

Review

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Church and the Red Terror on the Don in 1918–19 in the Latest Archeography

Abstract

The article is a review of a documents collection prepared by well-known historians Yulia Alexandrovna Biryukova and Evgeny Anatolyevich Ageev “The Church on the Don during the Civil War of 1918–19. Investigation of the Special Commission.” The book was published in Volgograd in 2022. It contains an introductory source studies article on the documents of the Special Investigation Commission for Investigation of the Bolsheviks’ Atrocities, created on General A.I. Denikin’s order. The collection is based on documents “from the field”: questionnaires about Bolshevik persecution filled in by parishes of the Great Don Host in 1919. The collection contains photographs illustrating the Red Terror against the Russian Orthodox Church on the Don. It contains all necessary scientific reference apparatus to facilitate the search for information. The review emphasizes relevance and scientific significance of the documentary materials introduced into scientific use by the compilers. Regional and microhistorical approaches are scientific basis for the documents collection; the Don materials are grouped by districts, deaneries, and parishes. These approaches, respectively, have formed the basis of this article, which is devoted to the analysis of the collection. The principles of consistency and determinism permit to assess the publication, which is considered as a phenomenon of science with its own structure, while a part of the historical knowledge. The main scientific method used in this publication is problematic. The article offers considerations on the problem of Red Terror towards the Russian Orthodox Church. Attention is focused on the fact that a significant part of the published documents testify to local initiatives in the acts of Red Terror. They did not originate from the authorities, were not ordered, but manifested newcomer soldiers’ aggression towards the Church. The author comes to the conclusion that the published sources may be useful to researchers of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Civil War in Russia. Analysis of the attitude of the local Bolshevik authorities, the military, and the population towards church institutions may contribute to a better understanding of the nature of the Russian Orthodox Church persecution and, more broadly, of the role of the religious factor in the Civil War in Russia.

Keywords

Russian Orthodox Church, Civil War in Russia, persecution of the Church, red terror, archeography, historical sources, archival documents.

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