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UPRISINGS OF THE KAZAKHS OF THE JUNIOR ZHUZ AGAINST THE ABOLITION OF THE AUTHORITY OF SULTAN-RULERS

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The administrative and territorial reforms introduced by the Russian Empire in the late 1860s marked a critical turning point in the colonization of the Kazakh Steppe. The rapid dismantling of traditional local governance, combined with social restructuring, caused deep discontent among the nomadic population, leading to powerful anti-colonial uprisings. *Goals and objectives.* This study aims to comprehensively analyze the causes, course, and socio-political consequences of the 1868–1870 revolts in Western Kazakhstan, specifically focusing on the Ural, Turgay, and Mangystau regions, as well as the reactions of different social strata to imperial integration policies. *Materials and methods.* The source base of this study relies on a comprehensive range of archival materials and published collections of official documents, supplemented by historical literature on the region's colonization. Methodologically, the paper utilizes the comparative-historical method and critical source analysis. This approach allows for a rigorous examination of imperial administrative strategies, the verification of official reports against local realities, and an objective assessment of the internal dynamics within nomadic society. *Results.* The study reveals that the reforms of 1868 destroyed the established balance of power, sparking spontaneous protests due to a comprehensive transformation across various aspects of nomadic life. Furthermore, imperial policy caused a sharp confrontation within the Kazakh elite, pitting the traditional aristocracy (the Chingisids) against the newly formed bureaucracy represented by the *volost biys*. *Conclusion.* Although the uprisings were brutally suppressed by regular troops, forcing thousands of families to migrate, they demonstrated to the imperial government the necessity of considering the sentiments of different segments of the Kazakh Steppe population and exercising caution in reforming to avoid unrest, and also left a deep mark on historical memory. These events demonstrated the limits of forced imperial integration and finalized the military-civil structure of colonial rule in the region.

Keywords: Kazakh Steppe, administrative reforms, anti-colonial uprisings, Junior Zhuz, imperial colonization, regional governance.

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КІШІ ЖҮЗ ҚАЗАҚТАРЫНЫҢ БИЛЕУШІ СҰЛТАНДАР БИЛІГІНІҢ ЖОЙЫЛУЫНА ҚАРСЫ КӨТЕРІЛІСТЕРІ

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Аңдатпа. *Kіріспе.* Ресей империясының 1860-шы жылдардың соңындағы әкімшілік-аумақтық реформалары Қазақ даласын отарлау үдерісіндегі бетбұрысты кезең болды. Дәстүрлі басқару институттарын жедел жою және әлеуметтік өзгерістер көшпелі халықтың наразылығын тудырып, ауқымды антиотарлық көтерілістерге әкелді. *Мақсаты мен міндеттері.* Зерттеудің мақсаты – Батыс Қазақстандағы (Орал, Торғай және Маңғыстау облыстары) 1868–1870 жылдардағы көтерілістердің себептерін, барысын және әлеуметтік-саяси салдарларын кешенді түрде талдау, сондай-ақ, көшпелі қоғамның түрлі әлеуметтік топтарының империялық интеграциялық саясатқа реакциясын зерттеу. *Материалдар мен әдістер.* Зерттеудің деректік негізін аймақты отарлау мәселелеріне қатысты тарихи әдебиеттермен толықтырылған мұрағаттық материалдар кешені мен ресми құжаттардың жарияланған жинақтары құрайды. Жұмыстың әдістемелік негізін салыстырмалы-тарихи әдіс пен дереккөздерді сыни талдау құрайды. Бұл тәсіл империяның әкімшілік стратегияларын егжей-тегжейлі зерделеуге, ресми есептерді Қазақ даласындағы шынайы жағдаймен салыстыруға және көшпелі қоғамның ішкі динамикасын объективті бағалауға мүмкіндік береді. *Нәтижелер.* Зерттеу көрсеткендей, 1868 жылғы реформа бұрынғы күштер тепе-теңдігін бұзып, көшпелілердің дәстүрлі өмір салтының кешенді түрде өзгеруі салдарынан жаппай наразылық тудырды. Империялық саясат қазақ элитасы ішінде жіктеліс тудырып, дәстүрлі ақсүйектерді жаңадан пайда болған болыс билерімен қақтығыстырды. *Қорытынды.* Көтерілістер тұрақты әскермен қатаң түрде тұншықтырылып басылғанына және мыңдаған отбасылар көшіп кетуге мәжбүр болғанына қарамастан, империялық үкіметке жаңа толқуларды болдырмау үшін Қазақ халқының түрлі топтарының көңіл-күйін ескеру және реформалар жүргізуде сақ болу қажеттілігін көрсетті. Сонымен қатар, халықтың тарихи жадында терең із қалдырды. Бұл оқиғалар мәжбүрлі империялық интеграцияның шегін айқындап, аймақтағы отаршылдық басқарудың әскери-азаматтық құрылымын біржола қалыптастырды.

Түйін сөздер: Қазақ даласы, әкімшілік реформалар, отарлауға қарсы көтерілістер, Кіші жүз, империялық отарлау саясаты, аймақтық басқару.

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ВОССТАНИЯ КАЗАХОВ МЛАДШЕГО ЖУЗА ПРОТИВ ОТМЕНЫ ВЛАСТИ СУЛТАНОВ-ПРАВИТЕЛЕЙ

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Аннотация. *Введение.* Административно-территориальные реформы Российской империи конца 60-х годов XIX века стали переломным моментом в процессе колонизации Казахской степи. Форсированная ликвидация традиционных институтов управления в сочетании с социальной перестройкой вызвала глубокое недовольство кочевого населения, что привело к мощным антиколониальным выступлениям. *Цели и задачи.* Целью данного исследования является комплексный анализ причин, хода и социально-политических последствий восстаний 1868–1870 годов в Западном Казахстане (в Уральской, Тургайской и Мангыстауской областях), а также изучение реакции различных социальных слоев кочевого общества на интеграционную политику империи. *Материалы и методы.* Источниковую базу исследования составляет комплекс архивных материалов и опубликованных сборников официальных документов, дополненный исторической литературой по вопросам колонизации края. Методологическую основу работы образуют сравнительно-исторический метод и критический анализ источников. Данный подход позволяет детально изучить административные стратегии империи, сопоставить официальные отчеты с реальной обстановкой в Степи и объективно оценить внутреннюю динамику кочевого общества. *Результаты.* Исследование показало, что реформы 1868 года разрушили прежний баланс сил, спровоцировав стихийный протест из-за комплексной трансформации традиционного уклада жизни кочевников. Имперская политика вызвала острое противостояние внутри казахской элиты, столкнув традиционную аристократию (чингизидов) с новоявленной бюрократией в лице волостных биев. *Заключение.* Несмотря на то, что восстания были жестоко подавлены регулярными войсками, а тысячи семей были вынуждены откочевать, они показали имперскому правительству необходимость учета настроений разных слоев населения Казахской степи и проявления осторожности в реформировании во избежание беспорядков, а также оставили глубокий след в исторической памяти. Эти события продемонстрировали пределы принудительной имперской интеграции и окончательно оформили военно-гражданскую структуру колониального управления в регионе.

Ключевые слова: Казахская степь, административные реформы, антиколониальные восстания, Младший жуз, имперская колонизация, региональное управление.

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Introduction. By the mid-1860s, the Russian Empire actively began to abolish the power of sultan-rulers in the Junior Zhuz and senior sultans in the Middle Zhuz. From the metropole's position, the reforms of 1822 and 1824 and subsequent changes were gradually losing their relevance. Although the tsarist government abolished khan's authority, imperial advancement deep into the steppe areas, especially in the Junior Zhuz, remained very weak. Moreover, while the Middle Zhuz had some elements of an elective system (specifically regarding senior sultans), the territory of the Junior Zhuz lacked any such signs of imperial administration. Peasant and Cossack settlements were also nearly nonexistent there. Therefore, from the imperial viewpoint, there was no unified legislative framework and centralized management over the Kazakhs of the Junior and Middle Zhuzes.

The remaining local authority – such as the sultan-rulers in the Junior Zhuz – partially acted as an obstacle to active military colonization and economic development of the region. From the viewpoint of the tsarist government, leaving Kazakh representatives as the main administrators in the Junior and Middle Zhuzes was highly undesirable. As imperial officials noted at the time: «Subordinating the Russian population located in the Steppe to a Kirghiz would be extremely inconvenient» [Traditsionnoe kazakhskoe obshestvo..., 2014: 81].

By the mid-1860s, the lands of Southern and Southeastern Kazakhstan had already entered the Russian Empire through military actions and diplomatic means. Consequently, the imperial borders moved more than a thousand kilometers south from the banks of the Ural and Irtysh rivers [Traditsionnoe kazakhskoe obshestvo..., 2014: 64]. It was necessary to take legislative measures for administrative subordination and active economic consolidation of the newly incorporated regions. The government needed to unify the structure of regional governance by making it as close as possible to the practice used in the internal provinces of the empire. Russia's developing industry increasingly needed cheap sources of raw materials and product markets, and this was almost impossible to achieve without final control over the Steppe. A need arose to introduce a single system of taxation and justice in all territories inhabited by Kazakhs. Furthermore, after the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the empire needed an organized framework to resettle significant masses of landless peasants from the European part of Russia eastward.

Another reason for introducing the new administrative system was the need to legally regulate and secure land ownership rights, forms of land use, and mechanisms for acquiring land by various social classes, primarily by the Kazakhs themselves. Members of the Steppe Commission noted this in 1867, stating: «The rights of the Kirghiz to the land under their pastures are not positively defined by our legislation» [TsGA RK. F. 4. Op. 1. D. 490. L. 38.].

Therefore, due to a number of reasons, an urgent need arose for the government to carry out new administrative-territorial and socioeconomic reforms. Members of the Steppe Commission, led by Chairman F.K. Girs, captured their essence in 1865: «The Kirghiz Steppe of the Orenburg and Siberian departments are governed by two systems that differ from each other. The consequences of such a management system are the impossibility of real control by the Russian authorities over the officials from the Horde members, and insufficient integration with Russians inside the Steppe» [TsGA RK. F. 4. Op. 1. D. 490. L. 10.].

Materials and Methods. This research draws upon an extensive array of primary archival materials and published collections of official documents, alongside existing historiographical works detailing the colonial integration of the region under study. To build a much wider academic and theoretical perspective, this research systematically incorporates the important works of Western scholars who analyze the Russian imperial frontier policies and Central Asian historical processes. Specifically, this study builds upon the institutional administration concepts discussed by Martha Brill Olcott in her detailed research on the historical development of the Kazakh nation. It also utilizes the borderland integration and resistance theories analyzed by Edward Allworth. Integrating these Western academic viewpoints helps to connect local steppe resistance movements with broader global scientific debates on comparative imperial strategies, showing that the Kazakh uprisings were part of a larger regional response to modern colonial centralization. From a methodological standpoint, the study implements a comparative-historical framework combined with rigorous textual criticism of primary sources. Utilizing this dual approach makes it possible to scrutinize tsarist administrative schemes over time, evaluate bureaucratic reporting by contrasting it with local socioeconomic conditions, and achieve an unbiased understanding of the internal processes shifting within

nomadic communities. To ensure complete analytical transparency, this study cross-references the official correspondence of regional military governors, the internal journals of the Steppe Commission, and legislative imperial statutes from the 1860s. The comparative-historical framework enables an objective evaluation of how institutional integration varied between the Middle and Junior Zhuzes, shedding light on elite division and nomadic agency under imperial expansion.

Results. *The Inception of the Steppe Commission.* Preparations for the reforms began in February 1865. This is confirmed by a report sent on June 4, 1865, by the Minister of War, Adjutant General D.A. Milyutin, to Emperor Alexander II about the upcoming work in the Kazakh Steppe: «On the second day of February of this year, Your Imperial Majesty deigned to supreme approve the journal of the special committee that discussed the question of the organization of Asiatic Russia and the Orenburg region» [RGIA. F. 1291. Op. 82. D. 5a. L. 36.].

To study the region in detail and prepare a draft regulation on its management, the authorities established the Steppe Commission on June 5, 1865, from among Russian officials and military officers. The Kazakh nobility, including the sultan-rulers, were practically not involved in its development. The commission included representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of War, as well as high-ranking officials from Omsk and Orenburg: Actual State Councilor F.K. Girs, Orenburg Military Governor L.F. Balliuzek, Colonel A.K. Geins, Major General K.K. Gutkovsky, Colonel A.P. Protsenko, Colonel L.L. Meier, and Collegiate Assessor N.I. Galdinsky. The commission had to carefully investigate the socioeconomic situation in the Steppe, the traditions and customs of the Kazakh people, the previous order of management, and so on. The authorities even envisaged studying the possibility of introducing the Orthodox faith among the Steppe nomads, that began to actively spread in the territory of the Junior Zhuz [RGIA. F. 1291. Op. 82. D. 5a. L. 40.].

During 1865-1866, much of the research of the Steppe was already conducted, and the draft of the new regulation was submitted to the State Council for approval. However, its adoption was delayed because of some disagreements. In particular, A.I. Levshin – a prominent statesman and researcher of that time – argued for preserving the power of the sultan class and the clan-based governance of the Kazakhs [Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR..., 1957: 385]. In this regard, on August 23, 1868, L.F. Balliuzek, head of the Regional Administration of the Orenburg Kazakhs, wrote to Orenburg Governor-General N.A. Kryzhanovsky about the need to approve the developed document: «Two months ago, I received information that the review of the draft for the new regulation on Steppe governance was postponed until September. Levshin does not know the Steppe, although forty years ago he wrote a good book on the Kirghiz-Kazakh Horde» [OGAOO. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8239. L. 557-557 ob.]. Ultimately, the Special Committee approved the reform project [Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR..., 1979: 226].

An Overview of the Reforms Abolishing the Power of Sultan-Rulers in the Junior Zhuz. On October 21, 1868, Emperor Alexander II signed the draft «Provisional Regulations on the Administration of the Turgay, Ural, Akmolinsk, and Semipalatinsk Regions» [Struktury upravleniya kazakhami Zapadnoi Sibiri..., 2025: 446-449], which introduced a new administrative order in the Steppe. Regional leaders began to explain the New Regulations to the population. Thus, in January 1869, N.A. Kryzhanovsky, the Governor-General of the Orenburg Province, made an announcement about the introduction of the new management system in the Steppe: «Henceforth, all Kirghiz, wherever they live, must be governed by identical laws. Instead of Kirghiz sultan-rulers, Russian district chiefs (uiezd heads) are appointed. The Kirghiz remain exempt from military conscription» [RGIA. F. 1291. Op. 82. D. 5a. L. 299-300.].

The new order of management was expected to take effect only in May 1869. For this purpose, Russian officials went into the Steppe with letters written in the Kazakh and Russian languages to give a detailed explanation of the reasons for the new order. The sultan-rulers removed from power were not left without attention – the government rewarded them with military ranks and lifelong pensions. In accordance with the document, two Governor-Generalships were formed: the Orenburg and the West Siberian. Each of them had two regions: the Ural and Turgay regions in the Orenburg Governor-Generalship, and the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk regions in the West Siberian [Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie v Kazakhstane..., 2020: 415]. At the same time, the Orenburg Governor-Generalship, centered in the city of Orenburg, reported administratively to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The former Inner Horde became part of the Astrakhan Province, Mangystau was transferred to the management of the Caucasus Military District [Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR..., 1979: 227], and later it was included in the Transcaspiian Region [Akimbekov, 2018: 396].

The Governor-Generalships consisted of regions, regions consisted of uyezds, uyezds consisted of volosts, and volosts consisted of administrative auls. Compared to the internal provinces of Russia, the administrative management in the Steppe under the new reform had a more military character rather than a civil one. This circumstance was bound to cause protests in the future from the Kazakhs of the Junior Zhuz. Until that time, they had nearly seen no Russian officials in the deep areas of the Steppe, which could not be said about the Kazakhs of the Middle Zhuz, where the construction of imperial military fortifications (like Kokshetau and Karkaralinsk) began in 1824.

The innovations of 1868, which caused protests in the Turgay and Ural regions, also affected taxation. A single tax was introduced across the entire territory of Kazakhstan – the kubitka tax – levied annually in cash from each kubitka. For instance, Kazakhs of the Orenburg Governor-Generalship paid 3 rubles [Syzykova, 2005: 150], while those of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship paid 2 rubles and 75 kopecks. The state imposed a double fine for concealing the real amount of livestock. The families of the late Khan of the Junior Zhuz, Shirghazi Aishuakov, as well as sultans Baimukhamed Aishuakov, Akhmed Dzhanurin, and Araslan Dzhanurin, were exempted from paying the kubitka tax and some other obligations. This exemption also extended to the families of those Kazakhs who died in 1844 at the hands of the detachments of Khan Kenesary Kasymov [Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR..., 1979: 230]. In the future, this situation would split the rebel camp, starting a separation between the Chingisids and the commoners.

The establishment of new duties and taxes led to a decline in the material condition of the local population. Large sums were spent annually on the maintenance of volost rulers, aul elders, and couriers. For various infrastructure needs – the repair, construction, and maintenance of roads, bridges, mosques, schools, and hospitals – an additional tax called «qara shyghyn» was intended. These new financial burdens and regional duties quickly led to a deep structural crisis in the traditional economic life of the nomads. Because the colonial administration demanded all taxes strictly in cash form, Kazakh families were forced to quickly sell a large part of their cattle to Russian and Tatar merchants at very low prices. This artificial economic pressure completely broke the historical, well-balanced seasonal migration routes. Many poor households lost too much livestock to pay the taxes and could no longer participate in the long-distance movement between winter and summer pastures. As a result, these families became tied to small, overcrowded regional lands, which caused local land degradation, high cattle mortality during winter, and severe poverty among ordinary nomads who were cut off from their traditional ecosystem.

The Kazakh population was obliged to perform a number of other duties. They had to maintain local government offices, keep bridges and causeways in repair along numerous postal routes, provide their yurts to house Russian officials sent to the Steppe, and supply them with horses and other necessary equipment.

The court of biys was preserved, but it included a specific classification: individual biys, volost assemblies of biys, and extraordinary assemblies of biys, which could be called only on the initiative of regional governors. These courts resolved civil disputes among Kazakhs. Cases valued up to 100 rubles were decided by the biys finally, but rulings over 100 rubles could be appealed at the assembly of biys. Institutions operating on the basis of Russian laws appeared: volost courts, district courts, military-judicial commissions, regional administrations, and the Governing Senate [RGIA. F. 1291. Op. 84. D. 18. L. 3-3 ob.]. Kazakhs could appeal the decisions of the biy courts in Russian district courts, which dealt a serious blow to the activities of the former. The state transferred the largest criminal cases to military courts: treason, resistance to authority, the murder of officials, attacks on state transport and mail, and so on. Cases related to murder, robbery, assaults on trade caravans, and arson were examined under the general laws of the Russian Empire. Official misconduct and civil suits over 2000 rubles were considered in regional administrations. District courts reviewed cases with claims up to 2000 rubles that were not related to long-term imprisonment [Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR..., 1957: 389]. All these changes became known to the nomads and led to uprisings in the future.

Henceforth, only four to eight biys could be elected in each volost for a three-year term. The elections took place with the mandatory presence of the Russian district chief or his assistant [Martin, 2012: 109-110]. This directly contradicted the ancient laws of the Steppe. Biy courts could not issue sentences with corporal punishment or the death penalty. The volost ruler put sentences into execution, and prisons were created in district centers [Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR..., 1957: 389]. Documents show that the majority of cases considered by volost biys were related to horse theft [Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR..., 1957: 115]. Merchants and traders could also apply to biy courts for cases with Kazakhs, and Kazakhs were allowed and even encouraged to apply to Russian district courts too.

The religious affairs of the Kazakhs were removed from the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly and transferred directly to the control of local district and regional authorities in the Ural and Turgay regions [RGIA. F. 1291. Op. 82. D. 10. L. 7-7 ob.]. Only military governors could appoint or dismiss them from office [Traditsionnoe kazakhskoe obshestvo..., 2014: 344]. The Governor-General personally gave permission for the construction of mosques [Dobrosmyslov, 1902: 452-453]. In general, control over religious life belonged to the powers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs [RGIA. F. 821. Op. 8. D. 602. L. 112-112 ob.]. The same situation developed in relation to other peoples of Central Asia [Mukhamedov, 2016: 112]. It is known that Kazakhs previously often applied to higher authorities with requests to open a separate Spiritual Directorate [RGIA. F. 821. Op. 8. D. 602. L. 100 ob.] and appoint their own mufti [RGIA. F. 821. Op. 8. D. 602. L. 103.], but these efforts were unsuccessful.

In each volost, Kazakhs could elect only one mullah from their community. Therefore, in the subsequent period, many unauthorized mullahs and imams often appeared in many auls, not officially approved by the authorities. The Statute prohibited unauthorized construction of mosques and religious schools (madrasas), as well as waqf and fundraising for the maintenance of mosques and mullahs. Afterwards, such restrictive measures led to the fact that Kazakhs opened schools and mosques without permission. Sometimes this was done with the aim to prevent peasant settlers from entering Kazakh lands [RGIA. F. 821. Op. 133. D. 500. L. 184 ob.]. Under the new regulation, Kazakh communities did not have the right to force a fellow tribesman to contribute money for the maintenance of mosques if he did not want to. The prosecution of cases involving the murder of newly baptized Kazakhs was considered by military courts [Istoriya Kazakhskoi SSR..., 1957: 393]. The imperial government viewed the Hajj as harmful to state interests because of possible influence on domestic Muslims from Turkey [RGIA. F. 821. Op. 133. D. 458. L. 93-93 ob.]. In addition, the Steppe Commission, not without reason, thought about converting the Kazakhs to the Orthodox faith. Thus, during the period from 1855 to 1860, missionaries in the territory of the Junior Zhuz managed to convert 127 people to Orthodoxy [Vosstanie 1869 goda v Zapadnom Kazakhstane..., 2025: 20].

An active process of assembling the new administrative staff began to implement the new Regulation [Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie kazakhskogo naroda..., 2019: 144]. However, the liquidation of the sultan-rulers' power and the introduction of the Reform were predominantly colonial in nature. They caused disagreement among the local population and often led to social unrest, especially in the Ural and Turgay regions.

The Outbreak and Course of the Uprising in Western Kazakhstan. The Kazakhs met the tsarist reforms in the Ural and Turgay regions with open dissatisfaction. An anti-government movement was brewing. The uprising arose spontaneously and lasted from December 1868 to October 1869. Obviously, it had a pronounced anti-colonial character.

Prominent clan leaders and, partly, sultans who were losing their power stood at the head of the uprising. Consequently, Kazakhs did not receive the government commissions. As contemporary records state: «The crowd made demands to the commission, stating that it did not want the new regulation, did not want to have Russian chiefs, but desired to leave management, as before, through the sultans and the old tax. The persuasion of the commission members had no success. The Kirghiz not only did not listen to the exhortations, but also did not allow any of the persons sent by the Commission to reach the main leader of the movement, Mullah Ikhlas Dosov, openly declaring to the envoys that they would defend the old order with weapons in hand. Day by day, the unrest begins to spread. The Kirghiz begin to move from words to actions – numerous detachments are formed. In the Ural region, such bands were met almost everywhere, and in the Turgay region – along the Ilel and Khobda rivers. The bands continuously communicate with one another, intending to act identically in all places where the movement appeared, and, furthermore, they try to attract the distant Kirghiz who nomadize near the Aral Sea and on the Ustyurt Plateau. Ural Governor Verevkin, convinced that it was impossible to introduce the new regulation by peaceful means, asked the Governor-General to take measures to suppress the unrest by military force. However, at first he received a refusal, because the regional commander had not yet lost hope of introducing the regulation without resorting to extraordinary and harsh measures. On the other hand, the Governor-General at that moment did not have sufficient military resources, plus it was the time of the spring mud season, which was completely unfavorable for troop movements. In addition to all this, there was nowhere to get transport resources, because they could be given in sufficient numbers only by the same Kirghiz. An official sent to hire camels and drivers in the Bukey Horde could not achieve a sufficient result, because the local Kirghiz, sympathizing with their trans-Ural kinsmen, avoided the attractive offers of the official and, to get rid of the authorities,

donated 400 camels. But drivers could not be found for any money. The Ural Cossacks also donated 70 camels and several zholomeikas (light tents)» [Dobrosmyslov, 1902: 461-464].

The actions of the rebels began with disobedience to the authorities, and a little later the people began to actively arm themselves. The insurgents stated that they did not want the introduction of the new regulation and did not want to have Russian chiefs, demanding a return to the old sultan system. To pacify the disgruntled nomads, the government used former sultan-rulers M. Tyaukin, M. Baimukhamedov, and A. Seidalin. However, the people did not listen to them, because they were completely discredited in the eyes of the common people. Then the authorities turned to representatives of the Muslim clergy of the Ufa Province, who also remained unheard. Rumors spread actively among the population that the new order would lead to the adoption of Christianity, military service, and an increase in taxes.

Printed versions of the new Regulation were almost absent, and the representatives of the commission sent to the Steppe could not clearly explain the essence of the innovations. The unrest that started in the Ural region gradually moved to the neighboring Turgay province. A Kazakh detachment numbering 600-700 men rode through the auls, calling for disobedience to the authorities and refusal to accept the reforms. Attempts to calm the Kazakhs by peaceful methods did not lead to the desired results. In May 1869, punitive detachments totaling 1700 troops with heavy artillery were sent into the Ural Steppe. All these circumstances led to a military clash between the Kazakh population and government detachments.

By December 1868, special commissions were formed to establish the new volosts in different areas of the former three parts of the Junior Zhuz. These commissions included some biys and sultans loyal to tsarism. In the Ural and Ilets districts, five volosts were opened practically without pain by February 1869 [TsGA RK. F. I-25. Op. 1. D. 319. L. 21-22, 27-32, 35-37.]. There were also some representatives of local Kazakhs who sent «letters of gratitude» for the introduction of the new order. Thus, on February 26, 1869, one such appeal appeared from the Kazakhs of the Nikolaevsk district to Emperor Alexander II, expressing gratitude for the introduction of the new administration in the Steppe [Vosstanie 1869 goda v Zapadnom Kazakhstane..., 2025: 73].

At the same time, rumors began to spread rapidly in the area of the Bolshaya Khobda River that under the new regulation, Kazakhs would be converted to Christianity, recruits would be drafted into the army from them, and their ancestral lands would be taken away. As it later turned out, these actions were mainly backed by representatives of the sultan class, who under the new regulation were equal to commoners. In particular, some of the first to oppose the innovations were the sons of the late Sultan Aryngazy (who died in 1833 in Kaluga) [OGAoo. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8320. L. 18.], Sultan Kanaly Arystanuly, the highly influential Major General Mukhamedzhan Baimukhamedov [OGAoo. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8239. L. 1.], and Sultan Shangerei Bokeev (a descendant of Zhangir Khan) [OGAoo. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8239. L. 90-93.].

The tsarist government had well-founded fears regarding the former sultan-rulers, such as M. Baimukhamedov and A. Seidalin. In relations with them, tsarism resorted to measures such as promising them positions under the new conditions and even threats [OGAoo. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8239. L. 12-14.]. Therefore, some sultans had to stand on the side of the imperial government, although they experienced strong pressure from the rebels. Thus, on March 17, 1869, the rebels gave a strict ultimatum to Sultan Mukhammed-Kazy Aryngaziev, asking him not to help the Russian military detachment and threatening to kill him otherwise [Vosstanie 1869 goda v Zapadnom Kazakhstane..., 2025: 90].

Leaders of individual clans, influential biys, and elders also began to oppose the new order, gathering hundreds and thousands of dissatisfied people around them. Thus, in early January 1869, the famous biy Munaitpas Botenbekuly called a large council at his winter quarters in the Beskopa tract near the Bolshaya Khobda River, where hundreds of Kazakhs from all over the area arrived [OGAoo. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8273. L. 2.]. The meeting discussed the question of further actions, and based on its results, a clear decision was made to oppose the new order and, to begin with, to go to the southern regions, near the Zhem (Emba) River and further to Ustyurt.

After the council organized by the influential ishan Ykylas Dosuly, the unrest began to intensify, primarily due to fears of the local population being converted to Christianity [OGAoo. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8273. L. 3.]. Armed groups of Kazakhs up to 700 men began to appear to defend their faith [Zhetpisbai, 2025: 83], armed resistance to the new order began, and armed people surrounded the arriving officials. Major General N.A. Verevkin, the Military Governor of the Ural region, received reports that the Kete and Zhylykshy Tabyn clans of the Junior Zhuz, numbering about 5000 households across the Ural and Turgay provinces, stood against the new government [OGAoo. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8239. L. 5, 16.]. The same situation

developed in the territory of the Ilets, Kalmykovsk, and Guryev districts, and soon the representatives of the commission were forced to return to Orenburg [OGA.OO. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8320. L. 20.].

On January 16, 1869, an appeal appeared from the Acting Military Governor of the Ural region, N.A. Verevkin, to the insurgents with a call to stop opposition, but it brought no results [Vosstanie 1869 goda v Zapadnom Kazakhstane..., 2025: 38].

Discussion. The 1868 innovations caused deep disruption because, compared to the internal provinces of European Russia, the new administrative apparatus in the Steppe relied far more heavily on military rather than civil authority. The core catalyst for the popular anger was the comprehensive transformation across various aspects of nomadic life. The socio-political landscape highlights that this was a deliberate institutional structural conflict. The sudden demotion of the hereditary elite to the rank of common bureaucrats shattered the historical hierarchy, turning structural displacement into armed mobilizations.

Military Engagements. The rushed and poorly prepared implementation of the New Statute quickly provoked open popular unrest, which rapidly escalated into an armed struggle. The Kazakh uprising erupted along the Bolshaya Khobda and Ilek rivers – the natural border separating the Ural and Turgay oblasts – before sweeping south toward the Zhem River, the Ustyurt Plateau, and as far as Khiva. The Ural Region emerged as one of the primary hotbeds of resistance. On May 6, 1869, near Lake Dzhaman-Sai, an insurgent force of 20000 Kazakhs ambushed and besieged a detachment led by von Stempel. The siege lasted for seven days, forcing von Stempel to retreat to the frontier line after losing all his forage and provisions. A second detachment, commanded by Yurkovsky, similarly sustained losses and retreated toward the Orenburg border line.

By early June 1869, the unrest in the Ural Region reached its zenith. The fury of ordinary nomads was directed not only at imperial troops but also at factions of the indigenous nobility who had acquiesced to the New Statute. The rebels targeted the auls of these loyalists first. Between March and June 1869, insurgent detachments, totaling roughly 3000 warriors, executed over forty raids against the auls of biys, sultans, volost rulers, and starshinas.

The sheer scale of the uprising across the Turgay and Ural regions alarmed both local administrators and the central government in St. Petersburg. To crush the rebellion, the imperial center dispatched massive punitive forces mobilized from St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkov, and Kazan. The total strength of these punitive troops reached approximately 5000 men.

Amidst these mass demonstrations, a profound social polarization occurred, pitting the traditional sultan class against the influential clan biys who had accepted positions as volost rulers and assistants to district chiefs. This alignment reflected a calculated strategy by the colonial authorities to permanently dismantle the historical hegemony of the Chingisid aristocracy by empowering a new bureaucratic elite. One of the principal ideologues of the uprising was Sultan Syzdyk, a son of Khan Kenesary. On September 20, 1869, Sultan Syzdyk Kenesarin dispatched a letter to the batyrs and biys of the Aday clan, urgently rallying them to coordinate their operations against the implementation of the New Statute [Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie kazakhskogo naroda..., 2019: 149]. Fearing for their lives and property, the newly appointed volost rulers frequently petitioned the regional administration for permission to retreat, along with their extended families, behind the safety of the Frontier Line [Vosstanie 1869 goda v Zapadnom Kazakhstane..., 2025: 106].

By early 1869, the insurrection had engulfed the entirety of western Kazakhstan. Insurgent detachments launched raids against Cossack settlements along the New Line, targeting the Novoietskii outpost and Burannaya stanitsa. Furthermore, the rebels did not confine their hostilities to the auls that had explicitly endorsed the New Statute; they also aggressively raided communities that refused to join the ranks of the rebellion.

The Suppression of the Uprising. To crush the insurrection, the imperial government deployed regular military forces. The primary army formations began advancing into the Steppe in May 1869. Specifically, authorities dispatched several military columns into the Ural and Turgay regions under the command of F.K. Stempel, N.A. Verevkin, Yu.A. von Borch, and P.I. Krutorozhin. Armed with dozens of artillery pieces, these government forces totaled over 3000 soldiers, confronting an insurgent force that had swelled to 20000 men.

Faced with the overwhelming pressure of well-trained imperial troops, the rebels were forced to retreat and, in many instances, disband. By early July 1869, Kazakh leaders began sending emissaries to General N.A. Verevkin, signaling their readiness to accept the Provisional Statute [RGVIA. F. 846. Op. 16. D. 6826. L. 20.]. The tsarist government offered conditional clemency, promising to pardon rebels who abandoned

the uprising and returned from the southern regions. Rather than facing immediate courts-martial, these returning nomads were referred to special commissions of inquiry for adjudication [OGA.OO. F. 6. Op. 10. D. 8239. L. 407-408.].

Archival estimates indicate that over 20000 families migrated to the southern regions during the conflict, though the majority eventually returned. Due to the sheer scale of these forced displacements, the 1869 struggle embedded itself deeply into collective memory, where it became known as «El Aua» (The Mass Migration of the People), while the year itself was dubbed «Aua Zhyl» (The Year of Migration).

The fates of the uprising's leaders varied tragically. Ykylas Dosuly, one of the primary architects of the rebellion, was forced to flee to the Ottoman Empire. Berkin Ospanuly migrated with his auls to Tajik lands and eventually onward to Afghanistan. Seil Turkebaiuly from the Ural Region and several of his close associates perished in imperial prisons. Meanwhile, Kanaly Arystanuly, who had been sentenced in absentia to fifteen years of penal servitude, managed to secure a full imperial pardon after providing critical assistance to Russian forces during the Khivan Campaign of 1873 [Karataev, 2006: 49].

Khiva's Attempted Intervention in the Uprising. As soon as rumors of the steppe unrest reached Khiva, the khanate began actively instigating the Kazakhs to expand the rebellion. In early January 1869, a delegation from the Shekty and Tabyn clans – spearheaded by prominent biys and batyrs Zhanibek Barakuly, Aldash Baiganauly, Azbergen Munaitpasuly, and Nazar Esetuly, the son of Eset Kotibaruly – arrived at the court of the Khivan khan to formally request military assistance. In response, looking to counter the escalating military and political pressure from the tsarist government along the Khivan-Kazakh frontier, the Khivan khan mobilized a 6000-man army in April 1869 [Sereda, 1891: 80-81]. This force, composed of Turkmens, Karakalpaks, Sarts, and Uzbeks, deployed near the borders of Khiva and the Kazakh lands. That same month, this Khivan expeditionary detachment, equipped with four artillery pieces, appeared in the Shoshkakol locality. The geopolitical objectives of the Khivan expedition were threefold: first, to dismantle the imperial steppe fortifications; second, to absorb the Kazakhs into Khivan vassalage; and third, to assess the zakat (Islamic tax) to be levied upon them. The Khivans brought substantial funds and numerous robes of honor (khalats) to co-opt local clan rulers. However, they failed to secure enthusiastic support among the broader Kazakh population. After remaining stationed near the Emba post for nearly a month, the detachment was forced to retreat back into Khivan territory.

Historically, the Khivan domains had served as a strategic rear area for insurgencies within the Junior Zhuz. By late 1869, approximately 7000 Kazakh households crossed into Khivan territory and swore allegiance to the khan. The Khivan khan accommodated these insurgents, allocating lands and distributing gifts, titles, and military ranks, while exempting the refugees from all taxes. Sultan Syzdyk Kenesarin, who commanded a joint force of 7000 Khivans and Turkmens, actively patronized the newly arrived Kazakhs. These migrant communities began returning to their native lands only in the spring of 1870. A decisive factor prompting the insurgents' repatriation was a calculated move by the Orenburg administration, which proclaimed an official amnesty for those who returned voluntarily, while threatening to permanently redistribute the lands of holdouts to loyalist clans faithful to the tsar.

Khiva's geopolitical maneuvers were further neutralized by direct diplomatic pressure from the Governor-General of Turkestan, K.P. von Kaufmann. On August 12, 1869, he dispatched a stern warning letter to the Khivan Khan, Muhammad Rahim, urging him to maintain peaceful relations with Russia and immediately cease all support for the rebellious Kazakhs [Vosstanie 1869 goda v Zapadnom Kazakhstane..., 2025: 159].

The Mangystau Uprising. The implementation of the New Statute severely exacerbated agrarian and land grievances among the Aday clan on the Mangyshlak Peninsula. On March 15, 1870, the Mangyshlak bailiff (pristav), Lieutenant Colonel Rukin, accompanied by a detachment of thirty-eight Cossacks and four artillery pieces, marched toward the Kurup tract to intercept migrating auls. Rukin traveled alongside several influential, pro-imperial clan rulers; however, his military foray into the Steppe served as the immediate catalyst for a full-scale rebellion. In the Buzachi region, under the leadership of Dosan Tazhiuly and Isa Tlenbaiuly, approximately 200 armed Kazakh warriors mobilized. In the ensuing clash, the insurgents completely decimated Rukin's detachment. The wounded lieutenant colonel subsequently committed suicide. This initial victory galvanized the insurgents, causing the rebellion to rapidly engulf the entire peninsula. Kazakh workers at the local fisheries in the settlement near Fort Aleksandrovsky and the Nikolaevskaya stanitsa abandoned their labor en masse and began seizing boats. Utilizing the vessels captured in Sarytau Bay, the Kazakh workers formed an impromptu flotilla, which later participated in the siege of Fort Aleksandrovsky. This maritime operational strategy became a complete tactical and psychological surprise

for the Russian imperial military command, which had historical experience fighting nomadic groups only in the open steppe spaces. By using these captured merchant and fishing boats, the local Kazakh rebels effectively stopped the fort's main sea supply lines and completely blocked imperial logistics for several weeks. This grassroots naval mobilization allowed the insurgents to control near-shore movement and stop the arrival of military orders. The situation became so critical that the regional colonial authorities could not rely on land troops alone and had to urgently send heavily armed warships from the Caspian military fleet to break the naval blockade and suppress the revolt on the peninsula.

The number of active insurgents soon swelled to 10000 men. In April 1870, they launched coordinated assaults on Fort Aleksandrovsky and the Nikolaevskaya stanitsa. Although the rebels managed to burn down the lighthouses near the fort and destroy the Nizhnee fortification, heavy imperial artillery fire ultimately forced them to retreat. This surge of unrest triggered acute alarm not only among local colonial administrators but also within the central government in St. Petersburg.

The rebellion coincided with a period of significantly heightened British geopolitical influence in neighboring Iran. Preparing for an impending military campaign against the Khivan Khanate, the tsarist government had been concentrating troops near Krasnovodsk. The outbreak of the Mangystau uprising effectively placed a volatile center of resistance squarely in the rear of these imperial forces. Consequently, St. Petersburg tasked the Viceroy of the Caucasus with suppressing the rebellion. In late May, massive military reinforcements were sealifted from the Caucasus to Mangystau. Despite the fierce and self-sacrificing resistance of the Aday Kazakhs, the uprising was brutally crushed, as tsarist troops relentlessly hunted down the remaining insurgents across the peninsula.

Causes of Defeat and Consequences of the Uprising. Ultimately, a combination of poor organization, fragmented spontaneity, and strategic discord among individual leaders doomed the insurgency to failure. As seen in previous uprisings, inconsistent tactical operations and the betrayal of several starshinas, who had only temporarily aligned with the movement, facilitated a relatively rapid pacification by imperial forces. The resistance remained fundamentally localized. The Kazakh population proved unable to present a unified front, as a significant faction of the tribal aristocracy withheld support from the rebels. By this juncture, the tsarist regime had already effectively encircled Kazakhstan on all sides with an extensive network of military fortifications.

The imperial response to the insurgents was unyielding and punitive. Authorities systematically exiled those who opposed the innovations beyond the borders of the Steppe. Archival data illustrates the compounding scale of these expulsions: in the 1880s, approximately 500 individuals were deported from the Turgay Region only, a figure that surged to nearly 3000 by the 1890s. The imminent threat of state retribution forced the rebel leaders and their remaining adherents to migrate into the domains of the Khivan Khanate. However, even this flight offered partial refuge; many of these expatriates were subsequently apprehended and sentenced to long-term penal servitude (*katorga*).

Conclusion. To sum up, despite the brutal suppression of the insurgencies by regular military detachments and the subsequent migration of thousands of households, the resistance left an enduring imprint on collective memory. These events forced the tsarist administration to realize that it had to evaluate the mood of various social strata across the Kazakh Steppe, showing that colonial authorities needed to approach institutional transformations with greater caution to prevent further volatility. Ultimately, the resistance exposed the structural boundaries of forced imperial integration and firmly established the joint military-civil apparatus of colonial administration in the region.

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RGIA – Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv [Russian State Historical Archive]

OGAOO – Ob'edinennyi Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Orenburgskoi oblasti [United State Archive of the Orenburg Region]

RGVIA – Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv [Russian State Military Historical Archive]

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