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Socio-Cultural and Political Image of the Volost Communities in 1917–18: Materials of the Shenkursk Uezd of the Arkhangelsk Gubernia

Abstract

The article attempts to reconstruct socio-cultural and political image of a particular local community formed in a specific life environment, which influenced the behavior patterns of the population in the period of radical transformation. Analysis of the problem promotes a profound

understanding of diverse revolutionary processes of 1917. The paper draws heavily upon microhistory approach with its interrelations of cultural and social contexts. According to the approach, the historic events on both individual and local levels become subjects of research. The study draws on materials of parish communities of the Shenkursk uezd of the Arkhangelsk gubernia, reflecting social, economic, cultural, and mental features of the typical northern periphery and also traditional agricultural region of Central Russia. In the days of the Civil War, the Shenkursk uezd was the epicenter of armed struggles between Bolsheviks and anti-Bolsheviks. The source base consists of published and unpublished materials. The archival sources are retrieved from the fonds of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Communes Union of the Northern Region (Central State Archive of St. Petersburg) and from the fonds of the Shenkursk Uezd Executive Committee of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies (State Archive of the Arkhangelsk region). The authors conclude that multiple factors influenced the perception of the ongoing revolutionary processes and choosing of the behavior patterns during the Revolution and the Civil War: economic activities, social status, age, educational background, political beliefs. Yet, pragmatic approach to life, inherent to their outlook, forced peasants to adapt their behavior to the rapidly changing environment. The research indicates that the rural population of the Shenkursk uezd, boasting high socio-cultural characteristics, was notable for their political involvement in the revolutionary processes of 1917–18. Political preferences of the population were multifaceted; they changed throughout the time, thus revealing the whole complexity of objective and subjective factors of the revolutionary process in Russia.

Keywords

Historical sources, revolutionary processes, European North of Russia, Shenkursk uezd, socio-cultural characteristics, Civil War, behavior patterns.

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