



NEW HOUSING POLICY – THE CREATION OF HOUSING COOPERATIVES IN UZBEKISTAN IN THE 1920-1930s

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ABSTRACT

From the very first days of its existence, the Soviet power pursued a housing policy that was radically different from the pre-revolutionary time. Its main feature was that the government proclaimed state ownership of house as the main means of its managerial influence on the gigantic masses of the population, driven by collectivization and industrialization. Replacing the public housing sector with the private sector was only a matter of time. The Soviet government needed to oust and destroy the private owner of the dwelling, since in the individual dwelling Soviet government saw the source of petty-bourgeois life — the basis of capitalism.

DISCUSSION

The most important in the first years of the Soviet government was the housing problem, which was exacerbated by the steady growth of the urban population. According to the census of 1921, there were 6.228 houses in the new part of Tashkent city with a total living area of 180.242 square sazhen¹. Out of total number of these houses, 39% were occupied by commercial premises and institutions. For every resident of the city, on average there was no more than 1 square sazhen of living area².

By the middle of 1921, the housing issue had become so acute that over 450 heat-cars were used as apartments for workers, and about 500 worker families lived in the open air³.

Deployment of Soviet housing construction has its history only since 1924, i.e. since the moment of the national-territorial demarcation of Central Asia with the separation of Uzbekistan into an independent republic. In the period covering 1924/25-1928/29, in housing construction in the cities were invested 25.1 thousand rubles⁴. In the following

years, investment in the deployment of housing construction increased and if in 1928/29 for these purposes were allocated 8.9 thousand rubles then by 1935 this figure was 27.0 thousand rubles.

According to the government report, by the time the IV Congress of the Soviets of the UzSSR began its work in 1928/29, the urban living area was estimated at 4,459,100 square meters. According to the inventory bureau of the People's Commissariat of Communal Services (NKKH), the total living area in cities and district centers as of January 1, 1936 was 5.825,4 square meters and according to it, the rate per person in the UzSSR was 3.8 square meters (in 1926/27, the rate per person in the UzSSR was 3.65 square meters)⁵.

Only the inability of the authorities to cope with the acute housing crisis, to debug the processes of economic management of housing and deploy mass housing delayed the decision to completely ban private ownership of housing. The government was forced to put up with a non-strategic presence in the cities of individual house building and allowed private housing. The government has generated state, departmental, cooperative, departmental-communal and other forms of ownership of housing. However, with all these existing forms right for ownership, control and management of housing was under control of NKVD,

¹ Sazhen – 2, 1336 meters

² GATO, f. 10, op. 1, d. 360, p. 135.

³ TsGA RUz, f. R-17, op. 1, d. 1112, p. 25.

⁴ TsGA RUz, f. R-2182, op.1, d.192, p.9.

⁵ TsGA RUz, f. R-1, op.1, d.682, p.302.



which acted, in fact, as the only general subject of economic management of housing. Other subjects, such as housing departments, real estate management, housing, communal and house trusts, house management, house managers, etc.), legally, organizationally and financially were part of the housing management system that was supervised and controlled by the NKVD.

The NKVD, together with the communal section of the State Planning Committee, drew up a five-year housing plan based on the number of urban population. For example, according to the census of 1926 the number of urban population was 903,031 people, the size of the living area was 4,416,345 square meters, while the increase in the urban population was taken into account, which amounted to 4.26% in 1927-28, and in subsequent years 5.86% the actual increase in living space over the years has been taken into account and in this way the need for living space has been revealed⁶. At the same time, it appeared from these calculations that by 1927 the average size of living space per person was 4.85 square meters, by 1928 – 4.69 square meters, and by 1929 – 4.47 square meters⁷.

The need for housing construction in connection with the development of collective and state farms by this plan was not taken into account. In drawing up the plan for the basis did not take any production principles. And only the growth factor of the urban population was taken, which indicates a purely formal approach to its compilation.

In accordance with the established plan, it was planned to embrace cooperativization with workers in the leather, food, silicate, printing, textile, clothing and silk-processing industries, however the cooperativization in such industries as oil, cotton, metal processing, which were the largest industries in Uzbekistan, was not envisaged.

The percentage of workers' coverage — 2819, of the total number of 16875 people employed by the housing co-operatives in the State Industry in 1929 was 16.7%, i.e. the percentage of cooperation was inappreciable⁸.

Coverage rate of employee cooperativization, i.e. groups with significantly higher average earnings than workers were also insufficient – in 1929 it was 1911 people⁹.

The cooperative type of household development of living space arose massively in the context of the implementation of the new housing policy (1921-1924), which created legislative, economic and organizational incentives for the spontaneous emergence of housing cooperation. By introducing a new housing policy and creating

housing cooperation, the authorities did not at all pursue the goal of full-scale provision of housing to the population. Housing cooperation was needed by the soviet authorities just as yet another lever for attracting additional forces and financial means of the population to work on economic custody of housing. The implementation of the state housing policy assumed that all processes, without exception – the construction, distribution, redistribution of housing, infrastructural and maintenance support, maintenance and repair of housing, punishment and encouragement through housing, etc., should be concentrated exclusively in the hands of the authorities. Independent uncontrolled housing cooperatives, capable of providing housing for people regardless of the government, capable of defending their rights (even within the framework of discriminatory protectionist legislation) were not only unnecessary, but even very harmful, as they hampered in the formation of a single state mechanism of "control, management and submission" by housing. The Soviet government was very clearly aware of the potential threat to its housing policy from the housing associations and was absolutely clear about the possible degree of erosion, as a result of the activities of housing cooperation, of their own organizational efforts to form and use housing as a means of managing people.

And therefore, in contrast to the "old" housing cooperation, the Soviet government created a system of "new" housing cooperatives, the so-called ZHAKT, RZhSKT¹⁰, managed by indirectly subordinating housing cooperatives to state bodies for implementing housing policy, by adopting relevant legislation and compulsory harmonization with it of the statutory documents of existing housing cooperatives, as well as by developing an absolutely controlled and directed procedure for electing management bodies housing cooperation.

Planning for housing construction, which was carried out by various organizations was very conditional. All planned character in this matter consisted in drawing up lists of the required number of credits and materials. Lists of sources of funds, lists of proposed construction, indicating the number of houses and apartments, etc. And indeed plans of this type, organizations under construction and, in particular, housing and construction cooperation, were considered conditional indicators and very often they did not adhere. This can be seen in the following example – according to the five-year plan of one of the organizations of the UzSSR, in this case UzzhilSouz (Uzbek housing union), in 1928/29 it was planned to build 193 houses for 538 apartments, in fact, they built 255 houses for 727 apartments¹¹.

⁶ TsGA RUz, f. R-95, op. 1, d. 1892, p.79.

⁷ TsGA RUz, f. R-95, op. 1, d. 1892, p.80.

⁸ TsGA RUz, f. R-95, op. 1, d. 1892, p.82.

⁹ TsGA RUz, f. R-95, op. 1, d. 1892, p.82.

¹⁰ Housing and rental cooperative partnerships;

workers housing-construction co-operative

partnerships; civil housing-construction partnerships

¹¹ TsGA RUz, f. R -95, op. 1, d. 1892, p.86.



The Soviet authorities believed that the existing system of cooperative housing construction in most cases did not develop the socialist way of life, but strengthened the old individualized forms of everyday life. The construction of one or two apartment buildings, in which each tenant had his own separate courtyard, fenced from the neighbor's yard, was perceived by the Soviet authorities as absolute individualism in the complete absence of any elements of collectivism. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Uzzhilsoyuz in 1929 built 5 one-apartment houses¹².

Speaking of co-operative housing construction in old and new cities, it should be noted that in this issue the aforementioned Uzzhilsoyuz did not have any solid installation – the organization of the RZhSK took place spontaneously. According to their data, 8 out of 36 RZhSK were located in old cities. In Samarkand, 1 out of 11 RZhK was located in the old city¹³.

In the city of Samarkand, during the period indicated, there were 11 ZHAKT, which combined 145 houses, with 34.234 square meters living space. According to the inventory, made in 1928/29, by the Samarkand City Council, they managed 1207 residential buildings with a useful living area of 131.326 square meters. Comparing the data of the Urban Management department with the data of the UzzhilSouz, one can see that the living space of the municipalized fund in the city of Samarkand was mastered by ZhAKT only in the amount of 26.06%. These figures call into great doubt the correctness of the data that was provided by Uzzhilsoyuz on the ZHAKT exploitation of 60 percent of the municipalized fund in the republic¹⁴.

Housing construction in the USSR was the prerogative of state agencies that had to decide what, where, in what quantities, what form and quality to build and make decisions, determined by the state ideology, policy and regulations that existed at that time. Only the inability of the authorities to cope with the acute housing crisis, to debug the processes of economic management of the housing and to develop mass housing construction delayed the decision on the complete prohibition of private ownership of the housing. Throughout the years of its existence, the Soviet government was forced to put up with a non-strategic presence in the cities of cooperative housing construction, as well as individual development, and allowed private housing.

RESUME

Housing policy of Soviet Power in Uzbekistan in 1920s-1930s: the Practice and Problems

In this article, the author attempted to analyze the Soviet government policy about housing construction in the cities of Uzbekistan in 1917-1941. Particular attention is paid to the search of forms of solving of housing issue by Soviet power despite the fact that it declared the state ownership of the dwelling as the primary means of their administrative influence on the vast masses of the population. Replacing of private sector by public housing was only a matter of time. Only the inability of the soviet authorities to cope with the acute housing crisis, debug the processes of economic management of housing and to develop mass housing construction delayed the decision to ban completely private home ownership. All the years of its existence, the Soviet government had to put up with the nonstrategic presence in the cities of cooperative housing construction, as well as individual development and allowed private dwellings.

¹² TsGA RUz, f. R -95, op. 1, d. 1892, p.87.

¹³ TsGA RUz, f. R -95, op. 1, d. 1892, p.88.

¹⁴ TsGA RUz, f. R -95, op. 1, d. 1892, p.90.