

УДК 378.124 (Сум)+94(47)+929

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2020-4-1228-1240

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N. E. Soum – the First Head of the Museum Department of the Institute of Out-of-School Education in Petrograd

Abstract

The revolutions of 1917 prompted a large-scale reorganization of almost all aspects of life in Russia. An important actor in its implementation was intelligentsia. Studying the biographies of the participants in that processes is important for two reasons. Firstly, it allows us to fill the gaps in the history of certain phenomena (i.e., the history of museum education in Russia). Secondly, it's important from the point of view of prosopography, as biographies help a better understanding of certain historical types. That is important in the context of the anthropological approach to the study of revolutionary events. The object of this article is the biography of one

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of the personalities of the first post-revolutionary years, Nikolai Emmanuilovich Soum (1879–1926). Studying chemistry at St. Petersburg University in the 1890s–1900s, Soum to a great extent followed the path laid by his father's professional activities. However, he didn't succeed in accomplishing his studies, perhaps on the account of his father's death and failed family finances. In the 1910s, when working as a chemist, he joined in the activities of scientific and educational societies. The enlightenment pathos and practical application of science (his interest in photography) prepared the changes, which took place immediately after the revolution. Since 1918 Soum served in the Petrograd gubernia department of public education, and from 1919 headed the Museum department of the Petrograd Institute of Out-of-School Education. One of his first projects was system of training of museum workers, one of the first in Russia. Structural changes and unfavorable political conditions hindered the implementation of the initiative. Soum, same as earlier in the pre-revolutionary period, was pushed to the periphery of cultural life.



Keywords

Museology, training of museum workers, Petrograd gubernia department of public education, Museum department of the Petrograd Institute of Out-of-School Education, N. E. Soum, revolution of 1917, archival documents, Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg (TsGIA SPb), Central State Archive of St. Petersburg (TsGA)

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SPb), Central State Archive of Literature and Art of St. Petersburg (TsGALI SPb).

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Grant information

This work has been prepared with financial support from of the Russian Science Fund (science project no. 18-18-00367).

The author is most grateful to E. V. Abroskina (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences) for her assistance in the work with archival documents.

Submitted 24.12.2019, published (for citation):

ANANIEV, V. G. N. E. Sum – zaveduyushchii muzeinym otdeleniem petrogradskogo Instituta vneshkol'nogo obrazovaniya [N. E. Soum – the First Head of the Museum Department of the Institute of Out-of-School Education in Petrograd. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2020, no. 4, pp. 1228-1240. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2020-4-1228-1240

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Thursday, 31 March 2022 04:54

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