

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

**“VELVET REVOLUTIONS ON THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER SOVIET
UNION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LEADERSHIP, FOREIGN
INVOLVEMENT AND INTERNAL DEMAND”**

A MASTER’S ESSAY SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
FOR FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

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DECEMBER 2005

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December 2005

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very much obliged to my Faculty Advisor Dr. Armen Aivazian who was very encouraging and supportive during the whole course of our cooperation.

My special gratitude also goes to the faculty of the Political Science and International Affairs Department for the knowledge that makes creation of this Master's Essay possible.

I am also grateful to my friends from the group of Political Science and International Affairs Department for their help and support.

Abstract

This Master's Essay will study comparatively the successive "Velvet revolutions" in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005). Specifically, the structure of leadership in all three countries and their role in the revolution process is examined. An analysis concerning external and internal forces fostering the revolutions is made and the problem whether they were primarily an internal demand or the result of outside manipulation is discussed in full detail. Further, the involvement of youth in the revolution process is studied. Finally, the possible implications for Armenia are considered, including the similarities and differences in external and internal situation with the mentioned countries prior to the three revolutions in question.

List of Abbreviations

CDCS	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
CEC.....	Central Election Commission
CEU.....	Central European University
CIS.....	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNR.....	Center for Nonviolent Resistance
CUG.....	Citizen’s Union of Georgia
EBRD.....	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
FH.....	Freedom House
IMF.....	International Monetary Fund
IRI.....	International Republican Institute
KPM.....	Kyrgyzstan People’s Movement
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NED.....	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO.....	Non Governmental Organization
NDI.....	National Democratic Institute
OSCE.....	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSI.....	Open Society Institute
PRU.....	Party of Regions of Ukraine
PSU.....	Party of Solidarity of Ukraine
RF.....	Russian Federation
SCFED.....	Serbian Center for Free Elections and Democracy
SDPU.....	Social Democratic Party-United
UN.....	United Nations
USAID.....	United States Agency for International Development

USSR.....Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

WB.....World Bank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	3
Abstract.....	4
List of Abbreviations.....	5
Introduction.....	8
Literature Review.....	16
The Structure of Leadership of the Post-Soviet Revolutions	
The structure of leadership in the three countries (Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan) in terms of leaders, their teams and organizational experience. The role of the charismatic leaders in the revolution processes in each particular case; the differences and similarities between them.....	20
Attitude and Behaviour of Younger Generation during Velvet Revolutions	
The impact of the youth movements (“Kmara” in Georgia, “Pora” in Ukraine and “KelKel” in Kyrgyzstan) on the revolution processes in each case, their similarities and differences.....	33
The Velvet Revolutions: The Causes and Reasons	
The Velvet Revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan as an internal demand or the result of outside manipulation mostly pressured by external forces.....	41
Possible Implications for Armenia.....	46
Conclusion.....	49
List of References.....	52

INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the majority of the former Soviet republics found themselves in a very difficult situation. Hard socio-economic conditions created dissatisfaction among the people which resulted in chaotic situation and gave rise to the velvet or color revolutions. Velvet revolutions developed in post-communist societies mainly in Eastern and Central Europe, and possibly will spread elsewhere. Participants of these revolutions mostly used non-violent means to protest against governments seen as authoritarian and their main goal was to advocate democracy and liberalism. Protests are notable for the important role of student activist organizations in organizing resistance. Thus, in this paper the term “Velvet Revolution” is meant to refer not to the initial transitions away from communist rule that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but rather pro-democracy movements that arose in transition countries against corrupt and less than democratic successor regimes. However, there will be remarks concerning Czechoslovakian revolution in 1989.

So far pro-democracy movements in transition countries have been successful in *Georgia* (the 2003 Rose Revolution), in *Ukraine* (the 2004 Orange Revolution) and *Kyrgyzstan* (the 2005 Tulip Revolution). The latter was more violent than previous ones. Each time massive street protests followed disputed elections and led to the resignation or the overthrow of leaders.

Each successful democratic revolution has produced an experience that has been consciously borrowed by others, spread by NGOs, and emulated by local social movements, forming the contours of a model.

The Rose Revolution in Georgia, following the disputed elections in 2003 led to the overthrow of the then president Eduard Shevardnadze and his replacement by Mikhail Saakashvili after new elections which were held in March 2004. The Rose Revolution was

supported by youth movement Kmara, which means “Enough”. *The Orange Revolution in Ukraine* followed the disputed second round of the 2004 presidential election and led to the annulment of the result and the repeat of the round. As a result leader of the opposition Viktor Yushchenko was declared president, defeating Viktor Yanukovich. The Orange Revolution was supported by the youth movement Pora, which means “It’s time”. *The Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan* was more violent than the other two and followed the disputed Kyrgyz parliamentary election in 2005. This revolution was supported by youth resistance movement KelKel. This means “Renaissance and shining of the good”.

Velvet revolutions aroused interest all over the world. There is a widespread opinion that velvet revolutions are the result of outside manipulation and mostly pressured by external forces. Thus, opponents of the velvet revolutions often accuse the Soros Foundation or the United States government of supporting and even planning the revolutions. Evidence suggesting US government involvement includes the USAID and UNDP supported internet structures called Freenet which are known to comprise a major part of the internet structure in at least one of the countries-Kyrgyzstan where one of the *velvet revolutions* occurred. Other claims of US involvement generally state that USAID, National Endowment for Democracy and Freedom House are directly involved.

On the other hand, supporters of the color revolutions generally consider the allegations of American or Soros influence in such revolutions as greatly exaggerated, and that the causes for such revolutions have been mostly national in nature, even if these revolutions received both support and inspiration or opposition from other nations or organizations. Some also feel that even if these revolutions were planned or directed by third nations, this doesn’t diminish their moral quality, and those were positive events regardless of who planned them. Moreover, the decentralized, strongly internet-based nature of the revolutions suggests that any ideological or governmental organizations which might have

stimulated the revolutions will have difficulty retaining control of the people involved, since they have become politicized and self-organized in the process.

Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan are separated from each other by thousands of miles, sharing only their communist heritage and post-communist woes, but nonetheless their revolutions influenced each other profoundly.

The purpose of this essay is to study comparatively the successive “Velvet revolutions” in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005). Specifically, it examines the structure of the leadership in all three countries and the role of charismatic leaders in the revolution process. The analyses concerning external and internal forces fostering the revolutions are made. Further the structure of forces and involvement of youth in the revolution process is studied. Finally, the possible implications for Armenia are considered. The following research questions have been proposed to study the problem:

1. What was the structure of the leadership in all three countries in terms of leaders, their teams and organizational experience?
2. What was the role of the charismatic leaders in the revolution processes in each particular case and what were the differences and similarities between them?
3. Were the velvet revolutions of Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan primarily an internal demand or the result of outside manipulation mostly pressured by external forces?
4. What impact the youth involvement in the revolution process had in each case and what were the differences?
5. Are there any possible implications for Armenia, including the similarities and differences in external and internal situation in the mentioned countries prior to the three revolutions in question?

Brief History of the Velvet Revolutions

Rose Revolution: Georgia

Rose Revolution refers to the peaceful 2003 revolution in the country of Georgia that displaced President Eduard Shevardnadze. Georgia had been governed by Eduard Shevardnadze since 1992. His government, and his own family, became increasingly associated with pervasive corruption that hindered Georgia's economic growth. The country was very poor according to European standards. In addition two Russian-supported breakaway regions (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) remained outside the control of Tbilisi government, and the autonomous republic of Ajaria was ruled by Aslan Abashidze, a semi-separatist leader. Shevardnadze's political alliance "For New Georgia" and Abashidze's "Union of Democratic Revival of Georgia" were opposed by popular opposition parties: Mikhail Saakashvili's "United National Movement" and "Burjanadze-Democrats" led by Parliamentary speaker Nino Burjanadze and ex-speaker Zurab Zhvania.

Parliamentary elections in Georgia had been held on November 2, 2003. However, local and international observers pointed out that elections were not fair and transparent. The opposition leader Mikhail Saakashvili claimed that he had won the elections and his claim was supported by independent exit polls. He urged Georgians to demonstrate against Shevardnadze's government and engage in nonviolent civil disobedience against the authorities. The main democratic opposition parties united to demand the ouster of Shevardnadze and the rerun of the elections. Soon massive anti-government movements started in the streets of Tbilisi and involved almost all major cities and towns of Georgia. Youth organizations were active participants of the protest activities. The opposition protest reached its peak on November 22, the day of an opening session of a new parliament, which was considered illegitimate. The same day, opposition supporters led by Saakashvili with

roses in their hands (therefore revolution had been named Rose Revolution) seized the parliament building interrupting a speech of President Eduard Shevardnadze and forcing him to escape with his bodyguards. He later declared a state of emergency and began to mobilize troops and police near his residence in Tbilisi. However, the elite military units refused to support the government. In the evening of November 23 Shevardnadze met with the opposition leaders Saakashvili and Zurab Zhvania to discuss the situation, in a meeting arranged by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. After the meeting, the president announced his resignation. This fact prompted an excitement in the streets of Tbilisi. More than 100,000 protesters celebrated the victory all night long. The outgoing speaker of parliament, Nino Burjanadze, assumed the presidency until fresh elections could be held. The Supreme Court of Georgia annulled the results of the parliamentary elections. In the January 4, 2004 presidential election Mikhail Saakashvili became the new president of Georgia (Webpage: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_Revolution).

Orange Revolution: Ukraine

Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004 was a series of protests and political events that took place throughout the country in response to allegations of massive corruption, voter intimidation and direct electoral fraud during Ukraine's Presidential run-off election of November 21, 2004. This fact had been reported by numerous domestic and foreign observers. The November 21, 2004 run-off was mandated by Ukrainian law because, according to the official results of the presidential election held on October 31, 2004, no candidate carried the absolute majority (more than 50%) of the vote cast, a case where a run-off between two top candidates with the highest number of votes was specifically required by

the law. The winner of the run-off was to become the country's third president since its 1991 independence following the demise of the Soviet Union.

Orange was adopted by the protesters as the official color of the movement because it was the predominant color in opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko's election campaign during his run for presidency. The symbol of solidarity with Yushchenko's movement in Ukraine is an orange ribbon or a flag bearing his "Yes! Yushchenko!" slogan.

Sometimes it was called the Chestnut Revolution due to the abundance of chestnut trees in Kiev the capital city of Ukraine and center of the revolution where a large 24-hour tent city was set up by Yushchenko supporters. The action was highlighted by a series of nationwide protests, sit-ins, and planned general strikes organized by supporters of opposition candidate Yushchenko following the disputed results of the November 21 run-off election. Due in large part to the movement's efforts, the results of the original run-off were annulled and a second run-off election was ordered by Ukraine's Supreme Court for December 26, 2004. Under intense international scrutiny, the official results of the second run-off proved to be virtually problem-free, legally valid and clearly in Yushchenko's favor. He was declared the official winner and with his inauguration on January 23, 2005 in Kiev, the Orange Revolution reached its successful and peaceful conclusion (Webpage: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange_Revolution).

Tulip Revolution: Kyrgyzstan

The Tulip Revolution refers to the overthrow of President Askar Akayev and his government in the Central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan after the parliamentary elections of February 27 and of March 13, 2005. The revolution sought the end of the rule of Akayev and his family and associates, who in popular opinion had become increasingly corrupt and

authoritarian. Following the revolution Akayev fled the country. On April 4 he signed his resignation statement in the presence of a Kyrgyz parliamentary delegation in his country's embassy in Moscow, and on April 11 the Kyrgyz Parliament ratified his resignation.

During the start of the revolution, the media have variously referred to the revolution as the "Pink", "Lemon", "Silk", "Daffodil", "Sandpaper", or "Tulip" Revolution. But over time, most of the media began to call the revolution as the Tulip Revolution. Such a term was meant to evoke similarities with the mostly non-violent Rose Revolution in Georgia (2003) and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004). This revolution, however, saw some violence in its initial days and at least three people died during widespread looting in the capital in the first 24 hours after the government's fall.

Protests began prior to the announcement of election results in many western and southern areas, and became more assertive as time passed. On March 18, thousands of demonstrators occupied the governor's office in the southern city of Jalal-Abad and another government building in Osh. Protesters in the southern town of Toktogul took captive a district governor and chief district prosecutor, both of them accused of colluding with Akayev's government in rigging the elections.

In the early hours of March 20, 2005 police attempted to recapture the buildings by force. Reports circulated of injuries to several demonstrators and to a police officer, while authorities temporarily detained hundreds of civilians in these areas. In the following hours, crowds surged to re-take the building in Jalal-Abad. The nearby police station quickly became a focal point for confrontations. Stone-throwing protesters stormed the station, causing some officers to take to the roof and fire warning shots in the air. The crowds forced open the doors of the building and witnesses observed people throwing Molotov cocktails into the windows.

By the following day, March 21, around 1,000 demonstrators in Osh occupied the

regional administration building, a police station and a television station, as well as the airport. Most security forces escaped unhurt, but rioters caught and assaulted two, before parading them on horseback in the city square. On March 22 activists seized another administrative building, in the southern town of Pulgon. A day later, the capital Bishkek saw its first demonstrations. A few hundred people gathered in the city's main square, but police broke up the rally before it could begin. Officers hit some of the crowd with sticks and arrested a number of organizers. Those detained allegedly included members of opposition newspapers, students, NGO leaders and members from KelKel youth movement. Protestors also took over Kadamjai in the south and the northern towns Talas and Kochkor (Webpage: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulip_Revolution).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Velvet Revolutions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005) attracted a lot of attention all over the world. Almost all the means of media addressed to the issue in question. A number of authoritative magazines and newspapers wrote a lot of articles about this subject, many well-known TV and radio stations covered the area under discussion, and even organized special programs devoted to the subject matter.

Overall, analysts referred to the phenomenon of Velvet Revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan from several major viewpoints. One group of analysts considers that Velvet Revolutions were the product of external manipulation. They claim that these revolutions are mainly financed by the West and predominantly they are provoked and “made up” by the US government.

Another group of analysts, mainly Western analysts and opponents of the previous standpoint claim that these revolutions were a step forward towards democracy. Proponents of this view mention that Velvet Revolutions on the territory of the former Soviet Union are the victory of democracy over corrupt and authoritarian rules.

There are a lot of sources supporting these views. An article, named U.S. Money has Helped Opposition in Ukraine, and published in the magazine *The San Diego Union Tribune* mentions that “The Bush administration has spent more than \$65 million in the past two years to aid political organizations in Ukraine, paying to bring opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko to meet U.S. leaders and helping to underwrite an exit poll indicating he won disputed runoff election”. The author mentions that the money was also spent through different organizations including The National Endowment for Democracy, which receives its money directly from Congress; the Eurasia Foundation, which receives money from the

State Department, and the Renaissance Foundation, part of a network of charities funded by billionaire George Soros that receives money from the State Department (Kelley, 2004).

Ariel Cohen, the author of the article Bush Administration Welcomes the Kyrgyz Revolution, writes that Kyrgyzstan's revolution is widely welcomed in Washington, and has some American policy planners contemplating the possibility of regime change in other Central Asian nations (March 29, 2005).

In the article by Roman Bessonov Georgia: Soros, Stalin, and a Barrel of Wine that was published in the *Executive Intelligence Review* magazine, author talks about causes of the Rose Revolution and as a main organizer of the revolution names George Soros and his Open Society Foundation. Particularly he mentions that for the period from September 2001 till November 2003, Saakashvili was under ardent tutelage from George Soros. Eduard Shevardnadze quitted being suitable person for the West. Though he was mostly west-oriented politician, he was unable to control all the Georgian territory and there was likelihood that he would turn towards Russia. The author mentions that Saakashvili, unlike Shevardnadze, is totally controlled by the USA and consequently is much more suitable for the West. Bessonov brings facts that Open Society Georgia Foundation launched a "youth assistance program" and young activists were promptly organized into a movement entitled Kmara! (Enough!). According to the article, Kakha Lomaya, head of the Open Society in Tbilisi, confirmed that the Kmara project "was coordinated in New York" (February 14, 2004).

As it was already mentioned there are opposing opinions concerning the causes and financial support of the Velvet Revolutions. In this respect, Julie A. Corwin in her article East: Regime Change on the Cheap has assembled opinions regarding Georgian and Ukrainian revolutions. Concerning Georgia she writes that Western foundations and the USA decided to put their money in order to improve the country's election system. However, they

did not intend to channel money directly to the youth organizations such as Kmara. She further mentions about another controversial fact that “Novye izvestia” confirmed the fact that Soros invested \$5 million in Kmara. On the other hand the author brings the arguments of the senior policy adviser for the Soros foundation who claims that the entire budget for all of its programs in Georgia amounted \$4, 6 million. Concerning foreign influence in Ukraine Corwin states that two opposing candidates Viktor Yanukovych and Viktor Yushchenko accused each other of receiving money from outside, namely Yanukovych from Russia and Yushchenko from the United States. Corwin also mentions that the youth movement “Pora” in its turn was accused not only of accepting U.S. financing but of being created by Western intelligence services (April 19, 2005).

In the article The Orange Revolution in *Peace and Conflict Monitor*, Muzaffar Suleymanov explores the situation concerning the velvet revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and studies why Russian influence was not strong enough. The author mentions that Georgian Rose Revolution was a precedent of democratic change on the territory of the former Soviet Union and in its turn took lessons from the East European velvet revolutions. He also mentions that the president of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili and the former President Havel of Czechoslovakia had visited Ukraine several times and gave advice to the opposition leader how to conduct successful democratic revolution. Suleymanov writes that there are many similarities between the revolutions including selection of the appropriate color, changes in political life due to the role of the masses. The most important point that mentions Muzaffar Suleymanov is that like Saakashvili, Yushchenko got support from the West. Then he talks about the role of Russia. Particularly he writes that since the collapse of the Soviet Union Moscow always has been trying to restore its lost influence over the capitals of now independent states. He indicates that the overall observation of Russian near-abroad politics shows that the Georgian-style democratic revolutions are not welcomed in Kremlin. And this

has been defining the Moscow-Kiev relationship since long before the October 2004 elections. In his article the author also refers to the question that Russia would prefer Viktor Yanukovich to Viktor Yushchenko as a president of Ukraine and adds that this fact may be supported through President Putin's question-and-answer sessions on Ukrainian television. Then while visiting Ukraine to take part in the 60th anniversary of liberation of the state from the Nazi occupation on the eve of the Presidential elections, he clarified his position on the issue. Analyzing the visit, BBC report says that Russia has made it clear it would like the then prime minister Viktor Yanukovich to become Ukraine's next president. Thus, Putin sent a message to the potential electorate on whom to vote for, and he made it clear that Russia would ensure the election results (February 23, 2005).

In the *Guardian Unlimited* Mark Almond, the author of the article The Price of People Power writes about the Western involvement in the revolution processes. He recalls the names of foundations such as America's National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and a myriad surrogates funding Ukraine's Pora movement or "independent" media. Further Almond states that not every penny received by dissidents came from taxpayers. The US billionaire, George Soros, set up the Open Society Foundation. The author mentions that the amount the foundation invested is difficult to verify, because Mr. Soros promotes openness for others, not himself (December 7, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses various sources including articles from internet, newspaper archives and articles from journals. The methods that are employed during this study are secondary analysis of data and historical/comparative methodology.

The Structure of the Leadership of the Post-Soviet Revolutions

The structure of the leadership in the three revolutionary countries (Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan) in terms of the leaders, their teams and organizational experience. The role of the charismatic leaders in the revolution processes in each particular case; the differences and similarities between them.

Rose Revolution: Georgia

President of the Republic of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili and His Team

The new generation of Georgian politicians is clearly oriented to the West. Typical is the biography of the leader of the nationalists and US puppet **Mikhail Saakashvili**. He was only twenty four years old when the Soviet Union broke up. This young man was given a grant by the US Congress and sent to Columbia University. He completed a Doctorate at the University of George Washington. In 1995, he also received a diploma from the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. In different times he worked at the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, Human Rights Protection State Committee of Georgia, at one of the biggest firms in New York.

While working with in the New York law firm of Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler Saakashvili was approached by Zurab Zhvania who was working on behalf of the President Eduard Shevardnadze to recruit talented young Georgians to enter politics.

When he returned to Georgia his career continued to shot ahead. First he became leader of the pro-Presidential “Green-Party” and then won a reputation as an outspoken nationalist-often called the “Georgian Zhirinovski”. In 1995 elections along with Zhvania he won seats in the Parliament, standing for the Union of Citizens of Georgia, Shevardnadze’s party (Web page: www.socialistworld.net).

On October 12, 2000, Saakashvili became Minister for Justice for the government of President Shevardnadze. He initiated major reforms in the decrepit, corrupt and highly politicized Georgian criminal justice and prisons system. In mid 2001 he became involved in a major controversy with the Economics Minister Vano Chkhartishvili, State Security Minister Vakhtang Kutateladze and Tbilisi police chief Soso Alavidze, accusing them of profiting from corrupt business deals. In 2001 he resigned from this post. From 2002 to 2004 he was president of the Sakrebulo (City Council) of Tbilisi (Web page: www.socialistworld.net).

On January 4, 2004 Mikhail Saakashvili won the Presidential elections in Georgia making him the youngest national president in Europe.

Nino Burdjanadze, the second most important leader of the “Rose Revolution”, is a daughter of the bread magnate Anzor Burdjanadze, a friend and colleague of Shevardnadze. She also started out as a supporter of Shevardnadze before going to the opposition (Web page: www.socialistworld.net).

Nino Burjanadze, Georgian jurist and politician, is currently serving as Speaker of the Georgian Parliament. She was born in July 1964.

Nino Burjanadze graduated from the Faculty of Law of the Tbilisi State University in 1986. She got a PhD in International Law from the Moscow State University in 1990, before teaching at the Faculty of International Law Department of the Tbilisi State University.

Member of the Georgian Parliament since 1995, in 2000 she became the vice-president of the Parliamentary Commission of OSCE. In 2001-2002, she presided the Parliamentary Commission for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. At the beginning of her political career, Nino Burjanadze was a member of Eduard Shevardnadze’s party, Citizen’s Union of Georgia (CUG) - her father, a rich businessmen, had been financing this party for years.

President of the Parliamentary Commission for the Foreign Affairs from 1999, she is then supporting Shevardnadze for his foreign policy. Nevertheless, she does not hesitate to openly denounce the corruption and inefficiency of the domestic policy implemented by the government, since she judges it to be ineffective.

In 2002 given the differences of opinion that oppose her to Shevardnadze, she leaves the CUG party. She forms an opposition party Burdzanadze-Democrats. This party takes part in the Parliamentary elections of 2003.

Following the Parliamentary elections on November 2nd, 2003, and its protested results, she joins the other opposition leaders in denouncing electoral frauds and the invalidity of the poll. They encourage mass demonstrations against Shevardnadze.

She becomes one of the three most popular political figures of the country, according to opinion polls realized in 2003. Her mandate as acting president ends up with the victory of Mikhail Saakashvili to the presidential elections on January 4th, 2004. On April 22nd, 2004, she gets back to her position of Speaker of the Parliament that was elected at the end of March 2004 (Web page: http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=77).

The third member of the opposition triumvirate is **Zurab Zhvania**. Zurab Zhvania, Georgia's youthful Prime Minister, was once a close ally of the former President, Eduard Shevardnadze, too, but turned against his corrupt regime and played a prominent role in its overthrow in Georgia's Rose Revolution. For several years he and Georgia's president, Mikhail Saakashvili, were rivals for leadership of the opposition, but later Zhvania became a key figure and moderating influence in the Saakashvili Government.

Zurab Zhvania was born in Tbilisi into a family of academics, following their example when he entered the Ivane Dzhavakhishvili State University. There he studied biology and after his graduation he became a researcher on human and animal physiology at the university.

In 1992 he was elected to the first post-Soviet Georgian national parliament, where he led the Greens' faction and became deputy chairman of the legislature's foreign affairs committee. There he was noticed for his eloquence and political acumen and, in 1993, Shevardnadze made him chairman of his Union of the Citizens of Georgia (CUG). From then on Zhvania became Shevardnadze's right-hand man. In 2002, however, Zhvania dissociated himself from Shevardnadze, having become increasingly disillusioned with the SMK's failure to reform. He joined a party of young reformers, who were to initiate the Rose Revolution. Zhvania was considered to be the most experienced and talented of those involved in the Rose Revolution and, indeed, the image of hundreds of Georgians waving red and white flags at him as he stood on a balcony after the forced resignation of Shevardnadze has become a symbol of the change of direction. He was fluent in English and German, as well as Russian, and was considered a Western-looking politician. This, combined with his popularity in difficult regions such as South Ossetia, not only made him stand out as an able statesman, but also as an unfriendly figure in Russia's eyes, a fact compounded by his ready criticism of Moscow's policy towards Georgia (Web page:<http://www.timesonline.co.uk>).

Orange Revolution: Ukraine

President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko and His Team

The new generation of Ukrainian politicians is obviously inclined to the West. The current president of Ukraine **Viktor Andriyovych Yushchenko** is a successful politician and former Prime Minister. He was born in the village of Khoruzhivka into the family of a teacher. He studied economics and worked as a rural accountant. Later he was promoted in his career; first to the post of deputy chairman of the Ukraine Agro-Industrial Bank in Kiev then in 1993 he started working in the newly-formed National Bank of Ukraine and became its head in 1997. As such, he played an important part in the creation of Ukraine's national currency, the hryvnia and the establishment of a modern regulating system for commercial banking.

In December 1999, President Leonid Kuchma nominated Yushchenko as Prime Minister. Soon, his government became embroiled in a confrontation with influential coal mining and natural gas industry leaders. The conflict resulted in a no confidence vote by the parliament. The vote was carried by 263 to 69 and resulted in Yushchenko's removal from office. Many Ukrainians viewed the fall of his government with dismay; four million votes were gathered in support of a petition supporting him and opposing the parliamentary vote and a 10,000-strong demonstration was held in Kiev.

Since the end of his term as prime minister, Yushchenko has become a charismatic political figure and he is popular among Ukrainians in the western and central regions of the country. As a politician, Viktor Yushchenko is widely perceived as a mixture of West-oriented and moderate Ukrainian nationalist.

In 2004 as President Kuchma's term came to an end, Yushchenko announced that he was an independent candidate for president. His major rival was Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich (Web page: <http://www.answers.com/topic/viktor-andriyovych-yushchenko>).

Viktor Yushchenko started the presidential campaign as Ukraine's most popular politician, and it took an enormous propaganda effort on state-run TV channels to make his rival, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, look like a real contender (Web page: www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4035789.stm). Ukrainian reformist politician was elected president on December 26, after weeks of turmoil that thrust the country into chaos.

One of Yushchenko's powerful backers was **Yulia Volodymyrivna Tymoshenko**. She is a politician and leader of the Bat'kivshchyna (Fatherland) party and Yulia Tymoshenko bloc. Prior to that she was a successful businesswoman in the gas industry and became one of the wealthiest people in Ukraine. Before becoming Ukraine's first female prime minister, she was considered the most significant ally of opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, and had a very high profile during the 2004 presidential election. She is one of the key leaders of the Orange Revolution inspired by those elections, which eventually brought Yushchenko to power. Tymoshenko made a move into politics in 1996, and was elected as a representative of Kirovograd oblast. From 1999 to 2001 Tymoshenko was the deputy prime minister for fuel in the energy sector in the government of Viktor Yushchenko (Webpage: <http://www.tymoshenko.com.ua/eng/news/first/2078/>).

Another politician that is worth mentioning is **Petro Poroshenko**. He was a one of the supporters of Yushchenko during opposition protests.

Poroshenko is the owner of the Channel 5 television station, which has made a huge propagandistic contribution to the success of the Yushchenko-driven "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine. Channel 5 was the country's only television channel sympathetic to Yushchenko's presidential bid throughout the 2004 election campaign and in the first week of the "Orange Revolution" that followed the discredited 21 November second election round that favored then-Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich. Channel 5 spearheaded a major breakthrough in

Ukraine's electronic media toward more pluralistic and objective news coverage, which clearly benefited opposition presidential candidate Yushchenko.

Also notable is that Poroshenko is a very rich businessman, and his financial contribution to the Yushchenko presidential campaign - in addition to that from Tymoshenko - has surely been hefty. Poroshenko runs the Ukrprominvest concern, which includes five confectionery plants and a business that sells foreign-made automobiles and motorcycles, and also manufactures domestic motor vehicles and ships. Poroshenko is the largest manufacturer of confectionery in Ukraine and has been dubbed the country's "Chocolate King".

Petro Poroshenko was born on 26 September 1965 in the city of Bolhrad, Odesa Oblast. He debuted in big politics in March 1998, when he was elected to the Verkhovna Rada. At that time, Poroshenko was a member of the Social Democratic Party-united (SDPU-o) led by Viktor Medvedchuk. In 2000, Poroshenko quit the SDPU-o and formed its own parliamentary caucus, called Solidarity, and a political party called the Party of Solidarity of Ukraine. By the end of 2000 his party joined the Party of Regions of Ukraine (now headed by Yanukovich), of which he became a cochairman. In 2001, Poroshenko left the Party of Regions, recast his former party into a Solidarity Party and joined Yushchenko's Our Ukraine election bloc. Poroshenko became manager of the Our Ukraine parliamentary election staff in 2002 and, after being elected to the Verkhovna Rada in March 2002, became head of the Budget Committee (Web page: <http://www.rferl.org/reports/pbureport/2005/01/2-120105.asp>).

Tulip Revolution: Kyrgyzstan

President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan Kurmanbek Bakiev and His Team

In the Georgian and Ukrainian revolutions, opposition groups united in removing their respective governments, but this was not the case with Kyrgyzstan. Various forces had joined

together to dispute the election as a coalition, however the opposition lacked an obvious leader who could have inspired people to protest. The more vocal critics of the allegedly rigged elections include **Kurmanbek Salievich Bakiev**, a former Prime Minister who resigned his post after police shot and killed five peaceful demonstrators in the southern town of Aksy in 2002; **Roza Otunbaeva**, a former Kyrgyz foreign minister and ambassador to the UK and the US; and **Felix Kulov**, former Kyrgyz vice president, Bishkek mayor, and chairman of the opposition party Ar-Namys.

Kurmanbek Salievich Bakiev grew up in the little village of Masadan. Bakiev's activities started in the plant named after Maslennikov in Kuibyshev town. Organizational abilities of the young specialist who demonstrated his professionalism in practice were worthy of notice and he was appointed director of "Profile" plant, which moved into prosperous enterprise in a short space of time. In 1990 Kurmanbek Bakiev was elected to the post of 1st secretary of Kok-Jangak municipal committee. After two years Kurmanbek Bakiev was appointed first to the position of deputy chairman of State Property Fund and then to the position of Governor of Jalal-Abad Region. In 1997 he was appointed to the position of governor – head of Chui region. As a new head of the region, he began by accelerating land reforms and forming of new commercial and economic relations with Russian Federation regions. During his stay as a governor of Chui region, investments worth about 40 million US dollars were attracted to the Chui region of Kyrgyz Republic.

In 2001 in recognition for his true worth, his superiors suggested Kurmanbek Bakiev run for the post of Prime Minister of Kyrgyz Republic. Acting Prime-minister Amangeldi Muraliev was the main opposition candidate, but the majority of elected representatives of the people elected Kurmanbek Bakiev.

On February 2003, he was considered as one of the Centralist group who opposed the existing regime. In autumn 2004, Kurmanbek Bakiev was elected as a Chairman of Central Council of political forces “Kyrgyzstan People’s Movement” which included 9 political parties. In particular, the “Kyrgyzstan People’s Movement” was at the head of mass people’s protests against falsification of election result during parliament elections that took place in February and March 2005. These protests led to the people’s revolution on 24 March 2005 (Web page: www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0923138.html).

Kyrgyzstan’s leading female politician is **Roza Otunbayeva**, 54, leader of the Ata-Jurt or Fatherland movement. She is a former ally of President Akayev who, after being dismissed by him, became very critical of the way he was allegedly taking power into his own and his family’s hands. As Kyrgyzstan’s former ambassador to Britain and to the United Nations, she is well liked and respected abroad (Web page: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4370925.stm>). Otunbayeva was appointed as acting foreign minister in March 2005, immediately following the Tulip Revolution. She proved to be too controversial to be confirmed by the Parliament and was eventually dropped by the government.

Felix Kulov was born in October 1948 in northern Kyrgyzstan, and made his career in the Interior Ministry, which he entered in 1967. He was appointed interior minister in early 1991 and played a key role during the abortive putsch against then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in August of that year, an act which earned him the respect of the population and the nickname “The people’s general”. President Askar Akaev named Kulov vice president in 1992, then governor of Chu Oblast in 1993. In 1997, Kulov was appointed national security minister and the following year, mayor of Bishkek. From 1998 to 1999 Kulov was mayor of Bishkek and became a popular figure in the city.

In July 1999, Kulov founded the opposition Ar-Namys party, which proposed him as its candidate for the October 2000 presidential election. But Kulov was refused registration

for that ballot after he declined to sit an examination to prove his fluency in the Kyrgyz language. In 2001 he was sentenced by a military court to seven years' imprisonment on corruption charges (Web page: http://unix.dfn.org/printer_FelixKulov.shtml).

On March 24, 2005, Kulov was released during the Kyrgyz revolution and appointed as co-coordinator of law enforcement and security services (effectively, the Kyrgyz head of security) by acting president and Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiyev. By April 11 he had been cleared of all charges. Kulov initially announced his intention to stand as a candidate for President in the elections scheduled for July 10. It was unclear at first whether language would be a barrier to his election: the president is required by law to be fluent in the Kyrgyz language, and in common with many from the north of the country, Kulov's native tongue is Russian. The issue became debatable, however, when he withdrew his candidacy in mid-May, pledging his support to Bakiyev. At that time he was also appointed Acting First Deputy Prime Minister. Later he was appointed as Prime Minister by Bakiyev when he was elected President. (Web page: www.answers.com/main/ntquery;jsessionid=3k6sdvb6f9bcl?method=4&dsid=2222&dekey=July+10&gwp=8&curtab=2222_1&sbid=lc04a).

Above it was briefly represented key figures of the Velvet Revolutions in three countries, namely Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. There will be presented several comparisons concerning revolutionary figures. Thus, while comparing the three new revolution-born presidents, Mikhail Saakashvili, Viktor Yushchenko and Kurmanbek Bakiyev, it is worth mentioning that before becoming presidents all of them had extensive experience in political sphere. **Mikhail Saakashvili** served as a Minister of Justice for the government of President Shevardnadze. Before he worked in one of the New York law firms and had been recruited by Zurab Zhvania on behalf of the then President Eduard Shevardnadze. Being

elected on January 4, 2004 Presidential elections in Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili became the youngest national president in Europe.

The current president of Ukraine **Viktor Andriyovych Yushchenko** is a successful politician and former Prime Minister. He was a head of the National Bank of Ukraine and played an important part in the creation of Ukraine's national currency, the hryvnia. In December 1999, President Leonid Kuchma nominated Yushchenko as Prime Minister.

It is an interesting fact that both Saakashvili and Yushchenko were promoted by ex-Presidents, respectively Shevardnadze and Kuchma and as a result overthrow them from the government.

Kurmanbek Salievich Bakiev, current president of Kyrgyzstan was a former Prime Minister. As Viktor Yushchenko, Bakiev is an economist and has government experience. Before becoming Prime Minister he had been governor of Chui region and implemented land reforms, as well as formed new commercial and economic relations with Russian Federation regions.

Thus, all three presidents had insight knowledge of the establishment structures and how they functioned, the strong and weak points and effectively used that information. Two of them had extensive foreign connections, not the least through the spouses: Yushchenko's wife is American citizen and Saakashvili's wife is Dutch.

One fascinating similarity in the leadership of the opposition in each revolution is that there was a woman second or third in the revolution's chain of command. **Nino Burdzanadze**, the second or third most important leader of the "Rose Revolution" started out as a supporter of Shevardnadze before going to the opposition. President of the Parliamentary Commission for the Foreign Affairs from 1999, she was then supporting Shevardnadze for his foreign policy. Nevertheless, she does not hesitate to openly denounce the corruption and inefficiency of the domestic policy implemented by the government and to encourage mass

demonstrations against Shevardnadze. Kyrgyzstan's leading female politician is **Roza Otunbayeva**, leader of the Ata-Jurt or Fatherland movement. She was a former ally of President Akayev who, after being dismissed by him, became very critical of the way he was allegedly taking power into his own and his family's hands. She became one of the key leaders of the Tulip Revolution. **Yulia Volodymyrivna Tymoshenko** was one of Yushchenko's powerful backers. Before becoming Ukraine's first female Prime Minister, she was considered the most significant ally of opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, and had a very high profile during the 2004 presidential election, and was one of the key leaders of the Orange Revolution.

One is tempted to think that perhaps the presence of a woman, especially educated, eloquent and attractive one in all of these three revolutions could have been part of the same revolutionary scenario and sophisticated political technology. However, this assertion could not be currently substantiated. The presence of women undoubtedly gave the revolution a much needed, humane and appealing image.

Yulia Tymoshenko, former Prime Minister of Ukraine, was one of the "lucky" Prime Ministers who came to power through "a velvet revolution". Though she was sacked of her position, she wasn't killed or died in suspicious conditions. The velvet revolutions that took place in various countries "swallowed" the key figures of those revolutions. This was the case with Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania. He was found dead in one of his Tbilisi apartments in February 2005. (Zoran Djindjic, one of the key figures of the Serbian revolution, managed to seize the power from Slobodan Miloshevic. Next year, Djindjic passed Miloshevic to the Hague Criminal Court. Zoran Djindjic, Serbian Prime Minister, was killed in Belgrade, in March, 2003).

In 2001 Felix Kulov was sentenced by a military court to seven years' imprisonment on corruption charges. On March 24, 2000, Kulov was released during the Kyrgyz revolution

and appointed as co-coordinator of law enforcement and security service. By April 11 he had been cleared of all charges. This was also the case with Yulia Timoshenko. She was charged under the former regime and spent 42 days in jail on charges of bribery, money laundering, corruption and abuse of power, all of which were eventually thrown out of court.

So, it is obvious that in each revolution charismatic leaders and their teams did play a big role during the whole process of the revolution and that they have considerable experience in the needed sphere.

Attitude and Behaviour of Younger Generation during Velvet Revolutions

The impact of the youth movements (“Kmara” in Georgia, “Pora” in Ukraine and “KelKel” in Kyrgyzstan) on the revolution processes in each case, their similarities and differences.

The recent successes of the velvet revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, as well as the much earlier success of the Yugoslav opposition in bringing down Slobodan Milosevic, have generated considerable interest in the driving forces behind these movements. Key roles in all these uprisings were played by informal but radical and disciplined youth movements espousing direct-action tactics. These groups include Otpor in Serbia, Kmara in Georgia, Pora in Ukraine, and KelKel in Kyrgyzstan.

The term *Velvet Revolution* was invented by a journalist after the events, caught on in world media and eventually in Czechoslovakia itself. Media saw this success and started tradition of inventing and assigning a poetic name to the similar events.

The first “Velvet Revolution” refers to the revolution in Czechoslovakia that saw the overthrow of the communist regime. This revolution started on November 16, 1989 with a peaceful student demonstration in Bratislava. Another peaceful student demonstration took place in Prague, the other day on November 17, which was severely beaten by the communist riot police. That event sparked a set of popular demonstrations from November 19 to late December, and a general two-hour strike of the population on November 27. By November 20 the number of peaceful protestors assembled in Prague swelled from 200,000 the day before to an estimated half-million.

With other communist regimes falling all around and with growing street protests, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia announced on November 28 they would give up their

monopoly on political power. On December 10, the Communist President Gustav Husak resigned and Vaclav Havel was elected as the President of Czechoslovakia on December 29, 1989.

When Vaclav Havel took up residence in Prague Castle in 1989, it seemed like the ending of a late-20th-century fairy tale. Since the 1960's Havel, the playwright and outspoken dissident, had exhorted his fellow citizens to "live in truth"- to refuse to allow Czechoslovakia's Communist authorities to manipulate them into silence, complicity and passivity.

The **demonstrations in Yugoslavia** in 2000, which led to the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic, are considered by many to be the first example of the peaceful revolutions that followed. However the protesters didn't adopt a color or specific symbol. The demonstrations were supported by youth movement "Otpor".

"Otpor" ("Resistance") is a pro-democracy youth movement in Serbia which has been widely credited for leading the eventually successful struggle to overthrow Slobodan Milosevic. It was formed in October 1998 as a response to repressive university and media laws that were introduced that year. The despair and alienation of the young, which the violent cauldron of Milosevic's Serbia had brewed, proved critical to the dictator's undoing. On October 10, 1998, a handful of student veterans of the 1996-97 protests founded "Otpor" as a vehicle for a new kind of defiance - choosing as their symbol a black clenched fist, a deliberate parody of the bloody fist that was an old Bolshevik symbol and a favorite image of Milosevic. Unlike the communists, however, they formed no centralized or hierarchical leadership but instead focused on grass roots organizing. They turned their back on the dictator's power as the first move in a struggle to take it from him.

In the beginning, "Otpor" had activities at Belgrade University. In the aftermath of NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia during the Kosovo War, "Otpor" started a political

campaign against the Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic. This resulted in nationwide police repression against “Otpor” activists, during which almost 2000 of them were arrested and some of them beaten. During the presidential campaign in September 2000, “Otpor” launched its “Gotov je” (He’s finished) campaign that galvanized Serbian discontent with Milosevic and resulted in his defeat.

After the NATO bombing, which had helped the regime suppress opposition, Otpor’s organizing took hold with a quiet vengeance. It was built in some places around clubhouses where young people could go and hang out, exercise, and party on the weekends, or more often it was run out of dining rooms and bedrooms in activists’ homes. These were “boys and girls 18 and 19 years old” who had lived “in absolute poverty compared to other teenagers around the world”, according to Stanko Lazendic, an Otpor activist in Novi Sad (The youth who booted Milosevic). “Otpor” offered these kids a place to gather, a place where they could express their creative ideas. In a word, it showed them how to empower themselves (Webpage: www.pbs.org/weta/forcemorepowerful/series).

“Otpor” was instrumental in inspiring and training several other youth organizations in Eastern Europe including “Kmara” in the Republic of Georgia, “Pora” in Ukraine, “KelKel” in Kyrgyzstan, etc.,.

In his article “Pro-American Che Gevara” Vasant Jover states that a small group of experts played a key role in spreading or “exporting” revolution into the East European and Central Asian countries. Their role is irrefutable in overthrowing the government of Shevardnadze in the Republic of Georgia, Kuchma in Ukraine and Akayev in Kyrgyzstan. Nowadays they are striving to bring down the corrupted and authoritarian regimes in Minsk, Alma-Ata and Baku (Web page: <http://www.aglob.ru/analysis/?id=925>).

Jover, while describing the group of experts, says that they are like missionaries: Serbs and Slovenians, Georgians and Ukrainians. They are young, well-educated and, no

more no less, bid for the democratization of the post-communist world. The common language for them is English, and usually they have perfect knowledge of English. Mostly they work in Western organizations and institutions, mainly in American ones. The author calls them “international democratic brigades” and mentions that their activities are regulated by Washington. In addition, several of them were granted a san “champion of freedom” personally by George Bush. In order to overthrow despots of the East these revolutionaries have unique “know-how”, delicate mixture of abilities such as non-violence, marketing and fund-raising.

All of them consider his/her responsibility to “export” this “magic formula”. For a number of them this is a mean of earning for living (they refuse to tell how much they earn). For others this is additional money (from time to time several hundreds of euro). Eventually, there are people who work on volunteer basis.

The most experienced of them is Pavel Demesh. He is a Slovenian; he is 49 and was one of the pioneers in this field. In 2000 he, in secret, coordinated a program of foreign aid to fight against Milosevic. He also was a confidential consultant of Ukrainian revolutionaries. In Bratislava he is a head of the East-European division of the influential American NGO “German Marshal Fund”, which supports activists in all over the region. In the past he was a Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia and is very well familiar with the political situation in the former Soviet bloc. He knows how to choose the best time for revolution.

Popovich, who is another expert in organizing revolutions, suggests an interesting strategy to overthrow authoritarian governments. Popovich says that in the first stage, it is necessary to establish a group of extremely interested young people, which later will become the main instrument of a revolution. Then, for that group a name must be chosen. The name of a revolutionary group must be short and easily remembered.

In the second stage the name of that group must be made known. This was the case with Georgian youth movement Kmara. “Che” from Belgrade suggested the plan and young Georgian enthusiasts brought that plan into being. In April 2003, at night they posted hundreds of posters with inscription “Kmara” in the central streets in Tbilisi and nine other towns in Georgia. The result surpassed all the expectations. The next morning everyone was talking about those posters. Even president Shevardnadze was caught into trap. Instead of ignoring them, he was exposing the movement making speeches by TV and radio stations and unconsciously advertising a small group of young people which seemed a mass movement to everyone.

In the third stage it is necessary to find money because the group needed to print out thousands of leaflets and brochures as well as to produce T-shirts with inscriptions. It was necessary to create internet site, to organize meetings, to rent offices, etc. The money was possible to find only from outside sources, particularly from Washington. Local businessmen would not give any financial support, because they didn’t want to spoil the relations with the government (Jover, Vansant 2005).

As it was already mentioned this was the case with **“Kmara”**, which is a civic resistance movement in the republic of Georgia. This movement undermined the government of Eduard Shevardnadze. Less than five months before parliamentary elections in Georgia, this protest movement has quickly inserted itself into the swirling political debate in Tbilisi. A relatively loose organization of students, Kmara was agitating for the conduct of free and fair elections. Kmara played a prominent role in anti-government protests across Georgia. Demonstrators supported opposition calls for changes in the composition of the country’s Central Election Commission. Student protests began gaining strength in April, when scores of students wrote the word “Enough” in public spaces and roughly 300 protesters burned a

flag portraying Shevardnadze and his entourage in front of the State Chancellery. Since then, Kmara has conducted numerous anti-government actions.

Kmara began organizing civilian groups of mainly students as election observers and were vocal about the need for fair elections prior to the November 2003 elections. Their work garnered much attention from Shevardnadze, who complained that the Russian government and George Soros' Open Society Institute had been funding an opposition movement meant to bring Shevardnadze from power. Links to the Russian government have never been proven, although the OSI is well known to have funded training for Kmara. The Belgrade based Center for Nonviolent Resistance was also of great importance in training Kmara, and several other Western organizations were involved in supporting the group. OSI flew the Georgian youth leaders and opposition leader Mikhail Saakashvili to Serbia in order to prepare them for what might happen in the upcoming elections and how they could react nonviolently in a way that would produce real changes (Webpage: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A11577-2003Nov24.html>).

The next youth organization that played a key role during the velvet revolution in Ukraine is “**Pora**”. This is another civic movement, which, as in previous case, was espousing non-violent resistance and advocating increased national democracy. This organization was in opposition to the authoritarian governing style of Ukraine's president Leonid Kuchma.

The group was established in 2004 to coordinate young people's opposition. It consists of mainly university students and has considerable influence in the staging of demonstrations, rock concerts and other events organized against the government camp and its presidential candidate, Viktor Yanukovich. Pora has its origins in a decision by the “Freedom of Choice Coalition” of Ukrainian non-governmental organizations “to create a broad volunteer network for the implementation of a nation-wide informational and

educational campaign, aimed at securing the voter rights of citizens”. Pora expressly refers to the “successful activities of volunteer networks” in Serbia (“Otpor” in 2000), Georgia (“Kmara” in 2003), and other countries. Pora proudly affirms that it has been advised by these groups (Webpage: <http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/encyclopedia/p/po/pora.htm>).

“Pora” was inspired and partly trained by members of the Serbian “Otpor” movement, which helped to bring down Slobodan Milosevic.

Protesters in the Central Asian Republic of Kyrgyzstan have followed the Georgian and Ukrainian example in overthrowing their government after complaints that elections were rigged. KelKel is a youth organization in Kyrgyzstan which had been set up with a view to inciting the Kyrgyz youth to be more politically active. This organization had been established before the February 27 parliamentary elections. Many observers, particularly those who know what role Otpor, Kmara, and Pora played respectively in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine, say KelKel will become a driving force behind political changes in this Central Asian country, where the opposition is weak and fragmented but is the most active compared to other countries in the region.

On January 7, about 150 people, wearing yellow and pink protest scarves, and carrying posters calling on president Akayev’s administration to observe voting rights, picketed parliament, and later, government buildings in downtown Bishkek. They were protesting authorities’ refusal to register ex-ambassadors as candidates in the country’s February 27 elections. Spurring the protests was a Bishkek electoral district committee’s January 6 refusal to register Roza Otunbaeva, a onetime foreign minister, and leader of the Ata-Jurt (Fatherland) movement, one of Kyrgyzstan’s five main opposition groupings.

The refusal had come just five hours after Otunbaeva had been presented with her official registration certificate-and coincided with news of the nomination of Bermet Akayeva, the president’s daughter, as a candidate for parliament from the same district.

While opposition members cried foul play, election officials declared that Otunbaeva's candidacy was denied because, contrary to current Kyrgyzstani election law, she has not lived in Kyrgyzstan permanently for the past five years. Otunbaeva served as ambassador to the United States and United Kingdom from 1992 to 2002, and later worked as a deputy special representative of the United Nations General Secretary. She returned to Kyrgyzstan in 2004 (Webpage: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4370925.stm>).

The first public events by KelKel had been organized on 11 January after Roza Otunbaeva. However, the culmination of antigovernment protests in Kyrgyzstan took place on March 24 as protesters stormed and occupied the presidential compound in the capital Bishkek. The same day, Kazakh deputy Bekbolat Tleukhan, speaking at the parliament in Astana, made clear that young people were behind the ousting of Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev. Tleukhan also said they were responsible for earlier protest movements in Georgia and Ukraine. (Webpage: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/pp041105a.shtml>).

Thus, from the above stated facts it is clear that youth organizations in all the three countries had considerable impact on the whole process of the revolutions. Though, in all the three revolutions there were attempts of suppression of these movements by the incumbents, however they have lost control over both the popular will and substantial parts of their own state apparatus.

The Velvet Revolutions: The Causes and Reasons

Were the Velvet Revolutions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005) an internal demand or the result of outside manipulation mostly pressured by external forces?

There are two general views about the causes of the Velvet Revolutions. According to one of them the Velvet Revolutions were the outbursts against post-Soviet corrupt and authoritarian governments. According to the other viewpoint these revolutions were the product of external manipulation and newest revolutionary methods involving latest informational technologies.

The West considers the Velvet Revolutions (Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan) a move towards democracy, Russian and pro-Russian politicians claim the revolutions to be “made-in-America coup” emphasizing the role of the Open Society Institute of George Soros in financing oppositions.

Rose Revolution: Georgia

According to analyst Andreas Speck’ article “A Velvet Revolution in Georgia” the Open Society Institute, which part-financed the parallel polls, is one of the main sponsors of the Liberty Institute, an organization with close links with Mikhail Saakashvili and one of the main organizers of the street protests. Soros also part-financed some of the media supporting the opposition, and – according to Georgian media – helped the Georgian student organization Kmara (Enough) with US\$500,000 start-up money. And Open Society financed the exchange of experience between Serbian Otpor activists, who played a role in

overthrowing Milosevic, with Kmara and Liberty Institute activists (Web page: <http://www.graswurzel.net>).

In May 2003, Mikhail Saakashvili and Zurab Zhvania went to Serbia, to meet with leaders of the democracy movement there. They invited them back to Georgia, to train 1,500 National Movement members in two-day training courses in political activism. Kmara too, only founded in April 2003, trained roughly 2,000 students in activism. In April 2003, in a discussion at the Nixon Center, Saakashvili referred to Serbia repeatedly when describing the situation in Georgia (Web page: <http://www.nixoncenter.org/publications/Program%20Briefs/PBrief%202003/041403saakashvili.htm>). In 2002, Mikhael Saakashvili and Zurab Zhvania – the then interim state minister and therefore leader of the government – both received the Open Society Prize of the Soros-funded Central European University in Budapest.

It is an interesting fact to mention that Richard Miles, US Ambassador to Georgia, was chief of mission to Yugoslavia from 1996 to 1999, and laid the groundwork there to get rid of Milosevic in 2000. Another coincidence: the Serbian Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID), which monitors elections in Serbia, was financed by USAID via the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) since 1997. CESID condemned the Yugoslav elections of 2000 as fraudulent, and – surprise – was involved in training Georgian Fair Election activists prior to the 2003 elections.

Certainly, Shevardnadze was not at all popular in Georgia after a decade of ruling the independent state of Georgia, and after more than 30 years of dominating Georgian politics. The country's economy never recovered from the civil war in the early 1990s. In May 2003, the IMF declared its worry that Georgia “is on the brink of bankruptcy”, and demanded budget cuts from the Georgian government. The country has a total foreign debt of 1.7

Billion US\$, 40% of which are with the IMF, World Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The remaining 60% of debt are bilateral with other CIS countries, Turkmenistan being the largest. The official Georgian unemployment rate is at 30%, the average monthly salary – for those who have one – at US\$20. An improvement of the economic situation is not in sight. Corruption is widespread in the country, and openly visible. Police officers stop cars and routinely ask for 2-5 Lari (1-2.50€), draft evasion is mainly possible through corruption. Also on higher levels in the administration, corruption is the rule rather than the exception (Webpage: <http://www.graswurzel.net>).

The conflicts around Abkhazia and South Ossetia have not been solved, and remain in a state of “neither war nor peace”. Internally displaced persons – ethnic Georgians from these two regions – push for a violent solution to the conflict; especially Georgians from Abkhazia still don't have any chance to return to their homes. Shevardnadze was regarded as not strong enough, although his more moderate approach probably avoided an escalation of the conflicts, and gained him support from the West. These are enough reasons for frustration, and more than enough cards for the former opposition to play with – and they played them successfully.

Orange Revolution: Ukraine

According to The Guardian Unlimited the activist movements in Ukraine were funded by a range of outside agencies including US State Department and USAID along with the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, NGO Freedom House and billionaire George Soros's Open Society Institute (Webpage: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1360080,00.html>).

On the other hand Russia's involvement in the election was more direct and heavily on the side of prime-minister Yanukovich. The extent of this involvement is still contested but some facts are indisputable such as multiple meetings between Russian president Vladimir Putin with Kuchma and Yanukovich before and during the elections. Putin repeatedly congratulated Yanukovich while the results were still contested, which caused much embarrassment to both parties. Yanukovich received a much more preferential treatment in Russian state-controlled media, and was surrounded by Russian consultants known to be close to the Kremlin throughout the election cycle. Most observers agree that the Yanukovich campaign received significant contribution from Russian state-controlled businesses. Other allegations, still disputed and very much unproven, include Russian involvement in Yushchenko's poisoning several weeks before the election, as well as alleged presence of Russian security forces sent to help Yanukovich to ascend to presidency (Webpage: http://www.monitor.uceace.org/archive.cfm?id_category=5).

Tulip Revolution: Kyrgyzstan

Significant contribution US government had in the revolution process in Kyrgyzstan. According to World Socialist Web Site article "US Money and Personnel Behind Kyrgyzstan's "Tulip Revolution"" the government established in Kyrgyzstan after the revolution is largely the product of US intervention. The author of this article Andrea Peters writes that using methods similar to those that proved successful in Georgia's "Rose Revolution," and most recently Ukraine's "Orange Revolution," in an effort to install a regime more amenable to its interests the Bush administration provided political and financial support to rival sections of the Kyrgyz ruling elite. In Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine in 2004, the US was able to successfully orchestrate the installation of Mikhail Saakashvili and Viktor

Yushchenko, respectively. The Bush administration financed opposition movements that manipulated the legitimate discontent within sections of the population over the undemocratic character of political rule in these countries in order to place in power pro-American regimes. Peters also mentions that Kyrgyzstan opposition was largely funded through western non-governmental organizations. Particularly, he says that one of the major NGOs working with the opposition, the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society (CDCS), receives the bulk of its funding from the National Democratic Institute in Washington, which is financed by the US government (Webpage: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/mar2005/tulp-m28.shtml>). However, it should not be minimized the role of the youth organization KelKel and the role that played opposition units. This was largely connected with the dissatisfaction of the large masses.

Thus, it may be said that each of these revolutions drew inspiration and expertise from previous cases. At the same time, each was based on local initiative and local sources of dissatisfaction, and each played itself out somewhat differently. Though they rely on some critical foreign (mainly U.S.) support, they were not manufactured abroad. Nevertheless, Georgian, Ukrainian, and Kyrgyz revolutions were heavily influenced by the preceding revolutions and took previous cases as a model for their actions. Also it is true that activists in each of these movements got funds from western non-government agencies and has been trained in tactics of political organization and non-violent resistance by professional consultants.

Possible Implications for Armenia

Historical events such as revolutions are never predictable and require a number of known and sometimes unknown factors to bluster. Usually scenarios for revolution are different from country to country. The most important thing that is necessary for the revolution and therefore regime change in a particular country is that dissatisfaction should exist in society. This can be true virtually for all the countries of the former Soviet space.

While turning to the three revolutions in questions it may be stated that they shared the common feature of being centered on a fraudulent election. In each case, an election was held and results were widely viewed to have been seriously manipulated by the current regime. As a result, mass protests broke out in all three countries, although the size of these protests varied across cases. After some period of uncertainty, the incumbent president either resigns from office or the election results are overturned, resulting in a member of the opposition becoming the new president of the country.

A close look to the three successful revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan reveals that in order a revolution to occur it is very important for democratic oppositions to have the ability to mobilize large masses of people. The ability of democratic oppositions to mobilize large numbers of people matters for several reasons. First, large numbers puncture the pretenses of the regime to mass support and demoralize those associated with the regime, increasing the likelihood of defections. But more than that, they also decrease the likelihood of repression, since repression of large numbers of demonstrators is difficult and contains the danger of inciting of backlash mobilization.

On the other hand, in many countries of former Soviet Union where elements of totalitarian regime still exists, even mobilizations of up to 25 thousand run the risk of significant repression. This was the case which took place in Armenia in the wake of the

fraudulent elections in February 2003. It is a well known fact that in April 2004 part of the Armenian opposition attempted to mobilize the people of Armenia in the streets to protest against the falsification of the 2003 elections, but this attempt failed.

In this respect Samvel Martirosyan, the author of the article “Armenia and Azerbaijan Reflected in the Mirror of the Georgian Revolution”, writes that the Georgian scenario could not have been repeated in Armenia because Robert Kocharyan was able reign in the bridles of the government and could easily attack the government. However, in case of Armenia there was a restraining factor in the form of unresolved conflict over Nagorno Karabagh issue. This factor did not allow the opposition to cross a certain line in their attempts to radically change the situation in the republic. In his article Martirosyan also speaks about the Western involvement in the Caucasian region as a whole and the republic of Armenia in particular. He mentions that the American government tries to establish its influence over the territory of CIS. For its geopolitical interests America uses internal tension of the countries. However, in Armenia, the Americans could hardly find any deserving figure in the opposition on whom they could rely if Kocharyan, who has the image of a pro-Russian leader in the region, were removed. The opposition, of course, was inspired by the success of the Georgian revolution and tried to exploit the situation but to see only the hand of Washington in this process would not be close to reality. On the other hand opposition leaders could have been encouraged by the Kremlin, because opposition leaders such as Stepan Demirchyan, Artashes Geghamyan or Aram Sargsyan at that moment were more Russian oriented (Webpage: <http://www.hetq.am/eng/politics/0412-smartirosyan.html>).

So it became obvious that any warnings of a “Velvet revolution” in Armenia during elections were issued in vain. In Armenia the possibility of a velvet revolution is dismissed as unlikely. This is partly due to the reason that there is no real alternative to the incumbent

authorities. In Armenia the opposition is not strong enough to stage a revolution. Otherwise there would be a replica of events that occurred in Georgia, Ukraine or Kyrgyzstan.

Thus, analyzing several points concerning Armenia it may be said that, on the one hand, the ruling regime in Armenia was shown the real strength of joined Western and internal pressure and the weakened Russian influence. This prompted the Armenian authorities to take a more pro-Western stands. On the other hand, the Armenian opposition was emboldened by these revolutions, though it seems in vain.

Conclusion

The world has witnessed a number of revolutions, beginning most recently in Serbia in 2000, the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia in November 2003, the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine in November 2004 and the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. It is undeniable that the elections in these countries produced revolutionary change and marked a broader shift in the post-Soviet world.

In this paper it was briefly discussed the origins of Velvet Revolutions. It mainly revealed that Velvet Revolutions initially developed out of the so-called Bulldozer Revolution in fall 2000, in which Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic was overthrown after he attempted to falsify the results of elections. The Bulldozer Revolution became a model for the Rose Revolution of November 2003 in Georgia, in which Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze was toppled in the wake of his use of electoral fraud to secure the victory of his parliamentary coalition. The Bulldozer and Rose revolutions in turn inspired the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in November 2004, when massive protests of up to a million people in Kyiv foiled Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich’s attempts to win election as president through massive voter fraud. Shortly afterward, in March 2005 Kyrgyz oppositionists, emboldened by the Serbian, Georgian, and Ukrainian examples, utilized the occasion of fraudulent parliamentary elections to carry out their own Tulip Revolution when thousands protestors around the country seized control over the government, forcing President Askar Akaev to resign.

This paper mainly studied three of them the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia in November 2003, the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine in November 2004 and the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. After a close examination of the velvet revolutions in these countries it may be stated that all these revolutions have been linked by a series of common features. These common features include: the use of stolen elections as the occasion

for massive mobilizations against pseudo-democratic regimes; foreign support for the development of local democratic movements; the organization of radical youth movements using unconventional protest tactics prior to the election in order to undermine the regime's popularity and will to repress and to prepare for a final showdown; a united opposition established in part through foreign prodding; external diplomatic pressure and unusually large electoral monitoring; and massive mobilization upon the announcement of fraudulent electoral results and the use of non-violent resistance tactics.

Indeed, the tactics of the regimes in all three successful revolutions in the regions were to certify falsified election results as quickly as possible by corrupt Central Electoral Commissions. In the Georgian case, the occasion for the storming of the parliament building was Shevardnadze's attempt to convene the newly elected parliament, which, if not disrupted, would have made the fraudulently elected body the official legislature of the country. The Ukrainian events followed a similar scenario, with the Central Electoral Commission validating the falsified results, and Yanukovich scheduled to assume office within days had the Supreme Court, acting under the pressure of the crowd, not struck down the validity of the election. In the Kyrgyz case, the fact that the revolution occurred two days after the new, fraudulently elected parliament was sworn in had a profound effect on the course of events; it made it extremely difficult for the old parliament to claim legitimacy and eventually led to the recognition of the new, fraudulently elected parliament as the rightful legislative body of the state—in spite of the successful overthrow of the regime.

Another common element for the three velvet revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan is that the driving force in each case was a youth protest movement with catchy slogans and symbols or logos. In Georgia the youth movement was called “Kmara” which means “Enough”, and its logo is a black fist on a yellow background; in Ukraine the movement was called “Pora”, which doubled as the slogan: “It is time” – complemented by a

new anthem: “Vstavay!”(Rise up!). It was accompanied by the symbol of orange scarves; and in Kyrgyzstan the movement called “KelKel, which means “Renaissance and shining of the good”. It was accompanied by the symbol of shining sun.

The networks and relations between these groups were consolidated through the sharing of media and PR and organizational knowledge. The Belgrade *Center for Nonviolent Resistance*, for example, has helped train activists in Georgia and Ukraine.

These revolutions may be considered as chain reactions in the post-Soviet territory. The velvet revolutions are interrelated, in which opposition groups borrowed frames, strategies, repertoires, and even logos from previously successful efforts and gained inspiration from the acts of others.

The democratic revolutions in the post-communist states is an ongoing process, and it would be unwise at this point to offer specific predictions about how this process will work itself out—i.e., where specifically revolutionary attempts will materialize, where they will not materialize, and where revolutionary attempts will be successful.

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