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The 'March Bolsheviks': The Emergence of the Uezd Organizations of the RCP (b) in the Vyatka Gubernia in the Spring – Autumn 1918: From Archival Materials

Abstract

Drawing on archival materials from the State Archive of the Kirov Region and those from the State Archive of Social and Political History of the Kirov Region, the article studies emergence and development of the uezd organizations of the RCP (b) in the Vyatka gubernia in the spring – autumn 1918. By spring of 1918 the Soviets had set up their authority, and the Bolsheviks had wrung the majority therein from the Left Socialists-Revolutionaries. Up to the spring of 1918 there were no RCP (b) organizations in most uezd towns of the Vyatka gubernia, which may be explained by non-proletarian character of the population and by extreme weakness of the RCP

(b) institutional arrangements in the gubernia. The novelty of this research hinges on the term the 'March Bolsheviks' used to explain the process of the party building. As it became a ruling one, left socialists, Baltic internationalists, and German prisoners-of-war turned internationalists swarmed to the party. The Bolshevik party overflowed with careerists, adventurers, and persons with a criminal past and present. There were shortages of food and goods, but party membership received food rations, and also a share in the confiscated food and property of the bourgeois. Many a party cell must have thus supplied and financed itself. Higher party bodies constantly had to purge the party organizations of those who 'worm themselves' into the party ranks and 'latched onto the part teat,' and also of persons with criminal record. The author is the first to introduce into scientific use these facts, which prior to 1991 could have never been published. Unfortunately, even after 1991, they remained uncollected, unanalyzed, and unpublished. Having analyzed the archival material, the author concludes that the gravitation of ideological backsliders towards the ruling party is attributable to the historical conditions. People had to obtain their needs, despite the ideology of the ruling party.

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Keywords

Historical source, Vyatka gubernia, uezd organizations of the RCP(b), party cells, reorganization.

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