

THE GREAT VICTORY IN THE MEMORY OF GENERATIONS

UDC 39

DOI: 10.33876/2311-0546/2025-2/7-22

Original Article

© *Ivan Boyko, Galina Ertmakova, and Natalia Tolstova*

CHILDREN FROM ORPHANAGES IN CHUVASHIA ON THE EVE AND DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

The fate of children during the war is one of the most difficult trials that all participants in armed confrontations have to go through. For the peoples of the USSR, it was fully manifested in the days of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945, during which the number of children who already were homeless or neglected increased significantly as a result of the call of the adult population to the army, the deaths of soldiers and officers, and the evacuation of millions of families to the rear areas of the country. Those areas launched activities to receive and to ensure the life and upbringing of minors. One of them was the expansion of existing and the creation of new educational institutions, orphanages in particular. The article examines how this work was done in the Chuvash Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which did not have serious material and financial resources, while the main efforts of the authorities were aimed at providing comprehensive front-line needs. Archival documents show the almost extreme conditions in which the children in orphanages found themselves, especially in the first half of the wartime period. The shortage of warm clothes, shoes, interruptions in food supplies, firewood storing, insufficient equipment for educational and residential premises, diseases among children, many of whom were experiencing separation from their families for the first time, and other circumstances — all this had to be solved by the staff of educational institutions, employees of the local Ministry of Education, and heads of the party and Soviet organizations in cities and districts of Chuvashia. Joint efforts had made it possible to overcome the main difficulties, to save the lives of children, and to ensure their education and upbringing.

Keywords: *The Great Patriotic War, the Chuvash ASSR, orphanages, pupils, evacuation*

Authors Info: **Boyko, Ivan I.** — Doctor of History, Chief Researcher, Chuvash State Institute of Humanitarian Sciences, (Cheboksary, Russian Federation). E-mail: boyko2003@yandex.ru ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9202-615X>

Ertmakova, Galina V. — Ph.D. in History, Director of the Budgetary Institution of the Chuvash Republic «State Historical Archive of the Chuvash Republic» of the Ministry of Culture, Nationalities and Archival Affairs of the Chuvash Republic (Cheboksary, Russian Federation). E-mail: gertmakova@yandex.ru

Tolstova, Natalia Ju. — Ph.D. in History, Head of the Scientific Center for the Study of Archival Materials on the Feat of Home Front Workers of the Budgetary Institution of the Chuvash Republic «State Historical Archive of the Chuvash Republic» of the Ministry of Culture, Nationalities and Archival Affairs of the Chuvash Republic (Cheboksary, Russian Federation). E-mail: nykuznetcova@yandex.ru

For citation: Boyko, I. I., G. V. Ertmakova, and N. J. Tolstova. 2025. Children from Orphanages in Chuvashia on the Eve and During the Great Patriotic War. *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 2: 7–22.

References

- Seriabrianskaia, G. V., and N. V. Sakovich. 2020. Deti v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny (na primere Volgo-Viatskogo regiona) [Children During the Great Patriotic War (on the Example of the Volga-Vyatka Region)]. In *Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina i problemy natsional'noi bezopasnosti sovremennoi Rossii. Mezhdunarodnaia nauchno-prakticheskaiia konferentsiia k 75-letiiu Pobedy Sovetskogo Soiuzna nad fashistskoi Germaniei (23-25 apreliia 2020)* [The Great Patriotic War and the National Security Problems of Modern Russia. International Scientific and Practical Conference Dedicated to the 75th Anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany (April 23–25, 2020)]. Orenburg: Izdatel'stvo Orenburgskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo instituta. 275–278.
- Slavko, A. A. 2010. Detskie doma i shkoly dlia detei-sirot v Rossii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny i poslevoennyi period [Child Care Homes and Schools for Orphans in Russia during the Great Patriotic War and the Post-War Period]. *Vestnik Chuvashskogo universiteta* 1: 79–88.
- Timofeev, V. V. 2010. Detskie evakuirovannye uchrezhdeniia v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny (1941–1945 gg.) (na primere respublik Volgo-Viatskogo regiona) [Children's Evacuated Institutions during the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) (on the Example of the Republics of the Volga-Vyatka Region)]. In *Edinstvo fronta i tyl v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941–1945 gg. (k 65-letiiu Pobedy). Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii (28 marta 2010)* [Unity of the Front and Rear During the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 (To the 65th Anniversary of the Victory. Proceedings of the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference (March 28, 2010)]. Cheboksary: Izdatel'stvo Chuvashskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universitetata. 149–154.