

УДК 94(47)+94(470/342)

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2020-1-169-179

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Attitude to the New Economic Policy in the RCP (B) Party Organizations of the Vyatka Gubernia in 1921-1923: Archival Materials

Abstract

Drawing on archival materials from the State Archive of the Kirov Region and the State Archive of Social and Political History of the Kirov Region, the article analyzes attitudes to the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the party organizations of the RCP (B) of the Vyatka gubernia in 1921. The novelty of this work lies in the fact that the author draws on archival documents to investigate the attitude of communists to the decision of the X Congress of the RCP (B) to replace surplus tax by tax in kind (prodnalog) and other measures for the development of the NEP in 1921. It turns out that party workers in position of responsibility and ordinary members of

the party, as a rule, understood and perceived the NEP in their own way, reading into it the interests and needs of different social and professional groups. Moreover, there emerged some ideological differences due to different understanding of the political goals of the New Economic Policy. For the first time in local historiography, the author has introduced into scientific use some previously unknown archival facts. The analysis of the archival material allows the author to conclude that the attitude to the NEP of party workers in position of responsibility and of rank-and-file members differed. If the “top” of the party discussed the ideological aspects of the NEP, the “bottom” members, as a rule, were interested in its practical orientation. There was no unanimous support for the NEP not just among the responsible party workers, but also among the rank-and-file members. The author comes to the conclusion that the lack of clear understanding of the nature of the New Economic Policy caused disagreements in the party ranks, which, in absence of the tradition of broad discussion of controversial issues, was fraught with danger of a split. The Military Communism ideology and low literacy (including political one) that prevailed in the party ranks did not promote good understanding of the new party course and its creative application under specific regional conditions. Critics and open opponents of the NEP faced “organizational conclusions.”

Keywords

Archive, historical source, Vyatka gubernia, X Congress of the RCP (B), attitude to the New Economic Policy, organization of the RCP (B), gubkom, county committees, State Archive of the Kirov Region, State Archive of Social and Political History of the Kirov Region.

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Submitted 25.05.2019, published (for citation):

TIMKIN, Yu. N. Otnoshenie k novoi ekonomicheskoi politike v partiinykh organizatsiyakh RKP(b) Vyatskoi gubernii v 1921-1923 gg. Po arkhivnym materialam [Attitude to the New Economic Policy in the RCP (B) Party Organizations of the Vyatka Gubernia in 1921-1923: Archival Materials. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2020, no. 1, pp. 169-179. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2020-1-169-179

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