Domestic Space and Household Culture of the Children of Soviet Kazakhstan, 1950s–1970s

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Abstract.
The aim of the article is to analyse the household relations and everyday life of the children of Kazakhstan in the post-World War II period until the 1970s, and their impact on shaping the worldview of the future "builders of socialism". The authors explore certain elements affecting the formation of the child's emotional world through the study of material and social components of the child's domestic space. The domestic space of the studied period was a unique phenomenon. It was a combination of the national rural traditions and the elements of urbanized culture, individualism and collectivism, and privacy and publicity. Based on their research findings, the authors come to the conclusion that the children's domestic space of that time was characterised by the lack of many necessities and amenities, but, nevertheless, the majority of the interviewed respondents consider this period to be one of the best in their lives.
Keywords: everyday life, domestic objects and amenities, children's domestic space, home, family celebrations.

Introduction.
In the studies on the projects of "Soviet childhood" in Kazakhstan, a special attention is paid to the official state policy, which determined the basic rules for the development of the Soviet childhood model. At the same time, it is also necessary to consider the informal foundations for the daily life of ordinary children of that time. Our study focuses on reconstruction of the children's everyday world thorough considering material and social components of their domestic space. The relevant information was never recorded in official sources, so we attempted to do it based on the methods of oral history. During the interviews, it was found out that the respondents could easily recall the details of their home life, including domestic objects and amenities.

The study of the history of childhood in the period of the 1950s–1970s makes it possible to analyse the formation and development of Soviet people in the epoch of developed socialism. Moreover, it allows determining how that process was influenced by such realities of that time as school, family, public organizations and the domestic space. According to N.L. Pushkareva, "the attention of a historian of everyday life is always focused not only and not just on domestic objects and amenities, but on life problems and their understanding by those who live nearby or lived before us <...> they (historians of everyday life – author's note) understand everyday life as not only <...> living and working conditions and housing <...> but also the whole range of relevant relationships" (Pushkareva, 2004). In the modern historiographic discourse, the concepts of everyday life and the space of everyday life are broadly defined, including not only surrounding material objects but also social relationships and the intellectual and emotional background. These factors together create the "lifeworld" that influences the process

of forming the child's social conceptions (Balashov, 2003, p. 4; Rozhkov, 2014, p. 24). In this paper, we explore children's everyday life, focusing primarily on material components of their domestic space.

Literature Review. Soviet historians rarely studied the issues related to domestic space. Some data can be found in the published studies on the living conditions of the working class and peasantry. During the period of building the socialist society, everything related to everyday life remained a controversial issue. However, L.D. Trotsky (1923) and A.V. Lunacharsky (1927) emphasized its importance. During the 1960s–1970s, the material and living conditions of the Soviet working people improved significantly in comparison with the post-war period. The achievements in the development of socio-economic and cultural relations were described in the studies of historians, sociologists and economists.

Later, during *perestroika*, and especially in the post-Soviet period, research papers on the daily life of the working people of the Soviet epoch began to appear. In 1986, E.M. Zuykova in her book "Everyday Life and Household Relations during the Socialist Period" stated that "under the conditions of socialist society, everyday life was increasingly acquiring social content" (Zuykova, 1986, p. 8). The new attitudes prevailing in historical science of that time made it possible to take a critical perspective on Soviet realities and the standards of living. Different aspects of social interactions, influence of politics on everyday life and the quality of life in the urban and rural areas were considered by Yu.V. Aksyutin (2004), E.Yu. Zubkov (1999), A.V. Pyzhikov (2000) and other scholars.

E. Balashov (2003) pays a special attention to children's public and domestic space in the school and pre-school environments, stating that during the Soviet period, there was a task of "creating an entirely new school environment and developing a comprehensive system of measures aimed at shaping a completely new psychological type of people, with new attitudes and social behaviour". The study by T. Smirnova (2015) focuses on the life and daily routines of homeless children and those from orphanages, revealing problematic aspects of the "happy Soviet childhood".In recent years, a number of scholars have focused on the issues related to Soviet childhood in their doctoral theses and academic papers: M. Perova (2021), S. Shmelev (2019) and V. Korenyuk (2017).

Foreign researchers are also interested in this topic. C. Kelly (2003) explores the place of children in the Soviet state and their civil status. L. de La Fe (2013) and H. Freeman (2012) consider the authenticity of a phenomenon of «happy Soviet childhood» and the place of communist ideology in the everyday life of Soviet children and in ideas about it. Swedish scholar Y. Gradskova (2007) also pays attention to the Soviet everyday life of the 1930s–1960s. Focusing on daily routines, she explores the attitude towards female beauty and motherhood in the Soviet Union.

Our research is based on the principles of the history of everyday life and the use of microhistory methods. This humanitarian style of historiography is associated with the founders of the "Annales School" M. Blok and L. Febvre, who studied the history of mentality and laid down the basis for the new social history. A. Lüdtke (2010) and C. Ginzburg (2000) proposed a different research approach to the history of everyday life, which focuses on microhistory, examining the mentality of a "little man" and analysing the life of ordinary people. A.Ya. Gurevich (1984), Yu.L. Bessmertny (1991), N.L. Pushkareva (1997) actively used the methods of the German historiographs in their studies of everyday life, especially when exploring routines and objects of the domestic space. American cultural anthropologist M. Mead (1983) was one of the first to provide a scientific basis for the history of childhood as an integral part of the history of everyday life. Further development of this field of science is associated with the name of Ph. Ariès (1999), whose work contributed to the growth in popularity of the topic of childhood among the researchers in the post-Soviet space.

Materials and Methods. Our research for the article complies with the principles of historicism and scientific objectivity. We use historical and comparative analysis to demonstrate the perception of the image of childhood in the official representation and in real life. Based on oral history methods, we recorded interviews with respondents with personal experience of the studied period of national history. For our article, we use interviews with the respondents born in 1940–1979, which were recorded in 2011–2021. In total, 100 interviews were conducted, and the fragments of 13 of them were analysed.

The interviewed respondents were divided into three groups: The first group includes the people who grew up in the city of Alma-Ata, the capital of the Kazakh SSR. The respondents of the second group spent their childhood in provincial towns, and, finally, the third group includes the residents of rural areas. The interviewed respondents are of different nationalities. By social origin, they are from families of employees, workers and peasants. Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview respondents from the families of high-ranking officials. There were two thematic questionnaires. The first focused on school studies and leisure activities, the second — on the domestic space (home, food, clothes).

It is well known that human memory is selective — people do not remember everything about their past. We also understand that in such interviews we have to deal not only with personal memories but also with "postmemory" — the information that a person received from others, but perceives as part of own memory. Both personal memories and "postmemory" are of equal value for our research. Moreover, the respondents, unwilling to present themselves in a bad light, were not always frank enough.

Our analysis and interpretation of the questionnaires allowed reconstructing both some unusual situations and the typical life of Soviet children. The use of the typological and systemic methods of historical analysis made it possible to structure the material and to determine the regularity and typicality of the episodes of children's daily life. The used research methods were aimed to explore the relationship between the material dimension of the domestic space and the child's perception of the world, and between the child's everyday life presented by Soviet ideology and the reality.

Results. The majority of interviewed respondents describe their childhood with warm feelings, recalling their home and family and the time when they were children. The population in the Kazakh SSR during the studied period was multinational. At that time, the Kazakh SSR was the only republic in the Soviet Union in which the indigenous ethnos did not constitute the overwhelming majority, and there was a significant ethnic diversity, which left its mark on the everyday family life — almost all respondents point it out.

Describing their domestic space, the majority of respondents state that in the Soviet society there were no drastic differences between social statuses of different families (poverty or prosperity). The urban infrastructure was more advanced, had better amenities and required less effort in daily activities. People living in rural areas lacked access to many basic amenities, and besides, they constantly had to maintain their personal subsidiary farms, where they had vegetable gardens, cattle, etc. In urban settings, the child's family most often lived in an apartment building. Comparing the descriptions of household routines and daily life in provincial towns and villages with the respective memories of the respondents who spent their childhood in Alma-Ata in the post-war period, we find both common features and differences. Most of the respondents lived in communal (shared) apartments or private houses, even in regional centres. When describing their homes, they rarely focus on overcrowding or inconvenience, although, judging by their recollections, the living conditions of many of them were rather modest. Soviet children rarely had some private space, i.e. their own rooms.

The home interior decoration and furnishing were usually quite simple and modest. The majority of respondents say that there were only some essential items in their homes: iron beds, tables and chairs.

There were certain differences in furnishing in urban and rural households. The respondents whose childhood was spent in rural areas more often mention items of handicraft furniture in the national style in their recollections of home furnishings. The furniture of the urban families was mainly factory-made, and the first domestic appliances — refrigerators, TV sets and washing machines — also first appeared in urban households.

As for the children's toys, clothes and food, there was no greater variety of them during that period. However, the clothes of children from urban settlements and those from villages had significant differences, both in the material and the style and manufacturer of the goods. Changes in the ethnic composition of Kazakhstan population greatly influenced daily routines, primarily with respect to the menu variety.

Discussion. The lack of social contrast in the perception of everyday life in the respondents' recollections can be explained, first of all, by the fact that the interviewed respondents mainly grew up in ordinary families of workers and peasant rather than high-ranking officials; another essential factor is the specific feature of autobiographical memory, smoothing out many contradictions of the past. The majority of the interviewed respondents grew up in traditional two-parent families in good and secure childhood conditions, surrounded by loving and caring parents and other relatives. Perhaps that is why many of them remember their childhood as a happy period of their life. In opinion of M.V. Romashova (2006), this perception of childhood could also be influenced by such propaganda clichés as "Thank you for our happy childhood" or the generally accepted notions of childhood as the most carefree and joyful time.

Presenting the interview materials in this article, we do not claim to cover all the issues related to the domestic space and daily routines, but we consider they can help to get a general picture of household relations in Kazakhstan during that period. The domestic space for children is a small copy of the big world, the acquaintance with which they begin in the family. Child psychologists state, "At the same time, the domestic order, as the presence of internal principles of the world organization, is of great importance for the child's psyche. In any case, home becomes for the child a subconsciously perceived mental model of the world order. This is a kind of primary cultural space, with which the child gets acquainted, intuitively absorbing its way of life and adopting the principles of its structure. They would remain some kind of coordinates in the system of which the child is inclined to think and act" (Osorina, 2010, p. 42).

Characteristics of the child’s domestic space depended mostly on such factor as the place of living. Despite some attempts to implement the policy of closing the gap between urban and rural living conditions, which were carried out in the 1920s and 1930s, the difference in economic, social and cultural development of urban and rural areas was still significant.

At that time, people in the villages and *auls* (traditional rural settlements) of Kazakhstan lived mainly in private houses. In the studied period of Kazakhstan history, most of the rural families were patriarchal and large, but the houses in which they lived were small, most often without any amenities. As one of the respondents recalls, "There were 5 brothers in my father’s family, and all of them went to the front. All of us, 8 children of those brothers, lived together in a small house near the railway station Matai. It was a simple house, no roof, 2 rooms. We

ate and slept in the same room" (Beysetbaeva, p. 1)."Our family with 7 children lived in the settlement of Dosovka. We had been living in a mud hut until I was eight years old. Then we moved to the four-room house built by the first Virgin Lands volunteers. There were just a few pieces of furniture, and only two iron spring beds in which we slept by twos. The rest of the family were sleeping on the floor, on the feather bed that my mum had made herself. All bed linen was sewn by our mother; the main problem was to find fabric, which was in great shortage" (Darmenova, p. 1).The further the settlement was from the regional centre, the worse the living conditions were.Thus, in collective and state farm branches located far from the farm centre, people lived in wooden houses. One of the respondents remember that in their two-room house used by the family with nine children, the only piece of furniture was a mirror. There was no table. The house was lit with a kerosene lamp (Kaliev, p. 1).

The housing situation in urban areas was complicated and had some specific features. Even in the pre-war period, there were discussions on the need to create a new type of housing for working families with the shared household and leisure premises. The concept could contribute to the formation of a "new type" of individual, with the respective new way of life and new leisure activities. As noted by E.M. Balashov, the main idea of the Soviet era was standardisation, which was supposed to apply to all the most vital aspects of life and, above all, to the typical dwelling and the average urban apartment. The same standards were used for furniture, clothes, household items and other consumer goods. As we know, since the mid-1950s, standardised four- or five-story houses with small apartments had been actively built in the cities of the USSR, including Kazakhstan. The government policy was to encourage mass-scale housing construction based on cheaper technological solutions. In the decree "On development of housing construction in the USSR" (1957), clauses 29 and 30 focused specifically on the construction of panel apartment blocks. The first of them stipulates that, beginning from 1957, "it is necessary to provide for the arrangement of economical and comfortable family apartments in the dwelling houses built both in urban and rural areas". That was a chance for many families to have apartments of their own. "I was born in the city of Almaty. I don't remember the address, but, apparently, it was housing provided by the factory, as my grandmother and mother told me. It was a barrack with one corridor, on the sides of which there were rooms for the families of factory workers. But later, in 1965 or 1966, my parents received a three-room apartment in the Sairanmicrodistrict. We had three rooms (a sitting room and two bedrooms) and a kitchen (Nurgalieva, p. 3).For example, as one of the respondents recalls, "My stepfather worked as a pilot. They gave him an apartment there. In one of the wooden houses. A large apartment. A room, kitchen and a small corridor. It looked like a royal mansion for us. Because housing situation was tight at that time. Most people lived in barracks" (Artsishevsky, p. 2). The barracks, as well as adobe houses, were constructed as temporary solutions to housing problems in urban areas. These cheap buildings had been in use until the 1970s. The barracks were long multi-apartment blocks with a corridor-centred layout. They had stove heating, but had neither water supply nor sanitary conveniences. With all that lack of basic amenities, they temporarily solved the problem of housing shortage. Those difficulties did not embarrass the Soviet people and did not cause any negative reaction, as almost everyone lived in the same conditions. They were happy to have a roof over their heads, even without amenities. This social phenomenon of "the historical habit of living in poverty" adversely affected the Soviet social policy, as thus the government abused the people's patience (Saktaganova, 2017, p. 160).

Communal apartments constituted an attempt to introduce elements of a new way of life into housing, based on the principles of socialization. The socialist attitude to daily life presupposed "rationality and the maximum emancipation of the individual from things"(Barysheva, 2015, p. 210). The collectivist way of life was supposed to have a positive effect on the growth of national income and an increase in the material well-being of the Soviet people. Therefore, home in those recollections is not only a specific place of living but also a whole world whose inhabitants had to live together. There are some descriptions of a difficult communal co-existence and "everyday struggle for living space". The relations with neighbours could be founded either on mutual compromise or, on the contrary, on communal quarrels that resulted in a "kitchen war". Nevertheless, most narrators recall the friendly collective life with nostalgia. None of the interviewed respondents had an own room. They could share the room with sisters, brothers or grandmothers. One of them recalls, "And in our room there was our mother's piano, occupying half a room, and a large bed in which my sister and I slept together" (Khodzhikova, p. 8).

The furniture assortment was very limited at that time. As noted by Zh. Abylkhozhin, "The volumes of consumer goods manufactured in the sphere of production did not correspond to the level of demand among the population whose incomes had increased significantly as a result of a number of measures. Thus, in 1960 only 35.5 thous. washing machines, 127 thous. electric irons, 1.2 thous. convertible sofas, 14 thous. sideboards, 0.6 thous. wooden beds and similar amounts of other goods were produced for the population of Kazakhstan of almost 10 million people" (Masanov et al., 2000, p. 334). It was difficult to buy necessary items for furnishing the apartments. Many respondents recall that the furniture in their houses was made by hand or to order. "Our Grandpa made the stools, he also made a big table in the kitchen; at that time Grandpa was a good carpenter, a true craftsman. The father was also a craftsman" (Verveykina, p. 3).

Kazakh families had round tables with short legs and tin-lined wooden chests for storing clothes and other goods. For the Kazakh people, a chest was an integral part of a girl's dowry. On the day of bride's send-off, her

relatives put her clothes and jewellery — and some bedding on top of them — into her dowry chest. She took her dowry to the house of her future spouse. The chest was locked, because it usually contained things that were "forbidden" for children in everyday life, such as chocolates, Indian tea and cube sugar. There was a shortage of goods in the country, and, as it was not always possible to buy so-called delicacies in a local store, people bought these things in big quantities to be stored for future use.

A traditional Kazakh round table had short legs (up to 35 cm) and could be easily moved. As there was not enough space, in the evening they made a bed in the same place where the table stood during the day (Beysetbaeva, p. 2). It must be pointed out that social contrasts and differences played a secondary role for the children of that time. In the post-war period, wealth and prosperity were more the exception than the rule. Another household item in any rural house was a stove. "We did our homework on the floor because we didn't have a special desk for that. However, we were the first to get a gas stove. Earlier we had cooked our food in a *kazanok* (middle-size cooking pot) in the old stove. The pumpkin porridge cooked like this was very tasty (Darmenova, p. 2).

As mentioned by Zh. Abylkhozhin, urban families most often had modern, factory-made furniture. The 1960s were marked by the beginning of the production of various consumer goods, many of which were a novelty for Soviet people. Thus, a very popular item of furniture was a so-called *servant* (sideboard), on the glazed shelves of which the best dinnerware for guests was stored. At that time, the families in the urban areas still had the same iron beds as the rural families. However, they began buying some new things, like bookstands, bedside tables and cupboards with table sets used on the most solemn occasions.

According to the respondents' recollections, TV sets were still very rare in the 1960s, especially in rural areas, and the families owing them were often visited by neighbours and their children."We got a TV set in 1961; I clearly remember my father going on business trip to Petrozavodsk and bringing a small TV set from there. We watched it "in colour" — the colour was gained with a film with three stripes: at the bottom there was a green stripe (like grass), then a yellow one (like daylight), and at the top the film was blue (like sky). So, we watched everything through that film, and it seemed to us that we were watching colour television. When we watched TV, our neighbours joined us, we mostly watched football and hockey — my mother liked hockey" (Usenova, p. 4). Another respondent comments, "So, I can proudly say that at that time in this village in which we lived (it was a settlement of Radio Centre No. 1), there were only 3 TVs, and our family had one of them. My grandfather's brother gave it to us when he was leaving for Russia. Therefore, there were some interesting stories, when half of our neighbours gathered in front of the TV to watch some interesting program or some kind of sporting event. I repeat once more — there were only three TV sets, so people from other families came to watch TV, discuss programs, etc." (Ulitin, p. 3).

Interior decorations were often improvised; women, especially housewives, were skilled in needlework, embroidery and knitting. As one of the interviewed women recalls, "Window curtains made of tulle were rare; after the war, there were no chandeliers, there was nothing, there weren't even lampshades. My mother always dreamt of having a lampshade. My father worked at *Kazaptekoupravlenie* (Kazakhstan pharmacy office), they received all kinds of drugs and cotton wool in fabric wrapping. It was called *obmotki*, and it was of some soft cotton sheeting. People ripped open the seams and used the fabric for crafts. One we visited somebody and saw there an orange lampshade with tassels. Mum saw it and said, "It's so beautiful!" It turned out they had dyed the *obmotki* fabric with the red streptocide. On one of our walls, I remember, there was an embroidered cat — a cross-stitch picture of a cat playing a ball of yarn; it was hanging over my bed. Everyone tried to decorate [home] in some way. My brother painted a picture; he painted very well in oils. He painted this peak. It is very good picture, it was hanging over our parents' bed. Then there was a picture called "Our Hut" painted by my brother in oil on canvas. Curtains of embossed linen were hanging on the windows; they used to belong to UlyanaSemyonovna. There was a very beautiful cross-stitch linen towel embroidered by my grandmother, my father's mother" (Verveykina, p. 4–5). As a rule, Kazakh families tried to preserve and use elements of national culture in the interiors. Even if they owned modern furniture and decorations, their apartments also had low round tables, Kazakh-type chests, cradles (*besik*), various felt rugs (*tekemet-koshma* with appliqué made of the same wool, but dyed in a different colour; *kyiz* — a simple felt rug; *syrmak* — a high-quality felt rug with inlaid patchwork); and various woven carpets (*alasha*) and high-pile carpets" (Saktaganova, 2017, p. 168).

The lack of clothes and toys encouraged both parents and children to make creative alterations and repairs, and create things with their own hands. "There were no dolls like Barbie now; we were drawing our dolls ourselves. All the girls were drawing some dresses. Then, in the 1950s, they began publishing fashion magazines. We copied dresses from those fashion magazines. And then we exchanged them" (Khodzhikova, p. 3). Another respondent, who lived in a rural area, recalls, "At that time, our toys were "toys" in name only. We found a suitable board and tied a thick wire to it — thus we got skates on which we skated and played on ice. In spring, we collected cow hair and made a ball of the hair with a stone in the centre — thus we got a ball for playing "run-and-run" (Zhakupov, p. 9).

Another respondent recalls, "You know, I had few toys; I remember, when I was a child, my aunt came — I believe she was from Siberia — and brought me a set of dishes. I valued those dishes so much, because nobody in

the neighbourhood, in the whole street, had such toys. If I brought those dishes somewhere, I kept a jealous eye on them to be sure that everyone was careful with them. My grandmother made a rag doll for me. So, we mostly had such primitive toys and made dolls for ourselves from different materials — for example, from corncobs. I remember we removed the corn silk and made a doll, making a skirt of fabric scraps for such corn doll. As for the first doll that I received as a present... It seems I had a great interest in dolls, so when I was fifteen years old, I asked to give me a doll, and they brought me a really beautiful, interesting doll, it was my first real doll, let's put it this way (Polyakova, p. 4).

A specific feature of the Soviet society was that permanent repairs as a creative process and the way of life were typical not only for poor people— it was a common shared experience of the majority of the population. This sphere of activity was a zone of individual control, creation of the own symbolic order and autonomy from the state (Gerasimova, 2004). The family shaped the child's mental representations and influenced socialization, and their domestic space contributed to this process. Traditional family values of the Kazakh people were preserved and passed on through generations. This fully applies to absolute authority of the father and respect for elders. Accordingly, smoking and alcohol consumption among children and adolescents were extremely rare, especially at home.

The needs of the Soviet people were growing, and everybody wanted to wear good-quality clothes, to be able to buy a party dress, a warm winter coat, good shoes, and comfortable and beautiful children's clothes, but the light industry had difficulties with providing the population of that huge country not only with beautiful and fashionable clothes but even with the most essential goods. Not that the shops in urban areas were completely empty — the goods began to appear there in the 1950s, but that was not enough, and the clothing lacked variety in colours and styles. At that time, the system of trade and catering was still poorly developed. The established retail sector was characterized by a monotonous and meagre assortment of goods, constant queues and intermittent supply. The population, especially in rural areas, was in dire need of basic consumer goods, especially clothing and footwear. It was not so easy to go and buy comfortable and beautiful ready-made clothes of good quality. Everything was in short supply. All respondents mention the absence of children's clothes in shops and say that it was very difficult to buy them. The problem of clothing shortages was mainly solved by creating things with the own hands, or, for example, through humanitarian aid coming mainly from the United States and Great Britain. One of the interviewed women recalls, "*Kazaptekoupravlenie* (Kazakhstan pharmacy office) received parcels with the inscription 'Gift of the American people to the Soviet people'. The parcels began coming immediately after the war end. The infant undershirt in the photo where I am seven months old is from such parcel. Once a parcel came with two packages, which contained not only clothing for adults but also children's clothes. At that time, there were two families with newborn babies among *Kazaptekoupravlenie* employees — our family had me and another had a son. The boy's father received boy's clothes, and my parents — girl's clothes" (Verveykina, p. 2). All respondents, speaking about their clothes, recall, first of all, that their mother, grandmother or someone else sewed clothes for them. "My grandma sewed dresses for me. It was a yoke dress, gathered below like this, loose-fitting, with puffed sleeves. All my dresses were like this — of different fabrics like calico or staple but the same style. She sewed those dresses in summer. And just for running and sunbathing there were no sundresses and blouses, I was running in my panties in a country style, well, until everything was shaped here. I was running in my panties all the summer" (Bolsanbek, p. 3). The respondents describe their appearance, especially clothes, always mentioning their neatness and cleanliness. Mothers strictly monitored the state of children's clothing — families, unable to buy new goods, often transferred clothes from older children to younger ones. "We were modestly dressed, of course, but our parents did their best; our grandmother Lyatipa was a dressmaker sewing for all kinds of artists, so she made clothes for us from some fabric scraps. We were wearing them in turn: I was wearing them, then my sister, our neighbours and our relatives. My cousins and second cousins remember that they were wearing my clothes. That's how we lived at that time" (Khodzhikova, p. 7). Buying a new piece of clothing, whether it was a tracksuit or a new coat, was a big deal for most children. When buying clothes for children, parents were guided by such criteria as "durability", "stain resistance" and, of course, "low price". According to some research findings, expenditures for the purchase of clothing, footwear and fabric varied from 18% to 23% of the family budget. According to official reports, the low share of this category of expenditures was related to poor performance of the state trade, which was typical not only for Kazakhstan, but for the Soviet Union as a whole. However, there were also other reasons: generally low standards of living of the population and insufficient development of the light industry in the whole country. Due to the inertia of the post-war period, people were buying, first of all, essential goods, i.e. food, and only then — "if there was anything left" — other necessities (clothes and footwear). The insufficient development of the light industry and the lack of choice also negatively affected the demand in this expense category. The psychology of people remained the same as in the post-war decade: "that'll do as long as there's something to wear" (Saktaganova, 2017, p. 194).

Almost all respondents from rural areas mention that leather and sheep's wool were used to make clothes. Besides, children from villages had national traditional elements in their clothes; many respondents remember that they were wearing national clothes made by their grandmothers and mothers. However, buying clothes in shops was

a special experience for them. The clothes of representatives of different social strata with different opportunities were different, clearly showing the level of income of a particular family. Contrary to all declarations, the economy was developing not in the interests of the people, but rather for its own needs.

Most of the younger children spent their preschool years at home. Their families took care of them on their own, because there were few kindergartens and nurseries, as we have already mentioned. None of the interviewed respondents who lived in rural areas attended a kindergarten. Mothers usually became housewives; if the mother worked, then grandmothers, sisters, brothers or relatives from an *aul* were raising children in the family, or, when the family income allowed, they used the services of nannies. Babysitting is another part of Soviet history that has fallen out of the collective memory. Since the network of preschool childcare institutions was poorly developed, and some families could not afford it, part of representatives of the post-war generation spent their preschool years with nannies, who were practically family members. Hiring servants or nannies was not particularly rare in the post-war period. Of course, only well-to-do families could afford them, often hiring representatives of ethnic minorities (Germans, Tatars, Bashkirs, Ukrainians, etc.) exiled from various regions of the USSR to Kazakhstan. Surprisingly, in the Soviet years, domestic servants — at first glance, a typical example of "bourgeois exploitation" — never disappeared and were actively hired by the new Soviet nomenclature elite. As one respondent recalls, there was an elderly German woman living with their family, who helped his mother take care of his younger sisters. His father was a high-ranking official, serving as the second secretary of the district party committee (Ibraev, p. 7).

In large families, the functions of nannies were more often performed by older children, who were therefore maturing faster: "As I was the eldest, I was looking after my sister, and when my sister grew up, we were both looking after the younger brothers" (Bolsanbek, p. 5). Despite their early maturing, children were still children, who wanted to play and spend as much time as possible with their friends. "At the age of 10, I already knew how to do everything. I was doing the laundry and could cook. What else could I do? I was the oldest. At first, I had only one sister, then the second appeared, then the third. I saw my mother cooking. Nobody taught me. I was just looking and doing the same. Of course, we were playing games: cops and robbers, hide-and seek. We had childhood, but it was parallel to other things in some incomprehensible way. We went swimming. We made a dam on the main *aryk* (aqueduct). We were swimming and sunbathing. We climbed into gardens to steal apples" (Artsishevsky, p. 6–7).

Another distinctive feature of the post-war family life was the early involvement of children in household work, because their families were in straitened circumstances, and their parents needed help in housekeeping. If the family had only one child or was comfortably off, the children were not particularly busy with housework. Still, labour education was part of the Soviet concept of childhood. In those families where the need was acute, children were working "in an adult way."

Another feature of domestic life and family relationships was the absence of constant parental supervision over children. There were many reasons for this lack of control, but the main reason was that the parents were constantly at work or busy with housekeeping: "Mum was leaving for work at half past eight, returning from work at half past six. We had a hired nanny, an old woman who tried to put my sister to bed until late evening. Sometimes she wasn't able to do it" (Artsishevsky, p. 6).

All respondents, with a few exceptions, mention their early independence. Today they recall that their parents did not keep a close watch over them or "lecture" them all the time. However, as they grew up, adult members of the family, who explicitly or implicitly guided the process of their socialization, influenced their development. To a certain extent, this testifies to the children's spontaneous socialization, influenced by various factors and, in the opinion of many respondents, primarily by the parents' example: "I saw all the time that my parents were doing something. Children were not instructed: there was no need to say 'you must do this or that'" (Verveykina, p. 8).

Family education lays the foundation for the system of individual needs and motivation. In the post-war years, the prevailing model of roles distribution in family life was patriarchal, especially in rural areas: the father was in charge, and the mother was assigned the function of raising children. The process of urbanization was transforming these relationships. In families with a higher social status, responsibilities for decision-making and raising their children were increasingly shared more equally between the spouses. Therefore, in the recorded interviews we can find descriptions of both patriarchal families (in which even children sometimes addressed their fathers and mothers very formally) and egalitarian ones. The choice of educational strategies, i.e. a system of punishments and rewards, also depended on the relationship pattern in the family. In semi-patriarchal families and in those families that did not practice egalitarian relations with children, parents punished their children more often. Almost none of the respondents mentions any special encouragement from their parents. They all speak about punishment and often provide vivid and humorous descriptions of the methods used by their parents. All education strategies applied by the parents were aimed to instil certain qualities in their children.

Nutrition is an integral part of everyday life. After the rationing system was abolished in 1947, the situation with the food supply began changing for the better.The home meals were pretty unvaried. According to K.K. Abdrakhmanova (2017), who studied meals of that time, "bread, baked goods, potatoes and cereals accounted for the largest share of all consumed food products. The diet poor in meat, dairy products, vegetables and fruits, which are the main sources of protein, vitamins and minerals, had an adverse impact on the health of the population. At the

same time, bread, flour, macaroni, vegetable oil and butter, sugar and tea were in short supply" (Abdrakhmanova, 2009, p. 100).

The so-called "autumn preparations" (homemade dried, preserved and canned food) helped to diversify the home meals. Almost every family canned vegetables and fruits. Most often, they salted cucumbers and tomatoes, made sour cabbage and berry jams. The holiday menu differed from everyday meals. In Kazakh families, *beshbarmak* (boiled meat with noodles) was a traditional festive dish.

Most of the population had extremely limited opportunities to eat varied and high-calorie meals. During the studied period, unvaried and low-calorie foods prevailed in the nutrition structure, which is confirmed by the recollections of the respondents. Children from rural families were in better situation, as those families had subsidiary plots. "We always kept poultry: geese and ducks. Meat was always on our menu. We cooked soups and *beshbarmak*, mainly from lamb. We all consumed a lot of dairy products, cottage cheese and clarified butter. Apples and other fruits were available, but we had to grow and preserve vegetables. Cabbage was fermented in barrels to be eaten in winter. We collected wild cherries and strawberries. We preferred drying berries rather than making jams" (Darmenova, p. 1).

During the period of the so-called "stagnation", the food situation began to improve. The research findings show that there was a smooth (no more than 2% per year) increase in calorie intake in the period from 1961 to 1970, with the stabilization at a level of more than 3300 kcal per day after 1972. In total, the calorie content of the average diet increased by 9.1% during the studied period. At the same time, there was a certain qualitative improvement in the diet of the USSR population: the share of animal source foods increased from 21% to 25.7%. The periods of 1965–1968 and 1973–1975 demonstrated the most active growth in the proportion of animal source foods in the typical diet. Thus, during the studied period, the average Soviet diet approached the maximum recommended consumption level for non-strenuous manual labour (Mendkovich, 2021). Still, the diet remained rather simple. In particular, AigulOspanova recalls, “We had an ordinary diet. In the mornings, my grandmother always got up with us and made tea before we went to school. We ate bread and butter and tea with sugar lumps. Each of us was given 10 kopecks, for which we could buy a pie and *kissel* (starchy jelly) or tea at school. For dinner, we always had tea and potatoes cooked in a large frying pan. The potatoes were fried in tail fat" (Abdrakhmanova, 2017, p. 62).

The multinational composition of Kazakhstan population also influenced their diet, which was significantly enriched with dishes of various ethnic groups. Accordingly, those who came to live in Kazakhstan also learned to fry *bauyrsaki* (fried dough) and cook *beshbarmak* (boiled meat with noodles). "We mainly ate simple food: soups, potatoes. When the first Virgin Lands volunteers arrived, we began cooking *borscht* (beetroot soup), and my mother learned how to make jam. And the Germans taught us how to cook such a dish as *shtrudli* (dumplings)" (Darmenova, p. 3).

The home atmosphere is largely made up of those daily practices and rituals that children are most likely not aware of when they are small. The "fabric" of the domestic space is woven from multiple small things and details. Its varied nature leaves its mark on the child's mind.

Conclusions.

The household conditions, created by the child’s close environment, and first of all parents and other relatives, influenced everyday life of the child. The family determined relationships between adults and children, created living conditions, defined the diet, provided clothing, leisure, etc. During the studied period, children’s living conditions and goods supply were improving, but they were still far from satisfying their needs. Moving from communal (shared) apartments and barracks to low-cost panel *Khrushchevkas* in urban areas, and from mud huts and wooden houses to brick houses in rural areas, demonstrated a qualitative improvement of the living conditions. The dwelling became a kind of social institution, used as a mechanism for the formation of the Soviet way of life. The quality of both children’s and adults’ diets was far from scientifically sound nutritional standards, which was caused by the extremely low standard of living of the population. Providing clothing for children was also a challenging task. The disposal income of an average working family was insufficient for the normal provision with all the necessary food and non-food items. The major share of the household income was spent on food. Accordingly, only a small amount was residually allocated for the non-food items, including furniture, clothes and footwear. The family budget deficit testified to the low standard of living of the population. The available funds were spent primarily on basic necessities, i.e. food and clothing. That was the minimum seemed necessary for human life. So, we can say that the lack of money and skimping on everything were essential characteristics in the everyday life of the Soviet people.

At the same time, the domestic space of the studied period, as a model of the world order, was a unique phenomenon. It was a combination of the national rural traditions and the elements of urbanized culture; the "old" religiosity and Soviet atheism; individualism and collectivism; and privacy and publicity. The forms of coexistence of the opposing principles varied in different families: conflicting in some of them and based on compromise in others. Before children went to school, only the family was responsible for their upbringing, so the child learned the first models of social behaviour through family relationships. The children could only understand their true nature and the surrounding world through the domestic space and objects, and through their early involvement in everyday

practices based on individual decisions and choice of coping or evasion strategies. The post-war domestic order contributed to children's early maturing, although much depended on parents, who tried to protect their children and provide them a "happy childhood" within the limits of their capabilities.

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