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Earliest History of Kazakhstan Polygraph

Предыстория казахстанского полиграфа

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The instrumental method of psychophysiological detection of concealed information i.e. examinations using a polygraph (“lie detector”) is widely applied in the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to the Eurasian Polygraph Association Public Association, law enforcement authorities and special services of Kazakhstan introduced at least 75 new polygraphs, differing greatly in systems and models in 2015 alone. Taught at the training centre of the association for all law enforcement bodies including Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kazakhstan National Agency for Corruption Prevention, Kazakhstan Republican Guard, National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Committee for Emergency Situations, General Prosecutor Office, State Revenue Committee Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Defence in 2015 were 168 new polygraph specialists. Almost every practicing polygraph specialist in

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Kazakhstan attended the seminars, conferences, and training courses organised by our association.

Besides law enforcement, the polygraph is very popular among private Kazakhstani businesses. Most largest banks have employed a polygraph specialist and some even more than one. The largest trading and mining companies also start to use the polygraph either by employing a polygraph specialist or by outsourcing one from the Eurasian Polygraph Association.

In this way, a new profession of polygraph specialist has developed in Kazakhstan. A suggestion to take a polygraph test today is no longer a surprise. Various courts more and more often consider the conclusion of polygraph examinations in various cases, and the law community turns to polygraph examinations to obtain evidence of their client's innocence in reference to various criminal acts.

Therefore, polygraph has made an official entry to Kazakhstan. Many remember the words of President Nursultan Nazarbayev [1] at the Board of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in January 2011, when the President insisted on widespread use of polygraph in the law enforcement system. As a result, on 21 May 2013 amendments to the law On law-enforcement services [2] were adopted, and a year later, on 19 June 2014, so were The rules of organising polygraph examinations in law enforcement bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan.[3] Today the application of a polygraph is obligatory in law enforcement bodies of Kazakhstan in three areas: 1) hiring personnel to work in law enforcement services, 2) in certification procedure, 3) in internal investigations.

However, the answer to a question how the polygraph started in Kazakhstan and who the "founding father" of the method is, is actually not so simple.

It is well known that the first polygraph in Kazakhstan was introduced in one of private banks in the early 1990s.[4] It was a Lafayette polygraph from the US. It was not Russified, and had no user manual. A businessman saw a polygraph in the United States and considered it an interesting device, so he brought it home as "potentially useful". Yet such a device can be useful only in the hands of a trained and skilled professional. There was no such a person in the bank, and anywhere else in Kazakhstan at the time. That is why the Lafayette disappeared without ever being used.

The second attempt to use a polygraph in Kazakhstan did not succeed either. A Soviet Delta polygraph made its way to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defence in the second half of the 1990s at legacy from Russian colleagues.[5] At that time this polygraph was spearhead technology, but its interface was too complex and difficult to understand. Working for the National Security Agency and being beginners in the matters of the polygraph we received a Delta without any instructions for use and had no

practical experience either. Our colleagues from Moscow kindly gave their advice and instructions on how to use a polygraph, and we managed to obtain data on physiological curves. Nonetheless, we were not able to make genuine examinations and conduct examinations with the machine.

Unfortunately, even the third attempt to introduce a polygraph into Kazakhstani law enforcement service did not succeed either, though it left a trace in the history. In the late 1990s the scientific and engineering department of one of the law enforcement agencies of Kazakhstan was tasked to develop and produce its own polygraph.[6] Soon the first Kazakhstani polygraph named Adal (meaning “Justice”) was presented. A few Adal machines capable of reading basic physiological parameters: the upper and lower respiratory response, cardio, skin reactions, and involuntary movements (tremor), were produced. However, significant deficiencies of the Adal were revealed, for example the setting of the device and tuning it to the examinee was difficult and tiring so that it sometimes took up to 30 or 40 minutes. Evidently, it was not acceptable in practical work, and Adal was dismissed.

Even now we are very sorry for Adal, as it was the first (and still is the only one) product of Kazakhstani designers in the field of polygraphy. If only the engineers had had a little more patience and endurance and if the state had helped them with additional funding, perhaps today Adal would be one of the best brands of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the realm of hi-tech and sophistication. However, everything happened as it did, and the third attempt at introducing a polygraph in Kazakhstan failed.

From the moment two major Russian polygraph equipment manufacturers, Varlamov and Soshnikov, visited our Republic, situation began to improve. Their polygraphs KRIS, RIF, Barrier-14, Polarg, and Diana became dominant in Kazakhstan. There was an especially high demand for the professional computerised polygraph Diana among Kazakhstan polygraph specialists in recent years. Of foreign machines Axciton is the most remarkable one.

It is believed that the question of using polygraphs in the Republic of Kazakhstan was first tackled in 2002, and covered its usage in investigative activities, the work of the personnel, and procedures. It was the first Kazakh textbook on criminology published under the supervision of the guru of Kazakhstani criminology, Professor A. Aubakirov, DLL.[7] A chapter of this textbook for high schools, innovative for that time, was titled Non-traditional methods of obtaining evidence in crime investigation, where criminological use of polygraph was also mentioned.

From the perspective of its time, the book considered conceptual, procedural, ethical, technical, and tactical issues of polygraph use. Likewise, polygraph examination

was assessed for reliability and accuracy. Commentators noted the phrase on pp. 682–683: “Thus, the polygraph is used in accordance with the current state of affairs in the Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Security Service, Federal Tax Police Service, Ministry of Defence, and other entities in Russian Federation. The same legal acts apply to Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, *and recently to the Republic of Kazakhstan.*” [emphasis by the author]. However, the claim was never mentioned again in the textbook. It is still a big question what kind of legal acts concerning the polygraph in 2002 in Kazakhstan that the author meant.

Nevertheless, time went on fast, and majority of mysteries were unravelled. Today it is no secret that the first departmental legal act in Kazakhstan was enacted exactly in 2002 by the National Security Committee. It regulated conducting polygraph examinations (the term was proposed by the author of the article, who also was one of the authors of this normative document) for hiring personnel to law enforcement agencies. The act was approved by the Chairman of the KNB of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and for a long time served as the policy document for the area.

Almaty Polygraph Association was founded on 1 July 2008, and was the first public association of polygraph specialists in the history of Kazakhstan.[8] Since then, 1 July became the official anniversary for Kazakh polygraphy. By now the process of implementation and use of polygraph has accelerated several times. Polygraph specialists from all over Kazakhstan as well as from Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, and other countries have joined the Almaty Polygraph Association. Consequently, the association was renamed into Eurasian Polygraph Association in 2012. With time, local Kazakhstani polygraph specialists have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills, and gained a lot of practical experience and even international recognition.

In August 2015, a group of polygraph specialist from the Eurasian Polygraph Association was invited to participate in the 50th anniversary conference of the APA (American Polygraph Association) held in Chicago. During the six days of the conference, together with leading world polygraph specialists, we considered current issues of lie detection, advanced techniques of examination, features of serious crime investigation with the use of the polygraph, identification of intentional resistance to polygraph testing, and other issues.

Today’s rapid and successful development of Kazakhstani polygraph would not be possible without the efforts of Ivan Zinkevich, a well-known Kazakh specialist in forensic sciences, professor, colonel of the reserve. Zinkevich was the first Russian scientist to raise the issue of applying the polygraph at a conference of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs on The use of technical devices in detection and inves-

tigation of crime in 1980. The conference was held in the Dzerzhinsky Kiev High School of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs, and its proceedings were published. [9] In the book the speech Zinkevich delivered at the conference is entitled Problems of polygraph use in crime investigation in the People's Republic of Poland.

Let's try to understand what made an associate professor of the Karaganda High School of Criminology of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs interested in the polygraph and why he addressed Polish experience in the implementation of the polygraph in criminal investigations.

Together with his parents, Ivan Zinkevich moved to Kazakhstan as Polish refugees, settlers against their will. Despite that young Ivan did not seem annoyed by the state that was so cruel for his family. He went to the High School of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs in Karaganda, where he studied from 1967 to 1971. Cadet Zinkevich was very lucky with the instructors, especially the teacher of psychology, a field of great interest for the young man. The works of A. Luria outstanding Soviet academic, changed the worldview of the young internal affairs officer, as they described the options for using psychophysiology in criminalistics.

Zinkevich also had a memorable meeting with the legendary Soviet spy, Rudolf Abel, who conducted several classes with high school students. Abel discussed the use of polygraph in blowing his cover in the US: although he did not say a word during the numerous polygraph examinations by the FBI, his physiology made everything clear and Abel could do nothing about it. Americans discovered everything about the Soviet spy network in the US.

Abel was arrested by FBI, but was soon released in return for an American pilot of a U-2 aircraft, Francis Gary Powers, shot down on 1 May 1960 over Sverdlovsk. For a long time, the KGB did not believe that Abel did not say a word during polygraph examinations, because it seemed incredible that the physiology of silent Abel revealed all the secrets.

With such personal experience, Abel acquired respect for the polygraph method of identifying hidden information. He emphasised that the method is highly effective and allows to reveal any secret. Zinkevich remembered these words of the famous Soviet spy particularly well.

Zinkevich looked for an opportunity to work with the polygraph when he started to work at the Academy of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs in Moscow. However, in all the communist bloc, such work was carried out only in the People's Republic of Poland. In order to get an internship there, Zinkevich had to visit the legendary First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Yuri Churbanov, pri-

vately son-in-law of General Secretary Brezhnev. Surprisingly, Churbanov approved the trip, as he appreciated the commitment of the young Zinkevich to the development of a new albeit controversial method.

In 1975, as one of the best young scientists, Zinkevich received an internship in Warsaw, at the Institute of Criminology of the Academy of Internal Affairs. Perfect knowledge of Polish and the striking desire for new skills led Zinkevich to a department where polygraph was in use for criminal proceedings. It should be noted that at the time Poland held a leading position among communist countries in introducing polygraph.

During the visit to Warsaw, Zinkevich worked closely with the legendary 4-channel polygraph created by Keeler factory. An experience that made Zinkevich confident that polygraph is a really efficient device and should definitely be used in his country too. With all these reflections and willingness to develop Kazakhstani criminalistics, Zinkevich came back home.

There was, however, not a single working polygraph in the Department of Criminology of the High School or in the whole USSR at the time. That is why Zinkevich decided to make one himself. In the Karaganda Medical Institute, he received a number of different devices, individually capable to record pulse changes, respiration, pressure, and other physiological parameters. With this diverse equipment the scientist made his own polygraph and started his extensive research programme where he experimented on the students of the Police Academy. He created artificial criminal situations and tried to use his device to find the culprits. In total, he examined more than 30 students and in about 85% obtained correct results. A very good figure even for our times.

It is interesting to notice that Zinkevich was unfamiliar with modern methods of polygraph examination, yet he intuitively came to test a concept that is currently considered the most reliable and valid in polygraph examinations. It is Lykken's test for detecting hidden information.

Such a dynamic research activity could not stay unnoticed in the Soviet bloc, however, and Zinkevich was summoned by B. Beisenov, the head of the Karaganda High School of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs. It should be noted that the general attitude to the polygraph was extremely negative in the Soviet Union, since the method was considered bourgeois and reactionary. There were only few mentions about the polygraph in the literature of the time made by G. Zlobin and S. Jani.[10]

Beisenov appreciated the creative enthusiasm of his subordinate but kindly warned that he should not dedicate his time to polygraph, since the method is similar to

biologism, and for further work in this area Zinkevich can be fired. However, the conversation did not convince Zinkevich to stop his work with polygraph as he felt that Beisenov had an understanding for the device as well. Nevertheless, Zinkevich decided to continue his research more carefully and theoretically rather than practically.

Zinkevich made many useful connections with outstanding scientists such as R. Belkin, G. Zuikov, N. Yablokov, and L. Vinitiskii. These progressive lawyers understood the benefits and potential practical use of the polygraph but were afraid to speak openly in defence of this method. Everyone remembered highly conservative statements by M. Strogovich and I. Panteleyev saying that “the polygraph compromised itself as a pseudoscientific method”.^[11] Professor I. Luzgin openly warned Zinkevich to be careful with the new device as it could bring plenty problems.

Tutors, R.S. Belkin and G.G. Zuikov made a huge impact on Zinkevich as a scientist. In 1975 they offered young Zinkevich go to explore Poland and polygraph. Experienced scientists could not work with the polygraph themselves, as they were afraid of other colleagues with extremely negative attitudes to the device. That is why they decided to attract a young scientist who had nothing to lose. In addition, Zinkevich was of Polish origin which they thought should simplify the task.

An outstanding professor himself, Belkin certainly used young Ivan Zinkevich to further his own ambitious goals. Under Belkin’s unofficial patronage Zinkevich conducted his experiments in Karaganda. In 1980 Belkin decided to test, with the assistance of his loyal subordinate Zinkevich, his opponents from the conservative professors board in Moscow. Belkin and Zinkevich prepared a speech for his performance at a conference in Dzerzhinsky Kiev High School of Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR in 1980.

Zinkevich chose the topic of his speech very carefully. He could not share the experience with the polygraph he had in Karaganda High School, as it could trigger negative reactions and consequences not only for him but for B. Beisenov as well. There was only one theme available that would not damage his reputation in uneasy Soviet circumstances: his Polish experience with polygraph.

In a report on a theme completely neutral at a first glance – Problems of polygraph use in the investigation of crimes in Poland – Zinkevich (most probably with Belkin’s approval) included very controversial and daring material. This is how Zinkevich entered into an open conflict with the reactionaries, ardent Soviet opponents of the polygraph.

In his report Zinkevich said “The fact is that in modern criminology, there is no other device such as polygraph to have so many negative opinions. They are made by people who neither have nor have seen a polygraph in their lives, and never conducted research on it, nor even are familiar with the special literature on this subject and methods of using the device.”[12]

In his smart and daring speech, Zinkevich proved the necessity of using polygraph for detecting the truth, by providing strong arguments and own observations made in lifetime’s experience. He mentioned outstanding works by physiologist I. Pavlov and psychologist B. Porshnev, and also made a link to the successful experience of Polish polygraphers, as well as their colleagues from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. He even referred to the examples of polygraph use in the US, even though that was not a typical reference in the Iron Curtain time. Zinkevich finished his speech with some truly revolutionary proposals.

For the first time in Soviet science he proposed to design a programme for the polygraph that would allow to solve experimental, theoretical, and practical problems and fight crime. He believed that the programme for future research should cover:

- a) the history of a problem
- b) the theory and practice of polygraph research in capitalist countries
- c) the theory and practice of polygraph researches in communist countries
- d) natural scientific grounds for polygraph
- e) psychological grounds for polygraph research
- f) ethical and legal aspects
- g) the questions of complex problem of polygraph use in fighting crime.

Zinkevich’s speech at the Kiev High School of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1980 went much ahead of his time. Serious research on his programme became possible only decades later. Only in 1997 could his tutor, Professor Belkin, prove the need for the polygraph.[13]

Today we should be proud that a Kazakh scientist was one of the first Soviet experimenters in instrumental lie detection. Unfortunately, this comes many years later than Zinkevich could have started applying his precious work and experience. Late is nonetheless better than never, and we all need to know that the Kazakhstani polygraph research started in the 1970s, precisely at the Karaganda High School of Police thanks to a modest scientist-experimenter Ivan Bernardovich Zinkevich.



Ivan Zinkevich (right) with President Nursultan Nazarbayev at a session of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan.

Translated by Yelena Milshtein

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