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The Everyday Survival Practices of the Kazakh Aul During the Crisis of the Early 1930s

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Abstract

The article examines the everyday survival practices of the Kazakh aul in the context of the socio-economic crisis of the early 1930s. The aim of the study is to identify the main forms of adaptation of the Kazakh population to administrative pressure and the destruction of the traditional economic system. The source base consists of archival materials and published documents. Using problem-chronological, historical-genetic, and historical-comparative methods, the study traces how families and individual farms used available resources and social connections amid the growing crisis. Everyday actions aimed at preserving the family and household could be combined with collective action and other forms of resistance. This considers survival and resistance not as military exclusive forms of behaviors, but as different ways the population acted during the crisis. The study examines migration movements, kinship and neighborly forms of mutual assistance, the preservation and concealment of food resources, the search for alternative sources of livelihood, and changes in economic practices. It has been established that in times of crisis, the population used available material resources, kinship ties, and spatial mobility to preserve the family and household. In conclusion, it is stated that the everyday survival practices of the Kazakh population in the auls varied depending on the specific circumstances and opportunities available to each individual family.

Keywords: everyday life; survival practices; Kazakh aul; collectivization; Semipalatinsk District; resistance

1. Introduction

The beginning of the 1930s was a period of deep economic and social upheavals for the Kazakh aul. Collectivization, the seizure of livestock and food, restrictions on traditional forms of management, and forced population movements directly affected daily life in the Kazakh aul. The crisis manifested not only in large-scale changes in the economic structure and demographic losses, but also in countless daily situations when individual families and auls had to find ways to maintain their farms, provide food, and support family members.

In historiography, this period has long been viewed mainly through collectivization, famine, Soviet economic policy, and the associated socio-demographic consequences. In recent decades, research attention has increasingly turned to the population's everyday experience and to specific forms of behavior and action in a crisis. This approach allows us to consider the residents of the Kazakh aul not only as objects of policy, but also as participants in everyday processes that shaped decisions in response to circumstances. In this context, it is important to study how the population of the Kazakh aul responded to the

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destruction of traditional agriculture during the period under study, since the organization of collective farms, the confiscation of livestock, administrative restrictions, and other factors led to an increase in social instability and mass famine. Under these circumstances, the residents of the aul sought ways to save their families and households, and tried to find necessary assistance and solutions to the prevailing situation. Some found a way out by flight to preserve their property and food supplies, while others relied on family ties and mutual assistance, which was of great importance for individual families and auls during the crisis of the early 1930s. In some regions, armed uprisings against the implemented policies emerged, representing one of the ways the population reacted to the current events. At the same time, the everyday practices of the Kazakh aul, including migration movements and mutual assistance practices, have not been sufficiently studied in historiography.

The practices by which residents of the Kazakh aul sought to preserve the economy and ensure their daily existence under the conditions of the early 1930s crisis require further study of specific regional material. The article analyzes the everyday practices of the Kazakh aul in the early 1930s, using the Semipalatinsk District as an example. The materials from this region make it possible to trace the changes in the everyday life of individual families and households, to identify the ways in which people responded to the consequences of collectivization, and to compare these responses with various forms of social protest. Archival documents were used. They contain information about the actions of the authorities, and there are also materials about the specific actions of the population in the context of an economic crisis and increased administrative control. Studying these actions shows how policy was reflected in the daily lives of Kazakh aul residents and changed their economic behavior.

Special attention is paid to family ties, which were used in various adaptation practices: the transfer of livestock, the preparation of migrations, the exchange of information and support for the persecuted. Their consideration makes it possible to show how families relied on existing relationships to preserve people and farms in times of crisis. The contribution of the study is to reveal specific ways of using these connections based on the materials of the Semipalatinsk district. At the same time, kinship is considered as one of the adaptation resources, the importance of which depended on the position of the family and the circumstances of decision-making.

The purpose of the article is to identify and analyze the main survival practices of the Kazakh aul in the early 1930s, as well as to show their connection with administrative pressure, the crisis of the economic system, and changes in traditional social relations.

2. Material and Methods

The study is based on a range of archival and published sources that make it possible to examine the collectivization policy in the Semipalatinsk District in the early 1930s not only at the level of decisions made by central and local authorities, but also through the everyday behavior of the population. The main source base consisted of documents from the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (AP RK), the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA RK), the State Archive of the Abay Region (SAAR), the State Archive of the East Kazakhstan Region (SAEKR), the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), and the Russian State Archive of Modern History (RGANI). An additional source was the published collections of archival documents «Popular Uprisings and Protests in Kazakhstan in the 1920s–1930s» (Musagaliyeva et al. 2022), «Asharshylyk. Famine. 1928–1934: a documentary chronicle: collection of documents. Vol. 9: 1930–1931» (Asharshylyk 2023), «Decree of 1928: Confiscated Fates» (Rakhmetullin 2021) and «Abyraly Uprising» by B. Nasenov (Nasenov 2005). The study uses documents from party and Soviet bodies, materials from state security agencies, information summaries and reports from

local governing bodies, telegrams, materials from the confiscation campaign, as well as interrogation protocols and testimonies from participants in armed uprisings. The difference in the origin and purpose of these documents makes it possible to compare the official view of the authorities regarding the processes that took place with the actions and reactions of the population recorded in the documents.

Official documents from Soviet bodies were examined taking into account the circumstances of their creation, the purposes for which they were drawn up, and the nature of the information contained in them. Reports from local administration and security agencies typically reflected the events that were taking place from the perspective of state control and could portray the population's behavior mainly as a violation of established requirements or as a manifestation of "anti-Soviet" sentiments. Therefore, the information contained in them was compared with other types of sources. This makes it possible to distinguish between the assessment of the population's actions by the authorities and the actions themselves, as reflected in the documents.

The methodological basis of the study is the principles of social history, the history of everyday life, and microhistory. The socio-historical approach allows us to consider the changes of this period through the situation and everyday experience of the population. The micro-historical approach highlights the specific situations and actions of Kazakh aul residents related to preserving the economy and providing for the family. The history of everyday life helps to trace how people solved everyday problems in times of crisis, what survival practices they used, and how the changes that took place affected the lives of specific auls. In this case the analysis focuses on the specific actions of the population in the context of changes to the usual order of economic and social life.

The historical-genetic method was used to trace changes in individual practices over time. The comparative-historical method was applied to compare various forms of population response and identify their common and distinctive features. The problem-chronological method made it possible to examine economic, migration, and social practices in relation to changes in the conditions of collectivization. The historical-systemic approach was used to compare state policy, economic changes, and the everyday behavior of the population. These approaches and methods allowed us to consider changes not only at the level of state policy, but also through the daily life of the Kazakh aul, the specific actions of people, and the survival practices that developed in a crisis.

3. Discussion

The study of collectivization and famine in Kazakhstan has a significant historiographical tradition. Domestic and foreign literature has examined Soviet agrarian policy, the specifics of 2, the destruction of the traditional economic structure, the demographic consequences of famine, and the population's forms of resistance. At the same time, many issues related to the lives of populations in individual regions remain insufficiently covered.

One of the most developed areas is the study of the causes of collectivization and hunger. In the foundational work of R. W. Davies and S. G. Wheatcroft, «The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931–1933» (Davies and Wheatcroft 2004), based on materials from the central archives of the USSR, it is shown that hunger was the result of a combination of administrative decisions, emergency grain and meat procurements, the crisis of agricultural production and miscalculations of state policy. S. Cameron links collectivization and violence with the food crisis, mass mortality and population displacement (Cameron 2018). R. Kindler, in turn, considers hunger and the economic crisis in interrelations with state policy, administrative coercion and the destruction of traditional life support mechanisms (Kindler 2017).

To study individual forms of population behavior, the concept of everyday resistance by J. Scott was enlisted (Scott 1985). In the article, this concept is used as an analytical tool: disagreement with the actions of the authorities in itself is not considered a form of resistance. The same action, under different circumstances, could primarily serve as a means of preserving the household economy, evading administrative control, or simultaneously hindering the implementation of state policy. In the materials under study, adaptation, evasion, and resistance do not form a sequence of actions. Therefore, it is important to determine the circumstances under which household and family actions began to hinder the implementation of specific measures.

This interpretation is based on studies that examine collectivization in Kazakhstan in terms of its impact on the economic structure and social relations of Kazakh society. N. Pianciola notes that the collectivization of farms in the Kazakh aul was accompanied by the destruction of the economic basis of nomadic society and a significant reduction in livestock (Pianciola 2004).

Research on the diversity of forms of resistance to collectivization is essential for studying the daily practices of the rural population. L. Viola's monograph «Peasant Rebels under Stalin» (Viola 1996), draws on Soviet archival materials, including documents from state security agencies, and examines various ways to counter collectivization, from avoiding administrative requirements and informal self-help practices to mass demonstrations. The author pays special attention to the role of rumors in spreading protest sentiment, as well as rural communities' participation in collective action. The proposed approach allows us to compare different forms of population behavior without limiting the history of resistance exclusively to armed actions.

To study the changes in the social organization of the Kazakh aul, I. Ogayon's monograph «La sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline: collectivisation et changement social, 1928–1945» (Ohayon 2006) is of interest. The researcher considers the forced transition of Kazakhs to settlement as a process marked by economic transformation, changes in social structure, and the nomadic population's resistance to collectivization. Her research allows her to correlate the daily practices of individual families with the larger-scale transformations of traditional society. At the same time, studying specific mechanisms of mutual assistance and the behavior of individual farms requires regional archival materials.

Research on Kazakhstan's history during the Soviet period holds an important place in Kazakh historiography. Academician M.K. Kozybayev was among the first to provide a comprehensive assessment of the political and social consequences of collectivization and famine for Kazakh society (Kozybayev et al. 1992). Scientific works of Zh.B. Abylkhozhin (Abylkhozhin 1991, 1997), devoted to the peculiarities of the economic structure of Kazakh society, and the research of T. Omarbekov (Omarbekov 2018), which examined collectivization, famine, armed protests of the population, and mass migrations in detail, are of great importance. The issue of social adaptation of Kazakh nomads to the policy of forced collectivization was specifically considered by K.R. Zhirindinova et al. Their research focuses on changes in the social and economic conditions of Kazakh nomads and ways of adapting the population to the pressures associated with collectivization (Zhirindinova et al. 2019). In these studies, the crisis of the early 1930s is considered in connection with government policy, changes in the economic structure and social processes in society.

Historian T.K. Allaniyazov has made a significant contribution to this field. His research examines the causes, course, and geography of the armed uprisings of 1929–1931; the activities of insurgent detachments; the operations of OGPU and Red Army units to suppress them; and source-related aspects of the history of resistance to collectivization. Of particular importance are the monograph «The Last Stand of the Defenders of Nomadism: A History of Armed Uprisings and Insurgent Movements in Kazakhstan (1929–1931)», co-authored

with A.S. Taukenov (Allaniyazov and Taukenov 2009), the study «The History of Armed Uprisings and Insurgent Movements of 1929–1931 in Kazakhstan in Recent Literature (2001–2021)» (Allaniyazov 2022b), and the article «Report on the Combat Operations of the Operational Group in Kazakhstan in March, April, and May 1930 as a historical source» (Allaniyazov 2022a). These studies address the current state of scholarship on the subject and examine new archival materials relating the history of armed resistance.

To understand the changes in the social and economic organization of the Kazakh aul, it is worth noting the work by A.S. Zhanbosinova and her co-authors, which is devoted to the historical memory of the transformation of the Kazakh aul in Soviet narratives. The authors show that collectivization and the changes associated with it affected the familiar forms of social and economic organization of the aul, examining them in the context of deeper changes to the traditional way of life of Kazakh society (Zhanbosinova et al. 2020). This analysis completes the obtained results by showing the everyday practices of the population not only as a direct response to individual administrative measures, but also as a reaction to a deeper change in the usual conditions of economic and social life.

Research by B.Zh. Atantayeva, and others, drawing on documents from central and regional archives, have also contributed significantly to the study of the history of collectivization in Eastern Kazakhstan. These studies examine the specific features of collectivization in the Semipalatinsk District, armed uprisings by the population, the activities of state security agencies, and the regional specifics of the unfolding crisis (Atantayeva et al. 2024, 2025; Atantaeva et al. 2026).

Despite a fairly large number of studies, historians have focused mainly on the causes of collectivization, government policy, demographic losses, and mass famine. The living conditions of the population at the level of individual districts, farming practices during the crisis, migration, relationships within the aul, and the rural population's daily struggle to preserve family and economy have been studied far less. This article complements existing research based on archival documents from central and regional archives. It examines life in the Kazakh aul of Semipalatinsk district in the early 1930s through the prism of economic activity, migration, and ways to overcome the crisis.

4. Results

4.1. Economic and Family Adaptation Strategies

An analysis of archival materials shows that the response of the Kazakh population in the Semipalatinsk region to collectivization was not limited to simple compliance with state policy or open resistance. Between these forms of behavior, there was a wide range of economic, family, and social practices through which the population tend to preserve property, family, and opportunities for economic survival.

One such practice was formally joining a collective farm. The fact of joining did not always indicate acceptance of collectivization. A previously published study shows, that in some cases, it was the result of direct administrative pressure (Atantayeva et al. 2024, p. 91). This fact is also confirmed by archival documents. For example, one of the grain procurers reported: "I was in Akkulsk for 10 days and put so much pressure on the residents of that settlement that they immediately agreed to join the collective farm; I'll go there again and put more pressure, and then everyone will be in the collective farm" (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 2952, leaf 97). This document shows that the formal registration of a household in a collective farm could have taken place under pressure and therefore should not be automatically interpreted as evidence of a change in the population's attitudes.

Another form of interaction with government bodies was through appeals and complaints. In a statement to the Semipalatinsk Provincial Party Committee, Shormanov Zinda, who was in custody, emphasized his loyalty to the Soviet government and at the same time

asked to preserve the property necessary for running a household: "take everything, leave only what is necessary for the Kazakh household" (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 2007, leaf 36). The case of Shormanov Zinda illustrates how a specific action by an individual was linked to the everyday task of preserving the household. The appeal came from a person who was in custody, yet even under these circumstances, he sought to influence which part of the property would be preserved. Thus, the request recorded in the source reflects not only the population's attitude towards state policy but also the practical solution to a specific economic issue under conditions of confiscation.

At the same time, the documents indicate the spread of practices directly related to the preservation of livestock and property. The resolution of the Kazakh Regional Committee dated February 1931 were mentioned households that were "maliciously evading" the delivery of livestock, as well as cases of mass extermination of livestock. State authorities demanded show trials and the confiscation of property (RGANI, f. 3, inv. 40, file 130, leaf 70–71). Thus, failure to deliver, slaughter, sale, or movement of livestock was considered by the authorities to be a violation of the established requirements. However, the actions of the population themselves may have been driven by the desire to preserve the main economic resource in the face of increasing procurement pressure.

The practice of transferring livestock to relatives and other households is particularly illustrative. This method of concealing property was one of the most common: livestock was transferred to relatives, and sometimes to the poorest households. One document noted: "There is a fragmentation of households, the distribution of livestock to relatives, and the driving of livestock to remote areas within the region and abroad; the most common way of concealing property, and primarily livestock, is to distribute it to relatives, often even to the poor, in order to thereby preserve one's own livestock for the future" (CSA RK, f. 5s, inv. 20s, file 88, leaf 53–54). This practice made it possible to formally change the ownership of property while still retaining the option to return it to the original owner.

Family ties became one of the ways to adapt to the consequences of the confiscation policy. In the context of increasing pressure on well-off households, cases of formal marriage dissolution were recorded, which made it possible to separate individual family members from the household subject to confiscation and thereby reduce the risk of their eviction and loss of property (Zhakisheva 2021, p. 36). Archival materials show that local authorities linked mass requests for the divorce of the wives of bais to attempts to avoid confiscation; however, with the mutual consent of the spouses, they did not always have legal grounds to refuse to dissolve the marriage (SAAR, f. 3p, inv. 1, file 22, leaf 52). The case of the family of bai Ike Adilev is illustrative. After filing for divorce, prior to being expelled from the Semipalatinsk Governorate, local authorities required his wife to remarry, as they viewed the marriage dissolution as a way to evade confiscation (Rakhmetullin 2021, p. 226). After the divorce, repressive measures were applied mainly to the man, while the woman and children were allowed to remain in their previous location and retain part of the property (Zhanbossinova 2026, pp. 46–47). Under these conditions, the change in family-legal status turned into a forced strategy to protect the family amid the confiscation campaign. In a specific situation, family relationships became one of the means of adapting to repressive measures. The decision, made under the threat of deportation and confiscation, demonstrates how the legal status of family members could be used to preserve at least some of their familiar living conditions.

The consequences of the economic and political campaigns manifested themselves not only in the overall reduction of the aul's material resources but also directly affected the situation of individual families. The situation in the aul Ubinskoye in the Shemonaikhinsky District is illustrative. In the spring of 1930, after the "excesses" committed against the middle peasants were acknowledged, the return of previously confiscated property began.

However, it was far from always possible to restore the households to their previous state. The documents noted the absence of clothing, footwear, food, and in some cases, livestock. By this time, the food had already been consumed, and the items had to be returned, being seized from collective farmers to whom they had previously been transferred. There were also cases of appropriation of confiscated property. For example, the Issakov brothers took two carts of belongings to Semipalatinsk (AP RK, f. 141. Inv. 1, file 3003, leaf 99). Thus, even an official decision to return property did not mean the restoration of the household: by this time, some of the resources the family needed had been lost or were in the possession of other owners.

The connection between economic status and family circumstances is more clearly evident in the fate of Krykpay Chokombayev from the Zaysan district. According to the investigation materials, in 1930 his property was confiscated, and he himself was deprived of voting rights. By the following year, the family was divided by the state border. Chokombayev's wife and son were in China, where his brother Oshai Jeksenov, who left Kazakhstan during the grain procurement campaign of 1930, lived. Chokombayev's son Jurtpai Krykayev, who was sentenced to three years in prison in August 1931, escaped from custody and also went to China (Asharshylyk 2023, p. 467).

In such a situation, Chokombayev's intention to leave Soviet territory can hardly be explained solely by political motives, as was done in the OGPU materials. The confiscation of property significantly limited his opportunities for independent economic activity, while a significant part of his family was already abroad. Therefore, the move could also be seen as a way to restore family ties, while simultaneously trying to find new conditions for economic survival. Chokombayev's individual strategy was shaped by several factors—the loss of property, administrative pressure, and the separation of the family.

Thus, the cases examined show that families and individual households used various available resources to limit the impact of state policy. Formal joining of a collective farm, appeals to government bodies, transferring livestock to relatives, and changing family and legal status took different forms and had different motives, but all of them were related to the need to adapt to rapidly changing conditions in economic and social life.

4.2. Migrations as a Survival and Evasion Strategy

Migratory mobility occupied a special place among the identified everyday practices. In traditional economies, seasonal movements were part of the organization of nomadic and semi-nomadic livestock breeding. Under the conditions of collectivization, movements acquired additional significance: they could have been caused by food shortages, a decline in livestock numbers, procurement campaigns, the confiscation of property, and the desire to leave areas with a high level of administrative pressure. N. Pianciola and S. Cameron attribute the mass movements of the Kazakh population to the destruction of traditional economies and the food crisis (Pianciola 2004; Cameron 2018). The materials from the Semipalatinsk District show that nomadic movements could serve several functions simultaneously: they could be a forced response to food shortages, a way to find pastures and other resources, a means of preserving the family, and, in some cases, a way to avoid confiscation and state control. Under certain circumstances, nomadic movements became not only a survival strategy but also one of the forms of forced, predominantly passive, resistance to the state policy being implemented (Atantayeva et al. 2025, 61; Zhirindinova et al. 2019, p. 169).

The scale of this phenomenon is reflected in the data provided by the OGPU. According to available data, in 1930, 34,977 households were affected by seasonal migrations, and in 1931, according to incomplete data, about 45,000 households. Representatives of various social groups moved in the direction of the border. In 1930, 529 bais, 1315 middle-class

households, and 1634 poor households migrated to China (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 5192, leaf 2). The ratio of these groups shows that migration cannot be viewed solely as a practice of wealthy households seeking to preserve their property. It became an accessible, albeit extremely risky, strategy for various categories of the population.

The migration often meant the relocation not of an individual person, but of an entire household, along with the part of the property that could still be saved. This is evidenced by a telegram from the OGPU dated 27 July 1930, regarding the situation at the May-Kopchagai outpost. On the night of July 11, ten collective-farm households—one middle-class and nine poor—left for China. They took with them 12 horses, 14 head of large livestock, and 22 head of small livestock. Two weeks later, on the night of July 26, another 50 collective farm households, led by its chairman, migrated from the same area. The document also reported the arrival of armed men from the Chinese side who assisted the migrants (SAOA, f. 3p. inv. 1, file 450, leaf 14).

Moving together with the livestock shows that it was not just about finding temporary shelter. People sought to preserve the material basis of their household and, thereby, the ability to continue economic activity after leaving. The social status of those who left is also indicative: nine out of the first ten households listed in the document are classified as poor. Consequently, the migration was not solely a way for wealthy owners to avoid confiscation or tax pressure. Low-income families also resorted to it, for whom preserving the remaining livestock was directly important for their continued existence.

The mass nature of such movements also indicates that nomadism could become a collective practice. The simultaneous departure of dozens of households points to the existence of stable ties between the participants and to the possibility of jointly making decisions about leaving. In this case, migration served not only as a population movement but also as a way to preserve families, livestock and economic opportunities under conditions of a growing crisis.

The decision to relocate was also influenced by the information circulating among the population. Rumors were spreading in the border areas about further confiscation of property, mobilization, and possible political changes. For example, Bay Kaliy Menkenov, who was detained while decampment attempting, spread information after his return about the upcoming confiscation of property from wealthy households and the mobilization of the poor for military service (CSA RK, f. 5s, inv. 20rs, file 88, leaf 55). The case of Kaliya Menkenov shows that the individual decision to leave was linked not only to immediate economic circumstances but also to perceptions of the possible future actions of the authorities. His behavior after his detention indicates that personal experience in conflict with state measures became part of the exchange of information among the population of the aul.

Sources indicate that migrations were often used as a way to preserve property. Information reports on the progress of the confiscation stated that in the Barlyk Aul Council of the Semipalatinsk Region, the bais Rahim Karakozov, Kazbek Chembekov, and Akpay Zhakypov persuaded about 50 poor people to petition for relocation to the border area, hoping to smuggle part of their livestock out of the country under the guise of relocation (CSA RK, f. 5s, po. 20rs, 88, leaf 258). In such cases, migration was combined with the practice of concealing and preserving property.

Government authorities perceived such actions primarily as evasion of taxes and confiscation. According to the materials of the closed meeting of the Secretariat of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) dated 26 November 1929, in response to reports about attempts by the well-to-do population of the Semipalatinsk District to use migration to evade state procurement quotas, the Plenipotentiary Office of the OGPU was instructed to strengthen the protection of the state border with China, identify

the organizers of the migrations, and take measures to isolate and evict them from the border zone (RGASPI, f. 17, inv. 25, file 41, leaf 21).

The documents also show that the migration could be not only an individual or family decision. Thus, one of the documents stated: "...in the aul of the Kazak (Kazakh—author) Davlet Churumbayev from the Tarbogatai volost, at an aksakal assembly of the 'Alybay' clan, it was decided that, after the release of some individuals from this clan from custody, they would immediately migrate abroad" On August 5, the specified clan migrated to China, and armed Kazaks came from China to escort them" (CSA RK, f. 5s, inv. 20 rs, file 88, leaf 175). Davlet Churumbayev appears in the source as a specific participant in the events, which shows how individual and family interests were combined with the collective decision of the clan regarding the migration.

In 1930, signs of a food crisis began to appear in the Semipalatinsk Region. This is evidenced, in particular, by a telegram from the agricultural cooperative named after Stalin of the Ust-Kamenogorsk district dated 29 June 1930, addressed to I.V. Stalin. Despite having fulfilled the sowing plan and communalization of 550 head of livestock, the artel, which united 89 households and 416 people, experienced an acute shortage of bread and appealed for urgent assistance from state funds. The document noted that the refusal to provide food aid put the household "at risk of destruction" (SAEKR, f. 6p, inv. 1, file 69, leaf 31). In the prevailing situation, migration became one of the ways for the population to survive.

The migrations had various and often interrelated motives. For some households, they were a way to find food and a safer place to live; for others, they were an opportunity to preserve livestock and property; and in some cases, they were an attempt to avoid increased state control. Therefore, reducing migrations solely to manifestations of resistance does not fully take into account the diversity of motives and circumstances that determined the population's behavior.

4.3. Kinship Ties as the Basis for Mutual Assistance and Collective Survival Practices

Kinship and neighborhood ties played a significant role in the context of the economic crisis. During the period under study, the stability of kin-hierarchical relations and their significance in the social and protest processes of the Kazakh aul were preserved (Zhanbossinova et al. 2023). An analysis of the archival documents cited in this article allows us to supplement this interpretation. Relationships within the aul served not only as a factor in organizing collective actions but also as a resource for everyday survival: they ensured the transfer of property, assistance to migrating families, the exchange of information, and support for those who were subjected to persecution.

At the same time, family ties were used to preserve property. Transferring livestock to relatives was one of the most common ways to conceal it from the authorities (CSA RK, f. 5s, inv. 20 rs, file 88, leaf 53–54). In this case, kinship served not only a social but also an economic function.

The resolution of the Kazkraikom of the AUCP (b) dated 25 May 1931 on the events in the Abraly, Chubartau, Chingistau, Kuv and Karkaraly districts set the task of eliminating the tribal principle in collective farms. At the same time, it was proposed to change the administrative structure of villages, replacing the generic principle with territorial and economic features. These provisions indicate that the party leadership noted the preservation of family ties in the new administrative and economic structures (Musagaliyeva et al. 2022, pp. 149–50).

Family ties become particularly important in border areas, where migration often leads to members of the same family ending up on different sides of the state border. Relatives who are already in China can help the new arrivals, provide temporary shelter, or facilitate further accommodation. In turn, the remaining connections with Kazakhstan

were used to transfer information, organize the departure of other family members and the removal of abandoned property. A typical example is contained in the case file of Krykpai Chokombayev. In February 1931, he invited four poor collective farmers—Seit Dyusezhanov, Charip Yensenov, Khairulla Abdullin and Nazik Yerzhanov—to go to China together. Chokombayev linked the possibility of such a step, in particular, with the presence of his brother Oshai Dzhaksenov there, counting on his help. After this conversation, four collective farmers left the Boleke collective farm, followed by 13 more households. Later, Chokombayev planned a joint migration with Sagidulla Valiev, who arrived from China (Asharshylyk 2023, p. 466).

In this case, the family connection had not only emotional but also practical significance. The fact that Chokombayev had a brother in China gave him the opportunity to count on help after crossing the border, and he probably took this into account when deciding to move. At the same time, his offer to other collective-farm workers shows that family ties could become part of broader social connections and influence the decisions of several households.

However, the group formed around him turned out to be unstable. In the summer of 1931, when Chokombayev once again approached Dyussezhanov, Yerdzhanov, and others with a suggestion to leave for China, they refused and reported the matter to the aul council. This episode shows that the presence of kinship and social ties alone did not determine people's behavior: the decision to migrate also depended on the specific situation and the perceived risks.

Another example of using family ties in the border area is related to Kassen Konuspayev. In November 1930, he arrived from China in the Sartomsuk area with a group of six people. According to operational reports, the purpose of their crossing was to escort relatives who lived on Soviet territory to China. After the group was detected, its members intended to take refuge with relatives, while Konuspayev himself planned to go to Zaisan to meet with his brother Orazbai. The documents mention two other brothers of his who remained on Soviet territory—Aish and Kenespay Konuspayev. Both maintained contact with Kassen; according to OGPU reports, Aish supplied him with cartridges (SGA, f. 9, inv. 1, file 489, leaf 158–165).

After leaving for China, the connections were not interrupted with the previous place of residence and the relatives who remained there. In December 1930, Konuspayev's group reappeared on Soviet territory, intending to retrieve the money, property, and livestock that had been left behind. They failed to carry out their plan due to the threat of detention. At the same time, operational materials indicate an intention to repeat the attempt in the spring and help the remaining relatives move to China. In this case, family ties supported not only contacts between family members but also real actions aimed at relocating people and preserving property.

The stories of Chokombayev and Konuspayev show that family ties in border regions could serve a practical function in crisis situations. They provided the opportunity to receive help after crossing the border, maintain contact with remaining relatives, transmit information, and make attempts to preserve people and property. At the same time, the decisions made by individual participants in such networks were not uniform and could vary depending on specific circumstances.

Kinship ties retained their significance even in the face of open resistance. For example, one document included a letter from an exiled resident to his relatives in the aul, reporting on the political situation: "Everywhere, the Soviet power has fallen; if you have any sense, act; we need to organize a mass uprising in the aul by refusing to hand over livestock and by looting" (Nasenov 2005, p. 594). The interrogation report of the participant in the uprising also noted that the connection between the residents of the Abraly and Chingistau districts was maintained through relatives who lived in the Samay Aul Council. The investigative

authorities viewed such contacts as evidence of the organization of protests, while the documents show that it was the kinship networks that served as the most important channel for information transmission and facilitated the coordination of joint actions.

After the suppression of the Abraly uprising, family ties continued to be used to support the persecuted participants. One of the participants in the uprising, who went into hiding after its suppression, received food from his relatives despite the threat of repression (Nasenov 2005, p. 656). Such actions demonstrate the persistence of mutual support even under conditions of heightened state control.

Family ties continued to influence the behavior of representatives of the lower levels of the Soviet apparatus. In a report by F.I. Danilov to Goloshchekin dated 31 August 1931, it was reported that the nomadic movement in a number of auls in the Kokpekty District was led by secretaries of parties, chairpersons of aul councils, and heads of collective farms (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 5046, leaf 36). Another document noted the participation of five communists and nine Komsomol members in the relocation; according to the source, they were members of the relocated tribal aul (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 5057, leaf 2). These data show that official affiliation with party and Soviet structures did not always determine a person's behavior in a crisis. In this regard, the information about specific representatives of the local apparatus is particularly illustrative. The secretaries of party units, the chairpersons of aul councils, and the heads of collective farms, who were expected to implement state policy at the local level, in some cases themselves participated in the migrations. The five communists and nine Komsomol members mentioned in the sources were also among the participants in the migration of the tribal aul. These facts show that belonging to the Soviet or party apparatus did not exclude a personal desire to preserve one's family, property, and established social ties. The behavior of individual employees within the local apparatus thus reflects the discrepancy between their official duties and the practical decisions they made in the context of the crisis.

4.4. From Everyday Practices of Avoidance to Resistance

The most difficult form of the population's reaction was open resistance. Archival documents allow us to connect it to a complex of economic and social problems of the early 1930s: confiscation of property, procurement pressure, food crisis, forced collectivization, and restrictions on habitual economic mobility. In addition to the everyday practices of evasion, various forms of resistance are recorded in the sources.

However, such behavior should not be interpreted as a direct continuation of previous daily adjustment practices. The behavior of the population was shaped depending on specific circumstances and could take various forms—from escapes and adaptations to hidden and open disagreement.

The confiscation campaign affected not only the bay farms, but also the relations between the various groups of the aul. It took place in two stages: in autumn of 1928 and in autumn of 1930, was accompanied by the arrests of 5000–6000 people, as well as the expulsion of 5000–6000 families, numbering about 35,000 people. The OGPU data indicate instances of public disagreement with the ongoing measures: at general meetings, the residents of the aul spoke out in defense of the bais who were being persecuted (Ablazhey et al. 2023, p. 90). Such episodes make it possible to see that the population's reaction to the confiscation went beyond an individual desire to preserve property. In some auls, it took on a collective character and was linked to the preserved relationships between members of the Kazakh aul.

Rumors and informal communication played a significant role in everyday communication in the Kazakh aul and could contribute to the spread of protest sentiments and the coordination of collective actions (Ablazhey et al. 2023). Given the lack of reliable

information, reports about the imminent collapse of Soviet power could link political expectations with specific economic demands. Thus, in the Chubartau and Kuv districts, reports circulated about the alleged capture of Semipalatinsk and Sergiopol, as well as about a coup in the Siberian region (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 5046, leaf 10). Such sentiments are also recorded in the interrogation protocols of the participants in the Abraly uprising: "The Soviet government has fallen; now power is passing into our hands. Cattle procurement is being cancelled; we will need to take back the livestock that was previously handed over. The Soviet government has robbed us enough" (Nasenov 2005, p. 590). These statements show that the expectation of political changes was linked to the cut-off of livestock procurement and the return of confiscated livestock. The spread of such rumors could contribute to the unification of participants around common demands.

In other areas, the protests were linked to food shortages. In the Zyryanovsky district, there were seizures of food funds. The population also appealed to local authorities, demanding that bread be issue file Party bodies characterized these events as the result of "kulak provocation" (RGASPI, f. 17, inv. 25, file 242, leaf 39). At the same time, the participation of women, children, poor people, and farm laborers in these protests indicates that what was happening was not related to "kulak provocation," but to the food crisis and the shortage of food products.

The opposition also affected administrative structures: for example, in the Abraly District, the offices of the aul councils were ransacked and documents were destroyed (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 5049, leaf 108). The destruction of the documentation disrupted administrative record-keeping and hindered the conduct of certain state activities.

In some cases, participants in the protests attacked representatives of the authorities and returned the confiscated livestock. For example, in the Maksim-Gorky district, a group of about 50 people attacked the aul council, beat the chairman, and took away 16 head of previously confiscated livestock (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 5046, leaf 9–10). In another case, after his horse was mobilized for collective farm work, the peasant returned the animal without authorization and, when an attempt was made to seize it again, offered physical resistance (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 5046, leaf 138). Certain actions demonstrate that the transition to open resistance could begin with a very specific economic conflict. For example, the unauthorized return of a mobilized horse reflected an attempt by one person to preserve property necessary for their household, whereas the attack by a group on the aul council was already a collective action aimed at recovering previously confiscated livestock. Comparing these cases shows the difference in the scale of resistance while maintaining a general connection to immediate economic losses.

In some cases, the worsening socio-economic crisis and the intensification of administrative pressure created conditions for a shift to open forms of resistance. The food and economic crisis, as well as rumours about the imminent collapse of Soviet power, played a significant role in this. The most radical manifestation of this process was the armed uprisings in the Abraly, Chingistau, Shubartau, Zharma, and other districts of the Semipalatinsk region. Their participants opposed the confiscation of property, forced collectivization, restrictions on traditional migrations, increased tax and procurement pressure, and state interference in the economic life of the Kazakh aul.

The materials on the Abraly and Chingistau uprisings noted that the confiscation of livestock and forced collectivization were the direct causes of the armed confrontation. "The main driving force in both regions is the widespread excesses and distortions of the class line in the conduct of economic and political campaigns, particularly the shifting of the entire burden of livestock procurement onto the poor and middle-class strata, with extremely weak pressure on the bai". Mass complaints about the improper dissemination of the plan to poor and middle-class households remained unaddressed. For example,

during the livestock procurement period, up to 400 written complaints accumulated in the Abraly district through the District Committee and Rabkrin, not counting oral complaints; poor people were left not only without satisfaction, but also without proper consideration. Numerous appeals through other bodies cannot be account file In the Abraly District, the 9-month livestock procurement plan was excessively inflated, reaching 8796 tons for the aul, instead of the 3378 tons allocated by the Region, which led to excessive taxation of the poor and middle-class population" (AP RK, f. 141, inv. 1, file 5049, leaf 108–109). The document shows that the tension in the Abraly District was linked to the livestock procurement efforts, the failure to address numerous complaints, and the increase in the livestock procurement quota for poor and middle-class households.

Armed resistance was one of the ways to respond to economic pressure. However, frequent mentions of armed resistance in the documents of the security agencies do not mean that this strategy of behavior prevailed. The available sources do not allow us to determine exactly how many people participated in the uprisings, and how many chose other ways of survival- migrating, hiding property, contacting the authorities or adapting to new conditions.

Differences in the choice of further actions can be traced in the materials of the Abraly district. According to a report from the Semipalatinsk operational sector of the OGPU, at a meeting in the Sutty-Bulak mountain area, Smagul Kaskaev from village No. 1 proposed ending the confrontation, citing deaths and reports of correcting excesses during meat harvesting. Some of those present decided to return to the villages and wait for the results of these changes. Others, fearing persecution, preferred to hide and hoped to resume their performance after the departure of the detachments. Thus, the cessation of resistance and its continuation could be based on different assessments of the same threat: some hoped to avoid new losses, others did not consider it safe to return (Musagaliyeva et al. 2022, p. 125).

The return of property, assistance, or relocation could temporarily alleviate the family's situation, but did not guarantee its well-being in the future. Sources do not always allow us to trace how the lives of these people turned out, so it is impossible to say for sure which strategy turned out to be more successful. These cases show that the choice of such methods of survival depended on specific circumstances, available family and kinship ties, as well as opportunities to save the household and ensure the safety of relatives.

5. Conclusions

The materials from the Semipalatinsk District indicate the diversity of everyday behavior among the Kazakh population during the crisis of the early 1930s. The main practices included preserving and moving livestock, evading state requirements, migrating, filing complaints, and making use of family and neighborly ties. The same action could have different meanings depending on the circumstances. Preserving property and household assets could be a common adaptive practice, but at the same time it could hinder the implementation of certain state measures.

Family and neighborly ties provided mutual assistance, information exchange, and support for families during crises. Migration was not limited to political protest. They could be related to the search for pastures and food, ensuring safety, and the desire to preserve the family. Complaints also show that the population of the Kazakh aul used available ways to protect their interests. At the same time, the armed demonstrations were linked to specific economic and administrative conflicts, such as livestock confiscation, increased slaughter quotas, ignored complaints, and stricter enforcement measures.

The materials of the Semipalatinsk District allow us to examine the experience of the Kazakh aul in the early 1930s through the lens of various everyday actions. Adaptation, mutual assistance, evasion, migration, and resistance were interconnected, but they did

not represent the same form of behavior. Their combination depended on the specific circumstances of individual families and households.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

AP RK	Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
CSA RK	Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan
RGANI	Russian State Archive of Contemporary History
RGASPI	Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History
SAAR	State Archive of the Abai Region
SAEKR	State Archive of the East Kazakhstan Region
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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SAEKR. Fund 6-p, East Kazakhstan Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)–Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Kazakhstan, Inventory 1, File 69.

SAAR. Fund 3p, Semipalatinsk District Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (Semipalatinsk District Committee of the CPSU (b)), Inventory 1, File 22.

RGANI. Fund 3, Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Politburo, Inventory 40, File 130.

RGASPI. Fund 17, Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Inventory 25, Files 41, 242.

CSA RK. Fund 5s, Central Executive Committee of the Kirghiz (Kazakh) ASSR, Inventory 20rs, File 88.

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