

ALIKHAN BUKEIKHAN: ON SOME OF THE MYSTERIES OF THE “SAMARA PERIOD”

*“Only Freemasonry can
defeat autocracy”
M. Kovalevsky.*

The Samara period is the least researched and one of the more mysterious times in the life and activities of Alikhan Bukeikhan, the leader of the early 20th century national liberation movement, Alash. He spent his first period of political exile in Samara from 1908 until the February Revolution of 1917. The period is also interesting for the Alash leader's active involvement in the ranks of the Russian Freemasons.

FIRST DEFEAT AND EXILE IN SAMARA

Before giving an overview and analysis of the new information and documents from the Russian city of Samara which shed light on an unknown chapter of the Kazakh leader's life in exile and flesh out historical facts that we already knew, I want to go into events preceding Alikhan Bukeikhan's being sent into exile in greater detail.

June 3rd 1907 undoubtedly marked the first heavy setback for the Kazakh national liberation movement, Alash. The hard knock for the Kazakh elite was less the dissolution of the Second State Duma than an amendment to the electoral law that same day which left the 4-million strong Kazakh nation without a right to vote. It was a national tragedy for the Kazakhs and a personal defeat for their leader, Alikhan Bukeikhan.

In an open letter to the deputies of the Fourth State Duma sent in 1914, Alikhan wrote bitterly: “The law of June 3rd has deprived us of our right to defend ourselves in the State Duma thanks to the efforts of princes and counts hunting for Kazakh land.”

Depriving Kazakhs of their right to vote was also the personal revenge of Russian Prime Minister Stolypin on the Kazakh leader for his merciless criticism on the pages of the newspapers he edited – Irtysh, Omich and especially The Steppe Pioneer – where, in a whole series of articles analysing the situation around the dissolution of the First State Duma, the author accuses the new head of the Cabinet of Ministers of establishing dictatorship and tyranny, conducting reactionary politics and implementing a policy of seizing Kazakh lands in the Kazakh Steppe Territory. Alikhan Bukeikhan wrote in an unpublished article how Steppe Territory Governor General Sukhotin also sought personal revenge against him: “My arrest appears to be an attempt at personal revenge by General Sukhotin who often provided gratifying material for my correspondence in my days of freedom when I suggested he be prosecuted for violating point 1 of the October 17th manifesto. I was then listed as a candidate for the State Duma by the Kazakhs.”

The article, written by Bukeikhan on February 20th 1906 in Pavlodar Prison, was most likely meant for publication in the capital's Kadet newspapers, such as “Our Life,” as stated in the accompanying letter addressed to Aleksandr Kolyubakin in St. Petersburg, one of the leaders of the Kadet Party. However, seeing as it was discovered with the letter in a military history archive in Moscow, neither the article nor the letter made it to their addressee.

Furthermore, the colonial administration of the Kazakh steppe had planned to exile the Alash leader from the territory as early as 1906; he was arrested and put in Pavlodar Prison in January of that year. This is laid out in detail in a secret report by the head of the Omsk gendarme: “In

view of the intelligence on Bukeikhanov and ... of his stubborn will to exert influence and take as active a role as possible in State Duma matters, the Commander of the Troops showed his willingness, should the Bukeikhanov case be dropped from the prosecutor's supervision ..., to deal with the case administratively which would entail the compulsory banishment of Bukeikhanov from the Steppe Territories..."

However, the authorities didn't get to carry out their secret plan. Alikhan Bukeikhan gives the reason in his memoirs, "Elections in the Steppes": "On April 15th 1906, I was transferred to Omsk Prison and was released again on April 30th when they realised I had unanimously been voted the electoral delegate in my volost."

The tsarist authorities were only able to threaten Bukeikhan "with compulsory banishment" because of the Coup of June 1907 which stripped the Kazakh people and their leader of any opportunity to defend their rights at the Russian Legislative Assembly.

For good measure, a special sitting of the St. Petersburg Court of Justice from December 12th -18th 1907 sentenced Alikhan Bukeikhan to three months in prison for signing the Vyborg Manifesto which meant him not only losing his right to vote but also the right to hold office. The sentence came into effect in January 1908. Alikhan Bukeikhan went to Semipalatinsk Prison to serve his sentence voluntarily.

This story and the next one, which happened while Bukeikhan was serving his sentence in prison, clearly demonstrate the paternally caring attitude the Alash movement leader had for his long-suffering people.

On one occasion, colleagues and friends – the great poet Abay's son and two nephews, and two other people – came to him in prison and suggested he try to escape, announcing that, "... everything is in place". However, much to his friends' amazement, Alikhan Bukeikhan refused point-blank, saying that if he escaped, innocent people would suffer as a hit squad would definitely be sent out into the steppe. "So," he went on, "it'll be better for me to stay in prison alone rather than the people suffering." He actually spent eight months in prison, not three, and was exiled immediately thereafter from the Steppe to Samara.

Having deprived the Kazakhs of the chance to defend their rights in the State Duma and exiled their leaders, the Stolypin government now had the chance to do what it liked with the Kazakh steppes unchecked and distribute the land taken from the native population amongst landless peasants who had been driven from the European part of Russia on goods trains or give it to imperial princes and counts from St. Petersburg.

Alikhan Bukeikhan considered he had only lost a battle – admittedly, an important one - not the war, and continued the fight in Samara, especially against Stolypin's "land reform" which had only reinforced the settler colonisation of Kazakhstan. Pen and paper became his main weapons. As did the secret Masonic community, one of whose founders, a Professor Kovalevsky, stated: defeat autocracy." Bukeikhan thought likewise.

FIGHTING AUTOCRACY WITH PEN AND PAPER

We genuinely do not know what Alikhan Bukeikhan did or whom he worked as and where at the start of his first period of political exile in Samara where he was sent with his family: his wife Elena Yakovlevna Sevastyanova-Bukeikhan and their two children. There are only snippets of information from various sources which say he worked in the local farmland department as either a forestry inventory man or land surveyor.

As mentioned above, he was now strictly forbidden from holding a position of public office such as the editor-in-chief of a newspaper or leader of a political party's local committee, as he had done in Omsk; the sentence handed down at the special sitting of the St. Petersburg Court of Justice in December 1907 was still in force.

But it was clear that the Kazakh leader actively sought to work with academic and socio-political organisations and publishing houses in St. Petersburg from the earliest days of his exile. Going on his publications, it would appear his co-operation with the "Siberian Matters" magazine, the Speech and Word newspapers and the editorial board of the Brockhaus and Efron "New Encyclopaedic Dictionary", which were all located in the mother country's capital, began in 1908. Alikhan Bukeikhan was a member of the editorial board at the encyclopaedia's publishing house from 1908 to 1917 and his name features amongst those of the editorial staff from volumes 8 to 22 inclusive.

Deprived of the opportunity to defend Kazakh national interests and fight the settler colonisation of Kazakhstan, seizure of Kazakh lands for landless peasants from European and Central Russia and the colonial authorities' crude policies of russification on a legal platform, i.e. the State Duma, the Alash leader was inspired to take up pen and paper. His sharpest and most incriminating words came in the national press.

The headlines alone on some of the articles and essays published in the St. Petersburg newspaper Siberian Matters in 1908 are clear evidence of that: "Russian Settlements in the Depths of the Steppe Territory," "Settler Plots in the Akmolinsk Oblast," "The Dispossession of Irrigated Kazakh Croplands," "The Unnecessary Governorate General," and many more.

And let us not forget the important detail that Alikhan Bukeikhan wrote these and a whole host of other articles and essays from ... inside Semipalatinsk Prison.

Alikhan Bukeikhan was not against using his broad range of contacts in high aristocratic circles, the academic and creative intelligentsia and amongst political statesmen in St. Petersburg to defend his people's interests.

In an article published in Ortalik Kazakstan in 1989*, well-known Karaganda-based journalist Zhaik Bekturov, one of those who did research into the history of the Alash-Orda leaders, recalls a very interesting episode from Bukeikhan's Samara period, a résumé of which follows.

Famous early 20th century Kazakh intellectual, Mambetali Chubekov, went to St. Petersburg in a desperate attempt to get back the native lands which had been seized by the colonial authorities, in spite of the fact that the sacred graves of his ancestors were there, and happened to meet his acquaintance Alikhan Bukeikhan. They went to the head office of the Land Use and Agriculture department together and tried on several occasions to prove the illegality of the migration authority civil servants' actions in seizing Chubekov's ancient lands from him, especially the lands containing graves, referring to the Tsar's own decree which forbade the seizure of lands with graves or holy burial grounds. But in vain. Crestfallen at their failed efforts, they returned to their apartment and happened to bump into Bukeikhan's colleague from the Duma, a Mr. M. Karaulov, a former Cossack officer from the Caucasus.

Having heard his former Duma colleague's sorry tale, Karaulov promised to organise an audience for them with the Tsar himself. He suggested to the two Kazakhs that they come to see his friend Prince Trubetskoy the next day. Karaulov assured them that he was in charge of the Tsar's personal security. He gave them Trubetskoy's address.

Alikhan Bukeikhan initially thought the idea was a joke, knowing that his acquaintance was not the most reliable character. But he decided to risk it, and had no choice in the matter after all.

When they came to Trubetskoy's home, Karaulov was already waiting for them. As they spoke, Colonel Trubetskoy expressed his sincere gratitude to the Kazakhs for an invaluable gift he had received. It turned out that on one trip to Omsk, the Russian prince had chosen two Kazakh horses for himself in an aul. The horses had soon saved him from certain death on more than one occasion. As a mark of his eternal gratitude, Prince Trubetskoy had thought that if the occasion arose, he should like to be able to thank the Kazakhs of Akmolinsk oblast. It turned out that Karaulov knew this and therefore volunteered to help Bukeikhan and Chubekov.

And Prince Trubetskoy did indeed promise to organise an audience with the Tsar. To conclude their discussion, he advised the two Kazakhs to write their grievance on the Tsar's headed paper and warned them that the Tsar wouldn't read a petition that was more than 10 lines long.

Bokeikhanov later admitted to his relatives that he had to work very hard to squeeze all the land problems of his countrymen into those 10 lines. The resolution to the petition given by the Russian Tsar in his own hand was short and laconic: "A disgrace. Give it back! Nicholas II." Alikhan Bukeikhan never mentioned this incident once in anything he wrote, no doubt thinking it was unworthy and shameful for a direct descendant of Genghis Khan. According to his nephew, the Alash leader only told him about it in the 1930s when he was visiting his uncle in Moscow.

In any case, the curious incident is not the fruit of Bukeikhan's nephew's imagination as the characters - Prince Trubetskoy and Cossack officer Karaulov - and the positions they occupied in society at the time fundamentally coincide with reality.

Grigori (Yuri) Ivanovich Trubetskoy (1866-1926) was a hereditary prince who was indeed in charge of the imperial guard from April 1906 to January 1914, initially as a colonel and from 1907 as a major general. The royal guard was a section of the guards who protected the Tsar.

Mikhail Aleksandrovich Karaulov (1878-1917) was a former Cossack officer, deputy of the Second and Fourth State Dumas and part of the Duma Provisional Committee formed after Nicholas II's abdication from the throne.

Therefore, Alikhan Bukeikhan's abashment in Bekturov's description of the event is a little dubious as he had a number of connections and considerable influence amongst St. Petersburg high society, including amongst politicians, as both a member of the Kadet Party Central Committee and a Freemason. What would be more likely was if Bukeikhan had turned directly to Karaulov or, even better, Trubetskoy himself. In 1914 and 1915, Alikhan Bokeikhan published two articles on the pages of the Kazak newspaper entitled "Trubetskoy hatynan" ("From Trubetskoy's letter") and "Trubetskoy lektsiyasy" ("Trubetskoy's lecture"). They were about other members of the Trubetskoy dynasty. It is hard to say whether these articles are linked to the aforementioned incident concerning Grigori Trubetskoy or not. But as we read on we will be reminded once again that the Alash leader had no shortage of contacts in St. Petersburg.

As sultan Smakhan, the Alash leader's younger brother, recalled, a group of seven of his countrymen descended on him in Samara in 1910. They said that Semipalatinsk oblast Governor General Nadarov intended to exile them, including sultan Smakhan – 10 people in all – to beyond the Steppe Territory "as an administrative procedure" in the same way Bukeikhan himself had been exiled.

At his countrymen's insistence, they set off hastily for St. Petersburg together where he would meet his former colleague at the First State Duma and current deputy of the Third Duma, Mikhail Stakhovich, and explain everything to him, whereupon the latter immediately got in touch with General Nadarov and forced him to change his mind. The result being that 10

Kazakhs could go back to the steppe in peace. Alikhan Bukeikhan himself would remain in exile until the February Revolution of 1917; he never exploited his many contacts to solve personal problems or advance his own career.

In moments of despair, he wouldn't simply call on the consideration and support of liberals in St. Petersburg and Russia as a whole but would seek help from senior deputies in the Legislative Assembly. His "open letter to the members of the State Duma" appeared in the capital city's newspaper Speech on January 23rd 1914. It is worthy of being reprinted here almost in full:

"The Migration Authority isn't merely involved in distributing government land in the Kazakh ["Kyrgyz" in the original] steppe to people "of all social classes," such as Princes Kochubey and Kasatkin-Rostovsky, Count Medem and others, who all have little land, but is also preparing for the Kazakh people "to embrace the Orthodox Christian faith".

These are the documents guiding the work giving Kazakhs the agricultural standard and carrying out the precise instructions of the central government:

"To the person in charge of migration matters in the Turgay-Uralsk district. The Holy Synod, as of April 5th (26th) this year, in ruling no. 3067, made it clear it would like, when land survey work is being carried out in areas where Kazakhs live, that Mohammedan Kazakhs and Orthodox Kazakhs should be settled alongside Russian peasants such that the number of Mohammedan Kazakhs was not more than half of the local Orthodox population so that when settling any problems relating to their daily life and needs, the Orthodox population would have the advantage over people of other races.

The Holy Synod thinks these measures could push the Kazakh population of the Steppe oblasts and on Turkestan territory to accept the Orthodox faith.

In saying this, the main Department of Land Use and Agriculture has come out in favour of Kazakhs and Russians being settled together, both to spread and strengthen Orthodox Christianity amongst those of other faiths and thus to expose the indigenous population of the Steppe oblasts to Russian statehood and Russian culture as quickly as possible and achieve their amalgamation with the Russians.

... This copy of Uralsk oblast military governor's notification no. 11400 dated June 12th of this year on the joint settlement of Orthodox and Mohammedans is being sent to Your Excellency for guidance and execution.

After the imperial edict of April 17th 1905, the Holy Synod thinks it is possible to interfere in the religious matters of those of other faiths by putting pressure on the economic life of the 5-million strong Kazakh nation and since the imperial edict of December 12th 1904, the Main Department of Land Use and Agriculture has recommended that the local administration and civil servants from the Migration Authority carry out the illegal ruling of the Holy Synod. Thanks to the efforts of princes and counts on the lookout for Kazakh land, the Law of June 3rd deprived us of the right to defend ourselves at the State Duma.

I hope that the deputies will turn their attention to the flagrant violation of the law depicted in this document and will make use of articles 35 and 58 of the State Duma constitution.

Member of the First State Duma

Bukey-Khanov, Alikhan Nurmukhamedovich."

From an academic and creative point of view, the “Samara period” was no less productive for the leader of the Kazakhs than his Omsk period was, as we have seen above. Here it is worth focusing on one significant moment which helps to reveal another side of Alikhan Bokeikhan’s personality: his stubbornness and ambitiousness when it came to achieving the goals he had set himself, his flexibility when taking decisions and his consistency of deeds and actions.

Few people know that the person who organised the compilation of the first collection of poetry and words of wisdom of Abay (Ibrahim) Kunanbayuly, subsequently published, and wrote the first article (obituary) about the life and works of the great poet and thinker in Russian was none other than Alikhan Bukeikhan. In the article, published in several December issues of the Semipalatinsk Gazette in 1905 and in Notes of the Semipalatinsk Sub-Section of the West Siberian Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (IRGS) of 1907, the author explained how the “original poems by Abay and his translations of Pushkin (excerpts from Eugene Onegin), Lermontov, Krylov were collected by his son Turaul and would soon be published by the Semipalatinsk Sub-Section of the IRGS as edited by A.N. Bukeikhanov”. Furthermore, in late 1905, the Alash leader attempted to publish a newspaper in his native tongue in view of the upcoming elections to the State Duma but he was arrested on his journey from Omsk to Semipalatinsk on January 8th 1906 and put in Pavlodar Prison. The Tsarist secret police seized his briefcase when they arrested him and found in it manuscripts of “poetry in the Kyrgyz language by Kyrgyz poet Abay [Ibrahim] Kunanbaev”, thus ending his attempts to publish a Kazakh newspaper, and the first anthology was not published in Semipalatinsk – where the poet came from – in 1906.

But Alikhan Bukeikhan would publish the first anthology of Abay’s works and the first Kazakh national newspaper – under the name Kazak, which the colonial authorities saw as provocative – while in exile in Samara. The anthology appeared in St. Petersburg in 1909 and the first edition of the Kazak newspaper came out on February 2nd 1913 in Orenburg. So we should note that this February marked the 100th anniversary of the first edition of Kazak.

When it comes to Bukeikhan’s Samara period creative legacy, we have to mention his essay “The Kazakhs” [“The Kyrgyz,” in the original] which was published in 1910 in St. Petersburg in an anthology entitled, “Forms of National Movement in Modern States,” which, in the mid-1980s, became one of the primary sources for research into contemporary Kazakhs by British academics at Oxford, and his memoirs, “Elections in the Steppe,” published in another collection in the capital in 1916.

Though those are all well-known facts from the history of Kazakhstan and Russia.

DECLASSIFIED MATERIAL

The documents found in the Samara oblast state archive and a new photograph of Alikhan Bokeikhan which is kept at the P.V. Alabin Samara Oblast Local History Museum, showing him with members of the Samara Kadet group (photograph no. 1), are declassified materials from the Samara guberniya gendarme which gathered information on him using its secret services and surveillance service.

This is evidenced by the heading in the journal where secret informants recorded the movements and meetings of “those under their care” (original spelling maintained): “General summary of data from observation in Samara of persons belonging to an unknown local (underlined) organisation and persons suspected of political espionage between May 3rd 1915 and January 1st 1916” [photograph no. 2].

According to the entries in the journal, all those “suspected of espionage” had nicknames, which they themselves were unaware of. Their numbers include another three historic figures, besides Alikhan Bukeikhan. Aleksandr Kerensky, a deputy of the Fourth State Duma and almost General Secretary of the Supreme Council of the Masonic Lodge, “The Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia”; Nikolay Gladish, then a deputy of the Samara City and State Duma and leader of the Samara group of the “People’s Freedom” constitutionally democratic party; and Isidor Ramishvili. Alikhan Bukeikhan came into contact with them at various points in his political career.

Oddly, unlike Kerensky, Gladish and Ramishvili, who appeared in the gendarme’s secret agent reports as Dumsky, Glasny and Ataman, the Alash movement leader had two nicknames: Asman and Kalmyk [photograph no. 3].

FREEMASONRY IN RUSSIA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The documents from the archives in Samara contain a certain amount of new material which I shall present here without further analysis.

Firstly, Bokeikhanov features in the material as one of the leaders of the Samara group of the Kadets (i.e. the Constitutional Democratic Party): the Samara Provincial Committee of the "People's Freedom" Party. The "custody form" Bokeikhanov filled out in Butyrka Prison in 1937 confirms that he had been a member of the Central Committee of the party from 1912 onwards [photograph no. 4].

His leadership role in Samara is also confirmed by earlier data sent to me by the Public Relations department of the KGB (TsOS KGB SSSR) in September 1991. This information states, in particular: "On November 24, 1912 in Samara, Bokeikhanov participated in the meeting organised to unite the efforts of all the revolutionary groups in Samara (from the Octobrists to the leftists)"; "In 1915 Bokeikhanov was part of the Samara Provincial Committee of the Constitutional Democratic Party"; "In October, Bokeikhanov was involved in the work of the regional meeting of the Constitutional Democratic Party held in the city of Samara. The meeting was attended by delegates from the Saratov, Simbirsk and Ufa provinces"; and again, "In January 1917 Bokeikhanov was one of the leaders of the Samara group of the Kadets".

Secondly, despite observation and undercover surveillance by the Tsarist secret police, Bokeikhanov was politically active not only as a leader of the local group of the Kadets but also as a "Master" of the Masonic brotherhood in Samara.

Freemasonry is by no means a new phenomenon in Russia; indeed, it has fairly deep roots (I examine its history in detail in an article from 1993-1994). However, in the early twentieth century, as a result of the defeat of the 1905-1907 revolution, it entered the political arena. Unlike the Freemasonry of earlier periods, it now had a specific political objective: to overthrow the autocratic regime. One possible scenario, albeit unwritten, involved physically eliminating Tsar Nicholas II; another entailed carrying out a palace coup and forcing him to abdicate.

The Masonic order in Russia acquired its name the "Grand Orient of Russia's People" in 1910. This took place after its radical reorganisation and revitalisation during the period of reactionary government under Prime Minister Stolypin. The claim by Valery Erofeev, a specialist in the history of the Samara region, that Bokeikhanov joined the Freemasons in Samara is questionable, however. To judge by other documents, Bokeikhanov became a Mason well before even Alexander Kerensky, the head of the Grand Orient of Russia's People right up until the 1917 Revolution and the formation of the Second Provisional Government. Bokeikhanov joined in St.

Petersburg, where the Masonic lodge was then known as "North Star", the name it had held since its creation in October 1906.

In addition to the evidence of Bokeikhanov's involvement with the Freemasons in the above-mentioned articles in "Kazakhstan Pravda" and "Prostor" from 1993-1994, the following lines appear in the online publication "Chapter 12. The Phenomenon of Russian Political Freemasonry in the Early Twentieth Century. The First Masonic Lodges of Russia (1906-1909)": "... Meetings of the St. Petersburg lodge 'North Star' were held on the premises of the former Kadets club. The Kadet faction of the Duma also met here: F.A. Golovin, V.A. Karaulov, A.N. Bokeikhanov ...". This is another clear indication that Bokeikhanov had become a Freemason prior to his election as a deputy of the First State Duma, or at least immediately after its dissolution on July 9, 1906. Kerensky, in his memoirs, says that he himself joined the Freemasons in 1912 when he became a deputy of the Fourth Duma.

Let us now turn briefly to the transformation of the Russian "North Star" lodge into the "Grand Orient of Russia's People", and the causes and consequences of this change.

The fundamental reorganisation of the Russian Masonic community and its name change were due to a number of serious factors; indeed, Russian Freemasonry was on the verge of being completely destroyed. The first of these factors was the incautious interview given by E. Kedrin to the newspaper "Russian Word" in 1908. Kedrin had been a member of the North Star lodge almost since its foundation in 1906. His admission in the interview that he held the position of "Master of one of the lodges in Paris" caused great concern among his Russian "Brothers", who suspected that agents of the police department had infiltrated their ranks. However, his next admission could hardly have been more careless and irresponsible: "The Black Hundredists are trying to claim that the Masons are behind the liberation movement in Russia. This is quite untrue – unfortunately. I say unfortunately because if the Masons were involved, the movement would have quite a different colour and would be far more powerful."

As an aside, it is worth noting that certain members of the first wave or "older generation" of Russian Masons were prone to talking too openly and were far from diligent in observing the essential principle of secrecy.

The activities of the Russian Freemasons were systematically attacked in Stolypin's reactionary press in the period 1906-1908, which claimed that a "Jewish-Masonic conspiracy" was underway. These attacks were directed primarily against the Kadets, the leading opposition party in Imperial Russia in the period to February 1917, of which Bokeikhanov was a member from November 1905 and on the Central Committee from 1912.

A letter from Bokeikhanov to A. Kolyubakin sent from Pavlodar Prison in February 1906 eloquently draws attention to the real threat from the Black Hundredists looming over the members of the Masonic order who were in the Kadets. Kolyubakin was one of the founders and leaders of the Constitutional Democratic Party "People's Freedom". In 1910 he would be involved in the reforms of the North Star lodge, as we shall see further below. In the letter, which never reached its addressee, Bokeikhanov writes as follows: "Dear Alexander, I am very glad that you avoided trouble with the Black Hundredists, that you cleverly managed to trick them".

It is also interesting to note that one of the Black Hundredist newspapers "Zorka" had just started operating in the Kazakh region. This newspaper was distributed free of charge. With this in mind, Bokeikhanov wrote the following lines in a short item appearing in the newspaper "Irtysh" in 1906 and in a historical essay in 1910, showing his characteristic wit and sarcasm: "None of the Kazakhs read Zorka. They remember the Kazakh proverb: "XX hier Text bitte einfügen XX"

– 'Mutton fat is good and tasty, but why are you lying in the road?' said the wolf, carefully stepping past the poison left for him in the road by the hunter.' "

The final factor forcing the leaders of the Masonic order in Russia to carry out a fundamental reorganisation was the scandal involved Count Orlov-Davydov. Count Orlov-Davydov was one of the major financial donors to the Russian Freemasons. A scandal blew up when his mistress, an actress by the name of Poiret, took him to court demanding that he admitted that he was the father of her illegitimate child.

Ultimately, all of these factors created an intolerable atmosphere of suspicion among the Russian Freemasons. They accused each other of having links with the Tsarist secret police, claiming that there was an agent provocateur in their midst. Leading Russian Masons such as Prince Bebutov, M. Margulies and others complained that the moral foundations of Freemasonry were being undermined. This brought the North Star lodge in St. Petersburg, and the lodge "Renewal" in Moscow to the brink of collapse. Prince Bebutov describes the oppressive atmosphere prevailing among Russian Masons at the time in detail in his memoirs "Russian Freemasonry in the Twentieth Century", in which he states that he was one of the founders of the Kadet party and the reformed Freemasons.

Prince Bebutov's role in the creation of the Kadet party is unquestionable; indeed, his portrait hung prominently in the Kadet Club in St. Petersburg. However, the initiator of the radical reorganisation of the Freemasons, saving it from closure and revitalising its ranks, was Kolyubakin, who was one of the true founders and leaders of the Constitutional Democratic Party. Kolyubakin was supported in his efforts by his fellow Kadets Nekrasov and Prince Urusov. Nekrasov later became one of the Permanent Members of all three Provisional Governments.

On the initiative of these three men, a general meeting of the Russian Masons was held in February 1910. This meeting was attended by leading representatives of the St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev and other provincial Masonic lodges, as well as the Military lodge. The basic purpose of the meeting, albeit not openly stated, was to get rid of the ballast – the first wave of Freemasons who were too talkative, ignoring the strict rule of secrecy and the moral and ethical foundations of Freemasonry. Importantly, they were also strongly opposed to the "excessive politicisation" of Freemasonry, whereas in fact Russian Freemasonry in the early twentieth century had originally been revived with specific political objectives in mind: to overthrow the autocratic regime, to seize power in Russia and to establish a democratic form of federal parliamentary government.

Kolyubakin, Nekrasov and Urusov, through their reforms, were able to "put these ethical-moral (rather than political) Masons to sleep", as it were, and to get rid of those Masons who had joined simply out of curiosity. The latter were mostly wealthy aristocrats and the leaders of a number of national parties from the Caucasus. Thus, according to Professor V. Startsev, an expert in the history of Russian Freemasonry in the early twentieth century, of the more than 90 members formerly in the French Rite lodges North Star, Renewal and others, only 37 "Brothers"⁴⁰ remained in the new "Grand Orient of Russia's People" – in other words, around 60 "old" members were "put to sleep". By "put to sleep" we mean that the Masonic lodge was officially closed to these "old" members, although they continued to consider themselves Masons. Meanwhile, Freemasonry was revitalised by its young, energetic members, and it expanded its activities in strict secrecy. One of the Masons who remained was Bokeikhanov, as we shall see below.

In February 1910, the Masonic lodges resumed their activities under the name "Grand Orient of Russia's People". Their leader was the new Secretary of the Supreme Council Nekrasov, who had joined the North Star lodge in 1908, one year after he joined the Kadets.

The role of Kadets such as Kolyubakin, Nekrasov and others as reformers and leaders of the Masons is clearly demonstrated by the number of Constitutional Democrats in the ranks of the Masons before and during the February Revolution of 1917. The political importance and power of the Masonic Order resided in the fact that its ranks brought together the most influential leaders and members of all the liberal parties and organisations in Russia: the Mensheviks, the Progressives, the Trudoviks and even, by some reports, Prime Minister Stolypin's "baby" the Octobrists under the leadership of Guchkov. The Masons also attracted non-party but influential social activists, industrialists, businessmen, leaders of religious groups and trade unions. A little later, towards February 1917, the Trudovik Kerensky became their undisputed leader. Thus at the third All-Russian Congress of the Grand Orient of Russia's People, held at the height of the First World War in the summer of 1916, Kerensky was elected General Secretary of the Supreme Council.

Significantly, after North Star was reorganised as the "Grand Orient of Russia's People" in 1910, a lodge called "Roses" was formed within the walls of the Third State Duma itself, comprising members of different party factions. This then passed smoothly over into the Fourth State Duma. In fact, a Mason faction had also existed in the two preceding Dumas. In the winter of 1913-1914, a Military lodge also came into existence.

It is interesting to note that this Military lodge comprised both established generals and "young, promising" junior officers of the Russian army and navy. Mainly due to the patronage of their older Masonic "Brothers" who wore general's stripes, these younger officers often made incredible leaps forward in their military ranks and careers. Later, their names would forever be associated with the bloody events of 1917-1920. They include Lieutenant General Denikin, Lieutenant General Krasnov and Vice-Admiral Kolchak, well known figures in the history of the Revolution, who joined the Masons in 1909 with the rank of army captain or naval lieutenant commander.

The fact that a military lodge was formed also suggests that the Russian Masons did not rule out violent overthrow of the Russian monarchy in order to achieve their ultimate goal. As the émigré historian S. Melgunov writes in his sensational book "The Road to the Palace Coup", the Military lodge under Guchkov played a significant role in preparing the palace coup and the abdication of Nicholas II.⁴³

Thus it would appear that there was indeed a "Masonic conspiracy" prior to February 1917, but not in 1906-1908 when Stolypin's reactionary press was hysterically claiming the existence of a "Jewish-Masonic conspiracy". Moreover, the target of this "Masonic conspiracy" was not Prime Minister Stolypin; the Masons had no involvement whatsoever in his assassination in September 1911. Neither did the Masons have any formal plans for a military coup or forced removal from power of the autocratic ruler Nicholas II. Rather, the idea of a military conspiracy against the Tsar could be said to be hovering in the air in Masonic circles, and even then not until 1915-1916.

For example, Melgunov records a remarkable episode that took place during the initiation into Freemasonry of the Commander of the Finnish Regiment V. Teplov. When one of the "Brothers" asked about his attitude towards plans for the physical removal of the Tsar, Teplov replied without hesitation, "If I am ordered to, I will kill him."

According to the memoirs of another witness, A. Galpern, among the "Brothers" was "a whole host of people, some of them very influential, who were much inclined towards conspiracy." One of these very influential people inclined towards conspiracy was none other than Kerensky, Deputy to the Fourth State Duma in 1912-1917 and General Secretary of the Supreme Council of the Grand Orient of Russia's People in 1916-1917.

But let us return to the "Samara period" in the life and work of Bokeikhanov. Evidently, the restructuring of the Masonic brotherhood in Russia in 1910 with the aim of further strengthening its activities in the coming years coincided with Bokeikhanov's period of exile in Samara from 1908 to 1917.

Moreover, it can be no coincidence that during his exile Bokeikhanov was a frequent visitor to St. Petersburg. From 1908 to 1910 he worked actively in the capital for the magazine "Siberian Questions", and from 1908 to 1917 was listed as a member of the Editorial Board of Brokgauz and Efron's "New Encyclopaedic Dictionary".

It is possible that during his frequent visits to St. Petersburg, Bokeikhanov attended secret meetings or "convents" of the Supreme Council of the Grand Orient of Russia's People. These meetings were usually held in the private safe house of one of the "Brothers" or in the room above the club of the Kadet party "People's Freedom".

But what was Bokeikhanov, the leader of the national liberation movement Alash, doing in the ranks of the Russian Freemasons in the first place? How did he come to be there? These questions are entirely legitimate. I have been asked them in recent years not just by ordinary readers, but by journalists and even academics. Yet the answers are plain to see. I listed them in a publication from 1993-1994, but they bear repeating here in summarised form.

Russia's colonial monarchy represented an insurmountable obstacle to Kazakhs regaining their ancestral lands. The monarchy also lay in the way of the transformation of the empire into a democratic, parliamentary federal state – a cause in whose name all the liberal political forces in Russia in the early twentieth century united under the banner of the Masonic brotherhood. The restoration of Kazakh statehood, even if initially just in the form of national territorial autonomy, was only possible through a radical change in the political system of the empire. The fact that these objectives coincided for Bokeikhanov and the Russian liberal forces was enough in itself to unite them in Freemasonry.

Bokeikhanov thus belonged to the Russian Freemasons not just as the universally recognised leader of the Kazakh national liberation movement, but also as an influential member of the Central Committee of the Russian Constitutional Democratic Party. Moreover Samara, where Bokeikhanov was exiled from 1908 to 1917, had one of the most influential provincial groups of the Kadets, as well as being a provincial centre of the Masonic Order. Kerensky, the most influential member of the Supreme Council of the Grand Orient of Russia's People, made numerous visits to Samara and was elected General Secretary of the Supreme Council less than a year after his last visit to Samara.

According to information provided to the author by the Public Relations department of the KGB (TsOS KGB SSSR) in September 1991, Bokeikhanov met Kerensky on three occasions in Samara: in July 1914, in May 1915, and again in October 1915. Archive documents from Samara received in recent years repeat this information in exactly the same terms, so it would appear that the source of the data is the same: documents from the police department of the Samara province that were later declassified.

However, the archive documents from Samara additionally reveal that Bokeikhanov had the status of "Master" at least in the Samara Masonic lodge. In this capacity he received new "Brothers". For example, the book "The History of Samara" quotes from the recollections of a certain Alexander Elshin, Secretary of the Kadets, in which he describes Bokeikhanov initiating him into the Masons at the house of Prince Kugushev (Photo 5).

Another important detail indicating Bokeikhanov's leading role in the Masons is the fact that the house where the Masonic ritual described by Elshin took place, although belonging to Prince Kugushev, was in fact the home of Bokeikhanov during his years of exile. This is confirmed by the surveillance journal kept by the Tsarist secret police, which even specifies the exact address: 30, Kazanskaya Street.

We may assume that the ritual was attended by both Kerensky, in his capacity as member and head of the delegation of the Supreme Council of the Freemasons in its main location, St. Petersburg, and Bokeikhanov, as "Master" or leader of the local Masonic lodge.

Let us look now in a little more detail at Kerensky. Kerensky had a significant influence on the course of Russian history, for which he was later nicknamed "the Wandering Jew of the Russian Revolution" (the Wandering Jew was a legendary figure who mocked Christ on his way to the cross).

Kerensky's meteoric rise was largely due to chance, to being in the right place at the right time. In May 1912, he was a member of the Manukhin Commission that investigated the Lena Massacre. As a result he was elected to the Fourth State Duma for the Trudovik Party that same year. He used the Duma as a platform for the struggle against Tsarist autocracy and, at the time of the February Revolution, was the undisputed leader of the Duma. His Masonic connections helped him here: the Masonic lodge "Roses" actively functioned within the Duma from 1910.

To reiterate briefly the main goal of the Masonic Order of Russia, it was not just to unify and coordinate the progressive forces that aimed for the overthrow of the autocracy. It was also, as Elshin writes, "to oppose the gang of Lenin and Bronshtein, who are Satanists and who possess secret knowledge about how to control people, which they use to evil ends, and whose services have been engaged by the enemies of Russia." In other words, the progressive forces within Russia already knew about Lenin's cooperation with Germany at the height of the First World War, benefitting Germany and going against the interests of his own country. The Moscow-based military historian S. Volkov states that Lenin's position with regard to his own country during the First World War is most accurately described as one of "state treason".

It is interesting to note that in the various memoirs, recollections and studies by Russian immigrants and foreign academics from the 1930s to the 1960s, as well as in more recent academic works from the current century, the Kazakh leader's name appears in a number of different forms, including "Bukeikhanov", "Bukkeykhanov" and, most often, "Bukei-Khanov". We should recall that his open letter to the deputies of the State Duma, quoted further above, was signed "Bukei-Khanov". The question naturally arises of whether, by signing himself "Bukei-Khanov", he was not directly addressing as a member of the Masonic brotherhood those deputies who had formed the Roses lodge, which was particularly influential in the Fourth State Duma. The answer, I believe, is self-evident.

The Russian historian Startsev argues that "Russian political Masons played a major role in strengthening the revolutionary situation in late 1916 and early 1917; they were the first to make use of the results of the spontaneous uprising of February 27, 1917. The secret political union exerted its greatest influence in Russia in the eight months following the February Revolution. The number of political Masons in the Provisional Government grew continuously."

The initial make-up of the "government of national confidence" was drawn up and discussed in detail at a meeting of representatives of the Duma liberal factions in 1916. This meeting took place in the room of G.E. Lvov in the Astoria Hotel in St. Petersburg.

According to L. Chermak, whose recollections appeared under the title "My time as a Mason" in the Kazakh magazine "Prostor", no fewer than six different lists of candidates for the future democratic government were drawn up in 1915-1916. These preliminary lists of members, or rather plans for the membership of the future provisional government, were referred to in Masonic documents as "Plan No. 1", "Plan No. 2", and so on. According to the Soviet historian A. Avrekh, a specialist in the history of Russian Freemasonry in the early twentieth century, there were no fewer than three such "Plan Nos." prior to the Revolution, but certainly not as many as six.

The final version of the distribution of ministerial portfolios was discussed on the night of March 2, 1917, having received the full approval of the joint meeting of the delegations of the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Committee of the State Duma. The only really new person on the list was Kerensky, who a few months later would bring the provisional but truly democratic government of Russia – the first of its kind – to its knees, thereby creating all the conditions necessary for the Bolsheviks to seize power.

In conclusion, it only remains to be said that the "Samara period" in the life and work of Bukeikhan, the future founder and leader of the Alash Autonomy, ended with the February Revolution, which led to his appointment as Commissar of the Provisional Government in the Turgay region in March 1917.

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