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The Proclamation of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and The Election of its Governing Bodies

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The article explores the 1920 proclamation of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (KASSR) within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and the establishment of its governing bodies. It investigates the political and socio-economic factors behind autonomy, the roles of party structures, and the first elections of executive and legislative authorities. Focusing on power legitimization and interactions between republican and central institutions, the study uses archival sources and modern research. It reveals that the KASSR's formation laid the groundwork for Kazakhstan's political and administrative system. The proclamation and elections recognized the Kazakh people as a distinct entity within Soviet Russia, creating state institutions where congresses of Soviets made major decisions and executive power was held by elected representatives of workers, peasants, and soldiers. This research deepens understanding of Kazakhstan's modern statehood origins and 20th-century societal shifts, offering valuable insights for educational programs on Kazakhstan's history and nation-building during the Soviet era.

Ղազախական Ինքնավար Խորհրդային Սոցիալիստական Հանրապետության հռչակումը և
կառավարման մարմինների ընտրությունը

Գուլդանա Տարպանովա

Պետեր Պազմանի անվան կաթոլիկ համալսարան, պատմության դոկտորական դպրոց,
ասպիրանտ

Հիմնաբառեր՝ Ղազախական ԻԽՍՀ, Ղազհեդկոմ (Կազրեկոմ),
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Հոդվածը նվիրված է 1920 թվականին Ռուսական Խորհրդային Ֆեդերատիվ Սոցիալիստական Հանրապետության (ԽՖՍՀ) կազմում Ղրղզական (Ղազախական) ինքնավար խորհրդային սոցիալիստական հանրապետության (Ղազախական ԻՖՍՀ) հռչակմանը և դրա կառավարման մարմինների ձևավորմանը: Ուսումնասիրվում են ինքնավարության ստեղծման քաղաքական և սոցիալ-տնտեսական նախադրյալները, կուսակցական կառույցների դերը, ինչպես նաև գործադիր և օրենսդիր իշխանությունների առաջին ընտրությունները: Հետազոտությունը, հիմնված արխիվային աղբյուրների և ժամանակակից գիտական ուսումնասիրությունների վրա, կենտրոնանում է իշխանության լեգիտիմացման գործընթացի և հանրապետական ու կենտրոնական կառույցների փոխհարաբերությունների վերլուծության վրա: Ուսումնասիրությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ Ղազախական ԻՖՍՀ-ի ստեղծումը հիմք դրեց Ղազախստանի քաղաքական և վարչական համակարգի ձևավորմանը: Հանրապետության հռչակումը և կառավարման մարմինների ընտրությունները խորհրդային Ռուսաստանի կազմում ճանաչեցին ղազախ ժողովրդին որպես առանձին քաղաքական միավոր՝ ստեղծելով պետական հաստատություններ, որոնցում կարևորագույն որոշումները կայացվում էին խորհուրդների համագումարների կողմից, իսկ գործադիր իշխանությունն իրականացվում էր աշխատավորների, գյուղացիների և զինվորների կողմից ընտրված ներկայացուցիչների միջոցով: Հետազոտությունը նպաստում է Ղազախստանի ժամանակակից պետականության ակունքների և XX դարի հասարակական վերափոխումների առավել խորքային ըմբռնմանը՝ արժեքավոր նյութ տրամադրելով Ղազախստանի պատմության և խորհրդային ժամանակաշրջանի պետականաշինությանն առնչվող կրթական ծրագրերի համար:

**Провозглашение Казахской Автономной Советской Социалистической Республики и выборы её
органов управления
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Ключевые слова: Казахская АССР, Казревком,
Алаш-Орда, Учредительный съезд.

В статье рассматриваются провозглашение в 1920 году Киргизской (Казахской) Автономной Советской Социалистической Республики (Казахской АССР) в составе Российской Советской Федеративной Социалистической Республики (РСФСР) и формирование её органов управления. Исследуются политические и социально-экономические предпосылки создания автономии, роль партийных структур, а также первые выборы исполнительных и законодательных органов власти. На основе архивных источников и современных научных исследований анализируются процессы легитимации власти и взаимодействие республиканских и центральных органов. Исследование показывает, что образование Казахской АССР заложило основы политической и административной системы Казахстана. Провозглашение республики и выборы её органов власти закрепили признание казахского народа как самостоятельного субъекта в составе Советской России, способствовали созданию государственных институтов, в которых ключевые решения принимались съездами

Советов, а исполнительная власть осуществлялась избранными представителями рабочих, крестьян и солдат. Результаты исследования углубляют понимание истоков современной государственности Казахстана и общественных преобразований XX века, представляя ценность для образовательных программ по истории Казахстана и процессам государственного строительства в советский период.

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Introduction. The proclamation of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (KASSR)¹ in 1920 marked a pivotal moment in the political transformation of Central Asia under Soviet rule. Emerging from the upheaval of the Russian Civil War and the collapse of the Tsarist regime, the establishment of the KASSR signified both the recognition of the Kazakh people as a distinct national entity and the beginning of their integration into the Soviet federal system. This process involved not only the formal declaration of autonomy but also the complex formation of governing bodies tasked with managing the republic's political, social, and economic affairs. The creation of the KASSR was shaped by a range of factors: political, social, and ideological, that influenced the balance between local national interests and centralized Soviet control. The involvement of various actors, including Bolshevik leaders, the Kazakh national elite, and representatives of different social classes, played a crucial role in defining the structures of power and the policies that guided the republic's early development. Moreover, the mechanisms of legitimizing authority through elections and congresses reflected broader Soviet efforts to establish governance rooted in the representation of workers, peasants, and soldiers. This article explores the historical context and significance of the KASSR's proclamation, focusing on the formation of its governing institutions and the political dynamics that accompanied this process. Drawing on archival sources, official documents, and scholarly research, it examines how the KASSR's establishment laid the groundwork for Kazakhstan's modern statehood and contributed to the broader Soviet project of nation-building. In doing so, the study highlights the challenges and contradictions inherent in creating an autonomous Soviet republic within a centralized federal system, shedding light on the early stages of Kazakhstan's transformation in the twentieth century.

In this study, I intend to concentrate on the following issues: How was the KASSR officially established, and what were the key political, social, and organizational steps involved in forming its governing bodies? What challenges and dynamics shaped the balance between Kazakh national interests and Soviet centralized control during the early years of the KASSR's formation? From the researcher's point of view, this study aims to critically analyze the process of establishing Soviet governance in Kazakhstan during the early 1920s, focusing on the creation of the KASSR. It investigates the dynamic interactions between local Kazakh elites, Bolshevik authorities, and competing political groups,

¹ Due to the orientation of the materials in this paper for a general audience, all the terms used within the period 1919-1925 are used in this paper. Since in 1925 the Kazakh people were given back their true name, we will speak of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh). This decision was taken at the Fifth All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets in 1925. <https://kazneb.kz/bookView/view/?brId=1545743&lang=ru> 'Kyrrevkom', 'Kyrobkom', 'Kyrkraikom', "Kyrgyz" and other exonyms in this paper are automatically given in the form 'Kaz...', 'Kazakh'. Only in quotations from archival and official documents the word 'Kyrgyz' is given without changes.

highlighting how these relationships influenced the development of political institutions and autonomy within the Soviet framework. The goals include tracing the political evolution of the KASSR, examining the composition and influence of its governing bodies, and evaluating the impact of Soviet nationalities policy on local governance and cultural development.

Literature review: The literature on the establishment of Soviet power in Kazakhstan during the early 20th century offers a multifaceted view of the political, social, and national dynamics that shaped the formation of the KASSR. Foundational works like Sapargaliev's "The emergence of the Kazakh Soviet statehood (1917-1920)" (1948) provide a detailed narrative of the revolutionary period, emphasizing the transition from Tsarist rule to Soviet governance and highlighting the roles of local leaders and Bolshevik authorities. The author's analysis underlines the challenges of integrating national aspirations with socialist ideology, a theme echoed across subsequent studies. Baishev et al. (1949) expand on this by focusing on the organizational aspects of Soviet power, documenting the elections, congresses, and formation of governing bodies that concretized Soviet authority in the region. Their work stresses the enthusiastic participation of workers and peasants, while also addressing tensions between class-based policies and national identities. This tension is further explored in Korzhenevsky's (2022) recent dissertation, which examines the national-territorial delimitation processes and the complexities of Soviet nationality policy, particularly the balancing act between central control and local autonomy. Shildebay and Aldazhumanov's [Shildebay, S.K., Aldazhumanov K., 2025] research contributes important insights into the ethnic and political composition of the KASSR's leadership, revealing the significant presence of Kazakhs within the executive committees while simultaneously exposing the dominance of non-Kazakh factions in key decision-making bodies. Their work highlights the intricate power dynamics within the Communist Party structures and the ongoing struggle for genuine Kazakh representation. The memoirs compiled in "Kazakhstan in the Fire of the Civil War" by Elagin et al. (1960) and Sartayev's "Formation and Establishment of Kazakh Soviet Statehood" (1960) provide valuable firsthand perspectives on the revolutionary fervor and ideological battles of the time, particularly the conflict between Bolshevik revolutionaries and nationalist movements such as Alash-Orda¹. These sources enrich the understanding of the socio-political climate surrounding the KASSR's creation. Allworth's (1989) broader historical overview situates Kazakhstan's experience within the wider context of Russian dominance in Central Asia, offering a comparative perspective on colonial legacies and Soviet nationalities policy. Vilenskii et al.'s documentary collection (1957) serves as a crucial source base, compiling primary materials that document the legal and institutional foundations of the KASSR. Together, this body of literature paints a complex picture of the early Soviet period in Kazakhstan, marked by the interplay of national self-determination, class struggle, and centralized Soviet governance. It reveals the challenges of establishing a new political order that sought to reconcile diverse ethnic identities with the goals of socialist state-building. The scholarship underscores the importance of local participation and the compromises between Kazakh leaders and Soviet authorities, which ultimately shaped the trajectory of Kazakh statehood within the USSR.

¹ Alash-Orda or Alash Autonomy is a Kazakh state entity under the Provisional People's Council of Alash-Orda, which existed during the Civil War. The autonomy was established by the Second All-Kazakh Congress held in Orenburg on 5-13 December 1917, and was liquidated by the Bolshevik Revolutionary Committee for the Management of the Kazakh Territory on 5 March 1920, but actually ceased to exist in the summer of 1919.

The methodology of this study combines historical-analytical and archival research approaches to examine the formation of Soviet power and the establishment of the KASSR in the early 1920s. Primary sources, including official decrees, government documents, minutes of congresses, and memoirs of key figures, form the foundational evidence base. These archival materials, sourced from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, allow for a detailed reconstruction of political events, institutional developments, and policy decisions during this formative period. The study employs a critical analysis framework to interpret how Soviet authorities balanced national autonomy with centralized control, and how class and ethnic dynamics influenced governance structures. Comparative evaluation of different versions of official documents, such as the Declaration of the Rights of the Working People of the KASSR, helps reveal underlying political tensions and competing narratives between Bolshevik leaders and nationalist factions. Secondary scholarly literature is used to contextualize archival findings within broader historiographical debates about Soviet nation-building, class struggle, and colonial legacies in Central Asia. The methodology emphasizes a nuanced reading of both Soviet and Kazakh perspectives, seeking to uncover the complexity of local participation, party politics, and social transformations. Throughout, the research maintains a critical stance toward sources, acknowledging potential biases, especially in official Soviet accounts and nationalist recollections. This methodological rigor ensures a balanced understanding of the challenges and contradictions involved in the early Soviet consolidation of power in Kazakhstan.

Formation and early challenges of Soviet power in Kazakhstan: Right after Soviet power was set up, even before the Civil War, the old government was broken down and new leaders were put in place. During the Civil War, as Soviet power was being restored, the Kazakh Revolutionary Committee (Kazrevkom)¹ was established on July 10, 1919, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars (SNK)² of the RSFSR to govern the Kazakh region [cf. Vilenskii 1957, 122]. In particular, by the early 1920s, local councils had made many administrative and territorial changes without official approval from central authorities. This caused confusion because the central government wasn't informed. The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD)³ and other bodies issued orders demanding reports and approvals, but local councils often ignored them. Despite this, the rules and orders created by the Bolshevik government in this period helped lay the groundwork for later, more organized and centralized reforms [cf. Korzhenevskiy 2022, 85-86]. The author means that early local actions were chaotic and uncoordinated, but the Bolshevik government's efforts during that time set the foundation for more effective, centralized control later on.

¹ The Kazrevkom, or Kyrgyz Revolutionary Committee, was a temporary body of Soviet power established during the Civil War to administer the territories inhabited by Kazakhs. It was formed on 10 (19) July 1919. Kazrevkom played an important role in the formation of the Kazakh ASSR, which was established on 26 August 1920.

² At different periods in the history of the Soviet Union, the SNK was the highest executive and administrative body of power. Initially, from 1917 to 1946, the SNK was the government of Soviet Russia (RSFSR) and then of the entire USSR. In 1946, the SNK was transformed into the Council of Ministers.

³ People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the RSFSR (NKVD RSFSR) - the central body of state administration of the RSFSR for fighting crime and maintaining public order in 1917-1930 and in 1937-1946.

Following an archival document, the issue of the autonomy of the KASSR was finally resolved by the decree of the SNK and the RSFSR dated August 26, 1920, which states that the Autonomous Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Socialist Soviet Republic was established as part of the RSFSR [CSA RK F. 5. S.1. F.1. pp. 16-16 verso].

Also, Mendeshev recalls that Kyrgyz (Kazakh) workers welcomed the decree with great enthusiasm. The imperialist chauvinists and Alash Orda supporters, who saw Kazakhstan's Soviet autonomy as insignificant, were strongly shocked [cf. Elagin, et. al. 1960, 374] The decree established that the governing bodies of the KASSR were the local Soviets of Deputies, the Central Executive Committee (CEC), and the SNK. For central management of various areas of state life in the KASSR, the following people's commissariats were created: 1) Internal Affairs with the Postal and Telegraph Administration; 2) Justice; 3) Education; 4) Health; 5) Social Security; 6) Agriculture; 7) Food Supply; 8) Finance; 9) Council of National Economy; 10) People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; 11) People's Commissariat of Labor; 12) People's Commissariat of Communications. For military administration, a "Military Kyrgyz Commissariat" was established, subordinated to the Trans-Volga Military District [cf. Sartayev 1960, 65].

And, Kazakh leader Baitursynov,¹ who had been previously part of the government, was briefly removed but later became the head of the Ministry of Education. The government had a balanced mix of Kazakhs, Russians, and Europeans. What's more, in September, conflict arose between the Bolsheviks and Kazakh leaders over voting rules for the Kazakh assembly. The Bolsheviks wanted to exclude former elites and those linked to past governments from voting, but Baitursynov opposed this and won. At the October 1920 assembly in Orenburg, many delegates supported Alash-Orda leaders like Baitursynov. During the early years, Alash-Orda was the main local power since other leaders had died or had limited influence. Because of this, Soviet authorities worked with nationalist leaders after the civil war. The 1920 assembly also declared an end to colonization [cf. Allworth 1989, 239]. The early 1920s saw a struggle between Soviet control and Kazakh leaders, but cooperation eventually led to Kazakh autonomy and shared governance within the RSFSR.

According to Baishev et.al. in the first half of 1920, workers and peasants of Kazakhstan elected their governing bodies at congresses of Soviets. The elections for the 1st All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets took place with great enthusiasm across the country [cf. Baishev et.al. 1949, 96]. However, the report for the first All-Kazakh Congress discusses the need to clearly define Soviet policy in the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) region and among the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) people. It raises questions about whether there is genuine support for national unity among the people or if it's just driven by the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) intellectuals, the role of class divisions, and the best revolutionary methods to involve the working masses. The report emphasizes understanding who the Soviet government should rely on to strengthen its power and guide the future revolution in the region [AP RK F. 140. S.1. F.8. P. 3]. The following examples illustrate this: in the minutes of the Regional Bureau of the RCP(b) of Kyrgyzya from September 9, which were discussed, there is a focus on nationalism among the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) masses being fueled by an intellectual with chauvinistic views. It also mentions that settlers still maintain a revolutionary spirit, but over time, as Kyrgyz (Kazakh) culture grows, this will fade, revealing the kulak nature of most settlers. Overall, the

¹ Akhmet Baitursynov (1872-1937) was a Kazakh educator, teacher, publicist, translator, Turkic scholar, linguist and politician. He was one of the leaders and active figures of the Alash movement.

policy should rely on the poor and middle peasants, workers, semi-proletarians among both Kyrgyz (Kazakh) and Russians, as well as Red Army soldiers. In other words, the discussion centers on national policy, class composition, and the strategy of relying on certain social groups [AP RK F. 140. S.1. F.4. P. 37]. A critical objection to this is that such a policy might overlook or suppress the interests and identities of certain ethnic groups or social classes, potentially causing resentment or resistance among those who feel excluded or marginalized. But the Russian central authorities did implement their policy by keeping economic and political control over Kazakhstan, managing key institutions, and shaping local governance to secure Soviet power, though this often-caused tension with local national groups.

Establishment of the KASSR's governing structures and national-political dynamics: On October 4, 1920, at 6:00 PM, the Constituent Congress was officially opened with a ceremony by the Chairman of the Kazakh Revolutionary Committee, V. Radus-Zenkovich, at the Sverdlov Club in the city of Orenburg [CSA RK F. 5. S.1. F.4a. P. 14]. Artykbayev states that for easier management of party organizations in Kazakhstan, a regional bureau of the Russian Communist Party and a Kazakh bureau under the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party were established [cf. Artykbayev 2004, 133]. At this point it should be added that the Congress made decisions on land, military, food supply, and other issues, and elected the first Soviet government of Kazakhstan [cf. Baishev et.al. 1949, 96]. Moreover, Shildebay continues: “Nine people were elected to the presidium of the congress: V. Radus-Zenkovich, A. Dosov,¹ S. Mendeshev,² A. Jangel'din,³ I. Akulov,⁴ A. Avdeev,⁵ P. Struppe,⁶ A. Baitursynov, and I. Martynov⁷” [Shildebay 2021, 42]. All in all, it can be seen that the establishment of Soviet power in Kazakhstan through active local participation, organized party structures, and the formation of the republic's first government.

Here it must be added that at the second congress session, S. Mendeshev was elected to the Mandate and Land Commissions and became chair of the education section. He proposed sending a congratulatory telegram to the working people of the Bashkir Republic. Reports on the Kazrevkom's work were presented

¹ Abilkair Iskakovich Dossov (1899-1938) - Soviet party and state leader, first secretary of the Aktobe (1934-1936) and South Kazakhstan (1936-1937) regional committees of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (b).

² Seytkali Mendeshev (1882-1938) was a Kazakh Soviet statesman and public figure. In 1920 he was appointed the first chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the formed Kyrgyz (Kazakh) ASSR within the RSFSR with the capital in Orenburg.

³ Alibi Togzhanovich Jangel'din (1884-1953) was a Kazakh revolutionary and traveller, participant of the Civil War. In 1920 Congress elected him a member of the Presidium of the first composition and deputy chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Republic, Commissar of Social Security.

⁴ Ivan Alekseevich Akulov (1888-1937) was a Soviet party leader and statesman. First Prosecutor of the USSR, chairman of the Vyatka and Orenburg regional committees of the RCP(b), chairman of the Revolutionary Committee for the administration of the Kazakh Territory.

⁵ Aleksandr Dmitrievich Avdeev (1887-1947) - Soviet party and statesman, in April-May 1920, chairman of the Organising Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) in the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) region.

⁶ Pyotr Ivanovich Struppe (1889-1937) was a Soviet party and state leader, chairman of the Lenoblisk Executive Committee (1932-1936). In 1920-1922 he worked in the Kazakh ASSR: Deputy Commissar of Internal Affairs, simultaneously (1922) - Chairman of the Kazakh Regional RevCom of the RCP(b).

⁷ Martynov Ivan Denisovich (1883 - 1953) was a Soviet statesman and party leader. In 1919-1920 - Head of the Orenburg provincial food committee, commissioner of the People's Commissariat of Food of the RSFSR in the Orenburg province, People's Commissar of Food of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) ASSR.

by S. Argancheev¹ and Mendeshev. Some delegates criticized Kazrevkom's work, but A. Ermekov² highlighted its successes despite unclear territorial boundaries and stressed the need to unite all Kyrgyz (Kazakh) lands under one Kazakh ASSR. Mendeshev responded that, although conditions were very difficult, they did their best [cf. Shildebay 2021, 43]. The most memorable and significant day in the work of the Constituent Congress of Soviets was October 6, when, on the proposal of the Communist faction, the congress discussed and adopted the "Declaration of the Rights of the Working People of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) ASSR." The "Declaration of the Rights of the Working People of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) ASSR" became a constitutional act that legally confirmed the historic achievements of the working people of Kazakhstan. For the first time in its history, the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) people proclaimed the creation of their national statehood. The congress declared the KASSR as a republic of Soviets of workers, working Kyrgyz (Kazakh) people, peasants, Cossacks, and Red Army deputies. In the KASSR, only working people held power, and voting rights were given to all productive citizens over 18. Former police, the mentally ill, criminals, and those living off hired labor or unearned income were excluded. The governing bodies of the Autonomous KASSR are the local Soviets, the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Central Executive Committee (KyrCEC), and the SNK of the KASSR. The First Congress of Soviets of the KASSR decided to follow RSFSR policies by transferring factories, land, and banks to the workers' state and protecting the poor peasants' interests, especially those harmed by past rulers. They emphasized the importance of settling nomadic Kyrgyz (Kazakh) people through collectivization, made labor compulsory for all citizens, and aimed to provide free, full education while improving health and social protections. They also promoted equal rights for Kyrgyz (Kazakh) women and required all citizens to defend the socialist homeland, with armed defense rights given only to workers [cf. Vilenskii et.al. 1957, 269-272]. Thus, the Declaration secured broad political rights for the working people. All these resolutions are driven by the desire to strengthen the alliance of workers and peasants and the friendship of peoples, to quickly overcome Kazakhstan's centuries-old backwardness, and to achieve its economic and cultural flourishing.

In the memoirs of the Deputy Chairman of the CEC of the Republic A. T. Jangeldin, in the collection "Kazakhstan in the Fire of the Civil War," the following is written: "It was a day of triumph for Lenin's national policy, a day of victory for free Kazakhstan over the White Guards and the bourgeois nationalists: the Alash-Orda members. This victory was won by the Kazakh people with the help of the Russian working class under the leadership and daily care of the Communist Party headed by V. I. Lenin. In my speech at the opening of the All-Kazakh Constituent Congress of Soviets, there was a call to the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) people for unity and the elimination of the remnants of the defeated White Guard-Alash-Orda gangs, and for the final exposure of their counter-revolutionary nature. The congress was held under the leadership of the Bolsheviks... ." [Elagin et.al. 1960, 370]. Consequently, the establishment of the KASSR marked a significant step toward self-governance and the formal inclusion of Kazakhstan as an autonomous republic within the Soviet federal system.

¹ Sakipkerey Zharmovich Arginshayev, Sakhiygirey Argancheev (1887-1938) - a Kazakh sociologist, Soviet party and state leader, in August 1920 he was acting chairman of the Revolutionary Committee for the Management of the Kazakh Territory.

² Alimkhan Abeuovich Ermekov (1891-1970) was a Kazakh public figure, one of the founders of the Alash party, the first Kazakh professor of mathematics.

According to the information provided, the key date marking the official establishment of the KASSR is August 26, 1920, when the decree by the SNK and the RSFSR formally established the KASSR as part of the RSFSR. Additionally, significant related events include: The Constituent Congress opened on October 4, 1920, and played a crucial role in organizing the government and adopting important declarations. The adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Working People of the KASSR on October 6, 1920, which legally confirmed the creation of the republic and its political framework. So, while August 26, 1920, is the official founding date, the early October 1920 congress sessions solidified the republic's governance and constitutional status.

This can be seen, for example, in the fact that on October 6, during a key meeting, reports on the Kazrevkom's work were discussed, with some delegates criticizing it, but others praising its achievements despite difficulties. The authors highlight that the Kazakh ASSR officially declared itself a republic of workers, peasants, Cossacks, and Red Army deputies on that day by adopting its first constitutional document. Thus, October 6 is considered the official founding day of the Soviet Kazakh Republic [cf. Shildebay and Aldazhumanov 2020, 97]. In this respect, I completely agree with the authors, because it was on October 6, 1920, that a key document was adopted, legally establishing the creation of the KASSR and officially declaring it a republic of the working people, which became an important step in the formation of Soviet power in Kazakhstan. Consequently, the official founding date of the Soviet Kazakh Republic is October 6, 1920. The creation of the KASSR and its equal status within the RSFSR was crucial for uniting the Kazakh people and building friendly ties with all Soviet peoples, especially the Russian people. It was an important step toward strengthening national unity and developing the Kazakh autonomous, and later union, state within the USSR.

It is important to mention that the first constitutional document of the Kazakh ASSR reflected the hard-won achievements of the Kazakh people and other Soviet peoples under Bolshevik leadership. The Declaration was approved by everyone, which was a big defeat for the bourgeois nationalists who were secretly against Soviet rule. At the congress, Alash-Orda members tried to push their own land ideas, wanting to keep old, traditional land use that favored feudal exploitation. However, their proposals were rejected, and the congress adopted land reforms based on the RSFSR's socialist land policies [cf. Sapargaliev 1948, 106]. It should also be noted that Sapargaliev points out: "Clause 'v' of paragraph 4 of the Declaration was adopted by the congress in the following wording: "To base the land policy of the KASSR on protecting the interests of the Kyrgyz and poor peasants, especially those groups of Kyrgyz working masses who were robbed by the Tsarist government and the Russian bourgeoisie". However, the version published in the 'Bulletin' omitted the words "Kyrgyz and poor peasants, especially those groups," resulting in a very different text: "To base the land policy of the KASSR on protecting the interests of the Kyrgyz working masses who were robbed by the tsarist government and the Russian bourgeoisie." This version contains no mention of the working Russians and other nationalities living in Kazakhstan; it speaks only of Kazakhs. These falsifications and deceptions by the Alash-Orda, of course, could have no real significance and certainly could not have influenced the decisions of the All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets in any way" (cf. Sapargaliev 1948, 110). It should be critically noted here that Alash-Orda efforts to highlight specific

concerns of the Kazakh working masses show their commitment to protecting national interests, even if their influence on official decisions was limited. In spite of this the differing versions of the land policy reflect ongoing tensions between nationalist and Soviet perspectives, highlighting the complexity of balancing ethnic and class interests in early Kazakh governance.

And as mentioned above, the governing bodies of the KASSR are the local Soviets, the CEC, and the SNK of the KASSR [paragraph 3 of the decree on the autonomous KASSR]. Accordingly, in KASSR, the highest body of state power was the All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets, and between congresses, it was the KyrCEC: 1. The All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets is the highest authority of the region. It is composed of representatives from city Soviets at a ratio of one deputy per 25,000 voters, and representatives from district congresses of Soviets at a ratio of one deputy per 125,000 residents. The All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets is convened once a year by the KyrCEC; 2. The KyrCEC is the legislative, executive, and supervisory body of the KASSR. The KyrCEC convenes for regular sessions every three months. Extraordinary sessions are called at the initiative of the KyrCEC, upon the proposal of the KyrSNK, or at the request of 3% of the KyrCEC members. The Presidium of the KyrCEC consists of 10 members and 5 candidates. The Presidium leads the sessions of the KyrCEC and serves as the main center for directing and overseeing work both at the central level and locally; 3. The KyrSNK is responsible for the overall administration of the affairs of the KASSR. To carry out this task, the KyrSNK issues decrees, orders, instructions, and takes all necessary measures to ensure the proper and swift functioning of state life. It immediately reports all its resolutions and decisions to the KyrCEC. The KyrCEC has the right to cancel or suspend any resolution or decision of the KyrSNK [cf. Vilenskii et.al. 1957, 298-303]. From the beginning, the Central RSFSR kept KASSR economically dependent by controlling key commissariats. Specifically, the commissariats of Food, Finance, Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, National Economy Council, Postal and Telegraph Administration, Statistics Bureau, Labor, and Transportation were placed under the authority of the RSFSR people's commissariats. These departments remained under RSFSR authority, as outlined in Articles 6 and 11 of the Decree establishing the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic [CSA RK F. 5. S.1. F.1. pp. 16-16 verso].

The 5th and 6th sessions of the Congress took place on October 7. There were no sessions on October 8 and 9. Shildebay emphasises that, on October 10-11, the Regional Bureau of the RCP(b) held a joint plenum with representatives from the provinces, where S. Mendeshev was preliminarily appointed as a member and chairman of the Presidium of the KyrCEC. On the final day of the congress, a 75-member KASSR CEC, its Presidium, chairman, and the People's Commissariat were elected. S. Mendeshev was unanimously chosen as both a member and the chairman of the KyrCEC Presidium. Also, S. Mendeshev served continuously as chairman of the KyrCEC from October 12, 1920, to April 19, 1925. On October 14, 1920, he was also elected chairman of the Administrative Commission under KyrCEC. One of his main tasks as chairman was to restore Kazakhstan's territorial unity [cf. Shildebay 2020, 482-483].

Furthermore, it is necessary to mention that based on the decision of the Constituent Congress, a unified central body for managing cultural development the People's Commissariat of Education (Narkompros) was established in the republic. It became the central state authority responsible for all areas of cultural development within the republic. For example, in the report on public education to the All-Kyrgyz Congress, it is stated that because of the Tsarist regime's narrow class policies and harsh treatment

of indigenous peoples, the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) people were very culturally underdeveloped. To truly use their new power after the Social Revolution, education must be a top priority in the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Soviet Republic. Under bourgeois rule, education was controlled by the state and elites, but under Soviet power, the working people hold all authority, so education should be guided by the central government while giving freedom to local bodies and private initiatives. The Narkompros was set up at the center, with local education departments in the regions. Local Education Councils were created to involve the wider population in educational work [AP RK F. 140. S.1. F.8. P. 10].

Additionally, the resolution of the Constituent Congress of Soviets of the KASSR dated October 12, 1920, approved the education section's plan as the basis for future work by the Narkompros. It emphasized the urgent need to address the cultural backwardness of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) population by focusing on eradicating illiteracy, providing compulsory education for all, promoting social upbringing, and developing vocational training. The congress tasked the KyrCEC and the Narkompros with prioritizing these goals in their work [cf. Vilenskii et.al. 1957, 295-296]. All these decisions aimed to strengthen the alliance between workers and peasants and promote friendship among peoples, quickly ending Kazakhstan's long-standing backwardness and achieving economic and cultural growth.

I would like to put forward the following data here: "The congress was attended by 273 delegates. The delegations were as follows: Orenburg-Turgay province - 112 delegates, Ural - 35, Bukeyev - 23, Akmolinsk - 34, Semipalatinsk - 49, Transcaspian - 1. Among the delegates, communists made up over 72 percent" [Sapargaliev 1948, 104]. The congress, approving the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) dated September 1, 1920, included the following territories in the KASSR: "Semipalatinsk region, consisting of the districts of Pavlodar, Semipalatinsk, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Zaisan, and Karkaraly. Akmolinsk region, consisting of the districts of Atbasar, Akmolinsk, Kokshetau, Petropavlovsk, and part of Omsk. Ural region, consisting of the districts of Uralsk, Ilek, Dzhambytinsk, Uilsk, Kalmykovsk, and Guryevsk. Orenburg-Turgay province, consisting of the districts of Aktobe, Irgiz, Turgay, Temir, and the areas of Orenburg, Pokrovsk, Petrovsk, Krasnokholmsk, Sharlyksk, Iletsk, Isaev-Dedovsk, and Orsk. Bukeyev province, consisting of the areas of Talovsk, Dzhangalinsk, Dengizsk, and Urdinsk. Kostanay district. Mangyshlak (Adaev) district" (see Fig. 1) [Vilenskii et.al. 1957, 293-294]. The congress reflected a diverse regional representation with a strong communist majority and formally incorporated multiple key territories into the KASSR.

However, Shildebay and Aldazhumanov's research shows that among the 1st elected members of the KyrCEC, about 48,6% were Kazakhs, with the rest being Russians, Jews, Poles, Latvians, and Tatars. Including two pro-Kazakh members, over half were Turkic peoples. The KyrCEC presidium was about 70% Kazakh, suggesting Kazakhs had a strong presence. But in reality, key decisions were made not by KyrCEC or its presidium, but by the bureau of KyrCEC's Communist faction. This bureau's decisions were controlled by the regional party committee (RK(b)P Kirov Oblast Bureau), which was dominated by Russian, Jewish, and other European representatives. Kazakh members never held a majority in that higher decision-making body [cf. Shildebay and Aldazhumanov 2020, 98]. Despite Kazakhs' strong presence in KyrCEC, real power rested with the regional party bureau dominated by non-Kazakh members.

In addition, Sapargaliev is of the opinion that more and more workers and peasants realized that Soviet power had replaced the old Tsarist and temporary bourgeois governments with a system close to and supported by them. Soviets, revolutionary committees, party groups, and the Red Army worked hard to spread political awareness among Kazakh villages in their own language. Schools and courses trained local agitators and organizers, and newspapers began to be published in Kazakh, helping the language become literary. At the Congress of Soviets, freely elected Kazakh delegates spoke openly about the hopes and needs of their people. Shortly after the All-Kazakh Congress of Soviets ended, Poland, unable to continue the war and fearing a Red Army counterattack, agreed to peace with Russia in October 1920. By November, the Red Army defeated Wrangel's forces¹, freeing Crimea and ending the counterrevolution there. With these victories and the defeat of nationalist forces in the Caucasus, Soviet power was firmly established across the former Russian Empire, marking a historic triumph for the socialist revolution [cf. Sapargaliev 1948, 112]. Sartayev points out that on its final day, the congress solemnly called on all autonomous republics and regions of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic to unite in the fight for building socialism. It also sent a message of support to the peoples of the East striving for their liberation. This marked the conclusion of the Constituent Congress of the Soviets of Kazakhstan [cf. Sartayev 1960, 73]. Overall, it can be seen that the growing political awareness among Kazakh workers and peasants, combined with key Red Army victories and the defeat of nationalist forces, solidified Soviet power across the region. The Constituent Congress of Soviets of Kazakhstan concluded with a call for unity among Soviet republics to build socialism and support liberation movements in the East, marking a decisive step in establishing Soviet rule in Kazakhstan.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the creation of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic marked a crucial stage in the formation of Soviet statehood on the territory of Kazakhstan and reflected the complex process of nation-building during the transitional period following the Civil War. The proclamation of the KASSR and the organization of its governing bodies symbolized the official inclusion of the Kazakh people into the Soviet federal system with a certain degree of autonomy, which responded to historical demands for national self-awareness and political participation. At the same time, the process of forming governing bodies was accompanied by numerous challenges and contradictions. On one hand, the first Soviet bodies included representatives of the Kazakh national elite, such as leaders like A. Baitursynov, which allowed for consideration of local interests and cultural specifics. On the other hand, real influence over key decisions remained with the party structures, predominantly controlled by Russians and representatives of other nationalities, reflecting a tendency toward centralized management and limitation of national sovereignty.

¹ The Russian Army (pre-reform Russian: Русская армия), also known as Wrangel's Army or the Crimean Army, was an operational-strategic formation of White forces in southern Russia from April to November 1920. After General Baron P. N. Wrangel assumed command, the defeated Armed Forces of South Russia were reorganized by him on May 11 in Crimea into the Russian Army, which existed until the White forces' evacuation from Crimea in November 1920. On November 21, following the evacuation, the Russian Squadron was formed to replace the army. In November 1920, after retreating from the Perekop positions (it is a defensive line located in the area of the Perekop Isthmus, a narrow land strip connecting the Crimean Peninsula with the mainland of Ukraine) to Crimean ports, the army was evacuated to the Black Sea straits region, then to Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Later, former members of the Russian Army became the foundation of the Russian All-Military Union.

The policy of the KASSR reflected an attempt to balance national and class interests. The Soviet authorities sought to unite the working class, poor and middle peasants of various ethnic groups, while simultaneously limiting the influence of former elites and nationalist movements such as Alash Orda. This led to certain conflicts, but ultimately a model of cooperation emerged aimed at strengthening Soviet power and socialist transformations. The adoption of the “Declaration of the Rights of the Working People of the KASSR” and the organizational decisions of the first Congress of Soviets laid the legal and political foundation of the republic, securing its status as a sovereign Soviet entity with broad rights for the working people. A significant achievement was the establishment of centralized structures such as the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars, as well as the creation of key commissariats responsible for internal affairs, education, economy, and culture. Special attention was paid to the development of education and culture in the Kazakh language, the eradication of illiteracy, and the socialization of the population, which became part of a broader strategy to overcome the centuries-long backwardness of the region and integrate it into the Soviet economic and cultural system.

Thus, the formation of the KASSR and its first governing bodies reflects a complex and multifaceted process of establishing a Soviet republic, intertwining interests of national self-determination, class struggle, and centralized political control. This experience laid the foundation for the further development of Kazakhstan as an equal subject within the Soviet Union and played a key role in the historical revival of the Kazakh people in the context of socialist modernization.

Summarizing the results of the discussion provides a detailed response to both questions posed in the introduction, thoroughly describing the official establishment of the KASSR and the complex political, social, and organizational stages involved in forming its governing bodies. In sum, the author effectively presents the official founding and organizational development of the KASSR alongside the ongoing negotiation between national aspirations and Soviet centralized governance during its formative years.

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Appendix

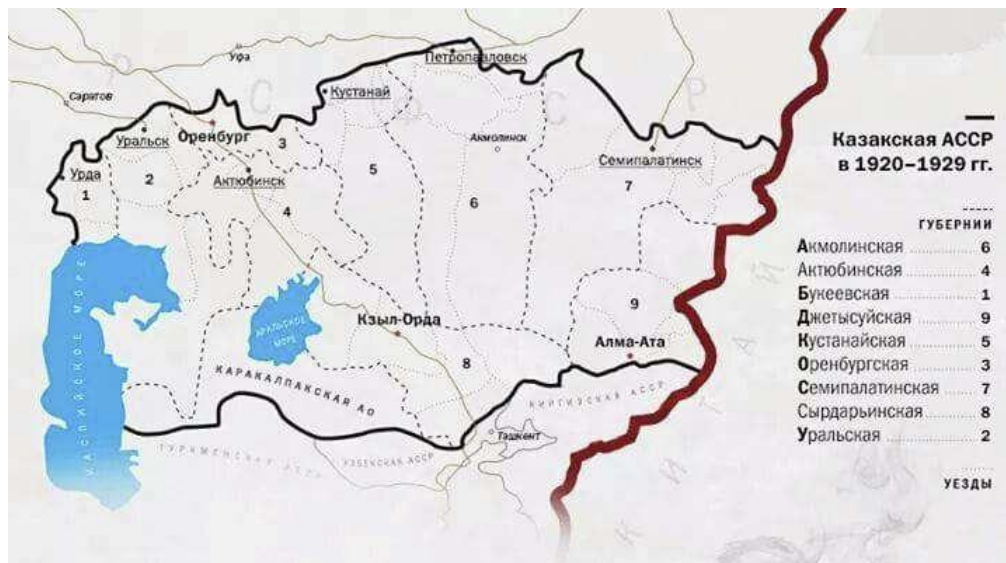


Figure 1. *The map of Kazakh ASSR in 1920-1929*. Source: <https://nomad.su/?a=15-201509020007> (Accessed August 4, 2025).