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ЯК БУДУВАЛАСЯ АРМІЯ ДЕРЖАВИ АЛАШ?

Анотація. *Це був 1919 рік, тобто напередодні взаємного визнання Алашської автономії та радянської влади один одного та включення до складу СРСР Казахської автономії. Однак історичні факти підтверджують, що лідер казахів намагався побудувати національну армію, повністю легальну, навіть у період першої російської революції 1905-1907 років, отже, в період авторитарного правління колоніальної імперії, незважаючи на низку непереборних перешкод, які ніби стояли на заваді. Стаття присвячена історичному аналізу процесу створення легальної національної армії населення Казахстану та політичної легалізації Автономної держави Алаш на території Російської імперії наприкінці 19 – початку 20 століття. Лідер казахського національного руху «Алаш» Аліхан Букейхан намагався створити легальну національну армію навіть у період першої російської революції 1905-1907 років. Однак він досяг своєї мети лише після Лютневої революції 1917 р. – напередодні громадянської війни, розпочатої більшовиками. Лідер казахського національного руху «Алаш» Аліхан Букейхан намагався побудувати легальну національну армію навіть під час період першої російської революції 1905-1907 рр. Однак він досяг своєї мети лише після Лютневої революції 1917 р. – напередодні громадянської війни, розпочатої більшовиками*

Ключові слова: *Аліхан, Державна Дума, конне ополчення, козацькі війська, армія Алаша*

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HOW WAS THE ARMY OF THE ALASH STATE BUILT?

Abstract. *It was 1919, that is, on the eve of the mutual acknowledgement of the Alash Autonomy and the Soviet rule of each other and the incorporation of the Kazakh Autonomy in the USSR. However, historical facts confirm that the leader of the Kazakhs was attempting to build a national army, a fully legal one, even during the period of the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907, therefore in the period of the autocratic rule of the colonial empire, despite a number of insurmountable obstacles that seemed to stand in the way. The article is devoted to a historical analysis of the process of creating a legal national army of the Kazakh population and the political legalization of the Autonomous State of Alash on the territory of the Russian Empire in the late 19th – early 20th century. The leader of the Kazakh National Movement "Alash", Alikhan Bukeikhan was attempting to build a legal national army even during the period of the first Russian Revolution 1905-1907. However, he achieved his goal only after the February Revolution of 1917 – on the eve of the civil war, launched by the Bolsheviks. The leader of the Kazakh National Movement "Alash", Alikhan Bukeikhan was attempting to build a legal national army even during the period of the first Russian Revolution 1905-1907. However, he achieved his goal only after the February Revolution of 1917 – on the eve of the civil war, launched by the Bolsheviks*

Keywords: *Alikhan, State Duma, mounted militia, Cossack troops, Alash army*

INTRODUCTION

When negotiating with the so-called "Omsk Government" led by Admiral Alexander Kolchak, which took place in February 1919 in Omsk concerning the issue of recognition of the autonomy of a six-million strong Kazakh nation, the leader of Alash-Orda (Alash-Orda – literally "Alash State". Author's Note) Alikhan Bukeikhan continued to resolutely and consistently defend the right of the Kazakhs to national self-governance, presenting another self-proclaimed. "All-Russian government" with a fait accompli of the existence of the Kazakh National Army: "You have misunderstood me regarding the militia. Our militia is an army. It already exists...". Bukeikhan was building the modern Kazakh army based on the principle, that "*an army should be organized like the Cossack troops with an independent military command*" [1].

The first obstacle was the decree of 1834, freeing the Kazakhs from military duty. "*Why have the Kazakhs not been conscripted before?*" – Qyr Balasy asked himself this question (Son of the Steppes – the most popular pseudonym of A. N. Bukeikhan) in 1913 in the article under the headline "Will the Kazakhs Be Recruited?" published in one of the first issues of the "Qazaq" newspaper and answered it himself, "*A decree exists which has freed the Kazakhs from military duty: 42nd article of the Regulation on Conscription states: "The population of Turkestan, as well as the Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirechye, Ural and Turgay oblasts are freed from conscription*" [2]. According to Bukeikhan, in 1834, the Senior Sultan of the Akmolinsk oblast,

Sultan Konyr Kulzha, son of Khudaymende, travelled to St. Petersburg, where he announced to the Russian Tsar: that the Kazakhs were anxious that the Tsar may obligate them to do military duty (Kazakhs were still respected at the time!) and in connection with this, it is necessary to assuage the groundless worries of the Kazakhs. In reply, the government issued a letter to Konyr Kulzha, guaranteeing that *“The Kazakh nation from this day and in the future is freed from conscription – while maintaining its current nomadic farming or switching to settled farming having created their settlements”* [3] (Ivanov et al., 2008).

As Qyr Balasy noted in the same article, *“from October 1905 Russia began to follow in Europe's footsteps: in its manifest dated from October 17, 1905, the Russian Tsar declared that from that day forward, no law would be passed without discussion of the State Duma and approval of the State Council”* [4]. Consequently, the cancellation of the decree of 1834 and the implementation of conscription for Kazakhs now depended not on the will or whim of the autocrat-Tsar, but on the actions of the newly established State Duma – the first Russian parliament. Bukeikhan was faced with a difficult challenge. Still, the main obstacle was Kazakhs' gripping fear of military service in the alien Russian army [5]. For example, in the course of the first general census of the Russian Empire in 1897, Kazakhs concealed or understated the number of their children of pre-conscription and conscription age due to fear that *“the census is conducted for the purposes of revealing the number of Kazakh children for conscripting them into service in the Russian Army”*. The fear ran so deep that a considerable number of Kazakh families simply migrated deep into the steppes to avoid the census [6]. This raises an important question: to what purpose did the leader of the Kazakhs seek to compel his semi-nomadic nation of many millions driven to the verge of extinction and extreme poverty by the predatory colonial policy to do military service in the regular army of the colonial empire on par with Russian peasants, Cossacks and other oppressed peoples? The answer is to be found in the works of Bukeikhan himself.

1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Having thoroughly researched archive documents concerning the process of acceptance of the Kazakh Junior and Middle Jüzes' (hordes) allegiance to the Russian Empire in 1731, 1781 and toward the middle of the XIX century the annexation of the Senior Jüz (horde) as well as having studied all historical events following these annexations, Bukeikhan came to the conclusion that the Russian Empire took advantage of its strength and grossly violated all the conditions under which Kazakh Khanates swore allegiance to it and turned them into its colonies [7]. With the statutes concerning the Siberian and Orenburg Kyrgyz-Kaysak between 1822-1824 the sovereign institution of state rule as a Khanate was abolished in the Junior and Middle Jüzes and instead an institution of “senior sultan” was implemented, which, according to Bukeikhan's convictions was a gross interference of Russia in the internal political affairs of its subject vassal Kazakh Khanates and virtual termination of Kazakh statehood [8; 9]. The announcement of Kazakh territories property of the Russian treasury and implementation of the institution of “volost administrators” instead of “senior sultans” in the “Steppe Regulation dated from 21st October 1868”, in the view of the leader of the Kazakhs was nothing other than annexation and complete elimination of the Kazakh national statehood [10].

Having confirmed the violation of the conditions by which the Kazakhs had sworn allegiance to the Russian Empire, Bukeikhan decided to dedicate himself fully to the struggle for the return of the Kazakh lands and restoration of national statehood in its former scope and borders at least within the Russian Empire to start with. However, after studying the ruthless experience of the largest armed uprising led by the last Kazakh Khan of all three Jüzes (hordes) Kenesary Kasymuly between 1837 and 1847, Bukeikhan chose for his people a peaceful and completely legal mode of battle for liberation. The establishment and convention in 1905 of the First State Duma only corroborated his point and foresight. Being a direct descendant of Genghis Khan, Bukeikhan knew how to set long-term strategic goals and objectives of the battle for national liberation and fight resolutely, flexibly, yet consistently to reach these goals [11]. These were: the general implementation of zemstvo in the Kazakh Steppe and Turkestan oblasts, the revival of the Kazakh national trial of biys, the translation of paperwork into the language of the indigenous population of the Kazakh lands, the return of illegally seized ancestral lands to Kazakhs with the sequential transfer into their ownership etc. For example, while fighting to implement zemstvo in the Kazakh regions, Bukeikhan saw *“the future of the Kazakh steppes in the purposeful realization of Western culture - in the broadest meaning of the term”* and planned the establishment of a modern democratic Kazakh state on a secure foundation – development of local and public self-government and infrastructure. *“Zemstvo”*, Qyr Balasy wrote in one of his many articles, published in newspapers “Irtysh” and “Qazaq” in the period between 1906 to 1917, *“is an assembly chosen by the local population. There are no aspects of life that zemstvo (or local self-government) would not be involved in. Zemstvo builds schools, clinics, hospitals, institutions of culture and art, roads and bridges; opens institutes of higher education, industrial plants, factories... Zemstvo elects the judicial authority, forms the police and defense forces... If the Kazakhs elect worthy persons into the zemstvo and follow the progressive culture, they will survive...”* [12].

Aside from the above, Bukeikhan viewed zemstvo as the forge of national managers for running the state. The most distinguished progressive public-political figures and liberal political parties of Russia in the period between 1905-1917, with whom the leader of the Alash movement worked side by side in his political career came from the depths of zemstvo assemblies and boards [13]. No less important goal for the Son of the Steppes was the abolition of the decree of 1834, which freed the Kazakhs from military service, which was at first seen as a benefit, particularly after a century of bloody war with the Dzhungars (Oirat state), which threatened the whole Kazakh nation with extinction. However, more than half a century later, especially as consequence of the implementation of the reforms of 1867-1868, 1886 and 1891 by Russia, the aim of which was the step-by-step colonization of the Kazakh regions (later the Steppe and the Turkestan oblasts), this benefit turned out to be pure evil for the Kazakhs. Kazakhs involuntary became a “minority” on their own lands, annexed in 1868 and which were now completely at the disposal of the colonial rule. This evil came out of the lips of the next Governor-General of the Steppe oblast, Ivan Nadarov, not for the first nor the last time, who, in reply to the demand of the delegation of Kazakhs in 1906, forcefully evicted from their ancestral lands, to stop this lawlessness, openly and peremptorily stated: *“Kazakhs will never achieve equal rights because they are equal to others who do not perform military service. Kazakh land does not belong to Kazakhs but to the state. Therefore, if the state needs it, it will be taken from the Kazakhs in accordance with that need”*.

Stubbornly working towards achieving compulsory military service for his people, Bukeikhan was pursuing two goals. One of them were the obvious, acutely necessary for the current moment equal rights with other nations, first and foremost the Russians and especially Cossacks, who served as the main weapon of colonial policy in the Kazakh steppes, the second goal was hidden, but aimed long term [14; 15]. It is very important to note, that he chose for his people not a recruitment service such as carried out by the Finnish, whose recruits could be sent to any region of the Russian Empire. The leader of the Kazakhs was not only working towards forming volunteer cavalry regiments out of his dzhigits (young men), but he was also intending them to have independent military command, which was precisely the hidden meaning of his goal. He foresaw that in the near future the Kazakhs would be forced to assert their ownership rights to their ancestral lands and the sacred right to national self-governance by force of arms. Getting ahead of myself, I would like to point out that in the meantime, in the string of articles in the “Qazaq” newspaper between 1913 and 1916, Bukeikhan justified the reason for necessity of voluntary service in cavalry regiments by the current interests of the nation by example of Cossack troops. Cossack voluntary military service in his opinion had a number of privileges and conveniences for the nomadic Kazakhs in comparison with regular compulsory military service or consignment. Firstly, horsemanship was a national tradition and part of everyday life for the Kazakhs. Secondly, upon turning 18, a Cossack would undertake three years of military training, at which point he becomes a true Cossack, and at 21 he would begin 12 years of real military service. In peacetime, a 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 Bukeikhan, 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 [16].

Thirdly, and most importantly, in Bukeikhan’s view: “By law a Cossack has greater rights than a moujik [Russian peasant], the reason for which is 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 favorable rights to land use than the moujik. We will not be granted that right. If we are granted it, it will only be to our advantage,” the Kazakh leader said, trying to convince his fellow countrymen.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In July 1906 Bukeikhan, unanimously elected as a deputy member of the State Duma of the first convention of the Semipalatinsk oblast, travelled to St. Petersburg with the intention of passing a number of bills, among which was the draft of the decree of implementation of compulsory military service for the Kazakhs, preliminary having discussed the matter with his electors, which is evidenced by a short note published in the June edition of the “Semipalatinsk Leaflet:” “June 10, in Semipalatinsk, in the building of the National House at 12 o'clock, the first meeting of the Kazakh electors took place. More than 150 people attended... A.N. Bukeikhanov opened the discussion, familiarizing the assembly with the programme of the party “National Freedom”, which all present decided to support. After him spoke: a Kazakh from the Genghis volost, Shakarim Khudaiberdin... Akhment Tyshkanbaev (from the Degelensk volost of the Karkalinsk district) about the land issue, Ilyas Dzhankarin (from Pavlodar district) about the same issue with regard to the settlement issue as well as the military service” [17].

Bukeikhan assumed, not without reason that the Duma of the first convention would approve of the bills which he was intending to put forward to be considered by the supreme legislative assembly. He would easily have been able to collect the signatures of many of his fellow deputy members, which were required for the

approval of the bills as part of the legislative work of the Duma. Since out of 448 deputy members of the Duma of the first convention, 153 were members of the Kadet faction, 4 of which were Kazakh and 1 unaffiliated deputy – Shaimerden Kosshygululy, elected by the Kazakhs of the Akmolinsk oblast. In addition to that, the whole leadership of the First State Duma was elected from the Kadet faction: the spokesman was Sergey Muromtsev, vice spokesmen – prince Petr Dolgorukov and Nikolay Gredeskul and finally, the secretary – prince Dmitry Shakhovskoy, a close friend of Alikhan Bukeikhan.

I will note that the Muslim faction of the State Duma of the first convention, as well as all the following, joined the Kadet faction. When the voting for his bills was taking place, Bukeikhan could confidently count on the complete support of the autonomist faction, consisting of members of the Polish kolo, Ukrainian, Finnish, Baltic, Tartar and other ethnic groups, 63 people in the first convention in total. 97 deputy members of the Labor party and 105 unaffiliated members would not have let him down either. Simply put, at the beginning of July 1906, the Kazakh leader seemingly faced a real possibility of reaching his strategic goals. However, this reality became a mirage in one instant. Bukeikhan arrived in St. Petersburg in the morning of July 8, 1906 – just on the eve of the forced dissolution of the State Duma of the first convention. As Bukeikhan himself commented in his memoirs, “Elections in the Steppe” dated from 1916, dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the State Duma, the elections in the Steppe and Turkestan oblasts were determined at the last minute, and at the moment of dissolution of the First Duma, elections in some of the regions of Turkestan did not even yet take place. It was no wonder that having crossed the threshold of the Tavrichesky Palace on July 8, 1906, Bukeikhan has barely managed to collect the signatures of the deputy members on the bills with the purpose of adding them to the agenda of the legislative assembly – the manifesto regarding the dissolution of the Duma was signed on the night of July 8, and the deputy members with Bukeikhan among them saw the manifesto on July 9 in the morning, posted on the doors of the Tavrichesky palace, where the State Duma met.

Despite it all, Bukeikhan did not lose hope since the second convention of the Duma was to take place. Not going into detail about why Bukeikhan voluntarily declined to run for deputy member of the Second Duma, being absolutely sure of his repeated election, which he described in detail in an open letter to the Kazakhs of the Semipalatinsk oblast on January 11, 1907, he sent his reliable comrade Temirgaliy Nurekenuly to the second convention with that goal in mind (Temirgaliy Tyunin-Norokonov or Norokonev), one of the five candidates nominated by him, among them, two nephews of the great poet and thinker Abay – Shakarim Khudayberdyuly and Kakitay Iskakuly [18]. However, a greater disappointment awaited Bukeikhan this time around. After 102 days of operation, from February 20, to June 2, 1907, the second convention was also dissolved. Simultaneously, with the decree on the dissolution of the Duma of the second convention the New Regulation on the State Duma elections, which deprived the five million strong Kazakh nation of voting rights and their removal from the Duma was published on June 3, 1907. Moreover, in December of the same year, by the special presence of the St. Petersburg district court, Bukeikhan was sentenced to a 3-month prison time for signing and publishing the “Vyborg Proclamation”, and was stripped of the right to occupy public offices. Having served his sentence in the Semipalatinsk prison not for 3 months, but for 8, he was exiled into Samara [19].

However, even despite his exile in the period between 1908 and March 1917, he continued his furious struggle for the rights and national interests of Kazakhs, including the right to perform military service in the cavalry troops with independent troop command, having put forward a corresponding bill in the Duma of the third convention through the faction of Kadet deputy members. However, as is important to note, without much visible success. *“Among the many issues addressed by the Duma, the bill to alter “the Regulation on Compulsory Military Service”, which concerned the implementation of compulsory military service for the Kazakhs, having found no luck anywhere, flickered and died along with other trivial matters...”* Bukeikhan wrote, denouncing the activity of the Third Duma, which after ceasing its operations, did not after all pass the bill of alteration of the “Regulation on Compulsory Military Service”, which oversaw the implementation of compulsory military service even for Kazakh. *“In this way – some Muslim people are conscripted for military service in the most abnormal conditions, others instead of carrying out service are obliged to pay the infamous monetary tax, and others still (Turkestan oblast and Muslims of Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirechye, Ural and Trans-Caspian oblasts) are completely forgotten (!)”*.

The leader of the “Alash” movement clearly realized that the nomadic Kazakhs, once a mighty warrior people, who made up the crushing impact force of the hordes of Genghis Khan, his son Jochi and grandson Batu Khan, over a period of more than half a century after their release from military service in 1834, have lost their former exceptional agility and mobility due to the settler colonization of the steppes and the shrinking of their habitat, as well as their free spirit and military valor, courage and boldness and withdrew from carrying military service and weapons. Moreover, military science as well as armaments, have not stood still in their development during that period passed. The last time that the Kazakhs exerted their former warlike character was in the first half of the XIX century. Namely, in 1812 the Kazakhs part of the Russian army participated in

the war against the French led by the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and in 1837-1847 they organized the largest armed uprising against the colonialist policy of the Russian Empire under the command of Kenesary Kasymuly (Kasymov), the last Khan of all three Jüzes [20]. Meanwhile with the election of the Duma of the fourth convention in 1912 arose a new opportunity for the approval of the bill of alteration of the “Regulation on Military Service”. Simultaneously between 1913-1917 Bukeikhan on the pages of the first national newspaper “Qazaq” unfurled an open and turbulent debate about the necessity for the Kazakhs to perform military service, suggesting and explaining the conveniences of service in mounted and cavalry troops.

However, the colonial power of the empire did not share the enthusiasm of the Kazakh leader due to its justified fear of an even larger uprising of the Kazakhs against the policy of colonization of Kazakhstan illegal in both its nature and content, violating the conditions of mutual agreement regarding allegiance to Russia. The memory of the uprising of Khan Kenesary was still fresh in the minds of the people. It remains to add that for 10 years Russian military art and weapons were powerless in the war against Kenesary Khan's unmatched riders. The talented commander and politician, distinguished state figure and leader of the Kazakhs fell victim to an absurd accident in a clash with the Kyrgyz caused by a betrayal of his closest associates. Moreover, even before, the Russian empire again was convinced of the extraordinary militancy, courage and daring of the Kazakh riders in the Patriotic War of 1812. It is an established historical fact that the Kazakhs participated in the war with the French from the first battles at Neman and “Battle of the Nations” near Leipzig to the occupation of Paris. They fought mainly as part of the Orenburg Cossack cavalry regiment, rarely in Bashkir regiments as well as the national volunteer corps. Two Kazakhs, Baybaturuly and Zhanzhigituly (in the archive materials Baybatyrov and Dzhandzhigitov) were awarded silver medals for the occupation of Paris as part of the Bashkir regiment. Among the celebrated heroes of 1812, the names of cavalry officers Major Temirov, Cossack Captain Yusupov, sotnik (Cossack lieutenant) Yumashev etc.

In the second half of the XIX century, the Kazakhs were represented by four descendants of Genghis Khan from the Junior Jüz, three of who were Major Generals and one General of Infantry. The Khan of the Inner Bukey Horde, great-grandson of Abulkhair Dzhangir Bukeyuly earned the rank of general before anyone else. His eight sons also obtained military education. The son of Khan Gubaydulla Dzhangiruly was awarded the highest military rank in the Russian Cavalry – General of Infantry (Cavalry). He became the first and only Kazakh – full cavalier of his kind of troops. The Neplyuev Military School established in 1824 in Orenburg was the origin of many military officers among Kazakhs, which was later reorganized into a Cadet Corps. Each year 30 spots out of 200 were reserved for Kazakh youths. Kazakh youths also occasionally studied at the Omsk Cadet Corps. One of its talented graduates was Chokan Valikhanov – who became a prominent scientist with a world famous name. In general, in the XIX and the beginning of the XX century there were in the military-civilian service in Russia (approximately): one Cavalry General, three Major General, six Colonels, eight Lieutenant Colonels, six Cossack Majors as well as a fair number of majors, captains and staff captains, sotniks (Cossack lieutenant) etc.

The seriousness of the fear of the Russian Empire is confirmed by the fact that in the period of World War I, especially between 1915-1916, despite the heavy casualties and colossal material losses, it did not dare to conscript Kazakhs, not to mention organize them into cavalry units with independent military command. The situation at the Western Front at the beginning of 1915 showed that new battles required not only the mobilization of millions of citizens, but also an astronomical amount of armaments and ammunition. Pre-war stocks of armaments and ammunition were exhausted and the warring countries began actively restructuring their economies to match military needs. The war gradually evolved from being a battle of armies to a battle of economies [21].

Having increased their population to 6.5 million (or fifth largest nation of the Russian Empire) towards the beginning of World War I, the Kazakhs over a comparatively short period of time could have organized mobile cavalry troops numbering several hundred thousand warriors, who, in the event of being sent to the Western Front could have considerably supplemented the reserve of the Russian army and noticeably improved its situation in the war. However, in all probability, the Russian colonial empire feared to lose its complete control over the Great Kazakh Steppe by giving the indigenous nation of many millions the right to have their own military forces with independent military command. It would seem that in St. Petersburg it was considered that Kazakhstan was a gateway to Central Asia. Even at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries Kazakhstan was a key geopolitical zone. The loss of control over Kazakhs and their vast territories would mean virtual loss of control over all “Asian Russia” and naturally would have deprived Russia of access to Afghanistan, Iran, India and the Pacific Ocean in general.

Meanwhile between 1914-1916 the Kazakh delegation led by Bukeikhan in St. Petersburg, with the assistance of members of various factions of the State Duma, relentlessly pestered high offices starting with the Tsar himself, the State Duma, the Council of State, government and ending with the Ministry of Defense

and Internal Affairs with the hope that in the time of difficult challenges the colonial power would in the end meet the wishes of the Kazakh “minority” to “serve” the Russian crown. In the negotiations in St. Petersburg the leader of the Kazakhs concentrated the attention of his interlocutors on the assurances of the colonial power itself, voiced before Russia joined the World War: “We are not fighting for markets, not for the enrichment of the capitalists, but for freedom, for the self-determination of all nations and nationalities. And now we demand to be given what was promised to us”. Bukeikhan insisted. Here it is necessary to remind the reader about another important historical fact, that in November-December 1916 Germany and its allies offered peace, however the military-political block of Russia, France and Great Britain – Atlanta – declined the offer, stating that “peace is impossible until the restoration of violated rights and freedoms, the recognition of the principle of nationalities and free existence of small states is ensured!”

Despite the obligations that Russia undertook to before entering the war, Russia was not yet ready to provide the Kazakhs with the right to self-determination, including the right to the formation of a national army. “During peace time the government is intending to conscript us to infantry troops” Qyr Balasy wrote on the subject in the article published under the heading “The Issue of the Conscription of the Kazakhs” in the “Qazaq”. “If the people will find it acceptable, then let them not waste time and continue to be engaged in farming... To me however, it is evident that if the Kazakhs will be conscripted, then our people should serve as Cossacks do. Valid arguments in favor of it have been specified for the uninformed in the “Petrograd Letters...”. While suggesting volunteer service in the cavalry with independent command (control), Bukeikhan was planning on educating these troops with the aid of Cossacks and found complete support among the Cossack members of the State Duma, which he reported in one of his “Petrograd Letters,” published in 1916 in the “Qazaq”: *“Here [in the State Duma] Cossack members have declared that if the Kazakhs wish to serve in the same manner as Cossacks, they will provide assistance. It is convenient for Kazakhs to be Cossacks”*.

“However” he noted in the previous letter of the same series, “the issue of implementation of conscription of the Kazakhs in the Duma is still closed and it is unlikely to be put forward at this moment. “Nevertheless, Bukeikhan’s political intuition told him that this issue would be positively resolved in the near future. His intuition did not fail him. The emperor of Russia on June 25, 1916 issued a decree on “The Requisition of the Indigenous People”, in other words, the mobilization of the Kazakh “minority” of the Steppe and Turkestan regions, for performing auxiliary work, which was the last thing the Kazakh leader wanted. Another unexpected turn for Bukeikhan was the mass uprising of the Kazakh which broke out following the “June 25” decree, which only enforced the fear of the colonial power of Russia of granting Kazakhs the right to form their own cavalry troops. Moreover, an uprising, even more so an unprepared one, did not suit the plans and strategy of the leader of the “Alash” movement, or to be precise – fully contradicted his goals. It is also imperative to note, that the fundamental cause behind the civil commotion was not so much the decree itself, but more its hasty and rough execution by the representatives of the colonial power and their appointees, such as volost administrators, village elders and the steppe nobility. That is precisely the conclusion the private council of the Kazakhs from Turgay, Ural, Akmolinks, Semipalatinsk and Semirechye oblasts came to about the damage caused to farming by the mobilization of men for auxiliary work, which took place on August 7, 1916 in Orenburg led by Bukeikhan: *“The supreme decree of June 25, became known to the Kazakhs in the form of an announcement by the local government while the decree itself was not yet published. It struck the unprepared population out of the blue. The local government hastily began to enforce the decree. In the unpreparedness of the population, as well as the extreme haste, harshness and abuse in the actions of the authorities lay the roots of the past and current misunderstandings and tensions that now became known... When the population saw the distinct injustice being exercised, it took the matter into its own hands, at the same time forcefully taking the lists from the volost administrators. This happened in Turgay, Ural, Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirechye oblasts. Thanks to the abuse of the Kazakh authorities the current generation got to meet brigades of Cossacks for the first time”*.

“Everything that has happened until now, – in the protocol of the current counsel, – is explained by the urgent haste of the execution of the supreme decree. It is necessary to take immediate measures to calm the population by withdrawing Cossack brigades out of the steppes and convening congresses of representatives of the population. The local authorities, namely volost administrators themselves caused civil commotion by their rash actions, their harshness and abuse of power, they perturbed the most peaceful and obedient to the supreme command people, whom they declared to be unruly and rebellious toward the authorities and law. All this is false – the Kazakhs obey the command”.

Having discussed the causes and consequences of the decree of June 25, 1916 and its actual execution, the private counsel of the Kazakhs drew up regulations containing 18 points, the first of which spoke of the “need for postponing the conscription of workers in northern uyezd (districts) until January 1, 1917 and the conscription of the southern districts until March 15, 1917” and in last point spoke of “regarding the above... petition the government”.

As follows from yet another of his “Petrograd letters” (IV – “Qazaq”, No. 192, 1916), at the beginning of September in Moscow, Bukeikhan discussed the matter of conscription of Kazakhs with Prince Georgy Lvov who led the United Committee of the Union of Zemstvos and the Union of Towns (ZEMGOR), an organization that aided the army, that maintained hospitals and ambulance trains, supplies clothing and footwear for the army, and who after the February Revolution between March and July 1917 became the Minister-Chairman and Minister of Internal Affairs of the First Provisional Government and also led the first coalition government. Later the Alash leader travelled to Petrograd where he met with Mikhail Rodzianko – the spokesman of the Fourth Duma, Andrey Shingarev, who was the chairman of the marine committee of the Fourth Duma between 1915 and 1917 and who in March-May 1917 became the Minister of Agriculture in the first composition of the Provisional Government. He also met with members of the State Duma of the fourth convention Alexander Kerensky, Ivan Yefremov and Mikhail Karaulov – being the chieftain (ataman) of the Terek Cossack Host. As it is not difficult to guess, Bukeikhan together with the Cossack members discussed not only the possibility of postponement of the conscription of Kazakhs for auxiliary work until the completion of farm work but also continued insisting on granting the Kazakhs the right to form cavalry troops with independent command. He was met with full support and was promised cooperation in the matter [22].

Prince Lvov undertook to place the Kazakhs mobilized for auxiliary work under the custody of ZEMGOR, which was reported in detail in issue No. 192 of the “Qazaq”. After a series of meetings with the leader of the Alash movement prior to and during the period of civil commotion of 1916, on September 10, of the same year, A. Kerensky addressed the Duma with a summary report about his journey around the Steppe and Turkestan regions, in which he placed the blame for the bloody oppression of the civil commotion on the Tsarist government, accused the Minister of Internal Affairs of abuse of authority, demanded the impeaching of the corrupt local Tsarist officials. At the time he was the head of the committee of the Fourth Duma for the investigation of causes and consequences of the events of 1916 in the Kazakh Steppe and Turkestan regions, having studied the events on the spot. He undertook his inspection trip into the Kazakh territory upon the insistent request of Bukeikhan, who sent Mustafa Shokay (Chokaev), his young associate to accompany him, who at the time served as the secretary of the bureau of the Muslim faction of the Fourth Duma.

Approximately from the end of 1915 Bukeikhan was a member of the bureau of the Muslim faction as a representative of the Kazakh population, at the end of October 1916 on his recommendation Mustafa Shokay became the second representative of the Kazakhs. As he sent Mustafa Shokay to accompany Alexander Kerensky in his trip to the Steppe and Turkestan regions, Bukeikhan was sure that they would find common ground. He knew that Kerensky and Shokay were both alumni of the Tashkent Gymnasium and the Law Faculty of the St. Petersburg University, albeit graduating in different years. The former graduated from the gymnasium in 1899 and university in 1904, while the latter graduated in 1910 and 1914. After recounting his report at the Duma, Kerensky as well as Karaulov and Yefremov promised Bukeikhan to send a telegram to the emperor who was on the front with the request to postpone the mobilization of the Kazakhs for auxiliary work from September 15 to a later time. Apart from everything else, upon the insisting request of the Alash leader, Andrey Shingarev personally addressed the Minister of War Dmitry Shuvaev on September 8, regarding the following: when and in what order will the Kazakhs be conscripted and will they be granted the benefits they asked for? Shuvaev replied: the Minister of War will make the decision regarding the conscription of the Kazakhs, only then will the issue be forwarded for consideration by the military department. “Now we are in search of a member who would positively resolve our matter with the Minister of Internal Affairs. It is difficult to predict anything, we are acting blindly. God help us!” Qyr Balasy wrote in his next Petrograd letter.

It follows that Alikhan Bukeikhan was able to find the person he was looking for, based on the order of the Minister of War Dmitry Shuvaev dated from October 14, 1916, the text of which was immediately published in the issue No. 202 of the “Qazaq” in 1916. However, the order did not meet the expectations of the leader of the Alash movement since it did not concern the right of the Kazakhs to form their own cavalry troops with independent command which was Bukeikhan's main goal. Instead, the order provided the following (loose translation of the author):

- 1) the authorization to recruit minorities, voluntarily choosing to serve in the Cossack troops is transferred to the troop atamans, namely the atamans of Cossack cavalry troops;
- 2) volunteer minorities will be recruited into the mounted cavalry troops participating in hostilities, in case of need, they may be placed at the disposal of reserve sotnik (Cossack lieutenants) to undergo military training;
- 3) minorities recruited as volunteers into the Cossack troops are obligated to enter service in their uniform (Cossack uniform) with their own weapons and horses;
- 4) volunteer minorities will serve as private Cossacks;
- 5) volunteer minorities will be freed from military service immediately after the war ends and will be sent home;

I order that the above decree of the Tsar will be executed with strictest compliance.

Signed: The Minister of War General of Infantry D. Shuvaev.

“Our military command”, – Bukeikhan wrote sometimes later, “must consist exclusively of our own personnel. Otherwise a foreign officer instead of training our warriors would punish them for the slightest offense and put them in jail unjustly. However, if the officer is a Kazakh, the warriors will undergo appropriate training, they will be well educated and politically literate. A commander that does not know Kazakhs, their language, culture and mentality will only punish them”.

Having achieved his goal – postponing the mobilization of the Kazakhs for the auxiliary works until the completion of the farm work, Bukeikhan together with his associates in the Alash movement lost no time and immediately set out for Kazakh regions with the aim to explain the situation to the people. He chose the hotspot for himself – the Trans-Caspian oblast. As Smakhan-tore Bukeikhan (the younger brother of the leader of Alash) wrote in his memoirs later, the chiefs of the Aday clan greeted Alikhan admiringly with banners and announcing “Our Khan has arrived!” In reply, Alikhan requested they put an end to rebellion [22].

His arguments were convincing. Firstly, a virtually unarmed uprising against modern regular troops of a warrior empire which had heavy casualties in the First World War was not only counterproductive, but also destructive to the people themselves. Secondly, the Kazakhs were being conscripted for auxiliary works, not the war. Thirdly, the youth will see a completely different world, another way of living and farming, modern weapons and conditions of war. This experience may come useful to the Kazakhs in the future, the leader explained to his fellow clan members. He convinced them to obey the decree of the Russian Tsar and let the dzhigits aged between 19 and 35 go to the front, promising to join them. At the end of 1916 Alikhan set out to follow them to the Western Front aiming to enter military service, ensure the living conditions and protection of rights of his young fellow clan members as well as all other “minorities” – Kyrgyz, Kalmyks, Buryats and others, he opened and led the “Department of Minorities” of ZEMGOR, taking the responsibility for providing the auxiliary works.

Following the February Revolution 1917, in the middle of March Bukeikhan was urgently summoned to Petrograd by the Provisional Government. On March 20, he was appointed the Commissar of the new democratic government of the Turgay oblast, about which he informed his people, sending a telegram to the “Qazaq”. He was also appointed a member of the Turkestan Region Administration Committee [23]. The Kazakh national leader assumed that the time for organizing the national army has finally come and set out to create it, firmly, but nevertheless cautiously, officially naming it “militia”. It is worthwhile to note that Bukeikhan began organizing the Alash army prior to the traitorous coup of the Bolsheviks in October 1917 and the creation in February 1918 of the bloody “Red Army”.

This way in July 1917 Bukeikhan left the ranks of the Constitutional Democratic (Kadet) party and promptly began organizing the first Kazakh National Party “Alash”, of which he informed the First All-Kazakh Convention, which convened between July 21-28 of the same year at his initiative. The 4th point of the agenda named “the Defense of the Homeland”, stated the following: “For the defense of the Homeland the army will not remain in its current condition. The youths having reached conscription age will undergo training and perform military service in their homelands; the youths have the right to perform military service according to their vocation: Kazakhs already perform military service in the mounted militia(!)”

Between the first and the second All-Kazakh conventions in July and December one more confidential and secret convention was held, where the regulation for organizing a Kazakh national militia-army was passed. This speculation is supported by the following quote of an article published on November 21, 1917 in the “Saryarqa” newspaper: “It is essential that we unite and reflect on the defense of our native land. The telegram sent by Alikhan, Akhmet and Myrzhakyp, published in the previous issue literally howls for the defense of the homeland and charges the citizens of Alash with it. What course of action the nation will take will be decided by the All-Kazakh Congress in Orenburg, planned to take place on December 5. In the meantime the main task is clear – to continue fulfilling the regulations of the September Congress(!)”.

As was mentioned above, during the formation of the national mounted militia-army, for its training, provision of arms and ammunition, Bukeikhan at first relied on the support and aid of the Cossacks, for example, the Omsk, Orenburg, Ural and Semirechye Cossack troops. Simply put, the leader of Alash, no matter how strange it seemed, considered the Cossacks, who served as the weapon and pillar of the colonist policy of the Russian Empire, to be allies in the struggle of Kazakhs for their national self-determination. And as it appeared – was not wrong in thinking so. Where prior to the February Revolution, as seen above, he in his struggle for the rights and interests of his nation enjoyed understanding and strong support of the Cossack members of the Duma, in the above mentioned telegram from Alikhan Bukeikhan, Akhmet Baytursynuly and Mirzhakyp Dulatuly, published on November 18, 1917 in the “Saryarqa” newspaper, on the eve of the second All-Kazakh Congress, it was said: “Parallel to our congress a general congress of Cossacks is taking place. We must also take part in this congress”.

After the Bolsheviks rose to power, Bukeikhan set a new goal for himself: to build a modern, educated and literate army. “An ignorant soldier” he wrote “makes no distinction between good and evil. An uneducated, uncultured and undisciplined soldier is capable of committing utterly lawless acts. The civil bloodshed among the Russians is a consequence of ignorance and incivility of their soldiers”. And one of the first legislative regulations of the National Council (government) of the Alash-Orda, passed between June 11-24, 1918 signed by Alikhan Bukeikhan concerned the issue of the creation of the Alash army: “To create a council of war of three members under Alash-Orda, entrust it with the functions of a military ministry and grant it with (authority) to open oblast and uezd level councils at the oblast and uezd departments of the Alash-Orda. The council of war will be charged with the responsibility to conscript dzhigits for fighting the Bolsheviks”.

As it turned out, at this point the first Kazakh cavalry brigades were already formed and were ready to defend their homeland, which is confirmed by a note in the Omsk newspaper “Svobodnaya Rech” issued on June 21, 1918 under the headline “The Arrival of the Kazakh Brigade”: “At noon on June 18, the newly formed Kazakh (originally Kyrgyz) cavalry of 500 men with officers-instructors in the steppes arrived in Alash. The brigade was greeted by the entire population of Alash... The brigade was taught the military art was armed”. The editorial note of the next issue of the newspaper contained new details regarding how “a solemn meeting was arranged at the square near the church of St. Nicholas, where “the famous national figure [Alikhan] Bukeikhan arrived, in whose honor at the suggestion of the lieutenant colonel [Khamit] Tokhtamyshev, the riders uttered the word “Allah”. The white banners carried slogans in the Kazakh language: “Long live the All-Russian and Siberian Constituent Assembly!” “Long live the true sons of the Motherland!” The speeches, said at the meeting, breathed of patriotism” [24].

Towards the middle of the summer of 1918 Bukeikhan was able to create not only a battle-ready division of the Alash state from several cavalry regiments, but also open a military cadet school for the training of national military officers. According to the Omsk newspaper “Svobodnaya Rech”, some of the brigades of Alash were already actively participating in the combat operations on the Southern front in the Semirechye oblast. “The actions of the Kazakh volunteers” the Omsk paper wrote “are constantly reported to the current Kazakh Premier Minister A.N. Bukeikhan by the government of Alash-Orda. He recently received the following telegram from Arkat: “Musa was present at the taking of Sergiopol, he arrived there and personally beheaded nine Reds. The Bolsheviks fled to Urdzhar. The brigade of Habidzhanov was sent after them. Administrator [of the Premier-Minister of Alash-Orda] S. Akaev”.

On June 16, Bukeikhan sent his ally, the head of the Bashkir Autonomy Z. Validov the following telegram: “The Semirechye oblast is cleansed of the Bolsheviks. The Kazakhs, Cossacks and offers are finishing off the remnants of the Bolshevik troops. Our (Kazakh) brigades were sent into the Altay guberniya”. In the telegram sent on September 12. 1918 to the members of the government in the city of Alash (Zarechnaya Slobodka, Semipalatinsk) from Ufa, where he was negotiating with the Committee of the members of the Constituent Assembly (Komuch) on the matter regarding the recognition of the Kazakh Autonomy, its head A. Bukeikhan openly mentions the national army: “All efforts are to be concentrated on the formation of a national army. Russia will be saved by national armies. Alash is one of the ally states of Russia, therefore the Alash army is one of Russia's pillars. The Alash regiment must be provided with all necessities and must not be dissolved. Buy the necessary equipment, even on credit. Buy a sufficient amount of arms. In the Ural and Turgay departments of Alash-Orda brigades are hurriedly undergoing military training. We will prepare officers in the Ural department”.

In February 1919, during the negotiations with the Omsk government led by Admiral Kolchak, the Premier-Minister of Alash-Orda, A.N. Bukeikhan announced the successes of his army: “Our militia is an army. It already exists: 700 of our dzhigits are on the front in Semirechye, 540 at Troitsk, 2000 in Urals oblast. When you read messages regarding the successes on the Semirechye front, bear in mind that these successes are owed to our brigades...”. It is necessary to briefly mention that uniforms were designed and sewn for the army of the Alash state, different for the command officers and the enlisted personnel, several hymns (marching songs) were written... [25]

All for one sacred goal – to assert the right of his nation for self-governance, to achieve recognition and political legalization of the Autonomous State of Alash on the territory of nine oblasts, Bukey Horde of the Astrakhan guberniya and the adjacent Kazakh volosts of the Altay guberniya, between 1917 and 1920 Alikhan Bukeikhan acted according to the age-old principle “politics is the art of the possible”. While creating the Alash army, Bukeikhan was not preparing for war – not with the Bolsheviks nor with anyone else, but was striving for asserting the national autonomy and preserve the fragile peace. “The militia is acutely needed simply due to the fact that now only those who are strong, armed and mounted can survive. “He wrote in yet another one of his articles. It became evident that at the height of the civil war in Russia, there was no other choice but to conclude an alliance with one of the warring sides in order to withstand the other, or vice versa.

No matter the choice, there was a chance for the salvation and recognition of the legitimacy of the young Kazakh state. Directly after the relocation of the National Council (government) of Alash-Orda to the city of Alash in March 1918, Bukeikhan attempted to establish communication – first - with the leaders of the Soviet power (negotiations with V. Lenin and J. Stalin via telephone were led by A. Ermekuly and Kh. Gabbasuly – his deputies). For the sake of political legalization of the state of Alash, the name Alash-Orda carries precisely that meaning, for the sake of preservation of the fragile peace and the relative stability in the region, the leader of the Kazakhs was prepared to make peace even with the devil himself. However, having been informed of the conditions of Alash-Orda regarding the acknowledgement of the Soviet power, the leaders of the Bolsheviks undertook to give their final answer in the nearest future and then went silent for a long time. Bukeikhan was forced to seek recognition and an ally in the opposing side, where, one self-declared All-Russian government replaced another every few months. The leader of Alash-Orda, Bukeikhan consistently and convincingly went before each new All-Russian government 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, forms a large political entity”.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, all for one sacred goal – to assert the right of his nation for self-governance, to achieve recognition and political legalization of the Autonomous State of Alash on the territory of nine oblasts. Alikhan Bukeikhan acted according to the age-old principle “politics is the art of the possible”. While creating the Alash army, Bukeikhan was not preparing for war – not with the Bolsheviks nor with anyone else, but was striving for asserting the national autonomy and preserve the fragile peace. For the sake of political legalization of the state of Alash, the name Alash-Orda carries precisely that meaning, for the sake of preservation of the fragile peace and the relative stability in the region, the leader of the Kazakhs was prepared to make peace even with the devil himself. The former leaders of Alash-Orda did not abandon their goal to create a national army, even after the establishment of the Soviet regime in Kazakhstan. Turar Ryskululy (Ryskulov) wrote his famous letter to Joseph Stalin, proposed to the government of the republic to form a Kazakh national... Red Army under the command of Kazakh officers, referring to the regulations of VTsIK (All-Russian Executive Committee). However, the leaders of the Soviet power feared the Alash-Orda even more than the Tsarist autocracy did.

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