

## **In search of a "new" Sovietology, new Post-Sovietology or Central Asian Studies...**

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The year 2016 will go down in history as the year of the 25th anniversary of independence of states formed after the Soviet Union collapse. In year 2017 will be the year of the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution, which marked the beginning of the Soviet studies development (Sovietology), the methodological approach to study the Soviet Union. The Sovietology was followed by Post-Sovietology and Post-Post-Sovietology.

These dates are an excellent opportunity to raise once again the question of the future of Sovietology and post-Sovietology, problems and prospects of studying the post-Soviet space.

European and American Sovietology was accepted hostilely by Soviet researchers, they took up a critical stance towards it, because it was a period of militant Marxism-Leninism, when Soviet researchers had a negative attitude to the non-Marxist theories.

From the sovietological outlook, European and American researchers studied politics, history, economic and social issues of the USSR, Soviet and post-Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The period of sovietology "reign" is characterized by a global confrontation between the Soviet and bourgeois ideologies, political isolation of the USSR, the inaccessibility of Soviet sources, the lack of contacts in the professional scientific community.

After the USSR collapses, the Kazakh, Russian, European and American researchers regularly began to address the issue of the future of Sovietology and Post-Sovietology. There appeared a large number of monographs and articles dedicated to the future of Sovietology and Post-Sovietology, Post-Post-

Sovietology, critics toward Sovietology and Post-Sovietology, the search for new theoretical and methodological approaches to studying the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Kazakhstan in particular.

The Soviet Union collapse and the formation of new independent states has become a problem of national history, general history and political studies. This fact and generational change have shown the need to find a new methodology. A new institutional reality - the problem of methodology has come into being.

**Criticism of sovietology, or how to call it: ex-sovietologists, post sovietologists, post-post-sovietologists, neo-revisionists, institutional pluralists or neo-institutionalists?**

There are well-known works of the Euro-American researchers of Soviet and post-Soviet period written from the point of Soviet studies' view. They are monographs, theses, bibliographic publications, scientific articles, etc., the number of which may exceed ten thousand. On the other hand, researchers are aware of works devoted to the Soviet Studies criticism that began in the mid-1970s, despite the fact that Sovietology had been institutionalized as a scientific discipline in the early 1960s. "Cliché vision of the USSR" had been understood. It had also been understood that the historical and contemporary development of any country cannot be regarded as dust or foam (Braudel 1958).

At the beginning of the 1990s American sovietologist Richard Pipes condemned the Sovietology for the lack of real understanding of the Soviet system due to rationalistic categories of Western social science (Pipes 1990).

A critique of sovietology was preceded by revisionism, which includes the American revisionist historians like Stephen F. Cohen (2001), Sheila Fitzpatrick (2004), political scientist Jerry Hough (1988) etc.

Western world gradually stopped thinking about the Soviet system as an ideology, as bipolar world "capitalism - communism" has no political reality as F. Furet (1976), a prominent French researcher, thought. However, today the modern world is acquiring structured features of a multi-polar world.

Famous French anthropologist E. Le Roy Ladurie (1976) regarded the erroneous assessment of the Soviet Union military might and the people welfare, disparaging tone in question of the working class and the peasantry of the USSR.

According to the American sovietologist S. Cohen (1985), one of the mistakes of Western sovietologists was to study the Soviet Union regardless of social factors, the lack of study of internal conflicts. The methodological difficulty of studying the Soviet Union consisted of scanty factual and empirical data material, complemented by closed nature of Soviet society, minimal contact with the international scientific community, the inaccessibility of archives and other sources, such as newspapers, radio, etc. The European and American researchers had repeatedly emphasized this methodological problem, and namely French Sovietologist H. Carrère d'Encausse (1975), a respected expert on the study of the Soviet Union and Russia.

Sovietology had proven to be unsuitable in the sense that the Soviet political culture compared with the idealized image of Western democracy. Foreign researchers focused on the role of government, the party and the state, and only then on the social phenomena and society. However, the American Sovietologist Martin Malia in article "Iz-pod glyb, no chto?" (Malia 1997) considers Sovietology as a complex research in the field of Politics, Economics, History and Sociology. He tells about the revisionists' desire to move from social history to the study of the socio-economic development of the USSR (Malia 1990).

American researcher S. Hanson (2003) tells about the unjustified opinion toward Sovietologist democratic theory, which became evident in the Eastern European post-communist states. A decade after the USSR collapse the progress achieved in recent years in the fields of democracy in post-communist states represented the strange mixed picture: according to his opinion, in post-Soviet Central Asia the development of democracy is slowly changing.

In our opinion, discrediting the Sovietology began to happen all by itself. But the political regime change of any state regardless of the changing mechanisms (revolution, coup d'état, the junta, etc.) entails the transformation and change of the theoretical and methodological foundations in their studying. The victory conditions of the October Revolution, Lenin's policies, the Stalinist regime, Brezhnev's socio-economic institutions and Soviet Union collapse were studied by the foreign analysts in the framework of Sovietology.

The emergence of new independent states in the territory of USSR, their political, socio-economic and cultural development were studied in a framework of sovietological position, known as post-sovietological research.

European and American studies are devoted to the issue of Sovietology insolvency to predict the USSR collapse. At the same time the problem which is related to the necessity and fallibility of prediction was arisen: whether there can be such scientific prediction? Many well-known sovietologists convinced that the prediction of the USSR collapse was impossible. Others considered that in earlier publications they foresaw the USSR collapse.

Emmanuel Todd, a French researcher, predicted the USSR collapse in the monograph "La Chute final" in 1976. Todd is a historian, sociologist, demographer, who received his PhD in Cambridge. He wrote his book in times of non-totalitarian model and at the same time increasing the "Soviet threat". Based on the historical approach, he started from demographic statistics focusing on the demographic growth of the Muslim population in the Soviet Central Asia. In conjunction with fertility declines in this region indicating the evolution of people's mentality (Todd 1976). The peculiarity of his analysis is using an anthropological approach. The book was well received in the French political circles, but it was soon forgotten.

Belarusian researchers M.A. Shabasova and V.I. Menkovsky (2011) did not seem to have known about it, but they believed that one of the causes of unfolding debate about the future Sovietology was the failure to predict the USSR collapse mainly based on British and American Studies.

A Critique of Soviet studies was revealed in an article "A propos de soviétologie" written by the French historian W. Bérélowitch (1987), published in the journal "Annales.Economies. Sociétés. Civilisations". The author emphasizes that transparency has become a tool to formulate the problems in a different way, the need to review approaches in studying the Soviet Union and the Central Asian republics, as opposed to those which had been previously used. He believes that Sovietology has a few drawbacks:

1. The growing influence of the party was viewed from the perspective of its central organs in neglect of its substructures. It was necessary to base on local sources and observations in order to fully introduce the central and local authorities. Thus, the theme of the party and the state - political centrism always dominated. However, the problems of studying sources and observation were again challenging and absolutely impossible in the closed Soviet society.

2. Sovietology often disregarded the issues of law, legitimacy, lack of freedom of movement, expression, association, the right to conduct cooperative trade. These concepts that were available in the USSR prevented the construction of a civil society. However, S. Cohen (1985) believes that it would be incorrect to state that there was a lack of human rights in the Soviet Union. It would be more accurate to speak of the absence of the Soviet citizens' political rights that denies all other rights, such as the right of association.

3. Sovietologists realized that they knew little about the language, history and everyday life of the various Soviet peoples focusing on the characteristics of Soviet policy in the comparative context. "Institutional polymorphism" or "institutional pluralism" used in the American political science to study the Soviet political system, which was characterized by the rotation practice of the party cadres, the relocation of party leaders from one institution to another throughout the Soviet Union territory.

The French researchers R. Giroux and M. Ferro (1991) tried to put the vision of the USSR in the context of universal history and external influences in the book "De la Russie à l'URSS: l'histoire de la Russie de 1850 à nos jours". The work published after restructuring gradually led to an understanding of the paradigm shift in concepts and trends in the study of political and socio-economic processes in the CIS, including independent Kazakhstan.

According to the American researcher Robert Tucker in 1992, the study of the state and its political heritage after the Soviet Union collapse in the Euro-American studies remains dominant. An American sovietologist Ch. King (2000), highlighting the difficulties of exhausted Sociological Research, believed that the Post-Sovietology had expanded the research areas and their thematic issues.

Since the mid-1990s, the scientific community lost interest in conducting sovietological research in the new geopolitical reality - the CIS, including the newly independent Central Asian states. They had become a normal part of comparative studies, which meant the destruction of the traditions of dialogue among political scientists, historians and sociologists specializing in the study of the communist and post-communist regimes. This period was characterized by a decrease in the number of researchers interested in Russian and Central Asian Studies in political and historical sciences. S. Hanson (2003) also adds the study of "notorious" Russian and other Eurasian languages.

In criticism of the old school, the new generation of international researchers focuses on new areas: legal, building of civil society, mentality, daily life, etc. [Pour une nouvelle historiographie de l'URSS 1996]. Comparative analysis may give better sense to overcome the institutional and social obstacles.

American and European researchers are right in the sense that it was necessary to revise the static conception of the USSR and the Central Asian republics. It became clear that H. Arendt's (1972) concept of totalitarianism had many disadvantages, because totalitarian institution and actually formed system were misplaced. But the totalitarian model gave an opportunity to highlight the ideological project resistance, the legitimacy of power, ideology as an element of political power and control over the population. It was viewed that totalitarianism was like an imposed process. There was a lack of attention to the basic theories and methods of comparative politics.

The problems of Sovietology and post-Sovietology had become increasingly visible during the Soviet period and after its collapse, the main of which was the study of the Party and the state, the political culture compared with Western democracy, and finally, the inability to predict the USSR collapse. These issues have emerged from the closed Soviet society, the lack of researchers' professional contacts and the unavailability of sources.

Criticism of Sovietology and Post-Sovietology makes it necessary to change the theoretical and methodological approaches. Under the prevailing circumstances, foreign researchers remind that it is necessary to look for new, more tolerant, unbiased study of the theories and models of new independent states in general and Kazakhstan in particular.

### **Sovietology and Post-Sovietology about Kazakhstan**

The study of the Central Asian region by the West began in the Age of Discovery (16th c.), the main methodological basis of scientific knowledge of which was J. Bodini's theory (1566) of geographical determinism. By the beginning of the 19th century, the geographical determinism fully exhausted itself and began to acquire Oriental Studies features. The Central Asian region sources were being built up, there was a process of managing, formation of scientific ideas and trends.

Foundations of classical Western Orientalism as a single structure shattered in the early 20th century after the February and October revolutions of 1917 in Russia. Methodological foundations of Oriental studies had been increasingly politicized.

Kazakhstan of the 19th century - the beginning of the 20th century had been studied as part of the Russian Empire after the October Revolution (1917) - in the USSR in the context of soviet logical positions.

Foreign researchers have studied the question of national liberation movements, colonization and Russification, the perception of the October Revolution, the Muslim population of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, sedentarization and industrialization, their influence on the development of Kazakhstan, the development of Islam in the Muslim outskirts of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, the development of political institutions and the economy in the Soviet Central Asia, the national question, inter-ethnic relations, etc.

It is possible to use theories by the French researchers as an example in order to analyze how specific and reliable were the interpretations of various political, social, economic and cultural processes and pure specific in Kazakhstan from the viewpoint of Sovietology. Are they a positive heritage for contemporary research?

European and American Sovietology, including the French Sovietology, has built the following scheme with regard to the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in Central Asia: Colonization - Russification - Sovietization- Decolonization - De-russification.

The colonization of Central Asia in the 1860s was followed by Russification, while Russification accompanied Sovietology with the establishment of Soviet power through the national progress. Control of this process was carried out by bureaucracy - the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Besançon 1986). American political scientist J. Hough in his book "The Soviet Prefects..." (1969) concludes that "no society can be kept if the currents flow in one constant direction from the top to the bottom and for Soviet society is as true as for any other society".

One of the most studied and debated issues in international studies is the study of "Kazakhstan's accession" to Russia. This study in French historiography was based on the meager factual and empirical material. French sovietologistH. Carrère

d'Encausse (1975) believes that before 1917 French study was based on the Russian Empire sources, which had been the main and only sources for studying this region. Therefore, the position of the progressive nature of the Kazakh steppes "accession" was dominated that hide the colonial and migration policy of the Russian Empire. Unavailability of other sources led to a perception that the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan were deeply tied to the colonizers - to the Russian political and cultural specificity (Romier 1925).

The core idea of the French research is concerned with a conquering nature of "Kazakhstan's accession" to Russia, which considered the Kazakh steppe as a tool to move to the southeast, to India and China. The trade-economic and military-political interests of Russia were to be found with the expansion of its borders on two continents. The modern Kazakhstani Historical Studies does not hide the interest of the Russian Empire in the broadening of its boundaries in the East.

At various stages of Kazakhstan's development while being a part of the Soviet Union the questions of "joining of the Kazakh steppe" to the Russian Empire were linked with ideological historical period and understood in various ways. Official Kazakhstani Historical Studies in the 1920-1930 as a part of the Soviet Historical Studies was under the influence of revolutionary maximalism, the main idea of which was to expose the "tsarist". Therefore, "Kazakhstan's accession" to the Russian Empire was regarded as the "absolute evil" for the Kazakhs.

French sovietologist A. Bennigsen (1955) considers this issue as the "absolute evil" for Kazakhs in the article "The interpretation of the Tsarist Russia conquest in Central Asia and the Caucasus", from the "absolute evil" theory to the "absolute good". His point of view was the aggressive character of "joining the Kazakh steppes" to Russia.

A prominent Kazakh politician, T. Ryskulov\*, regarded the accession as conquest, suppression of Kazakhs by force (Ryskulov 1997). Another well-known historian, S.D. Asfendiyarov\*\*, in the "Kazakhstan History" claimed that the conquest of the Kazakh steppe made no prosperity, peace and culture and created destruction, looting and killing (Asfendiyarov 1935).

In the second half of the 1940s, after the end of World War II when the Soviet Union emerged victorious with the strengthening of the Soviet state, there was another trend for the rehabilitation of Russia's policy in Central Asia and



Kazakhstan. The main conclusion of Soviet researchers - the theory of "lesser evil", according to which Russian domination "prevented the East barbaric enslavement of the Kazakh states and closed together with more civilized country than Asian neighbors" (Asfendiyarov1935).

The well-known Kazakh historian E.B. Bekmakhanov\*\*\* in his work "Kazakhstan's accession to Russia" sharply criticized Russia's policy of «joining the Kazakh steppes" to Russia, which had a negative impact on "patriarchal" society of nomadic Kazakhs" (Bekhmakhanov 1957).

In 1970-1980 in the USSR and Kazakhstan the concept of voluntary and progressive joining of Kazakh *zhuzes*(tribes) to the Russian Empire was being developed following the principles of internationalism and friendship among peoples, universal desire to unite with a strong northern neighbor.

\* **Ryskulov T.**(1894-1938) - Soviet statesman in Central Asia, the chairman of the Muslim Bureau of the Communist Party of Turkestan, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan ASSR. In the period of Stalin's mass repressions he was declared as an enemy of the people and shot in 02.10.1938. In 1956, he was posthumously rehabilitated.

\*\* **Asfendiyar S.D.** (1889-1938)- A prominent public figure and statesman, scientist, historian, the People's Commissar of Health in Turkestan ASSR (1919-1920, 1923-1924), the People's Commissar of Agriculture of the Turkestan ASSR (1920-1921) , member of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee (1925-1927), etc., Director of the Oriental Studies Institute named after N.N. Narimanov operating under the USSR Central Executive Committee (1927-1928), director of the State Medical Institute (1931-1933), Deputy People's Commissar of Education in KazASSR (1933-1933), First Deputy Chairman of the Kazakhstan base of USSR (1932-1937). He was arrested in August 1937 during the Stalinist repression, and rehabilitated in 1958.

\*\*\***E.B. Bekmahanov (1915-1966)** - Doctor of Historical Sciences, professor, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR, researcher of the problems of socio-economic and political history of Kazakhstan of XIX - early XX centuries of the revolutionary movement in the region during the first Russian revolution, author of ethnography, history, literature, legal science, atheism, history of culture and art of the Kazakhs, textbooks and teaching manuals on Kazakhstan History.

During this period, in Kazakhstan there were organized big events to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the voluntary "joining of Kazakhstan" to Russia.

Modern Kazakhstani Historical Studies, which is on the way of rethinking its theoretical and methodological foundations, identifies the positive and negative aspects of "Kazakhstan's accession" to the Russia. The positive aspects include the creation of the conditions for economic exchange and interaction between nomads and settlers, provides the basis for dissemination of literacy and revival of trade, inclusion of the Kazakh steppe in the new production relations. Russian authorities not the Russian people were responsible for the negative consequences of this process.

On the basis of modernization theory that used by European and American researchers in the 1950-1960, the relationship of modernization and colonization processes of Central Asia region of Russian Empire was being studied. These processes were followed by ethnic survival of autochthonous, their russification and national liberation movement, particularly the events of 1916 - the general people's uprising in Kazakhstan. The cause of the uprising was the royal decree of June 25, 1916 on the mobilization of "non-native" male population of Kazakhstan and Central Asia for non-combatant work from the age of 19-43 year old. French researchers as A. Bennigsen and Ch.Lemercier-Quelquejay (1964) tried to analyze and understand its roots.

A. Bennigsen and Ch.Lemercier-Quelquejay (1966) considered that the cause of uprising seems to be in a new stream of the Russian immigrants of 1891-1892 when the conflict between the Russian and local people had been intensified. In 1905-1906 it was mass resistance against the Russia.

In subsequent years, until the establishment of Soviet power indigenous population launched the struggle that was not related to the Russian revolution, but embraced the rural people and urban population. Changes in the political and socio-economic situation gradually led to the protest movement, orientation towards autonomy and independence (Bennigsen, Lemercier-Quelquejay 1960).

French researchers believed that the main reason for the uprising was the domination of the Russian Empire's colonial policy, resettlement policy, unfair decision of land distribution, the neglect of autochthonous. "Our brothers were forbidden to sit on the bench in different parts of the city's main square, in urban

gardens. Physical extermination and at the same time underlined moral degradation" (Tchokai 2001).

Lump-sum conclusion of the French researchers in the 1970s as the future outlook: the national movement will be followed by democracy.

According to the above-mentioned political activist T. Ryskulov, this rebellion had a great historical significance. The reasons lay in deep economic and political contradictions resulting from colonial exploitation of human, natural and land resources in the region: "The people's uprising in Central Asia was held in the third year of the world imperialist war, when revolution was brewing in tsarist Russia . ... the hope was being kindled to reset oppression to the tsarist colonial power. The diversion of the most Tsarist forces from Turkestan and Kazakhstan to the theater of war facilitated such an opportunity. The sharpening of contradictions between the metropolis and its colonial suburbs, which gave a start to revolution, raised a powerful reserve of the proletarian revolution in the colonies. The tsarist government made concessions, cotton surplus was downsized for the local population" (Ryskulov1997).

In Kazakhstani Studies of the Soviet period, assessment of the events of 1916 was based on the Marxist-Leninist theory. There are only 10-15 lines in the textbooks of the Soviet period covering this topic. In the multi-volume academic journals on Kazakhstan history of the Soviet period there was the same interpretation.

The modern interpretation of the Kazakh uprising of 1916, uprising "grew into a national liberation movement aimed at remedying the military colonization and extensive tsarist Russification policy and to a certain extent - the feudal Bahia village tops. However, the uprising was directed against the imperialist war led to a crisis of the national economy and extreme poverty of the people. The main aim of the 1916 uprising was a national and political liberation, which summed up the whole foregoing struggle of the Kazakh people for freedom and independence" (Kydyralina 2015).

One of the most studied and analyzed topic in the Kazakh, Russian and Euro-American political thought is the transition of Kazakhs from nomadism to a sedentary life.

Nomadic cattle-ranching in vast uninhabited territories of Kazakhstan was an effective method of agricultural production and represented a distinctive feature of the Kazakh steppe. However, from the second half of XIX century to the early XX century the transformation of the internal structure of nomadic civilization with the introduction of settled agricultural culture was clearly revealed.

French researchers have developed a number of conceptual approaches to the assessment of the Kazakh transition to a sedentarization: the violent transformation of the traditional Kazakh society that led to the destruction of Kazakhs' traditional nomadic lifestyle was named as "Sovietization of the Kazakh village"; tool of sovietization of the Kazakh society; the destruction of tribal organization of the Kazakh society is an obstacle for Soviet policy implementation. It had also a positive impact on the sedentarization of nomadic Kazakhs.

Another French researcher (Ohayon 2006) have found that in the process of sedentarization took place adaptation of autochthonous as a response to the created conditions. But they are more likely to identify a number of positive features and stand in the compromise position of sedentarization process. In terms of compromise we see a rational link in the evaluation of sedentarization by the French Sovietology.

In the Soviet period in the Social and Humanitarian Studies of the USSR and Kazakhstan sedentarization was presented only as a positive process without regarding a threat of ethnic identity. And this threat was great and so obvious that within 12 years Kazakh Graphics had been changed twice. In 1929, the Arabic script was replaced by the Latin alphabet, in 1940 - the Latin was replaced by Cyrillic. Young generation of Kazakhstan in 1950-1980 did not know about the rescheduling of the Kazakh language since this topic was taboo. They were left and are still left with unknown huge reservoir of the Kazakh people's written heritage of the 19th century to the period of the 1940s, they did not know the Kazakh literature and periodicals of the same period that the Soviet ideology presented as a bourgeois- nationalist publications.

Meanwhile, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was an increase of the Kazakh liberal media. French researchers A. Bennigsen and Lemercier-Sh Kelkezhe in the monograph "The press and the national movement of Muslims of Russia until 1920", published in 1964 in Paris, reflected the role of the press in the national movement development, on the basis of research , that the development of

the press is one of the manifestations of the evolutionary movement among Muslims (Bennigsen, Lemerrier-Quellejey 1964). It should be noted that the monograph was published in that period when the Kazakh historiography kept quiet about the first Kazakh periodical. National researchers knew practically nothing about it. These are Omsk newspaper "Dala ualayaty" founded in 1899 and has become one of the tools to inform the Kazakh steppe on current events, the first Kazakh newspaper "Kazakh", the magazine "Aikap", newspaper "Ishim Dala", which was published in the borderline of Russia and Kazakhstan. French researchers commended the works of Kazakh writers M. Dulatov "Oyan, Kazak" (Ufa, 1910), M. Kopeev "Hal Ahual" (Kazan, 1912), M. Zhumabaev "Sholpan". These are publications which Kazakhstan young generation of 1950-1980 did not know and did not hear.

Among other publications of the Kazakh press, that encourage intensification of political life in the Kazakh steppe, French researchers have called the newspaper "Kazakhstan" (Uralsk), "Sary Arka" and "Halyk sozi" (Semipalatinsk), "Dala" (Omsk); magazine "Abai" (Semipalatinsk). Periodicals, as a means of education and Kazakh people awareness on the political and socio-economic situation, became a potential mouthpiece of the ideas of the Kazakh people's independence (Carrère d'Encausse 2005).

In the Soviet period foreign sovietology represented national language issues in Kazakhstan and Central Asia as a process of survival of the national identity. Russification in the field of culture and education was seen as a part of the colonial policy of the Russian Empire and Sovietization. In 1970 there was only one Kazakh secondary school in the capital of the Kazakh SSR in Alma-Ata. All state documentation and procedures were conducted in Russian.

French analytics believes that the sovietization as a continuation of Russian colonization, the Russification policy, economic development based on the command control system and centralized planning, the development of relations "center-periphery" / "north-south", deterioration of peoples' social situation led to the manifestations of nationalism in the USSR and Kazakhstan. All these factors taken together were favourable to decolonization and internal cohesion of the Kazakh ethnic group to find ways to independence.

In the context of perestroika and glasnost and together with them a common understanding, as we noted earlier, the study of Central Asia and Kazakhstan with

view of sovietological and totalitarian positions could lead to a distorted reality, incorrect assessment of democratization processes of the new society. Central Asian society became open, new sources became available for foreign researchers, exchanges among scholars had become possible, which will inevitably put a number of new issues. Sovietology became known as Post-Sovietology.

In the early years of emergence of the new independent states on the territory of Soviet Central Asia, the Euro-American researchers highlighted another peculiarity: many issues of political and socio-economic life of Central Asia and Kazakhstan show many similarities with the questions set at the beginning of 20th century after Soviet power establishment. Noting the fact of history's return, - dejavu. What we can not but accept.

Studying the Central Asian region, non-local researchers based on a comparative approach during Perestroika and Glasnost periods. This was vividly shown that comparative approach appeared in people's mentality, in its sense of fear of new development inherent in the creation of new society, in transition from "socialism to capitalism" that could not create a new economy (Cohen 1989). Researchers considered these emerging contradictions through the prism of social activity in a dilemma: private - public, individual - collective, effectiveness - ineffectiveness, equality - inequality, the social cost of the new reforms, the level of adequacy - failure of the welfare state, etc.

The peoples of Central Asia region and Kazakhstan had been greatly changed for nearly seven decades of Soviet ruling. They have known the process and the impact of "modernization", which on the one hand, brought the industrial, social and cultural progress and provided a real human security and friendly relations between people of different nationalities when all nationalities considered equal (Kazakh, Russian, Ukrainian, Tajik and etc.). This is a distinct advantage and the achievement of the Soviet past. On the other hand, national characteristics and ethnicity of Central Asian region were gradually destroyed (Laruelle, Uhrès 2002).

But the Kazakhs have been able to preserve their national identity and culture thanks to their tribal organization, which has become a major factor impeding the policy of Russification and Sovietization, behind which the Soviet state machine ruled.

### **Kazakh researchers about Sovietology**

There are a number of foreign researchers' works in the Kazakh political thought devoted to the study of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The priority in the study of Kazakhstan history by foreign historiography belongs to K. L. Yesmagambetov (1999), who is a senior researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies named after R. B. Suleymenov. He coined a very important term for scientific use - "Sovietology" highlighted in the interpretation of the European and American analytics of national liberation movement, colonization, Russification, the perception of the October Revolution, sedentarization and industrialization, their influence on Kazakhstan's development and position of Islam in the Muslim outskirts of the Russian Empire and the USSR, the national question, inter-ethnic relations, the development of the national intelligentsia. He became a founder of the Kazakh Research School for the Study of Kazakhstan and Central Asian region by foreign socio-political experts.

The research of B. M. Suzhikov (2007), S. B. Bulekbaev (2015) and other Kazakh scientists are of interest in terms of methodology and foreign research methods and criticism. K. R. Nesipbaeva (1998) introduced Anglo-American Sovietology about Kazakhstan colonization giving periodization of Russian colonization, as well as explanation from the scientific point of view the main reasons of the Russia's way to the East, the resettlement of the royal and colonial policy in Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

The paper presents the main G. B. Byrbaeva's (2005) theoretical and methodological approaches of the Euro-American analytics on the key issues of the political and socio-economic development of Kazakhstan.

G. B. Byrbaeva's opinion deserves special attention "... focusing on the current geopolitical realities, in the work the preference is given to the definition of" Central Asia studies "as a scientific subject dealing with the people of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and, indirectly, the republics of the Russian Federation as well as the northern part of Afghanistan and Iran". The author made a clarification to identify location on the map: "Soviet zone in Central Asia: fathomable attributive of research subject is the most relational attributive lot in the form of" European and American Oriental Studies of Modern and Contemporary History of Central Asia" (Byrbaeva 2005).

### **New "Sovietology", "Post-Sovietology" or "Post-Post-Sovietology"?**

M. Malia (2004) in an article-response to A. Besançon «Non possumus» writes: "... My main idea is that there is no Europe without homogeneous cultural entity opposed to Russia, that Europe should be examined as a number of "special ways" (including the Russian way), which form a "gradient"- a stepped slope stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals. For me it is obvious that from Peter the Great timesto the era of "real socialism" construction in the Stalin and Lenin years, Russia and Europe together created the "West" in the broadest sense. Alain Besancon recognized that he agrees, in principle, with this Comparative Approach .... ". Developing Sonderwege idea of "special way", the sequence in studying the region, in our opinion, could be one of the methodological foundations to study Central Asian region.

Sonderwege – its "special way" of region studying can be supplemented by the neo-institutional approach proposed after the Soviet Union collapse by the Hungarian researcher CsabaLászló(2009), a specialist in international economics. In the absence of a socialist system and alternative to the private capitalist system and the market interest, the change of metaparadigm of modern social sciences is needed. Neo-institutional approach can adequately and impartially explain the events in the political, economic and socio-cultural development of the modern world, in which a growing competition of global and regional centres of power becomes a significant phenomenon.

Returning to the question of a market economy, we will focus on the term "great transformation", the authorship of which belongs to the Hungarian academician Karl Polanyi (1944). The essence of the term "great transformation" is associated with the introduction of the market economy. "The Great Transformation" is not spontaneous according to its neoclassical and Austrian School of Economics. In historical reality, according to G. Polanyi is the result of coercive state action. The idea of the reform on the "top-down" model has become one of the main state activities. He leads to the idea of neo-institutionalism and economic relations, considering that researchers are witnessing a return to pluralism and turn towards methodological exclusionism.

S.Hanson(2003), professor at the University of Washington, expresses interest in historical and comparative approach in political science. He identified the causes in marginalization of sovietological and post- sovietological research. In his opinion,



only historical and comparative approach can return to a debate about the communist institutions activities.

But the foreign studies of post-Soviet space once again focused on the development of democracy and other political processes, it means, a new political "centrism" is being created. In parallel, the research topics related to the environment, women, mentality are expanded. In the view of Western historians, political scientists and experts - the mentality of autochthons in comparative historical context: the October Revolution of 1917 led to mental tools changes of the Central Asian population, which became Soviet. The status of Kazakhstan as a sovereign state has changed the economic, social, cultural and family foundations of Kazakhs.

However, the continuity of previous sovietological theories and concepts emerges. In the leaflet of international conference on the study of the social state (Welfare state) and its impact on collective action (Collective Action) in Central Asia in the post-Soviet period, organized by French Research Institute in Central Asia (IFEAC, May 2015) is written: "The purpose of the conference: The deep economic and political crisis forced the Central Asian governments significantly reduce the social support programs for the public ... As a result, education and health spending and social support of vulnerable populations have been significantly reduced, resulting in a reduction of base services to the state population. Regional (1998) and World (2008) economic crisis has further weakened the capacity of Central Asian states to provide social support and other services to their populations".

The conference discussed the problems of housing in urban and rural areas, land-grabbing and illegal construction of houses, cuts in public spending on health care and poor health care access of Central Asia citizens, narrowing social responsibility of the state to vulnerable social groups: orphans, the elderly, the disabled, large families, single parents, unemployed persons, veterans of World War II (1941-1945) and etc. The equal access to education was not ignored, which, according to conference organizers, is a heritage of the communist principle of free mass education.

Doubtless advantage of holding an international conference – is the interdisciplinary approach to solve some of the issues raised, the participation of scientists specializing in different fields and disciplines, including political science,

anthropology, sociology, history, public administration and etc. But the range of issues raised clearly shows the features of Sovietology and Post-Sovietology.

In its almost 25 years of newly independent state existence, it is difficult to solve all problems at once: the institutionalization of the state, economic issues, social and cultural blocks: education, housing problems, pensions, etc. Foreign states for centuries had followed a long way to democracy, economic development and the social state. It has developed a definite culture to build these lines, which is now in difficult rapidly changing geopolitical conditions, undergoes certain difficulties and complexity.

Another question emerged from declared conference topics: the most important thing is whether such collective actions will lead to the protest movement, to the political and socio-economic destabilization of Central Asia.

The continuity in post-sovietological studies inherited by modern foreign researchers still remains.

In June 2015 the University of Amsterdam held a two-day seminar on theme: «Past the «Post»: Theorizing the post-post-Soviet via (New) Media and Popular Culture». The conference organizers and the researchers went further calling the post-Soviet research as a "post-post-Soviet."

Refusal from the old school methodology is well illustrated L. Febvre (1995): "... it is necessary to submit a separate group of different facts: politics, social, economic, intellectual spectrum. This is what I call a system of chest. The top drawer: politics - internal and external, there is no mixing. The second box: the right corner - the movement of population, the left - the organization of society. Question – by Whom? I think by political power, which dominated at the first box on top and controls everything. This concept, when I put the economy after the society is not new. I open the Russia history: the kings, the palace tragedy, corrupt ministers, bureaucrats, parrots, secret decrees and orders. But life is stronger, more original and deeper in the country, the life of forests and steppes, the moved population, a large swamp with an irregular rhythm of life to the Urals and further - to the Far East. I have a lot of questions, which is for me the history of Russia is for 1400 pages, I do not find the answers in this story, and the book failed." Whether Post-Sovietology has been successful? Whether Post-Post-Sovietology is going to be successful?

## Conclusion

At the beginning of August 2015 the world's media had distributed the information about the death of the patriarch of the British sovietologist Robert Conquest, author of the acclaimed monograph "The GreatTerror: Stalin's PurgeoftheThirties". There is a significant decline of previous generation. But a new generation of researchers is here to replace the previous generations. The new generation that born in 1980-1990s lives in a new environment, in a new geopolitical reality. This generation is free from ideologies that define the conditions and parameters of life. This generation knows about the Soviet Union from textbooks or from the parents' stories. The new generation is confronted with such events as the Islamic State ofIraq and Syria, a new wave of Asian-African migration to Europe and the Syrian conflict. Therefore, based on the inequality of the world order and Sovietology experience it is required an objective and impartial theoretical and methodological basis to study the post-Soviet space.

In terms of cognitive differences on the study of post-Soviet space and Central Asian region it is necessary to decide how to build an ambitious and at the same time the correct "world order" and mutual understanding. Building a better "world order" should be the result of public reflection and joint progress.

Sovietology ended its existence. We would hope that new methodology, new methodological pluralism with the expansion of subjects and areas of research will emerge. It will provide opportunities for the solution of scientific problems, using the positive experience of all historiographical and political theories and approaches. For example, "liberal" international relations theories that American researcher calls "international cooperation, including regionalism, as a product of interdependence" (Krickovic 2014).This will be possible after the failure of standard-stereotypical patterns of Sovietology under the new historical thinking and scientific understanding of theprevious experience.

In political view of Savonarola oriented to the Republicans, we recall that he believed that the country would only be a boon to Florence when society becomes moral: the religious and moral purification will produce a political reform. Only after that we can say whether the 21st century will be the era of peaceful coexistence. Otherwise, the world will be similar to torn jeans remained in vogue for years.

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## Summary

### **In search of a "new" Sovietology, new Post-Sovietology or Central Asian Studies...**

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The Euro-American, Kazakh and Russian studies naturally raised and are still raising the question of the future Sovietology, Post-Sovietology and even Post-Post-Sovietology caused by the USSR collapse and understanding the need to rethink the theoretical and methodological foundations to study the New Independent States / CIS as a whole and in the Central Asian region, in particular. Sovietology could not adequately reflect the changed reality. The author demonstrates the consistency and inconsistency of sovietology concerning the question about Kazakhstan history, as colonization, russification, sovietization and etc. The socio-economic development of independent Kazakhstan evaluated by foreign researchers was taken as an example in order to show traits of Sovietology inherited earlier. Guided by the inequality of the world order and sovietology experience, the objective and impartial theoretical and methodological basis to study CIS space is required. Otherwise, methodological inconsistency of Sovietology and Post-Sovietology in explanation and understanding of the political and socio-cultural processes in the territory of CIS will be a natural phenomenon. The "special way" of study, neo-institutional approach, historical, comparative and pluralist approaches are offered on the basis of international scholars' analysis.

**Key words:** Sovietology, Post-Sovietology, sovietologist, Kazakhstan, Central Asian Studies, ideology