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Problems of Soviet Democracy Development in the Activities of the CC CPSU Working Group
on Drafting New Constitution of the USSR in January – April 1962

Abstract

The article analyses the introduction of practices of interaction between the authorities and the society in the USSR during the Khrushchev Thaw; it was connected with drafting of new Constitution of the USSR. The article reviews the period from creation of the CC CPSU working

group to public creation of the Constitutional Commission under the USSR Supreme Soviet (January – April 1962). It attempts to identify archival documents related to the activities of the working group under the Central Committee of the Communist Party that demonstrate the attitude of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party N. S. Khrushchev to its proposals and to conduct their comparative analysis. Along with traditional methods of historicism, analysis, synthesis, the comparative method of source analysis has been used when studying documents on elaboration of the Constitution of the USSR in the personal provenance fond of L. F. Ilichev (fond 97) from the Russian State Archive of the Contemporary History (RGANI). The author establishes what issues, ideas, and notions were considered by participants of the constitutional project and addresses N. S. Khrushchev's reaction to their proposals. The study provides an opportunity to fill the gap in the scholarship on the initial stage of the Soviet Constitution drafting. The issue is quite significant due to the need to review the history of attempts to build up the interactions between the power and the masses and to take this study up to the present. The article adds to existing notions on the nature of the political regime of the USSR in the period from the mid-1950s to the early 1980s. The paper contributes to the study of the period and of the issue, it reconsiders the established views on Soviet social and political system as a structure of either purely totalitarian nature or, on the contrary, of democratic nature, and it helps to understand the complexity of its internal social and political mechanisms.

Keywords

Personal provenance fond of L. F. Ilichev from the Russian State Archive of the Contemporary History (RGANI), Constitution of the USSR, N. S. Khrushchev, Thaw, Soviet democracy, Soviet constitutional reform of 1962.

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