



HAIRDRESSING SALON AND BATHHOUSE AFFAIR IN UZBEKISTAN (1920-1980)

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the author reveals the situation with personal services during the Soviet period in Uzbekistan, specifically in the example of hairdressing and bath services. During the Soviet period, the authorities took control of the institutions providing personal services and gradually eliminated all forms private entrepreneurship in this area, turning it into public institutions. As a result, during all the years of Soviet power, the quality of personal services provided to the population remained one of the lowest among the Soviet republics.

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INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, people turn to organizations and individuals providing personal services to have their needs satisfied. As of the present day, there are many different areas in the sphere of personal services, which are of great importance in resolving any domestic problems that might arise in everyday life. With the evolution of human society, developments in science and technology and automation of manual labor, the area of personal services has gained momentum in its development and has become one of the key sectors of the economy. It is an undeniable fact that today, the life of a modern human being would be impossible to imagine without those providing personal services. Being one of the areas of personal services, hairdressing services have a long history. In various periods of history people showed different attitudes to different aspects of their appearance including hairstyles and beard trimming as well as a desire to look beautiful. Religious values, customs and traditions of the peoples also played an important role in the work of hairdressers. In order to reach their goals and to stand out among the crowd, some groups of people gave their hair and beard unusual shapes. In general, along with their direct functions of haircutting, barbers and hairdressers solved many other problems of everyday life.

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For example, they offered such first aid services as tooth removal and wound healing. Under special orders, they could even perform public corporal punishment, depriving people of eyesight with hot objects (Central Asian Ethnographic Collection, 2001). Prior to the beginning of the twentieth century, there functioned an established system of personal services in the territory of modern Uzbekistan. Barbers and other personal services facilities were situated on the territory of the markets in towns and villages, as well as in the centers of traditional neighborhoods. After the formation of Soviet Union, the way of functioning of personal service providers underwent some changes. They were forced to join various cooperatives, primarily to ensure that institutions providing personal services brought some revenue to the state. For instance, the Union of Turkistan artisans was founded with the purpose of having providers of personal services join the cooperatives. By 1921, Tashkent only had 50 special cooperatives consisting of barbers (Stasko, 1969). However, personal services were not the primary focus of the Soviet government during the first years of Soviet rule. First of all, Soviet authorities wanted to develop relations of the regional governments in Central Asia with the central administration in Moscow (Sahadeo, 211). Furthermore, Soviet authorities attempted to pass main economic sources in the region such as land and agriculture from private hands to collective or state property, as a result of which the government took control of

all the food and livestock (Sahadeo, 212-214). Later, other fields such as personal services were brought into the process of sovietization. Thus, the system of management of the personal services sector was changed. In 1931, a hotel-bath trust was formed on the basis of municipal enterprises. The trust was part of the management of municipal economy under Tashkent executive committee. It controlled baths, hotels, laundries, cloth-dyeing services, restaurants and barbers (State Archives of Tashkent city, item no. 31). Only in Tashkent in 1945, "Gosbantrest" (State Bath Trust) system included over 10 hairdressers (State Archives of Tashkent city, item no. 31). In the post-war years, their number increased dramatically. In municipal enterprises under the Ministry of Public Utilities of Uzbekistan, there were 247 hairdressers and barbers in 1955. Of these, 64 were in Tashkent region, 30 in Samarkand region, 7 in Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic and 12 in Bukhara region (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. R.2182).

In addition to the system of Ministry of Public Utilities, local industries and cooperative unions also had hairdressers and barber shops during the years under discussion, which shows the absence of a single system of management of hairdressers and barbers (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. 2330). In 1960, providers of personal services were under different authorities such as Consumer Cooperatives of the Republic (Uzbekbirlashuv), Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Public Utilities and National Economy Council under the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan (Stasko, 1971). This situation led to complications in the work of personal services providers. As the result, different providers of hairdressing and barber services enjoyed different levels of material security. Given this situation, some agencies suggested uniting all the hairdressing and barber services in the system of municipal services (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. R.2330), which was carried out in 1962, when 1592 providers of hairdressing and barber facilities were transferred from Ministry of Public Utilities to the Department of Personal Services (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. R.2697). However, despite the fact that Ministry of Personal Services was established in 1966, providers of hairdressing and barber facilities remained under the management of 14-17 ministries and departments (Iskhakov, 1976; Stasko, 1971).

Although in the 1970s numerous hair salons for women and children began functioning country-wide, Uzbekistan still ranked low for the level of personal services per capita among the republics of the Soviet Union. Thus, in 1975-1978, the level of coverage of population with hairdressing and barber services was 77% (Abdurashidov, 1980). For instance, in the 1979-1980, personal services sector earned 56 rubles. 52 kopecks in Riga turned, 56 rubles 52 kopecks in Frunze, 53 rubles 94 kopecks Tallinn, 48 rubles 35 kopecks in Kiev and 44 rubles 32 kopecks in Dushanbe. In Tashkent, personal services to population were rendered for 28 rubles 70 kopecks (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. R.2698), which means that Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, was in the lowest positions among the capitals of the Soviet Union in terms of the revenues of personal services sector. As for the level and quality of personal services for rural population of Uzbekistan, the situation was much worse. In the second half of the 1980s, there were noticeable differences in provision of personal services to city dwellers and rural population.

In particular, personal services to the rural population as a whole lagged by 1,6 times, including dry cleaning services— by 3.3 times, laundry - by 5.1, shoe repair services – by 2.6 and repair of vehicles— by 3 times (Nazarova, Kambarova, 1989). In other words, only 7,1% of private service vendors were located in rural areas, including 1.6% rental services, 1.5% dry cleaning services, 0.8% laundries, 30.5% hairdressers and barbers and 8.9% vendors of various services (Nazarov, Kambarova, 1989). As can be seen from the data provided above, hairdressing and barber services had the biggest share among the public services in rural areas. Thus, for all the years of the Soviet rule, this sphere of social and economic life lagged behind the personal services sector of developed countries in the world; moreover, their financial state and level of equipment were deplorable. In addition, personal services, especially in rural areas, were mainly limited to hairdressing services and shoe repair.

In the first years of the Soviet rule, the authorities did not pay due attention to baths. New bathhouses were not built and the existing ones were not repaired. Prior to 1917, there were 23 municipal bathhouses on the territory of the region, of which 14 were located in Tashkent. In addition, there were 28 bathhouses in the rural areas of the region. Most bathhouses were of typical style and had the operation period from 34 to 94 years, which means that they had long outlived their normal life span (Shodmonova, 2015). In 1924, 44 public bathhouses operated in Uzbekistan. According to some reports, villages did not have public bathhouses at that time (Kalanov, 1974). It is known that the Department of Management of Water Supply, Sewerage System, Bathhouses and Laundries of Ministry of Public Utilities of Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic employed only two people - the head and secretary. In the ministry there was also a department responsible for public bathhouses and laundries, where only two employees – the head and a chief heating engineer worked (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. P-2182). In 1938, there were several bathhouses in Samarkand region, of which 4 were located in Samarkand city, 2 in Kattakurgan, and the rest in Akdarya, Farish, Zaamin, Bulungur, Payariq, Nurata, Hatyrchiand Gallaaral districts (State Archives of Samarkand region, item no. 1643).

In 1940 in Tashkent several years of the population needed baths. It was informed that there would build new bath-houses every year. But this issue was later forgotten. Many bath-houses which situated in the city were in bad conditions, that couldn't apply people's need (Pravda Vostoka. 1940). During the last years of WWII, several old bathhouses in Tashkent were renovated and their boilers were restored in order to increase the volume of visitors. To meet the growing public demand for bath services, two bathhouses were built and started functioning in 1944-1945. They could serve 200 people per hour. As a result, it became possible to serve 1,771 people per hour in communal bathhouses and additional 600 people per hour in bathhouses belonging to different institutions (History of Socialist Tashkent (1945-1965), 1966). Indeed, most of the bathhouses that existed in the cities of the country in those years were built in the 1920s or even earlier, therefore, most of them were in need of major repairs. In Samarkand only, bathhouses in use by population in 1948 were built before 1917 and almost all of them were due to to be closed down because of their unsuitability for use. According to studies conducted in those years, the population of the city of Samarkand used public bathhouses 6 times a year, while

sanitary norms required this indicator to be at least 40 (State Archives of Samarkand region, 26 Fund). It should be noted that in 1948 there was an outbreak of spotted fever in Kashkadarya region. One means of preventing this disease is keeping the body clean, but in this period, there were not enough public bathhouses in Kashkadarya region to provide services to population. In particular, 274 collective farms did not have bathhouses. In Chirakchi District there were 80 collective farms, of which only 16 had bathhouses. 72 collective farms of Kitab district had 16 bathhouses, most of which were in need of repairs. In Guzar, Yakkabag-Beshkent districts existing bathhouses were in an unusable state and therefore some of them were adapted for housing and warehouses or used for other purposes (State Archives of Kashkadarinskoy region, item no. 1). Due to the expansion of existing bathhouses and construction of new ones in Tashkent city, in 1958 they could serve 1,568 people per hour. With bathhouse of Textile Mill and Excavator Plant, this figure reached 2,450 people per hour. According to the studies, the population of Tashkent city at that time amounted to 780,000 people, and if we consider that 50% of them regularly visited bathhouses and attendance rate of bathhouses by one person per month was 2.5 times, the total number of people visiting bathhouses per month at that time amounted to 975,000 (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. P-2182).

Revenues from personal services rendered by bathhouses and showers to citizens in 1959 reached 2,848,000 rubles. In 1960, this figure reached 3,036,000 rubles. It should also be noted that in 1959, laundry services collected 511,000 rubles, and in 1960, this figure was equal to 558,000 rubles (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. P-2330). While Tashkent had 16 bathhouses that could serve 6,500 people in 1956, in 1959 the number of bathhouses rose to 24 with the capacity of 7,100 people per house, and in 1960, 7,400 people per hour could use the services of 25 baths. By 1963, to serve the needs of the population, four more laundries and additional six bathhouses that combined bath and laundry services were put into operation. During the above-mentioned seven years, the number of bathhouses under National Trust of the Baths increased from 24 to 32. However, there were serious shortcomings in the provision of personal services to the public. In particular, the level of baths usage did not reach the level that met the needs, and their conditions were beyond sanitary requirements (History of Socialist Tashkent (1945-1965), 1966). In 1965, there were only 186 bathhouses with 8,087 places country-wide. Of these, 103 bathhouses with 6,270 were located in cities and 83 baths with 1,817 places were situated in rural areas. Bathhouses in cities exceeded government-imposed target by 100.8%, while in rural areas target plans were met by 97.6%, which meant that in the country as a whole, target plans were exceeded by more than 100%. However, the capacity and the quality of services provided by bathhouses failed to satisfy the growing needs of the population. Uzbekistan ranked twelfth among the 15 Soviet republics in terms of coverage with bathhouses with 3.6 places for 1,000 people, while the average figure for Soviet Union was 5.2 per 1,000 people. For example, in Turkmenistan, the level of coverage of population with bath services equaled 5.7 places per 1,000 people, and in Latvia, it was even higher with 7.0 places per 1,000 people (Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, item no. P-2182). In one issue of the magazine "Saodat" in 1989 it was reported that in the village of Jiza near Ulyanov in the Kashkadarya region, where there

were more than 1600 inhabitants, because of the lack of a general plan for the village for many years, the issues of building a bathhouse have not been resolved. But the book "In the Encyclopedia of Soviet Uzbekistan" (in the 1973 issue) describes other information, since it is reported that some public organizations, including consumer service points, exist in the village, (Saodat, 1989). In general, it can be noted that during the Soviet period, the demands of the population of many cities and regions of Uzbekistan in terms of personal and communal services were high, while the quality of those services in institutions of personal services was the cause of their fair discontent. During the Soviet period, various institutions providing personal services, which had a special significance for the daily life of the population, were poorly developed. The changes introduced to the system of consumer services did not take into account the needs of the local population, as well as local and regional peculiarities. Poor organization of services, poor quality, price and service culture evoked justifiable discontent of the population.

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