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**ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIONS OF THE SOVIET  
GOVERNMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SAFETY OF  
FUNCTIONING OF THE MOTOR TRANSPORT IN THE  
20–30TH YEARS OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

*In the article, on the basis of various documents and materials of the departmental and state archival institutions of Ukraine and Russia, legal documents, published historical-memoirs and special literature, the organizational measures of the Soviet Government on the development and safety of the functioning of motor transport in the 20–30's are extensively investigated twentieth century.*

**Key words:** *Soviet government, development, traffic safety, road transport, automobile industry.*

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**ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНІ ЗАХОДИ  
РАДЯНСЬКОГО УРЯДУ ЩОДО РОЗВИТКУ ТА  
БЕЗПЕКИ ФУНКЦІОНУВАННЯ АВТОМОБІЛЬНОГО  
ТРАНСПОРТУ В 20–30-ТІ РОКИ ХХ СТ.**

*У статті на основі широкого кола документів і матеріалів відомчих та державних архівних установ України і Росії, нормативно-правових документів, опублікованої історико-мемуарної і фахової літератури комплексно досліджуються організаційні заходи радянського уряду щодо розвитку та безпеки функціонування автомобільного транспорту в 20–30-ті роки ХХ ст.*

**Ключові слова:** *радянський уряд, розвиток, безпека дорожнього руху, автомобільний транспорт, автомобілебудування.*

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## ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННЫЕ МЕРЫ СОВЕТСКОГО ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВА ПО РАЗВИТИЮ И БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ ФУНКЦИОНИРОВАНИЯ АВТОМОБИЛЬНОГО ТРАНСПОРТА В 20–30-Е ГОДЫ XX СТ.

*В статье на основе разносторонних документов и материалов ведомственных и государственных архивных учреждений Украины и России, нормативно-правовых документов, опубликованной историко-мемуарной и специальной литературы комплексно исследуются организационные мероприятия Советского правительства о развитии и безопасности функционирования автомобильного транспорта в 20–30-е годы XX ст.*

**Ключевые слова:** советское правительство, развитие, безопасность дорожного движения, автомобильный транспорт, автомобилестроение.

Economic capacity of the certain country is defined not only by the level of the industry, but also extent of development of vehicles.

Development of the Soviet state at the beginning of the 20th century would be just impossible without advanced transport. By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War different types of transport created uniform network of railway, river, automobile, pipeline and air means of communication. The leading role in functioning of transport infrastructure belonged to the motor transport on which roads in the country the stream of transportations was carried out.

The purpose of this article is to investigate and analyse activity of public authorities in the sphere of ensuring functioning of the motor transport in the 20-30th years of the 20th century.

The specified purpose has caused statement of a number of research tasks: to get acquainted with a condition of the motor transport; to track the main directions of development of transport in days of the first five-years periods on the scale of the USSR; to find out a role and value of transport in development of the Soviet state.

In the first postrevolutionary years the public authorities of the Soviet Union paid special attention to recovery of road construction and development of the motor transport.

Carrying out nationalization of the motor transport in Ukraine, the authorities have taken measures for centralization of management of the national economy of the country. All automobile property which was at the disposal of various departments and institutions was transferred under control of the Supreme Soviet of the National Economy.

Local party and Soviet bodies together with provincial departments of Committee of the state constructions developed programs of construction of highways of three classes for restoration of the destroyed motor transport service: road highways trade and post paths, country and field

roads. In programs it was for the first time asked about reorganization of a part of a road network under car traffic.

For the purpose of strengthening of the planned leadership in transportation of goods all means of transport at Council of People's Commissars have created the Supreme Council on transportations (October, 1919) which coordinated transport policy in the country. The Interdepartmental Central committee on transportations at National commissariat of means of communication was executive body of Council [1].

Despite the considerable volume of road recovery work and also new road construction, the discrepancy of technical rules and instructions on a research and design of highway and paved roads to car traffic was an essential shortcoming, from the point of view of traffic safety on them. It was explained by the fact that road construction at that time had repair and recovery character, passed in difficult economic conditions. However in the 20th years of the 20th century experiments on mechanization of construction of dirt roads and a construction by their special machine and road groups have begun to be made.

Along with the solution of a problem of safety of traffic the government took measures for creation of production base of domestic automotive industry.

At the beginning of the 20th vehicle fleet of the Soviet state was not numerous, consisted of the worn-out in the years of civil war cars of foreign production. Therefore it was necessary to create own automotive industry. However, without having an economic opportunity to arrange mass production of cars, public authorities focused staff of automobile plants and workshops first of all on preservation of fleet of vehicles by recovery repair.

The IX congress of RCP(b) which has taken place in March-April, 1920 has set the new tasks for the state: restoration of fleet of vehicles of the country and his maintenance in working order. It was recommended to Department on construction of the highway, dirt roads and narrow-gage railroads, unlike the existing five-year programs of local road construction, creation of the five-year plan for uniform approach to development of organizational and technical issues of road economy in which together with construction of roads with a crushed-stone covering and dirt roads the main attention would be paid their capital and to maintenance [2, p. 16–18]. In the conditions of transition of the country to implementation of the new economic policy qualitatively new value was provided to the motor transport and road providing. At the same time the government in development of all automobile transport system of the state focused attention on creation of domestic automotive industry, among the major tasks there was an increase in constructive safety of vehicles. Realization of this condition meant increase in traffic safety in practice.

The problem of creation of structurally safe cars has arisen along with the beginning of their production by automotive industry of the country. In the solution of this problem was engaged created in 1921 the Central department of the state automobile plants controlled by HCNE that united seven small enterprises [3, p. 22]. With transformation of VSNKh to the National commissariat of the heavy industry of the USSR (in 1932) all tasks which have been connected with development and production of the cars answering to traffic safety were solved directly this department [4].

In the mid. of the 30th have been attracted to creation of cars which had appropriate level of safety national commissariats, the organizations and the enterprises which quite often didn't even belong to the sphere of automotive industry. So, the part of functions on automotive industry was performed by the National commissariat of the heavy industry of the USSR [5],

Narkomat of power plants and the electroindustry of the USSR [6] was engaged in creation of electric equipment of vehicles, production of autotires and autovarnishes was carried out at the enterprises of the National commissariat of chemical industry of the USSR [7]. The single questions connected with development of cars solved the National commissariat of the forest industry of the USSR [8] and the National commissariat of the USSR water transport [9].

As a result of purposeful actions of the government the number of vehicles from 1930 to 1934 has grown from 35 100 to 179 500 cars [2, p. 20], and at the end of 1938 USSR fleet of vehicles consisted already of 750 thousand units, of them 680 thousand – cargo cars. By the number of trucks of the USSR at that time it won first place in Europe and the second – in the world [10, p. 61].

Rapid growth of number of vehicles on roads of the country demanded essential changes in the organization of the modernized technologies in traffic safety and in operation of the automotor-park. In the 20th years of the 20th century maintenance of vehicles was carried out in the handicraft way in garages and the masterful organizations and the enterprises which used automotor-transport, but with increase in vehicle fleet of the country it became inefficient. By the end of the 20th years only 25–30 % of transport have been provided with garages and was respectively served [2, p. 20]. Therefore under the resolution of the CEC and CPC of USSR (1928) [11] as a part of the National commissariat of means of communication the Central management of highway and dirt roads and the motor transport (CMHDRMT) which purpose was an ensuring technical safety of vehicles has been created [12]. Besides, the resolution of Council of Work and Defense (1932) to CMHDRMT transferred all car repair plants and service stations [2, p. 20].

With growth of number of vehicles also the number of large-scale motor transport services inevitably increased. For years of a five-years period their quantity has grown with 62 to 143, and each of 48 farms served more than 100 cars [2, p. 20], and the centralized repair of cars at the plants of the «Avtorempostach» system was not always effective.

Despite it, in big motor transport services of some departments repair divisions which number has quickly exceeded the number of the «Avtorempostach» plants have begun to be created. So, in 1935 the repair base functioned already in motor transport services of 22 departments whereas in the Avtorempostach system there were only 7 such plants.

Since 1935 when because of need of improvement of road construction and the maintenance of roads of CMHDRMT has concentrated the efforts on the solution of these tasks [2, p. 21], the functions connected with repair and service of vehicles even more often carried out departments which operated automotor-transport. In the country the uniform system Soyuztrans of CMHDRMT which has united the organizations which were earlier a part of transport farms of the National commissariat of means of communication is created. This establishment had wide network of republican, regional and regional offices [13]. Soyuztrans has been focused only on transportation of goods on the major highways and exempted from service of small transportations of local value in which transport associations of republican national commissariats of municipal services were engaged. In 1935–1937 motor transportation associations in the system of the National commissariat of state farms of the USSR (Soyuzradgosptrans), in the system of the National commissariat of agriculture of the USSR (Soyuzsilgosptrans, Soyuzzagotrans), in some other departments have been created. All of them had to provide the maintenance of the vehicles belonging to them in a state, safe for the movement [14, p. 21].

Along with existence in the country of republican national commissariats of municipal services in 1939 also republican national commissariats of the motor transport have been created, one of tasks of which was an ensuring technical condition of vehicles. For this purpose the car repair plants, workshops, stations of service of cars have been transferred to new departments from the National commissariat of average mechanical engineering of the USSR (where this period included also the motor transportation industry) [2, p. 21].

With creation of National commissariat of the motor transport the number of subjects of management considerably increased, other departments also continued to carry out maintenance of the vehicles belonging to them. Moreover, all public institutions had to have motor transport services where repair work would be carried out. The issue of creation in departments of large-scale automobile enterprises, improvement of maintenance of vehicles was discussed at the XVIII congress of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) [15, p. 692].

Along with growth of vehicle fleet in the USSR, construction and improvement of roads went increase in its technical condition that had special value for increase in traffic safety.

By the beginning of broad automobilization in the USSR were expensive with a crushed-stone, soil covering, and the asphalted roads weren't. The majority of streets of the cities were paved. Therefore the question of road construction was of particular importance.

In days of the first five-years period in the country 21,2 thousand km of roads, including 4,7 thousand km with a hard coating [2, p. 22], have been constructed what, in turn, has caused the necessity of their repair and reconstruction. In this regard at the end of 1930 the new Provision on the Central management of highway and dirt roads and the motor transport in which need to perform functions on repair and reconstruction of roads was provided has been approved [16].

However in 1931 rates of road construction have sharply increased. Emergence of centralist tendencies in government has caused need of creation of special body of management of activities for construction, reconstruction and operation of highways [2, p. 23]. In this regard at the beginning of 1932 the Central management of highway and dirt roads and the motor transport has been brought out of structure of NCMT in independent All-Union central management of highway and dirt roads and the motor transport at Council of People's Commissars of the USSR [17].

In the Provision on this public authority it has been noted that it has to direct, plan, regulate road economy and the motor transport and also transport and operational and warehouse affairs.

CMHDRMT in 1932 has provided construction of nearly 49 thousand km of highways that by 1,5 times has exceeded the volume of construction of 1931, and in 1934 59 thousand km of roads, from them 6,7 thousand km – with a hard coating have been put into operation [2, p. 23].

Such rates of road construction impeded the implementation of CMHDRMT of obligations for reconstruction and repair of roads. In this regard the decision to increase the number of governing bodies of activities for contents and operation of roads has been made. This decision followed from indications of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) of 1931. On a plenum it has been also noted that improvement of road economy – one of the main tasks of municipal bodies. The decision to assign the functions connected with repair and operation of city roads to national commissariats of municipal services of federal republics has been also made [18, p. 554–557].

In the conditions of sharp increase in volume of construction of roads of CMHDRMT it was difficult to carry out at the same time repair and maintenance even of country roads. Roads in the country were in an unsatisfactory state what the attention in 1932 was paid [13] to. But

the problem has become aggravated in 1933–1934 when CMHDRMT has ceased to cope with contents them in proper condition. Therefore the special resolution which the government has obliged to enhance attention to performance of functions on repair and the maintenance of roads was accepted and also I have made the decision to carry out necessary reorganization of this organization [19].

However CMHDRMT didn't cope with duties and in 1935 has been liquidated. A part of its functions has been transferred to Head department of highways (Hedah) [20]. A task of new organization consisted in construction, reconstruction, capital repairs and the maintenance of the all-union roads which had a strategic importance [21].

For management of works on construction, repair and contents in a due condition of highway and dirt roads which had no all-union value the Head road departments at CPC of the USSR, Councils-national commissariats of federal republics and road departments at executive committees of regional (regional) councils have been formed [22]. The number of governing bodies has sharply increased in this sphere though in the documents regulating their activity specifically it wasn't told about tasks of these bodies for questions of safety of traffic safety.

Materials demonstrate that in official documents the question of improvement of roads, their equipment and contents due to the need of reduction of accident rate in traffic has been for the first time considered at a technical meeting on fight against accidents and traumatism on transport [2, p. 24–25.], about what it was accepted the relevant resolution. It is characteristic that only national commissariats of municipal services belonged to subjects which were engaged in improvement of road condition. Meanwhile the analysis of security status of the traffic safety in the mid. of the 30th shows that already then need standardly has ripened to put on all state bodies which were involved in construction and operation of roads, the corresponding tasks and functions of improvement of road conditions [2, page 25].

In days of the second five-year period rates of road construction have even more increased. So, in Ukraine only in Donbass it has been built roads: Stalino – Yasinovataya – Horlivka — Yenakiieve – Artemivsk – Konstantinovka – Kramatorsk – Sloviansk, connected the regional center with industrial regions, the western and central parts of the area and also with nodal points Artemivsk, Nikitivka.

Besides, it has been built the road Svatovo – Starobelsk (55 km long), connected the center of the Starobelsky district to the trunk railway line. From 1936 for 1937 two economically important highways with a hard coating of roads have been built. On the site from the Bryanka mine (Kadiyevsky district) in the direction to Debaltseve, Yenakiieve (55,83 km long) and the route Khartsyzk – Chistyakovo – Krasnyy Luch – Uspenka – Luhansk (107,2 km long). From 2 677 km of total length of roads (state, republican and regional value) in Donbass there was only 421 km of roads with a hard coating, or 1 % for 10 000 population whereas on other areas of Ukraine – 3 % for the same number of the population [23, p. 15–16].

Thus, for the end of 1939 in the USSR there were 118,2 thousand km of roads with a hard coating, including 5 thousand km with advanced coverings (asphalt concrete coverings; the coverings processed by the black knitting materials, etc.) which till 1917 weren't at all [24, page 76].

The country needed increase in network of the roads suitable for the movement of cars. Therefore at the XVIII congress of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) in resolutions on the plan for the third five-years period it has been written down: «To construct and reconstruct

210 thousand km of roads...» [24, p. 76]. At the same time special attention was paid on maintenance in proper condition of the operating roads, carrying out timely necessary recovery and maintenance for the purpose of increase in specific weight of motor transport in country goods turnover.

In 1940 the extent of roads with a hard coating has increased up to 143,4 thousand km that has allowed to increase providing with road network the called period almost by 4 times. In Ukraine in 1940 the extent of highways has already reached 270,7 thousand km, including with a hard coating – 29,3 thousand km [25, p. 95]. As a result goods turnover of the motor transport in the national economy of USSR made 1 670 million tons-km, has been transported freights of 187 200 000 t, goods turnover has made 282 million passenger-kilometers, is transported passengers of 29 400 000 people [26, p. 230].

Safety of traffic was impossible without the rational organization of the movement, use of modern technical means of its regulation. In the 1930th years national commissariats of municipal services of federal republics were engaged in a marking of streets of the cities, installation of road signs, traffic lights, lighting of the carriageway of streets, etc., and a protection of dangerous places on country roads, installation there road signs, signs, etc. – CMHDRMT [2, p. 25].

For ensuring production of necessary number of cars and the equipment for road construction of AUCPE of the USSR it has been created Road and machine trust [2, page 25] which has been reorganized into the National commissariat of the heavy industry later. Certain problems in this area were solved also by means of CMHDRMT [4]. However in the conditions of growth of rates of road construction these bodies weren't able to provide need of the country for such equipment. In this regard the government has attracted to the leadership in this activity the Soviet national commissariats of federal republics [19]. In 1937 the National commissariat of mechanical engineering of the USSR [27] was engaged in a task of construction of cars, and in 1939 the corresponding functions have passed to the created National commissariat of average mechanical engineering of the USSR [28].

However along with obvious rapid development of road and machine construction still there was a number of unresolved problems and shortcomings. In particular, poor quality of roads with a hard coating, lack of automobile entrances to railway stations, the small number of bridges through the large rivers, etc. [29].

Thus, on the basis of the analysis of materials and archival documents the author gives a real picture of creation and rates of development of the motor transport in the territory of the Soviet Union in days of the first five-years periods. The second and third five-year plans which tasks demanded increase in level of organizational and practical work of public authorities and public organizations, formation of extensive transport network, improvement of forms and methods of their activity, strengthening of personal responsibility of heads for the charged business were of particular importance.

War hasn't allowed to finish the third five-years period of development plan for the national economy of the country. However, despite shortcomings, in the USSR powerful transport infrastructure has been created. New automobile highways have begun to work in the country, the extent of roads and the number of passenger and cargo transportation has increased, it has been adjusted communication with industrial regions and vicinities, the transport material and technical resources were improved, all necessary conditions for appropriate ensuring its functioning have been created.

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