

THE LEADER OF THE NATION AND HIS "MOSCOW CAGE"

Alikhan Bukeikhan's "Moscow period" lasted 15 years, from December 1922 to September 1937. His exile to Moscow could be seen as a manifestation of the fact that the new Soviet regime wanted to ensure a peaceful, quiet life for the determined campaigner for autocracy, the leader of the Kazakh national liberation movement. However, behind their "concern" lay the desire to isolate Bukeikhan from his people, to erase his name from the history books and wipe it from the memory of his people. The Soviet regime was afraid of Bukeikhan's enormous popularity among the vast Kazakh nation and the authority that he held over them. In short, they feared losing power in Kazakhstan.

BOKEIKHAN'S "MOSCOW PERIOD" – UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Many unanswered questions remain about Alikhan Bukeikhan's "Moscow period". Indeed, some episodes are shrouded in mystery. However, through close examination of the archival materials and historical documents found in recent years in archives in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Samara and other cities, and with the help of the memories of his loved-ones, we have been able to put together a fairly complete picture of this final period in Bukeikhan's life, spent far away from his native steppes.

The first question we must address is why, after the coming of Soviet power in Kazakhstan, Alikhan Bukeikhan, the former head of Alash-Orda, did not emigrate to Turkey or, better still, France. After all, he would have been following in the footsteps of his former student and member of the National Council of the Alash-Orda Autonomy Mustafa Shokay (Chukayev), as well as most of the other prominent political figures in Russia in the period before and after the February Revolution and the Civil War of 1917-1920. This question was asked in the 1920s, and it has lost nothing of its relevance today, 95 years after the Bolsheviks' treacherous seizure of power in the Alash-Orda Autonomy.

In the first years of the Soviet regime, many representatives of the new, Soviet wave of Kazakh intelligentsia were trying to find the answer to this question, too. The very fact that the question was being asked just after the leaders of Alash-Orda recognised Soviet authority indicates that, before joining the Bolsheviks, A. Bukeikhan himself was in a dilemma about whether he should stay or go. It is also possible, probable even, that his fellow members of the National Council or government of Alash Orda asked, or even demanded, that he emigrate.

Alikhan Bukeikhan had a great many reasons to emigrate. For example, before the 1917 Revolution he had been involved in Russian Freemasonry, whose main aim and objective was not only to overthrow Tsarist autocracy but also "to oppose the gang of Lenin and Bronshtein (i.e. Trotsky – Author's Note), who are Satanists and who possess secret knowledge about how to control people, which they use to evil ends, and whose services have been engaged by the enemies of Russia". Alexander Elshin, Secretary of the Samara group of the Constitutional Democratic Party "People's Freedom" writes about this in his memoirs, for example.

Moreover, Bukeikhan's attitudes, beliefs and fundamental goals with regard to the future political and economic structure of Kazakhstan, and the former Russian colonial empire as a whole, as well as his attitude towards the nation and towards democracy, were in fundamental conflict with the views and actions of the Bolsheviks. This conflict is particularly clear in Bukeikhan's "Memo to the peasants, workers and soldiers" of December 1, 1917, just over a month after the treacherous seizure of power in Russia by Lenin's supporters. In this memo, the Kazakh leader denounces the "black-hundredist nature" of the new regime, comparing Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks, to the deposed autocrat Nicholas II:

"Ulyanov-Lenin, Chairman of the People's Commissars, holds all the power in his own hands, as did Tsar Nicholas. He is accountable to no-one. He calls allowing the people to exercise control over the decisions of their rulers a 'bourgeois prejudice'.

We have already seen this lack of answerability under Tsar Nicholas. The Chairman of the Bolsheviks, Ulyanov-Lenin, like Nicholas, rules autocratically. Ulyanov-Lenin, like Nicholas, treats the people like dumb animals. ... The Bolsheviks consider people's power a 'bourgeois prejudice'.

The Bolsheviks are closing down newspapers, breaking up meetings. The Bolshevik Commissar Ovanesov, who used to sell space for advertisements in the bourgeois press, calls freedom of assembly and freedom of speech a 'bourgeois prejudice'.

The Bolshevik Volodarsky, who no-one had even heard of until recently, has stated that the Bolsheviks do not suffer from parliamentary cretinism.

Volodarsky considers people's respect for decisions made by that temple of the people, the Constituent Assembly, which should be in the power of the people, a foolish 'bourgeois prejudice'.

The Bolsheviks have said that they will dissolve the Constituent Assembly, which was elected by universal, direct and secret ballot. The Bolshevik deputies did not attend the opening of the Constituent Assembly on October 28.

The Bolsheviks consider the Constituent Assembly itself a 'bourgeois prejudice'.

Remember, peasants, workers, soldiers, the Bolsheviks consider: 1) the answerability of rulers to the people; 2) freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly; 3) universal, direct and secret ballot; 4) the inviolability of the people's deputies; and 5) the power of the people – all this they consider bourgeois prejudice!

The Bolsheviks have released Dubrovin, the head of the "Union of the Russian People", from prison. Dubrovin – a black hundredist, a servant of Nicholas ...

Remember, peasants, workers, soldiers: the Red masks have fallen from the faces of the Bolsheviks and revealed their true black-hundredist nature!"³

Alikhan Bukeikhan did not change his view of true nature of the Soviets to his dying day, as we shall see later.

In September 1918, Bukeikhan, as head of the government of the Alash-Orda Autonomy, established a "special Kazakh court and commission of enquiry to investigate matters relating to Kazakh Bolsheviks".

Clearly Alikhan Bukeikhan, as the examples above show, had reason enough to emigrate. So his decision to remain in the country may, at first glance, seem counterintuitive, a sort of reckless revolutionary romanticism. It certainly leaves many questions unanswered.

Khoshmuhammed Kemengeruly (Kemengerov), a leading historian, writer and dramatist of the early twentieth century, writes in his essay "On the history of the Kazakhs" ("Qazaq tarihinan") that Bukeikhan's decision not to emigrate was motivated by his "boundless love for his people" [in the original: XXX]. However, he could have loved his people and his native land and

continued fighting for its liberation from under the Communist yoke from beyond its borders, as did Mustafa Shokay, for example. Indeed, maybe this was the only way possible now.

It is worth noting that K.Kemengeruly gave a manuscript copy of his essay to A.Bokeikhan before it was published by the Central Publishing House of the USSR in Moscow in 1924, asking him for any comments, corrections or suggestions. Alikhan Bukeikhan left the question of why he refused to emigrate unanswered, correcting nothing and adding nothing.

Yet the answer suggested by Kemengeruly is far from satisfactory. It does not explain Alikhan Bukeikhan's underlying motives for acting as he did. Furthermore, Bukeikhan did not make use of any opportunity he had to leave the country later either – unlike Zaki Validov (later Zaki Validi Togan), the former head of the Bashkir autonomy, for example, who fled to Turkey after it recognised Soviet authority.

Bearing in mind how Bukeikhan acted under the Soviet regime and his relationship with the leaders of the Bolsheviks, another explanation suggests itself – one that is far more complex and multifaceted. First of all, unlike Zaki Validov, who actively cooperated with the Soviet regime but then later took up arms against it, Alikhan Bukeikhan recognised the Soviet regime and joined its ranks in 1919 and never subsequently advocated the idea of armed struggle against it. This was not for any love of the idea of Bolshevism or the Bolshevik system. It was due to his extremely sober, realistic assessment of the strengths and capabilities of the new Kazakh autonomy and its people compared to the new regime. After all, Kazakhstan had been weakened by the spontaneous uprising of 1916 and plundered and destroyed during the Civil War of 1917-1919.

It is hard not to agree with the conclusion reached by researchers from Oxford University's Centre for Central Asian studies (here paraphrased): "The leaders of Alash Orda took this decision with some nervousness: Lenin and the Bolsheviks were the lesser evil – the situation in the steppes had reached a state where it was no longer possible for Kazakhs to sit on the sidelines and hope for a satisfactory outcome".

To this we may add another, not entirely unfounded assumption. A further reason why Alikhan Bukeikhan remained in Kazakhstan was that he was prepared to sacrifice himself, acting as guarantor that the members of Alash-Orda would not take up arms against the Soviet regime. After a series of debilitating and even humiliating negotiations with self-declared "all-Russian governments" – the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly or Komuch, the Siberian Autonomy, the Ufa Directory, and the Supreme Ruler of Russia Admiral Kolchak, in that order – the Bolsheviks were the only power to officially recognise the Kazakhs' natural right to self-determination.

Bukeikhan's call for this recognition was announced officially during negotiations with the Bolsheviks in Moscow and Saratov in 1918. Bukeikhan put aside his irreconcilable ideological and political differences with the Bolshevik leaders in order to ensure the recognition of the political legitimacy of the autonomous government of his people. In so doing, he showed flexibility, pragmatism and foresight. It cannot have been an easy decision for him to make.

THE PLAN TO "LIQUIDATE THE DISLOYAL PART OF ALASH-ORDA"

We now turn to the subject of how Alikhan Bukeikhan came to be in Moscow. What was the purpose of his stay there? Who had decided that he should be there? Was it another political exile? Were the Bolsheviks concerned about his health and welfare? Or was it in order to isolate him because of his absolute authority and influence over the Kazakhs?

A number of historical documents released by the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) show that there were strong grounds for all of the above questions. The earliest document from RGASPI is a telegram from the Deputy of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee (TurTsIK) Sultanbek Khodzhanuly (Khodzhanov) and the Chairman of the Turkestan Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan Turar Ryskululy (Ryskulov) to Joseph Stalin. The telegram was sent from Tashkent. According to a stamp on the telegram from the Office of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), it was received and registered on October 31, 1922. The date on which it was sent is not indicated. The telegram reads as follows (corrections by author):

"Moscow [.] TsK RKI [.] To Stalin.

From Tashkent 4757 76 23 15 40 a [?].

By order of the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic, Alikhan Bukeikhanov was arrested on October 14 [in] Karkaralinsk [.] Taking into account the decree [on] amnesty for the members of Alash Orda [.] the weak connection between the Soviet regime [and] the indigenous population of Kyrgyzstan [.] the atmosphere created [as] a result of the work of the last Congress of Soviets of Kyrgyzstan [, and] considering the possibility of an adverse reaction to this information [by] the Kyrgyz population, we consider it necessary to ask you to intervene [in] this case and, if no grounds are found for holding Bukeikhanov, we suggest immediately releasing him from arrest [.] 564 ---

Deputy Chairman of TurTsIK Khodzhanov.

Chairman of the CPC Ryskulov" [Photo 1].

This telegram reveals that the first Kazakh Soviet leaders of Kazakhstan (at that time still known as the Kyrgyz and Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics), S. Khodzhanuly and T. Ryskululy, did what they could to protect Bukeikhan from unwarranted harassment and arrest. Importantly, their arguments were taken into account by the Kremlin, as the following archival documents from the RGASPI demonstrate.

The first of these documents is Point 39 of the minutes of the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on November 2, 1922, which recommends asking KirObKom and the GPU the reasons for the arrest of Alikhan Bukeikhan. The second is the response from KirObKom to this enquiry, in the form of a secret telegram marked "strictly confidential" and signed by its secretary, Korostylev, dated November 11, 1922.

When we compare them with the historical facts and other available data, the arguments for arresting Bukeikhan presented by Korostylev in this secret telegram appear somewhat questionable. At the same time, they are entirely consistent with the methods employed by the Soviet punitive system in the early 1920s. The telegram reads as follows:

"Top secret.

Moscow. TsK eRKaPe.

In response to yours 17742-6127 /? The arrest of Bukeikhanov was due to his systematic disobedience of the orders of the KTsiK [.] his intention to flee [to] Turkestan [.] the liquidation of the disloyal part of the leadership of Alash Orda [in] the Semipalatinsk province [.] which has links [with] Mongolia [that are] corrupting the young people of Kyrgyz Number 75.

Secretary of the KirObKom / Korostylev /.

November 11, 1922, Orenburg [,] Sovetskaya Street, 37 [,] "KirObKom" [Photo 2].

What Korostylev writes is untrue inasmuch as, in the period before and after the Founding Congress of the Kirghiz-Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in Orenburg (October 4-12, 1920), Bukeikhan was only engaged in "administrative and organisational tasks" in Orenburg for a very short time, perhaps until the autumn of 1921. This is confirmed by the bibliographical notes on Bokeikhanov in "The State Duma of the Russian Empire: 1906-1917. Encyclopaedia", published in 2009 in Moscow, and by a number of other archival documents from Kazakhstan and Russia. Moreover, at this time it is very difficult to see any "systematic disobedience of the orders of the KTsIK" [the Kazakh-Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee – Author's Note] in Bukeikhan's actions. Indeed, nothing of this nature can be identified right up until his arrest on October 14, 1922, for reasons that we shall elaborate on below.

According to memoirs written by Alikhan Bukeikhan's younger brother, Smakhan Tore, Bukeikhan urgently returned from Orenburg to Semipalatinsk in 1921 due to the sudden deterioration in the health of his wife Elena. When he arrived, he found his wife already seriously ill. Gulnara Apai, the daughter of Miryakub Dulatuly, recalls that Bukeikhan arranged for an Orthodox priest to perform a Christian burial for his wife, faithfully fulfilling her dying wish.

To judge by the course of the events that followed, Bukeikhan planned to remain in his native land for a long period of time. There are certainly no grounds for suggesting that, after his wife's funeral, Bukeikhan returned to Orenburg. Smakhan Tore states that Bukeikhan went from Semipalatinsk to his native village of Jeltau, in Tokraun in the Karkaraly district of the Semipalatinsk region, where his family traditionally spent the winter. Here, for the first time, he passed almost an entire year with his relatives, from late 1921 to October 1922.

Smakhan Tore writes in his memoirs that Bukeikhan was arrested on October 10, 1922. This roughly agrees with the telegram from Khodzhanuly and Ryskululy, which gives October 14 as the date of the arrest. However, the two sources differ with respect to the question of where the arrest took place. Smakhan Tore, and all of Bokeikhanov's family and loved ones, claim that he was arrested in his native village and then taken to Karkaraly. The telegram from Khodzhanuly and Ryskululy states that the arrest took place in Karkaraly.

In fairness, it should be pointed out that the two sources do not necessarily contradict each other. Khodzhanuly and Ryskululy, in their short official telegram, may be simply giving as the date of Bukeikhan's arrest, the date of his delivery under escort to Karkaraly, i.e. October 14, 1922.

Alikhan Bukeikhan may thus have been engaged in administrative and organisational tasks in Orenburg from July 1920 to the autumn of 1921 – that is, from the moment of the decision by the Central Executive Committee "permitting former members of the Alash-Orda government to perform Soviet work and categorically forbidding their prosecution for past activities" of July 3, 1920 [Photo 3]. Following this, he may not have left his native village between autumn 1921 and October 1922. If this is the case, the accusation by the Secretary of the KirObKom, Korostylev, of "systematic disobedience" on Bukeikhan's part and an "intention to flee to Turkestan" is pure fiction – indeed, it is a barefaced lie.

But it is the next part of the telegram which is really interesting. It should be remembered that in documents of this type, marked "top secret", every word, punctuation mark or number, and

particularly any sentences that appear strange to the uninitiated eye, may have a special hidden significance.

Examining the contents of Korostylev's telegram carefully, it is difficult not to sense the ominous shadow hanging over Bukeikhan, and indeed all his colleagues from the government of the Alash-Orda Autonomy – the shadow of mass political repression. A particular warning note is sounded by the formulation "the liquidation of the disloyal part of the leadership of Alash Orda in the Semipalatinsk province". There can be no doubt that "liquidation" here means "physical liquidation" – removal or destruction by means of arrest and subsequent shooting or other form of execution. By the "leadership of the Alash Orda in the Semipalatinsk province", the author and recipients of the telegram meant what was known as the "eastern branch of Alash Orda". This was the part under Alikhan Bukeikhan's direct leadership. In March 1918 it had relocated from Orenburg to Semipalatinsk, or more precisely to Zarechnaya Slobodka. Zarechnaya Slobodka, according to a decision by the Second All-Kazakh Congress in Orenburg of December 13, 1917, had been declared the capital of the autonomy, to be known thenceforth as the city of Alash.

Without going into detail about the reasons why the Alash-Orda Autonomy was split into eastern and western parts in 1918, we should note that in Soviet documents dating from 1919-1920, the leadership of the "eastern Alash-Orda" was referred to as "Bukeikhanov's group". It was precisely this group that worried the Bolshevik authorities the most, both in the Kremlin and in Kazakhstan itself. This can be seen from the following quotation from the minutes of the meeting of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, Sixth Convocation, No. 28 of April 4, 1919, at which the decision of the People's Commissar for Nationalities Joseph Stalin to convene an All-Kazakh Congress was approved: "To authorise the convening of an All-Kirgiz Congress in Orenburg and grant personal immunity to all Kyrgyz people, including Bukeikhanov's group, who took up arms against Soviet authority" [Photo 4].

From Korostylev's telegram, it would appear that Bukeikhan's arrest in October 1922 was not on the personal initiative of Korostylev. As Secretary of the KirObKom he was most likely simply carrying out the likewise secret order from the centre – to be precise, from the People's Commissar for Nationalities, Joseph Stalin – to "liquidate the disloyal part of the leadership of Alash Orda in the Semipalatinsk province".

Yet Bukeikhan was not "liquidated". He was arrested, but not eliminated. Neither was he released. Why not?

The answer can be found in the telegram from Khodzhanuly and Ryskululy quoted further above. Most likely, the Bolshevik leaders in the Kremlin and Kazakhstan were forced to delay the implementation of their sinister plan to eliminate the Kazakh leader by the following lines: "Taking into account ... the weak connection between the Soviet regime [and] the indigenous population of Kyrgyzstan [,] the atmosphere created [as] a result of the work of the last Congress of Soviets of Kyrgyzstan ...". A particular warning note about the possible consequences of arresting Bukeikhan is sounded by the line: "the possibility of an adverse reaction to this information [by] the Kyrgyz population".

While Bukeikhan was still under arrest in Karkaraly, Stalin changed his mind about his immediate fate. He decided to keep Alikhan Bukeikhan under surveillance and as far away from his native steppes as possible in order to avoid any undesirable consequences for the Soviets. In other words, he decided to wait until the time was right.

STALIN: "DO NOT RETURN TO YOUR NATIVE LAND AND DO NOT GO TO THE STEPPE"

Did Bukeikhan know, either in the days running up to his arrest or at the time of the arrest itself, what fate the Soviet regime had in store for him? The simple answer is: yes. He knew about Lenin's announcement in 1922 that "an end to terror is impossible: it must be legally regulated". This had come after the terrible Civil War, which had ended with complete victory for the Bolsheviks. And he guessed at Stalin's intention to consolidate his own power whatever the cost, his readiness to commit any crime in order to achieve his goals, all the while hysterically repeating Lenin's call to arrest, shoot or hang.

Bukeikhan knew for sure that neither Lenin, nor Stalin in particular, would ever forgive him for his past activities. Both were maniacally vindictive. Moreover, both had personal scores (!) to settle with him. Yet, to judge by his actions, Alikhan Bukeikhan was prepared for whatever came. According to Korostylev's telegram, Bukeikhan had connections with Mongolia and the opportunity to flee to Turkestan, but did not make use of them. Instead, aware of the true nature of the Bolshevik regime and its leaders, he was concerned rather for the fate of his people. And he was not mistaken in his presentiment about the impending national tragedy for Kazakhstan, as the following minor incident, recorded by Smakhan Tore in his memoirs, indicates.

According to Smakhan Tore, when the Red Army came to arrest Alikhan Bukeikhan in his home village and take him to Karkaraly, he called his fellow tribesmen together and explained to them in simple terms that the country would soon enter a period of harsh change. For them to get through this period with the minimum of loss and suffering, they needed to get rid of any excess livestock and go over as soon as possible to agriculture – sowing grain, digging water channels, building mills, houses, schools and so on.

Smakhan Tore also records that the entire Kazakh community in Karkaraly accompanied Bukeikhan, weeping as he was led out of the city in November.

Bukeikhan was not taken to Orenburg and imprisoned alongside Miryakub Dulatuly, where he was interrogated every day for five to six hours, as the author of one article claims. He was, in fact, taken directly under escort to Moscow.

Alikhan Bukeikhan arrived in Moscow at some point in the first two weeks of December 1922. He was taken immediately to see Stalin in the Kremlin. This is further evidence, if such were needed, of whose orders lay behind his arrest and removal to Moscow.

Andrey Zubov, in his article "Inflexible Alikhan" published in 2009 in the newspaper "Strana i Mir", describes the meeting between Bukeikhan and Stalin. A number of episodes related in the article are likely to be very close to the truth. This is not just because they are based on material from the book "We must not forget the past" by Syrym Bukeikhanov, Alikhan Bukeikhan's great-nephew, but also because Bukeikhan is recorded as using a parable in his conversation with Stalin, which was quite typical of his style.

Bukeikhan had an extensive knowledge of folk wisdom, not just from the East, but from Russia, Western Europe and the ancient world. He frequently uses parables, sayings and proverbs to great effect in his essays, articles and notes published in the Tsarist and Soviet periods, as well as in his correspondence with friends, especially during his Moscow period. In his article, A. Zubov describes the following episode from the conversation between Bukeikhan and Stalin:

"The conversation was long. Alikhan Bukeikhan himself recounted with a smile how he tried to avoid making any clear judgments. He simply didn't know what Stalin would do. At one point, Stalin asked him a sly question: "What is the position of the Communists in your region?" Bukeikhan thought for a moment then replied as follows: "You know, in the East we like parables. Allow me to tell you a story. You've heard of Nasreddin Hodja, of course. One time he arrived at a gathering holding a horseshoe in his hand. When they asked him what he was holding, Nasreddin replied: "This is a horseshoe for my donkey. Now all I need for my dream to come true is three more horseshoes and a donkey." And that's how I would describe the position of the Communists in Kazakhstan."

Stalin appreciated this eastern humour. A little while later he told Bukeikhan, "Stay in Moscow for the moment. I have instructed comrade Torekulov to find you an apartment and a job. One thing I demand, however: do not return to your native land and do not go to the steppe".¹⁶

Ironically, just before the February Revolution in 1917, Nazir Torekululy had been working in the foreigners department of Zemgor (the United Committee of the Union of Zemstvos and the Union of Towns) on the Western Front under Bukeikhan. When Bukeikhan was appointed Commissar of the Provisional Government in the Turgay region, Torekululy also happened to be Turgay. It is thus possible that Torekulov even served as a member of Bukeikhan's staff during Bukeikhan's time there as Commissar.

From 1922 to 1928 Torekululy was head of the Central Publishing House of the USSR. He obeyed Stalin's order and gave Alikhan Bukeikhan a job there. The report on Bukeikhan's work in the Central Publishing House gives the exact date that Bukeikhanov was hired and the date when he was dismissed: "Mr. A.N. Bukeikhanov worked from December 14, 1922 to October 1, 1927 on the literary staff of the Kazakh section of the Central Publishing House of the USSR in Moscow".

The first five years of Bukeikhan's involuntary stay in Moscow were rather a busy period in his life. He was highly productive in terms of research, educational activities, journalism and even pedagogic work. He had an extremely wide circle of friends and acquaintances in both Moscow and Leningrad, including members of both the academic and the artistic intelligentsia – prominent academics, writers, singers and other performing artists, plus members of the central Party and state organisations. He knew many of them from before the Revolution, and he kept up these friendships and working relationships during the Soviet period. Among his contacts were the Academicians S. Oldenburg, S. Shvetsov and L. Chermak, the member of the Council of People's Commissars A. Tsyurupa and others.

Tsyurupa was Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence of the RSFSR/USSR from 1922 to 1923, Chairman of the State Planning Committee of the USSR from 1923 to 1925, and People's Commissar of Foreign and Domestic Trade of the USSR from 1925 to 1926 – that is to say, during Bukeikhan's initial years in Moscow.

Earlier in his life, between 1905 and 1917, Tsyurupa had managed the family estate of Prince Kugushev in Ufa province. It is a curious fact that Bukeikhan and his family lived in the home of Prince Kugushev from 1908 until the February Revolution of 1917, during his first exile in Samara – a fact that we shall return to below.

Many of the "old Bolsheviks" had known Alikhan Bukeikhan since his student years, or knew him from Marxist circles in St. Petersburg (see Part II of this study for details). This group included Lenin himself, the founder and leader of the Soviet regime. In fact, Bukeikhan took the

entrance exams for the Law Faculty of St. Petersburg University in November of 1891 at the same time as Lenin – or Volodya Ulyanov, as he was then.

According to the memoirs of Alimkhan Ermekuly, a former member of Alash Orda, Lenin himself welcomed one of the visits of the Kazakh delegation to Moscow in 1920. After the meeting, Bukeikhan stayed back in Lenin's office for a one-to-one conversation. It is not impossible that, in addition to discussing current matters, they also reminisced about their student years in St. Petersburg.

After the meeting, a remarkable incident took place, one that may have played a key role in determining Bukeikhan's later fate. When Bukeikhan left Lenin's office, the members of the Kazakh delegation (including Ermekov himself), who had been waiting for him in the corridor of the Kremlin, suggested that he call in on Stalin, the Commissar of Nationalities. Bukeikhan's reaction was brusque: "What does he have to do with it? Does he decide about anything?" and he headed straight for the exit. The astonished delegation quickly followed him.

Ermekuly related this incident to a reporter from Kazakh radio after his return from the Stalinist camp in Karaganda in 1960. A transcript of the interview was published in pamphlet form in Jezkazgan in 1992.

Some of the "old Bolsheviks" considered Bukeikhan, not without justification, an expert on Marxist economic materialism and the best propagator of this idea in Siberia. Shvetsov wrote about this in detail in his article "The Omsk newspaper 'The Steppe Region' and political exile", published in 1930. It was also one of the "old Bolsheviks" who later got Bukeikhanov released from prison, as we will see further below.

After the premature death of his wife Elena in Semipalatinsk in 1921, Bukeikhan to the end of his days remained faithful to the memory of his former companion, who had endured with him the persecutions, the time in prison, and the years of exile under Tsarist rule. But Bukeikhan was not lonely in Moscow. He lived with his daughter Elizaveta and his son Oktay (official name: Sergei), both of whom were already grown up by this time. Around 1925, the first grandson appeared: Iskander, the son of Elizaveta and Smagul Sadvakasuly, a child whom Bukeikhan loved to fuss over like any grandfather [Photo 6].

In terms of living conditions, there can be no comparison between the room in a Moscow communal flat (B. Kislovsky Lane 4, Apt. 15), "generously" provided to Bukeikhan by the Soviet government, and how he lived during his first long political exile in Samara.

It will be remembered that Bukeikhan spent nine years, from 1908 to 1917, living with his family in the house of Prince A.Kugushev in Samara. The house survives to this day [Photos 7 & 8, from the collection of Professor M. Sdykov, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Director of the West-Kazakhstan Centre for History and Archaeology, Uralsk, 2012]. Note that this was under the universally hated Tsarist regime, which Bukeikhan had devoted a good half of his life to overthrowing. Clearly, the Tsar treated his sworn enemies much more humanely and with greater respect than the new proletarian military regime treated its purely ideological opponents, as it were.

Alikhan Bukeikhan's tiny communal flat in Moscow, where he lived with his children, was frequently filled with visitors. It was not only his "pre-revolutionary" friends, acquaintances and colleagues from Moscow that would come to visit. Even more often he would be visited by his future son-in-law Smagul Sadvakasuly (one of the distinguished leaders of Kazakhstan), students from Leningrad University such as Mukhtar Auezuly, Alkey Margulan and others, and, less

frequently, visitors from his native steppes, including family members, friends and former colleagues from Alash-Orda such as Akhmet Baitursynuly, Jagansha and Khalel Dosmukhameduly, Khoshmukhammet Kemengeruly and others. Up until the 1930s he also stayed on good terms and often met with Turar Ryskululy and Nygmet Nurmakuly, by that time high up in the Party and government in Moscow.

By the 1930s his communal flat had been pressed into service as a sort of "transit camp" for friends and relatives of former colleagues from the Alash Autonomy, such as Akhmet Baytursynuly, Miryakub Dulatuly, Magzhan Zhumabayuly and others. After they had been convicted, their wives and children often stayed the night in Bokeikhanov's flat before also travelling to the prison camps, or on their way back to Kazakhstan. This is revealed by a short letter dated September 26, 1934 from Bukeikhan to Dulatuly in the Tungusk Department [Solovki Prison Camp, where Dulatov died on October 1935 in the Central Infirmary – Author's Note].

"Miryakub Dulatov

Central Infirmary

Tunguska Dept.

My dear Madiyar! Gaya and Altay left today after spending two nights here. Having seen them off, I am now writing to you ..."

We will return to this letter later. In the mean time, let us continue with our account of events as they unfolded.

As far as possible, Alikhan Bukeikhan kept up a lively correspondence with his former associates from Alash Orda, even when they were in the Soviet gulags on the margins of the Soviet empire. He also made every effort to prove their innocence and have them released, or at least to have their punishment reduced, or to help them with food or whatever was possible by sending packages from Moscow.

Bukeikhan's activities between December 1922 and October 1927 were not limited to helping his former colleagues and his work at the Central Publishing House. In parallel to his work, he was also busy with research, educational activities, journalism and pedagogic work. According to the memoirs of Academician Alkey Margulan, published in 1994, Bukeikhan was also a professor at Leningrad State University in the years 1925-1926.

On the recommendation of Shvetsov, Oldenburg and a number of other leading academics and members of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, in July 1926 Academician A. Fersman, a member of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences and the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Study of Soviet and Autonomous Republics, invited Bukeikhan to join the Special Committee as a "permanent expert on matters relating to the Kazakh expedition".

In the summer of 1926, Bukeikhan joined an anthropological expedition organised by the Special Committee to the Aday district in Kazakhstan, today's Atyrau and Mangistau regions. He held the position of head of the economic research team.

Meanwhile, the scope of the work carried out by Bokeikhanov in his five years on the literary staff of the Kazakh section of the Central Publishing House of the USSR reveal how productive he was. It also shows his desire to serve his people above everything else.

Thus in 1923 Bukeikhan helped found the Kazakh literary and journalistic magazine "Temirqazyq" ("North Star"), which for unknown reasons was shut down after the third issue. In August 1925, at his suggestion and largely thanks to his perseverance, the launch took place in Kyzyl-Orda of "Jaña mektep" ("New School"), a pedagogical and methodological journal for teachers in secondary schools and universities which survives to this day under the name "Qazaqstan Mektebi". January 1926 saw the first issue of the socio-political, literary and arts magazine for Kazakh women "Äyel teñdigi" ("Women's Equality"), which is still popular with Kazakh women under its modern name "Qazaqstan äyelderi".

Bukeikhan actively contributed to all of these publications, often acting as their lead author. Indeed between the years 1922 and 1927, articles, translations, literary criticism and short comments signed "Qyr Balası" ("Son of the Steppes"), "Ğ.B." (G.B. – Galikhan Bukeikhan) or simply V could be found on the pages of almost every Kazakh periodical.

From 1923 to 1926, together with Akhmet Baytursynuly and others, Alikhan Bukeikhan published some of the finest examples of the Kazakh oral tradition: the epics "Er Saun", "Er Tarğın", a version of "Qozı Körpeş – Bayun Sulw" recorded by V. Radlov, and "Jırma wş joqtw" ("23 lamentations").

Bukeikhan's literary translations include the novel "Hadji Murad", Tolstoy's "The Prisoner of the Caucasus", "77 fables" by Tolstoy and Aesop, and other works published in book form by the Central Publishing House in Moscow. He also translated into Kazakh numerous stories for children written by Turgenev, Korolenko, Mamin-Sibiriyak, Maupassant, Oscar Wilde and others, published in Kazakhstan's newspapers and magazines in the years 1923-1927.

At the same time, he translated and published textbooks and popular science books on astronomy, the origins of the earth, and the animal and plant worlds.

In terms of Bukeikhan's academic research, we should mention his studies "1916-1926", "The Cossacks of the Aday district" and "Agriculture of the Karakalpak region". The first of these works was dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the armed uprising of the Kazakh people in 1916 against the call to support the Western Front through rear action. The second was based on materials from the anthropological expedition to the Aday district and was published in a collection of studies from the expedition. The third work was based on Bukeikhan's study of agriculture in the Karakalpak region in 1927.

The above list of works written and published by Bukeikhan between 1922 and 1927 is far from exhaustive.

BUKEIKHAN'S LIFE IN HIS "MOSCOW CAGE"

Judging by the diverse, rich and highly creative activities carried out by the "Son of the Steppes" during this period in Moscow, one might think that his time far away from his native steppes went smoothly, that his life in Moscow did not weigh heavily on him. But his letters from various years to his former colleagues from Alash Orda and others – preserved, as one might expect, only in the archives of the NKVD-KGB-Kazakh National Security Committee and the Russian FSB – give us some insights into Alikhan Bukeikhan's inner world: how he felt, what he worried about, what he dwelt on, and what he was striving to achieve. Here are some excerpts from those letters, reproduced without comment:

From a letter to Dinshe Abilov from July 1923:

"My dear Dinshe, Why don't you write for Sholpan and Temirqazyq?³³ If you, with your education, don't write for them, who will? We are only allowed to serve Alash by teaching children, publishing in magazines and newspapers and writing and publishing textbooks in Kazakh. All other roads are closed to us!"

From a letter to Akhmet Baitursynulyv from June 23, 1925:

"Comrade Mendeshuly wrote a complaint about me which said that 'Bukeikhanov is writing articles in Enbekshi Qazaq'. On June 15, his complaint went to the publishing department of the CEC. According to the complaint, the Tatars in that department had let me slip through the net, so to speak. Now the Moscow Communists are ridiculing us, trumpeting everywhere that the 'Kazakh nationalists', the Kazakhs themselves are denouncing each other."

From a letter to Miryakub Dulatulyv in Solovki Prison Camp from September 26, 1934:

"Gaya and Altay left today after spending two nights here. Having seen them off, I am now writing to you. M.'s spouse is in Almaty. I couldn't help thinking: what is the point of a peaceful life if your boots pinch?"

These and other letters by Bukeikhan and the few memories of his loved ones suggest that the leader of Alash-Orda visited his native village several times in 1923-1925, together with his children, regardless of the prohibitions or whims of the Soviet leaders. According to the late Raimzhan Bukeikhanov, Alikhan Bukeikhan's nephew, on one occasion he arrived from Moscow with a prominent member of the Council of People's Commissars [according to Smakhan Tore this was probably N. Bryukhanov; according to the late journalist and writer Zhaik Bekturov it was probably A. Tsyurupa. Bekturov writes about this in detail in his article "Ush Eleken" published in 1989 in the Karaganda regional newspaper Ortalyq Qazaqstan]. The member's son was seriously ill and needed clean, dry air and fermented mare's milk.

Alikhan Bukeikhan's last visit to his native village dates from the summer of 1925, sometime in July or August, as borne out by two separate sources. Smakhan Tore states that the last time Alikhan Bukeikhan's family saw him was in the summer of 1925. And in the letter to Akhmet Baytursynuly dated June 23, 1925, Bukeikhan says that he is leaving for Kazakhstan on June 30.

Judging by another letter, dated October 2, 1925 and addressed to the People's Commissar of Agriculture of Kazakhstan Alyasqar Alibekov, Alikhan Bukeikhan was not just in a hurry to see his family. He was above all trying to find some possibility, however small, of finally returning to his native land:

"Com[rade]. Ali,

Write to me on behalf of the Kazakh People's Commissariat of Agriculture inviting me to Kyzyl-Orda on October 15. On the basis of this invitation, I can raise the question of my release from the Central Publishing House. Without such an invitation, the Central Publishing House will not let me go. But this way I will be released despite their opposition. It will also clarify our relationship, particularly as there is no need for me to be kept here either on their part or mine.

If you do write the invitation, send it to me via Smagul [Sadvakasuly]."

Did Bukeikhan obey Stalin's demand that he "should not return to his homeland or travel to the steppe"? The archival documents, personal correspondence and memories of his loved ones leave us in no doubt that Bukeikhanov did not consider this demand something that had to be obeyed.

In the first place, it did not have a clear timeframe. Secondly, it was nothing more than a personal whim on the part of Stalin, so it was more of a very strong request than a demand, with the implication that failure to comply could have dire consequences – as Bukeikhan later discovered. Thirdly, a personal demand by Stalin was not the same as a decision by the People's Commissariat of Nationalities or the Central Executive Committee.

Moreover, it is a matter of historical fact that the Stalin of 1922 was not the same as the Stalin of 1926-1929 or the Stalin of 1937. His political weight and influence differed radically depending on the period.

When Bukeikhan heard Stalin's demand from his own lips, probably at their first meeting in Moscow, he is unlikely to have challenged it or demanded any privileges or material benefits in return. He would have considered that below his dignity. Perhaps this was another fatal mistake on the part of the Kazakh leader. But neither he nor his colleagues from Alash-Orda ever fawned over anyone or tried to curry favour with them – not under the Tsars and not under the new dictatorship – especially for sake of their own personal wellbeing.

It is clear from the examples here that Bukeikhan was always pointedly polite during his personal meetings with Stalin, as he was with all the other Bolshevik leaders, from Lenin onwards. He in no way showed his true attitude to the individual in question or what he really thought about them. His real attitude to Stalin, as one of the leaders of the Soviet regime, is revealed by the story by Alimkhan Ermekuly above. We will see it again a little further below.

We do not know exactly what Aliasqar Alibekov, the People's Commissar of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, replied to Bukeikhan's letter of October 2, 1925. But based on the testimony of Salimgerey Karatleuly, questioned on July 6, 1929 in Almaty, "discussions took place about an invitation for Bukeikhan to come and work at the People's Commissariat of Agriculture".

GOLOSHCHEKIN AND A SENSE OF FOREBODING

The first determined attempt by Bukeikhan to return to Kazakhstan may be in some way related to Filipp Isaevich Goloshchekin's "election" to the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Kazakh SSR in autumn 1925. Goloshchekin was later the initiator and main driving force behind the monstrous "Little October" operation that brought more than six million Kazakhs to the brink of extinction.

Bukeikhan knew that Goloshchekin was Stalin's henchman. Stalin had started another of his insidious "political games", which involved replacing Party leaders in a number of Soviet and autonomous republics with his own men, with the sole purpose of protecting his position as General Secretary of the sole ruling party. Living in Moscow and in touch with the "old Bolsheviks", Bukeikhan could follow what was going on in the Kremlin and see the consequences of the infighting which had intensified since the death of Lenin. He understood how the Kremlin functioned behind the scenes, and he knew Stalin's love of power and insidious designs, to which end Stalin was rapidly amassing political weight and influence in the Party and across the entire country. He saw with foreboding the threat to Kazakhstan represented by the appointment of Stalin's henchman Goloshchekin, one of the organisers of the terrible massacre of the Tsar's family. The historian of the Revolution V. Burtsev, who knew Goloshchekin personally, describes him as a "typical Leninist" who did not baulk at the sight of blood: "an executioner, cruel, and showing signs of degeneration".

It is worth reminding ourselves that Stalin achieved his aim through these political games. Looking slightly ahead, we see that at the next Party plenum on January 1, 1926 Stalin was

reconfirmed General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

Bukeikhan followed the events taking place in his native Kazakhstan in the newspapers, which he received regularly, from letters, and from the tales of members of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, who often came to Moscow. For example, in his letter to Baitursynuly of June 23, 1925, he makes fun of the clumsy attempts by the "new Kazakhs" to sound like Lenin. As usual, he uses a parable, in this case the Ancient Greek myth about the bull who dreamed of becoming the god Jupiter: "It seems that Russian books often quote from Lenin's articles. Our Kazakh books never do so, except in the case of poor old Saken [Seifullin]. One of the Communists recently told me of this. I reminded him of the legend of how one day Jupiter came down to earth in the form of a bull and an ordinary bull dreamt of becoming a god. Then I asked him, "If the Kazakh Communists want to become Lenin, god's speed to them. But how can they become Lenin, when they are more like the bull?" My 'Tore' was seriously upset and rather offended".

Bokeikhan's first and all his subsequent attempts to return to Kazakhstan and somehow influence the course of events there were unsuccessful. However, he was in the new capital of the Republic, Kyzyl-Orda, on the eve of the Fifth Party Conference held in December 1925.

Alikhan Bukeikhan's presence in Kyzyl-Orda is confirmed by Salingerey Karatleuuly, whom we mentioned earlier. In his testimony from July 2, 1929, S.Karatleuuly stated that "Shvetsov told me that he had brought Bukeikhanov with him to Kyzyl-Orda. This was before the Fifth Party Conference in 1925".

Miryakub Dulatuly, who was questioned by the NKVD the very next day, July 3, is more precise about the purpose of Bokeikhanov's visit: "In 1925, during a visit by Bukeikhanov and Shvetsov, we visited AKAAVA [?]. I remember one of the invitations came from Khodzhanov. The party consisted of myself, Dulatov, Bukeikhanov, Baitursynov and Kadyrbaev".

Even from this fragmentary evidence, it is easy to see the important purpose that lay behind Bokeikhan's attempts to get to Kyzyl-Orda as soon as possible. His main goal was not to work in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture or in some other position, nor even to finally return to his home country, although, of course, he had refused to emigrate in order to serve the recently formed state and to contribute to its good, at least in some high office or economic position. He also wanted to serve as guarantor that the members of Alash-Orda would not take up arms against the Soviets.

His return was eagerly anticipated by the upper echelons of the Party and state leadership of the Republic. Attempts were made – some open, some secret – to bring him back to the country quickly, as we will see below. His authority as the true leader of the nation remained strong among the Republic's Soviet leaders, and even among those who saw him as the "leader of bourgeois nationalists". His extreme popularity among the people was unquestioned, and was well known to the Kremlin and to Stalin himself, as revealed by the telegram from Khodzhanuly and Ryskululy cited further above. None of Kazakhstan's Communist leaders dared contradict him to his face. Indeed, many of them who visited Moscow or lived there considered it an honour to meet him – something that would later incriminate them as cooperation with counter-revolutionary hubs in Moscow and Kazakhstan. Only a few careerists such as Mendeshuly secretly or openly denounced him later to the Kremlin.

One example was the Kazakh Soviet writer Sabit Mukanov, one of the most rabid "ideological" opponents of the idea of Alash and an active NKVD informant. For some mysterious reason, accompanied by his wife Mariyam, he attended the cremation in Moscow of Bukeikhan's son-in-

law Smagul Sadvakasuly, who died in the Kremlin hospital in 1933. Mariyam Mukanova appears to have been a sworn enemy of the members of Alash-Orda. She met Bukeikhan only once. In her memoirs published in 2000, she writes of him with undisguised admiration: "Bukeikhanov was an attractive man ... He had a regal look about him. He was haughty, with an inscrutable face."

Smagul Sadvakasuly was the husband of Bukeikhan's daughter Elizaveta, or "Lizazhan" as he fondly called her in his letters to Akhmet Baitursynuly. Smagul Sadvakasuly was also the father of Bukeikhan's only grandson at the time, Kenka – the affectionate form of "Iskander" by which he was known to his family.

The Academy handbook writes of Sadvakasuly as follows: "An exceptional, talented man of firm principles and excellent character, Smagul Sadvakasuly [Photo 10] was a talented political journalist, an outstanding writer and critic, a cultural worker, an organiser of the Kazakh theatre, a public speaker and a teacher of young people".

In 1925, at the age of 25, Sadvakasuly became the People's Commissar of Education of Kazakhstan. In 1926, he was one of the first to have a sharp confrontation with Goloshchekin, the new General Secretary. The two disagreed about questions relating to Kazakhs being forced to settle, the mass collectivisation of Kazakh villages and the confiscation of property from wealthy families in those villages, as proposed by Goloshchekin.

The irreconcilable conflict between Sadvakasov and Goloshchekin was in fact a reflection of the invisible, silent confrontation between two personalities: Bukeikhan, the leader of Alash, and Stalin, the leader of the Bolsheviks. It was the struggle between good and evil. One was guided by the fundamental interests of his nation and was willing to sacrifice himself on its behalf; the other was guided by ambitious, inhuman intentions based on the strengths and punitive force of a vast empire. Sadvakasuly's confrontation with Goloshchekin, like that of the leader of Alash with the leader of the Communist empire, was doomed from the start. Because behind Goloshchekin loomed the figure of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) himself: Joseph Stalin.

In 1928, as a result of this confrontation, Sadvakasov was recalled to Moscow by order of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and was enrolled as a first-year student in the Moscow Institute of Railway Engineers. Nygmet Nurmakuly was the next to follow him: the former Chairman of the People's Commissariat was also enrolled as a student in the Communist University of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). It is clear who was behind all this. After graduation, Sadvakasov was sent to work on the construction of the Moscow-Donbas railway line by personal order of Stalin. While working near Voronezh in the autumn of 1933, according to the official version, he contracted typhoid fever, and on December 16 of the same year died in hospital in Moscow. Following his cremation and up to 2011, his ashes were in the Donskoy Cemetery in Moscow. A few years later, this was also the location for a common grave in which the ashes of his father-in-law, Bukeikhan, were secretly interred.

But all this was still to come. To return to the period in question: based on the evidence of Dulatuly and Karatleuly from July 1929, Bukeikhan's trip to Kyzyl-Orda the day before the December Party conference, in order to participate in said conference, does not appear to be pure invention. A newsreel from the conference, discovered by chance in Kazakhstan in 2011, shows that a place was set up for him on the tribune. If the Party and state leaders of Kazakhstan were not expecting him to attend the conference, they certainly treated him with great respect. However, Goloshchekin's speech to the conference, in which he stated that "prior to his arrival in

the Republic, there was no Soviet power in place" went beyond even the most pessimistic premonitions of Bukeikhan.

Subsequent events, now dictated by Stalin's henchman Goloshchekin, show that in the few days that Alikhan Bukeikhan spent in Kyzyl-Orda he failed to achieve what he desired: to settle the discord between the different groups of Kazakh leaders in the country and so prevent the impending persecutions and repressions. Goloshchekin further contributed to this discord, pitting these groups against each other and skilfully exploiting their differences so as to be able to then attack each of them in turn.

"PUNITIVE REACTION BY STALIN"

In the summer of the following year, 1926, Bukeikhan made a second attempt to achieve a reconciliation between the Kazakh Communists in the Party and state leadership of the country. This time he came to Kyzyl-Orda with S. Rudenko, taking advantage of the anthropological expedition to the Aday district organised by the Special Committee of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Bukeikhan led the team carrying out economic research in the area, the overall expedition being led by Rudenko, an academic from Leningrad.

There is little point speculating whom Bukeikhanov may have met in Kyzyl-Orda or what he may have discussed with them. The immediate punitive reaction by Stalin shows that Bukeikhan was successful. On his return to Aktobe, Bukeikhan was arrested and, as in 1922, brought under escort to Moscow and immediately detained in Butyrka Prison.

Alikhan Bukeikhan's fate now depended entirely on the mood or whim of Stalin, who had become the almost uncontested master of the Kremlin and indeed the entire country. It is possible that this was exactly the point at which Stalin decided that the long-awaited moment had come to finally implement his plan of October 1922 to "liquidate the leadership of the disloyal Alash-Orda". If this is so, Bukeikhan was just a step away from certain death.

Was Bukeikhan afraid of death? His subsequent actions lead us to think that he was not. He was more worried about the fate of his country and his people, which he feared would face a trial of unprecedented proportions in the near future. Once again, his apprehensions proved well-founded. The first speech by Stalin's henchman Goloshchekin in December of the previous year, which Bukeikhan had heard in person, and Goloshchekin's first actions in 1926, accusing the youngest and most talented leaders of the country, the Chairman of the People's Commissariat Nygmet Nurmakuly and the People's Commissar of Education Smagul Sadvakasov, of "national deviationism" and "Sadvakasoverly" bode no good. This was followed by the persecution of to all appearances some of the most "loyal" Communists, including Seifullin, Murzagaliuly, Mendeshuly – who had denounced the leader of the nation to the Central Executive Committee literally a year earlier – and others.

Meanwhile Bukeikhan's daughter Elizaveta, with little Iskander still a babe in arms, was powerless to do anything to free her father. All the power in the country, including the judiciary, had been concentrated in the hands of a single person: Stalin.

However, a happy coincidence came to Bukeikhan's aid. Whether it was really an accident or not is unimportant. Raimzhan Bukeikhanov, Bukeikhan's nephew who often stayed with him in Moscow, told me personally what happened.

Elizaveta had gone to visit a friend from her student days to share with her the sorrow that had befallen her family. The friend's father, hearing the women crying, asked them what they were

talking about. This man turned out to be one of the "old Bolsheviks", Vasily Andreevich Shelgunov, now blind after a long period of exile in Siberia. From the sound of her voice and by touching her face, he recognised Elizaveta as the daughter of the legendary advocate the idea of Marxist economic materialism, Bukeikhan. The old Bolshevik immediately volunteered to help her and requested an appointment with Stalin without delay. It is not known whether Elizaveta accompanied the old man to the Kremlin or was present during his conversation with Stalin, but an article by Zhaik Bekturov from 1989 describes some of the details of the meeting. It is known that, at the time, Vasily Shelgunov was one of those old Bolsheviks who still called Stalin by his old Party name "Koba".

Entering Stalin's office, the old Bolshevik immediately attacked him, saying, "Koba, do you even know who they've arrested? A staunch Marxist! The man who taught us Marxism. Order his release immediately!"

The ultra-cautious Stalin appears to have realised that his position as General Secretary of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) – a post he had only been re-elected to at the beginning of the year – was not so all-powerful and secure that he could ignore an old Bolshevik from "Lenin's guard". By telephone, he ordered Bukeikhan to be released and brought to his office.

This atmosphere at this second meeting between Stalin and Bukeikhan was oppressive. Now Stalin spoke not as the People's Commissar for Nationalities but as the head of the state, and his manner was fitting. He reminded Bukeikhan of his earlier demand, which he repeated now but in a tone that brooked no opposition, not to mention disobedience.

From Stalin's words it is not difficult to see that he had thought carefully about what he had to say before the meeting. Suddenly, he narrowed his eyes slyly and a slight smile played around his lips. "If you miss your horse-meat dishes and fermented mare's milk so much," he said, "why not go to Bashkiria? They have the same type of food and drink there, you know."

In this way, he showed Bukeikhan that he knew exactly what he was about. Yet the archive materials reveal that even now, despite this pressure, Stalin could not get Bukeikhan to reconsider his decision to return to Kazakhstan – something which apparently at turns irritated and enraged the "father of all nations". Striking confirmation of this is found in the new archival documents released by RGASPI in 2010. These documents also show that, a few months later, the head of the vast Soviet empire personally had to try to find employment for Bukeikhan.

Two copies of a secret telegram exist which, according to the information on them, were to be sent in encrypted form. The first copy [Photo 12] is of more interest, the only difference between the two being that the first is handwritten and signed by Stalin, while the second [Photo 13] is typed up. The telegram is addressed to Goloshchekin and Nurmakuly and dated May 17, 1927.

An examination of the telegram reveal the mood of the author both through its contents and its sprawling handwriting. It is clearly written by someone in a state of irritation or fury even. This is what it says:

"Inform me immediately[:] do you object to Bukeikhanov going to Kazakhstan temporarily or working with you permanently. No. 11064/s – 3837/sh

STALIN".

Note how Stalin, a subtle psychologist if ever there was one, phrases the question: "Do you object?" In Russian, the construction is unusual: it is as if Stalin is telling the person he is asking

that he expects the answer "Yes". If he had used the more correct phrasing in Russian, the equivalent of "You don't object, do you?" he probably would have got the opposite answer: "No, we don't."

Let us now turn to the recipients of the encrypted telegram and their probable response. At this point in time, Goloshchekin was Secretary of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). Nygmet Nurmakuly had been Chairman of the People's Commissariat of the Kazakh (Kirghiz) ASSR since 1924, and remained in this post until April 1929.

It has not yet been possible to locate the telegrams sent by Goloshchekin and Nurmakuly in answer to Stalin's encrypted request of May 17, 1927. However, archival documents indicate that N. Nurmakuly was even more "concerned" than Stalin about finding employment for Bukeikhan. It is quite possible that Nurmakuly invited Bukeikhan to come from Moscow and gave him work in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture right under the nose of Goloshchekin. Goloshchekin, as Secretary of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) from 1924 to 1933, according to the records "ruled over" Kazakhstan – Leon Trotsky asked him once, sarcastically: "What, young master? Are you still the ruler?" – from his cosy office in Almaty, while all the central authorities of the Republic were in Kyzyl-Orda. However, N. Nurmakuly's decision to give A. Bukeikhan a job without the consent of Goloshchekin and the approval of Stalin was an extremely bold and very risky act.

"BOKEIKHAN'S WORK IN THE KAZAKH PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT OF AGRICULTURE AND GETTING AROUND STALIN"

An "interim decision" letter from the People's Commissariat of Agriculture [VRID.NARKOMZEM] of the Kazakh ASSR signed by Bukeikhan and addressed to the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR, i.e. Nygmet Nurmakuly, confirms that Alikhan Bukeikhan already held a high-up position in the People's Commissariat, no lower than Deputy Commissar, in June 1927. The letter also reveals that Bukeikhan temporarily acted on behalf of People's Commissar Sultanbekov during the latter's absence in Moscow, and requested "permission to travel to Moscow on July 6 of this year and to temporarily pass the duties of People's Commissar to the Member of the Board of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture Comrade Alimbaev". The letter does not specify the year, but the documents below confirm that it was written in July 1927.

The information submitted in due course by the TsGA MVD KazSSR to the NKVD of the USSR confirms that Bukeikhan went to Moscow and participated in the meetings of the Committee of the Central Executive Committee:

1/ "in the materials of the fund 'the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of the Kazakh ASSR', in the minutes of the meeting of the working committee to draw up rules for protecting the land of the Kazakh ASSR, developed on the basis of the Regulations on Solid Land Management of the Kazakh ASSR' from August 2-3, 1927, Bukeikhanov is listed as representing the Kazakh ASSR";

2/ "In the minutes of the meeting of the Presidium of the Federal Committee on Land of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of August 24, 1927, Bokeikhanov is listed as representing Kazakhstan"

There is a fourth document from the same archive, the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of the Kazakh ASSR: namely, a letter addressed to the Syr-Darya GZU of 1927 which bears the signature of "Bukeikhanov" as "Nach. Tsentr. Upr. Zem-stva" ("Head of the Central Office of Land Management" – Author's Note). The document is dated with the year 1927 only, with no day or month indicated.

It is thus difficult to determine exactly when Bukeikhanov held the position of Head of the Central Office of Land Management, before going to Moscow or afterwards. It is also unknown until what year Alikhan Bukeikhan worked in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of Kazakhstan and under what circumstances he lost his job there.

For example, on October 1, 1927, Bukeikhanov received a "reference" for his work in the Kazakh section of the Central Publishing House of the USSR. This reference states that he was dismissed as per October 1 of that year "due to a general reduction in cadres". The reference is entirely positive in tone, which would lead one to think that Bukeikhan's dismissal came at his own request. There were no issues with his work in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of Kazakhstan in the period when he was still a member of the literary staff of the Kazakh section of the Central Publishing House. Even before he joined the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, he had worked in parallel – highly successfully – as a professor at the University of Leningrad, been involved as an expert in the work of the Special Committee of the Academy of Sciences and been on a research expedition. In all these cases, Bukeikhan could request long-term leave "without special justification", as was widely practiced in Soviet organizations of this type.

Many questions remain about the reason for his dismissal from the Central Publishing House in October 1927 and not later or earlier, for example when he was invited to work in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, which he had strongly requested in his letter to the People's Commissar Alyasqar Alibekov of October 2, 1925. Whether his dismissal at this point in time was due to his intention to finally return to his native steppe, or the fact that an opportunity to do so had arisen, remains a mystery. But judging by the contents of the encrypted telegram [sent by Stalin on May 17, 1927], Stalin was still carefully considering the issue and wanted to sound out Goloshchekin and Nurmakuly.

Academician Sergey Shvetsov, an associate of Bukeikhan during the revolutionary movement in Siberia and the steppes, and a fellow member of the research expeditions of 1904 and 1927, wrote an evaluation of Bukeikhan in January 1928 highly praising his research activity from 1896 to 1928. This evaluation is dated January 5, 1928 and bears the stamp of the Permanent Representation of the Kazakh ASSR in Moscow.

To what end did Bukeikhan require the positive reference and his subsequent dismissal from the Central Publishing House, and the evaluation by Academician Shvetsov with its high praise for his research activity, essentially amounting to a reference? For the defence of his dissertation? So he could return to Kazakhstan and find a high-up position? Clearly the reference and evaluation were intended for Kazakhstan. But for what purpose? This is an important question, to which we do not have a convincing answer at present.

The issue cannot be ignored, however. Working at the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of Kazakhstan at different points in 1920-1921 and 1927, Bukeikhanov had the opportunity to examine the status and prospects of agriculture in certain parts of the country that he was previously unfamiliar with, such as the Karakalpak Autonomous Region. This area was separated from the Kazakh ASSR only in March 1930 and became part of Uzbekistan in 1936. His research paper "The agriculture of the Karakalpak Region" was published in "The Economy of

Kazakhstan" in 1928 in Kyzyl-Orda. In the paper, Bokeikhanov recommends that the region be developed by means of "intense irrigated agriculture in the direction of cotton and lucerne". With regard to traditional livestock farming, he sees all the conditions necessary for karakul sheep farming: "But a system of protective measures must be put in place for it [karakul sheep farming – Author's Note], as for cotton."

Meanwhile, the courageous act by Nurmakuly, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR – in modern terms the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan – inviting Bukeikhan to work in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture without the consent of Goloshchekin or the approval of Stalin, had serious consequences both for Nurmakov and for Bukeikhan. Of course, his act was simply used as a pretext for what followed: if it hadn't been this, something else would soon have been found. Thus in April 1929, he was dismissed from his post and recalled to Moscow by order of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in order, so it was claimed, to enrol him in the Communist University of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). And as early as May, Bukeikhan was invited to Almaty for questioning. This questioning, the only interrogation that took place, occurred on May 27, 1929. The minutes record Bukeikhan's short answer: "I have testified to Comrade Kashirin about the activities of 'Alash Orda' from the time of its creation until its collapse".

That year, most of Bukeikhan's colleagues from the Alash Orda government under Baitursynov were arrested. In their interrogations, the NKVD were particularly interested in the circumstances surrounding Bukeikhan's invitation to work for the Special Committee of the Academy of Sciences and his participation in the anthropological expedition to the Aday district. This can be seen from the testimony of Karatleuly on July 2, 1929: "When the Academy approved the project from Kazakhstan, it immediately invited Bokeikhanov to participate as a leading expert on Kazakhstan. He was invited via Shvetsov, who knew him well."

During questioning on July 6, Karatleuly further stated as follows: "To what extent Bukeikhanov influenced the expedition, I do not know. But I do know that he could have influenced it."

From these documents, it is clear that the merciless punitive system built up by the Soviet regime and by Stalin himself was seriously getting down to business with Bukeikhan. By 1929, Stalin's leading role and his power in the Party and the country as a whole were so entrenched that he could act without regard for "Lenin's guard". There was no-one left who called him by his nickname "Koba". Instead, people were beginning to call him "master" – although so far only behind his back.

WHAT STALIN FEARED: THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF THE LEADER OF ALASH

What was it that saved Alikhan Bukeikhan, founder and former head of the national and territorial autonomy of Alash-Orda, from the first wave of mass repressions in 1928-1929, when almost all of his former colleagues, including Akhmet Baitursynuly, Miryakub Dulatuly and Khalel Gabbasuly were arrested and sent to Stalin's prison camps for various periods of time? We do not have a clear answer to that question. Most likely, Stalin hesitated to take "drastic steps" against Bukeikhan for fear of the consequences in Kazakhstan. There can be no other explanation for Stalin's indecision. Through his henchman Goloshchekin, Stalin had excellent information about the actual situation in Kazakhstan and the precarious position of the Communist government there. Better than anyone else, he was also aware of Bukeikhan's absolute authority and untarnished reputation among his people and in the country as a whole, where he was considered the true leader of the Kazakhs. To those people he was known as "ult

kösemi", "Altı Alaş kösemi" and "bizdiñ hanımız" ["Leader of the Nation", "Leader of the Six Alash", "Our Khan"]. Even today, Kazakh-speaking intellectuals in modern Kazakhstan call him "ult kösemi" or even "nağız tuñğış prezident".

Stalin, whose aim at that time was to be the "leader of all people", closely followed the secret reports by the NKVD on how Bukeikhan's rare visits to Kazakhstan were greeted with rejoicing and a general lift in the mood of ordinary people in all regions of the country without exception. In 1926, for example, the people greeted Bokeikhanov with celebrations and jubilation in the Aday district of western Kazakhstan, today's Atyrau and Mangistau regions, when he arrived there with the anthropological expedition, calling him the "true leader of the nation" ("ult kösemi"). Academician Alkey Margulan later wrote about this in his diary, published only in 1994. As a member of the anthropological expedition, he was an eyewitness to this glorious event, and his diary records the sincere gratitude he felt to the people of Aday for not forgetting Bukeikhan's services to the nation.

It is interesting to note that ten years earlier, in 1916, the leaders of the Aday tribe had greeted Alikhan Bukeikhan enthusiastically, waving banners and proclaiming "Our Khan has come!" In response, Bukeikhan demanded an end to the rebellion. He had come to explain to them the futility and destructiveness of unarmed insurrection against the modern army of the empire, especially following the heavy losses of the First World War. This and other arguments that he presented were irrefutable, and he persuaded the leaders of the Aday tribe to obey the "June 25" decree of the Russian Tsar and send their horsemen aged 19 to 35 to the front, promising that he himself would join them. As always, he was true to his word, following them to the Western Front.

It is highly regrettable that historians and the general public in Kazakhstan still believe the myth of the 1916 uprising being "led by Amangeldy Imanuly (Imanov)", a legend created by the writer Gabit Musrepov. The true leader of the rebellion in Turgay was not Amangeldy Imanuly, who was known in the steppe as a horse thief and a thug, but Abdugappar, who was the Khan elected by the local tribes. Soviet historiography, mainly concerned with creating myths, carefully avoids mentioning Abdugappar's name as he was one of the "tore sultans" – a descendant of Genghis Khan.

Even more regrettable is the fact that the modern ideology of Kazakhstan, just a hundred years on, appears to be in no hurry to restore the truth about its national history, even when it is supported by compelling historical facts and archive documents.

It is certain fact that in the spring of 1917, Bokeikhanov, as Commissar of the Provisional Government of the Turgay region, invited Khan Abdugappar and Amangeldy Imanuly to come and talk to him. He convinced them that the Russian Tsar, against whom they were rebelling, had been deposed, and that the forthcoming Constituent Assembly would establish true democracy in the country. In response, both rebel leaders undertook to stop agitating the nation. Documentary evidence of this meeting is found in the state archives of Kazakhstan. Only one of the rebel leaders broke his commitment: Amangeldy.

But to return to the period under examination: there was another reason why Stalin did not dare to arrest Bokeikhanov, let alone physically eliminate him. The reason is given by Goloshchekin, Secretary of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in the years 1925 to 1933, in an article published in the journal "For the Party" at the beginning of 1930: "This period [1920-1925] was characterized not by Party structures but by the dominance of different groups, the ideology of Alash Orda outside the Party, and the ideology of Khodzhanov, Ryskulov and Sadvakasov, who reflected the ideology of Alash-Orda inside the

Party. At this time, the leadership was in the hands of these groups of nationalists ... Indeed at this time, I would argue, it was difficult to find a Kazakh Communist who did not belong to one of these groups ...".

Looking at the course of Stalin's actions, the logic behind them and the dates of events taking place in Kazakhstan, we see that all the Kazakh Communists – Ryskululy, Sadvakasuly, Nurmakuly, Khodzhanuly and others – accused by Goloshchekin of "national deviationism" [Stalin was the first to use neologisms such as "Trotskyism" in his accusations and the "-ism" style was taken up by Goloshchekin during the persecution of the Kazakh leaders in 1926-1933] were recalled to Moscow for the noble-sounding purpose of "study". A few years later, they were treated to the more refined Stalinist method of an immediate death penalty, with the exception of Sadvakasuly.

Alikhan Bukeikhan's final arrest and detainment in Butyrka Prison occurred on July 26, 1937, as evidenced by Warrant No. 3640 (Photo 15). His arrest came on the heels of the publication of the resolution "On anti-Soviet elements" signed by Stalin on July 2, 1937, on the basis of which, on July 30, 1937, the new head of the NKVD Nikolai Ezhov signed NKVD Operations Order No. 00447 "On the operation to repress former kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements".

In order to speed up the review of the thousands of cases that were generated, non-judicial repressive bodies were widely involved in the process: the "Commission of the NKVD and the Prosecutor General of the USSR" (of which even Ezhov himself, the People's Commissar of the Interior, formed a part) and the infamous "troika" of the NKVD of the USSR at the level of the union, the autonomous republics and the regions.

Prior to his third and final arrest in Moscow, Bukeikhan spent most of the time from 1928-1937 in his communal flat raising his grandson Iskander, as we know from the few fragmentary records that survive. In December 1933 he lost his only son-in-law Smagul Sadvakasuly. The funeral was attended by Ryskululy and Nurmakuly, who held high-up Party positions in the government, the writer Sabit Mukanov and his wife, and some others.

From March 1930 until the time of his first arrest in July 1930, and from 1935 up until his final arrest in July 1938, Jagansha Dosmukhameduly also lived in Moscow. Dosmukhameduly was head of the Western branch of Alash-Orda from 1917 to 1919 and Vice-Chairman of the All-Russian Muslim Council from May to November 1917. From his testimony to the NKVD of July 7, 1938, it appears that he first moved to Moscow at the invitation of his sister-in-law, Nadezhda Konstantinovna, who at the time was married to Turar Ryskululy.

From 1926 to 1937 Ryskululy served as Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR and so had every opportunity to arrange a decent job and housing for his brother-in-law Dosmukhameduly. This was pointed out to Dosmukhamedov by his "baldız" [sister-in-law] in a telegram he received in Tashkent, where he was unsuccessfully trying to find a job.

We do not know whether Dosmukhameduly met Bukeikhan during his first period in Moscow or not. However, in his testimony to the NKVD of June 2, 1938, Dosmukhameduly states as follows: "Very occasionally[,] once every two or three [months] or sometimes once every six months Bukeikhanov would come to see me. We would just have a chat. He is a great raconteur and would entertain me with his witty comments".⁵⁵ When questioned again on June 4 of the same year, Dosmukhameduly gave more details of his meetings with Bukeikhan: "Upon my return from exile in 1935, he and I occasionally met in my apartment or his. The last time I met him was February 1937. From what he said, I know that he had not been arrested despite the fact that he was one of the most active members of our c-r [counter-revolutionary] organization and

had previously been the leader and head of “Alash Orda”. And when interrogated on June 7, 1938, he added that he met Bukeikhan "in the years 1935 to 1937".

In his testimonies, Dosmukhameduly listed the names of all the former members of Alash-Orda whom he met in Moscow between 1935 and 1937, including Khalil Dos-Mukhameduly, Mirzagazi Yesbululy, Abdurakhman Monaitbasuly, Mustafa Buralkyuly, Mukhtar Murzin and, among the visitors to Moscow, Sanjar Asfندیyarov, Alpysbay Kalmenuly, S. Akayuly and others [from the record of the interrogations – Author's Note]. It is possible that all these members of Alash-Orda were primarily there to meet with Bukeikhan, the former Chairman of Alash-Orda and leader of the nation.

THREE LETTERS: THE ONLY EVIDENCE FROM TEN YEARS OF BOKEIKHANOV'S LIFE

Only three letters survive from this period. They are dated 1934. The author of the first letter, from February 27, 1934 is V. Bonch-Bruyevich, a close associate of Lenin's. Bonch-Bruyevich was at that time Director of the Central Museum of Literature, Criticism and Journalism (TsML). In the letter, he asks Bukeikhan to help him "organize the literary holdings" of the TsML [Photo 16]. So far, our search has been unsuccessful for any trace of the TsML itself or the "help" Bukeikhanov may have provided in organizing its collection, as requested by Bonch-Bruyevich, in the form of "letters, exchanges of correspondence, diaries, notebooks, memoirs, recollections, manuscripts, books, photo-cards, rare or unique books, censored books, books published in extremely limited quantities" and much more besides. The TsML, initially located at Rozhdestvenka 31, Building 5, 1st Floor, Moscow, has long since been liquidated and its assets distributed to other museums and archives in Moscow. Much of its collection went to RGASPI.

The other two letters are from Alikhan Bukeikhan himself. The first dates from September 26, 1934 and is addressed to his former colleague Miryakub Dulatuly, who was then serving a sentence in Solovki Prison Camp and who died tragically just ten days later in its central infirmary. Dulatuly was the first leader of Alash-Orda to die in Stalin's camps or prisons, but he would not be the last.

The final letter was written on October 17 of the same year, following the death of Dulatuly, and is addressed to Eldes Omaruly. It was found in the personal archive of Sarsen Amanzholov, indicating that the addressee received it. From the letter it is clear that Bukeikhan was continuing his research into the history of the Kazakhs and Kazakhstan in particular, which he had begun back in 1913. However, none of his manuscripts from 1928-1937 have survived; it is probable that they were confiscated on his arrest and destroyed after he was shot. Manuscripts of his early literary translations from 1922-1927, currently held by the former Central Research Library of NAS RK, along with the manuscript of an unfinished novel by Sadvakasov, made it to Kazakhstan thanks to Mukhtar Auezuly, a regular visitor to Bukeikhan's communal flat in Moscow up until 1937. The manuscript of the novel was discovered in the house-museum of Mukhtar Auezuly and is published in the complete works of Sadvakasuly edited by Professor D. Kamzabekuly.

In his book "We must not forget the past", Bukeikhan's great-nephew Syrym Bukeikhanov describes how Nikolay Ezhov himself accompanied the NKVD officers when they came to arrest Bukeikhan. This is very likely to be true, given that we know that Ezhov liked to be personally present at the interrogation and torture of famous individuals. Another hobby of his was collecting the bullets used to shoot Stalin's personal enemies, later recovered from their bodies in his presence. He kept the bullets in his desk.

However, it is far from clear whether Bokeikhanov's daughter actually "went to secondary school with him [i.e. Ezhov]". His biographer A. Pavlyukov discovered that during the Ezhov family's stay in Mariampol (now in the Republic of Lithuania), Ezhov attended just three years of primary school, and later, in 1906 while living with a relative in St. Petersburg, he trained to be a tailor. This is probably all the education that the future bloodthirsty People's Commissar of the NKVD had.

Even more interesting is the fact that in 1925-1926, ten years prior to his appointment as head of the NKVD, Ezhov worked in Kazakhstan under Goloshchekin as Deputy Executive Secretary of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). It is thus very likely that he could have dropped in to see Bokeikhanov in his communal flat from time to time during these years, as S. Bukeikhanov writes in his book.

THE LEADER OF ALASH: "I DID NOT LIKE THE SOVIET REGIME, BUT I CONFESSED!"

If we are to believe the response I received by letter from the Deputy Director of the Public Relations department of the KGB (TsOS KGB SSSR), A. Karbainov, on September 26, 1991, "Following arrest, during a single interrogation, even before being charged, Bokeikhanov confessed his guilt, and in court he confirmed the testimony he had given during the preliminary investigation". It is not recorded whether Bokeikhanov was subjected to torture in the presence Ezhov during this "single interrogation". However, the photograph of Bukeikhan from Butyrka Prison attached to Karbainov's letter tells us all we need to know.

Karbainov's letter further states that "the accusation that Bukeikhanov had been engaged in anti-Soviet activities was based solely on his testimony during the preliminary investigation, in which Bukeikhanov spoke in general terms about his involvement in nationalistic causes".

The letter further acknowledges that "witnesses were not questioned during the investigation or court process, nor does the file contain any other objective data confirming the existence of a so-called terrorist centre in Kazakhstan or Moscow."

At the same time, it would be wrong to assume that Bukeikhan was entirely "innocent" with respect to the Soviet government. If we accept the testimony of several former leaders of Alash-Orda, after the Red Army's conquest of Bukhara and Khiva and the destruction of their government, the Kazakh national elite feared – and not without reason – that the Soviet government would immediately end the autonomous independence of Kazakhstan and turn the country into a colony. As Jagansha Dosmukhameduly stated in his testimony during questioning by the NKVD in the Moscow region on June 4, 1938, the members of Alash-Orda believed that the Soviet government pursued the same policy of conquest as the Tsarist government before them. The members of Alash-Orda called this policy "Red imperialism". They considered the solemn assurances given by the leaders of the Soviet regime and the Bolshevik policy of national self-determination or even secession nothing more than "political manoeuvring". With some justification, they feared that as the Bolsheviks consolidated their power, they would destroy the independence of the national republics. "These thoughts were playing on the minds of the former members of Alash-Orda during the course of 1921", claimed Dosmukhameduly in June 1938.

It was these fears that prompted the former members of Alash-Orda to set up a Kazakh national organization in Tashkent in 1922, of which the intelligentsia of Alash-Orda were to form the core. The initiator and the chief ideologue behind this organization, known as "Alka" [literally "medallion" or "guardian" – Author's Note] was Bukeikhan. Organizational questions were dealt with by Dulatuly, Esboluly and Auezuly. Alka's draft platform was drawn up by Dulatuly,

Tynyshbayuly and Dosmukhameduly. The draft platform was then taken by Validkhan Omarov [Ualikhan Omaruly] to Bokeikhan for approval, who was at the time still in Orenburg.

It should be pointed out that Alka was not a clandestine or political organisation with political goals or objectives. This is confirmed by Dosmukhameduly in his testimony of June 1938. It was set up quite openly and was designed to carry out purely academic and educational activities, fully in accordance with the law. The establishment of such organisations was not forbidden under the Soviet laws in force at the time. Irrefutable proof of this is the fact that when Alka's platform had been finalised and distributed to all the regions of Kazakhstan, for information purposes and so that they could set up regional branches staffed by local Kazakh intellectuals from Alash, the Soviet authorities did not take any punitive action against the leaders of the organization, its members or anyone else involved. Another reason for this was the fact that Alka did not ultimately get off the ground – most likely because Bukeikhan, its initiator and chief ideologue, was removed to Moscow in December 1922.

Nevertheless, towards the 1930s, Alka was noted by the OGPU of the NKVD as a "counter-revolutionary underground nationalist rebel organization consisting of members of Alash-Orda". This, we should note, was simply a pretext for accusing and persecuting not only the former leaders and members of Alash Orda but all prominent national intellectuals and Kazakh Soviet leaders in Kazakhstan as a whole.

Having said that, it cannot be ruled out that the founders of Alka did initially give it some political goals and objectives when setting it up – objectives such as "training cadres and the population in armed uprising against Soviet rule in the case of a threat to the national independence of Kazakhstan". The Alash intellectuals might have been prompted to give the organisation such objectives by fears that the Soviet powers had secret plans to destroy the autonomy of the national autonomous republics, particularly Kazakhstan. What happened later shows that such fears were far from groundless.

Mustafa Shokay, another former member of Alash-Orda, who by the summer of 1921 was already in Paris, fully shared these fears. It would be quite wrong to assume, let alone try to prove, that Shokay emigrated to France for personal political reasons and acted purely on the basis of his own observations of the situation in Kazakhstan and Turkestan. What few scraps of information we have indicate that in the 1920s and 30s Shokay stayed in touch with some of the former leaders of Alash-Orda, particularly his political mentor and teacher Alikhan Bukeikhan. This is evidenced by their exchange of letters from 1925 via Amre Kashaubayuly, a popular dombra player and singer, who – not without Bokeikhan's assistance – visited Paris that year and performed brilliantly at the ethnographic concert at the Universal Exhibition of Decorative Arts. Clearly, Kashaubayuly was not the only channel of communication between Shokay and Bokeikhanov, who was in Kazakhstan until December 1922 and then in Moscow right up until September 1937. The deeply conspiratorial communication between Shokay and Bukeikhan was not as frequent as they might have liked perhaps, but it was nevertheless reasonably regular and ongoing. It is also very likely that the French Embassy in Moscow made this communication possible. Fortunately, diplomatic relations between France and the USSR were established in October 1924, two years after Bukeikhan moved to Moscow.

We should not forget either the close ties that had formerly existed between the French Masonic lodge "Great East" and the Russian Masonic lodge "North Star". Alikhan Bukeikhan probably joined North Star around 1906, not long after it was set up as a branch of the French Masonic community, its foundation being attended by delegates from Paris. The likelihood that French diplomats aided communication with Bokeikhanov is even greater given the fact – yet to be confirmed – that Bukeikhan collaborated with the influential French newspaper "Le Figaro" in

the late 1920s and early 30s. Of course, this collaboration was performed in secret. Bukeikhan's daughter, Elizaveta Bukeikhanova-Sadvakasova, incidentally referred to it in a conversation with Bukeikhan's nephew R. Bukeikhanov.

The attempt by Shokay in 1934-1935 to arrange the escape of Dulatov from the Solovki Prison Camp during a stop there by a French merchant ship is further proof of the regular, ongoing communication between Shokay and Bukeikhan. Shokay could only have known about Dulatuly's arrest and where he was being held from Bukeikhan: of all the former members of Alash-Orda, Bukeikhan was the only one still at large, albeit under the close supervision of the NKVD. Naturally, his wealth of experience in conspiratorial activities under the Tsarist regime, especially as part of the Russian Masonic Order, came in extremely useful here.

Shokay's activities while in exile and his interaction with colleagues from Alash-Orda in the period from 1919 to the late 1930s requires more detailed research and objective analysis. It is highly regrettable that modern historians in Kazakhstan tend to view the activities of Shokay – the former head of the Mukhtariat of Turkestan, better known as the Kokand Autonomy, and member of the National Council of the Alash-Orda Autonomy – as completely separate from the events taking place in Kazakhstan during this period and the activities of intellectuals and former members of Alash-Orda. This approach is entirely mistaken, unforgivable even.

But let us return to the fears of the former members of Alash-Orda about the national policy of the Soviet government. It is clear that Shokay followed developments in Kazakhstan not only via the Soviet and Western media but also through previously established channels of communication. Every action he took, every revelation he made about the policy pursued by the Soviet regime in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics was probably approved as far as was possible by Bukeikhan, and perhaps also by Baytursynuly and others. Through his frequent speeches and lectures to Western audiences, his articles in the Western press and his books, Shokay reported on the situation in Kazakhstan and the likely developments there with regard to the Kremlin's national policy. By publicising this information, he attempted to influence the actions of the Soviet government and its policies in the national republics. The attempts on the part of the Soviet government, under the personal supervision of Stalin, to render him harmless or better still physically remove him are eloquent testimony to the fact that his attempts to influence the national policy of the Kremlin were not in vain.

As for Alka's objective of "training cadres and the population in armed uprising against Soviet rule in the case of a threat to the national independence of Kazakhstan", these goals may not of course been reflected in the official platform drawn up by Dulatov, Tynyshbayuly and Zhagansha Dosmukhameduly. When the platform was drawn up in 1922, it was taken into account that most of the former members of Alash-Orda now held positions of leadership in the Soviet and Party apparatuses of the Kazakh and Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics. As such, it was assumed that they would influence policy in favour of protecting the interests of the Kazakh people and its specific national situation.

It should be stressed that Bukeikhan's view of the Soviet regime, like that of all the other former leaders and members of Alash-Orda, varied over time. In 1929, however, it took a drastic downturn when the Kazakhs were forced to settle, mass collectivisation was introduced in Kazakhstan and the Kazakh Soviet leaders of the republic were persecuted. From the moment Goloshchekin became leader of the Kazakh Party government, the unification of the nation's intelligentsia – especially the intelligentsia of Alash, labelled by the Soviet government a "national-bourgeois intelligentsia" – into a single organisation such as Alka was out of the question. By the 1930s, the Soviet regime had managed to disperse, fragment, neutralise and in some cases even intimidate the Kazakh national elite, the outstanding intelligentsia of Alash.

Perhaps the most telling evidence of this is the testimony of Zhagansha Dosmukhameduly from June 8, 1938: "When I met members of the Kazakh nationalist insurgent organisation at various times both before and after exile, and when I met Kazakh nationalists, we talked about the fact that almost half of the Kazakh nation had died as a result of collectivisation, we talked about Alash-Orda matters, about the fact that in the event of a war against the Soviet Union there would be mass arrests ... We talked about the fact that the Kazakhs no longer visit each other, meet up or talk to each other for fear of the NKVD, as everybody is being spied on, about the mass arrests in Kazakhstan, in particular the arrests of the Kazakh People's Commissars, saying how unhappy we were about these things and how we were surprised at the ongoing arrests of People's Commissars".

The next line of the letter I received from the Public Relations department of the KGB is perplexing, however: "Bukeikhanov's personal correspondence, seized during the arrest, has been lost". If this personal correspondence was stapled to Bukeikhan's file as evidence of his criminal activities, how could it possibly be "lost"?

Moreover, to judge by copies of the minutes of the Military Board of the Supreme Court of the USSR from September 27, 1937, when the case of Alikhan Bukeikhan was heard, the claim by the Public Relations department of the KGB that the accused "confessed his guilt, and in court he confirmed the testimony he had given during the preliminary investigation" is not substantiated. Copies of the minutes were provided by the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (at that time still the Federal Counterintelligence Service of the Russian Federation – Author's Note) in March 1995. In fact, according to the minutes, Bukeikhan's last words, granted to him by the court before it announced its verdict, were as follows: "I DID NOT LIKE THE SOVIET REGIME, BUT I CONFESSED!"

Following these words, the Military Board of the Supreme Court of the USSR announced its standard verdict, in which the accused was found guilty on all counts of the offense as charged and sentenced to death by firing squad. The sentence was carried out the same day, September 27, 1937, as confirmed by a document provided by the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation [Photo No 19].

That same day, the death sentence of another son of Kazakhstan was announced: Nygmet Nurmakuly, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Kazakhstan in the years 1924-1929. He was also shot the same day.

It is difficult not to agree with the view of researchers from Oxford University's Centre for Central Asian studies, published in 1985 (here paraphrased): "The outstanding Kazakh elite of this period disappeared in the bloody purge of the 1930s, along with most of the Kazakh Communists, including those who were sworn enemies of Alash-Orda."

A small but very important adjustment is required to this statement, however. Two members of Alash-Orda survived the mass repressions of the 1930s: Alimkhan Ermekuly, who was persecuted until the 1950s, and Mukhtar Auezuly. Ermekuly later became the first Kazakh professor of Mathematics, and Auezuly received the Lenin Prize for his epic novel "The Way of Abay".

Neither the letter from the Public Relations department of the KGB from 1991, nor the documents sent by the FSB, the legal successor to the KGB, give details of where Alikhan Bukeikhan was buried after he was shot. The last resting place of the legendary Son of the Steppes, the leader of the Kazakh people in the early twentieth century, was in fact only discovered by accident some 80 years after he was executed, thanks to persistent searching by

the descendants of Nurmakuly. With the help of the "Memorial" fund, they managed to find out that Bukeikhan and Nurmakuly were not only condemned and executed on the same day but also buried together – or rather their ashes were interred – in a common grave in the Donskoy Cemetery in Moscow [Photos No 20-22].

Alikhan Bukeikhan led a humble, ascetic life under the new rulers, as he did under the Tsars. After his arrest and execution, the only "luxuries" that his daughter Elizaveta and grandson Iskander inherited were his room in the communal flat in Moscow, some books, photographs, manuscripts and a pouch of naswar snuff, now in the possession of his great-nephew S. Bokeikhanov in Almaty.

Alikhan Bukeikhan enjoyed unquestioned authority in Russia and Kazakhstan, even among those who considered him a "class enemy" or a "bourgeois nationalist". He commanded profound respect, and on occasion great admiration and awe.

According to the memoirs of Smakhan Tore, Alikhan Bukeikhan would often say to his family that when he died all he needed was six feet of earth ("ölgende 2,5 kez jer kerek") in his native land to be buried in.

However, neither Bokeikhanov – the acknowledged leader of the nation – nor his daughter, nor his grandson Iskander were to find eternal rest in the land of their ancestors. All three generations of Bokeikhans were buried not in some corner of the vast Kazakh steppes, but in Moscow.

To this day, it is not known where his son Oktay (official name: Sergei) is buried. By 1937, Oktay had shown himself to be a talented academic and leader of industry in Kazakhstan and was at the forefront of the development of the Jezkazgan non-ferrous metal deposits. According to the late Zhaik Bekturov, a journalist and expert on Bokeikhan's life and work, Oktay died around 1944 under mysterious circumstances.

Sultan-Khan AKKULY