

HOLIDAYS AND LEISURE

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Original article

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WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' LEISURE DAYS IN THE TRADITIONAL CALENDAR AND ITS ALTERNATIVES IN THE SOVIET PUBLIC SPACE

This article aims to analyze the transformation in the structure of women's holidays throughout the 20th century, from the pre-Soviet calendar focused on the values of Orthodoxy and ethnic traditions to the Soviet holiday system and the present day. The authors attempt to find correlations between the number and content of women's days off from work in different periods of the 20th — 21st centuries and the social status of Russian women. Particular attention is paid to informants' stories when they explain the reasons for idleness, speak about their satisfaction from the increase or decrease in the number of days off and changes in leisure activities. The study is based on ethnographic field materials collected in the 1990–2000s in the villages of Western and Eastern Siberia. The authors of the article apply classical scientific methods of description, qualitative analysis of narrative interviews, and comparative method in order to identify common and different features in the typology and content of women's holidays among different groups of Russians in Siberia. In traditional culture, "idleness" was the most important aspect of a women's holiday. However, in the Soviet period and now, this criterion only corresponds to an officially non-working day: International Women's Day on March, 8. In traditional societies, the liberation of women from everyday work was not interpreted as a tribute to their special status (as wives or mothers), but rather as a way to avoid possible negativity for the entire community due to noncompliance with prohibitions on "women's work" on certain days. Thus, women invariably could not work on such days. "Idleness," or the conscious avoidance of "dirty" women's work, was perceived as a holiday in itself. The analysis of ethnographic materials revealed differences in women's and girls' holidays in traditional culture. During festive "maiden days," girls were exempt from housework and agricultural tasks but performed numerous rituals with significant folkloric elements and engaged in fortune-telling practices. The study considered the diversity of Russian and local Siberian ethnocultural groups and their holiday traditions.

Keywords: *holiday calendar, women's holiday, women's and girls' idleness, Friday, Soviet modernization, March 8, women's studies*

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