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Congresses of the Military Clergy of the Romanian Front in Iasi in 1917

Abstract

The article studies the practice of congresses of the Orthodox military clergy in 1917. To discuss their work in new social and political conditions, the priests gathered at the level of

divisions, corps, and armies. Adoption of general decisions required more representative meetings: in the spring and summer of 1917, congresses of the military clergy of the South-Western, Romanian, Western, and Northern fronts were held, and in July 1917, the Second All-Russian Congress of the Military and Naval Clergy was held in Mogilev. Studying minutes of the front-line congresses identifies issues that bothered priests serving in military units and institutions of various fronts of the Russian army and proposed solutions for urgent problems. The study is to consider the work of the congresses of the military clergy of the Romanian Front and to determine their place among congresses of the military clergy in 1917. To that end, the main decisions have been analyzed and compared with the decisions of other meetings. The article also discusses an attempt to increase the number of representatives of the front in Mogilev, explaining the reasons for its failure. The participants in the military clergy congresses of the Romanian front expressed interests of a fairly large number of priests: as of May 1917, approximately 410 pastors served in the military units and institutions of the young front. At the first congress (May 15–16, 1917) of the clergy of the Romanian front, most important (according to delegates) issues were discussed: state of the army, measures of its improvement, delegation of front priests to the All-Russian Congress of the Military and Naval Clergy, support for the dismissed clergy, representation in the Synod, etc. The second congress (June 25, 1917) convened to elect delegates to Mogilev. The source base of the study is documents from the fonds of the Russian State Historical Archive: minutes of the congresses of clergy of the Romanian, Western, South-Western, Northern fronts, minutes of the Second All-Russian Congress of the Military and Naval Clergy, telegrams, reports, and other documents concerning the protopresbyter's office. Data on the work of the congresses of clergy of the Romanian front is being introduced into scientific use for the first time.

Keywords

Historical sources, archival document, military clergy, Romanian front, congresses of clergy, World War I of 1914–18, Russian army, February Revolution of 1917, protopresbyter.

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