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FEATURES OF HUNGER 1921-1922 IN KAZAKHSTAN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**S.K. Malabayev¹ , M.M. Kozybayeva² **¹ K. Karasaev Bishkek State University, Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek;² Ch.Ch. Valikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology, Kazakhstan, Almaty.

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Annotation. The article is devoted to the famine of 1921-1922 in Kazakhstan. In the article, the authors reveal the causes and consequences of the famine of 1921-1922 in Kazakhstan, which, in comparison with other affected regions, experienced a greater burden in terms of food security. The famine was aggravated by the devastation and anarchy during the civil war, which prevented the rapid resolution of problems. In the north-western regions of Kazakhstan, famine became possible not only as a result of a natural disaster, but also as a result of the removal of surplus agricultural products by food detachments. The Kazakh people suffered from hunger, especially due to fundamental changes in the economy and a reduction in the number of livestock. The authors come to the conclusion that, although assistance to the hungry was provided, it was clearly insufficient, they show the role of international organizations in the fight against hunger.

Key words: war communism, surplus appropriation, famine, Soviet power, Bolsheviks, commissions to help the starving, charitable organizations.

Introduction. One of the issues in the history of the Soviet state of the twentieth century, for which a “taboo” remained for a long time, was the question of the famine of 1921–1922. It is well known that the study of hunger in the early 30s of the XX century in Kazakhstan and abroad is paid much attention to by foreign and domestic researchers, while the previous famine remains somewhat “in the shadows” and did not become the object of a separate systemic study. At the same time, it was universally believed in science that it was mainly the rural population that suffered from the famine of the early 1920s. Of course, the village suffered heavy losses, but the city also actively participated in organizing aid to the hungry, was engaged in collecting the necessary funds to eliminate the consequences of the famine. In this context, the famine of the early 1920s and its impact on the life of the population of Northern Kazakhstan, where famine has become large, remains relevant for study.

Materials and methods. With the acquisition of independence by Kazakhstan, the methodological postulates in historical science changed, Kazakhstani historiography began to fill in the gaps in the history of the Soviet state, to reveal the inhuman policy of totalitarianism in relation to the peasantry. Currently, the historical science of Kazakhstan has a certain base of scientific research, the authors of which have studied certain aspects of the famine of the early 1920s. In the scientific works of Soviet and Kazakh scientists such as G.F. Dachshleiger [Dachshleiger, 1978], M.K. Kozybayev [Kozybayev, 2006], T.O. Omarbekov [Omarbekov, 1997], M.K. Koigeldiev [Koigeldiev, 2009], Zh.B. Abylkhozhin [Abylkhozhin, 1997], K.S. Aldazhumanov [Aldazhumanov, 1992], K.A. Berdenova and S.I. Imanberdiyev [Berdenova, Imanberdiyev, 1994] raises the problem of the influence of the totalitarian system on the traditional structure of society in Kazakhstan and socio-economic processes in the Kazakh steppe. The works of researchers A.N. Alekseenko [Alekseenko, 1993], M.Kh. Assylbekov, A.B. Galiev [Assylbekov, Galiev, 1991], K.A. Sarkenova [Sarkenova, 2011] and others. The works of R.Zh. Kadysova [Kadysova, 2006], R. Conquest [Conquest, 1986], M.B. Olcott [Olcott, 1981] and others. Archival documents and periodicals covering famine relief campaigns have played an important role in the study of this topic. General trends in

Kazakh historiography show that cause-and-effect relationships and consequences of this large-scale catastrophe still remain a little-studied scientific problem.

Research results. In 1917, the Bolsheviks came to power. Unfortunately, having come to power by force, they used force and command-administrative methods of governing the country, including the Kazakh territory. Against the background of an armed confrontation with opposing forces, including the government of Alash Orda and the white governments, the Bolsheviks nationalized industrial enterprises, introduced food appropriation. These and other measures of the Bolsheviks led to mass famine in conditions of drought and crop failure, especially among the steppe population.

In 1921-1922, the Volga region and Kazakhstan were seized by a massive famine. This was due to poor harvests in different regions of Soviet Russia, which caused an even greater burden on the Kazakh steppe in terms of food supply. For example, the Akmola region was traditionally considered by the Bolsheviks as the breadbasket of new Russia. Therefore, there was a high requisition of grain from the local population, which led to a massive famine. The situation has worsened by the fact that the state has increased the compulsory collection of food products from the population, as well as the organization of free labor, various collection of things. Considering that there was little bread in Kazakhstan, great emphasis was placed on the confiscation of livestock from the local population. These methods of seizure were perceived by the local population as robbery and caused an increase in discontent, which turned into armed uprisings. The famine was aggravated by the devastation and anarchy during the civil war, which prevented the rapid resolution of problems. Together with the affected regions of the KSSR, famine in those years covered 35 provinces, the Samara and Saratov provinces were severely affected, hunger covered the Volga region, southern Ukraine, Crimea, Bashkiria, partly the Urals and Western Siberia.

In the summer of 1921, a significant part of Kazakhstan was hit by a drought, which was preceded by strong jute. It led to the death of up to 80% of livestock. In November 1921, the number of hungry people was 1 million 508 thousand people, which amounted to 1/3 of the population of the republic; by March 1922 this number had reached more than 2 million 300 thousand people. For example, in Western Kazakhstan, by June 1922, the number of starving and sick people reached about 82% of the total population. By the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in the summer of 1921, the provinces – Ural, Orenburg, Aktobe, Bokeevskaya, Kustanayskaya were included in the number of starving regions. About 1 million people died from the famine of 1921-1922 in Kazakhstan (Alekseenko, 1993:52).

In the north-western regions of Kazakhstan, famine became possible not only as a result of a natural disaster, but also as a result of the removal of surplus agricultural products by food detachments. The report of the Kustanai executive committee noted that “the mood of the population of the district, especially in recent years, has sharply changed for the worse on the basis of requisitioning” [Chernysh, 1995:14]. The authorities acted very harshly: “We will mercilessly remove everyone who interferes with the fulfillment of the surplus appropriation system”, the newspaper reported [Povstanets, 1920:2]. As the Kustanai newspaper *Krasnaya Step* wrote, in a letter from the Central Committee of the RCP (b), addressed in 1920 to all the provincial committees of the party, it was explained: “The allocation given to the volost is already in itself a definition of surplus” (*Krasnaya step*, 1920 (4):1). That is, the allocation indicated the amount of products that should have been withdrawn from the peasant. Often the bread was taken from the poor. Thus, in the productive Semipalatinsk and Akmola provinces, food detachments seized up to 80 % of all surpluses, more than 4 million poods of bread and 24.5 thousand poods of butter were collected under the tax in kind. The confiscated products – grain, oil, meat – were sent to the proletarian centers of the country – Moscow, Petrograd, Samara, Kazan, Saratov. The Kazakh people suffered from hunger, especially due to fundamental changes in the economy and a reduction in the number of livestock.

Hunger is especially vividly depicted in Kustanai, since here, thanks to the overcrowding of the population, all manifestations of hunger do not escape from the year the number of hungry people has increased before the observations and are easier to register. The famine affected the resettlement element most strongly – all these refugees of the civil war. The following figures testify to the size of the famine: as of November 1921, there were 192 340 people in the district, of which 7436 were in the city. With each next month, the number of hungry people increased by 25%. Whole families died out. Five cases of cannibalism and corpse eating have been reported. So, if at the beginning of 1921 the main crime was theft

of cattle, then in March people are killed in order to take possession of food, for example, the entire family of four people of citizen Palyaev, who lived seven miles from the city of Kustanai, was massacred in order to confiscate food and clothes [SAKR, 112:53].

“Izvestiya of Gubkom” in the city of Kustanai in November 1922, in the article “Fighting Hunger”, named the main reasons for the famine: “1) Imperialist and civil war, when the main labor force, both rural and with the isolation of its annual reduction in crops, the ruin of agriculture and the closure of factories. 2) The drought of the past two years and the reduction of sowing by up to 50%, which has befallen the harvest, as well as the massive appearance of agricultural pests that destroyed crops in many cases” (Izvestiya, 1922 (13):5).

One of the reasons for the famine, researchers say, is the unorganized mass resettlement of starving people from other regions of the country, especially from the Volga region. One of the articles of the Kustanai newspaper “Step” said: “The current hungry resettlement from the Volga provinces is, according to the general opinion, madness... It is possible that hundreds, and perhaps thousands of those less lost their heads and asked to be saved anywhere. But most of them will undoubtedly perish by the time when the necessary aid has already arrived at the place of their removal” (Step, 1921 (5):3). All the caravans of peasants, who first moved from the starving provinces of Russia, and then from the environs, clearly showed how the famine affected the population. The newspaper “Krasnaya Step”, Kustanai, dated June 16, 1923, reported: “1921, a year of poor harvest, agitated the Kustanai grain growers. The well-to-do and after them... and the poor began to gather in pursuit of the harvest in Ukraine” (Krasnaya step, 1923 (68):3).

Unauthorized settlement intensified, and the state waged a decisive struggle with it, which was reported in the same publication in the note “For the information of immigrants”: at present, neither the Volga region, nor in any locality, resettlement is open and no enrollment is made” (Krasnaya step, 1923 (48):3). However, this did not affect illegal resettlement. On this occasion, Izvestia of the Kustanai Provincial Committee of September 25, 1922 wrote that in 1922 “the population decline compared to 1920 is expressed in 29%, of which 9% died, the remaining 20% are attributed to those who left the province...” (Izvestiya, 1922 (26):3).

The newspaper “Step” wrote that “in 1921, by the Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the food tax from the province for national needs was removed” (Step, 1922 (34):2). The work of the Soviet bodies was carried out these days under the slogan “All for the fight against hunger”. Following the establishment in August 1921 of the provincial extraordinary commission for helping the hungry (gubernia committee), regional, volost, rural, aul commissions for helping the hungry and volost committees of mutual assistance were organized. On December 15, 1921, there were 8 regional, 75 volost and 363 rural and aul commissions.

Local periodicals also noted the fact that, especially due to fundamental changes in the economy, a decrease in the number of livestock, the Kazakh population suffered from hunger. So the periodical “Bulletin 3 of the Kustanai Congress of Soviets” № 2 dated September 4, 1920 publishing the debate on the report of the chairman of the provincial executive committee, comrade Taranenko, cites bold remarks from the Kazakh delegate Baikanov, who noted that “the principle of seed supply was not observed» and the poor (Fedorovsky district) those who came to Kostanay on cows left with nothing” [Byulleten’, 1920 (2):3].

Within two or three months the population fell into an unprecedented plight. For lack of bread, many turn to all kinds of surrogates. According to local newspapers, “not only the livestock itself is eaten, but also its skins. They begin to eat cats, dogs, carrion and bones of dead animals. «Only the smallest help could be provided. Orphanages, hospitals, social security houses in most cases received almost no bread at all, their inhabitants swelled and eventually died a slow death. Open canteens and food stations worked with great interruptions due to a lack of bread and other products. Despite all efforts, the assistance provided lagged far behind the actual need for it. Mortality has reached unprecedented proportions (Sovetskoye stroitel’stvo, 1921 (45):3).

Hunger is especially prominent in Kustanai itself, since here, thanks to the crowded population, all its manifestations almost do not escape observation and are easier to register. “Krasnaya Step” wrote: “The migrant element is starving – all these refugees from the civil and imperialist wars, almost all active

workers are starving, proletarian groups of the population are starving and dying out. In January 1922 there were 12 starvation deaths, in February – 500, in March – 1500. Whole families are dying out. Five cases of cannibalism and corpse-eating have been established. In the spring, a large number of coffins with corpses, buried in winter at an insufficient depth, emerged from the ground in the cemeteries. Every day there are hot dog fights for human meat” (Krasnaya step’, 1923 (67):2).

According to the authorities' acknowledgment, as reported by local print media, even the provincial commission for helping the hungry (Pomgol) was created only on August 30, 1921, although we remember that “the famine was clearly visible” already in July. “The autumn thaw that set in at this time, worn-out transport with half-starved cattle did not allow to quickly create local commissions” Pomgol himself later admitted, whose representatives appeared in the volosts only in November.

Thus, in August 1921 in the city of Petropavlovsk, the Akmola provincial emergency commission for helping the hungry (Gubchekapomgol) was created. The commission first collected voluntary donations, but then, when the number of hungry people in the Petropavlovsk district alone reached 150 thousand, taxes were established in favor of starving people from various commercial and industrial enterprises and spectacles; deductions of workers and employees were collected from their earnings, as well as during commodity exchange operations, flour collection when grinding grain; special “Weeks of food gathering” were held. The departments of the provincial executive committee were involved in the work of the provincial chekapomgol: the health department monitored the sanitary conditions of nutritional points, and the prodcom conducted the delivery and distribution of food, the social security department was in charge of the economic part of the assistance. Here is what was said about rendering aid to the starving population in one of the Kustanai newspapers: “...considering that the province cannot cope with hunger by its own means, Gubpomgolod from the very first days began to knock on all possible doors, demanding immediate help. But they do not always open at a knock, it is not always that what is requested is immediately given. For a long time, the local authorities were left exclusively to themselves ...” (Step’, 1921 (12):2).

The higher authorities tried to “tie” the starving and dying Kustanai province to the more prosperous Kokchetav and Atbasar districts of the Akmola region. But from the chiefs, according to “Step’”, they managed to get only 1800 poods of grain, which was sent to Turgai. By the summer of 1922 alone, 18 wagons of millet and wheat arrived from the Semipalatinsk region. As Pomgol stated, “the aid of the attached provinces was not so insignificant that it barely justified the expenses that were made to receive this aid” (Step’, 1921 (43):3).

In the fight against hunger, Soviet Russia needed outside help, and she began to admit this. The newspaper “Step’” for July 4, 1922 writes: “Hunger and the terrible consequences caused by it, reaching cannibalism before our eyes, found a response of sympathy in many civilized countries of the West”, prevent him from starving to death and support his existence until the next harvest. Workers – to give the worker the tools of production, to help restore the destroyed economy of the entire RSFSR” (Step’, 1922 (65):3). For example, the International Organization for Aid to the Hungry in Russia has launched its work. Its activity is based on the following principle: “rent destroyed factories and plants, supply them at our own expense with instruments of production and machines, hire starving workers and peasants at these factories and thus, on the one hand, feed the starving people, and on the other, help to raise our industry – in Moscow, Ufa, Chelyabinsk”. In addition, the newspaper in the article “Gift to the workers from the workers of America” reported on the “Society of Friends of Russia in America”, which was going to «make an agricultural expedition to Moscow consisting of 21 tractors with the necessary spare parts, rent about 25 thousand lands of the Volga region and undertook to plow and seeding at their own expense, apply reaping machines and harvest. The expedition transfers the entire harvest without any payment to Soviet Russia”. Of course, many of the ideas looked fantastic, but in the periodicals you can still find information about the real activities of “ARA” – an American charitable organization that delivers food to hungry areas in the province until 1923.

Although aid was provided to the starving, it was clearly insufficient. This is evidenced by the material of the article “Help to the starving” in the newspaper “Stepnaya Zarya” dated October 24, 1922, which says: “The district pomgol had 10 heads of cattle, which were distributed to the families of the Red Army soldiers and the poorest peasants and Kyrgyz. One third of the Kyrgyz population of the Adamovsky

region is starving, and will continue to starve, since it had no crops and no livestock. The situation is difficult” (Stepnaya zarya, 1922 (67):3). One of the ways to help the starving population was to relocate them to more prosperous areas. Despite, however, all the efforts of Gubpomgolod, it was almost impossible to do this. Thousands of starving people from other provinces (according to incomplete information, 7500) remained in Kustanai, villages and auls of the province. Gubavak sent 867 refugees, Gubono evacuated 1835 children from orphanages.

Newspaper editors themselves were actively raising funds to help the starving population. Thus, editor Berkovsky, reported that the office of the Kustanai newspaper “Step” “received for the starving from the non-party Kyrgyz of the Kenaral volost of the Kustanai province: 4 gold rings, 2 silver rings, silver money for 4 rubles. 10 kopecks from Comrade Shcherba – 1 St. George cross of 4 degrees and a silver medal of 4 degrees” [Step’, 1922 (62):1]. The authorities also used other sources of income: nationalized property and funds of churches and “kulaks”, etc.

What conclusions did the authorities draw from this catastrophe? One of the newspapers published the official view of the authorities on these events: “The famine had a great impact on the entire life of our province. There have been many changes. And all these changes in various aspects of economic life are of a negative nature ... The positive side here is the impetus that the consciousness of the masses received. Many people began to understand more clearly the reasons for the famine, began to understand that it was not from God, but from the population itself, who did not know how to handle the land and led it to complete exhaustion” (Krasnaya step’, 1923 (23):3). To put it mildly, a dubious conclusion, shifting the blame for what happened to his victims.

The Decree of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) signed by V. Molotov and A. Bubnov, published in the Bulletin of the Kostanai Committee of the RCP (b) for November 25, 1922, states that “the fight against hunger is turning into a fight against the consequences of hunger”, and, consequently, “the slogans are now: the fight for the peasant horse, for the plow, for the seeds, the fight against child homelessness, with prostitution, unemployment...”. Perhaps even due to circumstances beyond the control of the “system”, the slogans remained so for a long time: even by 1923, according to the reports of the Kustanai newspaper “Krasnaya Step”, “the consequences of the famine have not yet been overcome: the hungry masses, as well as the peasants who arrived from the Ukraine, continue to exploit the poor. Kyrgyz population” (Krasnaya step’, 1922 (65):3).

The report of the provincial committee “On the economic situation in the province” published in Izvestia of the province committee in November 1922 said; “Economically, our province continues to feel the pressure of all the consequences of the previous crop failure and hunger. The population of the province has decreased compared to 1920 by 29 percent. The area of arable land in comparison with 1919 has decreased by 69-72 percent. The number of farms decreased by 26 percent. The loss of livestock: horses – 73 percent, working livestock: oxen and camels – 58 percent, cows – 50 percent, young animals – 69 percent and sheep – 65 percent. This disaster, the spong committee concluded, “weakens us for many years” (Izvestiya, 1922 (139):3).

The effects of the famine were long lasting. Based on the materials of the State Archives of the city of Astana, the Akmola district commission for assisting the starving in Akmolinsk carried out its work in 1924 and considered cases of assistance to the starving who had already arrived from the southern regions (Karaganda, Nurinskaya, Zakharovskaya, Asan-Kaiginskaya, Saryarkinskaya, Sarysuiskaya, Kurgaldinskaya volosts). According to the commission, “the number of starving people reaches 12 thousand..., the starving displaced persons come in a crowd ...and ask for help, ...from their region they make their way into hunger” (SAN, 4:1). As a result of the meeting of the commission on April 1, 1924, it was decided “to propose to the General Department and the Stanichny village council, to urgently start examining the hungry people how they live in the city and issue documents on which they will receive food” to organize a subcommittee at the Ucommission of three representatives from Uzdrav, and the City Council chaired by a representative of the City Council, which will have to determine the fact of the hunger strike of one or another applicant and issue such documents, according to which they will issue benefits, ...attach the starving county to their relatives and bays. (SAN, 4:2).

Residents of the cities took an active part in the fate of the hungry. So, on May 17, 1924, at a general meeting of Muslim citizens of the city of Akmolinsk, they expressed a desire to take a group of starving people and distribute them among the wealthy citizens of the city, determining “at their own expense both able-bodied and not able-bodied (old people, children). The commission noted that “those who are certainly able to work, being with this or that citizen to feed, will do various small jobs within their own strength”. Also, the townspeople made a decision “to hold a meeting of employees and workers through the trade organization so that they make monthly deductions in favor of the starving to earn money, as well as hold meetings between the townspeople and merchants with an appeal to help the starving” (SAN, 4:4).

Conclusion. In general, many factors had a destructive effect on the agrarian sector of the economy: the First World War, the repressions of the tsarism against the Kazakh population after the suppression of the 1916 uprising, the severe consequences of the revolutionary upheavals of 1917 in Russia, the civil war, the economically irrational policy of the Bolsheviks of 1918-1921, repression of the peasantry after the anti-Bolshevik unrest of the early 1920s, natural and climatic factors – the drought of the summer of 1920, etc. Of the listed reasons for the agricultural crisis, the food policy of the Bolsheviks after their coming to power turned out to be the most ruinous for the peasantry, aggravating the already difficult situation toilers of the village. This is evidenced not only by the absolute figures of the reduction in acreage and livestock numbers during the period of “war communism”, but also by the mass peasant demonstrations of the early 1920s, which were called the “small” civil war in modern historical science. Thus, the famine of 1921-1922 was the result of the struggle of the Bolsheviks for power and the consolidation of this power. Today, striving to achieve new frontiers, we must learn from the historical past, be guided by the understanding that the highest value for the state should be the person himself, his life, and not the goal, even the highest.

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ОСОБЕННОСТИ ГОЛОДА 1921-1922 ГГ. В КАЗАХСТАНЕ И ЕГО ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯ

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена голоду 1921-1922 годов в Казахстане. В статье авторы раскрывают причины и последствия голода 1921-1922 годов в Казахстане, который, по сравнению с другими пострадавшими регионами, испытал большую нагрузку в вопросе обеспечения продовольствием. Голод был усугублен разрухой и безвластием в ходе гражданской войны, которые мешали быстрому решению проблем. В северо-западных регионах Казахстана голод стал возможен не только в результате стихийного бедствия, но и в результате вывоза излишков сельхозпродукции продовольственными отрядами. Казахский народ страдал от голода, особенно в связи с коренными изменениями в экономике и сокращением поголовья скота. Авторы приходят к выводу о том, что помощь голодающим хотя и оказывалась, но была явно недостаточной, показывают роль международных организаций в борьбе с голодом.

Ключевые слова: военный коммунизм, продразверстка, голод, советская власть, большевики, комиссии помощи голодающим, благотворительные организации.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ 1921-1922 ЖЫЛДАРДАҒЫ АШТЫҚ ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ ЖӘНЕ ОНЫҢ САЛДАРЫ

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Аңдатпа. Мақала Қазақстандағы 1921-1922 жылдардағы ашаршылыққа арналған. Мақалада авторлар 1921-1922 жылдардағы Қазақстандағы ашаршылықтың себеп-салдарын ашады, ол зардап шеккен басқа аймақтармен салыстырғанда азық-түлік қауіпсіздігі жағынан ауыртпалықты бастан кешірді. Ашаршылықты азаматтық соғыс кезіндегі қирау мен анархия қиындатып, мәселелерді тез шешуге кедергі келтірді. Қазақстанның солтүстік-батыс облыстарында ашаршылық тек табиғи апаттың салдарынан ғана емес, азық-түлік отрядтарының артық ауыл шаруашылығы өнімдерін шығару нәтижесінде де мүмкін болды. Әсіресе шаруашылықтағы түбегейлі өзгерістер мен мал басының қысқаруына байланысты қазақ халқы аштыққа ұшырады. Авторлар зерттеу нәтижесінде, аштыққа ұшырағандарға көмек көрсетілсе де, жеткіліксіз болғандығы туралы және бұл жағдай халықаралық ұйымдардың аштықпен күресудегі рөлін көрсетеді деген қорытындыға келеді.

Түйін сөздер: соғыс коммунизмі, артық игілік, аштық, Кеңес өкіметі, большевиктер, аштыққа ұшырағандарға көмек көрсету комиссиялары, қайырымдылық ұйымдары.

МАЗМҰНЫ / ОГЛАВЛЕНИЕ

Қ.Қ. Сәрсембина, М.М. Қозыбаева, Х.Б. Маслов Саяси қуғын-сүргінге ұшыраған әйелдер (Ақмола облысы бойынша).....	4
А.Т. Абдулина Этнокультурные аспекты состояния казахской диаспоры в Тарбагатайском аймаке Суар КНР	14
А.М. Әбікей, А.Ж. Утегалиева, Ж.С. Саурыкова 1928-1929 жж. қазақ байларын тәркілеу науқаны.....	27
К.Н. Балтабаева Пидахмет Бобкин и его потомки	40
Ж.Ж. Жеңіс Моңғол империясының құрылу кезеңіндегі идеологиялық ахуал.....	56
Ә.Қ. Шашаев, Н.Н. Құрманалина, А.Н. Қоңқабаева Н. Сәбитовтың қоғамдық-ғылыми мұрасы мен өмірінің бастапқы кезеңі.....	68
О.Х. Мұхатова Халифа Алтайдың өмірі мен қызметі туралы архив деректері.....	78
Ә.Қ. Бәкір, С.Т. Тайман, С.Т. Жарбулова Мұстафа Шоқай және Әлихан Бөкейхан.....	92
С.-Х.А. Жүсіп, Х.Б. Маслов Исторические аспекты участия казахов в первой мировой войне.....	104
С.А. Асанова Малоизученные аспекты истории голода 1921-1922 гг. в Казахстане.....	117
А.М. Dyab al-Noimat, М.А. Sultan Alafreet, Zh. Zhengis United States-Russian conflict over wealth and oil in Central Asia and the Caucasus.....	128
Kochiyev Elnur Rafik-Ogli Comparative analysis of political repressions of Kazakhs and Ahiska Turks.....	141
Элен Тибо Многоженство в Казахстане.....	151
А.Т. Капаева Продовольственная политика советской власти в Казахстане в условиях «военного коммунизма».....	166
А. Сманова, С. Шілдебай Мұстафа Шоқай және шетелдегі ұлттық өкілдердің тәуелсіздік үшін жүргізген күресі.....	177

Ш.Т. Булгауов, Г.Қ. Мұқанова

Смағұл Садуақасовтың қазақстанды «кеңестендіру»
туралы көзқарастары төңірегіндегі тарихнамалық дискурс..... 188

И.Ю. Анисимова, Ф.С. Рамазанова, К.Б. Болатова

История повседневности как направление исторических исследований:
предмет, источники, методы..... 199

A.M. Dyab al-Noimat

Central Asia and the Caucasus in Iran's foreign policy strategy 1991-2020..... 211

O. Kuanbay

Comparative scientific analysis on the political and social situation
of the Japan - Kazakh people in XVIII-XIX centuries..... 223

S.K. Malabayev, M.M. Kozybayeva

Features of hunger 1921-1922 in Kazakhstan and its consequences..... 232

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