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Kursk during the Nazi Occupation: Early Days of the German “New Order”: Materials of the Intelligence Reports of the 4th Department of the NKVD Directorate for the Kursk Region

Abstract

The article deals with the initial period of the occupation of the city of Kursk by German troops in the fall of 1941. Approach of the German troops and their allies to the Kursk region added urgency to the territorial state security agencies’ efforts to establish an effective intelligence and agent network in the territory. In July–September 1941 the staff of the Department of the NKVD for the Kursk region did a lot in this direction and the Soviet state security leaders received quite diverse information from the occupied city of Kursk and other areas of the Kursk region. The article is based on archival materials of the Directorate the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation for the Kursk region, the vast majority of which are being introduced into scientific use by the authors. Declassified materials of the 4th Department of the NKVD Directorate for the Kursk Region are used as a source of information. These are primarily messages of Soviet agents remaining in Kursk for reconnaissance and sabotage missions. The bones of intelligence information passed to the Soviet state security leaders were orders of the occupation authorities, local collaborationist publications that were being published under the occupation authorities, personal observations of agents, rumors, and public moods. Agent messages form a rather comprehensive picture of various aspects of daily life of the Kursk population at the initial stage of the German occupation: subsistence support, organization of collaborative civil administration bodies, church policy, nature of the occupation regime, terror against Soviet citizens suspected of involvement in the anti-Nazi underground. There is also information on everyday life and leisure of German servicemen: cafes, restaurants, cinema, theater, bawdy house. The attitude of the townspeople to the German “New Order” is revealed. At the same time, it was noted that some had gladly accepted the arrival of the German invaders and expressed a desire to cooperate with the occupation authorities.

Keywords

Sources, archival documents, German “New Order”, German occupation, collaborationism, Soviet agents, 4th department of the NKVD directorate for Kursk region

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