Review

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Buryatia in the Days of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45: Documentary Evidence

Abstract

The review is dedicated to the collection “Buryatia in the days of the Great Patriotic War: 1941–45,” compiled from documents stored in the fonds of the State Archive of the Republic of Buryatia (GARB). The publication includes over 400 documents revealing various aspects of the republic inhabitants’ activities in the wartime. Documents are grouped into two sections. The

first section mostly contains previously unpublished record keeping materials: decisions of local bodies of Soviet power at various levels, extracts from meetings of party committees, resolutions of rallies, reports on fulfillment and overfulfillment of state plan for supplying industrial and agricultural products, as well as appeals of workers and collective farmers to the Central Committee of the CPSU (B) and to J. V. Stalin personally. Some documents reveal the scale of uncompensated assistance provided by the residents of Buryatia, who gave money, livestock, and personal belongings to the state Defense Fund. Of interest is published correspondence with the command of partisan detachments, formed in part from residents of the republic, reports on trips to the front with labour gifts, and other documents. The second section contains sources of personal provenance: diaries and correspondence of military personnel called to the front from the republic and letters from the inhabitants of Buryatia to the army. Among the documents in this section there are excerpts from the diary of the Hero of the Soviet Union V. B. Borsoev, which is being published for the first time in this volume. The author describes the first period of World War II, the difficulties in supplying the warring army, the inability of the Red Army to fight and that of the commanders to control the troops. Front-line letters from soldiers and officers to their relatives and friends tell of the exploits and everyday life of the warring army, of the desire to defeat the enemy as quickly as possible and to return to peaceful life in the republic. The letters of the Kozulin brothers – Ivan, Alexei and Alexander, tankers who died in 1941–42, will undoubtedly attract the readers' attention. The documents of the collection create a holistic picture of life and production activities of the population of Buryatia in the days of the war, reflect the complex and dramatic process of the regional economy restructuring for the needs of the country's defense, convey the labour heroism of industrial and agricultural workers and creative intelligentsia of the republic. The materials of the book recreate a true picture of those events, greatly enrich our knowledge on the life of the population of Buryatia in 1941–45, and, undoubtedly, serve as a valuable source for historians and for those interested in the topic.

Keywords

State Archive Republic of Buryatia, front-line letters as a historical source, documents of management and record keeping, Great Patriotic War of 1941–45, correspondence with the command of partisan detachments, documentary sources.

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