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Formation of the Class of Middle Owners in the Uzbek Society at the End of 19th – beginning of 20th Centuries

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The conquest and joining of Turkestan to the economic life of Russia caused serious changes in the economic and public, political life of Uzbek society, influenced greatly its social and economic structure and social organization. First of all, this impact revealed in the loss of social hierarchy of society and hereditary estate's privileges, which determined all the internal life of the people of Central Asian region for many centuries. The main and decisive factor, determining the position of the person in the social hierarchy of society then became not estate-membership, but availability of property and capital. This caused the formation of a new social power, new class- the class of owners that occupied the leading place in the economic and social, political life of Uzbek society at the end of 19th century.

It should be marked that the liquidation of hierarchical division of the society and formation of the class of owners happened without conflicts and shock. There weren't any antagonistic relationships between those who had property and those who got a job from them. First of all, it happened in this way because sharp contradictions between the classes of the society with different property status weren't characteristic to the relationships having been formed for centuries. Such aspects of national way of life as a group responsibility, communal mutual aid in rural places and institution of mahallya in city didn't promote it.

At the beginning of the 20th century the great manufacturers, merchants, land owners, prosperous peasants, craftsmen were the leading kernel of the class of owners. But it was a small, though more noticeable part of it. The middle owners, such as owners of small ventures, shops, stores, cottage and craft workshops, plots of arable land formed the basis of this class. This was a powerful numerous group of the real middle owners, functioning in different fields of activity in the society.

A special careful treatment to the their property, deep desire to keep and multiply it, develop producing capacities of society, its stability and prosperity united them in the class. Respectful, kind relationships, decency, honesty, well manners, charity were their distinctive features.

First of all, an active development of the producing capacities of the country at the end of the of the 20th century was revealed in the creation of enterprises, processing agricultural material. In their majority they were small enterprises of a semi-cottage type, using the most simple machines: water-; steam- and paraffin – engines, hydraulic presses etc. Merchants, rich buyers of cotton, handicraftsmen were their owners. Thus, in 1897 in Tashkent there were functioning 36 small enterprises and 620 workers were occupied on them. Only 10 enterprises of that amount were rather large (with 10-80 workers). They belonged to rich merchants and businessmen, their annual productivity made up from 10 to 40 thousands rubles. But the majority of those enterprises (26 of 36) belonged to the people of moderate means. 5-6 workers were occupied on them. And besides local merchants and businessmen owned 15 enterprises.[1)] The amount of enterprises was growing steadily. If in 1884 in Fergana region there were 6 enterprises,[2)] in 1904-1905 there were 84 large ones with 25-50 workers, while the rest belonged to the owners with an

[1)] TsGA RUz, f. I-269, op. 1,d. 143, ll. 29-30; d. 148, ll. 51-90.

[2)] Prilojeniye k vsepoddaneyshemu otchetu voennogo gubernatora Ferganskoy oblasti za 1884 g.- Noviy Margilan, 1884.- p.11.

average capital and 5-10 workers were occupied on them.[3)] In 1910 in Sirdariya, Fergana, Samarkand and Semirechensk regions there were 362 enterprises. 110 of them had an annual productivity of more than 15 thousands rubles, 50 of them - 10-15 thousands rubles and the majority- 202 enterprises were medium ones with an annual productivity from 500 rubles to 10,000 rubles.[4)] By 1917 the general number of enterprises in the country was almost 1,500. Small enterprises of a semi-cottage type which had primitive equipment and no more than 5 workers formed the main part of them.[5)] These figures testify the steady growth of businessmen with average capitals in the industrial production of the country.

In the analyzed period the majority of middle owners occupied in the field of production was formed by handicraftsmen and craftsmen. The official statistics of the end of the 19th century evaluated their social status as "owners who had an independent work in the industrial field, and living in cities and rural places." According to the information of the first general population census of Russia's Empire in 1987, they made up 12,95 % of the population of Sirdariya, 41,4% - of Fergana and 11,46% of Samarkand regions.[6)] At the same time in the documents of that census there was marked a big variety of craft and cottage trades that produced almost all necessary things and food for the local people in the country. Only in 1897 in Tashkent besides above mentioned 36 enterprises, there were registered 1,699 handicraft institutions with 3,300 workers and annual productivity of 1-3 thousands rubles, each.[7)] In the same year in

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[3)] Statisticheskiy obzor Ferganskoy oblasti za 1904.-Noviy Margilan 1905.- p 53.

[4)]) TsGA RUz, f. I-1, op. 6, d. 528, l. 228.

[5)] Vekselman M.I. O chislennosti rabochego klassa Sredney Azii nakanune oktyabrya// Obshestvenniye nauki v Uzbekistane.-1985.#9.- p.29.

[6)] Pervaya vseobschaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiyskoy Imperii 1987 g. Volume LXXXVI. Sirdariyinskaya oblast' p. XIII, 116; Volume LXXXIX, Ferganskaya Oblast' .- p. IX, 114: Volume LXXXIII. Samarkandskaya oblast' .- p.IX, 94. – SPb; 1905.

[7)] TsGA Ruz, f. I-269, op. 1,d . 141 ,l. 17.

the whole Sirdariya region there were registered 4,611 handicraft institutions with 13,468 workers who produced wares for 16 mln. 484 thousands rubles per year, i.e. approximately 3,000 rubles per year each one.[8)] These were small work-shops where worked the master himself the members of his family, 1-2 apprentices and one, seldom two halfs (workers).

According to contemporaries, in their majority handicraftsmen and craftsmen were the typical middle owners who kept their families and provided society with necessary goods and products by honest labour. At the beginning of the 20th century the craftsmen who worked in cities earned approximately up to 200 rubles per year, and rural craftsmen – up to 100 rubles.[9)] According to A.P.Demidov who worked in Turkestan till 1917 in the Taxes Department of Colonial Administration, a master who built houses in rural places earned 80-100 rubles annually, those who made arba –100 rubles, a weaver – 1 rubles 20 kopeeks per week, a creameryman and a tanner – up to 3 rubles per week.[10)] It should be taken into consideration that rural craftsmen and handicraftsmen also had an arable land: 0,5 –1 dessiatinas , that gave their families all the necessary products.

According to the agricultural population census, in 1917 city's handicraftsmen (only male of efficient age, i.e. elder than 18 years old) made up 34,2%.[11)] In addition, women who weren't taken into account, were also used in handicraft and craft manufacture. One can make a comclusion that handicraftsmen and craftsmen formed a rather considerable part of the class of middle owners by 1917.

A tendency of a mass confirmation of the class of middle owners happened in the trade field as well. In 1878 only in

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[8)] The same place, l. 60.

[9)] Prilojenie k vsepoddaneyshemu otchetu Ferganskogo voennogo gubernatora za 1882-1884 gg.-Noviy Margelan, 1884.-p.11,13-14; Materiali k harakteristike narodnogo hozyaistva v Turkestane. Part II.-SPb.,1911.- p.120-121.

[10)] Demidov A.P. Economicheskii ocherk hlopkovodstva, hlopkotorgovli i hlopkovoi promichlennosti.- M., 1922.- p.32.

[11)] Statisticheskii ejegodnik 1917-1923 gg. Volume 1, 1924.- p. 42.

Tashkent there were given 5,820 trade certificates , 224 of them – to the merchants of the 1st and 2nd categories, 1,268- the to salesmen of the 1st and 2nd class , 3,689 – to the merchants , who had a petty trade and trade in the small stores.[12)] In 1882 in the city there were registered 6,333 people who were engaged in trading including 256 merchants of the 1st and 2nd categories, 1,559 salesmen of the 1st and 2nd class and 4180 traders of middle type.[13)] The figures proves that rich traders, which were represented by the merchants of the 1st and 2nd categories, formed only 4% of general number of people who were occupied with trade, while traders of the middle type formed 66,3%.

At the beginning of the 20th century prominent merchant's houses captured all the wholesale and retail trade, while the petty trade concentrated in the hands of the middle traders. In 1904 in Fergana region there were given 26,512 merchant's certificates: 48 to the merchants of the 1st and 2nd categories for a wholesale trade and 747- for retail; 5,975 –to the rest of the merchants for a petty trade and 19742 – for a trade in small premises.[14)] In 1912 in the report of the superior of Zakaspiysk region there was marked that "the trade in the region is concentrated mainly in small enterprises." In all, during 1912 in the region there were given 4,811 certificates; 15 – to the merchants of the 1st and 2nd categories for a wholesale and 1,218 – for retail trade; 3,578 to the rest of the merchants for a petty trade.[15)] In 1914 in Samarkand region there were given 67 certificates to the merchants of the 1st and 2nd categories; 3,530- to the petty traders and 8,565 – to the traders in small premises.[16)]

Examining the tendencies of the trade development and its internal structure in Turkestan within the explored period, one should mark such an important fact as its rapid growth in the

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[12)] TsGA Ruz, f. I-36, op. 1, d. 1528, l. 142.
[13)] The same place, d.2189. ll. 132,175.
[14)] Statistichesky obzor Ferganskoy oblasti za 1904 g. –p. 53.
[15)] TsGA RUz , f. I –1, op. 1, d.514, l. 52.
[16)] At the same place. f. I –1, op. 27, d. 1216-a, ll. 1-3, 17-18.

groups of the middle owners from the local people. According to the materials of the census of 1897, in Tashkent from 8,462 people occupied with trade and connected with a trade activity, 7,906 or 93,4% were people of the native origin. The majority of them was engaged in the trade of agricultural products (32,818) and also of cloth and clothes (1,425). The native people were almost monopolists in the town trade of cattle (99,4%), building materials (99,4%), leather (98,4%).[17)]

In 1898 Tashkent's Administration of the city gave 5056 trade certificates to the native people; 4226 of them - to the traders whose circulating capital fluctuated from 700 rubles to 2,000.[18)]

At the beginning of the 20th century the middle businessmen and traders represented a considerable group that in the soviet literature was called "a petty burgeoisie". In 1917 only in the cities of the country 19% of men of the efficient age belonged to it.[19)]

In the examining period agriculture occupied the leading place in the internal structure of Uzbek society. In 1907 it formed 84, 17% of the whole population of the country.[20)] In the historical literature of the soviet period there existed a firm statement that a characteristic feature of a social structure of a pre-revolution kishlak (a village) was "an ocean of petty and very petty farms that possessed rather meaningless and insufficient fond of land." The peasants without arable land or kishlak's proletariat made up 1,1%; mardikers or semi-proletariat who had up to 0,5 dessiatinas or 3 tanaps (1 dessiatina was equal to 6 tanaps) –21,6%; poor men – 55,9%, including peasants who had from 0,5 to 2 dessiatinas: chairikers (a share – cropper) –from 0,5 to 1 dessiatinas – 14,9%, petty peasants – from 1 to 2 desiatinas- 19,4%; middle people – from 3 to 5 dessiatinas – 27,5%, kulaks – from 5 to 10 dessiatinas

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17) Pervaya vseobschaya perepis' naseleniya Rossiyskoy Imperii 1897. Addition LXXXVI.- p.116-117.
18) TsGA RUz, f.I-36, op.1 dd.861, 863, 870.
19) Statisticheskii ejegodnik 1917- 1923gg. Volume 1.-p.42.
20) Materiali k harakteristike narodnogo hozaistva v Turkestane. Part 1 – p. 32.

– 10,6%, rich men – more than 10 dessiatinas – 4,9%. By 1917 the quantity of the poor was reduced to 47,4%, including peasants who hadn't plots of arable land: they made up 0,5%; mardikers – 16,7%, chairikers – 15,2%; petty peasants – 15,5 %. The number of the middle people and rich men grew up to 32,8% and 19,3 %, respectively. According to the soviet explorers, the mass poverty of the peasants was characteristic to the Uzbek kishlak; the majority of the dehkans barely made both ends meet, was ruined and replenished the number of city's proletariat. Only revolution and rebuilding of the whole agriculture on the socialistic basis could help them; but that meant a liquidation of a dehkan-owner with his private property of land and creation of collective farms. In such a way historians performed a social order of authorities that tried to approve radical breaking of the kishlak's social structure, which happened in the 30th years of the 20th century.[21)]

From our point of view, the social structure of kishlak was a bit different. The works of agronomists and officials of the colonial administration who were occupied with problems of agriculture of the country during the explored period, such as V.I.Yuferev, A.P. Demidov, S.V.Ponyatovskii, A.M Shachnazarov, V.A. Masal'skiy, S.A. Melik-Sarkisyan and others, and also the documents of revision in Turkestan done by the commission of the Earl K.K Palen,[22)] give us another elucidation of this problem. We haven't any reason to call in question their

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21) Aminov A.M. Ekonomicheskoe razvitie Srednei Azii (Kolonial'nii period).-T.,1959; Istoriya Uzbekskoy SSR. V. II.-T.,1968;Yuldashev A. Agrarnie otnosheniya v Turkestane (konets XIX-nachalo XX v.).- T.,1969; Vahabov M.G. Fogmirovanie Uzbekskoy Sotsiolisticheskoy Natsii.- T.,1961 etc.

22) V.I.Yuferev Hozyaistvo Sartov v Ferganskoi Oblasti.-T.,1911.,Trud v hlopkovih hozyaistvah Turkestana.- SPb.,1914; Russkii hlopok.- Petrograd,1916; A.P. Demidov Ekonomichekii ocherk hlopkovodstva, hlopkotorgovli i hlopkovoi promishlennosti.- M.,1922;. S.V.Ponyatovskii Opit izucheniya Hlopkovodstva v Turkestane i Zakaspiiskih oblastyah.- SPb.,1913;. A.M Shachnazarov Selskoye hozyaistvo v Turkestanskom kraye.- SPb.,1908;. V.A. Masal'skii Hlopkovoye delo v Srednei Azii i ego buduschee.- SPb.,1913; S.A. Melik-Sarkisyan Hlopkovoye delo Ferganskoy oblasti i meri ego uporyadocheniya.M.,1914; Materiali k harakteristike narodnogo hozyaistva v Turkestane.- SPb.,1911.- Part 1,2.

information, as it had been cited by objective specialists, contemporaries of the happened events, who didn't performed any special social order of authority.

The deficit of land was characteristic to the Central Asian region. But it was its centuries-old problem, not a specificity of the end of the 19th century. Development of new areas connected with the expensive, laborious, artificial irrigation had always limited the usage of land and cost keeping of typical to the region farms having insufficient arable lands. But it was a land-poverty that developed a special treatment to the arable land, labour in Uzbek dehkans, made them value every piece of land won back from nature and build a farm in the way it could bring them the highest income. The European specialists who were working in Turkestan at the beginning of the 20th century had written about it repeatedly with admiration. "The local people who had to be content with the small pieces of land, - wrote Turkestan's agronomist V.I. Yuferev, - developed basic skills of performing a highly intensive economy, a special psychology and attitude to the labour as to the main condition of getting profit from using the land's treasures."[23)]

The insufficiency of land accustomed an Uzbek dehkan to the most expedient economy, to cultivation of the cultures that could bring a maximum income. At the end of 19th – beginning of the 20th centuries cotton became such a culture. Abnormally high demand of the textile industry on cotton fibre and capital's investments into its development caused by this fact coincided with dehkan's interests. Cultivation of such a laborious culture that was in good demand on the market allowed dehkans to provide their families within the limits of their small plots of arable land. A secular experience of ancestors in the highly intensive labour, proprietary interest that directed all the manpower of the family to the maximum usage of it in the economy helped them.

[23)] Yuferev V.I. Hlopkovodstvo v Turkestane.- L;1925 .- p.8.

Cultivation of cotton turned out to be a profitable occupation for a dehkan's farm because of a good demand and rather high prices, provision of sale and one-year circle growth of this plant, that allowed to put it into agricultural circulation easily. The cotton culture in comparison with other agricultural plants became the most profitable in the 20th century in Turkestan. According to the calculations of the local agronomists in 1912, an average net profit from 1 dessiatina of rice made up 48 rubles; of maize - 36 rubles; dry wheat - 21 rubles; spray wheat – 41 rubles; luceme – 80 rubles; cotton – from 100 to 200 rubles.[24)] This is the calculation of income from one dessiatina of cotton crops in Fergana region at the beginning of the 20th century: the cultivation of land cost 115 rubles 44 kopeeks; if the harvest were approximately 60 poods of raw-cotton from dessiatina and the price were 3 rubles for a pood, a farm got from it sale 205 rubles (180 rubles for raw-cotton and 25 rubles for stalks). The dehkan got 90 rubles.[25)] The growth of labor expenses was accompanied by proportionate growth of the crops. And all the members of dehkan's family stayed on their farm, because it coincided with their social psychology.

These facts give us a reason to explore the social structure of Uzbek kishlak at the beginning of the 20th century from the positions different from those accepted in the Soviet historical literature and determine another criteria of the grouping of dehkan's farms according to their social category.

First of all it is consumed to the group of "the poor with small plots of land." The soviet historiography concerned to it dehkan's farms with arable lands from 0,5 to 2 dessiatinas (3-12 tanaps). Undoubtly, all the farms of chairikers, having from 0,5 to 1 dessiatinas, who weren't able to provide their families with such

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[24)] Krivoshein A.V..Zapiska glavnouprovlyayuschego zemleustroistvom i zemledeliem o poezdke v Turkestanskii krai v 1912 g. Prilojenie k vsepoddanneishemu dokladu.- T.,1912.- p.16.

[25)] Koritov N. O denejnom kredite u tuzemtzev //Ejegodnik Ferganskoi oblasti 3rd addition. – Novii Margilan, 1904.- p.103.

a plot of arable land, should be included into this group. The experience of a budget examination of 4 kishlaks of Andijan district allowed agronomist V.I. Yuferev to establish that "1 dessiatina is the lowest edge, and in this case family should let go their members to earnings, as their farm doesn't provide them with means of subsistence."[26] It should be noticed that, as a rule, dehkan didn't go away from his farm, but stayed at his plot of land.[27] Together with the work on his farm he applied for work for additional earnings as a mardiker on some kinds of agricultural works or became a chairiker, i.e. rent some piece of land in a cropping system. The lease of 1 dessiatina of land with cotton crops gave to chairiker approximately 100 rubles income: he got the cost of 2/5 of the harvest –72 rubles (at crop capacity 60 poods of the raw cotton from dessiatina and 3 rubles cost of 1 pood of the raw cotton), his master fed him and gave seeds for 28 rubles.[28]

As for dehkan's farms having lots from 1 to 2 dessiatinas, the part of them belonged to the poor with small plots of land, the majority, in our opinion, hadn't been them, but gravitated towards the middle class. They already had their cattle and the balanced budget.[29] Contemporaries characterized such farms as "independent, existing by means of the income from their own agricultural trade."[30] Such kind of farms formed approximately 20%.

In my opinion, dehkans' farms having from 2 to 3 dessiatinas belonged to the group of firm middle owners. Contemporaries characterized them as a "middle type of

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[26] Trud v hlopkovih hozyaistvah Turkestana.- p.18.
[27] Materiali k harakteristike narodnogo hozyaistva v Turkestane.Part 2.- p. 120-121.
[28] Koritov N. O denejnom kredite u tuzemtsev// Ejegodnik Ferganskoi oblasti. Edition 3.1904.- p. 103.
[29] Raschet budgeta dehkanskoy sem'i iz chetireh chelovek: Yuferev V.I. Hozyaistvo sartov Ferganskoy oblasti.-T., 1911.- p.31.
[30] Yuferev V.I. Trud v hlopkovih hozyaistvah Turkestana .- p.18.

independent dehkan's farms, that used only their own forces."[31] Using their lots with maximum productivity, these farms didn't hire additional workers even for some periods. On the farms with 2 dessiatinas (12 tanaps) 1,64 was allotted for agricultural crops, mainly cotton crops; 0,1 was occupied by farm stead; 0,03 –for perelogs; 0,2 –for haymaking. There wasn't a pastureland for cattle; it was kept in the stall.[32]

Also it should be marked that for the farms cultivating cotton, 3 dessiatinas were like the highest limit, because dehkans lacked workers and they had to hire them. But it was an additional expenditure. That's why dehkans tried to stay in the limits of 2-3 dessiatinas. Such farms formed the main mass of those cultivating cotton, especially in Fergana valley,[33] and made up approximately 30% of all the dehkan's farms in the country. High incomes from the cotton culture provided them a status of people of moderate means.

A possibility to cultivate a profitable culture by means of one's own family on the lot of 2-3 dessiatinas explains the typical situation of "lack of land" on the cotton – cultivating farms in the region at the beginning of the 20th century. Together with farms having 3-5 dessiatinas, the farms of the middle owners formed almost 50% of village people.

Besides, I consider that the farms having 5-10 dessiatinas should be also included into this group. The Soviet historiography referred them to the kishlak's ones. But they weren't the farms of Russian kulaks where all the work was done by the hired day laborers, but the farms of prosperous middle owners, where the master himself with his family worked from the dawn till dusk, sometimes engaging additional, a bit bigger manpower than the

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[31] Yuferev V.I. Hozyaistvo sartov Ferganskoy oblasti.-T., 1911.- p.31; Hlopkovodstvo v Turkestane.-p.81; Trud v hlopkovih hozyaistvah Turkestana.-p.19, 35; DemidovA.P The pointed works.- p.24.

[32] Demidov A.P. The pointed works.- p. 24.

[33] Materiali k harakteristike narodnogo hozaistva v Turkestane. Part 1.- p.165.

farms with 3-5 dessiatinas in order to perform some kinds of agricultural works.

The kulak's farms having more than 10 dessiatinas were very rare. It should be marked that their growth happened mainly because of the ruin of petty arable lands having 0,5-0,9 dessiatinas, not because of estrangement of the large land massive. By 1917 the number of such large farms in the country grew up from 4,9% to 6% because of the reduction of the farms having 0,5-0,9 dessiatinas from 21,6% to 16,7%. This process proceeded in rather slow temps and represented a characteristic feature of the development of social relationships at the beginning of the 20th century.

In spite of unfavourable conditions of agriculture in 1916-1917 caused by war, the number of middle class dehkans didn't decrease, but even grew up. According to our calculations, in 1911 they made up 57,5%; in 1917- 58,3%. Thus, the middle owner – a dehkan –owner and toiler was a decisive figure in the social structure of kishlak at the beginning of the 20th century.

It was the power of middle class dehkans that developed cultivation of cotton in Turkestan: sown areas were steadily enlarging, cotton fibre harvest and its crop capacity increased. The fall of these indexes that begun in1916 was caused by the creation of conditions at which cotton stopped to be a profitable culture for a dehkan and he switched over to cultivation of the other cultures. Besides, at the beginning of the 20th century middle class dehkans cultivated and produced another agricultural productions (except corn) by which they supplied their regions and performed export to Russia.

The analysis that we made allows to conclude that by 1917 the characteristic feature of the social structure of Uzbek society became the predomination of the middle owners in it. The class of the real middle owners occupied firm positions in the main fields of society's activity - manufacture, trade, and agriculture. The middle owners brought a considerable profit to their Mother country by honest and persistent labour. A deep interest in their own prosperity made them guarantors of stability and wealth of

the society. The Soviet Power called them "petty – bourgeois elements" and, by maximum efforts, annihilated them in the 20-30th years of the 20th century. It happened not by chance that at present time in the conditions of independent democratic state, remembering historical roots and psychology of the Uzbek nation, we ask a question on creation of wide net of small enterprises, on recreation of the middle owners' class, as a middle owner had always been and will be a true master on his farm and in his country, as well.