

HISTORIOGRAFIA  
THE STATUS OF THE ALASH MOVEMENT AND ITS  
INFLUENCE ON THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL  
STATEHOOD IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF  
CONTEMPORARY KAZAKHSTAN

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**IBRAYEVA, Akmaral – SAKTAGANOVA, Elmira – MALIKOVA, Saule – TAISHYBAI, Zarkyn – TEMIRKHANOVA, Assemgul – KABDUSHEV, Bolat. The Status of the Alash Movement and its Influence on the Formation of National Statehood in the Historiography of Contemporary Kazakhstan. In *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 2024, vol. 28, no. 2, p. 297-327, ISSN 1338-7219, DOI: 10.17846/SHN.2024.28.2.297-327.**

A well-defined national ideology that can consolidate society is critical for the sustainable development of a country. This paper considers the concept of the Alash movement, which serves as a constituent element of historical memory, playing a pivotal role in the establishment of sovereign Kazakhstani statehood and national self-identification. Several neighboring countries participated in the suppression of large-scale protest actions that took place in Kazakhstan in 2022–2023. These protests indicated the need for a correction of the liberal development model, the re-legitimization of state-political institutions, and the re-identification of the Kazakh nation in interaction with national minorities and neighboring states. This study examines the theoretical and practical legacy of the Alash movement as the initial experience in the creation of independent Kazakhstani statehood. The works of the leaders of the Alash movement form the basis for delineating the physical and mental boundaries of contemporary Kazakhstan within Eurasian, Islamic, and Turkic civilizational spaces. The history of the Alash movement is delineated into the ascending period of 1905–1920 and the descending period of 1921–1937. The research methodology, based on M. Kroh and M. Terry's study of national movements, facilitates the identification of developmental stages, determination of prerequisites, regularities, and outcomes of the Alash movement within the context of the collapse of the Russian Empire and the formation of the Soviet Union – referred to as M. Terry's „empire of positive action.“ Content analysis of scholarly and journalistic works reveals the fundamental characteristics of the ideological concept. Event analysis of pre-Soviet and Soviet periods determines the key components shaping the concept of „Alash“ in Kazakhstan's historical memory. This study defines new directions for understanding the „Alash“ concept. In the conditions of heightened social protests and potential exacerbation of interethnic relations in 2022–2023, the significance of the liberal secular concept of „Alash“ intensifies in the evolution, consolidation, and stabilization of the national consciousness of the contemporary Kazakhstani nation. The sustainable development of the Republic of Kazakhstan is feasible with active participation in Eurasian integration projects and the preservation of internal harmony among ethnicities and faiths. The „Alash“ concept should be integrated into higher and secondary education, shaping sites of historical memory, and informing the work of governmental agencies and the expert community.

**Keywords:** Central Asia; „Empire of Positive Action“; Identity; Independence; National State; Revolution;

**IBRAYEVA, Akmaral – SAKTAGANOVA, Elmira – MALIKOVA, Saule – TAISHYBAI, Zarkyn – TEMIRKHANOVA, Assemgul – KABDUSHEV, Bolat. Postavenie hnutia Alash a jeho vplyv na formovanie národnej štátnosti v historiografii súčasného Kazachstanu. In *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 2024, roč. 28, č. 2, s. 297-327, ISSN 1338-7219, DOI: 10.17846/SHN.2024.28.2. 297-327.**

Definovaná národná ideológia môže konsolidovať spoločnosť a podieľať sa na udržateľnom rozvoji krajiny. Článok sa zaoberá koncepciou hnutia Alaš, ktoré slúži ako konštitutívny prvok historickej pamäti a zohráva kľúčovú úlohu pri vytváraní suverénnej kazašskej štátnosti a národnej sebaidentifikácie. Na potlačení rozsiahlych protestných akcií, ktoré sa konali v Kazachstane v rokoch 2022–2023, sa podieľalo niekoľko susedných krajín. Tieto protesty poukázali na potrebu korekcie aktuálneho modelu rozvoja, opätovnej legitimizácie štátnopolitických inštitúcií a opätovnej identifikácie kazašského národa v interakcii s národnosťami menšínami a susednými štátmi. Štúdia

skúma teoretický a praktický odkaz hnutia Alaš ako počiatočnú skúsenosť pri vytváraní nezávislej kazašskej štátnosti. Diela vodcov hnutia Alaš tvoria základ pre vymedzenie fyzických a mentálnych hraníc súčasného Kazachstanu v rámci eurázijského, islamského a turkického civilizačného priestoru. Dejiny hnutia Alaš sú vymedzené na vzostupné obdobie rokov 1905-1920 a zostupné obdobie rokov 1921-1937. Metodológia výskumu nadväzuje na M. Kroha a M. Terryho texty o národných hnutiach a umožňuje identifikovať vývojové etapy, určiť predpoklady, zákonitosti a výsledky alašského hnutia v kontexte rozpadu Ruského impéria a vzniku Sovietskeho zväzu – označovaného M. Terryom ako „impérium pozitívnej akcie“. Obsahová analýza vedeckých a publicistických prác odhaľuje základné charakteristiky ideologickej koncepcie. Analýza udalostí z predsovietskeho a sovietskeho obdobia určuje kľúčové komponenty formujúce koncept „Alaš“ v historickej pamäti Kazachstanu. Táto štúdia definuje nové smery chápania konceptu „Alaš“. V podmienkach vyostrených sociálnych protestov a potenciálneho vyostrenia medzietnických vzťahov v rokoch 2022-2023 sa význam liberálneho sekulárneho konceptu „Alaš“ zintenzívňuje vo vývoji, konsolidácii a stabilizácii národného povedomia súčasného kazašského národa. Udržateľný rozvoj Kazašskej republiky je uskutočniteľný pri aktívnej účasti na eurázijských integračných projektoch a pri zachovaní vnútornej harmónie medzi etnikami a náboženstvami. Koncepcia „Alaš“ by mala byť integrovaná do vysokoškolského a stredoškolského vzdelávania, formovania miest historickej pamäti a informovania práce štátnych orgánov a odbornej verejnosti.

**Kľúčové slová:** Stredná Ázia; „ríša pozitívnej akcie“; identita; nezávislosť; národný štát; revolúcia;

## Introduction

The sustainable development of newly independent states in the post-Soviet space largely depends on effective nation-building grounded in an autonomous political culture and historical memory. Kazakhstan faces a particularly complex situation due to its vast size, multiethnic population, and the absence of natural physiogeographic boundaries.<sup>1</sup> The vast steppe at the heart of Eurasia still requires the formulation of its own civilizational and state-political identity.<sup>2</sup>

Following the dissolution of the USSR, the Kazakhstani elite confronted the task of creating an effective ideology that would ensure societal consolidation, implement economic reforms, and guarantee internal stability and external security.<sup>3</sup> For the contemporary Kazakhstani elite, Alash-Orda has become a model of progressive movement and a mechanism for liberation from archaic elements such as clan nepotism and corruption.<sup>4</sup> At the turn of the 20th to the 21st century,

<sup>1</sup> MOSTAFA, Golam. The concept of «Eurasia»: Kazakhstan's Eurasian policy and its implications. In *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 2013, vol. 4, p. 160-170.

<sup>2</sup> CURRIE, Thomas E. – TURCHIN, Peter – TURNER, Edward – GAVRIETZ, Sergey. Duration of agriculture and distance from the steppe predict the evolution of large-scale human societies in Afro-Eurasia. In *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 2020, vol. 7, p. 1-8.

<sup>3</sup> SUNY, Ronald G. – NAIMARK, Norman M. The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of Soviet Union. Stanford 1993; ZHUMARCHEVA, Laura – ABDILDIN, Zhabaikhan – AUBAKIROVA Saltanat. Kazakhstan's society modernization in response to the 21st century global challenges: The material aspect and the shifting discourse issue. In *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 2023, vol. 10, no. 4, p. 81-101.

<sup>4</sup> BILYALOVA, Marzhan – MUSELIMOVA, Karlygash – ILYASSOVA, Gulzhazira – SERIK-BAYEV, Abzal – AKIMZHANOVA, Marzhangul. Principles of Administrative Procedure and Proceedings in Kazakhstan against the Background of Foreign Experience. In *Public Integrity*, 2023, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 399-414; BOKAYEV, Baurzhan – NAURYZBEK, Madina – DAVLETBAYEVA, Zhuldyz – DUSSEPOV, Yerkin – RUZBEKOVA, Zhanar – TORIBEKOVA, Zulfiya. Factors

Kazakhstan, at its southern borders, faced the threat of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, significantly complicating the issue of constructing a national identity.<sup>5</sup> Choosing the secular Kemalist Turkish model as its primary development orientation, the Kazakhstani elite takes a more restrained stance towards slogans of Islamic solidarity and projects sponsored by Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other „oil monarchies“ in the Middle East.<sup>6</sup> The historical concept of the Alash movement became the foundation of Kazakh liberal secularism, oriented towards Russian-speaking culture and initially opposed to pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism.

The formation and development of the Alash movement included several characteristic stages. In pursuit of national identification, A. Bukeikhanov and other leaders of Alash initiated the transformation of oral Kazakh epics into written history. In the initial „folklore“ stage of national movement development, they found support in the mythological construct of „Alash“ – the legendary ancestor and war cry of the Kazakh people.<sup>7</sup> They emphasized the specificity of the legacy of patriarchal nomadism with its laws of hospitality and tolerance as the foundation of steppe ethnonationalism.

National leaders in 1905–1907 participated in the work of the First State Duma, founded the first newspapers and journals, and commenced educational activities.

In 1917–1918, after the collapse of the Russian Empire, economic collapse, and the onset of the Civil War, Alash Orda members were compelled to hastily establish state institutions. They transitioned from the „folklore“ to the „political“ stage without adequate preparation, lacking mass public support and a resource and personnel base. Attempts to form an alliance with White Guard governments in the Urals and Siberia predictably failed. The project of Kazakh national-territorial autonomy within a parliamentary federative republic was incompatible with the conservative ideology of „indivisible and united Russia.“ Similarly, Kazakh leaders, liberals, and secularists were unable to reach an agreement with the leadership of the Kokand autonomy, oriented towards pan-Islamist and pan-Turkist solidarity.

Following the establishment of Soviet power in Turkestan in 1920 and the creation of the Kazakh SSR in 1925, members of Alash Orda were co-opted into party

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driving individual perceptions of quotidian corruption: Evidence from Kazakhstan. In *Public Integrity*, 2023, vol. 25, no. 4, p. 380-393; NAIZABAYEVA, Gulnara – GARIFOLLA, Yessim – MUKHANBET, Assem. Changes in the traditional occupations and discourse of women: New element of human capital in redesigned Kazakh society. In *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 2022, vol. 9, no. 4, p. 55-69.

<sup>5</sup> EL MAKNOUZI, Mohammed El Hadi – JADALHAQ, Iyad Mohammad – ABDULHAY, Imad Eldin – ALQODSI, Enas Mohammed. Islamic commercial arbitration and private international law: Mapping controversies and exploring pathways towards greater coordination. In *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 2023, vol. 10, no. 1, p. 523; JADALHAQ, Iyad Mohammad – ABDULHAY, Imad Eldin – ALQODSI, Enas Mohammed – EL MAKNOUZI, Mohammed El Hadi. A systematic reviews and meta-analyses of interruption of the statute of limitations for civil claims: A comparative study of Arab legislations. In *Heliyon*, 2023, vol. 9, no. 6, p. 16756.

<sup>6</sup> ALQODSI, Enas Mohammad. Analyzing the implementation of usufruct rights and obligations in the UAE civil transactions law. In *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 2021, vol. 16, no. 2, p. 202-219.

<sup>7</sup> KESICI, Özgecan. The Alash movement and the question of the Kazakh ethnicity. In *Nationalistic Papers*, 2017, vol. 45, no. 6, p. 1135-1147.

and state bodies in collaboration with the „national communists.“ During the policies of autonomization and „indigenization,“ A. Bukeikhanov and his like-minded associates continued cultural and educational work, forming the foundation of national self-awareness.<sup>8</sup> Failing in their „political“ and „organizational“ efforts, they returned to the „folklore“ stage.<sup>9</sup> In the conditions of a severe shortage of qualified personnel within the framework of the Soviet „empire of positive action“,<sup>10</sup> the People’s Commissariat for Nationalities, under the leadership of I. V. Stalin, allowed the Soviet People’s Commissars of the Kazakh SSR to engage Alash members in teaching, publishing, and translation activities.<sup>11</sup>

During the Stalinist purges of 1937–1938, former leaders of Alash were repressed as bearers of nationalist ideology and potential opposition figures. The rehabilitation of the victims of the Great Terror allowed their names to be reinstated in the social and cultural space of contemporary Kazakhstan, making the personalities of the first generation of national leaders focal points in historical memory and public consciousness. The establishment of monuments, the renaming of city quarters and streets, and the active reissue of theoretical works became significant directions in the nation-building process in modern Kazakhstan.

The historical legacy of the Alash movement stands as a paramount component of the historical memory and societal self-awareness of the contemporary Kazakh nation. It serves as the foundation for a system of values, symbols, meanings, and behavioral guidelines.<sup>12</sup> The theoretical and journalistic works of A. Bukeikhanov, A. Baytursynov, M. Dulapov, and other members of Alash Orda represent a valuable intellectual resource, with their activities serving as an experience and example for members of the new Kazakhstani elite. The lessons learned from establishing sovereign statehood, based on liberal principles of separation of powers, secularism, democratic rights, and civil liberties, have formed the foundations for the development trajectory of modern Kazakhstan but have also led to significant challenges. For a long time after the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan served as a model of socio-political stability in the Central Asian region. The geographical toponym „Central Asia“ is identical to the previously used toponym „Middle Asia“ in Soviet historiography. During both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, this region includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

<sup>8</sup> EITSEN, Hilda. Refiguring ethnicity through Kazakh genealogies. In *Nationalistic Papers*, 1998, vol. 26, no. 3, p. 433-451; ESENOVA, Saulesh. Soviet nationality, identity and ethnicity in central Asia: Historic narratives and Kazakhs ethnic identity. In *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 2002, vol. 22, no. 1, p. 11-38.

<sup>9</sup> KROH, Miroslav. From national movement to the fully-formed nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe. In *Nations and Nationalism*. Moscow 2002, p. 121-145.

<sup>10</sup> MARTIN, Terry Dean. *The affirmative action empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Moscow 2011.

<sup>11</sup> TURSUN, Khazretali – GUMUS, Nasuh – BAZARBAEV, Kanat – ZHORAYEVA, Gulzhamal – KURMANALIN, Samat. The History of the Alash movement in the context of the «Empire of positive action». In *Asian and African Studies*, 2021, vol. 30, no. 1, p. 97-112.

<sup>12</sup> ZHANBOSENOVA, Albina S. – ZHANDYBAYEVA, Saule S. – ATANTAYEVA, Bakyt Z. – ZHIRINDINOVA, Kuralay R. – KAZBEKOVA, Ainur T. The historical memory on modernization of the Kazakh aul in the Soviet narratives. In *Opcion*, 2020, vol. 36(91), p. 426-441.

However, the country has lost this established reputation in recent years. Central Asia Protest Tracker (a project created by the Oxus Society for Central Asian Affairs) provides statistics on the number of protest actions in 5 Central Asian countries for the period 2018-2022. According to the data, among the 981 reported incidents, 520 occurred in Kazakhstan. At the same time, half of the reported incidents were related to demands for political reforms or mitigation of repression. The culmination was the protests that began in January 2022 and covered several cities across the country. These actions entailed human casualties and the involvement of military units of neighboring states aggravated the risk of interethnic conflicts.<sup>13</sup> The reason for the protests was the aggravation of the economic situation associated with fuel prices, but the likely prerequisites accumulated over the years. The possible factors include the inequality of economic opportunities associated with corruption processes, the growing gap between rural and urban populations, insufficient decentralization, and autocratic features of government.<sup>14</sup> The social protests in January 2022 demanded a fundamental revision of the state's economic policies.

### Literature Review

The study of the Alash movement commenced with a rigidly ideologized critique by communist authors during the early stages of socialist construction in Kazakhstan. The initial publication of Alash-Orda documents was executed with substantial omissions and distortions of their intended meanings.<sup>15</sup> Following the rehabilitation of repressed leaders of Alash in the 1950s-1980s, Soviet historical literature retained ideologically charged negative assessments of their activities, characterizing them as reactionary bourgeois nationalists.<sup>16</sup>

Researchers of the history of Soviet Kazakhstan acknowledged the positive outcomes of industrialization, urbanization, eradication of illiteracy, and the establishment of transportation and social infrastructure. Simultaneously, they did not fail to emphasize the high cost that the Kazakh nomadic ethnic group had to pay during the processes of national development, collectivization, and sedentarization. Party and Soviet authorities, in fulfilling central directives, spared no severity in hastening the destruction of traditional clan structures, eliminating the „backwardness“ of the Kazakh aul, and annihilating informal leaders, both factual and potential opposition figures.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> THE OXUS SOCIETY FOR CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS. Mapping patterns of dissent in Eurasia: Introducing the Central Asia Protest Tracker. 2020. Dostupné na internete: <<https://oxussociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-09-28-mapping-patterns-of-dissent-in-eurasia.pdf>>

<sup>14</sup> ZHANDAYEVA, Raushan - ROSENBERG, Rachael. *Policy Brief No.140: Kazakhstan's Bloody January: Digital Repression on the "New Silk Road"*. 2022. Dostupné na internete: <[https://toda.org/assets/files/resources/policy-briefs/t-pb-140\\_kazakhstans-bloody-january.pdf](https://toda.org/assets/files/resources/policy-briefs/t-pb-140_kazakhstans-bloody-january.pdf)>

<sup>15</sup> MARTYNENKO, Nikolai. *Alash-Orda*. Almaty 1992.

<sup>16</sup> GRIGORIEV, Vladislav K. *Confrontation. The Bolsheviks and non-proletarian parties in Kazakhstan in 1917-1920*. Alma-Ata 1989.

<sup>17</sup> CAMERON, Sarah. *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018; OHAYON, Isabelle. *The Soviet state and lineage societies: Doctrine, local interactions, and political hybridization in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia*

In post-Soviet Kazakhstan, the legacy of Alash figures prominently as one of the most important elements in historical memory and the foundations of national Kazakh identity.<sup>18</sup> The methodology employed in researching historical memory has allowed for an expansion of the issues surrounding Alash, extending beyond historiography into the context of major social sciences. The dissolution of the USSR initiated the formation of alternative national versions of historical memory in newly independent states, intensifying the search for continuity in historical traditions within the cultural space.

Emerging scientific schools faced challenging issues in reconciling the positive outcomes of socialist modernization with the negative oppressive impact on the socio-economic development of the union republics.<sup>19</sup> At the contemporary level of research, it is deemed necessary to set the task of formulating a constructive and coherent concept of the Alash movement, eliminating the „blind spots“ in national historiography, and defining the forms, methods, and motivations of national resistance to Russian imperial dictation and Soviet totalitarianism.<sup>20</sup>

Michael Terry's concept of the „affirmative action empire“ provided a new impetus to the study of national policies in the Soviet Union. The American scholar utilizes a traditional periodization of Soviet history, identifying intersecting stages such as the New Economic Policy (NEP) from 1923 to 1928, the Cultural Revolution from 1923 to 1932, and the regression from 1933 to 1938. The Eighth Congress in 1919 and the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in 1923 defined the main parameters of the development of national republics and autonomous regions, the elimination of „backwardness,“ and the formation of loyal national elites.<sup>21</sup> Terry expanded the research field of imperialism in spatial and chronological dimensions, examining the history of the Soviet Union in the 20th century as an „affirmative action empire.“

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during the 1920s and 1930s. In *Central Asian Affairs*, 2016, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 163-191; PIANCIOLA, Niccolò. Ukraine and Kazakhstan: Comparing the famines. In *Contemporary European History*, 2018, vol. 27, no. 3, p. 440-454; ZHIRINDINOVA, Kuralay. Social adaptation of Kazakh nomads in the period of forced collectivization. In *Opcion*, 2019, vol. 35(23), p. 164-180.

<sup>18</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. *Kazakh Autonomy and Russia. The History of the Alash Movement*. Moscow 1994; NURMAGAMBETOVA, Rita K. *The Alash and Alash-Orda Movements: Historiography of the Issue. 1920-1990*. Almaty 2003; SAKTAGANOVA, Zauresh G. – OMAROVA, Bakyt K. – ILYASSOVA, Kulyash M. – NURLIGENOVA, Z. N. – ABZHAPPAROVA, Bibihadisha Z. – ZHALMURZINA, Ailana Z. – MAZHITOVA, Zhanna S. *The Alash Party: Historiography of Movement*. In *Space and Culture*, 2020, vol. 7, no. 4, p. 208-218.

<sup>19</sup> HEDAS, Zoltán. Present times concerning things past: On recent conceptions of memory. In *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 2017, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 725-749; HEDAS, Zoltán. Rival Patterns of time, narration and identity. In *Time & Society*, 2019, vol. 28, no. 2, p. 838-858; KESZEI, András. Memory and the contemporary relevance of the past. In *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 2017, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 804-824; ZHANBOSENOVA – ZHANDYBAYEVA – ATANTAYEVA – ZHIRINDINOVA – KAZBEKOVA, *The historical memory...*, p. 426-441.

<sup>20</sup> KAZIEV, Sergei S. Main directions of the national policy of the Soviet state in Kazakhstan (1920-1929). *Bulletin of Tomsk State University*. In *History*, 2014, vol. 5(31), p. 51-56; TURSUN, Khazretali – GUMUS, Nasuh – BAZARBAEV, Kanat – ZHORAYEVA, Gulzhamal – KURMANALIN, Samat. *The History of the Alash movement in the context of the «Empire of positive action»*. In *Asian and African Studies*, 2021, vol. 30, no. 1, p. 97-112.

<sup>21</sup> MARTIN, Terry Dean. *The affirmative action empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Moscow 2011, p. 23-35.

Mark von Kroh investigates the experiences of national movements in Central and Eastern Europe in the 18th–19th centuries, primarily analyzing events in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the development of the national liberation movement of the Western Slavs, he identifies three stages of development. In the first, „folkloric“ stage „A,“ the emerging national elite engages in cultural and educational work, studying oral folk traditions and transforming collected folklore into written history. Ethnogenetic mythology emerges as a source of pride during this stage, with collectors of traditions typically focusing on great ancestors – renowned warriors, thinkers, and pioneers. In the second, „organizational“ stage „B,“ the consolidated elite formulate political goals for the creation of an independent state. The third „political“ stage „C“ sees agitation in the masses and practical struggle for national liberation from foreign imperial rule.<sup>22</sup>

Michael Terry accurately noted the main paradoxical feature of the Soviet state – its imperial characteristics, combined with a careful suppression of these traits in the ideology of proletarian internationalism and the „positive discrimination“ of the Russian ethnic majority.<sup>23</sup> The American researcher added a fourth „decentralizing“ stage „G“ to Mark von Kroh’s three stages, where new ethnic elites are formed in a unified state and, with the help of the center, begin to shape their own written cultures and state-political institutions.<sup>24</sup>

The Soviet „affirmative action empire“ by M. Terry became the initial and decisive stage of Kazakh national construction, uniting and accelerating the first three stages. It should be noted that M. Terry’s fourth stage is, in a sense, an artificial addition to Mark von Kroh’s scheme. The American scholar considers imperial policy with a reverse vector, where the center does not exploit the colonial periphery, but instead redistributes resources in the interests of subordinate segments. In the history of the Soviet Union, the „indigenization“ policy in the 1920s was a temporary deviation and was quickly discontinued.<sup>25</sup>

In contemporary works on the history of the Alash movement, the focus is on issues of enlightenment, periodization, the „indigenization“ policy, and historical memory. In the initial pre-revolutionary period, the Alash figures devoted primary attention to recording and systematizing folk epics, documenting key historical events to highlight a primordial collective personality and construct national identity. The early Kazakh enlighteners sought to conceptualize the physical and mental boundaries of the emerging Kazakh nation, juxtaposing it with both the Russian imperial bureaucracy on one side and the religious Turkic-Muslim elites on the other.<sup>26</sup>

The Alash movement has been formed in the context of the colonial policy of Tsarist Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. This policy was accompanied by the eviction of the Kazakh rural population to regions unsuitable for

<sup>22</sup> KROH, Miroslav. From national movement..., p. 121-145; KROH, Miroslav. Language as a Tool of Civil Equality. In *Ab Imperio*, 2005, vol. 3, p. 21-34.

<sup>23</sup> MARTIN, The affirmative action...; TERRY, Martin. Empire of positive action: Is the Soviet Union the highest form of imperialism? In *Ab Imperio*, 2002, vol. 2, p. 55-87.

<sup>24</sup> MARTIN, The affirmative action..., p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> KROH, Language as a Tool..., p. 21-34; MARTIN, The affirmative action ...

<sup>26</sup> KESICI, The Alash movement..., p. 1135-1147.



agriculture, the seizure of land. Moreover, the policy implies new taxes and agricultural duties on the population in connection with the needs of the Russian army in the first World War. The size of the taxes increased 3-4 times after the outbreak of the war. In addition, a large number of the population was planned to be mobilized for working rearward areas.<sup>27</sup>

The difficult conditions prompted the awakening of the National Liberation Movement, which included two main directions. The pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic trends rested on the idea of unity of the Muslim and Turkic peoples of Central Asia. In April 1917, the Shura-i-Islam party was created, which relied on the clergy and religious intelligentsia. Representatives of the party called for the creation of a national-religious Turkestan autonomy within the Russian Empire, which would unite the Turkic and Muslim peoples. Later, it was divided into a less radical wing of the jadids, who were supporters of democratic reforms, and a more radical wing. The latter then became a separate organization called Shura-i-Ulema and advocated building a state on the principles of orthodox Islam, rejecting reforms based on the European example.<sup>28</sup> Alash, a national movement and later the political party, represented the liberal-nationalist direction, advocating religious freedom, ethnic equality, and protection of human rights. The movement also called for the inclusion of the broad masses in the political process through political parties, public organizations, and self-government bodies. The Alash movement was led by the most prominent representatives of the National intelligentsia and received significant popular support, beating other parties in most regions in the Constituent Assembly elections. Another party created at that time was Ush Zhuz, which, having initially unclearly defined political views, later became Bolshevik and positioned itself as the main opponent of the Alash party.<sup>29</sup>

The draft of the Alash movement was published in the pages of the newspaper „Kazakh“ on November 21, 1917. The project assumed that Russia would become a Democratic Federal Republic, which includes Kazakh autonomy. The tasks of the movement included reforming some foundations of Kazakh society. The transformation of the economic foundations was supposed to ensure adaptation to market conditions and the specific cultural characteristics of Kazakhstan, such as the prevalence of nomadic cattle breeding, agriculture, and sedentary cattle breeding. The project provided for the right to assign land ownership to the indigenous population, protection of workers' rights (under the Menshevik program). Social equality was guaranteed regardless of ethnic origin, religion, or gender. The movement also proclaimed freedom of speech, the press, and public associations. It was planned to introduce compulsory and free education in the native language. Representatives of the movement advocated the separation of church and state, conducting legal proceedings in the Kazakh language in accordance with national traditions. Essential directions were education development,

<sup>27</sup> SHUMILOVA, Elina. The legal status of Kazakhs in the Russian Empire during the First World War (July 1914 - February 1917). In *Law and the State*, 2023, vol. 1(98), p. 60-70.

<sup>28</sup> BAZARBAYEV, Kudaibergen. The national progressive movement: The views of the Jadids on statehood. In *Young Researcher*, 2011, vol. 2, no. 3, p. 71-74.

<sup>29</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina. *At the break. Alash in the ethnopolitical history of Kazakhstan*. Almaty 2009.

the formation of a conscious society, and the involvement of the elite and the masses in socio-political activities.<sup>30</sup>

The political movement of Alash also exerted significant influence on the growth of national self-awareness among territories inhabited by other ethnic groups, notably the Kyrgyz. The Alash autonomy united Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations, yet the participation of Kyrgyz community leaders in post-February political processes alongside Kazakhs was a natural extension of their collaborative practice. However, in practice, both Kazakhs and Kyrgyz demonstrated national distinctions in self-identification.<sup>31</sup>

The political evolution of Alash was closely tied to major events in Russian history. Most researchers distinguish the pre-revolutionary „democratic“ and „pro-Western“ stages of Alash, characterized by liberalism and enlightenment, followed by the „reactionary“ and „counter-revolutionary“ phases of 1918–1920. This was subsequently overshadowed by relegation to secondary roles and eventual suppression in the years 1921–1937. The main focus has been on refining and specifying the stages of the movement’s organization, including the establishment of self-governing committees in 1917, the convening of national congresses, and the creation of state institutions.<sup>32</sup>

The formation of the Soviet „affirmative action empire“ can be delineated into the Leninist (1920–1924) and Stalinist (1924–1938) periods. V.I. Lenin identified the elimination of Great Russian chauvinism as a paramount task and sought to propel the Russian proletariat beyond narrow trade union consciousness (‘trade-unionism’). The new phase in the development of proletarian internationalism was linked to the transformation of the Communist Party into the vanguard of non-Russian nationalities. Joseph Stalin, having eradicated Trotskyist opposition and abandoned the concept of permanent world revolution, paradoxically reinstated the national structure of the Russian Empire without the state-forming Russian nation. To achieve this, the policy of „indigenization“ was discontinued, and state unification was initiated.<sup>33</sup>

The historical memory of contemporary Kazakhstan is characterized by internal contradictions and instability. The overall positive outcomes of industrialization and the cultural revolution poorly align with narratives of forced collectivization, sedentarization, and the famine of 1931–1932.<sup>34</sup> The historical past

<sup>30</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina. *Alash: The Historical Meaning of Democratic Choice: A Historical Monograph*. Almaty 2013.

<sup>31</sup> BEKTURSUNOV, Mirlan. Two Parts – One Whole? Kazakh-Kyrgyz Relations in the Making of Soviet Kyrgyzstan, 1917–24. In *Central Asian Survey*, 2022, vol. 42, no. 1, p. 109-26.

<sup>32</sup> SAKTAGANOVA – OMAROVA – ILYASSOVA – NURLIGENOVA – ABZHAPPAROVA – ZHALMURZINA – MAZHITOVA, *The Alash Party...*, p. 208-218.

<sup>33</sup> OHAYON, Isabelle. The Soviet state and lineage societies: Doctrine, local interactions, and political hybridization in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia during the 1920s and 1930s. In *Central Asian Affairs*, 2016, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 163-191; TURSUN, Khazretali – GUMUS, Nasuh – BAZARBAEV, Kanat – ZHORAYEVA, Gulzhamal – KURMANALIN, Samat. The History of the Alash movement in the context of the «Empire of positive action». In *Asian and African Studies*, 2021, vol. 30, no. 1, p. 97-112.

<sup>34</sup> ZHANBOSENOVA – ZHANDYBAYEVA – ATANTAYEVA – ZHIRINDINOVA – KAZBEKOVA, *The historical memory...*, p. 426-441.

can be viewed as a crucial source of emotionally charged information for shaping a system of national values. Constructing a logically interconnected and positively interpreted historical memory is a necessary prerequisite for creating a stable worldview, perception, and orientation. The micro-scale of the „small homeland“ and the macro-scale of the nation together constitute the space of historical memory. Within this space, concepts of eminent personalities – heroic ancestors, warriors, great thinkers, etc. – attain special significance.<sup>35</sup>

The research on the evolution of the „Alash“ movement during the Soviet period tends to overlook the internal logic of the development of national consciousness and the transitions from cultural-educational to political activities. Therefore, the destruction of the first generation of the Kazakh elite in 1937 and the suppression of its historical legacy from 1956 to 1991 created a gap, hindering the understanding of the mechanisms, prerequisites, and regularities of the influence of Alash heritage on the national movement in Kazakhstan during the collapse of the USSR. Post-1991, a shift from a critical approach to an apologetic one has significantly contributed to the establishment of statehood and national construction in sovereign Kazakhstan. During 2022–2023, as the liberal economic model faces a crisis and the social situation worsens, the political and intellectual elite is confronted with the challenge of reassessing both the theoretical and practical heritage of the Alash movement.

A contemporary examination of the political thought of leading figures of Alash, among whom prominent intellectuals were notable, reveals their acute understanding of the paramount necessity of revitalizing the language and literature of the people, their history, and most importantly, national consciousness and the preservation of national values. The anthology of poetry titled „Masa,“ published in 1911 first addressed these issues within the Kazakh intellectual milieu. These verses articulate the core essence of the Alash movement, which calls upon society to foster culture and education, spiritual and moral virtues. This call found resonance in the works of all Kazakh intellectuals of that period. Equally significant were political slogans advocating for laws recognizing Kazakhs' land ownership rights, the establishment of schools and universities teaching in the native language, and granting freedom and equality to the impoverished. These initiatives contributed to the broad societal support and popularity enjoyed by the political agenda of the Alash party.<sup>36</sup>

The primary objective of this study is to determine the role of the Alash movement in the emergence and development of Kazakh national self-awareness and historical memory. The initial experience of creating a written culture based on oral folk tradition, the formation of a secular ideology, and the establishment of liberal statehood are critically important for the sustainable development of contemporary independent Kazakhstan.

<sup>35</sup> HALBWACHS, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. London: University of Chicago Press, 1992; ROUSSO, Henry. *The Haunting Past. History, Memory and Justice in Contemporary France*. Philadelphia 2002; WERTSCH, James. *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge 2002.

<sup>36</sup> RAKHIMOVA, Kalamkas – BATYRKHAN, Bolatbek – SARKYTKHAN, Kaster. National ideas of Persian and Kazakh intellectuals at the beginning of the 20th century, in the struggle for the independence of Kazakhstan. In *ISVS e-journal*, 2023, vol. 10, no. 2, p. 694-704.

To achieve the stated objective, the resolution of the following research tasks is imperative:

- Analysis of the prerequisites for the emergence and the patterns of evolution of the Alash movement during the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods.
- Establishment of the key characteristics of the „Alash“ concept within historical memory.
- Investigation into the processes of transforming the theoretical and practical legacy of Alash in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.
- Examination of the impact of the Alash movement on the shaping of historical memory, ideology, and political culture within the contemporary Kazakh nation.

## **Methods and Materials**

### *Conceptual framework of the study*

In this research, the author relies on the methodology of historical memory studies by M. Halbwachs, the theory of national movements by M. Kroh, amended and complemented within the concept of „affirmative action empire“ by M. Terry. When examining the evolution of „Alash,“ the author adheres to the principles of historicism and systemic approach. The principle of historicism allows for the identification of key prerequisites, patterns, and trajectories of the evolution of the social movement, its transformation into a political party during the collapse of the Russian Empire, the Civil War, and the early stages of socialist modernization in Kazakhstan. The principle of the systemic approach ensures a panoramic exploration of the interrelation between central and peripheral institutions. The „Alash“ movement and its historical successor, Alash-Orda, operated within a broad context, interacting with state bodies, other social and political organizations, and tribal groups. The laws governing the historical evolution of „Alash“ can only be discerned by considering the interaction of the entire array of external and internal factors.

### **Research materials**

In this article, a content analysis is conducted on the theoretical perspectives of A. Buketov, M. Dulatov, A. Baitursynov, and other Alash intellectuals regarding the historical past, current situation, and prospects for the development of the Kazakh people during the period 1905–1917. Analyzing the content of these texts within the context of the First Russian Revolution and the Third June Monarchy allows an understanding of the patterns in the evolution of the Alash movement from enlightening circles to a political party. Based on materials from the newspapers „Kazakh,“ „Golos stepi,“ „Omic,“ and „Irtysh,“ the study explores the perceptions of Kazakh intellectuals about the historical past, current situation, and prospects for the development of the emerging ethnic community.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> BUKEYKHANOV, Alikhan. *Kazakhs: Historical and Ethnographic Works*. Astana 2007; BUKEYKHANOV, Alikhan. *Kyrgyz*. In *Forms of National Movements in Contemporary States*. St. Petersburg 1910, p. 575-600; BUKEYKHANOV, Alikhan. *Selected Works*. Almaty 1995.

This research is based on the archives of the State Archive of Socio-Political History of the Russian Federation (RGASPI), legislative and other normative legal acts of the pre-Soviet and Soviet periods,<sup>38</sup> major works by A. Buketov and other Alash movement leaders,<sup>39</sup> and resources from mass media and information agencies of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

### **Design and methodological tools of the study**

The study of the activities of the Alash movement in 1918–1920 is conducted based on a systematic event analysis of the historical narrative. In the context of the disintegration of the Russian Empire and the Civil War, A. Bukeikhanov and his like-minded colleagues had to transition from scholarly-publicistic work to state-building and the establishment of armed forces. This period involves an analysis of legislation, individual publications, and political proclamations. The first national state (Alash-Orda) operated in close collaboration with the White Guard governments of the Urals and Siberia and in opposition to Soviet power. Through the analysis of the history of the Civil War in Turkestan, the study identifies the prerequisites for the collapse of Alash-Orda, the reasons for capitulation, and the forced agreement with Soviet authorities.

The principle of historicism enables the establishment of continuity in Kazakh national development in the final stage of the Russian Empire and the early years of socialist construction in the USSR. The examination of the work of A. Bukeikhanov, M. Dulatov, A. Baytursynov in the Soviet period is conducted through a combination of content and event analysis methods. During the Soviet period, Alash leaders were removed from administrative and political positions but were allowed to work in educational institutions, mass media, and publishing houses. They played a significant role in the development of Kazakh written culture, education, and the formation of the national intelligentsia. In the declining stage of the Alash movement, its members competed in the processes of modernization and cultural revolution with national communists. A distinctive division of roles occurred, with the former remaining on the „folklore“ stage, while the latter engaged in organizational and political work. The combination of content and event analysis allows for the reconstruction of the historical concept of the Alash movement.

The examination of the concept of the Alash movement in the historical memory of contemporary Kazakhstan is conducted through the method of spatial analysis. It is essential to note that the formation of sites of cultural memory, the „return of names,“ was carried out following the historical narrative but overall, across the entire territory of Kazakhstan. The new national elite aimed to overcome the division into tribal unions (zhuz) as a potential factor for decentralization

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<sup>38</sup> ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE KAZAKH SSR. Socialist Construction in Kazakhstan during the Reconstruction Period. 1921-1925. Collection of Documents and Materials. Alma-Ata: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR, 1962; FORMATION OF THE KAZAKH SSR. Collection of Documents and Materials. Alma-Ata: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR, 1957.

<sup>39</sup> MARTYNENKO, Nikolai. Alash-Orda. Almaty 1992.

and destabilization. A comprehensive study of the crisis processes in 2022–2023 is based on real-time information and is open-ended.

### **Methodological limitations of the study**

The scope of this article and the state of the source base do not allow for a comprehensive exploration of the scientific and cultural enlightenment activities of the leaders of Alash before 1917, as well as the state-building efforts in Turkestan from 1918 to 1920. Additionally, the study of interactions between Alash members and national-communists, as well as their joint influence on the processes of nation-building in the Kyrgyz and Kazakh SSRs, is complicated. It can be assumed that after the rehabilitation of repressed national cadres in the 1950s, their theoretical works and practical experiences in the Kazakh SSR were downplayed but exerted a covert influence on the development of national consciousness until the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Certain difficulties arise in determining the impact of the theoretical legacy of the Alash movement on the political culture and governance practices of the contemporary Kazakhstani elite. Declarative apologetics and panegyrics towards the first generation of national leaders in independent Kazakhstan do not always manifest in practical measures for democratizing the state and ensuring the rights of ethnic minorities. The policies of secularism and tolerance face serious challenges from radical national movements. In the context of the anticipated dynamic socio-economic and political development in the Republic of Kazakhstan, a crucial task becomes the activation of reflection, transitioning from unequivocally apologetic approaches to a critical analysis of the theoretical and practical legacy of the Alash movement. The dynamic nature of the situation in modern Kazakhstan does not currently allow for definitive conclusions regarding the direction and outcomes of the development of the newly independent state.

### **Results**

The Alash Movement emerged in Turkestan as a local branch of the party of constitutional democrats. During the First Russian Revolution of 1905–1907, it represented an amorphous grouping of patron-client networks led by local political and cultural figures. In the period of the Third June Monarchy, Alash leaders focused on cultural and enlightenment activities, initiating the „folklore“ stage of national movement development.<sup>40</sup> From 1907 to 1914, the organizational centers of the movement were the editorial offices of newspapers such as „Kazakh“ in Orenburg, „Zhas Azamat“ in Petropavlovsk, and the newspaper „Sary Arka“ and the journal „Abay“ in Semipalatinsk.<sup>41</sup>

In the pre-revolutionary period, the political and intellectual leader of the Alash movement was A.N. Buketov (1866–1937). After completing his studies at the Omsk Technical School and the Economics Faculty of the Petersburg Forest

<sup>40</sup> KROH, Miroslav. *From national movement...*, p. 121-145; KROH, Miroslav. *Language as a Tool...*, p. 21-34.

<sup>41</sup> SAKTAGANOVA - OMAROVA - ILYASSOVA - NURLIGENOVA - ABZHAPPAROVA - ZHALMURZINA - MAZHITOVA, *The Alash Party...*, p. 208-218.

Institute, Buketov aligned himself with Russian liberals. In 1905, he joined the Cadet Party and participated in the publication of newspapers such as „Golos Steppe,” „Omich,” and „Irtysk.” He was elected to the First State Duma under the national quota from the Semipalatinsk region.<sup>42</sup>

Following the dissolution of the Duma on July 9, 1906, the Kazakh deputy signed the Vyborg Manifesto on civil disobedience, after which he was arrested and lost the right to participate in politics. From 1908 to 1917, Buketov was in exile in Samara. During this period, he consistently advocated for the liberal development of the Kazakh nationality within the framework of the Russian state. Buketov wrote: „We are Westerners... We can acquire culture through Russia, through the Russians... Autonomous regions in the concert of Western powers cannot play any role”.<sup>43</sup> He considered the main outcome of the First Russian Revolution of 1905–1907 to be the emergence of the Kazakh „intelligentsia, educated in Russian literature, believing in European culture, seeing the happiness of the homeland in a healthy embodiment of the fruits of Western culture.” Buketov opposed liberal Westernization to the conservative Islamist elite „educated in the spirit of Eastern orthodoxy and national-religious exclusivity”.<sup>44</sup>

On February 2, 1913, the first issue of the newspaper „Kazakh” was published in the publishing society „Azamat” („Citizen”) in Troitsk. The chief editor, A. Baytursynov, proclaimed the main goal of the new publication: „We will fight with all our might for the acquisition of education and culture”.<sup>45</sup> In the pre-war period, the Kazakh national movement remained in the „folkloric” stage „A” according to the typology of M. Kroh. A. Buketov, M. Dulatov, A. Baytursynov, and other intellectuals who received education in Russian schools and universities actively shaped national self-awareness, sought their own cultural identity, and resisted Russian colonial pressure. In 1911, one of the first collections of Kazakh poetry, „Sholpan” by M. Zhumabayev, was published in Kazan.<sup>46</sup> In 1916, the uprising of the Kyrgyz (Kazakhs) became a catalyst for the national movement, sharply exacerbating relations with the Russian (Cossack) population. Mass armed resistance and harsh reprisals by the Tsarist forces accelerated the processes of national consolidation, politicization, and the formation of self-awareness. The Alash movement began to transition from the „folkloric” stage

<sup>42</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. At the Fault Line: Alash in the Ethnopolitical History of Kazakhstan. Almaty 2009, p. 62-63.

<sup>43</sup> MARTYNENKO, Nikolai. Alash-Orda. Almaty 1992, p. 116-117.

<sup>44</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. The Kazakh steppe and its political elite in the conditions of revolutionary transit in Eurasia at the beginning of the 20th century. In *New and Recent History*, 2022, vol. 1, p. 57-68; ROTTIER, Peter. Legitimizing the Ata Meken: The Kazakh Intelligentsia Write a History of Their Homeland. In *Ab Imperio*, 2004, vol. 1, p. 467-484.

<sup>45</sup> SAKTAGANOVA - OMAROVA - ILYASSOVA - NURLIGENOVA - ABZHAPPAROVA - ZHALMURZINA - MAZHITOVA, The Alash Party..., p. 208-218.

<sup>46</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. At the Fault Line: Alash in the Ethnopolitical History of Kazakhstan. Almaty 2009, p. 88-96; HATCHINSON, John. Myth against myth: The nation as ethnic overlay. In *Nations and Nationalism*, 2004, vol. 10 (1/2), p. 109-123; HATCHINSON, John. *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation*. Boston 1987; KESICI, The Alash movement..., p. 1135-1147.

„A“ to the „organizational“ stage „B“. K. Kemengerov established the political society of Kazakh youth „Birlik“ in the Akmolinsk region.

After the February Revolution, A. Buketov returned from Samara to St. Petersburg and was appointed commissioner of the Provisional Government in the Turgai region. In April 1917, K. Kemengerov, A. Adilov, and S. Seyfullin established the „Zhas Kazak“ committee in Akmolinsk, which was later reorganized into the regional authority of Alash-Orda. In the summer, A. Buketov left the Cadet Party, after which, together with M. Dulatov and A. Baytursynov, he formed the „Alash“ electoral bloc to participate in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. The Alashists formulated a national version of the liberal program, including points on universal suffrage, proportional national representation in state bodies, the creation of a parliamentary federal republic, and the separation of church and state.<sup>47</sup>

The accelerated democratization of the Russian state-political system hastened the politicization of the Kazakh national movement. The public movement „Alash“ transformed into a political party at the First All-Kazakh (All-Kyrgyz) Congress in Orenburg from July 21 to 26 (August 3–8), 1917. At the Second All-Kazakh Congress in Orenburg from December 5 to 13 (December 18–26), 1917, national leaders proclaimed the creation of the Alash Autonomy. The Central Committee of the party became the basis for the national government – the People’s Council (Alash-Orda) and the government under the chairmanship of A. Buketov. Deputies of the Second Congress, M. Zhumabayev and Zh. Tleulin played a significant role in activating the Kazakh national movement. M. Zhumabayev, together with A. Baytursynov was elected to the commission for the publication of school textbooks.<sup>48</sup>

The armed forces of Alash-Orda, in operational terms, were subordinate to the Temporary Siberian Government of P. V. Vologodsky. However, the collaboration of Alashists who remained proponents of federalization with Siberian and Ural adherents of a „united and indivisible Russia“ was reluctant and extremely fragile. During the Civil War, Kazakh society became divided. The Russian-speaking urban population in Turkestan did not support Kazakh liberal autonomists. In the spring of 1918, workers’ congresses in Pavlodar, Akmolinsk, and Semipalatinsk established Soviet power, leading to the organization of Soviets in Kazakh villages.

On April 30, 1918, at the V All-Turkestan Congress of Soviets in Tashkent, a decision was made to create the Turkestan Soviet Republic as part of the RSFSR. In the conditions of total economic devastation, Alash-Orda failed to implement economic reforms and establish independent armed forces. Kazakh military formations either operated as part of the White Army or remained at the level of the people’s militia. Recognizing the lack of prospects for continuing armed struggle,

<sup>47</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. At the Fault Line: Alash in the Ethnopolitical History of Kazakhstan. Almaty 2009, p. 153-160; SAKTAGANOVA – OMAROVA – ILYASSOVA – NURLIGENOVA – ABZHAPPAROVA – ZHALMURZINA – MAZHITOVA, The Alash Party..., p. 208-218.

<sup>48</sup> MARTYNENKO, Nikolai. Alash-Orda. Almaty 1992, p. 68-69; SAKTAGANOVA – OMAROVA – ILYASSOVA – NURLIGENOVA – ABZHAPPAROVA – ZHALMURZINA – MAZHITOVA, The Alash Party..., p. 208-218.



in December 1919, A. Buketov and his supporters decided to send a delegation to Orenburg for negotiations and the formulation of terms of cooperation, essentially capitulating (Figure 1).<sup>49</sup>

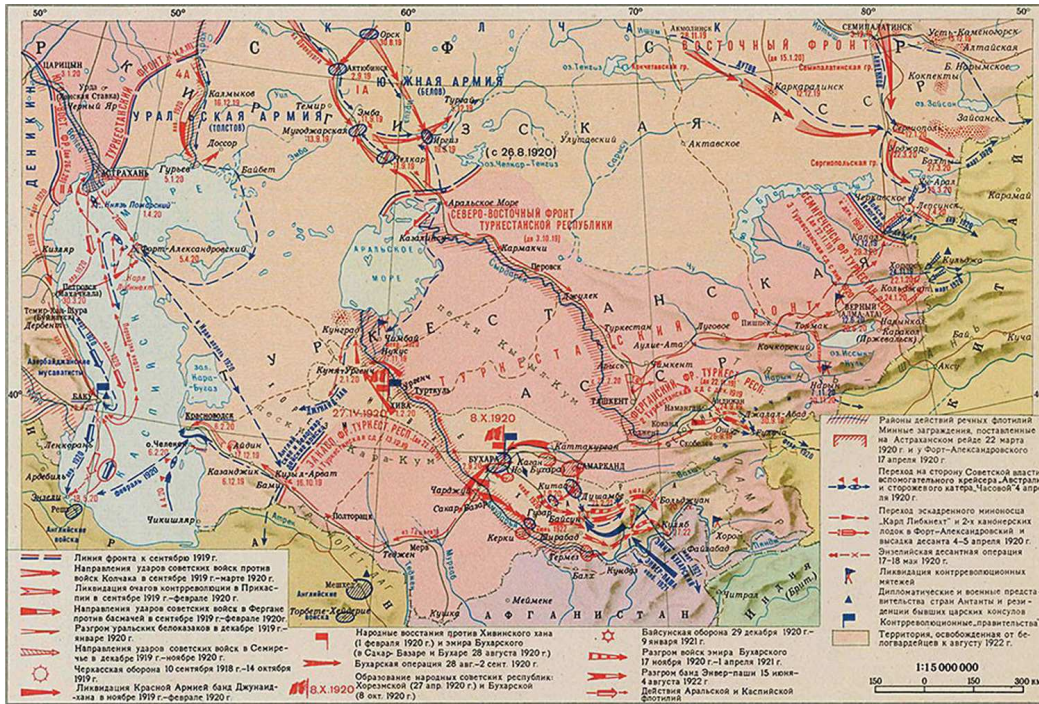


Figure 1. The Civil War in Turkestan, 1918-1920. Source: AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. *At the Fault Line: Alash in the Ethnopolitical History of Kazakhstan*. Almaty: Taimaz, 2009, p. 212-240.

On March 9, 1920, the Revolutionary Committee of the Kyrgyz Krai issued an order to liquidate the Alash-Orda and all its subordinate institutions. Following this directive, the central government in Semipalatinsk and its branches in Omsk, Turgai, Akmolinsk, and Petropavlovsk were dissolved.<sup>50</sup> Joseph Stalin approved the inclusion of A. Baytursynov in the Kyrgyz Krai Revolutionary Committee. The People's Commissar for Nationalities did not sympathize with the leader of the Alash movement, considering him neither a Marxist nor a revolutionary. However, Stalin deemed it necessary to leverage Baytursynov's connections and influence.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. *At the Fault Line...*, p. 212-240.

<sup>50</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, Dina A. *At the Fault Line: ...*, p. 353-354; TURSUN, Khazretali – GUMUS, Nasuh – BAZARBAEV, Kanat – ZHORAYEVA, Gulzhamal – KURMANALIN, Samat. *The History of the Alash movement in the context of the «Empire of positive action»*. In *Asian and African Studies*, 2021, vol. 30, no. 1, p. 97-112.

<sup>51</sup> NEWS OF THE KAZAKHSTAN TELEGRAPH AGENCY. Karaganda Maykuduk officially renamed in honor of Alikhan Bokeikhanov. KAZTAG, 2021. Dostupné na internete: <<http://www.kaztag.kz/ru/news/karagandinskiy-maykuduk-ofitsialno-pereimenovali-v-chest-alikhana-bokeykhanova>>

On August 25, 1920, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR, the Turkestan Soviet Republic was transformed into the Kirghiz Soviet Republic and, from April 1925, into the Kazakh ASSR. The national-communists among the Kazakhs became the mainstay of the center. S. F. Seyfullin was elected as the first chairman of the Sovnarkom of the Kazakh ASSR. The main task of the republican Central Executive Committee was to overcome the legacy of Russian imperialism and colonialism. In September 1920, the IX Congress of the All-Turkestan Congress of Soviets prohibited the migration of landless peasants from European Russia.<sup>52</sup> This „Little October in Kazakhstan“ took the form of harsh „positive discrimination,“ often turning into an act of revenge by the local population against former colonists perceived as their oppressors.<sup>53</sup>

In the context of a severe shortage of qualified national personnel, Soviet representatives agreed to assist their former opponents in socialist modernization. Joseph Stalin insisted on involving all representatives of the national intelligentsia, including former members of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Cadets, and Octobrists, in Soviet institutions for productive work. S. Saduakasov, a representative of the left-wing Alash movement, led the Kazakh committee of the Russian Communist Party (RCP) in Orenburg in 1918, and later transitioned from the pro-Soviet organization „Zhaz Kazakh“ to the Alash-based „Zhaz Azamat,“ assumed the position of the secretary of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee (KazTsIK). Subsequently, he held positions as the chair of the Planning Commission and the People's Commissar of Education of the Kazakh ASSR.<sup>54</sup>

On November 22, 1923, a decree by the Central Executive Committee of the Kirghiz ASSR mandated the use of the Kazakh language in official documentation and introduced compulsory quotas for the representation of national cadres in the party and Soviet authorities. K. Kemengerov taught at the Central Asian State University, and worked for the newspaper „Ak Zhol,“ and the journal „Sana.“ J. Tleulin, in 1919–1921, headed the healthcare department of the Kokshetau district and in 1922, became the head of teacher training courses. In 1927, he returned to his main specialty, assuming the position of the head of the healthcare department in Petropavlovsk.<sup>55</sup>

The policy of „indigenization“ significantly reduced the qualification of the administrative apparatus and led to an increase in interethnic tensions in Kazakhstan. The „empire of positive action“ increasingly clashed with the emerging forced industrialization and collectivization. Joseph Stalin concluded that centralized leadership was necessary for the national republics. In September 1925,

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<sup>52</sup> TURSUN - GUMUS - BAZARBAEV - ZHORAYEVA - KURMANALIN, *The History of the Alash movement...*, p. 97-112.

<sup>53</sup> MARTIN, *The affirmative action...*, p. 88-90.

<sup>54</sup> KAZIEV, Sergei S. Main directions of the national policy of the Soviet state in Kazakhstan (1920–1929). *Bulletin of Tomsk State University*. In *History*, 2014, vol. 5(31), p. 51-56; TURSUN - GUMUS - BAZARBAEV - ZHORAYEVA - KURMANALIN, *The History of the Alash movement...*, p. 97-112.

<sup>55</sup> KAZIEV, Sergei S. Main directions of the national policy..., p. 51-56; SUNY - NAIMARK, *The Revenge of the Past: ...*

F. I. Goloshchekin was appointed as the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan.<sup>56</sup> In 1927, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the Council of People's Commissars, and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee began to phase out „indigenization“ in the national republics of the Caucasus, Volga region, and Central Asia. In areas with a predominance of Russian-speaking population, the creation of Soviets without mandatory national quotas was allowed. Under Goloshchekin's pressure in March 1927, S. Saduakasov left the republican government to become the director of the Kazakh Pedagogical Institute. Later, he was removed from there and enrolled as a student at the Moscow Institute of Transport Engineers. After completing his education, he worked on the construction of the Moscow-Donbas railway and died of typhoid fever in 1933.<sup>57</sup>

| Comparison Criterion | Alashists                                     | National Communists                                |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Origin               | Upper strata: landed aristocracy, bureaucracy | Social lower class: settled and nomadic population |
| Social Base          | National intelligentsia                       | Workers, peasants, nomadic population              |
| Ideology             | Nationalism, liberalism                       | Communism, proletarian internationalism            |
| Scope of Activity    | Cultural and educational activities           | Administrative, political, and economic activities |

Tab. 1. Alashists and National Communists in the Kazakh SSR  
Sources: Author's development based on Martin<sup>58</sup>, Tursun<sup>59</sup>, Zhanbosanova et al.<sup>60</sup>

The policy of state centralization and unification equally struck both the „national communists“ and the Alash figures, squeezing them out of the party and Soviet bodies (Table 1). The emerging Soviet totalitarianism leveled both groups. In 1927, S. Seyfullin assumed the position of rector at the Kyzyl-Orda Institute of People's Education. M. Zhumabayev, invited by the People's Commissar of Enlightenment A.V. Lunacharsky, taught oriental languages at the Communist University of the Peoples of the East in Moscow and translated Russian and Western European poetry into Kazakh. In the summer of 1934, M. Zhumabayev and S. Seyfullin led the creation of the Union of Writers of Kazakhstan. From 1922 to 1927, A. Bukeykhanov worked in Moscow as a literary employee in the Kazakh section

<sup>56</sup> KAZIEV, Sergei S. Main directions of the national policy..., p. 51-56.

<sup>57</sup> CAMERON, Sarah. The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan. Ithaca 2018; MARTIN, The affirmative action empire...; TURSUN - GUMUS - BAZARBAEV - ZHORAYEVA - KURMANALIN, The History of the Alash movement..., p. 97-112.

<sup>58</sup> MARTIN, The affirmative action...

<sup>59</sup> TURSUN - GUMUS - BAZARBAEV - ZHORAYEVA - KURMANALIN, The History of the Alash movement..., p. 97-112.

<sup>60</sup> ZHANBOSENOVA - ZHANDYBAYEVA - ATANTAYEVA - ZHIRINDINOVA - KAZBEKOVA, The historical memory..., p. 426-441.

of the Central Committee of the People of the USSR. He was under constant surveillance by the NKVD, had no opportunity to publish, and was deprived of all contact with the Kazakh audience.<sup>61</sup> In 1924, A. Baytursynov was involved in reforming the Kazakh alphabet and wrote a textbook on applied grammar. He also worked at the editorial office of the newspaper „Ak Zhol,” taught at universities in Almaty and Tashkent and collected folklore.

In 1922, Kh. Dosmukhamedov headed the Scientific Council of the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment, and in 1923, he assumed the position of editor of the journal „Sana“ („Consciousness“). Later, he supervised the department of scientific literature at the state publishing house and participated in the organization of the first university in Kazakhstan. M. Dulatov was a member of the editorial board of the newspaper „Enbekshi Kazakh,” and he authored school textbooks. In 1930, he was arrested, sentenced to 10 years in labor camps, and died in 1935 in the Solovki prison camp. Bukeykhanov was executed on September 27, 1937, Zhumabayev on March 19, and Seyfullin on April 25, 1938. A. Bukeykhanov was rehabilitated by the Decree of the Supreme Court of the USSR on September 8, 1955, while M. Zhumabayev was rehabilitated on July 8, 1960. In 1958-1960, justice was restored for other national-communists and leaders of the Alash movement.<sup>62</sup> The complete dynamics of the Alash movement are presented for clarity in Table 2.

| Name and Chronological Framework  | Content  | Results   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Folkloric“ Stage „A“<br>1905–1917 | Fixation of epics, creation of written culture, and development of national consciousness through mass media and educational institutions. | The work has been initiated but not completed.  |
| „Organizational“ Stage „B“ 1917   | Transformation of the social movement into a political party.  | The political party did not establish a comprehensive network of grassroots organizations in urban and rural areas but managed to participate in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. |

<sup>61</sup> GLEASON, Gregory. *Discovering Independence: The Central Asian States*. New York 2018; KINDIRBAY, Gulnar. The national liberation movement of Kazakh intelligentsia at the beginning of the 20th century. In *Central Asian Survey*, 1997, vol. 16, no. 4, p. 487-515; KOLTASHOV, Vasilii G. Kazakhstan exiting the deadlock? Political crisis as a legacy of the global economic crisis and poor governance strategy. *Eurasia*. In *Expert*, 2022, vol. 1-2, p. 41-46.

<sup>62</sup> AMANZHOLOVA, At the Fault Line: ..., p. 353-354; TURSUN - GUMUS - BAZARBAEV - ZHORAYEVA - KURMANALIN, *The History of the Alash movement ...*, p. 97-112; ZHURTBAL, Tursyn. *My Pain, My Pride - Alash*. Astana 2016.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| „Political“ Stage „C“<br>1918-1920     | Establishment of state-administrative apparatus and armed forces, formation of national ideology.   | Alash-Orda did not gain stable support in urban economic centers and failed to provide material resources and national personnel for state construction. |
| „Decentralization“ Stage „G“ 1921-1937 | Return to the „folkloric“ stage within the framework of „korenizatsiya“ (indigenization), utilizing support from the Center to overcome illiteracy, publishing books, and creating educational and cultural institutions. | The work was partially executed before the onset of mass repression.   |

*Tab. 2. Stages of Development of the Alash Movement.  
Sources: Author's development based on Kesici<sup>63</sup>, Tursun<sup>64</sup>.*

After gaining independence in 1991, the Republic of Kazakhstan faced the need to formulate new ideas that would consolidate society, replacing those that prevailed in the USSR. In search of such ideas, the state leadership turned to important periods in the history of Kazakhstan. In this regard, along with the Turkic Khaganate of the 6th century and the Kazakh Khanate of the 15th century, the key place was occupied by the national autonomy of Alash. Although the representatives of the Alash movement failed to form an independent state in the 20th century, their contribution to national development remained in the memory of the people throughout the entire time until the collapse of the USSR. Consequently, the historical memory of this national movement has become a natural means of consolidating society. After 1991, in the historical memory of sovereign Kazakhstan, the national communists, seen as Moscow supporters, gave way to the Alash intellectuals, considered the true national leaders. Striving to restore national historical memory, the state leadership took the following measures: using names of the Alash representatives in toponyms; the installation of monuments and memorial sites; renaming schools, universities, and cultural institutions in honor of the founders of Alash-Orda; encouraging the reflection of the history of Alash-Orda in cinema. Finally, the official state coat of arms of Kazakhstan, adopted in 1992 depicts the symbol of Sha-nirak. Sha-nirak is the upper part of the yurt and a similar image of the yurt was the emblem of the newspaper „Ka-

<sup>63</sup> KESICI, *The Alash movement...*, p. 1135-1147.

<sup>64</sup> TURSUN - GUMUS - BAZARBAEV - ZHORAYEVA - KURMANALIN, *The History of the Alash movement...*, p. 97-112.

zakh“ founded by Alash. On September 19, 2015, the first Masonic lodge in Kazakhstan was named after A. Buketov. On July 4, 2021, a monument to the founders of the Alash movement – A. Buketov, A. Baitursynov, and M. Dulatov was unveiled in Nur-Sultan.<sup>65</sup> On June 24, 2018, a monument to M. Zhumabayev was erected in Petropavlovsk. Streets in Astana, Almaty, and Kokshetau were named after the great Kazakh poet. On September 22, 2017, a monument to A. Buketov was unveiled in Semey (Semipalatinsk). In December 2021, in Karaganda, the October District was renamed in his honor, Aerodromnaya Street in Almaty was named after him, and in Pavlodar, Marx Street was renamed.<sup>66</sup>

The state policy of „returning names“ has become an important direction in consolidating the Kazakh nation around the historical heritage of the Alash movement. It is crucial to note that the „returning names“ policy is uniformly implemented throughout the territory of Kazakhstan.

An important feature of Kazakhstan was the share of the titular nation in the population, which was significantly lower than in other former Soviet republics (39.7%) after the collapse of the USSR.<sup>67</sup> The ideas of interethnic equality and tolerance were integral to the Alash movement. In post-Soviet Kazakhstan, these ideas became a tool for forming a society of Kazakh identity, which has a multi-ethnic character and professes the values of hospitality and diversity.<sup>68</sup>

Additionally, the historical experience of Alash-Orda is consistently utilized to overcome tribalistic decentralization. A. Buketov and his like-minded colleagues, during the process of nation-building, consistently opposed the division of Kazakhs into Senior (southern), Middle (eastern), and Junior (western) juzes. The representative of the Senior juz, N. Nazarbayev, employed an ideology based on the legacy of Alash to justify the policy of liberal reforms and the integration of Kazakhstan into the global economy; the idea was to unite all Kazakh society.

In his book „The Era of Independence“, the first president of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev formulated the goal of Kazakh society as political and economic modernization, which should rest on the modernization of public consciousness. Its main components are the following: the preservation of national culture; the cultivation of knowledge and education as an engine of technological revolution and a key factor in the success of the state; the development of a sense of responsibility for the problems of the population; „pragmatism“ as a culture of moderation and abundance the opposite of extravagance and luxury; overcoming regional and ethnic disunity in the name of belonging to a single great nation.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> BEISIMBAEV, Samat. How the Progressive Views of Alash Orda Members Influenced Contemporary Kazakhstan. *Liter*, 2021. Dostupné na internete: <<https://liter.kz/105-letie-alash-ordy-kak-progressivnye-vzgliady-alashordintsev-povliiali-na-sovremennyi-kazakhstan-1658824228/>>

<sup>66</sup> NEWS OF THE KAZAKHSTAN TELEGRAPH AGENCY. Karaganda Maykuduk officially renamed in honor of Alikhan Bokeikhanov. KAZTAG, 2021. Dostupné na internete: <<http://www.kaztag.kz/ru/news/karagandinskiy-maykuduk-ofitsialno-pereimenovali-v-chest-alikhana-bokeykhanova>>

<sup>67</sup> STATE COM. USSR on statistics. Inform.-izd. otd. Population of the USSR: According to the All-Union. census 1989. Moscow Finance and Statistics, 1990.

<sup>68</sup> BASHMAKOV, Anatoliy A. The artistic heritage of «Alash» and public conscience modernization. In *Vestnik of M. Kozybayev North Kazakhstan University*, 2018, vol. 3(40), p. 73-84.

<sup>69</sup> NAZARBAYEV, Nursultan. *The Era of Independence*. Astana 2017.

These ideas repeat the Alash movement's postulates formulated a century earlier. These postulates included access to education for the entire population; economic reforms; and the creation of a state based on the interests of the entire diverse society. In his writings, the first president repeatedly mentions and quotes materials related to the Alash movement, describing its historical heritage as a key to the formation of the Kazakh nation.<sup>70</sup> His successor, K.-Zh. Tokayev has similarly appealed to the historical heritage, calling the word „Alash“ sacred to the Kazakh people. Tokayev has declared the need to continue research on the works of the leaders of the National Liberation Movement. He has noted that today's Kazakhstan is the dream of the leaders of Alash about an independent state.<sup>71</sup>

In post-Soviet Kazakhstan, the historical concept of „Alash“ plays a significant role in structuring the physical and socio-cultural space. The policy of national identification instrumentalizes normative historical narratives and cultural discourses, legitimizing the state-political system.<sup>72</sup> The contemporary political and intellectual elite of Kazakhstan, at a new historical stage, is compelled to address the same issues that their predecessors faced. These include an uncertain geopolitical status, open borders, numerous ethnic minorities in border areas, economic instability linked to environmental problems, vast arid spaces in the country's center, and the pan-Islamist challenge.

An important aspect is that the historical component associated with the history of the National Alash movement applies not only to the formation of national policy by the country's leadership. The history of Alash-Orda attracts the attention of cultural figures and ordinary people. The topic is also reflected in blogs in social networks, modern music, and brands. This fact shows the deep rootedness of this historical image in the minds of the people.<sup>73</sup> Various protest movements simultaneously appeal to the ideas of the Alash movement. The slogan of Alash is *Oyan, Qazaqstan! (Wake Up, Kazakhstan!)* was chosen as the name of a protest political movement created in recent years. In addition, the movement used several basic postulates of Alash in their own program.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the national memory of the Alash movement becomes a critical tool used both for consolidating the entire society. Moreover, this memory can serve as an argument in favor of various parties during social conflicts.

Thus, it can be argued that the perceptions of the professional public towards the Alash movement have undergone fundamental changes. Initially regarded as purely a national-liberation political movement, Alash has in the contemporary

<sup>70</sup> NAZARBAYEV, Nursultan. In the stream of history. Almaty 1999.

<sup>71</sup> TOKAYEV, Kassym-Jomart. We are reviving the names of Alash figures. Online publication Tengrinews. 2021. Dostupné na internete: <[https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/tokayev-myi-vozrojdaem-imena-deyateley-alasha-442306/](https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/tokayev-myi-vozrojdaem-imena-deyateley-alasha-442306/)>

<sup>72</sup> HELLER, Regina. From community politics to the politisation of community: The role of identity in Eurasian economic integration. In *East European Politics*, 2019, vol. 35, no. 2, p. 122-142; VON SOIST, Christian - GRAIVOGEL, Julia. Identity, procedures, and performance: How authoritarian regimes legitimize their rule. In *Contemporary Politics*, 2017, vol. 23, no. 3, p. 287-305.

<sup>73</sup> BASHMAKOV, The artistic heritage of «Alash»..., p. 73-84.

<sup>74</sup> OYAN QAZAQSTAN. Civil Declaration Oyan, Qazaqstan. Oyan, Qazaqstan. 2019. Dostupné na internete: <<https://oyan.digital/posts/grajdanskaya-deklaraciya-oyan-qazaqstann/>>

context become a symbolic representation of the formation of the Kazakh national idea and a prologue to the emergence of identity and self-awareness, culture, and enlightenment. Advocating for social democracy and individual rights, national identity, and culture, the Alash political movement largely anticipated its time and today shares many similarities with similar national movements in post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe in certain programmatic aspects.

## Discussion

The crisis phenomena in Kazakhstan in 2022–2023 demand a significant reconsideration of assessments regarding the Alash movement, particularly a departure from unequivocal apologetics. Thus, introducing the concept of „Alash“ into the historical memory of Kazakhstan, a multi-ethnic state, seems feasible. The errors of the Alash leaders, leading to the failure of the initial attempt to establish Kazakh statehood, require closer scrutiny in the face of the contemporary situation. In this context, the historical experience of the Alash movement is actualized within the framework of the „positive action empire“ and M. Kroh’s theory of nation-building.

From this perspective, rigidly contrasting Soviet and post-Soviet research schools appears unproductive. Unambiguous positive evaluations of „Alash“ in the works of Kazakh authors do not allow for an objective assessment of its strengths and weaknesses.<sup>75</sup> Conversely, M. Terry’s research effectively demonstrated the efficiency of systematic analysis in evaluating the merits and shortcomings of Soviet national policies.<sup>76</sup>

Post-imperial and post-colonial research methodologies enable a better understanding of the fundamental patterns in the evolution of the Alash movement as the embryo of the Kazakh nation. In the pre-revolutionary period, A. Bukeykhanov and other Alash leaders initiated the exploration of Kazakh history as the basis for socio-political and economic practices. Kazakh intellectuals sought to differentiate their ethnicity from Turkic neighbors, particularly Tatars, Bashkirs, and Uzbeks (Sarts), while also neutralizing external pan-Islamist influences.<sup>77</sup> In collaboration with Russian liberals, they made significant contributions to shaping Kazakh national self-awareness and political culture. However, their activities were confined to a narrow circle of educated individuals, primarily representing the social elite.<sup>78</sup>

The positive utilization of historical experience requires addressing the „blind spots“ and identifying the most acute problems in interethnic relations in Kazakhstan. The Alash movement emerged as a component of the Asian anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movement and retained this character within the Soviet Union. Kazakh national communists collaborated with Alash leaders in

<sup>75</sup> AKKULY, Sultan-Khan. AliKhan Bukeykhanov. Almaty 2016; ZHURTBAL, My Pain,...

<sup>76</sup> MARTIN, The affirmative action empire: ...; TERRY, Empire of positive action..., p. 55-87.

<sup>77</sup> KESICI, The Alash movement..., p. 1135-1147.

<sup>78</sup> SAKTAGANOVA - OMAROVA - ILYASSOVA - NURLIGENOVA - ABZHAPPAROVA - ZHALMURZINA - MAZHITOVA, The Alash Party..., p. 208-218.



implementing land-water reform and the cultural revolution.<sup>79</sup> However, during socialist construction and the strengthening of centralizing tendencies in the late 1920s, Stalin increasingly realized that Alash supporters perceived Soviet power equally as the dictatorship of Russian proletarians and as a peculiar reincarnation of the Russian Empire.<sup>80</sup>

The totalitarianism that took shape in the 1930s inflicted severe wounds on the emerging Kazakh nation, fully manifesting during the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1989–1991.<sup>81</sup> The forced collectivization and sedentarization in 1931–1932 led to famine and the mass death of nomadic populations.<sup>82</sup>

Throughout the Soviet period in Kazakhstan, tension between ethnonational and international orientations steadily increased. The suppression of political protests in Almaty in 1986 became a powerful impetus for national self-determination. Following the USSR's collapse, this contradiction fully manifested in the worldview of the Kazakh elite, representing a competition between internal and external development vectors. The justified pursuit of Eurasian integration faces resistance from Russia, perceived as an alternative center of attraction and a potential competitor in Central Asia.<sup>83</sup>

The economic reforms of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the attraction of foreign companies, and the deepening cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union allowed for overcoming the collapse of living standards in the 1990s and, overall, stabilizing the standard of living in the 2000s–2010s. The ideology of state building in Kazakhstan, framed as the „home for Kazakhs and a multi-ethnic republic,“ ensured peaceful relations between the titular nation and ethnic minorities. In the national discourse, the concept of „Great Eurasia“ was presented as an open cooperative project with prospects for expansion and deepening.<sup>84</sup>

Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy imposes elevated demands on the quality of state governance and the qualifications of the political elite. The establishment of sovereign statehood in a multipolar world implies asserting subjectivity and autonomy in determining strategic development priorities. The geopolitical status of Kazakhstan in the center of Eurasia constantly faces the threat of transforming it from a subject into an object of global politics, into an arena for the competition of states and transnational corporations for raw resources and transport corridors.

In the process of resolving accumulated contradictions and stabilizing national self-consciousness based on historical memory, a deeper examination of the creative legacy of A. Bukeykhanov, A. Baytursynov, and other Alash figures become essential. Special attention should be directed towards the fundamental

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<sup>79</sup> KOZODOI, Victor I. Alikhan Bukeykhanov: The Man of the Era. Novosibirsk 2021.

<sup>80</sup> TURSUN - GUMUS - BAZARBAEV - ZHORAYEVA - KURMANALIN, The History of the Alash movement..., p. 97-112.

<sup>81</sup> MARTIN, The affirmative action empire: ...; SUNY - NAIMARK, The Revenge of the Past: ...

<sup>82</sup> ZHANBOSENOVA - ZHANDYBAYEVA - ATANTAYEVA - ZHIRINDINOVA - KAZBEKOVA, The historical memory..., p. 426-441.

<sup>83</sup> SABOT, Steven. Russian Colonization of Central Asia and the Genesis of Kazakh National Consciousness. 1868–1920. New York 2003.

<sup>84</sup> HELLER, Regina. From community politics..., p. 122-142.

principles of political liberalism and religious tolerance. In this new interpretation, it is necessary to emphasize the theses regarding a primary orientation towards Russian and European development experiences, the imperative for the development of parliamentary democracy, civil society, and a socially oriented market economy in Kazakhstan.

## **Conclusions**

The liberal secular movement „Alash“ laid the foundation for the modern statehood of Kazakhstan. Following the dissolution of the USSR and the discrediting of communist ideology, the Kazakh elite embarked on a search for new orientations for national consolidation, socio-cultural identity, and value systems. The theoretical and practical activities of A. Bukeykhanov and other leaders of „Alash,“ along with their successes and failures, became a valuable example for N. A. Nazarbayev and could potentially serve as reliable benchmarks for K. - J. Tokayev in the future.

The reconstruction of the „Alash“ concept allows for an objective assessment of its significance in the historical memory of the contemporary Kazakhstani nation. The creation of the first newspapers, the recording of oral folklore, and the transformation of folk mythology into a historical narrative constituted the initial contribution of Alash figures to the formation of national self-awareness. The disruptions caused by World War I and the revolutions of 1917 interrupted this gradual evolutionary process. The leaders of the „Alash“ movement did not have the time to transition from the „folklore“ to the „political“ and „organizational“ periods (in the theory of national movements by M. Kroh). The first Kazakh government (Alash-Orda) failed to find external allies. The project of Kazakh national-territorial autonomy clashed with the conservative ideology of the „united and indivisible Russia“ of the White movement. Similarly, the liberalism of Alash-Orda contradicted the jadidist pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism of the Kokand autonomy.

During the formation of Soviet Kazakhstan, A. Bukeykhanov and his supporters were co-opted into Soviet bodies as part of the „indigenization“ policy in the „empire of positive action“ (in M. Terry's theory) and returned from the „organizational“ and „political“ to the „folklore“ period. They remained potential enemies of Soviet authorities and were repressed. The rehabilitation in the 1950s-1980s in the USSR paved the way for the return of the historical legacy of the „Alash“ movement to the socio-cultural space of sovereign Kazakhstan.

Since independence, Kazakhstan's state policy has used the historical memory associated with the Alash movement as support. This memory facilitated the formation of state policy to unite society and raised confidence in the chosen course of state development. For many years Kazakhstan has maintained the status of a model of socio-political stability in a rather complex and diverse environment of Central Asian countries. At the same time, the country's leadership has taken a large number of efforts to revive and popularize the ideas of the Alash National Liberation Movement. These facts, as well as the high level of perception of these ideas by society, indicate a successful experience of forming and

using the national idea. The communication of the state apparatus with society was also effective. Nevertheless, as in the history of any state, the recent historical path of Kazakhstan entails acute issues and unresolved problems, as indicated by the events of 2022-2023. The Alash ideas have critical importance in the self-identification of Kazakh society and their use by carriers of different political views. Therefore, it seems relevant both to further study the historical experience of this movement, its successes, and mistakes. It is necessary to scrutinize the modern perception of the Alash ideas by Kazakh society. Thorough research of public opinion would identify existing and potential causes of conflicts and misunderstandings. In addition, research can indicate directions for further work to improve both public communication and public policy in general. The historical and cultural heritage of the Alash movement contains principles that do not lose their relevance at the present time – equality of members of society regardless of ethnic origin, religion, and gender; freedom of speech; search for a balanced economic model based on the local characteristics of Kazakhstan; broad involvement of society in social and political life. Further implementation of these ideas in state development requires in-depth analysis and adaptation of historical experience to modern realities. This approach will bring the development of the state to a new level.

In 2022, social conflicts did not transform into interethnic ones. The Kazakh elite timely mitigates the actions of radical nationalists, but the northern regions with a predominance of Russian-speaking population and the southern borders remain areas of threats and risks. The indicated vector of development of a secular democratic multiethnic state did not eliminate the dangers of authoritarian political tendencies, corruption, and nepotism. The concept of the „Alash“ movement in historical memory remains an important factor in the systematic elimination of remnants of tribal nomadism. The main achievement of the Alash figures remains the justification of external and internal conditions for the development of modern Kazakhstan – firstly, participation in Eurasian integration with Russian and European involvement, and secondly, the preservation of interethnic peace.

The applied significance of this research lies in the value of the concept of a liberal secular state for the contemporary Kazakhstani elite. The „return of names,“ the demonetization of toponymy, and the reissue of scientific and journalistic works have become valuable contributions to the formation of historical memory and the search for national-state identity. The intellectual achievements and moral authority of the Alash figures have not been fully utilized in the development of Kazakhstan. The preservation of the risk of exacerbating interethnic conflicts and religious intolerance requires the activation of research into the theoretical and practical legacy of the „Alash“ movement. The processes of decommunization and desovietization of Kazakhstani historical memory also need further study and critical analysis, which will be fundamental for subsequent authorial developments.

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