Social Democratic Leaflets of the Period of the Decline of the First Russian Revolution in the Upper Volga Region: January 1906 – June 3, 1907

Abstract

The article studies leaflets of social democratic organizations in the Upper Volga region during the period of the decline of the first Russian revolution. The chronological framework for the study is January 1906 – June 3, 1907. The territorial framework includes the Tver, Yaroslavl,
Kostroma, and Vladimir gubernias. Source base of the study is published and unpublished sources: leaflets of the Upper Volga social democratic organizations. In January 1906 the revolutionary movement in Russia was waning. The leaflets of the Upper Volga extreme left organizations echoed regional socio-political life of 1906 – mid-1907: electoral campaigns for the First and the Second State Duma, parliamentary activities of the Social Democrats in the Second Duma, strikes, peasant demonstrations, Vyborg Manifesto, dissolution of the Second State Duma, etc. The social democratic proclamations sharply criticized autocracy, Black Hundreds, liberal parties (especially Kadets), and other socialist parties, their obvious rivals for influence over the exploited masses (especially the Socialist Revolutionaries). The social democratic leaflet literature split in two factions – Bolshevik and Menshevik. During the period of the decline of the revolution, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks evaluated the events of 1906-1907 differently. After the dissolution of the First State Duma the Bolshevik organizations pushed for an armed uprising, while the Mensheviks called for a peaceful strike. And yet, in the Upper Volga region the distinction between Bolshevik and Menshevik slogans was less pronounced than the scholarship indicate. The analysis of leaflet literature shows that in mid-July 1906 the ‘left bloc’ was reborn once again after the autumn of 1905. The proclamations of the Upper Volga social democratic organizations insisted that the RSDLP was the only true defender of popular interests. Leaflets of the Upper Volga Social Democrats dating from 1906 to 1907 are an important source for the period of the decline of the first Russian revolution.

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Keywords

Leaflets, first Russian revolution of 1905–1907, Social Democrats, Upper Volga region.
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Submitted 13.10.2017, published:

You can read completely article in the russian historic-archival magazine “The Herald of an Archivist”. Read more about terms of subscription here.

Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки здесь.