



ARMEN S. HAYRAPETYAN

Shirak Center of Armenological Studies
of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

 0000-0003-1051-5078
a.hayrapetyan@shirakcenter.sci.am

ARKADI A. AKOPOV

Shirak Center of Armenological Studies
of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia

 0000-0001-6771-9747
arkadone1@gmail.com

**RUSSIAN PEASANTS IN THE ALEXANDROPOL DISTRICT:
EMERGENCE, ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNAL LIFE,
AND FORMS OF LAND TENURE FROM THE NINETEENTH
TO THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY**

Abstract: The objective of this study is to examine the emergence of Russian peasants in the Alexandropol district of the Erivan province, as well as their communal life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The study of Russian ethnic groups in foreign environments presents several challenges. One significant question is whether to preserve or alter certain aspects of migrants' traditional way of life. In new surroundings, some traditions may change, while others may disappear. The significance of this work lies in the examination of local groups of Russians residing in a different ethnic environment. This prompts inquiry into the nature of cultural and economic interplay between Russians and the local populace. The study of cultural and domestic interactions between different ethnic communities has become a significant area of focus in modern historiography as nationalities continue to come closer together. This field of study holds scientific importance and provides practical knowledge.

To ensure a comprehensive review, it is important to consider factors such as the number of settlers, duration of residence, settlement features, cultural affinity with the local population, and other relevant factors.

This paper examines the migration of Russian peasants to Alexandropol district and their economic and social development as they adapted to new natural, socioeconomic, and political conditions.

In the literature produced prior to the revolution, the issues of interest to us were not adequately addressed. Some information on the history of Russian settlements can be found in articles by ethnographer S. Maximov and historian K. Borozdin.¹

¹ Maksimov 1861; Borozdin 1891.

Small historical and ethnographic descriptions of the Russian settlers in Eastern Armenia can be found in local periodicals in the form of articles, travel notes and correspondence. These works, descriptive in their content, are valuable because their authors observed the life of Russian peasants directly. For example, S. Bunyatov, a priest, lived among Russian peasants for five years and wrote on the basis of his personal impressions.²

The publications on Russian settlers contained in the *Memorial Books of the Erivan Province* are of some value.³

During the Soviet era, the study of the Russian population of Eastern Armenia began only in the 1960s and was mainly devoted to the religious study of the sectarians of Transcaucasia.⁴

In recent years, historical works devoted to the issues of tsarism's resettlement policy toward the Russian peasants of Eastern Armenia have appeared. A. Haiyan, along with other issues, tried to trace the process of the formation of Russian villages in Eastern Armenia.⁵

The monograph by D. Ismail-Zadeh also deserves attention. The author gives a general characterization of the economic and social life of the Russian peasants of Transcaucasia, but the issues of interest to us are reflected only in a general way.⁶

Thus, in the works of both pre-revolutionary and Soviet authors, the issues of studying Russian peasants in Eastern Armenia and, in particular, in Alexandropol district, have not the subject of a special study. This study intends to fill the existing gaps on the subject.

This paper draws extensively on the archival documents of the National Archives of Armenia, many of which have been introduced for the first time in this study. The documents contain a wealth of information on the history of Russian resettlement in Transcaucasia, the policy of the authorities toward them, relations between Russians and native Armenians, and data on the state of agriculture, including crops and livestock numbers. It is imperative to approach these documents with a critical lens, as they were compiled by officials and reflect the government's views on the settlers and their role in the new region.

Keywords: Russian peasants, Alexandropol district, settler, sectarians, farming, cattle breeding, social life, traditions.

1. History of the Emergence of the Russian Population in Eastern Armenia

The incorporation of a part of Eastern Armenia into Russia saved the Armenian people from the threat of physical extermination and guaranteed its further development. Compared to Persia and Turkey, Russia was at a higher level of socioeconomic development. By becoming part of the Russian Empire, Eastern Armenia was included in the orbit of more developed economic relations. This created favorable conditions for the growth of its agriculture, trade, crafts and industry.

The annexation of Eastern Armenia presented several political, social, and economic challenges for the tsarist government. One of the most significant challenges was how to strengthen its position in the newly annexed region. The government believed that attracting

² Bunyatov 1898; Bunyatov 1902.

³ *Pamyatnaya knizhka Erivanskoj gubernii na 1892g.*, *Pamyatnaya knizhka Erivanskoj gubernii na 1904g.* 1903.

⁴ Kozlova 1966; Klibanov 1965.

⁵ Aytyan 1989.

⁶ Ismail-Zade 1982.

Russian settlers to the area was the solution to this issue.

The emergence of Russians in Eastern Armenia occurred in two stages. The first stage reflected the peculiarities of the tsarist government's policy in Transcaucasia, particularly in Eastern Armenia, and was connected with military-strategic considerations. The second stage, which led to an increase in the Russian population, was driven by both the internal needs of the country and the economic importance of the new region.

A similar picture was observed in the development of the North Caucasus and central Asia, where the first settlers were Cossacks, military settlers.

2. Military Settlements

The first steps in the resettlement of Russians in Transcaucasia were made in the early nineteenth century. In 1816 it was decided to establish permanent headquarters in places of strategic importance, and at them "to form companies of married soldiers who would manage the regimental economy."⁷ The authorities hoped by this decree to increase the Russian population in the newly annexed areas. However, the implementation of this decree did not bring the desired results, as the number of such headquarters was insignificant. In addition, many officers, having retired, sought to return to their homeland.

The government aimed to increase the number of Russian settlers and promote the development of agriculture, trade, and industry in the region by establishing military settlements. These settlements were created at the expense of married and retired soldiers who were provided with everything necessary for military service. All settlers received an allowance from the treasury in the form of a *pravant* for half a year. In addition, each family received a lump sum of 160 rubles and fifteen *dessiatinas* of arable land.

The first residents of military settlements originated from Saratov, Tambov, Voronezh, Poltava, Moscow, and Kharkov provinces.

The settlers underwent military training throughout the year. Their lives were strictly regulated, including the construction of dwellings and other buildings according to a single plan that was closely monitored by superiors. Even marriages were arranged by the superiors. Military training began for children of settlers at the age of seven, and at eighteen they were transferred to reserve units. At twenty, they began serving in regiments.

Military settlers were required to give half of their land's produce to the 'reserve shop' and were prohibited from trading or visiting towns.

However, the costs of maintaining military settlements did not justify their existence, and as a result, no new military settlements were established in Eastern Armenia after 1848. "Experience proved," wrote the Caucasian governor Prince A. I. Baryatinsky, "that these settlements do not fulfill the purpose of their establishment and their management only burdens the military department."⁸ In 1851, the military settlements were transferred to the Ministry of State Property.

Thus, as a result of a certain course of government policy, which was based on

⁷ *Voyenno-geograficheskoye i statisticheskoye opisaniye Kavkazskogo voyennogo okruga* 1908: 13.

⁸ *Akty sobrannyye Kavkazskoy arkhograficheskoy komissiyey* 1904: 1349.

military-strategic considerations, in the first half of the nineteenth century, a number of Russian settlements founded as military settlements were established in the north of Eastern Armenia. Their importance in the socioeconomic life of the region was rather limited for a number of reasons.

3. Sectarian Settlements

During the 1820–1840s, peasants were resettled to the outskirts of the empire due to difficult economic conditions and social disenfranchisement. Religious persecution was also a reason for their relocation, as peasant sectarians were targeted by both the official church and the state. In several provinces, sectarians, particularly Molokans, constituted a significant proportion of the peasant population. The government and the church were actively suppressing dissenters. However, despite repression, tsarism was unable to eradicate the sectarian movement.

The Russian sectarians were resettled in Transcaucasia by a government decree on 20 October 1830. The resettlement was imposed on dissenters who were found guilty of spreading their faith. They were to be given to soldiers and sent to the Transcaucasian corps for service. Women and those unable to serve were to be sent to the Transcaucasian provinces for settlement.⁹ The general manager of the Transcaucasian region was responsible for settlers' accommodation. Families of exiled settlers were given an allowance of 100 rubles in low-forest areas and fifty rubles in forest areas for the construction of houses. The initial place of resettlement for Russian sectarians in Transcaucasia was Karabakh province, where Dukhobors from Don and Molokans from Tambov province were exiled. Since 1833, Russian resettlement to the territory of Erivan province has been authorized. The majority of Russian settlements were situated in the northern districts of the province. This was because these lands were predominantly owned by the treasury.

In 1847, the Commission for Establishing Russian settlements in the Transcaucasian Region was created to facilitate the Russification of the newly conquered territory. The commission's primary objective was to organize Russian settlements and provide settlers with suitable land.¹⁰ One paragraph in the Commission's instruction, which proposed the placement of sectarians in Armenian settlements, is noteworthy. It suggested that if Russians and Armenians lived together, the Armenians could gradually learn from the settlers about the best ways of economy and house construction and become familiar with the Russian language.¹¹ In the Alexandropol district, twenty-six Armenian villages agreed to the settlement of 165 families of Russian settlers.¹²

Although the authorities made efforts, mixed settlements of Russians and Armenians were not widespread. This was due to several reasons, including the difficulty of providing each Russian family with a plot of thirty *dessiatinas* because the lands near the villages were

⁹ *Polnoye sobraniye zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii* 1831: 169–170.

¹⁰ Klibanov 1965: 160.

¹¹ National Archives of Georgia fond 222, file 5: 21

¹² National Archives of Georgia fond 222, file 5: 38–41.

already being used by the local inhabitants. Additionally, Russian settlers in the new region attempted to settle together to organize their social and cultural life.

Russian peasants were allocated larger land plots compared to local peasants, with each family receiving between twenty-five and thirty *dessiatinas* of land.¹³ The government attempted to settle peasants on available free land, but often faced shortages, resulting in displacement of the local population. The settlement project of Alexandropolsky district stated that if the local population's discontent and protests were to be heeded in the newly acquired areas and each colony, vast areas of land, now inhabited by industrious and productive farmers, would remain empty in Russia.¹⁴

Land planning for settlers often involved taking land from the indigenous population under the guise of "deprivation." However, these lands in mountainous and foothill areas were already being used by local residents for arable land and paddocks. The government did not take this into account and, as a result, took away the most convenient lands from the local peasants.

The census of peasants' materials indicates that in the 1840s, resettlement was primarily from Tambov, Orenburg, and Saratov provinces. The mass peasant exodus to Transcaucasia began with the sectarians from Orenburg province in 1831–1832. They initially moved to Lenkoran uyezd of Shamakhi province and then, in 1844, moved to Alexandropol uyezd of Erivan province, where they founded the village of Vorontsovka (150 families, 386 males and 410 females), all Molokans. That year, three villages were founded: Privolnoye (72 families, including 233 males and 240 females, Orthodox), by natives of Orenburg province, Nikitino (34 families, including 111 males and eighty females, Molokans), by natives of Tambov province, and Voskresenko (44 families, consisting of 170 males and 159 females, Molokans) by natives of Saratov province.¹⁵

By the end of 1849, the Commission for Settlement in the Caucasus Region had been dissolved, with its functions transferred to the local authorities. These included the vice-governor of Erivan province, N. Blavatsky, and the chairman of the temporary committee on migration, R. Fadeev, who was also a member of the main board of the Transcaucasian region. As a result of their endeavors, the active Russification of the Lake Sevan basin, Alexandropol district and Lori region commenced in the 1850s.¹⁶

Blavatsky and Fadeev sought to establish Russian settlements along the entire length of the Alexandropol-Dilijan highway, with the belief that the settlement of the Alexandropol district and the Lori region by Russians would be of exceptional importance in terms of creating a robust node of communication between the Erivan and Tiflis provinces.¹⁷ As a consequence of their activities in 1851, 12 new sectarian villages were established in the aforementioned territories.¹⁸

In 1853, the resettlement of Russians from the internal provinces of Russia to the Transcaucasian region was temporarily stopped. The government returned to this problem

¹³ NAA fond 133, inventory 1, file 329: 304.

¹⁴ Tumanyan 1954: 42.

¹⁵ NAA fond 93, inventory 1, file 109, 110.

¹⁶ NAA fond 269, inventory 1, file 359: 6–7.

¹⁷ Avdalbekyan 1959: 222.

¹⁸ NAA fond 133, inventory 1, file 379: 21–24.

once again after the victorious end of the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878, when it was decided to repopulate the newly conquered lands with Russians and Greeks.¹⁹

In his report to the emperor dated February 4, 1879, the commander of the Caucasian Army, Prince Svyatopolk-Mirsky, stated: “The main task should be to populate the Kara region with as many Russians as possible. Otherwise, the goal of creating a Russian population in Transcaucasia will have to be abandoned. Now it is obvious that the decision to populate the rich territories of Akhalkalaki and Alexandropol districts with Armenians and Greeks in 1828–1830 was wrong. The repetition of such a mistake would be inexcusable.”²⁰

Over the next two decades, due to the consistent policy of the authorities, more than twenty Orthodox villages were founded in the region.

This is a brief history of the emergence of the Russian rural population in Alexandropol district of Erivan province.

4. The Social Life of Russian Peasants in Alexandropol District.

As with other regions of Eastern Armenia, each Russian village in Alexandropol uyezd was a distinct community. Similarly to his homeland, the peasant was confined to the closed world of his village. The village community owned land collectively, periodically redistributed it among households, and was bound by a circular bond in the performance of duties for the state. The community performed behavioral, ritual, and ceremonial functions and exercised strict control over the economic and spiritual life of the peasants. The majority of Russian settlements in the county were founded by natives of a single locality or even a single village (such as Nikitino and Voskresenka). As a result, they retained many habits and skills from their previous way of life in their new location.

5. Forms of Land Tenure

The peculiarity of land ownership in Alexandropol district was that the main part of land belonged to the treasury and private landownership was almost completely absent. State lands were prevalent, which made it easier to allocate land to Russian settlers. However, this process was not without difficulties as most of the arable land was already being used by Armenian rural communities.

The land allotment of the Russian rural community was allocated based on the fact that each family of settlers had to have 25–30 *dessiatinas* of convenient land.

In Alexandropol district, the proportion of arable land was limited, with pasture and unsuitable land being more prevalent. As a result, land was evaluated based on its suitability for farming. For Russian settlers, three *dessiatinas* of unsuitable land were considered equivalent to one *dessiatna* of suitable land.²¹

The local administration faced challenges in allocating arable land, hayfields, and

¹⁹ NAA fond 269, inventory 1, file 2326: 14–15.

²⁰ NAA fond 14, inventory 1 file 506: 75–78.

²¹ NAA fond 133, inventory 1, file 1173: 53.

pastures due to the mountainous terrain, uncomfortable lands, and proximity to Armenian villages. Additionally, the allotment lands of Russian villages were dispersed across different plots, each with its own name. For instance, in 1910, the allotment of Alexandrovka village comprised four plots: Tryasuny, Shigry, Sugroby, and Shishtina.²²

Arable land was typically situated within two to four *verst*s of the village, while pastures and hayfields were located up to ten *verst*s away. The community collectively owned the arable land, pastures, and hayfields. The community preserved its land fund by levying state taxes on all land owned by its members. Temporary residents, such as traders and newcomers from other places, had no right to use community land. The sale of communal lands was prohibited. In 1908, the villagers of Nikitino attempted to sell a portion of the land belonging to the peasants who had emigrated to the USA and use the proceeds for the community's needs. However, the district authorities denied their request.²³

The community's initial land fund remained unchanged, regardless of the number of its members. As a result, some communities ran out of land sooner than others. Admission of new members to the community was subject to varying conditions due to this issue. For example, in 1919 at the village meeting of Nikitino village it was decided to admit a new member of the community with his family from the Kars region and to provide him "on an equal basis with other members of the community, in permanent use of allotment land according to the number of family members. And he has no right to demand a full allotment, but he must use that plot of land which will be allotted to him by the community."²⁴

The community was interested in ensuring that its members paid state taxes and fulfilled public and state duties, so when new members were admitted to the community, their social behavior was discussed at the meeting. For example, in 1849 the Trustee of Russian Settlers reported to the Commission for the Settlement of the Transcaucasian Region that the Russian communities of Nikitino and Voskresenka, Alexandropol district, did not agree to accept Molokan E. Kobzev and his family for residence, because of his rebelliousness and evasion of public and state duties."²⁵

As mentioned above, the system of land allotment inevitably led to small landholdings, which were already noticeable in the Russian villages of the Alexandropol district in the 1860s and were reflected in numerous petitions from Russian peasant societies to the provincial government for an increase in land allotments. In 1871, for example, the peasants of the village of Voskresenka petitioned the governor of Erivan: "Since 1843... we have been in the present place... in the number of thirty-six farmsteads, since that time the number of farmsteads in our village has doubled... With an increase in the population, we began to suffer shortages, especially of arable land."²⁶

Small land holdings led Russians to migrate first to the Kars region, which was annexed to Russia in 1878, and then to the United States. In 1879–1880 eighteen families moved from the Russian villages of Alexandropol district to Kars region.²⁷ The migration

²² NAA fond 125, inventory 1, file 148: 7.

²³ NAA fond 140, inventory 1, file 2: 22.

²⁴ NAA fond 140, inventory 1, file 5: 6.

²⁵ NAA fond 133, inventory 1, file 329: 357.

²⁶ NAA fond 133, inventory 1, file 1016: 1.

²⁷ NAA fond 133, inventory 1, file 3123: 24.

of Russians from the original settlement to the Kars region became massive in the 1890s.

On the other hand, in a number of villages there was a slight increase in the number of land plots at the expense of the land plots left by the members of the community who moved to Kars region and the USA.

In any case, the average size of Russian peasant plots was much larger than that of Armenian peasants. For example, in the villages of Nikitino and Voskresenka, according to statistical materials, there were 5.7 and 3.3 *dessiatins* of land per person, respectively, while in the neighboring Armenian village of Bozikend - only 2.1 *dessiatins*.²⁸

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the dominant form of land tenure among the Russian peasants of the Alexandropolsky district was communal. The most common was the distribution of land among farms regardless of the number of families. For example, a family of seventeen people received the same allotment of land as a family of two. This system led to an unequal distribution of land, so the governor of Erivan ordered a change to the per capita land distribution. From 1882, all Russian villages in the Alexandropol district were allocated land on a per capita basis: “per eater” (the same amount of land was allocated to a man and a woman).

Redistributions of communal lands occurred periodically, with varying terms. For instance, in 1910, arable land was redistributed in Voskresenka village after six years, and in Nikitino after eight years.²⁹

After examining the terms of communal land redistribution in the Russian communities of Alexandropolsky district, it can be concluded that peasants in villages with less fertile soils established longer redistribution terms until the costs of land cultivation were fully recouped.

The village assembly selected 8–10 peasants, known as *delshchiks*, to redistribute the land. These individuals were highly respected within the community. In one of the verdicts of the Nikitin village society, the “*delishers* of public land” were specifically identified among the signatures of fellow villagers. The plotters, under the supervision of the village headman, created a preliminary plan for land redistribution. They counted the number of people in the village and divided the land into plots using natural dividing lines such as ravines, roads, and streams. The arable land was divided into several plots based on its quality and distance from the village. Each plot was then divided into ‘shares’ based on the number of allotment units of the peasant farm.

For the purpose of land redistribution, the village assembly selected eight to ten peasants to act as land distributors (*delshchik*). These individuals were highly respected within the community. In one of the verdicts of the Nikitin village society, the “distributors of public land” were specifically identified among the signatures of fellow villagers.³⁰ The plotters, under the supervision of the village headman, created a preliminary plan for land redistribution. They counted the number of individuals in the village and divided the land into plots using natural dividing lines such as ravines, roads, and streams. The arable land was divided into several plots based on its quality and

²⁸ Zelinskiy 1886, III: 476–481.

²⁹ NAA fond 125, inventory 1, file 148: 9.

³⁰ NAA fond 140, inventory 1, file 1: 4.

distance from the village. Each plot was then divided into “shares” based on the number of allotment units of a peasant farm.

During the time of division, peasants were organized into groups of 30–50 individuals. From each group, a senior, a respected person, was chosen, and a plot was assigned to each group by drawing lots. The land received through the lottery was then divided among the members of the group based on the number of allotment units of the peasant farm.

Unlike arable land, hayfields were redistributed annually, and the plot’s yield was taken into account. The plot size was determined using steps or a rope, a technique introduced by Russians and adopted by Armenians according to A. D. Yeritsov.³¹ The method for redistributing mowing was the same as that used for arable land.

Typically, each village had a pasture within its boundaries that was reserved for use by local residents. The community protected these pastures, preventing cattle from neighboring villages from grazing there. Additionally, lands designated for homesteads and vegetable gardens were also considered community lands.

6. Organization of Community Life

The rural community was not only a collective of people bound by the commonality of the settlement territory, but also a specific form of social organization. As a rule, a peasant collective was the smallest self-governing unit, known as a village society, and was bound by common land ownership. Legally, each community could independently decide its own internal affairs. However, in practice, the district administration closely scrutinized the community’s activities.

The settlers in the Alexandropol district practiced communal self-government. The assembly, led by a headman, made decisions on all important social issues. The headman oversaw an administrative apparatus that included an assistant, a clerk, a public tax collector, and a public mailman.

The headman was elected for a three-year term and was responsible for exercising executive power. Their duties included monitoring the moral behavior of community members.

In the secant’s villages of Alexandropol district, spiritual leaders had significant influence over the religious life of the community and sometimes even replaced civil and police authority. The heads of households had the right to vote at the assembly, which met at least once a month. Decisions made by the assembly were only valid if at least two thirds of the households were present.

The village assembly addressed a range of matters, including admitting new members to the community, granting land to peasants, setting terms for land redistribution, building roads, collecting money for public needs, organizing bread shops, settling family disputes, and appointing guardians for orphans. The village assembly held significant power and occasionally disregarded decisions made by higher authorities, including the Yerevan Chamber of Treasury. This was particularly true when the matter at hand involved land, which impacted

³¹ Yeritsov 1886, II: 95.

the interests of all peasants. The assembly was responsible for hiring shepherds and field guards to protect the property of villagers from potential robbery attacks.³²

The village assembly was responsible for maintaining village schools. In 1919, the assembly in Nikitino addressed several issues, including taxation for school maintenance, school repairs, purchasing textbooks and notebooks, starting classes, and the parents' council. The question of school maintenance was resolved as follows: All students, regardless of their financial situation, should be taxed on half a *pood* of potatoes each. The potatoes will be collected by the members of the parents' council, sold, and the proceeds deposited in the treasury.³³ Due to the large number of students, the council has decided to invite a third teacher to the school and maintain it using public funds.

The village assembly resolved the issue of guardianship for children without parents. A guardian was appointed for orphans not only if they had no relatives, but also when a widow remarried. The village headman, together with elected accountants, took an inventory of the orphans' property and handed it over to the guardian. A 'trustworthy' person was appointed as the guardian who had to report to the village assembly at the end of the year on their actions in guardianship of the property and upbringing of the orphans. For instance, in 1919, P. I. Arinin, a resident of Nikitino, allocated a part of the property to his deceased son Vasily, which now passed to his grandchildren, Vasily's children. The family was wealthy, and the three orphans received two cows, a calf, a steer, a horse, a cart, and a carpet.³⁴

The village community made sure that the orphan's property given to the guardian was returned on time, otherwise, by the decision of the village assembly, the headman took strict measures. In 1890, peasant I.S. Chichev of Nikitino village failed to return approximately 300 roubles of orphan money, resulting in the sequestration of part of his property, including a van with three horses, two cows, and two heifers.³⁵

The village community also took responsibility for maintaining and improving the appearance of their village. The village assembly selected 2–3 individuals to oversee the cleanliness of the village and take action against negligent owners. Each morning, after the cattle were driven out to the fields, the peasants were required to sweep the streets near their homes. According to contemporaries, Russian settlements had an appealing appearance - clean and tidy, which was not always the case for Armenian villages.³⁶

7. Forms of Mutual Assistance

The community organization of Russian peasants in the Alexandropol district was characterized by various forms of collective labor and mutual assistance, used in agriculture and domestic work.

Inextricably linked to the economic and intracommunity life of peasants was the custom of *pomochi* (mutual aid), which included features of economic and labor, and every

³² NAA fond 140, inventory 1, file 8: 50.

³³ NAA fond 140, inventory 1, file 8: 71–75.

³⁴ NAA fond 140, inventory 1, file 8: 51–53.

³⁵ NAA fond 140, inventory 1, file 1: 5.

³⁶ NAA fond 140, inventory 1, file 2: 10.

day and festive character.³⁷ *Pomochi* was a free and comprehensive aid provided to a fellow villager to accomplish a specific set of tasks. The communal nature of the *pomochi* was most clearly demonstrated in the aid organized by the village assembly. Such aid was an exceptional measure and was provided to families who had lost their breadwinner, families with many children, or those who lacked sufficient labor, as well as to those who had suffered from fire damage. Typically, the aid involved assistance with agricultural work and house construction. Community members would bring their own tools and horses to help with the work. When planting and harvesting potatoes from large areas, several families joined together and took turns doing this work in each household. However, this type of help was most often found among the female members of the community when processing flax, spinning, or chopping cabbage. The hostess herself invited relatives, neighbors, and friends to help. When work started was determined by the nature and amount work to be done. For example, for cabbage shredding they gathered in the morning and for flax processing in the evening and worked all night.³⁸

In general, it should be noted that for all types of *pomochi*, the degree of obligatory participation in work was high due to certain ethical perceptions and norms that developed around this custom and were supported by public opinion in the community. In the Molokan villages, however, helping sometimes took other forms. For example, the rich helped their poorer fellow villagers not by participating in the work themselves but by giving them money.³⁹

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Russian peasants in the Alexandropol district had various societies, partnerships and artels for the processing and marketing of dairy products.⁴⁰ The farms that belonged to such societies used to deliver all the milk they received from their cows to a householder, who used it to make cheese, butter and other products for herself. The next day, all the milk collected was given to another member of the society, and so on.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the partnerships gave way to dairy artels, where the production of products was taken to a higher technical level. The members of the artels, the farmers of a village, bought butter churns and centrifuges, rented premises, and invited craftsmen. From 1913, dairy artels were established in this way in the villages of Voskresenka and Nikitino. In 1913 in Nikitino there were twenty-five members of the artel; in 1914 it was seventy-five people with 110 farms in the village. In Voskresenka out of 105 farms, twenty-four were members of the artel.⁴¹ The artel workers delivered milk daily and took into account the amount, since it was used to make cheese and butter, with deductions for renting the premises, the payment to the masters, and the amortization of the equipment. There was another way for the artel workers to earn an income. Dairy products were sold at the markets in Tbilisi, Dilijan and Karakilis, and the proceeds were used to buy goods for the members of the artel.

³⁷ Gromyko 1981: 4-5.

³⁸ Gromyko 1981, 4: 38.

³⁹ Argutinskiy-Dolgorukov 1897: 112.

⁴⁰ NAA fond 125, inventory 1, file 737: 4.

⁴¹ Tamamshev 1947: 126.

8. Penetration of Capitalist Attitudes into the Lives of Russian Peasants

At the end of the nineteenth century, capitalist relations penetrated all spheres of life of the population of Eastern Armenia. The market demand for various agricultural products stimulated the development of trade. The growth of the urban population and the development of industry created a huge demand for bread. Local centers of wheat and barley production were established. In the province of Yerevan, the Alexandropol district was such a center. The district was also a center for commercial cattle breeding and accounted for more than half of the province's cattle.⁴² It can be assumed that the share of Russian peasants in the production of commercial grain and livestock was not insignificant.

The growth of commercial agriculture was always linked to improvements in agricultural machinery. At the end of the nineteenth century, improved agricultural machinery appeared in Russian villages. A.M. Argutinsky-Dolgorukov wrote that "fields are cultivated almost exclusively with improved tools. While the Armenians mostly plow with old wooden plows."⁴³

Capitalist relations reached their greatest development in the sectarian villages of the Alexandropol district. Sectarian communities became a center of development for bourgeois relations. The great economic development of the sectarian communities had objective reasons. It should not be forgotten that not only poor but also wealthier peasants took part in the resettlement, and in their new places of settlement they found ample opportunities to apply their capital. The accumulation of capital and the development of bourgeois relations were greatly facilitated by the socioeconomic privileges granted to the settlers.

The cultic peculiarities of the Molokan religion also played a role. The sectarians observed a sharp reduction in the number of holidays. The Molokans rejected the Orthodox understanding of fasting, interpreting it as abstinence from all evil: smoking, drinking, worldly pleasures, etc., which helped to use available resources economically and rationally. The Molokan doctrine required not only abstinence but also care for the family and hard work. Enrichment, according to the Molokans, was a sign of divine favor. The sharp internal contradictions that existed in sectarian communities were somewhat mitigated and regulated by the religious community at the expense of public funds and charity.⁴⁴

9. Conclusion

The integration of Eastern Armenia into the Russian Empire necessitated the assimilation of these territories into the empire's economy. The authorities regarded these lands as a colonial periphery and resettled Russian peasants, mostly sectarians to make them economically viable. The government granted them favors and closely monitored their religious activities. The settlers from the central and southern provinces brought their own farming methods and culture. The government organized them into communities and provided communal lands. In Alexandropolsky uyezd, Russians farmed and raised livestock

⁴² Ambaryan 1959: 67.

⁴³ Argutinskiy-Dolgorukov 1897: 99–100.

⁴⁴ Klibanov 1973: 113.

using new tools and improved livestock breeds, resulting in improved agriculture. Russian peasants were also involved in woodworking. Contacts between Russians and Armenians were limited due to religious and cultural differences. However, they still managed to influence each other and exchange experiences in agriculture and crafts. The Russian peasants who migrated to the Alexandropol district formed their own micro-community that allowed them to preserve their culture while adapting to local conditions.

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**АРМЕН ХАЈРАПЕТИЈАН
АРКАДИ АКОПОВ**

Национална академија наука Републике Јерменије,
Ширак центар за јерменолошке студије

**РУСКИ СЕЉАЦИ У АЛЕКСАНДРОПОЉСКОМ ОКРУГУ:
НАСТАНАК, ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈА ЗАЈЕДНИЧКОГ ЖИВОТА
И ОБЛИЦИ ЗЕМЉОПОСЕДА (19.–ПОЧЕТАК 20. ВЕКА)**

Резиме

У 19 веку, присаједињавање Источне Јерменије, укључујући Александропољски округ, Руском царству захтевало је израду и спровођење стратегије за развој ових нових територија. Циљ је био да се интегришу у економски систем царства. С тим у вези, руска влада је одлучила да пресели руске сељаци у ове области. Главни ток досељеника били су државни сељаци из аграрно пренасељених покрајина Русије. Међу њима је било много секташа који су се кретали како у нади да ће избећи репресију, тако и да развијају предузетничке активности у складу са својим уверењима. Политика власти према њима била је двојака. С једне стране, обезбеђене су им значајне земљишне и пореске олакшице, као и дозвола за бављење трговином и занатством. С друге стране, секташи су били прогањани због својих верских уверења, иако су подстицани да се населе у новом региону. Руски досељеници су донели своје пољопривредне вештине у регион, али су морали да се прилагоде новим климатским условима и да позајме неке технологије од локалног становништва. Такође су развили занате, укључујући обраду дрвета, и увели побољшане методе сточарства и пољопривреде. Пресељење руских сељака у Александропољску област довело је до формирања микрозаједница руске националности у региону. Интеракција између руских и јерменских сељака била је праћена културном разменом и утицајем. Међутим, верске и етничке разлике, као и деноминационо нејединство, закомпликовале су процес интеграције. Генерално, пресељење руских сељака у Александропољски округ било је део стратегије колонијалне експанзије Руске империје. Овај процес је значајно утицао на привредни и културни развој региона и допринео формирању јединствене етнокултурне средине.

Кључне речи: руски сељаци, Александропољски округ, досељеници, секташи, земљорадња, сточарство, друштвени живот, традиција.