

Repressions of 1937-1938 in Kazakhstan and their Consequences

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Abstract: *Manifestations of the current state in the Soviet period, the command-administrative system of its many facets should be more thoroughly investigated and submitted for public discussion. In the 20-30s of the twentieth century, our country has dropped a big experience, half of the nation was wiped out, people lost their best sons, who were proud of them.*

Keywords: *Alash, repression, Soviet, terror, intelligence, representatives, Council*

1. INTRODUCTION

Attention to the history of various complex periods suffered by Kazakh people, carrying it to future generations is the main task of historians. Manifestations of supremacy of command administrative system during the period of the Soviet power, its multiple faces must still be studied in detail and put forward for public discussion. In 20's-30's of the XX century a major ordeal was suffered by our country, half of the nation was exterminated, the people lost its best sons of whom it was proud. In order to keep these sorrowfull periods in the memory of descendants forever, the issues of publication of many scientific-research works, popular science books and other documentary information shall remain on the agenda. The full propaganda of the activities, the works of the public, state figures, who fought for the bright future of the country and became innocent victims of repressions, resurrection of their names are also required for the future.

2. DISCUSSION

It is only recently that the pursuit campaign, which originated in 1920-1930-ies and still remains the blank pages of history receives fair evaluation, the meaning of Stalin's policy is disclosed. The democratic transformations taking place in our country allow to reconsider, re-think many historical phenomena. A new look at historical facts and documents, which remained the blank pages of homeland history, new guesses and suppositions in their regard are now one of the current issues. All the stages of Kazakhstan history cannot be objectively reflected without the complete study of the prerequisites for the creation, the process and the consequences of the repressions of 1937-1938, without the full disclosure of their meaning, as after the willful extermination of the representatives of intellectuals and social figures, who were the best representatives of Kazakhstan culture as a whole in the above 30s, the history has nearly gone in a different direction. Only after gaining independence the truth about the huge injustice, oppression, the methods of colonization in the imperial and the Soviet epoch began to reveal itself. [1]

In fact, the information about the victims of all-out repressions is still not fully disclosed, not systematized. There are still many documents and destinies, the mystery of which has not been solved. The repressions, which destroyed remarkable people, outstanding leaders of the nation, will remain in the memory as major crimes and atrocities against humanity. The history itself presses charges against Soviet Imperial policy, which turned the territory of Kazakhstan into a huge punitive camp.

The repressions, which occurred in Kazakhstan, which have reached their peak in 1937-1938, can be studied through a thorough analysis of the new archival data, which was previously classified. A true estimate of those events cannot be made without a multifaceted study of the evidence of the above cruel period, without its objective review. Rethinking of some current issues of the past events requires new research approaches. Freedom from the subjective point of view, which formed in historical science, opens new research areas in the study of the process of formation and development of our country.

Repressions are an absolute atrocity, they bring misfortunes and suffering. Besides, they are inhuman, incomprehensible, this can be seen from the accusations, contained in the secret resolution of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR N.I. Yezhov dated July 30, 1937 About repression of former kulaks, criminals, and other anti-Soviet elements. [2]

The document reads as follows: "The state security authorities are faced with a task of breaking up this entire gang of anti-Soviet elements (...) Subject to repression are: 1. Former kulaks, who returned after serving the sentence and continue engaging in anti-Soviet subversive activities. 2. Former kulaks, who escaped the camps or labour camps as well as the kulaks, who hid themselves from dekulakization and are engaging in anti-Soviet activities. 3. Anti-Soviet elements, composed of former kulaks, criminals, whites, sectarian activists, churchmen, etc. All the repressed were divided into two categories: the most dangerous of the above elements were classified into the first category, they were subject to immediate arrest and shooting. Less active, but yet 'hostile elements' were classified into the second category. The latter were sent to the camps for a period of 8 to 10 years. The families of the repressed in both categories were registered and systematic surveillance was set up over them. [3]

The mass political repressions also took place as a preventive measure as a means to prevent the unrest due to the decisions unclear to the people due to deterioration of labour and living conditions, a decline in living standards. In fact, there was almost no possibility in the USSR of any visible and real opposition to the state power. The slightest attempts to draw attention to certain visible mistakes and deficiencies were severely and ruthlessly punished.

The mass political repressions, conducted in the USSR in Stalin's epoch (late 1960's – early 1950's). The number of the victims of repressions, sentenced to death for political (counter-revolutionary) crimes or the people deprived of their liberty, banished from their native land, sent into exile, the deported ones number in the millions.

The period of the most massive repressions, referred to as the Great Purge was observed in 1937-1938. Professor A. Medushevsky, Chief Scientific Officer of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences called the Great Purge the key tool of Stalin's social engineering. According to him, the decisive role of Stalin himself and the main country's punitive authority, the NKVD in organizing the mass repressions is beyond doubt. [4]

Some researchers considered Stalin's repressions to be a gross perversion of Bolshevik policy. Most of the victims of Stalin's repressions were themselves the members of RCP (b), leading figures of party, soviet, military and other authorities. A number of researchers believed that Bolshevik Red Terror was performed in the conditions of Civil War. Some historians view Stalin's repressions as the continuation of the repressions started by Bolsheviks immediately after the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia [5]. Not only the active opponents of Bolsheviks, but also the usual, ordinary people, who did not agree with their policy have become victims of repressions.

Following the Civil War the political repressions continued, part of the cases on political crimes was processed based on false accusations. In late 1920's – early 1930's with the beginning of agricultural collectivization and industrialization as well as with the strengthening of Stalin's personal power the repressions became massive. They reached their peak in 1937-1938, during these years NKVD authorities arrested 1,58 million people, shot 682 thousand people. As stated above, the ideologic basis of Stalin's repressions was formed during the Civil War (extermination of class enemies, struggle against chauvinism, etc.). The new step (the concept of strengthening the class struggle with the completion of building socialism) was made by Stalin himself at the July 1928 plenum.

Stalin's model of totalitarian system solidified not only in Kazakhstan, but also in the other national republics and provoked discontent in the regions. Stalin's report on the national issue was discussed at the Twelfth Congress of the RCP (b), during a heated discussion M.Kh. Sultangaliyev, a prominent representative of Tatar intellectuals, severely criticized his report. For the opposition to Stalin's definition of local nationalism Sultangaliyev was arrested and put into prison.

In 1923 Sultangaliyev was a Member of the Board in the National People's Commissariat of RSFSR, a very respectable state figure of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. He was charged of organizing a secret group against the party, connections with Z. Validi, who lived in exile in Turkey and counter-revolutionary forces. The GPU employees have secretly intercepted his letters on the issue of the nations and colonial peoples addressed to leading party and Soviet figures and used them in order to accuse him of calling to support the idea of creating the state of Turan out of Turkestan, Kazakhstan, Kashgaria, Khiva, Bukhara and the part of Afghanistan and Iran, where the Turks lived, united on a federal basis. Taking advantage of this, Stalin considered those, who expressed criticism against him to be political enemies and started accusing them. Well-known Kazakh political figures T. Ryskulov, S. Kozhanov were accused of being 'nationalists', 'Pan-Turkists', 'agents of imperialism', were subjected to all kinds of pressure. Alongside this, T. Ryskulov was charged of having connections with M. Sultangaliyev. [6]

In 1925 F.I. Goloschekin was assigned to manage the Kazakh regional party committee. His arrival was marked by a larger upsurge in political repressions. It is known that the Goloschekin's ruling ruined the Kazakh steppe, the people were plunged into a catastrophic famine. Famous historians wrote a lot about it.

During the above 20s the Kazakh krai, regional party organization turned out to be small bourgeoisie in composition. Goloschekin's policy, aimed at collectivization of the village deepened this area even more.

Immediately after arrival in Kazakhstan, Goloschekin and his supporters began accusing patriotically-oriented people, who were assigned with responsible work in the Soviet state and political system, of 'yielding to nationalism', called them 'Sadvakasov's group', 'Ryskulov's group', 'Mendeshev's group', 'Kozhanov's group' and considered them to be their members or the members of other social groups. I. Kuramysov and G. Togzhanov, who supported his 'Small October' movement, gave them the following definitions: 'Sadvakasov's group' is a manifestation of the Alash Orda movement, rich landowner's 'Baitursynov's group', 'Kozhanov's group' is nationalism, reflecting the ideology of the Alash Orda, 'Seifullin's group' and 'Mendeshev's group' is 'Left-Wing' disorder among Kazakh communists. In a word, the activities related to moral and psychological preparation for the Great Purge of the 1930s were carried out in the second half of the 20s.

In 1926 A. Bukeikhanov was arrested on the charge of counter-revolutionary activity and put into Butyrskaya prison in Moscow. But due to the lack of evidence in the criminal case against him, he was released from prison. However, they started to remove the public figures, who refused to support Goloschekin's ideas from Kazakhstan. In 1927-1929 T. Ryskulov, S. Kozhanov, N. Nurmakov, etc. were driven out of the Republic under various pretexts. [7]

In 1929-1930 at the initial period of repressions against the former leaders and participants of national liberation movements in the USSR republics, the participants of the Alash movement in Kazakhstan, including A. Baitursynov, M. Dulatov, M. Zhumabayev, Zh. Aimauytov, M. Tynyshbayev, Zh. Akpayev, etc. were arrested and sentenced to different terms of imprisonment. Among the accusations set forth against them by the OGPU troikas were: activities against the Soviet power, establishing a connection with Z. Validov, who was engaged in the Basmachi movement in Western Bukhara and was later sent into exile, forming the armed groups of young people for performing terrorist activities against the responsible employees, creating organizations for tight cooperation with rich landowners, agitation and propaganda against the Soviet power, etc.

In 1928-1929, when the first signs of the negative consequences of the cult of personality began to manifest themselves, more than 40 representatives of Kazakh intellectuals were arrested on the accusation of 'connections with the case of Sultangaliyev's group'. [8]

Alongside this, Stalin turned Kazakhstan into the location of those sent into exile for political motifs. Among those, who were sent to the Kazakh land were L.D. Trotsky, researchers of the land issue, well-known researchers A.V. Chayanov, N.D. Kondratyev, S.P. Shevtsov, etc.

At approximately the same time the trial of the Labour Peasant Party was on-going, the management of which was attributed to the aforementioned well-known researchers and economists A. Chayanov and N. Kondratyev. However, due to various reasons the trial of this party was not public. They were mainly accused of intending to overthrow the Soviet government with the support of kulaks. Although the accused avoided the capital punishment in early 30s, afterwards, in 1936-1938 they were charged again and this time they were not saved from Stalin's regime. Some of them were called from their place of residence to Moscow and shot there. For instance, Chayanov worked as a professor in Alma-Ata Agricultural Institute, when in early November 1937 he was condemned and then shot.

Kazakhstan has also not been spared from the search for local organizations of the Labour Peasant Party. In spring 1932 the OGPU 'revealed' that the Labour Peasant Party was functioning in Alma-Ata. K. Toktybayev, Y. Mustambayev, A. Barlybayev K. Akzhanov, Sh. Tokzhigitov, M. Auezov, who was in Tashkent at that time, D. Yskakov, A. Yermekov and others were charged of being the members of this party. Then they started searching for oblast and district departments of republican 'counter-revolutionary organization'. One department of the organization, referred to as 'Middle Class Party' was 'exposed' in Semipalatinsk, such people as S. Duisenbin, V. Ivanov, Sh. Toraigyrov, Kh.Kabyzbekov, N. Zhanalin, T. Korkembayev, E. Alin, K. Yesenkulov, K. Duisenbayev were charged of joining the party. [9]

Stalin's repressions of the 1930s became a great disaster of the people's destiny. Based on false accusations in the connections with secret counter-revolutionary organizations, criminal proceedings were initiated against Akhmet Baitursynov, Magzhan Zhumabayev, Zhusupbek Aimauytov and they were arrested. Based on the verdict of Military Board of the Joint State Political Directorate dated April 4, 1930, the representatives of Kazakh intellectuals were sent to the camps for a long time. A. Baitursynov, M. Dulatov, Kh. Gabbasov, Zh. Aimauytov, M. Yesbolov and others were sentenced to death, later this penalty was changed for a ten-year exile into the camp. They were accused of 'creating a secret organization of Kazakh nationalists, leaning on the support of capitalist countries and white emigrants, attempted to overthrow the Soviet power and create Alash-Orda Autonomy'. This 'organization' was also falsely accused of organizing a peasant's movement, which grew into an armed rebellion due to the mistakes made during collectivization and of the mass hurried moving of the peasants to China and Uzbekistan.

In early 1930s, prominent representatives of Kazakh intellectuals and political figures A. Yermekov. M. Tynyshbayev, Zh. Dosmukhamedov, Kh. Dosmukhamedov, Y. Mustambayev were illegally arrested. A total of 10396 people were arrested by 1931 under the pretext that they were 'representative of an enemy group', the vast majority of them being the representatives of intellectuals. [10]

By virtue of the the OGPU troika's decision dated April 20, 1932, two groups of Alash figures, the first one headed by A. Baitursynov and composed of more than 40 people, and the second one headed by M. Tynyshbayev, composed of more that 20 people, were sent to the Northern regions of Russia on false accusations. Among those were Zh. Dosmukhamedov, Kh. Dosmukhamedov, A. Umbetbayev, M. Murzin, A. Munaitpasov, K. Kemengerov, M. Buralkiyev, A. Omarov, Zh. Kuderin, Zh. Akbayev, S. Kadirbayev, Zh. Tleulin, etc., who were sent for a five-year period.

A confidential letter of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) dated July 29, 1936, issued to all party organizations had an influence on strengthening the mass repressions of 1937-1938. Strict requirements for revealing and full elimination of the mistakes, made due to the lack of 'vigilance and inability to distinguish an enemy'. The names of Reingold and Mrachkovsky, who previously worked in Kazakhstan, as organizers of counter-revolutionary activities were mentioned in this document. It was a warning for the Kazakh regional committee, which lagged behind the other republics in exposing 'the enemies of the people'. The Kazakh regional committee gathered twice, on August 5 and November 1, regarding this letter, as a result, 43 counter-revolutionists, supporters of Zinovyev were exposed and banished from the party. [11]

Under Stalin's instruction, a lot of organizational work related to exposing the enemies of the people was carried out throughout the country. On January 16-23, 1937 at the VIIth Plenum of the Kazakh regional party committee the issue of the struggle against Kazakh nationalism was brought up. By the spring of this year an active wave of exposing 'enemies and spies' began. Among them were the representatives of the intellectuals of all nationalities, managers of large enterprises and even ordinary kolkhoz men and workers. They were accused as the supporters of fascists and nationalists, defamed them of making agreements with capitalist states.

In 1937-1938 66 thousand of the representatives of literate and sagacious Kazakh intellectuals suffered from oppression. Despite the fact that these losses seem less multiple as compared with the losses of the previous period, they weakened the people's intellectual potential and in terms of psychological impact were equal to the previous disasters. The most educated, active representatives of the people suffered biggest prosecution. According to historians, 33 out of 101 board members, elected at the 1st Congress of Soviet Writers, which was held in 1934, were called 'the enemies of the people', and 180 out of 597 delegates, who attended the congress, suffered prosecution.

In 1937-1938 representatives of national intellectuals, who fought for the bright future of Kazakh people, made a significant contribution to science and education A. Bukeikhanov, A. Baitursynov, M. Zhumabayev, Kh. Dosmukhamedov, S. Asfendiarov, S. Seifullin, state and social figures of Kazakhstan S. Kozhanov, T. Ryskulov, U. Kulymbetov, O. Zhandosov, Zh. Sultanov, L. Mirzoyan, A. Kenzhin, etc. became the victims of the repressions. [11]

Kazakhstan turned into the region of camps, where political criminals were located. The victims of Stalin's violence suffered in the system of Karaganda camps (Karlager), Steplag, ALZHIR. Even during more than ten years after Great Patriotic War a considerable part of the Kazakh steppe remained the region of camps for the captives and political criminals.

Youth newspaper 'Leninshil Zhas' ('Lenin's Youth') was especially active in exposing 'the enemies of the people'. Throughout the entire year the articles, where the responsible employees holding management positions and writers were severely criticized, were published in this newspaper. S. Seifullin, B. Mailin, I. Zhansugurov, M. Auezov, G. Ormanov, A. Tazhibayev, G. Musrepov, Zh. Sain, etc. suffered acute criticism. The materials in the above article were titled 'Complete extermination of the enemies of the people in Komsomol', 'Bukhara Contraband', 'Destruction of the nest of bourgeois-nationalists'. On August 4, 1937 "Leninshil Zhas" ('Lenin's Youth') harshly criticized I. Kabylov, T. Ryskulov, S. Kozhanov, M. Zholdybayev, Sultanbekov, Mustambayev, calling them traitors, nationalists, the Alash Orda movement members, fascists, agents of German-Japanese imperialism.

On July 16, 1937 an article related to S. Mukanov was published in the newspaper "Socialist Kazakhstan", which said that he was supporting M. Zhumabayev, Alash Orda group member, an enemy of the people. In September an editorial titled 'There are many supporters of Mr. Ryskulov and Mr. Kozhanov in Southern Kazakhtan' was published in the same newspaper, where secretary of the regional committee Mr. Dosov was accused of not reacting to the criticism of the communists. It said that in spite of several signals regarding the enemies of the people Bukeikhanov, Kembayev, Yessengeldin, Dosov did not take any measures.

On the whole, in 1937-1938 articles against 'the enemies of the people' were published in 'Kazakhstan Pravda', 'Socialistik Kazakhstan' ('Socialist Kazakhstan'), 'Leninshil Zhas' ('Lenin's Youth'), 'Kazakh adabiet'i' ('Kazakh Literature') and in regional newspapers almost on a daily basis. The materials, published in these newspapers contributed to strengthening of repressions in Kazakhstan. Republic and regional periodic press was defaming the representatives of intellectuals and the persons holding management positions, as a result of which multiple progressive figures of Kazakhstan suffered repressions, were arrested and shot.

In autumn 1937 Alikhan Bukeikhanov, Nygmet Nurmakov and Nazir Torekulov were shot in Moscow, in Alma-Ata – Akhmet Baitursynov, in Omsk – Koshke Kemengerov. By the end of this year the Central Committee of the CP (b) of Kazakhstan issued an application to Moscow, requesting to increase the number of the repressed under the first category, i.e. subject to being shot across the republic by 600 people. In addition to this, the management of the republic also requested to increase the number of the repressed under the second category, i.e. sentenced to

long terms of imprisonment by a thousand of people. The proposal was approved at the session of the Politburo of the Central Committee of RCP (b) on December 3, 1937. Thus, by planning the increase of political repressions due to the search and extermination of the enemies, overfulfillment of the assumed obligations, Kazakhstan authorities added fuel to the flames of the Great Purge, which brought a major disaster to the people. A Special Council of the NKVD, extrajudicial punitive organs, referred to as 'troikas', 'dvoikas' carried out shock work on 'cleansing' the workers in the regions. [12]

Judging by the data, collected by "Adilet" ("Justice") Voluntary Historical and Educational Society, the number of those, who were shot in 1937 in Alma-Ata Oblast was 440 people, and in 1938 it exceeded a thousand, 330 people were shot in Zhambyl Oblast in 1937, in 1938 this number reached 510 people. Such increase in the number of victims was seen in all the regions. Today it is evident that a newspaper report about the Court Session of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R, which was held on March 6-12, 1938 in Alma-Ata, is only partly true. Firstly, the shooting of the leading employees, including those, whose names were mentioned in the list, published in that newspaper, occurred two weeks before the announced start of the private session of trial – in mid-February 1938. Secondly, prior to that publication, without taking into account the scale of the republic, in Alma-Ata alone about six hundred people died from the bullet of the hangmen.

Thus, on February 15, 1938 Konyrkozha Kozhykov, figure of the Alash movement, pedagogue, researcher, the figure of Soviet culture was shot. Among the 39 people, shot on February 25, were Sanzhar Asfendiyarov, Gabdolkhakim Bukeikhanov, Shakir Diveyev, Suleimen Yeskarayev, Tel Zhamanmurnov, Kudaibergen Zhubanov, Temirbek Zhurgenov, Uzakbay KulymNurtaza betov, Izmukhan Kuramysov, Seitkali Mendeshev, Ilyas Moldazhanov, Khasen Nurmukhamedov, Kabylbek Sarymoldayev, Zhanaidar Sadvakasov, Saken Seifullin, Zhagipar Sultanbekov, Nygmetolla Syrgabekov, Kaisar Tashtitov, Gabbas Togzhanov, Mirasbek Tulepov, Zeinolla Toregozhin.

37 people were shot on February 26, including Ilyas Zhansugurov, Ilyas Kabylov, Aspandiyar Kenzhin, Salemkhat Kulenov, Salimgerey Karatleuov, Azimbay Lekerov, Beiimbet Mailin, Askhat Seidalin, Zhumat Shanin. On February 27 among those 41 persons, who were shot were Magzum Asanbayev, Boris Berlin, Mergali Kadilbekov, Sabyr Kapin, Alkey Utekin, Vladimir Sluchak, Zarap Temirbekov, Mukhamediyar Tungashin, Mikhail Chudochkin, Telzhan Shonarov. Among the 40 persons, who were shot on February 28, were Birmukhamed Aibasov, Ashir Burkitbayev, Orazaly Zhandosov (his brother Oraz Zhandosov was shot on March 2), Mukhamediyar Zhankin, Mukhtar Samatov, MukhametkalivTatimov. On March 3 Ibadolla Kuldzhanov, Magazy Masanchi, Abdolla Rozybakiyev, Rakhym Sugirov, etc., the total of 38 people was shot, on March 7 – Nurtaza Yeralin, Zhumakhan Kuderrin, Nugman Manayev... 43 people in total, on March 8 – Abulkhair Dosov, Atlas Kalmenov, Zhaxylyk Kultasov, Khakimzhan Nurymov, 44 people in total, among the 37 people, who were shot on March 9, were Abdrakhman Aisarin, Akhmet Nuralin, Shakhzada Shonanova (Karatayeva), Anas Ilyasova (the data of Social Fund "Adilet" ("Justice")).

In 1937-1938 the terror became total. The people, who contributed to formation of Soviet authority, such as T. Ryskulov, S. Sharipov, A. Aitiyev, N. Torekulov, B. Almanov, S. Mendeshev, S. Argynshiyev, A. Asylbekov, D. Sadvakasov, N. Syrgabekov, S. Sharipov, M. Zhanibekov, etc. suffered from repressions during these years. [13]

Prominent party and public persons of Kazakhstan – U. Isayev, U. Zhandosov, T. Zhurgenov, K. Tashtitov, N. Nurmakov, A. Dosov, U. Kulumbetov, S. Segizbayev, I. Kabylov, I.M. Bekker, S. Nurpeisov, M. Tatimov, etc. perished at the hands of Stalin murderers.

The 20's and 30's of the XX century was a very complicated period full of contradictions in the history of Kazakhstan. The punitive policy, the policy of oppression reigned in all the spheres of social and political life of the country during these years. The punitive policy, the policy of oppression reigned in all the spheres of social and political life. The consequences of this policy were especially difficult in agriculture, which forms the basis of Kazakhstan economy. Based on the violent methods applied by the authorities, thousands of people suffered guiltless prosecution.

Over 100 thousand people were put into jail, sent to the camps, over 25 thousand of people were shot on political charges of being hostile toward the Soviet power.

3. CONCLUSION

The period brought big disasters to all Soviet people. During 1937-1938 mass terror seized the whole country. This disaster, which brought sorrow to the spiritual consciousness of the people, turned many remarkable people, who devoted themselves to social and political struggle, into the victims of repressions, accused as nationalists and the enemies of the people. These repressions, referred to as the Great Purge, were the creation of socialist system.

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