

City Family of North Kazakhstan in 1920-1930s

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ABSTRACT The everyday life of the city population of North Kazakhstan between the year 1920-1930s has been analyzed through the analysis of family and social relations of these people. This paper provides an analysis of scientific literature covering specific areas of study of everyday life of the population of cities of the Soviet Union. Authors have used sourced file copies, museum collections of written documents, and statistic materials. The authors have reported changes in the consciousness of citizens of the Soviet Union which has led to modernization of social relations as an example of a city population of this region. The authors have come to the conclusion that new forms of political organization in the society had impact on the modernization of private life, family, marriage and had caused new problems, that manifested themselves through the loss of previous family values.

INTRODUCTION

Social history allows for understanding of the specifics of everyday life of ordinary people between the year 1920-1930s. The study of the history of everyday life through the prism of social relations is a topical issue in historical science. Modernization of family relations in Soviet society was as a result of its direct impact on the state. An analysis of social relationship in the regional aspect is an example of a city population of North Kazakhstan of which allows the application of micro-historical approaches in the study of this problem.

It is worthy of note that the study of everyday city life in XX century became one for topical directions in historical science. At that time, the place of habitation and the way of living of people had undergone dramatic changes as people moved into cities, and changed occupations. So, Soviet's everyday life became an object of research for many scientists. Fitzpatrick (1999, 2015) was the first to make a complex analysis of everyday city life in the 1930s. Kaier and Naiman studied everyday life in Russia in the early years of Soviet government (2006). Leбина (1999), Kozlova (1996), Kornouhova (2004), Juleva (2004), Lucio-Villegas (2015) and Abramov (2015), Insebaev (2003) had made important contributions in the study of social and cultural images of both city and rural population of the Soviet period, based on public feeling, and as a way of life on the basis of analysis from wide complex of sources.

It should be noted that during the first post-revolution years, criticism of the patriarchal fam-

ily, which had radical character and soon turned into denial of archaistic, old forms of family and principles of family relation rather than an institution of a family that it is. But towards the end of the 1920s, the pendulum swung in another direction. Orientation on the development of military-industrial complex, stimulation of industrial development and city growth resulted in the development of the urban way of life, strengthening of women independence and education level were incompatible with the preservation of traditional family values. Involvement of government in family life manifested itself in different ways: abortion prohibition, divorce limitation, non-recognition of marriages not registered officially, increased attention to "moral image" in the assigning of "important" posts, interference of "community" into family affairs, increased chastity of official art.

The number of city families grew rapidly due to growth of the city population which was as a result of the movement of most part of the workforce from agriculture, spreading of industrial and other types of occupations. The rapid growth based on the educational level of men and women had also affected family and distribution of family roles. Even in ordinary literacy, reading and writing skills posed problem in the USSR (The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) even till 1920s. Starting from generations born in the second half of the 1930s, the share of men and women going into higher or secondary education had been growing. 333 men of one thousand and 294 women of one thousand born in the first half of the 1930s had gone into higher or secondary education (Vishnevski 2008).

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper is to study the specifics and main transformations in everyday life of city population of North Kazakhstan in 1920-1930s particularly in order to reveal specifics of forming family-marriage relations in Soviet society. The research covers the territory of North Kazakhstan including cities with various administrative statuses: from district scope cities to regional centers Akmolinsk, Petropavlovsk, Kustanai, Pavlodar, Kokshetav, Atbasar.

METHODOLOGY

Research is based on an interdisciplinary approach that allows for the study of everyday life as a cross-section of history, sociology, anthropology, study of culture, philosophy, economy, and so on. General scientific methods: analysis, synthesis, mathematical and statistical approaches were applied. Authors also applied special methods, namely comparative analysis, historical and typological, problematic and chronological, historical and systematic methods.

Works of American and Russian historians that made important contribution in the study of the history of everyday life became the foundation of the research. General theoretical works of everyday history by Braudel (1992) and Ludtke (1995) were specifically important in the study of the object of research. Methodological approaches dedicated to the study of a person in the society and family were reflected in the works of such scientists as Polyakov (2000), Zyromskaya (2012), Siegelbaum and Sokolov (2000), Juravlev (2005), Savelyeva and Poletayev (2008).

Synthesis of macro and micro-historical approaches were used in the research. While macro-historical approach reflects changes in social and economic, political, spiritual development of society, micro-historical approach allows tracking of impact for numerous macro-affairs in everyday life, that is, the way of life, interpersonal relations and others.

Documents provided by State Archive of Russian Federation (Moscow), by archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan: State Archive of North Kazakhstan region (Petropavlovsk) and the State Archive of Pavlodar Region (Pavlodar), a documentation of the funds from regional museums of local history were used as sources of research.

Materials from central and local periodicals were important sources in the study of everyday city life. The researchers used such newspapers as "Mir Truda" (1921-1925), Pavlodar periodical "Bolshevistskii Put" (1936-1939) and others. The most topical problems in everyday city life may be revealed from materials of periodic press. But one should bear in mind that those periodicals were a powerful ideological lever of state and the Communist Party, so everyday life was often embellished in them.

Sources of personal origin analyzed in the research are represented by memoirs of citizens and sources of personal origin. Memoirs of old-timers recorded during interviews and talks were an important addition to the picture of everyday city life in Northern Kazakhstan. "The Books of Sorrow" (lists of victims of political repression) of the North Kazakhstan region issued, collected memoirs of victims of mass political repression "Pages of Tragic Destiny" (Almaty 2002), "Tragedy and Enlightening" (Almaty 2002) and the likes were especially important sources. These books contain subjective assessments of these or that political event, and demonstrated the view from below on the whole era. In general, memoirs of eyewitnesses allowed full study of the everyday life of population in this period.

So, a relatively wide complex of sources was used in the work which enabled us to study city family in the context of study in everyday life of North Kazakhstan between year 1920-1930s fully and objectively.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Sex Education and Principles of Marriage

New approaches of the state towards the education of youths affected the Soviet family. Researcher S. Shevchenko wrote that the booklet by Zalkind "Twenty six commandments of a revolutionary proletariat" was published in the year 1924. This book gave the following advice on the esteem of elders "Only such kind of father is worthy of respect who shares a revolutionary and proletariat point of view". The problem of so called love is also clarified "Sex selection should be based on class revolutionary and proletariat reasonability... Feebleness and delicacy of women is useless economically and politically, that means that a woman of today proletariat should also behave almost like a man phys-

iologically” (Shevchanko 2000). Wide distribution of such literature was aimed at separation of youth from Muslim and Christian commandments. The Party regulated relations between man and woman in a bid to eliminate any sex differences to achieve an uncomplaining work force.

A decrease in death rate and a rise in birth rate questioned the necessity of conjugal sex behavior as well as behavior aimed at childbearing. The union of man and woman became more superficial and it did not always require an official registration. Existence of premarital relations may be proved in application of Kotlyarova, a citizen of Pavlodar to The Chairman of Women Department of Pavlodar Regional Committee of Communist Party dated 15 January, 1929, that is kept in the Pavlodar regional museum of local history. The woman asked in order to urge citizen Shishlov to responsibility who had seduced her and left her with child. Kotlyakova wrote that comrade Shishlov “should not be a member of the Communist Party, there is no place for such persons in the line of fighters for proletarian dictatorship who accomplished and led correct path to socialism and equality of man and woman in all dimensions”. It should be noted that there are only a few words in the letter about feelings and personal characteristics of the defendant that shows unacceptance in expressing any feelings. Unfortunately, the result of this appeal is unknown, but there is a note on the document which talks about the necessity to call on Shishlov for response, which may mean that the complaint was granted (Insebaev 2003).

Civil marriages were widely spread. These were marriages registered without the consent of official authorities. The function of marriage registration was transferred from church (mosque) to executive agencies. The age of consent was 18 years, although, there were exceptions. According to archived sources, there were also instances of early marriages in cities of North Kazakhstan. For example, in one of the outgoing directives on the problem of organization in the registration of civil state acts of Regional Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers, Peasants and Red Army Deputies of Akmolinsk dated 28 December 1922, it was written that “there are many requests to the regional department in the registration of civil state acts from people about appeals of citizens on permission of marriage before the age of consent... solely for reasons of gaining new workforce (daughter-in-law or son-

in-law) to farm”. Such permission might be given only in case of “total distortion of the farm (for example, in case of death or disability of parents or other older family members when an under aged person is the only relevant owner of a farm)” (State Archive of North Kazakhstan (SANK): F.55, List 1, Case 176).

Information about marriages by nationality, an example of the city of Kustanai is contained in State Archive of North Kazakhstan region. Marriages of representatives of one ethnos were more frequent. Great Russians were tolerant to representatives of other nationalities. There were 205 marriages of the same ethos, 22 with Ukrainians, 1 with Byelorussian, and Tatar (26 marriages of the same ethos, 1 with Uzbek, 2 with Persians). Kazakhs, Germans, Poles, and Hebrews during this period married only representatives of their ethnea. As we can see, cross-ethnic marriages are rare (State Archive of Russian Federation (SARF): F. Å374. List 23, Case 102).

Family Ceremonies

Some wedding ceremonies had also changed. The first “Red wedding” in Pavlodar was described in one of the issues of city newspaper “Steppe plowman”, 1922. It was organized as a ceremonial meeting in a club, where representatives of different rural organizations greeted the newlyweds and presented them *samovar* and tea set. In his speech, the bridegroom pledges to eliminate the illiteracy in his future wife in a year. After that, members of a panel issued the document of wedding and asked the audience for its approval. The document contained a command for both the bridegroom and bride to arrange their family life according to the new Soviet laws. The meeting was closed with signing “International”, afterwards, the audience viewed a performance. The next day, a family evening was organized with declamations, and signing. Guests had a discussion about new and old way of life (Mironov 1922).

Family ceremonies related to birth and education were also accompanied with participation from the community. The new ceremony that got the symbolic name “*oktyabriny*” (from October, the month of revolution) was introduced instead of church baptism that was widely spread among Slav population. First of all, *oktyabriny* took place in August 1923 in the city of Petropavlovsk in former Mariinskaya church that was

reconstructed by Komsomol members into a club. The first son of the regional committee on communist party, Fedor Ruzaev was “baptized” in the new manner. All Komsomol members and pioneers of Petropavlovsk attended the party. The Child laid on the table covered with red cloth in the middle of the former church. Members who were part of the ceremony read greetings and then voted the name of the newborn. The unanimous decision was to call the child Kim in honour of the Communist International for the Youths. While Organizing *oktyabriny* of his child, the secretary of the regional committee tried to gather followers for the new ceremony. But *oktyabriny* was not supported by young parents, because the practice was rare and was organized mainly as an act of opposition to church baptizing (Maksimova 2014).

Oktyabriny were organized at work with colleagues. The following order of the “real working party” of *oktyabriny* in Petropavlovsk by bakers was described in the newspaper “Mir Truda” No 7, 1925. “The daughter of one of the workers, comrade Ezhov had an *oktyabriny*. She was called Lena. One of the workers said in his greeting, that this *oktyabriny* will not be the last because the workers of this collective, would not take their children to the priest”. In his speech, the father, comrade Ezhov said “I am proud to take my daughter to *oktyabriny* and I will try to educate her in line with the new communist spir-

it”. But this tradition did not last for long because it was rarely mentioned in sources (Ivanov 1925).

Death Rate and Birth Rate

According to Table 1, death rate of newborns was high (1 to 100) as well as of babies below 1 year (about 5% of all fixed deaths). Let us return to data for the second half of the year 1928 in small towns of North Kazakhstan.

According to Table 2, large percentage of deaths in towns of North Kazakhstan was deaths of babies: in Kokchetav—34 cases of 99, in Atbasar—23 of 56. Deaths were mainly as a result of diseases of ingestion system (including those caused by insufficient feeding or eating low quality food), pneumonia, virus infections (typhus, tuberculosis, and others).

Even in the face of high babies’ death rate, city families still had many children—5-7 in average and even more. The state promoted this trend that may be proved by Order of Central Committee and the Sous of Peoples Commissars of the Union of SSR dated 27 June, 1936 and 14 November, 1936 respectively which talks about grants to mothers having many children. Regional Executive Committee of Pavlodar in its appeal dated 20 September, 1937 gave the following explanation: “mothers having 7 or more children with the youngest not older than 5 years of age

Table 1: Birth rate and death rate in the cities of North Kazakhstan in 1928 (State Archive of Russian Federation. F. Å-373, List 23, Case 12).

City	Total population	Number of born (without stillborns)			Number of stillborns			Number of dead			Includi-under 1 y.o.
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Kustanai	25416	586	599	1185	9	2	11	372	359	731	314
Petropavlovsk	47357	1257	1215	2472	17	10	27	653	557	1210	539
Akmolinsk	12781	306	293	599	2	3	5	203	255	458	120

Table 2: Birth rate and death rate in small towns of North Kazakhstan in the year 1928 (State Archive of Russian Federation. F. Å-373, List 23, Case 12)

City	Total population	The number of newly born		The number of deaths			Number of newly born (without stillborns)	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Kokchetav	11060	79	74	153	44	55	99	34
Atbasar	6746	59	43	102	34	22	56	23
Cherlak	2862	14	11	25	3	12	15	5

should get 3000 Rubles grant annually (irrespective of the number of children until the youngest is 5)". Grants for each new child according to Ch. 10 of this law was 2000 Rubles annually from the date of birth, provided the number of all children did not go lower than 7 (State Archive of Pavlodar Region (SAPR): F. 17. List 1, Case 141, Sheet 87).

According to the case "Certificate of family situation for 1937" of State Archive of Pavlodar Region Baidilova Kapriza (9 children), Tumentseva Maria Fedorovna (7 children), Murenkova Varvara Exdokimovna (7 children) and others were acknowledged as having many children. But only living children were counted and also those depending on their parents (in this case mother). At the same time, death rate among children was above all possible limits (SAPR: F. 17, List 1, Case 141, Sheet 87).

Changes in Kazakh Traditional Family

Kazakh families had undergone substantial changes. Great attention was paid to the legal status of Kazakh women. The trend on the elimination of illiteracy of Kazakh women had been developing. "Education, cultural and enlightening activity is very poor in Kirgiz regions: there were no textbooks and stationaries. It was as if only the boys were studying, while the girls were rare exception. At the same time, Kirgiz women were more interested in the problems pertaining to women movement than Russian women" (Samarkin 2010). Kazakh women were actively engaged in the political process, promoting ideas of equal rights both in social life and in political area. "Woman is equal to man in Soviet Republic... Central Executive Committee of Kirhizes declared a holiday the day Kirhiz woman was set free from *kalym*—1st of January" (Samarkin 2010). Women executive committees of *auls* and regions were organized in Petropavlovsk with mandatory participation of Kazakh women. Here, the women learned about the elimination of *kalym*, plural marriages and marriage of juveniles.

There was also a movement of women-delegates who helped orphanages, acted as patrons of pioneers, participated in the work of peasants committees. Khisamutdinova Nagar Khairutdinovna (born August 18, 1902 in Kokchetav of Kokchetav district in Akmolinsk Region) was one of such woman-delegates. In the year 1926-1928, she worked as an instructor in the women's department of Kokchetav district committee. During one of the meetings in the school of Schuchinsk, she received a letter from a girl, Khusnia with words "Save me". After the meeting, she visited the home of her husband, comrade Adilbekov. Khusnia was a pupil in 6th grade, who was given in marriage to a boy of 16 for big *kalym*. She recalled that "when we entered the room, mother-in-law called daughter-in-law into the closet where *boursak* was fried, seized the dipper in hot oil and splashed it on the girl's face" (State Archive of Akmolinsk Region (SAAR): F. 7714, List 2, Case 19b). A statement was written, husband's parents were taken into custody, the marriage was cancelled based on court decision and the girl was sent to a boarding school. The practice of solving family problems as well as divorces as a result of interference of community represented by women's departments and the people's courts was widely introduced in the years of Soviet power.

Marriages and Divorces

At the same time, women's emancipation, prosecution of plural marriages and *kalym* payers led to divorces that were relatively and widely spread all over the cities. Married couples became divorced by mutual agreement and by decisions taken by people's courts. Although, the rate of marriages conducted was high, half of the marriages were cancelled.

According to Table 3, in Kustanai in the year 1927, people appealed to people's court less frequently, marriages were cancelled by mutual agreement (108 of 137 divorces). Number of di-

Table 3: Marriages and divorces in cities of North Kazakhstan in year 1927 (State Archive of Russian Federation. F.Ā-373, List 23, Case 12, Sheets 49-58, 66-67)

City	Total population	Number of marriages	Total	Number of divorces	
				By mutual agreement	By court decision
Kustanai	25416	335	137	108	27
Petropavlovsk	47357	522	173	91	82
Akmolinsk	12781	55	24	12	12

divorces reduced in Petropavlovsk due to high population, but almost 50 percent of divorces were made by court decision (82 of 173). The same situation was in Akmolinsk: the same number of appeals to court and divorces by mutual agreement.

Let us consider the data about marriages and divorces in small towns of North Kazakhstan—in Kokchetav, Atbasar and Cherlak (urban-type community since 1925) in the second half of 1927.

Table 4 shows relatively low activity in marriage and divorce in the second half (July-December) of 1927 that may be caused mainly by seasonal character of marriage (most marriages were conducted in spring and summer period). But still, divorces took place and were related to marriages by half. In Kokchetav, most divorces were settled via the people's courts and in Atbasar and Cherlak by mutual agreement. The same trend was obtainable in the 1930s. According to the data of Petropavlovsk, there were 134 divorces per 302 registered marriages (SANK: F. 922, List 1, Case 1).

Not less mournful was the fate of the family of Zhambolov. Zhambolov Aburashman was elected second secretary of the Petropavlovsk City Committee of the Party in 1930. His wife Rabiga, worked as a desk woman for a local newspaper. The family of Zhambolov carried out important social work, thus, they promoted Kazakh literature and arts. They had two children: daughter Luiza and son Dias. On September 9, 1937, Zhambolov was excluded from the Party as ordered by the bureau of regional committee of the party as public enemy and he was imprisoned. Rabiga was later fired and arrested: in the year 1938, she was put in *Akmola camp* of wives of motherland traitors without a preset term. She was back in Petropavlovsk only 3 years after. She found daughter Luiza in Sandyktau orphanage, but traces of her son were lost. Being under the surveillance of District People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, Rabiga could

not get a good work and was hired only as a worker on tannery. Director of tannery assisted in finding Dias and get him reconciled with his family via court order because he was adopted by a family without children. The tragic fate of Zhambolova Rabiga was the fate of many women in this dreadful time, who despite going through all the horrors of *Akmola camp* of wives of motherland traitors, still had maternal love (Aktalghan 2008).

Thousands of homes were destroyed all through the years of Stalin's repressions and the fate of children of "public enemies" were ruined. They were humiliated even by close relatives embittered at the time. Azalia Akhmetova from Petropavlovsk recalled the severe hardships she passed through as a child after arrest of her parents in 1937. She lived for some time with her mother's relatives. After the arrest of her uncle and death of her grandfather, her life changed dramatically. "I shudder when I recall my childhood. They left me, humiliated. They treated me as a slave. Once, they wanted to fetch a blow on my head using the handle of big steak knife having sharp sides and made a deep wound in sin-ciput. Even now... I can still feel the scar which brings back sad memories toward the daughter of public enemy" (Pages of Tragic Destiny 2002). After being discharged from the hospital, the girl ran away from her relatives and lived as a tramp for some time. This way, the number of homeless children grew (Barnes 2011).

Many relatives of public enemies changed families due to unbearable pressure. For example, the next public enemy, the notary of Irtysh district Kireev was exposed in Pavlodar newspaper "Bolshevistskii Put" dated November 10, 1938 in the paper "Political Blindness". "This Kireev was no longer Kireev, but Dzholdasbekov. He had changed family in order to keep his social origin secret. Dzholdasbekov-Kirrev is the son of a rich bay (landowner) that was dispossessed

Table 4: Marriages and divorces in small towns of North Kazakhstan in 1927 (State Archive of Russian Federation. F.Ä-373, List 23, Case 12, Sheets 49-58, 66-67)

City	Total population	Number of marriages	Total	Number of divorces	
				By mutual agreement	By court decision
Kustanai	11060	25	16	5	11
Atbasar	6746	12	6	6	-
Cherlak	2862	2	1	1	-

in the year 1928. One of his brothers Alebai, was arrested last year as public enemy” (Davydov 1938). There are numerous examples of this kind.

In general, the atmosphere of that time was vividly pictured by Iraida Suleimanova, daughter of repressed Garifulla Iskakov who was a politician, scientist, journalist and public figure. “Our fate and that of our parents form the pages of tragic history of the country... Families, names, even nationality was changed. Brother did not recognize brother, relatives did not contact each other... Mutual distrust and slyness were often a matter of everyday life. The reason behind this was the mass repressions in the country which was called the Soviet Union” (Pages of Tragic Destiny 2002).

Analysis of the sources, revealed the problem of modernization on family and marriage in Soviet time, an example is that of city population of North Kazakhstan; public consciousness had undergone substantial changes, attitude to family relations and family values changed. Small mobile family of two and rarely three generations was highlighted. Processes of woman emancipation and women working in “male professions” in the case of comprehensive employment, affected the number of children given birth to. Rising levels of education among adults has affected changes in the family and family relations (Lucio-Villegas 2015). Freeing of social relations and the institution of marriage from ethnic frames of religion which allowed premarital relations, simplified the procedure of divorce, resulting in the growth of divorce proceedings. Traditional Kazakh families received more attention from the authorities. These families had undergone dramatic changes due to the crash of social and economic lifestyle of nomads.

CONCLUSION

Women emancipation, destroying of generic traditions like *kaly*m and plural marriages, interference of social organizations in family relations resulted in loss of family values that manifested itself most vividly in the period of famine and mass political repressions. The practice of divorce was widely spread in cities, children’s homelessness and prostitution were frequent phenomena. People changed families during the period of repressions to avoid prosecution for being relatives of public enemy, and torn kindred relationships. Whether intentional or not, individual way of life of people, including its family component should match with completely new

frames that were created in the country by the ongoing deep multifaceted social shifts. Changes in the demographic, economic, psychological way of life of city family, more and more drew people away from traditional models of behavior and needed to seek new ones. The only unquestioned advantage of these new models was that they are better than the former ones which fitted into the requirements of life. But that did not prevent the modern forms of organization of private life, family, marriage that complied with the new conditions, from causing new tensions and problems. Moreover, problems arise in transitional states when former family forms starts fading and new ones are yet to mature. That was exactly the situation the Soviet city family experienced in 1920-1930s.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The scientific and practical importance of this research is that materials of this paper and its conclusions may be used in studying problems of everyday city life in Soviet period. Absence of the study of this problem in Eurasian historiography and great potential of sources of different kinds which are yet to be analyzed, provide wide perspectives for researchers who study the history of everyday city life. Results of research may also be used in working out and reading courses of general and local history, the history of everyday life and the history of cities, sociological and politology based researches.

There are still a number of problems that require studying: family ethics, gender problem, impact of religion (despite official limitation by Soviet authorities), psychological aspects of behavior of the Soviet person, pedagogical approaches to education of youths, tradition of oral knowledge transfer, folklore, everyday folklore and others. There are many aspects of city family research that made the research landscape complete. But this problem should be solved by engaging specialists in different branches of science with cross-disciplinary approaches.

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