

Note: 1-December 1997, 2-December 1998.

Source: Paramonov, V. V. 2000, 179.

It was clearly stated in Table 3 that in 1998, %62 (whose monthly income is lower 3000 Tenge) of the total population was below poverty line. Moreover, this percent is higher in rural area than in cities, what has also contributed to social differentiation among population.

The transition to a market economy in Kazakhstan has been associated with increased inequality and stratification. Living standards have fallen for the majority of people, unemployment and poverty have been high, the distribution of assets and earnings has changed radically, and social benefits have fallen. The social distance between the "winners" and the "losers" of the reforms has widened dramatically.

Moreover, radical changes in the economy and the society coincided with reforms taken place in governmental apparatus as well as in state institutions.

1.5.2 Developments in the Political Arena

1.5.2.1 The President

Since Kazakhstan may be characterised as semi-presidential system and president has played very important, if not the major, role, in the introduction of all kinds of reforms, first, I would like to mention developments concerning the institute of presidency. The institute of presidency that was formed on April 24, 1990, was a principal step taken towards structural reforming of the state system. This step was caused by some objective and subjective reasons related with economic, political and ideological circumstances of that period. On 22 October, 1989, amendments to the Constitution of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, which would make transformation of the state system into presidential one much easier, were made: the powers of the Supreme Soviet were limited and the principles, which the election system was based on, were changed etc. These were the first steps taken in order to establish legal state.

As it was mentioned before, at the beginning of 1990s the Soviet Union faced with crisis encompassing whole existing political, social and economic system of the state. In that hard times, the search for a new constitutional organ, in order to learn the elements of “sovereignty”, to make structural changes in political, social and economic areas and to materialize the state functions which were not used before, was underway in many Soviet republics as well as in Kazakhstan.

The Communist Party was loosing its monopolist role as a nucleus of the state and this affected the whole political system. “Republic of Soviets” was

enable to cope with the problem due to its large territory on the one hand and the unwillingness of state organs and public servants to bear the all kind of responsibility-on the other. In order to cope with these problems, a new strong organ, which did not show its effectiveness in the past, had to be established. Thus the institute of the presidency was established to fulfill this gap.

To shortly summarize these developments: the transition process of Kazakhstan from the Soviet system into the new one based on the 1995 Constitution may be divided into four stages, as it was stated by Kazakh scholar Malinovski.⁷⁷ Furthermore, these four stages represent the developmental stages of the political-judicial status of the Kazakh President. This classification is based on the specific characteristics of the internal political system, the changes of the organizational content of the state.

First stage – **the Soviet Parliamentary Republic** – was reflected in the law “On the Organization of the Institute of Presidency in Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic” and in “The Amendments to the Constitution of the Kazakh SSR” as “The Head of the Kazakh SSR is the President of the Kazakh SSR”.

Second stage – **the Soviet Presidential System** – began with passing the law “On the Amendment to Constitution Related to the Status of the Head of the State”. Article 144 was changed as: “The Head of the Kazakh Republic, its highest executive and imperative organ is the President of the Kazakh SSR”.

Third stage – **Parliamentary system with empowered the Supreme Soviet** – was related to the period of the implementation of the 1993 Constitution.

⁷⁷ Malinovski, Viktor. 1998. *Glava Gosudarstva Suverennogo Kazakhstana* (The Head of the State of Independent Kazakhstan), Almaty: Print-S.

Article 75 of this Constitution was stated, “The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the Head of the State and its Highest Executive”.

Fourth stage – **Fifth Republic** – the period of the implementation of the 1995 Constitution. The third chapter of the 1995 Constitution is titled “The President”. This chapter is placed just after norms related to human and citizen rights and freedoms and is followed by chapters “The Parliament” and “The Government”. Thus the importance of the Institute of Presidency among all other organs of the state was emphasized.

1.5.2.2 The Formation of a Multiparty System

After mentioning developments concerning the institute of presidency, next focus will be on the formation of the multiparty system in Kazakhstan. The year of 1993 played a significant role in the process of formation of multiparty system in Kazakhstan. Coup attempt of August 1991 taken place in Moscow clearly showed that Communist Party could not be the political basis of the republic, since it lost its legitimacy and sympathy among Kazakhstani as well as other Soviet republics’ population. On the other hand, in the state that attempted to be a democratic, system had to embody many parties. N. Nazarbayev, as the leaders of other republics did, decided to form multi-party system at the expense of closing the Communist party. His first attempt was the creation of the Socialist Party, which inherited the property and the membership of the Communist Party. However, this party was not accepted by large masses as a new one since nothing changed but the name. Anuar Alimzhanov became its first president.

People's Congress of Kazakhstan was the result of Nazarbayev's second attempt to create a party. This party was created in October 1991 and was in accord with pro-Nazarbayev line. Olzhas Suleimenov and poet Mukhtar Shakhanov were first party's co-chairmen.

Nazarbayev decided to form another party in October 1992. The name was chosen as The Union of People's Unity for Kazakhstan. It was another example of strong pro-Nazarbayev political entity. Its first president was Supreme Soviet deputy Serik Abdrakhmanov, but in 1993 the leadership was passed to Nazarbayev.

First new Constitution of Kazakhstan was adopted in 1993, which envisioned a new legislature that was to be formed on a multi-party system base. On the one hand – the crises of Soviets (Councils) of People's Deputies' as representative organs, the need for a new legislature proposed by the new Constitution – on the other, stimulated the holding first in the history of Kazakhstan multi-party elections.

As a result, in October 1993, the Parliament passed laws "On Election", "On Provisional Empowering of the President and Local Administrators" (which envisioned vesting them with extra powers including those of the legislature) and decided to dissolve itself.

The situation on the eve of election campaign was characterised by such social and political tendencies as:
high inflation, which partly was due to the introduction of national currency;
systematic delays of wages, pensions and stipend payments;
activation of some groups among Slavic population as a result of further breaking up relations with Russia;
dissolution of the Soviets that resulted in dismissing of hundreds of deputies;

the formation of party coalitions as well as other groups (as official as well as unofficial) on the eve of general parliamentary election.⁷⁸

In general, parliamentary elections of 1994 were first multi-party elections in which all political forces as well as independent candidates could participate; Socialist Party of Kazakhstan (SPK) (ex-Communist Party of Kazakhstan), People's Congress of Kazakhstan (PCK) and Union of People's Unity for Kazakhstan were just some of them.⁷⁹

Table 5 Party composition of the Kazakhstani Supreme Soviet following the general election of 1994

Party/organization	Seats	% of Seats
Union of People's Unity of Kazakhstan	33	18.6
Confederation of Trade Unions of Kazakhstan	11	6.2
People's Congress of Kazakhstan	9	5.1
Socialist Party of Kazakhstan	8	4.5
Peasants' Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan	4	2.2
Social Movement Harmony (LAD)	4	2.2
Organization of Veterans	1	0.6
Union of Youth of Kazakhstan	1	0,6
Democratic Committee for Human Rights	1	0,6
Association of Lawyers of Kazakhstan	1	0.6
International Public Committee "Aral-Asia-Kazakhstan"	1	0.6
Congress of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan	1	0.6
Deputies of the 12 th Supreme Soviet	40	22.6
Independent candidates	62	35.5
Total	177	100.0

Source: OSCE Report on 1994 Parliamentary Elections in Kazakhstan, 1995.

According to the report of the Central Election Committee, out of 9,561,534 people eligible to vote, 7,030,050 or 73.52 percent participated in the

⁷⁸ Peruashev, A and Babakumarov, E. 1998. *Noveishaya istoriia Kazakhstana* (Newest history of Kazakhstan), Almaty: Daur, 78.

⁷⁹ See Appendix C for more information about Kazakhstani political parties.

elections. The national structure of the newly elected legislature was as follows: 106 Kazakhs, 49 Russians, 10 Ukrainians, 3 German, 3 Jews, 1 Uzbek, 1 Tatar, 1 Ingush, 1 Korean, 1 Pole and 1 Uygur.⁸⁰

MPs of the Union of People's Unity of Kazakhstan, Confederation of Trade Union of Kazakhstan and the People's Congress of Kazakhstan in the new parliament formed fractions. Remained MPs formed 14 deputy groups based on professional affiliations.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) criticized 1994 parliamentary elections for rescheduling of elections⁸¹ and irregularities in registering Russian candidates. Other criticisms of the CSCE towards the elections were: fraudulent ballots; simultaneous voting for several candidates; restriction of the opposition's access to media; and insufficient preparation time for political parties, movements, and candidates, drawing "a categorical conclusion that ... [the] elections ... were accompanied with an array of most flagrant violations in the procedure for a free expression of people's will and ... should be recognized as invalid".⁸²

Responding to these criticisms the Electoral Commission stated that although the elections may not have conformed well to Western standards, they were in line with current Kazakhstani legislation.⁸³

⁸⁰ Brown, Bess. 18 March 1994. "Kazakhstan Election results". In *RFE/RL News Briefs*, Munich: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Inc:12, 8.

⁸¹ According to the legislation parliamentary elections were to be held in summer 1995, but firstly were rescheduling for December 1994, and later to March 1994.

⁸² "Further Election Criticism". 9 March 1994. Moscow: ITAR-TASS. In *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*. 9 March 1994. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service, p. 34.

⁸³ "Further Election Criticism", 9 March 1994, 34-35.

Although some sources report that at least 60 percent of the newly-elected parliamentarians are reliable supporters of Nursultan Nazarbayev, and “... will, therefore, be able to control the majority in line with Nazarbayev’s wishes”⁸⁴, in reality the new parliament proved to be adopted oppositionist position. Parliamentary opposition led by deputy group “Progress” was quick to be organized immediately after the elections, and offered alternative program of economic development called “New Economic Policy”.

In May 1994 the Parliament passed a vote of no-confidence in the government of Sergei Tereshenko, who was appointed as prime-minister at Soviet times. This meant an apparent confrontation with the President. Nazarbayev, backing by the Constitution, which gave him the right to name the prime minister, subject only to parliamentary confirmation, ignored the vote for a time. His main argument was that privatization process had to be completed by the existing government.

But the Parliament continued to make pressure overriding the presidential veto on some bills. Moreover, nonparliamentary opposition called “*Respublika*”⁸⁵ began to demand replacement of both the prime minister and the president.

⁸⁴ “Final Results of Parliamentary Election Issued”. 17 March 1994. Moscow: ITAR-TASS. In *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*. 18 March 1994. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 43.

⁸⁵ “Respublika” brought together the Socialist Party, the Social-Democratic Party, the new Communist Party, the Lad (Russian nationalists), the Azat (Kazakh nationalist party) and the Tabigat (Greens). It prepared alternative program of economic development, it differed from the official one in many aspects but the main feature was the rejection of IMF recommendations, which would lead to “societal catastrophe”. For more information see: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 2 April 1994.

In October 1994, the Parliament managed to force Nazarbayev to accept the resignation of the Tereshenko government. Some scholars have argued that the acceptance of the resignation of the government was nothing but a good maneuver made by the President, since socio-economic situation in the country was still deteriorating and the President needed the scapegoat, who could be charged as the main responsible person for this deterioration.⁸⁶

In late 1994, the legislature began to see itself as the main brake on presidential power. Speaker of the Parliament, Abish Kekilbayev, a close associate of the President, became increasingly insistent that government actions and decrees must have a basis in law. On the other hand, he also began to insist that normal democratic practice is to have the parliament propose new legislation, rather than the President (as stipulated by the Constitution). Shortly, he believed that the suitable political system for Kazakhstan is parliamentarianism.

However, the opposition (parliamentary and nonparliamentary) believed that the replacement of the prime minister was a part of Nazarbayev's tactics and saw the only way in the election of the new president. Some independent newspapers began to actively discuss possible presidential candidates, among whom the most prominent were Olzhas Suleimenov (the People's Congress of Kazakhstan which announced itself as constructive opposition in autumn 1994), Serikbolsyn Abdildin (the Head of the "Respublika" and of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan) and Ghaziz Aldamzharov. The opposition agreed on supporting Olzhas Suleimenov as presidential candidate in the next presidential elections

⁸⁶ Karsakov, Ilyas. 1998. "Osobennosti transformatsii politicheskoi sistemy Kazakhstana v kontse 80 – v seredine 90 godov" (Features of the transformation of Kazakhstani political system at the end of 80s-mid of 90s). *Tsentrinaliia Asia i Kavkaz*:14, 45-68.

scheduled for December 1996, which was seen as the only way of gaining power in the republic.

Nazarbayev understood possible outcomes of such an oppositionist position well, what was complicated by the decreasing rating of Nazarbayev at the expense of increasing ratings of O. Suleimenov, G. Aldamzharov and A. Kazhegeldin because of further deterioration of economic conditions.⁸⁷

Whereas the opposition was focused on the next presidential election, the President went before the Parliament on March 11, and told them that they were an improperly assembled body, so were to be annulled as well as all passed laws including the decisions given by the government. President's decision was backed by the decision of the Constitutional Court given on March 6 and reaffirmed on March 11 on the sue of Svetlana Kvyatkovskaya who was a candidate but could not become a MP due to, according to her, the fact that the voting had violated the Constitution. She sued to have 1994 election in her (Almaty) district to be annulled, but the case was interpreted as casting doubt on the legitimacy of the entire parliament.

MPs reaction was not effective. Several deputies began a hunger strike. O. Suleimenov attempted to convene alternative "People's Assembly" but the building of the Parliament was closed due to "necessary restructuring", so they had to meet on the street.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Ibid, 55.

⁸⁸ Olcott, Martha. 1997. "Democratization and the growth of political participation in Kazakhstan". In Dawisha, Karen and Parrott, Bruce. *Conflict, cleavage, and change in Central Asia and Caucasus*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 227.

Having annulled the Parliament, N. Nazarbayev tried to find the appropriate way to solve the problem. The Constitution did not contain any rules for a situation when the legislature as well government was annulled; it did not provide any suitable mechanism to overcome existing political crises. Thus, the law “On Provisional Empowering of the President and Local Administrators” dated October 10th, 1993, was accepted by the President as provisional action till the new legislature would be convened, which was to happen only after adoption of the new constitution, since the old one proved to be ineffective.

On the other hand, Nursultan Nazarbayev convened an “Assembly of Kazakhstani People” of his own, at the end of March, although the Constitution did not contain any article giving the right to the President to do so. The Assembly of Kazakhstani People adopted a resolution for Nursultan Nazarbayev to stay at his post till December 2000 without election, which was backed by the will to avoid an anarchy in the country. Nazarbayev, although was not against such an idea, decided to put the matter to a national referendum.

The referendum was held on April 29, 1995. The results of the referendum were as follows: 91.3 percent of all eligible to vote peoples participated, and 95.8 percent of whom used their votes supporting the extension of the presidential rule.⁸⁹

The referendum emphasized the tendency towards centralised semi-presidential power and disappointed supporters of establishing parliamentarism. In this context, it can be claimed that dismissing of two parliaments within very short period of time may be explained as an outcome of “struggle” between

⁸⁹ Open Media Research Institute, *Daily Digest*, 2 May 1995.

supporters of semi-presidentialism and parliamentarism, which has been seen in many post-communist countries experiencing transition towards democratic regimes.⁹⁰

The political events following the referendum revealed organisational and financial weakness of the opposition, which was represented by Azat, Lad, the Communist party of Kazakhstan, Labour Movement, Tabigat. It prepared its own project of the new constitution but it lacked time and finances to carry on propaganda of its constitutional concept. The opposition succeeded only in presenting their draft to the President; it opposed the balance of power envisioned in the official project and was to be accepted by the legislature.⁹¹

Within the very limited period of time the project of the new constitution was prepared and presented for public discussion (the time allowed for discussion was only a month). Many political parties and organizations such as the Socialist Party, the People's Cooperative Party, the Party of People's Unity, the People's Congress of Kazakhstan, the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, Confederation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan made supportive commentaries on the new constitution.

The referendum on the new constitution was held on August 30, 1995. The voter turnout was 91 percent. 89.1 percent of all voters voted for the adoption of the new constitution.⁹² 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan has set a semi-presidential regime. According to it, the President is not belonging to any

⁹⁰ See Özbudun, Ergun. 1993. *Demokrasiye geis surecinde anayasa yapımı* (Constitution Building in the Transition Process to Democracy). Ankara: Bilgi.

⁹¹ Karsakov, Ilias. 1998, 43.

of legislative, executive and judiciary powers. He is above all of them and considered to be neutral. He appoints all high officials in the country including judges of high courts. Prime minister, who forms government according to presidents' rules, is subject to president's appointment too. The Parliament is bicameral and consists of the Senate (upper house) and the Majilis. Senate had 47 members who were elected by indirect voting through local representative bodies (since the number of regions was decreased from 19 to 14 because some regions were united the number of senators was changed), two from each of 19 regions and Almaty city. The President appoints 7 Senators; moreover, the Head of the Senate has been subjected to the Presidential nomination. The Majilis had 67 representatives (now it has 77, due to amendments made in the legislation), one from each district drawn to have roughly equal population. Generally speaking, it could be claimed that the new constitution is a rough imitation of the existing French Constitution, what is not surprising since the draft of the constitution was prepared with the assistance of French specialists.

After adopting the new constitution the new legislature had to be elected.

The elections were held in December 1995 with turnout of 79.5 percent. About 30 political parties, movements and organizations registered their representatives but only 15 of them succeeded in getting their candidates into the parliament. (See Table 6)

Table 6 Party representation in the parliament of Kazakhstan, December 1995

Party/organization	Seats

⁹² Olcott, Martha. 1997, 240.

<i>Majilis</i>	67
People's Congress of Kazakhstan (PCK)	1
Peasant Union	7
Youth Union	3
Lawyers' Union	1
Confederation of Trade Unions of Kazakhstan	5
People's Unity Party (PUP)	24
Union of Entrepreneurs	1
Nevada-Semipalatinsk Social Movement	1
Social Fund for the Assistance of Victims of Natural Disasters "Komek"	1
People's Cooperative Party (PCP)	1
Engineering Academy of Kazakhstan	3
Club of Creative Workers and School Principals of Aktobe	1
Democratic Party of Kazakhstan (DPK)	12
"Revival of Kazakhstan" Party (RKP)	1
Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPK)	2
Independents	14
<i>Senate</i>	47
Raion Maslikhaty (District Councils)	34
City Maslikhaty (City Councils)	2
Independents	4
Appointed by the President	7

Note: The total number of party-nominated candidates elected to the Majilis was fifty-one. Several deputies were nominated by more than one party/organization.

Source: *Vesti Kazakhstana*, December 30, 1995.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), while calling the elections fair, has declined to give Kazakhstan's electoral system a "democratic" imprimatur.⁹³

The bicameral parliament elected in 1995 was not like the previous one in terms of opposing government's and president's policies. The fact that the President may dismiss the Parliament at any time plays very important role in "pacification" of the Parliament. On the other hand, some oppositionist parties like "Azat" boycotted the elections because they considered the Presidential Decree "On Elections" as an illegal document, since it was adopted in the absence

of the legislature.⁹⁴ Moreover, all candidates had to pay a sum equal to 100 minimum wages (then it was about USD 600) in order to be registered as a candidate. This fee would not be returned notwithstanding whether candidate won the elections or not. This factor paved the way to withdrawing of many representatives of the opposition from the elections. In addition, as it was mentioned above, the President appoints 7 Senators, and nominates the Head of the Senate, thus strengthens his own power in the Senate. These and other factors affected the structure of the first bicameral parliament of Kazakhstan.

The opposition viewed the elections and the new structure of the parliament mainly as vehicles for Nazarbayev to legitimise his authoritarian rule. Oppositionist parties and movements formed the opposition movement “Azamat” which was registered in 1996. It held its first congress in April 1996 where a coordinating council of 49 members and three co-chairmen (Murat Auezov – Kazakhstan’s former ambassador to China, nowadays the Head of “Soros-Kazakhstan” Foundation, Petr Svoik – the Socialist party leader and the former chairman of the State Committee on Pricing and Anti-Monopoly Measures, and Turegeldy Sharmanov – a member of Kazakh and Russian academies of medical sciences) were elected.

In November 1997, several oppositionist party and movements convened the first session of a joint coordination committee on creating a union of opposition forces, where opposition activist Galym Abylseitov was elected as the chairmen. The organization, which was called the People’s Front of Kazakhstan, and included the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Workers’ Movement,

⁹³ For more information see the Website [www.freedomhouse.org]

⁹⁴ Olcott, Martha. 1997, 241.

LAD, Azamat, and Azat, was officially established in February 1998. Its main goal was to nominate a candidate for presidency in the next presidential elections. Azamat co-chairman Petr Svoik was elected as First Deputy Leader, and Chairman of Workers' Movement Madel Ismailov was named Deputy Chairman.

However, 17 pro-Nazarbayev party and movements, including the Democratic Party, People's Cooperative Party, and the Muslim Women's Union, responding to the attempts of oppositionist parties and movements to create a national front, signed a memorandum on cooperation with the government supporting Nazarbayev and his reforms in January 1998.

Short-term benefits of establishing "the regime of limited pluralism" were stabilising the country's economy as well as inter-ethnic relations. In 1996, GDP of the country increased first time after the independence. Banking system restructuring was successfully completed. However, the positive developments in the economy coincided with negative practices in the field of political rights. (See Table 7)

Table 7 Freedom ratings in Kazakhstan, 1992-2000

	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Political Rights	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Civil Liberties	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
Status	PF	PF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF

Note: Combined scores of civil and political liberties, each rated on a 1 to 7 scale with 1 being freest and 7 least free. A score of 5 and less (with a 2 on political rights) is regarded as "free", 6 to 11 as "partly free" (PF), and 12 to 17 as "not free" (NF).

Source: Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1991-1998, in www.freedomhouse.org

In September 1998 President Nazarbayev addressed the nation a speech *“On the Situation in the Country and major Directions of Domestic and Foreign Policy: Democratization, Economic and Political Reform for the New Century”*.

He stated that Kazakhstan must become a supporter and symbol of democracy and human rights. Seven fundamental elements of democracy were outlined:

- The electoral process must be honest, representative and encourage the fullest participation of candidates and voters.
- The role of parties in the political system must be strengthened.
- It is necessary to strengthen and to provide autonomy for the Majilis and Senate to have stability and the succession of power.
- The role of non-governmental organizations in building a civil society must be strengthened.
- An independent judiciary is a pillar of a democratic society.
- It is necessary to build on the already established record of a free, uncensored and independent press.
- Changes in attitudes to women must be made by increasing women’s representation in all branches of authority.

The President also stated that authoritarianism of any kind in Kazakhstan is the road to nowhere. Only a free democratic society will be a guarantor of a stable and happy life. The contents of the speech encouraged widespread support for further democratisation.

In October 1998 the two chambers of the Parliament agreed in a joint session on a series of constitutional amendments which included changing the term of office for the President from five to seven years; deleting the age limit of

65 for the President; removing the requirement for a 50 percent turnout for a valid election; and establishing the line of succession in case of the early resignation, removal or death of a President. One day later, the Parliament called early presidential elections for 10 January 1999. Thus, the presidential election was to be held almost two years earlier than planned.

Since no public discussion had taken place on this issue, the Parliament's decision caught the opposition parties and possible presidential candidates by surprise. Various groups questioned the legitimacy of the amendments to the Constitution and the election call. The Constitutional Council decided that the constitutional amendments were legal.

On November 30, 1998, the Central Election Committee formally registered four candidates: Nursultan Nazarbayev, the incumbent President; Engels Ghabbasov, a member of the Senate; Serikbolsyn Abdildin, the chairman of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan; and Ghani Kasymov, a chairman of Kazakhstan's custom committee. These candidates were able to present the required number (170,000) of signatures in support of their candidacy, to pay a registration fee of USD 30,000 and to pass a test in Kazakh language.

Other candidates voluntarily withdrew (Kharishal Asanov, and Zhaksybay Bazylbayev) or were denied registration due to an administrative sanction during the year prior to registration (Amantai-Khazhy Asylbek, and Akezhan Kazhegeldin).

Akezhan Kazhegeldin, after having been banned from running for the Presidency, embarked on organising a political party, the Republican People's Party (RPP), with the aim to participate in the Parliamentary elections of 1999.

The RRP called on its supporters to vote for none of the existing candidates. The founding congress of the RPP took place in mid-December 1998.

Election campaign atmosphere, according to the Report of ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) on the presidential election, was in favour of only one candidate, ie the incumbent president. State authorities did not behave impartially and provided support for the election of the existing president. It is claimed that there was no differentiation between state affairs and the incumbent's campaign. For example, state bodies announced and publicised their support for N. Nazarbayev, while printed messages encouraging passengers to vote for him were distributed on some local flights of the state airline. The report stated that administrative measures were taken towards some candidates' campaigning. For example, candidates had uneven access to public spaces.

On January 10, 88.3 % of all peoples eligible to vote participated in the election. According to the Central Election Committee, the majority of votes were given in the support the incumbent president. (See Table 8)

Table 8 The Results of the Presidential Election, January 10, 1999

Candidate	Votes, % of total
Nursultan Nazarbayev	79.8
Serikbolsyn Abdildin	11.7
Ghani Kasymov	4.6
Engels Gabbasov	0.8

Source: Web-site of the Central Election Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.election.kz, RFE/RL Newslines

The OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission⁹⁵ found that the election process did not suit the standards to which the Republic of Kazakhstan is committed as an OSCE participating state. The areas of concern include the following: duration of the election campaign, legislative framework, election commissions, the infringements on rights of citizens to seek public office, obstacles to freedoms of association and of assembly, campaign atmosphere, access to the media, voting procedures.⁹⁶

Next general elections were held in October 1999 according to the new law “On Election” passed on May 6, 1999. A newly elected bicameral legislature took office in December 1999.

According to the law, the number of Senate members was reduced to 39 from 47 due to uniting some *Oblasts*⁹⁷ (thus the number of them was decreased to 14 from 19). 32 members of whom are elected on the basis of indirect suffrage by secret ballot at a joint session of the deputies of *Maslikhats*⁹⁸ at each *Oblast* and in Astana and Almaty (these two cities are of special status); the rest is appointed by the President.

The Majilis has 77 members, the election of whom is based on direct suffrage of adult citizens by secret ballot. It is a mixed system, with 10 seats elected on the basis of proportional representation and the remaining 67 elected in

⁹⁵ ODIHR did not meet the Government’s request to send a presidential observer mission. In its public explanation, the ODIHR cited concerns about the unequal opportunities of presidential candidates, unequal access to media, and coerces support for Nazarbayev and sent small election assessment team to report on the full election process.

⁹⁶ The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. 5 February 1999. *OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission, Final Report*.

⁹⁷ *Oblast* is the term for the level of regional administrative authority.

⁹⁸ *Maslikhat* is the general term that refers to locally elected officials.

single mandate constituencies. These rules were innovations of the new law “On Election”, according to which each candidate listed on a party list must provide a fee equal to 25 minimum wages; these fees are refunded to the party as long as the party passes the 7% threshold of the total votes cast.

Candidates in the single-mandate races may be nominated by political parties, by any other republican or local public associations or may be self-nominated. Under the Election Law, candidates cannot appear on a party list and a ballot for a single mandate constituency at the same time.

Total 547 candidates were registered in the 67 single-mandate districts, of whom:

- 80 candidates nominated by public associations⁹⁹;
- 113 candidates nominated by political parties;
- 354 self-nominated candidates.¹⁰⁰

In addition, nine party lists with 64 candidates were registered for party list ballot.¹⁰¹

The Senate election took place on 24 October at joint sessions of qualified electors with turnout of 86.5 percent. Lack of open or official affiliation by candidates with political parties suggests that the Senate races were much more a question of individual political personalities than support for or against particular parties.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Public associations are every kind of NGOs except political parties.

¹⁰⁰ The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. 2000. *OSCE/ODIHR Final Report – Parliamentary Elections of 10 and 24 October 1999*

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Table 9 Political Make-up of the Majilis after 1999 Elections

Affiliation	Seats		
	Single member districts	Party list	Total
OTAN (Fatherland)	20	4	24
Civil Party	9	2	11
Communist Party	1	2	3
Agrarian Party	1	2	3
Republican People's Party (RPP)	1		1
People's Cooperative Party	1		1
Business	10		10
Government Associated	20		20
Others	4		4
Total	67	10	77

Source: The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. 2000. *OSCE/ODIHR Final Report – Parliamentary Elections of 10 and 24 October 1999*.

U.S. Department of State in its report on human rights practises in Kazakhstan¹⁰³ revealed many irregularities concerning the parliamentary elections of 1999. Particularly it stated that, among other irregularities, there were widespread allegations that some local authorities interfered with the parliamentary elections during the campaign and in the voting process.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, some reports claimed that tax inspectors and some KNB (Committee of the National Security – ex-KGB) officials intimidated opposition candidates, their supporters, and the independent media.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, OSCE/ODIHR

¹⁰³ U.S. Department of State. 2000. *The Report on Human Rights Practices in Kazakhstan*. Full text is available at the Website [<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/eur/index.cfm?docid=798>]

¹⁰⁴ In one case, the chief election commissioner resigned because, according to him, the district authority ordered him to deliver a victory for the authority's favoured candidate.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

reporting on the elections of 1999 pointed out (i) executive authorities' illegal interference in the election process; (ii) unfair campaign practices by parties closely associated with existing power structures; (iii) threats of bureaucratic, administrative, and judicial measures jeopardising media operations; (iv) bias by lower level election commissions for candidates and parties favoured by regional and local officials; and (v) intimidation and obstruction of the electoral campaign of opposition parties and candidates.¹⁰⁶

Thus, the Parliamentary Elections of 1999 failed to be consistent with OSCE election standards. However, Kazakhstan's parliamentary elections of 1999 marked a very significant step in the country's transition to democracy. According to OSCE/ODIHR, improvements in three areas created the potential for Kazakhstan to meet OSCE commitments:

(1) The Central Election Commission adopted an extensive set of regulations, significantly improving the legislative framework for the election; (2) Ten political parties were registered for the party-list election and 547 candidates for the single- mandate constituencies, contributing to pluralism; and (3) party, candidate, and non-partisan observers were accredited to monitor the proceedings in a great majority of precincts (polling stations).¹⁰⁷

After the election opposition parties have held a number of press conferences concerning their views on the election. Opposition forces created a united front of representatives of oppositionist political parties, human rights organizations, and NGO (non-governmental organisations) called the Forum of Democratic Forces, the founders of which were the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, Republican People's Party, Political Alliance of Women's Organizations, Ecological Union

¹⁰⁶ The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. 2000.

“*Tabigat*”, “*Orleu*”, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, “*Pokoleniye*”, “*Azamat*”, Association of Independent Mass Media In Central Asia, Workers’ Movement and others. It adopted a resolution of a series of demands, which include:

- an appeal to the Parliaments and Governments of the USA, Russia, Japan, EU, CIS, and OSCE not to recognise the deputies elected by means of widespread falsifications to the Senate and Majilis;
- a demand that the election results in both the Senate and Majilis be declared invalid;
- a demand to bring the members of the CEC (Central Election Committee) and lower-standing election commissions to justice for the violations committed;
- a demand to conduct in the first half of 2000 new elections to the Majilis and Maslikhats and also elections of Akims (regional governors, appointed by the President) and judges at all levels;
- a demand to conduct in the second half of 2000 new elections to the Senate.¹⁰⁸

It would not be hard to understand that none of their demands was taken seriously and met. Nazarbayev in his speech addressed to the nation and made on the eve of the elections warned Akims that they “must strictly adhere to the principle of non-interference by executive authorities in the activities of parties and candidates”. His expectations on the elections were “free and open,

¹⁰⁷ The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. 2000.

¹⁰⁸ Information on the Forum of Democratic Forces can be obtained from the Website [www.forum.fsn.kz]

transparent and competitive, monitored, accurately reported, and fairly adjudicated”.¹⁰⁹

In practise, the legislature exercises little control over the executive branch, although it has the constitutional authority to remove governmental ministers and vote no-confidence in the Government. The existing constitution allows the executive branch to dominate the legislature. According to the 1995 Constitution, although the Parliament must approve the overall state budget, it could increase state spending or decrease state revenues only on the approval of the executive branch. Nearly all laws passed by Parliament originate in the Government, which controls the budget of the Parliament; it has not provided funds for MP (Members of Parliament) to hire staff, a situation generally viewed as decreasing Parliament’s effectiveness.

Thus, the Constitution of 1995 fully established an autocratic political system¹¹⁰ which, according to some pro-Nazarbayev scholars one day in the future would transform into democratic one.¹¹¹ In practise this means that the political power has been consolidated in the hands of Kazakhstani President, who although according to the Constitution of Kazakhstan, is very powerful, expanded his presidential powers by decree, thus only he can initiate constitutional

¹⁰⁹ Statement by the President of Kazakhstan to the people of the country in connection with the elections of October 1999. Full text is available from the Central Election Commission Website at [<http://www.election.kz/eng/Obracheniye/Obrach.asp>]

¹¹⁰ Linz and Stepan showed defining characteristics of authoritarianism as follows: “Political system with limited, not responsible political pluralism. Often quite extensive social and economic pluralism... Often some space for semiopposition”. See Linz, J. and Stepan. A. 1996. *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 44.

¹¹¹ For example see Syroezhkin, K. L. and Akimbekov S. M. 1999. “Respublika Kazakhstan: poisk putei ustoychivogo razvitiia” (Republic of Kazakhstan: seeking the ways of stable development). *Tsentral'naiia Aziia i Kavkaz*: 5, 23-46

amendments, appoint and dismiss the government, dissolve Parliament, call referenda at his discretion etc.

The newly elected parliament did not prove to be very efficacious in opposing government's reforms by a vote of no-confidence. On the other hand, since the government is formed not from members of different political platforms but from high state officials – technocrats, 10 seats elected due to party lists do not play important, if any, role in contemporary Kazakhstani politics.

1.5.2.3 Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

According to the legislature, in order to be considered a non-governmental organisation, all such groups must be officially registered either nationally, with the Ministry of Justice, or locally with their local government departments. According to the legislation there are three kinds of such organisations:

- Political organisations
- Non-political organisations
- Religious organisations.

The Constitution makes provisions for their rights and activities. These organisations must be non-profit – in other words they have not rights to generate profit from their activities. They are considered equal before the law. In the case of activities which violate the Constitution or other legislation, the court system has the right to shut them down. Furthermore, the state has the right to scrutinise their activities to ensure they are acting according to the goals as set out in their registration documents.

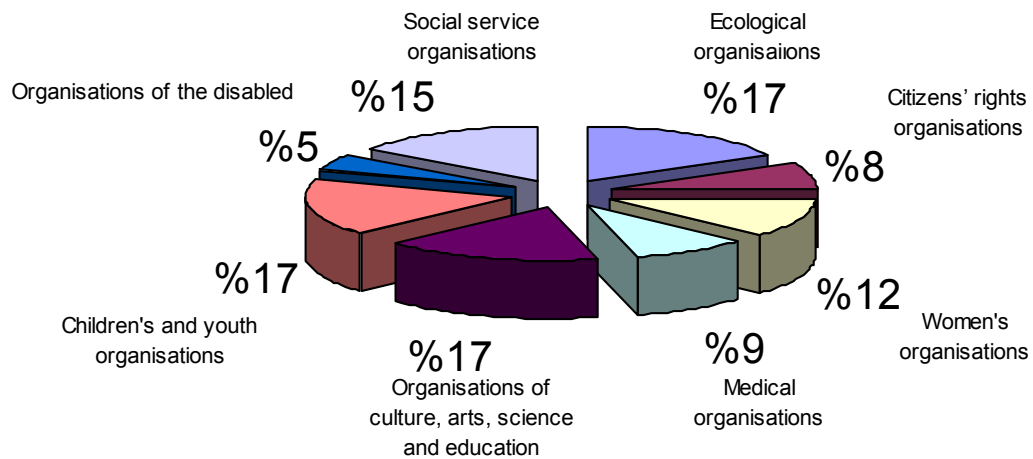
According to the legislation, all such organisations must be open in their activities, they must be self-governing, they must ensure equal rights for all members and their activities must, of course, be in accordance with the laws of the state. They may, for instance, conduct public hearings, hold meetings and demonstrations and publish their own newspapers or books. They must not interfere in the affairs of the government but they can cooperate with government such as through contracts and agreements.

The number of NGOs in Kazakhstan has grown from 500 in the early 1990s to more than 7,000 in June 2001.¹¹² These non-profit organizations provide a variety of free services, including environmental education, legal assistance, and cultural exchanges. (See Figure 1)

The Figure 1 details the main groupings of NGOs existing in Kazakhstan and the percentage of NGOs working in each of the categories. The figure has divided NGOs into the following eight categories: women's organisations, medical organisations; organisations of culture, arts, science and education; children's and youth organisations; organisations of the disabled; social service organisations; ecological organisations and citizens' rights organisations. The biggest categories (each with 17 percent of the total) are those devoted to culture, children and ecology. The smallest category is that of organisations devoted to issues of disability, at 5 percent.

¹¹² Information on NGOs could be obtained from the Websites <http://win.cango.net.kg/db/kz/Default.asp>, <http://www.president.kz/main/mainframe.asp?lng=en>

Figure 1 Types of NGO in Kazakhstan



Source: http://www.ifescentralasia.kg/Kazakhstan/ENG/book_kze.html

Active NGOs include: the Almaty City Ecology Center, the Almaty City Uighur Cultural Center, the Businessmen's Congress of Kazakhstan, the *Chernobyl* Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Congress of Entrepreneurs, the Democratic Committee for Human Rights, the Almaty Helsinki Committee, Artists' Union, Ecological Fund of Kazakhstan "*Initiative*" Green Salvation, the Intergovernmental Association of Uighurs, the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, the *Lop Noor - Semipalatinsk* Ecological Committee, the *Pokoleniye* Pensioner's Movement, the Republican Society for Legal Development of Kazakhstan, the *Shalom* Jewish Cultural Center, and the Socio-Ecological Union. Although some of them are active participants of the political life, for example, *Pokoleniye* took part in many oppositionist unions; their role in the politics is insignificant.

1.5.2.4. General Assessment

Totalitarian past has played very important role in shaping the Kazakshtani society. After getting independence in 1991 Kazakhstan as well as other post-Soviet states has committed itself to the principles of democracy. However, since democratic political culture had not been known by large masses, democratization had to be begun from above. N. Nazarbayev initiated first parties, all of which were, naturally, pro-presidential. General deterioration of economy, decreasing life standards shifted for a while the attention of masses as well as of elite from the political to daily issues. However, the Supreme Soviet elected in 1994 was successful in opposing some presidential decrees and in causing of governments' resignation – a thing which had never seen before. Moreover, the Supreme Soviet implied that a parliamentary republic would be the most appropriate system for Kazakhstan. But the cost of being opposition was too high – the Supreme Soviet was dissolved and the republic came under full presidential control. The President necessitated adoption of the new constitution in order to convene new parliament. New constitution, which envisioned powerful president who is characterized as above all branches of power, and was adopted on 30 August 1995. New bicameral parliament that was elected in December 1995 was not as efficacious as the previous one in terms of opposing presidency since it could be dissolved by a president at any moment. Thus, the republic made step back in shaping democratic state. Presidential election of 1999, which OSCE suggested to re-hold, was another example of strengthening the presidency in the republic. Main presidential candidates were denied in registering their names, therefore, automatically stayed out of the election, whereas some candidates without

popular support were permitted to participate. Shortly, everything was prepared to reelect the incumbent president. Parliamentary elections were held in October 1999. Some active oppositionists again were denied to register their names which prevented them from running for MP. However, 10 mandates (out of 77 Majilis seats) were subjected to party lists.

Thus, one has impression that Kazakhstan makes one step forward and two steps back concerning transition to democracy. The main argument of the President in 1990s was to conserve the existing stability in the country and strengthen the institute of presidency in order to fully implement reforms. However, the end of 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium have been marked with different approach of Nazarbayev toward democratization. His speeches encouraged democratization and the formation of strong opposition with alternative program of reforms.

The symptoms of democracy have been seen in speeches of the President since the end of 1990s. For example, the President in his “*Address to the People of Kazakhstan*” made on September 30, 1998,

I propose to you today a Kazakhstan for the 21st century based on sound and sensible values.
I propose to you a Kazakhstan based on a new economy.
I propose to you a Kazakhstan built upon democratic principles.
I propose to you new structures and procedures for Kazakhstan based on effectiveness and fairness of the Government.
I propose to you continuing to build a strong and secure Kazakhstan that plays a noticeable role in the world.
This is the Kazakhstan that I propose for our children.
A Kazakhstan that rejects religious extremism.
A Kazakhstan that rejects national extremism.

And, finally, a Kazakhstan which loudly and clearly rejects political extremism.¹¹³

As another example of the late commitment of Kazakhstani President to democratic principles is his speech “*Towards Free, Effective and Secure Society, The Message of the President of the Country to the People of Kazakhstan*” made on October 24, 2000 where he emphasizes that

[t]he main political lesson of the end of XX century consists in universality of democratization formula. All talks about special type of democracy are attempts to deviate from democratic principles. Therefore, we should clearly understand that deviation from democratization processes is a withdrawal from world tendency, it is the way to nothing. The direction of movement has been developed by centuries-old history of democratic societies.¹¹⁴

What is interesting here is the first sentence where the President pointed out the end of 20th century. On the other hand, N. Nazarbayev who previously emphasized the difference between democratic practices in the world and that democracy in Kazakhstan may be different than in Western democratic countries, clearly adopted the universality of the idea. I think that it is not the case that he simply has understood that his previous ideas on democratization were baseless, but he has waited for suitable time to announce his democratic commitment or has been pressed by external forces such as USA, OSCE etc. or both of them were valid at the same time. Some subchapters of the next chapter will try to analyse this case.

¹¹³ Full text of the speech could be obtained from the Website [<http://www.president.kz/main/mainframe.asp?lng=en>]

¹¹⁴ Full text of the speech is available at the Website [<http://www.president.kz/main/mainframe.asp?lng=en>]

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Social Structure

Social structure is very important from the point of analysing democratic tendencies of particular nation, since “deep, cumulative social inequalities represent a poor foundation for democracy”¹¹⁵. In the case of post-communist states we face a unique situation, which never existed before, since the society, here of Kazakhstan, has been undergone social changes that has led to social stratification never exercised in the past.

I had already discussed social structure of traditional Kazakh society in Introduction, therefore, here I would like to mention features of the Soviet society. Although it was claimed that the USSR was the classless society, even the last Constitution of the USSR adopted the existence of two classes: those of workers, peasants, plus one stratum – the intelligentsia¹¹⁶. This classification was not accepted officially till the All-Union Congress, which took place in Minsk in January 1966, since “in communist countries the study of the power structure was a taboo”¹¹⁷. It was only in the years of N. Khrushchev’s “thaw” when social structure of socialist society was begun to be subjected to studying. Only after

¹¹⁵ Linz, Juan et al (eds.). 1990. *Politics in Developing Countries*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publications, 19.

¹¹⁶ *The 1977 Constitution of the USSR*. 1978. Alma-Ata: Gylym.

¹¹⁷ Brucan, Silviu. 1998. *Social Change in Russia and Eastern Europe*. London: Praeger, 1.

death of Stalin Soviet sociologists could discuss their opinion on social structure of the socialist society. Zev Katz presented the summary of the debates and studies published after the Minsk Congress in such a way:

1. The *natchalniks* (rulers, leaders)—essentially the ruling social group
2. The *intelligentsia*—the highly educated specialists in various fields
3. The *white-collar employees*—service and technical non-manual workers of lesser education
4. The *manual workers*—ranging from unskilled to the highly skilled
5. The *kolkhoz peasants*—including both rank-and-file labor and the administrative staff and cooperative sector
6. The *privately employed*—hired and self-employed persons not drawing wages in the state and cooperative sectors¹¹⁸

Four of them were characterised as “classes” and two—as stratum (the white-collars employers and the privately owned). The reason why they referred as strata not as classes was their lacking in loading of class determinants¹¹⁹.

Which class had the dominant position? The answer was “a piece of cake”: the party bureaucrats, ie. the *nachalniki*, which was consisted of full-time party and government officials who ran all state institutions, civil and military, so-called *nomenklatura*. Their privileges as a ruling class were high salaries, access to a wide range of restricted services.

The other classes—the intelligentsia, the manual workers and kolkhoz peasants—were subjected to different definitions. In China, for instance, the intelligentsia had become part of the working class in 1978 by the decision of the

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 2.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 3.

Communist Party Central Committee¹²⁰, whereas in the USSR it had still accepted as a different class (social category) when country collapsed. The manual workers, which played a big role in the construction of socialism, “became in the eighties a dwindling social group” because of scientific-technological revolution¹²¹ and “within the working class the center of gravity was shifting from the manual working class to the intellectual one”¹²². In the case of the kolkhoz peasants, Soviet sociologists stated further social stratification. Four main occupational groups were characterised as a statistical bodies: “administrative personnel and specialists, mechanizers (or agricultural machinery operators), poultry and livestock farmers or handlers, and ordinary field workers”¹²³.

This structure was valid till the USSR was collapsed and Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991. After becoming independent Kazakhstan began to introduce free market-oriented policies (See Chapter 1) that led to changes in the structure of the society.

Social structures have been deeply affected by macroeconomic and social-sector reforms. V. Mickalev stated that “Differences in transition strategies across countries - thus differences in the duration and length of recessions and inflation episodes – are important determinants of changes in social stratification”¹²⁴. He added that social polarisation was further intensified by privatisation – which shifted assets toward the wealthy – and by the rise in

¹²⁰ Ibid, 19.

¹²¹ Ibid, 18.

¹²² Ibid, 18.

¹²³ Ibid, 25.

¹²⁴ Mickalev, Vladimir. *Transition's Social Cost*, at the Website [www.wider.unu.edu]

earnings inequality associated with changes in labour markets. Moreover, the collapse of the socialist state created an administrative vacuum leading to the erosion of the social security system and a worsening situation for society's most vulnerable people.

One of the significant causes of poverty has been unemployment. Moreover, many pensioners are poor together with many children living in large and single-parent families. In contrast, new elite has arisen. This small group consists of the *nomenklatura*, enterprise managers and younger professionals who have adjusted to the new situation.

Rising income inequality has been associated with profound changes in social structures. Old societal structure has been replaced by new social classes in the transition to a market economy. People's prospects in life are now largely determined by their possession of assets, goods and income opportunities. Change has been widespread, but it is not yet complete. Kazakhstani economy, as well as economies of other post-communist states, remains mixed system in which markets coexist with limited redistribution through the state.

The new pattern of social stratification is becoming clearer, although there are serious methodological and data problems in estimating its size. First, there is a new elite – the product of emerging capitalism. Second, the new commercial, managerial, and professional middle class has grown rapidly but has not been formed yet. Despite the rise of the new elite and the middle-class, the most numerous group consists of blue-collar workers, farmers, and state-sector employees. There are a number of the most socially deprived and marginalised people who are in long-term poverty.

Social polarisation in Kazakhstan and other former Soviet republics has large economic costs. The fact that corruption and crime in post-Soviet republics is more widespread than in Central Europe, where inequality has risen by less, is directly related with income distribution. Thus, a more active social policy – promoting better livelihoods and more investment in human capital – could have large economic returns. But there is a need for effective public transfers and income redistribution policies to alleviate and reduce poverty. Social cohesion cannot be ignored. In turn, social cohesion creates a suitable for democratic development environment, where large middle class would lead toward democratic consolidation.

2.2 The National Structure

One of the main features of Kazakhstani society, which is the outcome of Kazakhstan's past shaped by both Tsarist and Soviet policies, is, its multiethnic composition. What surprises one, is its stability in ethnic terms, i. e. the reality is that, Kazakhs and Slavs live in cohesion, as well as other nationalities. What are the mechanisms that provide such kind of stability? Before answering such kind of question it will be useful to provide some historical and statistical data on the matter.

As it could be understood from Chapter 1, the process of the formation of the Kazakhstani multiethnic society could be divided into five stages:

- (i) Russian colonisation; the organisation of Cossack formations of Uralsk, Siberia and Semirechye.
- (ii) The years of Soviet rapid industrialisation policy (1930s).

- (iii) The deportation of some nationalities from their homeland to Kazakhstan during the late 1930s-1940s.
- (iv) The project of settling new lands (*osvoyeniye tselinnih zemel'*)
- (v) Contemporary migration processes. (See Table 10)

Table 10 Inward and Outward Migration in Kazakhstan (1990-1997)

Year	Immigrant	Emigrant
1990	174 900	339 700
1991	206 094	288 184
1992	190 045	393 345
1993	111 274	344 274
1994	70 452	507 052
1995	71 137	348 537
1996	53 874	261 474
1997	38 067	252 922

Source: The Report of the Agency of Republic of the Kazakhstan on Statistics, www.kazstat.asdc.kz/indexe.htm

As it is seen from the Table 10, emigration has totally outnumbered immigration in Kazakhstan. Emigrants have been mainly Germans, Jews, Russians, and Ukrainians, which migrated respectively to Germany, Israel, Russia and Ukraine. The difference between these nationalities' size before 1990 and in 1999 can be clearly seen in Appendices.

However, this stability in ethnic terms in a country that has two main religions – Islam and Russian Orthodox Church – and where two main nationalities coexist has been seemed worth studying for western scholars.

Whereas some westerners see the future of Kazakhstan in dark frames¹²⁵, others believe that current stability owes much to personality of N. Nazarbayev and that post-Nazarbayev era will witness political turmoil. There are ones, according to whom, “Political stability has been preserved in Kazakhstan, in large part because this republic was part of much larger multi-national state”¹²⁶.

It seems to me that what constitutes the core of ethnic stability of Kazakhstan is, among other factors, mainly well-implemented (balanced) governmental policies have directed to balance relations between Kazakhs and Slavs, since as it is seen from Appendix 1, main nationalities are Kazakhs and Russians who sum up %83.4 of the total Kazakhstani population. “Kazakhstan’s political stability will depend much on the existence of a harmonious ethnic relation chiefly between the natives and the Slavs”¹²⁷.

First years of independence marked with the policy of “Kazakhization”: traditional names of cities and landmarks were restored, Kazakh history was reassessed in order to reflect a Kazakh national perspective, Kazakh and Islamic holidays were begun to be celebrated at a country-wide scale.

However, country had, and still has important Russian minority. Therefore, N. Nazarbayev has decided to implement two-fold policy, cause

[y]et Kazakhization is not enough to secure the success of Kazakh nation-building, as it threatens to provoke a backlash from the state’s substantial minority, faced as it is with political disempowerment and

¹²⁵ For example, Graham Fuller, a research fellow from RAND, expressed this view at a conference organized by Woodrow Wilson Foundation in Washington, DC (8-9 September, 1994).

¹²⁶ Olcott, Martha. 1993. “Kazakhstan After Independence”. In Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (eds.), *Nations & Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 313.

¹²⁷ Janabel, Jibek. 1996. “When national Ambition Conflicts With Reality: studies on Kazakhstan’s ethnic relations,” *Central Asian Survey*: 15(1), 5-21.

social disorientation. Therefore, Nazarbayev has coupled it to policy he has dubbed “harmonization”, which encourages the participation of Russians in all facets of Kazakh life and seeks, if not their assimilation, then at least their tacit acceptance of Kazakh rule. Automatic citizenship, wide tolerance of Russian language and culture, and government subsidies to the Russian-dominated industrial sector are all components of this policy.¹²⁸

All policies of the president as well as of the Government were directed toward creating a balance between these two main nationalities in social as well as in political spheres. For example, according to 1995 Constitution Kazakh language is official one, whereas Russian language was “conferred official government status”. Another example is banknotes of 500, 1000 and 2000 Tenge (national currency), in which one side is written in Kazakh and another - in Russian. The fact that 47% of state servants are Kazakhs clearly shows the policy aimed at balancing two nationalities.¹²⁹ In other sectors the percentage of Kazakh employees is as follows: in spheres of health, culture, sport and art – 44%, of education – 50.6 %, of industry and transport – 27.5 %, of construction – 22 %.¹³⁰

On the other hand, Kazakh nationalist parties such as *Azat*, *Alash* and *Jeltoksan* were closed or restricted in their activities. Political forces based on Russian identity such as *Edinstvo* failed to establish country-wide organisations and remained relatively local ones.¹³¹

So as it is understood from the facts mentioned above, this stability has been mainly the outcome of governmental policies. It should be said that these

¹²⁸ Ian Bremmer and Cory Welt. 1996. “The Trouble with democracy in Kazakhstan,” *Central Asian Survey*: 15 (2), 182.

¹²⁹ Satiyev, H. 1998, 10.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 14.

¹³¹ For more information see Janabel, Jiger. 1996.

policies were successful to maintain nation-building process of multiethnic society of Kazakhstan.

Finally, to prove this view, let us look what the Kazakhstanis have thought on “ethnic question”. The survey was made among representatives of Kazakhs and Russians in 1992 and 1996 and the main question asked was “What provides the stability in interethnic relations in Kazakhstan?” Answers can be clearly seen at Table 11.

Table 11 Reasons for the stability in interethnic relations in Kazakhstan (% of total respondents)

Reasons	1992		1996	
	Kazakhs	Russians	Kazakhs	Russians
Flexible policy of government	34.8	35.7	41.2	32.7
Difficulties of economic life	11.8	7.1	9.2	10.8
People understand their common fate	26.4	14.2	28.6	24.5
Friendly relations from the past	20.8	40.5	17.6	29.6
Activities of political organisations	2.3	1.1	3.4	2.4

Note: The survey results were published in Malinin G.V. 1997. *Mejnatsyionalnoye soglasiye v Kazakhstane: problemy, protivorechiia, perspektivi* (Intertethnic cohesion in Kazakhstan: problems, contradictions, perspectives), Almaty: Gylym, 89.

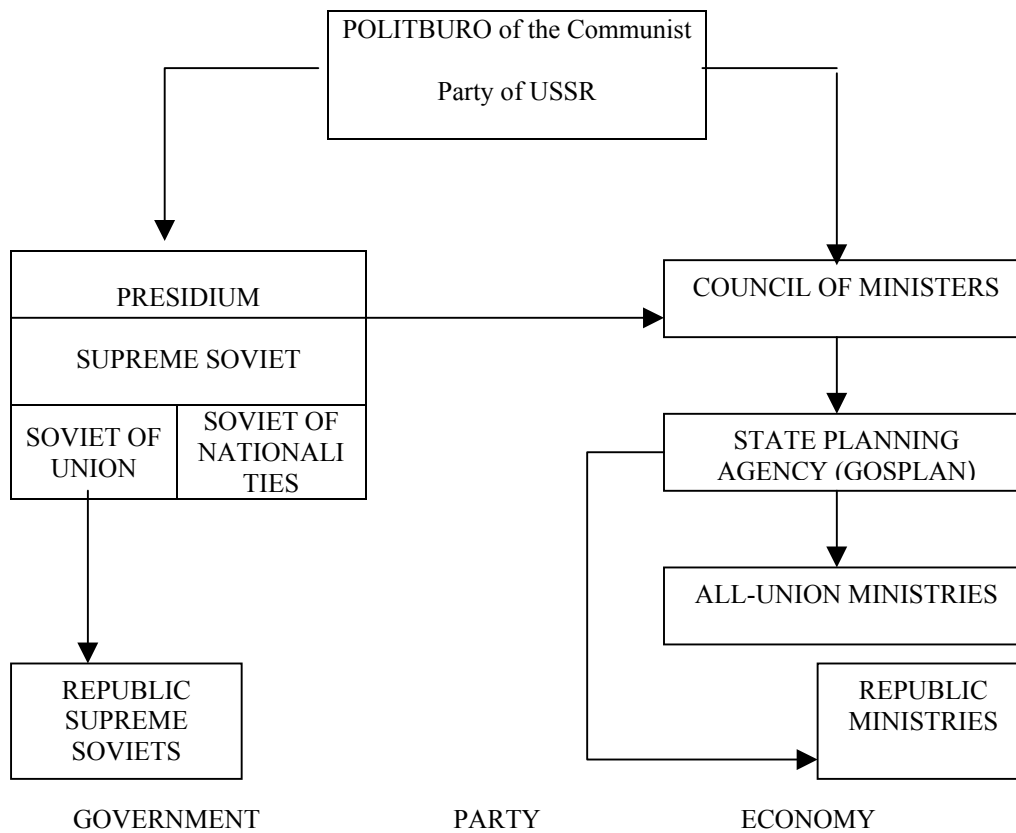
As it can be understood from Table 11, the main factor providing stability is, according to respondents, flexible policy of government. On the other hand, thoughts about the common fate of people of Kazakhstan in transitional period play very important role too. We should add to this continuation of friendly relations from the past, which also can be shown as one of the major factors.

Conclusion can be drawn that Kazakhstan, although has heterogeneous society is not unstable country in ethnic terms. This stability is mainly outcome of governmental policies, which have played a role of balancing power in multiethnic relations. However, other factors such as friendship that has its roots in Soviet times, the belief in common fate of all people of Kazakhstan should not be underestimated too.

2.3 State Structure

It is known that the Soviet Union as was due to its socialistic nature (as it was mentioned before, the last constitution of the USSR proclaimed the Soviet Union as the country fully exercising socialism) was completely centralised country. Before focusing on contemporary Kazakhstan's decision making structure it may be useful to examine the old one of the Soviet times. (See Figure 2)

Figure 2 Simplified structure of decision making in the USSR (after 1977 Constitution)



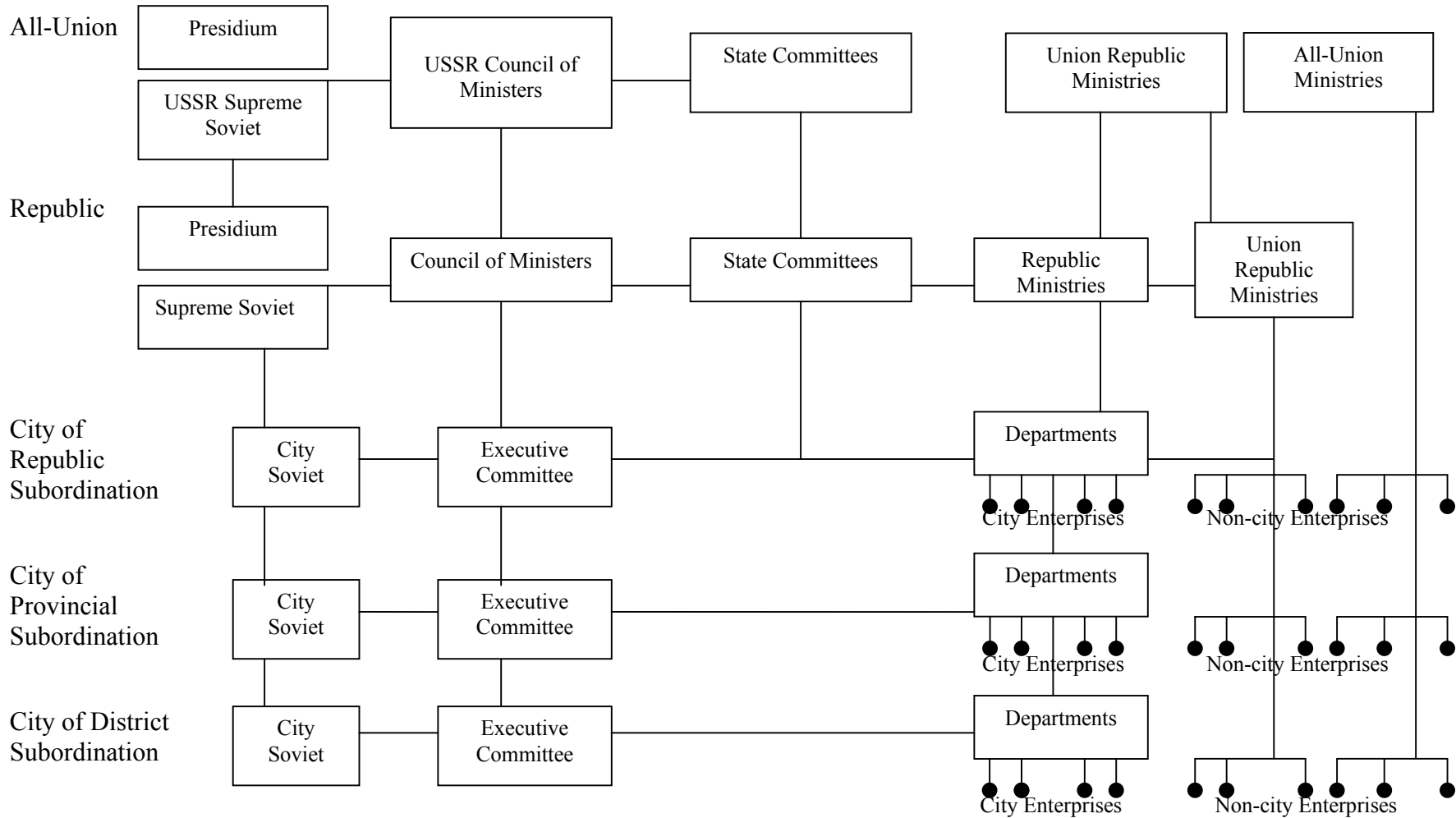
Source: Bater, James. 1980, 38.

As it is seen from Figure 2, all decisions in the USSR concerning governmental, economy and party issues, ie in all spheres of life, were made in *Politburo*. In all 15 republics, including Kazakhstan, the same hierarchy was created conditioning all their decisions had to be in line with the *Politburo*'s. Figure 3 is about decision-making environment of municipal government. The Figure clearly shows hierarchy of decision-making process that was valid in the USSR.

Such a totalitarian system could not allow non-governmental organisations to function, formed rare NGOs were closed and their members were repressed. (See previous sections). Only at the end of 80s, when liberalization of

the Soviet system was at its peak, non-governmental organizations began to function legally. As it was mentioned in Part 2, nowadays Kazakhstan has about 7,000 NGOs. However, some of them have played more or less important role in the political life, eg Pensioners' Movement "*Pokoleniye*", has an image of oppositionist line.

Figure 3 Schematic outline of decision-making environment of municipal government in the USSR (after 1977 Constitution)



Source: Bater, James. 1980, 42.

It is obvious that NGOs are still weak and rarely known by ordinary people. Although there are no proper data on the proportion of the population engaged in NGOs, According to survey made by IFES (The International Foundation for Election Systems) 40 percent of the population would consider joining an environmental, social welfare, or educational NGO. However, only 19 percent of those surveyed said that they aware of existence of NGOs in their communities, while 74 percent knew nothing of any such groups. 45 percent of the population believes that NGOs are “essential” or “necessary”, while 41 percent believe that NGOs are “not very necessary” or “not necessary at all”.¹³² These results clearly show the attitude of the population towards NGOs, which could be characterised as creative suitable environment for non-government organisations, but everyday issues mainly based on economic grounds prevent many citizens from participating in NGO activities.

The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan contains many articles on strengthening central government at the expense of weakening local administrators. For example, Akims (major executives) of the *oblasts* (main districts – Kazakhstan nowadays has 14 *oblasts*), major cities and the capital shall be appointed to office by the President of the Republic on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, whereas Akims of other administrative-territorial units are appointed or elected to office in the order, determined by the President of the

¹³²IFES-based survey was conducted in 1996. See: [www.ifes.org] IFES is a private, non-profit organization established in 1987. IFES provides non-partisan technical assistance in the promotion of democracy worldwide and serves as a clearinghouse for information about democratic development and elections. Since its inception, IFES has grown and worked in more than 100 countries around the world, earning an international reputation for the highest quality assistance and research in support of building and consolidating democratic institutions.

Republic of Kazakhstan. The President of the Republic has the right to release Akims from office at his own discretion (Article 87).¹³³ This article has envisioned Akims to be President's local representatives, which inevitable has led to the concentration of power in the hands of the President. Actually, experimental elections of some local Akims are scheduled for fall 2001, but it seems that the existing situation will not be considerably changed in the nearest future.

Such a situation when local administrators are subjected to President's appointment is natural consequence of state's past. Ruler of a country which past was shaped by totalitarian system, naturally, would show tendency towards adopting centralised state where most decisions are taken by the centre, and where local administrators are nothing but only the implementators of a central policy. Without any doubt, one of the good examples of such a state is Kazakhstan.

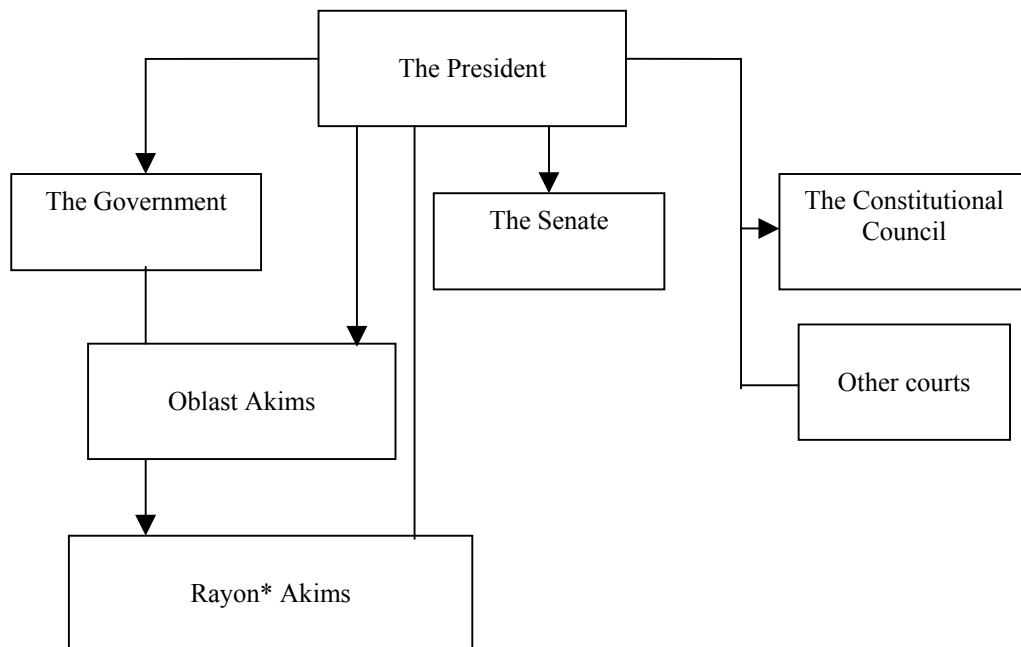
As a result, it is quite obvious that Kazakhstan still exercises centralised system with very little space to non-governmental organisations. Kazakhstani people, although have not rejected the idea of NGOs, have had little concern about joining their activities due to other primary problems, which partly could be because of their unfamiliarity with NGOs in the past.

¹³³ Sapargaliyeva, G. 1998. *Konstitutsia Respubliki Kazakhstan. Kommentarii* (Comments on the

2.4 Political Structure

Political structure of Kazakhstan that has adopted a strong presidency is one of the legacies of the totalitarian past, reminiscent single-party system when all decisions were taken by the center. In order to understand the existing political structure it is necessary to examine the presidential powers. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4 Powers of the President in Kazakhstan



Notes: *Rayon is a smaller than oblast district, an oblast consists of many rayons.

—▶ used to indicate direct relationship

— used to indicate indirect relationship

As it is seen from Figure 4, the President has great influence in all areas of the state. The President is the head of state and directs both foreign and domestic policy. Under the Constitution, the President ensures that all branches of state power are properly functioning. The President also:

Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan), Almaty: Jety Jargy.

- appoints the Prime Minister with the consent of the legislature,
- may dismiss the Prime Minister and therefore the government as well,
- has the authority to approve the structure of the government as proposed by the Prime Minister,
- may appoint and dismiss individual members of the government,
- may direct the government to introduce a bill in the parliament,
- appoints the Akims,
- may annul or suspend the actions of the government and those of subordinate levels of government such as the heads or Akims of oblasts and major cities and the capitals.

The influence of the Presidency extends to the legislative branch as well.

Here, the President

- has the right to directly appoint seven members of the Senate
- has the power to dissolve the parliament in three instances. Firstly, if it passes a vote of no confidence in the government. Secondly, if it refuses twice to consent to the appointment of a prime-minister of the president's choosing. And thirdly, if there is a political crisis resulting from differences between the parliament and other branches of state power. The parliament, upon a two-thirds vote, may delegate its legislative authority to the president for up to one year.
- has the right to determine priority consideration of draft laws and to designate draft laws "urgent," in which case parliament must consider them within one month. If the parliament fails to do so, the president may issue a decree with the force of law.

- can ask the prime minister to introduce legislation on his or her behalf. If a draft law submitted by the government is rejected, the Prime Minister may bring a vote of no confidence, which, if passed, results in the dissolution of the parliament. If rejected, results in the passage of the government's legislation without a vote by the parliament. However, the government may not do this more than twice each year.

The president also has the right, in limited circumstances, to issue decrees, laws and decrees having the force of law and can call for a referendum.

The president also has significant powers concerning the judiciary. For example, the president

- has the right to appoint the chairperson and two members of the Constitutional Council, which having been composed of seven members, advises on the constitutionality of proposed laws. (Two other members are appointed by the chairperson of the Senate and two by the chairperson of the Majilis),
- is the head of the Highest Judicial Council and has the power to appoint its members. On the recommendation of this Council, the Senate elects the chairpersons of the Supreme Court and the Law Collegiums, and the Justices of the Supreme Court.
- has the power to appoint all judges to the oblast courts and lower courts on the recommendation of the Qualification Collegium of Justice.

The absence of strong parties as well as of NGOs, on the one hand – has contributed to the powerfulness of the President and has created a vacuum in the system that has tried to be filled by the Presidency – on the other. Although

Kazakhstan has 16 registered political parties and movements¹³⁴, because of several factors discussed below, the existing political system is not a competitive one.¹³⁵

Objective factors. These factors are ones determined by historical development of the Kazakhstani society in the transitional period. Among the others, the population has affected by the transition from central planned economy to market one – a process which has very severe consequences for large masses – more than 65 percent of total population has become impoverished, as it was mentioned before. Under such conditions, the majority of the population suffering discomfort from the existing economic situation has been uninterested in political issues, ie has become apolitical. Thus, for many Kazakhstanis the idea of supporting political parties has become unacceptable.

Another factor is that social stratification has not been completed yet. Nowadays Kazakhstani society consists of large masses of impoverished and very few numbers of well beings. As a result of unstable and speedy economic processes, strong supporter of democratic ideas - middle class – is still on its way of formation.¹³⁶ Under such circumstances political parties have been uncertain about social base they address and could rely on. In addition, the absence of noteworthy polarisation between state and citizens should be mentioned. Apolitical Kazakhstani society that used to directly communicate with state

¹³⁴ Chebotarev, A. 2000. “Partiinoye Stroitel’stvo v Kazahstane” (Party Building in Kazakhstan), at the Website [www.kisi.kz]; and [<http://www.president.kz/main/mainframe.asp?lng=en>]. Political parties can be divided into three categories: ‘pro-presidential’, ‘constructive’ opposition and “hard” opposition.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

organs during the Soviet times, does not need political parties as mediators between state and society. Moreover, still many people expect state to solve all their problems, in other words, paternalistic expectations are still on the agenda. All these factors have led to indifferent population regarding political parties.

Subjective factors are factors related with activities of political parties and their policies. Many parties have been inactive in the political arena. Some parties were established due to existing political conjuncture when there was a need for a political party to participate in political activities such as parliamentary elections. As a result, parties established for fulfilling certain tasks within particular time, after completing their mission became *de facto* inactive players of the politics.

Moreover, many pro-governmental parties were established by initiative from “above”, ie by MPs or state officials who automatically became their chairmen. Although such approach could play a positive role in establishing a *cadre* party, it proved to be unsuitable for the Kazakhstani political system, since their members have not actively participated in the politics and such parties not being supported by large masses have not proved to survive.

Another subjective factor is that the absence of competition atmosphere among parties, what can be explained by similarity of their programs with few exceptions, has led to inactivity of political parties. In addition, many parties have been guided mainly by their leaders’ personal ambitions and have not reflected people’s interests. Thus when a leader became a state official, a leader of another establishment, or concentrated his or her activities in another sphere, their parties were “paralysed” in the sense of political activity.

Finally, lack of financial resources is one of the most important reasons of party passivity. It is obvious that impossibility of paying rent, publishing newspaper etc, would lead to party inactivity.

Artificial factors. This group includes factors which have been outcomes of state policy towards party building process and party activities. The most prominent one is the absence of any mechanisms regulating participation of political parties in the political life of the country:

(a) although according to the Constitution and Law “On Elections” parties have a right to participate in election not only by party lists but also by nominating candidacies for single-mandate districts, it is clear that participation of political parties in presidential and parliamentary elections is limited. First of all, the number of seats accredited to party lists is very small (10 out of 77) and this disproportion has led to *de facto* inactivity of MPs elected from party lists. In addition, practice of election MPs from party lists did not change rules regarding formation of party fractions in the Majilis, and their activities. According to the “Presidential Decree on Kazakhstani Parliament and Status of MPs” dated October 16, 1995, party fraction can be formed minimum by ten party members. Because of this regulation parties rely mainly on the results of single-mandate districts’ elections. But such a situation leads to emphasising not party affiliation but personal characteristics of candidates. As a result, apolitical constituency gives votes for particular personalities without concerning party affiliation;

(b) parties have not proven to be active in the Parliament. Some Kazakhstani parties have not their representatives in the legislature or have not enough members to form party fractions. Moreover, party members sometimes

adopt different form party line policies since parties do not have any mechanisms that enable them to control party members;

(c) government members are appointed by a president on apolitical basis, whereas, ideally, parties that have majority of seats in a parliament should form a government. Obviously, this factor amidst the others has negative effect on party building process in the country.

On the other hand, character of legal base regulating party activities can be defined as undemocratic and prohibitive one. Law “On Political Parties” dated July 2, 1996,

- mainly focuses on state control of party activities than on regulating party activities;
- completely ignores party activities concerning state governance;
- do not provide political parties specific rights, thus not differentiating them from other public associations;
- envisions very strict rules concerning establishment and registration of political parties. For example, a party can be registered only if it already has three thousand members.
- along with the 1995 Constitution prohibit political parties from receiving financing from the state and abroad.

Thus, the existing party system in Kazakhstan is far from being perfect. Tempo of party building process has been very slow, which, in turn, has led to the creation of political vacuum and has slowed down social transformations. It seems that under existing circumstances, state should be an initiator of changing such a situation taking necessary measures for effective party building.

The judicial system of Kazakhstan has been improving. The Republic currently has Constitutional Council, although it previously had a Constitutional Court under the prior 1993 Constitution, which had played a crucial role in dismissing the Parliament of 1994 election. On the other hand, a system of law courts, represented by the Supreme Court at the highest level, followed by oblast and local courts, was established for both criminal and civil matters.

Kazakhstani Constitutional Council has seven members. In addition to these seven, former Presidents have the right to life membership on the Constitutional Council. The President appoints the Chairperson and two other members. Two are appointed by the Chairperson of the Senate and two – by the Chairperson of the Majilis. The general term of appointment is six years but half of them are re-appointed each year.

An issue may be brought to the Constitutional Council by the President, the Prime Minister, the Chairpersons of the Senate or Majilis, or jointly by at least one-fifth of MPs. In addition, courts may ask the Constitutional Council to declare a law unconstitutional if it finds that a law or regulatory act infringes on the constitutional rights of a citizen.

If a draft law is found to be unconstitutional before it is enacted, the Parliament is expected to make necessary changes that would bring a law in line with the Constitution. If a law is found to be unconstitutional after it is enacted the law may not be enforced.

Kazakhstan has a Highest Judicial Council which is headed by the President and whose members are the Chairpersons of the Constitutional Council and the Supreme Court, the Procurator General, the Minister of Justice, and others

appointed by the President. This Council nominates candidates for the offices of Chairperson of the Supreme Court, the Chairpersons of the Collegiums, and the Judges of the Supreme Court. The Senate elects the nominees who are recommended by the Council and put before the Senate for a vote by the President.

The Chairpersons of oblast courts, the Chairpersons of the Collegiums and Judges of the oblast courts are recommended by the Highest Judicial Council and appointed directly by the President without a vote of the Senate.

The Qualification Collegium of Justice is an autonomous, independent institution composed of deputies of the Majilis, judges, public prosecutors, and others involved in the legal profession. The Collegium makes recommendations for the appointment of other lower-court judges on the proposal of the Minister of Justice. The President also appoints these lower court judges.

Judges are considered “permanent” and may not be suspended or removed from office without following the procedures established in the law on the judiciary. In order to be appointed a judge must be at least twenty-five years old, have a higher juridical education and have passed a qualification examination.

Although it can be claimed that the Constitution Council as well as the law courts play an important role in the implementation and development of the rule of law in Kazakhstan, it is obvious that the President has very big influence on the judiciary of Kazakhstan thanks to presidential powers mentioned before.

This section can be summarised in similarity with other sections, way: the political system of Kazakhstan represents highly centralised semi-presidential

system. All branches of power are directly dependent on the President, whereas other powers that play a role of checks and balances in other political systems, such as political parties, have proved to be weak and ineffective, partly because of state policies have been implemented, and partly because of other factors discussed above. Therefore, some part of population has not been represented in the Parliament. In such a political system, the presidential commitment to democratic ideas determines successful completion of transitional to democracy stage. However, although the incumbent President has emphasized his commitment to democratic ideas and has implemented more or less relatively democratic policies compared to other Central Asian states (with the exception of Kyrgyzstan), another leader with strong authoritarian tendencies may easily transform the country into an authoritarian state in a full sense (as is in the case of Uzbekistan). In order to prevent this, strong NGOs as well as other powers which play a role of checks and balances have to be developed.

2.5 Political Leadership

Although ruling political leaders of Kazakh republic have always underlined their commitment to democracy, they never give a priority to establishing a democracy focusing primarily on economic issues. What is interesting, the term “democracy” has been used both by ruling elites and their opposition. Former group has used the term to justify thesis on implementing necessary reforms before fully exercising democracy, which would create required for establishing civil society and political parties conditions (for which, particular period of time is needed – I

argue that ultimately, the time allowed for implementing reforms was finished – partially due to international pressure – and the ruling elite began to introduce democratic reforms). Latter group has defined democracy as institute which is able to optimise social and economic transformations under existing circumstances (thus, it must be exercised today and any extra time is not needed). Generally, it could be argued that lack of consensus between opposition and rulers has been conditioned by following circumstances:

- (i) rulers use the term democracy as a complicated formation which includes well-working mechanism of checks and balances within state apparatus, whereas opposition interpret this term as “openness” concerning administrative decisions, and ability to control decision-makers;
- (ii) former group emphasize unreadiness of the population to accept democratic norms while latter group claim the opposite;
- (iii) ruling elite characterise democracy as a regime which is to be established only after transition to a market economy will be ended and justify their thesis by showing examples of South Korea and Chile, the opposition points out foreign investments have been made in the republic, which in turn would prevent any danger related with regime changing.¹³⁷

Guiding by such different ideas on democracy opposition and the rulers have failed to reach an agreement, to make a pact. Instead of reaching a consensus rulers have appropriated “legal” methods to deal with the opposition. For example, former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin was banned from running

¹³⁷ Zhusupov, Sabit. 2000. “Demokraticheskiie preobrazovaniyya v Respublike Kazahstan: real’nost’ i perspektivy” (Democratic transformations in Kazakhstan: the reality and future), *Tsentral’naiia Asiiia i Kavkaz*: 4, 24-40.

his candidacy in presidential election of 1999 due to “administrative sanction” received within one-year period before the date of election. Human Rights Watch World Report 2000 on Kazakhstan stated that harassment of opposition political activists continued in 2000.¹³⁸ For example, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, a leader of RPP, was charged with illegal weapon possession, and with tax evasion; another opposition activist and member of RPP Madel Ismailov who once served a year in prison on charges of “offending the honour and dignity of the President”, was sentenced to 15 days of administrative detention, because of his participation in unsanctioned peaceful demonstration in January 2000.

In sum, political leaders which are in power have used a neutralising policy towards the opposition instead of adopting more flexible policy, justifying their deeds by social stability and economic recovery: “Democracy is not only political freedoms in spite of their importance and value. This is also realization of a number of other fundamental rights including the right on worthy economic conditions of life and security”.¹³⁹ Thus, transition process to democracy has been slowed down by governmental (presidential) policies, which could be seen as a consequence of the absence of democratic experiences both of rulers and of the opposition. Nevertheless, it seems that the President finally decided to make significant steps toward a democratic state (see below for arguments).

¹³⁸ The Human Rights Watch World Report 2000 (Kazakhstan) can be obtained from the Website [www.humanrightswatch.org]

¹³⁹ From the speech of the President made October 24, 2000. Full text of the speech could be obtained from the Website [<http://www.president.kz/main/mainframe.asp?lng=en>]

2.6 Development Performance

Kazakhstan got its independence in very difficult circumstances. In the first years of independence GDP fell down by more than a half. All economic ties were broken. The country faced another economic breakdown in the mid of 90s. Only after the year of 1996 GDP began to increase (with the exception of 1998 when Russian crisis occurred). GDP increased in 2000 by more than 10 percent. Investments and industrial production output increased as well. Vast natural resources, in case if rationally used, would lead to consistent economic growth.

However, income distribution has been unequal – more than half of population lived below the line of poverty in 1998. Transition to a market economy was very painful to more than half of Kazakhstani population, especially to the elders, who used to benefit from Soviet social security policies before the collapse of the old system. “We had to make painful reforms. Social price of reforms, especially on the first stage, was high. The rate was so high that there was a question whether independent Kazakhstan would exist”.¹⁴⁰ Since the budgetary expenses were minimized independent Kazakhstan could not meet all their expectations.

An advantage of authoritarian state shows itself in economic transition. It can be argued whether contemporary economic growth is mostly an outcome of consistent presidential economic program or of high prices of some raw materials, first of all – petroleum which have led to capital accumulation. But without doubt,

¹⁴⁰ Full text of the speech could be obtained from
[<http://www.president.kz/main/mainframe.asp?lng=en>]

the President has played an important role in achieving economic boom. Middle-run future perspectives of Kazakhstani economy were summarised by the President as follows:

Without going into details I will say what we are to do here in the nearest years: to lay new transport schemes to international markets; to modernize strategic and transit roads; build schemes in direction of “East - West” and “South - North” more actively; to develop Caspian infrastructure; actively reconstruct the road from Almaty to Astana. (...)What do we plan to achieve in five years? Forecasts are always **risky but guided by calculation we put new tasks for the country and its people and we are sure that:**

- real GDP will grow by 30%;
- growth of real salaries will be not less than 25-30%;
- annual inflation will not exceed 4-5%;
- tax receipts to the state budget will be 25% of GDP;
- budget deficit will not exceed 1,5% of GDP.¹⁴¹

In the long run, Kazakhstani economy has a potential to be a leading one in the region, first of all due to vast resources of petroleum as well as other natural resources. Although Kazakhstan is a land-locked country, its geopolitical position could be an advantage, since it is located both in Europe and Asia.

It seems that several factors will affect whether economic growth will continue or not. Let us point out some of them. Firstly, it is obvious that social stability is a life-or-death matter for achieving economic growth, especially for Kazakhstan where only 53% of the population are Kazakhs. Secondly, rational use of resources and attraction of foreign investments, undoubtedly will be main driving forces behind economic boom. How successful will be the President in achieving these aims will determine economic situation in the country. But what is more important, or let us say, what must go hand in hand with economic

¹⁴¹ Ibid. (emphasises are original)

growth is democratization of the society, since not only economic growth but also democratic society in prosperity must be the aim.

2.7 International Factors

Kazakhstan's experience with the rest of the World has begun since gaining independence in 1991. At Soviet times, according to Soviet Constitution, Kazakhstan *de jure* had the right to leave the Union and, therefore, could open its embassies worldwide after leaving the Union. But *de facto* this right had never been realised. All relations with foreign countries were regulated by Moscow.

Only after the Centre's control over the country was broke up, Kazakhstan became able to establish its embassies and implement independent foreign policy. Kazakhstan became a member of OSCE, UN, and other regional as well as global international organizations. Without any doubt, membership in such organisations has played very important role in democratization process in Kazakhstan. I want to focus on practises of some international organizations and the United States of America.

Kazakhstani democratic experience was criticised many times by OSCE which did not send its full mission to 1999 Presidential elections due to undemocratic practises. For example, main candidate of the opposition Akezhan Kazhegeldin was banned from running as a candidate. OSCE suggested Kazakhstan to annul election results and hold a new one. Nursultan Nazarbayev's

response was that OSCE applied double standards to Kazakhstan¹⁴², therefore election results were not annulled.

In January 2000, the OSCE/ODIHR issued final report on recent parliamentary elections where outlined seventeen recommendations that “made in spirit of assisting to improve the level of compliance with the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document”.¹⁴³

European Union envisioned TACIS (Technical Assistance to Commonwealth of Independent States) Program.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, President of the European Commission Romano Prodi and External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten met with President in June 2000 and reportedly stressed the need for further progress towards democracy. In July 2000, the EU/Kazakhstan Cooperation Council held the second meeting where political and human rights issues were discussed.

The end of 1999-the mid of 2000 was period when many American high officials visited Kazakhstani lands. In December 1999, the US/Kazakhstan Joint Commission chaired by Vice President Al Gore obtained President Nazarbayev’s commitment to work closely with the OSCE on implementing democratic reforms. The head of the CIA, the head of the FBI, NATO Commander, and Secretary of the State Madeleine Albright visited Kazakhstan in the spring of

¹⁴² Nazarbayev, Nursultan. 2000. *OBSE praktikuet dvoyniie standarty*. (OSCE applied double standards to Kazakhstan) [www.eurasia.org.ru]

¹⁴³ The Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. 2000.

¹⁴⁴ Launched by the EC in 1991, the TACIS Programme provides grant-financed technical assistance to 13 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan), and mainly aims at enhancing the transition process in these countries.

2000. All of them emphasised the importance of commitment to democratic practises for regional stability.¹⁴⁵

It can be claimed that Nazarbayev's recent commitment to democracy¹⁴⁶ as to an "universal value" is partly the outcome of international pressure, since Kazakhstan once seen as the leader in democratic transition stepped back in the 1990s, what could be one of Nazarbayev's means to stay at the power. Having banned oppositionist leaders from running both in presidential and parliamentary elections the President secured his place at least till 2006, when next presidential elections are to be held. The West having seen that Kazakhstan could easily change its destiny from democratic to authoritarian one, begin to stress the need for real democratic transition, what could be seen from recent "bombardment" of both international organisations' and America's high officials. What could be the future perspectives of international pressure for further democratisation in Kazakhstan is to be discussed in the next part.

¹⁴⁵ For more information see the Website [<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/europe/kazakhstan/html>]

¹⁴⁶ See his recent speeches at the Website [<http://www.president.kz>]

CHAPTER III

FUTURE PROSPECTS

What kind of future Kazakhstan going to be faced with? Democratic or authoritarian? What should be done in order to successfully complete democratic transition and begin democratic consolidation? Let us examine possible three future prospects of the country and make some suggestions on what should be done to democratize the Kazakhstani society. It should be noted here that, as it was mentioned above, the presidential preference is very important for Kazakhstan since the country's political system limits other sources of power at the expense of increasing those of the president. Therefore, I think, mainly the presidential policies will determine the future of the democracy in Kazakhstan.

3.1 An Authoritarian State

First scenario envisions Kazakhstan to preserving its authoritarian status. Kazakhstani President would be re-elected in 2006 presidential elections and would be in office till 2013. Main opposition activists would be able to raise their voices only from abroad. Although the economy would become dependant on oil incomes, particularly after 2010 when almost all pipelines would begin to function, considerable economic growth could be expected. Elections would continue to be criticised by international organisations for their brutal human rights violations. Existing political parties would be used for masking authoritarian form of ruling. Some international organisations such as OCSE may

annul membership of Kazakhstan due to insufficient reforms aimed at democratic transition.

This scenario does not seem to draw a realistic future. Although some parts of the population, particularly the old generation, may support such authoritarianism since it would suit their mentality shaped by totalitarian regime, large masses would oppose such regime, therefore, mass repression may begin. Short-term ethnic stability could cause long-term hostility based on ethnic particularities since the majority of political elite would be Kazakhs, whereas minorities would be under-represented in all stages of decision making. Moreover, such developments in political arena may lead to isolation of Kazakhstan from the Western democratic societies. The end of the regime is not hard to predict if remind Sukharto's overthrown in Indonesia.

3.2 A Democratic State

Second scenario is that the President would fully support democratic transition. He would annul 1999 presidential and parliamentary elections due to OSCE Reports which suggested to annul the elections (See above) and invite newly elected parliament to make amendments to the Constitution. Before the elections "Election Law" would be changed and all Majilis deputies would be elected from party lists. Opposition would not be repressed any more, and some opposition activists abroad would be invited to make a democratic pact. Decentralisation would take place and all Akims would be elected by the locals.

However, full-scale democratization may lead to extreme consequences. Liberalization never practised before by large masses would result in anarchy. Russian population of the North Kazakhstan may demand autonomy since in some northern regions Russians represent the majority. What is more, activities of national groups like Slavs' "LAD" and Kazakhs' "Alash" consciously or unconsciously may cause to conflicts on nationalistic grounds, therefore, possibility of civil war may arise. Economy may collapse since many groups would interfere in economic affairs at the same time.

3.3 The Middle Way

After focusing on some positive and negative sides of two extremes, both of which seem to be unrealistic considering the existing conditions in Kazakhstan, third, middle-of-the-road, way may be considered as possible future perspective of the Kazakh Republic.

It seems more likely that Kazakhstan would choose the middle way avoiding extreme situations. I arrived at such a conclusion after having analysed recent developments and annual speeches of the President (since he has been the main determinant of Kazakhstani way towards democracy or authoritarianism). In his annual speech in 1997 the President introduced the program – long term development strategy "Kazakhstan-2030" where policies concerning the future development of Kazakhstan till the year 2030 were defined. Seven long-term tasks were determined:

1. National security

2. Domestic political stability and consolidation of the society
3. Economic growth based on an open market economy with high level of foreign investments and internal savings
4. Health, education and well-being of Kazakhstani citizens
5. Power resources
6. Infrastructure, more particularly transport and communication
7. Professional state.¹⁴⁷

What attracts the attention here is the absence of any implications on establishing a democratic society in Kazakhstan. Typically for authoritarian state, the political rights were consciously “forgotten” whereas emphasis was given on social and economic well being of the population. This Message (Kazakhstan-2030) is a clear proof of a tendency of the President towards authoritarian state (the first scenario), that the President did not see democratization as one of the main tasks. Two years later the President completely changed his attitude toward the issue:

The main political lesson of the end of XX century consists in universality of democratization formula. All talks about special type of democracy are attempts to deviate from democratic principles. Therefore, we should clearly understand that deviation from democratization processes is a withdrawal from world tendency, it is the way to nothing. The direction of movement has been developed by centuries-old history of democratic societies.¹⁴⁸

One analysing the President’s speeches could arrive at such results: (i) the President looked for suitable moment to announce his commitment to democratic ideas or (ii) the President changed his mind and became a defender of a democracy (as a result of some factors). The contradiction between old and recent ideas of the President could be seen from one of his recent interviews where he complained about the absence of oppositionist party with alternative development program, although there were oppositionist groups in the past which

¹⁴⁷ Full text can be obtained from the Website [www.president.kz]

prepared even the alternative constitution project, let alone alternative economic development project, but were not given the chance to explain their ideas to the public (see previous parts).

Thus what is clear, is that the President 1991-1999 and the President after 2000 is not the same person in the sense of appropriating democratic values – the President who was of authoritarian line till 2000, began to stress the need for democratic development after that time. What are the factors that “motivated “ the President to change his mind? It was mentioned above, it seems that the President partly was pressed to announce his commitment to democracy by international organisations and the USA (see *International Factors* for details).

Among other factors that play a positive role in choosing democratizing Kazakhstan, multi-ethnicity of the society should be emphasized. National minorities would try to have equal rights with the Kazakh majority. It is very likely that the Kazakhs would tolerate their efforts to make stable multiethnic society, past relationships and other factors discussed before (see *National Structure*) would contribute to such toleration. What is important here, to control extreme groups, thus preventing them from causing any inter-ethnic conflicts – here the government of Kazakhstan proved to implement effective politics (see *National Structure*).

What should be done to improve the existing situation in the country to complete democratization process?

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. (emphasis are original)

Firstly, *decentralisation of the power*. Although this question has been discussed in Kazakhstan for many years¹⁴⁹, concrete steps have not been taken yet.¹⁵⁰ Decentralisation would lead to gaining democratic experiences of the population, and additionally elected local administrators would bear responsibility before his or her constituency.

Secondly, new and more *liberal law* regulating parties and their activities should be made. It was mentioned above that the existing legal framework, particularly related with parties and their activities is insufficient to provide their proper functioning. For example, the need for three thousand members to establish a new party as well as the small number of seats in the Majilis allocated to party lists could not be characterised as promoting efficient multi-party system in the country. Therefore, new law on parties and their activities are needed to establish really liberal and multi-party system.

Thirdly, *civil society* which is seen as a means of establishing democracy in a country contributing to pluralism¹⁵¹ needs to be developed. Thus every country attempting to establish a democratic society has to have plenty of civil society organisations which would lead to a democratisation of a country “from below”.

¹⁴⁹ The official opinion was that Northern *oblasts* with the Russian majority are very “sensitive” to the so-called Russian issue, ie to being discriminated as a minority in Kazakhstan. Therefore, this “sensitivity” may pave the way to separatist ideas and even deeds.

¹⁵⁰ Recently, the President issued the Decree “On Local Elections” which determined the time for holding the experimental elections of local administrators as Autumn 2001 where only two Akims of small villages are to be elected from each oblast. The Decree is full of doubtful rules. For example, Akims will be elected by indirect rule, ie the population of particular village will choose from 15 to 50 representatives (a number is determined by the Central Election Committee) who will then vote in the elections of local Akims.

¹⁵¹ Diamond, Larry, Linz, Juan and Lipset, Martin. (eds.) 1995. *Politics in Developing Countries*. (2nd ed.) London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 27.

Fourthly, *economic achievements* should be reflected on the population. It is proven that economic prosperity and democratization are interrelated. Obviously, democratic issues will not be taken as of primarily importance in a country where more than 60 percent of the population live under the line of poverty. Only after implementing successful economic program that will improve the living conditions of the masses one could discuss democracy.¹⁵² Economic growth reflected on the population would undoubtedly have positive effect on democratisation of the country.¹⁵³

¹⁵² There is saying in Kazakh “A hungry child does not play with the full one” which could be applied to the case of Kazakhstan before Western democracies.

¹⁵³ GDP raised by 10 percent in 2000. This tendency is continuing this year too. Last year pensions and wages of teachers, doctors and those of other budgetary organisations (except of civil servants) were raised by 30-40 percent. However, these steps seem to be insufficient.

CONCLUSION

Kazakhstani way towards establishing democratic society has a short history, that could be divided into three phases: 1) introduction of democratic ideas (1991-1995), 2) authoritarianism (1995-1999) and 3) moderate authoritarianism (1999 – till present).

Although there were some societal transformations in the late 1980s, democratic ideas were introduced to Kazakhstani society at the beginning of 1990s – with gaining independence as a result of the collapse of the USSR. First years of democratic experience were associated with massive state-building process, formation of political parties, NGOs. First parliament of independent Kazakhstan elected in 1994 could be a school of democracy for political elite of the new independent country since tried to play a role of check and balances in the political system where strong presidency began making its first steps preferring a system with parliamentary authority. But the cost of opposing presidential policies was high: the Parliament was dissolved in March 1995.

The year of 1995 symbolised a year of slowing down democratic transformations. Firstly, the 1994 parliamentary elections were annulled, and the Parliament was dissolved. Secondly, 1993 Constitution that envisioned a balanced political system was said to be ineffective and inapplicable to the existing situation. Thirdly, as a consequence of “ineffectiveness” of 1993 Constitution, a draft of a new one – that envisioned semi-presidential system where a president would be the main actor – was drawn and put on national referendum. Thus the political system was completely changed and the new bicameral parliament

became an inefficacious legislature without significant power. As a result of these developments in the area of the political, Kazakhstani status related with the exercising of political and civil liberties was decreased from “partly free” to “not free”, ie Kazakhstan obviously began to step back in the issue of democratic transition.

The mid of 1990s was passed under the banner of unofficial political repression of the opposition. Main opposition activist, former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin left the country fearing of being sentenced and prisoned for his political views. Others were sent abroad being appointed as ambassadors (eg Olzhas Suleimenov to Italy, Mukhtar Shakhanov to Kyrgyzstan, Baltash Tursumbayev to Turkey) or were appointed to important positions in the state apparatus. Some newspapers of oppositionist line were closed. Opposition proved to be unorganised and financially weak to propagandise its views. Political parties lacked mass support.

The end of 1990s was a peak of authoritarianism. The Presidential election of 1999 was nothing but a bad-masked play of free elections. Main oppositionist candidates were denied registration to participate in the election. The same scenario was practised in 1999 parliamentary elections. RPP decided not to participate since registration of its leader Akezhan Kazhegeldin was rejected by the Central Election Committee. Several international organisations criticised both presidential and parliamentary elections for political rights' violations.

However, the situation was changed by Nursultan Nazarbayev's announced commitment to democracy in one of his late annual speeches

(although he touched the problematic of a democracy first time in his 1998 annual speech– but we could characterise his speech of 1998 as experimental one directed to learn people’s attitudes towards the matter). Nazarbayev, who did not mention establishment of the democratic society even in the long-term development strategy “Kazakhstan-2030”, accepted the universality of democratic ideas (according to his speeches). The President who did not tolerate any kind of opposition in the past began to speak about opposition “of a good quality” (*kachestvennaya oppositziya*). It seems that international actors such as international organisations and Western states among other factors have played the main role in changing Nazarbayev’s ideas on democratisation of the Kazakhstani society. The opposition has begun to speak about possible early general elections dated for Summer 2002 and even of possible early resignation of the President.¹⁵⁴ According to some analysts of Kazakhstani politics the President will not try to be re-elected in the next presidential elections dated for December 2006.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, Kazakhstani political system could completely change after the new presidential elections establishing really democratic state.

The Kazakhstani way towards democratic society has been full of steps forward and backward. For many years the main task for Nazarbayev has been rapid economic development and stability in the society; democracy has been considered as of second importance until recent years. But, at least at theoretical level, it seems that things have begun to change. Many things have to be done in order to come close to a democracy as was defined in Introduction. Although

¹⁵⁴ For more information see the Website of the Kazakhstani opposition [www.eurasia.org.ru]

¹⁵⁵ For views of Kazhegeldin and other opposition activists see [www.eurasia.org.ru/cgi-eurasia/r-test.pl?analitica]

there are very little signs in the practise, one could surely expect that the establishment of a democratic society would not be a dream for Kazakhstan in the near future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Distribution of Kazakhstani Population by Selected Nationalities
(according to the results of the population censuses of corresponding years)

Nationalities	Population, thousand people			1989		1999	
	1959	1970	1979	Thou- sand people	Share in total popula- tion (%)	Thou- sand people	Share in total popula- tion (%)
Total population, Of whom	9313,3	13013,0	14688,3	16199,2	100,0	14953,1	100,0
Kazakhs	2798,4	4238,4	5293,4	6496,9	40,1	7985,0	53,4
Russians	3974,2	5521,9	5991,2	6062,0	37,4	4479,6	30,0
Ukrainians	762,1	933,5	898,0	875,7	5,4	547,1	3,7
Uzbeks	136,6	216,3	263,3	331,0	2,0	370,7	2,5
Germans	659,8	858,1	900,2	946,9	5,8	353,4	2,4
Tatars	191,9	285,7	312,6	320,7	2,0	249,0	1,7
Uygurs	59,8	120,9	147,9	181,5	1,1	210,4	1,4
Belarussians	107,5	198,3	181,5	177,9	1,1	111,9	0,75
Koreans	74,0	81,6	92,0	100,7	0,62	99,7	0,67
Azerbaijanis	38,4	57,7	73,3	89,0	0,55	78,3	0,52
Turks	9,9	18,5	25,8	49,5	0,31	75,9	0,51
Poles	53,1	61,4	61,1	59,4	0,37	47,3	0,32
Dungans	10,0	17,3	22,5	30,0	0,18	36,9	0,25
Kurds	6,1	12,3	17,7	25,4	0,16	32,8	0,22
Chechens	130,2	34,5	38,3	49,1	0,30	31,8	0,21
Tajiks	8,1	16,0	19,3	25,3	0,16	25,7	0,17
Bashkirs	8,7	21,4	32,5	40,9	0,25	23,2	0,16
Moldavians	14,8	26,0	30,3	32,4	0,20	19,5	0,13
Ingushs	47,9	18,4	18,3	19,5	0,12	16,9	0,11
Mordvins	25,5	34,4	31,4	29,2	0,18	16,1	0,11
Armenians	9,3	12,8	14,0	18,5	0,11	14,8	0,10
Greeks	55,5	51,2	49,9	46,3	0,29	12,7	0,08
Chuvashs	11,3	22,9	22,3	21,7	0,13	11,9	0,08
Kyrgyzs	6,8	9,6	9,4	13,7	0,08	10,9	0,07
Udmurts	3,9	15,8	15,5	15,5	0,10	9,1	0,06
Lithuanians	12,1	14,2	11,0	10,7	0,07	7,1	0,05
Bulgarians	12,2	10,4	10,1	10,2	0,06	6,9	0,05
Jews	28,1	27,0	22,8	17,5	0,11	6,7	0,04
Maris	2,1	9,1	10,6	11,9	0,07	6,5	0,04
Georgians	3,5	6,9	7,7	9,0	0,06	5,4	0,04

Gypsies	7,3	7,8	8,6	7,1	0,04	5,1	0,03
Lezgins	3,3	2,6	6,1	13,8	0,09	4,6	0,03
Chinesees	3,2	4,2	3,7	3,6	0,02	3,5	0,02
Persians	3,9	3,0	2,9	3,1	0,02	2,9	0,02
Meskhetenian Turks	2,8	0,02
Balkars	4,2	2,7	2,3	2,9	0,02	2,1	0,01
Ossetians	2,1	3,5	4,0	4,2	0,03	2,0	0,01
Estonians	3,7	4,1	3,5	3,3	0,02	1,8	0,01
Latvians	4,6	4,3	4,3	3,3	0,02	1,8	0,01
Turkmens	1,3	3,3	2,2	3,7	0,02	1,7	0,01
Karakalpaks	0,3	0,5	0,6	1,4	0,01	1,5	0,01
Avars	...	1,0	1,6	2,7	0,02	1,4	0,01
Karachains	5,6	2,4	2,1	2,0	0,01	1,4	0,01
Crimean Tatars	...	2,0	0,8	3,1	0,02	1,0	0,01

Source: The Report of the Agency of Republic of the Kazakhstan on Statistics, on <http://www.kazstat.asdc.kz/indexe.htm>

1. Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPK)

CPK, which was unofficially established in October 1991 by those who did not agree with decision of renaming the party into socialist one, was officially registered on February 28, 1994 and re-registered in 1997. It has departments in all regions of the Republic and some 55 thousands party members. Membership consists mainly of representatives of scientific intelligentsia, civil servants, workers, and pensioners.

CPK published the newspaper “*Trudovaya Zhizn*” (Working life) from 1995 to May 1997 when the National Agency on Press and Mass Media abolished its license due to the violation of some articles of Law of Press. CPK has close contacts with the Communist Party of Russian Federation, the Union of Communist Parties and other Communist Organizations of NIS Countries, the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan, Worker’s movement, “*Azamat*” and “*Pokolenye*”. In February 1998 it supported formation of the “People’s Front of Kazakhstan”. Main sources of financing are membership fees and donations.

Primary goal of the CPK can be summarised as establishment of the society based on the principles of scientific socialism. In political arena the CPK struggles for restoration of Soviets and establishment of parliamentary republic. In social and economic fields – restoration of the socialist type of ownership (private and state owned property and their combination); intolerance of exploitation of people; return to planned management of national property; suspension of privatisation; restoration of social guarantees that were provided by Soviet regime: right to labor, rest, lodgings, free health-care and education.

Despite the fact that CPK recognises parliamentary methods of struggle for power, at the same time, it uncompromisingly opposes official political course. Main methods of CPK are ideological, political, scientific-methodic and organisational work with population.

Ex-chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan Serikbolsyn Abdildin is the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPK.

CPK’s slate for 1999 elections to Majilis was headed by Serikbolsyn Abdildin, born 1937, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPK, Head of Department at Kazakh State Agrarian University and Boris Sorokin, advisor of the first secretary of CK CPK.

The CPK has three members in the Majilis.

Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan.

Agrarian Party is a new political formation on the Kazakhstani political map. Its Constituent Congress was held on January 6, 1999 in Astana - new capital of Kazakhstan. The program of this party defines follows as party’s primary goals: introduction of private ownership on land, improvement of rural infrastructure; decrease of taxes etc. One of the main goals of the party was

successful participation in the parliamentary elections of 1999. According to Chairman of the Agrarian party Madinov, "...Agrarian Party shall be a conservative political force, opposing revolutionary changes and interested in political stability". Before the election campaign began the party was not very active, but during the campaign – in very short period of time – it established a number of branches in the regions of the Republic and was registered by the Ministry of Justice. Although it was established just before the 1999 elections, it succeeded in sending three members to the Majilis

Republican political party "OTAN" (Fatherland)

"Otan" was formed in December 1998. Party was officially registered on February 12, 1999. The so-called "uniting" Congress of "Otan" took place on March 1, 1999 in Almaty, where "Otan" united with several parties which announced their dissolution such as the Party of National Unity of Kazakhstan, the Democratic Party, Liberal Movement of Kazakhstan and "For Kazakhstan – 2030" Movement. According to its leaders, "Otan" has roughly 126,5 thousands members and branches in all regions of the country. Its position is loyal to official policy.

Although the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Nursultan Nazarbayev – was elected a Chairman at the "uniting" Congress, he delegated powers to ex-Prime Minister Sergei Tereschenko.

Well-known public figures, scientists, businessmen are among party members.

Nowadays "Otan" has 24 members in the Lower House of the Kazakhstani Parliament.

Party "People's Congress of Kazakhstan" (PCK)

One of the first parties created by Nazarbayev – PCK was established on October 5, 1991, officially registered by the Ministry of Justice on December 3, 1991, and re-registered on December 12, 1995. It has branches in all regions of the Republic except Western Kazakhstan. The number of its members is reported as about 30,000. Social base of the party consists mainly of scientists, artistic intelligentsia, and businessmen. Till 1996 PCK owned two newspapers: "*National Congress*" and "*Halyk Congressi*" that had circulation of 40 thousands in total; both were closed due to financial problems. Main sources of financing are membership fees, donations and revenues from economic activity.

Main goal of PCK today is establishment of a democratic society. In social and economic spheres PCK promotes gradual privatisation of state property including land; development of agrarian sector, food and construction industries. 1994 marked change of the party's political orientation from loyal party to constructive opposition. However, at its 3rd Congress (October 14, 1995) PCK changed its political line once more, now from constructive opposition to constructive collaboration with state authorities. Now position of PCK is that of rather passive and loyal direction.

Well-known political activist and famous poet Olzhas Suleimenov has been the Chairman of PCK from its foundation. In connection with Suleimenov's appointing as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Italy in March 1996, Anvar Ismailov – one of the Suleimenov's deputies – has temporarily acted as a Chairman since then.

PCK has two members in the Majilis.

Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan (RPP)

It was found on December 17, 1998 and registered by the Ministry of Justice on March 1, 1999. At the moment of registration, membership of RPP accounted for 3,100 people. According to unconfirmed data party has its branches in all regions of the Republic. Main decision-making body of the party is the Congress. The Executive Committee carries out everyday activity of RPP.

According to the party program, its primary goals include establishment of a democratic state with market economy, improvement of quality of life of population by implementing radical political and economic reforms. RPP stays in "hard" opposition to official policy. The party has three newspapers: "*XXI Century*", "*451 Fahrenheit*", and "*Sol Dat*"

Ex-Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin is the Chairman of the RPP. Former Co-chairman of the Socialist party of Kazakhstan Gaziz Aldamzharov is the Deputy Chairman and the Head of the Executive Committee.

At the last parliamentary elections well-known political scientist Nurbulat Masanov, film producer Rashid Nugmanov, and popular journalist Sergei Duvanov headed party slate of RPP.

The Central Electoral Commission denied registration of Akezhan Kazhegeldin. The rest of the party leaders preferred to be registered as candidates for single-mandate electoral districts.

RPP has only one member in the Majilis elected from single-mandate electoral district.

"Revival Party" of Kazakhstan (RPK)

RPK was found on January 27, 199, and registered on September 20, 1995. The party has branches in all regions of the country with about 5,000 members – mainly teachers, doctors, scientists, artists, administrators, engineers, businessmen and students. RPK publishes monthly magazine "*Amazonka*" (in Russian, circulation 17,000). Republican and regional state-owned newspapers such as "*Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*" and "*Vechernii Almaty*" provide propaganda services and information on its activity. Main sources of financing are membership fees and revenues from magazine publication.

RPK promotes moral and spiritual revival of the society, creation of civil society and rule of law, and socially oriented economy. The party also struggles for providing women with opportunities for active participation in political life. In social and economic spheres it supports policies of defending the population from

inflation, increase of production, of developing export potential of the country, of providing social guarantees for indigent citizens, etc. In the political arena RPK is totally on the side of reforms that have been implemented by the President and Government.

Writer Altynshash Zhaganova is the Chairwoman of RPK.

Democratic party “Azamat”

Party “Azamat” was found on March 27 1999 on the base of “Azamat” movement and registered by the Ministry of Justice.

The party’s membership includes civil servants, representatives of scientific and artistic intelligentsia, owners of small business, non-political and non-governmental organizations. “Azamat” has not its own newspaper or magazine, therefore, uses such mass media means as newspapers “*XXI Century*”, “*Caravan*”, Commercial TV channel and others. Main sources of financing are donations.

In political arena “Azamat” promotes formation of a multi-party system, increase of parliamentary powers over governmental activities. “Azamat” supports introduction of self-government in villages, towns and cities with executive and representative bodies, with their own property and budget; total independence of courts from executive branch etc.

In economic and social spheres “Azamat” acts against giving control over key objects of national economy to small international companies; for demonopolisation of banking system and for decreasing number of taxes, simplification of tax collection process; supports national producers, small and medium business enterprises, social guarantees.

At the beginning “Azamat” was among the parties of “hard” opposition. Initiative of formation of opposition bloc called “People’s Front of Kazakhstan” belonged to the leaders of “Azamat” movement. “Azamat” had cooperated with Worker’s movement, “Pokolenye” movement, and the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. On December 11, 1998 leaders of “Azamat” movement made an unexpected for majority of observers statement “On political situation before presidential elections and perspectives of development of democratic processes in Kazakhstan”. In this statement co-chairmen of “Azamat” criticised their former allies – communists and Kazhegeldin’s group and expressed their wish to make a constructive dialogue with any president that would be elected including Nursultan Nazarbaev.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Galym Abilseitov is the Chairman of “Azamat”. He headed the slate of “Azamat” together with Murat Auezov, and businessman Platon Pak. Former Minister, one of the leaders of “Azamat”, Petr Svoik preferred to be registered as a candidate from single-mandate electoral district.

National party “Alash”

“Alash” was formed on the base of Republican Party of Kazakhstan. Party was officially registered during spring of 1999. It has branches in 9 regions. According to party leaders, party currently has 10 thousand members.

Its members are representatives of rural population and those of scientific and artistic intelligentsia of Kazakh origin. “Alash” has no own press organ and uses republican and local mass media in Kazakh language for propaganda and informing the population about party activities. Main source of financing – donations of activists.

Main goal of the party is revival of the Kazakh nation, unification of national-patriotic forces in order to create a democratic society. “Alash” is the only nationalistic party and reflects interests of the Kazakh population and mainly supports economic reforms and policies have implemented by the President and Government. However, ”Alash” does not cooperate with other parties and movements.

Sabetqazy Akatai is the Chairman of the party.

Republican Political Labor Party (RPLP)

The party was formed on the base of people’s movement "Union of Engineers of Kazakhstan" on September 18, 1995 and received official registration on January 10, 1996. It has branches in 8 regions of the country.

According to its leaders the party has 18,900 members, who are mainly representatives of scientific and technical intelligentsia. Press organ of the party is *The Newsletter of Engineering Academy of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, which is published once a year with circulation of 400. Main sources of financing are membership fees and donations.

Main goal of the party – expressing interests of intelligentsia through passing corresponding laws. RPLP promotes democratic and humanistic values, stressing the priority of human rights, equality of opportunities, political pluralism and absence of any ideological monopoly. Party supports governmental policies.

The Chairman of the Republican Political Labor Party is Bahytzhan Zhumagulov, who at the same time acts as the President of Engineering Academy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Representation of RPLP: 10 Members in the Majilis, 5 – in the Senate.

Civil Party

The party was found on November 17, 1998 and was registered by the Ministry of Justice later.

According to its leaders, the party was initiated by collectives of some metallurgic and mining enterprises. Actually, it unites managers of mining enterprises and those of financial groups.

As its main goal the Civil Party considers increase of production, increase of welfare, strengthening of the country's sovereignty. Party is loyal to the President.

Deputy General Director of Pavlodar Alumina Production Plant Azat Peruashev is the First Secretary of the party's Central Committee.

The party has 11 representatives in the Majilis.

Information from the following sources was used in Appendix B:

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