

## SCTMG 2020

### International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

## EVERYDAY LIFE OF GROZNY RESIDENTS ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR II

Elbuzdukaev Tamara Umarovna (a)\*, Gelagaeva Aruzha Magamedovna (b), Abdulvahabova  
Berlant Borz-Alievna (c)  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Chechen State Pedagogical University, Integrated Research Institute n.a. Kh.I. Ibragimov, RAS, Academy of Sciences of the Chechen Republic, 33, Kievskaya st. Grozny, 364037, Chechen Republic, Russia, telbuzdukaeva@mail.ru

(b) Chechen State University, 32, Sheripov st., Grozny, 364024, Chechen Republic, Russia, alton95@mail.ru

(c) Chechen State University, 32, Sheripov st., Grozny, 364024, Chechen Republic, Russia birlant@list.ru

### *Abstract*

The article discusses everyday life of Grozny residents on the eve of the Great Patriotic War (1939–1941). This period was studied only in terms of political and military events. During this historical period, stable stereotypes of mass consciousness of the era of socialism, an attitude to work, to property, ideal personality, “socialist morality”, and “socialist culture” developed. The focus is on the “history of everyday life” (material and cultural environment), and the impact of certain events on everyday lives). The social structure of Chechen society did not change significantly. Industrialization and violent collectivization could not change the lifestyle of the people. Nevertheless, the creation of the class of industrial workers and managers, the urban population, and the involvement of women in industrial production changed mentality of the Chechen people. The study of pre-war history of Grozny can boost patriotism of people. It is very important to show the unique, multifaceted, contradictory pre-war “spirit” through the prism of mentality of the Soviet people, to correlate private life with historical events, to describe the life of city residents.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

**Keywords:** Prewar life, patriotic moods, labor in industry; salaries; shortage of goods; housing problem.



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## 1. Introduction

In the late 1930s, significant shifts in the life of Grozny residents occurred. The influx of people into the city changed the social structure of the population. In the pre-war period, stable stereotypes of mass consciousness of the era of socialism, attitudes towards work, property, the type of ideal personality, the norms of "socialist morality", and the system of "socialist culture" developed. The article presents the most typical, characteristic features of the pre-war everyday life of the inhabitants of Grozny, which was the economic, political and cultural center (Table 01). The life was dynamic. In the urban environment, the main characteristics of Soviet everyday life were manifested.

**Table 01.** The development of public catering in the Chechen-Ingushetia in 1937–1940 (ChR Government, 1977)

|                                                                                     | 1937 | 1940 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| The number of catering enterprises at the end of the year                           | 170  | 311  |
| Including: dining rooms, restaurants and teahouses                                  | 60   | 110  |
| Snack bars and buffets                                                              | 101  | 201  |
| The turnover of catering, millions of rubles (in prices of the corresponding years) | 2,2  | 5,9  |

## 2. Problem Statement

Urbanization of the Chechen-Ingush society of the late 1930s created the problem of urban everyday life as a special sociocultural environment that developed in regional and national contexts which were the living space of inhabitants. The article aims to analyze the everyday life of Grozny residents on the eve of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945).

## 3. Research Questions

The object is the urban everyday life of Grozny on the eve of the Great Patriotic War. Particular attention is paid to the problem of consumption, housing conditions, material support of Grozny residents in 1939–1941. The first frontier is determined by changes in the international situation due to the outbreak of World War II. The final frontier is the beginning of World War II.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to analyze the urban everyday life of Grozny on the eve of World War II.

## 5. Research Methods

The research method is based on a combination of general scientific and historical methods. The work is based on the principles of historical research considering events in the life of Grozny residents on the eve of World War II. The study is based on the principle of historical interpretation, systematization, comparative and statistical analysis of data. The system analysis is used to structure the everyday life of

Grozny residents; the statistical method and content analysis are used to analyze and systematize materials, and draw general conclusions.

## 6. Findings

Modern historical science pays special attention to the everyday life of Soviet society. Interest in the pre-war era is determined by the emergence of a new type of society, which entailed radical changes in the social structure, material environment and spiritual areas. The imperious Soviet structures shaped the urban culture, filling the usual forms of expression of the religious worldview with new traditional paraphernalia, symbols, vocabulary, ideology.

The latest trends in the study of sociocultural problems of urban everyday life are associated with cultural history methods, as well as ethnocultural, microsocial, and gender approaches. Citizens were active consumers of mass urban culture, which took diverse forms. Representatives of Western historiography said that the majority of the urban population had a low level of literacy, limited cultural needs, a primitive way of life, a rural worldview, and rude morals.

Lebina (1999) believes that semi-feudal mass consciousness of the urban residents accepted new socialist dogmas. The German historian Plaggenborg (2000) studied the ideas of the Soviet elite about "new culture", a system of symbols introduced into the consciousness of people. Thurston (1996) described social life in the country. In his monograph "Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization", Kotkin (1995) emphasized that most people accepted the methods of the Bolsheviks and found themselves in the Stalinist "civilization". The English historian Stayte (1994) wrote about the revolutionary holidays considering symbols of the new regime. The paradox of the urban everyday life was that despite all difficulties, there was mass delight of Soviet people. According to Fitzpatrick (2001), this phenomenon is due to the hope for future abundance, which helped people endure current problems. Osokina (2008) pays attention to the saturation of Soviet everyday life with emotions (calls it "the routine of adventure"). Life required everyday heroism, and adventures were part of the everyday life (Osokina, 2008).

Society of the 1930s was far from the consumer society. The prewar urban everyday life in Grozny is understudied.

The formation of the image, level and quality of life of any social group is associated with material well-being. The aggravation of the housing crisis in the pre-war era was a direct consequence of the distribution of material and financial resources in the interests of technical modernization: planned tasks in housing and communal construction were of secondary importance. In reality, only representatives of the party-state nomenclature, highly qualified specialists, scientists and Stakhanovites could have apartments. Changes were reflected in the interior of apartments and houses. Wooden beds were replaced with metal ones; people began to buy oilcloth sofas and wardrobe units with mirrors. Homespun woolen blankets and striped rugs disappeared. The beds were covered with pique, bike and less often woolen blankets. Gramophones, balalaika, guitar and accordion became part of the everyday life. Indoor flowers enlivened the interior of apartments. There were corners for children.

In 1937, labor protection commissions and positions of labor safety instructors were created. When surveying apartments of the Chechens living at site 56, it was revealed that in 5 apartments, there was no

furniture. Of the 10 apartments surveyed, 8 apartments were needed to be repaired. The living conditions of workers living in houses were even worse (7 people lived in small rooms) (Elbuzdukaeva, 2011).

In 1938–1939, new tariff rates and official salaries were introduced, production standards were revised, and the minimum wage was determined (110–115 rubles). In 1940, the average monthly salary of workers and employees was 331 rubles (in industries – 341 rubles (including 696 rubles for engineering and technical workers), in construction – 363 rubles, in the transport industry – 348 rubles). The income structure of the industrial worker's family was as follows: (in %): wages of family members — 71.3; payment and benefits from public consumption funds (pension, allowance, scholarship, including free education and medical assistance) – 14.5; income from personal subsidiary plots – 9.2; income from other sources – 5.0 (Zinich, 2012).

At the end of the 1930s, in the oil and food industry, the average monthly wage was 307.4 and 188.2 rubles, respectively. The cancellation of cards increased prices and wages (Malafeev, 1964).

In labor relations, there has been a turn towards coercion. During 1940 and at the beginning of 1941, tough decrees were adopted. The central one was the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of June 26, 1940 (Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 1940). In July 1940, criminal liability for the production of low-quality products; in August, these measures were supplemented by a decree on increasing criminal liability for petty crimes (drunkenness, hooliganism, theft), which related to relations in the workplace and in the domestic sphere.

In the reference “The Main Decisions of the Government of the USSR on the Prices of Consumer Goods for 1938–1940”, changes in the pricing policy are traced. During 1940, by the decisions of the Economic Council of January 22, 1940, prices increased for meat, poultry, canned meat, confectionery, potatoes. By a decree of April 8, prices for animal oil, margarine, fish products, meat and meat products, cheese, mayonnaise, ice cream, cakes, muffins, soft drinks, etc. increased.

Under the shortage of many types of foodstuff, norms for the distribution of certain goods were adopted, and sales were limited. In 1939, a closed form of trade was introduced for workers in the non-ferrous metallurgy, coal and oil industries, the electric power industry, and a number of machine-building and metal-working industries. Opportunities to obtain additional products from the allotted land were expanded. Significant work was done to create subsidiary farms around industrial centers to supply factory canteens with vegetables and dairy products. In addition to the fact that the gardening movement provided a variety of home food, it was a kind of “outlet” for peasants and served as a way to maintain the rural lifestyle.

Worker received enough bread but rather than meat, fats, eggs, or butter. Their consumption was sharply reduced, which violated nutrition. These goods were bought at markets with uncontrolled prices. Even taking into account only state prices, the salary was only 88.6 % of that in 1928, when it reached the highest level for all NEP years. Given the total cost of living, its decline was much greater. It took eight years of steady increase in order to achieve the level of 1928 by 1940 (Malafeev, 1964; Shkaratan, 1964).

The problem of the pre-war everyday life was provision of ordinary citizens with industrial consumer goods, clothes, shoes. In January 1939, new higher retail prices for fabrics, threads, sewing and knitwear were set; in March-December, USSR uniform prices were set for a significant number of non-food items (watches, carpets, oilcloth, plastics, felted and felt shoes and etc.). In 1940, prices continued to

rise for matches, laundry soap, electric lamps, leather and rubber shoes, saddlery, metal products. An increase in the high cost of everyday goods made them unaffordable. For example, in 1940, only about 11.1 % were spent on the purchase of textiles, clothes, and shoes, and 17.5 % – on cultural services.

Only party workers and their families, Komsomol activists, Stakhanovites bought expensive clothes.

In the second half of the 1930s, in Grozny specialized workshops for sewing national clothes were opened. Young people could buy factory shirts (Studenetskaya, 1989).

For the late 1930s, a suit combining a Caucasian shirt and breeches was typical. At the same time, the Caucasian shirt was supplanted by the tunic and jacket.

Under the constant shortage of clothes and the limited distribution system, people's lives changed. A lot of time was spent in queues.

An integral part of the everyday life of citizens was catering. A large number of canteens, buffets, and snack bars were opened. Mass nutrition is one of the forms of food distribution. It contributed to the saving of significant labor and material resources, made it possible for women to get involved in the production sphere, social and political activities.

Mass leisure was encouraged. It was the period of the heyday of musical comedy, sound films. A mandatory attribute of leisure was cinemas and museums. On August 23, 1934, the cinema theater was opened in Grozny. At the end of 1937, there were two cinemas with 1300 seats. On March 28, 1938, the Presidium of the Chechen-Ingush Executive Committee decided to create a Film Directorate under the Executive Committee of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Daaev & Elbuzdukaeva, 2018).

In the late 1930s, in addition to existing cultural institutions, the Philharmonic Society, the National Theater of Song, Music and Dance, a music school and a music college were opened. Trade unions of writers, artists, architects and composers were created. The Museum of Fine Arts and the House of Folk Arts were opened. As of May 1, 1941, there were 5 theaters in the republic: the Chechen-Ingush National Drama Theater, the Russian Drama Theater named after M. Yu. Lermontov, the theater of young spectators, and the puppet theater. Along with hospitals, there were three mobile theaters, one circus and one stage.

## 7. Conclusion

The everyday life of the urban population of Grozny reflected the general picture of Soviet everyday life. Grozny was a complex conglomerate with old cultural and everyday norms of behavior, new politicized Soviet forms of urban life based on the dominant traditional culture that rural residents brought to the city. The authorities sought to educate the population and centralize the management of culture and leisure.

## References

- ChR Government (1977). *National Economy of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic*. Collection of articles. Chechen-Ingush Publ. House.
- Daaev, Kh. -B., & Elbuzdukaeva, T.U. (2018). *Grozny 1818–2018*. Aleph.

- Elbuzdukaeva, T. U. (2011). *Chechnya and Ingushetia in the 20-30 years of the twentieth century: the experience of modernization*. Parnas.
- Fitzpatrick, S. (2001). *Everyday Stalinism. The social history of Soviet Russia in the 30s*. ROSSPEN.
- Kotkin, S. (1995). *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization*. Univer. of California Press.
- Lebina, N. B. (1999). *Everyday life of the Soviet city in the 1920s and 1930s*. Neva; Summer Garden.
- Malafeev, A. N. (1964). *The history of pricing in the USSR (1917–1963)*. Mysl'.
- Osokina, E. A. (2008). Soviet everyday life: the routine of adventure, the habit of risk. *Social History*. ROSSPEN.
- Plaggenborg, S. (2000). *Revolution and culture: cultural landmarks between the October Revolution and the era of Stalinism*. Neva.
- Shkaratan, O. I. (1964). Material welfare of the working class of the USSR in the transition period from capitalism to socialism. *History of the USSR*, 4, 33–36.
- Stayte, R. (1994). Russian revolutionary culture and its place in the history of cultural revolutions. *Anatomy of a Revolution*. Glagol.
- Studenetskaya, E. N. (1989). *Clothing of the peoples of the North Caucasus of the 18th-20th centuries*. Science.
- Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1940). Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 26 June 1940 “On the transition to an 8-hour working day, seven-day working week and the prohibition of unauthorized withdrawal of workers and employees from enterprises and institutions”. *Vedomosti of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR*, 1940, no. 20.
- Thurston, R. W. (1996). *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934–1941*. New Haven.
- Zinich, M. S. (2012). Everyday life of the population of the USSR in the prewar years. 1938–1941. *Intelros Magazine Club “Peace and Politics”*, 12. <http://www.intelros.ru/readroom/mir-i-politika/m12-2012/17326-povsednevnyayazhizn-naseleniya-sssr-v-predvoennye-gody-19381941-gg.html>