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UZBEKISTAN'S ROLE AS AN EVACUATION CENTER IN 1941–1945

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Abstract

Based on historical evidence, this article highlights how Uzbekistan became a true haven for the population evacuated from frontline areas during World War II. It also outlines the social problems that arose during the relocation process. Most importantly, it reveals the high humanistic qualities and tolerance of the Uzbek people, as well as the significance of interethnic harmony, based on archival documents and concrete facts.

Keywords: World War II, evacuation, Uzbekistan, home front, orphans, population resettlement, humanism, material assistance, Council of People's Commissars, interethnic harmony, Resolution No. 1107, tolerance.

Introduction

During the Second World War, the multinational people of Uzbekistan demonstrated tremendous courage and resilience and made a significant contribution to the victory over fascism. During this extremely difficult period, the republic became a reliable home front that supplied the front with essential resources, while industrial enterprises were adapted to meet military needs.

More than one million people, including approximately 200,000 children, were evacuated to Uzbekistan from territories affected by the war. The people of Uzbekistan welcomed them as their own, shared their last piece of bread with them, and Uzbek families took orphaned children into their care, surrounding



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them with parental love and attention. This exemplary humanitarian effort demonstrated to the world the high moral qualities of the Uzbek people [1, p. 4].

Main Part

On August 25, 1941, pursuant to Resolution No. 1107 of the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR, statistical registration of all evacuated persons was organized, and responsible personnel and additional staff positions were allocated within the territorial executive committees for this purpose [4, p. 226]. The first tens of thousands of people from the frontline areas began arriving in Uzbekistan in the summer of 1941. The population of the republic's cities and villages warmly welcomed the displaced citizens, provided them with shelter, and often shared their last piece of bread with them. They also collected clothing and footwear for the evacuees. For example, at the initiative of workers of agricultural cooperatives in Fergana Region, caravans loaded with grain, vegetables, potatoes, and meat began arriving in the city. Considerable efforts were made to accommodate the incoming population. In Tashkent alone, more than 37,600 people were accommodated and provided with employment between November 24 and December 31, 1941, while in 1941–1942, this figure reached nearly 240,000 people [1, p. 234].

Documents relating to the history of evacuation began to be systematically compiled from October 1941, when the first groups of people transported by train arrived in the republic. On December 22, 1941, the administrative apparatus responsible for evacuation was approved in the regions and cities of the Uzbek SSR. On January 31, 1942, the Central Information Bureau was placed under the supervision of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR. The evacuation and resettlement of people to the republic continued until 1944.



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Individual registration cards were maintained for each person evacuated to Uzbekistan, while children under the age of 16 were registered together with the relatives accompanying them. In addition to individual cards, this information was also entered into registration books [2, p. 9].

By a resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of Uzbekistan and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan (Bolsheviks) dated October 22, 1941, a decision was adopted to accommodate 55,000 evacuated persons in the republic and provide them with employment in enterprises and institutions [3, p. 32].

On November 3, 1941, an additional plan was established by a resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR to provide housing for 250,000 evacuees in the regions and cities of the republic. Regional, district, and city executive committees were also instructed to provide evacuated persons with the necessary living conditions and to employ them in industry and agriculture [4, p. 270].

Results and Discussion

There were also a number of problems and misunderstandings in the evacuation and resettlement of the population. In particular, representatives of the Tashkent Railway Administration, Aris Railway Station, and the Tashkent Evacuation Point repeatedly redirected evacuees who had already been sent to Southern Kazakhstan, the Kyzylorda region, and other regions of Kazakhstan toward Uzbekistan. This disrupted the work of regional organizations responsible for accommodating and employing the evacuees in Kazakhstan. Therefore, the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan demanded that those responsible be held accountable and that the Tashkent Railway Administration and the Tashkent Evacuation Unit be



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instructed to stop the unauthorized redirection of individual groups of evacuees, railway cars, and train convoys [4, p. 316].

In response, Beskrovskiy, an inspector responsible for the formation and movement of evacuation trains, stated in the referenced telegram that it was impossible to identify those responsible because no specific evidence of redirection caused by the Tashkent Railway Administration, evacuation points, or other organizations had been provided. At the same time, he reported several cases in which railway cars had been sent to Uzbekistan under pressure from representatives of the Kazakh SSR, even when there was no corresponding train convoy. For example, on December 9, 1941, at Jambul Station, 15 railway cars carrying Polish citizens and originally designated for direct transportation were redirected from Aris Station toward the Fergana Region. Passenger trains traveling through the Kazakh SSR and carrying evacuees from the frontline areas to the “interior of the country” were also repeatedly misdirected. The number of such cases reached 50–60 people per day [4, p. 318].

Families evacuated from the frontline areas initially encountered numerous difficulties. Among those evacuated to Bukhara Region, for example, there were pregnant women who had worked at factories before their evacuation but did not have certificates confirming their employment. Some families consisted only of children and pregnant women, with no able-bodied adults. Because these women were in the final month of pregnancy, they were not provided with employment. In order to resolve these problems, the Bukhara Regional Executive Committee appealed to the Resettlement Administration of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Uzbek SSR [5, p. 275].

On December 15, 1941, the Council of People’s Commissars of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 1825 on allocating funds to provide material assistance to evacuated persons. Under this resolution, 200,000 rubles were allocated to



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provide financial assistance to particularly needy evacuees. Of this amount, 45,000 rubles were allocated to Tashkent Region, 20,000 rubles to Bukhara Region, 20,000 rubles to Samarkand Region, 20,000 rubles to Khorezm Region, 25,000 rubles to Fergana Region, 15,000 rubles to Namangan Region, 30,000 rubles to Andijan Region, 10,000 rubles to the Karakalpak ASSR, and 20,000 rubles to the Tashkent Children's Evacuation Administration [4, pp. 268–269].

Conclusion

In conclusion, during the Second World War, Uzbekistan became a place of refuge and salvation for many peoples. During those difficult years, the republic provided extensive assistance to evacuated populations. The people of Uzbekistan warmly welcomed the evacuees, provided them with shelter, and collected clothing and footwear to support those in need. The republican government also undertook substantial measures to accommodate and assist the displaced population.

These measures demonstrate the important role played by mutual assistance and interethnic solidarity in Uzbekistan during the war years. The experience of the evacuation period provides significant historical evidence of the humanitarian support extended to people who were forced to leave their homes because of the war.

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