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Aleksandr V. Antoshchenko

Petrozavodsk State University, Petrozavodsk, Russian Federation

Letters of A. V. Kartashev, Ex-Minister of the Provisional Government, from the Peter and Paul Fortress: 1917–1918

Abstract

For Anton Vladimirovich Kartashev (1875–1960), 1917 was a year of unexpected political rise and tragic fall. Docent of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Kartashev became popular in liberal circles as a chairman of the Society for Religion and Philosophy; he was appointed an associate (deputy) to the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod in March 1917. About the need for consistent implementation of the principle of separation of church and state, Kartashev did see eye to eye with the majority of the Cadet (Constitutional Democratic) Party leaders. He was a supporter of ‘symphony’ between church and state, restoration of patriarchate and conciliar

administration of the church. In summer, after joining the Cadet Party, Kartashev became Ober-Procurator, although his functions were soon absorbed by the Ministry of Religious Confessions. As a minister, he welcomed the All-Russian Sobor in August 1917, asserting the need for independent conciliar church in 'friendly cultural cooperation' with rule-of-law state. Kartashev participated in the Moscow State Conference and countenanced the affair of General L. G. Kornilov. In September, Kartashev resigned as minister to protest against the socialist stranglehold in the government. The resignation was not accepted, and at the night of 25 October he was arrested, along with other members of the Provisional Government. Letters published here are addressed to M. A. Petrunkevich, S. V. Panina and M. F. Kokoshkina; they were written by A. V. Kartashev during his imprisonment in the Peter and Paul Fortress. Correspondence of the Ex-Minister contains his assessments of the past events and records his moods, born from an eschatological perception of the developments in Russia. In one of his letters Kartashev explored the issues of human nature and flesh, male and female principles and conditions for their equality before God; the letter also outlined ways and means of reviving Russia after the revolution.

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Keywords

Personal provenance sources, correspondance, A. V. Kartashev, revolution of 1917 in Russia, Provisional Government, Orthodoxy.

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About author

Aleksandr Васильевич Antoshchenko, PhD in History, associate professor, Petrozavodsk State University, Institute of History, Political and Social Sciences, department of Russian history, professor, Petrozavodsk, Russian Federation, +7-8142-771020, antoshchenko@yandex.ru

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