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Marginalization as Humanitarian Problem of the Russian Abroad: 1920s-1930s

Abstract

Psychological state of the people who had to leave their homeland in the 1920s-1930s greatly influenced their social adaptation in exile and weaved a common humanitarian fabric of the Russian abroad. The article draws on unpublished sources from the State Archive of the Russian Federation and on the collection of periodical press of the Russian abroad stored in the Russian State Library (RGB) to study destructive trends in the milieu of Russian emigration that brought some refugees into borderland – marginal – situation. The research is to search in the historical retrospective for answers to the challenges facing the today Russian diaspora in the countries of the FSU and beyond, a recipe for maintaining national and cultural identity in the hostile environment. The problem remains poorly studied: in the domestic historiography there are few researches touching upon the subject. The research is based on the method of cross-disciplinary synthesis: legal, economic, psychological, cultural processes in ?migr? circles are studied as elements of the puzzle, the significance of which lies in the similarity of the trends of a century ago and those we observe in the national diasporas worldwide today.

Marginalization as humanitarian problem of the Russian abroad resulted in denationalization, washing out of cultural identity, loss of mental and cultural unity with the homeland left behind. Marginalization was most dramatic for former Russian military servicemen, as their social adaptation in exile encountered most severe difficulties. For a host of reasons, Russian emigrants not just drifted to the underworld, but also joined criminal communities or became the victims of crimes, try to resist to this process as they may. Officers, or more precisely, the most educated part of the officership, by all means strove to slow down the process of moral disintegration. The brightest episode in this struggle was emergence the courts of honor, created by the Russian officers in places of their compact resettlement.

Keywords

Historical sources, Russian abroad, marginalization, social adaptation, cultural identity, Russian emigration.

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