

Artículo de investigación

Russian liberal movement of the early 20th century in historical research

Movimiento liberal ruso de principios del siglo XX en la investigación histórica

Movimento liberal russo do início do século XX na pesquisa histórica

ЛИБЕРАЛЬНОЕ ДВИЖЕНИЕ РОССИИ НАЧАЛА XX ВЕКА В СИСТЕМЕ ИСТОРИЧЕСКИХ
ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ

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Abstract

The article presents a review and consideration of the main aspects, directions and specifics of research publications on the history of liberal parties in Russia in the early 20th century and their parliamentary representatives (factions) in the State Duma over this period. Carrying out this research, the author used methods of structural-functional analysis, historical-comparative and problem-chronological method, as well as the principle of scientific objectivity. The author carefully examined the enormous work done by researchers on archival materials and sources related to the history of political life in Russia in the early 20th century, its institutions and representatives. At the same time, the research goes beyond consideration of the accumulated experience and views of Russian scientists (A.Ya. Avrekh, D.V. Aronov, A.N. Egorov, V.V. Shelokhayev and others) on the subject matter stated in the title of the article, but also presents the relevant opinions of international historians (L. Edmondson, W.G. Rosenberg, D. Wartenweiler, R. Williams, J. Hosking, M. Stockdale). One of the research results is the analysis of works on the history of the People's Freedom Party (Cadets) as one of the largest liberal parties in Russian politics during the studied period. The author claims that at present moment it seems viable to look at the main aspects of the history of the liberal movement (parties) in Russia in the early 20th century and their parliamentary representatives both for general understanding of the work done by domestic and international historians in this area, and for understanding the specifics of its transformational change regarding the temporary

Resumen

El artículo presenta una revisión y consideración de los principales aspectos, direcciones y detalles de las publicaciones de investigación sobre la historia de los partidos liberales en Rusia a principios del siglo XX y sus representantes parlamentarios (facciones) en la Duma Estatal durante este período. Para llevar a cabo esta investigación, el autor utilizó métodos de análisis estructural-funcional, método histórico-comparativo y problema-cronológico, así como el principio de objetividad científica. El autor examinó cuidadosamente el enorme trabajo realizado por investigadores sobre materiales de archivo y fuentes relacionadas con la historia de la vida política en Rusia a principios del siglo XX, sus instituciones y representantes. Al mismo tiempo, la investigación va más allá de la consideración de la experiencia acumulada y las opiniones de los científicos rusos (A.Ya. Avrekh, DV Aronov, AN Egorov, VV Shelokhayev y otros) sobre el tema expuesto en el título del artículo, pero también presenta las opiniones relevantes de historiadores internacionales (L. Edmondson, WG Rosenberg, D. Wartenweiler, R. Williams, J. Hosking, M. Stockdale). Uno de los resultados de la investigación es el análisis de trabajos sobre la historia del Partido de la Libertad Popular (Cadetes) como uno de los partidos liberales más grandes en la política rusa durante el período estudiado. El autor afirma que, en el momento actual, parece viable examinar los aspectos principales de la historia del movimiento liberal (partidos) en Rusia a principios del siglo XX y sus representantes parlamentarios, tanto para comprender en general el trabajo realizado por historiadores

development factor.

Key words: liberalism, history, Russia, State Duma, Cadet Party, faction, parliament, historiography.

nacionales como internacionales. en esta área, y para comprender los aspectos específicos de su cambio de transformación con respecto al factor de desarrollo temporal.

Palabras clave: liberalismo, historia, Rusia, Duma del Estado, Partido Cadete, facción, parlamento, historiografía.

Resumo

O artigo apresenta uma revisão e consideração dos principais aspectos, direções e especificidades das publicações de pesquisa sobre a história dos partidos liberais na Rússia no início do século 20 e seus representantes parlamentares (facções) na Duma do Estado durante este período. Realizando esta pesquisa, o autor utilizou métodos de análise estrutural-funcional, método histórico-comparativo e problema-cronológico, bem como o princípio da objetividade científica. O autor examinou cuidadosamente o enorme trabalho feito por pesquisadores em materiais de arquivo e fontes relacionadas à história da vida política na Rússia no início do século 20, suas instituições e representantes. Ao mesmo tempo, a pesquisa vai além da consideração da experiência acumulada e visões de cientistas russos (A.Ya. Avrekh, DV Aronov, AN Egorov, VV Shelokhayev e outros) no assunto declarado no título do artigo, mas também apresenta as opiniões relevantes de historiadores internacionais (L. Edmondson, WG Rosenberg, D. Wartenweiler, R. Williams, J. Hosking, M. Stockdale). Um dos resultados da pesquisa é a análise de trabalhos sobre a história do Partido da Liberdade do Povo (Cadetes) como um dos maiores partidos liberais na política russa durante o período estudado. O autor afirma que no momento atual parece viável olhar para os principais aspectos da história do movimento liberal (partidos) na Rússia no início do século 20 e seus representantes parlamentares tanto para a compreensão geral do trabalho feito por historiadores nacionais e internacionais. nesta área, e para entender as especificidades de sua mudança transformacional em relação ao fator de desenvolvimento temporário.

Palavras-chave: liberalismo, história, Rússia, Duma Estatal, Partido Cadete, facção, parlamento, historiografia.

Аннотация. Статья посвящена обзору и рассмотрению основных аспектов, направлениям и специфике исследований истории партий либерального движения России начала XX века и их парламентских представительств (фракций) в Государственной думе данного периода. При написании работы применялись методы структурно-функционального анализа, историко-сравнительный, проблемно-хронологический метод, а также принцип научной объективности. В центре фокуса внимания автора лежит огромная проделанная работа исследователями по архивным материалам и источникам в отношении истории политического пространства России начала XX столетия, его институтов и представителей. При этом рассматривается и анализируется не только накопленный опыт и позиция отечественных учёных (Авреха А.Я., Аронова Д.В., Егорова А.Н., Шелохаева В.В. и др.) на заявленную в названии статьи проблематику, но и взгляд на неё зарубежных историков (Л. Эдмондсон, У.Г. Розенберга, Д. Вартенвейлера Р. Уильямса, Дж. Хоскинга, М. Стокдэйл). Одним из результатов работы стал анализ работ, имеющих отношение к истории партии Народной Свободы (кадетов) как к одной из самых крупных партий либерального толка политического пространства России исследуемого периода. Автор подчёркивает, что сегодня взгляд на основные аспекты исследования истории либерального движения (партий) России начала XX века и их парламентских представительств, будет полезен как в деле общего осмысления проделанной отечественными и зарубежными историками работы по данному направлению, так и в понимании специфики её трансформационного изменения с учётом фактора временного развития.

Ключевые слова: либерализм, история, Россия, Государственная дума, партия кадетов, фракция, парламент, историография.

Introduction

The interest in Russian political history of the early 20th century stems not only from the need of modern Russian society to develop some kind of “social consensus” when assessing its factual phenomena and outcomes, but also due to the recently increased attention of the historical community to the political life of Russia over that period regarding its thorough representation to the wider public (Bespalov, 2006).

The “optics” and spectrum of research issues related to the history of Russian politics in the early 20th century are expanding. That is why it seems necessary to systematize the studies on the history of Russian liberalism over that period, which would reflect the highly debatable nature of the key concepts of its evolution.

Therefore, this article aims to analyze the main directions and specifics of studying the history of the liberal movement in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century (parties) and their parliamentary representatives (factions) in the State Duma over this period that can be found in research and academic publications. To achieve the goal, the following objectives were set:

- 1) To study the development and accumulation of factual material on the history of Russian liberalism at the beginning of the 20th century;
- 2) To analyze the main development stages in the research on the history of Russian liberalism;
- 3) To determine the general and specific aspects in research papers devoted to the history of Russian liberal parties in the early 20th century and their parliamentary representatives (factions).

Methodology

This research is based on the materials on the history of Russian liberal movement (parties) at the beginning of the 20th century (monographs, essays, scientific articles, dissertations) of both domestic and international scientists.

The main research methods included the method of structural-functional analysis, historical-comparative and problem-chronological methods, as well as the principle of scientific objectivity.

The structural-functional method made it possible to consider the debatable issues of the

historical development of the liberal movement in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, presenting the evolution of researchers' views on certain areas of its genesis.

The historical-comparative method was used to compare the opinions of various groups of researchers on the main issues concerning the development of the liberal movement in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century.

The problem-chronological method allowed the author to systematize the range of historiographic sources and facts, as well as to identify the main works on the issue.

Adhering to the principle of scientific objectivity when analyzing works on the history of the liberal movement in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, the author could identify both strong and weak aspects of the researchers' assumptions, without politicization and ideologization of the research results.

At the same time, the paper considers not only the accumulated experience and gives a detailed overview of the position of Russian scientists which was presented in the Results section of the article, but also the view of international historians on it (L. Edmondson, W. Rosenberg, D. Wartenweiler, R. Williams, J. Hosking, and M. Stockdale). The analyzed works included the archival data of the funds of the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GA RF), the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), and the funds of the local regional archives of the Russian Federation (Shchukin, 2015, 2016).

Results

The main research results are the following.

1. Most papers on the studied issue appeared in the pre-Soviet period of 1905-1907, which corresponds to the time of the first Russian revolution and the establishment of the State Duma. At the same time, the first works devoted to this topic were more of a publicist, polemical, subjective nature, rather than an objective historical study (Bolshakova, 2006). A special feature of the pre-Soviet period regarding the research on the problem was the fact that the authors of the first publications were contemporaries, and had often participated in the events they wrote about, which allows looking at this problem from the inside (Galai,

1991; Dumova, 1988).

Considering this aspect, the study showed that the works of the pre-Soviet period are definitely of high value since they are interwoven into the very fabric of the emergence and development of the liberal ideology in Russia and the formation of liberal parties. However, they do not provide the theoretical and methodological framework that would make it possible to define them as historical works. Nevertheless, it is impossible to claim that these publications contain no scientific analysis. It was this pre-Soviet period that laid the foundations for the conceptual approaches to the history of Russian liberalism, which correlated with the conservative, liberal and socialist aspects of the social and political thought.

2. The Soviet period of studying the history of Russian liberal parties of the early 20th century presented quite many research works on this issue. However, historical studies that appeared during that period are characterized by apriorism, that is, an attempt to confirm in the research the concept created beforehand, political and ideological bias, the narrowness of the theoretical and methodological approach at that time represented by Marxism (Egorov, 2010).

3. One of the objectives of Soviet historians was to prove the counter-revolutionary activities of the liberals. The main research task the historians in the Soviet period set was to reveal and demonstrate the bourgeois character of liberalism. To solve this task, researchers analyzed the composition of the liberal parties and studied the social origin of their members. The works of M.N. Pokrovsky, A.N. Slepkov, S.G. Tomsinsky, S.E. Sef, E.D. Chermensky are devoted to this issue. All of them, one way or another, sought to prove the connection of the liberals (in particular, the Cadets) with the bourgeoisie (upper or lower class). The studies of M.N. Pokrovsky, A.N. Slepkov and S.G. Tomsinsky mostly focus on the bourgeois essence of the constitutional democratic party, and liberalism in general through its connection with capital. For instance, A.N. Slepkov argued that the Cadets are a "party of big capital". I.F. Gindin formulated the idea that the constitutional democratic party expressed the interests of the bourgeois elite (Egorov, 2010).

A number of interesting works on the history of Russian liberalism appeared at the end of the Soviet period, partly reflected general ideological trends in research. Talking about these, it is

worth noting the works of V.S. Dyakin, V.V. Shelokhayev, A.Ya. Avrekh and other authors (Spirin, 1977). For instance, V.V. Shelokhayev analyzes in detail the program of the constitutional democratic party, pays special attention to the attitude of liberals to capital, the state, monopoly, economic issues in general, and also raises the issue of financing sources of the party's activities (Shelokhaev, 2007). A.Ya. Avrekh pointed to the curious fact that although the Cadets should be linked with the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie itself had a negative opinion about this party, which was due to the self-identification of the party members and the fact that their program did not include provisions reflecting the interests of capitalists (Avrekh, 1966). Thus, Soviet historiography highlighted its bourgeois nature when defining the essence of the constitutional democratic party that was a symbol of Russian liberalism.

4. The carried out analysis showed that after the collapse of the USSR and the country's entering the post-Soviet historical period, the theoretical and methodological foundations of Marxism ceased to determine the scientific views of the new generation of historians, which influenced the way Russian liberal movement was perceived. In his work, Doctor of Historical Sciences A.N. Egorov writes the following: "The leading role in the study of Russian liberalism in the post-Soviet period belongs to V.V. Shelokhayev and historians of his school (D.V. Aronov, N.I. Kanishcheva, L.V. Seleznev, I.V. Narsky, etc.), who brought the study of this problem to a qualitatively new level. Currently, Russian liberalism is viewed by historians as a complex socio-cultural phenomenon, and the process of the formation and evolution of liberalism is studied in the context of a transforming historical environment" (Egorov, 2010). In the author's opinion, one cannot but agree with this point of view.

5. The study results demonstrate that the social nature of Russian liberalism and, in particular, that of the constitutional democratic party, nowadays remains one of the central research problems related the issue under study. In the Soviet period there was a definite answer to this question emphasizing the class origin of the party and its bourgeois nature, whereas at present moment other interpretations are more common. So, in the 1990s V.V. Shelokhayev (who is the leading figure and personifies the transition from the Soviet to the modern period in studies of the history of Russian liberalism)

comes to the idea that there were no “parties of purely class origin” in Russia (Egorov, 2010). Consequently, the Cadet party could not have been of bourgeois nature, or of any other class. V.V. Shelokhayev himself, as well as his students and followers, was inclined to consider the Cadet Party to be of intellectual nature (I.V. Narsky, S.V. Leonov, F.A. Gaida, V.Yu. Karnishin). Definitely, at the first stage of the development of post-Soviet historical science, most researchers still tended to see the bourgeois basis of the constitutional-democratic Cadet party. In this regard, the study showed that in addition to the problem of the social nature of liberal parties in Russia in the early 20th century, some other questions were raised in modern historiography, which in one way or another were inherited from the Soviet period of research. Among those issues it is worth noting the following: the activities of the liberal parties (cadets) in the work of the State Duma at the beginning of the 20th century, their role in the local government and local self-government bodies (Egorov, 2010).

6. A specific feature of the modern historiography on the issue considered in this article was the tendency to study the history of local cells of the People's Freedom Party. Since the beginning of the post-Soviet period, there has been a range of publications on the history of the Cadet party in Siberia, the Urals, the Volga region, the Central Black Soil Region, etc. (Seleznev, 2000).

7. The carried out analysis of the contribution of international scientists in the study of this issue has shown that they paid most attention to the relations between the authorities and the opposition during that period. When exploring the history of the liberal parties of tsarist Russia (mainly parties of constitutional democratic reforms (cadets)), international historiography mostly focused on studying their position on the rights and freedoms of citizens, program doctrines, tactical lines of behavior in the rapidly changing historical reality of Russia in the early 20th century. The position and status of the State Duma have also been investigated (Riha, 1960; Walsh, 1950).

In this article, the author did not set a goal of a detailed historiographical analysis that would cover the whole range of works of international researchers on the considered problems. This can be explained both by the format of the article itself and the availability of relevant major works by Russian authors. These are the studies of I.V.

Alekseeva (1004), O.V. Bolshakova (2008), and F.A. Seleznev (2004). In addition to this, it is necessary to mention the whole range of works by N.V. Makarov presenting the review of the history of Russian liberalism in the early 20th century and the political parties following this ideology as they are considered in the publications of Anglo-American researchers (Makarov, 2013). That is why a monograph of N.V. Makarov published in 2015 in Russia is of particular value since it systematically summarizes the overall experience of studying the history of Russian liberalism of the late 19th - early 20th century accumulated by Anglo-American researchers (Makarov, 2015).

However, it would be wrong not to mention the works of international authors on this topic. In this regard, it is worth noting the paper of British researcher L. Edmondson (1989), American researcher W.G. Rosenberg (1974), a monograph of Swiss researcher D. Wartenweiler (1999), American authors R. Williams (2009), J. Hosking, M. Stockdale (1996) and others (Rosenberg, 1996; Emmons, 1983; Tadashi, 2005; Tuck, 1951). However, it should be noted that the author of the article has not found any works solely dedicated to the factional formation of the liberal parties in Russia of the early twentieth century or the role of their parliamentary representatives in the legislative activities of the State Duma of that period.

Discussion

Modern historiography has not ignored a rather polemical question related to the identification of a constitutional democratic party. This problem proved its relevance as early as in the pre-Soviet period of research and arose due to the fact that the Cadets did not consider themselves liberals. As a rule, historians of the new generation solve this problem in the same way – they attribute the constitutional-democratic party to liberalism. It is more difficult to identify the party “Union of October 17”. The issue of identifying the Octobrists remains debatable.

Nowadays we can single out some main trends in the research on the history of liberal parties in Russia in the early 20th century. This involves studying and analyzing the following:

1. Legislative activity in the State Duma (D.V. Aronov, V.A. Demin, K.A. Solovyov) (Bespalov, 2006; Demin, 1996; Solovyov, 2011);

2. Tactics of building relationships with the current government and the struggle for power (F.A. Gaida, Sh.A. Shamkhalov, V.V. Shelokhayev) (Gaida, 2003);

3. Views on foreign policy and application of international experience by Russian liberal parties (I.E. Voronkova, L.I. Novikova, L.V. Selezneva, S.I. Shabanov) (Voronkova, 2009);

4. Work of local party cells and the regional aspect in their activities (E.Yu. Verzhbitskaya, A.N. Egorov, E.V. Elnikova, F.A. Seleznev, V.V. Tretyakov) (Egorov, 2007; Seleznev, 2001);

5. Ideas of some Russian liberals (N.I. Dedkov, L.S. Leonova, N.A. Potrnyagin, O.L. Gnatyuk) (Egorov, 2010);

Considering the above, one of the fundamental areas of research on the history of political parties and the most liberal Russian movement at the beginning of the 20th century implies studying the history of their parliamentary representatives (factions) in the Russian State Duma of that period. Here, one can mention such authors as V.A. Demin (1996), V.A. Patentova, V.A. Kozbanenko (1996), as well as some works by the author of this article (Shchukin, 2015). At the same time, it is clear that the research on this issue in domestic and foreign historical studies has currently become a separate and today's stage of studying this problem is totally devoid of certain "vices of the past". However, due to the possibility to apply a broader methodology, pluralism of political and ideological attitudes, we have a wider range of research that somehow enables a more objective view on the history of the liberal movement in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century.

Conclusion

The conducted research and analysis showed that methodological and ideological pluralism is to certain extent a specific feature of the modern stage of scientific research. This explains the presence of various approaches and assessments of the phenomenon under study. Regarding the considered issue, this feature manifested itself in the availability of various interpretations of Cadets' relations with the tsar, the revolutionary movement, and, consequently, the methods used by the party.

The study showed that liberal historians view the constitutional-democratic party as a force aiming to create new civil law reality in Russia, denying the possible revolutionary nature of the tactical actions of members of this party. On the other hand, conservatives are inclined to see Cadets as dishonest players in the political game

for power, responsible for the revolutionary events in the country.

The main conclusion that can be made is that the problem of the relationship between liberalism and the government is linked with an attempt to answer the question about what the liberal parties were like as the opposition and whether they were actually opposition forces. Modern historiography, as a rule, does not question its opposition basis, but there are debates on its systemic or non-systemic nature.

The analysis carried out in this article led to the following conclusions:

1. The issue stated in the title of the article was significantly expanded in the post-Soviet period by new works, studies of previously unexplored areas, interesting interpretations, not constrained by the state propaganda, ideological and methodological requirements.

2. The considered range of research issues has become much wider, and the methodological apparatus has been enriched regarding approaches to the study of this phenomenon.

It should be emphasized that a number of issues related to the history of Russian liberal movement in the early 20th century can be seen as timeless, that is, the one that has been explored during the entire period of research, but with a changing perspective, approach, methodology, range of sources, which enabled researchers to come up with new findings. At the same time, it is obvious that the history of Russian liberalism continues to attract the attention of not only domestic, but also international historians. Further research could provide a valuable contribution to the considered issue.

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