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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF KHAKASS AUTONOMOUS OBLAST

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Khakass Autonomous Oblast is a mountainous region whose natural economic conditions and distribution of population are only slightly different from other similar regions of southern Siberia. The oblast is the gateway to Tuva; the Usinsk automobile highway, one of the main routes to Central Asia, begins here.

The oblast includes two cities and 11 city-type settlements. It is divided into eight administrative rayons. The last all-Union census, 17 January 1939, reported that its population was almost 2½ times greater than that recorded in the 1926 census. Between 1926 - 1939, the farming population of the oblast increased 1½ times, and the population of its cities and workers' settlements by 18.8 times. According to recent estimates, this increase is still continuing. The tremendous growth of the urban population was a result of the intensive industrial development, which included the formation of cities, such as Abakan and Chernogorsk, and workers' settlements, such as Balakhchin, Balykss, Znamenitiy, Zolotogorsk, Kommunar, Kyzas, etc., around mines, plants, and factories.

The proportion of urban population in Khakass Autonomous Oblast is greater than in the majority of oblasts and rayons of Siberia. It is 7.9 percent greater than the average for urban populations throughout the USSR. In regard to percent of urban population, the oblast is surpassed only by such districts as the Kuznetsk Basin, where the proportion of urban population reaches 70 percent.

An analysis of the activities of urban settlements in Khakass Autonomous Oblast shows that Abakan is the principal cultural, administrative, distribution, commercial, and transportation center, while Chernogorsk is a typical mining center. The majority of urban settlements should be included in this

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latter category, namely, Balakhchin, Balyksa, Znamenitiy, Kommunar, Ordzhonikidzevskiy, and Priiskoviy. Tuim is a metals-processing site; Sonskiy and Kyzas are in the timber-cutting areas; and sawmills have been constructed in Ust'-Abakan.

It is estimated that only about 40 percent of the population are engaged in agriculture.

The distribution of population throughout Khakassian territory is very irregular. On the one hand, there are the densely populated districts of the Minusinsk basin (Altay and Ust'-Abakan), and, on the other, the areas along the oblast's periphery, which are very sparsely populated; e.g., Tashtyp, in the southern mountainous area. In density of population, Khakass Autonomous Oblast holds first place among the regions of Central Siberia. However, despite its relatively high density of population, only 30 percent of its territory can be utilized; the remaining area consists of uninhabitable mountains, steppes, and forest-steppes.

Russians, Khakassians, Ukrainians, White Russians, and other nationalities inhabit the oblast. Russians hold the numerical superiority; Khakassians are second. The latter form no more than one fifth of the population, but have given the oblast its name, since they were the original inhabitants.

Before the revolution, the Khakassians were divided into several member groups. They included the so-called Sagaytsy, who lived in the southeastern part of the oblast, and the Bel'tiry, in the southwest along the banks of the middle course of the Abakan River and along its tributaries. The Kyzl'tsy lived in the northwest on the Iyusskiy steppes between the Beliy Iyus and the Cherniy Iyus.

During the years of Soviet rule, national consolidation has been accomplished. The groups have been united into a single Khakassian nation with a single national culture. Where local peculiarities in language or mode of living among the various member groups had been preserved, they now have much less significance and are rapidly vanishing in the process of socialistic reconstruction.

The Khakassians principally inhabit the southern rayons of the oblast where the great bulk of the population is concentrated. Sixty percent of the Khakassian population now live in Askiz and Tashtyp rayons.

Topography

Khakass Autonomous Oblast extends 460 kilometers along the meridian (90 E) and through 4 degrees of north latitude (51-55 N). The topography is varied, although basically appears to be a hollow surrounded by a semicircle of mountain ridges: in the west, the Kuznetsk Altay; in the south, the Sal'dzhur and Sabinskiy mountain ranges; in the east, the Kaltanoba and Koxsin mountain ranges and others. This junction of lowlands, plateaus, and high mountains lends a certain uniqueness to the nature of the oblast.

The oblast naturally falls into three different areas: (1) northern -- the north Khakassian rolling, flat steppe which extends westward to the central mountainous elevations of the eastern slopes of the Kuznetsk Altay; (2) central (as distinguished from north Batenev ridge) -- very flat to the east from the Kuznetsk Altay, extending to the rolling lowlands of the Abakan and Koybal' plateau of the Minusinsk basin; (3) southern -- mountainous with an extremely rugged topography where some elevations reach 3,000 meters and are covered with snow for long periods.

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The rolling lowland steppes of the north and central parts of Khakass Autonomous Oblast are widely exposed in the north on the side of the Yenisey-Chulym Basin. The climate here is severely continental with a considerable range between winter and summer temperatures. Winter frosts approach minus 50 degrees centigrade, but thanks to the dryness of the air, they are easily endured. Summers are short and hot. Summer temperature approaches 37.5 degrees centigrade.

Except for the mountainous areas, the climate in the majority of the rayons does not hinder the development of agriculture; the lack of precipitation in the steppe areas (225-300 millimeters annually) is being overcome in a number of ways by skillful irrigation, snow retention, intelligent cultivation of the soil, and by other scientific agricultural measures.

The main river artery is the Yenisey, which flows across the eastern boundary of the oblast -- from south to north, from the Dzheyskiy threshold to the Saragash delta, a distance of 300 kilometers. Its left fork, the Abakan, flows into the Yenisey from the southwest. The Abakan is a typical mountain river which irrigates the western half of the Minusinsk basin and the southwestern mountain regions of Khakass Autonomous Oblast. The Yenisey, together with its tributaries, drains a vast area of 30,000 square kilometers within the boundaries of the oblast. Three fifths of the population live in the Yenisey basin. In the north, the Belyi Iyus and the Cherniy Iyus unite near the northern boundary of the oblast, to form the Chulym River, a tributary of the Ob'. The central portion is devoid of water, with the exception of the very small tributaries of the Yenisey. In the north and the northwest, the oblast has many large lakes (Itkyl', Shira, Belaye, Bol'shoye, Chernoye, etc.).

Of the entire 5,700,000 hectares of territory, 3,426,000 hectares, or 60.2 percent, are covered with forests and undergrowth; 403,600 hectares, 7.1 percent, are arable land; 369,200 hectares, 6.5 percent, are suitable for growing hay; and 995,500 hectares, 17.5 percent, are used for pasture and grazing land. The rest of the territory is unusable land, 4.1 percent; swamps, 0.9 percent, etc.

Soil Cover and Forests

The soil cover of the territory (sporadic rainfall is distributed throughout the inner mountain ridges) is distinguished by its great diversity which reflects its combination of vertical and horizontal zones. In the north, fertile and moderately fertile black soil is abundant; in the central part of the oblast there is forest argillaceous soil, which on the mountain slopes becomes southern-type black soil after having been further intermixed with the dark brown and chestnut brown soils of the steppes. In the south, the soil types suitable for farming are the various grades of black earth: fertile, moderately fertile, and poorly fertile. The river valleys and lake shores are characterized by their salty swamps and marshy soil. The limitations of the area under cultivation are clearly indicated by the topography and gravelly soil.

For agriculture, the most important of all the natural regions is the Minusinsk basin, where soil and climatic conditions resemble the best agricultural regions of Siberia. The basin is suitable for the cultivation of wheat and sugar beets. Farming conditions are also favorable on the north Khakassian steppe, where there is sufficient fertile black soil.

The forest reserve of Khakass Autonomous Oblast includes a variety of mountain forests, which are located principally along the periphery of the Minusinsk basin, in the mountains of the Kuznetsk Altay and on the Abakan and Kaltanov mountain ridges. Seventy-three percent of all the forests in oblast are located in the south and southwest, particularly in the mountainous Tashtyp Rayon. The

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forests have attained a good stand. Almost 80 percent of the trees in this area have developed from seedlings, 75 percent are of the coniferous variety, and 25 percent are of the deciduous variety. The varieties of trees include larch, pine, fir, cedar, spruce, and birch.

In addition to the mountainous areas, where continuous forest plantings are intermingled with tall grass, within the boundaries can be observed all the transitions from the forest steppe of the West Siberia type (Achinskaya Steppe) to the variegated feather grass of the black-soil steppe (North Khakassian Steppe) and the dry featherlike fescue grass steppe in the chestnut colored soils district (Koybal'skaya Steppe). The vegetation of the steppes, meadows, and especially the river plains include countless varieties of fodder grasses, which are the basis of the local livestock-raising industry.

Mineral Resources

Khakass Autonomous Oblast is generously endowed with fertile soils, forest vegetation, natural food resources, and considerable sources of water power. Its most important natural wealth is its mineral resources, which include: coal, iron ores, bauxite, gold, nonferrous metals, asbestos, gypsum, barium oxide, mineral dyes, marble, salt, limestone, refractory materials, and construction materials. Such a favorable combination of raw materials is not found even in the district of the Kuznetsk Basin, or in the Chermkov area.

Khakass Autonomous Oblast offers great prospects for future mineralogical development. Geological research is locating the new and precisely determining the old supplies of fuel, iron ores, and other types of minerals. The advantage of geographical location of the oblast is supplemented by advantages of climate, fertile soils, and distribution of forest and mineral resources.

Khakassian economy is based on mining, forestry, and raising grain for livestock. At the time of the establishment of Soviet authority, the people were engaged in cattle raising, irrigated and nonirrigated farming, hunting, and there was a small amount of gold and coal mining. Logging was carried on in the Yenisey and Abakan river areas and small sawmills were in operation.

However, during the Soviet period, Khakassian natural resources -- pasture lands, fertile fields, forests, and useful minerals -- have been most fully and most effectively utilized.

Industrial Development

During the Soviet Five-Year Plans, Khakass Autonomous Oblast attained great success in developing its economy and culture. It was transformed from a backward area of nomadic cattle raising and farming into an industrial-agricultural region. In 1940, the total industrial production output was 22 times greater than in 1913. The most important branches of industry are coal and gold mining, lumbering, and the food industries. As a result of industrialization, the relationship between industry and agriculture has been sharply altered. In the last 30 years, the proportion of industry in the economy of the oblast has increased from 15 to 60 percent; at the same time, the proportion of agriculture has decreased from 85 to 40 percent.

Agricultural Development

Agriculture has developed according to the principles of extensive farming. The planting area by 1940 had increased 400 percent in comparison with 1917. The wheat growing area had increased 565 percent; the total grain harvests increased sixfold. At the same time, improved methods of animal husbandry

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were being applied. The development of common herds, the establishment of cattle raising farms on kolkhozes, the establishment of animal husbandry sovkhoses, and the growth of the number of productive cattle on sovkhoses and kolkhozes, together with the care and improvement of cattle for the private use of kolkhoz members -- all have contributed to the rise of the animal husbandry industry.

Today, Khakassian agriculture completely satisfies the intraoblast grain and livestock requirements. A sizable amount of surplus goods is also sent out of the oblast. Agriculture also furnishes the raw material base for the food industry, namely, the meat, milling, and dairy industries. The majority of the indigenous population is engaged in agriculture. In the southern rayons of the oblast (Altay, Askiz, Beysa and Tashtyp), where the effects of industrialization have been felt only slightly, agriculture remains the chief and almost only branch of the economy.

Animal husbandry predominates, particularly the meat, dairy, and sheep-raising industries. The broad natural plains, mountain pastures, and hay fields have stimulated the development of animal husbandry. The broad expanses of Abakan, Koybalsk and the north Khakassian steppes, with their slight precipitation, contributed to the prerevolutionary development of extensive cattle raising. By 1940, Khakass Autonomous Oblast had very significantly increased its herds both in number and in quality, by improving breeds, inoculations against diseases, mechanized milking and shearing, etc.

The leading role in animal husbandry belongs to the kolkhozes which control about 70 percent of all livestock, 60 percent of which are in collectivized herds). The remaining livestock are for the most part found on sovkhoses. There are 12 animal husbandry sovkhoses in the oblast: eight produce milk and meat, three raise sheep, and one breeds horses. The collectivized cattle of all 167 kolkhozes of the oblast are concentrated on kolkhoz commodity farms.

Cattle distribution is patterned on the geographical distribution of the population: all basic animal-husbandry centers are located in the most populated rayons of Ust'-Abakan, Askiz, Altay, and Beysa. Although the total number of cattle declined during World War II, recently Khakass Autonomous Oblast has been rebuilding its herds. This is revealed by the very high proportion of young animals in the herds; for example, colts comprise 40 percent of the total number of horses and young pigs comprise 50 percent of the total number of swine.

There are extensive land reserves for farming in Khakass Autonomous Oblast. Generally, the arable lands are confined to the plains and the lowland valleys, ranging from 20 percent (Beysa Rayon) to 52 percent (Altay Rayon) of the total land reserves. Altay, Askiz, and Beysa rayons, which comprise 18.5 percent of the oblast but 56.6 percent of the entire arable area, are located for the most part in the steppe belt and have the most extensive agricultural development. In 1949, 54.5 percent of all grain crops, 48.3 percent of all industrial crops, 50.1 percent of all vegetables and melons, and 45.5 percent of all fodder crops were concentrated in these three rayons. Bograd, Ust'-Abakan, and Shirinsk rayons account for 34.2 percent of the entire acreage of the oblast under crops. In the remaining two rayons (Saralinsk and Tashtyp), which are very mountainous, farming has not been advanced.

The most noteworthy achievement in the oblast has been the increase of the irrigated area. The work of constructing irrigation systems was begun during the first years of collectivization of agriculture, but was intensively conducted on the eve of and during World War II. The Uyskaya and Uybatskaya irrigation systems were built to provide water for 30,000 hectares. The work of widening the Uybatskaya system, the Abakan canal, and other water systems is being continued. Many valuable crops such as wheat, beets, and fodder grasses are being cultivated almost exclusively by means of irrigation.

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At present, a sizable network of irrigation canals has been constructed in Askiz, Beysa, Bograd, Tashtyp, Ust'-Abakan, and Shirinsk rayons. The total area of irrigated land comprises 50,000 hectares, that is, 40 percent of the entire area under cultivation.

The basic crop, wheat, has been increasing in size each year. Also there has been the widespread planting of millet, the chief coarse grain crop of the poorly watered rayons. During the period of 1940 - 1947 the proportion of millet in the total crop acreage increased from 0.5 percent to 12.8 percent. In Abakan, Chernogorsk, and Minusinsk rayons during 1939 - 1950, vegetable and potato planting increased considerably; also, dairying, cattle-raising, and swine-fattening facilities were improved. A large suburban dairy and truck-gardening sovkhos has been established near Abakan.

Field husbandry is dependent upon a strong industrial base. In the eight rayons 11 MFS serve 164 out of a total of 167 kolkhozes in the oblast. There is mechanized cultivation of about 75 percent of the crop-growing area. Electricity is being introduced. In addition, other branches of agriculture are also being developed, such as poultry raising, truck farming, orchard cultivation, and apiculture.

Shelter Belts and Irrigation

Huge shelter belts are being planted on the oblast's steppe areas (Pri-abakan and north Khakassian steppes) to overcome the influence of drought, to prevent the scattering of ripened seeds, and to improve the water system and climatic conditions. In the years 1948 - 1950, the kolkhozes planted more than 300 hectares shelter belts. Poplar and acacia nurseries were established in Askiz and Beysa rayons.

Experience has demonstrated that the existing irrigation system, with its tight network of fixed canals, does not satisfy the present level of agricultural development. Utilization of new scientific farming methods has been greatly impeded. As a result, Khakass Autonomous Oblast is now converting to a more modern irrigation system.

By the application of the Dokuchayev-Vil'yams theory, conditions are being created for the development of a varied economy -- a proper unification of animal and field husbandry which will guarantee a steady increase in the fertility of the soil and its yield capacity, the productivity of cattle raising, and labor output. The first steps in this connection have already been taken.

Transportation

In addition, the improvement of transportation and communication lines has been a noteworthy achievement. In 1926, Khakass Autonomous Oblast was linked with the main line of the Trans-Siberian Railroad by means of the Achinsk-Abakan branch line. New and improved paved roads have been constructed within the oblast. The Usinsk automobile highway now connects Khakass Autonomous Oblast with Tuva.

Together with these transformations in the economic structure, the oblast has undergone substantial modification of its economic geography. This modification includes: the emergence of new mining centers in a number of rayons of the Kuznetsk Altay and the western Sayan; the development of old and the construction of new irrigation canals on the arid steppes of Minusinsk basin and the Tenesey-Chulim basin; and the migration there of many peasant families. ~~has even changed the population distribution of the oblast.~~

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In regard to the allocation of the cropped area, the numbers of industrial and truck-garden crops are progressively increasing (sugar beets, flax, hemp, root crops, potatoes, vegetables, watermelons, etc.). Among the districts of Central Siberia, Khakass Autonomous Oblast holds first place in the planting and harvesting of wheat. Each year interoblast ties are being strengthened. The most important link is that between the metallurgical and chemical plants and enterprises of the food industry, which are located in neighboring krays and oblasts of Siberia.

Cultural Development

A great cultural center has been constructed in the city of Abakan. There are now 375 schools as compared with a total of 13 before the revolution. Of this total, 349 are kindergarten and grade schools, with an attendance of 30,000; and 26 are secondary schools, with an attendance of 13,000. In addition, there are 72 special schools, attendance 3,200, and seven miscellaneous schools, attendance 700. More than 40 hospitals are now in operation; also many nursing homes, polyclinics, dispensaries, first-aid and midwife stations, and public health and epidemic control stations.

A publishing firm is successfully operating in Abakan, putting out books and newspapers in the Khakassian language. It functions as the Khakass scientific research institute of language, literature, and history.

In conclusion, the fundamental task for the next few years is the further development of the productive forces of the oblast, on the basis of utilization of its very copious natural resources. For such an achievement, the following conditions must be satisfied: a considerable expansion of the facilities for implementing research; the development of all modes of transportation; the widespread introduction of labor-saving devices in all branches of the economy; and the expansion of the work of training qualified cadres.

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