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Urban Population of the Russian Periphery in the Days of the First World War: Special Considerations for Identifying Documents on Issues of Public Sentiment and Behavioral Practices

Abstract

The article offers a systematization of archival sources on formation and development of public moods and behavioral practices of the rear zone population of the Russian periphery in the days of World War I. The following groups of archival sources have been identified: laws and regulations of central and local authorities (circulars, resolutions of ministries and departments, governors, heads of gubernia gendarme departments, commissars of the Provisional Government, orders of garrison commanders); record keeping materials (reports of

gendarmerie officials, governors, uезд police officers, polizeimeisters, and police supervisors (nadzirateli); reports of self-government institutions; censorship officers reports; reports and reviews of various committees, meetings, societies, cultural and educational institutions); personal provenance sources (letters, memoirs, anonymous and named complaints and police information); statistical and reference materials. This complex of sources allows to characterize public sentiments and behavioral practices of provincial towns citizens in the wartime: their perception of reality in the changing multifaceted demographic situation; attitudes towards national and confessional groups and their representatives; their reaction to veterans, wounded, prisoners of war, recruits, personnel of rear garrisons, and refugees; leisure possibilities; cultural entertainment and its impact on mood and behavior of citizens; their attitude towards authority and its representatives; impact of the opposition on political activities and dissatisfaction of citizens; organization of supply and its influence on socio-political processes in the urban environment; transformation of official national paradigm. The case-study of the Volga region registers difficulties in identification of sources in the fonds of regional and central archives, which pertain to the subject. The regional specificity in structure and content of archival materials is demonstrated.

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Keywords

Sources, laws and regulations, documents of management and record keeping, reports of self-administration institutions; censorship officers reports; statistics, Volga region, regional archives.

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