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Collected Documents on the History of the Pskov Orthodox Mission: A Recent Publication

Abstract

The reviewed work is devoted to a significant, and yet little-studied in both national and foreign scholarship, issue of the clergy interactions with German occupational authorities on the territory of the USSR in the days of the Great Patriotic War. It introduces into scientific use historically significant complex of documents (1941-1945) from the archive of the Office of the Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky) of Vilnius and Lithuania, patriarchal exarch in Latvia and Estonia, and also records from the investigatory records on charges against clergy and employees concerned in the activities of the Pskov Orthodox Mission (1944-1990). Documents included in the publication are stored in the archives of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Estonia,

Lithuania, Leningrad, Novgorod, and Pskov regions. They allow some insight into nature, forms, and methods of the Nazi occupational regime policies in the conquered territories (including policies towards the Church). The documents capture religious policies of the Nazis and inner life of the exarchate, describe actual situation of population and clergy, management activities and counterinsurgency on the occupied territories. The documents bring to light connections between the exarchate and German counterintelligence and reveal the nature of political police work with informants. They capture the political mood of population and prisoners of war. There is information on participants of partisan movement and underground resistance, on communication net between the patriarchal exarchate in the Baltic states and the German counterintelligence. Reports and dispatches of the clergy in the pay of the Nazis addressed to the Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky) contain detailed activity reports. Investigatory records contain important biographical information and personal data on the collaborators. Most of the documents, being classified, have never been published before.

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Keywords

Historical sources, Pskov Orthodox mission, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), patriarchal exarch of Latvia and Estonia, collaboration, Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, archival documents.

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