History of Refugee Children Who Arrived in Kyrgyzstan in the 1920s–1930s

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HOW TO CITE:
Ainagul T. Kaipbayeva , Orazgul Kh. Mukhatova , Yeldos Sauyrkan (2026). History of Refugee Children Who Arrived in Kyrgyzstan in the 1920s–1930s. International Journal of Special Education, 41(15s), 858-889

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ABSTRACT:
This article examines the historical experiences of refugee children who fled from Kazakhstan to the territory of Kyrgyzstan during the socio-political crises of the 1920s and 1930s. The main objective of the study is to analyze the social and demographic processes related to Kazakh refugee children who migrated to Kyrgyzstan as a result of famine, forced collectivization, confiscation campaigns, and political repression. Particular attention is given to the everyday lives of refugee children, including homelessness, disease, orphanhood, child labor, and the assistance provided by state institutions and local communities. The study is based on archival documents, statistical records, periodical publications, memoirs, and oral history materials preserved in the archives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and neighboring countries. Historical-comparative, demographic, and interdisciplinary research methods were employed. The archival evidence demonstrates that the issue of refugee children should be understood not only as a humanitarian tragedy but also as a complex historical phenomenon shaped by Soviet social and political policies. The research findings reveal that children constituted a significant proportion of the Kazakh refugees who arrived in Kyrgyzstan. Many children lost their parents and were left homeless and without guardianship. Famine and epidemic diseases contributed significantly to high child mortality rates among refugees. At the same time, the study identifies various forms of assistance provided by local communities, charitable initiatives, and Soviet institutions in Kyrgyzstan. However, these efforts proved insufficient to fully resolve the severe social problems faced by refugee families and abandoned children. The article interprets the history of refugee children within the broader context of the social consequences of Soviet modernization policies and considers it an important component of the shared historical experience of the peoples of Central Asia. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of migration, displacement, and child homelessness in the first half of the

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twentieth century.

Keywords: refugee children, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakh refugees, homelessness, famine, migration, 1920s–1930s, social history.

Introduction

The 1920s and 1930s were a period of extremely complex socio-political transformations for Central Asia. The Soviet policy of forced collectivization, the confiscation of livestock and property from wealthy households, famine, and political repression led to the mass displacement of the Kazakh population. As a result of these historical processes, thousands of Kazakh families were forced to migrate to the territory of neighboring Kyrgyzstan. Children constituted a significant proportion of these refugees, and many of them lived under severe social conditions.

The issue of refugee children who arrived in Kyrgyzstan should be understood not only as a humanitarian crisis, but also as a complex historical phenomenon shaped by Soviet social policies. Hunger, epidemics, harsh living conditions, and the loss of parents left many children homeless and without guardianship. Some children were placed in orphanages, while others survived with the assistance of local communities. Nevertheless, the social conditions, everyday life, and fate of refugee children have not yet been comprehensively studied in national historiography.

In this regard, the article analyzes the historical conditions of Kazakh refugee children who migrated to Kyrgyzstan on the basis of archival documents, statistical data, and oral history materials. The study aims to identify the social problems, demographic conditions, and consequences of migration processes affecting refugee children during the Soviet period. At the same time, this issue is considered an important component of the shared historical experience of the peoples of Central Asia.

Theoretical and Methodological Issues of the Study

The theoretical and methodological framework of the study is based on the approaches of historical demography, refugee studies, social history, and microhistory. Research on the social conditions of Kazakh refugees, especially children, during the 1920s and 1930s requires not only the description of political events, but also the analysis of human destinies and everyday life. From this perspective, methods of social history were applied to examine the living conditions of refugee children, the causes of homelessness, problems of social adaptation, and their survival strategies. In addition, a microhistorical approach was employed, enabling historical processes to be interpreted through the lens of individual human experiences.

The historical-comparative method was widely used in preparing the article. This method made it possible to compare the similarities and differences in the situation of refugee children in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and to identify the regional consequences of Soviet social policies. At the same time, historical-demographic analysis was employed to examine the number of refugee children, their age characteristics, mortality rates, and the scale of migration. Demographic indicators were analyzed comparatively using archival statistical materials and census data.

The source base of the research consists of official documents, statistical records, party reports, periodical publications, memoirs, and oral history materials preserved in the archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and neighboring states.

Source criticism and textual analysis methods were applied in the study of archival documents. These approaches made it possible to examine the origin and content of the documents, as well as to determine how the issue of refugee children was represented in official Soviet discourse.

In addition, special attention was given to interdisciplinary methodological approaches. Alongside historical scholarship, theoretical concepts from demography, sociology, and anthropology were incorporated into the study. Such a comprehensive approach allows the issue of refugee children to be examined not only as a historical event, but also as a socio-psychological and humanitarian crisis. As a result, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of displacement, child homelessness, and social upheavals in Central Asia during the first half of the twentieth century.

Discussion

The political events of the first quarter of the twentieth century had a profound impact on social life in Kazakhstan. Two revolutions, the Civil War, and the policy of "War Communism" produced severe consequences. During 1921–1923, famine struck Kazakhstan. This catastrophe affected not only Kazakhstan, but also more than thirty provinces of Soviet Russia. The famine that spread across the Volga region, the North Caucasus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan caused a sharp population decline, severe economic hardship, and the abandonment of large numbers of children.

Periodical publications of the 1920s frequently reported on people dying from starvation, individuals suffering from extreme malnutrition and edema, and children left homeless after losing their parents.

Reports also highlighted the widespread spread of infectious diseases among children begging in villages, towns, and crowded public places [4]. According to statistical data from July 1922, the following figures were recorded in different regions of the Kazakh ASSR:

Table 1. Victims of Famine in the Kazakh ASSR According to January 1922 Statistics[5].

№	Province	Adults	Children
1	Orenburg	138 339	209 671
2	Aktobe	171 389	134 000
3	Kostanay	217 565	96 935
4	Oral	123 600	103 500
5	Bukey Horde	100 000	
6	Adai District	75 000	9 670
7	Semey		5 616
8	Akmola	92 000	

Table 2. Victims of Famine in the Kazakh ASSR According to July 1922 Statistics[6].

№	Province	Children	Adults	Total
1	Orenburg	234512	263539	498051
2	Aktobe	72309	227691	300000
3	Kostanay	95930	237116	333046
4	Akmola	210000	230000	440000
5	Oral	165559	126539	292098
6	Semey	6110	8396	14505

Within only seven months, famine figures in various regions of Kazakhstan nearly doubled. For example, according to the Statistical Bureau's report of July 1, 1922, 246,311 people in Kostanay Province were suffering from starvation. Considering that the total population of the province was 414,572, approximately 60

[4] Антибольшевистское правительство (Из истории Белого движения): сборник документов. – Тверь: ТвГУ, 1999. – 219 с. (132 с.)

[5] Козыбаева М.М., Мурзаходжаев К.М., Малабаева С.К. Демографические последствия голода 1921–1922 гг. В Казахстане // Отан тарихы. – № 26(2). – С. 361-373 с. (365 с.).

[6] Шмидт В. Трагедия Казахстана 1921-1922 годов: голод и его последствия // Восточный архив. – № 1(37). – 2018. – 40-50 с. (48 с.).

percent of the population was affected by famine.

At the first session of the Second Convocation of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee in February 1921, a report was delivered identifying the causes of the famine. One of the major causes of starvation among the Kazakh population was linked to the Civil War. During the years of conflict, Kazakh territory became a battlefield, and local inhabitants were unable to maintain their economic activities properly. As a result of warfare and severe climatic disasters, livestock numbers declined by 50 percent, while in some regions the reduction reached 80 percent. Consequently, people were forced to leave their homes in disorganized waves in search of survival. Roads and railway lines became crowded with Kazakh refugees. Immediate measures were required to address the crisis. The Kazakh Central Executive Committee planned to establish medical aid services, food distribution centers, infectious disease clinics, and reception points in famine-stricken districts. In 1921, the Committee organized the Central Commission for Assistance to Famine Victims, chaired by S. Mendeshev. Representatives from state planning agencies, the People's Commissariat of Education, and the Children's Commission were included in its structure. The Commission's tasks involved assessing the scale of famine, determining the number of refugees in need of aid, restoring destroyed economic sectors, and addressing child homelessness. The Commission met once a week, and its resolutions were distributed throughout the republic.

In November 1921, the American Relief Administration (ARA) also joined famine relief efforts. The role of the ARA was particularly significant, as it provided humanitarian assistance and allocated food supplies for 120,000 children from famine-stricken districts. Nevertheless, ARA assistance proved insufficient. For this reason, local authorities appealed to the Catholic mission of the Pope in Soviet Russia for additional support. Representatives of the Catholic mission agreed to assist 20,000 children from famine-affected regions and, if necessary, up to 30,000 children. Food and medicine were planned to be delivered to Orenburg and nearby areas[7].

The importance of such aid to famine-stricken regions of Kazakhstan was extremely high. However, systematic measures were still necessary to fully overcome the consequences of the famine. T. Ryskulov emphasized that Soviet authorities devoted significant attention to famine relief and noted that starving populations were relocated to Turkestan, Russia, and neighboring republics. Among those relocated were 80,000 adults and 35,000 children. In support of famine relief efforts, the Turkestan Republic and Kyrgyzstan collected 40,000 head of livestock and distributed them to famine-affected regions of Kazakhstan. In addition, the RSFSR allocated two million poods of grain[8].

Special commissions were also established in famine-stricken regions. Overall, approximately 28 million people suffered from the famine caused by the policy of "War Communism." The situation of children among the starving population was especially severe. Children represented one of the most vulnerable social groups. According to 1922 statistics, 6.4 million children suffered from famine, and by the end of the year this figure had increased to 9 million. Crime rates among children also rose annually. Because the state struggled to resolve the problems of hunger and homelessness among children, 3,000 children were sent to Samarkand in November 1921. Food distribution centers established for famine-stricken children functioned poorly. Serious shortages of food and other essential supplies were clearly evident. In order to prevent child homelessness and save children from starvation, another commission was established under the Kazakh Central Executive Committee (KazCEC). The "Central

[7] Шмидт В. Трагедия Казахстана 1921–1922 годов: голод и его последствия // Восточный архив. – № 1(37). – 2018. – С. 47–48. (48 с.)

[8] Рыскулов Т. Собрание сочинений в трех томах. – Том 2. – Алматы: Казахстан, 1997. – 384 с. (243 с.)

Commission for Combating the Consequences of Famine" was chaired by S. Mendeshev. Its members included representatives of the State Planning Committee, the People's Commissariat of Education, the Children's Commission, and the RSFSR. The responsibilities of the Commission included determining the scale of famine, identifying the number of refugees in need of assistance, restoring damaged sectors of the economy, and placing orphaned children in special institutions in order to prevent child homelessness. The Commission also addressed a number of other related issues. Meetings were held once a week, and the Commission's decisions were distributed throughout the republic[9]. On April 24, 1924, the Chairman of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee, S. Mendeshev, stated: "War and famine have left us with a very тяжелое legacy that we have still not been able to fully overcome. This legacy is the problem of homeless children. In due time, the Party and public organizations actively participated in resolving the issue of child homelessness. One of our most important tasks is the rapid elimination of the severe consequences of child homelessness." Consequently, the issue of homeless children became one of the most pressing and complex problems facing the Kazakh government. Large numbers of orphaned and abandoned children without adult supervision appeared across all regions of Kazakhstan. In combating child homelessness, the authorities also relied on decrees issued by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. Particular attention was paid to Resolution No. 103 entitled "Regulations on Measures to Combat Child Homelessness." This decree clearly defined who was considered a homeless child and outlined the specific methods of working with them.

According to the decree, the following categories were classified as homeless children:

- full orphans under the age of sixteen;
- children who had completely lost contact with their parents and other relatives;
- children removed from their families by court decision;
- abandoned children.
- The decree also established the following measures for working with homeless children:
- transferring homeless children to the care of relatives or other trusted individuals upon mutual agreement;
- placing children in peasant households capable of supporting them, while providing state financial assistance to families that adopted children;
- placing homeless children in specialized state institutions for children;
- assigning homeless children to labor institutions;
- sending homeless children with severe disciplinary problems and those resistant to educational guidance to special colonies;
- transferring homeless children to specialized centers responsible for their placement and supervision;
- placing homeless children in medical institutions and kindergartens where healthcare assistance could be provided;
- providing material assistance to homeless children;
- involving children in labor activities and placing them in workshops, vocational schools, and technical colleges;
- appointing guardians or adoptive caregivers for homeless children.

The People's Commissariat of Education played a major role in work related to homeless children. At the same time, the People's Commissariat of Health was also heavily involved in combating child homelessness. During efforts to address the problem, it became evident that infectious diseases were

[9] Саятова А.С., Аликеева Г.М., Шахиева А.М. Медико-социальные факторы и голод населения в Казахстане в 20-е годы прошлого века (литературный обзор) // Вестник КазНМУ. – № 4. – 2021. – С. 166-171. (169 с.).

spreading extensively among homeless children. In a letter addressed to the Kazakh Central Executive Committee, Deputy People's Commissar of Health K. Stanitsky emphasized the need to establish isolated institutions for children suffering from chronic illnesses in addition to ordinary orphanages. However, he also warned that this issue required comprehensive discussion, since maintaining such institutions would require substantial financial resources. According to his report, approximately 60–70 percent of homeless children suffered from infectious diseases. Thus, the widespread prevalence of contagious illnesses among children and the urgent need to establish specialized institutions for them became matters requiring immediate attention. K. Stanitsky argued that it would be inappropriate to place the entire responsibility solely on the People's Commissariat of Health and stressed the necessity of broader institutional cooperation. As a result, the People's Commissariat of Education was also actively involved in this work. Alongside minor illnesses, children frequently suffered from severe diseases such as pulmonary, venereal, and skin diseases. Housing such children together with healthy children was considered extremely dangerous. Therefore, the People's Commissariat of Education and the People's Commissariat of Health quickly organized the classification and isolation of children according to their illnesses. Efforts were also made to provide these children with larger quantities of nutritious foo[10]. Between 1920 and 1924, a total of 196 institutions for children operated throughout the Kazakh ASSR, caring for 15,156 children. According to statistical data dated January 1, 1924, the total number of children who remained outside orphanages and without any form of assistance reached 45,000 across the republic. The system for combating child homelessness operated according to the scheme: "homeless child – reception center – orphanage." However, even children placed in orphanages and taken under state care often lived in difficult conditions. The central government allocated very limited funding to orphanages. Consequently, even basic necessities such as food and clothing were distributed sparingly. Beginning in 1923, institutions for children started to be financed from local budgets, which resulted in a sharp decline in the number of orphanages and their residents. The famine affecting the peoples of the Volga region between 1921 and 1923 further aggravated the situation. Their mass migration into Kazakhstan led to even greater neglect of homeless children within the country. As a result, child mortality rates increased significantly. Mortality among children under the age of one reached 80–90 percent, while among children older than one year it ranged between 50–60 percent. The conditions in orphanages, which were expected to reduce child mortality, were themselves extremely poor. Severe shortages of clothing, food, and bedding were clearly evident. In some cases, orphanages went without food supplies for more than a month. In order to avoid starvation, many children fled from orphanages. Despite the dire conditions in these institutions, the Central Children's Commission decided to continue admitting homeless children, as this represented an attempt to save their lives. Because the republic lacked the capacity to resolve the problem of homeless children on its own, authorities organized the relocation of children to safer regions. These included the RSFSR, the Turkestan Republic, and the Bukhara Republic. In 1921, 3,271 children divided among five trains were relocated to the territory of the Turkestan Republic. In 1922, 12,840 children were evacuated to safe areas by nineteen sanitary trains. One train was sent to the Bukhara Republic, while the others were directed to Russia and Ukraine. Overall, 79,500 homeless children from across the republic were

[10] Саятова А.С., Аликеева Г.М., Шахиева А.М. Медико-социальные факторы и голод населения в Казахстане в 20-е годы прошлого века (литературный обзор) // Вестник КазНМУ. – № 4. – 2021. – С. 166-171. (170 с.).

relocated to regions considered safe[11]. Thus, the Kazakh authorities attempted to systematically organize the placement of homeless children and combat child homelessness caused by the famine of 1921–1922. However, it was not always possible to stabilize conditions in local regions immediately. Consequently, migration abroad and the transformation of famine victims into refugees became increasingly widespread in famine-stricken districts. One of the destinations chosen by Kazakh refugees during this tragic period was Kyrgyzstan. The first major wave of migration to Kyrgyzstan caused by famine dates back to 1921–1922. Nevertheless, the issue of Kazakhs fleeing to Kyrgyz territory during the famine of 1921–1922 has not yet been comprehensively examined in historiography.

During 1921–1922, significant transformations were taking place in Kyrgyzstan. In accordance with the Bolshevik Decree on Land, land and water reforms began to be implemented in the spring of 1921. These years also witnessed the formation of the Kazakh diaspora in Kyrgyzstan. Kazakhs and Kyrgyz who had fled to China during the national liberation uprising of 1916 gradually began returning in 1921–1922. However, a considerable number of Kazakhs who feared returning to their historical homeland chose instead to settle in Kyrgyz territory. Kyrgyz manaps created favorable conditions for the Kazakhs arriving from China to engage in pastoral livestock breeding. Thus, the formation of the Kazakh diaspora in Kyrgyzstan during 1921–1922 was influenced not only by the famine, but also by the specific characteristics of the traditional nomadic economy. Kazakhs from the Akmola region migrated to Kyrgyz territory in search of pasturelands. Kazakh and Kyrgyz herders had long jointly used summer pastures such as Susamyr, Khan Jailau, and Karkara. According to a decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee issued on May 3, 1927, these pastures were officially transferred to Kyrgyzstan. This development also contributed to the consolidation of the Kazakh diaspora in Kyrgyzstan during the 1920s[12].

The problem of child homelessness in Kyrgyzstan intensified during the 1920s. Consequently, practical measures to combat child homelessness also began to develop during this period. On September 4, 1926, at a meeting of the Regional Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast, a report entitled "The Regional Children's Commission and Its Activities" was presented. Following the discussion of the report, the Council focused on several issues:

- trade unions and the Komsomol were not actively participating in the activities of the Children's Commission;
- insufficient efforts had been made to involve local residents in providing assistance to homeless children;
- despite these shortcomings, the Children's Commission had succeeded in establishing numerous local branches, which contributed to more effective efforts in combating child homelessness.
- Taking these shortcomings into account, the following tasks were assigned to the Children's Commission:
- adopting new regulations on the Children's Commission in accordance with the decrees of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars;
- ensuring that the Children's Commission not only combated child homelessness, but also carried out broader child protection activities, since child protection measures would help prevent homelessness;

[11] Сактаганова З.Г., Карсакова Г.Б. Детская беспризорность в Акмолинской губернии в 1921–1923 гг. и меры по ее ликвидации // Вестник КарГУ. – № 1(89). – 2018. – 49-56 с. (С. 51-53).

[12] Калшабаева Б.К. Некоторые вопросы этнической истории казахов Кыргызстана // Вестник КазНУ имени аль-Фараби. – Серия историческая. – № 4(95). – 2019. – 84-95 с. (С. 87-88).

- requiring regional executive committees to regularly review the activities of local branches of the Children's Commission and hear their reports;
- strengthening cooperation between regional executive committees and the Children's Commission and ensuring active participation in improving children's living conditions;
- monitoring the proper use of funds allocated for combating child homelessness;
- ensuring that regional departments of public education supervised the proper implementation of state measures against child homelessness at the local level;
- requiring regional branches of the Children's Commission to establish cooperation with local organizations in combating child homelessness;
- organizing the campaign "Friend of Children" throughout the region and broadly involving the local population;
- developing a unified regional plan for combating child homelessness[13].

In order to monitor the activities of the Regional Children's Commission, a report was presented on the work carried out between October 1, 1925, and September 1, 1926. It became evident that during this period the Commission's activities had been limited primarily to the city of Frunze. In order to improve effectiveness, a proposal was adopted to establish district and regional commissions. Between January and July 1926, measures were organized to identify homeless children, resulting in the registration of 250 homeless children. Of these, 90 children were placed under guardianship, while 15 were admitted to orphanages. Eighty-two children were returned to their homelands by railway, and another twenty were transported by other means. During these years, 3,000 rubles were allocated in the city of Frunze to support homeless children.

In November 1925, a night shelter for homeless children was opened in Frunze. During the winter months, up to eleven employees worked at this institution. The shelter was constructed quickly, but it suffered from numerous shortcomings and lacked proper equipment and facilities. With the arrival of spring, homeless children regularly abandoned the shelter and left the institution.

In January and March 1925, the Children's Commission also carried out activities aimed at establishing and developing periodical publications. The purpose of these publications was to promote public awareness and encourage residents to provide care and assistance to homeless children. These periodicals were published in both Kyrgyz and Russian[14]. The problem of homelessness among Kazakhs who fled to Kyrgyzstan, particularly among children, became increasingly severe during the 1930s, largely as a consequence of the famine of those years.

The 1930s became a period of profound transformation for Kazakhstan. Mistakes in the organization of economic policies contributed directly to the outbreak of mass famine. During the famine years in Kazakhstan, a large portion of the Kazakh population fled abroad. Alongside China, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Turkey, Kyrgyzstan became one of the principal destinations sought by Kazakh refugees. Due to the influx of refugees, the number of Kazakhs living in Kyrgyzstan increased tenfol[15]. n a letter sent by T. Ryskulov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, to I.V. Stalin on March 9, 1933, it was reported that approximately 100,000 Kazakhs had migrated to Kyrgyzstan [16] . According to information presented at the beginning of 1933 by the Bureau of the Communist Party's Kyrgyz

[13] Қырғызстан Республикасы Орталық Мемлекеттік Архиві (бұдан әрі – ҚырР ОМА). 20-қ. 1-т. 294-іс. 4-п.

[14] ҚырР ОМА. 20-қ. 1-т. 294-іс. 18-19-пп.

[15] Плоских В.М., Джунушалиев Д.Д. История кыргызов и Кыргызстана. – Бишкек: КРСУ, 2009. – 566 с. (286 с.).

[16] ҚырР ОМА. 21-қ. 16-т. 134-іс. 29-30-пп.

Regional Committee to D.I. Manzhara, representative of the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party for Central Asia, the number of Kazakh migrants in Kyrgyzstan amounted to approximately 25,000–30,000 households[17].

Protocol No. 91 of the meeting of the Kazakh Regional Party Committee dated February 19, 1932, stated that residents of districts bordering Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan were migrating en masse. However, the majority of these migrants were officially portrayed as nationalists and wealthy elites opposed to Soviet rule. Wealthy individuals and nationalists within local party organizations in Kazakhstan, as well as in Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan, were accused of assisting the mass migration of Kazakhs. Consequently, the Regional Party Committee issued a resolution requesting the Central Asian Bureau and the Kyrgyz Regional Committee to assist in returning these so-called wealthy and nationalist elements. Plans were also made to subject them to party responsibility and to purge nationalist elements from Soviet institutions and educational establishments throughout the country. Comrade M.I. Kakhiani was sent on an official mission to conduct negotiations with the Central Asian Bureau[18]. On February 23, 1933, an urgent telegram was sent to Jusup Abdrakhmanov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR. The telegram contained information regarding Kazakh households settled in the "Kyzyl Keruenshi" artel. The attached lists recorded the names of household owners and the number of livestock they possessed. The data clearly showed that many Kazakhs owned no livestock at all, while the wealthiest among them possessed no more than four camels. This demonstrates that the claims made by the Kazakh Regional Party Committee were unfounded. The situation within Kazakhstan itself was also extremely critical. According to T. Ryskulov, "In 1932 alone, 50,000 homeless children were officially registered. Orphanages in Kazakhstan were overcrowded with homeless children. Child mortality rates were extremely high. For example, in the basement of an orphanage in Semey, the bodies of twenty children were discovered. Due to the lack of transportation, the bodies had remained there for a long period. The Aktobe branch of the Red Cross reported that the situation of Kazakh children in Torgai was also catastrophic. Nearly all children under the age of four had died. Across the republic, for every 100–150 children, one or two children died daily, and in some cases as many as three children per day. In January alone, 1,100 homeless children were gathered in Karaganda, 450 in Kyzylorda, and 300 in Ayagoz. There was a real danger that all the children of the republic could perish in the near future."[19]

J. Abdrakhmanov wrote that "in the spring of 1932, Kazakhs began migrating en masse to Kyrgyzstan. As a result of starvation, deaths among them increased dramatically. This situation deeply alarmed many officials, including myself." In his diary entry dated February 25, 1932, J. Abdrakhmanov noted: "Another city has emerged near Frunze. It consists of the yurts of Kazakh refugees who fled because of famine and poverty. This is the result of Filipp's work."[20] On October 17, 1932, the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz ASSR discussed a draft decree entitled "On Providing Assistance to Children Arriving from Various Regions of Kazakhstan." Beginning on November 13, 1932,

[17] ҚырР ОМА. 21-қ. 16-т. 17-іс. 5-п.

[18] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (34 с.)

[19] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (С. 70-76)

[20] . Сарсенбаев Б.С. Кыргызско-казахские взаимоотношения в составе СССР (20–30-е гг. XX в.). – Бишкек: КРСУ, 2013. – 144 с. (66 с.)

large groups of starving Kazakhs from Kazakhstan started arriving in Kyrgyzstan in massive numbers. J. Abdrakhmanov convened a government meeting and stated that the republic's limited resources prevented the authorities from fully organizing assistance for the starving Kazakhs. Therefore, he requested an additional allocation of 100,000 rubles from the treasury of the RSFSR. In February 1933, J. Abdrakhmanov sent a confidential letter to the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR. In the letter, he reported that a large number of homeless children had arrived from Kazakhstan and Siberia during 1932. Their total number amounted to approximately 2,000 children. He noted that 100,000 rubles had been allocated for their maintenance, but that this funding had only been рассчитано for three months. According to agreements with the Kazakh authorities, homeless children were to be returned to their homeland; however, another 2,400 homeless children subsequently arrived in Kyrgyz territory. Of these children, 1,000 required full state care, while 1,400 needed temporary shelter and assignment to food distribution centers. For this reason, he emphasized the urgent necessity of allocating an additional 956,983 rubles[21]. Abdrakhmanov also reported that Kazakh refugees had settled in both the northern and southern regions of Kyrgyzstan and that they possessed neither property nor the means to sustain economic activity. Similar concerns were expressed in a report prepared by the Executive Secretary of the Central Children's Commission under the Kyrgyz ASSR. In an official memorandum addressed to N. Zubov, Executive Secretary of the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee, it was stated that the "Shukurylys" organization in Frunze had independently reached an agreement with the People's Commissariat of Education of the Kazakh ASSR and brought 500 orphanage children to Kyrgyzstan. The employees accompanying the children, like many other responsible officials, did not know where the children would be accommodated. As a result, the homeless Kazakh children who arrived in Kyrgyzstan were forced to live at the railway station for two weeks. In order to provide food for the children, the Children's Commission spent 1,500 rubles. After the arrival of the second group of children, the Central Children's Commission urgently appealed to its counterparts in Kazakhstan to intervene and resolve the situation. Before a representative from Kazakhstan arrived, the People's Commissariat of Education of the Kyrgyz ASSR allocated an additional 300 rubles. However, these funds were never used for the children's needs. One of the officials responsible for transporting the children appropriated the money and abandoned the children without supervision. Infectious diseases soon spread among the children, forcing authorities to place them in hospitals immediately. According to the original agreement, the children arriving from Kazakhstan were supposed to be healthy adolescents between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, numbering a total of 500 individuals. It had also been planned that they would arrive with sufficient food supplies and bedding. In reality, however, the children brought to Kyrgyzstan were between nine and twelve years old, lacked bedding, and wore poor and inadequate clothing. Many of them were also seriously ill. Because it was impossible for them to live in unheated barracks, numerous cases of children fleeing from the institutions were recorded. Of the 251 children accepted by the "Shukurylys" organization, many were eventually returned to Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, sixty children were employed by the organization. The total number of children who either escaped or died reached seventeen[22].

[21] Курманов З. Турар Рыскулбеков и Юсуп Абдрахманов: сотрудничество в борьбе за спасение казахских откочевников от ашаршылыка в Кыргызстане // Вестник КырГУ имени И. Арабаева. – № 3. – 2021. – С. 182-187 с. (185 с.).

[22] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и

The material conditions of the Kazakhs who migrated to Kyrgyzstan were extremely difficult. The situation of children, in particular, required urgent attention. M. Tuganbaeva, Deputy Chairperson of the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee, reported that nearly 10,000 starving Kazakhs had arrived in and around the city of Frunze and that 15–20 people, especially children, were dying every day as a result of starvation. Although local residents initially attempted to assist the starving Kazakhs by sharing the food supplies they possessed, such aid proved insufficient. Some of the migrants managed to survive independently and found work in collective farms and state farms, but the majority lived in extreme poverty. With the arrival of winter, the situation of Kazakh refugees became even more severe. Infectious diseases spread rapidly, and mortality rates, particularly among children, increased sharply. In desperation, many families began handing over their children to special institutions and orphanages. On June 7, 1933, a case of cannibalism involving starving people consuming children was even recorded in the city of Tokmok[23]. In an effort to improve the situation, the Kyrgyz government implemented a number of measures. At a government meeting on May 28, 1933, J. Abdrakhmanov specifically raised the issue of "employing Kazakh refugees," considering labor participation to be one of the primary means of overcoming starvation. Earlier, on February 27, 1932, A.O. Shakhray, First Secretary of the Kyrgyz Regional Committee, had written a letter to F.I. Goloshchekin emphasizing the need to carry out explanatory work in order to facilitate the rapid return of Kazakh refugees gathered around Frunze. He also requested the arrival of a special government commission for this purpose. According to the letter, if the commission failed to arrive, the refugees would be mobilized for spring sowing campaigns[24]. Many of the Kazakhs who fled to Kyrgyzstan, including their children, lacked official identification documents, which created additional difficulties. In order to place homeless Kazakh children in special institutions, 150,000 rubles were allocated from the republican budget. As a result, more than 1,500 children were placed in reception centers and orphanages across the republic. Kazakh migrants were also employed in industrial enterprises, construction projects, collective farms, and state farms. Of the allocated funds, 100,000 rubles were spent directly on relief assistance for starving Kazakhs. One of the most urgent tasks was the collection of homeless children and their placement in orphanages. The gathering of homeless children throughout Kyrgyzstan was carried out by members of the Red Cross and the Children's Commission. However, the orphanages in Frunze lacked the capacity to accommodate all homeless Kazakh children. Therefore, in addition to Frunze, new orphanages were established in other major centers and cities across Kyrgyzstan[25]. M. Tuganbaeva, Deputy Chairperson of the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee, also addressed a letter to M.I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. In the letter, she expressed gratitude for the allocation of 100,000 rubles for Kazakh refugees and their children, while also requesting an additional 900,000 rubles in financial assistance. The additional funds were intended for the purchase of 50 railway wagons of construction timber, the establishment of 30 food distribution centers, and the creation of two agricultural colonies for children. In addition, plans were made to purchase industrial goods for 10,000 adults and 3,500 children.

материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (40 с.).

[23] ҚырР ОМА. 21-қ. 16-т. 67-іс. 64-п.

[24] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (С. 35-36).

[25] ҚырР ОМА. 21-қ. 16-т. 17-іс. 24-п.

Results

Although the experience of combating child homelessness in Kyrgyzstan had developed relatively early, the arrival of large numbers of children as a result of the famine in Kazakhstan during the 1930s demonstrated that substantial challenges still remained in providing them with adequate care and support. Nevertheless, the Central Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz ASSR undertook a number of measures aimed at supporting the children of Kazakh refugees through state assistance programs. On October 29, 1932, a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz ASSR was held. During the session, special attention was devoted to providing assistance to children arriving from famine-stricken regions of Kazakhstan and to eliminating homelessness among children living on the streets. In response to the growing number of homeless children, several resolutions were adopted. For example, district authorities in Rykov, Talas, Kalinin, Alamedin, Issyk-Kul, Jalalabad, and Kyzyl-Zhar were instructed to establish food distribution centers immediately in order to save Kazakh children from starvation. At the same time, the practice of distributing free meals specifically for Kazakh children was introduced. In addition, the People's Commissariat of Supply of the Kyrgyz ASSR was ordered to allocate industrial goods necessary for 3,500 children. The Commissariat was also required to ensure the timely delivery of food supplies requested by the People's Commissariat of Education for homeless children. The People's Commissariat of Education allocated 20,000 rubles for homeless children through republican and district economic organizations. Meanwhile, the People's Commissariat of Health assumed responsibility for providing medical assistance to homeless children. Plans were also developed to establish reception centers for homeless children in large public buildings located in district centers. During the meeting, criticism was directed toward the organization known as "Friend of Children." The organization received an official warning for failing to demonstrate sufficient practical activity in resolving the problems faced by homeless children. The People's Commissariat of Education, the People's Commissariat of Labor, and collective farm organizations were instructed to provide employment for at least 300 homeless children. In addition, the Children's Commission was tasked with urgently opening overnight shelters for children in three buildings allocated by the City Council. The authorities of Belovod District were also instructed to establish an orphanage capable of accommodating sixty children[26].

During the 1930s, not only Kazakhs but also populations from certain regions of Russia became refugees and were forced to flee their places of residence en masse. One of the principal causes of this process was the secret OGPU directive entitled "The Liquidation of the Kulaks as a Class." At the Third All-Russian Congress on Child Protection held in May 1930, officials openly acknowledged that "in certain regions, indicators of child homelessness are increasing. The social background of child homelessness during these years is fundamentally different. It is evident that the policy of eliminating the kulaks has significantly intensified the problem of child homelessness, and we must not avoid recognizing this cause."

Beginning in March 1930, the structure of the Children's Commission underwent substantial changes. These changes were closely connected with the crisis and eventual termination of the New Economic Policy (NEP). From this point onward, restrictions were imposed on the financial and economic activities of the Children's Commission. At the same time, efforts to provide extensive equipment and facilities for model orphanages were discontinued. Beginning in 1931, a new practice was introduced whereby orphanages established their own forms of productive economic activity. Workshops were built for orphanage residents,

[26] Ашаршылык в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (С. 41-43.).

reflecting the severe financial difficulties faced in maintaining children's institutions. The Soviet state proved unprepared for the dramatic increase in the number of homeless children and for addressing their growing social problems. In addition, the number of orphanages declined throughout the Soviet republics.

A report issued on November 20, 1930, by the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR and the Children's Commission under the All-Russian Central Executive Committee stated that the material conditions of orphanages throughout the republics were extremely poor. The report highlighted problems such as insufficient food supplies and the lack of adequate clothing for children. According to statistical data from 1931, there were 1,475 orphanages housing 105,561 children. By 1933, however, the number of orphanages had increased to 2,045, with a total of 241,744 children living in them[27].

Efforts to accommodate the children of Kazakh refugees and place them under state care were reflected primarily in the work of boarding schools and orphanages. During the 1930s, boarding schools for homeless children became increasingly active in Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, their material and technical conditions remained extremely poor. An article entitled "Internat po Talasski," published in the newspaper Sovetskaya Kirgiziya on October 17, 1929, described the difficult conditions at a children's institution in Talas. The boarding school accommodated sixty children between the ages of nine and fifteen. Almost all of the children were forced to live in torn clothing, barefoot, and without proper hygiene. The shortage of shoes and the prolonged repair of the boarding school bathhouse, which lasted for more than three months, worsened the situation considerably[28]. Medical supervision was also absent at the Talas boarding school. As a result, children were admitted without any preliminary medical examinations, and only one general health inspection was conducted each year. The author of the article, Ivanov, noted that the living conditions of the institution's staff were comparatively better. Taking advantage of their status as adults, employees occupied the best and warmest rooms in the building. Having gone unpaid for two months, many employees neglected their duties and focused primarily on their own concerns. Consequently, children were frequently left without proper supervision. The severe conditions at the Talas boarding school were also described in a report written by Evgeny Sushkov, who served as an inspector, addressed to the People's Commissar of Education of the Kyrgyz ASSR. This report was submitted following an official investigation launched after the publication of the article "Internat po Talasski." Sushkov acknowledged that some improvements had been made after the article appeared. For example, the bathhouse had become operational, and clothing and shoes had been delivered. However, he also pointed to numerous unresolved problems, including the continued shortage of clothing, insufficient fuel for heating during winter, a lack of beds and blankets, and the provision of only one type of meal.

The material and technical conditions of the boarding school itself were equally difficult. There was a severe shortage of desks, chairs, and textbooks. After identifying these deficiencies, E. Sushkov submitted several recommendations to the People's Commissariat of Education:

- to establish systematic supervision over the funds, food supplies, and clothing allocated to the Talas boarding school;
- to introduce oversight and administrative guidance from educational departments in order to ensure the proper functioning of the boarding school;

[27] Славко А.А. Государство и беспризорностъ в 1930-е годы: система функционирование детских домов // Вестник СамГУ. – № 1(67). – 2009. – 24-27 с. (24 с.).

[28] ҚырР ОМА. 1097-қ. 1-т. 134-іс. 42-п.

- to ensure the timely delivery of textbooks to the orphanage;
- to improve children's nutrition by providing a varied diet rather than a single type of food;
- to request assistance from the Kyrgyz People's Commissariat of Health in establishing sanitary and medical supervision at the boarding school;
- to add a specialist for juvenile affairs to the official staff structure of the Talas boarding school[29].

However, the problems related to the material and technical conditions of the Talas boarding school, food provision, and the proper organization of child care remained unresolved for a long time. These same pressing issues were raised once again in the minutes of the Bureau meeting of the Talas District Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) dated April 15, 1935. In particular, the following deficiencies were noted:

- educational and воспитательная work was poorly organized, extracurricular activities and clubs functioned inadequately, and there were no physical education grounds for children;
- there was a severe shortage of blankets and pillows;
- the orphanage lacked sufficient metal beds, with only 46 metal beds available instead of the required 100;
- the financial support provided to the Talas orphanage was inadequate. Only the salaries of employees were paid properly. During the first quarter, the orphanage was supposed to receive 24,286 rubles for children's needs, but in reality only 9,919 rubles were allocated;
- repair work remained incomplete;
- the approved staff structure was insufficient for properly organizing educational and economic activities;
- the orphanage did not possess its own land plot designated for agricultural and хозяйственные activities[30].

Not only the boarding schools in Talas, but also other orphanages throughout Kyrgyzstan suffered from extremely poor material conditions. These harsh realities were also reflected in a letter written by one of the residents of the orphanage in Tokmok. In the letter, the child described how, despite having lived in the orphanage for more than a month, the children had still not been allowed to bathe, resulting in severe lice infestations. The author also complained about torn shoes that were never replaced and the failure to provide necessary clothing. Such difficult material conditions forced children to struggle for their own survival and awakened harsh survival instincts among them. According to the letter, this situation contributed to the spread of disorderly behavior among orphanage residents[31]. Orphanage No. 3 in Tokmok had been established in 1933 specifically for homeless Kazakh children. The conditions in the orphanage were extremely severe. The head of the orphanage, Parfenova, together with Syrmyachkova, was reportedly involved in stealing bread, food supplies, blankets, and pillows allocated to the children. As a result, the children suffered from hunger, and the orphanage fell into a disastrous condition. The institution was filthy, its windows were broken, and children's dirty clothing lay scattered together with food supplies. Sick children were fed only once a day. Instead of the prescribed 400 grams of bread, children received only 100 grams daily. Employees had effectively turned the orphanage into a center for food theft and the spread of infectious diseases. All of these conditions led to a dramatic increase in child mortality. During the first six months of 1933 alone, 400 children died.

What made this situation especially alarming was that these events did not occur in remote regions of Kyrgyzstan, but rather in the Frunze district itself, under the authority of the People's

[29] ҚырР ОМА. 1097-қ. 1-т. 134-іс. 43-44-пп.

[30] ҚырР ОМА. 658-қ. 3-т. 266-іс. 87-п.

[31] ҚырР ОМА. 1097-қ. 1-т. 128-іс. 47-п.

Commissariat of Education. On May 19, 1933, criminal proceedings were initiated in connection with these abuses. Sixteen employees of the orphanage were prosecuted. The scandal surrounding the orphanage was given major social and political significance. Authorities in the Frunze district were instructed to assist fully in the criminal investigation and support the work of the courts and the prosecutor's office. The republican prosecutor, Smirnova, was advised to impose severe punishments on those found guilty[32]. In general, the theft of funds and food supplies allocated for famine victims became widespread. T. Ryskulov reported that only 15 percent of the aid allocated by the state actually reached the starving population. Bread and grain intended for famine-stricken Kazakhs were frequently stolen at the local level and then resubmitted to the state in order to fulfill grain procurement quotas. Despite the catastrophic conditions throughout the republic, grain procurement campaigns were never suspended[33]. On July 7, 1933, T. Ryskulov addressed a letter to the Central Asian Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and to the Kyrgyz ASSR. Copies of the letter were also sent to N.V. Krylenko, the People's Commissar of Justice of the RSFSR. In his letter, Ryskulov described the abuses taking place in the food distribution centers established in Tokmok for starving Kazakhs and homeless children [34] . Earlier, on April 22, 1933, J. Abdrakhmanov had also written to the Central Asian Bureau of the Central Committee requesting the allocation of 250 poods of mill waste as relief assistance. Mill waste did not consist of pure flour; rather, it contained crushed grain residues, flour dust, and dirt. In most cases, such waste products were used as feed for livestock and poultry. It was considered harmful even for animals, let alone for human consumption. Nevertheless, on April 27, Abdrakhmanov's request was approved. The chairman of the Talas District Executive Committee was instructed to distribute the allocated mill waste among starving Kazakhs.

The material and social conditions of the orphanage located in the Kyzyl-Zhar district of Jalal-Abad region were also extremely poor. This orphanage had been established during the years of famine in the Kazakh steppe and the mass migration of Kazakhs abroad. According to data from 1933, fifty children lived in the orphanage, five of whom were Kazakh children. Although the children were divided into three groups, they were not fully provided with educational materials. Educational and воспитательная work was virtually nonexistent. It became evident that the caregivers lacked the necessary qualifications and that the administration paid little attention to these issues. The organization of food provision was also inadequate, while sleeping quarters lacked the required equipment and facilities. Although recommendations were made to eliminate these shortcomings in the future, resolving the situation remained extremely difficult[35]. On January 14, 1933, the children living in the Kyzyl-Zhar orphanage issued a public appeal connected with reductions in bread rations. The children wrote slogans such as: "Give us bread!", "Give us bread, we are pioneers, we are workers' children!", and "Give us bread, we are pioneers, we want to eat!" Following this incident, an investigation was carried out, revealing that a teacher named Karava Negresh had encouraged the children to write the slogans and post them on the school walls. He was subsequently denounced as an

[32] ҚырР ОМА. 10-қ. 1-т. 559-іс. 46-п.

[33] Курманов З.К. Из истории дружбы и братства: борьба с казахским «ашаршылыком» в Кыргызстане // Вестник Кыргызско-Российского славянского университета. – Т. 21. – № 3. – 2021. – 181-189 с. (186 с.).

[34] Плоских В.В. Революцией мобилизованный и призванный: Турар Рыскулов // Вестник Кыргызско-Российского славянского университета. – Т. 17. – № 4. – 2017. – 22-26 с. (24 с.).

[35] ҚырР ОМА. 658-қ. 3-т. 266-іс. 74-75-пп.

"enemy" and described as being of kulak origin[36].

Several orphanages that accommodated homeless Kazakh children during the famine years were also located in the Karabalta and Belovod districts. Conditions in these orphanages were similarly poor. In a letter sent in June 1935 by the Deputy Chairperson of the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee to the People's Commissar of Education T. Dzholdashev, the general conditions of the orphanages in these districts were described in detail. After inspecting the orphanages between May 25 and 28, 1935, the following observations were recorded:

"The orphanage in the Karabalta district is named after the Third International. The orphanage consists of eight peasant huts. The windows are small, the floors are earthen, and very little light enters the rooms. There is not a single metal or wooden bed in the orphanage. Children sleep on small wooden platforms. Blankets, pillows, and bedding are extremely dirty and are not replaced. There are no washbasins, and towels are insufficient. Because the children drink unboiled water, infectious intestinal diseases are widespread. At the time of my visit, nineteen children were in the isolation ward, while another twenty were receiving treatment at the outpatient clinic. The isolation ward consists of two rooms: one for sick children, while the other houses the pharmacy and outpatient clinic. The nurse, an elderly woman named Chubinskaya, wore torn and dirty clothing. Medicines were lacking, and the isolation ward itself was extremely filthy."[37] The Deputy Chairperson of the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee associated the difficult conditions of the orphanage primarily with the incompetence of its director. The director, V.N. Yuryev, had been appointed by the People's Commissariat of Education. His inability to organize the work properly was explained mainly by his irresponsible attitude toward his duties. As a result, a proposal was submitted calling for his immediate dismissal. Twenty-eight Kazakh children were being raised in this orphanage.

The Deputy Chairperson of the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee also visited another orphanage for Kazakh children located in the Karabalta district. This orphanage, situated in the settlement of Sosnovka, had been relocated there from Karabalta in 1934. The building had originally been constructed specifically for use as an orphanage. However, it lacked a dining hall and laundry facilities for the children. At the same time, the orphanage was located in a very favorable environment, surrounded by mountains and supplied with clean air and water. No child deaths had been recorded there. Fifteen hectares of land belonging to the orphanage were used to cultivate barley, oats, and wheat. The institution also owned five horses, two cows, and twenty pigs. Kumis was provided to the children daily. According to an agreement between the orphanage and the collective farm, one liter of kumis was purchased for fifty kopeks.

Nevertheless, the People's Commissariat of Education was also informed about numerous deficiencies in this institution for Kazakh children. It was reported that two children were forced to share one bed, while blankets and pillows were insufficient. The director of the orphanage, Zinat Seifullin, had been ill and absent from work for five months. There was no library, and no concrete educational plan for working with the children had been established. Taking these shortcomings into account, a recommendation was made to dismiss Z. Seifullin and appoint a new director who was also a member of the Communist Party. A total of fifty-three Kazakh children lived in the orphanage, including thirty-seven boys and sixteen girls[38].

Another institution that accommodated homeless children during the famine years was

[36] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (48-49 с.).

[37] ҚырР ОМА. 658-қ. 3-т. 266-іс. 120-п.

[38] ҚырР ОМА. 658-қ. 3-т. 266-іс. 122-п.

the Belovod orphanage. The orphanage consisted of five peasant houses. According to available records, conditions in the Belovod orphanage were comparatively better than those in the Karabalta district. The institution employed a staff of seventeen people. Nevertheless, like many other orphanages, it also suffered from numerous deficiencies, including:

- the dining hall being cold and damp;
- the absence of washbasins;
- bedding and blankets not being replaced regularly;
- frequent outbreaks of infectious diseases among children;
- the lack of a separate bank account for the orphanage, which resulted in irregular financing;
- the failure of the People's Commissariat of Education to provide a concrete educational and воспитательная work plan for the summer period, leaving orphanages to function according to their own discretion during summer months;
- the lack of textbooks, instructional materials, and official guidelines required for the orphanage;
- the absence of a library.

Six Kazakh children were being raised in the Belovod orphanage. Like other orphanages, the Belovod institution possessed its own agricultural land plot intended for economic activities. Barley, oats, beets, and corn were cultivated there. The orphanage also maintained ten cows, forty-five sheep, eleven pigs, two horses, and eighty chickens[39].

During the 1930s, one of the most important methods for integrating homeless children into society was their involvement in factory and vocational training schools. In August–September 1930, plans were made throughout the RSFSR to enroll up to 130,000 adolescents in factory-vocational training schools. Approximately 30 percent of these students—or around 30,000–40,000 homeless children—were expected to come from orphanages and homeless backgrounds. This policy was intended to help adapt homeless children and orphanage residents to socially useful labor and productive work. However, the process of integrating homeless children into factory-vocational training schools also revealed numerous shortcomings. Among the main problems were:

the insufficient educational and labor preparation of orphanage residents;

the absence of a concrete plan for enrolling homeless children in factory-vocational training schools;

the lack of special dormitories or residential facilities for homeless children in such schools;

the inadequate attention paid by educational departments, public organizations, and labor institutions to the placement of homeless children in factory-vocational training schools.

Taking these shortcomings into account, a number of important proposals were developed in the Kyrgyz Republic. Regional and district educational departments were instructed to determine the number of orphanage residents, identify those eligible for vocational training schools, and assess their educational level and labor preparedness. The People's Commissariat of Education, the Children's Commission, and local educational departments were required to resolve housing issues before the beginning of the academic year. In addition, labor agencies, trade unions, and Komsomol organizations became involved in solving important issues such as the employment of orphanage residents over the age of eighteen[40].

The experience of combating child homelessness in the Kyrgyz Republic developed and improved from year to year. Special resolutions were adopted, while shortcomings identified in previous years were carefully reviewed and used as the basis for new proposals. As a result, efforts to combat child homelessness reached a new level. Across the Kyrgyz Republic, the following measures gradually began to be implemented in the fight against child homelessness:

[39] ҚырР ОМА. 658-қ. 3-т. 266-іс. 122-124-пп.

[40] 3-қ. 1-т. **134**-іс. 333-334-пп.

teaching orphanage residents throughout the republic to engage in socially useful labor;
increasing the number of caregivers in orphanages and expanding the participation of representatives of the local population among the staff;
actively recruiting skilled craftsmen from among the local population who possessed specialized pedagogical training to work as teacher-instructors in orphanages;
maintaining available places in orphanages at all times for orphaned and semi-orphaned boys and girls;
promptly registering older children with labor exchanges and assigning them to industrial enterprises;
involving children aged sixteen to seventeen in collective farm labor, with the primary objective of integrating them into the economic activities of local households;
establishing orphanages for children between the ages of three and eight;
opening corrective labor colonies for boys and girls whose behavior fell under Article 46 of the Criminal Code and who were considered conditionally delinquent;
strengthening the educational and methodological foundations for preparing orphanage residents for labor relations;
sending teachers and administrative staff to central institutions for professional training and qualification improvement;
introducing a system of regular reporting on the activities of orphanages;
focusing not on increasing the number of orphanages in the future, but rather on expanding existing institutions;
encouraging peasant families to adopt and care for orphanage residents[41].

The massive influx of Kazakh refugees and homeless children into the territory of the Kyrgyz ASSR required the state to allocate additional financial resources. In January–February 1933, the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz ASSR addressed an official letter to M.I. Kalinin. In the letter, he emphasized that central government assistance was urgently needed in order to save Kazakh refugees and their children from starvation and help them adapt to daily life. Kazakh refugees had settled in more than twenty districts of the Kyrgyz ASSR. The letter raised concerns that local authorities had been unprepared for such an emergency situation, resulting in large numbers of Kazakhs dying from cold weather and inadequate food provision. For this reason, it was stressed that the 100,000 rubles allocated with the authorization of M.I. Kalinin were insufficient. These funds were already being used to support 1,500 homeless children. Attention was therefore drawn to the urgent need for an additional 900,000 rubles in order to provide assistance for the new waves of Kazakh refugees and the increasing number of homeless children. The proposed funds were intended to establish thirty additional food distribution centers and two agricultural colonies, each capable of accommodating one thousand children. In addition to financial support, the authorities also requested fifty railway wagons of timber and other construction materials[42].

The activities of orphanages within the Kyrgyz Republic intensified significantly following the arrival of Kazakhs displaced by famine. A special plan was adopted specifically to accommodate Kazakh children. This plan was discussed at a meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz ASSR. According to the plan, the following measures were to be implemented:

- providing free lunches for children, with daily meals prepared for 500 children at a cost of fifty kopeks per child; the total daily cost amounted to 250 rubles, while monthly expenditures were projected at 7,560 rubles;
- opening an additional reception center capable of accommodating sixty children, with 26,460 rubles allocated for this purpose until the end of the year;

[41] ҚырР ОМА. 674-қ. 1-т. 56-іс. 516-п.

[42] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (58-59 с.).

- expanding the orphanage in Frunze, for which 6,000 rubles were to be allocated from the state treasury;
- removing older children and those who still had parents from orphanages in order to create space for homeless children living on the streets;
- allocating 37,500 rubles in material assistance for approximately 1,500 children, with each child expected to receive goods worth about 25 rubles;
- allocating 7,500 rubles for medical and sanitary services for 1,500 children, calculated at five rubles per child;
- allocating 20,000 rubles for the establishment of dormitories equipped with basic necessities for 200 children;
- allocating 50,000 rubles to provide special clothing for 250 children enrolled in factory-vocational training schools[43].

In its efforts to combat child homelessness, the Kyrgyz ASSR was guided by resolutions issued by the central authorities. On June 20, 1927, a session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee was held, during which several important decisions concerning child homelessness and child protection were adopted. Specifically, a number of institutions working to improve children's living conditions were granted benefits such as tax exemptions. For example:

- colonies, sanatoriums, rest homes, and pharmacies working to improve children's welfare were exempted from taxes and state fees;
- industrial enterprises, commercial organizations, and cultural institutions engaged in improving children's living conditions were exempted from local taxes;
- educational-production workshops connected with orphanages and institutions for the social upbringing of children were exempted from both state and local taxes and fees;
- dining halls, tea houses, and dairy production facilities serving children were exempted from state and local taxes;
- institutions organizing concerts, theatrical performances, and public events aimed at improving children's welfare were also exempted from local and state taxes[44].

The issue of placing homeless children under state care and providing social support for Kazakhs who fled because of the famine represented a severe economic burden for the Kyrgyz ASSR. In his diary entry dated January 13, 1931, J. Abdrakhmanov wrote about visiting the market and teahouses in Jalal-Abad. Presenting himself as a Kalmyk Red Army soldier and pretending not to know the local language, he was able to speak freely with ordinary residents. During these conversations, he observed widespread dissatisfaction with the Soviet authorities. He concluded that this growing resentment could eventually lead to the emergence of a Basmachi movement in Kyrgyz territory. Abdrakhmanov associated this dissatisfaction with the Soviet policy of "liquidating the kulaks as a class." On February 4, 1930, the Central Executive Committee of the USSR issued a secret directive concerning the confiscation of kulak property. Under this directive, not only wealthy peasants but in some cases even middle and poor peasants became targets of confiscation, leading to widespread unrest. Many were expelled from republics and collective farm territories and sent to corrective labor colonies. According to 1934 records, there were nine such colonies within the territory of the Kyrgyz ASSR. While visiting the Karakol district, Abdrakhmanov spoke with a peasant who informed him that, by spring, many dissatisfied Kyrgyz intended to migrate to China. This information was later confirmed by the chairman of the Issyk-Kul District Executive Committee. Abdrakhmanov concluded: "Soviet power and flight to China seem incompatible, yet it is possible. We have pursued the grain procurement campaign too aggressively." By mid-February 1931, forty peasant households

[43] ҚырР ОМА. 674-қ. 1-т. 100-іс. 50-п.

[44] ҚырР ОМА. 674-қ. 1-т. 18-іс. 94-п.

had already fled from Kyrgyzstan to China[45]. On April 18, 1931, J. Abdrakhmanov arrived in Osh by postal aircraft. From an altitude of 700–800 meters, he observed only scattered yurts across the Kyrgyz steppe, with no sheep flocks, horse herds, or children tending livestock. Reflecting on what he saw, he wrote: "It was heartbreaking to look at these yurts, at their remnants, and at the collapse of the economic and political foundations of my native people." Thus, the inability to provide adequate support for homeless Kazakh children and the poor conditions within orphanages were closely connected to the broader crisis engulfing the country[46]. Many districts of Kyrgyzstan were themselves suffering from severe food shortages, while infectious diseases were spreading among the population. In the Alai-Gulcha district alone, thirty people had died from starvation within the previous month and a half. In the Kalinin district, twelve collective farms faced acute food shortages. In the Central District Council, two collective farm workers died from starvation. Similar cases were recorded in the "Intymak" collective farm, where two workers also perished from hunger. Kyrgyzstan failed to fulfill its grain procurement obligations in 1932. As a result, on May 9, 1933, severe reprimands were issued to A.O. Shakhray, First Secretary of the Kyrgyz Regional Committee, and J. Abdrakhmanov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, both of whom had been active in providing state support for homeless Kazakh children. In September 1933, both officials were removed from office. Because it had become increasingly difficult to provide food assistance for homeless Kazakh children and famine-stricken Kazakhs in general, on December 31, 1932, the Central Asian Bureau was forced to request additional assistance from the Central Committee of the Communist Party[47]. For his part, J. Abdrakhmanov linked Kyrgyzstan's failure to fulfill the grain procurement plan with his unwillingness to allow the republic to descend "to the level of Kazakhstan." T. Ryskulov also influenced Abdrakhmanov's active involvement in assisting Kazakh refugees and homeless children. In 1933 alone, T. Ryskulov sent four government telegrams to J. Abdrakhmanov, all concerning the settlement of Kazakh refugees[48]. J. Abdrakhmanov played a particularly significant role in placing homeless Kazakh refugees and their children under state care. As chairman, he established a special commission for assistance to Kazakh refugees. By May 29, 1933, a Commission for Kazakh Refugee Affairs was operating under the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR. Using his political authority and official position, Abdrakhmanov succeeded in persuading Kyrgyzstan's political leadership to provide state assistance for Kazakh refugees and their homeless children[49]. At a session of the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee on April 5, 1933, Abdrakhmanov identified a number of issues requiring immediate discussion. He openly expressed dissatisfaction with the slow and insufficiently active response of local authorities in placing the children of Kazakh refugees. As a result, he proposed the establishment of emergency bodies known as "Troikas," which were to possess extraordinary powers and play an active role in organizing assistance for refugee children. This demonstrates that Abdrakhmanov openly opposed those who refused to assist Kazakh refugees and their

[45] Абдрахманов Ю. 1916. Дневники. Письма к Сталину. – Фрунзе: Кыргызстан, 1991. – 320 с. (С. 146-153).
[46] Сонда, 166 б.
[47] Сарсенбаев Б.С. Кыргызско-казахские взаимоотношения в составе СССР (20–30-е гг. XX в.). – Бишкек: КРСУ, 2013. – 144 с. (С. 66-67).
[48] Плоских В.М., Джунушалиев Д.Д. История кыргызов и Кыргызстана. – Бишкек: КРСУ, 2009. – 566 с. (24 с.).
[49] Курманов З.К., Сарсенбаев Б.С. О социалъном поведении Советских чиновников в отношении казахского голодомора в 1932–1933 гг. (на примере Кыргызстана) // Вестник Кыргызского госдарственного университета имени И. Арабаева. – № 2. – 2022. – С. 227-235. (231 с.).

children. On April 22, 1933, Abdrakhmanov sent telegrams to district executive committee leaders. He made local authorities personally responsible for ensuring the fair distribution of food supplies intended for Kazakh refugees and their children, preventing theft and misappropriation. He also warned that strict oversight would be enforced and that any violations involving the theft of food supplies would result in criminal prosecution.

Kyrgyzstan was unable to freely distribute its available grain reserves to the Kazakhs who had fled there. According to the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR issued on May 6, 1932, collective farms were permitted to use and sell surplus grain only after fulfilling state grain procurement quotas in full. As a result, despite numerous telegrams and proposals calling for assistance to Kazakh refugees and homeless Kazakh children, Moscow did not exempt Kyrgyzstan from its grain procurement obligations. This significantly limited the ability to provide adequate aid to starving Kazakhs and homeless children. Nevertheless, the People's Commissar of Supply of the Kyrgyz ASSR, Slovatsky, issued a special order concerning assistance for Kazakh refugees. According to the order, 1,200 centners of millet were allocated as food aid. Of this amount, 500 centners were reserved as emergency stock, another 500 centners were distributed to food centers serving adults, and 200 centners were transferred to the People's Commissariat of Education, which was responsible for organizing and supervising orphanages. Information was collected from individual districts in order to determine appropriate forms and directions of assistance. For example, approximately 3,000 Kazakhs had settled in the Rykov district. Two thousand of them were employed in local collective farms and placed under the supervision of those farms. In addition, four food distribution centers serving 200 children were established in the district. Plans were also made to organize a kindergarten for one hundred people in the village of Aleksandrovka.

Kyrgyzstan possessed the potential to provide more comprehensive assistance and food support for homeless Kazakh children and adult refugees displaced by famine. However, grain stored in warehouses was being prepared for export abroad in order to support the USSR's future industrialization policy. Grain belonging to the state was often not even allocated for the needs of the local population. During these years, living under conditions of scarcity became a normal reality for the inhabitants of Kyrgyzstan.

At the same time, there was no official decree openly acknowledging assistance to Kazakh refugees. The authorities were unwilling to recognize that Kazakhs had suffered famine, fled to Kyrgyz territory, lived in desperate conditions, and left their children homeless. During the Soviet period, many issues were resolved through bureaucratic methods and procedures. For responsible officials, directives from the center were considered of paramount importance. Under a system based on repressive methods, the primary concern of officials was not solving the existing humanitarian crisis, but fulfilling the orders of I.V. Stalin and the demands of party leaders. The difficulties in accommodating Kazakh refugees and the inadequate assistance provided to homeless children were closely connected with this political reality.

During the 1930s, improving the conditions of orphanages became one of the most important issues on the public agenda. Efforts to combat child homelessness intensified considerably during this period. As a result of systematic work, the conditions of several orphanages in Kyrgyzstan gradually improved. Nevertheless, many orphanages still remained in extremely poor condition. Irregular financing and shortages of food supplies persisted. Some orphanages received nothing except bread. Problems such as shortages of clothing and insufficient sleeping facilities remained unresolved. Addressing these issues became a matter of state importance. District secretaries were instructed to place orphanages under direct supervision and eliminate identified shortcomings within a two-week period. In order to reduce the number of children in

orphanages, several measures were implemented. Children who had reached the age of sixteen were assigned to industrial enterprises and collective farms. Efforts were also made to locate parents and relatives and return children to their families, while some children were entrusted to peasant households for upbringing. In 1934, the People's Commissariat of Supply was instructed to provide all orphanage residents in Kyrgyzstan with 400 grams of bread and other food supplies. For this purpose, the total number of children living in orphanages was first determined[50]. Alongside efforts to improve living conditions, orphanages were also expected to shape children according to communist ideological principles. The authorities sought to create a new type of individual: healthy, educated, disciplined, culturally developed, capable of socially useful labor, and loyal to the ideals of communism. It was believed that achieving this goal required creating proper living and educational conditions for orphanage residents. However, during the 1930s, the situation in orphanages throughout Kyrgyzstan remained extremely difficult. The People's Commissariat of Education focused not only on material support for orphanages but also on the ideological orientation of educational work carried out within them. Teachers and staff were regarded as key agents in shaping children into citizens of a new social order. The Kyrgyz People's Commissariat of Education therefore organized inter-district training and retraining courses for orphanage educators. These training courses lasted either one or two months. Information was collected from all orphanages, and the number of educators required was determined according to the number of children. During the two-month courses, educators studied subjects such as Leninism, Russian Language and Literature, Mathematics, Geography, Natural Sciences, Pedagogy, Psychology, Educational Work in Orphanages, and Practical Training in Orphanages. One of the largest subjects by teaching hours was "Russian Language and Literature," which accounted for fifty hours, whereas Geography was allocated twenty hours[51]. Of course, not all homeless Kazakh children immediately received state support. Kazakh refugees and their homeless children who fled from the Aulieata region to the Ketmen-Tobe district remained outside the attention of state authorities for a long time. According to testimony given by a resident of the Ketmen-Tobe district, Narbekov Dzhumagul, on January 30, 1933, Kazakh children had begun arriving in Kyrgyz territory as early as the autumn of 1932. Local authorities took no effective measures to accommodate homeless children. Even boarding schools refused to admit children wandering in the streets. Although several decrees concerning the placement of homeless children had officially been adopted, these resolutions were not implemented by local authorities. On the contrary, one district official, Comrade Usenov, reportedly distorted the decrees and began expelling homeless children starting in February. As a result, many refugees who failed to receive assistance from district authorities died during that month. D. Narbekov submitted complaints regarding these events to the relevant authorities[52]. For this reason, the leadership of the Kyrgyz ASSR regularly collected information from all districts and monitored the activities of local officials. D.I. Manzhara from the Regional Executive Committee and J. Abdrakhmanov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, demanded reports concerning the implementation of decrees related to the placement of Kazakh refugees and their children. District authorities were required to provide data on how many Kazakhs had been employed, the number of Kazakh households in each district, and the extent to which children had been provided with state assistance. For example, on April 3, 1933, the chairman of the Orazbekov District Executive Committee sent a report to J. Abdrakhmanov stating that no cases of expulsion of Kazakh refugees had occurred in

[50] ҚырР ОМА. 10-қ. 1-т. 573-іс. 56-п.

[51] ҚырР ОМА. 688-қ. 3-т. 260-іс. 28-п.

[52] ҚырР ОМА. 688-қ. 3-т. 260-іс. 24-п.

his district and that, on the contrary, assistance was being provided to them [53]. Alongside measures aimed at improving conditions in orphanages, efforts were also undertaken to return Kazakhs who had fled during the famine years back to their homeland. At a meeting of the Bureau of the Kyrgyz Regional Committee held on April 17, 1932, the issue of returning Kazakhs who had migrated into the territory of Kyrgyzstan was specifically discussed. The initiative to repatriate homeless Kazakhs originated from the Kazakh government itself. During the meeting, district leaders from Kalinin, Alamedin, Belovod, Frunze, Chu, and Issyk-Kul were instructed to support the requests of the Kazakh authorities. They were tasked with conducting explanatory work among Kazakh migrants and encouraging support for Kazakhstan's repatriation efforts. In addition, the Council of People's Commissars was expected to participate actively in organizing the transportation of Kazakhs back to Kazakhstan by railway. The Kazakh authorities, for their part, assumed responsibility for transportation as well as for providing food and bread to those returning home[54]. However, the capabilities of the leadership of the Kazakh ASSR were themselves extremely limited. As a result, the full-scale evacuation of homeless children became a highly complicated issue. T. Ryskulov noted that, "according to information from the authorities of the Kyrgyz ASSR, 500 children had been sent to Aulieata in agreement with the Kazakh government. However, the children were not accepted there. Some of them died, while the remainder were brought back to the city of Frunze." [55] According to information provided on January 25, 1933, by the head of the operational point of the Turkestan–Siberian Railway at Pishpek station, it was impossible to determine the exact number of Kazakhs being repatriated to Kazakhstan. In general, the number of adults reached approximately 5,000, while the number of children approached 2,000. Most of the returning Kazakhs came from the Balkhash district, although migrants from various other districts were also present. The condition of the refugees, especially homeless children, was extremely severe. Instead of providing assistance, members of the commissions sent to organize aid were reportedly engaged in stealing fuel, food, and other essential supplies. It was evident that conditions in Kazakhstan itself remained catastrophic. Many Kazakhs who had managed to settle and find stable employment in Kyrgyzstan refused to return. In such cases, their children were gathered as "homeless children" and loaded onto trains bound for Kazakhstan. Faced with the prospect of their children being separated from them and sent away, parents were often forced to return against their will. Thus, the repatriation process frequently occurred without the consent of the Kazakh refugees themselves [56]. Moreover, Kazakh refugees returning from Kyrgyzstan were not properly received or accommodated in Kazakhstan. In 1933, two hundred Kazakh refugees were sent from Kyrgyzstan to the Shet district. Fifty-seven of them died on the way, and only 143 refugees managed to reach Petropavl. During the journey, they were not provided with the necessary food supplies. Their reception and placement were largely neglected, and no food assistance was allocated to them upon arrival. Consequently, deaths among the refugees continued. Even after being placed in special facilities in Petropavl, living conditions remained extremely harsh. One report concerning returning Kazakh refugees stated: "One hundred people were housed in a single room of the Central Workers' Club. Among them were many individuals swollen from starvation and too weak to move. The building

[53] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (С. 123-127.).

[54] ҚырР ОМА. 10-қ. 1-т. 376-іс. 1-2-пп.

[55] ҚырР ОМА. 10-қ. 1-т. 453-іс. 15-п.

[56] Сарсенбаев Б.С. Кыргызско-казахские взаимоотношения в составе СССР (20–30-е гг. XX в.). – Бишкек: КРСУ, 2013. – 144 с. (65 с.).

itself was filthy and covered with mold."[57] The efforts of the Kyrgyz authorities to return starving Kazakhs to their homeland were driven largely by practical considerations. Kazakh refugees were officially registered as economic households and included in grain procurement obligations. For example, in the Issyk-Kul district, 8,400 peasant households were registered, of which 1,837 consisted of Kazakhs and migrants from Siberia. Most of these households possessed no property or economic resources. For the republican leadership, the rapid return of Kazakh refugees therefore became an urgent necessity [58]. The severe economic crisis within Kyrgyzstan itself also influenced attitudes toward Kazakh refugees. Public opinion regarding the refugees varied considerably. Although the Kyrgyz government issued orders concerning assistance for Kazakh refugees, local authorities were often reluctant to provide accommodation and food support. The deputy chairman of the Frunze City Council wrote a special letter to the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee explaining that the city lacked the financial resources to assist Kazakh refugees because of insufficient funds and the debts of local institutions[59]. Although caring for homeless children was officially regarded as necessary and morally justified, conflicts nevertheless emerged between local residents and Kazakh refugees. The reduction of daily bread rations for workers to 400 grams and the perception that state resources were being spent on Kazakh refugees rather than local residents generated resentment among the population of Kyrgyzstan. Delays in providing full state support also contributed to disorder among some refugees. According to reports from the Frunze city police, complaints were received daily regarding Kazakh refugees damaging gardens and orchards. Cases were also recorded in which refugees stole bags of food from shoppers in local markets. However, criminal cases were often not initiated because these actions were understood as desperate responses to starvation.

As a result, local residents increasingly feared for their own lives and the welfare of their children. Consequently, demands grew for the rapid repatriation of Kazakh refugees. On April 16, 1932, the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR specifically discussed the issue "On Assistance to Kazakh Households Returning to Their Homeland." As a result, several confidential resolutions, not intended for publication, were adopted:

- to allocate 830 centners of bread from state reserves as assistance for Kazakhs;
- to distribute bread only to those Kazakh households departing from Kyrgyz territory.

There were also cases in which local authorities confiscated food supplies allocated to Kazakh refugees and their children returning home. The chairman of the Shymkent Regional Executive Committee informed J. Abdrakhmanov of these incidents in a letter. In response, Abdrakhmanov immediately instructed district leaders to halt such practices and ensure that Kazakhs could return to their homeland freely and with sufficient food supplies [60]. The Kazakh

[57] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (С. 54-57).

[58] Альжаппарова Б.К. Пауперизация казахского крестьянства в конце 1920-х-начале 1930-х (на материалах Центрального Каазахстана // European researcher. Series A. – Vol. (104). – Is. 3. 2016. – С. 140-147. (144 с.).

[59] Курманов З. Турар Рыскулбеков и Юсуп Абдрахманов: сотрудничество в борьбе за спасение казахских откочевников от ашаршылыка в Кыргызстане // Вестник КырГУ имени И. Арабаева. – № 3. – 2021. – С. 182-187. (186 с.).

[60] Курманов З.К., Сарсенбаев Б.С. О социалъном поведении Советских чиновников в отношении казахского голодомора в 1932–1933 гг. (на примере Кыргызстана) // Вестник Кыргызского госдарственного университета имени И.

authorities themselves were not always particularly active in caring for Kazakh refugees and their homeless children. Although commissions operated in certain districts, they failed to cover all Kyrgyz regions comprehensively. In a report addressed to J. Abdrakhmanov by the leadership of the Rykov district, it was stated that the authorities of the Kazakh ASSR had completely refused to assist in the repatriation of Kazakh refugees and homeless children from the district. There were also cases in which Kazakhs who had been repatriated from the Rykov district later returned again to Kyrgyzstan. To support homeless children, food distribution centers financed by local collective farms and state farms were established throughout the district. However, the large number of homeless children and refugees made it impossible to provide assistance to everyone. Hospitals in the district were overcrowded with Kazakh refugees. Because of overcrowding and severe material shortages, both food and medical services remained inadequate. Rather than recovering in hospitals, many Kazakhs left in even worse condition than when they had arrived. The insufficiency of state assistance also contributed to rising levels of criminal activity among the refugees. District authorities repeatedly emphasized these conditions in their reports and requested additional aid from the state. Such reports were submitted not only from the Rykov district, but from many other districts as well. Taking the situation into account, J. Abdrakhmanov issued a decision establishing special "troika" commissions composed of district leaders, representatives of the State Political Administration, and officials from district health departments. These commissions were empowered to make decisions regarding the placement of Kazakh refugees and homeless children. On April 5, 1933, the issue "On the Settlement of Incoming Kazakhs" was specifically discussed at a session of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR, where officials were urged to take more active measures in accommodating homeless children[61].

With the arrival of spring, many Kazakhs who had fled to Kyrgyz territory began leaving the places where they had temporarily settled. In a letter addressed to J. Abdrakhmanov by the Executive Committee of the Belovod district, it was reported that Kazakh refugees had migrated beyond the borders of the district. Homeless children, however, continued to remain in orphanages. The letter noted that the district orphanage had admitted an excessive number of homeless children: an institution originally intended for fifty children was now housing 140 residents. For this reason, attention was drawn to the urgent need for additional financial assistance and to the deteriorating welfare of the children. In general, Kazakh children accounted for approximately 20 percent of all children placed in orphanages in Kyrgyzstan. According to data from the Central Children's Commission under the Kyrgyz ASSR dated April 8, 1933, the total number of Kazakh children attached to food distribution centers reached 1,300. Nevertheless, there remained many children still in need of assistance. Consequently, proposals were put forward to establish additional food distribution centers and orphanages capable of accommodating 2,400 more children. On the same day, J. Abdrakhmanov issued instructions to the districts of Balykchy, Chu, Kalinin, Belovod, Talas, and Rykov to immediately establish food distribution centers for homeless children. The reception, accommodation, and feeding of Kazakh refugees and homeless children imposed substantial financial burdens on the Kyrgyz ASSR. On April 9, 1933, J. Abdrakhmanov sent a telegram to V.M. Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, proposing that greater responsibility be assigned to the Kazakh authorities. Since the migration of Kazakhs into

Арабаева. – № 2. – 2022. – С. 227-235. (С. 231-233).

[61] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (С. 128-133).

Kyrgyzstan was still continuing, he stressed that the leadership of Kazakhstan should take measures to halt the movement of refugees. He also emphasized that even providing food for those Kazakhs who had already arrived and accommodating homeless children required enormous expenditures. Abdrakhmanov raised a number of urgent concerns, including the unresolved condition of Kazakh children, the frequent deaths occurring among Kazakh refugees, and the widespread spread of infectious diseases. Taking these circumstances into account, he proposed three specific measures:

- preventing further migration of Kazakhs into the territory of Kyrgyzstan, with responsibility for this task assigned to the government of Kazakhstan;
- allocating one million rubles from the reserve fund of the Union budget in order to establish food distribution centers and equip orphanages with the necessary supplies, while the Kyrgyz authorities would assume responsibility for administering these funds;
- releasing food supplies sufficient to meet the daily needs of ten thousand people.[62]

The organization of Kazakh refugees and homeless children into food distribution centers and, when necessary, their transfer to orphanages gradually began to proceed in a more systematic manner. On April 23, 1933, the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR issued a decree concerning the establishment of food distribution centers and orphanages. Using funds allocated by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, plans were made to open orphanages and food distribution centers for Kazakh refugees in the following districts according to the number of people to be accommodated:

Table 3. Orphanages and Food Distribution Centers to Be Established by District (According to Number of People Accommodated)[63].

№	District	Orphanages	Food Distribution Centers
1	Frunze City	2570	1400
2	Frunze District	1200	1300
3	Belovod District	1200	1400
4	Kalinin District	1100	1300
5	Talas District	1100	1200
6	Rykov District	1100	1200
7	Jalal-Abad District	1100	1200
8	Osh City	1	1200
	Total	91470	82200

According to statistical data provided by the Central Children's Commission under the Central Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz ASSR on May 15, 1933, the number of homeless children in other district centers and cities also increased dramatically. For example:

Table 4. Data of the Central Children's Commission on the Number of Homeless Kazakh Children as of May 15, 1933

№	District	Number of Children in Orphanages	Number of Children in Food Distribution Centers	Total
1	Frunze City Reception Center No. 1	80	-	80
2	Frunze City Reception Center	-	868	868

[62] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (С. 136-145).

[63] Сонда, с. 168-169.

	No. 2			
3	Karabalta	84	350	434
4	Tokmok	-	700	700
5	Dmitrievka	-	115	115
6	Chu	-	200	200

Providing orphanages and food distribution centers with the necessary supplies and food for homeless children became a matter of state importance. According to information released on May 22, 1933, by the Commission for the Settlement of Kazakh Refugees under the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR, the largest allocations of food supplies were directed to orphanages and feeding centers located in the city of Frunze. For example:

Table 5. Data of the Commission for the Settlement of Kazakh Refugees under the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR

№	District	Orphanage		Feeding centers	
		Bread (centners)	Grain (centners)	Bread (centners)	Grain (centners)
1	Frunze City	29,5	36.2	10	25,7
2	Frunze District	15	12,3	10	18,6
3	Belovod District	14	12,3	10	24,7
4	Kalinin District	9	12,3	7,5	18,2
5	Talas District	7,5	5,9	5	12,3
6	Rykov District	4,5	5,9	5	12,3

The city of Frunze became one of the main centers where Kazakh refugees were concentrated in large numbers. Consequently, the number of people accommodated in orphanages and food distribution centers in Frunze was also particularly high. In total, thirteen food distribution centers for Kazakh refugees and homeless children were established throughout the Kyrgyz ASSR, serving up to 2,400 children. On the basis of agreements reached with the Kazakh ASSR, Kazakh refugees and homeless children were gradually repatriated, which temporarily halted the expansion of orphanages and food distribution centers.

However, beginning in March 1933, a new wave of Kazakh refugees again started arriving in Kyrgyz territory. According to data from April 1, 1933, the total number of Kazakh children in the Kyrgyz ASSR had reached 3,770. In an effort to eliminate child homelessness, the Kyrgyz government opened eight additional orphanages accommodating 1,470 Kazakh children. Child mortality rates also increased sharply. Eight additional food distribution centers were opened, providing support for 2,200 children At the meeting of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR held on April 28, 1933, special attention was devoted to the employment of Kazakh refugees in collective farms and to the registration and placement of homeless Kazakh children in orphanages. During the session, a special headquarters chaired by Comrade Petrash began operating under the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR. One of the headquarters' primary responsibilities was the elimination of child homelessness in Kyrgyzstan. Within two days, the headquarters was instructed to prepare and present a comprehensive action plan for addressing child homelessness. Party leaders, together with trade unions attached to various institutions, assumed responsibility for organizing practical measures to combat child homelessness.

Using funds allocated by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, plans were made to establish two orphanages with a combined

capacity of 570 people. In addition, educational and upbringing activities in the future orphanages to be opened in Frunze were placed under the authority of the city education departments, while responsibility for economic management was assigned to district party leadership. One of the principal priorities for the newly established orphanages was improving their material conditions and providing them with the necessary supplies and equipment. Responsibility for fulfilling these tasks was entrusted to district authorities. The People's Commissariat of Education was also instructed to establish additional orphanages in the Karabalta and Belovod districts. Furthermore, authorities were ordered to inspect all orphanage residents and discharge those who were materially secure or still had living parents

Kazakh refugees who had fled to Kyrgyz territory increasingly began to be employed in collective farms and state farms. This policy was implemented across all districts. Its main purpose was to help Kazakh refugees adapt to life in Kyrgyzstan, become self-sufficient, and prevent parents from abandoning their children to orphanages. For example, a special commission was established in the Rykov district. In order to address the issue of homeless children, the commission undertook the following measures:

- first, it determined the total number of Kazakhs who had fled into the district;
- approximately 2,000 adults were employed in collective farm work;
- food distribution centers serving 200 homeless children were established;
- throughout the district, Kazakh refugees were employed in all forms of unskilled labor;
- an orphanage for one hundred children was opened in the village of Aleksandrovka.

Similar measures were implemented in all districts. However, district authorities often lacked sufficient financial resources to resolve the problems faced by Kazakh refugees and homeless children independently. As a result, they remained heavily dependent on state funding. For example, on May 2, 1933, a food distribution center for 173 children was opened in the Talas district. The functioning of this institution also depended directly on food supplies and additional funding allocated by the government. In many cases, orphanages, food distribution centers, and kindergartens failed to receive the necessary food supplies and financial resources on time. According to data from the People's Commissariat of Education of the Kyrgyz ASSR, orphanages sometimes received only 15 percent of the food supplies officially allocated to them[64]. Conditions in orphanages and food distribution centers remained extremely poor and often failed to meet basic standards. On September 27, 1933, the results of a special inspection of these institutions were announced. The investigation revealed that orphanages organized by city education departments and municipal health authorities had not been adequately supplied with essential materials. Food distribution centers operated under extremely difficult conditions. Many were organized in open fields without even basic shelter. Sick and healthy Kazakhs stood together in lines, while dirt, lack of clothing, and unsanitary surroundings became commonplace. These conditions contributed to increased mortality among both children and adults. As a result of the investigation, the People's Commissariats of Education and Health were found responsible, and their failure to conduct proper oversight was treated as a criminal offense.

Not all homeless children during the famine years were taken into orphanages under state care. Large numbers of children disappeared without trace. This was particularly evident during the famine of the 1920s. According to V. Bilik, head of the Main Administration for Social Education under the People's Commissariat of Education of Turkestan, approximately 13,000 children went missing during the catastrophe of the 1920s. Most of these children had been relocated to the Turkestan Republic, Ukraine,

[64] Ашаршылық в Казахстане: казахские беженцы в Кыргызстане 1932–1933 гг. Сборник документов и материалов. – Бишкек, 2023. – 314 с. (С. 176-183).

and the western provinces. The principal obstacle in searching for them was the absence of any formal child registration system. V.P. Bilik emphasized that such difficulties could have been avoided if the registration of children under the People's Commissariat of Education had been properly organized. Therefore, he proposed that, in the future, the origins and identities of homeless children should be systematically documented[65].

In 1934, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee adopted a decree entitled "On the Placement of the Children of Arrested Persons." According to the decree, if one of the parents had been subjected to political repression, their children were placed in overcrowded orphanages with extremely poor living conditions. Life in such institutions was exceptionally difficult. Moreover, not only these special orphanages, but orphanages throughout the republic as a whole suffered from inadequate financing, while in many cases the funds that were allocated were misused. On May 31, 1935, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) adopted the decree "On the Elimination of Child Homelessness and Neglect." The decree stated that the persistence of child homelessness throughout the country was primarily the result of the inability of local authorities, party organizations, trade unions, and Komsomol organizations to organize their work properly. In order to implement this decree, supervisory councils were established within each orphanage. These councils included collective farm workers, state farm workers, and local activists. Their responsibility was to maintain systematic oversight over orphanage activities and ensure improvements in living conditions. As a result of the councils' work, orphanages gradually began receiving at least minimal quantities of food and clothing, while medical services also improved to some extent.

Beginning on September 25, 1935, a new procedure for admitting children into orphanages was introduced. Prior to this reform, virtually all categories of children considered in need had been admitted. However, under regulations introduced by A.S. Bubnov, the People's Commissar of Education of the RSFSR, a stricter admission system was established. In particular, the placement of children registered with the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs became considerably more difficult. Previously, orphanages under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Education accepted both ordinary children and those considered difficult to discipline or resistant to upbringing. Under the new regulations, orphanages were prohibited from admitting children who had violated the law, regularly escaped from institutions, or required long-term medical treatment due to illness or disability. Children who still had parents or relatives were, after investigation, placed independently by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs[66]. In 1937, taking into account the political climate that had developed in the country, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR began transferring orphanage children whose parents had been subjected to political repression—or who had become homeless for other reasons—to the care of relatives and adoptive families. However, because of the political purges of 1937, the number of homeless children sharply increased once again. Although the number of homeless children grew rapidly, the number of orphanages remained unchanged. The material conditions in orphanages under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs were extremely poor.

As a result, on May 20, 1938, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR issued a special order aimed at eliminating abuses in the treatment of children whose parents had been subjected to repression. The order stated that the children of repressed individuals were to be kept under normal living conditions, that humiliation and mistreatment of

[65] ҚырР ОМА. 653-қ. 1-т. 278-іс. 4-п.

[66] ҚырР ОМА. 688-қ. 3-т. 260-іс. 1-п.

such children should not be tolerated, and that they should no longer be regarded as enemies. Nevertheless, attitudes toward children and orphanages in general did not change immediately[67]. On the eve of the Second World War, eighteen orphanages were operating in Kyrgyzstan. These institutions housed 2,657 children who had become homeless as a result of famine, political repression, and other social catastrophes[68].

Conclusion

The famine of the 1920s and 1930s became one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the Kazakh people. It created an extremely severe demographic crisis throughout the Kazakh steppe. The sharp decline in the Kazakh population was caused not only by mass mortality resulting from the catastrophe, but also by the large-scale flight of Kazakhs to neighboring countries. At the same time, the socio-economic conditions in the countries that received Kazakh refugees were themselves far from stable. As a result, Kazakhs who fled from famine were forced to endure new hardships and challenges even after leaving their homeland.

One of the countries that demonstrated significant responsibility in accommodating Kazakh refugees and their homeless children was Kyrgyzstan. Despite the difficult economic conditions that existed within the Kyrgyz ASSR itself, the local authorities managed to organize the activities of orphanages and food distribution centers. Although the material conditions of these institutions remained extremely poor, efforts were nevertheless made to provide maximum possible assistance to homeless Kazakh children.

Despite the shortcomings in the implementation of these measures and the existence of certain negative attitudes among segments of the local population, it is impossible to deny the support and assistance provided in Kyrgyzstan to Kazakh refugees and their homeless children.

Acknowledgements

The author expresses sincere gratitude to all colleagues, reviewers, and scholars who provided valuable comments and support for this research. Special thanks are extended to those who assisted with data collection and analysis. Any errors or omissions remain the sole responsibility of the author.

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Funding

This research was supported by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan under Grant No. AP23488331, "The Problem of Child Homelessness in the Territory of Kazakhstan and Neighboring Countries in the 1920s–1930s.

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