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Political Activity of Revolution Leaders and Masses in Russian Province

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Abstract

The article is dedicated to a complicated question concerned the role of party leaders in revolution propaganda in Russian provinces in 1917. The author observes different kinds of political mind during the revolution and activity of different groups of people in revolution events. The main role in arranging and strengthening the local revolutionary organizations played the party leaders of the central party organizations who visited provinces for a special purpose or transiently during the transit under the police supervision. But sometimes it was hard for them to rule the masses because of their political unconsciousness.

Keywords: Revolution 1917, Province, Masses, Party leaders, Russia, Political activity.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays there exists a great interest for researching the behavior of a provincial human in the conditions of the social cataclysms. The ordinary summarizing the objective reasons (hard working conditions, low level of salary and of the whole life) doesn't let us to imagine the full historical reality. According to M. Bloch, "history wants to see people".² Now many researchers try to wide their activity by this direction. Many studies are dedicated to the psychology of the individuals as of the different social groups in 1905 and 1917 revolutions. However there exist the need to continue researching the behavioral stereotypes of the masses and political leaders in the conditions of the social transformations. This study is dedicated to the revolutionists in province, their psychological portraits and their role in the revolutions in the whole Russian Empire.

2. Methods

Researching the revolution process on the local level is still relevant for contemporary Russia because the problems of social psychology, people's treatment to the power, their orientation to cooperation or confrontation, the reasons of choosing the strategy of behavior are relevant in the contemporary Russian society as the country is developing on the way of forming the civil society and increasing the people's political culture.

The contemporary researches testify that the scientists are more and more interested in the history of revolution as a whole and of manifestations of the process on the local level. However, researching this problem is quite difficult because of finding out the main factors among the variety of different political events' reasons and determination of the correlation of objective and subjective reasons. All these facts cause the big massive of the literature concerned these problems and the variety of researched aspects of the revolutionary process determined by the historians. Nowadays the researches pay a lot of attention to analyzing the macro processes (the 1st World War's influence on the increasing of revolutionary attitude of wide groups of people, their mental transformations, forms and ways of politization) and to analyzing the activity of central party and state authority, prosopography of the political leaders. Also the historians research the subjective factors of the revolutionary process. The main of them is the organizing activity of the political parties and their leaders, the political culture of the different groups of population, the influence of the mass performances on the tactics of political parties, determination the reasons of different socialistic parties' fail (mostly, the Mensheviks who were the most realistic course of Russian revolutionary

² Bloch, Marc. *Apologie pour l'histoire ou Métier d'historien* (1949). P.18.

democracy). For the many years the special tendency appeared in the historiography – the multi-party system in the Russian province has not been researched well enough. However it is possible to explain the variety of political behavior of the participants of the revolutionary process only using the regional studies in the comparative aspect. As the historian Donald J. Raleigh said that it is time to refuse the point of view that Russian province was passive and secondary in the revolutionary process. It is important to enlighten the revolutionary events researching the role of social lower masses in Russian province.³

The contemporary regional studies concern different aspects of history of revolution (the influence of WWI on regions' development, political culture and behavior of different social strata and military forces, revolutionary everyday life, the activity of the local authorities and self-government, political and social organizations), however these studies are uncoordinated and embarrass to make up the comparative analyses. For example, there exist the studies concerning all these problems but only in one region. Thus in 2000, the studies on the problems of revolution appeared based on the material from Volga region⁴, "chernozem" (black earth) regions⁵, Siberia⁶, Dagestan⁷, Taurida Governorate⁸, Vladimir, Kaluga, and

³ D. J. Raleigh. *Revolution on the Volga. 1917 in Saratov*. Ithaca and London, 1986, 373 p.

⁴ Shestopalova T.M. *The February Revolution: the Provincial Dimension. On the Materials of Middle Volga Region*. Saransk, 2011. 23 p.; Rumjancev D.E. *The Democratization of the City Authorities in Volga Region in 1917: Historical-political Analyses*. Kazan, 2006. 24 p.; Slepchenkova A.A. *The Organization of Social-Revolutionists Party in Nizhny Novgorod Governorate: the Main Stages of Establishing, Development and Disintegration: 1895-1923*. Nizhny Novgorod, 2010. 24 p.; Mistrjugov P.A. *The Local Extraordinary Structures of the Soviet Power in 1918-1922*. Samara, 2015. 22p.; Jakimov D.V. *The Agrarian Problem in the Bolsheviks' and Left Socialist Revolutionists' Politics. In February, 1917 – July, 1918: on the Materials of Saratov Governorate*. Saratov, 2008. 20 p.; Khvostova I.A. *The activity of Nizhny Novgorod Zemstvo in the Public Education: 1864-1918*, Nizhny Novgorod, 2006. 27 p.; Dindarov A.V. *Land Committees of Middle Volga Region in 1917-1918*. Kazan, 2002. 23 p.; Krasovskaya Yu.V. *City Duma of Kostroma and Yaroslavl Governorates in 1917 – 1918*. Yaroslavl, 2002. 28 p.; Olneva O.V. *Everyday Life of the Provincial City in 1917: on the Materials of Yaroslavl Governorate*. Yaroslavl, 2005. 20 p.; Lapshin F.F. *Army and the Revolutionary Process in Province in 1917 – 1918: on the Upper Volga Region's Materials*. Kostroma, 2001. 35 p.; Kuznetsov V.V. *Political Parties in Middle and Lower Volga Region in 1907-1917*. Saratov, 2010. 42 p.

⁵ Oskin M.V. *The State Government and the Peasantry of Russia in War and Revolution: 1914 – October, 1917: on the Chernozem Governorates' Materials*. 2003, 16 p.; Polosina N.O. *Constitutional Democratic Party and The Union of October 17 in the Political Life of the Russian Province 1905 – 1917: on Tula Governorate's Materials*. Orel, 2010. 27 p.; Kutsevolov A.A. *The Activity of Socialist Revolutionists Party in Voronezh Governorate: the End of XIXth Century – 1918*. Voronezh, 2007. 23 p.; Luzikov V.K. *Forming and Staffing of Red Army Units in 1918-1920: on Ryazan', Tambov, and Tula Governorates' Material*. Moscow, 2016. 26 p.; Kolchinsky D.V. *The Political Culture of the Provincial Russian Society in 1917: on Tambov Governorate's Material*. Tambov, 2005. 25 p.; Gnusarev I.S. *Everyday Life of the Urban Population of Penza Governorate during the Civil War: 1918 - 1920*. Penza, 2015. 22 p.; Nikolashin V.P. *The Socialization of the Land in Tambov and the Re-organization of Tambov Countryside: 1917-1918*. Tambov, 2010. 23 p.; Alekhina E.V. *Tambov Zemstvo in WWI: 1914-1918*. Tambov, 2005. 25 p.; Karmanov D.V. *Voronezh Zemstvo: 1914 – 1918*. Voronezh, 2002. 22 p.

⁶ Vasil'eva E.V. *The Program Directions and the Political Practice of Siberian Constitutional Democratic Party: May, 1918 – January, 1920*. Omsk, 2011. 23 p.; Eremin I.A. *Western Siberian Home Front of Russia in WWI: July, 1914 – March, 1918*. Barnaul, 2006. 42 p.

⁷ Idrisov Yu.M. *The Dagestani Intelligentsia in three Russian Revolutions in the beginning of the XXth century*. Makhachkala, 2007. 22 p.

⁸ Potemkin E.L. *Socialist Revolutionists of Taurida Governorate in 1917-1918*. Moscow, 2005.

Ryazan' Governorates⁹, Vladimir, Moscow, Smolensk, and Tula Governorates¹⁰, Ural¹¹, Transbaikalia¹².

Despite the fact that there are a lot of regional researches of the revolutionary period as the manifestation of the system crisis, the methodological researches that help to analyze the source in the special way are unique and inter-disciplinary.

The main approach of the research is social anthropology and "new social history". The main purpose of the study is to find out psychological attitudes, views and models of behavior of the most active people in revolution (workers and peasants) and party leaders. The study is limited by Tula governorate. This limit lets us use local approach and microanalysis to study the motivation and forms of political activity in province. Tula governorate was a typical governorate of central Russia that had the features of both Industrial and Agricultural regions. The center of governorate Tula was a big industrial city with the huge concentration of workers and in uyezds the population was occupied in agriculture. The study is based on the papers found in Tula State archives' funds (P-37 – Odojev uyezd's Berezov ispolkom (executive committee), P-97 – Tula soldiers' deputies' council (1917-1918), F.1300 – Tula governorate gendarme administration, P-1861 – Collection of Emergency Committee (VChKa) papers (1917-1928) and so on). All the papers that we are able to find in Tula archives give us the information about some features in urban and rural population's behavior during the revolutions and let to research the direct relationships of the individual character and mass political mind and the crowd psychology.

Nowadays the researchers pay a lot of attention to subjective factors of revolution process (organizing activity of political parties and leaders, political culture of different groups of people, reasons of fails and victories of political parties).¹³ But it is impossible to explain

⁹ Zhuruhin A.N. The Staffing and Activity of Militsiya Units, Military Brigades and Red Guards in the Central Industrial Region in 1917: on Vladimir, Kaluga, Ryazan' and Tula Governorates' Materials. Yaroslavl, 2010. 24 p.; Shherbakova N.A. The Peasants' Protest in 1918-1920: the Sources, Forms and Dynamics: on Tula and Kaluga Governorates' Materials. Bryansk, 2009. 23 p., Akimova T.M. Zemstvos of Central Russia in the Period of Revolutionary Disturbance: March 1917 – May 1918: on Kostroma, Tver', and Yaroslavl' Governorates' Materials. Vladimir, 2007. 22 p.

¹⁰ Klimova A.K. The Ideological-Political and Organizing Activity of Socialists' Parties in March-October 1917: on Vladimir, Moscow, Smolensk. And Tula Governorates' Materials. Vladimir, 2003. 26 p.

¹¹ Kostogryzov P.I. The Anti-Bolsheviks Movement in Ural in 1917-1918. Ekaterinburg, 2013. 27 p., Abramovsky A.A. The Establishing of the Soviet Judicial System in Ural in 1917-1918: the Historical Aspect. Chelyabinsk, 2004. 53 p., Skipina I.V. A Man in the Conditions of the Civil War in Ural: the Historiography of the Problem. Tyumen, 2003. 45 p., Kuchak L.L. The Local Government in Ural and Western Siberia in March-October 1917. Ekaterinburg, 2002. 22 p.

¹² Mikheev B.V. Social-economic Development in Transbaikalia in the Beginning of XXth Century: 1900-1918. Ulan-Ude, 2012, 22 p.

¹³ See: Brovkin V. The Mensheviks after Oktober: Socialist Opposition and the Rise of Bolshevik Dictatorship. N.Y., 1987; Anatomija revoljucii. 1917 god v Rossii: massy, partii, vlast'. S.-P., 1994; Vlast' i opozitsija. Rossijskij politicheskij process XX stoletija. M., 1995; Smith S. Writing the History of the Russian Revolution after the Fall of Communism // The Russian Revolution: The Essential Readings. L., 2001, Figes O., Kolonitskii

different types of political activity in revolutionary process without local and regional researches in comparison.

3. Results and discussion

Socialists' portraits

In the researches it is customary to begin studying of the reasons of revolution 1905 with the heavy life conditions, sharpening of the contradictions between the wealthy and the poor people. In Tula region towns were the centers of the revolution, but there didn't exist any worsening of inhabitants' life (mill-hands and railway laborers and unskilled workers). Moreover, some of the parameters (for example, the demographic indices) even improved (the mortality rate slightly reduced) because of the wide-ranging activity of urban and zemstvo doctors. The urban self-government also helped to calm down the situation. The reports of the Tula town council testifies that the "city chairmen": wealthy businessmen, factories' owners were bent on arranging the good relationships with the workers and making up the mechanism of peaceful solutions to the conflicts. The scope of charity was being increased. At the same time these measures were incapable to solve the economic problems quickly as they had been accumulated for many years. The little decrease of the situation (closing up a factory and the reduction of the laborers that led to the worsening of life conditions) brought to the social tenseness and the splash of economic activity: the demands to give the job, to bring down the fines.

Against the background of the economic problems the activity of the first revolutionary organizations began to expand. In Tula Governorate the first revolutionary organizations appeared in the late 1800s – the beginning of 20th century. What was the social structure of these organizations? Tula social-democratic organization until 1917 consisted of burgesses (21%), peasants turned to workers (21%), intelligentsia (doctors, engineers, white-collar workers – 15%), laborers (11,7%). It is significant that in socialists-revolutionists' organization the biggest percent was for white-collar workers (about 30%), students (20%), schoolboys (13 %), burgesses (15 %). The quantity of peasants was only 3,2%, and it were mostly the peasants turned to be laborers and craftsmen, that means, these peasants were separated from the village.¹⁴ According to the Tula Gendarme department on the eve of 1917 there existed 460 socialists-revolutionists and 563 social-democrats in Tula Governorate.

B. Interpreting the Russian Revolution. The Language and Symbols of 1917. L., 1999. Buldakov V.P. Krasnaja smuta. Priroda i posledstvija revoljucionnogo nasilija. M., 1997.

¹⁴ GATO (Tula Region State Archive) F. P-1300.op 3. d.1658. d.1659

In general the educational level of the socialists was low (the illiterate and the semiliterate people constitutes near 50%).¹⁵ The active members of the organizations (people who were known by gendarmes) were people separated from the place of their birth, permanently migrating around the Governorate and the whole Russian empire. Among the socialists-revolutionists the indigenous urban citizens consisted 58% before 1917 (32% lived in Tula), after 1917 – 31%, among socialists-democrats: 41% (40% in Tula) of indigenous citizens and 61% (58% in Tula) after the revolution. Analyzing this data we can say that revolutionists in little towns of the governorate (but not in the industrial center) were newcomers. Also all the revolutionists were concentrated in towns: of 119 socialists-revolutionists who we know from the papers only 15 lived in the villages. Of 287 people who were registered by gendarmes in 1917, 92 were migrating from village to village; others lived in the city that they had reached from other villages or cities. Among socialists-democrats (303 before 1917) only 17 lived in the village, in 1917 of 248 only 16.

Activity in cities and villages

In the provinces (in uyezds) there were not enough party organizations. For example, in Tula Governorate in 1905-1906 there acted only 3 social-revolutionists' organizations in Venev, Belev and Novosil, but they were not numerous and didn't influence the life of cities and uyezds a lot. By personal recollections and evidences of Tula social-revolutionists presented in 1920s, by February 1920 in uyezds there had been acted about 120 their organizations, and by October even 230.¹⁶ However, this information seems to be exaggerated because of the conditions when the evidences appeared and not very accurate party statistics. As a rule, the social-revolutionists' organizations worked in uyezds' cities, not in volosts.

The Mensheviks' organizations by the February, 1917 hadn't existed in the uyezds at all. The Bolsheviks had their groups in Bogoroditsk, Efremov and Dedilov in the period of the first Russian revolution. However later they disappeared and only in 1917 the Bolsheviks stirred to activity among the uyezds' peasantry. As for the gorcom's (city committee) decisions there were appointed the agitators who weekly on Sundays visited the uyezds for arranging mass-meetings and assemblies.¹⁷

The political activity of the socialists came to accidental or sometimes special visits to villages to organize a meeting of any party organization. In social-revolutionists'

¹⁵ GATO F.P-1300. op.3. d.1658. d.1659

¹⁶ GATO. F. P-1861». Op.1. D.9.

¹⁷ Oktjabr' v Tule: Sb.dokumentov i materialov o bor'be za vlast' Sovetov v Tule i gubernii v 1917 godu. Tula, 1957. P.38.

memorandum there existed the rule of obligatory membership fee, but it was not common in the real life. Attending the meetings was enough for the membership.

The expansion of the Bolsheviks party to the village began only after the establishment of the Soviet regime. The main evidence of it is the chronicle of the Bolshevik organizations' creation. Most of them in volosts and villages were created in January – March, 1918.¹⁸ The interrelationships between Governorate committees of social-revolutionists, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks and uyezds' committees were irregular and resumed as appropriate.

In the governorate center where the political activity was higher by October, 1917 there were 2330 Mensheviks, 537 Bolsheviks, 450 social-revolutionists of the city population of 200,000 people. Despite their paucity they played the main role in Tula Soviet, in Governorate commissar of Russian Provisional Government' administration and in Tula City Duma from summer, 1917.

In the second half of 1917 the growth of urban and governorate organizations became slower. In July, 1918 in the second delegates' meeting of Tula Mensheviks the reporters marked the complex image of laborers' organizations' failure. Also they noticed the indifference of the wide masses to the party life: "Many members of organization didn't attend the meetings, were not interested in libraries and so on"¹⁹. The tendency for damaging the socialist parties continued in 1918. This process was caused by inner factors connected with the tactics of parties and external factors connected with the Bolsheviks' pressure on the opponents.

It is complicated to observe the dynamics of socialists' organizations' development because of the state of the source base. Its distinctive feature is that in the papers of Tula Regional State Archive (GATO) there is not any information about the quantitative staff of the socialistic organization because from December, 1917 to July, 1918 the process of Bolsheviks' system of control on the political opponents had been only establishing. It is possible to characterize the staff of volost', uyezd and urban Mensheviks and right and left socialists-revolutionists in December, 1917 – July 1918 only using the information of questionnaires and reports of volost', uyezd and governorate Soviets of Peasants' and Laborers' Deputies. However the first questionnaires contained the information about the socialists' representing in the structures of new authority were filled by the deputies of volost' and uyezd Soviets only in May-July, 1918. Tula Unit of People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) collected more detailed information about the Mensheviks and right and left socialists-revolutionists in 1920-1930. That is why in last papers they wrote only the main

¹⁸ Tak zakrepljalis' zavoevanija Oktjabrja. Tula, 1960.P.239; «Proletarskaja pravda». January, 19/ February, 1. 1918. №107-13. P. 3-4. ZNITO (Center of newest history of Tula region) F.1. op.1. d.4.1.1; d.47. l.11-12.

¹⁹ GATO F. P-1861. Op.1. D.9. L.55.

stages of social organizations' activity: from foundation to February revolution, from February to October, 1917, brief information about the establishing of Soviet power and the socialists' attitude to it, and the state of the socialists organization in 1922-1923. These papers were collected in order to chase the former political opponents and consist of many corrections. That is the reason why they give us the characteristics of socialists' activity with many mistakes.

After the establishing the Soviet authority in Tula the position of the socialistic organization changed. After the split of Socialists Revolutionists Party in autumn, 1917 its left wing became more popular, its representation rose not only in factories, but also in the local government. The quantity of left socialists revolutionists in Tula was 2000 people. But if the left wing had the status of the ruling party, right socialists revolutionists was losing their political position during 1918. In December their urban organization consisted of about 600 people.²⁰ After the Soviet power's establishing its quantity decreased. In January, 1918 in uyezds the mass arrests began, many members of the party went underground.

From May, 1918 the leaders of the socialistic organizations in Tula uyezd and urban government were heavily shortened. The main staff of Tula Governorate Executive Committee in July, 1918 consisted of mainly communists and left socialists revolutionists. The establishing of the Bolsheviks authority in Tula helped to consolidate their party and to force their fight against the socialists opposition. In spite of the fact that in spring, 1918 the Mensheviks and right socialists-revolutionists were quite popular among Tula population, but they were not represented in the authority. June-July 1918 was important for the political fortune of the socialistic parties of Tula governorate: the process of their forcible destruction and disintegration. Also in Tula the national socialistic groups acted: the Lettish (34 members of 1200 refugees in Tula), Polish-Lithuanian (50 members of 3000 people).

The main role in arranging and strengthening the local revolutionary organizations played the party leaders of the central party organizations who visited provinces for a special purpose or transiently during the transit under the police supervision. As the party organizations were being stronger during the revolution, the party leaders were paying more attention to the provincial organizations. The professional revolutionists were to unite the political powers from heterogeneous separated social elements keen on the political fight. According to the biography of the social organizations' leaders we can find a lot of common features. In 1917 all of them were young, had relatively high level of education, were newcomers in Tula, took active part in the political life of the city and the governorate in 1917-1918, then moved to Moscow, many of them ended their life in Gulag. When they came to Tula they were already

²⁰ GATO F. P-1861. Op.1. D.9. L.58.

been the professional revolutionists. For example, I.I. Akhmatov (the leader of Tula Mensheviks-internationalists) took active part in illegal work in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Shuya, was in emigration. P.F. Arsentiev (other Mensheviks' leader) had worked for party in Petrograd, Samara and Kaluga before coming to Tula, had been arrested 4 times, had spent 2 years in prison and had been sentenced to 4 years of deportation to Irkutsk governorate. The leader of Tula Bolsheviks G.N. was commanded to Tula by the Moscow committee of The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) in March, 1917 and at once he became in charge of the city Bolshevik committee. This small group of party activists of different political powers played the main role in the political life of the governorate in 1917-1918. Analyzing the lists of social-democrats and social-revolutionists made by Tula gendarmes and checked by NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) shows us that the quantity of the professional revolutionists who determined the specter of the political life was 4% by social-democrats and 3,9% by social-revolutionists.²¹ Witnesses said in 1920s: "The February revolution drove all the intelligentsia to the villages for working among the peasants where they took nearly all the charge and began to organize their party units".²²

The political "natural selection" caused the appearing in party a special kind of leadership. The leaders had to have the certain complex of moral traits, stereotypes of behavior, the "revolution" character. The most purposeful stern and rough leaders turned to be Bolsheviks. Old Bolsheviks of Uzlovaya station characterized their 32-years old leader I.I. Ruzinsky who had taken part in revolution 1905 in Tula and had been in underground organization and army in such a way: "resolute man", "he feels the fierce hatred against the enemies of revolution", "he wouldn't have mercy for his brother, if he turned out to be the enemy".²³ The development of the political events and the actions of Mensheviks and social-revolutionists (mostly the right-wing) says that there were not such leaders among them. In Uzlovaya station in May, 1918 the Mensheviks organization of 62 members acted. It submitted to the demand of 6 people from revolution Bolshevik committee to stop working. The whole Uzlovaya Bolshevik organization consisted of 9 people at that moment. The labour movement for re-voting of Tula Soviet (the recall of Bolsheviks delegates and the voting Mensheviks and social-revolutionists in place of them) was stopped even by the Mensheviks themselves as they did not want the bloodshed and preferred the "democratic" forms of fighting against the Bolsheviks.

The process of party establishment developed in 1917 was disturbed by the beginning of new organizations' differentiation. Among social-revolutionists and Mensheviks the new trends

²¹ GATO F. P-1300. Op.3. D.1658. D.1659.

²² Ibid. F. P-1861. Op.1. D.9. L.44.

²³ Ibid. L. 43.

appeared. Sometimes the names of these trends differed from the central tendencies. For example, in Novosil organization not only the social-revolutionists divided into right- and left-wing, but also the right-wing group divided into “liberal and social trends”.²⁴ Mensheviks and social-revolutionists from Belev divided into fractions became independent from each other and united only for special purposes (for example, for the election to the City Duma).

Political behavior of masses

At the same time the main common concerns were the food supply, imposing the 8-hours working day, the guarantee of economic rights. The growth of trade unions that had to stand for the laborers’ interests was much bigger than the growth of party units in Tula either in Tula governorate. To the middle of July in Tula there were 16 trade-unions with more than 26,000 members.²⁵ In meetings the workers supported party leaders that could properly capture their mood. That is why the fight between Bolsheviks and united Mensheviks and social-revolutionists was with varying degrees of success. For example, in summer of 1917 Bolsheviks often succeed the meeting to accept the resolution of disbelief to the Russian Provisional Government and Tula “conciliatory” Soviet. At the same time Tula Bolsheviks A. Kaul and S. Paradis recollected the cases when the Bolsheviks were forbidden to say speeches at meetings, pulled off from the tribunes and beaten.²⁶ In July, 1917 in Menshevik City committee meeting the mass’ indifference to the party’s life was marked.²⁷

The laborers of the biggest plants (Weapon and Cartridge) and railway workshops were in the field of view of the political activists, but it was impossible to cover plenty of other workers. Most of the workers didn’t make a distinction between political attitudes and thought at the level of mottos and meeting speeches. A worker of Weapons plant V.S. Murzik who later joined the Bolsheviks recalled: “In the Weapons plant there was a meeting concerning the Moscow assembly. Mensheviks and social-revolutionists spoke at the meeting exhorted the workers to support the assembly. But I decided to oppose. Taking the floor *I told workers the truth I’ve heard before from comrade Kaminisky*”.²⁸

In the condition of economic and political crises in Tula the strike movement of workers began, and in the villages the riots of manors became oftener. In this atmosphere the socialist organizations tried to solve their own problems. The most successful of them were

²⁴ Ibid. L. 51.

²⁵ Znamja truda. 1917. July, 9. №1. P.2; Velikaja Oktjabr'skaja socialisticheskaja revoljucija. Hronika sobytij. 1959. Vol.2. P.540.

²⁶ „Jeto bylo v 1917... Sb. vospominanij. Tula, 1957. P.28, 116.

²⁷ Ibid. D.13. L.50.

²⁸ Ibid. P.160.

Bolsheviks. The worse was the situation in Russia, Tula or Tula governorate, the more successful was the agitation to pass the power to the Soviets.²⁹ Bolsheviks' populist agitation led more and more allies who didn't know the party program but accepted the critic of the government.

The political inconsistency of Tula workers caused that the strike was perceived as the only form of every conflict solution and as a form of the contact with the administration. For example, after agreeing the economic demands of workers from the perfume factory "Floreal" the new strike began caused by the fact that one working women was hired and the administration didn't let her to return because of her conflict with the soap-boiler and the chemist.³⁰

As a rule, the political consciousness of the peasantry was bordered by "the village, fields, church, neighbor manors and rural community".³¹ Most of the peasants had lack of information about the events happened outside the boundaries of their settlements. In March-April, 1917 there were the elections to the civic executive committees of Tula governorate. Merchants, countermen, teachers, landowners, doctors, soldiers and workers were elected, but the peasants among them were very rear. For example, of 46 people from Alexin uyezd executive committee 1 man was a delegate of the town council, 2 were the delegates of zemstvo, 1 was a burgess, 2 were workers of Myshegsky plant, 2 were the soldiers-engineers, 1 was a delegate of a cooperative, 10 people of uyezds, 19 were the delegates of volosts committee (every volosts had one delegate). Belev uyezd executive committee consisted of 26 people: 4 people from zemstvo, 2 townsmen, 2 delegates of the united cooperates, 1 salesman, 3 burgesses, 3 railway workers, 2 officers, 2 soldiers of local garrison, 2 convalescent soldiers, 2 teachers, 1 clergyman, 1 member of Jewish community, 1 man of Belev consumer society.

The teachers took important part in the rural political processes. Their authority among the peasants was high. In resolution of Aleksin executive committee that determined the content of volosts committees was marked that the teacher are elected without quantity limits under the discretion of volosts assemblies. All the teachers from Belev uyezd were called for the special assemblies.³² The worldview of rural teachers was formed under the influence of social-revolutionist party who were the ideological successors of the Narodniks.³³ With the

²⁹ Proletarskaja pravda. 1917. September, 3. №22. P.4.; Oktjabr' v Tule. P.226; GATO. F. P-174. Op.3. D.40789. L.141.

³⁰ Golos naroda. 1917. October, 4/7. №156. P.3.

³¹ Figes O. Krest'janskije massy i ih uchastie v politicheskikh processah 1917-1918 gg. // Anatomija revoljucii. 1917 god v Rossii: massy, partii, vlast'. SPB., 1994. P.230.

³² Golos naroda. 1917. March, 24/ April, 6. №7. P.2.

³³ Anatomija revoljucii. P. 225.

help of the teacher Tula peasantry learned about the agrarian program of social-revolutionists earlier than the other parties' programs.

The main forms of working among peasants of social-revolutionists and Bolsheviks were visits to the villages, arranging the meetings, village and rural communities' assemblies. The success of such a visit depended on mottos and theses of agitators. There are examples of successful agitation both of social-revolutionists and Bolsheviks. The instructor of Moscow provincial bureau of Soviets Shevtsov described the mood of peasants in the report about his trip to Venev uyezd of Tula governorate in April, 12, 1917: "Among the peasants it is joyfully and productively to work, a special plan for organizing them isn't necessary. In many cases the peasants are not contented with their volosts committees that mainly consist of the wealthy peasants (kulaks), rural committees doesn't even exist... As a result the peasants sit on a powder keg and are only waiting for signal for pogroms".³⁴ In March-June 1917 in Tula region 480 mass actions for the decrease of rent price, 330 cattle pasture and damage on the landlords' manors, 94 land, hays and fallow lands grabs, 20 manor grabs, 78 illegal fellings and 34 land grabs happened. In June and July the peasants began to confiscate the landlords manors.³⁵ In September the newspapers informed about the peasant disturbances in Bogoroditsk, Venev, Krapivna uyezds, peasants' attack to the landlords' gardens and illegal fellings in Epifan uyezd, land grabs in Odoev and Venev uyezds. Epifan uyezd commissar Uzbekov reported the illegal felling was made by the whole settlements.

Numerous demands and resolutions testify that nearly all the peasants didn't understand political contradictions in the center and parties' programs. The choice of a party to vote in the Russian Constituent Assembly election depended on an agitator's visit. For example, the assembly of Berezov volost peasants decided to vote for the Bolsheviks' list after the Bolsheviks delivered a lecture about the Constituent Assembly at the meeting.³⁶ Krapivna commissar reported that the election to the uyezd zemstvo on October, 22 was disrupted because the soldiers came back from front "incited the voters basing on the fact that some people were not recorded to the voting list. Since October, 15 the pogroms and arsons of few landlords' manors began at once".³⁷ Some peasants said that they were forced to rob by different individuals who assured them that the only way to chase the masters away is the robbery and burning their houses to the ground".³⁸ Uyezd commissars thought that the reasons of the pogrom movement in villages were "the examples of pogroms in other Russian regions", newspapers' distribution, "instigation of soldiers, sailors came back from war",

³⁴ GATO. F.1527.Op.1. D.654.

³⁵ Ibid. F. P-97. Op.1.D.40. L.25.

³⁶ Ibid. F. P-37. Op.1. D.9. L.4.

³⁷ Tul'skaja molva.1917. October, 28/ November, 10. №2975. P.3.

³⁸ Ibid.

villages' tiredness of waiting the "rational authority", peasants' irritability of many different committees activity and plenty of resolutions impossible to put into practice; growing distrust of peasants to the existing power and doubts if the Constituent Assembly was to appear and could to change anything. The reports concluded that "in this atmosphere enmity and anger became apparent".³⁹

4. Conclusion

Consequently the pogrom movement developed in summer – autumn 1917 was determined by the peasants' own ideas about their problems. The socialists' agitation caused the demonstrations of the accumulated discontent and indignation of peasants.

All the socialist organizations connected the solution of the problems with the problem of government. The socialists of all trends tried to use the complicated social atmosphere in their own purposes. The political illegibility of workers and peasants made them to support people who were explaining clearer and described nearest future more attractive. Because of "the connections" with the Russian Provisional Government the authority of the Mensheviks and social-revolutionists decreased steadily, on the contrary the Bolsheviks became more popular. As Mensheviks leader Yu. Martov mentioned: "the masses were not inclined to support us and prefer to turn from "*national defenders*" to their antipodes Bolsheviks who are plainer and bolder, in fact they are more acceptable for wide uncultured masses because of their democratic image".⁴⁰

Thus the peasants and workers were guided only by their long-term or situational needs. The peasantry didn't become separated from their farms and stayed indifferent to the fights of political parties. It began to fight only when it was necessary for their urgent interests. The workers of Tula plants and factories were more active, but were guided by the same principles and their participation depended on the political organizations' activity. Nevertheless the socialists believed themselves to be the delegates of the whole people of Russia and try to speak for all of them.

It became fashionable to participate in the political life, public organizations and parties. In socialistic organizations the nuclear of professional revolutionists was forming and later there the leaders with the special features necessary for working in provinces and saving the problems in center appeared. Party establishment in provinces developed simultaneously with

³⁹ GATO. F. P-246 103. Op.1. D.74. L.28-29.

⁴⁰ See: Abrosimova T.A. Socialisticheskaja ideja v massovom soznanii 1917 g. //Anatomija revoljucii... P.187.

the economic fight of masses and often was put from above and joined with the masses during this fight.

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