Famine in Kazakhstan in 1931–1933: Discussions and Debates

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ABSTRACT:
Introduction. The history of famine in Kazakhstan during the early 1930s is a relatively under-researched topic in Russian historiography. This explains the growing public interest in the subject. This article provides a brief overview of Kazakh and foreign scientific literature on the famine of the 1930's. The purpose and objectives of this study are to identify and objectively analyze gaps in the history of Kazakhstan in the context of the policy of forming the historical consciousness of Kazakh society; a comparative analysis of various descriptions and interpretations of domestic and foreign scientific literature, and published archival sources on the famine in Kazakhstan in 1931–1933. Materials and methods. The main research materials are monographic works, collections of documents, and articles published on the topic by domestic and foreign researchers. The principles of objectivity and historicism were used as methodological approaches in conducting the research. In addition, the methods of analysis, synthesis, retrospective, comparative-historical, and historical-typological were used in the study of this problem. Results. The content and focus of historical research in the works under consideration are described, and areas of scientific interest are identified. Conclusion: Researchers from Kazakhstan and a number of foreign countries have made significant contributions to the study of the history of famine in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, historiography, famine, collectivization, sedentarization, grain harvesting, genocide, demographic crisis

Introduction

The study of the topic of the mass famine of 1931–1933 in Kazakhstan is one of the most important topics in domestic historiography, as it is of great importance for preserving historical memory, studying historical experience, analyzing its socio-psychological aspects, preventing such tragic events, and recognizing the number of victims and suffering. Properly incorporating the topics of the critical period into our collective memory and historical consciousness will undoubtedly contribute to the correct formation of national identity.

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, K.K. Tokayev, in his article "Independence is more precious than anything else" dated January 5, 2021, and in his report "A Just Kazakhstan – An Honest Citizen" at the II National Congress in Turkestan on June 17, 2023, and in his interview with the newspaper "Egemen Kazakhstan" dated January 3, 2023, paid great attention to the issue of strengthening historical consciousness. Because, without knowledge of the history of one's state and nation, the progressive development of the state is impossible. The great famine of the last century, from 1931 to 1933, is a fragment of our history, which will be forever inscribed in the memory of the nation. Since the history of a colonial country is written by the colonial country, there are many hidden aspects of this history that we do not know about. Studying the true history of the difficult periods of the Kazakh people leads to a full understanding of the value of independence and its glorification. In the 4th decade of the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, historical science faces new tasks related to the revision of the historical past, taking into account the achieved level of methodology and techniques of foreign and domestic historical science in the implementation of state programs, new conceptual approaches, and new sources. Only by turning to historical sources can one draw the right conclusions on the methodological and factual aspects of this complex and still incompletely resolved issue.

Materials and methods

The article was written on the basis of an analysis of documentary and monographic works, collections of documents, and articles published in the media by domestic and foreign researchers on the topic of the famine in Kazakhstan in the early 1930s. During the research, the principles of objectivity and historicity were used as methodological approaches. In addition, problem-chronological, comparative-historical, historical-typological, and other methods of studying the problem were of great importance in studying the topic.

Discussion

In the Soviet era, fundamental studies on the agrarian history of Kazakhstan by prominent scientists were published (A.B. Tursynbayev, G.F. Dakhshleiger, B.A. Nurpeisov, K.N., etc.). During the dominance of the Marxist-Leninist methodology, the causes of the famine were attributed to natural disasters such as drought, famine, and adverse weather conditions that cyclically shook the Kazakh steppe. The works emphasized the role of party bodies in the fight against hunger, and in particular, the connection between the struggle against hunger and the resistance of the class enemy, who tried to use difficulties to strengthen their positions, and the consequences of the rich and kulaks' internal dissension against the implementation of state decisions (Dahshlejger, 2015: 165). However, despite the limitations of the communist methodology, the works of Soviet historians contain valuable documentary materials, reviews of the famine years, and conclusions.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, works by Kazakh scientists appeared that examined the problems of socio-economic deformation in the Kazakh village, which led to mass famine and migration. Among them, the works of M.K. Kozybayev, K.N. Nurpeisov, K.S. Aldajumanov, T. Omarbekov, and Zh.B. Abylkhozhin are valuable. The works of these scientists are the theoretical and methodological basis for studying the history of Kazakhstan in the 20th century.

The first research articles about the famine of the 1930s were published in 1989 by M.K. Kozybayev, Zh.B. Abylkhozhin, and M. B. Tatimov, entitled "Kazakhstan's Tragedy". The authors linked the famine with the collectivization policy of nomadic and semi-nomadic Kazakhs, as well as with the implementation of "settlement" (Abylhozhin, 1989: 53–71). The article outlined methodological concepts for assessing the tragic pages of the history of Soviet Kazakhstan, and many of its provisions later became the basis for the study "Collectivization in Kazakhstan: The Tragedy of the Peasants" (Kozybayev et al., 1992: 36). The well-known demographer M. Tatimov, based on the analysis of state statistics in 1989, showed that the approximate number of people

who died from hunger and epidemics during the period of settlement and collectivization was: 2 million 20 thousand people, nomads - 616 thousand, including 205 thousand abroad (Tatimov, 1989: 124). At the same time, it is worth noting the study of the demographer A.B. Galiev on the issue of hunger entitled "Holod v Kazakhstane 1932–1933 gg." (Galiyev, 1988: 11–16) and the book "Socio-demographic processes in Kazakhstan" published in 1991 together with M.Kh. Asylbekov (Asylbekov, Galiev, 1991: 192). In his doctoral dissertation abstract, A.B. Galiev indicated that the demographic losses of the Kazakhs due to famine, disease, and migration amounted to 1,610,000 people (Galiyev, 1994: 16). However, fundamental research on this topic by scientists began only after our country gained independence.

Results

From November 1991 to December 1992, the Commission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan worked on studying the regulatory legal acts that led to the famine during collectivization. Its conclusions indicate that the Kazakh ethnos was subjected to the most brutal genocide, and the population lost 2.2 million people, that is, 49 percent of its entire population, due to famine and related epidemics, as well as a high level of natural mortality (Egemendi Kazakhstan, 1992).

The first collection of documents on the topic of the famine of the 1930s was published in 1998 by Sh.Sh. It was published by the Institute of History and Ethnology named after Ualikhanov in collaboration with the Archives of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Nasil'stvennaya kollektivizaciya..., 1998: 263). In addition, local historians also actively participated in the collection of archival documents on the topic of famine (Iz istorii velichajshej tragedii..., 2005: 268). Within the scope of this issue, the issue of the impact of famine on the everyday life of the people of North Kazakhstan is still relevant for research. In this regard, the works of scientists Zh. Kasymbayev (Kasymbaev, 1998: 174), G.A. Alpyspaeva (Alpysbaeva, 1997), as well as demographers A.N. Alekseenko (Alekseenko, 1993: 126), Malysheva M.P. (Malysheva, 2002), etc., can be mentioned. It should be noted that the research of local historians in the localities is also of great importance for creating a complete picture of the famine of the 1930s.

Among the scientists who have made efforts to determine the exact total number of victims of the famine of those years, we can mention A.N. Alekseenko. He tried to determine the number of losses, analyzing the publications of Kazakhstani historians and demographers about those who suffered from the famine. His calculations took into account not only those who suffered from the famine, but also those who were persecuted and deported, that is, the total losses of the Kazakh people in the 1930s. The demographer used the age-shift method to track how many people in each age group lived from 1926 to 1939. In his calculations, he excluded data on those who died of natural causes over 12 years from the losses determined by comparing age groups. Taking into account all the corrections, according to him, the losses of the Kazakh people alone amounted to 1,840,000 people, or 47.3% of the population in 1930. He also wrote that about 1 million Kazakhs fled Kazakhstan (Alekseenko, 2000: 19).

In 1992, the historian T. Omarbekov, who worked for a parliamentary commission and familiarized himself with the archives of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, believed that the Soviet leaders deliberately underestimated the losses of the population as a result of the famine. He concluded that the actual number of Kazakhs who died of famine and emigrated from 1931 to 1933 exceeded 3 million. T. Omarbekov extensively discusses the issue of the famine in his extensive work "The Tragedy of Kazakhstan in the 1920s and 1930s: An Auxiliary Textbook," published in 1997. In this work, the scientist examines the serious consequences of the central emergency measures related to the production of grain and meat, which were the prerequisites for the famine, the confiscation of large, wealthy properties, and the liquidation of wealthy

peasants as a class, and their serious consequences for Kazakh society. He dwells on the scale and consequences of the popular protests that took place in 1929–1931 against the confiscation of the property of the wealthy and the forced collectivization. The fact that these campaigns in Kazakhstan led to resettlement - the Kazakhs were forced to flee to neighboring countries due to mass starvation, the historian describes in detail, based on local and central archival documents of the Russian Federation, with specific data (Omarbekov, 1997). Similarly, T. Omarbekov published in 2011 an anthology entitled "Famine in Kazakhstan: Causes, Scope and Results (1930–1933)," which fully covered the above issues (Omarbekov, 2011: 203). T. Omarbekov's work "Famine", published in 2019 by the "Arys" publishing house, presents the main conclusions of the topic of Famine, which the scientist has studied for the last thirty years, and identifies the main causes of the famine. The historian believes that the cause of the famine in Kazakhstan is the result of the Soviet authorities' excessive reforms in agriculture and campaigning. The number of Kazakhs who were killed and displaced was clarified by comparing them with archival data (Omarbekov, 2019).

The collection of documents "Persecuted by Famine" by E. Sydykov, published in Semey in 2010, contains a wealth of information about Kazakhs who fled to Siberia from famine in the early 1930s (Sydykov, 2010). The collection of documents provides documentary evidence that the Kazakhs of the Steppe and Semipalatinsk regions, before the unprecedented famine, fled to the bordering Siberian lands. Based on the materials found, the compilers conclude that the number of Kazakhs who fled from Kazakhstan to Western and Eastern Siberia was not 50 thousand, as previously reported, but about 100 thousand. And based on the documents found, it is shown that the area of the Kazakhs who fled from famine in Siberia was much wider (Gonimye golodom, 2010: 42). The system of arranging the documents in the collection is grouped into chapters in chronological order, and a total of 359 documents are included. Several documents are presented here, grouped together under a single serial number. All published documents are taken from the State Archives of the Novosibirsk Region. The main correspondence (decrees, orders, directives, etc.) of the party and state bodies of the region (education, health, minority nationalities, etc.) of Novosibirsk, which was the regional administrative center of Western Siberia from 1930 to 1936, on the resettlement of Kazakhs to neighboring Siberia in the 1930s, is presented. The compilers have brought various types of official documents from the state archives of the Novosibirsk Region: acts, reports, minutes of meetings, correspondence, complaints, etc. The documents presented consider the resettlement of Kazakhs to neighboring Siberia and the issues of resettlement and other assistance to refugee Kazakhs. The presented archival materials provide detailed information about the plight of refugee Kazakhs and their children who fled to Siberia from famine.

As a result of extensive research work on the topic of famine, the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan presented to the public a collection of archival documents, "The Tragedy of the Kazakh Village 1928–1934". The first volume of the collection, covering the period 1928–1929, was published in 2013 (Tragediya kazakhskogo aula, 2013), and the second volume, covering the period 1929–1932, was published in 2018 (Tragediya kazakhskogo aula, 2018). The publication contains documents from the Archives of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The second volume of the collection of documents contains documents covering the processes of radical transformation in the life of traditional Kazakh villages: forced collectivization, the elimination of the wealthy, and the process of settlement. These reforms, carried out with extremely strict administrative measures, as well as the production of grain, beef, etc., mass training campaigns led to an intensification of the hunger crisis in Kazakhstan, the exodus of the population from the republic and abroad, armed conflicts, and uprisings. These documents, which contain information about the real situation in the country during that period,

are marked “secret” and “top secret,” and most of these documents are included in scientific circulation for the first time.

In 2022, as a result of the implementation of a scientific project under the leadership of specialists from the Sh.Sh. Ualikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology on the topic “Emigration and Adaptation of Kazakh Nomads to the Republics of Central Asia during the Mass Famine of the Early 1930s of the XX Century”, a collective monograph “Kazakhs in Central Asia: History and Fate (1920–1950)” was published. It examines the problem of the famine in the 1930s and the resettlement of refugees from the famine to the territory of neighboring Soviet Central Asian republics (Kazahi v Srednej Azii..., 2022).

In 2021, a five-volume documentary chronicle collection entitled “Famine. Hunger. 1928–1934. Documentary Chronicle” was published, which tells the story of the years of famine. Volume 1 of these collections contains documents related to the campaign to confiscate the rich and the grain and meat harvesting campaigns carried out in Kazakhstan in 1928–1929. Volumes 2–4 of the collection constitute the period of documents and materials relevant to our research topic, that is, 1930–1933. These three volumes present documents that provide evidence from the period of Soviet modernization of the agricultural economy of Kazakhstan. Various sources describe the tragic events associated with the forced collectivization of Kazakh villages, reveal the policy of confiscation and elimination of the rich and kulaks as a class, and show the growth of tension and discontent in Kazakh villages. The deep agrarian crisis is evidenced by the fact that it was the beginning of unprecedented economic cataclysms, socio-demographic upheavals, and widespread famine in the Kazakh steppes. The collection presents tragic events documented by documents of that era - decrees, resolutions, protocols, reports, references, statistical data, and citizens' appeals - that provide an objective picture of this catastrophe. The presented documentary chronicle is a comprehensive account of the history of agriculture in Kazakhstan. The presented documentary chronicle shows the large-scale modernization of Kazakhstan's agriculture and its consequences for the Kazakh people.

The 5th volume of the collection of documents is dedicated to the memoirs of witnesses to the famine. The memoirs show that the result of the center's policy of industrialization at the expense of agriculture was the imposition of a grain tax on Kazakh peasants who were engaged in livestock breeding, which in turn led to their rapid impoverishment. Many memoirs indicate that the modernization policy, which was unexpected for Kazakh society, was carried out in a hasty and unreasonable manner. The memoirs testify to the fact that the people, having lost their livestock and livelihoods, wandered and became refugees. The Kazakhs, whose source of livelihood was livestock, immediately found themselves in a difficult situation after losing their livestock. The sharp decrease in the number of livestock worsened the situation of the people, contributing to their starvation and death due to a lack of food. The memoirs mainly confirm this fact.

The content of the book "Kazakhs between Revolution and Famine" by historian Sultan Akimbekov, published in 2021, covers the Civil War in Russia, the establishment of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Autonomy, as well as the famine period. It systematically describes how the aspirations of the USSR to radically modernize the economy and social life dealt a devastating blow to traditional Kazakh society. This was one of the important reasons for the famine that swept through many regions of the USSR. According to the author, such economic modernization was reflected in the fact that it entailed extremely heavy losses in Kazakhstan. He argues that this was associated with the complete destruction of the Kazakhs' familiar world. In general, the period of large-scale upheavals for Kazakh society between 1930 and 1936 was associated with the tragedy of famine, which claimed the lives of many people, and at the same time with the destruction of the traditional social structure of society. Kazakh society, based on its social structure, lost its integrity and therefore lost its significance for the state. Kazakhs, without their previous structure,

became elements of a fundamentally new state and social system created in the USSR. Now the Kazakhs were faced with the task of adapting to new conditions, and to do this not as a community, as before, but on an individual basis. The author also concludes that the Kazakhs, within the framework of their national-territorial autonomy, retained their subjectivity, despite all its formality (Akimbekov, 2021: 496).

Collecting the memories of witnesses to the famine of 1931–1933 and their descendants is one of the important tasks of historians in all regions of Kazakhstan. In accordance with this, Sh.Sh. Within the framework of the project "Preparation and publication of a series of memoirs of witnesses of the mass famine in Kazakhstan in 1931–1933 and their descendants (20 volumes)", implemented under the leadership of specialists from the Ualikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology, the first (in the Aulie-Ata region, 2024) and second (in the Almaty region, 2024) volumes of the multi-series publication dedicated to the famine in the Aulie-Ata region and Almaty region were published. These collections contain memoirs of witnesses to the famine and their descendants from the mentioned regions. The memoirs of witnesses to the famine and their descendants, which were first introduced into scientific circulation, are of great importance as an important example of the history being told, and the information contained in them is also of great importance as an alternative historical source for revealing the truth about the famine. The content of the facts about the famine that are repeatedly found in the memoirs is as follows: a prolonged drought in the 1930s; the lack of assistance due to the government's failure to recognize the famine; the fact that agricultural reforms led to the destruction of the economic support of the Kazakh people; and the government's forcible seizure of grain and livestock. The memoirs also describe how Kazakh families gradually suffered from hunger as a result of the government's agricultural reforms. Such interviews in the memoirs provide a wealth of information about the hidden aspects of the tragedy when studying the famine, revealing the content of dry government documents.

Similarly, among the studies based on such memoirs, one can mention A.T. Abdullina's research article "Memories of Witnesses about the Famine in Kazakhstan in the 1930s: Issues of Documentary Studies and Reflections of Everyday Life" (Abdullina, 2021). The article describes the experiences of witnesses during the famine based on memoirs and other materials preserved in private archives and published publications. These sources are taken from a collection of documents about family and other events of famous writers and active Komsomol youth, preserved in the private collections of the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, telling about everyday life during the famine. The memoirs mainly contain information about the difficult everyday life in Kazakhstan during the years of forced collectivization and the settlement of nomads. As we have already noted, such, that is, famine As we have already noted, the data of such witnesses, who were the objects of the famine, are valuable in that they can supplement the subjective narratives given from the outside.

The topic of the famine in the 1930s in Kazakhstan has not gone unnoticed by foreign researchers. Of course, there was a lack of data in the works of researchers who addressed this topic, even during the USSR. However, the memories of foreign, especially Ukrainian, witnesses of the "Holodomor" about the famine that took millions of lives in the USSR prompted Western researchers to specifically deal with this issue. Most Western researchers considered the famine in Kazakhstan in the context of the famine in Ukraine. However, in recent years, foreign researchers have begun to study the famine in Kazakhstan as a separate topic. Studies published abroad in the past are also important for domestic historiography, because their methodological approach, diversity of approaches to the problem, and the development of the topic are necessary for assessing its development.

Among the works published on the famine of the 1930s before the collapse of the USSR were Martha Brill Olcott's research article "The Process of Collectivization in Kazakhstan" (Olcott, 1981) and Robert Conquest's monograph "Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and Terror of Famine" (Conquest, 1988). Although the historiography of the famine of the 1930s in Kazakhstan in general began much earlier, the works of these scientists increased interest in the Kazakh famine in the world scientific community and contributed to the emergence of a new wave of foreign researchers in this direction. The peculiarity of Martha Olcott's study, written in 1981, is that it does not mention Kazakhstan in the context of the famine in the USSR as a whole, but takes the famine in our country and the collectivization campaign that preceded it as a special topic. M. Although Olcott's extensive article was written during the Iron Curtain and the time when the archives were closed, it objectively presented the scale of the famine that followed the unprepared and crude collectivization campaign in the Kazakh ASSR, and introduced the Western public to the horrors of the famine that threatened the national extinction of the Kazakh people.

The aforementioned work by Robert Conquest describes the confrontation between the peasants and the party in the USSR and its tragic consequences, which led to the famine. The main focus is on the situation of the peasants in Ukraine, the destruction of the kulaks as a class, and the famine. Comparing the conditions and consequences of the famine in Ukraine with the famine in the Asian part of the USSR, he also gives his assessment of the famine that occurred in the Kazakh land. He argues that: "The causes and circumstances of this unprecedented human and economic catastrophe in the history of colonial powers are a matter that deserves the attention of Western experts," suggesting that the Kazakh famine has been largely ignored by Western historians. He argues, based on central and local government sources, that it was not the human toll of the famine that caused the collapse of agriculture and the outbreak of famine in Kazakhstan that angered Moscow, but the economic toll it caused. Moscow then carried out mass purges of local cadres (Conquest, 1988: 291). According to Conquest, to attribute the famine to economic and political mistakes is a narrow misapprehension, but in a broader sense, it is rooted in a misunderstanding of human culture. The surprisingly mechanical nature and superficiality of party thinking in Kazakhstan were very evident, he says, pointing to the consequences of the administrative-dictatorial management of the center, without taking into account the foundations of the local economy. According to the calculations given in the research work, in the first years of the famine, i.e. in 1930-1931, 15-20 percent of the Kazakh population fled outside the republic: 300,000 to Uzbekistan, the rest to other republics of Soviet Central Asia and China. The situation of those who went to neighboring Central Asian republics was the same as that of those who remained in their places, and most of them returned, losing hope (Conquest, 1988: 294). R. Conquest also cites a source describing the attitude of the authorities towards the local population during the famine: A senior party official from Chelyabinsk told a foreign communist, "The famine served us well in the Urals, Western Siberia, and the Volga region. The victims of the famine in these areas were mainly people who were alien to us. They were replaced by Russians who fled from the central regions. We are not nationalists, of course, but we cannot underestimate this favorable situation, - said a party official from Chelyabinsk, explaining the high mortality rate of the Bashkirs and other Muslim peoples of Asia, most likely due to their inability to transition from nomadic to settled life in accordance with their five-year commitments (Conquest, 1988: 295). As we have already noted, the data of such witnesses, who were the objects of the famine, are valuable in that they can supplement the subjective narratives given from the outside.

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In 2010, American historian Norman Neimark presented his work "Stalinist Genocides" to the public about the famine in Ukraine in the 1930s. Although the scientist's research work was devoted to the famine of the Ukrainian people, he did not bypass the famine in the Kazakh steppes. Comparing the losses of Kazakhs who were victims of the famine to the total population, the scientist makes the following conclusion: The famine in Kazakhstan, which has a large nomadic and semi-nomadic agricultural base, was even more severe than in Ukraine. The number of people who died from the famine reached 1.45 million, which was 38 percent of the total Kazakh population. This is the highest mortality rate among the nations affected by the famine in the Soviet Union. Moscow's neglect of the tragic consequences of the destruction of the Kazakh nomadic economy through the policy of forced "settlement" was the main cause of the famine. Kazakhs were not prevented from fleeing the famine-stricken regions and seeking help in cities and towns, but they were prevented from escaping to China through the poorly guarded border. Many Kazakhs were shot while trying to cross the border (Neimark, 2010: 75). Norman Neimark, like most foreign scholars, writes that the famine in Kazakhstan was a genocide. He shows that both Kazakhs and Ukrainians who suffered from famine went to Russian and Belarusian regions in search of food, but were unable to receive relatively quick and effective relief. Similarly, although it was known that the population was suffering from famine in both Kazakhstan and Ukraine, the authorities did not immediately ease the terms of forced requisitions as they had in other famine-stricken regions. For these and other reasons, some scholars have called the Kazakh famine a genocide, despite the paucity of documentation of such an effort by Moscow. He also quotes Kurt Jonasson, a researcher on the famine: "The combination of the deliberate starvation of the Kazakh people with the purges of Kazakh intellectuals and cultural figures is a clear manifestation of genocide." Given that Moscow's policies regarding the Ukrainian and Kazakh famines had the same clear goals, namely the destruction of a certain way of life closely related to the unique national and ethnic culture of these peoples, Jonasson's conclusion is correct (Neimark, 2010: 76).

Robert Kindler's seminal work is a comprehensive study of the Soviet campaigns for the forced settlement and collectivization of Kazakh tribes and the famine that followed them (Kindler, 2017). The author does not accept the view that the famine in Kazakhstan was intentional, and he agrees with the position expressed in Russian historiography on this. He believes that "accusing people of genocidal intent frees one from the need to examine the involvement of the peoples themselves in the disaster." Developing his idea, Kindler further writes: "It was not some abstract 'communists' who decided the fate of the people; more often, local party members, peasants, and workers were responsible for the lives and deaths of the famine. However, neither Ukrainian historians nor their Kazakh colleagues write about the culprits in the lower and middle administrative ranks and their motives" (Kindler, 2017: 25). However, the author formulates the research hypothesis from the very beginning as follows: "The transition of Kazakh nomads to settled life was not a program to liberate the "oppressed" people, and it was not aimed at creating a "new man"; after all, it served mainly to consolidate the power of the Bolsheviks and more effectively use the economic resources of the steppe" (Kindler, 2017: 14). The author cites a wealth of facts and documentary evidence to substantiate his conclusions.

In his 2018 article "On the Great Famine in Kazakhstan of 1931-1933," Niccolo Pianchiola argues that the main cause of the disaster, which claimed the lives of one in three Kazakhstanis, was the incompetence and dogmatism of Stalin's rapid modernization. More precisely, the mass

forced integration of Kazakhs into Soviet society (for the sake of complete state control) consciously ignored the peculiarities of their nomadic lifestyle and economy, and accepted them not as an "ideal" model of modernization, but only as a practical plan. This explains the relatively higher mortality rate among Kazakhs during the famine than among Ukrainians (Pianchola, 2018).

Among the foreign scholars who have published in recent years on the famine of the 1930s is Sarah Cameron's "The Famine-ridden Steppe. Famine, Tyranny, and the Establishment of Soviet Kazakhstan" (Kameron, 2020). In her study, Cameron views collectivization in Kazakhstan as an attempt to create a new Soviet nation and modernize a nomadic society, but also sees it within the broader context of imperial colonization. She clearly shows that colonial policies in the Kazakh steppe (especially during the last two decades of the Russian Empire) led to significant changes in the nomadic way of life and a change in the ecological environment. The mass migration of peasants from European Russia and Siberia to the south significantly increased the pressure on the steppe: Kazakhs were driven from their traditional pastures, soil erosion began, water bodies dried up, the likelihood of epidemics increased, etc. All this created a negative background, which subsequently affected the scale of the famine (Kameron, 2020: 26). In his work, the scientist, speaking about alternative ways to modernize nomadic society, cites the conclusions of many Soviet agronomists in the early 1920s that nomadic animal husbandry was the most effective way to use the desert regions of Kazakhstan (Kameron, 2020: 71). In this regard, Cameron believes that the disastrous decisions of the Moscow leadership during collectivization in Kazakhstan were not the result of ignorance of the local situation. The threat of mass extermination was known, but for the benefit of political and economic goals, this threat was ignored. Despite his neutral position in assessing the famine, the scientist assesses this issue as "a crime against humanity by the Kazakh famine". Three chapters of the book are devoted to collectivization and famine, as well as Goloshchekin's "Little Kazan" campaign, which was their predecessor. Cameron chronicles the events of 1928–1934 in detail. The common thread in these accounts of the scholar is the poor organization and preparation for collectivization, the shortage of personnel at the local level, the indifference to the lives and interests of the local population, misunderstanding on the part of local activists, tyranny, looting, violence, and displacement. The response to the campaign of mass collectivization was the uprisings and resettlement to border areas. These events turned into a devastating social catastrophe, from which a certain degree of recovery was possible only after several decades (Kameron, 2020: 26).

Conclusion

As the historical review shows, the works of researchers of the history of the famine of the 20s and 30s of the last century show an increasing desire to consider all aspects of the issue and the growing interest of domestic and foreign researchers. In recent decades, foreign authors have been particularly active in studying the famine in Kazakhstan, and a whole group of foreign historians has formed who are comprehensively studying this topic in Kazakhstani and Russian archives. They compare the specific nature of the famine in Kazakhstan with the famine in Ukraine, show the clear national specificity of the famine, and attribute the main responsibility for its occurrence to the Union center. The reviewed studies share a common position that the campaigns of collectivization and sedentarization of Kazakhs within the framework of Soviet modernization were carried out using excessively violent methods. A common flaw in the research of foreign scholars on the famine is that they rely mainly on Russian-language research and do not use Kazakh-language research. This gap can also be said about Russian researchers. If we mention the language factor that can be an obstacle here, we see that S. Cameron, one of the last foreign researchers, was able to use Kazakh-language research in his work. If in the future the historiography of foreign researchers is replenished with works in the Kazakh language,

it will undoubtedly contribute to the objective study of the issue.

New written and oral sources introduced into scientific circulation and analyzed clearly demonstrate the consequences of the mass famine and the demographic catastrophe of the nation. The archival material presented in the studies will certainly expand the research base of the topic. The task of modern scientists is to create a complete objective picture of this tragedy, which will be an important historical lesson for future generations. In order to restore the historical processes of that period, historians should rely only on authentic data.

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