



DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAYER OF MIDDLE OWNERS IN THE TURKESTAN REGION IN THE LATE XIX - EARLY XX CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the process of formation and development of a layer of middle owners in the Turkestan region under the conditions of its inclusion in the Russian Empire, and also reveals the creative role of this stratum in the development of the productive forces of society. The average owners, being interested in favorable conditions for their activities, were thus the guarantors of the stability not only of their own stratum, but of society as a whole.

The study of social relations in the Central Asian region in the period from the end of the 19th century to the end of the 30s of the 20th century from the standpoint of the theory of stratification made it possible to reveal the processes taking place in it in a new way. In particular, it showed that at the beginning of the 20th century in the Turkestan region, among the owners, a special social stratum was significantly strengthened, consisting of people of average income - average owners who, through hard work, brought tangible benefits to themselves and society, being the basis of its wealth and guarantors of stability. The Soviet government qualified them as enemies of the new system and completely exterminated them in the 20-30s of the twentieth century.

Statistics show that by 1917 in Turkestan, among men of working age (that is, over 18), 76% were owners of various sizes and types of property, 11.2% practically did not have it (landless dekhkans - 0.5 %, factory workers and workers of handicraftsmen and artisans - 7.4%, employees, students, disabled people - 3.3%). Dekhkan-mardikers, who owned up to 0.5 acres of land and made up 12.8% of the population, being on the verge of losing their property and moving either to landless dekhkans or to urban workers, represented an intermediate category between these two social groups¹. But the process of their ruin was relatively slow, since the specifics of land and social relations in the village kept these dekhkans on the ground for a long time.

The leading core of the layer of owners at the beginning of the 20th century. there were large industrialists, merchants, landowners, prosperous farmers, handicraftsmen and artisans. In total, they were about 19.6% among men of working age².

¹ Статистический ежегодник. 1917-1923. Том I, ч. 3. – С. 42-44.

² Статистический ежегодник. 1917-1923. Том I, ч. 3. – С. 42



But this was only a small part of the layer of owners. Basically, it consisted of middle-income owners, who were the main productive force of society. These were the owners of small plots of land, mills, rice makers, handicraft industrial establishments, craft workshops, shops, shops, caravanserais, teahouses, etc. Their predominance in agricultural, handicraft production, trade was a characteristic feature of the social structure of the region in the period under study.

In the sphere of industrial production, the middle owners were the owners of small enterprises of a semi-handicraft type. It was the rapid growth of small enterprises that was a characteristic feature of the industrial development of the region in the period under study. By October 1917, there were already almost one and a half thousand industrial establishments in the region. Most of them were small, semi-handicraft type, which employed up to 5 workers³.

A significant part of the average owners employed in the production of the region during the period under study were handicraftsmen and artisans. In 1897, 1699 handicraft establishments were registered in Tashkent with 3,300 employees (an average of 2 employees per 1 establishment) and an annual productivity of 1-3 thousand rubles each⁴. In the entire Syrdarya region in the same year, 4611 handicraft establishments with 13468 employees were registered⁵. These were small workshops in which the owner himself, members of his family, one or two students and one (rarely two) employees worked. In addition to artisans with hired workers, during this period there were still a significant number of artisans working alone at home. Their accounting was very difficult, but they were also part of the average owners.

Despite the changes at the beginning of the 20th century, for the artisans and handicraftsmen of Turkestan market conditions due to the massive import of factory goods from Russia, they continued to be the main producers of consumer goods for the local population. By 1917, handicraftsmen and artisans in the Turkestan region accounted for 34.2% of men of working age living in cities⁶.

Middle owners were also established in the trade sphere. Of the 5020 trade certificates issued in Tashkent in 1878, only 224 were issued to large owners, and 3689 to merchants who had small trade in small shops⁷. In 1897, in the entire Syrdarya region, out of the total number of men of working age, 19.7% were engaged in trade⁸.

At the beginning of the XX century. The number of people employed in the trade sector continued to grow steadily. Moreover, large merchant houses concentrate all wholesale and retail trade in their hands, while small trade remained with medium merchants. Of the 26512 merchant certificates issued in 1904 in the Ferghana region, only 48 gave the right to wholesale trade, 747 to retail, and 25717 to small trade. Considering the trends in the development of trade and its internal structure in Turkestan during the period under study, it should be noted that most of the average owners employed in this area were the indigenous

³ National Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, f. R-105, op. 1. d. 3. l. 139.

⁴ National Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, f. I-269, op. 1, d. 141, l. 17.

⁵ National Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, f. I-269, op. 1, d. 141, l. 60.

⁶ Статистический ежегодник. 1917-1923. Том I, ч. 3. – С. 42.

⁷ National Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan, f. I-36, op. 1, d. 1528, l. 142.

⁸ Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г. Т. 86. С. 4-5.



inhabitants of the region. In 1898, out of 6000 trade certificates issued by the Tashkent City Council, 5056 were issued to the indigenous inhabitants of the city.

In general, medium-sized entrepreneurs, handicraftsmen, artisans and merchants in Turkestan represented a significant layer of the petty bourgeoisie and by 1917 made up 19% of its men of working age⁹.

Dekhkans were the most numerous stratum of Turkestan proprietors in the period under study. Based on these materials, Soviet historiography, based only on the size of the farmer's land plot, that is, on the basis of a purely external sign of his social status, believed that in the social structure of the Turkestan village at the beginning of the 20th century, the poor made up 57% (they included landless farms and those who had plots up to 2 acres), middle peasants - 27.5% (farms with 2-5 acres), bais - 10.6% (farms with 5-10 acres), rich bais - 4.9% (farms with more than 10 acres).

On this basis, it was concluded that in the village "poverty and landlessness reigned", the main part of the dehkans "went ruined and joined the ranks of the urban proletariat". The salvation of the dehkans was seen by Soviet researchers only in the revolutionary restructuring of all agriculture on a socialist basis, that is, in the elimination of private ownership of land and the creation of collective farms¹⁰.

From our point of view, such an approach and the conclusions arising from it did not correspond to reality, because during the study period, it was not the size of the land plot that was the decisive criterion in determining the social status of a dekhkan in the structure of the village, but the income that this land gave to the dekhkan family. This approach allows us to conclude that at the beginning of the twentieth century. the social face of the Turkestan kishlak was determined not by the poor with little land, but by middle-class dehkans. Evidence for such a conclusion is provided by analytical calculations of agricultural specialists who worked in colonial Turkestan during the period under study - V.I. Yufereva, A.M. Davydov, A.P. Demidov, G.N. Cherdantsev and others. They knew the economy well dekhkan farms and in their works gave its objective characteristics. The increased demand of the textile industry of the metropolis and the resulting significant financial investments in the development of cotton growing coincided in Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century. with the interests of dehkans. The profitability of cotton cultivation for them was ensured by high demand and fairly high prices in the market, guaranteed sales, as well as a one-year development cycle that makes it easy to introduce this crop into economic circulation.

Of course, we must not forget that cotton growing in Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century. actively developed in the interests of the metropolis to the detriment of the development of other agricultural crops and, above all, grains, which were imported from the central regions of Russia, and the region's agriculture practically turned into a monocultural one, which made it highly dependent on the metropolis. But while the delivery of grain was even, it was much more profitable for farmers to grow and sell cotton, and buy grain.

⁹ Статистический ежегодник 1917-1923 гг. Том 1, ч.3. С. 42.

¹⁰ Аминов А.М. Экономическое развитие Средней Азии (колониальный период). – Т., 1959; История Узбекской ССР. Т. II. – Т., 1968; Юлдашев А. Аграрные отношения в Туркестане (конец XIX – начало XX в.). – Т., 1969; Вахабов М.Г. Формирование узбекской социалистической нации. – Т.. 1961; Ризаев Г. Аграрная политика советской власти в Узбекистане (1917-1965). – Т.,1967; Турсунмухамедов С. Великий Октябрь и изменение социальной структуры советского Узбекистана. – М., 1977.



Therefore, the cultivation of cotton on small plots allowed him to provide for his family during this period and contributed to the overall strengthening of his economy. This was achieved by high intensity of labor and maximum employment of all family members within the household.

Given these features of the situation of dekhkan farms in the region at the beginning of the 20th century, the social structure of the Turkestan village looked somewhat different. First of all, the group of "land poor" in it was much smaller. Really poor were only farms with plots from 0.5 to 1.5 acres, because such plots did not allow them to provide for their families and their owners were forced to resort to additional earnings. Farms of 1.5 - 2 acres, according to experts of that period, could already feed a family. Dekhkans, who had from 2 to 3 acres, were already solid middle peasants. Contemporaries characterized them as "an average type of independent dekhkan economy", which managed on its own¹¹.

At the same time, it should be noted that for the owners growing cotton, allotment of land in 3 acres was the upper limit, above which they no longer had enough of their own hands to process it and they were forced to resort to hiring them from outside. And this was an additional expense. Therefore, dekhkans basically tried to stay within the limits of 2-3 acres. The high profitability of the cotton crop provided them with the position of middle-income households.

The ability to grow a profitable crop with the help of only one's family on a plot of 2-3 acres explains the typical picture of the "land shortage" of cotton farms in the region at the beginning of the 20th century. These were labor farms of average income. Even in Soviet times, in the documents of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of the Uzbek SSR, farms with 1.1 to 3 acres were called "middle peasants, the most powerful group of dekhkan farms"¹². Farms with 3-5 acres were also middle peasants.

In addition, in our opinion, the dekhkans, who had 5-10 acres, which Soviet scientists attributed to the Bai, should be counted among the middle peasants. In fact, these were the labor farms of the prosperous middle peasants. Their owners themselves worked in the field, but they attracted a somewhat larger additional labor force than farms of 3-5 acres to perform certain types of agricultural work. Only a very small part of them rented out some of the surplus land on sharecropping.

With this approach, the Turkestan village in the early twentieth century. had the following structure: poor peasants - 45.6% (landless farms and farms with up to 1.5 acres), middle peasants - 38.9% (farms of 1.5-5 acres), wealthy middle peasants - 10.6% (farms of 5 - 10 acres), rich bai - 4.9% (farms over 10 acres). Thus, in general, the middle peasants made up almost 50% of dekhkan farms, and not 27.8%, as Soviet researchers believed. It was a strong layer of dekhkan owners.

A feature of the agriculture of Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century. there was an exceptionally high marketability of small land plots growing cotton. And since there were

¹¹ Юферев В.И. Хозяйство сартов Ферганской области. – Ташкент, 1911. - С. 31; Его же. Хлопководство в Туркестане. – Л.: АН ССР, 1925.- С. 81; Его же. Труд в хлопковых хозяйствах Туркестана. (Опыт характеристики рабочего вопроса в хлопковых районах Туркестанского края). – СПб., 1914.- С. 19, 35; Демидов А.П. Экономический очерк хлопководства, хлопковой торговли и хлопковой промышленности в Туркестане. – Ташкент, 1912. – С.24.

¹² Дополнительные материалы к отчету Наркомзема УзССР по проведению земельно-водной реформы в Самаркандской, Ферганской и Ташкентской областях. – Т., 1928. – С.89.



no large cotton-growing farms in Turkestan during this period, it was on small plots of land that the middle peasants from year to year increased the amount of cotton harvested and its yield.

Good indicators of crop growth and productivity did not mean that the dekhkan farms of Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century. there were no serious problems preventing them from running their farms more efficiently. The most important was the problem of loans, since already at the beginning of spring field work, the dekhkan needed money to buy seeds, working livestock, and pay for temporary workers (if the size of his plot required additional labor). But due to the lack of a system of state bank lending to dekhkan farms in the region, they were forced to use the services of local moneylenders and bais on very difficult conditions. If the state bank issued loans to private banks and cotton firms at 5.5%, and they distributed deposits to intermediaries at 8-9%, then the credit cost for a cotton farmer was already 60%¹³. A cheaper way of lending to dekhkan farms was needed. To solve this problem, the Russian State Bank in 1909 began to create small-scale dekhkan partnerships in the region, which financed them at the rate of 12% per annum. In 1917, 833 such partnerships were already operating in Turkestan. Met at first with distrust, this innovation quickly began to win recognition from dekhkans. "For all its lack of consciousness," writes A.P. Demidov, "the population easily cooperated and quickly learned the full significance of a small loan. The impeccable honesty, conscientiousness, accuracy of dehkans, their interest allowed the young cooperation of Turkestan to play a big role not only in improving the atmosphere of private credit but also in the development of the productive forces of agriculture¹⁴.

In contrast to the opinion of historians of the Soviet period that the system of bank credit in colonial Turkestan "had essentially no effect on the difficult state of cotton farms" and that "the loan was more of a consumer rather than a production character for the farmer, since it went mainly to subsistence of the family"¹⁵, comparative analysis of the issuance of loans by small credit institutions in the Syrdarya region for 1913–1917. shows that 98% of loans taken on credit were spent precisely on production needs, while 1.8% went to personal expenses¹⁶.

In the pre-revolutionary years, the system of small credit in Turkestan came closer and closer to serving the needs of direct dekhkan producers. This was a real way to strengthen labor dekhkan farms and, above all, those who made up the layer of middle owners among them. But this really positive process was interrupted in the region in 1917.

Thus, the facts indicate that at the beginning of the twentieth century. in the Turkestan society, the economic basis of which from ancient times was made up of owners of various forms of ownership, a layer of middle owners is being strengthened. Through their work, they brought tangible benefits not only to themselves, but also to society. All the owners included in this layer, regardless of their professional occupation, were characterized by diligence, a special careful attitude to their property as a source of family well-being, and the absence of

¹³ Кривошеин А.В. Записка главномууправляющего землеустройством и земледелием о поездке в Туркестанский край в 1912 г.– Т., 1912. – С. 17-19.

¹⁴ Демидов А.П. Указ. соч. – С. 239.

¹⁵ Аминов А.М. Указ. соч. – С.168; Юлдашев А. Указ. соч. – С. 241.

¹⁶ Статистический ежегодник. 1917-1923. Том II, ч.3. – С.412.



destabilizing aspirations. Interested in favorable conditions for their activities, they were thereby the guarantors of the stability not only of their own stratum, but of society as a whole.