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The policy of the conversion of the Soviet Gipsies to a settled and agricultural way of life in the south of Russia in the 1920s–1930s

The Soviet policy of the indigenization of national minorities was marked by an attempt to convert to a fully settled way of life the Gipsies (the self-name — *rom, roma, Romen* and also other ethnonyms: *sindhu, manusha, kale, boshebi*) who before and after the exodus from India for centuries and even millennia had been leading a nomadic life.

Both in the pre-Soviet and in the Soviet period it was impossible to obtain real data on the number of the Gipsies. In the USSR, according to the 1926 census, their number totaled 61,294 (20–25,000 families), and in the RSFSR — 40,948. These data did not absolutely correspond to the real number of this people. This was the status quo in the subsequent years. In 1936 the number of the Gipsies in the USSR was estimated at 80,000 people. But already at that time the Soviet officials found the indicated figure rather approximate (“Soveshechanie po trudoustrojstvu i kul’turno-bytovomu obsluzhivaniyu cygan,” 1936). In the districts and territories of the south of Russia the situation was practically the same. Thus, according to the 1926 census, 2,666 Gipsies resided in the territory of the four Kuban districts of the North Caucasus territory: namely in the Kuban district — 1,383 (52%), in the Armavir district — 935 (35%), in the Maikop district — 242 (9%), in the Black Sea district — 106 (4%) (Kirej, 2010). The accuracy of the figures both for the whole country and for the regions is simply astonishing. Moreover, this tradition of the

“accuracy” was observed in the subsequent years. Thus, the secretary of the Krasnodar district party committee S.E. Sanin in his memo “On the presence of the Gipsies and their lifestyle in Krasnodar territory” to the deputy head of the department of propaganda and agitation of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) K.F. Kalashnikov reported that as of 1 August there were 839 Gipsies, including 501 adults and 338 children in the territory (Bugaj, 2010).

From the middle of the 1920s the state started the conversion of the Gipsies to a settled way of life. The resettlement department of the RSFSR People’s Commissariat for Agriculture by the resolution of the Presidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee of August 30, 1926 set up a special committee that got down to the development of concrete measures to carry out this fantastic project. The decisive recommendations were issued by the supreme organs of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the authorities.

The first and most detailed act in this direction was a special resolution of the Central Executive Committee and the USSR Council of the People’s Commissars of October 1, 1926 “On the measures to promote the conversion of the nomadic Gipsies to a working settled way of life” (*Izvestiya Severo-Kavkazskogo Kraevogo Ispolnitel’nogo Komiteta*, 1928). This resolution suggested that the Central Executive Committees and the Councils of the People’s Commissars of the union republics should take measures to provide with land in the first place the Gipsies who were willing to convert to a settled way of life.

On the basis of this document the Presidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee and the RSFSR Council of the People’s Commissars on February 20, 1928 passed a resolution “On the provision with land of the Gipsies converting to a working settled way of life.” The resolution bound “the land organs to provide with land from the vacant land fund according to the local working norm both for the cultivation and the organization of the farm-based settled way of life in the first place the Gipsies willing to convert to a settled way of life and engage themselves in farming” (*Izvestiya CIK*, 1928). Apart from the organization of individual residential settlements, this resolution also envisaged the settling of the Gipsies in the already existing land communities on equal terms according to Article 46 of the RSFSR Land Code. The reason for obtaining the farm land had to be the appropriate application submitted by the Gipsies to the land organs in the place of their residence. Besides, the indigenization expenses were paid from the public funds. The Gipsies were entitled to all the privileges for the settlers stipulated by the legislation, specifically the payment of the allowance of 500 to 1,000 roubles to set up a house. This sum exceeded the allowance paid to the

settlers of other nationalities. The authorities in their indigenization policy relied heavily on the All-Russia Gipsy Union, established in 1925 (chairman A.S. Taranov). The rules passed by the People's Commissariat of Home Affairs (PCHA) on July 15, 1926, proclaimed the following goals of the organization: the unification of the Gypsies, the protection of their interests, the raising of their cultural standards, mutual assistance. It was expected that the Union would promote the opening of evening and Sunday schools, clubs, libraries, cooperatives, communes and industrial workshops, would publish newspapers, textbooks and other literature in the Gipsy language (Bessonov, Demeter, & Kutenkov, 2000). The organizers declared that they would lead the struggle against alcoholism, fortune-telling, a nomadic life-style. The work of the Union as well as of all other public organizations was supervised by the People's Commissariat of Home Affairs, where to, in compliance with the rules, they were to regularly submit the information about the available personnel. The Union was planning to open their branches in many regions of the country. Among the first was the branch in Rostov-on-Don. In 1925 in the Don territory, not without the participation of the Union, the first Gipsy collective farm-commune named the "Krikunov farm" in honor of its founder, young Gipsy N. Krikunov, was organized. In Rostov they set up two Gipsy cooperative societies (Avdulov, Kucherenko, & Shumenko, 2009).

However in 1928 the All-Russia Gipsy Union was liquidated as "having failed to serve its purpose." In 1932 the journal of the USSR Central Executive Committee *Sovetskoe stroitel'stvo* (The Soviet construction) among the reasons for closing down the organization named petty intrigues, embezzlement (15,000 roubles), and, above all, the absence of any results in the work on the organization of the branches in the provinces (Bril & Popova, 1932).

And the end of 1920s the organization of collective farms took off and the settlement policy as regards the Gypsies was implemented in the form of the organization of the national collective farms. According to the Collective Farm Center, by 1932 in the USSR there were 25 Gipsy collective farms that comprised only 490 families. According to the official data, in the North Caucasus territory there were four collective farms and one more in Dagestan ASSR which in 1931 joined the North Caucasus territory (Bril & Popova, 1932).

The Gipsy collective farms were set up in the Kuban, Stavropolie and Don territories, for example in the suburbs of Rostov and Taganrog and in Tarasov district (the north-west part of today's Rostov district). However the majority of the Gipsy collective farms of the south of Russia existed for a short time: a week, a month, a season or, at the best, not more than one year, whereupon the collective farm would disintegrate as the Gypsies would set off wandering again. More often than not those temporary "one-day collective farms" could

disappear in the blink of an eye after the allowances and loans assigned to set up a house had been received, payments for the fulfillment of the seasonal work had been made, when the administrative measures regarding the “Gipsies’ side jobs” had been toughened up, in the case of natural disasters, bad harvest, etc.

In a book by N. Nikolaenko we can read about such “collective farms” in the region of the large Cossack villages (*stanitsa*) Bagaevskaya, Semikarakorskaya, Vesiolaya. “The Gipsy band would start migration in May or in early summer when the time was ripe for haymaking. The Gipsies were mowing, stacking, transporting — whatever the collective farms asked them to do. The Gipsy baron made arrangements with the chairman and the Gipsies worked to contract. The Gipsies got the same work-day units as ordinary collective farmers. The collective farms paid the Gipsy band in kind: products — part of the crop, manufactured goods, for example, cooking utensils, fabrics or whatever might be useful in the Gipsy household. When the work in one collective farm was done, the Gipsy band would fold up tents and move to another collective farm where hands were wanted” (Nikolaenko, 2003).

Such situation was practically the same everywhere. The newspaper *Krestianskaya Pravda* of 1928 gave the following analysis of the situation regarding the provision of the Gipsies with land and their conversion to a settled way of life: “The Gipsies’ occupations, life and manners are in direct contradiction to the fundamentals of our socialist society. The old exploitative and speculative system under tsarism was more beneficial for the Gipsies’ activities. Though the revolution brought the Gipsies a great improvement in their legal status, it dealt a painful blow to the sources of their means of subsistence-trade, begging, prejudices — the breeding-ground for fortune-telling, sorcery, etc. Hence it becomes clear, that the property status of the Gipsies who had not changed their nomadic lifestyle and their former occupations, deteriorated sharply. The Gipsies grew very poor” (Bessonov, Demeter, & Kutenkov, 2000).

But there were other positive examples when the Gipsy collective farm-settlements stood the test of time. Among them is the “TrudRomen” (The working gipsy) collective farm in Stavropolie. The collective farm was set up in 1928 and was located at the foot of Byk Mountain, 18–20 km away from the district center Mineralnye Vody, in close proximity to the health resorts of the Caucasian Mineral Waters area.

Within two years 300 Gipsies who had arrived from various regions of the North Caucasus and Ukraine settled in the collective-farm village. The state provided the settlers with fertile lands (2,160 hectares), gave them allowances to set up house and extended to them all the privileges stipulated by the legislation. Thanks to the help from the working teams of the Mineralnye

Vody railway men, from the oil industry workers who offered the supply of high-quality water from their reservoir piped into the “TrudRomen,” the collective farm was able to successfully organize its life on the land and join in the agricultural work. The socio-cultural infrastructure of the residential settlement was intensively developing. According to the press reports, in 1931 the Mineralnye Vody district collective-farm union developed the project of a multi-flat house for the collective-farm workers in order to build in the following year in the Gipsy collective farm not less than 10 such houses (“TrudRomen,” 1931). The settlement operated a club and an elementary school where teaching was done in the Gipsy language, a chorus, a drama club, a nursery school and the playgrounds. The collective-farm workers were engaged in growing grain crops and in 1931 they undertook a commitment to deliver to the state over 40,000 puds of grain, i.e. 652 tons. The Gypsies were more successful in cattle breeding, particularly horse breeding.

The correspondent of the *Put’ Sovetov* magazine S. Chernyak, after acquainting himself with the settlement, stated: “Having firmly settled on the land, the Gipsy collective farm turned into one of the best mode collective farms in Mineralnye Vody district” (Chernyak, 1931). Certainly, this was a bit of an exaggeration.

The most important political act was granting this Gipsy village the status of the national village council that became the first Gipsy village council in the south of Russia. Bezludsky, one of the founders of the settlement and, possibly, the only literate collective-farm worker was appointed chair-man of the village council. The absence in the settlement of the party cell resulted in a staff problem which caused complications with the indigenization of the personnel. Besides, the Gypsies spoke different dialects and even languages — that is why there were proposals to switch over the teaching of school subjects to the Russian language. To train the personnel they formed the party reserve from the ranks of the Young Communist League members. In 1931 there were 35 members in the Young Communist League cell.

Close attention paid to the collective farm by the central and territorial authorities enables us to come to the conclusion that “TrudRomen” was to play an important political and ideological role — on the concrete example of one of the world’s most backward ethnic groups to demonstrate the triumph of the Lenin-Stalin national policy. This was all the more important as the Caucasian Mineral Waters health resorts were visited by numerous foreign delegations and the Gipsy collective farm was one of the routes planned for visiting by foreigners. S. Chernyak in his article in a territorial magazine spoke about the visit to the Gipsy collective farm paid “by the international team of foreign writers and journalists led by the French writer, editor-in-chief of the communist newspaper ‘L’Humanite’ Paul Vaillant-Couturier. Before his

departure from Mineralnye Vody Vaillant-Couturier addressed the meeting of the workers and collective farmers. Having shared his impressions of the Gipsy collective farm he noted: ‘The USSR is solving the national question the way no other capitalist country is capable of. A shining example of this is the Gipsy collective farm in Mineralnye Vody district where the collective farm has settled the people who altogether are developing their farm and who, under tsarism, haven’t even dared dream about this’” (Chernyak, 1931).

Those visits by foreigners including numerous Gipsy delegations from different countries made “TrudRomen” a kind of a model to follow in the process of the provision of the Gipsies with land and their conversion to a settled way of life in other regions of the USSR. And this secured substantial aid from the state to the collective farm irrespective of the efficiency of its agricultural work and final results. As in the case of “TrudRomen” and in general in their striving for converting the Gipsies to a settled way of life one can see a chiefly ideological motive. We agree with the opinion of the historian A. Kilin that the economic effect of such measures was highly questionable and the costs of their realization were quite real and substantial (Kilin, 2005).

Paying so much attention to the collective farm gave rise in its leaders and the population to increased demands towards the local authorities, to the extent of sponging when the Gipsy community in the expectation of what was promised to them did not make any independent efforts to increase the efficiency of their own farm. Even in 1936 the model collective farm “TrudRomen” did not grow in number — it united only 46 farms out of 112 farms with high capacity for work, demonstrated low labor productivity despite the leaders’ clichés about the progressive growth in the agricultural produce. Bezludsky, the permanent chairman of the village council reported from year to year: “All the commitments to the state are completely fulfilled by the collective farm. The productivity of crops is not high though it is rising from year to year” (“Soveshchanie po trudoustrojstvu...,” 1936).

The claims made by Bezludsky on the local authorities in his speech in Moscow in 1936 testify to the facts of sponging: “The territorial executive committee is demonstrating a bureaucratic attitude when asked for help. We needed 800 roubles to buy seeds: the territorial land administration and the territorial executive committee refused help. There is no control of the village council on the part of the district executive committee. The district executive committee instructor visited the collective farm only once — on November 11, 1934 and after this he never dropped in”. Incidentally it was acknowledged that the collective farm got its own tractors, three collective farmers were directed to the tractor-driving training course, one — to the team-leaders’ training course, four — to Moscow pedagogical college (“Soveshchanie po trudoustrojstvu...,” 1936).

Nevertheless, against the background of other collective farms “TrudRomen” could be considered extremely successful. In the absence of progress in the indigenization and in the organization of collective farms among the Gipsies across the country, the center put the blame on the local organs. Thus, the management board of the Collective Farm Center in its resolution of January 5, 1931 noted, that “lately there has been a big influx of the Gipsy delegates petitioning the land organs to provide them with land to organize collective farms. Despite the fact that the Gipsy masses are undergoing a radical break-up of the nomadic way of life and despite their desire to convert to the working track by uniting themselves into collective farms, the land organs and collective farms in the provinces more often than not pay insufficient attention to this cause neglecting the specific features of this nationality” (Bessonov, Demeter, & Kutenkov, 2000).

The absence of serious successes in the indigenization of the Gipsies forced the state to pass a new normative act. In April 1932 the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR issued the resolution “On the state of the work over the provision of services for the working Gipsies.” This document listed the measures to introduce the working Gipsies to crafts and agriculture. Though the resolution stated certain achievements it was noted that “because of the underestimation by some control government departments and local executive committees and village councils of the importance of the work among the working Gipsies, the measures planned on their work employment and socio-cultural service have failed to receive their proper practical realization” (Kilin, 2005).

The People’s Commissariat for Agriculture was recommended to work out and submit to the Council of the People’s Commissars of the RSFSR a concrete plan to provide the working Gipsies with land for their compact settlement, securing this measure by the allotment of the land plots from the state land fund and by the proper material and technical basis. The RSFSR People’s Commissariat for Agriculture, the Collective Farm Center (the All-Union Association of Agricultural Collective Bodies) and also the executive committees and village councils were ordered: a) on the basis of the organizational and economic consolidation of the existing Gipsy collective farms, demonstration and popularization of their work to intensify the involvement of the nomadic working Gipsies in the collective farms that are to become the initiators of the settling of the nomadic Gipsies. Simultaneously with this they were instructed to start work on the purge of the collective farms of the class-alien elements; b) to envisage the essential measures to enhance the economic position of the newly-emerged Gipsy collective farms (financing and crediting of the collective farms, their provision with seeds, machines and draught animals); c) within a month’s time to develop and take special meas-

ures to train collective farm workers from the ranks of the working Gipsy environment; d) in 1932 to develop measures to employ the Gipsy artisans (blacksmiths, tanners, harness-makers, etc.) in the workshops attached to the machine and tractor stations and in the collective farms by taking measures to improve their qualifications and train tractor-drivers from the ranks of the working Gipsy environment. The resolution also spoke about the measures targeted at the Gipsies' socio-cultural development.

According to N. Platunov and A. Kilin, from the moment of the realization of this decision one can speak about the purposive policy of the state regarding this nomadic people (Platunov, 1976; Kilin, 2005). Moreover, within the second five-year plan (1933–1937) the strategic goal — to build the socialist society — was to be achieved. By this time the plan on the total conversion of the nomads to a settled way of life and collective work had to be realized. In connection with this in 1934 the All-Union Central Executive Committee set up a commission led by the its secretary A.S. Kiselev on the settling of the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples on the farms. A similar commission for the Gipsies was set up by the Presidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee after the conference on the problems of settling the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples organized by the USSR Council of Nationalities of the Central Executive Committee (September, 1935). This commission, above all else, was charged with discussing the problem of the expediency of the settling of the Gipsies in one place (Hackevich, 1935). On January 4, 1936 they held a special meeting on the Gipsies' employment and the cultural and personal service that was chaired by the secretary of the USSR Council of Nationalities of the Central Execulative Committee A.I. Khatskevich. Among the participants were the leading Soviet officials from different government departments, and also representatives of Gipsy cultural and educational organizations (the Central Gipsy club, the theatre, the pedagogical college), production teams, chairmen of the Gipsy collective farms and village councils, representatives of the central press and others ("Soveshchanie po trudoustrojstvu...", 1936).

The report by Khatskevich outlined the history of the Soviet policy regarding the Gipsies, according to him, "the most downtrodden, the most backward people" with "the wildest, the bloodiest, perhaps the most confounded history of all the histories of all the peoples" ("Soveshchanie po trudoustrojstvu...", 1936). It was stated that more than 40 Gipsy collective farms (including four in the North Caucasus) comprising 1.5 thousand families were organized across the USSR.

One of the main problems in Khatskevich's report and the reports of other speakers was the problem of the organization of the territorial Gipsy regions to be populated by the working Gipsies. Moreover the issue of the

best region for the organization of the would-be Gipsy district (or districts) was actively debated. The report by the representative of the All-Union Resettlement Committee of the USSR People's Commissariat for Agriculture Zubietov noted that the Resettlement Committee had sent an inquiry to a number of the territories and regions about the possibility of the allotment of the territory for the organization of the Gipsy settlement of 30–35,000 Gypsies. In his view there were enough opportunities in West Siberia, the Urals and other eastern regions of the country. The USSR deputy people's commissar for agriculture F.A. Tsylo, expressing his disagreement with Zubietov, declared that the Gypsies should be granted the best land and in good climatic conditions. The Gypsies have a bent for cattle-breeding, horse-breeding, pig-breeding. It is necessary to find such a region where one could develop these branches. Bezludsky, the chairman of the village council of the most successful Gipsy collective farm "TrudRomen" in Mineralnye Vody district of the North Caucasus territory, jumping at the opportunity, declared: "If the Gypsies have their own territory, their own newspaper, the work will go right. The most suitable district for the settlement of the Gypsies would be Stavropol'shchina. There are many migrating Gypsies there. We can accept into our own collective farm 150–200 families if we are given help" ("Soveshchanie po trudoustroystvu...", 1936).

Simultaneously, Bezludsky criticized the North Caucasus territorial executive committee, the territorial Land Administration and the territorial executive committee for the lack of attention and help to the collective farm. We do not think this criticism was just. It is no mere chance that the representative of the RSFSR People's Committee for Agriculture Voronin, the previous speaker, having informed the meeting that in the RSFSR territory there were 26 collective farms with 611 households (about 3,000 people), noted that "on the part of some Gipsy collective farms one can observe the sponging sentiment — heavy reliance on the help from the center" ("Soveshchanie po trudoustroystvu...", 1936). Politcorrectness did not permit the official to say "absolute majority" instead of "some."

The instructor of the work among the Gypsies of the Department of Nationalities of the RSFSR All-Russia Central Executive Committee I.P. Tokmakov reported that over the previous years the RSFSR People's Commissariat for Agriculture had earmarked for the settlement of the Gypsies the following sums: in 1932 — 300,000 roubles, 1933 — 105,000 roubles, 1934 — 103,000 roubles. However, in 1935 the financing was suspended. The efficiency of these expenses can be judged by the number of the Gipsy collective farms that had been organized: in 1932 — 2, in 1933 — 5, in 1934 — 8 and in 1935 — 1. The resources assigned for the organization of the collective farms were looted and never reached the addressee. All the blame

was put on the rich men — kulaks. “The Gipsy kulaks get 30,000 roubles for purchasing cows but the working Gipsies never see these cows. When the government inspection commission arrived to check the facts, the kulak hit upon the idea of bribing the cowboy from the neighboring village to bring in for the time of the commission’s stay the herd of well-fattened cows, but as soon as the commission left, the members of the collective farm were again left without the cows, and the kulak escaped with the 30,000 roubles” (“Soveschchanie po trudoustroystvu...,” 1936).

The participants in the meeting put forward a lot of proposals as to the best territory for the organization of the Gipsy national district. It is interesting to note that in his conclusive speech the chairman spoke in favor of Stavropolie. Khatskevich declared: “I fully agree with comrade Tsyloko who points to the area for the Gipsies near Stavropol where there are all the necessary conditions for the organization of the collective farms among the Gipsies. The Gipsies should be settled there where they have already become acclimatized” (“Soveschchanie po trudoustroystvu...,” 1936).

But the final word rested not with Khatskevich, but with the superior executives who had no plans to organize another national district in the south of Russia. At least there was no concrete information about it in the resolution of the Presidium of the USSR Central Executive Committee of April 7, 1936 “On the measures to employ the nomadic working Gipsies and improve their economic, cultural and personal service.” The document consisting of four points, spoke about the need for further involvement of the nomadic Gipsies in industry, collective production teams (artels), collective farms, state farms and the improvement of the provision of cultural and personal service for the Gipsies who had converted or were converting to a working, settled way of life. The People’s Commissariat for Agriculture was charged with taking measures aimed at the comprehensive organization and economic consolidation of the existing Gipsy collective farms, their cattle-breeding and horse-breeding farms; in the year to come to fully implement the organization of the use of land of all the Gipsy collective farms with the issue to them on behalf of the state of the instrument for the perpetual use of land; to guarantee through the systems of the agricultural bank the required loans for the acquisition of cows by the Gipsies — members of the collective farms; to train from the Gipsy ranks combine operators, tractor-drivers, field team leaders, cattle-breeders, accountants and other workers for the existing and newly emerging collective farms. And only point 4 of the resolution spoke about the districts where the Gipsy collective farms could be organized. “While approving of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee’s measures to allot special territories for the development of the collective farms of the settling Gipsies, to charge the All-Union resettlement committee within a two months’ time

with outlining the appropriate territories for the settlement by the nomadic Gypsies who are willing to convert to a settled way of life by providing the newly-emerged Gypsy collective farms with the resettlement tax privileges” (“Soveshchanie po trudoustroystvu...,” 1936).

On the eve of the adoption of the Union Constitution (1936) it was necessary to demonstrate serious achievements in the indigenization of the Gypsies and in the spirit of the traditional Soviet rushed work and window-dressing to organize two dozen new Gypsy resettlement collective farms and intensify measures to convert the Gypsies to a settled way life. It was planned in 1937 to resettle a thousand Gypsy families, 400 of them were to be settled in the already existing collective farms and to organize 6 new collective farms out of 600 Gypsy families who had already resettled.

Soon after the adoption of the resolution of April 7, 1936, to the utmost satisfaction of the North Caucasus territory authorities, a decision was made to organize the Gypsy national district in Kuibyshev region. To this end two agricultural districts were united — Kuibyshev (the location of the Gypsy collective farm “Nevi bacht”) and Terengul (Bessonov, Demeter, & Kutenkov, 2000).

By 1938 there were 52 official Gypsy collective farms that comprised a few percent of the whole Gypsy population of the country (Bessonov, Demeter, & Kutenkov, 2000).

But right at that time the policy of the Soviet state regarding national minorities was undergoing cardinal changes in the spirit of the de-nationalization of their life and the promotion of assimilation. In the pre-war years it was “impermissible luxury” to spend money on the cash-deficit consuming project to improve the Gypsy collective farms. This made the Gypsies lose all interest in the collective farms. The majority of the Gypsy collective farms either proved to be inviable and disintegrated all by themselves or were destroyed during the fascist occupation.

Let us summarize. We agree with those researchers who believed that the settlement policy of the Soviet authorities expressed in the indigenization and organization of the national Gypsy collective farms at the end of the 1920s–1930s was the result of a compromise between the interests of the authorities and the Gypsy communities (Kilin, 2005).

The state in compliance with the declared course of action to build in the USSR the foundations of socialism was interested in the shortest possible time to convert the Gypsies to a settled way of life. But the Gypsies, too, pursuing their own pragmatic goals, only backed up the organization of the collective farms if this promised benefits: provision of food, assignment of cash or other loans, supply of machines and cattle, legalization of their status and so on and so forth. As soon as the collective farm became onerous for them, they, having received the subsidies or loans, would immediately abandon the allotted land.

The causes for the flight from the collective farms (the Gipsies' "protests with feet") were numerous: suspension of the help, previously promised, toughening of the administrative measures regarding "the Gipsies' side jobs," the anti-Gipsy sentiment and the protests of the population from the neighboring villages (often taking place not without the local authorities' participation), in the case of natural disasters, crop failure, etc. For example, the famine of 1932–1933 that became epoch-making in the history of the Gipsy settlements and collective farms of the south of Russia forced a major part of the Gipsies to leave the region in search of the country's more favorable territories to live in.

On the whole, for all the controversy of the policy of the conversion of the Gipsies to a settled way of life the very existence of the Gipsy settlements and collective farms was a positive form of their national and cultural development (Akopyan, 2015).

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К вопросу о репатриации поляков Северного Кавказа в Польшу после Первой мировой войны

Резюме

В статье на основе архивных документов и опубликованных исследований рассматриваются особенности репатриации в Польшу проживавших на Северном Кавказе этнических поляков как беженцев Первой мировой войны и военнопленных, так и российских поданных. Отмечается, что процесс массовой репатриации, начавшийся сразу же после окончания Первой мировой войны, в основном завершился в 1923 году. Этот короткий временной отрезок, можно условно разделить на несколько этапов. Первый — от восстановления 11 ноября 1918 года польской государственности и до весны 1920 года. На этом этапе репатриацией в основном занимались региональные польские дипломатические представительства и национальные политические организации. Второй — с весны 1920 года, когда на Северном Кавказе окончательно утвердилась советская власть, и до конца 1921 года. На этом этапе репатриацию осуществляли отделения Центрального управления по эвакуации населения и польские национальные секции. Завершающий этап массовой репатриации приходится на 1922–1923 годы.

The policy of the conversion of the Soviet Gipsies to a settled and agricultural way of life in the south of Russia in the 1920s–1930s

Summary

The article deals with the policy of the Soviet state on the indigenization of the south Russian Gipsies in the interwar period (1920s–1930s). According to the normative acts of the Soviet authorities, the local land bodies were obliged to provide with land (from the vacant land fund and according to the local working norm) those Gipsies who were willing to convert to a settled way of life and engage themselves in agricultural business. The authors adhere to the viewpoint that the indigenization of the Gipsies and the organization of their national collective farms was the result of the compromise between the interests of the authorities and those of the Gipsy communities. The Gipsies pursuing their own pragmatic goals supported the organiza-

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tion of the collective farms provided they could benefit from this. But as soon as the collective farms became onerous for them the Gipsies having received the cash benefits and loans would at once abandon the allotted land. The authors of the article are of the opinion that for all the controversy of the policy of the conversion of the Gipsies to a settled way of life, the very existence of the Gipsy settlements is a positive form of their national and cultural development.