

## **Goloshchekin's Assault on the Kazakh Elite**

Goloshchekin, appointed to the post of First Secretary of the party's Krai Committee in 1925, in a letter to I. Stalin outlining the main tasks involved in state-building in Kazakhstan and confirming the commitment of the republic's leaders to that course, noted that "in all oblasts before the Fifth conference [in December 1925] building was underway, without affecting the auls [nomadic settlements], and aimed at tackling national issues, without concerning class issues within the nation." [1]

It should also be noted that Goloshchekin and other henchmen sent from Moscow who strove for absolute power in the republic did not identify in any way the word "Kazakhstan" with the concept of an autonomous state. As the first leaders of the krai party organization, they acted for the most part as the fulfillers of various directives from Moscow and the party's General Secretary. Goloshchekin, for example, at a meeting of the Bureau challenged the sentence "Approving the political line of the Kazkraikom" in a draft resolution, stating, "I will categorically oppose this sentence. . . . I hold that the political line is the line of the party's Central Committee. We do not have our own political line." [2]

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

Goloshchekin's lack of concern for the interests of the Kazakh republic could also be seen when it came to territorial issues. In 1925 the Presidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee decided, without discussing the matter with the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh ASSR, to transfer the Ilel district of the Aktyubinsk province to the Orenburg province of the RSFSR. The numerical predominance of Russians among the region's population was cited as grounds for the decision. The matter was a topic of intense debate at a meeting of the Kazkraikom Bureau. The All-Union Central Executive Committee's decision was harshly criticized by the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR N. Nurmakov, the chairman of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee Zh. Mynbaev, member of the Kazkraikom Bureau S. Khodzhanov and others. Nurmakov noted, "this decision is tantamount to eliminating the Kazakh republic on the basis of its national composition, for the day when the ethnic European population reaches 70 percent is not far off, given the current rate of resettlement."

In response to Goloshchekin's assertion that in dealing with this issue not only considerations of nationality, but economic factors should be taken into account, Khodzhanov declared: "We cannot side with the viewpoint that national considerations are of no significance here. The situation in our republic is such that the question of nationality is of extraordinary importance . . . Now, to all appearances, there has been a certain move towards increasing resettlement. Mass resettlement to Siberia is becoming an official strategy. The Siberian settlers, having done a circle, end up here. Twelve thousand wagons have already been registered. I am of the view that this question should be considered from the standpoint of ensuring the preservation and further strengthening of the Kazakh republic as a state, not as a krai or region within Russia . . . therefore I suggest that this question be considered in detail from the standpoint of . . . preserving the Kazakh republic as a viable state, and not let it slip through the hands as certain comrades would be disposed . . ." [3]

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

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

Among the republic's leaders, second secretary of the Communist Party Krai Committee Sultanbek Khodzhanov, a strong-willed advocate of decolonization, stood out in particular, having risen to prominence during the period of land and water reforms in Turkestan in 1921-1922 and held in deserved esteem by the people. A month after arriving in Kazakhstan Goloshchekin was to have Khodzhanov relieved of his office and reassigned to the Communist Party Central Committee in Moscow. His place would be taken by N. I. Ezhov, who would eventually move to Moscow to become director of the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) of the USSR. Khodzhanov himself, of course, understood full well the meaning of the reassignment. At the meeting of the Kazkraikom Bureau at which he was told of the Central Committee's decision he said: "I was not summoned to Moscow to get things done, of course, but to not get things done." [4]

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

- The question of the posting of other officials (comrades Lur'e, Piatkin and Smirnov) to Kazakhstan shall be referred to the Secretariat for consideration so that the Secretariat can make a decision within one week;
- It shall be proposed to the Moscow Party Committee that at least three party officials be allocated for Kazakhstan. [5]

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

Having prevented Khodzhanov from engaging in further political activity in Kazakhstan, Goloshchekin turned his attacks to Smagul Sadvokasov, a member of the Kazkraikom Bureau of the Communist Party, people's commissar of education and editor-in-chief of the republic newspaper Engbekshi Qazaq. Sadvokasov condemned vocally and in his writings Goloshchekin's idea of a "little October," [6] sharply criticized the pace of indigenization (korenizatsiia) policy in the state apparatus, the Bolshevik method of confiscating property from Kazakh bays, and the focus on raw resources in industrializing the republic's economy. At the third krai conference Sadvokasov proposed a course diametrically opposed to that advanced by the Communist Party Central Committee and Kazkraikom with respect to expropriation of assets of the propertied classes. He noted in particular that in Kazakhstan the poor suffer most from a lack of work opportunities and a shortage of land, work tools and equipment, "and not due to anyone exploiting them." "Give Kazakh a horse, hay, a scythe," he said, "make it so that his farm is sustainable and it will be a hundred times more benefit than simply distributing what there already is. The idea of distribution of what there already is essentially an extremely dangerous idea, for distributing what there already is has an inherently consumerist aspect. Give a poor man a cow today, tomorrow he slaughters and eats it, and another day he may ask for another one, and if there isn't another one then we're left with nothing. . . . Today it's not some shock the country is waiting for, but constructive and peaceful work. And it is not new expropriations that will save it, but work and science." [7]

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

There were also disagreements between Sadvokasov and Moscow regarding the nature of industrialization. In the open press Sadvokasov condemned the position held by those who wanted to turn Kazakhstan and the Central Asian republics exclusively into suppliers of raw materials for the industrially developed central regions of the Soviet Union. "Whereas the imperialistic Russian bourgeoisie would only take strip raw materials from outlying regions while planting numerous factories and industrial works in their own backyard," he noted, "socialist industry should develop according to the principle of economic expediency." [8]

In 1927 the newspaper Pravda Vostoka published an article entitled "The General Line" by chairman Zelenskii of the Central Asian bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in which the author criticized local "nationalists" and "backers of the idea of a closed economy." [9] Responding to Zelenskii's indictments, Sadvokasov wrote: "Firstly, comrade Zelenskii's allegation that there is some trend (read: among the [non-Russian] nationals) supporting the establishment of a closed economy in each republic (a laughable idea) is wrong, and secondly, according to what theory does it follow that taking cotton out of Central Asia is a good thing, while taking textiles is a sign of a closed economy. It doesn't work like that, comrade Zelenskii. In fact, from the standpoint of economic expediency, industry should be situated as close as possible to the sources of raw materials.

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

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

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

Therefore, 'economically' speaking, everything goes against comrade Zelenskii." [10]

To finally put an end to "Kazakh nationalism" amongst the republic's leaders Goloshchekin held the Third Plenary Session of the Kazkraikom, where the group of S. Khodzhanov, S. Sadvokasov and Zh. Mynbaev was named on the agenda. They were accused of nationalism and of ideological ties to the Alash Orda intelligentsia. In his closing speech at the session Goloshchekin said "there are two types of Alash Orda members: old leaders and a new generation of Alash Orda. There is a major difference between them. I believe that if we take the old Alash Orda members, they have something that lies in the past. In the past they were, in Kazakh terms, Kazakh revolutionaries in the making—bourgeois revolutionaries. The younger don't have that. They are more malevolence. They grew up fighting Soviet authority." [11]

As it became clear from the speeches by Kazakh party members at the plenary session, under pressure from the emerging totalitarian regime seeking to create a national ruling elite noticeable changes were occurring; a large portion of them were adapting to the demands of the command-administrative system and championing Moscow's policies in Kazakhstan.

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

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

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

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

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

Titov: In what is this manifested?

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

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

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

Titov: A dictator?

Mustambaev: Call it as you like. Perhaps a dictator, perhaps such a strong comrade and party worker that the others pale in comparison, find themselves subordinate to his influence and so forth. But in any case it is my subjective opinion that the entire Krai Committee consists of comrade Goloshchekin. [12]

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

The chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (i.e., the government) of the republic, Nygmet Nurmakov, spoke out against the emasculating role of the Soviet structures. Speaking before the Krai Committee Bureau he said: "our Soviet structures are completely being supplanted by the party structures. This has been the case and is now the case. I have told this to comrade Goloshchekin many times. I have some-times objected to making the work of the Soviet structures too innocuous, and turning the leadership into wardship." [13]

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

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

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#### **Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia**

#### **References:**

1. Partiinoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane. Sbornik rechei i statei (1925-1930 gg.) (Moscow and Alma-Ata, 1930), p. 152
2. AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 8, l. 532ob.
3. Ibid.
4. AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 18, l. 231
5. Ibid., l. 230
6. F. Goloshchekin in one of his keynote speeches said, "there must be a little October for Kazakhstan." He reckoned the Russian kulaks had already been weakened and humbled by then, and that going after the Kazakh bai was not enough. So a mini-October revolution in the Kazakh auls was what was needed. In other words, Goloshchekin was advocating civil war in the auls.
7. AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 485, ll. 25-26
8. S. Sadvokasov, *Izbrannoe* (Almaty, 1994), p. 74.
9. *Pravda Vostoka*, October 7, 1927
10. Sadvokasov, *Izbrannoe*, pp. 74-75
11. *Vnutripartiinye voprosy na 3-m Plenumе Kazakhskogo Kraikoma VKP (b)* (Kzyl-Orda, 1927), p. 162.
12. AP RK, f. 141, op. 1, d. 2409, ll. 70-73
13. Ibid., d. 1649, ll. 6-59