

THE FAMILY IN POWER: A NEW PAST FOR AN OLD COUNTRY

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Introduction

The Bakiev family, which remained in power in Kyrgyzstan for five years, relied on formal and informal methods to rule the country and never hesitated to violate the division of power principle. To tighten their grip on power, its members held forth about their noble ancestry

and distorted the past to secure the future. The Tulip Revolution, officially recognized as a popular revolution and a protest against the corrupt authoritarian regime, was described as a turning point in the country's history.¹

The myth placed Bakiev and his family in the center of events: monuments, new street names, books and articles, scholarly conferences, films, theatrical productions, etc. were created to plant the myth in the people's minds.

A draft law on amnesty for the people actively involved in the events of March 2005 and guilty of premeditated crimes (with the exception

of felonies)² was one of President Bakiev's last efforts to commemorate the Tulip Revolution.

The law was not enacted; in 2010, two weeks of pompous jubilee celebrations were followed by the April revolution which removed President Bakiev from power.

Here I have analyzed the public speeches, interviews, commentaries, and publications of members of the Bakiev family and their ideologists which appeared in 2005-2010 to answer the following questions: What role did revision of the past play in family governance? What were Bakiev's real goals before and after the revolution? What sort of information was expected to comprise the chronicles of the family's glorious history compiled by the Bakievs and their ideologists? What position did Bakiev hold as president and how did he interpret the March 2005 events?

¹ See: K. Isaev, *The Year 2005. The Beginning of Renaissance of Kyrgyzstan*, Bishkek, 2005 (in Kyrgyz); T. Kenensariyev, "A Democracy Experience in Kyrgyzstan: History, Realities, Prospects," in: *An Experience of Democratic Reforms in the Eurasian Expanse: Comparative Models and Practical Mechanisms*, ed. by A.M. Baymenov, B.K. Sultanov, Almaty, 2006 (in Kazakh).

² See: "Prezident nameren obyavit amnistiyyu k 5-letiyu martovskoy revolyutsii," *AKIpress*, 23 March, 2010.

The Family in Power and the Glorious Past

The Bakievs, many of whom filled high state posts or led informal structures, had enough power to falsify the true history of the country.

Six brothers comprised the core of the president's large (even by the Kyrgyz standards) family:

- Zhusupbek (born in 1951) was Deputy Director of the Development and Investment of Communities Agency;
- Kanybek (1956) headed the village Yrys administration and the Teyit agricultural community;
- Zhanybek (1958), after reaching the rank of lieutenant general (with the help of his brother president), headed the State Protection Service and controlled the republic's defense and security structures;
- Akmatbek (1960), Director of Saly-Ata (which translates from the Kyrgyz as Father Saly), was also known as shadow governor of the Jalal-Abad Region and (according to a widespread conviction) "controlled everything and everyone;"³
- Adylbek (1961) was advisor to the foreign minister and chairman of the National Karate Federation of Kyrgyzstan;

³ O. Zhuk, "8 epizodov iz zhizni Akhmata Bakieva," *Delo No.*, 3 December, 2010.

- Maratbek (1963) was appointed ambassador to Germany as soon as his brother came to power.

The president's elder sons (born in his official marriage to Tatyana Petrova) also belonged to the ruling clan. Marat, the eldest, was Deputy Chairman of the State Security Committee and tried to spread his influence to the other defense and security structures to trim the power of his uncle Zhanybek.

Maxim, the president's younger son, headed the Central Agency for Development, Investments and Innovations and in this capacity controlled all the financial flows coming from abroad. In no time, he became a de facto second in command in the republic. At 32 he nurtured much more daring ambitions: "anointed" as the future potentate, he expected Art 52 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic to be amended accordingly.⁴

The president was naturally at the very top of the governing hierarchy; the regime, the result of his own efforts and those of his clan, contradicted the division of power principle. Centralized power and vast authority in the absence of institutionalized responsibilities allowed Bakiev to transform the events of March 2005 into the Tulip Revolution and commemorate it accordingly; the presidential decrees, speeches, and publications were "a compass pointing the way" for those implementing his ideas.⁵

The regime placed its stakes on the media, but the information they supplied was fairly contradictory: the president talked of his policy as designed to promote democracy while also continuing the authoritarian traditions. It should be said that the democratic and authoritarian versions Bakiev supplied never contradicted one another.

As distinct from the president, the family enjoyed much greater freedom when talking about the present and revising the past; their unyielding position never took into account the expectations of the international and domestic actors. In short, the discourse of the ruling clan was completely devoid of a democratic component.

The relatives never shunned authoritarian arguments; they never hesitated to talk to journalists and were never too shy to hold forth about their heroic deeds; they named streets after themselves and even erected monuments to themselves. The president's family was lauded in books, articles, and films. All sorts of family foundations poured money into cultural events designed to glorify the clan and its members and confirm the family's domination in the republic.

The discourse the presidential family diligently developed was used by civil servants, pro-government journalists, and politicians; this helped the president legitimize his grip on power and everything he was doing. On the other hand, there was no agreement in the family on certain issues related to the distant and, most important, recent past, March 2005 in particular: the varied opinions about the country's recent history did not completely fit the president's version of events.

Despite the conflict between the president's ambivalence about the past and his relatives' authoritarian approach, the media and all sorts of printed matter agreed on the prevailing version expressed, in particular, by Zh. Sariev and his *Duty to the Fatherland. The Roads to Follow... President*

⁴ According to Art 52 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, "If the President is unable to exercise his powers for reasons stated in this Constitution, the Toraga (Speaker) of the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) thereafter shall exercise his powers until the election of a new President. If the Toraga is unable to exercise the powers of the President, the Prime Minister shall carry out his duties then henceforward until the election of the new President of the Kyrgyz Republic." The planned changes would have passed on this right to Maxim Bakiev. It was mainly the opposition media and politicians who talked about the political decisions being made during Kurmanbek Bakiev's rule aimed at facilitating the power transfer to his son.

⁵ A. Bakachiev, "Human Rights are the Highest Value. Interview by A. Makeshov with Public Prosecutor of the Alamedin District," *Erkin Too*, No. 88 (1802), 21 November, 2008, p. 9.

Kurmanbek Bakiev⁶ and by S. Zholdoshev and S. Tokoev in *The Descendants of Teyitkhan*⁷ and *The Suzak District: Time and People*.⁸

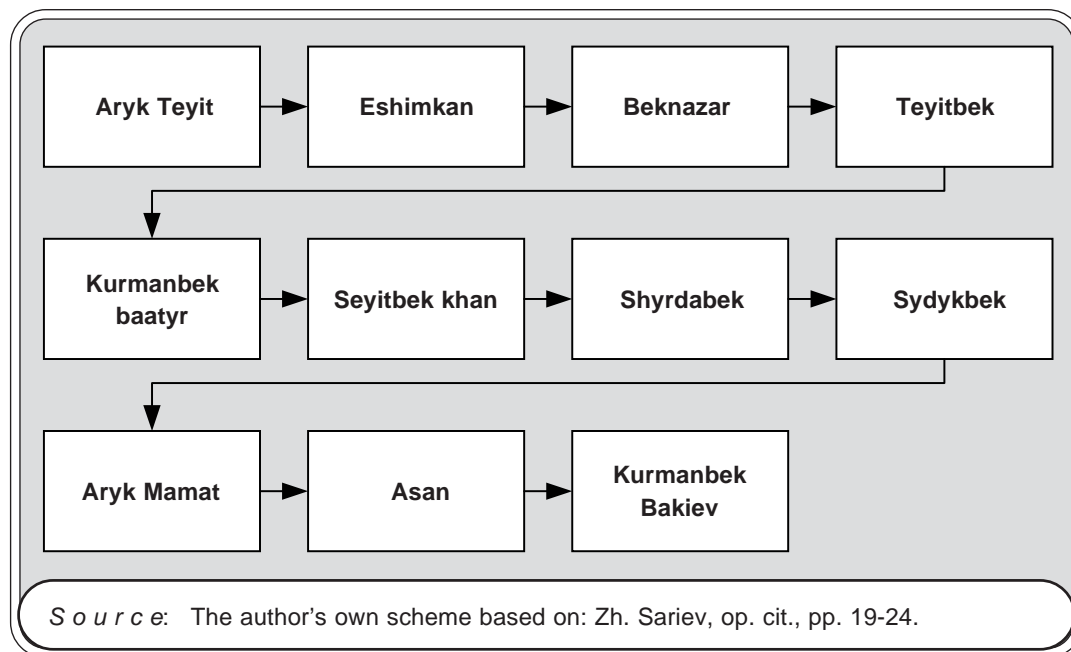
The authors demonstrated extensive knowledge of the artistic means employed by hagiographers and no mean skill when applying their methods to their own creations; they revised the past to present a new version of tribalism and regionalism. The Kyrgyz were described not as a single people but as a fragmented community which, before the advent of communism, lived in clans and tribes.

It should be said that official ideologists presented the relatively egalitarian social structure as an impressive hierarchic system crowned by the Teyit tribe, to which the presidential family belonged. To add plausibility to these inventions, it was suggested that further research be carried out.⁹

According to K. Azimov, the Teyit tribe (which belonged to the Ichkilik tribal group) was not merely “one of the most important tribes” but “the cornerstone of the Kyrgyz;”¹⁰ it gave birth to 11 khans; the last, 11th, khan being the president.¹¹ It turned out that president’s namesake Kurmanbek, an epic baatyr (hero) of the 16th-17th centuries who fought for his people’s freedom and independence, was one of the president’s ancestors.

Figure 1

**The Kyrgyz Khans of the Teyit Tribe
(according to K. Azimov)**



⁶ See: Zh. Sariev, *Duty to the Fatherland. The Roads to Follow... President Kurmanbek Bakiev. Documentary Narration*, Bishkek, 2009 (in Kyrgyz).

⁷ See: S.N. Zholdoshev, S.I. Tokoev, *The Descendants of Teyitkhan*, Bishkek, 2010 (in Kyrgyz).

⁸ See: *The Suzak District: Time and People*, ed. by S. Stambekov, A. Akzholov, M. Ashirbaeva, Bishkek, 2009 (in Kyrgyz).

⁹ See, for example: S.N. Zholdoshev, S.I. Tokoev, op. cit.; Zh. Sariev, op. cit.

¹⁰ Zh. Sariev, op. cit., p. 22.

¹¹ See: Ibid., p. 23.

K. Azimov did not limit himself to the arguments described above; he put the term *azho* (ruler or potentate)¹² into circulation, which became instantly popular with the media, political community, intelligentsia, ordinary people, and even Bakiev's opponents.

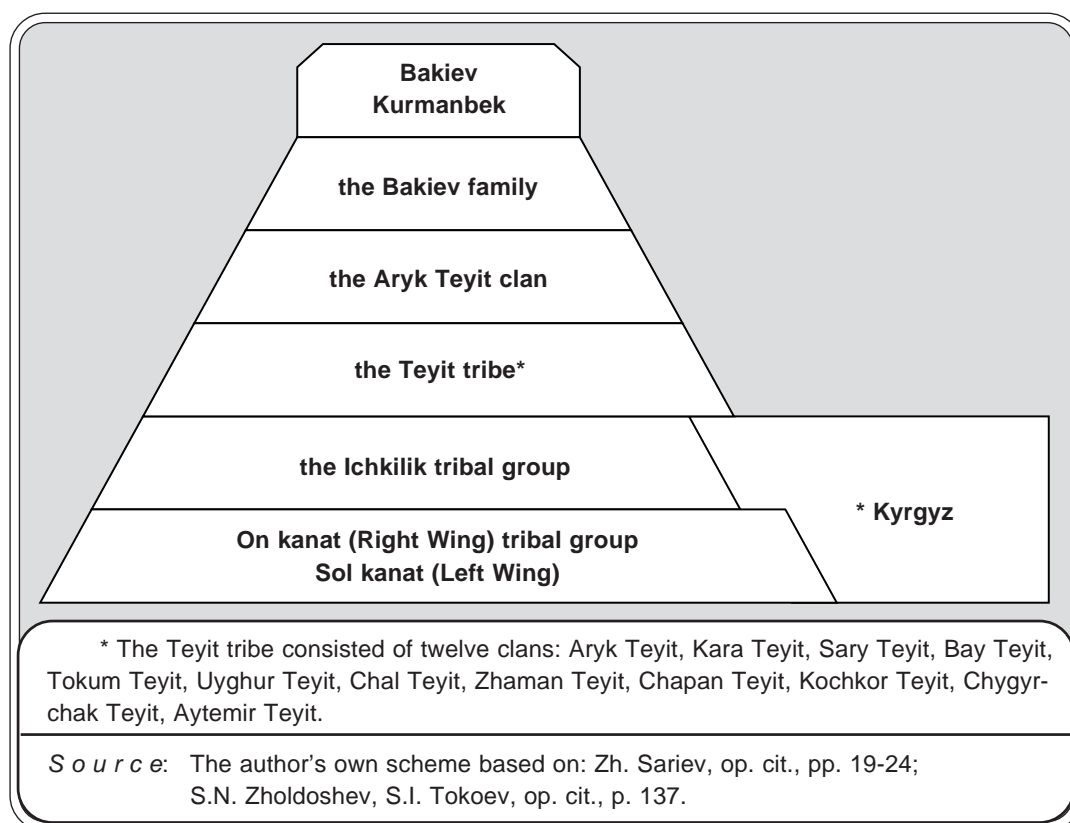
Soviet times received more or less similar treatment (with no references to the class struggle or repressions); the egalitarian idea of communism was replaced with a hierarchy organized around the Jalal-Abad Region (Suzak District), home of the Bakiev clan.

His father, Saly Bakiev, an employee of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and later of the KGB, who "kept officers of the security service on a short leash,"¹³ was presented to the nation as a hero, one of the outstanding members of the Teyit tribe and of the region where he lived. All of them were loyal to the country and had fought for the glory of the Motherland.¹⁴

According to many of those who lauded the ruling family, the Soviet period was a haven of social security and prosperity, largely thanks to the Bakievs, who filled high posts under Soviet power.¹⁵

Figure 2

The Clan-Tribal Hierarchy (according to K. Azimov)



¹² Sometimes the media used the term as the Kyrgyz variant of the word "president."

¹³ O. Tolebekov, *Life Dedicated to the Revolution, or the Bakiev Brothers. A Story Based on Documents*, Bishkek, 2007, p. 17 (in Kyrgyz).

¹⁴ For example, streets were named in honor of Abdyvasit Bakiev (the president's uncle) and Saly Bakiev (the president's father); a stipend in honor of Gulnara Bakieva (the president's niece) was established for scientific achievements.

¹⁵ See: M. Shadi uulu, "President Bakiev of Nookat," *Aalam*, 23 April, 2009, p. 8.

Similar methods were used to glorify and legitimize the Bakiev's activities during Akaev's very much demonized regime to make the Tulip Revolution, which brought Bakiev to power, look inevitable.

In this way, those who ruled the country changed the past to make it part of the present, and one that packed a hard punch at that.¹⁶

How the Bakievs Tried to Achieve Self-Legitimization

In a country where formal legal institutions had lost their credibility, the March 2005 events required strong ideological underpinnings. The new regime, likewise, needed legitimacy. The newcomers in the corridors of power preferred to stick to the principle of continuity of power, but they had to rely on the rhetoric of renovation as an important part of their rule. The memory of the revolution was intended as a cognitive, emotional, normative, legal, moral, and institutional justification of the Bakiev's claim to power, irrespective of what really happened in the country in March 2005. Nothing of what had happened could be described as a coup, yet everything should be commemorated as a revolution: in politics, how people are made to remember the past is more important than what actually happened; in this sense the present creates the past.¹⁷

Each and every revolution has its own heroes; in Kyrgyzstan, the Bakievs claimed this pedestal. The glorious image of the family acquired much more clarity against the background of the neutralized opposition and limited pluralism.

O. Tolobekov's *Life Dedicated to the Revolution, or the Bakiev Brothers*,¹⁸ full of family photographs, is best described as a myth or heroic epos of the members of the president's clan.

Zhusupbek Bakiev, one of the president's brothers presented as the key figure of the March revolution, died a year later of heart failure. His tombstone bears the following inscription: "He dedicated his heart to the people and gave his life to the Fatherland," which became a mantra and finally made him "one of the organizers and leaders of the popular revolt against the injustices of the previous rulers."¹⁹

In this way, the revolution was personalized while one person (invariably related to the Bakievs) represented collective willpower and collective drive. Commemoration of the name of the president's brother and the memory of the revolution are closely related to the traditional cult of the dead. A school, a park, and a street were named in honor of him, while a monument and a museum were intended to glorify his life. Zhanybek, another equally influential brother, set up and headed the Zhusupbek Bakiev Foundation.

The sanctified dead brother was the ruling family's unrivaled argument.

March 24 was declared a National Holiday: gala events swept the country in which the local authorities, singers, dancers, artists, and athletes all participated. Popular jubiliations lauded the members of the ruling clan. Two weeks before the riot that removed the Bakiev regime from power, Governor of the Batken Region A. Tagaev wrote: "The changes bred hopes that this government would serve the people."²⁰

¹⁶ See: E. Florescano, "Od historii—pomnika władzy, do historii wyjaśniającej," in: *Po co nam historia?* przekład Mróz M. wstęp Łepkowski T., Warszawa, 1985, pp. 71-72, 78.

¹⁷ See: M. Ziółkowski, *Przemiany interesów i wartości społeczeństwa polskiego*, Poznań, 2000, pp. 92, 105.

¹⁸ See: O. Tolobekov, op. cit., pp. 8, 12.

¹⁹ See: Vyshla v svet kniga "24 marta 2005 g.—Narodnaya revolutsia," *Kabar*, 22 March, 2006.

²⁰ A. Tagaev, "Narodnaya revolutsia vernula doverie i nadezhdu naroda," *AKIpress-Ferghana*, 24 March, 2010.

The jubilee events which extolled the Bakievs as heroes were but only one of the methods the ruling family used to boost its new image.

Kurmanbek Bakiev himself wrote several books to present his own ideas about the past and present. In his *Martovskaia revoliutsia: istoricheskiy vybor naroda* (The March Revolution: the Historic Choice of the People),²¹ the president took the trouble to discuss his closest circle and oppose it to Askar Akaev's family.

In 2005, Bakiev wrote: "The events of March 2005 were the result of usurpation of power by one man, one family, and its closest circle which placed their selfish aims above the destiny of the people and the country. This is a grave lesson for us all."²²

The harsh criticism of the nepotism of the previous regime served as a suitable background for presenting the Bakievs' laudable traits. The following methods were used:

- First, self-representation with use of the epic traditions of the Kyrgyz and folklore images: heroes of our day, the family members inherited positive personal traits from the previous generations and continued the glorious deeds of their great and noble ancestors. The Bakievs spared no effort to depict themselves as sincere, honest, good-natured, and hard-working people who "lived on their earnings alone"²³ and regretted the hard lot of the country and its citizens.²⁴
- Second, self-representation through their deeds: they posed themselves as heroes of the revolution unable to remain indifferent to injustice and forced to fight the regime. "It was thanks to Zhushup Bakiev that the huge rallies did not develop into serious clashes."²⁵ The large family was described as a well-organized institution in its own right and, together with the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan, led those who protested against the corrupt power.
- Third, self-representation as victims of the regime: the people were treated to a long story of the persecutions the Bakievs had suffered; they were presented as revolutionary martyrs: "...our family had to live under the pressure of the powers that be;"²⁶ "aware of the scandalous lawlessness, Zhanysh Bakiev naturally could not stand by and watch. He tried to fight for justice and again suffered for his efforts."²⁷

Zhushup Bakiev was the central figure; his death was used as proof of his sincerity and total dedication to the people and the country; it was the family's sacrifice to the cause of justice.

- Fourth, self-representation through populism; the Bakievs needed grass-roots support and never tired of saying that the president's family was not only part of the Kyrgyz people, but also stood above it. All of its members (starting with the father) held high offices in Soviet times: "All of them, each following his own path, acquired vast life experience; they filled high posts and were needed in the country."²⁸ Reference to the past justified their key positions in post-revolutionary Kyrgyzstan.

²¹ See: K. Bakiev, *Martovskaia revoliutsia: istoricheskiy vybor naroda*, Bishkek, 2010.

²² K. Bakiev, "O natsionalnoy strategii razvitiia i blizhayshikh zadachakh. Poslanie Prezidenta KR K. Bakieva narodu Kyrgyzstana," *MCN*, 29 September, 2006.

²³ This meant that they were hard-working and honest people with a modest lifestyle who relied exclusively on their official earnings (see: "K. Bakiev. He was a Public Figure Totally Dedicated to the People. Interview by Ø. Tølobekov," in: Ø. Tølobekov, op. cit., p. 6).

²⁴ See: K. Bakiev, "Vozvrata k prezhnim poriadkam ne budet," *Obshchestvenny Rating*, 29 December, 2005; verbatim report of President of the KR K. Bakiev's answers in Russian during live broadcast by GTRK on 20 December, 2006, available at [<http://www.president.kg/press/vistup/1844/>], 25 July, 2009.

²⁵ K. Bakiev, *Martovskaia revoliutsia: istoricheskiy vybor naroda*, p. 63.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

²⁸ "K. Bakiev. Proritetov ne menyau," Interview by D. Evlashkov and P. Negoitsa, *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 27 January, 2006; federal issue No. 3982.

High posts were a natural part of the family's biography, yet the people still feared that the clan system of state governance and usurpation of power might be revived. The president quenched these fears by saying that in contrast to the Akaevs, his family "never interferes in the affairs of the state and appointments." Each of its members was independent and never needed support from the president; at the same time Bakiev wrote "nobody can influence me."²⁹

The president argued that the members of his family had the right to pursue professional careers; their appointments to high posts allegedly met national interests, while the honesty, diligence, and professionalism of the Bakievs guaranteed their loyalty to the people and the state.

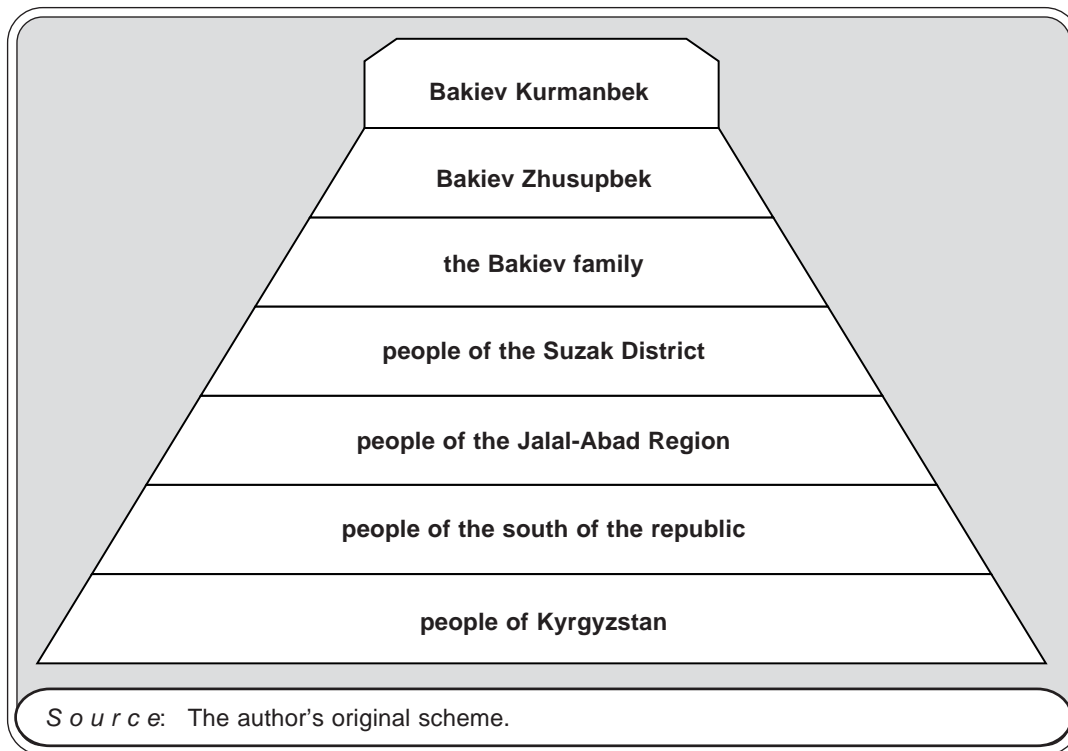
The consistent efforts to make heroes out of the Bakievs and their glorification planted the idea of a social structure opposed to unjust power: a hierarchy of individual and collective elements.

Empirical studies of the relevant elements show that the president, his late brother, and then the entire Bakiev family were at the very top of the hierarchy, while the Suzak District, the Jalal-Abad Region, and the republic's south were places of revolutionary glory.

The origins of the ruling family ensured a privileged position for the southern clans; the myth about the revolutionary victory of the people from the south of the republic allowed the Bakievs to occupy the central place in the power structure.

Figure 3

The Official Hierarchy of the Revolution Heroes



Bakiev and his family managed to move to the very top mainly because democracy was practically undeveloped. The ruling clan manipulated the memory of the revolution to fortify the symbolic

²⁹ K. Bakiev, "Vozvrata k prezhnim poriadkam ne budet."

foundation of the present in which not only the president, but also his closest circle, had access to the very limited resources. By interpreting the revolutionary events in its own way, the family managed to add legitimacy to a state order in which it *de facto* stood above the Constitution and laws and was unaccountable to any branch of power, while also establishing control over private property.

The opposition and symbolic elite that sided with it were kept in check, freedom of speech and the press was restricted, while support of the official version of symbolic reality was encouraged: the people in power decided what should be remembered and what should be forgotten.

The Bakievs never wanted an attractive façade: they persistently worked toward a version of the past that would convince the people and help them to become an imagined loyal community.³⁰

The Revolution as Presented in Kurmanbek Bakiev's Discourse

During his five years in power, Kurmanbek Bakiev regularly referred to the revolution and the March 2005 events in his public speeches, interviews, commentaries, and publications, but this did not help the ruling elite to arrive at a logical ideology and united position regarding the revolution.

In 2010, the president wrote his *Martovskaia revoliutsia: istoricheskiy vybor naroda*, which presented his very specific explanation of the revolution; he moved away from his previous thesis to offer a totally new opinion about the revolution, the people, and the state. Published on the fifth anniversary of the March revolution, it was intended as a new form of commemoration of the revolutionary events and of readjustment of the mechanisms of power.

The book was viewed as a new ideology of power and a “textbook of sorts for the top crust of our political community wishing to ensure a dignified future in deeds rather than in words,”³¹ that is, a return to the authoritarian system.

On the eve of Revolution Day, copies of the book signed by the author were distributed among the participants at Yntymak Kurultayy and chosen officials from all the branches of power. Unity was not achieved, probably because the “chosen” had no time to read the book: in April 2010, the Bakiev regime was removed from power.

It should be said that the memory of the revolution was needed only to add legitimacy to Bakiev's power as part and parcel of the strategy of an immediate response to the changes inside the country and beyond it.³²

The need to keep in line with the changing expectations of the people and the desire to maintain the status quo interfered with the process of revolutionary commemoration, which consisted of two intertwined—democratic and authoritarian—narratives. These versions were applied either separately, depending on the external conditions, or simultaneously, in the interests of legitimizing power.

The contradiction between the democratic and authoritarian forms of legitimization was largely created by the very ambiguous nature of the March 2005 events. The old regime was discredited, new people came to power, but nothing changed in the functioning of the political institutions, social structures, and the government. Despite official recognition of the formal and legal transfer of power, the March events radically changed the mentality and behavior of the people; most of the country's pop-

³⁰ See: B. Szacka, *Czas przeszły—pamięć—mit*, Warsaw, 2006, pp. 54-58; B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London, New York, 2002, pp. 155-162.

³¹ M. Zalikahnov, “Predislovie,” in: K. Bakiev, *Martovskaia revoliutsia: istoricheskiy vybor naroda*, p. 8.

³² See: A. Portinov, “‘Wielka Wojna Ojczyźniana’ w polityce pamięci Białorusi, Mołdawii i Ukrainy,” *Respublika nowa jesień*, No. 7, 2009, p. 26.

ulation was involved in voluntary civil mobilization when they protested (actively or passively) against the Akaev regime. The population of the pro-government regions, which supported the government at the elections and referendums, poured into the streets; passive and apathetic groups, likewise, joined in the process. The regime was brought down, which can be described as an achievement of the nation's emotional state.³³

The memory of the revolution, which some people hailed with enthusiasm and hope and others with fear and apprehension, was mainly associated with the time of Bakiev's presidency; the very fact that the memory was alive in the present generation made complete canonization of the March 2005 events impossible. The new government, forced to compete with living memory, tried to use democratic rhetoric as a cornerstone of its own legitimization.

The government tried to transform living memory, on the one hand, while merging with it, on the other, which would have made it impossible to form any opinion about the revolution and its driving forces (that is, whether it was the people who won or whether it was a mere product of political construing).

When molding the democratic version, Kurmanbek Bakiev never relied on refined conceptions stemming from fairly complicated and logically consistent constructs. He felt much more at ease dealing with popular ideas about democracy, never going beyond banal rhetoric and typically populist policies. This moved to the fore the idea that the revolution was a unique historical event which returned power to the people, that is, the myth of a social contract.³⁴

It was a myth about the freedom-loving Kyrgyz people who selflessly fought aggression and tyranny; the idea of statehood and freedom which had been cultivated for centuries was finally realized when the sovereign people created a state of their own.

It should be said that Askar Akaev, likewise, spoke of the freedom-loving Kyrgyz people; it was restored in more or less revised form (with the stress shifted to the Tulip Revolution) in Bakiev's discourse.

The events of March 2005 and Kurmanbek Bakiev's advent to power were described as a turning point in the country's life and the starting point of renovation; freedom had been returned to the people, while the present government was determined to serve it. The discourse left the people the right to oppose if the new leader usurped power; sovereignty could have rebelled once more to restore legality of power.³⁵

Kurmanbek Bakiev dressed the memory of the revolution in different attire: according to his authoritarian version, the revolution was not a struggle for liberation or restoration of the lost rights and freedoms. The authoritarian image presented popular protest not so much as a result of political opposition, but as a result of the inadequate satisfaction of social needs. The stress was not so much on limiting the president's power by means of the Constitution as on resolving all sorts of social issues (eliminating unemployment, guaranteed economic growth, and road building). The revolution was

³³ See: H. Arendt, *On Revolution*, London, 1990, p. 34; P. Sztompka, *Socjologia*, Kraków, 2002, pp. 28, 39; E. Matyenia, *Performative Democracy*, Boulder, London, 2009, pp. 6-10.

³⁴ See: H. Arendt, op. cit.; P. Sztompka, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

³⁵ The new government used the legitimating elements of Akaev's regime. This is clearly illustrated by what Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the KR Akylbek Zhaparov said in 2009. In his interview with *Kyrgyz tuusu*, he reproduced Bakiev's position by saying that the new leaders should learn the political lessons of the people's revolution: "The revolution has taught us what democracy is; it clarified the ideas and positions of the Kyrgyz people. Under our Constitution, the people are the source of power, while the president (Akaev.—N.Sh.) forgot this; he scorned the people and ignored their needs. If the president does not think about the people, they will up and drive him out of Kyrgyzstan, regardless of his power. To sum up—this is a lesson." The idea of the sovereign people survived until the April revolution of 2010 when a wave of popular protests removed President Bakiev from his post (see: A. Zhaparov, "We Received a Bankrupt State," *Kyrgyz tuusu*, No. 21, 23 March, 2009, p. 9; T. Kenensariiev, "Osnovnye istorichekie etapy razvitiya suverenogo Kyrgyzstana," p. 9, available at [<http://arch.kyrlibnet.kg/uploads/30.Kenensariiev%20T..pdf>]).

presented as a feat of overcoming fear and indecision; its definition as a “victory of the sovereign people”³⁶ was resolutely rejected. The people had been abandoned, while a new “father of the nation” in the person of Kurmanbek Bakiev assumed the duty of looking after his orphaned tribesmen.

This structure of reminiscences made it easier to legitimize the authoritarian model of power and ensured recognition of the political structures and laws of the predecessors.

Conclusion

I have posed myself the task of showing how President Bakiev and his family transformed the egalitarian past into a rigidly hierarchical one. As the myth had it, the clan displayed a lot of heroism before and during communist rule, during the years of independence, and in March 2005. To do this I had to answer the question: How did the mechanisms of commemoration of the Tulip Revolution and the Bakievs’ coming to power help to legitimize their rule?

I have identified and described the main elements of the pronouncements of the head of state, his family, and the ideologists of the regime.

On the one hand, despite inner tension and disagreements, the viewpoint of the family and the ideologists was more or less identical, while the authoritarian narration never recognized the subjective role of the people.

The past was presented as a time of heroes, all of them ancestors of the ruling family.

On the other hand, Bakiev’s rhetoric was never based on any systematized ideology. As distinct from his relatively independent family, he had a flexible response to all the internal and external stimuli; he frequently shifted his position, which explains the democratic-authoritarian ambivalence in his treatment of the revolution.

On the one hand, the revolution was presented as a culmination of the social contract which supplied a democratic description of the role of the people, the government, and the state. On the other, the memory of the revolution was used to realize the authoritarian aims and preserve the status quo.

This means that the analysis of the images of the past and the March 2005 events suggests contradictory conclusions; on the whole, however, the clan-centered hierarchic structure, which rested on the ruling family, predominated.

The aspects and mechanisms used to create the image of the past can be regarded as a combination of formal and informal structures in which the boundaries between the public and the private have been erased.

³⁶ H. Arendt, *op. cit.*; P. Sztompka, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-113.