

Research Article

Politikal Decisions of the First All Kazakh Congress and les Role in the Sovietization of the Kazakh Aul (1925)

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Abstract

The subject of this study is the political decisions of the First All-Kazakh Congress (Council) of 1925 and their impact on the organization and transformation of the Kazakh aul under the conditions of the formation of Soviet statehood. The aim of the research is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the political decisions of 1925, to determine their historical significance, and to assess the extent of their influence on traditional forms of aul organization. The methodological framework of the study is based on the principles of historicism, objectivity, and systemic analysis. Comparative-historical, problem-chronological, and structural-functional methods were employed, enabling the Council's decisions to be examined within the broader context of central policies and regional specificities. This article analyzes the political decisions adopted at the First All-Kazakh Congress of 1925 and their role in integrating Kazakh rural society into the Soviet administrative system. Drawing on archival materials from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the study explores the socio-political context of the Congress, national cadre policy, administrative-territorial reforms, local budgets, and the institutionalization of rural soviets. The adopted resolutions marked a transition from zhuz-based governance to a territorial-economic administrative model. The findings indicate that the decisions of 1925 were aimed at unifying the system of governance and gradually transforming traditional institutions. The planned reforms contributed to the redistribution of power, strengthened structural control, and laid the groundwork for subsequent socio-economic transformations. At the same time, contradictions were revealed between the proclaimed principles of self-government and the actual centralization of power. It is concluded that the political decisions of 1925 played a key role in the modernization of Kazakh society, while simultaneously limiting traditional forms of social organization.

Keywords

All-Kazakh Congress, Kazakh ASSR, Village Councils, Volost Budget, Administrative Reform, National Cadres, Sovietization

1. Introduction

The mid-1920s marked a period of institutional consolidation of the Soviet state system in Kazakhstan. The new system of power proclaimed after the October Revolution of 1917 was not immediately fully implemented across the territory of Kazakhstan. The Civil War, economic devastation, and the

consequences of the famine of 1921–1922 had a profound impact on the social structure of Kazakh society. The First All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets held in 1925 became an important political event that, for the first time, comprehensively discussed the issue of adapting the Kazakh rural population to

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the Soviet system of governance during this transitional period. This gathering was not merely an organizational event; it also served as a political platform aimed at defining the role of the national intelligentsia within the new state system.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the content of the political decisions adopted at the First All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets and to determine their role in the process of the Sovietization of the Kazakh countryside.

2. Research Materials and Methods

The issue of administrative and financial reforms in Kazakhstan during the 1920s–1930s has been examined from different perspectives in both Soviet-era and post-independence scholarship.

The main sources for this study are official documents, including resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Kazakh SSR (Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 30) and materials from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Fund 229). These sources also include financial reports, budgets, and statistical compilations.

The research employed several methodological approaches, including historical source analysis, the comparative method, institutional analysis, and a systemic approach.

3. Literature Review

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In a number of scholarly studies, the structure of the party-state apparatus is examined, as well as the evolution of the policy of “sedentarization”. Particular attention is paid to the role of the national intelligentsia in the early years of Soviet power and its adaptation to Soviet administrative structures in order to advance national interests. In the historiography of Soviet modernization in Kazakhstan, one of the prominent analytical approaches examines the transformation processes through the concept of the “Soviet project,” which makes it possible to situate these developments within the broader context of imperial transformation. This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the political, social, and institutional changes that accompanied the establishment of the Soviet system of governance in the republic. Within this line of research, particular attention is devoted to the evolution of the political elite, including its social origins, party experience, mechanisms of cadre formation, and the nature of its interaction with the central authorities. In the historiography of the Soviet period in Kazakhstan, considerable attention has been

devoted to the study of nationalities policy, the formation of the administrative apparatus, the development of financial institutions, and the implementation of agrarian policy. Within this line of research, scholars examine the functioning of the Soviet system of governance, the characteristics of state-building, as well as the institutional and socio-economic transformations that accompanied the Sovietization of the republic. An important group of primary sources is represented by official publications of the Soviet period, including the documentary collection History of the Kazakh ASSR (1920–1936) and the publication of the Central Council of the National Economy of the Kazakh ASSR, Reports and Speeches at the Meeting of the Leaders of the Highest State Authorities. General Characteristics of the Kazakh ASSR (Alma-Ata: Printing House of the Central Council of the National Economy, 1930). The latter contains reports by senior republican officials that provide a comprehensive assessment of Kazakhstan's economic potential, the development of state administration, industrial policy, and the priorities of Soviet modernization. The materials characterize the republic's natural resources, agricultural and industrial capacities, and the principal challenges associated with administrative governance and economic planning during the initial stage of socialist transformation. These works comprehensively examine the formation of public administration, the legal system, and governance policies in Kazakhstan during the Soviet period of the 1920s–1930s.

The studies also analyze the extent to which representatives of the Kazakh nation were incorporated into administrative structures within the framework of the Soviet policy of “indigenization” (*korenizatsiya*), as well as the specific features of кадровая policy and its political and social consequences. In addition, the earliest official documents that formed the basis for the establishment of the Kazakh ASSR in the 1920s are examined, and the historical significance of the decrees and resolutions that defined the legal status of the autonomous republic is assessed.

These works also reveal the mechanisms of financing within the Soviet administrative system, the formation of the system of state control, and the specific functioning of the bureaucratic apparatus. Particular attention is given to the role of law enforcement bodies in implementing Sovietization policies during the 1920s–1930s. The activities of the militia, courts, and investigative bodies in establishing the socialist legal order are analyzed, as well as the nature of political supervision and repressive measures of the period.

Furthermore, the collection of official documents on the history of the Kazakh ASSR (1920–1936), edited by Manash Kozybayev, brings together valuable materials on state-building, administrative-territorial changes, and economic and political reforms. This compilation is considered an important source base for researchers studying the history of Kazakhstan in the early Soviet period.

4. Discussion

The archival evidence presented in this study allows a

broader interpretation of the administrative-territorial reforms of the 1920s than is generally offered in existing historiography. Whereas most previous studies have examined either the formation of the Soviet party-state apparatus or the policy of *korenizatsiya* separately, the present research demonstrates that administrative reform, financial policy, ethnic settlement patterns, and the incorporation of the Kazakh population into Soviet institutions represented interconnected components of a single state-building process.

The findings generally support the conclusions of A. M. Aunasova concerning the adaptation of the Kazakh national intelligentsia to the Soviet political system. Aunasova argues that representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia attempted to preserve national interests by participating in the construction of Soviet institutions during the revolutionary period and the years of the New Economic Policy. The archival materials analyzed in this study confirm this interpretation but also broaden it considerably. Rather than acting merely as intermediaries between Soviet authorities and the Kazakh population, members of the national intelligentsia participated directly in the organization of rural administrative institutions, the implementation of administrative-territorial reforms, and the adaptation of centrally designed policies to local social conditions. Consequently, their historical role should be understood not only within the framework of political adaptation but also as an important factor in the institutional formation of local state administration. [1]

The conclusions of D. A. Amanzholova regarding the co-existence of traditional and Soviet administrative institutions are likewise confirmed by the present study. Amanzholova emphasizes that traditional mechanisms of authority continued to perform essential governing functions despite the establishment of Soviet institutions. The archival documents examined here demonstrate that the transition from clan-based governance to territorially organized Soviet administration proceeded unevenly across different regions of Kazakhstan. Formal administrative restructuring did not immediately eliminate traditional social relations; instead, Soviet institutions frequently operated alongside existing clan networks, particularly in remote rural areas. This finding suggests that administrative-territorial reform should be interpreted as a gradual process of institutional replacement rather than as an immediate transformation initiated by Soviet legislation alone. [2]

At the same time, the present research extends Amanzholova's interpretation by demonstrating that the effectiveness of Soviet administration depended not only upon political restructuring but also upon financial capacity and administrative accessibility. Even after new institutions had formally been established, their practical functioning remained constrained by insufficient funding, shortages of qualified personnel, weak communication networks, and the enormous distances separating rural settlements from republican administrative centers. Consequently, the degree of Soviet institutionalization varied considerably throughout Kazakhstan. [3]

The conclusions reached by N. D. Nurtazina and D. A. Amanzholova concerning the evolution of the national project

also receive additional confirmation. These authors argue that the Soviet national project gradually shifted from broader all-Russian ideological concepts toward more localized national forms of political organization. The present research demonstrates that the First All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets constituted one of the principal institutional mechanisms through which this transformation was implemented. [4] The findings of the present study complement the research of B. Zh. Kabdushev on the socio-political processes in Kazakhstan during the 1920s and 1930s. Kabdushev examines the influence of representatives of the Kazakh national intelligentsia and the Alash movement, particularly Zh. Akbayev, A. Bokeikhanov, and A. Baitursynov, on the formation of the socio-political views and statesmanship of N. Nurmakov. The author demonstrates that the active political activities of the leaders of the Alash movement had a significant impact on the development of Nurmakov's political outlook and approaches to public administration. In addition, Kabdushev's studies reveal the distinctive features of the formation of state institutions, the administrative system, and the development of managerial personnel in Kazakhstan during the 1920s and 1930s, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the processes of institutional construction of Soviet statehood in the republic. [5] Congress represented not merely an administrative meeting but an important stage in constructing Soviet national statehood, since its resolutions created institutional conditions for incorporating the Kazakh rural population into newly organized administrative structures while simultaneously redefining the relationship between traditional authority and Soviet governance. Particular significance should be attached to the financial dimension of administrative reform. B. E. Nurpeisova has demonstrated that the establishment of financial institutions in the Kazakh ASSR represented one of the principal challenges confronting the new Soviet administration and that the First All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets became an important forum for discussing insufficient financial support for local governing bodies. The archival evidence analyzed in this study fully confirms this conclusion but also reveals substantial differences in the functioning of financial institutions across administrative levels. Whereas guberniya administrations possessed greater fiscal resources and broader administrative authority, village councils often demonstrated greater flexibility in responding to immediate social needs despite their limited budgets. This comparison indicates that institutional effectiveness did not necessarily correspond to the volume of available financial resources. The financial difficulties identified by Nurpeisova also appear to have had broader political consequences than previously emphasized. The inability of republican authorities to independently approve local budgets, the dependence of financial allocations upon central Soviet institutions, and the prolonged procedures required for budget approval substantially limited the administrative autonomy of the Kazakh ASSR. Consequently, financial centralization functioned not merely as an economic mechanism but

also as an instrument of political control over regional administration. [6]

These conclusions correspond closely with the observations of B. E. Nurpeisova and Zh. M. Asylbekova concerning Soviet agricultural taxation. According to these authors, tax policy largely ignored the specific characteristics of Kazakhstan's predominantly pastoral economy and imposed financial burdens exceeding the productive capacity of local households. The archival materials analyzed in this study demonstrate that these fiscal problems extended beyond agriculture itself. Financial shortages affected the establishment of local administrative institutions, limited the recruitment of qualified personnel, and reduced the ability of rural Soviet authorities to perform even basic administrative functions. Thus, taxation policy, financial centralization, and administrative reform should be understood as mutually reinforcing components of Soviet modernization rather than as separate policy directions. [7]

The economic assessments presented in official planning documents of the late 1920s likewise correspond with the findings of this research. A. Podnek characterized Kazakhstan as one of the least economically developed republics on the eve of the First Five-Year Plan. The archival materials examined in the present study provide an explanation for this assessment by demonstrating that systematic state investment remained limited throughout much of the 1920s, while administrative institutions continued to experience chronic shortages of financial and organizational resources. Economic underdevelopment therefore reflected not only inherited structural conditions but also the priorities of Soviet investment policy during the early period of state formation. [8]

The conclusions of K. P. Kaminsky concerning Kazakhstan's exceptional agricultural potential likewise receive important qualification. Kaminsky emphasized the republic's considerable natural resources and prospects for agricultural expansion. The present research does not contradict this assessment; however, it demonstrates that realization of this potential was constrained by institutional weaknesses, uneven territorial administration, inadequate transport infrastructure, and insufficient financial support for local governing bodies. Consequently, the gap between economic potential and administrative capacity became one of the defining characteristics of Kazakhstan during the 1920s. [9]

Similarly, the optimistic assessment offered by U. D. Isaev regarding Kazakhstan's future economic development corresponds with the strategic intentions of Soviet policymakers but contrasts with the administrative realities documented in archival sources. Although republican leaders emphasized Kazakhstan's future industrial and agricultural significance, local governing institutions lacked the personnel, financial resources, and organizational capacity necessary for implementing these ambitious development programs. The discrepancy between political expectations and administrative capabilities therefore represented one of the principal contradictions of Soviet modernization in Kazakhstan. [10]

The interpretation proposed by V. N. Makogon concerning

the colonial legacy of the Russian Empire receives particularly strong confirmation from the archival evidence examined in this study. Makogon argued that imperial economic policy intentionally preserved Kazakhstan as a supplier of raw materials rather than encouraging industrial development. The present research demonstrates that Soviet administrative-territorial reforms unintentionally reproduced several structural characteristics of the earlier imperial administrative system. Administrative centers continued to be concentrated in territories with established infrastructure and substantial settler populations, while predominantly Kazakh nomadic regions remained comparatively underfinanced and administratively marginalized. Thus, despite ideological declarations concerning socialist equality, significant elements of the colonial territorial organization were preserved under Soviet administration. [10]

The documentary collection *History of the Kazakh ASSR (1920–1936)* edited by M. K. Kozybayev provides valuable documentary evidence concerning land reform, state-building, and economic modernization. The archival sources analyzed in the present study complement this documentary base by illustrating how official decisions were implemented in everyday administrative practice. Whereas normative documents describe the intended organization of Soviet administration, archival correspondence reveals numerous practical difficulties, including delays in budget approval, shortages of qualified personnel, weak communications, conflicts between republican and central authorities, and persistent inequalities in financial distribution between administrative regions [11].

Taken together, these comparisons demonstrate that the present research both confirms and substantially extends existing historiography. Previous studies have convincingly explained the evolution of the party-state apparatus, the policy of *korenizatsiya*, the activities of the Kazakh intelligentsia, and Soviet economic modernization. However, the archival materials examined here reveal that these processes cannot be fully understood in isolation. Administrative-territorial reform served as the institutional framework within which political integration, financial centralization, ethnic transformation, personnel policy, and economic modernization were simultaneously implemented. The study therefore argues that the administrative reforms of the 1920s should be interpreted not simply as bureaucratic restructuring but as one of the principal mechanisms through which Soviet power transformed the political organization, ethnic composition, and socio-economic development of Kazakhstan. [12]

5. Research Results

The study analyzes the impact of administrative-territorial transformations on the ethnic composition of the population and on the socio-political situation of the Kazakh people. As a result of Soviet reforms, the traditional clan-based system of governance was transformed, and the transition to a new

model based on territorial and economic principles was examined.

The contradictions and problems that emerged during the formation of the administrative governance system were identified and given a historical assessment. It was demonstrated that issues such as the failure to consider local specificities, shortages of qualified personnel, and inequalities in the distribution of powers between the central authorities and the regions at that time hindered the effective implementation of the reforms.

A comparative analysis was also conducted of the social assistance system at the guberniya (provincial), volost (district), and rural levels. The results show that although the guberniya level had greater resource capacity, more immediate and accessible mechanisms for providing assistance—particularly to incoming populations—were often implemented more effectively at the rural level. Nevertheless, financial and organizational constraints were felt across all administrative levels.

The political decisions of the First All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets held in 1925 were analyzed on the basis of archival materials, and it was demonstrated that its resolutions aimed at improving local administrative governance marked the beginning of a new stage in national state development. The historical role of this gathering in incorporating the Kazakh population into the Soviet system of state administration—based on the newly organized rural structure—was clarified.

The adopted resolutions represented the first step in the transition from the traditional clan-based system of governance to a Soviet model grounded in territorial and economic principles. As a result, traditional power structures were gradually transformed, and new administrative institutions were established within the framework of the Soviet government.

In addition, the efforts of the Kazakh intelligentsia to adapt Soviet power to national interests were examined, and their historical role in integrating the Kazakh rural population into the new system of state administration was evaluated. The research shows that their activities were aimed at preserving national identity, supporting the development of the state language and culture, and adapting administrative reforms to local conditions.

Overall, the study scientifically substantiates that the administrative-territorial reforms of the 1920s significantly influenced the political, social, and ethnic development of Kazakh society, while the decisions of the First All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets became an important historical stage in the institutional formation of national statehood.

Kazakhstan has historically been organized into several regions according to patterns of long-standing settlement. An examination of specific historical events shows that the organization of the local state administration system had distinctive features. In particular, the establishment of administrative institutions of the new Soviet government was often determined by practical considerations—such as the suitability of areas for settlement, the density of the population, and the availability of transport routes.

In reality, in many places that met these requirements the

local population was not predominantly Kazakh. Rather, these territories were largely inhabited by incoming populations who had been settled there under favorable conditions created during the period of the Tsarist government. As a result, the new Soviet authorities often followed the same principle and considered it appropriate to establish administrative institutions in these areas.

At the same time, the new administrative-territorial division of the republic had not yet been fully completed. Compared to the Kazakh population, incoming populations were more often settled in favorable regions, where population density was correspondingly higher. Even though Soviet power had been established in Kazakhstan, systematic financing of various sectors began to be considered only toward the end of the 1920s, particularly within the framework of the first Five-Year Plan. Several factors contributed to this situation. By the late 1920s, after the economic potential of Kazakh territory had been more thoroughly studied, Kazakhstan began to be viewed in 1929–1930 primarily as a source of raw materials.

In this regard, according to the opinion of a local leader of the Soviet government, “...the significance of the economy of the Turkestan Republic for the overall economic plan requires that the economic development of all its parts be included, especially those peripheral autonomous regions of the Soviet Republic without whose organization it is impossible to create a positive economic plan, for example, in the field of the textile industry.” [13]

At the same time, in a report addressed to the central authorities, the head of the Communist Party in Kazakhstan noted that “...in the near future Kazakhstan will become a raw material and food base for the entire Union, even without mentioning the exceptional wealth that indicates Kazakhstan’s bright future as a republic.” [14] In this report he also provided a characterization of the different regions of Kazakhstan.

For instance, it was stated that “...in Northern Kazakhstan alone there are 16 million hectares of land suitable for cultivation. In Central and Western Kazakhstan, new mineral resources are being discovered every year—oil, zinc, silver, copper, and others. In several regions of Kazakhstan there are deposits of billions of tons of coal, located close to iron ore and various non-ferrous metal ores. Owing to its copper deposits, as well as silver and zinc resources, Kazakhstan has the potential to become a global center of industrial production through the extraction of these metals. The Almaty district may well develop into a major center for livestock breeding, rice cultivation, and tobacco production/” [15].

To address these tasks, it was considered necessary to establish an effective system of state administration in Kazakhstan. However, at that time the republic’s significant economic potential was being utilized at a very low level. Several reasons were identified for this situation. Up to that point, the system of governance had largely functioned within unnecessary patriarchal and clan-based relations. In addition, the small and weak composition of the industrial proletariat, the predominance of nomadic pastoralism, widespread illiteracy, and

the persistence of clan-based social structures all hindered and slowed the development of Kazakhstan. Thus, the one-sided approach of the administrative system established by the Soviet government demonstrates that as early as the 1920s the policy aimed to make the peripheral regions economically dependent on the Soviet center and to shape them primarily as sources of raw materials. In this context, it became necessary to attract labor from outside the republic, involve it in production, stabilize the workforce, and improve the quality of local agricultural products in order to supply other industrial centers.

For this reason, regions with greater economic potential received priority in financing compared to districts considered economically “weak.” At the beginning of 1921, during the first meeting of financial officials dedicated to reviewing their initial activities, the issue of concentrating the organs of the Kazakh Republic around regional administrative centers and centralizing settlements was raised for the first time. [16]

The formation of the local system of state administration had several distinctive features. Administrative institutions were established according to certain criteria—such as whether an area was suitable for living, whether the population density was relatively high, and whether transport and communication routes were convenient. In reality, many of the territories that met these conditions were not predominantly inhabited by Kazakhs but by incoming populations who had been settled there under favorable conditions created during the Tsarist period. Consequently, the Soviet government often considered it appropriate to establish administrative institutions in these areas. Moreover, compared to the Kazakh population, the regions where settlers had been placed during the Tsarist period tended to have higher population density.

At this stage, the Soviet administrative–territorial division of the republic began to be shaped in accordance with the one-sided political approach of the Bolshevik leadership. Accordingly, based on a directive adopted by the Council of People’s Commissars of the Russian Federation, the local Central Executive authorities were instructed that “...it is necessary to create nationally homogeneous compositions of the Soviets in order to most fully satisfy the needs of the areas where the Russian population resides.” [17].

After the institutions of all commissariats of the Kazakh Autonomous Republic were newly established, it proved difficult to fully implement budgetary regulations, primarily because Orenburg—the administrative center—was geographically distant from many regions of the republic. In the initial stage, communication was maintained only with the Orenburg–Torgai region, the Bukey Horde, the Adai region, and the Ural Governorate, while issues concerning Akmola and Semey were addressed only in later years.

In 1924, a report titled “Control of the Budgets of the Semey and Akmola Governorates” was presented at a meeting of the Financial Collegium. It noted that the local budgets of these governorates had progressively increased during 1923–1924, while funding for administrative institutions had been reduced. At the same time, allocations for education,

healthcare, agriculture, and municipal services had increased” [18]

However, in 1926 and in the following years the condition of local guberniya budgets remained relatively weak. The main sources of revenue—particularly tax income—continued to be low. Another report presented to the Financial Collegium in 1924 on the budgets of the Semey and Akmola governorates again emphasized the progressive growth of their local budgets in 1923–1924, the reduction of funding for administrative institutions, and the increase in financial allocations to education, healthcare, agriculture, and municipal services.¹⁹

The revenue estimates of industrial and municipal enterprises, as well as those of communal departments, and their expenditures were approved by the guberniya (provincial) executive committees and included in the guberniya budget. At the republican level, the management of local financial bodies involved organizing administrative procedures when necessary, maintaining accounts, and supervising the process of local financing carried out by all governmental institutions of the republic. It also included conducting inspections and audits of the property of institutions and of all industrial enterprises transferred to the jurisdiction of local councils.

Local budget expenditures were directed toward maintaining and equipping schools in densely populated areas, as well as financing orphanages, colonies, and other social and legal institutions. Funding was also allocated for institutions dedicated to the protection of minors, various specialized schools, reading halls, rural community houses (izbas), libraries, and programs aimed at eliminating illiteracy and semi-literacy.

In addition, the financing of agriculture through local financial resources was coordinated in several key areas: agroeconomic services, zootechnical services, veterinary systems, and land management, as well as maintaining regulatory order in these sectors. In areas with higher population density, compared to Kazakh rural settlements, the People’s Commissariat of Finance of the republic assigned more substantial responsibilities to local guberniya financial bodies.

In general, during the 1920s the coordination of financial measures was assigned to the district (uezd) executive committees. Accordingly, volost administrations were funded through allocations provided by the guberniya authorities to the district executive committees. As for expenditures considered part of local finances, their coordination was also under the authority of the local guberniya executive committees.

The preparation and regulation of such budgets required complex procedures and often took considerable time. For example, before being submitted for approval, proposals had to undergo careful examination at several levels. Only after receiving positive assessments were they presented at economic meetings and then submitted for approval to the guberniya executive committees. In exceptional cases, matters concerning local revenues and expenditures affecting all guberniyas were forwarded, after the People’s Commissariat of Finance, to the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs for information and oversight.

Furthermore, in order to open and distribute credit allocations for the Kazakh Autonomous Republic, credits assigned for the use of the autonomous republic within the overall state revenues and expenditures of the Russian Federation were consolidated through the direct participation of the relevant departments. Their allocation was approved through the decisions and coordination of the guberniya financial departments of the Kazakh Republic. Financial credits of individual departments were to be distributed through the guberniya financial departments located in Orenburg.

Therefore, in the early 1920s, planning for future expenditures related to revenues and taxes was carried out in accordance with the general needs of the guberniya. This planning was undertaken in the guberniya financial departments with the participation of communal economic bodies and according to decisions made by members of the guberniya executive committees. The allocation of financial resources for industrial and socio-cultural sectors was addressed somewhat later.

Although these measures were thoroughly outlined in normative and other official documents, in practice their implementation often proved contradictory and inconsistent.

The subordination of the People's Commissariat of Finance of the Kazakh Autonomous SSR to the central authorities at that time created considerable difficulties in resolving many issues and often led to prolonged delays and various bureaucratic pretexts. For example, the approval of local budgets by the central authorities and the confirmation of additional federal subsidy assistance required numerous procedural agreements and was frequently complicated by other circumstances. This situation was largely explained by the deficit of the budget of the Russian Federation.

In this context, the central authorities, on the one hand, regarded the problems raised as internal matters of the republic. On the other hand, they instructed that solutions should be found within the republic's own capabilities—for instance, by reducing the administrative and managerial apparatus in small and remote settlements in order to save financial resources. Without sufficiently considering the real conditions of local specificities, the center demanded that local financial bodies strictly reduce administrative expenditures in order to economize central funds.

Naturally, these directives caused dissatisfaction among local authorities. Given the difficult condition of Kazakhstan's budget, it was practically impossible to fulfill such instructions. On the contrary, under the circumstances of establishing new Soviet settlements, it was necessary to increase staffing levels, regulate and raise wage levels, and address other organizational issues, which in fact required an increase in administrative and managerial expenditures.

At this stage, during a meeting of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the Bolshevik Communist Party, the People's Commissar of Finance, M. Murzagaliev, openly expressed opposition to the directives of the central authorities. In his report, he substantiated with concrete data that pressure was being exerted on the rights of the republic. He emphasized that

the already limited republican budget created a serious risk for the full establishment and functioning of administrative institutions.

Furthermore, Murzagaliev reported on the need to increase the number of qualified personnel within the district and especially the lower administrative apparatus of the Central Executive Committee of the Kazakh Autonomous Republic. In his report, he provided a detailed analysis of several issues and specifically pointed out that reductions in the Soviet administrative system at the local level had primarily affected rural areas inhabited by the Kazakh population.

For example, during the process of district–territorial reorganization, aimed at saving financial resources, approximately 1,400 rural Soviet administrative bodies were closed. [18] Murzagaliev expressed particular concern about this situation. The closure of these local governing bodies primarily affected sparsely populated districts and regional financial systems located in remote areas where the local population consisted predominantly of Kazakhs. These areas had fewer administrative units, smaller staff numbers, and significantly lower wage norms for employees. Because they were situated in remote regions, the workload for staff was heavy, yet their financial and material conditions were far worse compared to districts inhabited by other national groups.

In sparsely populated areas where the Kazakh population lived compactly, the Soviet administrative system often existed only nominally. In reality, these regions received almost no financial or material support. Moreover, the infrastructure in such areas was poorly developed: transportation routes, as well as postal and telegraph communication networks, were extremely limited or sometimes entirely absent. [19]

Across many regions of Kazakhstan, the population consisted largely of local nomadic communities. Financial institutions were generally weak throughout the republic, especially in regions located far from the central administrative centers.

When referring to Central Kazakhstan, the Karakalpak Autonomous Region, and the Akmola district, it was noted that, due to the great distances between settlements, the local administrative system was extremely limited, forcing people to manage as best they could. The general condition of the Soviet administrative system in Kazakhstan was highlighted, emphasizing that strengthening the Soviet administration in Kazakh-populated areas and supporting it materially and financially was an urgent issue.

In his report, Finance Commissar M. Murzagaliev stated:

"One of the most categorical directives from the party and Soviet central organs of the RSFSR regarding budget formation is the directive on the unconditional reduction of administrative and managerial expenditures by no less than 20%. On the other hand, Kazakhstan has several directives from the Party Central Committee, based on the report of the Regional Committee, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, and the session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) based on the report of the government of

the Kazakh ASSR, on strengthening district and, in particular, lower-level apparatuses, and on increasing the qualified workforce. Implementing these directives in the conditions of Kazakhstan involves increasing staff numbers, raising wages, and expanding credit operations—that is, an overall increase in administrative and managerial expenditures. In this case, the contradiction between the center's directives and local realities is resolved in favor of the center. In particular, institutions built on the republican budget, despite an extremely strict approach to constructing the administrative apparatus, are forced to raise the general question of whether it is even possible, under the conditions of the Kazakh SSR, to reduce administrative and managerial expenditures to the same extent as in the Federation itself, without comparing Kazakhstan to the industrial centers of the RSFSR, even in those regions where the economic and cultural conditions are closest to Kazakhstan." [20].

This clearly demonstrated that a 20% reduction was unrealistic. Furthermore, in areas densely populated by Kazakhs, the Soviet administrative presence existed mostly on paper, while the real situation was entirely different. Therefore, it was considered necessary to reject the rigid directives and focus on conducting work effectively, making any reductions in administrative expenditures impossible.

From the moment the organization of local administrative-territorial units began, Kazakh intellectuals sought to protect the interests of their people within the structural organization of the system, taking into account local specificities. Among them were Nurmakov, S. Smagulov, S. Seifullin, Torekulov, Mynbaev and others. [20]

At the next session of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the Bolshevik Communist Party, Finance Commissar M. Murzagaliyev, speaking as a financial expert, criticized the situation, emphasizing that the republic's rights were under pressure.

Meanwhile, in areas populated by incoming ethnic groups, councils that had been established earlier took into account the living conditions of the local population and provided targeted assistance to each family.

For example, assistance for daily necessities was provided as follows:

- 1) Boots – 1 pair
- 2) Sisa material – 1.6 meters
- 3) Fabric – 0.51 meters
- 4) Cloth (woolen) – 0.12 meters
- 5) Kerosene – 6.0 pounds
- 6) Soap – 1 piece
- 7) Tobacco – 2 packs
- 8) Matches – 1 box
- 9) Coal – 0.24 pood [21]

"Pood" is a Russian unit of weight, approximately 16.38 kilograms.

In addition, according to the system established by the Soviet government, the per capita food budget basket was structured as follows: [21]

Table 1. Food basket distributed by the Soviet government in 1922–1924.

Food Item		Standard Allocation
1. Wheat flour	kg	1.0
2. Barley	kg	7.0
3. Potatoes	kg	0.95
4. Cabbage	kg	8.0
5. Beets	kg	4.0
6. Garlic	kg	1.7
7. Meat	kg	7.8
8. Butter/Fat	kg	1.0
9. Milk	liter	5.5
10. Eggs	piece	3.0
11. Sunflower oil	liter	1.7
12. Fish	kg	3.0
13. Sugar	kg	2.0
14. Salt	kg	2.0

However, in the distribution of daily necessities and essential goods mentioned above, the needs of the local population—that is, the Kazakh people—were largely ignored, and only the requirements of incoming ethnic groups were considered. The allocation of aid in favor of these non-local populations was justified with various pretexts and inadequate reasons. For example, one frequently cited reason for the impossibility of providing these goods to the indigenous population was that the Kazakhs were “nomadic,” “scattered across the territory,” or that “the institutions of the Soviet government were still not fully operational in the areas they inhabited,” along with other artificially constructed explanations. These arguments were used to justify the lack of access for Kazakhs to grain and other essential items. [21]

Consequently, during the period 1920–1925, considering the vast extent of Kazakh-inhabited territories and the fact that the number of administrative-territorial units within these areas had not yet been fully defined, the local Kazakh population found itself in an extremely difficult situation compared to other ethnic groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the primary reason for organizing the First All-Kazakh Congress was directly connected to addressing this problem.

In 1925, the First All-Kazakh Congress was held. At this landmark assembly, Kazakhs who had come under Soviet or colonial policies under the tsarist regime had inflicted on their traditional nomadic way of life and cultural practices. Since all fertile land until that time had been largely in the hands of incoming ethnic groups, the nomadic population had been pushed into a state of forced hardship. This situation became one of the foremost issues on the agenda and deeply

worried the Kazakh intelligentsia. [22]

In the Kazakh steppe, the tsarist administrative system had been dismantled, and the Soviet government had prevailed over competing political structures. Now, under the new Soviet system, the key question was how to develop and secure the Kazakh population's future, prevent them from lagging behind amid ongoing changes, and effectively leverage the Soviet system while taking national characteristics into account. This became the primary issue addressed at the special congress, which explored solutions through a series of discussions and inquiries.

The assembly included not only Kazakh participants but also representatives of other ethnic groups serving in provincial and district administrative bodies. Proceedings were conducted primarily in Kazakh, with simultaneous translation into Russian. Several items were placed on the agenda. Initially, the historical role of the Soviet government was presented in general terms, but gradually the focus shifted to the central issue: establishing the effective functioning of the Soviet government within Kazakh society.

Key internal and detailed questions addressed at the congress included: the status of local Soviets in Kazakh-inhabited areas that were still not fully defined, the implementation of revolutionary laws at the local level, the functioning of rural police forces, the budgets of volost (subdistrict) administrations, and other pressing administrative issues.

Prominent Kazakh citizens who participated in the First All-Kazakh Congress included Mynbaev, Zhandosov, Saduakasov, Mendeshev, Khodzhanov, Kemengerov, Myltikpaev, Kulsartov, Yergaliyeva, Mustambaev, Lekerov, Kashkynov and many other members of the Kazakh intelligentsia. [22]

This congress was the first assembly held in the Kazakh territories after the Soviet government had been established, officially recognizing the consolidation of the Bolshevik government in 1920–1925 and aiming to organize settlements within the framework of the new regime. Although the Soviet government had replaced the tsarist regime in the central authorities following the 1917 revolution, and had been established and strengthened in Kazakhstan by 1920 (March 5, 1920) the formal discussion of consolidating Soviet authority in Kazakh rural areas occurred for the first time in 1925. [20]

As Mynbaev noted, the delay in addressing this issue was linked to various circumstances: the civil war, the famine of 1921–1922, and other hardships that had prevented adequate protection of the Kazakh population until that time. Therefore, once all Kazakh territories were brought together, the First All-Kazakh Congress provided the opportunity to revitalize the work of the Soviets and formally address the needs of the Kazakh people.

At this assembly, Kazakh delegates thoroughly analyzed the dire conditions in rural areas and discussed which measures would need to be implemented under the established Soviet government in the future. Village representatives from

local areas also shared their grievances. In general, the forward-thinking and enlightened members of the Kazakh intelligentsia voiced some harsh truths about the state of the population.

For example, Khodzhanov stated: “Of course, we are knowledgeable and understand the highest principles, but who are we trying to adapt to the Soviet government? The common people are too distant from us. At this meeting, we must focus not on ourselves, but on those we wish to bring under the system, and we must reach their level of understanding. Only then will there be no unnecessary words, and the solutions to all issues will gradually become clear. Only in this way can we reach mutual agreement.” [22]

Nurmakov, in his report, raised several questions before the assembly: “Even if the truly oppressed are wealthy kulaks or ‘counter-revolutionaries,’ who gave anyone the right to trample on their personal rights? No one. To resolve this, we have special courts, the GPU, and judicial institutions. But if you want to truly fight the rich, you must provide the middle and poor peasants with seed loans, agricultural machinery, and farming credit.” [22]

At the evening session on September 29, Zhandosov addressed the following issues. He emphasized that the challenges of building village Soviets were closely tied to national household practices, economic activities, and Kazakh cultural traditions. In his report, he highlighted measures to prevent the concept of the “backward Kazakh” from taking hold, describing how Soviet policies had, in practice, favored incoming European-ethnic populations and left local Kazakhs behind. He explained the implications of this situation to the gathered assembly. Nevertheless, he noted that the clear establishment of the Kazakh territorial boundaries should also be seen as an achievement. With the previous tsarist colonial administration abolished, the opportunity to establish a Kazakh state governance system was, in itself, a success.

And for the “backward Kazakh” population, this issue was far from simple. In this context, the primary concern in governing the Kazakh territories was the personnel problem. While the Soviet government had been established and many issues in Russian villages had been resolved, the village Soviets remained largely detached from the Kazakh communities and thus could not serve as centers of social or economic culture for them. Up to that point, Russian administrative methods had been imposed without regard for the specific characteristics of the villages. The initial district-level budget in 1920 faced a deficit, which meant that funding for agricultural and cultural initiatives in the villages could not be carried out. [20]

Lekyerov remarked: “If we look at the current Kazakh volosts, what is their local volost budget? It’s merely an illusion.” [22], Meanwhile, S. Saduakasov noted: “Volost budgets were introduced in the Kazakh Republic for the first time in 1924. However, many volosts lacked dedicated cash offices and financial departments, so funds were not distributed on time

across all areas. As a result, not a single social issue was resolved locally.” [22] This explanation made the true nature of financial policy in Kazakh villages clear to the assembly.

It is also important to highlight the effective aspects of the First All-Kazakh Congress and the decisions it adopted regarding the establishment of governance in Kazakh settlements under the Soviet government. The value of these records lies in the fact that, as early as 1925, Kazakh delegates made the first concrete decisions aimed at lifting the population out of extremely difficult conditions.

So, the resolutions were as follows [22]

On the rural, village, and volost Soviets of the Kazakh SSR:

- 1) Lower-level districting: Recognizing that, under the scattered conditions at that time, the village volosts had developed along tribal lines and were economically ineffective, it was concluded that this system of governance was unsuitable because it kept the population distant from the authorities.
- 2) Therefore, under the new districting, it was decided to rely strictly on territorial-economic principles and to completely avoid tribal groupings.
- 3) For the new districting, where necessary, settlements with concentrated Kazakh populations should be designated as an “Aul” (village).
- 4) During the new districting, every effort should be made to preserve national homogeneity wherever possible. This was the first resolution, intended to be completed by 1926–1927.

The second issue, regarding organization:

In elections, 50 individuals from areas inhabited by Kazakhs should be allowed to participate in electing the village Soviet.

When organizing the village Soviets for the first time, the following issues must be addressed:

- 1) Land and water management
- 2) Economic and cooperative activities
- 3) Labor and social matters
- 4) Cultural and educational initiatives
- 5) And the Kazakh executive committees were tasked with addressing the following issues:
- 6) Establishing communication in local areas;
- 7) Supporting agriculture based on village conditions;
- 8) Strengthening revolutionary commissions;
- 9) Distributing national publications;
- 10) Introducing a registration book for each family.

6. Regarding the Volost Budgets

- 1) When considering the volost budget, funds from the overall uyezd (district) and provincial budgets should be allocated to meet the cultural and economic needs of villages and kishlaks.
- 2) To better coordinate the work of provincial and uyezd executive committees based on the size of the volost

budget, volost executive committees’ institutions—such as mills, smithies, schools, and hospitals—should be placed under their supervision according to capacity.

- 3) The revenue and expenditure flow from the village tax could be increased with the permission of the provincial executive committee, provided that the volost budget is fully implemented without deficit, using funds received through the overall uyezd finances.
- 4) To strengthen the volost budgets, provincial executive committees should promptly identify non-tax revenue sources, and after distinguishing between local councils’ property and general state and local assets, these should be allocated into separate 4yezd and volost budgets.
- 5) It is necessary to improve the condition of hired workers and strengthen cultural and economic sectors using state finances. In cases where payments to volost (district) workers are required, coordination of subsidies must be ensured. Additionally, the conditions of volost schools, sanitary institutions, roads, and agro-infrastructure should be improved, with the corresponding budget allocation. The provincial executive committee must promptly develop an economic and construction program.
- 6) Provincial executive committees must ensure that the approved subsidy assistance for the lower apparatus of the volosts, as well as wage payments to hired workers from other income sources, are fully provided and directly utilized.
- 7) Provincial executive committees should collect comprehensive and detailed information on volost economies, and separately analyze the proportions of the provincial and volost budgets in the financing received through the local province.
- 8) Until the sources of volost income are fully identified, in order to properly manage the volost budget, village councils must oversee the financial and economic activities of the volost executive committees, and provincial and district authorities must demonstrate exceptional diligence.
- 9) At the end of each year, a report must be submitted on all economic matters and the formation of the volost budget. After the volost budget has been approved, new expenditures are not permitted. If such a situation arises, the responsible party must find a source of income independently.
- 10) To ensure the effective use of all volost income, it is the duty of the volost executive committees to keep the funds received in the volost income cash at the committees. If the monthly need exceeds this amount, the funds should be kept in the district department savings funds. If it is not possible to accumulate funds in these savings funds, they should be stored in a nearby local savings fund. [22]

Summary of the Main Research Findings

6.1. Preconditions for Convening the All-Kazakh Council

- 1) Although Soviet power was formally established in the territory of the Kazakh ASSR in the 1920s, tribal structures and elements of traditional governance were preserved in rural areas.
- 2) Land issues inherited from the tsarist period, privileges granted to settlers, and the economic crisis intensified social inequality within Kazakh society.
- 3) In Munbaev's report, it is noted that due to the civil war and famine, it was impossible to organize the Kazakh village. Only after 1925, when all Kazakh lands were unified, did an opportunity arise to systematize rural governance.

6.2. National Cadres and Political Discourse

- 1) The issue of national cadres was sharply raised within the Council.
- 2) Hodzhanov emphasized that "reforms carried out without considering the worldview of the general population will be ineffective."
- 3) Nurmakov insisted on adherence to legality, stating that the struggle against wealthy landowners must be carried out on a legal basis.
- 4) Zhandosov argued for the adaptation of the Soviet model to local specificities. He proposed not a mechanical elimination of the tribal structure, but its replacement with a new territorial governance system.

Therefore, these opinions reflect attempts to adapt and align the Soviet authority with national interests in the Kazakh lands, where it was gradually taking root and consolidating.

6.3. Administrative-Territorial Reform

- 1) One of the Council's main decisions was the issue of lower-level territorial organization.
- 2) The purpose of the administrative reform was to centralize governance and increase economic efficiency.

According to the resolution:

- 1) The tribal volost (district) structure was recognized as inefficient;
- 2) Governance should be based on territorial-economic principles;
- 3) For the first time, the "village" was defined as the primary administrative unit;
- 4) It was proposed to maintain national uniformity.

6.4. Volost Budget: Financial Institutionalization

- 1) The issue of finances was widely discussed at the Council.
- 2) Saduakasov highlighted the weakness of the actual financial mechanisms of the volost budgets.

Decisions adopted:

- 1) Provincial support for the volost budget;
- 2) Introduction of a subsidy system;
- 3) Strict regulation of income and expenditure procedures;
- 4) Obligation for annual reporting.

These measures represented the initial elements of financial control and planning.

6.5. Institutional Role of Village Councils

Village councils were tasked with:

- 1) Regulating land and water relations;
- 2) Organizing cooperative farming;
- 3) Addressing social issues;
- 4) Conducting cultural and educational activities.

In addressing social issues, taking account of each family reflected a strengthening of the state control mechanism.

6.6. Key Outcomes of the All-Kazakh Council Decisions

It initiated the administrative phase of the Soviet system.

For the first time, it provided a political platform for transitioning from the tribal structure to state governance in a village-based form.

7. Conclusion

The First All-Kazakh Council of 1925 laid the institutional foundation for introducing the Kazakh village into the Soviet system of governance.

The decisions adopted at the Council, for the first time, were aimed at systematizing:

- 1) Administrative reform;
- 2) The financial system;
- 3) Personnel policy;
- 4) The functioning of village councils.

This historical event demonstrates that during the consolidation of Soviet power, Kazakh intellectuals sought a balance between protecting national interests and adapting to the new system. These decisions were intended to be completed in 1926–1927. However, the subsequent implementation of these decisions faced several obstacles. In a circular letter dated September 26, 1925, it was noted that, due to reasons beyond their control, the legalization process could be delayed for an extended period.

In other words, in managing the republic under the new Soviet system in 1925–1926, delays in budget allocation were anticipated in advance. As a result, the execution of activities across all sectors was either stalled or reversed, as they depended on financial resources. Furthermore, realizing that no assistance would come from the center during such delays according to local capabilities, the authorities tried to manage on their own until the next budget was adopted within a year.

In the 1920s, reflecting on the Bolsheviks' policies, Akhmet Baitursynov wrote: "The new economic policy of the Soviet

state is unfamiliar to the local authorities, just as the revolution itself is.” [23]

Abbreviations

CSA RK	Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan
KAZ ASSR	Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
CC	Central Committee
Kraikom	Regional Committee
Sovnarkom	Council of People's Commissars
VZIK	All-Union Central Executive Committee
KSSR	Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic
GPU	State Political Directorate
Selsoviet	Village Council

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Bakyt Nurpeisova: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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