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**PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN GROZNY IN DAYS OF GREAT
PATRIOTIC WAR**

Z.M. Alkhastova (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Complex Research Institute named after Kh.I. Ibragimov, RAS 21a Staropromyslovskoye Highway, Grozny,
Russian Federation,

Abstract

The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union against fascist Germany was the greatest experience to test the multinational country, its strength and spirit. The country served honorably in the line of duty though it had to pay high and bitter price for the victory. There were no examples of mass heroism and self-sacrifice in the history of the mankind similar to the ones demonstrated during the Great Patriotic War. However, it is impossible to get a full and comprehensive understanding of the splendor of the nation's deed without realizing the heroism of the home front workers. From the beginning of the war the Chechen-Ingush Republic entered upon the path to mobilize its potential in fight against the aggressor. The priority task was to fulfill the defense orders. The producing and processing petroleum industry was the leading branch of the economy of Checheno-Ingushetia. The government of the country took necessary measures for its proper functioning. Realizing the importance of those objectives, the leaders of the republic took all measures to ensure continuous supply of light oil products (gasoline, kerosene), as well as oils to the front. For June 1941 the group of Grozneftkombinat enterprises hit the production target for oil, gas and diesel fuel. New types of petroleum products were quickly developed alongside with the competition for labor productivity, overachievement of daily average production of aviation petrol and oil. Besides, the petroleum engineers of Chechen-Ingushetia participated in military defense works, registered in the national militia battalions.

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1. Introduction

During the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) the heroism of petroleum industry workers of Chechen-Ingushetia ensured continuous supply of the necessary oil products to the warring Red Army. This strategic mission was only possible due to successful work of almost all links of petroleum industry of the region. On 6 April 2015 according to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin, Grozny was awarded the honorary title of the Russian Federation “City of Military Glory”. This also became possible due to the contribution of petroleum industry workers.

2. Problem Statement

The role of petroleum industry of Grozny in wartime (1941-1945) bears important scientific and practical value. The characteristic and analysis of activity of petroleum enterprises of the region may contribute to deeper understanding of the history during the years of war.

3. Research Questions

The object of the study is the contribution of the petroleum industry of Grozny to defeat of fascist aggressors.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose and task of the study is to reconstruct key parameters of petroleum industry of Grozny, in particular, its oil producing and processing sectors in the strive towards overachievement of the state targets during wartime.

5. Research Methods

The main methods used by the authors in the given study included system and problematic/chronological analyses.

6. Findings

By the beginning of 1941 Grozny was one of the leading centers of petroleum industry of the USSR with the population of 172.5 thousand people, which took the second place after Baku in the country on oil production, and the first – on the production of fuels and lubricants. By this time the Grozneftekombinat had 12 oil fields and the Grozneftezavod group of enterprises. As of 1 January 1942, 2870 specialists, 41% of which were certified professionals, worked at the Grozneftekombinat enterprises (Gakayev, 2008).

On 22 June 1941 the treacherous attack of German troops upon the USSR forced the Soviet leadership to reconstruct the industry of the country towards military objectives, to mobilize all forces and funds for the defeat of the enemy. The workers of Chechen-Ingushetia, mainly of its capital Grozny, made a worthy contribution to this nation-wide objective.

With the beginning of fascist aggression against the USSR the petroleum industry of Grozny became particularly important. The Grozneftekombinat was urged to provide the country and the front with high-quality oil products.

For June 1941, the Groznetftekombinat group of enterprises achieved the target for oil and gas production by 103.7%. The plan for the production of diesel fuel was implemented by 196%, and in July – by 821%. The Grozny oil refiners started to produce a new type of fuel oil and considerably increased the capacity of raw materials processing and light oil sampling. In June 1941, the target daily average processing made 16.713 tons, the actual performance – 18.863 tons (Abazatov, 1974). In comparison with June, the daily average oil production increased by 305 tons in July, by 599 tons in August, and by 607 tons in September. The daily average production of aviation petrol at Starogrozneft increased by 3.083 tons in August in comparison with June (Filkin, 1960).

In September 1941, the Red Hammer plant increased its output by 133%, and the production of special orders of the front made 354.6%. The Red Hammer plant, the Grozneft mechanical workshops and the Red Labor plant successfully mastered the production of military equipment for the front (Gakayev, 2008).

The meeting of the most active members of the Grozny party took place in Grozny on 1 November 1941. Its participants discussed the present situation and tasks of the Grozny party organization. The first secretary of the Chechen-Ingush Regional Committee and the Grozny City Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) V.A. Ivanov made the report at the meeting. In particular, he emphasized that the Grozny party organization is responsible for timely supply of the required quality and quantity of fuel to the Red Army and the Navy.

The adopted resolution highlighted that the “party and nonparty Bolsheviks of Grozny ensured early implementation of the decimестrial oil and gas production plan following the instructions of Comrade Stalin given in his speech of 3 July 1941.

The participants of the meeting decided that “the main objective of all party, economic, trade-union and Komsomol organizations of the city is the mobilization of all working people to suppress the enemy and win the war. All activities ... shall satisfy the needs of the patriotic war, tasks of early implementation of the state plans of 1941 by all enterprises of the city, thus ensuring continuous supply of fuel to the front, avoiding seasonal decline of oil production, and promoting the production of mortars, mines, grenades and other military equipment”.

The meeting of the Party activists adopted the initiative of the Red Hammer to organize the stakhanovite shifts during the 24th anniversary of the October Revolution with further assignment of earnings to the defense fund.

By the end of 1941, the oil-processing branch of Grozny turned into one of the most important areas that supplied the front with fuels and lubricants.

The program of oil production increase was massively implemented. New boreholes were put into operation during the considered period. In general, the Groznetftekombinat drilled 349.3 thousand meters over 10 months in 1941 thus achieving the annual drilling record. In 1941, 736.8 thousand tons were recovered from new wells only (Filkin, 1960). This helped the Groznetftekombinat to implement the oil production plan 55 days ahead of time, and the production of light oil products – 35 days earlier. Thus, the task on oil production was fulfilled by 114% (Gakayev, 2009).

160 petroleum industry workers, including the director of Grozneftkombinat V.N. Kochegarov, were awarded with orders and medals for early performance of government tasks (Ibragimov & Sulumov, 2015).

The huge contribution to the tasks on production increase and development of new types of fuels and lubricants was made by scientists of the Grozny Research Institute (GRI) and the Grozny Oil Institute (GOI), namely V.S. Baranov, N.N. Shangin, P.A. Amerik, V.S. Fedorov, M.A. Hayrapetyan, K.I. Loshkarev, S.L. Kravtsov, V.T. Nikolaeva, I.T. Pronyakov, etc. (Gakayev, 2009).

The authorities realized the plans of the fascist command regarding the Caucasus, especially such large oil centers as Grozny and Baku. The defense of these cities was strategically important for country leaders. On 13 October 1941, the USSR State Defense Committee adopted the resolution On Defensive Construction. In particular, this implied the construction of the lines of defense in piedmont area of the North Caucasus from Temryuk, along the southern bank of the Terek River to the Caspian Sea. Besides, it was decided to build the following fortified regions: Krasnodarsky, Tikhoretsky, Stavroposkyl, Groznensky (Bugayev, 2015a).

The Grozny Defense Committee, established on 22 October 1941 according to the resolution of the USSR State Defense Committee On City Defense Committees, discussed the construction of defensive facilities along the borders of Grozny (Grozny contour) and on external borders of neighboring settlements (external contour) at its first meeting on October 25 (Bugayev, 2015b). Certain practical measures were discussed at this meeting by people personally responsible for their implementation.

When in the fall of 1941 the fascists occupied Rostov-on-Don complicating the military situation in the Caucasus, the USSR Grozny Defense Committee adopted the resolution No. 847 SS On Evacuation of Maykopneft and Grozneft on October 28 (Ibragimov & Sulumov 2015). As stipulated in this resolution, the Grozneftkombinat shall start dismantling its oil fields since 3 November 1941. The majority of petroleum plants and almost the entire mechanical shop of Grozneftkombinat were dismantled, 64 exploration wells, 678 development wells with the flowrate of 1624 tons were shut down, 427 electric motors, 416.200 m of tubing and 391.504 m of bars were pulled out from wells over this period. In total, 13 thousand citizens (residents of Grozny) and villagers from different areas of the republic participated in dismantling of the Grozny-Armavir oil pipeline (Ibragimov & Sulumov 2015).

In the fall-winter of 1941, as a result of heroic battles of the Red Army, especially near Moscow, the Hitlerian plan of the lightning war ended in a fiasco. This collapse of the German blitzkrieg prescribed changes in short-term plans and tasks of the Soviet command almost in all military operations and the home front.

According to the order of the USSR Grozny Defense Committee of 12 December 1941, the dismantling of producing and processing petroleum facilities in Krasnodar Krai and Chechen-Ingush ASSR was stopped. Instead, it was decided to ensure urgent restoration and functioning of the Grozny petroleum industry. On 1 January 1942, 190 dismantled wells were put into operation during 18 days (Filkin, 1960).

On 7 March 1942, the Grozneftkombinat completed the quarterly plan for oil production 24 days ahead of time. On 24 March 1942, the USSR Grozny Defense Committee adopted the resolution on measures to increase the production of aviation fuels and aviation oils. The task was to increase the production of aviation fuel by more than twice in June 1942 in comparison with March.

Petroleum industry workers clearly understood the decisions of their government. In June 1942, the daily average oil and gas production reached 7.152 tons (Filkin, 1960). For example, Malgobekneft production field implemented the annual plan for oil and gas production by 175% and recovered extra 352.7 thousand tons of oil and gas. Other production fields also showed good results.

However, further military operations, especially in summer 1942, showed that the Wehrmacht forces its offensive actions on the southern side of Soviet-German opposition. Hitler planned “to occupy the Caucasus, Transcaucasia, then get to Iran and to the Turkish border”. The task to capture oil fields in Grozny and Baku was one of the most critical. Hitler understood that without it, his further offensive actions will not be successful. “Oil, the Caucasian oil pursued Hitler as an obsessional neurosis. It was the key to success for him. All his thoughts and plans developed upon his order were bound to oil” (Tike, 2005; Bodrova & Kalinov, 2016).

On 23 July 1942, being a werewolf, Hitler dictated the Directive No. 45 in the forest under Vinnytsya (Ukraine). In one of its points (No. 3) the task “was set for the group consisting of mobile forces to capture the district of Grozny, while other forces will close Military-Ossetian and Military-Georgian roads at height of passes if possible. Then it was planned to occupy the district of Baku by approaching along the coast of the Caspian Sea ...

These operations of the “A” group of armies received the code name “Edelweiss” (Tike, 2005).

In August 1942, the German troops forced Don near Rostov and began active offensive actions at the Caucasus.

As it was already noted, the Grozny petroleum industrial region was a key link (Iragimov & Ibragimov, 2017). By the end of summer, the German troops were in the line of contact with Chechen-Ingush ASSR.

On a September 1942, the meeting of the Grozny Defense Committee took place in the capital of Chechen-Ingushetia. L.P. Beria, I.V. Tyulenev, B.Z. Kabulov, I.K. Sedin, I.I. Maslennikov, Nikolsky, Efimenko, Skorodumov and the members of the Grozny Defense Committee Ivanov, Mollayev, Albagachiyev, Serikov participated in that meeting (Bugaev, 2015a).

The first issue in the agenda was “On defense measures of Grozny mountains”. (Bugaev, 2015a). It was decided to mobilize at least 20.000 people since September 1942 for defensive works in Grozny (Bugaev, 2015a). The planned measures were directly linked to the reliable defense of the city and its industrial facilities. From psychological point of view, the most vulnerable task was to shut down “wells with the flowrate of 2 tons”. In particular, in Starogrozneft – 183 wells, in Oktyabrneft – 107 wells. The “republican trio” was leading those operations (Bugaev, 2015b).

Thus, the petroleum industry workers of Chechen-Ingushetia had to stop the production of raw materials, namely oil, which was extremely necessary for the front. In total, 2.181 out of 2.459 producing wells were liquidated, as well as 131 out of 149 exploration wells (Ibragimov & Sulumov 2015).

On 13 September 1942, the USSR Grozny Defense Committee adopted the resolution No. 2298 SS On dismantling of Grozny oil refineries. In total, 4.020 cars of equipment were taken to eastern regions of the country (Bugaev, 2015b).

However, even in such difficult conditions Grozny enterprises continued to help the front. All engineering and mechanical plants, as well as workshops of Grozneftkombinat produced more than 90

military items (Ibragimov & Sulumov 2015). Broken tanks, armored trains, tractors, cars were continuously repaired in the shops of the Red Hammer plant. Scientists and engineers of GRI designed and manufactured the anti-tank weapons (Simarzin, 1968; Dzhafarov & Kurumov, 2010).

It was decided “to use the riverbeds of the Neftyanka ... and the Sunzha River to settle firing lines ...”. The leadership of Grozneftkombinat was responsible for filling the anti-tank ditch around Grozny with fuel oil, and the Red Hammer plant had to produce 15.000 pieces of shovels (Bugayev, 2015b).

It was also planned to ensure a 4-month food stock “in a special defensive area of Grozny mountains” “for military units and groups defending the city” (Bugayev, 2015b).

To protect the plants of the Stalinsky area (nowadays – Zavodskoy) of Grozny it was necessary to create a “communist group consisting of 400 people”. 15 KGB servicemen were recommended for command positions (Bugayev, 2015a).

The documents and materials of the Grozny Defense Committee, published in 2015 under the resolution of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Chechen Republic, confirm the many-sided work of party, Soviet, and economic organizations to defend the capital of Chechen-Ingush ASSR.

Local authorities took measures to encourage some distinguished people that contributed to the defense of Grozny (Bugayev, 2015b).

On 20 November 1942, the Groznensky Rabochy newspaper published the list of people that received national awards for model performance of tasks of the government and the military Command on rail transportation: Order of Lenin – Maslov P.V., a foreman of locomotive depot of the Grozny station and Turchenko A.M., head of locomotive depot of the Grozny station; Order of the Red Banner of Labour – Nepochaty A.F., a driver of locomotive depot of the Gudermes station, Kistanov M.I., head of the 4th distance of track maintenance, Shakhverdov A.S., a secretary of the All-Union Communist Party in the Chechen-Ingush Republic on transport, Order of the Badge of Honor – 14 people, medal “For Labor Merit” – 13 people.

During military operations near Malgobek and Grozny the Grozny population was getting prepared to protect the city from the enemy together with troops, defensive boundaries became stronger, engineers increased the production of ammunition and arms (Gakayev, 2008).

On September 22, the Grozny Defense Committee “due to approach of the front line to the mountains of Grozny” decided “to create the Grozny national militia”. At the same time, it was implied that “the militia will include all men able to fight with weapons” (Bugayev, 2015b).

By 5 October 1942, the destroyed and flaring from fire Malgobek was left by Soviet military troops (Gakayev, 2009), however the attempts of the fascist troops to take control over Grozny and the entire territory of Chechen-Ingushetia were not successful.

Having lost hope to take Grozny, on October 10-12 the German aircraft bombarded the Zavodskoy area with oil refineries and oil storages. Later, the Soviet aircraft blocked the intervention of fascist bombers. 35 enemy planes were downed (Gakayev, 2009).

During the counter-attack in December 1942, the troops of the Northern group of the Transcaucasian front defeated the opponent. During fights the cities and settlements of the North Caucasus were liberated. On 3 January 1943, Malgobek was liberated (Gakayev, 2009). As a result of fierce defensive battles from

25 July 1942 to 3 January 1943 all efforts of fascist troops to seize the Caucasus had finally failed (Bugaev, 2015a).

The new period in Grozny petroleum industry began after the extrusion of German aggressors from the North Caucasus. During the Great Patriotic War all enterprises were being recovered. As of 1 January 1943, only 12 wells of Grozneftkombinat enterprises were in operation, and in 4 months and 25 days the enterprises put into operation 170 more wells, thus exceeded a five-month plan of placing wells on production (Abazatov, 1974).

On 22 March 1943, the Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) according to the report of the Grozneftkombinat leadership noted that the plan for 20 days of March was fulfilled for oil production by 107.1% and the production of kerosene – by 165.8% (RSASPH, V. 17, Iss. 22, 3752, pp. 108). These were only the first steps towards the recovery of the industry in the city.

On 20 April 1943, the USSR Grozny Defense Committee considered the proposal of the Chechen-Ingush Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) and Grozneftkombinat and made a decision: On measures for partial recovery of Grozny petroleum industry. By June 14 the Grozny petroleum industry workers produced over 20 thousand tons of fuel for the country on account of the second half of the year. The Oktyabrneft enterprise achieved good indicators, where oil production was increased by more than twice from December 1942 to May 1943 (Abazatov, 1974).

In 1943, oil refineries of Grozny were successfully operating, the mechanical enterprises were put into operation. The Red Hammer plant implemented the annual plan for gross output by 103 percent, mechanical-repair plan – by 101.5%, tractor repair plan – by 107.2%, mechanical workshops of Oktyabrneft – by 112%, a mechanical workshop of Starogrozneft – by 128.2%. In general, the machine-building enterprises of Grozneftkombinat implemented the plan for gross output by 105%. A great job was done by the crews of Grozneftkombinat enterprises regarding the drilling of new wells. In total, 40 wells were drilled in 1943, which made it possible to produce twice as much oil than it was stipulated in the decision of the USSR Grozny Defense Committee. In December 1943, the daily average oil production in Grozneftkombinat was increased by 3.5 times in comparison with December 1942, and the daily average gas production – by 4.2 times (Abazatov, 1974). The annual plan for oil production was implemented ahead of schedule by 101.7% on December 27. The labor productivity was improved by 45% against 1942.

The Grozny petroleum industry was being restored and growing, continuously providing the front with fuel, lubricant oils and light oil products. In comparison with 1943 oil production in 1944 was increased by 41.2%, gas production – by 26. %, gross output of all branches of petroleum industry – by 31.4% (Simarzin, 1968). The operating well stock of Grozneftkombinat was increased from 112 in 1 January 1943 to 340 in 1 January 1944, the production of aviation petrol – by 65.3%, motor gasoline – by 40%, light oil products – by 20%. Oil and gas production per one worker in 1944 was increased by 77 tons, and manufacturing in mechanical engineering – by 14 thousand rubles (Abazatov, 1974). As of 1 January 1944, there were 5.162 Stakhanovites and 2.486 top-quality staff members in petroleum industry. Over the year, the number of Stakhanovites was increased by 2.168 people and the number of top-quality staff members – by 3.000 people. In turn, the industry was facing a shortage in staff having higher education. Thus, by 1 January 1944 Grozneft had 628 certified engineers. Women also played a great role in filling

some positions. If from June 1941 to 1943, 2,919 women worked at Grozneft enterprises, then by 1 January 1944 already 6,691 women worked there, which makes 44.2% of the total Grozneft staff (Filkin, 1960).

During 1944 due to the introduction of rationalization proposals and inventions in petroleum industry, about 15 million rubles of public funds were saved. The Grozneftezavod enterprises exceeded the 1945 April program on product range. 8 echelons of the above-target fuel were sent to the front.

7. Conclusion

The study allows making the following conclusions: first, despite the big destructions of Grozny petroleum industry caused by the German aircraft and repeated evacuation of equipment to eastern regions of the country, the petroleum industry workers of the city made a great contribution to providing the Red Army and the home front with oil products, which was critical for the sake of the victory; second, urgent expeditious evacuations and recovery works in petroleum industry in the shortest time possible happened due to petroleum workers of the considered region, and other regions of the country; third, it shall be noted that large-scale work of the Grozny petroleum industry on the restoration of objects during military operations allowed not only supplying oil products, but also creating a necessary reserve for further development of petroleum industry in the Grozny region during the first post-war years.

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