

Scientific article

УДК 94(47)+82-6+930.253

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2022-2-509-521

Kvasov, Oleg N.

Voronezh State University of Forestry and Technologies named after G. F. Morozov, Voronezh,  
Russian Federation

Russian Revolutionary Terrorists' and Militants' Letters to Power in the Early 20th Century

Abstract

The research is devoted to analysis of an original and peculiar source, written appeals of revolutionary terrorists and militants to tsarist authorities and institutions. This type of documents is known in source studies as “letters to power” and has been subject of numerous

studies and publications, mostly in form of collective peasants' appeals to authorities at various crisis points in the Russian history of the early 20th century. However, appeals of revolutionary terrorists and militants to population and administration have not yet been subject to analysis and research due to their sparsity, location in local archives, and unwillingness of party committees and police to make them known to general public. Terrorists' appeals to the authorities were essential to terrorism: this was their way to proclaim and make public their demands and reasons for violence. However, party committees always strongly resisted individual militants entering into communication, as they considered terrorist attacks as party activity, were wary of police provocations and concerned about secrecy. Therefore, we can assume that the militants' appeals to the administration are indirect evidence of their autonomy or independence from parties and committees. Such appeals were mostly made in the following two instances: when militants actively participated in action and when they were hiding from police persecution for a long time. Appeals could be verbose or concise, addressed directly to the authorities, or to a certain official, or distributed via media, or left as a note on the crime scene. They mocked police for their incapability to arrest the author, emphasized disinterested or party nature of their combat activity, announced future crimes. Detailed letters often proclaimed that the author had to resort to criminal action due to errors of prior administration. The authors implicitly or explicitly indicated their willingness to end their struggle, if they were to be granted pardon, or if the persecution were to be ceased. Numerous appeals of militants and terrorists to the authorities strongly suggest that social and political crisis of the Russian society was quite deep; they are an important sign of systematically organized party terrorism, as well as a vivid source for studying social and psychological atmosphere in the crisis of the early 20th century in Russia.

### Keywords

Sources, Russian revolutionary terrorism, letters to power, terrorist activity, revolutionary expropriation.

Download the article: [kvasov doi](#)

## References

BUTYRIN, D. A. Agenty i provokatory okhrannogo otdeleniya Vladivostokskoi kreposti (1907 - 1908 gody) [Agents and agents provocateurs of the secret police department of the Vladivostok Fortress. In Russ.]. IN: Novyi istoricheskii vestnik, 2020, no. 2 (64), pp. 23–57.

BUTYRIN, D. A. Kollezhskaa asessor Gubskii - master "tonkikh intrig" protiv sosluzhivtsev: iz istorii okhrannogo otdeleniya Vladivostokskoi kreposti (1907 god) [Collegiate assessor Gubskii, master of intrigue against his colleagues: From the history of the secret police department of the Vladivostok Fortress (1907). In Russ.]. IN: Novyi istoricheskii vestnik, 2021, no. 1 (67), pp. 99–125

KADIKOV, E. R. Eserovskii terror v Sibiri v nachale XX v. [The Socialist-Revolutionary Terror in Siberia in the Early 20th Century. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik Omskogo universiteta. Seriya: Istoricheskiye nauki [Bulletin of the Omsk University. Series: Historical sciences], 2016, no. 1 (9), pp. 57–59.

MEDVEDEV, S. V. Anonimnye pisma v moskovskie politseyskie uchrezhdeniya: donosy o pravitelstvennoi deyatelnosti i ugrozy vlastyam (1903-1907 gg.) [Anonymous Letters to Moscow Police Institutions: Denunciations of Anti-Government Activity and Threats to the Authorities (1903–07). In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik RGGU. Seriya: Istoriya. Filologiya. Kulturologiya. Vostokovedeniye [Bulletin of the RGGU. Series: History. Philology. Culturology. Oriental Studies], 2016, no. 1 (10), pp. 47–58.

LITVINOV, P. P. Uchrezhdenie tsarskoi "okhranki" v Russkom Turkestane [The Establishment of the Tsarist "Okhrana" in Russian Turkestan. In Russ.]. IN: Voprosy istorii, 2017, no. 2, pp. 74–90.

MILEVSKII, O. A. Voskhozhdenie inspektora: pervyi god zhandarmskoi sluzhby Georgiya Porfir'evicha Sudeikina v Kieve [The rise of the inspector: The first year of gendarme service of Georgy Porfirievich Sudeikin in Kiev. In Russ.]. IN: Novyi istoricheskii vestnik, 2021, no. 4 (70), pp. 195–220.

About the authors

Kvasov Oleg Nikolaevich, PhD in History, associate professor, G. F. Morozov Voronezh State University of Forestry and Technologies, department of social sciences and humanities, head of the department, Voronezh, Russian Federation, +7-960-101-88-39, kvasovoleg@yandex.ru

Submitted 15.10.2021, published (for citation):

KVASOV, O. N. Pis'ma vo vlast' rossiiskikh revolyutsionnykh terroristov i boevikov nachala XX veka [Russian Revolutionary Terrorists' and Militants' Letters to Power in the Early 20th Century. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2022, no. 2, pp. 509-521. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2022-2-509-521

**You can read completely article in the russian historic-archival magazine “The Herald of an Archivist”. Read more about terms of subscription [here](#) .**

**Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .**