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EVACUATED CHILDREN DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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Abstract

This article highlights the process of evacuating children from frontline zones to Uzbekistan during World War II, based on historical facts. It also outlines the social problems that arose during the relocation process and provides relevant statistics. Most importantly, the high qualities of humanism and tolerance of the Uzbek people, as well as the significance of interethnic harmony, are revealed based on archival documents and concrete facts.

Keywords: World War II, evacuation, Uzbekistan, home front, orphans, resettlement of the population, Khlebushkina, Resolution No. 1758, humanism, material assistance, Council of People's Commissars, January 13, 1942, interethnic harmony, tolerance.

Introduction

During the Second World War, the people of Uzbekistan demonstrated their compassion and hospitality by caring for evacuated children. More than 1.5 million people were evacuated to Uzbekistan, including approximately 250,000 children. During the first days of the evacuation, 239 children from orphanages were sent to Fergana, 280 to Andijan Region, 80 to Tashkent, and 408 to Bukhara and Samarkand Regions [1].



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Main Part

Beginning in November 1941, approximately 22,000 children were evacuated to Uzbekistan. Of these, 9,420 were accommodated in orphanages, while the remainder arrived independently. Boys accounted for 69 percent of the children who arrived. In terms of age distribution, among children arriving individually or in groups, those aged 15–16 constituted the largest group, accounting for 48 percent; adolescents aged 17–18 accounted for 18 percent, while school-age children between 8 and 14 years old constituted 2.5 percent. More than half of the children who arrived were complete orphans—51 percent. The remainder generally had one surviving parent but did not know their whereabouts. In many cases, their fathers were serving at the front [2].

In order to register and accommodate children arriving in Uzbekistan, the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR established the Central Children's Evacuation Point in Tashkent on November 24, 1941 [3]. Through this evacuation point, some of the children were sent to vocational schools, FZO schools, and railway vocational institutions, while 4,519 were employed at enterprises, collective farms, and state farms. Of the children who arrived in Uzbekistan, 2,278 were placed with families of workers, employees, and collective farmers, as well as in kindergartens, schools, collective farms, and other institutions for collective education and care [4].

To assist the evacuated children, workers throughout the republic collected nearly 80,000 items of various types of clothing and footwear, approximately 900,000 rubles in financial contributions, and more than 200,000 centners of food products [5].

During the first years of the evacuation of children, one of the main difficulties faced by the government was providing children—particularly those placed in orphanages—with adequate clothing, footwear, and bedding. To address this



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problem, efforts were made to mobilize local resources to supply orphanages with clothing and footwear. However, these measures were insufficient to meet the existing needs completely. As a result, the government of the Uzbek SSR appealed to the central authorities for additional assistance. In particular, it requested the allocation of cotton fabrics worth 2,500 rubles for orphanages, as well as materials through the leather-goods industrial cooperation system for the production of children's footwear, including 320,000 decimeters of soft leather, 120,000 decimeters of hard leather, and 220,000 decimeters of semi-hard leather products [6].

Between November 25, 1941, and May 19, 1942, the registration records of children arriving in Tashkent through the Children's Evacuation Point of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR recorded 13,262 children, including [7]:

- a) from November 25 to November 30, 1941 – 649 children;
- b) in December – 4,661 children;
- c) in January – 2,591 children;
- d) in February – 1,371 children;
- e) in March – 1,488 children;
- f) in April – 1,413 children;
- g) from May 1 to May 19 – 1,089 children.

In order to accommodate children who had lost contact with their relatives during the evacuation or had become separated from orphanages and educational institutions, the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan (Bolsheviks) adopted Resolution No. 1758, "On the Accommodation of Children Evacuated from Frontline Areas," on December 4, 1941 [8].



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The resolution provided for the establishment of a reception center for minors in Tashkent. The center was tasked with placing children in orphanages and educational institutions, while adolescents under the age of 18 were to be placed in industrial enterprises or agricultural work. The staff of the reception center was set at eight employees: the head of the center, three duty educators, one employment instructor, one evacuation officer, one accountant, and one technical employee.

Comrade Qo'qonboyev was instructed to provide, within three days, a building for the evacuated children's placement center in the Leninsky District of Tashkent, preferably close to the railway station. The head of the Evacuation Administration under the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR, Comrade Kichakov, and the chairman of the Tashkent City Executive Committee, Comrade Husainov, were instructed to expand the evacuation center's dining facilities and organize services for arriving evacuated children, adolescents, and large families, ensuring that they received food as a priority [9].

Results and Discussion

In order to establish supervision over children and adolescents, more than 30 children's rooms were established at police departments throughout Uzbekistan. As early as 1941, more than 3,000 neglected children were found on the streets of Uzbekistan [10]. The condition of these children was extremely difficult. A.P. Khlebushkina, who made a significant contribution to accommodating and caring for children in Uzbekistan during the war years, recalled: "...They looked like tiny old men and women. In order to get the children to the orphanages, the staff fed them with spoons and even donated their own blood" [11]. Despite their own exhaustion, the staff of the children's homes provided comprehensive care and support to the children.



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There were also shortcomings and errors in the process of registering and numbering evacuated children. According to information provided by Vernik, head of the Central Children's Evacuation Point, the registration book for November 1941 contained a numbering error of 101 entries: after number 1,099, the number 1,200 was entered. Furthermore, the registration book had no entries from number 8,663 to number 10,390 for the period from December 27, 1941, to January 3, 1942. As of June 1, 1942, the evacuation point had a list of 1,469 evacuated children who had arrived since January 1942 but had not been entered into the registration book. Of the 13,262 registered children, 3,429 had not been sent anywhere by the evacuation center, and there was no information regarding their whereabouts [12].

As of January 15, 1942, a total of 3,539 people had been evacuated to Surkhan Darya Region, including 37 children who had arrived without their parents [13]. Hundreds of Uzbek families took into their care children who had been evacuated and separated from their parents as a result of the war. In particular, the patriotic movement calling on the public to assist evacuated children spread widely throughout the republic after a meeting of women in Tashkent on January 2, 1942. At this meeting, Uzbek women were called upon to provide motherly care to children who had been left without parents [14].

During 1941, Uzbek families took 3,430 evacuated children into their care. Of these, the families who raised 3,378 children, or 98.5 percent, did not receive the allowance provided for caring for the children [15]. Families who took children into their homes considered them members of their own families and voluntarily refused state financial assistance. This can be regarded as a sincere expression of the Uzbek population's care and solidarity toward children separated from their parents and homes.



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On January 13, 1942, a Republican Commission for the Accommodation and Education of Evacuated Orphaned Children was established. The commission included Seitov, Rizaev, Kamolov, Jumanazarov, Garamov, Ubaydullaev, Seitova, Oleynikov, and Kazbekova. The commission was assigned the following tasks: a) to register, by January 20, children who had lost their parents; b) to use the experience of Tashkent in arranging individual education for children; c) to organize public patronage of orphanages; and d) to organize the collection of essential items for children [16].

As of March 31, 1942, the number of evacuated children in Karakalpakstan was 894. Of these, 54 were orphans, 32 were placed in orphanages, 17 received individual education, and 5 were provided with employment. The number of people willing to take children into their families was 686. The funds collected amounted to 92,460 rubles; 8,615 bonds and 986 children's items were collected, along with 227 meters of manufactured textile goods [17].

In order to implement Resolution No. 75 of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR dated January 23, 1942, "On the Accommodation of Children Left Without Parents," the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR adopted a corresponding resolution [18]. It stipulated that:

1. Children under the age of 15 shall be admitted to the children's reception centers of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR for a period not exceeding two weeks. During this period, the heads of the reception centers shall, through the internal affairs bodies, establish the whereabouts of the children's parents and ensure their return to them. If it is impossible to return the children to their parents, children under the age of 14 shall be sent through the public education authorities to appropriate children's institutions or placed under guardianship. Children over the age of 14 staying at the reception centers shall be placed by the



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Website: <https://econferencia.com>

People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR in industrial and agricultural employment in the areas where the reception centers are located.

2. The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Qobulov) shall be entrusted with centralizing the registration of all children left without parents throughout the republic. For this purpose, by April 20 of the current year, a Central Children's Information and Address Bureau shall be established in Tashkent, together with information desks under address bureaus in all regional centers and in Nukus for serving the Karakalpak Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

3. Children staying in reception centers, as well as those placed in employment, kindergartens, or under guardianship, shall be registered with the Children's Information and Address Bureau. Beginning April 20 of the current year, the Central Children's Information and Address Bureau shall be responsible for searching for children residing both within the territory of the Uzbek SSR and outside Uzbekistan, as well as for conducting correspondence with their parents.

4. The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Qobulov) shall be instructed to allocate, within the approved staffing limits of the People's Commissariat and regional bodies, special personnel to combat child neglect. In cities and districts, the registration and search for children left without parents shall be assigned to the passport offices of the internal affairs bodies.

5. The People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Razzoqov), the People's Commissariat of Health of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Mo'minov), their respective bodies, as well as the executive committees of workers' deputies' councils at the city, district, and rural levels shall be entrusted with organizing the accounting and supervision necessary to ensure the proper implementation of guardianship over children.



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6. The People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR shall be instructed, along with further developing the system of free care for children, to provide a monthly allowance of 50 rubles to persons who have taken children into their families for upbringing. The allowance shall be paid from funds allocated from the republican budget for children's activities.

7. When children are placed under guardianship or sent to work in industry and agriculture, the children's reception centers of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR shall provide them, at the expense of the republican budget, with the necessary clothing and footwear costing up to 200 rubles per person.

8. The State Planning Committee of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Korzhavin) shall, upon the request of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR, be entrusted with allocating the necessary footwear and clothing to meet the needs of the reception centers.

9. The People's Commissariat of Trade of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Sibirsev) shall, beginning April 1 of the current year, include the 11 children's reception centers of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR in the centralized supply system for food products, according to the standards established for them.

10. The regional executive committees and the Council of People's Commissars of the Karakalpak Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic shall be entrusted with providing all orphanages under the People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR with land plots for subsidiary agricultural production.

11. The People's Commissariat of Health of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Mo'minov) shall be entrusted with providing regular medical care to all orphanages under the People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR, assigning them to outpatient clinics and polyclinics, and appointing permanent physicians to the orphanages for daily medical supervision and regular examinations of the children.



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To provide medical services at children's reception centers, medical personnel currently employed by the People's Commissariat of Health shall be transferred directly to the staffing of the children's reception centers of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR, with the corresponding financial resources allocated for their maintenance.

12. The People's Commissariat of Health of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Mo'minov) shall be entrusted with providing the children's reception centers of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR with disinfection chambers.

13. The regional executive committees shall be entrusted with preparing premises with a total capacity of 2,500 places for newly established orphanages in collective farms and boarding schools in order to eliminate the shortage of accommodation capacity at children's reception centers. The allocation shall be as follows: Bukhara Region – 700 places; Tashkent Region – 300 places; Khorezm Region – 300 places; Samarkand Region – 300 places; Andijan Region – 300 places; Fergana Region – 300 places; and Namangan Region – 300 places.

14. The Administration of Labor Reserves under the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Dyakonov) shall, during the next admission campaign to FZO schools, vocational schools, and railway schools, give priority to children left without parents and children from orphanages and children's reception centers of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR, with the exception of pupils in the 7th and 10th grades, and shall admit those who have reached the age of 14 in accordance with the established admission rules beginning with the academic year.

15. In accordance with Resolution No. 185 of the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR dated January 27–30, the People's Commissariat of Education of the Uzbek SSR (Comrade Razzoqov) shall be entrusted with sending children over the age of 14 residing in orphanages to work in industry and agriculture.



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Children entering FZO schools, vocational schools, and railway schools shall be exempt from this requirement. The heads of enterprises and state farms, as well as chairpersons of collective farm administrations, shall provide housing for children accepted for employment.

16. Commissions for the placement of children left without parents shall be established under the regional, city, and district executive committees of the Councils of Workers' Deputies. The commissions shall consist of the deputy chairman of the respective executive committee and representatives of trade unions, the Young Communist League of Uzbekistan (LKSMUz), the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, public education authorities, and health authorities. These commissions shall be entitled to use the staff and administrative resources of the relevant executive committees of the Councils of Workers' Deputies in carrying out their activities.

This resolution demonstrates the extent to which the government prioritized the welfare and protection of evacuated children.

Conclusion

The Second World War brought tremendous suffering and hardship to humanity as a whole. The war separated many children from their families and loved ones. During these difficult years, Uzbekistan did not spare its efforts to assist children evacuated from the war-affected regions. Despite suffering from the consequences of the war and shortages of food and other essential resources itself, the Uzbek people welcomed numerous children into their homes and communities. They provided them with care, compassion, and hospitality.

As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized, "It is extremely important that future generations know and remember the great historical role of the multinational people of Uzbekistan in the struggle against fascism, their indomitable will and



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heroism, that they are made aware of the truth about those difficult years of the Second World War, and that our youth are educated in the spirit of courage and bravery through concrete examples” [20].

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