

Problems Of Studying the Everyday Life Of The Urban Population Of Karakalpakstan In The 1960s–1980s

Seydametova Gulnara Utarbaevna

Doctor of Philosophy in Historical Sciences (PhD), Senior Researcher at Department of History at Karakalpak Scientific Research Institute of the Humanities, Karakalpak Branch of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, Republic of Uzbekistan

Davletiyarov Madatbay Maxsetbayevich

Doctor of Philosophy in Historical Sciences (PhD), Senior Researcher at Department of Ethnography at Karakalpak Scientific Research Institute of the Humanities, Karakalpak Branch of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, Republic of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The author in referenced article had attempted to analyze the ways of formation the history of everyday life in world historiography to include fact that in France in the middle of XX century by efforts of representatives of the school of annals this area of history gained status of independent direction. In addition to this in article are considered the issues related to the development of this area of history in Germany and some other countries. Besides was conducted analysis of researches related to the history of everyday life in Russia at the End of XX – Beginning of XXI centuries.

It is noted that the study to everyday urban life in the economic, social and cultural conditions of Karakalpakstan mid-1960s, mid-1980s, will provide an opportunity to study the processes of formation of the social infrastructure of cities of Karakalpakstan

Keywords: Karakalpakstan, everyday life, urban population, social history, 1960s–1980s, modernization, urbanization, social infrastructure, cultural practices, Soviet period.

Introduction: Everyday Life History is a new approach in historiography, the subject of which is the sphere of human everyday existence within multiple historical-cultural and political-event contexts. The object of study for followers of this approach is the investigation of daily practices, including emotional reactions to life events and motives of behavior, which are repeated day after day, considered completely normal for the ordinary person, and essentially determining their style and way of life. According to researchers, the advantage of this approach is that the everyday reveals the life-world of the ordinary person in history, shows their role in social development, and their perception of social, economic, and political processes.

The concept of everyday life denotes the domestic side of existence, carried out from day to day, constant and unceasing. Everyday life is existence in its ordinary

understanding, with its cares, needs, habits, emotions, stereotypes of thinking, and perceptions of the surrounding environment with all its political, economic, and social components. As a scholarly approach to historiography, everyday life history is a kind of narrative discourse through the interpretation of social phenomena by the very participants of these processes.

In world historiography, everyday life history as a distinct field of history took shape in the second half of the 20th century. Although one of the first to address the problem of everyday life was the German sociologist N. Elias, whose research traditions continued in the works of H. Marcuse, P. Berger, and T. Luckmann. The theme of everyday life was also developed by American sociologists H. Garfinkel and A. Cicourel. The development of everyday life history was

also influenced by the ideas of American cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz.

Historians turned their attention to everyday life after the publication of works by M. Bloch, L. Febvre, and F. Braudel—representatives of the renowned school grouped around the journal *Annales*, founded in the 1950s. F. Braudel formulated a new approach to the study of social history, which consisted in a new understanding of the past as a “history from below.” Such an approach made the life of the “common man” the subject of historical inquiry.

A substantial body of historiographic material also exists among Russian historians. A group of historians from various institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, headed by Yu.L. Bessmertny and A.Ya. Gurevich, created a working group on the study of “everyday life history” and began publishing the almanac *Odyssey* and the yearbook *Casus*. In their publications of those years, they called for abandoning the study of only universal regularities in favor of more modest but, in their view, deeper investigations and historical reconstructions. However, according to researchers, Russian historiography has still not reached a unified understanding of the subject of everyday life history.

In Uzbek historiography of the independence period, the very formulation of the topic of everyday life is addressed in the articles of A. Dzhumashev and S. Shadmanova. The theme of everyday life is also linked to the monograph *Ethnocultural Processes in the Modern Multiethnic City*, which, on the basis of field research data, examines the demographic, migratory, ethnolinguistic aspects, as well as the family and social life of various ethnic groups in Tashkent during the independence period.

In the scholarly literature of Karakalpakstan from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, the central focus was on studying the party’s activities aimed at improving social and living conditions and raising the standard of living of the population. Researchers tended to exaggerate the growth of workers’ well-being while remaining silent about real problems in the socio-economic and everyday spheres. The main emphasis was placed on the so-called “consciousness of Soviet workers, their direct interest in the results of their labor, and their voluntary aspiration to build a bright future in the shortest possible time.”

It should be noted that in the 1960s–1980s, in the historiography of our region, ethnographers developed an approach in which *byt* (everyday life) came to be characterized as the daily way of life. This can be seen as the beginning of the emergence of the everyday life history direction in Karakalpak historiography.

Although an ethnographer studies *byt*, the historian of everyday life analyzes the emotional dimension of that *byt*: the experiences of individuals, their beliefs, habits, views, and worldview. In other words, the historian of everyday life focuses not merely on *byt* itself, but on the life problems and their interpretation by those who lived before us.

In traditional historiography of Karakalpakstan, everyday life as such is studied through the prism of family and household traditions in urban settings, in particular, the wedding, childbirth, and funeral-memorial rituals of the urban population of Karakalpakstan in the 1960s–1970s. At the same time, in Karakalpak Soviet historiography of the 1970s–1980s, a significant number of studies accumulated on issues of the material well-being of workers and peasants. Their development attracted the attention of economists, sociologists, and historians, which was reflected in historiographic surveys of researchers. Soviet-period historians studying issues of social life paid great attention to the role of the ruling party in social transformations. For example, A. Tazhibaev covered social transformations as a whole. B. Shamambetov and B. Zakirov examined issues of training personnel in agriculture. Monographs by K. Sarybaev, Zh. Medetullaev, and J. Palvanov were devoted to the economic and social aspects of the development of irrigation, cotton growing, and rice farming. K. Rzaev analyzed the social nature of personal subsidiary farming of the population and issues of demographic development. R. Kalbaeva addressed questions of women’s social activity. A. Gaipova studied the development of workers’ welfare in the republic in the context of Soviet historiography’s coverage of social practices. R. Dzhanaeva highlighted issues of cultural construction.

In Karakalpak historical scholarship of the independence period, a number of studies can be identified that illuminated various aspects of the social life of the period under consideration. Among them are the works of Acad. S. Kamalov, Doctors of Science B. Koschanov, R. Urazbaeva, and Ya. Abdullaeva; dissertation studies by R. Akhmetshin, T. Madreimov, G. Shamambetova, G. Tureeva, and others. One should also note the fundamental collective work *New History of Karakalpakstan*, published in 2003. However, publications by philosophers and sociologists proved to be more directly related to our topic.

However, the common shortcoming of the entire historiography on this issue is the absence of the main element that historians of everyday life place at the center of their narrative—namely, the individual. Despite the diversity of historiographical methods in our country, the history of studying the everyday life of

society is only just developing.

Although certain aspects of everyday life have been studied and continue to be studied, the processes directly concerning the urban population of Karakalpakstan in the second half of the 20th century remain insufficiently covered. To date, historiography does not possess a specialized work devoted to the history of the everyday life of the urban population of Karakalpakstan in the 1960s to the first half of the 1980s. For example, in the 1960s, in the capital of Karakalpakstan—Nukus—the construction of small-panel apartment blocks, popularly known as “Khrushchyovkas,” began. Respondents provide contradictory information: some claim that the waiting list for these apartments was very long, while others state that people were reluctant to move in. In most cases, these micro-districts were inhabited by a multiethnic population. The traditional majority of townspeople often ignored them, as such apartments contradicted their accustomed idea of housing. By the 1980s, the amount of state housing put into operation had increased: the urban population grew due to internal migration, and the demand for housing rose. Housing construction was presented as the real implementation of the Party’s policy of providing housing for all in need, while simultaneously addressing an ideological issue—the “internationalization” of society. A similar situation was characteristic of almost all urban settlements of Karakalpakstan during that period.

In the 1960s–1980s, the urban family served as the primary economic unit among the local nationalities, being tied to the house, personal subsidiary plot, outbuildings, and so forth. Within the family, traditions, kinship ties, rituals, and other elements of sociocultural heritage were preserved and passed down from generation to generation. This is the true value of studying everyday life—the connections between people, the atmosphere of a bygone era, which helped preserve the foundations on which the spirit of the people rests.

Thus, the study of everyday urban life under the economic, social, and cultural conditions of Karakalpakstan from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s will make it possible to explore the processes of forming the social infrastructure of Karakalpak cities, the construction of housing and facilities of social culture and daily life, to identify the forms and methods of introducing personal subsidiary farming, changes in income levels and forms of employment of townspeople, as well as to examine the system of social and domestic services for the population and to trace the situation in the fields of healthcare, education, and culture.

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