

Scientific article

УДК 930.253+32.019.57+93/94+930.23+930.85+
930.22+930.24+32.019.51+321.013+341.218.4+321.014+329.052

doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2023-1-73-85

Knyazev, Mark A.

Nizhny Novgorod State University, Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation

Rethinking the Purposes of A. I. Guchkov's Trip to Emperor Nicholas II in Pskov in the Days of the February Revolution of 1917

Abstract

The question the role of Alexander Ivanovich Guchkov, the leader of the Octobrists, in the events of the eve of and during the monarchy overthrow in February 1917 remains relevant in

the modern historiography of the Great Russian Revolution. Most researchers come to the conclusion that Guchkov was induced to participate in the revolutionary events by his desire to oust Nicholas II from power in order to deliver the throne to his heir, Alexei, under the regency of his brother Michael Aleksandrovich. A. I. Guchkov's trip to Pskov on March 2, 1917, which he undertook intending to persuade the emperor to abdicate, is predominantly considered as practical realization of this plan of the "great master of the revolution." However, the author has discovered a certain document drafted in the days of the February Revolution in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (specifically, in the fond 97 "Office of the Palace Commandant of the Ministry of the Imperial Court", file captioned "Correspondence and telegrams of the last days of Nicholas II's reign"). This document, which has been introduced to the scholarly discourse for the first time, can significantly clarify the historiographic picture. The document is a typescript containing a list of presumptive members of the Cabinet of Ministers to be headed by the "Prime Minister" A. I. Guchkov. The source analysis permits to conclude that the document was created by A.I. Guchkov himself or by someone quite close to him in the period from February 28 to March 2, 1917. This text contains a request for Nicholas II to appoint the oppositionist to the high governmental post. By examining the second part of the document, we can deduce that this request was in fact an ultimatum, as it contains information about the arrest of prominent state dignitaries and ministers and about 18 regiments (up to 75,000 people) joining the revolution. Thus, Guchkov went to Pskov not only to ensure the emperor's abdication, but also to become the head of the government. Although it is generally agreed that Guchkov had no political ambitions and simply provided a "mechanism of the revolution," analysis of his political activities in 1915-17 allows the author to conclude that, contrary to the popular belief, he strove to take the helm of state. It is common knowledge that the attempt of the Octobrists' leader to head the Cabinet of Ministers was a fiasco; and yet the identified document expands our understanding of A. I. Guchkov's personality and of the political struggle at the highest political and administrative level of the Russian Empire in the days of the February Revolution.

Keywords

Historical source on the February Revolution of 1917, Emperor Nicholas II, A. I. Guchkov, responsible ministry, Provisional Government, source studies.

Download the article: [knyazev doi](#)

References

ANFERTIEV, I. A. Dokumenty "Argentinskogo arkhiva" generala ot infanterii M. V. Alekseyeva ob obstoyatel'stvakh otrecheniya imperatora Nikolaya II ot prestola. 1917 g. [Documents of the "Argentine Archive" of General of Infantry M. V. Alekseev on the circumstances of the abdication of Emperor Nicholas II from the throne. 1917]. IN: Chetyre veka Doma Romanovykh. Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii "Chetyre veka Doma Romanovykh v mirovom sotsiokul'turnom prostranstve: istoricheskii, istochnikovedcheskii, biograficheskii diskursy". Moskva, 6 marta 2013 g. [Four centuries of the Romanov House: Materials of the international scientific conference "Four centuries of the Romanov House in the world socio-cultural space: Historical, source studies, biographical discourses." Moscow, March 6, 2013. In Russ.]. Moscow, RGGU publ., 2013, pp. 250-286.

KOZODOI, V. I. Aleksandr Ivanovich Guchkov i Velikaya russkaya revolyutsiya [Alexander Ivanovich Guchkov and the Great Russian Revolution. In Russ.]. Novosibirsk, SAUMK publ., 2015, 256 p.

KULIKOV, S. V. Aleksandr Guchkov i sud'ba rossiiskogo parlamentarizma [Alexander Guchkov and the fate of Russian parliamentarism. In Russ.]. IN: Tavricheskie chteniya 2018. Aktual'nye problemy parlamentarizma: istoriya i sovremennost'. Mezhdunarodnaya nauchnaya konferentsiya: Sbornik nauchnykh statei [Tauride readings 2018. Significant problems of parliamentarism: History and contemporaneity. International scientific conference: Collection of scientific articles. In Russ.]. In 2 parts. Part 2. St. Petersburg, Asterion publ., 2019, pp. 60-66.

KULIKOV, S. V. Glava V. Stavka: 23 fevralya – 1 marta [Chapter V. Stavka: February 23 – March 1. In Russ.]. IN: Pervaya mirovaya voyna i konets Rossiiskoi imperii [The First World War and the End of the Russian Empire. In Russ.]. In 3 vols. Vol. 3: The February Revolution. St. Petersburg, Liki Rossii publ., 2014, pp. 343-368.

SAFONOV, M. M. "Manifest podpisan. Peredacha zaderzhana snyatiem dublikata". Dokumental'nye svidetel'stva Pervoi mirovoi voyny ["Manifesto Signed. Delivery Detained due to Duplication": Documentary Records on the First World War. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik Arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2015, no. 3, pp. 8-34.

SENIN, A. S. Aleksandr Ivanovich Guchkov [Alexander Ivanovich Guchkov. In Russ.]. Moscow, Skriptorii publ., 1996, 268 p.

About the authors

Knyazev Mark Andreevich, N. I. Lobachevsky Nizhny Novgorod State University, Institute of International Relations and World History, department of foreign regional studies and local history, postgraduate student, Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation, +7-987-085-48-35, kn.mark.nn@mail.ru

Submitted 8.10.2022, published (for citation):

KNYAZEVA, M. A. K voprosu o tselyakh poezdki A. I. Guchkova v Pskov k imperatoru Nikolayu II v dni Fevral'skoi revolyutsii 1917 g. [Rethinking the Purposes of A. I. Guchkov's Trip to Emperor Nicholas II in Pskov in the Days of the February Revolution of 1917. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2023, no. 1, pp. 73-85. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2023-1-73-85

You can read completely article in the russian historic-archival magazine “The Herald of an Archivist”. Read more about terms of subscription [here](#) .

Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .