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The 1928 Confiscation of Bai Households in Kazakhstan: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to Studying the Social Transformation of Kazakh Society

The article examines the confiscation of *bai* households in Kazakhstan in 1928 as an independent historical phenomenon and as an object of theoretical and methodological analysis. The focus is placed not on the formal description of property seizure, but on revealing the social meaning of the confiscation campaign in the context of early Soviet transformation of the Kazakh aul. Under the conditions of nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral economy, the *bai* were not merely a wealthy group. They were embedded in a system of clan, economic, labor, and patron-client relations that structured authority, dependency, mutual assistance, and resource distribution within the aul. Therefore, Soviet intervention in the position of *bai* households affected the foundations of traditional social organization. The article argues for the need to combine several research approaches in the study of confiscation. The class approach is considered as the official Soviet explanatory scheme of the campaign and is subjected to critical analysis. The social-historical approach makes it possible to identify real social ties within the Kazakh aul; the institutional approach reveals the role of the state, law, and administrative apparatus; and the concept of social engineering helps interpret confiscation as an attempt by the Soviet authorities to classify, simplify, and restructure the complex social reality of traditional society. The article shows that the confiscation of 1928 combined legal formalization, administrative implementation, ideological justification, and social restructuring. The decree of August 27, 1928, and the instruction of August 30, 1928, gave the campaign a normative form; however, its actual significance went beyond legal regulation. Confiscation was aimed at weakening the influence of the traditional elite, dismantling previous mechanisms of local authority, transforming relations of dependency, and establishing new forms of Soviet control in the aul. Particular attention is paid to interpreting confiscation not as a secondary episode of collectivization, but as an independent political and administrative campaign. This perspective makes it possible to clarify its place in the history of early Soviet transformations in Kazakhstan. The article concludes that the confiscation of *bai* households became one of the first major instruments for the forced incorporation of the Kazakh aul into the Soviet system of power and administration, while its consequences were manifested in the transformation of social structure, forms of authority, local hierarchies, and relations between the state and traditional society.

Keywords: confiscation, *bai* households, Kazakhstan, Kazakh aul, theoretical and methodological approaches, Soviet agrarian policy, social transformation, social engineering.

Introduction

The confiscation of *bai* households in Kazakhstan in 1928 occupies a special place in the history of early Soviet transformations of Kazakh society. This campaign was associated not only with the seizure of property from large livestock owners, but also with the Soviet authorities' attempt to change the social structure of the traditional aul. Under the conditions of a nomadic and semi-nomadic economy, the *bai* stratum was not merely a wealthy property-owning group. It was embedded in a system of clan, economic, labor, and patron-client relations through which issues of employment, mutual assistance, resource distribution, local authority, and social dependency were regulated. Therefore, state intervention in the position of *bai* households affected not only the economic sphere, but also the deeper foundations of the social organization of the Kazakh aul.

The relevance of the topic is determined by the need for a deeper understanding of the confiscation campaign of 1928 as an independent historical phenomenon. In historical literature, this problem is often examined in the context of Soviet agrarian policy, the Sovietization of the aul, the limitation of the influence of the *bai* stratum, and subsequent socio-economic transformations. However, within such an approach, confiscation is often perceived as one element of broader processes, whereas the 1928 campaign itself had its own logic, legal framework, administrative mechanisms, and social consequences.

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In Soviet historiography, the confiscation of bai households was explained mainly within the framework of the class approach. It was presented as an inevitable and historically justified measure of struggle against feudal-bai elements and as a means of strengthening the social base of Soviet power in the aul. In post-Soviet Kazakhstani historiography, greater attention has been paid to the repressive nature of the campaign, its coercive methods, administrative pressure, and consequences for traditional society. At the same time, there remains a need for a research perspective that would make it possible to combine the analysis of the legal foundations, social content, and theoretical and methodological interpretations of the 1928 confiscation.

The scholarly problem of the article lies in the fact that the confiscation of bai households cannot be fully explained only through the description of decrees, statistical indicators, and administrative measures. Formally, it was framed as a campaign for the seizure of property and the exile of the largest bai and semi-feudal elements. However, in terms of its content, it was connected with deeper changes: the limitation of the influence of the traditional elite, the disruption of former mechanisms of social regulation, the weakening of clan and patron-client ties, and the establishment of new forms of political control in the aul. Therefore, the study of confiscation requires attention not only to factual material, but also to theoretical and methodological approaches that make it possible to reveal its social nature.

The purpose of the article is to examine the confiscation of bai households in Kazakhstan in 1928 as an object of theoretical and methodological analysis and as a mechanism of social transformation of Kazakh society. To achieve this purpose, the following objectives are defined: to reveal the historical prerequisites of the 1928 confiscation campaign; to characterize its legal and administrative foundations; to analyze the main research approaches to the study of the confiscation of bai households; to identify the social content of the campaign in the context of changes in the traditional structure of the Kazakh aul; and to determine the significance of the 1928 confiscation for understanding early Soviet policy in Kazakhstan.

The scholarly novelty of the article lies in the fact that the confiscation of bai households is considered not only as a political, administrative, and economic measure of Soviet power, but also as a complex social process connected with the transformation of the traditional institutions of the Kazakh aul. The article emphasizes that the confiscation of 1928 was aimed not only at the redistribution of property, but also at changing social relations, local hierarchies, and forms of authority in Kazakh society.

Thus, turning to the confiscation of bai households in 1928 makes it possible to understand more deeply the specific character of early Soviet policy in Kazakhstan. Of particular importance is not only the factual side of the campaign, but also its theoretical interpretation, since methodological analysis reveals confiscation as a complex process of interaction among the state, law, ideology, and traditional social relations.

Materials and Methods

The source base of the study consists of normative legal acts, documents of Soviet party and state bodies, archival materials on the history of agrarian policy in Kazakhstan, as well as scholarly works devoted to the early Soviet transformations of Kazakh society.

Particular importance is attached to the documents that defined the legal and administrative foundations of the confiscation campaign of 1928. These include the decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR of August 27, 1928, "On the Confiscation and Exile of the Largest Bai Households and Semi-Feudal Elements," as well as the instruction of August 30, 1928, which regulated the procedure for implementing this campaign. The use of these materials made it possible to identify the official logic of confiscation, the criteria for determining the households subject to confiscation, the mechanisms of property seizure, and the exile of representatives of the upper bai stratum.

As archival material, the study uses an informational and statistical report of the Kazakh Regional Party Committee dated October 14, 1928, containing data on the confiscation of bai property in the districts of the Syr-Darya okrug. This document is held in the National Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Fund 141). The use of this archival material made it possible to specify the regional features of the implementation of the confiscation campaign, identify quantitative indicators of confiscated livestock, and demonstrate the administrative mechanism of confiscation in southern Kazakhstan.

The study also uses published documentary materials and research devoted to the Sovietization of the Kazakh aul, the agrarian policy of Soviet power, the confiscation of bai households, collectivization, and the social consequences of the transformations of the 1920s–1930s. This group of materials is necessary for identifying the place of the 1928 confiscation in the system of early Soviet policy, as well as for comparing

different interpretations of its causes, content, and consequences. At the same time, confiscation is considered not as a secondary episode of collectivization, but as an independent political and administrative campaign that had its own legal basis, social orientation, and mechanism of implementation.

The article employs general scientific and special historical methods corresponding to the analysis of the confiscation of bai households in Kazakhstan in 1928 as an independent political and administrative campaign and as a mechanism of social transformation of the Kazakh aul.

The social-historical method was applied to reveal the social content of confiscation. With its help, the campaign was considered not only as the seizure of property from large livestock owners, but also as state intervention in the system of clan, economic, labor, and patron-client relations. This method made it possible to show that the bai performed not only economic but also social-regulatory functions in the aul, and that the weakening of their influence meant a transformation of former forms of dependency, local authority, and social organization.

The historical-genetic method was used to identify the prerequisites of the confiscation campaign of 1928. It made it possible to trace which political, social, and economic conditions preceded the adoption of the decree of August 27, 1928, why the Soviet authorities regarded the bai as an obstacle to the Sovietization of the aul, and how confiscation was connected with the general logic of early Soviet transformations in Kazakhstan.

The institutional method was applied in analyzing the legal and administrative foundations of confiscation. With its help, the decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR of August 27, 1928, the instruction of August 30, 1928, the activities of party, Soviet, and local executive bodies, as well as the mechanisms of implementing the campaign at the local level, were examined. This method made it possible to identify how legal decisions were transformed into concrete administrative actions: determining the categories of households subject to confiscation, compiling lists, recording and seizing property, exiling representatives of the upper bai stratum, and redistributing confiscated resources.

The problem-chronological method was used for the systematic development of the article's topic. The material was considered according to the main research blocks: the historical prerequisites of confiscation, its legal formalization, administrative implementation, regional manifestations, social content, and consequences for the Kazakh aul. This approach made it possible to preserve the internal logic of the study and to present the confiscation of 1928 as a process that had its own stages, mechanisms, and social results.

The historical-comparative method was applied to compare different interpretations of the confiscation of bai households. With its help, Soviet explanations of the campaign through class struggle, post-Soviet assessments of its coercive and administrative-repressive character, and contemporary theoretical and methodological approaches that consider confiscation as a form of state intervention, social engineering, and forced restructuring of traditional society were compared. This made it possible to substantiate the need for a comprehensive study of confiscation as an independent historical phenomenon that cannot be reduced merely to the prehistory of collectivization.

Results

Historical Prerequisites, Legal Foundations, and Social Content of the Confiscation of Bai Households in 1928. The confiscation of bai households in Kazakhstan in 1928 was prepared by the entire course of early Soviet policy toward the Kazakh aul. After the establishment of Soviet power, one of the main tasks of the new state was to subordinate traditional society to administrative and political control. The Kazakh aul preserved a complex system of social relations in which clan ties, economic interdependence, patron-client relations, and local forms of authority played an important role. Under these conditions, the bai stratum was perceived by the Soviet authorities not only as a wealthy property-owning group, but also as a social force that retained influence over the life of the aul [1]. In traditional Kazakh society, bai households performed not only economic functions. They were connected with the organization of labor, the distribution of livestock, support for dependent and poor households, and the regulation of relations within the aul. Therefore, the social role of the bai was not limited only to the possession of property. The bai acted as a figure of economic and social influence, and his position was determined not only by the number of livestock, but also by his place in the system of clan and patron-client ties [2]. For the Soviet authorities, such a structure represented a serious problem. The state sought to create new forms of administration in the aul, relying on the poor, village soviets, party organizations, and administrative bodies. However, the influence of the bai hindered the direct impact of the state on the rural population. In official Soviet rhetoric,

the bai stratum was portrayed as an exploitative and feudal group that obstructed the Sovietization of the aul and the strengthening of new institutions of power.

The immediate preparation of the confiscation campaign began even before the adoption of the decree of August 27, 1928. During this period, the political, legal, and administrative foundations of the future campaign were developed. On August 27, 1928, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR adopted the decree "On the Confiscation and Exile of the Largest Bai Households and Semi-Feudal Elements" [3; 288].

This decree became the legal basis of the confiscation campaign. It defined the main aims of the campaign, the categories of households subject to confiscation, as well as the procedure for the seizure of property and the exile of representatives of the upper bai stratum. The very title of the document indicates that confiscation was regarded by the Soviet authorities not only as a property-related measure, but also as a political action against a social group declared hostile to the new regime. The decree was followed by the instruction of August 30, 1928, which specified the procedure for applying this decree [4; 290]. It defined the practical mechanisms for implementing the decisions of the authorities: identifying households subject to confiscation, compiling lists, registering property, organizing exile, and distributing confiscated livestock and other property. Thus, confiscation acquired not only political justification, but also an administrative and legal form.

The instruction of August 30, 1928, established the property and social criteria of confiscation. It stated that bai who owned, in cattle-equivalent terms, more than 400 head in nomadic districts and more than 300 head in semi-nomadic districts were subject to confiscation and exile. In addition, persons recognized by local authorities as socially dangerous because of their position and influence over the local population could also fall under the scope of the campaign [4; 290], [5; 183–184]. This indicates that the confiscation policy had not only a property-related, but also a political and social character.

Thus, the prerequisites and legal foundations of the confiscation campaign were connected not only with property inequality, but also with the struggle for power and influence in the Kazakh aul. The Soviet authorities sought to weaken traditional mechanisms of social regulation and replace them with new institutions of administration. For this reason, the confiscation of 1928 became not only an economic measure, but also an important stage in changing the social structure of Kazakh society.

Administrative Implementation and Social Content of the Campaign. The implementation of confiscation required the active participation of party, Soviet, and local executive bodies. In practice, the campaign included the identification of bai households, the compilation of lists, the description of property, the seizure of livestock, the exile of owners, and the transfer of confiscated resources to other categories of the population or to economic structures. Each of these stages was connected with administrative pressure and the strengthening of control over the rural population.

Local commissions played a key role in implementing the campaign. They had to determine which households fell under the decree, what property was subject to seizure, and how exile would be organized. However, under the conditions of the Kazakh aul, such decisions could not be purely technical. They affected relations within clans, between rich and poor households, and between dependent groups and former patrons. Therefore, administrative measures inevitably interfered with the social fabric of the aul.

The documents on the preparation and implementation of confiscation included the decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR of August 27, 1928, the instruction of August 30, 1928, as well as materials of party and Soviet bodies that determined the procedure for implementing the campaign at the local level. This shows that confiscation was carried out as an organized administrative campaign based on a system of official decisions, instructions, and local execution [3; 288], [4; 390].

Archival data on the Syr-Darya okrug make it possible to specify the scale and regional features of confiscation in southern Kazakhstan. The informational and statistical report of the Kazakh Regional Party Committee dated October 14, 1928 contains data on the confiscation of bai property in the Aulie-Ata, Merke, Turkestan, Badam, Talas, Kyzylkum, and Shayan districts of the Syr-Darya okrug. Thus, in the Merke district, 5,701 head of livestock were confiscated from 22 households; in the Badam district, 1,238 head from 6 households; in the Talas district, 1,200 head were confiscated from Tavaliev's household; and in the Kyzylkum district, 6,625 head of livestock were confiscated from 22 households [6]. These indicators confirm that confiscation had a specific regional mechanism of implementation connected with the registration, seizure, and redistribution of property.

Additional published materials on southern Kazakhstan make it possible to see the mechanism of confiscation at the level of individual households. The published text of Protocol No. 8 of the closed meeting of the Aulie-Ata district commission for the confiscation of bai and semi-feudal households considered the division of the households of the bai Mainakov, Sultanbekov, and Kalabaev from the auls of the Talas volost. The commission decided to leave 16 head of livestock for the use of the bai, allocate 6 head toward the unpaid tax amounting to 424 rubles 7 kopecks, and divide the remaining 52 head among the batraks; yurts were transferred to the disposal of the district executive committee, and European-style buildings were proposed for use as a school [7].

Another example is connected with the Karaspan district of the Syr-Darya okrug. The published materials present the case of the bai Itayak Babirov, who had 556 head in cattle-equivalent terms. Livestock from five Karaspan bai was confiscated and transferred to shepherds and a state farm, and was partly sold to cover the agricultural tax; 7 yurts and 11 felt mats were transferred to the district department of public education, 3 felt mats to batraks, wool was handed over to “Kazsherst,” and the remaining funds after settlements, amounting to 624 rubles 18 kopecks, were transferred to the district union “Koshchi” [8]. These materials confirm that confiscation had not only a punitive but also a redistributive character, affecting economic, family, and social relations within the aul. The data presented show that the redistribution of property was not only an economic procedure, but also an instrument for changing the social structure of the aul. The seizure of livestock weakened the economic basis of traditional authority, while the transfer of property to the poor, batraks, Soviet institutions, and economic organizations contributed to the formation of new dependencies and channels of administrative control.

The social content of confiscation consisted in changing the system of social relations in the Kazakh aul. The bai stratum was part of a complex social structure in which economic wealth was closely connected with clan authority, patron-client obligations, and influence over dependent households. Therefore, confiscation destroyed not only the property base of individual households, but also habitual ties between different groups of the aul [2].

Poor and dependent households that had previously been connected with bai households through labor or patron-client relations became included in a new system of dependency, now on Soviet bodies, cooperative structures, and administrative decisions. The exile of the largest bai and semi-feudal elements was of particular importance. It removed from the aul those individuals who possessed not only property, but also local authority. As a result, the very structure of power at the local level changed: where traditional forms of influence had previously played a significant role, the Soviet authorities sought to establish new political and administrative institutions.

The instruction of August 30, 1928 is especially indicative in this respect. It took into account, as a basis for confiscation, not only the number of livestock, but also the recognition of a person as socially dangerous because of his position and influence over the local population [5; 183–184]. This shows that the object of the campaign was not simply a wealthy household, but a social group perceived by the authorities as a bearer of former forms of authority and dependency. The campaign of 1928 also contributed to the growth of social tension. Officially, it was carried out under the slogan of protecting the poor and limiting exploitation. In practice, however, it involved the local population in processes of identifying, condemning, and isolating representatives of the bai stratum. This changed the nature of relations between different social groups and contributed to the formation of new political loyalty.

Published materials on the Zhambyl region make it possible to specify manifestations of social tension caused by the confiscation policy. A publication on the work to rehabilitate victims of political repression states that armed clashes between residents and the authorities followed the beginning of the campaign to confiscate the property of 297 wealthy families. In the same context, 78 participants in the Kordai uprising and 28 participants in the events in the Sarysu district are named [8]. These data show that confiscation affected not only the property interests of individual households, but also broader social ties, causing tension between the population and Soviet power.

Consequently, the administrative implementation of confiscation showed that the legal decisions of 1928 were used as an instrument for restructuring the Kazakh aul. The campaign affected property relations, local hierarchies, clan ties, and forms of authority, which makes it possible to consider it as one of the early mechanisms of forced social transformation of Kazakh society.

Confiscation as a Mechanism of Social Transformation of the Kazakh Aul. The confiscation campaign of 1928 became an important instrument for changing the traditional structure of the Kazakh aul. It marked a transition from the indirect influence of Soviet power on rural society to direct administrative intervention,

and was aimed at limiting the property power of the bai stratum, destroying former mechanisms of influence, redistributing resources, and strengthening new institutions of power. Through confiscation, the Soviet state sought to create a new social base in the aul, primarily among the poor and dependent strata of the population. However, this process was coercive in nature and was accompanied by the destruction of established forms of social organization.

The connection between confiscation and subsequent transformations was manifested in the fact that the campaign of 1928 prepared the conditions for the further strengthening of state control over the agrarian sphere. Although confiscation should not be subsumed under the history of collectivization, it became one of the stages preceding a larger-scale state intervention in economic life. After the weakening of the bai stratum, the Soviet authorities gained more opportunities to promote new forms of agricultural organization and governance of the population [9]. At the same time, confiscation had its own historical logic. It was aimed primarily at eliminating the social group that the authorities considered an obstacle to the Sovietization of the aul. Its immediate goal was not the creation of the collective farm system, but the limitation of the influence of the bai stratum, the seizure of its economic base, and the destruction of the former system of local authority. For this reason, the campaign of 1928 should be considered an independent historical phenomenon.

Confiscation changed relations between the state and Kazakh society. If previously many processes within the aul had been regulated through traditional norms, clan ties, and the authority of influential households, after the campaign an increasing role began to be played by state decisions, administrative structures, and political criteria. A person's social status was increasingly determined not only by his place in the traditional system, but also by the assessment of the Soviet authorities. The confiscation of 1928 reveals an important feature of early Soviet policy: the combination of legal decisions, ideological rhetoric, and administrative coercion. On the one hand, the campaign was formalized through a decree and an instruction. On the other hand, its implementation was accompanied by class mobilization, political pressure, and coercive intervention in the life of the aul. This combination makes it possible to consider confiscation as an example of how the Soviet state used law to carry out social transformations.

Thus, the confiscation of bai households became one of the ways of incorporating the Kazakh aul into the system of Soviet administration. It contributed to the destruction of former social supports, the transformation of local hierarchies, and the establishment of new forms of control. Consequently, the significance of the confiscation of 1928 lies in the fact that it makes it possible to see early Soviet policy in Kazakhstan as a process of forced social transformation. For this reason, the confiscation of bai households should be considered not only as an episode of agrarian policy, but also as an independent historical phenomenon that had profound social consequences.

Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the Study of the Confiscation of Bai Households

The study of the confiscation of bai households in Kazakhstan in 1928 requires attention not only to normative acts, archival materials, and factual data, but also to theoretical and methodological approaches that make it possible to reveal the social nature of this campaign. Confiscation cannot be explained only as a measure of property seizure. It affected a broader range of issues: the position of the traditional elite, the transformation of the social structure of the aul, changes in forms of dependency, the strengthening of state control, and the restructuring of local mechanisms of power. One of the first approaches to explaining confiscation was the class approach. In the Soviet interpretation, the confiscation of bai households was regarded as a measure of struggle against feudal-bai elements and as a means of strengthening the social base of Soviet power in the aul. Within this approach, the bai stratum was represented primarily as an exploitative group that hindered the Sovietization of Kazakh society. However, the limitation of the class approach lies in the fact that it simplified the social structure of the aul and reduced complex clan, economic, and patron-client relations to the opposition between the "bai" and the "poor." Therefore, in this study the class approach is considered not as a ready-made explanatory scheme, but as an object of critical analysis.

For a deeper analysis of the topic, the social-historical approach is significant, as it is oriented toward the study of real relations within rural society. In this respect, foreign studies of the peasantry are productive, since they consider rural society not as a passive object of state policy, but as a complex social environment with its own forms of dependency, authority, adaptation, and resistance. T. Shanin regarded the peasantry as a special social group with a complex internal structure and its own political logic [10]. This approach makes it possible to analyze the Kazakh aul not only through the official categories of Soviet power, but also through the real social ties that existed within traditional society.

The institutional approach is also of great importance. It makes it possible to consider confiscation as the result of the activity of the Soviet state, party structures, legal bodies, and local administration. From this point of view, the decree of August 27, 1928, and the instruction of August 30, 1928 appear not simply as legal documents, but as instruments of state intervention in the social structure of the aul. The application of the institutional approach helps to identify how a political decision was transformed into administrative practice: through commissions, lists, property registration, exile, redistribution of livestock, and control over the local population.

A comparative context of studies on Soviet agrarian policy and collectivization is of substantial importance for the analysis of confiscation. Although the confiscation of bai households in 1928 cannot be subsumed under the history of subsequent collectivization, foreign studies of the Soviet countryside help to view it as one of the early stages in the intensification of state pressure on rural society. M. Lewin regarded collectivization as a profound social rupture connected with the crisis in relations between Soviet power and the peasantry [11]. S. Fitzpatrick studied survival strategies and everyday practices in the countryside after collectivization, showing that rural society was not a passive object of policy, but developed its own forms of adaptation [12]. These approaches make it possible to consider confiscation as a process in which state coercion encountered stable social ties and local forms of behavior.

The approach to the study of peasant resistance and adaptation is of particular importance. L. Viola showed that peasant resistance to Stalinist policy could take various forms, ranging from open protests to everyday methods of evasion and the defense of economic interests [13]. Applied to the problem of confiscation, this approach makes it possible to consider the Kazakh aul as an active social environment that reacted to property seizure, exile, administrative pressure, and the destruction of habitual forms of life. In this context, confiscation appears not only as an action of the state, but also as a process of interaction between power and local society.

The concept of state social engineering is especially productive for revealing the coercive nature of the campaign. J. Scott shows that a modernizing state seeks to make complex local societies more “legible,” classifiable, and manageable; such projects often ignore local knowledge and real social interconnections [14]. His work on everyday forms of resistance is also important for understanding how rural populations can react to pressure from above not only through open protest, but also through hidden practices of evasion, resource preservation, and adaptation [15]. In the context of Kazakhstan in 1928, this approach makes it possible to interpret confiscation as an attempt by the Soviet state to administratively simplify the social reality of the aul: to single out the “bai stratum” as a politically dangerous category, legally formalize its removal from the social structure, and replace former forms of authority with institutions of Soviet power.

Thus, the most productive approach to the study of the confiscation of bai households is the combination of several methodological perspectives. The class approach is important as an object of critical analysis, since it reflects the official Soviet logic of explaining the campaign. The social-historical approach makes it possible to identify real ties within the Kazakh aul. The institutional approach reveals the role of the state, law, and the administrative apparatus. Studies of Soviet agrarian policy and peasant resistance help to view confiscation as part of a broader policy of pressure on rural society, but without subsuming it under the subsequent processes of collectivization. The concept of social engineering makes it possible to consider the campaign as an attempt by the state to restructure traditional society through classification, seizure, exile, and administrative control.

Discussion

The analysis carried out shows that the confiscation of bai households in Kazakhstan in 1928 affected not only the property sphere, but also the deeper foundations of the social organization of the aul. The seizure of livestock, the exile of the largest bai, and the redistribution of property influenced traditional forms of authority, clan and patron-client ties, economic interdependence, and relations between different groups of the rural population.

In Kazakhstani historiography, this problem has been interpreted primarily in the context of the coercive agrarian transformations of the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the works of T. Omarbekov, emphasis is placed on the tragic consequences of early Soviet policy, deprivation of property, forced collectivization, and the destruction of the traditional foundations of Kazakh society [1]. Zh. B. Abylkhozhin analyzes socio-economic changes in twentieth-century Kazakhstan through the prism of the transformation of economic structures, property relations, and state intervention in social life [2]. These approaches make it possible to

consider confiscation as part of a broader process of changing the economic and social foundations of the Kazakh aul.

M.K. Kozybayev, Zh. B. Abylkhozhin, and K.S. Aldazhumanov connect confiscation with the subsequent processes of collectivization, emphasizing the tragic nature of agrarian transformations and the pressure exerted by Soviet power on the peasantry [9]. At the same time, the confiscation of 1928 should not be subsumed under the history of collectivization. It had its own legal foundations, administrative mechanisms, and direct social consequences. The historical and legal aspect of this policy is examined in the article by I. Sh. Borchashvili and B.M. Kurmanbayev, where attention is paid to the decree of August 27, 1928, the instruction of August 30, 1928, and the legal mechanisms of coercive agrarian transformations [5].

Studies of the regional features of collectivization also make it possible to clarify the consequences of early Soviet agrarian policy. A.I. Ongarbayeva and Z.G. Saktaganova, examining collectivization in Central Kazakhstan, emphasize the need to study this process on the basis of the principles of objectivity, documentary evidence, and the use of archival materials [16]. Their approach is important for the present study because it shows that the agrarian transformations of the late 1920s and early 1930s had not only a republicwide, but also a pronounced regional specificity. In this context, the confiscation of bai households in 1928 can be considered one of the early stages of the subsequent intensification of administrative pressure on rural society.

S. Mamraimov examines collectivization and the confiscation of bai-kulak households in Kazakhstan in the broader context of Soviet agrarian policy in 1928–1933. In his interpretation, confiscation policy was connected not only with the seizure of property, but also with command-administrative methods of governing rural society. The author emphasizes that the implementation of the campaign was accompanied by pressure from local authorities, an expansive interpretation of the category of “bai-kulak” households, and the inclusion of broader strata of the rural population in repressive practices. This approach makes it possible to understand more deeply that the confiscation of 1928 was not only an economic measure, but also a means of political control over the aul and the village [17].

Of particular importance in S. Mamraimov’s position is the conclusion about the destructive impact of confiscation on the economic and social potential of rural society. In his assessment, the seizure of property weakened the productive capacities of households, intensified social tension, and contributed to popular discontent, migration processes, and resistance at the local level [17]. For the present study, this conclusion is important because it confirms the understanding of confiscation as a mechanism of forced social transformation: through the seizure of property, the destruction of former economic foundations, the change in the status of social groups, and the strengthening of the population’s dependence on Soviet administrative structures.

The theoretical and methodological significance of the topic is revealed through the combination of Kazakhstani historiography with foreign studies of the peasantry, Soviet agrarian policy, resistance, and social engineering. T. Shanin considers the peasantry as a social group with a complex internal structure, its own political logic, and forms of adaptation [10]. This approach makes it possible to analyze the Kazakh aul not only through official Soviet categories, but also through real mechanisms of interdependence, authority, and local behavior.

The studies of M. Lewin and S. Fitzpatrick help to place the confiscation of 1928 in the comparative context of relations between the state and rural society [11], [12]. Although these works are devoted mainly to the Soviet countryside and collectivization, they make it possible to better understand the logic of increasing administrative pressure and changes in the everyday life of the rural population. The approaches of L. Viola and J. Scott, focused on the study of resistance, adaptation, and hidden practices of protecting resources, are important for explaining why confiscation was accompanied by social tension, property disputes, and various forms of reaction at the local level [13]; [14].

J. Scott’s concept of state social engineering makes it possible to interpret confiscation as an attempt by the Soviet authorities to make the complex social structure of the aul more “legible,” classifiable, and manageable [15]. From this perspective, the identification of the bai stratum as a politically dangerous category, the legal formalization of property seizure, exile, and redistribution of resources were elements of administrative simplification and the forced restructuring of traditional society.

Thus, the confiscation of bai households in 1928 occupies an independent place in the history of early Soviet transformations in Kazakhstan. It was connected with collectivization and subsequent agrarian changes, but it cannot be reduced to them. Its significance lay in the weakening of the traditional elite, the

destruction of former forms of dependency and authority, the redistribution of resources, the strengthening of direct state control, and the formation of new social relations in the Kazakh aul.

Conclusions

The confiscation of *bai* households in 1928 became one of the turning points of early Soviet policy in Kazakhstan. Its significance went beyond the seizure of property: through this campaign, Soviet power began to deliberately transform the social architecture of the Kazakh *aul*, dismantling former mechanisms of authority, dependency, and economic interconnection. The study shows that confiscation had a complex character. It combined legal decisions, administrative coercion, ideological rhetoric, and social restructuring. It is precisely this combination that makes it possible to consider the campaign of 1928 not as a separate economic measure, but as an instrument of early Soviet state intervention in traditional society.

Of particular importance is the conclusion about the independent character of the confiscation campaign. It was connected with subsequent collectivization, but it cannot be reduced to it. Confiscation had its own logic, its own legal foundations, and its own social consequences. Therefore, its study makes it possible to understand more precisely the transitional stage of early Soviet policy: from limiting the influence of the traditional elite to establishing direct administrative control over the *aul*.

The theoretical and methodological analysis confirmed that confiscation cannot be fully explained only through the class scheme or through the description of normative acts. A combination of social-historical, institutional, and comparative approaches is more productive. This perspective reveals confiscation as a process in which the state not only seized property, but also reshaped social relations, changed criteria of status, and subordinated local ties to a new political logic.

Thus, the confiscation of *bai* households in Kazakhstan in 1928 was one of the early mechanisms of the forced social transformation of Kazakh society. It became an important stage in the incorporation of the *aul* into the Soviet system of power and administration, and its consequences were manifested not only in the economic sphere, but also in changes in social structure, forms of authority, and relations between the state and traditional society. For this reason, without analyzing the confiscation of 1928, it is impossible to fully understand the character of early Soviet transformations in Kazakhstan.

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Қазақстандағы 1928 жылғы бай шаруашылықтарын тәркілеу: қазақ қоғамының әлеуметтік трансформациясын зерттеудің теориялық-әдіснамалық тәсілдері

Мақалада 1928 жылғы Қазақстандағы бай шаруашылықтарын тәркілеу науқаны дербес тарихи құбылыс және теориялық-әдіснамалық талдау нысаны ретінде қарастырылады. Негізгі назар мүлікті тәркілеудің формалды сипаттамасына емес, ерте кеңестік кезеңдегі қазақ ауылын қайта құру жағдайындағы тәркілеу науқанының әлеуметтік мазмұнын ашуға аударылады. Көшпелі және жартылай көшпелі шаруашылық жағдайында байлар тек экономикалық жағынан ауқатты топ ғана емес, сонымен қатар рулық, шаруашылық, еңбек және патронаттық байланыстар жүйесінің маңызды бөлігі болды. Сондықтан кеңес билігінің бай шаруашылықтарына араласуы дәстүрлі әлеуметтік ұйымның негіздеріне әсер етті. Мақалада тәркілеуді зерттеуде бірнеше зерттеу тәсілдерін ұштастыру қажеттілігі негізделді. Таптық тәсіл науқанды түсіндірудің ресми кеңестік үлгісі ретінде сыни тұрғыдан қарастырылады. Әлеуметтік-тарихи тәсіл қазақ ауылы ішіндегі нақты байланыстарды анықтауға мүмкіндік береді, институционалдық тәсіл мемлекет, құқық және әкімшілік аппараттың рөлін ашады, ал әлеуметтік инженерия тұжырымдамасы тәркілеуді кеңес билігінің дәстүрлі қоғамның күрделі әлеуметтік шындығын жіктеуге, оңайлатуға және қайта құруға бағытталған әрекеті ретінде түсіндіруге мүмкіндік береді. Мақалада 1928 жылғы тәркілеудің құқықтық рәсімдеуді, әкімшілік орындауды, идеологиялық негіздеуді және әлеуметтік қайта құруды біріктіргені көрсетіледі. 1928 жылғы 27 тамыздағы қаулы мен 30 тамыздағы нұсқаулық науқанға нормативтік сипат бергенімен, оның нақты мәні құқықтық реттеу шеңберінен әлдеқайда кең болды. Тәркілеу дәстүрлі элитаның ықпалын әлсіретуге, жергілікті беделдің бұрынғы тетіктерін бұзуға, тәуелділік қатынастарын өзгертуге және ауылда кеңестік бақылаудың жаңа формаларын орнықтыруға бағытталды. Тәркілеуді ұжымдастырудың қосалқы кезеңі ретінде емес, дербес саяси-әкімшілік науқан ретінде қарастыруға ерекше мән беріледі. Мұндай көзқарас Қазақстандағы ерте кеңестік өзгерістер тарихындағы оның орнын нақтылауға мүмкіндік береді. Зерттеу нәтижесінде бай шаруашылықтарды тәркілеу қазақ ауылын кеңестік билік пен басқару жүйесіне күштеп қосудың алғашқы негізгі құралдарының бірі болды және оның салдары қоғамдық құрылымның, билік нысандарының, жергілікті иерархияның және мемлекет пен дәстүрлі қоғам арасындағы қарым-қатынастардың өзгеруінен көрінді деген қорытынды жасалады.

Кілт сөздер: тәркілеу, бай шаруашылықтары, Қазақстан, қазақ ауылы, теориялық-әдіснамалық тәсілдер, кеңестік аграрлық саясат, әлеуметтік трансформация, әлеуметтік инженерия.

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Конфискация байских хозяйств в Казахстане в 1928 году: теоретико-методологические подходы к изучению социальной трансформации казахского общества

В статье рассматривается конфискация байских хозяйств в Казахстане в 1928 году как самостоятельное историческое явление и как объект теоретико-методологического анализа. Основное внимание уделяется не формальному описанию имущественного изъятия, а раскрытию социального содержания конфискационной кампании в контексте раннесоветского преобразования казахского аула. В условиях кочевого и полукочевого хозяйства байство являлось не только экономически состоятельной группой, но и важным элементом системы родовых, хозяйственных, трудовых и патронатных связей. Поэтому вмешательство советской власти в положение байских хозяйств

затрагивало основы традиционной социальной организации. В статье обосновывается необходимость сочетания нескольких исследовательских подходов к изучению конфискации. Классовый подход рассматривается как официальная советская схема объяснения кампании, требующая критического анализа. Социально-исторический подход позволяет выявить реальные связи внутри казахского аула, институциональный подход раскрывает роль государства, права и административного аппарата, а концепция социальной инженерии помогает интерпретировать конфискацию как попытку советской власти классифицировать, упростить и перестроить сложную социальную реальность традиционного общества. Показано, что конфискация 1928 года соединяла правовое оформление, административное исполнение, идеологическое обоснование и социальное переустройство. Постановление от 27 августа 1928 года и инструкция от 30 августа 1928 года придали кампании нормативную форму, однако её фактическое значение выходило за рамки правового регулирования. Конфискация была направлена на ослабление влияния традиционной элиты, разрушение прежних механизмов локального авторитета, изменение отношений зависимости и утверждение новых форм советского контроля в ауле. Особое значение придаётся рассмотрению конфискации не как второстепенного эпизода коллективизации, а как самостоятельной политико-административной кампании. Такой ракурс позволяет уточнить её место в истории раннесоветских преобразований Казахстана. Делается вывод, что конфискация байских хозяйств стала одним из первых крупных инструментов принудительного включения казахского аула в советскую систему власти и управления, а её последствия проявились в изменении социальной структуры, форм авторитета, локальных иерархий и отношений между государством и традиционным обществом.

Ключевые слова: конфискация, байские хозяйства, Казахстан, казахский аул, теоретико-методологические подходы, советская аграрная политика, социальная трансформация, социальная инженерия.

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