

# СЕКЦІЯ «ІСТОРИЧНІ І ПОЛІТИЧНІ НАУКИ»

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## **FOREIGN REFUGEES AND PRISONERS OF WAR IN SOVIET UKRAINE IN THE 1920S: LEGAL STATUS, ADAPTATION PROBLEMS, AND THE ISSUE OF RETURNING TO THEIR HOMELAND**

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The relevance of the research is connected, first of all, with the fact that the problem of forced migration in the modern world has gained particular importance, and the problem of attitude to such migrants, their adaptation in the new socio-cultural environment is becoming more and more acute. Equally important is the question of how to ensure mutual tolerance and adaptation of migrants and the local population? And, of course, a very significant question is how to ensure that migrants are not a material burden for a certain “settled” population. Society that has faced such problems is forced to seek solutions in the historical past.

The repatriation of prisoners of war and refugees from the territory of the Soviet republics was formally completed in 1925. However, the facts show that thousands of them remained to live in the territory of Soviet Ukraine and found a new homeland there. Soviet authorities were extremely needed in human material – competent specialists, soldiers, intellectuals. The uniqueness of the social category of foreigners lies in the fact that the immigrants from different countries were carriers of different cultures, mentalities, political traditions, production skills, everyday habits. The Soviet government also hoped with the help of foreigners, who fell into their hands, to solve problems of an international character, including the World Revolution.

The purpose of the article is to recreate a complete picture of the situation of forced migrants in Soviet Ukraine, to trace how it has changed and what was their path to their homeland. In this regard to achieve the goal of our work is possible through the use of comprehensive scientific study using a variety of processing and analysis methods (traditional, descriptive, quantitative, psychological, legal, sociological, linguistic, and others).

An analysis of domestic and foreign historiography of past years shows that the cause of unexplored many topics on this problem is not only the limited source base and ideological framework, but to a large extent the insufficient methodological equipment of historians.

The object of research work - forced migrants of the First World War - foreign refugees and enemy prisoners of war, who were on the territory of Soviet Ukraine from 1919 to 1925.

The subject of the research is relationships and interactions, occurred in the period under review between the central, local authorities, indigenous people and forced migrants; socio-economic, socio-political reality, its transformation and perception of refugees and prisoners of war; social and legal policy of the Soviet government.

There is necessary to consider the following problems:

– to identify the main migration flows, give them quantitative and qualitative characteristics in dynamics, identify the main groups of foreigners in the 1920s. according to their legal status, national, age, professional and other characteristics;

– to trace the main forms and methods of survival of refugees and prisoners of war of the First World War in Soviet Ukraine in the absence of re-evacuation;

- to highlight the creation of the Soviet evacuation apparatus, which was responsible for the forced migrants of wartime, and to consider the main directions of its activities;
- to highlight the stages and methods of returning refugees and foreign prisoners of war to their homeland, to analyze the effectiveness of the Centrofacking / Centrevac re-evacuation activities;
- to identify the attitude of refugees to help and care for them in Soviet Ukraine;
- to highlight the spontaneous resettlement of refugees and prisoners of war in grain-producing areas or self-repatriation and the attitude of the central and local authorities to this movement;
- to reveal the features of the perception of foreign migrants of the Soviet reality, their adaptation to the standards of behavior in the Soviet country and the impact of the ideological press.

On the basis of studying there are several conclusions:

The Bolsheviks approached the definition of the concept of «foreigners» from the standpoint of the proletarian revolution, which considered the idea of «solidarity of the working masses of the whole world» as one of the main ideas. The slogan «proletarians of all countries, unite!» was not only an agitational slogan of the Bolshevik Party, but it also lay at the heart of the Soviet Constitution being a kind of state motto. This basic idea of the Soviet constitution gave the basis for the definition of the concept of «foreigners». Soviet power abolished the former concept of a foreigner, recognizing the political rights of Soviet citizens for all workers, regardless of their nationality.

Way to release from captivity the form of change of citizenship was beneficial to the Soviet leadership, since gave the opportunity to replenish the ranks of the Red Army contingent who had military training, avoiding criticism from the world community. For this only required the desire of the prisoner of war and his declaration of positive attitude to the Soviet regime. The transformation of foreign prisoners of war in Russian citizens freed the Soviet government from cares and evacuation home about 2 million people. The mass spontaneous movement of prisoners of war to their homeland, which turned into a real flight, was caused by their unwillingness to participate in the Civil War in Russia and the impossibility of both living under conditions of Soviet reality and organized repatriation in the foreseeable future. As a result, the liberation of more than 50% of the central provinces European Russia from refugees in 1920s provided mainly unauthorized departure of refugees.

From March 1, 1922, the free evacuation of the German military and civilian prisoners were terminated. In February 1924, the government of the USSR informed the government of Austria that in the territory of the USSR among prisoners of war remained single persons wishing to return to Austria, “therefore the Soviet government considers evacuation of Austrian prisoners of war finished on May 1, 1924.

The legal mechanism for the departure of foreigners from Soviet Ukraine was established until the end of 1922. The process itself was not organized and was inhibited in every way. The numerous hardships associated with dispatching refugees, such as late notification, non-delivery to the train station of departure, lack of food on the way, non-return of valuables collected before being sent by escorts, allegedly for preservation, accusations of selling goods by refugees by speculation experiences related to abuses of official position and bribery of railway officials. At the same time, employees of evacuation agencies often could not protect refugees from arbitrariness.

In summary, the Soviet government sought not so much to help forced migrants as to rather stop providing them free aid, to shift the financial burden to the foreigners themselves.

During the next two or three years, many who wished to emigrate did this. However, many forced migrants (for various reasons) remained in Soviet Ukraine, and the Bolsheviks continued to use foreign human resources for their own purposes.