

National liberation struggle of Kazakh people: development of historical thought and a process of decolonization in the modern stage

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Abstract: A problem of decolonization process development in the modern period in Kazakhstan is considered in this article in the light of national and liberation wars and movements of Kazakh people. Modern state independence of Kazakh people is not a historical fortuity but a determined historical process reached during centuries-old anti-colonial struggle that was determined by typology and periodization of national and liberation wars and movements of Kazakh people. The problem of decolonization is brought up to date at this work. The problem of decolonization is one of the most undeveloped one in historiography of Kazakhstan because the historical science of Kazakhstan developed close to Russian one and later - in the Soviet historical tradition for some period of time; according to it the USSR was not considered as an empire and Kazakhstan – as a colony. That is why the article is one of the first attempts of national historiography problems related to the process of decolonization determination and coloration. Not only a tendency of decolonization in Kazakhstan but also some problems related to historical thought of Kazakhstan development were elicited in the research.

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1. Introduction

A revival of interest to national history of Kazakhstan is noticed today. This interest is not an attempt to leave modernity but it was dictated with other reasons. It is shown the best with the words of A. Y. Gurevich who wrote that to know modern state of affairs and to orient in the world it was necessary to find a stable basis in the both near and remote past of the world and own country's history [1].

The necessity of conceptual apparatus of historical science renewal substantially, some conceptual questions' reconsideration, the research problematic expansion have appeared lately. But new trends of historical science, new approaches, new methods allowing to penetrate deeper into historical reality of Kazakh people detection is the most important today. They will permit to leave flatness of history, of insignificant publications, of traditionalism in problem statement, of fear in historical questions' researching from other perspective. In other words, only in this case we shall be able to prevent symptoms of decline in the history of our country.

More than twenty-two years have passed after the USSR collapse and new sovereign states' formation. And only now it is shown up that national independence of the state had been more than three hundred years in orbit of Russian empire and it has not consolidated in modern public's mind of Kazakhstan. A system of orientation to modern Independent Kazakhstan as to colony may still exist in the mind of former parent state. This circumstance is a great problem especially for

development of modern integration processes on the post-Soviet territory. The trends of the historical and geo-political directions where the researchers relying to convenient for them facts of historical past without detailed analyses give opinion about political untenability of Kazakhstan today play the important role.

On the basis of it, we try to deny these authors' arguments in our publication on example of problems related to national and liberation fight of Kazakh people consideration. The development of historical thought in general that has been surviving a period related to a process of decolonization in Kazakhstan is brightly traced during this question research.

By turn, the problem of decolonization on the post-Soviet territory is one of the scantily-investigated aspects in modern national historiography. The problem is rather extensive and it covers all spheres of social life including the historical thought itself. On the basis of it, our aim is the process of decolonization at the modern stage consideration through a light of national wars and movements of Kazakh people.

The necessity of the research in this direction is conditioned with theoretical and methodological character of the problem. The problem of decolonization at the modern stage is closely connected to the most important aspect of historiography methodology – the fact of historiography – which is an original material for historiography art. We lean on historiography works and a wide circle of Kazakh history research published

both in our republic and abroad, especially in Russia, during the period of getting its independence. The peculiar role of historical science in the process of state ideology formation was mentioned by the researchers during the Soviet period [2].

This circumstance in its turn elicits the necessity of the modern research studying that reflects the development of historical thought. The extraneous features of pre-revolution, Soviet and modern periods' historiography facts characterized with different scientific approach that take place at almost all Kazakh people history researches of the last twenty-two years. That is why the theme of the research is actual both in cognitive and practical aspects.

The problem of national and liberation wars and movements is one of the actual items in modern historiography of our country and there is not a historian whose pen didn't write about the question disclosing different aspects of anti-colonial fight. It is necessary to note that the problem of national movements in the period of administrative command system studying was not successful in spite of Soviet historical science development in frames of hard diktat of the party. So, two extreme positions existed for colonial captures and national movements' coverage. On the one hand, the old great-power colonial concept tried to save previous guidelines in historical science, on the other hand young Marxist ideology tried to strengthen own position in Kazakh history problems studying. In the last analysis, in spite of mentioned above positions' confrontation, Soviet historians of Kazakhstan have inherited historical literature represented with bourgeois official historians [3].

The problem of national and liberation wars of Kazakh people for independence has become an object of some Soviet historians' scientific researches. A. F. Ryazanov [4], M.P.Vyatkin [5], E. B. Bekmakhanov [6], V. F. Shahmatov [7], A. Yakunin [8], A. H. Margulan [9] and others have made valuable contribution to anti-colonial movements of Kazakh people in Soviet period research.

We mark out two types of sources about this question in historiography of our country. The first source is represented with works written during the period of independence where national historical idea development is inside the process of decolonization and they are mainly directed to historical memory restoration and state sovereignty strengthening. The second block of sources is the works where different aspects of social and political development of Kazakhstan in the decolonization process contest are examined. Unfortunately, there are not many works like these and we are able to make an example of the only publication of a researcher A. Galy [10], so we shall pay attention to this situation later.

2. Material and Methods

The philosophy of scientific cognition in historical science of Kazakh people history was taken as methodology and method of research. The methods of analyses and syntheses in historiography and source studying critics, comparative historical, retrospective, synchronous, problem and chronological and other ones making a total chain of cognitive historiographer's work were used for the greater fruitfulness achievement. Historical and comparative and historical and system methods should be marked out among the methods of special and historical character. According to the goal and the objective, the historical and typological method was used for the types of anti-colonial struggle of Kazakh people determination which shows interdependence of single, peculiar, common and general. Studying the historical events, we discover some common space-singular and phased-similar in constant temporal development. A chance of moving the research to a new level of studying is expected on the basis of the methods.

3. Results

Historical examples of struggle for maintenance and reinstatement of national Kazakhstan statehood have rather vast chronological outline and cover all period of Kazakh-Russian relationship. This process had lasted for some centuries and had included a period of time from the XVIII-th century till the last quarter of the XX-th century.

Parallel on a world scale it also was the process of colonization and decolonization. The process of decolonization has begun from English colonies' getting sovereignty in America and declaration of the USA independence. Next, the population of Spain and Portuguese colonies in South America started the struggle for independence in the XIX-th century. And as a result of it there were fifteen states on the territory of South and North America by the end of the 20-s years of the XIX-th century. The process of decolonization in Asia and Africa started in the XX-th century and finished by the 40-s years.

Great Britain has admitted part of its colonies as dominions and has widened with it their rights to mother country during the process of decolonization in the middle of the last century. Then such countries as France and Belgium have also revised their attitude to colonies and the last African colony – Namibia – had got its political independence by 1989 year. English colony Hong Kong in 1997-th year and Portuguese enclave Macao in 1999-th have proceeded to Chinese jurisdiction. So the process of decolonization that had started in New time was finished on a world scale.

Nevertheless we consider that it is necessary to widen chronological and geographical frames of the

decolonization process. Notably, geopolitical important events of the 1991-th year, USSR collapse and fifteen new sovereign states on the territory of Eurasia formation should be included in the process of decolonization.

Colonization of Kazakh khanate was always lighted as “addition of the Kazakhs’ territory where nomads roam” to Russian empire in the tradition of tsar and Soviet periods later. This tradition allowed to diffuse borders of the colonization process and the historical thought itself was in full directed to people’s historical “obliteration”. The concept of Kazakhstan annexation to Russian empire from the point of view as “the lesser evil” has step by step become firmly established in historiography that was finally fixed in the 1995-th year at the conference devoted to the history of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in pre-revolutionary period [11]. Some national historiography representatives’ attempts to prove the real state were admitted as elements of dissident “bourgeois, national-deviational” trend and life and creative activity of E. Bekmakhanov and other social scientists were as an example [12]. Accordingly, the scientific studying of the problems related to national and liberation movements and wars of the Kazakh from the position of materialistic concept, evaluating them as “feudal-monarchical” [13], “reactionary” [14] greeted in totalitarian Soviet historical science.

There were some examples in the Soviet period in historiography when “the intentional anti-cattle-breeding colonial politics” [15] was considered as a conquest. P. G. Galuso in his article was the first to consider national and liberation movement in Central Asia “in era of Russian conquest” and put the question about anti-colonial character of Mangyshlak population’s movement in the 1870-th year and covered some its aspects [16].

At large, the author saw the only goal of all national and liberation movements in Kazakhstan and Central Asia – the struggle with Russian conquest [17]. He saw colonial politics and all national movements in Central Asia in this view. Nevertheless, ideological atmosphere of totalitarian society did not lay the author aside. P. Galuso divulged the questions from the point of view of the progressiveness of Kazakhstan and Central Asia conquest by Russia at his works.

Some Russian researchers have already admitted the fact that the USSR was a colonial empire and they have also put a question concerning many countries of the former USSR, especially related to Central Asia and that the struggle of national movements for self-determination it was necessary to consider within the scope of anti-colonial struggle. It is necessary to justice to Russian researchers who suppose that British and French colonies were separated from mother country with the seas but it was

only the geographical nuance which might not be considered as a reason of colonial character of Soviet statehood denial [18]. But this difference has determined Russian methods of colonization as opposed to England – step by step widening of its boards. Firstly, defenses were constructed along the borders, later they were populated by Cossacks and by soldierly garrisons and when the nomads protested it was demanded to stop “holdup” and Russian citizens’ capture and to concede equal rights for Russian merchants. Usually, after these “peaceful” measures punitive expeditions were sent to Kazakh steppe and “the necessity of Russian territory widening” was substantiated [19].

This point of view has formed two opposite opinions of Russian authors who do not attribute the anti-colonial struggle of the Kazakh to national movement and downgrade the role of the movements disputing the statehood of Kazakh people prevailed in scientific sphere of Russian science [endnote 20, 21, 22, 23, 24].

Such kind of position has taken vast development in works of Russian authors devoted to Eurasian historical aspect. Nowadays, modern Russian scientists continue discussing a problem of Kazakhstan annexation to territory of Russia and they deduce three geopolitical alternatives: China-centric, Turkestan and Russian one. And the last one is considered a rather effective one which creation of new multi-national and poly-ethnic empire establishment has contributed [25, p.21].

That is why it is clear enough that a necessity of new political organization creation will be grounded on reasons of the same “geopolitical cases” but instead of “Turkestan” alternative the “Islamic factor” will be used for deterrent by different researchers including Russian ones.

The problem of national and liberation movements both in tsar period and in Soviet time was under the peculiar control and did not agree with official state “colonial” ideology. There was not a special agency to supervise colonial territories in Russia as the ministry of colonies in England did. These questions were within military ministry jurisdiction in Russian empire that did not even give a chance to use a word “colony” in future [19].

Consequently, Russian empire and of the USSR later were afraid of the empire collapse because of ethnic and territory reasons and everything both possible and impossible was done to avoid these processes: policy of Russification, a complex of measures for historical nation obliteration, national intellectuals and national elite repression in particular.

It is impossible to disagree with a point of view that socialist regime is an artificial system that is why power and forced methods and neglect to the

representations of colonized people exhibited. This idea was shown by K. Popper who proved the totalitarian essence of Soviet state. According to his opinion, large-scaled repressions were the immanent characteristics of Soviet state. In other words, the socialist state could remain for some time only thanks to its people mass repressions [26].

So it is necessary to admit and to take into consideration the established political “colonial ideology” of the empire framed-up under the humanistic idea “about the role of Russia in movement of civilization to Asia and to the East” [27, 28, 29, 30]. After downfall of a tsar regime this colonial ideology did not disappear but was used by Bolsheviks and so the alien ethno political demonstration extermination methods and mechanisms have remained the same.

Therein, decolonization has become an objective and predefined process. The process is a result of national and liberation wars and movements of Kazakh people which have begun since the XVIII-th century and continued till the end of the XX-th one. Modern national historiography admits that independence of Kazakhstan was gained in the result of Kazakh people age-old struggle. There are five stages of national and liberation wars and movements and accordingly there are five types of anti-colonial protest in history [31].

The first type: the movements were aimed at traditional lifestyle and management protection and maintenance (movements of Sarym, Aryngazy, Kaipkali).

The protests of the second stage were in the form of nostalgic efforts for political independence in traditional steppe state’s restoration (anti-colonial activity of G. Valikhanov, Sarzhan and Kenesary Kasymov).

The third form is new colonial reforms’ rejection where the generating factor of people’s dissatisfaction growth was land and fiscal tsar policy in Kazakhstan (struggle of Zholaman, Eset, Zhankhozhi batyrs and spontaneous actions of 1869-1870 years, war of 1916 year).

The struggle has got transformation features in the fourth period; it was an effort to change existed system with political methods what was typical for “Alash” movement. There were not nostalgic efforts for traditional statehood restoration here, a term “Alash” was a main idea for total Kazakh ethnos political consolidation. This type of struggle is characterized with its idea’s and form’s investigation by the intellectual elite of the Kazakh. It should be marked that tsarism’s overthrow by Bolsheviks has put a range of difficult goals for the representatives of national intellectuals. If the representatives of national intellectuals identified the process of Kazakh struggle for the statehood with the tide of all national

movement of Turkish people development before the 1917-th year than the events of February have seriously adjusted the ideas of national intelligence in side of the further Kazakh statehood development. In the light of these events, the creative intelligence politicization process has moved faster that has given an opportunity to come an idea of Kazakh people’s unity around the idea of Alash out.

The fifth period of national and liberation struggle was during the period of Soviet power establishment and its existence in Kazakhstan. There were protest movements of the Kazakh at the period of “dispossession of the kulaks” and “collectivization” [32], of the Kazakhs’ moving to China and Mongolia, of scientific and creative activity of the intellectuals (E. Bekmakhnov’s case, “Zar-zaman” poets’ persecution), of different movements activity (Zhas tulpar and others), of the events of 1979 year in modern Akmolinsk region, of the events of 1986 year. After opened armed clashes and the Kazakhs’ moving out the USSR borders in 1930 year, the national and liberation movement has got its hidden character and its apogee has become an opened protest of Kazakh youth in 1986 year.

So, the historical factor was an importance for national statehood where the spirit of the statehood, supported with old-aged struggle against war-colonial Russian empire expansion kept in historical memory of people, generated new ideas and forces for the statehood struggle.

Mentioned above facts in full contradict the statement that modern independence of Kazakhstan is purely random “historical event”. This statement was reflected in works of such Russian geopoliticians as A. Dugin and others in frameworks of “post-imperial legitimacy” theory. We consider that we should mention that our society has been suffering with post-imperial syndrome in relationship with former mother country in period of decolonization. But the utility of post-imperial discourse is disputed by Russian researchers nowadays.

We promised in the prologue of the research that we should deal with a reason of practical scientific works in a problem of Kazakh society decolonization deficiency.

To our opinion, this situation was dictated with some reasons. At first, after the USSR collapse, historiographers of our country paid attention to historical memory of people regeneration. A lot of work has been done for twenty-two years and it has been continuing in this direction. Secondly, economic development has become a main problem of the society after independence acquisition. Thirdly, historians were not able to give an objective appraisal for running events because a full picture of the process was necessary for it. And the fourth circumstance,

marked by a researcher A. Galy, it was a struggle with national-deviators which was popular in the Soviet period of time and has come to independent Kazakhstan with all its attributes.

It should be marked, that this process had some demonstrations. Firstly, all researchers have paid their attention to the past and to the total revision of Kazakh and Russian relationship history where many scientists had to keep silent about historical truth for a long time to please of ideology, and an opportunity for a modern scientist to objective valuation and tsar and Soviet regime in all “its deeds” criticizing was opened up.

Secondly, the scientists’ efforts to avoid the modern processes of our society were marked by some representatives of the intellectuals as a consequence of “slave psychology” demonstration. Most probably, this situation was necessitated with atmosphere of nationalistic factor suppression proceeded from the Soviet state to sovereign Kazakhstan. Mostly, “slave psychology” affects on condition of life in our society. Perhaps, it should be marked, that the everyday consciousness of the society is a result of state ideology expression.

The public of the 1990-th years knew the methods of struggle with “national deviators” in Soviet period very well. This circumstance was marked out in the article of the modern historiographer A. Galy, where the author mentioned that “the history of power struggle with nationalism is the last page of the empire’s struggle with national-deviations. But this struggle has come into the struggle with the same factors in independent Kazakhstan. This struggle was some kind of extreme. The power of independent Kazakhstan did not imprison but restrained with disapproval and had publicly started a flirtation with an idea of neo-Eurasian. Kazakh elite was able to destroy old production relations - administrative command economy - and to create new market society and new institutions but the successful economical development was accompanied with the decolonization process braking and with the «Қазақ тілі қоғамы» struggle (Kazakh language society) on places” [10].

We undoubtedly accept and “use” the ideas based on historical, cultural and geographical closeness. But sometimes, considering these ideas, we overlook or do not “notice” the fact that they are mainly formatted or in other words ordered for political processes. Today some scientific circles, reasoning about fortune of Eurasia in Eurasian theory frameworks, throw into the society the ideas about “Great Kazakhstan” [for example 33], “panturkizm”’s revival, the ideas of turanism or panturanism - “Great Turan” - formation [25]. To our opinion, these ideas are only “illusions” at this period of time because

modern Kazakh people need pass in full the decolonization processes in framework of existing state borders where the ethnic, national and religious factors would be the basis for statehood development. These factors move every ideological demonstration out of the national borders of the republic aside.

The decolonization process has also touched the migratory processes on the post-Soviet space. Firstly, it is representatives of non-indigenous ethnoses outflow to its historical homeland: the Russians, the Germans and so on. This process is objective and historical one in frames of decolonization so our society should not treat it painfully. This situation develops in frames of national interests for Russia where there is a process of changing the course from post-imperial state to national one and notably the task is to gather together the Russians within the administrative borders of Russia and not to support the compatriots with any ideas about the empire restoration abroad. Obviously, our society should think over the labor migration starting for our compatriots living out of Kazakhstan’s borders. The decolonization process has brought especially significant success to spiritual culture of the Kazakhs’ revival. The state program “Cultural heritage” has strengthened in the public’s mind an idea about Kazakhstan as about an independent state.

At large, the decolonization process has “spontaneously” touched all spheres of state life in our society. But the process passes under the aegis of two directions: the role of state language and the national history revival. It has touched an educational sphere, the problems of Kazakh language, people’s historical memory restoration that includes studying and a great interest to national verbal historical tradition apparent, legendary heroes’ names search in historical past of the people and their rebirth, problems related to ethnic geography that was renamed in Soviet era in order to people’s historical obliteration. This question is tightly connected to an important problem of the state importance – the ethnical history of the Kazakhs formation.

4. Discussions

At large, it has been revealed that the decolonization problem in Kazakhstan research covers different historiography traditions; that is why brought up to date problem has theoretical and methodological character.

It has been proved that colonial ideology allowing to wash Kazakhstan’s borders away had become firmly established in pre-revolution and Soviet historiography and it had determined the potential of historical processes falsification that was necessary for Kazakh people historical processes obliteration.

It was determined that there is a direction in

modern Russian historiography which does not recognize the anti-colonial struggle of Kazakh people. Such kind of statements is shown in the works of Russian authors who consider the history of Kazakhstan in Eurasian frameworks aspect. Disputing about the problem of Kazakhstan's "joining" to Russia they mark out three geopolitical alternatives: China-centric, Turkistan's and Russian one. It is possible that some categories may resort to these geopolitical alternatives in the condition of modern political institution in Eurasian scale necessity creation where instead of "Turkistan" direction as "overbalancing" factor will be suggested the "Islamic" one.

By means of periodization and types of national and liberation struggle of Kazakh people determination it was proved that today's independence of Kazakhstan was not a "historical contingency". The process is a result of national and liberation wars and movements of Kazakh people which have begun since the XVIII-th century and lasted till the end of the XX-th one. And USSR disintegration and new sovereign states on the territory of Eurasia formation was in decolonization process frameworks.

It was ascertained, that the decolonization process has spontaneously been expressed by two directions: state language development and interest to national history revival. These directions had mostly suffered in Soviet epoch and were the objects of high attention and were one of the basic elements of historical examples about Kazakh statehood of people removal.

It is important for the decolonization process in Kazakhstan to touch the political sphere of CIS countries relation. Today the independence has been gaining a bit conditional character in the term of widening market world. There is not a state on a world scale where there is not a premise of ethnical, religious and other "breakings", threatening to the sovereign of the country. Today's events in different countries of the world testify to it. Such country as Egypt, having the thousand-year history of the state development, has found itself in captivity of political instability and social devastation. That is why our young state's independence should be strengthened with all possible methods. And it is necessary to implement into consciousness not only of our people but also of the representatives of political elite of former mother country that independence of Kazakhstan is an objective and historical established process. It is necessary to embrace all spheres of the state with the decolonization process. And only having endured decolonization, we are able to get rid of many social and state today's problems.

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