

*“No other Soviet nation’s historiography  
has seen such  
losses as that of Kazakhstan.”  
“The Great Friendship.”*

*To mark the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alash-Orda’s declaration of Kazakh autonomy, the independent journalist Sultan-Khan Akkuly, who lives in Prague, hereby begins a series of articles on the sources and origins of the ideas and lofty aims for which the Alash Party faithful gave their lives. The Alash-Orda proclaimed Kazakh autonomy at the Second All-Kazakh Congress in Orenburg on December 13<sup>th</sup> 1917; Alikhan Bukeikhan (Bukeikhanov), the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Kazakh leader and founder and leader of the first Kazakh political party and national liberation movement – Alash – was elected chairman.*

### **The unifier of Kazakh lands**

*“A time to gather stones.”  
Old Testament (Ecclesiastes 3.).*

Based on the historical documents we have available, I would say that in the last 200 years, there is almost no other ruler or historical figure, apart, perhaps, from khan Kenesara Kassymuly (Kassymov), who fought so doggedly and without the power of a state or a powerful army behind him for the restitution to the Kazakhs of their ancient lands as Alikhan Bukeikhan.

### **THE LAND OF OUR FATHERS**

Before the February Revolution of 1917, the Kazakhs were the sixth most populous of all the nations in the colonialist Russian Empire. According to information from the author of a brief history entitled, “Kazakhs” (“Kyrgyz”), the Kazakhs lived on the territory of nine oblasts and one guberniya before the revolution, “demarcated on the north by the River Dzhayk (Ural and Yayk), on the west by the Amu-Darya (Oks), on the east by the Irtysh (Irtys) and on the south by mountain ranges. In addition they also inhabit the Astrakhan guberniya.”

When part of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan was the second largest republic after the RSFSR, with an official area of 2,717,300 km<sup>2</sup>.

When Kazakhstan achieved independence on December 16<sup>th</sup> 1991, its area of 2,724,900 km<sup>2</sup> (an increase, for some reason, of 7,600 km<sup>2</sup>) made it the ninth largest country on Earth.

Any curious reader with an even superficial interest in the country’s history will long have known that the huge territory modern-day Kazakhs have come by wasn’t gained so much by the blood of their distant ancestors as it was by the life of a tangible historic figure who actually lived a little over 70 years ago, because the endless Kazakh steppes and lands which really were acquired by the blood and life of our glorious distant relatives were once lost as a consequence of the “voluntary union of the Kazakh khanates with Russia”. Modern-day Kazakhstan is only in control of part of that territory. That much is merely a statement of historically verifiable facts.

Let us turn to the historical facts to substantiate this.

Judging by Mr. Bukeikhan’s list of publications and his first monograph on the history of the Kazakhs, he began studying Kazakhstan’s incorporation into Russia in detail from primary sources back in the late 1890s. This is supported by a range of publications such as “From the correspondence of the khan of the Middle Kyrgyz Bukey horde and his descendants,” “From the

correspondence of the Kyrgyz khans, sultans and others,” and “From the papers of the Large Kyrgyz horde of Syuk Ablaykhanov” and the monograph “The historic fates of the Kyrgyz land and its cultural achievements”. Judging by the titles of these publications as well as the numerous articles which appeared in the newspaper “Kazak” between 1913 and 1917, it is clear that Bukeikhan was chiefly interested in the very history and conditions in which Kazakhstan came under allegiance to the Russian Empire and, more specifically, in the social, political and economic consequences of this process for the Kazakhs and their independence. The researcher also came by copies of the agreements made between the Russian Empire and the Kazakh khans “on accepting their allegiance”, or more specifically of the “charters” which the parties to the agreements exchanged. Bukeikhan found one original charter at the Semipalatinsk oblast administration and copies of other agreements in the Complete Collection of Laws (CCL) of the Russian Empire (CCL, vol. XXXIX no. 29907. Author’s note).

Having thoroughly researched the details of all these charters regarding how the Kazakh khanates came under Russian allegiance, Bukeikhanov went on to investigate in detail the subsequent activity of the Russian authorities. This refers to the so-called “Statutes on the Siberia and Orenburg Kazakhs-Kyrgyz” of 1822 and 1824 which is when the forced implementation of the Russian imperial administrative system actually began, first with the Little Jüz and then the Middle Jüz.

I remind you that it was these statutes of 1822 and 1824 which did away with the rule of the khans in Kazakhstan and introduced a system of territorial administration. The end of rule by the khans and introduction of a new system of administration aimed to complete the process of Kazakhstan’s colonisation. While the political independence of the Little and Middle Jüz Kazakhs was taken away from them, there was an organised seizure of their best lands, which were then settled with Russian Cossacks.

Further reforms introduced by the Russian Empire to Kazakhstan had the specific goal “of fusing the Kazakh-Kyrgyz steppes with the rest of Russia”. The political and administrative reforms carried out by the Russians in Kazakhstan in 1867 and 1868 are of special interest as they led to significant social, political and legal changes in Kazakh society. This new administrative system undermined the nomads’ communal and clannish way of life and limited the power of the toresultans, the clan leaders and the people’s biys. The reforms of 1867 and 1868 led to a weakening of the influence of the steppe aristocracy, clan leaders, people’s biys, batur-tarkhans and toresultans (descendants of Genghis Khan) which in turn affected their legal, economic and political situation.

The last formalities in Kazakhstan’s colonial takeover were the Statement on the Governance of the Turkestan Territory of June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1886 and the Statement on the Governance of the Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirechie, Ural and Turgay oblasts of March 25<sup>th</sup> 1891.

But the toughest consequence of these reforms was that all Kazakh lands were declared the state property of the Russian Empire, the Russian authoritarian regime, and were given over to the Kazakhs for their “perpetual use”. Or to put it more simply, the Kazakh nation of many millions of people was deprived in a single moment of its own lands and territories which they had won with the blood of many generations of ancestors and which hosted their graves. This is how Qyr balasy [Son of the Steppes] interpreted separate articles of the statement of March 25<sup>th</sup> 1891 regarding Kazakh lands in an article of his own in 1913: “On March 25<sup>th</sup> 1891, the “Steppe Statement” became law for the Kazakhs of the Semirechie, Semipalatinsk, Akmolinsk, Turgay and Uralsk oblasts... Article 119 of this law [statement] states: “...the lands occupied by the nomadic Kazakhs are hereby declared the property of the state.” Article 120 says that, “...these lands are given over to the nomadic Kazakhs for their perpetual use”. An addendum to article

120 states that, "...the other lands used by the Kazakhs will be seized for the good of the state..." They relied on this addendum specifically when seizing other Kazakh lands to hand over to peasants in the five oblasts mentioned above."

According to the testimony of the same Qyr Balasy, in 1911 a similar addendum allowing for the seizure of "excess" lands belonging to the Turkestan Kazakhs was added to the Statement on the Governance of the Turkestan Territory of June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1886: "Article 279 of this statement did not say a word about seizing excess lands from the Kazakhs. If the law had remained unchanged, land in Turkestan would not have been taken from the Kazakh and given to the peasant. In 1911 a bill was introduced to the Third Duma on a two-line addendum to article 279 ["Statement on the Governance of Turkestan"] which said: "If excess lands are found amongst the Kazakhs in Turkestan, the treasury is obliged to seize them for its own benefit... This was how the Kazakhs of Turkestan met the same fate as those in the Semirechie, Semipalatinsk, Akmolinsk, Turgay and Uralsk oblasts. Now any Turkestan Kazakh whose land is seized will have the law waved in his face. This is a perfect example of the strong imposing arbitrary rule on the weak."

In other words, the aforementioned statutes and statements of the Russian Empire issued between 1822 and 1911 completed Kazakhstan's transformation into a Russian colony. It went from being a vassal, favoured, subject state to an integral part of that state and Kazakhs became in position and law foreigners on their own lands. And as practice would go on to show, depriving Kazakhs of their rights to their own lands opened a broad range of opportunities to populate Kazakh territories with Russian settlers, thus squeezing the nomads onto land of little use. Internal reforms in Russia itself played no small part here, such as the emancipation of the serfs in 1861; Russian peasants were released from bondage but were landless and started to colonise Kazakhstan by settling its territory.

Bukeikhan observed grievous and flagrant violations by the Russian Empire of the conditions under which Kazakhstan was to come under "its allegiance" when he studied the statutes and statements on the governance of Kazakhstan. Not in a single agreement on the Kazakh khanates' union with Russia did he find so much as a suggestion that Russia had the right to interfere in Kazakhstan's internal affairs, never mind its governance. The Russians began to interfere in Kazakhstan's internal affairs based purely on their position of might, which grossly contradicted their very own obligations as per the agreements signed.

Let us again turn to historical facts.

As per the charter of February 12<sup>th</sup> 1731, Empress Anna Ioannovna of Russia agreed to accept Kazakhs' allegiance to Russia under the conditions contained in the letter of request sent by Abul Khair Khan of the Little Jüz. This act gave legal foundations to the beginnings of Kazakhstan's voluntary union with Russia.

Russia, I repeat, guaranteed that it would defend the Kazakhs from invasion by third states and promised not to allow "offence or destruction" by other Russian subjects and the khan took it upon himself "to serve faithfully and pay the yasak fur tribute as the Bashkirs do".

On October 10<sup>th</sup> 1731, Abul Khair Khan took an oath of allegiance to the Empress on behalf of all Kazakhs.

Ultimately, the refined conditions under which the Kazakhs swore voluntary allegiance to Russia were the following: Kazakhs promised to remain loyal to the Empress and her descendants, agreed to limit the khanate's external sovereignty, promised to serve [militarily! - I shall return to

this subject below], not to attack trading convoys and other Russian subjects, to return prisoners, to pay tributes [taxes], to allocate the children of khans and sultans as amanats [hostages].

Russia, the party accepting allegiance, in turn promised: "...to protect its new subjects from foreign invasion or oppression." It is obvious that the conditions laid out in these agreements did not foresee Russia's right to interfere in the Kazakhs' internal political affairs and certainly did not foresee forays into Kazakh lands and territories. The negotiations were held in the spirit of a voluntary agreement, even if the parties were bargaining from different positions. The result was Kazakhstan swearing allegiance to Russia, the ceremonial oaths of loyalty by the khans, sultans, clan leaders, people's biys and batus [tarkhans] serving as de jure recognition.

From a state legal point of view, Kazakhstan's form of dependence on Russia as per the conditions of the agreements was that of a protectorate. The limited sovereignty of a protected state is the legal basis of a protectorate; the Kazakh khanates notably lost their independence when it came to external policy and ceased to be a subject of international legal relations. Yet at the same time, the status still foresees internal self-rule for the protectorate state whereas, as Bukeikhan asserted, the Russian Empire grossly and categorically violated all the conditions under which Kazakhstan swore allegiance to it with its statutes of 1822 and 1824, its political and administrative reforms of 1867-1868 and its statements of governance of 1886 and 1891.

Kazakhstan's state legal relations with Russia between 1731 and 1824 can be defined as vassalage. Vassalage meant the Kazakh rulers taking vassal oaths and vows and providing amanat hostages, which they did.

Officially, the Little and Middle jüz khanates' relations with Russia from 1822 to 1824 were known as "allegiance" but there is not a single word in the agreements about turning the two Kazakh khanates and their territories into an integral part of Russia. The Kazakh khanates became vassal states and the Russian Empire conducted all dealings with the Kazakh rulers through its College of Foreign Affairs right up until the 1820s. This is attested to by October 1817 correspondence between the khan of the Bukey Middle jüz and the head of ministry and member of the State College of International Affairs, Count Karl Nesselrode, which Alikhan Bukeikhan published in 1901. Though, again, I reiterate that from a state legal point of view, the Kazakh khanates' vassal status only applied until the khanates, the Kurultai of the clan leaders and people's biys and the khanate councils were abolished.

In 1911, Alikhan Bukeikhan wrote sorrowfully in the St. Petersburg newspaper, "In the Muslim World": "Not 100 years has passed since the whole Kazakh nation swore allegiance to Russia\* (\*the Little Horde swore allegiance to Russia in 1731 under Abul Khair Khan, the Middle Horde in 1781 under Ablai Khan) and already all the lands of this semi-nomadic people have become the property of the treasury. In 1868 a law came into effect which stated: "*...lands occupied by camps and all appurtenances to those lands, including forests, are hereby declared state property*"\*\* (\*\*Article 119 of the Steppe Statement on Governance, issued in 1891). In spite of its importance and major significance for a whole people, this law was engineered in secret in offices in St. Petersburg and was approved not only without the agreement of the people who have hitherto considered themselves the sovereign masters of their lands but without them even being granted a preliminary audience. Having divorced the whole Kazakh people from the soil, this law sealed the fate of Kazakh animal husbandry and also put at stake the very existence of several million of our countrymen."

As soon as Bukeikhan had discovered these violations of the conditions by which the Kazakh khanates had voluntarily sworn allegiance to the Russian Empire, he began an uncompromising battle for his people to have their own lands returned to them. For he firmly believed that for the

national statehood - which appeared to have been given up without a fight - to be recovered required first and foremost territory of its own. He thought it was entirely anachronistic for Kazakh statehood to be revived with the former khanate system of government.

He dreamed of building a modern, democratic, Western-style Kazakh state which he wrote about in his historic essay "The Kazakhs" in 1910.

At this point we need to make a slight digression. For certain curious events in Bokeikhanov's life, which the author of these words would like to cover in greater detail, are in one way or another tied up with the subsequent activities and actions of our protagonist.

In 1890, while in his fourth and final year at the Omsk Technical School [OTS], Alikhan approached the head, a Mr. N. Dobrokhotov, and said that his real surname was not Nurmukhamedov – from his father's first name – but Bokeikhanov. We genuinely do not know what Alikhan's aims were in doing so. But it would be entirely reasonable to suppose that even at the age of 23, this future leader of the Kazakhs had already decided to fight the arbitrary rule of the colonial empire over his people and lands in the name of the khan of the Bukey Middle jüz, who had signed one of the agreements concerning the Kazakhs' voluntary union with Russia. It may not fully support such an assumption but the fact that Alikhan published the Bukey khan's correspondence with imperial civil servants, including the head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Count Karl Nesselrode, gives us reason to think so. We should also add that Alikhan was a direct descendant of Bukey Khan, the son of Baraq Khan, the "kokzhal" [leader of pack of wolves], who was famous throughout the Kazakh steppe.

Bukeikhan's legal education, which he received while also studying at the School of Forestry, helped him research the Kazakh khanates' allegiance agreements with the Russian Empire and analyse their content and the finer details of the Russian legislation of the time. In 1891, he took exams as an external student at the Faculty of Law at St. Petersburg University.

Bukeikhan chose a non-violent, peaceful mode of struggle to return his people's ancient lands to them within the framework of the Russian legislation in place at the time. Bukeikhan became convinced that armed struggle would only end in defeat and be counter-productive for the people by studying the history and reasons for the failure of the largest armed Kazakh uprising in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century which was led by khan Kenesary Kassymuly (Kassymov), a figure he had genuine respect for and pride in. In his monograph entitled, "The historic fates of the Kyrgyz land and its cultural achievements," Bokeikhanov would write: "The grandson of Ablai Khan, Kenesary Kassymov, who eclipsed in the national folklore even the glory of his extremely popular grandfather, gathered together several thousand horsemen from the ranks of the disaffected and, having declared himself the restorer of the once great Kyrgyz nation, tried to rally the whole Kyrgyz nation under his banner. Yet a very large part of the nomadic population remained indifferent to Kenesary's appeals."

It was a blessing that a wave of revolutionary liberation movements was welling up at the time in the colonial empire itself. But it would still be some time until the first Russian Revolution of 1905-1907.

He got a job as a civil servant, working as a statistician at the Akmolinsk oblast migration authority, with the aim of somehow stemming the tide of settlers who had rushed to the Kazakh steppes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to the Omsk-based newspaper Irtysh, which Bokeikhan was editing in 1906, "...this year [1906] has seen more settlers crossing the Urals than any other. Prior to this the greatest influx of settlers occurred in 1896, when 202,302 settlers came, and in 1900, when 215,627 people of both sexes came." And it was in those years between 1896 and 1901 that he took part in the Shcherbina's expedition - organised by the

Ministry of Agriculture and State Property - to research the steppe oblasts (Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk and Turgay).

Bukeikhan would go on to evaluate the aims and results of the work of this expedition as follows: “The Kazakh [in the original “Kyrgyz”. Hereinafter “Kazakh”. Author’s note] steppes, as far as official Russia was concerned, then seemed and indeed still seem to be such an inexhaustible supply of land that it would be possible to relocate a significant part of the excess population from the internal guberniyas of Russia without inconveniencing the Kazakhs themselves who appear not to be in need of the favourable lands. However, it became clear that this view was wrong and in 1896 an expedition was organised – headed by Shcherbina – to do statistical research on the Kazakh steppes. This expedition set a standard for land which was necessary so as not to harm the Kazakh economy and to enable the Kazakhs to gradually move over to a sedentary way of life.”

It should come as no surprise that following his participation in the Shcherbina expedition and work as a statistician at the migration authority, Bukeikhan became public enemy no. 1 for the colonial administration of the Kazakh Steppe territories. This is attested to by a secret report by “acting cavalry captain Rutland of the Omsk gendarme” dated December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1905 entitled, “Civil servant Bukeikhanov of the migration authority is and will definitely be the chief leader exerting huge influence over the whole Kazakh steppe”.

Cavalry captain Rutland was absolutely right in his assertion as Bukeikhan was the instigator and chief author of the well-known Karkaraly Petition which first posited the demand that ancient Kazakh lands be recognised as belonging to them: “The past 15 years have witnessed the colonisation of the Steppe territory. Every year the amount of land being exploited by Kazakhs decreases... The best agricultural lands and freshwater springs are being taken away to serve as plots for settlers which is why we must recognise land occupied by the Kazakhs as belonging to them. The state property department in the Steppe territory is marking out dachas as the sole property of the treasury while Kazakhs are removed from their ancestral wintering grounds.”

Bukeikhan’s role as leader of the Kazakhs is corroborated by his participation at the congress of Russian rural and urban leaders in November 1905 in Moscow where he once again took the opportunity of his own presentation to remind progressives in the mother country that his people had their own ancient lands: “I am a representative of the 4-million strong Kazakh people who inhabit an enormous territory from the Urals to the Altai, from the Siberian railway to Omsk.”

Here the leader of the Kazakhs mentioned only the north-western, northern and eastern areas of the Kazakh territory for the simple reason that at the time they were the areas of Kazakh steppe which were being subjected to unprecedented settler colonisation.

Meanwhile, Alikhan Bukeikhan had understood, in contrast to anyone else from the Kazakh national elite, that the Kazakhs would not get back the ancient lands which had been stolen from them by peaceful means under the existing authoritarian colonial regime nor revive their national statehood. He was convinced that the only real route to that goal was through political reform of the colonial empire itself: to transform it from an autocracy into a federal, democratic state. In 1906 he wrote in an Irtysh editorial: “Russia needs ... root and branch reforms which would turn it into a truly democratic state, uniquely suited to its social structure.”

So he took the only pragmatic and politically expedient decision, in his view, and joined the progressive forces of the Empire. The first Russian Revolution broke out in 1905 and Bukeikhan, with good reason, was pinning his hopes on a legal restoration of the Kazakhs’ downtrodden

rights to their own land thanks to the rescript of the February 18<sup>th</sup> 1905 convocation of the State Duma “with the trust of the people chosen by the people”.

“The Kazakhs’ only hope is the State Duma,” he wrote in an Irtysh editorial in 1906, “which will find the power to give the matter of migration the attention it deserves. As long as there is autocracy, Kazakh lands, as taxable state lands, unitary and office lands destined for sale to peasants as per decrees dated August 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>, will serve to defend privately owned land.”

Alikhan Bukeikhan ran for office in the hope of raising the Kazakhs’ most urgent problems in the State Duma such as the return to them of their seized native pastures, watering holes, wintering grounds, crops, meadows and forests, the recognition of all lands occupied by the Kazakhs as belonging to them, the introduction of zemstvo [local self-rule] and conscription for Kazakhs in all Steppe territory and much more. Bukeikhan discussed these very matters and took instructions at campaign meetings and whenever he met voters. For he was of the view that: “Kazakhs need their land interests protected... Kazakhs need land management with the involvement of Kazakhs themselves and local government. And that is only possible if ... if we have a constitution and representative government [State Duma. Author’s note].”

The matter of Kazakhs having to serve in the army by way of the annulment of an 1834 law, according to article 42 of which the Kazakhs were exempt from service, was also of relevance. This law, which was adopted in 1834 at the request of the elder sultan of the Akmolinsk district, Konyrkulzhy Kudaymendeuly, left the Kazakhs deprived of rights in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when compared to the Cossacks and even the peasant settlers who behaved like masters in the seized lands.

“Amongst the many questions the Duma touched upon, the bill to amend “The Statute on Conscription” briefly surfaced as a trifling matter which interested nobody...” Bukeikhan said, bemoaning the activity of the 3<sup>rd</sup> State Duma which adjourned without dealing with the draft law on amending “The Statute on Conscription” which would have foreseen conscription not just for Kazakhs but for all the Muslim peoples of Russia. “Thus some Muslim peoples were called to serve in the army in the most irregular circumstances, others were required to serve by paying a tax whereas others still (in Turkestan and the Muslim Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirechie, Uralsk and Zakaspiisk oblasts) were ignored altogether; and finally Muslim clerics themselves are expected to serve alongside everyone else, in violation of the privileges prescribed...”

The election and convocation of the 4<sup>th</sup> State Duma provided a new opportunity for the approval of the bill on amending “The Statute on Conscription”. In a series of articles in the newspaper “Kazakh” in 1913 and 1916, Bukeikhan suggested that his people choose voluntary service in the cavalry like the Cossacks who were in charge of their own military forces. In his view, voluntary Cossack-style service had a number of advantages and plusses for the nomadic Kazakhs compared to regular military service. Firstly, horsemanship was a national tradition and part of everyday life for the Kazakhs. Secondly, when a Cossack turns 18 he undertakes three years of military training, at which point he becomes a true Cossack, and at 21 he begins 12 years of real military service. In peacetime, the Cossack would spend all 12 years in his village, only spending 3-4 months every summer at annual reservist training in his home region. Thus, according to Bukeikhanov, a Cossack would only spend 3-4 years of his 12 years of actual military service in training. After 12 years of service, a Cossack becomes a reserve at the age of 38.

Thirdly, and most importantly, in Bukeikhan’s view: “By law a Cossack has greater rights than a moujik [Russian peasant], the reason for which was history itself: the moujik had been a slave [serf], whereas the Cossack was at liberty and free and thanks to his voluntary 12-year military

service he had greater advantages and more favourable rights to land use than the moujik. We will not be granted that right. If we are granted it, we will not lose it," the Kazakh leader said, trying to convince his fellow countrymen.

Moving on. Judging by the secret correspondence between the Omsk gendarme and the St. Petersburg police department in April 1906, the Tsar's forces arrested Bukeikhan while he was fully involved in his election campaign. The arrest was wholly down to the authorities fearing he would be elected to the State Duma: "In view ... of his stubborn will to exert influence and take as active a role as possible in State Duma matters, the Commander of the Troops showed his willingness, should the Bukeikhanov case be dropped from the prosecutor's supervision as per article 1035 of the Statute on Criminal Conviction, to deal with the case administratively which would entail the compulsory banishment of Bokeikhanov from the Steppe Territories as it was the generally held view, even amongst the prosecution, that Bukeikhanov was undoubtedly a dangerous if intelligent and skilled agitator."

However, any hopes the Kazakh people and their leader had in the State Duma were dashed with the adoption of a new electoral law on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1907, which Bukeikhan recalls with sorrow in his historic essay: "The law of June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1907 deprived 4¼ million Kazakhs of their voting rights. The government clearly deemed the presence in the State Duma of a people whom it so violently deprived of its lands unnecessary."

The Kazakh people and their leader would have got close to achieving their main goal if the First and Second Dumas, or the Dumas of National Anger, as people often called them, had not been dissolved. In the first two Dumas, the majority of votes was held by the Kadet Party fraction or "People's Freedom" Party which supported the bill drawn up by Mr. N. Kutler, the head of land use and agriculture, which foresaw the acquisition of plots of land from landowners and their subsequent redistribution to peasants.

Note that Bukeikhan was elected Deputy in the First Duma from the Kazakh committee of the Kadet People's Freedom Party whereas all other Kazakh deputies from the first two Dumas, united in a Muslim fraction, joined the Kadet fraction. If the Duma had adopted this draft legislation, the force of settler colonisation would have greatly weakened by itself. But this went against the plans of the Russian Emperor and the personal interests of the new Prime Minister, Mr. P. Stolypin, himself a large-scale landowner and former leading nobleman, whose policy towards the Kazakh steppes consisted, "...in promoting the migration to these uninhabited expanses of peasants from the European part of Russia".

Bokeikhan wrote the following on the matter after the dissolution of the First Duma: "The State Duma was closed, incidentally, not dissolved, due to disagreement on how to settle the agrarian question as it wanted to allot to peasants lands owned by departments, which had been inherited, and lands which belonged to landowners, monasteries and the treasury. By dispelling the State Duma, the only institution capable of solving the vitally important agrarian question in Russia and conflating matters of state importance with private individuals' interests, it [the Stolypin government] is manipulating ways to settle the agrarian question and making settling it in future more complicated."

All the while, the settler colonisation of Kazakhstan remained part of Stolypin's "agrarian reform". This was the first and main reason for the early dissolution of the First and Second Dumas and, most tragically for Bukeikhan, resulted in the Kazakhs losing their voice in the Duma.



“Stolypin’s agrarian reform” in Kazakhstan began with the replacement of Mr. N. Kutler by Mr. B. Vasilchikov as the “head of land use and agriculture” [Ministry of Agriculture. Author’s note]. Vasilchikov, the descendant of a prince and a large landowner, like Stolypin himself, justified the hopes of the reactionary Prime Minister by making a huge effort to put “Stolypin’s land reform” into practice. But the hidden motive which guided the instigator of this reform and its main supporter – Messrs. Stolypin and Vasilchikov – was revealed in a 1906 Irtysh editorial: “All these attempts by the government to broaden peasant land-ownership “by domestic means” are a disguised diversion of the peasant masses’ actual demands away from the privately owned lands of our landowners, namely the large-scale landowners Prince Vasilchikov, Count Vorontsov-Dashkov, Durnovo and Stolypin, who are directing our government’s policy. The peasant masses’ demands can only be met by expropriating privately owned land in European Russia for the working people who have little or no land. Promising peasants specific, ministerial and treasury lands thousands of versts away from where it is most required, as our government is doing, is sending those in need from pillar to post.”

According to the author of the article’s information, there was enough private land in European Russia itself to fully meet the demands of the landless peasants without having to resort to the illegal colonisation of the Kazakh steppes. In 1906, there were “90 million dessiatins” of private land in European Russia.

Meanwhile, in Kazakhstan, while the First State Duma was still in office, the colonial administration would continue to engender gross arbitrariness and lawlessness, consciously, and in complete violation of the then effective statement of 1886. It “found” ever more “excess land” in Kazakh native territory and expelled people from long-settled locations to the desert or mountains and then did not even provide these grazing lands, the zhaylau and kystau [summer and wintering grounds] the Kazakhs had passed on from generation to generation, to settler peasants but to princes, counts and noblemen from European Russia. The Kazakh native lands, which Russian princes so took a liking to, were seized under the context “of urgent state need”. For instance, the new Governor General of the Steppe Territory, a Mr. I. Nadarov, gave this fitting answer when another representative of the Kazakhs driven from their native lands demanded that he stop this abuse of power:

“1) The Kazakhs will never achieve equal rights because they are on a par with others who do not do military service;

2) The details of the draft on local government will be given to people’s delegates, but your nation is poorly educated;

3) Kazakh land does not belong to the Kazakhs but to the state. Therefore, if the state needs it, it will be taken from the Kazakhs in accordance with that need.

...and if plots are divided up for settlers for urgent state needs, the Kazakhs will not lose out as if their wintering grounds need to be moved, they will be given other places to winter and paid for transferring their wintering grounds in accordance with estimates by specialist commissions...”

General Nadarov’s response elicited a lightning reaction from the leader of the Kazakhs who observed that, “...to pay the Kazakhs, who have been deprived of their meadows and pastures, which are worth more than anything in the world, the value of the structures to be removed, is a poor joke and evidence of a complete lack of understanding by government agents of Kazakhs’ relationship to the land.” He was incensed that, “...by compensating for the loss of buildings, the government is only recognising a right of ownership to buildings and, as such, “legally denies” the right of any Kazakh, or village, or tribesman, to own their winter pastures and meadows”.

Prince Vasilchikov's first visit to Kazakhstan as the Chief Executive Officer of Land Use and Agriculture had even sadder repercussions for the indigenous population: "During Prince Vasilchikov's journey around Siberia in the summer of 1907, Steppe Governor General Nadarov repealed, at the former's request, the law on a prior review of plots of land to be given to settlers by a temporary commission. From that point on, Kazakhs weren't even entitled to complain about unfair reallocation [of lands]... At the current time, the supposed 25% increment on Kazakh rates [Shcherbina expedition. Author's note] is already being ignored which is also a violation of the law and creates new excess lands which can be divided into settler plots."

In this regard, Alikhan Bukeikhan made no attempt to hide his fears that, "...the Shcherbina rate was set too high *a priori* and so a few years later another expedition was organised with the same aim which promptly went on to set a different, much lower land rate". Yet he didn't dare to make a prediction as to what prospects this held out for the Kazakhs. But the leader of the Kazakhs was in no doubt that yet another expedition, "...would set a rate that would completely destroy the Kazakh economy and bring it to its knees".

According to Bukeikhan, following Vasilchikov's journey to the Kazakh steppes, there began, "...extremely intense work thanks to which there was an annual projection of a mass of plots for seizure for settler settlements "from the best Kazakh lands, irrespective of the fact that the plots planned were needed for the Kazakhs' animal husbandry"". "If the plots planned for settler settlements are not, for one reason or another, settled by settlers, then they will become state plots for rent," he states.

Yet what particularly concerned Bukeikhan in the Stolypin-Vasilchikov "agrarian reform" was its focus on handing over the plots of land allocated to Russian peasant settlers in Kazakhstan to them for ownership.

Furthermore, once the "Stolypin reform" had begun, there was talk in Vasilchikov's department and even the Duma of applying to the Kazakhs the "experiment" that had been undertaken in conquering America, which Bukeikhan writes about again: "One cannot help but be surprised at the haste of Deputy Markov from the Second Duma to get as many settlers as possible onto the Kazakh steppe; he declared to the State Duma migration commission that the Kazakhs were the descendants of the hordes of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane and that therefore they should be treated the same way the Red Indians were in America."

Bukeikhan completely rejected the view being imposed by the Tsarist authorities, "...whereby settling the steppe with settlers was bringing untold advantages to the Kazakhs: they have become far more prosperous in areas where settlers have appeared. Through their example the settlers have given them practical lessons in how to live a more cultured life" [Quote from article, "For Fear," under "Statistics": "The natives of the Siberian steppes are dying out and allowing it to happen. This is a crime... We must support them by creating the conditions under which they can develop culturally and economically like people of other races..."] He made his feelings very clear on the matter: "Very sadly, the indigent Russian peasant cannot be an example to the Kazakh either when it comes to law or economics!"

Now deprived of his right to stand for office and fight for the restoration of his people's rights from within the State Duma, Alikhan Bukeikhan was forced to defend his people's most urgent needs in writing from beyond his native steppes as he found himself in political exile in Samara.

While in exile, the leader of the Kazakhs focused the main attention of his fight to defend Kazakh lands from further encroachment by the colonial powers in appealing to the advanced,

liberal sections of imperial society by publishing articles in chiefly St. Petersburg-based publications from 1908 to 1914, such as Kadet papers “Rech” [Speech] and “Slovo” [The Word] and the Siberian Matters newspaper.

From 1908 to 1910 in particular, he published a whole series of essays, articles and observations devoted exclusively to the topic of the settler colonisation of Kazakhstan and its irreversible, harmful effect on both the steppe itself and its indigenous population, the Kazakhs. Just listing these publications would take up more than a page. And the titles of these articles and essays speak for themselves: “The Future Desert,” “The Dispossession of Irrigated Kazakh Croplands,” “Settler Plots in the Akmolinsk Oblast,” “Russian Settlements in the Depths of the Steppe Territory,” “The Unnecessary Governorate General,” and many more.

For example, in “The Future Desert,” he describes in detail how a ragtag group of settlers seized the Turgay oblast and how that land was now threatened with desertification because of the barbaric way they had exploited it. “The Kazakh steppe is currently a panacea and Eldorado for our agrarians, fine-fleece sheep-farmers, landless peasants and various peasant-kulak predators attempting to cream off the fresh land... One always hears the stereotypical answer when one asks what will happen when the land is exhausted: “We’ll move on.” Translation: “We’ll suck the land dry and abandon it.” Let’s say that after they leave, other, weaker people come, and they wring out the rest of what the land has to offer and then the steppe will be a true scene of utter devastation... Diligent colonialist implants need to reckon with and foresee this prospect. There is no need to settle the steppe by force and we must now allow predation. This economic “policy” can not be in the state’s interests.”

The author says that whereas 20 years earlier, the whole Turgay oblast was populated exclusively by Kazakhs, by 1908 there was already an almost equal number of Russians and Kazakhs in the Kustanay uezd of the same oblast: “100 plots have been carved out there and in the huge majority of cases they have been settled by Russians and, in individual cases, Germans.” In the Aktyubinsk uezd, “...things are progressing more slowly, but there about 80 plots have been seized and have mostly been settled”.

All of Bukeikhan’s publications - not just those in the St. Petersburg newspapers and journals but also those on the pages of the Kazakh newspaper “Kazakh” - testify to the fact that he scrupulously researched the geography, speed and dynamism of the settler colonisation in all parts of his native land, starting with the Semipalatinsk, Akmolinsk and Orenburg oblasts and finishing with the Semirechie and Syr-Daryinsk oblasts in Turkestan: how many dessiatins of land being used by the native population were taken in such an oblast or uezd, how much was allocated to settlers or sold to rich Kazakh land “hunters”, how many settler settlements sprang up where or how many of them had been abandoned etc. etc. The leader of the Kazakhs also followed Imperial Russia’s policy in other colonies, which we will see below.

In addition to this, the appearance of the Kazakh newspaper on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1913 marked the point at which Bukeikhan and his closest Alash allies – A. Baitursynuly, M. Dulatuly, R. Marsekuly and others – launched a far-reaching campaign on the pages of this, the first national publication, to explain simply to the man on the street how not to lose their land without being punished by the state, why they should not believe state propaganda about the advantages of changing to a settled way of life, why it would be harmful for Kazakhs to abandon their traditional ways of animal husbandry and why, on the other hand, they absolutely should refuse tiny plots of 15 dessiatins etc.

Alikhan Bukeikhan studied thoroughly the sad, to say the least, fate of the ancient lands of the Bashkirs, a people ethnically close to the Kazakhs in language, culture, religion and in their

methods of animal husbandry. This is supported by his articles “Башқұрт жерінің шежіресінен” (Bashkurt zherinin shezhiresinen) [lit. “From the History of the Bashkir Land”] and “Башқұрт жері” (Bashkurt zheri) [“The Bashkir Land”], published in the Kazakh newspaper in 1914 and 1915 for his people’s edification. A brief résumé of the first article follows.

According to a law adopted in 1863, every male member of a Bashkir family in the Ufa guberniya was allocated seven dessiatins of land and all other lands temporarily became state property under the benevolent pretext of being “for future Bashkir descendants”. The author was of the view that this concern by the Russian colonial authorities hid nothing other than an impudent and cruel lie. Just 13 years later, in 1876, 354,899 dessiatins of land, which is more than 400,000 km<sup>2</sup>, had gone under the hammer and at a price 7-8 times lower than their actual market value.

Featuring amongst the 293 “buyers” of this cheap Bashkir land were the names of 19 secret councillors, 16 current state councillors, 25 generals, 29 colonels, 30 state councillors and another 102 lower-ranked civil servants. By 1910, of the 354,899 dessiatins of land bought, 90 % had already been sold on but at a price of 28 rubles per dessiatin, which was 14 times (!) more expensive than the original price, and the owners had left Bashkiria. In the article, Bokeikhan calls these Tsarist officials and money-makers, “...worse comen than cheap Gypsies”.

What’s more, the Russian colonial emperor gave another 34,594 dessiatins of Bashkir land to his 11 most senior officials.

At the end of his article for the edification of his native Kazakhs, Qyr Balasy [Son of the Steppes], writes: “Now those hungry vultures have turned their greedy gaze to Kazakh lands. The government has presented a bill to the State Duma whereby parcels of land seized for moujiks in Siberia and the Kazakh steppes, where land is being served on a plate to these “gypsies”, will be passed on to the state if unclaimed by moujiks and then the “gypsies” will receive the land in return from the state.”

In the second short article, Bokeikhan gives a no less instructive and enlightening example to his fellow Kazakhs, again from the life of the Bashkirs, though this time in the Samara guberniya, where the leader of the Kazakhs was now serving his eighth year in exile. The article appeared in the Kazakh newspaper in 1915, once again under the intriguing title of “Башқұрт жері” [“Land of the Bashkirs”]. It starts as an epigraph with the Kazakh proverb, “ҚЫЗЫМ, САҒАН АЙТАМЫН, КЕЛІНІМ, СЕН ТЫҢДА!” (Kyzym, sagan aytamin, kelinim, sen tynda!) [lit. “I’ll tell you, daughter, and daughter-in-law, you listen too!”]. The gist was this.

As soon as the famous “Stolypin law” adopted on November 9<sup>th</sup> 1906 gave moujiks and Bashkirs the right to do as they pleased with their own plots of land, the Bashkirs, who were not farmers, began to sell. By 1915 the Bashkirs had sold off more than 50 % of their plots of land in all the uezds, volosts and towns in the Samara guberniya where they lived in numbers; they sold at a price of 13-16 rubles per dessiatin while the market price at the time was between 80 and 100 rubles.

By giving this example, the Son of the Steppes urged his people to learn from the tragic mistake of their brothers, the Bashkirs: “I am afraid that the Kazakh who wishes to receive his 15 dessiatins of land will meet the same sad fate as his brother the Bashkir. Having first allocated the villages plots of land, the law of June 14<sup>th</sup> 1910 will come into effect and the Kazakh will follow the Bashkirs’ lead. The law allowed for anyone wishing to break away from the village community to do so. If a Kazakh broke away with his 45 dessiatins, he would definitely sell.

Under this law, any Kazakh joining a village would achieve the status of moujik. The law of June 14<sup>th</sup> 1910 was aimed at the moujik.”

As you read this article, you should not rush to the conclusion that Bukeikhan, the leader of the Kazakhs, spoke up or campaigned against his people transitioning to a settled way of life or different form of animal husbandry. At all. In actual fact, in the many articles of his published in the newspaper “Kazakh” before the revolution in 1917 and in Soviet-era Kazakh periodicals, he spoke up for more advanced agricultural forms, methods and technologies, especially when it came to animal husbandry and the processing and production of agricultural goods. He quoted examples from Switzerland, England, Denmark, Australia and other countries with a developed agricultural sector.

Yet at the same time, Bukeikhan was fervently against the forced conversion of Kazakhs to a settled way of life which the Russian colonial powers were attempting to achieve and which the Soviet authorities did achieve in the late 1920s and early 1930s, wiping out over half of ethnic Kazakhs. As an avid supporter of Marxist economic materialism, he was sure that the transition from one way of life and form of economic management to another completely different one was a long, gradual, evolutionary process.

This is why he also railed against Kazakhs receiving tiny plots of 15 dessiatins in exchange for settling. “If you are sure that you will be able to feed your family on 15 dessiatins of land, then go and get your 15 dessiatins! But if you plan to graze your cattle on 15 dessiatins, you are sorely mistaken. That is idiocy!” Bukeikhan exclaimed in one article in the “Kazak” newspaper.

But the leader of the Kazakhs was so categorically and resolutely against Kazakhs receiving tiny plots of 15 dessiatins during that period of Kazakhstan’s colonial dependence for another, much more important reason, which we will see in this article: “The number of Kazakhs wishing to receive a moujik plot of land is increasing. The Kazakh is turning his back on his own prosperity. After the allocation was made in the Kustanay uezd of the Turgay oblast, the lands of the first aul (village) of the Sarysussk volost were transferred to a Ukrainian volost. This is a trap within article 20 [Instructions of June 9<sup>th</sup> 1909, approved by the Council of Ministers] to fall into in instances of receiving allocated land.”

Bukeikhan warned and tried to convince his people not to fall for this provocation and propagandising by the colonial authorities and their agents in the shape of a number of well-known Kazakh intellectuals [Bakhytzhan Karataev, a lawyer and former deputy of the Second State Duma. Author’s note.] and not ask for an allocation of 15 dessiatins for the simple reason that all the pastures, meadows, wintering grounds and other plum pieces of Kazakh land that they gave up would surely pass to the state, whence more often than not it would fall into the private hands of Russian aristocrat gypsies, as we saw from the sad story of the Bashkirs, or, worse still, be given over to use by Russian peasant settlers. This in turn would lead to an even greater wave of settlers from the European part of Russia.

Meanwhile, in summing up the preliminary results and the consequences of the Russian Empire’s policy of the settler colonisation of Kazakhstan, Alikhan Bukeikhan provided a slew of important information in his historic 1910 essay, “The Kazakhs,” and in an article published in the Kazakh newspaper in 1913.

Importantly, according to his data, taken from official imperial sources, the Kazakhs occupied the territory of nine oblasts and one guberniya: Semipalatinsk, Akmolinsk, Turgay, Uralsk, Zakaspiysk, Syr-Daryinsk, Semirechie, Fergana, Samarkand oblasts and Astrakhan guberniya.

Furthermore, and also going on official data from the 1897 census, Bukeikhan noted that the number of people declaring their mother tongue to be Kazakh, which stood at 4,084 thousands, had increased by 1910 to 4,696,600 (!). Furthermore, so that his calculations could be deemed as reliable as possible and to avoid any suspicion of an intentional exaggeration of the true number of his people, he took as his base the very lowest population natural increase rate of 1.5, which was even lower than the overall figure for Russia as a whole, which was then 1.55, whereas the rate of increase amongst the nomadic Kazakhs in the Turgay oblast, for example, was 2.5.

What is particularly interesting in this piece of research by Bukeikhan is the set of concrete figures showing the proportion of Kazakhs and other ethnic groups living in those oblasts and that guberniya: “In the Akmolinsk oblast, Kazakhs make up 52% (only in 3 northern uezds do they make up a mere 44%); close to the Akmolinsk oblast in this regard is Syr-Daryinsk, where Kazakhs are 69%, or less than 2/3\*; in the Uralsk oblast the Kazakhs constitute slightly under 3/4 (72.5%) of the population and in the Semirechie and Turgay oblasts, slightly over 3/4 (77.6% and 76.5% respectively). The Kazakhs are particularly dominant in the Semipalatinsk oblast where they constitute almost 6/7 (86.2%) of the population. In all the oblasts the Kazakhs form on average 69%, or more than 2/3 of the total population. On the territory as a whole, from Syr-Darya to the Irtysh, from Tian-Shan to the Ural River, Kazakhs are the majority, exceeding 65% (!).”

Whereas in this essay, Alikhan Bukeikhan skilfully avoided having to quote figures regarding the lands and territories he and his fellow Kazakhs laid claim to and considered their own, inherited via the blood of many generations of ancestors, the author is brave and open with his use of concrete data in his 1913 article published in “Kazakh”. Here I reproduce verbatim: “The territories of these nine oblasts and one guberniya constitute approximately 260 million dessiatins. A great deal of land previously used by Kazakhs has been handed over for use by moujiks [peasant settlers] in the Turgay and Akmolinsk oblasts in the last 10-15 years. By 1908, the land taken from Kazakhs and handed over to the moujiks for use constituted slightly over 4 million dessiatins. According to a 1913 report, the amount of Kazakh land seized and handed over to the moujiks now exceeded 6 million dessiatins...”

Running ahead of myself, I would like to point out here that some years later, all the information and data he researched and the nine oblasts and slew of other lands he listed would serve as the basis for the Alash-Orda National Autonomous Territory as proclaimed by Alikhan Bukeikhan. Having declared these lands the ancient – or great-grandfatherly [the Alash leader’s own coinage] – territory of the Kazakhs in December 1917, Bukeikhan would then proceed firmly, expediently and consistently to fight for the legal recognition of Kazakhs’ rights to them as the property of the nation as a whole. We will see as much below.

The unexpected outbreak of the February Revolution in 1917 saw the leader of the Kazakhs stuck behind enemy lines at the Western front near Minsk. But the overthrow of the autocracy and the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II didn’t take the Alash leader by surprise. For Bukeikhan was well informed of upcoming political events as a member of the very secretive Russian Masonic organisation, “The Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia”. Its main aim was the peaceful or violent overthrow of the monarchy. Pre-revolution historic documents, Western academic research into the revolutionary events of 1905-1917 and a number of memoirs from Russian so-called “white emigrants”, including Kerensky, Milyukov, Gessen and others, which became available after the collapse of the Soviet Union, particularly over the last 10-15 years, put it beyond doubt that the Russian masons reappeared from nowhere, or from “centuries-long hibernation”, with the specific aim of bringing down the autocracy. The legendary retort of M. Kovalevsky, the founding father of Russian early 20<sup>th</sup> century masonry, who returned to Russia in 1906 from exile in France, serves as an example: “Only Freemasonry can defeat autocracy.” I

would like to add by way of observation that at the time of the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907, the whole liberal and democratic movement in Russia, including the constitutionally democratic People's Freedom Party headed by Milyukov, and whose Central Committee featured Bukeikhan from 1912, did not rule out the possibility or even necessity of Russia become a "constitutional parliamentary monarchy" like the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland after the Second State Duma. This is backed up by former deputies from the forcibly dissolved First and Second Dumas receiving broad support from then active British MPs who visited Russia in the wake of the dissolution of the First Duma and met First Duma deputies, headed by former speaker Mr. S. Muromtsev. We should add that this illusion of a liberal Russia was first shattered with the dissolution of the First Duma and then completely dispelled with a June 1907 decree, signed by Nicholas II in violation of his own Manifesto of October 17<sup>th</sup> 1905, the Basic Laws of April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1906 and the abruptly amended electoral law for the State Duma. Not for nothing did liberal Russia call this Tsarist decree "the Coup of June 1907". But by signing this decree, Nicholas II also signed his own death sentence. The autocratic regime was doomed. The revolutionary forces in Russia had united in a secret Masonic movement and were beginning to look at the future of the country without a monarchy. Its overthrow was just a matter of time. Russian involvement in the First World War only precipitated the February Revolution.

Amongst the first positions and departments to be liquidated and discontinued in those first weeks of the February Revolution were those of the Governorate General which were replaced by Provisional Government commissars (upon orders from the head of the Provisional Government and Minister of Internal Affairs, Prince G. Lvov on March 4<sup>th</sup> 1917). Following these instructions, Alikhan Bukeikhan was appointed Provisional Government commissar for the Turgay oblast. The long awaited "time to gather stones" had come at last. But before we delve deeper into this subject matter, we need to make a brief pause at the following point.

As we know, the three main parties in the Caucasus – Mussavat, the Azerbaijani Islamic democratic party, the Armenian party Dashnaktsutyun and the Georgian Social Democratic Party – all received guarantees of autonomy within a future federal Russia once the Provisional Government was proclaimed immediately after the February Revolution. We genuinely do not know whether Bukeikhanov received a similar guarantee or not. Yet we shouldn't rule out such a possibility as if we consider point 4 of the ruling of the Second All-Kazakh Congress held from December 5<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> 1917, it deals not with an approval of Kazakh autonomy but an approval of "Constitutional Alash-Orda Autonomy by the All-Russian Constituent Assembly". It is highly probable that Bukeikhan, the leader of the Alash movement and party, received a guarantee of recognition of Kazakh autonomy from the members of the first and all subsequent forms of the Provisional Government from amongst his "brothers" in the Masonic community. I repeat that in the first Provisional Government there were at least four of Bukeikhan's Masonic brothers: Kerensky, Nekrasov, Tereshchenko and Konovalov. It is now beyond doubt that Bukeikhanov's appointment as Provisional Government commissar was down to his patronage by his "mason brothers". Yet it is clear that the leader of the Kazakhs obviously delayed organising a Kazakh political party. He only went about setting up the national Alash Party in July 1917 once he was a Provisional Government commissar, almost four months after the announcement of elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly where it was assumed Russia would be proclaimed a democratic, parliamentary, federal state. A new democratic law on elections to the Constituent Assembly was also adopted: *a universal, one-man-one-vote, direct election via secret ballot*, which Kazakhs had been deprived of by the law of June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1907.

Though for fairness's sake we must state that of all the colonised peoples of Russia, the law of June 3<sup>rd</sup> specifically deprived only the Kazakhs of their right to vote as all the nations of the Caucasus – the Azerbaijanis, Armenians and Georgians, as well as the Tatars, Bashkirs and other small Muslim nations – had deputies in all four State Dumas.

The Kazakhs, the sixth largest nation in Russia with a population of over 5 million by 1917, were completely deprived of a right to vote between 1907 and 1917 and had no representatives in the Duma up until February 1917. For Bokeikhan to set up a national party in that period would have been politically inexpedient and, more importantly, a risk. The most popular Kazakh leaders were exiled beyond the Steppe Territory starting from 1908-1910; Alikhan Bukeikhan was exiled to the Samara guberniya and Baitursynuly and Dulatuly were exiled to Orenburg where they were kept under close watch by the colonial authorities. To be as clear as we can, let us point out here that his actual period of exile in Samara only ended with the outbreak of the February Revolution and his appointment as Provisional Government commissar for the Turgay oblast.

It is odd that all the territories of the former Steppe Governorate General, the Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Uralsk and Turgay oblasts and the Orenburg oblast with its administrative centre, the city of Orenburg, had fallen under his control whereas the Turkestan committee chaired by Mr. N. Shchepkin was running the oblasts which had formerly fallen under the control of the Turkestan Governor General, i.e. Samarkand, Syr-Daryinsk, Fergana, Semirechie, Zakaspiisk, and the Bukhara and Khiva khanates.

As Provisional Government commissar, Bukeikhan was given fairly far-reaching powers, such as maintaining public order, preventing anarchy and creating a new apparatus of power in the uyezds and volosts: replacing the police with a militia and setting up public security committees. His activity consisted chiefly in running his subject oblasts politically, putting land laws into effect, regulating relations between the native Kazakhs and Russian settlers, maintaining public order to avoid a takeover by Soviets of Deputies (Bolsheviks) etc.

But Alikhan Bukeikhan considered it his main task to reassert Kazakh claims to their own lands and territories without allowing for harsh or bloody resistance from the Russian settlers, Cossacks and others. The Provisional Government formed a Chief Land Committee in April 1917 for land matters which gave him carte blanche in the area. The Turgay oblast commissar still managed to find a subtle solution to the thorny land question which worked in the Kazakhs' favour in the oblasts under his control without any major objection from the settlers or their representatives. We can see this from the events described hereinafter.

Oblast-level congresses only took place in a number of oblasts in April 1917 under his initiative and at his recommendation. Notably, the Turgay oblast congress was held from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> in Orenburg, chaired by Mr. Akhmet Baitursynuly. In addition to the most pressing matters of the day, such as a demand that the Constituent Assembly proclaim Russia to be a democratic federal republic, the Kazakh population of the oblast being able to elect deputies to the Constituent Assembly, the establishment of civil administrative committees from aul to oblast-level, there was a sixth point for which the following decision was taken:

1/ The Kazakhs consider it fair to seize lands from their ownership for government needs after land regulation based on rules established by the Constituent Assembly;

2/ Unsettled plots, sections, rentable lands, church land, monastery land and plots appropriated illegally for use as resorts should immediately be returned to their prior owners pending a solution of the agrarian question being found at the Constituent Assembly and plots that have been abandoned by former settlers and fallen into disuse should also be returned to their former owners. Animal husbandry plots which have been made available for long-term rent illegally should also be returned to their owners...



3/ Land survey work in the Steppe oblasts and Turkestan should be put on hold. The dispossession of Kazakhs, whose lands have now become uninhabited plots, must be stopped. Dachas owned exclusively by the state on Kazakh land that divided up Kazakh farms, meadows, arable land and pastures must be demarcated afresh and the illegally demarcated farms and holdings must be returned to the Kazakhs. These dachas must allow mowing and grazing of the cows in winter free of charge. Woodlands cultivated by the Kazakhs must be returned to their original owners. Poor Kazakhs living near forest dachas must be given access to the forest to build their houses.

Another important decision taken at the Turgay oblast congress of the Kazakhs from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> 1917 concerned the formation of a “special organisational office” headed by Bukeikhan which was to be in charge of devising a programme and setting a time and place for the first All-Kazakh Congress. The congress was called upon “to bring together the whole Kazakh nation, to establish and discuss its most pressing needs”.

Running ahead, let me note here that the first All-Kazakh Congress extended the decision made by the Turgay Congress on the land issue from three to 14 points, approved the demand that the Constituent Assembly proclaim Russia to be a democratic, federal, parliamentary republic and for the first time both demanded that the Kazakh oblasts be granted autonomy and showcased the need to replace the permanent forces with a people’s militia [national army]. The first All-Kazakh Congress adopted these rulings in the July.

But before that, from April 20<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, there was another very important, you could even say emblematic, forum in Orenburg: the Turgay Oblast Cossack Congress, chaired by the agronomist Sirius, at which Kazakh representatives were also present. It elected Akhmet Beremzhanuly comrade [deputy] chairman of the congress, and Turgay oblast commissar Bukeikhan was elected honorary chairman. What was emblematic was that the Cossack Congress “fully supported the ruling by the Oblast-level Kazakh Congress on the land question and decided to subscribe to it”. Furthermore, the Kazakhs and Cossacks shook hands and gave each other brotherly hugs at the congress. They committed themselves to friendly relations, to discussing potential conflicts over land and to settling them via a joint civil committee.

Following these congresses, at a second session on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1917, The Main Land Committee adopted a declaration with assurances that any future land reform would grant all agricultural land to the farming population but put off a final decision on the land question until the Constituent Assembly. Following this declaration, Bukeikhan addressed the people via the Kazakh newspaper, calling on them to approach settling this problem in a balanced, thought out way: “We have suffered untold abuse of power when it comes to our land. We can not be indifferent when talking about the land because land is the most fundamental subject matter in life. We must approach the question with thought and balance, without “complaint, conflict and turmoil”. If our people show restraint and a willingness to co-exist in peace until the Constituent Assembly, it will guarantee their future prosperity.”

Alikhan Bukeikhan prepared thoroughly for the upcoming Constituent Assembly to make sure Kazakh Alash national autonomy was recognised and its constitution approved. The main aim of the first All-Kazakh Congress was to create an independent Alash political party and to devise and put forward a list of Alash party candidates to stand in elections for deputies to the Constituent Assembly. The elections were slated for September 17<sup>th</sup> and party lists were to be presented by August 17<sup>th</sup>.

He left the Kadet Party beforehand, in July 1917. He gave his reasons for leaving the Kadet Party in the summer of 1917 as having irreconcilable differences with its Central Committee on three

principal matters. The Kadets' Central Committee was now in favour of private land ownership whilst Bokeikhan was convinced that if Kazakhs took ownership of the land, they would sell it to Russian peasants within years, as the Bashkirs did, and be left with nothing.

The Kadets' Central Committee crucially also came out against Kazakh autonomy and the separation of church and state. Bokeikhan left the Kadets' Central Committee and party in protest and immediately went about setting up the Alash Party, of which he informed the first All-Kazakh Congress, which took place in Orenburg from July 21<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> 1917.

The congress approved a list of deputies and candidates from each oblast - 78 in all – of which 43 Alash party members were elected deputies to the Constituent Assembly. However, by dint of the rapidly changing situation in Kazakhstan, as in Russia as a whole, the founding congress of the Alash Party never took place, at which they would have approved and adopted the party's statutes and manifesto and elected a leader and governing bodies. A draft of the party's manifesto was published in the Kazakh newspaper.

Meanwhile, due to the Bolsheviks' treacherous seizure of power, the situation in Russia had changed fundamentally which Bokeikhan, as chairman of the Alash Orda Autonomy, described in detail in his memorandum to the Council of Ministers of Siberian Autonomy in July 1918. Achieving recognition and political legalisation of their autonomy in the nine oblasts, the Astrakhan guberniya Bukey Horde and the Altay guberniya neighbouring Kazakh volosts proved to be much more difficult than proclaiming it, especially since one self-proclaimed Russian authority replaced another every two to three months. Yet the head of Alash-Orda consistently and convincingly went before each new all-Russian authority to assert the right of the Kazakh people to those lands and territories, declaring that, "The Alash Autonomy brings together the 6 million strong Kazakh-Kyrgyz population of the Kazakh Territory which has never been part of Siberia and the Turkestan oblasts; the Alash Autonomy ... occupies a territory which is almost round in shape (!) and with its population of 10 million, it forms a large political entity".

For example, as a result of negotiations with the Committee of Members of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly ["Komuch"], the Alash-Orda leader managed first to secure the "temporary recognition" of autonomy "pending approval by the Constituent Assembly of the situation regarding the rights of the Alash autonomous oblast" and second the temporary inclusion in Alash of all "disputed plots and territories".

It is important at this point to point out that neither before the February Revolution, nor during the period of Alash national territorial autonomy from 1917 to 1920, nor while the Kazakh Soviet state was taking shape, did Bokeikhanov and his Alash Orda colleagues ever pursue or achieve the expulsion of Russian peasant settlers, the so-called "German colonists" or the Khokhol Ukrainians [as the settlers and tsarist civil servants themselves called them. Author's note] or the Cossacks and many others from the plots and holdings occupied by them with a view to their subsequent deportation to Russia. In all his works, research, articles and writings, Bukeikhan viewed all these categories of settler as victims of an "ill-advised policy of colonialism and takeover" by the Tsarist authorities. Once autocracy had come to an end, Bukeikhan, as Provisional Government commissar, did not allow Kazakhs to take the law into their own hands regarding settlers and their forced removal from plots occupied by them. A telegram the Turgay oblast commissar sent from Orenburg on May 19<sup>th</sup> 1917 is testament to this: "If the Kazakhs from aul no. 2 of the Ileksky volost who currently occupy plot no. 434 are not willing to live by the conditions and in the place set out in the protocol of May 13<sup>th</sup> 1917 drawn up by the chair of the oblast administration, Mr. Tkachenko, and deputy chair, Mr. Kadyrbayev, they will be removed by force. The Russians will be drawn a ridge, a dividing line over which

the Kazakhs will not be allowed to graze their cattle, or set meadows and crops. I ask you not to argue with the Russians but to live in peace. If not, Kazakhs will be punished.

Turgay oblast commissar, A. Bukeikhanov.”

Therefore he considered the settlement of the Kazakh steppe by Russian settlers as a fait accompli. Bukeikhan wrote the following on the matter on the eve of the declaration of Alash autonomy: “We have many moujik [Russian peasant settlers] neighbours in the Uralsk, Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk oblasts; Moujiks and Kazakhs have intermarried in these oblasts. If we decide to abandon those Kazakhs, separate and live apart, those Kazakhs will remain amongst Russians; if we try to resettle them, those Kazakhs will hardly want to leave the lands of their forefathers and it would be stupid if they did so.

The most productive Kazakh land is to be found where Kazakhs live alongside moujiks. If Kazakhs do declare autonomy, we hope our Russians will stay here with us. By force of circumstances our autonomy will be territorial, not brotherly. It would appear that the Russians here support that.”

If we read carefully the contents of the ruling from the Second All-Kazakh Congress of December 5<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> 1917 which created the Alash Autonomy, there is not a single word about uprooting settlers from the lands occupied by them and deporting them to guberniyas inside Russia. However, the ruling, like all subsequent Alash-Orda official documents and the minutes of the negotiations between former Alash-Orda leaders and Soviet leaders, does clearly define all the lands and territories to be returned immediately to Kazakh ownership, such as the ruling from the First All-Kazakh Congress of July 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> 1917: 1) Kazakh lands must not be inhabited by anyone prior to the complete resettlement of Kazakhs in their plots of land; 2) ... All the following plots of land, which were seized from Kazakhs, must immediately be returned to them: plots for the nobility, for stock-raising, commercial and industrial purposes, resorts, monasteries, settlers, sections, rentable lands, plots given to private individuals and demonstration fields which have actually been handed over to garrisons and others... 3) To discontinue registering people for free plots etc.

Moving on. In the course of talks with the Siberian Autonomy on mutual recognition which took place in Omsk from July 13<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> 1918, there were a number of differences between Bukeikhan and Siberian Autonomy leaders and sometimes outright conflict regarding ownership of Semipalatinsk oblast, Kustanay uezd and other areas, as compiler Mr. N. Martynenko observed in the collection of documents. The talks ended with mutual recognition, but the Siberian Autonomy was soon replaced by yet another Provisional All-Russian Government formed at a State Conference held on September 23<sup>rd</sup> in Ufa [“The Ufa Directory”] which decreed on October 22<sup>nd</sup> (November 4<sup>th</sup>) 1918 that “the Alash government – Alash Orda – consider itself defunct”. But the Ufa Directory actually became defunct itself on November 18<sup>th</sup> of the same year. It was crushed by the so-called “Omsk Government” headed by “Supreme Ruler” Admiral Kolchak who was appointed that same day.

Even after the formation of the Omsk Government, Bukeikhan, as head of Alash Orda, continued to use hard facts to firmly and consistently assert the right of his people to autonomy on the territory of those same oblasts and guberniyas. For example, at a session of the Omsk Government’s preliminary interdepartmental commission on organising the Kazakh people on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1919, the Alash Orda leader asserted the Kazakhs’ right to the Petropavlovsk uezd in the Akmolinsk oblast and drew the commission’s attention to the tsarist authorities’ illegal land-grabbing policy: “The migration authority policy in our oblasts was chiefly expansionist. The Kazakh population was gradually squeezed out of its wintering grounds. Their mosques

were taken away from them and settlers kept calves in them... In 1911, based on the most highly approved opinion of the Council of Ministers, plots of land could be leased to cattle-farmers for a period of 36 years. The migration authority began carving up plots into 15,000 dessiatins, 10,000 and so on and to issue them to various people. This was how the Deputy Chairman of the State Duma, Mr. Varun-Sekret, came by a huge plot in the Petropavlovsk uezd of the Akmolinsk oblast and how Count Potocki was leased 15,000 dessiatins. The Council of Ministers' opinion, which went against the law, which stated that plots no bigger than 25 dessiatins could be made available for rent, created an utterly abnormal situation regarding land in the steppes. The Kazakhs were obliged to rent their own land. We demand that ... the mistakes of the past not be repeated, that what was done prior to the February Revolution not be done again. We request that the land question be brought back to the situation it was in under the Provisional Government of Lvov-Kerensky."

Alikhan Bukeikhan was equally insistent when defending the Alash-Orda Autonomy's right to create its own army: "You have misunderstood me regarding a militia. Our militia are troops. It actually already exists: 700 of our dzhigits [horsemen] are at the front in Semirechie, 540 men are in Troitsk and there are another 2000 in the Uralsk oblast. When you read news of our successes on the Semirechie front, know that this has been achieved thanks to our detachments... The army should be organised like the Cossack troops with an independent military command." Bukeikhan was a realist: a flexible and pragmatic politician and a statesman with foresight. As the head of a young national autonomous entity, the most important thing for him was to preserve it within the borders of ancient Kazakh lands and territories and to which end he was even willing to find a compromise with the Bolsheviks, in spite of irreconcilable differences with their leaders regarding the form of state administration and genuine democracy, which came across clearly in a memorandum to peasants, soldiers and workers dated December 1<sup>st</sup> 1917. Once the Alash-Orda Autonomy National Council moved to the city of Alash in March 1918, Bukeikhan made his first attempt to enter negotiations with Lenin and Stalin. I would like to point out that this was long before the start of talks with Komuch in June of the same year. According to the testimony of Mr. Smakhan Bukeikhan, the Alash leader's younger brother, at a government meeting which took place in early March at the home of the Kazakh merchant Zhumeke Orazalin in the city of Alash [Zarechnaya Slobodka, Semipalatinsk. Author's note], Alikhan Bukeikhan suggested to his brothers-in-arms that they recognise Bolshevik authority and make peace with them, saying: "We are weak; we don't have the arms or the strength to resist them for long." The suggestion was rejected by a majority of votes from the members of the National Council at the time. Furthermore, direct talks with Lenin and Stalin ceased because of the sharp deterioration in the Red Army's own situation in Siberia and the northern and north-western oblasts of the Alash Autonomy.

When it had become clear in the autumn of 1919 that Admiral Kolchak's armies faced inevitable defeat, the Alash-Orda head made an attempt to restart talks with the Soviet authorities. But this time the Bolshevik leaders had every opportunity to dictate the conditions under which the Alash Autonomy would join the Soviet system, unlike in March 1918.

It is important to underline at this point that the nine oblasts, the Bukey horde of the Astrakhan guberniya, the neighbouring Kazakh volosts of the Altay guberniya and the Petropavlovsk uezd of the Akmolinsk oblast [now the North Kazakhstan oblast], the Kazakhs' right to which Bukeikhanov persistently and consistently asserted first with the Provisional All-Russian Governments and then with the Soviet leaders by dint of their legally being Alash Autonomy territory and the ancient land of the Kazakhs, today form constituent, integral parts of modern, independent Kazakhstan.

We could tag on to the end of the article two little-known pages of Kazakh history from 1919 and 1920 when there were complicated talks in the Kremlin on setting the borders between the Kazakh autonomous entity and the RSFSR.

The first tells the story of how a 29-year-old Alimkhan Ermekuly managed to insist before Lenin, the founder and leader of the Soviet system, on Kazakhstan's right to what was then the Guryevsk oblast and is now the Atyrau oblast, the country's oil and gas wellhead. A short quote from his memoirs was published in 1989 by Zhaik Bekturov in the Karaganda regional newspaper, "Ortalyk Kazakstan". According to the late Bekturov, the manuscript of these memoirs is stored in the personal files of a Mr. G. Musrepov, a Soviet Kazakh writer, and a Mr. M. Ermekov, Alimkhan Ermekuly's son.

The second, better-known story is how Akhmet Baitursynuly managed to put the Kustanay uezd back under the autonomous republic's jurisdiction rather than that of the Chelyabinsk oblast in Russia with a single letter to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Council of People's Commissars. As we know, the Kustanay oblast is now the independent nation's breadbasket, where at least ¼ of Kazakhstan's grain is harvested every year. Would Ermekuly and Baitursynuly have been able to assert a right to these oblasts and return them to the Kazakhs if they hadn't had the strong figure of the nation's leader Bukeikhan behind them with his irrefutable academic and historical facts, arguments and archive material which confirmed that the tsarist colonial authorities had seized these lands illegally? The answer is obvious.

Bukeikhan was himself actively involved in negotiations as head of the Kazakh delegation at meetings of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR in the Kremlin when the subject of delineating the border between Kazakhstan and Russia was being discussed. But he mostly preferred to remain in his colleagues' shadow yet provide or arm his younger comrades, such as Ermekuly, with one set of irrefutable arguments and facts or another.

Another example. In his letter demanding the return of the Kustanay uezd, Baitursynuly didn't only refer to his own birth and work as a teacher in the uezd but to be more persuasive he brought up the illegal seizure of Kazakh lands in the uezd by Cossacks, German colonisers, Khokhol Ukrainians, as they were then known, and Russian peasant settlers which A. Bukeikhan referred to in his 1908 article "The Future Desert".

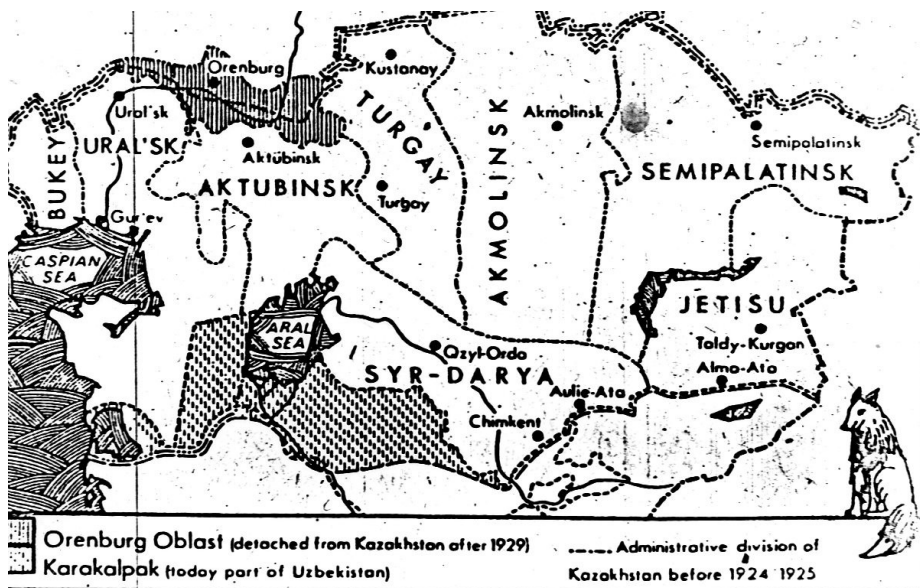
The fact that Alikhan Bukeikhan took a leading role in border negotiations is confirmed by Ermekov's memoirs and the following archived document provided by the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History. It is an excerpt from the minutes of a Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee Politburo meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1920, under point 17, on the Council of People's Commissars inviting Bukeikhanov to attend where he is listed as a "member of the Kirrevkom [Kyrgyz Revolutionary Committee]". This is a completely new and highly sensational piece of information. Because according to official Kazakh historiography, the only former Alash-Orda government leaders who were also part of the Kazrevkom [Kazakh Revolutionary Committee] were Baitursynov and Ermekuly.

In 1928, Bukeikhan wrote a short but very important academic essay entitled, "Agriculture in the Karakalpak Oblast" which was published in the "National Economy of Kazakhstan" newspaper. The Karakalpak Autonomous oblast was part of the Kazakh ASSR until 1930. We genuinely do not know whether the Alash leader rushed to have this essay published for fear there were plans afoot to reassign the oblast directly to the RSFSR or purely for academic purposes. However, on July 20<sup>th</sup> 1930, the Karakalpak Autonomous oblast was taken away from the Kazakh ASSR and reassigned directly to the RSFSR. Then, on December 5<sup>th</sup> 1936 it was made part of the Uzbek SSR, which had also managed to obtain the city of Tashkent as its new capital in 1930.

May I remind you that from 1918-1924, Tashkent was the capital of the Turkestan ASSR led by Messrs. T. Ryskululy (Ryskulov) and S. Khodzhanuly (Khodzhanov) and actually remained part of the Kazakh ASSR up until 1930. Tashkent was where the Ak Zhol newspaper and Sholpan magazine were published and where the Kazakh intelligentsia opened the Central Asian State University, which was a forerunner to the Tashkent State University (now the National University of Uzbekistan).

Prior to that, in 1925, the capital of the Kazakh ASSR was relocated from Orenburg to Kyzyl-Orda. Orenburg and the oblast of the same name became part of the RSFSR. But these territorial repartitions occurred without Bokeikhan's involvement. He was neither in the republican leadership or, indeed, within the borders of his native steppes. From 1922, the Alash-Orda leader was locked up in his "Moscow cell" and could only get back to his native lands extremely rarely.

I conclude by suggesting you take a close look at this pre-1930 map of Kazakhstan published by researchers from the Oxford University Department of Central Asian Studies in 1985. You can't help but notice that at the time Kazakh territory really was "almost round", as described by the Alash-Orda leader back in 1918-1919 when he persistently and consistently asserted Kazakhs' rights to these territories with every "All-Russian" authority and, later, Soviet leaders. The map also shows that through the loss of the Orenburg oblast and the Karakalpak Autonomous oblast, Kazakhstan "took on" its current territorial outline. If Bokeikhan was still alive today, he would no doubt repeat the words he said on the eve of the proclamation of Alash-Orda autonomy: "Even these lands are big. Let us keep them and master them."



**Sultan-Khan Akkuly.**  
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