



Socioeconomic Situation of Small Towns of East Kazakhstan During the Period of Stalin's Policy (1925-1953)

*Situación socioeconómica de los pequeños pueblos del este de Kazajstán
durante el periodo de la política de Stalin (1925-1953)*

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Abstract

Small towns of East Kazakhstan were first considered as a separate complex of administrative-territorial objects in the context of the period 1925-1953, when the structure of cities was laid, which became the basis of long-term development and influencing modern realities. The purpose of the study is to analyze the patterns and identify the main stages of the historical development of small towns in East Kazakhstan in the context of the socioeconomic policy of the state from 1925-1953 and to determine the reasons for the creation and development of small towns in the region. The following methods were used in the article: induction, comparative-analytical, systematization deduction, analysis, synthesis, historical-logical and comparative. The network of small towns of Eastern Kazakhstan was defined and the main stages of the socioeconomic development of the state from 1925-1953 were highlighted, the connection of the development of cities with each of the stages and factors that had a decisive influence on the formation of small towns and the development prospects were identified. The results of the study can be useful in the development of sociocultural programs for the development of small towns.

Keywords: city, East Kazakhstan region, industrialization, Stalin era, deposits.

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Resumen

Las pequeñas ciudades del este de Kazajstán se consideraron por primera vez como un complejo separado de objetos territoriales administrativos en el contexto del periodo 1925-1953, cuando se estableció la estructura de las ciudades, que se convirtió en la base del desarrollo a largo plazo e influyó en las realidades modernas. El propósito del estudio es analizar los patrones e identificar las principales etapas del desarrollo histórico de los pueblos pequeños en el este de Kazajstán en el contexto de la política socioeconómica del Estado en 1925-1953, a fin de determinar las razones de su creación y el desarrollo de pequeños pueblos de la región. En el artículo se utilizaron los siguientes métodos: de inducción, comparativo-analítico, sistematización, deducción, análisis, síntesis, histórico-lógico y comparativo. Se definió la red de pequeños pueblos del este de Kazajstán y se destacaron las principales etapas del desarrollo socioeconómico del Estado en 1925-1953, la conexión del desarrollo de las ciudades con cada una de las etapas y factores que influyeron decisivamente en la formación de pequeños pueblos y sus perspectivas de desarrollo. Los resultados del estudio pueden ser útiles en el desarrollo de programas socioculturales para el desarrollo de pequeños pueblos.

Palabras clave: ciudad, región de Kazajstán Oriental, industrialización, era de Stalin, depósitos.

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Introduction

The relevance of the stated topic is conditioned upon the fact that the modern problems of the economic systems of small towns in the region were formed in the period 1925-1953, when the primary structure of cities was created, which became the basis for their development. During the “Stalinist” period, the doctrine of urban planning was developed, which subsequently underwent only minor changes (Kuznetsov, 1970). The need for a historical and theoretical study of the development of small towns in Eastern Kazakhstan is determined by the relationship between the history of the development of settlements at initial stages with modern problems and prospects for the development of each individual city and the region as a whole. In the last decade, in historical and economic studies devoted to the actual problem of urbanisation, special attention has been paid to the development of socioeconomic systems of small towns, which corresponds to modern problems and urgent needs of the time and is associated with the geopolitical changes that occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Kanatbaeva, 2010). The problems of small towns affect the interests of macroeconomic stability and the national security of the state (Nurlanova, 2016).

There are 60 small towns on the territory of Kazakhstan, eight of which: Ayagoz, Zaisan, Zyryanovsk, Kurchatov, Serebryansk, Charsk, Shemonaiha, Ridder, are located in Eastern Kazakhstan, a region with one of the highest levels of urbanisation (Ualtaeva, 2014, 2011). The small towns of the region were not previously considered as a separate complex of administrative-territorial objects in the process of historical development. The general socioeconomic characteristics of the region are defined within the framework of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a whole, the characteristics of a given period that laid the foundation for modern urban development are not distinguished from the context of historical events. But, precisely, the period of industrialisation and modernisation was

associated with the highest rates of development of small towns in Eastern Kazakhstan, which is explained by the industrial development of natural and mineral resources in the region (Baysalbaeva, 2012).

The period of 1925-1953 considered in the framework of the study is one of the most difficult and in-demand in the context of a number of problems: colonization of Central Asia during the Soviet period, forced industrialisation of the first five-year plans, Stalinist repressions, deportation to Kazakhstan, evacuation of enterprises and the population, etc. (Proporokov, 2017). The industrialisation stage is associated with the creation of the socioeconomic potential of cities when the economy was completely rebuilt for the development of heavy industry, mining was actively carried out, and roads and cities were built. The works devoted to the socioeconomic transformations of the specified period in Kazakhstan are generalised. Problems of development of small towns in the region and the impact on East Kazakhstan of economic and social transformations carried out by I.V. Previously were not considered in a single context, which greatly hinders an objective assessment and understanding of the prospects for urban development at the present stage. Thus, the chronological period proposed for consideration is of particular interest, both from a general historical point of view and because of its little-studied nature. Consideration of the problem involves the separation of small towns in Eastern Kazakhstan from the general historical context of the development of the region and the study of the formation of each city. The economic organisation of small towns of the specified period is considered a socioeconomic system that takes into account the combination of social and economic interests in a certain territory.

The object of this study is small towns as socioeconomic and administrative-territorial establishments on the territory of Eastern Kazakhstan. The subject of the study is a complex of processes that determine the socioeconomic development of small towns during the period of transformations of 1925-1953, external and internal factors, methods, and technologies used by the state for the development of territorial entities. For the first time, small towns of East Kazakhstan are considered as a separate complex of administrative-territorial objects, and the analysis of the historical and theoretical base of the period 1925-1953 is given in relation to these objects. The results of this study can be used in the development of programmes for the development of small towns. Within the framework of the work carried out, the problem is considered, various aspects of which represent independent areas of research.

The problem of small towns in Kazakhstan was raised in the works of many Kazakh researchers, who identified the main problems of the development of this category of cities, the economic base of which is highly specialised, with a high degree of physical and moral deterioration, which leads to a decrease in production volumes and an increase in population migration to large cities. The information and historical aspect of the development of small towns in Kazakhstan is presented in the works of A.S. Ualtaeva, where the author touches on the region of East Kazakhstan (Ualtaeva, 2011). The complex process of development of Kazakhstan during the "Stalinist" period of 1925-1953, which was carried out within the totalitarian system and was associated with the period of forced industrialisation, Stalinist repressions, the events of the Great Patriotic War, the post-war reconstruction period, is represented by a number of studies. All the identified problems are subjected to a new understanding.

The works devoted to the topic of the forced resettlement of people to Kazakhstan deserve special attention. In the research of Polyan (2001) and Abuov (2008), devoted to the history and geography of forced migrations in the Soviet Union, the East Kazakhstan region is considered in the context of the entire historical excursion. Case studies are related to individual ethnic groups, for example, the problems of deportation and special settlements of Germans in Kazakhstan are considered by Efremova-Shershukova (2009). For each of the presented directions, general or thematic studies were conducted that do not consider the network of small towns of East Kazakhstan as a separate object of study. In the presented works, the history of individual settlements is considered on the topics of “small towns” or “Stalin period” as factual material for argumentation of historical and theoretical conclusions.

The aim of this study is to analyze the socioeconomic characteristics of the period 1925-1953: the problems of industrialization and modernization of production, Stalin's repressions, the events of the Great Patriotic War, and post-war reconstruction. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to solve the following tasks:

- to clarify, based on the study of literary sources, the main directions of the national policy of the Stalin period for the development of the Central Asian region.
- to identify, based on the analysis of primary and secondary data on small towns in East Kazakhstan, a system of typical and specific factors that influenced the formation of socioeconomic systems of small towns in the region.

Materials and methods

In the course of the research, such theoretical methods as analysis, synthesis, concretization, generalization, and the method of analogies were used. The main methodological approaches were interdisciplinary, systemic and programme-targeted, complex, functional, process, situational, and others, which allowed organising the most effective scientific search for solving the tasks. In addition to the general scientific methods traditionally used in historical research: induction, deduction, analysis, and synthesis, special methods were also applied: historical-logical, and comparative. The information and empirical base of the study consisted of archival materials, research, periodical materials, literary sources, and Internet data. The problem of the study was to identify the main socioeconomic factors that determined the main stages of the development of small towns in East Kazakhstan in the period 1925-1953. The geographical and chronological framework of the study is limited to the territory of modern East Kazakhstan from 1925-1953, associated with the period of leadership of the country I.V. Stalin.

The study was conducted in three stages: In the first stage, a theoretical analysis of scientific literature, and dissertations on the problem were carried out; the problem, purpose, and research methods were identified, and a work plan was drawn up. In the second stage, the following concepts were defined and detailed: small towns, territorial and administrative characteristics of East Kazakhstan, a network of small towns in East Kazakhstan, and the socioeconomic policy of 1925-1953. The characteristics of the network of cities included their systematisation, indicators of the current state. As

part of the definition of small towns in the region, historical, natural-geographical, and political prerequisites for and development of settlements were established. Then the main socioeconomic stages of the state policy of 1925-1953 were considered, aimed at the establishment of the Kazakh SSR and influenced the creation and development of city-forming enterprises and the urban structure of small towns in East Kazakhstan.

During the study of each of the stages, the analysis of the history of cities within the study period was carried out. In the course of the research, the following stages were identified and considered: industrialisation, the period of the Great Patriotic War, and the post-war period. Within the framework of the national totalitarian policy of the period under study, methods of using forced migration of the population had a significant impact on the socioeconomic development of both the state as a whole and individual region. The study determined the degree of influence of the deportation policy on the development of small towns in East Kazakhstan. Generalisation and systematisation of the obtained results allowed for determining the main forms and stages of the implementation of the general policy course in the context of a particular region.

Results and discussion

Small cities of Kazakhstan have received the definition – “small” because the population in them does not exceed 50 thousand people. Today there are more than 60 cities of this type in the country. The modern network of small towns in East Kazakhstan is represented by the cities of Ayaguz, Zaisan, Zyryanovsk, Kurchatov, Serebryansk, Charsk, Shemonaiha, and Ridder (Ualtaeva, 2014). Ridder is a city of regional significance. Ayaguz, Zaisan, Zyryanovsk, Shemonaiha are administrative centers of rural areas. In accordance with the gradation of small towns defined by the regulatory acts of Kazakhstan, the cities of East Kazakhstan are defined as industrial, industrial-transport, and scientific-experimental. Industrial cities include Zyryanovsk and Ridder, specialising in the extractive industry – the extraction of metal ores; Serebryansk – in the production of electricity; Shemonaiha and Zaisan – with the predominant development of industries processing agricultural products, Ayaguz and Charsk represent the type of industrial and transport centers. Kurchatov is a scientific and experimental center. There are no resort towns in the region (Ualtaeva, 2014; Baysalbaeva, 2012).

East Kazakhstan occupies the territory of the East Kazakhstan region, established in 1932 as part of the former Cossack ASSR, since 1936 – Kazakh SSR. In 1939, the Semipalatinsk Region was separated from the region, which existed as a separate strategic military facility until 1997. The division of the East Kazakhstan region in 1939 had an impact on the development of cities that developed for a long period in special domestic political conditions. The analysis of the development of East Kazakhstan in the context of general historical events and its geographical characteristics allows for identifying objective reasons for the development of small towns. The creation of cities in East Kazakhstan was initially preceded by a number of physical, geographical, and historical prerequisites. The determining factors for the creation of settlements were water basins and mineral deposits. In the river valleys, there are Ayaguz – the Ayagoz River, Zaisan – the upper reaches of the Zhemenyki River, Charsk – the Shar River,

Zyryanovsk – the Vtorushka and Maslyanka Rivers, Serebryansk – Irtysh, Shemonaiha – Uba. The foundation of the cities of Ridder and Zyryanovsk is connected with the development of deposits of metal ores. Small towns of East Kazakhstan began their historical development in the XVIII-XIX centuries, but their formation was completed in the middle of the twentieth century. Ridder received the status of a city in 1934, Ayagoz – in 1939, Zaisan and Zyryanovsk – in 1941, Kurchatov – in 1948, Shemonaiha – in 1961, Serebryansk – in 1962, and Charsk – in 1963.

The foundation of the settlements of Ayagoz, Zaisan, and Shemonaiha in the XVIII-XIX centuries is associated with the development of trade routes. The active development was facilitated by the holding of annual fairs and foreign trade with western China and Mongolia (Gorkovaya, 2008). The deposit of gold, silver, lead, and copper, discovered by F. Ridder in 1786 marked the beginning of the city of Ridder. In the XIX century, a plant, an enriching factory, and a railway were built next to the mine, but the development stopped (1862), resumed (1885), and the mine was transferred to foreign companies (1903-1918). In 1918, the mine was nationalised. The foundation of the city of Zyryanovsk is connected with a rich deposit in the Bukhtarma Valley, discovered by Zyryanov in 1791. In 1891, there were 8 mines operating at the mine, the Berezovskaya hydroelectric power station was working, and there was even a telephone. Since 1897, The Zyryanovsky mine has also been leased to foreign companies (Zyryanovskoye Field, 2002). In 1921, Ridder and Zyryanovsk were transferred from Siberia to the Kyrgyz Republic (Kazakh SSR). The creation and development of the city of Charsk was connected with the construction of Turksib in 1927. Kurchatov, the base city of the nuclear test site, and Serebryansk, the village of the Bukhtarminskaya hydroelectric power plant builders, were founded in the post-war period. The socioeconomic system of small towns of East Kazakhstan in the period 1925-1953 was developing and functioning, regulated by state authorities, during this period the doctrine of urban planning was comprehensively developed, which subsequently underwent only minor changes (Kuznetsov, 1970). In 1936, The Constitution of the USSR not only eliminates the opposition between the city and the village but also definitively establishes the concept of the city (Bondarenko, 2018).

The main objective of the economic policy of the Soviet Union from 1925-1953 was to create an independent industrial power with powerful military-technical and industrial potential. The policy of industrialisation (1927-1937) also solved an important social task aimed at changing the class structure of society in favour of the working class. The decision to carry out industrialisation was made at the Congress of the CPSU(b) in 1925. A significant feature of industrialisation was its forced nature (Proporokov, 2017). Industrialisation was associated with command-administrative, mobilisation methods, with the use of violence against the rural population (Absemetov and Zinoviev, 2016). The years 1923-1929 were devoted to the restoration of factories and plants destroyed by the First World War and the Civil War and the construction of new ones. In Ridder in 1923, the Sokolny and Ridder mines, a factory were restored, and the country's first electrolytic cyanide plant was built in 1928. The enterprises received the first current of the power plant (Ozirny, 1970). In May 1925, the Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR adopted a resolution on strengthening the growth rates of Soviet industry, rationalising production, and improving workers' skills. In 1926, the period of reconstruction of the national economy began. The XV Congress of the CPSU (b) in 1927 focused on the

need for the development of the heavy and defense industry in connection with the foreign policy isolation of the Soviet Union. The growing pace of product development in the republic ensured the influx of industrial migrants and the growth of the urban population, over 10 years the number of workers in Kazakhstan increased 6 times and reached 390 thousand people (Absemetov and Zinoviev, 2016). By the beginning of the first five-year plan, the Ridder had become an active industrial facility in the country, and the share of Russian workers and employees was 99.02%, and 74% of all employees. The share of working Kazakhs is only 16%, minimized (Ualtaeva, 2011).

In 1929, the resolution “On the Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy” was adopted. The years of first five-year plan are associated with an increase in capital investments in industry, housing construction, the introduction of new equipment, improving labour organisation, and raising the level of workers’ qualification (Razdina, 2016). But investments in the development of industrial production were directed into regions with a developed industrial base – the Urals, Ukraine. In 1928, Kazakhstan provided 0.6% of the total industrial output. There were not enough funds, and the developments were temporarily transferred to foreign firms. So, the Zyryanovsky mine from 1897 to 1930 was in the concession of French, Austrian, and English companies, and mining operations were practically not carried out. The last concession of the Lena-Goldfields company was liquidated in 1930. At the same time, exploration wells were drilled and an enriching factory was built, construction of housing and social and cultural facilities began. The basis of the economy of Zyryanovsk was the mining industry, and the city-forming object was the Zyryanovsky mine.

The city of Ridder gave gold to the country, and in 1927 a lead plant began operation. In 1932, Ridder received the status of a city, having already a sufficiently developed infrastructure: a workers’ and peasants’ club – Miner’s House, a workers’ cooperative with the participation of Komsomol members. In 1925, the first factory apprenticeship school in Semipalatinsk province was opened in the city, where 5.297 people worked (Ualtaeva, 2011). During this period, Ayaguz was actively developing, associated with the construction of the Turkestan-Siberian railway in 1927. Enterprises for the maintenance of railway rolling stock were created in the city: steam locomotives and diesel locomotives, wagon depot, which needed qualified personnel. The construction attracted hundreds of engineers, construction workers from all over the Soviet Union, and residents of nearby villages and villages. In the city, due to population growth, the active development of urban infrastructure began, a telegraph office and schools were built (Baimuratova, 2002). Zaisan, well known earlier as a place of political exile, was being built up. From the end of the XIX century, the city housed the county board, treasury, forestry, postal, and telegraph office, public library, and men’s parish school, which was transformed in 1915 into the city primary school (Chernykh, 1970). In 1926, two soap factories and a plant for processing imported iron ore, which was exported to China, Tibet, and Mongolia, were operating in Zaisan.

On May 9, 1929, the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) “On the Socialist Competition of Factories and Plants” was issued, on the basis of which “the creative initiative of the masses and the involvement of more backward strata of workers in socialist construction” was to develop (Razdina, 2016). In Kazakhstan, the workers

of the Ridder Plant were among the first to join the competition. At the Grigorievskaya mine Komsomolskaya brigade A. Lilienblada, consisting of six people, undertook to give twenty meters of face penetration in a month instead of the usual ten. The team has doubled labour productivity and almost halved the cost of a ton of ore. The same Komsomol shock brigades operated at the lead factory and in the electromechanical workshop – brigades of V. Tarasenko, V. Kopylova, and F. Stolbova. More than a third of Komsomol members employed in production were labour strikers (Davydova, 2006).

Industrialisation in Kazakhstan took place against the background of collectivisation, sedentarisation, and the Cultural Revolution. In 1929, the Bureau of the Kazakh Regional Committee of the CPSU(b) adopted a decision in which the transition to settlement was considered inseparable connection with the industrial reconstruction of the economy. The process was caused by the destruction of the traditional values of the nomadic people, 75.5% of whom led a nomadic pastoral economy. The tense social situation was complicated by economic difficulties associated with the famine of 1932-1933. and the death of more than 2 million people. The policy of sedentarisation of the nomadic and semi-nomadic Kazakh people turned into not only famine and mass death, but also mass migration of Kazakhs to China, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey. Abandoned places fell into decay, which was one of the reasons for the deportation of special settlers to Kazakhstan (Polyan, 2001).

In 1933, the prospects for the second five-year plan were determined, but the difficult social situation associated with rural regions caused a decrease in planned production indicators in cities as well (Razdina, 2016). Conditioned upon the difficulty of transportation and isolation from industrial centers, enterprises in the region worked intermittently. In 1930, the Council of Labor and Defense obliged the People's Commissariat of Railways to ensure the development of railway transport in the eastern regions of the republic. The resolution provided for the construction of the Rubtsovka – Ridder railway (Chernykh, 1970). The construction of the railway is connected with the period of the second five-year plan of 1933-1937. At the beginning of 1934, all preparatory measures were carried out: recruitment of workers, and delivery of equipment. In the summer of 1934, the laying of the highway on the Rubtsovka – Shemonaiha segment began. In September, S.M. Kirov visited the construction sites for an inspection. In 1936, it was decided to continue the construction of a broad-gauge railway, which was supposed to give direct access to the Ore Altai to the All-Union railway network. The main works on the construction of a more than seventy-kilometer section of the railway from Ulba-Transshipment station to Ridder station were completed by November 1937. The road connected the main ore deposits of Altai with the All-Union railway network (Chernykh, 1970).

With the construction of the road, the active development of the village of Shemonaevskoye began. In 1935, the laying of the tracks to the Shemonaiha station was completed, which contributed to the growth of the population and the development of the infrastructure of the village. In the 1930s, new schools, a bank, administrative buildings, and residential buildings were built in the railway settlement, and a lot of landscaping work was done. The construction of new factories and enterprises has led to an aggravation of the housing problem. Since 1934, construction without projects has been prohibited and certain norms have been introduced. In residential four or five storey buildings, apartments

in several rooms were provided, with a ceiling height of 3 m, a certain wall thickness, and the width of stairwells. Barrack-type housing, built without projects, was considered temporary.

The years of the second five-year plan (1933-1937) continued the policy of the “big leap,” but if the first five-year plan is devoted to the construction of new enterprises, then during the second there was a process of their development. Unlike the nomads of the steppes, the inhabitants of cities quickly became involved in Soviet culture, and massively mastered the Cyrillic alphabet and the Russian language. The construction of schools in cities in the 1930s was aimed at implementing a program to combat illiteracy in Kazakhstan. The foreign policy situation stimulated the development of not only the defence industry but also the activity of public organisations. In 1935, the first Komsomol shooting school of Osoviakhim was organised in Riddick, in which more than 40 people were engaged, defence circles were created: “Voroshilov Shooter,” “Glider Pilot,” “Ready for Labour and Defense (RLD),” “Anti-Aircraft Chemical Defence (AACD),” “Ready for Sanitary Defence (RSD)” (Davydova, 2006). During the second five-year plan, Kazakhstan became one of the places of settlement for the Finnish and Ukrainian populations deported from the border strip. 2.000 Ukrainian families were sent to the East Kazakhstan region. In 1937, Kurds were evicted from the border regions of Armenia and Azerbaijan to Kazakhstan (Polyan, 2001).

All migrations were associated with special settlements and tied to rural areas. A number of administrative transformations of the pre-war five-year plan changed the status of Shemonaiha, Zyryanovsk, and Ridder: the village of Shemonaiha was developed (1938), the village of Zyryanovsk received the status of a city (1941), Ridder was renamed Leninogorsk (1941) (Kratenko, 2002). The third five-year plan of 1938-1942 is associated with the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. In 1939, it was decided to build stand-in enterprises in the eastern regions of the country, in 1940, an 8-hour working day, and a seven-day week were introduced, unauthorised departure from enterprises and institutions was prohibited (Razdina, 2016). The construction of stand-in enterprises, and the development of existing enterprises involved a thorough analysis of the discovered fields on the ground and the exploration of new ones. In 1939-1940, the active development of Zyryanovsk began on the basis of forcing drilling and mining operations. New ore deposits were discovered, and previously known zones were studied in more detail and thoroughly. As a result, the reserves of the Zyryanovskoye field were significantly increased. The old mines Severnaya and Komisskaya, which were reconstructed, deepened to 306 and 262 m and operated until 1953. Productivity problems at the mine were related to old technologies, the lack of a railway, and electricity. 1940 was associated with the construction of the first highway in the region, which was interrupted by the war (Kuznetsov, 1970).

During the Great Patriotic War, Ridder's main enterprise, the polymetallic combine, increased lead smelting by 100%. Zyryanovsk continuously supplied defence enterprises with lead and other non-ferrous metals (Ualtaeva, 2011). But most importantly, East Kazakhstan has become a haven for thousands of people and a construction site for the installation of evacuated enterprises. Ridder (Leninogorsk) and Shemonaiha, Ayagoz, and Zyryanovsk were the most actively involved in the evacuation process from

the network of small towns. In Leninogorsk, evacuees were placed in 1941. Moscow Power Engineering Institute, Giprotsvetmet Institute, Lyubertsy Mechanical Plant, Electromechanical Plant, Artillery School, Kharkiv Opera Theater. In Shemonaihu – Voronezh special school, orphanage, and sanatorium “Ukraine” (Rifel, 2013). In 1942, the equipment of a wool spinning factory was removed from near Moscow, which continued to produce gymnasts and quilted jackets already in Ayagoz. The city’s launched auto repair plant has established the production of artillery shells and spare parts for tanks. Railway workers provided uninterrupted traffic along one of the main highways (Baimuratova, 2002).

In 1942, a workshop for the production of sabres was created in the repair shops of the Zyryanovsky lead plant, with which the cavalry division formed in Kazakhstan was armed, and then they began to be sent to other cavalry units. From villages and villages of East Kazakhstan and Semipalatinsk regions, residents were taking various scrap metals to the plant. According to an eyewitness, one day a camel caravan with packs filled with iron, copper samovars, and silver ornaments approached the factory. In 1942, it was decided to locate hospitals in East Kazakhstan on the territory of Leninogorsk and Shemonaihi, three hospitals were opened in Leninogorsk for 200, 400, and 1.000 beds. Hospital No. 3.988 was located on the basis of a surgical hospital, No. 3.989 occupied the hotel building, No. 2.094 was located in two four-story houses, and in the library building, all buildings were landscaped, had water pipes, sewerage, and central heating. Hospital No. 1.596 with 400 beds was located in Shemonaiha, and occupied four buildings, a former school, the management of the pig breeding trust, and two other small buildings (Rifel, 2013).

The small towns of Shemonaikhinsky, Leninogorsk, and Zyryanovsky districts included in the evacuation plan faced big problems, which received not only enterprises but also people who needed to be settled, employed, and fed. In December 1941, more than 3.000 people arrived in Leninogorsk, and in May 1942, 2.009 people were settled, in some apartments 5 people per 12 square meters. Workers and employees of enterprises were supplied with books, while the rest could only use a bread stall and buy food on the market (potatoes 35 rubles, milk 8 rubles a liter, eggs 30 rubles a dozen). In May, a canteen was opened to serve the students of the Energy Institute and the teaching staff. The nutrition of the evacuated migrants has become a common problem. 5.000 people arrived in Zyryanovsk, but the supply through Zolotoprodsnab and Zinkosvinetsprodsnab was limited only to its contingent, and the district consumer union was not able to feed such a number of people. The second problem was related to the unwillingness of able-bodied people to get a job. For example, in the city of Leninogorsk, 700 out of 1.023 people refused to work in mines, construction sites, and other Leninogorsk enterprises that lacked manpower. The third problem was determined by the lack of housing. The construction of simplified residential premises from local building materials and the relocation of non-workers from Leninogorsk to collective farms began (Rifel, 2013).

The powerful wave of deportation of Germans from the Volga region, Moscow, and the Moscow region to Kazakhstan, which began in September 1941, practically did not affect the small towns of Eastern Kazakhstan. Germans were sent to special settlements, to the Labor Army, and their rights to the movement were restricted for a long time.

By decree of 1948, escape from the settlement was punishable by 20 years of hard labour. Despite the fact that after the end of the war, the need for qualified specialists increased, attracting the German population to highly qualified jobs were practically impossible (Efremova-Shershukova, 2009). In the post-war period, work continued on the expansion and reconstruction of mining complexes, and the development of enterprises. In the post-war period, the cities began to improve. New enterprises were opened in Ayagoz, streets were improved, and the central part was built up with multi-story buildings (Baimuratova, 2002). In 1946, a new mine was laid at the Zyryanovsky mine, and in 1949 the construction of a new processing plant, and a railway began, and the development of the city continued. The entire complex of new facilities was put into operation in 1953. The tense period of the post-war ideological, political and military confrontation between East and West forced the Soviet Union to create its own nuclear shield. In order to prevent the possibility of using atomic weapons possessed by the United States of America in 1947, the construction of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site with an area of 18.5 thousand square kilometers was started for testing and research. The full-scale tests of atomic charges were carried out by the Mountain Seismic Station (MSS), "Object 905," created in 1947. In August 1949, for the first time in the USSR, a nuclear device was tested. The scientific management of the test was carried out by I.V. Kurchatov (Arkhipova, 2020).

In 1947, the village of Kurchatov was established, which received the status of a city in 1948. Kurchatov, the nuclear weapons test base, changed its names due to special secrecy: "Moscow-400," "Nadezhda," "Bereg," that in 1947 it was named in honour of an outstanding researcher. Gradually, the personnel moved into residential buildings and barracks, people were getting settled, and the town grew. A two-story cottage was built for the head of the landfill, at the first explosion in 1949, L.P. Beria and his guards were housed in it. In 1949, the "House of Officers" was put into operation. In the early 1950s, the construction of a water intake station with the entire complex of water treatment facilities was completed, the first 36 apartment buildings were laid, two-story barracks and a surgical department of the hospital were built. The embankment decorated the bank of the Irtysh in 1954. After the Great Patriotic War, the construction of hydroelectric power stations (HPS) on the Irtysh River was started. In 1952, the city of Serebryansk was established as a settlement of hydraulic builders during the construction of the Bukhtarminskaya HPS. In 1953, the construction of the Ust-Kamenogorsk – Zyryanovsk railway, which passed through Serebryansk, was completed. In 1950, the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted a resolution providing for the construction of a large enterprise on the basis of the Zyryanovskoye field, the Zyryanovsk-Ust-Kamenogorsk railway. In 1952, the Zyryanovskoye ore management was transformed into a lead-zinc combine. The development programme of the city provided mainly for the development of the combine, the construction of housing, and social and cultural facilities. Since the policy of industrialization and urbanization contributed to the development of small towns, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, they lost their former prospects for development. As the experience of other developed European countries had shown, moreover small towns needed to develop modern and competitive production structures (Bogdański, 2021; Hamdouch *et al.*, 2017). Further development of small towns is associated with new socioeconomic realities that have come after the end of the so-called "Stalinist" period.

Conclusions

A detailed study of the history of small towns of East Kazakhstan in the context of the socioeconomic policy of 1925-1953 allows us to draw a number of conclusions. The uneven development of cities does not allow today to single out a united network and assumes an individual approach to the study of each city in order to determine the prospects for development. Most of the cities arose on the site of historically formed settlements and actively developed during the period of industrialization on their basis, geographically and economically connected with enterprises under construction and railways. Those cities whose location fully corresponded to the interests of the state were developing rapidly. Thus, it is necessary to distinguish two factors that had a decisive influence on the formation of cities: historical background and state interests.

In the case of the cities of Kurchatov and Serebryansk, only a state order can be considered. Forced industrialization resulted in labour migration to cities and an increase in the population. The war period largely depleted the resources of small towns, enterprises, and the population evacuated from the European part were re-evacuated. The recovery period allowed continuing the development in which the state was still interested. Notably, the cities were practically not affected by the complex processes of colonisation of Central Asia and deportation, the history of the transfer of Kazakh nomads to a sedentary lifestyle, the famine of the 1930s, and, as a consequence, the mass death of people are associated with the countryside. The deportation policy was also associated with rural regions, where the deported ethnic groups lived in the regime of special settlements and were restricted in movements, the removal of which goes beyond the scope of the study period. Thus, small towns in the context of geopolitical changes after the collapse of the Soviet Union have lost the main factor influencing their development. Solving the problem of modern development prospects involves identifying new factors that stimulate the development of the studied objects.

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