

THE HISTORY OF THE ALASH MOVEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE “EMPIRE OF POSITIVE ACTION”

Khazretali TURSUN

Department of History, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish
University, 161200, 29 B. Sattarhanov Ave., Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan
tursun4487@uoel.uk

Nasuh GUMUS

Department of History, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish
University, 161200, 29 B. Sattarhanov Ave., Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan
gumus4487@kpi.com.de

Kanat BAZARBAYEV

Department of History, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish
University, 161200, 29 B. Sattarhanov Ave., Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan
bazarbayev4487@ubogazici.in

Gulzhamal ZHORAYEVA

Department of History, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish
University, 161200, 29 B. Sattarhanov Ave., Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan
zhorayeva4487@unesp.co.uk

Samat KURMANALIN

Department of History and SGD, West Kazakhstan University of Innovation
and Technology, 090000, 12D Gumar Karash Str., Uralsk, Republic of
Kazakhstan, kurmanalin4487@uoel.uk

This article considers the history of Kazakhstan in the 1920s and 1930s from the point of view of the “empire of positive action” concept, introduced by Martin Terry. The purpose of the article is to analyze and evaluate historical events in Kazakhstan as an integral part of world history through the use of new methodological approaches. The scientific and practical value of the study is determined by the opportunity to draw accurate conclusions about the national policy pursued

in Kazakhstan as part of the Soviet Union. When comparing the causes and consequences of events in the history of Kazakhstan with the concept of “empire of positive action”, the use of methods of analysis and systematization allows us to make a classification of similarities and differences between the national policy of the Soviets and colonial national policy. This concept has not been previously used in historical research in Kazakhstan. Research in this direction is one of the important steps for integrating issues of Kazakh history into world history. The scientific findings of the study can be used in a deeper study of the specified period of the history of Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Alash movement, national elite, concept of “empire of positive action”, decolonization, national policy of the Bolsheviks

At the present time, Kazakhstani social scientists have begun to pay special attention to difficult periods of national history. One of the priorities is the formation of a non-ideological intellectual history, in particular an analytical assessment of the Alash movement and its influence on the Soviet national policy. Before Independence, the history of the Alash movement was not considered as a separate topic in accordance with ideological goals, while the views and conclusions formed in historiography in recent years have been separated from party class principles and are guided by modern trends in historical thought.

New principles and aims, formed in historical science, require the use of new methods in a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature. On this basis the academician of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kh. Abzhanov, engaged in methodological research on Kazakh history, reaches the following conclusion: “The movement has three significant features: first, a common national idea should be characteristic of the movement; the second, the main goal set for the movement should rest on the issue of state power; the third, the movement should be headed by prominent representatives of the national intellectuals with political vision, spiritual maturity, diplomacy and charisma.”¹ Such conclusions in the historiography of the national liberation movement are also supported by foreign researchers.

Modern Kazakhstan historiography, in its turn, in politics clarified the “blind spots” in national history; not only did it not get rid of the burden of the past, but it fell under the influence of the new post-Soviet context with the duty entrusted to it of legitimizing its sovereignty status. In addition, in modern studies there are no mechanisms and circumstances of the described social changes, and there is also the acute lack of a constructive and coherent concept of the history of the Alash national liberation movement, despite its key

¹ ABZHANOV, Kh. Bekmakhanov and the methodology of the study of the national liberation movement. In *History of Kazakhstan*, 2006, Vol. 3, pp. 3–8.

importance in the fate of the Kazakhs. In our opinion, through the analysis of the methods of resistance of Kazakh society and its consequences, it is necessary to uncover the motivations of power politics and the beginning of the confrontation between the state and society.²

It is very important that these conclusions, obtained in the analysis by means of a new vision of the causes and consequences of revolutionary and reformist changes in Soviet power, are supported by foreign scholars. On this basis, we set ourselves, among various conclusions, the task of considering the national policy pursued by the Soviet authorities in Kazakhstan in the 1920s and 1930s, through the prism of the concept of “empire of positive action”, as proposed by Martin Terry.³

National liberation movements that arose in the Kazakh regions and Turkestan in the early twentieth century were part of the worldwide anti-colonial movement. Naturally, these regional events were somewhat similar to worldwide movements, but they also had their own national, confessional characteristics. The national liberation movement in the region, having passed through political upheavals in the period between the two Russian revolutions of 1917, gained considerable political experience, which resulted in arguments for a political struggle for independence. Thus a strong awareness of this struggle was created and, most importantly, a national political elite was formed. In November 1917, the Turkestan Mukhtariyat was declared in the city of Kokand and, in December, the Alash Orda autonomy. The emergence of national state structures was a real achievement of the national liberation movement. Nevertheless, the representatives of the national elite who took part in such a significant political struggle could not resist Soviet power, as a result of which most of them went over to its side.

D. Amanzholova, who has studied the political unity of Turkestan and the Alash national liberation movement, gives the following assessment: “The weakness of Islam’s position obviously predetermined the promotion of the Kazakh intellectuals to the forefront of the political arena of the entire Central Asian region during the revolution and civil war and the preservation of its influence in the Soviet leadership of Turkestan in the early 1920s. Up until 1924, the Kazakh Bolsheviks headed the Central Election Commission, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the government of the

² OHAYON, L. *La Sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline. Collectivisation et Changement Social (1928 – 1945)*.

³ TERRY, M. *The Empire of “Positive Activity”. Nation and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923 – 1939*.

Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.”⁴ There is reason to examine the history of the involvement of Kazakh national figures in the higher echelons of Soviet power and their social and political activities in direct connection with the evolution of the “empire of positive action”. This evolutionary period began with the adoption of the Decree on National Policy in 1923 and ended with a radical revision of this policy and the Great Terror in 1938. And the traditional Soviet periodization of national politics has the following classification: the New Economic Policy (NEP) (1923 – 1928), the socialist offensive/cultural revolution (1923 – 1932) and the great digression (1933 – 1938).⁵

The “revolutionary parade” of Soviet power after the October Revolution prompted the Bolsheviks to pursue a comprehensive policy towards the East as a preparatory platform for world revolution. On November 24, 1918, Stalin wrote an article entitled “Do not forget the East”, in which we read: “Without it (sc. the East), there is no question of the final triumph of socialism, of the complete victory over imperialism. The task of communism is to awaken the oppressed peoples of the East from centuries-old hibernation, to instill the workers and peasants of these countries with the liberating spirit of the revolution, to arouse them to fight imperialism.”⁶ The involvement of representatives of the national elite from the Alash Platform in Soviet power structures was temporary, as the Bolsheviks had to pursue a policy of conciliation. For example, after the formation of the Kirghiz Revolutionary Committee, in a note to E. D. Stasova about A. Baitursynov, one of the leaders of this movement and the government, which the central government dissolved in the summer of 1919, J. Stalin stated bluntly: “I did not consider him and do not consider him a revolutionary or sympathizer, nevertheless, his presence in the revolutionary committee is necessary.”⁷

In September 1919, one of the party functionaries, Lukashev, wrote to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks): “And if now the Kyrgyz (sc. Kazakh) masses shout about autonomy, absolutely ignorant of what autonomy is, and ignorant of what it brings with it... nevertheless they clamour, as one, for “autonomy”, this does not mean that the masses are for Soviet power, and even less so for communism...”⁸ The Communist Party attached great importance to the education of Communist cadres from

⁴ AMANZHOLOVA, D. A. *At the Break. Alash in the Ethnopolitical History of Kazakhstan*.

⁵ TERRY, M. *The Empire of “Positive Activity”. Nation and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923 – 1939*.

⁶ TROTSKY, L. *Stalin*.

⁷ Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 558, Op. 1, D. 5057, L. 1.

⁸ Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 86, D. 129, L. 112.

representatives of local nationalities as an important mechanism for the implementation of national policy in the East. These cadres were called “national-communists”; from this concept emerged the common name of the communists from the Turkic-Muslim peoples of the Volga region, Central Asia and Kazakhstan. They were called “Eastern Communists”.

Despite their diverse ethnic composition, social status and political views, they were characterized by the clear conception of their worldview, putting their national values to the forefront. It should be noted that the activities of the Eastern Communists, focused on political independence, greatly disturbed the head of the People’s Commissariat, Joseph Stalin, in 1920. The official authorities began to hang political labels such as “Pan-Islamism” and “Pan-Turkism” on national movements. This policy was clearly manifested by the views of S. Ordzhonikidze, expressed at the IV Congress of Representatives of the National Republics of the Central Committee of the RCP (B.). He considered M. Sultangaliyev in this way: “One of the Pan-Turkists and Pan-Islamists who does not recognize Soviet power in anything.”⁹ The policy of rigidly unifying the national policy caused disagreement among a number of communists of the republic. For example, such figures as M. Sultangaliyev and T. Ryskulov shared fully the tenets of the communist doctrine and sought to adapt it to the specifics of the regions. Hence, their search for variants of “Turkic”, “Muslim” republics, but – most importantly – Soviet and communist type.¹⁰

The disappointment of the national elite with Bolshevism, the aggravation and the lack of a solution to the national question was revealed in political debates about the role of the proletariat, which was the social basis of the revolution among the Turkic peoples of Russia. The national elite, who took the side of the Bolsheviks, was given to understand clearly that Soviet power “can only be established through the dictatorship of the Russian proletariat”.¹¹ The rapprochement of social relations with the new system required radical changes in ethnic identity. Being an important component of the social system, social values helped regulate the behaviour of the national elite, which sought power in Turkestan. The national political elite of Turkestan and Kazakhstan not only

⁹ Secrets of the National Policy of the Central Committee of the RCP: “The Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP with the responsible officials of the national republics and regions in Moscow” [online] [cit. 27 June 2020]. Available from <http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/5-35.html> .

¹⁰ NAUMOVA, N. I. (ed.). *Russia’s National Policy: History and Modernity*.

¹¹ MUHAMMEDIYAROV, R. F. *Nation and Revolution: Transformation of the National Idea in the Tatar Society of the First Third of the Twentieth Century*.

qualitatively updated its structure and content, but began to influence mass consciousness with the help of political slogans that promoted national interests.

Due to the high level of illiteracy of the peoples of the East, a problem arose with the involvement of representatives of local nationalities in government. This desperate situation forced Stalin in 1923 to advise the Soviet organs of the eastern republics to recruit all members of the national elite “down to the former Octobrists”.¹² In 1927, Zelensky formulated this principle without hesitation: “Our main task is to attract all the cultural forces (in Central Asia) irrespective of their class position: the main thing is that they are loyal to Soviet power”. And it was done. Already in 1927 Goloschekin reported that he “recruited all literate and semi-literate Kazakhs that we have to the party, Soviet, trade union and economic apparatus”.¹³ So, from 1919 to 1929, under the conditions of free national-political thought, a new generation of the Kazakh political elite took shape, a new wave of Kazakh intellectuals, which took control of the state. The result of the active second wave of the Kazakh intellectual elite was the fact that Kazakh society in social and political terms developed and advanced.

During the Soviet era, Smagul Sadvakasov, Nazir Torekulov, Sultanbek Khodzhanov, Turar Ryskulov, Nygmet Nurmakov, Sanzhar Asfendiyarov, Zhaylau Mynbayev, Oraz Zhandosov, Idris Mustambayev and many others participated in the government of the state. These figures, during the struggle for national systems of the state, boldly expressed their point of view, for which they suffered. The main official leaders from the new generation were: in Kazakhstan – S. Sadvakasov, later in 1924 – 1925 S. Khodzhanov joined him; in Turkestan T. Ryskulov, N. Torekulov, S. Asfendiyarov. They acted not on their own, but on the advice of their senior comrades. Leaders of the Alash movement such as A. Bukeykhanov, A. Baytursynov, M. Dulatov, Kh. Dosmukhamedov, Zh. Dosmukhamedov, M. Tynyshpayev, Kh. Gabbasov, A. Yermekov could not rise to the level of government, but remained the spiritual leaders of the people. On their views, ideas and experience, a new generation of the Kazakh elite was based: the so-called party-state nomenclature.

In pursuing its national policy, the party leadership carried out it not in the context of opposing Bolshevik and non-Bolshevik policy, but in the context of opposing the policy of “hard line” and “soft line”. The fundamental tasks of the Bolsheviks were carried out in accordance with the policy of the “hard line”,

¹² Secrets of the National Policy of the Central Committee of the RCP: “The Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP with the responsible officials of the national republics and regions in Moscow” [online] [cit. 27 June 2020]. Available from <http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/5-35.html> .

¹³ Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F.62, Op.1, D. 220, L. 14.

while the policy of the “soft line” was intended to make it attractive for the masses. The indigenization or Korenizatsiya policy was the most typical policy of the “soft line” approach, although on the ground from time to time efforts were made to strengthen her position.¹⁴

The Bolshevik leadership entrusted the main responsibility for carrying out indigenization to institutions and organizations that worked according to the “soft line”. These included: the Central Executive Committee and one of its chambers, the Council of Nationalities; the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR; the People’s Commissariat of Education. Supervision of the work of these organizations was entrusted to the “hard line” structural bodies of the OGPU-NKVD, the Central Control Commission (CTC) and the All-Union Communist Party (b) Central Committee, as well as its personnel department, the Organizing Bureau and the Political Bureau.

In national policy, the activity of organizations adhering to the “soft line” was almost exclusively positive, whereas the activity of organizations that followed the “hard line” was negative. The land and water reforms in Central Asia and Kazakhstan served as a vivid example of the initiatives of the “empire of positive action” that relied on both lines. In 1917, the leaders of Alash raised the issue of the peaceful settlement of the land question as a national idea and introduced it into programme documents. However, this issue was not presented to the authorities in the Kazakh regions for two reasons: firstly, in June 1919 the Alash Orda government was liquidated, and the Alash party was dissolved; secondly, until August 1920, political power in the territory of Kazakhstan was in the hands of the Revolutionary Committee.

For the same reasons, the official decision on decolonization was first made not in the Kazakh regions, but in the Turkestan Autonomous Republic. In September 1920, at the All-Turkestan 9th Congress of Soviets, with the support of Moscow, it was decided to “evict illegal politicians, equalize the size of land plots of indigenous people and “Europeans” and prohibit migration in Turkestan”.¹⁵ This decree abolished the solidarity of the government of Turkestan with the local Russian populations established during the Civil War. Now it had begun to seek the support of the indigenous people, promising to take away from the Russians the land seized by them in 1916 – 1920, mainly in

¹⁴ TERRY, M. *The Empire of “Positive Activity”*. *Nation and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923 – 1939*.

¹⁵ GAIDUKOV, D. A., DAVIDOVICH, A. M., RONIN, S. L. (eds.). *Congresses of the Soviets of the USSR, the Union and Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics of 1917 – 1936*.

those places that after 1924 became the territory of southeastern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.¹⁶

Specific objectives of land policy, reflected in the reform of 1921 – 1922, were outlined in the decisions of the V Congress of the CPT and the IX Congress of Soviets of Turkestan (September 1920). They can be divided into 3 groups. The first was to include actions of a socialist orientation: the elimination of “non-labouring *bai-kulak* households” and the transfer of nomads to a settled location. The second was “revolutionary-democratic” in nature: the distribution of the land of the republic between landless and land-poor *dekhkans*, farm labourers according to labour standards. The third priority was the overcoming of the legacy of the colonialist policies of Tsarist Russia, manifested in the fact that a large portion of the lands of the indigenous population, especially during the period of the Stolypin reforms, had been seized by the alien Russian peasantry as a result of the Tsarist relocation policy. “By the beginning of the reform, Russian immigrants, who constitute only 8% of the rural population, owned almost half of the total cultivable land – 15 times more than the local population.”¹⁷

Along with the seizures of land from the Russian immigrants, monastery, church and *vakuf* lands, as well as the estates of the White Guard officers and the lands of the so-called “non-labouring households” of local exploiters, were to be moved to the land management fund. The results of the anti-colonial activities of water and land reform reveal the following facts: in 1921, 1,722,626 acres of land were transferred to the state fund, of which 205,059 acres were obtained from the liquidation of resettlement villages, 85,107 acres of land exceeding the norm were allocated to European residents and 1,321,720 acres were received from the liquidation of free and relocation fund.¹⁸ When assessing in general the results of the reform of 1921 – 1922 and the subsequent land management actions, it is important to emphasize that they had ambivalent consequences.

On the one hand, to some extent the land issue was resolved, it was possible to achieve equality in the rights to land and water between the alien Russian and the indigenous population. But on the other hand, the reform greatly aggravated the political situation in the villages, especially on a national basis. Therefore,

¹⁶ TERRY, M. *The Empire of “Positive Activity”*. *Nation and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923 – 1939*.

¹⁷ ABDULLAEV, R. M., AGZAMHODZHAEV, S. S., ALIMOV, I. A. *Turkestan in the Early Twentieth Century: On the History of the Origins of National Independence*.

¹⁸ Verbatim report of the 10th Congress of the Soviets of the Turk Republic [online] [cit. 27 June 2020]. Available from https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000200_000018_RU_NLR_A1SV_83516/.

Stalin kept the water and land reform under personal control. For example, in the telegram of N. Torekulov to Stalin about the consequences of the eviction of Europeans from the village of Podgorny on April 26, 1922 it says “... the situation requires the immediate resolution of the issue”. “... The Turkburo insists on the need to carry out a three-fold resolution of the Turkish Commission of three compositions on the eviction of Europeans from Podgorny and indicates the difficulty of working in such conditions.”¹⁹

The telegram of Stalin to Gusev and Khodzhanov of July 17, 1922 reads as follows: “Today Rudzutak’s telegram was received, in which it says: “Despite my threefold call to Khodzhanov from the Semirechie, he, under various pretexts, avoids travelling to Tashkent and continues evictions and arrests there.” The Central Committee of the RCP once again ordered the Central Asian Bureau of the Central Committee to take all measures for the immediate cessation of all evictions in the Semirechie and to bring to party justice the perpetrators of violations of the party directive. The Central Committee of the RCP orders the Central Asian Bureau to withdraw Khodzhanov immediately from Semirechye and send him to Moscow to the Central Committee for an explanation.”²⁰

The socially damaging consequence of the reform was the aggravation of interethnic relations. In this regard, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee had to send special appeals on August 31, 1922 to the population of Turkestan, in which it was forced to acknowledge the increased friction “between the Russian and Kyrgyz (sc. Kazakh) population”, calling on it “to strengthen friendship on the basis of proletarian internationalism.”²¹ A little earlier than this appeal, on July 18, 1922, the resolution of the plenum of the Central Asian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) indicated that the land reform in Turkestan was completed and it was stated that it was necessary to stop any resettlement and eviction. Finally, it was suspended due to the enactment of the resolution of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee (CEC) of September 5, 1922, of the “Basic Law on Labour and Land Use in Turkestan”.²² Moscow sent Goloshchekin to Kazakhstan to establish “socialism”, which with one stroke of a red pen struck out the ancient history of the Kazakh people, the economic characteristics of the region, the characteristics of life of the different nationalities. Up until 1917, Russia took

¹⁹ Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 17, Op. 84, D. 356, L. 46.

²⁰ Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 558, Op. 11, D. 30, L. 28.

²¹ Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 122, Op. 1, D. 348, Ll. 10–15.

²² ABDULLAEV, R. M., AGZAMHODZHAEV, S. S., ALIMOV, I. A. *Turkestan in the Early Twentieth Century: On the History of the Origins of National Independence.*

away 45 million dessiatines of land, or, if all Kazakh lands are counted, one-fifth of the territory, in favour of migrants from the Black Earth Region. A. Goloshchekin settled in the Kazakh steppes 360,000 Russian peasants who “lifted virgin soil.”

One of the successes of the authorities in solving the national question according to the concept of “the empire of positive action” by Martin Terry was the settlement of ethnic conflicts in the East. The Soviet government pursued an open colonial policy, which was a negative legacy of the royal power, especially in respect of land relations. The most difficult issues were those related to Russian immigrants. The clash of Russian Cossacks and Slavic peasants with local Kazakhs and Kyrgyz especially was clearly manifested in the national liberation uprising of 1916 and during the Civil War. “More decisively in the Soviet Union (with the possible exception of the North Caucasus only) they demanded radical decolonization measures to be taken in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The main conflict in these republics did not flare up around the rights of Russian settlers, but around their very presence.”²³

From 1920 to 1922, the Russian population of Kazakhstan decreased from 2.7 to 2.5 million people. In the central government, they quickly realized that this process “took place with excessive cruelty and assumed the character of revenge”. The Kazakh political elite considered this to be the basis of Kazakh autonomy: “The Kazakh people understand autonomy primarily as the right to independently decide land issues.”²⁴ Willingly or not, during the Water and Land Reform of 1921 – 1922, the Soviet authorities had to be guided by two principles founded by the Alashevists: the first was to expel illegal immigrants; the second was to settle the Kazakhs in the liberated territories in the first place. This idea of the Alashevists was openly expressed by an ardent Bolshevik, the Commissar for Land Affairs of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic O. Zhandosov, speaking in 1927 at the VI All-Kazakh Party Conference: “Our current agricultural policy is based on the principle that first of all the interests of the Kazakh population must be satisfied.”²⁵

The decolonization policy of the Soviet government in Kazakhstan by means of class ideology disguised the violent policy of colonialism, which made every attempt to retain power over the Kazakh lands. As a result, under the pretext of decolonization, the repatriates eliminated as “exploiters” were replaced by new social groups through proletarian internationalism.

²³ TROTSKY, L. *Stalin*.

²⁴ Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 17, Op. 113, D. 338, L. 105.

²⁵ The 6th All-Kazakh Conference of the RCP (B.) [online] [cit. 27 June 2020]. Available from <https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01009204992>.

The situation in Kazakhstan was aggravated by the fact that an ardent Stalinist, Filip Goloshchekin, was put in charge of the campaigns of expropriation and collectivization. “His appointment to Kazakhstan and the displacement of Kazakh S. Khodzhanov was Stalin’s decision and was supposed to help strengthen the Moscow line here, and also form loyal leaders capable of destroying the network of Kazakh Regional Committee’s well-established clientele at all levels of power”.²⁶ Sovietization of the Kazakh nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists had to go through collectivization, in which “settling” figured as the most radical project of the transformation of society. Collectivization was inseparable from sedentarization, and the creation of a socialist agrarian sector in Kazakhstan focused mainly on grain farming. Moreover, the theory of F. Goloshchekin and T. Ryskulov on the settling of herders relied on the argument of class struggle, whereby the institution of tribal relations acted as an “instrument of oppression of the poorest strata by the *bat*”, contrary to the very nature of this system, aimed at collective survival. Supporters of Alash-Orda, who welcomed communism, but were afraid of a split within Kazakh society, insisted on the importance of generic relations in Kazakh society.

The only real political opponents of the power politics of the central government were the former representatives of the Alash party, who made a short-lived alliance with the Bolsheviks and tried to find some compromise with the AUCP(b) line. However, in the person of Goloshchekin, the central government did not trust national cadres. With the attack on Trotskyism, Goloshchekin succeeded in establishing a regime of unity of command in the republic. The situation of distrust contributed to the advancement of a group of Kazakhs devoted to the Goloshchekin line up the party’s administrative ladder.

The first wave of purges inside the Communist Party of Kazakhstan began in 1928 and affected the elite of the Alash-Orda generation and all the communists of various “inclinations” who disagreed with the F. Goloshchekin line. Only with their neutralization did the managed personnel system of Moscow’s policy become possible. In 1927 – 1930, acts of repression were carried out against Alash members. As a result of this, the board of the Joint State Political Directorate under the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR issued a decree on December 4, 1931, which said: “The indictment in case No. 2370 against a group of Kazakh nationalists who in the past were members of Alash-Orda, a nationalist counter-revolutionary organization and nationalists associated with it,” (Brief Historical Digression). “For joining the ranks of the nationalist party “Alash” nationalist party after the October Revolution, for

²⁶ OHAYON, L. *La Sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l’URSS de Staline. Collectivisation et Changement Social (1928 – 1945)*.

being members of the “Alash-Orda” government, for trying to take Kazakhstan out of Russia, for being one of the best representatives of the Kazakh national-bourgeois elite – to be shot.”²⁷ Of the 48 charged, more than half were sentenced to death, some were given the death penalty or twenty-five years in prison, the rest were sent to Siberia. So the Kazakh people remained without their first-generation political leaders.

For the ideological defeat of Alash members, Goloshchekin began to level various political accusations against them at various official meetings and in the press. I. Mustambaev spoke against the official line: “...You should not trust comrade Goloshchekin all the time, you cannot build communism in Kazakhstan with the hands of Yezhov”²⁸ and was immediately arrested. The following accusation was made against all Alash supporters: “They want to separate Kazakhstan from the composition of Russia.” Thus, an end was put to the concept of an “empire of positive action” in Kazakhstan before other regions. Although almost no words were spoken from the podium degrading the dignity of the indigenous population, the attitude towards the local national cadres became moderate, nevertheless emissaries from the Central Committee of the RCP (b) continued to be in charge of all key aspects of life. Overwhelmingly, their members took a hard line to consolidate the dominant positions of the central government.²⁹

Over time, it became obvious that the “national opposition” operating in the governing bodies of Kazakhstan did not affect the foundations of the socialist system but proposed a different vector of “socialist construction”. Evolution towards its implementation would help prevent society from sliding towards totalitarianism, overcoming the extremes of Soviet national policy and achieving a more organic combination of national interests with transformational processes.³⁰ M. Terry draws this conclusion: “Eastern nationalities have always been limited to such “soft line” organizations responsible for national policy, as the Council of Nationalities, headed by Turkmen and Uzbeks in 1927 – 1935, and the department of nationalities headed by Kazakhs who succeeded each other in the structures of Turkestan and Kazakhstan: S. Asfendiyarov, N. Nurmakov, A. Dosov.”³¹

²⁷ ZHURTBAY, T. *My Pain, My Pride – Alash!*

²⁸ GOLOSHCHEKIN, F. I. *10 Years of Soviet Power.*

²⁹ ABDULLAEV, R. M., AGZAMHODZHAEV, S. S., ALIMOV, I. A. *Turkestan in the Early Twentieth Century: On the History of the Origins of National Independence.*

³⁰ ABDULLAEV, R. M., AGZAMHODZHAEV, S. S., ALIMOV, I. A. *Turkestan in the Early Twentieth Century: On the History of the Origins of National Independence.*

³¹ TERRY, M. *The Empire of “Positive Activity”. Nation and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923 – 1939.*

In addition to the three political figures mentioned above, from the Kazakh elite, T. Ryskulov was appointed to posts of responsibility in Turkestan and Kazakhstan three times and three times he was invited to Moscow. His last position was that of vice-chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR. In October 1922 A. N. Torekulov was appointed head of the Central Publishing House of the Oriental Peoples Organizing Bureau of the RCP (b). S. Kozhanov, accused of nationalism, in October 1925 became an instructor in the Organizing Committee, and later was appointed to an additional post under Soviet control. All of these figures were not close to the institutions of the “hard line”. With indigenization on such a scale as in the East, the problem was one supply, not demand. In this connection, in November 1924, S. Kozhanov wrote a letter to Stalin with a proposal to send N. Torekulov to Kazakhstan as the People's Commissar for Education: “I think that N. Torekulov, sitting in Moscow since 1922 – 3 years – has learned what is needed. It cannot be that Moscow needed him. He needed Moscow.”³²

In February – March 1937, the next plenum of the Central Committee prepared the ground for the Stalinist purge.³³ At the plenum, they adopted a resolution “On the lessons of sabotage and espionage by Japanese-German-Trotskyist agents.” This was the beginning of the Great Terror. In the era of the Great Terror a new generation of the national elite was subjected to severe repression. Among them were both “national communists”, distinguished by their national ideas, and the elite of a new type: the party state nomenclature.

Representatives of the Kazakh national political elite who worked in the highest echelon of power in Moscow, N. Torekulov, T. Ryskulov, S. Kozhanov, N. Nurmakov, fell victim to the Great Terror because of a circular letter “On Anti-Soviet Pan-Turkic Nationalist Organizations”, sent on June 8 1937 by the General Directorate of State Security of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR. The letter became the basis for the arrest of representatives of the national elite of the countries of Central Asia and Tatarstan. The letter stated in particular that in recent years, the work of anti-Soviet, nationalist elements has intensified in the eastern republics and regions.³⁴ Their activities were associated with such organizations as Alash-Orda, Mussavat, Milli-Firka, Milli-Ittihad. Based on these charges in 1937, numerous arrests began. T. Ryskulov was taken into custody on May 21st, N. Nurmakov on June 3rd, S. Kozhanov on July 15th, N. Torekulov on July 17th. The protocols of their

³² Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 17, Op. 84, D. 721, L. 1-1ob.

³³ MODELJ, E., WHITE, S. *Soviet Elite from Lenin to Gorbachev. Central Committee and Its Members 1917 – 1991.*

³⁴ KHAUSTOV, V., SAMUELSON, L. *Stalin, The NKVD and The Repression of 1936 – 1937.*

interrogation, directed by N. Yezhov, were read by Stalin personally, after which he gave appropriate instructions.

In the era of the Great Terror, the new generation of the national elite was almost completely eliminated. “In the period from 1921 to 1954 more than 100,000 people were convicted in Kazakhstan for political reasons, more than 25,000 were shot. Approximately 1,750,000 people, representing 40 percent of the Kazakh population, became victims of the mass famine of the 1931 – 1932s.”³⁵ These facts constitute one of the most serious crimes of the national policy of the Soviet government. We consider all these excesses of the national policy to be a process of ethnodeformation. As we noted earlier in our articles, “ethnodeformation is the result of the negative changes experienced by a nation under the influence of external forces... If modernization brings about positive changes in society, being a stimulus of national renewal, then ethnodeformation, on the contrary, separates the nation from its cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and political existence, setting its evolutionary development on a catastrophically destructive course”³⁶. It means that the national policy of the Bolsheviks is considered to be an ethno-deformation of Kazakh society rather than a modernization.

The nature of historical events in Kazakhstan in the 1920s and 1930s was complex and ambiguous from a political, economic, cultural and social point of view. The analysis and assessment of this situation in Soviet historiography opened the door to various contradictory conclusions. However, general conclusions were also not made in the methodological studies of the independence period. This paradigm is also inherent in foreign historiography, which considers this topic from various aspects. It can be said that in a series of similar studies, the study of issues of national policy from the perspective of M. Terry’s concept of an “empire of positive action” is the most objective approach. Definitely, the main goal of the national policy pursued by the Soviet authorities in Kazakhstan at that time was the modernization of the traditional society.

However, the confiscation of property from the rich, the sedentarization of a nomadic economy and collectivization, all these reforms, can be seen as not leading to modernization but to ethnic deformation. Thus, consideration of the national policy of the Soviet authorities in Kazakhstan through the prism of the

³⁵ GRIBANOVA, E. M., MURZAGALIYEVA, G. N., CHILIKOVA, E. V. *Political repression and their consequences. Collection of memoirs and articles.*

³⁶ TURSUN, Kh. M., AS, H., BAZARBAEV, K. K., REZHEP, A., KELESH, M. Colonial nature of public education as a factor of ethnical deformation. In *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 2018, Vol. 23, No. 82, pp. 147–157.

concept of “empire of positive activity” will significantly affect the formation of an objective assessment of this issue.

REFERENCES

- ABDULLAEV, Rovshan M., AGZAMHODZHAEV, SAIDAKBAR S., ALIMOV, Igor A. *Turkestan in the Early Twentieth Century: On the History of the Origins of National Independence*. Turkestan: Shark, 2000.
- ABZHANOV, Khankeldy. Bekmakhanov and the methodology of the study of the national liberation movement. In *History of Kazakhstan*, 2006, Vol. 3, pp. 3–8.
- AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. *At the Break. Alash in the Ethnopolitical History of Kazakhstan*. Almaty: Taimas Publishing House, 2009.
- GAIDUKOV, Dmitry A., DAVIDOVICH, Aleksandr M., RONIN, Samuil L. (eds.). *Congresses of the Soviets of the USSR, the Union and Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics of 1917 – 1936*. Moscow: State Publishing House of Legal Literature, 1959.
- GOLOSHCHEKIN, Filip I. *10 Years of Soviet Power*. Kzyl-Orda: Kazakh State Publishing House, 1937.
- GRIBANOVA, Elena M., MURZAGALIYEVA, Gulnara N., CHILIKOVA, Evgeniya V. *Political repression and its consequences. Collection of memoirs and articles*. Almaty: Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2009.
- KHAUSTOV, Vladimir, SAMUELSON, Lennart. *Stalin, The NKVD and The Repression of 1936 – 1937*. Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopedia (ROSPEN), Foundation “B. N. Yeltsin Presidential Center”, 2010.
- MODELI, Evan, WHITE, Stephen. *The Soviet Elite from Lenin to Gorbachev. Central Committee and its Members 1917 – 1991*. Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopedia (ROSPEN), Foundation “B. N. Yeltsin Presidential Center”, 2011.
- MUHAMMEDINOV, Rafael. *Nation and Revolution: Transformation of the National Idea in the Tatar Society of the First Third of the Twentieth Century*. Kazan: Iman, 2000.
- NAUMOVA, Nataliya I. (ed.). *Russia's National Policy: History and Modernity*. Moscow: Russkiy mir, 1997.
- OHAYON, Isabelle. *La Sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline. Collectivisation et Changement Social (1928 – 1945)*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose-Institut Français d'Études sur l'Asie Centrale, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.4000/monderusse.6809> .

- Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 122, Op. 1, D. 348, Ll. 10-15.
- Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 17, Op. 84, D. 356, L. 46.
- Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 17, Op. 113, D. 338, L. 105.
- Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 17, Op. 84, D. 721, L. 1-1ob.
- Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 558, Op. 1, D. 5057, L. 1.
- Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 558, Op. 11, D. 30, L. 28.
- Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F. 86, D. 129, L.112.
- Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, F.62, Op.1, D. 220, L. 14.
- Secrets of the National Policy of the Central Committee of the RCP: “The Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP with the responsible officials of the national republics and regions in Moscow” [online] [cit. 27 June 2020]. Available from <http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/5-35.html> .
- TERRY, Martin. *The Empire of “Positive Activity”. Nation and Nationalism in the USSR, 1923 – 1939*. Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopedia (ROSPEN), 2011.
- The 6th All-Kazakh Conference of the RCP (B.) [online]. Kzyl-Orda: Kazakh State Publishing House [cit. 27 June 2020]. Available from <https://search.rsl.ru/ru/record/01009204992> .
- TROTSKY, Lev. *Stalin*. Moscow: Political Literature Publishing, 1996.
- TURSUN, Khazretali M., AS, Hakan, BAZARBAEV, Kanat et al. Colonial nature of public education as a factor of ethnical deformation. In *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 2018, Vol. 23, No. 82, pp. 147–157. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1495818> .
- Verbatim report of the 10th Congress of the Soviets of the Turk Republic [online]. Tashkent: Politizdat [cit. 27 June 2020]. Available from https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000200_000018_RU_NLR_A1SV_83516/.
- ZHURTBAY, Tursyn. *My Pain, My Pride – Alash!* Astana: Audarma, 2016.