

Difficulties in fulfilling the first five-year plans in the industry of Chechnya in 1928–1937

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Abstract. The paper analyzes the difficulties of the Soviet-party leadership in the Chechen Autonomous Region in implementing the first five-year plans. The study of this problem is caused by the fact that modern Russia is experiencing a new round of modernization processes, and today the experience of previous generations is important so as not to repeat their mistakes. The subject of this study is of continuous interest among scientists who consider the present as a direct continuation of the past. Given the fact that the North Caucasus has a special place in the recent history of Russia in the last two decades, therefore, a deep study of the trends and contradictions of socio-economic development in Chechnya in the 1928–1937 allows identifying the historical origins and causes of modern problems in this region, which are a direct consequence of the accumulated contradictions in historical development. The policy of industrialization by the Soviet leadership was considered as a decisive factor in creating the material and technical base of socialism and ensuring the country's defense potential. The industrial jump was caused primarily by the foreign policy aspect, so the leadership emphasized that to delay the pace means to lag behind. Industrialization for the Chechen Autonomous Region meant the creation of industrial production, because here it was almost absent, the main population was employed in agriculture. The city of Grozny with its factories was an independent region. In 1928, the Soviet leadership began to implement the directives of the first congress. The directives of the XV Party Congress emphasized the need for special attention to the issues of economic recovery and culture of backward national outskirts, which was the Chechen Autonomous Region by the beginning of the first five-year plans.

Keywords: Chechnya, five-year plan, industrialization, directives, Soviet economy

1 Introduction

The historiography of the studied question conventionally considers two main periods: the Soviet (from 1920 to 1991) and the post-Soviet, which began at the turn of the 80–90s of the 20th century. The issue of Chechnya during the years of industrialization, as it is indicated in the resistant Soviet historiography, has been considered quite a lot by both domestic and foreign historians. The study by I.R. Loov is devoted directly to the problems of the recovery period of the Chechen economy after the Civil War in Russia [1]. It is worth noting the study by A.V. Bolbukh devoted directly to the leading sector of the national economy of the Chechnya oil industry [2]. The studies by V.I. Filkin are relevant since they accumulate a large actual material, but of course, the studies of this stage need a more critical attitude [3].

The second stage falls on the end of the 80s of the 20th century and is characterized by a deep transformation of socio-economic life. The monograph "Chechnya and Ingushetia in the 20–30 years of the 20th century: the experience of modernization" by

T.U. Elbuzdukaeva [4] is quite interesting as a comprehensive study of industrialization, collectivization and the cultural revolution in Chechnya because all these processes were interconnected. The dissertation studies by M.Kh. Aliskhanova were devoted to the implementation of the state policy in the socio-economic sphere in 1920–1930 [5]. These works are characterized by the involvement of a large range of sources, statistical data, however, the work published to date does not fully cover this problem, some aspects have not been properly studied. The archival documents and regional printing press allow giving an objective assessment of the event of the first five-year plans.

2 Problem Statement

In 1927, at the congress of the All-Union Communist Party (b), it was decided to move to a five-year planned development of the country's economy. The implementation of the five-year plans had difficulties in Chechnya common both for the whole country and specific to the region. Despite the successes in the work

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of enterprises, over the years of the New Economic Policy the industry of Chechnya was generally weak. Profit did not provide for the needs of further economic and cultural development of Chechnya. The problems of modernization were obvious here: agrarian overpopulation, low level of education among the population, shortage of engineering and technical workers. The fate of the first five-year plans in Chechnya depended on overcoming these difficulties.

3 Research Questions

The subject of the study was the first five-year plans in Chechnya indicated in the directives of the congresses of the All-Union Communist Party (b), political processes and socio-economic development of the region during the studied period:

- to study the peculiarities of interaction between central and local authorities in the conditions of the formation of the Soviet model of government in Chechnya;
- to reveal the specifics of the implementation of socio-economic transformations by the regional authorities.

4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the work is to study the difficulties in the development of Chechnya's industry during the years of the first five-year plans.

5 Research Methods

The fundamental principles of research include historicism, scientific objectivity. The involvement of a wide range of sources and statistical indicators will allow an impartial study of facts in all the diversity of specific historical conditions.

6 Findings

The implementation of the tasks of the first five-year plan (1928–1932) implied bringing the traditional economy of the Chechen region to the stage of industrial development in a planned system. The difficulties associated with modernization were obvious here: the population of Chechnya was 309,886 thousand people, of which 306,910 people lived in rural areas, and only 2,975 people in the city, 10 enterprises made products for only 2 million 598 thousand rubles a year [6].

In December 1927, the XV Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (b) discussed directives to draw up the first five-year plan for the development of the national economy in the USSR. The plan provided for the creation of large machine production as a decisive factor in the material and technical base of socialism serving “as the only possible economic basis for socialism”, emphasized V.I. Lenin [7].

Chechnya with its backward forms of mountain cattle breeding retained ancestral and estate remnants,

extremely low cultural level of the population, the kulaks to a large extent retained their economic positions, and hence, it was only possible to talk about an accelerated overcoming of economic backwardness and bringing the economy to the level of industrialized regions of the country. After the separation of Chechnya from the Mountain Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in November 1922, without being included in its composition, the city of Grozny with its oil refineries and metalworking plants remained an agrarian region, where the industry was almost absent. In 1928, in order to eliminate the current situation in Chechnya, the Bolshevik leadership together with the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks approved the proposal of the North Caucasus Regional Committee to unite the Chechen Region and the Grozny and Sunzhensky Districts.

To implement the ambitious five-year plan, Chechnya had natural resources, but their development required huge funds. Investments in the development of industry in Chechnya according to the first five-year plan were determined in the amount of 7,341,9 thousand rubles, and given the problems of the region, the amount was insignificant [8].

Based on the fact that by the end of the 1920s oil became the most important factor in the country's industrialization and the most important link in Soviet exports, it became necessary that the oil industry, including Grozny, develop at a pace that would meet all national economic needs. Over the years of the first five-year plan oil production in Chechnya was supposed to grow from 3 million tons up to 6 million, and the production of petroleum products from 17 to 32 % [9].

The implementation of the directives of the first five-year plan in the oil industry required the selfless efforts of workers, engineering and technical staff and production managers. Already in 1931, Grozneft reported that the first five-year plan was fulfilled in two and a half years. For the early implementation of the plan for the production and processing of oil, the USSR government awarded Grozneft the Order of Lenin, and many oil workers – with the orders of the USSR, including N.V. Anisimov, M. Gortikov, T. Temergazov, Kh. Ezhiev.

Despite the successes in the oil industry, the position of the “owners of the country” at the enterprises remained difficult, wage equalization, poor living conditions in hostels for workers generated a high percentage of staff turnover. In 1931, at the enterprises of Grozneft it ranged from 18 to 35 % [4].

The five-year plan in the sectors of regional production, and in particular, logging, consumer goods, capital housing construction was not fulfilled, moreover, there were very low indicators (for some types of work – 1.6 %, 1 %, or production was not achieved at all). The main reasons for the failure to comply with the plan were poor discipline due to non-payment of salaries on time (wage arrears in some artels reached 2 months), and the failure to carry out proper cost accounting. So, in the Malo-Varandiisky artel only 20–25 people worked out of 194 members, the rest did not go to work. The plan for the production of consumer goods was not fulfilled:

sewing and knitting, spinning, textile, leather. The industrial cooperative Chechraznepromkhoz was the monopolist in the production of consumer goods (70 %). The plan for 1932 approved by Chechoblprom and Sevkaprom was set at 8,494 rubles, but in May 1932 the plan for the production of consumer goods was increased by 455 rubles, which was 62 % compared to 1931 [8]. Indeed, the indicator of growth in consumer goods production for the year (62 %) was unrealistic, not even taking into account the requirements of significant investments that were absent. Endless alterations of the first five-year plan undermined the initiative from below [4]. The continuous measures taken by the management of enterprises to withdraw funds from workers also undermined the initiative from below. So, by mid-September 1929, bonds of the third loan in the amount of over 308 thousand rubles were sold among the workers of the old industries. The old industry workers participated in the distribution of loan bonds “Five-year plan – four years”, “Third – decisive year of the five-year plan” [2].

The difficulties in the implementation of the directives of the first five-year plans were also caused by the fact that during the first five-year plan 90 % of all investments were directed to the oil industry within the city of Grozny, the rest of the industries did not receive proper development [10]. However, in order to justify the difficulties in the economy that arose for objective reasons the party leadership made them subjective in nature: our enemies are to blame for our difficulties. The first public processes took place already in 1930–31. Any miscalculation or mistake of an oil specialist was more often declared sabotage. It is important to emphasize that this was not always done at the request of Moscow, more often due to the initiative “from below”. Workers all the time heard about “disruptors”, saw the breakdown of planned tasks – and in everything they were looking for the conscious malicious intent of engineers (Table 1).

The party leadership of the Chechen Autonomous Region ordered the Chechen Council of Trade Unions to involve Chechen teenagers in the industrial training. The first five-year plan implied to involve at least 500 Chechens, annually at least 40 people. However, this plan was not fulfilled. The reasons for the failure to comply with the plan to involve Chechens in production were not knowledge of the Russian language, lack of housing, lack of conditions for compliance with the Koran’s prescription, in particular, the namaz.

Despite the fact that many indicators of the first five-year plan remained unfulfilled in reality, on January 7, 1933 at the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the All-Union Communist Party (b) Stalin reported on the implementation of the indicators of the five-year plan within 4 years and three months. Without disputing the implementation of the first five-year plan, one cannot but agree that significant success has been made in the development of industry over these years. Thus, the share of Grozneft in the allied oil industry for oil production in 1931 was 36.3 %, gasoline production was 73.6 % of all production in the USSR, and the cost of gross production was 42.8 % [11]. In the first five-year

plan the Red Hammer plant produced gross production in the amount of 21,465 thousand rubles. The number of workers at the plant exceeded 1,050 people. For all the years of the subsequent five-year plans, the Red Hammer plant remained the most profitable enterprise producing equipment for the oil industry.

The Chechen region began a new five-year plan in difficult conditions. A decline in production began after the rapid growth in 1931. State plans for oil production and drilling were not implemented, there was a lack of materials and equipment, labor organization suffered, and there were large non-production shutdowns. There were drawbacks in drilling operations – insufficient reduction in the cost of drilling, rational use of chemicals, and frequent accidents. The influx of unskilled labor from villages negatively affected labor discipline and labor productivity. Due to difficult working conditions, the problem of staff turnover remained the same. The theory of “attenuation” was again drawn attention to based on the current difficulties [12].

The difficulties associated with the implementation of the indicators of the second five-year plan were to be solved with the expansion of production. In the struggle to fulfill the planned indicators the party and economic leadership counted on an extensive path of production development. So, in 1934 in the Stragroznsky district it was planned to restore abandoned wells. The development of the Malgobek oil field began. In 1934 alone 38 drilling wells appeared here. The introduction of new drilling rigs and new fields made it possible for the first time in five years in December 1936 to fulfill the annual plan for oil production by 101.2 % and for drilling by 112 % [12].

Over the years of the second five-year plan in Chechnya, there was a weak development of a number of industries that had sufficient natural resources. The construction of cement plants based marl in Yarash-Mardy was postponed for a long time in Chechnya, and a cotton gin in Gudermes. This issue was vital for further industrial development of Chechnya. The industrial development of Chechnya required huge financial investments, but in conditions when the whole country turned into a huge construction site, there was a scattering of funds. The formation of the Soviet economy in Chechnya faced the same obstacles as the whole country [13]. As a result, the number of started and unfinished construction projects grew; by the end of the second five-year plan more than two-thirds of investments were frozen [14].

The difficulties in the economy caused by objective reasons were overcome by socialist competitions and movements of rationalizers. Workers of the Grozny railway stations twice (1933–1934) won the third place in the All-Union competition, 621 people were declared the shock workers here. On Stakhanov’s day on January 11, 1936, the oil fields exceeded the plan, and in drilling – the norms were exceeded more than twice. Some teams and individual innovators performed exceptionally well [2].

During the years of the second five-year plan, the political crisis intensified, which was the result of both

internal party contradictions and failures in fulfilling the tasks of the second five-year plan. Repressions began to justify them, the NKVD bodies in Chechnya fabricated a mythical case about the subversive activities of the “bourgeois-nationalist counter-revolutionary center”. Already in the first half of 1937, more than two hundred people from among the party-Soviet and economic assets were arrested [15].

7 Conclusion

The difficulties in implementing the directives of the first five-year plans were associated with both objective and subjective reasons. The ambitious first five-year plans were initially impossible. The adopted plans did not take into account the laws of the theory of economics, the adherence of Chechens to traditional values. To mobilize the working class to fight for the high pace of industrialization the party leadership used social competition as one of the important levers for fulfilling and overfulfilling the tasks of the five-year plans. Political terror caused a lack of initiative on the part of the engineering and technical leadership.

Despite all the difficulties, during the years of the second five-year plan in Chechnya, the output of oil industry, mechanical engineering, metalworking increased in general, enterprises for the processing of fruits and vegetables, livestock products arose, mills and power plants were built. All this, of course, contributed to overcoming economic and cultural backwardness, thus turning Chechnya into an industrial republic.

Table 1. Capital expenditures in industry Chechen Autonomous Region (thousand rubles) [16]

Production	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33
Mining exploration	114	35	10	8
Acetone production	500	1300	1174	-
Brick production	434.4	-	-	-
Forestry,woodworking production	220	150	200	149
Metalworking	40	54	27,5	-
Distillery	114	81	15	15
Polygraph	5	53	5	5
Textile industry	-	-	-	-
Oil mill	-	-	40	15
Canning production	55	340	-	-
Brewery	10	10	10	55

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