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THE PROBLEM OF THE REGIONAL PARTY-POLITICAL ELITE IN SOVIET RUSSIA: HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Abstract

In this article, the authors investigate the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s. At the expense of the most qualified and competent representatives of the political elite of the Southern Urals, the leading cadres of the authorities of the USSR and the RSFSR were formed. This gives particular importance to this region in the field of management training. In 2020, in the light of the latest events related to the pandemic of the new coronavirus infection COVID-19, political scientists and journalists in many democratic countries predict a return to the socialist model of government with a fairly strong role of the state. As a result, it becomes especially relevant to study the general laws and regional specifics of the socialist model of the formation of the ruling elite, its composition, the laws of its functioning, coming to power, its role in the social process, the reasons for its degradation and leaving the historical arena.

Keywords: party-political elite, USSR, Chelyabinsk region, KPSU, Komsomol.

Introduction

In world practice, the study of the political elite has always been and will be one of the priority areas of research for scientists, which is quite regular and natural. This circumstance is explained by the fact that the political elite has a decisive influence on the lives of millions of people, making the most important decisions in the political, economic, social, ideological spheres of society. This interest has manifested itself especially clearly in recent decades, which is directly related to the development of the latest mass media, and therefore the ability of political elites to manipulate the consciousness of people, and, as a result, the growing role of the elite in the political

process.

In this article, we will investigate the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s. The chronological framework of the study is since it was during these years that a typical mechanism for the training of leading personnel, characteristic of the so-called “Brezhnevskov” era, took shape. It included, on the one hand, strict requirements for the observance of party and state discipline, a clear knowledge of one’s place in the hierarchy of power within the administrative-command system. At the same time, leaders in the regions required such qualities as activity, perseverance, the ability to mobilize the masses to solve the assigned tasks, knowledge of the psychology of different seg-

ments of the population, the ability to achieve the final result without referring to objective difficulties and obstacles. It should be taken into account that for many representatives of the authorities, the Chelyabinsk Region has become a launching pad for participation in big politics, including appointments to positions at the all-Union and all-Russian levels. A feature of our study is that we will study their life and career paths after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Among them are E. M. Tyazhelnikov (Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1968–1984), Ambassador of the USSR to Romania (1983–1990), N. N. Rodionov (Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1958–1979), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1970–1978), Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the USSR in Yugoslavia (1978–1986), M. F. Nenashev (Editor-in-chief of the newspaper “Soviet Russia” (1978–1986), Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Publishing, Printing and Book Trade (1986–1989), Chairman State Committee of the USSR on Television and Radio Broadcasting (1989–1990), Minister of Information and Press of the USSR (July–November 1991), M. G. Voropaev (Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1966–1984), Deputy Chairman of the Party Control Committee under the Central Committee of the CPSU (1984–1989) and V. P. Polyanichko (the Head of the Section of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU (1978–1988), Adviser to the Central Committee of the CPSU in Afghanistan (1985–1988), 2nd secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (1988–1991), Head of the Republican Committee on Nagorno-Karabakh (1990–1992). All of them are a galaxy of bright, outstanding personalities who for a certain period of their lives were associated with the Chelyabinsk region, but

whom fate gave a chance to prove themselves, using, first of all, their professional qualities, in higher positions in the state.

Was there an elite in the Soviet Union? At first sight, it may seem rather controversial to use the term “elite” concerning the Soviet period of history. The fact is that in the USSR, in relation to power, it was more customary to use the term party-Soviet nomenclature. However, we share the point of view of the famous Russian sociologist O. V. Kryshchanovskaya (2005), who defines the ruling elite as a social group that “differs from others not by virtues at all, but by functions,” (p. 73) and they “endow it with a special status, power resources” (p. 74). According to this approach, the political elite can be defined as the highest stratum of the political class, possessing the maximum power and capable of making important decisions at the regional level, and such a stratum existed in the USSR.

Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of this scientific article was formed by the most important approaches, methods and principles of historical research. The application of the modernization approach made it possible to consider the development process of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s, its quantitative change associated with the reforming of the structure of the government of an evolutionary nature and qualitative renewal, namely the emergence of an elite striving for a qualitative reform of Soviet society. Modern researchers include in the theory of modernization socio-political, socio-cultural, intellectual and technological, legal, moral and humanitarian, nationally specific components of modernization, as well as the impact of globalization on this process (Po-

berezhnikov, 2006). This approach orients us to study the place and role of the party-political elite, its socio-demographic characteristics (Krasilshchikov, 1998), due to the elite played an active role in the modernization of Soviet society.

Another approach that allows identifying the national and regional specifics of the process of forming the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s is civilization-al. This approach focuses on a multifaceted study of the party-political elite – its origin, essence, functions, spheres and limits of impact on society. It allows us to take into account many factors, such as the independent dynamics of the development of the Soviet Union, its civilizational originality, the implementation of political reforms that accurately reflect the national characteristics of the political process (Dugin, 2014).

New opportunities for the historical interpretation of models of interaction between representatives of government and regional society have emerged through the use of the institutional approach (Nort, 1997). In a broad sense, the institution of relations between the party-political elite and society was interpreted as a system of cultural practices and rules within the framework of which the subjects interacted. A narrower interpretation of institutions involved an analysis of the activities of the country's party-political elite, including the regional one, and the field of its interaction with the population.

The research problem required to use of a complex of scientific methods: general scientific, special and private. Features of the socio-demographic characteristics of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s were established within the framework of the cultural-anthropological method. The historical-comparative method made it possible to identify general and specific characteristics of the party-

political elite of the Chelyabinsk region and its activities in comparison – in different historical periods – of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation. The problem-chronological method made it possible to focus on the study of individual, most important issues of the formation and activities of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s. Among them is the analysis of professional characteristics, the study of the main areas of activity that reveal the place and role of the regional elite in the process of managing society. The historical-genetic method made it possible to consider the reasons for the genesis and the specifics of the change in the thinking of the party-political elite in the 1960s – 1980s, which in general was later expressed in such processes as “Perestroika”, “Glasnost”, “Democratization”. The structural-functional method of analysis helped us to study the regional party-political elite in a certain system/structure and with the performance of certain functions within this system and for structures of a higher order (all-union level). The sociological biographical method was used by us within the framework of the current legislation,¹ following the principles of personal data processing. In processing this source of information, the authors adhered to the requirements of legality and fairness, implying their use under specific, predetermined research objectives. When processing personal data, their accuracy, sufficiency and relevance in relation to the objectives of the study were ensured. The authors strove to follow the most important methodological principles of historicism, objectivity and consistency, which contributed to the study of the subject of research holistically and in the interconnection of all its

¹ See: Federal Law of 27 July 2006 N 152-FZ “On Personal Data”. Retrieved July 24, 2020 from: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_61801/

aspects, in the context of general historical phenomena and processes.

The documents of the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History, the Central State Archives of the City of Moscow and the Consolidated Archive of Chelyabinsk Region were used as historical sources, including organizational and administrative information and reporting, office documentation of the state authorities of the Chelyabinsk Region of the Soviet period, materials of party organizations, and collections of personal documents.

The authors of the article have involved documents of a legislative and regulatory nature, documentary collections, encyclopedias, sources of personal origin, periodicals, Internet sources.

Results and Discussion

In the Soviet years, it was generally accepted that the leadership of the party and Soviet authorities were formed using the mechanism of democratic elections. Was this really the case? Let us try to figure it out.

In world practice, there are two mechanisms for “entering” the elite – through elections or appointments. In the USSR, according to Voslenskiy (2005), representatives of the regional party-political elite by the nature of their formation belonged to the layer of the elected nomenclature. It consisted of persons approved or “recommended” for elective nomenklatura posts. These included members and candidates of party committees of various levels, the Central Auditing Commission, deputies of the Supreme and local Soviets, secretaries of party organizations, members of various committees (p. 150).

What was the local management system that developed in the USSR in the 1960s – 1980s? Since 1918, it has developed on a consti-

tutional basis. Legally, the powers of power were in the hands of the Soviets, which created a single vertical of power. The official name of these authorities changed periodically. In the period under study, from December 1936 to October 1977, these were regional (regional, city) Soviets of Working People’s Deputies,² from October 1977 – People’s Deputies.³ However, the ramified system of party committees became the core of local government. The Soviet system of government was primarily a party system. It was not the congresses of Soviets, but the congresses of the party that determined the main directions of domestic and foreign policy. It was not the people, but the higher party bodies that ensured by their decisions the coming to power of political leaders of both the union and regional scale.

The functional division into representative and executive bodies was inherent in both party and Soviet authorities and administration. The deputies of the Soviets played the role of the representative body at all levels, and the role of the executive body was assumed by the executive committees.

The leaders of the party-political elite of the Soviet period relied on the mass party, exercised leadership and control over the development of society. On the one hand, they had enormous rights and powers, but, on the other hand, they were personally responsible for everything that happened in the country and regions.

It should be noted that the plenum of the regional party committee or the session of the re-

² See: Constitution (Basic Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 05 December 1936. Retrieved July 21, 2020 from: <http://www.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc&base=ESU&n=44975#017749075351214083>.

³ See: Constitution (Basic Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 07 October 1977. Retrieved July 21, 2020 from: <http://www.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc&base=ESU&n=514#044906239652053614>.

gional council was formally elected, but in fact, approved by an open vote in the positions of the actually already appointed leaders of the regional committee and regional executive committee. To vote “against” meant disagreeing with the Central Committee’s resolution with all the ensuing consequences, especially since a representative of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) – CPSU was always present at the plenary sessions concerning organizational issues regarding the first secretary of the regional committee. Genuine elections with multiple nominations and secret ballot only began to take place in the late 1980s.

Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s was the forge of the country’s personnel. Many representatives of the region’s party-political elite later became members of the highest authorities of the USSR. In our study, we decided to focus on analyzing the biographies of the five most prominent and extraordinary representatives of the regional elite, whose life and destiny are still relevant today. Among them are the Secretaries of the Chelyabinsk Regional Committee of the CPSU E. M. Tyazhelnikov and M. F. Nenashev, the First Secretaries of the Chelyabinsk Regional Committee of the CPSU N. N. Rodionov and M. G. Voropaev, as well as the First Secretary of the Chelyabinsk Regional Committee of the Komsomol V. P. Polyanichko.

As the experience of foreign (Kearns & Paddison, 2000; Holman, 2007) and domestic (Sushkov & Razinkov, 2003; Samokhina & Khudoborodov, 2018) scientists shows, one of the problems of studying the social and professional appearance of the party-political elite is the analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of this group. The most important criteria for reconstructing basic socio-demographic characteristics are gender, age, place of birth, social

origin, nationality, educational and professional level, length of service in party work, government awards and honorary titles. In our opinion, it allows, even concerning a small group of representatives of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region, to draw certain conclusions and identify the specifics of the formation and development of the political elite of the region.

In our study, we exclusively study men aged 48 and over. The average age at the time of appointment to a post at the all-union level was 47 years. This situation generally reflects a global trend. For example, according to a recent study, researches of Pew Research Center believe that women are more active in politics than men. However, despite this argument, there are too few women in high political offices. Thus, we have a picture of gender discrimination (Horowitz, Igielnik, & Parker, 2018). The same position is shared by S. Goldberg (1999), professor of sociology at City College in New York, who says that “the higher the status – the more competitive position – the lower the percentage of women” (p. 34).

Next, we analyze the place of birth. All representatives of the party-political elite were born in Russia. Two of them – on the territory of the Chelyabinsk region (Verkhnyaya Sanarka village, Borodinovka village) – E. M. Tyazhelnikov and M. F. Nenashev. Two – on the South of Russia (Rostov-on-Don and the Bystryansky farm in the Rostov region) – V. P. Polyanichko and M. G. Voropaev and one – N. N. Rodionov in the town of Chern, Tula province. In percentage terms, the number of representatives of the party-political elite born in the city is less (40%) than those from rural areas (60%). In our opinion, this circumstance may indicate a rather strong character of a person, since, despite the limited possibilities of the village, this did not

become an obstacle on his career path. At the same time, those representatives of the party political elite who were born on the territory of the Chelyabinsk region were able to navigate much easier in the specifics of the region, in the possible options for its development, and also to avoid distrust of the population, because the “Varangians” are usually treated with caution. The reasons for the presence of the remaining representatives of the party-political elite in the regional government bodies were different, most of them often associated with the relocation of the family, work on an assignment during the Great Patriotic War, demobilization from the army, etc.

For all the representatives of the party-political elite studied by us, childhood and adolescence were not easy. This was primarily due to the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. The war left many orphans, children lived and were brought up in incomplete and large families, and began their labour activity early.

In terms of social origin, all the representatives of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region under study represent a fairly predictable group – they came from the families of workers, employees and peasants. In percentage terms, the dominant group was made up of people from peasant families – 60% and the same percentage falls on people from families of workers – 20% and families of employees – 20%. Obviously, the birth of a worker or employee family gave the best starting opportunities – education, outlook, social circle, formed in the family, at the same time, other character traits were formed in representatives of the authorities – people from a peasant family – hard work, perseverance, the ability to cope with difficulties, which are no less important in achieving the goal, in this case, we mean, first of all, a career.

Exploring such a characteristic as nationality, we see that the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region of the 1960s – 1980s was multinational, and represented by such nationalities as Russians and Ukrainians, behind the obvious dominance of Russians – 80% of people.

When analyzing the educational level of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region, a tendency is clearly traced – the availability of higher education for all representatives. The number of universities that government officials graduated from included both federal and regional universities. Among them is the Moscow State University named after V. M. Lomonosov, Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys, Rostov Institute of Railway Engineers, Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical Institute, Magnitogorsk State Pedagogical Institute. According to the specialties received at universities – they were people from the field of education, transport, industry, journalism. This confirms the fact that during the Soviet period, the most capable and authoritative leaders and specialists from the spheres of production, science, culture and other sectors of the national economy were involved in state administration.⁴ Great attention has always been paid to the professional training of personnel and advanced training.⁵ So, the steady trend of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s was getting a second higher education in the field of public service or an academic degree and academic title. For example, the highest party school under the Central Committee of the CPSU graduated by M. G. Voropaev, the academic degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences and the academic title of professor was awarded to M. F. Nenashev, the academic degree

⁴ See: Russian State Archive of Contemporary History. F. 89. Op. 9. D. 31. L. 5.

⁵ See: Central State Archives of the City of Moscow. F. R-2784. Op. 1. D. 650. L. 12.

of Candidate of Historical Sciences and the academic title of associate professor was awarded to E. M. Tyazhelnikov, the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences was awarded to V. P. Polyanchko (Bozhe & Chernozemtsev, 2001).

All the representatives of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region studied by us, before their appointment to a leading position, worked at enterprises of the region, gained experience in party and Komsomol work. E. M. Tyazhelnikov began his career at the Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical Institute, in 1961–1964 he was the rector of it. Experience in Komsomol work – 14 years, experience in party work – 4 years.

N. N. Rodionov, upon arrival in the Chelyabinsk region, worked as a metallurgical engineer at the Magnitogorsk Metallurgical Plant. He began his party activity in Leningrad, then for two years, he worked as the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan and for three years as Deputy Chairman of the Leningrad Economic Council. In total, the experience of party work was 21 years. Having headed the Chelyabinsk region in 1965, N. N. Rodionov paid special attention to improving the economic performance of metallurgy, mechanical engineering and defence enterprises. Culture houses, schools, clubs, sports facilities, shops were built in all regional centres. From the memoirs of N. N. Rodionov: “I will say a little about Chelyabinsk. It was the most fruitful and fortunate period of my life. In 1965 I returned to the Urals as the first secretary of the Regional Party Committee. I was 50, and behind my shoulders were the district committee, Smolnyy, Kazakhstan, the economic council. Now, I could give away the accumulated life experience with interest” (Zakharov, Kalinina, & Nenashev,

2004, pp. 63-64).

M. F. Nenashev began his career at the Magnitogorsk Mining and Metallurgical Institute, where he worked as an assistant, associate professor, head of the department of Marxism-Leninism. He gained experience in party activities while working in the Chelyabinsk region – as the second secretary of the Magnitogorsk City Committee of the CPSU, Head of the Department of Science and Educational Institutions, and then-Secretary of the Chelyabinsk Regional Committee of the CPSU. In total, the experience of party activity was 15 years.

M. G. Voropaev began his career in the Chelyabinsk Region in 1942, when he was sent to the city of Zlatoust, where he worked as a senior technician, an engineer for the repair of steam locomotives. In subsequent years, he was in the Komsomol work for 5 years. Then he was engaged at economic work on the Chelyabinsk Metallurgical Plant – foreman, Head of the traction service of the railway workshop. M. G. Voropaev made a significant contribution to the development of the economy of the Chelyabinsk region, working as the first secretary of the Chelyabinsk Regional Committee of the CPSU. In total, his experience of party work was 30 years. Under his leadership, ferrous metallurgy came to the fore in the country, a program for the technical re-equipment of agriculture was implemented. He paid much attention to the patriotic education of young people (Bozhe & Chernozemtsev, 2001). Another of his activities in the Chelyabinsk region was the fight against drug addiction. So, in the Resolution of the Bureau of the Regional Committee of the CPSU on November 26, 1982 “On the organization of work to combat drug addiction” said that: “the number of people who use drugs, and the related number of crimes

in recent years has increased markedly”.⁶ Moreover, further measures were proposed to solve this problem: “For the decisive eradication of this evil, it is necessary to make fuller use of the power of public opinion, to improve educational work in every team, with every person. To consistently and persistently conduct explanatory preventive work in teams where the facts of drug use are revealed, to involve doctors, lawyers, pedagogical workers and other specialists in this”.⁷ And so M. G. Voropaev recalled about his work in the Chelyabinsk region: “The most difficult post-war year, I would call the year 1975. Then our region suffered a great disaster: a severe drought burned down all crops and grasslands”, and further “I am incredibly grateful to the fate that gave me great happiness to be with Chelyabinsk residents in days of joy and days of sorrow, to overcome difficulties together” (Zakharov, Kalinina, & Nenashev, 2004, p. 216).

V. P. Polyanichko begins his career with the Komsomol work, to which he devoted 6 years. Since 1965, he has been working in the Chelyabinsk region as the First Secretary of the Chelyabinsk Regional Committee of the Komsomol. After that, in 1972, he began his party activities as Secretary of the Chelyabinsk City Committee of the CPSU, which lasted 13 years.

When we are analyzing the biographies of the studied representatives of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region, it becomes obvious that for all of them the region has become a launching pad for the transition to a higher position of all-Union significance. So, E. M. Tyazhelnikov for 16 years was a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and for 7 years was the USSR Ambassador in Romania. N. N. Rodi-

onov was a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for 21 years. He was appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and later – Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the USSR in Yugoslavia. M. F. Nenashev was the Chief Editor of the “Soviet Russia” newspaper, after which he was appointed Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Publishing, Printing and Book Trade, in 1989 he became Chairman of the USSR State Committee on Television and Radio Broadcasting. In July–November 1991, he holds the post of Minister of Information and Press of the USSR.

M. F. Nenashev strove to objectively assess the contradictions of the perestroika era of M. S. Gorbachev and strove for Soviet television to reflect the real-life, for which he was accused in June 1989 plenum of the Central Committee that the country was being blackened on television, nothing bright and joyful was shown, to which M. F. Nenashev replied: “Aren’t you ashamed to rule the country so badly? Television is only guilty of reflecting more fully what is happening in real life than anything else. ... Television cannot be better than life” (Mamontov, 2019, p. 10).

M. G. Voropaev for 18 years was a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, was elected Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, for 5 years he was Deputy Chairman of the Party Control Committee under the Central Committee of the CPSU, in connection with which, by the Resolution of the plenum of the Regional Committee of the CPSU, he was dismissed from the post of First Secretary of the Chelyabinsk Regional Committee of the CPSU.⁸

V. P. Polyanichko was the Head of the Sector of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU for 10 years, succes-

⁶ See: Consolidated Archive of Chelyabinsk Region. F. P–288. Op. 195. D. 83. L. 3.

⁷ See: Consolidated Archive of Chelyabinsk Region. F. P–288. Op. 195. D. 83. L. 3.

⁸ See: Consolidated Archive of Chelyabinsk Region. F. P–288. Op. 189. D. 1011. L. 91.

sively for about 3 years he changed three positions as an Adviser to the Central Committee of the CPSU in Afghanistan, then Second Secretary of the Communist Party in Azerbaijan, then the Head of the Republican Committee in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The collapse of the USSR was a tragic page in the history of our state. This event influenced the fate of millions of people, including the representatives of the party-political elite we are studying. By the end of 1991, all Soviet and party bodies of power and administration at the all-Union level ceased to exist at once. How was the fate of those who were in power during the existence of the USSR and now could not continue to do so?

E. M. Tyazhelnikov in 1990, after the anti-socialist coup in Romania, at the insistence of the new authorities of this country, was recalled from his Ambassador post and transferred to the disposal of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then he was dismissed. In 1991 he returned to his speciality, namely, became a professor at the Moscow University for the Humanities, the author and editor of books about the history of the party and the Komsomol, problems of the international youth movement, a member of the editorial boards of the anthology “Builders of Russia. XX century”, encyclopedias, reference and other editions. He is a full Member of the International Academy of Creativity (1997), a full Member and Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Security, Defense and Law Enforcement (2003). However, he did not completely retire from politics. Already in 1996, he held the position of the Advisor to the Head of the Apparatus of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, in which he was until 2002.

N. N. Rodionov retired in 1986 and was not involved in active political activities.

In 1993, M. F. Nenashev published two volumes of memoirs “Hostage of Time” and “The Last Government of the USSR”. For 12 years from 1994 to 2006, he headed the state publishing house “Russian Book”. In 2006, he created the Department of Periodicals at Moscow State University of Printing and became its Head. He was engaged in social, educational and charitable activities, was the Chairman of the board of the Charitable Foundation “Future of the Fatherland” named after V. P. Polyanichko (Bozhe & Chernozemtsev, 2001).

M. G. Voropaev “remained a real communist until the end of his life,” (Rabchenok, 2019) and as noted by the Chief Archeographer of the Consolidated Archive of Chelyabinsk Region, G. N. Kibitkina: “As for the period after 1991, his assessment [M. G. Voropaev] was, of course, impartial” (Rabchenok, 2019).

V. P. Polyanichko in 1993 was the Head of the Temporary Administration on the Territories of the Mozdok Region, the Prigorodny Region and the adjacent areas of North Ossetia and the Malgobek and Nazran Regions of Ingushetia in the rank of Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Government of the Russian Federation and Deputy Prime Minister of Russia in the zone of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict. On August 1, 1993, he died as a result of a terrorist act in North Ossetia. The service car in which he was heading to negotiate with the Ossetian field commanders was fired upon by unknown assailants. The murder has not been solved yet (Bozhe & Chernozemtsev, 2001).

Furthermore, at the end of our study, we will analyze such characteristic as the presence of state awards and titles, which indirectly assess the professional activities of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region from the government of the USSR and the Russian Federation.

The grounds for their appointment were high indicators in the performance of professional duties, making a significant contribution to the development of certain spheres of society and the state, the manifestation of courage, perseverance, heroism, selflessness before the motherland.

All the representatives of the party-political elite studied by us were awarded Orders and Medals. Three Orders of Lenin were awarded to N. N. Rodionov and M. G. Voropaev, two Orders of Lenin were awarded to E. M. Tyazhelnikov; one Order of the October Revolution was awarded to E. M. Tyazhelnikov, N. N. Rodionov, M. G. Voropaev; two Orders of the Red Banner of Labor were awarded to M. F. Nenashev and V. P. Polyanichko, one Order of the Red Banner of Labor was awarded to E. M. Tyazhelnikov; one Order of Friendship of Peoples was awarded to E. M. Tyazhelnikov, M. F. Nenashev and V. P. Polyanichko; two Orders of the Red Star were awarded to N. N. Rodionov; two Orders of the Badge of Honor were awarded to M. F. Nenashev, one Order of the Badge of Honor was awarded to M. G. Voropaev and V. P. Polyanichko; one Order of Personal Courage was awarded to V. P. Polyanichko (posthumously). Among the medals are such as “For Valiant Labor in the Great Patriotic War of 1941 – 1945”, “For the Development of Virgin Lands”, “In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of V. I. Lenin” and others. The honorary titles were awarded to E. M. Tyazhelnikov (Honorary Member of the Komsomol, Honorary Doctor of the Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University), M. F. Nenashev (Honored Worker of Culture of the Russian Federation), M. G. Voropaev (Honorary Railwayman, Honorary Citizen of the South Urals) and V. P. Polyanichko (Honorary Citizen of Orenburg, Orsk, Gaya).

Conclusion

In general, analyzing the election system of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region in the 1960s – 1980s, it should be noted that it was extremely controversial and not entirely democratic. Indeed, the way to recruit the elite was elections, i.e. its individual representatives were elected at plenary sessions of party committees and sessions of the Soviets. The formation of the nomenclature took place as a result of the mechanism of selection and nomination of its representatives by certain individuals. All elections to leading positions were controlled by a narrow circle of people of higher power (party) authorities. An important role in this process was played by the factor of informal personal relations between higher and lower nomenklatura workers. Thus, the procedure of the elections was only a form of legitimization of the “nominees”, and the elections also created a legal basis for the exercise of power by the party-political elite. The Chelyabinsk Region was no exception in this respect.

However, in order to be objective and impartial, the following must be admitted. Most of the representatives of the party-political elite of the Southern Urals kept in touch with the population, knew their moods and needs, and reacted to their demands. A certain level of criticism and self-criticism remained in the ranks of the CPSU. The most prominent representatives of the party-political elite of the Chelyabinsk region, whose activities are discussed above, have made a significant contribution not only to the development of the region but of the entire state. This experience of training and placement of regional personnel, their education and promotion along the vertical of power is also relevant for modern

Russia. Their personal, business qualities, intellect, will, worldview, temperament, created that unique flavour of the era in which they lived.

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