

Life of Kazakhs in Tajikistan After Migration In the 1930s: Documents and Memories

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction. In the 1920s, and especially since the 1930s, the people inhabiting the territory of Kazakhstan were forced to emigrate to neighboring countries, including Tajikistan, due to hunger and persecution caused by the country's repression and left-wing collectivization policies. **Goals and objectives.** To reveal and objectively study the gaps in Kazakh history within the framework of the policy of preserving the past in independent Kazakhstan and the formation of the historical consciousness of Kazakh society, to analyze domestic and foreign scientific literature and published data on the issue of child homelessness in neighboring countries, including Tajikistan, in the 1920s-1930s.

Results. The results of the study will serve to form a collective historical memory, contribute to the growth of historical consciousness, and patriotism of the people of Kazakhstan. Supplementing national history with new facts from the memories of eyewitnesses will increase the general public's interest in historical information, in learning the history of their native land, will become an important factor in preserving the collective memory of the people, a means of self-education, and will directly affect the growth of the level of education of the population.

Conclusions. In the Soviet Union in the 20-30s of the 20th century, leftist policies, in particular political repressions, famine, and forced collectivization, had a negative impact on ordinary people, including the Kazakhs living in Tajikistan. The process of orphans, alien to the indigenous Kazakh society, emerged during the Soviet era and was clearly manifested under Soviet rule. However, the Soviet government fought against child homelessness not out of genuine compassion for these children, but in order to prevent a cruel army of children who opposed Soviet power.

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Introduction

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in his article "Independence is the Most Valuable Thing in the World" dated January 5, 2021 (Bazar, Ensepov, 2021: 255-258), in his report "A Just Kazakhstan – an Honest Citizen" at the II National Congress in Turkestan on June 17, 2023 (Tokayev, 2023: 1-3), and in an interview with the Egemen Kazakhstan newspaper on January 3, 2023, attached great importance to strengthening historical self-awareness (Imangazin, 2024: 1). This is explained by the fact that without knowledge of the past history of one's state and people, the progressive development of the state is impossible. In the 1920s and 1930s, the population of Kazakhstan, as a result of repression, famine, and persecution caused by the country's leftist collectivization policies, migrated to neighboring countries, including Tajikistan. In the tragic story of the Kazakh people and other ethnic groups in the USSR, forced to migrate to other cities and neighboring republics for survival during the totalitarian era, little research has been devoted to children who became homeless as a result of these events. Therefore, this article also examines the problem of child homelessness that arose during the turbulent years of perestroika, the multifaceted history of the Kazakh people. The article makes extensive use of and analysis of documents and information from the archives and libraries of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Northern Tajikistan consists of mountainous, foothill, and lowland areas, the latter bordering the steppe. At various points in history, the predominantly sedentary population—the Tajiks—interacted with nomadic peoples. In short, Northern Tajikistan lies on the border where sedentary and nomadic peoples lived and interacted.

One of the most significant nomadic peoples, the Kazakhs, along with others, had strong trade

and cultural ties with the Tajiks of this area. Since ancient times, Tajiks and Kazakhs, representing both sedentary and nomadic peoples, have lived side by side. Medieval sources and literature contain brief accounts of Kazakhs living in various territories of Northern Tajikistan at various periods in history, as well as of Tajiks living in Southern Kazakhstan. However, specialized research on the history of Kazakhs in Northern Tajikistan and Tajiks in Southern Kazakhstan remains lacking in Russian historiography. Furthermore, there is a need to localize the residences of these people in these territories across different historical periods and to analyze the economic and cultural relationships between Tajiks and Kazakhs. My cursory review of Kazakh historiography since independence, particularly in recent years, reveals that Kazakh historians have accomplished much in the history of Kazakhs abroad, including the history of Kazakhs in Northern Tajikistan. It is particularly noteworthy that Kazakh historians have made numerous archival documents on the famine in Kazakhstan from 1931 to 1933 public and analyzed them. A decisive rethinking by Kazakh historians, armed with new research methods, on this and the *Asharshylyk* issue, has revealed new realities of that period.

The two peoples, including other peoples of Central Asia, are linked by a millennium of history and a wealth of positive experiences of coexistence. During this period, adversity and difficult times united them, fostering mutual support.

The Kazakhs suffered the most in collectivism and the construction of collective farms. As a result of Soviet nationalization policies, the Kazakhs, being nomadic peoples primarily engaged in pastoralism, lived through a difficult period. The current policy led to a general famine, which in turn reduced the population; many died not only from hunger but also from epidemics, and some moved to other places.

Of particular interest is Kazakhstan's historical experience in the 1920s and 1930s, when, amid post-war devastation and famine, a large-scale campaign to eradicate homelessness was conducted. Despite harsh methods, including repression against "*kulaks*" and "*counterrevolutionaries*," the Soviet system succeeded in significantly reducing the number of homeless children. An analysis of this experience can be useful in developing modern social programs.

Thus, the problem of the history of child homelessness remains relevant today and requires a comprehensive solution, including government measures to combat child homelessness, as well as the active participation of civil society through historical experience.

Materials and Methods

An important methodological focus of the study is an interdisciplinary approach grounded in social history, historical anthropology, and the theory of political power. The approaches and theories employed are closely linked to historicity, objectivity, and the social principles of scientific research and allow us to examine child homelessness during the period of repression and famine within the complex history of our nation. For example, the principle of historicity proved useful for chronologically linking historical events in Tajikistan in the early 20th century with those occurring in the Kazakh steppe. The principle of objectivity helped determine the causes of political events in both countries. The social principle facilitated the analysis of the social foundations of child homelessness during this period. In addition to the principles of scientific research, the following analytical methods were employed: historical-comparative, retrospective, narrative, descriptive, and generalizing. All of this contributed to a comprehensive examination of the problem and the formulation of conclusions.

This article draws extensively on materials obtained through personal meetings and interviews with eyewitnesses and their descendants of the mass famine in Kazakhstan,

now residing in Tajikistan. The main informants of our study were residents of the city of Khujand, Istaravshan, the town of Ganchi and several villages of the Devashtich district and other villages of the Sughd region: for example, Zhumalieva Dyldakyz Zholzhaksievna (born June 5, 1959, married Yakubova Tillakyz Zhulzhaksievna), a resident of the city of Khujand; Ortikov Erkaboy (born May 3, 1948), a resident of the village of Yakhtan, Devashtich district; Akram Esergapov (born 1943), the village of Oboddora, Istaravshan district; Erkaboyev Akbarali (born 1949), the village of Lolazor, Devashtich district; Fozildzhonov Uktamjon (born 1950), the village of Kizili, Devashtich district; Narynbaeva Gulbarshyn Kapsamet kyzy (married name Supkhonova Gulbarshin Kapsametovna) (b. August 4, 1949), Ganchi town, Devashtich district; Vallamov Berdishukur (b. 1934-2025), Gul village, Devashtich district; Yusupov Norbuta Yusupovich (b. May 16, 1964), Anbarini Poyon (Anbargazi Poyon) village, Devashtich district, and others. Some information on the topic under study is reflected in N.I.'s works. Zarubin, N. Tursunov, and others.

The reliability of the research results is ensured by materials from collections of newly discovered historical sources (State Archives of Tajikistan, TR MAB, National Library of Tajikistan, etc.), including documentation from Soviet law enforcement agencies. The article also analyzes sources on specific issues in the history of child homelessness during the Stalin period. The documentary significance of these materials lies in their direct connection to the mechanisms of repressive policies implemented against minors in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in the aftermath of the famine and collectivization. The materials in this study are based on social construction and focus on social experience as a key concept. This is a truly interesting approach to analyzing resistance in the context of political transformations.

As a means of studying the characteristics of a political regime, the phenomenon of sabotage deepens our understanding of power mechanisms and social interaction. Several

important aspects can be highlighted, such as social experience. It is important to consider how various forms of resistance emerge from social contexts and influence political dynamics.

The conditions under which social representations are formed, including historical, cultural, and economic factors, shape perceptions of power and legitimacy.

Discussion

Most Kazakhs living in Tajikistan at the beginning of the 20th century resided in the Korgantobe and Balzhuan (Kulyab) regions. They were primarily engaged in livestock breeding and led a nomadic (pastoral, wintering) lifestyle. At that time, Kazakhs wintered in the Vakhsh River basin and the lower reaches of the Taiysu River, and during the rest of the year migrated to the foothills of the Terektytau and Alimtai mountains.

There are differing opinions about the number of Kazakhs living in Tajikistan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For example, N. Fevraleev wrote that in 1892-93, 800 shanyraks, consisting of Kazakhs from the Adai, Alim, Balykchi, and Tabin clans, were concentrated in one place (Nuraliev, 2017: 15). P. Gaevsky mentions that in 1910-1914, there were 180 Kazakh households in this Terektytau district. I.P. Magidovich, based on military data, also claims that there were more than 800 Kazakh households on the Kurgantob plain alone, estimating the population at over 4,000 people. According to this author, it was impossible to determine their exact number (most likely, during the censuses of those years, they were recorded as "Uzbeks" without their consent). In his opinion, only 490 people (fishermen and organized sedentary Kazakh camps) should have been counted. According to B.Kh. Karmyshev, wealthy Kazakhs with large livestock herds began to migrate to Afghanistan to save their livestock during the rise of Basmachi rebellion in Central Asia in the early 20th century (Nuraliyev, 2017: 19). According to Koshamkul Nurmatov, who is somewhat familiar with the history of Kazakh migration to this country in the early 20th century and is

interested in collecting data on this topic: "The revolutions of the early 20th century, when Russia was in power, brought many hardships to the Kazakhs. During those turbulent years, the consequences of violent clashes between the Bolsheviks and their opponents also affected the Kazakhs living in Tajikistan (according to estimates from 1924, there were more than 10,000 Kazakh families throughout Tajikistan). Among the thousands of people whose livestock was plundered were Kazakhs. The Tsarist government did not bring peace to this region. They did not hesitate to establish their own political administration... My parents moved to Uzbekistan with their herds of livestock back in the 1930s. Having learned that raising livestock in a sedentary country would be difficult, they came to Tajikistan from Afghanistan. When we arrived here, the security officers transferred my father's and other camel herders' livestock to... "Tajiktrans," and they became camel herders. Things couldn't have been worse; it was a time when the nation's wealth was at stake. The strength of these camels was used to build cities and roads. The only means of transportation in the steppes and mountains of Tajikistan was the camel. A Kazakh who didn't have at least two camels at his doorstep wasn't a "Kazakh." We became "Kazakhs" thanks to our ability to care for livestock and keep them in stalls. We were born far from our homeland, and even when we grew old, we knew we were children of a great country. Over the long years of our lives, we mastered the profession of a Tajik who picked and ate fruit from the soil. We also cultivated vegetable gardens" (Nuraliyev, 2017: 22). In the 1920s and 1930s, as in all republics of the Soviet Union (Ismagulov, Konbay: 2025, 780), large-scale collectivization of agricultural production was carried out in Tajikistan. This process effectively constituted the final stage of land and water reform and general agrarian reforms. Essentially, this was a transition from a feudal, pre-capitalist, and capitalist system of land use and agricultural production to a socialist, and then planned, economy.

The primary task of the young Tajik Republic in the 1920s was to form a national economy along Soviet lines. This process required significant financial resources, which the republic lacked. The Soviet government provided Tajikistan with enormous financial assistance, and its subsidies played a decisive role in the republic's state budget. For example, in 1926 they accounted for 84.0% of all expenditures; in 1927, 92.2%; in 1928, 79.7%; and in 1928, 72.6%. Moreover, in 1926-1927, budget and credit investments in agriculture in the Tajik ASSR amounted to 4.2 million rubles, which steadily increased in subsequent years to 9.5 million rubles in 1929-1930 (Abdurashitov, 1999: 16).

Subsequently, the Tajik government implemented several other measures to limit the population. On March 15, 1930, the Central Executive Committee of the Republic and the Council of People's Commissars adopted a resolution "On the Prohibition of the Independent Resettlement of Baikulak Farms and the Sale of Their Property" (Abdurashitov, 1999: 19), aimed at preventing their "self-destruction" and the squandering of property and means of production. On May 4, 1930, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Tajik ASSR adopted another important resolution: "On the Termination of All Slave Contracts Concluded by Wealthy Peasants and Kulaks with Peasants Uniting in Collective Farms or Uniting into Collective Farms" (Abdurashitov, 1999: 18).

The lack of necessary management and strengthening of the established collective farms during collectivization led to some collective farms being reflected only on paper, in official reports. Due to internal instability, they quickly disintegrated. A collective farm organized in Penjikent collapsed within days. Peasants abandoned the collective farms, declaring that it was better to work individually than in such collective farms.

In March 1930, a mass collapse of collective farms occurred. In one month—from March 15 to April 15—12 collective farms disintegrated in

the Kulyab, Korgant, Gissar, and Penjikent districts. During the collective farm movement in Tajikistan, local authorities committed numerous excesses, such as forced resettlement and the closure of mosques (Abdurashitov, 1999: 18). As a result of the distortion of the agricultural collectivization policy, serious signs of discontent emerged among peasants, some of whom abandoned the collective farm movement and took individual actions against the Soviet government. In several border regions, particularly in the Kulyab district, the population began migrating to Afghanistan. Demonstrations against collective farms and the Soviet government took place in the villages of Kuchkak and Karakshikum in the Kanibadam district.

The Party's program for cotton development was grossly distorted. The Party's commitment to the comprehensive development of cotton production was replaced by the slogan "cotton alone," which meant cotton completely displaced all other crops. This led to food shortages for the population and reduced feed reserves for livestock. Another important factor hindering the development of the collective farm movement was the intensification of the anti-Soviet struggle in all regions of Tajikistan. With the onset of land reform and collectivization, the struggle against the Party and Soviet authorities intensified. Peasants rebelling against leftist policies killed representatives of the Soviet government: the secretary of the local Ittifoki Kambagalon organization in the Garm district, Zainabib Kurbanov; the chairman of the Sharifov district executive committee in the Lakai-Tajik district; and Kholmat Khodjaev in the Regar district (Abdurashitov, 1999: 20).

A survey conducted in several villages in northern Tajikistan on the migration of Kazakhs during the Asharshylyk era revealed that Kazakhs had migrated to nearly every village. Oral accounts from elders and historians of those years, passed down from the older to the younger generation, are sometimes inaccurate and general, but some stories include the names of the settlers, describe the situation, and offer

much more about this disaster. Nevertheless, taken together, they reveal the scale of the migration to northern Tajikistan. Thus, the stories of suffering and hardship during the Holodomor of the 1930s are still etched in the people's memories. Particularly noteworthy are the friendly relations between Tajiks and Kazakhs during those difficult times, built on mutual support and assistance. Surprisingly, after returning to their homeland, many Kazakhs often returned to Tajikistan.

Results

As a result of the civil war in the 1920s, a turbulent time for the entire Soviet Union and for Central Asia, where the majority of the population lived off imported grain, the people faced a severe food crisis. Mass famine loomed. The Soviet government made unsuccessful efforts to save the situation. For example, on October 23, 1918, a committee to combat famine was created in the Khojent district. Food committees distributed grain, rice, and other foodstuffs to the population, and public catering stations for the starving were opened in various locations throughout the district (Khaidarov, 1991:47).

The famine winter of 1917-1918 claimed many victims, particularly among the nomadic Kazakh population of the steppe regions of the Jizzakh and Khojent districts. The natives themselves estimate a population decline of 50-70 percent in some places; Russians cite significantly lower figures but acknowledge the decline. The 1920 census showed that the native count was closer to reality (Zarubin, 1926, 24).

In the 1930s, collectivization was in full swing in northern Tajikistan, with collective farms being established in villages. Administrative reforms were still ongoing: districts and village councils were created on the sites of former volosts. This was a time of profound change for the Tajik people.

As a result of the national tragedy of the 1930s—the Asharshylyk in Kazakhstan—many people migrated to northern Tajikistan. These events, nearly a century old, are still fresh in the memories of the Tajiks of northern Tajikistan.

Erkaboy Ortikov, a resident of the village of Yakhtan, recalls that near the village of Yakhtan, in the area of Karokir (between the villages of Yakhtan in the Devashtich district and Navganda in the Istaravshan district), as his father said, Kazakhs migrated in the 1930s and founded 10 farms. A few years later, they returned to Kazakhstan when life improved somewhat. The ruins of their houses still remain. "I remember my grandmother telling me," recalls Erkaboy Ortikov, "those years were very difficult for the local population, too. In the spring, people gathered edible herbs. They had good relations with the Kazakh settlers. The Kazakhs got water from the Yakhtan khauz (reservoir)." (Ortikov) He emphasizes that his grandmother knew them by name, but, unfortunately, he no longer remembers them.

Akram Esergapov from the village of Oboddara gave the most vivid account. Akram Bobo was the son of a field worker. His father said that when collective farms were being established, many Kazakhs arrived. They lived in the village with them for several years. The heads of the families were Juman, Begjan, Adzhin, and Mingbulat (Esergapov).

A similar situation developed in the village of Lolazor in the Devashtich district. Several Kazakh families moved to Lolazor during those difficult times. A resident of the village of Akbarali, Erkaboev, describes it this way: "The elders said that several Kazakh families moved to the village during those difficult times. Unfortunately, I've forgotten much, but I remember that they were from Chimkent. They were received very well. They didn't stay here long, a couple of years. Many of the displaced people, victims of the famine, headed towards southern Tajikistan, in particular, Chilikul and Kolkhozobod" (Erkaboev). Another resident of the village of Lolazor, Uktamjon Foziljonov (born 1950), claims that further north, "Kazakhs who suffered from the famine in Kazakhstan also came to the village of Havutag (Devashtich district)" (Foziljonov).

Many Kazakhs settled in Tajik villages along the banks of the Syr Darya during that period. For

example, in the villages of Khashtiyak and Kushtegirman in the Spitamen district. Makhfirat Yarbekova (born 1951), a resident of the village of Khashtiyak, says: "I heard from my uncle that the Cossacks lived in huts built by the river from Kushtegirman to our village during the years of severe famine. The villagers gave them flour and porridge. When the mulberries ripened, they picked and ate them in the mulberry groves of the village of Khos, now in Uzbekistan. Upon returning to Kazakhstan, they sold their huts cheaply." (Yarbekova)

The most informative recollection of the situation in Kazakhstan during the famine of the 1930s is that of Tillakyz Zhulzhaksyevna Yakubova, an ethnic Kazakh (Devichi Zhumaliyeva Dylakyz Zholzhaksyevna, b. June 5, 1959), a resident of the city of Khujand, who came in the 1970s to work at a carpet factory in Kairakum and married a local. She is from Ulu Zhus Zhans, from the aul of Tasaryk (near Kenesaryk), the village of Blinkovo, Lengersky district, Shymkent region, Kazakhstan. She recalls: "My father, Zhumaliyev Zholzhaksy (1884-1974). My father had 38 children. I was born to my father's third wife. 30 children died of hunger and various diseases in the 1930s. My father's first wife also died then. "My father never left; he stayed there. They took everything from him, and persecution began because he had a large farm. It was hard for everyone, not just my father. When my father recalled this, he would be sad for a long time. When I was little, he would sit with the old people and talk, and I still remember them hiding in the mountains because they had a lot of livestock, and then collectivization began. So they wanted to take everything, and they took it all. Then the famine began, and he lost many children" (Zhumaliyeva).

Supkhonova Gulbarshin Kapsametovna, a resident of the town of Ganchi, an ethnic Kazakh, remembers very little about those difficult times: "I don't remember much now, but the elders talked a lot about the famine before the war, how difficult it was for people back then. Here in Ganchi, I also heard from elderly neighboring women several years ago that a couple of Kazakh families stopped near

the cliff of the Dakhan sai, but after some time they left" (Narynbaeva).

Norbuta Yusupov from the village of Anbarini Poyon in the Devashtich district recalls: "My father (Yusupov Khakim, 1928-1986) said that when he was little, he heard a lot about the Kazakhs who came to the Kokma area, near Yetti kyz (2 km north of Anbarini Poyon), who suffered from the famine in Kazakhstan. They had a utarchi (nomadic) way of life, but here they farmed. During the harvest season, they helped us harvest. The ruins of a yertul and pahsi walls from the Kazakhs still remain there" (Yusupov). Pardaboy Abduazimov (born August 1, 1966), a resident of the village of Firdavsi, said during a telephone conversation with me: "There are also Kazakhs in the village of Sebzor who migrated there around the 1930s and remained. The third generation of Kazakhs who migrated there live today." (Pardaboy) It should be noted that Pardaboy Abduazimov refers only to Kazakhs who migrated to Sebzor during the 1931-1933 famine.

At this point, I consider it appropriate, though it deviates from the topic of my research, to briefly discuss the history of the Kazakhs in this village. For example, the renowned Russian historian N. Tursunov, who studied the pre-revolutionary history of Sebzor, writes in his research that Uvak (Sebzor) consisted of the Kazakh tribe of Karai Uvak, which previously roamed the Kazakh steppes and wintered near the Syr Darya. Later, thanks to family ties with the ruler of Ura-Tyube, these lands were granted. They consisted of two groups: the Durva and the Karkarali. In the subsequent period, "the groups branched out: the Durva into the Murotali and Eshali, and the Karkarali into the Eshmurod and his five sons. As the population grew, residential quarters developed—the guzars of Bomachoyi, Urug guzar, Aimak, and Alobaytal. In addition to the Kazakhs, the population of Uvak included small groups of Uzbeks of the Kuychi group, Turks, Mughals, and Tajiks of Matchi" (Tursunov, 2018:544). Even in the second half of the 19th century, as part of tsarist administrative reforms, the Kazakhs of Sebzor were classified as

nomadic and were incorporated into nomadic auls. The population of Sebzor in 1879, part of the Karapchin aul, consisted of "11 kikitkas, inhabited by 26 men and 26 women, for a total of 52 people. One was a clergyman, four were industrialists, and the rest were engaged in cattle breeding. The following were counted: 17 camels, 20 horses, and 900 sheep. Those who died in the last two years: 2 camels, 20 horses, and 90 sheep" (TsGART, 13, p. 38). Kazakhs were also present in the ethnic composition of some other villages. For example, Erkaboy Ortikov, a resident of the village of Yakhtan in the Devashtich district, says: "My ancestors were Kazakhs. My great-grandfather, Nurchuk Bobo, migrated with his family from the Kazakh steppes a long time ago. So, Nurchuk Bobo - Egamberdi Bobo - Ortikboy Bobo - Erkaboy" (Ortikov). It should be noted that Erkaboy Ortikov belongs to the category of Uzbekized local Kazakhs. He claims that when he mentions his ancestors were Kazakh, his fellow villagers are surprised.

Mazars. Numerous sacred sites, including shrines, mazars, and individual graves, silently commemorate the Kazakhs who migrated to northern Tajikistan during the famine. According to informants, such sites are located in the villages of Lolazor, Oboddara, Yakhtan, Gul kishlak, and Anbarini Poyon. Regarding the location of a Kazakh mazar in the village of Lolazor, Akbarali Erkaboev, a resident of the village, says: "I also remember four Kazakhs buried on a hill in the Kulchashma area" (Erkaboev). Another informant from the village of Yakhtan, Erkaboy Ortikov, wrote: "In the area of Karokir (between the villages of Yakhtan in the Devashtich district and Navganda in the Istaravshan district), there is a Kazakh mazar" (Ortikov).

Akram Esergapov mentions the most famous mazar in the village of Oboddara: "The first to die among the resettled Kazakhs was a teenage daughter, then the wife of one of them, thus the mazar was formed. Since the first to die were a girl and an elderly woman, this mazar is popularly known as the Kizlyar mazar" (Esergapov). Today, it is one of the revered sites

for residents of the village and neighboring villages.

Seven kilometers south of Oboddara, in the village of Gul kishlak, there are also separate burial sites belonging to Kazakhs who suffered from the famine. A village resident, now deceased, Berdishukur Vallamov, while telling the story of the village of Gul kishlak and the sacred sites of the Ganchi volost, said: "There are several graves on a hill in the northern corner of Kattabagh. My grandfather, Burkhonbek (1886-1973), said that Kazakhs once settled here, that they suffered a famine, several children died, and they were buried there on the hill in the northern part of Kattabagh." (Vallamov) Some village residents are also buried there.

Norbuta Yusupov from the village of Anbarini Poyon in the Devashtich district recalls: "A Kazakh woman died of blood loss during childbirth, and her baby also didn't survive. They were buried where they died, next to the road. It is now a separate grave. Not far from where the Kazakhs settled, there's a Kazakh cemetery with 20-30 graves, each shaped like a small mound. "Everyone in the village knows these places" (Yusupov). All village residents and the resettlers participated in the funeral. In many cases, Kazakh resettlers were buried in village cemeteries. For example, in the cemetery of the village of Itorch, deceased Kazakhs were buried next to locals (Rakhimboev).

Return. In some villages, relations between resettled Kazakhs and local Tajik residents and other ethnic groups were so good that they periodically maintained contact and returned to Tajikistan. Akram Esergapov, a resident of the village of Oboddara, recalls: "Good relations developed with the locals. A few years after resettlement, some returned to Kazakhstan, but connections remained. In subsequent years, they returned during harvest time with a few camels and transported grain to the district center, Ura-Tyube, and the regional center, Khujand. This continued until the 1960s; the last to leave was Juman Bobo (Esergapov). A similar situation, according to local accounts, developed in the

village of Kizili. As Akbarali Erkaboev puts it: "After the Great Patriotic War, the same Kazakhs arrived with camels and were engaged in transportation. I don't remember exactly, but they returned to Kazakhstan around the 1970s, leaving (or selling) their camels. The last of the Kazakhs returned to Kazakhstan in the 1980s" (Erkaboev).

After independence, good relations between the two peoples continued. Akram Esergapov from the village of Oboddara says of this: "A couple of decades ago, I went to Kazakhstan looking for land for farming. When she learned I was from Oboddara, an elderly woman called me a fellow countryman." It turns out she was the daughter of one of the Kazakhs who came to us during the Asharshylyk era in the 1930s. I became their honored guest" (Esergapov).

The Kazakhs who migrated to this region were not immune to Tajikistan's political and economic situation. Educated, open citizens among the Kazakhs who fled their country to save their families and livestock became victims of the punitive machinery of the Soviet state. According to the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan, according to archival case No. C03305 stored in the Information Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, Babayev Abdali (born in 1900, village No. 7, Kyzylorda region, Kazakh SSR, on 06.12.1937 by the decision of the "Troika" of the State Security Department of the State Security Committee of the Tajik SSR ("Troika" of the UGB NKVD of the Tajik SSR") was sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment. He died on 05.05.1944 in the Angar camp), Babayev Kalymbet (born in 1895, village No. 49, Kyzylorda region, Kazakh SSR, on 11.09.1937 by the decision of the "Troika" of the State Security Department of the State Security Committee of the Tajik SSR was Children convicted under Articles 62 and 58 of the Criminal Code of the Tajik SSR on September 15, 1937, were innocently persecuted and punished (Nuraliyev, 2017: 29).

The emergence of homeless Kazakh children in Tajikistan was due to various political, economic, and social factors. Primarily, the collectivization of agriculture in the early 1930s, the persecution of the rich, and the mass famine of 1932–1933.

In the early years of the Soviet government, insufficient attention was paid to addressing and eliminating child homelessness (Kaipbaeva, Belyalova, 2025: 809). According to N.K. Krupskaya, in the early 1930s, there were over 2 million homeless children and adolescents in the USSR. Although this figure was smaller than in 1922, it still posed a serious problem for the state and society (Saveleva, 2015).

The Soviet authorities had reasons to ignore homeless and orphaned children. First and foremost, "homeless children" and "orphans" were the result of the Soviet authorities' own political and social policies. The forced separation of children from their "enemies of the people" parents was one of the repressive practices of the USSR (Mussabalinova, 2023: 174). Thousands of children of "enemies of the people" arrested during the "Great Terror" of 1937-38 were left without parental care, as not only their fathers but often their mothers as well were arrested. Most of these children ended up in orphanages. Relatives and friends of the detainees, who wanted to shelter their children with their own families, were not always able to prevent their placement in orphanages. In accordance with Circular No. 4 of the NKVD of the USSR dated January 7, 1938, "On the Procedure for Transferring Children Whose Parents Were Exiled to Relatives for Guardianship," potential guardians were screened by regional and provincial NKVD offices for "compromising information." The NKVD was instructed to monitor the mood, behavior, and social circles of the children of those arrested. Relatives who remained free, or parents released from prison, had difficulty locating a child sent to an orphanage, as misspellings or deliberate alterations of the child's surname were common (Plekhanov, 2007: 872).

In some orphanages, children of "enemies of the people" were constantly beaten, humiliated, fed, and forced to listen to endless propaganda about their social inferiority, spiced with the proverb "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Educational efforts were aimed primarily at maintaining an indifferent attitude toward homeless children and making them forget their "traitors" (Stole, 1988: 64-67). It was only on November 2, 1933, that a separate order was issued regarding the placement of orphans of wealthy kulaks, held in the Gulag, in special settlements (Isenov, Kuppenov, 2022: 98). The order states: "In a number of special settlements, there are a significant number of children of various ages—orphans, homeless, sick, etc. These children, left without parents and, accordingly, without permanent housing, are half-starved and, in most cases, are exposed to all sorts of diseases leading to death. As a rule, these children are not engaged in any work, even light work, which contributes to the development of poverty and parasitic tendencies in them. Such a situation cannot be allowed in the future..." (Franko, 2016: 123-124).

On October 1, 1932, the paramilitary railway security agencies of the People's Commissariat of Railways of the USSR were tasked with detaining and treating homeless children on the railway lines, providing them with food and cultural activities. Special patrols and task forces were used to search for the children, who were, among other things, sent to unguarded railway stations. The paramilitary security forces included educators who carried out their work in train cars or reception areas (Deryabin, 1981: 54).

In the early years of Soviet power, new types of educational institutions emerged—communal schools designed to accommodate all homeless and abandoned children, as well as children of workers and poor peasants in need of state financial assistance (Antonello, 2020: 497-499).

In 1918-1919, such schools operated in Khujand, Kostakoz, Ura-Tobe, and several other cities. The first boarding schools in Eastern Bukhara were established with the

assistance of Red Army units. Boarding schools were established in Kulyab and Garcha, and with the help of border guards, in Khorog and Murghab.

Following the formation of the Tajik ASSR (October 1924), public education developed significantly. In the 1930-31 academic year alone, there were 15 orphanages in the republic, housing 850 children. As of April 1, 1937, according to the People's Commissariat of Education of the Tajik SSR, there were 33 orphanages and 5 preschool orphanages in the republic. Their ethnic composition was diverse: of the 307 preschool children, 185 were Uzbeks (29), Russians (71), Kazakhs (11), Kyrgyz (3), and others (8). (Obidov, 1968: 105).

Homelessness and child neglect in the USSR were social phenomena that arose as a result of social catastrophes in the USSR (Stevens, 1982: 242-247). Since the founding of the USSR, measures have been taken to eradicate child homelessness, including the creation of a state system of social and legal protection and assistance, the establishment of specialized bodies and institutions for the control and prevention of diseases, the organization of commissions on minors' affairs, the creation of a social monitoring service for children, and the construction of reception centers, orphanages, and communes. Thus, concrete measures to address the problem of homeless children began to be implemented (Krivonosov, 2003: 92-98).

While 125,000 children were raised in orphanages in 1919, the number fell to 540,000 in 1921-1922. Forms of work with abandoned children, such as patronage, adoption, guardianship, and trusteeship, were introduced. The Komsomol (Young Communist League) found young people and teenagers "on the street" and took them under its wing. Special quotas (7%) were introduced for vocational training and employment of teenagers in enterprises. In the first year, more than 540,000 children passed through 200 reception and distribution centers established in 1921 and designed to accommodate 50 to 100 children at a time (Voitkevich, 2012: 12). However,

according to some sources, due to a lack of funds and staff reductions in 1922-1923, only 350,000 street children came to the attention of the relevant committees.

According to A.N. Krivonosov, "homeless children were taken from the streets to children's reception centers, and from there they were transferred to orphanages. This approach quickly filled the orphanages, which the state could not support" (Krivonosov, 2003: 92-99).

In 1924, V.I. Lenin created a special fund to help children, which led to the founding in 1926 of the volunteer society "Friend of Children," which organized shelters, workshops, summer camps, and playgrounds for homeless children (Voitkevich, 2012: 13). The creation of a new Soviet school for the re-education of "difficult" teenagers began, initiated by N.K. Krupskaya and A.S. Makarenko (Krivonosov, 2003: 92-99).

In March 1924, at the first Moscow conference on combating child homelessness, N.K. Krupskaya declared that the eradication of homelessness was not a matter of charity, but a matter of a healthy society (Krivonosov, 2003: 93). In November 1924, A.V. At the Fourth Congress of Heads of Regional Departments for Combating Child Homelessness, Lunacharsky emphasized the social danger of homelessness: "The problem is not that we share the suffering of homeless children, but that we risk raising these children to be antisocial, antisocial individuals. Through these children, we are creating a camp of our enemies, who will swell the army of criminals... Six million out-of-school children pose a terrible threat to the country and the revolution. Help organize work with street children" (Voitkevich, 2012: 13). Additional information

Resolutions and specific actions adopted by the Center for Social Action for Homeless Children reached the outskirts of the Soviet Union. In this regard, combating child homelessness was an important component of the Internal Affairs Service of Northern Tajikistan's work. Children and adolescents left on the streets due to the death of their parents, dire financial circumstances, and a number of other reasons

swelled the ranks of criminals and committed a variety of crimes, from theft to aggravated murder. Such children and adolescents became accustomed to antisocial behavior and lagged behind their peers in development.

The task of the authorities in Northern Tajikistan was to identify such children and adolescents and transfer them to the Commission for Children's Affairs, which then placed street children in orphanages and work collectives, where their lives, education, and vocational training were organized (Khokiroev, 2019: 43).

Police officers uncovered and prevented crimes related to theft in children's institutions and identified homeless children committing minor offenses in markets and train stations. In 1925, the NKVD of the Tajik ASSR established special departments to work with children, which later became the juvenile affairs departments that operate within the police today (Khokiroev, 2019: 44). The majority of homeless children were boys: in Tajikistan in 1925-1926, girls accounted for no more than 17-18% of homeless children. In 1925, there were 200,000 homeless children in the country, 90,000 of whom needed urgent assistance (Voitkevich, 2012: 14). The police, the investigative department, and the state-political administration were responsible for registering homeless children (Krivonosov, 2003: 94). However, the bulk of this activity was carried out by local education authorities. To prevent homelessness, in 1926, local education authorities created agencies for the social and legal protection of minors, including a guardianship service, a child affairs service, a legal consultation department, and a commission on minors' affairs. By 1925, the number of commissions had increased eightfold compared to 1920. The Central Commission on Minors' Affairs acted as the governing body (Voitkevich, 2012: 15). The Children's Social Inspectorate was active, conducting raids on abandoned children, inspecting the conditions of children in orphanages, and monitoring the gathering places of children under guardianship (Savelyev, 2015).

In 1925, the Soviet government allocated 50 million rubles to combat child homelessness. "Friends of Children" societies began using their clubs, canteens, teahouses, and shelters in 17 districts to care for homeless children.

A foster care agency was established through which children were placed with working families for upbringing. This was an important stage in the "adaptation" of graduates of prison colonies and orphanages to life outside the boarding school [Krivonosov].

In working with difficult teenagers, one-time educational interventions (conversations, warnings) were organized, placement or return to family; monitoring of the child's behavior or placement in closed educational institutions [Motorin]. Juvenile Affairs Commissions were specialized bodies that reviewed cases of offenses committed by minors (Plekhanov, 2007: 872). In closed institutions, difficult adolescents were treated under a strict pedagogical regimen, and they were required to learn the school curriculum and a vocation.

Jobs were also created in cities, and labor colonies were established in rural areas. The latter served both educational and correctional purposes. In the early 1920s, at the initiative of Felix Dzerzhinsky, OGPU labor communes were established. There, repeat offenders were given vocational training and taught collective labor. The communist ideology of homeless children was promoted through propaganda, according to which "the most important thing in raising street children and adolescents is a new attitude toward people, new care and attention, shedding the bad reputation of being a 'third-rate' group, achieving the title of commune member and leading others like you along this path, fighting for the country and having a clear understanding of what you are fighting for—you will receive the title of member of the Dzerzhinsky Commune."

Since 1928, the state has been tasked with eradicating homelessness among children as quickly as possible. An urgent plan to eliminate street homelessness was developed, and the number of orphanages and reception centers

was expanded. Children were placed with peasant families, blacksmiths, and collective and state farms on the condition that each child would receive an additional plot of land, be exempt from a one-time tax for three years, and have access to free schooling and a one-time allowance. This emergency plan to address the situation involved the simultaneous "removal" of homeless children and adolescents from their homes and their placement in orphanages, shelters, and foster homes (Plekhanov, 2007: 872).

In a circular from the People's Commissariat of Education dated March 19, 1928, the work to eliminate street homelessness was equated with a "combat mission." The nature of the actions, in essence, resembled a major military operation: the main forces and resources were clearly planned, the main areas of work were defined, the strictest secrecy was ensured, joint actions were coordinated, and thorough reconnaissance was conducted. The mass arrest of homeless children from the streets began simultaneously throughout the country on the night of April 12-13, 1928, and involved only the OGPU, police officers, investigators, inspectors for homeless children, and Komsomol members (Krivonosov, 2003: 92-98).

Homeless children were placed in orphanages. Adoption and guardianship were merely auxiliary methods of combating neglect and orphanhood. This figure—announced in 1926: 19,000 orphans placed in foster families—was the highest number of children at that time; orphans constituted approximately 14% of the total number of children (Krivonosov, 2003: 92-98).

On May 31, 1935, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued a decree "On the Eradication of Homelessness and Child Neglect," which outlined the task of raising children, set goals for the mass eradication of homelessness, and intensified the fight against juvenile penitentiary systems and crime. It stated that, given the significant number of children's

institutions and the improved financial situation of workers, the low number of homeless children represented a shortcoming in preventive efforts. The role of society in raising children was also emphasized; a system of measures to prevent neglect and homelessness was defined; measures to combat violations of minors' rights were developed; and parental responsibility for raising children was increased. The decree noted that homelessness had not been completely eradicated, but still persisted, not due to profound social reasons, but rather to the weak performance of local Soviet and Party bodies and the lack of organizational participation of the Soviet population in the fight against it. (Krivonosov, 2003: 92-98) Thus, it took approximately 15 years to eradicate mass child homelessness in the Soviet Union.

Of course, resolutions and decisions adopted at the Center reached peripheral regions, albeit belatedly. In Tajikistan, under the influence of the Soviet authorities, the fight against child homelessness was also actively pursued, and considerable work was accomplished. However, the fact that this work was carried out in a campaign-like manner, without careful preparation, did not yield significant results. According to archival data, the hastily constructed orphanages were inadequate and could not meet the needs of homeless children.

For example, on April 1, 1936, the Khorog orphanage housed 53 children. The buildings were dirty and unwashed, the floors were unwashed, the ceiling was dirty, and the stoves didn't work. There was no electricity. The children weren't provided with beds or bedside tables. Clothes and pieces of bread were strewn under the mattresses. There was a shortage of bed linen, and laundry was poor and irregular. Lice infested the children. Educational activities were poorly organized. The existing workshop was unsuitable for classes. The children were unaccustomed to work processes (Gart, Collection No. 360).

As of April 15 of the same year, the Shibyrgan orphanage housed 14 children. They were cared for by four people. The rooms and floors were

dirty, the premises dilapidated and damp. Education was poorly organized. Children were often left unattended for several days at a time. They were unable to wash for several days at a time. There was no sanitary or medical supervision. A doctor never visited. There was no isolation cell. There was no educational work; the children were left to their own devices. Pioneer work, no supervisor (Gart, Collection No. 360).

As of March 10, 1936, the Garm Children's Home housed 67 children: 60 boys and 7 girls. The room had only 31 beds, 40 mattresses, and 55 blankets. Some children slept in pairs on a single bed, while others slept on the floor. The room was unheated for three days (Gart, Collection No. 360).

There was no boiling water; the children drank water from a ditch. The children's clothes were dirty, and some went barefoot. They were given tea and bread for breakfast and soup for lunch. At night, the children were left alone. Some defecated on the bed because they were afraid to go outside and because it was cold. The children were dirty. There was no entertainment or anything useful. There was no pioneer work. The daily food allowance was 2 rubles, not 3 (Gart, Fund No. 360).

As of May 10, 1936, there were 50 children in the Istari orphanage. The orphanage in Isfera lacked clear direction, and its work processes were disorganized. There was no pioneer work. The home included school-age and preschool-age children. There were also adult children and children with their parents. Children of all nationalities. Russian children studied in Uzbek schools, some of whom had completely forgotten their native language. There was no sanitary or medical supervision. There was no large-scale work, play, or entertainment. Work hadn't begun. There was no workshop. Food was scarce. Tea and bread were available morning and evening, and soup in the afternoon. Third and second courses, as well as meat on important holidays, were not provided. There was no boiled water. The children's hair wasn't cut. This situation was repeatedly

reported to the People's Commissariat of Education (Gart, Fund No. 360).

The situation at the Korgantuba orphanage, where Kazakh children are being raised, was even more dire than in the others. The orphanage housed 68 children, including 58 schoolchildren and 10 preschoolers. There are also older children. There are also former residents of the orphanage who work in businesses but still live there. There is no labor education. Seven children recently ran away. There are no preschoolers. There are children of various nationalities: Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Kazakhs. The teachers don't speak Tajik, and some children don't speak Russian at all. They communicate through children's translators. There is no doctor. There is no medical care. There is no isolation ward. There is a sewing workshop for girls, but not all of them work. The carpentry workshop is out of order: there is no teacher. The land has not yet been planted. The children are not taught work skills. There is no boiling water in the orphanage. The staff has no special training. There are only 25 healthy children in the home; the remaining 11 have malaria, 8 have tuberculosis, 3 have syphilis, and so on. Some school-age children do not attend school. Childcare facilities in the area are in unsanitary conditions. The premises are unfit for habitation. The plaster is crumbling, the ceiling is collapsing, the windows are broken, and the floors are clay. The beds are arranged so that there is no free space between them for eating. There is no room for studying. The children do their homework on their knees by their beds. The kitchen is filthy, and the ceiling is collapsing. The children are left to their own devices. There are no entertainments, no games. There is no isolation ward. The children themselves live in unsanitary conditions. The condition of the beds and bedding is deplorable. The children do not have their own towels, toothbrushes, or even soap. They drink water from the irrigation canal. The level of education is very low. There is no pioneer work [Gart, Fund No. 360]. Cases of children from orphanages in Tajikistan being sent to education in Uzbek, Russian, and Tajik, regardless of their

ethnic background, are very common. For example, archival data contains an order from Ibragimov, head of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Tajik SSR, to the director of the Leninabad Orphanage, directing children of German, Russian, Ukrainian, and Mordvin descent to Russian schools, and Tatars and Kazakhs to schools teaching in Uzbek [Gart, Collection No. 360].

Conclusion

As the research results show, in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, the consequences of the left-wing authoritarian regime's negative political, economic, and social policies did not spare children. Political repression, famine, and forced collectivization did not bypass ordinary people, including Kazakhs living in Tajikistan. During this period of political upheaval, Kazakhs who migrated to neighboring regions outside the country, including Tajikistan, also felt the consequences of Soviet policy. According to archival data, the child homelessness discussed in this article also affected Kazakhs living in Tajikistan.

As the study shows, the process of orphans, alien to indigenous Kazakh society and originating during the Soviet era, was clearly evident under Soviet rule. However, the Soviet government combated child homelessness not out of genuine compassion for these children, but to prevent the emergence of a brutal army of children resisting Soviet rule.

According to other research findings, Kazakh children were registered as Uzbeks, Tajiks, or Russians. Current research focuses on finding the descendants of these children and returning them to their historical roots.

Thus, these tragic events led to the mass extermination of the peoples of Kazakhstan, many of whom moved to new locations, to neighboring fraternal republics, including Tajikistan. In Northern Tajikistan, children and women were the most vulnerable. Many of them remained there forever. This is evidenced by the numerous graves and mazars throughout the villages of Northern Tajikistan. Today, these sacred sites remain revered by Tajiks and others.

The suffering, pain, and difficult fate of the older generation during the Asharshylyk era, despite having occurred almost a century ago, remain etched in the memories of elders in the villages and towns of Northern Tajikistan. When I began collecting materials on this topic in the villages, I thought no one would remember anything, but the opposite turned out to be true. People spoke of the Kazakh settlers of those years as if they were their ancestors or relatives. Almost all informants noted the plight

of the nomadic Kazakhs, their poor health, and their sad condition. The high number of deaths upon arrival demonstrates how exhausted and weak the settlers were; some had traveled long distances on foot or on camels in extremely difficult conditions. It should be noted that despite the hunger and lack of food, the settlers behaved with dignity; there were no cases of robbery, looting, or any other conflict with local Tajiks.

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