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GROZNYI AS A COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CITY IN 19TH – 20TH CENTURIES

Zara Gelaeva (a)*, Hatmat Matagova (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) Chechen State Pedagogical University, 33, S. Kishieva Str., Groznyi, Russia
gelaevaz@bk.ru, +79289428402

(b) Chechen State University, 32, Sheripov Str., Groznyi, 364021, Russia
hatmat73@mail.ru, +79287880706

Abstract

The city of Groznyi was found on the site of the Groznyi fortress, which was built by the order of General Ermolov in 1818 on the territory of the destroyed Chechen villages. In the course of time after the occupation of Chechnya, the fortress became the place of trade for mountain dwellers not only of Chechnya, but also of neighboring nations. Not only Russians, but also Chechen settlements gradually occurred alongside the fortress. With the imprisonment of Shamil, the North-Eastern Caucasus became a part of the Russian Empire; in 1864, the North-Western Caucasus was conquered. As the research shows the discovery of oil in the region, which was originally used as a lighting and lubricant substance, made this region very attractive for oil companies in Russia and abroad, and contributed to the centralization of the oil industry in Groznyi. The construction of the railway also strengthened the status of Groznyi as a center of commerce and industry. Famous specialists in Caucasian studies relate the increasing role of Groznyi to the discovery of oil by the beginning of the second half of the 19th century. The city of Grozny was established by the decree of the Senate on December 30. The decree was published on February 3 and the “Provision on the city of Groznyi”, in which a number of privileges were granted to its residents and approved by the governor of the Caucasus on November 6. From January 1, 1871, a new administrative unit of Terek region was created.

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1. Introduction

Groznyi like any city of our country has its own history. The history of Grozny in the specified chronological framework was the subject of research by such authors as Shabaniants (1972), Kazakov (1989). As a part of the historical research of Chechnya during the indicated period, the history of Grozny was also investigated in the works of Khasbulatov (2001), Gapurov (2003), Gritsenko (1984), Kolosov (1968), Ibragimova (2006, 2009). The anniversary issue was prepared for the 200th anniversary of Grozny (Daaev & Elbuzdukaeva, 2018). The article by Korneeva (2016) touches upon the issue of economic nature. The article by Borov (2018) studies the possibilities of generalizing various approaches to the events of the Caucasian War period, within the period of which the fortress of Grozny was founded. The milestones in the history of Grozny are inextricably related to the history of the region and the Chechen people. The study of this problem highlights the main element in the chain of events with which make the history of the region so rich.

2. Problem Statement

A student research laboratory was organized at CSPU, the members of which are engaged in collecting material on the history of the settlements of Chechnya, including research work on the history of villages that existed in Grozny. According to various data, the number of villages reportedly reached from 8 to 36. Nowadays, researchers face the task of collecting archival, ethnographic material on the history of these villages, restoring the history of villages by learning bits and pieces, creating a source base on the research topic in the archive and collecting ethnographic material on the history of villages.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the research is the process of the development of trade and industry and the transformation of the fortress into the city of Grozny.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to study the history of Grozny as a commercial and industrial center of the North-East Caucasus in the designated chronological framework.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis was presented by the principles of objectivity, science and historicism. These methods involved the study of facts and phenomena in all their diversity, under specific historical conditions of their origin and development and allowed highlighting both the positive and negative sides of the analyzed events and phenomena. The authors applied the methods of source analysis.

6. Findings

Groznyi, the capital of the Chechen Republic was initially found as a fortress on the site of devastated Chechen villages. Over the time, the fortress became a trading place for Russians and mountain dwellers. Since the second half of the 19th century, after oil deposits began to attract Russian and foreign capitalists Grozny is considered to be a city. Oil, which came onto the surface of the earth and which Chechens called “мехк даьтта” (earth oil), was used originally as a lighting and lubricant substance. In the early 50s of the 19th century in Chechnya, the political situation developed in such a way that the national liberation movement was on the wane. The Chechens, exhausted by many years of war (Chechens, history, modernity, 1996), were ready to go for any compromise proposal of the Russian side. For their part, they offered various options for a mutually acceptable solution for joint neighborly living.

At the beginning of 1850, several of the most respectable mountain dwellers of the best families, after receiving Shamil permission and on behalf of the “unsubmissive societies” appealed to the commander of the left flank of the Caucasian military line. Their appeal consisted in the following request to allow the organization of three-day bazaars in the neighborhood of Grozny once a month and to allow “non-peaceful” Chechen residents, governed by the Imam, bringing homemade products for sale and exchange for various industrial goods delivered to the fortress by the Russians merchants from Central Russia. The authorities of the left flank of the Caucasian military line agreed to this proposal and the bazaar was open in the beginning of May 1850. The left bank of the Sunzha was chosen as a site for it. The first inhabitants of Grozny, among whom there were many farmers, artisans and other traders, cleaned it of reeds, removed the land, covered the hollow, sprinkled with sand, and made a bazaar. Both parties needed the bazaar as a place of trade. It was lively like all the Eastern bazaars, where the inhabitants of Grozny traded and exchanged the products of their labor. It quickly gained popularity among the mountain dwellers. Not only Chechens, but also the mountain dwellers of the neighboring peoples came to this market. As a result, by the end of the thirties of the last century, Groznyi had become one of the main shopping centers on the left flank. According to the testimony of one of the chiefs, Major General Pullo, up to 40 thousand mountain dwellers came annually to the borderline to sell their products.

At the beginning of May 1850, up to 500 carriages of “unsubmissive” Chechens with their wives and children gathered at the fair. It lasted, as it was agreed, for three days. The mountain dwellers brought food, animal skins, cloth, and carpets for sale. They bought industrial goods, textiles, Kalmyk tea, etc. from Russian merchants. The fair was held without incident. Both sides were satisfied and expressed mutual desire to organize such fairs annually. However, the next one was organized only ten years later ... (Kazakov, 1989) then in 1852, there was the Chechen massacre. Of course, this turned back the Chechens, who were afraid of trade in hostile territory. Nevertheless, during the course of history, Chechnya entered the final stage of the war of liberation, and the ruling circles considered the issue of the Caucasus, too be long. Both sides were close to resolving this issue.

The historical situation led to the fact that the Caucasus had become a part of the Russian Empire. In addition, in this regard, the role of the fortress, which was originally built to conquer and intimidate the Chechens, became a city in the second half of the 19th century, uniting peoples in commerce, economy, and culture. Moreover, increasingly frequently, the eyewitnesses in the descriptions called Grozny a city. In the early 1850s, Zisserman, a famous historian of the Caucasus, wrote: “From a small fortress ... it turned

into a vast ... city ... with large stores, warehouses, hospitals, and a rather significant number of commercial establishments” ... (as cited in Kazakov, 1989, p. 33) Grozny was turning from a military-strategic point into a trade and economic center of Chechnya.

In 1857, the situation on the left flank was so exhausted that the need to maintain its headquarters in Grozny disappeared. A postal station was created there, a regular movement of post-coaches to Vladikavkaz began, through which communication with Central Russia was carried out. In 1859, the governor of the Caucasus, A. Bariatinskii, ordered since 1860 to organize in Grozny two fairs a year (in spring and in autumn) (as cited in Kazakov, 1989).

These fairs later played a large role in the development of the city, as well as a consolidating role between the peoples, being for several years on opposite sides of the barricades by the will of fate. In the early 70s of the 19th century, the fortress received the status of the city. “In the mid-70s of the 19th century in Grozny there were 11,810 buildings, including 468 stone and brick ones, the rest were adobe, wooden and mudbrick ones. Stone and brick houses belonged to the merchants, including the emerging Chechen bourgeoisie: A. Chermoev, D. Matsiev, G. Matsiev, Arsamirzoev, Sh. Chulikov, Elmurzaev, Arsanukaev, Bashirov and others. From 1874 to 1876 in Grozny, the number of merchants increased 2 times (History of Chechnya from ancient times to the present, 2006). The Kaspiy newspaper drew attention to the fact that “the city grows up by the second”, that “the number of stone two-story houses with elegant entrances and architecture is increasing” (History of Chechnya from ancient times to the present, 2006, p. 201).

The city of Grozny gradually became the essential economic center of Chechnya by the end of the 19th century. This was also facilitated by the discovered oil fields, which, as they were mined, became a branch of the economy. Consequently, the development of oil industry led to its centralization in Grozny. Oil was found in various places in Chechnya. The local population built oil wells “the depth of which was from 3 to 10 arshins”. In total, for example, in the surroundings of Bragunov it was possible to enumerate up to 300 Chechen wells. The most enterprising of the Chechens tried to benefit from these deposits, which were suddenly discovered on their lands. For example, “In 1866, the officers mountain dwellers, the brothers Taimazovs Arslanbek, Sultan and Birakhan surrendered their land area near the village of Braguni for rent to Ismail Ali-Ogly and Magomed Mehdi-Ogly for 5 years for a bath houses site (there were warm sources) and oil production for 1,400 silver rubles a year”. However, the trade was competitive. Thus, “their rival Mirzoev tried to prevent the implementation of this transaction. The Bragun springs belonged to Taymazovs and the community of the village of Braguni and were located on the area of 4000 square sazhen; 60 wells each day gave up to 100 buckets of oil. Since 1870, these deposits were rented, with payment of 1,400 silver rubles a year.

Mainly local residents worked in the oil fields. Many Chechens tried to get this job because they could earn up to 75 kopecks per day, and that was good money for that time. The managers considered them “... quite intelligent and able to work”. Oil was found in many places. Several competing foreign firms have drilled six wells in Aldy, as a result oil turned out to be in one of them. The Istisuy group was located in the Grozny district, on the land of the village of Isti-su (Ibragimova, 2006). These and other fields such as Benoevskoe, Chanty-Argunskoe, and Karabulakskoe in Chechnya have been known for a long time. “In 1872 the police officer Mudarov developed and mined oil for free in the Chaberloyi area, on the land of the village of Nashkhoyi, in agreement with the villagers and with the permission of the head of the Terek

region. The mountain dwellers that were in the service of the tsarist government enjoyed special privileges and were strongly encouraged by the local administration. The Benoevo group of oil sources was located on the land of the village of Benoy, in the Vedeno district. The location of oil deposits occupied about 50 square milestones. The wells dug by the local population were from 2 to 6 arshins in depth and were located mainly along the left bank of the Neftianka River. The locals have long drawn the oil of greenish-brown color, with a strong smell of gas. The Chechens used this oil as a combustible substance, as well as for painting their buildings in order to protect them from dampness.

With the development of oil industry in Groznyi, a number of geologists and the representatives of private firms actively visited these places for the purpose of general observations (Ibragimova, 2009). The factual material indicates an extensive development of oil production at its initial, “artisan” stage which did not lead to a sharp increase in the amount of produced oil in the region. The lack of reforms as well as the stagnation of the oil industry in the Terek region was obvious. The establishment of a state monopoly on the regulation of oil production and oil refining in the North Caucasus did not contribute to the development of private enterprise (Ibragimova, 2009). High-quality oil deposits, the abundance of cheap labor made it possible to extract incredible profits. Thus, for 60 years from 1833 to 1893, 8 million pounds of oil was extracted (Ibragimova, 2009).

The end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries in the history of the Chechen capital is one of the most intense and interesting periods, because at that time, the capitalist relations started to develop intensively in Groznyi. A powerful impetus, accelerating the development of the city, was presented by the creation of the first industrial well with oil fountain. This event attracted a stream of people and funds. Soon the oil of Groznyi became famous worldwide. The first entrepreneur who laid the industrial wells, instead of the primitive oil wells that existed in Groznyi at that time, was the lawyer from Vladikavkaz, I.A. Akhverdov. His partner in oil industry was the Honorary Citizen of Vladikavkaz, the owner of a brewery on Kupecheskaya Street, E.Kh. Kireev (Akhverdov and Co.) The interest in the oil industry was dictated by its exceptional profitability. “In May 1895, the City Duma, the administrative body of the city government, was established in Groznyi. The executive body of the Duma was the city government. The mayor managed both institutions.” (History of Chechnya from ancient times to the present, 2006). “The city attracts the capitals of foreign firms. In 1914, oil production reached 1.6 million tons, with half of it being pumped over the constructed bridge to Makhachkala.

The penetration of Russian and foreign capital into Chechnya and the rapid development of the oil industry contributed to great changes in the region. The image of the city of Groznyi also changed rapidly. It developed, its population increased. New buildings and facilities of the oil refining industry were built in the Chechen capital”. “The number of merchants in Groznyi was growing rapidly. As early as 1896, the city had 323 trading establishments with a turnover of about 2.5 million rubles” (History of Chechnya from ancient times to the present, 2006, p. 175).

“By the beginning of the 20th century, Groznyi became one of the important commercial and industrial centers of the North-Eastern Caucasus, and of the Terek region in that period (Gelaev, 2013). The construction of the Vladikavkaz railway played a significant role. In 1892, the work began on the continuation of the Vladikavkaz railway on the Groznyi-Petrovsk-Derbent-Baku route. From November 1893 the Groznyi-Petrovsk line started to function, the line to Petrovsk was officially opened on May 17,

1894. In May 1899, the traffic was opened along the entire Beslan-Groznyi-Gudermes-Kadi-iurt-KHasav-iurt-CHir-iurt-Petrovsk line. Passenger traffic. The first passenger train arrived on the railway from the Sulak River on May 1, 1893 to the station of Grozny from Beslan. The railway allowed bringing manufactory and other overseas goods. The railway stations changed the existing urban structure, became the centers of the cultural and economic life of the city: shops, restaurants, and kiosks for selling newspapers appeared here (Ibragimova, 2009). Thus, for a relatively short period of time, the Grozny fortress became one of the important commercial and industrial cities of the North-Eastern Caucasus.

7. Conclusion

In the second half of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th centuries the following situation emerges: the fortress of Grozny has evolved from a military-strategic center into a peaceful commercial and industrial city of the North Caucasus. The city of Grozny gradually became the center of Chechnya. This was facilitated by oil fields, which became a branch of the economy of the country. Oil was found in various places. Consequently, the development of oil industry led to its centralization in Grozny.

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