

T. Alimbaev<sup>1</sup>, A. Utebaeva<sup>1</sup>, N. Akhmetzhanova<sup>1</sup>, A. Asankanov<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Ye.A. Buketov Karaganda State University, Kazakhstan;*

<sup>2</sup>*Kyrgyz National University of Yu. Balasaguni, Kyrgyzstan  
(E-mail: Arik309@mail.ru)*

## **The environmental situation and the environmental movement in Kazakhstan**

The article analyzes the ecological movement in Kazakhstan in 80–90's of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. On the basis of the study of ecological associations' Charters there were identified the main directions of this movement. It is a protection of the natural environment, the ecological consequences of unreasoned construction projects, long-term practice of placement and exploitation of large industrial enterprises, regardless of their impact on the natural conditions and human health, the mass movement for the closure of military sites. In the development of the ecological movement were shown two trends in Kazakhstan in the 70–90's. The first trend has evolved under the influence of public-political and economical structures that sought to attract the masses to the solution of ecological issues, determined by the state. For this purpose there were assigned specific legal rules in the state-legal mechanism which ensure the participation of every person in the solution of nature conservation goals. The second trend in the development of the ecological movement is associated with the part of society that is more aware of the nature and risk of further deterioration of the ecological situation, acted with more radical demands and criticism of state policy. This part of the movement was of autonomous and independent nature from the state and political structures and has appeared in Kazakhstan after events of December 1986. However, the ecological movement in the 80's and 90's did not change the character and character of the relationship between society and nature.

*Keywords:* natural resources, the ecological crisis, the ecological movement in Kazakhstan, the main trends and stages of environmental ecological movement, industrial enterprise, military polygons, people's health, ecology and politics.

Environmental movements appeared in the West in 60–70s. Million people, hundreds of national and local public organizations participated in them. An active part in environmental, antinuclear movement take the youth which enhances social critical and anti-monopoly tendencies. The important part in environmental movement belongs to scientists. In many countries there are special Green parties which grow stronger and active to fight to prevent environmental disaster and missile nuclear war. In our country only in the end of 80s when the government started to reduce total control in all the areas of life there was a legal opportunity for independent public associations of people worried about specific problems. Rapid growth of mass political activity after long silence led to creation of new public organizations and associations in huge amount.

The end of 80 – beginning of 90s is a process of socialist camp destruction and finally collapse of the USSR. All these processes in the recent past have great importance for the world history. Exactly, in the end of 80s of XX century political situation in the most world changes, there are changes in social and economical, political and public life. In the article there are considered some historical problems of creation and evolution of environmental movement in Kazakhstan in 80–90s of the past century.

There were two main tendencies in development of environmental movement in Kazakhstan in 70–90s. The first tendency evolved under the effect of state political and economical organizations which tried to attract mass to solve environmental problems determined by the government. To reach this goal in the state legal mechanism there were determined special legal standards which ensure participation of every person to solve environmental problems.

The second tendency in development of environmental movement is related to that part of society which mostly realizes the matter and danger of further exacerbation of environmental situation and offered more radical requirements and critics to governmental policy. This movement was independent of the state political structures and appeared in Kazakhstan after the situation in December in 1986. The events in December 1986 in Almaty and some regions of Kazakhstan were the first attempt to use the right nominated by restructuring for free expression of civil and political position. There was a splash of mass political participation of population's different social segments in republic.

Since November 1989 till March 1990 there were more than 100 legal and illegal public organizations in republic which were mostly clubs as councils, groups and associations. The centers of political activity were Almaty, Aktyubinsk, Karaganda, Ust-Kamenogorsk where we could count about ten similar organiza-

tions and among them environmental organizations as «Green front» (Almaty), «Biosphere» (Leninogorsk), «Green movement» (Zhambyl) and others [1; 5].

In that period development of public initiative was concentrated on actual environmental problems of that time as Semipalatinsk ground, Priaraliye and other. Creation of environmental movement in Kazakhstan is a natural result of democratic, public process, growth of population social activity. Public organizations appeared from the bottom, both small groups as well as huge in amount of members and great public legal and illegal movements.

Public environmental organizations had different forms of activity which approved their easy adaptability to different situations. They were not limited only with requirements of nature conservation but tried to widen their influence on formation of positive environmental policy by labor groups and different public organizations, deputy system.

In the last period, especially in 1990–1991 mobilization ability of environmental organization and their authority grew up as well as the amount of members in environmental movement. Consolidation of communications among groups of different orientation was successful because of the development process of Green ideology which was introduced to the population mentality by active political members due to the socialist system crisis and ideology of Marxism.

Political parties appeared in the end of 80s – beginning of 90s in Kazakhstan were Socialist party of Kazakhstan, Party of National Congress of Kazakhstan, Unity «National Unity of Kazakhstan», Republican Party of Kazakhstan, party of national liberty «Alash», social democratic party of Kazakhstan, party of Democratic progress of Kazakhstan, national democratic party «Zheltoksan» which included environmental problems to their programs and environmental terms appeared in their lexicon [2; 22–79].

Why could environmental movements get leading positions in a wide range of alternative movements in Kazakhstan? There were some reasons for that. In Kazakhstan injurious actions of ministries and departments, looting of natural sources, poisoning of atmosphere, soil, reservoirs reached great rates. Even mass media and official power had to sound alarm interpreting these processes on their own.

In consequence of unreasoned economical policy and realization of «century projects» appeared serious environmental disaster which covered almost all the territory of Kazakhstan. Activity of military departments did the great damage. For republic it turned to the problem of Semipalatinsk ground, tragedy of Aral, biological ground of island Vozrozhdeniye, grounds in Western and Central Kazakhstan.

Environmental movements became the reaction to the crisis in Kazakhstan of that period and which covered not only economical but also other aspects of life of socialist society. Environmental movements developed in situations when the environmental balance of all the planet was under the threat first time during all the historical period.

There was an alarm for the coming environmental disaster, sharp rejection of crisis development consequences of the latest period, sense that it is impossible to wait the decision of problems from the people above and there is a necessity to act without leaving the decision of problems for tomorrow. That is the main factor for creation of environmental movements in Kazakhstan.

The history of environmental movement with its specification and problems repeated the history of environmental movements of European countries in some way. Until the 70s small amount of active environmental associations supported only nature conservation. First organizations to protect environment appeared in the beginning of 70s. The titles of these organizations show that their attention was concentrated mainly on the problems of national landscape and nature conservation but the problems of environment were not considered a lot. Only in 80s when active urbanization and industrial influence on environment began there was some change in activity of environmental organizations.

Multiple conflicts which happened not only in the enterprises but also in the society made activists consider new problems related to the environment, fight against pollution, worsening of living conditions in the city.

Society pays a lot of attention to the environmental problems which is considered according to social and urban points but not only nature and landscape.

In that period awareness of negative environmental situation and related to it social and economical problems promoted to creation of different independent environmental formations in Kazakhstan. Environmental groups were created around some problem spontaneously which started with collection of signs, letters of protest, requests to official departments.

The next step is creation of independent surveying and desire to show the results to many people. That made an opportunity to use more active forms of protest with support of population as rally, picketing of of-

ficial departments or blocking of dangerous environmental objects. Despite diverse social and professional structure environmental organizations expressed interests of the most social layers of republic and high educational level of many members let them concern and aware environmental problems better.

According to the regulations of environmental organizations they can be divided to three directions.

The first direction is nature conservation. In 1987 at the initiative of famous poet of Kazakhstan M. Shakhanov there was created public committee on the problems of Aral, Balkhash and ecology of Kazakhstan which was supported by republican society. As a volunteer public organization the committee combined scientists, writers, artists. Their main aims were such as formation of objective social opinion about the situation in Aral, the lake Balkhash and other unique natural complexes. Another aim was organization and realization of change the position of society to the problems of Aral, environmental crisis in republic, social mobilization for active operations to realization of governmental and public structures solutions directed to safe unique natural sanctuaries of Kazakhstan.

At the initiative of the committee there were organized many events the funds of which were transferred to Aral Fund such as poetic nights with famous poets of Kazakhstan and other republics, Environment Round Table, «Days of Aral» in Moscow. Since 1988 there were held charity television marathons «Help Aral» which collected 40 million rubles only in 1988 [1; 8].

At committee there was organized Public Academy on the problems of Aral and environment of Kazakhstan. As actions of the committee got large scale, in 1991 its status was approved as International public committee «Aral-Asia-Kazakhstan». Besides its daily work on realization of help to population of Aral, refugee from the region of Aral, public committee does active international functions, in 1991 it prepared and held all-Union and International conference on the problem of Aral. Also it strongly fought for the save of Aral, for improving environmental and social situation in Priaraliye. To reach this goal there was founded International nomination of Aral which was given to scientists and public activists, organizations which contributed a lot to solve the problem of Priaraliye.

In 1991 at the initiative of public committee «Aral – Asia – Kazakhstan» Global Infrastructure Fund chose Aral basin as an object which requires total help [2; 22–79].

At creation of Public committee of saving Aral and Balkhash functioning of local power departments to save water sources of Kazakhstan became more active. Green organizations made different events trying to pay attention of population to environmental problems.

In Eastern Kazakhstan region hundreds of enthusiasts worried about disastrous state of river Irtysh in 1989 created public committee to protect Irtysh. In address taken there were formulated aims and tasks of new public organization. Following information was told there as «Environmental research shows that Irtysh is too close to disaster. The main reason of that is inept, unreasonable, environmentally incorrect managing» [3; 21.].

Because of departmental approach for using natural sources and development of industry in Irtysh region negative environmental consequences became huge. There appeared threat to existence of ecosystem in the mouth of Irtysh, fish, people's health, nature. In Irtysh basin many meliorative lands are flooded, boggy, salinized, left a turn and lost their productivity because of soil and natural changes. [1; 15].

In Kokchetav region there was the unity «Borovoye» which combined scientists and engineer technical employers of the city Shchuchinsk.

Tasks of the unity were such as conservation of ecosystem in Borovoye resort, conservation and rational use of region's forests [1; 19].

Environmental consequences of unreasonable construction projects, long-term practice of location and operation of large industrial enterprises without considering its influence on the nature and people's health caused organization of many independent unities for environmental conservation. Different public committees, groups, sections started to fight for removal of such enterprises from the city, their reshaping or closing which was the second direction of environmental movement in Kazakhstan.

In Aktyubinsk region there were created two unions as «Aktyubinsk ecologist» and public committee for nature conservation of the Northern region of Aktyubinsk [4; 143].

In its program «Aktyubinsk ecologist» considered making control of obeying environmental legislation by enterprises and organizations, making public discussions of construction projects, popularization of environmental knowledge. Amount of members is more than 500 people.

Public committee for nature conservation of the Northern region of Aktyubinsk considered learning of all the aspects of nature conservation in the Northern region of Aktyubinsk in its program. The committee

demanded obeying the environmental legislation from the pollutant of the Northern industrial area of the city.

There were created 10 nature protection organizations by 1990 in the Eastern Kazakhstan region.

The main aim of the group «Alternative» created with employees of Ulbinsk metallurgic factory (main part consisted of 25 members) was awakening of public consciousness and strengthening of public opinion on regional environmental problems. It was very bright especially in the period of election campaign for promotion of national deputies in Kazakh SSR and local councils. As the result there was organized practical majority in the city council which supported concrete measures on environmental problems in the region. The program of group functioning corresponded to the declaration adopted on meeting which occurred in Ust-Kamenogorsk in September 1988. Meeting made the concept where some part of claims were related to the competence of Government and central departments and another part was related to those measures which can be done by common efforts. In Eastern Kazakhstan region there was created local department of environmental fund. The aim of that organization was assistance to all the forms of environmental activity. There were also created such organizations as «Ecology», «Omir» which made equipment checkout, adjustment of car engines in order to reduce toxic emissions, produced systems of control for the atmosphere, planted trees to create green area in settlement [1; 22].

In 1989 Green organization of Sokolovsk-Sarbaysk mining and processing factory made a campaign in order to forbid construction work of the object where it was not considered set of dust removal device, there was organized independent environmental assessment which showed discrepancy of environmental safety. As a result construction of that workshop was stopped [5].

The third direction of environmental movement in Kazakhstan is mass movement for closing military grounds, paying of compensations, compensation of material and ecological losses to population.

Huge territories were occupied by military bases and grounds situated in the territory of Kazakhstan. Military industrial enterprises caused a loss to nature, polluted environment, test flights of rockets and supersonic military aircraft caused damage to ozonosphere.

During some decades statistics of nuclear detonation was hidden from the population. In the territory of Kazakhstan nuclear detonation took place since 1949 till 1989. According to official republican data, there were 470 nuclear detonations for 40 years, 90 of them are airy, 26 are land and 354 are underground. According to Russian data, in Semipalatinsk ground there were 125 atmosphere nuclear tests since 1961 including 100 airy, 25 land and 348 underground tests. In official data nuclear pollution of the territory occurred mainly as a result of air and land detonations and due to escaped gas fraction from 69 underground detonations [1; 47].

Data analysis of incidence and mortality of this area showed negative influence on the ground functioning. Activity of surface contamination made 11,6 thousand curie, 12,87 million curie of underground, so quota of underground contamination was more than 99,99%.

In some regions of Kazakhstan in 60s–70s there were made underground nuclear detonations as it was claimed later in order to learn the opportunity of using atomic energy for needs of national economy.

Nuclear detonations for needs of national economy in Atyrau and Eastern Kazakhstan regions since 1972 took place 10 and 7 times corresponding to regions, three times in Mangystau, two times in Southern Kazakhstan region and one time in Turgay, Kustanay, Aktyubinsk regions [1; 48].

In Urdinsk of Eastern Kazakhstan region there is military ground where took place tests of aircrafts and rockets, in this region there were some nuclear detonations. And researches had another characteristic comparing to Semipalatinsk. There were studied the ways of delivering nuclear charges to aircrafts and rockets. Starts were done from Kapustin Yar — this ground is now well known.

Most of detonations were done in the air, great part was infected with radioactive wastage. There were found serious chemical wastage of soil and water.

In Dzhezkazgan region it was created the movement «Ylytau». Activists were against the construction of military grounds and other military objects, for closing Baikonur Cosmodrome, made some discussions the main aim of which was attraction of general public to the problem of closing military grounds, compensation of moral and material losses to population, environment caused by grounds and Baikonur Cosmodrome.

Residents of the village Azgir of Tengiz in Mangystau region in June 1990 organized meeting the result of which was the demand to the Government to close military ground working since 1966 and make guilty people to renovate lands suffered from military tests, make the analysis of detonations influence on people's health and environment [1; 51].

Therefore, totally in republic in the period researched environmental movement became more active, in all the regions appeared environmental groups and organizations which had aims to improve environmental situation in the some region and totally in republic. In these years public initiatives on nature conservation, saving nature sanctuaries, unique natural territories were very popular. Ecologists fought for air purity, water purity in industrial cities of republic, against departments and ministries which constructed industrial enterprises without considering their influence on nature, environment and people's health. Especially movement for closing military grounds, compensation of material and environmental losses to population were very popular and gained big scope.

However, environmental movement in 80-s did not change the idea of society treatment to environment. Department's interests continued to appoint the idea of production forces development, irrational way of using sources. One of the bright examples of that regularity is the problem of Balkhash lake. Despite convincing arguments of scientists, members of the movement to protect Balkhash, the Government supported antiecological project on construction of Kapchagay water reservoir in 1970. As a result, the great damage was caused to Balkhash lake.

The growth of environmental activity of population demanded adequate activization of nature protection bodies. However, despite the active participation of public in discussion and solving environmental problems nature protection committee were very passive reducing their activity to use ways of administrative influence to breakers of nature legislation, updated forms and methods of work very slowly, lagging behind the growth of social and ecological activity of mass.

### References

- 1 Текущий архив Министерства экологии и биоресурсов Республики Казахстан // Годовой отчет за 1991 г. — 80 с.
- 2 Политические партии и общественные движения современного Казахстана: Справочник (Вып. 1). — Алматы: КазГУ, 1994. — 365 с.
- 3 Государственный архив Южно-Казахстанской области. — Ф. 123. — Оп. 5. — Д. 867. — Л. 21.
- 4 Доклад: Состояние природной среды в Казахстане в 1989 году. — Алма-Ата: Гос. комитет КазССР по охране природы, 1990. — 184 с.
- 5 Центральный государственный архив Республики Казахстан. — Ф. 1485. — Оп. 1. — Д. 246. — Л. 38.

Т. Алимбаев, А. Утебаева, Н. Ахметжанова, А. Асанканов

### Қазақстандағы экологиялық жағдай және табиғатты қорғау қозғалыстары

Мақалада XX ғ. 80–90-жж. Қазақстандағы экологиялық қозғалыс талданды. Экологиялық бірлестіктердің жарғыларын зерттеу барысында бұл қозғалыстың негізгі бағыттары айқындалды, олар: табиғи ортаны қорғау, дұрыс ойластырылмаған құрылыс жобаларының экологиялық зардаптары, адамдардың денсаулығы мен табиғи ортаға ірі өнеркәсіп орындарының әсерін есепке алмай, оларды орналастыру мен пайдаланудың көпжылдық тәжірибесі, әскери полигондарды жабу бойынша бұқаралық қозғалыстар. 70–90 жж. Қазақстандағы экологиялық қозғалыстардың дамуында екі тенденция байқалады. Бірінші тенденция мемлекеттік-саяси және экономикалық құрылымдардың ықпалымен дамиды, олар мемлекет анықтаған экологиялық мәселелерді шешуге бұқараны тартуға ұмтылды. Осы мақсатпен мемлекеттік-құқықтық механизмде табиғатты қорғау міндеттерін шешуге әрбір адамның қатысуын қамтамасыз ететін белгілі заңдық нормалар бекітілді. Экологиялық қозғалыстың дамуындағы екінші тенденция мемлекеттік саясатты сынаумен барынша радикалды талаптармен шыққан, экологиялық жағдайды одан әрі ушығу қаупі мен мәнін көп жағдайда саналы түрде түсінген қоғамның бір бөлігімен байланысты. Қозғалыстың бұл бөлігі мемлекеттік-саяси құрылымдардың тәуелсіз және дербес сипатқа ие және Қазақстанда 1986 ж. желтоқсан оқиғасынан кейін пайда болды. Алайда 80–90 жж. экологиялық қозғалыстар табиғат пен қоғамның қарым-қатынасының сипаты мен мәнін өзгертпеді.

*Кілт сөздер:* табиғи ресурстар, экологиялық дағдарыс, Қазақстандағы экологиялық қозғалыс, өнеркәсіптік кәсіпорындар, адамдардың денсаулығы, экология және саясат.

Т. Алимбаев, А. Утебаева, Н. Ахметжанова, А. Асанканов

## Экологическая ситуация и природоохранное движение в Казахстане

В статье рассмотрено экологическое движение в Казахстане в 80–90-х годах XX столетия. На основе изучения уставов экологических объединений выявлены основные направления этого движения: охрана природной среды, экологические последствия непродуманных строительных проектов, многолетняя практика размещения и эксплуатации крупных промышленных предприятий без учета их влияния на природные условия и здоровье людей, массовое движение по закрытию военных полигонов. В развитии экологического движения в Казахстане в 70–90-х годах проявлялись две тенденции. Первая тенденция развивалась под воздействием государственно-политических и экономических структур, которые стремились привлечь массы к решению экологических вопросов, определяемых государством. С этой целью в государственно-правовом механизме были закреплены определенные юридические нормы, обеспечивающие участие каждого человека в решении природоохранных задач. Вторая тенденция в развитии экологического движения связана с той частью общества, которая в большей степени осознавала суть и опасность дальнейшего обострения экологической ситуации, выступала с более радикальными требованиями и критикой государственной политики. Эта часть движения носила самостоятельный и независимый от государственно-политических структур характер и появилась в Казахстане после декабрьских событий 1986 г. Однако экологическое движение в 80–90-х годах не изменило характера и сущности отношения общества и природы.

*Ключевые слова:* природные ресурсы, экологический кризис, экологическое движение в Казахстане, промышленные предприятия, здоровье людей, экология и политика.

### References

- 1 The current archive of the Ministry of Ecology and Biological Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Annual Report for 1991, 80 p.
- 2 Political parties and social movements of modern Kazakhstan: Manual (Issue 1), Almaty: Kazakh State University, 1994, 365 p.
- 3 State archives of the South Kazakhstan region, f. 123, inv. 5, f. 867, p. 21.
- 4 Report: State of the natural environment in Kazakhstan in 1989, Alma-Ata: The State Committee for Nature Protection of the Kazakh SSR, 1990, 184 p.
- 5 Central state archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, f. 1485, inv. 1, f. 246, p. 38.