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Original article

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THE DOUKHOBORS AND THE ORTHODOX CHURCH: A HISTORY OF CONFRONTATION (1760^s — THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY). PART 1

The article is devoted to the history of the relationship between the Doukhobor sect and the Russian Orthodox Church in the last third of the 18th century, when the clergy encountered an already established religious organization, which remained unknown until its self-disclosure in 1768. The author shows the reasons that allowed the sect to remain outside the Church's field of vision for a long time. The article examines two possible outcomes for the Doukhobors after they were discovered among Orthodox parishioners: the return of repentant apostates to the bosom of the Orthodox Church or the transfer of the more stubborn ones to secular authorities for punishment. Attention is drawn to the mechanism of interrogation and admonition of the Doukhobors, conducted by the Orthodox clergy, and how the sectarians themselves behaved in response to it. The degree of reliability of the testimony obtained by the clergy during interrogations and admonitions is analyzed. The author uses specific examples to show the consequences of liberalizing the legislation concerning religious dissent during Catherine II's reign, and concludes that the Doukhobors not only did not hide their teachings during interrogations, but tried to affirm them in polemics with the Orthodox clergy.

Keywords: Doukhobor sect, creed, Orthodox Church, parish clergy, teaching priests, admonitions, ecclesiastical punishments

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