



Jason Kendall Moore, "Between Expediency and Principle: U.S. Repatriation Policy toward Russian Nationals, 1944-1949," *Diplomatic History*, Volume 24, Issue 3 (Summer 2000): 381-404.

Commentary by **Ivan I. Kurilla**, Department of History and International Relations, Volgograd State University, ivan@vlink.ru
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There are few problems in the history of the Second World War that have been less investigated than the fate of Russian prisoners of war who were given up to Soviet authorities in 1945-49 by British and American allies, and who consequently were sent to Gulag camps or executed in the USSR. Jason Kendall Moore's interesting article fills the gap in our understanding of US decision-making in that period.

Basing his analysis on the solid archival background from both diplomatic and military collections, Moore studies the interaction between the U.S. State Department and military personnel, and between both of these groups and the Soviet authorities, and demonstrates how they achieved an "unsatisfactory compromise between expediency and principle".

The author demonstrates that U.S. policy towards Russian nationals changed significantly several times. In 1944 and early 1945 Americans often based the repatriation decisions on the Geneva convention of 1929, while, at the same time, expediency prompted the full repatriation of Russian nationals found in German uniform. The practical solution was found in claimant policy.

The Yalta secret agreement for the reciprocal repatriation of personnel of February 11, 1945, however, legitimated the complete disregard of the Geneva Convention. That document avoided making distinctions between collaborators, prisoners, and civilians in order to dwell on the practical matter of exchanging personnel and thus avert dissent over Geneva Convention.

By the time of German surrender on 8 May 1945, the number of Russian (among other nationals) POWs created serious problem for the US Army in terms of supply, transportation, and administration. On 24 May American and Soviet representatives signed an agreement based on the assumption that while Wehrmacht had been dissolved there were no more prisoners of war and, consequently, the Geneva Convention did not apply. General Eisenhower was among the most prominent backers of the full repatriation of Russian nationals found in German uniform that he considered traitors. Thus, legal considerations, as well as principle of political asylum and human rights, were superceded by the military concerns.

Several incidents, like those in Fort Dix, where Russian POWs preferred suicide to repatriation, did not stop the forcible repatriation of large number of Russians that continued throughout the Summer of 1945.

Moore demonstrates that the situation began to change again by 1947. The general cooling in Soviet-American relations in the second half of 1940s led to open discord over the problem in February 1949, when the U.S. Army requested the departure of the Soviet repatriation mission from Frankfurt, Germany. Moore's observation that an inverse corollary emerged between U.S. willingness to repatriate Russians and the significance of their number is the best illustration of his conclusion that the reformulation of U.S. policy based upon changing perceptions finally defied either expediency or principle.

As any interesting research, Moore's article provokes some additional comments, not necessary needed for the article itself. It seems to me that an important distinction should be made not only between POWs and civilians, but also between Russian collaborators from the number of POWs, and those Russians who emigrated during the Revolution and Civil War. Many from the latter group were prominent White Army generals in 1918-1920, like General Shkuro, and General Krasnov (the latter even used to be the Ruler of Independent Cossack Don State in 1918-19). Most of Cossack divisions were formed from Cossack emigrants in Yugoslavia rather than from POWs. To call this second category "traitors" was not just: they never were Soviet citizens and never took on oath to Stalin. However, policy decisions based on nationality led American and especially British authorities to give up such people to USSR in the same manner they did for former POWs.

Another intriguing question that Moore addresses in the article only briefly deals with the Soviet position and Soviet policy toward Russian nationals. What was the Soviet command going to do in case of American resistance to giving up Russian collaborators in 1945? As for the top leaders of the Russian collaborators, it is known that Commander of Soviet 162 tank brigade Mischenko received an order "by all means to find and imprison Vlasov. In case he will be found in the American units disposition, to kidnap Vlasov" (Cit.: Sergei Ermachenkov, Andrei Pochtarev, "Poslednii pokhod vlasovskoi armii" (The last campaign of Vlasov Army). *Voprosy istorii*. 1998. No 8. P.100). So, in the case of a refusal to follow the Yalta agreement the U.S. Army faced real confrontation with the Soviet army as early as May 1945 over the fate of high-ranked traitors.

There are a couple of inaccurate statements in the article. Moore states that "thousands of Red Army personnel joined the White Russian Army formed by the Germans in the Spring of 1942. The defector General Andrei Vlasov initially held command" (p. 383). However, the Russian units on the German side were never called "the White Army", the term from Russian Civil War of 1917-1920. The official title of that first Russian formation was "Russian Popular Liberation Army" (Rossiiskaya Narodno-Osvoboditelnaya Arm, or RNOA). RNOA was dissolved in 1943 due to controversies that emerged between Russian and German officers. Vlasov was never the commander of that army, headed initially by Russian emigrant colonel Kromiadi (Sanin), and later by

former Soviet General Zhilenkov. The creation of a new Russian army took place only in 1944, when the German position in the war significantly worsened. General Vlasov held command over that army, usually known as Russian Liberation Army (ROA).

Moore's usage of the term "Red Army" is not precise. Since 1943, Red Army was officially renamed Soviet Army. When the author states that "Red Army executed or imprisoned collaborators" (p.403), he obviously uses "Red Army" as synonymous to "Soviet Government".

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