6

The Regime in Kazakhstan

Dmitrii Furman

From the Editor

The following essay examines the process of establishing and strengthening Nazarbaev's authoritarian regime in Kazakhstan. The analysis here is limited to providing an account of how that regime has evolved. The author draws a parallel between Nazarbaev and Yeltsin, offering a comparison of the respective methods that these two pos power. By the time this article appears, the political reality in Kazakhstan would not have undergone any substantial changes. For now the regime continues to preserve a firm grasp on the country, although some new actors have made their way to the wings of the political stage. The changes overtaking the space of the former Soviet Union are accelerating and are fraught with unpredictable outcomes. The "orange revolution" in Ukraine totally nullified the Kremlin's efforts to construct a "mini-Soviet Union" and imparted a significant new impulse to the political dynamics in the countries of the CIS. There is every reason to expect serious perturbations in the states of Central Asia as well. The mounting tensions and unrest here are accompanied by growing pressure from without. And all this obtains no less in Kazakhstan that the author has so graphically described in this article.

The goal of this chapter is to show the logic behind the development and functioning of the political regime of post-Soviet Kazakhstan. In addition, I endeavor to compare the regime in Kazakhstan with that in Russia.

Only by comparing post-Soviet regimes can one understand what in their evolution was determined by a common genesis (that is, by being inherently "post-Soviet"), by more profound factors (above all, the peculiarities of national cultures, which had been repressed during the coercive Soviet unification), and by circumstances (such as the individual traits of their rulers). But the divergence of some post-Soviet political regimes is so great that they cannot be usefully compared with each other; for example, the regimes in Estonia and Turkmenistan could hardly differ more. But it is interesting to compare regimes that are relatively similar, as in the case of Russia and Kazakhstan.

One can classify all post-Soviet states according to their most important political characteristics: do they allow a possible rotation of power, do they permit an opposition to operate peacefully and legally, and can that opposition, within the framework of the constitution, win elections and take power?

With these criteria in mind, we can identify one group of post-Soviet countries where, within the framework of a democratic system, power has already shifted several times. This group includes Estonia, Latvia. Lithuania, and Moldova. In these countries there are permanent "rules of the game" established by constitutions; and there can be various winners in this game.

A second, transitional category includes several other countries that had a change in power, but it came through an armed coup, not democratic means. Such was the case in Azerbaijan, Georgia before the revolution of 2003, and Tajikistan. To a significant degree, Armenia also belongs to this group, since the transfer of power from Ter-Petrosian to Kocharian actually came through a kind of "mild" military coup. Only later were these coups legitimized by elections. In some cases, the change in power occurred by democratic means, but only once (Ukraine before the "orange revolution" and Belarus). In all of these countries, the rulers are seeking to construct a system that will preclude a further rotation in power. But the success of such attempts varies greatly. Thus, in Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko was able to create a strict regime blocking a further rotation of power. Ukraine and Georgia, by contrast, appear to have very recently joined the category of countries where the democratic rotation of power will be normal.

Finally, a third group of countries is characterized by the "absence of presidential alternatives." These are countries that, in the course of the entire post-Soviet period, have not in general had any rotation of power, and where the same person has governed from the moment that independence was declared (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan), or has been appointed as the successor (Russia). Here, rather than have changes in winners and losers under permanent rules of the game; what changes are the rules, not the rulers. One cannot see Russia—which is governed by a

successor appointed by Boris Yeltsin—as fundamentally different in principle from the other countries in this group, which have had no changes in power whatsoever. The Russian change was due to an accidental factor—the health and age of the first Russian president.

The possibility of a democratic rotation is not the only criterion for the classification of regimes, and states in the same category may differ in other important characteristics. Thus, some states have not had a rotation but do have a legal opposition (Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan), but the system is so structured that it is impossible for them to come to power through peaceful means. Uzbekistan has a pseudo-multiparty system (close to the pseudo-multi-party system in "countries with a popular democracy"); the regime in Turkmenistan is better described as totalitarian than authoritarian. Kazakhstan, in terms of its political structure, is especially close to Russia; hence a comparison of these two regimes is of particular interest.

Nazarbaev's Rise to Power

Kazakhstan, while not unique, is a graphic example of the special processes unleashed by the collapse of the communist system, where colossal socioeconomic and ideological changes coexisted with an extraordinary degree of continuity in the ruling elite. That continuity is hardly commensurate with the scale of the socioeconomic and ideological changes. In Russia, the first president, Boris Yeltsin, was a representative of the Communist Party elite, yet nonetheless a rebel who had been expelled from the leadership and then left the party altogether. In Kazakhstan, the first and thus far only president was the last first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan—Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbaev.[1]

Nazarbaev was a professional party functionary who had been promoted by an earlier first secretary of Kazakhstan, Dinmukhammed Kunaev. The latter had held this position in Kazakhstan for a very long time, had colossal influence in Moscow, and enjoyed popularity in Kazakhstan itself. In 1984 Nazarbaev became the chairman of the Council of Ministers; he was regarded by Kunaev as his possible successor. In 1986, however, at the XVI Congress of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, Nazarbaev—sensing the winds of change blowing from Moscow—unexpectedly delivered a perestroika speech highly critical of his own patron and older friend, Kunaev.

Despite an external similarity (in both cases there was an unexpected critical attack on superiors), Nazarbaev's demarche differed greatly from Yeltsin's attack on Gorbachev at the Central Committee plenum of October 1987. Yeltsin's speech was impulsive, plainly not well thought out, and very risky. At this point, Yeltsin could hardly have been thinking that this would

mark the starting point of his rise to power. Nazarbaev's speech, by contrast, was relatively audacious, but designed to advance his career. Nazarbaev undoubtedly understood that Kunaev's days were numbered. The very fact that Kunaev had promoted him and indicated him as a successor could spoil his chances for becoming just such a successor. By contrast, his criticism of Kunaev could play well in Moscow: the new general secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, was seeking young, energetic, and bold leaders, and could accelerate Nazarbaev's rise to power.[2] However, things did not turn out as he had thought. Having decided to appoint as head of Kazakhstan a "Varangian," someone without ties to the local clans, Gorbachev dispatched Gennadii Kolbin to Kazakhstan. But the appointment of a Slav as first secretary only served to ignite the "December events" of 1986 in Alma-Ata, the first mass national demonstration in the USSR.[3] It was not until June 1989 that Nazarbaev finally succeeded in becoming the first secretary of the Kazakh Central Committee.

The short-lived rule of Kolbin was accompanied by repression of those who participated in the December demonstrations and "Kazakh nationalists" in general. In Kazakhstan people were even talking about a "miniature 1937." People therefore greeted Nazarbaev's accession to power with relief, thus giving the new leader a certain "startup capital" of popular (above all. Kazakh) good will. Nevertheless, his position was very difficult. The crisis of the Soviet system was obvious; figuratively speaking, Nazarbaev had just taken a seat in a chair that was about to break apart. In fact, from the very moment he obtained the highest post in Kazakhstan, he encountered a situation where, to preserve, consolidate, and enhance his power, Nazarbaev needed to find new ideological foundations and a new legitimacy—in a word, to make a "new chair" for himself.

In a record-breaking short period of time, and without letting go of power for a single moment, Nazarbaev transformed himself from an orthodox communist into a defender of capitalism and democracy,[4] a proponent of independence for Kazakhstan, and even an observant Muslim. It is of course impossible to believe that in 1990-1991 he suddenly underwent a radical revolution in his worldview. It is obvious that, both before and after the "revolution in Weltanschauung," the only thing that really mattered to him (as indeed to most of those in the Soviet nomenklatura) was his career. Hence his worldview automatically, instinctively adapted to the situation.[5] While the change in worldview to suit the new situation did not present any difficulty, it was quite difficult to preserve and enhance his own power and to create the requisite institutional form and legitimation. All this would require considerable adroitness. Not every leader in the late Soviet era would prove capable of coping with this task. But Nazarbaev did.

Genesis of the Kazakh and Russian Regimes

The genesis of the Nazarbaev regime in Kazakhstan and the Yelstin-Putin regime in Russia is somewhat different.

With certain reservations, one can say that Russia underwent a revolution in 1991, when a mass anti-Soviet movement (even if a minority) brought their leader, Boris Yelstin, to power. This movement made him victorious in the struggle to become chairman of the Supreme Soviet, elected him president of Russia, and finally backed him during the "August putsch" of 1991.

Kazakhstan knew no such revolution, no triumph of a mass movement. The anti-Soviet and anticommunist movement in Kazakhstan was significantly weaker than in Russia.[6] Nevertheless, by the end of the Soviet period, the society of Kazakhstan was seething with agitation and torn by contradictions and, at any moment, could have exploded into bloody anarchy.

While experiencing the socioeconomic and political crisis that beset the entire USSR, Kazakhstan had some specific conditions that made the situation here especially dangerous. The gradual disintegration of the USSR was driving this country toward independence, but its multinational composition made its existence virtually impossible. The titulary nation (Kazakhs) constituted a minority of the population (39.6 percent according to the census of 1989); it was only slightly larger than the more-developed and urbanized Russian "minority" (37.8 percent). Indeed, the latter formed a majority in the capital and in a number of northern oblasts (contiguous with Russia).

In Kazakhstan (as in other republics), the democratic movement unleashed by the Gorbachev liberalization acquired a national, anti-Soviet, and in some measure anti-Russian character.[7] Although Kazakh nationalism was not aggressively anti-Russian, it did raise demands to increase the status of the titular nation, its language, and its culture, which implicitly meant a certain downgrading in the status of Russians and their culture. Such actions inevitably provoked a negative reaction from Russians, especially the Cossack population, which historically had been the avant-garde of Russian colonization and a defender of the empire's borders. In the northern oblasts, with Russians comprising a majority of the population, such attitudes gave rise to demands for autonomy and separatism.[8] Predictably, this movement elicited the support of Russia, and not only from the "communist-patriotic" groups in the Russian Federation. Voices calling for a re-examination of Russia's borders and for the annexation of Kazakhstan's oblasts with a Russian majority periodically were to be heard from the "democratic movement" in Russia; the latter's amorphous, eclectic ideology also contains some nationalist-imperial components.[9] The situation became especially tense in

the period between the August putsch (August 1991, when Mikhail Gorbachev was held captive for three days by leading Soviet military and state officials) and the Belovezh Accords (December 1991, when the presidents of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus decreed the end of the Soviet Union) that is, at time when Yeltsin had not yet conclusively decided to liquidate the USSR. Indeed, during these months Russian authorities began to threaten the other Soviet republics that it would initiate a review of boundaries should they withdraw from the Soviet Union. In September 1991, this led to open clashes in Ural'sk between the separatist-minded Cossacks and Kazakh nationalists (whom the Azat Party had mobilized and sent from all over Kazakhstan), and over the next three months the same thing nearly occurred in Tselinograd (now called Astana).[10]

Seen ex post facto, what happened always appears to have been natural and logical: what happened *had to* happen. And whatever did not come to pass was simply impossible. But the scenario of a bloody nationalist battle and Russian separatism in Kazakhstan, though unrealized, was no less probable than in Moldova. And the consequences of such separatism would have been significantly more terrifying than in a republic like Moldova, since the latter does not border directly on Russia.

In this situation, the task for Nazarbaev was to preserve power (after creating its institutional and ideological foundations) and to redefine his status—from that of Soviet party leader to head of an independent state. That was inseparable from the need to calm, or at least contain, the agitation that then gripped society. The shift to an open national position (entailing, of course, a struggle against the Soviet Union) could not only have resulted in a catastrophe for the multinational Kazakhstan, but might have enabled the rise of other, more charismatic leaders from outside the old nomenklatura elite—that is, Kazakh counterparts to Abulfaz Elchibey of Azerbaijan and Zviad Gamsakhurdia of Georgia.

The tasks that Nazarbaev and Yeltsin then faced were thus very different. To be sure, both aspired to power in a time of profound social crisis. But Yeltsin, standing at the head of an oppositionist movement, could only come to power by inflaming revolutionary passions both in the USSR at large and in Russia itself—by launching a campaign against the Soviet system and its defenders. By contrast, Nazarbaev had already come to power within the framework of the Soviet system; his task was to moderate, not exacerbate, passions. At the same time, it was impossible to preserve both Soviet power and the strong authority of a Russian leadership. However, the greater internal independence of Kazakhstan, so long as it did not take the final step toward full independence, could well be combined with maintaining a weaker Soviet regime.

This difference in situations and objectives gave rise to significant differences in policy and ideological rhetoric.

Balancing Between Opposing Camps

Nazarbaev displayed a very strong political instinct. The ideological and political game that he played during this period can rightfully be called brilliant.

He was able to strike a balance between opposing ideological positions, something not easily achieved. He juxtaposed his dynamism, his openness to the new, and his "reformism" to the narrow-minded, reactionary mentality of the majority of the Kazakh party elite.[11] The relatively weak democrats in Kazakhstan saw him not as an adversary, but as an ally—and even as protector. Or, in any case, for them he was a "lesser evil." At the same time, Nazarbaev — through and through a member of the party nomenklatura—constantly emphasized his evolution and his striving for stability and order. For members of the nomenklatura elite, he was one of their own—that is, someone who would never let them be torn to pieces by the mob. For them too, he was the "lesser evil."[12]

It was more difficult to strike a balance between nationalist Kazakh rhetoric and a policy to achieve sovereignty on the one hand and the "Soviet internationalism" and support of the Union on the other. Such a balance would allow Nazarbaev to be seen favorably both by nationalists (who would regard him as too cautious, but in the final analysis striving to establish an independent Kazakh state) and by Kazakhstani Russians and all the internationalists (who wanted someone to uphold and defend the Soviet Union) and disarmed the Russians). Here Nazarbaev demonstrated amazing mastery; he never crossed over the subtle line that would have deprived him of the support of both sides.

Indeed, in 1990-1991 Nazarbaev was the most popular politician in the entire Soviet Union.[13] He symbolized the "golden mean" between democrats and separatists (seeking to demolish the USSR) and obtuse reactionaries (determined to preserve it at any cost); he proved relatively acceptable to both sides; and he showed amazing agility in balancing between Gorbachev, his right-wing critics, and Yeltsin. The People found in Nazarbaev reason to hope, simultaneously, for the preservation of the Soviet Union, a policy of liberal reform, and the autonomy of republics. But the cautious Nazarbaev declined to assume any honorific positions in Moscow (which, given the gradual breakdown of the USSR, had no firm basis); to do so he would risk losing the less prestigious, but real power in Kazakhstan.[14] He would, in short, not trade a bird in the hand for one in the bush.

In fact, Nazarbaev successfully reaped benefits from the breakup of the USSR and, to some degree, even contributed (however cautiously) to its demise.[15] He thereby preserved his posture as a defender of the Soviet regime and portrayed all his actions to secure the independence of Kazakhstan as involuntary. Kazakhstan, after all, faced a lethal danger from a Russian movement that opposed Kazakhstan's independence or one that demanded the separation of Russian oblasts from Kazakhstan (in the event Russia itself demolished the Soviet Union, but the leader of Kazakhstan defended it). Although these Russian movements proved confused and powerless, such movements served Nazarbaev's interest: Kazakh nationalism, in the face of this Russian threat, could not act against its "own" leader, who was carefully, but inexorably, leading the country toward independence.

Nazarbaev retained his position as the ostensible "integrator" of post-Soviet space and advanced various initiatives for unification (which then "ran into a wall of incomprehension and unwillingness on Moscow's side") throughout the entire subsequent period.[16] Nazarbaev took measures that consolidated Kazakhstan's independence, repressed Russian separatist encroachments, reinforced the ethnically Kazakh character of the state, and brought a change in the ethnic composition of the population (through the emigration of Russians and "Russian-speaking" elements and the repatriation of Kazakhs from other countries). And all that was done behind a smokescreen of appeals for reintegration of post-Soviet space, with Russia at its head.[17] It is impossible to say to what degree Nazarbaev consciously created this smokescreen, or did so unconsciously, as dictated by his unerring political instinct.[18]

The Rise of Personal Rule

The process of "switching seats" commenced in March 1990, when Nazarbaev, while naturally remaining first secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party, became chairman of the Supreme Soviet that had just been elected on a new basis. In April, following the general wave of declarations of sovereignty, the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR introduced the office of president and elected Nazarbaev to the new position. It had to overcome resistance from Russian deputies, who "instinctively thought ... that the institution of the presidency ... will distance the republic from Moscow."[19]

The August 1991 putsch in Moscow accelerated the breakup of the Soviet Union. There is hardly any question that, during these tense days in August, Nazarbaev waited to see who would prevail. His position was equivocal: depending on how things turned out, he could present himself as a staunch defender of the Soviet Union (having warned Gorbachev that his liberalism

would not lead to anything good), but also as virtually Yeltsin's comrade-in-arms.[20] After Yeltsin and the Russian "democrats" won, Nazarbaev (in a report at a session of the Supreme Soviet of Kazakhstan on 26 August 1991) declared that he personally averted a storming of the Russian White House, for he repeatedly phoned Gennadii Ianaev (vice-president) and Dmitrii Iazov (minister of defense) to tell them this would be a crime. "Apparently," he said, "it worked."[21]

The collapse of the putsch greatly increased the power of leaders in all the republics. Nazarbaev, for all practical purposes, could ignore the remnants of the Soviet leadership; its power had become nominal and invisible. He could get rid of the "party fundamentalists"[22] who had impeded him; simultaneously, he could also claim to have rescued those same people from the wrath of "bloodthirsty democrats."[23]

Now that the Soviet Union was clearly doomed, it was essential to rush the process of "making a new seat." And remnants of the "old chair" were being put to the torch. In September 1991, the Communist Party of Kazakhstan held an Extraordinary XVIII Party Congress, which resolved to liquidate itself and to create a new party of a "parliamentary type"—the Socialist Party. Nazarbaev did not join the new party. Like Yeltsin in Russia (who had not striven to create and head a party on the basis of "Democratic Russia" and instead pronounced himself to be the "president of all Russians"), Nazarbaev did not want to become tied to a party, which could somehow restrict his freedom of action. Instead, he assumed the role of "president of all Kazakhstanis."[24] The time for creating presidential parties, which were in the presidents' pockets, was to come later in Russia and Kazakhstan.

The process of "reseating" was nearly complete. But it was urgent that Nazarbaev reinforce the new "chair" through a national election; the earlier election by the Supreme Soviet, under the circumstances, was already insufficient. Nor could Nazarbaev permit his power to be less legitimate than that of Yeltsin, who had been chosen through a national election.

Kazakhstan held its first national election for president on 1 December 1991. The preparations for the election were already symptomatic of the new regime. Like Yeltsin in Russia, Nazarbaev established a regime of personal power, one in which legal institutions and norms were in part instruments, in part a cover. But Nazarbaev's specific style was very different from that of the impulsive Yeltsin; the Kazakh was much more cunning and cautious than Yeltsin, preferring to act indirectly through others and remaining behind the scenes.

The Kazakh dissident and leader of the Zheltoksan Party, Khasen Kozhakhmetov (who later changed his name to Kozh-Akhmet) decided to advance his candidacy. He did so not because he had hopes of winning but

because he wanted to give voters an alternative and to make himself better known. However, the Central Elections Commission refused to let him participate in the election, because he failed to collect the requisite 100,000 signatures. That enormous number of signatures was, no doubt, set to make the nomination of alternative candidates impossible. In addition, the Central Elections Commission reported violations in his campaign to collect signatures and threatened him with criminal prosecution. A police raid on his headquarters resulted in the theft of lists with 40,000 signatures. Nazarbaev`s press office issued a special announcement denying any association to the police action.[25]

Some 88.2 percent of the electorate voted on 1 December 1991, with Nazarbaev receiving 98.78 percent of the vote and only 1.22 percent voting against him.[26] And although even a formal alternative was missing in these elections, these "Soviet" type figures actually did reflect reality. At the time. Nazarbaev unquestionably occupied the midpoint between the diametrical opposites in forces at work in Kazakhstan: if not "good," he was at least "the lesser evil" for them. On 16 December 2001, Kazakhstan proclaimed its independence, becoming the very last Soviet republic to do so.

December 1991 marked the emergence of a new regime in Kazakhstan. It was a regime based on the personal power of a president unfettered by subordination to Moscow, by adherence to any official ideology or party, or (in fact) by a constitution and laws (which were promulgated and amended as the situation required).

Mutability of Leaders and the Social Context

Yeltsin and Nazarbaev came to power through different paths and in very different societies. Nevertheless, they fashioned the same basic type of regime. That the regimes belong to the same type was undoubtedly due to the similarity in the men themselves and in the societies that they governed.

Both Yeltsin and Nazarbaev are creations of the late Soviet nomenklatura. They had long since ceased to take seriously the ossified dogmas of Marxist-Leninist ideology; in the depths of their souls, they aspired to liberate themselves from party discipline, envied Western elites, and possessed enormous ideological adaptability. It was no problem for them to embrace "democratic" ideology if that permitted them to gain and hold onto power, if it provided the requisite legitimacy. The idea of the market and private property, which evoked images of the "sweet life" of Western millionaires, even aroused sincere enthusiasm.

But the ease of Nazarbaev's and Yeltsin's ideological transformations corresponded to a superficiality of their commitment to legal democratic

values and institutions. People who have no spiritual travails making a radical change in ideology and even state had no special piety toward the constitutions and laws that after all they themselves had created. Neither man came to power in order to surrender that power for the sake of principles and norms. And both sought to transform their power into something authoritarian, which admitted no alternatives. In doing so, they inevitably committed a host of crimes; now the only option, should they lose power, was judicial prosecution, personal ruin, and (in all likelihood) destruction.[27]

Both were also dealing with societies that, for all their differences, made it possible to construct a system "with no alternatives." For all the obvious and profound differences, in a number of respects the societies of Russia and Kazakhstan were quite similar.

Above all, that included the complete absence of a consensus regarding fundamental principles—even general ones like independence, democracy, and free markets. (The diametrical opposite was to be found in the Baltic republics.) When the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the repudiation of communist ideology, and painful market reforms came to Kazakhstan and Russia, they engulfed societies that were wholly unprepared for such revolutionary changes. In 1994, only 14.4 percent of the people in Kazakhstan believed the collapse of the USSR to be useful (with a still lower rate, 5.2, among Russians in Kazakhstan); 21.3 percent thought it more useful than harmful (compared to 8.9 percent for Russians in Kazakhstan); 27 percent saw it more harmful than useful (24.4 percent for Russians); and 18.8 percent as harmful (50.6 percent for the Russians).[28] Thus, even for the majority of Kazakhs, not to mention the Russians in Kazakhstan, the very existence of an independent Kazakhstan was not regarded as an incontrovertible, self-evident truth. Four years later, in 1998, only 58 percent of the Kazakhs and 21 percent of the Russians in Kazakhstan had a positive assessment of independence; 22 percent of the Kazakhs and 52 percent of the Russians held a negative opinion. As for the future, 23 percent favored unification with Russia, 29 percent unification within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), 16 percent the restoration of the USSR, 14 percent an independent state outside the framework of any associations or unions, and 10 percent a union of countries in Central Asia. They gave this response to the question "What kind of regime will exist at the beginning of the third millennium?": 28 percent predicted "chaos," 26 percent—"democracy," 16 percent—"regime under a strong arm," and 5 percent—"Soviet power." In addition, the complete absence of consensus, the intense passion, and the strong agitation were not linked to specific alternatives, to clearly formulated positions on the basic questions and programs of parties. The absence of consensus reflected an atomization of society and eclecticism and labiality

in political attitudes. Hence some political positions easily turn into their antithesis (the "communist-patriotic" becomes the "democratic" tomorrow, and then "communist-patriotic" the day after) and fuses with the opposite.

One must add that Russia and Kazakhstan lacked virtually any experience in making a power change through democratic methods. Nor had they the experience of democratic self-government. For its part, Kazakhstan lacked any experience as an independent state of the modern type. It found itself in a situation that was unprecedented and frightening.

Such societies—which are fragmented, atomized, and frightened by the unexpected and radical turn of events—are easily manipulated and complaisant toward authorities. They find it difficult to oppose anything. They fear themselves, their anarchic potential; psychologically, they feel the need for a "strong hand" at the helm. Their most important desire is not to have a specific ruler, but to have "order." As the opinion poll showed, many saw "chaos" as the most likely scenario; it was "chaos" that they feared most of all. As to which system is best suited to resolve the country's problems, 4.4 percent said "communism," 7.3 percent—"socialism," 5.9 percent—"capitalism," 2.3 percent—"Islam," 8.8 percent—"democracy of the Western type," and 56.9—percent "any, so long as there is order."[29] This set of values was ideal for constructing an authoritarian regime that could promise to provide this much-desired "order."[30]

In sum, both Yeltsin and Nazarbaev dealt with convenient, complaisant "human material." To put together a regime that would ensure their irreplaceability was a difficult, but entirely realizable objective.

Presidents and Parliaments

Yeltsin and Nazarbaev, having become presidents, next strove to reinforce their power and to eliminate alternatives. They encountered similar problems.

Above all, they needed to overcome resistance and opposition from their parliaments. Both were indebted to these parliaments for elevating them to their present positions. The Russian parliament elected Yeltsin as its chairman; the parliament of Kazakhstan elected Nazarbaev first as its chairman, then as its president. Nevertheless, conflict between the presidents and their parliaments was inevitable.

Above all, the elections of the people's deputies of the RSFSR and the deputies to the Supreme Soviet of Kazakhstan in March 1990 were conducted under conditions of a democratic upsurge. They were probably the freest and most honest elections in the history of these two states. This had an impact on the psychology of deputies, most of whom had won a fierce battle with competitors and felt themselves to be "chosen by the people."

That made the parliaments "ungovernable." Unrestrained by party discipline, having the same eclectic, unstructured, and agitated consciousness and the same low legal consciousness as the people who elected them, the deputies represented a volatile and emotional mass.

The situation was aggravated by the fact that both Russia and Kazakhstan operated on the basis of the old Soviet constitutions, which were unsuitable for the new conditions and had been gradually supplemented by various, contradictory amendments. It was generally believed that new constitutions were needed. But adoption of new constitutions could not occur without a struggle between the branches of power. This struggle was aggravated by the fact that custom rooted in constitutionalism and separation of powers was completely absent. Indeed, the very idea of these things was lacking. Instead, both the presidents and the parliaments laid claims to total power.

The presidents, moreover, could rely on the old social customs that favored monocracy, the traditions of autocracy, and the power of khans and first secretaries. In discussions about the constitution of Kazakhstan, some proposed to call Nazarbaev a "khan," the head of an oblast "sultan," and the heads of raions "beks."[31] These two presidents could also rely on the feeling of inferiority and backwardness (which were deeply ingrained in public consciousness) as well as the fear of democracy (which, while perhaps good for developed countries, would inevitably give rise to chaos and anarchy in Kazakhstan and Russia, especially under conditions of acute social and economic crisis).[32] Furthermore, in the "democratic" part of society (both in Kazakhstan and Russia), enormously influential was the idea that the most important thing was to create the "basis" of a modern society in the form of a market and private property, and that to do this it is possible to violate the requirements of democracy. The latter could be tacked on later, as a "superstructure" to the basis that had already been created.[33] All these arguments in favor of "strong authority" would be repeated, hundreds of times, in speeches by Nazarbaev and various ideologues of his regime.

The Supreme Soviets, for their part, based their claims on a powerful ideological foundation. Both the Gorbachev reforms and the struggle of the radical democrats invoked the slogan of democratization and returning power from the party apparatus to the people. And not simply to the people, but to the Soviets. The idea of returning power to the Soviets permitted liberal and democratic forces to establish a symbolic connection with the revolution of 1917 and with sacred Soviet symbolism ("All power to the Soviets!"). Therefore both the Russian and the Kazakhstani parliaments were dominated by a very deep conviction about their authority and mission.

The social and economic crisis aggravated this conflict between presidents and parliaments. The crisis unfolded against a background of strikes,

spontaneous disturbances (even in the army),[34] and the constant threat of ethnic conflict.

There was yet another aspect of this crisis: in addition to the crisis in the relations of the "branches of power," there was also a crisis within the ruling elite. Both Yeltsin and Nazarbaev had risen quickly above their former comrades-in-arms and fellow functionaries; as often happens in such cases, the latter found it very difficult to change from a relationship of equals to one where they were subordinated to the "boss."

In Russia, this aspect of the crisis became manifest in the relations between Yeltsin and Ruslan Khasbulatov, his closest associate and Yeltsin's successor as chairman of the Supreme Soviet. To this must also be added the relations between Yelstin and his vice-president, Aleksandr Rutskoi.

The development of the situation in Kazakhstan was strictly parallel to that in Russia. When Nazarbaev became the popularly elected president, he chose Erik Asanbaev (chairman of the Supreme Soviet) as his vice-president. It thus became necessary to choose a new chairman. On 11 December 1991, despite opposition from Nazarbaev, the Supreme Soviet elected Serikbolsyn Abdil'din, a high-ranking party functionary in the nomenklatura elite who had, until then, been Kazakhstan's representative in Moscow. The election of Abdil'din was a turning point in the relations between the president and parliament.

However, in January 1992, the Supreme Soviet agreed to a significant expansion in the president's authority. It liquidated the local *ispolkomy* (soviet executive committees) and empowered the president to appoint the heads of local administration; they subsequently became the main instrument for the president's control over society. Nazarbaev nevertheless understood that he would not succeed in gaining complete control over parliament. S.A. Abdil'din, naturally, was proud of his victory. (He beat the candidate actively supported by Nazarbaev and was elected against the will of Nazarbaev.)[35] Abdil'din later became head of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan and a constant, indefatigable adversary of Nazarbaev. How Abdil'din understood his role is evident from the caption under a photograph of the two leaders that appeared in the newspaper *Sovety Kazakhstana* on 9 December 1992: "A year has passed since President Nursultan Nazarbaev and the chairman of the Supreme Soviet... Serikbolsyn Abdil'din began to perform their duties, as the embodiment of the *two peaks of a single mountain."*[36] Obviously, such words made a confrontation between the "two peaks" inevitable.

On 28 January 1993 Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet adopted a constitution. Although the opposition believed it to endow the president with exceptional power and to be authoritarian,[37] to a significant degree it was actually

a compromise—one that Nazarbaev found unsatisfactory. Throughout 1993, the pro-presidential mass media of Kazakhstan waged an unremitting attack on parliament; the assault was analogous to the parallel campaign in the Russian "democratic" mass media. In both cases the media portrayed parliament as an obstacle to reform,[38] as an organ that constantly interfered with the work of the present government and that was seeking to assume power on its own.[39] Abdil'din was also accused of having "presidential ambitions."[40] "Presidential ambitions" were beginning to be perceived in Kazakhstan as the most horrendous accusation, something akin to being accused of state treason.[41]

In the summer of 1993, Nazarbaev asked the Supreme Soviet to grant him additional authority, like that of Boris Yeltsin. The Supreme Soviet, however, did not even take up the question.

The presidential-parliamentary conflict that developed parallel in Russia and Kazakhstan had a similar outcome. But their form reflected the differences in the psychology and behavioral style of the two leaders.

Yeltsin was simpler, more primitive and impulsive, and acted in a straightforward manner. Nazarbaev was inclined to wait, leaving it to Yeltsin to act and to clear the road for him. That is the way it was with the breakup of the Soviet Union, when Yeltsin took the main work on himself and Nazarbaev i seemingly opposed him), took advantage of its results as if he had no other option, and also became the head of an independent state. So too it was on this occasion. Yeltsin acted to aggravate the conflict and, in the end, dispersed the deputies by resorting to force and arranging a "blood bath" in Moscow. It proved a success: the people did not rise up to defend the parliament; and Western countries, above all fearing that the communists would return to power or that Russia would degenerate into complete political chaos, in effect sanctioned Yeltsin's coup d'etat. This opened the way for Nazarbaev.[42] It was obvious that, if a coup could succeed in Russia, it would be all the easier to carry out one in Kazakhstan. And if the West sanctioned a bloody dispersion of parliament in a European country, then a disbandment that was bloodless and in an Asian country would meet with still greater understanding. However, here too, as always, Nazarbaev moved cautiously, placing others out in front. He staged things such that the initiative for disbanding parliament appeared not to come from him, but practically from the deputies themselves.

Demands that the "reactionary" Supreme Soviet and the Soviets in general (as blocking the reforms that would lead Kazakhstan to a radiant future) disband themselves began to be heard in the mass media and at various meetings of Kazakhstani deputies from 1991.[43] But on 16 November 1993 the Alataus raion soviet in the city of Almaty adopted a resolution to dis-

solve itself and appealed to deputies in Soviets at all levels to follow its example: "The Soviets ... remain a symbol of the old regime and old ideology. The tight framework of the hopelessly outdated laws that regulate the work of the representatives of a system ... has increased the isolation of the Soviets from real life."[44] The timing for this step was well chosen: on 2 November 1993 Kazakhstan announced its withdrawal from the ruble zone. With economic chaos reigning in the country, people clearly would not be worried about the parliament.

A wave of self-disbandments of local Soviets followed. On 10 December 1993 a totally demoralized Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution: in violation of the Constitution, it gave the president the authority to issue decrees with the force of law and proclaimed its own disbandment. By this time part of the deputies had managed to become employees of the executive branch, the president had appointed others as heads of local administrations,[45] and others had been intimidated into resigning from office.[46]

The majority of the democrats in Kazakhstan, as in Russia, supported the dispersion of the parliament "for the sake of accelerating reform." Sergei Duvanov (a democratic journalist and politician currently in jail) even published an article on 25 November 1993 in *Kazakhstanskaia pravda* with this title: "I Think That Historical Expediency Will Not Harm Democracy," which declares that if parliament stands in the way of reform, then it has to be replaced. "And this must be done quickly."[47]

New parliamentary elections were set for March 1994—in accordance with the constitution that the Supreme Soviet had adopted in January 1993. The elections, in the total absence of a parliament, were under the complete control of the president and those whom he had appointed as the heads of local administrations.

Thus Nazarbaev achieved victory without any bloodshed and, it would seem, more easily than did Yeltsin. But this had a reverse side: Yeltsin's victory was more complete, because it opened the way for the compilation and adoption, by a referendum in December 1993, of a constitution that conferred almost unlimited rights of the president and few rights for the parliament. That is precisely what Yeltsin wanted. The situation in Kazakhstan was different. The constitution had already been adopted. Therefore if Yeltsin had carried out a bloody coup, but only once, Nazarbaev had a bloodless coup, but had to do it twice.

Opposition: The Peril of Moderates

On 7 March 1994, in accordance with the constitution of 1993, Kazakhstan held elections for the new Supreme Soviet. The elections were conducted

according to rules stipulated in a presidential decree. The decree provided for forty candidates to be elected on a so-called "State List," compiled by the president. Those candidates did not need to collect the requisite number of signatures for candidacy. Naturally, all of them were elected. In general, the elections were held under conditions marked by the total arbitrariness of the election commissions, appointed by the oblast governors *(akims),* who, in turn, had been appointed by the president. Frequently, these commissions simply refused to register candidates they deemed undesirable.[48] The election also had a peculiarity: the commissions counted ballots left blank as "yes" votes. As a result, the number of votes exceeded the number of voters.

Nevertheless, the composition of the parliament was not what Nazarbaev expected.[49] Externally, its composition seemed significantly more acceptable than that of its Russian analogue, the Duma, which was elected in December 1993 (i.e., after the October coup) and consisted mainly of communists and Zhirinovskii supporters. The opposition in Kazakhstan was significantly more moderate. But this was actually more dangerous for Nazarbaev than its radical counterpart in Russia, which shouted at meetings "Put Boris Yeltsin on Trial!" and called the Yeltsin government an "occupation" regime.

First, as already pointed out, the Yeltsin constitution came after the old parliament had been disbanded and placed strict limits on the role of the new one. By contrast, the constitution of Kazakhstan had been crafted by the old parliament and assigned significant authority to the legislative branch. In this situation, even an irreconcilable opposition (which held a majority in the Russian parliament) was less dangerous to presidential authority than more moderate opposition (indeed, constituting only a minority) in the parliament of Kazakhstan.

The second factor was, in my view, more complicated and more important. The very extremism of the Russian opposition and the moderation of the Kazakhstani opposition made the former weaker and less dangerous for the authorities.

The "red-brown," communist-patriotic opposition in Russia, to a certain degree, played into Yeltsin's hands, because the alternative that they represented was patently unacceptable. The West regarded this opposition as absolutely unacceptable; it was therefore always ready to react with understanding to any action by Yeltsin that aimed at its suppression and at bolstering his own authority. For the Russian elite, the prospect that the communists and "patriots" would come to power was so terrifying that, despite any shocking outbursts by the president, he unquestionably remained for the elite the "lesser evil." The possibility of unifying the main "communist-patriotic" opposition and the relatively small intellectual

democratic opposition (the party Yabloko) was completely out of the question. Nor was the communist-patriotic opposition acceptable for the majority of Russians. Despite the fact that Yeltsin was extremely unpopular, and despite the fact that the majority of voters cast their ballots in the Duma elections for the oppositionist parties, they knew that this was not a vote about real power. The prospect of a communist victory in the presidential elections was more frightening, for they understood that Yeltsin would not simply surrender power; hence such a victory would lead to chaos and civil war. The Yeltsin regime also invoked this specter to frighten them. Therefore, although the majority rejected Yeltsin's policies in the Duma elections of 1993, they nonetheless voted for Yeltsin in 1996 (as in the referendum in the spring of 1993).[50]

The situation in Kazakhstan was different. Here there was no bugaboo in the form of "communist-patriots." In general, the combination of communism and nationalism is a phenomenon specific to people in the Russian Federation. The combination of Kazakh nationalism and communism was in principle impossible: the USSR was not a lost "Kazakh empire" (as it was a lost empire for Russia), and nostalgia for the Soviet past was not combined with a specifically nationalist tone in Kazakhstan. In 1994 the Communist Party in Kazakhstan did not even participate in the elections; it was registered only a week after the elections. Its successor, the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan, did participate, having declared its ideal to be the "Swedish model" and having gone into opposition.[51] But after the communist party was re-established and Serikbolsyn Abdil'din (the speaker in 1991-1993) became its leader in 1996 and a real political force, it was much more moderate and more prepared to cooperate with others, including the rightist oppositionist forces, than was the case of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

Apart from the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan (which, despite opposition from authorities, managed to send fourteen deputies to parliament), the opposition included a party called the National Congress of Kazakhstan under Olzhas Suleimenov, with thirteen deputies. The opposition also included a few deputies from the Russian movement Lad and leftist tradeunionists and agrarians.[52] Neither the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan nor the National Congress of Kazakhstan were nationalistic (on the contrary, they accused the authorities of trampling the rights of the Russian population), antidemocratic, or antimarket. This was a quite moderate and "responsible" opposition. But precisely this moderation posed a threat to authorities. Such an opposition could not play the role of a "bugaboo," or "horrible alternative," against which it would be possible to justify the use of any means whatsoever. Nor did this opposition suffer from those enor-

mous internal ideological contradictions that split the Russian opposition into a left (main) and right (lesser). Instead, the opposition in Kazakhstan could easily unify the most diverse elements seeking to contest presidential authoritarianism. The result was a broad oppositionist alliance in parliament called "The Progress" that gradually attracted some deputies from the parliamentary majority and the broad coalition of oppositionist forces called "The Republic" (the head of its Coordinating Committee was S. Abdil'din).

A candidate for president who had the support of the moderate Kazakhstani opposition (and the presidential elections were not far off, being fixed for 1996 by the constitution) thus posed a greater danger for Nazarbaev than Ziuganov did for Yeltsin. From October 1994 the mass media openly began to discuss presidential candidacies for the elections in 1996. The only candidate that the opposition proposed to nominate was Olzhas Suleimenov, a popular poet, publicist, and public activist. The latter had obtained a seat in parliament through the state list, which must have been especially galling for Nazarbaev.

The year 1994 was very difficult for the economy of Kazakhstan. After three years of a steady decline in production, the gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 25.4 percent from the previous year. There was no end to this decline, no light at the end of the tunnel to be seen. In October Nazarbaev reconstituted his government, replacing Sergei Tereshchenko with Akezhan Kazhegel'din as its head. But that did not have a major impact on the situation. Hence the prospects of an oppositionist victory in 1996 became increasingly probable. Moreover, both Nazarbaev and Kazakhstani society could not have overlooked the example of two countries in the CIS where the authorities lost elections and the head of state gave up his position to oppositionist candidates: Ukraine and Belarus.

Nazarbaev did not wait passively for 1996 and idly watch as the belief in the lack of an alternative vanished from public consciousness. He acted with the characteristic style of anticipating blows and resorting to simple, but effective and cunning, tricks. The grounds for dissolving the new parliament, formally, did not come from him.

As noted, the 1994 parliamentary elections were accompanied by numerous violations of an electoral law that the president himself had promulgated (some articles of which were contrary to the constitution and plain common sense). This gave rise to many legal suits by candidates who had lost; such suits, naturally, went nowhere. And suddenly, on 6 March 1995, the Constitutional Court issued a verdict in one such suit (involving the female journalist T. Kviatkovskaia): it declared the election in her district, where she had lost, to be void. And since the court voided the elections not because the rules had

been flouted, but because these rules violated the constitution, the verdict in effect meant that the new parliament was illegitimate.

As in 1993, Nazarbaev remained behind the scenes, even feigning a protest against the court's verdict, but declared that he was "forced to bow before the force of law." At the last session of the parliament (11 March 1995), the president made the following statement: "Yesterday the Constitutional Court went beyond my objection and the objection by the chairman of the Supreme Soviet. I will say directly and openly that the decision of 6 March was utterly unexpected by me. You can talk and conjecture; that's your business."[53]

The deputies could do nothing. After all, the elections had really been conducted with numerous and sundry violations, and there had been protests (which had been ignored). And it was not even clear against whom they should lodge protests since formally the president was on their side. So the parliament was dissolved.

Olzhas Suleimenov, who had resisted a bit and made a row at meetings, was sent off as ambassador to Italy and then dropped out of the political game. His National Congress of Kazakhstan sank into anabiosis, lethargy and the majority of the opposition gave up.

Writing a New Constitution

On 1 March 1995 Nazarbaev issued a decree On the Formation of an Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan. The organ had vague functions; the president himself determined its composition. Of course, the Assembly was created before the "unexpected" verdict of the Constitutional Court on 6 March 1995; that was done specifically so that, after the dissolution of the Supreme Soviet, it would be possible to rely on an organ that, quite provisionally, could be portrayed as "representative." At its first session on 24 March, the Assembly proposed a referendum on this question: "Do you agree to extend to 1 December 2000 the authority of the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N. A. Nazarbaev, who was popularly elected on 1 December 1991?" The most hilarious thing here is that Nazarbaev claimed that the initiative came as a surprise to him.[54]

Literally the next day the president issued a decree on the referendum. Although there was no law authorizing such a referendum, Nazarbaev still had the right—conferred by the first parliament—to issue decrees with the force of law in the absence of a legislative body. His decree fixed the date of the referendum for 29 April 1995. Nazarbaev obviously was acting in haste so as not to give the opposition time to respond. The West protested, but quite weakly.[55]

Here is an example of the official agitation before the referendum:

Yes—to the political and economic stability of Kazakhstan;
Yes—to future of our children and grandchildren;
Yes—to the politics of peace and concord, to a politics without war, without sacrifices, without blood, without hundreds of thousands of refugees;
Yes—to tranquility in our homes and apartments;
Yes—to these five years that the president requests from us so as to lay the foundations for the future of the republic, to determine precisely the paths out of the economic crisis;
Yes—to the Eurasian Union.[56]

According to official data, 91.3 percent of the eligible voters participated in the referendum, and 95.4 percent of these voted "yes."

Right afterward came the time for the constitution. The 1993 Constitution, which Nazarbaev at that time had praised to the skies, was now declared "not to correspond to the spirit of the time" and to have become mired "halfway between a socialist past and market future." In June 1995 the same Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan approved the initiative of the republic's leadership to adopt a new constitution.[57] It was prepared hastily and without undue clamor. Finally, Nazarbaev had the constitution that he wanted; it was "no worse" than that of the Russian Federation. It calls the president the "symbol and guarantee of the unity of the people and state authority, the durability of the constitution, the rights and liberties of the person and citizen."[58] The text describes the powers of the president in twenty-two articles; it declares that "his honor and dignity are inviolable" and that "the support, service, and protection of the president and his family . . . are provided at the expense of the state."[59] He can only be removed from office because of illness or accusation of state treason; whereas the Russian constitution refers to "other serious crimes," stipulation that is missing here. The new Kazakhstani constitution also abolished (as did the Russian constitution of 1993) the office of vice-president; consistent with the post-Soviet model of "presidents without alternatives" there cannot be a second person who has been "elected by the people." These presidents want to have complete freedom of action in naming their successors. In the Kazakhstan case, former Vice-President Asanbaev was sent off to serve as ambassador to Germany.[60]

The parliament, according to the new constitution, consists of two houses: the Majilis (one elected per district *[okrug]),* and the Senate (two per oblast, elected at meetings of deputies to represent the organs of oblasts; another seven are appointed directly by the president himself). Whereas the 1990 parliament had 360 deputies, and that of 1994 had 144, the constitution of

1995 provided for 114, with 47 in the Senate and 67 in Majilis. The fewer the deputies, the easier it is to control them—all the more so if they are divided into two houses. A vote of no confidence in the government henceforth required a two-thirds majority in both houses.

There was no Constitutional Court, but only a constitutional council, which had limited power compared with the Constitutional Court. The council consisted of seven members; three (including the chairman, who casts the deciding vote) are appointed by the president; the chairmen of the Senate and Majilis each appoint two members.

A referendum of 30 August 1995 approved the constitution. The vote in favor of the constitution was 90 percent (actually just 34 percent, according to the opposition), with only 10 percent voting against.

Finally, in December 1995 there were elections to the new bicameral parliament. It would seem that this time Nazarbaev obtained what he wanted. For all practical purposes, the opposition did not participate in the elections.

A **President Empowered and Glorified**

If in 1993 Nazarbaev had mainly been emulating Yeltsin in the construction of his regime, from 1996 Kazakhstan had clearly "overtaken" Russia.[61]

Opposition parties (the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan and the National Congress of Kazakhstan) had been deprived of the opportunity to struggle for power. Indeed, they had even forfeited the illusion of power in the form of a parliamentary representation under an ultra-presidential system. In the end, they sank into hibernation and virtually disappeared. To be sure, 1996 did witness the appearance of a new opposition movement (later a party) called Azamat (Citizen), which drew on the intelligentsia for social support, based itself in Almaty, and strove to unify all the opposition into a "Popular Front." But it did not constitute a real threat for the president.

The authorities increased their control over society. The procuracy (State Prosecutor's office) demanded an end to closed sessions of public organizations, where antigovernment plans might be under discussion.[62] The government banned meetings under every kind of pretext, even the threat of epidemics. It also tightened its control over the mass media, especially television, where tenders for the right to broadcast eliminated all independent companies. The company "Khabar" (controlled by Nazarbaev's daughter Dariga) obtained channels and frequencies.[63] A number of earlier oppositionist publications fell into the hands of reliable people, above all, that same daughter Dariga and her husband. Russia did not take analogous measures to control the mass media until significantly later—under Yeltsin's successor.

Nothing and no one could limit Nazarbaev's authority. His power was

greater than that of the former first secretaries in Soviet times; the latter were subject to Moscow and bound by party ideology. And his power was greater than that of the Kazakh khans of earlier times. It was also greater than the power of his Russian colleague, who nonetheless had, in some measure, to deal with parliament and to engage in the tortuous electoral campaign of 1996 (and afterwards ended up in the hospital). Yeltsin did entertain plans to take Kazakhstan's path, replacing the elections by a referendum to extend his term, but in the end did not dare to carry them out. Nor could Yeltsin, in contrast to Nazarbaev, simply appoint the governors of oblasts. (Quite recently, his successor, Vladimir Putin, eliminated the election of governors and began to appoint them.)

A survey conducted at the end of 1997 showed that 77.6 percent of those polled regard the president's power to be unlimited.[64] And that is how it was perceived not only in mass consciousness. An article published in *Kazakhstanskaia pravda* by a prominent jurist expresses the following ideas which, without doubt, correspond to the spontaneously appearing ideology of the president of Kazakhstan and his entourage: "I think that the popularly elected president embodies the unity of the Kazakhstani people as the source of state power, combining in himself the fullness of power, independent of its subsequent division into legislative, executive, and judicial branches."[65]

It was natural for a "personality cult" of the president to take shape. To him are sung dithyrambs:

> I believe in today, I love Nursultan,
> He has justified the belief of the people,
> Who have bound up all their hopes in him.[66]
>
> A key figure,
> Generator of the idea of making Kazakhstan,
> As a secular and democratic power,
> Is the president of the republic,
> Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbaev . . .
> His intellect, competency,
> Enhanced by rationalism
> Permits him to be a true leader.[67]
>
> We must be thankful to the Almighty,
> That our people have such a son.[68]

The head of the Muslims of Kazakhstan, likewise, has declared that "the high spiritual office of mufti obligates me to provide every possible assis-

tance to the realization of the strategic policy of the president."[69] The head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Kazakhstan, Aleksii (Archbishop of Astana and Almaty), goes even further: "God has blessed the Kazakhstani people with a special grace, when from the depths of the people rose such a son as Nursultan Nazarbaev."[70]

How did the president use this unlimited power?

Privatization and Power

As a main argument to justify his omnipotence, Nazarbaev always has invoked the need for energetic steps to move along the path of market reforms. At the third session of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, he declared that it was good that elections were not being held: "We would await two years of electoral squabbling. We would not be up to economic reform."[71]

In reality, as Kazakhstan advanced significantly further than Russia in creating an authoritarian system, it also moved further along the path of market reform. To a question by a Russian interviewer as to what he thinks are the causes of the delays in reform in Russia, Nazarbaev replied: "Not the least important factor here, it seems to me, . . . was played by the political struggle, the schism in the Russian political elite,... but also the permanent election campaigns which, as is well known, siphon off much energy and resources."[72] Evidently, to a significant degree Nazarbaev was right. He felt himself more confident than did Yeltsin. After the dissolution of the second parliament and the extension of his term, Nazarbaev in general did not experience any institutionalized resistance and could virtually ignore public opinion. During this period Nazarbaev signed a mass of decrees from his administration, all bearing the force of law. On 29 January 1996, the day before the first session of the new parliament of Kazakhstan, *Kazakhstanskaia pravda* published nine new decrees.[73]

Kazakhstan was more active than Russia in opening its natural wealth to foreign investors, who gained a firm foothold in the energy and fuel complex. The country privatized its electric power stations; it began to privatize its residential housing management; it undertook a pension reform in 1997. As one Russian journalist (who, very probably, was genuinely enthralled by the successes in Kazakhstan) wrote in 1997: "In Kazakhstan (not without cause) people think that in some spheres it is necessary not for Kazakhstan to overtake Russia, but for Russia to overtake Kazakhstan."[74] Gradually, Kazakhstan looked to Russia for an example of authoritarian modernization (the idea toward which Russians seem generally well disposed), almost pushing aside Pinochet's Chile, which had been so popular in the early 1990s.

Naturally, privatization by an authoritarian regime that answers to no one was bound to permit an enrichment of the ruling elite—above all, the president himself and his immediate entourage. Such enrichment does not even presuppose some kind of special avarice; it happens automatically.[75]

In Kazakhstan, as in Russia, the notion of the "Family" and its capital took root. The Family would later encounter some difficulties because of an investigation into money laundering in the West ("Kazakhgate").[76] But in the mid-1990s that was still in the distant future. Naturally, there is no hard information about the wealth of the president and his wife (just as is true of Yeltsin and his family).[77] But all three of Nazarbaev's daughters are married to men who are unquestionably millionaires and who, simultaneously, hold high positions as officials or politicians. Dariga is herself the head of the Council of Directors of the largest media-holding company in Kazakhstan ("Khabar"); her husband, Rakhat Aliev, was a general, head of the tax police, deputy chair of the Committee of National Security, and a millionaire businessman. Dinara's husband is one of the biggest oil oligarchs, Timur Kulibaev; another oil oligarch in the clan is Nazarbaev's nephew, Kairat Satybaldy. The first husband of Aliia was the son of the Kyrgyz president Askar Akaev, Aidar (who worked in the Kazkommertsbank in Almaty); her second husband is also an influential entrepreneur, Daniiar Sakenov.[78]

The role of family and clan connections is greater in Kazakhstan than in Russia. Obviously, people in Kazakhstan accepted the public role of the ruler's kinsmen more "calmly" than in Russia, as if it were something entirely natural. By contrast, Yeltsin's daughters and sons-in-law remained in the background and did not occupy any especially important positions (before the public role of Tat'iana D'iachenko, which was very brief). By contrast, Dariga and all the sons-in-law of Nazarbaev are prominent, authoritative figures in Kazakhstan.

In addition to family connections in the narrow sense, other connections—based on locale, tribe, or horde *(zhuz)*—play a large role in Kazakhstan. The elite of power and property includes all the president's relatives and kinsmen, even remote ones.[79] And it also includes people who happen to come from his home village, Chemolgan; Kazakhstan has even invented a jocular term, "Chemolganization."[80] These connections enable the president and the Family to control literally every sphere of the economy and public life. Finally, this elite is also dominated by people from Nazarbaev's "Great Horde" *(Starshii zhuz).*

At the same time, in the circle of friends and close associates (the "Family" in the broader sense), people who are not ethnic Kazakhs play a significant role. Examples include Sergei Tereshchenko (a Slav and an old Nazarbaev friend and client) and Aleksandr Mashkevich (a Jewish activist,

aluminum king, and one of the most influential people in Kazakhstan).[81] One researcher in Kazakhstan suggests this explanation for these people's close ties to the president: "As a result of their ethnic illegitimacy, they will loyally serve their patron."[82] Their presidential connections and enrichment are typical of an order that placed the most strategically important and profitable raw material branches in the hands of foreign, not Kazakh, capital. The authorities endeavor to ensure that the most lucrative and most important export-oriented branches are directly subject to the Family, under its indirect control (through "ethnically illegitimate" clients, who are totally dependent on the president and his family), or consigned to foreign companies (whose owners have no connection to the politics of Kazakhstan). By contrast, access of domestic capital to the nation's resource wealth (apart from the Family) is limited to a few morsels.[83]

Nevertheless, the wealth of the Family, even in the broader sense (i.e.. including the distant relatives, close friends, and clients) constitutes only part of the privatized wealth. Later M. Auezov would say of the early post-Soviet period: "It was such a carefree . . . time, when the rapacious instinct was in power. And everyone was grabbing and stuffing his pockets. It was joyous and blissful."[84] All the top state officials and all those close to the president became rich. Prime Ministers Sergei Tereshchenko (1991-1994)[85] and Akezhan Kazhegel'din (1994-1997)[86] became multi-millionaires and each akim had his own "family," his own clientele; the appointment of a new akim often triggered a redistribution of property.[87] Corruption scandals, as a rule linked to the struggle of clans for property, did come to light, but reaction was muted.[88] Only later did the state make the battle against corruption one of its priorities. But a grotesque aspect of this campaign, specific to Kazakhstan, was the fact that the anticorruption campaign was directed by the president's closest relatives: Rakhat Aliev and Kairat Satybaldy. As a result, the campaign served first and foremost to remove competitors to the Family business and to reinforce its control.

The goals of privatization in Kazakhstan, as in Russia, were not only socioeconomic development and the personal enrichment of those who privatized (and those close to them). It also had political goals. In 1991, at a plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. Nazarbaev already made this statement: "The communists themselves must provide an example and more boldly become heads of privatized entities."[89] His appeal was heard.[90] The political elite (nomenklatura) quickly turned into a propertied elite. The elite included not only these individuals themselves, but also their children and close relatives; all this gave rise to the jocose expression "economy of nephews." And insofar as privatization, to a large degree, proceeded under the control of authorities and with a minimal

role for laws, that impelled the elite to have a vested interest in political power and its consolidation around the president.[91] The elite is beginning to represent an enormous and complex system; the most influential people, who had their own clients, were clients of the "Nazarbaev clan." And they were all bound together by a kind of "collective security" *(krugovaia poruka).* Moreover, the competition and struggle for power of individual groups took the form of a struggle for the attention and generosity of the president, and schisms within the elite, in some measure, served to reinforce his power at the top.

As in Russia, market reforms not only made the elites wealthy, but also left the masses impoverished. As a result, compared with the Soviet epoch, there was an increase in social stratification. There was also a sharp decline in the GDP. That downturn, however, sooner or later had to come to an end and give way to a post-transformation growth. In Kazakhstan this began in 1996 (0.5 percent growth in GDP) and continued in 1997 (1.7 percent). In 1998 Kazakhstan suffered the consequences of the Asian and Russian crises; the GDP again dropped (1.9 percent). But then it began a period of rapid growth, rising 45 percent from 1999 to 2004.[92]

The general dynamics of the decrease and growth in the GDP in Russia and Kazakhstan were similar. But Kazakhstan has quickly overtaken Russia in the rate of development and now is "the most dynamically developing country with a market economy in the entire post-Soviet space."[93] Indeed, the economy of Kazakhstan is one of the fastest growing among the developing economies of the world. Obviously, there are diverse opinions about the reasons for Kazakhstan's relative success (and still more it's stability). To a significant degree, it is undoubtedly associated with the extremely favorable conjuncture of prices on oil. But it is entirely probable that one factor has been the consistency of reform, which has been ensured by the harshly authoritarian rule of someone who really accepts the market ideology. That is all the more true since, in its late-Soviet and post-Soviet interpretation, this ideology coincided with Nazarbaev's own personal interests.

1998: From Celebration to Concern

Probably the happiest year in Nazarbaev's reign was 1998. That year he realized his great dream when the new capital in Astana was officially opened. It was designed to strengthen the new state. Thus, unlike Almaty (which is located on the southern border area), Astana is in the center; relocation of the capital aimed both to promote "Kazakhization" of the northern regions and to liberate Nazarbaev from the pressure of the Almaty population, which is politically active and disposed toward oppositionist activities.[94] The new

capital, Nazarbaev's pet project, is supposed to link his name with the future history of Kazakhstan for centuries to come.

This same year, he married his daughter Aliia (who studied in a private school in Switzerland and then became an art student at an American university) to Aidar Akaev (a student in economics at the University of Maryland and, as noted, the son of President Akaev of Kyrgyzstan). This was the first, and thus far the only, marriage between representatives of the ruling dynasties in the CIS. Although the marriage failed, at the time it was a great source of joy for Nazarbaev.[95]

However, in October 1998, in a speech to both houses of the parliament, Nazarbaev unexpectedly announced a program of democratization: "I shall tell you honestly: personally for me, . . . there are no external reasons to embark on such a democratization, limiting my own power." However, he added, "my people have earned their liberty through their suffering." Democratization would include the introduction of additional deputies elected by party lists to the Majilis, granting parliament the right to change the Constitution (if 80 percent of the deputies in each house voted in favor), and so forth. To be sure, all this did not amount to great changes.[96]

But that was not the main point: Nazarbaev had decided to violate the resolution of a referendum held so recently and to have early presidential elections (simultaneously extending the presidential term from five to seven years). Rumors about such plans were already afoot in the summer of 1998. At that point, however, he issued a categorical denial: "No. If my short 'no' is not enough, I'll repeat myself once more: 'No.' The elections will be held in accordance with the Constitution: in 1999 the parliament will be elected, and in 2000 the president."[97] But it subsequently emerged that the rumors were in fact true. Everything happened in the classic Nazarbaev style, now so familiar; he summoned the deputies and told them: "Let's not develop this subject, that is my firm request." When the deputies "insisted," he acquiesced.[98]

Now, at the very apogee of his power, Nazarbaev felt a serious new threat to his authority.

The New Opposition

This new threat was fundamentally different from all that had come before. It resulted not because social and economic crisis gripped the country: on the contrary, it arose because the crisis was being overcome. The challenge did not come from those social forces that existed at the founding of the regime, but from new forces generated by the regime itself and the post-Soviet transformation of society.

The development of Kazakhstan and Russia was relatively parallel. To be sure, some processes and phenomena, inherent in the Kazakh and Russian systems, manifested themselves in one country more clearly and earlier than in the other. Moreover, people in Kazakhstan and in the other post-Soviet republics had, characteristically, inherited from "imperial" times the notion that Russia is always ahead—in good and in bad senses." In fact, however, that was by no means always the case.

The conflict between presidential authority and the new bourgeoisie did not arise in Russia until Putin became the second president. Its most dramatic manifestation was the arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovskii in 2003. In Kazakhstan, however, all this appeared much earlier.

Evidently, such a conflict is inherent in this type of regime. So long as privatization was underway, the newly rich—who had obtained their wealth largely with the help of presidential authority—coalesced around the regime and supported it. Once they had amassed their wealth, they developed new interests. The new bourgeoisie began to understand that, under the conditions of an authoritarian system, their property was very weakly defended. Riches that had been accumulated, with the assistance of the authorities (by legal and quasi-legal methods), could just as easily be taken away by the authorities.[100] The result was a contradiction between the wealth and economic significance of the new bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and its lack of rights and ability to limit presidential power, on the other. The motives of the wealthy had also changed. Once they achieved a certain level of wealth, they sought to convert this into power and into public recognition and respect. At the same time, the authorities became increasingly concerned about the concentration of material resources in the hands of individuals, even if these were partly still dependent on the regime.[101]

All this transpired after society had presumably taken a form that the new regime found convenient and after the liberal opposition of the intelligentsia had virtually disappeared. Society had acquired a new system, different from the late Soviet times; the protest of the popular masses had somewhat abated as the transformation crisis abated and society adapted to the new conditions. Unexpectedly, a new opposition emerged; coming from the new bourgeoisie, it was backed by enormous material resources and was significantly more dangerous.

It is rather difficult to explain why the new opposition appeared in Kazakhstan before it did in Russia. Here it is possible only to present some hypotheses and conjectures.

Above all, Kazakhstan lacked a powerful communist-patriotic opposition. Its absence, as I have already pointed out, was no accident, but resulted from basic differences in Russian and Kazakh history and culture. In Rus-

sia, this opposition forced civil society to unite more firmly around the president; that took its clearest and most grotesque form in 1996. The bourgeois elite in Kazakhstan did not experience such constant pressure and threats.

Furthermore, tribal and horde factors may have played a role. People who feel a tribal and horde loyalty can count on the instinctive solidarity of blood kinsmen; they are not so isolated. Kazakh society, which has preserved tribal and horde connections, is not so "atomized" and defenseless before the authorities (in contrast to Russian society).

The president has sought to rely on the solidarity and loyalty of "his own people"—relatives, people from his home region, fellow tribesmen, and people from the Great Horde. He uses them to fill important positions in the state hierarchy and, through them, to maintain control over key (above all, raw materials) export-oriented branches of the economy as well as the mass media.[102] But this also has had a reverse side. Insofar as the representatives of other tribes and hordes have felt themselves excluded from power and from the more desirable pieces of property that has turned them into potential oppositionists. And they could count on support from "their own people." Authoritarianism thus encountered resistance from hordes and tribal loyalties.[103] In Russia, opposition oligarchs are isolated; they find it extremely difficult to elicit sympathy and support in Russian society. In Kazakhstan, a Kazakh oligarch can count, at the very least, on the support of fellow tribesmen.

To some degree, the opposition of the bourgeoisie gains further intensity from a national patriotic factor: namely, dissatisfaction that the economy has been substantially placed in the hands of foreign companies.

The Kazhegel'din Menace

The genesis of a new type of opposition in Kazakhstan was linked to the personality of Akezhan Kazhegel'din, the multimillionaire who served as prime minister from 1994 to 1997.

Kazhegel'din has no direct analogue in Russia. He is, unquestionably, a dynamic and intelligent man, someone who succeeded in the turbulent epoch of the early 1990s. He combines both the qualities of Russian politicians who pushed reform and privatization (such as Egor Gaidar and Anatolii Chubais) and Russian oligarchs (like Boris Berezovskii and Vladimir Gusinskii).

The origins of Kazhegel'din and his wealth remain quite murky.[104] His past includes service in the KGB and participation in the Russian democratic movement in 1989-1990. He came to power from the business sector, where he was chairman of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of

Kazakhstan; in that post he replaced Oleg Soskovets, when the latter moved to Russia.[105] Evidently, however, he amassed most of his wealth after he came to power. Nazarbaev, without question, knew that the prime minister did not forget about himself when he managed the economy, but initially Nazarbaev showed no concern. When Nazarbaev was asked whether he was certain that the money of foreign companies being invested in Kazakhstan on very profitable terms was really foreign, not a front for Kazakh money, the president answered: "The pound Sterling in the hands of Kazhegel'din and Rothschild have the same value."[106]

During his tenure as prime minister, Kazhegel'din was a radical and "merciless" privatizer and monetarist, and he made a significant contribution to the effort to attract foreign capital (and to legalize pseudo-foreign capital). The opposition accused him personally, above all, of deliberately excluding Kazakhstani companies from the most profitable raw materials branches.[107] One sees no kind of democratizing tendencies during his years as prime minister—a period, on the contrary, marked by the second dissolution of parliament and referenda to extend the presidential term and to approve the new constitution. As a result, Kazhegel'din elicited the visceral hatred of liberals in Kazakhstan.[108]

His removal on 10 October 1997 was due to several factors. First and foremost, the periodic change of prime ministers by the president is, in general, a normal mechanism of presidential rule in both Russia and Kazakhstan. It gives the president an opportunity to blame the prime minister for various difficulties and misfortunes that have harmed society; it also enables the president to reduce tensions and arouse hopes for new policies that will better correspond to the aspirations of society. Kazhegel'din himself became prime minister in 1994, when Nazarbaev sensed that the discontent had reached such a level of intensity that he had to sacrifice his old and loyal comrade-in-arms, Sergei Tereshchenko. In 1997 it was Kazhegel'din's turn. Moreover, when replacing Kazhegel'din with a new premier (Nurlan Balgimbaev), Nazarbaev made a speech to the parliament, where he reprimanded Kazhegel'din's government, declaring that it had become so obsessed with reforms and macroeconomic indicators that it had forgotten about the simple, ordinary citizen. "You are not forgotten!" the president reassured the simple citizen. "I sincerely feel for you, understand your difficult plight."[109] But there were clearly other reasons for removing Kazhegel'din.

The energetic and competent Kazhegel'din accumulated too much power in his own hands and sought to assert control over oil—the branch of the economy that was most profitable and claimed by the Family itself. As one Russian journalist observed: "The objective (even if quite conditional) counterweight to unlimited presidential power in recent years has not been par-

liament (the third and therefore quite loyal), but—however strange it might be—the prime minister, whose economic policy has been quite independent."[110] Kazhegel'din did not display a servile loyalty to Nazarbaev, as had his Russian predecessor, Tereshchenko (who, literally, could say that "I serve one person ... because he is the greatest blessing for the country and for the people"). As the re-election year 2000 drew nearer, Kazhegel'din began to arouse growing concern in the president.[111]

Naturally, the replacement of Kazhegel'din—like any important political step in regimes like that of Kazakhstan—was similar to the spectacle of "bulldogs fighting under a rug." Kazhegel'din was opposed by Rakhat Aliev and his wife, Dariga Nazarbaeva; Aliev, as head of the tax service and the main "fighter against corruption," began to conjure up various accusations of economic crimes by the prime minister; Dariga, who controlled the mass media, began to disseminate all this.[112] At the beginning of 1997, the president reduced the cabinet of ministers, which simultaneously allowed him to transfer the oil branch from the prime minister's control. In September 1997, Kazhegel'din fell ill, went to Switzerland for treatment, and then submitted his resignation. After leaving his post, he was awarded a medal and became an economic advisor to Nazarbaev. Initially he displayed full loyalty and said: "The road into the opposition is closed for me.... We have a dynamic, actively working head of state: Let's help him."[113] But if the road into opposition was really closed for Kazhegel'din, then no one would have raised the issue—as none would have dreamed that Tereshchenko could join the opposition. But rumors gradually began to circulate that Kazhegel'din himself had plans to run for president in 2000, and when journalists asked about this, he only gave evasive answers.[114]

Kazhegel'din soon moved toward an open confrontation with the president. He urged the election of the akims[115] and, more generally, a broad democratization that would instill in the population "the habit of resisting the authorities."[116] Kazhegel'din also ridiculed official assertions that the society of Kazakhstan was not ready for democracy: "This is an attempt to put the candy out of reach when they say that the institutions of democracy are splendid, but we are not ready for them.... But if we do not begin, then we never will be ready. If you never sit in the driver's seat of a car, you'll never learn how to drive."[117] He also commented on a statement that Nazarbaev made during his trip to the United States, reiterating that Kazakhstan needs time to build democracy and that the United States required two hundred years to achieve this. (Incidentally, this odd conception of American democracy is very widespread among post-Soviet presidents; Gaidar Aliev of Azerbaijan said the same thing.) In any event, Kazhegel'din commented: "If American presidents permitted themselves to falsify elec-

tion results and arbitrarily to extend their terms of office, then five hundred years would not have been enough for the United States to create a democratic society."[118] Kazhegel'din attempted to win the support of the Russian population by addressing their oppression.[119] He also appealed to Kazakhs from the Little and Middle Hordes by noting the domination of Nazarbaev's Great Horde.[120]

The conversion of Kazhegel'din to the "democratic faith" *{after* his departure from office) can be treated as ironically as the "conversion" of the nomenklatura elite (including Nazarbaev himself) in 1991. Nevertheless, the statements by Kazhegel'din were so well thought out that they appeared to have been preceded by serious intellectual work.[121] No doubt, similar processes were taking place in the thinking of others; his declarations reflected a general "ferment" in the Kazakhstani elite, which had come to regard the authoritarian framework of the Nazarbaev regime as too inhibiting and narrow.

Kazhegel'din is a Kazakh, wealthy, married to a Russian, and a former prime minister. He is acceptable to all—the West (which deems him a "strong pro-market" figure and a democrat) and Russia (upon which he has lavished compliments). Concretely, he has excellent connections in both the West[122] and Russia.[123] He was no Russian Ziuganov or even a Suleimenov in 1994; he was a really dangerous competitor. The "old" opposition—both on the left and on the right—overcame their animosity toward him (as someone who until recently had been the very incarnation of the regime) and rallied around him. Without doubt, he also had the support of the newly rich; among the akims and people in the Nazarbaev entourage, some were ready to "betray" their boss and go over to Kazhegel'din.[124]

The situation has been very clearly described by Ermukhamet Ertysbaev. A former democrat-oppositionist, he became the director of the Institute of Strategic Research and an advisor to the president; he had the capacity and evidently the permission to speak the "cynical truth." In his words: "In Kazakhstan the situation could arise where two reformers of a right-liberal view could begin a struggle for power, and this ... could lead to unforeseeable consequences."[125]

Evidently, the emergence of Kazhegel'din as a potential competitor precipitated a profound change in the political situation. It forced Nazarbaev, characteristically, "to play at forestalling" and to opt for earlier elections—that is, before Kazhegel'din had time to start "bellowing about" and before the opposition had time to crystallize around him. An additional factor could be the influence of the Russian and Asian financial crisis: in 1998 the growth of Kazakhstan's GDP, which had just begun, temporarily came to a halt. A final factor may have been alarm over the uncertain situation in Russia: the

end was nearing for the era of Yeltsin (someone upon whom Nazarbaev could always count for support), and as yet the question of Yeltsin's successor remained unanswered.

The Elections of 1999

The regime made perfectly clear that it had no intention of tolerating opposition and Kazhegel'din's candidacy. Kazhegel'din's press secretary was beaten by unknown assailants. His advisor, who had flown to Astana to give parliament a brochure (with his proposals for the democratic reform of the constitution) was arrested at the airport for "profanities addressed toward security officers and for resisting them." The publication of a book by Kazhegel'din was banned. A newspaper that supported him was fined 370,000 U.S. dollars. There were even some "semi-assassination" attempts on Kazhegel'din himself: somebody shot at him, but missed.[126] However, the real blow was dealt in the inimitable, familiar Nazarbaev style.

A presidential decree forbade the candidacy of anyone who had been subjected to administrative punishment within one year of the elections. Obviously, Kazhegel'din was careful to avoid committing, even inadvertently, any legal offense, but it never occurred to him that he would invite prosecution by participating in the founding assembly of an organization called "For Honest Elections." However, since this was the founding assembly, the organization was not yet registered. But participation in the activities of an unregistered organization is a legal offense. Once again a farce, similar to what we have already seen several times before, played itself out. Nazarbaev himself appealed to the Supreme Court with a request to overturn the decision of the Central Elections Commission to ban the Kazhegel'din candidacy. But the court does not accede to the "pressure" from the president.[127]

With the elimination of Kazhegel'din, Nazarbaev was left without any real competitors.[128] Besides Nazarbaev, participants in the election included the communist Serikbolsyn Abdil'din (who received 11.7 percent of the vote), General Gani Kasymov (called the "Kazakhstani Zhirinovskii" because of the specific style of his speeches[129] and his unrestrained populism,[130] he garnered 4.61 percent of the vote), and the writer-ecologist Engel's Gabbasov (0.76 percent). Propaganda for Nazarbaev filled the mass media not only in Kazakhstan but also in Russia;[131] an "agitation-train" of Russian pop star Barri Alibasov and the group "Na-Na" were dispatched to the Russian oblasts to mobilize support for the president. All this helped Nazarbaev to receive 79.78 percent of the vote.[132]

Parliamentary elections were set for 10 October 1999. Ten positions were

to be allocated per party lists; among the parties laying claim to these positions was the Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan, which Kazhegel'din had created and which naturally put him at the top of its list. But, after his exclusion from the presidential elections, Nazarbaev absolutely could not countenance letting him become a member of the parliament.

Whereas Kazhegel'din had been excluded from presidential elections because of an administrative offense, now the authorities employed a weapon that they would repeatedly invoke (both in Kazakhstan and in Russia): accusations of tax evasion. Privatization and, in general, the entire economic life in the 1990s had been conducted without regard to the laws, which indeed were internally contradictory and liable to different interpretations. That gave authorities the opportunity to raise questions about any case of privatization and to saddle a disloyal businessman with a tax audit and the like.[133] In this case, the government launched a criminal investigation against Kazhegel'din for tax evasion. Once again he was shunted aside (this time from parliament); his party—as a sign of protest—refused to participate in the elections.

Apart from Kazhegel'din's Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan, the Central Elections Commission registered eight parties. Four received the minimum qualifying vote (4 percent). As in Russia, the regime initially did not want to encumber itself with parties, but later began to experiment with the creation of its own "pocket" parties. On the eve of the elections, several small pro-presidential parties were merged to form the party Otan (Fatherland), with the old comrade-in-arms and assistant Sergei Tereshchenko at its head. This party won 30.9 percent of the votes and 4 seats. Other pro-presidential parties were also organized, with the goal being to simulate a multiparty system. They included the Civil Party *(Grazhdanskaia partiia),* founded by another Nazarbaev client, A. Mashkevich (it received 11.6 percent of the vote and two mandates); and the Agrarian Party *(Agrarnaia partiia),* which received 12.6 percent of the vote and two mandates. Otan is considered to be the party of state employees *(biudzhetniki);* the Civil Party represents businessmen and workers in privatized enterprises; and the Agrarian Party of course speaks for the agricultural sector. The only oppositionist party to meet the 4-percent barrier was the communists, who received 17.6 percent of the vote and two mandates.[134]

Russia, at approximately the same time, witnessed efforts to create a pro-presidential party. But there the process was less complicated and subtle. By contrast, in Kazakhstan a pro-presidential, pseudo-multiparty system had some elements of a real multiparty system: behind the three pro-presidential parties stood real "clans" of the elite, each of which had a certain social profile and which had differences among themselves. In Russia, "Unity"

(Edinstvo) and then "United Russia" *(Edinaia Rossiia)* were purely official parties and devoid of any social complexion.

It is very difficult to determine the role of the events of late 1998-early 1999 in the evolution of the Nazarbaev regime. It is always easy to find signs of a crisis, the beginning of the end, post factum, when the cycle of a regime is already complete. Nevertheless, one gains the impression that these months marked a watershed, separating the period when the regime was developing "upwards" from the later period of decline.

Nazarbaev held a maximum of power in the period after the referendum to extend his term and before the new presidential elections. The elections of 1999 were nonetheless the first to have an alternative (even if only a formal one). The certain "self-limitation," an involuntary step, had been due to pressure. The battles that the regime now fought had become defensive, not offensive. The regime triumphed, but no longer held the initiative.

Nazarbaev had not freed himself from the Kazhegel'din threat when a new, still more dangerous, crisis erupted. Its emergence was linked to some very murky events in the depths of the Nazarbaev family.

The Son-in-Law: Challenge and Defeat

The clans and court factions in Kazakhstan have waged a constant battle, as is always the case in such political regimes. But some new features gradually began to emerge. The clans were "taking root," expanded their clientele, and concentrated enormous resources in their own hands. As P. Svoik later pointed out: "The regime . . . entered a stage of schisms within itself, [dividing] into competing and conflicting clan groups."[135] The struggle among clans became more vicious; it was being fought not only behind the scenes and for access to the president, but to a certain degree openly and without regard for the president. The struggle against Kazhegel'din had been waged not only behind the scenes, but also by investigations and publication of compromising material; all that was organized without the president's knowledge, thereby confronting him with a *fait accompli* and forcing him to take action. The intensification of this struggle was obviously, to some degree, due to the fact that the parties realized that Nazarbaev is not immortal, and they had in view a more distant target: the legacy after Nazarbaev, their place in a post-Nazarbaev Kazakhstan.

It was purely accidental that neither the Russian nor the Kazakhstani regimes (neither Yeltsin, nor Putin, nor Nazarbaev) have male offspring and hence no obvious successors. That stands in contrast, for example, to the case of Gaidar Aliev in Azerbaijan, with his son Il'ham. However, General Rakhat Aliev—the husband of Nazabaev's daughter Dariga, the head of the

tax police, and deputy chairman of the Committee of State Security—proved to be very energetic and arrogant. As in any family, the Family in Kazakhstan is a complicated organism; its internal relations are incomprehensible not only for outsiders, but sometimes even for those who belong to it. It is unknown whether Nazarbaev regarded Rakhat as his successor, but the latter undoubtedly envisioned such a role for himself. Moreover, he did not want to sit quietly and bide his time; rather, he began to play some kind of "game" that is not entirely understood. As head of the tax inspectorate, he had accumulated compromising materials on the entire elite of Kazakhstan. Because his wife is a media-magnate, he had no difficulty making this material public whenever he chose. Rakhat and Dariga played a key role in the fall of Kazhegel'din and, once rid of him, Rakhat began—by blackmailing and intimidating businessmen—to assert dominance over the largest firms, one after the other.[136] All that would be of no consequence had not, for inscrutable reasons, internet sites under his control begun to disseminate compromising materials about the immediate entourage of Nazarbaev and even the president himself.

When, at that point, the United States and Switzerland froze President Nazarbaev's accounts, "Kazakhgate" slowly began to unfold. It even forced the parliament, in July 2000, to adopt a law "On the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan." The law declared that the first president who is "the leader of the people of Kazakhstan, ensuring its unity, the defense of the Constitution, the rights and liberties of the individual and citizen, . . . [he] cannot bear accountability for actions associated with the realization of this status."[137] Again, similar situations gave rise to similar resolutions: Kazakhstan's law of 2000 practically repeats Vladimir Putin's very first decree on the inviolability of Yeltsin. Even so, Rakhat's revelations appear very similar to Nazarbaev's criticism of Kunaev—as a stab in the back of an aging boss.

Rakhat's aggressive activities united everyone against him, including (evidently) other members of the Family and such Nazarbaev loyalists as M. Tazhin (Rakhat's own immediate superior, as head of the Committee of State Security). The latter forbade Rakhat to report to parliament about corruption in the upper echelons of power.[138] Nazarbaev's eyes were opened to the threat from his son-in-law, who had gone too far (as earlier he was warned of the threat from Kazhegel'din). But this case involved his own son-in-law; Nazarbaev could not simply drive him away. Instead, he transferred Rakhat from his position as the deputy chairman of the Committee of State Security and appointed him deputy head of his own bodyguard. And Rakhat continued to make threats of exposure. After a time he was "exiled" as the ambassador to Austria, and his relations with Dariga become a major topic of speculation in the political and leading circles of Kazakhstan.

The struggle between Rakhat and his enemies was already a struggle for power in a post-Nazarbaev Kazakhstan. But while some of the magnates who united against Rakhat had a purely personal and clan motivation (simply seeking to remove a figure who posed a danger for them), other participants had plans to establish new, more legal relations to protect themselves from the arbitrariness of a ruler and his entourage.

For some magnates and high officials who opposed Rakhat, the struggle now turned into a battle against the "autocracy" of the president.

The New Challenge: The Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan

The most active participants in the struggle against Rakhat were young, educated people: officials, politicians, and businessmen. In Kazakhstan they have come to be called the "Young Turks." Their leader is the akim of Pavlodar, I. Zhakiianov, and former minister M. Abliazov. They have proposed ideas close to those of Kazhegel'din.[139] This movement has adopted the name Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan.

Zhakiianov and Abliazov are unlike Kazhegel'din. The former prime minister was born in 1952, had already served in the Soviet system, became an agent of the KGB, and somehow participated in the Russian democratic movement. Hence he belongs to the late-Soviet era, his shift to the democratic movement coming after his removal from power. By contrast, Abliazov and Zhakiianov are young men without any Soviet past. Born in 1963, both are the product of the current regime.[140] They are the incarnation of the new Kazakhstan, of which Nazarbaev has said: "You are my pride, hope, and support."[141] This force grew up under Nazarbaev, but has found his framework too restrictive.[142] Any political motivation always includes elements of self-interest and idealism. But so far as it is possible to judge human motives, the motivation of Abliazov and Zhakiianov is first and foremost idealistic. M. Auezov has said of them: "For the first time people came to the scene who were defined as personalities, who were filled with a feeling of their own dignity, pride, responsibility for all that happens."[143] Their adversary, Nazarbaev's advisor and ideologist, Ermukhamet Ertysbaev, speaks of them in a similar vein: "Abliazov . . . is an idealist. But an idealist in politics is a social catastrophe."[144]

The scale of the movement they have created is greater than that of Kazhegel'din, and it has quickly acquired the character of a revolt by the new elite. To quote Ertysbaev once more: "In Kazakhstan there have appeared many rich and prosperous people, and many of them henceforth want an honest and free competition, transparent rules of the game."[145]

The Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan has attracted support from high-ranking officials, including former members of the cabinet of ministers (those who had been dismissed by Prime Minister Tokaev (whom Nazarbaev sacked for failing to cope with the fronde).[146] These ex-officials then formed their own party, Ak zhol (Radiant Path), which became part of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan; more moderate than its leadership, they formed a "bridge" between the radicals and power elite. One newspaper in Kazakhstan published a photograph from the early 1990s showing Nazarbaev with a large group of young, enraptured politicians and businessmen. The newspaper circled those who had gone into the opposition: they constituted more than half of the people in the photo.[147]

If the "revolt" of Kazhegel'din and his subsequent emigre fate can be partly compared with the activity and fate of Berezovskii and Gusinskii in Russia, the "revolt" of Zhakiianov and Abliazov corresponds to the movement that Khodorkovskii attempted to organize in Russia. But these processes, though analogous to those in Russia, developed earlier and on a larger scale in Kazakhstan.[148] Once again, as in Russia, but earlier and on a significantly larger scale, the new "oligarch" opposition has become a gravitational pull for the entire opposition—Kazhegel'din (living in emigration and engaging in his "intrigues" in Kazakhstan),[149] old liberal oppositionists which until then were in the condition of political "lethargy," and communists under the head of Serikbolsyn Abdil'din who became a member of the Political Council of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan. As Zhakiianov has proudly declared: "Just a few months ago the population perceived the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan as a handful of 'affronted' officials and businessmen. Now representatives of many well-known parties and movements have gathered under our banners."[150]

As usual, Ertysbaev has given the most precise evaluation of the threat that the new oppositionist union posed for the authorities: "Do not forget that in Kazakhstan ... there arose an unprecedented fact: a union of rich people and radical opposition, including the communists. This poses a serious threat of a destabilization of the entire situation in the country."[151] In another interview, Ertysbaev said the following: "The union of the radical wing of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan and the entire opposition, which until then had not had a financial policy, represents an explosive mixture and harbors the threat of the potential destabilization of the entire situation."[152]

In January 2002 an assembly of democratic society met at the circus in Almaty. The meeting was broadcast live by one of local television stations ("Tan," which belongs to M. Abliazov); journalists in Kazakhstan compared its impact to the live transmissions from the first Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.[153] Approximately 900 people from various regions of

Kazakhstan, with representatives of all opposition movements, attended the session.[154] The presiding chair was Abdil'din, the "elder" and the leader of communists. As Zhakiianov declared at the assembly: "The country is living in a climate of fear, total lies, and disbelief in the future,... [and] stands before a dangerous line which, if we cross it, we risk encountering a systemic crisis and putting at risk our statehood. The only real alternative to this can be decisive democratic reforms."[155] Those assembled demanded an expansion of the powers of parliament, even the transition to a parliamentary republic, and the election of akims and judges. The main direct demand was for a referendum on the election of the heads of local authorities, and for this purpose it established an initiative group. As was to be expected, the Central Election Commission found irregularities in the lists of participants and refused to register the movement.[156]

Crushing the New Opposition

Authorities are horrified and have responded immediately and spasmodically on every front.

Sometimes, the authorities' fear has led to the urgent promulgation of laws that can only be explained by the panic and horrendous images in the minds of the rulers. Such, without question, was the decree adopted in 2000 on the first president of Kazakhstan—Nazarbaev's reply to "Kazakhgate" and his fears of future prosecution. Another response to the new attack of the opposition was the 2002 decree on the "state of emergency." Whereas earlier the government could declare a state of emergency in the entire country for three days and in oblasts for six days, the new decree provided for thirty and sixty days, respectively. It was now possible to order a state of emergency if there was a threat to the security of citizens and political stability, including such things as an epidemic. Moreover, the decree provided for preliminary censorship and a ban on meetings and even mass performances.[157]

Naturally, the regime launched a campaign against hasty democratization, as something that threatened to lead to chaos, the breakup of Kazakhstan, and so forth. It also mobilized a plethora of letters to the press, declarations,[158] and even meetings[159] against a parliamentary republic and the election of the akims.[160] There were also serious articles that compared radicals from the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan with prerevolutionary populists *{narodovoV tsy),* who, in their unbridled haste undermined the slow but successful process of modernization in Tsarist Russia.[161]

At the same time, Nazarbaev sought to show that democratization was also his goal, and that his disagreement with the opposition concerned time

frames, not principles, and coherence of measures, not general direction. In his words: "If the normal conditions of life . .. have not been created, there is no point in talking about democracy of the American or French type."[162] The president emphasized that "democracy is our consciously chosen path of development, which I proposed to you, and which you accepted," but he warned that "alien prescriptions can harm us."[163] Nazarbaev reiterated his view that "nothing is more important for carrying out reforms than a stable state."[164] He also warned that "we have not matured to a parliamentary form of rule.... We categorically reject advice aimed at the artificial acceleration of democratic processes."[165] However, he did not summarily reject even the election of the akims; he was prepared to introduce this change in several rural areas, with the first elected rural akim appearing in May 1999 in Nazarbaev's home village of Chemolgan. Nazarbaev also established a permanent presidential commission, with representatives from political parties, on the problems of democratization.

Simultaneously, Nazarbaev sought to split the opposition. In an appeal to businessmen, he urged them not to become entangled in politics. In his words: "I want to recommend to all our bankers, businessmen . .. not to engage in politics, but to do what they know how to do. . . ." And he told journalists that the state must defend them from the oligarchs, who use the press for their own dirty games: "The state, he declared, must defend the journalist from the oligarch."[166] That is because, he said, "journalists have fallen under the pressure of bags of money."[167] All this bears a striking resemblance to Putin; similar processes give rise to similar methods.

But his most important objective was to separate "responsible opposition, which strives toward the same things as the president, but only too hastily," from the "irresponsible" opposition, which is linked to Kazhegel'din and the communists. Nazarbaev expressed "amazement how reformers and democrats could find themselves together with the bolsheviks and overt conservatives."[168]

The authorities thus attempted to win over the "responsible" opposition. Two leaders of Ak zhol, U. Dzhandozov and K. Kelimbetov, returned to state service and obtained important posts. And both remained members of Ak zhol. Moreover, there was a reregistration of parties under the new law; it raised the demands on parties and sought to liquidate small opposition parties (which it did). All were convinced that Ak zhol would not be registered.[169] But it was.[170]

Then a wave of terror came crashing down on the "irresponsible opposition." Zhakiianov and Abliazov were accused of economic crimes—just as in the case of Kazhegel'din (and Gusinskii, Berezovskii, and Khodorkovskii in Russia). On 27 March 2002 Abliazov was arrested; on 29 March Zhakiianov

faced the same threat, but took refuge in the French embassy. When Zhakiianov's wife drove up to the embassy (which was surrounded by pickets), the authorities confiscated her automobile (allegedly on the grounds it was under investigation). Then, on 4 April, Zhakiianov left the embassy—after the authorities had agreed not to imprison him during preliminary investigation, but to keep him under house arrest.[171] But the regime deceived both the French and Zhakiianov: "house arrest" came to mean detention under guard in the barracks of a private firm in Pavlodar. And Zhakiianov soon found himself in a "normal" prison.

All this was very similar to Russian methods. But some elements were especially characteristic of the Nazarbaev regime—when some persons acted against the opposition, but their identities remained unknown. I have already noted the secret gunshots fired at Kazhegel'din. Now came a whole wave of such acts. Thus on 29 March unidentified sharpshooters knocked out the cable of the television transmitter of the company "Tan," thereby ending its broadcasts. The cable was repaired, but again damaged on 15 May. Unidentified people acted in strict concert with authorities. "Tan" lost its right to broadcast. On 19 May a decapitated dog was hung on the window of an opposition newspaper *Delovoe obozrenie-Respublika,* with the following note: "There will be no next time." The dog's head, with the same note, was cast into the courtyard of the building where the newspaper's editor, I. Patrusheva, lived. Previously, she had received funeral wreaths through the mail. On 22 May a bottle with an explosive mixture was tossed into the office of the newspaper's editors, setting the office afire. There was also an organized assault, again by unidentified assailants, on the newspaper *SolDAT,* which had published materials about Kazakhgate. Journalists were beaten, and their equipment seized. The police, naturally, found nothing, dismissing all this as "hooliganism,"[172] and spokesmen for the regime referred to some mysterious "third force."

The journalist S. Duvanov, targeted by a criminal investigation for insulting the honor and dignity of the president, was also beaten by unidentified assailants. Nazarbaev declared that this was "a provocation specially planned and financed by enemies of our country."[173] Shortly thereafter Duvanov was arrested and sentenced to prison for raping a minor, a charge that was almost certainly false.[174]

The arrests of Abliazov and Zhakiianov (along with the conviction of Duvanov) unleashed a storm around the world. To their defense came the U.S. Senate, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Parliament, and even Kofi Annan. But nothing helped. On 18 July 2002 Abliazov was sentenced to six years imprisonment; on 2 August 2002 Zhakiianov was sentenced to seven years; both were incarcerated in penal

colonies. As always, Ertysbaev gave a very interesting and deliberately cynical commentary: "Mukhtar Abliazov, after the trial, said, and I quote verbatim: 'If suddenly justice were really to be rendered in Kazakhstan, then on the bank of the accused would be all—without any exception—the members of the government, and all the akims during the existence of the national state.' Thus Mukhtar, unfortunately, . . . confessed his guilt."[175] The general prosecutor O. Zhumabekov (the functional equivalent of Russia's Ustinov) issued a press release describing the conviction of Abliazov and Zhakiianov as an enormous success in the battle against corruption and, simultaneously, asserted that those deputies who defended them were also corrupt and associated with them by their own secret dealings.[176]

No doubt, Abliazov and Zhakiianov, like Khodorkovskii in Russia, knew what they were getting into: prison was a conscious choice. But one (Abliazov), while saying in his final statement that he was ready to go to prison if it would move Kazakhstan toward democracy, overestimated his strength. After a short time he filed an appeal for amnesty, which was granted. Upon leaving prison he renounced political activity. Zhakiianov remains in prison; Nazarbaev uses him to demonstrate what happens to those who do not capitulate. The Political Council of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan urged Zhakiianov to make a similar request for clemency, and he complied. In contrast to the petition from Abliazov, however, his did not express contrition or acknowledge guilt. The petition was rejected, and several new criminal accusations have been raised against Zhakiianov while he has been in prison.[177]

The wave of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan suffered the same fate as the opposition of Kazhegel'din. It was crushed by the firmness of the Nazarbaev regime. The latter withstood the challenge. But a series of ever more powerful blows and domestic processes in fact have been rendering the regime less and less stable.

Rising Opposition, Creeping Democratization

Two processes, parallel and interactive, are at work. On the one hand, oppositionist "waves" are arising from within the elite of Kazakhstan; groups are breaking away to demand a regime change. On the other hand, part of the ruling elite is undergoing a process whereby their loyalty to the president is softening or eroding. The elite is losing, increasingly, its monolithic unity; the president is losing, increasingly, his control over it.

This process is unfolding within the Nazarbaev Family itself, which the president is finding difficult to control. The prime minister can be sacked, an opposition oligarch imprisoned, but what is one to do with one's own

daughters and sons-in-law, who have amassed colossal wealth and influence, who have acquired an extensive clientele, and who begun to compete openly for the legacy of the aging head of the family? But since, as a result of a natural biological process, the midnight hour is fast approaching, the struggle for the inheritance has become increasingly intense. Events in other CIS countries force one to consider increasingly the options: the highly successful transfer of power in Russia from Yeltsin to his trusted man, though not a relative; the successful, with some bloodshed, transfer by Gaidar Aliev to his son in Azerbaijan; and the events in Georgia that have frightened all the post-Soviet presidents.

Like any family, that of Nazarbaev is a complicated and closed system. The newspapers of Kazakhstan and internet sites are full of rumors and gossip about its internal life. And this manifests more than a simple fondness for "peeking through the keyhole." As in a medieval monarchy, in Kazakhstan the domestic life of the "royal family," even the most intimate relations within it, have direct political significance. Sometimes, this is of the greatest importance. For example, Dariga and her husband Rakhat have reportedly separated or even secretly divorced; it was then said that this was untrue, that Dariga seeks to get "clemency" for Rakhat and have him returned to his homeland from his "exile" in Vienna. But whatever their relations might be, this can have a profound impact on the political future of Kazakhstan.

After Rakhat Aliev's exile, the leading pretenders to successor for a president with no male offspring include Dariga (although her relationship to Rakhat, in Vienna, remains unclear), and a second son-in-law Timur Kulibaev (the husband of Dinara, a man with a quiet and affable manner—the antithesis of Rakhat—and head of the oil sector). Recently there has been much evidence that Nazarbaev's "official" successor may be his energetic daughter Dariga. In 2003 she established her own party Asar (All Together), which, of course, gives unqualified support for the president and his policies. Its main themes, naturally, are "centrism, realism, pragmatism, toleration, and political moderation," but with a slight liberal ideological tint. It has also announced its intention to unite all pro-presidential parties.[178] It is suspected, however, that all this is being done by Dariga either "without her father's blessing" and on her own initiative, or that the blessing was given but, when other members of the family became upset, Nazarbaev made a half hearted attempt to call it off. In any case, he did not attend the founding congress of Asar; when local officials rushed to organize a campaign to join the new party, they suddenly—and to their complete bewilderment—received an order from Astana not to meddle.[179] If that is true, Asar will not become a unifying force, but simply the fourth presidential party (along with the Otan, Civil, and Agrarian Parties); still, it may signify that the party system that seem-

ingly represents the interests of social strata has been transformed into a party system that represents clans. Kulibaev has an enormous fortune and influence, but (unlike Dariga) does not control the mass media; according to reports in Kazakhstani press, he is now endeavoring to fill this gap by gaining a foothold in television. The competition of these two figures is beginning to acquire a public character, and the Family itself is becoming the source of a certain "pluralism."[180]

Apart from the Family groups under Nazarbaev's closest relatives, the ruling elite has other groups headed by "magnates"—people who do not belong to the Family in the narrow sense of the word. These include N. Abykaev (the closest advisor to the president and the head of his administration), S. Utemuratov (head of the Security Council and an oligarch), A. Mashkevich (the aluminum and chrome king, with his well-organized Civil Party), and others. These people are prominent comrades-in-arms or clients of the president himself, not Family members. They could play a decisive role in the inheritance struggle by allying with a Family candidate or even by supporting someone from outside the Family.[181] They could play a role analogous to that of the Russian magnates in the eighteenth century, when the order for succession to the throne was unfixed, and it depended on whom they chose to invite to rule (for example, Anna Ioannovna in 1730 or Elizaveta Petrovna in 1741). Finally, there is the most cohesive and influential group of Ak zhol party adherents, who simultaneously form an opposition party seeking to establish a more democratic regime and constitute part of the ruling elite.

This division of the ruling strata into clans and "parties" creates a situation with relative pluralism, and it is gradually giving rise to certain "pluralistic" or even democratic "habits." People become accustomed to a situation where there are various "power centers" that need their support and among which they can choose. Moreover, they see that, while a direct attack on the president can land one in prison, simple criticism and defense of one's positions—as the Ak zhol members do—is not so frightening and not even so hopeless.

In this situation, institutions that would seem to have only a decorative function (the pro-presidential parties and parliament) begin, like the tin soldiers of Saltykov-Shchedrin, to come alive. The form begins to acquire content. Thus, already in 1999 (in connection with budget questions) some in parliament launched an attack on Kazhegel'din's successor as prime minister, Nurlan Balgimbaev; the attack was led not by liberal oppositionists, for these are virtually absent from this parliament. Rather, the charge was led by loyalists from the presidential party Otan on the grounds that the budget was ignoring the interests of the southern regions. The prime minister did

have the backing of other loyalists, but these came from the Civil Party. When a vote of no confidence was moved, it fell just one short of the number required to allow a vote.[182]

This episode might be considered a special exception or simply something that had been staged (the vote of no confidence, after all, was not held, or Nazarbaev planned to replace Balgimbaev anyway). But we see the same picture in the next parliament, which initially was also seen as completely "problem-free."[183] In 2002, the press was already noting an increase in its activism. One began to hear voices demanding that the parliament's power be expanded and that extra-budgetary funds be included in the state budget (under their purview); the parliament also regularly began returning draft bills to the government for additional work. Once again, it was the deputies from pro-presidential parties who had become active and refractory.[184]

In 2003 Kazakhstan experienced something that had never happened before and that graphically showed how much society had changed. The government of Prime Minister Imangali Tasmagambetov submitted to the Majilis the draft text for a land code. Some deputies resisted the proposed law, arguing that it would lead to the formation of latifundia and leave the peasantry landless. The parliament thereupon inserted some relatively significant amendments (a moratorium on the purchase of land by nongovernmental juridical entities; a limit on the purchase of land by these entities and by foreigners; and so forth). The government opposed these changes and itself suddenly called for a vote of confidence. It was a perfectly obvious case of blackmail. A vote of no confidence required a two-thirds vote in both chambers, which was virtually impossible to achieve. However, if the government lost the vote, the president has the right to dissolve parliament and set new elections. In Russia even opposition parties did not vote for no confidence during the first and second Dumas. And it is impossible to compare the composition of the Majilis with those first two Dumas in Russia; instead, the Majilis is more like the present Duma. Nevertheless, 55 of 77 deputies in the Majilis, and 33 of 37 deputies in the Senate, voted for the no confidence bill. Tasmagambetov was, clearly, totally unprepared for such a turn of events; he even declared that the results of the vote in parliament had been falsified. Nevertheless, the government submitted its resignation, which was accepted.[185] Such had never happened in the history of Kazakhstan (or, for that matter, Russia).

What happened? Why did the deputies become so brave? The liberal press had not predicted such a turn of events. And when Tasmagambetov resigned, the press became utterly bewildered and began to write that the president had consciously withheld an order on how to vote, having decided it was time for Tasmagambetov to go. Simultaneously, it claimed that Nazarbaev

wanted to demonstrate to the world that Kazakhstan is a democracy. But even if all this were so, the fact that Nazarbaev could let parliament decide the question of his government's fate, and that deputies voted as they wanted (without fear that the parliament, in accordance with the constitution, would be dissolved) speaks to the new relations within the ruling elite of Kazakhstan. We must try to grasp that the previous or the current parliament has deposed a government in order to understand how these relations have gradually become so different from those in Russia.

On 2 December 2003 the chairman of the Majilis, Zh. Tuiakbai, published an article in *Kazakhstanskaia pravda* called "The Experience of Growing Up." Tuiakbai then was by no means a liberal oppositionist; rather, he was close to Nazarbaev and a relative of former Prime Minister Balgimbaev (toward whom the previous parliament came close to expressing no confidence). But in his article Tuiakbai demanded an expansion of parliament's powers, and talked about the need for a real division of powers, and proposed a new electoral law that would make the use of "administrative resources" impossible.[186]

When Nazarbaev speaks of a gradual transition to democracy, this appears to be a purely "instrumental" (if not demagogic) statement by someone who does not want to surrender or share power. No doubt, to a significant degree, that is indeed the case. But it sometimes happens that a person speaks the truth without realizing that it is the truth. During twelve years of independence, Kazakhstan has undergone changes that have drawn it closer to democracy. The Nazarbaev regime, which in the first half of the 1990s steadily moved in the direction of authoritarian control over society, is increasingly losing this control.

Some Comparisons

Our sketch breaks off in midstream: the life cycles of the regimes in Kazakhstan and Russia are not yet complete. Nevertheless, we can draw certain conclusions. And above all, it is possible to compare development in the two countries.

The regimes in Kazakhstan and Russia are obviously of the same type, and both have followed certain general patterns of development. But there are also very great differences.

From the very outset, the regime in Kazakhstan was more authoritarian than its Russian counterpart. The Russian system allows for the election of governors; in Kazakhstan, that remains an unrealized dream of the opposition. Astana is also much more inclined to combat opponents by resorting to crude terrorist methods, such as beatings and arson by "unknown assail-

ants." The Nazarbaev regime, after a referendum extending the presidential term, more quickly achieved maximum authoritarianism. Hence the people of Kazakhstan were right in 1998 to judge the Russian regime as "more democratic" than their own.[187] Today such evaluations are no longer possible. Significantly, during a recent visit by Putin, Nazarbaev proudly announced: "We are on approximately the same level with respect to reforms in both the economy and politics.... I am not afraid to say that Kazakhstan has a managed development of democracy."[188]

It is entirely possible that the greater authoritarianism of the regime in Kazakhstan has been a factor in the more rapid process of economic market reforms. Nazarbaev had more freedom of action than Yeltsin; he did not have to pay as much attention to public opinion as did his counterpart in Moscow. And that meant more consistent reform. And this is evidently bearing fruit: Kazakhstan has overtaken Russia in the rate of its economic development.

But this relatively successful development has an obverse side: the signs of breakdown and crisis have appeared earlier in Kazakhstan than in Russia. The Russian regime under Putin is in its prime. Yeltsin's successor, who was an utter unknown, garnered more votes in 2000 than had Yeltsin in 1996. and indeed triumphed in the first round. The Duma, elected in 1999, is incomparably more controlled by authorities than its predecessor. The Duma of 2003 is almost "ideal": The presidential party "United Russia has a constitutional majority, while the right liberal opposition is altogether unrepresented. Russian political development is not moving to bolster democratic elements and facilitate a rotation of power, but rather toward a further strengthening of the authorities' control over society, thereby excluding a rotation. The development in Kazakhstan has been different. The apogee of presidential authority, with no real alternative, came in 1995-1998. The nearly identical political systems in Kazakhstan and Russia (about which Nazarbaev spoke) is the result of a crossing of different trajectories: one marked by growing authoritarianism and management from above (in Russia), and one by just the obverse (in Kazakhstan). Moreover, it seems that this "point of intersection" has already been passed, and that the society of Kazakhstan is more pluralistic and "open" than that in Russia. To quote Nazarbaev's advisor Ertysbaev with respect to the coming presidential elections in 2006: "We do not need 98 percent, as was the case in 1991. We do not need 80 percent, as in 1999. But we need a controlling bloc of the electorate, say, 51 percent."[189] Russia is heading toward 80 or 90 percent, while Kazakhstan is sliding downhill toward 51 percent.

Both regimes face new challenges. In the beginning, they had to overcome resistance from social forces that already existed when the regimes

came into being; this resistance came from workers, peasants, the old nomenklatura elite, the intelligentsia, and nationalist movements. The establishment of the regime indicated that it had overcome such resistance. But later, resistance became increasingly evident from social strata that the regime itself had generated—the new bourgeois elite, which increasingly found the framework of the authoritarian presidential regime too restrictive. The appearance of these new forces has given new life to the old opposition and has changed the general structure of the opposition. This is transpiring in both Russia and Kazakhstan. But it happened earlier in Kazakhstan and in a more dramatic form. Khodorkovskii landed in jail when he had hardly begun his political activities. Abliazov and Zhakiianov succeeded in uniting the entire, highly diverse opposition and in presenting their own program. The scale of their support is incomparably greater than the modest backing given Khodorkovskii.

Kazakhstan moved more quickly toward the market than did Russia, and it encountered earlier, and on a larger scale, the emergence of a bourgeois opposition. It is clear that the vectors in the current development of the two countries are simply different. But one cannot say conclusively whether there is a causal connection between them, whether a bourgeoisie (and its consciousness) is forming more quickly in Kazakhstan because of the more rapid development of the market.

However, one can point to some cultural and situational factors that evidently did contribute to the development of an oppositionist mood in the bourgeoisie of Kazakhstan and to the "liberalization" of the regime. Kazakhstan lacks the Russian tradition of an autocratic, and later Soviet, totalitarian imperial state. This tradition in Russia imparts a specifically antidemocratic character to the protests of the popular masses against the bourgeois reforms; it spawns the "red-brown" synthesis so characteristic of post-Soviet Russia—that is, a union of communist and "fascist-like" nationalism that impedes the union of post-Soviet communists with liberals and democrats. Kazakhstan has no such "red-brown" synthesis. The communists are weaker here than in Russia. Most important, they are different. To a much greater degree than in Russia, the communists of Kazakhstan have accepted democratic values and established strong relations of cooperation with the liberal opposition.[190]

Initially, to some degree the Russian autocratic state tradition worked for the communist opposition, but gradually it has come increasingly to favor an authoritarian presidential regime. Russian consciousness, with relief, "recognizes" in the presidential power an autocratic authority that is "normal" and traditional for Russia. Yeltsin actively used autocratic symbols; Putin actively invokes autocratic and Soviet symbolism by emphasizing the tradi-

tionalism and the continuity of power. Nazarbaev does not have such a historical pillar of support in Kazakhstan. Although one need not take the idea of a "nomadic democracy" seriously, it is nonetheless clear that the Kazakh past does not provide the same degree of support for an authoritarian system as it does in Russia.[191]

The surviving tribal and horde connections can play a constructive role in the process of democratic development—not merely the negative role that is superficially visible. Russian society is totally atomized; given the lack of a civil society and a system of voluntary organizations, it proves completely defenseless before the authorities. The disunited, atomized individuals cannot mount solidarity to resist the state. A civil society is not more developed in Kazakhstan than in Russia. But the remnants of "pre-state" solidarities and loyalties, to a certain degree, compensate for this weakness and make the individual somewhat less isolated and defenseless. One gains the impression that in Kazakhstan (in contrast to Russia) every power hierarchy and presidential party structure, after achieving a certain level of control, then begins to break down: the struggle of official and oligarchic clans quickly begins rising beyond a safe level. The deputies who had been strictly selected began to vote in ways that surprised authorities. All this requires extensive, labor-intensive research. But I find very persuasive the hypotheses that authoritarian discipline is breaking down and that, to a certain degree, persisting tribal and horde loyalties have played a role in facilitating democratization.

It is hardly an accident that the majority of the leaders of the democratic opposition come from the Middle Horde. The domination of Nazarbaev's Great Horde naturally leads to discontent among Kazakhs in the Middle and Little hordes, and this discontent takes the form of a liberal, democratic opposition. It would hardly be correct to say that here, behind the liberal phrases, are concealed archaic tribal interests. Rather, these interests promote the adoption of a liberal ideology.

Finally, purely accidental factors have played a significant role in the development of opposition in Kazakhstan. The history of regimes like those in Kazakhstan and Russia show the impact of "biological" factors—the age and health of presidents, the various correlations between their life cycles and the development cycles of the regimes. Aging and ill health of a president in such a regime is always tantamount to crisis. This crisis affects all authoritarian regimes, even a monarchy with a well-defined order of succession. That is all the more true for regimes where succession is uncertain, where the aging ruler can designate his successor from various people, and where there is no 100-percent guarantee that the intended heir will in fact come to power. Naturally, as the transfer of power approaches, this situation

exacerbates the struggle of court parties, as various groups push different candidates, since none of the magnates can be certain of their own future. In such a situation there is a certain "oligarchization" of the regime and even a "democratization," for the competing groups appeal to ever larger strata of the elite and even to the population at large. In the USSR such was the case in the period of Lenin's illness and then after his death; the same happened after Stalin's death and in all the successive transfers of power. In the post-Soviet history of Russia, a similar situation arose in 1999 when Yeltsin had not yet identified his successor and the elite began to organize itself and even to act independently in promoting its own candidate—Evgenii Primakov.

Of great importance for the fate of a regime is the stage at which this inevitable crisis of succession sets in. The timing is in no way connected with the cycle of the current regime. If a regime is approaching collapse, if it is weakening, if it has already spawned forces that seek to break out of the existing framework, then the biological decline and death of the ruler—who embodies the regime—can prove fatal. If the regime is far from decline, however, a change in rulers can work in its favor: the new ruler will evoke joyous expectations, and he can rid himself of the most odious characteristics of the rule and personalities associated with his predecessor.

In Russia, the crisis of a power transfer was resolved in an almost ideal fashion. First, it happened at a relatively early stage in the development of the regime—-before the appearance of a serious conflict between the authoritarian presidential power and the new bourgeoisie, when forces that could attempt a regime change during a crisis situation had not yet fully formed. Second, Yeltsin demonstrated an amazing sagacity: he himself retired and appointed a successor who was virtually unknown and not overly associated with his own rule. The transfer of power to Putin significantly bolstered the regime, and the first Putin years have marked the heyday of the regime.

The situation in Kazakhstan is quite different. Nazarbaev is not as tired and ailing as was Yeltsin toward the end of his reign (although, to be sure, the years have begun to take their toll on the Kazakh leader too). Quite recently it was announced that Nazarbaev intends to compete in the presidential elections in 2006.[192] The crisis of a transfer of power in Kazakhstan still lies ahead. However, forces seeking to erect a more law-based regime are maturing more quickly in Kazakhstan than in Russia. And there is a chance that the forces that are maturing in Kazakhstani society can take advantage of the impending crisis: either, in general, by not allowing an inheritance of power, or by permitting this but under certain "conditions" (to use the term of Russian magnates who attempted to limit autocracy in the accession of Anna Ioannovna) to make the rule of Nazarbaev's successor

less personalized and less authoritarian, and to ensure a greater role for law, the parliament, and self-rule. All this could mark the final transition to a normal system of democratic rotation of power.

Conclusion

I have endeavored to provide an objective description of the regime in Kazakhstan. A great deal that has happened in this regime, as in the similar Russian case, is so obviously unattractive that, however much one tries to avoid bias, the resulting picture is hardly pleasant.

However, my goal was not to deliver a moral judgment on these regimes, but to determine their place in the evolution of the two societies. But for that we must raise the question of possible alternatives. Of course, there were alternatives, especially in 1991—that is, when these regimes first appeared. Obviously, there were both good and bad alternatives, with greater or lesser elements of authoritarianism and greater or lesser elements of democracy. But in our view real democracy did not constitute an alternative either for Russia or for Kazakhstan. Countries with such a history, and such a consciousness, like Kazakhstan and Russia, were not capable in 1991 of embracing democracy, a system with a struggle and rotation of power based on elections that took root in the post-communist countries of Central Europe and the Baltics. Consequently, both Russia and Kazakhstan found regimes that were entirely "normal" for these countries.

The figures of the presidents here have also been "normal." They could be a bit smarter or, conversely, a bit dumber. But this would not fundamentally change things. In any case there would still have been the construction of an extralegal system of personal power, duly masked by legal forms. There would still have been the "family economy" and corruption. Only if the president had been a saint would it have been possible, in the post-Soviet era, for the president not to become corrupt and not try, by every conceivable means (legal and otherwise) to cling to power. But a saint could not have become a post-Soviet president. A completely different type of persons took the path to power and created essentially similar regimes—be it the relatively uncultured and impulsive Yeltsin, the born communist bureaucrat and sly manipulator Nazarbaev, the refined intellectual and "quasi-dissident" Ter-Petrosian in Armenia, or the academician Akaev in Kyrgyzstan. Nazarbaev is no worse, for example, than Yeltsin; whatever sins may be on his conscience, they are less than those of the bloody coup of 1993 and the war in Chechnia. Nazarbaev can show even greater objective successes and achievements than the other presidents. An almost unthinkable Kazakh state has been established; there have been no bloody conflicts; and the growth of

the GDP is faster than in any other post-Soviet country and ranks among the highest in the world.

Almost all post-Soviet presidents—whose rule rarely allows alternatives—endlessly and in every possible way have repeated one idea: our peoples have not matured enough for democracy, the latter will lead to anarchy and massive bloodshed. So let's not permit the Europeans and Americans to interfere with their own prescriptions and advice. What may be good for them will be our destruction. Sometime we will come to democracy, but that is a vague "sometime." But for the time being, as Nazarbaev said during a trip to the United States: "If there were not here [in Central Asia] five authoritarian regimes, then there would be ten bin Ladens."[193] The self-interest of such statements, their aim of keeping the president in power and disarming Western criticism—all that is obvious. But the self-interest motive of these statements does not yet mean that they are false and are only, as the American researcher M. Olcott writes, "an unsubstantiated justification for the consolidation of power in the hands of the ruling elite."[194]

Recognition of the justness of these comments runs aground on our moral protest. But it does not signify a denial of the absolute moral significance of democracy, or a racist recognition of the eternal hierarchy of peoples. Democracy is an achievement of mankind, which sooner or later will belong to all. But this does not mean that all peoples can master democracy immediately and that those who cannot do it immediately never will or cannot do so—just as the recognition of norms and rules in literacy or knowledge of arithmetic does not mean that a child can learn to calculate and to read in a day or a week.

Those peoples of the USSR who were more developed and more prepared by their history (above all, the Baltic peoples) could switch directly from a communist order to democracy. For the peoples of Russia and Kazakhstan, who had virtually no experience with democracy (and, in the Kazakh case, even the experience of an independent state), such a jump was simply beyond their powers. For them a transition form that combined authoritarianism and some elements of democracy was more natural.

Both the Kazakhstani and the Russian regimes are transitional. In the course of the existence of these regimes, several things have happened: these societies have mastered some elementary democratic and market norms and customs; generations shaped under totalitarianism and bearing its mark in their consciousness have died off; and a new generation reared, if not under democratic, then under significantly freer conditions, has come to the fore. Under these regimes, forces have emerged that find the framework of the old regime too inhibiting and in the end want to demolish these limitations. Even from our brief overview of the evolution of the regime in Kazakhstan,

it is obvious how society there has moved forward during the Nazarbaev years, how fundamental democratic values have become rooted, and how the discontent with Nazarbaev and the system he created has grown.

To characterize the two regimes as transitional, as providing the framework under which society is prepared for democracy, does not mean that the transition to democracy can be conceived as an inexorable, gradual strengthening of democracy. The development of societies and of regimes does not coincide. The way a regime develops does not correspond to the logic of social development, but follows its own internal logic. A president who aspires to have a system devoid of alternatives must constantly, ever more intensively prevent the appearance of alternatives by expanding his control and extending the principle of no alternative to all levels and spheres of society. He must make some concessions to society, introducing elements of democracy, but these are nothing more than concessions made under pressure and limited so as not to infringe on the basic principle: no alternatives to their power. A reverse dependency is entirely possible: society can become increasingly ready for democracy, but the regime—precisely for that reason—becomes ever more repressive.

In any case, there is no smooth transition, but a gap, between these regimes in Kazakhstan and Russia, on the one hand, and democracy on the other. A transition to democracy can only occur if these regimes fall. It is inseparable from the situation where society first chooses not someone who is in power or designated by those in power as the successor. This is still not the triumph of democracy, but an absolutely necessary step toward it. But it is clear that resistance to this step on the part of presidential regimes will be fierce, and a simple vote cannot bring this about (as can be seen from the examples of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine).

Presidents may be right when they say that their societies have not matured enough for democracy and need time to make this transition. But they will never say that the time has now come, that now I can let loose of the reins of power, and that I can leave the people free to choose whomever they want. They will learn when this time has come, as did Shevardnadze and Kuchma, when they see crowds in the streets demanding their resignation and honest elections.

Notes

1. For a biography that is an apologia (naturally), but significantly more objective than might be expected, see the account by Nazarbaev's aide, Ermukhamet Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev* (Astana, 2001).

2. D. Kunaev, after his relegation to the status of pensioner, could never forgive Nazarbaev for this "stab in the back." The latter, however, used the name of the popular Kunaev to legitimize his own power: when Kunaev died in 1994, Nazarbaev is-

sued a decree memorializing the former first secretary and even establishing a museum in his name. In 2002 a grandiose assembly was held to commemorate what would have been Kunaev's ninetieth birthday. See R. Shbintaev, "Nash Dimash," *Leninskaia smena-Ekspress,* 12 January 2002, p. 3. Official articles emphasized Nazarbaev's closeness to Kunaev and even asserted and even warned that disliked people who opposed Nazarbaev (e.g., S. Abdil'din) should be treated with caution. See N. Morozov, "D. Kunaev—90 let," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 15 January 2002, pp. 1—4; and S. Tereshchenko, "Ne mogu molchat'," *Leninskaia smena-Ekspress K.,* 24 October 2002.

3. The mechanism behind the December events is poorly known and little understood. Later Kazakh nationalists will grossly exaggerate its significance. See the comments by the Kazakh historian M. Kozybaev in *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 20 February 2002, pp. 1-2. Later, Kunaev accused Nazarbaev of secretly organizing the demonstration in order to frighten Moscow and to force it to appoint him in Kolbin's place. By contrast, the Kazakh opposition later accused Nazarbaev of organizing the repression (see Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* pp. 139^0). It bears noting that these two opposing claims are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

4. Here is an example of his "transition" lexicon from mid-1991: "I believe that the transition to market relations is fully consistent with the theory of Marxism." N. Nazarbaev, "Doklad na plenume TsK KP Kazakhstana," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda, 23* July 1991, pp. 1-2. Subsequently, the references to Marxism vanished.

5. However typical were such quick and radical shifts in the worldviews of representatives of the Soviet elite, there is still something mysterious here. The terms to describe such a phenomenon are wanting; neither of the two models for such a description "work." The first model is "conversion," when a person really undergoes a radical change in his worldview and his eyes are opened. Thus, Nazarbaev later explained his ideological "revolution" by the influence that was exerted on him by a book of F. Hayek, *Doroga k rabstvu* (Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 191). But the very idea of a mass change of worldviews among adult, intelligent people precisely at a time when such a change is advantageous can only elicit a smile. The second model is that of "Shtirlits" (a soviet spy who was a member of Natzi elite, a hero of a famous Russian movie), i.e., a person whose worldview did not change, but previously had to be concealed. But the picture of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as comprised mainly of anticommunists is also ludicrous. Of the leaders of the CIS, only Gaidar Aliev used this model to explain his behavior; in all seriousness he declared that, as first secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, he foresaw the breakup of the USSR and gradually prepared Azerbaijan for independence.

Obviously, the real mental processes of these people cannot be reduced to the terms of "truth" and "falsehood." These terms are applicable only to a small circle of very concrete situations, in which they really could lie or speak the truth, but not to their ideological thinking. When, prior to 1990-1991, one had to speak communist words for one's career, they said them; this does not mean that they lied, pretended to be communists (as Shtirlits pretended to be a fascist). Unquestionably, they not only said these words, but to some degree also thought them, for a successful career required a certain degree of conformity in words and ideas. But when this ceased to be advantageous and even became dangerous, they began both to speak and think differently. That is not so much a conscious adaptation of words and behavior to the requirements of a career as a purely instinctive adaptation of their very thinking.

6. To a certain degree, the relative strength of anti-Soviet movements in various republics was apparent from the voting on the referendum about the fate of the USSR in March 1991. In Kazakhstan, 89.2 percent of the electorate participated, which was a higher rate than in Russia (75.4 percent), but less than in other Central Asian republics, where the rate everywhere exceeded 90 percent. The vote to preserve the USSR was 94.1 percent in Kazakhstan (only 71.3 percent in Russia); the vote against was 5 percent in Kazakhstan (but 26.4 percent in Russia). In almost all the Central Asian republics the voting against preservation of the USSR ran under 5 percent (the sole exception being Uzbekistan, with 5.2 percent). See *Pravda,* 27 March 1991, p. 1. Hence Kazakhstan, in terms of the negative votes and nonparticipation, was lower than Russia, but somewhat ahead of the other Central Asian states. Moreover, the social support for anti-Soviet movements in this period in Russia and Kazakhstan were similar. In terms of voting against the USSR, in Russia rates were highest in capitals —Moscow and Leningrad, in Kazakhstan—in the capital of republic Almaty (8.4 percent).

7. In 1987 the repressed participants in the December events had already created a committee, and then, in 1990, made this the basis for a party "Zheltoksan ("December"). In 1990 a national-democratic parties Azat (Liberty) and Alash (with an ideology containing strong Islamist and pan-Turkish elements) were created. Along with these national-democratic and nationalist movements were others of a more generally democratic, perestroika orientation. Nevertheless, these were objectively also directed against the all-union center and part of the general national-democratic wave. Thus, in February 1989, the well-known Kazakh poet and publicist O. Suleimenov created the movement "Nevada-Semipalatinsk," which was directed against underground nuclear tests on the territory of Kazakhstan. On the parties in the first half of the 1990s, see A. Kurtov, *Partii Kazakhstana i osobennosti politicheskogo protsessa v respublike* (Moscow, 1995).

8. A public opinion survey conducted in 1994 showed that in the Eastern-Kazakhstan Oblast of those Russians polled 42 percent favored the union of northern Kazakhstan with Russia, and in Severo-Kazakhstan Oblast the figure was 37 percent; 11 and 16 percent respectively were in favor of autonomy. See M. Olkott [M. Olcott], *Kazakhstan. Neproidennyi put'* (Moscow-Washington, 2003), p. 97.

9. These ideas were echoed not only by Solzhenitsyn, but also by "Westernizers" and "democrats" like Leningrad Mayor Anatolii Sobchak. In response to a statement by Sobchak in one interview, Nazarbaev had this to say: "Having known Sobchak for a long time and having respect for him, I never expected from him declarations about the former Russian provinces. . . . This can lead to bloodshed. . . . Who needs this? Sobchak or someone else? Any border claims today inevitably mean bloodshed." Interview published in *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 6 May 1992, p. 5.

10. See *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 4 October 1991, 15 November 1991, and 16 November 1991. Although after the terrible year of 1991 the threat of Russian separatism naturally faded, to some degree it persists to the present day. In 1999 the special services of Kazakhstan arrested, in Ust'-Kamenogorsk, participants of a conspiracy headed by Vladimir Kazimirchuk (nicknamed "Pugachev"), the goal being to proclaim a "Russian Republic." See S. Kozlov, "Russkaia respublika v Vostochnom Kazakhstane," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 24 November 1999, p. 1; "Terroristam pred"iavleno obvinenie," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 26 November 1999, p. 5; and A. Petrov, "Pugachev XX veka," *Moskovskie novosti,* 30 November 1999. The plans of E. Limonov and his "national Bolsheviks" are generally well known.

11. The role of the "reactionary bogeyman" at the time was played by the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, V. Anufriev, who had declared at a Central Committee plenum in February 1990: "Somebody, comrades, must answer for the collapse of the unity of the party, for the ideological breakdown; somebody must answer, comrades, for the events in Eastern Europe, about which no one wants to speak." Quoted in Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 293.

12. As Nazarbaev said in a speech at a conference in 1993: "I'm told that I saved you, former apparatchiks, but I say that this is not so." *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 4 March 1993, p. 1.

13. Here are the results of a poll conducted in 1991 by the journal *Dialog* about the "politician of the year": 40 percent named Nazarbaev, 36 percent Yeltsin, 26 percent Zhirinovskii, 19 percent Alksins, 18 percent Gorbachev, 13 percent Kravchuk, 12 percent Sobchak, 11 percent Silaev, and 9 percent Khasbulatov. After these came Akaev, Bakatin, Travkin, Shevardnadze, and Iakovlev. (The respondents could choose more than one person. See Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 162. According to data from another poll (conducted by the foundation Public Opinion in April-May 1991 in fifteen Russian cities, as well as Kiev and Almaty, and among 100 "minds," such as Bonner and Prokhanov), respondents were asked to identify the "republic, the leadership of which is conducting policies that are best thought through and that answer the interests of the people." More than half of the "minds" and a third of the general pool identified Kazakhstan, with Russia in second place. *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 17 August 1991, p. 1.

14. When, in the autumn of 1990, Gorbachev offered Nazarbaev the position as chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the latter posed a deliberately unacceptable condition: confirmation by the parliaments of all the union republics. In December 1990, in an interview in *Pravda,* Nazarbaev was asked how he felt about the offer to become the vice-president of the USSR, and responded: "If [the vice-president] is given the role described in the draft amendment to the Constitution, then this is just another aide. I do not see myself in this role." Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* pp. 159-60.

15. In precisely this manner Nazarbaev initiated, in autumn 1990, the establishment of ties among the republics, bypassing Moscow. The change that Kazakhstan made in the formulation of the question for the referendum about the fate of the USSR also objectively (and perhaps subjectively) represented a step aimed at undermining its significance. Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* pp. 164-65.

16. In this respect, the game that Nazarbaev played with Russia was very similar to that played by Lukashenko of Belarus; in some measure they were even competing with each other. Both advanced various proposals for "close integration," but presupposed a degree of equality that Russia could never allow in its relations with the former Soviet republics. The proposals were either rejected or put on hold, and Nazarbaev and Lukashenko feigned resignation. But in Lukashenko, who is simpler and more naive than Nazarbaev, there was undoubtedly as well a greater element of self-deception.

17. Here is a striking example of the brilliant Nazarbaev playing on Russian great power feelings and leaving Russian politicians discouraged: "From the logic of all previous life, . . . Russia could and had to become the center, the core of the CIS. But—and I say this with great regret—for a number of objective and subjective reasons, that did not come to pass.... Russia has the largest territory and richest natural resources in the world; it is inhabited by a talented, hard-working people. ... It is

necessary to say this so that it becomes the center of gravitational pull for all of Eurasia in the twenty-first century." In other words, Russia could have become the heart of the CIS, but failed to do so. Interview with Nazarbaev published in *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 16 January 1997, pp. 1-3.

18. Nazarbaev can hardly be reproved for specifically repressing ethnic Russians. But he could not fail to be happy about the gradual emergence of a Kazakh majority, for this contributed to giving Kazakhstan greater stability. And he was not always successful in concealing his joy in this matter. Thus, Murat Auezov, a liberal oppositionist, said this in an interview: "Until recently Russians comprised up to 40 percent of our population; now Nazarbaev, in his statements, *not without a flow of victorious reports* [emphasis mine—D.F.], names ... figures ... of 39 percent, then 33 percent, and in a recent speech 29 percent." *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 8 August 1997, p. 3. According to data from the censuses of 1989 and 1999, the proportion of Kazakhs increased from 40.15 to 53.1 percent, while that of Russians dropped from 37.4 to 30 percent. See A. Kurtov, *Demokratiia vyborov* v *Kazakhstane: avtoritarnaia transformatsiia* (Moscow, 2001), p. 309.

19. Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 335. Ertysbaev cites the argumentation of a Russian worker and member of the Supreme Soviet, B. Barchenko: "I believe ... that legalizing and putting in the hands of a single person, however good he might be, unlimited power, in the absence of a sufficiently developed political culture and strong democratic traditions in our republic, we have a real possibility of acquiring a new dictator in the near future or in a bit more distant time." Ibid., p. 336. This worker-deputy was clearly more intelligent than the majority of politicians and intellectuals.

20. Even Nazarbaev's statement of 20 August 1991, when the fate of the State Committee for the State of Emergency was already decided, contained an ambiguity that admits completely different interpretations. He said that the country had reached a point "beyond which begins the complete and final collapse of society," and he criticized Gorbachev for this, but the latter had not drawn any conclusions. Immediately, however, Nazarbaev said that the state of emergency could only be proclaimed by "relying on the constitutional, legal foundation." *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 21 August 1991, p. 1. Subsequently he displayed the same circumspection and prudence: at the last minute he didn't travel to Belovezh to meet the waiting Boris Yeltsin, Leonid Kravchuk, and Stanislav Shushkevich; he thereby avoided falling into the ranks of the "grave diggers" who had buried the USSR. As Shushkevich recalled, Nazarbaev expressed a desire to come immediately, but then claimed to have had flight delays because of a lengthy fueling. Shushkevich, *Soiuz mozhno bylo sokhranit'. Belaia kniga* (Moscow, 1995), p. 307.

21. *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 27 August 1991, p. 1.

22. Nazarbaev used this expression in a report to a plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan in July 1991. See *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 23 July 1991, pp. 1-2.

23. It is quite characteristic that the main "fundamentalist" and supporter of the State Committee for the State of Emergency, V. Anufriev, was made a presidential advisor.

24. "I did not join [the Socialist Party]. I believe that the president should be free from any political passions, but may have the support of this or that movement." Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 221.

25. Kurtov, *Partii Kazakhstana i osobennosti,* p. 179.

26. *Kazakhstanskaia pravda, 1* December 1991, p. 1.

27. On the internal logic of the development of the Russian post-Soviet regime, see D. Furman, "Politicheskii rezhim postsovetskoi Rossii," *Svobodnaia mysl',* 2003, no. 11.

28. See M. N. Guboglo, *Etnopoliticheskaia situatsiia v Kazakhstane* v *predstavleniiakh ego grazhdan* (Moscow, 1995), p. 268.

29. See V. Dunaev, "Konfliktuiushchie struktury kazakhstanskoi modeli mezhetnicheskoi integratsii," *Tsentral'naia Aziia i Kavkaz,* 1999, no. 5(6): 14—15.

30. See N. Popov and A. Rubtsov, "Skazhi mne, kto tvoi sosed, i ia skazhu tebe, kto ty . . . ," *Nezavisimaia gazeta-Sodruzhestvo,* no. 5 (27 May 1998): 3.

31. See S. Kozlov, "Nazarbaev sozdaet svoiu partiiu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 26 September 1992, p. 1.

32. Yeltsin was burdened by the accusation of destroying the Soviet Union and initiating reforms that subjected the people to impoverishment; because of that, he had to sketch radiant prospects and promise a rapid improvement in material well-being. By contrast, Nazarbaev could more legitimately describe the situation in which Kazakhstan found itself as not due to something he had done. He even dramatized the situation, drawing a picture that encouraged the reader to think that it is impossible to do "without a strong hand." Already in 1991 Nazarbaev was saying: "We await stratification (based on property), unemployment, and a decline in the standard of living." See Nazarbaev, "Doklad na plenume TsK KP Kazakhstana," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 23 July 1991, pp. 1-2. In 1993 he said: "Our hopes that we will raise the masses and realize privatization and reforms from below have not been borne out. Now it is necessary to conduct this process from above." S. Kozlov, "Oppozitsiia dolzhna imet' pozitsiiu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 20 February 1993, p. 1. Elsewhere Nazarbaev declared that "we did a splendid job . . . of carrying out the first stage of market reforms. . . . Yes, material stratification,... unemployment, bankruptcy—we are ready for all that." S. Kozlov, "Nursultan Nazarbaev: Khvatit kritikovat', kritikam ne mesto v nashei komande," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 4 March 1993, p. 1.

33. This idea, which gave rise in Russia to such a paradoxical phenomenon as the popularity of Stolypin and Pinochet among Russian democrats unquestionably is a Soviet reception of the ideas of the "Chicago economic school" (in some measure an analogue to the Leninist reception of Marxism); the Chicago school was reworked by a consciousness in which the basic structures of Marxist-Leninist thought had been more deeply rooted than those seeking to deny Marxism-Leninism could have suspected. A. Kazhegel'din also recalled: "It then seemed to me (as a young politician, essentially a technocrat) that everything will come about by itself. . . . I, and my fellow reformers, thought that if there is a market, then there will be democracy." See A. Kazhegel'din, *Oppozitsiia srednevkov'iu* (London-Moscow, 2002), p. 247. One could say the same of E. Gaidar and A. Chubais, who, in contrast to Kazhegel'din, however, have never spoken of their mistakes and blunders (insofar as I know).

34. In February, hungry soldiers of a construction battalion rebelled in Baikonur, ransacking the warehouses with foodstuffs and setting fire to barracks. The uprising had a distinctly national dimension: it was a rebellion of Kazakh soldiers against Russian officers. See *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 27 February 1992.

35. In his "speech to the throne," Abdil'din said: "I think that the Supreme Soviet, for the first time in its history, has chosen a leader without securing the approval of the center [Moscow], without the recommendation of party and other organs." Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 352.

36. Ibid., pp. 353-54.

37. Representatives of the Russian and Kazakh political movements that arose

spontaneously were united in their criticism of this constitution. Thus Iu. Startsev (leader of the organization "Unity") declared: "Today we have the very same dictatorship as before. The president, in essence, is the first secretary of the Central Committee, and they want to legalize this situation by adopting this version of the constitution." The chairman of Azat, K. Ormantaev, declared bluntly that "the draft. .. can turn Kazakhstan into a laughing stock." *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 23 January 1993, p. 3.

38. Serik Abdrakhmanov, leader of the pro-presidential Union of Popular Unity of Kazakhstan, said the following: "I think that, with this composition of the Supreme Soviet... it is possible to change little. . . . Hope is now . . . placed more on the representatives of executive authority." *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 9 June 1993, p. 3.

39. Z. Fedotova, deputy of Abdil'din, said the following at a press conference following the adoption of the Constitution: "I must categorically reject the assertion that the presidium of the Supreme Soviet holds the government and president on a leash." *Nezavisimaia gazeta, 2* February 1993, p. 1.

40. See S. Kozlov, "Parlament prinimaet novuiu konstitutsiiu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 27 January 1993, p. 3.

41. As the journalist K. Esenova has written: "Now the most serious accusation for any member of the government, parliament, in a word, for a person having any semblance of power, is to be accused of a secret (as a rule) or overt desire to become president." E. Esenova, "Stremiashchiesia k nei bezumny, a dostigshie ee porazheny toskoiu," *Panorama,* no. 47 (December 1994).

42. Ertysbaev writes of "stubborn rumors" that, after the dispersion of the parliament in Russia, Yeltsin asked Nazarbaev to disband his own parliament so that Yeltsin did not appear too much "alone." Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 355.

43. "Ekstremisty promakhnulis'," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda, 2* November 1991, p. 1.

44. Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 354.

45. The combination of a deputy's status with work in the executive branch was forbidden by the Constitution. However, the Supreme Soviet did not object and agreed to this violation of the constitution (which had just been adopted), for this was advantageous to the corps of deputies. But it was later to pay dearly for this. See A. Chebotarev, "Rukovodstvu Kazakhstana osnovnoi zakon ne pisan" (www .eurasia.org.ru/20011/free/08_30_Konstitution.htm).

46. The main organizer here was the *akim* (mayor) of Almaty, Z. Nurkadilov: he invited deputies to his office and forced them to write the declarations. See Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 368.

47. S. Duvanov. "Ta dumaiu chto istoricheskaia tzelesoobraznost'ne povredit demokratii." *Khazahstanskaia pravda,* 25 November 1993, p. 2.

48. Of 900 candidates more than 200 (naturally, mainly oppositionists) were not permitted to register. See Kurtov, *Partii Kazakhstana,* p. 169.

49. This had already become clear during the elections for speaker. In contrast to his predecessor (S. Abdil 'din, who had simply been elected speaker and was unwanted by Nazarbaev), the new Supreme Soviet elected A. Kekilbaev, who supported the president. But about 40 percent of the deputies voted for his opponent, G. Aldamzharov.

50. The question remains open whether the majority really voted for the constitution in the December 1993 referendum (which was held simultaneously with the elections to the Duma). Without doubt, the manipulation of the results of the referendum was on a large scale; it is no accident that the documents pertaining to this were destroyed immediately after the votes had been counted by the Central Elections Commission.

51. As Ertysbaev conjectures, Nazarbaev initially wanted to make the Socialist

Party of Kazakhstan the successor to the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, and hence a strong pillar of support for him (along the lines of the Popular Democratic Party of Uzbekistan). But what worked in Uzbekistan, with its tradition of medieval despotic statehood, did not work in Kazakhstan. The Socialist Party of Kazakhstan from the very beginning proved itself ungovernable; at its first congress, it rejected Nazarbaev's proposal to adopt the name "Democratic Party of Popular Unity" and instead chose the name "Socialist Party." See Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* pp. 220-21. Nazarbaev did not come to its second congress in 1992, saying: "What, am I now supposed to come to the congresses of all the parties?" Ertysbaev, p. 222. After the coup of December 1993, the party quickly turned into an opposition group; in the elections of 1994 its candidates, under various pretexts, were not permitted to register. After the second coup (spring 1995), the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan split: part, under Abdil'din, joined the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, while another part (with E. Ertysbaev) shifted to a pro-presidential position. Nonetheless in 1993 Nazarbaev created his own party, the "Union of Popular Unity of Kazakhstan," which the opposition ironically dubbed "the Union of Nomenklatura Unity." See O. Suleimenov, "Monopartizm privodit k bonapartizmu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 12 February 1993, pp. 1-3. But the construction of a presidential party, both in Kazakhstan and Russia, has proceeded at a slow, lethargic pace. The main reason for this, evidently, is the presidents' unwillingness to bind themselves to a party program and party apparatus, which they would then have to take into account.

52. On the composition of the new parliament, see Kurtov, *Partii Kazakhstana,* p. 86.

53. See Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 373. In a volume addressed to the Western reader *(My Life, My Times, and the Future* [Northhamptonshire, 1999]), Nazarbaev wrote: "Some . . . commentators assessed the parliamentary crisis as a consequence of my attempts to bolster my personal power. But that was not so. I only obeyed the decision of the Constitutional Court. Should one really have acted to the contrary—put pressure on the judges? . . . But that would really be a trampling of democracy and in the best traditions of totalitarianism." Quoted in Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* pp. 375-76.

54. See Ertysbaev, *Kazakhstan i Nazarbaev,* p. 377.

55. On the protests of the U.S. leadership, see V. Kiianitsa, "Diktat demokratii," *Moskovskie novosti,* 12 April 1995.

56. Ibid.

57. In this context I deem it superfluous to dwell on such questions as the illegal, anticonstitutional character of all these actions, and to discuss the multitude of violations of the law that accompanied the referenda. See Chebotarev, *Rukovodstvo.*

58. *Konstitutsii stran SNG i Baltiki* (Moscow, 1999), p. 212.

59. Ibid., p. 216.

60. Insulted, Asanbaev then began to subject the regime to liberal criticism and in one interview quite accurately explained the reasons for the elimination of the vice-presidency: "The institution . . . was conceived for facilitating . . . the transfer of power and as one of the obstacles to the path of giving birth to a regime of personal rule." Such an institution was not for the countries of the CIS. K. Ezhenova, *Svideteli* (Almaty, 2001), p. 17.

61. In the CIS (where, except in Moldova and, more recently, Georgia and Ukraine, the same type of regimes "without alternatives" predominate) there is constantly a kind of "mutual studying" among the heads of these states. Yeltsin's disbanding of the Russian parliament clearly had an influence on Nazarbaev's decision to dissolve his

parliament. Nor was the use of a referendum to extend his term in office an invention of Nazarbaev. Here he follows Islam Karimov, who had conducted just such a referendum. It is entirely possible that, in turn, Nazarbaev's creation of an upper chamber (partly appointed directly by the president himself) served as a model for Lukashenko.

62. Prosecutor General S. Shustov has said: "It was not uncommon to conduct closed sessions of various social organizations, where they discussed question of an overtly constitutional character." S. Kozlov, "Gosudarstvo ustanavlivaet pravovoi proizvol," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 17 April 1997, p. 3.

63. S. Kozlov, "Oppozitsiiu vytesniaiut s efira," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 26 February 1997, p. 3.

64. Kurtov, *Demokratiia vyborov,* p. 175.

65. Zh. Baishev, "Nad vlast'iu i s narodom," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 29 August 1998. The speeches of Nazarbaev himself periodically manifest a purely monarchist conception of his power: "If the opposition has a position, that can only make the president happy. My goal is to see that we have strong opposition parties and that, while arguing among themselves, they serve their people." *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 20 February 1993, p. 1. Obviously, Nazarbaev sees the opposition not as opposed to himself, but as court factions that argue among themselves, not with him, and that provide him with various counsel.

66. These lines, from the poet A. Tazhibaev, are quoted in A. Ospanova, "Nursultan Nazarbaev—vypukloe zerkalo kazakhskoi demokratii," *Segodnia,* 31 August 1998, p. 2.

67. B. Aiaganov, *Posttotalitarizm v Kazakhstane: vozwzhdenie demokraticheskikh tsennostei* (Almaty, 1994), p. 94.

68. K. Turysov, "Nekotorye 'mysli vslukh' po povodu oppozitsii," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 15 June 2002.

69. *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 5 November 2002, p. 3.

70. Ibid., 17 October 2002, p. 1.

71. S. Kozlov, "Sensatsionnoe zaiavlenie Nursultana Nazarbaeva," *Nezavisimaia gazeta, 1* May 1996, p. 3.

72. *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 16 January 1997, pp. 1-3 (interview with N. Nazarbaev).

73. See B. Aubakirov, "Novyi parlament nachal rabotu," *Segodnia,* 1 February 1996, p. 7.

74. Iu. Konstantinov, "Kazakhstan pervyi preodelel pik reform," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 6 May 1997, p. 5.

75. Later, the government of Kazakhstan admitted the presence of a secret billion-dollar fund, created from the income received for the sale of oilfields (all such deals were being surrounded by secrecy). Neither the parliament nor the public knew of the existence of such a fund, which was controlled by the president and expended only for extraordinary needs. It is entirely possible that there could not be a clear line between state and personal presidential money given the fact that the system permitted the creation of such funds.

76. "Kazakhgate" arose in 1999, perhaps being accidentally provoked by Kazakhstan's own special services. Seeking the foreign accounts of former Prime Minister A. Kazhegel'din, they appealed to Swiss authorities for assistance. In carrying out this charge, the Swiss stumbled on the accounts of Nazarbaev himself and his daughters. One account had received transfers amounting to 80 million dollars from accounts belonging to the government of Kazakhstan. As soon as Swiss justice took an interest in these transfers, the money was immediately transferred back to the government accounts. Nevertheless, they were "frozen." See A. Guliaev, "Novyi skandal

so 'shveitsarskimi schetami,'" *Izvestiia,* 26 October 1999, p. 4. The flywheel began to come off. In 2001, a South Korean magnate testified that he gave Nazarbaev 10 million dollars to facilitate his business in Kazakhstan *{Moskovskie novosti,* 13 November 2001). In April 2003, Nazarbaev's American advisor, lames Giffen, as he attempted to fly to Kazakhstan, was arrested under charges of bribing high officials in Kazakhstan; Giffen has been accused of serving as the intermediary for the leadership of Kazakhstan in obtaining bribes from American companies. *SetAssandi-Times,* 4 April 2003, p. 1. When various rumors about the secret accounts of Nazarbaev (despite all attempts by authorities to interdict them) became widespread, then-Prime Minister Tasmagambetov, made a declaration in parliament that Nazarbaev has neither property nor accounts abroad; someone, in an attempt to besmirch the president's name, had opened accounts in his name. See *Delovaia nedelia,* 5 April 2002, p. 1. According to other reports, this "someone" had been found: then-Prime Minister Balgimbaev was supposed to testify that he alone took the bribes through Giffen; Giffen, however, said that he passed them on to Nazarbaev and that he opened accounts in the name of Nazarbaev and his daughters without their knowledge. See M. Abilov, "Delo Giffena—vnutrennee delo SShA," *Assandi-Times,* 6 June 2003, pp. 1-3.

77. The opponents of Nazarbaev assert that he is among the ten wealthiest men in the world. Olkott, *Kazakhstan,* p. 110.

78. On the Nazarbaev family, see "Kazakhi s kirgizami razvelis'," *Ekho* (Azerbaijan), 2 July 2002, p. 5.

79. The most important posts in the cabinet of ministers and in the administration of the president were held by his relatives: A. Esimov (his function, evidently, being to keep an eye on the prime ministers), N. Abykaev, and S. Tursunov. S. Abishev, a relative of the president's wife, Sara Nazarbaev, was the first minister of economic relations of Kazakhstan. See Olkott, *Kazakhstan,* p. 217.

80. On the role of the hordes (zhuzy), see N. Masanov, "Kazakhskaia politicheskaia i intellektual'naiaelita: klanovaia prinadlezhnost' i vnutrietnicheskoe sopernichestvo," and N. Amrekulov, "Zhuzy v sotsial'no-politicheskoi zhizni Kazakhstana," *Tsentrat naia Aziia i Kavkaz,* 2000, no. 3: 141. The question of the role of tribal and horde links is very complicated. The tendency for superiors to surround themselves with "their own people" is a normal feature of any bureaucratic power structure. For example, in Russia Putin is now surrounding himself with people from Petersburg. The question is how does this in principle differ from "Chemolganizatsiia"? Evidently, there is nonetheless some difference. In the careers of the "Peterburgers," the main role is evidently played by their acquaintanceship with the president, who also comes from Petersburg, and their career depends on him, but not on belonging to a "clan," which in itself would create solidarity and loyalty. But all this requires further research.

81. A. Mashkevich played a very important role for Nazarbaev in creating a favorable image in the West. He is a prominent Jewish activist, the head of the Eurasian Jewish Congress. Mashkevich and Nazarbaev organized meetings of the rabbis and Muslim clergy of Kazakhstan, which led to this report in the newspaper *Forverts:* "The prosperous life of Jews in Kazakhstan has elicited a broad resonance among their fellow-tribesmen *[soplemenniki]* abroad.... It is far from being the case that in every country of the Islamic world the supreme mufti meets with the chief rabbi of Israel... . See "Islam-iudaizm: proryv na glavnom napravlenii," *Leninskaia Smena-ekspress,* 5 November 2002, p. 3.

82. N. Amrekulov, "Zhuzy v sotsial'no-politicheskoi zhizni Kazakhstana,"

Tsentrai naia Aziia i Kavkaz, 2000, no. 3: 141. Amrekulov's idea about "ethnic illegitimacy" as a factor contributing to the ties between Nazarbaev and Kazakh businessmen is very interesting. It is possible that similar factors explain Yeltsin's protection of the Jewish oligarchs. Chernomyrdin could provoke in Yeltsin the fear like that which Kazhegel'din aroused in Nazarbaev. Abramovich and Berezovskii, just as Mashkevich, could not provoke such fears. It is impossible for them to be presidents in Kazahstsan or Russia

83. Thus, under various pretexts, the authorities did not permit the well-known Kazakhstani company "Butia" (the name comes from the childhood nickname of its owner, Bulat Abilov) to take over the Karaganda metallurgical combine, which was turned over to a Western company. See V. Kiianitsa, "Bitva gigantov na pole chudes," *MN-biznes. Moskovskie novosti,* 5 July 1995.

84. Murat Auezov, "Za vse pridetsia otvechat'(interv'iu)," *Vremia,* 11 July 2002, pp. 12-13.

85. S. Tereshchenko explains the source of his wealth "as due to connections, as due to friends." He notes that the president had an advisor, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Moskovich, who provided credits of one million dollars, that was then used to speculate on grain sales: "Yes, yes, that very thing—buy and sell." *Vremia,* 22 August 2002, pp. 10-11.

86. Petr Svoik, a well-known opposition figure in Kazakhstan, characterized the social pyramid of Kazakhstan as follows. At the apex are 50 families, who control Kazakhstan. Under them are 5,000 clients (deputies, ministers, and so forth); beneath them are another 25,000 clients of these clients. Another 500,000 people have a good salary. And the rest are the poor. See P. Svoik, "We Are the Constructive Opposition," *Vremia,* 31 January 2002, p. 11. If, at the end of the Soviet era, the gap in the income between the top 10 percent and bottom 10 percent was four-fold, in 1998 the top decile received 27 percent of the national income and bottom decile 2.3 percent. See Olkott, *Kazakhstan,* p. 257.

87. See S. Kozlov, "Pereprivatizatsiia v Karagande," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 18 November 1997.

88. Here is a striking passage from a speech by Nazarbaev at a joint session of both chambers of parliament in September 1996: "Well, you understand. Everyone has gone through . . . such periods of chaos. You understand that the Kennedy family earned its first capital by speculating on liquor goods, when the dry laws were in effect in the United States." Of course, he affirmed the need to combat economic crimes. He noted that in the West the special services have the right to "detain" people and not release them "in the name of the higher interests of the nation." S. Kozlov, "Nazarbaev predosteregaet deputatov," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 3 September 1996.

89. *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 23 July 1991, pp. 1-2.

90. A poll in February 1996 of 1,000 respondents in cities in Kazakhstan gave the following results: To the question of whom they regard as "the most typical representative of big business in Kazakhstan," they identified "a highly placed official or party functionary" (47.6 percent), director of an enterprise (15.3 percent), people from the shadow economy (12.5 percent), thieves (7.3 percent), Komsomol functionaries (2.9 percent), and scholars (2.0 percent). To the question of the source of start-up capital, respondents identified bank credits (42.4 percent), money from parents (18.6 percent), and personal savings (5.2 percent). *Karavan,* 23 February 1996, p. 2.

91. In this regard, the fate of V. Anufriev (the former second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan and a communist "reaction-

ary" who supported the State Committee for the State of Emergency in August 1991) is very interesting. In theory, such a person should have become an adversary of the new regime. Instead, he became one of the directors of the largest banks (KRAMDS). See V. Ardaev, "Oskolki lopnuvshego banka doleteli iz Alma-Aty do Moskvy i drugikh stolits," *Izvestiia,* 17 October 1996, p. 5.

92. See Stanislav Zhukov, "Tsentral'naia Aziia—razvitie, determinirovannoe globalizatsiei," in *Tsentralnaia Aziia i IuzJinyi Kavkaz. Nasushchnye problemy,* ed. Boris Rumer (Almaty, 2002), p. 128.

93. A. Esentugelov, "Dualizm v razvitii ekonomiki Kazakhstana: strukturno-investitsionnye aspekty ee modernizatsii," in *Tsentral'naia Aziia i luzhnyi Kavkaz: nasushchnye problemy,* ed. Rumer, p. 168.

94. On Nazarbaev's comments about the new capital, as freed from the old worldview, see his interview in *Nezavisimaia gazeta, 9* June 1998, pp. 1-5.

95. Subsequently, rumors arose that, during her studies in America, Aliia became addicted to drugs—a tragedy of many similar families among the "new aristocrats." See *Ekho* (Azerbaijan), 2 July 2002, p. 5.

96. S. Shermatova, "Tsentral'naia Aziia dopustila brak," *Moskovskie novosti,* 21 July 1998. Although this article has nothing more than a description of events and not even hint at any kind of negative feelings or ideas, a court order shut down for two months the well-known newspaper *Diapazon* in Aktiubinsk—for merely reprinting the article. Evidently, the authorities were alarmed by the mere description of the "khanish bliss," since it could evoke envy among simple people. See S. Uspenskii, "Zapret na dva mesiatsa," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 9 June 1999, p. 5.

97. N. Nazarbaev, "Kazakhstan neizbezhno stanet protsvetaiushchei stranoi," *Izvestiia,* 4 June 1998, p. 1.

98. S. Kozlov, "Moi narod vystradal svobodu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta, 2* October 1998, pp. 1-5.

99. Thus, the well-known Kazakhstani journalist S. Mataev said in an interview: "Everything here repeats Russia, with a delay of one to two years." K. Esenova, *Svideteli,* p. 224. In reality, it is just the opposite: the conflicts in Kazakhstan in the second half of the 1990s are being repeated in Russia a few years later.

100. The mechanism for extracting wealth from the oligarchs by legal means (the violations of law in the process of privatization which went "unnoticed" by the authorities, were now "remembered" and "noticed") would be repeatedly applied in both Kazakhstan and Russia. Sergei Tereshchenko gave this ingenuous description of the situation: "They checked me a thousand times. . .. There is nothing; but if they had wanted to find something, they would have." See N. Suleimenov et al., *Kazakhstan 90-kh,* p. 96.

101. N. Masanov, a well-known oppositionist historian and sociologist in Kazakhstan, wrote in 1998: "The authorities have sincerely changed their attitude toward the emerging national bourgeoisie, having discerned in it a serious power and ambitious pretensions. … In the end, the national bourgeoisie … perished even before it had managed to be born." N. Masanov, "Politicheskaia i ekonomicheskaia elita Kazakhstana," *Tsentral'naia Aziia i Kavkaz,* 1998, no. 1: 88. The last assertion by Masanov, as further events were to demonstrate, was an exaggeration.

102. It is utterly impossible to say the degree to which this policy is conscious or unconscious. A person can quite sincerely think that he patronizes his kinsmen not because they are relatives, but just because they happen to be very clever and able.

103. N. Masanov recounts a very revealing episode: in 1994 academicians, who

mainly represent the Middle Horde, did not allow Nazarbaev to appoint his candidate from the Great Horde as president of the Academy of Sciences. N. Masanov, "Kazakhskaia politicheskaia i intellektual'naia elita," p. 55.

104. For a full-scale study of Kazhegel'din's activity, see Suleimenov et al., *Kazakhstan 90-kh.* This volume is very informative, although, unquestionably, it was written on the orders of the presidential administration, with the goal of exposing Kazhegel'din as a corrupt figure.

105. In presenting him to the parliament, Nazarbaev said that Kazhegel' din "showed himself to be a market person." Suleimenov et al., *Kazakhstan 90-kh,* p. 48.

106. V. Vyzhtovich, "Saliam, investory," *Izvestiia,* 3 July 1997, p. 4.

107. He curtailed the voucher privatization, which was to have become the "trampoline into the cosmos" for the national bourgeoisie, and redirected privatization toward attracting foreign investment. See Masanov, "Politicheskaia i ekonomicheskaia elita Kazakhstana," *Tsentrai naia Aziia i Kavkaz,* 1998, no. 1: 86.

108. A few days before the prime minister's removal (when it was already obvious that the days of his government were numbered), the cochairmen of the oppositionist movement Azamat (P. Svoik, M. Auezov, and G. Abil'siitov) sent Nazarbaev an open letter that censured Kazhegel'din in the strongest possible terms. For example, the letter declared that "on this high post of leader of the government, Mr. Kazhegel'din fully manifested his inherent traits as a petty shop thief." The letter concluded with "a public appeal for the dismissal of Mr. Kazhegel'din from his duties as prime minister . . . and for an objective investigation of his activities, including possible abuses, personal avarice, and exceeding his authority." Suleimenov et al., *Kazakhstan 90-kh,* pp. 197-98. Very soon those who signed this letter found themselves together in the same political bloc with Kazhegel'din.

109. V. Ardaev, "Kazakhstan mozhet stat' 'tsentral'noaziatskim barsom,'" *Izvestiia,* 16 October 1997, p. 3.

110. Idem, "Nursultan Nazarbaev odnim resheniem dostig dvukh tselei," *Izvestiia,* 11 October 1997. The experience with Kazhegel'din taught Nazarbaev a lesson. After the latter's removal, he began to change prime ministers quickly so that they could not become strong and "sink roots." If, between 1991 and 1997, Kazakhstan had only two prime ministers (Tereshchenko and Kazhegel'din), in the period from 1997 to 2003 it had four (Balgimbaev, Tokaev, Tasmagambetov, and Akhmetov).

111. S. Tereshchenko, "Ne mogu molchat'," *Leninskaia smena-Ekspress K,* 24 October 2002, pp. 1-3.

112. See V. Ardaev, "Kazakhstanskii prem'ier 'propal,'" *Izvestiia,* 1 October 1997, pp. 1-2.

113. Kazhegel'din, *Oppozitsiia,* pp. 457-58.

114. As Kazhegel'din said: "Only if there arises the threat of a liberal modernization of society, then I will certainly participate.... But in general I am a professional economist, and high politics is of little interest to me." Suleimenov et al., *Kazakhstan 90-kh,* p. 191.

115. Kazhegel'din said that "if the mayor is elected, then he will look on the entrepreneur as his favorite beet in his favorite garden." Kazhegel'din, *Oppozitsiia,* p. 103.

116. See Ertysbaev, "Nekotorye aspekty prezidentskoi izbiratel'noi kampanii v Kazakhstane (oktiabr'-dekabr' 1998 goda)," *Tsentrai naia aziia i Kavkaz,* 1999, no. 1(2): 48.

117. Kazhegel'din, *Oppozitsiia,* pp. 104-5.

118. Idem, p. 251.

119. In Kazhegel'din's words: "In betraying the Russians, we betray our forebears, their choice and their memory. We betray our own past and the future of our children." Kazhegel'din, *Oppozitsiia,* p. 137.

120. Kazhegel'din speaks half jokingly, half seriously, that "when they settle with the Russians, they will take after the Little and Middle Hordes," and recalls the anecdote about an old Armenian, who, dying, bequeathed this: 'Take care of the Jews.'" Kazhegel'din, *Oppozitsiia,* pp. 138-40.

121. As Petr Svoik has said: "All this democratic rhetoric, which he now possesses to perfection, I think, comes not only from his mind and pragmatism, but also somewhat from his soul." Esenova, *Svideteli,* p. 99. The moral problems that arose for the old "intelligentsia" oppositionist Svoik in the shift of Kazhegel'din to the democratic opposition (which until recently had found him so detestable) was analogous to the problems that faced the Russian democratic opposition when Berezovskii and Khodorkovskii came to oppose the regime. Further, Svoik has declared that Kazhegel'din was "one of those who showed that it is necessary, possible to steal, the faster and the more brazen, the better. . . . But what he is now doing is, without question, positive for Kazakhstan." Ibid., p. 101.

122. Incidentally, the daughter of Kazhegel'din, Diana, is married to an Italian count.

123. Here is what the Russian newspaper *Segodnia* wrote of Kazhegel'din before his departure from office: "Having gone through the Western school of business and being quite far from a clan mentality, he could entirely become that person upon whom Russia could rely in the future. Kazhegel'din categorically denies the possibility of competing with Nazarbaev ... in 2000; but many analysts believe that he is the sole candidate who could be put up to oppose Nazarbaev. That is all the more true since not only Russia, but also the Western partners of Kazakhstan could be interested in banking on Kazhegel'din. V. Shpak, "Ostrov stabil'nosti," *Segodnia,* 23 July 1997, p. 3.

124. In an interview with a Russian newspaper, Kazhegel'din said the following: "For understandable reasons, I will not directly name those who support me financially. I can say that part of those who help the current president are in any case prepared to help me as well. In addition, there are also others who stand behind them. Some have a political interest, while for others it is purely economic." Kazhegel'din, *Oppozitsiia,* p. 431.

125. E. Ertysbaev, "Nekotorye aspekty," p. 49.

126. S. Kozlov, "Ischezaiut politicheskie protivniki prezidenta," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 23 September 1998; and A. Rubtsov, "Oglushitel'naia pobeda s poterei litsa," *Moskovskie novosti,* 24 November 1998.

127. See "Verkhovnyi sud Kazakhstana ne prislushalsia k prezidentu," *hvestiia,* 26 November 1998, p. 3; and V. Prigoda, "Nursultan Nazarbaev mozhet ne volnovat'sia," *hvestiia,* 1 December 1998, p. 2.

128. Another potential candidate of the liberal opposition was the ambassador of Kazakhstan to Turkey, B. Tursambaev; hastily appointed deputy prime minister by Nazarbaev, he forgot about his oppositionist stance. See N. Suleimenov et al., *Kazakhstan 90-kh,* p. 253.

129. During one television appearance, he hurled a vase at a journalist who had insulted him; on another occasion, also on television, to demonstrate his strength and courage, he crushed a glass with his hand and suffered lacerations from the shards.

130. G. Kasymov proposed a seven-year program. In 1999 it aimed to eliminate poverty, illness, and crime; in 2000 to improve agriculture; in 2001 to achieve eco-

nomic stabilization; in 2002 to provide social guarantees; in 2003 to ensure a radical upsurge in the economy; in 2004 to eliminate unemployment; in 2005 to reach world levels; and in 2006 to enter the ranks of developed countries. G. Kasymov, "Vlast' neobkhodimo podchinit' narodu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 26 December 1998.

As political scientists in Kazakhstan have suggested, Kasymov was really "undone" by the Nazarbaev aides who were organizing the elections. The goal was to have him perform the role of Zhirinovskii: to drain off part of the protest vote, which would otherwise have gone to more dangerous adversaries. As one analyst argued: "On the eve ... of the elections, the political elite of the republic undertook to shift the institution of the clown to the local level by exploiting the pre-election image of G. Kasymov, who criticizes and supports the ruling elite." B. Mailybaev, "Pravo naroda na soprotivlenie ugneteniiu i oppozitsionnuiu deiatel'nost' v svet traditsii russkikh i kazakhov," *Tsentral' naiaAziia i Kavkaz,* 2001, no. 4(16): 46. In contrast to Zhirinovskii, however, Kasymov got out of control and in the future joined the general democratic opposition.

131. For a model of such agitation, see Vitalii Tret' iakov, "Kakoi prezident nuzhen Kazakhstanu i kakoi prezident Kazakhstana nuzhen Rossii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 18 December 1998. The article ends with these words: "It is precisely with a Nazarbaev Kazakhstan that we have real prospects for creating a solid, the most stable and essentially unlimited Union."

132. See M. Grigorian, "Al'ternativnye, no ne demokraticheskie vybory," *Tsentralnaia Aziia i Kavkaz,* 1999, no. 2(3); and R. Abazov, "Prezidentskie vybory v Kazakhstane: do i posle," *Polis,* 1999, no. 3.

133. On of the publicists serving the Nazarbaev regime later gave this generalization both for Kazakhstan and for Russia regarding the experience of a struggle for power with the oligarchs: "The history of privatization is remarkable in that everyone has ... a 'skeleton in the closet,' and the inalienable right of the state ... as needed to take these 'skeletons' out" and expose them to public view. See Daniiar Ashimbaev, "Oligarkhiia i demokratiia," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 14 November 2003, p. 3.

134. See O. Vorkunova, "Parlamentskie vybory v Kazakhstane," *Ekonomika i politika Rossii i gosudarstv blizhnego zarubeztiia,* 1999, no. 11 (November).

135. B. Kuz'menko, "Na kraiu politicheskoi areny," *Vremia MN,* 21 September 2002, p. 4.

136. For a description of his meeting and conversation with Rakhat, who demanded a share in the Turan Alem bank, see the memoirs of M. Abliazov: "Kholodnaia vesna 2000 goda," *Assandi-Times,* 29 November 2002, p. 5.

137. See M. Adilov, "Chto ne uchityvaet amerikanskoe pravosudie," *Ekonomika, Finansy, Rynki. Delovoe obozrenie respubliki,* 27 September 2002, p. 1.

138. It hardly makes sense to attempt, on the basis of rumors, to disentangle the twisted ball of court intrigues in Kazakhstan—the "secrets of the Almaty-Astana court." But to understand the characteristics of politics in Kazakhstan, it is worth noting that Marat Tazhin is regarded as a close friend of another Nazarbaev's son-in-law, Timur Kulibaev. See Olkott, *Kazakhstan,* p. 261.

139. See S. Kozlov, "Mladoturki rvutsia k vlasti," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 21 November 2001, p. 5. Various materials in the mass media devoted to the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan and the crisis that ensued after its emergence are collected in S. Markelov and O. Petrovskii, eds., *Kazakhstan 2001-2002. Politicheskii krizis. Fakty i dokumenty* (Novosibirsk, 2002).

140. "These are intelligent guys with a conscience, but in general they ... are

indistinguishable from the current authorities and the very same oligarchs." See "Beseda s Tursunbaevym," *Delovaia nedelia,* 25 January 2002, pp. 1-2.

141. Ertysbaev recalls: "I remember a scene at one of the banquets . . . in the middle of the 1990s. The president went up to a table where businessmen (Bulat Abilov, Erkin Kaliev, Mukhtar Abliazov and others) were seated. All rose to their feet. The head of state, in a heartfelt and confidential manner, told them: 'You are my pride, hope, and support.'" See "Priamoi put'—ne vsegda samyi korotkii (interv'iu E. Ertysbaeva)," *Vremia,* 8 August 2002, pp. 12-13.

142. Gari Kasymov characterizes these people thus: "They consoled themselves with the idea that diplomas from prestigious European universities, 'knowledge of perfect English,' and free quotations from the pillars of Western market theory will permit them to achieve success in power, as still recent... in business.... Very soon they realized: all that is useless if you have not fully mastered the methods of behind-the-scenes fighting of the apparatus." See the interview with Kasymov in *Vremia,* 25 April 2002, pp. 12-13.

143. "Khod peremen uzhe ne ostanovit.' (Interv'iu M. Auezova)," *Ekonomika. Finansy. Rynki. Delovoe obozrenie respubliki,* 19 July 2002, pp. 1,5. A. Kozhakhmetov, who sought to advance his own candidacy as an alternative to Nazarbaev in 1991, but then left politics for business and then again returned to politics, characterizes Kazhegel'din, Zhakiianov, and Abliazov thus: "I think that, in level of education, in level of competence,... Kazhegel'din is stronger. But in the level of morality, in the strength of spirit Mukhtar [Abliazov] and Galymzhan [Zhakiianov] are stronger." See the interview with Kozhakhmetov in *Assandi-Times,* 4 April 2003, p. 5.

144. "Pora meniat' vsiu sistemu (interv'iu E. Ertysbaeva)," *Vremia,* 18 April 2002, pp. 12-13.

145. Ibid.

146. The declaration on the establishment of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan was signed, in addition to M. Abliazov and G. Zhakiianov, by U. Dzhandozov (deputy prime minister), N. Subkharberdin (chairman of the board of the largest Kazkommertsbank), A. Ashimov (artist), T. Tokhtasynov (chairman of the board of directors of the mining company ALEL and Majilis deputy), B. Abilov (a young multimillionaire and deputy in the Majilis from the presidential party Otan, who was deprived of his parliamentary mandate after joining Democratic Choice), Zh. Ertlesova (deputy minister of defense), A. Baimenov (minister of labor and social defense of the population), G. Amrin (deputy secretary of the Security Council), K. Kelimbetov (first deputy minister of finance), T. Al'zhanov (chairman of the committee for investments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Z. Battalova (senator), N. Smagulov (president of Kazprodkorporatsii), and E. Tatishchev (chairman of the board of Turan Alem, a public joint-stock company).

Among those who supported Democratic Choice were Z. Kakimzhanov (minister of state revenues and head of the customs service); for details see K. Stepanova, "Astana prodolzhaet 'sviashchennuiu bor'bu s korruptsiei,'" *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 16 April 2003, p. 6, B. Imashev (former head of the anti-monopoly agency), and A. Sarsenbaev (Kazakhstan's ambassador to Moscow). The latter declared: "I support Ak zhol and do not conceal that it was created by my colleagues, friends, and people with similar views.. .. Moreover, I am restrained from joining this party only by the diplomatic mission. But the guys know that I am with them." A. Sarsenbaev, "Astana-Moskva (interv'iu)," *Vremia,* 7 February 2002, p. 13. He later left his position and became an active figure in Ak zhol.

147. "Kak molody my byli, kak verili v sebia," *Ekonomika. Finansy. Rynok,* 5 Julv 2002, p. 1.

148. In an interview with *Moskovskie novosti,* Dariga Nazarbaev spoke about analogues: "The situation repeats that which was in Russia three to four years ago. The oligarchs, interest groups—are linked to banks: Kazkommertsbank, Narodnyi Bank, and Turan Alembank. . . . In this political wave, the wild card was our opposition, which they (the oligarchs) are using to blackmail the authorities." See "Vostok i zapad glazami zhenshchiny (interv'iu s D. Nazarbaevoi)," *Moskovskie novosti,* 26 February 2002. But Nazarbaeva has forgotten about Kazhegel'din and could not foresee Khodorkovskii.

149. Kazhegel'din, who became more energetic after the creation of Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan, at the time portrayed optimism completely in the spirit of Berezovskii: "I have to celebrate my fiftieth birthday abroad. But the next birthday will already be celebrated in my homeland." See "On vernetsia?" *Vremia,* 27 March 2002, p. 2.

150. "Zashchita Zhakiianova (interv'iu)," *Vremia,* 14 March 2002, p. 12.

151. E. Ertysbaev, "Priamoi put'—ne vsegda samyi korotkii," *Vremia,* 8 August 2002, pp. 12-13.

152. "Porameniat' vsiu sistemu (interv'iuE. Ertysbaeva)," *Vremia,* 18 April 2002, pp. 12-13.

153. Gul'zhan Ergalieva, "Skazat'—i umeret'," *Assandi-Times,* 17 January 2003, p. 7.

154. M. Kim, "Demokraticheskii vzryv," *Delovaia nedelia,* 25 January 2002, pp. 1-2; and A. Karnaukhov, "Demokratiia rozhdaetsia pod kupolom tsirka?" *Moskovskie novosti,* 29 January 2002.

155. Karnaukhov, "Demokratiia rozhdaetsia."

156. See L. Erzhanova, "Dvizhenie v storonu," *Leninskaia smena—Ekspress K,* 14 February 2002, p. 1.

157. "Vrediteli napali na polia, vragi naroda golovu podniali," *Karavan,* 24 April 2002, pp. 4-5.

158. Scholars from the Kazakhstan Humanities-Juridical University even issued a whole scholarly statement, which said that the idea of the election of the akim (governor) encroaches on the constitutional prerogatives of the president and that "democracy is not an end in itself, but a constant, all-encompassing social process, which has its own laws and rules." See "Ne stoit verit' pseudodemokratam," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 5 February 2002, pp. 1-4.

159. Thus, the pro-presidential parties organized a meeting in Almaty under such banners as: "We'll not let the president be offended!" and "Kazakhstan is one and not divisible into separate principalities of akims." See "Kto raskachivaet lodku," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 5 February 2002, pp. 1-4.

160. Some arguments deserve mention. Thus, the leaders of the Kazakhs conducted a press conference against Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan, where they said that the election of the akim in Russia led directly to the war in Chechnia. See *Panorama,* 25 January 2002, p. 4. As the Majilis deputy M. Troshinin said: "Precisely the idea of universal franchise (i.e., collective irresponsibility) became, if you will, one of the main reasons for the collapse of the USSR, which had once been powerful and unshakable." See M. Troshinin, "Oboidemsia bez mitingovshchiny," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 29 January 2002, pp. 1-3.

161. The very names of these articles are revealing, for instance: "Stick to the Evolutionary Path," and "Make Haste, But Don't Rush." See M. Adilov, "Gniet s

golovy, a chistiat s khvosta," *Assandi-Times,* 14 February 2003, pp. 1-3.

162. N. Nazarbaev, "Demokratiia—ne nabor dannykh Bogom zapovedei," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 28 December 2001.

163. N. Nazarbaev, "Ob osnovnykh napravleniiakh vnutrennei i vneshnei politiki na 2003 god," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 30 April 2002, pp. 1-2.

164. N. Nazarbaev, "Nasha Konstitutsiia—eto osoznannyi vybor naroda Kazakhstana," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 30 August 2002, pp. 1-2.

165. N. Nazarbaev, "Vlast' bol'she ne odinokaia," *Vremia MN,* 19 December 2002, p. 6.

166. "Moia tsel'—postroit' normalnoe demokraticheskoe obshchestvo (beseda N. A. Nazarbaeva s rukovoditeliami SMI)," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 7 February 2002, pp. 1-3.

167. N. Nazarbaev, "Prislushivat'sia k pul'su peremen, nesti liudiam pravdu," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 13 March 2002, pp. 1-2.

168. N. Nazarbaev, "Nikto ne vprave otmenit' demokratiiu," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 26 January 2002, p. 1.

169. See B. Abilov, "Chemkhuzhe varit golova—tern luchshe v nei kasha," *Vremia,* 27 June 2002, pp. 12-13.

170. Seven parties passed the re-registration: Ak zhol, the Civil Party, Otan, the Agrarian Party, the Communist Party, the Party of Patriots (G. Kasymov), and the Social-Democratic Party Auyl. See *Delovaia nedelia,* 14 April 2002, p. 2.

171. "Khronika pikiruiushchei demokratii," *Karavan,* 5 April 2002, pp. 2-3.

172. "Vse, krome politiki," *Leninskaia smena—Ekspress K,* 24 May 2002, p. 5.

173. *Panorama,* 30 August 2002, p.5.

174. *Assandi-Times,* 8 November 2002, p. 1.

175. "Priamoi put'," pp. 12-13.

176. "Zakon o bor'be s korruptsiei deistvuet," *Leninskaia smena—Ekspress K.,* 23 August 2002, pp. 3^1.

177. Iu. Fomenko, "Khodataistvo o pomilovanii otlozheno," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 27 September 2003, p. 1. Later he was allowed to live in a village near the colony.

178. "Asar, znachit vmeste," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 29 October 2003, p. 2. A certain liberal tenor in the position of Dariga can be seen in the fact that, on the question of the relationship to the opposition, she replied that she had a good attitude toward it, for the opposition constitutes "the sanitation workers of the forest." Dariga attracted into Asar someone who had, until recently, occupied the most consistent liberal oppositionist position: Murat M. Auezov. See "Odolet' sem' khrebtov (interv'ui)," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* 25 October 2003, pp. l^t.

179. See: M. Adilov, "V sem'e ne bez 'Asara'?" *Assandi-Times,* 31 October2003, p. 1.

180. What is transpiring within the Family is suggested by the following, rather unseemly story. The website kompromat.ru published two articles. One reported that Nazarbaev has a second clandestine family; it also relayed details, which suggested that the author (or whoever ordered the article) is very well informed and that, most likely, the article came from within the Family itself. The second article confirmed this, but simultaneously reported that the source of the first article was Nazarbaev's wife Sara and his daughter Dariga. This issue of *Assandi-Times* was bought up by "people in civilian clothes" and then destroyed. See M. Adilov, "Vse mogut koroli! . . . A koroli?" *Assandi-Times,* 12 December 2003, p. 1.

181. For a discussion of different variants in succession, see M. Adilov, "Kuda ukhodiat prezidenty?" *Assandi-Times,* 17 January 2003, p. 3; and D. Musataev, "Akela eshche ne promakhnulsia," *Assandi-Times, 1* February 2003, p. 1.

182. See S. Kozlov, "Prem'er ministr stal mishen'iu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 11 June 1999, p. 5; and idem, "Pravitel'stvo uderzhalos' u vlasti," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 25 June 1999, p. 5.

183. This is the characterization by a journalist of *Izvestiia* elected to parliament in 1999: "The authorities... wanted to have a 'problem-free' parliament—and they got it. The government will not have to wrack its brains to convince those elected by the people to vote for this or that draft law, for the budget, for amendments to the Constitution." See A. Guliaev, "Svoi liudi v mazhilise," *Izvestiia,* 9 November 1999, p. 4.

184. See "Vlast' i oppozitsiia: analiz i prognozy (doklad sluzhby politicheskogo analiza Tsentral'no-Aziatskogo agentstva politicheskikh issledovanii APR)," *Ekonomika. Finansy. Rynki,* 26 July 2002, p. 4.

185. D. Akhmetov became the new prime minister. I cannot refrain from quoting his response to the question of one deputy in the Majilis as to how he will treat dissenters: "We are building a state based on the rule of law, and each person has freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom in all their rights. Therefore I simply remain a convinced supporter of the view that we must work within the framework and within the boundaries of our state based on the rule of law. We must not have dissenters; we must build a constructive dialogue—and only in the atmosphere of mutual understanding, constructive decisions, and in the spirit that we are building a unified state, in the spirit that the state of Kazakhstan should be rich. For this there is the president's program, and we should work for its realization. . . ." See "Novaia metlia: pervye ispytaniia," *Karavan,* 20 June 2003, p. 5.

186. Nevertheless the results of the elections of 2004 were falsified and the new Majilis is controlled by the loyalists

187. A public opinion survey in 1998 showed that 28 percent of the people in Kazakhstan believe that Russia is more democratic than Kazakhstan; only 6 percent believe it to be less democratic. See Popov and Rubtsov, "Skazhi mne, kto tvoi sosed."

188. M. Glikin, "Prezidentskii marafon snova nachalsia v stepi," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 12 January 2004, p. 1.

189. E. Ertysbaev, "Pora menia vsiu sistemu," *Vremia,* 18 April 2002, pp. 12-13.

190. Of late Russia has also begun to exhibit a similar tendency, but in a much weaker form and clearly associated with the fact that both—the right and the left—oppositions are "on the verge of taking their last breath."

191. Important is not so much the real political system of the Middle Ages, as its image—how it is perceived by modem consciousness. In Kazakhstan, Kazhegel'din can say that the Kazakhs are a democratic people: "We always elected the khans in our country." See Kazhegel'din, *Oppozitsiia,* p. 165. Such a phrase is impossible in Russia.

192. See K. Tanaev, "Nursultan Nazarbaev na tsarstve," *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 3 February 2004, p. 5.

193. See V. Kara-Murza, "Kazakhskaia oppozitsiia pozhalovalas' britanskomu parlamentu," *Kommersant,* 12 May 2003, p. 511.

194. Olkott, *Kazakhstan,* p. 23. This book begins with the words of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, who writes that his motherland is a splendid country, in which there is everything and "there is no kind of gap in the character of Nigerians," but the "woe of Nigeria consists only in the bankruptcy of its leadership." Olkott believes that this statement is completely appropriate for Kazakhstan. I deem it superfluous to polemicize with this point of view, which is natural for a Nigerian writer, but which appears naive in the book of the American author. For Russia, such logic, "why are we, such a talented and great people, in such a sorry condition?" is also very characteristic of Russian nature.