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“The Bloodless Revolution” of 1920 in Arkhangelsk

Abstract

The article is based predominantly on sources of personal provenance (memoirs of participants and eyewitnesses of the events of 1920 in Arkhangelsk, stored in the "fonds of memoirs" from the State Archive of the Russian Federation, State Archive of the Arkhangelsk Region, Central State Archive of Historical and Political Documents of St. Petersburg, Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, Vologda Regional Archive of Contemporary Political History, Scientific Archive of the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences. and scientific archives of the local history museums in the Arkhangelsk region). These documents allow us to expand our understanding of the events that took place in Arkhangelsk in February 1920 and to

supplement the information of other, synchronous, sources on this interesting fact of the Civil War: attempts to peacefully transfer power from the administration of the Northern Region (a quasi-state entity with its center in Arkhangelsk) to the command of the advancing Red Army through a “transitional government” formed from activists of local trade union organizations. The nature of the Civil War associated with ideological disorientation of the population manifested itself in the desire of certain groups (i.e., White soldiers who defected from the Red Army, workers who welcomed the change of power in 1918) to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the Soviet authorities. It was reflected in their insistence on establishing of the “revolutionary order” in the city even before the arrival of the Red Army. When the prepared script was disrupted, the city plunged into anarchy for several days. This article is an attempt to reconstruct the events of February 1918 in Arkhangelsk in order to demonstrate the impact made by individuals driven by their own motivations, interests, and goals on the events of historical significance.

Keywords

Archival documents, historical sources, sources of personal provenance, Civil War, Arkhangelsk, Northern Oblast, White evacuation, civil power, anarchy.

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