

CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES UNDER  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Tahira Allahyarova  
Farhad Mammadov

POLITICAL PARTIES IN AZERBAIJAN:  
FROM ONE ELECTION TO ANOTHER

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**Science editor:**

**Elkhan Nuriyev**

Doctor of Political Science, Professor  
Director, Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the  
Republic of Azerbaijan

**Reviewers:**

Jamil Hasanli

Doctor of History, Professor

Musa Gasimli

Doctor of History, Professor

**Technical editor, proofreader:**

Caroline Sutcliffe

**Designer:**

Intigam Mahammadli

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## FOREWORD

While Azerbaijan's fourth parliamentary election will be held on 7 November 2010, it is possible to describe the current stage as a pre-election one. In this stage, it is imperative to observe the activities of political parties, their election platforms, and their strategic and tactical action plans, compared to those of earlier stages. Accordingly, whether the opposition parties have a serious concept on finding a way out of their current predicament, or the available resources and potentialities, the balance of power in the political struggle should be analyzed. To do this, it is necessary to follow the background and dynamics of political parties.

The results of a sociological survey "On political parties in Azerbaijan – 2010: situation in the run-up to the parliamentary election and plans," conducted by the Research Council independent association among leaders and activists of political parties, shall be used as reference material in preparing this book, in addition to the Central Electoral Commission's statistical information "On the participation of political parties in parliamentary and presidential election in the Azerbaijan Republic in 1995-2008." The book is intended for a broad audience interested in the establishment, dynamics of political parties, and their participation in electoral processes and the real state of affairs.





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## Introduction

A political party is a public association possessing a certain structure, permanently engaged in political activities, representing the political will of its members and considering it its key mission to contribute to the determination and implementation of a country's political course.

There have been nonpartisan, single-party, bipartisan and multi-party systems in political history. Nonpartisan systems are characterized by the absence of officially registered parties or a prohibition on the activity of political parties. A candidate in nonpartisan elections represents his or herself independently. To illustrate a similar system, we can recall the George Washington Administration and the first U.S. Congress elections.

**Genesis of parties** – the establishment and formation of a party is a factor affecting its ideology, position, public relations and development of the political system. Since this is a highly complex and controversial process, political analysts have yet to reach unanimity over the issue. It may take decades and even centuries to form a party system, but, it is hardly possible to bring about a qualitative change or transformation even if the most sophisticated political technologies are applied.

According to a universally shared opinion, there are differences in the way parties are formed because every state undergoes different stages in its development, and deals with different problems and objectives. Such is known as the “**origin of parties**” problem. The “origin” phenomenon is a factor genetically characteristic (birth-mark) of party systems in all countries. From this standpoint, there are two

ways in which parties can form under the influence of “domestic” and “foreign origin.” Whereas in the former a party mainly emerges in the course of a parliamentary election, in the latter it is formed due to certain ideological factors. The first starts their activities with a parliamentary election and gradually evolve in a civil society, while the second, on the contrary, begins their activity with civil society and undergo evolution within parliament. The parties established in the second way tend to be more monolithic and sustainable.

Historically, parties emerged in the U.S. and Europe at about the same time. However, while their inception was nearly simultaneous, their structure and makeup diverged. For this reason, political science draws distinction between European and American parties. When speaking about formation characteristics of parties, we may come across their lawful and unlawful groupings. As a measure of classification, we believe it is important to examine whether a party has emerged either through evolution or revolution.

In Azerbaijan, parties emerged without going through a period of gradual evolution. Despite the presence of a number of common features with other post-Soviet republics, there was a completely different environment in Azerbaijan which was largely preconditioned by the occupation of its territories, war, national liberation movement, and its chaos and civil confrontation. These features were not observed in any other CIS country. From this standpoint, we can confidently say that alongside the European and American approach, Azerbaijan experienced its own way of party formation. In other words, the “origin of parties” phenomenon is explained by this peculiarity in Azerbaijan.

There is another feature arising from the above men-

tioned characteristics and it manifests itself in the formation of parties in Azerbaijan. This is the factor of leadership in political parties, the establishment of parties around a certain individual and rivalry between leaders. The ambitions of party leaders are evident in all political processes. This factor, of course, is also present in other countries (suffice it to remember the rivalry between T. Jefferson and A. Hamilton). The difference, however, is that it has become almost "eternal" in national politics.



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## **1. ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN AZERBAIJAN AND KEY FEATURES OF THEIR DYNAMICS**

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What are the main characteristics of the Azerbaijani model of parties and is there anything in common with the existing international experience?

Political parties started forming in Azerbaijan in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The 1988-1993 period consisted of party formation, whereas the subsequent collapse, in the early 1990s, of social unions characteristic of Soviet years and the increase of political activity, laid the foundation for the emergence of political parties in the new Republic.

As mentioned earlier, political parties first emerged on the wave of a public and political struggle triggered by Armenia's aggression and the break-up of the Soviet Union, set against the backdrop of nationwide resistance and outrage over the ensuing aggression. This factor sped up the formation of front-like groups in post-Soviet republics.

The speed to which parties were emerging in the said period, and the level of their political involvement and tension in society could not produce counterforce. Since political parties in transitional democracies do not always match the universally-accepted definition of parties, their emergence is not the same as that of liberal democracies. The observation of the process of institutionalization of political parties in transitional societies show that sovereign and democratic states may even break up in their early stages, as a result of chaotic organization, which is inversely proportional to political conscience and culture.



“Dozens of political parties and movements emerged in the political firmament. In the autumn of 1991, there were the Azerbaijan Karabakh Salvation Movement, the Azerbaijan Islamic Party, the Union for a Single Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijan Youth Social Democratic Organization, the Young Turks Organization under the Azerbaijan Popular Front. In the summer of 1992, they were joined by the National Independence Party of Azerbaijan. In the spring of that year, the Musavat Party held its restoration congress, the New Azerbaijan Party was established and the Bozqurd Party started operating. In mid-1993, there were about 30 political parties, associations and movements in Azerbaijan” (the Azerbaijan Republic (1991-2001), Baku, 2001, p. 42)

The appearance of so many political forces while the population was experiencing a great need for political organization, combined with the possibility of these forces ascending to power, could not but worry Soviet authorities.

Therefore, communist leaders made every effort to weaken any national liberation and political activity in Azerbaijan or to channel it in the right direction. "A policy was pursued towards dividing political leaders into 'liberals' and 'radicals' in order to undermine public movements from within. Certain forces got into this 'trap,' thus opening the way for their own disintegration and discord" (Et al, p. 32).

There are around 70 political parties in Azerbaijan, of which 54 are officially registered. The foundation for reforms in the area of institutionalization of Azerbaijan's political system was laid by the adoption of the "Law on Political Parties" on 2 June 1992. This law was updated in 1996, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007.

The transition to the multi-party system in the 1990s has been one of the major achievements in the evolution of Azerbaijani society. The number of political parties has dramatically increased, however has not led to qualitative changes in the party system. Failure of the parties to en-



gage in active political propaganda and strengthen their social support, or otherwise, "inactivity," has become chronic. Rivalry between political parties is too weak in Azerbaijan. Another factor impeding a civilized and democratic rivalry is that many political parties have been established around individuals, not around an ideology.

Political parties do not differ from each much by their platforms and goals, ideas and political directions, organizational structures, methods of work, etc. Thus, while the proximity of social-democratic and liberal-democratic traditions may facilitate their closeness, conservative traditions keep rightwing parties at a distance from them. Although some parties that were mainly established as clubs (by intellectuals) they still remain on the horizon and their activity is close to none. Most of the small, "couch" (all members can fit in on a couch) and satellite parties operate as satellites of authoritative opposition parties.

A civilized and constitutional political struggle is a good indicator of evolution in the party system. If the number of actual members of political parties is small, there are limited opportunities for mobilizing the electorate and there is almost no public foundation. Most parties are weak from organizational and financial standpoints, inter-party relations are not developed well. Most importantly, political parties have not developed their specific position, ideology, world outlook and strategy. Certain parties are formed in a manner typical of Soviet times (lack of political culture, impossibility of dialogue, confrontational logic, extremism, etc.). As a result of that, the "political centrism" traditions are very weak. The "centrism" course is intended to serve political unity and, most importantly, nationwide accord and stability

in society. The stage of sound and civilized rivalry between and especially within parties has not been reached yet. This is explained by the reluctance of most parties to follow the existing political practices and traditions and to change, or by a low level of political culture.

A number of parties have left Azerbaijan's political scene in recent years. This process is also quite weak. It would be premature to talk of the establishment of a bipartisan system in Azerbaijan. A multi-party system whereby two or three parties compete for political power has not formed yet. Although there are 54 registered parties, the vast majority of them have few members and few representatives in parliament. Parties are mostly represented in parliament by one or two MPs. The "polarization" tendencies serving the interests of party leaders, not parties proper, reduce the possibilities for civilized rivalry. On the one hand, there is monolithic political unity of the ruling party, while on the other there are weak and disorganized opposition parties. For example, there is a real and strong political force, while there are parties with nothing but a chairman and a stamp. Practices when parties join into blocs are impossible and unlikely in the future.

Most parties are: politically passive, have no future, no members and electorate, can't influence national politics, only work in offices, etc. And this is not a complete list of their characteristics.

Well-known American political analyst Richard Pipes dwells upon the features characteristic of party systems in post-Soviet republics. He asserts, "There are too many parties and most of them serve the selfish interests of their leaders. Such parties are not rivals but enemies to each oth-

er. In the West, parties are not enemies, but rivals.”

The activity dynamics of parties is extremely complicated and nonsystematic. There are parties ranging from those in the political vanguard to those established only to stand in elections and win over the support of the electorate, the so-called “parliament” and “community parties” (club parties).

At the same time, there are class parties (e.g. party of villagers), inter-class parties representing different social groups; parties differing for their organizational structure; legal and illegal parties depending on their place in the political system; and, finally, those distinguished by their ideology, e.g. reformists, centrist, conservative, reactionary, etc. Since the main goal is not just to create a semblance of a multi-party political system, but to establish a dynamic political environment and competitive parties, this is quite worrisome.

The construction of a democratic state requires the presence of strong authorities alongside a powerful opposition. When there are too many parties, their disorganized activities affect the successful performance of the political system.

It would be wrong to say that political parties in Azerbaijan pursue different ideas. The ideological and political standing of parties can be determined by a way of grouping them into accordance with their legitimate political power and attitude towards the state. This attitude ranges from unreserved support to extreme radicalism. The key reason for that is the failure of opposition parties to provide voters with their own alternative of an effective and constructive program and the fact that the system of political parties has not been formed yet. When analyzing the development

dynamics of political forces in Azerbaijan, we can observe that parties mainly evolved in the right direction at earlier stages, while the preference is given to leftist slogans now. The fact that parties position themselves as being “centrist” mainly pursues propaganda purposes.

The tendencies towards the “center” are more typical of poly-ethnic societies. In the first years of nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev’s government, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh was made a strategic priority. The principle of promoting Azerbaijan became the centerpiece of national ideology. However, most parties seem reluctant to accept this reality and adapt their political practices to this strategic goal.

On the other hand, the application of the political centrality idea to parties is also linked to the formation of the middle class. In other words, a centrist stance is less sensitive to social and ethnic affiliation. The fact that the middle class is not fully developed hampers the formation of strong centrist parties advocating national interests.

The efforts to maintain status-quo political parties have not been channeled into real activity, initiatives or intellectual potential, but only into the struggle for power. Over this period, they have only shown their capacity to break-up, proving them unwilling to engage in a dialogue and only interested in increasing their numbers. Describing themselves as “innovators,” they have been unable to get rid of radical stereotyping. Having no support in society, they predominantly attract “come-and-go people.” As such, they can’t engage in a civilized competition during elections or take action contradicting political morale and spiritual values.

Speaking about the characteristics of the party formation process, it is worth pointing to the establishment of new parties in the run-up to elections. A number of parties have emerged lately, for instance. After severing himself from the PFFPA (Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan) and running for presidency in 2008, Gulamhuseyn Alibayli established the Aydinlar Party, Elshan Manafov left the ASDP to set up the Democratic Leftist Party. The editor-in-chief of the Baki Khabar newspaper, Aydin Guliyev, has said he will establish a new party after the election.

Experience shows that people who have not made major political achievements are unlikely to succeed in establishing a party. Some experts think that the appearance of new parties is the requirement of a new time. The artificial increase in the number of political parties impedes consolidation of political forces and reduces their influence. Their appearance does not represent an answer to the social requirement and further weakens the already precarious plight of the opposition.

Political parties in Azerbaijan have either limited or no opportunities to affect the formation of public opinion. On the one hand, this shows their weakness, while on the other it boils down to a lack of resources to affect public developments. Despite the adoption of the laws "On public associations" and "On political parties" in Azerbaijan, a new law reflecting modern transformation has yet to be adopted. The mechanism of ascending to power by means of party lists was terminated in 2002. Following the introduction of changes to the constitution, the proportional system of ballot was abolished.



## REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

| No | Party   | Date of Establishment                           | Leaders  |
|----|---|---|--|
| 1  | Azerbaijan People's Democratic Party  | Established in 1967. Registered 11 August 1992. | Senior adviser - Rafiq Turabkhanoglu   |
| 2  | Azerbaijan Popular Front (the Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan, PFPA, was established on its basis in August 1995) | 16 June 1989                                    | In autumn 2000, the party split up as both its wings claimed to be a legitimate successor. The chairman of the PFPA's reformist wing, Ali Karimli, considers himself the legal successor of the party. |
| 3  | Azerbaijan National Democratic Cognition Party  | 5 October 1989                                  | Chairman - Osman Afandiyeu   |
| 4  | Azerbaijan Social Democratic Party  | 10 December 1989                                | Co-chairmen - Araz Alizada, Zardusht Alizada   |
| 5  | The Unity Party   | 22 January 1990                                 | Chairman - Khudu Khuduyev  |
| 6  | The Motherland Party  | 24 November 1990                                | Chairman - Fazail Agamali  |
| 7  | The Single Azerbaijan Party   | 12 September 1991                               | Chairman - Karrar Abilov   |
| 8  | Azerbaijan Villagers Party  | 19 April 1992                                   | Chairman - Feyruz Mustafayev   |
| 9  | Azerbaijan Democratic Party   | 17 October 1991                                 | Co-chairmen – Sardar Jalaloglu, Rasul Guliyev  |
| 10 | Azerbaijan Revival and Progress Party   | 24 July 1992                                    | Chairman - Azad Nabiyeu  |
| 11 | Democratic Azerbaijani World Party  | 9 June 1992                                     | Chairman - Mammad Alizada  |
| 12 | Azerbaijan National Independent Party   | 17 July 1992                                    | Chairman - Etibar Mammadov   |
| 13 | Civil Solidarity Party  | 26 September 1992                               | Chairman - Sabir Rustamkhanli  |
| 14 | The Hope Party  | 16 October 1992                                 | Chairman - Iqbal Agazada   |
| 15 | Musavat Party   | 6-7 November 1992                               | Chairman - Isa Gambar  |
| 16 | New Azerbaijan Party  | 21 November 1992                                | Founder - Heydar Aliyev<br>Chairman - Ilham Aliyev   |
| 17 | A Single Azerbaijan National Unity Party  | 28 November 1992                                | Chairman - Hajibaba Azimov   |
| 18 | Azerbaijan National Movement Party  | 5 December 1992                                 | Chairman - Samir Jafarov   |
| 19 | Independent Azerbaijan Party  | 23 January 1993                                 | Chairman - Nizami Suleymanov   |
| 20 | The Compatriot Party  | 27 February 1993                                | Chairman - Mais Safarli  |
| 21 | National Salvation Party  | 3 March 1993                                    | Chairman - Mahammad Hatami   |
| 22 | Gorgud Party  | 6 May 1993                                      | Chairman - Firudin Karimov   |
| 23 | Azerbaijan Communist Party  | 27 November 1993                                | Chairman - Ramiz Ahmadov   |
| 24 | Azerbaijan Democratic Proprietors Party   | 23 April 1994                                   | Chairman - Gasim Gasimov   |
| 25 | The Party of Patriots   | 4 June 1994                                     | Chairman - Hamlet Talibov  |
| 26 | Azerbaijan National Statehood Party   | 2 July 1994                                     | Chairman - Sabir Tariverdiyev  |
| 27 | Azerbaijan Liberal Party  | August 1994                                     | Chairman - Lala Shovkat Hajiyeva   |

|    |   |                  |   |
|----|---|------------------|---|
| 28 | Alliance in the Name of Azerbaijan Party  | 17 November      | Chairman - Abutalib Samadov                                   |
| 29 | Azerbaijan Social Welfare Party           | 6 December 1994  | Chairman - Khanhuseyn Kazimli                                 |
| 30 | Azerbaijan Democratic Enlightenment Party | 11 December 1994 | Chairman - Mammadhanifa Musayev                               |
| 31 | Azerbaijan Single Communist Party         | September 1995   | General Secretary of the Central Committee - Sayad Sayadov    |
| 32 | Social Justice Party                      | December 1995    | Chairman - Matlab Mutallimli                                  |
| 33 | The Unity Party                           | 12 May 1998      | Chairman - Tahir Karimli                                      |
| 34 | National Congress Party                   | August 1998      | Chairman - Ikhtiyar Shirinov                                  |
| 35 | Azerbaijan Republican Party               | November 1998    | Chairman - Subut Asadov                                       |
| 36 | Azerbaijan Liberal Democratic Party       | February 1999    | Chairman - Fuad Aliyev  |
| 37 | Azerbaijan People's Party                 | 4 April 1999     | Chairman - Panah Huseynov<br>Acting Chairman - Giyas Sadikhov |
| 38 | Azerbaijan Fighters Party                 | 27 May 2000      | Chairman - Agadur Muslumov                                    |
| 39 | The Justice Party                         | 8 May 2002       | Chairman - Ilyas Ismayilov                                    |
| 40 | National Unity Party                      | 8 May 2002       | Chairman - Yunis Aliyev                                       |
| 41 | Modern Musavat Party                      | 8 May 2002       | Chairman - Hafiz Hajiyev                                      |
| 42 | Azerbaijan Free Republicans Party         | 8 May 2002       | Chairman - Kamil Seyidov                                      |
| 43 | Great Salvation Party                     | 12 August 2005   | Chairman - Fazil Mustafayev<br>(Gazanfaroglu)                 |
| 44 | The Freedom Party                         | 12 August 2005   | Chairman - Ahmad Oruj   |
| 45 | Azerbaijan Democratic Reforms Party       | 12 August 2005   | Chairman - Asim Mollazada                                     |
| 46 | United Azerbaijan Popular Front Party     | 12 August 2005   | Chairman - Gudrat Hasanguluyev                                |
| 47 | The Progress Party                        | 12 August 2005   | Chairman - Chingiz Sadigov<br>(Damiroglu)                     |
| 48 | Great Azerbaijan Party                    | 12 August 2005   | Chairman - Elsad Musayev                                      |
| 49 | The Evolution Party                       | 12 August 2005   | Chairman - Teyyub Ganioglu                                    |
| 50 | Civil Unity Party                         | 12 August 2005   | Chairman - Sabir Hajiyev                                      |
| 51 | Traditional Popular Front Party           | 8 February 2007  | Chairman - Mirmahmud Fattayev                                 |
| 52 | Civil Development Party                   | 10 August 2007   | Chairman - Ali Aliyev   |
| 53 | Azerbaijan National Democratic Party      | 24 December 2008 | Chairman - Tufan Karimli                                      |
| 54 | The Clearness Party                       | 25 November 2009 | Chairman - Gulamhuseyn Alibayli                               |

The 54<sup>th</sup> registered party in Azerbaijan is the Clearness Party. It was registered with the Justice Ministry on 25 November 2009. Its constituent assembly was held on 14 December 2008. According to Trend.az, the congress, which ap-

proved the party's name, charter and mission, was attended by 201 representatives. G. Alibayli was elected chairman and Khanoglan Ahmadov deputy chairman. The congress also approved the party's 45-people Supreme Assembly and a 5-people Control Commission. G. Alibayli was the chairman of the Popular Front Party's Supreme Assembly, adviser and official representative of President Elchibay in parliament in 1992-1993. From 1995 to 2005, he was elected a member of the Milli Mejlis for two consecutive times. He was a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He was a member of the Popular Front from 1989 and chairman of the party's Supreme Assembly from 1993. In early August, he resigned from chairmanship in the Popular Front Party's Supreme Assembly and in late September established the Clearness Party. He voiced his protest at the PFFPA's decision to boycott the 2008 presidential election and abandoned his party membership. Standing in the presidential election as a candidate, Alibayli announced that he would establish a new party (I. Alizada/Trend.az, 14.12.2008).

The chairman of the new party has described the key objectives of the party as follows: "The authorities and opposition can't get along well now. Under such circumstances, political relations do not stay within legal and moral bounds. Therefore, society is at an impasse. As a result, there is no confidence in political forces. To regain this confidence, we intend to pursue different policies. We will try to regain the confidence in both the authorities and opposition. We will be far from denying or praising anyone. We don't see rallies as our main goal. Our objective is to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and update the election law in cooperation with all political forces. Our goal for the near future is to stand in the 2009 local and 2010 parliamentary elections,

while the long-term objective is to run for presidency in 2013.”

Regarding participation in national elections, the party's deputy chairman, Gadir Ibrahimli, said:

“About 40 members of our party intend to stand in the parliamentary election. We encourage our leading members to join the election. Discussions within the party are ongoing. We may introduce changes to our initial list and revise our nominations in some constituencies” ([www.trend.az](http://www.trend.az)).

#### UNREGISTERED PARTIES

The main reason for the number of unregistered parties being almost as high as that of registered ones, is that preference is being given to quantitative rather than qualitative indicators. Even now the setting up of parties is a popular occupation. This could be seen as a natural process only if newly emerging parties had a slightly new ideology, programs and activities. This, however, is not the case.

**Azerbaijan Party of Greens** (APG) was founded on 16 December 2006. Its co-chairman is currently Mayis Gulaliyev. The party has already established 25 district branches. On 25 November 2007, the APG's Youth Organization held its constituent assembly to adopt a charter and program. The party positions itself as a highly active public and political party and promotes itself on its ever-updating webpage. The APG says it has good international relations and maintains contact with the European Party of Greens, the Ukrainian Party of Greens, the Green faction of Russia's Yabloko Party and the Georgian Party of Greens. On 27 December 2006, the APG and the Georgian Party of Greens signed a Memorandum on Cooperation.

To date, the registration of only two parties has been repealed by the state. In 1995, the Supreme Court canceled the registration of the Bozqurd Party (at present the Azerbaijan National Democratic Party) and the Islamic Party. The court ruled that the Bozqurd Party's registration was not in line with the law. This party was subsequently registered as the Azerbaijan National Democratic Party on 24 December 2008. As for the cancelation of the Islamic Party's registration, the decision explained that the party's chairman was found guilty of espionage in favor of Iran and arrested.

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## 2. IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM OF PARTIES

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A comparative and detailed analysis of the platforms of all registered and unregistered parties shows that most political parties (especially opposition ones) duplicate each other in terms of ideology, passive innovativeness, radicalism, and the nature of their programs and activities. Only a handful of parties realize the importance of civilized rivalry. There is complete turmoil in the ideological spectrum of parties because there are no boundaries. An ideological platform requires implementation, not just declaration. Therefore, a different approach is required to systematize the situation.

To do that, it is necessary to consider not a party's declared ideology, but its political conduct, attitude towards legitimate authorities and its activity. Every party must explicitly define its program and goals within the boundaries of its ideology. In the absence of that, people will only view such organizations, public associations and political parties against the backdrop of their leaders. For this reason, parties often become known as "someone's parties". In normally developed societies, political parties are seen as abstract entities advocating their own ideologies. If there is no party environment, the struggle is waged between individuals and grouping is observed. Parties differ from each other mainly by their ideological stance. Those supporting radical change are considered *leftist*, while those adhering to traditions are seen as *rightist*.

If a broader approach is applied, leftists include commu-

nists, *socialists and social democrats*, while rightists include *liberals, conservatives and ultra-rightists*. Centrist forces prefer to stay away from extreme ideas. Parties may also be distinguished by their political conduct (democratic, totalitarian), their stance (pro-government, opposition), and their attitude towards development (radical, evolutionist, reformist). Leftist, rightist and centrist parties, too, are further subdivided depending on their structure. For instance, *rightists can be centrist, extreme, radical, and new rightist*. The co-chairman of the Azerbaijan Social Democratic Party (ASDP), Araz Alizada, is in favor of establishing a five-party system in the country and believes that there is no need for so many parties, especially since most of them follow the same ideology: "These parties differ from each other by the personal ambitions of their chairmen. There is no other difference. It would be enough for the future development of Azerbaijan to have one leftist, one left-centrist, one centrist, one right-centrist and one rightist party. A five-party system may bolster the country's political development. Today, The parties existing in Azerbaijan have by and large emerged from the Popular Front, differing only in their personal ambitions, but sharing in the same ideology."

***Party colors and symbols.*** Parties all over the world express themselves through different colors. This is mainly done to differentiate themselves in elections. Red is usually the color of leftists – socialists, communists, etc. Conservative parties select blue or black. There are also exceptions. For instance, U.S. Republicans are red, while Democrats are blue. "Moderate" socialists are usually pink, while liberals are yellow. Green is the color of environmental and Islamic parties. Orange is the color of nationalists, while violet and white, despite symbolizing a monarchy, are frequently used

by modern political parties. For instance, the banners of the Azerbaijan Civil Solidarity Party, New Azerbaijan, National Independence, the PFPA, the UPFPA, etc. are white. Brown and black are usually used by fascist and neo-fascist parties. As for emblems, communists use the hammer and sickle, while socialists select a rose held in a fist. Interestingly, symbols and emblems can seriously influence a party's image because they have to do with human memory and mentality (e.g. during a 2005 referendum in Kenya, supporters of the constitution used the banana, while opponents preferred the orange as their symbol). Since opposition parties in Azerbaijan are in favor of an "orange revolution", they can conditionally be associated with the orange color.

**Party names.** In most cases, a party's ideological direction is reflected in its name, e.g. democratic, liberal, etc. The right of political parties to use the name of the state in their name varies in different countries. In Russia, if a party uses the name of the state, it is exempt from the payment of duty, while in Belarus parties are prohibited to use the words "Belarus, republic, national, people's" in their names. In Azerbaijan, as is the case in all other areas, this area is full of extremes, as 32 registered parties have the word "**Azerbaijan**" in their names. Experts believe that parties which have reached a certain level of organization, hold a place in the country's politics but have not achieved anything palpable have to take a difficult step to end their run of ill luck. The director of the Center of Political Technologies, Vali Alibayli, believes that stepping up of party activity is much more important than a name. "Of course, the name of a political organization which has been in the political scene for some time is its best means of presenting itself. However, I



don't think name change can enhance a party's effectiveness and go down well with the public. The biggest task is to find a way out of stagnation and expand political activities. In their absence, parties can't achieve anything no matter what they are called. Political organizations should start thinking more about projects capable of ending their dire situation. This issue is dealt with differently in other countries. In Turkey, if a party is banned, its leadership and members have to change its name. At the same time, if two or more parties decide to merge, a completely new name is used. No party has ever changed its name because a previous one wasn't good enough and achieved a lot after being renamed" ([www.baki-xeber.com/new/2009/06/02](http://www.baki-xeber.com/new/2009/06/02)).

In addition to causing differences of opinion, the ideological spectrum of parties is an important factor which makes a consensus difficult. There was a one-party system in the U.S. between the independence war and the early 1830s, while the bipartisan system emerged in the 1830s. According to well-known expert in parties A. Shwarzenberg, a one-party system can serve as a means for national integration and prevent a split in society and lead to unity among social and national groups. For instance, although the Republican People's Party founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was Turkey's only party in 1923-1945, neither its ideology nor structure was totalitarian.

According to R. Darendorph, there will be no need for parties belonging to one camp or another in the current century. New parties will become a "political cocktail." Political processes show that parties are still a real force in the modern political system. Their most common feature is that the social foundation of parties is very weak. Most

of them feel unclaimed and temporary. Parties describing themselves as *liberal* do not follow the classical meaning of this ideology but pursue their own interpretations of it. They can also be described as "pro-western." There are both radical-democratic and social-liberal ones among them.

Political groups and parties in Azerbaijan can generally be divided into three directions:

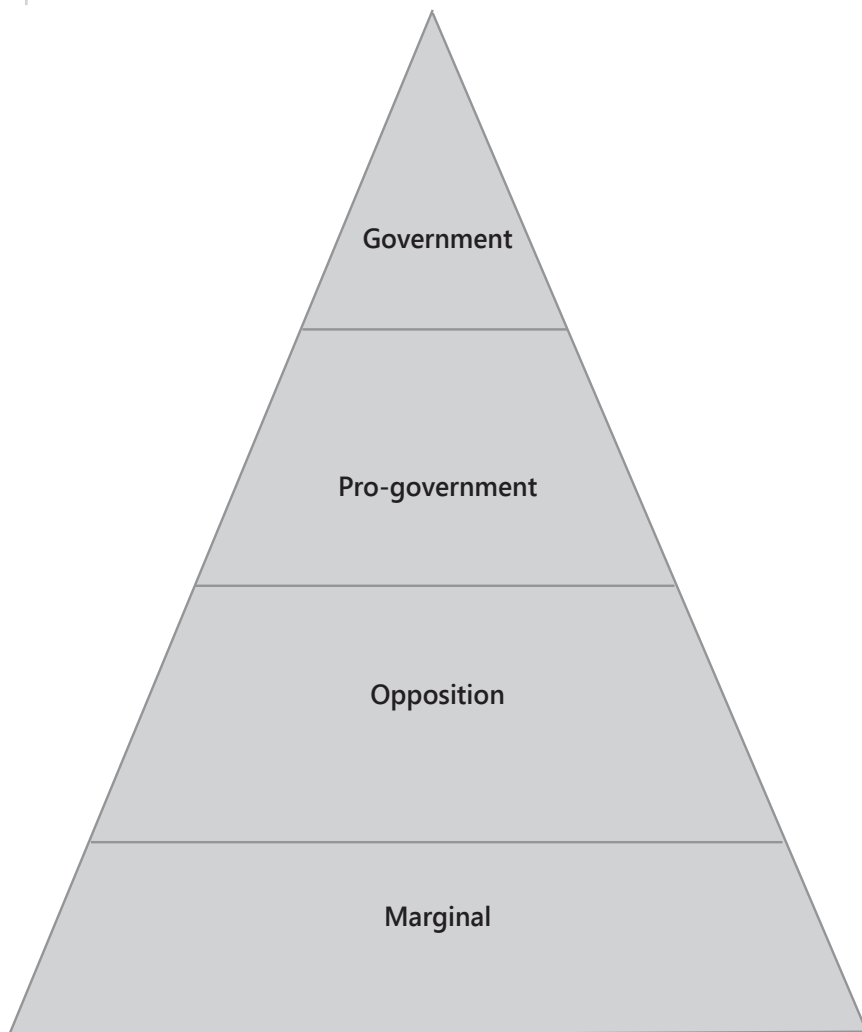
1. Rightist – mainly neoliberal and anticommunist parties;
2. Democratic parties of centrist direction;
3. Parties belonging to the leftist wing of political forces – communist and socialist;

The left side of Azerbaijan's political spectrum looks quite weak and does not have social support. Whereas before 1991 Azerbaijan's political life was mainly characterized by the "democrat-communist" rivalry, after 1991 this rivalry was superseded by the "reformer-conservative" confrontation. Starting from 1993, there became a struggle between democrats and radicals. The democratic development of the Azerbaijan Republic has been the program objective of most parties. However, as the political circumstance changed, they gradually revised their views to become "rightist."

It is noteworthy that rightist parties differ from each other from the history of their political struggle and tactics. For instance, although the Musavat Party adopted one declaration (1912) and four programs (1917, 1936, 1992, 1997), its principles have not changed much. The party still adheres to the principles of independence, nationalism, statehood, freedom and national solidarity. The party's positions were

revised from leftist to rightist in the first quarter and in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although Musavat was a left-centrist party in 1917-1918, it transformed into a right-centrist organization.

Speaking about the features characteristic of political parties' activities in Azerbaijan, it is worth indicating that the ideology of all political parties and organizations regarding restoration of the country's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty (except for communists, socialists and others still nostalgic of socialist times) remains unchanged. Conservatives who want to change the society through evolution hold right-centrist positions. International experience shows that right-centrist positions are characterized by pragmatism, consensus and openness to dialogue. There are very few parties in Azerbaijan playing an important part in the country's public and political life who have a strong social foundation. Certain parties are too loyal to have a good reputation. All political parties in Azerbaijan can generally be attributed to one of the following:



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### 3. BLOCS AND UNIONS EXISTING ON THE POLITICAL HORIZON IN THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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It is highly important to find a formula for coordinating and effective organization of political parties. The formation of political blocs in the country is also affected by a lack of such objective coordination. There appears to be a need for some coordination prior to the formation of political blocs when a normal democratic environment is established on the political scene. This may lead to a mobilization of significant resources and the appearance of dozens of groups deserving to be reckoned with. It is widely believed that the most serious obstacle for party mergers, is the factor of political leaders. However, since 2003 a number of political leaders have given up party chairmanship: Etibar Mammadov has resigned from the Azerbaijan National Independence Party, Lala Shovkat Hajiyeva from the Azerbaijan Liberal Party, and Panah Huseyn from the Azerbaijan People's Party. This, however, has not led to rapprochement among parties. Previous leaders were not replaced by people of national caliber, but of those on the party level.

There have been several merger attempts on the part of opposition parties. In fact, they planned mergers, not into a bloc, but into a party. The idea first emerged in connection with the Popular Front and Musavat parties several years ago. The plan was that the new party's chairman would be one person, while a candidate for presidency from the party would be someone else. The suggestion wasn't approved and the merger attempt was abandoned. More recently, parties have actually given preference to breaking up rather than uniting, which is evidence of a political crisis.

The crisis increases discontent, hopelessness and differences, and leads to a split. The opposition in Azerbaijan has yet to learn how to live in a new environment.

In 1998, a total of 20 political parties refused to stand in the presidential election. The radical opposition (five parties) signed a protocol on boycotting the election. In order to conduct a democratic presidential election, or coordinate the activities of political parties and organizations, the Movement for Electoral Reforms and Democratic Elections (MERDE), a coalition comprised of 36 public and political organizations, was established on 26 March 1998. In 1999, the biggest public organization of the opposition, MERDE, already included 67 parties and groups (PFPA, ADP, Musavat, ANIP, Civil Solidarity, etc.). Although many blocs and alliances were established in the first years of independence (national resistance movement, national democratic bloc), they proved short-lived (except for the Democratic Congress, the Roundtable, the Advisory Assembly).

Although these organizations play a mediatory function between the state and citizens, they differ from each other by their objectives, activity methods, and their influence on the authorities. The establishment of the **Democratic Congress**, which was advisory and collaboration entity of parties represented in the authorities, was a reaction to the 4 June 1993 rebellion (PFPA, Musavat, Ahrar, Chagdash Turan, APDP, etc.). This bloc, established in early 1994, had 11 members in 2000. On 7 January 1995, the **Roundtable** center was set up and declared civil solidarity as its primary objective. The advisory center planned to become a focal point of all political organizations regardless of their orientation. Although this entity initially included 32 organiza-

tions, its second statute was signed by 16. In early 2000, the Roundtable had 11 member-parties. On 5 April 1997, an advisory and cooperation center, the **Advisory Assembly**, was established by parties supporting the policy of incumbent authorities. In early 2000, the assembly, by then joined by parties adhering to contradictory positions (Communist Party, the Motherland Party), had 12 members.

In October 1997, on the initiative of the ASDP and the Communist Party, the **Socialist Azerbaijan** bloc was established with the aim of building democratic socialism.

While inter-party integration agreements are being signed today (IAP, ANIP, Vahdat, SJP; Progress Party, a total of nine parties), there is no tangible result. Integration is too slow and its importance is not duly appreciated. The ongoing rivalry and differences between and within parties (traditional and reformist wings of the PFFA; Unity; ADP-Justice; ACP: ACP-1; ACP-2; ASCP, etc.) are hampering real unity. Therefore, the chances of political parties turning into parliament ones are rather slim, while their resources for engaging in political struggle are limited.

On 9 May 2003, the Supreme Assembly of the Hope Party passed a decision to support a candidate from the **"Our Azerbaijan"** bloc, Musavat chairman Isa Gambar in the 2003 presidential election and to join the bloc. A bilateral agreement with the Musavat Party was signed on 21 May 2003. The bloc included over 30 political parties and around 70 public organizations.

On 6 June 2005, the Supreme Assembly of the Hope Party decided to drop out of "Our Azerbaijan", while con-

tinuing bilateral relations with Musavat and other parties.

***The Union for Democracy (UD)*** included three opposition parties – the Traditional Popular Front Party (Chairman – Mirmahmud Miralioglu), the National Democracy Party (Chairman - Isgandar Hamidov) and the Freedom Party (Chairman - Ahmad Oruj). The UD was established after the 2005 parliamentary election. In early September 2008, the bloc was joined by Great Azerbaijan and in November by the People's Party. The Union is an advisory and cooperation platform for these parties. In October, the National Democracy left the UD, while the National Salvation Party joined it.

**Election blocs.** There were quite a few election blocs established over the 2005 parliamentary election. These included:

**“Independent media - 2005” election bloc**

**Women’s election bloc**

**“Young Azerbaijan – new names” election bloc**

**“New parliament” election bloc**

**“Parliament -2005” election bloc of lawyers**

**“New policy” election bloc**

**“Union of public leaders” election bloc.**

**The “Independent media - 2005” election bloc** was established on 15 May 2005 by editors of five popular newspapers. The bloc’s objective was not to run for parlia-



ment but to serve as a means for that. It believed that the participation of independent media in Azerbaijan's future political life was necessary.

**The Women's election bloc** was established on 14 May 2005 mainly by leaders of the Azerbaijan Women's Movement.

**The "Young Azerbaijan – new names" election bloc** was established on 27 May 2005. It was an election bloc open any professional and patriotic Azerbaijanis regardless of political affiliation. Its objective was to serve as a means for strengthening national unity and civil dialogue.

**The "New parliament" election bloc** emerged 13 June 2005. The bloc planned to establish a non-political "Public Alliance" bloc.

**"Parliament 2005" election bloc of lawyers** was established on 16 May 2005. Its objective was to facilitate active participation of lawyers in political developments and use their potential more effectively.

**The "New policy" election bloc** was established on 12 April 2005. Its strategic objective was to democratize Azerbaijan's political system.

**The "Union of public leaders" election bloc** was formed on 22 April 2005. One of its founders, president of the National NGO Forum, Azay Guliyev, was elected to parliament.

**The "Azadlig" (Freedom) Bloc of Political Parties** (Union of Political Parties in the Azerbaijan Republic) was

established in the run-up to the 2005 parliamentary election. Comprised of two parties and one movement, the bloc, according to observations, had an electorate of around 30 people.

After the ADP left "Azadlig", the bloc, which was already in a precarious situation, got into an even more difficult situation. The bloc, now comprising two parties (one of which is still not registered) and several movements, is about to be cast into oblivion ([www.Azadligradiosu.com](http://www.Azadligradiosu.com)). A Musavat member says it can't even conduct a 30-people rally. Members of the bloc are trying to get together under the pretext of "adopting a new program". Developments show that opposition parties and blocs will fail to avoid the tendency of splitting up before the next parliamentary election. This is confirmed by conflicts within "Azadlig" and the small number of people joining the Musavat Party's rallies.

The possible split of "Azadlig" has become part of the opposition's agenda. The Popular Front Party led by Ali Karimli has said the inclination of "Azadlig" towards Musavat would lead it nowhere. For the first time in four and half years, one of the bloc's three parties went



against the others and joined a different protest action. Musavat is pursuing a deliberate policy towards splitting "Azadlig", which leads to regress among the radicals. Instead of preparing for elections and mobilizing the frugal resources available to them, party leaders attempt to

weaken each other (Parvaz Atakishizada, [www.1news.az](http://www.1news.az). 06.07.2010).

Indeed, as a result of these flash-like processes, the bloc's split became discernible. The leader of the

Azerbaijan Liberal Party, Lala Shovkat, said in an interview with the Media forum: "The 'Azadlig' bloc has ceased to exist. I said back in February that if the PFFA and Musavat join, 'Azadlig' will cease to exist. This decision proceeds from the interests of PFFA members. Therefore, the split should be viewed quite normally." (Imdad Alizada, [www.mediaforum.az](http://www.mediaforum.az); 2010-07-13).



According to the deputy chairman of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, Zakir Huseynov, the blame for the split should not be put on foreign forces. It is the fault of its members. In general, time proves such blocs ineffective because they are not established in accordance with international requirements. Although there are different forecasts as to the formation of new election blocs, no specific entity has emerged yet.

The movement **"For Karabakh and Republic"** was established in the early 2009 to oppose the referendum on the introduction of changes to the Constitution. It included Musavat, PFFA, ALP, Hope, ADP, Civil Development and other opposition parties. The parties declared that they would stand in last year's local government elections and

even held discussions in this regard. Their election concept was to nominate their candidates to municipalities and to enable all political parties to register their hopefuls. As is known, the collective attempt to stand in the election failed. Experience shows that leaders of political parties prefer personal ambitions to party interests. This tradition is quite dangerous. To prevent it, the opposition needs to renew, more open-minded leaders need to emerge. Without reforms and a new law, there is little hope that blocs can be effective.

## 4. PARTICIPATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN PREVIOUS ELECTIONS



In the years of independence, Azerbaijan has seen five presidential, three parliamentary and three local government elections. Today, Azerbaijan is on the eve of a fourth parliamentary election. What was the dynamics of political parties' activities in previous elections like? Did they progress or regress? The reality is that there has never been an ideal election in world history. U.S. ex-senator and president of the Crain Group, Daniel Crain, asserts of the democratic election model: "Democracy always develops and election results may be disappointing." The best example of that was Winston Churchill's failure to be elected for a second term in 1945 after leading his country to victory in World War Two. After the shocking defeat, Churchill said in the House of Commons in November 1947: "No-one

is saying that democracy is perfect. In fact, democracy is the worst form of governance except for the forms already used over time." (2010 parliamentary election in Azerbaijan: more democratic, more transparent. Materials of International Conference, 16 April 2010, Baku – 2010).

An ideal and democratic election is a goal, a criterion any country would like to reach. Undesirable phenomena always take place along this road and most important is the intention to rule them out. Let's have a look at the dynamics of political parties' participation in previous parliamentary and presidential elections (this analysis is based on the Central Electoral Commission's statistical information "On the participation of political parties in parliamentary and presidential election in the Azerbaijan Republic in 1995-2008").

Free and fair elections represent an important political and legal mechanism for strengthening the foundation of a state and developing a sustainable civil society. The elections laws prepared on the basis of Azerbaijan's first democratic Constitution that were passed through nationwide referendum on 12 November 1995, became perhaps the most elaborate sphere of national legislation. The Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic adopted the Laws "On the referendum" on 30 December 1997, "On presidential elections in the Azerbaijan Republic" on 9 June 1998, "On the Central Electoral Commission" on 15 May 1999, "On local government elections" on 2 July 1999, "On elections to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic" on 5 July 2000 (by canceling the Law "On elections to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic" dated 12 August 1995). On 27 May 2002, the Milli Mejlis passed the Law "On approving the

Electoral Code of the Azerbaijan Republic”.

According to the election laws passed on the basis of Azerbaijan’s first democratic Constitution, there were three parliamentary (1995, 2000 and 2005) and three presidential elections (1998, 2003 and 2008) in the 1995-2008 periods.

### **I. Election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic of the First Convocation, 12 November 1995**

On 13 June 1995, the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic passed a decision to conduct election to the national legislature, while on 14 June a Decree “On measures to conduct election to the national legislature of the Azerbaijan Republic” was signed. Election to the Milli Mejlis was scheduled for 12 November 1995. The general election was conducted on the said date, repeat voting on 26 November, repeat election on 4 February 1996 and repeat voting on 18 February. The election was held on a single-chamber first-past-the-post and proportional ballot systems. 100 people were to be elected through the former and 25 through the latter.

A total of 13,851 members, or 30%, of precinct election commissions represented political parties, while 9,234, or 20% represented independent candidates. 1,094 candidates were nominated through single-mandate constituencies. Following the examination of complaints, the Central Electoral Commission upheld decisions by 66 district electoral commissions to deny registration of 175 candidacies, and repealed decisions of the said commissions to register 98 people as candidates.

To examine the veracity of signatures collected by candidates, a group of experts was established by the CEC. After

the examination of signatures, 392 people were included on the list of candidates on the first-past-the-post system and eight people on the list of political parties. Prior to the election, 11 people withdrew their candidacies on single-mandate constituencies. Eventually, there were 378 candidates nominated through 99 constituencies. Of 32 registered political parties 18 confirmed their interest in standing in the election, but only 12 of them submitted notification documents to the CEC.

Four parties (Musavat, the Azerbaijan People's Democratic Party, the Azerbaijan Communist Party and the Hope Party) were barred from the election by the CEC for breaching the election law. The parties filed applications with the Supreme Court of the Azerbaijan Republic, which upheld the ban of the Central Electoral Commission.

In 93 constituencies, the election was held on an alternative basis. In 30 of them, the number of candidates on the ballot paper was between 5 and 9 people, while in two there were 11-12 candidates. 165 of 378 candidates people were members of different political parties.

Ballot papers on the proportional system of ballot included the following parties:

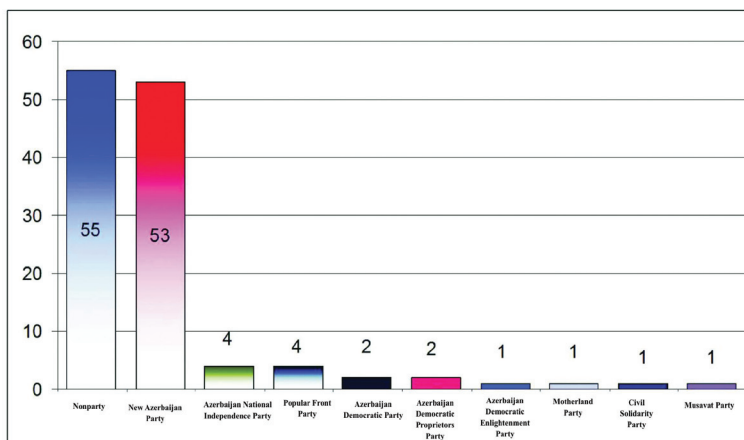
**Azerbaijan Democratic Independence Party**  
**Azerbaijan Democratic Proprietors Party**  
**Azerbaijan National Statehood Party**  
**Azerbaijan National Independence Party**  
**Alliance for Azerbaijan Party**  
**Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan**  
**The Motherland Party**  
**New Azerbaijan Party**



On 12 November 1995, the course of election in 4,591 polling stations was observed by 378 candidates, representatives of eight political parties, proxies, local and international observers from 20 countries, authoritative international organizations, including the UN, OSCE, EU, etc.

The first round of elections was considered valid in 91 of 99 constituencies, repeat voting was scheduled in 20, while in four a repeat election was set for 4 February 1996. However, after the repeat voting on 26 November 1995, the number of constituencies in which repeat elections was to be held reached 15. In the said constituencies, 47 candidates competed for parliamentary seats.

A total of 124 people were elected to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic of the first convocation (including 99 on single-mandate constituencies and 25 through party lists). *Diagram of the 12 November 1995 election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic.*



### **This was the breakdown of MPs by political parties:**

All parties participating in the election – 69 candidates, or 55.65 %

Including:

New Azerbaijan Party – 53

Azerbaijan National Independence Party – 4

Popular Front Party – 4

Azerbaijan Democratic Party – 2

Azerbaijan Democratic Proprietors Party – 2

Azerbaijan Democratic Enlightenment Party – 1

Motherland Party – 1

Civil Solidarity Party – 1

Musavat Party – 1

Nonparty – 55, or 44.35%

15 of elected MPs were women.

## **II. Presidential election of the Azerbaijan Republic, 11 October 1998**

According to Article 101.1 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic, the President is elected for a period of five years through the exercise of general, equal and direct suffrage by free, individual and secret ballot. According to Article 178.1 of the Electoral Code of the Azerbaijan Republic, the third Wednesday of October of the last year of the presidential office term is considered the election day.

On 9 June 1998, the Milli Mejlis adopted the Law "On Presidential Election in the Azerbaijan Republic." The 11 October 1998 presidential election was an important event in the country's public and political life.

The new law was based on the Azerbaijani Constitution and democratic principles. On 6 July, considering suggestions from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the U.S. National Democracy Institute for International Relations, different political parties and individuals, President of the Azerbaijan Republic Heydar Aliyev sent a letter to the Milli Mejlis urging the parliament to introduce certain changes to the law. The new draft envisaged amendments to 18 articles of the law and was adopted on 10 July.

The adoption and application of the law on the presidential election triggered electoral reforms in Azerbaijan. A new composition of the Central Electoral Commission was approved ahead of the presidential election. The Law "On the Central Electoral Commission of the Azerbaijan Republic," adopted by the Milli Mejlis on 15 May 1998 and approved by the President of Azerbaijan, significantly expanded the status of the Commission and specified the rights and responsibilities of its members.

In a meeting on 30 June, the Central Electoral Commission decided according to Part 1, Article 101, of the Azerbaijani Constitution and Part 3, Article 3, of the Law "On Presidential Election in the Azerbaijan Republic" that 11 October 1998 would be presidential election day in Azerbaijan.

One of the key stages of the election campaign, nomination of candidates, was well organized. According to the presidential election law, electoral associations and initiative groups nominating presidential hopefuls were to register with the CEC and 11 such entities applied to the Commission. According to Article 26 of the Law "On Presidential Election in the Azerbaijan Republic", the Motherland Party, the Communist Party, the National Independence Party, the Al-

liance for Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijan Social Prosperity Party, the Hope Party, the National Statehood Party, the Azerbaijan National Movement Party, the Independent Azerbaijan Party, the Single Communist Party and the New Azerbaijan Party stood in the election as electoral associations. On 4 August 1998, President H. Aliyev appealed to the Popular Front, Musavat and Liberal Parties through the media urging them not to boycott the election. The Central Electoral Commission registered the following individuals as candidates:

President Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev by CEC decision No 85/317 dated 12 August 1998, Chairman of the National Independence Party Etibar Salidar oglu Mammadov, Chairman of the Independent Azerbaijan Party Nizami Mammad oglu Suleymanov nominated by the Independent Azerbaijan Party, Chairman of the Social Prosperity Party Khanhuseyn Huseynaga oglu Kazimli nominated by the Social Prosperity Party, First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party's Central Committee Firudin Sharif oglu Hasanov nominated by the Azerbaijan Communist Party and Chairman of the Azerbaijan Association of Victims of Political Repression Ashraf Farzali oglu Mehdiyev nominated by the Azerbaijan Association of Victims of Political Repression.

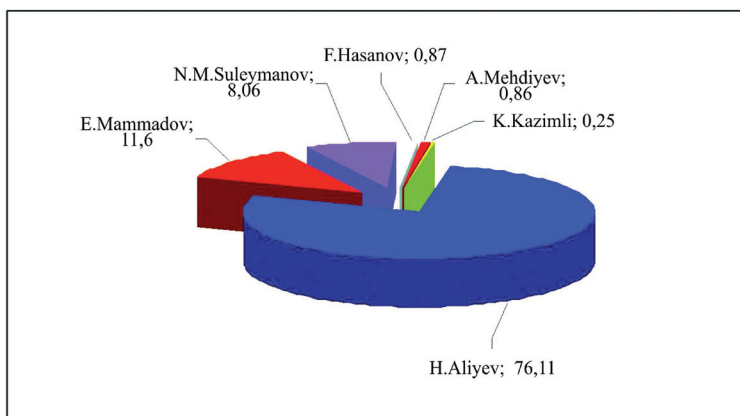
The Public Information Center was established under the Central Electoral Commission for the first time.

A meeting of the CEC on 15 October 1998 summed up results of the presidential election in the Azerbaijan Republic. It was indicated that of the 4,255,717 registered voters, only 3,358,465, or 79.18%, cast their ballots (according to the Law "On Presidential Election in the Azerbaijan Republic," if at least 25% of registered voters cast their ballot the election is considered valid). Of the voters, 2,556,059 (76.11%) voted for

H. Aliyev, 389,662 (11.6%) for E. Mammadov, 270,709 (8.06%) for N. Suleymanov, 29,244 (0.87%) for F. Hasanov, 28,809 (0.86%) for A. Mehdiyev and 8,254 (0.25%) for Kh. Kazimli.

Therefore, according to Part 2, Article 101, of the Azerbaijani Constitution, Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev was elected president of the Azerbaijan Republic by winning a majority of two thirds of the votes.

*Diagram of the 11 November 1998 presidential election in the Azerbaijan Republic*



### **III. Election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic of the Second Convocation, 5 November 2000**

Election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic of the Second Convocation was held in the autumn of 2000. The election was scheduled for 5 November. On 18 July, a 17-member Central Electoral Commission representing main political forces of the country was established by a

Presidential Decree and Decision of the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic. Commission members were divided in three categories: six represented the political party elected through the multi-mandate constituency and commanding a majority in the Milli Mejlis (New Azerbaijan Party), six represented political parties constituting minority in the Milli Mejlis and five nonparty members.

According to Clause 5, Article 12, of the Law "On the election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic," the CEC was to approve the plan and graphical drawings of single-mandate constituencies 110 days prior to the election, i.e. on 18 July 2000. However, the CEC could not start operating in the new composition due to some uncertainties in the initial stages of preparations. Despite repeated warnings made to six Commission members representing the National Independence and Popular Front Parties, the latter ignored Commission sessions, thus preventing a quorum.

A regular meeting of the CEC was scheduled for 19 July and all members were notified. However, the said six members did not attend and the Commission could not be formed again. Therefore, by flagrantly breaching Clause 1, Article 4, of the Law "On the Central Electoral Commission," the six CEC members endangered the possibility of the parliamentary election. Faced with a difficult situation, the remaining members of the Commission appealed to the President, Speaker of the Milli Mejlis and the Director of the OSCE ODIHR.

A statement by 11 members of the CEC issued on 19 July unequivocally said that such action by the mentioned people was the result of their parties' desire to disrupt the

parliamentary election and placed responsibility for possible implications on the ANIP and PFP. Members of the CEC asked the President again to find a way out of the situation, express his attitude to it and intervene.

According to a President Decree dated 22 July, an 18<sup>th</sup> member of the CEC, nominated by nonparty members of the Milli Mejlis, was appointed, and on 24 July the Commission held its first legitimate session with two thirds of its members present. The meeting elected Mazahir Mahammad oglu Panahov as Central Electoral Commission chairman. Also elected was the deputy chairman and secretary of the CEC. The six CEC members representing parliamentary minority parties continued to ignore Commission sessions.

A CEC statement of 24 July 2000 indicated that the Commission had held its meeting in a new composition with two thirds of its members present, elected its chairman, deputy chairman and secretary, discussed outstanding issues and passed decisions on them. Despite being notified in advance, the six CEC members nominated by parliamentary minority parties did not attend the session. The CEC indicated that they should realize their responsibility for the breach of law and to stop such behavior.

The formation of polling stations in conjunction with relevant executive authorities and local governments was completed by 16 September, i.e. 50 days before election day. To ensure the suffrage of Azerbaijan's refugee population, separate polling stations were established in their temporary settlements. With at least 30 days left for election day, i.e. by 6 October, polling stations and precinct electoral commissions were established at embassies of the Azerba-

ijan Republic in foreign countries. A total of 4,976 polling stations were set up. Extensive work was carried out to ensure high voter turnout, and compile and verify voter lists.

With one month left for the election, on 6 October, President Heydar Aliyev urged the Central Electoral Commission to discuss the proportional ballot system again. He said in his address that “the Central Electoral Commission of the Azerbaijan Republic has taken all the necessary measures regarding the parliamentary election due on 5 November in full accordance with the Laws ‘On the election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic’ and ‘On the Central Electoral Commission of the Azerbaijan Republic’. Of the lists of candidates submitted by 14 political parties and political blocs which applied to the Central Electoral Commission under the proportional ballot system, only five were registered. The CEC’s refusal to register the lists of other political parties was substantiated by objective evidence and did not cause any suspicion, which was confirmed by subsequent court rulings. However, I think that the alienation of political parties from the struggle for 25 proportional ballot seats has slightly limited the opportunities for all categories of the population to express their views freely.

The main political decision in the election must be made by voters who determine which political party deserves to be represented in parliament. Whether a party is represented in parliament depends on its social foundation and public support, not on any executive body. Only an election can serve as an objective criterion of a party’s place in society. Taking this into consideration, and without casting doubt on the decisions of the Central Electoral Commis-



sion, I am urging you to revise your decisions which limit the opportunities for political parties to stand in the parliamentary election on the proportional system of ballot.”

After discussing President Heydar Aliyev’s address at a meeting on 7-8 October, the CEC reached the conclusion that by allowing all political parties to compete for seats in the parliament it would contribute to a free and fair election in the country. The Commission indicated that the presidential address was in line with several provisions and spirit of the Constitution, adding that this democratic step would create equal conditions for all political parties and ensure a free and fair election in Azerbaijan.

Taking the above into consideration and governed by Clause 10, Article 2.2, of the Law “On the Central Electoral Commission”, the Commission, in addition to the already registered candidates from the New Azerbaijan Party, the Popular Front Party, the National Independence Party, the Civil Solidarity Party and the Communist Party, decided to register the lists of candidates from the Musavat Party, the Democratic Party, the People’s Democratic Party, the National Congress Party, the Alliance for Azerbaijan, the Democratic Azerbaijan World Party and the Liberal Party. The National Statehood, the National Movement and the Democratic Enlightenment parties decided to act as a bloc, and the CEC registered the first bloc of political parties, Democratic Azerbaijan. The registration of political parties was welcomed by the public and reverberated well outside Azerbaijan. A statement by the director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Ambassador Gerard Studman, from 10 October praised the CEC decision to register all political parties. “This decision

opens up the opportunity for all parties to stand in the 5 November parliamentary election.” On 7 July, registered political parties and blocs started submitting their lists of candidates to the Central Electoral Commission, while on 23 July the process of nomination of candidates by citizens, political parties and blocs on single-mandate constituencies began.

A total of 1,044 citizens applied to district electoral commissions for signature sheets and 823 submitted relevant notification documents. After all documents, including signature sheets, had been examined by district electoral commissions, 408 candidates were registered and their final list announced. Subsequently it reduced to 390 as some candidates withdrew their bids, while others were removed by the CEC.

One of the noteworthy features of the parliamentary election was the provision of all political parties with the opportunity to freely engage in political campaigning. The list of candidates running for parliament on single-mandate constituencies included representatives of 33 political parties. They accounted for 63.3% of all candidates registered under the proportional system, while nonparty candidates had 36.7%. Of the political parties operating in Azerbaijan in accordance with legislation 14 applied to the Central Electoral Commission for registration under the proportional system of ballot. Of these, nine failed to have their lists of candidates registered due to flagrant violations in the collection of signatures and provision of inaccurate information. Only five compiled all the documents correctly and were allowed to stand in the election. The people listed by political parties and blocs under

the proportional system of ballot competed for 25 seats in parliament.

Thus, the election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic of the Second Convocation was held on 5 November 2000.

**The returns were as follows:**

**Total number of voters on the electoral register in all constituencies – 4,212,915**

**Number of ballot papers issues to voters on election day – 3,000,198**

**Number of ballot papers considered valid – 2,897,864**

**88 people were elected to the Milli Mejlis through single-mandate constituencies.**

According to a protocol of the Central Electoral Commission dated 17 November 2000, the returns of the election on the proportional system of ballot and the break-down of votes cast for all political parties and blocs were as follows:

**New Azerbaijan Party – 1,809,801**

**Popular Front Party – 313,059**

**Civil Solidarity Party – 182,777**

**Azerbaijan Communist Party – 182,029**

Therefore, elected to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic under the proportional ballot were 16 members of the New Azerbaijan Party, 4 of the Popular Front Party, 3 of the Civil Solidarity Party and 2 of the Communist Party.

The Constitutional Court of Azerbaijan approved the results of the 5 November parliamentary election on multi-

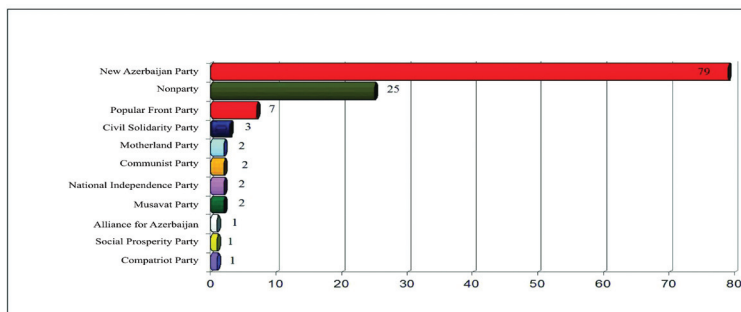
mandate constituencies. On the day of the repeat election, on 7 January, 163 international observers monitored the voting process at over 400 polling stations. Observers included 13 representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 5 of the OSCE PA and 5 of the Ago Group. During the repeat election, 37 of 76 standing candidates represented political parties. In total, 68.93% of voters cast their votes at 4,964 polling stations in 99 single-mandate constituencies in the 5 November 2000 parliamentary election and 7 January 2001 repeat election. 2,926,904 ballot papers were considered valid, 2,888,813 people voted for and 38,091 against listed candidates

**The break-down of elected members of the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic by political parties was as follows:**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>New Azerbaijan Party</b>                        | <b>– 79</b> |
| <b>Popular Front Party</b>                         | <b>– 7</b>  |
| <b>Civil Solidarity Party</b>                      | <b>– 3</b>  |
| <b>Motherland Party</b>                            | <b>– 2</b>  |
| <b>Communist Party</b>                             | <b>– 2</b>  |
| <b>National Independence Party</b>                 | <b>– 2</b>  |
| <b>Musavat Party</b>                               | <b>– 2</b>  |
| <b>Alliance for Azerbaijan</b>                     | <b>– 1</b>  |
| <b>Social Prosperity Party</b>                     | <b>– 1</b>  |
| <b>Compatriot Party</b>                            | <b>– 1</b>  |
| <b>25 people were not affiliated to any party.</b> |             |

Of the elected MP, 61 were nominated by political parties, 52 were self-nominated and 11 were nominated by initiative groups of voters.

*Diagram of the 5 November 2000 election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic*



#### **IV. Presidential election of the Azerbaijan Republic, 15 October 2003**

The next parliamentary election in Azerbaijan was scheduled for 15 October 2003. On 27 May 2003, the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic adopted the Law "On approving and enacting the Electoral Code of the Azerbaijan Republic." The Electoral Code of Azerbaijan dramatically revised the principles for forming the Central Electoral Commission and enabled different political parties to delegate their representatives to the Commission. The adoption of the Electoral Code was followed by four months of campaigning which started on 14 June. According to the Code requirements, an average representative number of voters permanently residing in the territorial districts of the republic were calculated, and 125 constituencies were established. The Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic established a 15-member Central Electoral Commission elected for a five-year period. The CEC included representatives of political parties constituting parliamentary majority and mino-

rity, those elected through single-mandate constituencies, those representing political parties that did not succeed in being elected to the Milli Mejlis through the multi-mandate constituency, those elected independently, those who stood in the election on the multi-mandate constituency, those not represented in the Milli Mejlis but representing four political parties that won the highest number of votes in the multi-mandate constituency.

With the exception of Khankandi constituency No 122, located on Armenian-occupied Azerbaijani territory, election commissions were set up in 124 constituencies and 5,146 precinct election commissions established in line with the Electoral Code.

Polling stations and precinct election commissions were also established in temporary settlements in different parts of the country to enable refugees and IDPs to exercise their suffrage. Besides eligible citizens and initiative groups, the process of nomination of candidates for presidency was joined by political parties and blocs. All key activities regarding organization of the election were carried out in line with a schedule. Fifteen parties active in the republic, including the New Azerbaijan Party, Musavat, the Popular Front Party, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, the National Independence Party, the Alliance for Azerbaijan, etc. applied to the CEC for registration of their nominees. Ten initiative groups also submitted notification documents to the Central Electoral Commission, while five presidential candidates were nominated by eligible citizens. After examining the signature sheets and other documents, the CEC found the documents of 19 out of 30 candidates legitimate and approved their candidacies. Of these, 13 were nominated by political parties and six by initiative groups.

Signature sheets and other accompanying documents of 18 candidates were submitted to the Central Electoral Commission. Sadman Huseynov, nominated by an initiative group of voters, died. The CEC studied the documents of the other 17 candidates and established that only 9 of them had managed to collect the required number of signatures in a due manner. Their candidacies were registered by the Central Electoral Commission. Three other potential candidates, taking advantage of a relevant provision in the Electoral Code, made a financial deposit with the CEC and their request was granted. Thus, a total of 12 candidates stood in the election. Subsequently, four of them withdrew their candidacies and the CEC passed a decision on canceling their registration. The CEC granted the request of incumbent President Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev to withdraw his candidacy in favor of candidate Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev.

As a result, the names of eight candidates were included in ballot papers: Prime Minister of Azerbaijan nominated by an initiative group of voters Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, Chairman of the Modern Musavat Party nominated by the said party Hafiz Alamdar oglu Hajiyev, candidate nominated by the National Unity initiative group Lala Shovkat Hajiyeva, candidate nominated by the Popular Front Party initiative group Gudrat Muzaffar oglu Hasanguliyev, Chairman of the Justice Party nominated by the said party Ilyas Abbas oglu Ismayilov, Chairman of the Musavat Party nominated by the said party Isa Yunis oglu Gambar, Chairman of the Azerbaijan National Independence Party nominated by the said party Etibar Salidar oglu Mammadov and Chairman of the Civil Solidarity Party nominated by the said party Sabir Khudu oglu Rustamkhanli. Most candidates represented the opposition, which was evidence of a fair and democratic election environment in the country enabling voters to make a free choice.

On 16 August 2003, i.e. 60 days before election day, registered candidates started their campaigning activities. Invitations were sent to 31 countries and seven international organizations to send their observers. Authorized representatives of international organizations in Azerbaijan were also officially invited to monitor the poll. A total of 1,000 international observers came to Azerbaijan in the run-up to the election.

The election marathon which lasted over four months culminated on 15 October 2003. The protocols compiled by precinct election commissions were processed by district election commissions and submitted to the Central Electoral Commission within 48 hours. The CEC, in a meeting on 20 October, discussed the election results. The results showed that of 4,442,338 registered voters 3,164,348 people, or 71.23%, took part in the voting and 2,421,061 votes were found valid. Of these, 1,860,346, or 77%, voted for candidate Ilham Heydar oğlu Aliyev, who beat all his opponents by a great difference. Isa Gambar received 338,145 (13.967%) of votes, Hajiyeva Lala Shovkat 87,523 (3.615%), Mammadov Etibar 70,638 (2.918%), Ismayilov Ilyas 24,098 (0.995%), Rustamkhanli Sabir 19,973 (0.825%), Hasanguliyev Gudrat 12,071 (0.499%), Hajiyev Hafiz 8,267 (0.341%).

After summing up election protocols of district election commissions, the CEC passed a decision to approve the protocol on the results of election in the republic. The protocol was signed by 12 out of 15 members of the Central Electoral Commission, including three representatives of opposition parties: the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, the Azerbaijan Popular Front Party and the Azerbaijan Communist Party.

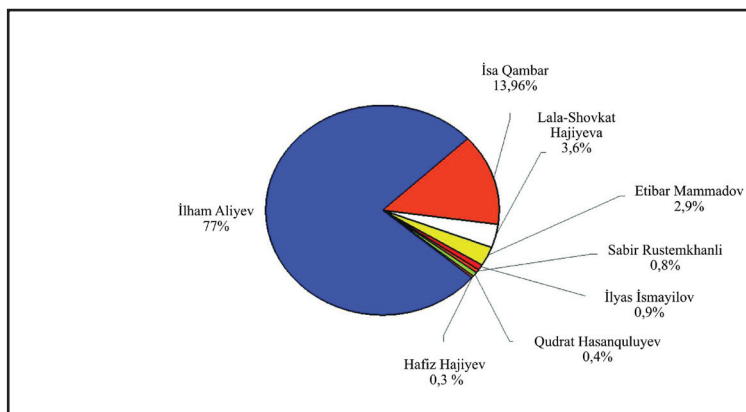
According to Article 102 of the Azerbaijani Constitution and Article 203.1 of the Electoral Code of the Azerbaijan



Republic, the said protocol, the CEC decision and documents accompanying it were sent to the Constitutional Court for approval and announcement. On 28 October 2003, the Constitutional Court confirmed the election results and announced Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev President of the Azerbaijan Republic.

On 31 October, Mr. Ilham Aliyev was sworn into office in a ceremony at the Republic Palace.

*Diagram of the 15 October 2003 presidential election in the Azerbaijan Republic*



## V. Election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic of the Third Convocation, 6 November 2005

A regular election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic was held in November 2005. Resolutions signed by President Ilham Aliyev on 11 May and 25 October 2005 had a strong impact on electoral practices. They outlined

ways of improving electoral practices and eliminating the factors impeding free and fair elections, and set specific tasks before relevant executive agencies and institutions, including the Central Electoral Commission, regarding democratization of the pre-election environment.

According to Articles 3.5 and 3.6 of the Law "On the Central Electoral Commission" dated 27 May 2003, the CEC issued a decision dated 21 July 2005 to register the Reform bloc established by the Democratic Azerbaijan World Party, the Azerbaijan Free Republicans Party, the Azerbaijan Democratic Enlightenment Party and the Azerbaijan Republicans Party; the Freedom bloc established by the Musavat Party, the Azerbaijan Popular Front Party and the Azerbaijan Democratic Party; the New Policy bloc established by the Azerbaijan National Independence Party, the Azerbaijan Social Democratic Party and the Azerbaijan National Movement Party; a decision dated 24 July 2005 to register the Azerbaijani Forces bloc established by the Unity and National Unity parties; the Democratic Azerbaijan bloc established by the Justice Party, the United Azerbaijan National Unity Party and the Civil Solidarity Party; the election bloc For Azerbaijan established by the Azerbaijan People's Democratic Party and the United Azerbaijan Party; a decision dated 27 July 2005 to register the Azerbaijan Progress Alliance established by the Gorgud Party, the Azerbaijan Revival and Progress Party; a decision dated 15 August 2005 to register the Unity bloc established by the Azerbaijan Fighters Party and the Azerbaijan National Statehood Party.

According to the Electoral Code of the Azerbaijan Republic, campaigning started on 7 September 2005 and stopped at 08.00 on 5 November, i.e. 24 hours before the election. Lots were cast at a CEC meeting to determine the

breakdown of free air-time of registered entities and the resulting schedule was approved.

On Election Day, 6 November 2005, voting was conducted at 125 constituencies. By decisions of district election commissions, the elections at 37 polling stations were considered invalid. Unlike previous elections, this time Milli Mejlis members were elected only on the first-past-the-post system. The election at Khankandi constituency No 122 for Nagorno-Karabakh was held for the first time.

On 23 November, the Central Electoral Commission sent its final election protocol, of district election commissions and other accompanying documents regarding the 6 November election to the Milli Mejlis to the Constitutional Court of the Azerbaijan Republic for verification and approval. Election protocols of six constituencies were not approved as they were in breach of the Electoral Code requirements. MPs were elected on 115 constituencies.

Lala Shovkat Hajiyeva, who was elected a member of the Milli Mejlis in the 6 November 2005 election through the Yasamal district constituency No 17 was, in accordance with Clause 5, Part I, Article 89 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic, deprived of her deputy's mandate by Decision 2/3 of the CEC dated 19 January 2006.

According to the protocols of district election commission compiled after repeat election, 10 new MPs were elected. Of 124 people elected to the Milli Mejlis nine were nominated by initiative groups of voters, 50 by political parties and 59 were self-nominated.

The break-down of members of the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic of the Third Convocation elected in the

6 November 2005 election and 13 May 2006 repeat election by political parties was as follows:

**New Azerbaijan Party – 61**

**Musavat Party – 5**

**Motherland Party – 2**

**Civil Solidarity Party – 2**

**Azerbaijan Democratic Reforms Party – 1**

**Azerbaijan Popular Front Party – 1**

**Azerbaijan Social Prosperity Party – 1**

**Great Salvation Party – 1**

**United Azerbaijan Popular Front Party – 1**

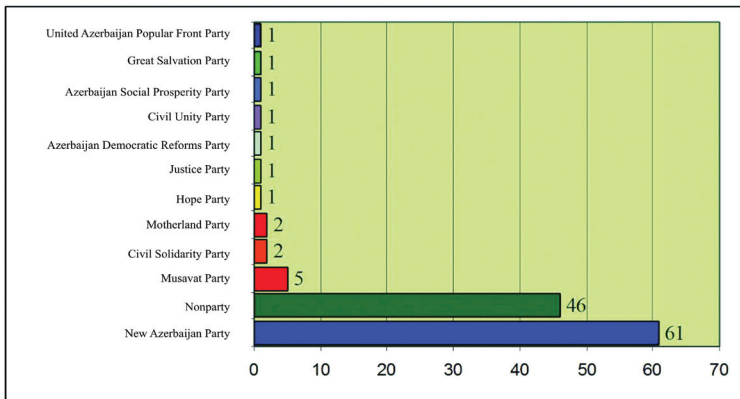
**Justice Party – 1**

**Hope Party – 1**

**Civil Unity Party – 1**

**46 nonparty deputies were elected to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic of the Third Convocation.**

*Diagram of the 6 November 2005 election to the Milli Mejlis of the Azerbaijan Republic*



## **VI. Presidential election of the Azerbaijan Republic, 15 October 2008**

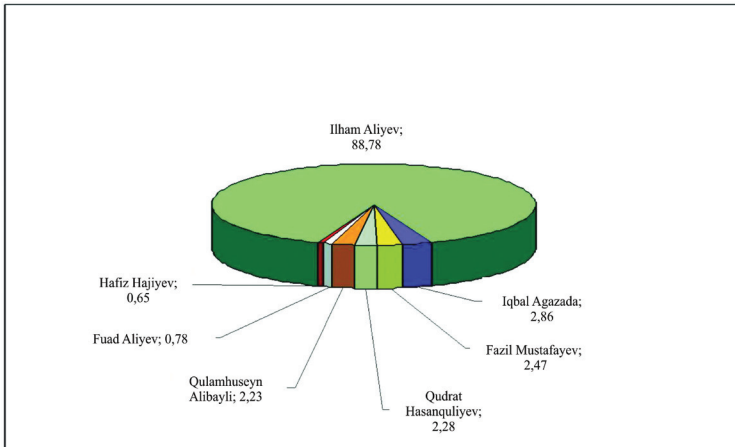
In the run-up to the 15 October 2008 presidential election, the Electoral Code was further updated in cooperation with the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Issues pertaining to the CEC in the National Plan of Action on the protection of human rights in the Azerbaijan Republic, signed by the President on 28 December 2006, were extensively discussed at a Commission meeting.

In a meeting on 28 July 2008, the CEC decided to schedule presidential election in the Azerbaijan Republic for 15 October 2008. The CEC received 17 applications from potential candidates. Of these, 14 were made by citizens, one by an initiative group and six by political parties.

The candidacy of Ilham Heydar oğlu Aliyev was registered by decision No 9/33 of the CEC on 7 August 2008. In line with applicable legislation, the following candidates were registered by CEC decisions on the following dates: Chairman of the Hope Party, MP Iqbal Fehrüz oğlu Ağazadə nominated by the said party on 30 August 2008; Chairman of the Great Salvation Party MP Fəzıl Gəzənfər oğlu Mustafayev nominated by the said party and Chairman of the Modern Musavat Party Hafiz Aləmdar oğlu Hacıyev nominated by the said party on 9 September; Chairman of the United Popular Front Party, MP Güdrat Muzaffar oğlu Həsənguliyev nominated by the said party on 11 September; self-nominated Gulamhüseyn Surkhay oğlu Alibaylı and Chairman of the Azerbaijan Liberal Democratic Party Fuad Ağası oğlu Aliyev nominated by the said party on 13 September.



According to the election law, the CEC provided candidates with the opportunity to use the state-owned newspapers Azerbaijan, Xalg gazetı, Respublika and Bakinskiy Rabochiy free-of-charge. Besides, the said newspapers allocated at least 10% of their weekly publications to registered





candidates. According to Article 75.2 of the Electoral Code, election campaigning commenced 28 before the election, i.e. on 17 September 2008, while on 19 September the CEC released the list of officially registered candidates for presidency in the 15 October 2008 presidential election:

- 1. Aliyev Ilham Heydar oglu**
- 2. Agazada Igbal Fehruz oglu**
- 3. Mustafayev Fazil Gazanfar oglu**
- 4. Hajiyev Hafiz Alamdar oglu**
- 5. Hasanguliyev Gudrat Muzaffar oglu**
- 6. Alibayli Gulamhuseyn Surkhay oglu**
- 7. Aliyev Fuad Agasi oglu**

On 8 October, in an effort to ensure greater transparency of the election, the Central Electoral Commission approved the "Regulations on the installation and use of web-cameras at polling stations" and decided to install them at 500 polling stations throughout the country. The election was also monitored by around 50,000 observers. A total of 1,250 international observers from 44 organizations representing around 60 countries monitored the polls. Of a total of 4,927,561 voters included on voter registers in 5,359 polling stations, 75.12% took part in the election. The CEC finalized the presidential election on 19 October 2008 and submitted the results to the Constitutional Court of the Azerbaijan Republic for approval. 88.78% of all valid votes in the presidential election were cast for Aliyev Ilham Heydar oğlu, 2.86% for Agazada Igbal Fehrüz oğlu, 2.47% for Mustafayev Fazil Gazanfar oğlu, 2.28% for Hasanguliyev Gudrat Muzaffar oğlu, 2.23% for Alibayli Gulamhuseyn Surkhay oğlu, 0.78% for Aliyev Fuad Agasi oğlu and 0.65% for Hajiyev Hafiz Alamdar oğlu.



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## 5. ELECTION - 2010. RESOURCES AND TACTICS OF PRO-OPPOSITION PARTIES

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The results of a sociological survey “On political parties in Azerbaijan – 2010: situation in the run-up to the parliamentary election and plans,” conducted by the Research Council independent association among leaders and activists of political parties (See: last section) shows that the total number of members of 25 political parties is 1,243,429, or about 20% of the electorate. Therefore, a victory or defeat in the election is not fortuitous and is part of a global pattern of civilized struggle among political parties. A defeat should not, therefore, be seen as an end of a party but rather as an opportunity to renew and move forward. There are numerous examples in world history when political parties managed to ascend to power in the conditions of tough political regimes. The only fundamental power capable of making this possible is public support and so-



cial foundation. The fact that opposition parties have often blamed outside factors, not themselves, for their failures and passiveness has become a typical feature lately.

To see that this is really the case, one can examine opposition parties' election tactics and conduct:

1. *Before election;*
2. *During election;*
3. *After election.*

Almost all forms of reaction to election results existing in the world can be observed:

1. *Leaving the scene by declaring a boycott and showing passive resistance;*
2. *Active resistance and confrontation;*
3. *Loyal position, having to accept the status-quo.*

Usually in a pre-election period, parties become incredibly active. They issue statements, make initiatives, put forward demands and provide "arguments" for three pre-

vious defeats. The essence of most statements and initiatives is unification. Parties have several common features in their pre-election tactics. The ruling, pro-government, opposition, marginal and almost nonexistent parties can be grouped into:

- *those supporting unity and blocs;*
- *those opposed to unity and not joining any blocs.*

This classification has certain typical features. Pro-government parties are opposed to blocs, while most opposition ones (except for the Hope, ALDP and ASDP parties) consider this a priority. Some of those interested in establishing blocs think this is the opportunity of bolstering their authority, others seek to extend their presence in the political firmament.

The paradox is that although opposition parties in Azerbaijan mix all tactics, they can't achieve anything. Instead of acknowledging defeat in a civilized manner, the opposition always claims alleged irregularities in the election. This has already become a tendency. From this standpoint, an opinion by Yunis Oguz, who took part in the 2005 parliamentary election, is noteworthy: "Unfortunately, those losing elections in Azerbaijan immediately point to irregularities and don't want to admit their own mistakes. For instance, well-known political leader Isa Gambar was beaten by a low-key opponent in the 2005 parliamentary election, but he didn't have a single falsified protocol to dispute his defeat" ([az.apa.az/news.php](http://az.apa.az/news.php)).

It is also worth pointing to one positive aspect – this tactic does not enjoy any public support, which urges the opposition to take a critical view of itself and to consider

revising its activities dramatically. We can refer to some revelations by certain party leaders, a program article by the Hope Party leader called "Democratic opening of the opposition", etc.

The chairman of the Civil Development Party and co-founder of the Freedom bloc, Ali Aliyev, says this about the activities and role of parties in a new environment: "Sooner or later, it will be necessary to develop party system on Azerbaijan. The experience of recent years shows that any artificial interventions in the political sphere, including artificial establishment of parties, are doomed to fail. Such parties and politicians are not supported by society, which prevents normal formation of the country's political system. This may be possible at a transitional phase of development. But the traditional animosity between opposition leaders, the methods of political struggle they use do nothing to strengthen our country from within and expose Azerbaijan to external threats. This cannot last forever. A durable and sustainable state must have a developed political system and political institutions. A changed approach to the formation of political parties, a criterion of any political system, weakens the opposition's dependence on foreign states and organizations. Some political organizations look financially less secure than those receiving grants and other bonuses from the West. Without questioning the intellect and skills of those under the influence of foreign forces, we have to agree that the financial and material assistance they receive from outside is highly important for them.

Our approach to prevent such political panorama, is to revise the process of party formation (formation of the political system and the opposition). The approach we propose

does not envisage rejection of the political system tried by many years and ordeals. In fact, it envisages upgrading the existing system. Of course, any abrupt movement may disturb the balance. Precise and carefully measured steps will supply the existing political system with missing elements, add new touches to it and legitimize it" (2010 parliamentary election in Azerbaijan: more democratic, more transparent. Materials of International Conference, 16 April 2010, Baku – 2010).

The interview of the chairman of the Azerbaijan Liberal Party (ALP), Avaz Temirkhan, with the International News Agency over the 2009 local government election was quite noteworthy. Prior to the election he had said that the ALP would nominate 1510 candidates for 524 local government positions. When asked after the election why the liberals remained silent in the polls, the party's founder and chairperson of the National Unity Movement, Lala Shovkat, said: "I have repeatedly indicated that we made too many mistakes. We must admit that. Most importantly, the opposition has failed to unite. I know the situation from within and think it is our ambitions that prevent us from uniting. I wish the opposition could finally understand the seriousness of the situation and stand in the election together. Only then can we achieve something." She added that if the opposition creates several blocs again, there won't be any result ([www.mia.az](http://www.mia.az)).

Another contributor to the opposition's decline in Azerbaijan is the lack of a leader and the opposition's inability to institutionalize. The tendency observed in recent years when chairmen of parties resign from their positions but establish posts of party leaders instead is rather paradoxical.

cal. There are numerous media reports about that.

According to the director of Turan news agency, Mehman Aliyev, in democratic countries the main responsibility rests on the shoulders of leaders and requires great knowledge, skill and talent. "The difference from the previous post of chairman consists in the ability to intervene in exceptional cases. This process creates conditions for younger politicians to display their skill. However, leaders have largely retained their control functions and can intervene in any situation" (P. Sadayoglu, <http://almaqezeti.com>).

Political expert Zafar Guliyev says that this is the case not only in Azerbaijan. According to him, political organizations of other countries use similar mechanisms. "In situations when political organizations split, leaders prefer to step aside and become more of a banner for the party. They only do promotion work to stand in the next election. For the public it doesn't matter what their exact role is. The elimination of the proportional system of ballot has dealt a severe blow to parties. Now leaders prefer to act more on their own... Since the post of a leader seems to be the only one unaffected by crises, politicians aspire to take it. This post also serves to prolong their political careers. If this tendency persists, many parties and their leaders will soon disappear. The political circle in Azerbaijan is gradually narrowing" (P. Sadayoglu, <http://almaqezeti.com/index.php?mod=view&id=1348>).

Those approaching the issue from another angle believe that it is evidence of growing democracy within parties and a means of preventing leaders from staying in their posts for too long. What ambitions, mottos and demands are the opposition putting forward in the 2010 parliamentary

election? Can we see anything besides demands and statements? Can we see in-depth analysis of previous failures? As an example, we can review the mentioned article by the chairman of the Hope Party, Igbal Agazada. We haven't come across any opposition reaction to the article yet.

The opposition's most frequent demand regarding the election is to restore of the proportional ballot. Headlines such as "Nationwide referendum must be held", "Opposition puts forward new demand before authorities,"and "Restoration of the proportional ballot!" can be found in many pro-opposition media.

If we examine political science, we can see prominent proponents of the first-past-the-post system (Duverrier, Bordeaux, etc.) saying that it leads to the evolution of a multi-party system, emergence of independent parties, disappearance of the poor in competition. Under this system voters can choose a party with real capabilities. The proportional system increases the chances of a split within large parties, casts a shadow on the intentions of truly capable and skilled leaders who are suspected of creating a party only for the sake of election. Spanish Senator Luis Fraga, while analyzing election models in Western Europe, speaks about the proportional model. "The political parties deciding who should and who should not stay on their list have a lot of power. As a result, instead of democracy there is a threat of partocracy. If the most important institution of a parliamentary democracy (parties) is weak, this is especially the case. By concentrating too much power, political parties undermine the institutional structure. Those voting for a party, not a particular candidate, don't always understand what they are voting for. Therefore, the gap between

voters and their representatives in the parliament expands. Eventually, people have second thoughts about the soundness and integrity of these institutions. We all know that responsibility and accountability are the most important issues in democracy. This must always be remembered.”

The prospects for a fourth unification of the opposition are rather dim. This time, however, it is a life-or-death issue for the opposition, perhaps its last opportunity. The mentioned article by Igbal Agazada says in this regard:

“The biggest problem of the Azerbaijani opposition is the lack of a unity model. There have been many attempts to unite, but they all have failed. Mutual accusations have further distanced opposition parties from each other. As a result, no contribution has been made to building a democratic society. Besides, people’s expectations of the opposition proved correct. Therefore, the 2010 election is highly important. Calls for unification are being made again. Some organizations are revealing their plans over the parliamentary election. Although there is only a year left for the election, there is no palpable unity, the preparatory stage is very poor. I regret to say that attempts are being made again to find ways towards success through traditional unity. No attention is being paid to detail. In short, traditional models of 2003 and 2005 may change some party names in parliament but they can’t change the number of MPs or their quality. If so, what is the point in trying to go back to the same model?!”([www.mediforum.az](http://www.mediforum.az)).

The sharpest reaction to unification slogans expressed so far belongs to Isa Gambar. While speaking about forms of unification, he said: “One of our colleagues says all democratic forces of the opposition should unite. A wonderful



slogan, isn't it? But we all know that 'all opposition' is a broad concept. Is it possible for all opposition to unite? If some of these forces are governed by Moscow, others by Tehran and yet others by the incumbent authorities, how can they unite? Unable to take a principled stance and governed by different forces, these small parties can actually create new problems for truly democratic forces at such an important time and under such difficult circumstances. There are certain parties in parliament which I don't even consider opposition" ([www.yenimusavat.com](http://www.yenimusavat.com)).

Speaking on the subject of unification of opposition parties, the co-chairman of the Azerbaijan Social Democratic Party (ASDP), Araz Alizada, has told Trend that the bloc to be established by leftist parties has no future. The attitude of the Communist Party is also quite interesting. It has announced plans to stand in the parliamentary election but has no intention to join any blocs. The chairman of its Central Committee, R. Gurbanov, said: "Opposition parties' attempts to join forces before elections have proved futile. Our party has not received any suggestions regarding that, but even if we do we won't accept them. We have participated in all elections to date, and we will again. We will compete for as many seats as possible. We have a good potential in the center and districts" ([az.trend.az/news/politics/movements/823184.html](http://az.trend.az/news/politics/movements/823184.html)).

The Union for Democracy, which includes several opposition parties, has prepared a list of its candidates, the chairman of the Freedom Party, Ahmad Oruj, has told Trend. According to him, the union intends to nominate candidates in all constituencies. "We have established the Central Election Headquarters and are about to complete initial lists

of candidates". The semblance of "activity" created by the Freedom Party is only explained by the pre-election stage. The fact that the party has no-one other than its chairman is confirmed by a story on Radio Liberty's web-site head-lined Personnel Party. In fact, this situation is characteristic of all marginal parties existing in Azerbaijan.

In the run-up to the election it seems interesting what the main rival of the ruling party, i.e. the key opposition force is. Existing views about this may change in this election. For instance, there is an increasing number of stories suggesting that "the Hope Party may become Azerbaijan's key opposition force". Its chairman, MP Igbal Agazada, says: "Since I finished second in the 2008 presidential election, it is our party that is the key opposition force now".

According to Agazada, since the opposition is mainly struggling for survival today, the classification and roles of parties are slightly obscure. "However, there are 3-4 parties in Azerbaijan capable of affecting public and political processes. One of them is ours".

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## 6. ATTITUDES (OPINIONS AND FEEDBACK) TOWARDS THE ADOPTION OF A NEW LAW ON PARTIES AND FINANCING OF PARTIES BY THE STATE

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The emergence of a different political situation at a new stage in Azerbaijan's development, the activities and role of parties in society, relations between the state and parties necessitate the adoption of a new law meeting national and international requirements. Most of the polled representatives of parties support the idea of re-registering all political parties in order to improve the political system and to establish their attitude to issues determined by the state. Most support the idea of adopting a new law on parties, expanding the authority of the parliament, increasing the number of MPs and conducting political reforms.

Interestingly, while the opposition was categorically opposed to the adoption of a new law before the issue of state funding of parties emerged, the financing issue is now expected to become part of the new law and the number of supporters has started to increase. This is confirmed by some media publications regarding the adoption of a new law. According to a Musavat representative, if the new law tightens conditions for registration and financing of political parties, all segments of civil society will be affected. The opposition politician believes that this will also take a toll on NGOs, public associations, media outlets, and other democratic institutions, and remarks that it is necessary to prevent such from happening.

According to the current law, a party can be founded by 1,000 people. However, it is not known what criteria the figure is based on. Considering the fact that Azerbaijan has a population of over 9 million people and around 5 million voters, the number of people required for registration of a party may increase. It should at least constitute 0.1% of all voters, i.e. a political party must gather at least 5,000 signatures to be registered. It would be desirable if the law contained a provision whereby parties would be required to have branch offices in at least half of the country's districts and cities to be considered a political organization of national proportions (this experience does exist in other countries).

What role can a new law on parties play in their development? Will it become an element of democracy? Will it trigger any improvement among parties? Of course, it depends on how we approach the question. It is not a process of major parties devouring numerous small ones. Major parties can emerge through unifications and coalitions in the family of parties (rightist, leftist, nationalist, centrist), not necessarily by the adoption of a new law. Coalitions may certainly lead to small and marginal parties being overshadowed by large ones. These processes take place among parties as ideologically close organizations get together and start competing for leadership in a "new family".

Small parties aren't capable of competing with large ones and are therefore faced with the choice: either to leave the electoral and political scene or to join forces with ideologically closer parties. If the new law is not adopted, Azerbaijan's small parties will have to lead a marginal life

forever. The new law will provide them with the choice: either to give up politics or to unite with larger parties. Since marginalization trends are very typical of Azerbaijan's political scene, it would be interesting to find out the scientific definition of "a marginal party."

What are the criteria making a party marginal? If a party is systematically unable to receive votes in the elections or indeed to secure some social support to be registered, it is a marginal party. From this standpoint, most of Azerbaijan's political parties can be considered marginal.

The new law on parties may serve as an institutionalization initiative from "above" for them. As a result, a major nationwide party may emerge. The process of institutionalization of parties in the country started "from the bottom". The new law may become important support, means and factor in the process of party construction. Although there are 67 registered political parties in the US, there is a bipartisan system in America. In Europe, political forces operate around two or three political parties or streams. To turn into a strong political force, parties unite into 3-4 civil and democratic organizations, blocs and coalitions, thus integrating into the political system.

As has been said, the need for forming a new model party system in the country caused a more heated political debate after President Ilham Aliyev came to power. How are political parties going to be financed? What are the principles for doing this? How much money needs to be allocated for this purpose? These questions still cause a lot of debate today.

The views expressed in the letter help us sum up the

positions of both opposition and government representatives on changes and amendments to the law on political parties adopted in 1992, and to see how diverse these views are. They also show that there are specific answers already.

Most people believe that popular support and performance in elections are the principles in many countries of the world for deciding how much money a political party is going to get from the state budget. As is clear, the financing of political parties can be important for ensuring transparency in their activities and for reducing their dependence on various groups. Of course, for an organization to become a political party, funding cannot be seen as a remedy for all ills.

Which political parties shall be financed? Should funding be allocated before or after inactive parties are closed down? Which parties should get the money: those registered in accordance with the new law, or all of them? What are the basic reasons for closing down a party? One can say that issues like these are about to be resolved in keeping with international experience, law and consensus.

In many countries of the world, political parties receive funding from the state budget. This is important for the development of a party, for its active participation in society and to prevent its financial dependence on outside forces. But there is no universal mechanism for funding political parties from the state budget. Participation in elections, particularly in parliamentary elections, and the percentage of votes gained in elections are seen as the basis for this. In countries with the proportional representation system

of elections to parliament, it is easier to allocate funding to political parties from the state budget. In those countries, it is the parties represented in parliament which receive the funding.

Against the backdrop of Azerbaijan's economic growth, political parties can be funded from the state budget today. In the past two years, the government has allocated funds to NGOs (1.5 million manats in 2008 and 2.8 million manats in 2009) and media organizations (1 million manats in 2009). Discussions are going on whether to finance political parties as well.

The election system in Azerbaijan and the funding of political parties from the state budget were discussed in a two-day workshop (Towards Transparency in Politics: The Election System in Azerbaijan and Financing of Political Parties) organized by the OSCE in Baku in 2006. Election systems, the role of finance in politics, the positive experience of political financing and the funding of political parties in Azerbaijan were the main issues on the agenda of the workshop. The main debates centered on the election system. Pro-government parties supported the first-past-the-post system, but opposition parties defended the proportional representation system or a mixture of the two systems.

It is important to consider election results while allocating funding to political parties from the state budget. But, there is still no common view on whether it should be presidential, parliamentary or local elections.

Azerbaijan uses the first-past-the-post system of elections to parliament. Therefore, state funding can be allocated to the political parties that clear the 3 percent thresh-

old in either presidential or parliamentary elections (in the proportional representation system, political parties have to clear a 3-5 percent threshold to get into parliament).

One can shed light on the most disputed problems by dividing the views on state funding to political parties into groups (such as the groups of views held by government agencies, representatives of the government and the opposition) and by comparing those views. Despite some disagreements, most of the people in the opposition believe that there is no need for re-registration of political parties. They say that the authorities intend to create new obstacles for the operation of some parties by raising the issue of re-registration.

If all these are approved, the new law on political parties is certain to cause disagreement between the authorities and the opposition. Some problems also may arise with re-registration. According to media reports, Fazil Gazanfaroglu, chairman of the Great Salvation Party, has drawn up a draft law and submitted it to parliament. The draft is made up of two parts. According to the first part, the political parties which garnered some votes in the 2005 parliamentary election but failed to make it into parliament will be allocated 15,000 manats a month by 2010. The parties which participated in the election and gained 100,000 votes in total could also receive funding.

The second part of the draft deals with the funding of the parties that will be represented in parliament after the 2010 election. According to the draft, if a party fails to participate in parliamentary and local elections twice, its registration will be revoked.



A proposal called “Zero Option” on the financing of political parties has also come from the opposition. Musavat and the other opposition parties represented in parliament have suggested that representation in parliament should be taken as the basis for allocating money to political parties from the state budget. However, the Popular Front of Azerbaijan Party and its allies, which boycotted the election, say that the base of social support is a more important factor to look at. Circles close to Musavat have come up with a new proposal on this issue. Musavat, which has five MPs, says that the funding should be fixed at 1 manat per voter.

Many experts believe that several factors should be taken into account in the financing of political parties from the state budget. First, the multi-party system is something new for Azerbaijan. It has not yet developed fully. Therefore, the state should not discriminate against any political party. It has to support all of them. Second, there are some parties that have always defended national and state interests, and have never received any funding from foreign donors. Therefore, they have never participated in any anti-Azerbaijani project. Organizations like these should be taken into account so that they could demonstrate their potential.

Third, most of the opposition parties in Azerbaijan are claiming that “no normal election has been held” in the country to date. The Musavat party did not recognize the outcome of the elections in 1995, 2000 and 2003. The Popular Front of Azerbaijan Party and its allies did not recognize the results of the parliamentary election held in 2005. Therefore, the Popular Front of Azerbaijan won seats

in parliament after the elections in 1995 and 2000, and Musavat received seats after the election in 2005.

Given all of this, there is only one option which everybody can agree upon. This is called the "Zero Option", according to which, all of the 45 registered parties should receive equal funding from the state budget. This situation should continue until the parliamentary election in 2010. Every party will receive state funding depending on the outcome of the election. The parties which fail to make it into parliament will receive no money from the state budget. Those who propose the Zero Option call it a fair option. It means that, until the release of the outcome of the parliamentary election in 2010, the funding to be allocated to political parties from the state should be divided evenly among the registered parties. This money should be spent on the strengthening and organization of political parties. It will also help them demonstrate their potential. After the election, the parties should be classified according to the result of the vote. The parties which clear the threshold should get money from the state budget. Those which fail to clear the threshold will receive no money from the budget. Most of the parties share the view that it is important to adopt a new law on political parties before the allocation of funding from the budget.

The National Independence Party of Azerbaijan says it is important to take into account the following principles while allocating funding to political parties from the state budget: participation in elections; international relations; impact on people (on their views); possession of structures (branches) in the regions; representation in municipalities and parliament. Views on the approximate amount of



money to be allocated from the state budget are also interesting. Political parties have commented on reports that 6 million manats will be allocated to parties from the state budget in 2009. The information below has been taken from the [www.cssn.gov.az](http://www.cssn.gov.az) website.



Hafiz Hajiyev, chairman of the Modern Musavat Party, said: "There is a serious need for money to ensure the operation of regional branches of parties. At least 700,000 to 800,000 manats are needed to finance the regional branches and to ensure that they participate in political developments more actively. The need for money grows during election years."



Fazil Gazanfaroglu, chairman of the Great Salvation Party, says that 20,000 to 25,000 manats of state funding would be enough to ensure comprehensive operation of the party in a month. A lot also depends on the form of the financial aid.



Igbal Agazada, head of the Hope Party, also says that 20,000 to 25,000 manats a month are important for the normal functioning of any party. He believes that political parties running

in elections should receive even more funding. In any case, it is important that the mechanism of financing political parties from the state budget serves as an important material and economic stimulus for the development of party building in Azerbaijan into a qualitatively higher stage.

Apart from that, the closure of politically inactive parties under the new law is an issue that needs to be resolved in keeping with international practice. The current law does not envisage revoking the registration of political parties that are not functioning. Azerbaijan has not had such a case. Revoking the registration of a non-functioning political party is a globally accepted norm. Even in the leading countries of Europe, if a political party does not function for over two years, it is closed down. A legal assessment of the real situation of a number of political parties in Azerbaijan may reveal all legal conditions for their closure.

Revoking the registration of political parties that do not participate in elections is in law in European countries. This is said to be connected with the state support for political parties. Political parties bear public responsibility, as they receive funding from the state.

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## 7. POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE RUN-UP TO THE 2010 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, FORECASTS

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1. The party system that has taken shape in Azerbaijan after the regaining of independence has vacillated between two extremes (like a pendulum). The one party system of the Soviet period was replaced by an extreme multi-party system in the 1990s. With the establishment of a model of governance by a ruling party over the past electoral stages, the process has stabilized between the two extremes, and efforts to establish parties have continued intensively. The outline of the party system started to emerge in the course of these developments.

2. In the 1990s, the party system in Azerbaijan was through a natural and objective process called "Growth Disease." The growth in numbers was the main trend at the time, and still continues to be the case. The growth in numbers has also evolved into a "chronic disease." This is a very difficult situation, hampering the quality of performance of parties in political life. It can be resolved by joint efforts of the parties themselves, the state and society.

3. After regaining independence, Azerbaijan has held presidential and parliamentary elections that met democratic standards. In short, a new democratic election system was established with the first parliamentary election (held in 1995). In the second stage (in 2000), the transformation of the election system became more intense and the ruling party achieved national consolidation (*consolidation* is conditional (minimum) here. It means that there is no force

in the country that is capable of changing the government without the consent of other actors. More specifically, this shows that a relative balance has been achieved as a result of the recognition of formal democratic institutions by the actors. Most importantly, it is the electoral institution). An analysis of interviews conducted with party leaders and functionaries shows that the political opposition, which is an important institution of democracy, is in serious decline in Azerbaijan.

**There are several reasons for that:**

- Opposition parties fail to hold dialogues and establish blocs and unions based on the principles of political culture and civil struggle;
- A lack of interest among the electorate in participation in political parties;
- The excessive number of political parties;
- The programs and ideology of the political parties appear to be different. But in fact, they are identical;
- The electorate finds it difficult to determine the ideology of the political parties and therefore cannot make a choice;
- Opposition parties have lost all presidential, parliamentary and local election held in Azerbaijan to date. Therefore, interest in those parties has waned;
- Newly-established pro-opposition parties have not been able to win public support, as they have failed to make qualitative change in their activities.

4. The main features of Azerbaijan's political system (the composition of its institutions, and the resources, strategy and tactics of the actors) have remained almost unchanged after the third and last parliamentary election held in 2005.

5. There has been a trend of growth in the number of informal actors and institutions in the political arena compared to the number of the formal ones.

6. At this stage, there is a ruling party in the political arena. The other actors are not in a position to challenge it altogether.

7. The political opposition has lost the chances of coming to power. In view of this, the strategy of compromise prevails in the relationships between the ruling party and the remaining (pro-opposition) forces.

8. The process of formation of parties is weak. The kind of competition between parties that we had at the early stage of this process is almost non-existent now because of the weakness of the political opposition.

9. In international practice, there is an important measurement called "party institutionalization." The standard for the institutionalization of a party is determined by its successful participation in three elections. If we apply this measurement, it will turn out that only one party (the ruling New Azerbaijan Party) has been able to institutionalize in Azerbaijan. Pro-opposition parties have failed to benefit from party institutionalization although they had enough time for that during the elections held in the country.

Now let's have a look at the main characteristics of the transformation Azerbaijan's ruling party has undergone

over the past elections:

- Most importantly, based on the factor of a powerful leader, the ruling party has been able to build a model of governance. Thus, Azerbaijan is one of the very few countries in the world, and also in the post-Soviet space, to have ensured the establishment of this model;
- It has reaffirmed itself as the ruling party in all directions and at every level – parliamentary, electoral and regional;
- By ensuring national unity and the consolidation of the party elite, it has put an end to the crisis and chaos in the country. According to political analysts, it has also stopped the wave of orange revolutions in the CIS space by speeding up the rate of (economic) growth and by securing public and political stability.

**Recommendations:**

- The fact that the formation of parties has not been observed to have had a positive evolution and dynamics since Azerbaijan regained its independence makes it impossible for this process to continue further. Speeding up the slow processes by making use of international experience, through reforms and the participation of the state, and bringing it in line with the standards of the progressive world and the party system are of importance for establishing of a democratic civil society in Azerbaijan. If this does not happen, political parties can hinder the establishment of civil society instead of becoming an important tool for building one;
- Against a backdrop of the excessive number and frag-



mentation of political parties, their inaction and passive activity in the country's political life have remained unchanged to date. It is important to analyze all this seriously, and to take measures to change the status-quo. Above all, this should include the adoption of a new law on political parties and measures to revive political competition. Otherwise, the abundance of political parties in Azerbaijan will hardly be translated into qualitative change in the short term. Therefore, the parties themselves should come up with initiatives, and serious institutionalization measures should be carried out with state support and through reform;

- In international practice, neither the first-past-the-post system, nor the proportional representation system of election is seen as the main factor for the development of parties. First, this is because of the fact that the party system is on the decline as a political institution across the world. Second, the presidential system is more optimal in all countries with two or more political parties. The presidential institution is efficient in a bi-party system at best. In other words, the opposition survives if it wins presidential elections. Otherwise, it loses ground all the time;
- At the same time, the proportional representation system could be restored temporarily to demonstrate that the weakness of the opposition parties is not due to the aforementioned election systems but mostly because of subjective factors. On the one hand, this would help revive the opposition. On the other hand, this would show that their weakness is not due the mentioned issue;
- Updating the opposition on all spheres (ideological, po-

litical, social, electoral, political culture, methods of civil struggle, party-state relations and relations within and between parties) through public discussions is also important for scholars and intellectuals;

- Parties should prefer centrism in their ideology. A weak party is the one with a weak ideology in the first place. This should be analyzed thoroughly;
- Compared with any other factor, the election institution has a much bigger role in shaping a country's image. Azerbaijan has cultivated the image of an investment friendly country with a growing economy and that of a reliable partner. It has no problems with all these. The parliamentary election to be held in 2010 should improve Azerbaijan's image in the world. All forces should try to achieve this together;
- Political science has developed an indicator called "the effective number of parties". This indicator determines what share of political parties has impact in the political system. This indicator is used at electoral (results of elections) and parliamentary levels as well. For instance, the "effective number" of parliamentary parties in Russia (i.e. the number of parties with impact in the State Duma) is 1.89. It used to be 10 in 1990s. This means that none of the remaining parties is an "effective" one, or "they all together do not have the weight of a single party." Similar analysis needs to be conducted in Azerbaijan as well.

**Forecasts:**

- There is no serious ground to predict any radical change in the activities of Azerbaijan's political parties over the next electoral stage or afterwards. The most important issue for the political opposition could be taking steps to get out of the fiasco. This is because the society is already aware of the election tactics of the opposition (slogans calling for unification, active or passive resistance aimed at covering up their failure, demands for the restoration of the proportional representation system). This is going to be the last test for the current model of the opposition;
- At the same time, now we can see attempts to present new ideas and positions on this front. This shows that the number of active forces can grow in the political arena in the near future. These forces can win enough seats in parliament in this year's elections to form factions;
- The part of the opposition that is adopting a new model and strategy can gradually replace the current "main opposition." In the main opposition camp, all of those who fail to join forces with a more ambitious party can be marginalized;
- The parties with a program of comprehensive reform, political dialogue and civil struggle and pro-centrist forces have better chances for the near future. At this stage, if the mistakes are assessed critically and correctly, the Azerbaijani opposition can be expected to get rid of the old stereotypes, which have hindered its operation for years, and to maneuver. An article by the chairman of the Umid (Hope) Party can be seen as an

initial program of strategy and tactics for the new opposition;

- The chairmen of the parties have declared themselves as leaders. This has no significance from the viewpoint of strategic or tactical maneuvering. These are only compulsory moves. A solution to the problem of leader within the opposition can also come on the wave of change;

There has been no precedent of unity or bloc called "negative consensus" among the opposition parties in Azerbaijan. It will not be possible in the future either. The current opposition will continue to be fragmented, rather than united. Therefore, it is the new model opposition parties that should unite and institutionalize – a task that will take long to accomplish. The following parties and blocs can join in an election bloc in the forthcoming parliamentary election: "The Alliance for Democracy" bloc, the Classic Popular Front of Azerbaijan Party, the Freedom party and the Musavat party.

In state-party relations, the model of "consensus" can be continued and developed further in keeping with the international practice, particularly when it comes to the reforms of law and financing;

- Speaking about the future of the ruling party, one can say that today it has no alternative or rival. First, this is because the opposition is extremely fragmented. Second, they have no leader or unity. This is while the ruling elite is firmly united;
- The leader is the decisive factor in any party. Political parties are the most pragmatic subjects of the election process. As political parties are after their own interests,

their behavior is mostly opportunist in nature (in other words, they seek to benefit at the expense of other actors). For the unity of the political opposition, there must be a leader who is capable of setting common rules and ensuring that the rules are observed. Such incentives can be conditioned by expectations, risks, etc. connected with uncertainty in the institutional design. Let us take a look at our recent past. The opposition has always attempted to stage an orange revolution and undermine security. In fact, this still dominates the tactics and behavior of the opposition. Therefore, ensuring the public and political stability ought to be a national cause in the current election year. An analysis of the past elections shows that the public and political stability established in Azerbaijan can survive even the most dangerous turn of political developments and risks.

- The fact that today political rivalry with the ruling party is impossible has brought about the model of “consensus anyway” and the status-quo at the national level, in the political field and in party relations. But as we know, nothing is eternal in political life. How long will this consensus last? If international practice (West Germany, Mexico) is taken into account, this model can resolve the “dilemma of leader.” It can also be one of the first steps towards a democratic consensus and serve a very important basis for ensuring succession. The lack of strong political rivalry and the dominance of informal institutions over formal ones rule out any unexpected development in the short term. They also make it impossible to change the current model of consensus. Neither the Azerbaijani voter, nor most of the political actors are interested in the disruption of stability in return for promises about uncertain prospects. Moreover, attempts by

the ruling party (which thinks that there is no serious rival to challenge it) to ensure a positive background and transparency for the opposition to carry out its struggle in a civilized manner help boost its influence and preserve the status-quo;

- Finally, if we compare this with international practice again, we can see that “as a rule, economic modernization serves the democratization process, speeding up its evolution.” (*Diamond L. Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered / Reexamined Democracy. Essays in Honor of Seymour Martin Lipset // G. Marks and L. Diamond (eds.). London: Sage, 1992, p. 93-139*). According to another author who analyzed the Brazilian experience of the 1970s, “the more successful the economic development is, the more sustainable developments within the consensus model will become”. (*Linz J. The Future of an Authoritarian Situation or the Institutionalization of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Brazil / Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Future // A. Stepan (ed.). New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973, p. 233-254*). The fact that Azerbaijan saw an economic growth amid the global financial crisis allows us to draw important and positive conclusions from the aforementioned statements.
- An increasing number of “studies” in neighboring and faraway countries have predicted a growth in the weight and influence of Islamist parties and the politicization of Islam in Azerbaijan. There are even some views that the problem of the lack of a leader in the opposition will be resolved with the emerge of a radical religious leader. These predictions lack serious grounds. Moreover, they should be treated carefully as they concern state secu-

rity. There is a need for sociological research to reveal (with specific facts) the potential and resources of those who wish to come to power using Islam. It is extremely important for state security to determine the institutional and legal bases that will regulate a situation in which the election may fail, lead to a crisis or be lost by the ruling party. These should be a focus of attention.

- Predictions by representatives of both the opposition and the authorities on the course and outcome of the next election are also interesting to know. Unlike in the past elections, the opposition does not have very big claims to win in this election. The opposition does not expect fundamental change from this election. Rather, it mostly views it as a process that can serve as a real step toward change. Apart from the main factors cited here, such as the voters that are not happy with the government, or relations between various forces within the government, the foreign factor is also worth paying attention to. A representative of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan Party says that the growing resentment at economic problems caused by the global financial crisis would help the opposition carry out a more successful election campaign compared to the one it held in 2005 ([www.azadlig.az](http://www.azadlig.az)). Most of the members of the political opposition believe that there is a problem of "oil and democracy" in the country caused by Azerbaijan's participation in regional and global projects and also by the country's possession of considerable resources of energy. Some even blame the foreign factor for then weakness of the opposition. "The influence of the opposition in this process [election] will very much depend on the establishment of effective cooperation with the Western circles that can influence the course of elections in

Azerbaijan, and also on the way the opposition presents itself as an alternative source of power. Therefore, I think that 2010 will not be an ordinary year," Isa Gambar said. ([www.yenimusavat.com](http://www.yenimusavat.com)) "It is not only the authorities that do not want to see the opposition strengthen and get closer to the masses of people. Global powers and the international organizations and trans-national companies that are serving their interests do not want this either. They need this opposition not to replace the government but to exert pressure on it." (The Green Party, [www.mia.az](http://www.mia.az)). The chairman of the Citizen and Development Party, Ali Aliyev, has predicted: "The parliamentary election to be held in Azerbaijan 2010 can help develop a political system that will benefit the statehood. It can also serve as a transitional period to a system of ethical, principal, convincing and reliable relations. For this to happen, the hegemony of some organizations and persons in the opposition camp should be ended by natural means. In fact, this process has started on its own. The leaders of two of the parties that formed a movement to fight against the referendum [in 2008] joined forces in September of last year to sideline another party, but they failed to do so. As a result, the movement broke up, and most importantly, the "dominance" of the two party leaders weakened. This process resumed early this year. There was an attempt to draw a known party to an election bloc on the condition that two persons will be in a dominant position. But this attempt was a fiasco. Attempts by international circles (NDI) to influence this produced no result either. The two persons are resorting to every means to retain their "dominance" in the opposition camp. But there has been no result. To us, this stage was characterized by the ouster of the "power" in



the opposition. The next state, I mean the parliamentary election and afterwards, can be a stage of "construction". The "construction" stage does not seem to be an easy one, because there will be a tight contest. It will not be easy to win. Artificial intervention is also unacceptable. The predicted failure of these two parties, which are aspiring to "dominance," will lead to a further deterioration of the situation within the parties. A change of leadership (election of a new chairman) in one of the two parties may bring about secession and collapse. Failure in the election may prompt the resignation of the chairman of the other party. These are being discussed behind the scenes. There will be an outflow of cadres from the parties within the next three years. This is imminent. The legitimacy to be ensured by representation in parliament sometime later, the extra opportunities to be opened up if political parties start receiving funding from the state budget, and correct and purposeful implementation of organizational, propagation and international work can bring about a different political atmosphere and a different system of political relations ahead of 2013. (Materials of the international conference "The 2010 parliamentary election in Azerbaijan: More democratic and more transparent", Baku, 16 April 2010).

Economic Intelligence, an organization that makes forecasts about the political and economic situation in countries around the world, has also made a forecast about domestic politics in Azerbaijan over the next two years. It predicts that President Ilham Aliyev is likely to ensure support from the political elite and retain his control of various groups. There is a little expectation of in-flight [in Azerbaijan's ruling elite] in 2010-2011.

According to the new strategy of the ruling New Azerbaijan Party for the forthcoming parliamentary election, women and the youth are underrepresented in parliament today. There is a need for increasing their participation in parliament. The New Azerbaijan Party is thinking of ways to use this more efficiently. YAP Deputy Chairman Ali Ahmadov has said: "We will try to ensure that women and the youth are nominated [to parliament]. However, the reality at the centre of our election tactics is this: one of the very important and decisive factors of victory in every election is that people should trust and vote for a particular candidate. When it comes to change in our election tactics and technology, every election is significantly different from others. Naturally, the 2010 parliamentary election will be different from the election held in 2005. This is because today's Azerbaijan is different from the Azerbaijan we had back in 2005. The thinking of people in Azerbaijan has undergone significant change over the past five years. All these will be seriously addressed in YAP's program for the forthcoming election. It will contain the novelties that we are going to use. On the whole, the election technology of the New Azerbaijan Party will meet the requirements of the election atmosphere and period.

Today the New Azerbaijan Party has 64 members in parliament. This is slightly over 50 percent of the seats in parliament. Our goals in the coming parliamentary election are divided into two groups'. The first group is made up of minimum goals. Of course, the minimum goal is to retain our current seats in parliament. Our maximum goal is to improve the situation further. We are analyzing the situation, and I think it is too early to say anything specific. But the New Azerbaijan Party will make a decision in due time." ([az.trend.az/news/politics](http://az.trend.az/news/politics)).

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## 8. POLITICAL PARTIES IN AZERBAIJAN - 2010: THE SITUATION IN THE RUN-UP TO THE PARLIMENTARY ELECTION AND EACH POLITICAL PARTY'S KEY OBJECTIVES

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In order to see the features of the system against a backdrop of the formation of parties and the characteristics of their dynamics (domestic and foreign factors, legal and illegal activities, evolution and revolution), let us have a look at the general picture of the current parties. To have an objective assessment of the real state of the parties and the overall situation ahead of the election, we have looked into the views and ideas of party leaders and functionaries. The results of a poll conducted by the Research Council (a center for independent studies: Chairman Sahib Jafarov and member Nazim Mahmudov) among the leaders and functionaries of 25 well-known parties have been used in the analysis of the latest pieces of information. The poll was called "On political parties in Azerbaijan – 2010: situation in the run-up to the parliamentary election and plans." The leaders and main functionaries of the parties provided the following figures and information in interviews with the pollster. (The names of the parties are given in the chronological order taken by interviews)

### **MOTHERLAND PARTY**

Established on 24 November 1990

Registered on 11 August 1999

Chairman Fazail Agamali

Name of the interviewee: Etibar Guliyev

Position of the interviewee: deputy chairman

The party's ideology is based upon the principles of statehood and patriotism. Nationalism is also a basic value for this right-centrist party. As of 2009, the party had 20,000 members. The payment of the membership fee is voluntary. The budget for March 2010 was 1,000 AZN. The party has 60 branches in towns and districts. It has held five congresses by 2010. The party congresses are held every five years (the latest congress was attended by 350 people). The party chairman, the Supreme Assembly, the Control and Inspection Commission, the Central Council and the chairmen of the district branches are elected.

Young people account for 30 percent of the party members. Women make up 17 percent of the members. One of the deputies of the party chairman is female. Nearly 200 people joined the party in the past year. MPs from the party are very active in public relations. A website is under construction for the party. The party acted as an observer in the latest presidential election and supported Ilham Aliyev's candidacy. Of the 14 party candidates running in the 2005 election, two were elected to parliament. 215 out of 440 candidates running in the local elections in 2009 won. In parliament, its MPs make proposals not as a party but as individuals.

The party's main goal in the 2010 parliamentary election is to be represented in the Milli Mejlis. It will try to retain the current seats in parliament and win two more. A total of 30 candidates from the party will run in the election. The party does not intend to join any election bloc, but has said that it will coordinate its election tactics with YAP. The party took real steps in 1999 towards dialogue between the authorities and the opposition. But that did not produce any

positive result. The main proposal made by the party to improve the political system was to hammer out a mechanism for state support and adopt a new law.

### **FREEDOM PARTY**

Founded in 1995

Registered on 12 August 2005

Chairman Ahmad Oruj

Name of the interviewee: Ahmad Oruj

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

The party's ideology is based on state nationalism. It is a centrist party with 4,800 members. The payment of the membership fee is voluntary. It has no fixed budget. The number of regional offices is nearly 33. The party has held three congresses thus far. The congresses are held every five years. The quorum in the 2006 congress was 130 people. The party Chairman, the Supreme Assembly, the Central Executive Apparatus and the chairmen of the regional offices are all elected.

Young people account for 50 percent of the party members. There are almost no female members in the party. Between 50 and 100 new members joined the party in 2009. The party reaches out to people mostly via opposition newspapers. The party did not participate in the last presidential election. It had four candidates running in the last parliamentary election. But none of the candidates won the election. The party did not participate in the latest local elections either.

The primary goal of the party in the 2010 parliamentary election is to be represented in the Milli Mejlis. Its

election program is mostly focused upon the protection of the rights for the middle class. The party is positive about participation in election blocs and is currently in talks with the Alliance for Democracy. The party's current resources are not sufficient enough to meet its material and technical needs.

### **DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established on 26 June 1991

Registered in 1999

The Party Chairman: Sardar Jalaloglu

Name of the interviewee: Hasrat Rustamov

Position of the interviewee: deputy chairman

The party's ideology is based upon liberal and democratic values. The task set in the party program is to build a democracy. It is a leftist party. The party is said to have nearly 10,000 members. The membership fee amounts to 1 percent of the minimum salary. The party's [monthly] budget is 600-700 AZN. It has 55 regional branches. The party has held six congresses so far. The last one was held in 2007. The congresses are held every two years. The 1/1,000 quota has been set by the Organization Committee. It is said that the last party congress was attended by 300 people. The party Chairman, the Supreme Assembly, the Control and Inspection Commission and the heads of the district branches are elected.

Young people (under 35) account for 10-15 percent of the party members. Women make up 5 percent of the members. One of the members on the Political Council is female. In the past year 1,000 new members are said to have joined the party. The party reaches out to people via press releases, which are said to be circulated on a regular basis, and press

conferences. The party did not participate in the last presidential election. In the 2005 parliamentary election, it ran with 40 candidates. In the 2009 local elections, the party had 30 candidates, only two of whom were elected.

The main goal of the party in the 2010 parliamentary election is to win five to six seats in the Milli Mejlis. The party's election program is targeted at winning over the voters who are not happy with the government policies. It is expected to nominate more than 60 candidates to run for parliament. The party is positive about setting up election blocs and continues talks about this. It is also positive about fostering a dialogue between the authorities and the opposition, and has made a written appeal in connection with this. The party has a weak material and technical base.

### **PEOPLE'S PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established in 1995

Registered in 1999

Acting Party Chairman: Giyas Sadikhov

Name of the interviewee: Giyas Sadikhov

Position of the interviewee: Acting Party Chairman

The party's ideology is based on Musavatism and populism.

The target set in the party program is to spread the ideas of Musavatism in society. It is a rightist party. The party is said to have nearly 4,000 members. The payment of the membership fee is voluntary. Has no fixed budget, which is formed mostly during election times. The party has up to 40 branches in the towns and districts. Has held three congresses, which are organized every two years. The quota in the congresses is 1/5. The chairmen of the district branch-

es, the party chairman and the Political Council are elected.

Young people account for 40 percent, and women 10 percent of the party members. The party was joined by 10 new members in 2009. The party acted as an observer in the last presidential election. Only one candidate from the party ran in the last parliamentary election as part of the Azadlig (Freedom) bloc and won. The party ran in the last local elections with 50 candidates, only two of whom won.

The main goal set in the 2010 parliamentary election is to ensure the unity of the opposition. It aspires to four seats in parliament. The party's election program makes the problems of youth its priority, as well as the fight against corruption, and calls for the establishment of a middle class. Four candidates will be running for parliament. The party intends to join election blocs. It is positive about dialogue between the authorities and the opposition. The current resources of the party are too weak to enable it to conduct a normal campaign. The party supports changes to the law to optimize the political system. It has presented a drafted law to parliament on this.

### **POPULAR FRONT OF AZERBAIJAN PARTY**

Established: 1989

Registered: 1995

Chairman: Ali Karimli

Name of the interviewee: Hasan Karimov

Position of the interviewee: Chairman of the  
Supreme Board

The Popular Front of Azerbaijan (PFA) was the first political organization in the national liberation movement of



Azerbaijan. The PFA which went through several contradictory stages in the 1990s (due to the rise of the national movement, political successes and splits, the 20 January tragedy and revival, political power and deposition, etc.) was in the leading positions of the country's political sphere at that time.

In 1995 the PFA was transferred into a political party under the name of the PFAP (the Popular Front of Azerbaijan Party). At present, several of the Azerbaijani opposition parties arose from the PFA. The majority of the politicians in the movement have set up their own parties. The chairman of the PFA, founded on 16 July 1989, was Abulfaz Elchibay. Upon foundation of the PFA, the first 15-member Executive Board was elected.

With the death of Abulfaz Elchibay in 2000, the PFAP split into several factions, and at first two and then three political parties claimed to this party name. Later current United Azerbaijan People's Party and the Traditional Popular Front Party gave up their claims on the title of the PFAP. However, both parties refer their dates of foundation to 16 July 1989. None of the first leaders of the PFA are now members of these three organizations.

The incumbent chairman of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan Party, which considers itself the successor of the PFA, is Ali Karimli. As already noted, there are two more parties with the words of "Popular Front": the Traditional Popular Front Party (Chairman is Mirmahmud Miralioglu), and the United Azerbaijan Popular Front Party (Chairman MP Gudrat Hasanguliyev). At one time, a lot of well-known political parties in Azerbaijan (the Musavat Party, the National Independence Party, and the People's Party) were set up on the basis of the PFA.

Thus, Isa Gambar (Parliamentary speaker under the PFA) is the chairman of the Musavat Party; Sulhaddin Akbar (deputy national security minister under the PFA) is the chairman of the board of the Musavat Party; Etibar Mammadov is the leader of the National Independence Party of Azerbaijan. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PFA was marked in 2009.

Musavatism (equality), democracy, nationalism are basis of its ideology. The target of the program is a united Azerbaijan and democratic society. In the political system, it represents the right. The number of the party members is 47,000 people. The party membership fee amounts to 1 per cent of the salary. The party has no a fixed budget. There are 80 city and district branches of the party. In all, the party held eight congresses. A congress is held every two years. The quota for the congress is one to 10 proportion and 600 delegates attended the latest congress. The elected bodies are - chairman, the control-audit commission and chairmen of the district branches. The youth in the party amount to 20 percent of the party members with women making up 10 percent.

The number of the newly-recruited party members over the last year is about 300 people. The public relations of the party are mainly carried out through Azadlig newspaper. The party boycotted the latest presidential election. In the 2005 parliamentary election, the party nominated 48 candidates and three were elected to parliament. Of the 47 candidates, no one was elected to the municipalities.

As the party boycotted the parliament, there have been no activities to this end. The key target of the party in the 2010 parliamentary election is to fight for 20 parliamentary seats within the Freedom bloc. The election tactics of the party are to appeal to discontented voters in this elec-

tion. The party is expected to nominate 70 candidates in the election. The party is positive on the authorities-opposition dialogue provided that the first step is made by the authorities. As for available resources, the party has serious financial problems. The party considers important the re-registration of the parties, the state support and the approval of a new legislation for the optimization of the political system.

### **LIBERAL PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established: 3 June 1995

Registered: 14 August 1995

Acting chairman of the party: Avaz Temirkhan

Name of the interviewee: Avaz Temirkhan

Position of the interviewee: acting chairman

The protection of human rights and supremacy of laws are pillars of its ideology. The target of the program is the establishment of society and securing the supremacy of human rights. The party is on the left of the political system. According to the 1998 data, the number of the party members stands at 58,000. However, the party avoids giving a precise figure on the number of the party members.

The membership fee in the party is 0.10 AZN. The party has no a permanent budget. The party carries out its activities through 65 city and district organizations. The number of the held congresses is five with four years interval between congresses. The overall quota for a congress is 300 delegates. The elected bodies are a chairman, the political board, the control-audit commission and the district organizations.

Some 25-30 percent of the party members are youth,

with women totaling 25 percent. The number of new recruits for the party (over the last year) is presumably a figure of 1,000. The party boycotted the 2008 presidential election. In the 2005 parliamentary election, the party nominated 70 candidates, and one won 1 parliamentary seat.

The party did not run in the latest municipal election. As the party refused to participate in the parliamentary sessions, it has no proposed drafted projects. In 2010 parliamentary election, the party's key target is to stand in the election under the Freedom bloc, to formulate political force centre through securing the whole opposition unity. The claimed parliamentary representation is 25-30 seats together with the bloc.

The key planks of the election platform are social problems, social justice and the fight against corruption. It is expected that the bloc will nominate 125 candidates in the election. The party's attitude towards dialogue between the authorities and the opposition is positive, provided that the first step is made by the authorities. As for available resources, the party's material and technical status is weak. The party views the state's support as the best way to optimize the political system.

### **LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established: 30 January 1999

Registered: 1999

Party chairman: Fuad Aliyev

Name of the interviewee: Fuad Aliyev

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

The liberal democratic values constitute the basis of its ideology. We should note that for its ideological values,

the party is close to the Liberal Party. The key target of the LDPA's program is to build a democratic society. The party is on the centre of the political system and has about 6500 members. The membership fee in the party is 0.20 AZN. The budget of the party is about 1000 AZN. The party operates in the political system with its 56 regional organizations.

As a whole, the LDPA has held two congresses and a conference with powers of the congress. We should say that a party congress is held every five years. At the latest congress, 230 delegates at a ratio of 1/30 were elected. The elected bodies of the party are the Supreme Board (15 members), the chairman and the chairmen of the city and district organizations. Women comprise 30 percent of the party members. The youth in the party amount to 60 per cent, which enable us to say that the majority of the politicians in the party are young. This also indicates to insufficient political experience, however.

We should say that two members of the Supreme Board are women. The number of the new recruits for the party over the last one year is said to be around 1000 people. The main reason for this is the party's participation in the presidential election and its increased participation in the political activities around it. The party's public relations are mainly carried out through [www.ldpa.az](http://www.ldpa.az) website. Although the party nominated 30 candidates for the 2005 parliamentary election, none of those candidates were elected. In the 2009 municipal election, the party nominated seven candidates. The LDPA targets the unity of the opposition in the upcoming parliamentary election.

At the same time, the party also views a representation

in parliament as a key target. Standing in the election with 11 candidates, the LDPA is planning to set up a bloc with the Hope Party. The party is positive about the authorities-opposition dialogue and appealed to the authorities in 1999 to this effect. As for the existing resources, the party is also proposing to set up a fund for the campaign of the candidates, re-writing of the legislative basis and its endorsement.

### **NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established: 1993

Registered: 24 December 2008

Party Chairman: Tufan Karimli

Name of the interviewee: Tufan Karimli

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

Nationalism and adherence to the national values form the basis of its ideology. The party is on the right of the political spectrum. The number of the members is about 2500 people. The membership fee is voluntary. The budget is not fixed. The number of the city and district organizations is 37; it held four congresses and a congress is held every three years. The elected bodies of the party are: the chairman; the Grand Congress (50 percent is elected in a congress; and amounts to 35 people); the political council (the supreme executive body is also elected in a congress) and the control-audit commission. The young party members amount to 80 percent with women 1-2 percent. The registration of the new recruits is not recorded.

The party carries out public relations through [www.bozqurd.com](http://www.bozqurd.com) website and Milliyatchilik (Nationalism) newspaper. The party supported the incumbent president's

political course in the latest presidential and parliamentary elections. Although about 30 party members nominated their candidacies in the latest municipality elections, no one was elected. For the 2010 parliamentary election, the key target of the party is to nominate up to 100 candidates and obtain representation in parliament. The party's stance on participation in the electoral blocs is negative. The party's approach to the authorities-opposition dialogue is positive. As for available financial resources, the party has serious financial and technical problems.

### **NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established: 4 July 1992

Registered: 17 July 1992

Party Chairman: Yusif Bagirzada

Name of the interviewee: Arzukhan Alizada

Position of the interviewee: Secretary-general

Press secretary: Ali Orujov

International secretary: Elsan Mustafayev

Nationalism and patriotism are the cornerstones of its ideology. The party is on the centre in the political system. The number of the members (under the figure available to 2007) is about 30,000. The membership fee in the party is not compulsory and under the party statute, is not less than 0.10 AZN. The budget is not fixed; a total of 69 city and district organizations are functional. A party congress is held every three years and the 10th congress was held in July 2010.

There is no precise quota for a congress, and the participation of the district organizations in the elections is considered to be important. The post of the chairman, the sec-

retariat (secretary-general and five secretaries), the Central Board, the Political Board are elective bodies. The youth in the party amount to 18-20 percent with women amounting to 8 percent (three of the 14-member Political Board are women). The number of the new recruits over the last year is 196 people.

The party's public relations are carried out through [www.millet.az](http://www.millet.az) website and annual reports. The party did stand in the latest presidential election. In the 2005 parliamentary election, the party nominated 40 candidates and two of them (informal NIPA candidates – their candidacies were endorsed by the NIPA Political Board) won mandates. After the election, they did not indicate their party affiliation. In the 2009 municipality election, there stood 37 official and 117 unofficial NIPA candidates in the election. The two parliamentarians have seized contacts with the NIPA.

In the 2010 parliamentary election, the party targets to get support of the discontent electorate, young people, pensioners and those engaged in average businesses. The claimed amount of seats in parliament is to achieve minimum representation. The party is planning to nominate candidates from at least 60 constituencies. Although the party has no clear-cut position on election blocs, negotiations to this end are underway. The party backs the authorities-opposition dialogue, but no written appeal has been sent to the government to this effect.

### **SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established: 1989

Registered: 27 July 1990

Party co-chairmen: Araz Alizada, Ayaz Mutallibov



Name of the interviewee: Araz Alizada

Position of the interviewee: Co-chairman

The establishment of social-democratic values in society is the cornerstone of its ideology. The party is on the left of the political spectrum. The number of the members is said to be about 3,000 people. There is a voluntary membership fee system in the party. The budget of the party is not fixed. The number of the city and district organizations is 40.

The number of the conducted congresses is 11 with five years of interval between congresses. Some 250 delegates were elected to the latest congress. The elected bodies of the party are the co-chairmen and the deputy co-chairmen. Of the party members, 35-40 percent are youth with the same percentage of women. The number of the new recruits over the year is 120 people. The party has no media outlet for the public relations.

The party did not stand in the 2008 presidential election. Some nine candidates stood in the 2005 parliamentary election but none of them won a seat. Also none of the two candidates in the municipality election was elected either. For the 2010 parliamentary election, the party's key target is to nominate 2-3 candidates. The number of the claimed parliamentary seats is to achieve minimum representation. The central planks of the party's election platform are made up of appeals to the unemployed, the poor and the middle class. The party's approach to the election blocs is negative and has no plans to join blocs.

The party's attitude towards the authorities-opposition dialogue is positive only provided this step is taken by the president. As for available resources, the party's financial

and technical opportunities are weak. The party supports the optimization of the political system, the financing of the parties from the state budget, the approval of a new law on the political parties and the restoration of the proportional electoral system.

### **UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established: 1993

Registered: September 1995

Party Chairman: Musa Tukanov

Name of interviewee: Musa Tukanov

Position of the interviewee: Secretary general

The party upholds the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and communism. The target of the program is the strengthening of the working class and the protection of their rights. It represents the leftist stream in the political system. The number of the party members is 3000 people. The membership fee is voluntary and has no a fixed budget. The party has 16 city and district organizations. The party has held two congresses up to now. Some 200 delegates attended the latest congress. A congress is held every five years. The elected bodies of the party are the Central Committee, the Political Bureau and the first secretary. The number of young party members stands at 30 percent with women 1 percent of them. No registration of the new recruits has been carried out recently. The public relations of the party are carried out through Iskra newspaper.

The party did not stand in the latest presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections. The key target in the upcoming election will be to increase its representation in par-

liament. The party does not support involvement in blocs. The main reason for this is said to be ideological differences in their party programs. The party does not favour the authorities-opposition dialogue. As for the availability of resources, the party has serious problems. The party considers the financing of the parties from the state budget important, and wants the approval of a new law on political parties.

### **GREAT SALVATION PARTY**

Established: 2003

Registered: 2005

Party Chairman: Fazil Gazanfaroglu

Name of the interviewee: Fazil Gazanfaroglu

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

Structuralism and restriction of powers of the state are cornerstones of its ideology. The target of the program to spread of liberal-democratic ideas throughout society. It stands on the left of the political system. The number of the party members ranks over 3000 people. The membership fee amounts to 1 AZN. The monthly budget is within 400-500 manats. The party has 45 district organizations. The number of the held congresses is 3 with 2.5 years interval between congresses. The quota for the congress delegates is a ratio of 1 to 10. The elected bodies are the post of chairman; the political council, the control and audit commission and district organizations. The chairman and the control-audit commission members are elected by the congress and the chairmen of the district organizations are elected by the local organizations. The youth in the party amounts to 40 percent (20 percent is represented in the party leadership) with women standing at 10 percent. A to-

tal of 1500 new recruits were accepted to the party in 2009. The party maintains contacts with the public through media outlets and meetings with voters.

The party candidate gained 2.5 percent of the votes in the 2008 presidential election. A total of 17 candidates contested the 2005 parliamentary election and one was elected to parliament. The party nominated 386 candidates in the 2009 municipal election and 144 of them were elected. The key target of the party in the 2010 parliamentary election is to win a sufficient amount of seats – at least 25 seats - to create a faction. Up to 100 party candidates will stand in the forthcoming election.

As to involvement in the election blocs, the party has no a single position. At present the party does not view real the authorities-opposition dialogue. As for the existing resources, the party's material and technical basis is weak. It is positive about funding of the parties from the state budget and is a supporter of changes to the law on the political parties.

### **UNITED POPULAR FRONT PARTY OF AZERBAIJAN**

Established: 2004

Registered: 2005

Party Chairman: Gudrat Hasanguliyev

Name of the interviewee: Sohrab Abdullayev

Position of the interviewee: Secretary-general

Unity, statehood, democracy are key ideologies of the party. The target of the program is the establishment of democratic society. It is on the centre right of the political system. The number of the members is 138,000 people.

The membership fee is 1 percent of the salary. The budget is variable. The number of organizations in the city and districts are 65. The number of held congresses is two per every four years; delegates are held to the congresses at a ratio of 1 to 50 and 1 to 100. The elected party institutions are – the chairman, the Control-Audit Commission and the chairmen of the district organizations. The youth in the party constitute about 30 percent with women totaling 10 percent of the members. They are represented in the party leadership, in the Executive Board, in the Council, and in the Control-Audit Commission. It is said that the number of new recruits in 2009 amounted to 100 people.

The party's public relations are carried out through Xalg Jabhasi newspaper and its website. The party nominated the candidacy of the chairman in the 2008 presidential election. A total of 61 candidates were nominated in the 2005 parliamentary election and one was elected to parliament. In the 2009 municipal election, 1020 candidates were nominated and 100 of them won seats.

The key target of the party for the 2010 parliamentary election is to nominate 70 candidates. The claimed representation in the parliament is 3-5 seats. The attitude towards the election bloc is positive and has not so far as joined any bloc due to lack of formal appeals. The party's material and technical basis is weak. It considers the law on the political parties necessary.

### **DEMOCRATIC AZERBAIJAN WORLD PARTY**

Established: 1992

Registered: 1993

Party chairman: Mammad Alizada

Name of the interviewee: Mammad Alizada

Position of interviewee: Chairman

The establishment of democratic society is the cornerstone of its ideology. The target of its program is to build a democratic and social society. It is on the centre of the political system. In an interview, the party chairman put the number of the party members at 124629 people. The membership fee is 0.20 AZN. The budget is not stable. The party has 78 city and district organizations. It has held three congresses to date. A party congress is held every five years.

The quota for a congress is at a ratio of 1 to 100. A total of 850 delegates attended the latest congress. The elected party bodies are the chairman, the Control-Audit Commission, the executive board and the chairmen of the city and district organizations. The youth in the party amount to 16 percent with women 30 percent of the members. The number of the new recruits in between 2008-2010 is said to be 12,400 people. The party's public relations are mainly carried out through independent media outlets. The party supported the candidacy of incumbent Ilham Aliyev in the 2008 presidential election.

Although 57 candidates were nominated in the 2005 parliamentary election, none of them won seats. A total of 300 candidates contested the 2009 municipal election and three of them gained seats. The key target of the party in the 2010 parliamentary election is to increase its representation in parliament. The party will struggle for minimum of two parliamentary seats. The key plank in the election platform is to support the president's political course. The number of the expected candidates in the election will be 125. Although the consultative council of the party decides

involvement in election blocs, in general, the party does not join any bloc. The party is completely positive about the authorities-opposition dialogue and considers it necessary for the development of society. The actual resources are weak. The party supports re-registration, the state support and the approval of a fresh legislative act for the optimization of the political system.

### **DEMOCRATIC REFORMS PARTY**

Established: 7 April 2005

Registered: 12 August 2005

Party Chairman: Asim Mollazada

Name of the interviewee: Asim Mollazada

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

Democratic and liberal values constitute the cornerstone of its ideology, as well as the integration into European culture and science. The key targets of the program are the promotion of the principles of liberty and responsibility in society. It stands on the right centrist position in the political system. The number of the party members is 8,000 people. The party statute does not set a membership fee and the budget of the party is formed mainly with donations and voluntary membership fees. The party budget for March 2010 amounted to 1,000 AZN. The number of the city and district organizations is about 83. Since establishment, the party has held two congresses. A congress is held every two years with a quota 1 to 15 proportion.

Some 200 delegates attended the latest congress. The party's elected bodies are – chairman, the political council (19 members), the control-audit commission, the supreme board, and the chairmen of the district organizations. Of

the 50 percent of the party members are youth with women amounting to 40 percent. Over the last five years, it is said that 6,000 new recruits were accepted to the party. The party's public relations are carried out through [www.dem-reforms.org](http://www.dem-reforms.org) internet website. The party was involved in the 2008 presidential election in its capacity as an observer. Although the party stood in the 2005 parliamentary election with several candidates – indicating and leaving blank party affiliation point, only two candidates won seats in parliament. In the 2009 municipal election the party participated with 72 candidates and 21 of them won seats.

The party managed discussion of a number of important problems. For the 2010 parliamentary election, the party intends to nominate over 60 candidates and contest representation in parliament. The key plank of the election platform considers the involvement of youth in the process as a priority and keeping on the spotlight the integration into the European science and culture. However, the number of the party candidates to contest parliamentary seats in the upcoming parliamentary election is not exact for now. The party is for independent involvement in the election this year. The party has not come up with an initiative on the issue in question, but negotiations were said to be underway. The party's stance on the authorities-opposition dialogue is said to be extremely positive. The existing resources can be considered normal. The party considers important the state support and approval of a new legislative act for the optimization of the political system.

### **JUSTICE PARTY**

Established: November 1993

Registered: 1994, 2002



Party Chairman: Ilyas Ismayilov

Name of the interviewee: Mutallim Karimli

Position of the interviewee: Deputy chairman

Liberal, social and democratic values constitute the cornerstone of its ideology. The target of the program is the restoration of the social justice. It is on the left to centre in the political system. It is believed that the number of the members is 23000 people. The membership fee is 0.10 AZN. The budget is variable. The party has 68 city and district organizations (only four district organizations have headquarters). The party has held two congresses. A congress is held every four years. The latest congress was attended by 450 delegates. The elected bodies in the party are the chairman, the Political Council and the Supreme Board.

Young party members account for 15-20 percent with women comprising 10 percent (a woman sits on the political board). The number of new recruits over the last year is said to be about 150 people. The party's public relations is conducted through Geopolitika (Geopolitics) newspaper (publication has been suspended now). The party's candidate stood in the 2003 presidential election. Only one candidate was elected to parliament although 32 parliamentary candidates stood in the 2005 election.

Thirteen of 300 candidates were elected in the municipal election. The key target of the party for 2010 parliamentary election is to have minimum three candidates win mandates for parliament. The planks in the election platform are the building of a democratic, law-governed state, improvement of the social situation and gaining votes of intelligentsia members. The target for the number of the

candidates to vie for parliamentary seats is set to be 20-30 people. The party considers it possible to set up a bloc with the parliamentary parties of the UAPFP and the Great Salvation Party. The party's attitude towards the authorities-opposition dialogue is positive and considers the dialogue inevitable. As for the existing resources, the party has some problems and is in great need of developing itself. The party considers as key the restoration of the proportional election system, the state support and perfection of the legislation for the optimization of the political system.

### **TRADITIONAL POPULAR FRONT PARTY**

Established: 2006

Registered: 2007

Party Chairman: Mirmahmud Fattayev

Name of the interviewee: Mirmahmud Fattayev

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

The keystones of the party ideology are united Azerbaijan, national democracy and equality. The party is on the right of the political system. The number of the party members is said to be 20,000 people. The budget is not fixed. The number of the city and district organizations is five. The number of the conducted congress is one and is held every three years. The quota for a congress delegate is set at the ratio of 1/50. The elected bodies of the party are the chairman, the Control-Audit Commission and the Supreme Board. The youth amount to 12 percent of the party members (a deputy chairman is young; young people are also in the Supreme Board) with women at 10 percent (there are also women in the Supreme Board)

The number of new recruits in 2009 amounted to 500 in 2009. The party's public relations are implemented through constant conferences across districts. The party boycotted the 2008 presidential election and stood in the 2005 parliamentary election with 30 candidates. Of about 200 party candidates in the municipal election in 2009, three gained mandates.

For the 2010 parliamentary election, the key target of the party is to succeed in the number of seats able to set up a parliamentary faction. It is planned to nominate about 70 parliamentary candidates. The party's stance on involvement in election blocs is positive and talks are under way to this end. The party is also positive about the authorities-opposition dialogue. As for the existing resources, the party is in dire financial problems. It proposes the re-registration of the parties, the state funding and making changes to the law on the political parties.

### **MUSAVAT PARTY**

Established: November 1911

Registered: November-December 1992

Party Chairman: Isa Gambar

Name of the interviewee: Arif Hajili

Position of the interviewee: Deputy of Chairman

Musavatism (equality), Turkism, modernity and liberalism are the keystones of its ideology. The party says it is on the centre right of the political spectrum. Although the party refused to give a certain figure out about the party members, it claims to be second only to the NAP. The mem-

bership fee in the party amounts to 1 percent of the salary. The monthly budget of the party is 1000 AZN. The number of the city and district organizations is 80. The number of the held congresses is 7 and is held every four years. The quota for a congress is at a ratio of 1/200. The elected bodies of the party are the chairman (the term of office is limited; the chairman cannot be elected more than two terms), the Supreme Council and the Chairmen of the district organizations (elected at conferences).

The youth in the party constitute 30 percent (one member of the party Supreme Board is young) with women standing at 25 percent. (Five of 16-member Supreme Board of the party are women). The number of the new recruits over a year is said to be at about 10,000. The party's public relations are carried out through *Yeni Musavat*, *Demokrat* and *Paralel* newspapers. The party boycotted the latest presidential election.

In the 2005 parliamentary election, 41 candidates contested for parliamentary seats and five of them gained mandates. In the 2009 municipal election, about 30 candidates won seats. The key planks in the election platform will be establishment of democratic society, liberal economy, equality, integration into Euro-Atlantic space. It is planned to nominate candidates from all election constituencies. As for the party's involvement in an election bloc, it is considered possible in cooperation with the Union for Democracy. The party's position on the authorities-opposition dialogue is also positive. Although the currently available resources are not high, it is planned to mainly target dissatisfied electorate. The party considers it important to adopt a new legislation on the political parties.

## **MODERN MUSAVAT PARTY**

Established: 5 May 2001

Registered: 8 May 2002

Party chairman: Hafiz Hajiyev

Name of the interviewee: Hafiz Hajiyev

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

Social-democratic ideas are keystones of its ideology. It is on the left of the political system. The number of the members is 90,000. In line with the party statute, the membership fee is voluntary; therefore, the party's budget is unstable. Although the number of the city and district organizations is 67, only two of them have headquarters. In all, the party held three congresses. Congresses are held every four years with a quota of 1/200. The elected bodies in the party are – the chairman, the Control-Audit Commission, the Executive Board and the political board. The youth in the party amount to 34 percent with women (a deputy chairman is a woman) constituting 27 percent. The number of the new recruits in 2009 is said to be about 1000 people.

The party's public relations are carried out through Muasir Musavat newspaper and [www.muasir-musavat.net](http://www.muasir-musavat.net) website. The party stood in the 2008 presidential election with its own candidate. In the 2005 parliamentary election the party nominated 18 candidates; however, the party is not represented in parliament. Of 124 candidates in the 2009 municipal election, five got elected. The main objective of the party for the 2010 parliamentary election is to support the president's course and win 10 parliamentary mandates. The key planks of the election platform are to persuade society to own position proceeding from democratic and liberal values. The number of the parliamentary candidates

is between 85-90 people.

The party leadership is negative about involvement in electoral blocs. However, the party's attitude toward the authorities-opposition dialogue is positive. The material and technical resources are enough. Its position on the re-registration of the parties and state funding is positive; is for the approval of a new law on the political parties and supports giving new powers to parliament and the conduct of political reforms.

### **SOCIAL PROSPERITY PARTY**

Established: 1998

Registered: 1999

Party Chairman: Khanhuseyn Kazimli

Name of the interviewee: Hamid Nuraddinoglu

Position of the interviewee: Chairman of the Supreme Board

The keystone of its ideology is the building of a fair state. The target of its program is to succeed in a fair state and social welfare. It is on the right in the political system. It is said that the number of members is 35,000 people. The membership fee is 1 percent of the salary. The budget of the party is unstable. The number of the city and district organizations is 73 with the number of the conducted congresses six with a period of five years between congresses (the latest congress was held in 2008). The quota is at a ratio of 1/300 per a delegate.

The elected party bodies are – chairman, the supreme board, the control and audit commission and chairmen of district organizations. The young party members constitute

30-40 percent of the members with women 30 percent. It is said the number of new recruits for the party (over the last year) was 250 men. The party carries out public relations through Sosial Rifah newspaper and www.asrp.az website. The party was involved in the latest presidential election in the capacity of an observer. Although three parliamentary candidates nominated three candidates and one of them was elected to parliament. A total of 200 candidates stood in the 2009 municipal election and 30 of them were elected municipality members. The party-drafted law "On evaluation" was submitted to parliament by the party. The party's main objective for the 2010 parliamentary election is to get representation in parliament. The party has claims to three mandates in parliament.

The main feature of the party's election tactics is to be pro-opposition. The number of contenders in the election will be between 60-70 men. The party has taken a decision against involvement in blocs. The attitude towards the authorities-opposition dialogue is considered a peculiarity of normal society. The party possesses sufficient resources to fund its own candidates in the 2010 parliamentary election. The party considers it necessary to implement state support for the development of the party system and the approval of a new legislation.

### **HOPE PARTY**

Established: 1993

Registered: 1993

Party chairman: Igbal Agazada

Name of the interviewee: Taleh Aliyev

Position of the interviewee: Deputy Chairman

Nationalism and democracy are cornerstones of its ideology. It is on the centre right of the political system. The number of the party members is indicated to be 50,000 people. Under the party statute, the membership fee is 1 percent of the minimum wage. The party's monthly budget varies from 10,000 to 12,000 AZN. The number of the city and district organizations is 61. The number of the conducted congresses is three with four years interval between them. The delegate quota for a congress is at a ratio of 1 to 50. The elected bodies in the party are the chairman, the Supreme Council, the Control-Audit Commission and the chairmen of the district organizations.

The young party members amount to 70-80 percent (under 45 years old). The amount of the women in the party is 30 percent (deputy chairman, the chairwoman of the control and audit commission are women). The number of the new recruits for the party over the last five years is between 2500-3000 people. The party's public relations are carried out through Yeni Umid newspaper. The party stood in the 2008 presidential election in the capacity of an observer. Of the 31 parliamentary candidates in the 2005 parliamentary election, one candidate received a parliamentary mandate. The party nominated 395 candidates in the 2009 municipal election and 42 of them were elected to municipalities.

The main objective of the party for the 2010 parliamentary election is to stand in the form of a bloc. It is planned to nominate over 60 parliamentary candidates in the election. As for the election bloc, the party is engaged in two projects on blocs. The party's attitude towards the authorities-opposition dialogue is positive. As to the available resources, it has some problems. The party proposes re-registration of the parties, inacting state funding and making



changes to the law on the political parties.

### **UNITY PARTY**

Established: 1995

Registered: 1995

Party Chairman: Tahir Karimli

Name of the interviewee: Tahir Karimli

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

Azerbaijanism and national values are the cornerstones of its ideology. The target of the program is to succeed in the national unity. It is centrist in the political system. The number of the party amounts to 16,000 members. The membership fee is 1 percent of the salary. The party's budget is variable. The party conducts its policies through 47 city and district organizations. The number of the conducted congresses is three with two year's interval. The delegate quota for a congress is at a ratio of 1/50; the latest congress was attended by 764 delegates.

The elected party bodies are the Chairman, the Grand Board, the Control-Audit Commission and the Board of Elders. The youth in the party constitute 20-25 percent, with women 10-12 percent (three women sit on the Political Board). The party did not recruit new members over the recent years and lost part of members. The party's public relations are carried out through Vahdat newspaper. The party supported Ilham Aliyev's candidacy in the 2008 presidential election.

Though 46 candidates run in the 2005 parliamentary election, none of them were elected to parliament. The party nominated about 100 candidates for the municipal elec-

tion, yet none of them gained mandates. For the 2010 parliamentary election, the party's key objective is to achieve representation in parliament.

Territorial integrity, pro-democracy slogans will be the main planks of their election platform.

The number of the candidates in the election will vary from 10 to 20. The party does not consider it acceptable for involvement in the election blocs. The party is positive about the authorities-opposition dialogue. As for available resources, they are low. The party advocates the re-registration of the parties, the state support and the approval of a new law, etc.

### **CIVIL SOLIDARITY PARTY**

Established: 3 November 1992

Registered: 26 September 1992

Party Chairman: Sabir Rustamkhanli

Name of the interviewee: Samir Hasanli

Position of the interviewee: Political Board member

Nationalism is the basis of its ideology. The party is on the centre of the political system. The number of the party members (according to a 2009 report) is 30,000 people. Under the party statute, the membership fee is 0.50 AZN. The party has no fixed budget. The number of the district and city organizations is 79. As of now, the party has held six congresses (the latest congress was in December 2007). A party congress is held every four years. The set quota for delegates is on a ratio of 10/100. A total of 408 delegates attended the latest congress. The elected bodies in the party are the chairman, the supreme board, the political board

and the Central Control-Audit Commission.

The young party members amount to 60 percent (under the age of 45) with women at 15 percent (one percent in the political board; 2 percent in the Central Control-Audit Commission; 10 percent in the Supreme Board). The number of new recruits for the party over the last year is 600 people. The party's public relations are carried out with annual reports and party members' meetings with people. The party did not stand in the 2008 presidential election. Some 31 candidates ran in the 2005 parliamentary election and three of them were elected to parliament. A total of 115 people were elected to municipalities in the 2009 election. The party submitted a drafted law on the Karabakh problem, made proposals to the draft law on the budget, etc.

For the 2010 parliamentary election, the party's key target is to gain 10 mandates. The party is planning to nominate candidates from about 70 constituencies. Young people are its priority in the challenges of the party. The party has said that it would not attend election blocs. It is positive about the authorities-opposition dialogue. As for available resources, they are a bit weak. The party considers the state funding and approval of a new law inescapable.

### **NEW AZERBAIJAN PARTY**

Established: 21 November 1992

Registered: 18 December 1992

Party chairman: Ilham Aliyev

Name of the interviewee: Mubariz Gurbanli

Position of the interviewee: Deputy executive secretary

Azerbaijanism, civil solidarity, democratic values are cor-

nerstones of the party. It is on the center right of the political system. The number of the members is 505,000. The membership fee is 0.50 AZN. As for the existing budget, the party's activities are transparent. It has 83 city and district organizations. As of now, the party has held four congresses. The party congresses are held every for years. The 2008 congress was attended by 622 delegates. The party's elected bodies include the chairman, the Political Council, the Central Control-Audit Commission and the chairmen of the district organizations. The youth in the party constitute 39 percent with women at 35 percent. The new recruits in 2009 amounted to 29,000.

The party's public relations are carried out through Yeni Azerbaijan and other newspapers, [www.yap.org.az](http://www.yap.org.az) website. The party ran in the 2008 presidential election with its own candidate and the party chairman was elected as president. Of 125 candidates in the 2005 parliamentary election, 63 received mandates. In the 2009 municipal election, the party gained 10,431 mandates.

The main objective of the party for the 2010 parliamentary election is to receive more mandates. The main plank of the election platform is to implement an election platform in line with the idea of Azerbaijanism and an adherence to the ideas of the national leader Heydar Aliyev. It is expected that the number of contenders in the parliamentary election will amount to 125. The party is not positive about its involvement in election blocs. The party considers the authorities-opposition dialogue possible. As for available resources, the party's financial and technical opportunities are normal. It is positive about state funding of the parties and considers making changes to the law on the political parties inevitable.

## **COMPATRIOT PARTY**

Established: 1990

Registered: 1993

Party chairman: Mais Safarli

Name of the interviewee: Mais Safarli

Position of the interviewee: Chairman

Azerbaijanism and statehood are the cornerstones of the party's ideology. The party is on the center of the political system. It is said that the party comprises of 12,000 members. The membership fee in the party is voluntary and is not binding under the party statute. For this reason, its budget is unstable. The party has 37 city and district organizations. The number of the conducted congresses is four with four-year interval between congresses.

The number of the delegates at the latest congress is put at 670 people. The elected bodies in the party are the chairman, the deputy chairmen, the Political Council and the Control-Audit Commission (all of them are elected at congresses). Some 68 percent of the party members are young people with women amounting to 45 percent. The party's public relations are carried out through the press service of the party. The party has no own mouthpiece. The party attended in the latest presidential election as an observer. The party nominated 12 candidates in the 2005 parliamentary election. Over 100 party sympathizers were elected to municipalities in the 2009 local election. In the 2010 parliamentary election, the party's key objective is to support the presidential course and to maintain the stability of the country. The party will contest the 2010 parliamentary election for the right to representation with 15 candidates. The party is positive about involvement in

election blocs. However, as of now, it is not represented in any bloc. The party is also positive about the authorities-opposition dialogue and the current resources are enough to succeed in set tasks in the election.

To recap, it is necessary to underline that in any case, the elections conducted during the independence period in conditions of multi-party system are an important step for the development of electoral democracy in the country, as well as to make it a tradition to change political leadership via civil and constitutional elections under competitive atmosphere. There are big hopes that the 2010 parliamentary election will be a new qualitative step to this end.

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Center for Strategic Studies under the  
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2010  
8 M. Ibrahimov Street, AZ 1005,  
Baku, Azerbaijan

**Tel.:** (+994 12) 596 82 41

**Fax:** (+994 12) 437 34 58

**E-mail:** [info@sam.gov.az](mailto:info@sam.gov.az)

**Web:** [www.sam.gov.az](http://www.sam.gov.az)

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