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Paradigms of Power in the Russian Periphery in 1917

Abstract

The article studies specifics of forming of local structures of power as a totality of circumstances that sprang from the revolution. To identify a trend in disintegration of the old socio-political forms and in emergence of new ones in 1917, it draws on the decrees of supreme authorities, which it only discusses as far as they determined the formation of new administration and the reforming of self-government institutions in the periphery. It should be noted that the revolutionary parochial mentality distorted government policies, at times even rejecting them. Activities of the local administration of the Provisional Government are reflected in the fonds of the gubernia commissars. Some of the documents were published with cuttings in collections and chronicles on revolutionary movement. However, priorities of compilers hinged on ideological and political situation and not those of source base, as most documents were out of their reach, some even destroyed. Records of the provincial executive authorities include incoming and outgoing papers characterizing their unsuccessful attempts to find a solution to working and agrarian questions or a means of interaction with local self-government agencies and social and political associations. These materials often show irresolution and a lack of initiative and consistency of the local authorities, which were no match to the onslaught of extremist revolutionary forces. The analysis of the relations between power and society on the

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ground in 1917 made on the basis of these archival sources confirms the multi-faceted nature of the national collapse. All attempts to implement the Western all-democratic principles of regulating social relations proved most inefficient in the periphery. The author concludes that democratic government institutions suited neither the traditional values of the people, nor the demands of the revolutionary currents.



Keywords

Source, archival document, Provisional Government, gubernia and uezd commissars, public executive committees, documents from regional archives.

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