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'It Is Necessary to Find a Way Out Soon, or the Russian People Shall Be Destroyed': A
'Plain-Speaking Petition' to Authority of a Kozelsk Citizen in March 1919

Abstract

The article studies the letter to authority that originated in the Kaluga gubernia, in which a man signed Roshchin expressed his extreme concern about the way the government policy of building a new life was implemented. The Kozelsk citizen resolved to write his 'plain-speaking

petition' in March 1919, believing that the very life of the Russian people was under the threat. He considered it his duty to report to Moscow about 'sinful and harmful' doings in the uezd. He thought that uneducated, ignorant, and experienced leaders of socialism builders were unfit for authority. The peasant youths were bent on destruction of all things, that took centuries evolve, and yet had no clue about socialism. The new authority felt no need in seasoned professionals or skilled managers, its only interest was in making self-profit in troubled waters. Its activities in the sphere of trade and agriculture caused shortages or total unavailability of food and essential goods for local population. Under the new regime in education with its antireligious policy, schools resembled taverns where the songs, dances, and vulgar expressions could be heard all day long. Roshchin noted that health services were deplorable and starvation increased death rate daily. He had no faith in methods of economic management, he observed from the inside, and awaited a deadlock. Thinking over all facts stated in the letter leads to the conclusion that it was written by a passionate and active citizen, who involuntary witnessed and experienced the plight of the early days of the Bolshevik regime: hunger, cold, epidemics, heavy mortality, and total economic disorganization. Seeing ignorance, incompetence, and lack of ability in local leaders, party nominees from rural youth, who, he believed, were unfit to manage and had no good qualities, Roshchin feared to entrust them with his life and future and, seeing no other way, pleaded with the central government to take measures and save the nation. The letter sums up the most crucial drawbacks of the Bolshevik inner policy.

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Keywords

Source, letter to authority, 1919, drawbacks of the Bolshevik inner policy, Kaluga gubernia.

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