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HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE ON THE STUDY OF THE KORENIZATSIYA (INDIGENIZATION) POLICY

Abstract. This article examines the historiographical discourse surrounding the policy of korenizatsiia implemented in Kazakhstan during the early Soviet period, drawing upon a comprehensive analysis of bibliographic sources. The authors analyze diverse scholarly approaches advanced by Soviet, post-Soviet, and international researchers regarding this policy. The study traces the transformation of interpretations from ideologically conditioned assessments characteristic of the Soviet era to more critical and multidimensional re-evaluations emerging during the years of independence.

The purpose is to trace the evolution of scholarly perspectives, reflecting shifts in methodological frameworks, value orientations, and the growing commitment to an objective reconstruction of the historical past, taking into account national interests and contemporary decolonial approaches. The objectives of the study include systematizing research approaches to the study of korenizatsiia, as well as identifying the influence of changing methodological and axiological paradigms and broader historical contexts on the interpretation of national policy.

The analysis of policy is aimed at examining the experience of the interaction of ethnic groups in a multiethnic state. Such an approach contributes to addressing existing historiographical gaps and to reassessing the significance of this policy within the broader framework of forming a polyethnic society into a unified political nation.

Keywords: korenizatsiia (indigenization), nationalities policy, Soviet Kazakhstan, socio-cultural modernization, ethno-region, historiography, early soviet period, discourse.

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Introduction

Contemporary historical scholarship convincingly demonstrates that the principle of historicism constitutes a fundamental foundation of historical inquiry. Adherence to this principle entails viewing any event as a process, identifying the causes of its emergence, tracing the changes it underwent at different stages, and determining the outcomes to which it ultimately led. Such an approach requires accounting for the concrete conditions of a given era, examining events in their interconnections, and understanding how they developed and were assessed across different historical periods (Ippolitov, 2013). No historical phenomenon or event represents a once-and-for-all established dogma, rather, reinterpretation and

reassessment over time constitute a natural process.

In the study and analysis of the soviet past, historicism functions as a pivotal methodological framework, since a significant number of “blank spots” still persist and require comprehensive examination in light of accumulated source materials and historiographical scholarship. Particular attention within the academic community is directed toward ethnopolitical issues, which are regarded as an important factor of socio-political development and a key element of nation-building. The collapse of the USSR and the subsequent period of “sovereignization” opened a new stage in the historiography of the national question, characterized by scholarly debates, active

exploration of new topics, and the incorporation into academic circulation of a substantial body of newly available sources.

Korenizatsiia, implemented within the broader framework of soviet nationalities policy, was described in soviet historiography as a successful and effective measure. However, in accordance with the same principle of historicism, this policy warrants renewed interpretation, since the ideological premises of korenizatsiia at the local level were accompanied by a range of practical contradictions and inconsistencies. Rigorous and in-depth research is impossible without a historiographical review. Historiographical analysis makes it possible to identify the evolution of scholarly approaches and to avoid the uncritical reproduction of established interpretations.

Materials and methods of research

The empirical basis of this study comprises a corpus of historiographical works addressing korenizatsiia in the ethno-regional context of Central Asia, with particular attention to Kazakhstan. The analysis incorporates publications by Kazakhstani (domestic), soviet, and international scholars, reflecting both conventional interpretations shaped within soviet historiographical narratives and contemporary approaches grounded in a decolonial rethinking of the soviet past. The application of a decolonial perspective makes it possible to conceptualize korenizatsiia as an inherently contradictory instrument one that combined elements of nationalities policy with inherited imperial practices of governance. A historiographical analysis was employed to determine how the policy of korenizatsiia was justified, framed, and represented within scholarly and ideological narratives.

Methodologically, the article is grounded in a problem-chronological approach, which allows the policy's stages to be delineated and the transformation of its objectives and implementation mechanisms to be traced from its inception in early 1923 to its winding down by the mid 1930s. The comparative-historical method is used to identify distinctive features in the interpretation of korenizatsiia across domestic, soviet, and foreign historiographies. The study also relies on a set of general scholarly principles associated with historicism. Taken together, these methods ensure a comprehensive analytical framework and facilitate an assessment of the historiographical evolution of

approaches to the korenizatsiia policy.

Analysis

In the works of Soviet, Kazakhstani, and foreign scholars, issues related to korenizatsiia have been addressed intermittently, as a rule within the framework of adjacent thematic fields. During the Soviet period, the subject of korenizatsiia was examined predominantly in accordance with official ideological paradigms. Critical analysis of the contradictions and negative consequences of this policy was generally absent or significantly constrained by the limits of Marxist-Leninist methodology. In the post-Soviet period, scholarly interest in the problem increased substantially. Kazakhstani and foreign researchers gained access to archival materials, which made it possible to reassess the goals, mechanisms, and outcomes of korenizatsiia. The scholarship of this period is marked by a notable strengthening of critical and interdisciplinary approaches.

At the same time, the degree to which the topic has been studied cannot be regarded as exhaustive. Despite the existence of a substantial body of research, the policy has not yet received a holistic and comprehensive historiographical interpretation. As a rule, scholars address issues of korenizatsiia in a fragmentary manner, examining its individual aspects within the context of nation-state building, nationalities policy, ethno-political processes, or language policy. This indicates the continued scholarly potential of the topic and the relevance of its further investigation.

The korenizatsiia policy constituted a significant and multifaceted process of the country's socio-cultural modernization. It was aimed at training and staffing local government bodies at all levels with representatives of the Kazakh nationality cadres regarded as socially reliable and ideologically prepared. In addition, it encompassed a set of measures to introduce Kazakh-language record-keeping, in accordance with the decree "On the Introduction of Record-Keeping in the Kirgiz Language" of 22 November 1923. As a comprehensive program of far-reaching transformations, the policy reshaped value orientations and cultural practices, deliberately steering society toward a new, Soviet type of social and political order.

Results

The study of the Soviet state's nationalities



policy and, more specifically, the korenizatsiia a policy in Kazakhstan has a long-standing scholarly tradition. Interest in korenizatsiia as an object of historical inquiry took shape during the Soviet period and has continued to develop in contemporary scholarship. For a long time, researchers sought to elucidate the mechanisms of its implementation and to assess its impact on the formation of national elites, the development of culture, and the transformation of administrative governance.

Soviet historiography interpreted korenizatsiia as an unequivocally progressive measure intended to compensate for the Russification policies of the imperial period. The primary objectives of the policy were presented as the promotion of national languages and cultures and the creation of conditions for the more effective dissemination of communist ideology. Within this interpretive framework, korenizatsiia was portrayed as fostering among various peoples a sense of respectful treatment by Soviet authority, strengthening trust in administrative institutions, and consolidating the new political order in regions inhabited by national minorities.

After the Revolution and the Civil War, the Soviet state had very limited continuity with the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia that had previously studied the development of imperial minority populations. The majority of those writing on these issues consisted of party and state functionaries directly involved in establishing Soviet power. During the 1920s–1930s, they turned to the social transformation of the region, including the resolution of the “national question.” Among the most prominent figures were T. Ryskulov, S. Asfendiarov, N. Nurmakov, and S. Sadvokasov. Leaders of the kazakh intelligentsia such as S. Sadvokasov and N. Nurmakov oriented their efforts toward supporting kazakh national statehood and the gradual modernization of the kazakh ethnos.

Early Soviet approaches to korenizatsiia are reflected in reports by leading party officials of the KazASSR, including F.I. Goloshchekin’s “Korenizatsiia in the Period of Socialist Reconstruction” (1929) and M.O. Orumbaev’s “On the Progress of korenizatsiia of the State Apparatus of the KSSR” (1928). Goloshchekin’s report outlined key directions for the practical resolution of the national problem, defined principles for implementing korenizatsiia by the

late 1920s, and addressed the status of non-party national intelligentsia, cadre training, and cultural development. Such reports primarily articulated the official stance of the party leadership and served a mobilizational and propagandistic function rather than constituting a genuine program for resolving the national question in Kazakhstan.

Works of the 1920s–1930s by russian scholars B.N. Rodnevich (Rodnevich, 1931), M. Ryadnin (Ryadnin, 1928), and V.I. Belyakov (Belyakov, 1927) were likewise predominantly historical-propagandistic in nature, as their authors acted as direct conveyors of the official party line. Their writings emphasized the difficulties of constructing a modern administrative apparatus in a “backward” republic, oriented toward maximizing responsiveness to the needs and specificities of the local population. In the jointly authored volume by Kh.Sh. Amrin and E.I. Knyazeva, “Collections of Guiding Materials on korenizatsiia” (Amrin, Knyazeva 1934), decrees, circulars, instructions, and other normative legal documents regulating the implementation of the policy were systematized, thereby delineating its legal and organizational foundations.

At the same time, the intellectual legacy of early soviet predecessors should by no means be dismissed as obsolete or irrelevant. On the contrary, engagement with these works enables scholars to trace the evolution of academic representations, to reconstruct the logic through which approaches and evaluations were formed, and to identify the continuity of research traditions. Neglecting this experience would impoverish contemporary scholarship, since such sources contain the analytical foundations without which it is impossible to secure a coherent and objective understanding of the historical process and to sustain an intellectual link between generations of researchers.

Historiographical traditions in the study of korenizatsiia persisted into the postwar decades. During this period, scholars operating within established academic paradigms sought to adapt them to evolving ideological and political conditions while preserving interpretive continuity regarding the principal trajectories of Soviet nationalities policy. The scholarship of this era demonstrates a marked intensification of tendencies toward the unification of perspectives, coupled with a consistent emphasis on the Soviet state and the culturally dominant central model

as the primary initiator and agent of so-called “progressive” transformations. Claims such as, “Overcoming Kazakhstan’s backwardness and eliminating the de facto inequality of the Kazakhs was possible only through systematic, long-term assistance from the Russian working class and the entire Russian people to the Kazakh people” (Omarov, Pankratova, 1949: 4.), clearly exemplify this interpretive orientation.

Korenizatsiia as a subject of scholarly inquiry was examined in K. F. Kotov’s Candidate of Sciences dissertation, “Korenizatsiia of the Soviet State Apparatus of Kazakhstan (1920–1936)” (1951). The scholar authored more than 120 publications addressing a wide range of issues related to statehood and democracy, national-state construction, and the constitutional regulation of social relations. According to A. P. Kuchkin, the implementation of korenizatsiia in Kazakhstan was possible only with decisive support from the Russian people, who possessed revolutionary and administrative experience, as well as through comprehensive political, economic, and cultural assistance from the Russian proletariat and its leadership in the processes of state formation and socialist construction. Such assistance, he argued, strengthened friendship between the Kazakh and Russian peoples and facilitated the incorporation of the Kazakh masses into Russian culture. This body of scholarship clearly reflects a tendency to privilege a centralizing and unifying model over local initiatives and forms of national self-governance (Kuchkin, 1954). In this context, the notion of “fraternal assistance” functioned as a discursive mechanism legitimizing the continued dependence of the national republics on the Union center and reproducing elements of a colonial paradigm.

Socio-political transformations from the mid-twentieth century, marked by a relative liberalization of public life, significantly expanded the range of research questions and created limited space for scholarly debate. Nevertheless, during this period korenizatsiia did not receive sustained or systematic attention. This was likely due to the reorientation of Soviet nationalities policy toward the strengthening of Russifying tendencies. At the same time, studies emerged that examined Soviet nationalities policy in broader terms and the national question in Kazakhstan in particular. Works by A.F. Aboyan (1966), G.F. Dakhshleiger (1961), N.K. Kiikbaev (1957), and others addressed

the difficulties arising from the intensification of interethnic relations, including tensions associated with the korenizatsiia of the administrative apparatus.

The scholarship of S. Zimanov emphasized both the achievements and the limitations of the Bolshevik project to reorganize the political system and the life of nationalities on socialist foundations, implemented within the framework of the proclaimed right of nations to self-determination. Together with M.A. Binder and G.S. Sapargaliev, S. Zimanov authored the three-volume *History of the State and Law of Soviet Kazakhstan* (1961–1965), the first volume of which addresses korenizatsiia in the period 1921–1925. Adhering to the dominant Soviet interpretive framework, co-author G. S. Sapargaliev concluded that, despite its inherent limitations, korenizatsiia during the NEP years largely facilitated the increased participation of Kazakh workers in state institutions. At the same time, certain shortcomings of the campaign were acknowledged: in order to fulfill prescribed percentage quotas and in the absence of adequately trained Kazakh personnel, targets were often met by recruiting insufficiently prepared individuals from support or auxiliary staff, resulting in the incomplete realization of the policy’s objectives (Sapargaliev, 1961).

During the period conventionally described as late socialism (from the mid-1960s to the 1980s), korenizatsiia and its constituent elements as components of Soviet nationalities policy were examined, among others, by A.N. Nusupbekov and B. Kh. Khasanov. Writing within the intellectual and ideological constraints of the period and against the backdrop of industrial expansion, Nusupbekov analyzed the integration of the indigenous population into industrial production through vocational training and the advancement of professional qualifications across the republic’s enterprises (Nusupbekov, 1966). In the late 1980s, under the conditions of glasnost, Khasanov conceptualized Kazakh–Russian bilingualism as a social necessity of the era and turned to the history of early Soviet language policy (Khasanov, 1987).

With the dissolution of the USSR and the intensive process of nation-state formation, research into the ethno-political dimensions of the Soviet past entered a new phase of development. The contemporary decolonial approach in Kazakhstani historiography enables a reassessment of korenizatsiia, which had previously been



interpreted primarily as a progressive initiative of Soviet power. In this context, particular attention is devoted to a critical re-evaluation of the nature and consequences of Soviet nationalities policy. Representatives of the early twentieth-century Kazakh political elite most notably M. Shokay as well as contemporary Kazakhstani scholars such as M.Q. Kozybayev, M.K. Qoigeldiev, T.O. Omarbekov, Zh.B. Abylkhozhin advance the concept of the colonial nature of the Soviet state. Despite proclaimed slogans of equality and national self-determination, the party continued to reproduce imperial practices of governance and ideological control. Viewed through this lens, *korenizatsiia* appears not only as a component of the Soviet ethnopolitical system but also as an instrument for preserving colonial relations in a transformed soviet form.

A particularly strong interest in issues of nation-building is evident in the works of domestic historians S.Sh. Kaziev and E.N. Burdina. These authors analyze the principal directions of Soviet nationalities policy in Kazakhstan both in general terms and across specific historical periods. With regard to *korenizatsiia* and its constituent elements, they address issues of interethnic trust, the implementation of language legislation, and the processes of local elite formation, among other themes (Kaziev, Burdina, 2014, 2015). Works such as Zh.U. Kydyralina's "Nation and History" (Kydyralina, 2009) and V. Eshpanov's "Beyond the Pages of the Past: The Socio-Economic and Political Situation of Kazakhstan (1920s–1930s)" (Eshpanov, 2019) approach Soviet nationalities policy through the prism of critical analysis. These scholars examine the formation of national administrative personnel within the political and ideological dimensions of the policy. With respect to *korenizatsiia*, they conclude that, in practice, the policy revealed key characteristics of the Soviet system: the ambivalence of power, its declarative and slogan-driven nature, and a clear discrepancy between proclaimed objectives and actual outcomes.

The regional dimensions of *korenizatsiia*, based on materials from regional archives and reflecting grassroots practices, have been examined in studies of Akmola Region, Kostanay Region, and the Pavlodar District by G. Mukanova (Mukanova, 2025), I.K. Ternov (Ternov, 2012) and Zh.K. Nurbay. Analyzing the process of national-state construction in the Pavlodar District during the initial years of

Soviet rule, Nurbay emphasizes its contradictory character. In the author's view, this experience was shaped by the anti-popular policies of party and Soviet institutions, manifested in the restriction of political and economic freedoms, the declarative nature of state reforms, the mismatch between proclaimed slogans and actual practices, and the artificial expansion of the bureaucratic apparatus (Nurbay, 2020). These findings make it possible to trace the continuity of systemic problems and miscalculations in Bolshevik nationalities policy, which also conditioned the limited effectiveness of *korenizatsiia*.

The application of a problem-chronological approach to the study of *korenizatsiia* has made it possible to trace the evolution of the policy and the successive stages of its implementation. Particular attention is devoted to the first stage, associated with the so-called percentage quota of *korenizatsiia*, in the joint work of E. Zhanykulov and K. Abenov (Zhanykulov, Abenov, 2013). The second, most effective, stage of national personnel formation under a functional quota is examined in L. Shotkabayeva's study. The author supports a three-stage periodization of the policy proposed by the soviet historian N. Belenchuk: 1921–1923 the conceptualization of the principal strategic directions of the policy, 1923–1928 the search for concrete pathways of national and cultural construction, and from 1929 to the late 1930s the consolidation of centralist approaches and a turn toward the unification of national cultures (Belenchuk, 1990).

A separate discussion should be devoted to the position advanced by A.A. Kulshanova. Her work is grounded in a revisionist approach and aligns with an entrenched interpretive stance within soviet historical scholarship. In assessing the causes and aims of national-state construction in the USSR, Kulshanova proceeds from the assumption that nationalism constituted a danger and that its potential strengthening represented a threat of opposition to a Soviet state still in the process of consolidation. Among the positive outcomes of *korenizatsiia*, she highlights the emergence of a national cultural elite, the formation of administrative cadres, and the development of a party bureaucracy (Kulshanova, 2011). In her article "The Problem of the Reliability of Archival Sources on *Korenizatsiia* in Kazakhstan", she also addresses the necessity of critically evaluating archival materials on the topic, noting that they

frequently contain inaccuracies and contradictions. She argues that, first, archival materials on korenizatsiia in their bulk cannot be regarded as fully reliable and therefore require verification; second, the sources are often characterized by the mechanical transfer of data without adequate control, cross-checking, or analytical scrutiny; and third, cases of falsification and imprecision are encountered. Moreover, she observes that the surviving documentation largely originates from guberniya and uezd-level institutions, while materials from the lowest administrative levels namely auls and volosts are virtually absent, which raises doubts about the representativeness and evidentiary reliability of the available archival base on korenizatsiia (Kulshanova, 2001: 115).

With regard to the national education system in the republic, G.T. Khairulin and U.D. Munalbayeva conclude that the cultural and pedagogical dimensions of korenizatsiia were also reflected in the content of higher education (Khairulin, Munalbayev, 2013). The study of Kazakh history and the Kazakh language, regardless of the primary language of instruction, was included across all faculties in the curricula of KazPI in the 1930s. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the implementation of the language dimension of the policy proceeded under difficult conditions associated with the standardization and further development of the Kazakh language and the elaboration of scholarly terminology. It is therefore not accidental that Sh. Alzhanov, in the article “Five Years of Struggle and Construction of the First Kazakh National University,” noted that the institution had succeeded in transferring the teaching of a number of academic disciplines from Russian into Kazakh while overcoming a range of difficulties. Practical experience, he argued, demonstrated that at that stage and given the state of the Kazakh language, the korenizatsiia of instruction was an exceptionally challenging task especially considering the need to avoid diminishing the quality of lectures (their coherence, structure, and scholarly rigor) while simultaneously making them accessible to the majority of students. Moreover, korenizatsiia had to be implemented in the absence of textbooks in the Kazakh language (Alzhanov, 1934).

It should also be noted that in the contemporary system of higher education the topic of korenizatsiia has likewise been addressed in instructional manuals by A.K. Zhumadil (Zhumadil, 2018) and

E.S. Quandyq (Quandyq, 2012) developed for students specializing in history-related disciplines. In these works, korenizatsiia is presented as a factor of cultural assimilation. Drawing on a knowledge-centered framework, the authors outline the causes and distinctive features of the policy in Kazakhstan, partially indicate its internal contradictions, and identify both the limits and the consequences of its implementation.

Overall, contemporary Kazakhstani scholars have substantially expanded the approaches and analytical practices applied to the study of korenizatsiia through comprehensive examinations of its stages, regional specificities, and outcomes, emphasizing the divergence between declared objectives and actual practice. In addition, a new layer of sources drawn from central and regional archival collections has been successfully integrated into scholarly circulation. In recent interpretations, the policy is increasingly conceptualized as an ambivalent process in which, alongside the development of national cadres and culture, systemic problems inherent in soviet nationalities policy also became clearly manifest.

In contemporary Russia, which positions itself as the legal successor and continuator of the Soviet Union (including through the 2020 constitutional amendments), the collapse of the USSR gave renewed impetus to research on nationalities policy in Soviet ethno-regions. The transformed socio-political context necessitated a reconsideration of earlier analytical frameworks. Russian scholars such as D. Amanzholova (Amanzholova, 2016, 2020), P. Dyatlenko (Dyatlenko, 2007), and others have examined korenizatsiia in Kazakhstan primarily through the prism of cultural and language policy, including related alphabet reforms. As a prominent figure in Russian historiography, Amanzholova produced comprehensive studies on the formation and functioning of power institutions within center–republic relations, directly addressing the institutional and political dimensions of korenizatsiia. The study of Soviet state-building practices in Kazakhstan has also been advanced by I. Anisimova (Anisimova, 2017) and Yu. Lysenko (Lysenko, 2015). These scholars characterize korenizatsiia as a key component of Soviet nationalities policy, aimed at implementing the proclaimed right of nations to self-determination and at developing their cultural, educational, and administrative capacities. The shift in Soviet nationalities policy from the mid-1930s marked by



the curtailment of *korenizatsiia* and subsequent changes in the centre's approach to the union republics has been analyzed in the work of V.I. Musaev (Musaev, 2018). O.K. Kaiokova devoted a series of studies to *korenizatsiia* and nationalities policy in the ethno-regions of the RSFSR, including the Kazakh Autonomous Okrug, from the second half of the 1920s to the mid-1930s. Summarizing the outcomes of the policy, she identifies both positive effects, such as the creation of conditions for the preservation and development of minority national identities, and contradictory consequences associated with cultural unification and the subsequent sovietization of the population in national territories (Kaiokova, 2007). In many contemporary Russian studies, a degree of continuity with Soviet historiography remains evident, reflecting the persistence of established narratives that continue to shape interpretations of historical processes.

In international historiography, Soviet nationalities policy has often been examined at the intersection of postcolonial and postsocialist approaches. It should be emphasized that the debate over whether the USSR functioned as an empire and whether Soviet republics can be understood as colonies is far from new. Already during the Cold War, many Western scholars, working primarily in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, argued that the Soviet Union constituted an empire little different from other European empires and would ultimately face a similar fate. From this perspective, Bolshevik authorities imposed an alien ideology on diverse peoples, many of whom resisted or rejected it and awaited an opportunity to challenge what they perceived as an oppressive order (Kalinovskij, 2020).

Soviet domestic governance has also been analyzed using comparative-analytical frameworks that draw analogies with earlier imperial practices, as reflected in the works of P. Blitstein and M. Rolf. Blitstein argues that Soviet leadership simultaneously deployed "imperial" and "nationalizing" practices: it sought to construct a unified political nation while at the same time preserving or even reinforcing multiple ethnocultural distinctions (Blitstein, 2006). Rolf likewise emphasizes the paradoxical nature of the "empire of nations": conceived as the antithesis of tsarist Russia, the USSR nevertheless developed foundational principles of nationalities policy in which Lenin and other party leaders created

a new state and promoted a distinctive policy of *korenizatsiia*. A key contribution of his analysis is the demonstration of the contradictions inherent in *korenizatsiia*, particularly when pursued alongside strategies of Sovietizing culture and population-dynamics that, in his view, facilitated the later consolidation of Stalin's totalitarian dictatorship (Rolf, 2020).

T. Martin's theory devoted to "Stalin-era nationalities policy in the 1920s–1930s", offers an alternative pluralistic interpretation. He argues that the distinctiveness of Soviet policy lay in its comparatively stronger support for the external institutional and cultural forms of national minorities than for those of the Russian majority a logic he conceptualizes as "affirmative action" (Martin, 2001). In a co-authored work, T. Martin and R.G. Suny show that Soviet nationalities policy combined elements of support and repression, producing a distinctive twentieth-century model of state governance of ethnicity (Martin, Suny, 2001). Donald Wilber while not fully denying the presence of colonial-like relations within the Soviet Union, emphasized that the USSR nonetheless pursued policies of economic and social development in its more "backward" regions (Wilber, 1969). G. Hosking characterizes Soviet national-state construction as globally unprecedented in its treatment of formerly colonized peoples, presenting it as broadly protectionist in orientation and aimed at cultural and economic progress as well as the participation of non-Russian peoples in governance (Hosking, 2000).

Andrzej Wierzbicki analyzing Soviet nation-building policy and attempts to construct a so-called "Soviet nation," argues that the Soviet authorities sought to integrate the multiethnic population into a project of socialist modernization and to endow it with the characteristics of a fully-fledged nation-state. For non-Russian citizens, the Soviet Union often appeared as a Russian-dominated state in which both domestic and foreign policy were structured around the Russian language and culture. Orientation toward a Russian cultural and linguistic model, although officially presented as a residual legacy of the imperial past, in practice functioned as an instrument of sovietization and the assimilation of other peoples. To a certain extent, this interpretive perspective contradicts the declared principles of *korenizatsiia*; nevertheless, it provides an explanatory framework for understanding the policy's limited results,

partial failures, and leveled or diluted outcomes (Wierzbicki., 2017).

Bernard Oliver likewise treating korenizatsiia as a process within Soviet nationalities policy, draws parallels with “indigenization” and “nationalization.” When applied specifically to the union republics, this logic yields a series of “republic-level” variants “Kazakhization,” “Ukrainization,” “Belarusization,” “Uzbekization,” and others. The Serbian scholar Rajko Bukvić, comparing Soviet korenizatsiia with post-Soviet “Kazakhization,” concludes that the pursuit of national identity driven by nationalist forces can generate both internal and external conflicts. As a distinctive feature of “Kazakhization,” he highlights the planned transition of the Kazakh language to a Latin script a move with a precedent in the early Soviet period which, in his view, may entail geopolitical tensions in the region (Oliver, 1990).

In the book by the well-known publicist M.J. Payne (translated by Zh. Abylkhozhin), *Stalin’s Railroad: Turksib and the Building of Socialism*, interethnic conflicts are described in detail in connection with planned labor recruitment based on the compulsory mobilization of the local population for a major infrastructure project. Payne examines an interethnic uprising triggered by unemployment, deficiencies in local governance in implementing korenizatsiia, discrimination and ethnic prejudice on the part of the railway’s managerial staff, and the resulting distortions in the policy’s execution. In this specific case, korenizatsiia once again appears as an “illusory” project, revealing a clear discrepancy between its declared objectives and its practical outcomes (Pajn, 2006).

Conclusions

Existing historiographical discourses on korenizatsiia among other issues often reflect the essential features of ethnopolitical and ethnosocial development and make it possible to discern

prevailing social and political orientations.

Interpretations of the korenizatsiia policy in Kazakhstan were formed under conditions of ideological and methodological fluidity. Soviet historiography, adhering to official ideological premises, portrayed korenizatsiia as a progressive and successful project aimed at involving the indigenous population in governance and cultural construction. Contemporary scholarship, having substantially expanded the range of research problems, has revealed the policy’s contradictory nature, emphasizing its declarative character and ambivalence. Works by Kazakhstani scholars not only synthesize earlier research but also propose new approaches, drawing on an enriched and expanded source base and a reassessment of accumulated knowledge. A decolonial perspective has exposed the discrepancy between official objectives and actual practice, highlighting the persistence of imperial mechanisms of control and administrative pressure emanating from the centre. Regional studies based on materials from Akmola, Kostanay, and Pavlodar demonstrate that the effectiveness of korenizatsiia largely depended on local conditions and the quality of party-administrative work on the ground. The problems identified in recent scholarship underscore the need for critical verification of archival materials, a substantial portion of which contains methodological and factual distortions. International historiography, approaching the Soviet national project through comparative-imperial frameworks, significantly enriches the research field while not denying the policy’s modernizing dimensions.

Taken together, the reviewed studies demonstrate that korenizatsiia was a complex and internally contradictory phenomenon, combining elements of modernization with new forms of political control. Contemporary interpretations of korenizatsiia still require an interdisciplinary, critical, and comparative approach that can reconstruct the policy’s actual practices and assess its consequences for nation-building in Kazakhstan.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ЖЕРГІЛІКТЕНДІРУ СЯСАТЫНЫҢ ТАРИХНАМАЛЫҚ ДИСКУРСЫ

Аңдатпа. Мақалада библиографиялық материалдарды талдау негізінде Қазақстанда ертекеңестік кезеңде жүзеге асырылған жергіліктендіру саясаты мәселелерінің тарихнамалық дискурсы сипатталған. Авторлар аталған саясатқа қатысты отандық, шетелдік, кеңестік және кеңестік кезеңнен кейінгі зерттеушілердің ғылыми көзқарастары мен зерттеу тәсілдерін қарастырған. Кеңестік дәуірге тән идеологиялық тұрғыдан негізделген бағалаулардан бастап, тәуелсіздік жылдарында қалыптасқан неғұрлым сыни, жан-жақты қайта пайымдауға дейінгі интерпретациялардың өзгерістері сипатталған. Мақаланың мақсаты – ұлттық мүдделерді және қазіргі деколонизациялық ұстанымды ескере отырып, өткенді объективті түрде қайта құрастыруға бағытталған ғылыми тәсілдер мен құндылықтық бағдарлардың өзгерісін айқындайтын көзқарастар эволюциясын зерделеу. Мақаланың міндеттері: кеңестік, отандық және шетелдік ғылыми әдебиеттердегі саясаттың тарихнамалық дискурсының қалыптасу кезеңдерін талдау, Қазақстандағы жергіліктендіруді зерттеудің ғылыми тәсілдерін жүйелеу, ұлттық саясатты ғылыми тұрғыдан пайымдауға әдіснамалық және құндылықтық бағдарлардың, жалпы контекст өзгерісінің әсерін айқындау.

Жергіліктендіруді зерттеу кеңестік жүйе жағдайында ұлттық мемлекеттілікті қалыптастыру тәжірибесін, сондай-ақ көпұлтты мемлекеттегі этностардың өзара әрекеттесуін талдауға бағытталған. Бұл тарихтың «ақтаңдақ беттерін» ашуға, сондай-ақ полиэтникалық қоғамды біртұтас саяси ұлт ретінде қалыптастыру идеясы аясында саясаттың маңызы мен әлеуетін бағалауға мүмкіндік береді.

Кілт сөздер: жергіліктендіру, ұлттық саясат, Кеңестік Қазақстан, әлеуметтік-мәдени жаңғыру, этноаймақ, тарихнама, ертекеңестік кезең, дискурс.

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ИСТОРИОГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ ДИСКУРС ПОЛИТИКИ КОРЕНИЗАЦИИ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

Аннотация. В статье на основе анализа библиографического материала описан историографический дискурс вопросов политики коренизации, реализованной в Казахстане в раннесоветский период. Авторы рассмотрели различные исследовательские подходы отечественных, зарубежных, советских и постсоветских исследователей относительно данной политики. Описана трансформация интерпретаций политики от идеологически обусловленных оценок советского периода до более критического и многопланового переосмысления в годы независимости. Цель статьи – проследить эволюцию взглядов, отражающую смену научных подходов, ценностных ориентиров и стремление к объективной реконструкции исторического прошлого с учётом национальных интересов и современного деколонизационного подхода. Задачи статьи: проанализировать этапы формирования историографического дискурса политики в советской, отечественной и зарубежной научной литературе, систематизировать исследовательские подходы к изучению коренизации в Казахстане, выявить влияние смены методологических и ценностных ориентиров, общего контекста на научное осмысление национальной политики.

Изучение коренизации направлены на анализ опыта строительства национальной государственности в условиях советской системы и взаимодействия этносов в многонациональном государстве. Это позволит заполнить «белые пятна» истории и оценить значение и потенциал политики в рамках идеи формирования полиэтнического общества в единую политическую нацию.

Ключевые слова: Коренизация, национальная политика, Советский Казахстан, социально-культурная модернизация, этнорегион, историография, раннесоветский период, дискурс.

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