

The first famine in Kazakhstan under Soviet rule: historical and demographic aspects

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Abstract. *The article is devoted to the historical and demographic review of the famine in Kazakhstan at the beginning of the twentieth century, known as the «first famine» in the Soviet period. The purpose of this article is to study the works of domestic and foreign scientists from the point of view of historical analysis, to consider approaches to the study of this problem, as well as to assess the causes and consequences of the famine of 1921-1922 from the point of view of modern research.*

As a research task, the authors of the article identified an attempt to identify the main causes of famine in Kazakhstan, the scale of damage and the impact of hunger on the life of the indigenous population of the country with the help of an overview historical-comparative and historical-demographic analysis. The article discusses new archival materials and the latest research by Russian scientists on the topic under study in recent years.

The authors made certain conclusions regarding the fact that not all aspects of the famine of 1921-1922 were sufficiently studied, such as historical, geographical, environmental and migration consequences.

Keywords: *famine; food spread; zhut, taxes; demographic crisis; uprising; population censuses.*

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Introduction

One of the actual problems in the modern history of Kazakhstan is the theme of the early 20th century famine. This problem has been little studied and requires a comprehensive investigation that takes into account the economic, social, and political factors of that period. While the famine of 1930-1933, known as Asharshylyk in Kazakhstan, has been extensively studied with numerous sources

and rich historiographical analysis, the famines of 1917-1918 in the Turkestan Republic and 1921-1922 in the northwestern region of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic have received relatively little attention.

The reason for this is the assessment of Soviet and domestic historians, who viewed the causes and consequences of these tragic famines as a natural outcome of the devastation caused by the Civil War and the

policy of 'war communism' of the Bolsheviks in the country. However, a comprehensive historical, demographic, and economic analysis is required, including the works of both foreign researchers and domestic scientists, along with the introduction of new and previously unknown archival documents from the Republic and neighboring countries.

As of the present day, the topic remains relevant due to the continuous introduction of new data from archival documents into scientific discourse. This influx of information enables a deeper study of the causes and consequences of the famine. It is worth acknowledging that the historiography of the 1920s famine has some similarities in the interpretation of the problem and the identification of its causes, despite the existence of several different research schools, such as Soviet, domestic, and foreign, each providing their theoretical justifications for the study of the topic.

Analyzing the contradictions in the results of previous studies and exploring less examined aspects of the problem indicates that a comprehensive examination of the historiography of the so-called *First Kazakh Famine* of 1921-1922 by domestic and foreign scholars will generate fresh insights for further research. It will also help to identify different perspectives and viewpoints on the question of the regularity of famines in Kazakhstan.

Materials and methods

The primary materials utilized for this study were archival documents from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as regional archives from the West Kazakhstan and North Kazakhstan regions. In recent years, numerous articles have been published that make use of new and previously undiscovered documents from the regional archives of the Republic. Additionally, collections of conference materials and round table discussions dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the famine in Kazakhstan have been incorporated into both domestic and foreign scientific literature.

The methodological foundation of this work rests on a collection of theoretical and

methodological principles that emphasize historicity and reliability, as well as the systematic approach to research. Throughout the study, the main general historical methods employed in historical science were utilized, including the historical-comparative method and the method of systematization. Theoretical research methods played a crucial role in organizing and systematizing the gathered material for successful examination. The work incorporates widely accepted methods such as analysis, synthesis, classification, induction, analogy, and generalization.

Discussion

Certain authors, such as N.I. Mardarovsky and S.A. Neustadt, were among the pioneers who addressed the famine at the beginning of the 20th century. In his concise work titled *Famine In Kyrgyzstan And The Fight Against Under-Breeding*, Mardarovsky identified the main causes of the famine as the colonial policy of Tsarism and the illiteracy of the region's population. He also made the controversial statement that hunger is inherent only to uncultured peoples. Nevertheless, Mardarovsky managed to depict the scale of the famine, its consequences, and provided recommendations for its prevention (Mardarovsky, 1922).

S.A. Neustadt, thirty years after the famine occurred, conducted research based on archival documents to estimate the number of starving individuals in the disaster-stricken area. He was among the first to indicate the figure as 2.3 million people (Neustadt, 1957).

During the 1960s to 1980s, authors such as A.B. Tursunbayev, G.F. Dachsleiger, and A.N. Nusupbekov wrote about hunger in the Kazakh village in their respective works.

After gaining independence, the theme of the 1921-1922 famine in the works of historians like T.O. Omarbekov, K.S. Aldazhumanov, M.B. Tatimov, Zh.B. Abylkhodzhin, A.M. Mamyrkhanova, and others reached a new level of research. Several dissertations were written on this topic. One notable work is the monograph by B.A. Mussayev titled *Famine in the First Half of the 20s of the 20th Century in Kazakhstan: Historical, Socio-Political Analysis* (Mussayev, 2006). In this monograph, the author delves into the prerequisites, causes,

and extent of the famine, as well as its political and socio-economic consequences. The work provides a comprehensive examination with a specific focus on highlighting the socio-political aspects of the problem. It significantly contributed to the understanding of the topic of hunger in the first half of the 20s.

In recent years, a wave of new works has emerged, enriched by an updated database of previously unknown archival documents and a group of researchers fully engaged in this subject. Many of these works were dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the famine and received new impetus from the state to study hunger and mass political repression. Noteworthy among these historians are A.T. Kapaeva, A.N. Konkabayeva, B.S. Boranbayeva, M.M. Kozybayeva, and E.E. Khaidarov, whose articles and works shed light on various aspects of the famine in greater detail.

Previously unpublished and qualitatively new archival documents have been made available through collections such as *Famine in Kazakhstan in 1921-1922 in Domestic and Foreign Scientific Literature* and *Famine in Kazakhstan. 1921-1923. Collection of Documents and Materials*. These collections have played a crucial role in providing access to a wealth of historical resources. Many of these documents and materials originate from the State Archives of the West Kazakhstan region (SAWKR), North Kazakhstan region (SANKR), as well as from the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (APRK) and the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSARK).

Results

For most domestic and foreign researchers, including Soviet ones during the Soviet period, the topic of famine in Kazakhstan in the 1920s was often considered as part of the general famine in Russia and the Volga region, which caused it to be overlooked in their studies. However, it is essential to recognize that the famine had its own specific localities. For instance, the famine of 1917-1918 occurred mainly in the Syrdarya and Zhetysu regions of the krai, whereas the famine of 1921-1922 affected the northwestern regions of the Kazakh ASSR.

The nomadic lifestyle of the Kazakhs contributed to the famine's peculiar nature, as their lives were filled with significant risks and challenges, including diseases and hunger in the steppe. By the late nineteenth century, approximately 78.7% of Kazakhs engaged in nomadic cattle breeding, as the steppe landscape provided an ideal environment for this practice (Masanov, 2011:550). Famine in the steppe seemed to follow a repetitive pattern, occurring every ten years. The devastating famines of 1897 and 1899 in the Turkestan region severely affected the Kazakhs' cattle breeding economy. The number of livestock drastically decreased from 3,181.0 thousand in 1895 to only 1,312.0 thousand in 1900, representing a 41.2% decline (Barthold, 1963:58). Similarly, the famine of 1910-1911 in the larger territory of Kazakhstan also led to the loss of livestock due to a lack of fodder. This necessitated a process of rebuilding the livestock population, with the Kazakh economy gradually transitioning from cattle breeding to a cattle-pastoral or cattle-farming system.

The question of the number of Kazakhs living at the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries is significant and requires attention. Census data serves as the most extensive and comprehensive source of information about the population. By the mid-19th century, many European countries had already conducted censuses, and in the Russian Empire, a population census was carried out in 1897. The late 19th to the early 20th century was a crucial period in the history of Kazakhstan, marked by extensive societal changes that profoundly impacted the population. Political, economic, social, and administrative transformations led to significant shifts in the ethnic and social composition of Kazakhstan's population. The population censuses conducted during this time period accurately reflected the evolutionary processes occurring within the territory of the Russian Empire, which later became the Soviet Union, encompassing Kazakhstan as well (Kaliyeva, 2009:5-6).

During the early 20th century, the issue of the Kazakh population's size was a subject of discussion among historians. According to M. Tynyshpaev, citing data from the general census of 1897, Kazakhs were ranked

sixth among the nationalities in Russia with a population of 4,100,000 inhabitants. However, Tynyshpaev considered this figure to be inaccurate due to certain factors. He mentioned that the Kyrgyz (Kazakhs) did not have extensive metric records until recently, and in many regions, these records were still lacking. During the census, some Kazakhs hid their children, fearing conscription by the government.

Official data from the 1897 census indicated that a total of 4,333,000 people from 60 different nationalities lived in the territory of Kazakhstan. Out of these, 3,398,000 people, constituting 81.7% of the population, were Kazakhs (CSARK, 41:146-148). While the first experience of the population census had its drawbacks and might not have accounted for all aspects accurately, it remains a fact that the Kazakh population at the beginning of the new century was at least 4 million people.

The famine that occurred in the southern regions of Kazakhstan in 1917-1918 shared similarities with previous disasters, such as crop failure (zhut) in the steppe and the death of livestock due to a lack of feed. However, that famine was aggravated by national liberation uprising of the Kazakhs and other Central Asian peoples against the tsarist troops and the subsequent Civil War between the White and Red armies.

In the summer of 1917, a drought in the Turkestan region resulted in a sharp decrease in the grain harvest. Only half of the required amount of grain, which was 110 million pounds, could be collected for the population. The economic miscalculations of the new Soviet leaders in Tashkent also contributed to the severity of the situation. For instance, the Decree of February 26, 1918, «On the confiscation of cotton fiber and raw cotton», had serious consequences (Rajabov, 2012:114).

Measures to combat hunger were not adequately organized and were insufficient in quantity. According to T. Ryskulov, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan, I. Tobolin, stated directly during a meeting of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee that the economically weak Kazakhs, from the Marxist perspective, would still have to perish. He argued that it was more important for the revolution to allocate

funds to support the better fronts rather than fight against hunger (Ryskulov, 1925:12). In his own words, Ryskulov admitted that the deceased people of Turkestan had saved the Soviet government. If these millions of starving people had demanded their share, they could have disrupted everything. Although they were not fed, they inadvertently saved the overall situation (Ryskulov, 1925:77).

Mustafa Shokai, an ideological opponent of Bolshevism and the former head of the Kokand government, commented on T. Ryskulov's words, labeling him a «Soviet asset». Shokai noted that Ryskulov did not provide exact figures in his book, only indicating the enormous number of deceased. However, M. Shokai, using Soviet sources from 1919, mentioned a staggering figure of 1,114,000 people who perished during the famine (Shokai, 1993:32).

On November 20, 1918, a Central commission was established in the Turkestan ASSR with the primary goal of combating hunger. T. Ryskulov, who was only 24 years old at the time, was appointed as the chairman of this commission. In response to the devastating famine, over a thousand food distribution centers were organized, and regional, county, and township cells of the commission were established to address the crisis. Through their concerted efforts, within a span of five to six months, the situation in the region came under control. However, it was only by the end of 1923 that the famine was completely prevented in the Turkestan region. Tragically, during this period, a quarter of the population fell victim to the famine.

We cannot overlook or underestimate the pivotal role played by T. Ryskulov in the fight against hunger. His efforts were of great significance and had a positive impact in mitigating the famine's impact. Even in the 1930s, when he was no longer within the Republic, Ryskulov continued to express his concern about the famine in the steppe and the excesses in the collectivization of agriculture. He wrote letters to notable figures such as I. Stalin, V. Molotov, and F. Goloshchekin, seeking attention to these pressing issues (APRK, 6403:137-146).

After the end of the Civil War, another dreadful ordeal awaited the Soviet people,

including the Kazakhs. In 1921, the country experienced a winter without snow and a summer without rain, leading to drought in many regions, particularly affecting the Volga region. This resulted in widespread famine. By autumn 1921, the number of hungry people across the country had reached 20 million (Khaidarov, 2021:159). For the Kazakhs, a nomadic people relying on millions of herds of horses and sheep, this famine had a profound impact on demography and the economy.

The immediate causes of the famine included the First World War, the Kazakh uprising against requisition in 1916, exorbitant taxes, the civil war with its accompanying mass casualties, and the policy of 'war communism', which severely affected agriculture. The famine primarily affected the western provinces of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Orenburg, Uralsk, Aktobe, Kostanai, Bukei, and Aday counties). A total of 20 districts and 21 counties were hit by the famine (Musaev, 2006:62-63). Out of the seven provinces of the Kazakh ASSR, five were declared starving. The famine's total area covered 1,048,100 square kilometers, with a population of 2,633,300 people. As of November 1921, the number of starving individuals, including both sexes, was 1,558,927 people, accounting for 60% of the population. By April 1922, this number had risen to 93% (CSARK, 25:9).

The year 1921 was a time of great hardship for the Kazakhs, exacerbated by the policies and decisions of the government during the Soviet Civil War. On March 18, 1921, the 1st Regional Food Council under the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) People's Commissariat of Food discussed the issue of cattle seizures from Kazakhs, following an order from the People's Commissar of the RSFSR. Despite objections from local economists warning of the disastrous consequences, the government tax was still approved. This tax, along with other extortions, had a devastating impact on cattle farming. According to archival documents, in 1917 there were 29.7 million

cattle in the Republic, but by 1920 the number had decreased to 9.7 million, and in 1921 it further dropped to 6.2 million, representing an 83% reduction (APRK, 211:38).

Other forms of taxation were also imposed on the population, adding to their hardships. For instance, in Kokshetau county in 1921, various types of taxes were listed, such as egg tax, oils, wool, meat, seine (a fishing net), bread, vegetables, tobacco, and skins (APRK, 107:83). All these extortions were imposed before the mass famine struck Kazakhstan, making it reasonable to assume that other provinces not affected by the famine should have offered help to the distressed areas.

In 1921, both Akmola and Semipalatinsk provinces had sufficient grain harvests that could have provided food for the starving population. However, the Council of the People's Commissariat of the RSFSR instructed the People's Commissar of Food of Kazakhstan, N. Samatov, to send all the bread from these provinces to Moscow without the knowledge of the Center (Union). Despite objections from N. Samatov, these instructions were carried out (Kapayeva, 2021:123).

The famine that struck the western region during that time was of an unprecedented scale, leading to drastic reductions in the number of livestock. The impact was severe, as demonstrated by the significant decline in livestock numbers. For instance, in the Bukei province during 1921-1922, the number of horses decreased from 146,000 to 49,000, and the number of sheep decreased from 1.3 million to 0.4 million. Consequently, the total number of cattle in 1921 compared to the pre-Civil War figure was only 20% (Boranbayeva, 2017:23).

Data compiled on August 15, 1921, regarding the number of livestock in the province and the number of livestock in need of feeding indicated that nearly half of all species were in dire need of feed, which ultimately led to significant loss of livestock due to the ensuing famine (see Table 1).

Table 1. Information on the number of livestock in the Bukei province declared starving

Province	All			Out of the total number needs feeding		
	Horses	Cattle	Small livestock	Horses	Cattle	Small livestock
Bukei province	23,292	71,323	54,468	11,649	31,120	28,407
Total	149,083			71176 (48%)		

This document indicates that there is no precise information available about cattle numbers separately for each county; only general figures for the province are known. Concerning the need for livestock feed, it is stated that assistance should have been provided earlier, and if it continues to be delayed, the loss of livestock is likely to be inevitable. The autumn and winter of 1921-1922 saw a significant decline in livestock numbers, with a maximum decrease of 20% to 40%.

Providing timely assistance is challenging due to the diverse feed resources in different counties. For instance, the fodder available in the I and II Primorsky districts would not be beneficial for Torgun and Kalmyk counties, as they are located near railways, and it might even be harmful (SAWKR, 1:12).

The drought of 1921 had a significant impact on agriculture in Kazakhstan, affecting approximately 31% of the total wheat-sown land. The provinces that historically served

as major grain producers were severely affected, and the overall impact of the drought extended to around 0.9 million dessiatines of land in Kazakhstan. Kazakh historians have used data from the book *Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic in 1923* to provide more accurate population data and a clearer understanding of the consequences of the disaster. The table below presents data on the urban and rural population by province. It is evident that the number of rural population significantly decreased in 1923, particularly after the terrible famine (see Table 2).

From the data, it can be inferred that agriculture was in a dire situation, and state aid failed to reach its intended destinations. Medical institutions were not adequately supplied with necessary medicines and equipment, leading to further hardships. As a result, many people were compelled to flee to the cities seeking better conditions and resources (Konkabayeva, Murzakhodzhayev, 2021:170).

Table 2. Comparative analysis of statistical data of urban and rural population from 1917 to 1923

Provinces	Number of population								
	Urban			Rural			Total		
	1917	1920	1923	1917	1920	1923	1917	1920	1923
Orenburg	153,676	134,750	139,986	679,107	627,140	424,615	832,783	761,890	564,601
Kostanai	26,687	20,120	20,785	414,909	424,340	280,679	441,596	444,460	301,464
Aktobe	21,789	23,710	31,457	470,918	430,750	271,392	492,707	454,460	302,849
Uralsk	74,636	54,400	51,019	580,461	459,440	309,039	655,097	513,840	360,058
Bukei	3960	3960	9172	247,220	226,280	206,961	251,180	230,240	216,133
Turgay	1459	730	853	110,013	91,080	57,563	111,472	91,810	58,416
By district	282,207	237,670	253,272	2,502,628	2,259,030	1,550,249	2,784,835	2,496,700	1,803,521

Source: Konkabayeva, Murzakhodzhayev
Some aspects of the famine in Kazakhstan in 1921-1922:
in archival documents and written materials

According to archival documents from the Uralsk province, the population was reported to be 524,824 people based on the 1920 census. By the autumn of 1921, the number of hungry people in the province had reached 227,000 (see Table 3), out of which 123,500 were adults and 103,500 were children (SAWKR, 14:8). This indicates that by the autumn of 1921, approximately 45.5% of the total population in the Uralsk province was

suffering from starvation. By 1922, the number of starving individuals in the Uralsk province had further increased to 378,816 people, including 174,439 children and 204,377 adults. This translates to approximately 70% of the provincial population facing starvation. When considering the rate of starvation among the affected population, children constituted 46% of the total number of hungry people, while adults accounted for 54% (see Table 4).

Table 3. The number of hungry people in the Uralsk province for the autumn months of 1921

Counties	Number of population	The number of hungry	Percentages	Adult population	Children
Uralsk county	124,037	38,000	30%	20,000	18,000
Ilek county	128,623	90,000	70%	46,500	43,000
Kalmykovsk county	59,216	42,000	70%	24,000	18,000
Dzhambeyty county	92,948	33,000	35.5%	19,000	14,000
Guryev county	120,000	24,000	20%	14,000	10,000
Total	524,824	227,000	43.2%	123,500	103,500

Source: State Archive of the West Kazakhstan region. F. 19, Inv. 1, C. 27, L. 47

Table 4. Number of hungry people in the Uralsk province for the spring months of 1922

Name of counties	Number of population	Number of hungry people	Children	Adults
Uralsk city	39,565	19,783	11,889	7914
Uralsk county	91,853	81,749	38,419	43,330
Dzhambeyty county	91,770	72,498	30,754	41,744
Ilek county	137,204	113,212	54,715	58,497
Kalmykovsk county	55,947	44,198	18,942	25,256
Guryev county	118,440	47,376	17,740	27,636
Total	534,779	378,816	174,439	204,377

Source: State Archive of the West Kazakhstan region. F. 19, Inv. 1, C. 23, L. 503

The archival documents from the city of Uralsk provide valuable insights into the severity of the famine impact on mortality and illness during that period. At the peak of the famine in the region, particularly in December 1921 and January-February 1922, the number of people admitted to medical institutions exceeded 2,000 per week, despite the acute shortage of hospital beds (approximately 700 beds available in the city).

The situation was critical, with a large influx of patients overwhelming the limited healthcare resources. Table 5 presents data on deaths in hospitals in the city over a ten-day period. The mortality rate among the admitted adults was approximately 30%, while for children, it was even higher, reaching almost 50%. These figures do not take into account those who could not access hospitals due to the shortage of medical facilities.

Table 5. Information on mortality from hunger and disease in medical institutions of the city of Uralsk for the period from January 1 to January 10, 1922

Name of counties	Died of starvation				Died of illness				% of mortality from hunger in adults	% of deaths from hunger in children	Estimated increase in mortality from hunger in %	Annotation
	Adults		Children		Adults		Children					
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female				Specify diseases that give a large% mortality rate
Uralsk city	7	4	15	17	32	4	24	22	29.2%	46.6%	-	Exhausted by hunger
Total	125											

Source: State Archive of the West Kazakhstan region.
F. 19, Inv. 1, C. 37, L. 27

The information from the explanatory notes regarding the hunger strikers in hospitals in the city of Uralsk for the month of March 1922 provides a stark picture of the dire situation during the famine:

1. A total of 770 patients were admitted to hospitals, while the number of available beds was only 2522 patients. Among the admitted patients, 31.7% were men, 39.6% were women, and 28.7% were children.

2. Out of the total number of patients, a staggering 71.2% were suffering from hunger and exhaustion. Among these individuals, 38.2% were men, 37.2% were women, and 24.6% were children.

3. The mortality rate was distressingly high, with 16.8% of patients (425 individuals) succumbing to their condition. Of these deaths, 30.5% were men, 17.6% were women, and a devastating 51.0% were children.

4. The vast majority (84.7%) of deaths were attributed to hunger and exhaustion, emphasizing the severe impact of the famine on the population.

5. The lack of available spaces in hospitals led to 888 refusals for admission, with 866 of those rejections being from among the hungry (SAWKR, 33:34).

According to official data, in the country, due to a spontaneous famine, the mortality rate of children under the age of

1 ranged between 80-90%, and for children over one year old, it was between 50-60%. Child homelessness has also increased. For example, on December 1, 1921, there were 128,000 homeless children in KazASSR; then in January 1922, two months later, their number reached 333,043 people. Along with the homelessness of children, the first instances of population migration from starving regions to other places were recorded. Mass migrations were the consequences of famine, as people left their native lands and went in search of prosperity to Siberia, Turkestan, Mongolia, and China. According to a report to the Akmola provincial Revolutionary Committee dated July 21, 1921, in the Baganaly-10 parish of the Atbasar district, a population of 6,000 families attempted to relocate to the Turkestan Region (SANKR, 6:29).

People dissatisfied with the authorities' policies clandestinely organized riots and uprisings against food detachments that seized all food supplies. In April 1921, Guryev rebelled under the leadership of Safonov, with some local militia and soldiers joining their cause. Their numbers reached 500 people, and they arrested local communists and Soviet activists. They conducted raids on grain collection points where products taken from the population were stored and controlled several settlements for several months.

The longest and most significant uprising was led by V. Serov in the Uralsk province. It lasted from September 1921 to August 1922 and stood out for putting up a formidable resistance against the regular Soviet army. On March 9, 1922, near the village of Krasnoyarsk, a fierce battle took place between the rebels and a detachment of cadets from the Orenburg Military School. Serov led a detachment of 1,000 mounted and 300 foot soldiers. Though the rebels initially had to retreat, they later faced defeat by the OGPU forces, and many were executed (Khaidarov, 2021:160-161).

All segments of the population, as well as authorities and public associations, actively participated in the fight against hunger. In March 1922, Seitkali Mendeshev, the chairman of the Kazakh Central Election Commission, attempted to draw Stalin's attention to the catastrophic situation in the Kazakh steppe. He wrote that in some villages, people were dying by the hundreds, and they resorted to eating not only cats, dogs, and surrogates, but the situation even led to cases of cannibalism (Kindler, 2017:76).

S. Mendeshev also held the position of chairman of the Central Commission for Famine Relief under the CEC of the Kazakh ASSR. In his report on July 8, 1922, titled *The Question of Hunger*, presented during the opening of the 3rd session of the Central Executive Committee of Kazakhstan, he provided an overview of the commission's work. In his report, he emphasized the significant role played by international institutions in the fight against hunger. He mentioned the contributions of organizations like the International Workers' Committee, the Red Cross Society, the American Famine Relief Administration (ARA), and the Quaker movement. Mendeshev cited a figure of 2,832,000 starving people (Mendeshev, 2021:12).

In the resolutions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of February 26, 1922, which were published in *Izvestia VTsIK*, it was declared necessary to urgently mobilize all available resources in the country to combat hunger. Local councils were instructed to implement the seizure of church property and other valuable resources within a month from the date of publication of the resolution. This included precious objects made of gold,

silver, and stones that were in the possession of religious groups of all faiths (SAWKR, 20:3). Following the resolution, the process of seizing church valuables commenced promptly, with particular focus given to county executive committees collaborating with county committees for famine relief. The instructions stipulated that all confiscated valuables should be promptly sent, along with records and protocols, to the county financial department and then to the provincial financial department, with a specific allocation to the fund of the Central Commission for Famine Relief. During the collection of valuables, certain guidelines were put in place. It was strictly prohibited to exchange these items for bread or any other products. Additionally, authorities were instructed not to mistreat believers, ensuring the preservation of their honor and dignity throughout the process. Organizing rallies and holding discussions with the population on the matter was also prohibited.

It was initially planned to complete the campaign for the seizure of church valuables in the Uralsk province by May 10, 1922 (SAWKR, 20:25-26). However, the campaign faced delays and continued until December. The primary centers for seizure were situated in the city of Uralsk and in the Ilek and Uralsk counties, where the population of Slavic origin predominantly resided. In contrast, some areas, such as Dzhambeyty and the Dzhambeyty district, did not undergo any seizures. The commission's report stated that upon examining the church in Dzhambeyty, no valuables were found for seizure, as the church had been robbed twice (SAWKR, 20:90). On July 6, 1922, the results of the seizure included the dispatch of one chest with church valuables from Guryev County. The chest was accepted without opening or checking its contents, based solely on external inspection in accordance with the provided inventory and act. It was observed that the chest had no external damage, no lock, and was tied with an intact rope and sealed with two unbroken seals. The chest's weight was determined to be 5 pounds 30 pounds, which equates to approximately 95 kg (SAWKR, 20:91).

Separately, we can mention the help of neighboring republics, one of which was the

Ukrainian Republic, which, during the famine years, periodically sent food in the form of donations to the Kazakh Republic, including the Uralsk province. The table shows the types

of products sent from different institutions and the quantity in pounds. Such shipments were sent once every one or two months (see Table 6).

Table 6. Information on shipments of donated goods as of December 1, 1921, Uralsk province

From where are assigned	Bread products	Vegetables, etc.	Annotation
Kiev, Pishcheviki	5000 pounds		
Kharkiv, Ukraine	20,000 pounds		
Centrosoyuz	1000 pounds		
Orlovsky, previously sent	2000 pounds		
CC Pomgol, cranberries		4500 pounds	
Ukraine, Kharkiv Central Committee Pomgol	8000 pounds		
Rybinsky		1000 pounds	
Kursk Centrosoyuz	908 pounds		
Orlovsky	5000 pounds		
Orlovsky Gubprodkom		4000 pounds	
Central Committee Pomgol Narkomprod			3000 pounds of fish
All	41,908 pounds	9500 pounds	3000 pounds
TOTAL	54,408 pounds or 870,528 kilogram		

Source: State Archive of the West Kazakhstan region. F. 19, Inv. 1, C. 21, L. 16

When discussing the activities of the American Aid Administration (ARA), it's important to note that it was established on the initiative of the future US President G. Hoover. The ARA office was located in Orenburg, the capital of the republic. Frederick Line was initially appointed as the head of the Orenburg office, but in December 1921, he was replaced by Walter H.A. Coleman. Kolman expanded the ARA's area of activity to Aktobe, where a huge number of refugees from the steppes had accumulated. At the peak of its activity, in the summer of 1922, the Orenburg office of the ARA extended its operations to the Uralsk province. In June-July 1922, 339,508 children and 860,041 adults received meals from canteens and warehouses of the Orenburg branch of the ARA, though 240,000 of this number lived in Bashkir cantons, not within the territory of the Kyrgyz ASSR (Tsidenkov, 2021:139). The efforts of Fridtjof Nansen and his Nansen Mission during the famine in

the early 1920s helped save millions of lives (Nansen-Heyer, 1986:392-415).

The ARA Committee for Children's Aid established 214 canteens in the province, specifically in the Uralsk, Ilek, and Dzhambeyty counties, where a total of 29,939 children received meals. Additionally, the ARA systematically provided 71,000 adult rations for the Uralsk province. During that time, the provincial committee for famine relief fed a total of 36,147 people in February, 67,000 people in March, and 48,000 people in April. Out of this number, 18,750 were adults, and 29,250 were children who received assistance.

The Russian-American Committee for Children's Aid (RACCA) in the Uralsk province, in their report dated April 3, 1922, stated that as of April 1 of that year, there were 61 ARA canteens providing 12,278 rations in the city of Uralsk, and 94 canteens offering 12,441 rations in the Ural district. Additionally, there were

55 canteens with 4,720 rations in Ilek and Ilek Uyezd, as well as 4 canteens with 500 rations in Dzhambeyty county and Dzhambeyty. In total, there were 29,939 rations allocated in the province (SAWKR, 30:6). However, in the following years, the size of the rations

given to the population began to decrease as the severity of the hunger in the region comparatively lessened. Archival documents provide information about the number of rations issued to the population during the summer months of 1922 (see Table 7).

Table 7. Information on the number of ARA rations issued to children and adults

Points	July		August	
	Children	Adults	Children	Adults
Uralsk city	11,775	21,262	11,234	14,795
Uralsk county	25,536	40,161	26,491	5500
Ilek county	24,026	27,000	25,864	11,149
Dzhambeyty county	12,741	18,596	15,644	22,454
Kalmykovsk county	9158	25,000	9158	14,288
Guryev county	3160	5502	8077	13,418
Shumikhinsky district	947	685	947	-
Chizhinskaya parish	2000	3157	1919	3157

Source: State Archive of the West Kazakhstan region. F. 19, Inv. 1, C. 38, L. 62

The activities of foreign international organizations, such as the American Relief Administration (ARA) and the Nansen Mission, were of significant importance and cannot be underestimated. These organizations made substantial financial and humanitarian contributions to the fight against hunger not only in specific provinces but throughout the entire country. During the All-Russian meeting of the Famine Relief Commission on December 2, 1921, the commission acknowledged the crucial role and assistance provided by the ARA organization and Dr. Nansen's mission as the primary rescuers in aiding the hungry (SAWKR, 23:151-154).

In recent studies conducted by Kazakh historians on the definition of famine victims, a comparison of agricultural censuses from 1920 and 1923 revealed that the number of Kazakh population who died of hunger amounted to 414 thousand people, accounting for 18.5% of the Kazakhs. Additionally, the percentage of population decline between 1920 and 1923 was found to be 19.1%. Among rural residents, this level was even higher at 21.5% (Kozybayeva, Kudaibergenova, Baydaly,

2021:152). However, it's important to note that other sources present different figures. For instance, the official summary of the Regional Party Committee to the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) states that there were 2,286,591 people who experienced hunger, with 68% of them succumbing to death, totaling 1,554,882 fatalities (Darkenov, 2013:75).

The renowned Kazakh historian-demographer, M. Tatimov, conducted meticulous research on the registration and movement of the population of Kazakhstan, utilizing census data and statistical records from accounting bodies. According to his calculations, a staggering 950 thousand Kazakhs lost their lives due to the national liberation uprising of 1916, the revolutions of 1917, the civil war, and the consequences of the famine in 1921. Additionally, around 200 thousand Kazakhs migrated out of the country. The impact was profound, with the decline of Kazakhs amounting to over 1 million people in just the first quarter of the twentieth century (Tatimov, 1992:134).

An American historian and writer, renowned for his expertise in the history of

the USSR and the author of the book *Harvest of Sorrow*, drew parallels between the two famines in Kazakhstan during the 1920s and 1930s. He asserted that the famine in Kazakhstan during the 1930s was artificially induced, much like the one in 1921, resulting from reckless policy decisions driven by purely ideological considerations (Conquest, 198:293). This perspective is also corroborated by the German historian R. Kindler. In his book *Stalin's Nomads: Power and Famine in Kazakhstan*, he begins by narrating an event from 1921, where the Communists, in positions of authority, witnessed the distressing scenes that unfolded (Kindler, 2017:76-77).

Various sources provide data on the number of deaths caused by hunger, including those resulting from diseases, often linked to malnutrition and unsanitary conditions. It is estimated that the total number of victims during the 1921-1923 famine ranges from 1 to 1.5 million, with a decline in the Kazakh population of half a million or more. However, these figures are still subject to ongoing clarification and revision.

Conclusion

Summarizing, it can be concluded that the famine in the first quarter of the twentieth century holds a significant place in the history of the Kazakh people and Kazakhstan. A considerable portion of this famine was influenced by human actions and can be considered artificial in nature. While some may argue against this perspective, it is essential to acknowledge that natural and climatic factors did play a role, but the nomadic population had previously managed such phenomena quite well on their own.

The famine of 1921-1922, referred to in recent times among Kazakh scientists as the First Kazakh Famine during the Soviet era, marked the beginning of a chain of tragic events. These included the collectivization of agriculture, the sedentarization of nomads, the uprising in 1929-1931, the Great Zhut or Asharshylyk of 1930-1933, and the mass repressions in 1937-1938.

The study of hunger in the early twentieth century gives us certain opportunities for future research and may include the following research priorities:

- ✓ an essential aspect of studying hunger in Kazakhstan is analyzing the lasting impact of this tragedy on various aspects of the population's life in the years that followed. Researchers can delve into the effects of hunger on health, education, the economy, the social sphere, and other dimensions of society to understand how it shaped the trajectory of the nation;
- ✓ investigate how the world reacted to the crisis and the assistance provided;
- ✓ delve into the individual stories of famine victims to gain a more profound comprehension of personal and collective traumas, provide a human perspective on the tragedy and its lasting effects on families and communities;
- ✓ explore how this historical event influenced the collective consciousness and behavior of Kazakhstanis at the present time, contributing to the understanding of the nation's cultural memory and resilience;
- ✓ contribute to the creation of monuments and memorial complexes dedicated to preserving the memory of famine victims.

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Кеңестік билік тұсындағы Қазақстандағы бірінші аштық: тарихи-демографиялық аспектілер

Аңдатпа. Мақала кеңестік кезеңдегі «алғашқы аштық» деп аталатын ХХ ғасырдың басындағы Қазақстандағы аштық тақырыбына тарихи және демографиялық шолуға арналған. Бұл мақаланың мақсаты отандық және шетелдік ғалымдардың жұмысын тарихи талдау тұрғысынан зерттеу, осы мәселені зерттеудегі тәсілдерді қарастыру, сондай-ақ 1921-1922 жылдардағы ашаршылықтың себептері мен салдарын қазіргі заманғы зерттеулер тұрғысынан бағалау болып табылады.

Зерттеу міндеті ретінде мақала авторлары шолу тарихи-салыстырмалы және тарихи-демографиялық талдаудың көмегімен Қазақстан аумағындағы ашаршылықтың негізгі себептерін, залалдың ауқымын және ашаршылықтың елдің байырғы тұрғындарының өміріне әсерін анықтау әрекетін анықтады. Мақалада жаңа мұрағат материалдары және соңғы жылдардағы зерттелген тақырып бойынша отандық ғалымдардың соңғы зерттеулері қарастырылған.

Түйін сөздер: аштық; азық-түлік салғырты; жұт; салықтар; демографиялық дағдарыс; көтеріліс; халық санақтары.

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Первый голод в Казахстане при советской власти: историко-демографические аспекты

Аннотация. Статья посвящена историческому и демографическому обзору темы голода в Казахстане в начале ХХ века, известного как «первый голод» в советский период. Целью данной статьи является исследование работ отечественных и иностранных ученых с точки зрения исторического анализа, рассмотрение подходов при изучении данной проблемы, а также оценка причин и последствий голода 1921–1922 гг. с точки зрения современных исследований.

В качестве исследовательской задачи авторами статьи была определена попытка с помощью обзорного историко-сравнительного и историко-демографического анализа выявить основные причины голода на территории Казахстана, масштаб ущерба и влияние голода на жизнь коренного населения страны. В статье рассмотрены новые архивные материалы и новейшие исследования отечественных ученых по исследуемой теме за последние годы.

Авторами были сделаны определенные выводы относительно того, что не все аспекты голода 1921–1922 гг. были в достаточной степени изучены, как, например, историко-географические, экологические и миграционные последствия.

Ключевые слова: голод; продразверстка; джуг; налоги; демографический кризис; восстание; переписи населения.

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