

Skutnev A.V., Kirov, Russian Federation

Character Study of Peasant, Priest and District Police Officer in World War I Period

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## Annotation

The article is devoted to the study of provincial society mentality during World War I with regard to its religiosity. It was at that time that the interactions of the Church and the clergy with the population - the peasantry - exposed a set of pre-existing contradictions. A number urban evils transited to the country-side. One of the most acute problems of the 20th century, encompassing not only the cities but the country-side as well, was d excessive drinking. Excessive drinking became the scourge of the society. The dry law enacted in the wartime did not lead to sobriety, but vice versa reduced the peasants to drinking industrial or low-quality alcohol. The war did not smooth over differences existing around the agrarian question, the assignment of land to the clergy of a parish, for example. There was a significant increase of religious indifference during the war period. The devaluation of human life proceeded to an increasing degree. However, the war only confirmed the fact that religiosity was falling. Internal unity of the society proved to be an illusion. The church, as well as the government, lost its unifying role. And yet the Church tried to change its role in the life of the country-side. The clergy wanted to stay in touch with parishioners. For interactions between the clergy and the congregation not to stay limited to the church-office there were established in all parishes of the dioceses the boards of trustees for aiding the families of the called to arms, which incorporated

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priests and parishioners. However, high ideals, such as patriotism, were destroyed by the everyday routine. With the war protracting, the dissatisfaction of the peasants with life, regime and its servants only grew. As men went to the front, the country-side became shorthanded, the foraging of bread and horses undid the peasants. Priests were addicted to the same human vices as their flocks. Some of drinkers and wine-sellers were clerics. Several priests proclaimed their withdrawal from the department of religious affairs. As well as parishioners, they showed disrespect for authority and legitimacy. Eventually it resulted in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The study is based on archival documents and the periodicals and newspapers of the Vyatka province.



### Keywords

Russian Orthodox Church, clergy, mentality, peasantry, World War I.

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