

Struggle Against Homelessness and Neglect in Tatar ASSR in 1920s – The First Half of 1940s

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Abstract

The relevance of the research problem due to a problem of child homelessness and neglect in Tatarstan in 1920s - the first half of 1940s, based on complex analysis of published and unpublished sources. The purpose of the article is determination of child homelessness etapization. A leading approach to the study of this problem was the method of comparative analysis and source external and internal criticism of historical sources. The main results of Author's research are: identified periods and characteristic for each of them methods of coping besprizornosti over time from the formation of the Tatar Autonomous Republic up to the end of the Great Patriotic War. The authors conclude that the Soviet government policy in this issue pursued the ultimate goal of regime preserving and strengthening. The article can be useful in teaching the course of Russian history, and can also be used in future research practice on this issue.

Keywords: children, hunger, war, homelessness, neglect, education, orphanage, Tatar ASSR.

1. Introduction

Social problems of child homelessness and neglect as part of childhood history interest for a long time many foreign researchers (Ariès, P. (1962), Mause, L. (1974), Pollock, L. (1983, 1987), Heywood, C. (2001)). A number of European scientists are actively engaged in the issues of children's homelessness and neglect in Soviet Russia (Shturman, D. (1988), Holmes, L.E. (1992), Kirschenbaum, L.A. (2001)). In particular, works of Alan Ball are devoted to life of homeless children of the 1920s, as well as to the homelessness struggle policy of the state (Ball A., 1992, 1996). L. Kirshenbaum pays a great attention to the subject of communist education of junior pre-school children in the context of general suggestions of political education in the early decades of the Soviet government (Kirschenbaum, L.A., 2001, p. 224). Shturman D. examines the influence of ideological factors on school children's education in Soviet Russia in 1920-1930s. (Shturman, D., 1988, p. 54-55). Holmes L. studied the function of labour education in soviet school (Holmes, L.E., 1992, p. 545-565). Original aspect of the problem - the survival of children in conditions of Russian post-revolutionary emigration is developed in works of M. Iovanovich (2001) and V.D. Zimina (2004). M. Iovanovich revealed some general tendencies of homelessness of Russian children in 1920-1940s in conditions of emigration. V.D.Zimina studies the problems of self-preservation of Russian emigration children in 1920-1930s, as well as analyses the historiography of the subject.

2. Methodological Framework

In Russia, the researchers of the 1920s raised in their articles children's homelessness as a social problem (Lublinsky P., 1929, Edelstein A.O., 1927). However, the study of literature of the period shows that the existing works only indicate the problem field, as the focus is made on the study of criminality, and homelessness is considered only in the context of hooliganism among children. Modern Russian researchers pays considerable attention to the problems of homelessness, neglect and child deviation (Parentlessness and homelessness in Russian, 2008). Discourse associated with government policy concerning orphans and homeless children is prevailed in the works of A.A. Slavko (2005), A.Yu. Rozhkov (1997, 200), N. Sazhina (2003). General tendencies in the spread of homelessness and neglect during the Great Patriotic War, the peculiarities of orphanages in wartime conditions are revealed in the works of A.A. Slavko (2009,2012), A.Sh. Kabirova (2011).

2.1 The Research Hypothesis

The authors consider revelation of stages and determination of specific character of each stage of child homelessness in the territory of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR), from the moment of its formation in 1920s up to the end of the Great Patriotic War in 1945 as the objective of the present article.

2.2 Theoretical and Empirical Methods

The methodological basis of the study were general scientific principles and methods used in science of history - analysis and synthesis, as well as special-empirical methods - typologization and statistics.

3. Results

3.1 Political, social and economic changes in the Russian society and the first stage of the Soviet state struggle with homelessness and neglect

The Russian revolution of the early XX century, the Civil war, famine of the 1920s became a source of huge masses of homeless and neglected children. From these historical events, the first stage of struggle against homelessness and neglect of the Soviet state began. The need to struggle with homeless in many ways was due to the fact that at a crucial time when all old traditions, usual beliefs and ethical norms were destroyed by the revolution, and new ones were in its formative stages, not only adults, but also representatives of the younger generation took the path of crime (Khanipova I.I., 2013, pp. 242-247). A.O. Edelstein, describing the state of child criminality in the middle of 1920s, emphasized that "the present army of homeless children is in the best case, the army of hooligans, and at worst, more serious offenders. The whole situation of homeless children life is a kind of hooliganism "university" (Note 1)". Moreover, of course, elimination of homelessness means to undermine one of the most important roots, from which grows hooliganism. The struggle against homelessness is a fight with the present and above all with the future hooliganism"(Edelstein, A.O., 1927, p. 77). The task of the "new" man training, the formation of his moral qualities and world-views was entrusted on children's educational institutions of the republic.

In the Republic of Tatarstan, as well as around the country, near the orphanages and children's care centres gathered hungry children every day, hoping to find shelter and food. Some parents left their children in state institutions and some just abandoned on the streets to fend for themselves. However, children's institutions were not able to accommodate all of them. Cries about a mass flow of homeless children and about complete inability to accommodate and feed them due to lack of food, money, clothes, linen and other necessary material resources were heard from cantons (In five years. To the 5th anniversary of Tatar Socialist Republic declaration, 1925, p. 20). Many thousands of hungry and naked children in fact remained on the street. Contemporary of the events noted that in Kazan from 82 792 abandoned children in state institutions were only 13, 24% (10 964 people), and 22, 61% (18 723 children) received daily ration from government. Thus, 53 105 children in fact were without food aid and received only such food that can be given them at home (Fisher, H.H., 1935, p. 86). The governing body of Tatar Republic took all possible steps to open new orphanages. For example, in the canton of Sviyazhsk in July 1920 there were two orphanages, which kept 64 children (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, P-3682, 1/78, p. 175 ob.). In January 1922, already 12 orphanages with 704 children functioned in the canton. Total number of children under the age of 15 years old to the middle of January 1922 was 32 420 people (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, P- 168, 3/2, pp. 3, 3ob.). In canton of Bugulma at the same time were 32 orphanages, 8 of which - in the city (for 796 children) and 24 - around the canton (for 2262 children) (Archive of Federal Security Service Directorate of Russia on the Republic of Tatarstan, 109, 1/1. p. 11). Thus, the total number of children at the beginning of 1922 in the canton was 125 170 people (Archive of Federal Security Service Directorate of Russia on RT, 109, 1/1, p. 9). Many of them did not have parents, died of hunger and diseases. The opening of the new children's homes were behind the paces of growing number of orphans.

The Sub-Committee for Famine Relief at Tatar Central Executive Committee (TatCEC) proposed temporary accommodation of starving children of 8-15 years old in full dependence on citizens due to the lack of children's homes and the inability to increase their number because of lack of funds. In this regard, the Department of Preschool Education of the People's Commissariat of Education of TASSR developed a special instruction (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, P-3682, 1/341, p. 65). Cantonal commissioners for public education had to develop and organize guardianship and patronage in the field engage in the legal protection of minors and struggle against child homelessness. For example, in 1922 a section of child guardianship of the Public Education Department of the Canton of Chistopol opened 18

committee cases involving 37 minors (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, P-2029, 1/164, p. 20b.). Semimonthly struggle against child homelessness was conducted for taking away of abandoned children from the streets in the republic under the Regulation of TatCEC on January 13, 1923 (Labor and Agriculture, 2, p. 121). In the republic, a special child commission at TatCEC was created, the main objective of which was provision of assistance to children, especially the homeless.

However, in the middle of 1920s, a sharp reduction in funding of orphanages forced their direction to reduce the number of their inmates. The Republic Government tried to find a way out from critical situation in the development of patronage system of orphans (Bernstein, L., 2001), i.e. the accommodation of children in peasant families for education. Based on government regulations was developed a special instruction on the procedure and conditions for the transfer of inmates of children's homes and homeless children in peasant families, to prepare them for agricultural work, which emphasized, that only homeless children and orphans aged from 4 to 15 years were subject to transfer (Collection of statutes and orders of the Workers 'and Peasants' Government of the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic, 1928, p. 716-718). It should be noted that the patronage education initiated by the government was not accustomed neither in 1920s nor in 1930s.

3.2 Features of the second stage with child homelessness

Management of public education of children, organization of children's institutions (kindergartens, nurseries, playgrounds) and guardianship (trusteeship) under juveniles and minors, conducting of activities on struggle against child homelessness and neglect were entrusted to the village councils by the Resolution of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of January 1, 1931 (Collection of statutes of the Workers 'and Peasants' Government of TSSR, 1931, p. 116). Since that time, the second stage in the history of child abandonment and homelessness overcoming started. There were no differences between the concepts of "homeless" and "neglected" in that period. In official documents figured the general concept of "street homelessness". The term "neglect" in conjunction with child homelessness was actively used since 1935. This stage is associated with many factors - dispossession with concomitant kulaks' exile, administrative and party purges, forced resettlement of different categories of citizens and other repressions that has resulted in massive death of people, destruction and hunger, lack of parental care. To our opinion, a major role in the spread of homelessness in TASSR played famine of the early 1930s (Khanipova I.I., 2011). The proof of this are, in particular, the facts that became more frequent in 1933 of tossing children in child institutions, juvenile begging on the streets of the city of Kazan. Despite official statements about the complete elimination of mass homelessness of children, their presence on the streets was a frequent occurrence.

As of October 1, 1933 in the Tatar ASSR were 22 child protective organizations with 2,283 children. Geographically, 18 children's homes were located in the republic regions, and 4 were in the city of Kazan. By September 1, 1934, the number of foster children reached 2328 people. Due to the huge flow of homeless, the existed net of children's homes in the republic was not able to cover all children. The actual number of children from institutions considerably exceeded the number of children due to the staff. The situation with the lack of places in children's homes of TASSR, as well as a lack of living spaces continued in subsequent years. Thus, the village council of Bondyuzhsk in a letter dated August 8, 1935 requested the Regional Children's Commission at the Tatar Central Executive Committee to indicate availability in children's homes of the republic and allow to pass for education 15 orphans living in Bondyuzhsk working village. Repeated appeals of the board of the collective farms of the republic with the aim of placing children on patronage, as well as to the nearby children's institutions of the city of Yelabuga were unsuccessful. Orphanages were overcrowded and the collective farms and the farmers themselves were in financial hardship (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, P-3682, 1/2091, p. 58). Children of collective farmers "temporarily reduced to penury" needed public care, adaptation in collective along with orphan children. Totally 500 children had to be urgently arrange for patronage in the republic. Another 2,471 children of collective farmers also needed help from the state (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, P-3682, 1/2091, p. 67). The organized collection of street children, which were transferred to children's homes or immediately sent to patronage in the regions of the republic, sending to work and study was held in order to struggle against homeless children during 1933-1934, around the cities, particularly in the city of Kazan.

According to the regulations of the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR and the Collective Farm Center of January 16, 1930 "About the conditions of children transfer from institutions for patronage to collective farms" in the collective farms should be sent healthy, disciplined children, expressed themselves a desire to go under guardianship of collective farmers (Utevsky B.S., 1932, p. 108). In practice, the orphanages often tried to transfer for education of the collective farmers undisciplined or sick children. There have been cases when some regional departments of public education, directing orphans on patronage, did not take into account their ethnic origin, whereby the children found

themselves in an alien language environment. In 1934, 44 regions of Tataria participated in patronage. Selective inspections conducted in September 1935, in collective farms, showed that the situation of children, who were under the patronage, was extremely unsatisfactory in the overwhelming majority of collective farms (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, P-3682, 1/2091, p. 81). Children taken by collective farms from orphanages to patronage, starving, had no clothes, beds and bed linens. Most orphans had to live in unheated, unfit for human habitation rooms - in fire sheds, club, and school, because the farm did not provide a flat for a long time or farmers took them to their houses for a short time. Some of the children taken on a collective farms' patronage, but not accommodated in apartments, had to lead a nomadic life, to escape and return to the orphanage. In some regions of the republic (Bugulminsky, Pestrechinsky) because of undue conclusion of agreements between the collective farms and individual farmers on the patronage of children, the last were forced to feed on courtyard, to cadge. Due to poor material and social support, lack of clothes and shoes, many children could not attend school, lapse into crime. Farmers families, who took orphans for education, were usually of many children, but did not have enough good material conditions of life and appearance at the home of one more "mouth" exacerbated a disastrous situation. All the more, as shown by inspection documents, the money monthly due to patronized children was not given in time by District Boards of Public Education (District Board).

Regulation X of All-Tatar Congress of Soviets (1934), adopted on the report of Bashkirov (People's Commissar of Education of TASSR) was devoted to search for ways out of the situation. It obliged the Government to improve radically the educational work in orphanages, to strengthen measures for patronage of homeless children by the families of workers and systematically observe the conditions of their upbringing (Collection of statutes and regulations of the Workers 'and Peasants' Government ATSSR 1935, p. 27-29). In addition, by order of the People's Commissariat of Railways and the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR of November 29, 1933 "About strengthening of work on child homelessness liquidation in rail transport" in 1934 at the Kazan railway station along with the other nodal stations of the country, car receiver for homeless children was opened. Three temporary children's receiver, the task of which was to provide public assistance to children, adaptation in the collective were organized additionally in Kazan. In the reception centres, children could be no more than one month. After this period they were sent to children's institution of the appropriate type (preschool, school or specialized - for children with physical disabilities), or if relatives were alive, returned to the parents or relatives (Collection of resolutions and orders of the USSR, 1935, 32 (474)). After the resolution of 1935 through the reception centres, directly subordinate to the bodies of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) were passed more than 10,500 children (3860 people of which became homeless due to the death of parents, 3183 people - because of heavy material conditions) up to February 1940. On June 1, 1940, there were 1,705 patronized children, 67 of which were subject to taking off from patronage until the end of the year in connection with the achievement of full legal age. Another 896 children needed in the determination of patronage.

3.3 The activities of the state to overcome problems of orphanhood during the third stage of struggle with child homelessness

From the beginning of the Great Patriotic War began the third phase of the history of struggle against child abandonment, which was conditioned by demographic, socio-economic and socio-political factors (Rokutova O.A., 2010, p. 208-210). In 1941-1942, the issue about the placement of unparented children repeatedly discussed by the Government of the USSR and the RSFSR, but had never fully been resolved (State Archive of the Russian Federation, A-2306, 70/5512, p. 20, 65, 77, 85-90). The Secretary of the Tatar Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (CPSU) (b) on propaganda was assigned to solution of issues related to the struggle against child homelessness, as well as monitoring and control of the children's homes of the Tatar Republic (Central Public Archive of Political and Historical Documentation of the Republic of Tatarstan, 522, 1/325, p. 147).

The problem of child homelessness and neglect again worsened due to the sharp increase in the number of orphans. The struggle against them in the rear area was complicated by several factors, including the evacuation process (Krivonozhkina, K. & Khanipova, I. 2013). Having taken a huge amount of evacuated enterprises and institutions, Tataria became a refuge for a significant number of children's homes, boarding schools and other institutions of social education. The number of children's homes during the war years increased from 17 to 113. Governing body of educational institutions, as well as the governing body of the republic, overcoming great difficulties, had to solve organizational problems and issues of material support of orphanages, the public funding of which was minimal and did not cover all the needs of the pupils. Network congestion of orphanages and boarding schools of the Tatar ASSR, recorded by a special commission sent to the republic by Council of People's Commissars RSFS consisting of national security major L.N. Dines and inspector of People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR L.V. Anisimova, contributed to the further growth of homelessness and neglect. According to A.Sh. Kabirova, in the first half of 1942 in Kazan militia detained 1224

children, during the same period in 1943 - 1532, for 1944 - 8756 people, among them homeless were 1061 and neglected - 7695 children (Kabirova, A.Sh., 2011, p. 110-111). Due to the increasing number of homeless children grew the number of juvenile delinquents.

Extensive work on revealing and registration of homeless was carried out in TASSR, first by the teachers-enthusiasts. Employment in enterprises of the republic through the reception centres of the NKVD was suggested as an alternative to street for homeless in later years - teenager of 15-17 years. Nevertheless, this measure had not led to a significant reduction in the number of homeless children. Considerable assistance in the struggle against children homelessness and neglect provided the Komsomol organization of the city. On August 7, 1942 a decree of the Central Committee of All-Union Leninist Young Communist League "About Measures of Komsomol organizations on struggle against child homelessness and for the prevention of child homelessness" was issued, according to which the members of the Komsomol of Tataria were engaged in search of children, made systematic rounds of teenagers concentrations (Kazan railway station, wharf, urban markets and bazaars), revealed street children, sending them in reception centers, carried out explanatory work with parents of homeless children.

In 1945, the Komsomol and the Party organizations, the NKVD bodies of the Tatar ASSR detained 15,785 children, of whom 4032 were homeless, 11 753 - neglected child (State Archive of the Russian Federation, P-9412, 1/28, p. 146). In comparison with 1944 the total number of detainees of homeless children in 1945 decreased by 2 184 people. Meanwhile, the number of neglected has decreased by 3,912 children. Number of homeless on the contrary increased, what was explained by the growth of independent re-evacuation of children to their former places of residence, as well as strengthening of work of the territorial and transport bodies of the NKVD on elimination of homeless children from the street (attics, station, markets, etc.).

In search of a way to solve problems of homelessness and neglect during the war, the Soviet and party organs of the republic once again returned to the idea of revival of Patronage Institute. Because of these measures in Tatarstan in 1943 200 orphans in 1944 245 orphans were adopted and 507 children were covered by guardianship. (Kabirova, A.Sh., 2011, p. 112). However, the number of children taken under patronage was not comparable to the number of homeless children who remained on the street.

4. Conclusions

Study of the problems of homelessness in the first decades of the Soviet state were engaged in both Russian and foreign experts. However analysis of the problem in the multinational region (Tatarstan), the selection of child homelessness stages is seen for the first time. Thus, during 1920-1940s in the Tatar ASSR clearly observed three steps of struggle against child homelessness. On the one hand, the government tried to overcome homelessness and neglect, antisocial phenomenon among children. Struggle against child homelessness, as well as general public care of children, was a part of social policy, was aimed at solution of strategic problems of preservation of the existing system of government. On the other hand, the priority of production problems, funding of child institutions as a last resort, moved aside the real solution of the problem for long decades.

5. Recommendations

The article can be useful in teaching the course of Russian history, for all people interested in modern social processes in the Russian Federation, and also can be used in future research practice on this issue.

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