

To leave in order to return

Alikhan Bukeykhan waged his struggle against rude Russifying colonial policy of imperial Russia, solely within the framework of actual laws. Together with progressive Russian intelligentsia and parties, he tried to reform colonial parent state itself, turn it into democratic, parliamentary, federative state, truly governed by the rule of law.

There can hardly be found another example in history of Eurasian continent, when leader of national liberation movement, a prominent public figure, a former deputy of supreme legislative branch of state authority came to prison voluntarily in order to serve the term of sentence, which had been meted out by judicial authority.

Firstly we should make a short excursus to a prison epic of Alikhan Bukeykhan. During entire period of his political, scientific and social activity, the leader of Kazakh national liberation movement “Alash”, either during tsarist regime and Bolshevist “dictatorship of the proletariat”, was subjected to persecution: arrests, imprisonments and exiles. In a period of 1896-1917 the Alash leader was put in tsarist prisons three times (Omsk, Pavlodar and Semipalatinsk) , once he was arrested with entire delegation of Alash-Orda government by edict of the head of self-declared “all-Russian” government admiral Kolchak in 1919 (Omsk). In a Soviet period legendary Son of steppes “visited” Karkaraly and Orenburg NKVD torture-chambers three times in 1922, two times he was sent to Moscow “Butyrka” in 1926 and 1937.

According to Sergey Shvetsov memories, the first time Alikhan was imprisoned in 1896-1897, being “the only bright” political observer of the Omsk newspaper “Stepnoy Kray”. Two subsequent arrests were inseparably connected with revolutionary events of 1905-1907 in Russia en masse and with his leading role in those events in his native Stepnoy Kray in particular.

In “Irtysh” newspaper Bukeykhan wrote that “October Manifesto”, i.e. an imperial edict dated February 18, 1905 which declared the right for petitions, awoke Kazakh (Kirgiz) steppe, which had been suffering because of unexplainable lawlessness of Russifying policy and its ignorant executors, represented by half-educated cadets, seminarists, psychopaths and alcoholics. Soon after that publication his figure became involved in a secret correspondence of Oms Gedame Directorate with Police department of Russia MIA in St. Petersburg, in a role of “the main leader of religious and political movement of Kazakh population in “Stepnoy Kray”. Bukeykhan’s arrest followed that correspondence. He was committed to Pavlodar prison without appropriate court order, on the basis of some “information from intelligence service”.

On April 15, 1906 the Alash leader was transferred from Pavlodar to Oms prison. According to a secret plan of authorities he was to be exiled by general governor’s

order, but the plan failed: On April 30 Alikhan went at large due having been chosen an elector of his native Tokraunskaya volost, in the end of June he was unanimously elected a deputy of the First State Duma for Semipalatinsk oblast. In December 1907, A. Bukeykhan as a former deputy of the First State Duma was sentenced to 3 months of prison and deprived of electoral rights for signing and distribution of “Vyborg Proclamation”, although it is necessary to note that he had been deprived of his electoral rights six months before. New electoral law, known in history as “Coup of June 1907” (Stolypin’s Coup), which had been worked out by tsarist Prime-Minister Pyotr Stolypin was promulgated on the day of the Second Duma Dissolution. This law deprived 5 million Kazakh people of Parliament-Duma rostrum. Thus colonial Empire gained leverage for controlling aboriginal Kazakh lands.

Alikhan Bukeykhan considered “Coup of June 1907” to be his private defeat that is why he claimed all the responsibility for failure with credit. In summer 1908, having submitted to the will of his party, he voluntarily came to Semipalatinsk for serving sentence. According to handwritten memories of Smakhan tore Bukeykhan, a blood younger brother of Alikhan, he did not suffer from idleness and loneliness. Besides family, friends and associates from “Alash” movement visited him every day.

Meanwhile Alikhan Bukeykhan spent in Semipalatinsk prison not 3 months as St. Petersburg appellate court had demanded, but 8 months. Thanks to his friends and companions, those 8 months passed as if they were 8 days.

Outside the prison walls the first political exile to Samara awaited Kazakh national leader, he would return from exile only after the February Revolution of 1917.

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