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The Alash Movement and the Soviet Government: A Difference of Positions

Tsarist Repression of the Kazakh Elite

The 1730s saw the start of colonization of the Kazakh steppe by the Russian Empire,¹ and it was from this period that the question of the relationship with the Russian administration and attitude toward its reforms would become a fundamental problem for the Kazakh ruling elite. Polarization of opposing views on the issue would eventually lead to a split amongst them. Exacerbation of relations between pro- and anti-Russian camps often ended in tragedy. Khan Abulkhair, with whom the start of the Junior Juz's incorporation into the Russian Empire is associated, would meet his death at the hands of sultan Barak, an opponent of the rapprochement between Kazakh society and Russia (1748). Khan Esim Nuraliev, the grandson of khan Abulkhair, was killed by supporters of batyr Syrym Datov who held that the latter was beholden to Russia

1 The annexation of Kazakhstan to the Russian Empire is generally considered to have begun in 1731, when khan Abulkhair of the Junior Juz signed an agreement accepting the status of a Russian subject. The process of integrating the Middle and Senior Juzes was completed in 1864, when the Siberian and Syr Darya military fortification lines were combined in the city of Turkestan.

(1797). Khan Zhantore Aichuvakov, known for faithfully doing the Russian administration's bidding, was murdered by men acting on the instructions of sultan Karatai (1809), who also did not wish to see the Kazakhs under the Russian Empire.

This was the time of the Empire's protectorate over the Junior and Middle Juzes. The Russian administration during that period set itself a clear objective: to weaken and bring about the gradual dissipation of the Kazakh khanate from within so as to prepare it to eventually accept Russian control. During this period the Russian government did not allow any one khan or sultan to bolster his position, artificially brooking hostility between them and supporting those sultans who would serve Russia faithfully and loyally in becoming khans. In short, in the Kazakh khans the Russian administrators were looking for men who would compliantly do their bidding, not the independently minded or strong politicians with dreams of sovereignty.

Khan Nurali's son, Karatai Nuraliev, for example, despite having been elected khan on several occasions (in 1809 and 1815 at any rate) in the Kurultai of the Junior Juz's largest clans—the Baiuly and the Alimuly—was never officially recognized as such by the Tsarist administration. The reason was the sultan's vigorous opposition to the Tsar's predatory policies, and in this respect he received strong support from his tribesmen. When asked by sultan Karatai to respect the will of those who elected him, Orenburg governor-general Volkonskii replied: "I must rejoin that unless his Majesty wills it so, none should venture to address you 'khan,' nor may you bestow upon yourself that estimable title, upon risk of legal consequences."²

Of course there were no laws requiring that a khan elected by the Kazakh Kurultai also had to be officially endorsed by the Tsarist administration: in this case the colonialists' intentions were simply tantamount to law.

One victim of the Tsarist administration's repressive policies was Aryngazy Abulgaziev, a khan of the Junior Juz who held considerable influence in the latter. Count Nessel'rode, a senior Tsarist official, described him thus: "Aryngazy is brave, ambitious and generous, and so

² *Trudy obshchestva izucheniia Kazakhstana: Otdel istorii i etnografii*, tom 7, vyp. 2 (Kyzyl-Orda, 1926), p. 92.

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may instill devotion towards himself or, through fear, grow to become sole ruler of the Horde, and then we will find ourselves moving in directions not of our own choosing but instead seeking to satisfy his demands.”³

In May 1821 khan Aryngazy was summoned to St. Petersburg by the very Tsar himself. The defiant and intransigent khan was detained en route and sent to Kaluga, where he lived in exile for another 13 years until his death in 1833. In his homeland he was survived by a large family and children. To the sultan’s request that he be given his freedom came the reply “it deigns the Tsar to find that the expected benefits of releasing sultan Aryngazy cannot compare with the dangers, which seem highly probable.”⁴

Yet during this period the process of recruiting servants of the Tsar from among the ruling Kazakh elite was already successfully underway. The sultans Akhmet Zhanturin, Baimukhamed Aichuvakov and others, having been conferred military rank and other privileges by the Russian administration, took charge of detachments of the Tsar’s army to suppress anti-colonial actions of their compatriots.⁵

Once the Russian system of government had been established in Kazakhstan, the way in which the Kazakh ruling elite was dealt with changed significantly.⁶ To professionalize the running of Kazakh society, the colonial administration switched to training Kazakhs themselves to serve among its ranks. The younger generation of Kazakhs, recipients of a Russian education and upbringing, were meant to lead the line in terms of advocating the interests of the Russian state and Russian culture.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 147.

4 *Ibid.*; *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei v piati tomakh*, vol. 3 (Alma-Ata, 1979), p. 168.

5 “The descendants of khan Shirgazy Aichuvakov and the sultans Baimukhamet Aichuvakov and Akhmed and Arslan Zhanturin, and the families whose relatives participated in suppressing the feudal movement of Kenesary Kasymov were freed from paying taxes.” *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 3, p. 230.

6 As a result of administrative reforms in 1867–1868 the Kazakh steppe was blanketed in a uniform system of government. Administration was clearly military in nature. All power was concentrated in the hands of the Russian military and bureaucratic machine. The influence of the Kazakh aristocracy and sultans, *bais* (the rich and influential), *bis* (tribal leaders who served also as judges in customary courts) and village chiefs was essentially destroyed. And this system of administration was maintained until 1917.

This objective was realized, to a certain extent, through Kazakh scholars and leading educators Ch. Ch. Valikhanov, I. Altynsarin and others who were products of Russian educational institutions. Yet at the same time they were not simply blinkered agents of their colonial masters, and thus in their behavior and sentiments there was a certain duality. On the one hand they understood that without European education and culture Kazakh society could not be freed from its medieval ways and backwardness, but at the same time they could not help but see the negative consequences of colonial dependence. The sharply critical stance taken by Ch. Valikhanov, I. Altynsarin, Zh. Chuvakov and other leading members of Kazakh society towards the Tsarist administration's reforms evidence the dawning of a qualitatively new period in relations between the national elite and the administration.

The Alash Movement

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russia, throwing caution to the wind, began overt colonization of Kazakhstan. Once the legislative framework was in place, it began intensive resettlement of Russian peasants to the steppe, convinced they were the bearers of an advanced culture. According to the Tsarist ideology, and later that of the Bolsheviks, there was not, and could not be, anything particularly serious in life on the steppe, and so it should be reformed fundamentally and immediately so as to convert it to Russian ways. Kazakh youth being taught in Russian educational institutions were inculcated with this idea. Tsarist agrarian policies, mass expropriation of Kazakh lands for the newcomers, and increasing impoverishment of the masses compelled educated Kazakhs to enter politics on a professional level, nurture the idea of national liberation, and organize a political party with a concrete agenda.

The Tsarist administration engaged in double dealing with them. On one hand, representatives of the national elite (A. Bukeikhanov, A. Birimzhanov, A. Kalmenov, B. Karataev and others) were elected to the first two State Duma convocations. On the other, the issue of resettlement, which was keenly and persistently raised by them through the Muslim faction and Cadet deputies, and heated debates on the topic at

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sessions of the Duma led to the Kazakh people being stripped of the right to vote.⁷ And while all this was going the most active members of the national elite were being subjected to persecution and deportation.⁸

In response to these brutish colonial policies, Tsarism engendered a strong opposition among the Kazakh intellectual elite, which pressed for a return to independence. The formation of the Alash Orda government and the autonomy of Turkestan (Kokand) in 1917 were not just the result of intense political activity by the national elite; at the same time these events attested to the immense potential of such activity to bring about a national revival.

Thus, the Alash movement was born of the serious crisis that stemmed from the Tsarist colonial policies in Kazakhstan. Progressive forces in Kazakh society, first and foremost the emerging national intelligentsia, understood perfectly well the sinister implications of colonial dependency and saw as a way out of the situation the reinstatement of national statehood.

Here certain specific features of the Kazakh liberation movement at the start of the twentieth century are worth noting. Firstly, the liberation movement of this period was a logical continuation of the Kazakh people's struggle for independence, only under new historical conditions. It was a logical continuation, for example, of the anti-colonialist actions of the Kazakhs in the nineteenth century.⁹

Secondly, however, at the start of the twentieth century the liberation movement was led by a political force new to Kazakh society: the national intelligentsia. Though modest in number, they were extremely

7 The Regulation on Elections to the State Duma of July 3, 1907. See V. I. Kovalenko et al., eds., *Politicheskaia istoriia Rossii: Khrestomatiia* (Moscow, 1996), p. 607.

8 In 1907–1910 the leaders of the national liberation movement Alikhan Bukeikhanov, Akhmet Baitursunov and Mir-Yakub Dulatov were convicted and received sentences of various lengths, then were deported from Kazakhstan for involvement in the anti-colonial movement.

9 Soviet historiographers did not acknowledge that the manifestations of Kazakh anti-colonialism of the twentieth century had its roots in the nineteenth century. For example, the Kazakh revolt under the leadership of Kenesary Kasymov in 1837–1847 was treated as a feudal-monarchist uprising, while the social and political activity of the national intelligentsia at the start of the twentieth century as a bourgeois nationalist movement. In contemporary historiographies of Kazakhstan both of these developments are treated as stages of the one and the same anti-colonial movement.

active and politically sophisticated.

A distinctive result of the progress of the national liberation movement was the founding of the Alash party in the summer and autumn of 1917. The party's platform, which was published in the newspaper *Qazaq (Kazakh)*,¹⁰ essentially consisted of two objectives: liberating the Kazakh people from colonial dependency and taking them forward to surmount the nation's social and economic backwardness. As was stated quite clearly in the party's program, it intended to achieve these main goals through political and socio-economic reform rather than radical revolutionary change. Thus, in terms of the methods it advocated to achieve its objectives, the Alash movement was fundamentally different from the Bolshevik faction of social democrats. It was no accident, therefore, that the ideas and slogans of the October socialist revolution of 1917 were rejected out of hand by Alash. And during the civil war the Alash party and the Alash Orda government joined forces in rallying against the Bolsheviks and the Soviets.

Let us now take a look at the key aspects of the Alash party's program. In the section on state structure it is stated that "Russia should become a democratic, federal republic (in a democracy the power belongs to the people, a federation is a union of states with equal rights. Each state in a federal republic has its own territory, may independently determine its own agenda, and is bound by ties of friendship)."¹¹ The head of state and government would be the president, elected by the State Duma for a fixed term. All citizens would have the right to vote, irrespective of their origin, faith and gender. The power to legislate would lie with the State Duma, which would monitor the activities of government agencies, hear their reports and make enquiries regarding specific areas of interest.

It is interesting to note that before the 1917 Bolshevik revolution the leaders of the Alash movement were hesitant to discuss the question of independent statehood, limiting themselves to the demands that Kazakh oblasts be given the right to a certain amount of local self-government (*zemstvo*) and a greater role in the judicial process and military service,

10 The decision to create the Alash political party was made at the all-Kazakh congress in July 1917. *Alash qozghalısı / Dvizhenie Alash: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, vol. 1 (Almaty, 2004), pp. 438-441.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 504-505.

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with account for local customs. The Alash program states that "all Kazakh lands are united as a consolidated whole, are sovereign and join the Russian Republic on federal grounds."¹² The political state of affairs in the former empire at the end of 1917 was such that the leaders of the national liberation movement could quite openly discuss the question of state autonomy within the framework of the federation.

The party also took a moderate line when it came to social policy. Its program contains no hint of restricting the rights of the feudal aristocracy. The movement's leaders were convinced that in Kazakh society, due to certain circumstances, class differentiation had not evolved as it had in, for example, Russian society. Moreover, for Kazakh society, which was at the stage where the liberation movement was gaining popularity, it was more important to consolidate the nation than to lead it to confrontation on the basis of class differences and interests. These interests are reflected in the program in the distinctive assertion that the Alash party is directing its efforts and energies for the good of the nation, is "leading people on the path to progress" and "championing justice."

The program also makes no mention of disqualifying any social groups or forces from a role in governing the state. The question of taxation was decided along roughly the same line: "levying of taxes shall be done fairly, depending on wealth and income, that is to say, the rich will pay more, and the poor — less."¹³ Workers rights would be protected by special legislative acts. On this question the Alash party took the same stance as the social democrats (Mensheviks).

Under the Alash party program autonomous Kazakhstan would become a secular state, i.e., there would be no state religion, and all citizens would have freedom of conscience to practice their choice of faith. The anti-feudal and anti-colonial character of the program was particularly palpable in the sections "Principal Rights" and "Teaching of Science and Knowledge." Here it was noted that in the Russian Republic all citizens, irrespective of faith, nationality, race or gender, would be equal. Other stipulations that were provided for included the right to assemble and to organize associations, freedom of speech and freedom of the press, the inviolability of the individual and one's residence, etc.

12 Ibid., p. 504.

13 Ibid., p. 505.

As follows from an analysis of the party's program, the leaders of the Alash movement advocated first and foremost implementation of steps aimed at decolonization and the achievement of general democratic objectives. Their main, pressing task was to bring about national rebirth. They were also well aware that this could be attained by creating a society receptive to progressive experience of others. And, naturally, they had not the least intention of establishing an insular, mononational state, as Soviet historians claimed.

Soviet Hostility to the Alash Intelligentsia

The leaders of the national liberation movement also understood clearly it was impossible for these objectives to be reached in Russia without creating a democratic system and giving freedom of choice to people who had previously been dependent on the metropolis. On this platform they were prepared to co-operate with the new regime. Expressing the general view held by the Alash party's founders, A. Baitursunov in a letter to Lenin wrote: "The proletariat of the Russian nation, which has for centuries been stealing from and oppressing the Kazakhs, must prove and demonstrate through deeds that they are the liberators of oppressed peoples and not their new subjugating masters who wish to sponge off them in place of the Tsar's bureaucrats."¹⁴ At the same time he urged the Soviet leadership to tackle the escalating problems in Kazakh society in conjunction with the nation's political elite who had gained experience in the pre-revolutionary struggle. He wrote, ". . . among the Kirgiz [i.e., Kazakhs] there is a certain part of the intelligentsia that the people trust wholeheartedly and who, while not being immune to mistakes or losing their way, would never deliberately sell out their people no matter the reward or benefit. The most direct route, if the Russian proletariat wishes to gain the trust of the Kirgiz, is through these members of the intelligentsia."¹⁵

Were the calls of Baitursunov and others heard by the central leader-

14 A. Baitursunov, "Pis'mo tov. Leninu V. I. 17 maia 1920 g.," Arkhiv Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan (AP RK), f. 811, op. 20, d. 568, ll. 46-46 ob.

15 Ibid.

ship? Ensuing events and the process of Sovietization in the republic show that the Soviet government was confident it knew better than anyone the local problems and the ways and methods of solving such problems, and had no intention of handing over the initiative to anyone else in this regard. This was manifested in the following. Firstly, leadership posts in Communist Party organizations in the Kazakh oblast (up to the year 1925), and later the krai, were given to officials who were assigned from Moscow¹⁶ and had no knowledge of local life or customs, and hence judged them “according to Moscow stereotypes.”¹⁷ As a result they had no “specific work plan” other than the basic instructions set out in the “Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia” and the Russian Communist Party program.¹⁸ Most of these officials, who had earlier been involved in revolutionary activities and the civil war, behaved themselves under the new conditions as some sort of higher caste of “celebrated heroes and liberators” and were carriers of that disease, Russian “Bonapartism” — i.e., viewing local problems from on high and with excessive simplification.

Secondly, while solidifying their grip on power in Kazakhstan, the Bolsheviks methodically and consistently propagated the view that the pre-revolutionary Kazakh intelligentsia were some sort of reactionary, counter-revolutionary force that had acted in opposition to the cardinal interests of the Kazakh population on the whole. As an example, in the resolutions of the First All-Kirgiz (Kazakh) Party Conference it was noted unequivocally, “the Kirgiz intelligentsia have no connection (by origin or status) to the Kirgiz masses and are least of all connected with the interests of the poorest of the Kirgiz people.”¹⁹

While did exist other views among the Communist Party ranks as to

16 Before Goloshchekin was sent to Kazakhstan as the First Secretary of the krai party organization the post was held by: S. S. Pestkovskii (1920), I. A. Akulov (1920–1921), M. Murzagaliev (1921), M. M. Kostelovskaia (1921), G. A. Korostelev (1921–1924) and V. I. Naneishvili (1924–1925). Of these, the only Kazakh was M. Murzagaliev, who led the oblast party organization for less than six months in 1921.

17 T. Sedel'nikov, “Tsarskaia okraina: vzgliad iznutri (Pis'mo V. I. Ul'ianovu-Leninu),” *Mysl'* 7 (1993), p. 80.

18 Baitursunov, “Pis'mo tov. Leninu,” l. 46.

19 *Kazakhstanskaia oblastnaia (kraevaiia) partiinaia organizatsiia v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh konferentsii i plenumov obkoma i kraikoma*, vol. 1, 1921–1927 (Alma-Ata, 1981), p. 33.

the place and role of those of the intelligentsia who were not party members, it was on the former that social policy of Kazakh Krai Committee (Kazkraikom) of the Russian Communist Party was to be based in subsequent years. Admittedly it could not have been any other way, given the political predominance of a party that explicitly claimed the solution to national problems lay in resolving class conflict. Stalin himself was the inspiration for this approach. Having raised the issue of Tatar “nationalism” (embodied by M. Sultangaliev) at the Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) with the responsible officials of national republics and oblasts in 1923,²⁰ he imposed the task of “turning Turkestan into a model republic” before railing against “Kazakh nationalism.” In his letter to the members of the Kazkraikom Bureau of May 29, 1925, regarding the newspaper *Aq-Jol* (formerly an organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan and the Central Executive Committee of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic), he took an emphatically negative view of the newspaper’s line, adjudging that the critical comments on its pages “had no place in the country of the Soviets.”

The Kazkraikom’s stance towards “non-party intelligentsia” was also set out in the letter. He wrote: “I am against non-party intelligentsia educating Kirgiz youth in politics and ideology. We did not seize power to let the political and ideological education of our youth be handed over to the bourgeois, non-party intelligentsia.”²¹

Stalin’s letter essentially signified the hardening of policy towards the Alash Orda intelligentsia, restricting their activities in the fields of science, the arts and especially in the press. And what is particularly interesting is that the offensive that was to be launched against the main leaders of the Alash party (which had already long since ceased to exist as such) was prepared simultaneously by the various ranks of the Communist Party and OGPU.²²

The Kazakhstan OGPU took to its task with enthusiasm, providing

20 I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1952), pp. 291–341.

21 AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 479–A, ll. 1–2.

22 The acronym OGPU stands for *Ob’edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie* (Unified State Political Administration), later renamed the Committee for National Security, or KGB, of the USSR.

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quarterly status reports "On the Activities of the Alash Orda and Kazakh National Factions." In one such report the activities of former leaders and activists of Alash and national factions in the final quarter of 1922 were described as being characteristic of a movement whose purpose was national liberation. Taken together with others, this document serves as confirmation that the Soviet leadership understood and recognized internally the existence of a real national liberation movement in Kazakh society. However, obscuring it in class-related slogans, they purposely wrote it off as anti-Soviet activity by the national bourgeoisie.

From about the year 1925 the process of forcing the Alash Orda intelligentsia out of printed media began. For example, on two occasions (March 2 and October 23) that year the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (hereinafter the "Central Committee") reviewed the status of the press in Kazakhstan. Decisions adopted by the Central Committee's secretariat on March 2, 1925, cite "inadequate control of printed periodicals on the part of the Kirgiz [Kazakh] Krai Committee and local party bodies" and "the influence of nationalistic members of the intelligentsia who are not party members on the leading political line in certain periodical publications."²³

At a meeting on October 23, 1925, the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee heard a report by Secretary of the Kazakh Krai Committee F. I. Goloshchekin entitled "On the Kazakh Press," in which he focused on the "stranglehold" the Alash Orda intelligentsia had on the republic's Kazakh-language press. The Organizational Bureau, expressing its "understanding" of the situation and the need to increase party control over the Kazakh press, instructed the Kazkraikom "to organize a Press Department under the Kazkraikom and staff it with as many trained workers as necessary."

"Having noted the inadequate editorial work in general political publications of Tsentroizdat [the Central Publishing House for Peoples of the Soviet Union] in the Kazakh language," the Organizational Bureau proposed that the Tsentroizdat board "a) release all its Kazakh-language publications only after meticulous political editing; b) relieve comrade Bukeikhanov of his duties as editor."²⁴

23 AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 377, l. 1.

24 Ibid., ll. 33-38.

It was prescribed by the Central Committee's Press Department that the "general principle is to preserve a single, mass-circulation peasants' newspaper for each *guberniia* [province]" and close all *uezd* (district) newspapers (with the exception of *Jūmisker Tili*). The range of departmental publications was also to be reduced. The final list of periodicals to be available in the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was to be submitted for approval to the Press Department of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. The Press Department of the Kazkraikom of the Russian Communist Party was instructed in the space of two months to study the state of literature in the Kazakh language and submit a "special report to the Press Department of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)."²⁵

By decision of the Kazkraikom Bureau dated June 10, 1925, the instructions given by Stalin and the Central Committee were accepted to be enacted and a circular was distributed among the provincial committees with recommendations on how to manage the national press and on procedures for using the national non-party intelligentsia in it. Local party organizations were instructed to step up the operations of their propaganda departments in support of control over local press.

All of this meant the chartering of a new course designed to force leaders and activists of the Alash movement out of public and political life. The realization of this course was accompanied, firstly, by purposefully and explicitly undermining the Alash Orda intelligentsia in the eyes of the Kazakh people by characterizing them as bourgeois, *bais* and reactionary, and, secondly, by encouraging acceptance into the upper echelons of the party and administration those Kazakh nationals who were willing to tow the line set by Moscow. Thus was the foundation laid for a new phase in the political life of the people and their intelligentsia. Intellectuals, who until that time had expressed general national and democratic interests, now had to hand over that function to party officials and Soviet nomenklatura, whose role was to fulfill Moscow's directives.

In order to at first isolate, and then eliminate altogether the thin layer of pre-revolutionary national intelligentsia, the Soviet leadership chose a

25 Ibid., I. 38.

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sophisticated method through which to punish it. In the decisions of the party congresses and conferences the important role of the small number of national intelligentsia was openly acknowledged, while in practice the policy was to squeeze the most active members out of public life. In their directives the Bolshevik leadership always noted that it saw better than anyone the internal problems in Kazakh life and therefore was in a position to solve them without the involvement of any "bourgeois intellectuals."

As early as the first years of the 1920s the central leadership began a course aimed at preventing any manifestations of "local separatism," taking resolute steps to allow the Communist Party to take root and survive under local conditions and working to bring about uniform living conditions and social structures. At this time certain languages and cultures were already given preference over others. The necessary foundations for successful implementation of these policies were laid by the migration policy of the Stolypin government, and this was continued during the Soviet period. In 1925 the indigenous nation accounted for approximately 58 percent of the republic's total population, compared to 81.7 percent in 1897.²⁶

Around the same time the Communist Party's national policy moved away from the principle of self-determination in the structuring of the state, and the idea of social equality became noticeably dominant over the idea of freedom. In party documents statements of the following ilk became widespread: ". . . national problems can be solved only in the course of building socialism, the building of socialism is possible on the basis of close economic and political ties with the entire Union, the latter being a possibility only together with solution of the main problems in building socialism throughout the USSR."²⁷

26 N. V. Alekseenko and A. N. Alekseenko, *Naselenie Kazakhstana za 100 let (1898–1997 gg.)* (Ust-Kamenogorsk, 1999), pp. 61–63; *Ana Tilí* 1 (1991).

27 *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane: Sbornik rechei i statei (1925–1930 gg.)* (Moscow and Alma-Ata, 1930), p. 150.

Goloshchekin's Assault on the Kazakh Elite

Goloshchekin, appointed to the post of First Secretary of the party's Krai Committee in 1925, in a letter to I. Stalin outlining the main tasks involved in state-building in Kazakhstan and confirming the commitment of the republic's leaders to that course, noted that "in all oblasts before the Fifth conference [in December 1925] building was underway, without affecting the *auls* [nomadic settlements], and aimed at tackling national issues, without concerning class issues within the nation."²⁸

It should also be noted that Goloshchekin and other henchmen sent from Moscow who strove for absolute power in the republic did not identify in any way the word "Kazakhstan" with the concept of an autonomous state. As the first leaders of the krai party organization, they acted for the most part as the fulfillers of various directives from Moscow and the party's General Secretary. Goloshchekin, for example, at a meeting of the Bureau challenged the sentence "Approving the political line of the Kazkraikom" in a draft resolution, stating, "I will categorically oppose this sentence. . . . I hold that the political line is the line of the party's Central Committee. We do not have our own political line."²⁹

Of course this outburst was not accidental, but most likely the fundamental position of a political officer fully and completely dependent on the party leadership in Moscow. Therefore it would be wrong to talk of any special position of the Kazkraikom during this period regarding any particular major problems. After Goloshchekin took over, the Kazakh krai party organization not only became compliant and a "reliable" part of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) organization, but successfully turned into a state structure, taking over all other forms of government administration.

Goloshchekin's lack of concern for the interests of the Kazakh republic could also be seen when it came to territorial issues. In 1925 the Presidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee decided, without discussing the matter with the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh ASSR, to transfer the Ilek district of the Aktyubinsk province to the

²⁸ Ibid., p. 152.

²⁹ AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 8, l. 532ob.

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Orenburg province of the RSFSR. The numerical predominance of Russians among the region's population was cited as grounds for the decision. The matter was a topic of intense debate at a meeting of the Kazkraikom Bureau. The All-Union Central Executive Committee's decision was harshly criticized by the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR N. Nurmakov, the chairman of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee Zh. Mynbaev, member of the Kazkraikom Bureau S. Khodzhanov and others. Nurmakov noted, "this decision is tantamount to eliminating the Kazakh republic on the basis of its national composition, for the day when the ethnic European population reaches 70 percent is not far off, given the current rate of resettlement."

In response to Goloshchekin's assertion that in dealing with this issue not only considerations of nationality, but economic factors should be taken into account, Khodzhanov declared: "We cannot side with the viewpoint that national considerations are of no significance here. The situation in our republic is such that the question of nationality is of extraordinary importance . . . Now, to all appearances, there has been a certain move towards increasing resettlement. Mass resettlement to Siberia is becoming an official strategy. The Siberian settlers, having done a circle, end up here. Twelve thousand wagons have already been registered. I am of the view that this question should be considered from the standpoint of ensuring the preservation and further strengthening of the Kazakh republic as a state, not as a krai or region within Russia . . . therefore I suggest that this question be considered in detail from the standpoint of . . . preserving the Kazakh republic as a viable state, and not let it slip through the hands as certain comrades would be disposed . . ." ³⁰

Thus, within the first days of arriving in Kazakhstan, Goloshchekin behaved as a representative of Moscow, not as the leader of an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation. Accordingly, the fight against "regionalism and Kazakh nationalism" would become one of his main concerns. Goloshchekin began the assault on "Kazakh nationalism" by removing from the highest ranks of the republic's leadership those officials who had the greatest influence on public opinion and who,

30 Ibid.

being independent from Moscow and its representative, could resist their course.

From the very beginning of his time in Kazakhstan Goloshchekin alleged there was a certain "August alliance" that opposed his appointment as leader of the krai party organization. He purported that the alliance was headed by the second secretary of the Communist Party Krai Committee, Sultanbek Khodzhanov, with people's commissar of education Smagul Sadvokasov and the chairman of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee Zhalau Mynbaev also being among its supposed members. In actual fact there never was any anti-Goloshchekin alliance. Goloshchekin had to circulate such a rumor to justify his actions against these people in the republican government.

Among the republic's leaders, second secretary of the Communist Party Krai Committee Sultanbek Khodzhanov, a strong-willed advocate of decolonization, stood out in particular, having risen to prominence during the period of land and water reforms in Turkestan in 1921-1922 and held in deserved esteem by the people. A month after arriving in Kazakhstan Goloshchekin was to have Khodzhanov relieved of his office and reassigned to the Communist Party Central Committee in Moscow. His place would be taken by N. I. Ezhov, who would eventually move to Moscow to become director of the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) of the USSR. Khodzhanov himself, of course, understood full well the meaning of the reassignment. At the meeting of the Kazkraikom Bureau at which he was told of the Central Committee's decision he said: "I was not summoned to Moscow to get things done, of course, but to not get things done."³¹

Having gotten his staunchest opponent called to Moscow, Goloshchekin at the same time requested that the Communist Party Central Committee send "some senior party, administrative and economic policy officials" to Kazakhstan. Notifying the Kazkraikom Bureau of this he said, "one comrade has already been assigned to our command. This is comrade Vakhmanov, the head of the organizational committee from Nizhny Novgorod. I requested another person as well, but a decision has yet to be taken." Regarding this matter the following was resolved:

31 AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 18, l. 231.

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- The question of the posting of other officials (comrades Lur'e, Piatkin and Smirnov) to Kazakhstan shall be referred to the Secretariat for consideration so that the Secretariat can make a decision within one week;
- It shall be proposed to the Moscow Party Committee that at least three party officials be allocated for Kazakhstan.³²

All these proposals had been considered and approved at a meeting of the Central Committee Politburo the middle of October 1925, and the Kazkraikom was duly notified by telegram. Thus the Central Committee, having received an inspector in the person of Khodzhanov, in exchange sent to Kazakhstan several officials from the "proletarian center" that was Moscow. This was not the only such case: in the second half of the 1920s T. Ryskulov, A. Dosov, S. Asfendiarov, S. Sadvokasov, N. Nurmakov and other high-profile public figures in Kazakhstan were sent to Moscow on various grounds to work in a range of institutions. Dozens of "senior officials" were sent from Russia in exchange.

Having prevented Khodzhanov from engaging in further political activity in Kazakhstan, Goloshchekin turned his attacks to Smagul Sadvokasov, a member of the Kazkraikom Bureau of the Communist Party, people's commissar of education and editor-in-chief of the republic newspaper *Engbekshí Qazaq*. Sadvokasov condemned vocally and in his writings Goloshchekin's idea of a "little October,"³³ sharply criticized the pace of indigenization (*korenizatsiia*) policy in the state apparatus, the Bolshevik method of confiscating property from Kazakh *bais*, and the focus on raw resources in industrializing the republic's economy. At the third krai conference Sadvokasov proposed a course diametrically opposed to that advanced by the Communist Party Central Committee and Kazkraikom with respect to expropriation of assets of the propertied classes. He noted in particular that in Kazakhstan the poor suffer most from a lack of work opportunities and a shortage of land, work tools and equipment, "and not due to anyone exploiting them." "Give Kazakh a

32 Ibid., I. 230.

33 F. Goloshchekin in one of his keynote speeches said, "there must be a little October for Kazakhstan." He reckoned the Russian *kulaks* had already been weakened and humbled by then, and that going after the Kazakh *bai* was not enough. So a mini-October revolution in the Kazakh *auls* was what was needed. In other words, Goloshchekin was advocating civil war in the *auls*.

horse, hay, a scythe," he said, "make it so that his farm is sustainable and it will be a hundred times more benefit than simply distributing what there already is. The idea of distribution of what there already is essentially an extremely dangerous idea, for distributing what there already is has an inherently consumerist aspect. Give a poor man a cow today, tomorrow he slaughters and eats it, and another day he may ask for another one, and if there isn't another one then we're left with nothing. . . . Today it's not some shock the country is waiting for, but constructive and peaceful work. And it is not new expropriations that will save it, but work and science."³⁴

Regarding the idea of confiscating the property of the *bais*, Sadvokasov suggested not getting carried away with the extremely political side of the issue but implementing a flexible tax policy so as to draw their money into cooperative endeavors, the construction of social welfare infrastructure and so forth. Sadvokasov's criticism of the Communist Party line in this respect was regarded as upholding the interests of the propertied classes, and he was dubbed the "*bais*' ideologue."

There were also disagreements between Sadvokasov and Moscow regarding the nature of industrialization. In the open press Sadvokasov condemned the position held by those who wanted to turn Kazakhstan and the Central Asian republics exclusively into suppliers of raw materials for the industrially developed central regions of the Soviet Union. "Whereas the imperialistic Russian bourgeoisie would only take strip raw materials from outlying regions while planting numerous factories and industrial works in their own backyard," he noted, "socialist industry should develop according to the principle of economic expediency."³⁵

In 1927 the newspaper *Pravda Vostoka* published an article entitled "The General Line" by chairman Zelenskii of the Central Asian bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in which the author criticized local "nationalists" and "backers of the idea of a closed economy."³⁶ Responding to Zelenskii's indictments, Sadvokasov wrote: "Firstly, comrade Zelenskii's allegation that there is some trend (read: among the [non-Russian] nationals) supporting the

34 AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 485, ll. 25-26.

35 S. Sadvokasov, *Izbrannoe* (Almaty, 1994), p. 74.

36 *Pravda Vostoka*, October 7, 1927.

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establishment of a closed economy in each republic (a laughable idea) is wrong, and secondly, according to what theory does it follow that taking cotton out of Central Asia is a good thing, while taking textiles is a sign of a closed economy. It doesn't work like that, comrade Zelenskii. In fact, from the standpoint of economic expediency, industry should be situated as close as possible to the sources of raw materials.

Here the objection may be presented to us that setting up industry in a region requires not only raw materials, but working hands and fuel.

The answer to that is the millions of poor in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and the billions in reserves of coal and oil in Kazakhstan.

They could also claim yes, that's all very well, but there are no railroads in Central Asia. To that it may be answered that in our time railroads are built with people's hands, and railroad construction is also a part of industrialization.

Therefore, 'economically' speaking, everything goes against comrade Zelenskii."³⁷

To finally put an end to "Kazakh nationalism" amongst the republic's leaders Goloshchekin held the Third Plenary Session of the Kazkraikom, where the group of S. Khodzhanov, S. Sadvokasov and Zh. Mynbaev was named on the agenda. They were accused of nationalism and of ideological ties to the Alash Orda intelligentsia. In his closing speech at the session Goloshchekin said "there are two types of Alash Orda members: old leaders and a new generation of Alash Orda. There is a major difference between them. I believe that if we take the old Alash Orda members, they have something that lies in the past. In the past they were, in Kazakh terms, Kazakh revolutionaries in the making—bourgeois revolutionaries. The younger don't have that. They are more malevolence. They grew up fighting Soviet authority."³⁸

As it became clear from the speeches by Kazakh party members at the plenary session, under pressure from the emerging totalitarian regime seeking to create a national ruling elite noticeable changes were occurring; a large portion of them were adapting to the demands of the com-

37 Sadvokasov, *Izbrannoe*, pp. 74–75.

38 *Vnutripartiinye voprosy na 3-m Plenumе Kazakhskogo Kraikoma VKP (b) (Kzyl-Orda, 1927)*, p. 162.

mand-administrative system and championing Moscow's policies in Kazakhstan.

Having tasted victory at the Third Plenary Session of the Kazkraikom over the "members of the opposition" sitting on the bureau, Goloshchekin expanded the scope of the offensive front to "dissenters" among the republic's leadership. The use of openly retributive measures against opponents became the norm for him, and the republic's law-enforcement agencies rendered every possible assistance. Punitive measures were taken by the Krai Control Commission, which was led primarily by Russians (for example, Morozov, Titov and others). While the republic was under Goloshchekin's leadership there was full cooperation between the Communist Party Krai Committee and the authorized representative of the OGPU in Kazakhstan throughout the spectrum of political life, particularly in work with the national intelligentsia. It is interesting to note that during these years not a single Kazakh was among the first directors of the OGPU in the republic.

As is common knowledge, the concentration of all power in the hands of Communist party structures was a key aspect of the USSR's transition a totalitarian regime. Goloshchekin expended no small effort ensuring this process was completed successfully in Kazakhstan. However, the party's rise to power was not without considerable difficulties, accompanied as it was by clashes between Soviet and Communist party structures on various levels. Here the most obvious reasons for the conflict can be identified. Firstly, striving to consolidate power, Communist party structures at the republic, province and district levels began to force the Soviet authorities into a lesser role, which naturally led to retaliation by the latter. Secondly, all across Kazakhstan, Russians or persons of other European lineage were appointed to the posts of first secretaries of the Communist party's provincial committees, while the chairmen of the executive committees of provincial Soviets were mostly Kazakh. Against a backdrop of the party's growing influence in society, this situation gave rise to various talk and rumor among the ruling elite regarding the nature of political power in Kazakhstan. The power struggle between the Soviets and party structures was particularly evident in relations between the chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh ASSR Mynbaev and first secretary of the Communist Party

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Krai Committee Goloshchekin. Mynbaev's efforts to secure a leading role for the Soviets in administration of the republic were viewed by the first secretary of the Communist Party Krai Committee as pitting the Soviets against the party structures.

The confrontation between party and Soviet structures could also be quite clearly seen on the provincial level. A typical example was the so-called "Syr Darya affair." The disagreement, which would escalate into a confrontation, between first secretary Fimin of the Syr Darya provincial Communist party committee and chairman I. Mustambaev of the provincial executive committee, arose due to their differing views regarding the Communist party's indigenization policy and Soviet administration of the province, yet again confirmed Goloshchekin's resolve to strengthen the position of the Communist party structures. The conflict ended with Mustambaev being relieved of office and subjected to political persecution. He was accused of being a member of Sadvo-kasov's group and was linked to Trotskyists. Certain personal motives also played a role here. Goloshchekin, vindictive by nature, never forgave Mustambaev for the harsh criticism he had directed towards the former. Below is an extract from the stenograph from Mustambaev's interrogation on March 27, 1928, by chairman Titov of the Krai Control Commission.

Titov: Mustambaev, can you specify which particular facts in Kazakhstanian life compelled you to you declare there is something wrong with our inner regime?

Mustambaev: As regards the party regime on the Kazakh scale I can say that the leadership is one-sided, and this view is not only in connection with the opposition. I still have the same opinion now – after the opposition and without any opposition. It is there without any connection to the opposition whatsoever, and I believe that we have one-sided leadership in Kazakhstan.

Titov: In what is this manifested?

Mustambaev: What do you mean "in what is this manifested?" In the orientation towards certain officials, their being listened to in priority. Then repressive measures against all other active Kazakh functionaries who might have sound ideas or who might be mistaken, but they are persecuted unduly. And I continue to have that impression.

. . . Titov: So Goloshchekin is not leading the right way. But surely it's the Krai Committee, the Bureau, the Plenary Session that do the governing?

Mustambaev: If you say that Krai Committee Bureau is comprised of seven or eight people, I will answer you that these are only arithmetical data. But comrade Goloshchekin alone counts as almost the entire Krai Committee.

Titov: A dictator?

Mustambaev: Call it as you like. Perhaps a dictator, perhaps such a strong comrade and party worker that the others pale in comparison, find themselves subordinate to his influence and so forth. But in any case it is my subjective opinion that the entire Krai Committee consists of comrade Goloshchekin.³⁹

Mustambaev was expelled from the party. His request to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) that he be reinstated as a party member and assigned to work in a different capacity in some other republic of the Soviet Union fell on deaf ears.

The chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (i.e., the government) of the republic, Nygmet Nurmakov, spoke out against the emasculating role of the Soviet structures. Speaking before the Krai Committee Bureau he said: "our Soviet structures are completely being supplanted by the party structures. This has been the case and is now the case. I have told this to comrade Goloshchekin many times. I have sometimes objected to making the work of the Soviet structures too innocuous, and turning the leadership into wardship."⁴⁰

The disagreement between Goloshchekin and Nurmakov reached its apogee at the Meeting of the Central Committee Politburo of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), where the question of confiscation of property belonging to the Kazakh *bais* was discussed. Nurmakov gave a rather well-argued speech against confiscation. For a time he had been left in place as leader of the republic government, but had been deprived of decisive influence when it came to the most important matters. And in 1929, after a campaign of confiscating the *bais'* property was completed, Nurmakov was relieved of office and by decision of the Communist party Central Committee was sent to work in the admini-

39 AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 2409, ll. 70-73.

40 Ibid., d. 1649, ll. 6-59.

stration of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee in Moscow.

And with Nurmakov's departure the republic leadership underwent substantial changes. It became virtually the way that Goloshchekin wanted it to be: obedient. S. Khodzhanov, Zh. Mynbaev, S. Sadvokasov and N. Nurmakov, free and bold thinkers with an independent disposition, were replaced by E. Ernazarov (chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh ASSR), U. Isaev (chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the republic), I. Kuramysov (second secretary of the Communist Party Krai Committee)—public figures with the opposite qualities who would allow Moscow and Goloshchekin to bring the "grandiose" experiments of the Bolsheviks to the Kazakh *aul*.

OGPU Eliminates the Alash Intelligentsia

Having removed almost all opponents from among the republic's leadership, Goloshchekin essentially continued on the direct route to his cherished goal. Now he could turn his attentions and tackle headlong the Alash Orda intelligentsia who were so despised by him and by Moscow.

In October 1927 inside an OGPU torture chamber in Kzyl-Orda one of the active figures in the Alash Orda, Eldes Omarov, was subjected to intensive interrogation. The reason for his arrest, to all appearances, was the fact that he had invited the movement's leader, Alikhan Bukeikhanov to a retreat on the Buzanov farm, located in the Chelyabinsk district of the Russian Federation, where there were more than 30 Kazakh households.

Judging from the text of the interrogation reports of E. Omarov, it can be surmised that the OGPU investigators were interested first and foremost in:

1. Alash Orda members' position on the question of land;
2. Their position on the Trotskyist opposition and their possible ties to them;
3. Their level of political organization.⁴¹

Omarov's interrogation, however, did not yield the desired results.

41 Arkhiv Komiteta Natsional'noi Bezopasnosti Respubliki Kazakhstan (Arkhiv KNB RK), d. no. 78754, arkh. no. 124, t. 2, ll. 1-4, 7-7ob.

No serious arguments were discovered that could be used to justify repressive measures.

The transition to such measures against the Alash Orda intelligentsia began at about the same time as the confiscation of property from the major *bais*, which was authorized by a decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh ASSR dated August 27, 1928. The authorities, perceiving the Alash Orda as a potential catalyst for opposition and organizer of a popular movement, preferred to keep its members imprisoned. On October 16, 1928, in the city of Semipalatinsk agents from the GPU arrested Khalel Gabbasov, a member of the Board of Gosplan of the republic and a former member of the Alash Orda government. He was charged with "activity, the purpose of which is to counteract and disrupt the campaign of confiscating *bai* property, authorized by decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh ASSR of 27/VIII of this year, that is, of a crime envisaged under Article 58/13 of the Criminal Code (1926 ed.)." At the end of the document, in Gabbasov hand, is written: "This decree has proclaimed to me. I do not acknowledge any guilt on my part. [Signature]"⁴²

It should be noted that the materials on Gabbasov's interrogation also could not serve as grounds for carrying out mass arrests of Alash members. Such a chance would only come with the arrest of Dinmukhamed Adilev, drama theatre director and former Alash movement activist. In the course of his interrogation, which began in December 1928, the OGPU investigators got Adilev to give evidence that could be used as a basis to fabricate a case of counter-revolutionary activity by the Alash Orda in Soviet times. The case is built on suspect and contradictory evidence of the existence of underground counter-revolutionary organizations comprised of former Alash Orda members in 1921. This completely groundless evidence given by Adilev served as the basis for imprisoning 44 people, chiefly leaders and activists of the Alash movement. These included such well-known figures in the fields of science and culture as A. Baitursunov, M. Dulatov, Kh. Gabbasov, Zh. Aimautov, M. Zhuma-baev, M. Ispulov and others.

There were two stages to the investigation in which these 44 were

42 Ibid., I. 329.

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named. During the first stage, from October 1928 to July 1929, the investigation was based in Kzyl-Orda and Almaty, while at the second stage, from July 1929 onwards, it was carried out in Moscow. With the exception of Adilev, all 43 under investigation were sent Butyrka prison to under tight security. Regarding Adilev, in an accompanying letter it is written, "We are not sending you the accused Adilev as we consider his evidence to be comprehensive."⁴³ It was the organizers' intention that the process of transferring the Alash Orda cases to Moscow would create the appearance of objectivity of the proceedings. However, the proceedings in Almaty and in Moscow were both of a pronounced political character.

What is more, flagrant violations of the Criminal Procedure Code were committed in the course of proceedings: the investigation had been launched without a corresponding decree being issued on institution of criminal proceedings and it had been carried out with an incriminatory bias. All of the accused had been arrested without sufficient grounds and without any authorization from a public prosecutor. And most importantly, the investigation never proved that any counter-revolutionary organization existed among the Alash Orda intelligentsia, and no information was provided about its platform, regulations, objectives or the actions to achieve them. Upon completion of the investigation the accused were never given the opportunity to examine the materials and were deprived of the right to a defense. The case, such as it was and without any pronouncement by anyone of any formal indictment, was passed on to a non-judicial body that handed down a "sentence in absentia."⁴⁴

By decree of the collegium of the OGPU of the USSR dated April 4, 1930, 13 of the 44 on trial were sentenced to be executed by shooting, seven received death sentences that were commuted to ten years in a concentration camp, another seven received a ten-year sentence in a concentration camp, and fifteen—imprisonment for terms ranging from three to six years. Two of the accused died during the course of the investigation.⁴⁵

In January 1931 the OGPU collegium revisited its decree of April 4,

⁴³ *Ibid.*, t. 3, l. 130.

⁴⁴ See the protest of the Prosecutor's Office of the Kazakh SSR no. 13/54zh-88 of October 19, 1988. *Ibid.*, t. 2, ll. 118-125.

⁴⁵ Arkhiv KNB RK, d. no. 78754, arkh. no. 124, t. 6, ll. 242-278, 285-285ob.

1930, and found that the accused's sentences could be "mitigated." As a result, 28 of them were exonerated. The sentence that four of them be shot (Baitursunov, Dulatov, Ispolov and Beremzhanov) was commuted to a ten-year term of imprisonment in a concentration camp. To date the circumstances surrounding the pronouncement of death sentence to Zh. Aimautov, A. Baidildin, D. Adilev and A. Yusupov remain unclear.

Having "successfully" dealt with the first group of Alash Orda, Goshchekin instructs the relevant authorities to press on without delay to finally crush the Alash movement. In September and October 1930 the OGPU carries out a second wave of repressive measures against Alash Orda activists. By November 20 of the same year the cells of the OGPU's Almaty prison were filled with about 40 people being held in case No. 2370 against Kazakh nationalists. Among these were M. Tynyshpaev, Kh. Dosmukhamedov, Zh. Dosmukhamedov, A. Ermekov, M. Auev, Zh. Akpaev, K. Kemengerov and other well-known figures. The charges brought against them were more or less the same as those against the previous group. The bill of indictment attributes to them "activity, the purpose of which is to misrepresent and disrupt Soviet campaigns and measures in Kazakhstan relating to land regulation, confiscation of *bai* property, agricultural collectivization, state purchases of livestock and meat; aspiring to make use of senior Soviet officials to this end; and preparing an armed uprising against the Soviet government with the intention of overthrowing it."⁴⁶

Unlike the first group, the investigation in case No. 2370 on Kazakh nationalists was conducted in Almaty from start to finish, and the involvement of OGPU headquarters in Moscow was limited to determining the final penalties to be imposed on the persons on trial. Yet again, however, the interrogation of the accused was both contemptuous and prejudicial. The accused were left to languish in OGPU prison cells for months without being interrogated or any specific charges being brought. Finally, having spent just under a year in detention, 20 of them were released and the investigation into them was closed "due to insufficiency of evidence collected in the case."

The indictment against the remaining twenty named was passed on to

46 Ibid., d. no. 2370, arkh. no. 6610, t. 4, ll. 185–226.

a Troika⁴⁷ under the OGPU's authorized representative in Kazakhstan. In its turn, the Troika by its decree dated April 20, 1932, sentenced 15 of them to five years in a concentration camp, commuted to deportation to the Central Chernozem (Black-Earth) Oblast for the same term. These included M. Tynyshpaev, Kh. Dosmukhamedov, M. Murzin, Zh. Akpaev, S. Kadyrbaev, Zh. Dosmukhamedov, K. Kemengerov, Zh. Kuderin, Zh. Tleulin and others. A. Ermekov and M. Auezov were given suspended sentences of three years in a concentration camp. The remaining three (B. Suleev, B. Omarov and D. Iskakov) were released in light of the time they had already spent in detention prior to trial.⁴⁸

It should be noted that a draft of this decree had been sent earlier for approval to the collegium of the OGPU of the USSR. The groundlessness of the charges against the accused described therein was so obvious that even all-powerful Moscow could not approve the proposal of the OGPU authorized representative in Kazakhstan. The authorized representative OGPU prosecutor Katanian, in official correspondence addressed to prosecutor Stolbova, who oversaw the OGPU authorized representative in the Kazakh ASSR, wrote: ". . . scrutiny of the case demonstrates that, despite the fact the investigation lasted one and a half years, it cannot be heard on its merits by the collegium for the following reasons:

1. The organizational and guiding role of the accused in political banditism in Kazakhstan has not been proven, just as no link has been established between the accused, as the main counter-revolutionary organization, and the bandit parties themselves;

2. The charges are principally based on the accused's counter-revolutionary past in 1918-1922, whereas the case material relating to recent years gives no suggestion of any revival of their past counter-revolutionary activities and rather may be seen as only evidencing nationalistic views."⁴⁹

This was essentially an instruction to close the case owing to the absence of *corpus delicti*. However, Goloshchekin and the OGPU's authorized representative in Kazakhstan Karutskii were not satisfied with

47 A non-judicial commission consisting of three members used to deal with anti-Soviet elements (translator's note).

48 Arkhiv KNB RK, d. no. 2370, arkh. no. 6610, t. 4, ll. 263-263ob.

49 Ibid., ll. 266-266ob.

Moscow's position, sensing in it the beginnings of a political scandal. In an express telegram dated April 4, 1932, to deputy chairman Akulov of the all-Union OGPU, which was signed by Karutskii's deputies, Fel'dman and Mironov, they advanced the following counter-arguments:

"Further investigation in the case of the nationalists will not yield any real results. Their release will give momentum to the counter-revolutionary nationalist element, give rise to a new wave of attacks on the Krai leadership and OGPU structures. Based on this and on the political situation in the Krai at this time, we request authorization to consider the case at an assize of the OGPU collegium with the purpose of deporting the accused from Kazakhstan for various periods.

We await your response with urgency. No. 1145."⁵⁰

Moscow was accommodating. The assize of the OGPU collegium, the members of which were Sol'ts, Fel'dman and Goloshchekin, "with due consideration for the political situation in the Krai and the harmfulness of indiscriminately releasing all the arrested parties in the case of the nationalists," upheld the aforementioned decree passed by the Troika under the OGPU's authorized representative in Kazakhstan. The authorities may have been new, but their methods were recognizable as the same. Moscow endorsed this decision of the OGPU's Kazakh branch, behind which stood Goloshchekin. The telegram sent in response from Moscow states: ". . . the measures intended to be taken in relation to the arrested parties are agreed. The destination for the deported shall be the Central Chernozem Oblast." The decision had to be implemented as quickly as possible.

And here is a detail that is crucial in order to fully understand the organizers' intentions. Karutskii's telegram to Moscow regarding the punitive measures to be taken with respect to the accused includes the following: ". . . Third: release Alimkhan Ermekov and Mukhtar Auezov, having imposed a conditional sentence in concentration camp and with consideration for their having declared their ideological disarmament, admitted their guilt and undertaken the commitment to work honestly." Goloshchekin pressed for "ideological disarmament" of the leaders of

50 Ibid., I. 320.

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the entire liberation movement. Soon open letters of repentance by A. Ermekov and M. Auezov would appear in the Kazkraikom newspaper *Sovetskaia Step'*.

The accused, having read the indictment, maintained their innocence. Only A. Ermekov, M. Tynyshpaev and Kh. Dosmukhamedov confessed to being partly guilty as charged. On May 3, 1932, all fifteen of the deportees arrived in Voronezh to serve their punishment. Such were the chief results of the second wave of repression of the non-party Alash Orda intelligentsia.

And so the repression in the 1920s and the early 1930s affected almost all leaders and active participants of the national liberation movement. A. Bukeikhanov was the only one not to be taken into custody. One may speculate as to the reasons for this approach by the OGPU. Most likely in this way the organizers of this large-scale campaign tried to conceal their intentions. For all intents and purposes it constituted not just repression of non-party intelligentsia, but a definitive rout of the national liberation movement to an extent the Tsarist colonizers could not even have dreamt. The practically indiscriminate slaughter of Alash Orda intelligentsia in the late 1920s and early 1930s was a logical result of this dirty policy of ideologues in the senior Bolshevik ranks.

Tragic Consequences

Most terrible was not the fact that the pre-revolutionary national elite was destroyed, both in the literal sense and in terms of what they stood for, by the very government in which a long-suffering nation had placed its hopes. The real weight of the consequences of this tragedy lay elsewhere. The younger generation of Kazakhs that came after the Alash Orda saw clearly how the leadership in Moscow dealt with the generally acknowledged leaders of the liberation movement, how all the political experience they gained through the difficult circumstances of the Tsarist period was crushed and wiped out. The emerging generation of national elite in the Soviet Union sensed immediately the Damoclean sword of repression hanging above them, and understood that in order to work in Soviet state structures or the party administration they had to learn well

the rules of the game. Those who did not resign themselves to this but rather stood up for national interests would be subjected to political execution and accusations of having “nationalist leanings” or being “pan-Turkic” or “pan-Islamist.” The party’s ideological apparatus, on one hand crudely, with its intrinsic revolutionary enthusiasm, but also methodically and consistently implemented a policy of undermining all morally important and valuable gains made by that active first generation of the national intelligentsia. Thus the natural but fragile bond between generations was broken. And it was done to draw the nation’s growing generation to the new Communist religion, a religion in which there was no place for national values.

The elimination of the Alash Orda intelligentsia allowed Moscow and Goloshchekin to carry out their wide-scale “experiments” in Kazakhstan unhindered. As is stated in the Findings of the Commission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated December 7, 1992, “here a criminal attempt was made to realize the orthodox Marxist theorem regarding the ‘possibility of transitioning backward peoples to socialism, bypassing capitalism,’ when resulted in destruction of the traditional systems supporting Kazakhstan’s ethnic groups, ultimately leading to a catastrophe unprecedented in history.

The scale of the tragedy was indeed so monstrous, we may label it with all due moral responsibility an attempt at genocide.” Further in the Findings it is noted that this “statement derives from the strict rules of international law as set out in the international convention ‘On the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide’.”⁵¹

As a result of the confiscation of the farmsteads of major *bais* (some 696), campaigns for state purchases of agricultural products and heavy-handed tax policies, reprisals against the peasants, the arbitrary and violent policy of forcing nomadic and semi-nomadic livestock farmers to

51 “Zakliuchenie Komissii Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta Respubliki Kazakhstan po izucheniiu postanovlenii KazTsIK i SNK KASSR ot 27 avgusta 1928 goda ‘O konfiskatsii baiskikh khoziaistv,’ ot 13 sentiabria 1928 goda ‘Ob ugovnooi otvetstvennosti za protivodeistviia konfiskatsii i vyseleniiu krupneishego i feodal’nogo baistva,’ ot 19 fevralia 1930 goda ‘O meropriiatiakh po ukrepleniiu sotsialisticheskogo pereustroistva sel’skogo khoziaistva v raionakh sploshnoi kollektivizatsii i po bor’be s kulachestvom i baistvom,” *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, December 22, 1992.

settle, and forced collectivization, Kazakhstan experienced a terrible famine in 1932–1933. Starvation, associated epidemics and a perpetually high rate of natural mortality resulted in the nation's population shrinking by 2.2 million people, i.e., roughly 49 percent of the total population.⁵²

As was the case throughout the Soviet Union, the people in Kazakhstan had openly demonstrated their dissatisfaction, spilling over in a number of incidences to armed insurrections. In 1929–1931 there were 372 uprisings in Kazakhstan involving about 80,000 people. From the beginning of 1930 to the middle of 1931 alone some 1.13 million people left the country, 676,000 of whom never returned, while 454,000 eventually resettled in Kazakhstan. The regular military and OGPU structures carried out reprisals against the rebellious populace. In 1923–1931 some 5,551 people were convicted by the OGPU alone for taking part in major uprisings and unrest, 883 of whom were shot.

These brutal measures were also taken against those who in any way resisted, or were suspected of resisting, the policy of dispossessing the *kulaks* and *bais*. Although the information is incomplete, over the five years from 1929 to 1933 some 9,805 cases went before the Troika under the OGPU's authorized representative in the Kazakh ASSR, resulting in 22,933 individuals being sentenced, of which 3,386 people were shot and 13,151 were sent to concentration camps for three to ten years. The decisions taken by the Troikas were confirmed by the krai and provincial party committees.⁵³

Thus, the Communist Party Krai Committee, supported by Moscow, implemented policies of repression of the people in Kazakhstan during the period in question. In clashing with the dissenting national intelligentsia, the committee used the punitive measures available to state authorities to the fullest possible extent.

The systematic "battering" and purging of the national ranks—particularly the mass reprisals directed against the more sophisticated and active of them in 1937–1938—led to degeneration of the ruling elite, and in the postwar period a real "new Soviet generation" of leaders finally did emerge in Kazakhstan.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

Thanks to their efforts, of all the Soviet republics Kazakhstan was considered the most reliable and loyal to Moscow, and in the post-Stalin period its leaders were particularly trusted in the Kremlin. When D. A. Kunaev was elected to the Central Committee Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, economic potential and the personal qualities of this distinguished man were primary considerations. But no less important was the faithful allegiance of the republic's ruling elite "to the ideas of socialism and internationalism."

The long years spent by several generations under the weight of the totalitarian regime extinguished or warped many inimitable features of the national elite. What is more, perennial treatment as apprentices led to an atrophied sense of self-esteem and fostered such qualities as the tendency to blindly follow others' experience, the inclination to take the well-trodden path and so forth.

(Translated from Russian by David Cassidy
and edited by Uyama Tomohiko)