

# Activities of Chita Regional Government During the Great Patriotic War

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**Abstract**—The article describes activities of the government of Chita Region represented by the Regional Council of Workers' Deputies during the Great Patriotic War. The article describes activities of the regional executive committee in agriculture and local industries during the war.

**Keywords**—World War II, Regional Council of Workers' Deputies, Chita Region, regional executive committee, regional party committee, local industry, agriculture

## I. INTRODUCTION

Railway transport played a huge role in ensuring the victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany. Providing the delivery of strategic reserves to the front, the evacuation of material assets and people from the areas occupied by the Hitler troops, the railway traffic was a link between the front and the rear. In addition to solving military problems, the railways continued to supply the industry with raw materials, fuel, metal, as well as transport passengers. An important role in creating conditions for the uninterrupted operation of railway transport belonged to the system of government. An analysis of the historical experience of the public administration allowed us to understand current changes in the public administration. The relevance of this study is due to the lack of comprehensive studies on the history of public administration in Chita region during the war.

A detailed analysis of historiography is not a subject of this article. We emphasized two main stages in its development: 1) mid-1940s - mid-1980s; 2) the second half of the 1980s - beginning of the XXI century. The first stage was characterized by the accumulation of factual material on the history of local Soviets, highlighting the main aspects of activities of Soviet authorities. Researchers identified main aspects of the problem, specifics of activities of local Councils in various regions. In 1972, S.G. Chumak published an article describing Chita Regional Council of Workers' Deputies during the Great Patriotic War; he identified activities of the regional Soviet body during the war.

Of great importance was the study of theoretical issues of formation, activities of the public administration apparatus in general and the regional administration system in particular. The main result of the study of Soviet local authorities is the definition and solution of the problem on the basis of unpublished sources. The authors identified and systematized

extensive factual materials on the history of the Great Patriotic War.

Since the second half of the 1980s, a new stage in historiography began. The authors began to use new approaches to the study of history, rethought the Soviet system of government and began to interpret it as totalitarian. New assessment of the social nature of Soviet society led to a different conclusion in the analysis of activities of government authorities. The Councils of Workers' Deputies began to be characterized as part of the authoritarian-bureaucratic system.

The thesis by I. Perfilyeva deals with the history of formation of the state apparatus of Transbaikalia in 1922-1936. The author analyzed the development of public authorities in Transbaikalia. Public administration issues are covered in the articles of the Small Encyclopedia of Transbaikalia [1].

The problem of formation and functioning of Chita regional government in 1941 - 1945 has never been a research subject. There are no comprehensive studies on this issue.

## II. METHODS

The methodology is based on the fundamental principles of historical science – objectivity and historicism which require the in-depth analysis of events and facts, their objective assessment to form the most adequate picture of past reality and identify relations between historical events and external conditions.

When analyzing the role of the public administration in Chita region in 1941-1945, the following methods were used:

- the chronological method to consider activities of the regional government of Chita region in a chronological sequence, from the beginning of the Great Patriotic War until its end.
- the comparative historical method to show changes and activities of the Soviet authority of Chita region and the country as a whole; to identify functions of the regional authorities during the war.
- statistical analysis which was used to study quantitative and qualitative changes that occurred in the public administration system;
- the synchronous method to consider activities of the public administration system in Chita region, the RSFSR and the USSR.

The conclusions are based on the analysis of historical documents deposited in the funds of the State Archive of the Trans-Baikal region and materials of local mass media.

### III. RESULTS

During the Great Patriotic War, it was necessary to restructure the entire system of public administration, including councils of workers' deputies. Changes in the structure of the Soviet government of Chita region were supposed to increase mobility and flexibility of the Council. The changes concerned the executive committee of the regional Council of Workers' Deputies. There were new departments and commissions, while the number of workers did not increase. [2]

During the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet authorities contributed to the victory in the war. The Regional Council of Workers' Deputies and its executive committee mobilized human and material reserves. The regional Council of Workers' Deputies aimed at ensuring interests of the front.

The war posed a difficult task for agriculture - to provide the army with food. During the war, the mandatory minimum of workdays per year increased from 100 to 150. Teenagers and family members of collective farmers aged 12 to 16 years had to produce at least 50 workdays. If the collective farmer did not produce the obligatory minimum of workdays, he was expelled from the agricultural cartel and lost his personal plot. Chairmen of executive committees and secretaries of district committees discussed this measure with collective farmers [3].

The situation in agriculture was extremely difficult: a decrease in the number of workers, productive and draft livestock, and the level of mechanization and agrotechnical measures, sown areas, crops yield.

The reduced number of the peasant population was associated with a constant outflow of the male population to the front. The number of men decreased by 4 times. [4] As of February 1, 1943, there were 67 out of 140 required agronomists, 86 out of 341 required livestock specialists, 52 out of 119 veterinarians and veterinary technicians [5]. Veterinary services were low-quality which negatively affected livestock productivity.

During the war years, the rural population was sent for permanent industrial and construction works. In 1942-1943, Chita Region mobilized 30,740 people for industries, including 9927 collective farmers. [6]

As a result of the reduction in the number of the rural population, the burden on the remaining collective farmers increased sharply. Agriculture needed skilled workers. The regional executive committee implemented a number of measures aimed at solving the personnel problem. On June 28, 1941, the regional executive committee and regional party committee obliged the regional land department, MTS directors, district committees and district executive committees to ze a short-term training of new tractor and combine harvester operators from among women and men of an non-conscript age. [7] Particular attention was paid to the training of female agricultural personnel. In t summer of 1941,

2,095 people, of which 1,595 were women, were trained (76%). [8]

From December 1941 to May 1942, according to the Agrotechnical Business program, 1943 people were trained in Chita (instead of the planned number of 500 people). 242 tractor drivers (instead of 200 people), 204 people drivers (instead of 200 people) were trained. The agricultural personnel was trained as well. 42 people were trained in the Baley MTS, including 30 female ones, 19 people - in the Bochkarev MTS, including 11 female ones. Classes were held daily for eight hours. At the Skovorodino MTS, 39 machine operators, including 23 female ones, were trained. In summer of 1942, about three and a half thousand tractor drivers worked at the MTS and state farms of the region, 60% of whom mastered this specialty during the war. [9]

The regional authorities were engaged in the training of agricultural personnel. It should be noted that the accelerated pace of training and retraining of new specialists, primarily among women and adolescents, did not ensure a high level of training. The district executive committees provided on-the-job training of millers, locomotive drivers, millstone builders, blacksmiths, saddlers, etc.

The shortage of labor during the sowing and harvesting years was compensated for by the mobilization of workers, office workers, schoolchildren, and higher and secondary educational institutions. According to government regulations, all men and women were mobilized for agricultural works. Those who tried to evade were punished.

In September 1941, the executive committee of the regional Council of Workers' Deputies and the regional committee of the CPSU (b) engaged all labor-able rural population, including students and urban residents in harvesting. Schoolchildren helped collective farmers. During the summer holidays of 1941, 1532 schoolchildren worked at state farms of Aginsky National District and Kyrin District. In 1942, 15747 workers, office workers, housewives and 19920 high school students were engaged in harvesting. [10, 11]

The regional executive committee did a lot of work. M.I. Kalinin noted: "Local industries play an important role in the general military economy. In addition to the fact that local industries are direct suppliers of defense products, they supply semi-finished products to enterprises. This imposes a great responsibility on the workers for the implementation of production plans and tasks of local industries" [12]

Local industries and trade cooperatives faced two related tasks: implementation of front-line orders and production of consumer goods for the needs of the population.

With the outbreak of World War II, the material and technical supply of Chita region reduced. In the pre-war period, the demand for consumer goods and products was satisfied through supplies from the central regions. In war conditions, when the supply with industrial goods decreased, the expansion of production of which should be focused on local raw materials, was of great importance in the activities of the regional Soviet governing body. It was not possible to quickly find their own raw materials, and therefore, local

industry was experiencing difficulties, especially at the beginning of the war.

Local industries and cooperatives implemented military orders. They produced skis for the needs of the Red Army. In November 1941, leaders of the regional industrial unions and the regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks warned that failure to fulfill the ski production plan would entail "strict party responsibility for the disruption of the defense event." [13]

To ensure the material and domestic needs of the population, it was necessary to produce goods from local raw materials. There was an acute shortage of soap, shoes, clothes, school supplies, household items, etc. In May 1942, the evacuation hospital No. 1028 received only 60 kg of soap at a monthly need of 249 kg of soap and 125 kg of soda. [14]

By the decision of the executive committee of Chita Council of Workers' Deputies, workshops for producing things from production wastes and repairing clothes were opened. They organized the purchase of second-hand items and organized the production of wooden-soled shoes. To provide the population with soap, soap production was organized in Chita, Petrovsk-Zabaykalsky, Aginsk, Aksh, and Byrka. In January 1942, the regional executive committee established planned targets for soap making using local raw materials and waste from the dairy and leather industries. The monthly plan was 15 tons of soap. [15]

In February 1942, the regional executive committee adopted the decision "On measures for the development of the leather and footwear industry of the Regional Trade and Industry Committee". The Executive Committee of the Regional Council of Workers' Deputies asked the People's Commissariat of Light Industry of the RSFSR to transfer the canned old sheepskin and fur coat factory in Chita to the Regional Department of Light Industry to open a chrome factory [16] Chita Obllegprom was provided with required equipment for organizing tanneries and a shoe factory. The regional department of light industry was supposed to organize the factory by April 20, 1942, ensuring the launch of the chrome plant in the second quarter of 1942; since the second half of 1942, it had to launch a leather factory in Sretensk. The regional executive committee of the Council of Workers' Deputies ordered the district executive committees for brick and tile production in the districts to ensure the production of pottery. In 8 districts (Krasnochikoy, Akshinsk, Nerchinsk-Zavod, Petrovsk-Zabaykalsk, Uletov, Shilka, Ust-Kara and Khilok), one enterprise for processing hemp fiber had to be opened.

Despite all the efforts, it was not possible to provide the population with industrial goods made from local raw materials. This was primarily due to the outflow of workers to the front and restricted material resources.

In addressing the issue of providing the population with food, it was important to organize local food production. In January 1942, the regional executive committee decided to produce noodles. The regional food industry committee provided workshops with equipment and raw materials. [17]

In May 1943, the plan for the production of products from local raw materials was not implemented. One of the reasons was the undeveloped network of district food processing plants. There were 20 district and city food processing plants in the region, which was insufficient. [18] The regional executive committee emphasized that the main problem is the lack of local raw materials. The pasta factories produced 945 tons of noodles. But they lacked own flour. The Executive Committee wanted the food industry to produce 400 tons of flour per month. [19]

In March 1944, in order to increase the production of yeast, fortified and non-alcoholic drinks by Chita Yeast Brewery, the executive committee of Chita Regional Council of Workers' Deputies decided to organize new workshops.

The development of the own raw material base for the regional food industry was of great importance. It was decided to expand the sowing area for grain crops and vegetables on subsidiary plots of food processing plants. The state bank funded the creation of the own raw material base.

In the war conditions, the creation of livestock and vegetable farms by industrial enterprises, trade organizations, and social institutions (schools, kindergartens, hospitals, emergency hospitals) was of great importance. The Soviet authority paid much attention to this area. This issue was discussed monthly at meetings of the regional executive committee.

The efforts of regional Soviet and party authorities to establish local industry yielded positive results. The tenth session of the regional Council of Workers' Deputies, held in April 1944, noted that regional and local industries fulfilled the plan of 1943 for gross output of products by 128%, the number of increased by 14 %. In 1944, the gross output of local industries and cooperatives increased by 37.8%, and the annual plan was implemented by 113%. The regional food industry increased its volume by 48.9%. The light industry fulfilled the plan by 114.2%. The cooperatives reached 105% of the level of 1940. [20]

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the Great Patriotic War restructured the government and society in a military way. The tasks set by the war required prompt and effective solutions. To this end, the public administration was transformed. The entire system of councils adapted to the extreme conditions.

During the war, the structure of Chita Regional Executive Committee of the Council of Workers' Deputies changed. The divisions and administrations continued their work, but the war conditions required new divisions and commissions. At the same time, the managerial staff did not expand, and even reduced. The load of full-time employees increased.

During the war, the main form of work of the regional Council of Workers' Deputies were sessions whose number decreased sharply which led to a decrease in the role of the Council. Its role intensified. The outbreak of the war did not lead to major changes in the forms of work of the regional executive committee: extended meetings remained the main form. They began to attract Soviet workers which led to the

accumulation of rich management experience. In the conditions of the constant outflow of leaders from the region, this was of great importance.

Despite all the difficulties, the regional Council of Workers' Deputies and its executive committee were able to organize work in such a way as to meet needs of the population and the front.

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