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ALASH ORDA'S SOVEREIGN FOREIGN POLICY: NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK DELEGATION (1918-1920)

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The article examines newly declassified judicial and investigative materials from the archives of Kazakhstan, Russia, and Japan, as well as the Kazakh periodical press of 1917-1920, which introduce into scholarly circulation previously unknown pages of the history of the National Autonomous Republic of Alash and its government, the Council of Alash Orda. *Objective and Tasks.* It is demonstrated that as a result of the collapse of the Russian Empire in January 1918, Alash was transformed into a sovereign republic, and its leadership in 1918-1920 sought recognition of its statehood and independence both within the post-imperial space and by the international community. *Materials and Methods.* The sources include declassified documents from domestic and foreign archives, as well as periodical press. The research employs comparative-historical, historical-retrospective, historical-genetic, historical-typological, and systemic methods of analysis. *Results.* Special attention is paid to the contradiction between the decisions of the Kazakh congresses (kurultais) of 1917 and the program of the Alash party, which proclaimed a federal structure for Russia, and the practical actions of the Council of Alash Orda, aimed at distancing itself from Russia and seeking foreign policy support. The Council of Alash Orda actively interacted with the governments of Turkestan and Bashkiria, undertaking diplomatic initiatives and appealing for military and political assistance from foreign states. The first of these was the Czechoslovak Republic, formed in October 1918 after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. *Conclusions.* New sources open up the prospect of revisiting traditional assessments of the political strategy of Alash Orda and its role in the formation of

Kazakh statehood. They demonstrate that, having grown disillusioned with the idea of federation, the leadership of Alash Orda sought recognition of independence through appeals to foreign states, the first of which was the Czechoslovak Republic.

Keywords: History of Kazakhstan, Alash autonomy, transformation into a republic, «Alash» army, Geography of Central Asia, Military Council, Czecho-Slovak Corps, uprising against the Bolsheviks, anti-Bolshevik autonomies, Czecho-Slovak Consulate, negotiations in Vladivostok, military-technical assistance, evacuation from Russia.

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АЛАШ ОРДА ҮКІМЕТІНІҢ ЕГЕМЕН СЫРТҚЫ САЯСАТЫ: ЧЕХОСЛОВАКИЯ ӨКІЛДІГІМЕН КЕЛІССӨЗДЕР (1918-1920)

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Аннотация: *Кіріспе.* Мақалада Қазақстан, Ресей және Жапония архивтерінен табылған жаңа құпиясыздандырылған сот-тергеу материалдары, сондай-ақ 1917-1920 жж. қазақ мерзімді баспасөзі қарастырылып, Алаш ұлттық автономиялық республикасы мен оның үкіметі – Алаш Орда Кеңесінің тарихындағы бүрін ғылыми айналымға енгізілмеген беттері зерттеледі. *Мақсаты мен міндеттері.* Ресей империясының 1918 жылғы қаңтардағы құйреуі нәтижесінде Алаш тәуелсіз республикаға айналғаны, ал оның басшылығы 1918-1920 жж. постимпериялық кеңістікте де, халықаралық қауымдастық деңгейінде де өз мемлекеттілігі мен тәуелсіздігін мойыннатуға ұмтылғаны көрсетілді. *Материалдар мен әдістер.* Дереккөз ретінде отандық және шетелдік архивтердің құпиясыздандырылған құжаттары, сондай-ақ мерзімді басылымдар пайдаланылды. Зерттеуде салыстырмалы-тарихи, тарихи-ретроспективтік, тарихи-генетикалық, тарихи-типологиялық және жүйелік талдау әдістері қолданылды. *Нәтижелер.* 1917 жылғы қазақ құрылтайларының Ресейдің федеративтік құрылымын жариялаған шешімдері мен «Алаш» партиясының бағдарламасы және Алаш Орда Кеңесінің Ресейден оқшаулануға, сыртқы саяси қолдау іздеуге бағытталған іс-әрекеттері арасындағы қайшылықтарға ерекше көңіл бөлінді. Алаш Орда Кеңесі Түркістан мен Башқұртстан

ұқіметтерімен белсенді байланыс орнатып, дипломатиялық қадамдар жасап, шетел мемлекеттерінен әскери және саяси көмек сұрады. Солардың алғашқыларының бірі Австро-Венгрия империясының күйреуінен кейін 1918 жылдың қазан айында құрылған Чехословакия Республикасы болды. *Корытынды*. Жаңа деректер Алаш Орда саяси стратегиясына және оның қазақ мемлекеттілігінің қалыптасуындағы рөліне қатысты дәстүрлі бағаларды қайта қаруға мүмкіндік береді. Олар федерация идеясынан көнілі қалған Алаш Орда басшылығының тәуелсіздікті мойындау үшін шетел мемлекеттеріне жүгінгенін, ал олардың ішінде алғашқысының Чехословакия Республикасы болғанын дәлелдейді.

Түйін сөздер: Қазақстан тарихы, Алаш автономиясы, егеменді республика, «Алаш» армиясы, Орталық Азия географиясы, Әскери кенес, Чехо-Словакия корпусы, большевиктерге қарсы көтеріліс, антибольшевиктік автономиялар, Чехо-Словакия консулдығы, Владивостоктағы келіссөздер, әскери-техникалық көмек, Ресейден эвакуациялау.

Алғыс. Мақала ҚР Ғылым және жогары білім министрлігінің Ғылым комитетінің қаржылық қолдауымен, БНҚ BR28713777 «Қазақстанның тарихы мен географиясына қатысты жаңа деректер: талдау, аударма және ғылыми айналымға енгізу» жобасы аясында дайындалды.

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СУВЕРЕННАЯ ВНЕШНЯЯ ПОЛИТИКА АЛАШ ОРДЫ: ПЕРЕГОВОРЫ С ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВОМ ЧЕХОСЛОВАКИИ (1918-1920 гг.)

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Аннотация. *Введение.* В статье рассматриваются новые рассекреченные судебно-следственные материалы из архивов Казахстана, России и Японии, а также казахская периодическая печать 1917-1920 гг., которые вводят в научный оборот ранее неизвестные страницы истории Национальной автономной республики Алаш и её правительства – Совета Алаш Орды. *Цель и задачи.* Показано, что вследствие распада Российской империи в январе 1918 г. Алаш трансформировался в суверенную республику, а её руководство в 1918-1920 гг. стремилось к признанию собственной государственности и независимости как в постимперском пространстве, так и международным сообществом. *Материалы и методы.* В качестве источников использованы рассекреченные документы отечественных и зарубежных архивов, а также периодическая печать. Применялись сравнительно-исторический, историко-ретроспективный, историко-генетический, историко-типологический и системный методы анализа. *Результаты.* Особое внимание уделено противоречию между решениями казахских курултаев 1917 г. и программой партии «Алаш», провозглашавшими

федеративное устройство России, и практическими действиями Совета Алаш Орда, направленными на обособление от России и поиск внешнеполитической поддержки. Совет Алаш Орды активно взаимодействовал с правительствами Туркестана и Башкирии, предпринимая дипломатические шаги и обращаясь за военной и политической помощью к иностранным государствам. Первым из них стала Чехословацкая Республика, образованная в октябре 1918 г. после распада Австро-Венгерской империи. *Выводы.* Новые источники открывают перспективу пересмотра традиционных оценок политической стратегии Алаш Орды и её роли в становлении казахской государственности. Они свидетельствуют о том, что разочаровавшись в идее федерации, руководство Алаш Орды стремилось к признанию независимости через обращения к иностранным государствам, первым из которых стала Чехословацкая Республика.

Ключевые слова: история Казахстана, автономия Алаш, трансформация в республику, армия «Алаш», география Центральной Азии, Военный совет, чехословацкий корпус, восстание против большевиков, антибольшевистские автономии, консульство Чехословакии, переговоры во Владивостоке, военно-техническая помощь, эвакуация из России.

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Introduction. Representatives of the Kazakh democratic intelligentsia clearly understood that the revival of a national state in the form of a republic in conditions of dependence on Russia was impossible without relying on external political forces, economic support and, most importantly, close cooperation in military matters. Therefore, R. Marsek's trip to Vladivostok under the guise of an official business trip on economic issues of the Semipalatinsk regional Zemstvo administration was not accidental. In fact, this trip was undertaken on the instructions of the Chairman of the Alash Orda Council, A.N. Bukeykhan, conveyed to R. Marsek through members of Alash Orda, A. Ermek (Ermekov) and Kh. Gabbas (Gabbasov). These and other details of this trip became known from his testimony to the NKVD investigator. In particular, R. Marsek briefly mentioned in his statements a meeting with the Consul of Czechoslovakia, the commander of the American Expeditionary Corps in Vladivostok, and the American envoy to Japan. He provided a more detailed account only of his visit to the Japanese General Consulate.

A written appeal from the Provisional People's Council (Government) of Alash Orda to the Government of Japan, discovered by the Japanese researcher Ryosuke Ono in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan's diplomatic history, as well as the testimony of a prominent figure of the Kazakh national liberation movement and the Alash party, former chairman of the Semipalatinsk Regional Zemstvo Administration Raimzhan Marsek (Raimdzhan Marsekov), given to the NKVD investigator on April 26, 1938, preserved in the Specialized State Archive of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, require a fundamental reconsideration of the history of the Alash Republic and the activities of its Alash Orda government during 1918–1920.

It is evident that the NKVD investigators did not attach much importance to R. Marsek's negotiations with the Consul of Czechoslovakia, the U.S. envoy to Japan, and the commander of the U.S. expeditionary forces in the Far East, and did not seek to clarify the details. Judging by the interrogation protocol, the investigators were primarily interested in the purpose of his visit to the Japanese General Consulate, the nature and content of his conversation with the Japanese Vice-Consul, and his contacts with Japanese representatives in China [SA KNB RK. F.9. Op.1. D.305. LL. 193-210, 228-233]. It is worth noting that Czechoslovakia, as one of the 33 states that emerged after the defeat of the Central Powers, also participated in the international peace conference held in Paris. This conference, convened by the victorious powers of the First World War (1914–1918), aimed to draft and sign peace treaties with the defeated states. It took place from January 18, 1919, to January 21, 1920. Presumably, R. Marsek, like the Alash Orda Council, did not place significant hopes on the military and political support of Czechoslovakia, which was established only at the very end of the First World War – in October 1918 – following the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire [Saryarqa, 1918. №59: 2-3]. Nevertheless, the young Czechoslovak state had the opportunity to provide critically important military assistance to the Alash Orda Council in its struggle against the undeclared but de facto intervention of Soviet authorities. This support could have taken the form

of supplying weapons to the nascent national army of Alash Orda. There were solid grounds for appealing to the Czechoslovak consulate for arms and ammunition.

According to the testimony of R. Marsek during the preliminary investigation, upon arriving in Vladivostok at the beginning of 1919 together with two former members of the Provisional Government of Siberian Autonomy – the Speaker of the Siberian Duma, I. A. Yakushev, and the State Secretary of the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia, V. I. Moravsky – they «first visited the Czechoslovak consul and explained to him the purpose [...] of their visit» [SA KNB RK. F.9. Op.1. D.305. L.193].

Judging by the fact that R. Marsek visited the Czechoslovak diplomat «first and foremost», the meeting (negotiations) with the Czechoslovak consul was a priority task for Alash Orda, taking precedence over subsequent negotiations with representatives of the United States and Japan. Marsek had planned to visit the Japanese General Consulate in Vladivostok only «as a last resort».

During the negotiations with the Czechoslovak consul, he stated that the entire Siberian population, including the Kazakhs, did not wish to be governed by A. Kolchak, whom the Alash Orda Council believed aimed to restore the monarchy overthrown in Russia. He urged the consul not to support such a government. «All these individuals», R. Marsek asserted, concluding his testimony about the meeting with the Czechoslovak consul, «to whom we spoke, received us favorably and promised to convey our request to their respective governments» [SA KNB RK. F.9. Op.1. D.305. L.193]. However, among all of R. Marsek's meetings with representatives of foreign states, this article will analyze specifically the aims, objectives, and circumstances of his visit to the Czechoslovak Consulate.

Materials and methods. In the present article, declassified materials from both domestic Kazakh and foreign archives have been employed as primary sources, including those of the State Archive of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan (formerly the KGB of the Kazakh SSR), the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (formerly the KGB of the USSR), the State Archive of the Russian Federation, as well as the Archive of Diplomatic History of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan [JACAR. B03. 051221900. URL: 26-30], materials were also drawn from collections of Kazakh periodical press and Russian newspapers of the early twentieth century (such as *Qazaq*, *Saryarqa*, *Svobodnaya rech'*, *Russkaya armiya*, the journal *Abai*, among others), as well as from collected works of a number of leaders of the Kazakh national movement Alash in the early twentieth century. Among the listed primary sources, the greatest scholarly value for the present study is represented by the testimonies of the founder and leader of the Alash national movement, former Chairman of the Provisional National Council (Government) of Alash Orda, A.N. Bukeikhan, preserved in the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation; those of Raimzhan, a prominent figure of the Alash movement and former head of the Semipalatinsk Regional Zemstvo Administration, preserved in the State Archive of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan; as well as documents from the Archive of Diplomatic History of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, first discovered in 2021. Archival materials from the SA KNB RK (Special Archive of the Committee for National Security of the Republic of Kazakhstan), the AP RK (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan), the TsA FSB RF (Central Archive of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation), the GARF (State Archive of the Russian Federation), along with publications from the Kazakh and Russian periodical press of 1917-1919 (such as *Qazaq*, *Saryarqa*, *Svobodnaya rech'*, *Russkaya armiya*, and others), as well as a range of studies by contemporary Russian scholars, were also employed in the present research.

In the course of this study, a comparative analysis was conducted of the testimonies of A.N. Bukeikhan and R. Marsek during the NKVD investigation concerning the de facto sovereign foreign policy of the Alash Orda Council in 1917-1920, whose primary objectives were the recognition of the de facto statehood and independence of the Alash Republic, the establishment of bilateral diplomatic, trade-economic, and cultural relations, as well as the provision of military-political support.

The present research employed comparative-historical, historical-retrospective, historical-genetic, historical-typological, and historical-systemic methods of examining the stated problem. General scientific methods, including analysis, synthesis, and logical reasoning, were also applied. Undoubtedly, the methodological foundation in reconstructing cultural-historical processes lies in the principle of historicism, which regards the past as an objective reality to be comprehended.

Discussion. Several aspects discussed in this article had already been examined and emphasized in publications dating back to as early as 1910. In that year, A.N. Bukeikhan published an essay analyzing the forms of national movements in contemporary states [Bukeikhan, 1910: 577-600]. The issues of

transforming the Alash Autonomy into a sovereign state were addressed by E.K. Nurpeisov and S.A. Jusip [Nurpeisov, Jusip, 2021: 6-25]. The dissolution of the Russian Empire created the historical conditions for achieving independence prior to the establishment of Soviet power in the Kazakh Steppe, which imposed an anti-historical trajectory on the development of the formally independent states across the former colonial periphery of the empire.

Before the final consolidation of Soviet rule in the Great Steppe, violent clashes erupted between Alash forces and Soviet interventionists, who sought to impose communist ideology while combining it with territorial expansion. At the forefront of the national liberation movement emerged the urgent problem of armed defense of the homeland. This issue, highly relevant for its time, was examined by S. Akkuly [Akkuly, 2019: 24-37]. Almost immediately, the problem of defending the homeland was also raised in the pages of newspapers such as Qazaq, Saryarqa, Birlik tuyi, and the journal Abai, beginning in July 1917 and continuing until late 1919.

The combat qualities of the warriors of the Alash army were described by their Russian contemporaries, for example, V. Sorokin [Sorokin, 1919: 2] and P. Parfenov [Parfenov, 1924: 25-26]. The military events of the national war against the occupying Soviet power, which turned the Kazakh Steppe into a theater of fierce armed clashes, have been the subject of studies by contemporary Russian scholars.

These works, now liberated from the pressure of communist ideology, shed light on the actual historical picture of military operations, including the complex interactions of the Czechoslovak Corps with the self-proclaimed all-Russian governments in post-imperial Russia and with Soviet power.

Results. As is well known, after the dissolution of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly by Soviet power on 6 (19) January 1918, Russia was left without any legitimate authority. In the context of such political powerlessness, the Alash Autonomy was transformed into a republic exercising the full scope of state authority within its territory, that is, sovereignty unrestrained by any external supranational institutions. The Alash Orda, authorized by the Kurultai to «negotiate blocs (unions, alliances) with other autonomous neighbors», pursued an independent (sovereign) foreign policy between 1918 and 1920. During this period, it conducted negotiations amidst the outbreak of the Russian Civil War and the undeclared invasion of the Alash Republic by Soviet forces, addressing issues of mutual recognition, military-political alliance, and joint struggle against Soviet power [Nurpeisov, Jusip, 2021: 17].

Newly uncovered archival materials-both foreign and domestic-provide indisputable evidence that in 1918-1920 the Alash Orda Council undertook active measures aimed at reducing dependency on Russia and sought international recognition of its state sovereignty and independence, applying a variety of strategies and tactics.

Among the many issues related to ensuring sovereignty-political, economic, territorial, and socio-cultural-the problem of organizing the military defense of national independence occupied a special place. It should be particularly noted that this question was at the center of attention of the Alash movement from the very beginning of the twentieth century. Such a strategic task reflected the far-reaching plans of the Alash leaders at a time when raising the issue of liberation from the Russian Empire-one of the world's most powerful colonial powers-appeared historically premature [Zhussip, Sarmanova, Maslov, 2025: 692].

It is important to emphasize that the founder, theoretician, and political leader of the national liberation movement Alash, Alikhan Bukeikhan, made repeated attempts to secure the right to form Kazakh national cavalry units, modeled after the Russian Cossacks and with independent national military command, even during the Tsarist period. His first attempt occurred during the sessions of the First and Second State Dumas of the Russian Empire in 1906-1907, when he sought the repeal of the 1834 law (imperial decree) that had exempted the nomadic Kazakh population from military service in perpetuity. However, this initiative failed due to the premature dissolution of the Second State Duma and the disenfranchisement of the Kazakhs under the new electoral law of 3 June 1907 [Bukeikhanov, 1910: 600].

His second attempt came at the beginning of the Fourth State Duma in 1912. With the outbreak of the First World War, A. N. Bukeikhan intensified his struggle for the repeal of the 1834 law, the introduction of conscription for Kazakhs, and the establishment of Kazakh cavalry forces under national command. Nevertheless, despite the dire situation of the Russian army on the fronts of the First World War, Tsar Nicholas II – justifiably fearing the creation of Kazakh cavalry units-signed the decree of 25 June 1916, which mandated the forced mobilization of the «inorodtsy» (non-Russians), including Kazakhs, for rear labor service. Thus, the second attempt by the leader of the Alash movement ended unsuccessfully [Akkuly, 2019: 24-37]. A real opportunity arose only after the February Revolution of 1917.

By undertaking these attempts – unpopular among parts of the population – to extend military conscription to the Kazakhs, A.N. Bukeikhan was guided by the logic that the day would inevitably come when the defense of the homeland would become essential, and at that moment Kazakh zhigits trained in military affairs within the ranks of the regular Tsarist army could make a decisive contribution. That moment came in 1917.

As A.N. Bukeikhan, by then the former head of the Alash Orda Council, testified to an NKVD investigator in August 1937, in accordance with the resolution of the First All-Kazakh Kurultai (21-26 July 1917) and the September meeting in Orenburg, the leaders of the Alash movement and party began, in the second half of 1917, to establish armed detachments. These units were conceived as the first regular national army in the history of the Kazakh people, organized under the official designation of a «people's militia».

In forming this first national army, the Alash leaders took into account the fact that under Tsarist Russia the Kazakhs had been exempt from conscription. «The Bashkirs served in the military (under Tsarism), and therefore the unification of our detachments with the Bashkirs would enhance their combat effectiveness», A. N. Bukeikhan maintained [TsA FSB RF. D.12066. P-34862. L.31]. Therefore, they relied primarily on the support of the related Bashkir autonomy, as well as on the Orenburg and Siberian Cossack troops, the governments of the Samara Committee (Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly – Komuch), the Siberian autonomy, and others. To arm the «Alash» army, weapons were purchased from the Cossacks and Russian soldiers returning from the fronts of the First World War. At the same time, the chairman of the Alash Orda dispatched a delegation headed by A. Baitursynov and M. Dulatov to China for the procurement of weapons. Funds for weapons and ammunition were collected from the population by levying a contribution of one sheep from each Kazakh household. As the command staff for the newly formed units of the national army, Bashkir, Cossack, and White officers were invited, as well as former prisoner-of-war officers of the Turkish army [TsA FSB RF. D.12066. P-34862. L.29]. According to the newspaper *Svobodnaya rech*, «On June 18, 1918, a newly formed detachment of Kazakh cavalry, numbering 500 men with officer-instructors, arrived in the city of Alash (the temporary capital of the Alash Republic). Together with the Kazakhs came the chairman of the Alash Orda Council, A.N. Bukeikhan. The detachment was trained in the art of war and armed» [Svobodnaya rech, 1918. №164].

It should be noted that the first cavalry regiments of the Alash army were formed, trained, and armed even before the establishment of the central military department of the Alash Republic. During negotiations with Admiral Kolchak's Provisional All-Russian Government, the head of the Alash Orda Council, A. N. Bukeikhan, stated the following: «In the matter of the militia, you have misunderstood me. Our militia is an army. It already exists in fact: 750 of our dzhigits are at the front in Semirechye, 540 near Troitsk, and 2,000 in the Ural region. When you read reports of successes on the Semirechye front, know that these successes have been achieved thanks to our detachments» [Alash Orda, 1992: 142].

By early December 1917, the following had been conscripted into the ranks of the people's «cavalry militia»: 150 dzhigits in Karkaraly, 100 in Bayanaul, 400 in Zaisan, and 160 in the city of Alash [Saryarqa, 1917, №23: 4]. According to the newspaper Saryarqa, in the summer of 1918 the first «Alash regiment» was formed in Kostanay under the command of Bashkir Major General Zulkarnain Dashkin, while in Zhamankala (Orsk) the second «Alash regiment» was established under the command of the ataman of the Orenburg Cossack Host, Major General Alexander I. Dutov [Saryarqa, 1918, №61: 2-3].

Two weeks later, the same Saryarqa reported more precise figures: 2,000 fighters in Uralsk; two cavalry regiments in Turgay (Zhamankala – Orsk and Kostanay); two regiments in the city of Alash; and two regiments in Semirechye – making a total of nearly eight Alash regiments by the end of 1918 [Saryarqa, 1918, №63: 1].

The military department itself was created only on June 24, 1918, that is, six days after the parade of the first cavalry regiment in the city of Alash, as part of the Alash Orda Council under the name «Military Council». It was vested with the functions and powers of a ministry of defense, with the right to establish regional and district military councils under the respective sections of the Alash Orda Council. The Military Council was entrusted with the task of conscripting dzhigits to fight against the Bolsheviks [Alash Orda, 1992: 109].

In fact, this was the first Ministry of Defense in the history of modern Kazakhstan. The head of the Military Council, that is, the first Minister of Defense, was appointed to be Khamit Tokhtamys (Tokhtamyshev), a former career officer of the tsarist army, veteran of the First World War, captain, and later lieutenant colonel. One of the clauses in the draft agreement between the Provisional Government of the Siberian Autonomy and the Alash Orda Council stated: c) The Siberian Government, with the full support

and energetic assistance of the Alash Orda, shall provide the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) army with weapons, equipment, uniforms, provisions, and military instructors [GARF. F.P-133. Op.1. D.8. LL.24-25 ob.]. However, as noted by Gattenberger, head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Provisional All-Russian Government, in his report to A.V. Kolchak: «Despite the fact that the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) people could have provided up to 20,000 warriors within two months, no proper measures were taken to form Kyrgyz units. Last summer, 1,200 Kyrgyz volunteers gathered in Semipalatinsk, but even they were not utilized: they were not given weapons, and since the regional office had no means to support them, the djigits had to be unwillingly sent back to their homes» [GARF. F.P-1701. Op.1. D.6v. L.169]. This fact was confirmed by the Chairman of the Alash Orda Council, A.N. Bukeikhan, in his telegram to one of the ministers of the Siberian Autonomy dated August 18, 1918: «Today I received a reply from the commander of the Steppe Corps, Ivanov: not a single rifle, not a single officer can be provided to the units being formed; I request that you telegraph the position of the Duma Commission regarding the agreement between the Alash Orda and the (Siberian) government» [GARF. F.P-1701. Op.1. D.6v. L.29].

No less important for the Alash Orda in the creation of a national army was the training of instructors – non-commissioned officers from among the Kazakhs as junior commanders – and the establishment of training units. Among Kazakh youth there were sufficient numbers of zhigits, literate not only in Kazakh but also in Russian, to meet this need.

«Our military command», wrote the head of the Alash Orda Council, Alikhan Bukeikhan, in 1918, «must consist exclusively of our own cadres. Otherwise, a foreign officer, instead of providing proper military training to our soldier, will punish him for the slightest fault and imprison him without cause. If, however, the officer is one of our own Kazakhs, the soldier will receive appropriate combat training, be well prepared, and politically literate. A commander unfamiliar with the Kazakh people, their language, culture, and mentality, will only punish them» [Alash Abai, 1918: 1].

In 1918, two military schools (askeri medrese) were established in the cities of Alash and Uralsk for the training of Kazakh junior officers. The first graduation of junior officer-instructors of the Alash army took place in Uralsk on October 1, 1918 [Alash: Saryarqa, 1918: 3]. In the junior officers' school in Alash, directed by a Kazakh officer with Russian officers as assistants, 27 Kazakhs were in training. According to the same Gattenberger, «they were soon to depart for the Semirechye region to form a second cavalry partisan regiment, for which 280 volunteers had already enrolled» [GARF. F.P-1701. Op.1. D.6v. L.170].

The armament and ammunition for the Alash army could not be provided even by Admiral A. Kolchak's Provisional All-Russian Government, since it itself was in acute need of military-technical resources – and in large volumes. For example, the self-proclaimed «Supreme Ruler» of Russia and head of the anti-Bolshevik White movement, A.V. Kolchak, on 26 July 1919, through his representative in the Far East, attempted to accelerate the acquisition of military supplies from Japan – primarily 50,000 rifles and 10 million rounds of ammunition, and this on a monthly basis. [GARF. F. P-200. Op.1. D.528. L.49]. In a telegram from his representative in Vladivostok dated 5 September 1919, it was stated: «The Japanese are prepared to release a total of 20,000 rifles and the corresponding ammunition» [GARF. F.P-200. Op.1. D.684. L.1].

In the newspaper Russkaya armiya («The Russian Army»), published by the army of the Provisional Government of the Siberian Autonomy, the Kazakh warriors of the «Alash» army were described as the centaurs of the steppe: «From an early age the Kirghiz (Kazakh), like all nomadic peoples, rarely part with their horses, just as our ancestors – the Scythians – were regarded by Greek writers as extraordinary beings, half-man, half-horse, centaurs, since they were never seen apart from their steeds. In much the same way, the Kirghiz are veritable centaurs of the steppe. Thus, cavalry arose naturally from among them» [Sorokin, 1919: 2].

Meanwhile, by the time Raimzhan Marsek visited the Czechoslovak Consulate in Vladivostok in early January 1919, eight separate cavalry regiments of the «Alash» army had already been formed, with the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Regiments merged into a distinct Kazakh Cavalry Brigade under the command of Captain Kh. Tokhtamys [RGVA. F.39711. Op.1. D.2. L.75].

As stated in the written appeal of the Alash Orda to the Japanese government, delivered by R. Marsek to the General Consulate of Japan in Vladivostok on January 17, 1919, the mobilization of 150-200 thousand warriors did not pose significant difficulties for the Council of Alash Orda; the real problem lay in the lack of weapons and ammunition. However, by mobilizing between 40 and 50 thousand armed fighters, Alash Orda, together with Turkestan and Bashkiria, would have been able to expel the Bolshevik occupation army from their territories [JACAR. B03. 051221900. URL: 24-25].

Thus, the formation of a professional army encountered two nearly insurmountable obstacles. First, although there was a sufficient number of people willing to fight for the independence of their country alongside the leaders of Alash, they lacked the modern, for that period, skills in conducting military operations. Second, the acute shortage of firearms and ammunition nullified the combat enthusiasm and courage of the warriors on the battlefield. Meanwhile, external partners for the supply of weapons and officer training were represented by independent state structures and military organizations of post-imperial Russia and the Provisional Government. By entering into contractual relations with the Alash Orda Council, they recognized it as the government of a sovereign state – the Republic of Alash [Zhussip, Kozybayeva 2022: 102].

Amidst the civil war in Russia itself and Soviet intervention, supplying the army with the necessary weapons and ammunition was an almost insurmountable challenge. Anticipating the upcoming difficulties in building national armed forces, the leaders of the Alash party turned their attention to the Czechoslovak Corps formed in Russia. This approach was largely motivated by the expectation of complicated negotiations with the self-proclaimed all-Russian governments, as well as the central and local bodies of Soviet power. In these circumstances, seeking support from the Czechoslovak Corps, oriented toward the democratic political system of their own country, seemed more favorable to the leaders of Alash than relying on Russian organizations that had chosen divergent political objectives: the restoration of monarchy, constitutional democracy, anarchism, or party-based Soviet governance, among others.

According to the testimony of R. Marsek, upon arriving in Vladivostok at the beginning of 1919 together with two former members of the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia – the Speaker of the Siberian Duma I.A. Yakushev and the State Secretary of the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia V.I. Moravsky – they «first of all visited the Consul of Czechoslovakia and explained to him the purpose [...] of their visit» [SA KNB RK. F.9. Op.1. D.305. L.193].

Judging by the fact that R. Marsek visited the Czechoslovak diplomat «first of all», the meeting (negotiations) with the Czechoslovak consul was a priority task for Alash Orda, rather than the subsequent talks with representatives of the United States and Japan. Moreover, Marsek planned his visit to the General Consulate of Japan in Vladivostok only «as a last step».

During the negotiations with the Czechoslovak consul, he stated that the entire Siberian population, including the Kazakhs, did not wish to have a government headed by A. Kolchak, who, in the view of the Alash Orda Council, sought to restore the monarchy overthrown in Russia. He urged the consul not to extend any support to such a government «All these persons», asserted R. Marsek, concluding his testimony about the meeting with the Czechoslovak consul, «whom we visited, received us favorably and promised to bring our request to the attention of their governments» [SA KNB RK. F.9. Op.1. D.305. L.194].

It is highly doubtful that the main purpose of R. Marsek's meeting with the Czechoslovak consul, in which he presented himself as the official plenipotentiary representative of the Alash Orda Council, was merely to inform the diplomat about Alash Orda's attitude toward Admiral Kolchak and to urge the newly established Czechoslovak government not to support him. Judging by his own testimony, in all his official meetings he, on behalf of the Alash Orda Council, set forth requests for the recognition of the independence of the Republic of Alash and other revived states of Turkic-speaking peoples (Turkestan, Bashkiria, and the National Administration of the Turko-Tatars), the establishment of bilateral diplomatic, trade, economic, and cultural relations, as well as the provision of military and political support.

It should be noted that Czechoslovakia, which emerged after the defeat of the Central Powers and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in October 1918, was among the 33 states participating in the Paris Peace Conference (January 18, 1919 – January 21, 1920), convened by the victorious powers to draft and sign peace treaties with the defeated states. It is likely that R. Marsek, like the Alash Orda Council, did not place high hopes on full-fledged military and political support from Czechoslovakia, but regarded it as a potential partner capable of providing crucial assistance –namely, the supply of weapons for the Alash army. There were substantial grounds for appealing to the Czechoslovak consulate for arms and ammunition.

It should be emphasized that the founder, theorist, and political leader of the national liberation movement «Alash», Alikhan Bukeikhan, had repeatedly attempted, even under Tsarist rule, to secure the right to form Kazakh national cavalry units modeled on the Russian Cossacks – with an independent national command structure. The first such attempt was made during the sessions of the First and Second State Dumas of the Russian Empire (1906–1907), when he advocated the repeal of the 1834 law (the Tsar's charter) that exempted the nomadic Kazakh people from military service. Bukeikhan proposed to introduce military duty for the people of the Great Steppe on a legislative basis. However, his initiative ended in

failure: the Second State Duma was prematurely dissolved, and the new electoral law of June 3, 1907, deprived the Kazakhs of their voting rights [Bukeikhanov, 1910: 600].

The second attempt was undertaken at the beginning of the Fourth State Duma's session in 1912. With the Russian Empire's entry into the First World War, A.N. Bukeikhan intensified his struggle for the repeal of the 1834 law, the introduction of military conscription for the Kazakhs, and the right to form Kazakh cavalry troops with a national command structure. However, despite the dire situation of the Russian army at the frontlines of the First World War, Tsar Nicholas II, not without reason fearing the creation of Kazakh cavalry units, signed the decree of June 25, 1916, on the forced mobilization of «aliens», including Kazakhs, for rear labor. Thus, the second attempt of the leader of the Alash movement also ended in failure [Akkuly, 2019: 27]. A real opportunity arose only after the February Revolution of 1917.

As A.N. Bukeikhan, the former head of the Alash Orda Council, declared to an NKVD investigator in August 1937, according to the resolution of the First All-Kazakh Kurultai held on July 21-26, 1917, and the September conference in Orenburg, the leaders of the Alash movement and party began in the second half of 1917 to form armed detachments. These were intended to become the first regular national army in the history of the Kazakh people, under the more acceptable designation of a «people's militia». In creating this first national army, the leaders of Alash took into account the fact that under Tsarist Russia the Kazakh people had been exempt from military service. «The Bashkirs served in the army (under Tsarism), and therefore, merging our detachments with the Bashkirs would have increased their combat capability», A.N. Bukeikhan believed [TsA FSB RF. D.12066. P-34862. L.31]. They therefore relied primarily on assistance from the allied Bashkir Autonomy, as well as from the Orenburg and Siberian Cossack troops, the governments of the Samara Committee (the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly, or Komuch), the Siberian Autonomy, and others. To arm the «Alash» army, weapons were purchased from the Cossacks and Russian soldiers who had returned from the fronts of the First World War. At the same time, the chairman of the Alash Orda sent a delegation headed by A. Baitursynov and M. Dulatov to China to procure arms. Funds for weapons and ammunition were raised from the population by collecting one sheep from each Kazakh household. As the officer corps for the newly formed units of the national army, Bashkir, Cossack, and White Guard officers were invited, along with former prisoners of war from the Ottoman army [TsA FSB RF. D.12066. P-34862. L.29]. According to the newspaper *Svobodnaya rech'* (Free Speech), «...on 18 June 1918 a newly formed detachment of Kazakh cavalry, numbering 500 men and accompanied by officer-instructors, arrived in the city of Alash (the temporary capital of the Republic of Alash. – Author). Chairman of the Alash Orda Council A.N. Bukeikhan arrived together with the Kazakhs. The detachment was trained in military skills and armed» [Svobodnaya rech, 1918, №164: 2].

It should be noted that the first cavalry regiments of the «Alash» army were formed, trained, and armed even before the establishment of the central military department of the Republic of Alash. During negotiations with the Provisional All-Russian Government of Admiral Kolchak, Chairman of the Alash Orda Council A. N. Bukeikhan stated the following: «You misunderstood me on the question of the militia. Our militia is an army. It already exists in practice: 750 of our jigits are at the front in Semirechye, 540 men near Troitsk, 2,000 men in the Ural region. When you read reports of successes on the Semirechye front, know that these successes were achieved thanks to our detachments» [Alash Orda, 1992: 142].

By early December 1917, the following numbers of jigits were conscripted into the ranks of the people's «mounted militia»: 150 in Karkaraly, 100 in Bayanaul, 400 in Zaisan, and 160 in the city of Alash [Saryarqa, 1917, №23: 4]. According to Saryarqa, in the summer of 1918 the first «Alash Regiment» was formed in Kostanay under the command of Bashkir Major General Zulkarnain Dashkin, while the second «Alash Regiment» was organized in Zhamankala (Orsk) under the command of Ataman of the Orenburg Cossack Host, Major General Aleksandr I. Dutov [Saryarqa, 1918, №61: 2-3]. Two weeks later, Saryarqa clarified that there were 2,000 fighters in Uralsk; two cavalry regiments in Turgai (Zhamankala – Orsk and Kostanay); two regiments in the city of Alash; and two regiments in Semirechye – amounting to almost eight «Alash» regiments by the end of 1918 [Saryarqa, 1918, №61: 1].

Meanwhile, the military department was only created on 24 June 1918 – six days after the parade of the first cavalry regiment in the city of Alash – as part of the Alash Orda Council, under the name «Military Council». It was entrusted with the functions and authority of a Ministry of War, including the right to establish regional and district military councils under the corresponding regional and district branches of the Alash Orda Council. The Military Council was tasked with conscripting jigits for the struggle against the Bolsheviks [Alash Orda, 1992: 109].

In fact, this was the first Ministry of Defense in the history of modern Kazakhstan. The head of the Military Council, that is, the first Minister of Defense, was appointed Hamit Tokhtamys (Tokhtamyshev), a former career officer of the Tsarist army, a veteran of the First World War, captain, later lieutenant colonel. One of the clauses of the draft agreement between the Provisional Government of the Siberian Autonomy and the Council of Alash Orda stated: «The Siberian government, with the full support and energetic assistance of Alash Orda, shall provide the Kirghiz (Kazakh) army with weapons, equipment, uniforms, provisions, and military instructors» [GARF. F.P-133. Op.1. D.8. LL.24-25 ob.]. However, as noted by Gattenberger, head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Provisional All-Russian Government, in his report to A.V. Kolchak: «Despite the fact that the Kirghiz (Kazakh) people within two months could have provided up to 20,000 warriors, no proper measures were taken to form Kirghiz units. Last summer in Semipalatinsk, 1,200 Kirghiz volunteers gathered, yet even they were not utilized: no weapons were given to them, and since the regional department had no funds to maintain them, the djigits had to be reluctantly sent back home» [GARF. F.P-1701. Op.1. D.6v. L.169]. This fact was confirmed by the Chairman of the Council of Alash Orda, A.N. Bukeikhan, in his telegram to one of the ministers of the Siberian Autonomy dated August 18, 1918: «Today I received a reply from the commander of the Steppe Corps, Ivanov: I cannot provide a single rifle or a single officer for the units being formed; I ask you to telegraph the opinion of the Duma commission regarding the agreement between Alash Orda and the (Siberian – Author's note) government» [GARF. F.P-1701. Op.1. D.6v. L.29].

No less important for Alash Orda in the creation of a national army was the training of instructors – non-commissioned officers from among the Kazakhs – as the junior command staff, as well as the establishment of training detachments. Among Kazakh youth, there were enough djigits, literate not only in Kazakh but also in Russian, to meet these needs.

«Our military command», wrote the head of the Alash Orda Council, Alikhan Bukeikhan, in 1918, «must consist exclusively of our own cadres. Otherwise, a foreign officer, instead of providing combat training for our warrior, will harass him for the smallest offense and unjustly throw him into the guardhouse. If, however, the cadre officer is one of our Kazakhs, the warrior will undergo proper military training, be well-instructed, and politically literate. A commander who does not know the Kazakh, his language, culture, and mentality, will only punish him» [Alash Abai, 1918: 1].

In 1918, two military schools (askeri medrese) were opened in the cities of Alash and Uralsk for the training of Kazakh junior officers. In Uralsk, the first graduation of junior officer-instructors for the Alash army took place on October 1, 1918 [Alash: Saryarqa, 1918: 3]. In the junior officer school in Alash, headed by a Kazakh officer and assisted by Russian officers, another 27 Kazakhs were being trained. According to information from Gattenberger, «in the near future they are to depart for Semirechye Province to form the second cavalry partisan regiment, which already has 280 volunteers registered» [GARF. F.P-1701. Op.1. D.6v. L.170].

The armament and ammunition for the Alash army could not be provided even by Admiral A. Kolchak's Provisional All-Russian Government, since it itself was in acute need of military-technical resources – and in very large quantities. For example, the self-proclaimed «Supreme Ruler» of Russia and head of the anti-Bolshevik White movement, A. V. Kolchak, on 26 July 1919, through his representative in the Far East, attempted to expedite military supplies from Japan – chiefly 50,000 rifles and 10 million rounds of ammunition, and this on a monthly basis [GARF. F.P-200. Op.1. D.528. L.49]. In a telegram from his representative in Vladivostok dated 5 September 1919, it was stated: «The Japanese are prepared to release a final consignment of 20,000 rifles and the corresponding ammunition» [GARF. F.P-200. Op.1. D.684. L.1].

In the newspaper of the army of the Provisional Government of the Siberian Autonomy, Russkaya armiya, the Kazakh warriors of the «Alash» army were referred to as the centaurs of the steppe: «From early childhood, the Kirghiz (Kazakh), like all nomadic peoples, rarely part with their horse, just as our ancestors – the Scythians – whom Greek writers regarded as special beings, man-horses, centaurs, because they never saw them apart from their steeds. The Kirghiz are almost the same steppe centaurs. Therefore, cavalry naturally formed from among them.» [Sorokin, 1919: 2].

By the time Raimzhan Marsek paid his visit to the Czechoslovak Consulate in Vladivostok in early January 1919, eight separate cavalry regiments of the «Alash» army had already been formed, among which the 1st and 2nd cavalry regiments had been combined into a separate Kazakh Cavalry Brigade under the command of Captain Kh. Tokhtamys [RGVA. F. 39711. Op.1. D.2. L.75].

As stated in the written appeal of the Alash Orda to the Government of Japan, delivered by R. Marsek to the Japanese Consulate General in Vladivostok on 17 January 1919, the mobilization of 150,000 –

200,000 warriors would not have posed particular difficulties for the Council of Alash Orda; the problem lay in the lack of weapons and ammunition. However, by mobilizing 40,000 –50,000 fighters with arms, the Alash Orda, together with Turkestan and Bashkiria, could have expelled the Bolshevik occupation army from their territories [JACAR. B03. 051221900. URL: 24-25].

The necessary assistance to the «Alash» army could not be provided by the government of Czechoslovakia but rather by the Czechoslovak Corps in Russia. What, then, did Czechoslovakia itself and its military corps in Russia represent at that time? The Czechoslovak Corps was formed within the army of the Russian Empire in the autumn of 1917 from Czechoslovak units and detachments, consisting mainly of Czechs and Slovaks – volunteers, prisoners of war, and defectors from the armed forces of Austria-Hungary and Germany – who had expressed a desire to take part in the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. The first Czech military unit (the «Czech Druzina») had been created as early as autumn 1914 in Kyiv, at the very beginning of the war, from Czech volunteers living in Russia. By late 1915, the Druzina was expanded into the First Czechoslovak Rifle Regiment named after St. Wenceslas, numbering around 2,100 men (renamed in 1917 as the First Czechoslovak Rifle Regiment named after Jan Hus). By the end of 1916, this regiment had been expanded into a brigade [Tsvetkov, 1998].

Meanwhile, in February 1916, the Czechoslovak National Council (CSNS) was established in Paris. Its leaders (T. Masaryk, M. Stefanik, E. Benes, and others) advanced the idea of creating an independent Czechoslovak state and sought to gain the approval of the Entente powers for the formation of an independent Czechoslovak army.

After the February Revolution, the CSNS created its branch in Russia, which was recognized by the Provisional Government as the sole representative of Czechs and Slovaks in Russia. The Czechoslovak state itself was proclaimed in November 1918 during the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with active support from the Entente powers. The movement for the separation of Czech and Slovak lands from Austria-Hungary, institutionalized on 13 July 1918 as the Czechoslovak National Council, was led by Tomas G. Masaryk, who spent the war years in exile. On 14 October 1918, the Czechoslovak Provisional Government was formed, and on 14 November, by expanding the National Council with deputies from the Reichsrat representing the Czech lands, the Revolutionary National Assembly was created.

On 28 October 1918, the CSNS proclaimed the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak state. In October 1918, a Slovak National Committee was established in Slovakia, which on 30 October issued a declaration demanding the creation of a unified state of Czechs and Slovaks. On 13 November, the National Council adopted a provisional constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic, with T. Masaryk becoming its President and K. Kramar appointed as the head of the first government.

The Czech leaders succeeded in obtaining permission from the All-Russian Provisional Government to lift numerical restrictions and create larger national military formations on Russian territory. In October 1917, a decision was made to form the Czechoslovak Corps of three divisions. At the same time, the CSNS, seeking to transform the corps created in Russia into a «foreign allied army stationed in Russia», petitioned the French government and its president to recognize all Czechoslovak military formations as part of the French army. From December 1917, on the basis of the French government's decree of 19 December establishing an autonomous Czechoslovak army in France, the Czechoslovak Corps in Russia was formally subordinated to French command and was instructed to prepare for transfer to France [Golovin, 2011].

That same year, 1917, by joint decision of the French government and the CSNS, the Czechoslovak Legion in France was formed. The CSNS acknowledged that all Czechoslovak military formations – the Czechoslovak legionnaires in Russia – were dependent upon the decisions of the Entente [Tsvetkov, 1998]. All efforts of the CSNS were directed at organizing the evacuation of the corps from Russia to France. The shortest route was by sea – through Arkhangelsk and Murmansk – but it was rejected due to fears that the corps might be intercepted by German forces in case of an offensive [Golovin, 2011]. It was therefore decided to transport the legionnaires along the Trans-Siberian Railway to Vladivostok, and from there across the Pacific Ocean to Europe [Tsvetkov, 1998].

On March 26, 1918, the leadership of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR (Sovnarkom), the Czechoslovak National Council (CSNS) in Russia, and the command of the Czechoslovak Corps signed an agreement guaranteeing the unhindered transfer of Czechoslovak units from Penza to Vladivostok. By the summer of 1918, the Czechoslovak Corps had become the only truly combat – ready force in post-imperial Russia, numbering up to 50,000 men, while both the Red Army and the emerging White forces were still in the early stages of formation and lacked military efficiency. This balance of power provoked distrust on the part of the Bolsheviks toward the Czechoslovaks. At the same time, although the

Czech leadership formally agreed to the partial disarmament of the Corps, the soldiers themselves viewed the measure with strong dissatisfaction and regarded the Bolsheviks with open hostility and suspicion.

At the same time, the Soviet government became aware of secret negotiations among the Allies concerning a Japanese intervention in Siberia and the Far East. Indeed, on April 5, 1918, without prior notice to his allies, Japanese Admiral Kato landed a detachment of marines in Vladivostok under the pretext of «protecting the lives and property of Japanese citizens». The Bolsheviks, suspecting the Entente of duplicity, demanded new negotiations to change the evacuation route of the Czechoslovaks – from Vladivostok to Arkhangelsk and Murmansk [Golovin, 2011].

The German General Staff likewise feared the arrival of a 40,000-strong corps on the Western Front. Under German pressure, on April 21, Sovnarkom telegraphed the Krasnoyarsk Soviet with a firm order to halt the movement of the Czechoslovak Corps to Vladivostok and to disarm it [Parfenov, 1924: 25-26]. The Corps command interpreted this order as an intention by the Bolsheviks to hand them over to Germany and Austria-Hungary as former prisoners of war. Such an atmosphere of mutual distrust inevitably led to consequences. One such incident occurred in Chelyabinsk, where a clash broke out between Hungarian and German prisoners of war on one side and the Czechoslovaks on the other, prompting the local soviet to arrest 10 Czechoslovak soldiers. However, on May 17, their comrades freed the detainees by force, disarmed the local Red Guard unit, and stormed the arsenal, seizing 2,800 rifles and an artillery battery.

The day before this incident, from May 16 to 20, 1918, a congress of Czechoslovak military delegates convened in Chelyabinsk. To coordinate the activities of the dispersed corps groups, the congress established a Provisional Executive Committee of the Czechoslovak Army, composed of three commanders and chaired by a member of the CSNS in Russia. It should be noted that at this congress, Captain Kh. Tokhtamys (Tokhtamyshev) delivered a welcoming address on behalf of the Army of Alash and the Alash Orda Council [GA RF. F. P-200. Op.1. D.684. L.58]. Consequently, the Alash Orda Council had established cooperation with the Czechoslovak Corps even before R. Marsek's visit to the Czechoslovak Consulate in Vladivostok. In turn, the congress firmly declared a break with the Bolsheviks and resolved to stop surrendering weapons, continuing their march to Vladivostok independently. In response, on May 21 in Moscow two representatives of the Czechoslovak National Council in Russia – Max and Chermak – were arrested, and an order was issued for the complete disarmament and dissolution of the Czechoslovak Corps. The arrested representatives in Moscow transmitted, on behalf of Masaryk, an order for the Czechoslovaks to surrender all their weapons. However, the legionaries decided to obey only their «Provisional Executive Committee», elected by the congress. The Executive Committee distributed a directive: «Do not surrender weapons anywhere to the Soviets, do not provoke clashes, but in case of attack defend yourselves, and continue the advance eastward in your own order».

The uprising of the Czechoslovak Corps spread across the Volga region, the Urals, Siberia, and the Far East, creating favorable conditions for the elimination of local Soviet authorities, the formation of the first anti-Soviet governments (KOMUCH, the Provisional Siberian Government, which later merged into the Provisional All-Russian Government of the Ufa Directory, subsequently reorganized into the Provisional All-Russian Government, or «Admiral Kolchak's Omsk Government»), and the beginning of large-scale military operations in the framework of the Civil War. The immediate cause of the uprising was the Bolsheviks' attempt to disarm and dissolve the Czechoslovak Corps [Saryarqa, 1918, №63: 2-3].

On May 27, Colonel Voytsekhovsky's unit captured Chelyabinsk. The Czechoslovaks, defeating the abandoned Red Army detachments, also occupied cities along the Trans-Siberian Railway – Kazakh Petropavlovsk and Kurgan – overthrowing Soviet power there and opening the road to Omsk. Penza was also taken [Novikov, 2018: 98]. Other units entered Novonikolaevsk, Mariinsk, Nizhneudinsk, and Kansk (May 29). In early June 1918, the Czechoslovaks entered Tomsk. On June 4-5, near Samara, Czechoslovak units defeated the Bolshevik Red Army and secured a crossing over the Volga. On June 4, the Entente powers declared the Czechoslovak Corps part of their armed forces and stated that they would regard any attempt to disarm it as an unfriendly act toward the Allies. However, the corps' situation worsened under pressure from Germany, which persistently demanded that the Bolsheviks disarm and dissolve the Czechoslovaks. According to the official press organ of the Alash Orda Council, the newspaper Saryarqa, «the treacherous Soviet government was ready to comply with this demand of Germany» [Saryarqa, 1918, №57: 2].

In liberated Samara, on June 8, 1918, the first anti – Bolshevik government – the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly (KOMUCH or the Samara Committee) – was established. The conditions for this had been created by the Czechoslovaks. In turn, in its declaration on the rights of the autonomous Alash Orda, it was the first of the anti-Soviet governments to recognize the sovereignty of the

Republic of Alash [GA RF. F.P-200. Op.1. D.684. LL. 20-21]. §5 of the declaration stated: «The Provisional Siberian Government has no control over the Alash Orda, i.e., the Provisional Siberian Government and the Alash Orda are equal in rights». §9 read: «...at the meeting of the Samara Committee and members of the Alash Orda, the autonomy of Alash was recognized by the Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly» [GA RF. F.P-200. Op.1. D.684. LL.1-3]. Subsequently, the Samara Committee and the Alash Orda government concluded a military-political alliance. This demonstrates an indirect connection between the Czechoslovak Corps and the recognition of the sovereignty of the Alash Republic. In addition, the Samara Committee provided the Alash army with 2,000 rifles, 38 machine guns, 2 artillery pieces, and 2 automobiles [Saryarqa, 1918, №57: 2].

On June 11 (24), 1918, the Alash Orda Council sent a telegram stating that, in accordance with the decision of the 2nd All-Kazakh-Kyrgyz National Kurultai of December 5-13 (18-26), 1917, it had begun fulfilling its duties and ordered the creation of regional and district Councils of the Alash Orda. The telegram also informed that the Alash Orda maintained allied relations with the Siberian and Bashkir autonomies. In the same telegram, the chairman of the Alash Orda, A.N. Bukeykhan, proposed organizing regional and district councils of the Alash Orda, immediately beginning the collection of taxes and levies for 1918 and 1917, calling up a mounted militia, and organizing military units [Bokeykhan, 2017: 457].

On June 17 (30), 1918, the Provisional Siberian Government was formed in Omsk. This marked the beginning of the formation of regional anti – Bolshevik governments across Russia. According to the official newspaper of the Alash Orda Council, Saryarqa, the Czechs and Slovaks had been under the colonial yoke of Austria-Hungary for 400 years [Saryarqa, 1918, №67: 1]. The proclamation of Czechoslovak independence on October 28 increased the desire of the military corps to return home. During an inspection in November – December 1918, the Minister of War of the Czechoslovak Republic, M. Stefanik, issued an order instructing all units of the Czechoslovak Corps to leave the front and transfer positions to Russian White Army troops. At that time, the total strength of the Czechoslovak Corps reached 72,644 personnel (3,004 officers and 53,455 soldiers and ensigns of the Czechoslovak Army).

This order from the Czechoslovak Minister of War became an important basis for the Alash Orda Council to delegate R. Marsek to the Czechoslovak consul in Vladivostok. His task was to obtain from the Czechoslovak leadership the transfer of weapons and ammunition of its military corps, leaving Russia, to the government of the Alash Orda. On January 27, 1919, the commander of the Czechoslovak Corps in Russia issued an order declaring the section of the Trans-Siberian Railway between Novo-Nikolayevsk and Irkutsk an operational sector of the Czechoslovak Corps [Saryarqa, 1918, №61: 2]. The Siberian railway, therefore, came under the control of the Czech army in post-imperial Russia, and the de facto administrator was the commander of the Allied forces in Siberia and the Far East, French General Maurice Janin. He regulated the movement of trains and the evacuation of military units.

By December 1919, the first ships carrying Czechoslovak legionnaires began departing from Vladivostok. On 42 ships, 72,644 people were transported to Europe (3,004 officers and 53,455 soldiers and ensigns of the Czechoslovak Army). On February 7, 1920, at the Kuytun station in the Irkutsk region, an armistice agreement was signed between the commands of the Bolshevik Red Army and the Czechoslovak Army in Russia, guaranteeing the Czechoslovak legionnaires a retreat to the Far East and their evacuation. According to this agreement, prisoners were exchanged, coal was loaded into locomotives, and lists of Russian and Czechoslovak representatives for accompanying trains were drawn up and approved. On the night of March 1–2, 1920, the last Czech trains left Irkutsk, and regular units of the Red Army entered the city.

Thus, all military-technical resources of the Czechoslovak Army in Russia did not go to the Alash Orda government or its forming national army. Presumably, some were surrendered to the Bolshevik Red Army, while others went to the White movement forces. The practical assistance of the Czechoslovak Army to the Alash Orda Council consisted in isolating the self-proclaimed «Supreme Ruler of Russia», Admiral A. Kolchak, and the chairman of his Council of Ministers, Pepelyayev [Khandorin, 2019: 162].

The meeting and negotiations with the Czechoslovak consul were not the Alash Orda Council's first contact with representatives of foreign states. As the former chairman of the Alash Orda Council, A.N. Bukeykhan, stated in August 1937, in the spring of 1918 he sent Alash Orda representatives A. Baitursynuly, M. Dulatuly, and R. Marsek to Eastern Turkestan (China) [TsA FSB RF. D.12066. P-34862. L.29]. Through them, he sent a letter to the Russian consul in Chuguchak, V. Dolbezhev, in which he asked him to petition the Chinese government regarding the supply of the Alash army with military-technical equipment from Urumqi. Reporting this to the Russian envoy in Beijing via telegram, V. Dolbezhev, in turn, requested

telegraphic instructions concerning the Alash Orda's request. To secure the desired instructions from Beijing, the consul assured the envoy that the Alash Orda Council «could mobilize 40,000 Kyrgyz (Kazakh) for joint action against the Bolsheviks» [AP RK. F.811. Op.24. D.114. L.12].

However, these contacts also did not yield the expected results. Nevertheless, R. Marsek still had to conduct negotiations with the official representatives of the United States in Russia, in particular with the commander of the U.S. expeditionary forces in the Far East and Siberia, as well as with the U.S. envoy to Japan.

Conclusion. The analysis of the activities of the Alash Orda Council and Raimzhan Marsek's diplomatic mission in Vladivostok in 1918-1919 allows us to assert that the Alash Republic effectively possessed sovereignty over its territory and took active steps toward international recognition and strengthening its independence. In the context of the Russian Civil War and the threat of intervention by Soviet forces, the leaders of Alash Orda sought to create a national army, provide it with weapons and officer training, and establish diplomatic contacts with other states, including Czechoslovakia, Japan, and the United States.

Particular attention was given to negotiations with the Czechoslovak consul, which were of strategic importance for securing military support and strengthening the republic's foreign policy position. Despite difficult conditions and limited resources, Alash Orda demonstrated the ability to conduct independent foreign policy and implement measures to protect its territories militarily.

Thus, new archival data and testimonies of key figures of the Alash movement allow for a reconsideration of traditional views on the early history of the Alash Republic and its government, highlighting the significance of their diplomatic initiatives and efforts to form a national army as a foundation for the future statehood of the Kazakh people.

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- JACAR – Yaponskiy tsentr aziatskikh istoricheskikh zapisey [Japan Center for Asian Historical Records]
- RGVA – Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyy voyennyy arkhiv [Russian State Military Archive]
- SA KNB RK – Spetsializirovannyy arkhiv Komiteta natsional'noy bezopasnosti Respubliki Kazakhstan [Special Archive of the Committee for National Security of the Republic of Kazakhstan]
- TsA FSB RF – Tsentral'nyy arkhiv Federal'noy sluzhby bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii [Central Archive of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation]

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