

The election code calls for a mixed electoral system, with the election of 135 members from single member districts and 42 from a list of candidates proposed by the president.²⁷ Registration for candidacy in a single member district requires 3000 constituent signatures.

The parties vary significantly in their financial and administrative strength and in their level of local and regional organization. The most advantaged in this regard are:

1. The Socialist Party of Kazakhstan is the successor to the Kazakhstan Communist Party, renamed in August 1991. Party membership is relatively unrestricted, though predominantly rural. As of August 1992, the party numbered around 50 000 members, although it has since declined. Although it is predominantly Kazakh in membership (65 per cent), it has significant representation from other minorities. Although programmatic statements are rather thin, one may assume that its basic agenda is to retain the social and economic privileges of its members in the face of privatization and marketization. In this, they are markedly advantaged, having inherited much of the media access and property of the communists.
2. The People's Congress Party is headed by the noted poet Olzhas Sulemeinov, who was a leader of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement. This group too is self-consciously interethnic and class-neutral, seeking to unite all ethnic and income groups in one organization. Membership numbered approximately 24 000 in late 1992. It is widely believed that Nursultan Nazarbaev promoted the creation of People's Congress at a time when he felt that the stigma of the past rendered affiliation or too close an association with former communists a political liability. As time passed, however, Nazarbaev distanced himself from the movement, largely, it is believed, because of the ambitions of Sulemeinov.
3. The Popular Unity Party, which held its first organizational congress in October 1993, is headed ostensibly by Kuanysh Sultanov, former head of the republic's Komsomol organization, and currently a vice-premier in the government. This is a late entry to Kazakh politics, but is also closely associated with the president, in fact claiming him as their unofficial

²⁷ See *RFE/RL Weekly Report* (December 9, 1993).