
ВОПРОСЫ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ И ФЕДЕРАТИВНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ

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ВОПРОСЫ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ И ФЕДЕРАТИВНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ

Научный журнал

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ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОСТИ ПО ПРОТИВОДЕЙСТВИЮ ПРЕСТУПНОСТИ В ГОДЫ ВЕЛИКОЙ ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННОЙ ВОЙНЫ 1941-1945 ГГ.

В статье представлены результаты анализа опыта организованного вовлечения местного населения в процесс пресечения преступной деятельности. Исследование проводилось на примере Среднего Поволжья СССР, которое в годы Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945 гг. представляло собой единый экономический район. Особое значение снижения количества преступлений было обусловлено тем, что в военное время центральные органы власти СССР, а также крупнейшие оборонно-промышленные предприятия были сосредоточены в городах Куйбышеве и Ульяновске. В связи с большими кадровыми потерями в полиции власти призвали общественность помочь предотвратить преступления. На территории Среднего Поволжья действовали бригады содействия полиции и отряды охраны общественного порядка, имевшие право не только следить за соблюдением общественного порядка, но и задерживать преступников. Общая численность таких общественных формирований в Среднем Поволжье составляла более 30 тысяч человек. Охранные функции в сельской местности взяли на себя отряды народного ополчения и специально созданные истребительные батальоны, численность которых составляла несколько десятков тысяч человек. Членство в этих общественных организациях было добровольным. Каждый член такой организации прошел курс юридической подготовки, физической, боевой и строевой подготовки. Результатом мобилизации гражданского населения на противодействие преступности стала относительно спокойная криминогенная обстановка, а также снижение преступлений против личности по сравнению с довоенным периодом.

Ключевые слова: СССР, Среднее Поволжье, уголовная преступность, милиция.

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THE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF THE MIDDLE VOLGA REGION OF THE USSR AND ITS FIGHT AGAINST CRIME DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1941-1945

The article presents the results of the analysis of the experience of organized involvement of the local population in the process of suppression of criminal crime. The study was conducted on the example of the Middle Volga region of the USSR, which during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 was a single economic region. The particular importance of reducing the number of crimes was due to the fact that in wartime the central authorities of the USSR, as well as the largest defense industrial enterprises, were concentrated in the cities of Kuibyshev and Ulyanovsk. Due to the large personnel losses in the police, the authorities called on the public to help prevent crimes. On the territory of the Middle Volga region, police assistance brigades and public order protection groups functioned, which had the right not only to monitor the observance of public order, but also to detain criminals. The total number of such public formations in the Middle Volga region was over 30 thousand people. The security functions in rural areas were assumed by the people's militia detachments and specially created fighter battalions, the number of which was several tens of thousands of people. Membership in these public organizations was voluntary. Each member of such an organization took a course of juridical training, physical, combat and drill training. The result of the mobilization of the civilian population to counteract crime was a relatively calm criminal situation, as well as a decrease in crimes against the person compared to the pre-war period.

Key words: *USSR, Middle Volga region, criminal crime, police.*

Introduction. The years of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 became a serious test for many residents of the USSR. An increase in the working day, a decrease in the income of the population, the need to change their place of residence due to evacuation created conditions for the deterioration of the criminal

situation. The process and results of the mobilization of society to counteract criminal crime in difficult socio-economic conditions are of particular relevance not only for historical science, but also for modern law enforcement practices and improving the level of legal knowledge of citizens.

The studied territory – the Middle Volga region, which included the Kuibyshev and Ulyanovsk regions, during the Great Patriotic War was a single economic region of the RSFSR. In the cities, industry was concentrated, working for the needs of defense. Up to 70% of the population lived in rural areas and were employed in the agricultural sector. Large traffic flows passed through the Middle Volga region – river communication along the Volga River, as well as the V.V. Kuibyshev railway, which connected the central regions of the country with the Ural and Siberian regions [7. P. 58]. Also in the first months of the war, the cities of Kuibyshev and Ulyanovsk became the place of evacuation of the USSR government, central executive and judicial authorities, embassies of foreign states, and the city of Kuibyshev acquired the unofficial name of the "reserve capital of the USSR". Therefore, it was very important for the state to maintain a prosperous criminal situation on the territory of the Middle Volga region.

The main historical sources for the research work were previously unpublished archival documents from the funds of the Samara Regional State Archive of Socio-Political History and the State Archive of the Contemporary History of the Ulyanovsk region. For the most part, these are documents of the police, as well as regional committees of the CPSU(b).

1. Personnel of the police in the Middle Volga region during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. According to the practice of combating criminal crime established in the USSR at the end of the 1930s, the police's area of responsibility included the suppression of criminal acts, the protection of public order, patrol duty, and the detention of criminals. Before the war, the police of the Middle Volga region employed more than two thousand employees. The police system included departments of criminal investigation, combating economic crimes (combating the theft of socialist property), district commissioners who were responsible for observing the rule of law in the territory entrusted to them, and street patrol units. The structure of the police and the number of employees made it possible to prevent the deterioration of the criminal situation, to stop the development of violent and economic crime in the region.

In the first months of the war, most of the experienced police officers voluntarily went to the war fronts. Thus, in the first two weeks of the war, 270 police officers of the Kuibyshev region went to the front, which amounted to 20% of the total number of employees. By September, the number of conscripts in the active army amounted to 570 people [3. P. 98]. More than 40% of police officers left the territory of the Ulyanovsk region for the active army [5. P. 67]. To mitigate the consequences of the shortage of police officers, the working day was increased from 8 to 12 hours a day. In addition, all police personnel refused to take days

off before the war. However, this did not bring tangible results. All vacant places were occupied by older people who came to the service from 45 to 51 years old. However, in addition to their advanced age, these cadres did not have the necessary service experience. As a result, most of the newly hired employees left the service, unable to cope with the volume of work and the tasks facing them. By 1943, the turnover of personnel in the police of the Middle Volga region reached 50% of the total personnel (1).

The general decline in the number and deterioration of the professionalism of police officers in the Middle Volga region was complicated by the increased importance of the territory for the entire USSR. Thus, by January 1942, the number of residents of the cities of Kuibyshev and Ulyanovsk had doubled compared to the pre-war period. The largest defense industrial enterprises, cultural values, research organizations, as well as bodies and institutions of the central executive and judicial authorities were evacuated to the territory of the Middle Volga region. Only these conditions required a significant increase in the number of police officers. For example, on December 9, 1941 the Ulyanovsk City Committee of the CPSU (b) sent a petition to the Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Merkulov with a request to increase the additional allocation to the staff of the city police department of the positions of deputy head of the Department for operational Work and senior operational commissioner of the department for combating economic crimes (2).

Despite the significant shortage of personnel in the police, the regions of the Middle Volga region assisted in staffing the police territories liberated from Nazi occupation. For example, the NKVD Directorate for the Kuibyshev region in June 1942 asked the Ulyanovsk City Party Committee to select 5 people from among Komsomol girls with an education of at least seven years of school to send them to work in the NKVD bodies of the liberated regions (3). In 1943 the Astradamovsky district police department of the Ulyanovsk region received a request for the provision of three qualified people from the district police commissioner and above for the recruitment of police bodies of republics and regions liberated from enemy troops. Preference was given to those workers whose relatives lived in the liberated territory. Responsibility for the professional skills of the expelled workers was assigned to the head of the district police department (4). By 1944 the number of police officers recalled from the Middle Volga region to serve in the regions liberated from the invaders has acquired large volumes. For example, in 1944, in the Ulyanovsk region, out of 29 replaced senior police officers, 14 were seconded to the liberated regions. In total, 28,5% of the operational staff of the police units of the Kuibyshev and Ulyanovsk regions were transferred to the staff of the employees' bodies. As a result, such a large number of seconded workers caused tension in solving the daily tasks facing the police. Having taken care of this problem, the Ulyanovsk Regional Committee of the

CPSU(b) was forced to send a letter to the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs with a request to stop the recall of police officers from the Ulyanovsk region (5).

Naturally, with a significant shortage of the number of police officers, the internal order of the service was significantly violated by multiple personnel changes. For example, cases have become frequent when the authorities did not warn the policeman about the upcoming duty, or the policeman could be on duty for several days in a row (6). The situation was further aggravated by local party organizations that tried, without the knowledge of the regional police departments, either to transfer policemen from one district to another, or even to move them to work in executive authorities and economic organizations. Most of the police officers had a secondary professional education and were valued as heads of civil institutions. The reshuffle of employees took place until April 1943, when by a joint decision the regional committees of the CPSU (b) and the regional police departments banned such actions without obtaining their own sanctions (7).

Despite all the efforts of local authorities, it was not possible to completely eliminate the shortage of personnel in police units. For example, in 1944, out of 100 people who applied for admission to the service, only 69 people passed the entrance tests. The training of new personnel was also difficult. Due to the military conditions, the number of police educational institutions in the USSR has halved, and the number of cadets studying in them has decreased fourfold. The Kuibyshev Regional Police School, which provided training for the Kuibyshev and Ulyanovsk regions, was also closed [8. P. 11]. A way out of this situation was found in the system of internal training of employees, which was carried out by the most experienced senior police officers. For example, in the Ulyanovsk region, internal training and retraining of employees was carried out through a system of short-term courses, permanent educational circles and thematic seminars. To improve the professional competencies of the police officers, a commander's training lasting 8 hours was carried out weekly. In 1944, 373 police officers were trained using a system of short - term courses in the Ulyanovsk region (8).

Summing up the analysis of the personnel of the police, it should be noted the following. On January 1, 1943, 870 policemen worked in the Ulyanovsk region instead of 949 (9). By January 1, 1945, their number had decreased to 823 people. At the same time, 205 police officers had up to one year of work experience, 419 had worked for less than two years. Thus, more than 75,8% of the police officers of the Ulyanovsk region were represented by new employees who did not have the necessary experience in combating crime. Such cadres required a lot of work to improve their professional skills. In addition, due to the extreme shortage of personnel, the police of the Ulyanovsk region was staffed by a large number of older people. So then, 256 employees were over 40 years old, 154 employees were over 50 years old (10). In the Kuibyshev region, the situation with police

personnel was also very difficult. By January 1945, the shortage of personnel was 300 policemen. More than 60% of the police personnel were unskilled young employees. In addition, 589 older people served among the policemen (11). Thus, throughout the entire period of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 in the territory of the Middle Volga region, there was both a shortage of the required staff of police officers and a decrease in their professional composition. Unable to replenish the staff of police officers already in the first months of the war, the authorities were forced to turn to the civilian population for help in carrying out the tasks facing the police.

2. Police assistance brigades and public order protection groups. In the pre-war period in the USSR there was an experience of involving the public in the fight against criminal crime. At the grassroots organizations of the police – departments and district departments, since 1932, police assistance brigades have been created (12). In the documents, the brigades were referred to abbreviated as "brigadmil", and the members of the brigades were called "brigadmilletts". Members of the brigade could count on the issuance of weapons at the time of duty, which provided for the need for special training [6. P. 123]. Members of the brigades participated in detours of settlements to identify criminals and bandits, during searches as witnesses or guards, were on duty at police stations, carried out guard duty, escorted the arrested, and also observed order in places of mass gathering of citizens [4. P. 1342].

Police assistance brigades were important in the conditions of personnel starvation. Already in September 1941, the Kuibyshev Regional Department of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs insisted on the immediate reformation of the police assistance brigades due to the fact that a certain part of the public was mobilized into the active army. Constant educational work was carried out with the members of the teams. The police did not disclose operational techniques, but taught them the basics of Soviet law, methods of operational surveillance, identification and detention of violators of public order and suspicious persons. Members of the brigades regularly attended physical and rifle training classes. In addition, in wartime conditions, the police assistance brigades were considered as a school for replenishing the police personnel reserve, especially for ordinary and junior commanders [2. P. 278]. In the Middle Volga region, the work on the creation of brigades was more successful in cities. Thus, by March 1942, 53 members of brigades were working in Ulyanovsk at the city administration and three police departments. Seven of them were constantly employed in the street patrol service, the rest were on duty in shifts at police stations. With the help of police officers and independently, members of brigades in the city of Ulyanovsk detained more than 100 criminals who committed criminally punishable acts during the period from July 1941 to February 1942 (13).

A prerequisite for the creation of a police assistance brigade was its organization at the district police department. In large cities of the Middle Volga

region – in Kuibyshev, Ulyanovsk, Syzran there were several police departments, and in rural areas of the Middle Volga region departments were located in district centers. As a result, the police assistance brigade could carry out its functions only within the boundaries of the district center, and all villages that were part of the district remained outside their authority. At the same time, more than 70% of the population of the Middle Volga region lived in rural areas, and therefore, this territory had to be subjected to tighter supervision. The solution was found in the creation of public order protection groups. They had similar powers and responsibilities to the police assistance brigades. Public order protection groups were formed and operated not at police stations, but at settlements, at large industrial enterprises and even collective farms. First of all, this made it possible to neutralize the lack of personnel in the police in rural areas. Secondly, this was also the reason for the massive involvement of civilians in the fight against crime.

During the first 6 months of 1942, public order groups were organized in all cities and villages on the territory of the Kuibyshev region. The total number of members of these groups was 15970 people. In total, they detained more than two thousand persons who committed crimes and offenses. Among the detainees, 540 people committed criminal offenses, 459 deserted from the Red Army, 332 people evaded mobilization into the active army, 787 people did not have documents with them and violated the current passport regime. Thus, in June 1942, in the Bolshechernigovsky district of the Kuibyshev region, members of the public order protection group detained two unknown persons who did not have documents with them. During the investigative measures, it was established that both were deserters, had firearms with them and committed a number of robberies of villagers (14).

By the beginning of the summer months of 1943, public order protection groups were established in all settlements of the Ulyanovsk region. 5,653 people were involved in these groups. During 1943, 698 thieves, 79 hooligans, 127 deserters from the Red Army and 793 people who committed other criminal acts were detained by members of public order protection groups within the borders of the Ulyanovsk region. By January 1945, in the Ulyanovsk region, the number of public order protection groups amounted to over 7 thousand people. In 1944, they were able to detain 2,246 criminals and violators of public order (15).

In addition to the main tasks of daily patrolling the area and monitoring the protection of public order, members of the police assistance brigades participated in mass verification activities against the population. The need for such events was caused by a number of circumstances. Firstly, large internal migrations of the population that occurred during the war, evacuation, mobilization of villagers to work in industry did not allow in all cases to carry out the correct registration actions. Consequently, the police and executive authorities could not have the correct information about the number and composition of residents living within the boundaries of the settlement. Secondly, during the

verification of documents, persons who were wanted for committing criminal offenses were identified. Thirdly, mass verification measures made it possible to identify deserters and evaders from military service, who posed a particular danger to the population. Desertion and evasion of military service during the war were regarded as a criminal offense, therefore deserters, evading justice, led an illegal lifestyle. In addition, in the conditions of the planned and distributive economy of the USSR, the deserter could not count on receiving or purchasing food and clothing. As a result, most of the deserters embarked on the path of theft and robbery, committing serious criminal offenses. Deserters often gathered in criminal gangs that terrorized villages, robbed and killed local residents, and committed violent crimes. Considering that the average number of policemen in the territory of the Kuibyshev and Ulyanovsk regions did not exceed 2,3 thousand people, it was impossible to carry out checks of the population exclusively by the police. In January 1942, the police assistance brigades and public order protection groups were focused on fighting deserters. One of the reasons was the unflattering assessment of the first secretary of the Ulyanovsk City Committee of the CPSU(b) Grebnev in relation to the police, who could not organize the public to identify persons who evaded mobilization. As a result of the work carried out, more than 60 deserters were identified in Ulyanovsk in two months of 1942 (16). In 1944, a widespread population check was carried out in the Kuibyshev region. More than a thousand police officers and more than 15 thousand members of police assistance brigades and public order protection groups took part in it. During several days of verification measures, they managed to identify and detain 138 deserters and more than 3 thousand people who evaded conscription into the active army (17).

Members of police assistance brigades and public order protection groups were rewarded with awards and prizes for their successful work. For example, in 1943, 19 people were encouraged in the Kuibyshev region, and 7 people were encouraged in the Ulyanovsk region. The most significant cases of detention of criminals were covered in local newspapers. Many members of the police assistance brigades in the post-war period received the necessary professional education and joined law enforcement agencies. It should be taken into account that the police assistance brigades and public order protection groups had sufficiently broad powers to actively suppress crimes, in particular, they had the right to detain persons suspected of committing criminal acts, had the necessary weapons, and had legal knowledge. The positive experience of both public organizations was highly appreciated, and in the post-war period they continued their activities. In the 1960s, they were transformed into public order squads, and their members became known as "vigilantes".

3. Fighter battalions and militia units. Fighter battalions and militia units were originally created not to fight crime, but to participate in defensive military

operations. However, the territory of the Middle Volga region was not frontline, so both organizations were used to strengthen preventive anti-criminal measures.

Fighter battalions began to be created in the Kuibyshev and Ulyanovsk regions from June 30, 1941 (18). The fighter battalion was an independent combat unit, numbering 100-200 people. The battalion consisted of two to five fighter groups of 10 to 15 people, communication and warning departments, intelligence and surveillance departments, as well as a sanitary department of 5-7 people. The age of the battalion's fighters ranged from 18 to 45 years. They were subordinate to the district departments of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. The battalion was assigned transport at the rate of 1 horse in harness for 3-4 people, 1 car for 15 people. Weapons were issued to the battalion's soldiers at the threat of the outbreak of hostilities, or when the battalion was on patrol. A 60-hour training program was also compiled, which included both drill, physical and rifle training, and 19-hour tactical classes (19). In December 1941, the Kuibyshev Regional Committee of the CPSU(b) and the regional executive committee issued a repeated resolution on the organization of fighter battalions. It stipulated that the Kuibyshev region is not a frontline, therefore, fighter battalions of permanent basing will not be created. According to this resolution, for example, on December 14, 1941, the Astradamovsky district committee of the CPSU(b) adopted a resolution on the creation of a fighter battalion in the area with a total of 90 people from communists, Komsomol members and trade union members. As transport, the detachment used 30 horses allocated from collective farms, machine and tractor stations, party organizations and executive authorities (20).

Separate fighter battalions were formed in the cities. For example, by December 30, 1941, 3 fighter battalions were formed in Ulyanovsk. The first of them was formed from 39 organizations and included 200 people. There was a fighter battalion of 100 people at the Ulyanovsk railway station and a battalion of 200 people in the Zavolzhsky district of Ulyanovsk, formed from 200 workers of the largest defense plant No. 3 named Volodarsky (21). Fighters of fighter battalions took special combat training classes for 3 hours 3 times a week on the job. Initially, fighter battalions, as paramilitary volunteer formations, were created to protect important military and economic objects of the rear, to combat sabotage and reconnaissance groups of the enemy. However, the territory of the Middle Volga region was not frontline. Therefore, by the autumn of 1941, the main task of the fighter battalions was patrolling the territories and assisting the police in maintaining public order (22).

Units of the People's militia also carried out counteraction to crime on the territory of the Ulyanovsk region during the Great Patriotic War. Despite the colossal workload, even the militia's security service at night did not exempt them from their main work (23). In the Middle Volga region, the people's militia was created in the period from July 8 to August 10. The Kuibyshev regional Committee of the CPSU(b) made calculations in which the number of the militia

was to be 1 battalion (600 people) to a rural or urban area. However, by the end of July, the average number of militia in each district reached a unit of a regiment consisting of 3 battalions. By about August 10-12, the formation of the militia was completed. Combat training classes were conducted with members of the people's militia units. One of the main tasks of the people's militia in the Middle Volga region was the protection of the most important objects of state power, as well as important economic objects: warehouses and barns, currents, crops in the fields (24). The militia carried out watch duty outside of working hours in those places designated by Soviet and party organizations, as well as by the command of the people's militia units together with the heads of collective farms, state farms, machine and tractor stations, various enterprises, institutions and organizations. Groups of 4-6 people were mainly used on duty. For example, in the Kuzovatovsky district, by the beginning of August 1941, 44 units of the people's militia with a total of 1,600 people were created. They took the oil depot, the railway, the institutions of the district center, collective farm fields, warehouses and farms under protection. In the Melekessky district, militia fighters were used to protect crops in the field. In the Staro-Mainsky district, the militia took the buildings of the bank, the district council of workers' deputies, and some other important objects under protection. In addition, the militia carried out night duty at the place of work. The militia carried out guard duty in accordance with the requirements of the charter of the garrison service of the Red Army (25). According to the resolution of the plenum of the Supreme Court of the USSR of July 28, 1941, upon joining the people's militia, a person became liable for committing any crime to the court of a military tribunal, not a civil court, and for violating the established order in the units of the people's militia was responsible under the provision on military crimes (26).

The fact of heavy security against the background of a reduction in the number of police officers gives reason to talk about the positive impact of the activities of the people's militia on the prevention of criminal offenses. One way or another, the People's militia influenced property crimes and hooliganism to reduce property crimes and hooliganism (27).

It should be noted that the fighters of the People's militia and fighter battalions, in addition to protection, performed other important functions. For example, in cities and large towns, the militia was responsible for overseeing the blackout. In wartime, violation of the blackout regime was equated to a criminal offense, since the light in the windows at night could serve as a pointer for enemy aircraft. Fighters of the fighter battalions, who knew the area where they lived, took part in constant patrolling of the vast forests of the Middle Volga region. This helped to improve the fight against deserters, as well as with recidivist criminals who were wanted. In general, it was the observation work of the people's militia units and fighter battalions that was extremely necessary for the police. For example,

in 1942-1943, more than 300 wanted persons were detained by members of two public organizations on the territory of the Middle Volga region.

The successful actions of the extermination battalions and units of the people's militia were covered in the local periodical press. For example, in the Kuibyshev regional newspaper "Volzhskaya Commune" for July 28, 1943, an article was published in which it was reported about the raids carried out by the militia in Kuibyshev. Thus, the militia identified yards and households that were not prepared for possible fires during enemy air raids, and corrected the situation. A month later, the same newspaper published an article about the combing of forests by fighter battalions in the Samara Luka area, where they managed to detain 18 persons previously wanted for criminal offenses.

Conclusion. During the harsh years of the Great Patriotic War, there was a steady practice of involving the population in the fight against criminal crime. As a result, the state added two organizations to the police that actively counteract crime – these are police assistance brigades and public order protection groups, as well as two more responsible for preventive measures – these are fighter battalions and militia units. The effectiveness of the organized work of the civilian population to combat the spread of criminal crime was to improve the criminogenic situation in the Middle Volga region. Thus, in the Kuibyshev region, the total number of crimes decreased by 31% during the war years. In the Ulyanovsk region, the number of assaults during the same period decreased by 57,9%, premeditated murders decreased by 50%, property crimes by 65%. At the same time, the detection rate of registered crimes by the police increased from 73,2% to 84,8% (28). In addition to the real effect, the results were also brought by a massive improvement in the legal literacy of the population. In the conditions of modern urbanization, the constant increase in the urban population and the growth of crime associated with these processes, the studied experience of attracting the population to the active suppression and prevention of criminal crime can be of significant benefit in normalizing the criminogenic situation.

NOTES:

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