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Original paper



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## **To the publication by A.V. Minzhurenko of Essays on the political history of Omsk during the Civil War**

### **Abstract**

The study is an analytical review of a new scholarly popular publication by Alexander V. Minzhurenko, *Essays on the Political History of Omsk during the Civil War*. In his work, the author describes the socio-political events that took place in Omsk between 1917 and 1920, taking into account all the major political actors. Due to the specificity of the topic, the principal scholarly method employed in preparing the review is the problem-oriented approach. At the same time, the principles of systematic analysis and determinism make it possible to characterize this new book as a phenomenon in scholarly life that is integrated into the broader body of general historical knowledge, although it contains a number of controversial and ambiguous assertions. The review outlines the overall substantive content of the publication. The reviewer also places a subjective emphasis on certain components, includ-



ing a number of interpretations and evaluations of the actions of the Russian government of Alexander V. Kolchak, the personality of the Supreme Ruler and Supreme Commander-in-Chief, his political opponents, and other phenomena of this period in the history of Omsk. Central attention is naturally devoted to the situation in Omsk in 1918–1919 and to the controversial figure of the Supreme Ruler, as well as to the reasons for his military and political defeat. The reviewer notes the high scholarly level, thoroughness, and painstaking nature of the work carried out by the author of the book, Omsk historian Alexander V. Minzhurenko. In conclusion, it is emphasized that the publication will be particularly useful for further study of the Civil War in Siberia. At the same time, for a number of issues it would have been advisable to draw upon a broader source base. Nevertheless, this popular science publication raises a series of debatable questions that touch upon an important layer of the history of the Great Russian Revolution of 1917–1922.

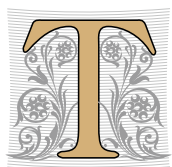
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he history of the socio-political life of Omsk over the past quarter century has received fairly detailed coverage in the works of Russian historians. Its various aspects (economic development, everyday life, and the stages of policy pursued by anti-Bolshevik governments) have repeatedly been examined in detail in domestic historiography<sup>1</sup>. This demonstrates that the regional events of the Great Russian Revolution of 1917–1922 continue to provoke scholarly interest and attempts at interpretation from different perspectives.

In this context, it is hardly surprising that a new publication should have appeared that once again addresses the transformations of political regimes in the city on the Irtysh River. The book by Associate Professor Alexander V. Minzhurenko, *Essays on the Political History of Omsk during the Civil War*<sup>2</sup>, is a work in the genre of popular scholarly historical literature. Its aim is to acquaint readers with the dramatic events of 1917–1920 in Siberia, focusing primarily on Omsk.

The book presents a step-by-step account of interpretations of the socio-political events unfolding in Omsk from the begin-

<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Звягин С.П. Правоохранительная политика А.В. Колчака. Кемерово, 2001; Шиловский М.В. Политические процессы в Сибири в период социальных катаклизмов 1917–1920 гг. Новосибирск, 2003; Штырбул А.А. Политическая культура Сибири: Опыт провинциальной многопартийности (конец XIX — первая треть XX в.). Омск, 2008; Кокоулин В.Г. Повседневная жизнь горожан Сибири в военно-революционные годы (июль 1914 г. — март 1921 г.). Новосибирск, 2013; Кокоулин В.Г. «Демократическая контрреволюция»: Сибирь, Поволжье, Урал (май–ноябрь 1918 г.). Новосибирск, 2014; Кокоулин В.Г. Омск в годы революций: власть, политическая борьба и повседневная жизнь (февраль 1917 г. — май 1918 г.). Новосибирск, 2016; Кокоулин В.Г. Белая Сибирь: борьба политических партий и групп (ноябрь 1918 г. — декабрь 1919 г.). Новосибирск, 2017; Сизов С.Г. Белая столица России: повседневная жизнь Омска (июнь 1918 г. — ноябрь 1919 г.). Омск, 2018; Кокоулин В.Г. Продовольственная политика и сибирская деревня в годы «военного коммунизма» (ноябрь 1919 г. — март 1921 г.). Новосибирск, 2020. 300 с.

<sup>2</sup> Минжуренко А.В. Очерки политической истории Омска в годы Гражданской войны. Омск, 2025. 352 с.

ning of the Revolution to the retreat of the White authorities from the city. It should be noted that the work begins with a discussion of the two revolutions of 1917. Naturally, academia adheres to the principles of democratic pluralism and fully allows for such a viewpoint. However, at present, the majority of domestic and foreign specialists in this field accept the concept of the Great Russian Revolution of 1917–1922, which included various stages – the February, July, August, October stages, and others – as well as the stages of the Civil War<sup>3</sup>. The author then draws parallels with the 1990s, suggesting that they may also be termed a revolution. In our view, the processes of 1917–1922 could more appropriately be compared with the events of 1985–1991 rather than with the 1990s, when the developments that unfolded were the consequence of the defeat of perestroika. From a certain stage onward, mass opposition movements acting “from below” played a decisive role in the political transformations of the 1980s; therefore, it is possible to speak not only of a period of political reform but also of a revolution<sup>4</sup>. The early 1990s, in relation to the late 1980s, can more accurately be characterized as the defeat or rollback of that revolution<sup>5</sup>.

A.V. Minzhurenko rightly emphasizes that throughout the century following the end of the Civil War, its history was heavily dependent on ideology. Many Soviet historians were compelled to “toe the party line”, to write within a prescribed paradigm, to refrain from expressing their own viewpoints under the threat of repression, and to adapt to the opinions of authorities intolerant of free thought. The author then objectively demonstrates that a similar problem existed in emigration, where many participants

<sup>3</sup> Шубин А.В. Основные этапы Великой российской революции // Гуманитарные науки в XXI в.: научный Интернет-журнал. 2017. № 9. С. 100–115.

<sup>4</sup> Шубин А.В. Основные проблемы и этапы истории перестройки // Российская история. 2019. № 2. С. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Кардаильский В.А. Демократическая революция 1991 и неудача левого проекта // Демократия и социализм. 2015. № 1. С. 47.

in the White movement described the same events in precisely the opposite manner.

At this point, it is worth dwelling on one particular aspect. In the book itself, beginning with the abstract, the author emphasizes that during the Civil War there existed a third force, about which few people outside the historical profession are aware. This assertion is entirely justified, and throughout the study A.V. Minzhurenko repeatedly returns to this topic. However, in mass consciousness today, the Civil War is still perceived exclusively as a confrontation between the Reds and the Whites. Few remember that Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, anarchists, various peasant and national movements (all with their own highly distinctive programs and principles) also participated in the struggle, opposing both the Reds and the Whites.

Even today, in public perception, the anti-Bolshevik movement is associated primarily with its right-wing, conservative component, the Whites. The roles of Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, anarchists, peasant and national movements, their alternatives and paths of development, have been pushed into the background. The same can be said of cinema and popular culture, where the role of the “third path” is mentioned only in passing. Let us emphasize in advance that this does not apply to academic historical scholarship: works on the activities of the Russian liberation movement appear quite regularly. However, in the post-Soviet period one can often hear opinions, both from supporters of Red and White authoritarian statism, that the revolutionary currents of the third path were allegedly predetermined to fail. In a certain sense, this remains an echo of the Civil War itself. Soviet publications of the time claimed that representatives of the third force were, in essence, acting in favor of the Whites, while White newspapers accused them of assisting the Bolsheviks.

As historian Genrikh Ioffe wrote:

“In *My Past and Thoughts*, Alexander Herzen offered a remarkable metaphor: history has many doors, passages, and exits...

This is even more true of the history of revolutions — gigantic whirlwinds of life, explosions, upheavals. This was also the case in Russia in the unforgettable year of 1917. At the end of February and the beginning of March, a centuries-old monarchy fell. An event of such enormous scale could not be — and was not — ‘linear’ or unambiguous. It was created by people of different intentions, minds, and characters, who consciously or unconsciously contributed to one or another outcome. Therefore, the country did not face a single prospect — it had alternatives”.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, we must express disagreement with the author’s assertion that history does not recognize the subjunctive mood (p. 319). As our experience shows, the phrase that history knows no “ifs” is not an answer, but rather an evasion of an answer.

It is therefore partly unjustified that, while mentioning the Red (Soviet) and the White (émigré) historiography, the author says nothing about the historiography of the third force itself. Yet its participants had their own media abroad: *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* (Mensheviks), the journal *Zarya* of the more right-wing Mensheviks, the Socialist Revolutionary publications *Revoliutsionnaya Rossiya* and *Volya Rossii*, the journal *Sovremennye Zapiski* of the more right-leaning SR group, and the anarchist publication *Delo Truda. Probuzhdenie*. A number of materials in these outlets addressed the events of the Great Russian Revolution while criticizing both the Reds and the Whites.

Some participants of the third force managed to publish their memoirs in the USSR during the relatively freer period of the 1920s (freer, of course, compared with the 1930s). The memoirs of Socialist Revolutionary Evgeny Kolosov, published in the USSR in 1923, elicited both positive and negative reactions within the country and were highly praised by SR émigrés<sup>7</sup>. Many Menshe-

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<sup>6</sup> Иоффе Г.З. 1917 год: альтернативы // Наука и жизнь. 2017. № 10. С. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Стельмак М.М. Иностранцы союзники антибольшевистского движения в работе Е.Е. Колосова // Сибирский антропологический журнал. 2022. № 2. С. 173.

viks, Socialist Revolutionaries, and anarchists who found themselves in emigration succeeded in writing memoirs with their own assessments of events, free from the pressure of the ideological apparatus. From this it follows that throughout the twentieth century there were, in fact, more than two viewpoints on the events of 1917–1922.

A.V. Minzhurenko deserves credit for his step-by-step analysis of all the anti-Bolshevik governments in Omsk: the West Siberian Commissariat, the Provisional Siberian Government, the Provisional All-Russian Government (Directory), and Admiral Kolchak's Russian Government. The author is correct in noting that the figure of the Admiral often overshadowed everything else to such an extent that ordinary residents of Omsk either have only the vaguest idea about the three previous governments or have never heard of them at all (p. 6). Indeed, it is not uncommon for the general public to conflate all four Omsk governments into a single entity<sup>8</sup>. The author then rightly emphasizes that the Civil War (and even the confrontation within Omsk alone) cannot be understood merely as a struggle between Whites and Reds; events were somewhat different and far more complex. At the same time, a note of skepticism is evident in the book regarding the program and prospects of a “third path” during the Civil War.

It is difficult to pass over the episode in the section covering domestic historiography. The author rightly lists the contributions of historian Vladimir Shishkin in publishing collections of documents from the four anti-Bolshevik Omsk governments. However, the statement that follows seems, in our view, rather unfortunate and misplaced:

“With the publication of these editions, the monopoly of professional historians on access to documents stored in state archives

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<sup>8</sup> Петин Д.И., Стельмак М.М. Педагогика в архиве на службе преодоления современных мифов массового сознания о Гражданской войне в России // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2018. № 3. С. 10.

was broken. Any person interested in the history of the region can now familiarize themselves with the texts of ministerial decrees, the detailed stenographic reports of government meetings, the decrees of the Supreme Ruler, and other documents” (p. 7).

Undoubtedly, working with archival collections requires time and considerable financial resources, particularly when travel to other cities or countries is involved or when requesting copies of files. The release of document collections certainly facilitates the researcher’s work. However, a layperson reading this sentence might incorrectly conclude that, prior to Shishkin’s publications, certain professional historians had held a monopoly and prevented others from working with the documents. The impression arises that before Shishkin’s editions, documents on the events of 1917–1922 had never been published.

The main narrative of the book begins with reports on the October events of 1917 and the reactions of various social strata to the Bolsheviks’ seizure of power. The author emphasizes that during this period and the preceding months, most residents were inclined toward the creation of a unified socialist government comprising moderate Bolsheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, and anarchists<sup>9</sup>. Such a multiparty government representing “the whole of democracy” was at the time a fully plausible alternative<sup>10</sup>. Subsequently, while paying attention to the reactions of different social groups to the Bolsheviks’ rise to power or takeover, the book also rightly notes the role of the 2nd Omsk School of Ensigns. However, in describing this important event, the author does not draw upon the detailed works of historian A.Yu. Sablin<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. С. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Шубин А.В. Альтернатива социалистического многопартийного правительства в 1917 г. // Петербургский исторический журнал: исследования по российской и всеобщей истории. 2017. № 4. С. 137; Абросимова Т.А. Несостоявшийся компромисс по вопросу о власти (осень 1917 г.) // Новейшая история России. 2020. Т. 10. № 3. С. 580.

<sup>11</sup> Саблин А.Ю. Коллективный портрет начальника Омской школы подготовки прапорщиков пехоты // Омский научный вестник. Сер.

Among minor inaccuracies, one striking point is the characterization of the revolutionary Vladimir Kosarev as a Bolshevik from 1898 (p. 22). It would have been more precise to indicate that he was a member of the RSDLP from 1898. The monograph then continues with a characterization of the various political forces and parties involved in the Omsk events, which is certainly a positive contribution to immersing the reader in the atmosphere of the era. However, regarding the *oblastnik* (Siberian regionalist) movement, there is, in our view, a serious inaccuracy or poorly expressed idea. The text implies that with the arrest of the *oblastniks* in the 1860s, their activity ceased entirely and was only revived in 1917:

“In 1865, the *oblastnik* movement was crushed by the authorities. All members of the ‘Society for the Independence of Siberia’ were arrested and brought to trial. Grigory Potanin spent three years in the Omsk fortress (prison) before being sent to penal servitude (forced labor, *katorga* — *Editor*). This idea did not take root among the broad masses of Siberians, and the *oblastnik* movement can be said to have been forgotten for a long time. Now, in 1917–1918, interest in *oblastnichestvo* in Siberia has been revived”.<sup>12</sup>

In reality, the movement evolved throughout the entire pre-revolutionary period<sup>13</sup>. Some *oblastniks* continued to publish, participate in socio-political and cultural life, and even face repression. It cannot be said that they had the support of all layers of Siberian society, but there was certainly no oblivion.

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Общество. История. Современность. 2021. Т. 6. № 1. С. 22–29; Саблин А.Ю. Корпоративная культура школ подготовки прапорщиков Сибири в годы Первой мировой войны // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2021. Т. 6. № 4. С. 47–53; Саблин А.Ю. Адаптация юнкеров-крестьян к условиям городской среды в годы Первой мировой войны (на примере Омска) // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2022. Т. 7. № 3. С. 128–134.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. С. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Шиловский М.В. Сибирское областничество в общественно-политической жизни региона во второй половине XIX — первой четверти XX в. Новосибирск, 2008.

Many political figures debated their role. The Menshevik Leonid Shumilovsky wrote a prominent article on *oblastnichestvo*, published in January 1913 in *Sibirskaya Zhizn* with a preface by Grigory Potanin<sup>14</sup>. In 1916, the exiled SR Evgey Kolosov actively defended the *oblastniki* in response to public polemics surrounding them<sup>15</sup>.

The critique of Soviet historiography is fair: for a long time it presented the entire anti-Bolshevik movement as White and representing bourgeois interests. The author demonstrates the contradictions and conflicts between SRs and Cadets at the end of 1917 – early 1918. SR Pyotr Derber, when forming the governing structures of autonomous Siberia, proposed not to include bourgeoisie and people with the right to vote in general (p. 45). Many of the “old guard” *oblastniki* opposed Derber, considering him an opponent of alliance with these people (“elements”)<sup>16</sup>. In our view, this SR position should be clarified. Apparently, they were disappointed by the policies of these elements – bourgeois, liberal, and moderate – in the Provisional Government. Liberals blocked socialist proposals for social reforms, such as prohibiting land transactions until the Constituent Assembly or implementing industrial planning. The government largely opposed social reforms before the Assembly convened. The liberal-socialist coalition thus became incompatible with reform and led the February regime to catastrophe. Amid a deepening socio-economic crisis and governmental inaction, despair among workers and the urban lower classes grew<sup>17</sup>. In fact, the authorities themselves slowed down the agrarian reform proposed by Minister of Agriculture Viktor Chernov. The Ministry of Justice even directed

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<sup>14</sup> Шумиловский Л.И. Утопия ли? // Сибирская жизнь. 1913. № 22. С. 2–3.

<sup>15</sup> Колосов Е.Е. Сибирское областничество и русский марксизм // Сибирские записки. 1916. № 4. С. 158–174.

<sup>16</sup> Шишкин В.И. Первая сессия Сибирской областной думы (январь 1918 г.) // История белой Сибири. Сб. науч. ст. Кемерово, 2011. С. 58.

<sup>17</sup> Шубин А.В. Основные этапы Великой российской революции // Гуманитарные науки в XXI в.: научный Интернет-журнал. 2017. № 9. С. 107.

prosecutors to suppress the “self-rule” of land committees acting on instructions from the Ministry of Agriculture<sup>18</sup>.

The book pays significant attention to the initial antagonism between SRs and Mensheviks, on the one hand, and officers and the Cadet party, on the other, during the formation of power in Omsk in the summer of 1918. Officers made little distinction between Bolsheviks and other socialists (p. 45). By mid-June 1918, the idea of a dictatorship had emerged in Omsk’s right-wing circles<sup>19</sup>. The book then contains a debatable statement left without comment. Minzhurenko notes that in spring–summer 1918, there were discussions among officers about inviting Lavr Kornilov to Siberia from southern Russia. According to the author, the general was popular in Siberia, as he was across the country. However, Kornilov did not accept the proposal for technical reasons, although he later sent General Vasily Flug for reconnaissance<sup>20</sup>. We believe that if Kornilov had arrived in Siberia, the conflict within the anti-Bolshevik camp in summer 1918 would have been far more severe. The general was popular not throughout the country, but primarily among its conservative circles. Describing the situation in early autumn 1917, the opponent of the Bolsheviks Vladimir Voitinsky noted that for soldiers there was “no name more hated than the name of Kornilov...”<sup>21</sup> SRs and Mensheviks remembered the attempted military anti-democratic coup in late summer–early autumn 1917. The failed revolt essentially united all democratic forces against Kornilov<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Шубин А.В. Основные этапы Великой российской революции // Гуманитарные науки в XXI в.: научный Интернет-журнал. 2017. № 9. С. 107.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. С. 99.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. С. 65–66.

<sup>21</sup> Костяев Э.В. Войны и революции Владимира Войтинского // Военная история России. Материалы XIV Международной военно-исторической конференции: Сб. науч. ст. СПб., 2021. С. 170.

<sup>22</sup> Шубин А.В. Революционный 1917 год. От Февраля к Октябрю. М., 2018. С. 245–246.

Next, some characterizations of political figures mentioned in the book deserve attention. Describing the finance minister of the Omsk governments, Ivan Mikhailov, the author notes that he was “for some reason considered close to the SRs” (p. 102), explaining that this view likely arose because his parents were Narodniks. Later, the author suggests that Mikhailov was indeed close to the SRs but had undergone an evolution in his political views (p. 148). As an experienced intriguer (as many contemporaries noted), Mikhailov merely feigned closeness to the SRs for opportunistic reasons and to gain entry into power during the democratic phase of the anti-Bolshevik movement, a fact repeatedly highlighted in historiography<sup>23</sup>.

The book also mentions the former teacher and Menshevik Leonid Shumilovsky, described by Minzhurenko as a “true social democrat” (pp. 102, 227, 247–248). In the West Siberian Commissariat, the Provisional Siberian Government, the Provisional All-Russian Government (Directory), and Kolchak’s Russian Government, he headed the Ministry of Labor. There is a recurring assertion about the Admiral’s democratic rule because one of his ministers was a Menshevik. However, in July 1918, Shumilovsky left the party as he did not want to be bound by party discipline<sup>24</sup>. Another well-known Menshevik and opponent of the Bolsheviks, Boris Nikolaevsky, noted in emigration that Shumilovsky had accepted the ministerial post without informing Siberian RSDLP organizations. When clarification was demand-

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<sup>23</sup> *Стельмак М.М., Петин Д.И.* «Он насытил свое честолюбие при Колчаке»: министр финансов И.А. Михайлов в оценках современников // Исторический вестник. 2022. Т. 42. С. 36–61; *Стельмак М.М., Петин Д.И.* «Что, вы хотите, чтобы я подписал себе обвинительный акт». Личность министра финансов белого Омска И.А. Михайлова в оценках его секретаря А.С. Соловейчика // Вестник Томского государственного университета. 2024. № 503. С. 64–76.

<sup>24</sup> *Московкин В.В., Скитина И.В.* Под прессом двух диктатур: меньшевики Урала и Зауралья в первые месяцы диктатуры А. Колчака // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2019. Т. 4. № 3. С. 12.

ed, Shumilovsky himself sent a notice of his resignation from the organization and party to the editorial office of *Altaysky Luch*<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, it should be noted that the Mensheviks did not approve of Shumilovsky's participation in the Omsk governments. At the same time, the author rightly points out, with references, that Shumilovsky never achieved his goals as Minister of Labor, could not "bring even partial improvements to the social situation", and that "the Ministry of Labor found itself in the position of a foreign body with which the social organism as a whole could not integrate" (p. 249).

A separate point deserves attention: the characterization of Admiral Kolchak, a figure that continues to provoke debate, particularly in Omsk<sup>26</sup>. The book mentions the future Supreme Ruler's plans to move south in Russia (p. 181). However, Shishkin provides evidence that the Siberian option was, if not the only one, then the primary one for Kolchak:

"The Siberian option is supported by the extraordinary activity that Kolchak immediately displayed in Omsk, clearly aiming to establish himself on Siberian soil".<sup>27</sup>

In our view, the figure of Pyotr Vologodsky in Kolchak's Russian Government hardly demonstrates the Supreme Ruler's democratic inclinations; he was needed purely for appearances. When the Admiral was pointedly reminded of Vologodsky's for-

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<sup>25</sup> Николаевский Б.И. РСДРП (меньшевики) за время с декабря 1917 по июль 1918 // *Меньшевики после Октябрьской революции: Сборник статей и воспоминаний Б. Николаевского, С. Волина, Г. Аронсона. Бенсон, 1990. С. 43.*

<sup>26</sup> Петин Д.И. Круглый стол в Омске к 150-летию со дня рождения А.В. Колчака // *Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2025. Т. 10. № 1. С. 5–7; Наумов С.С. А.В. Колчак в историческом сознании омичей: «война за память» и примирение с прошлым (вторая половина 1980-х–2020-е гг.) // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2025. Т. 10. № 1. С. 50–62.*

<sup>27</sup> Шижкин В.И. Вице-адмирал А.В. Колчак (19 сентября — 4 ноября 1918 г.) // *Россия в глобализирующемся мире. Архангельск, 2006. С. 164–176.*

mer affiliation with the SRs, he reportedly responded that Vologodsky was already old and had withdrawn from all affairs, but was needed as a symbol, saying: “He is hardly an SR!”<sup>28</sup>

It is also difficult to agree with the characterization of Kolchak as a supporter of the February Revolution (p. 183). Numerous researchers and contemporaries have noted the opposite<sup>29</sup>. In essence, he remained a monarchist even after the February Revolution<sup>30</sup>. The reasons for Kolchak’s allegedly democratic behavior in 1917 (such as his participation in the reburial of Lieutenant Pyotr Schmidt) have been explained in scholarly literature. He attended such events largely out of necessity, using the ceremonies to consolidate his influence and promote the ideas of militarism. He needed the support of (naval) sailors and therefore tried to present himself as a successor to Schmidt’s cause. The Vice-Admiral was unlikely to have been enthusiastic about this role, but he did not publicly refuse it<sup>31</sup>.

When quoting a conversation with Georgy Plekhanov, the author does not fully cite Kolchak: “The social democrats do not love the fatherland...” (p. 184). “...and, moreover, there are very many Jews among them...”<sup>32</sup> This is an important detail reflecting his worldview, which also manifested during his time in Siberia.

The description of Kolchak as a famous and celebrated naval commander, in our view, requires clarification. He was indeed a talented hydrographer, polar explorer, and specialist in mines and torpedo warfare. Torpedo boats were his natural element.

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<sup>28</sup> *Иоффе Г.З.* Колчаковская авантюра и ее крах. М., 1983. С. 177.

<sup>29</sup> *Стельмак М.М.* Образ иностранных союзников антибольшевистского движения в периодической печати Западной Сибири (май 1918 г. — декабрь 1919 г.). Омск, 2023. С. 214–216.

<sup>30</sup> *Кожевин В.А.* Российское офицерство и Февральский революционный взрыв. Омск, 2011. С. 185.

<sup>31</sup> *Колоницкий Б.И.* #1917: Семнадцать очерков по истории Российской революции. СПб., 2017. С. 67–69.

<sup>32</sup> *Плотников И.Ф.* Александр Васильевич Колчак: исследователь, адмирал, Верховный правитель России. М., 2002. С. 74.

However, it is incorrect to overestimate his role as Commander of the Black Sea Fleet. The Black Sea was not closed to enemy vessels. His record includes serious mistakes, such as the loss of enemy ships, a reluctance to recognize trends in contemporary naval art, and reliance on a single blocking measure — mines. Kolchak's activities did not result in the “complete prevention of enemy access to the Black Sea... The enemy fleet, when necessary, freely deployed and withdrew its ships through the straits, organizing reconnaissance and clearing of mines”.<sup>33</sup> The cruisers *Goeben* and *Breslau* did not appear in the Black Sea in late 1916 and the first half of 1917 not because the Bosphorus minefields were insurmountable, but because both ships were docked, repairing combat damage sustained over the previous two campaigns.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps the most controversial claim of the reviewed publication concerns Kolchak's stance toward the “third path”. The author thoroughly describes the confrontation of SRs and Mensheviks with right-wing, anti-democratic forces. Ultimately, the book reaches the familiar conclusion regarding the supposed inevitability of the third path:

“This path, as we have seen in the example of the SRs, leads to defeat. In the conditions of the Civil War, in the clash of two dictatorships, only the dictatorship that was most rigid and all-encompassing could prevail” (p. 236).

From this follows a rather debatable conclusion about the reasons for Kolchak's defeat. Apparently, the Admiral himself followed the third path and thus doomed himself to failure, since he did not become a “strict dictator” or a “ruthless despot” (p. 236). This claim is difficult to accept. Without in any way justifying the

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<sup>33</sup> Козлов Д.Ю., Подсобляев Е.Ф., Грибовский В.Ю. «Должен признать... что к делу развития морской силы Колчак имел громадное влияние». К вопросу об эффективности управления силами флота вице-адмиралом А.В. Колчаком // Военно-исторический журнал. 2006. № 2. С. 33–35.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. С. 34.

Red terror and the numerous crimes and atrocities of the Cheka in the ensuing period, one cannot attribute the defeat of Kolchak's Russian Government to his leniency or to following some uniquely "Kolchak-SR-Menshevik" path. Structurally, Kolchak's regime was a classic military dictatorship<sup>35</sup>. The Supreme Ruler was an unmistakable militarist. Historian Vladimir Khandorin noted of Kolchak:

"...the real policies of his government primarily served the interests of the bourgeoisie. In particular, government loans to private enterprises were six times greater than loans to zemstvos (country councils — *Editor*), even though agriculture remained the main branch of the Russian economy, employing three-quarters of the country's population".<sup>36</sup>

The new electoral law, approved by the Council of Ministers of Kolchak's Russian Government on December 27, 1918, effectively blocked Mensheviks and SRs from city councils<sup>37</sup>. Kolchak himself was a Russian nationalist to the core<sup>38</sup>. The available evidence does not allow the White terror to be viewed as somehow more "humane" than the Red<sup>39</sup>. General Mikhail Inostrantsev characterized the Admiral's view of popular involvement:

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<sup>35</sup> *Хандорин В.Г.* Адмирал Колчак: правда и мифы. Томск, 2006. С. 172.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* С. 170.

<sup>37</sup> *Московкин В.В., Скипина И.В.* Под прессом двух диктатур: меньшевики Урала и Зауралья в первые месяцы диктатуры А. Колчака // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2019. Т. 4. № 3. С. 11.

<sup>38</sup> *Московкин В.В., Скипина И.В.* Под прессом двух диктатур: меньшевики Урала и Зауралья в первые месяцы диктатуры А. Колчака // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2019. Т. 4. № 3. С. 11.

<sup>39</sup> *Стельмак М.М.* К вопросу о репрессивном характере внутренней политики Российского правительства А.В. Колчака // Актуальные проблемы изучения истории Гражданской войны в России: Материалы Всероссийской научной конференции, посвященной 100-летию начала Гражданской войны и 100-летию государственной архивной службы России. Омск, 2019. С. 133–146.

“Kolchak himself intends to manage without the help of the people or public opinion and believes he can cope alone with the severe situation in which our homeland finds itself...”<sup>40</sup>

Inostrantsev recalled that during one conversation, Kolchak emphasized that he would never allow the Constituent Assembly, convened in early 1918, to meet again. The Admiral even added that he would disperse it if it convened independently and execute those who refused to obey. In a letter to Lieutenant General Pepelyaev regarding the proposal for an urgent convening of the Constituent Assembly in July 1919, Kolchak expressed strong opposition<sup>41</sup>. In the Supreme Ruler’s view, this was unacceptable, as it would have led to SR victory. As the Admiral’s biographer Pavel Zyryanov noted, the SRs would have had no place in the new Constituent Assembly<sup>42</sup>.

Reflecting on the phenomenon of Atamanshchina (the ataman/warlord rule — *Editor*), the author rightly points to it as one of the reasons for the defeat of Kolchak’s Russian Government, noting that the question of why the Admiral failed to control it remains open (p. 307). Although he tried, Kolchak could not fully curb the terror<sup>43</sup>. Major General Pospeev later described the atmosphere of the Kolchak capital as “idleness at the top, the bandit exploits of various atamans, and a complete misunderstanding of the requirements of the time in social policy <...>”.<sup>44</sup>

Despite attempts by Kolchak’s government to influence Ataman Grigory Semyonov, his policies did not change. Ultimately, by Order No. 136 of May 25, 1919, the Supreme Ruler canceled previous orders restricting Semyonov’s activities. This order effectively amounted to Omsk’s capitulation to the Ataman’s ac-

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<sup>40</sup> Ходяков М.В. Деньги революции и Гражданской войны: 1917–1920 годы. СПб., 2019. С. 190.

<sup>41</sup> Хандорин В.Г. Адмирал Колчак: правда и мифы. Томск, 2006. С. 148.

<sup>42</sup> Зырянов П.Н. Адмирал Колчак, верховный правитель России. М., 2012. С. 468.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Петин Д.И. Генерал-майор А.М. Поспеев: страницы служебной деятельности // Новейшая история России. 2018. Т. 8. № 2. С. 389.

tions. This occurred because the Omsk authorities depended on Japanese support and could not worsen relations with them over Semyonov<sup>45</sup>. By that time, Kolchak possessed sufficient evidence against the Ataman, collected in February–March 1919 during a trip by Lieutenant General Katanaev of the Siberian Cossack Army, a member of the Military Council under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and chairman of the Central Investigation Commission at the War Ministry. Katanaev, having verified the situation in Transbaikalia firsthand, reported it to the Admiral<sup>46</sup>. Nevertheless, Japanese support evidently took precedence.

In early September 1919, the headquarters of the Amur Military District received a report from the military prosecutor regarding the actions of Major General Kalmykov, Ataman of the Ussuri Cossack Host. The report was based on documents and witness testimony, and the description of the lawlessness and crimes spanned 20 pages. The report was forwarded to Omsk, but no action was taken due to Kalmykov's "state merits".<sup>47</sup>

For this reason, in our view, it would be inaccurate to portray Kolchak as a fighter against repression, entirely free of responsibility for the actions of the Cossack atamans and other measures of the White terror. Here again appears a familiar formula in Russian history (and even historiography!) – that of the "good tsar and bad boyars", or in this case, the "good Supreme Ruler and bad atamans". The Supreme Ruler attempted to implement his ideas using coercive methods, and such approaches never have positive outcomes for the population.

In our opinion, Shishkin provides a fair explanation of the defeat of Kolchak's regime precisely as a dictatorship:

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<sup>45</sup> *Савченко С.Н.* Примирение Верховного правителя России А.В. Колчака и атамана Г.М. Семенова весной 1919 г. // Военно-исторический журнал. 2011. № 3. С. 17.

<sup>46</sup> *Катанаев Г.Е.* На заре сибирского самосознания: Воспоминания генерал-лейтенанта Сибирского казачьего войска. Новосибирск, 2005. С. 232.

<sup>47</sup> *Ципкин Ю.Н.* Гражданская война на Дальнем Востоке России: формирование антибольшевистских режимов и их крушение (1917–1922 гг.). Хабаровск, 2012. С. 101–102.

“Obviously, the establishment of a military dictatorship cannot be a panacea guaranteeing its authors and bearers the desired results, especially in the conditions of the Civil War, when various segments of society are fighting each other with weapons in hand”.<sup>48</sup>

In this context, it is difficult to agree with Minzhurenko’s claim of some special “third path” followed by Kolchak. Apparently, to support this thesis, the author argues that the Admiral was a man of progressive views who considered landowners an outdated estate. On this basis, Minzhurenko classifies the Supreme Ruler (presumably as an opponent of the landowners) as a supporter of Pyotr Stolypin. According to the author, Kolchak was more of a “Stolypinist” than Stolypin himself (p. 243). The topic of Stolypin’s reforms is a separate area for specialized research. Evaluations of his reforms are diametrically opposed and require careful, balanced judgment. It should be noted that it is unlikely that following Stolypin’s policies would have reduced social tensions in Russia, even if the Supreme Ruler had succeeded. The well-known agrarian historian Andrey Anfimov noted that out of 3.7 million Stolypin resettlers, 1 million returned, and 700,000 scattered across Siberia, becoming ordinary laborers<sup>49</sup>. Anfimov demonstrated that “Stolypin pursued a clearly defined line to preserve landowner estates”.<sup>50</sup> He was not willing even to consider the compromise project proposed by the Cadets for the compulsory sale of landowner estates at a fair price.

Economist Lev Litoshenko<sup>51</sup> and historian Mikhail Shilovsky<sup>52</sup> indicate the unresolved agrarian question in Siberia and

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<sup>48</sup> Шишкин В.И. Колчаковская диктатура: истоки и причины краха // История белой Сибири. Тезисы второй научной конференции (4–5 февраля 1997 г.). Кемерово, 1997. С. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Anfimov А.М. Царствование Николая II в цифрах и фактах // Отечественная история. 1994. № 3. С. 73.

<sup>50</sup> Anfimov А.М. П.А. Столыпин и российское крестьянство. М., 2002. С. 265.

<sup>51</sup> Cited in: Шубин А.В. Великая российская революция: от Февраля к Октябрю 1917 года. М., 2014. С. 81.

<sup>52</sup> Шиловский М.В. Первая мировая война 1914–1918 гг. и Сибирь. Новосибирск, 2015. С. 200–201.

Central Asia, arising from Stolypin's policies. At the All-Russian Agricultural Congress in 1913, the majority sharply criticized Stolypin's reform. It must also be remembered that historians point to non-economic motives behind the reforms:

“By this time, the situation in the village had become threatening, and in the elimination of the commune, the government and landowner circles hoped to find a panacea for all ills... The primary, dual aim of the reform was the destruction of the peasant commune, which had given peasant uprisings a certain organization, and the creation of a strong conservative support base for power from wealthy peasant landowners”.<sup>53</sup>

Historian Elena Koshechkina summarizes the results of the agrarian policy of Kolchak's Russian Government:

“The unresolved agrarian question: declarations of intent without concrete reforms, postponement of granting land to peasants, a failure to understand fundamental differences in attitudes toward peasants in European Russia and Siberia, and the justification of crimes against peasants — all this ultimately led to the fall of Admiral A.V. Kolchak”.<sup>54</sup>

The book's assertion that the Admiral was late in counter-propaganda, or that the White authorities did not sufficiently agitate, appears debatable (pp. 241, 246). The core of the ideological apparatus consisted of the intelligence structures of Siberia's anti-Bolshevik governments. In Western Siberia during various periods of the Civil War (June 1918 — December 1919), propaganda work was conducted, to one degree or another, by eighteen such agencies<sup>55</sup>. Often the problem was not the absence of propaganda literature

<sup>53</sup> Шубин А.В. Великая российская революция: от Февраля к Октябрю 1917 года. М., 2014. С. 75, 79.

<sup>54</sup> Кошечкина Е.А. Внутренняя аграрная политика правительства А.В. Колчака // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2020. Т. 5. № 3. С. 22.

<sup>55</sup> Луков Е.В., Шевелев Д.Н. Осведомительный аппарат белой Сибири: структура, функции, деятельность (июнь 1918 г. — январь 1920 г.). Томск, 2007. С. 16–17.

(which was produced in significant quantities) but the inability of the Omsk authorities to deliver it promptly to the troops and population, a shortcoming contemporaries lamented<sup>56</sup>.

As noted by Ural Cadet A.A. Krol:

“Samples of anti-Bolshevik proclamations brought from the front were childishly naive: at their core, they were based on the fact that Lenin and Trotsky had taken the Kremlin, with slogans in various versions that later coalesced into the stereotypical ‘Kill the Jews, save Russia’”.<sup>57</sup> According to another contemporary, contrary to claims that “there will be no imitations of the popular language”, the opposite occurred. Combined with a “churchly moralizing” tone, this significantly reduced the effectiveness of the propaganda publications<sup>58</sup>. According to Georgy Gins, “a poster depicting a soldier rushing into battle against the Reds was issued in five variations by different propaganda services and became so overexposed that it produced the effect opposite of what was intended”.<sup>59</sup>

At the same time, White propaganda also sought to make bold statements. Historian Alexey Sushko emphasized:

“Kolchak’s military Russian nationalism represented a typical statist model. Fear was the basis. Nationalist propaganda sought to instill fear in the population for the survival of Russian culture and Orthodox Russia, thereby mobilizing them to fight the enemies of the Russian people — the Bolsheviks”.<sup>60</sup>

However, it must be recognized that in southern Russia, White propaganda was more effective than in Siberia. In the central office of OSVAG — the information-propaganda body of the

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<sup>56</sup> Луков Е.В., Шевелев Д.Н. Осведомительный аппарат белой Сибири: структура, функции, деятельность (июнь 1918 г. — январь 1920 г.). Томск, 2007. С. 16–17.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. С. 171–172.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. С. 172.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Сушко А.В. К вопросу о характере и значении колчаковской пропаганды в Гражданской войне // Вестник Томского государственного университета. 2016. № 411. С. 155.

Armed Forces of southern Russia — in the summer of 1919, there were 255 people, with a total staff of 8,500 (according to other sources, 10,000). OSVAG was divided into 12 departments. Historian K. Lazarski showed that the belief in the ineffectiveness or insufficiency of White propaganda was exaggerated. White propagandists skillfully achieved their goals, even if it required manipulation of facts, provocations, or demagoguery. Ultimately, the principle “the end justifies the means” prevailed<sup>61</sup>. Naturally, this also applies to Soviet propaganda.

It is also necessary to point out certain inaccuracies, which, though not undermining the work, should be avoided in scholarly popular publications on history. One longstanding myth is that the Budenovka hat was allegedly a pre-revolutionary invention. The claim that the Budenovka was an attribute of the Tsarist army has not been confirmed by any serious source. Kirill Tsyplonkov, a military outfit consultant at the Russian State Library of Arts, notes that the pre-revolutionary Budenovka is “a rather absurd myth (with no indirect evidence)”. “There was no question of designing a completely new parade uniform from head to toe in a country whose economy had been exhausted by war over the previous two years”.<sup>62</sup> Several orders regarding the establishment of military uniforms for the Red Army date to spring 1918.

The author’s statement regarding the hostage-taking of families of officers mobilized into the Red Army is not entirely accurate (p. 232). Historian Andrey Ganin examined this question:

“Due to a number of objective reasons, reprisals against the families of military specialists did not spread in Soviet Russia. If such measures had been practiced by the Reds, the anti-Bolshevik

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<sup>61</sup> Будницкий О.В. Российские евреи между красными и белыми. М., 2005. С. 225.

<sup>62</sup> Гражданская война, охватившая российскую территорию в 1917–1923 гг., породила не только новое мощное государство, но и узнаваемые во всем мире атрибуты одежды // <https://www.gazetametro.ru/legacy/articles/proishozhdenie-budenovki-postavili-pod-somnenie-22-02-2018>.

press would not have remained silent, but would have publicized them extensively. However, nothing of the sort occurred. Even in anti-Bolshevik sources, references to hostages among military specialists' families are isolated, and their reliability cannot be verified. Of course, we cannot completely exclude isolated excesses during the Civil War, but it must be recognized that such reprisals were not systematic".<sup>63</sup>

As an example of his claim about hostages, the author mentions the arrest of General Kappel's wife, citing Ganin (p. 293). However, in his work, Ganin specifies:

"For example, the family of the well-known White General Vladimir Oskarovich Kappel lived in Perm. His wife, Olga Sergeevna Strolman, lived under her maiden name; in 1918–1919, she even worked in the headquarters of the Red 3rd Army as a typist. In one questionnaire, she indicated her husband's identity and was, of course, dismissed without the right to work in military institutions. According to one version, she moved to Moscow, where she secured a position in the State Treasury. In May 1919, Strolman was arrested as a hostage by the Cheka and held in Butyrka Prison until March 1920, when she was informed of her husband's death and offered a divorce. According to Kappel's daughter, the arrest occurred in Glazov (headquarters of the 3rd Army from December 1918), after which the Cheka leaders Felix Dzerzhinsky and Vyacheslav Menzhinsky intervened (!) on her behalf, with the latter offering her a job in the People's Commissariat of Finance under the condition of a divorce *in absentia* from her husband. Moreover, from April 1, 1919, Strolman was employed there. Thus, the wife of one of the most prominent leaders of the anti-Bolshevik camp spent between four and ten months in detention, according to various accounts. To call this brief arrest with contradictory circumstances "hostage-taking"

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<sup>63</sup> Ганин А. В. «Измена и предательство повлечет арест семьи...» Заложничество семей военспецов — реальность или миф? // Родина. 2010. № 6. С. 75.

can only be done with a stretch. The credibility of émigré accounts about an alleged proposal to Kappel to “soften his blows against the Reds” in exchange for the release of his wife, and the dramatic response of the general (‘Shoot my wife, for she, like me, considers the greatest reward on earth from God would be to die for the Motherland. And as I have beaten you, I will continue to do so’) seems highly dubious. At the very least, Kappel did not weaken his actions, and his wife, despite this, was released fairly quickly. It is even more difficult to imagine under what circumstances such a proposal could have been made”.<sup>64</sup>

When considering the issue of the former Russian Empire’s gold reserves in a dedicated chapter, the author, for some reason, cites the works of Mosyakin, a writer who is not a professional historian and has been found guilty of extremely inaccurate interpretation of facts<sup>65</sup>. In our opinion, it would have been more appropriate in this case to rely on the works of historian Oleg Budnitsky<sup>66</sup>. The book includes a rather well-known note from Lenin to Ephraim Sklyansky, dated in the twenties of January 1920. It should have been mentioned that several contemporary researchers date it to February 24, 1920.<sup>67</sup>

The author’s decision to include the topic of the relationship between Kolchak’s Russian Government and foreign allies proved

<sup>64</sup> Ганин А.В. «Измена и предательство повлечет арест семьи...» Заложничество семей военспецов — реальность или миф? // Родина. 2010. № 6. С. 72.

<sup>65</sup> A Master Class in Sharp Practice by Journalist and Publicist Aleksandr Mosyakin in Arkady Mamontov’s Documentary Film «Корона под молотом» [Crown under the hammer] // [https://historia.su/istoricheskie-temy/mir\\_i\\_sovetski\\_soyuz\\_v\\_20-ye\\_gody/440-master-klass-shulerstva-ot-zhurnalista-i-publicista-aleksandra-mosyakina-v-dokumentalnom-filme-arkadiya-mamontova-korona-pod-molotom.html](https://historia.su/istoricheskie-temy/mir_i_sovetski_soyuz_v_20-ye_gody/440-master-klass-shulerstva-ot-zhurnalista-i-publicista-aleksandra-mosyakina-v-dokumentalnom-filme-arkadiya-mamontova-korona-pod-molotom.html).

<sup>66</sup> Будницкий О.В. Колчаковское золото: конец легенды // Труды Института российской истории РАН. 2006. № 6. С. 140–160; Будницкий О.В. Деньги русской эмиграции: Колчаковское золото. 1918–1957. М., 2008.

<sup>67</sup> Ленин В.И. Неизвестные документы. 1891–1922 гг. М., 2000. С. 329–330; Корнеев В.В., Козлов Я.В. Очернение Ленина. Как это делают официальные «историки» на страницах «Российской газеты» // Политическое просвещение. 2014. № 5. С. 45.

correct. This aspect is given considerable attention. The reasons motivating the leading the world powers to support the White Movement are enumerated. Therefore, the thesis that, in the end, they allegedly came to desire the defeat of Kolchak's regime appears quite debatable ("if he had won, it would have been disadvantageous for them to deal with a strong White Russia; a weak Soviet Russia was more advantageous") (p. 253). Again, in our view, this is a highly debatable thesis that requires citations from serious sources. To our knowledge, no sources have been found proving that the allies deliberately reduced support due to a desire to prevent the Supreme Ruler's victory. Foreign assistance and supplies were fairly substantial.<sup>68</sup> The Allied powers wished to increase support, but this was not always possible. As an argument, Minzhenko points out that the end of World War I would have allowed for significantly increased aid to Omsk authorities (p. 253). However, this can also be viewed differently: the world was exhausted from the war, and anti-war sentiments were growing. In early 1919, the movement against interventionist policy in Great Britain gained considerable momentum. On January 27, 1919, a strike began among workers, miners, builders, and mechanics, halting operations at several industrial enterprises<sup>69</sup>. Britain's shift toward ending intervention was prompted by the depletion of financial, human, and political resources, and rising domestic protests<sup>70</sup>.

The thesis regarding foreign allies "striving to carve up Russia" (p. 338) is also problematic. In reality, they were merely establishing relations with new state formations on the territory of the former

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<sup>68</sup> *Стельмак М.М.* Образ иностранных союзников антибольшевистского движения в периодической печати Западной Сибири (май 1918 г. — декабрь 1919 г.). Омск, 2023. С. 122–133.

<sup>69</sup> *Миронюк С.А.* Британская политика интервенции в России (ноябрь 1917 г. — декабрь 1919 г.) как фактор Гражданской войны: этапы и особенности // Исторический вестник. 2024. Т. 47. С. 360.

<sup>70</sup> *Миронюк С.А.* Интервенция в Россию в политических дискуссиях правящих кругов Великобритании (1917–1919 гг.). Дисс. канд. ист. наук. М., 2021. С. 173.

Russian Empire, not obligated to promote their inclusion in White Russia. Only in the case of Japan can one to some extent speak of a desire for some territory from the former Russian Empire, but this idea did not emerge independently of Kolchak's plans. In mid-December 1919, Kolchak discussed territorial concessions to Japan in exchange for increased aid. However, due to the imminent defeat of the Whites, the negotiations came to nothing<sup>71</sup>.

Regarding the alleged insufficient support from the Entente, the author claims that Red Army soldiers did not see the interventionists at the front or encounter them as prisoners<sup>72</sup>. This is only partially correct. Many Red Army soldiers vividly remembered the Czechoslovak Legion (before they were withdrawn to the rear to guard the railway at the beginning of 1919 and engaged in battles with Siberian partisans). Armed forces of the Allied powers mostly engaged with anti-Kolchak partisans behind the front lines; this applies to the Americans and Japanese in the Far East. The capture of Czechoslovak legionnaires by the Red Army was also reported in White newspapers<sup>73</sup>. Soldiers of other countries were less frequently captured but did sometimes fall into Soviet hands. For example, on February 12, 1920, the UK and RSFSR concluded an agreement on the exchange of prisoners of war<sup>74</sup>. In April 1919, Lenin, in a note to Sklyansky, mentioned French prisoners, though in small numbers<sup>75</sup>. Historian Ksenia Besspalova<sup>76</sup> studied the French prisoners in southern Russia in spring–summer 1919 and Soviet attempts to indoctrinate them.

<sup>71</sup> Шмелев А.В. Внешняя политика правительства адмирала Колчака (1918–1919 гг.). СПб., 2017. С. 198.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. С. 254.

<sup>73</sup> Стельмак М.М. Образ иностранных союзников антибольшевистского движения в периодической печати Западной Сибири (май 1918 г. — декабрь 1919 г.). Омск, 2023. С. 234–235.

<sup>74</sup> О'Коннор Т.Э. Г.В. Чичерин и советская внешняя политика 1918–1930 гг. М., 1991. С. 103.

<sup>75</sup> Ленин В.И. Неизвестные документы. 1891–1922 гг. М., 2000. С. 285–286.

<sup>76</sup> Бесспалова К.А. Французские военнопленные на юге Советской России весной и летом 1919 года // Научный диалог. 2021. № 6. С. 317–331.

From this, it follows that foreign allies provided considerable assistance to White Russia, yet neither Kolchak nor Lenin can be considered spies, as some conspiracy theorists claim. The Civil War erupted in the country due to a range of internal reasons; foreign countries had no role in causing it.

In describing the explosion at the Supreme Ruler's personal residence on August 25, 1919, the author avoids conspiracy theories and does not present the incident as an assassination attempt. It should be noted that, due to the incident, seven soldiers from the guard were killed<sup>77</sup>, not six. Among the deceased was the Omsk poet Pyotr (Yuri) Sopov, conscripted into the White Army. The author's unsupported speculation that the accident could have been caused by Sopov shooting at a box of grenades is baseless. Instead of presenting evidence, the author writes: "These things happen with poets too" (p. 278). Such a remark is inappropriate even in a popular publication.

It is difficult to agree with the claim that by 1917 Siberia was on the rise and that there were no serious war-caused social conflicts and critical conditions in the economy and society (p. 335). The food situation was better than in European provinces, but it gradually worsened. Combined with shortages of goods, rising prices, and lack of government measures, this increased tension among the population, leading to mass unrest<sup>78</sup>.

It should be noted that the book presents several major political events in Omsk from 1917–1920 in an interesting manner, detailing the background behind changes in anti-Bolshevik political regimes and aspects of internal and external policy. The reader can understand the essence of events in the city beyond the outdated

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<sup>77</sup> Петин Д.И., Стельмак М.М. «Убиты при взрыве в доме Верховного правителя»: к анализу актовых записей о смерти чинов конвоя адмирала А.В. Колчака 27 августа 1919 г. // Вестник архивиста. 2021. № 3. С. 730–731.

<sup>78</sup> See: Стельмак М.М. А.Н. Гладышев и его время: реконструкция биографии сибирского социал-демократа. Омск, 2025. С. 179–240; Шиловский М.В. Первая мировая война 1914–1918 гг. и Сибирь. Новосибирск, 2015. С. 237.

“Reds vs. Whites” paradigm. The author utilizes periodicals from the Civil War era, memoirs, archival documents from the Historical Archive of the Omsk Region. He does not present dry schemes but enlivens the narrative by characterizing figures who shaped history. A reader entirely unfamiliar with the Civil War will learn much from the book. However, in emphasizing the “third path”, more memoirs from participants of this movement could have been used. For example, the leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, Viktor Chernov, is mentioned repeatedly, but his classic, repeatedly published memoirs are not utilized<sup>79</sup>.

Recent specialized works by historian Anatoly Shtyrbul<sup>80</sup> are not employed when discussing the SR party in Omsk during the military-revolutionary period. In describing the military coup in Omsk on the night of November 18, 1918, the detailed work of historian Vladimir Shishkin<sup>81</sup> is not referenced. The book lists important stages of political struggle in Omsk (the “Popov revolt”, the aforementioned coup, uprisings against Kolchak’s rule, but does not mention the October railway workers’ strike, which began on October 17, 1918, across the Trans-Siberian Railway, with the main events occurring in Omsk. Martial law was imposed, and the strike ended on October 21<sup>82</sup>.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the issues raised are of a debatable nature, which is necessary when making judgments about such a controversial period. We hope the author continues to develop this topic. After all, the path of the third force did not end in Omsk with the defeat of the Whites. Practically until the mid-1920s, SRs, Mensheviks, and anarchists who

<sup>79</sup> Чернов В.М. Перед бурей. Воспоминания. М., 1993. 408 с.

<sup>80</sup> Штырбул А.А. Эсеровское движение в Омске и Среднем Прииртышье: Рождение. Взлет. Падение. Гибель. В 2 ч. Омск, 2021.

<sup>81</sup> Шишкин В.И. 1918 г.: от Директории к военной диктатуре // Вопросы истории. 2008. № 10. С. 42–62.

<sup>82</sup> Штырбул А.А. Политическая культура Сибири: Опыт провинциальной многопартийности (конец XIX — первая треть XX в.). Омск, 2008. С. 365–366.

opposed Bolshevik policies continued to operate in Siberian cities, albeit under increasingly difficult conditions within the emerging system, which did not tolerate free thought<sup>83</sup>.

All the above remarks do not affect the overall positive impression of the publication. We hope the book will serve as a foundation for further research and discussion among academic and regional history communities. Equally important, we hope the book sparks interest among those just beginning to study the history of the Civil War in Siberia, helping them to explore the full political spectrum of the Omsk events during the military-revolutionary era.

### Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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<sup>83</sup> Сушко А.В. Региональное измерение истории органов ГПУ–ОГПУ: к анализу монографии А.Б. Гуларяна и А.Ю. Сарана // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2023. Т. 8. № 1. С. 85–86.

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