

# PARTY BUILDING IN TAJIKISTAN

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Party building in a genuinely democratic society appears to be a rather simple affair: the people elect political parties, and the one that receives the majority of votes forms the government and determines the priorities of state policy until the next election. So, ideally, political parties are voluntary organizations which form a bridge between the people and the government, thus creating an efficient system along the lines of people-party-government. In so doing, the parties that lose the election create the opposition with the confidence that the government system itself guarantees their right to engage in political activity.

Real party building looks much more complicated, particularly in countries like the CIS states where democracy is incomplete or still developing. The former Soviet republics began from the same starting point, they all rejected the totalitarian Soviet-style system dominated by one party and a single ideology. But during the past fourteen years, each country of the Commonwealth has taken certain steps toward democracy. For example, whereas Turkmenistan and Belarus have simply made cosmetic changes to the old Soviet system of gov-

ernance, in Ukraine and Georgia political parties are already capable of having a significant impact on the election results.

But none of them have yet been able to make the transition to the above-mentioned formula of people-party-government. Across the board, the formation of parties and party building have ended up in the hands of the local elites—clan, regional, business circles, criminal, family, and so on. These elites are merely using political parties as a tool to gain or retain power. And this power is all the more coveted as the fight continues for deficit resources and a share in the divvying up of property. In this situation, the people are just as alienated from politics as they were in the Soviet system. Whereby the scarcer the resources, the more intense the struggle for power.

It is customarily believed that political parties in Tajikistan are formed according to the territorial principle, and the interparty struggle is most often seen as a standoff among the regional elites. But regionalism did not become an indispensable part of our republic's political life overnight. It is a rather complicated process that has been going on for more than one decade now.

## The Cloning Process

Party building in Tajikistan can be provisionally divided into three stages. The first stage took place during the Soviet era, when the ruling Communist Party comprised a single whole with the state machine. For Tajikistan, the 1920s-1930s were a unique experience in building a contemporary party under the conditions of an Eastern society, whereby Moscow managed to keep rather effective tabs on any manifestations of regionalism and clannishness in the local party elite. But even the Tajik Communist Party of the Soviet era could not entirely avoid accusations of regionalism and parochialism. At the end of the 1940s, it was dominated by people from the north Leninabad (now Sogd) Region, that is, representatives of the Leninabad clan, although applying the term "clan" to Tajikistan is not entirely correct. To be fair, it should be noted that the "Leninabadites" (mainly people from the region's capital of Khojent and partly from Kanibadam) did not have complete domination in the way it is usually described today. At the same time, the Leninabadites occupied most of the highest posts, while a certain tacit career "ceiling" was applied to people from other regions, which there was little chance of rising above. The power struggle went on within the one ruling party, was kept out of sight, and was limited in nature, while the groups themselves were rather amorphous, inconstant, and unstructured.

The situation began to change during the perestroika years. First, due to the abrupt reduction in subsidies from the Center and the rising resource deficit, it became increasingly evident that the property pie was soon to be divided up. Second, it soon became obvious that the Leninabadites, whose long years of dominance was largely thanks to support from the Center, did not have such a firm foothold as people thought. What is more, the political struggle at the top gradually went beyond the boundaries of a purely inner-party standoff. It was soon understood that it was easier to challenge the domination of the Leninabadites outside the formed and ossified party structure than within it. The nomenklatura groups relied increasingly on their own regions, informal land unions, and associations in the power struggle. In this way, regionalism and parochialism gradually encompassed the whole of society, and opposition along territorial lines became unexpectedly aggravated at all levels of power and public associations, from district committees to scientific institutes and creative unions.

In this situation, one of the main forms of struggle against the former system of power distribution was to create new political associations and parties offering an alternative to the C.P.S.U., which signified an end to the single-party era in the republic and the beginning of the second stage in party building. The first opposition public structures appeared in the republic, although they did not have any experience in the political struggle or the necessary organizational skills.

The formation of alternative political associations began in 1989 when the first attempt was made in the republic to create a National Front. But this attempt was short-lived apparently because it was obviously custom-designed and ordered from above. It was essentially an attempt by the powers that be to keep the nascent opposition under wraps. But then the National Movement, Rastokhez, arose, which was much more successful. At any rate, on the eve of the first parliamentary elections at the beginning of 1990, its leaders were talking seriously about obtaining at least one third of the seats in the new legislative body. The hopes of the opposition were crushed after the February events of 1990. At that time, the republic's capital was engulfed in its first wave violence and unrest, with the blame being placed on the leaders of Rastokhez. And the elections held under emergency conditions led to the formation of an essentially one-party parliament (the Communists received 95% of the seats in it).

Disappointment made it obvious to the opposition-minded part of society that new political structures must be created. In August 1990, a new alternative political organization appeared in the republic—the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), which was joined by many active participants of the Rastokhez movement. And as early as 27 September, the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) held its founding convention. The history of this party goes back to the mid-1970s when the first underground Islamist cells appeared in the south of the republic. At the end of perestroika, they emerged from the underground, first as a branch of the All-Union Islamic Revival Party (with its center in Moscow). In December 1990,

the Islamists managed to officially register their party as an independent political organization with the republic's Ministry of Justice.<sup>1</sup>

But the new political parties proved to be more independent and active on paper than in practice. Most of the democrats were members of the intelligentsia, since many of them did not see any prospects for themselves within the framework of the old system. Correspondingly, the democrats suffered from the same old disease that inflicts these "intelligent" associations—alienation from the masses, while the Islamists felt a chronic need for secularly educated people (or at least those with a university diploma), perhaps due to their traditional mistrust of the intelligentsia.

Under these conditions, it was pointless to talk about serious party building. The democrats tried to form a network of their own cells in the regions, but this required years of arduous work. The Islamists, on the other hand, who had recently emerged from the underground, proved entirely incapable at this time of building a contemporary-style political party. The opposition parties were essentially hastily created public organizations with no precise structure, party discipline, or developed strategy and tactics. Such associations could only function efficiently during meetings and demonstrations when there was a chance of quickly seizing power. Their leaders were usually of a specific type, people with a great deal of charisma, but not prepared for long and tedious organizational activity.

This may be why the Tajik opposition preferred the tactic of meetings and demonstrations to developing long-term strategy aimed at cultivating their influence among the masses. As a result, the opposition parties were unable to emerge from their regional frameworks and become truly national political associations. They enjoyed support mainly from natives of the Karategin Valley and the Gorny Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAR), while throughout the rest of the republic their influence was minimal. The ruling elite did not fail to take advantage of this by creating an anti-opposition outpost in the south Kulob and north Leninabad (Sogd) regions. Representatives of the main ethnic minorities in the republic also had a very negative attitude toward the opposition.

Of course, the crisis did not boil down to just a regional confrontation. Tajik regionalism in itself is a multifaceted phenomenon caused by economic, social, and political factors. What is more, we need to keep in mind the ideological factor, since the entire range of opposition movements and groups, from the pro-Western democrats to the Islamists, put up resistance to the old communist elite.

The injudicious policy of the upper echelons led to opposition members of the most diverse, at times even incompatible convictions—supporters of the IRPT, DPT and Rastokhez movement—joining forces, and by 1991 they acted as a single force. During the civil war that flared up in 1992, the forces against the opposition created the National Front, in which people from the Kulob Region predominated.<sup>2</sup> By the beginning of 1993, the opposition formations had been defeated, and the administration and main leaders of the opposition parties had moved abroad. The National Front came to power in the republic. And although at the beginning of the civil war its representatives brandished communist slogans, they eventually distanced themselves from the Communist Party of Tajikistan (CPT) and the former elite.

Then began a period of political stagnation, which lasted for several years; all alternative opposition parties were banned, and for some time there was only one registered party in the republic, the CPT. But it was no longer part of the state machine, assuming a rather amorphous position "alongside the authorities." The country's new leadership did not see any need in reviving the Communists' previous dominating role in society. A new power elite emerged in the republic, the backbone of which was formed from natives of the Kulob Region. It was new in the fullest meaning of the word, its representatives not only had a different regional, but often a different social origin, and also differed from their predecessors in social status, education, and experience. Correspondingly, the new elite soon faced several problems, how to overcome regional boundaries, spread their influence, and reinforce their foothold not only in the regions, but also nationwide.

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<sup>1</sup> See: P. Mullojanov, *The Islamic Clergy in Tajikistan since the end of the Soviet Union*, ed. by Stephane Dudoignon and Komatsu Hisao, Islamic Area Studies, Kegan Paul, London, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> See: D.V. Mikulskiy, *Anatomiia Grazhdanskoi voiny v Tadzhikistane*, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1977.

It gradually became understood that the best way to achieve this goal was to create a political party, that is, a new type of organization with an extensive network of cells at all levels of society, as well as with a strict hierarchy and precise strategy and tactics. In other words, the matter concerned a party of power which would perform the same functions in society as the C.P.S.U. had performed during Soviet times, however, catering to the new conditions of the transition period. The People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT) was formed to play this part, the founding convention of which was held on 10 December, 1994. But its transformation into the party of power did not begin until its fourth convention in 1998 when the country's president, Emomali Rakhmonov, was elected party chairman.

On the other hand, the Peace Treaty signed by the government and opposition in June 1997 created conditions for the opposition parties to return to the political stage. According to the provisions of this document, the authorities were obliged to remove the ban on the activity of opposition parties in the republic (primarily the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan and the Democratic Party), in light of which there were proposals to introduce corresponding amendments into the country's Constitution. But the opposition (which at that time was officially called the United Tajik Opposition—UTO) was supposed to disband its armed divisions and transfer to legal forms of political activity. In this way, implementation of the peace agreements laid the foundation for establishing democratic relations in the republic, within the framework of which political parties could fight for seats in parliament and for their candidate at presidential elections by constitutional means.

A big step forward was introducing amendments into the country's Constitution which legalized the activity of religious political parties. This legalization of an Islamist organization is unprecedented in Central Asia. It is the only instance of its kind, since usually the supporters of Islamic movements in the region's states have but one way to engage in politics—underground activity.

Under the new conditions, the advantage went to political parties with a good organizational base, professional staff, and capable of carrying out daily and tedious work. The time of amorphous public associations and movements of the 1989-1997 type had receded forever into the past.

So in 1998, the most recent and third stage of party building began in Tajikistan. It was characterized by the emergence of a new type of political organization capable of engaging in the political struggle by constitutional means under multiparty conditions.

The parties reached this stage with different political experience and opportunities. The CPT and ruling People's Democratic Party proved the most prepared to meet the challenges of the new conditions. The first was ready thanks to its organizational experience, qualified staff, and traditions accumulated over the decades of previous activity. Although it no longer enjoyed its former resources or status, it had sufficient time for adaptation. As for the PDPT, its assets included the administrative resource and the support of the authorities both at the local and federal levels.

Parties which belonged to the UTO at the time the Peace Treaty was signed were in a somewhat different position. Soon thereafter, the alliance of democrats and Islamists fell apart. The United Tajik Opposition was disbanded, and the democratic forces found themselves in a state of permanent crisis. The Rastokhez movement essentially ceased its activity, and the Democratic Party split into two wings in 1996, supporters of the so-called Tehran Platform (registered by the Ministry of Justice in 1997 as the DPT) and adherents of the Almaty Platform, which was closer to the leadership of the UTO. The two wings did not unite until the end of 1999, not long before the parliamentary elections, which prevented this party from obtaining enough votes to get into the Majlisi Oli (the country's parliament).<sup>3</sup> And the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, which formed the backbone of the UTO, had around 2,000 members by the time of its second registration. What is more, in form and structure, it was more reminiscent of a public movement than a contemporary political party. Even in comparison to the prewar period, its base was limited to regional boundaries, and in many regions of the country it had to begin its activity essentially from scratch.

After their return to Tajikistan, the DPT and IRPT preferred their former tactic of cooperation with the government, whereby most of the problems and issues that arose were resolved on a private basis. Particularly since, according to the peace agreements, most of the leaders of the UTO had received posts

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<sup>3</sup> Data on the parties is presented according to information from radio BBC [<http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/tajikistan/>].

in the republic's power structures (within the 30% quota), or they were given the opportunity to engage in business. This gave an additional boost to peaceful settlement of the conflicts and confrontations that constantly arose during the first year after the peace treaty was signed.

What is more, warming up of the political atmosphere gave birth to a new phenomenon, the appearance and emergence into big politics of new political organizations, which by 1998 was no longer considered an unusual event. Until it acquired the status of the party of power (that is, before Emomali Rakhmonov was officially declared its chairman), the PDPT existed for several years as an independent political organization. But on the threshold of the first (after signing the peace treaty) parliamentary elections held in February 2000, an alliance of small new parties and associations appeared in the republic (most of them were still not officially registered), which assumed the role of the new opposition and the main critics of the powers that be. The most active were the Junbish movement and the Adolat va Tarakkiet Party (Justice and Development). And although the critical speeches of the new opposition leaders were quite moderate, against the background of a cautious silence from the former UTO leaders, who shied away from any confrontation with the authorities, they looked extremely radical.

Thus, by 2000, three main centers of political power had formed in the republic: first, the PDPT, that is the party of power; second, the old opposition, represented by the two former wings of the UTO—the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan and the Democratic Party; and third, the new opposition, largely consisting of recently created movements and parties. But the 2000 elections showed that the appearance of the new parties did not have much effect on the general breakdown and correlation of political forces in the country, since according to the voting results only three parties gained seats in the lower house of parliament: the PDPT, CPT, and IRPT.

Not only did representatives of the new parties, which naturally had been registered by this time, fail to exceed the 5% barrier required to get into the Majlisi Oli, the democrats failed too, which indicates the crisis which the country's democratic movement found itself in.

## From Elections to Elections

The 2000 elections were largely a turning point for the country's political organizations. The voting results graphically showed that under the new conditions, the principle of party building applied at the beginning of the 1990s was no longer acceptable. We will remind you that at that time political parties were essentially formed on a regional basis and were amorphous and poorly organized structures. It became obvious that in the next few years those structures would climb to the top which managed to break free from regional constrictions and become national political organizations with equal impact and support both in the south and the north of the country.

In the four years since the elections, the political breakdown in forces has not so much changed as taken on a specific and stable form. Several of the movements and parties which made up or supported the new opposition (such as Junbish) have left the political scene after being unable to achieve official registration or find the necessary financial and other resources to continue their political activity. By the end of 2004, there were six political parties officially registered with the Ministry of Justice: the People's Democratic Party (PDPT)—the party of power; the Communist Party (CPT); the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT or IRP); the Democratic Party (DPT); the Socialist Party (SPT); and the Social-Democratic Party (SDPT).<sup>4</sup>

In so doing, there was essentially the same number of participants in the 2005 election race. Only the SDPT (the leader of the so-called new opposition, which was called the Adolat va Tarakkiet Party before registration) was the only new addition to the list of registered parties. But the parties differed significantly from each other in terms of quality and professionalism of party work, financial and organizational possibilities, and party building principles. For example, only three of them overcame the re-

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<sup>4</sup> See: *Political Parties of the Republic of Tajikistan*, OSCE, Dushanbe, 2004.

gional barriers to any significant extent and could consider themselves national, that is, they had representative offices functioning in all or most regions of the country. This primarily applies to the PDPT, the Communist Party, and the IRPT.

In terms of its possibilities, the PDPT holds essentially unrivaled first place, whereby not only due to its significant administrative resource. It has achieved impressive results in forming a suitable infrastructure. In particular, it has created an extensive network of primary organizations not only in the regions, but also in all areas of the republic; its basic cells are headed essentially everywhere by staff secretaries, that is, those working at a professional level. Among them are many former functionaries of the Communist Party who have a great deal of organizational experience and knowledge accumulated during the decades of party building. Local government institutions usually render all kinds of assistance in holding the PDPT's functions; many civil servants (admittedly not to the same extent as in Soviet times) are members of the party of power, and its literature is actively, and we can say by quota, distributed throughout every region of the republic. Of course, this party is still far from encompassing society in the way the C.P.S.U. did, but nevertheless it has been able to create the largest and most efficient political apparatus in the country. What is more, its ranks are filled with leading politicians, prominent businessmen, and the best known representatives of the intelligentsia.

As for the CPT, although it holds stable second place in terms of influence and number of supporters in society, its most urgent task in recent years has been retaining its former foothold and not attempting to conquer new expanses. Admittedly, the party has largely retained its electorate, which is ready to vote for it no matter what. But, just as in other CIS countries, it is the older generation in Tajikistan that tend to vote for the communists, and their numbers are on the steady decline. The CPT has particularly suffered in terms of cadres: for the past few years many of its prominent figures have left to join the party of power. Nevertheless, it is still one of the few national parties which has essentially retained its former structure and network of primary organizations in almost every region of the country. In so doing, the communists are still basically close (even loyal) to the authorities. Many people in the republic do not even recognize the CPT as the opposition, believing it and the party of power to be "two sides of the same coin."<sup>5</sup>

But the greatest progress in the area of party building has been achieved by the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, keeping in mind the path it has gone since its second registration with the Ministry of Justice (1998) to the present. Indeed, the IRPT essentially began again from scratch in 1997 with only 2,000 members, while today its ranks have swelled to 22,000. The Islamists were the first to create a network of primary organizations throughout the republic, including in the Sogd Region and the Kulob group of regions, which at one time were the main bastion of the pro-government forces. Incidentally, the party's largest branch just happened to be created in the Sogd Region (around 7,000 people). The party's achievements include the appearance of its primary organizations in Badakhshan, or to be more precise, in the local Ismaelian community, although just recently the IRPT was considered a purely Sunnite organization.

During the past few years, several qualitative changes have been noted in the party. On the one hand, the radicals who were dissatisfied with the party's conciliatory policy toward the authorities have left its ranks and more moderate citizens of the republic, who used to be put off by the party's radical image, have taken their place. And on the other hand, in addition to the old (in terms of work experience) leaders, representatives of the young generation have become influential in the party. Many of them have a good secular education and uphold moderate viewpoints. Of course, as in any other party, the IRPT is still divided into moderates and radicals. But it is worth noting that at the parliamentary election held on 27 February, 2005,<sup>6</sup> representatives of the moderate wing were included on the list of its candidates for deputy in the Majlisi Oli. And what is more this list was prepared and approved by rank-and-file party members.

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<sup>5</sup> *Zindagi*, No. 3, 20 January, 2005, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> This article went to press before the Central Election Commission published the final results of the voting at the 2005 parliamentary election.

The efforts of its leaders to select and train qualified cadres (this work is done by a special department within the party) have helped to turn the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan into a political constitutional-type structure. These efforts have resulted in an increase in the qualifications of its leaders in the provinces in recent years. Today it is the second party in the country (after the PDPT) with the financial resources to allow it to have a network of staff secretaries and leaders in its primary organizations. There are quite a lot of successful businessmen among its supporters and activists, mainly representatives of small and medium businesses, which also increases the IRPT's opportunities compared with other opposition parties.

In contrast to the Islamists, the secular or democratic part of the opposition is still trying to struggle to its feet and dealing with indetermination and dissension. Not long before the 2005 elections, the chairman of the Democratic Party, Makhmadruzi Iskandarov, was arrested, which only aggravated its long-term crisis. The Socialist Party is also split into two factions. The Social-Democratic Party is a little better off, but it has still not passed the formation stage and cannot compete on equal terms with the three main parties.

The common misfortune of all the parties representing the secular opposition is the absence of a developed infrastructure and a dearth of professional cadres and financial resources. Their influence is restricted to specific regions, and the leaders of the primary and regional branches are forced to work under the same conditions as everyone else. The ideological views of the above-mentioned parties are just as indeterminate. Only the SDPT has presented a sufficiently competitive election platform. As for the SPT, its proposal to resolve the economic problems by raising taxes will hardly enhance the party's rating among the electorate.

In truth, the Tajik voters are rather weak in questions of ideology and economic policy. The main criteria for them today are still such factors as the party's ability first to ensure stability and peace in the country, and second, to fix the economy, resolve social problems, and raise the population's standard of living. In this sense, the IRPT is beyond rivalry since most of the people associate it with strengthening stability and peace in the country (which in itself has already promoted a certain economic upswing in the years since the conflict). Voters are also attracted by the CPT's platform, where special attention is focused on social issues. Despite the negative association which the Islamists nevertheless arouse among a significant percentage of the electorate, the IRPT (like the CPT) has a relatively stable number of voters willing to vote for it no matter what.

According to the data of a survey conducted in 2001 and 2004 by the Shark Information Analysis Center, during the past three years, the PDPT's rating has increased from 27.4% to 31.4%, the IRPT's from 2.9% to 8.2%, while the communists' rating has been significantly shaken, falling from 44.5% to 20.7%. But, as we have already noted, the CPT is still the second most influential party in the country.

Approximately one month before election day, most local experts said that the results of the 2005 parliamentary elections were a foregone conclusion and would most likely be an exact repetition of the results of four years ago: the PDPT would receive the majority of the votes and at least 15 of its representatives would get into parliament on the party lists; second place would go to the CPT (4-6 deputies); and the IRPT, regardless of its real potential, would obtain 2-3 mandates.<sup>7</sup>

## Prospects

Two mutually exclusive trends are observed today in the work of the country's political structures. On the one hand, all the parties are striving to become national and spread their influence and presence to all regions. And on the other, political power in each party is concentrated to one extent or another in the hands of people from one of the country's regions. This contradiction is particularly obvious when analyzing the activity of the largest parties, which have an extensive network of branches throughout the

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<sup>7</sup> See: *Zindagi*, No. 3, 20 January, 2005, p. 16.

republic. At the middle and grass roots level, their activists comprise of representatives from all the regions. But in the upper echelon of these parties there is usually a disproportionately high percentage of representatives from one or several regional/subregional groups. Even parties which were initially created with supposed immunity to parochialism sooner or later find themselves within tight territorial boundaries. For example, the SDPT, which is conceived as a supraregional political organization (it is believed that its founder R. Zoirov, a native of Kazakhstan, is not infected by the Tajik regionalism virus), is currently becoming a party which relies on the northern regions, and it has little chance of gaining active support in the south. Apparently the conditions that have developed over the past decades are in themselves dictating the character and nature of party building in the republic.

The question arises of what will party building look like in Tajikistan in another few years, and to what extent will it correspond to the democratic standards of government by the people?

As for the near future in politics, political scientists are basically of the same opinion. We have already mentioned the forecasts regarding the composition and activity of the parliament elected in 2005. And the upcoming presidential election in 2006 is just as predictable. Hardly anyone doubts that if the current president, Emomali Rakhmonov, puts forward his candidacy (and this is most likely), he will have no great difficulty in being elected to another term (even without resorting to the administrative resource). Most of the country's population associates the image of the current head of state with stabilization of social life and centralization of power, which has had a favorable effect on the economy as well. What is more, there is no other personality on the political scene (at least today) who could create serious competition for the current president on a national level.

Nevertheless, the boost from the peace agreements of 1997 which stimulated the economic growth of recent years must be reinforced soon by real and large-scale reforms in the economy and the social sphere. After all, such questions as economic development, social justice, employment, and raising the standard of living are becoming of prime importance. These problems are so urgent for present-day Tajikistan that any delay in their resolution will inevitably invest them with political significance.

At present, the republic's government and the leadership of the ruling party are showing their support of democratic transformations and market reforms. In terms of their world views, the representatives of the ruling elite, who are currently shaping the country's economic policy, are sufficiently close to the Russian ideologues of the Putin reforms. They can both be characterized as pro-market statesmen, that is, they are supporters of market reforms, but condone greater participation of the state.<sup>8</sup> But pro-market statesmen usually ignore the social sphere. When they are in power, the state cuts back its social obligations toward the population: benefits are cancelled, utility fees and transportation costs go up, and so on. The difference is that by canceling benefits the Russian government is transferring responsibility to the regions and their Tajik colleagues shifting the burden onto the shoulders of the labor migrants (admittedly, not all, but some social obligations). On the whole, pro-market statesmen are supporters of macroeconomic reforms, and in so doing they usually declare the need for developing small and medium businesses, but in reality this area is considered secondary.

In this way, if the current trends of the Tajik government in the economy and social sphere are retained (which is most likely), the emphasis in the next decade will be placed on implementing macroeconomic projects and gradually increasing the state's role in the economy. On the other hand, the state's social obligations toward the population will be cut back and the development of small and medium business will be pushed into the background. In the meantime, under the specific conditions of present-day Tajikistan, the macroeconomic development model (in general terms it was developed back in Soviet times) is not capable of resolving several of the most urgent and pressing problems facing society. Mega Soviet-style projects cannot provide work for even a small percentage of the population today, and cutting back on the state's social obligations under conditions of growing unemployment will lead to a drop in the standard of living and correspondingly to a rise in social tension.

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<sup>8</sup> See: B. Kagarlitskiy, "Kolkhoz 'Kreml'," *Novaia gazeta*, 27 January, 2005 [<http://2005.novayagazeta.ru/nomer/2005/06n/n06n-14/shtml>].



Under the macroeconomic model, basic resources are usually distributed unequally, being concentrated in the hands of the ruling elite, which will aggravate the struggle among the groups competing for access to the market levers allowing control over the distribution of national resources. In our country, this development of events will cause a new outbreak of regionalism, which will inevitably lead to an increase in social and political tension in society. Under these conditions, regionalism is becoming the main factor influencing the entire formation and development of both the ruling and opposition parties.

The political prospects for most parties will depend on resolving economic problems. If the government cannot find a way out of the economic crisis, it will have to toughen up its domestic policy in order to hold onto power, eliminating or limiting the activity of potential political rivals, primarily parties and public associations, as the most efficient mechanism of civilian mobilization. In this respect, the events in Georgia and Ukraine, where the well-organized opposition destroyed the seemingly unshakeable power system, is a good lesson for post-Soviet power regimes unwilling or incapable of undergoing democratic reforms.

In this way, legal party building will largely fall under the state's control. In terms of the extent to which it encompasses society, the party of power will become increasingly reminiscent of the C.P.S.U., and will permit only sufficiently loyal political structures to participate in the elections. Democratic mechanisms and attributes will be completely retained, but they will be used not for the general benefit of the people, but for reinforcing the powers that be. Elections will gradually assume an increasingly provisional nature, and their results will be determined not during open competition between the leading and opposition parties, but on the basis of preliminary and private agreements among them. In so doing, the political parties (like the elite groups standing over them) will be faced with the dilemma of either adopting new game rules or rejecting legal methods of political activity. Radicalization of the parties and associations squeezed out of the framework of constitutional political activity will become inevitable.

Of course, this alternative of the development of events is possible only with "successful" implementation of the currently observed trends in the economy and social sphere. But it is very likely that many negative aspects will be eliminated or adjusted during the economic reforms. By the way, it may turn out that after the 2006 election, the government's economic policy will be defined by a different team of specialists with different views and work methods. If the population's life improves during the next presidential term, and social tension in society is successfully defused, this will also have a positive effect on the country's overall democratization. Then party building may take on forms much closer to the norms and standards of real democracy.

At any rate, in the next few decades, Tajikistan's experience, like that of other CIS countries, will apparently be another confirmation of a generally known truth: development of real democracy is impossible without building a contemporary market economy.