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ELIMINATION OF BANDITISM IN THE PERM REGION IN THE DAYS OF THE CIVIL WAR: RECORDS OF INTERROGATION AND MINUTES OF WITNESS INTERVIEW

Abstract

The article examines criminal activities of the Alikin and Borodulin gangs known for brutal murders and robberies in the Perm region. The article is based on the documents from the Perm archives, the style of which enables criminal profiling. Banditism was rooted in desertion and deficient measures against it. Desertion prevention policies introduced by the authorities caused many a conflict between peasants and Bolsheviks. The end of the Civil War saw an increase in reported murders of Soviet and party workers and peasants in the periphery. At first, deserters used to shelter in some forest close to their native villages, their relatives providing food. When positive misprision of deserters became a punishable offence and deserters were to be sent to the front, the bread grew scarce and the threat of detection increased, as relatives could be watched and reported. These problems deserters solved the in the old-fashioned way by murdering Soviet and party workers, informers and witnesses. Another, more painless and nevertheless effective way was intimidation and terror. Yet another form of banditry was spreading where authority was shaky. Bandits controlled local authorities and locals. Deserters spontaneously formed gangs of bandits not unlike the mafia of the 19th – 20th centuries. Authorities and ordinary people were involved in their activities, which included murder, robbery,

rape and blackmail. Indulgence gave bandits free reign, instilling permissiveness and impunity. Peasants still adhered to the shared responsibility known as *krugovaya poruka*. If a peasant failed to meet requirements of bandits, say, refused to give away bread, money, or some other property, or assisted in a criminal investigation, they would be lynched and outcast.

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Keywords

Source, archive, desertion, peasants, banditism, Civil War, Soviet power, Perm gubernia.

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