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Gubernia Control Commission of the RCP (B) Fighting the Disintegration of Party Organizations in 1921–23: Archival Materials of the Vyatka Gubernia

Abstract

The article draws on archival materials from the Central State Archive of the Kirov Region to analyze the activities of the Vyatka Gubernia Control Commission of the RCP (B) in 1921–23 directed against the collapse of party organizations of the gubernia. The author pursues two

tasks: identifying the commission staff and determining its methods. The novelty of the research is determined by the fact that in 1921, following the introduction of the new economic policy, many party members found the abrupt change of course intolerable, which led to a crisis and collapse of entire party organizations. Recently, there have been published a lot of works on various aspects of the control commissions' activities, but their activities directed against collapse of entire party organizations haven't yet been investigated. The research is based on archival material and uses principle of historicism and historical institutionalism. The Vyatka Gubernia Control Commission was established in August 1921 in connection with the first general purge. Its first membership did take decisive action, having no relevant experience and busy with Soviet work. But as the situation in the party organizations deteriorated, the 19th Gubernia Party Conference (February 1922) decided to regard the commission staff most seriously. The new commission included Nikolai Agalakov, Ivan Babintsev, Gusev as its members, D. Zobnin as a candidate, and Sitnikov as an investigator. In 1922–23 the meetings of the commission repeatedly discussed the state of the party organizations and Soviet apparatus of the Kotelnich, Nolinsk, Malmyzh, Orlov, Slobodskoi, Soviet, Urzhumsk districts, and of other party organizations. The major shortcomings were identified: collapse of internal party work, failing discipline, abuse and corruption, drunkenness, squabbles, and resignations from the party. The peculiarity of this period was such that these shortcomings became widespread and threatened entire organizations. Members of the Vyatka gubCC got busy; relying on the party committees and organs of the Cheka-OGPU, they were able to stop the process of organizational disintegration by 1924. The analysis of the activities of the Vyatka gubCC has showed that it became an effective tool in overcoming the collapse of party organizations and in strengthening discipline. This happened only after the commission was staffed with experienced, disciplined, and energetic local staff. While reviewing the commission's activities, it has become apparent that the most effective methods of its work were field meetings, purges of the entire organizations, transfer of guilty party members, imposition of various party penalties (up to exclusion from the party).

Keywords

Vyatka Gubernia Control Commission of the RCP (B), uezd committees, inter-party crisis, disintegration of party organizations.

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