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History of the Doukhobors of the Taurida Gubernia in the Fonds of the State Archive of the Republic of Crimea: The First Half of the 19th Century

Abstract

The article investigates the complex of archival sources on the history of the Doukhobors in the Taurida gubernia in the first half of the 19th century. The Doukhobors appeared in the region in 1802 under the decree of Alexander I and lived in the North of the gubernia until 1845. On this site they were able to build an independent commune based on equality of its members and intercommunity of property. The most complete collection of sources on the Taurida Doukhobors history is kept in the fonds of the State Archive of the Republic of Crimea. It includes documents of the chancellery of the civil governor of Taurida and that of the gubernia

board. The source complex consists of documents of various types and provenance. Their information potential is determined by the range of powers of the local authorities. Being saturated with factual data, they allow to explore main aspects of the history of the Doukhobors of the Taurida gubernia in the first half of the 19th century. Information value of the sources differs. All the documents in the archival fonds are divided into four thematic groups. The first group covers documents on the advent and settlement of the Doukhobors in the Taurida gubernia and characterizes their resettlement which was organized by the authorities. The second group includes documents revealing their legal status and determining directions and dynamics of their rights restrictions. The documents of the third group characterize the cult's dogma, the change of religion by the Doukhobors, and their relationship with the local authorities and the Orthodox population. They allow to understand the internal organization of the sect and the mechanism of its existence. The fourth group includes documents on the law violations by the Doukhobors and their subsequent eviction from the gubernia. They complete the history of sectarians in the Taurida gubernia and describe the causes, conditions, course, and consequences of the resettlement of the Doukhobors in the Caucasus in great detail. They also explore the crimes committed by the sect elite, which give a different view on the Doukhobors. Thus, the sources allow to reconstruct the history of the Doukhobor sect in the Taurida gubernia.

Keywords

Archival document, source, Orthodoxy, sect, Doukhobors, Taurida gubernia.

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