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.
References


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