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Wartime Official and White Guardsman K. E. Murashkinsky: Little-Known Pages of the Biography of the Soviet Biologist

Abstract

The paper analyzes the previously unexplored stage in the biography of Konstantin Evgenievich Murashkinsky, a world-class Soviet scientist, as an unusual example of the life of a representative of the “former people” in the RSFSR–USSR. It attempts to analyze the
experience of the pre-revolutionary academic scientist integrating into the Soviet society after having served as subaltern officer and later wartime official in the “old” and White armies. These aspects of his life and work have been made a subject of in-depth interpretation for the first time; influence of these facts on his subsequent fate has been assessed. The study draws on a complex of unpublished sources of official nature from the fonds of the Historical Archive of the Omsk Region: autobiographies and questionaries of K. E. Murashkinsky, as well as paperwork of the Omsk gubernia and okrug military commissariats, Omsk City Executive Committee related to his being on a special register of ex-Whites and thus deprived of voting rights.

Theoretical basis of the study is anthropological and systematic approaches, problem-chronological and comparative-historical methods. This makes it possible to follow up the circumstances of adaptation of the intellectual and former White Guardsman K. E. Murashkinsky to conditions of social cataclysms and also his success in earning professional recognition in the Soviet society, while correlating his biography with general trends in the fate of the “former people” and, in particular, those officers who stayed in the RSFSR–USSR. The research refutes the much replicated myth of complete annihilation of ex-White Guards in the days of great terror. Although Murashkinsky’s dramatic departure from life happened in the era of Stalinism, it had no connection with mass repressions. The publication may be of interest to specialists studying biographies of Russian biologists, aspects of the social adaptation of intelligentsia to the conditions of the First World War and the Civil War in Russia, as well as life of the “former people” in early Soviet society.

Keywords

Historical sources, social adaptation, intelligentsia, biologists, World War I, Civil War in Russia, officers, military officials, Soviet power, lishentsy, Omsk Agricultural Institute, Omsk.

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