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The origin of the Environmental Movements and their directionality in Kazakhstan in 80–90 years of the XX century

The article analyzes the trends of the ecology movement in Kazakhstan as a manifestation of group interests. The author gives a brief history of the origin and development of this movement and its peculiarities as a new participant of political life. Special emphasis is focused on the consideration of possible strategies in the development of the ecology movement in the long-term prospects.

Key words: natural resources, ecological crises, environmental movement in Kazakhstan, main trends and phases of environmental movement, industrial units, military grounds, human health, ecology and politics.

The current stage of development of historical science in the country is characterized by a revival of research activity in its various areas. The study of environmental issues that are considered to be insufficiently developed in the historical science of Kazakhstan are of particular relevance in this context. The fact that current public interest in the issue of ecology rose sharply says about the necessity of its comprehensive study. In addition, the need for objective assessment of the state of historiographic situation in one or another field of historical knowledge is getting increased in the modern period. According to the literature review published abroad and in the Soviet Union sustainable interest of social scientists to the study of the relationship between society and nature has been formed in the 70–90s. In our opinion, historical studies has taken only initial steps in learning, critical thinking and generalization of experience in organizing interaction between society and nature. There are no works of a generalizable nature in Kazakhstan's historiography on the history of formation and development of interaction between man and the environment. Historians have not begun to study the causes of deterioration of the ecological situation in the country, major development trends of the movement in support of the environment, enhancing the role of human factors in solving environmental problems. We should add that under the conditions of allegation of a pluralistic thinking there is a problem of critical rethinking of published papers on environmental issues, the involvement of new historical material in the scientific use. Many topical issues put forward by the socio-economic and political development of the republic, are not even affected. The practice clearly surpassing the theory, set more and more new issues, anyhow connected with environmental problems. In our opinion, this is a significant disadvantage that needs heightened attention of researchers.

Two tendencies were manifested in the development of the ecology movement in Kazakhstan in the 80–90s. The first trend has evolved under the influence of state and political structures that sought to attract the masses to deal with environmental issues identified by the state. For this purpose, definite legal rules were consolidated within state-governance mechanisms providing the participation of each person in solving environment-oriented issues. The second trend in the development of the ecology movement has been associated with that part of society, which increasingly were aware of the essence and danger of further aggravation of the ecological situation, and came forward with more radical demands and criticism of government policy. This part of the movement was self-sufficient and independent from the state and political structures in nature and has appeared in Kazakhstan after the events of December 1986. The events of 1986 in Almaty and a number of areas of Kazakhstan had been the first attempt to use the right claimed by reconstruction to the free expression of civil and political position.

The development of social initiatives were focused on the relevant environmental issues of that time as Semipalatinsk target range, the Aral Sea and others. The emergence of the ecology movement in Kazakhstan is the naturally determined result of the democratization process and publicity, the growth of social activity of the population. Social ecology movements emerged «from below», and these are small groups and broad social movements with fairly large number of members. They included both officially registered and unregistered. Processes of people's comprehensive improvement were main determinant in their development which not only inspired activities of people but put forward new challenges as well. And finally, the removal of numbers of unjustified restrictions influenced on the associations of people. Rapid growth of self-regulating public force and the activity increase of its participants were natural result of all of these. Different forms of activity, indicating their flexible adaptability to different conditions had been in the arsenal of social ecologi-

cal organizations. They were not limited to narrow requirements of environmental protection, but sought to expand frames of its influence on the formation of a positive environmental policy, through the labor collectives, various social organizations, and deputative system. Mobilization capacity of ecological organizations and their authority significantly increased as well as the number of participants of the ecology movement in 1990–1991. The process of «green» ideology development contributed to strengthening ties between groups of different orientation, which were impressed into the minds of people with the help of activists from the political ecology due to the crisis of the social system and ideology of Marxism [1; 22].

Why could ecological movements achieve leading positions in a wide variety of alternative trends in Kazakhstan? It succeeded due to several circumstances. With a huge production potential of extractive industries in Kazakhstan, due to predatory acts of ministries and departments, plunder of natural resources, poisoning of the atmosphere, soil, water has reached a warning level. Even the mass media and the authorities were forced to raise alarm in interpreting these processes in their own way.

Due to ill-designed economic policies and the implementation of the ‘projects of the century’ a serious ecological disaster that has covered almost the entire territory of Kazakhstan has been developing. Activity of the military departments has caused great damage. It turned out with the problem of the Semipalatinsk target range, the tragedy of the Aral Sea, bio-polygon on the ‘Renaissance’ island, target ranges in the Western and Central Kazakhstan — said N.A.Nazarbayev [2].

The ecology movements appeared as a reaction to the crisis Kazakhstan was undergoing which involved not only economic, but also all other areas of social life. Ecology movements have evolved in an environment when for the first time in the history of mankind ecological balance of the planet was under the threat.

Concern before an impending ecological catastrophe, the sharp rejection of the consequences of the crisis development of recent years, feeling that you don’t have to wait those on the «top» to solve all problems, that you need to determine actions yourselves without postponing till tomorrow, — is one of the major factors that gave rise to the ecology movement in Kazakhstan. The experience of the ecology movement, with its characteristics and problems in general terms was somewhat repeating the history of the ecology movement in Western Europe [3; 16]. Till 70s small number of active environmental associations adhered to strictly conservative views. The first organization to protect the environment emerged in the early 70s. The very names of these organizations indicate that they were focused mainly on the problems of preservation of the national landscape and nature, and regarding environmental issues, they were given a low place. In the 80s, when the rapid urbanization and an active impact of industry on the environment began, a turn was projected in the activities of environmental organizations. The numerous conflicts that have taken place not only in factories but also on social level firstly made it necessary for environmental activists to bring up a new problem related to the environment, fighting against pollution and deterioration of living conditions in cities. The society is beginning to attach great importance to environmental issues, which are now considered from social and urbanistic point of views, aside from nature and landscape.

In 80–90s awareness of the population of Kazakhstan of adverse ecological situation and social and economic problems related to it contributed to the establishment of various independent environmental groups. Ecological groups were formed spontaneously around some sort of problem and usually they began with the collection of signatures and letters of protest, appeals to the official authorities.

The next stage — an organization of independent expertise and a desire to bring their findings to the widest range of people. This made it possible, with the support of the population to use more severe forms of protest: rallies, picketing of the official authorities, or blockade of environmentally hostile objects. Despite the diverse social and professional staff, environmental organizations have been expressing interests of the majority of social strata of the republic, and the relatively high educational level of many of its participants made it possible for them to more quickly and acutely understand and feel the emerging environmental problems.

Based on the study of the environmental regulations of ecological associations, they can be divided into three directions.

The first area — the protection of the environment. A public committee on the problems of the Aral Sea, Balkhash and ecology of Kazakhstan unanimously supported by the public of the republic was created by upon an initiative of the famous poet M.Shakhanov in 1987. As a voluntary public organization, the committee joined together scientists, writers and people of art. Its main objectives were: formation of an objective opinions of the public about the state of the Aral Sea, Lake Balkhash, and other unique natural complexes. Developing and implementing of a complete turn of public opinion on the Aral Sea environmental

crisis in the country, mobilizing the public to positive steps to implement the decisions of government and public bodies, aimed at saving the unique natural monuments of Kazakhstan were also included into the program of the committee.

Upon the initiative of the Committee many events have taken place, the proceeds from which were listed to Aral Fund, poetry readings with participation of famous poets of Kazakhstan and other republics, the environmental round table «Days of the Aral Sea» in Moscow. Since 1988 charitable telethons «Help the Aral Sea» began to be held that only in 1988 collected 40 million roubles [4; 15]. The Civic Academy on the Aral Sea problems and ecology of Kazakhstan was created under the committee. Since the activities of the committee acquired a wide scale in 1991, it was confirmed in the status of the International civic committee «Aral — Asia — Kazakhstan». In addition to its daily work on organizing assistance to the residents of the Aral Sea, the refugees of the Aral Sea region, a civic committee pursued an active international activity, prepared and held the All-Union and the International Conference on Problems of the Aral Sea in 1991.

With the creation of the civic committee of saving the Aral Sea and Lake Balkhash the activity of local authorities for the conservation of water resources of Kazakhstan was activated. «Green» hold various activities, and try to draw public attention to the problems of the environment, they were created everywhere.

Environmental impacts of ill-conceived construction projects, longstanding practice of placement and operation of large industrial facilities without regard to their impact on the natural environment and human health have given rise to hundreds of independent groups advocating for the environment. Various public committees, groups, sections launched a struggle for the removal of such enterprises from the city, and their shutdown — it was the second direction of the ecology movement in Kazakhstan [5; 4].

The third direction of the ecology movement in Kazakhstan — a mass movement on shutdown of military sites, payment of an indemnity, indemnification to the population of all the material and environmental losses.

Military bases, polygons located in the territory of Kazakhstan occupied enormous spaces. The military industrial enterprises significantly polluted the environment, evaluation flights of missiles and supersonic military airplanes harmed nature and the layer of the atmosphere. Ecological Association «Naryn» was created upon the initiative of the people of Western Kazakhstan region, Uralsk city. Ecology movement «Naryn» appeared approximately at the same time with the movement «Nevada — Semipalatinsk» in March 1989 and solved similar problems: to find out the truth about nuclear-weapon testing, to obtain compensation for the losses suffered by local residents. Namely during these years, that is in 1989, throughout all regions of Kazakhstan where the military training grounds were located mass movements began on their shutdown [5; 5].

The movement «Ulytau» was created in Dzhezkazgan region. Proponents opposed the construction of military sites and other military facilities, for shutdown of «Baikonur» cosmodrome, held a discussion the main purpose of which was to draw a wide public attention to the issue of closing military sites, indemnification of moral and material damage to the population, nature, caused by polygons and «Baikonur» cosmodrome [5; 7].

However, the environmental movement in the 80s did not change the nature and essence of the relationship of society and nature. Departmental interests continued to determine the nature of the development of productive forces, an unsustainable way of using resources. One of the vivid examples of manifestation of this pattern is the problems of Lake Balkhash. Despite very strong and convincing arguments of scientists, environmentalist in defense of the Lake Balkhash, the government supported the construction of the anti-environmental project of Kapchagai water reservoir in 1970. As a result, the Lake Balkhash has suffered substantial damage [6; 5].

The growth of the environmental activity of the population demanded adequate activation of the work of environmental authorities. However, amid extensive public participation in the discussion and solution of environmental problems, nature conservation committees displayed inactivity, reducing its activity to the use of measures of administrative influence against violators of environmental laws, slowly updated forms and methods of its work, falling behind the growth of social and environmental activity of the masses.

Conclusion

Based on the above, we should note that generally ecology movement was activated in the period being studied throughout republic, ecological groups and organizations that made it their mission to do work on environmental improvement in the given region and across republic as a whole emerged in all regions. Public initiatives on the protection of natural sanctuaries, unique natural sites, protection of the natural habitat were wide-spread during the covered years. «Ecologists» have fought for clean air and water in the industrialized

cities of the country, against the departments and ministries that built production enterprise without regard to their impact on the environmental conditions and human health.

The movement for the shutdown of military sites, recovery of material and environmental losses to the population has especially gained large scale.

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XX ғасырдың 80–90-шы жылдарындағы Қазақстандағы экологиялық қозғалыстардың пайда болу тарихы мен олардың бағыттылығы

Мақалада XX ғ. 80–90-шы жылдарындағы экологиялық қозғалыс талданды. Экологиялық бірлестіктердің жарғыларын зерттеу негізінде осы қозғалыстың негізгі бағыттары анықталды, олар — қоршаған ортаны қорғау, ойластырылмаған құрылыс жобаларының экологиялық салдары, ірі өнеркәсіп кәсіпорындарын орналастыру мен олардың адамдардың денсаулығы мен табиғи жағдайларға әсерін есепке алмастан іске қосудың көпжылдық тәжірибесі, әскери полигондарды жабу бойынша бұқаралық қозғалыс. Алайда 80-ші жылдардағы экологиялық қозғалыс қоғам мен табиғаттың байланысының сипаты мен мәнін өзгертпеді. Автормен ведомстволық мүдделер өндіріс күштердің даму сипатын анықтауды, ресурстарды қолданудың тиімсіз тәсілін ұстануды жалғастыра бергендігі дәлелденді.

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История возникновения экологических движений и их направленность в Казахстане в 80–90-е годы XX века

В статье проанализировано экологическое движение в Казахстане в 80–90-е годы XX столетия. На основе изучения уставов экологических объединений выявлены основные направления действия этого движения — охрана природной среды, устранение экологических последствий непродуманных строительных проектов, многолетней практики размещения и эксплуатации крупных промышленных предприятий без учета их влияния на природные условия и здоровье людей, массовое движение по закрытию военных полигонов. Определено, что экологическое движение в 80-х годах не изменило характера и сущности отношения общества и природы. Автором доказано, что ведомственные интересы продолжали определять характер развития производственных сил, нерациональный способ использования ресурсов.

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