

The 1822 Statute of Siberian Kirgiz and the Beginning of Russian administrative system in the Kazakh Steppe

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Abstract

The 1822 Statute of Siberian Kirgiz marks the beginning of the direct Tsarist rule through bureaucracy on the Kazakh Steppe. Later on, the Statute of Orenburg Kirgiz in 1824, and other important statutes promulgated in 1867/68, and the reformed statutes on Turkestan and the Steppe Provinces in 1886/1891, all modeled on this initial 1822 Statute. First of all, it established an administrative system, which aimed at absorbing the Kazakh tribal elites to constitute local governing bodies. Additionally, based on the vertical management, the Tsarist legislators paid attention to demarcating and maintaining administrative divisions among districts (okrug) and parishes (volost'), in order to prevent the emergence of a trans-regional nomadic polity. Moreover, according to the 1822 Statute, the provincial and district governments would encourage sedentarization of Kazakh nomads, which was the fundamental approach to diminishing the military potential of nomadic pastoralists, by means of land development projects, tax breaks, education and social security policies. In the nutshell, the 1822 Statute, designed by Mikhail Speransky, is a groundbreaking move in the institutional history of the Tsarist rule on the Kazakh Steppe.

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