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Research paper

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DAILY OCCUPATIONS OF DAGESTAN UZDENIS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19th – EARLY 20th CENTURIES

Abstract. The subject of this research is the daily activities of Dagestan freemen (commoners) – uzdenis in the second half of the 19th – early 20th century. In our research, we have applied procedural and modernization approaches. The first approach considers everyday life as an ordinary, everyday human existence, focusing on the environment, social relations in society. The modernization approach considers the transition of society from the traditional to the modern type, accompanied by the breaking of traditional values, a change in mentality. The article applies historical-genetic and historical-comparative methods. The author describes for the first time the daily activities of Dagestan uzdenis after the annexation of Dagestan to Russia. The article aims to show the changes that occurred in the traditional occupation of Dagestan uzdenis under the influence of capitalist relations that came from the Russian Empire. The author concludes that the daily occupations of the Dagestan freemen comprised traditional forms of agricultural production. The basis of the labor activity of uzden farms was the economic experience of previous generations. Farming in different parts of Dagestan had its own peculiarities. It received special development in the flat and foothill parts of the region with more arable land. In the mountainous zone, the lack of arable land forced farmers to use artificial fields – terraces created and maintained by the labor of several generations. Terraces testify to a high agriculture and have a centuries-old history in Dagestan. In addition to agriculture, Dagestani uzdenis were engaged in cattle breeding, handicrafts, seasonal work, and fishing. A major role in the daily activities of Dagestanis was played by the natural and climatic factor, which dictated the timing of agricultural work. Thus, in the second half of the 19th – early 20th century, the usual way of daily life of the Dagestan peasant gradually changed. Agriculture and cattle breeding acquired a commodity character, factory-made agricultural tools appeared on the farms of wealthy peasants, and the geography of seasonal works expanded. This might be explained by the integration of Dagestan into the economic space of Russia and the modernization of its economy during the period under study.

Keywords: Dagestan; uzdenis; daily occupations; agriculture; cattle breeding; handicraft; seasonal work.

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ТРУДОВАЯ ПОВСЕДНЕВНОСТЬ ДАГЕСТАНСКОГО УЗДЕНЯ ВО ВТОРОЙ ПОЛОВИНЕ XIX – НАЧАЛЕ XX вв.

Аннотация. Предметом исследования является трудовая повседневность дагестанских свободных общинников – узденей во второй половине XIX – начале XX в. Нами использованы процессуальный и модернизационный подходы. Первый подход рассматривает повседневность как обыденное, будничное существование человека, уделяя особое внимание окружающей среде, социальным отношениям в обществе. Модернизационный подход рассматривает переход социума от традиционного к современному типу, сопровождаемый разрушением традиционных ценностей, изменением менталитета. В статье применяются историко-генетический и историко-сравнительный методы. Статья является актуальной, поскольку в ней впервые охарактеризована трудовая повседневность дагестанских узденей после присоединения Дагестана к России. Цель статьи – показать изменения, происходившие в традиционной трудовой повседневности дагестанского узденя под влиянием капиталистических отношений, проникавших из Российской империи. Сделаны выводы, что трудовую повседневность дагестанского свободного общинника составляли традиционные формы аграрного производства. В основе трудовой деятельности узденских хозяйств лежал хозяйственный опыт предшествующих поколений. Занятие земледелием в разных частях Дагестана имело свои особенности. Особое развитие оно получило в плоскостной и предгорной частях края, где было больше пахотных земель. В горной зоне недостаток пахотной земли вынуждал крестьян использовать искусственные поля – террасы, создаваемые и поддерживаемые трудом нескольких поколений. Террасы свидетельствуют о высокой земледельческой культуре и имеют в Дагестане многовековую историю. Помимо земледелия дагестанские уздени занимались скотоводством, ремеслами, отходничеством, работами на рыбных промыслах. Большую роль в трудовой повседневности дагестанцев играл природно-климатический фактор, диктовавший сроки сельскохозяйственных работ. Трудовая повседневность дагестанцев включала занятия земледелием, животноводством, ремеслом, часть крестьян находила заработок в отходничестве. Таким образом, во второй половине XIX – начале XX в. привычный уклад повседневной трудовой жизни дагестанского крестьянина постепенно менялся. Товарный характер приобретали земледелие и скотоводство, в хозяйствах зажиточных крестьян появились сельскохозяйственные орудия фабричного производства, расширилась география отходничества. Это объяснялось интеграцией Дагестана в экономическое пространство России и модернизацией его экономики в исследуемый период.

Ключевые слова: Дагестан; уздени; трудовая повседневность; земледелие; скотоводство; ремесло; отходничество.

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Traditional history studies major events in the history of peoples, famous political figures, i.e. the sphere of its interests deals with macro-history. The life of ordinary people acquires special place in it if they were participants in uprisings, revolutions, wars, etc. Interest in microhistory, focused on the everyday life of the common man, to the conditions of his work, his family and social life, leisure, arose among historians in the second half of the 19th century. The works of foreign and domestic historians of that time examined the traditions, customs, and way of life of peoples in different historical periods. Everyday life received a “second wind” in the 1920s, when researchers turned from studying the external forms of manifestation of everyday life to its internal intellectual and spiritual regulators [1, p. 4].

In the second half of the 20th century, the history of everyday life was widespread in Europe and Russia. It has remained a principal scientific direction to the present day. The works of a number of Russian and foreign researchers [2–5] consider everyday life as a habitual part of a person’s life, which is repeated from day to day. There are works devoted to certain elements of the life of peasants [6; 7], townspeople [8; 9], etc.

At the same time, there is no consensus in modern humanitarian knowledge in defining the subject of studying the history of everyday life as a scientific direction. There is also no unity in the definition of methods for studying the history of everyday life. Thus, some domestic researchers believe that everyday life studies the sphere of private life. Others include labor activity in the scope of analysis. Sociologists and ethnographers believe that everyday life should include “production life” and “daily occupations”.

In our opinion, everyday life is a broad concept that includes living conditions, work and recreation, factors affecting the formation of consciousness and norms of behavior, etc. It covers the daily life of all social strata and groups of society. Thus, everyday life is a multidimensional concept.

In our article, we aim to demonstrate the daily activities of the largest group of Dagestan’s population – the uzdenis, free commoners. They lived in all nine districts of the Dagestan region, formed after the end of the Caucasian War and the annexation of Dagestan to the Russian Empire.

In addition to the uzdeni as a class, before the peasant reform of the 60s of the 19th century, there were feudal-dependent categories of farmers in Dagestan – rayats, chagars, as well as a small number of slaves.

The daily activities of Dagestan uzdenis has not been in the focus of any special study, but there are many general works, such as monographs, articles on the history of Dagestan written by historians and ethnographers, which highlight the traditional occupations of Dagestanis, show the changes that occurred in their daily working life after the annexation of Dagestan to Russia. Thus, the historiography on the socio-economic development of Dagestan in the second half of the 19th – early 20th century is quite extensive.

When writing the article, we used a variety of sources. This is a statistical appendix to the annual report of the military governor “Reviews of the Dagestan region” – notes of travelers who visited Dagestan during the study period, memoir literature.

The traditional occupation of the Dagestan uzdeni was agriculture. The basis of their life was the land and the work on it. This is reflected in the proverbs: “An elegance of a household is not in wealth, but in an arable land”, or “The owner of the land is the one who plows it” [10, p. 47].

Agriculture, along with cattle breeding, has been the main occupation of Dagestanis since ancient times. This is evidenced by archaeological materials, written sources, etc.

Since Dagestan was a country of natural and climatic contrasts, had a complex terrain, farming in its different parts had its own peculiarities. Thus, it was widely developed in the flat and adjacent foothill part, where there was more arable land. The mountainous people were also generally engaged in agriculture. The lack of arable land in the mountains forced the peasants to create artificial or use natural terraces. The researchers note that the terraces have a centuries-old history in Dagestan and are an indicator of a high agriculture. The spread of terraces is attributed to the Iron Age [11, p. 20].

Artificial terraces were created and maintained by the painstaking work of several generations of peasants. Dagestan peasants have accumulated extensive economic experience in the use of artificial irrigation and fertilization of fields. The peasants created an agricultural calendar, and studied the properties of different types of soils.

During the period under study, the lands in the Dagestan region were not demarcated, so the exact economic distribution of various estates in desyatina (approx. 2 3/4 acres) was impossible. According to the Reviews of the Dagestan region, the number of lands on different estates in 1899 was 1,099,601 desyatina¹, and in 1913 already 1,275,472 desyatina², i.e. the area of land used increased.

Dagestan uzdenis mainly cultivated grain. The main crops varied depending on the zone – mountainous, foothills, plain. Wheat, millet, corn, flax, hemp, bare barley, beans, lentils, beans were cultivated in the mountainous areas. Winter wheat and barley were cultivated on the plain and in the foothills. “In spring sowing, – as S.S. Gadzhieva writes, – a large place was occupied by spring barley, corn, and rice (among the Zaslak Kumyks). In addition, Kumyks sowed vegetable-melon crops in the spring, mainly pumpkin, watermelons, melons, beans, cucumbers, which was a specific feature of the economy of the entire population of lowland and foothill Dagestan” [12, p. 66]. In the plain regions, in addition to vegetable and melon crops, peasants grew technical crops – cotton and madder. Cotton was grown not for sale, but for their own needs, since they made clothes and carpets from it.

In the second half of the 19th and the early 20th century, gardening and viticulture occupied a prominent place in the economy of Dagestan. Gardening was widespread wherever climatic conditions allowed – in the mountain-valley zone of mountainous Dagestan, in the plain and foothill belt in Temir Khan-Shurinsky, Kaitag-Tabasaran and Samur districts. With the construction of the railway, fruits from Dagestan began to be exported to Russian cities.

The lands for vineyards were expanding. Viticulture acquired a commercial character. New varieties of fruits and grapes began to be cultivated in the region. For instance, in the village of Gedzhukh, in Vorontsov-Dashkov vineyards, elite grape varieties from Italy and France were grown.

V.S. Krivenko notes that in Southern Dagestan in the 90s of the 19th century, “the Vorontsov’s vineyards have already had a beneficial effect on the gardens of the neighbouring residents, who, under the guidance of the scientist-winemaker and gardener, practically arranged improved techniques for planting, pruning bushes and winemaking” [13, p. 140]. Thus, Dagestanis acquired more modern methods of viticulture.

1. Review of the Dagestan region for 1899 – Temir Khan-Shura, 1900. P. 44.

2. Review of the Dagestan region for 1913 – Temir Khan-Shura, 1913. P. 6.

The methods and techniques of cultivating land were passed down from father to son, thus remaining archaic, but also quite elaborate. Depending on the plowing zone, different tools were applied. In the mountains, it was a light tillage tool – “puruts” (or “duruts”). On the plain, a “saban” was used – a four- or six-share wooden plow. The peasants also used sickles, wooden harrows, threshing boards set with stones. In the mountains, they tilled fields with the same tools that their fathers and grandfathers used.

From tillage to harvest, the daily routine of a farmer consisted of hard work. From birth and almost to death, the Dagestan uzdeni was part of the usual cycle of work on the ground.

It should be noted that the daily occupations of men who lived in the mountains and those who lived in the foothills and on the plain differed. The duties of men both on the plain and in the mountains included tilling the land, sowing, watering, mowing, harvesting trees, caring for trees [14, p. 180]. Women were engaged in weeding and hoeing (cultivation).

Common occupations were harvesting bread and hay (men with a scythe, women with a sickle); hay transportaion (men – on donkey, arba, wood-sledges, buckrakes, women – on themselves), threshing [14, p. 180].

On the plain, agriculture was more large-scale and labor-intensive than in the mountains. According to M-Z.O. Osmanov, “on average, the amount of cultivated land on the plain was higher in terms of one farm than in the mountainous part by 5 to 6 times, than in the mountainous part – by 7 to 8 times. Since operating a scythe was physically demanding, it was man’s work, and there were 4-5 times more haymakers on the plain than in the mountains” [14, p. 180].

In addition, on the plain, where wheeled transport was used, the man was engaged in the transportation of loads – hay, sheaves, firewood, fertilizers. In the mountains, this work was done by women, carrying loads on themselves.

Thus, men on the plain were more engaged in agriculture than in the mountains, due to the fact that there was more arable land there.

In addition to farming, the men’s daily occupations included cattle-breeding. Along with agriculture, it was the oldest form of occupation of Dagestanis. Natural and climatic conditions conditioned the peculiarities of the development of cattle breeding. The mountainous zones provided extensive summer pastures, while the pastures of the flat part of Dagestan were suitable for winter grazing.

The inhabitants of the plains kept a lot of cattle. The cattle were used not only to produce meat and milk, but also as a draft force. Sheep farming was in second place. Sheep were driven to pastures in the mountains for the summer. The pastures were rented from the highlanders.

In the mountainous areas, people mostly bred sheep, although they also kept cattle. As in the whole of Dagestan, horses were kept here for riding. In addition, donkeys and mules were raised in mountainous areas to transport goods.

There was a division of labor for the care of cattle. Men cared of small cattle and working cattle, and women cared of dairy cattle [12, p. 71].

In Dagestan, due to the peculiarities of natural and climatic conditions, a distant-pasture system (transhumance) was well-developed. Cattle, mostly small cattle, were driven from mountainous and foothill areas to the plain for the winter. Winter pastures were located on the Tersko-Sulak and Primorsky lowlands of Dagestan, as well as on the plains of Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Individual cattle breeders who had small herds united in a “kosh” of 10-15 farms to form koshars and prepare food in case of a harsh winter. All expenses were divided among themselves in proportion to the number of sheep [15, p. 89].

Transhumance was a difficult occupation, and only men were engaged in it. According to Н.-М.О. Khashaev, the procedure for uniting cattle breeders in the “kosh” has existed for a long time, since the adats say that one of the members of the “kosh” was chosen by the udaman (chief), and all shepherds obeyed him [15, p. 89]. It could be any experienced cattle breeder, but most often it was the owner of the largest herd or rent tribute. He supervised the working routine, solved issues related to the rent of pastures, distributed responsibilities among the members of the kosh union and monitored compliance with the internal regulations of the kosh, which was based on the traditional strict fulfillment of all orders of the chief [16, p. 57].

The duties of the kosh members were diverse – grazing cattle, shearing sheep twice a year, milking them and making cheese, taking turns on duty at night, guarding the herd. The daily life of shepherds was hard, which is reflected in the proverbs: “Whoever wants work, builds a mill, whoever wants care, owns a herd” [15, p. 89].

The shepherd, who performed hard work, so necessary for the maintenance of the family and economy, enjoyed great respect among Dagestanis. In the folklore of all the peoples of Dagestan, he is always a positive character. According to popular belief, the shepherd had to be distinguished by endurance, dexterity, ability to heal wounds, play the flute beautifully.

The peoples of Dagestan developed holidays, rituals associated with cattle breeding. Upon the return of shepherds with flocks of sheep from winter pastures-kutans, mountain villagers organized horse races, competitions in strength and agility between young people.

As Dagestan integrated into the Russian economic system, positive changes were taking place in agriculture and animal husbandry. They gradually acquired a commodity character. This was facilitated by the construction of roads in Dagestan, which more closely connected different parts of the region with each other, strengthened the development of commodity-money relations.

A major role in the economic development of the region was played by the Temir-Khan-Shura – Gunib – Kumukh postal and trade tract, trade roads connecting mountainous districts with the plain (Tarki – Kafir – Kumukh and Kazikumukh, etc.), as well as roads connecting Mountainous Dagestan with Transcaucasia [22, p. 100].

Thanks to the laying of the Vladikavkaz railway in the 90s of the 19th century on the territory of Dagestan, field and livestock products began to be exported from the region, which contributed to the growth of their marketability. In addition, factory agricultural machinery began to arrive in Dagestan by rail. The “Review of the Dagestan region” for 1902 states that improved iron plows were gradually being put into use in the villages of the districts adjacent to the railway. The results of tilling with these plows were excellent, as they required only two pairs of buffaloes to operate them, while the previous plows – four pairs. By the end of the year, frequent cases of replacing old plows with new ones were recorded³. In addition to iron plows, threshing machines, seeders, harvesters, winnowers, mowers, etc. appeared.

3. Review of the Dagestan region for 1902 – Temir-Khan-Shura, 1903, p. 17.

Factory tools were not cheap, they could only be purchased by large landowners and wealthy uzdenis. Interestingly, judging by the census of agricultural machinery and implements in 1910, the uzdenis acquired factory tools much more often than large landowners⁴. Factory machinery facilitated the work of the peasants and contributed to the growth of marketability of agriculture.

According to the degree of prevalence of factory agricultural implements, G.G. Osmanov divided Dagestan into three districts: “In the first district, which included Avar, Gunib, Darginzky, Kazikumukhsky and Samursky districts, mainly old, primitive agricultural equipment was common. In the Kurinsky and Kaitago-Tabasaran districts, there was a gradual displacement of outdated equipment by iron plows. And only in Temir Khan-Shura and Khasavyurt districts improved agricultural equipment accounted for 80%” [23, p. 125].

The daily activities of the Dagestan uzdenis, in addition to farming and animal husbandry, also included artisanal crafts. Due to the harsh climate in the mountains, farming was only possible for a short period of time. Lack of arable land did not allow the peasants to feed themselves at the expense of agriculture, therefore handicrafts became widespread.

In the second half of the 19th century, along with household handicrafts in Dagestan, there was a custom craft on order. The third stage of peasant production – small commodity production – also became widespread, when a craftsman produced products for sale on the market.

According to our calculations, at the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century, 90% of artisans lived in rural areas, and only 10% – in cities [17, p. 128].

O.V. Markgraf considers “historical conditions” and “population density” as the reasons for the widespread development of handicrafts in Dagestan. By historical conditions, he means that for many centuries the natural route of eastern trade and population flows from the east, through Derbent and along the shore of the Caspian Sea were running through Dagestan. Thanks to this route, its population, more often than others, found themselves in a state of siege. On this rocky ground, surrounded on all sides by enemies, the mountaineers had to find and obtain all means of subsistence and protection: food, clothing, shoes, weapons, etc. [18, p. 37].

The peoples of Dagestan developed different types of handicrafts: metalworking, processing of wood, leather, stone. Mostly men were engaged in these trades. Women processed wool, made products from clay, etc.

In almost every village there were blacksmiths who made knives, axes, hammers, horseshoes, sickles, scythes and other necessary equipment in the peasant economy. Copper ware was produced in many villages of Dagestan. There were especially many coppersmiths in the Kazikumukhsky and Darginzky districts. In some villages, metalworking developed from handicrafts, when metal products were made on demand in their spare time from agricultural work, to the level of small-scale commodity production. This happened to the manufacture of weapons, the popular centers of which were the villages of Amuzgi, Harbuk and Kubachi of the Kaitago-Tabasaran and Bolshoe Kazanishche of Temir Khan-Shura districts, as well as to jewelry, which was developed in the Kazikumukhsky district.

Men everywhere were engaged in leather processing. Residents of Kazikumukhsky and Darginzky districts sewed boots and shoes for sale. They started shoe-making workshops in

4. Agricultural machines and implements of European and Asian Russia. – St. Petersburg, 1913, p. 7.

the cities of the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia. Fur coats and hats were sewn everywhere in the villages from sheep skins.

Wood processing was also among man's occupations, and was practiced in many villages. Household utensils, grain storage bins, boxes, grain measurements, window frames were decorated with wood carvings. Everything that the mountaineer's hand touched acquired artistic value. Even a simple wooden salt shaker was covered with carvings.

Stone carving was also an exclusively man's occupation. In many villages, craftsmen made grave steles richly decorated with magnificent carvings. They also carved household items, for example, stone stands for spinning wheels, etc.

Thus, the daily occupations of the Dagestan uzdenis, along with agriculture and cattle breeding, included handicrafts, which played an important role in the economy of the peasant economy.

One of the features of the daily men's occupations in Dagestan was the seasonal work. Seasonal work is defined as the temporary departure of peasants from their farms to earn money. It occupied an important place in the socio-economic development of the region, in the life of its population. Usually, the purpose of the departure was to obtain the necessary funds to cover arrears and maintain their farms. For a certain part of the population of Dagestan, seasonal work was almost the only source of existence, since Mountainous Dagestan is characterized by acute land shortage.

In search of work, Dagestanis went to Transcaucasia, to the North-Eastern Caucasus. After the annexation of Dagestan to Russia, the geography of seasonal works expanded, the labor market and the demand for workers increased. Seasonal work acquired a massive character. Dagestanis went to seasonal work in large "parties of 40 or more people"⁵. They were mostly unskilled workers who agreed to any job. Along with them, many artisans were leaving. Jewelers and gunsmiths from Dagestan worked in Vladikavkaz, Grozny, Pyatigorsk, Stavropol, etc. [19, p. 57].

The seasonal work for artisans was very common in small-land mountain districts, for example, in Kazikumukhsky. In search for job, the Laks often climbed into the most remote corners of the globe, "Laks artisans could be found in Rostov-on-Don, Moscow, Constantinople, Cairo, Addis Ababa, Kuldzha, Paris, etc." [20, p. 491].

The number of Dagestani workers grew from year to year. This is evidenced by the "Reviews of the Dagestan region". If in 1906 there were 79,652 workers⁶, then in 1913 their number reached 93,313⁷, i.e. in 7 years there were 13.6 thousand more workers.

During the study period, the role of seasonal works increased in the daily occupations of Dagestani men. The horizons of the seasonal workers expanded, through them the connection of Dagestan with the surrounding world strengthened. The mountaineers quickly moved away from patriarchal foundations in everyday life, and the peoples of Dagestan were drawn into the mainstream of all-Russian socio-economic life.

Under the influence of Russia, a new industry appeared in Dagestan – fishing. The owners of the fisheries were Russian industrialists. In addition to skilled workers – fishermen from the Volga region, – local residents were engaged in this sphere. During the spring fishing seasons, contractors traveled through the villages and recruited men into "vatags" – fisheries.

5. Novaya Rus. 1910. No. 116. April 30.

6. Review of the Dagestan region for 1906. – Temir-Khan-Shura, 1907, p. 47.

7. Review of the Dagestan region for 1913. – Temir Khan-Shura, 1915, p. 45.

In his memoirs, A. Dalgat writes that the owner of a fishery paid the contractor three rubles per worker. The contractor appropriated this money and demanded three rubles from workers as payment for the provision of work [21, p. 47]. There were a lot of free workers, and every poor man wanted to participate in the spring fishing season.

Thus, the daily occupations of the Dagestan commoner-uzden included agricultural work – farming and cattle breeding, as well as handicrafts. After incorporation into Russia, seasonal work became widespread, which on a smaller scale took place before. Dagestanis also worked in fisheries in the Caspian Sea.

In household management, uzdenis applied the experience of previous generations. During the period under study, Dagestanis also borrowed production experience and new skills from other peoples. This occurred in different ways: as a result of seasonal works, when Dagestanis who visited other regions of the empire acquired new knowledge and skills; from Russian settlers who founded settlements in the northern regions of Dagestan. In addition, after the uprising of 1877, five thousand Dagestanis were sent to remote provinces of the empire, some of them died, others did not want to return, and those who returned to their homeland passed on to their countrymen the production experience they had acquired in a foreign land.

Specific climatic conditions played a big role in the work of Dagestanis. Adapting to the difficult economic conditions, they created terraced fields, engaged in cattle breeding.

In the second half of the 19th – early 20th century, the usual way of daily occupations of the Dagestan Uzdeni changed gradually under the influence of capitalist relations that came from Russia: agriculture and cattle breeding took on a commodity character, factory-made agricultural machinery appeared in the region, the geography of sales of handicrafts, as well as seasonal works expanded. The fishing industry became a new sphere of labor for mountaineers. Labor activity had traditionally been the most important component of the life of the Dagestan uzdeni, and it remained so during the time under study.

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