

## **FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BODIES OF THE PASSPORT SYSTEM IN SOVIET KAZAKHSTAN IN 1920s**

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History of passport is one of the less researched questions in the history of Kazakhstan. We cannot find research projects on formation and development of passport system in Kazakhstan among candidate or doctoral dissertation papers. Of course, there are scientific articles dedicated to the general history of passport and its role in the state system. But we may affirm that no complex work exists about the initial development processes of the passport system in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s. Our research work is devoted to discussion of the initial formation and development processes of this sector in Kazakhstan and its executive bodies. One of the important results of the research work consists in its theoretical and practical significance. A specific system of viewpoints and opinions has developed in the national historical science regarding the topic of the article. Researchers located and processed multiple archive sources and made them known to scientific community. Permits, mandates and certificates played the role of initial documents used in the passport system of Kazakhstan in 1920s. A number of states bodies were tasked with organization and supervision of issuance of these documents. They were Special departments, pass and registration offices and local Soviets. 1918-1920 Civil war contributed to the appearance of certificates and mandates.

**Keywords:** passport, certificate, pass and registration office, special department, militia, mandate, document, employment history, revolution, resolution, People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, All-Russian extraordinary commission.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction of the Problem**

After the end of the civil war in Kazakhstan in 1920 the country came to be ruled by Bolsheviks. The state system created by Bolsheviks presented a number of differences from the former tsarist government. The Soviets aspired to closely control the state system in its entirety. Even though a number of privileges were given to peasants and workers, state bodies charged with control of individual rights and movement grew stronger. This issue was closely connected to the passport system policy since one of the services the passport system was expected to deliver was to control and monitor residence and migration of citizens within the national

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borders. Even though by 1920s the passport system in the true sense of the word had not developed in the Soviet Union, including Kazakhstan, its initial mechanisms came into being during that time. Looking at research we can see that the word passport and related experience appeared in Kazakhstan with formation of the Soviet government. The passport system did not develop overnight. Executive bodies of the Soviet passport system were organized in accordance with the post-1918-1920 civil war situation. Passport system bodies served to identify enemy elements in the army and prevent them from freely moving around the country. A documentary permit was required to freely move from one place to another. Passport was the paper implementation of such permissions. Initially various documents performed the role of passport. We cannot evaluate the initial formation and development of the passport system in Kazakhstan without looking more closely at the operation of organs which organized, issued and controlled such documents. The term "passport" was foreign to the newly formed Soviet Union. At that point the word passport was used in history and international experience. The term "passport" started to be used in the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1932 (A.Y. Tarasov, 2005). During the time we are discussing certificates, mandates, reference letters and similar documents played the role of passport in Soviet Kazakhstan. They contained information about name, profession, places of residence and work of citizens. Special temporary certificates or safe-conducts were issued to persons going on a business trip or simply travelling from one city to another. The documents had a limited validity period. A number of state bodies organized and supervised all related operations. They were Special departments affiliated with the All-Russian extraordinary commission. The primary objective of our research is to state an author opinion regarding the service of the abovementioned state bodies. In order to explore the system and field of work of these bodies, we developed a special strategic search plan. It consists of conducting analysis and drawing a final conclusion based on the material archive evidence providing insight in the operation of pass and registration offices and special departments in Kazakhstan in 1920s.

### **1.2. Theoretical and practical significance of the study**

As we stated above, the research topic is one of the first questions explored by the historical science of Kazakhstan. Theoretical results of the study may contribute to formation of new viewpoints and opinions in the national historical science with regard to formation and development of the passport system. Problem principles of Soviet and Russian specialists have found widespread use on the research topic. The authors combined these principles and viewpoints, and transformed them into a complex providing information about the initial operations of the passport system in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s.

We can state that the practical meaning of the research is to publish its results in high-rating international editions and make them available not only to Kazakhstan

but to all readers around the world interested in this issue. Furthermore, the practical significance is enhanced by the study's use as reference material for master or doctoral dissertation papers.

### **1.3. Historical description of the problem**

In order to fulfill our plan, we need to turn our attention to the principal service areas of the pass and registration offices and special departments created in Kazakhstan in 1920s. These bodies were under control of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and the All-Russian extraordinary commission. More precisely, pass and registration offices reported to special departments which, in turn, reported to the All-Russian extraordinary commission board at the Council of People's Commissars (K. Degtyaryov, 2008). The All-Russian extraordinary commission was established by the Council of People's Commissars on December 6, 1917 for the purpose of combating counter-revolutionary elements and sabotage. This body functioned until February 6, 1922 and after its dissolution was integrated into the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic (S.E. Matveyev, 2009). Even though special departments reported to the All-Russian extraordinary commission, the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic gave them orders as well. However, the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic and the All-Russian extraordinary commission were completely independent of each other. Special departments were established on December 19, 1918 with a decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist party (K. Degtyaryov, 2008). Special departments were tasked with combating counter-revolutionary and espionage activity in the units and offices of the Red Army. (K. Degtyaryov, 2008). Pass and registration offices were established in special departments in order to regulate and control internal movement and migration. The main purpose of pass and registration offices was to approve certificates and mandates of public workers going on official business and to register foreign citizens (Central State Archive, fund No 40, file No 64).

Until establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922, the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic supervised security and criminal police activity in Russia and other Soviet republics (including Kazakhstan). Now we provide an answer to the question of how the Council of People's Commissars was established. The Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic was one of the people's commissariats established under decree "On establishment of the Council of People's Commissars" adopted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> All-Russian conference on November 8, 1917 (L.À. Naumov, 2007). On October 28, 1917 the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic "On establishment of workers militia" was adopted. The decree served as the legal foundation of the militia system (L.À.

Naumov, 2007). Analyzing the above information, we can state that the militia system was also subordinate to the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. During the first years of the Soviet system's existence, the most important areas of work of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs were the following (L.À. Naumov, 2007):

- Establish local Soviets, select and monitor their personnel;
- Supervise execution of the central government's orders at local level.

These services were employed to solve complex issues of the Bolshevik system. People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic supervised and controlled not only local Soviet bodies in Russia, but also all state authorities in other autonomous republics.

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1. The Techniques Used**

During research we based our work on the methods and principles of historical research and operation of archive funds and evidence sources. We reviewed files in archive funds and introduced them to scientific circulation on the research topic. To achieve this we used methods of archive science such as record management, classification and historicism principle. In our research study we appropriately used methods of learning, interdisciplinary method and structured analysis methods of source research and general historical science.

### **2.2. Description and details about the object of research**

Archive files and research works, articles and Internet resources about the formation and development of the passport system in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s were the main objects of research. We started with archive files which were used as the first object. During research operations at the Central state archive we analyzed several files on the passport system bodies. These files provided information and documentary evidence about the field of operation of the passport system bodies. Among these documents were telegrams, circular letters, forms, certificates, decrees etc. For example, on December 1, 1920 administration department of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic sent a circular letter No 352 to executive committees of all regions. The letter contained a reminder to the regional executive departments of all Soviet republics from the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. The reminder instructed administration departments to immediately stop issuing passes and safe-conducts for railway and waterway travel to persons sent on official missions. The circular letter instructed that persons on official missions must be provided with issued special certificates and mandates at their departure location (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 64). Looking at the information provided in the document, we answer the question

of what kind of document a circular letter is. Circular letter was one of the important types of documents used in the Soviet era for transaction of various kinds of state business (Ä.L. Kuklin, 2010). During analysis of the above mentioned circular letters we can see, that in 1920s due to the ravages of the civil war requirements for documents of persons sent on business became very strict. For the purpose of ensuring effective control and preventing escape of enemy elements, people on official business were to be provided with obligatory special certificates and mandates containing photos and indicating full names. The rules of travel on rail road and water ways stated that all employees of front, party and civil services of the Bolshevik system were to carry a photo in their mission certificates. The only category exempted from this requirement was disabled persons (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 64). We analyze the content of the following documentary source – a telegram with regard to the passport issue. In accordance with the order 6878/125 of the special department of People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic dated October 7, 1920, a telegram was sent to the administrative division of the special department in Orenburg. The telegram instructs not to issue passes and safe-conducts to evacuees and refugees from Siberia, Ukraine and Caucasus (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 64). The information contained in the telegram confirms that the special department and subordinate pass and registration offices played an important role in the issues of migration and illegal migration. If pass and registration offices did not issue safe-conducts, citizens of 1920s had no possibility of travelling on rail road or water ways. Stowaways were strictly punished. In special departments there were control check points which reported to pass and registration offices. Control check points were established in large stations along railroad lines or ports along the rivers. In order to proceed with their journey, travelers had to pass control check points (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 64). If a person travelled on business, he/she was to present a pass received in the pass and registration office.

In order to account for and control residents, city special and residential departments maintained close cooperation. We can see it in the following document. On October 9, 1921 the central residential department sent a telegram No18/4 to the special department in Orenburg (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 46). The telegram instructs not to issue passes or safe-conducts without presentation of extracts from registers of tenants. In spite of the instruction the special department of the Orenburg region issued safe-conducts without extracts of the regional residential department. “We ask you to discontinue this practice”, says the telegram. (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 64). Analyzing this information we can see that the issue of movement of citizens in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s was controlled by two state bodies. They are: pass and registration office of the special department and the residential department. Persons travelling between urban settlements could not obtain safe-conducts without permits from these bodies. We

conclude that this process appeared in connection with the 1918-1920 civil war situation. It might be asked why telegrams and circulation letters in relation with Kazakhstan were sent from Moscow to Orenburg. The explanation is the following. On 26 August 1920 the decree of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic “On establishment of Kirghiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic” was issued. Between 1920 and 1924 the executive bodies of the Soviet Kazakhstan were situated in Orenburg (V.V. Amelin, 2012).

Another type of analyzed documents is certificates and references issued to citizens by administrative bodies of local Soviets. References and certificates issued by village Soviets, district Soviets and city Soviets entitled residents to settle various personal issues. For example, when necessary, village or city Soviets issued death or divorce reference letters with attached certificates. In case of request for material or legal assistance by widowed women, local Soviet authorities issued reference letters stating “demise of spouse” and provided an administrative certificate as a confirmation document (Central state archive, fund No 135, file No 23). It is necessary to remind that at the time overwhelming majority of references and certificates were written by hand on simple paper. The legal force of documents resided in the seal of local Soviet authorities appended thereto. Issue of certificates of death or divorce by local authorities in Soviet Kazakhstan was quite frequent during the time of confiscation and deportation of rich landowners in 1927-1928. Well-to-do people were labeled as *kulaks* and forcefully resettled with their families from the places where they lived for hundreds of years to other regions. Relatives and employees of landowners and kulaks wrote complaints and statements to higher authorities asking to be permitted to return to their home land. To prove the authenticity of the claims certificates and personal IDs issued by local Soviet authorities were attached (Central state archive, fund No 135, file No 23). In these ways the passport system of Kazakhstan performed its recording, certification and permitting activities.

### **3. RESULTS**

#### **3.1. Author’s synthesis of data**

Summarizing the author research opinion with regard to the information exposed above, the readers may get the impression that in 1920s all inhabitants of Kazakhstan were in possession of certificates, mandates, employment books or registers of tenants. By searching through the Central archive and personal archives about Kazakhstan cities in 1920s, we can ascertain that not all residents of the regions of the republic were provided with registers of tenants or certificates. It is quite possible that village residents of Kazakhstan at the time did not actually know what an official business trip certificate or register of tenants was. However, simple Kazakh peasants who did not understand the very notion of Bolshevism did not need passes

or safe-conducts. For many people the need to use railroad or water transport was exceedingly small.

The reason for that is the data provided by the 1926 population census which showed that only 8.4% of Kazakhstan population lived in the cities while the remaining 91.6% lived in rural areas (Population of Kazakhstan in 1917-1939, <http://e-history.kz/ru>). A significant part of city residents belonged to other ethnicities. The majority of the rural area population still followed the traditions of nomadic life. In the process of migration from one place to another, Kazakhs travelled hundreds of kilometers using horses and camels. Documents issued by pass and registration offices were deemed unnecessary for migrations of rural residents between different regions. Passes and safe-conducts were necessary for people on business trips to use various means of transportation. Rural residents who wanted to travel to central cities to submit statements or requests to authorities were issued certificates and personal IDs by local Soviet authorities. Certificates provided with the seal of village Soviets were sufficient to settle issues at the region or district level. However, these IDs were not consistently used. Permanent resident cards were issued to foreign citizens only in large cities. The first steps for introduction of employment books were made by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1918. However, they were applicable only in Petrograd and Moscow (Y.K. Omarbayev, 2015). Issue of employment records to residents of the USSR was introduced on the basis of a decree dated January 15, 1939 (À.N. Khobotov, 1992). One of the last questions is about registers of tenants. Citizens of Kazakhstan who possessed registers of tenants resided in large cities like Orenburg, Verny, and Uralsk, etc. For residents of villages and other rural settlements registers of tenants were not mandatory. On the basis of author's assessment of presented information, we can see that the first processes of formation of the passport system took place with the advent of Soviet power in Kazakhstan. A residential department was established which was in charge for recording names and residence addresses of citizens. Organs issuing permission for and controlling movement of citizens in the national territory as well as various types of documents also came into being. All of these processes did not cover the whole territory of the republic and they did not develop rapidly. But we can state that they laid the foundation of the system. We know that the principal function of a passport or personal ID system is to contribute to certification of citizens' trans-border travels or residence in the national territory.

### **3.2. Systematization of passport bodies and documents**

Renowned theoretical historian I.D.Kovalchenko wrote in his work "Methods of historical analysis" that structural analysis of any historical process helps to form an objective opinion and make the material more accessible to readers (I.D.Kovalchenko, 2003). Following this principle, we apply structural analysis to

the state of the passport system in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s and its development processes. An illustrative aspect of the analysis is to structure data by building a scheme or a table.

Table 1 shows the types of passport documents used in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s and in what form they were implemented in practice (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 64).

TABLE 1: TYPES OF PASSPORT DOCUMENTS IN SOVIET KAZAKHSTAN IN 1920S AND FORMS OF THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

<i>Types of documents of the passport system</i>	<i>Official mission certificate</i>	<i>Mandate</i>	<i>Certificate-reference</i>	<i>Residence cards</i>
Issued to whom and for what purpose	For party and army employees on official business	Identification document issued to officials employed in important state positions	Certificate documents issued to residents by local administrative authorities	Issued to foreign citizens residing in large cities

We applied structural analysis to the above data by structuring it in a table. Through this we found out that 4 types of personal identification documents were available to citizens of Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s. Of course, such types of documents as register of tenants and employment books existed as well. However, as we stated above, registers of tenants were used only in cities while employment books were not implemented in Kazakhstan in 1920s at all. Location of samples of identification documents such as certificate, mandate, reference letter and the like in archives contributed to the establishment of the leading role that these types of documents performed.

Now we try to apply structured analysis to executive bodies of the passport system. Bodies of the passport system constantly changed. However, the general aspect of their structure in 1920s is presented in Table 2 below (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 64).

TABLE 2: STRUCTURE OF BODIES OF THE PASSPORT SYSTEM IN SOVIET KAZAKHSTAN IN 1920S

<i>Direct</i>	<i>Pass and registration offices in special departments (Central state archive, fund No 40, file No 64)</i>	<i>Residential department of the Kirghiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic</i>	<i>Village council</i>
<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Until 1922 – All-Russian Special Commission, after 1922 People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs</i>	<i>Central residential bureau of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic</i>	<i>District Soviet council</i>



Data in the table confirms that in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s the passport system was divided in 3 systems – organization, document issue and monitoring bodies. Village councils were the most widespread administrative bodies in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s. At the same time, village councils belonged to the lowest administrative level. The reason for showing village councils in the table is that village councils played an important and leading role in the life of Kazakh people 91.6% of whom lived in rural areas.

### **3.3. Comparison of foreign and national experience on passport system**

We can state that the structured analysis of data shown in the table above is the first experience of the natural historical science on this issue. It is confirmed by the fact that finding research works and articles about initial formation processes of the passport system in Kazakhstan is quite complicated. However, principles and methods of historical processes of formation of national passport systems are stated in detail in works of Russian and other foreign researchers. It is well known that one of the criteria that impact development of a passport system is the political and economic situation. Citizens of countries closely connected to each other by economic exchange desire to be able to cross borders without hindrances. Canada and the USA passport policy may be used as an example of international experience in this area. The two countries were neighbors and economically dependent on each other which amplified the emigration process. In Canada the numbers of temporary workers who crossed the US border were especially high. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the US government started to impose requirements on visitors from Canada to carry personal identification documents. For this reason in 1862 a central system of passports issue was established by order of the general-governor of Canada. It existed until 1915. Passports existed in the form of “Request letters” provided with the signature and seal of the general-governor (History of Passports, 2014).

This information shows that passport system bodies and their documents developed in other countries only gradually. As the world passport experience shows, modern passports for international or national use (ID cards) started to develop after 1920s. In the USSR the term “passport” first appeared in 1932, but a unified passport issue system was established in the Soviet Union (including Kazakhstan) only after 1960s.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

In terms of discussion of the general results of the research work, we can state that the research achieved its formulated objectives. The article provides a review of the direction of initial development of the passport system in Kazakhstan in 1920s. Archive materials were widely used in the research, and documents were personally analyzed by the authors. In terms of documentary evidence a few shortcomings

should be mentioned. Archive materials were extracted only from the Central state archive of Kazakhstan. In 1920s Kazakhstan was a part of the Soviet state, and, being subordinate to Moscow, received orders and decrees from the central government. In this regard, it would not be superfluous to search and explore Moscow archive funds of Soviet history. In this regard, the administration of the Central state archive reminded that 80% of documents related to Soviet Kazakhstan were received from Moscow. We plan to research and use foreign archive funds in the future research dedicated to this issue. However, despite the lopsided character of their information, data of foreign research and Internet resources were used to a great degree in the research work. In the research on European, Russian and other foreign passport systems there are no data regarding the history of passport system of Kazakhstan. With regard to national research we may mention one article. In 2013 employee of the archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan E.M.Gribanova published the article "From the history of passportization of citizens in Kazakhstan and Alma-Ata city in 1930s" (Å.Ì. Gribanova, 2013). The article reviews the process of development of passport system in Kazakhstan and Almaty starting from the 1932 joint decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union "On establishment of passport system in the Soviet Union". Thus, the research shows in a complex way the directions of development of the passport system at the time when the term "passport" was introduced in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. In our research work we discussed elements that belonged to the system and its field of activity at the time when the term "passport" was still not in use. In 1920s not only in Kazakhstan but in the Soviet Union personal ID cards, employment books, registers of tenants and similar identification documents were not unified or mandatory. Such documents were issued only when required. As an example we may mention certificates issued by village councils for address verification, official mission certificates or arm holding licenses etc. The reason was that in 1920s the economic and organization capabilities of the young Soviet state were limited and unable to cover the whole state territory.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing issues discussed in the main part of the article, we propose the following conclusions with regard to formation and development of the passport system in Soviet Kazakhstan in 1920s:

- With establishment and reinforcement of Soviet power in Kazakhstan in 1920s, the first organization bodies and documents of the passport system started to form;
- By period of validity the documents of the passport system for citizens of Soviet Kazakhstan were not unified and were not implemented consistently. Personal identification documents were issued to citizens upon request;

- Consequences of the 1918-1920 civil war contributed to introduction of personal identification system in Soviet Kazakhstan;
- Since the initial formation and development of the passport system of Kazakhstan has not been the subject of contextual and complex historical and scientific research, it requires conduction of large-scale research projects;
- Documents that performed the role of passport during 1920s were a pledge and a guarantee for citizens to successfully transact their business with state authorities;

These conclusions pinpoint the historical development processes of the passport system in 1920s.

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