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Kolkhozes in the Practice of State and Political Administration of the USSR at the Initial Stage of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45

Abstract

The article addresses problems of document complexes interpretation, specifically, materials of the Agricultural Department of the Central Committee of the ARCP (B) from the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, which reveal the specifics of state political management practices in the USSR in relation to kolkhozes during the initial stage of the Great Patriotic War. By their type, these sources are materials of informational, current records, and reporting documentation. They contain assessment of the state of agricultural production in the regions of the USSR; characterize practice of making and implementing management decisions; review

reasons for the failure of administrative mobilization campaigns. The article attempts a source analysis of studying limits and possibilities of the mobilization model of agricultural management in the USSR in 1941–43 and content and results of relevant practices. The thesis of necessary correlation between authentic reproduction of political actors' judgments (in form of demands to fight the “anti-state line,” “squandering,” and “fraud”) and underlying reasons of anti-crisis management as a compensatory mechanism in implementation of the mobilization model has its special educational value. The research has allowed the author to conclude that the crisis of collective farm production was aggravated by the appearance of additional threats to viability of peasant economy at the initial stage of the Great Patriotic War. The situation was so critical that it required implementation of emergency measures in practices of state and political management, including restoration of political departments of the MTS, methods of direct anti-crisis management, general mobilization of labor resources during the most important agricultural campaigns, strengthening of mass political education of farmers, which involved huge corps of political workers.

Keywords

Archival document, collective farm system, USSR, Great Patriotic War, political department of the MTS, practices of state and political management, corpus of sources, source study.

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