The problems of Economic Development of the Cities of the Russian Province in 1941-1945 (on the Materials of the Lower Volga Region)

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Abstract. The study, based on a comprehensive analysis of archival documents, focuses on the peculiarities of the economic development of the Lower Volga region towns in the extreme conditions of the Great Patriotic War. The authors examine the problems of supplying the region's inhabitants with food and basic necessities, organisation of medical, housing and communal, as well as cultural and consumer services. Particular attention is devoted to the military daily routine of the residents of Stalingrad during the military operations in the city. The paper also shows the features of the industrial development of the region during the war period. The authors analyse the difficulties and shortcomings that arose in the work of local authorities of the Lower Volga region while solving everyday problems and providing social assistance to the inhabitants of the region. The authors conclude that such measures were quite effective and, despite the shortcomings and difficulties, allowed to ensure social stability in the region. The study was carried out on the basis of archival documents that are first time used for scientific purposes and have not yet been the object of historical analysis.

1. Introduction
The Great Patriotic War had a decisive influence on all spheres of life of Soviet society, including, in many ways, determined the economic situation in the cities of the Russian province. The present study is devoted to the identification of the contribution of the cities of the Lower Volga region to the country's economic potential. Particular attention is paid to the specifics of industrial development in the cities of the region. The novelty of scientific research is that a comprehensive analysis of the features of the economic development of the towns of the Lower Volga region in emergency military conditions was carried out on the basis of an analysis of previously unpublished and first introduced archival documents for scientific circulation. Archival materials made it possible to study the features of the economic development of the cities of the region that were front-line or representing a deep rear, which determined the nature of the problems that arose in the economic sphere. In the study, the mechanism of decision-making and implementation of local government decisions in the cities of the Russian province in the field of solving their economic problems is described.

2. Relevance
The study of the causes of the victory of the Soviet state in the Great Patriotic War still attracts the attention of historians and does not lose its relevance. One of the factors contributing to the victory in the war was the state economic and social policy, the subject of which was the organisation of the
work of industrial enterprises, ensuring the minimum needs of the population in material, communal and medical services, food and basic necessities. The demand for historical experience in the implementation of social and economic policy in the emergency military period is due today to the fact that at that time the state managed to ensure the work of regional industry and, on the whole, to satisfy the living conditions of Soviet people.

At the same time, it is essential to study the experience of implementing social and economic measures in large regions of the USSR, one of which was the Lower Volga region during the war period. The cities of the region were large industrial and agricultural centres. The created industry largely predetermined the outcome of the war.

3. Scientific importance of the issue with a brief literature review
First historical works on the state of the economic and social spheres appeared already during the Great Patriotic War, however, the study of this problem in the publications of the military and post-war period was episodic. Further development of the historiography of the investigated problem happened in 1964-1985, when new documentary materials were introduced into the scientific circulation. At the same time, publications appeared on the activities of party bodies and trade union organisations to supply the population [1], [2].

The history of the Great Patriotic War was also reflected in fundamental scientific works, which showed the leadership role of party organisations when solving the material and everyday problems of the population in the war period. The second half of the 1960s have seen the appearance of the studies on the economic situation of individual population groups in 1941-1945 [3], [4], [5].

After the 1990s, a new period of historiography of the problems of the military economy began, caused by the appearance of access to new historical sources for researchers [6], [7], [8].

The works of regional scientists are also valuable for this study. Some problems of regional economic policy were reflected in conferences devoted to military issues [9], [10].

There is a revival of interest in various aspects of the Great Patriotic War at the present stage in foreign historiography. Translated publications [11], [12], [13] are important historiographic sources and allow for a different perspective in the socio-economic situation in 1941-1945. Quite a controversial for domestic historiography point of view on the events of the war and the role of the Soviet side is expressed in the studies by E. Bivor [14]. In recent years, numerous works of Western historians were published in the Russian language who analysed the economic problems of the countries participating in the Second World War.

Thus, a historiographical review of the analysed problem showed that although historians have done some work in the field of research on the problems of the military economy, the specifics of the economic development of the towns of the Lower Volga region have not been thoroughly analysed. Therefore, the degree of scientific development of the research problem is clearly insufficient and needs further study.

4. Statement of the problem
The scientific aim that this study is willing to achieve, is connected with determining the influence of extreme military conditions on the economic development of the Russian city. The paper examines the economic situation prevailing in the cities of the Russian province based on the example of the largest region - the Lower Volga region. The scientific idea on the overall effectiveness of state measures carried out in the region, primarily in the field of ensuring the operation of industrial enterprises, organisation of centralised supply of the population and rational use of local resources in solving the material and everyday problems of the population, has been proved, which has made it possible to reduce food, housing and communal difficulties in the region.

The study provides a theoretical justification for the provisions that reveal the role of local government bodies (city defence committees, party organisations, workers’ councils) in ensuring economic security in the region.
5. Theory
During the Great Patriotic War, the cities of the Lower Volga region played a significant role in the economic development of the region and the country as a whole. The economy, human and raw materials resources of the Lower Volga region constituted an essential part of the country's military and economic potential. The prewar years have seen the industry of the region make a giant leap in its development. The cities of regional importance were rapidly developing. Saratov and Stalingrad were large industrial centers. Thus, the gross industrial output of the Saratov region in the war years amounted to 8 bln rubles, and in the Stalingrad region - 9.2 bln rubles. [15].

In Astrakhan, there were factories of shipbuilding and ship repair industry. They produced military products, produced aerosleighs, scoops, trawlers, flamethrowers, submarines, etc. Food industry enterprises were concentrated in Astrakhan and in the cities of the Kalmyk ASSR. So, during the war period the Astrakhan fish processing plant the name of Mikoyan started producing new products from fish: flour, cereals, biscuits [16].

The need to oppose the enemy required the concentration of all resources available in the Lower Volga region for the solution of military tasks. The priority directions of production were heavy industry, machine building, defence, chemical, electrotechnical industries. The production of military products increased. The Stalingrad Tractor Plant produced T-34 tanks. In addition, the assembly of T-60 tanks was carried out at the «Shipyard» plant. Production of military equipment did not stop even during the breakthrough of the German fascist troops to the city on August 23, 1942. Large-scale artillery production was concentrated in Stalingrad. By early 1942, the factory «Barricades» had increased the output of 76-mm guns by more than 2 times. About 9% of all manufactured goods for the defence industry were produced at the Stalingrad factory "Red October" [17].

Production of goods for the front was also handled by industrial enterprises in the Saratov region. So, the plant "Traktorodetal" provided the release of mines, ammunition, aircraft bombs, anti-tank rifles. Production of navigational and artillery devices, fuel for the front set up at the S. M. Kirov cracking plant. The Saratov Locomotive Repair Plant produced tank shells. The factory No. 292 produced uniforms and objects of front life. A considerable attention was devoted to the production of Yak-1 fighter aircraft at the Saratov Aviation Plant [18].

The territory of the Lower Volga region became the most important agricultural area of the country. The relatively successful solution of food problems in the region was due to a considerable attention to the formation of the local production base and the development of food industry enterprises, primarily fish. The production of fish products was developed in the Kalmyk ASSR and in the Astrakhan Region. During the war period, the role of the Volga-Caspian fishing basin increased significantly. It is necessary to note the significant contribution of the fishing industry of the Lower Volga region to the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, especially in the Battle of Stalingrad, when the enterprises of the industry were in close proximity to the front, worked under firings of German fascist aviation and supplied fish products for the Red Army and the civilian population.

Limited food supplies from centralized state funds and transport problems led to a shortage of food products. A significant proportion of the population that was provided with food at low rates, experienced problems with food supplies. At the same time, certain categories of the population of the Lower Volga region could not often get food even at minimal rates.

Significant damage to the local industry was caused by military operations near Stalingrad. Shops and public dining rooms, bakeries and food warehouses stopped working in the city. On September 7, 1942 in Stalingrad, the food allowance was reduced [19].

At the end of February 1943, the first plans for the restoration of Stalingrad were elaborated [20]. The restoration process was carried out at a fairly rapid pace, and by April 1943 the Stalingrad Tractor Plant had produced a batch of diesel equipment. The Sacco and Vanzetti Stalingrad plant started the production of medical equipment.

Kirov, First May Day artel and other were launched in the Yermansky district of the city. Shoe shop of the artel. The shoe workshop of the First May Day artel had repaired 3,500 pairs of various shoes
by June 1943. The sewing shop completed various orders worth 13,797 rubles. Kirov artel began producing yarn for knitting. 23rd anniversary of October artel resumed its work in the Barricade district of Stalingrad. The acceptance of orders for the fitting and sewing shops began [21]. Shoemakers' shops and shoe repair shops for families of military personnel and evacuees were opened in the cities of the Stalingrad region [22]. The enterprises of light industry worked with considerable interruptions, were supplied on a residual principle, experienced a constant shortage of raw materials, electric power, skilled workers and equipment.

The activities of the local party and state authorities in the field of resuming the work of the local food industry played a big role in the organization of the food supply of the urban population. For example, a bakery was opened in the Stalingrad LoaderHouse. A noodle shop which produced 800-900 kg of products per day was opened in the city bakery No. 5. A confectionery shop produced daily 400 kg of biscuits. The restoration work was completed at the Stalingrad Bakery No. 3. Its capacity in 1943 reached 60 tons of bread per day [23]. Subsidiary farms were created, collective and individual truck farming developed, centralized procurement of intermediate goods was practiced, and other measures aimed at ensuring the growth of commodity funds were implemented in the region. All this allowed to substantially increase the consumption resources and organize the supplies to the civilian population of the Lower Volga region and the standing Army in the most difficult military conditions.

During the war period, there was a sharp decline in the provision of the population of the region with industrial goods. Their production was greatly damaged during the period of military operations in the region and the occupation of part of its territory by German fascist troops. A particular attention was paid to the restoration of the production of consumer goods in Stalingrad. Thus, in 1944 the work of a silicate brick plant was restored. An increase of consumer goods production at the enterprises of the local industry of the Lower Volga region was observed in 1943 [24]. Local industry enterprises that were restored for the indicated period and started the production of new types of household products, played an important role in it.

The Saratov region saw significant work on the organization of production of manufactured goods from local raw materials in order to provide for the population supplies carried out. So, even at the beginning of the war in the Baltai district of the region, local production of manufactured goods was poorly developed. Only three commercial artels of sewing, felting and shoemaking and woodworking profiles were working. By the end of 1943, these workshops opened new shops and the production of new types of goods was mastered. For example, pottery, saddle, tannery, sheepskin, button, and combbed shops were opened at the "Udarnik" artel. Artel "Woodworker" mastered the production of carts, sleighs, wheels, baskets, household utensils and other household items [24]. In general, the volume of the production of everyday items in the total unit weight of products produced by local industry enterprises in the Saratov region increased from 55.5 to 85.8%.

A large number of industrial artels serving the population were available in the Astrakhan region. For instance, in 1942 the "Trikotazhnitsa" artel produced common goods worth 1,470 rubles, the "Red Torch" artel started to produce tooth powder, the "Metalist" artel established the production of table spoons [26]. In 1942, light industry enterprises produced 309,000 pairs of leather shoes, 81,600 pairs of felt boots, 1,223 litres of pottery, and 635 tons of laundry soap [27]. It should be noted that these volumes of manufactured goods still lag far behind the pre-war level.

6. Findings (conclusion)

The Great Patriotic War led to significant changes in the socio-economic structure of the Lower Volga region. The city centres of the region became the most important military and defence, as well as nutritional base, which made it possible to provide the troops fighting in Stalingrad with the necessary weapons, and the civilian population with food and consumer goods. During the war period, the industrial structure of regional industry has changed significantly. In Stalingrad and in Saratov, the share increase of enterprises of the military-industrial complex increased. At the same time, the share increase of heavy industry led to a reduction in the production of consumer goods for citizens. Insufficient centralized funds contributed to the development of the region's own production of food prod-
ucts. In the cities of the Astrakhan region and the Kalmyk ASSR, considerable attention was paid to
the work of food industry enterprises. However, the volume of output could not meet the needs of the
entire urban population. Therefore, the supply of food and industrial goods remained insufficient till
the end of the war.

The war had an impact on the material and everyday security of the urban population. From 1941
to 1945 there was a shortage of food and consumer goods due to regular interruptions in the central-
ized supply and the transfer of local producers to the production of military orders. The lack of finan-
cial, technical and human resources hampered the operation of urban infrastructure enterprises.

In the framework of military economy, the urban population was provided with food and industrial
goods by the introduction of differentiated supply standards. However, the scarcity of food often led to
significant supply disruptions. In order to preserve social and political stability in the region, there
were elaborated measures to provide material and everyday assistance to the least protected groups of
the population.

It should be noted that the cities of the Lower Volga region due to close proximity to the front
made a huge contribution to the Victory of the Soviet people in 1941-1945. The victory was ensured
by the constant growth of production of military equipment in the region and local food resources due
to the development of food industry enterprises. The social assistance provided in the region made it
possible to provide for the minimal needs of citizens and solve their material and domestic difficulties.

7. Practical significance
The results of the research contribute to expanding the existing knowledge system about the economic
development of the cities of the Lower Volga region in extreme military conditions. The findings and
results of the study will provide an opportunity to study the experience of local authorities in imple-
menting economic policies in the region. The expected results of the research can be used for a scien-
tific solution of specific applied problems. The experience of solving problems that appear in the eco-
nomic sphere in emergency military conditions is of practical interest and can be useful in crisis situa-
tions, man-made disasters, and in the work of regional state structures.

The planned scientific results can be applied in research, teaching and pedagogical work.

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