

**FORMATION OF KAZAKH AUTONOMOUS SOVIET SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC AS THE FIRST STEP OF REALIZATION OF THE SOVIET MODEL
OF NATION-STATE BUILDING IN KAZAHSTAN**

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the beginning of realization of the Soviet model of nation-state building in Kazakhstan – formation of Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (1917 –the beginning of 1920s). Thesis provides national, social and political factors in Kazakhstan present on the eve of the Socialist revolution. It examines the features of soviet nation-state building in the period of establishment of Soviet Power and Civil War in Kazakhstan and analyzes the political status of the new autonomous republic and the main dimensions of its development, difficulties and contradictions in the first years of KASSR.

Thesis argues that there were no real preconditions for Bolshevik revolution in Kazakhstan. The Soviet project of nation-state building was realized under conditions of severe military confrontation of the Civil War, the struggle with Kazakh national project, suggested by Alash party and balancing between interests of Kazakh and Russian political groups in local soviet administrative units. Analysis of the main documents, regulating the status of the Kazakh Autonomous Republic, demonstrates a low degree of independence of KASSR on the Central authorities of the RSFSR. However, formation of KASSR became an important step in the development of Kazakh statehood, unification of the Kazakh lands and building of Kazakh nation.

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Introduction

Currently the Soviet nation-state building is one of the controversial topics in historical research in the former Soviet Union. This topic is of particular interest in the context of studying the history of Central Asia. Soviet nation-state building was involved in the formation of the Central Asian States in their modern borders and of the modern Central Asian Nations. Despite the significant number of common features, the implementation of the Soviet project of nation-state building in each of the five Central Asian States had different features. The case of Kazakhstan seems to us the most unique. It's not just the fact that Kazakhstan is larger than the other four states put together and that the Kazakhs were the largest Turkic ethnic group in the Russian Empire. It's also the fact that in Kazakhstan the indigenous Kazakh population, at the time of the formation of an Autonomous Republic in 1920 and of a Union Republic in 1936, was less than half of the total population. In addition, the Kazakh Autonomous Republic, and then the Union Republic, was the only state of all the Soviet republics of Central Asia bordering Russia; most of the territory of Kazakhstan had been a subject of Russian colonization much earlier and in a more substantial amount. For this reason, the Russian population accounted for a significant proportion of the population. These characteristics naturally affected the process of implementing the Soviet model of nation-state building. Implementation of the Soviet nation-state building can be divided into three stages in Kazakhstan. The first stage was formation on the vast territory of the Kirghiz steppes of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1920, the second was the national state delimitation in Central Asia and the formation of Kazakh autonomy within the

present boundaries of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1924-1925, and the third was the obtaining of Union status for the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1936: that is, the possibility of legal secession from the Soviet Union, which in fact became the legal basis for the formation of an independent state after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The present work is devoted to the first stage of the Soviet nation-state building in Kazakhstan: the formation of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

As a result of the implementation of the Soviet policy of nation-state building, the Kazakh people, for the first time after joining the Russian Empire, had the opportunity of national self-determination. This opportunity was realized in the formation of Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Republic in 1920. However, it was only the first step of self-determination. Problems in national fields, territorial contradictions with neighbor autonomies, the presence of significant Kazakh population in Turkestan Autonomous Republic demanded the continuation of nation-state building. As regards realization of Bolshevik theory of self-determination of nations in Kazakhstan I consider that the early Bolshevik regime and the dominance of the Communist party did not complete fulfillment of its principles. Kazakhstan continued to depend upon decisions of the central authority in Moscow in implementation of most important reforms which must be implemented according to the Central Soviet model. However, the role of local authorities became more important than in Tsarist time, especially in implementation cultural and economic policy.

The purpose of this work is to explore the process of creation of Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist autonomy in the context of implementation the Soviet policy of nation-state building in Kazakhstan.

The question of the formation of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet socialist Republic, as of Soviet nation-building in general, was and continues to be a politicized one in the Kazakh historiography. Therefore, in this work, in addition to the analysis of the development of autonomy, I find it necessary to consider the views of Western historians on the issue of Soviet nation - building, especially with regards Kazakhstan.

In the first part of the chapter I examine the main concepts devoted to Soviet national policy and Soviet nation-state building which appeared after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in Western historiography. They are “incubator of nations” by Ronald Grigor Suny, “affirmative action empire” by Terry Martin, “communal apartment” by Yuriy Slezkine, “state-sponsored evolutionism” by Francine Hirsch. In the second part of the chapter I will study western scholars’ works focused directly on the Soviet nation-state building in Central Asia and Kazakhstan in particular.

Before examining the implementation of Soviet model of nation-state building is necessary to understand whether there were real prerequisites for Socialist revolution in Kazakhstan or not; what social, national and political conditions took place on the eve of the Socialist revolution. The first part of the second chapter focuses on these issues. The second and the third parts of the chapter examine Soviet Nation-State building in the period of the establishment of Soviet Power and the Civil War. I provide description of the formation of the first soviet governmental institutions in Kazakhstan and define difficulties and contradictions of Soviet nation-state building. These parts of Chapter II pay particular attention to two alternative projects: the project of national-democratic intelligentsia united Alash party and the Pan-Turkish projects of Muslim national communists; and also the struggle of Soviet government with these projects.

The last chapter of this thesis focuses on the formation of Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic directly. I describe the process of defining the borders of new autonomous republic and examine two first most important documents of KASSR: the Decree about formation of Kirghiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the Declaration of Rights of Working People of Kirghiz (Kazakh) ASSR. I also examine the degree of independence of KASSR, difficulties and the main tasks of the development of the Kazakh Autonomous Republic.

The main primary sources which relate to my thesis are a vast complex of documents of state and party of apparatus. The documents are divided into several types. The first type is the main state's acts: 1918 RFSR Constitution, Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, 1917, Declaration of the Rights of the Workers of KASSR, 1920. The second type is party and state documents related to the central power of Soviet Union. (Soviet decrees, laws, protocols of meetings, official reports). The third type is documents produced by local Kazakhstani authorities (reports, proceedings of meetings, transcripts of Communist Party's meetings, conferences and plenums, open letters of Communist Party's leaders). This type is dominant in my research.

The next group of primary sources consists of publications of the top leaders of the Kazakh Soviet Autonomy and the leading politicians, public figures in Kazakhstan in the period the establishment of first years of Soviet Power: books, speeches and the articles in the official Communist Party's magazine "Bolshevik of Kazakhstan" devoted to nation-state building.

Sources were obtained from documents in the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (the former Archive of the Communist party of

Kazakhstan), research funds and collections of documents of the National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Central Scientific Library of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (the former Library of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR).

Chapter 1 The main concepts of Soviet nation-state building in Western historiography.

Soviet nation-state building is one of the central topics of research of Soviet national policy in the Western historiography. For a long time this issue and Soviet national policy in general, was examined by scholars who belonged mostly to the totalitarian school of the Soviet history which dominated in the period of the Cold War. Scholars evaluated the Soviet national policy as the continuation of tsarist policy, considered the Soviet Union as a colonial Empire and “the breaker of nations” and “portrayed non-Russian nationalities as the hapless victims of Soviet-Russian rule.”¹ Implementation of nationhood and national autonomy was considered as a classic strategy “divide and rule” with its final goal to include and keep the previous territories of Russian Empire in the new Soviet State. The main opponent of the totalitarian school, the revisionists, were not engaged in the debates about the nature of national policy and concentrated predominantly on studying of the social history of the Soviet Union.

The situation changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. First of all, it promoted the study of nations of the Soviet Unions and the fundamentals of Soviet national policy. Second, the Cold War was over and, as a result, the previous political situation stopped to influence on historical research. Furthermore, the establishment of political connections with new independent states also promoted the study history of these states. Third, new archival documents became

¹ Hirsch Francine, *Empire of nations Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 27.

accessible for researchers. These changes resulted in a growth of interest in research on the Soviet nations and reevaluation of Soviet national policy.

Under these conditions new critical historical works, devoted to national policy of the Soviet Union toward national minorities, began to appear. These works challenged the dominant position of the totalitarian paradigm and formed new concepts which reevaluated many aspects of the Soviet national policy. In this chapter I will analyze the main concepts of the Soviet national policy appearing after the end of the Cold War and the Collapse of the Soviet Union in Western historiography. They are “Soviet Union as Incubator of Nations” by Ronald Grigor Suny; “Soviet Union as a Communal Apartment” by Yuri Slezkine; “Affirmative Action Empire” by Terry Martin and “State-sponsored Evolutionism” by Francine Hirsch and the issue of the Soviet nation-state building in them. In the last part of the chapter I will review the works of Western scholars dealing with the first years of Soviet nation-state building in Kazakhstan during the last three decades.

One of the first historians who reexamined the fundamentals of the Soviet national policy was Ronald Grigor Suny. In his book *“The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union”* (1993) Suny stresses the importance of non-Russian nationalism in the formation of the Soviet national policy and the territorial structure of the new state. He supports the statement of Richard Pipes that the Soviet Union was the first modern state which placed “the national principle in the base of its federal structure.”² He claims that in the period of the beginning of Soviet nation-state building the Soviet Russia “was conceived not as an ordinary national state but the first stone in a future multinational edifice.”³

² Ronald Grigor Suny, *“The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union”* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), 89.

³ *Ibid.*, 85.

This nature of the new Soviet State was explained by the limitless of the Russian Revolution (the aim of the Soviet leaders for the World Revolution) and the participation in the struggle with the leading imperial states for sympathies of semi-periphery and periphery regions of the world. He defines the Soviet Union as the “incubator of new nations” because it promoted the consolidation of many ethnicities into nations as a result of the Soviet national policy. The scholar defines many positive changes which national minorities acquired under the Soviet rule: national territory, education and culture in the national languages, promotion into positions of power. Furthermore, he writes about many privileges obtained by some national minorities such as *Ukrainians*, *Armenians*, *Jews* in other Soviet Republics (extraterritorial, education). However, Suny, following the traditions of the totalitarian school, argues that the Soviet Union was “pseudofederal state” which “eliminated political sovereignty for the nationalities.”⁴

As regards to nation-state building in Kazakhstan, Suny pays relatively little attention to Central Asian nationalities in comparison with some other large nationalities in the Soviet Union such as *Ukrainians* or *Armenians*. He claims that national identity among *Kazakhs* was poor because of tribal structure and a low number of intellectuals. According to Suny, *Kazakhs* acquiesced to the Soviet rule because of the absence of alternatives after the defeat of *Whites*. He also argues that among the *Kazakhs* “Soviet power was a façade that disguised the real structure of local power underneath” i.e. the power of traditional tribal leaders and traditional legislation. He draws this conclusion on the basis M. Olcott statement

⁴ Ibid., 101.

that the majority Kazakh party workers didn't have secular education and didn't know about both party ideology and program⁵.

Another important revisionist view on Soviet nation-state building was presented by Yuri Slezkine. In his essay *The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism* he writes about significant achievements of the Bolsheviks in implementation of national policy and nation-state building in particular. According to Slezkine, the Soviet Union was "the world's first state to institutionalize ethnoterritorial federalism, classify all citizens according to their biological nationalities and formally prescribe preferential treatment to certain ethnically defined population"⁶. Using the Vareikis' metaphor Slezkine compares the Soviet Union with a large communal apartment in which all national units were "separate rooms". Russians, in turn, did not get their own "room", but they occupied "a large and amorphous space not clearly defined as a room."⁷ "They could be bona fide national minorities in areas assigned to somebody else, but in Russia proper they had no national rights and no national opportunities (because they had possessed and misused them before)."⁸

The scholar points out the completely new approach to the division of population of former Russian Empire: before the Socialist revolution the key factor was religion, after revolution – ethnicity, which became the basis for the territorial division of the Soviet Union. The borders of the majority of territorial units were national. Slezkine opposes the representatives the totalitarian school who claims that policy of creating national territories and nations state was an example of applying

⁵ Ibid., 114-115.

⁶ Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53 (1994): 415.

⁷ Ibid., 434.

⁸ Ibid.

the principle of "divide and conquer". He argues that this policy was a concession to the national claims of former oppressed nations

According to Slezkine, there were two important actions of the new Soviet State: "ethnicity-based affirmative action" and "class-based affirmative action". The first one was implemented in the new formed national territorial units on the periphery, the second one - in Russian territories⁹. Thus, it was beneficial to be proletarian for Russians in Russian territories and to be a representative of national minorities in national units. In the view of Slezkine, the main part of this ethnically-based action was the policy of *korenizatsia*.¹⁰ In his essay he provides statistical data which shows the successful implementation of *korenizatsiia* policy. Slezkine claims that according to the logic of Soviet power the development of the Soviet statehood of non-Russian peoples and the policy of *korenizatsiia* were the main way of overcoming economical, political and cultural backwardness of non-Russian peoples.

At the same time, political rights of Soviet national units were totally restricted. Any attempt to dispute the leading line of the Soviet Center was suppressed: "national rights were matters of cultural form as distinct from political and economical "content"; but ultimately all form was derived from content and it was up to party leaders in Moscow to decide where the line should be drawn in each case."¹¹ Furthermore, in mid 1930-s unofficial hierarchy of nations appeared and the Russian nation became gradually to take dominant position.

⁹ I mean territories of RSFSR which were not related to national units, for example, Belgorod *oblast*, Novgorod *oblast* etc.

¹⁰ Promoting of representatives of titular nationalities in Soviet Union for taking leading positions in government management, education of national units.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 434.

In the context of nation-state building in Central Asia, Slezkine argues that the main criteria for nation building were “tribal self-identity” and clan genealogies. He writes about territorial controversies between Kazakh and Uzbek in 1920-s and the way to their solution. He claims that despite political and economic priorities, which took place in the solution of territorial controversies, the main criterion was ethnic. He also mentions Kazakhstan in the example of ethnicity-based affirmative action: returning Cossack lands to nomads in 1920-s. Thus, the concept of “USSR as a communal apartment” became a serious attempt to reconsideration the traditional view of the totalitarian school of Soviet history. However, the main opponent among revisionists who created the most well-founded concept examining the Soviet national policy was Terry Martin.

Terry Martin defines the Soviet Union as a “novel and fascinating experiment in governing a multiethnic state” - the first Affirmative Action Empire. He borrows this term from the contemporary American policy which gives preference to members of ethnic group that have suffered in the past. According to Martin, Russia’s new revolutionary government promoted the nationhood of ethnic minorities in the following forms: national territories, national language and national elites, national culture. Thus, the Soviet Union established “many characteristic institutions forms of the nation-state” for national minorities.¹²

The author examines the logic of this Soviet national policy. In his view it was based on four premises. The first is “the Marxist premise”. According to the Bolsheviks, nationalism is a dangerous type of ideology as it prevents the international union of workers. By promoting national consciousness to ethnic

¹² Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Cornell University Press (2001), p.1.

minorities they struggled with “bourgeois nationalism” and attracted them to join the new Soviet state. The second, “the modernization premise”, implies that the rise of nation is inevitable and is connected with the onset of capitalism. Bolsheviks believed that the construction of the nationhood of ethnic minorities promoted the socialist modernization of traditional ethnic societies. The third premise Martin calls “the Colonial premise and the “Greatest dangerous principle”. Bolsheviks justified non-Russian nationalism and considered it as a response of national minorities to oppression and colonization in the Tsarist time. Therefore only by supporting national minorities the new Soviet State could gain their trust and participation in socialist building. For the Bolsheviks the main danger was the Great Power Chauvinism of Russians. As a result the nationalism of ethnic minorities was permitted but the Russian nationalism was suppressed. National minorities received privileges (hiring, education) over Russians in all national units. It was also concerned with territorial borders of formed national units. Some territories with dominant proportion of Russian population were related to national minorities’ units. The last premise, “the Piedmont Principle”, presumes that the existence of the correlation between internal national policy and foreign policy goals. Bolsheviks supported national minorities representatives of which lived across Soviet borders (for example, Ukrainians in Poland, Moldavians in Romania). By doing so the Soviet government hoped to attract these minorities and make them the agents of Soviet influence in neighboring states. By implementing the Affirmative Action policy toward national minorities Bolsheviks hoped to attract the colonial and oppressed nations in the world.

According to Martin, the central role in the Soviet national policy belonged to the policy of *korenizatsiia* (indigenization). This policy started in 1923 by adopting

two resolutions which promoted national languages and national elites.

Korenizatsiia became the part of “the Bolshevik’s decolonizing rhetoric, which systematically favoured the claims of indigenous peoples over “newly arrived elements’ (*prishlye elementy*)”¹³ In the period of the Great Retreat (1933-1938) *korenizatsiia* was scaled back, but it was not over. Martin defines following reasons of this retreat. First, the confrontation between the Soviet Union’s Center and national communists who often were not satisfied the implementation of the policy in the regions. The Soviet Center, in its turn, thought that *korenizatsiia* didn’t solve the task of disarming nationalism and promoted anti-Soviet rhetoric in the national units. Furthermore, the growth of military danger, first of all from Germany and Poland, forced to control national units who could be potential allies of the Soviet enemies.

The support of the former imperial national minorities was based on the discrimination of the “former oppressor” nation, i.e. Russians. According to Martin, the positive discrimination of Russians was one of the essential features of Affirmative Action Empire. The Soviet government treated to Russians party leaders treated to Russians with suspicion, partly even believed them as a source of threat, and couldn’t clearly define their status and role in the new state’s system. But later the policy toward Russians changed. In the period of the Great Retreat Russians and Russian culture were rehabilitated and became “the unifying force in a newly imagined Friendship of People.”¹⁴ (p. 27).

The author also takes into account one important feature of the realization of affirmative action policy - economic equalization. The national policy also aimed to help overcome economic and culturally inequality among Soviet nationalities.

¹³ Ibid., 12

¹⁴ Ibid., 27.

However, according to the author, the affirmative action in education and hiring didn't solve completely this aim because "the Soviet commitment to economic equalization was never institutionalized" and "economic commissariat was consistently hostile to the Soviet national policy."¹⁵

Summarizing the first two decades of the development of the Soviet Union and transformation of the Soviet national policy in mid 1930-s Great Retreat Martin draws conclusion that "the affirmative action empire was a logically coherent but highly utopian strategy."¹⁶ It became obvious in mid 1930-s when instead of initial ideas the strategy of implementation of national policy became more practical. The idea of unitary state became to dominate over national minorities' rights.

In the book *"The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939"* (2001) Martin considers the Soviet nation-state building in the Soviet East, including Kazakhstan, as the significant part of the Affirmative Action. Martin stresses that Kazakhstan was one of the regions suffered from Russian colonial policy and the degree of the implementation of Affirmative Action was significant. He describes the mass expulsion of Slavic settlers and Cossacks and returning occupied lands by them to Kazakhs. He also examines implementation of *korenizatsiia* policy as an essential part of Affirmative action policy in Kazakhstan. Similar to other eastern regions *korenizatsiia* was implemented here by promoting indigenous people to the important positions in the local government and supporting the study and use of local languages. At the same time national elites, and often even a written culture were absent in the "Eastern" national units due to cultural backwardness. Therefore the *korenizatsiia* policy

¹⁵ Ibid., 14.

¹⁶ Martin, Terry. "An Affirmative Action Empire: The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism." In *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation—Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 81.

focused on education and the formation of national elites and the creation of national cultures and languages (for example, creating national alphabets in Latin and then Cyrillic scripts for backward ethnicities). According to Martin, *korenizatsiia* was accompanied by interethnic tensions and by the end of 1920-s was implemented in a milder form taking account the interests of Russians.

Thus, the works of Terry Martin, especially the book “The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939” became a culmination of revisionist view on the issue of Soviet national policies. The concept “Affirmative Action Empire” had already become dominant in the post-Cold period among revisionists and many professional historians studying the Soviet national policy in the context of this paradigm became to use it in their research. However, after several years Francine Hirsch wrote a book “Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union (2005). This book can be considered the challenge dominating revisionist view in 1990-s.

In her works Francine Hirsch doesn't use the typical categories of totalitarian school like “breaker of nations” or “prison of people” to characterize of actions in the field of Soviet national policy. Instead she challenges the most dominant concept in the Soviet national policy toward non-Russian nations - “Affirmative Action” by Terry Martin. To explain the logic of the Soviet national policy she created the new concept “state sponsored evolutionism”. It means “exhorting Soviet leaders to give nationhood to feudal clans and tribes in order to push them along the imagined road to socialism.”¹⁷ It is “a Soviet version of civilizing mission” which combines European cultural evolutionism, Marxist theory of historical development and Lenin's view about the possibility of revolutionaries to speed up

¹⁷ Francine Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities”, *Russian Review* 59 (2000): 203.

the historical development. According to Hirsch, state-sponsored evolutionism is not similar to “national self-determination” and it is not form of “affirmative action”. The main aim of the policy of state sponsored evolutionism was the assistance to various groups of backward population to move rapidly the stages from tribal and feudal-clans forms to nations, after that to united socialist nation without difference in the level of economical and cultural development. It was necessary for Bolsheviks in order to implement economic modernization, “to further accelerate the revolution and speed the transition to the communist future.”¹⁸ This feature of the Soviet national policy explained the reasons why Bolsheviks promoted and supported the rapid growth of nations in the first years of the Soviet power and why they stopped to support it and began to aim to unification of small national minorities into big Soviet nations in the late 1930-s. Thus, Bolsheviks considered “the nation” as a transitional stage to a new state of denationalized people. Nationhood was considered as an effective means of further consolidation of the Soviet state, granting the right of national self-determination as a path to modernization and the elimination of the colonial vestiges.

Hirsch claims that ethnographic knowledge played the great role in the Soviet national policy. According the scholar, ethnography includes not only study ethnoses, tribes, their language and borders of their settlement but also archeology, anthropology, geography local knowledge (*kraevedenie*). The ethnographers played the great role in the creation of nations and internal borders between Soviet national units.

As regards the study of Kazakhstani case Hirsch doesn't examine the beginning of the Soviet statehood in Kazakhstan - the formation of Soviet

¹⁸ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*, 9.

autonomy. However she pays significant attention to the nationhood in Central Asia, the national delimitation in Central Asia and its consequences.

Analyzing the national delimitation in Central Asia, she argues that this policy was a new way of imperial policy in the region. After the delimitation new Soviet national republics were created and the process of nationhood intensified. Soviet policy of the state towards Central Asian peoples Hirsch calls “double assimilation” – the process of “assimilation of diverse peoples into nationality category and then the assimilation of nationality categorized group into the Soviet state and society.”¹⁹ She stresses that Soviet national policy is different from the policy of “single assimilation” (*russification*) in the period of Russian Empire. According to Hirsch, there were no formed nations in Central Asia until the October revolution, “ethnic, linguistic, religious, clan, and economic divisions often did not coincide, and people subscribed to several identities at once.”²⁰

The policy of ‘double assimilation’ was often implemented with using force and violent means. The author provides examples of some territorial conflicts between new nations in Central Asia. Moscow played the role of an arbiter in these conflicts and as result of this role the Soviet center strengthened its power in the region. In addition, the significance of knowing and using Russian language increased because conflicted sides had to use it in their arguments. Formation of Soviet republics and new nations encouraged the split of Pan-Turkish and Pan-Islamic movement within the former Turkestan, promoted to the growth of national identity of local people. Furthermore, the frequent appeal to Moscow promoted the growth of the authority of the Union center in the eyes of the elites of the new

¹⁹ Francine Hirsch, *Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities*, 214.

²⁰ Ibid.

Soviet republics. Hirsch writes: “new dominant nationalities and national minorities used a common vocabulary and standardized administrative procedures to fight for resources and assert their rights; they also became increasingly anchored in the Soviet State and society.”²¹ Overall, Hirsch claims that processes of emerging the Soviet empire and nations were mutual and all tensions between new Central Asian republics strengthened the Soviet power in Central Asia.

Western scholars didn’t focus their attention to the study of the development of Kazakhstan and Kazakhs under the Soviet rule. It could be explained by the lack of access to archival documents in the period of the Cold War. The second reason was the consideration of non-Russian people “through the lens of the Cold War” i.e. as “the Soviets as an undifferentiated whole, as the polar opposite of the Americans”.²²

Therefore there was no special research about history of Kazakh people in Western historiography till the mid 1980-s. In 1987 Martha Brill Olcott wrote a book “The Kazakhs” devoted to history of Kazakhs from the foundation of Kazakh Khanate to the period of developed socialism (1960-1970).²³ One chapter of this book called “The Revolution and Civil War in the Kazakh Steppe” is devoted to the period of the establishment of the Soviet Power and the Civil War in Kazakhstan. . However, Olcott doesn’t analyze thoroughly Soviet nation-state building in Kazakhstan restricting the examining of main events of Revolution and Civil War, examining of Alash Orda and its struggle with the Soviet Power.

²¹ Ibid., 225.

²² Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*, 2.

²³ Olcott, Martha Brill. *The Kazakhs*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Press, 1987.

The collapse of the Soviet Union promoted a turn toward the study of non-Russian nations in Western historiography. Sudden dissolution of the second power state in the world, Ethnic conflicts taking place in the last years of the Soviet Union and in the first years after its collapse showed the importance of national factor in the historical development of the USSR. One of the new trends became the study of Central Asian nations including Kazakhs. A comprehensive analysis of the issues of formation of Central Asian nations and the Soviet statehood was provided by Olivier Roy and Jeremy Smith. Roy claims that Soviet national policy played the major role in the formation Central Asian nationhood and statehood. It “determined not only their frontiers, but also their names, their reinvented pasts, the definition of the ethnic groups that they were reckoned to embody, and even their language.”²⁴ However, Roy provides only general overview and patterns of creation of national autonomies and nations in Central Asia and placed in the center the main trends of the development of Central Asian nations in the period of their *location* in the Soviet Union.

Jeremy Smith examines the issues of the national autonomy and nationhood deeper and more thoroughly. He claims that Bolsheviks implemented nation building in Central Asia, and in Kazakhstan in particular, on the basis of deep analysis of ethnic composition of Central Asia population by Bolsheviks. According to Smith, the nation building collided with the most serious challenges in this region because local population had not differentiated themselves by nations before the October revolution.²⁵ From his point view, the granting autonomy to “new” nations

²⁴ Olivier Roy, *Central Asia: the Creation of Nations* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2000), vii.

²⁵ Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question (1917-23)* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 76.

was the way of overcoming backwardness and “mistrust... toward Russians and Russian authorities.”²⁶

The main feature of the first works, devoted to Central Asia and written after the turn to study non-Russian nationalities, was the lack of research describing a particular case thoroughly i.e. one particular Central Asian nation. The situation changed after the book *Tribal Nation: the Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* written by Adrienne Linn Edgar (2006). It covers the period of Soviet Turkmenistan from the win of Soviet Power to the end of 1930-s. This book presents a comprehensive analysis of both the creation of the Soviet Turkmen Republic and making Turkmen nation and the Bolshevik nation-state policy in Central Asia in general. Examining the Bolshevik national policy in the period of the Civil War in Central Asia the scholar stresses that the Bolsheviks supported the demands of local peoples for autonomy and self-determination with the main aim “to show the newly reconstituted Russian state would be union of equal nationalities not a perpetuation of the tsarist colonial empire.”²⁷ Furthermore, Bolsheviks believed that local population would be more favourable to socialist ideas if they were transmitted by native elites.

Edgar can be conceded as a follower of revisionist paradigm. According to Edgar, the main foundation of Soviet national policy was the formation of national territories which “would provide spatial and institutional framework of the development of socialist nationhood”²⁸. In her point of view Soviet Union was a

²⁶ Jeremy Smith, *Red Nations: the Nationalities Experience in and after the USSR* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 49.

²⁷ Adrienne Lynne Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton University Press 2004), 43.

²⁸ Ibid.

multinational state with a “new alternate form” of relation between the center and the periphery.

Also she doesn't consider the delimitation in Central Asia in the mid 1920-s as in the context traditional imperial policy “divide and rule”. According to Edgar the most important reason of the delimitation in Central Asian and the creation of national republics was the desire to strengthen the support of the Soviet rule (especially the support of political elites of local ethnicities). In addition, Moscow aimed to reduce interethnic and intertribal conflicts, replaced them with class struggle within communities. She writes: along with the process of nation-building Bolsheviks promoted “conflict among social classes”, enlisted “the support of the poor and dispossessed” and also eradicated “existing systems of property and land tenure”. The main reason of such actions was the intention to “create not just nations but socialist nation.”²⁹

Analysis of Turkmen nation creation is important for Kazakhstani case because both Kazakhs and Turkmen were nomadic Turkic peoples, although genealogy of Kazakhs was more complicated and ethnical territory was larger. Edgar claims that the leading criterion in the creation of Turkmen Soviet republic was genealogy. From this point of view, she defines Turkmenistan people as a “tribal nation”. She emphasizes the absence of signs of nation before Soviet rule in Turkmenistan: “It was under Soviet rule that Turkmen people first acquired a clearly defined territory, a standardized language, and other features of modern nationhood.”³⁰ Overall, in her point of view the process of nationhood of Turkmen was connected with socialist transformation. It also can be related to other Central Asian nations.

²⁹ Ibid., 4.

³⁰ Ibid., 5.

Another case of formation Central Asian nation, Uzbeks, was examined by Adeeb Khalid in the book *"Making Uzbekistan Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR"* (2015). The scholar claims that the main aim of building nations in the region was its later unification under the Soviet rule. From his point of view the key role in the formation of Soviet Uzbekistan played the local intelligentsia on the basis of the ideas of Jadidism and the adherence to Islam and the settled way of life but not the Soviet government and Moscow ethnographers who used "tribe" as the main criterion for differentiation. He writes: "Uzbek elite...created territorial entity for the sedentary Muslim population of Central Asia, which they had come to imagine Uzbek." Thus, Uzbekistan was "not the artificial product of Soviet machinations, but the triumph of an indigenous national project."³¹

As regards to the Kazakhstani case there is no similar comprehensive research devoted to making Soviet Kazakhstan. However, several doctoral dissertations examining the development of Kazakhstan in the first two decades under the Soviet rule were defended during last five years.³² Although these dissertations focus mainly on the Soviet modernization some issues of Soviet nation-state building are also examined. Thus, for the last three decades the main features of western historiography of Soviet national were the shift of research paradigm from totalitarian to revisionist and the growth of research interest to non-Russian nations. Revisionist defined the positive outcomes of the Soviet national policy for non-Russian nations, stressed the compensatory character of the Soviet

³¹ Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2015) 257-258.

³² Kindler, Robert. "Die Nomaden und der Hunger: Sesshaftmachung und Herrschaftsdurchsetzung in Kasachstan, 1920-1945" (The Nomads and the Famine: Sedentarization and Assertion of Soviet Rule in Kazakhstan 1920-1945). PhD Diss., Humboldt University of Berlin, 2012; Cameron, Sarah. "The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Mass Violence and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan." PhD Diss., Yale University, 2012; Thomas, Alun. "Kazakh Nomads and the New Soviet State." 1919-1934. PhD Diss., 2015.

nation building but at the same time didn't reject negative sides of the Soviet national policy. All these features: reevaluation of the Soviet national policy, new concepts of the Western historiography, the lack of comprehensive research devoted to Kazakhstani case stress the necessary and importance of research of Soviet nation-state building in Kazakhstan.

Chapter 2 Towards Kazakh Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic: Soviet Nation-State building in the period of the establishment of Soviet Power and the Civil War

2.1 Kazakhstan on the Eve Socialist Revolution: Social, National and Political Characteristic

Before examining the establishment of the Soviet Power and the beginning of the Soviet nation-state building in Kazakhstan, it is necessary to examine political views of population, social and ethnic relations on the eve of the October Socialist revolution. Kazakhstan (*Kirghiz Krai*) was one of the backward regions in the Russian Empire. The main branches of economy were agriculture (mostly grain production and cattle breeding) and mining. Kazakhstan was a colony under the direct rule of government and lacking civil rights of indigenous population.

According to the first census in Russian Empire 1897, the population of Kazakhstan (in modern borders) numbered 4333000 people³³. 3852000. (93, 6%) people lived in rural area, i.e. most of population was agrarian. Cities of Kazakhstan were few in number, the biggest city, Uralsk, had 36400 people.³⁴ 3392000. or 81% were Kazakhs; 534000 people or 12,8% – Russians (with Ukrainians); 56000 people or 1,35% Tatars; 55800 thousand people or 1,34% Uyghurs.³⁵

³³ The Russian Imperial Census of 1897 in Kozina V.V. *Demographicheskaya istoria Kazahstana*. (Karaganda: KarGU, 2007), 28.

³⁴ Ibid., 29.

³⁵ Ibid., 29.

In the period from 1897 to 1917 number of Kazakhs grew only 6.5 % and their share in the total population declined to 58 %.³⁶ Most of Kazakhs led the nomadic way of life and their infant mortality and death rate were very high. Therefore Kazakhs' rate of natural increase was lower than Russian one. For example, natural increase of nomads was 5.1 times lower than Russian peasants in 1910, 3.5 times lower than Russian peasants in 1914 in Akmolinsk region (*oblast*).³⁷

On the contrary the number Russians and *Ukrainians* significantly rose despite equal birth rate.³⁸ Russian people began to migrate to the territory of Kazakhstan in the 1860s. The reasons for the resettlement of peasants were following. First of all, the abolition of serfdom didn't solve the agrarian question in Russia. There was the lack of land for rapidly growing agrarian population in the European regions of the Empire. Secondly, by intensification of resettlement policy to the Steppe region and Turkestan the imperial government aimed to create a social base in the Central Asian borderlands and gain the support in the case of conflicts with local population. Thirdly, the tsarist government expected to intensify the economic development (first of all, grain production) of new territories.

The peak of resettlement policy was related to implementation of the Stolypin agrarian reforms in the beginning of twentieth century. The number of Russians rose 2.4 times and achieved 17.4 % of population, the number of *Ukrainians* increased in 8.2 times and achieved 10.4 %.³⁹ Migrants settled in the regions with suitable for cultivation of land and became ethnic majority in North Kazakhstan. Russian colonial authorities withdrew nomad lands for the migrants (by

³⁶ Ibid., 32.

³⁷ Ibid., 31.

³⁸ Ibid., 29.

³⁹ Ibid., 31.

1916 approximately 45 mln. desyatin were withdrawn).⁴⁰ The average income of a Kirghiz household was significantly lower than a Russian one. For example, the annual income (1915 year) in Semirech'e *oblast* for a Russian peasant household was 1018 rubles, for Kazakh peasant household – 657 rubles.⁴¹ Evaluating the Russian colonial policy, Georgiy Safarov⁴² wrote: "Its own colonial policy Russian tsarism slowed down the shift of Kirghiz people to the settled way of life and expelled them into a desert, created for them the "Kirghiz pale settlement" made from desert spaces and mountains."⁴³ Later, the negative influence of Russian colonial policy was stressed by Josef Stalin: "the old state, the landlords and capitalists, left us a heritage of such downtrodden nationalities as the Kirghiz, Chechens and Ossetians, whose lands were colonized by Cossack and kulak elements from Russia. Those nationalities were doomed to incredible suffering and to extinction."⁴⁴ This policy caused strong negative reaction of Kazakh population and promoted ethnic conflicts between Russian peasants and Kazakh nomads.

The dominant social category in Kazakhs society was nomads i.e. the society didn't divide into classes. However, under influence of Russian colonial policy, which transformed Kazakhstan to the source of raw materials for the needs of central imperial regions and the development of capitalism new social categories appeared. They included Kazakh unskilled workers, Kazakh proto bourgeoisie (rich cattle-breeders and Kazakh merchants) and intelligentsia. The first two groups were few in number and did not influence on social structure. But the

⁴⁰ *Natzionalnoe osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazahstane*. Institute of History and Ethnology named after Ch. Valikhanov, <http://e-history.kz/ru/contents/view/287>.

⁴¹ Georgiy Safarov. *Kolonialnaya revolyutsia (opyt Turkestana)*. (Almaty: Zhaly, 1996), 73.

⁴² Georgiy Safarov – a Russian revolutionary, statesman, a member of Uralsk regional bureau VKP (b) in 1918, a member of Turkestan bureau VKP (b) in 1919-1921.

⁴³ Safarov. *Kolonialnaya revolyutsia*, 73.

⁴⁴ I.V. Stalin. The Report on the immediate tasks of the party in the National Question, March 10, 1921, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1921/03/08.htm>

last social group was the most important for the development of Kazakh national consciousness and political development of the region.

The development of education played the key role in formation of Kazakhs intelligentsia. In XIX century the Russian government established the new educational system in the Steppe region and also changed it in Turkestan. Russian-Kirghiz schools were opened in the Steppe region. They worked on the base of Ilminski's⁴⁵ system (secular school with native and Russian language of education). In South Kazakhstan Russian-indigenous schools were created by the project of a Russian turkologist, academician V. Radlov. They combined traditional Muslim education with contemporary Russian educational curricula. Furthermore, Russian ministry of People's Enlightenment also promoted the study of Russian language in Muslim schools (*medrese* and *mektep*). After graduation many representatives of the Kazakh elite also had the opportunity to study in the Russian universities and Cadet Corps.

A Kazakh intelligentsia appeared as a result of the development of education and the study in higher educational institutions of Russian Empire. Seeing the plight of the people as a result of colonial policy of Russia, the intelligentsia began a political struggle for the rights of Kazakhs. The impetus was the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907. A group of Kazakh intelligentsia wrote a petition with demands to stop the confiscation of land, to promote the Kazakh language in the official documents, to increase the representation of local populations in local administration, to allow the free construction of mosques in July 1905 in Qarqaraly. The Kazakh intelligentsia can be divided into two groups: the liberal-democratic and

⁴⁵ a Russian eastern studies scholar, educator, missionary.

socialist.⁴⁶ The first part was more numerous and under the influence of ideas of liberalism, Jadidism and pan-Turkism. The second part declared with the socialist slogans and was more radical. The divergent views of the intelligentsia showed the uprising of 1916. The socialists supported and in some places even led a revolt (S. Seyfullin, T. Ryskulov), but most of the liberal-democratic intelligentsia (A. Baitursynov, A. Bukeikhanov, M. Dulatov) opposed armed actions, claiming the impossibility of struggle against heavily armed Russian troops. However, there were no strong controversies between two groups of intelligentsia, or a clear differentiation at least till the Uprising of 1916 and the February Revolution. Both parts of the intelligentsia sought to improve the position of the Kazakh people. A Kazakh communist, the head of the Press department of Kazakhstanian committee of All-union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, G. Togzhanov wrote: “an intelligent man who belonged to a rich family and an intelligent man who belonged to a poor family came together. Everybody had a slogan: for all- national interests”.⁴⁷

According to Togzhanov, all representatives of Kazakh intelligentsia supported nationalist ideas: “till the Revolution [the October Socialist Revolution]... we have chosen the same road – nationalism, and we had come to the Revolution with this nationalism. Nationalism wasn’t idea of Akhmet [Baytursynov] and Alikhan [Bokeikhanov], nationalism was the all-Kazakh desire, nationalism was directed to against tsarism and Russian bourgeoisie.”⁴⁸

Furthermore, Togzhanov stressed the influence of liberal-democratic intelligentsia on future socialists: before the revolution we received the only

⁴⁶ The Soviet Historiography divided it into “bourgeois nationalists” and “revolutionary democrats”

⁴⁷ Gabbas Togzhanov ‘Nashi vcherashnie I segodnyashnie dni’ [Our yesterday’s and today’s days]. Kizil Kazakhstan, 5-7, 1927 citation from Pis’mo Turara Ryskulova “O knige Kazakhskiy Kolonialniy Aul [a letter of Turar Ryskulov “About the book of G. Togzhanov” Kazakh Colonial Aul.” In T. Ryskulov, *Sobranie sochineniy*, Tom.1, (Almaty: Kazakhstan, 1997), 375.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

patriotic education from our nationalists⁴⁹ [liberal-democratic] ... They served as an example for us.”⁵⁰

The deterioration of economic situation during the First World War due to increasing taxes and requisition of food for the front; the Uprising of 1916 against mobilization for rear work promoted the radicalization of the Kazakh society and increasing social and ethnic tensions in Kazakhstan. After the Decree of 25 June 1916 on the mobilization of allogeneous people (*inorodtsii*) in the rear works, the Kazakhs revolted. Gradually the uprising transformed from the anti-war to anti-colonial and anti-Russian. As the result of ethnic clashes 1905 Russian and Ukrainian were killed, the Russian punitive forces lost 171 troops. As a result of the uprising were forcibly mobilized of 150000 Kazakhs on the rear works and 300000 were expelled to China.⁵¹ The exact number of losses among Kazakhs is object of debates because of all Russian Central Asia was engulfed in rebellion and there was no strict ethnic differentiation in the region.

The Kazakhs supported the February revolution of 1917 because they hoped to improve their position. One of the leaders of Kazakh national intelligentsia Akhmet Baitursynov⁵² explained this positive perception of the February revolution by following reasons: “first of all, it freed them [Kazakhs] from the oppression and violence of tsarist government, and, secondly, it fortified their aims to bring about their own cherished dream – to govern independently.”⁵³ The political life

⁴⁹ Togzhanov used the name “nationalists” because according Soviet traditions the representatives of liberal-democratic intelligentsia were called “nationalists” or “bourgeois nationalists”. I prefer to use the name liberal-democratic.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *Natzionalnoe osvoboditelnoe vosstanie 1916 goda v Kazahstane*. Institute of History and Ethnology named after Ch. Valikhanov, <http://e-history.kz/ru/contents/view/287>.

⁵² Akhmet Baitursynov – one of the leaders of Kazakh intelligentsia, the main ideologist of Kazakh national democratic party “Alash”.

⁵³ Akhmet Baitursynov, “Revoliutsia i Kirgizy,” *Zhizn' natsionalnostei*, 29, 1919, <http://dereksiz.org/bl-basilim-otirar-kitaphanasi-filimi-ortalifini-rilfanina-10-j-v2.html?page=12>.

activated significantly in the period between the the February in the period between Bourgeois Democratic Revolution and the October Socialist Revolution. Political preferences were different and depended on social and national background. Most of Kazakhs were politically neutral or support the national party “Alash”.

The members of Kazakh national democratic intelligentsia founded the party Alash to represent interests of Kazakh people in July 1917. The leaders of the party were A. Bokeikhanov, A. Baitursynov, M. Dulatov, Kh. Gabbasov, Kh. Dosmukhamedov. The main aims of the Party were to establish national autonomy which would be a part of Parliamentary, Federative Russian Republic, grant equal rights to all nations, stop the colonial policy, promote of the capitalistic way of economic development.

A significant proportion of Kazakhs remained political neutral and indifferent to political struggle because of nomadic way of life and low level of literacy. According to official statistics, the level of literacy of Kazakhs was 7 % but Russians had 33.6%, i.e. almost in 5 times more.⁵⁴

Some representatives of intelligentsia supported socialist ideas but the socialist ideology was not popular among Kazakhs because of lack of class distinction. Undoubtedly there was had inequality of wealth among Kazakh people but there was no clash between poor Kazakh *Sharuas* (ordinary nomads) and rich Bais (rich cattle-breeders); there were not even organized protests against privileged strata of nomadic society. This feature was stressed not only by Kazakh nationalists but also by the Kazakh Bolsheviks. One of the leaders of Alash party

⁵⁴ Krasnobaeva N.L. Naselenie Kazakhstana v konce XIX-pervoy chetverti XX veka. Kandidatskaya Dissertatsiia, <http://cheloveknauka.com/naselenie-kazahstana-v-kontse-xix-pervoy-chetverti-xx-veka#ixzz49bY9QNtC>.

Akhmet Baitursynov claimed: the Kirghiz⁵⁵ people didn't need socialist construction and they were not aware of the socialist doctrine"⁵⁶. According to his views, Kazakh people were indifferent to the class struggle and had "its own model of socialism and communism caused by their living conditions". The same idea was held by one of the Kazakh Bolshevik leader, Turar Ryskulov. Examining the changes after the October revolution he writes: "the class stratification, which can be united poor people, doesn't exist."⁵⁷

The majority of Slavic population (Russians and Ukrainians) supported the Socialist Revolutionary Party because this party presented the interests of peasantry and most of Slavic people were resettled peasants. However, workers and demobilized soldiers (most of them were Slavs) supported Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

There was also an important social estate which constituted strong political, social and military force and played an important role in the Kirghiz *Krai* - Cossacks⁵⁸. After the beginning of Russian expansion beyond the Urals including Kazakhstan, the Russian Empire created many Cossack forts along the rivers, which united in Cossack lines to control the new lands. There were four Cossack Hosts; the major parts of which were located in the borders of contemporary territory of Kazakhstan. According to Census of 1897, the number of Cossacks was

⁵⁵ Kazakhs were called Kirghiz or Kirghiz-Kaisak in Russian Empire, and Kirghiz – Kara-Kirghiz. This tradition continued to exist in the first years of the Soviet Power (till 1925).

⁵⁶ Akhmet Baytursinov, "Revolutsia i kirgizi," <http://dereksiz.org/bl-basilim-otirar-kitaphanasi-filimi-ortalifini-rilfanina-10-j-v2.html?page=12>.

⁵⁷ Turar Ryskulov, Natsionalniy vopros v osveschenii programmi RKP (b). Doklad na IV Chrezvichainom s'ezde kompartii Turkestana 12 sentyabrya – 6 October 1919. [The National question in the context of the program RKP (b). The report on the fourth Extraordinary Congress of Communist Party of Turkestan 12 September 6 October 1919]. In T. Ryskulov, *Sobranie sochineniy*, Tom 3, (Almaty: Kazakhstan, 1997).

⁵⁸ Cossacks are irregular semi-military communities with predominantly East-Slavic language. Cossacks located in Kirghiz *krai* had different (mostly Russian) ethnic backgrounds, for example ethnic composition of Siberian Cossacks: Russians – 94.3%; Mordvins – 4.89% ; Tatars – 0,81% (Source: Otchet o sostoyanii Sibirskogo kazach'ego voiska za 1913 god. [The report about the condition of the Siberian Cossack host for 1913] (Omsk, 1914. Chast II), 119-120.

following: Orenburg Cossacks - 424400 people; Uralsk Cossacks – 125000 people; Siberian Cossacks – 104600 thousand people; Semirech'e Cossacks – 38000 people.⁵⁹ Cossacks formed most important military force and owned significant amount of land. After the February Revolution, they created their own parties in each hosts. Due to ideological (monarchic values) and economical (most of Cossacks possessed more significant areas of lands in comparison with Russian resettled peasants and nomads), they were opponents of socialists especially Bolsheviks. The elections to the All Russian Constituent Assembly demonstrated the different political demonstrated different political preferences of population of Kirghiz *Krai*. For example, according to the results of elections in Kustanay Uezd of Turgay *oblast* 72 745 people voted for Alash, 51 245 for the SRs (Socialist Revolutionary Party,) RSDRP (Mensheviks) – 3465; in the Aktubinskiy Uezd: “Alash” – 28 202; the SRs 12114; RSDRP (Mensheviks) 1736. Overall, as a result of the elections Alash received three of five; the SRs –two of five delegate places in the All-Russian Constituent Assembly. According to the results of elections in Semipalatinsk Uezd 59 745 people voted for Alash; 3 375 for the SRs; Cossack party received 3136, Bolsheviks – 1910. The results of the elections in Uralsk (the center of Uralsk Cossacks Host): 7248 – for Cossacks; the Left SRs – 2737; Alash – 976. Overall, the majority of votes received Alash Party (407 000 or 0.9 % of all Russian votes).⁶⁰

59 Kabuzan V.M. Chislennost i razmishenie kazakov Rossiyskoy imperii v XVIII – nachale XX v. // Trudi instituta rossiyskoi istosii. Vyp.7. Rossiyskaya Akademia nauk,M., 2008

⁶⁰ Istoria Kazakhstana (s drevneishih vremen do nashih dney). Tom 4. (Almaty: Atamura, 2009), 115-116.

Thus, there were a lot of social and national contradictions in Kazakhstan on the eve of the October Revolution. They were characterized both social⁶¹ tensions (between rich peasants (*kulak, bais*), landlords, upper bourgeoisie and poor peasants (*batrak, sharua*), workers) and national tensions. These contradictions exploded into the severe military conflict between various national and social groups in the years of the establishment of the Soviet Power and the Civil War.

2.2 The first steps in the period of the establishment of the Soviet Power

Soviet power started to be established in Kazakhstan in the period from the end of October 1917. The followers of the new Soviet state were workers, soldiers, the poor part of peasantry, revolutionary democratic intelligentsia. Adversaries of the Soviet Power were the majority part of Cossacks, prosperous peasants, Kazakh liberal-democratic intelligentsia (party Alash) . The character of the establishment of the Soviet Power depended on the correlation of supports and opponents of it in various regions. Peacefully the establishment of the Soviet Power was implemented in the regions crossed by railroads with a significant number of proletariat and demobilized soldiers. The military way took place in the regions with the a significant proportion of Cossacks (there were four Cossack military governments of the Ural , Semirech'e, Siberia and the Orenburg Cossack troops). Overall, the establishment of the Soviet Power in Kazakhstan was more difficult than in many central regions of the former Russian Empire. This was due to the small number of proletarians, the economical and cultural backwardness of local population, the difficulties in relations between Russian colonists and indigenous Kazakhs and the

⁶¹ I use the name "social" instead of "class" because the level of class formation was low on the eve of the October Revolution here in comparison with the European regions of Russian Empire. Especially it related to the Kazakh population.

significant number of the opponents of the Soviet Power. Despite these factors, by the March 1918 the Soviet Power was established in most regions and all cities of Kazakhstan. It happened due the high level organization of Bolshevik forces and the weakness, discord and lack of organization of anti-Bolshevik forces. This reason was stressed by Mustafa Chokai in his explanation of the loss of anti-Bolshevik forces in Perovsk (Kyzyl Orda). He wrote: “the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies realized our helplessness. Therefore they did not notice us. Despite we were 96-98% of population we couldn't resist the Soviets.”⁶² However, the process of the establishment of the Soviet Power continued till the beginning of the Civil War and was not ultimately completed in some administrative units. Good evidence demonstrating the difficulties in process of the establishment Soviet Power was Uralsk *oblast* settled by significant number of Cossacks. The Bolsheviks even sent special revolutionary forces from Petrograd to suppress the Cossacks resistance but the Soviet power was not established completely in this region.

The representatives of Kazakh revolutionary democratic intelligentsia who became members of Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks: T. Ryskulov, S. Seifullin, A. Dzhangildin, A. Asylbekov, A. Serikbayev played an important role in the establishment of the Soviet Power. In addition, the revolutionary wing of Kazakh intelligentsia founded the Kazakh socialist party “Ush Zhuz” headed by Kolbay Togusov in Omsk in October 1917. The ideology of the party was close to the Left SRs. This party was loyal to Bolsheviks and also promoted the widespread of the Soviet Power in Kazakh Steppe.

However, the participation of Kazakh people in the establishment of the Soviet Power was not the key factor. The crucial role in the win of the Soviet Power

⁶² Istoria Kazakhstana (s drevneishih vremen do nashih dnei), 131-132.

in Kazakhstan played the soldiers of local military units, demobilized World War soldiers (recruited from resettled Russian peasants) and workers. They were united in the Soviets and supported the program of Bolsheviks –the land to peasants, factories to workers. The number of Kazakhs among these categories of population was few, the majority of workers and soldiers were Russian. Because of nomadic way of life, low level of literacy, tribal and patriarchal consciousness Kazakh people were had neutral attitude to the Soviet Power, didn't understand the Soviet ideology or under influence of Kazakh national party "Alash" which consisted of the majority of the small number of Kazakh intelligentsia. Subsequently Akhmet Baitursynov explained the opposition to the Soviet Power by the following reasons: the lack of understanding of the Soviet ideas and the methods of the establishment of the Soviet Power. He wrote:

The second revolution [the October Socialist Revolution] seemed to Kirghiz incomprehensible because there was neither capitalism nor class differentiation in Kirghiz society; even a property was not sharply delineated as in other nations: many objects of consumption regarded as public domain. The October Revolution unleashed the terror toward Kirghiz people ... it was accompanied by violence, robbery, abuse and a kind of dictatorial power, in short, the revolution in the borderlands was not the revolution (as it is usually understood), it was anarchy.⁶³

The leaders of "Alash" didn't accept the ideas of the October revolution and the Bolshevik power. The party, as I mentioned above, received more votes in the elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly than the Bolsheviks. When the Bolsheviks began putting obstacle in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly the leaders of the party decided to end their cooperation with the Soviet Power. The chairman of the party Alikhan Bokeikhanov wrote: "The red mask of the revolution

⁶³ Akhmet Baytursinov, "Revolutsia i kirgizi," <http://dereksiz.org/bl-basilim-otirar-kitaphanasi-filimi-ortalifini-rilfanina-10-j-v2.html?page=12>

has fallen from the face of the Bolsheviks and revealed his nature as that of Black-Hundreder⁶⁴ 65

Finally, the leaders of the party proclaimed the national autonomy “Alash” and created the national government “Alash Orda” in December 1917. The government declared the national autonomy, formed national military units and published the project of the future state structure.

The program of Alash, published in November 1917, proclaimed Kazakh autonomous republic Alash one of the members of Federation of Russian Republic.”⁶⁶ The program contained following regulations⁶⁷: all people regardless of confession; social origin and sex declared equal; the religion was separated from the state, all confessions were declared equal; all personal rights (freedom of speech, meetings, press) were granted to people. The important meaning was the land issue. The lands must be distributed first among Kazakhs, and part of previously confiscated lands was to be returned to Kazakhs. The program party in relation to economic, social and partly national policy was close to the The Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets) but it also contained some elements of Socialist parties programs (Mensheviks and SRs). For example, as regards to the working question the Alash party declared itself “the supporter of the Mensheviks’ group of social-democrats.”The land question was close to SRs ideas (all lands were possessed by a community or a state). The program of Alash was called nationalistic in the Soviet historiography. However, it was true partly. Alash

⁶⁴ Black hundred – a radical nationalist movement in the Russian Empire in the beginning of XX century.

⁶⁵ Translated in Kendirbay G., “The national liberation movement of the Kazakh Intelligentsia at the beginning of the XX century,” *Central Asian Survey*, 16 (1997), 504.

⁶⁶ *Istoria Kazakhstana (s drevneishih vremen do nashih dnei)*, 122.

⁶⁷ The program of Alash was published in the magazine “Kazak” in Kazakh Language. The translation from Kazakh into Russian in *Istoria Kazakhstana (s drevneishih vremen do nashih dnei)*. Tom 4. Almaty: Atamura, 2009, 121-125.

maintained the interests of Kazakh people, the party stressed their first priority in granting of lands, high-ranking governmental positions, promoted Kazakh language. But they also took into consideration the interest of other nationalities. According to the Alash project, Russians and other non-Kazakh nationalities received ten of twenty five places in the Alash government. This number of places was correlated with national composition of *Kirghiz Krai*. Thus, the content of Alash program clearly demonstrated that the Alash project of nation-state building was serious ideological opponent to the Bolshevik project.

Furthermore, the recognition of the Soviet Power by Kazakhs prevented the distrust of Russians because of the long Russia's colonial policy toward Kazakh people. Mustafa Shokai, Kazakh political activist, the second head of Kokand Autonomous government wrote: "Due to the policy of the tsarist government, the Kirghizs were accustomed to consider Russian people as unit, without distinction of classes and estates, as their national oppressor. Their attitude to a Russian peasant or worker was similar to that of a Russian official of the colonial administration or a Cossack."⁶⁸

The analogous point of view was indicated by Akhmet Baytursinov in his letter to Vladimir Lenin. He wrote about the attitude of ordinary Kirghiz people to Russians and historical reasons of this attitude such as Russian colonial policy: "Only by having called themselves Communists-internationalists Russians can't gain non-Russian peoples' confidence, because these peoples were under suppression of the ingenious policy of the tsarist government. The Kirghiz people

⁶⁸ Mustafa Shokai, *Sovetskaia vlast and kirgizi*. Volniy Gorets, 41, 21 June 1920. In Shokai Mustafa, *Turkestan nasha obschaya kolybel'* (Turkestan v dokumentah lichnogo arhiva M. Shakaya 1920-1940), Tom 1, (Almaty: Kazygurt, 2011), 13.

have a saying: “a Russian, whoever else he might be is a Russian (a robber and oppressor).””⁶⁹

Thus, it was necessary for the Soviet Government to make significant efforts in order to consolidate and strengthen the Soviet Power in Kazakhstan and find the supporters among Kazakhs. Furthermore, the Soviets collided with the same difficulties in the other regions settled by the Turkic peoples. The Turkic peoples were cultural and economic backward but occupied the large territories of former Russian Empire – the significant parts of Caucasus and Volga Region, Central Asia (Russian Turkestan and Steppe region). According to the 1897 Census, the number of Turkic people was 13 601 251 or 11% of total population. The Turkic peoples were the second ethnic group by number after Eastern Slavs (Great Russians, Little Russians and White Russians). After the October Revolution, three Turkic national autonomous governments were created: in November –December 1917 in Volga region (Bashkortostan), Steppe region (Alash) and Turkestan (Kokand)). All autonomies had common borders and were closely connected. For example, one of the founders of Alash party and the members of Alash Government Mustafa Shokai, was later the second chairman of Kokand Government.

Thus, the new Soviet Government had to solve two important tasks: to attract local population to side of the Soviet Power and to struggle with the national “bourgeois” autonomous governments. For achievement this goal the Soviet government took the following steps.

⁶⁹ Pis'mo A. Baytursinova V.I. Leninu “O preodolenii nedoveria sovetskoi vlasti k kazakhsko intelligentsii”, 17 May, 1920.[The letter of . Baitursynov to V.I. Lenin “About overcoming distrust of Soviet Power to Kirghiz (Kazakh) Intelligentsia”] In dvizhenie Alash:sbornik materialov sudebnykh processov nad alashevtsami: Tom 2. Dokumenty, doprosy I otvety. Sinkhronnye perevody. Materiali sudov. Konfsikovannye pis'ma. Pod redaktsiey D. Makhat, B.F. Karipzhanov (Almaty: FF “El-Shezhire, 2011): 60.

First of all, the new Soviet government adopted two important documents in conducting national policy: The “Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia” (2 November 1917 and Appeal of the Council of People’s Commissars to the Muslims of Russia and the East (27 November 1917). They became the basis of the Soviet national policy in the Soviet East including Kazakhstan. The Declaration guaranteed the equal rights of Kazakhs with other peoples of the Soviet Russia and granted the right of self-determination to Kazakhs (creation of a national autonomous government) “even to the point of separation and the formation of an independent state.”⁷⁰ The “Appeal to the Muslims of Russia and the East” declared the free development of national and cultural institutions: “Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are declared free and inviolable! Build your national life freely and without hindrance. It is your right.”⁷¹

These rights were also confirmed by the first constitutional act of the Soviet Russian Republic – the “Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People”. According to the Declaration, a new state, the Russian Soviet Republic “was established on the principle of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics.”⁷² The lack of class struggle and capitalist stage of the development of Muslim peoples were not a problem for Bolsheviks. Vladimir Lenin equated the oppressed nations with exploited classes.

He also created the theory of transition of backward peoples to socialism without capitalism. This theory clearly demonstrated the real possibility of building

⁷⁰ Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, 2.11.1917, <https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/1917/11/02.htm>.

⁷¹ Appeal of the Council of People’s Commissars to the Muslims of Russia and the East, 27.11.1917), <https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/foreign-relations/1917/December/3.htm>.

⁷² Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People, 3.01.1918, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/jan/03.htm>.

communism among the economically and culturally backward peoples. He wrote: “with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.”⁷³

The next important step was the creation the special department of People's Commissariat of Nationalities (Narkomnatz) the Central Commissariat of Muslim affairs in Inner Russia and Siberia (Muskom) in January 1918 headed by Mullanur Vakhitov and then after his death by Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev. The main task of Muscom was the attracting Muslim population to the side of the Soviet Power. The activity of Muscom, as the whole national policy of the Soviet government in Soviet East, including Kazakhstan was under control of the Josef Stalin head of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities. Subsequently, in November 1918 Stalin became a chairman of Central Bureau of Muslim Organizations of Russian Communist Party and began to coordinate all Muslim Party Organizations directly.

After creation of the national “bourgeois” autonomous governments Stalin appealed local Soviets to fight with these “Autonomous bourgeois groups” and “to take their autonomous governments” and transformed them into Soviets”.⁷⁴ In the “Appeal to the Soviets of Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg, extraordinary commissar of Turgay *oblast*, Verniy Council and others,”⁷⁵ Stalin claimed that to strengthen the Soviet Power in economical backward borderlands it is necessary to “raise up” (*podnyat*) the masses till the Soviet Power and to “merge” (*rastvorit'*) their best

⁷³ Report of the Commission On the National Questions, July 26, 1920. Available in : <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/jul/x03.htm#fw3>.

⁷⁴ Stalin J. Odnaz iz ocherednikh zadach” Pravda, 62, 63, 3-4 April 1918. in Sobranie documentov “Obrazovanie SSSR 1917-1924” pod red. E.B. Genkinoy. Moskva-Leningrad, 1949.

⁷⁵ The text was published in the magazine “Bolshevik Kazakhstan”, 9-10, 1935, 14-16.

representatives with it. But it is impossible without the autonomy of these borderlands.”⁷⁶

According to Stalin, future autonomy should oppose to Bourgeois autonomy which was “the tool of enslavement its own people mass” and be built on the base of the local Soviets and include itself the creation of “local schools, local court, local administration, local authorities” and guarantee “the rights of a local native language in all spheres of public life.”⁷⁷ Stalin appealed to stop the division into nationalities and “unify behind the corresponding Soviet organizations”.⁷⁸

As regards Kazakhstan, the new Soviet State implemented steps to strengthen the vertical of the power, unification of the local government representative bodies (Soviets), preparation to all-Kirghiz Congress of Soviets. For implementation, direct contacts with Kirghiz *Krai* the special Kirghiz bureau was established in the People's Commissariat of Nationalities in 12 May 1918

As a result of these steps the number of the followers of the Soviet Power among Kazakhs increased significantly. It was one of reasons why the leaders of the party “Alash” started again to negotiate with Bolsheviks. Another reason was the military success of Bolsheviks – the victory over Cossacks and destruction of the Kokand autonomy (an ally of Alash Orda) in Turkestan in February 1918. The main aim of Alash government was to obtain the recognition of Alash from the Soviet Government. The Prime Minister of the “Alash” Autonomous Government Alikhan Bukeikhanov sent Kh. Gabbasov, Kh and Dzh. Ddosmukhamedovs to Moscow. They held negotiations with Lenin and Stalin. The representatives of Alash Orda agreed to recognize the Soviet Power but demanded the agreement from the

⁷⁶ Ibid, 14.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 15.

Soviet government to concentrate power in the hands of Alash leaders in Kirghiz Steppe to resist the idea of the class struggle in Kazakh society and to follow the idea of national unity. The Soviet leaders rejected the conditions of Alash representatives and continued the work towards the realization of its own project according to the example of Turkestan Soviet Federative Republic (The south territory of the contemporary Kazakhstan became the regions of this Republic founded in 30 April 1918).

This work was headed by the Extraordinary Commissar of the Kirghiz Steppe A. Dzhangildin with support of the Kirghiz bureau of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities. In May 1918 he informed Moscow about the intention to call the All-Kazakh Soviet Congress in order to approve the formation of new soviet autonomy but the beginning of the Civil War in the territory of Kazakhstan in summer delayed this intention.

2.3 Soviet nation-state building in the period of the Civil War

The military resistance to the Soviet Power started immediately after the beginning of its establishment. Even after the completion of its establishment on the majority of the territory of Kazakhstan the little pockets of resistance still were active. After the revolt of the Czechoslovak legion in May 1918 Kazakhstan became one of the important theatres of the Russian Civil War. The Orenburg and Ural White Cossacks, headed by ataman Dutov, occupied Northern-Western part of the Kirghiz Steppe with the main city Orenburg; Siberian Cossacks occupied the Northern and Eastern regions. The Semirech'e Cossacks, headed by ataman Annenkov, seized the major part of Semirch'e. The Northern, Central and Eastern territories of Kazakhstan was under the rule of the Provisional Government of

Autonomous Siberia headed by Admiral Kolchak. The Northern-Western territories was under the rule of the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly (“Komuch”) formed in Samara. Thus, the most parts of the territory of Kazakhstan was occupied by Whites; Orenburg, Ural, Siberian and Semirch’e Cossacks became the main military power in Kazakhstan. Soviet Turkestan was cut off from Soviet Russia; however, there were Reds pockets of resistance and a partisan movement.

In these changed conditions ‘Alash Orda cancelled all decrees and laws of the Soviet government, and communists began to be prosecuted. The leaders of “Alash” negotiated with the representatives of the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly (Komuch) and the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia. As a result of these negotiations “Alash Orda” formed the alliances with these governments. According to the conditions of the Treaty, Alash Orda received arms from Whites and formed their own military forces. Soon, they also started to participate in armed struggle against Soviets. According Alash-Orda’s data, the Alash military unit numbered approximately 13000 people.⁷⁹

The Soviet bodies of power began organizing the military resistance in these difficult conditions. They started to build the Red Army units on the base of compulsory military service. Kazakh people also were recruited into Red Army but took part in the War voluntarily for a long time. Furthermore, the Soviet Power started to form Kazakh national military units. All Kazakh military units had equal rights and privileges with Russian units.

The Bolsheviks also began the significant propagandist work among Kazakh people but it was not all-exclusive because most of territories were under control of

⁷⁹ Istoria Kazakhstana (s drevneishih vremen do nashih dnei). Tom 4, 159.

the opponents of the Soviet power or passed from hand to hand. But the most important action of Soviet Power was to change the tactics of communication and work with local population. The attitude to Kazakhs had been often arrogant from the side of the colonial administration in previous tsarist time; colonial officials, Cossacks treated them as an inferior people. The communists changed the pattern of communication and interaction with all Eastern former oppressed peoples including Kazakhs. This change was explained by Vladimir Lenin to gain trust of “former oppressed nations”:

The Bashkirs do not trust the Great Russians because the Great Russians are more cultured and used to take advantage of their culture to rob Bashkirs. So in those remote places the Great Russian stands for “oppressor” and “cheat”. We should take this into account. We should fight against this. But it is a long-term thing. It cannot be abolished by decree. We should be careful here. And a nation like the Great Russians should be particularly careful because they have provoked such bitter hatred in all other nations.”⁸⁰

However, some elements of previous attitude were kept by local communists. Georgy Safarov described these remnants in his book “Colonial Revolution in Turkestan.” He noted some similarities between Russian colonial policy and the policy of local Bolsheviks in the first years of Soviet power in Turkestan. Turkestan was cut off from the Central Regions of the Soviet Russia and local communists, predominantly Russian origin, conducted the policy which was far from the Leninist principles. He writes:

The Bolshevik party didn’t establish the Soviet power but the Soviet power was established by the party of Bolsheviks in Turkestan ... Belonging to the industrial proletariat in the Tsarist colony was a national privilege of Russians . Therefore, from the first steps of the dictatorship of the proletariat took the

⁸⁰ Vos’moy s’ezd RKP(b):protokoly. [the Eighth congress of RKP (b)] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1959), 46-48, 77-81. Translation in Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* Vol. 53, No. 2 (1994), 420.

typical colonial appearance here: a Russian worker took over "managing the peoples of Turkestan."⁸¹

Surely, the similar situation was in the other former colony – *Kirghiz Krai*. As described above, Bolsheviks was not dominant political force and Soviet Power was established due to perfect organization of local Bolsheviks and the significant support of the central regions. Thus, after establishment of Soviet Power the number of Bolsheviks began increasing very fast. Nevertheless, there were positive changes in the policy toward indigenous population in Central Asia owing to the arrival of Moscow Communist, among whom was Safarov.

At the beginning of 1919 Red Army won several important battles and began to liberate the areas of Kazakhstan from Whites. The special military governmental bodies of powers –Revolutionary Committees (“revkoms”) were created in various administrative units (*oblast, uezd, volost, aul*). They possessed extraordinary authority and concentrated all military and civil power in a single administrative unit. Elections to the Soviets took place in some regions. Thus, revkoms and Soviets became the main power in the regions under the control of Reds.

The food situation in Kazakh *auls* was very difficult. Kazakhs people suffered under severe conditions, on the verge of famine because of permanent requisition of provisions and forage from both sides of the conflict (especially they suffered from White Cossacks). In these conditions many Kazakhs refused to fight on the side of Whites. A member of Kazrevkom (Kirrevkom) T. Sidelnikov wrote to Vladimir Lenin: “Kolchak tried to form Kirghiz cavalry units like Cossacks type. Kirghizs came, obeyed and then, uniformed and armed, they perished like flies after

⁸¹ Georgiy Safarov. *Kolonialnaya revolyutsia*, 115.

first battle.”⁸² The victories of Reds, their policies of attracting the Kazakhs and projecting their image of defending ordinary people increased its support among Kazakhs and promoted the reconsideration of Alash policy toward the Soviet State in the beginning of 1919.

Another reason of this reconsideration was deterioration of relations with White forces. Alash government collided with dictatorial attitude of Kolchak's regime and repression against some of its leaders Dzh. Akpayev and I. Alibekov. Akhmet Baytursinov wrote: “Yesterday's tsarist servant Kolchak appeared before the Kirghiz people in all the majesty of a military dictator and with all the charms of the tsarist government, which had not yet faded from people's memory.”⁸³ Thus, Kazakh national leaders had to choose between two “devils” and they, along with many national democratic leaders of Volga region, decided to choose the Soviet Power.

The Soviet leaders reacted positively. One of the leaders and the main ideologist of “Alash” movement Akhmet Baitursynov arrived to Moscow for the negotiations with Lenin and Stalin. Bolshevik leaders promised to grant the amnesty of the members of the “Alash” movement, accelerate the creation of Kazakh Soviet autonomy and promised to incorporate Alash leaders who switched to the Soviet side in the governmental institutions in *Kirghiz krai*.⁸⁴

The first step in the building Kazakh Soviet autonomy after these negotiations was the creation of a Kirghiz (Kazakh) Revolutionary Committee (Kirrevkom) in 10 June 1919. Kirrevkom became the first government of

⁸² Pis'mo T. I. Sedel'nikova V.I Leninu “O Kirgizskoy respublike i kirgizskoy bednote”, 23 April, 1920.[the letter of T.I. Sedel'nikov to V.I Lenin “About Kirghiz republic and Kirghiz poor people] In *dvizhenie Alash: sbornik materialov sudebnykh processov nad alashevtsami: Tom 2. Dokumenty, doprosy i otvety. Sinkhronnye perevody. Materiali sudov. Konfsikovannye pis'ma. Pod redaktsiei D. Makhat, B.F. Karipzhanov* (Almaty: FF “El-Shezhire, 2011): 42.

⁸³ Baytursinov, A., *Revolutsia i kirgizi*. Dzhizn natsionalnostey, <http://dereksiz.org/bl-basilim-otirar-kitaphanasi-filimi-ortalifini-rilfanina-10-j-v2.html?page=12>.

Kazakhstan under the Soviet rule, the main military and civil body of power. The first composition of Kirrevkom was following: S. Pestkowski (chairman), A. Baytursinov, V. Lukashev, A. Dzhangildin, M. Tuganchin, S. Mendeshev, B. Karataev. Hence, out of all seven members of Kirrevkom five members were Kazakhs, including a former leader of Alash Baytursinov who became the deputy of the chairman. In summer 1919 Baytursynov discussed with the Alash leaders the issue of the transition to the Communist Party but not all of them agreed to do it. However, some important members such as B. Karaldin and A. Alibekov accepted this suggestion and became later the members of Kirrevkom. The representatives of the Alash movement who decided not to join Soviet governmental institution nevertheless started to cooperate with the Soviet Power. A few participants continued the resistance.

Kirrevkom was the main body of power in the period from 10 June 1919 to 10 October 1920. Its composition must be divided into three groups: Russian (or European) Communists, Kazakh Communists and former members of “Alash Orda”. In November 1919 all Kazakhs, who participated in armed struggle against the Soviets, were amnestied. After this amnesty the transition to the side of the Soviet Powers significantly increased.

In the autumn of 1919 Kirrevkom began to work for formation of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic. The special commission headed by Baytursynov for defining the borders was created. But in the process of working up the autonomous republic Kirrevkom encountered many difficulties.

First of all, there was Russian opposition inside the local party organization in relation to the creation of the Kazakh national autonomy or a deviation (*uklon*) towards great-power chauvinism. Some Russian communists objected to the

granting autonomy to the Kazakhs so soon because they considered that Kazakh people had not achieved a sufficient economic and cultural level of development.

For example, the chairman of the revkom of Ural *oblast* Petrovsky argued:

“The Russian proletariat is much more revolutionary and experimental than the Kirghiz poor people, who are not quite able to cope with the state organization. This particularity promoted the fears that the future autonomous Kirghiz region gives the power not to poor nomads, not to proletarian sections of the population, but to the Kirghiz bourgeois intellectuals, who are more vigorous and had the ability to adapt.”⁸⁵

Many Kazakh also communists complained to Moscow about the remnants of chauvinistic attitude to Kirghiz people in some Russian communists: “First of all, there are no internationalists of the first water or they are not enough. In fact, many of call themselves internationalists, are nationalist and imperialists.”⁸⁶

Secondly, the reluctance of the communists of some regions (with the majority of Cossacks and Russian population) to be part of new Kirghiz (Kazakh) autonomous republic. In spring 1920 the part of the Communists of Ural *oblast* wished to be separated from the Kazakh autonomous republic for political, and economic reasons, was under the rule of Moscow directly.”⁸⁷ The communists of this region on the second Ural Provincial Communist party conference accepted the resolution in which the degree of economic development of the regions, settled by Kirghiz people was declared low and Kirghiz people - unprepared to understand “Marxist Outlook” (*marksistkoe mirosozertsanie*). Considering these features they draw conclusion that it was necessary to put the region under direct rule of Central Committee in Moscow.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ In Nicolay Timofeev, *Bor'ba kazakhskoy partiynoy organizatsii na dva fronta s ukloami v natsionalnom voprose v 1919-1920 gg.* Bolshevik Kazakhstana, 9-10, (1935): 73.

⁸⁶ Pis'mo A. Baytursinova V.I. Leninu “O preodolenii nedoveria sovetskoi vlasti, 61.

⁸⁷ Nicolay Timofeev, *Bor'ba kazakhskoy partiynoy organizatsii* p. 76.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 77.

Communist leaders of Semipalatinsk and Akmolinsk *oblasts* (also with significant proportion of Russian peasants and Cossacks) made the same demands in relation to northern and northern-eastern parts of Kazakhstan. In the period of the Russian Civil War, these regions were related to Siberian revolutionary committee (Sibrevkom). Representatives of the local Communist party of these regions suggested joining most parts of these *oblasts* with the majority of Russians to the Soviet Siberian provinces (gubernii) as administrative units. Here is an extract from one of their letters to Sibrevkom:

“Settling among the vast Kirghiz migrations (*kochevaniy*) Russian peasants opened and cultivated the new lands, developed a strong agricultural economy and took deep roots in the places where before a nomad only had wandered with his flocks before ... and that what could be referred to Kirghiz territory before , are inhabited by Russian peasants now.”⁸⁹

However, these demands of representatives of Ural, Semipalatinsk and Akmolinsk regions were rejected by Vladimir Lenin and these territories gradually became part of Kazakh Socialist Autonomous Republic in future. This decision of the Soviet government was a good example what Terry Martin has called an “Affirmative Action policy”.

Third, mutual mistrust each other: the Kirghiz people did not trust arriving communists, Russian communists did not trust some representatives of Kazakh intelligentsia (former participants of Alash movement). In their letter to Lenin the Communists of Turkestan, Bashkiriaa and Kirgizstan (Kazakhstan) stressed that it was impossible to build socialism in their regions by European communists: “It is impossible to release the native poor from the bondage of colonists by the hands of those same colonists, or by the hand of local authorities, based on the colonists. To

⁸⁹ Ibid, 79.

send the first water communists of Europe – it means “to spoil” these communists.”⁹⁰

Akhmet Baytursynov presented the similar ideas in his letter to Lenin. He writes about mistrust of Kirghiz(Kazakh) people to Russian proletariat. According to Baytursinov, Kazakh national intelligentsia could be effective link between the Soviet government and local people. But it is necessary for it that these intellectuals gained the confidence of the Soviet government. “The difficulty in the Kirghiz issue is that the Kirghiz can't trust yesterday's oppressors, the Soviet government can't trust yesterday's opponents.”⁹¹

The mutual mistrust also promoted the difficulties in relationship between Moscow and Kazakh communists. The opposition of a part of Kazakh communists to Soviet policy was called national deviation (*uklonizm*) in Kazakh Soviet historiography. Before examining the struggle with “Kazakh national deviation” in the process of Soviet nation-state building in Kazakhstan in order to understand all aspects and difficulties of this struggle and the views of its representatives it is necessary to write some words about the Muslim Communism in Russian Communist Party and its pan-Turkic aspirations.

The main ideologist of Muslim Communism was the chair of the Central Muslim Military Collegium in Narkomnatz Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev. Sultan-Galiev suggested creating the autonomy of Muslim Communist Party and increasing the opportunity of making political decision by indigenous Turkic communists. He also

⁹⁰ Pis'mo kommunistov Bashkirii, Turkestana i Kazakhstana V.I. Leninu s predlozheniem po peresmotru nekotorykh punktov ego tezisov po natsionalnomu voprosu. 16 June, 1920 [The letter of Communists of Bashkiria, Turkestan and Kazakhstan to V.I. Lenin with the suggestion of revision of several points of his propositions on the national question] in In dvizhenie Alash:sbornik materialov sudebnykh processov nad alashevtsami: Tom 2. Dokumenty, doprosy i otvety. Sinkhronnye perevody. Materiali sudov. Konfsikovannnye pis'ma. Pod redaktsiey D. Makhat, B.F. Karipzhanov (Almaty: FF “El-Shezhire, 2011): 66.

⁹¹ Pis'mo A. Baytursinova V.I. Leninu o preodolenii nedoveria sovetsskoi vlasti, 61.

supported the ideology of pan-Turkism put forward the idea of consolidation of Turkic people. Subsequently Sultan Galiev became one of the main initiator of creation of Federative Turkic State “Turan” as a part of the Soviet Union.⁹² The main opponent of Sultan Galiev was Stalin. Stalin considered that the formation separated Muslim Communist Party and creation of “Turan” weakened the unity of the party and the Soviet State. Under Stalin’s influence Sultan Galiev’s project of creation of Tatar-Bashkir autonomy failed.⁹³ Instead two separated Tatar and Bashkir autonomies were created in 1920.

Another project of combining two Turkic peoples was suggested by a member (and then the chairman) of Bashkir Revolutionary Committee Ahmet-Zaki Validov.⁹⁴ He offered to unite future Kirghiz and Bashkir republics, Orenburg was to be the economical and cultural center of Kirghiz-Bashkir republic. He also suggested dividing Orenburg *gubernia* into small administrative units in order to reduce the power of Orenburg Cossacks and Russian opposition to the future autonomous republic.⁹⁵ However, the Soviet Government didn’t support Validov’s project.

Many ideas of leaders of Turkic national communists were popular among so-called “Kirghiz [Kazakh] national national-deviators” (*natsional-uklonisti*). The leader of so-called in the Soviet historiography “national-deviators” was a deputy of

⁹² Il'mira R. Ismagulova “Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev o turkskom edinstve”. Vestnik Bashkirskogo Universiteta, 4, (2005), 83.

⁹³ The reasons of fail of this project and the struggle of Sultan Galiev with Stalin in: the book Bennigsen, Alexandre, and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay. *Le soufi et le commissaire: les confréries musulmanes en URSS*. Seuil, 1986 (Russian translation in “Sultan-Galiev protiv Stalina: musulmaskiy kommunizm I VKP(b)” in <http://newskif.su/>); the article Schafer, Daniel E. “Local Politics and the Birth of the Republic of Bashkotostan, 1919-1920.” *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (2001): 165-190.

⁹⁴ More in detail in: Dina A. Amanzholova “Kazahsaya avtonomia ot zamisla natsionalov k samoopredeleniu po-sovetski”. Acta Slavica Japonica. The Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University. Tomus XXI, (2004), 125.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

chairman of Kirrevkom Akhmet Baitursynov. According N. Timofeev⁹⁶, Baitursynov and his supporters objected to two things. First, he was against uniting Orenburg with a future Kazakh Autonomous Republic, an especially against awarding it the status of a capital. Orenburg was the important industrial center with the population more than 100 000 people (the majority of population was Russian). Baitursynov supposed that Kazakh people couldn't achieve real autonomy in which Orenburg would be a center.

Secondly, he was opposed the decision of Kirrevkom to deprive the right to vote of some representatives of Kazakh intellectuals who had served in colonial administrative units before and mullahs. He and his followers were against the imposition of class struggle in Kazakh society and urged all Kazakh intellectuals to work for the new Soviet autonomy. The activity of Baitursynov provoked many conflicts in Kirrevkom. However, Stalin found it necessary to presence of Baitursynov in Kirrevkom. He wrote in a notice to E.D. Stasova: 'I did not and do not believe him a revolutionary-communist or a sympathizer, however, his presence in the revolutionary Committee is necessary.'⁹⁷

Aiming to find supporters Baitursynov met with Sultan-Galiev, Validov and the members of the delegation of Turkestan Autonomous Republic in 1920 in Moscow and discussed the future fate of Soviet Turkic republics.⁹⁸ In the next year Validov proposed the program of Turkic national federation which was adopted by the representatives of the Party "ERK"⁹⁹, Jadidists, and Alash Orda.¹⁰⁰ Validov explained his reason for creation this program in his letter to the chairman of

⁹⁶ Nicolay Timofeev, *Bor'ba kazakhskoy partynoy organizacii*, 87-89.

⁹⁷ In Amanzholova D. A. *Kazahsaya avtonomia ot zamisla*, 122.

⁹⁸ Nicolay Timofeev, *Bor'ba kazakhskoy partynoy organizacii*, 88.

⁹⁹ A socialist party of Bahkria, Buchara and Turekstan in the period from 1919 to 1926.

¹⁰⁰ Ilmira R. Ismagulova, *Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev*, 84.

Turkestan Bureau of RKP (b) Janis Rudzutaks. He claimed that the Bolshevik policy was adapting socialism to Russian imperial traditions.¹⁰¹ This meeting and the views of Turkic national communists was attributed by Cheka counterrevolutionary activity. The plenipotentiary of Cheka (All-Russian Emergency Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage) in Turkestan ASSR Yakov Peters wrote:

“Their tactics were: 1) the capture of the Soviet apparatus by promotion reliable bourgeois nationalists; 2) the capture of educational and scientific institutions with the aim of educating young specialists in the spirit of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism and the spread of pan-Turkic ideas; 3) the organization and the full assistance to *basmachestvo*¹⁰², use it in the struggle against the Soviet power.”¹⁰³

The Soviet leaders believed that Turkic national communism was a threat to the unitary of the Communist Party and the new Soviet state. Therefore the Soviet government took immediately action.

First of all, the Soviet government began to project to settle the borders of i Turkestan. Lenin suggested to consider issue of delimitation in Turkestan and to order *Turkkomissia* (Turkic Commission) to implement following actions in 1920: “1) to make map (ethnographic and so on.) of Turkestan with subdivisions into *Uzbekia*, *Kirghizia* and *Turkmenia*. 2) to find out more in detail the terms of the merger or division of these three parts.”¹⁰⁴

Mustafa Shokai evaluated the logic of this step in the following way: the Soviet government was frightened and took steps to prevent the unification of the Turks into a single nation, a single political body. It was the time that the idea to

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Anti-Soviet movement of local population in Central Asia in 1920-beginning of 1930-s

¹⁰³ Bor'ba kazakhskoy partiynoy organizacii, 89.

¹⁰⁴ In Pokrovski S.N. Obrazovanie Kazahskoi ASSR. (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk Kazahskoi SSR, 1951), 15.

divide the tribes of Turkestan into separated “independent republics” was originated in Russian Bolsheviks.”¹⁰⁵ The examining of reasons and aims of national delimitation and creation of new nations in Central Asia is very controversial issue which is not related to main tasks of this research. However, from my perspective, the point of view of Mustafa Shokai is rational enough.

In addition, pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism were ones of the main reasons of tightening of policy toward Islam. In the first document to Muslim people “Appeal to the Muslims of Russia and the East” declared free development of Islam: “Muslims of Russia... Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are declared free and inviolable!”¹⁰⁶ However, according to RSFSR Constitution of 1918, Muslim ulems were deprived of voting¹⁰⁷. Later Bolsheviks declared Islam as a tool of exploitation. In the letter about organization of work among peoples of East, we can find the following instruction: “Treating with care the religious beliefs of the masses it is necessary to show people anti-popular activity of the ruling Muslim classes with the help of religion.”¹⁰⁸

Then some repressive measures in relation to the leaders of Pan-Turkic movement were introduced. Sultan-Galiev was arrested in 1923. The chairman of Bashrevkom Validov retired after formation of Bashkir ASSR, he emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1924. Baitursynov was excluded from the RKP (b) in 1921 (later he

¹⁰⁵ Mustafa Shokai, “O Turanskom gosudarstve.” Ieni Turkestan, 14, Januray, 1930. In Shokai Mustafa, *Turkestan nasha obschaya kolybel’* (Turkestan v dokumentah lichnogo arhiva M. Shakaya 1920-1940), Tom 1, (Almaty: Kazygurt, 2011), 229.

¹⁰⁶ Appeal of the Council of People's Commissars to the Muslims of Russia and the East, 27.11.1917). <https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/foreign-relations/1917/December/3.htm>.

¹⁰⁷ Constitution RSFSR of 1918, Chapter 13, the Right to Vote, : <https://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/government/constitution/1918/article4.htm>

¹⁰⁸ Pis'mo TzK RKP (b) vsem partiynim comitatetam i politotdelam o rabote sredi narodov Vostoka.[The letter of TsK RKP (b) to all party committees and political departments about the work among East peoples] In KPSS v rezolutsiyah i resheniah s"ezdof, konferentsiy I plenumov TsK. Moscow, 1983, Tom. 2, 241.

was arrested with other leaders of Alash Orda in 1929 for previous “counterrevolutionary activity”).

These difficulties reduced the quality of Kirrevkom’s work and slowed down the formation of national autonomy. However, the process of creation of Soviet national autonomy accelerated in the beginning of 1920 after completion of most military actions of Civil War. In the In early January 1920 the first Soviet Kirghiz (Kazakh) regional conference made decision about the necessity of formation of Kazakh Soviet autonomy. The Central Committee of Russian Communist party of Bolsheviks RCP (b) created the Kirghiz (Kazakh) regional bureau of RCP (b) in 30 April 1920. Thus, the formation of Kazakh Soviet autonomy achieved the final stage.

Chapter 3 Formation of Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic

3.1 Declaration of Formation of Kazakh ASSR

The defining of the borders of future autonomous republic was the main difficulty in the final stage of the formation of Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Kirghiz (Kazakh) representation (A. Baitursynov, A. Ermekov and G. Bukeikhanov) in the Central Executive Committee appointed a commission consisting of experienced statisticians, economists, ethnologists, draftsmen and other professionals (22 people) for the preparation of the project of future Autonomous Republic's on the basis of historical, ethnographic, natural-geographical and economic of conditions of the development Kirghiz *Krai*; the place of commission's work was Moscow.¹⁰⁹ The important role of defining borders played the former members of Alash party who aimed to establish the borders according to the project of their autonomous republic of 1917. The commission initiated the special meeting (took place in Moscow in the early of August 1920) which should the final decision on the matter of the borders.¹¹⁰ The reporter was the representative of Semipalatinsk *oblast* A. Ermekov. He suggested including territories settled by Kazakhs in following gubernias and *oblasts* with total area of 3 467 922 square versts¹¹¹: Astrakhan, Turgay, Uralsk, Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Semirech'e, Transcaspian (Zakaspiyskaya), Samarkand and Fergana.¹¹² According to Ermekov, Kazakh nomads used 81 % of lands of these territories and constituted

¹⁰⁹ Dina Amanzholova, "Kazakhskaya avtonomoia: ot zamisla natsionalov k samoopredeleniu po-sovetski," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 21 (2004):129.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Approximately 3700 thousand square kilometers; for comparison the contemporary area of Kazakhstan 2717 thousand square kilometers.

¹¹² Dina Amanzholova, "Kazakhskaya avtonomia: ot zamisla natsionalov":130.

54 % of population.¹¹³ The representatives of Sibrevkom Sokolov and Turkcomission Safarov appealed against Ermekov's project. Sokolov argued that joining of Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk *oblasts* with significant proportion of Slavic population to the Kazakh Autonomous Republic could promote interethnic conflicts.¹¹⁴ Safarov claimed that it would be very difficult to govern Kirghiz (Kazakh) territories of Turkestan from Orenburg because Soviet Power was weak in these territories and Kirrevkom didn't have enough power to overcome the resistance of counterrevolution.¹¹⁵ Ermekov, in turn, argued: "cultural and economic centers located on the borderlands of the territory of Kirghizia, are the object of territorial claim of adjacent regional governments (Sibrevkom and etc.). Without these centers the southern regions would be destined to economic and cultural famine and extinction."¹¹⁶ As a result of the discussion most of participants supported the position of Ermekov. For instance, the chairman of Kirrevkom Pestkovsky claimed " On the basis of the national principle (similar to other cases) it is impossible to create an Autonomous Republic in Kirghizia,. Only one principle can be appropriate – territorial."¹¹⁷

The Decree on the "Formation of Kirghiz [Kazakh] Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic" was signed by the chairman of Council of People's Commissars Vladimir Lenin and Chairman of the Central Executive Committee Mikhail Kalinin in 26 August 1920. According to the Decree, the Kazakh Autonomous Republic was formed as a part of RSFSR and consisted of following administrative units within their borders in 1917: the Semipalatinsk *oblast* consisting

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 131.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 130-131.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 132.

of Pavlodar, Semipalatinsk, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Zaysan, Karkaralinsk *uezds*; the Akmolinsk *oblast* consisting of Atbasar, Akmolinsk, Kokchetav, Petropavlovsk and a part of Omsk *uezds*; the Uralsk *oblast* consisting of Uralsk, Lbishensk, Temirsk, Gur'ev; the Turgay *oblasts* consisting of Kustanay, Aktyubinsk, Irgiz, Turgay *uezds*; Mangishlak *uezd* of Transcaspian *oblast* 4th and 5th *volosts* of Krasnovodsk *uezd* of Transcaspian *oblast*; Sinomrsk *volost*, Bokei Orda, 1th and 2th *primorskiy okrugs* of Astrakhan gubernia.¹¹⁸ All these territories belonged to Kazakhstan nowadays. Orenburg was not mentioned in the decree, however, Orenburg with its neighbor territories was included in the Kazakh ASSR in October 1920. It also was declared as its capital. According to official data of autumn 1920, the territory of Kirghiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Republic was 1 871 239 square versts (2129000 square kilometers), the population numbered 5046000, 46.6% Kazakhs.¹¹⁹ Reducing Kazakhs on 12% can be explained the fact that southern territories of Kazakhstan were parts of Turkestan ASSR in that time. According to the Decree, Akmolinsk and Simipalatinsk *oblasts* temporarily remained the under control of Sibrevkom. To solve the problem of incorporation of these two *oblasts* into Kazakh Autonomous Republic the representation of KASSR was created in Sibrevkom in October 1920.¹²⁰ There were some tensions in the defining the borders in the process of joining: some officials of Sibrevkom aimed to use national criterion in separation of territories. However, the center supported the position of Kirrevkov which was based on economic ties of regions and the perspective of future development. The

¹¹⁸ Decret Vserossiyskogo Tsentralnogo Iсполnitel'nogo komiteta I Soveta Narodnyh Komissarov ob obrazovanii Avtonomnoy Kirgizskoy (Kazakhskoy) Sovetskoy Sotsialisticheskoy Respubliki, 26.08.1920 [The Decree of All-Russian Executive Committee and Council People's Commissars on the Formation of Kirghiz (Kazakh) Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic] in *Obrazovanie SSSR. Sbornik dokumentov 1917-1924, pod redaktsiey E.B. Genkinoy*, (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1949), 175-177.

¹¹⁹ *Istoria Kazakhstana sdevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dney*), 176.

¹²⁰ Dina Amanzholova, "Kazahskaa avtonomoia: ot zamisla natsionalov, 138-139.

delimitation in was completed in February 1921 in North-East of Kazakhstan; all demands of Kirrevkom were satisfied. According James Smith, the delineation of the Kirghiz ASSR to include Orenburg and the Russian dominated northern districts was a victory not just for national-territorial principle but also theory that national liberation and the preparation of the “backward” people for socialism could only be achieved.”¹²¹

The First Constituent Congress of Soviets of KASSR organized by Kirrevkom opened in 4-12 October 1920 in Orenburg. There were 273 delegates represented all regions of recently formed Kirghiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and 6 delegates of Altay Gubernia. 197 delegates were the members of Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks; the rest delegates were non-Party men. The national distribution of representatives of Kazakh administrative units was following: 128 Kazakhs, 127 Russians (with Ukrainians) and 18 other nationalities.¹²² The Congress prepared and adopted the appeals: to all Autonomous republics and *oblasts* of the Russian Soviet Federation; to all working-people of Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. “Henceforth every nationality of Russia, including Kirghiz, has thrown off political and economic oppression and has begun construction of a new free life”¹²³ was stated in the Appeal to all Autonomous republics and *oblasts* of the Russian Soviet Federation. In addition, according to the Appeal all reasons of national tensions were eliminated

¹²¹ Jeremy Smith, “*The Bolsheviks and the national question, 1917-23*” (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 82-83

¹²² Evgeniy Fedorov, “Uchreditel'nyy s"ezd Sovetov KASSR” *Bolshevik Kazakhstana*, 9-10 (1935), 105.

¹²³ Obrashchenie Pervogo s"ezda Sovetov Kirgizskoy (Kazahskoy) Avtonomnoy Sovetskoy Sotsialisticheskoy Respubliki ko vsem avtonomnim *oblastyam* i respublikam Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 4.10.1920, [The appeal of the first Congress of Soviets of the Kirghiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic to all autonomous *oblasts* and republics of the Russian Federation] in *Obrazovanie SSSR. Sbornik dokumentov 1917-1924, pod redaktsiei E.B. Genkinoy*, (Moscow-Leningrad:Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1949), 179-180.

and “Kirghiz people along with the proletariat of Russia and all countries will move on the way of total cultural and economical emancipation.”¹²⁴

The congress also approved the Declaration of Rights of Working People of Kirghiz (Kazakh) ASSR. According to the Declaration “Territory of Kirghiz *Krai* is proclaimed the Republic of Soviets of workers, working Kirghiz people’s, peasants’, Cossack s’ and Red Army men’s deputies.”¹²⁵ However, there were some controversies and disputes between former members of Alash and Russian (European) communists.

3.2 Political Status of KASSR. Declaration of Rights of Working People of Kirghiz (Kazakh) ASSR

First of all, the former members of Alash who were also represented in the Congress advocated the preservation of old land relations in Kazakh rural areas and appealed against the radical socialist transformations in Kazakh *aul*. In addition, they insisted in the preservation of the pre-revolutionary Arbitral court (*Treteiskiy sud*), based on the traditional Kazakh court). The Russian communists insisted on common ruler of law with other regions of RSFSR and the unified organization of the judicial system. The suggestions of Alash members were rejected by the majority of the Congress, According to Yermekov, a crucial role in the Alash proposals was played by the position of the Kazakh Communists, including Dzhangildin and Seifulin, who supported Russian Communists. Seyfullin claimed that: “the principles of organization of the people's court, adopted in the

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Deklaratsia Prav Trudiashikhsya Kigizskoy (Kazakhskoy) ASSR, 6.10.1920 [Declaration of Rights of Working People of Kirghiz (Kazakh) ASSR] in Sovety I Revkomy v Kazakhstane (oktyabr'1917 - 1920), Dokumenty i materialy, pod redaktsiey S.N. Ppokrovsky (Alma-Ata:Izdatel'stvo Kazakhstan, 1971), 202-206.

Russian Federation is quite suitable for the people's courts of the KASSR...in struggling with the major crimes among Kirghiz people (revenge killing, *kun*¹²⁶, *barymta*¹²⁷) was welcome."¹²⁸ Civil institutions of government were created instead of Kazrevkom. At its closing meeting on October 12, 1920 the Congress elected the Supreme legislative power KASSR - the Central Executive Committee; the Presidium of the CEC KASSR selected S. Mendeshev (Chairman), S. Seifullin, V. A. Radus-Zen'kovich, A., Dzhangildin, I. A. Akulov, I. F. Kiselev, B. Almanov, A. Dosov, G. A. Korostelev P.I. Struppe. The lack of former members of Alash Orda in the Presidium of VTsIK is striking contrast to abolished Kazrevkom. KazTsIK confirmed the composition of government – Council of People's Commissars of KASSR headed by V.A. Radus-Zen'kovich.

Thus, all organizational structures and governmental institutions of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic were created; KASSR became one of the Republic of Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

According to the Decree about formation of Kirghiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the governmental bodies of KASSR were local Councils of deputies, the Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of KASSR. Twelve people's commissars were established: 1) Internal Affairs with the Office of posts and telegraphs; 2) Justice; 3) Education; 4) Health; 5) Social security; 6) Agriculture; 7) Food; 8) Finance; (9) the Council of national economy; 10) the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate; 11) Labour; 12) Railways.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ *Kun* – punitive damage (money or property) for murder to relatives of murdered man, a murderer can save his life and even avoid any punishment if relatives agree to forgive him.

¹²⁷ *Barymta* - the seizure of cattle as a revenge for an offense, or compensation for damages

¹²⁸ Iz pokazaniy A. Ermekova sledovatelю OGPU ot 30 noyabrya 1930 g. [from the testimony of Yermekov to an investigator of the OGPU dated November 30, 1930] in Istoria Kazakhstana sdevenyshikh vremen do nashikh dney v gyati tomakh. Tom 4. (Almaty: Atamura, 2010), 174-175.

¹²⁹ Decret ob obrazovanii Avtonomnoy Kirgizskoy (Kazakhskoy) Sovetskoy Sotsialisticheskoy Respubliki, 26.08.1920.

It should be noted that majority of the Central governmental bodies of the Autonomous Republic were directly subordinated to the Central Power bodies of the RSFSR. For example, the highest military authority (the Kirghiz Military Committee) was subordinated to the Zavolzhsky military district.¹³⁰ Furthermore, according to the article 6 of the Decree of the People's Commissariats of food, Finance, communications, Rabkrin, Council of Agriculture, the Department of posts and telegraphs, the Kirghiz (Kazakh) Bureau of statistics, the Kirghiz (Kazakh) Emergency Commission remained subordinated to the "corresponding People's Commissars of the RSFSR "with purpose of unity of financial and economic policy of the RSFSR".¹³¹ As to financing issues, according to article 8 of the Decree KASSR "all necessary finances and technical means were supplied by the funds of the RSFSR".¹³² In addition, it was forbidden for the KASSR to have political or economic contacts with foreign countries. Article 9 of the Decree stated: "Foreign affairs and external trade remain entirely under the jurisdiction of the Central governmental bodies of the RSFSR."¹³³ The decree paid also significant attention to national rights of KASSR. According to the Decree, all nations were declared equal, each nation had an equal right to use the mother tongue in all public institutions and at school.¹³⁴

A striking proof of national equality and a change in the attitude of the new government towards the local population was the introduction of Kazakh language along with Russian in official documents. In addition, civil servants of KASSR were

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

required to study Kazakh language, the compulsory study of the Kazakh language was also introduced into local Soviet Party schools.¹³⁵

The fundamental rights of the residents of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic were introduced in the Declaration of Rights of Working People of Kirghiz (Kazakh) ASSR. The Declaration had a class-oriented character. All power in the Autonomous Republic “should belong entirely and exclusively to working people.”¹³⁶ According to article 2 of the Declaration among the categories of the population, deprived of the right to vote, were “servants and agents of the former police, the persons employing hired labour for profit, and living on unearned income.”¹³⁷ In addition, article 4 of the Declaration stated the necessity to continue the class struggle and to build a socialist society through the struggle with the exploiters.¹³⁸ To achieve this goal the Declaration prescribed a policy of expropriating of the means of production, eliminating private property and transferring it to the disposal of the state. KASSR’s citizens were guaranteed the right to free education and healthcare, men and women were declared to have equal rights.¹³⁹ The main priority in gender policy was an accelerated emancipation of Kazakh women because they were believed an oppressed category of population without equal rights with men. To work was declared the duty of every citizen of the Autonomous Republic, RSFSR’s labor code was introduced in KASSR.¹⁴⁰ Unified with other regions of RSFSR the legal system and proceedings were declared. 5 and 6 article of the Declaration emphasized the impossibility of economic and

¹³⁵ Viktor A. Padus-Zen’kovich, “Organizatsia I pervy god suhestvovani suschestvovania KazSSR”, *Bolshevik Kazakhstana*, 9-10, 1935: 112-113.

¹³⁶ Deklaratsia Prav Trudiashikhsya Kigizskoy (Kazakhskoy) ASSR, 6.10.1920.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

military separation of the KASSR from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and all economic and military organs of the Republic declared to be controlled by the Central Government of RSFSR.¹⁴¹

Most of the representatives of Kazakh intelligentsia perceived positively the formation of the Autonomous Republic in Kazakhstan, though there were some negative evaluations. Evaluating the formation and further development of Kazakh Soviet autonomy, Akhmet Baitursynov characterized it as a “puppet” (*kukolnaya*)¹⁴² Republic¹⁴³, some members of the Alash criticized the dependency of local governmental bodies on the Central Government of the RSFSR and the class character of autonomous legislation and policy. As result they took part in the Congress dedicated to the project of creation of the Turkic national Federation in Turkestan in 1921.¹⁴⁴ However, most of the Kazakh intelligentsia, including some members of the Alash party emphasized the positive aspects of new Autonomous Republic including unification of the Kazakh lands and the achievement of national self-determination of the Kazakh people.

3.3 First Steps of the New Autonomous: Aims and Difficulties

One of the main tasks of new Soviet government was to gain the confidence of Kazakh people. For this purpose propaganda work was launched in all parts of Kazakhstan. Kiroblbureau (Kirghiz (Kazakh) *oblast* bureau) of the RCP (b) played the key role in organization of propaganda work. When organizing the party and

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Not possessing the real rights and self-government.

¹⁴³ Manash K. Kozibayev “Otechestvennaya istoria XX veka: mify i realnost” in Manash K. Kozybaev “Problemy metodologii, istoriographii i istochnikovedenia istorii Kazakhstana (Izbrannye trudy). (Almaty: Gylm, 2006), 158.

¹⁴⁴ This project was not supported by Soviet government and then suppressed. Some of participants joined to the *Basmachi* movement, the chairman of the Congress Validov emigrated in 1923.

propaganda work among the Kirghiz, it was necessary to take into consideration the specifics of the development of Kirghiz people. In the report devoted to the organization of communist party's work in KASSR the secretary of Kiroblbureau Akulov emphasized that "mechanical transfer to Kyrgyzia [Kazakhstan] of methods adopted in the Russian regions, is impossible."¹⁴⁵ According to Akulov the main propaganda work should be directed toward the poor people of Kazakh *aul*, the Kirghiz [Kazakh] proletariat and the young people who were being drafted into the Red Army. He stressed the party's agitation should be also accompanied by material assistance (food, clothes) to the Kirghiz [Kazakh] people in order to show party's care and concern upon difficult economical conditions¹⁴⁶ of Kazakhs.¹⁴⁷ According to Akulov's order, divisions of the national minorities and Kirghiz sections were created in all regional party organizations (gubkoms, ukoms, raikomss Kazakh sections; they also were involved in the agitation and propaganda of socialist ideas, the policy of the Soviet government.¹⁴⁸ A significant role in attracting of non-party members of Kirghiz people to party's work belonged also to Rabkrin. In addition, for the purpose of agitation and promotion of socialist ideology was established Kazizdat (Kazakh publishing house) engaged in publishing books and newspapers in Kazakh language.¹⁴⁹

From Akulov's report, the main obstacles to the organization of the party and propaganda work among Kazakh people were economic backwardness and the

¹⁴⁵ "Iz tezisov doklada politsecretarya Kirioblbyuro RKP (b) I.A. Akulova na kraevom partiynom soveshanii o partiynoy rabote, 28.09.1920"[From the notes of political secretary of Kiroblbureau of the RCP (b) I.A. Akulov on the regional party meeting devoted on party work I. A. Akulova at a regional party meeting on party work] in Vekhi konsolidatsii. Iz opyta partiynikh organizatsiy Kazakhstana v reshenii natsionalnogo voprosa v 1917-1927 gg. Sbornik dokumentov (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1990), 29.

¹⁴⁶ There was famine in several regions of Kazakhstan in 1921-1922.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 30-31.

¹⁴⁹ Viktor A. Padus-Zen'kovich, "Organizatsia I pervy god suhestvovani suschestvovania KazSSR", 113.

dominance¹⁵⁰ of Bays and Aksakals.¹⁵¹ According to Akulov, “Kirghiz people belongs to the Oriental peoples that are the most economically and culturally backward, to peoples, that are still in the stage of tribal relations.”¹⁵² From Akulov’s point of view, the low level of education, lack of experience of the class struggle in the Kazakh *aul* prevented the understanding socialist ideas by Kirghiz people, therefore the party should set a key task to struggle with these categories of the population.¹⁵³

Another important task was to struggle with the influence of Kazakh intelligentsia. The members of Kiroblbureau believed that the majority of representatives of Kazakh intelligentsia were “an artificially created group (Tsarist officials) with strong bourgeois-nationalist views because three-quarters of intelligentsia were former *alashordyntsy* (members of Alash party).”¹⁵⁴ Despite the amnesty and participation of former Alash members in the Soviet governmental institution the Soviet power treated to Alash with suspicion. Moreover, frequent cases of deteriorating attitude of Kazakh nomads toward the Soviet Power were associated with the activities of the Kazakh intelligentsia – the supporters of the Alash movement. For example, M. Murzagaliev report at the conference of the RCP (b) devoted to national question argued: that “a major role in the cooling of the revolutionary ardor of Kirghiz people belonged to the aim of authorities and Kirrevkom to return Alashordntsev (members of Alash party) to Orenburg as soon as possible, to compromise with them.”¹⁵⁵ Therefore because of the political

¹⁵⁰ Patriarchal and tribal relations dominated in Kazakh society therefore the most respected and influential people were the leaders of tribe (aksakals) and rich cattle-breeders (bays)

¹⁵¹ Iz tezisov doklada politsecretarya Kirioblbyuro RKP (b) I.A. Akulova, 30.

¹⁵² Ibid., 29.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 30.

¹⁵⁴ Iz tezisov doklada politsecretarya Kirioblbyuro RKP (b) I.A. Akulova, 30.

¹⁵⁵ Iz doklada M. Murzagaliev na 1 Kazakhstankoy konferentsii RKP (b) po natsionalnomu voprosu, 14.06.1921 [from the report of M. Murzagaliev on the first Kazakhstan conference of the

unreliability of former Alash intelligentsia it was necessary to stop “flirting” with them and use them “only as technical¹⁵⁶ force.”¹⁵⁷

Building relationships with former members of Alash Orda, who were the vast majority of the Kazakh intelligentsia, was a necessary and even forced step due to lack of educated Kazakhs. The chairman of Council of People's Commissars of KASSR Radus-Zen'kovich wrote: “We depended heavily on a narrow category of employees of Kazakh intelligentsia, closely associated with Alash Orda in central and local work.”¹⁵⁸ Many representatives of the intelligentsia related to Alash, did not want to cooperate with the Soviet authorities. This unwillingness, according to Radus-Zen'kovich, explained a small percentage of Kazakhs in the administrative institutions. He provided the following statistics: in the Central governmental bodies Russians constituted 70%, Kazakhs – 24%, other 6%.¹⁵⁹ Surely, the leaders of the Autonomous Republic understood the necessity of participation representatives of local population in state bodies of the Autonomous Republic to strengthen the position of the Soviet government among Kazakhs. “It was the only way to eliminate the existing mistrust and to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and fraternal relations between the workers of the formerly dominant nation and the labour masses of the former colonies.”¹⁶⁰ In this regard, “Kirrevkom and the

RCP (b) on the national question) In dvizhenie Alash: sbornik materialov sudebnykh processov nad alashevtsami alashevtsami: Tom 2. Dokumenty, doprosy i otvety. Sinkhronnye perevody. Materiali sudov. Konfsikovannye pis'ma. Pod redaktsiei D. Makhat, B.F. Karipzhanov (Almaty: FF “EI-Shezhire, 2011): 137-138.

¹⁵⁶ It means to use them in the fields not related to government (education, health care, low-ranking officials etc.).

¹⁵⁷ Iz tezisov doklada politsecretarya Kirioblbyuro RKP (b) I.A. Akulova, 30.

¹⁵⁸ Viktor A. Padus-Zen'kovich, “Organizatsia I pervy god suhestvovani suschestvovania KazSSR”, 112.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

provincial revolutionary committees had to carry out forced mobilization of the Kirghiz intelligentsia to work in Soviet institutions in the spring of 1920.¹⁶¹

At the same time the relationship with loyal Soviet intelligentsia was also problematic. It was supported by following words of Radus-Zen'kovich: Frequently Kazakhs-Communists exaggerated the importance of national peculiarities in party and Soviet work, leaving in the shadow of the class interests of the workers. The deviation from communism toward bourgeois-democratic nationalism arouse imperceptibly, as the consciousness of a Kazakh, even for a proletarian, was still enveloped by patriarchal and tribal remnants.¹⁶²

In addition, according to the report of GPU,¹⁶³ the cases of nationalism of representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia took place. Remarkably, many of representatives of this group didn't belong to the Alash Orda. They were communists, members of RKP (b) and often occupied high-ranking positions. According to the report among them were Baytursinov (an high-ranking official of Narkompros (people's Commissariat of Education) of KASSR; members of Kirghiz (Kazakh) Executive Committee Sadvokasov, Auezov; a representative of Sovnarkom KASSR M. Murzagaliev, a pereresenative of Kazakh Supreme Tribunal Argancheev.

Here is an extract from the GPU's report:

¹⁶¹ Nikolay Timofeev. Bor'ba kazakhskoy partiynoy organizatsii na dva fronta s uklonami v natsionalnom voprose v 1919-1920 gg. *Bolshevk Kazakhstana*, 9-10, 1935, p.91.

¹⁶² Viktor A. Padus-Zen'kovich, "Organizatsia I pervy god suhestvovani suschestvovania KazSSR", 115

¹⁶³ Doklad sotrudnikov GPU v Kiroblbyuro RKP(b) "O gruppovoy I personalnoy kharakteristike, suschnosti I deyatel'nosti Alash-Ordyy I natsionalistov kirghiz, a takzhe voobsche Kirrobotnikov. 23.09.1922. [a Report of the officers of GPU to Kiroblbureau of RCP (b) in about group and personal characteristics, essence and activities of the Alash-Orda Kirghiz nationalists and the workers of Kirrobkom in general] In dvizhenie Alash:sbornik materialov sudebnykh processov nad alashevtsami: Tom 2. Dokumenty, doprosy I otvety. Sinkhronnye perevody. Materiali sudov. Konfsikovannye pis'ma. Pod redaktsiey D. Makhat, B.F. Karipzhanov (Almaty: FF "El-Shezhire,2011): 110.

The activities of the group is that they systematically struggle with “colonization” in all its forms, often artificially created, and it is done using unions of Kirghiz people into one integral unit; everywhere throughout Kirghiz [Kazakh] republic the systematic agitation is implemented for the need to occupy all offices only by Kirghiz people: Russians and other non-indigenous people were dismissed and shifted to technical posts.¹⁶⁴

Another important task of new Soviet autonomous republic was to eliminate interethnic contradictions, “liquidation ... mistrust and often hostility toward Russians.”¹⁶⁵ The main reasons of it were tsarist colonial policy and remnants of arrogant attitude to Kirghiz people from Russian peasantry, especially rich peasants. A Russian *kulak* [a rich peasant] continues in the old way to treat a Kirghiz, and consider him almost a slave, sometimes a *seredniak* [a peasant with average income] could not refrain from manifestations of the remnants of previous colonial attitude which was raised by the Imperial government over centuries.”¹⁶⁶ Besides, many newly arrived communists conducted Soviet policy in Kazakhs regions without taking account the peculiarities of local people and way of life, “they often forgot about”¹⁶⁷

One of the important means of realization of the task to gain trust was implementing of the “land and water” reform. As a result of this reform significant areas of lands, withdrawn in colonial period, were returned to Kazakh nomads. However, it also promoted dissatisfaction of Slavic People, especially Cossacks. Also new the authorities of the Kazakh autonomous republic started negotiations with Turkestan Soviet Republic and Central Government of RSFSR for joining settled by Kazakhs regions of Turkestan (according to Census of 1920 the share of

¹⁶⁴ Doklad sotrudnikov GPU v Kiroblkk RKP(b), 110.

¹⁶⁵ Iz tezisov doklada politsecretarya Kiroblbyuro RKP (b) I.A. Akulova, 29.

¹⁶⁶ Insruktsia Kiroblbyuro RKP(b) “Partiynaya Pabota sredi kirgziov”, 4.11.1920 [An Instruction of Kiroblbureau of the RCP (b) “Party work among the Kirghiz people”] in Vekhi onsolidatsii. Iz opyta partiynikh organizatsiy Kazakhstana v reshenii natsionalnogo voprosa v 1917-1927 gg. Sbornik dokumentov (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1990), 29.

¹⁶⁷ Viktor A. Padus-Zen'kovich, “Organizatsia I pervy god suhestvovani suschestvovania KazSSR”, 115

Kazakhs in TASSR was 19.3%,¹⁶⁸ amounting to 1091925 people or approximately 26-28% of all Kazakh people in RSFSR.

Thus, despite all difficulties and contradictions Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic became the final step of first stage the Soviet nation-state building in Kazakhstan. The main future tasks for further development were the ultimate union of Kazakh lands in the borders of the Autonomous Republic, the creation of Kazakh Soviet national elite and completion nation-building. The realization of these tasks was implemented in the second stage of the Soviet nation-state building in Kazakhstan in the process of korenizatsia (indigenization) policy and national delimitation in Central Asia.

¹⁶⁸ Akay Nusupbekov "Ob"edinenie kazakhskikh zemel' v kazhskoy socialisticheskoy respublike," (Alma-Ata: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk KazSSR, 1953), 59.

Conclusion

The first steps in the Soviet project of nation-state building in Kazakhstan were carried out under difficult conditions. First of all, Kazakhstan lacked the preconditions for socialist revolution. The Kazakh population for the most part led a nomadic life; the education level was very low (only 7% literacy) and there was no class struggle as such in the Kazakh village, despite the economic differences. A large part of the Kazakh intelligentsia had not adhered to the Bolshevik views and were against the radical socialist transformations in the Kazakh *aul*.

Moreover, inter-ethnic relations were complicated. The colonial policy of Russia, the growth of taxes and levies on the Kazakh population during the First World war, brutal suppression of the uprising of the Kazakhs against the mobilization for logistical works in 1916 contributed to the growth of hostility and distrust among Kazakhs towards the colonial administration and towards the Russian part of the population. As for the Slavic population, which at the beginning of the revolution amounted to about 30% of the total, there were more supporters of the Bolsheviks, but also not a few were their enemies, especially among the Cossacks. The weakness of the Bolsheviks showed in the Constituent Assembly elections, where the victory was won by two political forces: Kazakh national party (Alash) and the peasant party of the socialist-revolutionaries (SRs). The position of the Bolsheviks was strong only among the urban population, which was significantly less in the Kirghiz (Kazakh) agrarian region.

But despite this, the Bolsheviks gained the upper hand over their opponents and began to carry out the socialist reorganization of the territory, including nation-state building. The victory of the Bolsheviks in Kazakhstan was caused by the

following factors: military aid from the Central regions of the RSFSR, good agricultural policy and completed national policy. A significant number of local people, including many representatives of the intelligentsia, were attracted to the Soviet government by guarantees of the establishment of a national Autonomous Republic and the equality of all nations and by the promise not only to stop the seizure of land but also to return the lands confiscated in the years of the tsarist empire.

It should be noted that the project of nation-building of the Bolsheviks initially did not enjoy the support of the majority of the local intelligentsia, which opposed the Soviet regime and created its own national autonomy Alash-Orda. The project of the party Alash focused more on policy documents of the provisional government (it is no coincidence that the leader of the party Alash and the Chairman of the autonomy of the Alash-Orda was a long time member of the The Constitutional Democratic party) and offered to create autonomy within the Russian Federative Democratic Republic. The project Alash assumed the lack of class-struggle, non-violent gradual modernization of the Kazakh society, as well as orientation to key Western values such as the rule of law, natural rights and individual liberty, including the right to private property (but not on lands).

In addition to outside competition, there was internal competition for the Bolsheviks with the so-called project of Turkic Republic. The ideological basis of this project was national communism and pan-Turkism. The authors of the project were the national leaders of Communists of the Republic of Tatarstan (Sultan Galiev), Bashkortostan (Validov), and Turkestan (Ryskulov), who proposed to unite all Turkic peoples into the Turkic Soviet Federation and then to be part of the Soviet Union on the rights of an equal partner like *Ukraine*. This project had less broad

support in Kazakhstan than in the Volga region and Turkestan, but supporters of the Turkic project were considerable. Moreover, often both projects had the same supporters (for example, Baitursynov) at different stages of their implementation. Both projects were unable to withstand competition and failed. The crucial role in the victory of Soviet power and the Soviet model of nation-state building was played by the transition of many followers of Alash party led by the main ideologist of the party Akhmet Baitursynov to the side of Soviet power. This transition was largely forced because of the considerable military superiority of the supporters of the Soviet regime and the difficulties in the relationship with the Siberian government of Kolchak and the Cossacks.

In the process of formation of the Kazakh Autonomous Republic the Soviet authorities had to balance between the two forces. On the one hand, many representatives of the Russian population were against inclusion of the regions with the majority of Slavic population the new Autonomous Republic. Furthermore, some Russian communist even believed that it was premature to grant the autonomy status to the *Kirghiz Krai* because of the absence of the proletariat and the low level of cultural and economic development. On the other hand, the leaders of the Kazakh population also sought to include the northern territories settled by Russians because they believed that these territories had belonged to the Kazakh people historically and had economic significance for the Kazakh Autonomous Republic. It should be noted that the Central authorities supported the Kazakhs in most cases of struggle for the territories. This support had a significant impact on the growth of the number of supporters of Soviet power. In addition, the Kazakhs were returned partially the lands withdrawn in the period of colonization; Kazakh

language began to be used alongside Russian, Kazakhs became actively to be involved in administrative positions.

Analysis of the main documents, regulating the status of the Republic, demonstrates a low degree of independence of KASSR from the Central authorities of the RSFSR. Most of the commissariats were directly subordinate to the Central People's Commissariats of the RSFSR, but not the government of the Republic. The party organs of the Autonomous Republic were directly subordinated to the Central party Committee in Moscow as well. In addition, class character was clearly traced in of the Declaration of the Rights of Working People in KASSR - the main document that defines the rights of citizens in KASSR. According to the Declaration and the Soviet suffrage, the people employing hired labour, the mullahs and the former tsarist officials were deprived of electoral rights and the right to be elected to local authorities. In the Declaration the emphasis was on rapid implementation of socialist transformation, the aggravation of the class struggle, and consequently to violence in the Kazakh *aul*. These negative sides naturally could not hold the Kazakh intelligentsia, which is now in a latent form continued struggle for national rights. It was expressed in the desire to pursue a more independent policy from the centre, in the promotion of national cadres, in the creation of favorable conditions for economic development, in cultural-educational work. These actions were implemented by both the former members of Alash-Orda and the Kazakh Communists who took leadership positions in the Autonomous Republic

Overall, despite restricted rights of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and dependence on Moscow's decisions, it was an important step in the development of Kazakh statehood, unification of the Kazakh lands and building of Kazakh nation.

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