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PLACEMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR INTURKESTAN MILITARY CAMPS

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ABSTRACT

This article gives information about the prisoners of war in Turkestan and how the military camps were established to disperse the captives in the region. It also highlights data concerning POWs' living conditions in Turkestan. Most of them were sent to Tashkent. Initially, it was not difficult to place them in military camps. The barracks of the Turkestan Military District (TurkVO) were given to the captives. The Slavs were sent near the border with Kazakhstan, not far from Omsk in south-central Russia. The Hungarians and Germans became prisoners of war in the Siberian camps. The location of the camps also played an important role in the difficult lives of political prisoners.

KEYWORDS: *Barracks, Prisoners, Established*

INTRODUCTION

In 1914, Austro-Hungarians, Germans, Slavs, and Romanians captured in Russia, by order of the General Staff, began to be resettled in the Urals, Siberia, Turkestan, and the Far East [3]. More than 400 military camps were set up in Russia during World War I [5]. Russia had planned to place prisoners of war only in remote areas far from major cities. They were mainly sent to the areas where the railway lines reached. Because they knew that rail transport would be a great help in placing prisoners of war in military camps. But suddenly, the Russians' plans to relocate the prisoners changed. This, in turn, is due to the growing number of prisoners of war in Russia.

Prisoners of war, initially housed in military camps in Kiev, Penza, Kazan, and Turkestan, were later dispersed to different regions according to their ethnic origin. The Slavs were sent near the border with Kazakhstan, not far from Omsk in south-central Russia. The Hungarians and Germans became prisoners of war in the Siberian camps. The location of the camps also played

an important role in the difficult lives of political prisoners. For example, in Murmansk, in the far northwest of Russia, the situation of soldiers forced to serve in captivity was much worse and sadder than in the southern parts of the empire.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

According to the plan, the territory of Turkestan was not pre-designated for prisoners of war, but, as noted above, the increase in the number of prisoners led to their relocation to the territory of Turkestan. In the telegram No. 6158 of August 30, 1914 of the Chief of the General Staff to the Chief of the General Staff of the Turkestan District, it was announced that Turkestan was designated as a permanent place of detention of prisoners of war [11]. First, as early as September 1914, a stream of prisoners of war was placed in the urban areas of Turkestan.

Initially, it was planned to place about 10,000 prisoners of war in Turkestan. However, by the end of 1914, the number of prisoners of war planned to be placed in Turkestan had grown significantly. As of July 21, 1915, there were about 150,000 people in the Turkestan military district. Prisoners of war from Austria-Hungary and Germany began arriving in Tashkent in September 1914.

More than 50,000 prisoners of war of various nationalities have been relocated to Turkestan since the start of hostilities. Most of them were sent to Tashkent. Initially, it was not difficult to place them in military camps. The barracks of the Turkestan Military District (TurkVO) were given to the captives. Prisoners of war were sometimes forced to move from one camp to another. For example, a prisoner of war named Ferdinand Effenberg was brought to Peremishl on March 22, 1915, and then with other prisoners of war was sent first to Kiev, then to Moscow, in April to Tashkent, in July to Samarkand, and finally to Siberia [13].

By June 1915, the number of prisoners of war in Turkestan exceeded 148,000 [7]. They were placed in 37 specially built military camps, barracks and other places at the disposal of the Turkestan Military District. There was a shortage of space for prisoners of war in camps in the Turkestan military district. The reason was that the number of prisoners of war was increasing day by day. For example, the special zones in Kattakurgan were intended to house only 600 prisoners of war, but in practice doubled the number to 1,200. In Samarkand, the figures were 1,000 instead of 500. Under these circumstances, to solve this problem, two bunk beds were brought and installed in military camps. This event was the only way to accommodate the capacity of the captives mentioned above. About 600 prisoners of war to be housed in the camp at Charjoi were sent to barges in the Amudaryafлотilla. In the Syrdarya region, a university building in Kazalinsk was donated to 100 prisoners of war. Similar cases were reported in Perovsk [6].

According to Sterling, the head of the U.S. mission, in 1915 there were 82,425 Austro-Hungarian and 3,812 German prisoners of war in Turkestan [14]. By March 1916, the number of prisoners of war in the country had reached 200,000 [8]. They outnumbered the population of the cities where they lived. Even the Turkestan government was concerned about the areas where these prisoners of war were being held, because in the event of various riots, of course, the prisoners of war and the local population were a great force together.

In addition to prisoners of war, Austrian-Hungarian and German "civilian prisoners" - Germans, Poles, and other centuries-old tsarist troops - were brought to Turkestan. Refugees evacuated

from the western regions began to appear in Central Asia in June 1915, and by the end of the year there were about 70,000 people. Among them were about 8,000-10,000 Poles and Jews, 1,500 Baltic, and about 4,000 Germans from the Volyn and Kiev regions. Due to the influx of refugees, the Turkestan administration requested their expulsion. Beginning in May 1916, refugees began to be expelled, mainly from the Samara and Saratov regions. The remaining 8,000-10,000 people joined the ranks of Europeans in Turkestan.

Most of the refugees were from Poland, the Baltics and other parts of the empire [8]. It should be noted that in late 1915, the military governor of the Sirdarya region, Lieutenant General A. Galkin, appealed to the Catholic priest Justin Pranaytis to provide asylum for refugees from the church. Pranaytis immediately agreed, and in 1916 he granted them asylum. Initially, 63 refugees took refuge in Kostel's dormitory. They were provided with food, clothing, and other necessities. The refugees were funded by a Roman Catholic charity. Medicines and foodstuffs were also sent by Poland as humanitarian aid. In particular, in the spring of 1916, a special central committee of the Kingdom of Poland sent a group of health and food supplies to help sick refugees in Turkestan[9]. It is clear that the Polish government has not spared any assistance to its citizens, no matter where they are.

According to the Refugee Assistance Committee, as of May 1, 1916, there were 59,400 prisoners of war in Turkestan, up from June 1, 1916. ra 15,900. After the evacuation, which began in late April 1916, there were about 7,000 to 8,000 refugees left in the country [1]. The growing focus on the issue of prisoners of war and refugees in Turkestan, in turn, has worsened the financial situation of the local population, and the process has led to an economic crisis over food and livelihoods.

The reasons for the resettlement of many prisoners of war and refugees in Turkestan include:

- It is too far from the location and as a result there is no possibility of escape;
- The availability and cheapness of food in this country.

All military camps in the Russian Empire are subordinated to the Ministry of Defense under the General Staff (GUGSh). The issue of prisoners of war was initially dealt with by the 7th Division of the Evacuation Department of the GUGSh. By the fall of 1916, the GUGSh had set up a separate evacuation unit for prisoners of war. At the same time, in all military districts, units for the issue of prisoners of war, accountable to the GUGSh, began to be established [2].

The captured military officers, doctors, priests and officials were placed in Tashkent, Perovsk, Kazalinsk, Turkestan, Namangan, Kokand, Samarkand, New Bukhara (Kogon), Jizzakh and Khojand.

The military camps in the Russian Empire differed in function, as in all the countries of the First World War. Prisoners of war were sent to collective, transport, filtration, and labor camps for a period of time. Concentration camps were not set up to carry out fascist extremist activities, as in World War II, but were organized to constantly monitor the movement of prisoners of war. The decision to establish the first concentration camp was made in April 1915 by TurkVO. They planned to house 50,000 prisoners of war in this camp. Initially, two such camps were set up in Troitsk, near Tashkent, for 6,500 prisoners of war and in Samarkand for 3,500 prisoners of war [6].

The tsarist government realized that captives were a valuable resource for the wartime economy. As a result, many prisoners were forced to work on farms and mines, to participate in the construction of canals, and 70,000 were involved in the construction of railways. Many prisoners were killed during the construction of the Murmansk railway. Captives also died of malaria, vitamin C deficiency due to malnutrition and fruit and food malnutrition. The death toll totaled about 25,000. Due to the appeals and pressures of the German and Habsburg governments on the use of the labor of prisoners of war, their forced labor was much more limited.

There was a "class stratification" of prisoners in the Habib camps. Captive military officers were required by Article 190, Chapter II, Section 17 of the 1907 Hague Convention [15], to receive the same salary as soldiers received during their service in their home country during captivity. As a result, military officers received a salary of 50 to 75 rubles a month [12]. However, the remaining 1,500,000 non-commissioned officers were not paid a single salary. However, after the events of February 1917, prisoners of war were officially recruited and paid a monthly salary.

In the spring of 1915, the TurkVO command began building new camps using the labor of prisoners of war. These camps were set up along the railway line in major cities such as Kazalinsk, Perovsk, Turkestan, Chernyaev, Avliya-Ota, Khojand, Kattakurgan, Namangan, and Kokand. As construction continued, the prisoners lived in camps. The total capacity of all barracks (old and new camps) was eventually increased to 200,000 [8].

In mid-1915, prisoners of war from Turkestan were sent to work in Russia's European territory. A total of 68,000 people were evacuated, eliminating the issue of overcrowding. It should be noted that in Turkestan, as well as in the neighboring Emirate of Bukhara, the labor of prisoners of war was actively used. Thus, 138 people worked in private individuals, in the Zemstvo and municipal institutions - 551, in the military unit (on the territory of TurkVO) - 765; in the Ministry of Railways (within TurkVO) - 288; in trade enterprises - 272; in the institutions of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Management - 209 people worked [8].

In the process of registering prisoners, Russian military officials first registered them based on which of their hostile armies and religions they belonged to. Therefore, it was very difficult to create a clear national composition of prisoners in Turkestan. For example, the national composition of the prisoners of war of the Habsburg monarchy was as diverse as the empire itself. According to the data, during the First World War, 25% of the Austrian-Hungarian armed forces were Austrians and Germans, 23% - Hungarians, 13% - Czechs, 4% - Slovaks, 9% - Serbs and Croats, 2% - Slovenians, 3% - Ukrainians, 7% - Romanians and 1% - Italians who served in the military and participated in World War I [4].

The principle of national and civilian placement of prisoners was established at the beginning of the war and was of great national importance. From 1914 to 1915, the camps in Turkestan were "mixed", meaning that they had different nationalities. Researchers have reported that since 1916, there has been a practice of division in national camps. Thus, while the camps in Tashkent were predominantly Slavic (Croatians, Slovenians, Czechs, etc.), the Germans, Austrians, and Hungarians settled in Skobelev and Fergana. If the camps were of a mixed type, the Slavs were appointed to senior positions in the internal administration of the prisoners [13].

Many citizens of the Habsburg monarchy were taken prisoner of war in 1914 (at the Battle of Galicia) or in 1916 (Brusilovsky's victory). Some were arrested while injured, others surrendered

voluntarily. Each prisoner's biography is unique. In particular, these are autobiographies of subgroups (mostly Slavs) called "friendly nations." Attitudes toward the Slavs were friendly until the Russian Revolution of 1917. Not surprisingly, they were closer to the Russians than the captured officers. In addition, the captives of the lower classes of the Slavs had more opportunities to establish human relations with the common people.

In 1915, a branch of the Union of Czech and Slovak Societies of Russian Societies was opened in Tashkent. It was soon transformed into a representative office of the Czech-Slovak National Council and operated for several years. As of January 15, 1917, there were 10,489 registered soldiers and 617 officers of West Slavic descent in Turkestan.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the issue of prisoners of war during the First World War was a process that lasted for 8 years on the Eastern Front, from August 1914 to the summer of 1922 until the release of the last group of prisoners of war from Vladivostok. Many prisoners of war spent 3-4 years of their lives in captivity in various parts of Russia from 1918-1919 until their release. Of the estimated 8.5 million prisoners of war, about 750,000 were reported to have died in military camps. About 430,000 Austro-Hungarian, German, and Turkish prisoners of war were resettled in Siberia and Turkestan during the Civil War [12], and were forced to link their lives with these countries until their return to their homeland in 1921-1922.

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