

Scientific article

УДК 94(47)+639.1

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2021-3-827-839

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Hunting of the Northern Selkups in the 1920s – early 1960s: A Review of the Manuscript by E. D. Prokofieva

Abstract

The article is to study the hunting of the Northern Selkups in the era of active socialist transformation of the Selkup economy (1920s – early 1960s). So far, none of the scientific

publications have considered this topic in detail, assessing its scientific significance and novelty. The scientific significance is emphasized by the new round of industrialization of polar latitudes, which necessitates taking into account the survival experience of the ingenious northerners in their extreme climate. The research tasks include consideration of the manuscript of the ethnographer and scholar of Siberia E. D. Prokofieva “Hunting of the Taz-Turukhan Selkups,” kept in the Archive of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the Russian Academy of Sciences. It was written on the basis of data collected by E. D. Prokofieva during her expeditions to the northern Selkups in 1925–28 and in 1962. The study of E. D. Prokofieva’s manuscript has been carried out using comparative historical method, methods of analysis and description. The research has resulted in the following conclusions: At the time of the socialist reforms of the Selkup economy, the Selkups still used their traditional means and methods of hunting. The Soviet transformations in the sphere of hunting — the positive ones — include a new procedure for accepting furs from the hunters, which spared them the arbitrariness of private buyers; study of the region’s natural resources and measures for preserving and restoring the number of head. Collectivization, settled lifestyle of hunters in the kolkhozes farmsteads necessary for their work in the new sectors of economy, and elimination of the interval between the hunters’ trips to distant hunting lands allow no unambiguous assessments. These transformations resulted in a drop of productivity indicators of the Selkup hunting and in violation of the original hunting regulations, thus launching the process of degradation of the Selkup hunting tradition. Soviet reformers were unable to solve some of the oldest problems of hunting, such as lack of transport reindeer, etc. The region administration and the kolkhozes heads had a plan to bring the hunting industry to the forefront, but by 1960 it had not even begun to be implemented. E. D. Prokofieva’s manuscript fills in the gaps in the characterization of some elements and phenomena of the Selkup culture and introduces into scientific use a new valuable source on the history and ethnography of the peoples of Siberia.

Keywords

Historical source, Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, indigenous peoples of the North, Selkups, economic activities, hunting, history of socialist transformations, E. D. Prokofieva.

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Submitted 7.04.2021, published (for citation):

STEPANOVA, O. B. Okhotnichii promysel severnykh sel'kupov v 1920-kh – nachale 1960-kh gg.: obzor rukopisi E. D. Prokof'evoi [Hunting of the Northern Selkups in the 1920s – early 1960s: A Review of the Manuscript by E. D. Prokofieva. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2021, no. 3, pp. 827-839. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2021-3-827-839

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Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .