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Strategy of the White Army on the Southern Front in A. I. Denikin's 'Defamation of the White Movement'

Abstract

The article studies A. I. Denikin's interpretation of military strategic issues of the Civil War in the South of Russia as presented in his manuscript 'Defamation of the White Movement,' which is being introduced into scientific use by the authors. It analyses military aspects of A. I. Denikin's

activities, which had been widely debated by the White emigration. One of the main issues in studying the history of the Civil War is formation and battles of the Volunteer Army at the initial stage of the Civil War, strategy of its commanders, and causes of its subsequent defeat and retreat. In his work A. I. Denikin addressed such important issues as strategy of the White leaders when the Movement emerged and the Volunteer Army was formed and later transformed into the Armed Forces of South Russia. He pointed out reasons behind selection of the direction of attack during the First Kuban Campaign, among them expectations of the Don Cossacks uprising. He assessed the validity of assumption that German occupation forces might have supported Bolsheviks. This last point was particularly significant, as German command did not want a revival of independent Russian national armed forces, and wished to prevent the creation of a United White Front against Bolsheviks, their proteges and allies. Offensive in the direction of Kuban aimed to access the Black Sea coast, where the White army could secure much-needed assistance of the Entente. In the South of Russia, on the Don and the Kuban, there was much opposition to the Russian communism and manpower needed by and ultimately supporting Denikin's army. Finally, A. I. Denikin devoted some (although insufficient) pages to the famous Moscow Campaign, which holds its special place in the history of the Civil War in the South of Russia. The authors compare content of A. I. Denikin's work with data on main strategic operations of the armed forces of Southern Russia available to contemporary historical science. They argue that A. I. Denikin convincingly refuted erroneous conclusions and speculation of his opponents, widespread in the Russian emigre community. Accurate and succinct characterization of the events, given from the perspective of an eyewitness and an active participant, makes up the bulk of the 'Defamation of the White Movement,' which may be of interest not only to scholars, but to all interested in the national history.

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Keywords

Historical source, personal providence sources, White Movement, White Army, Armed Forces of South Russia, General A. I. Denikin, Moscow Campaign of 1919, strategic issues, local separatism, causes of the White Movement defeat.

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