

THE HISTORICAL PARAMETERS OF RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

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Executive summary

The reign of Tsar Alexander I (1801-1825) witnessed a notable attempt to address a dilemma of Russian state policy towards religious diversity: how to regulate a multi-confessional empire in which one faith – Orthodoxy – was state-sponsored and considered by many to be a national church. During the early part of his reign, the Tsar implemented a policy towards “sectarians” involving “toleration through isolation.” That is, non-Orthodox Russians could be tolerated only if they were completely separated from the Orthodox population and concentrated in areas on the periphery of the Russian Empire. Later in his reign, Alexander I modified these policies to withdraw some of the protections initially offered to non-Orthodox believers. This paper traces the development of these policies in the early nineteenth century and points out the ways in which they, and the issues they involved, mirror contemporary debates about religious policy and religious diversity in Russia.

Introduction

Questions of religious pluralism and religious toleration in post-Soviet Russia remain important to American policy-makers. On one hand, religious freedom is vital to the development of Russia's fledgling political institutions and culture, which are themselves influential components of Russia's role in regional security issues. On the other hand, the boundaries of Russian religious pluralism are central to the negotiation of the post-Cold War relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation.

In the recent past, Russia passed two laws on religion, in 1990 and 1997. The former was "widely applauded for its careful safeguards of religious liberty" while the latter "restrict[ed] the activities of religious minorities and foreign missionaries."¹ In response to the 1997 law, one American commentator sounded the alarm: "A new war for souls has broken out in Russia – a war to reclaim the traditional spiritual and moral soul of the Russian people, and a war to retain adherence and adherents to the Russian Orthodox Church." He continues: "Russia has moved from... the open embrace of religious rights for everyone to tight restrictions on everyone's rights, save those of the Orthodox Church."²

Russia's religious politics is of particular concern to Americans for three reasons. First, during the 1990s, the Orthodox Church was a potent interest group in Russian politics, actively lobbying for increasingly "monopolistic" control over the spiritual lives of Russian citizens. As one Russian journalist noted in 1996: "within the church, priests who frankly pine for the tsarist system have gained strength."³

Second, based on western standards of religious pluralism – and especially the United States's belief in the separation of church and state – Americans and many Russians consider the acceptance of religious diversity to be a cornerstone of a properly functioning "modern" democracy. In that sense, debates about religious pluralism in Russia's Duma and among Russian intellectuals are also discussions about the future contours of Russia's newly developing forms of democracy.

¹ Mark Elliott and Sharyl Corrado, "The 1997 Russian Law on Religion: the Impact on Protestants," *Religion, State & Society* 27, no. 1 (1999): 109

² John Witte Jr., "Introduction," in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War For Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 1 and 19.

Finally, Russian religious policy also directly affects American citizens in Russia. The United States has a long tradition of missionary activity and proselytism around the world. Many U.S. missionaries considered the newly-opened Russia to be a land of great spiritual potential. However, they have found themselves confronting state religious policies (not to mention public opposition) that have challenged their presence in Russia and, on occasion, threatened them with arrest.⁴

State treatment of Russian religious “sectarians” [*sektanty*, including Molokans, Dukhobors, and Subbotniks]⁵ during the reign of Tsar Alexander I (1801-1825) provides important historical context to today’s debates over religious policy and religious diversity in Russia. Alexander I’s reign was characterized by the need to resolve tensions caused by religious heterogeneity. The Tsar attempted to solve an essential dilemma of Russian religious policy: how to regulate a multi-confessional empire in which one faith – Orthodoxy – was not only privileged, but state-sponsored and considered by many Russians to be a national church.⁶

³ Anatoly Krasikov, “State, Church, and Religious Freedom,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 10/09/96, located at <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/krasikoveng0910.html>.

⁴ Elliott and Corrado, “The 1997 Russian Law on Religion,” *passim* and especially the appendix, and Witte and Bourdeaux, *Proselytism and Orthodoxy*, *passim* and especially 323-340.

⁵ When I use terms such as “sectarian,” religious “dissenter,” and “non-conformist,” I am referring to the variety of what may be called “indigenous” Christian sects – including, but not limited to, Dukhobortsy, Molokane (Pryguny, Obschie, Postoiannye, Dukhovnye), and Subbotniki (Iudeistvuiushchie) – who, in the early- to mid-eighteenth century broke away entirely from the Orthodox Church to embrace different forms of theology and practice. I differentiate them from “imported” Western Protestant sects such as Mennonites, Baptists, and Pentecostals because of their Russian origin; and from Old Believers, who considered themselves the true practitioners of Orthodoxy and did not challenge the authenticity and authority of the Eastern Church in its fundamentals. The religious beliefs and practices of these “sectarians” were distinct in many vital respects and my study is sensitive to variations in the experiences of each sect based on their religious faith. Nonetheless, they shared certain commonalities: complete and intense opposition to the Orthodox Church, refutation of the need for priests and hierarchies (or any other mediators in a relationship with God), belief in “spiritual” baptism rather than water baptism, and abjuration of all externalities such as icons, incense, and churches.

⁶ This was a question that plagued tsarist Russia until its demise and has been revived with the 1997 law. See Peter Waldron, “Religious Toleration in Late Imperial Russia,” in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, eds. Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 103-119; M. A. Reisner, *Gosudarstvo i vieruiushchaia lichnost’* (St. Petersburg: 1905); A. M. Bobrshchev-Pushkin, *Sud i raskol’niki-sektanty* (St. Petersburg: 1902); N. L. Solov’ev, *Pol’nyi krug dukhovnykh zakonov* (Moscow: 1907); V. I. Iasevich-Borodaevskaia, *Bor’ba za veru: istoriko-bytovye ocherki i obzor zakonodatel’sva po staroobriadchestvu i sektantstvu v ego posledovatel’nom razviti* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia Tipografiia, 1912); and K. K. Arsen’ev, *Svoboda sovesti i veroterpimost’* (St. Petersburg: 1905).

For Russian officials, this question became increasingly pressing over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The combination of imperial expansion, which brought large numbers of Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Protestants and “pagans” into Russia, and the proliferation of schismatic and sectarian religious movements in the central provinces brought the tsarist government face to face with the demands of rapidly expanding religious diversity.⁷

Especially during the reigns of Catherine II and Alexander I, the autocracy confronted this dilemma by introducing varying degrees and forms of religious toleration.⁸ Their tolerance had its limits, however. Russian monarchs proved unwilling to accept any challenge to the preeminence of the Orthodox Church and, especially, could not condone the growth of Russian Christian sectarians at the expense of Orthodoxy. Both Catherine II and Alexander I struggled continuously to find an acceptable middle ground between outright acceptance and complete criminalization of non-Orthodox Russians – a middle ground that would permit the sects’ existence, even grant them certain civil rights, while simultaneously considering them apostates whose beliefs could not be permitted to thrive.

During the first third of the nineteenth century, tsarist policy-makers developed the practice of what I will call “toleration through isolation” in response to this dilemma. That is, non-Orthodox Russians could be tolerated in the Russian Empire only if they were completely separated from the Orthodox population – taking advantage of the Empire’s vast size to isolate sectarians on the periphery.

⁷ On the proliferation of new sectarian movements in the eighteenth century, see F. V. Livanov, *Raskol’niki i ostorozhniki: ocherki i razskazy*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. Khana, 1872-1873); Orest Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh* (Kiev: 1832), 3-24; John Eugene Clay, “Russian Peasant Religion and its Repression: The Christ-Faith [*Khristovshchina*] and the Origins of the ‘Flagellant Myth, 1666-1837’” (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1989); idem., “The Theological Origins of the Christ-Faith [*Khristovshchina*],” *Russian History* 15 (1988): 21-41; Laura Engelstein, “Rebels of the Soul: Peasant Self-Fashioning in a Religious Key,” *Russian History* 23, nos. 1-4 (1996): 197-213; S. A. Inikova, “Tambovskie Dukhobortsy v 60-e gody XVIII veka,” *Vestnik Tambovskogo universiteta. Ser. Gumanitarnye nauki* vyp. 1 (1997): 39-53.

⁸ Between Catherine II and Alexander I, Paul I introduced a wave of persecution of the Dukhobors, although he was relatively tolerant of the Old Believers. See *Obzor meropriiatii ministerstva vnutrennikh del po raskolu s 1802 po 1881 god* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie Departmenta Obshchikh Del, 1903), 27-43, esp. 29-30; E. R. “Russkii raskol i zakonodatel’s tvo,” *Vestnik Evropy* 15, kn. 4 (April 1880): 512-513; and *SPChR* (1860) vol. 1, pp. 771-772, 783-789.

In the religious policies and activities of Alexander I, we can clearly see certain trends that mirror today's developments, despite all of the intervening decades and changes, and also permit us to develop certain models for understanding the nexus of State, Church, and human rights in contemporary Russia.⁹

1. In Russian history, there were important discrepancies between the law as laid down in legal codes and the law as it was practiced and performed by local administrators. Indeed, given the vast size of the Russian empire and its perpetually undergoverned condition, religious laws were only as effective as the officials who implemented them. During the reign of Alexander I, local officials and Church personnel regularly disregarded central state directives, interpreted them in ways that they saw fit, and imposed their own vision of what the appropriate treatment of non-Orthodox people should be. As a result, the actual practice of religious policy – and how it might be experienced by the Russians subjected to it – could vary dramatically. While the law might claim to protect the rights of different religious communities, practical implementation meant much tougher restrictions imposed on the religiously non-Orthodox.
2. There were also important regional variations in the law itself. That is, the central tsarist government in St. Petersburg formulated and applied different religious laws in different parts of the Russian empire. The practice of uniform laws for every individual or region of the empire did not exist in Russia at that time, in great part in order to allow administrative flexibility for such a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-confessional country. The legacy of these legal structures lingers today.
3. Religious affiliation was intricately tied to national identity and nationality during the reign of Alexander I, as it continues to be. To be Russian meant, to a greater or lesser degree, also to be Orthodox. Those people of Russian ethnic background who did not subscribe to the Orthodox Church posed (and continue to pose) a complex conceptual problem for Russian culture.
4. Similarly, there was a direct link between Church practice and state political activities in Alexander's Russia, but one that did not preclude a more equitable treatment of religious minorities.

⁹ Compare my findings discussed below with Elliott and Corrado, "The 1997 Russian Law on Religion" and Witte

5. As today, the policy-making process was contingent and often haphazard in early nineteenth-century Russia. Even in autocracy's day, high-ranking state officials did not make laws alone and then dictate them to the population. Centrally-mandated religious laws, and policies of religion-based discrimination or toleration, were made in interaction with the demands, requests, and lobbying efforts of both the non-state population and local administrations. In the case of Alexander and the sectarians, such laws were forged by the triangular interaction of central decision-makers, local authorities, and the sectarians themselves, each with their own demands, goals, and actions. Policy evolved not so much from the implementation of a preconceived vision but from the twists and turns of bureaucratic bargaining, often producing unanticipated outcomes.
6. Whatever the original intent of tsarist religious policies, these laws were misinterpreted (consciously and erroneously) with great frequency by the targeted religious communities, who conducted themselves in accordance with the rules as they construed them. As a result, the case of religious policy under Alexander I indicates the need for contemporary scholars and policy-makers to look not only at legal dictates to understand the parameters of religious (in)tolerance, but also to explore how the population understood those laws and structured their lives according to their interpretations.
7. Religious "toleration" in the case of Russia under Alexander I had very different meanings from how observers today would define it. The notion of toleration through isolation or segregation – by physically separating religious communities one from the other – would not necessarily be considered a policy of toleration in the contemporary world, even though it was indeed a common practice in Europe from the Reformation onwards. This fact indicates the existence of many different definitions of "tolerance" that contemporary observers must keep in mind as they approach the case of Russia today.
8. The reign of Alexander I saw a shift in religious policy from more toleration to less toleration. The shift is significant for at least two reasons. First, the transformation of religious practice under

Alexander reflects the degree to which Russian laws were by no means static entities, but rather living organisms that evolved and developed over time based, on the specific circumstances in which they existed. Second, the extension of religious toleration in Russia was by no means a linear development. Laws accepting religious pluralism often created their own unexpected outcomes and dilemmas that forced Russian policy-makers to rethink the original policy. Thus, just as the 1997 law revised the 1990 variant, reducing the rights of a certain classification of non-Orthodox religious communities, so too did the reign of Alexander I see a retrenchment towards a more restrictive religious policy following an effort to “liberalize” the state’s practices.

Toleration, restriction, and isolation: religious dissent in the reign of Alexander I

The reign of Alexander I (1801-1825) is, not unjustifiably, considered a high point of religious toleration towards non-Orthodox Christians in Imperial Russia.¹⁰ In comparison with his predecessors, Alexander took a relatively lenient approach, particularly with regard to sectarians, to the question of how to rule a multi-confessional society. While Catherine II had implemented broad practices of religious toleration, she had not always extended such acceptance to the Russian sectarians. The sectarians’ religiosity led them to reject the power of the Tsar and his/her government. Catherine, with her enlightenment-derived, utilitarian religious tolerance, could not countenance such a challenge to state power, and continued to enforce strict measures against the spread of sectarian religious tendencies.¹¹

Alexander, with his leanings to mystical Christianity, was quick to extend tolerance even to these religious movements – albeit on a restricted and piecemeal, case-by-case basis. In the first half of his reign, by far the majority of his declarations concerning the sectarians were specifically directed towards

¹⁰ For general discussions of religious toleration in the reign of Alexander I, see *Obzor meropriiatii*, 43-48; E. R. “Russkii raskol,” 516-532; and P. N. Miliukov, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul’tury*, vol. 2, no. 1, *Tserkov’, Religiiia, Literatura* (Moscow: Progress-Kul’tura, 1994), 127.

¹¹ Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 122; George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), 30-31; James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Vintage Books,

one denomination: the Dukhobors. According to the letter of the law, his tolerance applied only to this one sect. However, his acceptance of the Dukhobors opened up, indirectly and at times directly, both a discursive and legislative space in which other sectarian confessions, and particularly the Molokans, found greater freedom to exist.

We should note that Alexander's tendencies to tolerance did not necessarily reflect a simple acceptance of religious pluralism or freedom of conscience for religious minorities. In his final years on the throne, Alexander turned away from his initial practices of tolerance. Moreover, even during the early years of his reign, the Tsar implemented a Janus-like religious policy which aimed simultaneously to carve out a legal niche in which Russian religious dissenters could exist, while simultaneously trying to restrict their spread and eliminate their "errors of faith."

On one hand, Alexander decriminalized religious non-conformity and mandated the separation of "heresy" from secular or civil crimes. Affiliation to a sectarian faith was no longer considered a criminal act in and of itself, although certain public displays of religious non-conformity were deemed criminal disturbances of public order.¹² At the same time, Alexander granted religious dissenters civil rights not substantially less than those of Orthodox Russians, particularly freedom from persecution.

On the other hand, Alexander simultaneously strove to prevent the growth of sectarian faiths, considering the non-conformists to be heretics whose religious beliefs were grossly in error. In contrast to his predecessors, who often applied severe measures to those who professed a sectarian affiliation, Alexander I believed that only humane treatment and good example could bring the sectarians back into the "bosom" of the true, Orthodox church. These two branches were grafted together in the making of Alexander's religious policy. For the Tsar, toleration of religious diversity was not simply an end in itself, but also the most efficient means to eliminate that very same religious pluralism.

1970), 254-255. For a discussion of Catherine's more lenient treatment of the Old Believers, see *Obzor meropriiatii*, 21-27 and Madariaga, *Russia in the Age*, 517-518.

¹²Public displays included prayer houses, public marriage or burial ceremonies, and preaching or religious discussions within earshot of Orthodox Russians.

Two concerns lay behind this dual policy towards religious non-conformity that Alexander implemented at the outset of his reign: the maintenance of public order and the fulfillment of civil and military duties by the Empire's subjects. As long as sectarians did not disrupt the "general good" and continued to meet their responsibilities as Russian subjects, Alexander did not challenge their right to exist. Such disruptions of the public order included disrespect to Orthodox priests, overt displays of "heresy," attempts to spread the dissenting faith, or any efforts to tempt Orthodox subjects to religious error. In practice, this meant that he increasingly upheld a juridical distinction between those sectarians who sought to spread their beliefs and those who simply adhered to a dissident faith. Non-conformists found guilty of preaching and proselytizing to Orthodox Russians faced increasingly serious criminal prosecution as threats to public order. Rank-and-file believers who made no effort to spread their faith were tolerated. Moreover, such efforts emphasized the importance of state obligations by requiring that leaders and disseminators of sectarian faiths be forced to carry out service useful to the state (especially militarily, but also economically) despite their status as religious criminals.

Corporatism, national religions, and the sectarian dilemma

To better understand the foundations of the religious policies of Alexander I, we must explore the intellectual framework in which Russians were working with regard to the sectarians. In the background of Russia's policies of religious toleration during the early nineteenth century lay a belief in the close relationship between religion and ethnicity which permeated (in various guises) educated circles through much of the Imperial period. Indeed, on a broad level, Russian notions of the connections between religious and national affiliation restricted the choices available to policy-makers, making the somewhat clumsy policy of "toleration though isolation" seem like the best possible option.

Like many other multinational empires, Imperial Russia applied a corporatist approach to religious toleration: tolerating non-Orthodox confessions as corporate groups rather than allowing freedom of

conscience to individual believers. In his discussion of the structures of toleration in multinational empires, Michael Walzer argues that:

Imperial autonomy tends to lock individuals into their communities and therefore into a singular ethnic or religious identity. It tolerates groups and their authority structures and customary practices, not (except in a few cosmopolitan centers and capital cities) free-floating men and women. The incorporated communities are not voluntary associations; ... Though there is some movement of individuals across their boundaries (converts and apostates, for example), the communities are mostly closed, enforcing one or another version of religious orthodoxy and sustaining a traditional way of life.¹³

We can see this structure of toleration at work, for example, in the religious policies of Catherinian Russia. In the words of one historian:

As a rational being, she believed neither in forcible conversion nor in the persecution of religious minorities, provided that her subjects all had religion, and fulfilled the religious duties it imposed on them. Religion was to her a valuable element in the preservation of public order and the maintenance of public and private morality, but it should never be allowed to rival the influence of the government.¹⁴

In Imperial Russia the corporatist approach to religious pluralism led to a frequent coupling of religious affiliation and nationality [*narodnost*']. Writing on these questions at the turn of the century, the jurist M. A. Reisner argued that nineteenth-century Russian officials and intellectuals believed religion to be the “foundation of nationality,” and that each ethnic group naturally possessed its own “national religion.”¹⁵ The primordial religion for Russians was Orthodoxy – just as Judaism was for Jews and Islam for Tatars. The nineteenth-century French observer of Russia, Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, echoed these views. “For Russians, ‘Catholic’ means ‘Pole’ and ‘Protestant’ means ‘German.’” Elsewhere he

¹³ Michael Walzer, *On Toleration*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 16. Russia’s approach to religious tolerance is emblematic of toleration in multinational empires across time and geographical boundaries. See the theoretical discussion of toleration in multinational empires (especially in comparison with consociations and nation-states, and in comparison with the practices of the Ottoman Empire) in *ibid.*, 14-36.

¹⁴ Madariaga, *Russia in the Age*, 503. For a discussion of her policies of religious toleration more generally, see *ibid.*, 503-518 and A. M. Ammann, “Church Affairs,” in *Catherine the Great: A Profile*, ed. Marc Raeff (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 294-297.

¹⁵ The following discussion is drawn from Reisner, *Gosudarstvo*, especially 194-196 and Bobrshchev-Pushkin, *Sud*, 1-50.

added: “[i]n the eyes of the masses, indeed of the highest classes and the government itself, no one is a true and thorough Russian who is not Orthodox.”¹⁶

In outlining his interpretation of the formation of Russian religious policy towards non-Orthodox subjects of the Empire, Leroy-Beaulieu depicted an intricate relationship between religious affiliation, nationality and corporatist religious policies:

As [Russia] extended her frontiers in Europe and Asia, she had to make legal room for the religions of the annexed countries. At every acquisition the Tsars engaged to respect the religion of their new provinces. They were and remained for all that the Orthodox Tsars, jealously bent on preserving for their own Church her ancient monopoly amid their old subjects. ... The other cults, introduced in to the empire by conquest, were sanctioned for the conquered peoples, not for the Russian of Old-Russia. The Pole was allowed to remain a Catholic, the Tatar a Mussulman, the German a Protestant, the Jew a Jew, but the Russian was to remain Orthodox. ... For the Russian Church, as has already been pointed out, is not only a State church, but an essentially national one, so strongly knit by history and habits to the existence of Russia that it really seems as though, outside of her, one cannot be a Russian. In the eyes of the government as well as of the people, the quality of Orthodox Christian is (even now) the surest pledge of patriotism and loyalty.¹⁷

Without overlaying religious and national identity quite as unproblematically as Leroy-Beaulieu, recent scholarship has also underscored how these two webs of constructed and coded meaning existed in dynamic and mutually-influential interaction. In particular, scholars have discerned a vital nexus between Orthodox Christianity and Russian nationality. This coupling derives in great part from the emphasis placed on Orthodoxy during the reign of Nicholas I as an integrative and educational tool of Empire – a vital pillar of those beliefs and practices known as Official Nationality.¹⁸

¹⁶ Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians*, vol. 3, *Religion* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1896), 45 and 511, respectively. I argue in other publications that the bonds between Orthodoxy and Russianness were at times stretched and even severed briefly. For suggestive comments on the evolving relations between nationality and religious affiliation in the case of Russians and Orthodoxy, see Gregory Freiden, “Romans into Italians: Russian National Identity in Transition,” in *Russian Culture in Transition*, vol. 7 of *Stanford Slavic Studies*, ed. idem. (Stanford: 1993), esp. 243-251.

¹⁷ Leroy-Beaulieu, *Empire of the Tsars*, 508-510.

¹⁸ Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality, 1825-1855* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961); Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy, Vol. I From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 379-381; and Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 214-245.

Indeed, Theodore Weeks has written recently that “throughout the empire the terms ‘Russian’ and ‘Orthodox’ were nearly always treated as obvious synonyms” in the nineteenth century. Importantly, Weeks finds that this linkage continued in one form or another into the twentieth century, despite state-sponsored efforts to sever the bond: “St. Petersburg’s policy toward Russians in the Kingdom of Poland after 1905 ... to redefine ‘Russian’ in a nonreligious manner ... was an effort doomed to failure.”¹⁹

The parameters of Russian religious tolerance towards sectarians during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were broadly constructed around these national notions of religion. As Russians who were not Orthodox, the sectarians represented a unique dilemma and a problematic case in an intellectual environment of ethnically-based, corporatist religions. Reisner argued: “[t]he schism [*raskol*] fractures the unity of Orthodoxy as the exclusive, ideal basis of the dominant nationality [*narodnost*].”²⁰ Leroy-Beaulieu added: “[T]o such Russians as would feel inclined to leave the pale of the Orthodox Church no way seems open but to drop their nationality, since their country repulses them.”²¹

Indeed, sectarians stood at the margins of Russian society in the first decades of the nineteenth century, banished there by both secular and spiritual authorities. From a religious perspective, they were considered heretics, well outside the flock of the Orthodox Church. As well as being lost souls, consensus among state officials held that sectarians were by their very nature – fanatical, given to absurd views, lacking respect in their teachings for earthly authority – disloyal to state and Tsar, and threats to the very existence of these cornerstones of the Russian Empire.²² Lurking in the background was the example of the religious fractures of Western Europe which Russian officials viewed as perilous to state and national unity.²³

¹⁹ Theodore Weeks, “Defending Our Own: Government and The Russian Minority in the Kingdom of Poland, 1905-1914,” *The Russian Review* 54 (October 1995): 544, 540.

²⁰ Reisner, *Gosudarstvo*, 195.

²¹ Leroy-Beaulieu, *Empire of the Tsars*, 510.

²² On sectarians as a political threat see, for example, “Istoricheskiia svedeniia,” 291-292 and V. M. Skvortsov, *Zapiska o dukhobortsakh na Kavkaze* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 1-7.

²³ GARF f. 109, op. 3 (sekretnyi arkhiv), d. 1495, 1855, l. 2.

To grant toleration to the sectarians was not a simple matter, then, given Russia's corporatist and national approach to religious diversity. In addition to putting aside theological opposition to heresy, toleration of sectarians required a fundamental revision of the meanings of Russianness. Throughout the Imperial period, Russian leaders' liberating actions towards the sectarians were circumscribed by these corporatist, national notions of religious affiliation. This fact helps us to understand why, despite the inclination to implement policies of tolerance in the empire – generated both by enlightenment rationalism and mystic piety – tsarist officials strove simultaneously to restrict the sectarians. It was not until 1904-05 that sectarians received civil rights to their religious practices alongside those of other non-Orthodox Christian denominations in Russia.²⁴

Extending toleration under Alexander I

When Alexander I became Tsar in March 1801, many of his first actions concerned the fate of religious non-conformists in Russia.²⁵ Only one week following his ascension to the throne, Alexander ordered the return to their former homes in the New Russian provinces of all Dukhobors who had been summarily banished to Siberia by his father.²⁶ Moreover, within a month of becoming Tsar, Alexander issued a rescript to all military and civil governors that ordered a fundamental alteration of state treatment of Russia's sectarians. He declared that, thenceforth, when dealing with those “who have deviated from the correct faith and the rightful Holy Church” because of their “simplicity and ignorance,” spiritual authorities were to replace “severity” and “coercion” with “meekness, patience and diligent insistence which alone can assuage the cruelest heart and lead them from inveterate stubbornness.”

²⁴ See, for example, Solov'ev, *Pol'nyi krug* and Iasevich-Borodaevskaia, *Bor'ba za veru*.

²⁵ These religious declarations formed part of a larger oeuvre of legislative acts that revised much of Paul I's legislation. See Allen McConnell, *Tsar Alexander I: Paternalistic Reformer* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1970), 22-25; Marc Raeff, *Understanding Imperial Russia: State and Society in the Old Regime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 113-145; and Alexander M. Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries: Russian Conservative Thought and Politics in the Reign of Alexander I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997), 15-90.

The new Tsar asserted that the persecution of sectarians which had characterized the religious policies of his forebears (and especially his father, Paul I) had accomplished little and had not “corrected” the non-conformists. Rather, such mistreatment had led them to a “common bitterness” and entrenched the apostates in their false beliefs. Alexander ordered that not even “the smallest oppression” was to be used in efforts “to bring [the dissenters] to reason and point [them] on the true path.” Patience, good example and respectful treatment were to be the order of the day. Accompanying this shift in relations to the non-conformists, Alexander asserted that the primary concern of tsarist officials should be to ensure that the “general public order everywhere would not be disturbed.” Officials were not to prosecute religious deviation per se, but those sectarians who did disrupt the social peace were to be tried to the harshest extent of the law.²⁷

Over the course of the first twenty years of his reign, Alexander issued a series of decrees both expanding and reinforcing this original statement of religious tolerance towards the Dukhobors. In November 1801, Alexander wrote to the governor of Slobodsko-Ukraine guberniia in response to an uprising of Dukhobors in that region. Upon returning from exile in Siberia, the Dukhobors had burst into rebellion because of debilitating poverty, the severe treatment they received from religious officials in New Russia, and particularly the forceful nature of the priests’ “admonitions.” Alexander assigned the governor the task of reasserting order among the Dukhobors while also defending them from all persecution on the part of local authorities.²⁸

Reason and experience long ago demonstrated that the intellectual delusions of simple people are only exacerbated by debates and elegant admonitions. Only with inattention, good example and tolerance will [the errors] be obliterated and disappear ... Such is the rule with which the local administration should behave

²⁶“O poselenii dukhobortsev v Novorossiiskom krae,” *Russkaia Starina* 98 (May 1899): 396; Gary Dean Fry, “The Doukhobors, 1801-1855: The Origins of a Successful Dissident Sect” (Ph. D. diss., The American University, 1976), 86; and for the 1799 order sending the Dukhobors into exile, see *SPChR* (1860) vol. 1, pp. 771-772.

²⁷*Obzor meropriiatii*, 49. These notions reflected Alexander’s worldview more broadly. As one historian has described: Alexander’s “favorite theme [was] the law, not caprice, must rule supreme in the state.” McConnell, *Tsar Alexander I*, 24.

²⁸“Zapiski Moskovskago martinista senatora I. V. Lopukhina,” *Russkii arkhiv* 52, kn. 1 (1884): 87-88 and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 17-18.

towards [the Dukhobors] ... These admonitions should in no way take on the form of interrogations, torture and open violence to the rites of their beliefs.²⁹

In a similar letter to the governor of Tambov province in 1803, Alexander I reaffirmed that:

The general rule, taken by me in cases of error of this kind, consists of not doing violence to conscience and not entering into investigations of the internal profession of faith. At the same time, any external signs of deviation from the Church are not permitted, and any temptations to lure people from the Church are strictly forbidden, not as a heresy, but as a disruption of the general good and order.³⁰

In the same letter Alexander ordered that in dealings with the Dukhobors in Tambov province, tsarist authorities were to use priests who were “meek” and of “good morals,” not to enter into arguments with the Dukhobors, and to strive to return the Dukhobors to the true faith not through “force or obligation,” but by their “good example” and “holy life.” In order to avoid the conflicts between Orthodox and non-Orthodox villagers common in Tambov province, Alexander ordered both spiritual and secular authorities to refrain from coming into contact with Dukhobors, and especially from visiting their homes.³¹ As long as the Dukhobors continued to fulfill their obligations and duties to state power, and did not disrupt the general good by openly luring others to their faith, the Dukhobors were not to be punished for their heresy and were to be left alone in the internal profession of their faith.³²

In 1816, Alexander I reiterated his instruction to tolerate the Dukhobors. In a dispatch to the military governor of Kherson guberniia, the Tsar asked:

Does it befit an enlightened Christian state to return those in error to the bosom of the Church through harsh and severe means, torture, exile and other similar methods? The teachings of the Savior of the world, who came to earth ... to save the fallen, cannot be taught through violence and punishments ... True faith is produced by God’s blessing through persuasion, edification, meekness, and, above all, good example. Severity never persuades, it only embitters. All the measures of strictness exhausted on the Dukhobors over the course of the thirty years up to

²⁹ *SPChR* (1875), p. 17.

³⁰ *SPChR* (1875), p. 25. Also found in *PSZ(1)* t. 27, 1802-1803, no. 20629, p. 470.

³¹ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 25-26 and N. Varadinov, *Istoriia Ministerstva vnutrennikh del*, vol. 8, supplementary, *Istoriia rasporiazhenii po raskolu* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1863), 63-64. Alexander again underlined the need to approach the sectarians in Tambov with tolerance and good behavior in another letter to the Tambov governor later in 1803. See *PSZ (1)* t. 27, 1803, no. 20904, p. 848.

³² *SPChR* (1875), pp. 25-26.

1801 not only failed to wipe out that sect, but significantly increased the number of their followers.³³

Alexander continued this letter, asserting that even though the Dukhobors were in error in their religious beliefs, they “must feel that they exist under the protection and patronage of the laws, and only then can we reliably expect them to love and feel an attachment to the Government, and to exact their fulfillment of its laws....”³⁴

The policies and practices of Alexander I concerning religious toleration attracted a degree of international attention. The French ambassador to Russia, the Comte de Noailles, wrote in his report to Paris in 1817 that the decree of December 21 1816 “merits note for the principles of religious tolerance that it established ... [The Dukhobors] should not be bothered in any manner for their religious belief, but, on the contrary, treated and protected like the other subjects of His Imperial Majesty.”³⁵

Alongside these declarations of tolerance towards religious diversity – and despite Alexander’s reluctance “to do violence to conscience” – the Tsar continued efforts to ensure that activities which threatened to disrupt “public order” would be swiftly and strictly punished. An example from Astrakhan guberniia shows the boundaries of Alexander’s religious toleration. In 1802, Dukhobors descended “noisily, in whole crowds” into a village marketplace and “openly began to spread their depravity [razvrat].” Upon being sent to the local court, the Dukhobors not only refused to deny their errors but also renounced any obedience to, and recognition of, state authorities. Reflecting Alexander’s distinction between fanatical leaders and believer-followers, the central instigators of the disturbance were exiled as criminals to the Kola peninsula, whereas the others were granted monarchical mercy.³⁶

Three other examples also demonstrate Alexander’s severe response to religious activity which challenged social tranquility. In 1802, a Dukhobor “teacher-fanatic” in Saratov province persuaded the

³³ *SPChR* (1875), p. 47.

³⁴ *SPChR* (1875), p. 48.

³⁵ Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich, *Imperator Aleksandr I: opyt' istoricheskogo issledovaniia* (St. Petersburg: 1912), vol. 2: 260-261.

³⁶ Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 28-29.

majority of his village, including women and children, to barricade themselves in a cave filled with wood for the purpose of self-ignition.³⁷ With the fire already blazing, other villagers became aware of what was going on and intervened, pulling the half-dead Dukhobors out of the flames and smoke. When brought to trial, those who repented their errors and rejoined Orthodoxy were permitted to return to their homes. However, the “depraved” were exiled with hard labor or incarcerated in a monastery.³⁸ Elsewhere in 1802, an estate peasant from Tambov named D’iakov displayed “obvious disobedience” towards his landlord and was taken to court. There, he and his family demonstrated “disobedience to all legal authority, originating from errors of faith.” In response to their denial of the state’s and landlord’s authority, the D’iakov family was banished to Kola.³⁹ Moreover, in 1807, Alexander made efforts to stop the spread of the “false teachings” of the Dukhobors in Siberia. He asserted that Dukhobors who were overtly seducing others to the Dukhobor faith, and disrupting public order, were to be sent into military service in Siberia. Those who were incapable of military service were to be sentenced to work either in the Nechersk factories, or in the state salt factory in Selengin.⁴⁰

Origins of isolation

The idea of sectarian segregation did not originate with policy-makers in St. Petersburg. It arose among the dissenters themselves, then was embraced by tsarist officials. Not unexpectedly, religious non-conformists and tsarist authorities had divergent expectations of what isolation would mean in practice.⁴¹ Sectarians requested isolation as a means to escape Orthodox persecution, to strengthen their economic prospects, and to evade the surveillance of state officials. In contrast, Imperial authorities saw isolation as a method to restrict contact between dissenters and Orthodox Russians: to halt sectarian

³⁷ While self-immolation was a common practice among Russia’s Old Believers, this is the only case on record describing the Dukhobors involved in such practices and should not be considered typical of the sect. On Old Believer self-immolation, see Crummey, *Old Believers*, 45-57, 187-192, passim.

³⁸ Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 29.

³⁹ Fry, “Doukhobors,” 109.

⁴⁰ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 36-37. See also *Obzor meropriiatii*, 46.

proselytism and to exterminate the dissenting faiths. They also believed that the geographic concentration of sectarians would facilitate Orthodox proselytizing among the dissenters.

The policy of isolation came into being in this context of trying to realize Alexander's dual goals – tolerating the existence of the religious dissenters and ensuring them civil rights, while simultaneously attempting to break them of their heresy and to prevent any further spread of the non-conformist faith. By physically separating religious non-conformists and Orthodox Russian subjects into discrete, unconnected communities, Alexander believed that he had found the best means to achieve toleration and restriction simultaneously. Such segregation was also in keeping with Russian beliefs in the linkage between ethnicity and religious affiliation, because isolation represented the closest approximation of a national homeland for the sectarians.⁴²

The story of isolation began in 1801 when Senators I. V. Lopukhin and Iu. A. Neledinskii-Meletskii were sent to Kharkov province to investigate a series of Dukhobor complaints about their conditions of life upon returning from exile in Siberia. During the investigations, Dukhobors presented Lopukhin with a petition requesting that they be amalgamated into a separate, mono-confessional colony. While coming to know the Dukhobors, Lopukhin began to condone their faith and to sympathize with them in the face of maltreatment by local tsarist officials.⁴³ He relayed the Dukhobors' request for isolation to the Tsar using a language that consciously merged Alexander's emphasis on legal treatment for non-conformists with the desire to lead them back into the Orthodox Church.

Lopukhin asserted that, first, the formation of a Dukhobor colony would quiet the sectarians' unrest, by removing them from the harassment and animosity of Imperial officials in the region. Second, such segregation would all but eliminate the Dukhobors' ability to spread their beliefs to others. Finally, Lopukhin argued, concentrated settlements would facilitate the conversion of Dukhobors to Orthodoxy.

⁴¹In this vein, see the discussion in GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, n.d., ll. 45-46.

⁴²On Russian practices of “[confining] the alien confessions within their historical boundaries,” see Leroy-Beaulieu, *Empire of the Tsars*, 512.

Their concentration would help well-educated, moral, and patient priests in their task of bringing the Dukhobors back to Orthodoxy by giving them ease of access to large numbers of Dukhobors at once.⁴⁴

Alexander agreed whole-heartedly with Lopukhin's proposal and immediately set in motion the consolidation of a separate Dukhobor colony in New Russia. In January 1802, the Tsar granted permission for any Dukhobors in the New Russian provinces to settle together in a region known as *Molochnye vody* [Milky Waters] on the banks of the Molochna river in Melitopol' uezd.⁴⁵ Alexander I wrote to the Governor of New Russia to outline his reasons for isolating the Dukhobors. He argued that the concentration of Dukhobors, separate from other Russians, would be an effective policy "both with respect to the ruin being endured by these people, and also that I consider such separation to be the most reliable means for the cancellation [*pogashenie*] of their heresy and for the suppression of its influence on others."⁴⁶

The terms of settlement in Melitopol' district reflected a tsarist policy that was at once concerned with the welfare of the Dukhobors as Russian subjects and desirous of the termination of the sect (through conversion to the Orthodox Church and the prevention of any external manifestations of the faith). To facilitate their new lives, Alexander granted the Dukhobors extremely generous material conditions for settlement relative to the Empire's average peasant.⁴⁷ The Dukhobor settlers were assigned relatively large land allotments (at least fifteen desiatinas per soul, although frequently more) and received five-year tax relief. Alexander reiterated his desire that local officials "defend them [the Dukhobors] from any

⁴³ On Lopukhin's religiosity more broadly, see Alexander Lipski, "A Russian Mystic Faces the Age of Rationalism and Revolution: Thought and Activity of Ivan Vladimirovich Lopukhin," *Church History* 36, no. 2 (June 1967): 170-189 and Billington, *Icon and the Axe*, 269-306

⁴⁴ "Zapiski I. V. Lopukhina," 92-96 and Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 25.

⁴⁵ *Molochnye vody* received its name from the high chalk content in the river which gave the water a milky color.

⁴⁶ *SPChR* (1875), p. 18. Alexander's opinion can also be found in *PSZ*(1) t. 27, 1802, no. 20123, pp. 27-28. On December 9, 1816, in a letter to the Kherson military governor, Alexander echoed these original reasons for settling the Dukhobors in New Russia: to prevent their further ruin and maltreatment and, through separation, to lead to suppression of the sect. See *SPChR* (1875), p. 47.

⁴⁷ For details on the Dukhobors' conditions of settlement in the Milky Waters region, see *SPChR* (1875), pp. 18-19; Fry, "Doukhobors," 103-108; "Poselenie dukhobortsev na r. Molochnoi" *Russkaia starina* 100 (October 1899): 240; Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Doukhobors*, 35-61; and Sunderland, "Making the Empire," 138-157, 174-216.

restrictions, and work to favor their settlement.” The newly arriving Dukhobors were to be settled as closely as possible to their co-religionists who already lived near Molochnye vody.

However, as part of Alexander’s two-pronged religious policy, local officials also were told to ensure that these Dukhobors did not break any civil laws and especially did not harbor illegal runaways, nor attract anyone at all to their sect.⁴⁸ Permission to settle in the Melitopol’ district applied only to those Dukhobors already living in New Russia and was not a blanket permission for Dukhobors from anywhere in Russia to move to Molochnye vody. Moreover, the legislation of 1802 applied only to Dukhobors and did not concern other sectarians, such as Molokans or Subbotniks, who were also beginning to appear in great numbers in the central provinces during these years.

Over time, the decision to concentrate Dukhobors in one part of New Russia was extended to Dukhobors living in other Russian provinces. The broadening of the scope of isolation came in response to the demand of Dukhobors elsewhere in the Empire. They had heard about the favorable conditions granted their brethren and requested to join them in the Molochna region in order to unite with their co-religionists and to save themselves from the persecution that they felt they suffered at the hands of tsarist officials and their Orthodox neighbors.⁴⁹ Indeed, the 1802 legislation generated a mass of petitions from religious non-conformists throughout the Empire.⁵⁰ Alexander granted the Dukhobors’ desire in 1804, arguing that the relocation of these sectarians would remove the causes for “discord” between the Dukhobors and Orthodox Russians, and that by settling the Dukhobors in one place, “the very surveillance of them [the Dukhobors] would be more active.”⁵¹ In granting the dissenters’ demands, tsarist officials moved slowly towards a more general policy of toleration through isolation. Thus, as with the initial decision to bring the Dukhobors together into one settlement, here again, the actions of the Dukhobors themselves pushed the administration to take new actions.

⁴⁸ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 28-30.

⁴⁹ Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 26.

⁵⁰ The petitions of Dukhobors in Tambov and Voronezh provinces in 1804 to be resettled to Melitopol’ district were particularly important in widening the scope of dissenter segregation. Fry, “Doukhobors,” 130-131.

The number of Dukhobors in New Russia grew rapidly in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Dukhobors from many parts of the Empire – Tambov, Voronezh, Finland, Siberia, Archangel, the Caucasus, and the Don region – requested and received permission to settle in New Russia.⁵² Others were forcibly exiled to Molochnye Vody by state order. In February of 1805, for instance, Dukhobors living in the Azov fortress were ordered to relocate to Melitopol’ district as a means to “avert the spread of this sect, so that the followers of the sect would be scattered as little as possible.”⁵³

Tsarist officials also expanded the scope of the segregation policy beyond the Dukhobor sect and began, albeit inconsistently, to bring other sectarians together in one proscribed place, as they had been doing with the Dukhobors. In 1816, Alexander I ordered that all Ikonobors⁵⁴ in the Empire “who remained unrepentant in their errors” be relocated to Molochnye vody.⁵⁵ In the 1820s, tsarist officials began both to banish Molokans, and to grant their requests, to settle in Melitopol’ uezd alongside the Dukhobors.⁵⁶ In the early 1820s, for example, the Ministry of the Interior received a petition from 306 Molokans in Tambov province who wanted to be relocated, along with their families, to Tauride province so that they could be with their religious brethren, and because they found themselves unable to meet their annual taxes in their current location.⁵⁷

Similar policies of isolation and segregation can also be seen in the case of the Subbotniks, although with characteristics unique to the sect. Unlike Dukhobors and Molokans, Subbotniks were not sent to New Russia, but rather isolated in the North Caucasus, particularly in Astrakhan guberniia. Moreover, while there were many voluntary migrants among the Subbotniks (especially to the towns),

⁵¹ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 27-30; and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 65-66.

⁵² *SPChR* (1875), pp. 28-30, 62-63; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 79; Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 26; Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Doukhobors*, 37.

⁵³ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 30-31.

⁵⁴ Ikonobor was a term used in certain parts of Russia to refer to the adherents of a religiosity similar to, or the same as, Dukhobors. After 1830, Ikonobors were amalgamated with the Dukhobors in state parlance and statistics. See Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 26.

⁵⁵ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 44-45.

⁵⁶ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 62-63, 66-67.

their settlement in the Caucasus was more frequently a form of punishment or exile than was the case for Dukhobors and Molokans migrating to the Molochna region. Banishment to the Caucasian frontier as punishment frequently elicited the restrictive results desired by Russian authorities. There were numerous cases of Subbotniks who refused to be resettled and preferred to convert to Orthodoxy to avoid relocation southwards.⁵⁸

As the Subbotnik example demonstrates, New Russia was not the only location in the Russian Empire in which sectarians were isolated during the reign of Alexander I. In 1804, for example, Dukhobors who had been exiled to Ekaterinburg for work in the mines (and who were later moved to Irkutsk guberniia) were not permitted to settle in New Russia because the distance that they would be forced to travel to relocate posed too serious an obstacle. Instead, Alexander decreed that local officials should set up a Dukhobor colony in Irkutsk on the basis of the one near Molochnye vody.⁵⁹ Moreover, even when presented with the option, not all Dukhobors wanted to go to the Molochna colony. In 1811, for instance, as many as 4,000 Dukhobors from a variety of provinces petitioned the Tsar to create a Dukhobor settlement in the recently incorporated lands of Bessarabia similar to the one in Melitopol' district. Serious consideration was given to this plan even though it was eventually rejected out of fear of possible French invasion.⁶⁰

Assailing Alexander's tolerance

Beginning in the 1810s, but especially in the 1820s, criticisms of Alexander I's religious policies arose from a myriad of sources, including the Tsar himself. They took a variety of forms, and came from differing perspectives. While critics often proposed mutually exclusive solutions, the majority called for

⁵⁷Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 129.

⁵⁸On the Subbotniki in the North Caucasus, see GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, ll. 79-112; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 593, 1820-1840, ll. 21-29; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 95, 99; and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 62-63.

⁵⁹PSZ (1) t. 28, 1804-1805, no. 21845, pp. 1134-1136.

some combination of less tolerance and more complete isolation for sectarians. Critics evinced frustration with Alexander's original two-pronged efforts and with the tensions and contradictions that arose from the attempt to apply toleration and restriction at once. They also found fault with the practice of isolation that had ensued from combining these contradictory goals. The isolation policies of the early 1800s were inconsistent in their application, affecting various sectarian denominations differently, and utilizing a variety of geographic areas for segregation.

Alexander himself grew impatient with the results of his policies. He found himself in constant conflict over their application with local officials who generally preferred to continue their previous, more oppressive approach to sectarianism. Regional officials either could not recognize, or were unwilling to recognize, the distinction that Alexander was making between persecuting faith and persecuting acts of faith that broke civil laws or threatened the well-being of the state and its people. Despite the Tsar's orders, sectarians continued to suffer at the hands of local officials simply for professing their faith. Many of these local officials took advantage of the wording of Alexander's declarations of tolerance and imposed the prohibition on public "manifestations" [*okazatel'stvo*] of sectarianism in the widest possible sense, allowing them, in effect, to persecute non-conformists for their adherence to another faith.⁶¹

A group of Molokans described how Alexander's "benevolent views towards them and his orders in their favor have been evaded, so that some of their families are yet separated by banishment."⁶² In one case (1816-1818), Dukhobors from New Russia complained to Alexander that twenty of their brethren had been exiled to Siberia "not for any crimes, but only for being Dukhobors." Alexander responded immediately, ordering that all Dukhobors mentioned in the petition be returned from exile and settled in

⁶⁰Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 78. Fry, "Doukhobors," 132-134. Petitions came from Voronezh, Tambov, Saratov, Astrakhan, and Orenburg provinces. Apparently some Dukhobors and Molokans did clandestinely relocate to Bessarabia in the 1820s and 1830s. See Fry, "Doukhobors," 134.

⁶¹*Obzor meropriiatii*, 45. Catherine II ran into similar problems when her tolerance towards Old Believers was blocked in its application by the long-standing practices of Russian officials. As one nineteenth century Russian commentator described the obstacles: "The Synod and Senate still did not assimilate the new directive and remained true to the old tendencies; lower powers, secular and spiritual, did not stop constricting schismatic communities." E. R., "Russkii raskol," 508.

⁶²Quoted in Fry, "Doukhobors," 168.

Molochnye vody. He underscored his discontent with their banishment by demanding that Siberian officials spare no expense for their trip back, so that no Dukhobors were lost “by exhaustion in transit.”⁶³

In response to the evasions of local authorities, Alexander ordered in 1818 that in the future, “when Dukhobors are uncovered, then, before they are taken to court, before even the local administration issues any command about prosecuting them in court,” the details of the case were to be sent to Alexander for prior review. In ordering this surveillance of the treatment of religious dissenters, Alexander struggled to avoid evasions of his policy by local officials.⁶⁴ Left in the position of watchdog, chastising officials when they ignored the laws, Alexander began himself to rethink his policies.

In addition to ignoring Alexander’s relatively tolerant approach, local officials openly protested his policies. For example, they complained bitterly about settling Dukhobors in Melitopol’ district. In 1816, Alexandre de Langeron, governor-general of New Russia, voiced to Alexander his vehement opposition to the policy of isolating the Dukhobors in New Russia.⁶⁵ He demanded the dissenters’ removal from Tauride guberniia for leading “dissipated lives,” and found them guilty of converting Orthodox neighbors to their heresy. He also argued that the Dukhobors were not “Christian schismatics” [*raskol’niki*], but rather some other religious tendency that had lost all connection to Christianity.

Alexander boldly defended the Dukhobors’ right to exist in Melitopol’, and demanded proper treatment for them. But, Langeron offered a more radical solution to the problem of the Dukhobors: increasing their isolation. Rather than keep them in New Russia, Langeron argued, the Dukhobors “should move to another area, where the residents are not Christian.”⁶⁶ Thus, Langeron argued for expanding the policy of isolation that had developed under Alexander I in order to prohibit any possible contact with Christian, and especially Orthodox, people.

⁶³ Fry, “Doukhobors,” 167-168; *SPChR* (1875), p. 54.

⁶⁴ *SPChR* (1875), p. 55. For an example where Alexander’s demand for prior review halted local prosecution of Dukhobors, see Fry, “Doukhobors,” 170.

⁶⁵ For a detailed analysis of Langeron’s opposition to the Dukhobors under his rule, see Fry, “Doukhobors,” 141-154, 164-165; *SPChR* (1875), pp. 46-49; and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 79-81.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Fry, “Doukhobors,” 153.

In another case, M. M. Speranskii voiced his concerns about St. Petersburg's Dukhobor policy in response to the appearance of Dukhobors in the diocese of Penza in 1816. He found that the settlement of Dukhobors in the Molochna region represented at least "indifference, with a certain tinge of patronage," if not "true encouragement" to the non-conformists. Such patronage was unacceptable in the case of the Dukhobors since their doctrine was "so close to the spirit of liberty and civil equality, that the least curvature or deviation left of this line – where presently they still stand – could produce a very powerful shock among the people." Despite a deep disenchantment with the isolation policy, Speranskii stopped short in this letter of demanding an end to the Molochnye vody settlements. However, he did underscore the problems inherent in the existing practice of giving the sectarian settlers in New Russia generous land allotments and other economic perquisites. "What differences in land, in taxes, in obligations... God save us if our peasants, or particular landowners, learn of these differences."⁶⁷

Speranskii was not the only tsarist official to voice concern that the settlement of sectarians in the Molochna area was only serving to strengthen the non-conformists' position in Russian society, and to attract Orthodox Russians into the dissenting faiths. In 1822, the governor of Tauride guberniia declared in a report to the Ministry of the Interior that the Orthodox population [*narod*] believed that Molokans received special state patronage. The governor argued that this view of Molokan privilege derived from two sources. First, both Orthodox and Molokan Russians misinterpreted the Tsar's declaration of toleration for the Dukhobors in 1816, believing that the ruling not only protected all religious non-conformists from persecution, but that, through it, the state actively sought to protect the sectarians and to invite "all to join the heresy."⁶⁸ Second, the large land allotments held by dissenter-settlers (relative to others in New Russia as well as peasants elsewhere in the empire) – at times reaching as much as 37.5 desiatinas per adult male – led people to see the religious dissenters as state-sponsored.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Speranskii's report is discussed in *ibid.*, 154-162.

⁶⁸ For the declaration, see *SPChR* (1875), pp. 46-49.

⁶⁹ Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 130. On Dukhobor land allotments and other information on land holding in New Russia, see RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, ll. 29-40, 54-61ob, 81-82ob, 123-128ob, and 132-135; RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3331,

By the mid 1820s, such high organs of government as the Ministry of Interior, Committee of Ministers and State Council also raised their voices against the existing policy of isolating sectarians to New Russia. They agreed that the original intent of government policy had been to distance the sectarians from Orthodox Russians in order to halt the spread of the heresy and induce the dissenters to convert to the “path of truth.” Despite initial successes, an eruption of new followers was soon recorded. As soon as the settlers in Tauride province were able to root themselves in their new homes, and appreciate the benefits – large land allotments, a healthy climate, relative religious freedoms and unification with other sectarians – they concluded that the government was looking after them. They believed this state patronage was not only a conscious effort on the part of St. Petersburg to ease their lot in life, but also an invitation for others to follow their example.⁷⁰

Consequently, the Ministry of Internal Affairs asserted, many of those sectarians who had masqueraded as Orthodox by following its outward practices in order not to be exiled were now no longer concerned about the repercussions of open sectarianism. They began to declare themselves as sectarians to provincial officials and put forward requests for transfer to Molochnye vody. In addition, certain Dukhobor communities sent agents to New Russia for reconnaissance. Upon receiving good reports, they too began to display their religious non-conformity openly and also petitioned for resettlement.⁷¹

These state agencies were not incorrect when they asserted that the sectarians themselves viewed Alexander’s toleration as a sign of complete acceptance and even encouragement. Throughout the nineteenth century, Russian sectarians saw the reign of Alexander I as a golden age. In his manuscript history of the Molokans (c. 1910), I. G. Vodopianov described how the Molokans had been savagely

1841; RGIA f. 383, op. 1, d. 234, 1838; and GAKhO (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Khersonskoi oblasti) f. 14, op. 2, d. 70, 1821-1833. My deepest thanks go to John Staples for bringing the final two RGIA references to my attention, generously sharing his research with me, and permitting me to read his microfilm copy of the GAKhO document.

⁷⁰ State representatives also pointed to the appearance of Quakers in Russia as an important factor in the continued increase in the number of sectarians. MVD officials reported that these Quakers spread the idea among peasant villagers that the Tsar looked favorably upon their intention to convert to a sectarian faith. They then offered to compile lists of those desirous of conversion which would then be presented to the Tsar. Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 227-228.

⁷¹ Varadinov *Istoriia*, 227-228.

persecuted in the late eighteenth century, but that Alexander I, “the Blessed Tsar granted [us] freedom.”⁷²

Dukhobor communities described their experiences under Alexander I in a similar fashion. Only during his reign, they believed, “did they begin to look on us as human beings.”⁷³

Alexander’s toleration-restriction religious policies also failed to resolve the contradictions and conflicts that arose from Orthodox and non-Orthodox Russians living together. Despite the increase in the number of dissenters sent into isolation in New Russia or the Caucasus, many others – indeed the majority – still remained among the Orthodox.⁷⁴ Tensions arose in this multi-denominational setting because tsarist state policy applied different laws to people of different religious affiliations living in the same village or town.

The case of Subbotniks living in the town of Aleksandrov, Astrakhan guberniia, in the early 1810s reflects the legal and social problems of multi-confessional living.⁷⁵ Half of the merchants and lower-middle-class townspeople in Aleksandrov were Subbotniks. The Caucasian provincial administration complained in the 1810s that because they held to the law of Moses, the Subbotniks “refused to fulfill community duties on Saturdays, such as the transport of state provisions, the sending of convicts in stocks, the giving of wagons, etc.,” and refused to swear oaths of allegiance to the Tsar.⁷⁶

⁷² GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 237, 1910, l. 40. See also the descriptions of the centennial of Molokan freedom celebrated in 1905: N. F. Kudinov, *Stoletie Molokanstva v Rossii 1805-1905 gg.* (Baku: Parovaia tipo-lit A. M. Promyshlianskago, 1905); “Molokanskii s”ezd v Zakavkaz’e i otmennoe k nemu vnimanie namestnika,” *Missionerskoe obozrenie* X, no. 11 (August 1905): 289-291; and “Vserossiiskii s”ezd molokan,” *Missionerskoe obozrenie* X, no. 9 (June 1905): 1416.

⁷³ V. V. Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane v Zakavkaz’e, Shiity v Karabakhe, Batchi i Oshumoedy v Srednei Azii, i Ober-Amergau v Gorakh Bavarii* (Moscow: Tipo-litografiia Tovarishstva I. N. Kushnerev, 1900), 4-6. In this vein, see also Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 28.

⁷⁴ Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Doukhobors*, 38.

⁷⁵ The case of the sectarians living in Aleksandrov presents a dilemma of nomenclature. Sources describing the non-conformists of this town vary in the way they label the sectarians. Some sources call them Subbotniks, others label them as Molokans, and others still, “Molokans who professed the Jewish faith.” This multiplicity in naming reflects a more general confusion among officials over how to divide these dissenting faiths. I have called these people Subbotniks because the sources give every indication that these inhabitants should be classified under the rubric of Subbotnik as I have defined them elsewhere: see my “Heretics and Colonizers: Religious Dissent and Russian Colonization of Transcaucasia, 1830-1890 (Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1998), 20-21.

⁷⁶ Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 88. On Subbotniki in the North Caucasus, see also GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 593, 1820-1840, ll. 21-22.

The number of Subbotniks in Aleksandrov caused serious problems in elections to public offices. Subbotniks were prevented from holding public office because tsarist law required elected officers to swear an oath in order to hold a position of authority. In addition, despite Alexander's tolerance for the existence of religious non-conformists within the Empire, he was unable to countenance the possibility that they might hold positions of influence from which they could lure Orthodox subjects into error.

However, in 1813, an Orthodox inhabitant of the town sent a petition to local officials requesting that Subbotniks be permitted to take part in the elections and be elected to public posts. The petition explained that because Subbotniks had been barred from holding elected office, the obligations and duties of all public office holding rested solely on the Orthodox half of the town – a grossly disproportionate burden. The petitioner believed that these extra responsibilities were not only juridically unfair, but also reduced the economic capabilities of the Orthodox people, who were forced to expend their energies in administration. By granting the Subbotniks freedom from duty, the existing legal set-up provided the Orthodox with a material impetus to join the Subbotniks.⁷⁷

In reply, the minister of the Interior argued that it was impossible to permit the Subbotniks to take part in elections because of the required oath of allegiance. In stark contradiction to the opinions of the Orthodox petitioner, the Ministry of the Interior believed that the deprivation of Subbotniks of the right to be elected to such positions of responsibility showed them that sectarian religious affiliation brought no benefit to their civilian life. Rather, it deprived them of rights and advantages from which subjects of the Orthodox faith profited.⁷⁸ The Committee of Ministers agreed with the essence of the decision by the Ministry of the Interior not to permit the Subbotniks to take part in the elections, but also took the petitioners concerns more seriously. The Committee asserted that “the burden of carrying out public office, falling only on the shoulders of the inhabitants of Orthodox faith, would be for them onerous and would divert them from their occupations, and could cause disruption in their own businesses.” They also argued that the “irresponsible freeing of the Subbotniks from the fulfillment of public office, representing

⁷⁷ *PSZ* (1) t. 32, 1812-1815, no. 25529, p. 741.

for them a preferred relief of duty, could give others a reason to convert to their heresy, solely to evade election to public office, always burdensome for the citizen.”

In consequence, the Committee of Ministers advised that the Subbotniks should be prevented from being elected to public offices, but that those Orthodox town-dwellers who were elected in their stead must be given sufficient recompense for their work.⁷⁹ Instead of service in public office, the Subbotniks of Aleksandrov were required to pay an annual sum (88 rubles and 66.5 kopecks) which would represent a third of the salaries of public officials of the town.⁸⁰ Although the authorities reached a compromise here, the case of the Subbotniks in Aleksandrov reflected the pressing problems posed by the close proximity of Orthodox and non-Orthodox given the government’s practice of applying different laws to different groups. Such cases elicited a demand for greater isolation of sectarians from Orthodox, and for changes to the policies established in the early part of Alexander I’s reign.

The final, most important complaint about Alexander’s policies – both for the Tsar and his critics – was that despite his faith in the ability of tolerance to bring the sectarians back into the Orthodox fold and to reduce the quantity of religious non-conformists in the empire, their numbers had in fact increased over the course of Alexander’s reign.⁸¹ Hints that the number of dissenters was on the rise began to appear already in 1811 with the petition of Tambov Dukhobors requesting to be resettled to Bessarabia. The petitioners claimed to represent as many as 4,000 souls, and their sheer numerical size attracted the attention of tsarist authorities, who began to see the Dukhobors in a new, threatening light.⁸² The numerical increases continued into the reign of Nicholas I. In 1826, information concerning the sectarians began to flow into the capital as a result of various efforts that Alexander I launched to collect intelligence. Rather than a decline and geographic restriction of the number of sectarians, governors were

⁷⁸ Ibid..

⁷⁹ Ibid., 740-741 and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 42-43.

⁸⁰ *SPChR* (1875), p. 43. These rules and regulations concerning the holding of public office were later extended to the Dukhobors, see *SPChR* (1875), p. 57 and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 81.

⁸¹ For a general statement of this fact, see *Obzor meropriiatii*, 47.

⁸² Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 78-79, 228.

in fact reporting an increase in the number of sectarians in the Empire, and the religious non-conformists remained widely dispersed.⁸³

Reformulating religious policy

In the face of these growing criticisms of his religious policy, and in particular of its failure to solve the problems that it set out to confront, Alexander I began to reformulate his policies towards the sectarians. The shift began in the final five years of his reign and carried over into the rule of Alexander's successor, Nicholas I. Indeed, changes in religious policy towards the sectarians that historians have generally attributed to Nicholas I were, in fact, the progeny of a process of policy reevaluation and transformation begun under Alexander I. The transformation was piecemeal, and the 1820s were a time of debate and experimentation, in which tsarist authorities searched desperately for a new religious policy.

The quest for a new religious policy led not away from isolation, but to an increase of segregation (and in a single, different location) as the best means to tolerate religious pluralism while protecting the preeminence of the Orthodox Church. Throughout these debates, tsarist officials enacted a series of restrictive policies to reduce the spread of non-conformism. While the fundamental contours of Alexander's original policy remained unaltered, the internal dynamic changed substantially. The aspect of Alexander's policy that aimed to convert and segregate was strengthened relative to that which treated the dissenters like Orthodox Russian subjects. If Alexander's original policy had been toleration with a liberal dose of restriction, through the 1820s tsarist policy transformed into restriction with a dose of toleration.

Russian officials raised new obstacles to the spread of religious non-conformists and to their interaction with Orthodox subjects. In large numbers, Dukhobors and Molokans were exiled to Tauride province and Subbotniki to the North Caucasus, and disseminators of these faiths were tried harshly in

⁸³ For the government's statistics on the number of dissenters in 1826 and 1827, for example, see Varadinov,

criminal court.⁸⁴ Skoptsy, who suffered particularly harsh treatment in the latter years of Alexander's reign, were sent into military service in Siberia and Georgia, while those incapable of such service were settled in Irkutsk guberniia.⁸⁵

Moreover, in March of 1820, Alexander agreed to a proposal of Speranskii that, because of the distance of the region from central power, Dukhobors and other schismatics [*raskol'niki*] accused of disseminating their faith in Siberia "could be taken to criminal court immediately and judged not for being part of the schism, but for external deeds, involving unruly behavior or the disruption of decorum and order."⁸⁶ In granting this power to the local Siberian authorities, Alexander backed away from his earlier efforts to retain final authority over all affairs involving the sectarians, re-empowering local officials to take action against the sectarians.⁸⁷

Surveillance of all schismatics also increased dramatically in the 1820s – in part to collect information about the dissenters, in part to prevent the spread of their faiths. Alexander I increased the financial resources available to the Orthodox missionaries charged with saving the Subbotniki from their false faith.⁸⁸ In the final year of his life, Alexander ordered the formation of a Secret Committee on schismatic affairs. Among the primary goals of the Committee was the collection of information (especially demographic) on the sectarians in the Russian Empire.⁸⁹

In 1825, in the midst of these growing restrictions, and in response to the growing sense among St. Petersburg's authorities that Alexander I's religious policies were failing to achieve their ends, the

Istoriia, 157-180.

⁸⁴ *Obzor meropriiatii*, 48; E. R., "Russkii raskol," 527-531; and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 62-63.

⁸⁵ On the Skoptsy, see *SPChR* (1875), pp. 67, 81.

⁸⁶ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 57-58.

⁸⁷ Alexander's original decision to wield full power in all cases involving sectarians is found in *SPChR* (1875), pp. 54-55.

⁸⁸ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 80-81.

⁸⁹ *SPChR* (1875), p. 78; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 191; and I. P. Liprandi, "Kratkoe obozrenie sushchestvuiushchikh v Rossii raskolov, eresei i sekt kak v religioznom tak i v politicheskom ikh znachenii," in *Sbornik pravitel'stvennykh svedenii o raskol'nikakh*, vyp. 2, ed. V. Kel'siev (London: Trubner & Co., 1861), 91-169. Extensive materials

minister of the Interior, Vasilii Sergeevich Lanskoï, proposed a new variant on the isolation model. His proposal altered the existing policy of segregation in two important ways. First, it changed the location for forced settlement. Second, it introduced a two-tiered system of isolation, in which those sectarians considered particularly dangerous and who had been convicted of spreading their sectarian faith were exiled to even farther reaches of the Empire than those who simply professed the faith.

Lanskoï recommended that those people who actively spread “heresy” should be charged in criminal court for disturbance of the public peace and then exiled to Eastern Siberia where they would be put to hard labor.⁹⁰ He also proposed that all Dukhobors, Molokans, Ikonobors, and Dukhovnye Khristiane who were of “free” social status – that is, merchants, *meshchane*, Cossacks, state and court peasants, and *odnodvortsy* – should be sent for settlement to Western Siberia. In order to enhance the isolation, Lanskoï also argued that these sectarian settlements should house no more than 100 people per village, and that the villages be distanced from any Orthodox settlement by at least 25 *versts* (approximately 25 kilometers).

The Committee of Ministers took Lanskoï’s proposal seriously as a solution to Alexander’s unsatisfactory policy of isolation in New Russia. They wrote to the governor-general of Western Siberia for information on lands where they might settle and segregate the dissenters. In the interim, however, the Tsar (now Nicholas I) interjected his opinion that, rather than simply banish the guilty dissenters as Lanskoï proposed, it would be better to enroll able-bodied sectarians in military service, while those who were incapable would be settled in Siberia. In this manner, Nicholas asserted, the maximum service would be extracted from the sectarian subjects of the Empire and their potential contributions to the general welfare could be directed where it would do the most good. However, from 1825 through until 1830, the governors-general of both Western and Eastern Siberia did not answer inquiries about appropriate land allotments – perhaps exhibiting their resistance to the new plan through silence. As a

from this Committee can be found in RGIA f. 1473, op. 1, especially d. 49, 54, 55, 60, and 62. On other efforts, outside the Committee, to gather information about the Dukhobors, see RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1826, d. 46.

⁹⁰Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 228.

result, Lanskoï's vision for reformulating the isolation policy was stalled for the second half of the 1820s.⁹¹

While the central authorities explored new practices of isolation in Siberia, additional legislation sought to restrict contact between those sectarians who might spread their faith and Orthodox Russian subjects. In February 1825, new measures were promulgated against the Subbotniki, who had increasingly aroused concern within the government.⁹² The Committee of Ministers ordered all governors to arrest Subbotnik leaders and their assistants, sending those who were capable into military service, while those not capable were ordered settled in Siberia. In order to prevent any communication with Orthodox inhabitants and the spread of their heresy, Subbotniki were to be settled separately from others, watched closely by local authorities, and denied passports to travel from their villages.⁹³ As with other sectarians, this decree outlawed external display of their heresy, as well as actions to tempt others into the faith.⁹⁴ Subbotniks were also prevented from holding high office. Moreover, officials believed that the presence of Jews near Russian communities helped spread the Subbotnik heresy. Thus, all Jews were to be forcibly relocated out of those districts where Subbotniks lived and not permitted to return to those regions.

The Synod made Transcaucasia a primary alternative for the isolation of non-conformists when it added its own supplementary rules to the February 1825 decree. On September 15, 1825, the Synod argued – and Alexander agreed – that Subbotnik leaders and assistants who were to be exiled into military service should only be sent to front line units in Georgia, “on the assumption that they, not knowing the Georgian language, cannot spread their false teachings among the local inhabitants.” To further increase

⁹¹ Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 228-229.

⁹² See *SPChR* (1875), pp. 74-78; *PSZ* (1) t. 40, 1825, no. 30436a, pp. 397-408; *PSZ* (1) t. 40, 1825, no. 30483, pp. 465-467; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 271-277; *GMIR* f. 2, op. 7, d. 593, ll. 25-27; and Antoine Scheikevitch, “Alexandre I^{er} et l’hérésie Sabbatiste,” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 3 (1956): 223-235.

⁹³ Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 271. These laws were not to be applied to the Subbotniki who lived in Aleksandrov uezd, Caucasus guberniia.

⁹⁴ External signs included meetings in house for prayer, circumcision, marriage and funeral rites, as well as any other rituals that were not in accord with the Orthodox Church.

their isolation, and inhibit any proselytizing, the decree of September 15 also required that once assigned to posts in Georgia, the Subbotnik soldiers were neither to be relieved from duty, nor granted temporary leave to visit their original homes and families. The Synod argued in the decree that separating them from their “native land and cutting them off forever from their relatives and friends would produce in the followers of the sect a fear of remaining any longer in their apostasy.”⁹⁵

In a similar case, an edict of April 10, 1826 stated that those serfs who espoused the Dukhobor “heresy” should be sent into military service, with those incapable exiled to Siberia for settlement. In addition, efforts were made to restrict the mobility of the Melitopol’ Dukhobors. A decree stated that they were thenceforth to be denied passports to absent themselves from their villages for work purposes, and were to be permitted short-term leaves from their domiciles only with the knowledge of the local police.⁹⁶

Conclusions

Under Alexander I, the government experimented with a variety of approaches to the question of religious pluralism in the Empire. By the end of his reign, it was moving toward harsher measures as it searched for a workable policy towards the sectarians. The period began with Alexander’s introduction of tolerance towards sectarianism – in part as a weapon against religious dissent – and evolved into “toleration through isolation” as a result of the Dukhobors’ request for segregated settlement. In the 1810s and 1820s, a rising tide of dissatisfaction with these policies spread through the central and provincial bureaucracy. During the 1820s, a rash of new and uncoordinated legislation and proposals appeared concerning the sectarians as tsarist officials grappled with the persistent problem of governing a multi-confessional state without endangering the stable and reputedly loyal majority. During the decade,

⁹⁵ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 80-81 and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 275. The practice of sending dissenters to Georgia for military service was not new in 1825, but was certainly not widespread. It appears that Skoptsy were most likely to be sent to Georgia for military service. On Dukhobors sent to Georgia, see *SPChR* (1875), pp. 50-51; regarding the Skoptsy, see *SPChR* (1875), pp. 44, 67, 81.

⁹⁶ *SPChR* (1875), pp. 86-87 and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 229.

new component parts to Russian religious policy (isolation, military service, and limitation of the spread of sectarians) were gradually adopted as Russian policy-makers edged in new directions.

Abbreviations

Archives:

GARF	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow
GMIR	Gosudarstvennyi muzei istorii religii, St. Petersburg
OR RGB	Otdel rukopisei, Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka, Moscow
PJBRMA	Peter J. Braun Russian Mennonite Archive, Toronto
RGIA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv, St. Petersburg

Published Sources:

AKAK	<i>Akty sobrannye Kavkazskoiu Arkheograficheskoiu Kommissieiu</i> (12 vols., 1866-1904)
IKOIRGO	<i>Izvestiia Kavkazskogo otdela Imperatorskogo Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva</i>
MIEBGKZK	<i>Materialy dlia izucheniia ekonomicheskogo byta gosudarstvennykh krest'ian Zakavkazskogo kraia</i> (7 vols., 1885-1887)
PSPRVP	<i>Polnoe sobranie postanovlenii i rasporiashenii po vedomstvu Pravoslavnogo ispovedaniia Rossiiskoi Imperii</i>
PSZ (1-3)	<i>Polnoe sobranie zakonov</i> (in three series)
RTKE	<i>Raion Tiflissko-karssko-erivanskoi zheleznoi dorogi v ekonomicheskoi i kommercheskoi otnosheniakh</i> (1897)
SMOMPK	<i>Sbornik materialov dlia opisaniia mestnostei i plemen Kavkaza</i> (46 vols., 1881-1929)
SPChR (1860)	<i>Sobranie postanovlenii po chasti raskola, sostoivshikhsia po vedomstvu Sv. Sinoda</i> (2 vols.)
SPChR (1875)	<i>Sobranie postanovlenii po chasti raskola</i> (Ministry of the Interior, 1 vol.)

Government Institutions

MGI Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennykh Imushchestv [Ministry of State Domains]

MVD Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del [Ministry of Internal Affairs]

Archival and Published Citations:

f.	fond
op.	opis'
d.	delo
l. (ll.)	list (listy)
otd.	otdelenie
st.	stol
ch.	chast'
d-vo	deloproizvodstvo
k.	kartonka
doc.	document number
t.	tom
vyp.	vypusk