

ACTIVITY OF STATE AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS OF KRASNOYARSK KRAI ON THE PREPARATION OF A MEETING OF DEMOBILIZED SOLDIERS IN 1945-1948

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Abstract: *The relevance of the problem stated in the article is explained by the fact that the transcripts and decisions of party and soviet authorities of Krasnoyarsk Krai on meeting of the demobilized soldiers of the Red Army after the end of World War II were collected and analyzed for the first time. The article examines the socio-economic processes in the Soviet Union of the post-war era, associated with the mass demobilization of the Red Army personnel in 1945-1948, since the number of the army in these years decreased from 11 million to 2.8 million people. The leading method in the study of this problem is the historical method, thanks to which it was possible to show that the specialists returning to peaceful labor were extremely in demand in the context of the reconversion of the national economy. On the basis of studying the documents of the State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, it became known that state and public organizations of the USSR regions, including the Krasnoyarsk Krai, systematically and purposefully lined up work on the socio-economic arrangement of demobilized soldiers. The documents of the party and Soviet bodies noted the need for a solemn meeting of the victorious soldiers and solving their housing and everyday problems, as well as assistance in finding employment. The article proved that, despite the financial and material difficulties of the postwar period, the crop failure and the famine that followed it, the population of the Krasnoyarsk Krai adequately met demobilized soldiers who heroically defended the independence and sovereignty of the state. The materials of the article suggest practical significance for university professors of historical specialties.*

Keywords: demobilization, reconversion, restoration of the national economy, World War II, USSR.

After the end of World War II, the army of the Soviet Union totaled more than 11 million people, which was redundant in peacetime. On the other hand, it was necessary to revive the economy destroyed by the war and move on to peaceful construction, which required a significant number of workers. In connection with this, on June 23, 1945, the Law on the demobilization of thirteen ages of the personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces was adopted. In the summer of 1945, the entire rank and file and sergeant staff over 45 years old, as well as officers over 50 years old, were dismissed from the army. Since September 1945, after the end of the war with Japan, the age of soldiers and sergeants discharged into the reserve was lowered to 30 years, and military personnel who had

valuable specialties for the restoration of the national economy were also dismissed. In the period 1946-1948. older officers who had no military education, soldiers and sergeants over 20 years old were fired from the army. The demobilization process was completed mainly in 1948. In total, 8.5 million people were dismissed from the army and the number of the army decreased to 2 million 874 thousand people¹.

The demobilized soldiers were transported to the place of residence at the state expense, receiving a one-time monetary reward, the amount of which depended on the period of service in the army during the war, they were provided with a complete set of uniforms and shoes, and on the way - with food.

Responsibility for the welfare of demobilized soldiers fell on the military distribution commandant's offices and military-food items. After all, the soldiers fired into the reserve had to travel more than one thousand kilometers to the house, and about 300 special military-food points were created all along the way. During the years of the WWII, the military-food items have accumulated vast experience: they accepted and served over 300 thousand military trains and military-sanitary trains².

According to the state decisions, the regional authorities and the management of the enterprises were obliged to organize a solemn meeting of the victorious soldiers, to provide work to demobilized people within a month from the date of their arrival at the place of residence not lower than their posts before mobilization, and provide demobilized living space and fuel. The collective farm boards were to render all possible assistance to the peasants demobilized from the army in acquiring the economy and in arranging them at work.

Materials and methods

The article was prepared on the basis of studying the documents of the State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. The authors analyzed the transcripts and decisions of the party-economic assets, meetings of the party and Soviet authorities, primary party organizations, which took specific measures to implement the decisions of the highest authorities. The source was also the materials of the newspaper "Krasnoyarsk Worker", which reflected the specific actions of official and public

¹ S.I. Linets, A.S. Linets, M.V. Krat, N.D. Nikolayenko, O.B. Maslova, "The work of the state security bodies of Stavropolsky krai during the Great Patriotic War and in the post-war period", in *Astra Salvensis*, 2018, vol. 6, no. 12, p. 73-82.

² V.V. Usmanov, *Calling Bell, Burning Sword with Fire*, Parus-M, Kurgan, 2003.

organizations of meetings of the demobilized soldiers, difficulties in organizing these meetings, the opinion of the public and individual demobilized, revealed positive and negative experience in solving this problem in the regions and localities of the Krai.

The methodological basis of the study was a set of analytical approaches, the principles of historicism and consistency, scientific analysis and synthesis. Methodologically, the work is based on the combined experience of socio-historical research.

Results and discussion

The problems of economic recovery in the USSR in the war and postwar years are devoted to a significant layer of scientific, journalistic literature, summarizing works on the history of the CPSU, the history of the USSR, and the economy. However, the authors mainly cover the issues of the restoration of the national economy in the context of party leadership. With all the diversity of published literature, the least studied aspects of the history of the postwar period is organization of the demobilized soldiers and officers of the Red Army meeting. The work of the party-Soviet and economic bodies was carried out tremendously, both materially and socially and morally, as the controversial situation was taken into account, reflected in the joy of victory and the pain of loss. In the works of historians who studied the postwar period, the meetings of the first echelons with demobilized soldiers, their role in the restoration of the national economy are mentioned^{3,4}.

Party-Soviet and public bodies of the country, including the Krasnoyarsk Krai, were faced with the task of organizing a meeting of valiant warriors-winners. At the XIII session of the Krasnoyarsk Regional Executive Committee on July 4, 1945, measures were developed to ensure the meeting of fellow countrymen - defenders of the Motherland. In his speech, the Secretary of the Regional Committee of the CPSU(b) A.B. Aristov noted that it is necessary to prepare well for the admission of demobilized front-line soldiers, to create all conditions for them in acquiring their own household and employment assistance: "...so that every warrior, coming out of the car, immediately felt that he came home,

³ M.R. Strugova, Demobilization of Warriors in the Krasnodar Territory 1945-1948: Adaptation to Peaceful Life. Russian society and wars of the 20th century, in Materials of the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference, March 15–16, Kubankino, Krasnodar, 2004, p. 226-231.

⁴ V.V. Usmanov, Calling Bell, Burning Sword with Fire, Parus-M, Kurgan, 2003.

that he was greeted as a hero and protector”.⁵ On July 6, 1945, the main regional newspaper *Krasnoyarsk Worker* was published under the heading “We will provide a warm and joyful meeting to our countrymen – the valiant defenders of the Motherland!”. The issue covered the materials of the XIII session of the Krasnoyarsk Regional Executive Committee, the exploits of Krasnoyarsk citizens on the frontline and labor frontiers, the number called on the workers of the region to thank the defenders of the Motherland in full. The issue of July 17 was devoted to the preparation of a meeting of fellow countrymen under the slogan “Welcome, dear defenders of the Motherland, to your native land”. It described the diverse work of labor collectives in organizing meetings, repairing houses and apartments, fuel storage, and the work of the commissions on meeting demobilized. The activities of Soviet, party, trade union, Komsomol organizations for the registration of vacant posts were covered in order to immediately offer those who returned to this or that job. So, people in the Chastoostrovsky area already waited for the former school principal Tisurin, having received from him a telegram about returning. They also waited for the teachers Potemkin, Kuznetsov, Aslamov, who were selected as school principals. Altogether, on January 1, 1946, 441 demobilized teachers returned to the schools of the region, but they only somewhat weakened the staff shortage in the education system, the shortage of teaching staff remained⁶.

Based on the decisions of the session of the regional executive committee, the city and district party-Soviet authorities of the Krasnoyarsk Krai created special commissions to meet demobilized people and developed specific measures for meeting their fellow countrymen. The plans outlined measures for equipping premises at railway stations for rest and catering, repairing hotels, and organizing special stalls for selling essential items to them, so that the fighters could return with gifts to the family. The demobilized soldiers were provided priority service demobilized in canteens, shops, cinemas and theaters, as well as housing and fuel. In addition, enterprises and organizations were assigned certain days of transport for the timely transportation of fighters from the station to the place of residence⁷.

They prepared thoroughly for the meeting: they repaired residential premises, houses, decorated with festive flower garlands stations, hotels,

⁵ A.B. Aristov, Report at the XIII session of the regional Soviet of Workers' Deputies, in *Krasnoyarsk Worker*, 1945, July 6.

⁶ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. P-26. Op. 15. D. 54. L. 99.

⁷ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. 1386. Op. 1. D. 944. L. 3-4.

houses of culture, in cities and villages of the region placed posters and banners with welcome slogans in honor of the winners: “Welcome, dear defenders of the Motherland, to your native land!”, hung portraits of great commanders. At the railway stations, agitation points and red corners were organized, which were festively decorated with congratulatory banners and flowers. Not far from the river station on the banks of the Yenisei, a dormitory with 10 beds was equipped, a doctor and an agitator were attached to it. Employees of the club of the Krasnoyarsk woodworking plant prepared an evening for a solemn meeting of the demobilized, issued special numbers of wall newspapers and “combat sheets”, year-round duty was established at the station⁸.

In the cities and districts of the region, around-the-clock work of card bureaus were established so that everyone arriving could immediately receive a bread card. Also, a number of special shops and canteens worked around the clock, serving those who arrived after demobilization with goods and food. The region did not regret anything for the victorious warriors, as it was during the war, when residents of the Krasnoyarsk Krai collected gifts for soldiers on the front of 253 cars⁹.

Attention was paid to the improvement of the work of baths, laundries, hairdressers “for the cultural services of the demobilized, so that they feel the love and respect of their fellow countrymen”.¹⁰ The importance of the work of medical institutions was emphasized. They were repaired and supplied with fuel. The network of local resorts was restored, where hospitals were located during the war, and now they were ready to receive demobilized soldiers for treatment and rest. The Khakasszoloito Trust not only organized at the railway stations, from which the roads to the mines went, well-appointed recreation rooms, but also was ready to provide the needy former front-line soldiers free vouchers to Saralinsky Holiday Home¹¹.

At the initiative of a number of enterprises in the city of Krasnoyarsk, including the Sibtyazhmash plant team, a fund of gifts for demobilized soldiers and officers began to form. Residents brought footwear, clothing, food, books, magazines, children's toys, hygiene items

⁸ E. Astafyev, N. Limont, J. Balodis, Welcome, dear defenders of the Motherland, to your native land!, in *Krasnoyarsk Worker*, 1945, July 17-20.

⁹ D. A. Malyutin, F. G. Gryaznukhin, L. F. Malyutina. Review of Collection of Documents “Krasnoyarsk Region during the Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945 (On the documents by Archive Agency of Krasnoyarsk Region)”, in *Bylye Gody*, 2010, vol. 29, no. 3.

¹⁰ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. 1386. Op. 1. D. 944. L. 3-4.

¹¹ Preparing for the meeting of fellow winners, in *Krasnoyarsk worker*, 1945, July 22.

and other things. Thus, residents of Uyar brought over 40 books and magazines to the recreation room at the railway station; and the villagers of Balakhta collected small gifts from toys, books, soap for 35 demobilized soldiers¹². Only in 1945, money was raised to the fund – 1750 thousand rubles, manufactory - 18 thousand meters, items – 17446 pieces, 780 apartments were repaired, 10755 m² of firewood, 1352 m² of coal, 293 heads of cattle were allocated¹³.

Particular attention was paid to the agitation and propaganda work among the demobilized. The soldiers were told about the contribution of the Krasnoyarsk Krai to the Great Victory. During the war years, the Krai became an industrial region producing cannons, airplanes, ammunition, radio equipment, locomotives, small arms, non-ferrous metals, bath-and-laundry facilities, sanitary, tank repair cars, skis, army shoes. Residents of the region formed, prepared and sent to the front more than 20 military units and separate special units, almost 562 thousand people were called up to the ranks of the Red Army, and 250 gift wagons were assembled and sent to the front^{14,15}.

Propaganda work was associated with the preparation of elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Demobilized were both the object and the subject of agitation. So, on quays, river stations, premises for agitation centers were created, where they lectured and explained Stalin's speech to voters in the Stalin electoral district of Moscow and the Law on the five-year plan for the restoration and development of the national economy of the USSR. There was a demonstration of movies, schoolchildren gave concerts.

In August 1945, the Bureau of the Krasnoyarsk Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party(b) adopted a resolution “On political work among the demobilized from the Armed Forces of the USSR”. The document pointed out the importance of attracting former front-line soldiers to military training of young people, working as propagandists and agitators¹⁶.

A meeting of newspaper editors by the Red Army fighters was held at the editorial office of the Minusinsk district newspaper. At the meeting, the demobilized talked about how they were met by fellow countrymen,

¹² State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. P-26. Op. 15. D. 487. L. 4, 5.

¹³ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. P-26. Op. 15. D. 54. L. 3,4.

¹⁴ L.E. Mezit (ed.), *Krasnoyarsk Territory in the years of the WWII of 1941-1945. (according to documents from the archival agency of the Krasnoyarsk Krai)*, Krasnoyarsk Krai Archival Agency, Krasnoyarsk, 2010.

¹⁵ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. 1386. Op. 1. D. 946. L. 129.

¹⁶ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. P-26. Op. 15. D. 484. L. 1, 2.

pledged to make every effort for peaceful construction, concern for collective farm production. Former gardener Kuzmenko said: “I fought at the front for four years and now, when I returned to the collective farm garden, I will continue to grow it”¹⁷.

Much attention was paid to assisting in solving housing problems, the development of loans for individual housing construction. Considering the great need for housing, in August 1946, the USSR Council of Ministers adopted a resolution “On raising wages and building housing for workers, engineering and technical workers of enterprises and construction sites located in the Urals, Siberia and the Far East”¹⁸. According to the decree, those wishing to improve their living conditions and acquire their own home could build it by taking a loan from the state for a period of 10 to 12 years. Thus, in the postwar years, an impetus was given to the development of individual housing construction. But, as noted in the report of the state support department of the Krasnoyarsk Krai, the former front-line soldiers mostly took out loans not for the construction of new houses, but for the purchase of already built log cabins, for exporting houses from other territories to permanent residence¹⁹. Numerous archival materials, analysis of meetings of the party-Soviet and economic bodies speak of a chronic shortage of building and finishing materials, workers, forest plots, and a large lack of development of allocated funds.

At the XIV session of the Regional Council in December 1945, the chairman of the executive committee, Ye. P. Kolchushansky paid great attention to the employment of demobilized soldiers. Each quarter, personnel departments reported on the employment of former soldiers. So, in the report of the personnel department of the Krasnoyarsk Regional Committee of the CPSU(b) on January 1, 1946, demobilized fighters and officers of the Red Army arrived in the region: 12,254 people in the cities, 27,606 in the countryside. Employment in industry – 5285, in institutions and organizations – 4621, agriculture – 17152 people. The rest was temporarily not employed, using the leave they had²⁰.

Demobilized to work were issued without orders and coercion mainly to previous jobs or in accordance with the specialty acquired during the war. However, for the Communists in the question of choosing a place

¹⁷ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. P-26. Op. 15. D. 53. L. 2.

¹⁸ *The decisions of the party and the government on economic issues*, Vol. 3, Politizdat, Moscow, 1968, p. 332-334.

¹⁹ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. P-26. Op. 15. D. 487. L. 5.

²⁰ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. P-26, Op. 15. D. 54. L. 2.

of work there was a limitation due to party discipline, which was supposed to put state and party interests above personal ones and often members of the CPSU (b) were sent to the most problematic areas of national economic recovery without special consideration of their wishes. Workers who received specialty before the war, mostly returned to their previous jobs. So, 53 former warriors who had previously worked at the factory returned to Sibtyazhmash²¹.

At the same time, demobilized soldiers could take advantage of a wide network of courses and schools for professional training, which was launched by trade union authorities. At the enterprises the method of brigade-individual study was widely applied. Front-line officers, out of turn, were accepted into the Communist Party, they were given leadership positions in the national economy and were promoted to Party-Soviet work.

A large role in organizing meetings of demobilized was given to street committees. They had the duty to explain to the population the Law on Demobilization and the events held in the districts, upon meeting the welcome guests. Especially distinguished themselves in working with demobilized street committees of the Kaganovich and Kirov districts of the city of Krasnoyarsk. The street committees of these districts greeted the soldiers solemnly, with bread and salt, helping their families to renovate the living quarters, to decorate the houses and courtyards²².

Considerable preparatory work allowed the Krasnoyarsk citizens to happily meet on July 24, 1945, the first train with demobilized soldiers. The Krasnoyarsk Worker newspaper devoted a significant part of the issue of July 28 to this event. The train at the station square was greeted by the sounds of the orchestra, exclamations of "Ura", people who arrived from the cars were carried out, they were thrown at flowers, a meeting of the workers of Krasnoyarsk was held right there. A welcoming speech was made by the secretary of the Kaganovich (now – Zheleznodorozhny) district committee of the CPSU(b) Chuev. He expressed the hope that those demobilized "in peaceful constructive labor will manifest themselves as well as on the fronts of the WWII." The director of the mechanical plant, Tretyakov, spoke about selfless labor in the rear of Krasnoyarsk citizens, mothers, wives, sisters in the name of Victory. He called the returning soldiers to the guards' labor on the peaceful front. In response, the younger sergeant I.F. Cherenov, guardsman S.P. Chernyak, who

²¹ E. D. Kozlov, L. S. Pisarenko, A. P. Demidovich (ed.), *Debt, character, honor: 70 years of the history of the Sibtyazhmash plant (1941-2011)*, Poligrafblank, Krasnoyarsk, 2015, p. 25-27.

²² State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. 1386. Op. 1. D. 947. Ll. 40, 56, 93.

thanked the residents of the region for their military work, noted that the Victory Banner over the Reichstag is a good visual aid to the lesson the Red Army gave to the Germans. The speakers assured the countrymen that they would joyfully take on peaceful labor in order to “heal the wounds more quickly and strengthen the economic and military power of the socialist Motherland”²³.

An analysis of the materials of the Krasnoyarsk Worker newspaper and archival documents shows that not everywhere and not always everything was clearly organized: the human factor, formalism also appeared in such a joyful event as the meeting of the victorious soldiers. In the passport office of the city of Krasnoyarsk, demobilized soldiers were greeted with long service, long lines, a dirty unlit room without a table and chairs²⁴. The ordeals of officer Korobov, who needed to get home to the village of Predivnoe, were told in the issue from December 21, 1945. But there were obviously few negative examples; the overwhelming majority of facts speak of well-organized meetings. Publications in the local press of critical articles on the meeting of demobilized soldiers indicate a certain freedom of speech and the desire to eradicate the negative manifestations in the sensitive topic of the post-war device of the winning soldiers.

The beginning of peaceful life was marked by a total deficit of non-food items. It is well known that an extraordinary appeal to the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) of several secretaries of the regional committees of Siberia with a request not to hold demonstrations in the cities on November 7, 1946 due to poor provision of the population with warm clothing. In addition, not enough consumer goods were produced in the province during the war years. The lack of weaving, the importation of industrial goods into the region caused an acute need for footwear and clothing. As noted in the report of the Krasnoyarsk Division on the household structure of families of military personnel, sackcloth clothing was commonplace for the population of the region^{25,26}.

The post-war famine that raged in the west of the country also affected the Krasnoyarsk Krai. The meeting of demobilized soldiers was overshadowed by the onset of famine due to crop failure, especially in the southern grain regions of the region. The potato harvest was frozen – Siberian's second bread, melons, partly beetroot and cucumbers, 2620

²³ S. Malobitsky, From Berlin, in *Krasnoyarsk Worker*, 1945, July 28.

²⁴ O. Toroschin, Need to restore order!, in *Krasnoyarsk Worker*, 1945, October 7.

²⁵ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. P-26, Op. 15. D. 487. L. 1.

²⁶ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. П-26, Op. 15. D. 54. L. 2.

hectares of perennial grasses died from drought, which affected the death of livestock. It was hard for people to live: there were few products in the cities, they were expensive. People suffered from dystrophy, tuberculosis, gastric diseases. Famine led to the opening of four orphanages in areas affected by crop failure^{27,28}. In such difficult conditions, the former soldiers of the WWII began to work in peace.

Thus, the state and public authorities of the Krasnoyarsk Territory carried out significant work to organize meetings from 1945 to 1948 of 138 thousand inhabitants of the region who were demobilized from the ranks of the USSR armed forces. Party-Soviet and public organizations were faced with a rather difficult task – to help demobilized soldiers to integrate safely into a peaceful reality, given the fact that more than 32,000 of them returned disabled and unsuitable for production activities. The restoration and development of a peaceful economy fell on their shoulders, with which they coped heroically.

²⁷ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. 1386. Op. 1. D. 100. Ll. 7, 47.

²⁸ State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Krai. F. II-26. Op. 15. D. 487. Ll. 1,2,12.