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**LEGITIMIZING THE *ATA MEKEN*:
THE KAZAKH INTELLIGENTSIA WRITE
A HISTORY OF THEIR HOMELAND***

In 1913 an anonymous author who signed his article *Turik balasy* [Son of the Turks] wrote in the newspaper *Qazaq*, “history proves the true existence of a people... Our own history is lost, our nation is forgotten, we do not know our borders or perceive our own accomplishments”.¹ The quote demonstrates the importance of history to the Kazakh intelligentsia in defining the Kazakh nation. History legitimates nations, a nation without a history is not a nation, and therefore it became imperative for the Kazakh intelligentsia to record the history of their nation.

Turik Balasy’s quote points out three major aims of the Kazakh national movement of the early twentieth century. First, the Kazakh people represented a historical nation that had fallen into decline, which is why the Kazakh nation was forgotten. Second, the intellectuals articulating the Kazakh nation posited themselves as the true leaders of the nation because they understood why the nation’s natural historical development had been interrupted, and more importantly the intelligentsia knew how to revive the

* A version of this paper was first presented at the Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies annual convention in 2002.

¹ Turik Balasy. *Qazaqtyng Tarikhy* // *Qazaq*. 1913. No. 2 n.d.

nation. Finally, because the Kazakh people represented a historical nation, they also possessed a fatherland, the Kazakh *ata meken*.

The Kazakh nation needed a clearly demarcated territory; the Kazakh nation could only be revived within its own borders. Through writing the history of the Kazakh nation, the intelligentsia hoped to legitimize themselves as one of the world's rightful nations and preserve their territory from further Russian colonization. As a result of the resettlement of Russian peasants, the territorialization of the Kazakh nation took on great significance. Because the writing of history is an interpretive endeavor, the Kazakh intelligentsia often located their nation's roots in other cultures as a means of strengthening their claims to territorial rights.

Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century Kazakh intellectuals began studying the history of their people. The imposition of Russian colonization gave the Kazakhs a powerful "other" from which to evaluate their traditional society. The early Kazakh intelligentsia looked to the past for the answers of their society's decline. By the twentieth century, the next generation of Kazakh intelligentsia not only found these answers in the past, but they also saw history as a road map that could lead the Kazakhs out of their current predicament. The younger intelligentsia was strongly influenced by other members of the Imperial intelligentsia, including the Russian intelligentsia as well as members of the Ukrainian, Azeri, Tatar, and Central Asia jadid intelligentsia. They readily adapted the Imperial intelligentsia's philosophy of historical progress and therefore viewed history as a way to explain both the roots of the Kazakh nation and its future development. They viewed progress as a universal phenomenon accessible to all who cultivated knowledge. The idea of progress was predicated upon the growth of a historical conception of time. The Kazakh intelligentsia believed that they could see where their nation was going by examining its own past as well as the past of other nations. They believed that history itself could be viewed scientifically and thus measured in terms of evolutionary progress. This section of the Kazakh educated elite understood that progress would eventually reach Kazakh society, but also that they could speed its arrival. Therefore, the study of history involved more than just examining the past and reporting on it, but also looking for the impediments to the nation's natural evolution.

In addition, the Kazakh elite believed that they could learn much from studying the history of other societies, especially those more advanced than their own. European intellectual trends came to symbolize the correct path to enlightenment. They could see where Europe stumbled along the way and learn from Europe's mistakes. Consequently, the Kazakh intelligentsia

articulated in their works a position that highlighted the advantages of Kazakh backwardness.² Knowing where they intended to go was a great aid; the intelligentsia could accelerate the historical developmental processes with what they learned from other civilizations while avoiding their mistakes.

Theorists of nationalism often point to the importance of history in forging a national identity. As Anthony D. Smith states: "National unity requires both a sense of cohesion, a 'fraternity,' and a compact, secure, recognized territory or 'homeland'",³ both of which assume a long history. The history of a people defines them as a nation. The national intelligentsia creates or, to use Smith's vocabulary, "rediscovers" memories of its golden age, a time of great achievement. They believe the nation develops linearly; as a result, "the period of decline is regarded as 'unnatural,' a matter of 'betrayal' from within, or 'subjugation' and decay from without".⁴ The aim of those intellectuals who are rediscovering their past is to "explain the lot of their community and prescribe remedies for its ills".⁵ The intelligentsia comes to portray themselves as the new "priesthood of the nation." Their interpretation of history imbues them with the knowledge necessary to direct and lead the nation.

Modern scholarship tends to see nationalism as a constructed identity, while the nationalists themselves believe that it is a primordial identity. Whereas scholars debate why and how nationality is constructed, nationalists do their best to demonstrate the ancientness of their nation. Therein lies a paradox – by writing histories and researching their cultural roots to demonstrate their nation's longevity, uniqueness, and innateness, nationalists actually create or invent their nation. "Cohesion of a group may depend on the particular articulation of the sense of commonality, and here a sense of shared past experience, that is, history, becomes important as a record of what binds the group together and distinguishes it from others. Nations are particular forms of collectivity that are constituted by a process of creating histories".⁶

The desire to be seen as a nation is the aspiration to be recognized as an equal member of the world community. In the Kazakh case, it was the

² The idea of the advantages of backwardness was often expound in lectures and seminars conducted by Professor David McDonald at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

³ Anthony D. Smith. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford, 1986. P. 148.

⁴ *Ibid.* P. 191.

⁵ *Ibid.* P. 191.

⁶ Ronald Suny. *Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations* // *The Journal of Modern History*. 2001. Vol. 73. P. 869.

desire to having an equal voice within the Russian empire. All nationalist assume that the modern world is naturally divided into different nations. By developing their national identity and culture, national groups can demonstrate that they belong to the family of nations and therefore have legitimate claims over a particular territory. While nations are conceived of as natural phenomena, nationalists believe that this identity can lie dormant and unconscious among the national population. It is the role of the intellectual to bring this national identity, which supercedes that of class, gender, familial, tribal, regional, or religious identities, to the forefront of the people's consciousness.⁷ Therefore, the proponents of national identity often refer to an awakening. The national elites' goal is to posit their nation as an equal member of the world community.

Intellectuals use history to legitimize a homeland and make a claim of equality with other nations. This is clear in the current rewriting of Kazakh history. Most historians of Kazakh history would agree that the first Kazakh State emerged in the fifteenth century and that the main heroes, the Khans Janibek and Karai, founded this state. This is a focal point in traditional Kazakh history that has long been a part of Kazakh oral traditions, detailing how these great khans freed their people from the despotic rule of the Uzbek Khan Abu'l Khayr. However, today new histories are being written in Kazakhstan that place much more emphasis on the Kazakh's older 'ancestors' such as the Scythians and the Androns, than on the accomplishments of the first Kazakh khans. Kazakhstan's official government website, for example, gives the following account of the Kazakh history: "Both Androns as well as their descendants, the Scythians were the distant ancestors of the Kazakhs. The name of 'Usuns', the people who took the place of the Scythians from the 3rd century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D. is still preserved in the name of one of the large Kazakh clans. Today, the Kazakh-yiusuns live in the same place where their ancestors, the Usuns, lived centuries ago".⁸

This historical account goes on to argue that even though the Androns, Scythians and Usuns had a European constitution, a Mongol people appeared on the steppe in the fifth and sixth century and began to mix with these peoples, giving the Kazakhs their present day Asian appearance. The account even goes on to state that there is evidence that the Scythians spoke a proto-Turkic language. A silver bowl that is believed to be of the Scythian

⁷ See Ronald Suny and Michael Kennedy. (Eds.). *Intellectuals and the Articulation of Nation*. Ann Arbor, 2001.

⁸ <http://www.kz/eng/history/hist1.html> (Last accessed on 3/31/04).

period, for example, was found to contain an inscription that is supposedly an early form of the Kazakh language. The purpose of this revised history is to anchor the modern day Kazakh nation to Kazakhstan, the territory on which it is presently located. By providing the Kazakhs with an ancient ancestry, the account roots the Kazakh nation to its historic – and current – homeland and uses history to legitimate existing borders. It is clear from this example of state sponsored nation building that history plays an important role in legitimizing the territorial integrity of a nation.

The Kazakh intelligentsia in the early twentieth century did not have the luxury of undisputed leadership that today's Kazakh government possesses. There was a struggle for leadership of the Kazakh community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Kazakh intelligentsia therefore needed to use their vision of Kazakh history to not only legitimate a homeland and define borders for protection against Russian colonization, but also to legitimate their claims to lead this nation. The histories they constructed served to delegitimize all other notions of nationhood. As Prasenjit Duara argues, the intellectuals viewed history as “not something merely made up, but as the site of contestation and repression of different views of the nation”.⁹ In this spirit, the Kazakh intelligentsia of the early twentieth century constructed a history that demonstrated that the traditional leaders of the Kazakh community, the khans, sultans, biis and beys, destroyed the once great Kazakh nation through their greed and selfishness. The intelligentsia believed that their function was to lead the Kazakhs back to national unity and restore its prestige in the modern world.¹⁰ By positing themselves as the leaders of a legitimate nation, the Kazakh intelligentsia believed that they would be entitled to a voice in future decisions regarding colonization, and would therefore be in a position to put a stop to Russian abuses and protect the Kazakh's sovereign territory, the *Ata Meken*. The role of the intelligentsia was to point out the abuses of the past so they could be corrected and restore the Kazakh nation to global prominence.

⁹ Prasenjit Duara. *Historicizing National Identity, or Who Imagines What and When* // Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (Eds.). *Becoming National: A Reader*. Oxford, 1996. P. 159.

¹⁰ This is not to suggest that the Kazakh intelligentsia were committed to an independent Kazakhstan. Under the conditions of colonization, they saw self-determination as a Kazakhstan with some degree of autonomy within the Russian Empire.

in barbaric traditions, Kazakh society declined and was therefore easily conquered. Through their efforts at reform, the first generation of intellectuals created an awareness of the linguistic, cultural, social and historical attributes of the Kazakhs. This helped create an idea of a single national group as defined by their newly created histories. However, by the twentieth century a new generation of intelligentsia began to use nationalism to make political demands and to define a homeland, something the first generation was not interested in doing.

The Second Generation of the Kazakh Intelligentsia

The second generation of Kazakh intelligentsia appeared in the early twentieth century. They were different from the first generation because they came to see Kazakh national identity as a political tool useful for enacting change. By building on the work of the early reformers, the second generation believed that the Kazakh nation was a historical nation and was therefore entitled to certain privileges within the Russian Empire. Projecting a Kazakh identity as that of a unified and ancient nation, the 20th century Kazakh intelligentsia were politically positioning themselves within the empire.

Another important difference between the early reformers and the 20th century intelligentsia was the concept of homeland. The first generation reformers looked to revitalize their society and culture, but made no claims to a geographically defined homeland. Land was not an issue for the first generation of reformers, but rather they focused on modernizing their society and used nationhood as an organizational and cultural tool. However, due to the rapid incursion of peasants from the European parts of the empire and the displacement of the Kazakhs from the best pasture lands, the second generation realized that to be recognized as a distinct nation, they needed to preserve their remaining territory. Without a distinct territory and culture, their society would quickly be assimilated into the dominant Russian culture of the Empire. If assimilation occurred their society would lose the privileges associated with Kazakhness. Therefore the second generation intelligentsia advocated the preservation of their ancestral lands. To legitimate their claim to the steppe territory the younger reformers traced their ancient territorial claims to the second century BCE.

One of the main reasons for the political evolution of the intelligentsia was the rapid influx of European peasants into the steppe. With the dawn of the twentieth century, Russian peasant resettlement had begun to seriously disrupt the Kazakhs' nomadic economy by settling on the best pasturelands.

By 1917, three million Russian peasants had settled 17 million desiatins of steppe land. This was a tremendous influx of Russians into the steppe. By 1897, sixteen percent of the population in the northern oblasts in the steppe region was Russian. By 1916, the Russian population had grown to 41.6 percent.²⁹ Because of this massive resettlement into the steppe, traditional migration routes and many of the most fertile pastures were no longer available for the Kazakhs. As a result, the Kazakhs increasingly engaged in sedentary agriculture as the conditions created by peasant colonization made it impossible to continue their nomadic existence. Paradoxically, resettlement officials were often corrupt and used their authority to seize Kazakh settlements and hand them over to Russian peasants, causing newly settled Kazakhs to once again become nomads or settle on poorer quality land.³⁰ As a result of this resettlement, the Kazakhs became largely marginalized in the new society that was taking shape. The pastures that had supported their nomadic way of life were rapidly disappearing, thereby impoverishing much of Kazakh society. In addition, the loss of these pastures also meant the loss of territory – a place that the Kazakhs could call home. This became the central issue of the reformist intelligentsia.

The second generation intelligentsia saw its most important task as that of preserving their homeland, without which they could not be viewed as a nation. Building on the early histories of the Kazakhs produced by Valikhanov and influenced by the Western notion of national self-determination that was current in the literature of the Imperial intelligentsia, the second generation used the grab bag of history to stake its claim to a well defined territorial homeland.

This new elite viewed history as a way to both demonstrate that they were a historically legitimate nation, entitled to certain rights and autonomy, and as a model of development. History showed the mistakes of the past and therefore the remedies to restore the Kazakh nation. This is clearly illustrated in the first of a series of articles entitled *Qazaqtyng tarikhi* [Kazakh History] by an anonymous contributor who signed the articles *Turik Balasy*: “If we know what kind of good and bad times our ancestors passed through we will understand the results and profit from them. So in the future, our leaders can draw on the results from the past. In studying history we will know clearly who we are as a people.”³¹

²⁹ Martha Brill Olcott. *The Kazakhs*. Stanford, 1980. Pp. 89-90.

³⁰ Peter Rottier. *The Kazakhness of Sedentarization: Promoting Progress as Tradition in Response to the Land Problem* // *Central Asian Survey*. 2003. Vol. 22. No 1. Pp. 67-81.

³¹ *Turik Balasy. Qazaqtyng Tarikhi* // *Qazaq*. 1913. No. 2 n.d.

The Kazakh intelligentsia had their own view of the Kazakh nation and their own interpretation of the history of their nation. The early twentieth century Kazakh intelligentsia believed that it was not their nomadic way of life that had made the Kazakhs a nation, but rather, their distinct culture, language, and, most importantly, their homeland. The intelligentsia argued it was the personal greed and selfishness of the khans and mullahs that had kept the Kazakh nation from progressing as had other nations of the world. The Kazakh nation had not been recognized as a real nation because the rest of the world knew nothing about it. The Kazakhs had not yet progressed to a point where they had their own written language or history. In his second article on Kazakh history, Turik Balasy stated, "The Kazakhs are not known among the foreign peoples of the world because we have no written history. Today the maps of Asia do not show that the million Kazakhs possess any territory."³² The reason for this was that the khans and mullahs sought to keep the Kazakh people in a backward state and thereby solidify their own positions of authority. By constantly keeping the Kazakhs nomadic, the traditional leaders had denied them the opportunity to study, learn and advance. The very nature of nomadic life was not compatible with progress.

Turik Balasy wrote, "In the past, without strength and might nothing could be created, anyone can see this. This violence was the work of the tyrant. What profit can come from this period of the khans?"³³ The author's point is that the khans' reliance on violence did not advance the Kazakh nation as the *Zar Zaman* writers and *aqyns* had argued, but instead resulted in the stagnation of the nation. Because of the despotism of traditional leaders, the Kazakhs were unable to advance. This was demonstrated by their inability to create any attributes associated with the concept of a nation, such as a written language, books and scholarship.

These articles contradicted Valikhanov's history by stating that the Kazakhs were not descendants of Chingiz Khan. Turik Balasy, as his chosen pseudonym implies [child of the Turks], tied the Kazakhs more strongly with their Turkic ancestors than with the Mongols. The Turks represented a higher civilization to associate with than the Mongols, with their history of pillage and plunder. By disclaiming the Kazakhs' Mongol heritage, Turik Balasy implied that the Kazakh khans, who claimed their descent from Chingiz Khan, were tying their legitimacy to the despotic east, and its nomadic tra-

³² Turik Balasy. *Qazaqtyng Tarikhi* // *Qazaq*. 1913. No. 3 n.d.

³³ Turik Balasy. *Qazaqtyng Tarikhi* // *Qazaq*. 1913. No. 2 n.d.

ditions. By asserting that the Kazakhs were not related to the Mongols, the author argued that the Kazakh nation's historical development was disrupted by an alien and illegitimate source. Therefore, the intelligentsia could return the nation to its correct path of development by uncovering the true history of the Kazakh people.

The intelligentsia did not believe that the lack of national progress was solely the fault of the khans, but that the Islamic mullahs (who the Kazakh intelligentsia also viewed as an unnatural import from among the emirates and Tatars) also sought to keep the people from fulfilling their historical destiny. Turik Balasy stated that the religious leaders believed that it would be better to forget the history of the Kazakhs, "[they] say about it: 'Why do we need to know history? What does it tell us? It is just a story. Why do we need to learn anything except God's commands and Muhammad's words?' These simple-minded statements are the cause of harm to the nation; only through understanding our history can we become a nation."³⁴ In the view of the Kazakh intelligentsia, it was this lack of knowledge that had led to the decline of the Kazakh nation.

The Kazakh intelligentsia sought to revive the decaying nation in order to protect it from disappearing altogether. They felt threatened by Russian colonization as the editors of *Qazaq* stated:

Now, into our territory foreigners arrive and participate in our society. How much will the foreigners impact our society? History shows that if the outsiders are strong, then the inhabitants will be further weakened and vanish. If the inhabitants are strong, the newcomers will be digested into the population and the foreigners will disappear. If the two are equal, they will not become one or the other, they will not exterminate each other, they will both exist, each one contributing to the other's nationality.³⁵

In order to preserve their notion of nationhood, the Kazakh intelligentsia deemed it imperative to continue to develop their culture. As the editors of *Qazaq* affirmed, "If we wish to use the name Kazakh and become a nation we need to think of our grief in our own language... Let us study so we can join the ranks of the other peoples of the world."³⁶ For the intelligentsia the path to national rebirth lay in native language education and the teaching of Kazakh history and culture. Through these means, the Kazakhs could

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Orenburg 10 fevral' // *Qazaq*. 1913. No. 2 n.d.

³⁶ Ibid.

demonstrate to the world that they constituted a legitimate people. As Turik Balasy maintained, “In this century, we can open the eyes of the world to our Kazakhs through scientific inquiry, we can repair the damage of anonymity and show that we are a people with customs built on Kazakh culture, and protect this by establishing our own literature.”³⁷ Therefore, the Kazakh intelligentsia, as the leading advocates of Western-style education and native language publishing were positing themselves as the leaders of the nation.

A History of the Homeland

As previously demonstrated, the Kazakh intelligentsia believed that other world nations did not perceive of the Kazakh people as a nation because of their lack of development and the dearth of Kazakh literature and written history. They believed that by providing a written history as well as a national literature, they could legitimate themselves as a nation. Because of Russian peasant settlement and colonization, the most pressing issue for the Kazakh intelligentsia was the issue of homeland. Therefore, the histories constructed by the Kazakh intelligentsia in the early twentieth century focused on legitimating an ancient fatherland for the Kazakh nation.

The notion of homeland was emphasized in the histories of the second-generation intelligentsia. Ahmet Baitursunov wrote in the second edition of the newspaper *Qazaq*, “The Kazakh nation for a long time has inhabited a definite territory, and lived a particular kind of life.”³⁸ The intelligentsia needed to establish the principle that the steppe was their historical homeland. The Russians did not view the land as belonging to the Kazakhs because of their nomadic lifestyle and they therefore believed that the steppe land was open for peasant settlement. By declaring that the Kazakhs were the historical residents of this land, the intelligentsia could argue for an end to settlement or at least have a voice in decisions regarding resettlement.

Ali Khan Bokeikhanov was the first member of this new generation intelligentsia to write a history. In 1903, he wrote *Istoricheskie sud'by Kirgizskogo kraia i kul'turnye ego uspekhi* (*The History of the Kyrgyz [Kazakh] Territory and Culture and its Achievements*). It is interesting to note that the title of this piece focuses on the territory of the Kazakhs, making a claim to its historic ownership from the start of the essay. In his history he links the Kazakhs to the ancient peoples called the “Chud” (Bokeikhanov

³⁷ Turik Balasy. *Qazaqtyng Tarikhi* // *Qazaq*. 1913. No. 3 n.d.

³⁸ As quoted in Winner. P. 129.

is probably referring to the Udmurt who inhabited the steppe in the copper and bronze ages). "The ancient settlements of the Chud were located on the banks of the Irtysh near Pavlodar, in the vicinities of Karkaralinsk, in the upper regions of the Ishim and Tobol rivers, and on the banks of the Ileka and Ural rivers."³⁹ During this time the steppe civilization reached a high state of cultural development. Bokeikhanov indicated that these were the ancestors of the Kazakhs.⁴⁰ In tracing the ancestry of the Kazakh people back as far as there were records of people inhabiting the steppe, Bokeikhanov was establishing the Kazakh historical rights to the land. He was also showing that the Kazakhs were descendents of a highly cultured civilization.

Bokeikhanov's history claims that, according to Chinese sources, around 200 BCE the Usuns occupied the Kazakh steppe. He states that these people had light hair and blue eyes. They remained in the steppe region until the first century of the Common Era when they were pushed out.⁴¹ In the seventh century, the first of the Turkic tribes began to appear. Finally, the Kazakh and Kyrgyz tribes appeared in the steppe in the eleventh century. While these early tribes were scattered by the Mongol invasions, they remained on the territories that they claimed as their own. Bokeikhanov claims that the Kazakhs are a mixture of all of the civilizations that had inhabited the region since ancient times.⁴² In claiming territorial primacy, Bokeikhanov is positing the ancient claims of the Kazakhs to this specific territory. His history not only defines a homeland, but imbues the Kazakh nation with a long and distinguished pedigree.

In many of his articles, Bokeikhanov makes a point of detailing the Kazakhs' attachment and innate link to the land. In an article entitled *Kabinet zherindegi qazaqtap* (*Council on Kazakh Lands*), he begins by presenting the history of the Kazakhs in the eastern regions of today's Kazakhstan between the Ob' and Irtysh rivers. He stated that in 1750, the Kazakhs defeated the Jungars and since that point they have occupied that territory.⁴³ His point is to show that the Kazakhs restored this piece of their ancient homeland before the Russian Cossacks made their way into the eastern part of the steppe, thereby nullifying any claim the Russians may make about acting as protectors of the Kazakhs. In another article, *Eki zhol* [Two paths], Bokeikhanov also began with a description of the Kazakh living along the

³⁹ Ali Khan Bokeikhanov. *Istoricheskie sud'by Kirgizskogo kraya I kul'turnye ego uspekhi* // Alikhan Bokeikhanov Tangdamaly. Almaty, 1995. P. 45.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid. P. 45.

⁴² Ibid. P. 47.

Irtys River, tracing their reappearance on the territory to the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ The purpose of presenting the histories in the articles is to demonstrate a historical claim to a territory with defined borders. Bokeikhanov is conscious of the history of the Kazakhs, and the great losses they suffered during the *aktaban shuberundu* (the great retreat), that occurred because of Jungar and Kalmuk aggression in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was at this time that the Russians were invited in by the various khans of the three *zhuz* to help protect the Kazakhs from further Mongol aggression. However, by pointing out that in the regions that Bokeikhanov mentions the Kazakhs were able to restore their own authority, he is undercutting the Russian argument that they were invited into the region and are entitled to territory due to their efforts on behalf of the Kazakhs.

Bokeikhanov also contributed an essay “Kirghizy” for the political work *Formy natsional'nogo dnizheniya v sovremennykh gosudarstbakh* (*The Formation of National Movements in the Contemporary States*). One of the goals of this essay was to demonstrate that the Kazakhs are a historical nation with a legitimate homeland. In this essay, Bokeikhanov stated that the Kazakhs have occupied a set territory since the thirteenth century. He declared, “These territories consist of the plains that are bordered by the Ural and Yaik rivers to the north, the Amu Dar’ya to the west, the Irtys to the east and the mountains to the south.”⁴⁵ In addition, he claims the Kazakhs also occupied the territory of the Astrakhan guberniya.

To further stress the Kazakh claims to the steppe territory Bokeikhanov stated that Kazakhs made up the majority of the population – over 65% in the territory from the Syr-Dar’ya to the Irtys and from the Tyan’-Shan mountains to the Ural river according to the 1897 census. By citing the census, Bokeikhanov demonstrated that the empire administratively classified the Kazakhs as a people, which further strengthen his argument, even though the census did not really count ethnic groups as such, but rather categorized its subjects by language.

In addition to defining the borders of the Kazakh nation, Bokeikhanov attempted to demonstrate that the Kazakh nation was evolving. He explained that the modern Kazakhs were not simply “primitive nomads that are con-

⁴³ Ali Khan Bokeikhanov. Kabinet zherindegi qazaqtap // Qazaq. 1913. No. 10. n.d

⁴⁴ Ali Khan Bokeikhanov. Eki zhol // Alikhan Bokeikhanov Tangdamaly. Almaty, 1995. Pp. 265-268.

⁴⁵ Ali Khan Bokeikhanov. Kirghizy // Alikhan Bokeikhanov Tangdamaly. Almaty, 1995. P. 66.

stantly roaming with their herds and acting half-wild.”⁴⁶ Bokeikhanov wrote that in those areas where natural historical conditions have been favorable, the Kazakhs engaged in agriculture and semi-nomadic livestock breeding. Bokeikhanov utilized this argument to demonstrate that the Kazakhs are not only advancing, but that they knew the territory very well. Because this land is their homeland and they had inhabited it for centuries, they understood how best to make use of it. “Kirghizy” is critical of the Russian peasants’ development of intensive agriculture. Bokeikhanov declared that the land was not suited to this type of agriculture and predicted that the settlement camps would quickly turn to desert after a few good harvests. He predicted that resettlement would bring ruin to not only the Kazakhs who had the land stolen from them, but also the Russian peasants who would soon be facing famine.⁴⁷ In positing his arguments in historical development, he clearly is in line with thinkers from the Imperial intelligentsia who were committed to the idea of the historicized nation. Bokeikhanov obviously believes that the Kazakhs will certainly progress and that in order to do so they must not only educate themselves to catch up with the other nations, but remain in their homeland, which to the Kazakhs is an integral part of Kazakhness. It is expressed in their knowledge of their *ata meken*, which has allowed the Kazakhs to develop their own culture and deep rooted history. Though they faced misfortunes that stymied their development as a nation, the Kazakh intelligentsia believed that they could help the people develop a true national consciousness and reawaken the long slumbering Kazakh nation.

Conclusion

The second generation Kazakh intelligentsia wrote histories of their people and the territory they inhabited in an effort to re-establish themselves as a legitimate nation. They clearly believed that through the articulation of nationhood, they could then make demands for some semblance of autonomy on a defined territory. The histories they constructed contained the first expression of a Kazakh fatherland, the *ata meken*. With their territory rapidly being confiscated by the Russian Resettlement Administration, the Kazakhs used history to try and answer the questions that they themselves posed in the second edition of the newspaper *Qazaq*, “When we reflect on the existence of the Kazakhs do we do so with sadness? Do the Kazakhs even exist? When do we say there was a Kazakh nation? What contemporary

⁴⁶ Ibid. P. 70.

⁴⁷ Ibid. P. 73.

people inhabit the territory from the Volga to the Irtysh, from the Ural to Afghanistan? In our opinion the Kazakhs did not vanish, but will we remain a Kazakh nation?" The work of this second generation intelligentsia was to preserve and reawaken a Kazakh nation that was once vibrant, but had fallen into decline as the result of illegitimate rule and foreign subjugation. With the Russian Resettlement Administration rapidly confiscating their territory, the Kazakhs used history to define their territory and legitimize their right to this land. The members of the intelligentsia were the first to define the nation territorially and the first to articulate the notion of Kazakhstan in order to argue for a say in what was happening to their *ata meken*.

In arguing for the settling of the nomads and defining and historicizing their territory, the Kazakh intelligentsia made a strong claim for the recognition of Kazakhs as a territorial nation. The goal was to become a recognized nation in the eyes of the Russian administration and therefore gain a voice in state politics. Unlike the jadids of Central Asia, whose main concern was cultural reform, the Kazakhs were looking for political rights and utilized nation building to political ends. They addressed much of their reform movement to the Russian state, while Central Asian jadids addressed their concerns to the community. However, to keep their movement moving forward, they also needed to produce politically conscious Kazakh national "citizens." To do this they focused primarily on education as a way to socially reproduce and advance their movement.

SUMMARY

Питер Ротьер анализирует формирование исторического самосознания казахской интеллигенции с середины XIX века. По мнению автора, русская колонизация способствовала кристаллизации национального сознания среди казахской интеллигенции. Традиционно настроенные акыны критиковали современное им состояние казахского общества и настаивали на возвращении к кочевым корням казахов. Напротив, казахская интеллигенция считала современное образование по российской модели способом улучшения жизни казахов и разделяла взгляды российских интеллектуалов на кочевые народы как на отсталые. Второе поколение казахской интеллигенции, под влиянием распространенного в начале XX в. интереса к самоопределению национальностей, провозгласило историческое право казахской нации на свою территорию. В отличие от центрально-азиатских джадидистов, казахская интеллигенция не ограничивалась культурными требованиями, политизируя процесс нациестроительства.

The Kazakness of sedentarization: promoting progress as tradition in response to the land problem

PETER ROTTIER

Introduction

There is little doubt that the Russian colonization of the Kazak steppe had a tremendous impact on the Kazak society during the 19th century. Russian administrators replaced the traditional leaders of the community while *muzhik* settlements restricted grazing lands and disrupted the nomadic economy. The very survival of the Kazak people seemed in question by the early 20th century. The most immediate threat to Kazak society was the land question, which became the principle issue of debate among those who claimed the mantle of Kazak leadership. Those engaged in this discussion were forced to struggle with the very notion of what it meant to be Kazak. Participating in this discourse was a new elite, the Kazak intelligentsia, who came to advocate the radical position that the Kazak community should change from a nomadic society to a sedentary one. They defended this position by articulating that the true nature of Kazak society was based on progress, with sedentarization being the next step in that progress. Their goal was to save their remaining pasture from further Russian settlement. To do so the Kazak intelligentsia had to posit themselves as the true leaders of the Kazak community while declaring the traditional leaders of the Kazaks, who advocated nomadism, to be the enemies of the Kazak nation.

The Kazak intelligentsia based their claim of leadership on the concept of a Kazak nation. A nation that they argued was once great but since had fallen into decline because of the greed of the few—the khans, sultans, ulema and now the *aqsauls* and *biis*. The intelligentsia's view of these traditional leaders was that they had kept the nation divided and backward in order to serve their own whims. In order to return the Kazaks to their rightful place as a leading nation, the Kazak intelligentsia advocated modernizing Kazak society through education and sedentarization. They believed modernization would not only aid the Kazaks economically, but more importantly it was essential for the preservation of their homeland—the fundamental component of a nation. Paradoxically, this new modern elite posited themselves as leaders of the Kazak community, while at the

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same time redefining what it meant to be Kazak. They argued that true Kazaks should abandon their traditional nomadic lifestyle and replace it with a sedentary one.

Kazak nomadism

For the Kazak intelligentsia to ask the nomads to adopt a completely different way of life was no easy task. The socio-economic life of the Kazaks was based upon nomadism. Although some limited agriculture did exist among the Kazaks, this was looked upon as unappealing and beneath the status of the nomad. In the winter camps, permanent structures were erected and some individuals remained behind during the summer migrations to plant feed for the winter.¹ For the most part, the task of farming fell to those who were either too weak to continue on the yearly migrations or those who had lost their livestock and therefore were forced to remain at the winter pastures. These 'unlucky ones' planted fodder to sell so they could raise enough money to purchase new animals and once again return to their nomadic way of life.

Nomadism was deeply ingrained into the psyche of the Kazak people. Janibek's son Qasim reportedly defined the Kazaks as follows: 'We are the men of the steppe; all of our wealth consists of horses; their flesh is our favorite food, mare's milk our best drink. Houses we have none. Our chief diversion is to inspect our flocks and our herds of horses.'² This romantic image of nomadism was deep-seated in the culture of the Kazaks. Their way of life was glorified in the oral epics that were transmitted from *aul* to *aul* by the traveling *aqyns*.³ As Thomas Winner noted in his study: 'All phases of Kazakh life—birth, marriage, battle, mourning and death—were recorded in song.'⁴ The hero of these epics was the *batyr*, who embodied the free warrior spirit of the idealized nomad. The oral literature instilled a strong sense of nomadic identity in Kazak society. At the same time, the *aqyns* gained a place of prominence in society because through their epics they defined Kazak identity and history. However, maintaining this nomadic identity became increasingly difficult for the Kazaks as pastures became restricted during the 19th century.

Russian colonization and the land crisis

Russian peasant colonization of the Kazak steppe had a direct impact on the Kazak population's adoption of a sedentary lifestyle. By 1917, three million Russian peasants had settled 17 million desiatins of steppe land. This was a tremendous influx of Russians into the steppe. In 1897, 16 per cent of the population in the Northern oblasts in the steppe region was Russian. By 1916 the Russian population had grown to 41.6 per cent.⁵ Because of this massive incursion into the steppe, migration routes and many of the most fertile pastures became unavailable for the Kazaks. As a result, the Kazaks increasingly engaged in sedentary agriculture as the conditions created by peasant colonization made it impossible to continue a nomadic existence. Between 1906 and 1916 the

that the Kazaks could become equal to their Russian oppressors. The most effective way to accomplish this was through education and settlement.

The best known of this first generation of Kazak enlighteners were Choqan Valikhanov, Ibrahim Altysarin and Abay Qunanbaev. Through their writings and work, many new Kazaks were educated in the Western style and by the 20th century a sizable group of native intellectuals debated the issues of the day.²² This second generation of Kazak intellectuals became considerably more vocal in their criticisms of the Russian administration's land policy. They also articulated the idea that the Kazaks represented a distinct nation, and were therefore entitled to certain rights. The nationalism of this group was the result of a number of circumstances. First, the resettlement of the Russians between 1890 and 1917 took a considerable toll on the Kazak people. Second, the 1905 revolution in Russia allowed for a slightly more open atmosphere in which to criticize the administration. Following the revolution, the newly created State Duma allowed representation of national groups confirming the importance of the national argument. Third, many of this second generation elite attended school in St Petersburg, Moscow, Orenburg, and Omsk. As a result, they became much more familiar with the Russian and other national intelligentsia and incorporated the ideas of these groups into their own discourse. Their main motive, however, was to stake their claim as the legitimate leaders of the Kazak community.

The intelligentsia and the land problem

The Kazak elite, seeing the dire conditions of their people, protested vehemently to save the land for the Kazaks. They used the new medium of the printing press to articulate their concerns to the Kazak people. In the editorial of the second edition of *Qazaq*, entitled, '*Orenburg, 10 Fevral*' [Orenburg, 10 February], the editors state: 'Our people are in grief, we will discuss our people's sadness and our current direction'.²³ Indeed, the newspaper *Qazaq* and the journal *Aikap* featured many articles on current issues, but the land issue dominated all others, 'These days there are many problems facing the Kazaks, but the most important one is the land problem'.²⁴

In their articles, the intelligentsia demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the steppe and its Kazak inhabitants. In the article '*Qazaq*', Alikhan Bokeikhanov, who was a member on Shcherbina's survey expedition, detailed the Kazak population in nine oblasts and the *guberniia* of Astrakhan. He also related to his readers the population growth among Kazaks residing in these regions between 1898 and 1913. He noted that while the Kazak population increased, the amount of land available to the native population decreased. 'In 1913 an estimated six million desiatins of land will be taken from the Kazaks and given to the muzhiks'.²⁵ The declining conditions of the Kazaks that resulted from *muzhik* resettlement became the major complaint of the Kazak writers.

In 1907 Mırzhaqyp Dulatov wrote '*Bızdın maqsatymyz*' [Our goals], which attacked the Russian colonization of Kazakhstan. In the article he complained that

the Kazak people had lost all their rights because of Russian colonization. He bemoaned the impoverishment of the Kazaks because Russian resettlement officials were giving *muzhiks* the most fertile land in the steppe. 'Now these administrators allow thousands of peasants to fill the Kazak steppe, taking away our Kazaks' water resources and fertile land.'²⁶ Dulatov's attack on the Resettlement administration indicated the outrage of the intelligentsia toward the Tsarist policy of land confiscation. As a result of this article, the Russian authorities closed down the newspaper *Serke*, in which the article appeared, but Dulatov escaped arrest.²⁷

Akhmet Baitursunov also wrote about the abuse of the resettlement officials. In an article that appeared in *Qazaq* in 1913 he wrote:

Last summer they appeared, surveyed the land, dug furrows, and completely prepared the land for resettlement. These 5000 desiatins included a thirteen home winter camp as well as Kazak summer pastures. Did this work benefit the Kazaks? Of course not! This land was stolen for the muzhiks. The Kazak land was stolen and we believe stolen improperly.²⁸

Baitursunov's article complained about resettlement officials in Yrghiz uezd, Shangel volost, who confiscated 5000 desiatins of land. He informed his readers that when complaints were filed in Orenburg regarding the confiscation, resettlement officials claimed that the seizure was not harmful to the Kazaks in the region, and necessary for the Russian peasants.

In Dulatov's collection of poems entitled, *Oyan, Qazaq!* [Awake Kazak!], written in 1909, he implored his people to awaken from their ignorance and unite to fight colonization, which was taking away the Kazak land and destroying their traditions.

Open your eyes, awaken, the Kazak, hold up your head,
Do not spend your life in vain!
Land is lost; religion and life are deteriorating,
My Kazakh, now it does not become you to lie as before!²⁹

Dulatov believed that the loss of land meant much more than economic impoverishment for the Kazak people. He believed that the land was sacred, and its loss also meant the loss of Kazak identity. The editors of *Qazaq* reiterate this point in the first issue of the newspaper. 'What if we do not overcome our present fate? Do we fold up our yurts and scatter, destroying our society?'³⁰

The Kazakness of sedentarization

The Kazak intelligentsia used the press to debate the land issue and try to find solutions to their woes. One solution to the land crisis that the intelligentsia advanced was Kazak sedentarization. This became the most contentious issue of debate among the intelligentsia. Soviet historiography claims that the Kazak intelligentsia was split over this issue. Soviet scholars claim that those members of the Kazak intelligentsia who wrote for the newspaper *Qazaq* were against sedentarization, while those who wrote for the journal *Aikap* were for the

settlement of the Kazaks. As recently as 1998, an article in *Ana Tili* continued to argue that these groups of intelligentsia were split on the issue of settlement.³¹ The recent availability of the works of these intellectuals, however, demonstrates that this was not the case. Gulnar Kendirbaeva correctly argued that both of these groups of intellectuals supported Kazak sedentarization.³² While sedentarization was advocated by different means by the authors of *Qazaq* and *Aikap*, preserving the steppe through Kazak settlement was a shared goal among these intellectuals.

The Kazak intelligentsia, like the Russian intelligentsia, believed in the linear development of nations. They understood that ethnic groups evolved into nations over time. The Kazak intelligentsia came to view the nomadic tradition as a stage of development that all societies pass through. By presenting settlement as the next stage in developing an advanced society, they were able to show that it was not against Kazak custom, but rather, the next necessary step in the development of the great Kazak nation. Through this argument the Kazak elite were able to promote modernization while denouncing Russian colonialism.

The problem of advocating settlement was that the intelligentsia needed to posit themselves as the keepers of the traditional culture, while simultaneously advocating a completely new lifestyle. Because of Tsarist resettlement policy, the intelligentsia realized that the only way to achieve control of the land was by building permanent structures and settling families on the land. They therefore needed to express sedentarism in terms of progress and therefore a part of the true Kazak tradition. They argued that *Kazakness* was not an attribute of the nomadic way of life, but rather, that their identity resonated from the *ata meken*, the Fatherland. Territory, not tradition, became the cornerstone of the Kazak intelligentsia's argument for sedentarization.

The writings of the national intelligentsia in the early 20th century reflect this desire to establish a national identity based on the territory. In the second issue of *Qazaq*, the editors assert their belief that the Kazak people must change in order to progress:

The pattern of agriculture is changing; let it change. As our culture changes we need support to stay together as a people. Now foreigners arrive into our region and they participate in our society. How will these foreigners affect our people? History shows that if the outsiders are strong, then the inhabitants will be further weakened and vanish. If the inhabitants are strong, then the newcomers will be digested in the population and disappear. But if the two are equal, they will not become one or the other, they will not exterminate each other. They will both exist, each one contributing to the others nationality.³³

The authors of this piece admonish Kazak resistance to change: 'our people do not plant crops, we cannot even produce food, how can the Kazak continue to exist?' The intelligentsia believed that the only way to preserve the land was through sedentarization and making changes to their traditional pastoral practices.

Dulatov emphasized the importance of securing the land in one of the poems from his *Oyan Qazaq* [Awake Kazak!] collection. This poem, *Qazaq zherleri*

[The Kazak land], conveys the urgency that Dulatov felt in protecting the Kazak land that remained:

In the year 1731 we met the Russians.
After their appearance a lifeless emptiness ensued,
What will be the inheritance of the Kazak children?

In the year 1867 they took our land as well.
From year to year our pastures and water resources shrink,
The *muzhiks* come out to settle.

...

All the Kazaks are being chased out,
As the Farmers come to settle.
They set out to survey the land,
And with this purpose take our good land.

...

Since the arrival of the Russians all the good land is diminishing,
The only souls remaining are farmers.
To us all that remains is bitter water and the desert steppe,
Plant crops, do not abandon the good land.

Take a look from the mountains and stones,
The rich possess barns for their horses.
Now the *muzhiks* come like great clouds,
They fill the Kazak land.

The time now is too short to quarrel (among ourselves),
I beg you all to pay attention.
At 15 *desiatins* a household,
If we give this land away, how will we remain?³⁴

Dulatov feared that if the Kazak people did not act, then the Russians would continue to pour into the steppe and take all the suitable land. He believed that the *muzhik* invasion sapped the Kazaks of not only their land, but also their way of life. Through sedentarization, the Kazaks would be able to protect the land that remained and thereby preserve their culture. For Dulatov, sedentarization was a way to ensure that the Kazaks would keep their homeland.

In the article *Zher maselesi* [The land problem] that appeared in the journal *Aikap* in 1911, Dulatov tried to establish a dialogue among the Kazak intellectuals on the issue of sedentarization vs nomadism. He stated that many Kazaks wished to continue the practice of nomadism, but the intellectuals who represent this group would not express their opinion in the journals and newspapers. For this reason, Dulatov presented the arguments both for and against settlement to stimulate discussion of the problem.³⁵

Dulatov's begins by detailing the Russian administration's policy of resettlement and how this had impoverished the Kazak economy. 'It has been 15–20 years since they began coming to the steppe, and there is no visible end to this migration, there is only a small amount of good land left and much of the land that is not suitable for anything is being given to the Kazak people, soon we will

be nothing more than beggars.³⁶ Dulatov worried that if the Kazaks did not settle there would be no land for the Kazaks, and the *ata meken* would vanish along with the Kazaks as a people. This fear was prevalent among the Kazaks, as another article warned, '... if Kazaks do not settle, this good land will be taken from them, therefore it is necessary to divide the land and settle'.³⁷

Dulatov saw settlement as a way to preserve the Kazaks as a people and keep their strong traditions and culture. 'We are not poor, we are not without skill, the Kazaks will settle, reduce their number of livestock, raise the value of their property, plant crops, study, develop our skills, these things will move us forward and if we pursue this path, in a little time we will again be a first rate nation.'³⁸ Dulatov argued that settlement and agriculture were a path to progress for the Kazak people. Settlement was not portrayed as something that was not in the character of the Kazak people. Throughout time, they have striven to be a great people. This was the path they must take to continue this tradition.

One of the editors of the journal *Aikap*, Mukhamedzhan Seralin, had similar sentiments on the land problem:

We are convinced that the building of settlements and cities, accompanied by a transition to agriculture based on the acceptance of land by Kazakhs according to the norms of Russian muzhiks, will be more useful than the opposite solution. The consolidation of the Kazakh people on a unified territory will help preserve them as a nation. Otherwise the nomadic auls will be scattered and before long lose their fertile land.³⁹

Clearly the goal of settlement for Seralin was to unite the Kazaks on their homeland.

Bokeikhanov also wrote extensively on the land issue in favor of preserving the land for the Kazaks by any means necessary. In his article *Kabinet zherindegi qazaqtap* [Qazaqs and the land administration], which he wrote in 1913, Bokeikhanov related how the Russians set up a council for land redistribution in the Qarasuyk and Kinshak regions in 1906. He stated that those who took the 15 desiatins offered by this council were still registered as living in the region, whereas those who continued the nomadic tradition were expelled. He cursed the Kazaks who stubbornly stuck to the past and as a result, lost their homeland. 'How much respect do Kazaks seem to have of themselves?'⁴⁰ The intelligentsia believed that by not settling on the steppe, the Kazaks gave the Russians an opportunity to declare pasturelands to be in excess of Kazak needs and seize fertile land.⁴¹

In another article, *Eki zhol*, Bokeikhanov continued to implore the Kazaks to keep their land. He related a story of how the Russians who settled along the Irtysh River experienced problems with Kazak raids. They passed laws barring the nomads from coming within 10 km of the peasant settlements. However, if the Kazaks wanted to remain in the area, they were given the opportunity to settle. 'If our Kazaks would have become farmers, who knows what may have become of our culture.' Here, Bokeikhanov was directly tying the culture and identity of the Kazaks to the land. It did not matter that nomads became settled farmers as long as they occupied their homeland, they would be Kazaks.

However, by allowing themselves to be impoverished and by losing their homeland, the Kazaks would lose their identity and fail to be Kazaks.⁴²

Another member of the Kazak intelligentsia, Sultanmakhmud Topaighyrov, also supported the sedentarization of the Kazaks. In 1913, he reprinted an article written by the Crimean Tatar Gasprinskii, entitled *Topyrak, Topyrak* [Land, land]. This article contained a significant message for the Kazaks. In it, Gasprinskii lamented the condition of the Tatars and Nogays whose residence had been the Crimea. He related how the Russians had driven most of the Tatars and Nogay from the area and how the Tatars that remained were outnumbered by the colonists. He stated, 'A people can not exist in the world without land'.⁴³ Gasprinskii also conveyed that when the Tatars and Nogay controlled the region, they did not even appreciate the value of their land. They did not try to develop the land and saw little use for agriculture. When the Russians moved in, they willingly sold their land for only a fraction of its value. He then included a firm warning to the Kazaks, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen: 'The Crimean people's sad situation is beginning for the Kazaks, Kyrgyz, and Bashkurt. Heed our terrible example ...'.⁴⁴ By printing this article in a Kazak journal, Toraighyrov was expressing his view on the situation of settlement. The Crimean Tatars and Nogay lost their land because they did not understand the value of the land. By continuing with the nomadic way of life, the Kazaks risked the loss of more land, and their culture and traditions that would go with it.

The article '*Qytai zherindegi qazaqtar*' [Kazaks and Chinese land] admonished Kazaks for moving to China in order to continue their nomadic existence. The article states: 'The Chinese people themselves do not have much land'.⁴⁵ If Kazaks continued to migrate to China, then conflict would surely ensue. The article indicated that the real solution to the land problem was not migration to foreign lands, but to become educated and therefore progress. It stated that it was only because of Kazak backwardness that the Russians were able to take their land. The author declared that the Kazaks needed education to advance. 'If the Kazaks do not advance, we will disappear, scattered throughout the world'.⁴⁶

The Kazak intellectuals struggled to show that being Kazak did not necessarily mean being a nomad. Omar Karashev wrote:

Eternal nomadic livestock breeding was not ordered as the eternal Kazakh fate. There comes a time when we are able to live as agriculturists and as traders. The present-day Russians and Tatars and other settled peoples first led nomadic lives, raising livestock. How they are occupied in the present day is known by all. We are no worse off than they are and we are the children of humanity. We are also able to live as they do.⁴⁷

While the intelligentsia agreed that settlement of the nomadic Kazaks was the best way to preserve their homeland, they disagreed as to what type of agriculture they should engage in. Many of the contributors to *Aikap* believed that Kazaks should adopt the Russian agricultural model and give up livestock breeding. They believed that sedentary agriculture was an indication of a high society. The writers for *Qazaq*, however, believed that the Kazaks should settle, but adopt intensive livestock breeding.

Bokeikhanov, one of the editors of *Qazaq*, stated in an article that the land was not suitable to agricultural production. He contended that by improving their techniques, settling on large tracts of land, purifying and shrinking their herds, the Kazaks could produce the meat the Russian settlers demanded and do so profitably. He cited the example of Australia, which despite its poor land, exports meat all the way to England.⁴⁸ Bokeikhanov scoffed at the assertion of *Aikap* that people engaged in sedentary agriculture were more advanced. He states: 'Chingiz Khan conquered the world, Timur tried but could not. Timur was the leader of a settled people whereas Chingiz Khan the leader of a nomadic society'.⁴⁹

Bokeikhanov advocated a change in the nomadic economy, but not its abandonment. By converting to intensive livestock breeding the Kazaks could take possession of the land by building permanent structures, but also maintain a connection to their nomadic past. The contributors to *Qazaq* believed that their position on Kazak settlement was closer to the spirit and tradition of the Kazak people. They also argued that to establish Kazak settlements based on livestock breeding would require more land. Bokeikhanov estimated that three hundred desiatins of land would be required for each family to pursue this new form of agriculture.⁵⁰ An article in *Qazaq* in 1914, '*Qazaq ham zher maselesi*' [The Kazaks and the land problem] openly argued that by following livestock breeding norms, the Kazaks could acquire more land. 'Following the livestock breeding norms, 6000 people would require 90,000 desiatins of land. Following the planting norms, only 45,000 desiatins would be required.'⁵¹ These norms would have given the Kazaks twice as much land than what the Resettlement Administration was presently allotting. The editors of *Qazaq* wanted the Kazak people to be able to sedentarize according to these norms to protect more land.

The *Qazaq* writers believed that the Kazaks could not continue to exist as they had in the past. Bokeikhanov wrote that the number of livestock was too large for the shrinking environment. They also could not adopt European agriculture on the steppe, as the land was not suited for this. Only livestock breeding could preserve the Kazak identity. If the intelligentsia could convince the administrators to allocate land based on a true nomadic norm, as Pahlen and Kaufman had advocated, the Kazaks could improve their economy and preserve their land, and in so doing, also safeguard the Kazak nation.

Conclusion

As a result of Russian resettlement practices in the Eurasian steppe, the Kazak people became increasingly impoverished. The Kazak intelligentsia believed that the land problem was the most serious quandary facing the Kazaks. They came to see the steppe as the Kazak homeland. Their goal was to save the land, and therefore the Kazak nation. The intelligentsia believed that the only way to save the steppe was for the Kazak people to settle on the land, build permanent structures and engage in some form of sedentary agriculture. If the Kazaks continued with nomadic life, the Russian resettlement officials would take their

land and give it to Russian peasants. The intelligentsia realized that nomadism was no longer a feasible option for the Kazak people. The Russian administration had already settled Russian peasants on the best land. The restricted migration routes available could not support the Kazaks. Therefore, the Kazak intelligentsia realized that the only solution was to encourage change with the past customs.

The intelligentsia argued that nomadism was a phase that the Kazak nation had passed through and that it was time to move on to the next phase in order to return to its status as a top nation, inline with the other nations of the world. In following their belief in the linear development of history, the Kazak intelligentsia promoted itself as an elite that could return the Kazaks to prosperity. The elite posited themselves as the true reservoir of Kazak identity. By doing so, they were able to argue that Kazak identity was tied to their homeland, and not necessarily to traditional nomadism, which was little more than an economic phase that they needed to pass through.

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35. M. Dulatov, 'Zher Maselesi', *Shygharmalary*, Vol 2 (Almaty: Ghylym, 1997), pp 36–39 (originally published in *Aikap*, No 11, 1911).
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37. Op cit, Ref 24, pp 32–33.
38. Op cit, Ref 35, pp 37–38.
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