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## SOME SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONSEQUENCES OF FAMINE IN AKMOLA PROVINCE IN 1921-1923


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**Abstract.** *Introduction.* The first Soviet famine of 1921-1923 covered not only the entire territory of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Kazakh), but also 35 provinces of Soviet Russia with a population of about 30 million people and coincided with a period in the history of the Soviet state when the state's situation was difficult due to revolutions and civil war. At times, these disasters reached such proportions that they entailed not only the weakening and ruin of the peasant economy, but also the mass extinction of the population from hunger. *Objectives.* The study the socio-economic and demographic consequences of famine in northern Kazakhstan in 1921-1923 (using the example of Akmola province); to determine the scale and nature of the consequences of famine; to analyze statistical data on the population in the counties of the province on the basis of archival materials; to consider the activities of the Akmola provincial Commission for Famine Relief. *Results.* The article uses archival sources to study the activities carried out as a result of the policy of war communism, types of food distribution, shows the territories affected by drought, the decline in the number of livestock in the counties of the province. During the famine, the situation of Akmola province was aggravated by the influx of refugees from other regions. *Conclusions.* The severe socio-economic and demographic consequences of the famine of 1921-1923 were the result of the economic policy pursued by the Soviet government, the consequence of the imperialist and civil war and aggravated natural phenomena (drought, jute, etc.). Against the background of the difficult economic situation in the country and prolonged famine, the ethnodemographic picture of the region has changed. The famine of 1921-1923 was caused by a combination of causes and severe consequences that aggravated the situation to the extent of a catastrophe. The consequences of these events had a serious impact on the subsequent development of Kazakhstan.

**Keywords:** famine, province, county, Akmola Provincial Commission for Famine Relief (Akmoprovcom Femrel), epidemics, disaster, refugees, homelessness, unemployment.


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## 1921-1923 ЖЫЛДАРДАҒЫ АҚМОЛА ГУБЕРНИЯСЫНДАҒЫ АШАРШЫЛЫҚТЫҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК-ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ДЕМОГРАФИЯЛЫҚ САЛДАРЫНЫҢ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ

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**Андатпа. Кіріспе.** 1921-1923 жылдардағы алғашқы кеңестік ашаршылық Қырғыз (Қазак) Автономиялық Кеңестік Социалистік республикасының бүкіл аумағын ғана емес, сонымен бірге кеңестік Ресейдің 35 губерниясын да қамтыды. Ашаршылық Саратов және Самара провинцияларында, Еділ бойында, Украинаның оңтүстігінде, Башқұртстанда, Қырымда, Орал маңында және Батыс Сібірде қатты көрінді. 1921 жылғы ашаршылық шамамен 30 миллион халқы бар аудандарды қамтыды және революциялар мен азаматтық соғыстың салдарынан мемлекеттің жағдайы ауыр болған Кеңес мемлекеті тарихындағы кезеңмен сәйкес келді. Бұл апаттар осындай мөлшерге жетті, бұл шаруа қожалығының әлсіреуі мен күйреуіне ғана емес, сонымен бірге халықтың аштықтан жаппай жойылуына әкелді. *Зерттеудің мақсаты және міндеттері* – 1921-1923 жылдардағы Солтүстік Қазақстандағы ашаршылықтың әлеуметтік-экономикалық және демографиялық салдарын зерделеу (Ақмола губерниясының мысалында); ашаршылық салдарының ауқымы мен сипатын анықтау; мұрағаттық материалдар негізінде губерния уездеріндегі халық саны бойынша статистикалық деректерді талдау; Ақмола губерниялық аштыққа көмек комиссиясының қызметіне талдау жасау. *Нәтижелер.* Архивтік дереккөздер бойынша мақалада әскери коммунизм саясатының нәтижесінде жүргізілетін іс-шаралар, азық-түлік орналастыру түрлері зерттеліп, құрғақшылықтан зардап шеккен аумақтар, губерния уездері бойынша мал санының азаюы көрсетілген. Ашаршылық кезінде Ақмола губерниясының жағдайы басқа өңірлерден босқындар санының келуімен ушығып кетті. Аштық туберкулез, сүзек, шешек, безгек, тырысқақ және т.б. сияқты аурулардың эпидемиясына ықпал етті; ауыл шаруашылығы мен өнеркәсіптің құлдырауына әкелді; жергілікті тұрғындар арасында жұмыссыздар санының өсуі, көше балалары мен балалар үйлерінің көбеюі, каннибализм сияқты құбылыстың пайда болуы. *Қорытынды.* 1921-1923 жылдардағы ашаршылықтың ауыр әлеуметтік-экономикалық және демографиялық салдары Кеңес өкіметі жүргізген экономикалық саясаттың нәтижесі, империалистік және азаматтық соғыстың салдары және табиғи құбылыстардың (құрғақшылық, жұт және т.б.) күшеюінің нәтижесі. Елдегі күрделі экономикалық жағдай мен ұзаққа созылған ашаршылық аясында аймақтың этнодемографиялық көрінісі өзгерді. Бұл оқиғалардың салдары Қазақстанның кейінгі дамуына елеулі әсер етті.

**Түйін сөздер:** ашаршылық, губерния, уез, Ақмола губерниялық аштыққа көмек комиссиясы (Ақмолгубком помгол), эпидемиялар, апаттар, босқындар, панасыздық, жұмыссыздық.

**Дәйексөз үшін:** Сақтаганова З.Ғ., Қарсақова Г.Б. 1921-1923 жылдардағы Ақмола губерниясындағы ашаршылықтың әлеуметтік-экономикалық және демографиялық салдарының аспектілері // Отан тарихы. 2023. №

## НЕКОТОРЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИХ И ДЕМОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ ПОСЛЕДСТВИЙ ГОЛОДА В АҚМОЛИНСКОЙ ГУБЕРНИИ В 1921-1923 ГОДЫ

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**Аннотация.** *Введение.* Голод 1921-1923 годов охватил не только всю территорию Киргизской Автономной Советской Социалистической республики (Казахской), но и 35 губерний России, охватил районы с населением около 30 миллионов человек и совпал с периодом, когда положение государства было тяжелым вследствие революций и гражданской войны, засухи, гибели урожая и разорения крестьянского хозяйства. Временами эти бедствия достигали таких размеров, что влекло за собой не только ослабление и разорение крестьянского хозяйства, но и массовое вымирание населения от голода. *Цель и задачи исследования* – изучить социально-экономические и демографические последствия голода в северном Казахстане в 1921-1923 годы (на примере Акмолинской губернии); определить масштабы и характер последствий голода; анализировать на основе архивных материалов статистические данные по численности населения в уездах губернии; рассмотреть деятельность Акмолинской губернской комиссии помощи голодающим. *Результаты.* В статье по архивным источникам изучены мероприятия проводимые в следствие политики военного коммунизма, виды продовольственной разверстки, показаны территории, пострадавшие от засухи, убыль численности скота по уездам губернии. В период голода положение Акмолинской губернии усугубилось притоком численности беженцев с других регионов. Голод способствовал возникновению эпидемий, к упадку сельского хозяйства и промышленности; росту численности безработных среди местного населения. *Выводы.* Тяжелые социально-экономические и демографические последствия голода 1921-1923 годов явились результатом экономической политики проводимой советской властью, следствием империалистической и гражданской войны и усугубившимися стихийными явлениями (засуха, джут и др.). Последствия этих событий оказали серьезное влияние на последующее развитие Казахстана.

**Ключевые слова:** голод, губерния, уезд, Акмолинская губернская комиссия помощи голодающим (Акмолгубком Помгол), эпидемии, бедствие, беженцы, беспризорность, безработица.

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**1. Introduction.** The first Soviet famine of 1921-1923 covered not only the entire territory of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Kazakh), but also 35 provinces of Soviet Russia. The famine was most pronounced in the Saratov and Samara provinces, the Volga region, Southern Ukraine, Bashkiria, the Crimea, the Urals and Western Siberia. The famine of 1921 covered areas with a population of about 30 million people and coincided with a period in the history of the Soviet state when the state's situation was difficult due to revolutions and civil war. For many decades, huge areas of the middle and lower Volga region, the eastern regions of the North Caucasus, Crimea, the southern districts of Ukraine and Western Siberia have been suffering from drought, crop loss and the ruin of the peasant economy every three or four years. At times, these disasters reached such proportions that they entailed not only the weakening and ruin of the peasant economy, but also the mass extinction of the population from hunger. The famine catastrophe of 1921-1923, exceptional in its size, gave rise to such a phenomenon as cannibalism in some regions.

The history of the famine of 1921-1923 is relevant in Russian history. The topic of hunger was poorly studied during the years of Soviet regime. Most researchers of the Soviet period attributed the difficulties and consequences of the protracted civil war, the devastation of the national economy during the establishment of Soviet regime, the policy of war communism, drought and crop failure that arose as a result of unfavorable climatic conditions, mistakes and excesses of the economic policy pursued by state bodies to the main causes of the famine.



**2. Materials and methods of research.** The methodological basis for the most objective picture of the past formation associated with the first Soviet famine of 1921-1923 are the principles of scientific objectivity and historicism. The principle of objectivity is expressed in the facts and events consideration from the perspective of reliability and a comprehensive approach. From the standpoint of historical truth, the accumulated historiographical experience and revealed new information on the topic under study were analyzed. The principle of historicism allowed us to consider the processes and events that led to dramatic consequences in their causal cross-section. It also helped to identify the development dynamics, establish relationships with other phenomena on a general historical background, taking into account specific historical conditions and in chronological order.

The main source for writing the article were archival documents from the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the State Archive of the North Kazakhstan region and the State Archive of the Akmola region. When writing the article, a comparative, descriptive, regional, systematic methods allowing to reveal the topic more deeply were used. An analysis of various archival documents and materials was also made.

**3. Discussion.** The first works on the famine of the early 1920s were written by party leaders E.I. Yaroslavsky, V.A. Antonov-Ovseenko and others, which were reference informational, and propaganda in nature (Antonov-Ovseenko, 1922:9). These works reflected the government's point of view. Accordingly, they assigned all the responsibility for the famine to the imperialist war, the machinations of the bourgeoisie in the city and the kulaks in the countryside, allegedly used to discredit the legitimate government. In the work of N. I. Mardarovsky's "Famine in Kyrgyzstan and the fight against poor harvest" notes that "hunger and poverty are inherent only in uncultured countries" (Mardarovsky, 1922:7). The author notes that the causes of the famine were the illiteracy of the population, the colonial policy of tsarism, the First World War and the civil war that followed it. He explained the main cause of the famine by the devastation due to the civil war, and also gave recommendations on agricultural work in order to prevent further natural disasters and reduce the number of hungry. In the future, Soviet historians reduced the causes of the disaster mainly to the consequences of war and drought.

During the Soviet period, many works were written, namely by Dahshleiger G.F., Nurpeisov K.N., Tursunbayev A.B. and others concerning the socio-economic, political situation of the Kazakh people in the 1920s-1930s.

Dissertations were devoted to the famine of 1921-1922 in Kazakhstan. For example, in 2005 Musaev B.A. wrote his "Famine in the first half of the 20th century in Kazakhstan: historical, socio-political analysis". In 2010, T.A. Kariyeva issued "Semey guberniyasyndagi ashharshylyk zhane onyn saldary (1921-1922 lj.)". The authors considered the main causes and reveal the extent of hunger. In addition, the socio-economic and political consequences of this tragedy are being revealed.

After gaining independence, Abylkhozhin Zh.B., Omarbekov T.O., Koigeldiev M., Mamyrkhanova A.M., Alekseenko A.N., Tatimov M.B., Atusheva S.B., K.S. Aldazhumanov, S.O. Smagulova and others began to actively engage in this topic.

**4. Results.** In the 1920s, the economic and political situation in Kazakhstan was unfavorable, due to the First World War, civil War, revolutions and uprisings, natural disasters, crop failures and jute, which negatively affected the demographic situation of Kazakhstan (hunger and increased mortality among the population) as well as agriculture and livestock industry. According to the materials of the All-Russian Census of 1920, 4781263 people lived in Kazakhstan, 402751 people lived in cities and urban-type settlements, 18695 lived in villages and stations along the railway line, 4359817 people lived in rural areas (Statistical and Economic Review 1923:62). In the autumn of 1920, according to the Statistical Department of the Kazakh ASSR, 4938383 people lived in the republic (Statistical and Economic Review 1923:65). In total, the population of the Republic numbered about 5 million people (SARF. F. 1318. S. 22. F. 105. L. 445).

As part of the policy of war communism in agriculture, an unfolding system of harvesting agricultural products was carried out. The conductors of the Bolshevik campaign for food distribution were rural Poor Control Committees as well as land and water committees, and armed workers' detachments that expropriated the products produced by the peasants in "favor of the revolution". In Kazakhstan, the state grain monopoly and the expansion on a large scale began to be carried out in 1920.





At the beginning of the same year, the "meat" assessment began to extend to cattle farms. One of the types of food rationing was meat, according to which the local population was obliged to hand over live cattle to specially organized expeditions at the provincial food commissariat. In 1920 there were four such expeditions organized. In order to ensure the meat distribution, a ban was imposed on the slaughter of livestock for private sale; therefore, in order to slaughter livestock for internal use, the owner had to obtain permission from the volost executive committee, signed by the chairman. In the absence of a permitting document, all cattle were confiscated; the peasant himself was brought to court of justice in the revolutionary tribunal. An unprecedented reduction in livestock occurred in the Akmola province, where in 1914 the number of livestock was more than 4 million, and in 1922 - 1 million 347 thousand. The number of horses decreased in this province by 3 times, sheep - by 4 times (SACA. F. 244. S. 1. D. 250. L.18). Writing a letter addressed to the chairman of the Kyrgyz Council of S. Seifullin People's Commissars Baganalinsky district inspector Gumar Divaev notes that in the pre-revolutionary period, most of the farms of Baganaly volosts were distinguished by their prosperity. Some farms had up to 1,000 horses, up to 5,000 sheep, up to 100 cows, etc. The situation changed in 1919, when jute came, which contributed to the death of cattle. The next reason for the reduction of animal husbandry was the policy of meat cuts. Out of 8 thousand farms, 6 thousand farms migrated to the Ishim district and other regions (CSA RK. F. 30. S. 1. F. 247. L. 45).

A total of 3515,583 heads were distributed in the Omsk province (in terms of cattle), by April 15 1921 1401,783 cattle heads were withdrawn that made 39.08% of the planned redistribution (Soviet Siberia, 1921:5). According to the newspaper "Soviet Siberia" during 1920 About 39 thousand of cattle and 20 thousand of rams were taken from the Kazakh population of Kokchetavsky district, 34 thousand of cattle and more than 50 thousand of rams were confiscated in Atbasarsky district, 18600 cattle and more than 95 thousand rams were withdrawn in Akmola district, 20 thousand cattle and 29 thousand rams were singled out in Presnogorkovsky parish of Petropavlovsk district. (Soviet Siberia, 1921:7).

Grain was completely confiscated from agricultural farms. In mid-May 1920, the food committees received an unspoken party directive to prepare for the introduction of a food dictatorship. The Government of the RSFSR issued a decree dated June 20, 1920, according to which grain producers of Siberia and adjacent territories of Kazakhstan were obliged to proceed with threshing and delivery of all grain surpluses in the order of combat order. According to this directive, the food company of 1920-1921 was given tasks for grain storage in the amount of 110 million puds for the regions of Siberia of which the north-east of Kazakhstan accounted for 35 million puds, i.e. more than one third. And this is with a rather low harvest in 1920 (Decrees, 1978:240). According to the State Financial Report of the Russia-Wide Cheka, No. 13, dated February 20, 1921, to speed up the collection of the food tax in the provinces of Kazakhstan, a two-week period was announced, for which communists, representatives of the security service and the politburo were mobilized. The bread tax was fulfilled by 85%, grain fodder and meat completely. This summary reported on the dissatisfaction of peasants and cattle breeders with the policy of Soviet regime in the countryside, and about the mass withdrawal from the Party of Communist peasants (CHEKA-OGPU, 2000:577). The consequences of the war years, natural disasters that fell during this period and irrational economic policy caused destructive trends of a large-scale nature in agriculture. The sown areas of grain in the provinces of the KASSR in 1917 amounted to 2307320 arpents by 1923, the reduction in the area of sowing increased to 61.9%. (SARF. F. 1318. S. 22. F. 109. L. 232).

Table 1.

Provinces of Kazakhstan affected by the drought of 1921\*

Province, region or republic	Territories affected by drought (%)	Average yield from 1 arpent, in poods	Per capita yield, in poods
Aktubinskaya	87	1,3	1,6
Uralskaya	80	1,9	0,6
Bukeevskaya	80	2,5	0,2
Kostanayskaya	64	3,8	2,3
Orenburgskaya	50	5,2	1,9
Almolinskaya	18	17,6	5,7



The drought of 1921 affected 31% of the total amount of wheat-sown land. As the above statistics show, the main provinces of Kazakhstan, which were historically grain producers, were on the verge of ruin. In general, 0.9 million arpents of land were affected by drought in Kazakhstan (Schmidt, 2018:41).

In the second half of May 1921, it became clear that there would be no harvest. The amount of grain harvested together with the stock of previous years provided the population with food at a minimum rate of two pounds a year per capita. The livestock industry found itself in an extremely difficult situation. The number of all livestock types has decreased over the years by more than 10.5 million units. According to the CHEKA in the West Kazakhstan provinces, there was a good harvest in Semipalatinsk and Akmola provinces. All grain surpluses were under strict control of the party and Soviet bodies. Many peasants with bread refused to fulfill the food tax. In total, 19% of bread and grain were collected in the province (CHEKA-OGPU, 2000:545). Drought, jute, intensive bread, meat and other types of food off-taking have led to famine in this region. For example, the spring sowing campaign of 1921 turned into a painful ordeal for the peasantry. During the Civil War, seed funds were looted. And the bread that survived was taken by the food authorities until May 1921 by the methods of food distribution. The peasants complained: "The last bread is taken away and other products as well as in 1920, and there is no difference between the food tax and the food distribution" (North Kazakhstan region, 1993:161).

One of the most important factors of the famine was the deep decline of the economic situation, both agricultural and cattle-breeding economy of the Republic. The death of livestock, especially among the Kyrgyz steppe population from the so-called "Jute" (1920), from the shortage of herbs and the almost complete lack of control against epizootics, due to insufficient funds, led to the livestock reduction. Another reason for the famine was an unprecedented drought leading to a grain crop failure that affected many regions of Kazakhstan. In the materials of the North Kazakhstan State Archive it is noted: "In Kokchetav district information report commission for famine relief of Akmola province dated December 17, 1922, the harvest of 1921 in Kokchetav district due to drought turned out to be unfavorable, and in addition, completely died from frost, hail, non-germination and most of the mares suffered, a total of 173841 arpents. Consequently, out of the total sowing 283375 arpents there were 169534 arpents harvested... There was nothing left of the past years grain harvests in Kokchetav district after the distribution and off-taking during 1920 and 1921... From all of the above it can be seen that the collection of the food tax with an increase to 100% is absolutely not possible" (NKSA. F. 55. S.1. F. 28. L. 73). Since July and August, the population of the county has begun to leave their homes and dozens of housewives with all their families and dead inventory are moving to Akmola and Atbasar counties, where yields are considered higher than in Kokchetav county, and also a lot have left for Semirechye and Ukraine. Due to the order on the termination of bread free circulation, barrage posts were set up almost simultaneously and bread was taken away from citizens who had prepared it, which caused discontent and even hostility to these events (NKSA. F. 55. S.1. F. 28. L. 74). According to one data, the number of victims dying from hunger increased every day. More than 37.5 million people were in the disaster zone (North Kazakhstan region, 1993:161). According to other sources, by the autumn of 1921, more than 20 million people were starving in the country (History of Kazakhstan, 2009:193). The total number of hungry people in the provinces numbered 1508900 people (SARF. F. 1058. S. 1. F. 175. L. 11). Operational reports of the Cheka (All-Russian Emergency Commission) stated: "The famine associated with the food crisis determines the situation of all segments of the population, excluding kulaks and speculators. Most feed on grass and carrion..." (CSA RK. F. 44. S. 11. F. 63. L. 160). For example, in Akmola province, "the population feeds exclusively on grass, the consequence of which is swelling, turning into starvation, of which many cases have been registered" (SAAR. F. 115. S. 1. F. 149. L. 34).

The direct impact of surrogates on the human body was different. According to the researchers, eating clay caused intestinal obstruction, constipation, especially dangerous – up to a fatal outcome – in old age. Potato foliage caused diarrhea, bone flour from fresh bones also had dangerous consequences for the human body (Narsky, 2001:315). According to documentary sources: "At present, the poor feed on various weeds with an admixture of one tenth of wheat, crushed and ground bone, animal skins and everything that has at least one hundredth of nutritional value" (SAAR. F. 115. F. 1. F. 2. L. 86).



As a result of the famine, the situation of Akmola county worsened. The harvest in the Akmolinsky district in 1921 was an average of 25 poods per arpent, potatoes for 100 poods. In total, up to 3774475 pounds were harvested. The required rate per 321000 population of 14 poods per capita is 4494000 poods a year. Thus, the deficit for the harvest of 1922 was expressed in 717525 poods. As a result, a tax was imposed on the 4th category, i.e. the harvest from arpents was considered to be up to 4 pounds, which amounted to 1,600,000 pounds of tax, which was carried out by the local population 33% with the use of confiscations, general searches and "sweeping grain from many citizens to clean" (SARF. F. 1065. S. 2. F. 116. L. 26rev.). There was a large influx of starving people from other provinces and counties in the county. According to the County Commission for Famine Relief, there were up to 47,000 starving people in the county, 6317 of them refugees (the number of refugees reached up to a third of the total number of starving people, out of 74,000 people) (SARF. F. 1065. S. 2. F. 116. L. 27).

In Akmola province, the situation was aggravated by the uncontrolled influx of refugees from the starving areas of the Volga region. About 900 thousand children and adults were evacuated to more prosperous areas. 25 thousand children were sent to Siberia alone. In the summer of 1921, large parties of refugees began to arrive in Petropavlovsk. The city was overloaded with exhausted people. Up to 10 thousand children have been accumulated in orphanages of the city and county. A lot of homeless kids appeared. Dirty, ragged, hungry, they wandered in search of food. The police, together with Komsomol members and women activists, conducted night raids at the station, on passing trains, children were arranged in orphanages and shelters. "A lot of work was done to shoe, clothe, feed, cure children. And no less to teach many of them to live and work in a team," recalls A.I. Vorozheeva, who worked at that time as the head of the city party committee women's department. There were not enough bedclothing, clothes, shoes in orphanages. Typhus, cholera, dysentery, scabies took many lives. But even more children died from exhaustion. For example, only in November-December 1921 115 children died. The situation with the nutrition of children is characterized by a telegram from the provincial executive committee to the KIRCEC: «"Kirnarkomprod" allowed for orphanages only 500 rations, instead of the former 6710. There are 10000 children, the situation is terrible, and we have to throw them out into the street. Take urgent measures» (North Kazakhstan region, 1993:162).

Some orphanages did not receive food monthly, and the children ran away so as not to starve to death. This is how the Kazakh poet, writer, deputy chairman of the famine relief commission in Akmola province and an eyewitness to the events Magzhan Zhumabayev describes the famine catastrophe in the provincial newspaper "World of Labor" dated June 16, 1922 for No. 30 (667) article "Famine in Sary-Arka", in which he wrote: "Since the autumn of 1921, our Akmola province has become the arena of the death march of the silent tsar - famine. Since then, the Kyrgyz (Kazakhs) of our province have been experiencing the same trials and sufferings out of hunger, which their brothers in the upper provinces of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) republic have been subjected to for two years. I have the official relations of several Kyrgyz executive committees of Petropavlovsk and Kokchetav counties. The Imenalinsky volispolkom writes: "In our volost, hunger began to be strongly felt since November 1921. The entire poor population having eaten all the cattle until autumn, was engaged in cattle stealing all winter. The unprecedented jute of last winter damaged almost all the cattle by 70 percent namely. People swell and die. From November to May, the volost executive committee registered 270 cases of starvation deaths. The Sarnaigyr volost Executive Committee writes: "From January to May there were 72 cases of starvation registered. Hunger is increasing. A lot of cattle died from the April ice storm. Cattle rustling is excessively intensified. The same is reported from the Baimbetskaya and Ayyrtau volosts of the Kokchetavsky district...» Citing several more similar examples, Magzhan Zhumabayev writes in conclusion: "...These extracts of course can testify to the extent of the plight of the Kyrgyz in our province. In short, except for one Semipalatinsk province, the entire Kyrgyz Sari-Arch from the Caspian Sea to the Irtysh is in the grip of famine. Farms are being destroyed, livestock is being destroyed..." ".It's time to abandon the old view of Catherine's times on Sary-Arka as a fabulous Kirghiz-Kaysak horde, as a land "where everything breathes in abundance", where koumiss flows like a river and where smoked meat under the open sky is withered by a mountain. It's time to hear the moan of Sary-Arka and understand the terrible Kyrgyz people silence full of suffering" (Zhumabaev, 1922:2). M. Zhumabayev sees the reason why "they know inexcusably little" about the famine in the region in the following: "In 1921,



as soon as disaster befell the Volga region, the whole of Russia became agitated. The wide Volga made the whole country rustle. For, firstly, the Volga is closer to the center, and secondly, the population of the Volga region is much more cultured than the Kyrgyz. And a cultured person will always be able to make others hear his voice. On the contrary, the silent Sari-Arch, having dutifully accepted the tsar-famine, leads a silent struggle with him and dies meekly in this unequal battle" (Zhumabaev, 1922:4).

On July 1, M. Zhumabayev left for Kokchetavsky and Petropavlovsk counties to collect food donations and establish the work of the Kokchetav Starve Control Committee. According to the results of the trip to these counties, he presented a report in which he wrote that on July 16 he left for the hungry western volosts of Kokchetav county to familiarize himself with the situation on the ground. "I was in Chungurchinsk, Karachinsk, Mezgil and Ayyrtav volosts. The situation in the volosts mentioned above was indeed catastrophic: 90% of the population ate berries. I was an eyewitness to many diseases caused by hunger" (NKSA. F. 1616. S. 1. F. 2. L. 26).

By the second half of 1921, according to the Akmola Gubernatorial Executive Committee, in the province the number of starving, both Volga region refugees and locals amounted to 440 thousand people. So, in "Akmola county, the number of such was 66.5 thousand people, Atbasar county – 110 thousand, Kokchetav county – 115 thousand people, Petropavlovsk County – 150 thousand people" (NKSA. F. 55 S. 3. F. 26. L. 56rev.).

Famine acquired a large scale in Akmola County known as the most fertile one in Akmola province. The policy of war communism, crop failure and jute in 1922 contributed a lot to the appearance of the "ghost of the Volga region" in the county (CSA RK. F. 82. S. 1. F. 212. L. 69). The starving, especially the residents of the southern volosts - Asan-Kaiginskaya and Sary-Arkinskaya, were heading to the city of Akmolinsk, where they tried to find work and improve their plight. Orphanages were overflowing with homeless children. The population ate cats, dogs, and surrogates (CSA RK. F. 82. S.1. F. 280. L. 12). It should be emphasized that the registration of hunger strikers began to be carried out in Kazakhstan only since November 1921. If in November 1921 in Kazakhstan, according to the People's Commissariat of Health, 1 million 559 thousand 911 people were starving or 315 starving per 1 thousand people, then in April 1922, the number of hungry reached 2 million 471 thousand 740 people (CSA RK. F. 82. S. 1. F. 212. L. 22). Thus, almost 50% of the Kazakhstan population was enclosed by hunger. In Akmola province, in April 1922, according to the People's Commissariat of Health, 472 thousand starved. In the Semipalatinsk province, which included the Karkaralinsky district, the number of hungry people reached 14 thousand 505 people (CSA RK. F. 82. S. 1. F. 212. L. 25).

Famine to a large extent contributed to the emergence of epidemics such as tuberculosis, typhus, smallpox, malaria, cholera and others. For example, in 1922 36 thousand 524 people caught typhus in Akmola province, 4 731 people were infected with cholera, 4 thousand 234 people were infected with malaria, scurvy – 1137, dysentery – 2 thousand 780 people (CSA RK. F. 82. S. 1. F. 212. L.7). The head of the Akmola County Health Department in his report at the provincial meeting noted that "the mortality of Kyrgyz from infectious diseases (typhus, smallpox, tuberculosis) is huge" (CSA RK. F. 82. S.1. F. 212. L. 8). In Akmola province in 1922, 8 373 people died in hospitals. (CSA RK. F. 82. S. 1. F. 212. L. 13).

The sources of the North Kazakhstan State Archive contain information about the difficult situation in the Atbasar district. "On January 30, 1922, the Atbasar County Commission for Famine Relief provided the following information: "In total, 12284 people were registered as starving migrants in 18 volosts and Atbasar, 17240 local people. Those and others together 29524 people. Together with the lists of the hungry, petitions were received for the satisfaction of the hungry in the county. Not only the settlers, but also the locals, in the absence of bread and other products, eat the corpses of fallen animals, skin, especially in the western volosts of the county, which suffered a complete crop failure. According to official data of the Ministry of Health, more than 50% of diseases are caused by hunger" (NKSA. F. 1616. S. 1. F. 1. L. 35).

As of January 1, 1922, 14962 people were registered as starving migrants from 24 volosts and the city in Atbasarsky Uyezd, and 22439 people were registered as local population. Ukompomgol reported that this information is far from complete due to the fact that starving people arrive daily from hungry provinces, and also no information was provided from the Kazakh population, due to the remoteness from the city. There are a lot of deaths in both the city and the county. It is not possible



to specify the quantity for lack of information from the Ministry of Health (NKSA. F. 1616. S. 1. F. 4. L. 56). In the report on the situation in the Atbasar district in the period from March 3 to March 29, 1922 Ukompomgol reported: "The county is in the most difficult situation of famine... There are no pit points and canteens in [the] county, and for lack of funds and food, it is not necessary to open [them] and talk [about them].... Every day representatives arrive from the volosts of the districts, categorically demanding bread for the hungry, with factual data, resolutions, protocols and other facts about the nightmarish cases of hunger and starvation, indicating [that] the famine has reached the extreme and people are doomed to starvation. Especially the district of the county, where they eat skin, bones, fallen animals, eat dried apricots, cake, clay - there are no products as such. In other volosts of the county, all the working cattle were eaten..." (NKSA. F. 1616. S. 1. F. 4. L. 56rev.).

With the increase in the number of hungry, child homelessness also increased. For example, on December 1, 1921, there were 128,000 street children in the KSSR, and on December 31 – 158,000, in January the number of street children increased to 333043 people (SARF. F. 1058. S. 1. D. 175. L. 1).

In 1922, there were 14 orphanages in Akmola province, where there were 9.426 thousand children and 4 infantries for infants up to 3 years. According to sources, infant mortality was high and reached 40% (SAAR. F. 115. S. 1. F. 5. L. 42). Driven to despair by the pangs of hunger, people began to eat fried, boiled and even raw human meat. They ate not only the meat of corpses, but also people killed daily for these purposes (SARF. F. 1058. S. 1. F. 175. L. 23rev.).

Due to the famine of 1921-1923, the handicraft production of the republic also declined. Handicraft workers, having no means to support their families, were forced to sell their tools (SARF. F. 1065. S. 2. F. 116. L. 173). According to the Labor Exchange, there were more than 3000 unemployed people in Kazakhstan on August 1, 1922. As hunger increases the unemployment rate may increase to 18000 people. To improve the life of the unemployed commissions were created at Labor Exchanges whose duties included the construction of overnight houses cheap apartments, free canteens with cheaper lunches (SARF. F. 1065. S. 2. F. 116. L. 29rev.). As a reflection of the consequences of the famine, it should be noted that the population of Akmola province decreased by almost 30% in relation to 1920. Of the total number of state-owned enterprises, 40% were active, 35% were inactive and 25% were leased. Of 127 artisanal artels, 50% were inactive. The number of closed schools reached 80% (SARF. F. 1065. S. 2. F. 116. L. 204).

In order to solve the problem provincial special commissions were created to help the population, which determine the activity of all supporting bodies in this issue. Thus on August 23, 1921 the Akmola Provincial Commission of Starve Control was organized first at the provincial committee and then on the basis of the Central Executive Commission distribution to help the population of Kyrgyzstan No. 4515 (CSA RK. F. 1215. S. 1. F. 19. L. 50rev.). First the tasks of the provincial committee were: voluntary donations in favor of starving regions and the management of the entire region in the public Governor's Office. Thus the provincial commission started its work. As a material background, periodic 2- and 3-week donations were performed in accordance with the requirements of the public service (CSA RK. F. 1215. S. 1. F. 19. L. 51).

In Petropavlovsk there were founded 8 eating houses, 5 units in Kokchetav, 3 in Atbasar, 3 in Akmolinsk. There were 19 tables in all cities. The register number of starving people both local, and refugees in January, February and March 1922 reached: 150000 people in Petropavlovsk County, 114000 people in Kokchetavsky County, 10000 people in Atbasarsky County, 66397 people in Akmolinsky. In total the number came up to 340397 people (CSA RK. F. 1215. S. 1. F. 19. L. 53).

The famine especially affected Priishimsky, Middle-Arginsky, Baganalinsky and Krasivinsky Atbasarsky districts as well as Krivo-Ozernsky, Konstantinovskiy, Balkashinsky and parts of Shchuchinsky volost, Aleksandrovsk, Kayandinsky and karachinsky district of Kokchetavsky district. A significant part of the population was Kirghiz (Kazakhs) engaged in cattle farming, they did not have the opportunity to buy bread. 10% of grain seeds were given to the population but they didn't get the addressee because the distance to go to get the seeds was too long 1000-1500 versts, and the Kirghiz who received grain did not agricultural instruments and could do nothing but eat the seeds. The Russian population of these regions either did not get the seeds at all or a got small amount to plant. This also led to fast poverty. Studying the difficult situation of the Kirghiz population the Central Commission of Starve Control and the Red Cross provided the regions with food and medical treatment. (SARF. F. 1065. S. 2. F. 116. L. 58rev.). Despite the continuous problems with



material and physical resources the activity of the Akmola Provincial Starve Control Commission aimed to help poor residents of Akmola province.

**5. Conclusion.** Studying the research analysis results, it is necessary to note that the heavy socio-economic and demographic effects of 1921-1923 famine were the result of the Soviet Union economic policy, the following Imperial and civil wars, draught and jute (mass cattle death). On the background of hard economic situation in the country and a food crisis, the ethno demographic picture of the region was also changed. The severity and tragedy of the considered years (1921-1923) were concluded in the quality of specific subjective circumstances in northern Kazakhstan. First, deprivation caused by war as it is in which the region was one of the epicenters and servile obligations in favor of warring parties. Second, requisitioning of products (prodrazverstka) in 1921 that deprived the population not only of cultivated grain, but also the seed supply was actually taken away.

It should be noted that the significant deprivation faced the horse and cattle farming: the mobilization of horses in 1921, as well as the reduce of draught oxen by 20% compared to 1917. The migration of refugees from other provinces and regions (Volga region, Bashkiria etc.) and mass transitions outside the Republic also worsened the situation.

The reduction of the rural economy main industries and growth of unemployed people took place in negative social relations resulting in street robbery and other crimes. Out of the famine there appeared occasions of cannibalism, the archival documents witness the mass growth homeless children. Mass epidemics of the population (typhus, cholera, dysentery, malaria) and epizootic disease have become symbols of the considered years. The food crisis of 1921-1923 years aggravated the situation. These events have accordingly become a serious connection to the subsequent development of Kazakhstan.

#### Sources

SARF - State Archive of the Russian Federation  
 CSA RK - Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan  
 NKSA - North Kazakhstan region State Archive  
 SAAR - State Archive of Akmola region  
 SACA - State Archive of the city of Astana

#### Дереккөздер

РФМА - Ресей Федерациясының мемлекеттік архиві  
 ҚРОМА - Қазақстан Республикасы Орталық мемлекеттік архиві  
 СҚМА - Солтүстік Қазақстан облысының мемлекеттік архиві  
 АО МА - Ақмола облысының мемлекеттік архиві  
 АҚ МА - Астана қаласының мемлекеттік архиві

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