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Demidova, Elena I.

Saratov State University, Saratov, Russian Federation

Vasilchenko, Maxim A.

Moscow Financial and Industrial University "Synergy," Moscow, Russian Federation

Czechoslovak National Council (Branch for Russia) and Its Activities during Revolutionary Events of 1917 and the Civil War

Abstract

The study of the Czechoslovak national movement, the activities of the Czechoslovak National Council and its branch for Russia during the revolutionary events of 1917 and the Civil War is one of the key topics for understanding the complexity of political situation in Russia, causes of the Civil War and its consequences. The article discusses the activities goals and objectives and decision-making mechanism of the Czechoslovak National Council for Russia, on the behalf of which negotiations were conducted between Soviet state bodies and the Czechoslovak corps leadership on the issue of passage of Czechoslovak echelons to their homeland. The study uses both general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, inductive method, comparative method) and special ones (historical-chronological and content analysis). The use of the historical-chronological method is to correlate documentary information with general historical picture of the period, while the use of content analysis is to create a more reliable picture of the activities of the Czechoslovak National Council and its branch for Russia. The study analyzes structure of this socio-political institution, its activities to prevent the Czechoslovak military corps from being drawn into the Civil War in Russia, and reveals contradictions between civil and military participants in the Czech national movement. It is to find out what the Czech national liberation movement in Russia was and how the activities of the department for Russia of the Czechoslovak National Council changed in 1917–18. It has examined all currently published materials of the Czechoslovak National Council. The documentary information has been brought in correlation with general historical picture of the period and desire to implement the principle of sovereignty, recreating a reliable picture of the Czechs' and Slovaks' perception of the Russian revolutionary events. The First World War and subsequent contradictory and ambiguous political events in Russia had a direct impact on the growth of the national consciousness of the Czechs and Slovaks, strengthening their desire for state self-determination. On the patriotic upsurge, guided by ideas of Slavic unity in their fight against the forces of the Quadruple Alliance, national military formations were created in Italy, France, and Russia, that took part in the hostilities of the First World War. The authors highlight the role and measured political line of the leader of the Czechoslovak National Council, the future first president of independent Czechoslovakia, T. G. Masaryk.

Keywords

Czechoslovak National Council, revolutionary events of 1917 in Russia, Civil war, T. G.

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About the authors

Demidova Elena Igorevna, PhD in History, professor, N.G. Chernyshevsky Saratov National Research University, department of national history and historiography, professor, Saratov, Russian Federation, +7-905-383-56-70, demidova-elena@yandex.ru

Vasilchenko Maxim Anatolyevich, PhD in History, Moscow Financial and Industrial University "Synergy," department of fundamental legal and socio-humanitarian disciplines, assistant professor, Moscow, Russian Federation, +7-906-301-69-61, maks-vasilchenko@mail.ru

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