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Environmental History of the North of Western Siberia (1917–1991): Research Potential of the Archival Sources

Abstract

The article discusses prospects of studying archival sources on the history of the North of Western Siberia in 1917–1991 in the context of environmental history. The object of this authoritative trend in the world historiography is interaction of man and nature throughout time, or, alternatively, relationship between man and culture in the past. Environmental history is closely connected with resolution of the global history issues, that is, with exploration of summation of endogenous and exogenous factors, i.e, natural, planetary, general and local conditions of the human history. History of Siberia and its territories is a truly immense study space for an environmental historian. The same is true of the Siberian North, where the problem of using biological resources for industrial development comes to the fore, as well as issues of traditional management of nature and of peculiar northern views on the interaction with

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environment, history of fishing and hunting and environmental protection. Siberian archives reveal brilliant prospects for identification, analysis and usage of documentary materials on environmental history of the Siberian North in the Soviet era. Studying historical aspects of the ecology issues of the Soviet era is impossible without an analysis of party documents stored, for instance, in the State Archive of Social and Political History of the Tyumen Region (GASPITO) fonds: documents of the Tobolsk obkom of the AUCP(b), of the Tyumen industry obkom of the CPSU, of the Tyumen obkom of the CPSU, of the Khanty Mansiysk obkom of the CPSU, of the Yamalo-Nenets obkom of the CPSU. These party documents reflect all the crucial issues of societal life, including those of environmental conservation and rational use of natural resources. The identified archival materials complex indicate that the documental basis for studying environmental history of the North of Western Siberia is ample. Qualitative and quantitative data from the archival documents, taken together with other sources, allow study various aspects of Soviet environmental policy in the North of Western Siberia and its implementation at the local level.



Keywords

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Environmental history, Siberia, archives, archival sources, documentary publication, environmentalism, biological resources of Siberia.

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