

ABOUT SOME CASES OF “NON-RETURN” AS A SPECIAL FORM OF EMIGRATION FROM THE USSR DURING THE PERIOD OF “THE COLD WAR”

Alla A. Salnikova¹ and Elena A. Gerasimova²

The relevance of the research problem is determined due to the need of further investigation of the history of protest activity in the USSR as a phenomenon characterizing the maturity level of any civil society, but, unfortunately, to this day still remaining insufficiently studied component of the Soviet political past. The article aims at exploring the phenomenon of “non-return” as a special kind of political emigration from the USSR during the period of “the cold war”. The leading approach to the study of this problem was the hermeneutic interpretation, verification and interpretation of previously not introduced into scientific discourse documents and record keeping, deposited in RGANI (Russian state archive of contemporary history), and materials of Soviet legislation of the analyzed period. The main inferences of the study are the characteristics of these not enough studied forms of protest movement in the USSR, known as the “non-return” of ordinary Soviet citizens, and the activities of the Soviet secret police aimed at preventing it. It is proved that, despite the unofficial ban on travel and various penalties (up to capital punishment) against persons who attempted without permission to leave the country, nevertheless such cases as a special form of political protest took place. The methodology of coping with the specific documentary and narrative sources on the problem under consideration is proposed. The article can be useful for the teaching of political history of Russia, history of the Soviet punitive agencies, law, archival studies and source studies of Russian history, and historical anthropology and psychology.

Keywords: cold war ; illegal emigration ; non-returners ; repressive politics ; political protest.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon, which will be discussed in this article, chronologically coincides with the so-called “third wave” of emigration (Polyan, 2005). “The third wave” is emigration from the USSR during period of “the cold war”, namely from 1948 to 1986. At that time in terms of the bipolar confrontation the external migration flows between the USSR and the West were minimized. To leave the USSR even in business trip abroad or a tourist trip was difficult. Soviet citizens were required to obtain not only the visa of the country they visit, but also so-called “exit” visa that was issued in a special Department of visas and registrations of the Ministry of internal Affairs. Official permission to travel remained to the privilege of the party bureaucracy, ideologically loyal men of science and art and rare “politically mature and morally steady” “ordinary” Soviet citizens (Shevyrin, 2010). To

¹ Professor of the Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia, *E-mail: Alla Salnikova@kpfu.ru*

² PhD Student of the Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia, *E-mail: geresimova@mail.ru*

emigrate freely from the USSR was almost impossible. For pragmatic reasons and under the pressure of the world community, the authority allowed to leave the Soviet Union only to the Jews, who expressed their wish to repatriate to their historical homeland in Israel, and representatives of some other ethnic minorities: the Soviet Germans, Greeks, Armenians. According to researchers' data, during the "third wave" of immigration around 450900 people legally left the Soviet Union (Heitman, 1993). However, ethnicity was not a guarantor for issuing exit visas. In the USSR there was a group of so-called "backtrackers" "those who the government deprived of the right to leave the country.

It is a widespread stereotype that only active opponents of communism, Jews and dreaming of the world stage artists wished to leave the USSR (Scutnev, 2011; Vessie, 2015). However, in the funds deposited in the Russian state archive of contemporary history of the KGB reports in the Central Committee of the CPSU information about the cases of ordinary citizens' break-out from the USSR is preserved. To prevent such runaways and harshly punish "non-returns" up to full and part accusations in high treason with all the ensuing consequences have become a real practice of political organs of Soviet justice (Kudryavtsev and Trusov, 2000) as a special part of the legal system established or used to suppress political opponents by legal and illegal means. In this article the real cases of "ordinary" Soviet people's "non-returns" as a kind of protest activity that occurred during the cold war are studied.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Due to almost total unexplored nature of the designated theme, both in domestic and foreign historiography, primarily the use of the methods of archival heuristics and selection is relevant, which is aimed at identifying and building the complex of different sources to provide representative data subjected to mapping, verification, and hermeneutic reading.

The method of transcription of the source text will allow them to decipher the real content, either directly or latently embedded in them by the authors of the documents.

The method of source studies as a General method of historical knowledge allows us to compare differing and even contradictory information contained in different sources of origin (authority"personal documents), with the purpose of reconstruction of the real historical situation and restoring the portraits of its participants.

The methods of historical anthropology and historical psychology allow us to understand the nature of behavioral strategies, tactics and practices of the pursued and pursuers in the context of historical facts of the era.

RESULTS

Non-returners: who are they?

In addition to cases of legal emigration during the cold war, the widespread practice of not returning to the USSR from approved trips abroad and tourist trips took place. Among the well-known "unreturners" were Rudolf Nureyev, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Galina Vishnevskaya, Mstislav Rostropovich, Maxim Shostakovich, Andrei Tarkovsky and many others.

In conditions of "cold war" renunciation of Soviet citizenship and asking for political asylum in the West has discredited the country in which, it would seem that "a man can breathe so freely" and powers tried to prevent the possibility of escape by all available means. No trip abroad was without the control of the Counterintelligence Department of the KGB. Operational staff were included in delegations travelling abroad and had to prevent leakage of classified information, to identify and examine suspicious links of Soviet citizens with foreigners and prevent attempts to return to their Motherland (Order, 1974). So, in the informative letters to the Central Committee of the CPSU in February 1963 the Chairman of the KGB V. E. Semichastnyi urged not to send the staff of the Symphony orchestra of the Leningrad Philharmonic on tour in capitalist countries. The reason for this was a report of one of the informants that the main conductor E. A. Mravinsky in a private conversation publicly announced his intention not to return to the USSR (RGANI, Fund 5, inventory 30, the case 412).

Voluntary renunciation of Soviet citizenship, in accordance with article 64 of the RSFSR criminal code, was regarded as treason – a particularly dangerous state crime punishable with imprisonment with confiscation of property for a period of 10 to 15 years, in special cases up to the highest measure of punishment – death penalty. In the Soviet Union, the non-returners were waiting for convictions of treason in absentia. The world-famous dancer Rudolf Nureyev in January, 1962 was sentenced in absentia under article 64 to seven years imprisonment with serving of sentence in strict regime colony. The way back for hundreds of non-returners was actually closed. Those who still dared to return to the USSR were sent to special correctional institutions for especially dangerous state criminals.

Mass emigration could cause catastrophic damage to the reputation of the USSR, and every attempt to leave the country illegally was severely punished. However, in special cases, the government itself forcibly deprived of citizenship. According to the law "On citizenship of the Union of Soviet Socialist republics" on 19 August 1938 and further by the same act of 1 December 1978, the deprivation of citizenship was the prerogative of the court. The court was involved in the case, if, as stated in article 816 of the act 1978, a person "has committed acts defaming the high title of citizen of the USSR and detrimental to the prestige or state security of the USSR" (On nationality, 1978, article 816). Most often such a procedure was

subjected to not pleasing for the power writers and dissidents. During the period of «perestroika» meaning rebuilding, some of them rehabilitated. Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1990 by the nominal decree restored the right of citizenship of 22 people, among whom were human rights activists, workers of science and art.

By the land and sea: the cases of ordinary Soviet citizens' non-return:

Most “ordinary” fugitives tried to illegally cross the Soviet border with Germany, Turkey or Iran. The passage westward across the border with the socialist countries was impossible: illegal immigrants at detention without trial were immediately passed to the brotherly USSR. So, in May 1963 while attempting an unauthorized crossing of the Romanian People's Republic to Yugoslavia the citizens of the USSR A. V. Dukatov and V. N. Gavrilov were detained and handed over to the Soviet authorities. During the investigation it was established that Dukatov and Gavrilov tried to cross the Soviet border with Turkey in 1960, but after prophylactic conversation were released. His actions in the investigative documents deposited in RGANI Dukatov explained as following: “In the USSR there is no freedom, and I prefer to starve in freedom than to live in captivity. Abroad I was not looking for easy life, wanted to see how a person can live in a free world, having nothing but his hands, feet and head” (RGANI, Fund 5, inventory 30, the case 412, sheet 37). In the USSR Gavrilov and Dukatov were arrested and charged with treason.

A significant part documents denotes of soldiers' and conscripts' runaways from the border military units. For example, in October 1959, the ordinary commandant of the battalion, stationed in the GDR, E. P. Danchenko with co-workers celebrated his birthday in a German cafe. When returning to the part he lagged behind his comrades, stole the bike standing at the hospital, rode it and then disappeared. Three days later there was a message from the British that Danchenko asked for political asylum in Germany (RGANI, Fund 5, inventory 30, the case 312).

We studied archival documents testifying that in such cases, the Soviet secret service in all possible ways tried to return the fugitive home. Dialogue with the country, where there was an escape, usually lined up according to a certain principle: the border guards of both countries were often able to negotiate and exchange of fugitives and soldiers. So, defected to Iran in June 1956, Sergeant A. I. Sukharev was offered to be exchanged to Iranian Sergeant Melehi Huseyn of RGANI, Fund 5, inventory 30, case 176). It acted in a similar way for other soldiers who have escaped from a place of service and crossed the border, for example, L. V. Bunina, V. F. Saburov (RGANI, Fund 5, inventory 30, the case 176, 277). After forced return of such fugitives the prosecution was expected not only by article 247 of the criminal code of the RSFSR – the desertion, but the notorious article 64 “ treason. Anatoly Marchenko, a famous dissident, author of the acclaimed book about the

post-Stalin political camps "My testimony", also got into the Dubravlag after a failed attempt to cross the border with Iran. He was charged with treason and imprisoned in a special colony for especially dangerous state criminals (Marchenko, 2005).

Relations with Western countries and the US remained tense, and intelligence services of the capitalist countries tried to use every opportunity to discredit the USSR. Archival documents indicate that Soviet residents sometimes had to respond quickly to the removal from Germany of Soviet deserters. In the process of inquiry it was often revealed that the escapees gave to foreign intelligence information of a military nature known to them (RGANI, Fund 5, inventory 30, the case 312).

In the desire to leave the USSR citizens were sometimes invented extremely sophisticated ways. In 2012, to the screens of the country the Russian documentary "One ocean" came (directed by Alexei Litvintsev). This is a real story about the escape of Soviet, and later Canadian and Israeli scientist–oceanographer Slava Kurilov. In December 1974 he, being on the tourist cruise ship "Soviet Union", jumped off the side of the ship near the Philippines and was in the open ocean over two days. From the Philippines he was deported to Canada and there at his request was granted Canadian citizenship.

Kurilov was not the only one who dared to cross the Maritime border. At Night on the 23rd of March 1958, former warden of the Batumi prison V. P. Lukanov near the village of Sarpi (joint land and sea borders with Turkey) crossed the river on the Turkish coast by swimming. According to archival documents, the command of the frontier did not breach the Maritime boundary by swimming in winter conditions. The main forces were concentrated on the overlapping land boundaries, and Lukanov meanwhile literally sailed away from the country (RGANI, Fund 5, inventory 30, case 277).

In May 1963 KGB initiated a criminal case under the article 64 of the RSFSR criminal code in respect of the student of 5th (final) course of the VGIK, V. L. Smirnov. In the process of investigation it was established that Smirnov and student of the same Institute Baliev were taken on the board of the ship "Simferopol" by order of the chief fishing expedition for the filming of a documentary about the life of fishermen. At night from 13 to 14 March 1963 during their journey from Alaska to the Gulf by the Straits of Unimak at a distance of 5 miles offshore the disappearance of Smirnov was discovered, and astern starboard imposed by the nodes of the rope, lowered to the water. From the cabin, where Smirnov lived, a part of his stuff and a folder with documents and money was lost (RGANI, Fund 5, inventory 30, the case 412).

Of course, we should not think that all of these runaways have been a conscious form of direct political protest, especially when we talk about escapes of the representatives of the Soviet power structures. Romantic and illusory perceptions

of young people about “capitalist Paradise”, which were inspired by the means of Western propaganda, played important role in these cases. However, the almost complete absence of spontaneity, careful planning and clearly stated, politically sound arguments of such runaways can indicate their obvious political awareness and protest.

DISCUSSIONS

The history of emigration from the USSR started to be investigated mainly in the post-Soviet years as a part of global process of emigration from Russia in general. The most controversial among researchers is the question of periodization and the concept of “emigration waves”. So, P. Polian has identified and described four waves of emigration from the USSR from 1918 to 1922; from 1941 to 1944; from 1948 to 1986; and from 1986 to the present (Polian, 2005). The origins of Soviet emigration, its political and cultural aspects explored I. E. Semochkina (2007). Professor of history at the University of Colorado (Colorado State University) S. Chatman (Sidney Heitman) was one of the first who reviewed the priority areas and the number of Soviet emigration during the cold war (Heitman, 1993). Emigration as a particular form of protest activity was investigated by A. V. Scutnev (2011). However, insufficient and somewhat one-sided source provision of these pieces of work caused some limitations to the inferences, making the study outlined in this article relevant.

CONCLUSION

Thus, in this study the documents and archives, first involved in the scientific discourse were introduced and analyzed, which allows us to trace the specifics of the illegal, not sanctioned by the state and violating the legislation, ways of emigration from the USSR during the cold war as a specific kind of dissent. The most common ways of illegal immigration are revealed, they are: the rejection of the return and request for political asylum in the capitalist countries, on the one hand, and cases of illegal border crossing, on the other; the concrete examples of such shoots. It is proved that, despite the singularity of these cases, they clearly showed not only the absence of a desired by power one-mindedness in the Soviet Union, but also the miscalculations of the Soviet secret police, intended to erect “iron curtain” around the “most free” country in the world. Our study highlighted the prospects of using now open for access documents of special services for further study of the history of suppression of the dissent in the USSR and “non-normative” behavior of Soviet citizens, including “ordinary” members of Soviet society. The unique content of these documents and the development of new methods of hermeneutic reading, verification and interpretation are an essential foundation for the investigation of the so-called “catacomb” history of Soviet society, issues that were not reflected in other sources.

Recommendations

The article is of interest to specialists in the field of political history of Russia, history of the Soviet punitive agencies, law, archival studies and source studies of Russian history, and historical anthropology.

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