
Documentary evidence of party purges in Kazakhstan: social discourse

Streszczenie: W artykule przedstawiono historię czystek partyjnych w latach 1920-1925 na podstawie analizy dokumentów archiwalnych. Z analizy tekstów wynika, że początkowy etap czystki w partii objął wszystkie kategorie społeczne, a naród kazachski doświadczył ucisku kolonialnego nie tylko w sferze społeczno-gospodarczej, ale także duchowej. Jeśli dyskurs publiczny tworzy podstawy ładu politycznego i buduje niezbędne dla sprawowania władzy relacje ze społeczeństwem, to z dokumentów wynika, że można go wykorzystać jako instrument władzy.

Summary: This article examines the history of the party purge in 1920-1925 based on the analysis of archival documents. Analysis of the texts shows that the initial stage of the purge of the party covered all social categories and the Kazakh people experienced colonial oppression not only in the socio-economic sphere but also in the spiritual sphere. If public discourse creates the basis for political order and builds the relationships with the public necessary for government, then the documents show that it can be used as an instrument of power.

Słowa kluczowe: Totalitaryzm, represje, archiwum, komitet regionalny, partia komunistyczna, czystka partyjna

Keywords: Totalitarianism, repression, archive, regional committee, communist party, party purge

One of the arbitrary actions carried out in the Soviet world as a whole, including in the territory of Kazakhstan, were oppression, punishments without grounds for any suspicion. Even special inspection and control organizations – commissions worked for this purpose. Discourse analysis of the public space of party politics conducted by the center helps to reveal its social nature. If public discourse creates the basis for political order and builds the relationships with the public necessary for government, then the documents show that it can be used as an instrument of power.

In the resolutions of the plenum of Kyrgyz Regional Committee (Kyrregcom), which specifically considered the activity and tasks of the Kazakh regional control commissions, the goals and tasks of the commissions and the directions of their work were clearly stated. First of all, it says: “in all respects it is necessary to ensure the correct implementation of the party direction in the activities of all Soviet

organizations”¹. “To correct the way of action not only of individual members of the party, but also of whole groups and organizations, which by their behavior and actions destroy the unity of the party, lower its reputation and in general contradict the traditions and decisions of the party. Preventing eliminate fights, group splitting, groupism, conflicts, feuding with each other, etc. Great tasks against the evasion of petit-bourgeois instincts, i.e. against philistinism, slovenliness, treason to class principles, religious blind faith, non-communist way of life, detachment from the masses of the workers’ party, rent, private trade, drunkenness, careerism, bureaucracy, the fight against egoism”² were set.

The control commissions in their work were to constantly purge non-proletarian, alien, harmful and party-destructive elements. At the same time, “through the heads of state apparatuses it is necessary to launch the process of compaction and improvement of the system, to establish a planned internal self-control”³ - the party, which made this its main task, as we see, surrounded public life from all sides and kept it under strict control. Although we emphasize the need to “bring to justice those who hinder the implementation of the principle of workers’ democracy in the experience of the Party organizations”, we are once again convinced that in practice democracy was not even heard of.

The purge of the party ranks began on the basis of the decision of the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (of bolshevik) and the resolution of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) of July 21, 1921 “On the inspection, revision and purging of the party ranks”. The purge of party ranks in Kazakhstan began at the end of August 1921. Based on the decision of the IX All-Russian Conference on June 18, 1921 during the first All-Kazakh Conference was appointed Regional Control Commission⁴. And at the meeting of the Central Commission at Kyrregom on January 10, 1921, the Regional Commission of the RCP(b) on control, purging and inspection of the composition, the decision of the 10th Congress of the RCP(b) and the CC of the RCP(b) of July 21, 1921 was established on the basis of the resolution “On the inspection, revision and purging of the party ranks”⁵.

According to the statute: «the main goal of the control commission is to strengthen the unity of the Party»⁶. In the course of its activities, the commission knew that the main goal was to eliminate elements that harmed the reputation of the party, to eliminate the activities of other currents that destroyed the reputation

¹ Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (APRK). - fond 139. - list 1. - case 816. - pp. 25-32.

² There 1, p. 28.

³ Russian State Archive of Social and Political History. - fond 17. - list 86. - case 9. - p. 7.

⁴ APRK. - fund 718. - list 2. - case 674.

⁵ APRK. - fund 813. - list 1. - case 48.

⁶ Circular Instructions of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) // APRK. - fund 139. - list 1. - case 477. - p. 119.

of the party. The control commissions controlled the behavior of the party members, made judgments and, if necessary, applied punitive measures. The control commission had the same rights as all party committees. The two organizations, elected at the party conference, did not have the right to change each other's decisions beyond their authority. Although the party committees could not change the decisions of the control commission, according to the statute, the verdict passed by the control commission could not take legal effect without the approval of the party committee⁷.

As a private organization, the function of the control and revision commissions was to supervise the ideologically correct work of the party organization and the correct organization from the political point of view. In carrying out the "health-improving" work of the society, relying on the activities of the control institutions in the field, it dealt with the question of their work. This can be evidenced by the text of telegram No.131829/241, which came from Moscow and the Kremlin in connection with the purge of the party⁸. From it we see: "In the regulation on the inspection and purging of the ranks of the Communist Party, published on August 3: 1) all instructions received from the center related to the purge must be carried out by local party organizations; 2) in their activities local inspection commissions must be guided by the instructions of the central commission and report back. ...4) the decision of regional and gubernatorial commissions takes effect only when it is recognized as correct by the center, and the decision of local institutions is implemented only when it is supported by the district or regional commission" – on the 5th paragraph of the rule: "every member of the party must be vetted, we see that he has reached the point of expulsion from the party if he has not been vetted within a certain period of time"⁹.

As a result of the inspection of the party's personnel, errors were found in all aspects of the party's life and activity. These shortcomings fall into three categories: "a) due to the wrong structure of the party apparatus or methods of power management; b) due to the weakness of ideological education and unity; c) from the diversity of the social structure of the party"¹⁰.

Thus, the command and administrative system began to create a powerful apparatus of social control and coercion. When considering the personal composition of the party, special attention is paid to the social status of each member, the time of joining the party, his activities, party and Soviet order. "The need to gather information about individual members by survey and by individual interview with each member" was sent by telegram to provincial, county and district organizations from higher organizations. The distrust of local party workers is so great that

⁷ There, 2-2 turn.

⁸ APRK. – fund 718. – list 1. – case 2a. – file. 26.

⁹ There, p.26.

¹⁰ There, p.7.

even a special form of circularity has been applied to them. Later such interference in private life, which had become a principle, came to be taken as a condition of what it should be, without even raising any objections.

Every member of the Communist Party is obliged to observe the following rules of Party discipline. "1) every member of the party is obliged to carry out any party work: a) everywhere, at any time, i.e. at home, in the street, among acquaintances, must carry out oral propaganda, read aloud newspapers or books to illiterate groups of the party; b) must organize clubs, hold meetings and rallies on notice of the organization; 2) every member of a particular party or executive party council is obliged to give a full, comprehensive report of his activities, the work carried out and changes in it; 3) every member of the party is responsible for his activity to the party, and therefore must be ready to report in any necessary case; 4) every member who refuses to do the work assigned to him is considered to have violated the party rules; 5) any member of the party has the right to criticize the party's activity only at party meetings. And he is considered responsible to the party for discussion in a non-party environment; 7) a party member must not miss any party meeting or assembly, must not be late, patiently participate until the end, and be a member of either a trade union or cooperative organization; 8) every communist must rid himself of all national sentiments; ...10) every communist must be an example of good manners, i.e., he must not swear, must not swear with the mat, must not drink alcohol, must not engage in religious obscurity, must behave decently and be an example for others" [6, pp. 26], we see that only one ideological consciousness instead of such personal qualities as independence of thought, opinion and freedom was tried to form. Communist Party, the main purpose of which is to purify the party from alien elements: "One of the main goals of the Party in the Kazakh region is the purification of the party composition and management organizations from the rich and Alashorda element"¹¹ - and defines who are the alien elements. Further: "The idea of Soviet power and the prestige of the Party will only grow when we put the workers' dictatorship in the hands of the poor" - party believes. They say - "By bringing the poor into the party, we will, first, find a way to connect with the majority, and second, we will be able to assemble a powerful force against the rich on their basis". The secret document further specifies the conditions to be observed: "As one of the main measures:...5) the timely detection of socially alien elements to be purged in localized territories and the application of countermeasures"¹² [7, p. 38] is noted. On this basis, Kyrregcom issued special circulars numbered 1832, 2131 of April 18, 1923. The command-administrative system pursued its cunning policy: "There is no place

¹¹ To all secretaries of the gubcoms (urgently, strictly confidential) // APRK. - fund 139. - list 1. - case 554. - p. 38.

¹² There, p. 38.

for exploiters in any organization of power in the KASSR, as in other autonomous regions of the Russian Soviet Federation. All legislative, executive and controlling power must be entirely in the hands of the workers. The Party, which aims at the elimination of human exploitation, has set itself the task of eliminating the division of society into groups, fighting the exploiters irrespective of nationality and creating a socialist organization of society. "It is necessary to mobilize the citizens of the republic to work for the elimination of the parasitic elements of society and the rapid organization of the socialist economy of the KASSR"¹³. Thus the party saved the Kazakh poor from exploitation and put the whole Kazakh people under the sword of totalitarianism. It would not be wrong to say that the communists, who singled out the working class as the ruling class and proposed not to divide it into classes and groups, pursued the policy of the command and control system with great dexterity.

Thus, the main weapon of the direction aimed at accelerating the construction of socialism is: a) strengthening of directive principles; b) strict centralization; b) operational management; c) was strict control. The main way to achieve the goal in the apparatus was not specialization, but command and control initiative. "The basis of people's activism is that they believe that those who serve the Party well will succeed. With the opinion that, the State was in the role of father, master, and the citizen – in the role of asylum seeker under him"¹⁴ – we can fully agree. Thus, the interests of the state prevailed over the interests of people in society. There is no place for individual creativity in the state. People became one of the mechanisms of the apparatus of the administrative and management system.

For example, at the third all-Kyrgyz regional conference, the question of measures to directly combat the influence of petit-bourgeois elements on party members was specifically raised. "Systematic, effective and tireless work through the control commissions to purge the Party of alien and corrupt elements and to collect loose elements, but not yet separated from communist consciousness, must be established as a principle and a general prerequisite of the measures applied in this field"¹⁵. All spheres of life are included to achieve their goals. Further: "our tax policy in the village should be based on a deep social spirit directed against the kulaks and wealthier elements, it should be understandable to the poorest classes. It must involve the most conscious elements, conscious of the social nature of our tax system, clear from a class point of view and as conscious as possible. The correct formation of our class organizations must play a great role in strengthening our

¹³ Chrestomathy on the modern history of Kazakhstan (1917-1939). - Vol.1. / Edited by. Karazhanov K.S. - Almaty: "Sanat", 2002. - p.408.

¹⁴ Korzhikhina T.P. The birth of the administrative-command system of management // Administrative-command system of management. Problem and fact. - Interuniversity collection of scientific works. - M., 1992. - p. 5-27. p. 16.

¹⁵ APRK. - fund 139. - list 1. - case 541. - p. 157.

relations with the poor masses” - leads to class divisions. It creates a split between traditional social groups in Kazakh society. Its vivid manifestation: “The dependence of the poor on the rich and the endless exploitation of the poor, disguised by patriarchal and patrimonial relations, to a certain extent persist in the village”. In village councils and district organizations, rich people and their children or those who support them sit in one of the two and use the power in their hands in their tribal and class interests, distort the political and social measures of the Soviet power and the decisions of the Party to the masses”¹⁶ - blames the rich, national intelligentsia: “a small group of Kazakh petit-bourgeois intelligentsia actually represents the interests of socially strong elements, the class consciousness of the poor” while the Kazakh people restrain the growth of social contradictions, preach the unity of the people and pull their nationalistic understanding of the phenomena of social life horizontally. On this basis, the Alash party was once founded, although it has disintegrated from the organizational point of view, it has remained as an ideological current hostile to communism and trying to educate the younger generation in the spirit of nationalism and chauvinism. Thus, it is accused that nationalism is a very strong obstacle to the growth of communist influence on the Kazakh poor”¹⁷. This is only one side. Now begins to look for a way out of such a situation. Thus, “the main method of strengthening communist influence on the Kazakh poor and farmhands is to attract the Kazakh poor and farmhands to the defense of their interests, opposing their interests to the kulaks and the rich and taking them away from them on the basis of these material interests. For this purpose, first of all, it is necessary to carry out a large and systematic work to eliminate bondage relations and endless exploitation of the poor in the village, which from the outside looks like charity and care for poor relatives. The cattle used on the basis of these relations should be declared the property of the one who uses it”¹⁸ - Thus, it was decided to hit the Kazakh poor hard, who were already exhausted, and to realize it by influencing it.

Jointly strengthening the ranks of the party, increasing the authority of the party, cleansing the ranks of the party from alien elements; in the fight against bureaucracy, careerism, abuse of authority; we see that the control and revision commissions played a great role in controlling the violation of friendly relations within the party, etc., in the implementation of other measures.

From the documents we can see that “The audit commissions should be entrusted with the systematic inspection of the work of the party apparatuses at least once a month, control over the accurate and complete fulfillment of staff tasks, participation in the formation of conditions and forms of work that ensure the

¹⁶ APRK. - fund 139. - list 1. - case 541. - p. 157.

¹⁷ APRK. - fund 139. - list 1. - case 541. - p. 159.

¹⁸ APRK. - fund 139. - list 1. - case 541. - p.160.

normal functioning of the party apparatuses”¹⁹. Comprehensively differentiated measures to cleanse the ranks of the party from the rich, who are called “unpleasant elements”. In the decree on the record and experience of work among the Kazakh poor: “Taking into account that the rich and other negative elements have penetrated into the communist nests in the Kazakh chairmen of the aul council, due to the lack of proper guidance and instructions from the top of the party, these nests are under the influence of the environment, it is necessary to implement the following measures: a) the nests should be regularly cleansed of negative elements, the remaining members should be sent through the party schools, and b) the nests should be permanently managed by the party”.

According to the instruction “Cleansing Soviet leading organizations of elements alien to Soviet power and incapable of work”, before beginning the inspection work, the inspection commissions decided to divide all workers into three categories: “1) workers who should be immediately removed from power; 2) those who should be dismissed by decision of the commission or temporarily retained in place but will be released in the future, as well as those who cannot be promoted in the future; 3) those who remain on duty”. According to the party’s decree, the previous category includes those who served in the guard under the royal power; those responsible for such crimes as theft, fraud, seduction, and bribery; and priests of any religion; If they or their close relatives (wife, husband, father, mother) are engaged in trade, have a large household or a large house, the second category includes leaders and officers under the royal power; former rich people, owners of lands, factories, and those who aroused little suspicion and dissuaded²⁰. To purge the whole party of such elements.

The Kazakh people tolerated colonial oppression not only in the socio-economic sphere, but also in the spiritual sphere, especially in language, religion and mentality. We see this in the reports of the central audit commissions. First of all, let us consider the sequence of crimes for which they are most often prosecuted, that is, crimes that are widespread within the Party, according to the indicators of the report of the audit commission prepared for the period from March 1 to September 1, 1923.²¹

¹⁹ Semi-Annual Report of the Control Committees of the RCP(b). - Moscow: Tip. i. tov. Vorovsky, 1924. -p.72.

²⁰ APRK. - fund 139. - list 1. - case 4. - file. 12-14.

²¹ Semi-annual Report of the Control Committee of the RCP(b). - Moscow: Tip. i. tov. Vorovsky, 1924. -72 p. 53, pp. 16-17.

Table 1. Report of the Audit Committee prepared for the period from March 1, 1923 to September 1, 1923.

Name of errors and offenses	1923 Total % of people prosecuted	1923 Absolute number of those prosecuted
Collecting property, speculation	3,37	810
Alien elements	3,97	943
Dispute	4,26	1024
Religious traditions	4,62	1111
Criminal offenses	6,51	1565
Service offenses	11,27	2711
Violation of party order	16,46	3959
Alcohol	25,72	6186
Various	23,18	5745

As can be seen from the table, the highest percentages are related to alcohol and party offenses and official crimes. Next come disputes (4.26), speculation (3.27), alien elements and religious traditions (4.62). To determine the average annual crime rate, compare these data with 1922 and look at the following table:

Table 2. Report of the Auditing Committee prepared for March through September 1922.

Names of errors and offenses	1922 Total % of people prosecuted	1922 Total % of people prosecuted
Collecting property, speculation	3,12	3,37
Alien elements	4,52	3,97
Dispute	5,63	4,26
Religious traditions	2,82	4,62
Criminal offenses	7,3	6,51
Service offenses	12,95	11,27
Violation of party order	14,28	16,46
Alcohol	20,52	25,72
Various	28,84	23,18

As can be seen from the table, alcohol related crimes increased from 20.52% to 25.72%, party disturbances from 14.28% to 16.46%, religious activities from 2.82% to 4.62%, and it can be seen that the remaining disputes and crime has slightly decreased.

A number of measures have been applied to those prosecuted for the above-mentioned offenses. The first is expulsion from the party, which is stipulat-

ed for a certain period of time or indefinite expulsion. The second is reprimand or warning, the third is dismissal or transfer, the fourth is transfer to production, and the fifth is re-exoneration. For example,

Table 3. Report on those prosecuted and expelled from the Party for crimes committed

Names of errors and offenses	Number of people prosecuted	Number of people expelled from the party	% figure
Collecting property, speculation	810	499	61,825742
Alien elements	943	800	84,8
Dispute	1024	183	17,87
Religious traditions	1111	717	64,53
Criminal offenses	1565	1108	70,01
Service offenses	2711	1182	43,6
Violation of party order	3959	1584	40,01
Alcohol	6186	1782	20,9
Miscellaneous	5742	857	14,81
Total	24050	8712	36,22

It is immediately noticeable from the table that many people were expelled from the party for following religious traditions and practicing religious rites. A large percentage also applies to party offenders. From the information in this table we can see not only for what offense the party was expelled from the party, why the party allocated more fun, but also how the ideology of the party tried to keep the minds of the majority in total submission through persuasion false ideology.

This kind of policy pursued by the party, firstly, caused great disaster to the Kazakh people, and secondly, created the idea that human personality and human society can be corrected and revitalized by any plan. And this did not remain only at the level of understanding, but was actually realized through the policy of coercion. Thirdly, among the documents of the control and audit commissions it is established that the documents with confidential rubric prevail.

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