



Opinion

Volume 8 Issue 5 - April 2019
DOI: 10.19080/GJAA.2019.08.555746

Glob J Arch & Anthropol

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Memories of Kazan Cloth-Maker of the First Half of the XIX Century: Daily Life of “Inconspicuous People”



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Submission: April 01, 2019; **Published:** April 10, 2019

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the characteristic of a unique historical source, which provides rich material for studying the everyday life of workers of the Kazan cloth manufactory in the XVIII - first half of the XIX centuries. This text is a biographically structured memories of the clothier, recorded by the Kazan historian N.Ya. Agafonov in the 1870s. The document is a rare example of oral history, which allows us to characterize the outline of the socio-cultural, ethno-confessional, mental and psychological characteristics of Kazan clothmakers.

Opinion

A person lives in everyday life without thinking about its routine, responding to the challenges of each day. These everyday life problems fit into a common behavioral model that reflects collective practices and perceptions. Thus, an ordinary person is a true Creator of history, it is in his daily life that historical processes take place. Kazan cloth-makers were the workers of the cloth manufactory, forever attached to the enterprise in 1736, which made them one of the discriminatory groups of the urban population. Lack of personal freedom, territorial segregation in Kazan Cloth settlement, forced labor at the factory formed a special cloth-makers microsociety, the reconstruction of which is complicated by the fact that cloth workers were not a category of people prone to reflection and did not leave any written sources about their life. In this regard, a unique document, the record of memories of the old resident of the Cloth Settlement A.S. Yuriev, made by the Kazan historian N.Ya. Agafonov in the 1870s., is of particular value.

This text is difficult to qualify as a full interview, because N. Ya. Agafonov did not record the questions asked or other elements of the conversation, moreover the conversation was not limited to a specific topic. The source is based on the biographical principle of giving the information. The old cloth-maker remembered the everyday life of Cloth Settlement families, kept in his memory, sometimes delving into the past for several generations, creating something like family genealogy. The source has a high degree of reliability, as there is no discussion of tendentiously colored topics, such as serfdom, the attitude to power, to the administration of the factory, but there are bright strokes to the

life of the cloth-makers. A.S. Yuriev had no reason to distort the facts speaking about them.

The document is a transcribed text, it is written from the oral conversation of A. S. Yuriev, who was an uneducated worker of the manufactory, and from the famous Kazan historian. This fact influenced on the linguistic aspects of the document. We do not hear the live speech of the master, marked with characteristic linguistic forms, we have a competent and complex speech of an educated person. Thus, the cloth-maker's memories are an oral historical source created by the historian long before the appearance of oral history, and this is his special value. Informal talk about “the old times” provides rich material about everyday survival practices in times of the serfdom of cloth-makers. Life experience of A. S. Yuriev and the people around him makes it possible to understand how living in an isolated settlement and the work on a serf manufacture determined the way of life and lifestyle. The study of the document revealed everyday practices that contributed to the deepening crisis of the serf manufactory, and the cloth-makers' lifestyle turned out to be petty bourgeois in its characteristics, which is important for understanding the features of modernization processes in the Russian city of the pre-reform era.

The story told by A. S. Yuriev reflects the historical reality in the way in which it kept in the memory of a cloth-maker. It is important to consider the fact that the Cloth settlement was a rather closed society, in which the local collective memory was kept for a long time. Memories of the cloth-maker have in common with the established information which hard

accustomed in closed societies and kept long in memory. It is almost impossible to separate one from the other, his own memories and established public opinion, which he perceives as his own. This is one of the advantages of this source, which allows to highlight the socio-cultural, ethno-confessional, mental and psychological characteristics of the inhabitants of Cloth

settlement. Thus, looking at the history "from below", we can see the real history of the life experience of "inconspicuous people", which is of interest not only for the local history. Practices of everyday life affect the direction, pace, depth of transformation and reform, success or failure of a political regime, historical process or event.



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DOI: [10.19080/GJAA.2019.08.555746](https://doi.org/10.19080/GJAA.2019.08.555746)

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