

РЕШЕНИЯ СЪЕЗДА ПРАВОСЛАВНОГО ВОЕННОГО ДУХОВЕНСТВА ЮГО-ЗАПАДНОГО ФРОНТА В ПРОСКУРОВЕ В 1917 г.

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Решения съездов военного и морского духовенства, состоявшихся в начале XX в., до настоящего времени остаются малоизученными. Обращаясь к этой теме, исследователи чаще всего сосредотачивают внимание на работе собраний всероссийского значения – Первого Всероссийского съезда военного и морского духовенства (июль 1914 г., Петроград) и Второго Всероссийского съезда военного и морского духовенства (июль 1917 г., Могилёв). Однако важную роль в истории института военных священников в 1917 г. сыграли и фронтовые съезды, которые состоялись на Юго-Западном (5–7 мая 1917 г.), Западном (24–28 мая 1917 г.), Румынском (25 июня 1917 г.) и Северном (26–28 июня 1917 г.) фронтах. В исследовании рассмотрена работа первого из них – Съезда православного военного духовенства Юго-Западного фронта в Проскурове (май 1917 г.), проанализированы основные решения, принятые на нем. Определено отношение военного духовенства к войне, поддержке политических партий, организации культурно-просветительской деятельности. Рассмотрены предложения делегатов по введению выборного начала и реорганизации системы управления священниками, состоящими в ведомстве протопресвитера. Изучен вопрос о совпадении мнения участников съезда в Проскурове с решениями Второго Всероссийского съезда военного и морского духовенства в Могилёве. В ходе исследования были использованы архивные документы и материалы периодической печати, в частности документы из фондов Российского государственного исторического архива в Санкт-Петербурге: протоколы заседаний Съезда православного военного духовенства Юго-Западного фронта, резолюции протопресвитера на решения съезда, протоколы заседаний Второго Всероссийского съезда военного и морского духовенства.

Ключевые слова: Первая мировая война; православное военное духовенство; Юго-Западный фронт; Февральская революция; фронтовые съезды духовенства.

РАШЭННІ З’ЕЗДА ПРАВОСЛАЎНАГА ВАЕННАГА ДУХАВЕНСТВА ПАЎДНЁВА-ЗАХОДНЯГА ФРОНТУ Ў ПРАСКУРАВЕ Ў 1917 г.

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Рашэнні з’ездаў ваеннага і марскога духавенства, якія адбыліся ў пачатку XX ст., да гэтага часу застаюцца малавывучанымі. Звяртаючыся да гэтай тэмы, даследчыкі часцей за ўсё засяроджваюць увагу на рашэннях з’ездаў усерасійскага значэння – Першага Усерасійскага з’езда ваеннага і марскога духавенства (ліпень 1914 г., Петраград) і Другога Усерасійскага з’езда ваеннага і марскога духавенства (ліпень 1917 г., Магілёў). Аднак важную ролю ў гісторыі інстытута ваенных святароў у 1917 г. адыгралі і франтавыя з’езды, якія адбыліся на Паўднёва-Заходнім

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(5–7 мая 1917 г.), Заходнім (24–28 мая 1917 г.), Румынскім (25 чэрвеня 1917 г.) і Паўночным (26–28 чэрвеня 1917 г.) франтах. У даследаванні разглядаецца праца першага з іх – 3’езда праваслаўнага ваеннага духавенства Паўднёва-Заходняга фронту ў Праскураве (май 1917 г.), аналізуюцца асноўныя рашэнні, прынятыя на ім. Вызначаецца стаўленне ваеннага духавенства да вайны, падтрымкі палітычных партый, арганізацыі культурна-асветніцкай дзейнасці. Разгледжаны прапановы дэлегатаў па ўвядзенні выбарчага пачатку і рэарганізацыі сістэмы кіравання святарамі, якія знаходзіліся ў ведамстве протапрэсвітэра. Даецца адказ на пытанне аб супадзенні меркавання ўдзельнікаў з’езда ў Праскураве з рашэннямі Другога Усерасійскага з’езда ваеннага і марскога духавенства ў Магілёве. Падчас даследавання былі выкарыстаны архіўныя дакументы і матэрыялы перыядычнага друку, у прыватнасці дакументы з фонду Расійскага дзяржаўнага гістарычнага архіва ў Санкт-Пецярбургу: пратаколы пасяджэнняў 3’езда праваслаўнага ваеннага духавенства Паўднёва-Заходняга фронту, рэзалюцыі протапрэсвітэра на рашэнні з’езда, пратаколы пасяджэнняў Другога Усерасійскага з’езда ваеннага і марскога духавенства.

Ключавыя словы: Першая сусветная вайна; праваслаўнае ваеннае духавенства; Паўднёва-Заходні фронт; Лютаўская рэвалюцыя; франтавыя з’езды духавенства.

DECISIONS OF THE CONGRESS OF THE ORTHODOX MILITARY CLERGY OF THE SOUTHWESTERN FRONT IN PROSKUROV IN 1917

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The decisions of the congresses of the military and naval clergy, held at the beginning of the 20th century, remain little studied to this day. Turning to this topic, researchers most often focus on the decisions of congresses of all-Russian significance which is the 1st All-Russian congress of the military and naval clergy (July 1914, Petrograd), less often on the decisions of the 2nd All-Russian congress of the military and naval clergy (July 1917, Mogilev). However, front-line congresses also played an important role in the history of the institute of military priests: they took place in the Southwestern (5–7 May 1917), Western (24–28 May 1917), Romanian (25 June 1917) and Northern (26–28 June 1917) fronts. This article discusses the work of the first of them which is the Congress of the Orthodox military clergy of the Southwestern front in Proskurov in May 1917. The author of the article analyses the main decisions of this congress. The attitude of the military clergy of the front to the war, participation in the political parties, organisation of cultural and educational activities are shown. The proposals of the delegates on the reorganisation of the administration of the department and the introduction of an elective principle are analysed. It is shown whether the opinion of the participants of the congress in Proskurov coincided with the decisions of the 2nd All-Russian congress of the military and naval clergy in Mogilev. The article was prepared on the basis of archival documents and materials of the periodical press. In particular, documents from the funds of the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg) such as protocols of the sessions of the Congress of the Orthodox military clergy of the Southwestern front, the resolutions of the protopresbyter on the decisions of the congress, the protocols of the sessions of the 2nd All-Russian congress of the military and naval clergy were used.

Keywords: World War I; Orthodox military clergy; Southwestern front; February revolution; front-line congresses of the clergy.

Introduction

The February revolution made a profound impact on the position of the Orthodox military clergy in the Russian army. The working conditions of military chaplains and the attitude of soldiers to their activities changed. Amid the manifestation of social problems, the rise in political struggle, the intensification of decay in the army, the military clergy faced the need to adjust their work in conformity with the new realities. Indeed, the Provisional government, just like the imperial power, considered the institution of military clergy as one of the tools to leverage the minds of soldiers, their patriotic feelings, discipline, and subordination. In an attempt to reconsider their activities in the army, their own rights and liabilities, the military clergy began to

convene fraternal meetings at the level of garrisons, divisions and armies. However, in order to draft decisions concerning the entire institution, a higher level was required. Therefore, in May – June 1917, front-line congresses of military clergy were organised, and in July 1917 the 2nd All-Russian congress of military and naval clergy was held (after – 2nd All-Russian congress).

The researchers focused primarily on the decisions of the 1st All-Russian congress of military and naval clergy (July 1914, Petrograd, after – 1st All-Russian congress), less frequently they dwelled on the 2nd All-Russian congress (July 1917, Mogilev). Among the authors who devoted their research to the history of these events, the following ones are worth mentioning: V. M. Kotkov,

S. V. Malyshko, E. V. Starostenko, E. V. Isakova [1–9]. In the few studies of the military clergy congresses which were held during World War I, the front congresses of 1917 went unnoticed. Yet they preceded the 2nd All-Russian congress, contributed greatly to the formation of its agenda and influenced the taken decisions. A close scrutiny of the congresses makes it possible to determine what positions the front-line clergy stood on, what differences there were in the views of the priests working on different fronts. On the eve of the 2nd All-Russian congress, the clergy congresses of the Northern (26–28 June 1917), Western (24–28 May 1917), Southwestern (5–7 May 1917) and Romanian (25 June 1917) fronts were held. Also on 9 June, a congress of the military clergy of Petrograd and its environs was held. The Caucasian front was provided with the information too late, so it was not possible to organise the congress. There is no doubt that the most significant among the aforementioned ones is the Congress of the Orthodox military clergy of the Southwestern front in Proskurov (after – Congress in Proskurov). It became a kind of precursor of the 2nd All-Russian congress because the pro-

posal to convene the congress was voiced in Proskurov. Many issues discussed at the Congress in Proskurov entered the agenda of the 2nd All-Russian congress.

The purpose of this article is to establish the features of the work of the Congress in Proskurov. For the attainment of this goal, the following tasks were set: to consider the main decisions of the Congress in Proskurov, to correlate them with the decisions of the 2nd All-Russian congress, to determine the implementation of decisions in practice if possible.

This research has been prepared on the basis of archival materials. Most of the documents were obtained in the event of working with the funds of the Russian State Historical Archive in Saint Petersburg. It's about the fund 806 entitled «Spiritual government under the protopresbyter of the military and naval clergy». The protocols of the sessions of the Congress in Proskurov, the correspondence regarding its organisation, the resolutions of the protopresbyter on the decisions of the congress, the protocols of the sessions of the 2nd All-Russian congress were used. Also the author of the article used materials of the periodical press.

Methodology

In the process of research, the author adhered to the basic principles of scientific research (the principles of historicism, objectivity, consistency, values-based and comprehensive approaches, etc.). In the work, general

scientific and general logical methods, such as analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction were used. Apart from this, special historical methods (problem-chronological, comparative-historical, etc.) were deployed.

Main part

The Southwestern front military clergy congress took place in Proskurov (currently the city of Khmel-nitsky, the regional centre in Ukraine) on 5–7 May 1917. Representatives of the military clergy of the Western and Romanian fronts also took part in it. In total, 43 military priests attended the congress. By rank, most of them were archpriests and priests. By position, they were army headquarters priests, rural deans, ordinary military priests (regimental, hospital, brigade priests). Five meetings were held.

The congress was initiated by the head priest of the Southwestern front. This position was established only during the war under the Regulations on the field command of troops in wartime. All the military clergy serving in the military units and institutions of the Southwestern front were subordinate to the head priest. It is important to note that the Southwestern front had the largest number of military clergy: there were 830 of them in May 1917¹. During World War I, the position of head priest was held by archpriest V. Griftsov. He explained that there was a need for holding a session due to the great historical events that gripped Russia and the necessity to work out a solution to the most

vital issues which emerged in the aftermath of the new socio-political realities: «At present, we have, on the one hand, a cruel enemy seeking our legacy, on the other – a turbulent sea of human passions, striving for new paths leading to a new life; there, on the battlefields – the thunder of guns that decides the outcome of bloody fight, here inside the country we observe different opinions floating around and the struggle for class and estate interests; outside looms the threat of defeat and enslavement, inside there is a threat of anarchy, decay and destruction. Thus, danger is both ahead of us and behind us. This is the reality we face»² (hereinafter translated by us. – E. S.).

At the first session, a discussion on attitudes towards war and peace took place. The relevance of the issue was directly related to the ideological work carried out by the military clergy in the military environment. Indeed, it was in their sermons, teachings, and conversations that they tried to form the «correct» attitude of soldiers to the war. Both before 1917 in imperial Russia, and after February 1917 under the Provisional government, the military clergy supported the policy of the current government [10, p. 63]. The position of the

¹Rus. State Hist. Arch. (RSHA). F. 806. Inv. 5. F. 10392. P. 71.

²Ibid. F. 10140 p. B. P. 62.

Provisional government, in its turn, was well known: waging the war to the victorious end. The protocol contains discourses of individual military priests about the state of the army: they noted a decline in fighting spirit, anti-militaristic sentiments, and unwillingness to fight. Despite that situation, a military priest had to promote the idea of continuing the war. Meanwhile, the proposed argumentation did not differ from the pre-revolutionary one, the only difference being the fact that the call to fight for the tsar was substituted for the call to support the policy of the Provisional government. The delegates claimed that giving up in the middle of the war would be a shame for Russia (archpriest K. Sukhiev), they justified wars from the standpoint of Christianity (as archpriest I. Krylovsaid said, «...a war is not considered a sin if it is fought in defense of the weak and oppressed»³). It is important to note that interpretations in line with socialist ideas emerge in the rhetoric of the military clergy concerning war and peace. For example, priest I. Yastrubetsky put it this way: «The coup that has occurred in our country should not change the course of the war, for if capital threatens to the principles of socialism, the threat stems from the German capital. We have to fight it in the first place, but the Germans themselves have to fight it as well... The only way out of this kind of situation suggests itself is a war to victory»⁴. In his speech, he also stated that the war was commenced by «...the ruling classes in defense of the bourgeoisie and capital»⁵. Such statements were not typical of the military clergy. However, in 1917 they became quite common.

As a result of the discussion, the delegates agreed that the war was necessary «a) to liberate the subjugated peoples (of Poland, Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, Galicia, Ugrian Rus, the occupied provinces of Russia, etc.), b) to vanquish German militarism that endangers the peace of all mankind, c) to consolidate the new state system with the announced principles of political freedom, social justice and the idea of democracy, d) however, war should not pursue annexations and contributions, and e) as for losses, the issue must be resolved at an international congress in conformity with the principle of fair distribution between belligerent and non-belligerent states»⁶. It is interesting to note that it was the Soviets that were in favour of a world without annexations and contributions, and not the Provisional government which determined the country's foreign policy at that time [11, p. 374]. In brief, the resolution was published in the newspaper «Russkie

vedomosti»: «Recognising the war as the greatest disaster, the congress finds that the war must be brought to an end in order to liberate the enslaved peoples and crush German militarism, which is a threat to the whole world»⁷.

Looking ahead, we shall note that this issue was subject to discussion at other front-line congresses of the military clergy. For instance, at the congress in Minsk the clergy of the Western front agreed that the war should be waged until an honorable peace is negotiated and in agreement with the allies, therefore, inactivity is unacceptable [8, p. 28].

Such an important issue as war and the attitude to it was discussed at the 2nd All-Russian congress. The following wording was put to the vote: «War is a non-Christian phenomenon, but in the presence of modern conditions, it is an inevitable evil, just like a struggle for peace; it is necessary to fight against the possibility of its recurrence, and to this end it is necessary to change the moral nature of human beings»⁸. However, this wording sparked a debate. In particular, one of the delegates from the military clergy of the Southwestern front, archpriest I. Krylov, suggested adding the following words: «...under certain conditions, when war is a necessity, a military heroic feat is a truly Christian virtue»⁹. The proposal was included in the final version¹⁰. We see that the decisions of the Congress in Proskurov and the 2nd All-Russian congress differ. The participants of the first congress that was mentioned considered it necessary to focus on the end of World War I, whereas the participants of the latter formulated their attitude to the war in a broader sense.

Investigating the history of the 1917 military clergy congresses, one should admit that the most difficult, sensitive and controversial issue was the one concerning political parties. This relates to the support of certain political forces in the context of the restructuring of the political field in Russia and preparations for the Constituent assembly. The author reckons that the congresses, both front-line and all-Russian ones, failed to reach a consensus on this issue. The problem was rooted in the dual position of a priests, who were both men of the church and a citizen having political rights and civic duty. That complex issue turned into a serious controversy.

The protocols of the Congress in Proskurov contain only the most important of what was said at its sessions. One of the speakers, priest K. Steshenko, stated the need for the church and the clergy to be above parties

³ RSHA. F. 806. Inv. 5. F. 10392. P. 64.

⁴ Ibid. P. 64 bp.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. P. 65.

⁷ Съезд военного духовенства // Рус. ведомости. 1917. № 111. С. 5.

⁸ RSHA. F. 806. Inv. 5. F. 10140 p. B. P. 171 bp.

⁹ Ibid. P. 171 bp.

¹⁰ Ibid. P. 171 bp. – 172.

and political convictions, so that the road to the church and the clergy would always be open for leaders with different political views. At the same time, he recognised that as a citizen, and given the prevailing circumstances, when the fate of the state was being decided, a priest had to clearly speak out about the current political situation and fulfill his civic duty by joining certain political groups or movements. When choosing a party, a priest has to be guided by the gospel, the principles of love, equality and goodwill. Archpriest A. Pogodin, the representative of the clergy of the 13th Army corps, claimed that the clergy of the corps expressed their support for the socialist parties, but only in their desire to influence the society morally, rejecting the achievement of goals by violent methods¹¹. Archpriest I. Krylov, the representative of the clergy of the 1st Guards corps, also supported the idea of joining one or another party, fearing that otherwise a priest's voice would not be heard.

The result of the discussion was the following decision: «a) the church of Christ, as a preacher of eternal truths, must stand above any political parties, as they tend to waver and change their platforms and programmes; b) hence, the clergy, as the preacher of these truths, should not be engaged in social and political movements and parties, but c) as citizens expected to participate in state building, in order to fulfill their duty better, they should join (in Russian *присоединиться*) the party the banner of which is illuminated by great slogans such as love, brotherhood, equality, social justice and democracy»¹². The decision of the congress was presented differently in the periodical press. The pages of the newspaper «Russkie vedomosti» reported that the Congress in Proskurov decided that priests should stand outside political parties¹³. It is precisely this position that representatives of the clergy of the front will persistently defend at the 2nd All-Russian congress of the military and naval clergy.

When one analyses the materials of the 2nd All-Russian congress, it becomes obvious that the clergy of the Southwestern front eventually assumed the position of non-participation in the work of political parties despite the use of the word «joining» in the decision of the Congress in Proskurov. In the result of heated discussions at the sessions of the 2nd All-Russian congress, the majority decided that «... a priest, as a citizen who wants to participate in the construction of state and public life, is free to join (in Russian *примыкать*) any of the existing political parties, guided by the pastoral conscience»¹⁴. However, despite the fact that the majority voted in

favour, later some of the congress participants, including representatives of the clergy of the Southwestern front, demanded that the decision should be submitted for re-vote. In particular, R. Prozorovsky, a delegate from the clergy of the Southwestern front, pointed out to the rest of the participants that the adopted resolutions are not actually supported by the majority: «We must not allow a priest to join any political party. On all fronts, the congresses passed resolutions implying that a pastor should not belong to a political party. The resolution of our session is a defamation of the military clergy who do not want partisanship in their work, and a betrayal of those orders that were definitely given to us by the front-line congresses»¹⁵. The controversy revolved around the interpretation of the word «join». The speaker explained that this word does not mean «be part of» (in Russian *примыкать не значит принадлежать*), although at the same time participation in political life is a human civil right, which the congress cannot take away. R. Prozorovsky was joined by another participant of the congress, archpriest A. Pogodin, who declared that a military pastor should be non-partisan, and the congress of the Southwestern front instructed the delegates to support the idea of non-partisanship at the congress. From his point of view, all that is permissible is the fulfillment of civic duty by voting. Archpriest I. Krylov also delegated from the clergy of the Southwestern front spoke out in a similar way: «The congress cannot give a military pastor a blessing to participate in any political party on its own behalf» [6, p. 73]. The result of the debate was the decision to leave the resolution in the form in which it had been voted for. In response, R. Prozorovsky announced a «dissenting opinion» on behalf of a group of delegates (at the 14th session it was handed to the chair of the congress) [6, p. 73].

It is interesting that at the congress the decision on the attitude towards political parties was not classified as one of the decisions to be implemented immediately¹⁶. Despite this the revised text of the decision was placed on the pages of the institution's journal «Church and social thought: a progressive organ of the military and naval clergy»: «...the clergy, as servants of the church, preaching eternal truths must stand above changing politics and any political parties; but being at the same time citizens called upon at the moment to exercise their civil rights, clergymen can join (in Russian *присоединяться*) political parties and support (for example, in the Constituent assembly) those representatives who are fighting for the implementation of Christian principles and the ideas of democracy»¹⁷.

¹¹RSHA. F. 806. Inv. 5. F. 10140 p. B. P. 67 bp.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Съезд военного духовенства // Рус. вед. 1917. № 111. С. 5.

¹⁴RSHA. F. 806. Inv. 5. F. 10140 p. B. P. 172 bp.

¹⁵Ibid. P. 173.

¹⁶Ibid. V. P. 213.

¹⁷Всероссийский съезд военного и морского духовенства // Церковно-обществ. мысль. 1917. № 1. С. 35.

Apparently, as a compromise, the word «join» was used, which was contained in the decision of the session of the Southwestern front.

In the new socio-political realities, the issues of cultural and educational activities acquired special significance. Recognising the importance of information campaigns in the new conditions, delegates from the clergy of the Southwestern front discussed methods of working with soldiers. The speaker (priest K. Steshenko) noted the relevance of conducting conversations and readings, in which the events taking place in Russia would be explained from a Christian point of view. It was suggested not to be limited to conversations, but to take care of providing military units with libraries with up-to-date literature. For better organisation of librarianship, it was recommended to organise awareness-raising activities for soldiers. Those proposals were not new: such a practice of the Orthodox military clergy existed even before the revolution. The delegates to the congress supported the report of K. Steshenko, and voted for the military clergy to conduct conversations and readings, giving political education to soldiers (from a Christian point of view)¹⁸. The materials prepared by the publishing commission of the clergy of the Southwestern front had to become an aid in awareness-raising activities. The commission used to publish editions of military-historical content, and from then on began to print works of political content.

The participants of the Congress in Proskurov could not ignore the issue of the electoral process, which was urgent in Russia after the revolution. They agreed that all administrative positions in the institution, from the dean to the protopresbyter, should be occupied by elected candidates. However, the persons who occupy these positions at the moment had to keep them until the end of the war¹⁹. Separately, the congress discussed having protopresbyter G. Shavel'sky remain in office. The participants of the congress asked him not to leave his post, and urged the clergy of the front to vote for the current protopresbyter if the election principle was applied. The 2nd All-Russian congress adopted similar decisions, however, at the request of G. Shavel'sky, a re-election of the protopresbyter took place in Mogilev, and the post was reserved for him for life [7, p. 144].

The attempt of the congress participants to accept draft instructions for corps, army and front-line clergy committees seems to be of interest. These projects were presented at the 4th session. The corps spiritual committee was to include one representative from each division of this corps, as well as one representative from the clergy of the sanitary units. The tasks of the com-

mittee included working out measures for the development of all aspects of pastoral activity of the clergy, the promotion of organisation, unification and close cohesion of the clergy, and taking care of maintaining their prestige. To attain this, the committee was supposed to organise spiritual and awareness-raising activities in all units of the corps, take care of supplying the clergy with the necessary literature, discuss and solve emerging problems. A special function of the corps committee would be to conduct courts of honor.

According to the project, the structure of the army clergy committee included one representative from each corps committee and one from the committee of institutions and army units that are not part of the corps. The task of this committee was to coordinate the actions of the army clergy. It was to become an advisory body under the priest of the army headquarters.

The front-line clergy committee was to include one elected member from each army committee and one from units and institutions that were not part of the front armies.

The protopresbyter's resolution on the proposed projects was brief: «The matter of corps, army and front-line clergy committees should be considered once again with all caution»²⁰. At the 2nd All-Russian congress, provisions on new positions and councils would be adopted. However, these would be positions and councils for peacetime states (district priests and district presbyter's councils; corps deanery and corps presbyter's councils). The projects proposed by the congress of the clergy of the Southwestern front were not considered in Mogilev.

In addition to organising their own committees, the participants of the congress recognised the need to participate in the work of military committees and councils. The priests of the front were asked to attend the meetings of regimental committees, to delve into their lives and to exert their pastoral influence on the character and direction of their activities in the spirit of the Gospel²¹.

Speaking about the representation of the military clergy in various assemblies, one cannot fail to point out the fact that the delegates from the clergy of the Southwestern front considered it necessary to have their own representative in the Synod, especially in conditions when issues concerning church reorganisation were being raised. The candidacy of protopresbyter G. Shavel'sky was proposed for such representation (which he was not happy about, leaving the following comment on the margins of the meeting minutes: «There wouldn't be big damage to spiritual affairs in the army if I had to be torn away from them by making trips to the Synod»²²). We

¹⁸РSHA. F. 806. Inv. 5. F. 10140 p. B. P. 68 bp.

¹⁹Ibid. P. 69 bp.

²⁰Ibid. P. 74.

²¹Ibid. P. 71.

²²Ibid. P. 70.

have identified a draft telegram (or report) on behalf of the 2nd All-Russian congress with a petition to the Synod to summon the protopresbyter of the military and naval clergy to the Synod for the presence and participation in its meetings²³. At the same time, we note that in the protocols of the 2nd All-Russian congress there is no mention of a discussion of this issue.

In addition to said above, the work of the journal «Bulletin of the military and naval clergy» was discussed at the congress (the press organ of the department was negatively assessed); the work of the publishing commission operating on the Southwestern front received high acclaim. Issues of charity were discussed (in particular, the facilities of the sanatorium for military clergy in Essentuki), texts of greetings to the government, the Synod, the protopresbyter, the supreme commander and commander of the armies of the Southwestern front were adopted and compiled.

As for the role of the session of the military clergy of the Southwestern front, it is important to note that it was the session that came up with the idea of convening the all-Russian congress of military and naval clergy. The delegates considered it necessary for the better organisation of military and naval clergy, as well as for the streamlining of church and social life. The chair of the congress was asked to appeal to the chief priests of other fronts with a call for speaking out on this issue and supporting the idea of holding the congress. In case of a positive decision on the congress, Petrograd was named as its venue. Nevertheless, as we know, Mogilev became the venue [5, p. 197–198].

Conclusion

The Congress in Proskurov is a significant event in the history of the military clergy during World War I. It became the reaction of the military clergy to the socio-political changes that swept the society and the army after the February Revolution of 1917. The clergy of the Southwestern front came up with a proposal to hold an all-Russian congress of military and naval clergy, developed a quota for the number of participants from each front. The decisions made in Proskurov influenced the agenda of the 2nd All-Russian congress. The priests of the Southwestern front discussed the issues that they considered the most important in the inter-revolutionary conditions. These include the attitude towards war and peace, political parties, the introduction of the elective principle and the reorganisation of the management system, educational work with sol-

A quota for the number of representatives from the clergy of the fronts was formed: it was proposed to elect delegates from all units, both frontline and logistics, including two representatives from the frontline and one representative from every other unit (one from the headquarters, one from the medical unit and one from the reserve regiments, benchmark and supply units). Priest K. Steshenko, archpriest I. Krylov, priest I. Yastrubetsky, archpriest R. Prozorovsky and archpriest A. Pogodin were elected as representatives of the military clergy of the Southwestern front, and archpriest V. Tselitso and archpriest V. Fedorov became reserve candidates²⁴. The chief priest of the front was also to be present at the congress. The delegates from the congress were instructed to abide by the decisions of the Congress in Proskurov and corps committees. In the list of delegates to the 2nd All-Russian congress, we have discovered a discrepancy with the decision of the front: archpriest G. Kastorsky and priest A. Mateyuk were also indicated among the delegates from the Southwestern front (both did not participate in the work of the frontline congress, G. Kastorsky arrived in Mogilev as a representative of the corps and was admitted as a plenipotentiary delegate on an exceptional basis)²⁵.

The protopresbyter agreed to the norm of the Congress in Proskurov and, in order to accelerate the election of delegates, recommended it to the clergy of other fronts. He suggested sending one representative from the fleet, and three from Petrograd and the surrounding area. The start date of the 2nd All-Russian congress was also announced then – 1 July 1917.

The congress participants agreed that the war must be fought to the bitter end. The decision of the congress about political parties differed from the decision of the 2nd All-Russian congress, that led to a complex discussion in which representatives of the clergy of the Southwestern front advocated for the decision of the front-line congress. The decision to introduce an elective principle in all administrative positions in the institution of the military and naval clergy fully coincided with the general opinion of the military and naval clergy. Proposals for the creation of corps, army and front-line spiritual committees were not developed. In general, the congress played its role in consolidating the military clergy in a difficult post-revolutionary situation, but most of the decisions of the 2nd All-Russian congress that followed it were not implemented.

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²³RSHA. F. 806. Inv. 5. F. 10140 p. B. P. 267–267 bp.

²⁴Ibid. P. 73.

²⁵Ibid. P. 149, 152.

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