

SCTCMG 2019

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

EVERYDAY LIFE OF NATIVES OF GROZNY DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Tamara Elbuzdukaeva (a)*, Leila Aleroeva (b), Aizan Sugaipova (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) Chechen State Pedagogical Institute, Kh. Ibragimov Complex Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Academy of Sciences of the Chechen Republic, 33, Kievskaya str., Grozny, 364037, the Chechen Republic, Russia
telbuzdukaeva@mail.ru, 8928 644 71 09

(b) Chechen State Pedagogical Institute, 33, Kievskaya str., Grozny, 364037, the Chechen Republic, Russia
l.aleroeva@mail.ru, 8927 448 91 51

(c) Chechen State University, 32, Sheripova str., Grozny, 364907, the Chechen Republic, Russia
novaya-cafedra@mail.ru. 8928 942 98 31

Abstract

The war extremely complicated the everyday life of the population at the rear of the country. It was especially difficult in the first period of the war. The hard-pressed moral and psychological environment associated with the retreat of the Red Army, the death of relatives and friends, and hard work at full capacity were aggravated by harsh living conditions and food shortages. The State Defense Committee was a new extraordinary organ of state power, merger of the party and state apparatus. The formation of city defense committees transferred the process of centralizing the power to a horizontal level, giving local authorities certain autonomy, which was important in conditions of a region close to the front. Under extreme wartime conditions, material and everyday spheres were transformed and acquired new features. In the context of reallocation of resources in favor of the front, food supply to the noncombat population during the war years was reduced. The card system was the norm and the main source of products for a vast majority of city dwellers. The analysis of every-day life historical dimension is to foster the identification of the emotional component of life experience and human emotional stress that are crucial to objectively recreate a clear picture of the historical past. In-depth treatment of everyday life scenarios of Grozny citizens, which embraced labor activity, material and social aspects of life, study, leisure and other elements, allows a deeper awareness of personal values, attitudes, circumstances of everyday life of the Soviet people.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Everyday life, Grozny City Defense Committee.



1. Introduction

On the eve of the 75th anniversary of the Victory of the USSR over Nazi Germany, little-known aspects of military history are being updated. The issues related to economic and socio-cultural demands of citizens in the conditions of military everyday life appear to be relevant and timely in the face of the ongoing interest in the history of World War II and attempts to falsify its events. The relevance of the study is justified by the increased interest in the life of ordinary people, their struggle for survival, which enables to determine their role in the historical process, thereby complementing the historical canvas of the Great Patriotic War.

2. Problem Statement

The research problem is the analysis of social and cultural transformations of the Soviet rear during the Great Patriotic War, focusing on the problems of the Grozny urban everyday life.

3. Research Questions

The authors find extremely relevant to show the daily life of Grozny as a social and cultural phenomenon in warfare. A real incentive to study this topic also lies in the desire to highlight the role of extraordinary state bodies – the Grozny City Defense Committee, otherwise referred to as GGKO – in the daily life of the republic. The specific experience of military everyday life is not only of research interest; an example of responding to hard life situations is of practical importance, as well.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to examine the everyday life of the inhabitants of Grozny during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

5. Research Methods

In their study, the authors applied the basic principles of historical science, particularly historicism, objectivity and scientificity, as well as analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction and content analysis. The principle of historicism established a logical relationship between separate events and facts that make up the history of everyday life of the inhabitants of Grozny during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. The principle of objectivity implies drawing conclusions and logical assumptions based on a comprehensive analysis of various sources characterizing the state policy towards the protection and livelihoods of the population of Grozny, mobilization of spiritual resources in the battle against the Wehrmacht.

The article takes into account modern methodological trends in the development of historical science, aimed at reconstructing the daily life of the city's population. The use of various aspects of 'everyday life' contributes to the transfer of institutional macro-history to the 'history of the details of life', 'new local history'.

6. Findings

The panorama of military everyday life was comprised of behavioral patterns of men, women, elderly people and children living in an environment of hunger, horrors of bombing and the death of close relatives. Under dangerous conditions, Grozny residents, as well as the residents of other front-line and rear cities, suffered heavy losses, with their main everyday concerns to be for the protection of their own and their children's lives, provision them with food, shoes, clothes, housing, and many other challenges. The general mosaic of military everyday life was composed in the post-war years under the influence of the mass media, memoirs, literary and movie images. The cultural memory of the Great Patriotic War overlapped with the personal experience of those who survived the war.

First of all, it is necessary to decide on the concept of 'everyday life'. Ozhegov (1993) perceives everyday life as being and existence. Akhiezer (1998) explains this concept as a human life, including work, life, leisure, travel. Academician Polyakov (2000) wrote that everyday life is "a sum of billions of human destinies in the distant and near past that have both common global features and specific, regional, national, and, finally, individual traits" (p. 72).

The authors believe that the definition of academician Polyakov (2000) is rather general in considering the concept of 'everyday life', while rightly observing that "in order to understand historical events and phenomena, it is necessary to solve a dual problem – to depict both a person and the environment" (p. 72).

Soviet historiography on the Great Patriotic War did not use the concept of 'history of everyday life'. However, certain aspects of the problem were highlighted in the publications of historians of that period. The standard of living of the population, material and everyday situation were delineated in the generalized manuscripts on the history of the Great Patriotic War. The issues of food supply, material and everyday situation were covered by the research into the history of the working class and peasantry of the wartime, as well as several economic studies. The most objective among the foreign works is the monograph of the American historian Glantz (2008) who described the Great Patriotic War as a "real kulturkampf", i.e. a deadly struggle between two cultures, and not a "war of ideologies".

A number of books by foreign authors working in the field of everyday history have been published in Russian. These are primarily the works of the German historian Lüdtké (2010) who explores the relationship between the authorities and people, the psychological state of a person in extreme conditions, and notes how war turns into the 'routine work' for those involved.

The everyday life of the population of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, as well as the entire country, was influenced by the mechanisms of the military economy and social policy conducted by the State. Under the extreme warfare conditions, material and everyday spheres were transformed and acquired new attributes.

The entire executive authority in the country was concentrated in the hands of the State Defense Committee set up on June 30, 1941. All citizens, party, Soviet, Komsomol and military bodies had to execute decisions and orders of the State Defense Committee in full obedience. Thus, a mechanism was created to ensure the unity of state, political and military government. As specified in the resolution of the State Defense Committee of October 22, 1941, the Grozny City Defense Committee was established. The Committee was entitled to declare a state of siege, evacuate residents, entrust enterprises with special assignments for the production of weapons, ammunition, equipment, form people's militia and fighter

battalions, organize the construction of fortifications, mobilize the population and transport, establish or abolish institutions and organizations. Militia, formations of troops of the NKVD, volunteer formations were handed over to the GGKO (Danilov, 2002).

The strategic implication of the city of Grozny was abundantly evidenced by the fact that, in addition to refined products, over 90 items of goods were produced, including military items like mortars, incendiary bottles, shells, cartridges, uniforms. The factories of Grozny repaired tanks, armored trains, guns, tractors, cars and other types of military equipment. At industrial enterprises, a working day lasted 11 hours without days off. Production discipline was tightened – workers could be put on trial for absenteeism or tardiness.

On October 22, 1941, the Grozny City Defense Committee imposed a special regime in Grozny. All the approaches to Grozny were girded with solid lines of fortifications, with a developed system of anti-tank ditches, firing reinforced concrete points, communications and other artificial obstacles. The defensive lines erected during this period around Grozny had a critical role to play in the defense of the North Caucasus.

Labor Army soldiers were stationed in the nearest villages, in sheds and lambing barns tailored to their needs, some were settled in dugouts. At their disposal they had field kitchens, health centers, hiking bakeries, hairdressers, workshops for repairing shoes and clothing, sewing mittens, etc.

In the autumn of 1941 and in August-December 1942, up to 40 thousand residents of towns and villages of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (Shaydaev, 1967) together with the Red Army worked day and night to construct fortifications around Grozny. By decision of the Grozny City Defense Committee of November 21, 1941, students were also mobilized to construct fortifications. Commissar Albagachiyev, the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, was instructed to transfer the citizens released by the NKVD of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR from penal institutions to the 10th GKO Directorate of Defense Work for defense works. Special construction activities were fully provided by the main labor force made up of construction battalions and prisoners of the NKVD Chechen-Ingush ASSR (Grozny DefDept, 2015).

The fire brigades filled 28 kilometers of anti-tank ditches up with oil, soaked with it 9 kilometers of a straw shaft, coated with oil possible tank lanes of 1 million square meters and pumped 7,000 cubic meters of water into anti-tank ditches (Ibragimov & Khatuyev, 2007).

Party and Soviet authorities realized that the major burden in the rear would fall on women's shoulders, hence this required a quick solution to the problem of expanding pre-school institutions. In warfare, many kindergartens shifted to work around the clock. Across Grozny 915 babies received care, of whom 724 were children of front-line soldiers (Grozny DefDept, 2015).

The issues of the rationed supply of food and industrial commodities to the urban population acquired exceptional importance. Soap and water shortages, lack of washhouses led to the spread of pediculosis and typhus. Health care personnel made every effort to prevent epidemics and the spread of acute infectious diseases. Besides, voluntary aid community was also involved in the fight against epidemics and sanitary troublemakers.

Food coupons could not fully meet the nutritional needs of the population. As a result, it became necessary to find various ways to provide people with sufficient food. A heaven-sent opportunity was acquired from household plots. The decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the

Central Committee of the AUCP (b) of April 7, 1942 “On the allocation of land for subsidiary farms and gardens for workers and employees” significantly strengthened the expansion of household plots.

The natives of Grozny cultivated mainly corn and potatoes, and special inspectors were employed to distribute plots among workers, supply them with seeds and equipment, help in harvesting and exporting the yield. The government was sensitive to children’s and health establishments. A particular emphasis was placed on the state supply to the intellectuals – specialists, cultural workers, scientists, teachers and doctors. The Secretary of the Chechen-Ingush Regional Committee of the AUCP (b) V. Ivanov in his memorandum “On the supply of bread to the workers of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the political mood of the population in connection with the introduced new rations”, noted the extremely tense situation with the supply of bread to the workers of Grozny and villages of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. The reaction of the population to the Government Decree on reducing the rates of bread consumption deserves special attention. An overwhelming majority of the population perceived this as a public necessity, even though there were some negative views and statements of individual workers and employees expressed both at official meetings and in private and recorded by informers (Grozny DefDept, 2015).

Hosking drew attention to noticeable changes in the Soviet distribution system, which showed how the war accelerated the process of “differentiating labor aristocracy from other social groups”, since the core workers got higher salary and better rations (as cited in Drozdov, 1998).

From the autumn of 1942, industrial management got entitled to reduce nutritional standards for disciplinary cases, shirkers and those who were serving correctional labor sentences. They got a bread supply rate reduced by 100-200 g. In case of failures to fulfill production quotas, late arrival and early departure from the construction of defensive lines, that was considered absence without valid excuse and a worker was deprived of bread coupons at all.

Grozny was preparing to repel air attacks with training alarms to reveal that the city was adequately ready neither for counter-air nor for chemical defense. The resolution of the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR dated July 2, 1941 introduced compulsory training among the population aged 16 to 60 years in air and chemical defense. Air defense operations involved the construction of bomb shelters, the deployment of local air defense capability (LADC). LADC detachments did participate in dismantling air-raid debris, cordoning off contaminated areas, protecting property of citizens, eliminating the effects of air attacks, blacking-out residential buildings, enterprises, streets, transport, etc. After an alarm signal, the lights in the dwellings were turned off, windows in those rooms with the lights on were shuttered, and light indicators were installed along the streets and enterprises. The population was alerted to the air raid using street loudspeakers, sirens, and factory hooters.

On July 25, 1942, the Grozny City Committee adopted a resolution on the implementation of the “Provision on fire brigades at enterprises, institutions and residential buildings”. By August 1, 1942, the chiefs of district housing offices, managers and commandants of dwellings, heads of enterprises and institutions were ordered to man up fire brigades and replenish the missing fire equipment. For failure to comply with the decision, those guilty were fined in the amount of 100 rubles or sentenced to correctional labor for up to 1 month (Grozny DefDept, 2015).

In response to increasing bombardments of the city and in order to avoid unnecessary human casualties, the Grozny City Defense Committee decided to evacuate the population from Grozny, except for those who worked for defense. Citizens who refused to evacuate voluntarily were evicted administratively. Within 24 hours, it was required to arrange dismantled evacuation of women with children, the elderly and disabled from the city to the southern districts of the republic and the city of Makhach-Kala. The People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade had to provide evacuees with flour, bread for a period of 5 days (Grozny DefDept, 2015).

In order to preserve the property of citizens evacuated from the city, the GGKO ordered the City Executive Committee and district councils within a week's time to take stock of all apartments left by the owners for evacuation, to take inventory of the property left with a copy of inventory list being transferred to the district executive committees. All apartments were to be sealed and made available for accommodation by other owners solely after approval by the City Executive Committee. The managers and commandants of houses should organize systematic monitoring of the property left behind by the evacuees. Besides that, the Grozny City Defense Committee allowed the City Council to occupy free apartments and private rooms left by the owners. However, this gave rise to numerous loopholes in the law, resulting in a series of fraud and malpractice accidents when housing departments allowed those being not entitled to move into the apartments left by the families of servicemen for evacuation, did not organize the protection of the property of families evacuated, etc. (Grozny DefDept, 2015).

Fires broke out in the city. The most terrible fire occurred in the oil barn that kept a million tons of oil. The flaming oil flowed into the city through the destroyed fences and earthen ramparts, melting everything on the way. Fighters of the militarized fire protection and volunteers came to fight against fires. In a fight with fire, many heroes were injured and died. In their honor, in 1944, an obelisk was installed near the building of the fire station on Industrialnaya Street.

In late 1942, the troops of the Northern Group of the Transcaucasian Front, which included many Grozny residents, broke the enemy's defenses on the approaches to Grozny and launched a counteroffensive. The defensive stage of the Battle of the Caucasus ended and the offensive phase began.

Refugees were returning to Grozny. The state authorities directed and controlled the process of re-evacuation. The police were forbidden to register non-citizens in the city, admitting as an exception the temporary registration of invalids of the Patriotic War arriving from hospitals. The heads of institutions, enterprises and organizations were forbidden to employ external part-timers, as well as workers and employees without preliminary agreement on the registration with the police. The issue of entry permission to the city of Grozny was in the competence of the Police Department of the NKVD ChIASSR (Grozny DefDept, 2015).

7. Conclusion

The everyday life of the population of Grozny and the republic as a whole was affected by the mechanisms of the military economy and social policy conducted by the State. The material and everyday spheres were transformed under the influence of wartime extreme conditions and steadily acquired new features.

Despite the difficult warfare situation, the material and living conditions of the population of Grozny, the supply of essential goods and medical services were gradually returning. In general, rationed supply was significant in providing a major part of Grozny residents with a minimum of food and industrial goods.

References

- Akhiezer, A. S. (1998). *Russia: a Critique of Historical Experience (Socio-cultural dynamics of Russia), vol. 2. Theory and Methodology: Dictionary*. Novosibirsk: Siberian Chronograph.
- Danilov, V. N. (2002). *The Soviet State in the Great Patriotic War: the Phenomenon of Extraordinary Authorities in 1941–1945*. Saratov: Saratov University Press.
- Drozдов, V. V. (1998). *Modern Foreign Historiography of the Soviet Economy in the 1940s*. Moscow: Dialogue-MSU.
- Glantz, D. M. (2008). *Soviet Military Miracle of 1941–1943. The renewal of the Red Army*. Moscow: Yauza Eksmo.
- Grozny DefDept (2015). *Grozny City Defense Committee. Documents and materials*. Grozny: Publishing and Printing Complex Grozny Worker, JSC.
- Ibragimov, M., & Khatuyev, I. (2007). *The Chechen Republic during the Great Patriotic War*. Nalchik: Publishing Center El-Fa.
- Lüdtke, A. (2010). *History of Everyday Life in Germany. New approaches to the study of labor, war and power*. Moscow: ROSSPAN.
- Ozhegov, S. I. (1993). *Dictionary of the Russian language*. Moscow: Az.
- Polyakov, Yu. A. (2000). Man in Everyday Life (historical aspects). *Domestic history*, 3, 125.
- Shaydaev, M. G. (1967). *On the defense of the Caucasus. Military, organizational and ideological work of the party on the Caucasian front in 1942–1943*. Leningrad: Leningrad State University Publishing House.