

Document publication

УДК

94+341.232.1+327.5+93/94+394.011+002.61+394.912+930.253+355/359-05+355/359+341.24
+321.02+930.25+930.22+930.2+002.513.5+002.6.048.26+003.074+651.5+327.51+351/354+35
.086+35.081.71+35.084.25+35.084.3+394.1

doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2023-3-804-822

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Operation “Bracelet”: British Colonel E. Jacob on W. Churchill’s Visit to Moscow in August 1942

Abstract

The article presents the first Russian publication of a part of the diary of Edward Jacob devoted

to the visit of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Moscow and to his talks with the leader of the USSR Joseph Stalin in August 1942. This visit was of a great importance for establishing personal contact between the leaders of two countries, which was necessary for the Allies' cooperation during World War II. The subject of the research is diary of Edward Jacob (1899-1993), who was Military Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet in 1939-46. The document is stored in the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge in personal collection of Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Ian Claude Jacob. Publication of the documents in Russian is being made for the first time; it is justified by the necessity of advanced study of the Soviet-British relations and their influence on the course of World War II. This source contains an original version of events perception by their immediate participant, as reflected in diary records. The major method of research is content analysis of the diary, which makes it possible to detail events connected with Churchill's visit, to reconstruct the image of Stalin, his environment, common Russian people, and day-to-day life in Russia and in Kremlin in perceptions of a foreigner, the British officer. Jacob's diary contains original travel notes on his flight over the territory of the USSR, meetings and talks between Churchill and Stalin. Jacob also compiled brief summaries of information, in particular, on Churchill's arrival to Moscow and the course of his talks with Stalin, which the author of the diary didn't witness personally. Analysis of the diary text shows that he received his information directly from Churchill, and his interpretation of events is colored by emotional perceptions of the Prime Minister. W. Churchill considered personal contact with J. V. Stalin absolutely necessary for mutual actions during the war. Description of the banquet procedure in Kremlin, also reflected in other national and foreign sources (records of talks from both sides, memoirs of W. A. Harriman, A. Cadogan, etc.), makes it possible to reconstruct "Stalin's court etiquette" and observations on Stalin's personality in the perceptions of the diary's author, distinct from the contents of other sources. Study of Jacob's diary leads to the conclusion that, despite serious contradictions, which had appeared initially between the two leaders, the contact was re-established in the meetings on August, 14-16, and the change of interpreters helped. The work is of an interest for researchers studying the history of international relations and anti-Hitler coalition, as well as for all interested in the events of World War II.

Keywords

Historical source, personal contact of the leaders, second front, Russians, J. V. Stalin, Prime Minister of the Great Britain W. Churchill, Kremlin, E. Jacob's diary, Kremlin banquet.

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Submitted 27.03.2023, published (for citation):

BYSTROVA, I. V. Operatsiya “Braslet”: britanskii polkovnik EH. Dzheikob o vizite U. Cherchillya v Moskvu v avguste 1942 g. [Operation “Bracelet”: British Colonel E. Jacob on W. Churchill’s Visit to Moscow in August 1942. In Russ.]. *Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist*, 2023, no. 3, pp. 804-822. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2023-3-804-822

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