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Historiographical Sources of the Russian Emigration: Revisiting the Characterization of the White Movement Leaders E. K. Miller and N. N. Yudenich: 1920–30s

Abstract

The article presents results of the analysis of historiographical sources of Russian emigration in order to identify various points of view on assessment of activities during the Civil War of the leaders of two of four largest enclaves of the White Movement: Lieutenant General E. K. Miller

in the Northern enclave and Infantry General N. N. Yudenich in the North-Western one. The complex of works of Russian "migr" authors, consisting mostly of memoirs and several research papers published in the 1920-30s, represent first attempts at a different (non-Soviet) portrayal of the confrontation of the early 20th century, for instance, an anti-Bolshevik view on the factors underlying the defeat of the White Cause. The leadership of the largest anti-Soviet enclaves was listed among these factors. Thus, consideration of publications of the leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party P. N. Milyukov, professional historian, graduate of the Moscow University scientific school; Major General P. A. Tomilov, Commander of the North-Western Army (before Yudenich); Lieutenant General A. A. Rodzianko; G. K. Gins, Russian legal scientist, member of the government of A. V. Kolchak; deputy of the I, III, and IV State Dumas N.N. Lviv, public figure and journalist, who reported on political issues at press conferences of N. N. Yudenich, G. L. Kirdetsov (Dvorzhetsky); and others permits to implement the principle of objectivity in historical research, but also to highlight the views of "migr" authors on issues relating to the White Movement enclaves' leaders implementing their authority. The article notes that the said historiographical sources indicate to such negative features in the activities of Generals Miller and Yudenich during the Civil War as indecision, passivity, inability (or, possibly, unwillingness) to rally anti-Bolshevik forces against the Soviets and to organize positive military administration work on the occupied territory, which hampered formation of strong White dictatorship in the regions. The analyzed sources argue that only White dictatorship during the Civil War could have effectively resisted the authoritarian power of the opposite camp, the dictatorship of the Red. However, in the works of "migr" authors, there is also an opposing opinion, that cooperation was much needed between the military authorities and democratic civil authorities, for example, the government of the North. The article states that studying of this complex set of sources should take into account the peculiarities of their creation: authors' personal attitudes to the events of the Civil War and its participants (sometimes biased), their lack of professional historical skills, narrowness of the source base. Thus, any further research should include comparative analysis of the data of historiographical sources of the Russian emigration and contributions of other historiographical trends.

Keywords

Historiographical sources of the Russian emigration, Civil War in Russia, head of the Northern Enclave of the White Cause General E.K. Miller, head of the North-Western enclave of the White Cause General N.N. Yudenich, assessment of activity, form of political rule, personality characteristics.

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