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Supreme Ruler A.V. Kolchak on His Trip to the Tobolsk Front: Revisiting the Analysis of an Unknown Photo Document (1919)

Abstract

The article is to analyze an unknown and previously unintroduced into scientific use photographic document concerning front-line activities of Admiral A. V. Kolchak during the Civil War. The relevance of the work springs from the fact that scholars quite rarely provide source analysis of film and photo documents as independent sources on the history of the Civil War in Russia within the framework of interdisciplinary practices. At the same time, there is a significant interest of national scientific community in this historical figure and it has been causing sharp polemical discussions for a century already, including, at times, contradictory judgemental statements. The photograph we are introducing into scientific use was discovered in 2020; it is in permanent storage in the fonds of the Center for Historical Heritage of River Workers and Patriotic Education, which is a part of the Omsk Institute of Water Transport structure. It should be emphasized that most distinctive feature of the photograph is its everyday and non-staged nature, whereas the overwhelming majority of A. V. Kolchak's known images are official. The authors have used comprehensive methodological approach based on a combination of anthropological approach to source, use of biographical and problem-chronological methods with its source study criticism (both external and internal). This theoretical set of methods has allowed the authors to interpret the revealed visual document as well as possible, linking its appearance with concrete historical situation and state activities of Admiral A. V. Kolchak at his post of the Supreme Ruler in the final stage of the Omsk period of his biography. This publication may be of interest to researchers of the Civil War and the White Army in Eastern Russia, of Admiral A.V. Kolchak' biography in his time as the Supreme Ruler, as well as to specialists in source studies, study of visual documents, and history of everyday life.

Keywords

Source study, photo documents, visual documents, military anthropology, Civil War in Russia, White movement, A. V. Kolchak, people's museum of the Omsk Institute of Water Transport, everyday life.

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