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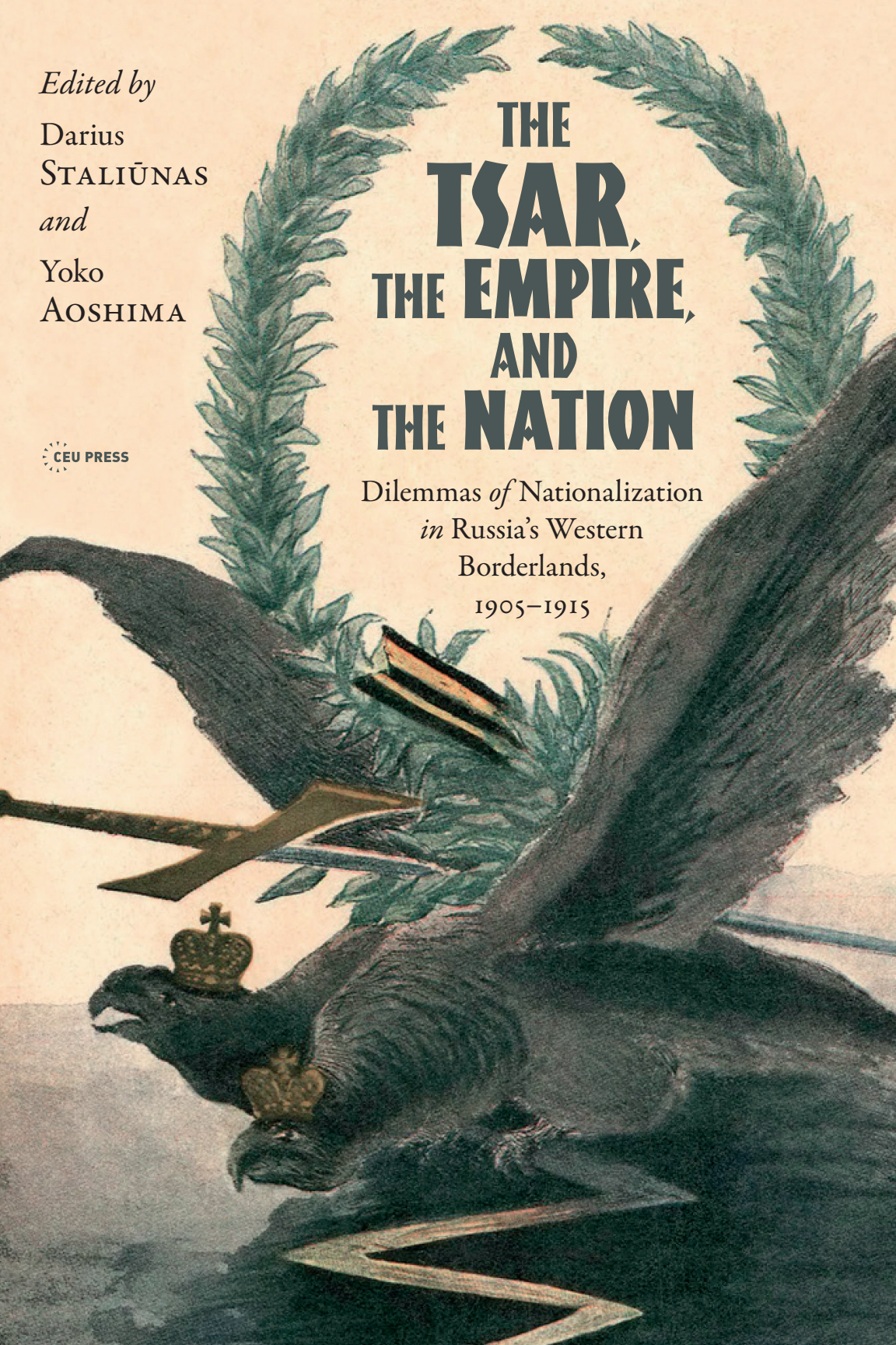
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# THE TSAR, THE EMPIRE, AND THE NATION

*Dilemmas of Nationalization  
in Russia's Western  
Borderlands,  
1905–1915*

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AND  
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*in* Russia's Western Borderlands,  
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DARIUS STALIŪNAS *and* YOKO AOSHIMA



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# Introduction

Among the several monuments that the tsarist government chose to erect in Vil'na, the capital of its Northwest region at the turn of the century, two were especially prominent. The first, unveiled in 1898, was dedicated to the Vil'na governor-general in 1863–65, Mikhail Murav'ev; the second, unveiled in 1904, honored Catherine the Great, Russia's empress between 1762 and 1796.<sup>1</sup> The two edifices in fact symbolized two different visions of the Romanov Empire. In government circles, Murav'ev earned praise for his role in quashing the uprising of 1863 and as a statesman who played a key role in efforts to reestablish the region's Russianness. The monument's construction and unveiling unfolded principally as a Russian affair in Russian discourse, and indeed, government representatives' anti-Polish sentiments were evident without ever having to be stated explicitly.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the monument's appearance illustrates how the Romanov Empire acquired elements of a national (Russian) monarchy in its later decades.<sup>3</sup> Yet by 1904,

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- 1 Official nineteenth-century place names are used throughout the book (for example, Vil'na and not Vilnius) and only in those cases where these names are radically different from the current ones is the name used today included in parentheses (for example, Novoaleksandrovsk [Zarasai]).
- 2 Darius Staliūnas, "Poland or Russia? Lithuania on the Russian Mental Map," in *Spatial Concepts of Lithuania in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Darius Staliūnas (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 78–82. Theodore R. Weeks argued that the initiators for the unveiling of this monument did not demonstrate any anti-Polish sentiments: Theodore R. Weeks, "Monuments and Memory: Immortalizing Count M. N. Muraviev in Vilna, 1898," *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 27, no. 4 (1999): 551–64.
- 3 Richard Wortman, "The Tsar and the Empire. Representation of the Monarchy and Symbolic Integration in Imperial Russia," in *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 266–86.



the city's governor-general Petr Sviatopolk-Mirskii contended that the unveiling needed to involve not only Russians but also people of other nationalities, above all the Polish-speaking social elite.<sup>4</sup> His position on the matter reflected his approach to nationality issues in the region more generally. He moreover proposed easing elements of discrimination against non-Russians, believing that their commitments to non-Russian national identification did not necessarily undermine their loyalty to the emperor.<sup>5</sup> In short, the two visions of the Romanov Empire embedded in the monuments were these: one perceived the empire as primarily an ethnic Russian (*rususkii*) state, where the interests of Russians were promoted at the expense of non-Russians; the other embraced the idea of imperial heterogeneity, whereby political elites sought to ensure the loyalty of non-Russians by tolerating rather than suppressing their diverse cultures.

Historians now broadly agree that non-Russian nationalisms were not the primary cause of the fall of the Russian Empire in the World War I.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, scholars have recently made significant efforts to show that the Romanov Empire and similar multiethnic states actually proved quite effective in coping with the challenges of nationalism. In their path-breaking book *Nationalizing Empires*, Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller turn attention to the processes of national consolidation unfolding at the core of empires—processes that they regard as having been quite successful. Those processes, they contend, were aimed at “the preservation and extension of empires rather than at the dissolution of empires or the transformations of entire empires into nation-states.”<sup>7</sup> Writing specifically about Russia, Miller assesses the monarchy's deployment of nationalism as a source of legitimization and evidence of its quest for common cause with popular Russian

4 Rasa Antanavičiūtė, *Menas ir politika Vilniaus viešosiose erdvėse. XX a. pirmoji pusė* (unpublished manuscript).

5 Witold Rodkiewicz, *Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Provinces of the Empire (1863–1905)* (Lublin: Scientific Society of Lublin, 1998), 225–33.

6 Dominic Lieven, *The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 284.

7 Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller, “Introduction: Building Nations in and with Empires—A Reassessment,” *Nationalizing Empires*, edited by Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2015), 3.

nationalism.<sup>8</sup> Other researchers, such as Theodore R. Weeks, likewise contend that “after 1905 official nationalism and popular nationalism became closer than ever,” despite “constant tension” between them.<sup>9</sup>

There is undoubtedly truth to the claims that national consolidation process at the core of the Romanov Empire was successful to some extent, yet we are still left to contemplate the effects of imperial nationality policy on the integration of non-Russians, i.e., the ways in which that policy sought to create institutional spaces and a language of inclusion that could generate sentiments of unity and belonging among those who did not happen to be Russian. Here, the consensus appears broadly pessimistic. A collective monograph edited by the aforementioned Miller and Mikhail Dolbilov notes that, for all intents and purposes, the imperial government in 1907 rejected the integration of non-Russians into the imperial political system with an alteration to the parliament’s electoral law that was specifically designed to reduce their representation.<sup>10</sup> The authors of a volume released by the journal *Ab Imperio* concur that the empire’s nationalizing policy was essentially anti-imperial in that it envisioned no space for non-Russians in the country’s political body.<sup>11</sup> In a study of identities and nationalism in Right-bank Ukraine, Faith Hillis offers a rather categorical conclusion along the same lines: “Russian tsars, bureaucrats, and intellectuals thus proved unable to reach a consensus about how the empire should respond to the national challenges that it faced. They could neither grant ethnonational considerations a leading role in imperial governance nor guide the empire toward civic nationhood without undermining the foundations of the entire autocratic system.” For Hillis, this failure “weakened the empire’s internal stability.”<sup>12</sup> Other historians,

8 Alexei Miller, “The Romanov Empire and the Russian Nation,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, edited by Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2015), 309–68.

9 Theodore R. Weeks, “Official and Popular Nationalisms: Imperial Russia 1863–1914,” *Nationalismen in Europa: West- und Osteuropa im Vergleich*, edited by Ulrike v. Hirschhausen and Jörn Leonard (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2001), 412, 432.

10 Mikhail Dolbilov and Alexei Miller, *Zapadnye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006), 367.

11 Il’ia Gerasimov et al., eds., *Novaia imperskaia istoriia Severnoi Evrazii*, vol. 2: *Balansirovanie imperskoi situatsii XVIII–XX vv.* (Kazan’: Ab Imperio, 2017), 286–87.

12 Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus’: Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2013), 7.

too, have noted the lack of a coherent nationality policy, ascribing this fact to both the diversity of worldviews among different political elites and inadequate coordination among government authorities.<sup>13</sup> Thus, historians arrive at different conclusions with regard to the question of how successful the Romanov Empire was in adapting to challenges of nationalism depending on whether they concentrate on interaction between imperial government and popular Russian nationalism or on the effects of tsarist nationality policy on non-Russians.

The subject of the present volume is precisely the response of the empire's ruling elite to the challenges of nationalism in the tsarist regime's last decades. While there are reasons to acknowledge the compatibility of empire and nationalism, there were clearly substantial challenges in combining the two in a coherent, long-term policy. Whereas earlier explorations of these issues have tended to encompass either the empire as a whole or smaller administrative units, the present volume adopts an intermediate geographic scope by focusing on Russia's western peripheries collectively. We understand this region as including the twelve provinces extending from Ukrainian lands in the south to the Baltic provinces in the north, as well as the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>14</sup> It was precisely in these western peripheries, as Hillis writes, that "Russia first encountered the challenge of modern nationalism."<sup>15</sup> This was also one of the Romanov empire's geopolitically sensitive regions and the one where the challenge of nationalism was both the greatest and the most complicated. Control over Poland meant that Russia could exert greater influence over European affairs, but that territory simultaneously created a host of problems. As Dominic Lieven succinctly remarked, "Poland was too big to absorb easily, and its elites were too numerous, too self-confident and too wedded to heroic memories of the old independent Polish Commonwealth."<sup>16</sup> Although from time to time

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<sup>13</sup> Lieven, *The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*, 274–75.

<sup>14</sup> These twelve provinces were Kiev, Volhynia, Podolia, Vil'na, Kovna, Grodna, Minsk, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Kurland, Livland, and Estland.

<sup>15</sup> Hillis, *Children of Rus'*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Lieven, *The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*, 272.

ideas about abandoning the Kingdom of Poland circulated among the imperial intellectuals and ruling elites, such a solution was never seriously considered by the tsarist government.<sup>17</sup> Not only was it unthinkable for a great power to dispense with such an important territory; it was also crystal clear that Polish claims to the territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Right-bank Ukraine would not disappear if the Kingdom of Poland became independent. Western borderlands were also the site of the largest concentration of Jews, and in the late imperial period, many tsarist officials regarded Jews as a serious threat if not an outright enemy. From their incorporation into the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century, the Baltic provinces were also highly sensitive in a geopolitical sense. Following the German unification in 1870–71 they became a target of “Russification” policy, although that policy was not that harsh as in the Western region.<sup>18</sup> Strife there peaked in 1905, when the region saw the eruption of one of its fiercest social conflicts, which also overlapped with the national crises (Estonian and Latvian peasants against the Baltic German nobility).

Separate parts of the empire’s western peripheries had different statuses on the Russian mental map. The Grand Duchy of Finland and most of the Kingdom of Poland (then officially called the Vistula Region) were understood as territory under Romanov rule but not Russian “national territory.”<sup>19</sup> Nor were the Baltic provinces of Estland, Livland, and Kurland typically construed as part of that “national territory,” since there were comparatively few ethnic Russians residing there, with Estonian and Latvian peasants constituting the absolute majority under a social elite of Baltic Germans.

17 On such ideas see, for example, Henryk Głębocki, *Fatalna sprawa: Kwestia polska w rosyjskiej myśli politycznej (1856–1866)* (Cracow: Arcana, 2000), 304.

18 On tsarist policy in the Baltic provinces, see Edward C. Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710–1870* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Michael Haltzel, *Der Abbau der deutschen ständischen Selbstverwaltung in den Ostseeprovinzen Rußlands: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der russischen Unifizierungs-politik 1855–1905* (Marburg-Lahn: J. G. Herder-Institut, 1977).

19 On the distinction between Russian Empire and Russian “national territory,” see Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2008), 32, 163–67; Alexei Miller, “The Romanov Empire and the Russian Nation,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, edited by Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2015), 338–47. Two parts of the Kingdom of Poland—Chelm and Suwalki—represent an exception because they were regarded in certain circles as Russian and Lithuanian territory respectively.

But as Karsten Brüggemann shows in his chapter, the second half of the nineteenth century nonetheless saw a partial symbolic appropriation of the region in Russian national discourse on the basis of historic and confessional criteria—something revealed even in geographic nomenclature: initially labeled *Ostzeiskii krai* (from *Ostsee*, the German for “Baltic”), the provinces later became *Pribaltiiskii krai* (“Baltic region” in Russian). The provinces further south—at the center of attention in this book—were in most cases very much conceptualized as a Russian “national territory”; indeed, they were often identified quite purposefully as Western Rus’, with reference to the medieval polity that Russian discourse interpreted as homogenous eastern Slavic territory and the foundation of Russia in its more modern form.<sup>20</sup> The one principal exception in the region was Kovna and a portion of Vil’na province, which featured a compact Lithuanian population and, in certain contexts, was identified as “belonging” to Lithuanians.<sup>21</sup>

The chapters below are divided into four sections based on their primary analytical focus. The first section explores transformations in nationality policy and the impact of nationalist ideology on bureaucratic thinking. The second focuses more closely on the specific matters of religion, the third on education, while the fourth analyzes interrelationships between the tsarist government and popular Russian nationalism.

## Transformations of Imperial Nationality Policy

Competing policy strategies and the influence of regime liberalization on possibilities of effective rule are the focus of the studies written by Anton

20 The Western region consisted of the Southwest region (the provinces of Kiev, Volhynia, and Podolia) and the Northwest region (the provinces of Vil’na, Kovna, Grodna, Minsk, Vitebsk, and Mogilev), even though sometimes in the early twentieth century, the term “Northwest region” was applied only to the so-called Lithuanian provinces (Vil’na, Kovna, and Grodna), but not to the remaining three “Belorussian” ones. This region does not even appear among the borderlands analyzed in Alfred J. Rieber’s book, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

21 Darius Staliūnas, “Poland or Russia? Lithuania on the Russian Mental Map,” in *Spatial Concepts of Lithuania in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Darius Staliūnas (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 23–95.

Kotenko, Darius Staliūnas, and Malte Rolf. These chapters probe the diversity of imperial visions promoted by tsarist officials, focusing in particular on the tension between visions that, on the one hand, promoted privileges for the East Slavic population and the discrimination or segregation for non-Russians and, on the other, stood ready to tolerate non-Russian demands in the sphere of culture and education in order to ensure their loyalty to the Romanov Empire. Those investigations reveal that while one or the other vision might emerge predominant at a particular moment or in a specific context, neither was able to conquer the other entirely, which left policy inconsistent even at the conceptual level. Kotenko analyzes the imperial government's actions in the Southwest region in relation to both Russian and Ukrainian nationalism. If the region represented Russian "national territory," then its Little Russian, or Ukrainian, inhabitants were construed as part of the tripartite Russian nation, along with Belorussians and Great Russians.<sup>22</sup> Although some government officials—for example, in censoring agencies—promoted a strict assimilationist policy towards Little Russians, Kotenko shows how the Revolution of 1905 legalized publications in the Ukrainian language, which made it impossible to ban such works solely on the basis of language. Other local officials were more interested in securing social stability than in any policies of cultural homogenization. Kotenko proposes that a combination of different visions of empire and nationality policy, along with important changes to the political regime after 1905, blocked proponents of a strict assimilation policy from fully realizing their plans. In a fruitful formulation, Anton Kotenko calls the tsarist state an inconsistently nationalizing empire. Indeed, collectively we argue that inconsistency represents the main characteristic of nationality policy in the late imperial period.

Darius Staliūnas continues this theme of inconsistency by focusing on two competing strategies of nationality policy in the Northwest region: an *imperial nationality policy*, which proposed that the satisfaction of non-

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22. As the focus of this book is the imperial government and popular Russian nationalism, we use the term used at the time in Russian discourse: "Belorussians," rather than the modern "Belarusians." This choice has no ideological connotations.

Russians' cultural demands would guarantee their loyalty to the empire; and a *nationalist policy*, which prioritized the tasks associated with assimilation for the East Slavic population and segregation with regard to Jews and Poles, and sometimes even all Catholics. Proponents of the second strategy often recommended the continuation of policies in the post-1863 period, even though the more liberal political regime and stronger non-Russian national movements after 1905 made such policies substantially more difficult to pursue. Staliūnas also shows that even tsarist officials themselves conceded that neither of these strategies could guarantee the loyalty of non-Russians in the longer term.

Rolf deals with the dilemmas of imperial nationality policies in the Kingdom of Poland. He shows how local Russian nationalists promoted policies of strengthening Russian influence in the kingdom, and how they were supported by some among the empire's political elite who were infiltrated with a degree of ethnic Russo-centrism. But, as Rolf argues, Warsaw's governor-general Georgii Skalon, the principal tsarist statesman in the region, pursued this policy only to a limited degree. Of Baltic German origin, Skalon embraced estate-orientated concepts of social order that would have been undermined by the proposals that radical Russian nationalists sought to implement in the empire's borderlands. Thus, Rolf argues, tsarist officials in the Kingdom found themselves in double isolation: they were perceived as foreign by the largest of the local nationalities, Poles and Jews; and they were simultaneously alienated from Russian nationalists. Exploring this complicated situation, Rolf concludes that tsarist government had no long-term vision of how to manage the empire's multiethnic borderlands.

## Confessions in the Crossfire

Another core issue involved religious groups and their status in the aftermath of 1905. Several of our authors correspondingly focus on this question. Chiho Fukushima and Vilma Žaltauskaitė show how repressive methods in confessional policy eventually led not only to homogenization (the acculturation of the Orthodox East Slavic population into Russian society)



but also to differentiation (the acculturation of East Slavs into Polish society of those who converted to Catholicism). Fukushima discusses the impact of the 1905 Decree of Tolerance, which allowed people to leave the Orthodox faith, on nation-building processes. The strongest players in the Chełm-Podlasian region were the imperial government and the Orthodox Church, on the one hand, and Polish nationalists in collaboration with the Catholic Church, on the other. After the decree's issuance, former Uniates—Greek Catholics who had been forcibly converted to Orthodoxy in a large campaign of 1875—converted to Roman Catholicism on a massive scale, and thus became even more strongly acculturated into the Polish society. At the same time, it is likely that those who remained Orthodox acculturated into the Russian nation.

Like the Kingdom of Poland in Fukushima's chapter, so too in the Northwest region there was a spate of mass conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism after the toleration decree, as Žaltauskaitė's chapter reveals. But here a majority of the so-called recalcitrants who had resisted their inclusion in Orthodoxy in the decades before 1905 were not Uniates but the descendants of Belorussian Roman Catholics who had been forced to convert to Orthodoxy by the government between 1863 and 1868 (though notably some of those converts remained in Orthodoxy even after 1905). Žaltauskaitė shows that the confrontation between the Orthodox and Catholic communities, between Orthodox and Catholic clergy, and between the imperial government and non-Russian nationalisms had a long prehistory and did not begin with the decree of 1905, as some of the earlier historiography has proposed. Žaltauskaitė also notices a rise in discriminatory measures in confessional policy from around 1908. This policy shift did not serve to increase loyalty to the empire among Catholics in the Northwest region.

## Transformations in Education

The 1905 Revolution also brought significant changes to educational policy. Yoko Aoshima argues that in contrast to earlier decades, the central government after 1905 began to discuss education policy matters on an empire-wide

scale, rather than addressing each region separately. Even so, the position of different regions on the Russian mental map remained quite varied, with the result that the scale and scope of native language use also differed as it had before the revolution. Focusing mostly on the Baltic provinces and the Kingdom of Poland, Aoshima asserts that discussions of the use of non-Russian languages in schooling around 1905 began with only a regional focus, although the government actually permitted a slightly wider range of rights for non-Russian languages within an arrangement that asserted the basic predominance of the Russian language as the state language. However, the discussions taking place in the imperial center provoked demands from non-Russian populations more than earlier in the empire's history, which in turn caused the government to try to protect Russian interests.

After 1905, the imperial government initiated plans for the creation of a universal primary education system. Kimitaka Matsuzato analyzes the tensions that emerged in this project in the Southwest region, where the Ministry of Education sought to expand the school network as evenly as possible so every child would have the opportunity to receive a basic primary education. However, the lack of resources compelled the government to rely on the financial input of local communities, who often prioritized the higher primary schools. Beyond the goal of increasing access to education, the tsarist bureaucracy had another motive for maximizing the number of schools under the jurisdiction of the ministry or the *zemstvos* in relation to parish schools: it hoped to counter illegal Polish schools, whose numbers surged after 1905.<sup>23</sup>

Two further chapters focus principally on the content of educational policy. Olga Mastianica and Jolita Mulevičiūtė analyze how officials sought to promote imperial loyalty in the Northwest region through the education system, paying particular attention to various instructional practices, primarily excursions. Mastianica highlights continuity: after 1905, the Russian education system continued to implement the historical narrative conceived back in the 1830s, which declared the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to be a

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23 The *zemstvo* was an institution of self-government introduced in most of the Romanov Empire in 1864. For more on the introduction of the *zemstvo* system, see chapter 2, p. 44 in this book.

Russian state, and thus construed the Northwest region as being composed of historically Russian lands. Mulevičiūtė notes a concept that began to appear in school reports following excursions, whereby the Russian nation as a supra-ethnic community was portrayed as an alternative to the homogeneous Russian nation. Both authors stress that despite the Northwest region's ostensible status as Russian "national territory," uncertainty over its actual Russianness became clearly evident in the various actions of state institutions. Mastianica notes that while teachers and other activists frequently called for more attention to the history and geography of the region in their lessons, the tsarist government did little in this regard. Mulevičiūtė shows how this region was marginalized as an excursion destination. Both authors admit the difficulty of finding sources that can reveal the influence of these lessons and excursions on pupils, though they hypothesize that this indoctrination could have had the "side effect" of fostering non-Russian loyalties.

### **The Problem of the Russian Right**

Relations between the imperial government and Russian rightist organizations in different western peripheries of the empire varied significantly even as they also had certain common characteristics. In the Northwest region, as Vytautas Petronis shows, rightist organizations of different orientations—both moderate (nationalist) and extreme (radical and monarchist)—appeared in the early twentieth century. The first were more influential in the so-called Lithuanian provinces, the second in Belorussian lands. However, according to Petronis, none of them had a specific ideology or strategy that "would have encompassed other—the non-Russian — nationalisms within the general framework of the empire." The imperial government backed all these organizations between 1905 and 1907, though subsequently it sometimes used them only instrumentally, without providing support that was either constant or complete; after 1910, government backing weakened. Petronis indicates that the rightists feared the delegation of more power to society, yet at the same time we should not forget that many members of these organizations were state employees, bureau-

crats, school teachers—that is, a constituent part of imperial institutions. As many of the studies in this volume show (see Staliūnas, Žaltauskaitė, and Aoshima), from 1908 onward, imperial nationality policy in the western peripheries became increasingly discriminatory towards non-Russians, which is what a majority of these Russian rightists wanted.<sup>24</sup> However, this does not mean that this shift happened in all the empire's peripheries, or did so simultaneously.<sup>25</sup> In this volume Rolf argues that on the one hand, Warsaw governor-general Skalon renewed the policy of strengthening Russian influence in the Kingdom of Poland after 1910 but, on the other, he still looked for moderate reconciliation with Polish society.

In the Baltic provinces, Russian rightists' situation was more complicated than in the Northwest region, as here Russians made up a very small percentage of the population. That is why such right-wing activists recommended more drastic solutions designed to increase the influence of ethnic Russians in the region (for example, government-backed colonization by Russian peasants and the creation of incentives for Estonians and Latvians to depart voluntarily). When discussing the political visions of Russian rightists in the Baltic region, Brüggemann emphasizes their utopian character. Much like Petronis and Kotenko, he argues that the rightists' plans for the region appeared too radical to tsarist government officials and threatened to destabilize ethno-confessional relations in the region. They, therefore, did not earn the government's support.

As the chapter by Vladimir Levin shows, there were no serious disagreements between the imperial government and Russian rightists on the "Jewish question." With a few exceptions, neither side intended to grant Jews equal rights. Yet, there was a kind of dynamism in both bureaucratic attitudes to-

24 A shift towards policy restricting autonomy occurred at a similar time in the Grand Duchy of Finland: Edward C. Thaden. "Administrative Russification in Finland, 1881–1914," in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914*, edited by Edward C. Thaden (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 84–88.

25 In the Caucasus, Viceroy I. Vorontsov-Dashkov managed to uphold a consistent policy until 1915, avoiding any openly discriminatory policies aimed at non-Russians: Stephen Badalyan Riegg, "Neotraditionalist Rule to the Rescue of the Empire? Viceroy I. Vorontsov-Dashkov amid Crises in the Caucasus, 1905–1915," *Ab Imperio* 3 (2018): 115–39.

wards Jews and the visions of Russian rightists. If during the Revolution of 1905 Jews occupied the top position in the empire's "hierarchy of enemies," then in subsequent years, their demonization decreased, and by 1914, their place in the enemy rankings had been taken by Germans. Still, Jews acquired equal rights to the other subjects of the empire only after the February Revolution in 1917, and the continuation of their status as second-class subjects before then prevented the formation of rightist Jewish political organizations. Although there were some individual conservative and loyalist Jews who tried to gather into rightist organizations or cooperate with Russian rightists, Levin shows that they were largely unsuccessful in these efforts.

Thus, the inconsistency of imperial policy, emphasized by many contributors to this volume, did not mean inconsequentiality. As shown not only in Levin's but also in Fukushima, Matsuzato, Mulevičiūtė, and Žaltauskaitė's papers, the empire's policy in this arena—despite and even because of its very inconsistency—shaped the loyalties and attitudes of non-Russians.

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So, which of the two visions identified at the start of this introduction actually predominated the empire's last decade? The answer must be "neither." At any given moment and in any particular context, one or the other might gain the upper hand. But in the end, the regime could commit itself completely to neither of them. As an imperial formation, it could not identify fully with Russian nationalism, even though it sometimes implemented things that Russian nationalists advocated. A focus on loyalty over nationalization, meanwhile, could not address the general tendency of non-Russian claims to escalate. The altered political context—new civil rights, a parliament with real legislative power, a burgeoning press, etc.—rendered the execution of any policy originating before 1905 much more difficult afterward. The result was a dilemma that was never resolved. If tsarist Russia in its last decade represented a nationalizing empire, it was only inconsistently and reluctantly so.



**P a r t**

**I**

Transformations of  
Imperial Nationality Policy





# An Inconsistently Nationalizing State: The Romanov Empire and the Ukrainian National Movement, 1906–1917

Anton Kotenko

## Introduction

The southwestern provinces of Kiev, Volhynia, and Podolia posed a challenge for the nationality policy of the Romanov Empire. During half a century after its acquisition from the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, Russian emperors and the central imperial bureaucracy conceived this region, which was populated by numerous ethnic and religious groups, as quite an exotic Polish territory, occasionally even “associating it with something similar to the overseas colonies of Western European empires.”<sup>1</sup> Even though the indifference of the emperors toward the national composition of the formerly Polish *terra incognita* had already started to change during the last weeks of Nicholas I’s life,<sup>2</sup> it was definitely bound to change after the January Uprising of 1863–64. It turned out that the area was mainly populated by peasants, the majority of whom were defined by ethnographers not as Poles, but as Orthodox and Catholic Little Russians/Ukraini-

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1 Mikhail Dolbilov, “Poliak v imperskom politicheskom leksikone,” in *Poniatiiia o Rossii. K istoricheskoi semantike imperskogo perioda*, vol. 2, edited by Alexei Miller et al. (Moscow: NLO, 2012), 320.

2 Mikhail Dolbilov, *Russkii krai, chuzhaia vera: etnokonfessional’naia politika imperii v Litve i Belorussii pri Aleksandre II* (Moscow: NLO, 2010), 164, 169.

ans.<sup>3</sup> As Little Russians, they were declared to be members of the tripartite Russian nation who potentially could be relied upon by the government in its new nationality policy in the region. At the same time, their Russianness was problematized by the emerging Ukrainian national movement and its activists. The latter clearly argued that the southwest of the empire was populated not by Little Russians, but by Ukrainians who were distinct from both Russians and Poles. No wonder that both visions dramatically collided after the emergence of the public sphere in the Romanov Empire in 1906.

The history of Russian nationalism in the Romanov Empire and, in particular, its southwestern provinces, has recently become fashionable in historiography. It has been discussed not just in scholarly literature, but even in popular historical monographs and edited collections.<sup>4</sup> The general argument suggested by historians to explain the emergence of Russian nationalism since Hugh Seton-Watson's idea of "official nationalism" (and its popularization by Benedict Anderson) is that since the 1830s, the empire required a new ideological foundation to preserve its stability.<sup>5</sup>

- 3 The major breakthrough in this imagination was a result of an expedition organized by the Russian Geographical Society and conducted by Kievian Ukrainophiles under the leadership of Pavlo Chubynsky in 1869–70. The organizers and executors interpreted the results of the expedition differently. For more on the expedition, see Anton Kotenko, "Etnohrafichno-statystychna ekspedyttsiia P. Chubyns'koho v Pivdenno-Zakhidnyi Krai," *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 3 (2014): 128–51; and Anton Kotenko, "Eto stoilo by obshchestvu desheвле gribov': Lystuvannia Pavla Chubyns'koho z Rosiis'kym heohrafichnym tovarystvom," *Spadshchyna* 10 (2015): 267–343.
- 4 For examples of scholarly works, see Klymentii K. Fedevych and Klymentii I. Fedevych, *Za viru, tsaria i Kobzaria: malorosii's'ki monarkhisty i ukrains'kyi natsional'nyi rukh (1905–1917 roky)* (Kiev: Krytyka, 2017); Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Timur Kalchenko, *Kievskii klub russkikh natsionalistov* (Kiev: Kievskie vedomosti, 2008); Alexei Miller, "The Romanov Empire and the Russian Nation," in *Nationalizing Empires*, edited by Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2014), 309–68; Igor' Omel'ianchuk, *Chernosotennoe dvizhenie na territorii Ukrainy, 1904–1914* (Kiev: NIURO, 2000); David Rowley, "Imperial Versus National Discourse: The Case of Russia," *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 1 (2000): 23–42. Robert Edelman's, *Gentry Politics on the Eve of the Russian Revolution: The Nationalist Party, 1907–1917* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1980) remains a classical exploration of the problem. Examples of popular historical works include Serhii Plokhyy, *Lost Kingdom: The Quest for Empire and the Making of the Russian Nation, From 1470 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2017); and Andrei Teslia, *Pervyi russkii natsionalizm... i drugie* (Moscow: Ievropa, 2014).
- 5 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 86. Seton-Watson defined "official nationalism" as a doctrine, that appeared in the Habsburg and Romanov empires in the second half of the nineteenth century, according to which the leaders of the empires "considered it their task, and indeed their moral duty, to impose their nationality on all their subjects—of whatever religion, language or culture. As they saw it, by drawing these people

Thus, it was the state and its officials who cautiously began to practice some elements of Russian nationalism by attempting to integrate the empire around the Russian nation. By the 1860s, the idea spread among the Russian intellectuals, some of whom, like Iurii Samarin, argued that “we, the Russians, must now become what the French are in the French Empire, and the English in the British Empire.”<sup>6</sup> The empire actively embraced Russian nationalism during the reign of Alexander III and his successor Nicholas II. In December 1905, for instance, the latter famously and symbolically accepted the badge of the most popular Russian nationalist organization of the time, the Union of Russian People (*Soiuz Russkogo Naroda*, hereafter SRN).

The SRN was particularly active in the Southwestern region of the empire. According to contemporary estimates, the region was a stronghold of nationalists: in 1907, around half of the SRN’s members (197,636) came from the territory of modern-day Ukraine; half of them (99,336) resided on the territory of Volhynia, where they were led by the priests of the local Pochaev Monastery.<sup>7</sup> Among the socially deprived peasantry living in the Ukrainian province, the Union vigorously campaigned against the “conspiracy” of Ukrainian nationalists, Polish landowners, and Jewish merchants, presenting all of them (as well as state bureaucracy, but never the emperor) as the main reasons for local social and economic troubles. Another major regional Russian nationalist organization—more elitist in comparison to the SRN—was the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists, which was created in April 1908. During the first year of its existence, it had 329 members, men and women.<sup>8</sup>

Still, the question of how connected all of these organizations were to the government of the empire has remained open. One argument put forward by Alexei Miller and Ricarda Vulpius suggests that in the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a project in the Romanov Empire to cre-

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upwards into their own superior culture, they were conferring benefits on them; while at the same time they were strengthening their state by creating within it a single homogeneous nation.” Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977), 148.

6 As quoted in Miller, “The Romanov Empire and the Russian Nation,” 332.

7 Omel’ianchuk, *Chernosotennoe dvizhenie*, 139–43.

8 Edelman, *Gentry Politics*, 70.

ate a Russian nation out of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians.<sup>9</sup> Another argument was proposed by Theodore Weeks, who stated that there “the word ‘policy’ seems far too definite a term for the confused, disparate and uncoordinated actions of the Russian administration vis-à-vis its non-Russian subjects.” According to Weeks, Russian “official” nationalism was first and foremost aimed not at building the Russian nation, but at preserving the Romanov Empire.<sup>10</sup> Recently, Valerie Kivelson and Ronald Suny suggested uniting these positions by distinguishing four programs for saving the empire on the eve of the World War I: building an imperial civic nation; turning the empire’s Eastern Slavs into the ruling nation; relying on the estate principle; transforming the empire into a federation of different nations.<sup>11</sup>

In this paper, I would like to approach the problem of relations between the imperial government and Russian nationalism from the point of view of the censorship of Ukrainian language texts from 1905 to 1914. I argue that the proposition of the empire’s gradual but consistent Russian nationalization from above since the 1830s to the World War I is not accurate. Not only should we make a distinction between popular and state nationalisms; we should also question the coherent nature of the latter. In particular, despite all the limitations of and prohibitions on Ukrainian activity, the imperial authorities on the eve of the Great War neither pursued a systematic plan of turning the peasants of empire’s southwestern provinces into Russians, nor promoted a coherent anti-Ukrainian policy. Not only did not all state officials endorse the project of turning the Romanov Empire into a Russian one, it also seems that there was no coherent project or a “master plan” (as Weeks suggested<sup>12</sup>) of this kind.

Moreover, post-1906 developments in the state’s regulation of Ukrainian-language publications show that contrary to the development of Rus-

9 Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2003), 4–5; Ricarda Vulpius, “Slova i liudi v imperii,” *Ab Imperio* 1 (2006): 354–55.

10 Theodore Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 5, 9.

11 Valerie Kivelson and Ronald Suny, *Russia’s Empires* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 250–52.

12 Weeks, *Nation and State*, 12.

sian public nationalism, which indeed was on the rise, the empire curiously became less nationalist than before. It became less anti-Ukrainian and, thus, less pro-Russian than it had been during the period when the Valuev Circular and Ems Edict remained in force. Yes, many state officials favored the project of turning the Romanov Empire into a Russian Empire; they also supported Russian nationalist organizations and did their best to suppress Ukrainian nationalists. However, even those bureaucrats who argued against Ukrainian nationalism had to comply with existing laws, which provided Ukrainians with many more opportunities to disseminate their ideas than those in force between 1863 and 1906.

### Imperial Authorities and Russian Nationalists Against Ukrainian Nationalists

Until 1906, a Ukrainian public sphere in the Romanov Empire did not exist;<sup>13</sup> it was impossible to publish a text in the Ukrainian language and orthography even, for instance, on such an apolitical subject as the Sahara Desert. According to the stipulations of the emperor's edict (*vysochaishego poveleniia*) of May 18, 1876 and its amendment from October 8, 1881, the only texts that were allowed to be published in the "Little Russian dialect" were historical documents which including the preservation of the original orthography, dictionaries, and original fiction (translations were forbidden) following the rules of Russian orthography. Thus, the abovementioned brochure on the Sahara by Borys Hrinchenko was banned because even though it "did not contain anything opposite the censorship rules, it

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13 Technically one might date the appearance of Ukrainian public sphere in the empire by 1905, when the Ems Edict, which was never formally repealed, lost its power after the October Manifesto granted freedom of speech to the population of the empire. From then on, the Ukrainian press could be published without asking for prior permission from the censorship committee. On December 31, 1905, the first issue of the first Ukrainian daily newspaper, *Hromads'ka Dumka*, was published. However, I argue for dating the emergence of a fully-fledged Ukrainian public sphere in 1906 because until the spring of 1906, the St. Petersburg Committee for censorship still banned Ukrainian publications with references to the Ems Edict. The last such prohibition seems to have taken place in April: RGIA, f. 777, op. 7, №2 (*Po malorossiiskim izdaniiam*), 73, 76. The prohibited text was "What school do we need" (*Iakoi nam treba shkol'y*) by Borys Hrinchenko, a reprint from *Hromads'ka Dumka*.

did not belong to belles lettres.”<sup>14</sup> The only way for Ukrainians to disseminate their ideas via print was, thus, to publish them in Galicia and later smuggle them into the Russian Empire.<sup>15</sup>

This situation changed immensely in 1906, when after the liberalization of publishing rules, Ukrainian activists immediately used the opportunity to popularize their views via print media. Even though Ukrainian did not become a language of administration, the courts, and, most importantly for Ukrainian nationalists, schools,<sup>16</sup> it was still used for publishing books, newspapers, and journals. Thus, according to official data, in 1909, nine periodicals were published in Ukrainian in Kiev with an average general print run (*srednii obshchii tirazh*) of 11,300 copies; in 1910, there were ten periodicals with an average general print run of 15,985 copies; in 1911, it was twelve periodicals with an average general print run of 14,800 copies; in 1913, there were fourteen periodicals with an average general print run of 17,320 copies.<sup>17</sup> None of these was suppressed by the authorities for being a Ukrainian periodical. Thus, in 1915, when thirty members of the State Duma asked the ministers of internal affairs and war for the reasons why the majority of Ukrainian publications were closed, they received the response that out of the fifteen publications mentioned in the inquiry, only four had been closed by the authorities (three by the military and one by the general-governor), whereas eight of them ceased publication on their own and two were still being published.<sup>18</sup> What concerned the most important Ukrainian publication of the time, *Rada*, after it was closed, its publisher never even applied for permission to reopen the newspaper, which, according to the officials, probably would have been supported.<sup>19</sup>

14 RGIA, f. 777, op. 5–1897, №7 (*Po rassmotreniiu sochinenii na malorossiiskom narechii*), 127–28.

15 According to the 1876 edict, books published in Ukrainian abroad could legally circulate in the empire only after the permission of the Main Department for Press. See Dmytro Doroshenko's memoirs about the Ukrainian usage of Finland as a window to smuggle books in Ukrainian into the empire: Dmytro Doroshenko, *Moi spomyny pro davne my nule (1901–1914 roky)* (Winnipeg, 1949), 48–49.

16 More on this see in: Ricarda Vulpius, “Ukrainskii iazyk i shkol'noe obuchenie v pozdneimperiiskii period,” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2005): 321–30.

17 TsDIAK, f. 295, op. 1, № 438 (*Otchety o rabote Kievskogo vremennogo komiteta po delam pechati*), 56–309.

18 RGIA, f. 776, op. 17, № 447 (*Zapros, vnesennyi za podpis'iu 30 chlenov Gosudarstvennoi Dumy...*), 1–2.

19 In fact, by 1914 the publisher, Ievhen Chykalenko, accumulated many debts and thus could not continue publishing *Rada*. Thus, as he mentioned it in a number of his letters to different people, the decision



Instead of repressing the Ukrainian press, the government shored up some Russian nationalist periodicals published in the Southwestern region. For instance, in 1913–15, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (hereafter MVD) provided annual subsidies to the newspaper *Kiev*. However, even though over three years the amount of these subsidies reached sixty-five thousand roubles, by the end of 1916, *Kiev*, “the only newspaper in the region with a steady national-Russian tendency,” still carried a deficit of twenty thousand roubles.<sup>20</sup> Another project, which was supported by the MVD in 1916, were newspapers published by the Kievan “Society of the Double-Headed Eagle” (*Kievskaiia kopeika* and *Dvuglavyi orel*). In 1916, the Minister of Internal Affairs allocated each of them a monthly allowance of one thousand roubles.<sup>21</sup>

It was Russian nationalists and not the government who clearly attacked the Ukrainian nationalist movement. Activists of the latter were accused of political separatism and the desire to break apart the Russian nation and empire. In the opinion of Russian nationalists, Ukrainian was not a separate language and Ukrainians were not a separate nation, but rather the Little Russian part of the Russian tripartite nation. Even their name, “Ukrainians,” was a “fabrication”: “There are no Ukrainians here,” stated one of the Kievan Russians in his 1913 talk. “There are no Ukrainians here either alive or in the cemeteries: neither on the ground, nor under it.”<sup>22</sup> A specially coined word designated Ukrainian activists as *Mazepists* after the Cossack hetman Ivan Mazepa, who “betrayed” Peter I by siding with Charles XII in 1708.

Except for fighting Ukrainian activists in the press, southwestern Russian nationalists tried to combat their Ukrainian rivals by denouncing

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of military authorities to close *Rada* actually made him happy: Ievhen Chykalenko and Serhii Iefremov, *Lystuvannia 1903—1928 rr.* (Kiev: Tempora, 2010), 111; Ievhen Chykalenko and Petro Stebnytsky, *lystuvannia 1901—1922 rr.* (Kiev: Tempora, 2008), 403.

20 RGIA, f. 776, op. 33, № 397 (*O vydache subsidii gazete “Kiev”*), 1–13.

21 RGIA, f. 776, op. 33, № 407 (*O vydache subsidii kievskomu obshestvu “Dvuglavyi orel”*), 1–32. In their appeal to the authorities, members of *Dvuglavyi orel* argued that contrary to *Kiev* their newspapers target not the intellectuals, but soldiers and peasants, who cannot comprehend the materials published by *Kiev*.

22 Ivan Sikorskii, *Russkie i ukraintsy* (Kiev: Klub russkikh natsionalistov, 1913), 12. Three years later, in May 1916, the same rhetoric was used, for instance, by the mayor of Moscow, who allowed the founding of a society of mutual aid for Moscow’s Ukrainian students but stressed that the society should be named “Little Russian” instead of “Ukrainian” because “there are no Ukrainians in Russia at all”: RGIA, f. 1284, op. 187–1916, № 48 (*Ob utverzhdenii proekta-ustava obshestva*), 7.

them to the authorities, alerting the latter of the growing “Ukrainian menace.” An example of this approach might be the famous case of the so-called Stolypin circular issued by the minister in 1910, which closed the Ukrainian “Prosvita” society in Kiev as an “alien society.”<sup>23</sup> The initial proposal to close “Prosvita” came to St. Petersburg from the Kievan governor-general Fedor Trepov. However, Trepov’s correspondence with St. Petersburg contains a newspaper clipping from a St. Petersburg newspaper, which accused Kievan regional authorities of heeding the requests of a local Russian nationalist newspaper *Kievlianin*. On the margins of this clipping, someone from the MVD demanded that the abovementioned article from *Kievlianin* be found; it turned out to be an op-ed by Anatoly Savenko.<sup>24</sup> Its author argued that despite the authorities’ 1909 decision to forbid the activity of Polish “Oświata,” Kiev still had many other organizations pursuing similar separatist aims such as the Ukrainian “Prosvita”; Savenko persistently suggested the government continue its repressive policy and close the Ukrainian associations as well.<sup>25</sup> Stolypin followed this suggestion.

Sometimes Russian nationalists tried to influence even the conceptual apparatus of state officials. It seems that high-ranking officials like the Kievan governors, not to mention authorities in St. Petersburg, did not care much about which word—“Ukrainian” or “Little Russian”—to use to designate the population of the southwestern part of the empire and its lan-

23 RGIA, f. 1284, op. 187–1910, № 21 (*O zakrytii obshchestv*), 66–68. At the moment, this “alienation” of Ukrainians seems to have been a simple mistake, which was corrected in a few months. The new version of the circular stated that only “Ukrainian societies, which deny the unity of the Russian nation and propagate Ukrainian separatism and independence” should be closed. See Petr Stolypin, *Perepiska* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2007), 361; Hillis, *Children of Rus’*, 238; RGIA, f. 1284, op. 187–1909, № 260 (*Po tsirkuliaru 20 ianvaria sego goda*), 50.

24 Anatoliy Savenko, “Zamетки. DCCCLXVIII,” *Kievlianin* 38 (7 February 1910): 3.

25 The Kiev governor and local journalists were not the only ones, however, who could have inspired Stolypin’s circular. Two years before, the St. Petersburg Department of Police received another similar request, this time coming from the mayor of Odessa. The latter notified authorities in the capital of subversive gatherings of the local “Prosvita,” whose members cursed Bogdan Khmel’nitski for the unification of Ukraine with the Russian Empire. The mayor asked St. Petersburg to close “Prosvita.” RGIA, f. 1284, op. 188–1908, № 159 (*Ob ukrainskikh obshchestvakh “Prosveta”*), 4. Valentyna Shandra suggests that the circular was inspired by a report by a Kievan censor, Sergei Shchegolev, which was submitted to St. Petersburg by the Kievan governor Alexei Girs: Valentyna Shandra, “Mova iak zasib formuvannia natsional’noi identychnosti,” in *Ukrains’ka identychnist’ i movne pytannia v Rosiis’kii imperii: sproba derzhavnoho rehu-livuvannia*, edited by Hennadii Boriak (Kiev: Instytut istorii NANU, 2013), xxxvi.

guage. For instance, in 1913, the Kievan governor sent a request to the Kievan Temporary Committee for Print asking for data on a prospective publisher for a journal in the "Ukrainian language." However, a member of the committee left a note on the margins of this request so as not to forget to "inform the governor that official terminology recognizes only the Little Russian dialect, whereas the term 'Ukrainian language' was introduced without preliminary permission (*iavochnym poriadkom*)."<sup>26</sup> In 1914, the same committee received a request from the head of the Kiev gendarmerie about a number of books and journals in the "Little Russian *language*" that were approved for publication. In its reply, the Committee informed the gendarmes of books and journals written in the "Little Russian *dialect*."<sup>27</sup>

Occasionally some state officials, like Petr Stolypin, backed up the Russian nationalists, as happened, for instance, during the elections to the western zemstvos in 1911. At the same time, many other state officials remained "either indifferent or opposed to them." Even the new head of the Council of Ministers, Vladimir Kokovtsev, was far less sympathetic towards Russian nationalists as opposed to Stolypin, his predecessor. Thus, during the fourth Duma elections, despite all the nationalists' desire for governmental help, the state's assistance to them became less consistent.<sup>28</sup> The same was true at the local level. If the governors of Kiev and Podolia provinces, Alexei Girs and Aleksandr Eiler respectively, supported the Russian nationalists and were considered allies by them, "[the Russian nationalists] were extremely mistrustful of the governor general of the southwest, F.F. Trepov."<sup>29</sup> Another governor of Volhynia, Aleksandr Kutaisov, also opposed them (and in 1912 he was removed from the office by the MVD).<sup>30</sup>

The Kievan Temporary Committee for Print seems to be the only imperial institution of the time that consistently opposed the Ukrainian national movement, and in this way, it could have carried out the project

26 TsDIAK, f. 295, op. 1, № 440 (*Perepiska o vyiasnenii dopustimosti k obraschcheniiu razlichnykh izdaniu*), 99–100.

27 Ibid., 193.

28 Edelman, *Gentry Politics*, 148–49.

29 Ibid., 150.

30 Ibid., 128, 130–36.

of nationalizing the Russian Empire. Between 1909 and 1917, it was led by Timofei Florinski, a historian and philologist who seems to be one of the few imperial officials who did not hide his Russian nationalist bias, and, since the end of the 1890s, actively and consistently fought against Ukrainian national activists. In addition to his published brochures,<sup>31</sup> this was revealed by his annual secret reports to the Main Department for the Press. There, Florinski made a clear distinction between the “Little Russian dialect” of the Russian language and the “Little Russian bookish dialect of the newest type (the so-called Ukrainian language).” Florinski always used the latter in quotation marks to underline its artificiality and difference from the language spoken by “Little Russians.”<sup>32</sup> “Ukrainians,” according to Florinski, were not a separate nation but a political party aiming at political separatism from the Russian Empire. Therefore, the Kievian Temporary Committee for Print used any pretext to ban Ukrainian publications.<sup>33</sup>

### Imperial Authorities Oppose Russian Nationalists

At the same time, despite governmental subsidies to Russian nationalist newspapers and the related activity of some imperial officials, one still cannot argue that the officials of the late Romanov Empire pursued a coherent state-directed nationalizing project.

First, except for the subsidies, local Russian nationalist newspapers were also read, fined, and banned by the censors and courts. For example, when the lobbyist of *Dvuglavyi orel* asked the Minister of Internal Affairs for a grant, he included a note that his paper was repeatedly subjected to both judicial and administrative penalties for its articles criticizing state officials and accusing the latter of “betraying the fatherland.”<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Timofei Florinskii, *Malorusskii iazyk i “ukrainsko-russkii” literaturnyi separatizm* (St. Petersburg, 1900).

<sup>32</sup> TsDIAK, f. 295, op. 1, № 438 (*Otchety o rabote Kievskogo vremennogo komiteta po delam pechati*), 56, 116, 179, 298).

<sup>33</sup> See Chykalenko and Iefremov, *Lystuvannia*, 85.

<sup>34</sup> RGIA, f. 776, op. 33, № 407, 16.

In addition, a number of local officials tried to curb the antisemitic publications of Russian nationalists by informal means. Thus, in 1912, the Kievan governor asked the Minister of Internal Affairs, Aleksandr Makarov, to use his connections and stop *Dvuglavyi Orel* from publishing articles that promoted a “hostile attitude among its readers towards governmental agents and diminishing governmental prestige.”<sup>35</sup> However, despite all his efforts, even in 1914, the general-governor had to state that the newspaper continued to publish articles “discrediting not only local officials, but even the representatives of the higher central government.”<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, regional imperial authorities tried to control and regulate the activity of Russian nationalists in the Volhynia province. For instance, in 1905, its governor informed the Kievan general-governor that he received a copy of *Troitskie listki*, the dissemination of which he considered undesirable for his province because of its texts, which could have “caused unacceptable discord and a mutual distrust among the native Russian population and numerous non-Orthodox people who live in the Volhynia province. In particular this unrest can be directed against Jews, who are treated by the local Christian population, predominantly the low class, in an unfriendly way.”<sup>37</sup>

Both the Volhynian governor and the Kievan general-governor tried to restrain the Pochaev monks, Iliodor and Vitalii, whose sermons and publications in a local newspaper entitled *Pochaevskie izvestiia* were characterized by an “extreme intolerance towards local Jews and Poles.” Thus, in 1907, the Kievan general-governor secretly wrote to Prime Minister Petr Stolypin asking him to contact the Synod and use it to help stop the activities of Iliodor and Vitalii.<sup>38</sup> However, in 1908, the Volhynian governor again secretly informed the MVD that despite all of the useful patriotic activity of Vitalii, some of his actions deviated from the law and were very undesirable from the point

35 RGIA, f. 776, op. 16–2, № 905 (*Ob izdanii v Kieve gazety pod nazvaniem “Dvuglavyi orel”*), 20.

36 Ibid., 103.

37 TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 855, № 359 (*Po raznoi perepiske, kasaiushcheisia vyborov v Gosudarstvennuiu Dumu*), 1–4.

38 TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 857, № 312 (*O vrednoi deiatel'nosti ieromonakha Pochaevskoi lavry Iliodora...*), 2–4.

of view of preserving state order, and in particular those who call for violence against local Polish landlords.<sup>39</sup> At the end of 1908, one of them, Roman Sangushko, even complained to Stolypin about *Pochaevskie izvestiia*, which “instigates hatred towards all non-Orthodox (*inovertsam*) and aliens (*inorodtsam*), Polish landlords, Jews, and even the local administration, whose representatives are accused of being revolutionaries or bribe-takers, bought by the enemies of Russia.”<sup>40</sup> Even though it seems that the efforts of the authorities did not attain their desired result, the correspondence between the Volhynian governor, the Kievan general-governor, and the MVD on this subject, which lasted until 1910, at least indicates the hesitation of imperial authorities concerning their wholehearted embrace of local nationalists.

Similarly, the story of the Ukrainian media attests to the fact that the attitudes of state institutions and Ukrainian activists were not shaped by constant repressions and bans. Even Timofei Florinski, with all his hatred for the Ukrainian press, not only had to disguise his actions through some formal procedures, but also had to act in a framework of existing law. Thus, the only way for him to suppress the Ukrainian media was to follow the law as strictly as possible and hope that the Kiev judicial chamber would support his resolutions. However, quite often, even this was not the case. For instance, in 1909, Hnat Hotkevych complained to the Main Department for Press that the Kievan Committee for Print refused to review his “Album of Historical Portraits,” adding that “in principle, some actions of the Kievan censor belong to the area of lawlessness (*prinadlezhat k oblasti proizvola*).” St. Petersburg demanded explanations from Florinski, who submitted a report arguing that Hotkevych had not followed the formal requirements. But this clarification did not convince the Main Department for the Press, which allowed the album to be published even without asking the Kievan censors to review it.<sup>41</sup>

39 Ibid., 23. The reason why such articles could appear at all was that *Pochaevskie izvestiia* was published in town, which did not have a separate censor. Thus, each issue of the newspaper had to be checked by a policeman in Kremenets, 25 verst (about 25 km or 17 miles) far from Pochaev, which meant that even when the policeman decided to arrest the issue, it would have already reached the subscribers.

40 Ibid., 34.

41 RGIA, f. 776, op. 16 p.2, № 187 (*Po zhalobe inzhener-tekhnologa na Vremennyyi komitet po delam pečati*), 1–19.

In a number of other cases, Florinski failed to ban Ukrainian publications because of the local judicial chamber. For instance, in March 1909, this institution refused to confirm a block on Volodymyr Samiilenko's poetry, "To Ukraine" (*Ukraini*), which was accused by the Kievan censors of having a "separatist-Little Russian tendency" and instigating "hatred toward the contemporary system of government and Russians."<sup>42</sup> In another case from 1910, the same chamber refused to confirm a ban on a tear-off calendar whose publishers, according to Florinski's Committee, committed a host of crimes. One of them was not simply the calendar's mention of the deaths of Karl Marx and Alexander II on the same page because they both occurred on the same day, March 1, but the *sequence* in which they appeared on the page: Marx's death preceded the emperor's despite the fact that even pure chronology demanded the contrary.<sup>43</sup>

Probably the best-known instance of the Kievan judicial chamber's refusal to support Florinski in his crusade against Ukrainians took place during the same year, 1910. It was related to the decision of the Kievan Temporary Committee for Print to confiscate the fourth issue of the newspaper *Selo* and its calendar supplement, which contained a map of Ukraine. Florinski argued that the map and the accompanying article advanced an idea of Ukrainian separatism and threatened the unity of the Russian nation. One of the ways it did so, according to Florinski, was the calendar's consistent usage of the terms "Ukraine," "Ukrainians," "Ukrainian nation," "Austrian Ukraine," and "Russian Ukraine." According to him, "This arbitrary renaming of one branch of our Russian nation (*russkogo naroda*) aims at asserting to the masses, which the calendar targets, a wrong and criminal idea that the 'Ukrainian nation,' which is created anew, constitutes a separate nation."<sup>44</sup> Kievan Ukrainians celebrated the judicial chamber's decision to revoke the prohibition as "a slap to Florinski."<sup>45</sup>

42 RGIA, f. 776, op. 16 p.2, № 195 (*O nalozenii aresta na knigu pod zaglaviem Volodymyr Samiilenko "Ukraini"*), 1–4.

43 Alexander II was killed in 1881, whereas Marx died in 1883; RGIA, f. 776, op. 16 p. 2, № 357 (*O vzbuzhdenii sudebnogo presledovaniia po "Otryvnomu kalendaru" na malorossiiskom narechii*), 1–5.

44 TsDIAK, f. 295, op. 1, № 259 (*Vypiski iz zhurnalov zasedanii komiteta*), 8–17.

45 Ol'ha Mel'nyk, "Lysty Leopolda Budaia iak dzherelo do vyvchennia naukovo-orhanizatsiinoi ta



Thus, in 1912, Florinski complained to his St. Petersburg superiors that all “attempts of the Committee to fight the dissemination of these ideas by addressing the criminal court had never achieved this aim. The judicial chamber did not find anything illegal about propagandizing these ideas, which could have been punished by criminal laws.”<sup>46</sup> He continued to grumble in a similar way in 1914:

As far as our Criminal Code does not have laws that would protect the national and cultural unity of the Russian nation, even during the current year, the Committee, as I have explained many times earlier, did not have the objective means to fight the harmful and extremely dangerous direction of the “Ukrainian” press. The activity of this party developed without any obstacles. [...] I found it possible to institute only two proceedings [...] One was not yet discussed. And in the first case the editor was fined 200 roubles. “Ukrainian” periodicals cannot complain about “repressions.”<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusion

It has been suggested in historiography that one should distinguish “Russian nationalism as a public sentiment, and the ‘official nationalism’ of the autocracy” as “closely connected yet independent phenomena, sometimes going on side by side, but no less often entering into conflict with each other.”<sup>48</sup> This study proposes complementing this argument with a revision of the idea of Russian “official nationalism.”

In May 1910, Kievan Ukrainians buried one of their leaders, Borys Hrinchenko. According to contemporaries, no less than 3,000 people at-

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vydavnychoi diialnosti Mykhaila Hrushevskoho (1907–1912),” *Ukraïns’kyi arkhheobrafichnyi shchorichnyk* 10/11 (2006): 604. By no means was this story a model one; in 1913 another censor successfully ordered the sellers of a book on Ukrainian art to cut out the accompanying map of Ukraine: TsDIAK, f. 295, op. 1, № 477, p. 240b–25; M.P., “Shche pro ‘Ukraïns’ke mystetstvo’ (‘L’Art d’Ukraine’) V. Shcherbakivs’koho,” *Rada* 244 (25 October 1913): 4.

46 TsDIAK, f. 295, op. 1, № 438 (*Otchety o rabote Kievskogo vremennogo komiteta po delam pechati*), 188.

47 Ibid., 308.

48 Miller, *Ukrainian Question*, 5.

tended the funeral. Those who remembered the passage of Taras Shevchenko's body through Kiev in 1861 could easily notice the contrast: according to Oleksandr Rusov, back then, Shevchenko's coffin was accompanied by only eighty people. Rusov's interlocutor, Martyrrii Halyn, explained the difference: "All of this was achieved by the press. If the administration was smarter, first of all, it would have closed *Rada* because it was [*Rada*] that laid the foundation for such a pompous funeral."<sup>49</sup> Even if Russian nationalists from the southwestern provinces of the empire energetically argued that Ukrainian activists were breaking the Russian national body, and thus should be suppressed, it seems that the imperial government never embraced Russian nationalism as its regular policy at all levels; it never "became smarter" about suppressing them. Meanwhile, those imperial bureaucrats, like Timofei Florinski, who definitely tried to undermine the Ukrainian national movement were not part of a centralized state-led effort that would encompass all branches of the imperial government. If one imperial institution did not allow the usage of the Ukrainian language in schools, another institution still permitted thousands of people of different classes to read Ukrainian publications.

Thus, instead of being considered a modern nationalizing state that conducts a nationalizing policy from above, or an outstanding example of the application of Seton-Watson's doctrine of "official nationalism," the Romanov Empire should be viewed as an inconsistently nationalizing empire that did not pursue a coherent program of making the empire more Russian from reigns of Nicholas I to Nicholas II. One of the examples of this inconsistency, which was recognized even at the time, was the legalization of the Ukrainian press in 1906. So long as publishers stuck to existing laws, they would be able to see their texts printed and sold and, maybe, even read.

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49 Ievhen Chykalenko, *Shchodennyk*. Vol. 1 (Kiev: Tempora, 2011), 104.



# Challenges to Imperial Authorities' Nationality Policy in the Northwest Region, 1905–15

Darius Staliūnas

There are different approaches toward the longevity of the Russian Empire in historiography. Some researchers claim that the Romanovs' recipe for success lay in the effective integration of the peripheries (primarily their elites) into imperial ruling structures, and that the state collapsed in 1917 due to the particular circumstances created by the war.<sup>1</sup> Others argue that the Russian Empire did not collapse earlier thanks to its military power.<sup>2</sup> Only a small part of this fundamental debate will be analyzed here. The question raised in this study is whether the tsarist government had a clear nationality policy concept in the Northwest region in the late imperial period, that is, one that in its own view could produce results, at least to ensure the loyalty of non-dominant national groups.<sup>3</sup> I argue that tsarist officials had problems finding this kind of strategy, and essentially reconciled themselves to the disloyalty of the non-dominant national groups (or at least their elites) in the Romanov Empire.<sup>4</sup>

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1 This idea prevailed at the conference “Russia between Reforms and Revolutions, 1906–16,” held at the European University in St. Petersburg on May 26–28, 2017.

2 This approach dominates among historians of Central and Eastern Europe.

3 The Northwest region consisted of the Vil'na, Kovna, Grodna, Minsk, Vitebsk, and Mogilev provinces, even though the term was sometimes applied to only three provinces: Vil'na, Kovna, and Grodna, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

4 Imperial nationality policy regarding Poles, Lithuanians, and Belorussian Catholics will be analyzed in this chapter. These are the most significant national groups that are either not recognized as part of the Russian category, or their Russianness was controversial (as in the case of Catholic Belorussians). The “Jewish ques-

The policies of the tsarist government on the western periphery of the Russian Empire following the 1905 Revolution have received much less attention than the period after the quelling of the 1863–64 uprising.<sup>5</sup> This is because in the post-1905 period, the imperial government did not experiment much in terms of politics, passing only a few decrees based on nationality policy motives (for example, the creation of Cholm [Chełm] province and the introduction of the zemstvo system in six of the Western region's provinces), while public life was significantly more active, consequently drawing greater interest from researchers. Additionally, between 1905 and 1915 as compared with the post-1863 era, the centers of power changed somewhat.<sup>6</sup> During the earlier period, especially between 1863 and 1865 when Mikhail Murav'ev was the governor-general of Vil'na, many nationality policy innovations were implemented at the initiative and through the efforts of local authorities (banning the Lithuanian press in the traditional script, the introduction of Russian into supplementary services in the Catholic Church, the mass conversion of Belorussian Catholics to Orthodoxy, etc.), while at the beginning of the twentieth century, the powers of the Vil'na governor-general were much less extensive. The reduced influence of the Vil'na governor-general was related to numerous develop-

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tion" will not be discussed here both because of the limited scope of this study, and because this problem had obviously become a prerogative of the central government in the early twentieth century, and local officials showed little initiative on this issue. Nationality policy toward these non-dominant national groups will be revealed through an analysis of debates among tsarist bureaucrats, decisions made by imperial authorities, and, only to a very limited degree, through an examination of how that policy was implemented.

- 5 The following works are worth mentioning here. Malte Rolf's research on the Kingdom of Poland; see: Malte Rolf, *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland. Das Königreich Polen im Russischen Imperium (1864–1915)* (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2015); the summative study by Mikhail Dolbilov and Alexei Miller, *Zapadnye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006); works dedicated to confessional policies: Vytautas Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai Vilniaus vyskupijoje 1798–1918 m.* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2006); Aleksandr Bendin, *Problemy veroterpimosti v Severo-zapadnom krae Rossiiskoi imperii (1863–1914 gg.)* (Minsk: BGU, 2010); and the monograph by Theodore R. Weeks in which the following questions are analyzed in greater detail: local self-government, the separation of the Chełm province from the Kingdom of Poland: Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1996). See also a monograph on the Chełm problem by Polish historian Andrzej Szabaciuk, *'Rosyjski Ulster': Kwestia Chełmska w polityce imperialnej Rosji w latach 1863–1915* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2013).

- 6 This research spans the period up to 1915, as after this time, a larger part of the Northwest region came under German military occupation.

ments: the officials who took up these posts, Alexander Freze (1904–1905) and Konstantin Krshivitskii (1905–1909), did not have the same authority as, for example, Murav'ev. The jurisdiction of the Vil'na governor-general at the beginning of the twentieth century spanned only three provinces: Vil'na, Kovna, and Grodna, whereas in the 1860s, it also extended to the “Belorussian” provinces of Minsk, Vitebsk and Mogilev, where the government often applied the same anti-Polish measures. Furthermore, starting at the end of the nineteenth century, there was increasingly more discussion among bureaucrats about the need to abolish general-governorships on the empire's peripheries, which is what happened in the case of Vil'na in 1912.<sup>7</sup>

There were even more differences between these two epochs that are noteworthy. Starting in 1905, Russia was a constitutional monarchy, and all decrees had to be approved by the parliament (Duma). Even though the first two Dumas opposed to the government were dissolved and the third and fourth Dumas in effect supported the government's policies, this new government institution limited the ability of tsarist authorities to experiment in the field of nationalities policy. At the same time, there were numerous situations where members of non-dominant ethnic or confessional groups participated at the discussion stage on certain measures in the fields of education, local self-governance, and religion. This also reduced the potential for drastic discriminatory measures.

Nevertheless, this approximately ten-year period was important in the evolution of the tsarist government's nationalities policy in the Northwest region. It is important for our understanding of how the imperial government tried to manage old and new challenges: growing nationalism among Russians and non-Russians; the strengthening of the revolutionary movement; the (at least formally) legalized constitutional regime; and the influence of the international situation on the empire's domestic affairs. Although the focus of this chapter is on the post-1905 period, tsarist nationalities policy in the last decade of the Empire cannot be analyzed without at least briefly discussing the changes that took place in nationalities policy in the early twentieth century.

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7 The post of the Vil'na governor-general had been vacant since 1909.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the government's main enemy on the empire's western periphery was without doubt the Poles. However, at around the turn of the twentieth century, influential imperial officials emerged, such as the Vil'na governor-general Petr Sviatopolk-Mirskii (1902–1904; also minister for internal affairs in 1904–1905), who imagined the empire's "hierarchy of enemies" quite differently.<sup>8</sup> In May 1904, while summing up his activities throughout his tenure as the governor-general of Vil'na, he recommended differentiating between different sectors of Polish society despite practically admitting that the government must continue fighting against Polish influence and, in particular, stop the Polonization of non-Polish Catholics (Belorussians and Lithuanians). Sviatopolk-Mirskii only considered Poles living in cities to be disloyal, while the Polish gentry were "a calmer, [politically] more lucid group and were a great support to the government."<sup>9</sup> Even at this stage, the senior official stated that it was no longer the Poles' anti-government activities that posed the greatest problem, but the "workers question," which was closely associated with the "Jewish question"; that is, the main challenge to the maintenance of political stability came from the participation by Jews in the revolutionary movement.<sup>10</sup> Some of the empire's political elites also changed their attitude toward the empire's Polish subjects in response to the political conjuncture. At the end of the nineteenth century when Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy formed the Triple Alliance, the negative policy against Poland that had been in place since the beginning of the eighteenth century disintegrated.<sup>11</sup> Thus, some senior officials in Russia such as, for example, the Warsaw governor-general Pavel Shuvalov, alleged that discrimination against Poles in the Romanov Empire would make them politically loyal to the Triple Al-

8 On his program, see also: Witold Rodkiewicz, *Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Provinces of the Empire (1863–1905)* (Lublin: Scientific Society of Lublin, 1998), 225–42.

9 Rimantas Vėbra, ed., *Lietuvių klausimas Rusijos imperijoje XIX a.–XX a. pradžioje* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2001), 158–85, quote on 168.

10 Ibid., 241.

11 This was, first of all, the goal of Prussia and Russia not to allow the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth to grow strong in the eighteenth century, and to stop it from re-establishing itself in the nineteenth century: Martin Schulze Wessel, *Russlands Blick auf Preussen: Die polnische Frage in der Diplomatie und der politischen Öffentlichkeit des Zarenreiches und des Sowjetstaates 1697–1947* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1995).

liance, which was why policies relating to Poles had to be changed.<sup>12</sup> These changes to the empire's imagined "hierarchy of enemies" became even more pronounced during the period of the 1905 revolution.<sup>13</sup>

The altered informal "hierarchy of enemies" was an important, but not the only reason for least part of the empire's ruling elite's changes in their periphery integration strategies. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some bureaucrats admitted that the "Russification" policy not only failed to bring the anticipated benefits, but even produced results that directly opposed the imperial government's expectations. Officials noted the ineffectiveness of earlier policies not just with regard to Poles, but also, for example, in their policy on the publication of the Lithuanian press in the traditional script. Some senior officials admitted that this prohibition had worsened relations between the government and the Lithuanians: "The population, usually quite calm and compliant, was pushed to the verge of revolt."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, in the view of imperial officials, the policy of Cyrilization did not reduce the Polonization of Lithuanians but increased it. It was no great secret to imperial officials that Lithuanians had devised a way of printing Lithuanian books and, later on, newspapers in the Latin script in Prussia (from 1870–1871 in the German Empire), and then smuggled them into the Russian Empire. Lithuanian historians have identified as many as 2,854 individuals who were caught with illegal Lithuanian printed material. It was obvious to the Kovna governor-general Alexei Rogovich that: "It was impossible to force a million-strong tribe to forget their nationality or language, which it had preserved completely intact during the entire history of Poland and Russia, and at the same time it was impossible to destroy the 'Lithuanian movement.'"<sup>15</sup> The enormous amount of illegal literature was also dangerous to the government, not only because it was printed in a prohibited script, but also because of its content. In other

12 Petr Shuvalov, Overview of the Situation in the Northwest region (1896), *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (GARF), f. 543, op. 1, d. 466, l. 7.

13 Dolbilov and Miller, *Zapadnye okrainy*, 343.

14 Quoted from: Vytautas Merkys, *Knygnešių laikai 1864–1904* (Vilnius: Valstybinis leidybos centras, 1994), 368.

15 *Ibid.*, 364.



words, some officials maintained that a legal Lithuanian press in the Latin script would be more advantageous to the government as then it could be shaped by censorship.<sup>16</sup> Also, an unquestionable incentive was the general liberalization of the regime, which resulted from both the defeat in the war against Japan and the revolution of 1905.

Probably the first complex attempt to recommend an alternative to “Russification” was the aforementioned report by Sviatopolk-Mirskii, from which we learn that the Vil’na governor-general at the time suggested changing policies affecting non-Russians. There was no reason to exclude the Polish gentry from various organizations and state institutions; rather they should be invited to join, and thus encouraged to cooperate with Russians. In other words, the imperial government had to move from a policy of segregation to one of integration. These joint efforts by Poles and Russians would contribute to the integration of the region into the Russian Empire.<sup>17</sup> He also acknowledged that the policy carried out against Lithuanians—which in analytical terms could be described as acculturation, and which had to be followed by assimilation—was counter-productive, and that the Russian authorities had to come to terms with the Lithuanian ethno-cultural community’s existence in principle.<sup>18</sup> But in the case of Belorussian Catholics, the ultimate goal had to remain conversion to Orthodoxy, or, as we would put it, complete assimilation. However, the methods here had to be completely different. One of the most important principles was to stop discriminating against the Catholic Church, because that kind of policy “would only distance Catholic Belorussians from the government, and, in retreating from the Russians, they would ultimately join the Poles, doing so entirely consciously and in great numbers.”<sup>19</sup> Guided by this particular logic of nationality policy, in 1905, numerous legal acts were changed in the Russian Empire in order to regulate non-Russians’ education, religious life, and the acquisition of land.

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16 For more on this issue, see *ibid.*, 358–86.

17 Vėbra, *Lietuvių klausimas*, 168–85.

18 *Ibid.*, 200–22.

19 *Ibid.*, 93.

In this research, I make the distinction between the *imperial* or *pragmatic* nationality policy and *nationalist* nationality policy strategies, which are understood here as ideal types. The first strategy's main aim was to ensure stability in the empire, so that the demands of non-Russians could be met if it helped to achieve tranquility within the society. At the same time, acculturation or even assimilation methods could be employed here too, as long as they did not increase opposition among imperial subjects. The second strategy, meanwhile, was defined by the idea that political loyalty could only be achieved through cultural homogenization; that is, the political loyalty of non-Russians had to be secured by applying assimilation or acculturation policies, and in cases where that was impossible, or if such policies failed, segregationist political measures were applied, and ethnic Russians protected. Proponents of this strategy perceived any concession to non-Russian nationalities as dangers to the wellbeing of the empire.<sup>20</sup>

### “The Polish Question”

On March 15, 22 and 23, 1905, the Committee of Ministers considered the abolition of discriminatory measures against Poles, basing their judgment on the report by Sviatopolk-Mirskii already cited here.<sup>21</sup> The participants in these meetings noted that the Poles' attitude to the Russian Empire had changed. They no longer exhibited separatist tendencies, and they could prove to be quite useful as a conservative element in the struggle against the new main enemy: “dangerous teaching, seeking the social equality of

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20 Witold Rodkiewicz has defined the empire's different nationality policy strategies in a little bit different way. He writes that *bureaucratic Nationalism* sought to transform the empire into a Russian nation-state, and understood integration as “a full linguistic and cultural Russification of non-Russians,” while nationhood within the framework of *imperial Strategy* was taken to be political loyalty, supporting Lithuanians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians as a counterforce against the Poles, etc.: Rodkiewicz, *Russian Nationality Policy*, 13–16. For a slightly different conceptualization of different approaches towards nationality issues in the late imperial period, see Valerie A. Kivelson and Ronald Grigor Suny, *Russia's Empires* (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 250–52. Out of the four “visions for the empire” identified by Kivelson and Suny, that of the “true Russian’ nationalists” is actually the same as the *nationalist* one described above.

21 The Committee of Ministers was charged with preparing point 7 of the tsarist decree of December 12, 1904, which foresaw the implementation of eliminating discrimination against non-Russians.

all classes, and extreme democracy.”<sup>22</sup> We can also see such changes in the empire’s imagined “hierarchy of enemies” on its western periphery. Summarizing the experience of the 1905 revolution that had just taken place, the governor of Grodna thought the activities of Jewish revolutionary organizations, which he went so far as to call “a terrible threat,” were a much more serious problem, despite noting that Poles had not abandoned their aim to Polonize the Belorussians.<sup>23</sup>

In the meetings of the Council of Ministers held in March 1905, senior officials demonstrated that they were going to take into account at least some of the demands of non-Russians, primarily of Poles, so that “they could improve their economic situation and develop their religious strength.” As was written in the meeting’s minutes, this kind of attitude “would inspire love and respect by the incorporated nations for the dominating [nation], and eliminate, or at least minimize, ethnic tensions and dissatisfaction.”<sup>24</sup> This kind of approach can be attributed more to methods of *imperial* (or *pragmatic*) nationality policy than *nationalist* nationality policy. The imperial decree of May 1, 1905 confirmed the resolutions passed at these meetings, which abolished certain anti-Polish discriminatory measures that had been introduced after 1863 (many of the prohibitions on purchasing or renting land, it planned to revive the self-governing activities of the gentry; teaching subjects in Lithuanian and Polish at various levels in state schools was also permitted).<sup>25</sup>

Like other legal acts that eased discrimination against “persons of Polish origin,” this decree did not change the perception of the Western region as a Russian national territory in official discourse, nor were the convictions of the imperial ruling elite changed so that other ethnic groups (first of all

22 Minutes of the Committee of Ministers’ meetings, March 15, 22, 23, 1905, *RGLA*, f. 1276, op. 1, d. 106, l. 407.

23 Report for the Grodna province, 1907, *RGLA*. *Chital’nyi zal*, papka No 2820, doc. no. 20, l. 1.

24 Minutes of the Committee of Ministers’ meetings, March 15, 22, 23, 1905, *RGLA*, f. 1276, op. 1, d. 106, l. 404.

25 Decree of May 1, 1905, *RGLA*, f. 1276, op. 1, d. 106, l. 423. The prohibition on buying land from Russians remained in place. Even though it was the cancellation of anti-Polish prohibitions that was formally being deliberated, some discriminatory measures against Lithuanians were also revoked.

Lithuanians and “Russians”) had to be protected from Polish influence.<sup>26</sup> This position was very clearly elucidated by Krshivitskii, the Vil’na governor-general: “Any external oppression of the Polish element is deeply wrong and naturally opposes the sentiments of Russians; [in addition], as experience has shown [this kind of policy of oppression] brings the opposite results, which simply strengthens the oppressed element and morally weakens the dominant [element].” However, this kind of approach, according to the governor-general, was acceptable only within the “ethnographic boundaries of the Polish nation,” while in Belorussia, the government had to see to the survival of the Belorussians under the influence of Russian culture.<sup>27</sup>

Ivan Tolstoi, who had been appointed education minister in October 1905, suggested making radical changes to policies concerning the Poles. His credo declared that schooling cannot “Russify” non-Russians, that is, change their collective identification, which is why schools had to be made attractive to these nationalities. One of the first measures in reaching this goal had to be the introduction of “local languages” as part of the curriculum.<sup>28</sup> The minister suggested particularly radical changes to the education policy in the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>29</sup> As he himself wrote in his memoirs, he recommended a reform program practically repeating word-for-word the recommendations made by Leon Petrażycki, a Polish professor at St. Petersburg University. Besides other recommendations, this program foresaw the introduction of Polish as the language of instruction not only in state primary schools, but also in secondary schools. However, not only Russian and Russian literature, but also Russian history and geography had to be taught in Russian. Russian gymnasiums were to operate in the same way

26 Minutes of the Committee of Ministers’ meetings, March 15, 22, 23, 1905, *RGIA*, f. 1276, op. 1, d. 106, l. 403. On the Russian mental map, only Kovna province and the northwest part of Vil’na province within the Western region with a majority Lithuanian population were not perceived as Russian “national territory.”

27 Draft report from the Vil’na governor-general to P. Stolypin, August 20, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, BS, 1906 m., b. 412, l. 4. Similar ideas appear in a report prepared by the head of the Common Affairs Department of the Interior Ministry at the end of 1905, *RGIA*, f. 1284, op. 250, d. 220, l. 114–6.

28 Ivan Tolstoi, *Zametki o narodnom obrazovanii v Rosii* (St. Petersburg, 1907), 12–15.

29 Tolstoi also dismissed the Vil’na educational district overseer Vasilii Popov, whose “Russification” policy I will discuss later in this chapter. See Popov, *Memuary grafa I. I. Tolstogo* (Moscow: Indrik, 2002), 66.

in that Polish and Polish literature had to be taught.<sup>30</sup> However, Georgii Skalon, the governor-general of Warsaw, did not approve of such radical changes, and it was decided in St. Petersburg that this kind of reform was “not for these times.”<sup>31</sup>

The conditions for teaching “local languages” (Polish and Lithuanian) as subjects in the Northwest region were also revised while Tolstoi was education minister. If the resolutions passed in 1905 in St. Petersburg (the decree of May 1 and the resolution from the Education Committee at the Ministry of Education issued on September 22) foresaw that these languages could be taught as non-compulsory subjects in state schools only if “the majority of the pupils were of Lithuanian or Polish nationality” (the first document referred to a majority in a certain locality, the second meant a specific school); then, by January 21, 1906, the Ministry of Education allowed the introduction of this subject even where a specific national group did not make up the majority.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Polish as a subject was introduced in certain secondary, higher primary and two-year primary schools in the Northwest region.<sup>33</sup> However, soon enough, at the end of April 1906, Tolstoi and Sergei Vitte, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, were dismissed from their positions, which symbolized the end of the more liberal era.

Even though the tsarist decree of April 22, 1906 foresaw that the teaching of the Polish language as a subject could be introduced in primary schools in the part of Grodna province where Poles lived in a rather com-

30 *Memuary Tolstogo*, 164–72. In the Manuscript Department of the Russian National Library, the Tolstoi collection has a document “Note about languages of instruction in state education institutions in the Kingdom of Poland” (*Отдел рукописей Rossiiskoi natsional'noi biblioteki v Sankt Peterburge*, f. 781, d. 118), whose authorship has been attributed to the minister, although in his memoirs he wrote that he did not keep this document and only had the recommendations made by Petrażycki at hand when he was writing them. *Memuary Tolstogo*, 165.

31 *Memuary Tolstogo*, 165, 172. The Polish language basically only received these kinds of rights in private schools from 1905, which Tolstoi recommended granting to state schools in the Kingdom of Poland.

32 Report from the Vil'na educational district overseer to the minister of education, March 9, 1908, *LVI A*, f. 567, ap. 26, b. 800a, l. 15. For earlier regulations, see: Excerpt from the Vil'na educational district Circular No. 9 (1905), *LVI A*, f. 378, BS, 1904 m., 316, l. 181.

33 In 1908, out of the forty-one state secondary schools in the Northwest region, Polish was only taught as a subject in twenty-one, and in just a few primary schools in the cities. Out of the 117 private Christian schools, Polish was taught as a subject in only twenty: report from the Vil'na educational district overseer to the minister of education, March 9, 1908, *LVI A*, f. 567, ap. 26, b. 800a, l. 15.

pact area, this resolution was never implemented, regardless of the four meetings of the senior local officials in Vil'na and Grodna that took place in 1906, during which a "Polish territory" in Grodna was designated. In the years to come, senior local officials questioned the reliability of the research conducted in 1906.<sup>34</sup> It is likely that some of them did not even want to see this resolution carried out, and their critique of the collection of the data was only a pretext for failing to introduce Polish in primary schools in Grodna province. In the post-1905 period, imperial nationality policy changed yet again, and some tsarist bureaucrats no longer wanted to grant "privileges" to Poles any more.

The non-Russian elites on the empire's peripheries did not abide by the "rules of the game" envisaged by the imperial government. Take, for example, the case of the implementation of the April decree (April 17, 1905), whereby non-Orthodox clergy, first of all from the Catholic Church, took advantage of the fact that the government had not set down procedures for conversion, and initiated mass conversions of Orthodox believers to Catholicism.<sup>35</sup> In other words, it became clear to officials that the concessions the government was prepared to make could not satisfy the demands of the non-Russian elite. The change in direction in policy was also determined by the suppression of the revolution, which meant that the government had to take less notice of the demands made by opposition forces.

Gradually, in the perception of at least some tsarist officials, Poles recovered their status as the Empire's main enemies on its western periphery. This change is also evident in the reports by the Grodna governor Nikolai Nevrovich. Discussing the situation in 1907, he devoted a lot of attention to the threat coming from Jewish revolutionaries, and even noted that the Russians and the Poles had temporarily become united in the face of this threat in the province. In later years, the governor highlighted the dangerous activities by

34 See: "Ob upotreblenii mestnykh iazykov v nachal'nykh shkolakh Severo-Zapadnago kraia (Vysochaishee povelenie ot 22 apreliia 1906 goda)," *LVI*, f. 378, BS, 1906 m., b. 378; "Ob ustanovlenii etnograficheskikh granits primeneniia Vysochaishego poveleniia 22-go apreliia 1906 goda o dopushchenii pol'skogo iazyka v nachal'nykh uchilishchakh Grodnenskoii gub.," *LVI*, f. 567, ap. 13, b. 1301.

35 See also Žaltauskaitė's chapter in this volume.

Poles somewhat more, even though his reports still contained negative assessments of Jewish activities.<sup>36</sup> Thus, we should not be surprised by the fact that some of the points in the decree of May 1, 1905, such as the one concerning elections to the self-governing institutions of the gentry, were never realized, and, if we believe Aleksander Meysztowicz, Konstanty Skirmuntt and Stanisław Lopaciński, all Polish members of the State Council, then the decree was only followed in the first two years after its announcement, after which administrative practices changed, and local officials made it difficult for Poles to make use of the newly granted rights. Governor-generals were said to be stalling the issue of permits to Poles wanting to buy plots of land in order to eliminate land strips (domains sandwiched into other land holdings). In 1911, the Cassation Department of the Governing Senate explained that Poles could not buy land from legal entities, etc.<sup>37</sup>

The trend whereby the imperial government treated Poles *in corpore* as an enemy element whose influence could not be allowed to affect other national groups, primarily “Russians,” is illustrated very well in the story of the introduction of the zemstvo in the Western region. This local self-governing institution was introduced in the Russian Empire in 1864, although not in all of its peripheries. It was not introduced in the Western region because the ruling regime feared that the Poles would dominate these institutions. The bureaucratic correspondence that began at the end of the nineteenth century regarding the introduction of the zemstvo in the Western region ended in 1911, when Nicholas II confirmed the law on creating zemstvos in six of the provinces of the Western region.<sup>38</sup> They were not introduced in the “Lithuanian” provinces (Vil’na, Kovna, Grodna). The Vil’na and Kovna provinces were excluded from the area where the law applied because the Ministry of Interior Affairs believed that “zemstvo meetings in most of the districts in the Kovna and Vil’na provinces [...] would not have a Russian character at all, and [...]

36 Report for the Grodna province, 1907, 1908, 1910, *RGLA. Chital’nyi zal*, papka no. 2820.

37 Report by the State Council members Meysztowicz, Skirmuntt and Lopaciński “On the situation of Poles in the Western region,” *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 128, d. 1407, l. 20.

38 The details surrounding the preparation of this law have been discussed in historiography: Aron Avrek, “Vopros o zapadnom zemstve i bankrotstvo Stolypina,” *Istoricheskie zapiski* 70 (1961): 61–112; Weeks, *Nation and State*, 131–51; Dolbilov and Miller, *Zapadnye okrainy*, 271–75, 378–81.

would be completely undesirable in terms of the state's interests, and completely impermissible in terms of the domination of the Russian idea in the land."<sup>39</sup> The imperial government's greatest fear was that local self-governing institutions would be taken over by Poles. One dimension of this context which has received less attention in historiography is that the zemstvo system was never introduced in Grodna province either. Based on the official version, tsarist officials decided not to apply this reform in Grodna province because it would have proven inconvenient to administer the Vil'na governor-generalship if the zemstvo existed in only one of its provinces.<sup>40</sup> This could actually have been an important motive for tsarist bureaucrats, but it might not have been the only one. The abolition of the institution of Vil'na governor-general was deliberated extensively in imperial government institutions basically from the post-1863 period on, and the post was vacant altogether starting in 1909. The resolution for the abolition of the institution was finally passed at the beginning of 1911.<sup>41</sup> In other words, in 1909–10, bureaucrats might have suspected that the institution of the Vil'na governor-general would soon be non-existent. Therefore, it is likely that the imperial ruling elite also looked suspiciously on Grodna province as a territory overly influenced by the Poles, where there were quite a few Catholic Belorussians, and for this reason were "undoubtedly under the influence of Polonization."<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, in the remaining six provinces of the Western region, elections to zemstvo self-governing institutions had to take place according to the national curia system, so that Russians would have the majority. This decision is a clear illustration of the government's nationality policy priorities. It was passed regardless of the fact that some of the participants in the discussions that took place in government offices warned of the nega-

39 Official letter from the Interior Ministry to the State Duma on the introduction of zemstvos in the Western Region, January 20, 1910, *RGIA*, f. 1288, op. 4, 3e deloproizvodstvo, 1909 god, d. 38a, l. 171.

40 Ibid., l. 172; Avrek, "Vopros o zapadnom zemstve," 69.

41 Darius Staliūnas, "An Awkward City: Vilnius as a Regional Centre in Russian Nationality Policy (ca 1860–1914)," in *Russia and Eastern Europe: Applied 'Imperiology'*, edited by Andrzej Nowak (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2006), 222–43.

42 Official letter from the Interior Ministry to the State Duma on the introduction of zemstvos in the Western region, January 20, 1910, *RGIA*, f. 1288, op. 4, 3e deloproizvodstvo, 1909 god, d. 38a, l. 172.



tive impact of national curiae on integration processes: this kind of election procedure would only transform the Poles into representatives of Polish national groups, and instead of seeing various national groups unite, they would work more for the benefit of their own national group.<sup>43</sup> The imperial ruling elite's priority was the defense of Russian interests, while the integration of non-dominant national groups, first of all Poles, was less critical, and in actual fact, was not quite feasible from the point of view of the elites. This is precisely the kind of policy direction we see in the meeting of senior tsarist officials held in St. Petersburg in April 1914 "On the Fight against Polonization in the Northwest region."<sup>44</sup>

At these meetings, senior officials expressed their concern over the recent intimacy between the "Polish aristocracy and intelligentsia" and the common people, which could be very dangerous to the integrity of the empire.<sup>45</sup> There was no discussion of the possibility of making Poles loyal subjects of the emperor, or to exerting some kind of influence over their cultural identification. We get the impression that senior tsarist officials had reconciled themselves with the idea that Poles would have anti-Russian views, and that this was something they could not hope to change. A discussion recorded in the meeting journal on April 18 1914 mentioned that a German should not be appointed as the Catholic Archbishop of Mogilev because the Poles would treat this as a challenge.<sup>46</sup> Discussions like this, in which we find the high-ranking officials meeting in St. Petersburg actually cared about the feedback from Poles, were rare and exceptional. All attention in these discussions was focused on measures meant to protect "Russians" and Lithuanians from Polish influence. The participants in the meeting decided to approach the Interior Ministry with suggestions to reduce Polish influence in the Catholic Church: for example, attempts to ensure

43 Avrekh, "Vopros o zapadnom zemstve," 92–93.

44 The Northwest region is understood here in a narrower sense, as the Vil'na, Kovna, and Grodna provinces, and perhaps also the Minsk, provinces. The governors of the first three provinces participated in the meeting. The Minsk governor was also invited to the meeting, but he could not attend.

45 Copy of the minutes of a meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 17, 1914, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 88.

46 Ibid.

that Lithuanians were appointed as bishops in Vil'na and Tel'shi [Samogitia], and that a Latvian should hold this post in Mogilev; a reduction in the number of Poles in chapters and in staff collectives at consistories and religious seminaries; holding additional Catholic prayers and the teaching of religion to Belorussians only in Russian; restricting the influence of the Catholic Church using various other means; strengthening the position of the Orthodox Church; taking up a whole range of other measures further complicating the purchase of land for Poles, and improving the economic situation of Russians, etc.<sup>47</sup>

Even with the outbreak of the Great War, when some of the western borderlands were occupied by the German army and when rivalry broke out between the warring sides over trying to win over the Poles, only some of the more senior imperial officials (such as the minister for war, Alexei Polivanov) were prepared to abolish legal acts discriminating against "persons of Polish origin." Others (the interior minister Alexei Khvostov and the minister of agriculture Aleksandr Naumov) suggested not hurrying, and still others (the minister of education Pavel Ignat'ev) proposed making only partial concessions; there were also some (the minister of justice Aleksandr Khvostov), who, in the event that the Kingdom of Poland receive autonomy, would have suggested introducing new prohibitions aimed at Poles in the Western region.<sup>48</sup>

### What to Do with the Lithuanians?

In the view of most tsarist officials, unlike "the Polish question," Lithuanians did not pose any immediate threat to the integrity of the Empire. But the tsarist government still had trouble finding a clear and consistent nationality policy with regard to Lithuanians.

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47 The plan for counteracting Polonisation prepared by the meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25 and 26, 1914, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 70–72. Many of these ideas had already been discussed after the suppression of the 1863–64 uprising.

48 See the file: "O vvedenii prepodavaniia na inorodcheskikh iazykakh v chastnykh srednikh uchebnykh zavedeniakh," *RGIA*, f. 733, op. 196, 1915 g., d. 1003.

Despite the increasing liberalization of the political regime, which began in 1904, and the obvious consolidation of the Lithuanian national movement, even in the revolutionary 1905 period, there were officials in the Northwest region who essentially suggested continuing a nationalist policy that had been introduced after 1863. The most prominent adherents of this policy were Vil'na educational district officials, with overseer Vasilii Popov (1899–1906) at the fore of such efforts. In the spring of 1905, local education agency officials tried to convince both the Vil'na governor-general and the central government that religion could only be taught in Lithuanian in the first year, as previously.<sup>49</sup> They also sought to limit the presence of Lithuanian in schools as much as possible at the beginning of 1906 (they agreed to the use of Lithuanian in primary schools when teaching arithmetic in the first year of school, but only alternating it with Russian).<sup>50</sup> Northwest region officials based these nationality policy recommendations on several arguments. They argued that the Lithuanian national movement was anti-government: revolutionaries were said to play an important role in this movement. Some activists used the slogan “Lithuania for Lithuanians” and sought to bring down the tsarist government. In Kovna province, the interests of these activists and Polish estate owners coincided. In addition, Popov and his subordinates repeated images about the Lithuanian language from the post-1863 period. They asserted that there was no such literary language, while the Samogitians could not understand Lithuanian. Nonetheless, during the period of the 1905 revolution, this was not the only approach to nationality policy that existed.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, from 1905 the local government had much less power to determine the selection and implemen-

49 For more on this, see the following files: “Po voprosu ob uregulirovanii narodnogo obrazovaniia v guberniakh Severo-Zapadnago Kraia, tut zhe i perepiska po voprosu o prepodavanii Zakona Bozh'ego v uchebnykh zavedeniiax na prirodnom iazyke uchashchikhsia,” *LVIA*, f. 378, BS, 1904 m., b. 316, l. 16–35; and “Po prosheniiu krest'ian-litovtsev o vvedenii v nachal'nykh narodnykh uchilishchakh prepodavaniia zakona Bozhiiia r.[imsko]-katolicheskogo ispovedaniia na litovskom iazyke,” *LVIA*, f. 567, ap. 12, b. 7453.

50 Official report by the Vil'na educational district overseer and an overview prepared by the overseer's assistant A. Beletskii on the situation in the Kovna province at the end of 1905, *RGLA*, f. 733, op. 173, d. 27, l. 52–61, quoted from l. 53.

tation of specific nationality policy measures compared to the post-1863 period. The liberalization of the tsarist regime that occurred in 1905 unavoidably had to offer more rights to Lithuanian social activities and the status of the Lithuanian language in the public sphere. Even though the language rights of non-dominant national groups were regulated separately in each region (for example, opportunities to use “local languages” in the educational institutions in the Baltic provinces and the Kingdom of Poland were expanded earlier and were more wide-ranging than in the Western region), the empire-wide liberalization of the political regime affected the Western region as well. Furthermore, the imperial government could no longer ignore the collective demands of Lithuanians, especially with regard to the rather dramatic situation that unfolded in Kovna province at the end of 1905, when Russian officials and teachers were driven out from rural areas en masse. Ultimately, some imperial officials admitted that the earlier policy was fruitless: “When the government implemented certain Russification measures towards Lithuanians in the mid-1860s, after it had subdued the Polish revolt, the Lithuanians were, in a political sense, an indifferent mass, lacking any national consciousness, and the government could expect that Lithuanians, feeling the effects of the measures implemented, would go along with unification with the real Russia. However, the outcomes [of this policy] did not meet these expectations.”<sup>51</sup> In the end, regardless of all the repeated claims coming from various government institutions and separate officials that after 1905 “this language [Lithuanian] does not actually exist, as Lithuanian today is still just a language of the common folk and is split into numerous dialects, which sometimes differ greatly from one another,” gradually, both in the imperial bureaucracy and in public discourse, a different approach to the existence of Lithuanian literary language began to take shape.<sup>52</sup> A good illustration of this were the debates in the Third Russian State Duma, during which constitutional dem-

51 Official letter from the interior minister to the Committee of Ministers, September 10, 1905, *RGIA*, f. 472, op. 60, d. 2137, l. 5.

52 Kazys Žukauskas, *Iš Lietuvos mokyklos istorijos. 1905–1907 metai* (Kaunas: Valstybinė pedagoginės literatūros leidykla, 1960), 63.

ocrats identified eight non-Russian languages in the Empire that should be taught for four years. Alongside Polish, German, Tartar, Estonian, Latvian, Georgian and Armenian, Lithuanian was also mentioned.<sup>53</sup>

All of the mentioned circumstances led to the situation whereby after the April decree (April 17, 1905), Lithuanians could study Catholicism in Lithuanian during the whole teaching period; after the extended bureaucratic correspondence between Kovna, Vil'na, and St. Petersburg in 1905–1906, Lithuanian could be taught as a subject in state secondary and primary schools, and the language could be used in primary schools when teaching arithmetic.<sup>54</sup> Lithuanians were the first to receive permission to publish periodicals in the region, and starting in 1906, they could study at the Ponevezh Teacher Training College and work as teachers in the Northwest region. One Lithuanian society could establish private primary schools in Kovna province although the government placed greater restrictions on the activities of these particular schools in 1908–15.<sup>55</sup> In the Kovna province, the government allowed societies to keep their documentation in “local languages” (i.e., in Lithuanian and Polish). There were other reforms to the position of Lithuanians as well.

Additionally, during the revolution of 1905 as well as in later years, imperial officials of various ranks deliberated over whether it would be beneficial to support the Lithuanian national movement, and thereby weaken the position of the Poles in the Northwest region. Petr Verevkin, who served as Kovna governor in 1904–1912 and Vil'na governor in 1912–1916, is often presented in historical scholarship as a tsarist official who was “favorable toward the Lithuanians,” and who “always backed the Lithuanian side in arguments between the Poles and Lithuanians.”<sup>56</sup>

53 Wayne Dowler, “The Politics of Language in Non-Russian Elementary Schools in the Eastern Empire, 1865–1914,” *The Russian Review* 54, no. 4 (Oct. 1995): 536n90. These debates did not affect the situation in the Grand Duchy of Finland.

54 Magdalena Karčiauskienė, *Pradinio švietimo raida Lietuvoje XIX a. antrojoje pusėje ir XX a. pradžioje* (Kaunas; Šviesa, 1989), 126–37; Olga Mastianica, “Lietuvių kalba Vilniaus švietimo apygardos vidurinėse mokyklose 1906–1914 m.,” *Lituanistica* 2, 104 (2016): 77–90.

55 Vladas Pupšys, *Lietuvos mokykla: Atgimimo metai (1905–1918)* (Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universitetas, 1995), 58.

56 Martynas Yčas, *Atsiminimai. Nepriklausomybės kelias*, vol. 1 (Kaunas, 1935), 22; K. Giedraitis, “Guber-

At first glance, certain circumstances appear to support the aforementioned historiographical thesis. Verevkin made suggestions numerous times to Sviatopolk-Mirskii, the Vil'na governor-general, to support the Lithuanian periodical press financially.<sup>57</sup> He backed some Lithuanian demands, such as the appointment of Lithuanian teachers to primary state schools in Kovna province in 1906.<sup>58</sup> In 1906, the governor-general recommended allowing the establishment of private schools where Lithuanian (and not Polish) would be the language of instruction.<sup>59</sup> In 1909, Verevkin suggested that once the zemstvo system was introduced, elections in Kovna province would be organized for groups of large and small landowners separately, thereby ensuring the proportional representation of Lithuanians.<sup>60</sup> However, having analyzed other suggestions made by the governor, especially those formulated in his later years in the office, we see that this tsarist official's concept of nationality policy was rather more complex. Verevkin's actual approach to the educational and cultural activities of Lithuanians is illustrated quite well in the discussion that took place in 1910–1911 between local and central government agencies over the future of the Saulė (the Sun), a Lithuanian Catholic education society.<sup>61</sup>

This kind of discussion could not have taken place without the Kovna governor's involvement, especially because it was none other than he who confirmed the society's by-laws in 1906, and later, without consulting the leadership of the Vil'na educational district, confirmed a new edition of these by-laws. At first, Verevkin highlighted the positive aspects of the society's activities: the society was led by the priest Konstantinas Olšauskas,

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natorius, kurio bloguoju nemini," *Bangos* 33 (1932): 835; Laima Laučkaitė, *Ekspresionizmo raitelė Mariana Veriūkė* (Vilnius: Kultūros, filosofijos ir meno institutas, 2007), 121.

57 Copy of the minutes of a meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 17, 1914, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 79. The Kovna governor suggested this kind of measure so that the "government's aims" would be reached, but he received a negative response because there was a "shortage of funds."

58 Minutes of the meeting discussing the implementation of the April 22, 1906 decree (May 5, 1906), *LVIA*, f. 378, BS, 1906 m., b. 378, l. 65.

59 Minutes of an official meeting regarding schools, February 8, 1906, *LVIA*, f. 378, BS, 1906 m., b. 378, l. 46.

60 Journal of the commission which discussed the introduction of zemstvos in the Western region, dated October 10, 1909, *RGLA*, *Pechatnye zapiski*, No. 2512, p. 1.

61 For more on Lithuanian educational societies, see Vida Pukienė, *Lietuvių švietimo draugijos XX amžiaus pradžioje (1906–1915 metais)* (Vilnius: A. Varno personalinė įmonė, 1994).

who tried to arouse “feelings of national consciousness” in Lithuanians; was a “harsh opponent of Polish influence,” and believed that the Lithuanian nation was “historically closely associated with Russia, and had to maintain a permanent connection with Russia for a peaceful future and for its own benefit.” In addition, Olšauskas was said to have served the government’s interests in numerous ways during the revolution of 1905. Thus, in the governor’s view, the society’s president should not be considered a dangerous person, and his oppositional stance toward Poles, “from the government’s point of view, had a rather positive aspect, as the reduction of the influence of the Poles among the Lithuanians was always one of the main objectives of the local government, and from a general policy point of view in the borderlands as a whole, [it] juxtaposes [Polish] influence with a certain degree of growth in the Lithuanian national consciousness that was completely justifiable.”<sup>62</sup> However, Verevkin’s positive stance toward the cultural demands of Lithuanians had some clear boundaries. Since the task of any school was to prepare “future subjects’ of the Russian Empire, as many state schools as possible had to be opened, thereby pushing out any private schools, especially those for non-Russians. Therefore, it would be best if Saulė did not open separate schools, but rather collected funds and contributed to the establishment of state schools. Further, so that these schools would be attractive to Lithuanians, future Russian teachers had to be able to speak Lithuanian as well as they could.”<sup>63</sup> On other occasions as well, Verevkin expressed a similar opinion regarding *Saulė* and other Lithuanian educational societies, and about education policy in general: their activities expressed certain anti-government signs, primary education should be controlled by the government, Lithuanians should work only as supplementary (auxiliary) teachers in state primary schools, and after the introduction of zemstvos, education should be re-

62 Secret report by the Kovna governor to the minister of education, December 14, 1911, *RGLA*, f. 733, op. 177, 1910 g., d. 273, l. 22.

63 *Ibid.*, l. 23–24. The overseer of the Vil’na educational district was even less approving of *Saulė* and recommended that it be closed. Report by the overseer of the Vil’na educational district to the minister of education, May 17, 1911, *RGLA*, f. 733, op. 177, 1910 g., d. 273, l. 72–73.

moved from their field of competency, so that “primary schools would not serve any separatist-nationalist goals.”<sup>64</sup>

There is no doubt that Verevkin's political views were quite different from those of most tsarist officials who worked in the Northwest region in the second half of the nineteenth and even the early twentieth century. Some local officials like Nikolai Griazev, the vice-governor of Kovna (1905–1910) who later became the Kovna governor (1912–1917), suggested bidding by a strict, *nationalist* nationality policy strategy because he considered non-Russians to be “natural enemies of Russian statehood,” and saw “the goal of complete separatism and the creation of Lithuanian autonomy” in the activities of Lithuanian educational societies, thus recommending they be closed.<sup>65</sup> Verevkin's reaction to most situations shows that his nationality policy featured more elements of *imperial nationality policy* than *nationalist nationality policy*. In his view, the government had to support Lithuanians' cultural demands only to the extent that they protected this non-dominant group from Polish influence, but no more. As far as we can gather from the information available, the Polish community also had a positive view of this governor's activities, which would imply that he had not earned the status of a supporter of the Lithuanians in the eyes of the Poles. In 1912, the Kovna City Municipality, where the Poles were the strongest group, decided to make Verevkin an honorary citizen of Kovna, stressing his “care shown to city dwellers of all religions and nationalities.”<sup>66</sup>

Verevkin also participated in the mentioned meeting in St. Petersburg in 1914, in which anti-Polish policy measures were discussed. The only problem is that the surviving documentation just has a summarized account of the opinions of a majority or a minority of the participants in the meeting and does not specifically identify which officials were in favor of one or another position. The opinions of the participants over policy regarding the

64 Draft report for the Kovna province, 1908, *Lietuvos nacionalinės Martyno Mažvydo bibliotekos Rankraščių skyrius* (LNB RS), 19-76, l. 6–7, 10, 26–7; draft report for the Kovna province (1908–1911), LNB RS, f. 19-82, l. 17–19.

65 Confidential letter from the Kovna governor to the interior minister, April 28, 1913, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 128, d. 44, l. 633–34.

66 Astramskas, *Kauno gubernijos miestų savivalda*, 177.



Lithuanians were divided. A minority thought that, generally speaking, the government “should not support non-Russians,” and this should also apply in the case of Lithuanians because that kind of assistance “to the Latvian movement” in the Baltic provinces was not justified, as once the movement strengthened, it became not only anti-German but also anti-Russian.<sup>67</sup> In the opinion of a minority of the participants, the same would happen with the Lithuanian movement, which would seek to “give the Lithuanian nation a position of independence from Russian statehood, and they would most probably be drawn, along with the Polish nation, into a struggle against the government.”<sup>68</sup> Many tsarist officials thought it was quite realistic that the Lithuanians were actually cooperating with the Poles. For example, Griazev suspected that the Lithuanians were just pretending to be opposed to the Poles in order to confuse the government.<sup>69</sup> But in the opinion of most of the participants in the meeting, the Lithuanians did not pose this kind of threat because they were Catholic, and the Catholic Church was “one of the harshest opponents of socialism.” In addition, the Latvians were fighting against Germans who were loyal to the empire, while the Lithuanians were fighting Poles, who were disloyal to the emperor, and who had proven their disloyalty both in the past, when they rose up against the Russian government, and the present, when they were preparing to back Austria-Hungary in the coming war.<sup>70</sup> Importantly, surrounded by Poles and Russians, Lithuanians had no chance of securing political independence, while “the Russian state was their main protection against Polonization.” Ultimately, a majority argued that “the Russification of Lithuanians would result in difficulties, and would ignite dissatisfaction among the masses,” which is why the government “should not create obstacles for the development of the Lithuanian na-

67 Even though imperial officials looked rather favorably upon the Latvian national movement (until around 1883), much like in the Lithuanian case, it would be hard to identify any specific measures it took that would have promoted Latvian nationalism. For more on this, see: Staliūnas, “Affirmative Action in the Western Borderlands of the Late Russian Empire?” *Slavic Review* (Winter 2018): 995–97.

68 Copy of the minutes of a meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 25, 1914, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 180.

69 Report for the Kovna Province, 1913, *RGLA*, f. 1284, op. 194, 1914 g., d. 35, l. 14.

70 Interestingly, with the conflict with Austria-Hungary and Germany approaching, senior tsarist officials did not question the loyalty of the Germans.

tional movement, and had no grounds to make a negative assessment of its leaders just because they participated in the movement.”<sup>71</sup>

Judging from the opinions of most of the participants in the meeting, the measures devised by these senior officials in April 1914 featured several points that can be regarded as protective measures on behalf of Lithuanians: government institutions had to try to ensure that the Catholic bishops in both Tel'shi and Vil'na were Lithuanians, to “de-Polonize” the chapters of Catholic Dioceses, that is, increase the number of non-Poles in the structure; determine quotas based on nationalities in Catholic seminaries; and to give the Lithuanians the opportunity to take up secondary positions in state public service structures.<sup>72</sup>

The idea of supporting a Lithuanian's candidacy for Bishop of Vil'na was not a new one. It had been raised in the bureaucracy in 1907, when Bishop Edward von der Ropp was dismissed from his post. Taking into account the small percentage of Lithuanians in the Vil'na diocese and the request of the Holy See to find a suitable Polish candidate, the prime minister and interior minister Petr Stolypin thought that a Lithuanian would be suitable to serve as suffragan bishop.<sup>73</sup> Since the late nineteenth century, the local and central government had been closely following Polish–Lithuanian conflicts in the Catholic Church over the language of additional prayers, and they constantly received complaints from Lithuanians over the inappropriate appointments of priests to parishes (with Lithuanians being sent to Slavic parishes, and Poles to Lithuanian parishes). In most cases, the main concern of officials was to guarantee social stability, and the easiest way of achieving this was to ensure that additional prayers should take

71 Copy of the minutes of a meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 25, 1914, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 181–82.

72 The plan for counteracting Polonization prepared by the meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25 and 26, 1914, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 70. When selecting a Lithuanian candidate for the post of Vil'na bishop, the participants in the meeting suggested taking into account the opinion of *The Union to Return the Right to Use Lithuanian in Roman Catholic Churches in Lithuania*, although we should not take this at face value. Copy of the minutes of a meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 18, 1914, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 99. This union, which had gathered rightist Lithuanian public figures under its umbrella, was noted for its radical anti-Polish policy.

73 For more on this, see Staliūnas, “Affirmative Action”, 992; official letter from the interior minister to the minister of foreign affairs, January 27, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1908, b. 334, l. 3–4.

place in the language of the majority of parishioners, and in mixed parishes, in the languages of the majority and the minority. But a more sympathetic position towards Lithuanians can often be detected in officials' reports. In 1912, the Kovna governor Verevkin informed the central government numerous times that a bad trend was becoming evident in the province: a rise in additional prayers in Polish, which could be explained by the "goal of Poles to Polonize the Lithuanian peasants."<sup>74</sup> The constant sending of letters by various officials to Catholic hierarchs obviously served as a form of pressure. However, as has already been mentioned, the concern of the government was to protect the Lithuanians and Belorussians from Polonization and not to create any special conditions for the Lithuanians.

In the context of the government's approach towards the situation in the Catholic Church, the points in the plan devised at the 1914 meeting about support for Lithuanians comes across as something exceptional. However, we have no knowledge of any further bureaucratic moves that led to their actual implementation. Some of these measures might have been introduced only with the approval of the Holy See, and this was a field in which the tsarist government had no illusions about its success. In addition, some more senior officials feared the popularization of socialist ideas and Lithuanians' "dreams about the introduction of autonomy in Lithuania."<sup>75</sup>

### **The "Belorussian National Feeling Development" Program**

In the late imperial period, the status of Belorussians as an ethnic group in Russian official and public discourse did not really change when compared to the earlier period. As before, it was conceptualized as a constituent part of the tripartite Russian nation. Members of the imperial government treated the status of the Belorussian language accordingly: "In reality, the Belorussian dialect is not an independent language at all, but only a debased Russian

74 Reports from the Kovna governor to the Department of Foreign Confessions, February 15 and May 13, 1912, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 128, d. 699, l. 12, 58.

75 Copy of the minutes of a meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 13, 1914, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 79.

language with Polish impurities, and, incidentally, it has not been debased so much that Russians cannot understand it or that Belorussians are not able to understand Russian.<sup>76</sup> Just like Yiddish, Belorussian was often referred to in the Russian discourse as jargon.<sup>77</sup> This kind of approach to Belorussians was typical even of rather liberal-minded imperial officials, such as the education minister Tolstoi, for example. Tolstoi called Belorussians and Little Russians “branches” of the Russian tribe (*plemia*).<sup>78</sup>

However, at least during the period of the 1905 revolution, many senior tsarist officials recommended searching for means of influence other than those used prior to the revolution. Tolstoi believed that the prohibition on printing books in the Little Russian and Belorussian languages incited “autonomous-separatist goals” in these communities.<sup>79</sup> The Vil’na governor-general Krshivitskii (1905–1909) explained that under the new conditions, the government could only rely on “cultural measures.” Even though the governor-general admitted that, because “Lithuania and White Rus” were part of one state with Poland, “based on their language and customs,” Belorussians were “a kind of mixture of real Russians and Poles,” and could “just as easily become Russians or Poles.” Yet, the “cultural struggle” at the time “had almost ended in favor of the Russian element.” Nonetheless, in Krshivitskii’s opinion, in order for Belorussians to “become nationally aware,” i.e., identify themselves with Russians, a whole swathe of measures had to be implemented: “to ensure as quickly as possible” that additional Catholic prayers be held in Belorussian; to open primary schools where Belorussian is taught; to contribute to the formation of a clergy of local origin; to create better conditions for Belorussian peasants to buy land; to create a network of consumer societies; and to publish cheap books in the “local dialect” for the common folk. Krshivitskii believed that in this field, the government needed assistance from the public, which is why he supported

76 Copy of the minutes of a meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 25, 1914, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 179.

77 Aleksandr Milovidov, *O iazyke prepodavaniia v narodnykh shkolakh Severo-Zapadnogo Kraia (Po povodu zaprosa v Gosud. Dumu)* (Vilnius: Tipografia ‘Russkii Pochin,’ 1912), 12–13.

78 *Memuary Tolstogo*, 154–55.

79 *Ibid.*, 155.

right-wing organizations that had become established in the region, such as the Northwest region Russian Veche (Severo-zapadnoe russkoe veche) and The Peasant (Krest'ianin). He also believed that these efforts would become easier to realize when zemstvos were introduced in the region.<sup>80</sup>

In many respects, Krshivitskii's program was reminiscent of the measures recommended by certain tsarist bureaucrats in the early 1860s. Then, exactly as in 1906, some members of the imperial political elite searched for "cultural measures" in the fight against Polish influence among Belorussians. However, much as in the mid-nineteenth century, toward the end of the empire's existence, the tsarist government hesitated to support the institutionalization of this language, even at the primary school level; and there is not much information to suggest that there was broad support for publications in the Belorussian language. In fact, Krshivitskii's suggestions regarding Belorussian as a language taught in primary schools were completely unacceptable to the absolute majority of officials because they were considered dangerous to the integrity of the Russian nation.

The idea concerning the use of Belorussian in additional Catholic prayers was deliberated many times in various government institutions in the lead-up to the World War I.<sup>81</sup> We may suspect that tsarist officials would often have treated the introduction of Belorussian simply as a transitional stage in adopting Russian. In addition, some Orthodox bishops feared that additional prayers in Belorussian might attract Orthodox believers to the Catholic church, who could eventually convert to Catholicism.<sup>82</sup>

Officials did not harbor such fears over the introduction of Russian in supplementary Catholic services in the early twentieth century, and the central government went to great lengths to see the Holy See revoke the prohibition of 1877 regarding the use of the language in the Catholic Church. The Holy See did not lift the prohibition of 1877, but issued a new interpre-

80 A draft report from the Vil'na governor-general to P. Stolypin, August 20, 1906, *LVI*, f. 378, BS, 1906 m., b. 412, l. 4–5. For more on this topic, see also Vytautas Petronis's chapter in this volume.

81 Report from the Vil'na governor-general (Freze) to the interior minister, June 27, 1905, *RGLA*, f. 1284, op. 190, d. 84a, l. 63; Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 226, 297; Bendin, *Problemy veroterpimosti*, 357–58.

82 Copy of the minutes of a meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg, April 18, 1914, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 108.

tation: it allowed ethnic Russians who had converted from Orthodoxy to Catholicism to use Russian; while in 1907, it allowed the use of Russian dialects in the historic Polish–Lithuanian lands, including, therefore, Belorussian.<sup>83</sup> During negotiations between the Russian government and the Holy See, correspondence began between government offices in St. Petersburg and Vil'na over the publication of prayer books and other religious books in Belorussian. An expert commission had to be established in Vil'na especially for this matter.<sup>84</sup> However, local Catholic hierarchs, such as the bishop of Vil'na Ropp, believed that Belorussian would only be a temporary measure before the introduction of Russian.<sup>85</sup> Even in later years, various imperial officials believed that the introduction of Russian in additional Catholic prayers would be a suitable means of fighting “Polonization.”<sup>86</sup> But this move did not win support among the Catholic clergy or laity. One of the factors that encouraged Catholics to oppose the introduction of Russian in additional prayers (just as in the teaching of the Catholic faith in state schools, which will still be discussed in this chapter) was the fear that events from half a century ago—when the imperial government introduced Russian in additional Catholic prayers to convert Catholic Belorussians to Orthodoxy—would be repeated.<sup>87</sup> So the tsarist government was forced to

83 Translation into Russian of the letter from the papal nuncio to the Catholic bishops in the Russian Empire, *RGIA*, f. 733, op. 196, d. 54, l. 4–5; Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 294–302.

84 See the file: “Po voprosu o sostavlenii i izdanii katolicheskikh molitvennikov i drugih bogoslužebnykh knig na razlichnykh belorusskikh govorakh,” *RGIA*, f. 733, op. 196, d. 54. So far, no information has been found that would suggest the formation of a commission like this.

85 Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 302.

86 Official letter from the interior minister to the Vil'na and Grodna governors, June 13, 1912, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 128, d. 697, l. 11; “Zapiska ministra vnutrennikh del o deiatel'nosti katolicheskogo dukhovenstva, napravlennoi na podchinenie naseleniia zapadnago kraia pol'skomu vliianiiu, i o merakh bor'by s etimi vliianiiami,” *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 150, l. 8, 14–5.

87 A request from peasants of the Ialovskii (Volkovysk district) Catholic parish to the administrator of the Vil'na Catholic diocese, *LVA*, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2811, l. 235–6; report from the administrator of the Vil'na educational district to the Ministry of Education, October 19, 1911, *RGIA*, f. 733, op. 173, d. 30, l. 103. On the introduction of the Russian language into supplementary services in the Catholic Church, see Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi, 2007), 164–70; Mikhail Dolbilov, *Russkii kraj, chuzhaia vera: Etnokontsional'naiia politika imperii v Litve i Belorussii pri Aleksandre II* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010), 471–77. Theodore R. Weeks, who was not as closely acquainted with the documentation from this experiment, thought that when implementing this measure, imperial officials were not seeking to convert Catholic Belorussians to Orthodox believers: Theodore R. Weeks, “Religion and Russification:

accept that Catholic Belorussians were being “Polonized” in the Catholic Church. Yet, there was another area closely related to additional prayers where the tsarist government could have an impact on Catholic Belorussians: the teaching of religion courses in state schools.

Until the revolution of 1905, Belorussians had to learn about the Catholic religion in Russian, but the April decree foresaw that this subject had to be taught in the “native language.” A fierce struggle broke out immediately on the western borderlands of the Empire between tsarist officials and the Catholic Church over what the “native language” meant, and how it should be determined. The Catholic clergy consistently took the position that religion should be taught to Belorussians in the language in which they prayed, i.e., in Polish. At the initial stage, it would be possible to use Belorussian. The government in the Northwest region, however, maintained a strict position, arguing that religion had to be taught to Belorussians in Russian, and that the final decision about a specific pupil’s “native language” had to be made by officials.<sup>88</sup>

However, the regulation of non-Orthodox religious education had to be applied across the whole Empire, so final decisions regarding this matter were made by the central government. At the beginning of September 1905, the Education Committee of the Ministry of Education prepared a draft of its Provisional Rules, which stated that non-Orthodox religious education in secondary and primary schools was not compulsory. If religion was offered, it would be taught in the “native language” of the pupils, which would be determined by a written or oral request by parents or guardians, while the school leadership was obliged to check that pupils actually understood that language.<sup>89</sup> However, the Ministry of Education confirmed the

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Russian language in the Catholic Churches of the ‘Northwest Provinces after 1863,’ *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 1 (2001): 93.

88 This theme is not completely new in historiography. The main legal acts regulating the teaching of religion to non-Orthodox believers have been discussed by Bendin and Merkys. However, neither of them tried to analyze in greater detail the existence of different nationality policy concepts among the imperial ruling elite, or to explain the changes in regulations concerning religion that took place. What is even worse in Bendin’s case is that his writings focus mainly on tsarist policy apologetics. Bendin, *Problemy veroterpimosti*, 344–56; Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 221–32.

89 Excerpt from the minutes of the Scientific Committee of the Ministry of Education meeting held on September 7, 1905, *RGLA*, f. 733, op. 195, d. 710, l. 18; See also: *RGLA*, f. 764, op. 3, d. 109, l. 581–601.



Provisional Rules only on February 22, 1906. The process took so long because the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was also involved in the process of preparing the document, decided to ask the opinion of representatives from non-Orthodox churches. Most of the Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Reformed, and Catholic hierarchs criticized the point in the Provisional Rules about the participation of school officials in procedures to determine pupils' "native language."<sup>90</sup> The latter point also earned criticism from Petr Durnovo, the Minister of Internal Affairs, who noted that in most cases, people working in educational agencies would not be able to check whether pupils actually knew the language they were declaring as their native language because these officials simply did not know the local languages.<sup>91</sup> By this time, Tolstoi had recently been appointed education minister, and, as has already been mentioned in this chapter, he believed that state schools had to be attractive to non-Russians, that they should not have any "political aims," and that they should allow students to learn in their native language.<sup>92</sup> In addition, prime minister Sergei Vitte maintained that religion had to be taught to non-Orthodox pupils in the language "they had been accustomed to praying in since childhood."<sup>93</sup> Thus, it is no wonder that the Ministry of Education took the comments of Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed clergy into consideration and indicated in the Provisional Rules of February 22, 1906 that religion would be taught to pupils in their "native language," which would be determined at the request of parents or guardians.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> All feedback: *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 10, d. 514, l. 40–49, 52–54, 57–80.

<sup>91</sup> Official letter from the interior minister to the education minister, February 7, 1906, *RGLA*, f. 733, op. 195, d. 710, l. 23. There were members of the Scientific Committee of the Ministry of Education such as Henrijs Visendorfs, a Latvian activist and publicist of folklore, who said that learning religion was a matter of personal conscience, so no outside examiners needed to participate in the process. Excerpt from the minutes of the Scientific Committee of the Ministry of Education meeting held on September 7, 1905, *RGLA*, f. 733, op. 195, d. 710, l. 9.

<sup>92</sup> Tolstoi, *Zametki o narodnom obrazovanii*, 12–5.

<sup>93</sup> Official letter from the chairman of the Council of Ministers to the minister of war, February 6, 1906, *RGLA*, f. 821, op. 10, d. 514, l. 154.

<sup>94</sup> Provisional Rules, confirmed by the education minister on February 22, 1906, on the teaching of religion to non-Orthodox Christians and the supervision of the teaching of this subject by clergymen at educational institutions of the Ministry of Education, *LVI*, f. 567, ap. 12, b. 6385, l. 339–40. Religious instruction lessons were never made compulsory.



The Catholic clergy exploited these Provisional Rules very successfully, achieving their aim that the Catholic religion be taught in Polish to Belorussians in state schools, if it was taught at all in a given school. The overseer of the Vil'na educational district reported to St. Petersburg in 1908 that, within the boundaries of the region, Belorussian Catholics were not being taught religion in Russian anywhere, only in Polish.<sup>95</sup> This had happened because priests had a much greater influence on this ethno-confessional group than government officials or teachers. In addition, officials complained that the members of this ethno-confessional group considered their dialect and the Russian language to be "peasant," or "common" languages, whereas Polish was the language of the "lords," and a respected Church language.<sup>96</sup> Often, people who professed the Catholic faith and spoke one of the Belorussian dialects at home would answer questions about their nationality by saying they belonged to the "Catholic nation," or the "Catholic nationality," adding that they were Catholics; some asked to have religion taught to them in the "Roman language" (*rimskii yazyk*).<sup>97</sup> The imperial government naturally blamed Catholic priests for this kind of identification of nationality with faith.

Some members of the local government thought this situation was not all bad. Baron Boris Vol'f, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district, was one such local official, who believed that the will of the people had to be considered, as that was the only way of ensuring they would send their children to state schools.<sup>98</sup> Officials like this prioritized the loyalty of a sub-

95 Report from the Vil'na educational district overseer to the Ministry of Education, December 18, 1908, *RGLA*, f. 733, op. 173, d. 29, l. 72–73.

96 Report from the head of the directorate of the Grodna people's schools to the Vil'na educational district overseer, March 2, 1909, *LVIA*, f. 567, ap. 13, b. 1301, l. 52; report for the Vil'na province, 1910, *RGLA*, f. 1284, op. 194, 1911g, d. 66, l. 7–8.

97 "O predstavlenii svedenii o rodnom iazyke uchenikov uchebnykh zavedenii," *LVIA*, f. 567, ap. 1, b. 1948; "Po khodataistvu krest'ian der. Krazhina o razreshenii im obuchat' detei gramote na russkom i rimskom iazykakh," *LVIA*, f. 567, ap. 23, b. 487. Roman from Roman Catholic Church.

98 Official letter from the overseer of the Vil'na educational district to the head of the chancellery of the Vil'na governor-general, April 3, 1907, *LVIA*, f. 378, BS, 1906 m., b. 378, l. 202–04; report from the overseer of the Vil'na educational district to the Ministry of Education, January 29, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 567, ap. 13, b. 1301, l. 49–50. For a similar approach: the report sent by G.O. Freitakh von-Loringofen (an official from the Ministry of Education) to the Vil'na educational district for an inspection, *RGLA*, f. 733, op. 172, d. 16, l. 226–31.

ject of the empire over cultural identification. The fact that Vol'f, a Baltic German, took this approach should not surprise us.<sup>99</sup> However, when he left the post in 1908, officials from the region again began to jointly pressure the central government about the provision concerning the responsibility of educational agency staff for determining the “native language” of students. They finally succeeded in this effort in 1912: a circular issued by the education minister on October 27, 1912 on the matter transferred the decision to school officials.<sup>100</sup> However, this victory by Northwest region officials was rather deceptive, for in many cases, priests would not attend schools at all in order to avoid teaching religion in Russian.<sup>101</sup> In addition, most Catholic children generally did not attend state schools, which meant that Belorussian Catholic children were being taught religion in Polish at secret or semi-secret schools.<sup>102</sup>

The efforts of the tsarist government to exert an influence on Catholic Belorussians, and even to an extent, Orthodox believers as well, was also complicated by the fact that newspapers were being published in the Belorussian language starting in 1906. This press, primarily the newspaper *Nasha niva*, experienced repressive censorship of its publications, which were alleged to raise issues of social injustice, while other government institutions feared negative political consequences of these policies. Sometimes officials were afraid that the Belorussian press, especially when it was published in the Latin script, would only encourage Belorussians and Poles to become closer. But tsarist officials with a deeper knowledge of the situation saw that, for example, *Nasha niva* was not pro-Polish but was dangerous for its Belorussian separatist flavor; that is, it popularized ideas about an independent Belorussian nation.<sup>103</sup>

99 Vol'f became the overseer quite accidentally. The minister of education Tolstoi had already received approval from the tsar to appoint him as overseer of the Riga educational district. However, dissatisfaction arose in the Russian press over the fact that a Baltic German was being appointed to an educational district that was already dominated by Germans, whereupon the minister immediately found another position for him. *Memuary Tolstogo*, 263–64.

100 Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 232.

101 For example, the Vitebsk governor reported that in this province, “in a majority of places, priests were no longer teaching Catholic instruction”: excerpts from governors' reports, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 225–6.

102 Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 232.

103 “O nabludeni z belorusskoiu gazetoiu ‘Nasha niva,’” *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 10, d. 1154; an official letter from

The unsuccessful attempts to introduce Belorussian or Russian in supplementary Catholic services and in the religion curriculum taught in state schools, and the existence of the periodical press in Belorussian at the beginning of the 1910s, again prompted the imperial government to devote special attention to Belorussians. In 1912, the minister of the interior started to think about a complex “Belorussian national feeling development” program, which involved the governors of the region. Everything was summarized at the meeting of senior officials in St. Petersburg in April 1914 discussed earlier. First, as before, senior tsarist officials suggested decreasing the “Polonization” of Belorussians through the Catholic Church: the national composition of Catholic seminaries had to correlate (percentagewise) with the national composition of the population, Russian had to be introduced in additional Catholic prayers, and officials had to check that religion was being taught to Belorussian Catholics in Russian in schools, etc. Second, government institutions had to ensure the “nationalization” of Belorussians through state schools (for example, by strengthening patriotic education in teacher training colleges), and other cultural-educational activities like opening Russian libraries and reading centers, organizing agricultural shows and lectures, etc. An intense discussion about the government’s potential funding of a periodical publication aimed at Belorussians also took place at the meeting in 1914. Even though one of the participants in the meeting suggested allocating this kind of funding to Belorussian publications, the majority decided that the subsidy should be given to publications in Russian, because “less attention should be given to the idea that Belorussians are a unit separate from the Russian nation.”<sup>104</sup>

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the provisional administrator of the Interior Ministry to the Vil’na governor, January 26, 1913, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 128, d. 977, l. 2; Andrei Unuchak, “‘Nasha niva’ i belaruski natsyanal’ny rukh (1906–1915 gg.)” (PhD dissertation, Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus), 121–38. The press aimed at Belorussian Orthodox believers was published in Cyrillic, and in the Latin script for Catholics. *Nasha niva* was initially printed in both scripts, but in 1912, due to financial difficulties, the editorial board decided that the newspaper would be published in only one script, Cyrillic, as there were more Belorussian Orthodox believers than Catholics.

<sup>104</sup> “Ob opoliachenii belorussov i o merakh k vozrozhdeniiu v belorusskom naselenii natsional’nogo russkogo samosoznaniia,” *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 128, d. 697; “Delo (sekretnoe) o merakh bor’by s pol’skim vlianiem na belorusskoe naselenie,” *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 150, d. 167; “Ob usilivshimsia v poslednee vremia stremlenii pol’skoi narodno-demokraticeskoi partii k opoliacheniiu belorusskogo naseleniia,” *LVIa*, f. 567, op. 26, d. 999.

## Conclusions

During the period of 1905–1915 in the Northwestern provinces, we observe a collision of different nationality policies. In the proposals made by some tsarist officials (Minister of Education Count Tolstoi, Governor of Kovna province Verevkin, and Overseer of the Vil'na educational district Vol'f), especially between 1905 and 1907, there were many elements of *imperial nationality policy*, which demonstrated a belief that fulfilling the cultural aspirations of the non-Russian population would guarantee their loyalty to the empire. Likewise, Stephen Badalyan Riegg has found a similar concept of nationality policy in the activities of the Viceroy of the Caucasus, Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov between 1905 and 1915.<sup>105</sup> However, as the events of the revolution of 1905 revealed, the empire could not rely on non-Russians: the Poles—primarily the Catholic clergy—did not follow the imagined “rules of the game” and according to imperial officials, they quickly advanced the “Polonization” of Belorussians and Lithuanians.

During the time of the revolution, the Lithuanian inhabitants of rural areas forced large numbers of Russian teachers and local bureaucracy out of their country and demanded territorial autonomy. Such demands, however, were unacceptable not only to the governing imperial elite, but to Russian liberals too. Besides, the tsarist bureaucracy understood well that even if they supported Lithuanians against the Poles, this would not have produced the desired results: “By giving Lithuanians certain forms of support, the department [of Foreign Confessions] also understands that expecting total solidarity [from Lithuanians] with the government is unlikely.”<sup>106</sup> Therefore, the strategy of employing *imperial nationality policy* in the Northwestern provinces could not have provided the means to secure the loyalty of local non-Russian population.

The policy that was promoted and, to some extent, implemented by the overseer of Vil'na educational district, Popov, and the governor of Kovna prov-

105 Stephen Badalyan Riegg, “Neotraditionalist Rule to the Rescue of the Empire? Viceroy I. Vorontsov-Dashkov amid Crises in the Caucasus, 1905–1915,” *Ab Imperio* 3 (2018): 115–39.

106 Official letter from the Department of Foreign Confessions to the head of the Department of the Local Economy, June 30, 1913, RGIA, f. 821, op. 128, d. 44, l. 654–5.

ince, Griazev, had more aspects of *nationalist nationality policy*, which became prevalent starting around 1908 and continued to intensify during the 1910s. It provided somewhat better results when dealing with the Orthodox Belorussian population, but it was not consistent (i.e., in the sense of aiming at complete assimilation) because starting from 1905, Belorussian-language publications (including periodicals) were legally printed in the empire. At the same time, Belorussian Catholics' submission to imperial integration was problematic: whenever they could choose the language of religious education in state schools, they opted for the Polish, not Russian; when the choice was removed, Catholic priests refused to teach, and catechism classes were moved outside of state schools. Lithuanians did not succumb to the attempts at cultural homogenization after 1863; hence the imperial government did not have illusions about the success of such policies during the first decades of the twentieth century. After the suppression of the revolution of 1905, the Poles once again became the main enemies of the empire in this region. Because the imperial government was quite sure about their disloyalty and the fact that nothing could have been done to change the situation, it considered the implementation of the policy of segregation. After 1905, tsarist officials frequently proposed the same discriminatory or subtle social engineering-oriented schemes to be included in nationality policies, which were first discussed after the suppression of the uprising of 1863–64. However, because of the more liberal political regime, the gradual centralization and strengthening of the national movements of non-Russians, their implementation before World War I was even less feasible than during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The challenge of non-Russian nationalisms discussed in this chapter do not imply that these nationalisms were capable of destroying the Romanov Empire anytime soon. Yet, at the same time, tsarist officials did not have a clear-cut strategy for enacting nationality policies, which, in their understanding, could have guaranteed the loyalty of the imperial subjects in the Northwest region, just as in other western borderlands.<sup>107</sup>

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107 For the same argument with regard to the Baltic provinces, see Brüggemann's chapter in this volume. For the Kingdom of Poland, see Rolf, *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland*, 427.

# What Is the “Russian Cause” and Whom Does It Serve? Russian Nationalists and Imperial Bureaucracy in the Kingdom of Poland

Malte Rolf

In the summer of 1908, a letter from Warsaw reached the Interior Ministry in St. Petersburg. The message conveyed a bitter complaint about the local governor-general Georgii Skalon. The lament’s anonymous authors blamed the official of betraying the “Russian cause” (*Russkoe delo*) in the Polish provinces. In their eyes, Skalon had failed to “venerate the Russian name” (*podniat’ russkoe imia*) and protect the “national interests near the Vistula.” The authors—who introduced themselves as “Russians from Warsaw”—made clear that the Kingdom was “held tightly in the hands of the enemies of Russia.”<sup>1</sup> While the denunciation made it explicit that the Poles needed to be seen as “the enemies of Russia,” it also indicated that Skalon’s lack of vigilance may be explained by his non-Russian origins and his Baltic-German family background.<sup>2</sup> To make matters worse, those who were willing to fight for the “Russian cause” would be stigmatized as “Russifiers” (*obrusiteli*). No wonder, the letter concluded, that the situation of the “Russian community” (*russkoe obshchestvo*) in the Kingdom was desperate. This is why the central institutions and the minister in St. Petersburg should intervene and rescue the “dying Russian cause in Poland” (*gibnushchee russkoe delo v Pol’she*).<sup>3</sup>

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1 Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 215, op. 1, d. 156, ll. 25–27 (Minister of the Interior on an anonymous letter, 26 July 1908), l. 25.

2 GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 156, l. 25–26.

3 GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 156, l. 27.

This fiery accusation may have been more drastic in its rhetoric than other complaints, but it was the only anonymous letter. During the last decade before World War I, the imperial ministries and politicians were frequently addressed with such “voices of concern” who discredited local imperial authorities and accused them of a lack of will to defend the “Russian cause” in the western borderlands. Skalon as the most powerful figure in the tsarist state machinery at the Vistula was especially vulnerable to accusations of giving in to Polish interests and “retreating” from the protection of “positions already held by Russians.”<sup>4</sup>

Why did members of the “Russian community” feel stripped of their protections by an imperial bureaucracy that, after the January Uprising of 1863–64, had pledged to forever “defend” the “Russian cause” in the Kingdom? How can we explain the emergence of obvious frictions between local state authorities and the diaspora representing the “imperial nation” at the Vistula?<sup>5</sup> What kind of different notions of the “Russian cause” surfaced in these conflicts, and why did advocates of the “Russian community” place their hopes on these central institutions while simultaneously losing trust in the regional branches of tsarist power? Finally, what dynamics were linked with these new tensions, and how did they contribute to the constraints that shaped the political landscape in post-revolutionary Russia?

This chapter will explore these questions. In the first part, it will discuss how the Revolution of 1905 led to a fundamental shift in imperial policies in the Kingdom of Poland. In the course of a strategic readjustment, tsarist authorities strove to create new alliances in order to undermine rev-

4 In the denunciation of 1908, it sounded like this: Skalon was “handing over Russian positions to the enemies of Russia” (*ustupat’ zaniatyie russkimi v krae pozitsii vragam Rossii*). GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 156, l. 27. For similar letters from that time, see, e.g., *Archiwum Głównie Akt Dawnych* (AGAD), KGGW, sygn. 1893, kart. 1–89v (Report by the governor of Piotrków, April 15, 1906), l. 68ob; GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 156, l. 25–27 (Commentary on denunciations directed at the chief of the chancellery of the Warsaw governor-general, July 26, 1908).

5 On “imperial nations” and projects of “imperial nation”-building within the framework of the empire, see Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller, “Introduction: Building Nations in and with Empires; A Reassessment,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, ed. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2015), 1–30, in particular, 2–7.

olutionary unrest, thereby facilitating novel approaches to Polish political forces and their representatives. This contribution will elaborate the depth of imperial-Polish collaboration and the continuing tensions inscribed in it.

In the second part, the chapter turns to the deterioration of the relationship between imperial authorities and the Russian community in the western borderlands. It will focus on the dynamics that turned crucial questions, such as how to define the "Russian cause" and distinguish groups identified with it, into much disputed issues. Here, the emancipation process of the Russian diaspora from older imperial-bureaucratic domination is taken up. The study will elaborate on how the changing political framework, including the creation of a public sphere that evolved on grounds of the Fundamental Laws of 1906, empowered the Russian community, and how it equipped its members with new options to pressure state authorities. This essay will discuss how arguments in favor of "nationalizing" the empire or even for consistent "Russification" policies contested concepts of supra-ethnic imperial management. Different notions of imperial rule *within* the local and central institutions of the state bureaucracy will surface here.

Finally, the chapter reflects on the means the imperial administration had available for effectively managing the conflict-ridden situation in the Kingdom. It examines to what extent tsarist officials were, in fact, able to shape the political landscape in the borderlands, and to which vision of future imperial rule they subscribed. Did they have a long-term vision of how to "defend" the "Russian cause" in the peripheries? To what extent were concepts of "nationalizing" the empire part of the authorities' agenda that targeted at "upholding" the "Russian name" at the Vistula? These are questions tackled in the last section of the chapter.

In posing these questions this contribution significantly differs from earlier scholarship due to its focus on the interaction of the imperial administration and the local Russian community. Taking a closer look at the chronology of tensions and frictions after 1905 helps us better understand the unfolding processes of radicalization. Earlier research has neglected such dynamics that, as we will see, had severe effects not only on the situa-



tion in the Empire's peripheries, but on the political landscape in the capital as well. This chapter will, thus, address the "feedback loop" between Poland and Russia that facilitated processes of "provincializing the center" in a time of rising nationalism.

### Imperial Rule in the Kingdom of Poland Before 1905

To understand the dynamics of the post-revolutionary period, it is necessary to provide a short survey of the long history of Russian hegemony in the Kingdom of Poland. Many of the tensions between 1905 and 1914 were connected to the conflicts that had shaped this part of the Empire for almost a century.

After the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century, Russia successfully defended its claims on the Eastern territories of the former *Rzeczpospolita* at the Congress of Vienna. Additionally, in 1815, Alexander I also managed to expand Russian control over the core provinces of the old Polish monarchy. By creating a *de jure* independent Kingdom of Poland, St. Petersburg ensured its domination over this new state. Moving forward, all Russian Tsars were to be crowned Kings of Poland, and their viceroys in Warsaw would intervene in internal Polish affairs if necessary. After the 1830–31 Uprising, Russian troops were sent there, and much stricter surveillance over the Kingdom was enforced. Still, the 1863–64 January Uprising marked a clear caesura in the history of Russian hegemony in Poland. After crushing the revolt, St. Petersburg introduced a wide range of punitive and administrative measures to "pacify" the region and to intensify imperial influence.

Around 240,000 soldiers from Russia were stationed in the Kingdom, more than 40,000 of them in Warsaw alone. Local autonomy was banned in the Polish provinces, many existing legal peculiarities were abolished, and a military-bureaucratic command was enforced for the conflict-ridden borderland. The former Kingdom was to become nothing but a mere administrative district, tightly bound to the rest of the Empire. This blow was also reflected in the terminology used: after 1864 the territory was widely

called "Vistula Land" (*Privislinskii krai*), eradicating all traces of former Polish statehood.<sup>6</sup>

After the January Uprising, tsarist authorities also began reforming the region's state administration. They transferred the Russian governorate system to the Kingdom, and filled the most influential positions in the bureaucracy with external officials. With very few exceptions, Catholics (Poles) were barred from the higher ranks of the local administration. In effect, after 1863–64, the upper levels of officialdom were dominated by non-local civil servants imported from the core territories of the empire, who for the most part, were Russian and Orthodox.<sup>7</sup>

Although this system remained almost unchanged until World War I, certain periods were characterized by different modes of enforcement. In particular, during the reign of Alexander III and his highest representative in Warsaw—the polonophobic governor-general Iosif Gurko—much effort was directed toward the goal of further eliminating existing differences between the western periphery of the empire and Russia's internal provinces. During these "dark years," as Polish contemporaries called it, administrative interference reached all cultural and social spheres and affected educational institutions in particular. Teaching in institutions of higher learning as well as intermediate and advanced school classes was to be

6 Sbornik administrativnykh postanovlenii Tsarstva Pol'skogo. Vedomstvo vnutrennykh i dukhovnykh del, vol. 1, Warsaw 1866. GARF, f. 102, op. 254, d. 1 (Obozrenie mer pravitel'stva, priniatykh po Tsarstvu Pol'skomu posle 1863 goda, 1880); Nikolai M. Reinke, *Ocherk zakonodatel'stva Tsarstva Pol'skogo* (St. Petersburg, 1902). See also: Werner Benecke, *Militär, Reform und Gesellschaft im Zarenreich. Die Wehrpflicht in Russland 1874–1914* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), 63–68; Kristof Gumb, "Ugrozhat' i nakazyvat': Russkaia armiiia v Varshave v 1904–1906gg.," *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2008): 157–94; Malte Rolf, *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland: Das Königreich Polen im Russischen Imperium (1864–1915)* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2015), chap. 4; Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), chap. 5.

7 See also: Andrzej Chwalba, *Polacy w służbie Moskali* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1999), 40; L. E. Gorizontov, *Paradoksy imperskoi politiki: Poliaki v Rossii i Russkie v Pol'she (XIX–nachalo XX v.)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Indrik, 1999), in particular, 170–85; Malte Rolf, *Rządy imperialne w Kraju Nadwiślańskim: Królestwo Polskie i cesarstwo rosyjskie (1864–1915)* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2016), chap. 2; Katya Vladimirov, *The World of Provincial Bureaucracy in Late 19th and 20th Century Russian Poland* (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 2004), 51–55; Stanisław Wiech, *Spółczesność Królestwa Polskiego w oczach carskiej policji politycznej (1866–1896)* (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2002), 223.

conducted in Russian, and programs to introduce the Russian language in primary schools were launched.<sup>8</sup>

Traditionally, these administrative measures have been labeled as policies of “Russification.” However, it is worth dwelling on this issue in more length. New research has questioned this terminology and has pointed toward the absence of a coherent program of Russification pushed by St. Petersburg and its representatives in the peripheries.<sup>9</sup> In the Polish provinces, Russificatory policies can hardly be seen as the principal guidelines of local imperial officials over the decades.<sup>10</sup> Despite all efforts to further tie this periphery to the greater empire, all state representatives agreed on the fundamental differences that separated the Kingdom from the Russian core lands. In contrast to a perception of the “Western provinces” that Russian authorities considered “national territory,” officials perceived the Kingdom of Poland as a quite distinct entity with its own history and population, which legitimized a certain degree of local “distinctiveness” (*osobennosti* or *obosoblennosti*). The Kingdom was described as a “borderland” (*okraina*) or as a part of “historic Poland”; sometimes it was even identified as a “foreign country” (*chuzhaia strana*).<sup>11</sup> In fact administrative policies—like the

8 GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 76, ll. 160b–20 (Report of the governor-general Al’bedinskii to Alexander II., December 27, 1880); GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 94, l. 560b (Decisions of the Committee of Ministers, February 17, 1898).

9 See Mikhail Dolbilov, “Russification and the Bureaucratic Mind in the Russian Empire’s Northwestern Region in the 1860s,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 2 (2004): 245–72, in particular 245–49; Andreas Kappeler, “The Ambiguities of Russification,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 2 (2004): 291–97; Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essay in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2008), 45–65; Alexei Miller, “Between Local and Inter-Imperial: Russian Imperial History in Search of Scope and Paradigm,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 1 (2004): 7–26; Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practices of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), in particular 57–70; Darius Staliūnas, “Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwest Region after the Uprising of 1863–64?,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 2 (2004): 273–89; Theodore R. Weeks, “Russification. Word and Practice 1863–1914,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 148, no. 4 (2004): 471–89.

10 See in more detail in Malte Rolf, “Russifizierung, Depolonisierung oder innerer Staatsaufbau? Konzepte imperialer Herrschaft im Königreich Polen (1863–1915),” in *Kampf um Wort und Schrift: Russifizierung in Osteuropa im 19.–20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Zaur Gasimov (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2012), 51–88.

11 GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 97, ll. 30–45 (Letter of the Warsaw governor-general to the Ministry of Interior, March 12, 1902), l. 320b; *Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy* (APW), t. 151, cz. 3 (KGW), sygn.

*non*-extension of zemstvo- and Duma-institutions—even deepened the gap between Russia “proper” and the Kingdom.

To be sure, most imperial representatives avoided the term “Russification.”<sup>12</sup> Instead, they described themselves as “defenders” of the “Russian cause” at the western border of the empire. Before 1900, they sought to extend and protect “Russian statehood” (*Russkaia gosudarstvennost’*), a statehood that in historical perspective was identified as clearly “Russian,” but was not understood as Russian in a narrow ethnic sense.<sup>13</sup> Still, most imperial authorities did privilege the Russian-Orthodox community—with Gurko in the forefront—because they saw local Russians as the most reliable group the empire could rely on in the borderlands. Iosif Gurko frankly praised their “wholehearted devotion to the Russian cause” (*bezzavytnaia predannost’ russkomu delu*).<sup>14</sup> The exemplary erection of the gigantic Orthodox Alexander Nevskii Cathedral in Warsaw shows this most clearly: symbolic representations of the empire’s hegemony and the privileges for the Russian-Orthodox parish were fused together in one common cause.<sup>15</sup>

543, kart. 3–6 (Report of the chief of Warsaw district administration, August 29, 1897), kart. 3; AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 1767, kart. 3–5v (Letter of the minister of the interior to the Warsaw governor-general, June 28, 1881).

12 For an explicit criticism, see Konstantin Pobedonostsev’s comment during a meeting of the Committee of Ministers: GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 94, ll. 550b–580b (Proceedings of the Committee of Ministers, February 17, 1898), l. 55.

13 *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv* (RGIA), f. 1284, 1898, op. 185, d. 55, l. 8 (Letter of the Warsaw governor-general Imeretinskii to the minister of the interior, January 4, 1899); GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 97, ll. 30–45 (Letter of the Warsaw governor-general Chertkov to the Ministry of Interior, March 12, 1902), here ll. 320b–34. E.g., Warsaw Governor-general Imeretinskii called all imperial officials serving in the Polish provinces “istinnye pionery russkogo dela na okrainakh gosudarstva.” GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 97, ll. 25–27 (Notes of the Warsaw governor-general Imeretinskii, January 12, 1899), here l. 260b.

14 AGAD, KGGW, Sygn. 1773, kart. 19–530b (Report of Warsaw governor-general Iosif Gurko, 25 December 1883), here kart. 19. Konstantin Pobedonostsev expressed quite explicitly: “Russian state power (*russkaia gosudarstvennaia vlast’*) should understand itself as the representative of the ruling nationality (*gosподstviushchaia narodnost’*). It should take care to establish correct opinions on [...] the rights of the Russian people, their past and present, among all imperial subjects regardless of their descent.” GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 94, ll. 550b–580b (Proceedings of the Committee of Ministers, February 17, 1898), here l. 57.

15 See Piotr Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów: Sztuka rosyjska w Warszawie 1815–1915* (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1991), 114–37; Piotr Paszkiewicz, “The Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Saint Alexander Nevsky in Warsaw: From the History of Polish–Russian Relations,” *Polish Art Studies* 14 (1992): 64–71; Piotr Paszkiewicz, *W służbie Imperium Rosyjskiego 1721–1917: Funkcje i treści ideowe*

Although this general approach remained unquestioned until 1905, the political atmosphere changed considerably after Gurko was forced into retirement in 1894. The succeeding governor-generals Pavel Shuvalov (1894–96) and Aleksandr Imeretinskii (1896–1900) strove to come to terms with Polish society. With a series of symbolic concessions, they inaugurated what contemporaries called a “time of change.”<sup>16</sup> Nicholas II’s visit to Warsaw in 1897, the opening of a Polytechnic Institute, the erection of a monument dedicated to the Polish national poet and supporter of independent Polish statehood Adam Mickiewicz, the approval of a large exhibition hall for Warsaw’s Society of Fine Arts: all of these arrangements seemed to point at a serious reevaluation of imperial policies.<sup>17</sup>

The international situation at the end of the nineteenth century and the threat of an anti-Russian Triple Alliance fueled this reassessment of negative policies toward Poles because they directed Polish loyalties to the neighboring empires. In addition, domestic social developments such as rapid industrialization and urban growth stimulated the overburdened authorities to look for new forms of cooperation with the local population.<sup>18</sup>

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*rosyjskiej architektury sakralnej na zachodnich rubieżach Cesarstwa i poza jego granicami* (Warsaw: Institut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1999); Paweł Przeciszewski, *Warszawa: Prawosławie i rosyjskie dziedzictwo* (Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza Egros, 2012), 121–44; Robert L. Przygodzki, “Russians in Warsaw: Imperialism and National Identities, 1863–1915” (PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 2007), 206–31; Malte Rolf, “Russische Herrschaft in Warschau. Die Aleksandr-Nevskij-Kathedrale im Konflikttraum politischer Kommunikation,” in *Jenseits der Zarenmacht: Dimensionen des Politischen im Russischen Reich 1800–1917*, ed. Walter Sperling (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2008), 163–89.

16 See Erazm I. Pil’ts, *Povorotnyi moment v rusko-pol’skikh otnosheniakh* (St. Petersburg, 1897), 5–12.

17 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 7031, kart. 38–39 (Letter of the minister of the interior to the Warsaw governor-general, June 13, 1912); APW, t. 151, cz. 3 (KGGW), sygn. 543, kart. 24–29v (Report of the chief of the Warsaw district, November 10, 1897). F. F. Orlov, *Russkoe delo na Visle (1795–1895)* (St. Petersburg, 1898). See also Malte Rolf, “Der Zar an der Weichsel: Repräsentationen von Herrschaft und Imperium im *fin de siècle*,” in *Imperiale Herrschaft in der Provinz: Repräsentationen politischer Macht im späten Zarenreich*, ed. Jörg Baberowski, David Feest, and Christoph Gumb (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2008), 145–71; Andrzej Szwarc, “Manewry polityczne wokół odsłonięcia pomnika Mickiewicza w Warszawie: Raport General-Gubernatora Królestwa Polskiego Alexandra Imeretyńskiego do Mikołaja II z stycznia 1899,” in *Gospodarka: Ludzie: Władza*, ed. Michał Kopczyński and Antoni Mączak (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krupski i S-ka, 1998), 265–76; Janina Wiercińska, *Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie. Zarys działalności* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 1968); Katarzyna Beylin, *W Warszawie w latach 1900–1914* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), 29–39.

18 See, e.g., Ute Caumanns, “Mietskasernen und ‘Gläserne Häuser’: Soziales Wohnen in Warschau zwischen Philanthropie und Genossenschaft 1900–1939,” in *Wohnen in der Großstadt 1900–1939: Wohnsituation und Modernisierung im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. Alena Janatková and Hanna Kozłowska-Witt (Stuttgart:

This noticeable wind of change may have provided grounds for less constraint in the imperial–Polish encounter in the 1890s though it did not lead toward a general questioning of the authorities' basic self-perception as "defenders of the Russian cause." This became evident in an internal report issued by Imeretinskii on the political situation in the Kingdom, which was soon leaked by PPS-socialists. This report frustrated many Polish contemporaries who had hoped for a significant improvement in imperial–Polish relations. It became just as apparent in the ongoing policies of granting special privileges to the Russian community in the Kingdom.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, the Russian-Orthodox population increased significantly during this decade, particularly in Warsaw. Now, contemporaries saw a "Russkaia Varshava" on the rise. This "Russian Warsaw" gradually transformed in terms of its social and professional structure. While around 1900, a large share of Russians living in Warsaw was still employed by the government, the size of the *raznochintsy*-milieu grew, and many of these people followed occupations outside the imperial bureaucracy. Nonetheless, until the turn of the century, "defending" the "Russian cause" remained a common denominator that encompassed very different notions of what the "Russkoe delo" would stand for. Shortly before the revolution, imperial authorities and members of *Russkaia Varshava* still subscribed to a concept of *concordia* in which the Russian community and the imperial state were seen as mostly overlapping spheres.<sup>20</sup>

It would be misleading, though, to characterize imperial policies at this point as "nationalizing." It is worthwhile noting that neither Shuvalov nor

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Franz Steiner, 2006), 205–24; Malte Rolf, "Imperiale Herrschaft im städtischen Raum: Zarische Beamte und urbane Öffentlichkeit in Warschau (1870–1914)," in *Russlands imperiale Macht: Integrationsstrategien und ihre Reichweite in transnationaler Perspektive*, ed. Bionka Pietrow-Ennker (Cologne: Böhlau, 2012), 123–53. On the German view of Polish loyalties, see John C. G. Röhl, *Wilhelm II. Der Aufbau der Persönlichen Monarchie 1888–1900* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001), 557–65. I thank Jan Markert for drawing my attention to this.

19 See *Tainy nashei gosudarstvennoi politiki v Pol'she. Sbornik sekretnykh dokumentov*, published by the Russian Free Press Fund (London 1899). On censorship policies privileging the Russian community, see Malte Rolf, "Approved by the Censor: Tsarist Censorship and the Public Sphere in Imperial Russia and the Kingdom of Poland (1860–1914)," in *Underground Publishing and the Public Sphere: Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Jan C. Behrends and Thomas Lindenberger (Vienna: LIT, 2014), 31–74.

20 See *Dvizhenie naseleniia goroda Varshavy*, ed. Varshavskii magistrate (Warsaw 1902); "Russkoe delo v Privisliskom krae," in *Privisliskii kalendar'* (Warsaw 1898), 18; Alexei A. Sidorov, *Russkie i russkaia zhizn' v Varshave* (Warsaw, 1900).

Imeretinskii followed Gurko's plan of further "Russifying" the Kingdom's culture or educational system. Both were undecided on how far political concessions to the Poles should go, but they were both trying to come to terms at least with those segments of Polish aristocracy and bourgeois society willing to cooperate. Facing new challenges like the rise of socialism and nationalism and the increasing illegal activities of more radical groups among the younger generation, tsarist officials were offering a *modus vivendi* to groups like the Warsaw Positivists or the *Ugodowcy*.<sup>21</sup>

The Revolution of 1905 radically changed this political situation. The social and political turmoil of the years 1905–1906 confronted the tsarist administration with hitherto unknown threats and, in the longer run, facilitated new concepts of imperial management.

### The Revolution of 1905 and the Reinvention of Imperial Policies in the Kingdom of Poland

Hardly any other region of the empire reached the scale and intensity of revolutionary upheaval and violence as the Kingdom. Dead bodies in the streets in Warsaw or Lodz; assassinations of policemen and other officials; bloody clashes between army units and protestors; a deadly vendetta be-

21 On the Polish *Ugodowcy*—a milieu of conservatives willing to cooperate with tsarist officials—see Pil'ts, *Povorotnyi moment v russko-pol'skikh otnosheniiakh*; Vladimir D. Spasovich and Erazm I. Pil'ts, *Ocherednye voprosy v Tsarstve Pol'skom*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1902). On Warsaw Positivism, see Stanislaus A. Blejwas, "Warsaw Positivism—Patriotism Misunderstood," *The Polish Review* 27, nos. 1–2 (1982): 47–54; Peter Salden, "Puškin und Polen 1899: Die Petersburger Feier der polnischen Zeitung 'Kraj' zu Puškins 100. Geburtstag," *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 53, no. 3 (2008): 281–304; Denis Sdvižkov, *Das Zeitalter der Intelligenz: Zur vergleichenden Geschichte der Gebildeten in Europa bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 120–23; Tadeusz Stegner, "Polskie partie liberalne na mapie politycznej Królestwa Polskiego na początku XX wieku," in *Tradycje liberalne w Polsce: Sympozjum historyczne, Materiały i Rozprawy do Teorii, Dziejów i Współczesności Liberalizmu*, vol. 1, ed. Roman Benedyckiuk and Ryszard Kołodziejczyk (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2004), 49–67. On the growing socialist and national forces, see Robert E. Blobaum, *Feliks Dzierżyński and the SD-KPiL: A Study of the Origins of Polish Communism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Peter Hetherington, *Unvanquished: Joseph Pilsudski, Resurrected Poland, and the Struggle for Eastern Europe* (Houston: Pingora Press, 2012); Norman M. Naimark, *The History of the "Proletariat": The Emergence of Marxism in the Kingdom of Poland, 1870–1887* (Boulder, CO: Columbia University Press, 1979); Brian A. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).



tween rival political factions, and a brutal enforcement of martial law and field court justice with more than 1,000 death sentences constituted "normality" in these tumultuous times. Only after martial law was declared in December 1905 were imperial authorities able to regain control over the Polish provinces.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the revolution was not a closed chapter by the end of 1905. The unrest, bloodshed, and anarchy persisted for more than two years. The tsarist administration kept the Kingdom of Poland in a state of emergency until 1909; officials and the local population alike were shaped, sometimes traumatized, by the revolution. The revolution left its imprint on the new political and legal order and the new political culture.<sup>23</sup>

In this moment of the Empire's ultimate crisis, state officials started to reconsider some of the key features of imperial management and nationality policies. As a lesson of 1905, tsarist authorities reevaluated the traditional hierarchy ranking foes in which Poles, struggling for any sort of national emancipation, ranked at the top. During 1905–06, officials started

22 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2573, kart. 50–50v (Letter of the minister of interior to the Warsaw governor-general, August 17, 1905); AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2585, kart. 22 (Letter of the minister of interior to the Warsaw governor-general, December 30, 1906). See Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), passim; Jörg Baberowski, *Autokratie und Justiz: Zum Verhältnis von Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Rückständigkeit im ausgehenden Zarenreich 1864–1914* (Frankfurt/Main: V. Klostermann, 1996), 764–68; Robert E. Blobaum, *Revolucja: Russian Poland, 1904–1907* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); William C. Fuller, *Civil–Military Conflict in Imperial Russia, 1881–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 169–91; Anna Geifman, *Though Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894–1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 226–27; Don C. Rawson, "The Death Penalty in Late Tsarist Russia: An Investigation of Judicial Procedures," *Russian History* 1 (1984): 29–58, here, 48–50; Malte Rolf, "Revolution, Repression and Reform: 1905 im Königreich Polen," in *Schlüsseljahre: Zentrale Konstellationen der mittel- und osteuropäischen Geschichte: Festschrift für Helmut Altrichter zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Lilia Antipow and Matthias Stadelmann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2011), 219–32.

23 On everyday violence, see Vladimir V. Esipov, "Narodnaia nravstvennost'," in *Nekotorye cherty po statistike narodnogo zdorav'ia v 10 guberniakh Tsartva Pol'skogo*, ed. Varshavskii statisticheskii komitet (Warsaw, 1907), 59–65, here 62–64; *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print. Part I, From the Mid-nineteenth Century to the First World War. Series A: Russia, 1859–1914*, ed. Dominic Lieven (Bethesda, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 132–33 (Doc. 86). See also Malte Rolf, "Metropolen im Ausnahmezustand? Gewaltakteure und Gewalträume in den Städten des späten Zarenreichs," in *Kollektive Gewalt in der Stadt: Europa 1890–1939*, ed. Friedrich Lenger (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013), 25–49; Malte Rolf, "A Continuum of Crisis? The Kingdom of Poland in the Shadow of Revolution (1905–1915)," in *The Russian Revolution of 1905 in Transcultural Perspective: Identities, Peripheries, and the Flow of Ideas*, eds. Felicitas Fischer v. Weikersthal, Frank Grüner, Susanne Hohler, Franziska Schedewie, and Raphael Utz (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2013), 159–74.



to see socialists as the main threat to the Empire and were, thus, more open to forms of cooperation with all non-revolutionary segments of the Polish political spectrum. Since older dialogue partners like the Positivists or the *Ugodowcy* had been politically marginalized during the revolution, tsarist authorities began looking for other options.<sup>24</sup> By now, the Polish National Democrats (*Endecja*) appeared to be a political movement whose representatives, who were engaged in a bitter fight with the socialists, seemed receptive to some kind of collaboration. After 1906, Governor-general Skalon identified Roman Dmowski and his *Endecia* as possible accomplices in a joint effort to isolate socialist forces and end the turmoil in the Kingdom once and for all. In fact, Dmowski proved to be quite responsive to such ideas. While the socialist parties and the PPS in particular continued to attack the regime with terroristic assaults, Dmowski was willing to operate within the new legal sphere offered by the Fundamental Laws of 1906 and the electoral system of the Duma.

In this new alliance of uneven partners, Skalon openly supported the National Democrats as the rising political force. He approved their rallies for the first Duma election campaign even before the party was officially registered. And he ordered local state representatives to provide indoor spaces for *Endecia*-gatherings. Obviously, already at the turn of the year 1905–1906, Polish nationalists were assessed as a second-rate threat to the stability of the Kingdom.<sup>25</sup>

By 1906, tsarist officials like Skalon were quite certain that they had won back the initiative in fighting the revolution. Martial law and ruthless field court justice, along with the presence of massive military forces, seemed to play out its effects during this second year of upheaval. Since the discipline of Russian soldiers in the Kingdom had never been in doubt, the authorities knew that they could enforce “order” at any time, while the random attacks

24 APW, t. 24 (WWO), sygn. 263, kart. 1–6 (Report on the social and political situation in the Kingdom, 1913–1914, January 14, 1914); APW, t. 24 (WWO), sygn. 261, kart. 1–32, here kart. 16–17 (Report on “people’s opinion” in the Kingdom, 1913).

25 See Pascal Trees, *Wahlen im Weichselland: Die Nationaldemokraten in Russisch-Polen und die Dumawahlen 1905–1912* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2007), 103–16; Rolf, “The Kingdom of Poland in the Shadow of Revolution.”

of socialist fighting groups failed in stirring up mass protests comparable to 1905. Reassured with such confidence in his own power, Skalon could easily grant space to the more moderate Polish forces. Thus, although political activities of any kind remained restricted during the period of martial law, the tsarist administration allowed a certain normalcy to return to the political and social sphere even before 1909.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, the Fundamental Laws of 1906 and the advent of parliamentarianism in Russia had radically changed the institutional framework of imperial policies. Although the continuing state of emergency suspended many civil rights, the political dynamics of inner-Russia also affected the Kingdom. Political parties and their outlets, social associations, cultural societies, and all sorts of institutions turned to the imperial administration with their request for official registration. Political, social, and cultural life began to self-organize and witnessed a boom after martial law was lifted in 1909. Tsarist authorities also had to adjust their agenda and policies within this new framework of civil laws, elections, and an active public sphere. Imperial management needed to find influential allies within this mushrooming public sphere if it wanted to be effective. National democrats, in contrast to liberal positivists or *ugoda*-conservatives, represented a powerful organization in this respect.<sup>27</sup>

Growing tensions in international relations also facilitated this alliance. Since war against imperial Germany seemed to be almost inevitable, anti-German sentiments provided some common ground for both imperial and Polish representatives. The perception of a common enemy across the border helped to bridge many differences in worldviews and political goals.<sup>28</sup>

26 See Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 260–91; Christoph Gumb, "Die Festung. Repräsentationen von Herrschaft und die Präsenz der Gewalt, Warschau (1904–1906)," in *Imperiale Herrschaft in der Provinz: Repräsentationen politischer Macht im späten Zarenreich*, ed. Jörg Baberowski, David Feest, and Christoph Gumb (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2008), 271–302; N. D. Postnikov, "Terror pol'skikh partii protiv predstavitelei russkoi administratsii v 1905–1907 gg.," in *Individual'nyi politicheskii terror v Rossii XIX–nachalo XX v.*, ed. K. H. Morozov (Moscow: Memorial, 1996), 112–17.

27 APW, t. 24 (WWO), sygn. 263, kart. 1–6 (Report on the social and political situation in the Kingdom, 1913–1914, January 14, 1914); APW, t. 24 (WWO), sygn. 261, kart. 1–32, here kart. 16–17 (Report on "people's opinion" in the Kingdom, 1913).

28 See, e.g., Roman Dmowski's analyses in *Niemcy, Rosja i kwestia polska from 1908*.

All of this contributed to the readjustment of imperial policies in the Kingdom of Poland. After 1906, tsarist authorities not only strove to “re-store order” but to stabilize the political situation long term. But defining new paradigms of imperial administration was not only a matter decided in the chancelleries of a mandarin bureaucracy. The search for new alliances and policy guidelines took place in direct contact with Polish society. The following section will take a closer look at how successful imperial managers were in their interactions with a multifaceted Polish society and to what extent they were indeed able to establish a new mode of collaboration. To make matters more complex, in a second step, I will elaborate on the effects this new Polish–imperial encounter had on the Russian community in the Kingdom.

### **In Search of New Alliances: The Tsarist Administration and Polish Society after 1905**

St. Petersburg’s representatives had much to offer those willing to participate in the legal and political system established in 1906. In the period of martial law, it was the Warsaw governor-general who decided whether an institution would be legally registered and which restrictions might be imposed on it. The administration defined the boundaries of the legal public sphere, and its power rested on the fact that it could facilitate or hinder any kind of political activity.

The bureaucracy decided to use this “enabling power” in order to strengthen the National Democrats in particular. It was not only during the revolution that Skalon favored Dmowski’s party. Even after 1907, when the overall political situation had calmed down, the *Endecia* and its sub-institutions enjoyed considerable support by state authorities, for example, the Warsaw governor-general only in rare cases issued administrative decrees when it came to media associated with the National Democrats. Even investigative journalism that revealed the shortcomings of the local bureaucracy was tolerated. In 1908, journalists of the daily newspaper *Goniec* exposed the grave mismanagement of and networks of corrup-

tion within the municipal administration of Warsaw. Skalon reacted to the scandal by commissioning a special committee. Consequently, city president Viktor Litvinskii had to resign. Contemporaries had already interpreted this as a sign of a new age of independent media empowered to pressure the state machinery.<sup>29</sup>

Even more astonishing is the scope of tacit permission Skalon showed toward one of the key projects of the National Democrats: the "Polish Motherland School" (*Polska Macierz Szkolna*). In summer 1906, the governor-general gave his approval for the creation of a network of private schools in the Kingdom. By 1907, almost seven hundred schools with more than seven thousand schoolchildren had already been registered.<sup>30</sup> This sweeping success obviously raised doubts among imperial representatives as to whether a privately run school system might marginalize state-sponsored schools in the future. Already in December 1907, Skalon abruptly closed the schools run by the institution and withdrew the registration of *Polska Macierz Szkolna*.<sup>31</sup> This clearly shows the narrow limits in which public initiatives were able to unfold in the Kingdom. It also demonstrates how arbitrary imperial policies were—even when it came to newly identified allies among the local population. Such sudden interference from above was a threat to all associations and institutions active under martial law. From time to time, Skalon reminded the young Polish civil society that, in the end, he held ultimate power in the Polish provinces.

Still, imperial officials generally showed a great deal of willingness to grant Polish civil society at least some participatory authority. After 1906, representatives of the municipal society in Warsaw were frequently invited to sit on numerous state committees that dealt with the problems of admin-

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29 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 6247, kart. 30–38 (Report of the special committee to Skalon, December 21, 1909); AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 6247, kart. 20 (Report of the head of the special committee to Skalon, August 27, 1909); GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 156, l. 60b (Letter of Skalon to Stolypin, Oktober 1909).

30 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2723, kart. 6–6v (Letter of the Governor of Siedlce to Skalon, October 30, 1906). See Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 178–82.

31 Many of these schools were kept running by private initiatives. See Edmund Staszyński, *Polityka oświatowa caratu w Królestwie Polskim: Od powstania styczniowego do I wojny światowej* (Warsaw: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1968), 207–40.

istrating the growing metropolis—for instance, the commission to prevent cholera epidemics in the city, or ad-hoc snow removal committees.<sup>32</sup> The imperial bureaucracy and the city president's board in particular constantly demonstrated their closeness to the urban citizenry and their goodwill to cooperate with the local population. At least in Warsaw, authorities made room for citizens to be directly involved in government affairs and granted them an, albeit restricted, share in decision-making.

Keeping this in mind, the reasons Governor-general Skalon was indeed in favor of introducing municipal self-institutions in the Kingdom of Poland is less surprising. With the City Duma, he identified an institutional body that could provide the framework for further cooperation with those segments of Polish society that were prosperous enough to indeed profit from this socially exclusive council. Skalon, thus, opposed those voices calling for laws that would have discriminated against Poles and the use of Polish in municipal assemblies and boards. In the end, even Skalon failed to enforce this highly controversial reform, as Russian nationalists in the State Duma and the Senate obstructed the project.<sup>33</sup>

In general, it becomes obvious that local imperial authorities were trying to forge novel alliances in the post-revolutionary period and that they were willing to collaborate with political forces that, just a few years earlier, had been identified as bitter enemies. This new openness rested on the inversion of the hierarchy of friends and foes that had taken place during the turmoil of 1905. No doubt, this search for a *modus vivendi* was strictly limited even after 1909. Whenever the tsarist administration viewed the political and social activities of the National Democrats as threat to public order, they intervened; for example, Dmowski's efforts to intensify political mobilization through antisemitic campaigns—such as the boycott of Jewish businesses in 1912—were curtailed by imperial authorities. This had little to do with sympathy for Jewish citizens among state officials, but rather

32 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 5820, kart. 54 (Report of the commission's chairman G. Giunter, January 12, 1907); APW, t. 25, sygn. 125, kart. 24–25; t. 151, cz. 1 (KGW), sygn. 471, kart. 171–75 (Documents of the commission for preventing cholera epidemics, 1908).

33 See Weeks, *Nation and State*, 152–71.

with their obsession with "public order" to which aggressive antisemitic agitation might pose a danger.<sup>34</sup>

But such examples do not distort the overall picture that local tsarist authorities acted with much less hostility toward the political mainstream of Polish society after the Revolution of 1905. The National Democrats were the principal beneficiaries of such an approach. It could be argued that the *Endecja's* focus on "cultural autonomy" as the main political target for the near future was a reaction to this. This goal stayed within the legal framework provided by the reforms of 1906, but it opened up a terrain in which state representatives and Polish politicians could seek out pragmatic collaboration on a daily basis. All of this was indeed crucial for stabilizing the Kingdom's political landscape in the final years before World War I.

Thus, imperial authorities proved rather successful in securing public order and political stability in the Kingdom after 1905. At the same time, they were confronted with a new challenge: the local Russian community underwent a deep transformation during the Revolution and began to petition state representatives with new demands.

### A Fragile Alliance: Imperial Authorities and the Russian Community

By sheer numbers, the Russian-Orthodox community in the Kingdom had grown considerably during the last decade of the nineteenth century. This was particularly obvious in Warsaw: in 1897, the census recorded 49,997 Orthodox in the city, making up more than 7 percent of the city's population.<sup>35</sup> For a long time it was impossible to distinguish between the imperial administration and the Russian diaspora. All higher state representatives

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34 See: APW, t. 22 (ZOW), sygn. 22, kart. 1 (Order of the Warsaw governor-general to the Committee for the affairs with the press, November 9, 1912); RGIA, f. 821, op. 128, d. 989, ll. 50–56 (Order of Governor-general Skalon, December 19, 1912). Iosif A. Kleinman, *Mezhdū molotom i nakoval'nei (pol'sko-evreiskii krizis)* (St. Petersburg, 1910). See also Robert E. Blobaum, "The Politics of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siecle Warsaw," *The Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 2 (2001): 275–306; Rolf, *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland*, 398–410; Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: The "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 163–69.

35 *Dvizhenie naseleniia goroda Varshavy*, ed. Varshavskii magistrat. Stat. ordel (Warsaw, 1902).

sent to their post in the Kingdom integrated into this local community of the “imperial nation.”<sup>36</sup> Moreover, until 1900, most Russians in Warsaw were employed by the government. This began to change around the turn of the century, as new social groups and professions began to emerge. In the late 1890s, a broad range of occupational opportunities had arisen outside of the bureaucracy, professions like academics, (private) teachers, publicists, book dealers, priests, engineers, physicians, lawyers, and artists.<sup>37</sup> Some of them engaged in activities that went beyond the traditional scope of government-sponsored culture.<sup>38</sup> The process of a gradual emancipation of the Russian community from state structures was facilitated by the reforms brought about by the Revolution of 1905. Based on the Fundamental Laws of 1906 and similar to Polish society, the Russian diaspora managed to create a vivid cultural and political life.<sup>39</sup> Many protagonists within this

36 On the concept of “state–nation” or “imperial nation,” see Berger and Miller, “Building Nations in and with Empires,” 2–7.

37 Alexei A. Sidorov, *Russkie i russkaia zhizn' v Varshave* (Warsaw, 1900); *Putevoditel' po Varshave i ee okrestnostiam s adresnym otdelom*, ed. V. Z. (Warsaw, 1893). For a thick description of *Russkaia Varshava* in earlier times, see Vladimir Mikhnevich, *Varshava i Varshaviane: Nabliudeniia i zametki* (St. Petersburg, 1881), in particular, 46–48. For more details, see Malte Rolf, “Between State Building and Local Cooperation: Russian Rule in the Kingdom of Poland, 1864–1915,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 19, no. 2 (2018): 385–416, in particular, 405–406; Malte Rolf, *Pol'skie zemli pod vlast'iu Peterburga: Ot Venskogo kongressa do Pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2019), chap. V.

38 See “Russkoe delo v Privislinskom krae,” in *Privislinskii kalendar'* (Warsaw, 1898), 18; Varshavskii russkii kalendar' na 1904 god (Warsaw, 1903). In particular the articles: “Obzor sobytii russkoi zhizni,” 6–15, and “Ozhivlenie russkoi obshchestvennoi zhizni v Varshave,” 47–86. See also: Alexei A. Sidorov, *Istoricheskie ocherk russkoi pechati v Privislinskom krae* (Warsaw, 1896); *Putevoditel' po Varshave i ee okrestnostiam*, ed. V. Z. (Warsaw, 1893); Nikolai F. Akaemov, *Putevoditel' po Varshave* (Warsaw, 1902). AGAD, Upravlenie Varshavskikh Pravitel'stvennykh Teatrov, sygn. 1, kart. 1–33 [Catalog of theater activities, 1900–1910, March 1910].

39 Among others, see the Warsaw Section of the Russian Assembly (*Varshavskoe otделение russkogo sobraniia*) and the Russian Society in Warsaw (*Russkoe obshchestvo v g. Varshave*), which were founded after 1905. The Warsaw Section of the Russian Assembly soon became the second largest regional branch of this organization in the empire and counted more than eight hundred members. AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2548, kart. 1 (Letter of the minister of interior to the Warsaw governor-general, January 20, 1905); kart. 4–8v (Founding documents on the Warsaw Section of the Russian Assembly, May 1905). See also Iu. I. Kir'ianov, *Russkoe Sobranie 1900–1917* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 99. Numerous cultural institutions like the Russian Circle for Literature and Science in Warsaw (*Russkii Varshavskii literaturno-nauchnyi kruzhok*), the Russian Circle for Music and Drama (*Russkii muzykal'no-dramaticheskii kruzhok*), or the Russian Circle of Lovers of Theater and Scenery (*Russkii kruzhok liubitelei stsenicheskogo iskusstva*) mushroomed alongside with plenty of sports clubs such as the Russian Athletic Society. On this, see Vladimir V. Esipov, *Ocherk zhizni i byta Privislinskogo kraia* (Warsaw, 1909), 14–17; Grigorii G. Moskvich, *Putevoditel' po Varshave* (St. Petersburg, 1907), 101–104.



new landscape voiced concerns and demands that were not automatically congruent with the interests of local state representatives.<sup>40</sup>

But now, in the wake of revolution, tsarist officials had to take these claims more seriously. This was due to several reasons: first, the new electoral system imposed by Prime Minister Petr Stolypin in June 1907 privileged Russian-Orthodox voters in Warsaw. With a separate "national" electoral curia, one of the two Duma seats allocated to the metropolis was reserved for Russians, while the vast majority of Catholic and Jewish voters were left with a single representative in the State Duma. Russian voters thus had an over-proportional share of electoral power.<sup>41</sup>

In addition, quite a few Russians in Warsaw maintained close ties to influential members of the imperial elite in the capital. Some of them held seats in the Senate, some of them worked in the central government, and some belonged to the circle of power around Prime Minister Stolypin. Many of them had served in different administrative positions in the Kingdom for some time before moving on to higher posts in St. Petersburg's institutions. Obviously, belonging to this loose group of "former Warsawians" created a sense of affection and made them inclined to promote Russian interests in the Kingdom of Poland.

The most prominent figure here was, no doubt, Vladimir Gurko, son of former Governor-General Iosif Gurko. In 1897, shortly after serving as Warsaw's vice governor, Vladimir Gurko wrote a polonophobic *Essay on the Vistula Territory*. In 1906, Gurko was promoted to deputy minister of the interior. He continued publishing polemics and historical studies in which he identified the pursuit of Russian national hegemony as a crucial feature of imperial policy.<sup>42</sup> Anton Budilovich was another visible self-declared "defender of the Russian cause" in the borderlands and the Kingdom of Poland. He had held administrative positions at the University of Warsaw in

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40 Similar developments can be identified in the Northwestern regions. See Vytautas Petronis's contribution to this volume.

41 See Czesław Brzoza and Kamil Stepan, eds. *Posłowie Polscy w parlamencie rosyjskim 1906–1917: Słownik biograficzny* (Warsaw: Sejmowe, 2001), 7–15; Trees, *Wahlen im Weichselland*, 320–29.

42 See Vladimir I. Gurko (Pseudonym: V. R.), *Ocherki Privisl'ia* (Moscow, 1897); Vladimir I. Gurko, *Osnovy vnutrennei politiki imperatora Aleksandra III* (St. Petersburg, 1910).



the 1880s. In 1892–1893, he was transferred to Iur'ev-University where he served as its chancellor shortly after it had been renamed the University of Dorpat.<sup>43</sup> In 1901, the Minister of Education promoted him to St. Petersburg, where he continued to deal with nationality issues and educational matters in the non-Russian peripheries of the empire.<sup>44</sup> Both officials had different views on the most pressing questions in the borderlands, but both agreed with many other “former Warsawians” that the “Russian cause” was under particular threat in the Polish provinces and that it needed active protection from state institutions.

Figures like Gurko or Budilovich demonstrate how well the alliance between state representatives and the Russian community in the Kingdom still operated. They also show that even officials engaged actively in public debates after 1905, where they attempted to place the issue of an allegedly endangered “Russian cause” at the center of political discourse. But such prominent activists cannot conceal the fact that this traditional collaboration had become contested in many respects. Taking a look at several examples of interactions and conflicts between the imperial authorities and representatives of the Russian community will help elaborate on the extent to which the old alliance was still intact and where new frictions began to surface. Whether the founding of a “House of the Russian People,” the reopening of the Imperial University in Warsaw, or the electoral campaign for the Third and Fourth State Dumas, the cohabitation of imperial and national interest groups in the Kingdom caused numerous tensions, and sometimes even open clashes.

43 See Trude Maurer, *Hochschullehrer im Zarenreich: Ein Beitrag zur russischen Sozial- und Bildungsgeschichte* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 830–32.

44 See Anton S. Budilovich, *Vopros ob okrainakh Rossii, v sviazi s teoriei samoopredeleniia narodnostei i trebovaniiami gosudarstvennogo edinstva* (St. Petersburg, 1906); Budilovich, *Rech': O edinstve russkogo naroda* (St. Petersburg, 1907). I have argued elsewhere that the life course and careers of officials like Budilovich can be analyzed as “imperial biographies.” See Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf, “Elites and Their Imperial Biographies: Introduction,” in *Eliten im Vielvölkerreich: Imperiale Biographien in Russland und Österreich-Ungarn (1850–1918)/Elites and Empire: Imperial Biographies in Russia and Austria-Hungary (1850–1918)*, ed. Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 33–37; Malte Rolf, “Imperiale Biographien: Lebenswege imperialer Akteure in Groß- und Kolonialreichen (1850–1918) zur Einleitung,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 40, no. 1 (2014): 5–21. See also Gorizontov, *Paradoksy imperskoi politiki*, 184.

Already in 1905, it became evident that certain demands articulated by the Russian community did not overlap with the agenda of the local administration. The idea of establishing a "House of the Russian People" (*Russkii narodnyi dom*) as a cultural institution and giving it a home in the center of Warsaw was an old one. Voices calling to (finally) move onward with the realization of this project grew louder during the revolution. Obviously, the political mobilization of Poles during the upheaval spurred the Russian community to seek cultural countermeasures. Local activists managed to recruit the support of Stolypin, who pressured the authorities in Warsaw to pave the way for a large cultural center with conference facilities, a library and a concert hall. Although Governor-general Skalon backed this project, a dispute soon arose about where to build this impressive building. The newly founded Russian Society in Warsaw (*Russkoe obshchestvo v g. Varshave*) proposed dedicating a large section of the centrally located Ujazdowski park as the future construction site. This provoked opposition among tsarist municipal authorities who were not willing to sacrifice parts of the city's most representative and popular park.<sup>45</sup>

Skalon soon understood the problematic implications of such a symbolic act that would have antagonized Polish civil society in Warsaw whose support Skalon needed in his quest to stabilize the political situation. Since Ujazdowski park represented a core part of Warsaw's bourgeois culture and identity, cutting it into slices in order to build a "Russian House" would surely have turned Polish opinion against the government. Furthermore, no consensus over the future use of this institution could be reached. While activists of the Russian community envisioned a cultural center open to the general (Russian) public without any restrictions based on estate or property, higher-ranking imperial authorities favored a socially more exclusive club and declined the idea of cultural services and venues that would also attract the lower classes of the Russian community.

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45 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2606, kart. 8 (Letter of the *Russkoe obshchestvo* to Skalon, February 3, 1906); AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 7031, kart. 1–4 (Minutes of meetings with the Warsaw governor-general, August 20, 1911).

In the end, the project failed due to the lack of an adequate construction site. Skalon kept refusing to approve property procurement in the center of town. Representatives of the Russian community rejected all alternative locations proposed by the city administration, which were on the peripheries of the city center as this would have symbolically emphasized Russians' marginal position in the metropolis. In light of the extremely high real estate prices in the metropolis, the Russian community could not afford any appropriate property downtown on its own. Consequently, the "House of the Russian people" was never built.<sup>46</sup> Thus, this failure also highlights the relative economic weakness of *Russkaia Varshava* in Warsaw. While the local Polish community independently financed numerous cultural institutions in the city center during the same period and was able to donate more than a million rubles for the foundation of the Polytechnic Institute, the imperial administration wrote frankly about the poverty of Warsaw's Russians and their inability to finance a project like the "Russian House" without subsidies from the government.<sup>47</sup>

In the post-revolutionary period, imperial authorities reacted quite reservedly toward claims from the Russian community that would have fueled Polish resentments. This becomes even more evident in the debates surrounding the reopening of the Imperial University of Warsaw. The university had been closed due to student protests and boycotts during the revolution. In 1908, Skalon was considering re-launching academic life in Warsaw. Prior to this, numerous representatives of the Russian community raised their voices and advanced ideas about the future shape of the university in particular, and the educational system in the Kingdom in general.

46 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2606, kart. 8–9v; sygn. 7031, kart. 1–97. In particular, AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 7031, kart. 9 (Letter of the city president to the Warsaw governor-general, November 24, 1911); kart. 96–96v (Letter of the minister of the interior to the Warsaw governor-general, November 8, 1913). Among other places, the municipal authorities proposed a construction site behind the Polytechnic Institute. For more detail, see Malte Rolf, *Russian Rule in the Kingdom of Poland (1864–1915)* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, forthcoming in 2020) chap. 9.

47 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 7031, kart. 97 (Minutes of a meeting on building the "Russian House", August 20, 1911). On the overall awareness among imperial officials that the Russian potential in the Western peripheries of the empire was rather weak, see also Darius Staliūnas, "Affirmative Action in the Western Borderlands of the Late Russian Empire?," in *Slavic Review* 77, no. 4 (2018): 978–97, in particular, 996–97.

"Nationalizing education" was the key slogan in this discourse, and writers like the influential book trader Vladimir Istomin favored the strict apartheid of national cohorts in all educational institutions. Istomin argued that the government should only support Russian-language-based "national-patriotic schools."<sup>48</sup>

According to such radical views, the empire as a political space belonged to Russians only. In the anonymous pamphlet, "Why Should There Be a Russian University in Warsaw," the author demanded that the Imperial University should finally take on a clear "Russian character" (*russkii kharakter*).<sup>49</sup> Another author argued that the high school could become a motor of the "spiritual convergence of the borderland with the center" (*dukhovn[oe] sbliuzhen[ie] okrainy s tsentrom*) only if it took on such a Russian character.<sup>50</sup> In these formulations, non-Russians within the Empire were assigned to the status of cultural helots, deprived of institutions of (higher) education.

Neither the governor-general nor the overseer of the educational district shared such radical judgments. When Warsaw's university reopened in 1908, little of its pre-revolutionary design had changed. The university was explicitly announced as "imperial," and as such, it was open to all imperial subjects regardless of descent and was by no means meant to be a "Russian university" in an exclusive ethnic sense.<sup>51</sup>

Within these debates a great deal of disagreement between the imperial bureaucracy and more radical voices from the Russian community surfaced. These frictions became even more apparent during the electoral campaign launched for the Russian seat from Warsaw in the Third State Duma.

48 Vladimir A. Istomin, *Natsional'no-patrioticheskie shkoly* (Moscow, 1907), 5: "O natsionalizatsii gosudarstvennoi shkol'noi sistemy." See also: Vladimir A. Istomin, *Svoi i chuzhie vrugi pravoslavno-russkogo dela v guberniakh Privislinskogo kraia* (Moscow, 1907); N. A. Vetskii, *K voprosu o Varshavskom Universite* (Warsaw, 1906).

49 "Pochemu v Varshave dolzhen byt' russkii universitet?", anonymous polemic, without dating, around 1908, Department of Handwritings, *Rossiiskaia Gosudarstvennaia Biblioteka*, f. 44, op. 14, d. 3, l. 10.

50 See *Varshavskii Universitet i byvskaia Varshavskaia Glavnaia Shkola* (St. Petersburg, 1908), 27.

51 Without question, Russian as the state language would remain the *lingua franca* of teaching. Due to this and other reasons, the number of Catholic students remained rather low in the following years. See in detail Rolf, *Rzady imperialne w Kraju Nadwiślańskim*, 333–43.

During the elections, the nationalist “Russian Society in Warsaw” nominated philologist Sergei N. Alekseev as its candidate. Alekseev was infamous for his polonophobic views, and the *Russkoe obshchestvo* left no doubt that they shared his beliefs. In their founding charter, the society already stated that it intended to present all “true Russians” in Warsaw. While anyone regardless of “sex, profession, or estate” could become a member, only “full-blooded Russians” (*polnopravnyi russkii*) were invited to join the club.<sup>52</sup> The *Russkoe obshchestvo* called the governor-general to finally “protect the national and cultural interests of the Russian people in the Vistula lands.” From this perspective, “strengthening the Russian state in the province” was narrowed down to “a fight for the well-being of Russia and its great people” (*bor’ba na blago Rossii i ee velikogo naroda*).<sup>53</sup> The empire was redefined as serving only “true Russians,” and the government’s main goal was reduced to privileging the “national interests of Russians and all those who carry this idea [of protecting the Russian cause] in the borderlands.”<sup>54</sup>

Opinion leaders of the *Russkoe obshchestvo* propagated extreme visions of nationalizing the empire that had little in common with the notions of the “Russian cause” shared by most of the upper bureaucracy throughout the nineteenth century. In Skalon’s view, such demands laid waste to the fragile stability he had been able to establish in Poland. The governor-general, thus, refrained from supporting the Russian nationalists during the election campaign. Even though Prime Minister Stolypin sympathized with the *Russkoe obshchestvo*, Skalon decided to opt for an open confrontation and granted his political patronage to the Octobrist Party. He advised the local state newspaper *Varshavskii Dnevnik* to campaign for their

52 Paragraph III, Artikel 5 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2606, kart. 5 (Project of founding charter of the *Russkoe obshchestvo v Varshave*, May 1906).

53 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2606 (1906–1910), kart. 8–9v (Letter of the *Russkoe obshchestvo v g. Varshave* to Skalon, February 3, 1906), here kart. 9. See also *Predvybornye izvestiia Russkogo obshchestva v Varshave*, No. 1 (August 20 [September 12], 1907), 1. On Alekseev, see *Predvybornye izvestiia Russkogo obshchestva v Varshave*, no. 3 (September 14 [27], 1907), 2; *Obzor deiatel’nostei Russkogo okrainnogo obshchestva za 1910* (St. Petersburg, 1911), 33.

54 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 9012, kart. 110b [Program of the *Russkoe obshchestvo*]; AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2606, kart. 8 (Charter of the *Russkoe obshchestvo*, October 17, 1905); *Ob avtonomii Pol’shi*, Izdanie Soiuzna 17-go oktiabria (Moscow, 1906), 2–7.

candidate although the *Russkoe obshchestvo* and Stolypin raised bitter complaints about this.<sup>55</sup> In the end, Skalon's political engagement failed to obstruct Alekseev's sweeping victory. Out of the election delegates, 62 percent voted for the nationalist candidate; therefore, they decided to send a polonophobic extremist to the State Duma, who, at the same time, was a bitter opponent of the highest state representative in Warsaw.<sup>56</sup>

This conflict demonstrates quite clearly how divided political attitudes and perceptions were between members of the Russian community and the imperial bureaucracy. The following years did not ease tensions. In this period, petitions, anonymous letters of complaint, and denunciations against local officials flooded central institutions. Such accusations of "betrayal of the Russian cause" further distanced the Russian political public from local state structures and their representatives. This also fueled a process of radicalization in which opinion leaders of the Russian diaspora questioned the multi-ethnic composition of the tsarist administration and the supra-national consensus to which most of the officials in the Kingdom still subscribed. The "Russian cause" that had served as a semantic link between the central bureaucracy and the Russian community had now turned into a highly controversial issue. Russian nationalists had successfully stripped the slogan of its original meaning—Russian statehood<sup>57</sup>—and had narrowed it down to a matter of Russian exclusivity. In this understanding, the powerful political phrase could be used to demand guarantees of Russian superiority in all aspects of political and social life.<sup>58</sup>

Skalon's openness toward new forms of collaboration with Polish society specifically evoked anxieties of further marginalization among ma-

55 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 9012, kart. 101 (Telegram from Stolypin to Skalon, September 13, 1907); AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 9012, kart. 103–104v (Open letter of the electoral delegates to Skalon, October 8, 1907). "Neskol'ko slov po povodu iskazheniia faktov v dvukh stat'iakh Varshavskogo Dnevnika," in *Predvybornye izvestiia Russkogo obshchestva*, no. 1 (August 30, 1907), 1.

56 *Predvybornye izvestiia Russkogo obshchestva*, no. 6 (October 16, 1907), 3.

57 GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 97, ll. 25–27 (Notes of the Warsaw Governor-general Imeretinskii, January 12, 1899).

58 See, e.g., Vladimir A. Istomin, *Svoi i chuzbie vragi pravoslavno-russkogo dela v guberniakh Privislinskogo kraia* (Moscow, 1907); Vladimir G. Smorodinov, *Popechitel' Varshavskogo uchebnogo okruga Aleksandr L'vovich Apukhtin* (St. Petersburg, 1912).

ny Russians. Polish calls for cultural autonomy were perceived as essential threats to one's own (privileged) status. Recent social and economic developments had increased such fears, as Polish civil society proved to be quite successful in overcoming the temporary crisis caused by the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905. Already during the 1890s and again after 1907, the province's urban bourgeoisie prospered, and its financial and cultural potentials became apparent in Warsaw in particular. With institutions like the Polytechnic Institute, the Zachęta National Gallery of Art, the Philharmonic, or the Wawelberg housing project, the philanthropy of affluent citizens transformed the face of the city and bore witness not only to the wealth of the Polish-Jewish bourgeoisie but also to the scope of the "enabling policy" practiced by governor-generals like Imeretinskii and Skalon. The failure of the Russian community to build a "Russian House" in the center of Warsaw was an awkward showcase of one's own weakness. And there were other incidents at the time that pointed in the same direction: "cultural events" in desolate locations, the inability to collect sufficient funds to build a monument to Stolypin, the low academic prestige of the "Russian" university in Warsaw, and/or the poor appearance of the "Russian public" during celebrations of the anniversary of Borodino. All of this threatened to turn local Russians into an object of mockery.<sup>59</sup>

Such everyday experiences of one's own social and economic marginalization frustrated members of the Russian community who saw themselves as the primary representatives of the empire. This frustration was directed against local state authorities who seemingly did not intervene to elevate Russians to their entitled status. Some of the members of the Russian diaspora hoped to mobilize support from central state institutions. In par-

59 For instance, during a Pushkin lecture convened by the Russian community, a number of guests fainted because the rented room proved to be much too small and the air too sticky. AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 2607, kart. 5–5v (Letter of the organizers to the governor-general, January 31, 1906). On the Borodino-celebrations and the monument to Stolypin that was never erected, see AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 1339, kart. 126 (Minutes of the committee for building a monument to Stolypin, 1912–13); GARF, f. 726, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 100–101 (Report of Warsaw's chief of police, July 25, 1912). On Zachęta et al., see GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 94, ll. 11–14 (Report of the Warsaw governor-general, January 12, 1898); AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 7381, kart. 1 (Letter of the Warsaw governor-general, November 23, 1907). See also Beylin, *W Warszawie w latach 1900–1914*, 7–36; Wiercińska, *Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych*.



ticular, Prime Minister Stolypin appeared to be a true advocate of "Russian interests" in the peripheries as he had made it clear that the state could not possibly be "an impartial arbitrator in the Russian and Polish competition" but needed to enforce Russian primacy there.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, Stolypin interfered in local affairs several times by supporting the claims of the *Russkoe obshchestvo*.<sup>61</sup> When anonymous accusations against Skalon and other local officials grew louder, Stolypin decided to send a senator revision to the Kingdom. In 1910, Senator Dmitrii Neidgart headed the investigation, and in the following year, he published a devastating evaluation of the condition of Skalon's local administration. The report echoed many of the claims of the Russian community and ennobled some of the core projects of the local Russian nationalists, like building a "Russian House." Neidgart adopted their view that the imperial administration's first and foremost duty was to shelter and promote ethnic Russians. In his report, the senator from St. Petersburg subscribed to an ethnic understanding of the "Russian cause."<sup>62</sup>

From there it was only a small step toward viewing the loyalties of the empire's multi-ethnic officialdom with growing doubts. When the young army officer Alexei Brusilov was stationed in the Warsaw military district, he was convinced he had found "German networks" at work in a local administration headed by a Baltic German.<sup>63</sup> Such conspiracy theories may serve as proof of how strongly certain groups of "Young Turks" in the high-

60 Cited in Manfred Hagen, "Das Nationalitätenproblem Russlands in den Verhandlungen der III. Duma 1907–1911" (PhD diss., Universität Göttingen, 1964), 59–61. See also Abraham Ascher, *P. A. Stolypin: The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 303–20; Aleksandra Bakhturina, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii: Gosudarstvennoe upravlenie i natsional'naia politika v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914–1917 gg.)* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), 16–17; Mary Schaeffer Conroy, *Peter Arkadevich Stolypin: Practical Politics in Late Tsarist Russia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1976); Alexandra Korros, *A Reluctant Parliament: Stolypin, Nationalism, and the Politics of the Russian Imperial State Council, 1906–1911* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); Peter Waldron, "Stolypin and Finland," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 63, no. 1 (1985): 41–55.

61 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 9012, kart. 101 (Telegram of the minister of the interior to Skalon, September 13, 1907).

62 See: Dmitrii B. Neidgart, *Vsepoddanneishii otchet o proizvedennoi v 1910 godu po vysochaishemu poveleniiu Gofmeisterom Dvora Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Senatorom Neidgartom revizii pravitel'stvennykh i obshchestvennykh ustanovlenii Privislinskogo kraia*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1911). On *Russkii dom*, see vol. 1, p. 73–94.

63 See Aleksei A. Brusilov, *Moi vospominaniia* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), 50–53.



er bureaucracy and army were inclined toward ideas of Russian ethnic nationalism and subscribed to concepts of “imperial nation”-building.<sup>64</sup>

The Prime Minister in the capital may not have shared all of the inherent radicalism of such opinions, but still he was regularly playing “the national card” when it came to bolstering his position of power. In the case of Skalon, he tried to take advantage of the ethnic conflicts in Warsaw in order to promote his relative: Senator Dmitrii Neidgart was his brother-in-law, and it was an open secret that he had ambitions to replace the Warsaw governor-general. Accusations of a “betrayal of the Russian cause” served as a strong argument in this attempt to seize this influential position.<sup>65</sup> For Skalon, this meant that he could hardly ignore the local Russian community despite their marginality both in economic terms and population size. Representatives of this small group knew all too well that they could exert pressure on the governor-general through central authorities in the imperial capital. To some of the nationalist activists in Warsaw’s Russian community, even this kind of support from St. Petersburg seemed weak. They sought a much broader political mobilization based on nationality policies that would go beyond the framework of the state apparatus. This became apparent when some of the protagonists from Warsaw sought to establish ties with other local centers of Russian nationalists. On the one hand, they

64 See, in particular, Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism*, 211–16; Berger and Miller, “Building Nations in and with Empires,” 2–7. Also: Dietrich Geyer, “Nation und Nationalismus in Rußland,” in *Nation und Gesellschaft in Deutschland*, ed. Manfred Hettling and Paul Nolte (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1996), 100–13, here, 103–104; Kappeler, “The Ambiguities of Russification,” 294; Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, “The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, ‘National’ Identity, and Theories of Empire,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald G. Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23–66, here, 54–55; Wayne Dowler, *Russia in 1913* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 172–73; Joshua Sanborn, “Family, Fraternity, and Nation-Building in Russia, 1905–1925,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald G. Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 93–110, here, 94–95; Charles Steinwedel, “To Make a Difference: The Category of Ethnicity in Late Imperial Russian Politics, 1861–1917,” in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, ed. David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 67–86, here, 76–77; Weeks, *Nation and State*, 193–98.

65 See also: Łukasz Chimiak, *Gubernatorzy rosyjscy w Królestwie Polskim 1863–1915: Szkic do portretu zbiorowego* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Funna, 1999), 74–75; L. E. Gorizontov, “Výbor nositel’ia ‘russkogo nachala’ v pol’skoi politike Rossiiskoi imperii, 1831–1917,” in *Poliaki i russkie v glazakh drug druga*, ed. V. A. Khorev (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Indrik, 2000), 107–16, here, 110–11.

tried to connect directly, inviting guest speakers from Kiev or other places; on the other, they utilized trans-local organizations such as the Russian Borderland Society (*Russkoe okrainnoe obshchestvo*). In addition, they coordinated publications in order to place "borderland topics" at the top of the agenda of contemporary debates. In Warsaw, the activists of the *Russkoe obshchestvo* around Alekseev effectively collaborated with the Russian Borderland Society. In Platon Kulakovskii, a professor at the Imperial University in Warsaw and one of the most prominent authors of the Library of Russia's Borderlands (*Biblioteka Okrain Rossii*, a series of book publications), Alekseev found a congenial fellow campaigner against alleged "Polish demands."<sup>66</sup> In his writings, Kulakovskii reduced the empire to a mere handmaid of ethnic Russian claims for superiority. No wonder the *Russkoe obshchestvo* put him on the short list of suggested readings.<sup>67</sup>

The most important forum for influencing public debates and, in fact, shaping imperial policies, of course, was the State Duma. After their triumphant victory in the elections for the Third Duma, the "Russian Society" managed to defend their seat in 1912. Once again, Alekseev was sent to Tauride Palace to represent the Russian electoral curia of Warsaw. Here he was not a nationalist loner from the fringes of the empire. After 1907, Russian nationalists in general dominated the Duma. Within this heterogeneous group, delegates from the *okrainy*-provinces were highly over-represented. Russian nationalists from these borderland territories not only tended to be more radical with regard to their calls for discriminating against other nationalities and in terms of their antisemitism. They were

66 See, e.g., Platon A. Kulakovskii, *Poliaki i vopros ob avtonomii Pol'sbi* (St. Petersburg, 1906); Kulakovskii, *Pol'skii vopros v proshlom i nastoiashchem*, in *Biblioteka Okrain Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1907); Kulakovskii, *Russkii russkim*, 5 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1907–1913). See also Aleksandr A. Bashmakov, *Pamiat Platona Andreevicha Kulakovskogo* (Petrograd, 1915). See also D. A. Kotsiubinskii, *Russkii natsionalizm v nachale XX stoletia* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), 30–37; Iu. I. Kir'ianov, *Russkoe Sobranie 1900–1917* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 53–54. On the Russian nationalists' circle in Kiev, see Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), in particular chap. 7; Faith Hillis, "Making and Breaking the Russian Empire: The Case of Kiev's Shul'gin Family," in *Eliten im Vielvölkerreich: Imperiale Biographien in Russland und Österreich–Ungarn (1850–1918)/Elites and Empire: Imperial Biographies in Russia and Austria–Hungary (1850–1918)*, ed. Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 178–98.

67 See: *Predvybornyie izvestiia Russkogo obshchestva*, no. 4 (September 23, 1907), 4.

also quite successful in placing “*okrainy*-topics”—like language regulations for the polyphonic peripheries or, generally speaking, the “national questions”—on the political agenda of the Empire writ large. In fact, individuals originating from these borderlands shaped the programmatic positions of both the moderate right and the more radical nationalists to such an extent that we can say that men of the periphery politically usurped the right wing of the imperial parliament in St. Petersburg.<sup>68</sup>

In addition, activists with a background in the western provinces figured prominently in the attempts to create a unified political force within the divided Russian nationalist camp. Warsaw’s *Russkoe obshchestvo* worked actively in the Third Duma to establish an empire-wide Russian-national party.<sup>69</sup> In the Fourth Duma, the united “Nationalists” even temporarily surpassed the Octobrists, constituting the largest faction in the Tauride Palace. Since both factions were represented almost equally by politicians from the western regions, the Fourth Duma was not only a “duma of lackeys,” but a “duma of the *okraina*” as well.

The fact that in Russia’s political discourse, the multifaceted borderlands often were treated as one kind of *okraina* already demonstrates how radical activists coming from the margins of the empire successfully “provincialized” the metropolitan political landscape. In fostering a collective singular of “the *okraina*,” they promoted the notion of a basic dualism structuring imperial space. This binary model separated the *okraina*-regions from the “Russian core lands” (*korennnaia russkaia zemlia*) and gave birth to calls for a consistent and standardized *okraina*-policy.<sup>70</sup>

While before 1900, the diversity of the peripheries, their languages, cultures, and people—and thus the fragmented nature of the empire—was

68 See Hagen, “Das Nationalitätenproblem Russlands”; Manfred Hagen, *Die Entfaltung politischer Öffentlichkeit in Rußland 1906–1914* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982), 227–34.

69 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 9012, kart. 114–114v (Report of the assistant of the Warsaw governor-general, September 5, 1907).

70 See, e.g., A. N. Druzhynin, *Rossia i ee okraina* (Kiev, 1903). To some extent, this dichotomy was older with a plurality of borderland territories opposed to the “core of Russian statehood” (*osnovnoe iadro russkoi gosudarstvennosti*). AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 6469, kart. 77–78v (Letter of the Warsaw Governor-General Gurko to the chief of Moscow’s municipal administration, May 1, 1893), here kart. 77ob; GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 94, l. 58 (Decrees of the Committee of Ministers, February 17, 1898).

widely acknowledged, Russian nationalists now strove to establish a perception of the borderlands as a singular larger entity in political discourse. In their view, the bitter fight for the "Russian cause" was the one common challenge in all the peripheries. It was the conflict between a small number of local Russians with the indigenous majority of the non-Russian populations they saw as the overarching feature of such diverse regions like Bessarabia, the Western and Baltic provinces, Finland, and the Kingdom of Poland. Such dualistic concepts of imperial territories made it easy to call for a centralized borderland policy that would have diminished the influence of local state representatives like governor-generals.<sup>71</sup>

Consequently, in 1912, the nationalist Duma-faction launched an initiative to eliminate the position of the Warsaw governor-general altogether. This maneuver was not only driven by the mutual hostility between Alekseev and Skalon, but also by the nationalists' essential concept of *okraina* as a larger borderland territory that needed to be governed by central institutions without too many intermediate officeholders on the spot.<sup>72</sup>

Along with their ability to shape the agenda, nationalist Duma-delegates were a crucial political force when it came to obstructing reform projects that would have granted extended rights or participatory institutions to the non-Russian populations of the borderlands. The way in which the Council of Ministers' scheme to introduce municipal self-government in the Kingdom of Poland fell apart due to the nationalists' strict opposition in the Duma highlights their influence as a "spoiling factor" or destructive force. In this constellation, the St. Petersburg government could only

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71 See, e.g., Anton S. Budilovich, *Vopros ob okrainakh Rossii, v svyazi s teoriei samoopredeleniia narodnostei i trebovaniiami gosudarstvennogo edinstva* (St. Petersburg, 1906); Grigorii A. Evreinov, *Natsional'nye voprosy na inorodcheskikh okrainakh Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1908). On the impact of imperial biographies on such dualistic notions of empire, see: Malte Rolf, "Beamte in Bewegung: Zu Strukturen und Akteuren imperialer Herrschaft im ausgehenden Zarenreich," in *Migrationen im späten Habsburger-Imperium*, ed. Carl Bethke (Tübingen: TVV Verlag, 2019), 56–86.

72 See "Zakonodatel'noe predlozhenie ob uprazhnenii dol'zhnosti Varshavskogo General-Gubernatora" (February 29, 1912), in *Prilozheniia k stenograficheskim otchetam Gosudarstvennoi Dumy. III sozyv, ses. V*, vol. 3, no. 374 (St. Petersburg, 1912).

promulgate reforms in the peripheries and undermine the privileges of local Russian populations there only by executive decrees under article 87.<sup>73</sup>

All tsarist officials within the state apparatus, be they representatives of central or local authority, had to consider this political deadlock and its implications for imperial management. How much this new mode of permanent, institutionalized confrontation shaped the policies fostered by the governor-general in Warsaw still requires investigation.

### **Between Nationalizing and Managing the Empire: Tsarist Administration in the Kingdom of Poland After 1905**

To clarify a crucial issue straight away: the nationalists' attempts to remove Skalon from his position utterly failed. Skalon politically survived numerous denunciations, intrigues orchestrated by Stolypin and his entourage, and the kind of impeachment launched by delegates of the Fourth Duma. Until his death in 1914, Skalon remained the highest tsarist representative on the Vistula.

Still, Skalon had to react to the challenges of a shattered alliance with the local Russian community. Some of his executive decrees indicate that after 1910, the "Russian cause" seemed to return to the top of the governor-general's agenda. Pressured by Russian nationalists, local authorities now re-launched policies to strengthen Russian influence in the periphery.

First, the nationalization of the Warsaw–Vienna Railway Company in 1912 was a bitter blow to the Polish *Inteligencja* because it entailed the loss of large number of jobs for Polish technical experts, engineers, and administrative directors. Soon tsarist authorities also called for a reduction of Catholic employees in the postal and telegraph service sector. These branches of government were now classified as areas of strategic importance in the borderland region, and efforts to increase the number of staff members of "Russian and Orthodox decent" were considered.<sup>74</sup>

73 On the project of elective city government, see Weeks, *Nation and State*, 160–71.

74 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 5076, kart. 1–3v (Letter of the minister of the interior to the Warsaw governor-general, May 21, 1914).

To make matters worse, the bureaucracy proceeded with further limiting Polish self-organization in other respects. After 1910, conflicts between state authorities and the Polish-run institution of voluntary fire brigades intensified. Rumors circulated that the government might take over the organization, which was of tremendous symbolic significance to Polish society not only because it was an important association for local community-building, but also because it was the only occupation that allowed Poles to wear uniforms in public spaces. Russian nationalists had long called for a state take-over of this last bastion of Polish symbolic sovereignty. After 1910, this option seemed to be more realistic than ever.<sup>75</sup>

This was only a footnote in comparison to the debate revolving around the question of whether a separate Kholm Province should be created, and whether these territories should be extracted from the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>76</sup> The older "Kholm-question" became a heated dispute when a law intending the formation of an autonomous province was discussed in the State Duma. In the years 1911–12, an illegal "Committee of National Mourning" in Warsaw organized a series of symbolic protests. All of this was in vain: with the support of the government in St. Petersburg and the nationalists in the Duma, the formation of a Kholm Province was decreed in June 1912, and already during this year, far reaching measures of Russification were enforced in the region.<sup>77</sup>

75 AGAD, PomGGW, sygn. 1212, kart. 44–45 (Letter of the chief of police to the assistant of the Warsaw governor-general, June 8, 1910); kart. 75–75v. See: Stanisław Wiech, "Działalność ochotniczych straży ogniowych w Królestwie Polskim (1864–1914): Droga do emancypacji narodowej czy sposób na rusyfikację?," in *Życie jest wszędzie... Wsiudu zbizn'... Ruchy społeczne w Polsce i Rosji do II wojny światowej*, ed. Anna Brus (Warsaw: Neriton, 2005), 277–91.

76 See Weeks, *Nation and State*, chap. 9.

77 See the annual reports of the chief of police in 1911 and 1912 in *Raporty Warszawskich Oberpolicmajstrów (1892–1913)*, eds. Halina Kiepuska and Zbigniew Pustuła (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 1971), doc. 19, p. 113, and doc. 20, p. 119. AGAD, Warszawski Komitet Cenzury, sygn. 21, kart. 512–514v (Report on the Polish press, 1911). The "Kholm-question" evoked a large compendium of publications and polemics. On the Polish side, see Liubomir Dymsha (Lubomir Dymsha), *Kholmiskii vopros* (St. Petersburg, 1910); W. Reymont, *Z ziemi chełmskiej: Wyrażenia i notatki* (Warsaw, 1911). On the Russian side: *Varshavskie besedy i rechi Arkhiepiskopa Nikolaia (1908–1909)* (St. Petersburg, no year); *Kholmiskaia Rus' i Poliaki*, anonymous (St. Petersburg, 1907). See also Ascher, *Stolypin*, 320–22; Edward Chmielewski, *The Polish Question in the Russian Duma* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), 111–37; Klaus Kindler, *Die Cholmer Frage 1905–1918* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1990); Kocubinskii, *Russkii natsionalizm*, 289–91; Weeks, *Nation and State*, 172–92.

Finally, the list of state activities pointing at a new emphasis on the “Russian cause” would be incomplete if the inauguration of the Aleksandr Nevskii Cathedral in Warsaw remained unmentioned. The project itself was much older, dating back to the time of Gurko. Over the years and due to the slow pace of construction work, most of Warsaw’s inhabitants probably got used to this seemingly eternal building site in the center of the city. The opening of the cathedral in 1913 and the pompous celebrations accompanying it still came as a shock. The massive crowd of Orthodox churchgoers, the ringing of the huge bells in the bell tower—by far the tallest building in the metropolis—and the monstrosity of the golden cupola that “sparkled like polished Cossack-boots in the sun” made it clear to everyone that Russian-Orthodox hegemony overshadowed the old Polish capital.<sup>78</sup>

They reacted in symbolic forms of protest: for example, when in the same year, the opening of the third Vistula bridge was scheduled and tsarist authorities planned to have an Orthodox priest bless the viaduct, Polish representatives who had been invited to the event decided to boycott it. Granting symbolic priority to Orthodoxy through an infrastructural project, which, in Polish eyes, the community had paid for through a municipal tax, was unacceptable to them.<sup>79</sup> The imperial Polish encounter again seemed to be overshadowed by mutual affronts and mistrust.

In overview, several legal initiatives, administrative orders and symbolic events between 1910 and 1914 seem to point in the direction of a new, coordinated wave of discriminatory policies against the local non-Russian population. So, the question may be posed: was there a “national paradigm shift” within the state bureaucracy on the eve of World War I?

The answer to this is less clear than it might seem at first sight. No doubt, even the higher echelons of the tsarist administration were infiltrated with a degree of ethnic Russo-centrism that had been rather foreign to these mi-

<sup>78</sup> Cited in Paszkiewicz, “Russian Orthodox Cathedral,” 69. See also: Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów*; Paszkiewicz, *W służbie Imperium Rosyjskiego*; Przeciszewski, *Warszawa: Prawosławie i rosyjskie dziedzictwo*; Przygodzki, *Russians in Warsaw*, 206–31; Rolf, “Aleksandr-Nevskij-Kathedrale.”

<sup>79</sup> APW, t. 24 (WWO), sygn. 263, kart. 1–6 (Report on the social and political situation in the Kingdom, 1913–1914, January 14, 1914), here kart. 5v.



lieus in earlier times. Stolypin's style of policy making provided a role model in this respect, regardless of whether he was utilizing Russo-nationalism as a strategic tool in the political bargaining process or whether he was indeed convinced of the need to bolster Russian superiority in the empire.<sup>80</sup>

In contradiction to this, we can trace the strong reservations toward a "Russians first" agenda in the local halls of power. In Warsaw, with Skalon as the highest tsarist representative in office, we find a particular resentment toward interventionist policies aimed at nationalizing the empire. Consider, for example, the case of the state's takeover of the Warsaw-Vienna railway in 1912. Although feared by Poles, it was not actually accompanied by major staff changes. Even after the government seized control of the company, the amount of Catholic employees remained extremely high at almost 96 percent. Neither did Skalon push strong Russification measures in the postal and telegraph administration although central institutions in St. Petersburg urged him to do so. In 1914, the percentage of Catholic Poles working in these "strategic branches" of the state apparatus was still nearly 70 percent.<sup>81</sup>

On top of this, the governor-general avoided the conflict with Polish society that any nationalization of the voluntary fire department would have initiated. This may have been largely due to practicality and the sheer fact that the state depended on the financial, infrastructural, and personal support from Polish society in organizing a fire protection and rescue system. But Skalon, no doubt, also refrained from escalating the issue with fragile political stability in the Kingdom in mind. Thus, the fire department remained a Polish voluntary business until the War, despite bitter protests from the Russian community.

Even the "Kholm-question" spotlights the differences in political priorities that existed between the local and central authorities. While Stolypin

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80 See: Geyer, "Nation und Nationalismus in Rußland," 103–04; Alexei Miller, "The Empire and the Nation in the Imagination of Russian Nationalism," in *Imperial Rule*, ed. Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2004), 9–45; Suny and Martin, "The Empire Strikes Out" 54–55. On Stolypin, see Ascher, *Stolypin*.

81 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 5076, kart. 9 (Attachment to the letter of the minister of the interior to the Warsaw governor-general, May 21, 1914).



strongly supported the creation of a separated and Russified province, Skalon openly opposed it. The Governor-general most likely was motivated by a fundamental dissent toward all attempts to diminish his power. The new province would have been removed from the “Vistula land,” and thus from Skalon’s administration. But he was probably also aware of the highly problematic implications the formation of a Kholm Province would have for maintaining “order” in the Kingdom. Because of this, Skalon tried to prevent the creation of a Kholm Province until the very end.<sup>82</sup>

Skalon’s hesitancy to transform imperial management into “Russians first” policies becomes most evident in the way he continued to distance himself from the nationalists’ milieu within the local Russian community. While the governor-general ostentatiously granted logistic and symbolic patronage to dignified institutions like the Russian Charity Society (*Russkoe blagotvoritel’noe obshchestvo*), he avoided any form of contact with nationalists’ organizations like the Russian Society or the Russian Assembly in Warsaw (*Russkoe sobranie v Varshave*). During the Duma elections of 1912, Skalon again openly favored the Octobrists’ candidate—in vain.<sup>83</sup>

On the other side, Skalon continued to offer concessions, albeit limited, to Polish society after 1910. He was openly in favor of introducing municipal self-government to the Kingdom of Poland; he enabled a widespread network of privately run Polish schools; and he ceded space to a very vivid public discussion on “cultural autonomy” for the Polish provinces.<sup>84</sup> In the heady days of “symbolic policies,”<sup>85</sup> it was often symbolic actions that mat-

82 See Kindler, *Die Cholmer Frage*, 170–76. On the general skepticism of imperial officials toward redrawing of district borders based on ethnic criteria, see: Darius Staliunas, “Territorialising Ethnicity in the Russian Empire? The Case of the Augustav/Suvalki Province,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2011): 145–66; Edward C. Thaden, “The Russian Government,” in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914*, ed. Edward C. Thaden (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 15–110, here, 65.

83 On the close ties between the Russian Charity Society and the Warsaw governor-general, see Przygodzki, *Russians in Warsaw*, 113–32.

84 See: Edmund Staszyński, *Polityka oświatowa caratu w Królestwie Polskim: Od powstania styczniowego do I wojny światowej* (Warsaw, 1968), 207–209 and 238–40.

85 On the crucial importance of such politics of symbols, see Murray J. Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967). See also Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky, eds., *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 2009); Andreas Dörner, *Politischer Mythos und symbolische Politik. Sinnstiftung durch symbolische Formen am Beispiel des Hermannsmythos* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995);

tered most: thus, in his efforts to maintain a certain *modus vivendi*, he supported the local initiative to erect a monument in honor of Frédéric Chopin in Warsaw. In 1912, the governor-general approved the location for the projected statue. The terrain chosen was highly significant: the monument was supposed to be unveiled in Ujazdowski park, precisely the spot Skalon denied to the Russian community for building a "Russian House." No wonder that Russians from Warsaw again sent complaints to the minister of the interior, lamenting "with great bitterness" that they were witnessing the local administration giving way to Polish "national requests" (*natsional'noe domogatel'stvo*) by providing "state territory" for the purpose of "elevating a Polish national composer."<sup>86</sup>

It is no pure coincidence that the proposal of the Duma's nationalist faction to eliminate the governor-general-position in the Kingdom dates to this very year. Besides their institutional reasoning, the initiative also sought to discredit Skalon personally, as well as his style of imperial management. Probably never before had a tsarist official and Polish society been brothers-in-arms as much as during these days. Confronted with the nationalists' attacks on the special legal and administrative status of the Kingdom, Poles unanimously opposed this proposal. By 1912, the much-accurSED institution of a governor-general had turned into an agency that guaranteed the distinctiveness of the Kingdom and its symbolic and ad-

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Gerhard Göhler, "Symbolische Politik – Symbolische Praxis: Zum Symbolverständnis in der deutschen Politikwissenschaft," in *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?*, ed. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 2005), 57–70; Manfred Hettling and Paul Nolte, eds., *Bürgerliche Feste: Symbolische Formen politischen Handels im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); Herfried Münkler, "Die Visibilität der Macht und die Strategien der Machtvisualisierung," in *Macht der Öffentlichkeit – Öffentlichkeit der Macht*, ed. Gerhard Göhler (Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995), 213–30; George L. Mosse, *Nationalisierung der Massen. Politische Symbolik und Massenbewegungen von den Befreiungskriegen bis zum Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1993); Jürgen Osterhammel, "Symbolpolitik und imperiale Integration: Das britische Empire im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Die Wirklichkeit der Symbole: Grundlagen der Kommunikation in historischen und gegenwärtigen Gesellschaften*, ed. Rudolf Schlögl, Bernhard Giesen, and Jürgen Osterhammel (Konstanz: UVK Univ-Verlag, 2004), 395–421; Rüdiger Voigt, "Mythen, Rituale und Symbole in der Politik," in *Symbole und Rituale des Politischen: Ost- und Westeuropa im Vergleich*, ed. Andreas Pribersky and Berthold Unfried (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 55–72.

86 AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 7031, kart. 38–39 (Letter of the minister of the interior to the Warsaw governor-general, June 13, 1912).

ministrative distance to inner-Russia. Maintaining the institutional *status quo* was now in the interest of most Polish opinion leaders, and not those of the local Russian community.<sup>87</sup>

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All the incidents mentioned above show that, with regard to the local state authorities in the Western provinces, we can hardly identify a paradigm shift around 1910. Even in the final years before the First World War, the governor-general stayed faithful to the idea of imperial policies based on moderate reconciliation with Polish society. Nationalism aiming at the creation of an imperial nation and granting local Russians further privileges did not become the political policy line of his administration. In fact, the escalating radicalism of some members of the Russian community was triggered precisely by the official's reluctance to embrace nationalizing strategies.

How can we explain this caution and, in some cases, even rejection of such claims? Skalon's Baltic German roots might help us understand why he obstructed nationalizing policies. He was certainly aware of the fact that the Great Russian nationalist vision of the empire left little room for non-Russian officials. Nationalist endeavors threatened the pillars of the established multi-ethnic bureaucracy, of which Skalon was representative.<sup>88</sup>

But he also saw that in the medium and long term, nationalist policies would destabilize the multi-ethnic empire, particularly on the periphery. As a representative of the highest and most elite ranks of a state bureaucracy that was ethnically quite heterogeneous, Skalon advocated a different form of imperial governance. He promoted a political order that rested on strict social and estate hierarchies, but at the same time built on dynastic loy-

87 See the memories of Stanisław Bukowiecki, published under the pseudonym Drogosław: *Rosja w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1914), 29–30. For more detail, see Kindler, *Die Cholmer Frage 1905–1918*, 170–76.

88 For a very similar perspective, see, e.g., Gustav Emil Mannerheim's views on the empire's "national question." See Bradley D. Woodworth, "The Imperial Career of Gustaf Mannerheim. Mobility and Identity of a Non-Russian within the Russian Empire," in *Eliten im Vielvölkerreich: Imperiale Biographien in Russland und Österreich–Ungarn (1850–1918)/Elites and Empire: Imperial Biographies in Russia and Austria–Hungary (1850–1918)*, ed. Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 135–54.

alty that embraced all ethnic and religious groups in the empire. From his standpoint, nationalist agitators posed not only a threat to peace and stability in the borderlands, where ethnic Russians constituted just a small minority. They were also a danger to the fundamental estate-based status quo of an empire where, according to the 1897 census, Russian was the mother tongue of only 53 percent of the noble elite.<sup>89</sup>

Like many other higher state officials, Skalon was guided by estate-orientated concepts of social order. In conservative institutions like the emperor's court, the Senate or the upper echelons of the state administration, noblemen maintained a corporative loyalty over ethnic-national frictions. It is not surprising that in such socially exclusive circles, a skepticism toward the "plebeian" elements of mass politics and the democratic implications of nationalistic demagoguery was widespread.<sup>90</sup> Even in post-revolutionary times, Skalon and other higher officials tried to defend the established arrangements of an estate-based monarchy built on the supranational idea of dynastic loyalty, which was much more socially biased than exclusive in an ethnic sense. Furthermore, they accepted the structural principles of a composite monarchy that allowed a large variety of regional "peculiarities" in legal and administrative terms. In this perspective, a single *okraina* policy propagated by some nationalists not only seemed simplistic; it also neglected the historically rooted distinctiveness of each province, which no higher official dared to question. Skalon's persistent emphasis on the special conditions of the Kingdom was not only a way of securing his own privileged position as governor-general. It rested on the tradition of managing a composite monarchy in which all subunits of the empire were unique. Interventionist nationalizing strategies were not a part of this long-established model of imperial rule.

89 See Jörg Baberowski, "Auf der Suche nach Eindeutigkeit: Kolonialismus und zivilisatorische Mission im Zarenreich und der Sowjetunion," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 47, no. 3 (1999): 482–503, here, 488.

90 See also Geyer, "Nation und Nationalismus in Rußland," 103–104; Kappeler, "The Ambiguities of Russification," 293–95; Geoffrey Hosking, *Russland: Nation und Imperium 1552–1917* (Berlin: Siedler, 2000), 405–406; Suny and Martin, "The Empire Strikes Out," 55; Raphael Utz, *Rußlands unbrauchbare Vergangenheit: Nationalismus und Außenpolitik im Zarenreich* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 257–58; Weeks, *Nation and State*, 194–98.

In sum, the Warsaw governor-general refused to be a tool for nationalist agitators. The fact that the tsar kept him in office until his death in 1914 shows that Skalon's notion of imperial policy found support not only along the Vistula, but in the court in St. Petersburg as well. Facing the nationalists' narrow sense of the "Russian cause" being promoted among ethnic Russians, it is hardly astonishing that Skalon refrained from this leitmotif after 1905. A slogan that used to be equated with imperial-Russian statehood and the tsar's mission in the peripheries now had been opened to the interpretation offered by opinion leaders on the nationalist right. On the eve of the Great War, the old semantic consensus between imperial officialdom and the Russian community in the borderlands evaporated.

### **"Splendid Isolation"? On Future Perspectives of Imperial Management in the Kingdom of Poland**

The conflicts analyzed above demonstrate the twofold isolation that the higher state bureaucracy faced in the periphery of the late tsarist empire. In the Vistula lands, the highest representatives of the government were seen as foreign, and not only by the indigenous, Polish and Jewish population that went about molding their own public sphere after 1905. State authorities became equally alienated from the local Russian community, which increasingly questioned the multi-ethnic nature of the empire. Paired with fatalism about any possibility of progress given the continuing local crisis, this double isolation frustrated many officials.<sup>91</sup>

Imperial management at the time of the Fundamental Laws and the expansion of civil rights was difficult business. After 1906, officials only slowly got used to the formation of autonomous public forums, but they could hardly ignore the blossoming political landscape.<sup>92</sup> In the Kingdom of Po-

91 APW, t. 24 (WWO), sygn. 263, kart. 1–6 (Report on the social and political situation in the Kingdom, 1913–1914, January 14, 1914).

92 In 1907, Stolypin and Skalon—while stripping the Russian electoral curia of "unreliable" voters—communicated frankly about the "ills" of elections because their outcome was not predictable, but rather a "matter of chance." AGAD, KGGW, sygn. 9012, kart. 10–12v (Letter from Stolypin to Skalon, July 17, 1907); kart. 13–15v (Letter of Skalon to Stolypin, July 24, 1907); kart. 101 (Telegram of Stolypin to Skalon, September 13, 1907).

land, they were confronted with the parallel existence of governmental and social spheres.<sup>93</sup> State authorities were not able or willing to overcome their isolation and establish solid grounds for intensified collaboration with the indigenous population. Incidents of cooperation with representatives of Polish society were little more than situational coincidences. This limited the potential of an imperial management that fostered policies that would have had a deeper impact on the local society, a limitation of which some officials were quite aware.<sup>94</sup> In times of rapid modernization and social transformation, state authority without such grounding remained a fragile endeavor. The administration's isolation was paralyzing rather than empowering.

From the perspective of the periphery, tsarist officials in the Kingdom of Poland did not opt for a closer alliance with the local Russian community. Active "imperial nation"-building did not advance to the top of the agenda of the Warsaw governor-general's management strategies. Obviously, Skalon was aware that this would only have been meager compensation for the administration's isolation, and that it would have hardly counterbalanced the loss of a certain cooperativeness among Poles. The local state bureaucracy, thus, refrained from interventionist nationalizing policies, and the coexistence of the imperial government and Russian nationalists in the Kingdom of Poland was strained by numerous tensions and confrontations.

In overview, it seems as if during the final years before the war, the highest representatives of the government had no long-term vision of the future of the empire, beyond simply trying to maneuver through the current troubles. Tsarist authorities retreated to core areas of governance, mainly focusing on the enforcement of "peace and order" in the public sphere while, at

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93 This is well demonstrated by the parallel existence of educational institutions after 1906, with (Russian) state-run schools on one side and Polish private ones on the other. See Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, chap. 5; Rolf, *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland*, chap. 13. Another example is the Polish parallel public sphere: in 1913, Warsaw's distribution network of prints alone counted more than forty bookstores, thirteen libraries, and fourteen shops for periodicals. AGAD, Warszawski Komitet Cenzury, sygn. 29, kart. 5–22 (List of bookstores and libraries in Warsaw, 1913).

94 APW, t. 24 (WWO), sygn. 263, kart. 1–6 (Report on the social and political situation in the Kingdom, 1913–1914, January 14, 1914), here kart. 5v.

the same time, enabling the advancement of social and cultural life in the Kingdom. Protecting the Empire in these provinces followed the guiding principle of border security through military means and the prevention of any form of domestic unrest. It was a reactive and even passive trait that characterized imperial rule in the Kingdom on the eve of the war.<sup>95</sup>

By now, the Kingdom had lost its experimental status for empire-wide “best practices” of imperial management it had been assigned following the January Uprising of 1863–64.<sup>96</sup> After 1906, it turned into a trouble spot, marred by instability and gridlock, with little hope of improvement. While the unquestioned military suzerainty of Russia in its borderlands may have instilled a notion of “eternality” of imperial power in the Kingdom, tsarist authorities still had to face the failure of their original ambitions to further integrate the Kingdom into the empire and to overcome the region’s fundamental foreignness. It had been one of the key features of the Great Reforms of Alexander II to surpass the dysfunctional patchwork of provinces with multifold legal and administrative subsystems, and thus, to forge a composite monarchy into a unified, homogenous empire.<sup>97</sup> In the case of the Kingdom of Poland, this approach had reached a dead end. Imperial management put into practice after 1906 rather contributed to the persistence of the distinctiveness of these provinces.

Opinion leaders within the local Russian community in the Kingdom constantly criticized the authorities’ lack of zeal for fostering nationalizing policies and bolstering the “imperial nation.” Confronted with the admin-

95 See also Weeks, *Nation and State*, 5–8 and 193–98.

96 I have argued elsewhere that St. Petersburg’s decisions to impose some of the administrative principles of inner Russia on the Polish provinces in the aftermath of 1863–64 can also be seen as a test for homogenizing the imperial bureaucracy in the course of the Great Reforms, and thus as an experiment of intensified state building in the empire’s peripheries. See Rolf, “Russifizierung, Depolonisierung oder innerer Staatsaufbau?”; see also Hannes Grandits, Pieter Judson, and Malte Rolf, “Towards a New Quality of Statehood: Bureaucratization and State-Building in Empires and Nation States Before 1914,” in *The Jena History of Twentieth-Century Central and Eastern Europe*, vol. 2: *Statehood*, ed. Sabina Ferhadbegovic, Joachim von Puttkamer, and Włodzimierz Borodziej (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

97 See W. Bruce Lincoln, *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990), 36–60; Grandits, Judson, and Rolf, “Towards a New Quality of Statehood: Bureaucratization and State-Building in Empires and Nation States before 1914.”



istration's reservations toward such an agenda, nationalists even radicalized their "Russians first" demands and further undermined the fragile foundation of the multiethnic empire. In this sense, the continuous tensions in the Kingdom of Poland had a severe impact on the political and mental landscape of the Russian Empire as a whole. Together with other peripheries, the Kingdom had become a "breeding ground" of nationalist radicalization and claims of Russian superiority. Russian nationalists from the fringes of the empire developed extreme apartheid policies that discriminated against the indigenous populations and, thus, contributed greatly to the overall crisis of the borderlands and the late empire as a whole. Contemporaries had already identified such a "feedback loop" between Poland and Russia.<sup>98</sup> In the process of "provincializing the center," the erosion of imperial rule in the *okraina* territories in the long run facilitated the demise of the authority of the monarchy in the capital itself.

Although the future prospects for the empire on the eve of World War I were grim, it would still be misleading to rate the implosion of the fragile imperial system as inevitable. The Russian Empire had proven before that it was able to overcome severe crises—for example, during and after the Revolution of 1905—and that it was able to adjust to new circumstances. It is worth stating that in 1914, the authorities' police and military control over the Kingdom was not the least in doubt. The end of St. Petersburg's long-lasting rule over the Polish provinces came not from within, but was enforced from the outside. Only with the Russian military defeat in August 1915 and the occupation of Warsaw by German troops, had the "Russian cause" on the Vistula become, in fact, a "dying cause."<sup>99</sup>

98 *Politicheskie itogi: Russkaia politika v Pol'she; Oberk Varshavskogo publitsista (Perevod s pol'skogo)*, published anonymously (Leipzig, 1896), 12. The authors also pointed out the danger that the Kingdom might turn into a negative role model for the empire because it was presented as an "incubator of arbitrariness" (*rassadnik proizvola*) that would eventually "infect" the imperial bureaucracy as a whole. See p. 14.

99 GARF, f. 215, op. 1, d. 156, l. 27 (Minister of the Interior on an anonymous letter, July 26, 1908). After reestablishing independence, Poles quickly eliminated some of the most visible remains of the "Russian cause." Inter alia, they demolished the Aleksandr Nevskii Cathedral in Warsaw. See Werner Benecke, "Zur Lage der russisch-orthodoxen Kirche in der Zweiten Polnischen Republik 1918–1939," in *Religion im Nationalstaat zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918–1939. Polen—Tschechoslowakei—Ungarn—Rumänien*, ed. Hans-Christian Maner and Martin Schulze Wessel, 123–44 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2002), 125–26; Rolf, "Aleksandr-Nevskij-Kathedrale," 188–89.





**P a r t**



Confessions in the Crossfire



# Interconfessional Rivalry in Lithuania after the Decree of Tolerance

Vilma Žaltauskaitė

Emperor Alexander II visited Vil'na on July 13, 1867. Among the representatives from all the estates that gathered to welcome him were peasants who had recently converted from Catholicism to Orthodoxy. The emperor stressed when speaking to them that “They *would not be able to* revert to their earlier faith, and I am pleased to see them as Orthodox believers” (my italics).<sup>1</sup> These words were printed and displayed at all volost'-self-governments (*volostnoe pravlenie*) in the Minsk province, so they would be known to anyone considering reverting to Catholicism.<sup>2</sup> The mass distribution of the emperor's words shows that reversion was indeed a likely problem, and that the involvement of an authority figure such as the emperor was necessary to solve it. Leaving the Orthodox Church was not an option according to the laws of the Russian Empire until the Decree of Tolerance (April 17, 1905) was proclaimed across the whole empire, including the Northwest region (NWR), where there were recent converts to Orthodoxy. The mass conversion of Catholic peasants to the Orthodox faith between 1863 and 1867 was part of the government's policy of “de-Polonization.”<sup>3</sup> One of its outcomes was that between 1863 and

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- 1 We have no data to suggest that similar notices were displayed in the Vil'na, Grodna, or Kovna provinces. Perhaps this kind of measure was applied because the Minsk province had the greatest number of new Orthodox believers (35,569). Statistical data from: Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi, 2007), 133.
- 2 Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (Russian State Historical Archives, RGIA), f. 821, op. 125, d. 267, l. 28, 34.
- 3 For more details, see Staliūnas, *Making Russians*, 131–80.

1867 in the so-called Lithuanian provinces, which are the focus of this chapter, there were 18,775 new Orthodox believers in Vil'na province, 466 in Kovna province, and 16,267 in Grodna province.<sup>4</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the government and the Orthodox Church in the NWR were forced to deal with the category of “recalcitrants” (*uporstvuiushchie*), those who had formally converted to Orthodoxy but did not consider themselves as Orthodox believers.<sup>5</sup> There were instances of legal and illegal efforts to return to their previous faith, usually among Roman Catholics. Personal and collective requests were written and submitted, couples were married, and children continued to be baptized in accordance with Catholic rites.<sup>6</sup> The government resolved this problem through the use of repressive measures and increased control, transferring all the blame to the Catholic Church and its clergy. The registration of new Orthodox believers was enforced and threats were made to close down churches where the clergy provided religious services to nominal Orthodox believers; as a result, these clerics faced criminal and administrative liability.<sup>7</sup>

These kinds of measures were sufficient to control the situation: there were only a few mass efforts to leave the Orthodox Church and return to the former faith. For example, between 1881 and 1894, only 139 person-

4 Ibid., 133.

5 There were people like this among the Uniates as well because this Church was absorbed by the Orthodox Church in the Western Region in 1839; the Kingdom of Poland followed suit in 1875.

6 Statistics from the period 1881–1894 about submitted requests to return to Catholicism: RGIA, f. 821, op. 125, d. 267, l. 4–5. Orthodox Church hierarchs had already drawn attention to the actions of the Catholic clergy against new Orthodox believers in 1881–82; the issue of restricting Catholic “propaganda” was discussed for an entire decade in the Vil'na province. See Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas (Lithuanian State Historical Archives; LVIA), f. 378, BS, ap. 1882, b. 230 (Po otzyvu Arkhiepiskopa Litovskogo i Vilenskogo s zapiskoiu o dopuskaemykh odstupleniiakh ot ustanovlennogo v SZK poriadka).

7 Report from the Vil'na Roman Catholic Consistory dated December 3, 1899 to the Bishop of Vil'na (it indicates that stricter regulations were enforced in 1888 for recording converts to the Orthodox Church in registries and other social status documents; Orthodox Church initiatives were indicated as well), LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 6–7; 9–10. When secular and Orthodox Church authorities investigated a case in 1887 in which the peasant Ivan Martsinchik sought to revert to Catholicism, it was found that he had received religious rites from the Dambravas parish priest Fr. Zimnoch. Officials suggested warning that if this situation continued, his church would be closed. The Vil'na governor-general informed the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which supported the recommendation. The priest was informed by an official from the Vil'na diocese. Report from the Vil'na governor-general to the Vil'na diocese official, March 19, 1888; report from the Vil'na diocese official to the Dambravas parish priest Fr. Zimnoch, March 22, 1888, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 1–2.

al requests and 6 collective requests were submitted from the Vil'na and Grodna provinces.<sup>8</sup> However, the situation changed fundamentally in 1905 with the declaration of the Decree of Tolerance, in which the first article indicated that individuals could leave the Orthodox Church without facing any legal repercussions. The “ruling” (*gospodstvuiushchaia*) status of the Orthodox Church was maintained even after the announcement of the decree, but nevertheless, the opportunity to legally leave the Orthodox Church was a radical innovation in the Russian Empire.

The aim of this study is to analyze the outcomes of the declaration of the Decree of Tolerance (April 17, 1905) on the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in the so-called Lithuanian provinces of Kovna, Vil'na, and Grodna, all of which were part of the NWR. Specifically, this essay asks the following questions: What was the social position of Churches in communities and what were the roles of Churches as institutions? How did these change over time? And what were the differences and similarities in the Lithuanian dioceses/provinces above? I shall also try to ascertain how the imperial government participated in these processes, and whether the burgeoning nationalisms of non-dominant ethnic groups influenced interconfessional relations. I intend to determine the innovations (and/or continuity) in government policy after 1905 as it compares to the policies regarding the Catholic Church after the uprising of 1863–64. In this study, I argue that the reversion from Orthodoxy that commenced after the announcement of the decree of April 17, 1905 demonstrated the low social prestige of the Orthodox Church in these specific provinces in the NWR at the time. This meant that the government's “de-Polonization” measures implemented after the uprising of 1863–64 were not only ineffective; they were also a stimulus for interconfessional tension that went on until 1904, and even intensified after the Decree of Tolerance. This inter-

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8 Statistics from 1881–1894 about submitted requests to return to Catholicism, RGIA, f. 821, op. 125, d. 267, l. 4–5. Mikhail Dolbilov has analyzed the Minsk governor's initiative concerning the possible return of the peasants of Lagoshin to Catholicism in 1878–79. The initiative was not successful. M. Dolbilov, *Russkii krai, chuzhaia vera: etnokonfessional'naia politika imperii v Litve i Belorusii pri Aleksandre II* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010), 702–706.

confessional tension can be understood, to a certain extent, as an outcome of the decree. The tension that arose between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance has to be explained by taking into consideration the socio-cultural norms that functioned in society for a long period of time, the traditions of each Church, and the political reforms underway (the Decree of Tolerance was followed by the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, the Temporary Provisions of Societies and Unions issued on March 4, 1906, and elections to the State Duma). I would like to stress that political reforms are not the focus of my research, and due to the scope of my study and my research questions, they will not be discussed. However, these simultaneous developments were also important for understanding interconfessional relations, and they appeared in the same context.

In this study, Lithuania is understood as part of the NWR, and specifically the Kovna, Vil'na, and Grodna provinces. The imperial government's policies in Lithuania in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries differed significantly from those implemented in the Belorussian provinces of Minsk, Mogilev, and Vitebsk, which were considered more politically reliable.<sup>9</sup> These provinces made up the Lithuanian and Vil'na Orthodox diocese. In 1900, separate Grodna and Brest dioceses were formed from the former Grodna province. In terms of the Catholic Church, the Vil'na and Grodna provinces constituted the Vil'na diocese. Kovna (and Kurland) province made up the Samogitian (Tel'shi) diocese.<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that the imperial administrative space correlated rather closely with the administrative spaces of both Churches. Meanwhile, the other provinces in the NWR, Minsk, Mogilev and Vitebsk, were part of the Catholic Church's Mogilev archdiocese; they did not have a separate

9 Zita Medišauskienė, "Lietuvos samprata: tarp istorijos ir etnografijos," in *Lietuvos istorija: Devynioliktas amžius; visuomenė ir valdžia*, vol. 8, part 1, ed. Tamara Bairašauskaitė, Zita Medišauskienė, and Rimantas Miknys (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2011), 52.

10 The double name of the Tel'shi or Samogitian diocese was in use starting in the beginning of the 1840s, and it was this form of the name that was recorded in 1847 in the agreement between Russia and the Holy See. The government moved the center of the diocese from Varniai to the provincial center of Kovna in 1865. However, the diocese's name remained the same.

Church administration, and their separate jurisdictions were directly subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. So, in terms of both the government and the Church, they were different from the other NWR provinces. The confessional structure of the mentioned NWR provinces was not uniform with regard to the numbers of Orthodox and Catholic believers. Catholics dominated in Kovna province (1,214,603 believers in total as of January 1, 1904, and 45,906 Orthodox faithful in 1905). Almost half the Orthodox believers in Kovna province lived in the northern part of the Novoaleksandrovsk (Zarasai) district, which bordered Vil'na province. In Vil'na, there were 419,770 Orthodox believers (according to 1902 data), and 984,676 Catholics. In Grodna province, there were 920,277 Orthodox believers (according to 1905 data), and 403,362 Catholics (1905).<sup>11</sup> The network of Orthodox parishes was much denser, which meant that parishes were smaller and there was more clergy compared to the Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup> Both the Orthodox and Catholic parish networks overlapped, so neither of these Christian communities was isolated.

### The Beginning of (In)tolerance in the NWR

The announcement of the Decree of Tolerance meant that it was possible to choose one's faith freely: it became possible to leave the Orthodox Church, join another Church, and profess another faith. Paul W. Werth argues that the government foresaw the mass conversion of nominal Orthodox believers to Catholicism.<sup>13</sup> However, the conversion process in the NWR took place on a much larger scale than the local government or Orthodox Church expected. It was as if everything that happened in the NWR after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance caught the government and the Orthodox Church completely off guard. For example, even before the

<sup>11</sup> Eighty-three Catholic parishes, 350 Orthodox parishes.

<sup>12</sup> Kovna province: 300 Catholic parishes, 37 [45] Orthodox parishes; Vil'na province: 154 Catholic parishes, 167 [171] Orthodox parishes; Grodna province: 83 Catholic parishes, 350 Orthodox parishes.

<sup>13</sup> Paul W. Werth, *Pravoslavie, inoslavie, inoverie: ocherki po istorii religioznogo raznoobrazia Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012), 50.



Decree of Tolerance, when Vil'na governor-general Freze recommended a positive solution to the issue of "recalcitrants," that is, to allow them to profess the Catholic faith, he did not envisage mass conversion to Catholicism because he believed that the government's economic measures and the activities of the Orthodox clergy and schools would be effective in retaining believers.<sup>14</sup> In a report written on April 8, 1905 about the situation in the diocese in 1904 (just before the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance), Nikanor, the Orthodox Archbishop of Grodna and Brest, stated that the "recalcitrants" living in the Slonim, Volkovysk, and Sokulka districts were not dangerous; they were elderly, they did not attract Orthodox believers to their side, and they "gave no grounds to fear the fate of Orthodoxy in the diocese."<sup>15</sup> A member of the clergy in the Bystritsa Orthodox parish in the deanery of Shumsk in the Vil'na district admitted that *uporstvuiushchie* made up the majority in the parish of almost 1,500 believers, but he saw no danger that the parish would disappear as a result.<sup>16</sup> In July 1905, one of the Vil'na governor-general's officials who analyzed the situation stated that in the Orthodox parish, which used to number 2,000, only thirty to forty believers remained.<sup>17</sup>

Even after taking the obvious statistical inaccuracies into account, the data shows clearly that the local government and the Orthodox Church did not fully grasp how important the need to change confessions—that is, to leave the Orthodox Church—was. Imperial officials and Orthodox clergy appeared to have forgotten that the Orthodox Church had grown so much in the NWR not as a result of the Church's successful missionary activities, but due to the imperial government's confessional political projects,

14 Report from the Vil'na governor-general Aleksandr Freze to the minister of internal affairs, February 23, 1905, RGIA, f. 821, op. 125, d. 268, l. 4.

15 Report about the situation in the Grodna and Brest diocese in 1904, April 8, 1905, RGIA, f. 796, op. 442, d. 2021, l. 41–42.

16 According to data from the cleric Lev Tyminskii, in 1903 the parish had 1,580 parishioners. They included 165 *uporstvuiushchie*. Data from the Shumsk deanery's cleric Lev Tyminskii about the Bystritsa church, June 19, 1904, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1904, b. 272, l. 466–68. In 1904, it is said that there were 1,604 parishioners. Statistics about the growth of the Bystritsa Orthodox parish, June 22, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1904, b. 272, l. 381.

17 Report by Pugavko to the Vil'na governor, July 17, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 404, l. 47.

namely, the abolition of the Uniate Church, and the mass forced conversion of the peasantry to Orthodoxy. Without these government-initiated measures, the growth of the Orthodox Church was very slow: the Orthodox community in the Lithuanian and Vil'na dioceses recorded only a few hundred conversions from Catholicism to Orthodoxy annually; for example, in 1904, there were 152 such conversions.<sup>18</sup>

After the announcement of the decree of April 17, 1905, certain communities of believers in the NWR began to change. In some, the number of believers started to rise (Catholics), while in others it fell (Orthodox). Werth has conducted the most thorough research on how this process was regulated, the practices associated with changing one's confession in the Vil'na and Samogitian (Tel'shi) dioceses, and the obstructions to opportunities to actually utilize the religious freedom outlined in the Decree.<sup>19</sup> His analysis shows that the legal regulations for changing confession were not prepared at the same time as the announcement of the decree; he also presents the historical development of the attitudes of the government and the Orthodox Church toward former Uniates and so-called "recalcitrants" up to the announcement of the decree. In addition, Werth draws attention to the fact that the majority of conversions to Catholicism (74 percent) were in 1905. This means that they took place immediately after the announcement of the decree.

Aleksandr Bendin has carried out probably the most comprehensive research on interconfessional relations in the NWR, and thus also conversions after the Decree of Tolerance.<sup>20</sup> His study stands out from others in the field in that he uncritically adopts the rhetoric and social stereotypes of contemporary sources (and also, in some cases, the broad anti-Catholic narrative typical of the government and officials dating from the context of the

18 Annual report about the situation in the Lithuanian diocese in 1905, RGIA, f. 796, op. 442, d. 2096, l. 37.

19 Paul W. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Paul W. Werth, "Trudnyi put' k katolitsizmu: Verospovednaia prinalozhnost' i grazhdanskoe sostoianie posle 1905 goda," *Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akademijos metraštis* 26 (2005): 447–74.

20 Aleksandr Bendin, *Problemy veroterpimosti v Severo-Zapadnom krae Rossiiskoi imperii (1863–1914)* (Minsk: BGU, 2010); Aleksandr Bendin, "Religioznye konflikty v Belorussii i Litve," *Chatverty mizhnarodny kongres dasledchykau Belarussi. Pratsounyia materialy* 4 (2015): 106–10.

de-Polonization policy), and analyzes the confession-changing process within the context of the “Catholic Church’s propaganda,” Catholic “fanaticism,” and the actions of the “clever yet cunning” Catholic Bishop of Vil’na, Edward von der Ropp, toward the tsarist government. Bendin’s work creates an aggressive image of the Catholic Church (the clergy and believers) after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance. He claims that until then, “good neighborly relations had been established,” while after the decree, they transformed along the lines of “intolerance,” which suddenly changed the character of interconfessional relations.<sup>21</sup> Bendin also mentions “extremist” propaganda, arguing that “religious and ethnic extremism took on especially dangerous social forms” that spread throughout Lithuania’s Orthodox dioceses.<sup>22</sup>

Even though his research covers the period from 1863 to 1914, he does not seem to realize the outcomes of the government’s “de-Polonization” policy actions on the position of the Catholic Church after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance, nor does he take into account the cultural norms in interconfessional and social relations at the time. In his study, confessional changes are the outcome of “militant Catholicism,” thus eliminating any other possible reasons for such conversions, including a person’s individual right to choose. In this way, he remains stuck in the rhetorical narrative of his sources, which often discuss the dark (*nevezhestvennaia*) masses under the sway of an authority figure (the government or a member of the clergy). He does not delve deeper into expressions of religiosity, the nature of religious life, changes to the Catholic Church’s social education, the Christian tradition of the Western and Eastern Churches.

In this study, I present a critical assessment of Bendin’s position that the confession-changing process, which began after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance, should be interpreted as Catholic religious extremism that produced a wave of Catholic violence that swept through Orthodox dioceses. He is correct in saying that many in these diocese converted to Catholicism: the Orthodox dioceses in the Lithuanian, Vil’na, Grodna,

21 Bendin, *Problemy veroterpimosti*, 273–74.

22 Ibid., 322; 328–29.

and Brest provinces lost over 20,000 faithful in 1905 alone (in Vil'na province 16,286, in Grodna province 3,625, and in Kovna province, 900 converted to Catholicism).<sup>23</sup> These are indeed enormous figures, but the need to change confession and return to Catholicism was alive and well in the nineteenth century as well, but the difference was that it was legally impossible to do so. I have no doubt that there were cases of psychological coercion and physical violence in the conversion process, but there is no proof that this happened in the majority of cases. What should also be considered is the context of cultural norms at the time, where violence and coercion were frequently used as a means of resolving tensions in social life. It is quite telling that corporal punishment was still exacted on peasants, even after legal reforms in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

In my opinion, the confession changing process that commenced in the NWR after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance, and the interconfessional tension that followed, were determined not only by political circumstances, but by a larger set of factors. Some of them were new; however, many measures in the confessional sphere enacted by the imperial government earlier (after the 1863–64 uprising) continued to function after the 1905 Decree. For example, measures forced upon the Catholic Church by the imperial government had a negative influence on interconfessional relations later on because the officials enacting them came to be identified with the Orthodox Church.<sup>25</sup> The perspective that “This government does not come from God, but from the Devil” was already apparent in 1876, as shown by these words spoken by a monk from a monastery that had been

23 Note that the Grodna governor indicated that in 1905, a total of 4,409 people had converted to Catholicism, and 1,931 in 1906, of whom 998 returned to the Orthodox Church. Report from the Grodna governor Boiarskii about the Polonisation of Belorussians in the Grodna province, September 11, 1913, RGIA, f. 821, op. 150, d. 167, l. 11.

24 Vladas Sirutavičius, *Nusikaltimai ir visuomenė XIX amžiaus Lietuvoje* (Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos 12) (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1995), 96; Vilma Žaltauskaitė, “Socialiniai aspektai Vilniaus ir Žemaičių (Telšių) vyskupijos Romos katalikų dvasininko tarnystėje ir gyvensenoje (XIX amžiaus antroji pusė),” *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis* 1 (2017): 109.

25 Such measures included: restrictions on the authority of bishops; deportations in 1863 and 1885; state control over the mobility of the clergy; church closures—sometimes even using military force against believers who resisted them, the last such case of which was in 1893 in Kražiai in the Kovna province—control and restrictions over religious practices; and even the prohibition of certain practices.

closed.<sup>26</sup> The approach that the Orthodox faith was the Devil's work can also be encountered in rhetoric after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, the Orthodox faith was sometimes called "the dog's faith" (*sobachia vera*) by the Catholic clergy and believers in the NWR, both before and after the announcement of the decree.<sup>28</sup> But the altered political conditions of the post-1905 period made these perceptions of the Orthodox Church among the Catholic population more visible in the public sphere. Not only were there more reasons and opportunities to make such declarations, but such declarations contributed to their entrenchment, government institutions issued sanctions for such phrases.

It is noteworthy that the Catholic Church based its relations with individuals of other faiths (and not only Orthodox believers) on the tradition of the Council of Trent, which was itself formed as a response to the Reformation. Consequently, its relations with people of other faiths were, on the whole, poor, and any positive cases were exceptions, not the rule. For example, due to this attitude towards other confessions, in 1898 students from the Imperial Roman Catholic Spiritual Academy did not participate in the funeral of their Lutheran lecturer.<sup>29</sup> Friendly relations between Catholic priests and Orthodox laymen were uncommon and were even punishable as a priestly misdemeanor, which might invite an investigation by superiors within the Church.<sup>30</sup> Three glasses of cognac shared by an Orthodox cleric and a Catholic priest were worth mentioning in one such investigation (it is

26 Vilma Žaltauskaitė, "Socialiniai aspektai Vilniaus ir Žemaičių (Telsių) vyskupijos Romos katalikų dvasininko tarnystėje ir gyvenimoje (XIX amžiaus antroji pusė)," *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis* 1 (2017): 83.

27 Report from the Porozovsk Orthodox church (Volkovysk district) to the Grodna Orthodox consistory, July 9, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1904, b. 272, l. 400.

28 Request from the former organist Adam Karvovskii to the Minsk governor, January 8, 1873, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2346, l. 4; report from the Archbishop of Lithuania and Vil'na to the Vil'na governor-general Eduard Totleben, February 15, 1882, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1882, b. 230, l. 14; report from the Grodna governor-general mentioning Fr Julian Karpowicz, January 28, 1891, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1891, b. 375, l. 31; annual report about the Lithuanian and Vil'na diocese in 1905, RGIA, f. 796, op. 442, d. 2096, l. 30; report from the Archbishop of Lithuania and Vil'na to the Vil'na governor-general, June 13, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 405, l. 5.

29 Povilas Januševičius, *Visokių atsitikimų sąrašas: 1895–1898*, ed. Vilma Žaltauskaitė (*Bibliotheca Archivi Lithuanici* 5) (Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2004), 275.

30 Report from the Vil'na dean to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Vil'na, July 30, 1894, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 3, b. 1172, l. 42.

not possible to determine the exact circumstances as to why the investigation was conducted).<sup>31</sup> In short, relations between Catholics and Orthodox believers were not idyllic both before and after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance. Therefore, interconfessional relations before and after the Decree should be assessed by taking into account the whole context and socio-cultural norms active at the time.

### Conversion to Catholicism after the Decree

As has already been mentioned, in 1905 alone, the Orthodox Church lost thousands of members in the NWR. It is significant to note just how the numbers relate to the numbers of those converted to Orthodoxy by imperial officials between 1863 and 1867. While this would be difficult to determine precisely, some general trends can be identified. It is quite likely that the first to convert to Catholicism after the Decree were those who were considered only nominal Orthodox believers, the so-called “recalcitrants.” In this way, during the several months after the decree’s announcement, the previously mentioned Orthodox parish of Bystritsa dwindled.<sup>32</sup> Eighty-eight people joined the Slonim Catholic parish (Vil’na diocese, Grodna province) in December 1905.<sup>33</sup> There were many nominal Orthodox believers in the Slonim district, so we can presume that it was they who converted in 1905.<sup>34</sup> Elderly people, sixty-four or seventy eighty-year-olds, also reverted to the Catholic faith.<sup>35</sup> Entire families joined the Catholic Church (the ages of the parents went up to forty, which suggests that they may have been the descendants of “recalcitrants”). Ivan Minkevich from the Minsk province in the Vil’na diocese asked for the sacrament of baptism, as he claimed only to have been bap-

31 Report from a police officer to Stepan Petrovich[?], July 15, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1904, b. 272, l. 398–399.

32 See note 20.

33 Report from the Slonim priest B. Sarosek to the Bishop of Vil’na, December 31, 1905, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2806, l. 281.

34 [I.K.?] About the recalcitrants in the Grodna province, July 26, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1904, b. 272, p. 419.

35 Data about those who converted to Catholicism, 1905–1914, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2805, l. 1–80.

tized with water, indicating at the very start of his request that he was from the “Logishin parish of recalcitrant Catholics.”<sup>36</sup> The governor and the Ministry of Internal Affairs had examined the fates of former Catholics in Logishin (Minsk province) back in 1878–79, but they had not been permitted to convert back to the Catholic faith at that time.<sup>37</sup> The intention to return to the faith of their parents and their ancestors was recorded in numerous requests and in the characterizations of “recalcitrants” both prior to the Decree of Tolerance and afterward.<sup>38</sup> In a report about the parish from 1907, the Orthodox Archbishop Mikhail of Grodna and Brest stated that there were no mass conversions to Catholicism, as all the *uporstvuiushchie* had already reverted to Catholicism.<sup>39</sup> Eighty-one people converted to Catholicism in Grodna province in 1907.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it is fair to assume that the majority of those who changed their confession immediately after the Decree of Tolerance had been forced into Orthodoxy earlier.

The process of conversion to Catholicism was most evident in Vil’na province (Vil’na diocese): in 1905, 16,286 people became Catholics.<sup>41</sup> Catholic Bishop Ropp of Vil’na was convinced that it was not true Orthodox believers who were converting to Catholicism, but rather those who had always considered themselves to be Catholic and were only nominally Orthodox believers, especially ex-Uniates and those who had been forced into Orthodoxy in the 1860s.<sup>42</sup> Ropp was consistent. He underlined this expla-

36 Request from Ivan Minkevich to the Bishop of Vil’na, July 24, 1907, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2838, l. 8.

37 Dolbilov, *Russkii krai, chuzhaia vera*, 702–06.

38 Request from Adolfa Makarevich Burachevskaia to a Vil’na diocese official (she writes about the efforts of an Orthodox cleric to persuade her to return to the Orthodox Church. The woman claims that Catholicism was the faith of her grandparents and great-grandparents, which she had always wanted, and that she was attending church of her own free will, while she would only go to an Orthodox Church for Easter confession, and not of her own free will), December 4, 1908, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2954, l. 37, 40, 42–44. Report from the Ostrovets Orthodox clergyman Zhebrovskii to the Lithuanian Orthodox consistory, with data about the Ostrovets parish, July 19, 1904, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1904, b. 272, l. 462.

39 Report from 1907 by Archbishop Mikhail of Grodna and Brest about the diocese, RGIA, f. 796, op. 442, d. 2204, l. 26, 32, 33.

40 Bendin, *Problemy veroterpimosti*, 276.

41 Ibid.

42 Report from the Bishop of Vil’na to the Department of Foreign Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, May 13, 1905, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 18; report from the Bishop of Vil’na to the minister of internal affairs, July 23, 1905, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 30–31.

nation in his report to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and, at almost the same time, the bishop sent out another circular to the clergy in his diocese in which he gave the same interpretation. In the circular, he indicated that in the procedure of conversion to Catholicism, a brief profession of faith that acknowledged the Pope and indicated an understanding of the differences between the Catholic and Orthodox faiths sufficed for those “who were Catholics in spirit.”<sup>43</sup>

Cases that were dependent on the cultural environment in a region are also worth mentioning; for example, when an Orthodox believer who lived in a cultural space dominated by Catholics decided to convert to Catholicism. In this way, in Ponevezh (Panevėžys) district in Kovna province, twenty-four Orthodox peasants (known as “colonists”) from the Ri-azan’ *slabada* chose Catholicism because they now associated themselves with Lithuanian Catholics both in a linguistic and a cultural sense. They claimed to have accepted the tenets of the faith of their neighbors (Lithuanian Catholics), had forgotten Russian, and had married into Lithuanian (Catholic) families.<sup>44</sup> Officials of Kovna province examined this case very closely, and the governor purposely delayed sending his response (a term of one month applied) to the leaders of the Catholic Church.<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, the Orthodox cleric who tried to talk them out of their decision stated that the “Orthodox Church had completely lost these applicants.”<sup>46</sup> Perhaps for similar reasons, the number of conversions to Catholicism was lowest in Grodna province, where Orthodox believers rather than Catholics dominated; the number of conversions to Catholicism was smaller there than was the number of people forced to convert to the Orthodox Church between 1863 and 1867.

43 Report from the Bishop of Vil’na to clergy in the diocese, May 15, 1905, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 21.

44 Report from a Ponevezh district *ispravnik* to the Kovna province board, April 7, 1906, Kauno regioninis valstybės archyvas (Kaunas regional state archives; KRVA), f. I-49, ap. 1, b. 24717, l. 110. Documents from 1905–07 related to these requests, *ibid.* l. 106–12.

45 Requests were submitted in November 1905, while responses only arrived on April 19, 1906. Report from the Bishop of Samogitia (Tel’shi) to the Vil’na governor-general, March 13, 1908, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 403, l. 72–74.

46 Report to the Lithuanian Orthodox consistory, March 19, 1907, KRVA, f. I-49, ap. 1, b. 24717, l. 109.



There were other cases of confessional changes, notably as a result of various social circumstances: a person might have adopted Orthodoxy in prison and wished to return to his former faith; there were cases of mixed marriages where one spouse was Orthodox and the couple's children had been baptized as Orthodox believers and now sought a different faith, etc.<sup>47</sup> The activities of the Roman Catholic clergy was also one of the factors that influenced reversion to Catholicism. The Orthodox Church and local government specifically highlighted these activities. However, the central government only had information about fifteen Roman Catholic clergymen from Kovna province, five from Vil'na province, and six from Grodna province who could potentially face criminal prosecution for their anti-government activities.<sup>48</sup> Incidentally, "anti-government activities" was a broader concept than "crimes against the Orthodox Church," but they were often intertwined.<sup>49</sup> In any case, the number of priests prosecuted for such offenses in the first year after the Decree of Tolerance was not high. Furthermore, there were fewer clergymen accused of "anti-government activities" in Vil'na province in the first year after the decree's announcement, compared to Kovna province, although, as previously mentioned, the number of converts was much higher in Vil'na province. This seems to indicate that the Catholic clergy was active in many spheres of life and was not the sole trigger of conversions.

### **The Legitimization of Conversion to Catholicism: The Position(s) of the Church and Government**

A number of social and cultural factors determined a person's return or conversion to Catholicism. Obviously, after the Decree of Tolerance, the Catholic Church was much better prepared for this process than was the impe-

47 Request from the peasant Chiapulis (to the Vil'na Roman Catholic consistory?), November 1, 1910, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2954, l. 63.

48 List of priests who could be held criminally liable, RGIA, f. 821, op. 125, d. 3250, l. 36; report from A. Mamontov, May 3, 1907, RGIA, f. 821, op. 125, d. 3251, l. 214–254; report from A. Mamontov (1907), RGIA, f. 821, op. 150, d. 254, l. 2.

49 Report (author unknown; 1905?), RGIA, f. 821, op. 125, d. 3264, l. 261–262.

rial government or the Orthodox Church. The Catholic Church's hierarchs reacted promptly to the decree with specific actions. Bishop Ropp of Vil'na had already confirmed the procedure for conversion from Orthodoxy to Catholicism by April 21, 1905, almost immediately after the announcement of the decree.<sup>50</sup> Archbishop Jerzy Szembek of Mogilev also sent a dedicated circular to the clergy on May 2, 1905.<sup>51</sup> This may be an indication of the coordinated actions of both hierarchs, especially when we know that Bishop Ropp was in St. Petersburg when the decree was announced (where the Archbishop of Mogilev resided).<sup>52</sup> The Diocese of Samogitia (Tel'shi) distributed their circular to the clergy somewhat later, on May 27, 1905.<sup>53</sup>

The Catholic Church's leaders preempted the government by several months in regard to disseminating information about the conversion procedure; the Ministry of Internal Affairs set out provisional procedures for the registration of conversions from the Orthodox Church in a circular issued on August 18, 1905.<sup>54</sup> That circular was sent to the bishops on September 8, and went into effect in November. The government ordered the following procedure: it foresaw a term of one month, during which the governor of a province had to inform the leadership of the Catholic Church about submitted requests after a series of required actions. Importantly, those who wanted to leave the Orthodox Church would have to submit a written request to the governor, who would then inform the leaders of the Orthodox Church about the individual wishing to leave their fold. The Orthodox Church would have the opportunity to influence this decision (*uveshchanie*). Werth's study shows that the provisional circular from the Ministry of Internal Affairs was valid for over a decade.<sup>55</sup> It could be said that the speed of the Catholic bishops and their initiative through the

50 Circular from the Bishop of Vil'na, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 404, l. 6.

51 Report from the Metropolitan of Mogilev Wincenty Kluczyński, 1910s?, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 127–29.

52 Report from the Bishop of Vil'na to the Vil'na governor-general Konstantin Krshivitskii, April 20, 1906, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 80.

53 Instructions from the Suffragan Bishop of Samogitia (Tel'shi) G. F. Cirtovt to members of the clergy, LVIA, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 184, l. 9.

54 Circular from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, August 18, 1905, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 40–41.

55 Werth, "Trudnyi put' k katolizizmu," 471.

circulars were forerunners of the Catholic Church's decades of correspondence concerning the legitimization of converts' registration and reproaches over the ignorance of the government's circular.<sup>56</sup> Later on, repressions were exacted against clergy who provided religious services to Catholics who had not been registered in accordance with the procedures set out by the government. However, the bishops' initiative also demonstrated their authority, the Church's governance of the clergy, and the overall strength of the religious community. By registering conversions, local clergy were abiding by the procedures outlined by their religious leaders.

Several stages in the confession changing registration process can be distinguished. Initially, the imperial government reacted moderately; it waited patiently for information from Catholic bishops about individuals who had converted to Catholicism in the period from April 17 to August 18, 1905. By the end of 1905, taking into account the enormous number of conversions since the Decree of Tolerance and the demand to adhere to the procedures outlined in the circular from the Ministry of Internal Affairs on August 18, 1905, the Vil'na governor-general, Aleksandr Freze recommended that the procedure be simplified only for those who had converted to Catholicism before August 18, that is, prior to the circular's validity, so as to prevent cultivating the "belief in the minds of the uneducated masses that the government was disrupting their conversion to Catholicism." He asserted that it would suffice for the Catholic clergy to present lists of such people to the governor, indicating their estate, former faith, age, and the parish they were joining, while the governor would inform the Orthodox Church.<sup>57</sup> The central government approved an even simpler procedure: the temporary minister of internal affairs let Krshivitskii, the incoming Vil'na governor-general, know that he supported the idea of a more simplified procedure.<sup>58</sup> The State Council member Petr Durnovo also approved, saying it

56 File (O perekhodakh raznykh lits v katolichestvo), 1888–1913, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482; File (Materialy iz kantseliarii Mogilevskoi eparkhii, smena veroispovedaniia), 1910–1914, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 4273.

57 Report from Andrei Stankevich, an official in the Vil'na governor-general's chancellery, to the Kovna governor Petr Verevkin, December 5, 1905, KRVA, f. I-49, ap. 1, b. 24717, l. 34.

58 Report from a temporary official at the Ministry of Internal Affairs to K. Krshivitskii, the Vil'na governor-general, December 23, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 403, l. 26–27.

would be enough to just “inform” the governor without abiding by the other instructions in the circular.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, subsequent correspondence between government institutions and the Catholic Church shows that imperial officials appeared to forget these simplified procedures and demanded that written requests be made to the governor, including those who had converted to Catholicism before the August 18 circular.<sup>60</sup>

Starting around 1908–1909, the accuracy of registration took a much stricter approach. In 1909, Petr Reviakin, an official from Kovna province, prepared an announcement about conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism, in which he indicated that there were 353 cases of registration of Catholic converts that ignored the August 18, 1905 circular (at the time, there was a total of 1,148 converts), and that the prosecution of several dozen clergymen had been initiated in the so-called Peace Courts. Reviakin claimed that the clergy’s actions, described as insolent [*nagly*] and mocking [*izdevatel’s tvo*], threatened the government’s authority.<sup>61</sup>

The question of damage to imperial authority or the Orthodox Church arose not only regarding the actions of the Roman Catholic clergy. One police officer wrote that his subordinate, “without his knowledge or permission,” married and converted to Catholicism, ignoring the procedure set out in the August circular.<sup>62</sup> In 1905, an Orthodox cleric in Grodna province wrote to the Vil’na governor-general’s office and said that the authority of the Orthodox Church was eroded in his deanery as a result of the conversion of the *volost’* and village elders to Catholicism; he alleged that Catholics argued that intelligent and influential people chose Catholicism.<sup>63</sup> The defense of government authority meant returning to pre-Decree repression. The government’s greater attention to the registration procedure for conversions could be

59 Report from Andrei Stankevich, an official in the Vil’na governor-general’s chancellery, to the Kovna governor Petr Verevkin, January 11, 1906, KRVA, f. I-49, ap. 1, b. 24717, l. 94.

60 Report from the Vil’na governor to the Bishop of Vil’na, July 18, 1906, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 87.

61 Report from Reviakin to the Kovna governor, November 11, 1909, KRVA, f. I-49, ap. 1, b. 28259 (the pages are not numbered).

62 Report from the Grodna governor to the Vil’na governor-general, November 22, 1907, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 403, l. 64.

63 Report from the Volkovysk Orthodox dean to the Vil’na governor-general’s chancellery (with a confidential additional note), July 26, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 405, l. 60.

related to the reform of registration under discussion in 1906–07, which the Orthodox Church's Holy Synod opposed.<sup>64</sup> The Vil'na governor-general also opposed these changes after he received reports from the governors of Vil'na, Kovna, and Grodna.<sup>65</sup> It is most likely that the government's greater attention to the conversion procedure was determined by changes in confessional policy. The Catholic Bishop Ropp of Vil'na was dismissed from his position at the government's behest at the beginning of October 1907.<sup>66</sup>

Further changes occurring after 1907 affected the government's approach toward the Catholic Church in a broader sense than just whether registration procedures were being followed correctly. Numerous circulars regulating the Catholic Church's activities were sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>67</sup> In the case of Fr. Zenkevicz, dated February 16, 1910, regarding his provision of religious services to Orthodox believers who had converted to Catholicism after the Decree of Tolerance, the Ruling Senate determined that the procedures for registering conversions to Catholicism of August 18, 1905 had to be followed, and if they were not, the individual would continue to be considered Orthodox.<sup>68</sup> This means that the formal registration norms based on Orthodox registry book entries that were valid up to the Decree of Tolerance were still in place.

64 Werth, "Trudnyi put' k katolitsizmu," 467.

65 Report from the Vilna governor-general to the minister of interior, March 6, 1908, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1908, b. 339, l. 16–17.

66 Darius Staliūnas, "Vilniaus vyskupo E. Ropo veiklos pėdsakais (1903–1907)," in *Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos*, vol. 7: *Atgimimas ir Katalikų Bažnyčia* (Vilnius: Katalikų pasaulio leidiniai, 1994), 213–18.

67 For example: a circular to governors on July 25, 1908 about restrictions on holding religious processions; a circular on January 17, 1909 regarding the appointment of convicted and punished clergymen as priests; a circular on January 29, 1909 regarding the comprehensive investigation of illegal actions by clergymen in the struggle against "religious-national fanaticism"; a circular on December 16, 1909 about the transfer of clergymen from other dioceses; circulars on December 21, 1909 and November 20, 1910 regarding the appointment of clergymen only with the approval of the ministry; a circular on January 13, 1910 about controlling the appointment of teachers of religion; circulars on September 19, 1911 and October 28, 1911 about the urgent investigation of cases brought against clergymen and whether their punishment had been enforced; a circular on September 21, 1911 about banning the catechism in all institutions apart from schools. *Sbornik tsirkuliarov po DDDII odnosiaschikhsia k rimsko katolicheskomu dukhovenstvu, 1905–1912 god*, RGIA library, 41, 43, 52, 54–55, 57, 60, 68–69, 75, 81.

68 Report-draft No 5984 from the Metropolitan of Mogilev (c. 1913/1914); report No. 945 from the Metropolitan of Mogilev to the clergy of the Mogilev archdiocese and the Minsk diocese, 27 February 1915, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 4273, l. 2, 10–15. Excerpts from annual reports of the Minsk diocese. The Polish-Catholic question, RVIA, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 228.

In demanding that Catholic bishops adhere to its regulations for registering conversion to Catholicism, the government (the Ministry of Internal Affairs) claimed that the registration process outlined in the August 18, 1905 circular did not impinge in any way upon the Decree of Tolerance.<sup>69</sup> However, adherence to this bureaucratic formality was understood as an expression of the government's authority and power, and the clergy were expected to acknowledge it. On June 23, 1906, Petr Stolypin, the Minister of Internal Affairs, explained to the Bishop of Vil'na that the August circular was mandatory for both secular and religious authorities. Otherwise, the (Catholic) clergy's actions would be viewed as promoting opposition to and mistrust of the legitimate actions of the government.<sup>70</sup>

### The "Ruling" Church and Government after the Decree of Tolerance

Bishop Ropp of Vil'na knew in advance about the Decree of Tolerance and prepared accordingly. There is no doubt that leaders of the Orthodox Church also knew about the preparation of the decree.<sup>71</sup> Nonetheless, unlike the hierarchs of the Catholic Church in the NWR, they trusted the imperial government's authority to regulate the procedures for conversion to Catholicism, or, more specifically, to halt any such conversions. The government's patronage was the accepted status quo for the Orthodox Church in the NWR. The Orthodox clergy demanded this patronage even after political conditions changed. Following his visits to churches in the Novoaleksandrovsk district in September 1905, Bishop Sergei of Kovna asked the Vil'na governor-general to protect the Orthodox Church and Russianness from erosion because they were closely associated with the government's authority and its "prestige."<sup>72</sup> Thus, the Orthodox Church called on

69 Report from the minister of internal affairs to the Bishop of Vil'na, June 23, 1906, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2482, l. 85–86.

70 Ibid.

71 Aleksandr Polunov, *K. P. Pobedonostsev v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi i dukhovnoi zhizni Rosii* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010), 322–37.

72 Report from Bishop Sergei to the Vil'na governor-general, September 12, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 404, l. 139.

the government to act in defense of its interests. One of the Vil'na governor-general's officials even openly identified as a serious problem the inactivity of Orthodox clerics and their lack of authority after the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance.<sup>73</sup> Some Orthodox leaders also acknowledged this challenge in addition to other problems within the Orthodox Church.<sup>74</sup>

Numerous appeals were made by the Orthodox archbishops of Vil'na, Grodna, and Brest to governors and governors-general regarding conversions to Catholicism as early as 1905. The Mother Superior at the Krasnostok monastery (in Grodna province) even appealed to the emperor in May 1905.<sup>75</sup> In June 1905, a congress of Orthodox clergy from the Diocese of Lithuania and Vil'na on "the struggle with Latin-ness" was held,<sup>76</sup> while another meeting about the revival of Church life and the establishment of parish communities was held on January 24, 1906.<sup>77</sup> There were also smaller congresses involving deanery clergy, who shared their impressions of conversions to Catholicism and suggested ways of resolving the ensuing problems. For example, a congress of clergy from the Shumsk deanery was held on January 2, 1906. The clergy appealed through their archbishop to the imperial government, asking it to protect the remaining Orthodox believers and clergy. In order to achieve this goal, they suggested that the procedure for appointing state civil servants should be changed: all civil servants should be Orthodox believers. It was claimed that this would undermine the Catholic clergy's networks and influence.<sup>78</sup> These cries for help from the Orthodox Church did not go unheeded: already by November 23, 1905,

73 Report from Pugavko to the Vil'na governor, July 17, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, 1905, b. 397, l. 7.

74 Polunov, K. P. *Pobedonoscev v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi i dukhovnoi zhizni Rosii*, 239–52, 322–37.

75 Report from the mother superior of the Krasnostok monastery to the Vil'na governor-general, May 16, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 399, l. 20–25.

76 Annual report about the Lithuanian and Vil'na diocese for 1905, RGIA, f. 796, op. 442, d. 2096, l. 24. "Latin-ness" meant the Catholic Church.

77 Report from Archbishop Nikandro of Lithuania and Vil'na to the Vil'na governor-general, January 23, 1906, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1906, b. 397, l. 7.

78 Report from Archbishop Nikandro of Lithuania and Vil'na to the Vil'na governor-general, February 14, 1906, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1906, b. 397, pp. 50–54; report from Bishop Sergei of Kovna to the Vil'na governor-general (where he cites the letter he received from the Shumsk deanery's Bystritsa Orthodox cleric Lev Tyminskii), March 26, 1906, *ibid.*, l. 56–57. Newspaper article from *Novoe vremia* (April 25, 1906, No 10797), which presents information identical to that in Tyminskii's letter. *Ibid.*, l. 61.



a circular sent out by the Vil'na governor-general ordered the local government to monitor the actions of the Catholic clergy and inform the Orthodox Archbishop of Lithuania and Vil'na.<sup>79</sup> Apart from other points, the circular indicated that, given that the majority population in the region was uneducated peasants, and taking into account their lack of independence, the administration should support the Orthodox Church to maintain a sense of order. It argued that the imperial government should take into account the demands of Catholics and their clergy; further, it should not allow Catholic antagonism against Orthodox believers—which the circular attributed to peasants' poor understanding of the decree and manifesto—to grow. This is why the governor-general drew attention to cases of religious intolerance and violence, ordering that the courts be informed of such events and appeals made. The circular explained which parts of the law were valid, and which ones were not, and stated that all cases should be heard only after religious authorities initiated them.<sup>80</sup> This circular was followed by orders from the local government: for example, the Kovna governor's circular to district police officers, *ispravniki* (district police chiefs), and city police chiefs issued on December 19, 1905. Thus, local government institutions attempted to protect the Orthodox Church from religious intolerance and cases of violence.

The diocese's official position on the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance was published in its newspaper, the *Litovskiiie eparkhialnyie vedomosti* (Lithuanian Diocesan News), rather late, only at the end of June 1905 (Nos. 25–26). It wrote that conversions were not harming the Church because it was only “false members” who were leaving. Additionally, the losses were considered the “outcome of militant Catholicism,” or a form of attack, and therefore, something that had to be countered by defending “Orthodox-Russian matters in the NWR.” The newspaper used a rather traditional rhetoric of attack and struggle, while also naming enemies, and similar

79 Report from the Vil'na governor-general Freze to Archbishop Nikandro of Lithuania and Vil'na, December 14, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap.1905, b. 404, l. 166.

80 Report from the Vil'na governor-general Freze to the Kovna governor, with the additional entry '*rasporiazhenie po kraiu*', November 23, 1905, KRVA, f. I-49, ap. 1, b. 24717, l. 23–24.



rhetoric was also used by diocesan hierarchs and parish clergy in the NWR. This rhetoric of attack and militancy was neither incidental nor new. It had been applied broadly even before 1905, by both the Orthodox Church and the government.

In 1906, the Ministry of Internal Affairs received a note from the Roman Catholic Mogilev metropolitan over antagonistic activities against Catholics by Orthodox clerics, which also included spreading defamatory material about Catholicism. An appeal was made to the Synod of the Orthodox Church. The Synod replied that it did not approve of such phenomena, but neither did it condemn them. It maintained the view that a national-religious struggle between Catholics and Orthodox believers was taking place in the Western provinces, where it was Catholics, not Orthodox believers, who were on the offensive. Moreover, the Synod asked the Ministry of Internal Affairs to inform the Catholic metropolitan that his clergy should not engage in proselytization.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, the very Catholics who initially made the complaint ended up as the accused.

The complaint from the Mogilev metropolitan was not the only one.<sup>82</sup> Clergy from the Vil'na diocese often complained to the bishop about Orthodox clergy who disseminated literature that demeaned Catholicism, both in 1905 and later on.<sup>83</sup> For example, Fr. Necziporowicz of Shereshev (Pruzhaný district, Grodna province) appealed to the Bishop of Vil'na over defamatory literature against Catholics that was being spread among the town's Orthodox believers by their own clerics.<sup>84</sup> It appears that the offend-

81 Report from the Chief Procurator of the Orthodox Holy Synod, October 29, 1907, RGIA, f. 821, op. 125, d. 3250, l. 88–89.

82 The official of the Archdiocese of Mogilev also lodged a complaint about anti-Catholic publications from the Polotsk diocese in 1908. See: report from the Mogilev archdiocesan official to the minister of internal affairs, August 26, 1908, RGIA, f. 826, op. 3, d. 193, l. 30. Report from the Borudzenichy parish priest to the Roman Catholic diocesan board, November 1906, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2954, l. 22, printed anti-Catholic materials on ll. 23–27. Incidentally, the same print was indicated in 1909, and the information contained in it is also recognizable in Catholics' testimonies about defamatory information about them.

83 Report from the Borudzenichy (Bezdzozho) parish priest to the Roman Catholic diocesan board, November 1906, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2954, l. 22, printed materials on pp. 23–27. Incidentally, the same was indicated in 1909, and the information contained in it is also recognisable in Catholics' testimonies about defamatory information about them, *ibid.*, l. 37–40.

84 Report from the Shereshev parish priest Jan Necziporowicz to the Bishop of Vil'na, September 2, 1905, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2954, p. 81; publications included in l. 82–102 of the file. It is important to note that

ing literature was copies of the June–September issues of *Pochaevskii listok* (Pochaev Pages), published by the Pochaevskaia Lavra.<sup>85</sup> Another cleric from the Grodna province, Fr. Gurski at Dambravas, also complained about *Pochaevskii listok*.<sup>86</sup> Roman Catholic clergy also mentioned other publications that propagated the same narrative: for example, the “leaflets to the people” by the Orthodox Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit in Vil’na.<sup>87</sup> This indicates the rather systematic dissemination of anti-Catholic literature in these provinces. The distribution of printed material published by Orthodox dioceses and monasteries was understood as a separate means of overcoming “Catholic propaganda,” and in 1912, Archbishop Mikhail of Grodna and Brest mentioned this as one of the measures that could be taken to counter conversions.<sup>88</sup>

Analysis of the government’s approach towards the registration of organized conversions to Catholicism by the Catholic bishops, should include discussion of the ever-stricter position of the government towards the Catholic Church in the NWR. The dismissal of Bishop Ropp of Vil’na in October 1907 could be considered the formal end of this period of liberalization (this was not the first time the government had resorted to this kind of measure in the diocese: in 1863, Bishop Adam Stanisław Krasiński was deported, followed by Bishop Karol Hryniewicki in 1885). This was merely part of its policy to weaken “Polish influence/propaganda,” and it revealed dynamism in the government’s treatment of Polish-

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the secular authorities viewed this cleric as being particularly fanatical, and he was known for his antagonistic activities. Report from the Vil’na governor-general K. Krshivitskii to the minister of internal affairs, May 2, 1906, RGIA, f. 821, op. 125, d. 3251, l. 1.

85 Pochaevskaia Lavra was a monastery in the Volhynia province. A branch of the *Sojuz Russkogo Naroda* (Union of the Russian People) party functioned under its wing, which actively defended the people from “Polonization” and Jewish economic influence (by making concessions to peasants to enable them to acquire land, and establishing consumer associations). It was headed by Archimandrite Vitaly. Report about the de-Polonization of the Church (1911–1912?), RGIA, f. 821, op. 10, d. 1072, l. 31–38.

86 Report from the Dambravas parish priest Fr. Gurski to the Bishop of Vil’na, November 23, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 393, l. 71; the mentioned publications are added in l. 72–75.

87 “Leaflets to the people” with defamatory content against Catholics are mentioned here: report from the Vil’na diocesan official to the minister of internal affairs, May 13, 1910, LVIA, f. 694, ap. 1, b. 2954, l. 2, 64–65.

88 Annual report from Archbishop Mikhail of Grodna and Brest about the situation in the diocese in 1912, RGIA, f. 796, op. 442, d. 2521, l. 35.

ness (in the eyes of the government, Poles were again becoming the main enemy in the NWR).<sup>89</sup>

The government did partly return to the former policy of “de-Polonization” regarding the Catholic Church. When writing about the situation in the Vil’na province in 1907, the governor indicated that a “Pole” had become a political concept rather than an ethnographic one. He began his review of the political situation in the province by noting that national-religious relations and the activities of the Roman Catholic clergy were the main focus of attention.<sup>90</sup> The governor also mentioned the struggle by Lithuanians against “Polonization” and the Polonized Catholic clergy, the struggle against the use of the Lithuanian and Belorussian languages in church services, and the intellectual darkness of the peasant masses.<sup>91</sup> The government sought to shape relations with various national groups in the NWR based on different agendas, but “de-Polonization” was always a key target. Local governments even decided to study tsarist confessional policy in the post-1863 period and requested copies of documents from the Inspection Commission for the Affairs of the Roman Catholic Clergy in the North Western region (*Revizionnaia komissiiia po delam rimsko-katolicheskogo dukhovenstva Severo-zapadnogo kraia*), which operated between 1866 and 1868.<sup>92</sup> But in this effort to “de-Polonize” the Catholic Church, the government distinguished between Catholic Poles, who, in the governor’s understanding, should have made greater distinctions between religion and politics, Catholic Lithuanians, and Catholic and non-Catholic Belorussians. The latter, Belorussians, were emerging from “the dark peasant masses” to become a (self-aware) people (*naselenie*), who also had to be protected from Polonization, especially by the Catholic clergy.<sup>93</sup>

89 See the chapter by Darius Staliūnas in this volume.

90 Annual report about the situation in the Vil’na province in 1907 (draft), LVIA, f. 380, ap. 65, b. 215, l. 4.

91 Ibid., 4–8.

92 Delo s perepiskoiu o byvshej Revizionnoi Komissii uchrezhdennoi v Vil’ne v 60-kh godakh proshlogo stoletia po delam rimsko-katolicheskogo dukhovenstva, February 29, 1908–April 8, 1908, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1908, b. 368, l. 1–8.

93 Report from the Grodna governor-general Petr Boiarskii about the Polonisation of the Belorussian population in the Grodna province, September 11, 1913, RGIA, f. 821, op. 150, d. 167, l. 7–24.

Catholic Lithuanians were viewed in various ways: when they stood up in defense of their right to use the Lithuanian language in church, they were in line with the government's interests regarding its struggle against "Polish influence." However, the spread of Catholic culture in the form of societies, schools, and catechism education was not viewed in an entirely positive light.<sup>94</sup> This is especially evident in the government's attitude toward the procedure for registering converts to Catholicism in Kovna province. In meetings of higher officials initiated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1914, some recommendations and the motivation behind them signaled a return to the measures applied to the Catholic Church after the uprising of 1863–64 (control over seminaries, the regulation of religious processions, and the question of supplementary Mass services).<sup>95</sup>

Thus, interconfessional relations after the Decree of Tolerance of 1905 were affected by more than just the decree. In the NWR, the decree was implemented in the context of the new political conditions, but it also drew on an anti-Catholic narrative that had already existed for decades and featured rhetorical themes such as: "militant Catholicism," "militant Polonization," fanatical clergy, the "Jesuitical" way of doing things (meaning deceptive, evil, and sly), the fanaticism of believers, the strong religiosity of women and their activities, and the shadowy influence of the clergy on the dark peasant masses, which instilled them with discipline, obedience, and submissiveness. Some of these themes were encountered less, and others more frequently; however, none of them disappeared from central and local government rhetoric between 1905 and 1915.

94 Announcement from the minister of internal affairs about the activities of the Roman Catholic clergy (which mentions the meeting of NWR governors held in April 1914, so the document must have been written later), RGIA, f. 821, op. 150, d. 150, l. 10.

95 Report from the minister of internal affairs about the activities of the Roman Catholic clergy (which mentions the meeting of NWR governors held in April 1914), RGIA, f. 821, op. 150, d. 150, l. 1–15. On the discussion about the program for the struggle against Polonization in the Western region (re: Kovna province), RGIA, f. 821, op. 150, d. 172, l. 12–68; entries from governors' reports (1910), *ibid.*, l. 200–30. Darius Staliūnas gives a detailed analysis of the content of these discussions in his chapter in this volume.

## Conclusions

In enacting its policy of “depolonization” after the 1863–64 uprising, the government created conditions that would allow tensions in interconfessional relations to flourish. These tensions were visible up to 1905, and became even more apparent after the Decree of Tolerance. In April 1905, the government was not prepared to issue legal regulations outlining procedures for conversion, even though this right was declared in the decree. It sought to maintain its control over the process, while also ensuring participation by both itself and the Orthodox Church in the process. Meanwhile, the procedures set out by the Catholic Church were repressed. The Orthodox Church remained the ruling Church and continued to enjoy the support of the government with regard to its hegemonic social position and in its dealings with the Catholic Church.

This analysis has also highlighted provincial differences concerning conversions in the NWR. There were conversions to Catholicism in Kovna province; however, these did not take place on a mass scale because the number of Orthodox believers there was not very large to begin with. Vil’na province (like part of the Vil’na diocese) was not confessionally homogeneous, and it had more newly formed Orthodox parishes that were significantly affected by the conversion process. In Grodna province, this process did not reach the scale it did in Vil’na province, and it was concentrated mostly in those districts where the population was mostly Catholic already. After the announcement of the Decree of Tolerance, the Orthodox Church lost some of its community of believers in the NWR (even though some of them were only nominally Orthodox) and had to revise its position in society, but it continued to enjoy the government’s support. The creation of a new model of social activity demanded time and intellectual and economic resources.

In his note to Vil’na governor-general Freze dated June 28, 1905, Orthodox Archbishop Nikanor of Grodna and Brest indicated the detrimental actions by the Roman Catholic clergy against Orthodox believers. He asked for a printed government note that explained the meaning of the

April decree to the “unenlightened peasant masses” (*maloprosveshchennia massa naroda*) to be hung up in district head offices and disseminated in other ways, hoping that this action could halt dangerous Polish-Catholic propaganda.<sup>96</sup> Archbishop Nikanor was not convinced that these kinds of actions would prove effective, but he hoped that they would have some effect, however small. In short, he trusted that the government would protect the Orthodox Church against the loss of its followers. This situation nearly repeated the situation from 1867, when Tsar Alexander II’s speech to the volost-self-government-offices was distributed. Thus, Nikanor had actually no new ideas; instead he harkened back to old models of tsarist regulation of interconfessional relations.

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96 Report from Archbishop Nikanor of Grodna and Brest to the Vil’na governor-general, June 28, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, BS, ap. 1905, b. 405, pp. 11–12.



# **The Struggle between Confessional and Nationalist Groups for the Chełm–Podlasian Region: The 1905 Decree of Tolerance and Former Uniates**

Chiho Fukushima

## **Introduction**

The Eastern territories of the early modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth were called Ruthenia (Ruś), which had been domains of the Kyivan Rus and its successors (principalities of Rus), therefore, traditional inhabitants of Ruthenian lands were Orthodox Christians. After Polish influences began overwhelming Ruthenian lands, local elites gradually acclimated to the new environment, accepting Polish language and Western Christianity as their own. In contrast to the local elites, who became Polonized and Catholicized, Ruthenian non-elites remained Orthodox. Although the Union of Brest (1595–96) made majority of Ruthenian population Eastern Catholic (Uniate), it secured them separate (from Roman Catholic) hierarchy and parishes based on Eastern tradition, therefore, did not Polonize them. As a consequence, a situation peculiar to Ruthenia, where Polish nobility (including Polonized nobility of Ruthenian origin) ruled over Ruthenian peasants, was made up.

After the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, throughout the nineteenth century, Ruthenian lands were under the rules of the Russian Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy, where the formation of Ukrainian or Belorussian nations started. However, many of the Ruthenian peasants had not yet been assimilated to any nationality until the twentieth century. They were no one but “tutejsi” (or autochtons) of the



lands, dependent on their Polish lords even after the Emancipation, whereas the Russian Empire always treated them as Polonized branches of “Russian” nation and continued the efforts to de-Polonize them.

This chapter features these Ruthenians and the competition over them between the Polish and Russian elites. The focus of the discussion is the religious issue, especially the Decree of Tolerance (1905), and the Chełm question, the most visible consequence of the Decree.

### **Former Uniates in the Former Territories of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth**

When the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was formally dissolved in 1795, the Uniate population was unevenly distributed and more heavily concentrated in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania than in the Kingdom of Poland. Earlier research indicates that during the first half of the nineteenth century, Uniate peasants were already conscious of their confessional identity as Catholic, although they were still very far from any form of nation-building. In 1838, on the eve of the Union of Polotsk (the “reunion” of the Uniate Church and the Russian Orthodox Church), more than one hundred Uniate priests petitioned Nicholas I for permission to become Roman Catholic and not Orthodox if the Uniate Church was to be abolished.<sup>1</sup>

Not all Uniates expressed such resistance to the empire’s policy of absorbing them into the Russian Orthodox Church. Resistance was peculiar to those Uniates living in the Western provinces concerned with the Union of Polotsk, and especially those in Congress Poland, where the Uniate diocese of Chełm remained active until 1875. Uniates in Right-Bank Ukraine, where the policy to reunite them with the Orthodox Church had already been initiated during the reign of Catherine II, converted rather smoothly to Orthodoxy. The main reason for this was the lack of dominance of the Uniate Church among local Little Russians there.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alena Filatowa, “Kościół unicki a tożsamość Białorusinów (koniec XVIII–pierwsza połowa XIX wieku),” *Polska–Ukraina 100 lat sąsiedztwa* 4 (1998): 201.

<sup>2</sup> The struggle between the Uniate and the Orthodox church was seesawing in the Ukrainian lands. Barbara

Before the Union of Polotsk, Uniates more or less evaded Orthodox Mass and sacraments. Conscious of their own confessional identity, they considered Orthodox believers as “other” and doctrinally schismatic. Those who moved to the Orthodox Church were called “Moskals” by those who did not. Smaragd Kryżanowski, the Orthodox Bishop of Polotsk and Vitebsk, mentioned conflicts between local Uniates and Orthodox believers in his letters. They called each other names such as “Moskals,” “apostate,” or “Polish fools.”<sup>3</sup> Since the locals had no distinct national identity, they were identified only by their religious association and were seen as Catholic or Orthodox. Both “Muscovite” and “Polish” were just alternative names for Catholic and Orthodox confessional identities.

Even before the Union of Polotsk, the Russian government made local Uniate priests celebrate Mass and preach in their local (Ruthenian) language instead of Polish in order to de-Polonize these regions. This was rational because not all locals understood Polish, and the switch from Polish to Ruthenian was accepted by locals. Notwithstanding this development, a segment of Ruthenian Uniates changed their rite and became Roman Catholic after the Union of Polotsk, while the majority became Orthodox.<sup>4</sup>

Yet those Orthodox priests who had previously been Uniate priests faced difficulties in fulfilling their functions after 1839. Many of them had never been taught how to conduct Mass in Old Church Slavonic. Parishioners were even less proficient in Old Church Slavonic, although they did not understand Polish either. Pavel Ignatiev, the governor of Vitebsk, admitted that the integration of former Uniates to Orthodoxy was not going well.<sup>5</sup> After the “reunification” of Uniates with the Russian Orthodox Church, they were no longer Uniate, but neither were they strictly Orthodox. Having maintained Uniate-like characteristics in their culture, they

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Skinner, *The Western Front of the Eastern Church: Uniate and Orthodox Conflict in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009).

3 Filatowa, “Kościół unicki,” 201.

4 Ibid., 202. As a consequence of this union, around 1,500,000 people converted to Orthodoxy. Paul W. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 79.

5 Filatowa, “Kościół unicki,” 202.

became quasi-Orthodox. Some researchers emphasize that this hybrid character of autochthonous peasants became one of the fundamental elements of future Belorussian identity.<sup>6</sup>

Although the attempts to make former Uniates fully Orthodox or Russify them were not very successful, the Russian Empire did succeed in partly de-Polonizing them. In the mid-nineteenth century, Ruthenian peasants seemed to distance themselves from their Polish lords. Further, the Poles failed to mobilize Ruthenian peasants during the January Uprising (1863–64), though there were exceptions, for example, in Congress Poland.<sup>7</sup>

### The Reality of “Nominally” Orthodox Former Uniates

Until the suppression of the January Uprising, the situation of Congress Poland had been different from that of other former Polish–Lithuanian territories. It enjoyed comparative autonomy, and the Uniate diocese of Chełm was the only place in the empire where Uniates could legally practice their religion. The autonomous status of the kingdom came to an end with the suppression of the January Uprising. It was then renamed Vistula Land, and the diocese of Chełm, which included its approximately 260,000 parishioners, was dissolved and merged into the Russian Orthodox Church in 1875.<sup>8</sup> The Russian Empire leveraged Orthodox immigrants from Galicia—who were Russophiles and hostile to the growth of Polishness among Ruthenians—to establish Russian Orthodoxy and de-Polonize the Ruthenian lands of former Congress Poland, that is, the Chełm–Podlasian regions.<sup>9</sup>

After 1875, Uniates of the Chełm diocese who longed to join Roman Catholic Church but were rejected became formally (but nominally) Or-

6 Michitaka Hattori, *Fushigi no kuni Belarus* (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2004), 50.

7 Anna Krochmal, “Kościół unicki w Galicji i na Chełmszczyźnie wobec manifestacji patriotycznych i Powstania Styczniowego (1861–1864),” *Teka Komisji Historycznej X* (2013): 47–77.

8 According to the calculation by Kolbuk, the number of parishioners of the whole diocese numbered to a total of 260,156 in 1874. Witold Kolbuk, *Duchowieństwo unickie w Królestwie Polskim 1835–1875* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL, 1992), 15.

9 Włodzimierz Osadczy, *Święta Rus': Rozwój i oddziaływanie idei prawosławia w Galicji* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2007), 204–34.

thodox. While contact between Roman Catholics and former Uniates was forbidden in the empire after the January Uprising, former Uniates were dependent on Catholic priests. Many of the former Uniates of Congress Poland registered in Orthodox parish records boycotted Orthodox services and sacraments and secretly availed themselves of various Catholic services and sacraments performed by Catholic priests.<sup>10</sup> It is ironic that in specific cases, the attempt to de-Polonize Ruthenian peoples produced the opposite result.

After 1875, former Uniates of former Congress Poland not only became more dependent on local Roman Catholic priests but also grew their ties with the Galician Uniate Church. Many Podlasian couples avoided Orthodox weddings and held their marriage ceremonies in Galicia, where the Uniate Church still functioned. This became somewhat fashionable, and such marriages were called “Cracovian marriages.” Since “Cracovian marriages” were considered illegitimate in the Russian Empire, couples who had “Cracovian marriages” were continuously pressured to marry in the Orthodox Church, and their children were treated as illegitimate.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, couples who married in Galicia could be fined for illegally crossing the border.<sup>12</sup>

Another popular custom among former Uniates was “burial without a priest.” When former Uniates did not want an Orthodox priest to supervise their funerals and they could not find a Catholic priest, they buried the dead by themselves. This custom was formally prohibited in the former Congress lands in 1882, and violators were fined.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> According to data (1876) presented by Cabaj, in six districts (Biała, Konstantynów, Radzyń, Siedlce, Sokółów, Włodawa) of the province of Siedlce, only 9.74 percent of formally Orthodox parishioners visited Orthodox churches; unbaptized (in the Orthodox Church) children numbered 1,307. Jarosław Cabaj, “Unici Podlascy wobec ukazu tolerancyjnego z 30 kwietnia 1905 r.,” *Rocznik Białkopodlaski* IV (1996): 157–59.

<sup>11</sup> According to data presented by Cabaj (based on Loganow’s calculation in 1913), in four districts (Biała, Konstantynów, Radzyń, Włodawa) of the province of Siedlce, 4,182 couples married in Galicia, while 8,703 married in local Orthodox churches. Cabaj, “Unici Podlascy,” 159. “Cracovian marriage” had been a punishable offence since 1880. Witold Kolbuk, “Kwestia chełmska 1839–1918: między religią a polityką,” *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Studia Religioznictwa* 32 (1999): 144.

<sup>12</sup> Cabaj, “Unici Podlascy,” 159. The weakly guarded Russo–Austrian border was also crossed by parents with babies who wished their own children be baptized by Uniate clergy. Robert Blobaum, “Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife: The Struggle between Catholics and Orthodox Christians in the Chełm Region of Russian Poland, 1904–1906,” *The Polish Review* XXXV, no.2 (1990): 115.

<sup>13</sup> Cabaj, „Unici Podlascy,” 160.

Those who were nominally Orthodox but did not follow the Orthodox Church were called “recalcitrants” (“oporni” in Polish). There has been much discussion about how many former Uniates still remained attached to Catholicism. According to data emanating from the Orthodox side (shared by Bishop Evlogii Georgievsky), about 100,000 former Uniates were under the influence of Poles, including both Catholic and secular nationalists.<sup>14</sup> Another set of data from an investigation conducted by the Holy Synod in 1899 revealed the number of “recalcitrants” to be 81,246 (nearly 18 percent of former Uniates).<sup>15</sup> The governor of Siedlce reported that about 20,000 of 136,215 “Russians” in his province emphatically claimed to be Catholic.<sup>16</sup> Until 1905, various punishments (penalties or banishment) were meted out to “recalcitrants” for working on Orthodox holidays, burying their dead in Catholic cemeteries, and so on. Occasionally, they were even deported to the deep interior of Russia proper.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Decree of Tolerance (1905) and Mass Conversion in Former Territories of the Commonwealth**

The Decree of Tolerance, which was the primary issue in the religious politics during the twilight years of the Russian Empire, must be studied in the broad context of the Eurasian Empire as has been done by Paul Werth.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the status and treatment of former Uniates was comparable to that of other religious groups in the empire who had been forced into Orthodoxy and were also the beneficiaries of the Decree of Tolerance. Yet, as part of the “Russian nation,” former Uniates could not be put placed in the same category as various groups of “foreign” faiths. In this sense, former Uniates were very similar to the Old Believers, who were the primary beneficiaries of the Decree.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>15</sup> Ks. Józef Łupiński, “Ukaz tolerancyjny Cara Mikołaja II z 17/30 kwietnia 1905 roku,” *Saeculum Christianum* 8, no. 1 (2001): 185.

<sup>16</sup> Theodore R. Weeks, “The ‘End’ of the Uniate Church in Russia: The *Vozsoedinenie* of 1875,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44, no. 1 (1996): 38.

<sup>17</sup> Kolbuk, “Kwestia chełmska,” 144.

<sup>18</sup> Werth, *The Tsar’s Foreign Faiths*.

The background of former Uniates was specific to them: the historical encounter of Ruthenianness (later, Russianness) and Polishness in their regions. As nationalism flowered, the issues of confessional identity could not remain separate from that of nationality.

Aleksander Łotocki (Oleksandr Lototskyi), a contemporary Ukrainian politician, analyzed the motives behind the conversion and the influence of conversion on the formation of the national identity of Podlasian Ruthenians.<sup>19</sup> Karol Dębiński analyzed the list of converted people compiled by the Catholic Church, which was called the *Liber Conversorum*.<sup>20</sup> Studies on former Uniates by contemporaries not only prefigured research on a group which requires special attention in regard to the effect of the Decree in the Polish–Russian borderlands, but are also valuable as primary sources for researchers of later generations.

Since that time, in Polish historiography there is an accumulation of research into the consequence of the Decree of Tolerance among former Uniate population. This research has established new facts and clarified many points regarding, for instance, the situation of the former Uniates before and after the Decree, and how the mass conversion to Catholicism affected their identity.<sup>21</sup> Activities of external groups (Catholic Poles, Polish nationalists, Orthodox clergy, Russian officials and so on) have been studied as important agents affecting former Uniates, as the latter rarely left their own voice in the historical record.<sup>22</sup> The question of identification of for-

19 Oleksandr Lototskyi (published under pseudonym, Bilousenko), *Kholmśka sprawa* (Kiev: Vik, 1909).

20 Karol Dębiński, *Ukaz tolerancyjny z dnia 30 kwietnia 1905 roku w diecezji lubelskiej: Wolność unitów porzucenia prawosławia (odbitka z Wiadomości Archidiecezjalnych Warszawskich)* (Warsaw: Drukarnia Społeczna Stow. Robotn. Chrześc., 1918).

21 Jarosław Cabaj examined the attitudes of former Uniate Podlasians toward the Decree. Cabaj, "Unici Podlascy." Robert Blobaum's article is the most pioneering research available in English. Blobaum, "Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife," 111–24.

22 Tadeusz Krawczak researched the reactionary activities of the Orthodox and Russian nationalistic camp after 1905. Tadeusz Krawczak, *Kształtowanie świadomości narodowej wśród ludności wiejskiej Podlasia w latach 1896–1918* (Biała Podlaska: Podlaskie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne, 1982). Witold Kolbuk, who researched Orthodox–Russian interference with the practice of the Decree, concluded that the Decree of Tolerance was strictly for appearances, and neither the tsar nor the Orthodox Church allowed former Uniates to leave "the Russian world." Witold Kolbuk, "Skutki carskiego ukazu tolerancyjnego z 1905 roku na ziemi chełmsko-podlaskiej," *Roczniki humanistyczne* XLV–XLVI, no. 7 (1997): 239–49. Józef Łupiński pointed out the discord in the Orthodox camp due to the lack of consensus between the tsar,

mer Uniates, which is connected with the situations around the Decree and the conversions as their choices, and the separation of the eastern borderland of the Congress Kingdom of Poland (the Chełm–Podlasian region) as a consequence of the loss of equilibrium caused by the mass conversion of former Uniates to Catholicism have also aroused researchers' interests.<sup>23</sup>

The work of these historians reveal much about the Chełm–Podlasian region at a time of great change in the religious policy of the Russian Empire, and have helped explain the role of religious issues in the political struggles between the Russian Empire and Polish nationalists in regard to the borderland. But less attention has been paid to the potential for a Uniate revival.

In this study, based mainly on Polish sources, I am going to retrace the transformation process of the autochthonous identity into a modern nationality by analyzing the outcomes of the Decree of Tolerance and reactions and counteractions from competing actors in the region. My special attention will be directed to examining the possibility of a Uniate revival, which could provide autochthonous Ruthenians other options than becoming Polonized. By following developments before and after the Decree, the links between religious and nationality issues and the conflicts involving not only the Russian Empire and Poland, but also the Ukrainian nation-building program become clear.

Mass conversion to Roman Catholicism and the Chełm question are the most significant issues that emerged from the Decree of Tolerance, and while this chapter touches on these, many researchers have also addressed

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the Committee of Ministers, and the Holy Synod. Łupiński, "Ukaz tolerancyjny," 183–200. Meanwhile, Jan Konefal concentrated on the role Roman Catholics played in supporting former Uniates. Jan Konefal, "Towarzystwo Opieki nad Unitami (1903–1912)," *Chrześcijanin na Świecie* 114 (1983): 49–56. Mariusz Sawa discusses the identity question of the "tutejsi" of this region by comparing the approaches to various outside groups (both religious and secular) toward them. Mariusz Radosław Sawa, "Unici chełmsko-podlascy' i ich potomkowie (XIX/XX w.)—kim byli: Perspektywa historyka-autochtona," *Bazylikańskie Studia Historyczne* 4 (2014): 67–83.

23 Jarosław Cabaj, "Postawy ludności Chełmszczyzny i Podlasia wobec kwestii przynależności państwowej swych ziem (1912, 1918–1919)," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 99, no. 4 (1992): 63–81. Andrzej Szabaciuk focused on the circumstances before and after the Decree in the Chełm–Podlasian region in his monograph dedicated to the Chełm question. Andrzej Szabaciuk, "Rosyjski Ulster: Kwestia chełmska w polityce imperialnej Rosji w latach 1863–1915 (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2013).

them. But another important and no less curious question has received decidedly less attention: Why did a Uniate revival not occur?<sup>24</sup> This chapter explores this question as well.

### The Decree of Tolerance, April 17/30, 1905

When the Russian Empire realized reforms and liberation were necessary after its defeat in the Russo–Japanese war, it quickly set about changing the religious policy. On February 11/24, 1905, the bill that later became the draft of the Decree of Tolerance was introduced by the Committee of Ministers and confirmed by Nicholas II. Further, on April 17/30, 1905, “The Decree confirming the beginning of the Toleration,” or the so-called Decree of Tolerance was issued by the tsar.<sup>25</sup> This decree enabled the subjects of the tsar to convert from Orthodoxy to other Christian faiths. Converting from Orthodoxy to other religions, which was considered apostasy, had been formally prohibited and designated as a punishable offense under the penal code of the Russian Empire since 1847.

The Decree contained seventeen articles. The main intended beneficiaries of this decree were the Old Believers, to whom seven articles (5–11) of the Decree were dedicated. The first, second, and fourth articles covered all Christian religions. In addition to those three articles, the thirteenth article, which focused on the places of worship for all Christian denominations, and the fourteenth, which focused on religious education (catechism, above all), applied to former Uniates. The third article, concerning nominally Orthodox people who actually followed the religion of their ancestors, was intended for non-Christian peoples, and therefore, did not apply to former Uniates.<sup>26</sup>

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24 Konrad Sadowski’s approach to the question of Uniate revival is full of useful information and suggestions, but it is tailored to understand situations in interwar Poland. Konrad Sadowski, “Religious Exclusion and State Building: The Roman Catholic Church and the Attempted Revival of Greek Catholicism in the Chełm Region, 1918–1924,” in *Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe: Essays in Honor of Roman Szporluk*, ed. Zvi Gitelman, Lubomyr A. Hajda, John-Paul Himka, Roman Solchanyk, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 507–20.

25 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*, sobranie 3-e, vol. XXV: 1905 (St. Petersburg, 1908), 257–58.

26 *Ibid.*, 257.



## Mass Conversion

The Decree of Tolerance did not permit the foundation of new religious groups, and it only allowed tsarist subjects to select one from the many existing groups. Therefore, former Uniates, who had nowhere to return to, expressed their affiliation with Catholicism by converting to the Roman Catholic Church.

Following the Decree, there were large-scale conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism. Werth has estimated that 252,571 people converted to Catholicism between 1905 and 1915 (214,949 out of them converted between 1905 and 1906) in the whole Empire.<sup>27</sup> Many conversions were recorded in the provinces of Vil'na and Grodna (approximately 62,000 cases between 1905 and 1908). Eastern Belorussian lands recorded smaller numbers (4,000 in the province of Vitebsk, for example), while in Western Belorussia, where a large population of "recalcitrants" lived, far more conversions were recorded.<sup>28</sup>

There were discussions on the actual number of conversions. According to the data documented by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, approximately 170,000 people converted from Orthodoxy to the Roman Catholic Church between 1905 and 1909 across the whole of Congress Poland, and out of them, 150,000 were from the Chełm–Podlasian region.<sup>29</sup> The tsar's government officially estimated smaller numbers (100,000 cases), while the Poles overestimated the number as closer to 200,000.<sup>30</sup> Today, many researchers tend to use the data documented by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, although Łupiński suggests the possibility of an intentional underestimation of the number of cases by the Ministry.<sup>31</sup>

27 His calculation was based on the records of the Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Faiths. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths*, 210.

28 Hryhoriewa uses the data produced by the Catholic side. Walancina Hryhoriewa, "Wyznanie unickie a świadomość narodowa Białorusinów (druga połowa XIX–początek XX)," in *Polska–Ukraina: 1000 lat sąsiedztwa*, ed. Stanisław Stępień, vol. 4., 205.

29 The Chełm–Podlasian region is defined as the Chełm region together with the Southern part of the Podlasian region, which corresponds to the eastern halves of the provinces of Lublin and Siedlce. Ninety-five percent of such conversions occurred in 1905. These numbers are supported by the records of the Orthodox Church.

30 Kolbuk, "Skutki carskiego ukazu," 240–41. Błobaum, "Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife," 120.

31 Kolbuk, "Skutki carskiego ukazu," 240–41. See also Łupiński, "Ukaz tolerancyjny," 197.

There is no doubt that the Ruthenians of the former Congress Poland had the highest rate of conversions. According to Dębiński, the Catholic population, which was 32,769 in 1904, increased to 90,349 in 1906 in eight selected parishes in the province of Siedlce.<sup>32</sup> The rate of increase was almost 280 percent.<sup>33</sup> Many people converted to Catholicism in the province of Lublin, too, although the rate of conversion was much lower than in the province of Siedlce.<sup>34</sup> In the Chełm–Podlasian region, the Roman Catholic Church was a minority until the twentieth century. The ratio of Catholic and Orthodox followers was approximately 1 to 4.5 until 1905, when the numbers were reversed. Between 1905 and 1909, more than 95 percent of those who left Orthodoxy wished to become Roman Catholic.<sup>35</sup>

### The Catholic Church's Attitude to Large-Scale Conversion

Because Uniate Ruthenian peasants of former Commonwealth territories had been dependent on local lords and intellectuals, or government officials, who were usually Roman Catholic or Orthodox, they were inevitably affected by activities of those actors after the Decree. Further, as Roman Catholics of the “Historical Poland” became increasingly conscious of their Polish nationality, their attempts to recover their exclusive hegemony over Ruthenian peasants were assisted by the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church welcomed conversions of former Uniates. Catholic priests actively traveled around former Uniate regions and encouraged people to join the Catholic Church. Kazimierz Franciszek Jaczewski, the Bishop of Lublin, gave instructions to Catholic parish priests to register all those who wished to leave Orthodoxy and “come back” to the Catho-

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32 In the province of Siedlce, there were nine parishes (*dekanaty*) total. The parish of Garwolin is excluded from consideration by Dębiński because it was exceptional in the sense that more than 95 percent of the population was Polish and Jewish, and Ruthenians were a very small minority.

33 Cabaj, “Unici Podlascy,” 164.

34 According to a brochure published in 1918, the Catholic population grew by 109 percent (from 184,134 to 201,052) in the sample districts of Lublin. M. T. (Maria Tańska) (oprac.), *Sprawa chełmska* (Warsaw: Nakład Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1918), 19.

35 Kolbuk, “Kwestia chełmska,” 148.

lic Church.<sup>36</sup> Since large numbers of former Uniates were rushing to local Catholic priests, the priests wanted the procedure for accepting them to be as quick and easy as possible.

In July 1905, Bishop Jaczewski asked Konstantin Pobednostsev, the chief procurator of the Holy Synod, for directions on how the Catholic Church should deal with former Uniates. In August 1905, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, pressured by the Orthodox Church, provided additional clarification of the Decree, and on August 20, 1905, the Department of Foreign Confessions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs announced the concrete conditions and procedures for leaving Orthodoxy:

Those who wish to leave Orthodoxy must first inform the local governor about their decision, and then inform the Orthodox bishop. An Orthodox parish priest has to confirm a person's desire to leave Orthodoxy. If the person cannot be persuaded by the Orthodox priest to remain in Orthodoxy, he/she would inform the local governor of his/her desire to convert. The local governor has to report this to the Orthodox bishop, then to the hierarchy of the church to which this person wants to belong. The Orthodox bishop sends this person the agreement within a month, and the governor gives the hierarchy of the designated church the permission to accept him/her. The local curia discusses the matter and informs the province's chancellery whether the person is acceptable or not. If the person is considered to be acceptable, the local curia has an obligation to report this to the governor and the Orthodox Church. The governor then informs the Orthodox parish about the conversion.<sup>37</sup>

The purpose of such complicated procedures was to make conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism long and arduous. It was the Holy Synod's way of resisting the Decree of Tolerance. Twice in 1907, Bishop Jaczewski made official complaints about these complicated procedures. However,

<sup>36</sup> Łupiński, "Ukaz tolerancyjny," 193–94.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 195; Cabaj, "Unici Podlascy," 167.

the seemingly complicated procedures did not discourage people from becoming Catholic because Catholic priests in practice accepted even those who had not completed the procedure for leaving Orthodoxy. In December 1906, the Catholic Church in Poland summoned a special synod in Warsaw to discuss the Decree. The leading figure at the synod was Bishop Jacewski. The synod stated the Catholic hierarchs' intention of accepting as many applicants as possible into the Catholic Church. In 1908, the Ministry of Internal Affairs intervened and decided to treat as Orthodox those people who had moved to the Catholic Church without following proper procedures to leave Orthodoxy. Despite the repeated appeals by Jacewski and other Catholic figures, and the discussions by the Polish Circle (*Koło Polskie*) at the State Duma, the procedures for leaving Orthodoxy were not made easier.<sup>38</sup>

Not all Catholic priests took pains to accept former Uniates unconditionally. Some priests rejected them upon finding that they had not followed the legitimate procedures to leave Orthodoxy. Other priests demanded bribes for accepting former Uniates (although Jacewski had instructed them not to accept anything from converts).<sup>39</sup>

Since the Decree of Tolerance was not particularly detailed and did not pay special attention to former Uniates, many concrete problems remained, and it took some time to resolve them. The most peculiar problem among former Uniates was the issue of "Cracovian marriage." As already mentioned earlier, "Cracovian marriage" was invalid in Russia, and children from such unions were considered illegitimate. In 1907, the Council of Ministers made the decision to allow civil courts to legitimize such marriages, as well as the children born in them. The problem of age was also unresolved. The Decree guaranteed the freedom to choose faiths to adults only, while the Orthodox and Catholic churches had different stan-

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38 Łupiński, "Ukaz tolerancyjny," 196–97.

39 Ibid., s.198. Bribes were also offered to local officials to speed up the process. According to Polish sources, the commission located in Warsaw, which had jurisdiction over conversion cases, received approximately two million rubles in bribes from those who desired to convert from Orthodoxy to Catholicism. Orthodox sources confirm this. Orthodox Bishop Evlogii complained that officials received bribes and released former Uniates from the Orthodox Church too easily. Kołbuk, "Skutki carskiego ukazu," 241.

dards concerning legal age. In the Orthodox Church, legal age was twenty-one years old, while in the Catholic Church, it was fourteen. In 1910, the Department of Foreign Confessions decided that for the purposes of the Decree of Tolerance, the legal age should follow the Orthodox standard of twenty-one.<sup>40</sup>

The stubbornness of “the recalcitrants” had always attracted local Roman Catholics. Additionally, Poles’ compassion for the miseries of the former Uniates in the Chełm–Podlasian region was anchored in their resentments over the suppression of the 1863–1864 Uprising. Roman Catholics tried to attract former Uniates to their side. To this end, their activities aimed at former Uniates included running such organizations as the Collegium Secretum, which was established in 1896 in Congress Poland and published underground periodicals for former Uniates, or as the Society for Defending Uniates (Towarzystwo Opieki nad Unitami), which was established in 1903 in Cracow and provided former Uniates with education in the Polish language.<sup>41</sup> In 1904, the Society drew up a petition to the Pope (Pius X) calling on him to recognize former Uniates as Catholic, and 56,500 former Uniates signed it.<sup>42</sup> Another organization called Catholic Association (Związek Katolicki), established in 1907 in Congress Poland conducted critical activities against not only the Orthodox Church, but also the Mariavite Church which exercised growing influence among Poles in the Russian Empire.<sup>43</sup>

The interest of Poles in Ruthenian matters was not limited to the religious sphere. Organizations like the Society for Defending Uniates and the Catholic Association contributed significantly to making many Ruthe-

40 Łupiański, “Ukaz tolerancyjny,” 195–96.

41 Sawa remarks that the initial activities of the Society for defending Uniates, which was connected to the Polish League (Liga Polska), later renamed as “the National League” (Liga Narodowa), can be traced back to 1897. Blobaum, “Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife,” 116; Sawa, “Unici chełmsko-podlascy,” 74.

42 Łupiański, “Ukaz tolerancyjny,” 161–63; Kolbuk, “Skutki carskiego ukazu,” 245.

43 Having been excommunicated from the Catholic Church since 1906, the Mariavite Church was criticized by mainstream Catholic Poles. Blobaum, “Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife,” 113. Kolbuk points out that the Holy Synod even supported the Mariavite Church with the hopes of making it strong enough to rival the Catholic Church, which was becoming more and more influential over former Uniates due to the strong leadership of the Bishop Jaczewski. Kolbuk, “Skutki carskiego ukazu,” 242, 245; Kolbuk, “Kwestia chełmska,” 149, 152.

nians, especially in the Chełm–Podlasian region, pro-Polish. Cabaj points out that Polish secular nationalist activists joined the open-air Mass organized by the Society for Former Uniates.<sup>44</sup> In addition to the schools run by religious-based organizations, Polish political parties also provided former Uniates with Polish-language education in several institutions, for example, the Polish Motherland School (Polska Macierz Szkolna) run by National Democrats (Endecja) and even the Light (Światło) run by essentially anti-clerical Socialists. They were forced to move their activities underground by the government at the turn of 1907.<sup>45</sup>

Against the background of fierce struggle with Ukrainian nationalists in Galicia, Poles were enthusiastically sought to facilitate the entry of Podlasian Ruthenians into their camp. Many contemporary publications in Galicia highlighted Poles' sympathy toward former Uniate Podlasians.<sup>46</sup> Besides working with these former Uniate Podlasians, Polish activists also tried to awaken the Poles' interest in them.<sup>47</sup>

### The Counteractions of the Orthodox/Russian Camp

Łupiński pointed out that the decree was embarrassing for the Russian Orthodox Church. Pobednostsev, the procurator of the Holy Synod, had not been consulted during the preparation process of the Decree and stood categorically against it. Orthodox priests were uneasy about the large-scale conversions and were afraid of the collapse of Orthodox parishes in the former Congress Poland. In May 1905, Ieronim, the Orthodox archbishop of Chełm and Warsaw, warned about the possibility of persecutions of

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44 Cabaj, "Unici Podlascy," 167.

45 Kolbuk, "Kwestia chełmska," 151–52. By 1904, the network of underground schools with curriculum emphasizing the study of Polish language and Catholic religion numbered 134 in the province of Siedlce. Orthodox bishop Evlogii was astonished by the "Orthodox" children of his diocese who addressed him in Polish during his visitation in 1903–1904. Blobaum, "Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife," 116–17.

46 An example of such publications seeking to inform Poles about former Uniates was *Hospody Pomiluj na Podlasiu: Kronika 33 lat prześladowania unii przez naocznego świadka*, which was published in Cracow, 1908.

47 *Z ziemi chełmskiej* by Władysław Reymont (1909) and several works by Stefan Żeromski were inspired by the tragic history of Belorussian Uniates. Makoto Hayasaka, *Belarus: Kyokai-ryoiki no rekishigaku* (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 2013): 226–34.

Orthodox believers in that region, and the local governors reported the volatile situation in the Chełm–Podlasian region to the governor-general of Warsaw. In fact, even stones were thrown at some Orthodox priests (probably by former Uniates). Since the Decree of Tolerance did not allow the conversion of Orthodox churches to Catholic churches, the former became vacant in those parishes where the majority of parishioners had converted to Catholicism. Further, government officials, at the request of the Orthodox Bishop Evlogii, did not turn over these churches to Catholics.<sup>48</sup>

On realizing that their position was in danger in the westernmost regions of the empire, the Orthodox camp reacted quickly. The figure leading the Orthodox side in its reaction to the crisis was the Bishop of Chełm, Evlogii Georgievskii. In the sense that he was hard-working and extremely charismatic, he was the exact counterpart of the Catholic Jacewski. He actively made his rounds in the diocese and called on Orthodox followers to adhere to the Orthodox faith. He also pressured the Holy Synod (Pobednostsev), and even the tsar, to lend more support to Orthodox people in the Congress Poland.<sup>49</sup>

To compete with the Catholic and Polish influences, the Orthodox camp had already founded organizations aimed to shield Ruthenians from Polish influence in 1905. The Confraternity of the Holy Mother in Chełm was one such organization. It engaged in anti-Polish propaganda and warned locals not to switch to the Catholic side. In addition, it conducted a campaign to vilify the Commonwealth as a suppressor of Ruthenians and to exalt the tsars as protectors. Another organization, the Confraternity for the Protection of Ruthenians from Poles and Catholic Priests, was established specifically to counter the Catholics' the Society for Defending Uniates. The journal *Kholmiskii narodnyi listok* (1906–08) recorded a number of criticisms against Polish-Catholics by the Russian-Orthodox side.<sup>50</sup>

Comparing the activities of such Russian organizations with their Polish counterparts, Cabaj noted some commonalities: they both referred to history, although their interpretations of the history of Ruthenian lands

48 Lupiński, "Ukaz tolerancyjny," 191–92, 194; Szabaciuk, "Rosyjski Ulster," 98.

49 Szabaciuk, "Rosyjski Ulster," 94–98, 101–02.

50 Kolbuk, "Kwestia chełmska," 150.

greatly differed. The Catholic side emphasized the persecution of Ruthenian Uniates by the Russian Empire, while the Orthodox side emphasized the partition of the Commonwealth as God's punishment for torturing Ruthenian Orthodox people.<sup>51</sup>

In the westernmost territories of the empire, the Poles' focus on former Uniates, their anti-imperial, anti-Orthodox activities, and the rapid increase in their population as a consequence of the large-scale conversions to Roman Catholicism led to a reaction not only from the Orthodox Church but also from the imperial government. To prevent former Uniate Podlasians from leaning toward Catholics and Poles, a discriminative policy against non-Orthodox subjects was introduced. The Włościański Bank (Peasants' Land Bank) was forbidden from lending money to non-Orthodox peasants to purchase land. Russians even used demagoguery, with Bishop Evlogii promising to divide Polish estates among Orthodox peasants.<sup>52</sup>

### Toward the Separation of the Chełm–Podlasian Region

The last attempt to defend Russianness, or perhaps more appropriately, Ruthenianness, in the Chełm–Podlasian region was an administrative reform: the separation of the Chełm–Podlasian region from Congress Poland and its reorganization into an independent administrative unit called the Province of Chełm (1912–1915).<sup>53</sup>

The Chełm–Podlasian region was where Orthodox inhabitants faced the most serious pressure to convert to Catholicism after the issue of the

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51 Cabaj, "Unici Podlascy," 165–67.

52 Kolbuk, "Skutki carskiego ukazu," 247–48; Kolbuk, "Kwestia chełmska," 142, 153. On both the Catholic and Orthodox sides, various demagogueries or rumors fabricated by rural clergy and parishioners uninstructed by bishops circulated and occasionally drove people to panic. Blobaum, "Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife," 119.

53 Until the separation, this region consisted of all or part of eleven counties in the eastern halves of the Siedlce and Lublin provinces. The counties of the former, where Orthodox population was relatively large, were Włodawa (56 percent), Biała (38 percent), Konstantynów (31 percent). Of the latter, the Orthodox population formed a majority in Chełm, Biłgoraj, and Zamość. Blobaum, "Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife," 113–14; Kolbuk, "Skutki carskiego ukazu," 248–49; Cabaj, "Unici Podlascy," 168; Wojciech Trzebiński i Adam Borkiewicz (oprac.), *Dokumentacja geograficzna*, Z. 4: Podziały administracyjne Królestwa Polskiego w okresie 1815–1918 r. (Zarys historyczny) (Warsaw: Instytut Geografii PAN, 1956): 96–99.



Decree of Tolerance, and this occasionally took the forms of terrorizing or discriminating against their Orthodox neighbors. The region even came under martial law for several months so that the state could reestablish there, but it could not fully halt anti-Orthodox violence.<sup>54</sup> Bishop Evlogii played a crucial role in realizing this plan, too. Three months after the promulgation of the Decree, Evlogii drew up a petition for the separation.<sup>55</sup> He proposed that “Kholmśkaia Rus,” (the eastern part of the provinces of Lublin and Siedlce) should be separated from the Vistula Land and made a new province. He also proposed that the region should be annexed to the provinces of Grodna or Volhynia, if it was too costly to establish an independent province.<sup>56</sup>

The idea of separating this region from Congress Poland had already been discussed by the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century. When Slavophilism and Pan-Slavism appeared as “Great Russian nationalism” in the Russian Empire, the Chełm–Podlasian region, also called “Kholmśkaia Rus” or the “Russian Trans-Bug region,” was considered to be an important strategic front in “the Russian world.”<sup>57</sup>

In the 1860s, the emancipated peasants of the region, the majority of whom were former Uniates, were targeted for integration into the Great Russian nation. It was Vladimir Cherkasskii, a Slavophile activist, who first mentioned the foundation of the province of Chełm in 1866.<sup>58</sup> In 1878, the plan for separation was discussed at the Commission for the Affairs of Congress Poland but was rejected. In the 1880s, the idea was again proposed, and the Minister of Internal Affairs, the governor of Siedlce, the governor-general of Warsaw, and the Orthodox bishop of Chełm and War-

54 Blobaum, “Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife,” 120–23. State authorities demanded the Bishop of Lublin transfer local Catholic priests disrupting social peace by zealously trying to convert rural Orthodox inhabitants. Reports sent by statesmen of Siedlce and Lublin provinces show how local Orthodox believers and state officials were threatened by daily outbreaks of “pogroms.” They reported about Polish employers’ wage discrimination against Orthodox workers.

55 M. T., *Sprawa chełmska*, 18.

56 Szabaciuk, “*Rosyjski Ulster*,” 103.

57 Kolbuk, “Kwestia chełmska,” 142.

58 Ibid., 143.

saw (Leontii Lebedinskii at that time) supported this idea.<sup>59</sup> In the 1890s, Vladimir Bobrinskii, a representative of “the Russian–Galician Association,” actively promoted this idea.<sup>60</sup> However, during the nineteenth century, the idea of the separation was never implemented because there was still optimism that the whole Congress kingdom could be de-Polonized over a long period of time. Moreover, there were opposing opinions on territorial-administrative reforms from a legal viewpoint.<sup>61</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the idea of separation finally came to fruition. The ecclesiastic administrative reorganization preceded the secular administrative reorganization. In February 1903, the governor-general of Warsaw sent a letter to the Holy Synod emphasizing the necessity of the formation of the independent diocese of Chełm.<sup>62</sup> After the Russo–Japanese War, and soon after the Decree of Tolerance, the Holy Synod made the decision to establish an independent diocese of Chełm on April 29, 1905. In June, this decision was acknowledged by a decree, and the new diocese began in September.<sup>63</sup> The former archdiocese of Warsaw was divided into two dioceses: the archdiocese of Warsaw and the Vistula region, and the diocese of Chełm and Lublin.<sup>64</sup> The secular administrative reorganization followed this ecclesiastical reorganization.<sup>65</sup>

The Chełm province was explicitly designed to be Orthodox dominant.<sup>66</sup> However, the regions where the Orthodox Church had dominance over the Catholic Church were too small (only the districts of Hrubesczów

59 Ibid., 144, 146.

60 Ibid., 147.

61 Iosif Gurko, the governor-general of Warsaw, was anxious about the significant difference between the legal systems of Congress Poland and the Russian mainland. Therefore, he seemed unenthusiastic about transferring the Chełm region to the Empire proper. M.T., *Sprawa chełmska*, 16–17.

62 Szabaciuk, “*Rosyjski Ulster*,” 103.

63 Ibid., 104.

64 Evlogii, who was a strong supporter of the idea of a separate province of Chełm, was appointed the bishop of Chełm and Lublin, while Hieronim was appointed the bishop of Warsaw.

65 Prior to the actual separation, several policies indicating the government’s intention to treat the Chełm region separately were formulated. In June 1905, the Chełm region was excluded from the limited concessions for local administration and elementary schools granted by the Committee of Ministers in the Vistula lands. During the second Duma of 1906, the “Russian” population of the Chełm region was guaranteed the right to separately elect its own representatives. Blobaum, “Toleration and Ethno-Religious Strife,” 123–24.

66 Kolbuk, “*Kwestia chełmska*,” 147–148.

and Chełm) to form a separate province. Consequently, the government also had to include in the province some other regions where the Orthodox and Catholic populations were more equally split.<sup>67</sup> The administration of the new province of Chełm corresponded with the administrative reorganization in the Orthodox Church. The territories in Congress Poland belonged to the diocese of Warsaw and the Vistula region, and the province of Chełm belonged to the diocese of Chełm and Lublin.<sup>68</sup>

### The Chełm Question in the Polish National Discourse

The Poles were unnerved by the separation of the Chełm–Podlasian region from the historical territory of Congress Poland. Lubomir Dymśa, the delegate to the State Duma from the province of Siedlce, emphatically objected to the separation. He argued that the separation would prove to be a serious mistake for both the state's interests and the local inhabitants' welfare in his book published in 1911, which presented various demographic data on the provinces of Siedlce and Lublin.<sup>69</sup> He opposed the separation, especially from the perspective of equal rights for Orthodox and Catholic inhabitants, which the Decree of Tolerance was meant to secure.<sup>70</sup> He also condemned Russia as an oppressor of the Poles, despite Russia's claim to be the leader of Slavic nations. He entreated that Russia should respect those nationalities who had no state on their own.<sup>71</sup>

To counter the Russian and Ukrainian national discourse, which claimed the Chełm–Podlasian region as their own (Russian or Ruthenian), the Poles developed their own arguments. The important points of those arguments can be found in a brochure written by an anonymous author (with initials M. T., later identified as Maria Tańska) and published in Warsaw in 1918.<sup>72</sup> Tańska called the separation of the Chełm–Podla-

67 M. T., *Sprawa chełmska*, 20.

68 Kolbuk, "Kwestia chełmska," 152.

69 Lubomir Dymśa, *Sprawa chełmska* (Warsaw: Nakład Gebethera i Wolffa, 1911).

70 Ibid., 96–104.

71 Ibid., 119–20.

72 M. T., *Sprawa chełmska*.

sian region “the new partition of Poland,” and attempted to demonstrate the region’s Polishness.<sup>73</sup> The author mentioned many reasons to consider the Chełm–Podlasian region could have been a part of the historical Polish territory. The first was the geographical location of the region, which was a part of the Vistula and, not the Dnieper or Dniester basin. Second, it was only Vladimir who brought the region into his realm; until then, it belonged to the Western Slavs.<sup>74</sup> Added to those geographical and historical reasons is the third reason: the region’s religious tradition. Tańska mentioned the Church Unions of Florence (1439) and Brest (1596) as the examples of the region’s long familiarity with Catholicism, and emphasized the Commonwealth’s tolerant attitude toward Orthodox institutions (educational and printing institutions above all), which was generally much friendlier than Russia’s attitude toward Ruthenian coreligionists.<sup>75</sup>

As for ethno-national factors, the fourth reason, Tańska claimed that all Podlasian (and Volhynian and East-Galician) peasants have Polish blood. She insisted that they, along with their lords, were of a Polish–Ruthenian mix, even though they became “Ruthenianized” while their lords were Polonized.<sup>76</sup> On the one hand, the author emphasized historical connections between the Chełm–Podlasian land and Poland, while on the other hand, she emphasized the lack of any strong relationship between this region and Russia. She recalled that in the third partition of the Commonwealth (1795), Russia did not specifically object to Austria’s claim to this region. Using this incident, she pointed out Russians’ indifference to the region and also noted that the emergence of the idea of separating this region from Congress Poland was a very recent development in Russia.<sup>77</sup>

The author placed a great emphasis not only on the history of the Commonwealth in the region but also on the Napoleonic tradition. She not-

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73 Ibid., 30.

74 Ibid., 6.

75 Ibid., 6–10.

76 When Poles extensively colonized eastern territories during the medieval and early modern periods, Polish peasants (many of them were taken from Mazovia and Mazuria) became Ruthenian, while local elites assimilated into the Polish nobility. Ibid., 7.

77 Ibid., 11, 15.

ed legal and juridical features in Congress Poland derived from the Duchy of Warsaw. She also asserted the crucial differences between these features and those of Russia proper, and argued that the incorporation of the Chełm region into the empire's estate-based system could cause great confusion as well as legal and economic disadvantages for locals.<sup>78</sup> She did not fail to mention the different calendar systems adopted by Congress Poland and the empire, and insisted that the revision of the calendar created considerable difficulties in everyday lives of local Catholics.<sup>79</sup>

### The Chełm Question in the Ukrainian Nation-Building Scheme

Former Uniate peasants in the Chełm–Podlasian region, who were yet to be integrated into any modern nation, could potentially become not only Russians or Poles, but also Ukrainians.

The first attempt to “Ukrainianize” this group was made not by Ukrainians, but by the Russian imperial government, which tried to introduce the Little Russian language in Orthodox churches in 1905, not long after the influence of the Decree of Tolerance became visible. Although the Mass was to be held in Old Church Slavonic, sermons were to be given in Little Russian, which was more similar to the local dialect of the region in comparison with Russian, so that parishioners could easily understand them. The goal of this policy was to de-Polonize local churches and parishioners.<sup>80</sup>

When Nikolai Ignatiev, the Minister of Internal Affairs, advocated for the separation of the Chełm–Podlasian region from Congress Poland, he proposed that the region must become a part of the Volhynian province, which belonged to the general government of Kiev (the so-called South-western provinces, where the predominant nationality was Ukrainian).<sup>81</sup>

78 Ibid., 20–26.

79 Ibid., 21–23.

80 Sawa, “‘Unici chełmsko-podlascy,’” 77–78. Bishop Evlogii required even Roman Catholic churches in the former Uniate region to introduce Old Church Slavonic and Little Russian (Ukrainian). Szabaciuk, “*Rosyjski Ulster*,” 98.

81 Kolbuk, “Kwestia chełmska,” 146.

Ukrainian nationalists in Eastern Galicia also had an interest in the Chełm question. They first approached the Chełm–Podlasian former Uniates around 1907. The Shevchenko Society and Prosvita (Enlightenment) had begun their activities in the region, and Ukrainian nationalists believed that they had to be more cautious about the Polonization rather than the Russification of the Podlasian Ruthenians. Therefore, they welcomed the formation of the independent province of Chełm, which meant the separation of “Chełm Ukrainians” from the Polish lands.<sup>82</sup>

The author of the abovementioned brochure seemed anxious about the eventual Ukrainization of the region. She pointed out the great distance that lay between the province of Chełm and Kiev given that the governor-general of the latter was also in charge of the province of Chełm. The author also criticized the transfer of Catholic parishes to the bishopric of Lutsk and Zhytomyr. She expressed her objections to those changes from the perspective of convenience. Presumably, however, the author did not underestimate the ambitions of the Ukrainian side in this region.<sup>83</sup> As the Ukrainians established their state, Poles hoped that even if the worse came to worst, the Polish–Ukrainian border would still be fixed on the Bug (also known later as the Curzon Line), although it was more likely that the Styr would become the borderline. This was desirable from the perspective of the ethnicity and religion of the people in the region.<sup>84</sup>

The Chełm question attracted the attention of the Habsburg monarchy, too. Poles were actively lobbying to involve Hungarians in particular in this issue because both faced the same menace: the Ukrainian national movement. Their common interest was to prevent the Carpatho-Ruthenians from becoming involved in the Ukrainian national movement. The Polish Circle even sent representatives from Russia to visit Budapest to form a united front.<sup>85</sup> During World War I, Austria supported the Polishness of

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82 Ibid., 155; Cabaj, “Postawy ludności Chełmszczyzny i Podlasia,” 69.

83 M. T., *Sprawa chełmska*, 26–28.

84 Adorján Divéky, *Sprawa Chełmska a Węgry* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo “Przeglądu Dyplomatycznego”, 1919),: 6.

85 Ibid., 6–7.

the Chełm region, in contrast to Germany, which supported Ukrainians' efforts to nationalize the region.<sup>86</sup>

In 1917, the Ukrainian Central Rada proclaimed that this region was to be included in the Ukrainian state.<sup>87</sup> In 1918, when the treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, the Ukrainians got close to taking control of this region with German support. However, the Chełm–Podlasian region was becoming increasingly Polonized due to the efforts of Poles, while the Ruthenian population was decreasing as a result of Russians' appeals for the local Orthodox population to migrate eastwards.<sup>88</sup>

### The Reactivation of the Uniate Church

Despite their enthusiasm about joining the Roman Catholic Church, former Uniates seemed to have no ambition to reestablish the Uniate Church. The top priority for them was being acknowledged as Catholic, and the difference between the rites in the two Churches was not of much interest to them. This clearly shows that, at least in former Congress Poland, Ruthenians had been firmly confessionalized as Catholics but had no national identity yet (whether Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, or Belorussian; apparently not even Ruthenian). Although Hryhoriewa sees the reason for this in the longer local history of religious tolerance (or perhaps indifference) among the people of the region, it seems that their identity as Catholics was unquestioned, even if they were not really concerned about their Eastern ecclesiastical tradition.<sup>89</sup>

Still, there were some prospects for reviving the Uniate Church, but not from within the region. Interestingly, it was Russians and Ukrainians who discussed the possibility of reestablishing the Uniate Church. The liberal

86 Sawa, "Unici chełmsko-podlascy," 75.

87 Ibid., 78. Ukrainianizing movements were followed by the German occupation during World War II. Ibid., 80.

88 After the provocation of World War I, nearly 200,000 Orthodox inhabitants were evacuated from the Chełm–Podlasian region to the Russian interior. Some of them returned to their homeland, which belonged to Poland in the interwar period, and revived the Church Union. Kolbuk, "Kwestia chełmska," 155–56.

89 Hryhoriewa, "Wyznanie unickie," 206.

press in Russia argued that they must not abandon the possibility of reconstructing the Uniate Church. They considered the Uniate revival the best counteraction to the mass conversions to Roman Catholicism, and the most effective way to protect Chełm–Podlasian peasants against aggressive Catholicization, and eventual Polonization. They argued that the Greek Catholic Church of Galicia, which was effectively resisting the Polonization of the region, could be used as a model, although the Russian central government and Orthodox clergy did not agree with this position.<sup>90</sup>

In Ukraine, Andrii Sheptytskyi, the Metropolitan of the Galician Uniate Church, had already initiated concrete actions for the Uniate revival in the Russian Empire in 1901.<sup>91</sup> After the Decree of Tolerance, Nikolaj Franko, a Studite monk of Albanian origin, and Jeremia Lomnytskyi, a Basilian monk from Lviv, became actively involved in the reorganization of the Uniate diocese of Chełm.<sup>92</sup> The interests of these clerics were, of course, not unrelated to the Ukrainian nationalists' program mentioned above. Such efforts aimed at the Uniate revival disturbed the Orthodox clergy. Bishop Evlogii categorically opposed the idea of such a revival, and he asserted that it is the reeducation of the former Uniates in Russian Orthodoxy, and not the revival of Uniatism that was most needed to exterminate the Polish influence in the region. His opinion was supported by the Holy Synod in 1906.<sup>93</sup> The Ministry of Internal Affairs did not permit the revival of the Uniate diocese, but it allowed the newly converted Catholics (former Uniates) to practice Eastern rites in Roman Catholic churches.<sup>94</sup>

Inside the Congress Kingdom, Konstantin Maksimovich, the governor-general of Warsaw, and Evgenii Menkin, the governor of Lublin, together with Bishop Evlogii, discussed the plan to re-launch the Uniate Church in

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90 Szabaciuk, "*Rosyjski Ulster*," 90.

91 His intervention in Russian territory was justified by the old tradition of the Rus' that entrusted a vacant diocese to the jurisdiction of the neighboring diocese's hierarch. Ibid., 90–91. In 1907, Sheptytskyi requested and received jurisdiction over all Uniates of the Russian Empire from Pius X. He seemingly was concerned that a considerable number of former Uniates converted to the Catholic Church of the Latin rite. Sadowski, "Religious Exclusion and State Building," 512.

92 The former appealed to the pope, while the latter to the tsar. Szabaciuk, "*Rosyjski Ulster*," 91.

93 Ibid., 92.

94 The Christmas of 1905 became the first such occasion for holding Mass in the Eastern rite. Ibid., 93.



order to stop the mass conversion of Podlasiian Ruthenians to the Roman Catholic Church. However, the plan was never realized.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, no such effort for a Uniate revival came from former Uniates themselves.

I would argue that there were three major factors that impeded a spontaneous Uniate revival among former Uniates at the beginning of the twentieth century. The first is the lack of an intellectual stratum among former Uniates. Since there were effectively no Uniate priests available, former Uniates would have been largely dependent on Roman Catholics for the education of younger generations. The education provided in Polish may have facilitated the Polonization of the local Ruthenian society. Second, former Uniates lacked property. The thirteenth article of the decree allowed non-Orthodox Christians to build, rebuild, and repair their churches and prayer houses, but it did not clarify if the institutional infrastructure confiscated by the Orthodox Church would be returned to non-Orthodox Churches.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, in principle, the former Uniates were without any ecclesiastic property even after 1905. The Orthodox Church did not return churches, nor monasteries, to them, and neither did the Catholic Church transfer their institutions to former Uniates.<sup>97</sup> Additionally, the thirteenth article ordered that the construction of churches must be carried out with the permission of the top priest of every religious group. Since there was no particular hierarchy among Uniates, no former Uniate could obtain such permission to build a new church. Hence, the decree implicitly deterred the revival of the Uniate Church.

Lastly, Roman Catholics, who devotedly supported former Uniates, were not enthusiastic about reviving the church union, despite the fact that they made great use of the Uniate martyrology in preserving their influence over former Uniates. Even the Society for Defending Uniates failed to help

95 Kolbuk, "Skutki carskiego ukazu," 243; Kolbuk, "Kwestia chełmska," 150.

96 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov*, 258.

97 After the suppression of the January Uprising, the Empire confiscated a part of the Roman Catholic Church's assets in the Western provinces, with many of them closed and transferred to the Orthodox Church. Since then, the Catholic Church itself had been prohibited from building new churches or repairing old churches. Witold Jemelity, "Sytuacja Kościoła Katolickiego w Królestwie Polskim po Rewolucji 1905 r.," *Prawo Kanoniczne* 48, nos. 1–2 (2005): 157–84.

former Uniates to reorganize their own church. It only offered them protection against pressures exerted by the Orthodox Church.

The connection between the Galician Uniate Church and Ukrainian national interests was the crucial factor behind the Polish Roman Catholic clergy's lack of support for the reorganization of the Uniate Church in the Russian Empire.<sup>98</sup>

Moreover, former Uniates themselves were content with the opportunity to convert to the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>99</sup> However, the memory of having been Greek Catholics survived. It was in interwar Poland that “Belorussian” people attempted to reestablish the Uniate Church (Neounia).<sup>100</sup> Those who had once migrated eastward, and then returned to their homeland from Soviet Belarus made an effort to revive the union, and in 1923, Rome expressed its support for the project. Against all expectations, this new Uniate Church's growth was impeded by World War II, and only one parish has survived.<sup>101</sup>

## Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, I would like to confirm the hypothesis that, from a long-term perspective, the dissolution of the Uniate Church Latinized and Polonized a section of Ruthenians (potential Belorussians/Ukrainians) both in terms of religion and nationality. This process occurred despite forcible attempts to de-Polonize/Russify the majority (an example of such an orientation was “Western Russism” [Zapadnorusizm] in Belorussia).

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98 The fear that Galician Ukrainian nationalism might expand outside of Galicia through a Uniate revival in the Chełm–Podlasian region was the main reason Poles prevented the attempts by Galician Uniate clerics to reorganize the Uniate Church in this region in the interwar period. Sadowski, “Religious Exclusion and State Building,” 518–20.

99 Jan Urban, a Jesuit, remarked that former Uniates no longer missed Uniate priests. Sawa, “Unici chełmsko-podlascy,” 75.

100 Krzysztof Grzesiak, “Efforts to Reactivate the Uniate Church in Lublin Region in the Interwar Period,” *Roczniki Kulturoznawcze* 5, no. 2 (2014): 45–58.

101 The parish of Kostomłoty, which now comprises the Roman Catholic parish of Siedlce, has not been absorbed into the Ukrainian Uniate Church and has preserved its originality.

The conversion to the Roman Catholic Church and the formation of Roman Catholic identity became the route used by “recalcitrant” former Uniates to embrace Polish national identity. This transition was initiated primarily through Polish-language education. Even though the autochthonous Ruthenians continued to use their mother tongue in everyday life, their younger generations became literate in Polish. Through the Polish-language education offered by politically motivated Poles, former Uniate peasants in Podlasia were greatly influenced not only by Polish culture but also Polish political nationalism. Since the National Democrats were influential in the former Congress Poland at that time, and many churchmen supported this party, former Uniates who had become Roman Catholic quickly internalized the party’s message: unenlightened peasants who are potentially Poles must be educated to be Poles.<sup>102</sup> Since the formerly Uniate peasants in the Chełm–Podlasian region had not identified themselves as Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, or Belorussians, their one and only identity—Catholics—eventually made them embrace Polishness, or perhaps more specifically the identity of “Polak-Katolik.”

Meanwhile, the Orthodox camp failed to draw in those “autochthons” in order to secure the region’s “Russianness,” an imperial rather than a national identity. Moreover, a Uniate identity, which could possibly steer the “autochthons” toward the Ukrainization, was not reestablished. The Polish national program had the advantage over its rivals because of the historical connections between Roman Catholics and former Uniates in the region, and this older identification was not interrupted despite conditions in Congress Poland (or Vistula Land), enabling its consolidation during the Second Polish Republic.

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102. Stanisław Kutrzeba, professor at Jagiellonian University, tried to refute the Russians’ claim to Lithuania and Belorussia in his 1919 study which asserted that “Catholic White-Ruthenians consider themselves mostly as Poles.” Stanisław Kutrzeba, *The Rights of Russia to Lithuania and White-Ruthenia* (Paris, 1919), 6.

**P a r t**



Transformations  
in Education



# **Native Language Education in the Western Border Regions around 1905**

Yoko Aoshima

## **Introduction**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian imperial government revised its so-called Russification policy directed toward the empire's western border regions and decided to allow the education of languages described as "native" (*rodnye*), "natural" (*prirodnye*), and "local" (*mestnye*). Was this a temporal retreat from the "Russification policy" in the face of national movements, or was it a fundamental change in the policy toward the non-Russian population, or something else altogether? In order to answer these questions, we need to explore the nuanced context of what actually happened.

This chapter considers the process of transformation in the conditions surrounding native language education among non-Russian populations at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially around 1905 in the western border regions. In so doing, it shows how a small concession by the government resulted in fundamental changes to Russian imperial society. The western border regions always had special political significance for the Russian Empire because they marked the empire's point of contact with the Western world, which was considered economically and technically more advanced and culturally more sophisticated. As the link with "neighboring contiguous empires," (Alexei Miller) this region was inhabited by various

national groups whose members spread over these imperial borders.<sup>1</sup> For the imperial elites, the western regions used to be “a showcase for the empire’s Europeanness.” However, serving as the gateway through which the age of nationalism penetrated the empire, gradually they became a threat to the stability of the empire.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the western border regions were the frontline of the empire’s national issues.

In the midst of the war with Japan, the imperial government planned a re-examination of the guiding principles of the state under the pressure of social ferment. Under the tsar, meetings “to discuss the need for reorganization of the state” were held on December 2, 6, and 8, 1904, the participants of which were the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers Sergei Witte, the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, Minister of the Interior Petr Sviatopolk-Mirskii, and all the other ministers and most important state bureaucrats.<sup>3</sup> The result of this meeting, “The Decree on Directions (*prednachertanii*) to Improve State Order” was signed by the tsar on December 12, 1904.<sup>4</sup> Relating to non-Russian populations, among the most important provisions was article 7, which addressed “the rights of non-Russians (*inorodtsy*) and local natives (*urozhentsy*) of individual areas of the Empire.” Subsequently, based on this article, the Committee of Ministers began deliberating on the concrete measures that could fulfill those “Directions” in the first half of 1905, which gradually took shape in the form of laws and administrative instructions, including the introduction of non-Russian education.<sup>5</sup> However, rather than reducing the social turmoil, those

1 On “the macrosystem of continental empires,” see Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2008), 20–27.

2 Karsten Brüggemann, “Representing Empire, Performing Nation? Russian Officials in the Baltic Provinces (Late Nineteenth/Early Twentieth Centuries)” *Ab Imperio* 3 (2014): 236, 261.

3 B.V. Anan’ich and V.S. Diakin, eds., *Krizis samoderzhavii v Rossii 1895–1917* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), 165.

4 Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii (PSZ), series 2, no. 25495 (December 12, 1904), “O prednachertaniiakh k usovershenstvovaniiu gosdarstvennogo poriadka.”

5 I analyzed the features of this discussions previously. See: Y. Aoshima, “Reforma imperskogo obshchestva: peremeny v iazykovoii politike v shkolakh zapadnykh okrain Rossiiskoi imperii v 1904–1905 gg.,” in *Millerovskie chteniia—2018: Preemstvennost’ i traditsii v sokhranении i izuchenii dokumental’nogo akademicheskogo nasledii: Materialy II Mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii, 24–26 maia 2018 g., Sankt-Peterburg*, ed. I.V. Tunkina (St. Petersburg: Renome, 2018), 506–14.

measures accelerated demands from local non-Russian populations. Petitions based on governmental announcements flowed into various offices.

Why did the government take the risky step of acknowledging the right of non-Russians to introduce non-Russian languages in schools? Before answering this, we need to remember the traditional methods used by the Russian government to rule its border regions. Russian imperial policies had been inconsistent, differing significantly according to the period, region, administrative department; even individual officials who held various posts made a difference in how borderlands were treated.<sup>6</sup> Political decisions were influenced by the aggregation of administrative practices within separate administrative units, rather than unified instructions toward all non-Russian populations. One of the factors that influenced these administrative practices was “the Russian nationalist perspective” (as Alexei Miller put it) toward a region. For example, the authorities’ attitudes differed significantly between the nine Western Provinces, which the government firmly regarded as Russian national territory, and the Baltic Provinces, which did not necessarily hold such a position in the imperial mind.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, the government dealt with problems relating to non-Russian populations quite differently according to the region, rather than according to the national group.

It is true that some specific national problems posed serious political challenges to the government. Among the most important was the so-called

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6 Edward C. Thaden proposed the already well-known classification of “Russification”: unplanned, administrative, and cultural. Alexei Miller, highly evaluating this first step, criticized “the Thaden classification does not single out any regional peculiarities.” Miller pointed out “the absence of unity on the questions of the tactics and strategy of Russifying efforts between the state and society, as well as within the bureaucracy between various social movements and within those movements [...]” Edward C. Thaden, ed., *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); Miller, *The Romanov Empire*, 46–47, 55.

7 Alexei Miller, “The Empire and the Nation in the Imagination of Russian Nationalism,” in *Imperial Rule*, ed. Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2004), 9–26. The “mental map” of the Russian government and society varied depending on the situation and the individual involved. The attempt to understand the regional perspective of various groups in the Russian Empire has recently begun. For a general overview, see: Steven Seegel, *Mapping Europe’s Borderlands: Russian Cartography in the Age of Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); for an analysis dedicated to Lithuania, see: Darius Staliūnas, ed., *Spatial Concepts of Lithuania in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016).



"Polish question," especially after two uprisings.<sup>8</sup> However, the government still tended to cope with these questions in a regional framework rather than as a general ethnic minority issue. The government preferred to solve problems relating to local non-Russians at the discretion of each administrative unit depending on each situation. The 1904–1905 discussion in the government shared this previous feature, but the result was different. This paper examines this change in the historical context surrounding the introduction of native language education, shedding lights on the Kingdom of Poland and the Baltic Provinces. From the governmental perspective, these two regions were relatively separate from Russian national territory.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, the change of policies was more visible in these two regions than in the nine Western Provinces the government viewed as national territory and, consequently, where it firmly maintained the so-called Russification policy.

The main concern of the government had been to maintain stability in all regions of the empire.<sup>10</sup> The government perceived the means to guarantee the stability in a variety of ways, but we can identify two tendencies after the 1863–64 Uprising. One gave sufficient attention to the interests of local

8 "The Polish question" was of critical importance for the Russian Empire, partially because the disloyal elites posed a threat to the empire, which was based on the solidarity of multiethnic elites, and partially because the Poles were the ruling elites in the areas that were allegedly Russian territory inhabited by Little Russians and Belorussians, which composed All-Russian nation together with the Great Russians. Accordingly, academic attention has been paid to the area. Leonid Gorizontov, *Paradoksy imperiskoi politiki: Poliaki v Rossii i Russkie v Pol'she* (Moscow: Indrik, 1999); Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2003); Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008); Mikhail Dolbilov and Alexei Miller, *Zapadnye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2006); Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007); Mikhail Dolbilov, *Russkii krai, chuzhaia vera: etnokontsefional'naia politika imperii v litve i belorussii pri Aleksandre II* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obrazovanie, 2010); Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

9 The Kingdom of Poland was the target of "the Polish question," of course, but the governmental strategy differed between the Kingdom of Poland and the Western Provinces that were regarded as Russian national territory. Dolbilov and Miller, *Zapadnye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii*. Regarding the general view of the language politics in the Western regions around 1905, see: V.S. Diakin, *Natsional'nyi vopros vo vnutrennei politike tsarisma (XIX-nachalo XX vv.)* (St. Petersburg: LISS, 1998), 36–40.

10 According to Theodore Weeks, "first and foremost, the government aimed to defend the unity and integrity of the Russian state," and "the Russian imperial government, far from pursuing a consistently nationalist course, reacted rather than acted." Weeks, *Nation and State*, 5, 13.

non-Russian residents; the other pursued “the Russian Cause” by promoting the Russian language and protecting Russians’ interests. The direction that officials adopted in each instance depended on individual situations. The fluctuation between the two main tendencies continued up to the beginning of the twentieth century.

The decree of December 12, 1904 implied that the central government had a rather tolerant attitude toward non-Russian populations. The Committee of Ministers also subsequently interpreted the seventh article to favor the rights of non-Russian subjects, at least in its discourse.<sup>11</sup> However, the article of the decree itself included the abovementioned two opposing tendencies even in the same sentence. Additionally, the Committee of Ministers discussed the rights of non-Russian populations in traditional ways: separately, and by administrative unit. What was different this time is that they examined the rights of non-Russians in various regions at the central level simultaneously.<sup>12</sup> This brought about something new. Various non-Russian groups in various regions enthusiastically raised their demands relating to the native language education in close succession, to which the government responded by referencing administrative practices in other regions as well as the decisions of the Committee of Ministers. On the one hand, the principle of respecting the native language in schools gradually expanded and consolidated. On the other hand, this situation provoked the fervent aspiration to protect Russians’ interests in the peripheries of the empire.

### **Native Language Education Before 1904–1905**

Prior to 1904–1905, the matter of native language in schools had been discussed in various regions regarding various types of educational institutions and organizations. Here I explore the points of the discussion con-

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11 The Committee of Ministers’ discussion took on a “liberal-reformist tone.” Anan’ich and Diakin, eds., *Krizis samoderzhaviiia v Rossii*, 167.

12 There were precedents regarding deliberative organs established in the central government that discussed matters concerning the border regions, such as the Western Committee around the 1863–64 Uprising. However, usually those organs dealt with specific regions in reaction to specific matters. For more on the Western Committee, see: Miller, *The Ukrainian Question*, 139–45.

cerning native language education in the two regions, the Kingdom of Poland and the Baltic provinces, where the government granted some concessions around 1905.

Let us begin by looking back to the pre-history of such education in the Kingdom of Poland, which was based on the discussions of the Committee of Ministers concerning the reexamination of the rights of non-Russians in 1905. Educational policy toward the Kingdom of Poland had vacillated between educational and political goals after the 1830–31 Uprising. After the uprising, the government began to control educational institutions in the area, but once Alexander II ascended the throne, the government mitigated these repressive policies.<sup>13</sup> Nikolai Miliutin, known as an “enlightened bureaucrat,” formulated a tolerant educational policy toward the Kingdom and promulgated it on August 30, 1864 as a Tsar’s Rescript, which expressed Alexander II’s determination to consider only “disinterested service to education, constantly improving the public education system in the Kingdom.”<sup>14</sup> To achieve this, “the opportunity should be given to the Polish youth to study in their native language (*ego prirodnyi iazyk*).”<sup>15</sup> Yet despite these declarations, by the late 1860s, the Russian language became the language of education in the Kingdom. In 1872, the same gymnasia law as had been introduced in the internal provinces was implemented, and in 1885, in elementary schools, the educational language became Russian, except for non-Orthodox religious instruction and the native language of pupils.<sup>16</sup> Regarding private schools, after the new rule to teach physics, mathematics, and history in the Russian language was introduced in 1869, subsequently, all subjects were taught in primarily in Russian though no clear rule was issued.<sup>17</sup>

What were the actual problems surrounding the educational language in the area just before 1904–1905? Let us take the discussion on native lan-

13 *Zhurnaly Komiteta Ministrov po ispolneniiu ukaza 12 dekabria 1904 g.* (St. Petersburg, 1905), 386–68.

14 *Ibid.*, 381–82.

15 *Ibid.*, 382.

16 *Ibid.*, 382–83; S.V. Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor deiatel'nosti Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia, 1802–1902* (St. Petersburg: Ministerstvo Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia, 1902): 586–92.

17 *Zhurnal*, 402; Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (RGIA), f. 733, op. 166, d. 737, l.28.

guage in elementary schools as an example. The 1893 edition of the empire's *Digest of the the Laws* proposed that non-Orthodox religious instruction and courses on the native language of pupils should be taught in that language in the elementary schools of the Kingdom.<sup>18</sup> On this matter, local people often complained to the Warsaw governor-general that the Polish language was not being taught to a satisfactory extent. On November 11, 1897, Governor-general Aleksandr Imeretinskii asked the overseer of the Warsaw educational district about the actual condition of the Polish language education, considering complaints from below as justifiable, because "in schools where the vast majority of pupils is composed of native people from the area and which are financed mainly by local communities, residents have a right to anticipate, even to demand that their children properly learn native literacy."<sup>19</sup> In response to this, the Overseer, Valerian Ligin, investigated the condition of the Polish language in so-called Polish schools, where the teaching of this subject was obligatory by law.<sup>20</sup> He found that among the thirty-six hours of study a week, Polish language classes occupied four instructional hours on average although there was great variability according to school districts; in contrast, Russian language classes took up twelve hours. Among 2,183 Polish elementary schools in 1897, in 179 of them (8 percent) Russian teachers taught the Polish language. According to Ligin, the assumption of the governor-general was somewhat valid. Therefore, on February 19, 1899, he created an improvement plan, designed mainly to enhance Polish language education. It planned to increase Polish language classes to six hours a week and transfer Russian teachers from their posts in Polish schools to Russian ones, gradually replacing them with Polish teachers.<sup>21</sup> Ligin concluded that the institutionalization of courses in the state language had already been solidified by thirty years of practice in the Warsaw educational district, and that strengthening the Polish

18 Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii (SZ), ed. 1893, article 3686, 3687. The number of classes other than Polish language: religious instruction—2, Russian language—12, history and geography—3, arithmetic—8, calligraphy—2, drawing—1, singing—2. RGIA, f. 733, op. 172, d.1435, l.3.

19 RGIA, f. 733, op. 172, d.1435, l. 1.

20 Ibid., 2.

21 Ibid., 3.

language would, therefore, not distract pupils from being successful in the Russian language.<sup>22</sup> Thus, governmental officials sometimes tried to give more consideration to the local language, though often on the condition of the continued predominance of the Russian language. The Minister of Education agreed to Ligin's suggestion in April 1899 and sent secret instructions to the Overseer of the Warsaw educational district on April 30, 1899.<sup>23</sup>

However, once the head of the educational district changed, this moderate improvement plan was rejected. The following Overseer, Grigorii Zenger (1902–04) petitioned to cancel the replacement of teachers. The letter to the minister from July 19, 1900, which Vladimir Beliaev actually wrote for Zenger based on the reports on local directors of the school directorate, complained that the sudden order promoting the “avoidance of Russian teachers” confused the process of appointing new teachers, which only produced a serious lack of teachers as a result.<sup>24</sup> According to local officials, this replacement was not only “unfair” to Russian teacher candidates, but also “dangerous.” Orthodox teachers played the role of “missionaries” to protect “young true Russian children,” mainly children of lower ranking officers in the area. In some cases, their parents came to the region “for the Russian cause,” but had no possibility of returning to “core Russia (*korennnaia Rossiia*).”<sup>25</sup> They felt “abandoned among the non-Orthodox population” and could not educate their children in the rules of the Orthodox faith, which meant that, in the end, they “must be Catholicized.” It was necessary, therefore, to maintain or even increase the number of Orthodox teachers in Polish schools for the “Russian cause in general.” For these reasons, the Overseer considered it “highly desirable to leave Russian teachers” in Polish schools under the condition that they “familiarize themselves with the local language.” Thus, the Overseer stubbornly insisted on the protection of Russians’ interest in preserving Russian rule in this region even at the expense of few opportunities for Poles to learn the Polish language

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22 Ibid., 4.

23 Ibid., 5–7, 20.

24 Ibid., 10.

25 Ibid., 12.

simply as an educational subject. As a result of this letter, the idea of replacing Russian teachers with Polish ones was immediately rejected.<sup>26</sup>

Aleksandr Shvarts, the subsequent Overseer of the Warsaw educational district, went one step further to decrease educational opportunities for Polish pupils.<sup>27</sup> He demanded a reduction of the educational program from four years to three years in total because the four-year curriculum proved overly burdensome for local residents. According to his suggestion, for example, in the one-class school, local language instruction would be reduced from six to four hours, while the Russian language continued to be twelve hours.<sup>28</sup> On June 22, 1904, the Scholarly Committee of the Ministry of Education mostly agreed to the new educational program, though with some reservations. For example, the committee changed the wording regarding Russian language use in the classroom from “require” to “recommend” because it was not practical to enforce if teachers were Polish, and, in addition, opposed the reduction of Polish language education in the curriculum in general.<sup>29</sup> Before 1904–05, local languages were permitted, but only as a separate subject, and the local educational office often firmly opposed even slightly increasing the number of classes—from four to six hours, for example. Even though the central office took an accommodating view toward non-Russian residents, it was still sensitive to the voices of local officials. The local officials’ obstinate attitude impeded a small concession to local non-Russians.

We can find a similar example in the Riga educational district. Yet, whereas in the Warsaw district, the power of local Polish elites had been officially nullified, here local communal organizations—composed of representatives of the Lutheran church, the nobility, peasants, and schools themselves—maintained substantial power over educational matters.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 8–13.

<sup>27</sup> Aleksandr Shvarts served as the Overseer of the Riga educational district from 1900 to 1902, the Warsaw educational district from 1902 to 1905, the Moscow Educational District in 1905, and from 1908 to 1910, he was the Minister of Education.

<sup>28</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 172, d. 1435, l. 19–27.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 29–34.

<sup>30</sup> *Zhurnal*, 461–62; Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 581; SZ, 3568–3611; Büggemann, “Representing Empire, Performing Nation?” 242–43; Thaden, *Russification*, 68–72.

As suspicions toward the German-speaking Lutheran nobility and clergy grew in the mid-1880s, according to the explanation of the Committee of Ministers of 1905, a desire emerged to “liberate” the Estonian and Latvian population from German influence and to “replace” it with Russian influence.<sup>31</sup> For this purpose, officials sought to promote the gradual penetration of the Russian language into local schools and, at the same time, to transfer local private and elementary schools, previously under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to the control of the directors and inspectors of the Ministry of Education.<sup>32</sup> Since local communal bodies remained in place even as jurisdiction passed to the Ministry, confrontation between the local organizations and the local educational authority intensified.<sup>33</sup> The ambiguity of existing laws merely added to the confusion. The *Digest of the Laws* declared in one article (3617) that subjects taught in the elementary school included elementary German language, in addition to religious instruction, the Russian language, arithmetic, and so on, while another (3640) claimed that permissible educational languages were Russian, Estonian, or Latvian: German was not mentioned.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, education in the Russian language was gradually introduced even into private schools in the region, except for Lutheran religious instruction, German language, and other local dialects.<sup>35</sup> Under these confused and repressive conditions, communal bodies went so far as to stop meeting and supporting schools financially.<sup>36</sup>

In this situation, the obstinacy of local officials was also visible. For example, on April 27, 1901, the Iur’ev Philanthropy Association petitioned the Ministry of Education for permission to allow education in the German language in their private school for poor children, based on Article 3617 in the *Digest of the Laws*.<sup>37</sup> In August, October, and December, 1901,

31 *Zhurnal*, 463; Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 670.

32 *Zhurnal*, 463–64; Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 677.

33 Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 678.

34 *Zhurnal*, 474; SZ, ed. 1893, article 3617, 3640.

35 SZ, ed. 1893, article 3741.

36 *Zhurnal*, 470–71.

37 RGIA, f. 733, op. 172, d. 1807, l. 1–4.

the Overseer of the Riga educational district, at the time Shvarts, categorically refused this petition in reaction to repeated inquiries from the Ministry of Education. According to Shvarts, Article 3617 was itself limited by a law from 1887, which allowed only Russian, Latvian, and Estonian as instructional languages in the first year of elementary school.<sup>38</sup> Making full use of his legal knowledge, Shvarts refuted the association's demands one by one, and regarded allowing local organizations to open private-styled educational institutions in the first place as undesirable because organizations were likely to exploit this permission to strengthen the teaching of the German, Latvian, or Estonian languages at the expense of Russian.<sup>39</sup> When the Ministry remarked that because Article 3617 was included in the *Digest of the Laws*, it had the force of law, Shvarts responded that Article 3617 had been left in the Digest simply because of a "misunderstanding or oversight of the codifier."<sup>40</sup> He contended that at stake in the interpretation of this article was the issue of whether further "school reform"—that is, giving the Russian language the opportunity to take root in this region through schooling—would actually occur or not.<sup>41</sup> Shvarts attempted to hamper German language education firmly, and he even stood opposed to private schools with non-Russian language education in general.

The local educational authority was apt to construe as their mission the inculcation of "the state language" into non-Russian populations, and for this purpose, placing limits on the use of native languages. On June 12, 1902, the Ministry of Finance asked for permission to use the Estonian and Latvian languages in lectures on anti-alcoholism for the people (*narodnye chtenia*) in order to enable locals to understand lectures. On August 22, 1902, the Overseer of the Riga educational district, Petr Izvol'skii refused this request, insisting on the necessity of using Russian in these lectures

38 PSZ, series 2, no. 4455 (May 17, 1887), "Vysochaishe utverzhdennye Vremennye Dopolnitel'nye Pravila ob upravlenii nachal'nymi uchilishchami v guberniiakh Lifliandskoi, Kurliandskoi i Estliandskoi." See also: Thaden, *Russification*, 71.

39 RGIA, f. 733, op. 172, d. 1807, l. 15.

40 Ibid., 14, 19–20, 23, 28–29.

41 Ibid., 25–26.



so as to promote the Russian language among the local population.<sup>42</sup> The Ministry of Education nonetheless overrode Izvol'skii's opinion and approved the request of the Ministry of Finance on September 9, 1902.<sup>43</sup> The central ministries preferred the effective promotion of anti-alcoholism over bolstering the Russian language.<sup>44</sup>

Before the decree of 1904, requests concerning the use of native languages had repeatedly appeared in each region under different circumstances. In these matters, the local educational authority had often stubbornly adhered to their mission to fortify imperial rule through the promotion of Russian language education and, accordingly, to restrain the use of native languages as much as possible, even when central offices preferred flexible measures suitable for each particular case. Under these circumstances, the revolutionary situation emerged in the midst of the Russo-Japanese war. The government was forced to find any social groups that might cooperate with and support the government. The Committee of Ministers in 1905 probably believed that if the generous central government were to reproach the excesses of local offices and to accommodate whichever petitions they desired as they often did, then local peoples would cease complaining and adopt a collaborative stance toward the government.

### **The Decree of 1904 and the Committee of Ministers**

The seventh article of the decree of December 12, 1904 impacted the situation in the end, but the government did not necessarily intend to principally transform the policy of native language education. In the first place, the seventh article of the decree itself was ambivalent: it asserted the general need "to re-examine existing regulations that restrict the rights of non-Russians and local natives in individual areas of the empire," while restrictions

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42 RGIA, f. 733, op. 172, d. 2069, l. 1–3.

43 Ibid., 4–5.

44 Just after the decree of 1904, the same discussion and disagreement between the local and central offices took place relating to the Shlok Public Meeting of Livland province, which petitioned to hold lectures for people in the Latvian language on December 24, 1904. Ibid., 7–24.

on the rights of non-Russians, which were caused by “vital interests of the state and clear benefit of the Russian people (*narod*),” would be preserved.<sup>45</sup> From March to May of 1905, the Committee of Ministers discussed the concrete measures required to fulfill the decree.

At first glance, the committee showed sincere support for the rights of non-Russian people, especially in the sense of permitting them to use their own “natural” languages in various administrative and social institutions, including educational ones. Yet this attitude was shaped not out of concern for the civil rights of the populations, but rather emerged from the idea of the Russian Empire’s generosity. The committee emphasized that when the Russian Empire incorporated “land inhabited by non-Russian peoples,” Russian monarchs sought to “guarantee to each nationality (*narodnost*) the way of life to which it is accustomed.”<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the committee stated, “the dignity of the Russian name, first of all, requires that each nationality (*natsional’nosti*) [...] be given as wide a use of its own language as possible.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, the government firmly assumed that the rights of non-Russian people were granted as a result of the benevolence of the state, and therefore, that the government should have a power to assess “the possible range of allowance” for non-Russian languages.<sup>48</sup>

The approach of the Committee of Ministers was conventional as well. The discussions of the Committee of Ministers were separated according to administrative unit, as mentioned above: first, on the nine Western Provinces (March 15, 22, 23); second, on the provinces of the Kingdom of Poland (April 5, 6, and May 3); third, on the Jewish population (May 3); and fourth, on the “non-Russian (*inoplemennye*) peoples” who inhabited the Baltic Provinces and the Eastern Provinces (May 10). The members of the Committee examined these matters based on previous political observations and legislative and administrative practices. As a result, the Committee of Ministers followed the historically formed attitudes towards each region.

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45 *Zhurnaly*, 6.

46 *Ibid.*, 307.

47 *Ibid.*, 359.

48 *Ibid.* 357, 359.

The order of the discussion and the number of days devoted to each region reveal significant features of official attitudes. The Committee of Ministers selected the nine Western Provinces as the first region for consideration and upheld as the manifest “fundamental policy” there the task of “strengthening Russian dominance and weakening Polish influence,” based on the assertion that the region “had been Russian land since ancient times.”<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, the committee construed the Kingdom of Poland to be a non-Russian national area inhabited by “an almost exclusively ethnographically single mass—the Polish nationality.”<sup>50</sup> Here, the Committee of Ministers confidently stated, the government had no intention “of Russifying (*obrusit*) the Poles and denationalizing them,” since they had been “acquainted with European culture” and developed “their own language and literature to a high degree.”<sup>51</sup> The goal of the government was “their possible rapprochement with Russian society, while maintaining the religious and ethnic characteristics of the Polish population.” Punitive measures should be mitigated, and the Polish language could be further allowed.<sup>52</sup> But despite all the sympathetic comments toward the Poles, the Committee of Ministers considered that the introduction of the education in the Russian language after the 1860s was a correct policy, and it insisted on principle that after 1905, schools in the region “should remain Russian as before”; that is, the educational language should continue to be Russian in order to preserve the idea of “Russian statehood.”<sup>53</sup> According to the Committee, the reason the policy sometimes did not work well was that “the intention of the higher government” was “arbitrarily interpreted by the subordinate institutions.” In particular, “the local educational authority” showed “excessive intransigence and an obvious lack of goodwill to all Poles.”<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the Committee believed if they restrained local officials’ stubborn

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49 Ibid., 309, 311–12.

50 Ibid., 379.

51 Ibid., 384.

52 Ibid., 385.

53 Ibid., 390.

54 Ibid.

attitudes and showed some care to the Polish population, then they would collaborate with the government.

In contrast to the Kingdom of Poland, the Committee of Ministers perceived the Baltic Provinces through the prism of an old estate society, emphasizing the “significant differences of the social system from the central areas of the Empire.” Society there was under “the cultural predominance of the nobility and clergy of German origin,” and the education of the region’s main inhabitants, Latvians and Estonians, “was conducted mainly in German.”<sup>55</sup> The Committee of Ministers negatively reviewed the introduction of the Russian language in the Baltic Provinces and lamented the importation of the same administrative system as in the internal provinces in the 1880s, which resulted in the “lowering of the cultural condition of the region.”<sup>56</sup> To restore it, the Committee of Ministers counted on “the higher and educated classes of the Baltic region,” who were “always among those committed to the firm legal authority and state order.” Through education, the Committee remarked, those classes tried to inculcate “feelings of loyalty to the Emperor, respect for religion, and the necessity of supporting the existing system among the peasant population.”<sup>57</sup> The Committee of Ministers considered German elites as the loyal group in the region, and posited that if the government recognized their dominant social status, they would cooperate in securing the region.

Thus, the Committee of Ministers attempted to implement the seventh article of the 1904 decree by administrative region, with considerably different views on each of them. In general, the Committee of Ministers revealed a hope that they might reconstruct the collaborative relationship with local ruling elites in the Kingdom of Poland and the Baltic provinces, while in the nine Western provinces, they adhered to the idea that the territory belonged primordially to Russia, and decisively refused to recognize the Poles as the dominant power in the region.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 460, 467.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 471.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 471.

The Committee of Ministers, emphasizing the original imperial tolerance, insisted on the necessity of reconsidering excessive restrictions on the use of native languages; remedying the “ambiguities of laws,” which evoked erroneous interpretations; and “going a bit further (*poiti eshche neskol’ko dalee*)” to widen the range of use of native languages in schools.<sup>58</sup> There were two main points of the proposed changes at this time: first, to secure native language and religious instruction in elementary schools and extend it slightly further, for example, to permit the use of native languages to teach arithmetic in the first year; and second, to allow for education in native languages, except in courses on the Russian language, history, and geography, in private schools without any state privileges.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the Committee’s actual concession was not all that large: in the case of the elementary schools, it just slightly widened the range of the use of the native language, but in the case of private schools, it was a new attempt to permit education in native language, but it was limited only to the type of the private school that lacked any state privileges. But if we recall the administrative practices in each region prior to 1904–05, which stubbornly impeded the use of the native language in all circumstances, then it is understandable that the Committee believed their decision would be sufficiently tolerant and would positively affect the situation. However, the situation moved in the opposite direction from what the Committee anticipated.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 391, 399.

<sup>59</sup> There was a type of private schools run with private or public funds, but they granted the state privileges regarding pupils and teachers, such as the rights to further education, state service, and military service. If pupils of the private school with no state privileges wanted to enter higher educational institutions, they had to take the entrance examination in the Russian language. This was the main reason the Committee of Ministers insisted that history and geography remain taught in the Russian language. Ibid., 369, 401–04, 432–33, 475–77, 488–89; PSZ, series 2, no. 26162 (May 1, 1905), “Ob otmene nekotorykh ogranichitel’nykh postanovlenii, deistvuiushchikh v devyati Zapadnykh guberniiakh, i o poriadke vypolneniia punkta sed’mogo Imennogo ukaza 12 Dekabria 1904 goda v otnoshenii sikh gubernii,” no. 26368 (June 6, 1905) “O poriadke vypolneniia punkta sed’mogo Imennogo Vysochaishago ukaza 12 Dekabria 1904 goda v otnoshenii gubernii Tsarstva Pol’skogo,” and no. 26452 (June 18, 1905) “O poriadke vypolneniia punkta sed’mogo Imennogo Vysochaishago ukaza 12 Dekabria 1904 goda v otnoshenii inoplemennykh narodnostei.” In the Kingdom of Poland, for example, the new posts of Polish language and literature were introduced in the University of Warsaw. However, the main targets of the discussion were elementary schools and private schools.

## Expanding Demand for Native Language Education

Instead of subsiding, social turmoil escalated after the decree. In the Kingdom of Poland, already in the autumn of 1904, Polish public figures, with famous lawyer Vladimir Spasovich as their leader, sought to influence the government by petitions, as well as direct the general turbulence from the Russo–Japanese war and revolutionary movements toward the acquisition of regional autonomy in terms of language, religion, and administrative positions. The actions of workers, peasants, and students also became intermingled with this movement, and together they demanded permission to use the Polish language in public institutions. The Lublin governor Vladimir Tkhorzhenskii stated in his report on February 1905 that the decree of 1904 raised new hopes in Polish society. In particular, they interpreted Article 6 on religious toleration and Article 7 on the rights of non-Russian populations as benefitting them.<sup>60</sup> In this situation, the Lublin governor insisted that it would be crucial to “calm Polish minds” by making them understand the clear difference between the state language, which could only be Russian, and local languages, which could be used for family, church, and private communication. For this purpose, they demanded “an authoritative word” from St. Petersburg.<sup>61</sup>

The disorderly situation in towns heavily influenced pupils in educational institutions in the Warsaw educational district. On March 2, 1905, Minister of Education Vladimir Glazov (1904–05) expressed concern that since the middle of January, the revolutionary atmosphere had prevailed in the whole of Polish intellectual society. Among others, “pupils of Polish origin and the Catholic faith” submitted petitions that asserted that all schools should be taught in the Polish language by Polish teachers, and they boycotted their classes. At the beginning of February, Overseer Shvarts, who had insisted on maintaining a resolute attitude toward pupils—including expulsion—in the end acceded to the suggestion from the local community

60 RGIA, f. 733, op. 195, d. 702. l.1–3.

61 Ibid., 5.

to hold a meeting to discuss measures for reestablishing order in the schools of the educational district and invite pupils' parents to it. Once the meeting convened, however, it turned out that more than a thousand parents participating in the meeting firmly called for the restoration of the Polish school, which Poles had lost after 1863. It was obvious that outraged pupils were supported by many parents and members of the Polish intelligentsia.<sup>62</sup> The decree of 1904 resulted in fostering declaration of local society's aspirations in the turmoil, instead of pacifying the crowd.

In this context, the petitioning movement, known as "memorials" in Warsaw, was growing. Representatives of individual groups first petitioned the highest bodies of the government and then transmitted the contents of those requests with sympathetic comments to various newspapers in the Russian capital; finally they sold the papers in Warsaw, where Russian newspapers had previously been rare. Shvarts regarded such efforts as enabling the spread of "false information" and promoting propaganda among pupils.<sup>63</sup>

A typical case of the use of such "memorials" concerned the discussion on establishing advanced classes in girls' private schools. The discussion had begun at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the Warsaw educational district had been very cautious in addressing it. Although district laws permitted private schools with three or four classes to exist, many private schools asked for permission to have six classes. On July 12, 1903, the government decreed that those seeking to expand the number of classes should transform their schools into the governmental type of school with seven classes and accept the control of a Russian supervisor.<sup>64</sup> In a "memorial" of October 1904 reacting to this, Spasovich condemned "the local educational authority" for forcing school owners to transfer their private schools over to the Russian administration while continuing to use the owners' funds. Furthermore, Polish teachers were expelled even from private schools, not for any demonstrable transgression but solely "for their nationality," which "insults primarily the common human sense of legality

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 33–36.

<sup>63</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 166, d. 737, l. 30.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 17–18.

and justice.” Spasovich argued that while it was understandable that boys’ governmental educational institutions were to be controlled because they provided state privileges, “there was no reason that girls’ private schools, to which parents sent their daughters just for education that met the demands of their families, should be restrained.”<sup>65</sup> In response, on December 18, 1904, Shvarts emotionally criticized the note, cursing it as “unjustifiably and impudently charged with completely false accusations” that imposed “improbable and heavy reprimands” on officials of the Ministry of Education for their “patriotic activity.” He accordingly appealed to Minister Glazov for “a worthy refutation of the unceasing attacks on us and a defense of us from slander and undeserved insults.”<sup>66</sup> In addition, he added a report from the general-governor’s assistant, which stated, “Warsaw female private educational institutions undoubtedly serve as one of the most dangerous breeding grounds of revolutionary ideas.”<sup>67</sup>

Just after the decree of 1904, the local educational authority continued to respond as repressively to the demands from the local society as before. The demands from the local society, however, gained force and became more systematic. Soon after that, on February 23, 1905, Shvarts reported that forty-eight petitioners of girls’ private schools had applied for immediate permission to introduce the teaching of all subjects in Polish into their schools, with the exception of Russian language and Russian history. Shvarts, proclaiming that this “memorial” represented “the consistent and natural conclusion of derision aimed at the Russian authorities,” insisted that all the educational institutions whose owners had signed “the deviant requirement” be closed permanently.<sup>68</sup> In the wake of this incendiary response, on June 3, 1905, Minister Glazov wrote to Spasovich defending Shvarts and remarking that the latter’s opinion was in line with the decision of the government; therefore, Spasovich’s criticism had “no actual basis.”<sup>69</sup> The local

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65 Ibid., 2–3.

66 Ibid., 11.

67 Ibid., 14.

68 Ibid., 29–32.

69 Ibid., 45–49.



authority was desperate enough to crush the aspirations of Polish society that the 1904 decree had roused.

Yet, even as all of this was unfolding, on June 8, 1905, the Committee of Ministers reached the decision to allow education in the Polish language—except for the subjects of Russian language, history and geography—in private schools without state privileges in the Warsaw Educational District.<sup>70</sup> The district's official journal, which informed readers about the instruction of July 29, 1905 concerning the abolition of restrictions on the use of the Polish language, added that, while private school owners hoped to introduce the Polish language in their schools, in the case of schools that enjoyed the same privileges as state schools, school owners had to abandon these privileges and transform their schools into fully private institutions.<sup>71</sup> This decision of the Committee of Ministers helped restrain the repressive attitude of the local educational authority as well as encouraged the local society to increasingly articulate their national aspirations. For example, when Shvarts received a petition to allow education in the Polish language from a boys' private school on August 8, taking into consideration the Committee of Ministers' discussion, he decided to accept the petition and added that this case would be a precedent for the future.<sup>72</sup> On September 4, 1905, Glazov recognized that, after the decision of the Committee of Ministers on June 8, "the ever-increasing number of petitions indicating the desire of society to have an upper school with education in Polish as soon as possible obliges me to meet this need."<sup>73</sup> The Minister concluded that he found it possible to permit private schools in the district to provide education in Polish, thus reflecting the situation in the Baltic Provinces. On September 7, he asked the Committee of Ministers for a prompt ruling of offi-

70 *Zhurnal*, 433. At this stage, a law on this matter was not yet prepared.

71 "Po voprosu ob upotreblenii pol'skogo iazyka v uchebnykh zavedeniiakh Varshavskogo uchebnogo okruga," *Tsirkuliar po Varshavskomu Uchebnomu Okrugu*, no. 9 (1905): 294–95.

72 This is about a petition from the Vavel'berg and Rotvand secondary technical schools in Warsaw to allow the opening of parallel classes (without any privileges) in which education would take place in the Polish language. In this period, the need for mechanical technician training for employment in local factories increased, and accordingly the need to teach mathematics and physics in Polish also grew. RGIA, f. 733, op. 166, d. 737, l. 53–55.

73 *Ibid.*, 61.

cial law on this matter.<sup>74</sup> The central and local educational authorities were shaken by the decisions of the Committee of Ministers, and, referencing the situations of other regions, obeyed it.

Local society in the Kingdom was further encouraged to submit petitions. Indeed, in the middle of September 1905, owners of girls' private schools simultaneously sent numerous petitions with the same request to the Overseer of the Warsaw educational district. All of them solicited permission to teach all subjects, except for Russian language, history and geography, in Polish as soon as possible; their requests were urgent because, they wrote, parents refrained from sending their children to schools, waiting for the time when this matter would be resolved in their favor.<sup>75</sup> On October 1, 1905, St. Petersburg finally issued a decree that permitted the teaching of all subjects (except Russian language, history, and geography) in Polish and Lithuanian in private educational institutions without state privileges located in the Kingdom.<sup>76</sup> Following this decree, on October 21, 1905, the Ministry asked the Warsaw educational district to screen the private schools that had submitted petitions and to decide which of them could have more than four classes. On November 2, 1905, the next Overseer Beliaev refused this request, finding plenty of legal reasons for his denial, and he attempted to make a new rule that would place private schools under strict ministerial control. However, the central office replied negatively to this suggestion, noting that the decree of October 1, 1905 already had the force of law.<sup>77</sup> Some officials still stuck to the old perspective, but the decisions of the central government constrained their activities.

In the Baltic Provinces, the government treated the local German nobility relatively tolerantly from the beginning. One reason for this was

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74 Ibid., 72, 75.

75 Ibid., 76–161.

76 Ibid., 228–29. The Lithuanian language was also permitted, influenced by a demonstration in the Mariampol' male gymnasium of the Warsaw educational district on September 15. One of its requirements was the improvement of Lithuanian language education. Ibid., 186–90, 196–97. PSZ, series. 2, no. 26756. "O razreshenii v chastnykh uchebnykh zavedeniakh v guberniakh Tsarstva Pol'skogo predavaniia nekotorykh predmetov na Pol'skom i Litovskom iazykakh."

77 RGIA, f. 733, op. 166, d. 737, l. 211–17, 226.

the fact that around 1905, Latvian-speaking peasants actively participated in the revolutionary movement against the privileges of local noblemen.<sup>78</sup> More than once, the government quelled the movements thanks to “the assistance of Germans.”<sup>79</sup> Viewing the local situation as a problem of class conflict rather than national conflict, the government came to rely on the conservatism of the local nobility. Indeed, according to the decision of the Committee of Ministers on June 18, 1905, the Ministry of Education took up the requests of the Livland Noble Assembly for their own gymnasia with German language education.<sup>80</sup> The Minister asked the Marshal of the Livland nobility for an opinion about the plan to build gymnasia for the children of the local nobility. In November 1905, the Marshal replied that his corporation did not aspire to have such estate-limited educational institutions, which would not be desirable in terms of pedagogical considerations; instead, the Livland nobility desired to build gymnasia “open to children of all confessions and estates.”<sup>81</sup> The local German nobility hoped to establish private schools with German language education, which would be open to the wider population.

However, the local educational authority was suspicious of local elites, whose schools could result in the Germanization of local pupils. On March 9, 1906, for example, the office of the Riga educational district rejected the petition from A.K. Saloman requesting permission to teach in the German language in her private girls’ school in Iur’ev. The office explained to the Ministry that it could permit the petition if all the pupils spoke in German language freely before they entered the school. However, in Saloman’s school, those girls whose native language was German, in the local office’s view, constituted only 20 to 24 percent of pupils. The majority of students came from the families of Estonian-speaking townspeople and peasants, for whom the German language was “completely alien by nature,” that is,

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78 RGIA, f. 733, op. 173, d. 26, l. 12–23.

79 RGIA, f. 733, op. 196, d. 233, l. 95.

80 *Zhurnal*, 489.

81 RGIA, f. 733, op. 166, d. 1082, l. 2–3.

not their native language.<sup>82</sup> Here as well, the local educational authority was vigilant about local elites whose language might take on the role of “the state language,” and even after the decision of the Committee of Ministers, it still reacted repressively toward requests from this segment of society.

Soon after this ruling, however, on April 19, 1906, the government finally promulgated a law for the Baltic Provinces that allowed private educational institutions that were maintained solely by local funds and received no public subsidies to teach all subjects in local languages except Russian literature, history, and geography, which would be taught in Russian.<sup>83</sup> Based on this law, Vil’gel’mīna Iogansen, a private tutor in the town of Valk of the Livland province, petitioned to have education in the German language introduced in her private girls’ school. Expressing no direct opposition to the use of German in her school, the district’s Overseer insisted that the school be fully transparent in its regulation of funding, school expenses, reference books, library collection, and so on. In response, the Ministry’s Scholarly Committee rejected this suggestion because it was not based on the law of April 19, and on August 21, it decided to permit the use of German to the school without reservation.<sup>84</sup> On October 19, Iogansen’s school was finally approved by the Ministry of Education. The school statute even included the following phrase; “the school accepts children of all confessions and estates.”<sup>85</sup> Despite the wariness of the local office, the central office was less cautious about the Germanization of the local society, at least at this stage.

Meanwhile, even the local educational office tended to expand the right to use the native languages in private and elementary schools to various language groups, if the majority of pupils in a school spoke a non-Russian language. As already noted, the Lithuanian language was permitted in private educational institutions in the Kingdom of Poland on October 1, 1905, if the language used by the majority of the local population around

82 RGIA, f. 733, op. 173, d. 26, l. 80–81.

83 PSZ, series 2, no. 27729 “O vvedenii v chastnykh uchebnykh zavedeniiax Pribaltiiskogo kraia prepodavaniia na mestnykh iazykakh.”

84 RGIA, f. 733, op. 166, d. 1364, l. 1–8.

85 Ibid., 9.

the school was Lithuanian. In September 1905, the Committee of Ministers explained that once they decided to permit Polish language education in private schools on June 6, 1905, then “there is no reason to place the Polish language in a privileged position.” The Committee of Ministers, mentioning that the population in Riga and Revel’ petitioned for permission to have German language education, also predicted that the same kind of petitions for Latvian and Estonian language education would come sooner or later. The Committee, revealing their intention to permit those petitions, noted that this permission met “the requirement of maintaining equilibrium between different groups of the non-Russian population (*ino-plemennomu naseleniu*).”<sup>86</sup> The local office was also amenable in this regard. In March 1906, the office of the Riga educational district, in reaction to a petition for the introduction of the Polish language in an elementary school in Libava (Liepāja) in Kurland Province, permitted Polish, and even expressed its intention to permit Lithuanian language education in the region, even though it had not received any petitions yet. Overseer Grigorii Ul’ianov noted that even though the *Digest of the Laws* did not include those languages, if these languages were the native languages of students, then they should be permitted based on the law of June 18, 1905.<sup>87</sup> Both the local and central government seemed to agree to native language education in private schools, the introduction of native languages as a subject in elementary schools, and the use of native languages as an auxiliary bridge languages, especially in the first years of schooling.

Furthermore, in the Warsaw educational district, the General Superintendent of the Warsaw Evangelical Consistorial district on August 16, 1906 asked for permission to use the German language in those elementary schools of the Warsaw educational district in which the majority of stu-

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86 RGIA, f. 733, op. 166, d. 702, l.104–05. The local office basically conformed to the idea of the central government. The office of the Warsaw educational district noted on October 6, 1905, that if the Lithuanian language education was not permitted, the local Lithuanian intelligentsia would believe they were being ignored because the government allowed “privileges” regarding the use of the native language to “the less legitimate Polish population (*menee legal’noe pol’skoe naselenie*).” RGIA, f. 733, op. 166, d. 737, l.189.

87 RGIA, f. 733, op. 173, d. 26, l.79.

dents were German. On September 21, the Council of the Overseer permitted the request in principle, “seeing no reason for depriving the more peaceful and loyally devout German population of the privilege that is now being granted to the local Polish and Lithuanian population.” Yet the local educational office was still cautious about a national group gaining power locally. Therefore, taking into account the fact that a part of the German population might prefer to preserve the state language, and bearing in mind the protection of children of other nationalities from “artificial Germanization (*iskusstvennoe onemecheniie*),” the local educational authority added the phrase “at the request of the majority of the founders.”<sup>88</sup> On January 31, 1907, the official permission was issued, which allowed German language education in the elementary schools and private schools of the Warsaw educational district that had been established for the “German people (*narodnost*),” if there was a petition from the founders of the school.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, German language education was also permitted for “former German colonists” in Bessarabia, Kherson, Tavrida, Ekaterinoslav, the Volyn Provinces, and Don on March 23, 1907, and in the Saratov and Samara Provinces on May 21, 1907.<sup>90</sup> Thus, the significance of native language education was clearly increasing in private schools and elementary schools. Permission for native language education spread rapidly and widely to various groups in various regions of the empire, as local offices mutually referenced the cases of other groups in other regions. Additionally, the right was quite evenly distributed among various language groups since the local office, and more or less the central office as well, were still vigilant about the possibility that other, non-Russian groups might take on the dominant role in local societies. As a result of all these processes, native language education came to be considered the right of each language group in the empire in practice.

Indeed, the liberal Minister of Education under Witte, Ivan Tolstoi (1905–06) once attempted to make a general rule on education in the native

88 RGIA, f. 733, op. 173, d. 21, l. 14–15, 18.

89 Ibid., 26–27.

90 Ibid., 42–44, 50.

language for non-Russian populations.<sup>91</sup> As early as December 24, 1905, just after becoming minister, he sent a memo to Witte about “the next measures of the Ministry of Education” and asked to discuss it in the Council of Ministers. In this memo, he stated that “the question concerning teaching in the native language of pupils in schools for the non-Russian population” was “particularly acute in the present extraordinary circumstances.” Therefore, the ministry had to establish “solid grounds” for resolving this question according to the guidelines set out in the Committee of Ministers’ conclusions relating to the Warsaw educational district and the Riga educational district: first, in primary and middle schools for non-Russian populations, teaching in the native language of pupils could be allowed, except for courses in Russian language, Russian history, and geography. Second, private schools could offer education in local languages, but in these cases, pupils had to pass examinations for all subjects in Russian to receive the same rights the state school provided.<sup>92</sup>

Tolstoi suggested establishing a clear principle permitting education in native languages in elementary and secondary schools, as well as private schools, which would allow considerably wider rights than the decisions of the Committee of Ministers. Tolstoi’s successor, Petr Kaufman (1906–08), tried to adopt his policies, and as mentioned above, the principle of education in non-Russian languages was widely accepted in private schools and in elementary schools, where native languages were widely introduced as a subject and used to teach other subjects. Yet, the government was reluctant to make any general rule about education in native languages. Eventually, the next minister, Shvarts, who had been ousted from the post of the Moscow Overseer by Tolstoi in 1905, and returned to the Ministry of Education as a minister in 1908 under Petr Stolypin (1906–11), changed the ministry’s course in a more conservative and restrictionist direction.<sup>93</sup> In the

91 *Memuary grafa I.I. Tolstogo* (Moscow: Indrik, 2002), 39.

92 Otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi natsional’noi biblioteki, f. 781, d. 269, l.1–2; f. 781, d. 115, l.1, 4–5. Tolstoi also tried to introduce Polish language education into the entire educational system in the Kingdom of Poland, which was not realized either. RNB OR, f. 781, d. 118, l.1–11; *Memuary grafa I.I. Tolstogo*, 163–171. Diakin, *Natsional’nyi vopros*, 370–72.

93 Regarding the “inter-departmental meeting on the matter of school education in regions with a non-

end, rather than creating general rules that might tie its hands, the government sought to maintain an arrangement that gave it the freedom to decide each case based on its specific circumstances. Here we can see almost the definition of autocracy: the freedom and power to rule arbitrarily, without constraints, even of one's own making. In fact, the government shifted the emphasis away from the rights of non-Russians and toward Russians' advantage in the short term.

### The Reawakening of State Interests and Russians' Privileges

Although the rights of each language group were taken up by central and local authorities, the interest of Russians was still the main focus of state policy in the western border regions. On October 11, 1905, the Ministry of Finance requested cooperation from the Ministry of Education on the matter of a petition to permit Polish language education submitted by the members of the Dombrova Gornaia School Society in the Petrokov province of the Kingdom of Poland because there was otherwise the possibility of "disorder" and strikes among workers "for the most insignificant reason."<sup>94</sup> At almost the same time, on October 24, 1905, Overseer of the Warsaw educational district Shvarts requested that the central office provide "a guarantee for the Russian Orthodox population in the Kingdom of Poland to be able to receive education in the Russian language." According to him, one after another, private schools and elementary schools in the region tried to move to education in Polish, and the local Russian population, which numbered more than two hundred Orthodox Christian families, petitioned to open a separate Russian language division for their children in one of Dombrova's elementary schools. Yet, according to the director of the Łódź school district, it was impossible to open such a division because all the schools already had an excess of pupils. Therefore, the only possible solution was that the

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Russian and non-Orthodox population" (mezhdovedomstvennoe soveshchaniia po voprosu o postanovke shkol'nogo obrazoveniia v mestnostiiakh s inorodcheskim i inoslavnym naseleniem) in the Stolypin era on January 30, 1910, see; Diakin, *Natsional'nyi vopros*, 99–109.

94 RGIA, f. 733, op. 173, d. 25, l. 5–7.



central government allocate funds for establishing an independent school just for Russian children. Agreeing to this suggestion, Shvarts insisted that it should be the responsibility of the government to guarantee the possibility of studying in the state language for all who so desired, and also the opportunity to obtain an education in Russian for Russians who came from the imperial core. He emphasized the importance of protecting Russians living in the peripheries—very often involuntarily—from absorption into the non-Russian (*inorodcheskie* and *inoplemennyi*) population. Shvarts complained that with the introduction of local language education in private and elementary schools, it became almost impossible to preserve Russian language education because the Russian population was too scattered, and thus too small, to maintain their own schools.<sup>95</sup> Thus, Shvarts vigorously requested funds for establishing an independent school just for Russians. But up to the autumn of 1907, the central office delayed the allocation of funds for it. Finally, on November 6, the Ministry sent a small amount of money and promised to send funds every year starting the following year. While at least by the end of 1907, the central office was not very enthusiastic about this matter, locally a sense of urgency about Russians' marginalization intensified.

In due course, the situation of Russians in the Kingdom of Poland drew the attention of the newly emerging right-wing political group, the Russian National Union of the Archangel Michael. On June 22, 1908, they called on Shvarts, now the Minister of Education, to pay attention to the issue of an elementary school for the children of the Russian population, which had been left in a "hopeless and unprofitable situation" in the Kingdom of Poland. The Ministry then reacted to this on July 31, 1908 by asking the Overseer his opinion. In response to this, the Overseer hastily tried to justify himself by listing his measures to satisfy the needs of the Russian people in the region.<sup>96</sup> Now, the radical political tendency that pursued Russians' interest, especially in the border regions where Russians constituted minority, came up to the surface.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

<sup>96</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 173, d. 25, l. 64.

The recognition that Russians' interests were neglected in the border regions stirred up a sense of crisis about the health of imperial rule even within the central government. Starting around 1908, the central government once again cast a distrustful eye on the local German population. On February 1908, Stolypin sent an article to Minister of Education Shvarts entitled, "From the Baltic Region," that had been published by the chauvinistic newspaper *Peripheries (Okrainy) of Russia* on February 2. This article pointed out that "Russian influence is weakened" in the region. The article raised alarms over the situation that posts in the local administration were occupied almost completely by "non-Russians and non-Orthodox people," such as Germans, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Poles. The article warned that "those who think that the Baltic Germans are supporters of Russia and friends of Russian statehood are entirely mistaken." "Our Germans are happy to rush into the arms of their Vaterland at any moment." In this context, the article claimed that the government should do everything to promote the "Russian cause"; otherwise, "Russians will be squeezed out from here so that there will be no memory of them." Stolypin, "entirely sharing" the article's outlook, demanded that Shvarts "strive in every possible way to increase the number of core Russian people in the Baltic Provinces, both in the ranks of the local service class and among the agricultural population" in order to strengthen Russian statehood in the region.<sup>97</sup> Stolypin was affected by the campaign of the radical right, and became an enthusiastic supporter of Russians' interests in the western borderlands.

On July 8 and November 13, 1908, Stolypin again pressured Shvarts. Based on the information from Russian media, he warned that schools maintained by the Baltic "German Societies," which used the German language for education after the regulation of April 19, 1906, were actually subsidized by the All-German School Union in Germany. Regarding this matter, Governor-general Aleksandr Meller-Zakomel'skii commented to Stolypin that "sufficient counteraction from the side of local organs of the Ministry of Education" had not been conducted until now against "the

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97 RGIA, f. 733, op. 196, d. 233, l. 9–12.

dangerous activity in support of the success of the Russian cause.”<sup>98</sup> Now it was Shvarts’s turn to be on the defensive. On November 13, 1908, Shvarts told Stolypin that the Overseer of the Riga educational district had already paid attention to the matter. According to the Overseer, at the present, the local office not only had to deal with the “cultural” matter—that is, to protect a culture by teaching children in native languages—but also with the “political” matter—that is, “proselytizing” about German language education to all the peoples of the Baltic region. To resolve the latter problem, the only possible way was to strengthen Russian schools in the region. Only in this way could the “lofty competition of world cultures between Russian and German” be won. Agreeing to this, Shvarts nevertheless insisted that it would be “untimely” to suppress the local Germans’ activity by changing the law because Latvian revolutionary activity had been suppressed with the assistance of the Germans, and even now, tranquility in Russia had not yet been fully achieved. He then argued that what was most important was the restoration of the soundness of the school with Russian language education. He especially emphasized that it was important to reaffirm that in elementary schools, education in the local language should be permitted only in the first years as an auxiliary tool for mastering the Russian language. In senior classes, the local language could be introduced but only as a subject, and all other subjects should be taught in Russian.<sup>99</sup> He tried to look back to the initial point of discussion at the time of the Committee of Ministers in 1905 in order to stabilize the situation, pushing against pressures from both the Russian and non-Russian nationalist movements. In the period of Witte, Shvarts seemed to be very conservative and obstinate, but now in the period of Stolypin, he became moderate and flexible. As a traditional bureaucrat, Shvarts adhered to the idea of securing imperial governance by balancing non-Russians’ demands and state interests through administrative discretion. Yet, the political movements both of non-Russians and Russians had already escaped the traditional administrative framework.

98 Ibid., 68, 86–89. Meller-Zakomel’skii himself was strongly opposed to Stolypin’s idea of “demographic ‘Russification’ of the Baltic Provinces.” Büggemann, “Representing Empire, Performing Nation?” 256–59.

99 RGIA, f. 733, op. 196, d. 233, l. 94–96.

## Conclusion

Around 1905, amid war and revolution, the imperial government decided to show its merciful side by making small concession to the non-Russian populations in order to calm social turmoil. These concessions included assenting to native language education in elementary and private schools. Since the administrative practices just before 1904–05, especially those of local authorities, were overly inflexible, central officials believed that if they constrained local officials and exhibited a generous attitude toward non-Russian populations, the government would mobilize their cooperation. However, the situation did not stabilize; rather, it became more chaotic. The demands of local populations increased, and even supposedly marginal types of schools not directly related to state privileges, such as private and elementary schools, became the targets of political movements. In particular, private schools raised the hopes of various local groups because native language education was allowed in this type of school. Meanwhile, after the decision of the Committee of Ministers, local officials were forced to follow its instructions, and many petitions were gradually accepted. The number of private schools offering native language instruction expanded, and various native languages were introduced into many elementary schools. As a result, the principle that non-Russians need native language education became entrenched in both the imperial government and society.

However, this was not necessarily the intention of the government. It was true that the government recognized the need to care for non-Russian populations, but the rights of non-Russians should only be realized in so far as the “vital interests of the state and clear benefit of the Russian people (*narod*)” were preserved, and the government preferred to maintain discretionary power over requests for native language education. This was how the traditional autocracy had governed its extremely diverse territories for a long time. Indeed, as the demands from non-Russian populations grew and Russians’ privileges and state interests seemingly eroded, the government veered into a course that prioritized the protection of the latter.

Yet, the political context surrounding the matter had already changed, and in the process, various linguistic groups came to demand their aspirations explicitly and energetically, which, in turn, led to the emergence of Russian nationalist groups designed to counteract this trend. These Russian national groups lobbied and pressured the central government from outside the administrative framework. The educational authority, under pressure from the central government, was now forced to enforce previously issued laws and strike a balance between non-Russians' and Russians' political movements in order to stabilize imperial governance. As Russia entered the age of representative mass politics, this task was becoming much harder than ever before.

# Politics around Universal Education in Right-bank Ukraine in the Late Tsarist Period

Kimitaka Matsuzato

The introduction of obligatory or universally accessible education represented a landmark of modernization in many countries.<sup>1</sup> In nation-states that were latecomers to modernization, such as Germany and Japan, obligatory primary education was vital for nation-building and survival in the age of imperialism. The tsarist government in Russia was comparatively indifferent to nation-building and preferred to entrust the burden of primary education to public institutions such as churches, peasant communes, and local self-governments. The government's dependence on these institutions necessitated constant negotiation so as to deposit as great a burden as possible on the other party, but at the same time, it promoted heroic endeavor and self-sacrifice among pedagogues, clerics, and municipal officers.

The politics around the introduction of universal primary education in the Southwestern Region (Right-bank Ukraine) of the Russian Empire in the early twentieth century raised two issues. First, it intensified the contradiction between accessibility to and the quality of primary education. Right-bank Ukraine lacked *zemstvos* until 1911 because of the government's fear of local Polish elites' dominance. Because of this disadvantage, the local "Russian" youth needed the swift spread of lower elementary

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<sup>1</sup> I use the terms "universally accessible education" and "universal education" to distinguish the tsarist government's policy of primary education from obligatory education. Until the end of its existence, the tsarist government did not find it possible to introduce obligatory primary education in Russia, but instead tried to realize a situation whereby all children of school age could go to school if they and their parents wished.

education.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, industrial growth and mounting professionalism in Right-bank Ukraine made the existing one-class (three-year) and two-class (five-year) schools obsolete since these schools gave their graduates no opportunities for advancing to middle school or state service.<sup>3</sup> Facing the choice between geographically uniform elementary schooling and advanced primary education, the Ministry of Education (ME) chose the former, but it needed to convince those communities requesting the latter. Second, the policy for universal primary education intensified the competition between parish and secular (ME and zemstvo) schools in Right-bank Ukraine. Given the lack of zemstvo schools, at the beginning of the twentieth century, 83 percent of primary schools in rural Right-bank Ukraine were Orthodox parish schools,<sup>4</sup> but ME officers were dissatisfied with the quality of these schools.

On May 1, 1904, the government established the Provincial and District Committees for Zemstvo Administration (*Komitety po delam zemskogo khoziaistva*; hereafter, zemstvo committees) in three Southwestern Provinces.<sup>5</sup> Composed of representatives of state institutions and appointed councilors, zemstvo committees were nicknamed “margarine zemstvo,” meaning pseudo-zemstvo. Since then, zemstvo schools began to challenge the monopolistic position of Orthodox parish schools in Right-bank Ukraine, though the government obliged zemstvo committees to subsidize

2 In pre-revolutionary Russia, the adjective “Russian” implied what post-revolutionary terminology called “Eastern Slavic.” In other words, it included Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians. On this issue, see Alexei Miller, “*Ukrainskii vopros*” v politike vlastei i russkom obshchestvennom mnenii (vtoraia polovina XIX v.) (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2000); Klimentii K. Fedevych and Klimentii I. Fedevych, *Za Viru, Tsaria i Kobzaria: Malorosiis’ki monarkhisty i ukrains’kyi natsional’nyi rukh (1905–1917 roky)* (Kiev: Krytyka, 2017); and my “Pol’skii faktor v Pravoberezhnoi Ukraini: Konets XIX–nachalo XX v.,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2000), 91–106.

3 At single-class schools a teacher had a class composed of pupils of three different grades, while two-class schools had another senior class composed of the fourth and fifth grades.

4 L. M. Drovoziuk, “Osvitnia diial’nist’ zemstv Pravoberezhnoi Ukrainy (1904–1920 rr.),” PhD dissertation (Vinnytsia, 1998), 18.

5 On the delayed introduction of zemstvos in Right-bank Ukraine, see Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on Russia’s Western Frontier 1863–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), Ch. 7; Kimitaka Matsuzato, “The Issue of Zemstvos in Right Bank Ukraine 1864–1906: Russian Anti-Polonism Under the Challenges of Modernization,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 51, no. 2 (2003): 218–35.

parish schools. The multi-confessional composition of the region's population made this competition even harsher. Recent studies have revealed that non-Orthodox parents, such as Polish Catholics and Jews, unexpectedly acquiesced to sending their children to Orthodox parish schools, perhaps for the sake of their secular knowledge. Orthodox parish schools, in turn, released non-Orthodox pupils from the obligation to attend classes on Divine Law (*zakon bozhii*), meaning elementary Orthodoxy.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, Polish parents hoped to have secular ministerial (ME) and zemstvo schools in their neighborhoods (or at least, that is what ME and zemstvo officers believed).<sup>7</sup> Polish notables' and intellectuals' activities to establish Polish schools without the authorities' permission rose after the Revolution of 1905. The oversight office of the Kiev educational district not only repressed this movement but also collected data on these Polish schools. Such data did not indicate the political dangerousness of the Poles' movement, but the ME demonized it so as to validate a request to the Ministry of Finance to subsidize its attempts to establish universal primary education.

This paper investigates the politics around universally accessible education in Right-bank Ukraine in the early twentieth century from the multiple perspectives briefly outlined above. Before embarking on this task, a detour is necessary to survey the history of primary education in post-Emancipation Russia, the most striking feature of which was the government's dependence on religious, local, and communal institutions.

### Pre-History: Dependence

Under serfdom, various ministries, such as the Ministries of Crown Lands and State Properties, ran their own schools, but the most numerous categories were ministerial (ME) and parish schools.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the post-1861

6 Volodymyr Pererva, *Tserkovni shkoly v Ukraini kintsia XVIII–pochatku XX st.: zabytyi svit*, vol. 1, *Zahal'na chastyna* (Bila Tserkva: Vydavets' Oleksandr Pshonkiv's'kyi, 2014), 386.

7 In 1894, the overseer of the Kiev educational district reported that parish schools were useless for education because they could not interest the population of other faiths who compose "more than 18 percent of my district, and, in Volyn Province, more than 23 percent." (Drovoziuk, "Osvitnia diial'nist'," 19).

8 In villages of state peasants, for example, parish schools were built under the guidance of local branch-



period, their functions were divided by children's educational stages. Rural children were to obtain elementary literacy at parish schools. Those who enjoyed better material conditions entered ministerial schools to receive higher primary and intermediate education. Despite these divisions based on pupils' educational levels, there was an ideological contrast between the two types of schools. Ideas of modernization, professionalism, and social mobility guided ministerial schools, while parish education represented the idea of estate-based stability and clericalism. Ministerial schools were much more qualified than parish schools from a pedagogical point of view, but they were expensive and inaccessible for the unprivileged strata of society. Parish schools were closer to the people, if they existed at all, but the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was too poor to build enough parish schools to service the vast empire, and priests were too uneducated to become teachers of rural children.<sup>9</sup> Zemstvo schools would fill the vacuum between these extremes—qualified but inaccessible ministerial schools and relatively cheap but unqualified parish schools.

The imminent abolition of serfdom provoked the government's interest in revitalizing primary education in rural Russia. It was unconceivable to conduct peasant reforms without creating a stratum of literate peasants who understood their new legal status, rights, and obligations. Released from the power of their owners, the peasantry needed literate officials deriving from their own estate to manage village and township self-government. In the early 1860s, the initial bet was placed on parish schools to fulfill this goal. Alexander II and the newly appointed minister of education Aleksandr Golovnin, a representative of the so-called progressive bureaucrats, supported this policy, and the Holy Synod obliged the local clergy to involve themselves in primary education. Because of the lack of sufficient

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es of the Ministry of State Peasants, while the ME could only "influence" their management. See S. V. Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor deiatel'nosti Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniia. 1802–1902* (St. Petersburg, 1902), 284. As Petr Zaionchkovskii noted, pre-Reform Cadet Corps were not so much military schools as schools for general education of the noble youth. See P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Voennye reformy 1860–1970 gg. v Rossii* (Moscow, 1952), 30.

9 Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861–1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), Ch. 1.

budget and available teachers, many parish schools, the number of which mushroomed in 1861, remained on paper. The peasants were disappointed with the parish schools' poor performance and began to deny them material support. Even the parish schools, which had survived the upheavals surrounding their creation, were practically replaced by zemstvo schools in zemstvo provinces, while in the non-zemstvo Right-bank Ukraine parish schools continued to play a more or less important role.<sup>10</sup>

In 1860, the government created the Special Commission to deliberate on supplemental proposals required by the coming Peasant Provision. This commission reported the need to substantially develop primary education among peasants to the Editing Commission. Given that universal obligatory education was unachievable because of insufficient funds and manpower among the peasants, the Special Commission found entrusting the creation of village schools to peasant communes unavoidable, and placed the contents of education (*uchebnaia chast'*) under the control of the ME. The Special Commission submitted this opinion to the Editing Commission, which in turn passed it on to the Main Committee on Peasant Affairs. Correspondence between the Main Committee and the ME resulted in the famous Peasant Provision, confirmed by the tsar on February 19, 1861. This Provision granted village assemblies the right to petition for literacy education and authorized township assemblies to petition for establishing township schools. Peasant communes were allowed to collect commune taxes in order to run schools and pay salaries to teachers.

During the term of Minister of Education Golovnin, two managerial issues came to the fore. First, the ME began to integrate schools run by various ministries, which had been inherited from the pre-Emancipation period, into its jurisdiction.<sup>11</sup> This policy unsurprisingly caused conflicts with the Holy Synod. Golovnin appeased the Synod by asserting that the ME had no intention of intervening in the primary education run by the ROC, but, on the contrary, the rural clergy's active involvement in primary educa-

10 Olena Drach, "Rozvytok pochatkovoi osvity v Ukraini (1861–1917 rr.)." *Dysertatsiia na zdobuttia naukovooho stupenia kandydata istorichnykh nauk* (Kharkiv, 2001), 49–53.

11 Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 396–97.

tion would give them additional income to alleviate their difficult material conditions.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, the imminent creation of local self-governments, zemstvos, provoked a discussion about to what extent the zemstvo should bear responsibility for public education.<sup>13</sup> The Zemstvo Statute of 1864 did not regulate relations between the government and zemstvos in public education, but the Provision on Primary Popular Schools, confirmed by the tsar on July 14, 1864, stipulated zemstvo participation in the provincial and district education councils. While building their own schools, zemstvos in many cases accepted schools established by various ministries and village communities in the pre-Emancipation era.<sup>14</sup>

The Law of May 29, 1869 authorized the ME to open “model schools” in villages if the latter’s assemblies adopted the agreement (*prigovor*) to provide land for the building of schools. Moreover, the ME was to pay stipends to priests who finished pedagogical courses at theological seminaries and who were selected as teachers by zemstvos and peasant communes. The ME was to subsidize schools run by the ROC, zemstvos, village communes, and private persons. To supervise schools, the ME introduced inspectors of popular schools (*inspektory narodnykh uchilishch*), whose duties and competencies were prescribed by the Instruction of October 29, 1871. These inspectors were obliged to encourage zemstvos, city self-governments, and peasant communes to open new schools. If these local communities did not have sufficient means to establish new schools, inspectors were to petition the overseers of the educational districts. When the office of Directors of Popular Schools was introduced in each province, this obligation was passed on to them.<sup>15</sup>

The new Provision on Primary Popular Schools of May 25, 1874 led the system of provincial directors of schools and inspectors of popular schools to completion. Historians often attribute this system to Minister of Education Dmitrii Tolstoi’s intention to establish state control of

12 Ibid., 449.

13 Ibid., 450.

14 Drach, “Rozvytok pochatkovoï osvity,” 57.

15 TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707 (Kiev educational district), op. 229, 1908, spr. 103, ark. 12–14.

public education, while simultaneously limiting the zemstvos' responsibilities to the purely managerial and material aspects of schools.<sup>16</sup> Yet, the point was that the government once again confirmed its intention to rely on social institutions in primary education by assigning supervision to the ME. Before 1897, the ME's expenditure for subsidizing primary education was negligible, while the zemstvos bore the main financial burden of building and running rural primary schools. This is why the Southwestern Region (Right-bank Ukraine), which lacked zemstvos because of the Polish question, was so disadvantaged in primary education. In Right-bank Ukraine, the Provincial Committee of Guardianship of People's Temperance, introduced in 1894 (when the government introduced state sales of vodka), managed primary schools.<sup>17</sup> Apparently, these schools were expected to substitute the role of zemstvo schools in zemstvo provinces, but this was an unrealizable desire. As a result, peasants' literacy rate was lower in Right-bank Ukraine than in Left-bank Ukraine and the Great Russian Provinces which had zemstvos.<sup>18</sup>

On July 12, 1879, the last years of Alexander II's reign but under the influence of his son, the future Alexander III, the Committee of Ministers adopted a resolution which found it impossible to develop primary education "without granting the clergy the dominant position in the management of primary education."<sup>19</sup> Under Alexander III, this new course was promptly codified. On January 26, 1882, the Committee of Ministers requested Ober-Procurator Konstantin Pobednostsev of the Holy Synod to work out measures to develop parish schools. The Special Commission established under the Synod prepared the Rules on Church-Parish Schools, which were confirmed by the tsar on June 13, 1884. According to these rules, the Synod introduced school councils attached to bishoprics. At the

16 For example, see I. V. Zaichenko, *Osvita i pedagogichna dumka v Ukraini u XIX-na pochatku XX st.* (Kiev: Komprint, 2013), 201–02.

17 This was a high-profile institution in which the provincial governor, bishop, and marshal of the nobility participated.

18 Matsuzato, "Pol'skii faktor," 99–101; L. M. Drovoziuk, "Osvitnia diial'nist'," 21–24.

19 *Zapadno-russkaia tserkovnaia shkola* 10 (1909): 16.

end of the 1880s, these councils opened their district (*uezd*) branches. In the 1890s, following the model of ministerial and zemstvo schools, two types of schools, one-class and two-class schools, were established. The one-class schools provided a three-year education mainly composed of divine law, hymns, reading in Church Slavonic, Russian language instruction, calculation, and penmanship. The two-class schools provided a five-year education that supplemented one-class schools' contents with elementary geography, Russian history, an understanding of nature, drawing, and painting. In contrast to the short-lived boom of parish schools in the early 1860s, this time, the ROC enjoyed abundant financial support from the government. During the twenty-five years after 1884, about forty thousand parish schools were opened in the empire, and the total number of their pupils reached about two million.<sup>20</sup>

### The Turning Point

As mentioned earlier, in the early postreform period, the ME tried to integrate schools run by various ministries into its jurisdiction. Accordingly, it preferred to subsidize its own (ministerial) schools, rather than zemstvo and parish schools.<sup>21</sup> In 1869, the ministry issued 170,000 rubles of credit for popular education in the thirty-four zemstvo provinces, but only 51,000 rubles of this were distributed to non-ministerial schools. Since 1897, the ME increased subsidies for popular education every year. In 1899, it started to subsidize parish schools. The sum of the credits delivered to primary and parish schools rose from 1,484,672 rubles in 1897 up to 8,284,672 rubles in 1906, that is, it increased more than 6.6 times in nine years. Besides, schools in the Warsaw educational district and the Western Provinces received special subsidies. In 1902, the ME decentralized distribution of credits; the ME began to issue credits to school districts, which in turn decided how to

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 1, 17–20.

<sup>21</sup> It might seem strange to refer to a ministry “subsidizing” agencies under its own control. However, this was the standard terminology adopted in documents of the then ME, which testify to the fact that the creation of a ministerial school in a locality did not mean automatic funding by the ministry.

distribute the credits among schools, considering petitions sent from various secular and religious institutions that supported schools.<sup>22</sup> Ministerial schools often needed to compete with zemstvo schools located nearby.

The ME devised this application-based financial support to make petitioners promise to bear appropriate burdens in response to government subsidies. Communities requesting government subsidies to build a new school had to explain what they could give the planned school: land for the school building, part of its construction expenditures, or apartments for teachers. Moreover, the ministry expected public initiative and creativity to develop primary education, which often proved to be more important than money. For example, in 1904, the ME started to subsidize handicraft courses at popular and parish schools. This was a response to public proposals aiming to make primary education more attractive to peasant parents.

After the introduction of margarine zemstvo in Right-bank Ukraine in 1904, both the ME and the Provincial Committee of Guardianship of People's Temperance began to transfer their schools to zemstvo committees. That this transfer started not after the real zemstvo was created in Right-bank Ukraine in 1911 but during the presence of "margarine zemstvo" between 1904 and 1911 deserves attention. For example, in 1906, in Kiev Province, the Provincial Committee of Guardianship of People's Temperance transferred nine primary schools over to zemstvo committees, which also opened four primary schools by themselves. In sum, there were thirteen zemstvo schools in Kiev Province at the end of 1906. In 1907, the number of zemstvo schools increased from thirteen to twenty. Among the seven new schools, six had been transferred from the ME to zemstvo committees.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of the vigorous expansion of primary education, as of January 1, 1904, the number of ministerial schools in the Russian Empire reached 42,574 with 97,874 teachers and 3,126,359 pupils, while the total number of the other kinds of schools amounted to 45,376 with 97,619 teachers and 1,961,670 pupils. Thus, the total number of school pupils was 5,088,029,

22 TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707, op. 229, 1908 rik, spr. 103, ark. 14zv.–16 (part of the ME document "Svideniia po razrobke shkol'nykh setei i planov osushchestvleniia vseobshchego obucheniia").

23 *Otchet Zemskogo upravleniia Kievskoi gubernii po narodnomu obrazovaniiu za 1907 god* (Kiev, 1908), 1.

while the number of children of school age in the Russian Empire was 12,549,068.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the enrollment rate in Russia in 1904 was 40.5 percent. Though the financial crisis caused by the Russo–Japanese War and the revolutionary turmoil retarded the expansion of primary education between 1904 and 1906, public passion for education did not diminish. In 1906–07, seventy-nine district zemstvos and city self-governments submitted petitions for the ME's subsidy to make primary education in their territories generally accessible (*obshchedostupnoe*). Indeed, some districts of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Olonets, Viatka, Samara, Saratov, Nizhegorod, and other provinces had nearly realized universal (generally accessible) primary education.<sup>25</sup>

The ME prepared a project for the introduction of universal primary education in Russia. The project continued the idea of reliance on zemstvos, city self-governments, and peasant communes financially, especially in regard to the construction of schools, while the ME worked to standardize teachers' salaries with its own budget (360 rubles a year for teachers and sixty rubles for teachers of Divine Law, that is, priests). Meanwhile, the ME changed the organizational principle or criterion to expand school networks. Previously, the educational districts decided whether to finance the creation of a new school, considering whether the petitioning community was ready to bear the appropriate burden for the institution. This method saved the ME's money and stimulated public interest in primary education, but it was problematic from the viewpoint of the spatially uniform distribution of schools. In some localities, there were multiple two-class schools, while in others even one-class schools were few and far between. In 1908, the ME requested district zemstvos and city self-governments to submit plans for constructing school networks in their localities that would enable the realization of universal education in the future. The educational districts began to finance local self-governments and communities based on these general plans.

24 TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707, op. 229, 1908 rik, spr. 103, ark. 16.

25 TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707, op. 229, 1908 rik, spr. 103, ark. 16zv.–17.

In the same post-1905 period, the population's growing interest in education resulted in new petitions to the ME requesting financial aid for advanced primary education, particularly four-class city-style schools, based on the Provision of May 31, 1872.<sup>26</sup> The ME faced a difficult choice. The planned, steady realization of universal education required the even distribution of resources, while popular requests for advanced primary education were pulling the ME back to the previous preferential distribution of resources. This contradiction was especially serious in Right-bank Ukraine. On the one hand, the late-coming zemstvos in the region desperately needed the swift expansion of their school networks, however elementary they were. Moreover, the "Russian" population's low literacy, inferior to that of the

Table 1. Changes in the Issue Structure before and after (approx.) 1905

	Criteria and purpose	Preferred schools	Resource distribution	Merits	Demerits
<b>Before 1905</b>	The community's readiness to bear appropriate burdens	One-class and two-class schools	Preferential allocation of resources	Budget economy, civic responsibility	Uneven development
<b>After 1905</b>	<b>Universal education</b>	One-class and two-class schools	Even allocation of resources	Geographic evenness of schools, accessibility	Unsatisfactory level of education
	<b>Advanced primary education</b>	Four-class city-type schools based on the 1872 Provision	Preferential allocation of resources	Satisfactory level of education, social promotion chances	Unevenness, lower accessibility

<sup>26</sup> The ME proposed this type of school to substitute district (*uezd*) schools based on the Provision of 1828. See *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, Sobr. 2, Tom 47 (1872) (St. Petersburg, 1875), No. 50907. According to I. V. Zaichenko, the transformation of district schools into city-style schools went slowly, and 147 district schools continued to function as late as 1894. At the same time, city-style schools enjoyed a certain amount of popularity, and their number amounted to 527, at which almost eighty thousand pupils throughout the empire studied in 1898 (see his *Osvita i pedagogichna dumka*, 202–203).



Polish and Jewish populations, also prioritized lower elementary education. On the other hand, the Right Bank's industry and commerce, which was more developed than other parts of the Russian Empire, cultivated a progressive strata of the rural population that began to request advanced primary education for their children. Ben Eklof has paid attention to this phenomenon, but he equates the upgrade from two-class to four-class city-style schools to the upgrade from one-class to two-class schools.<sup>27</sup> The former implied a challenge to the ME policy of even geographical distribution of schools.

The ME responded to the requests for upgrade from two-class to four-class schools restrictively because it was concerned that the upgrade, which was often accompanied by the preferential allocation of resources to a few communities in a district, would probably violate the already-adopted plan for the introduction of universal primary education. The Kiev educational district required the communities requesting the upgrade from two-class to four-class schools to inform them of: (1) the number of the people living in the community; (2) the size of territory the requested school would cover; (3) how many schools existed in the same and neighboring communities; (4) whether the community or organizations supporting the request for the advanced school were ready to provide the school with sufficient land; (5) the expected number of pupils; (6) how much state subsidy was needed to build and maintain the school; and (7) whether the community had kept its promises in the past.<sup>28</sup> The following section examines the administrative processes around the upgrade of schools.

### **The Administrative Process of Upgrading Primary Schools**

The first case is from Murafa Town (a *mestechko* which presently belongs to the Sharhorod district of Vinnytsia oblast'), Iampol'skii district, Podoliia Province. In 1912, this town and its surrounding villages had about a 7,300-strong "native [i.e., Ukrainian] peasant population," while about

<sup>27</sup> Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, 438–44.

<sup>28</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, ll. 27–28.

2,000 people of other estates lived in Murafa.<sup>29</sup> Among the 7,300 natives, about seven hundred were school-age children. In 1908, when Iampol'skii district Zemstvo Committee composed its plan for universal primary education, Murafa Town and its surrounding villages had a two-class primary ministerial school with two full groups (*komplekty*) and a two-class parish school. Four teachers were working at the ministerial school: the school-master, his wife who was a teacher, an unmarried teacher, and a teacher of Divine Law (*zakonouchitel'*), the last of whom was a local priest.<sup>30</sup>

To teach all children of the territory elementary literacy, it was necessary to expand primary education by organizing twelve groups of pupils in various places in the territory in addition to the two existing groups of pupils. During the following four years, only two one-class ministerial schools with two groups and one two-class zemstvo school were introduced, while the other nine planned groups of pupils had not been organized.<sup>31</sup> A reason for this delay was the population's attachment to advanced primary education. In these years, a clientelist group took shape, guided by the local peace arbitrator,<sup>32</sup> Iarmolovich, and a State Duma member from the locality, Vasilii K. Pakhal'chak.

In 1907, instead of using the preexisting wooden school building, the Murafa community, under the leadership of Peace Arbitrator Iarmolovich, began to build a stone-made school with six classrooms appropriate for advanced primary education, expecting that the full construction would cost about 8,000 rubles. Yet this expectation proved to be extremely optimistic. In 1907 and 1908, the ME subsidized the community to the tune of 1,200 and 3,000 rubles respectively. This was not sufficient, and the community repeatedly petitioned to receive 7,329 rubles to complete the building. The ME gave 1,500 rubles more to complete the classrooms in the building. The Provincial Zemstvo Committee issued 2,400 rubles to complete the other

<sup>29</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 40.

<sup>30</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, ll. 38ob.–39.

<sup>31</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 106.

<sup>32</sup> On this position, see my "S komissarov antipolonizma v prosvetiteli derevni: mirovye posredniki na pravoberezhnoi Ukraine (1861–1917 gg.)," *Ukrains'kyi humanitarnyi oghlad* 9 (2003), 62–121.

parts of the building on the condition that, first, the community organize a “special commission” that included a zemstvo technician to supervise the construction process. The second condition was that the community allow the zemstvo committee to use some of the classrooms for two groups of the one-class zemstvo school, which was going to be opened soon. The community, perhaps because it was interested in using the new building exclusively for advanced primary education, resisted this modest condition. Only after Iamolovich resigned from the post of peace arbitrator did the community agree with the zemstvo committee. In 1910, a one-class zemstvo primary school with one group opened in this building, and this school quickly developed into a two-class zemstvo school, but the problem of teachers’ apartments remained unsolved.<sup>33</sup>

In January of the same year, the precinct inspector of popular schools asked the Murafa community whether it was ready to support the opening of a four-class city-style school and whether it could temporarily provide land for the school’s construction. The community joyfully adopted the agreement (*prigovor*) and submitted it to the precinct school inspector. Yet, the inspector did not respond at all to the community’s answer but, instead, after several months sent the same query, to which the community responded in the same manner, proposing to transform the existing two-class school into a four-class school. The inspector repeated the same query again, which convinced the Murafa population that he was intentionally delaying the new school. In 1912, the plenipotentiaries of the community petitioned State Duma member Pakhal’chak, who in turn submitted a memorandum together with numerous documents accumulated during 1910–12 to the minister of education. In their petition, the peasant plenipotentiaries proudly noted that “the local population’s cultural level rose so significantly that the real need for the advanced type of school has matured.”<sup>34</sup>

33 RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, ll. 105ob.–107. Later, the overseer of the Kiev educational district argued that the school building could not be completed because the school precinct inspector did not allow the special commission to spend the zemstvo subsidies to pay off the debts despite the requests of parliamentary Pakhal’chak and his group. The second reason was that Iamolovich was alienated from the affair.

34 RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 40.

Pakhal'chak remarked that the stone-made school building was too large and extravagant for the present two-class school and that the peasants were complaining about "why we have paid the last bit from our meager means for the construction of this magnificent building."<sup>35</sup>

The ME requested the overseer of the Kiev educational district to explain the situation. The Kiev overseer, in turn, requested the school inspector of the precinct report to him on the events of the previous four years. The opinion of the inspector significantly differed from that of the peasant plenipotentiaries and provided a factual basis for the Kiev overseer's counter-argument. The peasant plenipotentiaries noted that the territory of the school site was more than three *desiatinas* (one *desiatina* is about 1.09 hectares). The new stone building had six classrooms, a recreation hall, and a teachers' room. The site had a workshop for handicraft courses, while a wooden building on the site that had been the previous school was also usable. The Kiev overseer corrected the Murafa plenipotentiaries' optimism by noting that the school site was less than two *desiatinas* and that the old building required major repairs to make it usable for education. A fundamental problem was the lack of teachers' apartments.<sup>36</sup> Readers may be impressed to learn that the school inspector was acquainted with such trivial matters when he argued against the local communities' requests. Concerning the expected enrollment of the requested school, the plenipotentiaries noted that their district had only one advanced primary school in the district seat, so the demand for an advanced school in Murafa would be enormous. The plenipotentiaries added that the future advanced school would absorb pupils presently going to the local parish school. The overseer was a realist here, too, noting that an advanced primary school had opened in Shargorod city in Mogilev district, only ten *verstas* (one *versta* is about 1.067 km) from Murafa Town, in 1912, so the need for a similar school in Murafa decreased.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 38ob.

<sup>36</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 105ob.

<sup>37</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 107ob. Presently, Shargorod/Sharhorod is the seat of the district (*raion*) to which Murafa belongs.

A fundamental counterargument by the Kiev overseer was that the transformation of the existing two-class school into a four-class one meant nothing but the elimination of the existing school, which would unquestionably impede the realization of universal education in the locality. Therefore, it was desirable to open higher primary schools “not instead of the existing lower schools, but independently from them, in the interests of the poorest group of the local population.”<sup>38</sup> As described below, the ME and the zemstvo committee (since 1911, a full-fledged zemstvo) invested significant money in the construction of the new school building, and its purpose was to further develop existing lower primary education. Therefore, according to the Kiev overseer, the Murafa community should obtain the ME’s special permission and the zemstvo’s consent to use the school building for advanced primary education.<sup>39</sup>

The second example is Rzhishchev Town in Kiev district. As a river port city on the Dnipro, Rzhishchev was one of the most populous settlements in Kiev Province on the eve of World War I. The whole population was 20,154 and the number of children of school age was 2,015. It had a grain-exporting wharf, a sugar factory, two pig-iron factories, two sawmills, two brick factories, a boiler house, three tanneries, and other numerous small enterprises. Nevertheless, Rzhishchev had no more than a two-class ministerial primary school of the rural type, a parish school for girls, a two-class school for Jewish boys, and a private school for Jewish girls.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, for example, Sme-la Town (then belonging to Cherkassy district of Kiev Province, presently belonging to Cherkassy Oblast), though similar to Rzhishchev in terms of population and industrial development, had several lower primary schools, one four-class advanced primary school, and boys’ and girls’ gymnasiums.<sup>41</sup>

In 1908, perceiving this situation as unfair, Rzhishchev’s town community discussed the possibility of establishing a four-class city-style school, but there was no building for this purpose. In 1910, the community con-

<sup>38</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 106.

<sup>39</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, ll. 106ob.–107.

<sup>40</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 29.

<sup>41</sup> RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 4.

structed a building with six classrooms and a teachers' room for the existing two-class school. As was the case with Murafa, the construction of a new school building too luxurious for a lower primary school stimulated the population's yearning for transforming it into an advanced primary school.

When Chairman V. K. Tritshel' of the Kiev district zemstvo visited St. Petersburg perhaps in late 1912 or early 1913, he petitioned the ME to transform the existing ministerial two-class primary school with four groups in Rzhishchev into a four-class school starting in the autumn of 1913. The ME accepted this request on the condition that the district zemstvo take responsibility for managing the existing four groups of the ministerial school in the autumn of 1913.<sup>42</sup> This response seems confusing. The zemstvo requested to transform the existing two-class ministerial school into a four-class one, but the ME responded that if the zemstvo took responsibility for the existing four groups, that is, if the management of the existing ministerial school could be passed to the zemstvo, the ME would permit the construction of a new ministerial four-class school. The ME's policy was consistent with the Murafa case; the ME did not support upgrading the existing lower elementary school into an advanced one because this would impede early realization of universal education. Instead, the ME proposed the creation of a new advanced primary school parallel to the existing lower primary school.

The Kiev district zemstvo regarded this condition as acceptable since the regular zemstvo assembly of 1911 had already decided to establish a one-class primary school with two groups in 1912, so the zemstvo only needed to add facilities and programs for another two groups. In April 1912, the zemstvo assembly petitioned the ME to continue to deliver the same amount of subsidies that the ministry was giving to the ministerial school, even after control over the school was transferred to the zemstvo. The merit of Rzhishchev in comparison with Murafa was that the district zemstvo and the township paid attention to the issue of teachers' apartments, allocating 360 and 300 rubles a year respectively for this purpose.<sup>43</sup>

42 RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 4.

43 RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, ll. 4–40b. and 29–290b.

The third example is Shuliavka Village, located in the suburbs of Kiev City with a population of forty thousand. The villagers decided to open a four-class primary school to celebrate the tricentennial of the Romanov Dynasty and, they allocated 850 square sazhen of land for this purpose. Councilor I. N. Denisiuk of the district zemstvo proposed a plan for the construction of the school to the zemstvo assembly on April 6–7, 1912. Based on the assembly's decision, the district zemstvo board sent a petition to the Kiev educational district. The office of the Kiev educational district responded to the zemstvo, noting that the petition only proposed to allocate 850 square sazhen (one sazhen is 2.13 meters) of land, but mentioned neither participation in construction nor monetary support. On July 4, 1912, the zemstvo board replied and justified the lack of contribution—other than land—by noting that issue was discussed at an extraordinary session of the zemstvo, which was not authorized to decide on budgetary issues. The board remarked that since the Kiev district zemstvo had recently spent much money on the education of the populace, it would agree to support the Shuliavka school after the ME decided positively on this matter. This attitude of “leaving things to others” did not move the overseer, who shelved the issue without even responding to the zemstvo. In November 1912, the Monarchist Party “Kievan Union of the Russian People” took up this issue and petitioned the ministry; party leaders emphasized that the anniversary of the dynasty was approaching, and that it was “quite desirable to realize the population's patriotic desire to open the school on this day of celebration.” Yet the “patriotism” of the population was not enough to move the Kiev overseer. Responding to the ME's query, he replied curtly that the school in Shuliavka might be included in the future general plan of the network of advanced schools in Kiev Province.<sup>44</sup>

The final example comes from the Cossack Ivangorod town of Borzensk district, in Chernigov Province. Though Chernigov Province did not belong to the Southwest Governor-Generalship, it belonged to the Kiev educational district. As early as November 2, 1908, the Ivangorod Cossack

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44 RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, ll. 134–134ob. and 161–161ob.

Community adopted a resolution requesting the transformation of the two-class ministerial school in the town into a city-style four-class school based on the 1872 Provision. The agreement stated that advanced primary schools were superior to two-class schools in terms of their teaching program, the quality of teachers, and possibilities for graduates' further education and employment. According to the agreement, the demand for advanced primary education was so high in this provincial town that parents sent their sons to city-style schools in surrounding cities. Ivangorod itself had a population of ten thousand and it was the center of gravity for the surrounding five townships, the total population of which surpassed fifty thousand, all of which had only lower primary schools. The community promised to dedicate the existing communal two-storied house of the existing two-class school to the future advanced school.<sup>45</sup>

In May 1912, the community repeated the request. The Kiev overseer provided a portrait of the situation that stood in diametric opposition to the community's own description. According to the overseer, the Ivangorod population was not distinguished by their desire to give their children maximally advanced education. Evidence for this was the fact that the population did their best to send their children to the zemstvo school in the town. The reason was that necessary attendance at zemstvo schools was shorter than at ministerial schools, and zemstvo schools distributed textbooks for free. It was true that a four-class school could provide more benefits to children, but it was questionable whether the parents would send their children to a four-class school with a much longer attendance period, which made it far more expensive than the existing two-class school. The overseer referred to the Ivangorod community's past insincere behavior. When it petitioned for the two-class school, it promised to dedicate one *desiatina* of land, but in fact allotted only eight hundred square *sazhens*, namely, about three times less than promised. Moreover, the community opened two communal stores in the schoolyard to earn profits, and it was necessary to remove them to build teachers' apartments. Despite the situa-

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45 RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, ll. 35–36.



tion described above, the Kiev overseer supported the idea of transforming the existing two-class school into a four-class one precisely because of the present school's miserable situation. The only way to pump more resources out of the Ivangorod community was to upgrade the existing school into a four-class school. Yet, the ME did not support its Kiev agent's suggestion of a "flight to the front," and ordered the overseer to reject the request.<sup>46</sup>

### Orthodox Clericalism and Clandestine Polish Schools

After the zemstvo committees were introduced in 1904, there were three kinds of primary schools in Right-bank Ukraine: ministerial, zemstvo, and parish institutions. ME and zemstvo officers felt a deep disdain for the poor quality of lessons given at parish schools, their coarse and insanitary buildings, and the reactionary ideology clerics impressed on pupils.<sup>47</sup> In response, the ROC clergy and pro-ROC intellectuals argued that parish schools had merits that the secularized education provided by ministerial and zemstvo schools lacked. First, a significant portion of zemstvo schools were two-class schools; parish schools were overwhelmingly one-class schools and requested neither longer attendance nor heavier financial burdens from parents for education. Considering the differing period of attendance, the pedagogical effectiveness of parish schools should not be underestimated. Christian ethics supported parish schools, which meant that schools were not beholden to one or another pedagogue's individual influence; rather, the community's Christian environment undergirded the schools' educational effect. This was exemplified by the teaching of Church hymns at parish schools, a subject lacking at secular schools. Choruses sung by children not only enhanced their spiritual development; it also made an extraordinary impression on their family members.<sup>48</sup>

Another reason for the ME's and the zemstvo's negative opinion of parish schools was that, in their view, in multi-confessional Right-bank

46 RGIA, f. 733, op. 179, d. 80, l. 76ob.

47 On zemstvo liberals' criticism of parish schools, see: Drovoziuk, "Osvitnia diial'nist'," 29–31, 37.

48 *Zapadno-russkaia nachal'naia shkola* 10 (1909): 20–21; 3 (1911): 12–13.

Ukraine, Polish and other non-Orthodox parents did not wish to send their children to Orthodox parish schools. This also motivated the Poles to establish their own clandestine schools. ME officers remarked that Polish parents' desire was just knowledge and the social promotion of their children, so if the network of secular schools managed by the ME and zemstvos became sufficiently dense, Polish parents would send their children to these schools.<sup>49</sup> Volodymyr Pererva introduces countless examples where, in Right-bank Ukraine, Polish, Jewish, and other non-Orthodox parents resigned themselves to sending their children to Orthodox parish schools.<sup>50</sup> This phenomenon makes us question why the same Polish parents supported the activities of clandestine Polish schools. Pererva suggests that Polish parents sent their children to Orthodox parish schools to demonstrate their loyalty to Russia, while they had their children educated at clandestine Polish schools for the future restoration of Polish statehood.<sup>51</sup> However, this interpretation seems to overestimate Polish parents' political consciousness.

Indeed, in the Western Provinces after the abolition of serfdom, the Poles often established their national schools without asking the permission of the authorities. The Criminal Codex identified this deed as a misdemeanor (*prostupok*), and the punishment was too light to have a preventive effect; the fine was seventy-five rubles (in cities) and five rubles (in rural areas), neither of which was accompanied with a prison sentence. On April 3, 1892, the emperor's decree "On the Punishment of Clandestine Education in Vil'na, Kovna, Grodna, Minsk, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Kiev, Podoliia, and Volynia Provinces" made punishments stricter, imposing on those who founded clandestine Polish schools a fine of three hundred rubles or a three-month prison sentence.<sup>52</sup> In August 1906, this decree was abolished and the ineffective light punishment was restored. Unsurprisingly, the Poles began to establish illegal schools without permission.<sup>53</sup>

49 Report of the Director of Popular Schools in Kiev Province to the Overseer of the Kiev educational district, March 15, 1907 (TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707, op. 229, 1907 rik, spr. 112, ark. 17).

50 Pererva, *Tserkovni shkoly*, 63–64, 151, 385–91.

51 Ibid., 63–64.

52 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, Sobr. 3, Tom 12 (1892) (St. Petersburg, 1895), No. 8486.

53 TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707, op. 229, 1907 rik, spr. 112, ark. 22; Rozhdestvenskii, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 689–90.

In 1907, the government began to adopt countermeasures. They searched and closed such schools and punished the founders. According to the files preserved by the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, the Kiev educational district continued to record these discoveries and repressions until 1910, which seems to indicate that the Polish movement for clandestine schools declined after 1910. I identified one hundred and thirteen cases of clandestine Polish schools revealed in 1907.<sup>54</sup> Their locations are included in the following chart.

Table 2: Cases of Clandestine Polish Schools Recorded in 1907

Province	District	Settlements	Total numbers	
Kiev	Radomysl'	Colony: Guta-Zabrochskaia; Villages: Krymska, Berkozovka, Ostrov, and Romanovka; Towns: Malin	6	36
	Berdichev	City: Berdichev; Towns: Dziun'kov, Pogrebishche, Makhnovka; Villages: Pustakha, Zarudintsy, Pikovtsy, Polichintsy, Bogudzen'ka	9	
	Vasil'kov	Towns: Shamraevka, Rokitno, Belaia Tserkova; Villages: Venrik, Prishivan'n, Leshchanka, Yankovka	7	
	Tarashcha	Villages: Ianishovka, Tetiev, Burkovtsy, Shuliaki, Aleksandrovka, Bagva	6	
	Skvira	Towns: Volodarka, Khodorkov; Villages: Prichepovka, Berezianka, Volitsa-Zarubnitskaia, Ivan'ki, Khmelevka	7	
	Uman'	Village: Peregonovka	1	
Podolia	Kemenets	Towns: Kupino; Villages: Bogushovka, Malaia Karabchiv, Skotyniaki	4	25
	Proskurov	Towns: Fel'shtin; Villages: Zarech'e, Moskalevka	3	
	Letichev	Villages: Mashkovtsy, Korolevka, Mikhapol', Svinnaia, Fashchivka, Slobodka, Korzhovtsy, Popovtsy, Grimichka	9	

<sup>54</sup> I reviewed TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707, op. 229, 1907 rik, spr. 112. Further descriptions in the text derive from my comprehensive analysis of this file. Therefore, I will not put archival sheet (*list*) numbers as a source for each statement. The source of a particular statement is the whole file, not one or another sheet.

## Politics around Universal Education in Right-bank Ukraine in the Late Tsarist Period

	Balta	Town: Krivoe Ozero	1	
	Vinnitsa	Town: Ianov; Villages: Uladovka, Piliava (2 cases)	3	
	Litin	Colony: Guta-Chernelevskaia	1	
	Gaisin	Town: Kunia	1	
	Ushitsa	Village: Shchebutintsy	1	
	Ol'gopol'	Town: Bershad', Village: Chechel'nik	2	
Volyn'	Rovno	Townships: Voronukha, Khutor Zurno	2	52
	Vladimir Volynskii	Colony: Romanovka; Villages: Biidiug, Blydov	3	
	Lutsk	City: Lutsk (4 cases); Colonies: Gubinskie Budki, Keremenets; Town: Vladimirtsy; Villages: Lavrov (2 cases), Nesvichi, Podberezh'e, Romanov, Biskupichi	13	
	Zaslavl'	Village: Gorodishche	1	
	Zhitomir	Town: Krasnopol' (2 cases); Villages: Motrunki, Motovilovka, Torchin, Korytyshche	6	
	Rovno	City: Rovno; Colonies: Voronukha, Zurno	3	
	Starokonstantinov	Towns: Teofipol', Krasilov, Bazaliia, Kupaen'; Villages: Zapadintsy, Lonki, Krasilovskaia Slobodka; Sloboda Novomeiskaia	8	
	Duben'	Towns: Olynka, Mlynov; Villages: Kosarevskaia-Rudka	3	
	Kremenets	Towns: Shumsk, Iampol'	2	
	Novograd-Volynskii	Villages: Tadeushpol', Khrobuznaia, Brazhintsy	3	
	Ovruch	Sloboda: Khriplia; Villages: Shashalovka, Kalinovka, Buda-Golubievichskaia, Novaia Guta, Klitka, Pelcha, Mechnaia Rudnia	8	

As shown by this chart, Polish clandestine schools emerged most frequently in Volyn' Province and second-most frequently in Kiev Province. The counties of Radomysl', Verdichev, Vasil'kov, Skvira, Tarashcha (Kiev Province), Letichev (Podoliia Province), Lutsk, Starokonstantinov, and Ovruch (Volyn' Province) recorded numerous cases of Polish clandestine schools. Obviously, the local number of Polish clandestine schools reflects ethnic Poles' demographic weight in these localities. Yet, this number

possibly also depended on local Russian notables' tolerance towards Poles. For example, I. S. Matiets, the schoolmaster of a two-class parish school in Lipki village, Skvira district, Kiev Province, was famed for his professionalism. As the director of popular schools in Kiev Province reported to the overseer of the Kiev educational district, the Kievan bishop visited the school in May 1910 and was satisfied with the school's facilities, as well as by the pupils' answers when he examined them. The bishop was especially fascinated by the pupils' choral singing. A member of the Kievan Zemstvo Committee joined this appraisal when he visited the school. However, the director of popular schools lamented that when this "ideal schoolmaster" noticed the existence of a clandestine Polish school in his village, he not only failed to report it to the authorities; he even allowed his Orthodox pupils to attend it. The director of popular schools gave Matiets a strict reprimand for his "indifferent attitude toward the breeding of moral-religious and national feeling among Russian children." The director warned Matiets that he would be removed if he repeated this behavior.<sup>55</sup> It appears that the schoolmaster was an advocate of inter-confessional dialogue in a multiethnic society. By making a show of accusing the schoolmaster, the director, in fact, protected one of his best subordinates from receiving an even more severe punishment. Further, let us discern the general tendencies of clandestine schools in the three Southwest provinces.

### Founders

In most cases, clandestine schools were founded either by local Polish notables, such as landowner-nobles, owners of sugar factories, pharmaceutical chemists (*provizor*), lawyers (*prisiazhnyi poverennyi*, two cases in Luts'k City), or Catholic priests. These two categories could work together, as was the case with Grimiachka Village, Letichev district, Podolia Province, where a landowner, the owner of a brewery, and a priest cooperated to open a school at a peasant's house. Founding a school could also be a collective action, as was the case with the Catholic parish guardianship in Vorodarka

<sup>55</sup> TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707, op. 229, 1910 rik, cpr. 145, ark. 60–61.

Town, Skvira District, Kiev Province. There were cases of more democratic management of schools. In Ovruch District, Volyn' Province, for example, donations by local Catholic believers maintained three of the schools established by priests; in one of them, parents provided lunch to a female teacher instead of salary. Meanwhile, landowners often opened a school in their estate office building to educate the children of agricultural workers and tenant farmers. There were three cases where schools developed from orphanages (*priiut*).

In most cases, notables or priests on the same settlements founded schools, yet they sometimes opened schools in neighboring settlements. There was a case in Letichev District of Podoliia Province, where a Catholic priest named Antonii (Grzhmailo), in tandem with landowner Kovnatskii, itinerantly opened schools in four villages: Mashkovtsy, Korol'vka, Mikhal-pol', and Svinnaia. A relevant portion of the founders were women—female nobles and nobles' daughters or widows; I identified seven women among the thirty secular founders.

### Teachers and Contents of Teaching

Women made up a significant proportion of teachers; of forty-three teachers who taught secular subjects, twenty-five were women (58%). Teachers of Divine Law were Catholic priests and accordingly men. The contents of the education provided by Polish schools were poor: Divine Law, Polish language and sometimes Russian language courses, and handicraft and sewing courses. They are, at best, comparable to one-class Orthodox parish schools. Noble and peasant girls, often younger than twenty years old, devoted themselves to educating children, but they often lacked a pedagogical license, as was also the case with Orthodox parish schoolteachers.

### Pupils

Polish schools were small and could not accept many children mainly because of the lack of space. Schools were often opened at nobles' or peasants' houses, parsonages, and sometimes in estate out-buildings, the last of which were relatively large. Among the forty-one schools whose enroll-

ments could be identified, seven schools had fewer than eleven pupils, fifteen schools had from eleven to twenty pupils, thirteen schools had from twenty-one to thirty pupils, and only six schools had more than thirty-one pupils. The authorities became extremely sensitive if pupils included Orthodox children. I was able to identify eight such cases, among which four were observed in Ovruch Uezd of Volyn' Province.

### Exposure

There seemed to be three channels to disclose clandestine Polish schools: first, the line of officials moving from police—governors—governor-general; second, the ME's local agents (inspectors and directors of popular schools); and third, local Orthodox priests (often teachers of Divine Law), who reported the existence of Polish schools in their parishes to the bishopric. When local police officers found clandestine schools, they reported it to the governor, who independently took the necessary measures to close them. When local agents of the ME or local priests found clandestine schools, they reported it to the provincial director of popular schools, who in turn asked the governor to close them.

The characteristics of clandestine Polish schools emerging after the 1905 Revolution seem to indicate that they sought no more than to reproduce Polish and Catholic identity. Poor and disorganized, Polish schools could at best be compared to one-class Orthodox parish schools, and they were far from breeding young rural intellectuals who would embrace Polish ideas. Obviously, Polish parents, Catholic clerics, and social activists (volunteer teachers) did not expect advanced secular knowledge to emanate from Polish schools. Yet, the Russian authorities interpreted these schools as rural Poles' attempt at strengthening Catholic propaganda.<sup>56</sup> On May 12, 1907, when Polish clandestine schools began to be disclosed, the overseer of the Kiev educational district sent a petition to the minister of education, in which he argued that Polish enlightening societies at-

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<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Kievskii eparkhial'nyi missiionarskii komitet, *Katolicheskaia propaganda v Kievskoi eparkhii posle darovaniia svobody veroispovedanii 17 apreliia 1905 goda* (Kiev, 1908).

tempted to Polonize not only the Russian population who espoused Roman Catholicism, but also Orthodox Russians if possible. To deter this, the overseer asked the Southwest governor-general to pursue criminal charges against the founders of the Polish schools. However, prohibitive measures alone would not be able to impede the “new onslaught of Polish-Catholic propaganda.” The most effective positive measure would be to establish a network of primary schools in places “where Polish schools emerged.” For this purpose, the Kievan overseer requested funds to accomplish this from the ME: 120,000 rubles at first and then 34,000 rubles every year. According to the Kievan overseer, the most appropriate form of school for the task of promoting the “Russian cause” in the Southwestern Region was two-class primary schools, which should be established everywhere. He added that, for the time being, local communities would not be ready to deliver subsidies for such schools. In the future, the procedure of delivering government subsidies should be simplified to build school networks quickly.<sup>57</sup>

I could not find any evidence that the ME supported this petition requesting that schools be built wherever illegal Polish schools emerged. Such a position was improbable because, first, this policy would provoke furious protest from other local communities that had already borne the heavy burden of opening and running a school in their territory. Second, the core idea of universal education, which the ME was then preparing, was spatially even networks of schools. The speedy establishment of one or another school for confessional reasons would have damaged this attempt at uniformity. Indeed, I have not found any argument advanced by either the ME or the Kievan overseer that two-class schools were more advantageous than four-class advanced schools in the struggle against Polonism, when they criticized local communities’ petitions for four-class schools. As I described above, their main concern was spatial uniformity of school networks.

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57 TsDIA Ukrainy, f. 707, op. 229, 1907 rik, spr. 112, ark. 8–8zv.



## Conclusion

When it began to modernize, the Russian Empire was already a world power. To sustain its vast territory, the government spent a huge amount of money. As a result, in contrast to other countries belatedly modernizing, such as Japan and Germany, the available funds for modernization was severely limited in the Russian Empire. The government had no alternative but to rely upon public resources and initiative for modernization, while public institutions such as the *zemstvos*, the ROC, and local communities exploited the government's reliance on them in order to achieve their own goals. Thus, constant negotiation between the government and local institutions characterized modern Russia's public administration. Moreover, the geographical uniformity in the allocation of resources—easily achievable in state-led modernization efforts—became a serious issue in the contestation over modern Russia's public administration. The introduction of universal education should be understood in this context. One must bear in mind that primary education was not a priority area among the government's modernizing projects after 1905, while agricultural aid enjoyed the generous financial support of Petr Stolypin's government. This added another layer to the ME's policy; under any pretext, be it Polish clandestine schools or the introduction of universal education, it tried to increase its share of the government's budget.

Another unexpected challenge to the geographical uniformity of budget allocation was the Polish question. The softening of the prohibition of unauthorized Polish schools after the 1905 Revolution caused these schools to mushroom in Right-bank Ukraine. Although the local Poles' request for their own national schools was defensive and philanthropic as this chapter has demonstrated, the overseer of the Kievan educational district used this movement as a pretext for requesting an increased budget allocation for primary education in the region. Yet at the same time, his office never adopted the discovery of an unauthorized Polish school as a criterion for establishing a new school in the locality. This would have violated the geographic uniformity of budget allocation for school construction and, accordingly,

the ME's effort to introduce universal primary education. To put it differently, measures aimed at universal education could not become an instrument of anti-Polish policy in Right-bank Ukraine because the former developed in the contradiction between the need for administrative optimization (spatially even distribution of schools) and requests by local communities which, as a rule, had become more aspirational in terms of social and economic modernization and less obedient to the authorities than they had been in the pre-1905 period. Consequently, the imperial government's struggle against clandestine Polish schools could only be accomplished by "prohibitive measures."



# To Sense an Empire: Russian Education Policy and the Origins of Mass Tourism in the Northwest Region

Jolita Mulevičiūtė

## The Fugitive Nose and the Question of Colonial Imagination

By opening his book *Internal Colonization* with a discussion of Nikolai Gogol's "surrealist" short story *The Nose* (1836), cultural historian Alexander Etkind was not simply hoping to achieve the literary impact so valued in contemporary humanistic studies. According to Etkind, "Gogol is an imperial author who belongs to the list of great colonial authors, along with James Joyce and Joseph Conrad," as evidenced by his famous satirical work that encompassed the sweeping expanse between Riga, St. Petersburg, the Caucasus, and Kamchatka.<sup>1</sup> Etkind also notes that the story's fugitive nose was apprehended on its way to Riga without speculating why the mystical creature was trying to reach the center of the Livland province, a question that would be an entirely logical one and might provide insight into the nature of the Russian colonial mentality. So, why exactly did the nose of the story's unfortunate protagonist, Kovalev, decide to depart St. Petersburg for Riga, when it could have easily chosen Helsingfors (today, Helsinki), Reval (Tallinn), Warsaw, Vilna, Kiev, Odessa, Nizhny Novgorod, or Moscow? This study, which focuses on excursions, especially but not only school tours organized in the so-called Northwest Region of the Russian Empire in the early twentieth century, provides an answer to this question

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 13–14.

among others. I assert that group travel was not just an educational tool or form of recreation, it was also a cultural undertaking that helped define a specific political space and disseminate an imperial ideology in the imagination of Russia's subjects.

Such an analytical viewpoint would have been impossible in Lithuanian historiography fifteen or twenty years ago because of the predominance of ethno-linguistic and ethno-confessional themes in local historical research. For a long time, nineteenth-century history was largely constructed as a narrative about the struggle to retain a Lithuanian-language press, Lithuanian schools, and to defend the rights of a Lithuanianized Catholic Church. Any analysis of the circumstances of this struggle from the Lithuanian perspective viewed Russian imperial power as a repressive external force, and all of its employed tactics were defined as furthering Russification, which meant nothing less than the assimilation of local inhabitants. By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, such a defensive, ethnocentric historical model concentrated on political events and linguistic issues began to erode. In the past two decades, there has been a shift away from the study of the ethnic Lithuanian nation toward the analysis that includes all ethnic and confessional groups residing in the territory of Lithuania. The dynamic diversity of political and administrative methods of governance has been much discussed, and the multifaceted meaning of "Russification" has been revealed. Moreover, the grand narrative has been rejected as the search began for new approaches that draw on the lessons of the so-called "turns" in the humanities. All these methodological changes have made it possible to delve not only into the facts of political and social life of the former empire, but also into the mentality, imagination, and emotions of a bygone society.<sup>2</sup>

2 For attempts to apply new methodological approaches in nineteenth-century Lithuanian studies, see, for example: Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Antanas Kulakauskas, *Pod władzą carów: Litwa w XIX wieku* (Cracow: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych "Universitas," 2003), first published as Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Antanas Kulakauskas, *Carų valdžioje: Lietuva XIX amžiuje* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1996); Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007); Darius Staliūnas, ed., *Spatial Concepts of Lithuania in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016); Vasilijus Safronovas, *The Creation of National Spaces in a Pluricultural Region: The Case of Prussian Lithuania*, trans. Albina Strunga (Brighton, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2016).

This article follows these trends in Lithuanian historiography. Several points of departure are important for my analysis: first and foremost, is the tenet, which comes from postcolonial theory, that an imperial government and the nations ruled by it are not simply two separate, opposing historical actors, but that they are constantly interacting and constructing new, mixed forms of reality; here it is important to take note of Mary Louise Pratt's concept of "contact zone" and Homi K. Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity.<sup>3</sup> This perspective suggests a second principle, which requires taking into account not only the destructive, autocratic expression of power that led to the country's underdevelopment, but also the creative and inventive practices undertaken by imperial authorities. Thirdly and finally, my focus will center on visual practices because, based on John Urry's view of tourism, one can assert that any form of sightseeing is primarily and essentially associated with the visual experience.<sup>4</sup> Thus, I rely on insights offered by visual culture studies, but instead of scrutinizing specific imagery, I focus on the context of visual perception. In so doing, through the prism of the history of organized travel, I reveal how the Russian government responded to the political, economic, and social challenges of a new era and sought to modernize its strategy for integrating and protecting the empire. At the same time, however, I highlight a contradictory aspect of this process and demonstrate how, despite the government's efforts, one construct of tsarist administration—the Northwest Region comprised of six Lithuanian and Belorussian provinces—remained one of the most problematic regions within the imagined imperial space.

### Against Entropy

In 1908, Georg Kerschensteiner (1854–1932), the renowned German educator and promoter of the so-called new school concept, published an

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3 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994).

4 John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1990).

article on the issues of national education in the journal *Internationale Wochenschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik*. Three years later, the text was translated into Russian and included in a collection of articles by Kerschensteiner published in Moscow. In his paper, Kerschensteiner warned his readers about the destructive entropy eating away at the foundations of modern, democratic states: “Everything that we value the most in a contemporary state—the freedom of academic research, a free press and free speech, the right of assembly and association, universal suffrage, free industry and communication—all of these freedoms and their consequences for the industrial and economic life of a country, all of this uncurbs individualism, counteracts the solidarity of the masses, and encourages centrifugal, not centripetal forces.”<sup>5</sup>

The views of this German academic were quite popular in early twentieth-century Russia. Many Russian social activists who advocated for the unification of the heterogeneous ethno-cultural and economic imperial space eagerly supported his ideas. Kerschensteiner proposed combatting destructive centrifugal processes not by employing coercive administrative measures, but through educational and cultural methods, which is precisely what the Russian government began to consistently implement from the 1880s onward. “When people are connected by a common cultural aspiration and when they understand this tie, they perceive weakness in any attempt to divide their forces, and thus seek to avoid it. So, the modern state is a union consolidated by such common cultural objectives,” wrote Kerschensteiner trying to demonstrate the advantages of the cultural approach.<sup>6</sup> What is more, he believed that cultural activity can only be effective in a large country (which Russia certainly considered itself to be), because only a large country is (potentially) capable of providing for a modern individual’s spiritual needs. Kerschensteiner proposed developing the collective activity of young people based on a shared sensory experience, the

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5 Georg Kerschensteiner, “Problema narodnogo vospitaniia,” in Georg Kerschensteiner, *Osnovnye voprosy shkol’noi organizatsii, perevod so vtorogo nemetskogo izdaniia pod red. E. Ger’e, s vstup. stat’ei N. V. Speranskogo* (Moscow: Tipografiia T-va I. D. Sytina, 1911), 33.

6 Ibid., 36.

pleasure of which would awaken children's drive to serve others and bind their individual egoism to a community spirit, helping to nurture, in the author's words, a social instinct and sense of solidarity, thereby educating the nation as an integral whole.

Kerschensteiner singled out student associations for sport and tourism as one of the few forms of German collective cultural activity that actually fostered the devotion of young people toward their community and their homeland. His assertions began to resonate just as the practice of organizing group excursions was beginning to take hold in the Russian Empire. The development of Russian tourism was supported by several favorable circumstances: the emergence of a railway network, the relative liberalization of the internal passport regime in 1894, and discounted railway fares approved at the turn of the twentieth century.

Tours organized by schools became the most popular type of early mass tourism in Russia. In 1900, the Ministry of Education revoked an 1873 edict establishing summer educational programs largely limited to writing exercises and instead instructed primary and secondary schools to introduce nature walks and field trips.<sup>7</sup> Detailed rules for educational tours were developed in the first decade of the twentieth century. School trips were required to be organized in accordance with administrative orders and restrictions based on sex and nationality. Tour organizers had to obtain a permit from the overseer of the local educational district. Girls' schools were encouraged to focus on travel to nearby locations and religious or agricultural sites. It was not recommended to take Jewish students on long-distance trips, but if tours did include these students, organizers were required to obtain advance approval for their participation from the local administrative bodies in the district to be visited if it was beyond the permitted settlement zone.<sup>8</sup> By the early twentieth century, then, opportunities to ex-

7 "(2-go avgusta 1900 goda, no. 20185). Tsirkuliar Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia popechiteliam uchebnykh okrugov – ob otmene letnikh kanikuliarnykh rabot uchenikov srednikh uchebnykh zavedenii," *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* 331 (sentiabr' 1900): 64.

8 "Svedeniia ob uchenicheskikh ekskursiakh," in *Vilenskii kalendar' na 1911 prostoi god* (Vilnius: Elektro-Tipografiia "Russkii Pochin," [1910]), 64.



plore the Russian Empire had expanded considerably, but the chance to travel freely through the vast country was largely reserved for male persons of Christian faiths.

Organized touring was considered to be a modern and effective pedagogical tool. It was asserted that travel could help overcome the conflictual relationships between teachers and their students, bring students together, shape shared group interests, and instill a sense of mutual solidarity. This method did have one serious shortcoming, however—it was expensive. This explains why efforts were made to reduce travel costs. Beginning in 1902, discounted train fares were introduced, low-income students were provided with financial assistance, support was obtained from local municipalities and private transport companies, and internal resources were sought through fostering cooperation among institutions reporting to the Ministry of Education. This policy produced certain results; for example, the professor of classical philology and the descendant of petty Lithuanian nobility, Merkelis Račkauskas (1885–1968), recalled that a tour of Kiev organized by a secondary school (*gimnazija*) in Shavli (Šiauliai) for about fifty students, both Orthodox and Catholic, was particularly appealing for him as someone who had never visited any larger city, and that the cost of the trip was low—only seven rubles.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, despite government efforts, travel to more distant locations remained out of reach for poorer pupils. The opportunity to visit the remote expanses of Russia was primarily enjoyed by the children of wealthy families. Thus, for objective reasons school trip organizers in the Northwest Region, as in the empire overall, focused their efforts mainly on the middle class, that is, the families of local officials and representatives of the intelligentsia as well as members of the bourgeoisie and gentry. At the same time, however, it was precisely these professionally active and financially independent social groups that played an essential role in the country's economic development and political stability.

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9 Merkelis Račkauskas, *Užrašai: Dvidešimt metų (1885–1905) Žemaitijos užkampy* (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2008), 295.

## Knowing One's "Little Motherland" and Loving the "Great Fatherland"

Fundamental school reforms launched in the second half of the nineteenth century in Europe, Russia, and the United States conferred new importance on tourism as a broad means of education. This process was influenced by the rapidly adopted understanding of visual learning, which was centered on the belief that training should be based not on theory or "book knowledge," but on direct, sensory (especially visual) experience capable of providing children with specific information and practical skills. Human vision was believed to have exceptional educative powers. It was asserted that "the eye is not only a conduit of light, but also of enlightenment," and therefore, all efforts had to be undertaken to ensure that "the foundation of any instruction must be 'visibility', so that an 'object', or at least its image, shall have precedence over the word."<sup>10</sup> Influenced by such views, schools in the Russian Empire began to assemble visual aids and change their curricula. Excursions became one of the most effective new visual educational tools, giving students the opportunity to view the natural and cultural sites they were learning about in situ.

The principles of visual learning and the practice of organizing tours were closely linked to an ideology grounded in getting to know one's birthplace. This attitude promoted the belief that it was essential to become familiar with one's immediate surroundings because, according to the proponents of this approach, only through the specific and personal experience of the "little motherland" (*rodina*) could one hope to develop a proper love for one's "Great Fatherland" (*Otechestvo*).<sup>11</sup>

Local studies had been encouraged throughout Europe since the days of the Enlightenment and romanticism. "One doesn't have to become a profound scientist, but failing to come to know the land in which one lives is

<sup>10</sup> Boris Iakovlev, *Risovanie, kak obshcheobrazovatel'nyi uchebnyi predmet* (Moscow: Ucheb. otd. Muzeia prikl. znaniy v Moskve, 1896), 13, 15.

<sup>11</sup> For the distinction between the concepts of *rodina* and *Otechestvo*, see Mariia Leskinen, "Predstavleniia ob 'otechestve' i 'rodine' v russkikh uchebnikakh geografii poslednei treti XIX v.: konstruirovaniie natsional'noi identichnosti," *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, seriia 8: *Istoriia*, 3 (2010): 43–44.

a great shame—and an even graver shame if one knows more about foreign lands than about one's own,” wrote the poet Ludwik Kondratowicz (1823–62).<sup>12</sup> In the latter half of the nineteenth century, such patriotic ideas that emerged alongside national movements began to take on a political form in many countries, and exploratory wandering through the countryside by lonely intellectuals were soon replaced by organized group excursions. It should be noted that according to the Russian interpretation, exploring one's native land had a specific aim. On the one hand, it was intended to help Russian settlers truly “own” the newly colonized territories, providing a sense of “home” for colonists finding themselves in foreign surroundings. At the same time, it was also hoped that ethnic minorities, once armed with greater knowledge about their own history and having experienced pride for their “little motherland,” could better participate in Russian social life and become more effectively integrated into the greater imperial space.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, teaching about local nature, economics, and culture as a part of imperial geographical and social structure was considered to be an effective means for consolidating multi-ethnic society in such a huge country, the Romanov Empire.

The task of developing “homeland studies” programs (*rodinovedenie*) began to be addressed in Russian educational institutions starting in the 1860s. Among the first to tackle these courses was the renowned Russian educator Konstantin Ushinskii (1824–71), who believed that children must know their own country, but also argued that such knowledge should be visual, specific, and must begin with a student's native region: children must learn how to compare the familiar with the remote and must properly understand the relationships between things.<sup>14</sup> This particular pedagog-

12 Władysław Syrokoma [Ludwik Kondratowicz], *Wycieczki po Litwie w promieniach od Wilna*, vol. 1, *Troki, Stokliszki, Jezno, Punie, Niemież, Miedniki etc.* (Vilnius: Nakładem księgarza A. Assa, 1857), 7.

13 See Vera Tolz, “*Sobstvennyi Vostok Rossii: Politika identichnosti i vostokovedenie v pozdneimperskii i ranne-sovetskii period*” (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2013), 76–77, first published as Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

14 See Konstantin Ushinskii, *Rodnoe slovo: Dlia detei mladshogo vozrasta: God vtoroi* (St. Petersburg: Tipografia Glavnogo artillerijskogo upravleniia, 1864).

ical method was likely first adopted in the Dorpat (Tartu) educational district. According to Ulrike Plath, after the publication of Gustav Blumberg's book *Heimathskunde. Stofflick begrentz und methodisch bearbeitet* (Dorpat: Gläser, 1869), schools in the Baltic provinces, where the German cultural influence was predominant, began to teach local history and geography, and patriotic tourism (walking Heimat) was introduced step-by-step as a practical means of education.<sup>15</sup>

By the early twentieth century, "homeland studies" had become an integral part of the primary school curricula throughout the European territory of the Russian Empire.<sup>16</sup> A considerable body of educational literature was published for the subject in the form of textbooks instructing teachers how to correctly develop the educational process beginning with a child's living place and progressing to the Russian Empire as a whole, and specialized surveys that described the climate, nature, demographics, native populations, economy, and culture of individual areas. To make such instruction more effective, many of these publications featured extensive illustrations. Efforts to make "homeland studies" more visual reached their zenith in the years between 1909 and 1911, with the ambitious idea to incorporate colored photographs taken by Sergei Prokudin-Gorskii (1863–1944), which represented various locations throughout the empire and their inhabitants with extraordinarily powerful realism.<sup>17</sup> In 1910, a special inter-ministerial commission was established to acquire and publish the photographic prints. The resulting album was meant to serve as a grand visual encyclopedia of the country ruled by the Romanov dynasty, and a subscription campaign was launched to encourage advance purchases of the book. The institutions of the Vil'na educational district were also required to order the collection of pictures, and only three of them had the courage to refuse to do so due to the prohib-

15 Ulrike Plath, "Heimat: Rethinking Baltic German Spaces of Belonging," *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/ Studies on Art and Architecture/Studien für Kunstwissenschaft* 23, no. 3–4 (2014): 67, 73.

16 See Marina Loskutova, "S chego nachinaetsia rodina? Prepodavanie geografii v dorevoliutsionnoi shkole i regional'noe samosoznanie (XIX–nachalo XX v.)," *Ab Imperio* 3 (2003): 159–98; Leskinen, "Predstavleniia ob 'otchestve' i 'rodine,'" 40–55.

17 See Natal'ia Naryshkina-Prokudina-Gorskaia, "Chelovek, kotoryi shel bystro": *Po stranitsam semeinykh vospominanii* (St. Petersburg: Rodnye prostory, 2015), 112.

itive cost of the publication for their meager school budgets.<sup>18</sup> But despite the energy invested in the launching of the project, the endeavor was never realized, likely because of the unfavorable financial and copyright terms (Prokudin-Gorskii offered to sell his collection for a hundred thousand rubles on the condition that he would retain sole rights to his work).<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding the drive to create an illusion of reality and to present all material as clearly as possible, the vision of the country that unfolded before students' eyes on the pages of textbooks was rather fragmented, consisting of individual landscapes, examples of local flora and fauna, ethnic types, and economic and cultural sites. According to Marina Loskutova, the mosaic-like nature of the presentation was the result of an ahistorical, naturalist approach as well as disparate classification principles, which is why the "native land" had no recognizable features: "In Russia, the little motherland could easily shrink to the horizons of one village, and just as easily expand to the very edges of the great 'fatherland.'" <sup>20</sup> We could go further and assert that, in both Russian imperial discourse and in the academic geography that reflected it, the only absolute and unquestionable concept was the "Great Fatherland," while one's homeland was devoid of clear content or autonomous value. Its depiction was subjected to political circumstances and only became meaningful when projected upon a symbolic metastructure: the Romanov state. This approach was particularly evident in schools in the Northwest Region.

The concept of "homeland studies" reached the Northwest Region at the same time as other areas of the Russian Empire. After conducting an inspection of schools in Vitebsk, Dinaburg (Daugavpils), and Mogilev in 1865, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district complained that students lacked

18 See the file regarding subscriptions of the album by Sergei Prokudin-Gorskii in institutions of the Vil'na educational district, 1910, *Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas* (henceforth, *LVA*), f. 567, ap. 1, b. 1851.

19 For more details on this topic, see the files: "O priobretenii v kaznu sostavliaemoi professorom Prokudinym-Gorskim kollektzii fotograficheskikh snimkov dostoprimechatel'nostei Rossii," 1910, *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv* (henceforth, *RGIA*), f. 1276, op. 6, d. 597; "Proekt zakliucheniia k rabotam Mezhdvostvennoi komissii po voprosu o priobretenii v kaznu fotograficheskikh kollektsii S. M. Prokudin-Gorskogo," 1911, *RGIA*, f. 25, op. 5, d. 381, l. 2–8.

20 Loskutova, "S chego nachinaetsia rodina?," 183, 194, 196.

information about their neighboring provinces and that Russian geography was being taught as if it was the geography of China.<sup>21</sup> Although local officials regularly emphasized the need for learning about one's native land, no significant progress on this subject was achieved as evidenced by the concerns periodically expressed by educators as well as the lack of instructional tools allocated to the Western provinces. Not a single geography textbook encompassing the entire Northwest Region was published prior to World War I. Indeed, publishers only succeeded in issuing brief, non-illustrated surveys of the Minsk and Vil'na provinces that appeared particularly insubstantial within the overall context of similar publications elsewhere in the Russian Empire.<sup>22</sup> In truth, efforts were made to incorporate elements of "homeland studies" programs into Russian language and literature lessons, but these attempts also avoided the use of illustrations of local sites of interest.<sup>23</sup> More importantly, textbooks on Russian literature for local children were compiled according to a contradictory logic: rather than beginning with a focus on subjects pertinent to the native land, publications started by examining works that glorified Russia, inserting information about the regional culture in the form of brief supplements. The conclusion, then, is that the "native land" in the course books used in Northwestern regional schools remained invisible both literally and figuratively; its representation "faded" due to the focus on the "Great Fatherland." Given that the literature intended for "homeland studies" programs was closely related to the practice of educational excursions (by providing selective information, textbooks shaped the principles of instructional tourism), one can assume that a similar strategy for controlling perspective was also applied in the organization of student tours.

21 "Report by the overseer of the Vil'na educational district, Ivan Kornilov, on the inspection of schools in Vitebsk, Dinaburg, and Mogilev, April 1865," *LVIA*, f. 567, ap. 3, b. 1435, l. 14v-15.

22 Aleksandr Smorodskii, *Geografiia Minskoi gubernii (Rodinovedenie)* (Minsk: Parovaia tipo-litografiia Kh. Ia. Dvorzhetsa, 1894); Evstafii Orlovskii, *Uchebnoe opisanie Vilenskoi gubernii* (Vilnius: Tipografiia M. R. Romma, 1904; 2-e izdanie: Vilnius: Tipografiia A. G. Syrkina, 1912).

23 Nikanor Odintsov and Vsevolod Bogoiavlenskii, eds., *Kniga dlia chteniia v narodnykh uchilishchakh Severo-Zapadnogo kraia Rossii s russkimi i tserkovno-slavianskim bukvarom i materialom dlia samostoiatel'nykh pis'mennykh uprazhnenii*, vol. 1-3, (Vilnius: Tipografiia A. G. Syrkina, 1896).

## Travel Itineraries: Opportunities and Limitations

As in other European countries, the appeal of tourism within the Russian Empire was bolstered by popular science publications, travelogues, and adventure fiction, particularly the romantic novels of James Fenimore Cooper, Thomas Mayne Reid, and Jules Verne, all of which were eagerly collected by Russian school libraries. The imperial royal family's trips were held up as exemplary models for school excursions, including the 1837 visit made by the future emperor Alexander II to twenty-nine of the Russian Empire's European provinces, which the poet Vasilii Zhukovskii (1783–1852) compared to a “national betrothal to Russia,”<sup>24</sup> or the tour to the Russian Far East taken in 1890 by the future Nicholas II in order to inaugurate the construction of the Trans-Siberian railroad—a visit that was later widely promoted through illustrated lectures, photography collections, and books.

Much like the travels embarked upon by the country's leaders, school excursions were also ideologically driven and strategically motivated. The dominant elements featured on the educational tourism map included the old and new capitals of Russia, Kiev—long considered the symbolic cradle of Russian statehood and the Orthodox religion—as well as entire regions, first and foremost the Volga region, Crimea, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Finland. The geography of educational tours essentially reflected the colonial structure of the Romanov Empire, and it was meant to shape the spatial perception of a “Great Russian State” to be embraced by the tsar's subjects.

The Vil'na educational district began organizing tours in 1900, the same year in which the Ministry of Education directive was issued.<sup>25</sup> Following education policymakers in St. Petersburg, local teachers began discussing the special benefits of tourism, asserting that group travel would provide children with necessary knowledge and would help to harden students phys-

24 Sergei Tatishchev, *Imperator Aleksandr II: Ego zhizn' i tsarstvovanie*, izdanie 2-e, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Izdanie A. S. Suvorina, 1911), 82.

25 Maksim Kossakovskii, “K voprosu ob uchenicheskikh ekskursiakh s pedagogicheskoi tsel'iu,” *Tsirkuliar po Vilenskomu uchebnomu okrugu* 6 (iun' 1900): 421–41.

ically as well as to develop their willpower, responsibility, and self-reliance. In the view of educators, school tours would also bring teachers and students closer together and, most importantly, would inspire young people's faith in the moral and material capabilities of the Romanov Empire.<sup>26</sup> Already in the first three years, alongside a number of local hikes, several long-distance trips took place: visits to Pskov, Kiev, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, an excursion to the famous Orthodox Solovetskii monastery and the Murmansk area, as well as a trip to Crimea with stops in Gomel', Kiev, Yekaterinoslav, Kherson, Odessa, Sevastopol', Yalta, Feodosia, and Khar'kov.<sup>27</sup> Systemic planning of multi-day trips to more distant locations took on even greater relevance in 1910, after the board of the Vil'na educational district called for more attention to be devoted to visiting remote regions.<sup>28</sup>

In many respects, school travels organized in the Northwest Region differed little from the routes that were popular in the rest of the country. The tours promoted in the Vil'na educational district brought students to St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, the Black Sea resorts, and the Caucasus and Turkestan. It is worthwhile noting that the last destination was the most challenging. Implemented in 1911 to replace a planned visit to Vladivostok and the Russian Far East Region because of an outbreak of the plague, the excursion to Turkestan lasted forty-two days and included numerous stops in Khar'kov, Rostov-on-Don, Baku, Krasnovodsk, Bukhara, Samarkand, Khodzhen, Tashkent, Samara, Nizhnii Novgorod, Moscow, Smolensk, and other cities. Thirty-eight children and eight adults from various Northwestern schools with their personal belongings and ten photo cameras covered 10,002 versts (10,670 km) by train, steamship, and horse-drawn

26 S. Kovaliuk, ed., *Otchet o sostoiianii Vilenskoi 1-i gimnazii za 1899–1900 uchebnyi god*, (Vilnius: Tipografia Vil. Prav. Sv.-Dukhovskogo Bratstva, 1901), 82–83.

27 See S. Kovaliuk, ed., *Otchet o sostoiianii Vilenskoi 1-i gimnazii za 1899–1900 uchebnyi god*, 53; *Ekskursiia uchenikov Vilenskoi 1-oj gimnazii v Krym (7 iunია – 11 iulია 1901 goda)* (Vilnius: Tipografia Vil. Prav. Sv.-Dukhovskogo Bratstva, 1902); A. I. Shestov, ed., *Opisanie ekskursii uchashchikhsia Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga za 1910 god*, (Vilnius: Tipografia Iosifa Zavadzkiego, 1911), 8; S. I. Medvedev, ed., *Opisanie ekskursii vospitannikov srednikh uchebnykh zavedenii Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga v Turkestan letom 1911 goda*, (Kaunas–Vilnius: Tipografia I. Zavadzkiego, 1912), 3; “1903 report on a trip taken by the Mozyr' secondary school to Kiev,” *LVI*, f. 567, ap. 1, b. 1400, l. 2–10.

28 Medvedev, ed., *Opisanie ekskursii*, 3.



carriage. The travel costs for each participant totaled sixty rubles and students' families and public donations defrayed these costs.<sup>29</sup>

Tour planners sought to portray the Russian Empire as a country of inexhaustible natural resources, boundless economic possibilities, and innumerable cultural treasures. Various mnemonic techniques including journaling, drawing, and photography were employed to record travellers' experiences. In mandatory reports about their travels written after returning home, sightseers and their tour leaders usually emphasized their impressions of the country's great diversity. To put it more precisely, the most important leitmotif of these bureaucratic travelogues was not dangerous difference but rather variety as a peaceful kaleidoscope of landscapes, ethnicities, and cultural landmarks emblazoned in the memory and joined into an integral whole by recurring symbols of imperial rule and the expression of Russian nationhood. School reports drafted to satisfy the demands of the Ministry of Education displayed a clear overall ideological trend that embraced the image of the Russian people as a supra-ethnic community. In other words, accounts written by tour participants captured the emerging idea of a complex form of "Russianness" as an alternative to the portrayal of a homogenous Russian nation. They signaled the increasing acceptance of the need, according to Vera Tolz, to cultivate multiple, complementary identities in an effort to more effectively manage Russia's ethnic plurality.<sup>30</sup> However, this interpretation of the Russian state as a resultant force encapsulating the energies of numerous constituent nationalities generally incorporated slightly different content in different regions and was developed in particular local ways, as is demonstrated in the history of tours organized in the Vil'na education district.

Not surprisingly, prevailing anti-Polish policies meant that schools in the Northwest Region had to refrain from organized travel to the Kingdom of Poland. It is also understandable that pupils from this restive area were not given the opportunity to visit foreign destinations, despite the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 5–9.

<sup>30</sup> Tolz, "*Sobstvennyi Vostok Rossii*", 50, 65.

fact that many students and teachers from other provinces of the empire were traveling to Paris, Prague, Berlin, Constantinople, and Jerusalem with increasing frequency.<sup>31</sup> Since 1911, when the ministers of education, internal, and foreign affairs approved a form of collective foreign student passport, departures of general and higher education school groups abroad became much easier.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, no such excursion was organized by the Vil'na educational district. It seems that tsarist authorities, fearing the influence of Polish nationalism and Catholicism as well as revolutionary ideas spreading across European countries, sought to obstruct any Western-orientated school trips arranged in the Northwest Region. What is especially notable, however, is that local education administrators generally avoided traveling to the Grand Duchy of Finland and the neighboring Baltic provinces. Only a handful of such tours were organized in the 1910s, including an excursion for students of the Pinsk Realschule (*real'naia shkola*) to the environs of the Gauja river, known as the Livliandian Switzerland; a sailing trip for Vil'na educational district students in the Bay of Finland; and visits by schools from Ponevezh (Panevėžys) and Vil'na to Libava (Liepāja).<sup>33</sup> Of these tours, only the first was motivated by genuine cultural interest, while both the sailing trip and excursions to Libava (then famous for its modern submarine base) were organized with propaganda goals in mind—to extol the power of the Russian navy. These facts are indeed telling if we remember that a multitude of tourists from across the Russian Empire regularly visited Riga, Reval, Helsingfors, and Imatra. Finland was an especially popular destination—the country was viewed as an ideal imperial colony.<sup>34</sup> Its idyllic portrayal encompassed the safety of

31 For statistics on this topic, see Anatolii Belgorodskii, *Uchenicheskie ekskursii (Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk, znachenie i organizatsiia ikh)* (St. Petersburg: Sinodal'naia tipografiia, 1912), 5–6; Genadii Dolzhenko, *Istoriia turizma v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii i SSSR* (Rostov-na-Donu: Izdatel'stvo rostovskogo universiteta, 1988), 42–52; Z. P. Solov'eva, "O nekotorykh osobennostiakh organizatsii ekskursii v Rossii (1905–1914)," *Peterburzhets putesthestvuet: Sbornik materialov konferentsii*, ed. in L. I. Kashpur (St. Petersburg: "Piligrim," 1995), 62–68; Andrei Ivanov, *Istoriia rossiiskogo turizma (IX–XX veka)* (Moscow: Forum, 2011), 145–47.

32 Ivanov, *Istoriia rossiiskogo turizma*, 146.

33 See Shestov, ed., *Opisanie ekskursii*, 73–82, 86–94, 115–18; "1912 report by the director of the Alexander I secondary school villa in Vil'na," *LVTa*, f. 567, ap. 1, b. 2465, l. 151–59.

34 Nathanaëlle Minard-Törmänen, "An Imperial Idyll: Finland in Russian Travelogues (1810–1860)" (PhD diss., University of Helsinki, 2016), 319.

agrarian conservatism, practicality of Western cultural convenience, and the beauty of primordial nature. Therefore, the Grand Duchy of Finland was visited by both members of the imperial royal family as well as students from the Caucasus educational district, which itself was not lacking in natural treasures.<sup>35</sup> When the director of the Vil'na Secondary School (*gimnaziia*) proposed a tour of the Baltic provinces, St. Petersburg, and Finland, however, the overseer of the educational district rejected the idea, arguing that "tour participants would encounter the foreign Finnish and German cultures..., while they should first be exploring native Russian regions [*korennye oblasti Rossii*] with all of their holy sites and historical landmarks which are so dear to the Russian heart."<sup>36</sup>

The geographical boundaries of school trips organized in the Vil'na educational district were limited by long-established political interests. For example, Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, the author of a monograph about the Russian railway era, cited a brochure by Sergei Buturlin (1803–73) that had been published in 1865 during a debate on further railway development. In his pamphlet, Buturlin warned against the dangers arising from expanding the communications network linking the Western territories and suggested forcing the "binding" of these border areas to the territorial core of the country.<sup>37</sup> School tour organizers adhered to a similar principle, attempting to associate the cultural experiences of students in the Northwest Region with the central and more distant territories of the Romanov Empire, hoping to prevent the rise of any new separatist sentiments among local communities in the process.

35 See, for instance: *Ekskursii uchashchikhsia Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga v 1908 godu* (Tbilisi: Tipografiia T-va "Lieberman i Ko," 1909).

36 S. Kovaliuk, ed., *Otchet o sostoianii Vilenskoi 1-i gimnazii za 1900–1901 uchebnyi god*, (Vilnius: Tip. Vil. Prav. Sv.-Dukhovskogo Bratstva, 1901), 113.

37 See Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Poezd v sovremennost': Mobil'nost' i sotsial'noe prostranstvo Rossii v vek zheleznykh dorog*, trans. Maiia Lavrinovich (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2016), 67–68, first published as Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne: Mobilität und sozialer Raum im Eisenbahnzeitalter* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014).

## A Split Identity, or Where Does Russia End?

As the history of school travels shows, the tsarist government saw the intellectual and emotional integration of residents of the Western region into the greater imperial space as an important strategic aim. At the same time, however, organized tourism from the central imperial territories to the Lithuanian and Belorussian provinces was rarely undertaken. In truth, when the railway line linking St. Petersburg to Warsaw opened in 1862, Vil'na was increasingly visited by various transients, mostly traders and entertainers in search of better wages. The rapid rise in travellers is evidenced by the growth of businesses offering temporary lodging: in 1864, only seven such businesses operated in Vil'na, while by 1915, there were as many as seventy-five hotels and rooms for rent.<sup>38</sup> The development of a travel industry is also evident in the publication of tourist guides and books.

The first study about Vil'na to meet the demands of the travel guide genre was issued in 1856 by the publisher, archaeologist and antiquities collector Adam Honory Kirkor (1818–86).<sup>39</sup> Written in Polish, the book emphasized the heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania based on the traditions of Western culture and was aimed at educated readers in the lands of the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.

After the Polish–Lithuanian Uprising of 1863–64, travel guides about Vil'na began to appear in Russian.<sup>40</sup> The first to begin writing such guides was the playwright, poet, and Orthodox Church historian Andrei Murav'ev (1806–74). Likely encouraged by his brother, Mikhail Murav'ev, the Governor General of the Northwest Region responsible for the suppression of

38 See *Ukazatel' goroda Vil'ny: Sostavlen po razporiazheniiu g. glavnogo nachal'nika kraia* (Vilnius: Tipografia A. K. Kirkora, 1864), 132; M. Tassel'kraut, ed., *Vsia Vil'na: Adresnaia i spravocnaia kniga gor. Vil'ny. 1915 god*, (Vilnius: Tipografia M. Kukhty, 1915), 200–01.

39 Jan ze Śliwina [Adam Honory Kirkor], *Przechadzki po Wilnie i jego okolicach* (Vilnius: [s. n.], 1856).

40 For more information on this topic, see Pavel Lavrinets, "Russkie putevoditeli po Vil'niusu XIX–nachala XX vv.: printsipy kompozitsii i otbora ob'ektov," in Liubov' Kiseleva, ed., *Putevoditel' kak semioticheskii ob'ekt*, (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2008), 219–39; Mikhail Dolbilov, "Gorod edva li svoi, no i ne vovse chuzhdyi: Vil'na v imperskom i natsionalisticheskom voobrazhenii russkikh (1860-e gody–nachalo XX veka)," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 2 (144) (2017), accessed November 30, 2018, [https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/novoe\\_literaturnoe\\_obozrenie/144\\_nlo\\_2\\_2017/article/12414/](https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/novoe_literaturnoe_obozrenie/144_nlo_2_2017/article/12414/).

the 1863–64 uprising, A. Murav'ev prepared a brief survey of the city's Orthodox churches, which was published in St. Petersburg in 1864 and soon reprinted in both Russian and French in Vil'na.<sup>41</sup> The brochure became the foundation of a canon of all subsequent Russian guidebooks about Vil'na. In it, A. Murav'ev portrayed the region's central city as a historical cradle of the Orthodox religion, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a Russian state, and its territory as a collection of Russian-Lithuanian lands that fell into decline after unification with the Polish Kingdom, recovering only after their "return" to the Romanov Empire. The publication's author, thus, sought to find a place for Vil'na within the expanse of an imagined Russian world and encourage other travellers, first and foremost pilgrims from the interior Russian provinces, to visit the city. But neither A. Murav'ev's book nor later, more expansive guides succeeded in achieving these goals.<sup>42</sup> Statistics about the number of visitors to the Vil'na Public Library and its Antiquities Museum attest to this fact.<sup>43</sup>

Records from that bipartite institution dedicated to local history and culture show only sporadic visits by tourists from more remote regions. In 1902, 1903, and 1909, they tell of visits by students from the Irkutsk and St. Petersburg Orthodox Seminaries, as well as pupils from a girls' secondary school (*gimnaziia*) in Pskov.<sup>44</sup> In addition to civilian Vil'na residents

41 *Russkaia Vil'na: Prilozhenie k puteshestviu po sv. mestam russkim* (St. Petersburg: Tipografia Vtorogo otdel. Sobstvennoi E. I. V. Kantseliarii, 1864); *Russkaia Vil'na: Prilozhenie k puteshestviu po sv. mestam russkim* (Vilnius: Tipografia A. Syrkina, 1865); *Vilna Russe: par l'auteur du Pèlerinage aux lieux-saints de la Russie*, traduit du russe (Vilnius: Imprimerie de A. H. Kirkor, 1865).

42 A slightly different opinion was expressed by Mikhail Dolbilov (see Dolbilov, "Gorod edva li svoi, no i ne vovse chuzhdyi"). According to the historian, in the first decade of the twentieth century, both local Russians and visitors from the internal imperial areas began to feel themselves less alienated in Vil'na. However, a few examples provided by the researcher can be considered as manifestations of Russian wishful thinking aimed at ideological or commercial purposes than evidences of actual psycho-cultural changes. Quite on the contrary, 1905 revolution deepened political and inter-ethnic tensions in the city and therefore heightened specific Russian feeling of insecurity and otherness.

43 From 1867 to 1915, relevant information on the attendance rates was published in the annual reports of the Vil'na Public Library and Museum. See *Kratkii otchet o Vilenskoii publichnoi biblioteke* (Vilnius: Tipografia A. Syrkina, 1867) and the subsequent publications.

44 On the visits by seminaries, see *Otchet Vilenskoii publichnoi biblioteki i muzeia za 1902 god* (Vilnius: Tipografia A. G. Syrkina, 1903), 6; *Otchet Vilenskoii publichnoi biblioteki i muzeia za 1903 god* (Vilnius: Tipografia A. G. Syrkina, 1904), 5. On the visits by the group from Pskov, see *Otchet Vilenskoii publichnoi biblioteki i muzeia za 1909 god* (Vilnius: Elektro-Tipografia "Russkii Pochin," 1910), 22.

and Russian soldiers stationed in the city, the majority of tourists visiting the public library and museum consisted of students from the Vil'na, Warsaw, and Kiev educational districts, as well as Catholic and Orthodox pilgrims from the Lithuanian, Belorussian, and Polish provinces. Given that in the early twentieth century, museum tours were an obligatory part of the official educational policy program, such visitation statistics for the region's most important cultural institution suggest that Vil'na was considered primarily a locally significant site on the Russian tourism map. Its draw was limited to the Northwest Region and its neighboring provinces. In other words, despite the efforts of the tsarist administration to integrate the Western areas into the imperial body through both administrative methods and cultural means, the appeal of this historic center reached only into the former territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, failing to penetrate deeper into the empire.

Vil'na was a rarely embraced destination for rank-and-file imperial officials as well as the ruling elite. A tour by Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich is particularly telling. From 1884 to 1888, this member of the Romanov royal family made a series of trips to the western borderlands of the country, which were later described by the poet and novelist Konstantin Sluchevskii (1837–1904), who accompanied the duke on his travels. Vladimir Alexandrovich devoted considerable attention to visiting Finland and the Baltic provinces, familiarizing himself with regional administrative, economic, and cultural centers, as well as the area's smaller historic cities and resorts. The Northwest Region was relegated to the sixth, or last, place on the itinerary. Instead of traveling to the main city of the region, Vil'na, connected with St. Petersburg by a direct railway line, the Grand Duke made a detour, briefly visiting Kovna (Kaunas), Jurburg (Jurbarkas), and Grodna. From there, he went to Osowiec and Warsaw. After a three-day visit to Warsaw, the traveller turned back to the imperial capital, stopping along the way in Novogeorgievsk (today Modlin, a part of the city Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki), Brest Litovsk, Nesvizh, Minsk, Smolensk, Kaluga, and Tula. Although the tour was officially represented as a sort of cultural activity, its trajectory suggests that inspecting this “wedge-shaped territory”

(which, according to Sluchevskii, “continues to demand difficult and persistent government efforts to achieve its final unification with the empire”<sup>45</sup>), Vladimir Alexandrovich was guided by strategic state interests. Nearly all of the aforementioned stops on the tour were important military sites that had assumed extraordinary significance in the context of the foundation of the Triple Alliance in 1882. Even the picturesque Neman (Nemunas) river valley stretching from Kovna to Jurburg was not chosen for its historical treasures: the high-ranking traveller was more concerned with security along the border zone with Prussia, through which an unprecedented quantity of contraband was flowing to the Romanov Empire.

The image Russian travellers had of the Northwest Region differed considerably from their perception of neighboring lands. Finland and the Baltic provinces were traditionally associated with Western culture. This Russian-controlled “domestic” West, this “Little Europe,” attracted even the aforementioned character from Nikolai Gogol’s story. Having escaped from its master and determined to enjoy life, Kovalev’s nose decided to travel to Riga, which surpassed Reval in its urban appeal and which, compared to Helsingfors, was much more accessible (crossing the border into Finland would have required the fugitive to present papers and undergo a luggage inspection).

Riga, Reval, and Helsingfors were destinations unto themselves, while Vil’na and Kovna were rarely chosen as the final stop on most tours. The Northwest Region was usually a brief stopover, as was the case for a group of railway school students from Odessa embarking on a tour of St. Petersburg and Finland in 1910.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, cities in the Lithuanian and Belorussian provinces were presented as transit stops in guides and travel books printed by foreign as well as Russian publishers.<sup>47</sup> One such book was published by naturalist, translator, and poet Vasilii Sidorov (1843–1903) in

45 Konstantin Sluchevskii, *Po Severo-Zapadu Rossii*, vol. 2: *Po Zapadu Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie A. F. Marksa, 1897), 397.

46 See *Odessa, Vil’na, Peterburg, Finliandiia: Ekskursiia uchashchikh i uchashchikhsia Odesskogo zheleznodorozhnogo uchilishcha: 1910 g.* (Odessa: Tipografiia Ia. Kh. Shermana, 1910).

47 For instance, see *Russland: Europäisches Russland, Eisenbahnen in Russ-Asien, Teheran, Peking. Handbuch für Reisende* (Liepzig: Verlag von Karl Baedeker, 1904).



1891.<sup>48</sup> This Baedeker-style pocket guide was notable for its vibrant, literary form of narrative. In it, Sidorov described his journey from St. Petersburg to Yekaterinoslav, devoting quite a bit of attention to his brief visit to Vil'na.

Sidorov began by viewing Vil'na from a distance, from a hill in the suburbs, looking out over an enticing landscape. He noticed the dwellings, Catholic churches, and Orthodox shrines climbing the slopes of the Viliia river valley and admired the picturesque urban texture interspersed with occasional pyramids of poplars and islands of green gardens.<sup>49</sup> But once the traveller descended into the dense world of the city, his impression changed. Having arrived from Riga where he enjoyed that city's broad boulevards and spacious squares, Sidorov was unpleasantly surprised by the crooked, narrow, and poorly-paved streets of Vil'na crammed with Jewish residents; by the city's old and dilapidated houses; and, most importantly, by a reflexive sense of uncertainty. This feeling only grew in intensity after seeing Catholic churches converted into military barracks: cabbage soup simmered and horses neighed where God had once been worshipped. Local holy sites handed over for use by the Orthodox faithful offered little solace either. The Catholic spirit, so foreign to the Russian mind, was still clearly evident in the old architectural forms hidden beneath Byzantine decoration. Overall, the local milieu suggested something ambiguous and left unsaid—as if something were missing. It was an unfinished, discordant, ill-defined city lacking sufficiently comfortable living space.<sup>50</sup> Here, too, Sidorov's imagination takes a sudden leap. In his words, observing such cities as Vil'na always made him want to spring forward at least one hundred years into the future to see what this place would be like: "I feel as if I can see electric lights everywhere, and all these [cities] of Vil'na, Kovna, Perm', and Cheliaba will have been transformed into something almost like Paris or Berlin."<sup>51</sup>

48 Vasilii Sidorov, *Okol'noi dorogoi: Putevye zametki i vpechatleniia: Riga, Vil'no, Kiev, Odessa, Konstantinopol', Krym, Ekaterinoslav*' (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. Katanskogo i K°, 1891).

49 Ibid., 16.

50 Ibid., 23.

51 Ibid., 22.



Sidorov's thoughts reveal his own inner bewilderment. Neither the city's "Latin" past nor its Russian Orthodox present satisfied him. The former seemed too alien, while the latter appeared apocryphal and deceiving. Incapable of discerning a connection between the different components of Vil'na's identity, Sidorov sought refuge in his own imagination, which he deployed to compare the center of the Northwest Region to insignificant Russian provincial backwaters and relegate the city to the margins of his own reflections.

Other travellers transiting through the Lithuanian and Belorussian provinces expressed similar feelings of uncertainty and dissatisfaction.<sup>52</sup> Considering both the low number of visitors and the content of their travelogues, it can be assumed that the image of the Northwest Region embraced by Russians was extremely contradictory, and thus hardly conducive to the promotion of any tourism-related activity. Indeed, ambiguity was engrained in the name of the administrative unit itself, which was devised to erase, along with the name Lithuania, any allusion to the historical sovereign European polity the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth that once existed on this edge of the Russian Empire. Although it denoted the "North West," the toponym invented by Russian authorities essentially meant "the East" (i.e. Eastern Christendom), positioning the Lithuanian and Belorussian provinces as the Western part of the Russian Orthodox world. And yet, the "Western" vector in the place-name made the Russian description of the region rather vulnerable, forcing the need to constantly prove the region's geopolitical and cultural dependence.

The difficulties arising from attempts to describe the essence of this administrative unit is evident from the failure to produce a single school textbook reviewing all six of the border provinces or any Russian travel guide that promoted the region as a unified whole prior to World War I. Rather, this task was undertaken not by some representative of official Russian culture, but by the Vil'na-based Polish journalist and theater critic Napo-

52 For a comparison, see Aleksandr Miliukov, *Letnie poezdki po Rossii: Zapiski i putevye pis'ma* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie F. Bazunova, 1874), 206–17; Nikolai Ostankovich, "Ekskursiia po Litve (Putevye zametki), *Istoricheskii vestnik* 107, no. 2 (1907): 586–612.

leon Rouba (1860–1929). In 1908, Rouba invited the local Polish-speaking intellectuals to collaborate, and in a year's time, with the assistance of some eighty respondents, he prepared and published an encyclopedic guide.<sup>53</sup> The book was titled *A Guide to Lithuania and Belorussia*, avoiding any reference to the name, “the Northwest Region.” Indeed, its title included two geographic names defining the territories of two different ethnic communities, which testified to the modern split that had taken place in this historical area.

Historians emphasize that different imperial regions were given different status within Russian nationalist discourse—some of them were perceived as imperial borderlands and others as Russian “national territories.”<sup>54</sup> Finland, Estland, Livland, and Kurland belonged to the category of borderlands. Sidorov had no doubt, for example, about Riga's German character. Everything there was different than in Russia: the language, customs, domestic conveniences, and rules governing trade. It was an unfamiliar land, almost foreign. Thus, even upon noticing the distaste local Germans had for Russians, he felt little personal discomfort.<sup>55</sup> His encounter with Vil'na, on the other hand, troubled him: this city was part of “ancient Russian lands,” but its Russianness was difficult to discern. Failing to recognize the ideological phantom constructed by imperial policymakers, a large part of Russian society experienced similar complications. In their search to find a way out of the stalemate in which they found themselves, Russians adopted a strategy similar to that of Sidorov; that is, marginalizing the Northwestern provinces on their own mental maps, and transforming them into an unappealing and insignificant peripheral area, a kind of transit zone, thereby seemingly securing the right for themselves to ignore unresolvable geopolitical, cultural, and psychological problems.

53 On the initiation of this project, see “On the Publishing of a Travel Guide for Six Lithuanian and Belorussian Provinces, 1908,” *LVTI*, f. 378, ap. 116, b. 399. For the published guide, see Napoleon Rouba, ed., *Przewodnik po Litwie i Białejrusi*, (Vilnius: Wydawnictwo “Kurjera Litewskiego,” Nakład Edmunda Nowickiego, [1909]).

54 See Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research*, trans. Serguei Dobrynin (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2008).

55 Sidorov, *Okol'noi dorogoi*, 12.

## Postscript

Guided by the approach outlined in a 1988 study by Gennadii Dolzhenko,<sup>56</sup> Russian scholars have associated early Russian tourism in their works with the needs of public education and recreation. Studies by historians in other countries, meanwhile, underscore the political aspect, distinguishing all types of Russian tourism from the modern culture of Western travel and its orientation toward recreation, consumerism, and entertainment.<sup>57</sup> The political dimension is particularly evident in the organization of school trips, which became the main form of group excursions in the Northwest Region. It is noteworthy that political propaganda objectives in these borderlands began to be increasingly emphasized in 1910, after the formulation of a series of official directives. It was in this year that, in addition to the previously discussed effort to organize more frequent tours to distant destinations, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district issued a directive to encourage students' participation in marine tours organized by the Navy League (*Liga obnovleniia flota*), as well as to devote greater attention to paramilitary expeditions and visits to Orthodox temples and monasteries.<sup>58</sup>

Tours were meant to foster deeper patriotism among students, instilling a common imperial dimension in the consciousness of a new generation. Even as the tsarist authorities persistently sought to incorporate the population of the Northwest Region into the larger imperial space, the integration of the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania into the mental Russian map proceeded at a sluggish pace. Although the Northwestern provinces continued to be considered "native" Russian territories (first and foremost those areas with a predominantly Belorussian ethnic composition), such a depiction of these borderlands only functioned as intended on the official level. Even up to the outbreak of the Great War, the region's place

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<sup>56</sup> Dolzhenko, *Istoriia turizma*.

<sup>57</sup> See Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Marek Olkuśnik, *Wyjechać z miasta...: Mieszkańcy Warszawy wobec podróży, turystyki i wypoczynku na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2015).

<sup>58</sup> Shestov, ed., *Opisanie ekskursii*, 193–97.

within the Russian world remained poorly defined and thoroughly contradictory as evidenced by the lack of records of Russian travel through the Northwestern provinces<sup>59</sup> and the small number of tour groups visiting the region from areas in the central part of the Russian Empire.

An analysis of the origin of mass tourism offers us an opportunity to follow how the strategies for integrating and protecting the empire changed and how, within this field, compulsory political and administrative measures had become increasingly intertwined with cultural techniques focused on the modeling of a collective social experience for the Romanovs' subjects. It is worth remembering that the start of organized educational tours coincided with the emergence of experimental pedagogy: it was precisely during this time that scholars began to explore students' attention, memory, associative thinking, and imagination in laboratory conditions. New instructional and educational methods employed by promoters of school tourism emphasized the role played by the senses and emotions over the intellect. The rise of these approaches signified an essential modernization of imperial strategies that opened qualitatively new opportunities to manipulate the consciousness of the masses.

Seeking to summarize the assertions made in this chapter, the question arises as to the specific consequences that resulted from tour organization policies. Was this approach actually effective? How did it change the worldview of people living in the Northwest Region? Did new techniques help create a modern, integrated imperial society? Unfortunately, the lack of historical data prohibits me from reaching a defined, unambiguous, and credible answer to these questions. There is no doubt that organized tourism was effective on a regional level. According to Plath, "[v]isiting Heimat was a form of giving social networks... a spatial dimension and creating personal mental maps."<sup>60</sup> However, it seems that when extended to

59 For a comparison of the statistics on travelogues, see Sergei Mintslov, ed., *Obzor zapisok, dnevnikov, vospominanii, pisem i puteshestvii, otnosiashchikhsia k istorii Rossii i napechatannykh na russkom iazyke. Vypuski IV i V: Vremena imperatorov Aleksandra II, Aleksandra III i Nikolaia II*, (Novgorod: Gubernskaia tipografia, 1912).

60 Plath, "Heimat: Rethinking Baltic German Spaces of Belonging," 74.

the country-wide educative method, group travel had a contradictory effect. After an analysis of the expansion of the Russian imperial railway network, for example, Schenk perceived a certain duality. He claimed that improved transportation possibilities and the resulting increase in travel frequency not only deepened the integration of the imperial space, but also contributed to its fragmentation, by emphasizing the country's regional differences.<sup>61</sup> Willard Sunderland perceived a similar duality in the country's development. In his research on Russian colonization policies, he came to the conclusion that the late imperial period witnessed the emergence of opposite processes of homogenization and differentiation because state power was used both for the unification of the empire and for the fostering of the country's internal differences.<sup>62</sup>

The assertion itself, nevertheless, suggests that educational tours did, in the end, have a certain influence on the mentality of imperial Russia's subjects. However, their impact upon the human psyche was neither direct nor immediate or easily predictable. In this respect, we might recall Račkauskas's account of his excursion to Kiev as an eloquent example of such a delayed effect. Beneath the ironic fabric of their narrative, these memoirs, written by an elderly man who had subsequent personal knowledge of the first independent Republic of Lithuania and the reality of life under Soviet occupation, reveal a nostalgic admiration for youthful adventures, which gave a young man the opportunity to see undiscovered lands and experience moving encounters with the unknown.

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<sup>61</sup> Schenk, *Poezd v sovremennost'*, 319, 329–30.

<sup>62</sup> Willard Sunderland, "Ministerstvo aziatskoi Rossii: nikogda ne sushchestvovavshee, no imevshee dlia etogo vse shansy kolonial'noe vedomstvo," in *Imperium inter pares: Rol' transferov v istorii Rossiiskoi imperii (1700–1917)* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010), 108–9.

# The Formation of Imperial Loyalty in the Education System in the Northwest Region in 1905–1915

Olga Mastianica

Schools alone have been and always will be the best means of implanting a Russian foundation in the society of the region. Only with the assistance of the education system can the future generation adopt an unbroken bond between the northwest periphery and the Russian core.

—Kovna governor Petr Verevkin

The above affirmation by Kovna governor Petr Verevkin (1904–12) leads us to the conclusion that even after 1905, when discrimination against non-Russian languages and cultures in the educational system of the Northwest Region declined, officials continued to consider a state school education one of the most suitable measures to form and secure non-dominant national groups' loyalty to the Russian Empire. These changes have drawn quite a bit of attention from researchers, and historians have sought to explain how and under what conditions the national (non-Russian) education system was created in the northwest provinces between 1905 and 1915, and how the elites from non-dominant ethnic groups carried out the nationalization of the masses by harnessing formal (private primary school) and informal (the periodical press, pupil and teacher societies) educational institutions.

Yet, there has been practically no analysis of how attempts were made to instill imperial loyalty via the state education system in the region after 1905, or how central and local governments reacted to non-dominant

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ethnic groups' attempts to use education to form other (non-Russian) loyalties among younger generations. In this study, just one aspect of the Russian Empire's post-1905 education policy will be discussed. In order to trace this history, first this chapter will provide an analysis of how general subjects like history, geography, and Russian language and literature were taught, and what status the tsarist government assigned these branches of learning and disciplines in primary and secondary schools as a means of entrenching imperial loyalty in the Northwest Region. After this discussion of formal educational institutions, I shift my attention to various informal means of education, including educational excursions for pupils and teachers, students' participation in historical and state celebrations, and student societies to understand their role in cultivating imperial loyalties. Through this analysis, I show that regardless of the liberalization of educational policy after 1905, the imperial bureaucracy continued to consider the teaching of history, literature, and geography an important means of indoctrination. Furthermore, despite some changes, there was still an effort to uphold narratives formulated much earlier.

### Teaching the History of the Northwest Region

After 1905, the teaching of general subjects like Russian history and geography relied on the same curricula and used the same methods used in the interior provinces of the Russian Empire. A constituent part of Russian history curricula and textbooks was the history of the Northwest Region based on the concept of history created by Nikolai Ustrialov in the 1830s.<sup>1</sup> The history of Russia written by Ustrialov used in secondary schools claimed that, in terms of its state structure and confessional and ethnic composition, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was as much a Russian state as the Duchy of Muscovy; the only difference was that the small Lithuanian nation also took part in its formation. Lithuanian dukes had adopted Russian culture and be-

1 For more about Ustrialov's concept of history, see Darius Staliūnas, "Poland or Russia? Lithuania on the Russian Mental Map," in *Spatial Concepts of Lithuania in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Darius Staliūnas (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 40–45.

longed to the East Christian (Orthodox) Church, which made them the kin of the Russians in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The goal of establishing a union of the two Russian states had always thrived, but such a merger had been postponed “by accident,” that is, because of Lithuania’s union with Poland, which the latter needed much more than the former.

A similar conceptualization of the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was continued to dominate school literature printed after 1905 because the imperial academic community was actively engaged in publishing. Between 1905 and 1915, “new” Russian history textbooks written by Sergei Platonov, Sergei Ivanov, Ivan Kataeev, and Ivan Skvortsov were published; in these new books, the material was divided thematically rather than chronologically, paying greater attention to the formation of Russian statehood, in addition to covering the Russian economy, and providing an overview of significant cultural phenomena and various kinds of illustrative material.<sup>2</sup> In the Russian history textbook published in 1909 by Platonov, a popular professor at St. Petersburg University, and widely used in secondary schools in the Vil’na educational district, the expansion of the Russian Empire was explained as the logical outcome of the Romanov dynasty’s actions in strengthening and defending their state.<sup>3</sup> Platonov called the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the “Lithuanian-Russian state,” where “the Russian element was superior to the less cultured Lithuanian one”; for example, in reference to the age of the Lithuanian Duke Mindaugas (1253–63), Platonov argued that cities were being built based on the Russian example, and stated that Russians commanded the duke’s warriors.<sup>4</sup> Lithuanian

2 Oleg Abramkin, “Problemy otechestvennoi istorii v shkol’noi literature XVIII-nachala XX v.,” *Liberal Arts in Russia* 4 (2015): 496–512; Mikhail Studenikin, *Metodika prepodavania istorii v russkoi shkole XIX–nachala XX v.* (Moscow: Prometei, 2016), 46–57.

3 Sergei Platonov, *Uchebnik russkoi istorii dlia srednei shkoly: Kurs sistematicheskii v dvuch chastiakh s prilozheniem vos’mi kart* (St. Petersburg: sklad izdaniia I. Bashmakova, 1914), 58.

4 Russian geography textbooks used in state schools in the Northwest Region also tried to instill the idea that from the beginning, Lithuanians were under the civilizing influence of Russians. For example, Alexandr Baranov’s Russian geography textbook, which was one of the most popular secondary school texts in the Vil’na educational district, stated that “based on their origins, appearance, customs, and primal faith (*pervonachal’noe verovanie*), Lithuanians are close to the Slavs. It was only due to the extended period of Polish influence that Lithuanians converted to Catholicism and practically forgot their true nationality (*nastoiashchuiu narodnost’*).” Aleksandr Baranov, *Geografiia Rossiiskoi imperii s geograficheskimi kartami*



dukes did not engage in the capture of Russian lands, but there was a peaceful incorporation of Russian lands: "The inhabitants of the Russian lands themselves willingly agreed to be ruled over by the Russified Gediminid dynasty." Much like Ustrialov, Platonov explained that the successful functioning of the "Lithuanian-Russian state" was disrupted by the unions of Krewo (1385) and later Lublin (1569), after which Polish influence began to increase, as did Polish lords' oppression of the Russian peasantry. Platonov reached the unambiguous conclusion that Catherine II had succeeded in implementing "historical justice," "to recover our Russian lands from the Rzeczpospolita (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth)."<sup>5</sup>

In the new history curriculum (until then, a history curriculum prepared in 1902 applied in secondary schools across the Vil'na educational district), which the Ministry of Education prepared in 1913 to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of Romanov rule, the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was also presented as the history of the "Lithuanian-Russian state." The explanatory text for the system-wide Russian history course authorized by Mikhail Taube, the minister of education, on July 13, 1913, expressly demanded that "history teachers, when speaking about the formation of the Lithuanian-Russian state, explain in detail that both in terms of numbers and cultural influence, the Orthodox Russian element dominated in this state."<sup>6</sup> According to the education minister's instructions, "a detailed presentation of the conquests of the first Lithuanian dukes had to be omitted," thereby perpetuating the idea of the union of the two Russian states during the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania promoted in textbooks. The educational aim in the teaching of history was to "turn children's attention to the finest and most idyllic moments in the historical past, to instill love for their Fatherland (*otechestvo*), and to encourage devotion to the throne." As such, the history teacher was an educator

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*i risunkami v tekste. Kurs gorodskikh i uездnykh uchilishch. Vtoroe izdanie* (St. Petersburg: izdanie D.D. Polubariiianova, 1887), 44. By Slavs he, first of all, meant Russians.

5 Platonov, *Uchebnik russkoi istorii*, 79.

6 "Obiasnitel'naia zapiska k sistematicheskomu kursu russkoi istorii," *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* XLVI (1913): 112.

whose primary role was to “nurture patriotism and love for the Fatherland (*otechestvo*).”<sup>7</sup>

The administration of the Vil’na educational district understood the role of the teacher in the educational process perfectly. It is no wonder that on the instructions of Vasilii Popov, the overseer of the Vil’na educational district (1899–1906), state gymnasium teachers of history, geography, Russian language, and Russian literature were given the task of preparing an anthology of historical articles to commemorate the age of Catherine II (i.e., the period when the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania were incorporated into the Russian Empire) on the occasion of the unveiling of a monument honoring the empress in Vil’na.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the official pedagogical publication *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* (Education in the Vil’na educational district), which was primarily oriented at teachers, included instructions on how history teachers could nurture patriotism, which were written by some of the most famous educators of the time.<sup>9</sup>

According to Konstantin El’nitskii, whose article “The Nurturing of Patriotic Feelings” was printed in the periodical in 1909, learning Russian history and geography, participation in commemorations of state holidays, learning patriotic songs, and reading suitable fictional literature would only produce results if and when history teachers were purposefully regulated, as “they have the easiest access to the pupil’s soul and can leave a distinct mark upon it.”<sup>10</sup> El’nitskii’s ideas were supported by local teachers. Fedot Kudrinskii (1867–1933), a Russian language and Russian literature teacher at Nesvizh teacher training college (he later worked in state and private

7 “Obiasnitel’naia zapiska k programme elementarnogo kursa otechestvenoi istorii,” *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* XLVI (1913): 106.

8 *Imperatrica Ekaterina II. Sbornik istoricheskikh statei*. Izdan po rasporyazheniiu gospodina popechitelia Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga V.A. Popova. Pod redaktsiei prepodavatelii Vilenskoi I gimnazii A. Turtsevicha (Vilnius: Tipografiia A.G. Syrkina, 1904).

9 *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* was a supplement to the official pedagogical publication *Tsirkuliar po upravleniiu Vilenskim uchebnym okrugom* [Circular on the management of the Vil’na educational district], published in Vil’na between 1901 and 1915.

10 Konstantin El’nitskii, “Vospitanie patrioticheskogo chuvstva,” *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* 1 (1909): 569–75. For more about El’nitskii’s pedagogical views, see: Liudmila Smirnova, “El’nitskii Konstantin Vasil’evich (1846–1917),” *Istoriko-pedagogicheskii zhurnal* 3 (2011): 43–45.

girls' gymnasiums in Vil'na, and contributed to the anthology of articles in honor of Catherine II), was also convinced that lectures and excursions were an incorrect means of instilling patriotic feelings in children.<sup>11</sup> "There is no better way to instill love for the Fatherland (*otechestvo*) than the example of the history teacher, a son of the Fatherland, who himself embodies that love,"<sup>12</sup> he asserted in an article entitled "On National Upbringing," published in *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* in 1909.

The local education administration also sought to control teachers' professional activities and their social activism. On the initiative of the Vil'na educational district, there was a congress of Russian language and history teachers in Vil'na in March 1907, and in January 1908 there was an additional congress for Russian language and literature teachers. In February and March 1908, a congress was held for teachers of the physical and natural sciences, and in April 1910, one was held for drawing, draughtsman-ship, and craft teachers. At these congresses, teachers could only discuss questions that had already been formulated by the board of the Vil'na educational district, while resolutions passed by teachers would have to gain the approval of the board chaired by the patron of the Vil'na educational district. During these conventions, during which the local education administration sought to ensure teachers' loyalty to the political regime, the idea was raised to devote more attention to knowledge about the Fatherland (*rodinovedenie*), a new way of teaching geography and history that was gaining popularity at the time in the Russian Empire.

At the congress of Russian language and history teachers held in Vil'na on March 7–11, 1907, Evstafii Orlovskii (1863–1913), who had a wealth of experience of teaching history and geography in Grodna state schools,

11 Kudrinskii was born in the Volhynia province into the family of an Orthodox priest. In publications released in Vil'na, he promoted the pedagogical ideas of Pirogov and Tolstoi, prepared a new digest of Russian literature, and promoted the idea in historical works about how the Polish nobility oppressed the Russian peasantry after the Union of Lublin, and viewed the Union of Brest (1596) as a plan by Poles to bring peasants who professed the Orthodox faith under their influence.

12 Bogdan Stepanec (Fedot Kudrinskii), "O natsional'nom vospitanii," *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* 5 (1909): 206.

raised the issue.<sup>13</sup> Orlovskii was a member of the Northwest Region branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, and was very familiar with the new landscape teaching concept (*landshaftnaia kontseptsia*), which was so popular across the Russian Empire at the time. Advocates of this concept wrote many textbooks devoted to different regions of the Russian Empire.

The new landscape concept meant that learning had to begin with knowledge about the pupils' closest surroundings, objects, and phenomena they were well-acquainted with, and only move on to lesser-known objects and phenomena that were further away. This meant that, for example, when learning geography, pupils first of all had to learn how to sketch their own class and school, and then to learn about their city and their "motherland" (*rodina*). In this case, *rodina* was understood as the pupil's native land, as opposed to the "great Fatherland" (*otechestvo, otchizna*), that is, the whole Russian Empire.<sup>14</sup>

During the 1907 congress, Orlovskii also suggested considering the "fatherland" the province of the Russian Empire where the pupil lived. In his view, knowledge of the geography and history of the development of one province or another should make up the content for teaching "knowledge of the fatherland" (*rodinovedenie*).<sup>15</sup> Orlovskii recommended introducing

13 Orlovskii was born in Vil'na Province, in the Ashmiany district. His father was an Orthodox priest, and he pursued his education at the Lithuanian Religious Seminary and at the Institute of History and Philology in St. Petersburg. Orlovskii had significant teaching experience: he was a history teacher at the Grodna State Boys' Gymnasium for twenty-eight years, and a geography teacher at the Grodna State Girls' Gymnasium for ten years. Besides his pedagogical activities, he was also an active social figure: in 1907 he helped found the Grodna Pedagogical Society, in 1891–1913 he worked at the Grodna Public Library and was an honorary member of the Grodna Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Sophia. He collaborated actively with the editorial board of the *Grodna Province News* (*Grodnenskie gubernskie vedomosti*): in 1890 he was responsible for its review section on works written about the history of the Northwest Region, and in 1892–94 he reviewed various historical periodical publications for the newspaper. He also prepared several research papers on the history of Grodna and a discussion of the events of 1812 in the Grodna province, and he researched the history of the Orthodox Church in Grodna and the Grodna province.

14 Marina Loskutova, "S chego nachinaetsia rodina? Prepodavanie geografii v dorevoliutsionnoi shkole i regional'noe samosoznanie (XIX–nachalo XX v.)," *Ab Imperio* 3 (2003): 159–98.

15 *S'ezd prepodavatelei russkogo iazyka i istorii srednikh uchebnykh zavedenii Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga, proiskhodivshii v Vil'ne v marte 1907 goda. Sektsia istoriia* (Vilnius: Tipografiia A.G. Syrkina, 1907), 17. Note that during the congress of teachers of the physical and natural sciences in February and March 1908, Orlovskii also spoke about the need to devote more attention to fostering knowledge about the geography of the Northwest Region, and to ensure the implementation of suitable teaching methods. *S'ezd prepodavatelei matematiki, fiziki, estestvovedeniia i geografii srednikh uchebnykh zavedenii Vilenskogo*

the history and geography of the Northwest Region as a separate subject, thus removing it from the general Russian history and Russian geography course as had been the case. He envisaged allocating only three or four lessons to the history and geography of the Northwest Region. Further, judging from the descriptions of the Vil'na and Grodna provinces Orlovskii had prepared earlier, his concept of the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was no different from that presented in Ustrialov's, and later on, in Platonov's textbook. The descriptions of the Vil'na and Grodna provinces, which were aimed primarily at school-age youths, also said that during the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, "Russian civilization and the Orthodox faith took on a leading role," and the Russian language was the state language in which official documents and legal acts were written.<sup>16</sup> The majority of the population of Vil'na, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was made up of Russians already during the reign of the Lithuanian grand duke Gediminas (1316–41), and the Lithuanian dukes willingly promoted the Orthodox faith by building Orthodox churches in the city.<sup>17</sup> The scholarly papers Orlovskii prepared also accentuated the positive impact of the incorporation of the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania into the Russian Empire, which guaranteed more rapid economic and cultural development in the region and ensured the population's "return" to their true religion, Orthodoxy. That is why, despite recommending teaching the history and geography of the Northwest Region as a separate subject, Orlovskii basically promoted the same conceptualization of the history of the Northwest Region that Ustrialov had created.

Orlovskii was not the only one to suggest devoting more attention to the history and geography of the Northwest Region. At a congress of primary school headmasters and inspectors of the Vil'na educational district held in Vil'na in December 1907, discussions also turned to the fact that "dur-

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*uchebnogo okruga, proiskhodivshii v Vil'ne s 25 fevralia po 2-e marta 1908 g.: sektsiia geografii* (Vilnius: Tipografia A.G. Syrkina, 1908), 47.

16 Evstafii Orlovskii, *Uchebnoe opisanie Vilenskoi gubernii* (Vilnius: Gubernskaia tipografia, 1904), 10; Evstafii Orlovskii, *Uchebnoe opisanie Grodnenskoi gubernii* (Grodna: Gubernskaia tipografia, 1906), 8.

17 Orlovskii, *Uchebnoe opisanie Vilenskoi gubernii*, 10.

ing lessons, pupils should be given more literature to read about the history of the Northwest Region.”<sup>18</sup> In 1909, Aleksandr Pigulevskii, the district inspector who participated in the Vil’na educational district executive commission’s meetings to improve pupils’ moral, intellectual, and physical development, spoke about how schoolchildren had to be encouraged to become more familiar with the history and geography of the Northwest Region. Pigulevskii was convinced that this knowledge would benefit them in their future professional pursuits: “Our gymnasium and real (practical) school graduates are theoreticians. They have none of the knowledge that is necessary in practical life. They have no idea of their class plan, nor the districts or roads in their province, or their city plan, yet they know all there is to know about America, Africa, and Australia.”<sup>19</sup>

However, neither Pigulevskii nor Orlovskii received support from either the local education administration or the teaching community. For example, Sergei Nikonov, a Russian language and history teacher at the First State Boys’ Gymnasium in Vil’na who participated in the commission’s meeting, was quick to express his concerns. He suggested taking into account graduates’ future professional activities. He posed a rhetorical question to those who had gathered: “do we need to introduce knowledge of the fatherland? After all, later on, Vil’na will remain the fatherland for just half of our pupils. For gymnasium students who are studying in Vil’na, this city is their fatherland so long as their parents or relatives live here. After they complete their studies, many of them will never come back to Vil’na.”<sup>20</sup> Most teachers who took part in the Russian language and history teachers’ congress in 1907 were also convinced that introducing the history and geography of the Northwest Region as a separate subject could have some undesirable results. For example, Ivan Maksimov, a history and ge-

18 “Soveshchanie direktorov i inspektorov narodnykh uchilishch Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga, proiskhodivshee v Vil’ne 15-22 dekabria 1907 goda,” *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* 2 (1908): 61.

19 *Protokoly zasedanii komissii pri upravlenii Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga po voprosu o merakh sodeistviia fizicheskomu, npravstvennomu i umstvennomu razvitiuu uchashchikhsia* (Vilnius: Tipografiia A.G. Syrkina, 1909), 87.

20 *Ibid.*, 89.

ography teacher at the State Boys' Gymnasium in Gomel', was certain that "providing knowledge about one's native land can prompt the formation of a misconceived understanding that one's native land is something distinct or special when compared to other parts of the Russian Empire, and that it is not the same state."<sup>21</sup> Valentin Kotov, a history teacher at the Second State Boys' Gymnasium in Vil'na, believed that the national groups living in the territory might not approve of a separate and detailed account of the history of the Northwest Region as it was presented in school literature.<sup>22</sup> It could be that Kotov had in mind first of all the Northwest Region history teaching material prepared by Arsenii Turtsevich (1848–1915), which the parents of Polish pupils vehemently asked to be removed from the curriculum, even appealing to Boris Vol'f, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district (1906–08) on the matter in 1906.<sup>23</sup>

Turtsevich, a history teacher at the First Boys' Gymnasium in Vil'na, prepared some teaching materials on the history of "Western Russia" in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> The introduction to his "West Russian history" digest, published in 1892, began with a clear declaration of the national-patriotic mission that schools had (by teaching history, language, and literature), highlighting the fact that it was especially important to learn the history of Russia's western periphery because young people there were at risk of adopting a tendentious or distorted explanation of historical facts from Polish history texts.<sup>25</sup> In the editor's view, the same kind of teaching material that had been used a quarter of a century earlier was

<sup>21</sup> *S'ezd prepodavatelei russkogo iazyka i istorii*, 18.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> "Secret note from the overseer of the Vil'na educational district Vol'f to the education minister Schwarz, March 19," 1908, *LVI*A, f. 567, ap. 26, b. 800a, l. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Turtsevich was born in Minsk Province into the family of an Orthodox priest. He was a graduate of the University of St. Petersburg's Faculty of History and Philology. In 1872, he began his pedagogical career at the Shavli Boys' Gymnasium, later teaching at the First State Boys' Gymnasium in Vil'na. As well as teaching material on the history of the Northwest Region, he also prepared and published a separate biography of the Vil'na governor-general Murav'ev, a document anthology on the administration of the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the times of Catherine II, and in two separate papers, he presented a biography of Catherine II and the situation of the peasantry under the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.

<sup>25</sup> Arsenii Turtsevich, *Khrestomatiia po istorii Zapadnoi Rossii. Uchebnoe posobie dlia uchenikov starshikh uchebnykh zavedenii* (Vilnius: Tipografia A.G. Syrkina, 1892), IV.



necessary (Turtsevich recalled governor-general Murav'ev's competition for writing a history textbook for the Northwest Region). Turtsevich's Russian history textbook, compiled in 1894, was widely used in both secondary schools in the Vil'na educational district, as well as in professional educational institutions (for example, in teacher training colleges); it also continued Ustrialov's concept of the history of the Northwest Region and featured a particularly strong anti-Polish discourse.<sup>26</sup> Turtsevich stated quite unambiguously that after the Union of Lublin, Poles had started to forcibly impose a foreign, Catholic, faith in the "Russian lands," along with a foreign culture, adding that the Polish nobility was engaging in the harsh oppression of Russian peasants.<sup>27</sup>

In September 1906, some of the Polish intelligentsia together with Vil'na mayor Michał Węśławski (1905–16), who represented the interests of Polish political parties in the Second State Duma, appealed to Vol'f, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district, asking him to remove from the curriculum Turtsevich's textbooks in which "the religious and national feelings of Polish pupils were being hurt."<sup>28</sup> However, the Overseers' Board, led by Vol'f, discussed this request but, nevertheless, decided to retain Turtsevich's textbooks because "they contained nothing that could insult the Poles."<sup>29</sup> Incidentally, the author of these textbooks, who was also invited to participate in the meeting of the Overseers' Board, promised to "change some sentenc-

26 For more about the teaching of history in seminaries, see: Vilma Žaltauskaitė, "Pasaulietinių dalykų – rusų kalbos, literatūros, tėvynės istorijos ir geografijos – mokymas dvasininkų rengimo įstaigose (XIX amžiaus antroji pusė)," *Archivum Lithuanicum* 15 (2013): 293–330.

27 Note that Turtsevich further developed his ideas later on. In 1911, (to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the abolition of serfdom), he prepared a separate paper in which he sought to prove how harshly the Polish *szlachta* oppressed Russian peasants during the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. For more about the anti-Polish discourse in the Russian public and academic discourses, see: Aleksandr Filiushkin, "Vgliadyvaia's' v oskolki razbitogo zerkala: rossiiskii diskurs Velikogo Kniazhestva Litovskogo," *Ab Imperio* 4 (2004): 566.

28 "Secret note from the overseer of the Vil'na educational district Vol'f," 18. Andrzej Brochocki, a pupil of the First State Gymnasium in Vil'na, wrote in his memoirs that some of the pupils from the Vilnius Governorate were studying history at home. Therefore, the students compared information learned at home and during Turcevic's history lessons: "Obviously, none of the students dared to discuss with the teacher. However, after school, students of Polish descent broadly and with and outrage discussed the teacher's false interpretation of events of Polish history." See Andrzej Brochocki, *Na przełomie dwóch epok. Zapiski obszarnika, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Oddział Rękopisów, inv. nr. 9874 III, s. 53.*

29 "Secret note from the overseer of the Vil'na educational district Vol'f," 18.



es and expressions that could cause misunderstandings”<sup>30</sup> in the next edition of the Russian history textbook, but there is no evidence he actually kept this promise. Turtsevich’s textbooks were published in several editions with no indication that any amendments were made, and they were used in state schools across the Vil’na educational district.

The local authorities were obviously afraid of introducing changes into the history curriculum. At the congress of Russian language and history teachers held in March 1907, teachers suggested reorganizing Russian history teaching in the first through third grades at gymnasiums. Based on the history curriculum in use at the time, the history of the east was taught in third grade; teachers at the congress suggested teaching this in the fourth grade, and instead presenting a systematic history of Russia in the first three grades. According to Maximilian Kossakovskii, a history teacher at the Second Boys’ Gymnasium in Vil’na, most pupils only attended three grades, so upon leaving school, they would have a more systemic knowledge of Russian history; other teachers at the congress backed his opinion.<sup>31</sup> However, the Overseers’ Board did not approve of even this suggestion, demanding strict adherence to the history curriculum confirmed by the Ministry of Education. It even considered that a stress on the Russian aspect of the history and geography of the Northwest Region could have the effect of inciting separatism. According to a circular distributed on September 28, 1907 by Vol’f as overseer of the Vil’na educational district, the history of the Northwest Region had to be taught “within the framework of the general Russian history course, abiding by strict principles of objectivity and science.”<sup>32</sup> After 1905, the local education administration devoted more attention to teaching methodologies for this subject than to the conceptualization of the history of the Northwest Region, which had, in effect, remained unchanged since the 1830s. The administration paid particular attention to different visual instruments and their emotional impact.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> *S'ezd prepodavatelei russkogo iazyka i istorii*, 23.

<sup>32</sup> “Protokol zasedaniia popechitel'skogo soveta pri upravlenii Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga 28 sentiabria 1907 goda: Po rezoliutsii popechitelia Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga,” in *S'ezd prepodavatelei russkogo iazyka i istorii*, 36.

## The Significance of Visual Tools and Their Emotional Impact

The Vil'na educational district administration had paid attention to visual propaganda before. As Jolita Mulevičiūtė has noted, in 1885, Nikolai Sergiievskii, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district (1869–99), established a commission, which was made up of the directors of Vil'na gymnasia, folk schools of the Vil'na province, and the Vil'na Teachers' Institute; it was charged with organizing public readings with slides (glass plates with illustrations that were hand-drawn or printed using the decalcomania technique).<sup>33</sup> These regular popular illustrated lectures, mostly on history and geography, were held in the sports hall of the Second Boys' Gymnasium. Schoolteachers introduced listeners to the climate, nature, and customs of the lands on the empire's peripheries (Central Asia, the Crimea, the Caucasus, Transcaucasia) and foreign countries (France, China, India). However, according to the commission's activity reports, narratives about the tsars and their heroic deeds attracted the most interest.

In 1909, Emelian Pravosudovich, the director of a private boys' gymnasium in Vil'na who participated in the commission formed by the Vil'na educational district to propose measures to improve the moral, intellectual, and physical development of pupils, argued the following: "the stronger and more vibrantly important historical events that demonstrate our national heroes' chivalry and love of the Fatherland (*otechestvo*) are presented to students, the easier it will be to have an impact on a young person's heart. On hearing lively historical accounts about our national heroes (*natsional'nyie geroi*) who nobly served in the name of their Fatherland, a young boy will subconsciously orient his future activities in the same direction, even while still at his school desk."<sup>34</sup> This was why Pravosudovich, like most school headmasters and teachers from the Vil'na educational district who took part in this commission, suggested devoting particular attention to various visual methods for teaching history. On November 11, 1909, immediately

33 See: Jolita Mulevičiūtė, "Kova dėl vaizduotės: vizualinė Rusijos imperijos propaganda Šiaurės vakarų krašte," *Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akademijos metraštis* 38 (2014): 129–47.

34 *Protokoly zasedanii komissii*, 81.

after the end of the commission's work, a separate museum of visual teaching material was established under the Kovna Schools Directorate (Muzei nagliadnykh posobii grafa M.I. Platova pri Kovenskoj direkcii narodnykh uchilishch) at the initiative of the board of the Vil'na educational district. This collection included historical and geographical teaching material illustrating "the cultural life of the Russian nation" and "the richness of nature in the Russian Empire."<sup>35</sup>

Between 1905 and 1915, the board of the Vil'na educational district as well as teachers who frequently participated in the congresses previously mentioned in this chapter, suggested devoting more attention to integrating the subjects of history, geography, and Russian literature. It seems they hoped to use this interdisciplinarity to achieve better results. Vissarion Alekseev, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district (1914–15), paid particular attention to the integration of history, geography, and Russian literature. He instructed state gymnasium teachers to prepare integrated history and Russian language and history and geography curricula.<sup>36</sup>

At the congress of teachers of Russian language and literature held in Vil'na in 1908, teachers were encouraged to devote special attention not just to the historical-literary importance of works of Russian literature, but also to the ideological, aesthetic, historical-social, and especially national (*natsional'naia*) significance of works of fiction.<sup>37</sup> In 1910 in the official pedagogical publication *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom ucheb-nom okruge*, Adrian Krukovskii, a Russian language teacher at the First State Boys' Gymnasium and the private V. M. Prozorova Girls' Gymnasium, both in Vil'na, shared his experience on how to effectively use Rus-

35 By 1911, the museum already had 1,928 different kinds of visual material. It had collected historical maps and school atlases prepared by Dobriakov, descriptions of the nations of the Russian Empire by Ianchuk, and Russian geographical images by Borzov. The museum was not particularly popular with schoolchildren: only fifty-nine schoolchildren visited it in 1910, 129 in 1911, fifteen in 1912, ninety-nine in 1913, and seventy-eight in 1914. For more information, see *Katalog muzeia uchebnykh nagliadnykh posobii grafa M.I. Platova pri Kovenskoj direkcii narodnykh uchilishch* (Kaunas: Gubernskaia tipografiia, 1911).

36 See *Materialy po organizatsii shkol'nogo obucheniia na nachalakh nauchnoi pedagogiki* (Vilnius: Tipografiia A.G. Syrkina, 1915).

37 *Protokoly zasedanii komissii prepodavatelei russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga, proisikhodivshikh 2–9 ianvaria 1908 goda v g. Vil'ne* (Vilnius: Gubernskaia tipografiia, 1908), 15.

sian literature when teaching history. He suggested using works by Russian writers because “they are so good at presenting historical events, they become very close to the pupils’ hearts.” In this way, Krukovskii recommended using works by Aleksandr Pushkin to cover the times of Peter I; the work of Alexei Tolstoi to illustrate the times of Ivan IV; and the poetry of Vasilii Zhukovskii and Mikhail Lermontov to explore the events of 1812.<sup>38</sup> He also suggested paying particular attention to the commemoration of the anniversaries of the birth and death of Nikolai Gogol (1809–52), the Russian national (*natsional’nyi*) writer who declared “national unity” based on common statehood (*obshaia gosudarstvennost’*) and used standard Russian (*obshche-russkii iazyk*) in his work.<sup>39</sup> A separate resolution regarding the integration of history and geography was passed at the congress of teachers of the physical and natural sciences held in February and March 1908; it was approved by the Overseers’ Board under the board of the Vil’na educational district.

Sergei Medvedev, a history and geography teacher at the Vil’na Teachers’ Institute and the Vil’na Jewish Teachers’ Institute and one of the key participants in the meeting, stressed that a great deal of attention should be paid not just to Russian history, but to Russian geography as well, “so that the future son of the fatherland (*otechestvo*) is well aware of all the fields of modern life.”<sup>40</sup> That is why Medvedev, whose opinion was supported by other teachers at the congress, suggested dividing the geography course into two parts: physical geography and political-economic geography, and placing geography in the history-philology faculties. However, congress attendees insisted on devoting time to school excursions, a relatively new means of teaching history and geography.<sup>41</sup>

38 Adrian Krukovskii, “Otechestvennye pisateli v narodnoi shcole,” *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* 1 (1910): 22–23.

39 Adrian Krukovskii, “Gogol’ kak natsional’nyi russkii pisatel’,” *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* 5 (1908): 107–09.

40 *S’ezd prepodavatelei matematiki, fiziki, estetstvovedeniia i geografii*, 39.

41 For more about the excursions, see the chapter by Jolita Mulevičiūtė in this volume.

## School Excursions

In state schools in the Russian Empire starting in 1900–01, excursions became an increasingly important pedagogical tool. At the time, the Ministry of Education published circulars on the organization of excursions. The board of the Vil'na educational district only started paying more attention to school excursions in 1910, when it put out its own separate publication providing information on how to organize school excursions.<sup>42</sup>

At the congress of teachers of the natural and physical sciences held in February and March 1908, another topic of discussion was how much attention should be paid to “nearby” (*blizhnie*) versus “distant” (*dal'nie*) excursions, that is, those beyond the boundaries of the Northwest Region. Most teachers, including even Turtsevich, were in favor of excursions within the financial reach of students, which meant trips to nearby destinations, such as museums and archives, Orthodox churches, castles, and other architectural monuments in the Northwest Region. For example, in 1901, Turtsevich organized an excursion for the pupils of the First Boys' Gymnasium in Vil'na to Troki. During the excursion, he explained that there were many Orthodox churches, and also that Catholicism only started becoming more established during the seventeenth century in Troki. Until then, Russians had made up the majority of the population in the town, and Russian had been the state language. That is why he concluded that since its founding, Troki had “more Russian than Polish characteristics.”<sup>43</sup>

At this same congress, a resolution was passed requiring the Vil'na Pedagogical Museum (*Vilenskii pedagogicheskii muzei*) to prepare a separate catalogue of local points of interest and commence with archaeological excavation work.<sup>44</sup> In 1909, at the initiative of the board of the Vil'na educational district, Evdokim Romanov, the chairman of the Northwest

42 *Opisanie ekskursii uchashchikhsia v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge za 1910 god. Po porucheniiu upravleniia Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga* (Vilnius: Tipografiia Iosifa Zavadzkiego, 1911).

43 Arsenii Turtsevich, *Trokskii zamok (istoricheskii ocherk)* (Vilnius: Tipografiia A.G. Syrkina, 1901), 19.

44 *S'ezd prepodavatelei russkogo iazyka i istorii*, 18; *S'ezd prepodavatelei matematiki, fiziki, estetstvovedeniia i geografii*, 56.

Region's branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, prepared separate recommendations to state secondary school teachers on how to organize archaeological digs in the Northwest Region.<sup>45</sup>

Some of the teachers who worked in the Vil'na educational district and some of its board members, however, were more in favor of distant excursions beyond the borders of the northwest provinces. Aleksandr Vrutsevich was the first to express this kind of opinion at the congress. He was a geography teacher at the Vil'na Real (Practical) School and a member of the Russian nationalist organization the Russian Borderland Union (*Russkii okrainnyi soiuz*).<sup>46</sup> He stated that schoolchildren should visit distant parts of the Russian Empire, and called on the teachers organizing these kinds of excursions to stress "how the situation of each corner of the empire changed once it became part of the Russian Empire, i.e., to illustrate the cultural mission that the imperial Russian government was performing in the land."<sup>47</sup> His opinion was supported by Semion Kovaliuk, the director of a private boys' gymnasium in Vil'na and chairman of the Russian nationalist organization, the Peasant (*Krest'ianin*), who participated in the commission to offer opportunities to accelerate the moral, intellectual, and physical development of students, which was formed by the board of the Vil'na educational district. Kovaliuk was convinced that distant excursions "would give pupils the opportunity to test their knowledge of geography, history, archaeology, and ethnography acquired from books, and allow them to get a better sense of the grandeur and might of the whole Russian Empire."<sup>48</sup> That is why when

45 "Kratkie ukazaniia dlia soversheniia arkhelogicheskikh ekskursii srednimi uchebnymi zavedeniiami Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga. Zapiska chlena vremennoi komissii po ustroistvu i upravleniiu Vilenskoi publichnoi biblioteki i muzeem E. Romanova," in *Protokoly zasedanii komissii*, 158.

46 Vrutsevich graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of St. Petersburg. Between 1905 and 1915, he was the editor of the periodical publication *Krest'ianin*. In an article in 1907 devoted to the opening of the Vil'na branch of the Russian Borderland Union (Vilenskii okrainnyi soiuz), Vrutsevich described the activity guidelines for the Russian population in the Northwest Region as follows: "State-wide matters are of secondary importance to us because with our weak local forces, we cannot expect to have any serious influence on one or another decision. We have a special task: to defend the state's interests here, as it is in this way that we can serve state-wide (*obshchegosudarstvennym*) interests." Aleksandr Vrutsevich, "Otkrytie Vilenskogo ordela 'Russkogo okrainnogo soiuz,' " *Krest'ianin* 13–14 (1907): 195. I am grateful to Vytautas Petronis for the reference to this periodical publication.

47 *S'ezd prepodavatelei matematiki, fiziki, estestvovedeniia i geografii*, 40.

48 *Protokoly zasedanii komissii*, 8. Kovaliuk was a graduate of the Vil'na Teachers' Institute. In 1912, he was

editing *Zor'ka* (Morning Star, 1905–12), the only periodical publication in Russian for children, for the Vil'na educational district, Kovaliuk presented visual material from the internal provinces of the Russian Empire alone.<sup>49</sup>

Grigorii Levitskii, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district (1908–12), also realized the importance of school excursions to distant locations. In 1910, he appealed to the directors of state boys' secondary schools, urging them to organize excursions to Siberia and the Caucasus. Students' parents paid for these excursions, and the Vil'na educational district helped negotiate a discount for train tickets. Levitskii was certain that “by familiarizing themselves with such far-off parts of the Russian Empire, their natural surroundings, the everyday life and customs of the local population, youths would be able to feel the whole majesty of the Fatherland (*otechestvo*), which would encourage them to love their fatherland even more, and work for the benefit of the Fatherland.”<sup>50</sup> However, Levitskii's proposed school excursions to Vladivostok and Murmansk never took place due to a lack of participation. On his orders, an excursion to Turkestan did eventually take place in 1911, thanks to the efforts of Sergei Medvedev, the director of the Kovna Boys' Gymnasium, who managed to persuade only thirty-four pupils from the whole Vil'na educational district to go on the school trip.

It is difficult to say what influence this excursion and others like it actually had on students' views of the Russian Empire. However, one participant of the Turkestan excursion, a seventh-grade student named Georgii Archipovich from the Pinsk Real (Practical) School, shared these impressions:

Before the trip, I had almost no understanding of what Turkestan, or the southeast part of the Russian Empire in general, was. Now I can imagine

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elected chairman of the Vil'na Russian Nationalist Union (Vilenskii russkii natsional'nyi soiuz). On April 18, 1912, Kovaliuk and other members of Russian nationalist organizations were received by the education minister Kasso. During the meeting, Kovaliuk drew the minister's attention to the fact that the Catholic clergy in the Northwest Region were seeking to teach religion in schools in Polish, thereby “polonizing” Belorussians, for whom religion had to be taught in Russian.

49 For example, the magazine *Zor'ka* featured illustrations with captions such as: “View over Volga, Tver', Kazan'.”

50 Circular published by the overseer of the Vil'na educational district, Levitskii, to the directors of boys' gymnasiums in the Vil'na educational district, November 19, 1910, *LVI*A, f. 567, ap. 1, b. 1856, l. 3.

just how large our great Fatherland (*nashe otechestvo*) actually is, how beautiful the Volga and the Caucasus are, and how desolate the natural surroundings of Turkestan are. Having visited all these parts of the Fatherland, my fatherland (*moia rodina*) has become especially dear to me.<sup>51</sup>

While we cannot determine whether these thoughts authentically conveyed what he felt, we can say with some confidence that his impressions, printed in an official publication, complied with the narrative promoted by the officials behind these excursions.

However, the Vil'na educational district administration had the goal of "correcting" the image of the "motherland" in a way that would better suit its needs. For example, this was done with Vil'na, where some of the students or their families originated. As Darius Staliūnas has noted, in the Russian discourse, Vil'na was undoubtedly treated as a Russian city early on: the origins of its name were Russian, Russians made up a significant percentage of the population since its very founding, and Eastern Christianity was established there first.<sup>52</sup> That is why, when visiting Vil'na, the pupils at boys' and girls' gymnasiums and teacher training colleges had to visit the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, along with other Orthodox churches and the monuments erected in honor of Murav'ev and Catherine II.<sup>53</sup> Visiting the Murav'ev museum was compulsory for students and future teachers, as was the tour of the Vil'na Public Library (*Vilenskaia publichnaia biblioteka*). It was at the library that students were shown legal documents from the period of the "Lithuanian-Russian state," written in "Russian, not Polish,"<sup>54</sup> giving further credence to the idea of Russian cultural domination in Vil'na and the general

51 *Opisanie ekskursii vospitannikov srednikh uchebnykh zavedenii Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga v Turkestan letom 1911 goda* (Kaunas: Gubernskaia tipografiia, 1911), 178. Sergei Medvedev, the director of the Kovna boys' gymnasium, organized this excursion. Forty-three students from various boys' schools in the Vil'na educational district took part in this excursion. As in other cases, the authorities of the education district did not provide any financial support for it and only took care of discount for train ticket.

52 Staliūnas, "Poland and Russia?," 77.

53 For example, in 1910, forty-one school excursions were organized in the Vil'na educational district. Of these, twenty-eight named Vil'na as their destination.

54 A publication on school excursions from 1910 featured a detailed plan of what sights should be visited in Vil'na and, accordingly, the "narrative" about these sights that should be presented. See *Opisanie ekskursii uchashchikhsia v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge*, 119–22.



“Lithuanian–Russian state” promoted in history and geography textbooks. Thus, the local education administration, as well as teachers who organized “Russian” tours around Vil’na,<sup>55</sup> sent the younger generation the message that the Northwest Region and Vil’na, “its capital,” was not just a part of the Russian Empire, but also a part of Russian national territory.

### State Holidays and Commemorations

A “Russian” celebration to mark the birth of Nicholas II, son of Alexander II and the heir to the throne, was organized in 1868 at the initiative of Pompei Batiushkov, the overseer of the Vil’na educational district (1868–69). Pupils from Vil’na gymnasiums and rabbinical and folk schools (it is claimed that around a thousand schoolchildren participated) were invited to Antakalnis forest to celebrate with food and the singing of Russian songs.<sup>56</sup> After 1905, seeking to nurture patriotic feelings and respect for the ruling dynasty, the local education administration also encouraged active participation by pupils in the tricentennial of the beginning of the Romanov dynasty and commemorations marking the events of 1812, the Battle of Poltava, and the abolition of serfdom. In order to encourage their participation in anniversaries and public commemorations, the board of the Vil’na educational district sought to prepare local teachers ideologically by sending out separate instructions and encouraging teachers to organize suitable historical publications. In this way, at the initiative of the local education administration, the afore-mentioned teachers Orlovskii and Kudrinskii both wrote about events during the 1812 war in Grodna Province and in Vil’na; Dmitrii Dovgiallo, a history teacher in several state schools across Vil’na, wrote about the importance of the Battle of Poltava.<sup>57</sup>

55 For example, Flavian Dobrianskii, who initially worked as a history and geography teacher at the Vil’na Teachers’ Institute and was later appointed director of the Vil’na Jewish Teachers’ Institute, prepared three “Russian” guides to Vil’na. In 1882, he compiled a separate account about the Manuscript Department at the Vil’na Public Library in Church Slavonic and Russian.

56 See Vytautas Petronis, “Vilnius ir vilniečiai: miesto ir bendruomenių kaitos bruožai XIX a. antrosios pusės oficialiojoje spaudoje,” *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis* 1 (2016): 43–44.

57 Evstafii Orlovskii, *Grodnenskaia guberniia v 1812 godu (istoricheskii ocherk)* (Grodna: Gubernskaia

In order to ensure the deeper emotional impact of participating in state holidays and at commemorations of historic events, local teachers organized thematic excursions and illustrated lectures, taught patriotic songs, and encouraged students to write historical poems, organize theatrical performances, and participate in military parades. For example, as part of the celebrations marking the tricentennial of the Romanov dynasty, pupils at the First Boys' Gymnasium in Vil'na prepared a theatrical performance called "Life for the Tsar." At other state schools in the Vil'na educational district, six thematic lectures were organized using 176 slides, and a choir of three hundred children from different state schools across Vil'na was formed and sang songs, such as *Lord, Love the Tsar* and *Glory, Glory to the Tsar*, set to music by Mikhail Glinka. Pupils from the Keidany two-grade primary school wrote poems: "To Mark 21 February 1913" and "To Mark 300 Years of the Rule of the Romanov Dynasty."<sup>58</sup> Pupils from state schools in the Vil'na educational district went to Moscow to commemorate the events of 1812. One of the participants, Boris Chrypov, an eighth-grade pupil from the Bobruisk Boys' Gymnasium, shared his impressions: "During these days, I recalled the words of Karamzin: he who does not know Moscow, cannot know Russia. There are so many emotions linked to the Kremlin, its walls, and the Orthodox churches; this is where the Russian state emerged, this is the treasury of the Russian nation's historic treasures."<sup>59</sup> The feelings of this pupil, which were printed in *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge*, also reflected the central and local administration goals regarding how students should feel when participating in commemorations.

The speeches made by teachers marking these celebrations also had to echo the government's intentions. Iosif Iashchinskii, a history teacher at the Vil'na Real (Practical) School, stated: "The year 1812 was a year of glo-

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tipografia, 1912); Fedot Kudrinskii, *Vil'na v 1812 godu: v pamiat' stoletnei godovshchiny Otechestvennoi voyny* (Vilnius: izdanie upravleniia Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga, 1912); Dmitrii Dovgiallo, *Petr Velikii dlia Zapadnoi Rusi: na pamiat' o 200-letii Poltavskoi pobedy* (Vilnius: Russkii pochin, 1909).

58 1613–1913: *Iubileinye torzhestva v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* (Vilnius: Tipografia Russkii pochin, 1913), 15, 22, 377.

59 "Vpechatleniia prisutstvovavshago na iubileinykh torzhestvakh v gorode Moskve v avguste 1912 goda," *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Vilenskom uchebnom okruge* 1 (1913): 28.

ry for Russia, while for Poles it was a year of failures and unfulfilled, empty dreams. During the War for the Fatherland, all Russians united, and this unity gave them the strong moral resolve to fight against foreign enemies who tried to suppress the Russian nation's national feelings (*natsional'noe chuvstvo russkogo naroda*).<sup>60</sup> In marking the tricentennial of the Romanov dynasty, Makarii Sidorenko, a history and geography teacher at the boys' gymnasium in Gomel', declared forthrightly in his speech: "In the age of Catherine II, the borders of the Russian Empire finally reached their natural limits," thereby again claiming that the expansion of the Russian Empire was the logical outcome of the Romanov dynasty's empowerment and defense of the Russian state.<sup>61</sup>

Students also had to recognize that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was as much a Russian state as the Duchy of Muscovy, whose successful "conglomeration" with other parts of the Russian Empire was interrupted by the Poles; they did so by writing essays on appropriate themes. For example, as part of the celebrations marking tricentennial, state school pupils from the Vil'na educational district wrote essays with titles such as "The Importance of the Russian Tsars in Liberating the Western Slavs," "Russian and Polish Relations in the Times of Mikhail Fiodorovich and Aleksey Mikhailovich Romanov," "Russian and Polish Relations during the Reigns of the First Romanovs," "The Patriotic Reign of Elizabeth," and "Alexander II: Tsar-Liberator and Tsar-Peacemaker."<sup>62</sup> In one school essay, Boleslav Zubritskii, an eighth-grade pupil from the Vil'na Real (Practical) School, claimed: "The addition of the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the remainder of the Empire was a necessary step for the Russian government, for ever since the Union of Lublin, the Poles repressed the Russians, the true inhabitants of these lands."<sup>63</sup>

60 "The Meaning of the Patriotic War of 1812: A lecture given by the Vil'na Realschule teacher I. Iashchinskii, October 22, 1912," *LVLA*, f. 567, ap. 1, b. 1995, l. 21.

61 "A celebratory speech to mark three hundred years of Romanov rule made by the Gomel' Boys' Gymnasium history teacher, M. Sidorenko, February 21, 1913," *LVLA*, f. 567, ap. 1, b. 2161, l. 5.

62 *1613–1913: Iubileinye torzhestva*, 30.

63 "Russko-pol'skie otnosheniia pri pervykh Romanovykh (uchenik VIII klassa Vilenskogo real'nogo uchilishcha B. Zubritskii)," in *1613–1913: Iubileinye torzhestva*, 287.

## Schoolchildren's Societies

After 1905, Polish, Lithuanian, and, to a certain extent, Belorussian, activists worked intensely with the younger generation and tried to create national education systems using teaching measures that could only be used in illegal schools or in educational society schools; promoting their respective versions of history, and organized societies of teachers and students.<sup>64</sup> The use of voluntary societies to influence students was also hastily adopted by local Russian nationalist organizations in cooperation with the board of the Vil'na educational district.

In 1910, when the Polish youth sports organization Sokół was officially closed,<sup>65</sup> the Russian Social Organization (Russkoe obshchestvennoe sobranie) founded its own youth sports organization: Russkii sokol (Russian Falcon). The board of the Vil'na educational district also devoted quite a lot of attention to this organization. On March 15, 1913, Alexei Ostroumov, the overseer of the Vil'na educational district (1912–15), participated in a public display of the organization's military activities. There were also gymnastics exercises accompanied by Russian patriotic songs sung in the sports hall of the Second Boys' Gymnasium in Vil'na. In 1913, this organization was chaired by Mikhail Pavlovskii, the founder of a private boys' gymnasium in Vil'na.<sup>66</sup>

Based on the number of its members, which did not exceed a hundred, this youth sports organization lagged behind another school-age youth organization called Poteschnaia armiia (The Happy Army), whose activities demonstrated a visible link between sports and state ideology.<sup>67</sup> This orga-

64 The memoirs of graduates of State Boys' Gymnasiums of Vilna governorate often shows what students sought to resist the means of imperial loyalty by using various visual forms. Senior students used to damage their school uniforms that symbols of Russian imperial authority could not be seen on them. See A. Brochocki, *Na przełomie epok*, s. 49; Zygmunt Sieluzyczny, *Garść moich wspomnień*, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Oddział Rękopisów, inv.nr. 9852 III, s. 35.

65 The Polish youth sports organization Sokół was founded in Vil'na on November 11, 1905. The organization's board had a number of Polish National Democratic Party members.

66 *Otchiot Vilenskogo gimnasticheskogo obshchestva 'Sokol v Vil'ne' za 1913 god* (Vilnius: Tipografia I. Notesa i S. Shvailikha), 1914.

67 Vladimir Ekse, *Vilenskoe poteshnoe voisko ili gosudarevo delo, izlozhennoe voinskimi iazykom zakonov i daisheche otvety na vse voprosy ustroistva i obucheniia voiska po angliiskoi sisteme, no v dukhe Rosiiskom* (Vilnius: Tipolitografia T-va N. Matst, 1911). I am grateful to Vytautas Petronis for the reference to this text.

nization had its own militaristic elements: uniforms, a flag, and a pin with the inscription: "Fight for the Tsar and the Fatherland" (*Bor'ba za Tsaria i Otechestvo*). Also, in 1912, this organization of primary school pupils was chaired by General Fiodor Martson of the Vil'na military district, and its members were invited to join in a military parade organized to mark the Battle of Borodino.<sup>68</sup> According to the district inspector Aleksandr Pigulevskii, not only could this kind of youth element become "an accessory to the army," but participation in the activities of such societies would encourage school children to "nurture love for the Fatherland and its ruler [*Rodine i ee Derzhavnomu Gosudariu*], on the foundations of a national education."<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusions

After the revolution of 1905, neither the central government nor local education officials searched for methods to instill and ensure loyalty to the empire that were especially suited to the youth of the Northwest Region. General school subjects in the region such as history and geography were taught according to the same rules and employed the same teaching methods used in the internal provinces of the Russian Empire. For example, when teaching the history of the Northwest Region after 1905, it was basically Ustrialov's conceptualization of Russian history from the 1830s that was taught; according to this narrative, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was considered as much a Russian state as the Duchy of Muscovy in terms of its structure and confessional and ethnic composition. A deeper knowledge of the "great Fatherland" had to be fostered through excursions organized for pupils and teachers, and the board of the Vil'na educational district oriented these educational trips more frequently toward St. Petersburg, Moscow, and more distant parts of the Russian Empire; "local" excursions also had

68 Russkii [?], "Obozrenie sobytii i okrainnaia zhizn'. Vil'na," *Okrainny Rosii* 18 (1912): 271–72.

69 In 1913 and in the summer of 1914, special gymnastics courses were organized for state gymnasium teachers at the initiative of Pigulevskii. Aleksandr Pigulevskii, *Fizicheskoe vospitaniie i zadachi kratkosrochnykh gimnasticheskikh kursov dlia uchitelei* (Vilnius: Tipografia A.G. Syrkina, 1914), 5.

a purpose: “to demonstrate the Russian nation’s domination, cultural importance, and influence,” for example, in Vil’na. Thus, children were given the message that the Northwest Region was not just a part of the Romanov Empire; it was actually a part of Russian “national territory.”

During the events of 1905 and later, various non-dominant ethnic groups attracted the attention of members of the local education administration as a result of what was, in their view, an incorrect interpretation of the Northwest Region’s history. However, as the discussion of Turtsevich’s textbook in 1906 illustrates, the Vil’na educational district administration could only “hear” the complaints from non-Russians but saw no need to make any changes, especially since, in most cases, the active assistants of the board of the Vil’na educational district were local teachers. Attempts by certain teachers to devote more attention to the history and geography of the Northwest Region were rare. Furthermore, any desire to deepen awareness of the historical past and the natural resources of their surroundings had to be conveyed only as a stage in learning about the “great Fatherland.” However, in the view of the education administration, even accentuating the Russian history and geography of the region might appear to have separatist potential.

There are almost no sources that would allow us to understand what the results of this indoctrination actually were. One thing that is clear, however, is that the means described in this chapter may very well have had the opposite effect. By devoting more attention to the *Russian* history and geography of the Northwest Region in his lessons at Nesvizh teacher training college, the aforementioned Kudrinskii encouraged his pupils to take an interest in Belorussian folklore and analyze Belorussians’ way of life and customs. In his view, these kinds of “ethnographic studies” were intended to convince future teachers that, in terms of their origins, “language,” and ethnography, Belorussians were simply a part of the Russian nation.<sup>70</sup> However, as Konstantin Mitskievich, a student at the Nesvizh teacher

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<sup>70</sup> Kudrinskii published a paper in 1904 entitled “Belorussians: A Historic Outline,” where he explained that, based on their origins and way of life, Belorussians were part of the Russian nation. He viewed Belorussian as a dialect of the Russian language.

training college, wrote, collecting Belorussian songs and stories quite conversely inspired him to take an interest in the Belorussian language and reminded him that “Belorussian was precisely the language of my ancestors.”<sup>71</sup> Mitskievich (the future Jakub Kolas, 1882–1956) began to write poems and stories in Belorussian within the walls of this training college, and he soon became one of the most active figures in the Belorussian national movement. Thus, employees in the imperial Russian education sector who opposed giving greater attention to the history and culture of the Northwest Region were at least partially right; this attention had a potential side-effect: provoking non-Russian loyalties.

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71 Jakub Kolas, “Moia avtobiografia (1928 g.),” in *Izbrannyye sochineniia* (Minsk: Nauka, 1983), 10.

**P a r t**

**IV**

The Problem of  
the Russian Right





# Right-Wing Russian Organizations in the City of Vil'na and the Northwestern Provinces, 1905–1915

Vytautas Petronis

Our age is a time of self-organization. The economic and socio-political relations of our times force people to organize. It is hard, even impossible, for a single individual to successfully struggle in the contemporary relations of societal life. Not just to struggle, but also to learn and go forward is only possible with the help of an organization. Even in his own work, his craft, a man can perform more successfully and usefully for society by joining some group in his profession, his comrades in craft.

—Excerpt from “Vilnius, 27 lapkričio,” *Vilniaus žinios* 204 (813) (1907).

## Introduction

The revolution of 1905 in the Russian Empire brought significant changes not only to the governance of the state, but more importantly, it was instrumental in activating deep structural and ideological transformations in society. One was the partial emancipation and legalization of national movements and nationalisms. As a consequence, some ethnic groups, and even nations, which until then did not have pronounced popular nationalisms, were forced to create them as a response to the growth and threat of other nationalisms. Paradoxically, the Russians, the dominant nation in the empire, whose nationalism rose during the years of the revolution, were latecomers. Until 1905, Russian state-nationalism was largely managed and controlled by the imperial authorities. The surge of popular nationalism and monarchism during the revolution, both of which supported

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the imperial regime in one way or another, had to define relations between themselves and the state authorities.

Research into Russian monarchism and nationalism has grown during the last twenty-five years. A number of studies concerning different aspects of imperial, right-wing political parties and organizations, as well as collections of documents, have been published by Russian historians.<sup>1</sup> When looking at research into the western provinces, the largest body of work has been done on the southwest region—the Ukrainian-inhabited lands—where radical right-wing Russian groups and nationalists were the strongest.<sup>2</sup> Investigations into the northwestern provinces have predominantly been carried out by Belorussian researchers.<sup>3</sup> However, these works concentrate mostly on the five provinces of Mogilev, Vitebsk, Minsk, Grodna, and Vil'na.<sup>4</sup> Almost no research has been done on the sixth province, Kovna, which was inhabited predominantly by Lithuanians, and where the Russian monarchist and nationalist movement was weakest. Therefore, to complement this picture, in this chapter I have concentrated primarily on Russian right-wing organizations in the center of the northwestern provinces,

- 1 See, for example, D. Pavlov, ed., *Partiia 'Soiuz 17-go oktiabria': Protokoly s'ezdov, konferentsii, zasedanii TsK 1905–1915*, 2 volumes (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1996, 2000); Iurii Kir'ianov, ed., *Pravye partii: 1905–1917; Dokumenty i materialy*, 2 volumes (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1998); Daniil Kotsiubinskii, *Russkii natsionalizm v nachale XX veka. Rozhdenie i gibel' ideologii Vserossiiskogo natsional'nogo soiuz* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001); Iurii Kir'ianov, *Pravye partii v Rossii. 1911–1917 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001); Iurii Kir'ianov, *Russkoe sobranie 1900–1917* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003); A. Stepanov, *Chernaia sotnia* (Moscow: Eksmo, Iauza, 2005); S. San'kova, *Russkaia partiia v Rossii: obrazovanie i deiatel'nost' Vserossiiskogo natsional'nogo soiuz* (1908–1917) (Orel: Izdatel'stvo S.V. Zenina, 2006); A. Stepanov, A. Ivanov, and O. Platonov, eds., *Chernaia sotnia. Istoricheskaia entsiklopediia 1900–1917* (Moscow: Institut Russkoi Tsivilizatsii, 2008); A. Ivanov, *Pravye v russkom parlamente: ot krizisa k krakh* (1914–1917) (Moscow–St. Petersburg: Al'ians-Arkheo, 2013).
- 2 See, for example, the numerous studies by D. Kotsiubinskii, Iurii Kir'ianov, I. Omel'ianchuk, and others. Recent monographs by Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca, NY–London: Cornell University Press, 2013) and Klimentii K. Fedevich and Klimentii I. Fedevich, *Za Viru, Tsaria i Kobzaria: Malorosiiskii monarkhisti i ukrainskii natsional'nyi rukh (1905–1917 roki)* (Kiev: Kritika, 2017) shed more light on different aspects of the topic.
- 3 See, for example, the following monographs: Konstantin M. Bondarenko and Dimitrii Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarkhisty v nachale XX veka: monografiia* (Mogilev: MGU im. A.A. Kuleshova, 2003); Konstantin Bondarenko, *Pravye partii i ikh organizatsii v Belarusi (1905–1917 gg.)* (Mogilev: UO 'MGU im. A.A. Kuleshova', 2012), as well as other studies by these and other authors, predominantly published by Mogilev State A. Kuleshov University.
- 4 All the geographical names in this text are given in the form in which they were used during the period of analysis.

the city of Vil'na, and also in the province of Kovna. During my research, several new archives of organizations were discovered, which will hopefully shed even more light on the history of the Russian monarchist and nationalist movement in the northwestern provinces.

Among the many questions discussed in this chapter, the main ones are: Who and what were the main right-wing organizations that operated in the center of the northwestern provinces? What were the relations between the northwest Russian monarchists and nationalists and the imperial authorities? And when and why did right-wing organizations seek to cooperate with the imperial government? Through an analysis of the history of northwestern right-wing organizations, their interaction with each other, and with the local and central authorities, I argue that the region was not homogenous. Russian organizations in Vil'na and Kovna provinces differed to some extent from those in Belorussian-inhabited lands, and from the beginning, they manifested themselves in a less radical and more moderate form of monarchism, while exhibiting pronounced nationalist tendencies.

Before beginning a detailed analysis, it is necessary to briefly examine the situation before 1905, that is, the first steps in the organization and activities of Russian imperial elites in Vil'na, the administrative center of the region.

### **The Appearance of the Northwestern Russian Societal and National Clubs**

It is generally agreed upon that practical attempts to increase the uniformity of the northwestern provinces and their population with the rest of the Empire peaked after the uprising of 1863. Governor-general Mikhail Murav'ev introduced a hard-line political direction, which promoted Russianness in a variety of forms, and attempted to integrate the borderlands into imperial socio-political structures. The authorities supported Russian culture and the Orthodox Church; they sent imperial employees from the internal provinces to the borderlands, thus replacing most of the former local and predominantly Polish bureaucracy; they suppressed the Catholic Church and Polish cultural and social dominance, in addition to other

measures. In time, these top-down processes created a tradition of state-run “Russification,” or, in the eyes of the supporters of these policies, the “restoration” of historically inherent Russian rights in the provinces. Later, despite admitting that this strategy had largely failed, for many Russian conservatives, the Murav’ev period still represented the “golden age” of the state’s involvement in the protection and growth of Russianness in the western borderlands.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, this system had begun to be perceived as problematic: it slowed down the modernization of society and clashed with the new political ideologies and movements, chief among them socialism and nationalism. It was inevitable that the supporters of the monarchy and the old estate system had to adapt to the new trends. The first legal imperial monarchist organization, a club for the Russian elite, appeared at the turn of the century. The Russian Assembly (*Russkoe Sobranie*) was established at the end of 1900 in St. Petersburg. It included a number of senior imperial officials and members of the nobility and was primarily concerned with cultural activities, research, and the protection and promotion of Russianness, which to a great extent followed the ideology of Slavophilism. During the revolution of 1905, the Russian Assembly reformed into a political party. However, having enjoyed little success in attracting a greater following and influence on the political scene due to its elitist and conservative tendencies, by 1914 it had left politics and reverted to cultural and educational activities.<sup>5</sup>

Being more of a Slavophile club than a political party, the early Russian Assembly did not strive to expand the organization into other parts of the empire. Nevertheless, several sections opened in the provinces before 1905. One of the first was established in Vil’na in 1904.<sup>6</sup> Having no political aspirations (political parties and organizations were prohibited before the declaration of the October 17 Manifesto), this section was formed as a kind of national club by several high-ranking provincial officials, some of

<sup>5</sup> For more on this, see Kir’ianov, *Russkoe sobranie*.

<sup>6</sup> V. Levitskii, “Pravye partii,” in *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale 20 veka*, vol. 3, book 5, ed. L. Martov, P. Maslov, and A. Potresov (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia t-va ‘Obshchestvennaia pol’za’, 1914), 358.

whom later became prominent imperial ministers and senators.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, because of very limited documentation, the history and activities of the pre-1905 Vil'na section remain obscure. We can presume that it was involved in cultural and social activities, but it is also possible that after its establishment, as was quite common at the time, the section existed only on paper.

Parallel with the Russian Assembly, the northwest middle and high-ranking imperial bureaucracy found it necessary to create a variety of social, charitable and leisure organizations. Russian social clubs were established in Minsk and Vil'na, which in essence resembled the national clubs that were popular in other European countries. One of the earliest such institutions opened in Vil'na around 1904. It was called the Official Family (*Sluzhebnaia Sem'ia*) and included many high-ranking imperial employees stationed there, as well as other prominent members of the local Russian elite. The club was managed by a board of twenty elected elders who held meetings twice a month, and, for the most part, looked after leisure activities for members of the club and their families. Family gatherings, literary and musical evenings, lunches, dinners, and lectures were the most popular events.<sup>8</sup>

The Official Family existed until the beginning of 1906, when it was reformed into an openly nationalist club. Besides changing its name to the Vil'na Russian Societal Assembly (*Vilenskoe Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Sobranie*), it also opened its doors to lower-ranking officials and the local Russian intelligentsia, predominantly state school teachers.<sup>9</sup> The transfor-

7 The founders and heads of the Vil'na section were imperial officers stationed in the city. According to Senator Stepan Beletskii, who became head officer in the Vil'na governor-general chancellery department in 1904, he was one of the founders and a member of the Russian Assembly's Vil'na section. At the beginning, it was headed by Alexei Kharuzin, a prominent ethnographer and anthropologist, and future senator, who at the time was in charge of the general-governor's chancellery. Later, after leaving the post, his successor Andrei Stankevich, another future prominent imperial politician, replaced him as head of the chancellery and the section. "Protokol pokazanii S.P. Beletskogo ot 14 iunia i 2 iulia 1917 g.," in *Soiuz Russkogo Naroda: Po materialam cherezvychainoi sledstvennoi komissii vremennogo pravitel'stva 1917 g.*, ed. A. Chernovskii (Moscow–Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1929), 77.

8 For an account of the Vil'na club, see "Official Family for the year 1904/1905," Vilniaus Universiteto Biblioteka Rankraščių Skyrius (Vilnius University Library Manuscript Department, VUB RS), F6-857, 19–20.

9 Id., "Vil'na," *Okrainy Rossii* 10 (1910): 153. A prominent lawyer and statesman, member of the St. Petersburg Russian Gathering, and one of the founders of the St. Petersburg Russian Borderland Society (*Russkoe*

mation presumably occurred due to the ongoing revolution, and also because of new laws, which required the registration of all legally operating organizations.<sup>10</sup> Similar Russian societal assemblies opened in other north-western towns too.<sup>11</sup>

Starting in late 1905, the assemblies became places where local Russian state officials and supporters of the imperial authorities could meet and interact. Judging from the lists of members, these national clubs were predominantly frequented by people with right-wing political preferences. There is no information that liberals, like the Constitutional Democrats (or the *kadets*), ever participated in the activities of the assemblies, although officially there were no restrictions based on political views. Only minors, members of the military on active service, people with criminal convictions, and those whose memberships in similar organizations were revoked were not permitted to join.<sup>12</sup> The popularity of these local elite organizations was reflected in their growing numbers: for example, the Vil'na Russian Societal Assembly had 340 members in 1908–09, and in 1910–11, it had 467 members.<sup>13</sup>

These Russian clubs were also instrumental in the emergence of other local right-wing organizations, such as the Circle of Russian Women (Kruzhok Russkikh Zhenshchin). The first Circle appeared in St. Petersburg in May 1907. It would seem that the northwestern organizations of women followed its principles, but they were not directly associated with the St. Petersburg branch.<sup>14</sup> Despite being charitable and educational institutions, the Circles nonetheless belonged to the right-wing, sometimes even radical end of the political spectrum, and focused only on working with Or-

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Okrainoe Obshchestvo), Nikolai Sergeevskii also described the Vil'na Russian Societal Gathering as a national club in the ethnically non-Russian city. Nikolai Sergeevskii, "Shest' dnei v Vil'ne," *Okrainy Rossii* 35–36 (1908), 501.

10 "O vremennykh pravilakh ob Obshchestvakh i Soiuзах," in *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii. Sobranie tret'e. T. XXVI. 1906: Otdelenie I* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 201–7.

11 For example, the Minsk Russian Societal Assembly was established in 1908.

12 *Ustav Russkogo Obshchestvennogo Sobraniia* (Vilnius, 1908), 1.

13 *Otchet [Vilenskogo] Russkogo Obshchestvennogo Sobraniia za 1908–9 god* (Vilnius, s.a.), 1; *Otchet Vilenskogo Russkogo Obshchestvennogo Sobraniia za 1910–11 god* (Vilnius, s.a.), 1.

14 *Chernaia sotnia. Istoricheskaia entsiklopediia 1900–1917*, 502–3.

thodox and Russian (including Belorussian and Ukrainian) people.<sup>15</sup> They were usually headed by the most active and prominent women in local Russian society; for example, the leader of the Minsk Circle was the Minsk governor's wife, Vera Erdeli.<sup>16</sup> The Vil'na Circle was headed by Elena Dobrianskaia, whose father Flavian Dobrianskii was a prominent teacher, a member of the Vil'na Archaeographical Commission and the northwestern section of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, as well as possibly being one of the founders of the Russian Assembly's Vil'na section.<sup>17</sup> Circles also tried to become more prominent and secure larger followings and greater financial support by electing women from society's elite as honorary members. The Vil'na Circle indicated that the wives of the Vil'na governors Dimitri Liubimov (1906–12) and Petr Verevkin (1912–16), as well as the widow of the former governor-general Konstantin Krshivitskii (1905–09), also belonged to the organization. Despite their political preferences, however, these women's organizations excelled in charitable work: the Vil'na Circle supported war refugees and soldiers at the front until the German occupation of the city in the autumn of 1915.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the first northwest right-wing political organizations appeared in the midst of these Russian societal assemblies and/or national clubs after the proclamation of the October 17 Manifesto. However, this can only be said about the moderate ones, whose supporters came from among the middling and senior officials and the intelligentsia, and not about the radical organizations like the Union of Russian People (Soiuz Russkogo Naroda), which had a larger following among the lower classes and the peasantry.

15 This was not something unusual because other national groups (Poles, Jews, Lithuanians) also established their own national charitable, educational, medical, and similar organizations, which worked primarily with members of their own nation. However, unless they were religious, Russian state organizations were more liberal in the sense that they provided assistance to non-Russians too.

16 For more on the Minsk Circle of Russian Women, see Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarkhisty*, 75–77; and Dimitrii Lavrinovich, "Russkie zhenskie kruzhki v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi zhizni Vil'no i Minska v nachale XX veka," in: *Religia i obshchestvo 10* (conference proceedings), eds. V. Starostenko and O. D'iachenko (Mogilev: MGU im. A.A. Kulshova, 2016), 49–52.

17 "Mestnaia khronika," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1075 (Jan. 4, 1907).

18 *Otchet vilenskogo kruzhka russkikh zhenshchin za 1909 god* (Vilnius, 1910); "V 'Kruzhke russkikh zhenshchin,'" *Vilenskii vestnik* 2887 (Jan. 30, 1913); *Otchet vilenskogo kruzhka russkikh zhenshchin za 1914 god* (Vilnius, 1915).



This had an effect on the uneven distribution of right-wing organizations in the northwestern provinces. Whereas moderate and liberal monarchists, as well as nationalists, were stronger in the western parts of the region, especially in urban areas with the highest concentrations of Russians in their population, radical parties and organizations had a stronger following in the eastern parts, and especially in the countryside. The dividing line ran approximately where Catholics and Orthodox met, with the provinces of Kovna and Vil'na (Lithuanian) on one side, and the Minsk, Mogilev, and Vitebsk (Belorussian) provinces on the other. Grodna Province was split between the two. This relative division can be noticed when looking at the societal support and activities of right-wing parties, especially the radical Union of Russian People, which, due to its promotion of the monarchy, Russianness, and Orthodoxy, targeted very specific ethnic and confessional societal groups. In the territories dominated by or boasting high percentages of non-Russians and Catholics, the support for radicals was low. Moderate right-wing groups and nationalists were somewhat more successful there. A stronger Russian nationalist ideology presumably developed as a response to the potent and active non-Russian nationalisms, primarily Polish and Lithuanian. Despite this division, however, moderate monarchists and nationalists had followers in the Belorussian provinces too.

### **The Organization and Activities of the Radical Right: The Union of Russian People**

Radical right-wing Russian political and societal organizations emerged in the northwest region during the revolution of 1905. At the beginning, they appeared as various self-organized groups that supported monarchism and aimed at combating the revolution. Most of them had a short life span: they either disappeared or joined the newly organized political party the Union of Russian People. Until the suppression of the revolution, the Union was the main radical right-wing organization in the empire. It was started in October 1905 by Aleksandr Dubrovin, and it quickly managed to establish numerous sections, especially in Orthodox-dominated

parts of the western provinces.<sup>19</sup> They were supported by the highest state authorities due to their strong counter-revolutionary attitudes and activities, as well as the promotion of absolute monarchy, Russianness, and Orthodoxy. To a great extent, the Union stood against any reform of imperial governance and perceived the Duma as an advisory institution that essentially limited the power of the emperor.<sup>20</sup> This radical attitude toward the October 17 Manifesto narrowed the party's participation in politics even though it had a huge following, especially among the Orthodox, and to some extent among Old Believers too. The Union became infamous for the violence, pogroms, and terror it inflicted in the northern and especially the southwestern provinces.<sup>21</sup>

After the suppression of the revolution in 1907 and the stabilization of everyday social and political life, the troublesome radicals became a burden for the imperial government. The internal power struggle between several groups within the party led to its split, and in March 1908, the moderate wing headed by Vladimir Purishkevich reorganized itself as the Russian National Union of the Archangel Michael (Russkii Narodnyi Soiuz Imeni Arkhangel'a Mikhaila). Later, in 1909–10, another break occurred in what remained of the Union of Russian People. In 1911, Dubrovin's followers established the All-Russian Dubrovin Union of Russian People (Vserossiiskii Dubrovinskii Soiuz Russkogo Naroda), while the other, more moderate (or centrist) part became known as the Union of Russian People (Reformed) (Soiuz Russkogo Naroda [Obnovlencheskii]). All these changes in the central party were also reflected in the provincial sections. There were splits and transformations, and changes of leadership and loyalties. Unfor-

19 See, for example, I. Omel'ianchuk, *Chernosotennoe dvizhenie na territorii Ukrainy (1904–1914)* (Kiev: NIURO, 2000); Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarchisty*, 41–56; for the spread of the right-wing parties and groups in the northwestern provinces (except Kovna), see: Bondarenko, *Pravye partii*, 108–27.

20 Despite the fact that the Duma was perceived only as a simple institutional connection between the emperor and the people, the Union of Russian People nevertheless envisioned itself actively participating in politics, and thus protecting the monarchy, the state, and the Russian nation. *Ustav obschestva pod nazvaniem 'Soiuz Russkogo Naroda'* (St. Petersburg, 1906), 3–6.

21 Hans Rogger, "Was There a Russian Fascism? The Union of Russian People," in *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Macmillan–St. Anthony's College, 1986), 212–32.

tunately, very limited archival material remains on these developments in the northwestern provinces; most of the information presented here comes from the periodical press and other scholarly research.

As was mentioned earlier, the radical wing drew its greatest support from the imperial authorities during the revolutionary years. In a famous quote from a telegram sent by Nicholas II to Dubrovin, the founder of the Union of Russian People, on June 5, 1907, the emperor greeted the party and thanked it for its support of the monarchy, calling them an example of “obedience to law and order.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, since its establishment and until the change of the election law on June 3, 1907, the Union received official and unofficial support from many high-ranking state authorities. Even after the decline in its popularity, some of the imperial authorities continued to help the party and its offshoots financially until the beginning of World War I.<sup>23</sup>

The first radical right-wing organizations appeared in the northwestern provinces in Belorussian-inhabited territories, such as the Mogilev Province Union of Russian People (Soiuz Russkikh Liudei), in October 1905. Similar organizations with different names sprang up in other provinces too: the True Russian People (Orsha), the Society of Old Believers and Rightists (Vitebsk), For Faith, the Tsar, and Fatherland (Bobruisk), and others. Most of these were soon incorporated into the Union of Russian People.<sup>24</sup>

The Union was a very popular organization, boasting 2,124 sections all over the empire by 1908, when all the other right-wing parties barely had 105.<sup>25</sup> According to Iurii Kir’ianov, who based his calculations on data collected by the Ministry of the Interior, it was claimed that at the peak of the movement around 1907–08, in Vil’na Province there were approximately

22 Kir’ianov, ed., *Pravye partii: Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 1, 341.

23 Vladimir Kokovtsov, *Iz moego proshlogo: Vospominaniia 1903–1919*, vol. 2 (Paris: Izd. zhurnala “Illustrirovannaia Rossiia,” 1933), 9–13.

24 Bondarenko, *Pravye partii*, 109–110. For detailed numbers of members of right-wing organizations in the Belorussian provinces for the period 1907–1916, see: Konstantin Bondarenko, “Kolichestvo i chislennost’ pravomonarkhicheskikh obrazovani v Rossii i Belarusi v 1907–1916 gg.,” *Vesnik Magileuskaga dzharzhaunaga universiteta imia A. A. Kulashova, Ser: A, Gumanitarnyia navuki (gistoryia, filasofia, filalogiia)* 2(46) 2015, 4–13.

25 Bondarenko, *Pravye partii*, 112.

one thousand members (mostly members of the Union); in Kovna there were 6,450 members of the Union;<sup>26</sup> in Grodna 897 members (502 [the Union] and 395 [other organizations]); and in Minsk there were 16,486 members (3,770 [the Union] and 12,716 [other organizations]). Statistics for later years are not available, and only Minsk Province has approximate numbers for the year 1915–16, in total 450 members.<sup>27</sup>

Such high numbers for the earlier period, however, should be treated with caution. Close connections between the radicals and the Orthodox Church, Orthodox brotherhoods, Old Believers and Russian landlords might have had a strong albeit temporary mobilizing effect on the peasantry. There were many reports about the artificially created Union's provincial sections, where whole parishes registered by the politicized Orthodox clergy. In some cases, people were tricked into joining radical monarchist organizations. For example, in Ponevezh (in Kovna Province), the local landlord Grigorii Gnatovskii, an active member of the Union's Vil'na section and one of the monarchist delegates to Nicholas II (April 11, 1907),<sup>28</sup> took the initiative in establishing a section in the center of the Ponevezh district. It should be noted that Gnatovskii had long and good relations with the Kovna governor Petr Verevkin and his family.<sup>29</sup> Enjoying a privileged position as the head of the assembly of the local nobility, he opened the section

26 Kir'ianov's numbers for Kovna Province are very inaccurate. The file on the Union of Russian People in the Kovna governor's chancellery archive shows that during the entire period from 1905 until the beginning of the war, there were only three officially registered sections: in Novoaleksandrovsk (opened in 1906), in Ponevezh (1907), and in Kovna (1910). The registration of sections was done at the St. Petersburg city governor's office, and the Kovna governor was only informed about the fact (see, for example, the note on the registration of the Kovna section: Kauno Regioninis Valstybės Archyvas [Kaunas Regional State Archive; KRVA], I-53; 1, 51; 9).

Reports from the heads of the local district police to the Kovna governor's chancellery reveal that in mid-1907, the Novoaleksandrovsk section had 300, and Ponevezh 1,449 members, which officially made 1,749 members of the Union in total (KRVA, I-59, 1, 51; 11, 27). These numbers were the peak of the party's popularity. Membership of the Kovna section is not known, but it could not have been high, probably up to a hundred.

27 Kir'ianov, ed., *Pravye partii v Rossii, 1911–1917*, 79–80 (table).

28 "Mestnaia khronika," *Morskaia volna* 4 (April 20, 1907).

29 Gnatovskii corresponded with Verevkin at least starting from the early 1890s. Gnatovskii's telegram to Verevkin's family in St. Petersburg, dated 1892, Lietuvos Nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo Biblioteka Rankraščių Skyrius (Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania Manuscript Department, LNMMB RS), F19-475, 3.

on October 14, 1907. The highest Orthodox authority, Archbishop Nikandr of Vil'na and Lithuania, participated in the festivities, which combined imperial and religious rituals; mass in the Ponevezh Orthodox church was followed by a blessing of the section's flag and patriotic speeches given by the archbishop and other participants. Afterwards, a politicized religious procession went through the town to the Orthodox cemetery, where respects were paid to the Russian soldiers who fell during the suppression of the 1863 uprising. The celebrations continued in Gnatovskii's house, where the archbishop, a number of high-ranking Orthodox priests, and members of the Vil'na and Ponevezh sections, composed a telegram expressing their loyalty to Nicholas II.<sup>30</sup>

Arguably, this small example illustrates rather well the relations between the Union's section and different imperial authorities. Many members and heads of district sections were either Orthodox priests or Russian landlords. The Vil'na provincial section occupied a higher hierarchical position within the organization, where Archbishop Nikandr was an honorary member and a strong spiritual authority. The direct or indirect participation of high-ranking members of the Orthodox Church in politics, and their support for conservative and even radical right-wing groups, provided the latter with a strong foothold in parishes and semi-secular conservative Orthodox brotherhoods, and allowed further political agitation through the churches. Also, at the end of 1907, some local authorities still expressed support for the Union of Russian People, and personal relationships with governors, such as the one between Gnatovskii and Verevkin, contributed greatly to the party's strong position.<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, personal contacts could have been beneficial for political groups and the authorities. One example of such cooperation came from the Gnatovskii–Verevkin connection. In a letter to the governor, Gnatovskii announced that on his trips through the province where he was promot-

30 Ochevidets, "Torzhestvo osviascheniia znamenii Ponevezhskogo otdela Sojuza Russkogo Naroda," *Morskaiia volna* 21 (October 22, 1907).

31 An exchange of congratulations between the Ponevezh section and governor Verevkin (Jan. 1, 1908), LNMMB RS, F19-1081, 1–3.

ing the Union's candidates to the Third Duma, he had encountered leftist politicians, who, in his words, had carried out "anti-government agitation." Therefore, he asked Verevkin to order the police in Ponevezh and other districts to be ready to respond at Gnatovskii's request in order to prevent political agitation by opposition parties. Interestingly enough, Verevkin found this suggestion useful; however, he pointed out that such assistance had to come at the initiative of the district policemen themselves and not by order from the Kovna governor. Despite that, a request (albeit unofficially) was issued.<sup>32</sup> Whether this had any effect is not clear.

As was mentioned earlier, statistics about the Union's membership are problematic. Some Orthodox and Old Believer parishes were registered as provincial sections, quite possibly even without the consent of the people. This turned out to be the case with the Ponevezh section. As the Lithuanian press reported, supposedly even during the opening, heads of local state schools and commanders of the military garrison rejected the organizers' invitation to participate in a religious-monarchist procession.<sup>33</sup> Only Old Believer and Russian settlers attended because, as it was claimed in the press, Gnatovskii assured people that during the opening of the section, the archbishop would announce an official manifesto about the new redistribution of land. (This might have been connected with ongoing discussions regarding the introduction of zemstvos in the western provinces.) People came and probably joined the section to improve their chances of getting more land. But when nothing was announced, everyone became angry at Gnatovskii's trick.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the section faced more trouble: a few months

32 An official letter from the Ponevezh section of the Union of Russian People to the Kovna governor, July 16, 1907, KRVA, I-59; 1, 51; 32, 45 and two following unnumbered pages.

33 It is important to note that at the end of 1905, active-service military were forbidden to participate in any political organizations, and because of this, many officers abandoned political groups and only reserve military remained. Moreover, in the spring of 1906, the Ministry of the Interior issued a recommendation to all state employees to abstain from participation in political groups because, as it was explained, political activities distracted them from their primary duties. Later, in a circular from September 14, 1906, civil servants were prohibited from participating in anti-government revolutionary groups, which to some extent also included right-wing radicals who openly declared themselves to be against the changes introduced by the October 17 Manifesto. Finally, in October 1913, the Holy Synod passed a decision that forbade Orthodox priests from joining political movements and parties (Kir'ianov, *Russkoe sobranie*, 87–88).

34 Bsparnis, "Panevėžio rusų sąjunga," *Vilniaus žinios* vol. 203, no. 812 (1907).

later, in July 1908, the administration of Kovna Province took Gnatovskii to court for embezzling money given by the state for orphans. The court found him guilty and sentenced him to prison.<sup>35</sup> But with the help of the Union's Vil'na section, Gnatovskii was released.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the generally negative attitude towards the Duma, the Union of Russian People was nonetheless quite successful on the new political scene, especially in the western borderlands. The change to the election law on June 3, 1907 and the introduction of separate Russian electoral curia, opened up possibilities for Russians to send representatives to the parliament. At the same time, this law also introduced strong division among local right-wing followers. Earlier attempts at consolidation against non-Russians and leftists became an internal power struggle for seats in the Duma. This will be addressed later in this chapter, when looking at moderate right-wing organizations. But it should be mentioned here that the radicals were successful in winning several seats for their candidates in Vil'na Province in the elections to the Third (1907) and Fourth (1912) Dumas, when the infamous radical right-wing politician Gregorii Zamyslovskii won the majority of votes.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the initial support, the Union's relations with the authorities gradually worsened. After the successful 1907 elections, the radicals became much more vocal in criticizing senior officials who, according to them, did not adhere to the principles of monarchy, Orthodoxy, and Russianness. In Vil'na, they were especially negative about the overseer of the Vil'na educational district, the Baltic German Baron Boris Vol'f, who was accused of supporting the Poles and other non-Russian ethnicities in schooling and refused to appoint the Union's members as teachers.<sup>38</sup> Later, the Vil'na section reported other attempts to force local authorities to conform to their political agenda and appoint their candidates as teachers in state schools, employees at the Polesie railway company's administration, and elsewhere.

35 "Žinios. Iš Lietuvos. Panevėžys," *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 30 (July 23 [August 5], 1908).

36 "Kratkii obzor deiatel'nosti Vilenskogo Gubernskogo Otdela Soiuza Russkogo Naroda za 1908 god," *Morskaiia volna* 45 (March 9, 1909).

37 "Mestnaia khronika," *Morskaiia volna* 21 (October 22, 1907).

38 Morskaiia volna, "V chem obviniaetsia g. popechitel' Vilenskogo uchebnogo okruga baron Vol'f," *Morskaiia volna* 35 (June 7, 1908).



They used personal contacts to secure Gnatovskii's release from prison, wrote reports about the "improper" behavior of Jews and Poles, and so on.<sup>39</sup>

The Union of Russian People was much more successful in Belorussian rather than Lithuanian-inhabited lands. There, starting from 1906 up to the beginning of 1908, the radicals had at least sixty-four sections and sub-sections, not including other similar, but not Union-run radical organizations.<sup>40</sup> After splits in the party in 1908 and 1911, the provincial sections either divided or became loyal to one of the offshoots, the Russian National Union of the Archangel Michael, the Union of Russian People (Reformed), or the All-Russian Dobrovin Union of Russian People.<sup>41</sup>

## The Moderate Right and the Nationalists

### The Northwestern Russian Veche

Generally, supporters of the October 17 Manifesto can be grouped under the common label "the moderate right," although this political trend evolved into a variety of organizations. Unlike the radical right, the moderates (chief among were the main political parties, the Union of October 17 [Soiuz 17 Oktiabria], or the Octobrists, and the All-Russian National Union [Vserossiiskii Natsional'nyi Soiuz]), supported the reformed monarchy and the unity of the empire. The first steps taken by the moderate right, however, were more cautious than those of the radicals.

39 "Kratkii obzor deiatel'nosti Vilenskogo Gubernskogo Otdela Soiuzu Russkogo Naroda za 1908 god," *Morskaiia volna* 45 (March 9, 1909).

40 See Bondarenko's calculations for every northwestern province (except Kovna): Bondarenko, *Pravye partii*, 112–18.

41 On the distribution of sections in five northwestern provinces (except for Kovna) for the period between 1908 and 1914, see *ibid.*, 118–24. Statistics on Kovno Province are very fragmented and require further investigation. In reports to the Ministry of the Interior about the province, governor Verevkin indicated that in 1908, besides the Sviato Nikol'skoe Petropavlovskoe Orthodox brotherhood, there were two Union of Russian People sections (in Poneviezh and Novoaleksandrovsk), with approximately 2,000 members, and the newly created, but barely functional section of the Union of the Archangel Michael in Onikshty, Vilkomir district. "Vseppoddaneishii otchet Kovenskogo gubernatora za 1908 god," LNMMB RS, F19-76, 3. The latter was established in May 1908 and was run by the local Orthodox priest Ioan (or Iakov) Budnikov. Just as with the registration of the sections of the Union of Russian People, the Onikshty chapter of the Union of the Archangel Michael was registered in St. Petersburg. "V Kovenskoe gubernskoe po delam ob obshchestvakh Prisutstvie," KRVA, I-53, 1, 112, 1.



One of the first moderate northwestern right-wing organizations was the Vil'na-based Northwestern Russian Veche (Severo-Zapadnaia Russkaia Veche). The word *veche* suggested a form of assembly or council of Russian society, which came from the medieval Slavic tradition and was indicative of the traditionalist and, to some extent, democratic approach to building the organization. The idea to establish an organization that would unite all northwest Russian right-wing supporters was first proposed on October 30, 1905 at a meeting at the Official Family club. The suggestion came from Aleksandr Beletskii, the assistant to the overseer of the Vil'na educational district. Receiving overwhelming support, the participants in the meeting formed a preparatory committee tasked with formulating a charter for the new organization. It must be noted that the committee was composed of prominent imperial officials and the local Russian intelligentsia, such as Stepan Beletskii, the head of the Vil'na governor-general's chancellery and future senator and vice-governor of Samara Province, and Semion Kovaliuk, the owner and head of a private school in Vil'na. At the next meeting, members of the club were also joined by invited representatives from the local Old Believer community. The already-printed statute, however, caused some disagreement over the paragraph allowing all inhabitants of the northwestern provinces to join the organization regardless of their faith or nationality. The paragraph was quickly removed, allowing only Russians (i.e. those with official Russian nationality, Belorussians, Russians, and Ukrainians) to become members. The opening of the Veche took place on December 26 that year.<sup>42</sup> It was reported that the ceremony was attended by over four hundred.

One of the most important tasks for the new organization was to create its own periodical. At same time, another newly established moderate right-wing Vil'na organization, the Peasant Society (Obshchestvo 'Krest'ianin', its founder was the aforementioned Kovaliuk), was also preparing to publish its own journal. However, they were aiming at a very specific social

42 Although the Veche's January report showed that only 216 joined the organization "Journal No. 4 of the meeting of the Central Council of the Northwestern Russian Veche" (January 16, 1906), VUB RS, F4-A754, 16.

stratum, the Belorussian peasantry, and were primarily concerned with improving their patriotic and economic standing. Therefore, this periodical did not fit the Veche's plan for the unification of all the Russian inhabitants of the region. Moreover, the Vil'na section of the Union of October 17 was also looking forward to having its own periodical, but its members soon became preoccupied with political matters and cancelled the plan. Additionally, the Veche positioned itself as a non-political and more national(-ist)-cultural organization, which made it difficult to cooperate with the Octobrists.<sup>43</sup> With no suitable alternative, on February 19, 1906, they began publishing a newspaper entitled *Belaia Rus'* (White Rus'), which appeared weekly until the beginning of June, when it was closed due to financial problems.

The charter of the Veche opened with the slogan: "Total tolerance and respect for opinions" (*Polnaia terpimost' i uvazhenie k mneniiam*). This was quite unusual for a right-wing Russian organization, especially bearing in mind the ongoing revolution and the activity of the radical Union of Russian People. This could, in part, be explained from the perspective of "defensive nationalism," which was quite prevalent among local moderates: surrounded by strong non-Russian nationalisms, they did not want to escalate violence in the city or the region. On the other hand, comprised as it was of a number of middle and high-ranking imperial officials, taking a radical path was not favored by the local authorities, whose main goal was to maintain stability and order. It is no surprise then that the Veche aimed to find consensus between different nationalisms and establish their place among them. This conclusion can be made by looking at the first paragraph of its statute, which stated: "Acknowledging the right to individual cultural development for every nationality [*narodnost'*] of the region and based on the grounds of the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, the Northwest Russian Veche has the goal of uniting Russian inhabitants of the northwest provinces in the form of the protection of Russian national [*narodnykh*] interests

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43 "Protocol from the meeting of the Central Council of the Northwestern Russian Veche No. 1" (December 30, 1905), VUB RS, F4-A754, 1-6.

in the sphere of socio-political life in all its manifestations, and at the same time striving to clarify common political and societal goals with the other nationalities [narodnosti] of the region.”<sup>44</sup>

It is important to point out that, unlike the radical right, the Veche's charter did not mention religion as a criterion for national identification. By leaving this out, they probably expected to win the sympathy of Belorussian Catholics, who were usually identified (by others) as Poles. Combining religious with national identification was much more important for radical groups and political parties, as well as conservative Orthodox organizations like the numerous northwestern brotherhoods. For them a “true Russian” was a person who not only belonged to the “official Russian” nationality, but also adhered to either the Orthodox or (to some extent) Old Believer confession. No Catholic could be a “Russian,” unless he converted to Orthodoxy, and even then there was no guarantee. And no Jew could ever become a “Russian.” Another explanation for the absence of the religious criterion could be that the Veche included people adhering to different Christian confessions, mainly Orthodoxy and Protestantism. A number of active moderate northwest Russian rightists were Lutherans such as, for example, the heads of the Vil'na and Minsk Octobrists, Nikolai Matson and Gustav Shmid.

Despite claiming to be a non-political organization, the Veche unofficially associated and partnered itself with the Union of October 17. Both regarded the October 17 Manifesto as their founding document; both proclaimed moderate rightist or even liberal conservative views; and they also shared members. As was stated in the Veche's letter to the Vil'na Octobrists, the implementation of the party's political program and state reforms required patriotically motivated citizens. Educating them was one of the main goals of the Veche, which also meant raising new Octobrist supporters. Still, the Octobrists' task was the political protection and practical realization of state reform, while the Veche cared more about “national defense” and the support of the local Russian population. It was “... not a

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44 Ustav soiuzu ‘Severo-Zapadnoe Russkoe Veche’, VUB RS, F4-A754, 7.

political organization, not a party, but a community, a brotherhood, if you wish; however, not a religious, but a spiritual one, which connects through common attitudes, interests and goals.” It could only have been called political because it urged people to be politically active, like, for example, participating in elections to the Duma because, as was stated in the letter, refusing to do so was a civic crime.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the big plans, high hopes, and rather liberal attitudes, the Veche faced serious problems, which hindered its activities from the very beginning. The main challenge was financial. The publication of the newspaper proved to be extremely difficult. Moreover, many members did not bother paying membership fees, which put all the other plans on hold. Furthermore, the distribution of the newspaper met with strong resistance from Vil'na newspaper vendors (mostly of Jewish and Polish origin) who either boycotted *Belaia Rus'* or physically attacked the hired distributors.<sup>46</sup>

This situation forced the Veche's Central Council to seek the governor's assistance. Reaching him was presumably not very difficult because of the personal or professional connections of some of the members. Therefore, instead of having their own publication, the Central Council thought of appropriating the semi-official newspaper of the northwest provinces, *Vilenskii Vestnik* (The Vil'na Gazette). It would seem that its editor V. Tchumikov was not associated with the organization. However, convincing the governor Dimitrii Liubimov (1906–12) to appoint one of the members of the Veche as the new editor of the newspaper was unsuccessful. Instead, Liubimov agreed to compensate subscribers to the discontinued *Belaia Rus'* with issues of *Vilenskii Vestnik* for the pre-paid period.<sup>47</sup>

By the beginning of 1907, the Veche had stopped all its activities. The initial excitement and declarations of support from high-ranking officials and the local Russian elite proved empty. The failure of the organization

45 Congratulatory letter to the Vil'na section of the Union of October 17 (possibly early 1906), VUB RS, F52-425, 1.

46 Journal No 11 of the meeting of the Northwestern Russian Veche's Central Council (February 23, 1906), VUB RS, F4-A754, 27–28.

47 A letter from the Vil'na governor-general's chancellery to the head of the Northwestern Russian Veche Aristarkh Pimonov (no date; probably late September to early October 1906), VUB RS, F4-A754a, 69.

was primarily because its members did not show any great interest in spending their leisure time taking part in its activities. Financial support was also a problem, despite the fact that some members were rather wealthy people, like the head of the Veche, the successful merchant and board member of the Vil'na branch of the State bank and other organizations, Aristarkh Pimonov. Nevertheless, the Northwestern Russian Veche became the first attempt, albeit unsuccessful, to create a local moderate right-wing and nationalist-oriented organization.

It was officially closed on June 20, 1911.<sup>48</sup> Even during the first half of 1906, the slow demise of the organization was not a hard blow to the Vil'na and northwest moderate rightists and nationalists. Many of them had already moved on to other organizations, choosing the radical right or the Octobrists as alternatives. It was time for differentiation according to ideology, nationality, and/or religion. The initial goal of the Veche to become a "universal" organization that would have united different branches of the northwest right-wing movement did not disappear. Soon it found its mission among local Octobrists, many of whom were instrumental in establishing the Veche in the first place. The idea of an umbrella organization to coordinate the activities of the monarchists materialized in the more articulated and political form of the Russian Borderland Union (*Russkii Okrainyi Soiuz*).

### The Russian Borderland Union

The all-empire liberal monarchist party Union of October 17 was established after the proclamation of the October 17 Manifesto, and its first sections appeared in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Besides supporting state reforms and the imperial government, it also aimed at introducing a form of constitutional monarchy. Contrary to the elitist Russian Assembly, the Octobrists welcomed everyone who supported the state, the Duma, and the reforms. From the beginning, it started actively establishing provincial sections, and preparing for the forthcoming elections to the First State

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48 Official document of the closure of all activities and bank accounts (June 20, 1911), VUB RS, F4-A754, 73.

Duma. The northwestern sections opened at the end of 1905 and the beginning of 1906.

For the better coordination of political and societal work and the elaboration of the party's ideology, the first general meeting of Octobrists was held in Moscow on February 8-12, 1906. Before the meeting, some of the delegates joined several work groups, which discussed specific issues and problems and prepared resolutions in order to formulate the party's position. One of the work groups was called the Borderland Commission most of which consisted of representatives from Poland and the northern, southwestern, and Baltic provinces. The resolution of the Commission had strong nationalistic undertones and claimed to protect Russian national interests in the western borderlands. For this reason, it was suggested that the party's Central Committee approach the highest authorities of the state in order to change the existing electoral law, which had just been introduced on December 11, 1905. According to the law, every citizen of the empire who was eligible to vote, regardless of his religion or nationality, could elect whomever he wanted. The Borderland Commission, however, was concerned that in the provinces where Russians constituted an ethnic minority or where local elites were of non-Russian origin, Octobrist candidates could not compete. In their understanding, this situation eroded the position of Russians as the nation forming the state. Therefore, the Commission proposed that imperial authorities should introduce a proportional electoral census according to nationality so that Russian voters could elect their own Duma representatives independently of others. Additionally, it suggested that at least one Russian member should be elected from every non-Russian dominated western and Baltic province, and two from every province in Poland. The same principle had to be applied in other ethnically mixed regions, like the Caucasus. Together with issues of electoral law, the Commission also touched on the use of the Russian language. They argued that Russian was the only inter-ethnic, all-empire language that allowed different ethnic groups to communicate with each other, and therefore, it had to be taught in all state and private schools at all levels. The party's Central Committee and congress agreed partially to the second part, stating that all

laws and regulations for different linguistic groups that applied at that time were a sign of cultural and political oppression. But this was a question that should have been resolved in the Duma.<sup>49</sup>

The first part of the resolution, however, provoked heated debates. Prince Petr Volkonskii, who also participated in the work of the Borderland Commission, disagreed with it, noting that the laws of the empire had to be applied to everyone equally, and asking for privileges for one nationality would create a precedent for others; that is, non-Russian groups that lived in areas dominated by Russians would have a reason to ask for the same special treatment. Also, he pointed out that no non-Russians from Poland, or the north- and southwestern and Baltic provinces took part in either the work of the Borderland Commission or the Octobrist congress. Finally, in his opinion, the demand for a special electoral census for Russians clashed with the party's ideology because it was the party's position that all imperial subjects had to obey the laws of the state. The introduction of the census would result in inter-ethnic tensions. Besides, the demand for such privileges pushed the Octobrists closer to the radical right parties, which declared that only Russians and Orthodox should be eligible to vote. Volkonskii's opinion was supported by the party's leader Aleksandr Guchkov and most of the congress. The resolution of the Commission was changed according to the party's ideology and the opinion of the majority.<sup>50</sup>

However, this outcome did not satisfy the borderland Octobrists. The strongest and most vocal supporters of the introduction of the nationality census were the Octobrists from the northwestern provinces: the head of the Minsk section, retired second-class navy captain Gustav Shmid and Nikolai Matson, the leader of the Vil'na Octobrists and engineer with the Polesie Railway Company. They and other delegates from Poland and the Bal-

49 For the resolutions and reactions to them, see Pavlov, ed., *Partiia 'Soiuz 17-go oktiabria'*, 137–38. It should be noted that in the collection of documents published in 1996, the text of the resolution of the Borderland Commission differs slightly in formulation and wording from the one published just after the congress. Therefore, I have followed the text published in *Rezoliutsii, priniatye pervym s'ezdom delegatov otdelov 'Soiuza 17-go oktiabria' i partii, k nemu prisodedenivshikhsia* (s.l., 1906), 4.

50 Pavlov, ed., *Partiia 'Soiuz 17-go oktiabria'*, 138–40; see also *1-ii vserossiiskii s'ezd delegatov 'Soiuza 17go oktiabria'. 8–12 fevralia 1906 g. g. Moskva* (Moscow, 1906), 29–32.

tic provinces argued that the Russians in the borderlands did not want any privileges, only equal rights to be represented in the Duma; otherwise, the future of the Russians in the non-Russian dominated provinces was unclear. Guchkov's assurance that the issues raised by the Borderland Commission would be a priority for the party in the First Duma was not credible because at that time, nobody could guarantee that the Octobrists would win a majority of seats.<sup>51</sup> And as the results of the elections to the First Duma showed, the borderland Octobrists were absolutely right to doubt these promises.<sup>52</sup>

It was quite clear from the discussions at the congress that the borderland Octobrists differed from the others in their strong nationalism. Politically they constituted the right wing of the Union of October 17, but before the appearance of the All-Russian National Union (*Vserossiiskii Natsional'nyi Soiuz*) in 1908, and especially after the introduction of its new organizational charter in 1911, most of the borderland Octobrists remained connected with the party in one way or another.

Meanwhile, after the unsuccessful attempts to secure the party's support, they decided to take matters into their own hands. The northwestern sections in Minsk and Vil'na tried to bend the opinion of the highest imperial authorities by writing personal and public letters; trying to secure the Vil'na governor-general's help in contacting the government; sending delegations to Nicholas II; and so on. They were supported and joined by the previously mentioned Northwestern Russian Veche as well as other local right-wing organizations.<sup>53</sup> The fear of losing the forthcoming elections and the threat of declining Russian political superiority in the region, which before October 17, 1905 was, to a large extent, secured by the power of the

51 Pavlov, ed., *Partiia 'Soiuz 17-go oktiabria'*, 140–41; I-II *vserossiiskii s'ezd delegatov 'Soiuza 17go oktiabria'*, 32.

52 For more about the introduction of Russian electoral curia, see Konstantin Bondarenko, "Bor'ba za Gosdumu: Ideologiia russkikh monarkhicheskikh partii i ikh belorusskikh predstavitel'stv v vybornykh kampaniiakh nachala XX veka," *Belarusskaia dumka* 4 (2015): 89–93; Dimirii Lavrinovich, "Bor'ba za izmenenie sistemy vyborov Gosudarstvennogo Soveta v Zapadnykh guberniakh Rosiiskoi imperii (1906–1911)," in *Rosiiskie i slavianskie issledovaniia: sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ed. A. Sal'kov (Minsk: BGU, 2015), 82–88; Dimirii Lavrinovich, "Bor'ba za izmenenie sistemy vyborov v Gosudarstvennuu Dumu na territorii zapadnykh gubernii Rosiiskoi imperii (1906–1907)," in *Tavricheskie chteniia 2015* (conference proceedings), ed. A. Nikolaev (St. Petersburg: OOO ElekSis, 2015), 55–63.

53 "Obozrenie sobytii i okrainaia zhizn'," *Okrainy Rossii* 1 (1906), 13–15; see also: *Okrainy Rossii* 2 (1906), 37; Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarkhisty*, 71–72.



state authorities, all forced them to disregard the party's cautious path. The heads of the Union of October 17 did not appreciate this contempt for discipline; however, it would seem that no stricter measures were taken against the borderland sections.<sup>54</sup>

A few days after the initial Octobrist congress, delegates from the western and Baltic provinces and the Kingdom of Poland held a separate meeting in Vil'na on February 20, 1906. Among the many things discussed, they agreed unanimously to establish a new borderland organization, the purpose of which was the unification of all right-wing political groups and the coordination of their efforts. At this early stage, however, they did not come to any particular decision, and the establishment of the organization was delayed for a year. Additionally, similar aims to unify northwestern rightist groups were declared by the Veche, although its main goal was more socio-cultural than political.<sup>55</sup>

The Veche's official distancing from politics and its loose organizational structure resulted in more theoretical and populist declarations than actual work. Therefore, the Octobrists took up the same ideas but improved them with a more concrete political outlook and organizational character. It is not surprising that one of the final acts of the Veche was the preparation of the foundation for the new organization, announcing another borderland Octobrist gathering. The Veche officially invited the Warsaw, Minsk, Iur'ev (Tartu), and Riga Octobrists to attend a meeting in Vil'na on October 7–9, 1906.<sup>56</sup> During the meeting, the Octobrists discussed the political pressure that Russian organizations felt from Poles and Jews. It was clear to them that no assistance could be expected from the imperial authorities or their political partners in the internal provinces of Russia because, as it was said, the latter did not know the actual situation in the imperial borderlands, while the former did not want to understand it or were un-

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 72–73.

<sup>55</sup> Later, it was claimed that the idea to have such an umbrella organization appeared just after the announcement of the October 17 Manifesto. D.B., "Vil'na," *Okrainy Rossii* 6 (1907), 91. However, no discussion regarding this matter was found in the press or anywhere else.

<sup>56</sup> "Iz Vil'ny," *Okrainy Rossii* 32 (1906), 531.

der the strong influence of non-Russians. Therefore, it was concluded that the Russian rightist intelligentsia had to organize and fight its opponents on its own. Questions about the electoral census and a change to election law were raised. They prepared an address to Prime Minister Petr Stolypin, which asked once again for the introduction of an electoral census and the appointment of permanent borderland Russian representatives on the State Council.<sup>57</sup> Most importantly of all, it was decided unanimously to finally open the Borderland Union.<sup>58</sup>

The Vil'na governor-general approved the statute of the Union on January 17, 1907. The organization's headquarters were in Vil'na, the center of the northwestern provinces. It planned to have sub-sections in districts and parishes. The Union declared that it should become a link between the state and the Russians (i.e., the "official Russians," Russians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians) in the region. For this reason, their goal was to unite the inhabitants of the Russian borderland on the basis of nationality, represent their interests and voice their needs in government institutions, as well as inform the rest of the empire about the true situation in the borderlands. Moreover, any Russian organization could join the Union as long as their programs did not contradict its ideology. The official declaration was signed by Vasilii Kurchinskii, a professor at Iur'ev (Tartu) University and dean of the Medical Faculty, Aleksandr Bezpalchev (Kovna), a civil engineer, Ivan Chigiriov, an official with the Minsk district court, and Octobrist leaders Shmid (Minsk) and Matson (Vil'na).<sup>59</sup>

Judging from the statute, the new organization resembled the Veche and did not have a strict organizational structure. Its main units were provincial committees (they were formed in Vil'na, Minsk, Grodna, Vitebsk, Iur'ev [Tartu], Kovna, and elsewhere before the official opening of the organization). There was no limit to membership either. Men and women were both allowed to participate. The only restrictions were on schoolchil-

57 Extracts from the address to the prime minister: "Khronika," *Okrainy Rossii* 38 (1906), 647–48.

58 T., "Vil'na," *Okrainy Rossii* 33 (1906), 548–49.

59 "Mestnaia khronika," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1076 (January 5 [17], 1907); 1085 (January 17 [30], 1907); "Ustav Russkogo okrainogo soiuza," in Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarkhisty*, 198–200.

dren, adolescents, and people with criminal convictions.<sup>60</sup> It is worth noting that the provincial committees did not follow the administrative division of the state: they had to be opened “where Russian national awareness was strongest.” For this reason, for example, the Union’s center in the Baltic provinces became Iur’ev (Tartu) instead of Riga.<sup>61</sup>

The opening ceremony took place on March 25, 1907, and it was attended by around six hundred participants. Matson was elected head of the new organization, and his deputies were Aleksandr Vrutsevitch and Vladimir Kontor, both Vil’na state school teachers. Most of the speeches made during the ceremony focused on the Belorussian question, stressing their “Russian” and not “Polish” ethno-cultural origins. As was usual with right-wing organizations, the meeting ended by dispatching telegrams to top state officials protesting Polish demands in the Duma to unite the northwest provinces with Poland.<sup>62</sup>

At first the Borderland Union was quite successful in its work. It opened several new provincial sections and established good relations with other right-wing organizations across the ideological spectrum: moderate (the Vil’na “Peasant” Society), radical (the Union of Russian People), and religious (mostly with different Orthodox brotherhoods, like, for example, the Vil’na Brotherhood of the Holy Ghost [Vilenskoe Sviato-Dukhovskoe Bratstvo]). Its council organized meetings; discussed the possibilities of disseminating their ideology among the Belorussian peasantry; and reported on the results of the information campaigns which presented the situation in the region for Russians in the empire’s internal provinces, etc. Soon, however, the organization started to face the same financial difficulties as the Veche; it failed to start its own periodical publication. Even though *Minskoe Slovo* (The Word of Minsk), which was edited by Shmid, to some extent served as the organization’s newspaper, it could not completely meet the needs of the Borderland Union.

60 Elfi [L. Ivitskii], “Iz Vil’ny,” *Okrainy Rossii* 11 (March 17, 1907), 174–75; Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarchisty*, 74.

61 D.B., “Vil’na,” *Okrainy Rossii* 6 (1907), 91–92.

62 “Vil’na,” *Okrainy Rossii* 13 (March 21, 1907), 207–8.

Parallel to this, there was another challenge: the lack of societal support. Apart from a few hundred northwestern intelligentsia in the urban areas (predominantly teachers from state schools), the propagation of rightist ideas in the Lithuanian provinces (Vil'na and Kovna) was not successful, especially after the end of the revolution. Relatively greater support was found among the Belorussian Orthodox peasantry in the Minsk and Grodna provinces. Still, when it came to active participation, it would seem that meetings held by the organization's Central Council were the only work in which the Borderland Union engaged.<sup>63</sup>

The most active period for this and other northwestern right-wing organizations was during the elections to the Duma, and major goal was the consolidation of Russian voters in order to win their votes. The introduction of the "Third-of-June" system in 1907, when, among other things, changes were made to the electoral law and the Russian curia was separated from the rest of voters, played a favorable role; at the same time, it became a test for the Borderland Union. Before the change to the electoral law, right-wing parties had to compete with non-Russians and their political opponents on the left. After the change, their only political opponents were Russian liberals and leftists, and, as it turned out, other right-wing parties. Moreover, on an official level, the change to the electoral law was, to some extent, a return to the old system based on the confessional identification of people, when religion once again became a more important factor than ethnicity. For example, the identification of the Russian curia in the Vil'na and Kovna provinces was done by looking only at confession. The curia was composed of Orthodox, Old Believers, and Protestants.<sup>64</sup>

In order to consolidate right-wing supporters, the Borderland Union called a meeting of all local right-wing organizations in Vil'na on June 14, 1907. Matson urged delegates to begin propaganda campaigns. However, the Union refused to take the lead because many of its members complained of having no time due to their main work and responsibilities. Despite the

63 Elfi [L. Ivitskii], "Vil'na," *Okrainy Rossii* 21 (May 26, 1907), 329.

64 "O poriadke izbraniia chlenov Gosudarstvennoi Dumy ot russkogo naseleniia Vilenskoi i Kovenskoi gubernii," *Krest'ianin* 22 (July 9, 1907), 344–47.

importance of the upcoming elections, no one was willing to dedicate all their leisure time to this matter. Nonetheless, after long discussions, an electoral committee was formed to rally Russian and Belorussian voters and recruit suitable candidates as MPs who would be the best representatives of the northwest imperial Russian community. The committee consisted of radical and moderate representatives, Orthodox clergy, and other groups. Matson became the head of the electoral committee, and on June 22, they published an official address to Russian voters.<sup>65</sup>

Just after the meeting, however, another address to Russians appeared in *Vilenskii vestnik* (The Vil'na Gazette), signed by an unknown "non-party group" (the Russian Non-Party Electoral Committee /Russkii Vnepartiinyi Izbiratel'nyi Komitet), which identified its political position as center-right; supported moderate and liberal Russian nationalism and the reforms announced by the October 17 Manifesto; and declared the left and the radical right its political opponents.<sup>66</sup>

This unexpected appearance threw the fragile right-wing coalition into disarray. The open declaration of political animosity by a non-party group toward the radicals and other influential religious-conservative organizations, like the Vil'na Brotherhood of the Holy Ghost, fragmented the electoral committee. In the end, instead of a unified group, three individual right-wing committees appeared: the "right," led by the radical Union of Russian People, the "center," led by the Borderland Union, and the "left" non-party. The newspapers predicted that because of the political apathy among the general population, victory belonged to the group that managed to mount the most active propaganda campaign, promising voters whatever they wanted to hear.<sup>67</sup>

The next big meeting of Vil'na's Russian voters was organized by the non-party group. Matson, many members of the Borderland Union, and

65 "V obshchestvakh i sobraniakh. Pervoe predvybornoe sobranie russkikh izbiratelei," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1210 (June 16, 1907); Vremennyi izbiratel'nyi komitet, "Russkie izbirateli!" *Vilenskii vestnik* 1215 (June 22, 1907).

66 Russkii vnepartiinyi izbiratel'nyi komitet, "Russkie izbirateli!" *Vilenskii vestnik* 1209 (June 15, 1907); "Mestnaia khronika," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1216 (June 23, 1907).

67 Avich', "Kogo vybirat'," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1222 (July 1, 1907).

representatives of the radical right also participated. It turned out that the organizers, the non-party group, were rather young, mostly Belorussian-born teachers and civil servants whose political views did not differ much from those of the Octobrists and the Borderland Union. The meeting was the final break-up of the coalition between the moderates and the radicals. In the end, the Borderland Union and the non-party electoral committees merged and formed a new unified group.<sup>68</sup>

Leaving the joint electoral committee and elections aside, it should be noted that the radicals were much more active in the 1907 elections in Vil'na and in other parts of the northwestern provinces. The promotion of their candidates was better organized and structured. They also received moderate support from local authorities, as was shown earlier in the case of the Ponevezh section of the Union of Russian People and the Gnatovskii–Verevkin cooperation against agitation by left-wing parties.

Contrary to the moderate and liberal right-wing groups, the Vil'na provincial section of the Union of Russian People had its own ideologically representative newspaper, *Morskaia volna* (The Wave of the Sea), which was probably the most radical and antisemitic periodical publication in the northwestern provinces.<sup>69</sup> In it, they claimed to represent *Realpolitik*, protecting Orthodox peasants from the Polish gentry, fighting Jewish economic dominance, and so on. The radicals were especially successful in building economic organizations like artisan workshops, which unofficially received large contracts to produce clothing and underwear for the army that might have given them adequate income.

Judging from the activities of the united electoral committee, their main work mostly revolved around organization and coordination activities with other provincial electoral committees. Surprisingly, they chose to follow more democratic principles for the 1907 elections by asking voters to propose the best Duma candidates from Vil'na province. In this respect,

68 P.K., "Sobranie russkikh izbiratelei," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1229 (July 10, 1907); P., "Vil'na," *Okrainy Rossii* 27–28 (August 8–11, 1907), 420–21; K., "Sobranie russkikh izbiratelei," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1230 (August 12, 1907).

69 It is hard to say whether the periodical was directly associated with the section.

the radicals were much more pragmatic: they appointed the candidates and told people to vote for them.<sup>70</sup> In the end, the elections to the Third Duma in the Vil'na Province Russian curia were won by two representatives of the radical right: the aforementioned Zamyslovskii, and the Orthodox priest Veraksin. The moderates and the centrists were somewhat more successful in the Belorussian provinces.<sup>71</sup> Overall, the elections to the Third Duma were a success, and the imperial parliament was dominated by right-wing parties.

After the successful elections, most Russian organizations basically stopped their activities on the public scene and returned to irregular meetings, organizing cultural events, leisure activities, public lectures, and so on. With the partial exception of the Union of Russian People, which continued its different economic endeavors, most right-wing organizations became inert, hoping that perhaps with the right wing's majority in the Third Duma, their active work was finished. Because of this, as some noted, many monarchist and nationalist organizations came to exist only on paper.<sup>72</sup>

Soon, however, the newly established St. Petersburg Russian Borderland Society (*Russkoe Okrainoe Obshchestvo*), which opened officially on February 17, 1908, began operating with the same ideology and aims as the northwestern Borderland Union. The Society evolved out of one of the branches of St. Petersburg's Russian Assembly. Even before it appeared, several of its founding members were publishing the rather influential, moderate, and to some extent, nationalistic journal *Okrainy Rossii* (The Russian Borderlands).<sup>73</sup> Among the founders of the periodical and the Society were persons from the northwestern provinces: Polikarp

70 "Russkii vnepartiinyi izbiratel'nyi komitet," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1276 (September 7, 1907).

71 Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarkhisty*, 52–53.

72 As one of the correspondents of the journal *Okrainy Rossii* sarcastically noted about the right-wing organizations in Vil'na (which could probably be applied to the whole northwest region too): "The history of all local Russian societal endeavors was one and the same: at first, arduous organization, debates, tiresome waiting; then pompous openings with dinners, balls, speeches, telegrams; afterwards a few years of existence; and, finally slow death at the hands of the same founders." Id., "Vil'na," *Okrainy Rossii* 10 (March 6, 1910), 152.

73 For more, see Konstantin Bondarenko, "Russkoe okrainoe obshchestvo: vzniknovenie, politicheskie tseli i zadachi," in *Romanovskie chteniia: sbornik trudov Mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii, Mogilev, 21 oktiabria 2004 g.*, ed. O. D'iachenko (Mogilev: MGU im. A.A. Kuleshova, 2005), 27–34.

Byval'kevich, the long-term school inspector of the Vil'na educational district, editor of several Vil'na-based newspapers and journals, and publicist, and Platon Kulakovskii, who was a prominent scholar, Slavist, and writer. Byval'kevich was born in Vil'na, and Kulakovskii in Ponevezh (in Kovna Province).<sup>74</sup>

The appearance of the Borderland Society, which claimed a number of prominent imperial politicians and members of the intelligentsia as members, somewhat superseded the Vil'na Borderland Union as the coordinator of regional right-wing organizations. Therefore, after a slight adjustment to the charter, the Borderland Union and its sections joined the Society in May 1908, while at the same time preserving its semi-autonomous organizational character. However, this did not prevent their gradual decline, and it seems that after 1909, the Union ceased to be active. Whether it continued to virtually exist, just like the Veche, or when was it closed is unclear. The initial high hopes for the Borderland Society were overrated too, because it did not, and could not, become an active player in the northwestern provinces. Basically, it remained in St. Petersburg, and continued collecting and publishing information on Russian national issues in the western provinces, Finland, and elsewhere. After the elections to the Fourth Duma and the subsequent closure of *Okrainy Rossii* in 1912, some members of the Society, including Kulakovskii and Byval'kevich, as well as many of the northwestern Octobrists and members of the Borderland Union, joined the nationalists and their party, the All-Russian National Union.

#### The All-Russian National Union

The disappearance of the Borderland Union and its sections resembled that of the Veche. Until the elections to the Fourth Duma in 1912, northwestern Russian right-wing parties and organizations were barely functioning. As mentioned earlier, due to internal conflicts between the leaders of the radical Union of Russian People, the party split several times. The Vil'na

74 Short biographical data on Byval'kevich may be found in the lists of people involved in the Russian White movement. See <http://xn--90adhb6agof.xn--prai/arhiv/uchastniki-grazhdanskoj-vojny/uchastniki-belogo-dvizheniya-v-rossii/uchastniki-belogo-dvizheniya-v-rossii-bsh-bya.html>, accessed October 23, 2018.



section ceased publishing its newspaper *Morskaia volna* in 1909. From then on, there is almost no information on the activities of the radicals in the provinces of Vil'na and Kovna.

From early on, the northwest moderate right wing was much more inclined towards modern Russian nationalism. During the revolution of 1905 and the years after it, there was no proper all-empire Russian nationalist party or organization that could have satisfied their needs. Attempts to create their own organizations failed, primarily due to a lack of commitment and the general political inertia of the population. Moreover, the aim to unite all northwest Russian right-wing organizations and their supporters could not have been achieved due to the great ideological discrepancy between radicals and the moderate right. Many local right-wing supporters belonged to the intelligentsia and the middle-class, which, due to the old social structures still in existence, hindered their attempts to establish a dialogue with the highest state authorities.

Local authorities (although not all, of course) did not show any particular interest in the nationalists. There is no indication that the Vil'na governors supported the nationalist cause; however, the Minsk governor, just like the Minsk Russian Societal Assembly (established in 1908), was more inclined to cooperate with the nationalists because they promoted "Russian state interests."<sup>75</sup> One explanation for the low level of support in the "Lithuanian provinces" could be the preservation of stability within society because open support for one right-wing group might have caused dissatisfaction in another. The brief period of revolution-induced reforms lasting until mid-1907 was followed by the strengthening of imperial conservatism. Nevertheless, Stolypin, who grew up on an estate near Keidany (in Kovna Province) and spent a lot of time there while he was Prime Minister, turned to the newly organizing Russian nationalist party after distancing himself from the Octobrists.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarkhisty*, 93.

<sup>76</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the All-Russian Nationalist Party, see Kotsiubinskii, *Russkii natsionalizm v nachale XX stoletii*; San'kova, *Russkaia partiia v Rossii*. On the evolution of the south and northwestern nationalists, see Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarkhisty*, 92–100.

The organization of the All-Russian National Union began in 1908; however, for a few years, they remained a small parliamentary faction without attempting to build a stronger political party and create a network of provincial sections. The approaching elections to the Fourth Duma, and Stolypin's turn towards nationalism, pushed for reorganization. The new statute of the party from 1911 envisaged the growth and opening of provincial sections. It is important to note that many nationalists came from the western provinces, primarily the southwest. Politicians from the Kiev Nationalist Club were instrumental in founding the National Union. Further, there was sympathy for the ideology among the moderate right in the northwestern provinces too.

However, the organization of sections of the party in Vil'na Province began rather late, primarily as a result of the introduction of the new statute and the approaching elections in the autumn of 1912. Also, the murder of Stolypin in Kiev in 1911 increased respect for him and provided additional impetus for consolidation among the nationalists.<sup>77</sup> The Vil'na section, which was called the Vil'na Russian National Union (*Vilenskii Russkii Natsional'nyi Soiuz*), was opened by the same group of former Octobrists, members of the *Veche*, and the Borderland Union, together with moderate rightists from the Peasant Society. The head of the latter, called Kovaliuk, a teacher and the owner of a private school, together with his colleague Vrutsevich, also a teacher, became the most active promoters of nationalism. Kovaliuk was appointed to lead the Vil'na section. The Duma elections once again became a mobilizing event, and yet another attempt was made to unify and establish common ground between the Vil'na radical right, the nationalists, and the conservative Orthodox Brotherhood of the Holy Ghost.

One of the first actions taken by the newly established section was their attempt to present themselves on the broader imperial scene and cultivate support in St. Petersburg. A delegation that included Kovaliuk, Vrutsevich,

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<sup>77</sup> The Minsk section of the All-Russian National Union was opened in April 1911 by the Octobrist leader I. Chigirev, who closed the section and moved to the nationalists. By the end of the year, the new section had 193 members, 30 of whom were Orthodox priests (Bondarenko and Lavrinovich, *Russkie i belorusskie monarkhisty*, 92).

and another teacher, historian Lukian Solonevich, arrived in the capital on April 17, 1912. They were joined by their old colleague Byval'kevich, who was officially a delegate of the Sofia Orthodox Brotherhood in Grodna, as well as MPs in the Third Duma from Minsk Province, Orthodox priest Andrei Iurashkevich and Iosif Pavlovich, both of whom were connected with the parliamentary nationalist faction.<sup>78</sup> It is interesting to note that in the rightist press they were called "the Belorussian delegation," which indicated not only their origins, but also their representation of the Belorussian population. They expressed concerns about the Polonization of Catholic Belorussians through schools to senior officials. According to them, the local administration and Catholic priests either actively or passively supported the identification of Belorussians as "Poles," which was based on the stereotypical belief that Catholicism was a Polish religion. In a memorandum presented to the authorities, the "Belorussian delegation" demanded that religion should be taught in the local language of the majority in the northwestern provinces, either in Lithuanian for Lithuanians or in Russian for Belorussians.<sup>79</sup>

They were granted audiences with the minister of the interior, the minister of education, and other senior officials. They also received a warm welcome from the nationalists and monarchists and made presentations on the situation in the northwestern provinces, the dangers of creeping Polonization, and other related topics.<sup>80</sup> The trip was a success, and St. Petersburg's right-wing politicians and senior officials appreciated the newly established Vil'na section and its goals and agenda. Still, it would seem that it was only moral support; in practice, however, they did not achieve much. Upon the delegation's return, the Vil'na section began actively building a new coalition for the approaching Duma elections.

On April 29, 1912, the first meeting of the Vil'na Russian right-wing voters took place. All major organizations were represented: the nationalists, the radicals, and the moderates, as well as the Brotherhood of the Ho-

78 F.O., "Vil'na," *Okrainy Rossii* 27–28 (July 7–14, 1912): 417–19.

79 P.K. [Platon Kulakovskii], "Priezd belorusskoi delegatsii," *Okrainy Rossii* 16 (May 21, 1912), 233–36. For more on issues related to the education of Catholic Belorussians, see the chapter in this book by Darius Staliūnas.

80 S.K., "Belorusskaia deputatsiia v Sankt Peterburge," *Okrainy Rossii* 16 (May 21, 1912), 241.

ly Ghost. A list of eighteen candidates was compiled for future discussions.<sup>81</sup> However, a few days later, in a *Vilenskii vestnik* interview with Kovaliuk and Vrutsevich (he was not named in the original article, but he was identified later), the latter expressed his reservations about the participation of Orthodox priests in politics, which he called an “erroneous practice.” Moreover, it was stated that a stronger coalition between the nationalists and the radicals was impossible in the future due to ideological differences. They supported each other and the right-wing candidates only during elections.<sup>82</sup>

The wish of the nationalists to become the leaders of all right-wing organizations and the denunciation of the Orthodox clergy’s participation in politics by some represented a new political direction in the Russian right wing. When looking at other northwestern provinces, we can see similar tendencies, whereby Russian nationalists formed separate electoral committees. Interestingly enough, in the Belorussian-inhabited territories, rather close cooperation was established between the radical right, the Orthodox brotherhoods, and in some cases, even the imperial authorities.<sup>83</sup>

This unexpected turn of events within the Vil’na right-wing camp escalated further when, at the beginning of June, the Brotherhood of the Holy Ghost announced it was establishing a separate electoral committee and invited nationalists to join their leadership and support the Brotherhood’s candidates. Until the elections to the Fourth Duma, the Orthodox Brotherhood and similar religious organizations exhibited relatively low-level political activism. The elections, however, activated a semi-secular organization that became a consolidated political factor. The long-established hierarchi-

81 “Russkoe predvybornoe sobranie,” *Vilenskii vestnik* 2663 (May 1, 1912).

82 “Sredi vilenskikh izbiratelei,” *Vilenskii vestnik* 2667 (May 6, 1912).

83 Bondarenko, *Pravyye partii*, 275. On the role of Orthodox brotherhoods in the monarchist movement in the Belorussian-inhabited provinces, see Konstantin Bondarenko, “O meste i roli pravoslavnykh bratstv v monarkhicheskom dvizhenii na territorii Belarusi v nachale XX veka,” in *Religiia i obshchestvo 11* (conference proceedings), eds. V. Starostenko and O. D’iachenko (Mogilev: MGU im. A.A. Kulshova, 2017), 97–99. The author states that in the 1912 elections, the role of the Orthodox brotherhoods in the Belorussian provinces was generally insignificant. However, judging from the press and later developments in the northwestern right-wing camp, their connection with the radical parties and organizations was beneficial for both, and thus led to the partial politicization of the religious brotherhoods. Also, many of the northwestern radical right sections were either established or managed by Orthodox clergy, some of whom, as in the case of the Vil’na archbishop Nikandr, were leaders of local brotherhoods.

cal structure, close connections with the Orthodox clergy, and provincial religious communities demonstrated that the Brotherhood could compete with political parties and organizations.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, the Brotherhood was also assisted by other radical organizations like the Union of the Archangel Michael, the Union of Russian People, and the like.<sup>85</sup>

The Vil'na Brotherhood and their followers were especially fierce in their criticism and even personal insults against Kovaliuk, Vrutsevich, and other nationalists through the newspaper *Vilenskii Vestnik*. They also started another periodical just for the election campaign called *Russkii izbiratel'* (The Russian Voter), which was edited by a man called Tikhmenev, a specially hired person from St. Petersburg, whose goal, according to the nationalist press, was to wage a campaign promoting Brotherhood candidates and, at the same time, discredit the nationalists. In the end, this rivalry backfired, and the Russian voters in Vil'na refused to elect any right-wing candidates. However, with the help of the Brotherhood, the radical right succeeded in sending two of their members from the Vil'na district to the Duma: Zamyslovskii and the Orthodox priest Vladimir Iuz'viuk, both of whom were members of the Union of Russian People.<sup>86</sup>

After the unsuccessful elections, Kovaliuk gave up his leadership over the Vil'na nationalists. But the failure to elect a new head of the section forced him to continue chairing the organization officially until 1913. This election defeat also reflected the diminishing activity of the Vil'na nationalists. Some of them began supporting the Brotherhood, and some even joined the organization. Probably the last appearance of the Vil'na nationalist section was in the autumn of 1913, when their representatives travelled to Kiev to commemorate the anniversary of Stolypin's murder.<sup>87</sup>

84 P.B.-ch [P. Byval'kevich], "Predvybornoe vremia v Severo Zapadnom krae," *Okrainy Rossii* 25 (June 23, 1912), 377–79.

85 On the place of the Orthodox Church in radical right ideology, see K. Bondarenko, "Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' v ideologicheskoi doktrine pravykh partii i ikh belorusskikh formirovanii," in *Religiia i obshchestvo 9* (conference proceedings), ed. V. Starostenko and O. D'iachenko (Mogilev: MGU im. A.A. Kuleshova, 2015), 48–50.

86 "Mestnaia khronika," *Vilenskii vestnik* 2804 (October 19, 1912).

87 "V Vilenskom russkom natsional'nom soiuze," *Vilenskii vestnik* 3065 (September 1, 1913).

Before the beginning of World War I, northwestern Russian right-wing organizations gradually shifted from more political to practical work, like, for example, improving agriculture and introducing cooperatives to Belorussian peasants. Some nationalists took the lead in the Vil'na Russian Agricultural Society (Vilenskoe Russkoe Sel'sko Khoziaistvennoe Obshchestvo), and many also joined other economic organizations like the all-empire Russian Grain (Russkoe Zerno).<sup>88</sup> With the beginning of the war, political and societal activism by Russian nationalists and other right-wing groups stopped. Many were called up or volunteered for the army; others, like Kovaliuk, were forced to move deeper into Russia with the advance of the Germans.

## Conclusions

The history of the right-wing parties and organizations in the northwestern provinces and their central city Vil'na shows the complicated relationship between the newly born popular Russian monarchist and nationalist movements and the imperial authorities.

During the revolutionary period from 1905 to the end of 1907, radical and conservative religious groups like the Union of the Russian People and various Orthodox brotherhoods generally received stronger support and greater sympathy from both local and central imperial authorities. They stood for the traditional socio-political system in which monarchism, Orthodoxy, and the dominance of Russians were pillars of the empire. Moreover, these groups opposed the revolution and fought against it, which also made them a useful ally for the state authorities.

The moderates and the nationalists were more inclined to organize people, stressing the importance of political participation, patriotic (imperial) education, nationalism, and so on. Many times, especially during elections to the Duma, the northwestern Octobrists, nationalists, and their organi-

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88 "K organizatsii Vilenskogo Russkogo sel'sko-khoziaistvennogo obshchestva," *Vilenskii vestnik* 3200 (February 9, 1914).

zations attempted to mobilize Russians and Belorussians by taking a somewhat more democratic approach, asking people to propose the best representatives to the Duma, express their opinions, vote, etc. This, of course, was primarily for the educated population, but organizations like the Peasant Society explored to some extent the opinions of the Belorussian peasantry and their needs. However, this approach proved to be less successful primarily because of the lack of such traditions and the general political inertia within society. Therefore, the direct and authoritarian path taken by the radicals was, in a sense, more pragmatic and perhaps even more understandable for many, especially in rural areas where the Orthodox clergy were sometimes the only moral authority and the only representatives of the intelligentsia. Arguably, this approach produced rather good short-term results, but it failed to raise the Russian patriotic and/or civic consciousness, and thereby modernize society. Instead, it continued to reproduce and strengthen the old social structures and the lack of interest in change.

The revolution became a catalyst for organizing and increasing the active participation of people in politics, the economy, and cultural life. However, the traditional gap between the imperial authorities and society (regardless of ethnicity or confession) was not overcome during the period analyzed. Despite their concern about the threat of non-Russian nationalism and the Polonization of Catholic Belorussians, the nationalists were nonetheless a modernizing force given their goal of building a modern Russian nation. Most were civil servants, bureaucrats or school teachers, and educated people in white-collar jobs. In this sense, they were appreciated more by the central imperial government; however, local authorities were quite ambivalent when it came to showing support for the provincial moderate right and nationalists by, for example, backing them in the 1912 Duma elections or helping moderate right-wing organizations like the Northwestern Russian Veche survive. Arguably, delegating more political power to the people was seen as a dangerous practice, just like the deeper reform of the state. The aggression that the radical right demonstrated tended to unbalance the local social order and traditional relations, which was undesirable for the authorities whose task was to preserve stability.

The distribution of right-wing groups according to ideology showed that the northwestern provinces were not a homogeneous territory. It would appear that Russian right-wing organizations in the Lithuanian-inhabited lands, notably regions with a Catholic Belorussian population and urban areas, tended to be somewhat more nationalistic than radical or conservative. Perhaps this could be explained by the higher civic consciousness in towns where larger numbers of civil servants and members of the intelligentsia were concentrated. The Orthodox clergy and, to some extent, Russian landlords had greater influence in rural settlements and parishes. Even though the statistics of the radical right did not represent their actual numbers, they were still favored by the more conservative, patriarchal, and religious communities, to whom the "old ways" of being ordered were, perhaps, more legible than was the articulation of an informed and individual position.

The history of the northwestern and specifically Vil'na Russian right-wing organizations reveals that one of the biggest hindrances to the formation of modern Russian nationalism was the absence of a clear ideology and strategy that would have encompassed other, non-Russian, nationalisms within the general framework of the empire. The radicals were the most consistent because they kept to the pre-1905 doctrines that preached exclusive rights for the monarchy, the Russian nation, and the Orthodox religion, whereas most of the local imperial authorities either took on the position of a mediator, showing no particular preference for either side, or just ignored them altogether. Arguably, for the local authorities, the Russian popular right-wing movement was useful to have around and to maintain and deploy when necessary, but only as an instrument rather than a partner.

From around 1913, the Russian right-wing movement in the northwestern provinces lost popularity and influence, especially in the Lithuanian-inhabited parts and the city of Vil'na. After the unsuccessful elections of 1912, many nationalists changed their activities from more political to socio-economic, which was a field largely dominated by different Orthodox religious organizations and the radical right. However, the outbreak of the war halted the transformation and the further development of the northwestern Russian right-wing movement.





# Defending the Empire in the Baltic Provinces: Russian Nationalist Visions in the Aftermath of the First Russian Revolution

Karsten Brüggemann

The report was alarming. The revolutionaries had burned down “almost all manors,” dissolved government institutions, and took portraits of the tsar off the walls in the offices of Hasenpoth (Latvian: Aizpute) district in the province of Kurland. In the north of the district, usurpers proclaimed a “Latvian Republic” and took weapons from a Finnish (!) ship. The anonymous author concluded more than two years later that nobody could be certain in these days, that “our borderland” was still in Russian hands. Even in peacetime, he asserted, there were only “*inorodtsy i inovertsy*” (different by their origin and/or faith) in state offices. Moreover, the Baltic barons were organizing the resettlement of German colonists to Kurland. It seemed as if the whole non-Russian borderland along the Baltic Sea was uniting to eliminate Russian authority in the region, which was so close to the capital geographically. The author ended his small piece, published in the chauvinist paper *Okrainy Rossii* (Russia’s borderlands) in early 1908, with the desperate assurance that every Russian who was not yet “Germanized, Latvianized, or Lutheranized” feels that they are “on enemy territory.” The empire in the Baltic littoral apparently was in great danger.<sup>1</sup>

In the historiography on the Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire, which has traditionally been dominated by local scholars,<sup>2</sup> many studies

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1 N.N., “Iz Pribaltiiskogo kraia,” *Okrainy Rossii*, no. 5 (1908): 69–70. Partly published in Valentin S. Diakin, *Nacional’nyi vopros vo vnutrennei politike tsarizma (XIX–nachalo XX vv.)* (St. Petersburg: LISS, 1998), 242–43.

2 Karsten Brüggemann and Bradley D. Woodworth, “Entangled Pasts—Russia and the Baltic Region,” in *Russ-*

have focused on the excesses of the local revolution in 1905. The littoral was indeed shaken by a wave of violence, especially in the countryside of the Livland and Estland provinces, where it was directed mostly against German landowners and clergy.<sup>3</sup> During these months of extreme violence, the tiny group of Germans, whose elite had played a dominant role in the provinces for centuries, finally sensed how dependent they were on imperial support. Only massive counter-violence exercised by the imperial army and German self-defense units allowed the old authorities to regain control. In the aftermath of the upheaval and using new freedoms granted by tsar Nicholas II, German associations in the provinces were established to address the needs of the community, offering some comfort and an ethnic consciousness which was hitherto quite foreign to the Germans of the littoral.<sup>4</sup> A far more important consequence of the nationalization process taking place in reaction to ethnic violence, was that any kind of political cooperation between Baltic Germans on the one hand, and Estonian and Latvian representatives on the other, eventually became extremely difficult to negotiate.<sup>5</sup> It seems that, in the very sensitive Baltic borderland, the clash of ethnicities loomed large. How did the imperial government react?

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*land an der Ostsee: Imperiale Strategien der Macht und kulturelle Wahrnehmungsmuster (16. bis 20. Jahrhundert)/Russia on the Baltic: Imperial Strategies of Power and Cultural Patterns of Perception (16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, ed. Karsten Brüggemann and Bradley D. Woodworth (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau, 2012), 3–26.

- 3 Ernst Benz, *Die Revolution von 1905 in den Ostseeprovinzen Rußlands: Ursachen und Verlauf der lettischen und estnischen Arbeiterbewegung im Rahmen der ersten russischen Revolution* (Mainz: University of Mainz, 1989); among other works in Estonian by the same author, see Toomas Karjahärm, “Gewalt in Estland im Jahr 1905: emotionale Anomalie oder ein Faktor der Modernisierung?” in *Wandel und Anpassung in der Geschichte Estlands. 16.–20. Jahrhundert/Change and Adaptation in Estonian history: 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. Karsten Brüggemann (Lüneburg: Nordost-Institut, 2014), 140–74.
- 4 It is important to note, however, that these associations blossomed only for a short period. See Karsten Brüggemann and Katja Wezel, “Nationally Indifferent or Ardent Nationalists? On the Options of Being German in Russia’s Baltic Provinces, 1905–1917,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 20 (2019): 39–62; Jörg Hackmann, “Nachholende Modernisierung. Das kurze Leben der Deutschen Vereine in den russländischen Ostseeprovinzen (1905–1914),” in *Vereinskultur und Zivilgesellschaft in Nordosteuropa/Associational Culture and Civil Society in North Eastern Europe*, ed. Jörg Hackmann (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau, 2012), 387–418.
- 5 Still valuable for the richness of its sources is: Gert von Pistohlkors, *Ritterschaftliche Reformpolitik zwischen Russifizierung und Revolution. Historische Studien zum Problem der politischen Selbsteinschätzung der deutschen Oberschicht in den Ostseeprovinzen Rußlands im Krisenjahr 1905* (Göttingen: Muster-schmidt, 1978); Toomas Karjahärm, “Das estnisch-deutsche Verhältnis und die Russische Revolution von 1905,” in *Estland und seine Minderheiten: Esten, Deutsche und Russen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Konrad Maier (Lüneburg: Institut Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1995), 431–51.

Historiography so far has neglected the repercussions of the Baltic revolution in 1905–06 on the imperial scene.<sup>6</sup> Though we understand local reactions quite well by now, far less is known about Russian perceptions of the clashes on the Baltic countryside. Of course, in general, the reactions of various Russian groups were quite diverse. While Lenin praised the revolutionary activity of the Latvian proletariat,<sup>7</sup> for the St. Petersburg government, keeping the region quiet and loyal was the primary goal now more than ever. It comes as no surprise then that a confused and shaken center, in the face of the first signs of potential separatism from Estonians and Latvians, returned to a century-old strategy of aristocratic alliance with the German nobilities of the littoral. At the same time, however, the center also had to look for ways to come to terms with demographic realities in terms of, for example, pragmatically cooperating with the Estonian-led city administration of Revel' (in Estonian, Tallinn; in German, Reval).<sup>8</sup>

For Russian “popular nationalists,” who—according to Theodore R. Weeks—never came so close to the realm of “official nationalism” executed by the government as in the aftermath of 1905, everything had gone wrong in the strategically vital Baltic borderlands.<sup>9</sup> In their eyes, Russia now had to pay the price for the complete failure of any kind of “Russification” in the

6 This aspect is addressed only very generally in Edward C. Thaden, “The Russian Government,” in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914*, ed. Edward C. Thaden (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 13–108, here 72–75; with a different focus, but valuable for the perspective of the government, see Natal'ia S. Andreeva, *Pribaltiiskie nemtsy i rossiiskaia pravitel'stvennaia politika v nachale XX veka* (St. Petersburg: Mir, 2008). On the Baltic Germans, see especially chapters 5 and 6 in Anders Henriksson, *Vassals and Citizens: The Baltic Germans in Constitutional Russia, 1905–1914* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2009).

7 Vladimir I. Lenin [Rabochii], “Sovremennoe polozhenie Rossii i taktika rabochei partii,” in idem, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, t. 12, 175–82, here: 181. (Originally published in *Partinye izvestiia*, no. 1, February 7, 1906); Vladimir I. Lenin [Rabochii], “Iubileinomu nomeru ‘Zihna’,” in idem, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, t. 19, 305–09, here 305–306 (originally appeared in *Zihna*, no. 100 [July 1910]).

8 For the latter, see the letter of Estland's governor Petr P. Bashilov to the Director of the Department of Police M.I. Trusevich, January 22, 1907, in *Imperskaia politika Rossii v Pribaltike v nachale XX veka. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, ed. Toomas Kar'iakharm [Toomas Karjahärm] (Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 2000), 135–39. The Estonian city administration of Revel' is discussed at length in the unpublished PhD dissertation by Bradley D. Woodworth, “Civil Society and Nationality in the Multiethnic Russian Empire: Tallinn/Reval 1860–1914” (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2003).

9 For the term “popular nationalist,” see Theodore R. Weeks, “Official and Popular Nationalism: Imperial Russia, 1863–1914,” in *Nationalismus in Europa: West- und Osteuropa im Vergleich*, ed. Ulrike von Hirschhausen and Jörn Leonhard (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001), 410–32.

littoral where *inorodtsy* and *inovertsy* continued to dominate the local administration even after 1905. Since the 1860s, demands to support “Russian principles” (*russkie nachala*) in the Baltic provinces had become popular in the press; but not even under Aleksandr III, during the period of so-called “Russification” that was much criticized by Baltic Germans and Estonians/Latvians alike, did the situation change to such an extent that would have pleased Russian nationalist activists. As a matter of fact, concerning their visions for a Russian imperial future of the Baltic provinces, they remained disappointed with the government until the very end of the empire.

In this chapter, I will first briefly outline the perception of the Baltic past and present in imperial nationalist discourse since mid-nineteenth century, keeping in mind the precarious relationship between the categories of “empire” and “nation” concerning the allegedly “German” provinces, which were commonly believed to be a kind of “European” periphery of the tsarist state. How was the project of the “imperial nation,” to use Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller’s term, conceived so as to influence (and ultimately, possibly alter) the situation in the Baltic provinces?<sup>10</sup> Second, I ask how the immediate influence of events during 1905–06 in the region affected the perceptions and visions of Russian popular nationalists.

In contrast to the government, which by and large for the sake of the empire continued to view the Baltic German nobilities as natural allies in the littoral, nationalists must have felt the complete isolation of their radical position. They virtually ran out of potential allies in the provinces. Heavily influenced by Nikolai Danilevskii’s teachings about the inevitable clash between the Germanic and Slavic worlds, rallying behind the traditional estate-based alliance of aristocracies supported by the dynasty did not enter their minds. Moreover, after the revolutionary excesses committed by Estonians and Latvians, it was virtually impossible for them to con-

<sup>10</sup> Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller, “Introduction: Building Nations in and with Empires—A Reassessment,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, ed. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2015), 1–30, here 4–5. Cf. the term “national empire” used by Mark Bassin, “Geographies of Imperial Identity,” in *Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2, *Imperial Russia, 1689–1917*, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 45–63.

ceive of anti-German cooperation with the demographic majorities in the provinces. Thus, they applied the very imprecise category of “Russianness” (*russkost*) to conditions in the very un-Russian littoral in the vain hope of finding support in the imperial center, which should be, at least in their view, committed first and foremost to the representatives of the imperial nation in the borderlands. Yet the imperial government continued to view the provinces as “Russian” according to an imperial rather than a strictly nationalist definition.

This study argues that, in Russian eyes, it was the emergence of Estonians and Latvians as collectives with an independent agenda that ultimately forced imperial authorities and Russian nationalists alike to change their attitude toward the provinces. Previously, both ethnicities were generally believed to be “ethnographic material” that sooner or later would assimilate to the larger neighboring cultures, be it German or Russian.<sup>11</sup> After 1905–06, however, they were largely seen as socialists and potential separatists, and thus no longer as future objects of any kind of “Russification.” In the early twentieth century, the imperial (and) nationalist dream that Estonians and Latvians would sooner or later become loyal citizens acculturated—presumably by orthodoxy—to the world of the Rus’ obviously remained just that, a dream.

Finally, this contribution demonstrates that eventually solving the “Baltic question” the way it was posed during the imperial period came close to squaring the circle. Robert Schweitzer has convincingly argued that St. Petersburg failed to create a “government party” in the provinces that would have provided local support for the central government’s aims, leaving this task primarily to the imperial government’s official representatives, the governors.<sup>12</sup> Of course, not being able to solve the national question did not

11 On a document entitled “Baltiiskii vopros s pravitel'svennoi tochki zreniia” (1870/71), see Sergei G. Isakov, *Ostzeiskii vopros v russkoi pečati 1860-kh godov* (Tartu: Tartu Riiklik Ülikool, 1961), 178–83; Juliia L. Michailova, “‘Baltiiskii vopros s pravitel'svennoi tochki zreniia’: P. A. Valuev i ego rol' v upravlenii Pri-baltiiskim kraem v 1860-e gody,” in *Rossia i Baltiia, vyp. 4: Chelovek v istorii*, ed. Aleksandr O. Chubar'ian et al. (Moscow: IVI RAN, 2006), 16–28.

12 Robert Schweitzer, “Quasikonstitutionelle Herrschaft ohne ‘Regierungspartei’: Das Dilemma der angemessenen Vertretung gesamtstaatlicher Interessen Russlands in den autonomen ‘Grenzmarken’ des

mean that the whole empire would immediately collapse; but neither pragmatism (managing Baltic diversity as had been done over the past centuries) nor radical nationalism (the bet on *russkost'* as general solution for the non-Russian region) offered durable solutions that could keep the region quiet, loyal, and secure. In the final section, I will additionally argue that during World War I, Russian imperial policy toward the littoral reached a dead end because the center had also run out of potential local allies.

### Perception of a Non-Russian and Non-Orthodox Region during the Nineteenth Century

In the early 1870s, a governmental paper postulated that the “Baltic question” had become one of the most urgent problems of imperial domestic policy.<sup>13</sup> To put it another way, using the situation in the Baltic provinces in order to criticize the government had become quite popular. In press debates concerning this question in the 1860s, criticizing local developments in the Baltic provinces was widely used as a tool to demand the government break German domination of and support everything Russian in the littoral.<sup>14</sup>

This nationalizing approach to the empire was accompanied, moreover, by an illustrative change in topography. While traditionally, the Baltic provinces were referred to as *Ostzeiskii krai* (*Ostsee* is German for “Baltic”), since the 1860s a telling neologism was used: *Pribaltiiskii krai* (“Baltic region”). Obviously invented, much like the similar *Privislenskii krai*,<sup>15</sup> to reflect the

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Russischen Reichs,” in *Russland an der Ostsee: Imperiale Strategien der Macht und kulturelle Wahrnehmungsmuster (16. bis 20. Jahrhundert)/Russia on the Baltic: Imperial Strategies of Power and Cultural Patterns of Perception (16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, ed. Karsten Brüggemann and Bradley D. Woodworth (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau, 2012), 225–42; cf. on the role of the governors in the provinces, see Karsten Brüggemann, “Representing Empire, Performing Nation? Russian Officials in the Baltic Provinces (Late 19th/Early 20th Centuries),” *Ab imperio* 15, no. 3 (2014): 231–66.

<sup>13</sup> Isakov, *Ostzeiskii vopros*, 179.

<sup>14</sup> See Isakov, *Ostzeiskii vopros*; Andreas Renner, *Russischer Nationalismus und Öffentlichkeit im Zarenreich 1855–1875* (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna: Böhlau, 2000), 293–374; Olga Majorova, “Die Schlüsselrolle der ‘deutschen Frage’ in der russischen patriotischen Presse der 1860er Jahre,” in *Deutsche und Deutschland aus russischer Sicht: 19./20. Jahrhundert; Von den Reformen Alexanders II. bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Dagmar Herrmann (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006), 81–101.

<sup>15</sup> On the process of “territorial Russification” related to the invention of the term *Privislenskii krai* for Poland, see: Raymond Pearson, “Privileges, Rights, and Russification,” in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, ed. Olga

perspective of the empire towards the border region, this new term semantically “Russified” Baltic topography. It also created new expectations: as *ostzeiskii*, the region was something far away, intrinsically foreign, something that might even be permitted to remain separate. As *pribaltiiskii*, in contrast, the region was meant to be a genuine part of the empire.<sup>16</sup> In 1907, the previously mentioned ultra-nationalist newspaper *Okrainy Rossii* claimed that only Germans still used the old-fashioned term *Ostzeiskii krai*, while Russians were kindly asked to pay attention to geography and call it correctly *Pribaltiiskii krai*.<sup>17</sup> After all, it was geography (among other factors) that made the region undoubtedly “Russian,” at least according to widespread discourse in late imperial Russia.

How “Russian” were the Baltic provinces?<sup>18</sup> Until the mid-nineteenth century, they had been largely conceptualized as a German part of the empire. During the reign of Nicholas I, it was not unusual for the region to be perceived as making Russia truly European, and thus a European empire in its own right.<sup>19</sup> German dominance there, however, was perceived in terms of a “cosmopolitan monarchism” typical of the Nikolaevan era.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it

Crisp and Linda Edmonson (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 85–102, here 97; Sviatoslav Kaspe, *Imperiia i modernizatsiia: Obschaia model' i rossiiskaia spetsifika* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), 143.

16 One of the leading dictionaries published on behalf of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society as late as 1876 still only used the term *Ostzeiskii krai*. See *Geograficheskii slovar' Rossiiskoi imperii*, ed. Petr P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, t. 3 (St. Petersburg: Tip. V. Bezobrazova, 1867), 725. The Brockhaus and Efron encyclopedia two decades later indicated the change in its lemma: A. Ia[novskii], “Pribaltiiskii (ostzejskii) krai,” in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, Vol. XXV (49), ed. Fridrikh A. Brokgauz and Il'ia A. Efron (St. Petersburg: Tip.-Litografiia I.A. Efrona, 1898), 110–17. See, in general, Karsten Brüggemann, “The Baltic Provinces and Russian Perceptions in Late Imperial Russia,” in *Russland an der Ostsee: Imperiale Strategien der Macht und kulturelle Wahrnehmungsmuster (16. bis 20. Jahrhundert)/Russia on the Baltic: Imperial Strategies of Power and Cultural Patterns of Perception (16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, ed. Karsten Brüggemann and Bradley D. Woodworth (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau, 2012), 111–41; Karsten Brüggemann, *Licht und Luft des Imperiums: Legitimations- und Repräsentationsstrategien russischer Herrschaft in den Ostseeprovinzen im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), 223–24.

17 Balt, “Pribaltiiskii vopros,” *Okrainy Rossii* nos. 37–38 (1907): 537–38.

18 The following paragraphs are based on Brüggemann, “The Baltic Provinces.”

19 In 1848, the eminent geographer Konstantin I. Arsen'ev wrote that though the empire's provinces on the Baltic Sea coast were almost entirely foreign in terms of language, law, and, culture, they comprised the “most treasured possession of the Empire” not least because they made it “European.” Konstantin I. Arsen'ev, *Statisticheskie ocherki Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1848), 4.

20 Paul Bushkovitch, “What Is Russia? Russian National Identity and the State, 1500–1917,” in *Culture, Nation and Identity: The Ukrainian–Russian Encounter (1600–1945)*, ed. Andreas Kappeler, Zenon E. Kohut, and Frank E. Sysyn (Edmonton–Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 144–61, here: 154.



was a typical imperial territory in which loyalty was guaranteed by transnational estate-based identities and solidarities—the alliance of aristocracies. Yet there was an uneasiness with the ethno-cultural conditions of the Baltic provinces, expressed, for example, in the accounts of Russian visitors to the littoral.<sup>21</sup> Even if the Baltic Germans were still highly praised for their cultured habits, they came to be chided for refusing to learn the language of the emperor, whom they claimed to honor so dearly, and they were criticized for their “provincial patriotism.”<sup>22</sup> Yet this earlier criticism was not grounded in ethnic preconceptions. However, this began to change. While Russians visiting the provinces in the 1820s and 1830s sought their “Europe” in the romantic landscape of medieval towns and castles, they later came to search for *Russian* symbols of the empire in this foreign environment. Revel’ was, thus, turned into an imperial *lieux de memoire* with a special regard for Peter I.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from that, there was a growing sensibility for all of the missing elements of Russian imperial culture that would make even the ostensibly “Western” capital a Russian city. Still there were very few Russians on these shores. Russian was seldom heard spoken, and Orthodoxy was weak. There was political loyalty expressed by the Baltic Germans, but no cultural affinity. There were virtually no cultural anchors for Russians in the region, and this only slightly changed when in the 1840s approximately 100,000 Estonians and Latvians converted to Orthodoxy (which was, on the whole, a development in the countryside, where few Russians lived). In the long run, not even Russian religion turned these Baltic peasants into Russians, although many Russian (and, with a growing sense of fear, German) observers expected this to happen. If conversion was initially a form of social protest against economic conditions in the countryside—peasants adopted the faith of the Emperor in the vain hope of being granted good land—

21 Brüggenmann, *Licht und Luft*, 181–207.

22 See, e.g., Faddei V. Bulgarin, *Letniaia progulka po Finliandii i Shvetsii v 1838 g.* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Ekspeditsii Zagotovleniia Gosudarstvennykh Bumag, 1839), 33 (quote), 38, 40–41, 68.

23 Brüggenmann, *Licht und Luft*, 125–27; see also Karsten Brüggenmann [Brüggenmann], “Kak Estoniia stala russkim mestom pamiati. Turisticheskie marshruty i istoricheskoe vobrazhenie v epokhu Nikolaia I, *Neprikosnovennyi Zapas* 104, no. 6 (2015): 224–37. On Peter’s many visits to Revel’, see Sergei G. Isakov and Tat’iana K. Shor, *Vlastiteli Rossiiskoi Imperii na estonskoi zemle* (Tallin: aleksandra, 2009), 10–52.

being Orthodox eventually provided a means for Estonians and Latvians to escape German cultural and economic domination.<sup>24</sup>

In the long run, the conversion movement fundamentally altered the Russian perception of the Baltic provinces. Inspired by Western romantic nationalism, Russian intellectuals sensed that Russian imperial domination over non-Russian territories had to be justified anew. Instead of explaining Russian power simply by referencing autocratic rights, historical and cultural arguments for continued imperial dominance were elaborated. In this respect, the conversion to Orthodoxy was welcomed as a field upon which the issue of German domination in the Baltic provinces could be reassessed. Of lasting influence were Iurii F. Samarin's "Letters from Riga," written in 1848. Here, the prominent Slavophile who had worked in Riga on behalf of the Interior Ministry in the mid-1840s clearly set out a program for the mental appropriation of the Baltic region by Russia as a precondition for its genuine "merger" (*sliianie*) with Russia proper. In demanding affirmative action for the representatives of the imperial nation, this program challenged tsarist policy at the time. Samarin was arrested for a few days, and the "Letters" were never published during his lifetime.<sup>25</sup>

Samarin maintained that the Great Russian Plain extended all the way to the Baltic Sea; it was only at the coast that the empire (and thus the im-

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- 24 Daniel C. Ryan, "Religious Conversion and the Problem of Commitment in Livland Province, 1850s–1860s," *Ajalooline ajakiri* 121/122, no. 3–4 (2007): 369–92; Daniel C. Ryan, "The Tsar's Faith: Conversion, Religious Politics, and Peasant Protest in Imperial Russia's Baltic Periphery, 1845–1870s" (PhD diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 2008). See also Aleksandr V. Gavrilin, *Očerki istorii Rizhskoi Eparkhii. 19 vek* (Riga: Filokaliia, 1999), 109–82; Hans Kruus, *Talurahva käärimine Lõuna-Eestis XIX sajandi 40-ndail aastail* (Tartu: Eesti Kirjanduse Selts, 1930); Brüggemann, *Licht und Luft des Imperiums*, 187–99.
- 25 Iurii F. Samarin, "Pis'ma iz Rigi," in *Sochineniia Iu. F. Samarina*, vol. 7: *Pis'ma iz Rigi i Istorii Rigi*, ed. Dmitrii F. Samarin (Moscow: D. Samarin, 1889), 1–160, here XVI. See, in general, Kaspe, *Imperiia i modernizatsiia*, 127. On Samarin cf. Robert Stupperich, *Jurij Samarin und die Anfänge der Bauernbefreiung in Rußland* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1969), 45–55; Edward C. Thaden, "Iurii Fedorovich Samarin and Baltic History," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 17 (1986), 321–328; Edward C. Thaden, "Iurii Fedorovich Samarin (1819–1876) as a Baltic Historian," in *Geisteswissenschaften und Publizistik im Baltikum des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Nobert Angermann, Wilhelm Lenz, and Konrad Maier (Berlin and Münster: LIT, 2011), 137–55; Iuliia L. Mikhailova, "Slavianofily i ostzeiskii vopros (40–60-e gody XIX v.)," *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, no. 5 (2007): 49–61. The recent paper by Richard Pipes, "Iurii Samarin's Baltic Escape," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42, no. 3 (2011): 315–27, is largely an English translation of the older but still relevant study Boris E. Nol'de, *Iurii Samarin i ego vremia* (Paris: Impr. de Navarre, 1926).

perial nation) met its “natural” border.<sup>26</sup> Translated into geopolitical terms, this argument turned into a strategic one that was well known since the times of Peter I, when Russian power in the Baltic provinces was seen as vital for defending the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, and thus protecting the capital. In Samarin’s “Letters,” this geographic “naturalness” was underpinned with an argument taken from history, which asserted the “naturalness” of imperial Russian rule. Samarin reminded his readers of an ongoing process of submission on the part of the indigenous populations to peaceful Russian authority, which began as early as the time of Kievan Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise in the eleventh century.

In this narrative, the Germans played the part of brutal intruders who interrupted a peaceful process of the integration and assimilation of lands and peoples into the Orthodox world of the Rus’. According to this thesis, Samarin claimed Russia’s right and “destiny” to “lead the Baltic region to civil and ecclesiastical enlightenment,” a *mission civilisatrice* typical for an empire in the nineteenth century. Most of all, however, his argument that “the Germans took the Baltic region from the Russians, and Catholicism tore it from the bosom of Orthodoxy” resonated with his Russian readers.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, German dominance in the region was interpreted as unjust and even “unnatural.” Based on this idea, Estonians and Latvians had originally adopted Christianity as a result of a peaceful mission from the east.<sup>28</sup> Equipped with this narrative, nationalists thereafter could depict the Baltic region as initially Orthodox and, thus, culturally and historically Russian territory.<sup>29</sup>

26 Samarin, “Piśma,” 18; Samarin’s argument was later used particularly by the Riga-based Russian historiographer Evgraf V. Cheshikhin. See his *Istoriia Livonii s drevneishikh vremen* vol. 1 (Riga: Tip.-lit. A.I. Lipinskogo, 1884), III; Karsten Brüggemann, “Ein Russe in Riga: Evgraf Vasil’evič Češichin (1824–1888) als Journalist und Historiker im Dienst des Imperiums,” in *Geisteswissenschaften und Publizistik im Baltikum des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Nobert Angermann, Wilhelm Lenz, and Konrad Maier (Berlin and Münster: LIT, 2011), 157–91.

27 Samarin, “Piśma,” 4–5, 18; cf. Anti Selart, “Vene ike ja muistne priius. Eesti–Vene suhete historiograafiast” *Vikerkaar*, nos. 8–9 (2000): 98–104, here: 99.

28 [Filaret,] “Otkuda korennyye zhiteli Lifliandii pervonachal’no poluchili khristianstvo, s vostoka ili s zapada?” *Moskovitianin* 4, no. 7 (1843): 85–102, here 96, 100.

29 Evfimii M. Kryzhanovskii, *Ostzeiskii vopros i pravoslavie* (St. Petersburg: s.n., 1884), 10–14; Boris V. Dobryshin, *K istorii pravoslaviia v Pribaltiiskom krae. Ocherk s prilozheniem nekotorykh ofitsial’nykh dokumentov* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tip., 1911).

What was important from the point of view of the empire was that the “natives” (*tuzemtsy*), as this colonial discourse tended to call Estonians and Latvians, were seen as victims of German aggression given that their forefathers had previously been on the “right” path towards Orthodoxy and the Russian world. The conversion movement of the 1840s, thus, properly expressed their “natural” needs. In the 1860s, the Baltic “natives”, allegedly under attack by a Germanizing Lutheran Church, were even depicted as martyrs to the “Russian cause.”<sup>30</sup> This discursive environment was famously expressed in the well-known controversy between Samarin and the Professor of History at Dorpat (Russian: Derpt/Iur’ev; Estonian: Tartu) University, Carl Schirren in 1869, in which the latter ferociously attacked the idea of a Russian *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>31</sup> However, the framework established by Samarin was later used by Alexander III to carry out so-called “Russifying” reforms in the Baltic provinces.<sup>32</sup>

The tone was set, however, for a more enduring kind of “Russification” than any kind of administrative or political reforms could offer: the “Russification” of the region in the minds of the Russian public. Of course, in contrast to predominantly Slavic-inhabited territories in the Western provinces claimed by Russian nationalism as part of the national body, the Baltic provinces were usually seen as Russian only in terms of history and culture. However, attempts to demonstrate that Latvians (and Lithuanians) were ethnically “half-brothers of the Slavs,”<sup>33</sup> and the urgent demand made

30 Isakov, *Ostzeiskii vopros*, 70.

31 Carl Schirren, *Livländische Antwort an Herrn Juri Samarin* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1869), 103, 104–05. Schirren attacked Samarin’s *Okrainy Rossii: Seriia pervaiia; Russkoe baltiiskoe pomor’e*, vol. 1: *Russkoe Baltiiskoe pomor’e v nastoiashchuiu minutu (kak vvedenie v pervuiu seriuiu)* (Prague: Tip. Dr. F. Skreishovskogo, 1868). In turn, his attack was answered by Samarin’s former teacher, the historian Mikhail P. Pogodin, *Ostzeiskii vopros: Pis’mo M. P. Pogodina k professoru Shirrenu* (Moscow: Tip. “Russkogo”, 1869). On this debate, see Michael Haltzel, *Der Abbau der ständischen Selbstverwaltung in den Ostseeprovinzen Russlands: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der russischen Unifizierungspolitik 1855–1905* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1977), 27–40; Gert von Pistohlkors, “Ursprung und Entwicklung ethnischer Minderheiten in der baltischen Region im 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert,” in *Staatliche Einheit und nationale Vielfalt im Baltikum: Festschrift für Prof. Dr. Michael Garleff zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Gert von Pistohlkors and Matthias Weber (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005), 13–34.

32 On these reforms, see the concise analysis in Haltzel, *Der Abbau*, ch. III–IV; Thaden, “The Russian Government,” 54–75.

33 Evgeniia L. Nazarova, “Russkii iazyk kak instrument rusifikatsii/obruseniia Ostzeiskogo kraia v politike

by historian Mikhail P. Pogodin already in 1869 to “Russify” (*rusit'*) the natives of the Baltic provinces as soon as possible in order to make them into “truly Orthodox Russians,”<sup>34</sup> prove that there was fertile ground for the idea to make the provinces part of the national body, at least at some point in the future. Even if the Baltic provinces were not perceived as being ethnically “Russian” right now, or in Miller’s words, they were “not included into the image of the Russian national territory,”<sup>35</sup> they were broadly regarded as a historically (and potentially) Orthodox region with a (peasant) population culturally bound to the world of Russia, and thus predisposed to Russia’s cultural and political dominance.

### Russian Nationalists and Baltic History

History mattered in the Russian perception of the Baltic provinces, because for those inspired by the vision of a national empire,<sup>36</sup> Samarin’s thesis of a Russian pre-Catholic past in the littoral served as an essential legitimization of their claims. In the years after the revolution of 1905–1906, this thesis already had its own history. It was popularized in brochures introducing the *Pribaltiiskii krai* to an increasingly literate public starting in the 1870s. One of the first examples of this type of literature published in 1870 repeated the claim, taken from Samarin’s teacher Pogodin, that “before the Germans, Poles, Swedes, and Danes, the Baltic littoral [*Baltiiskoe pomor'e*] belonged to Russia” because it used to be part of the principalities of the Rus’.<sup>37</sup> Thus, from times immemorial, the region never lost its primordial Russian character. This construction of

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vlastei i predstavleniakh obshchestvennosti Rossiiskoi imperii: XIX v.,” in *Istoricheskii put' litovskoi pismennosti: Sbornik materialov konferentsii*, ed. S. Temchin (Vilnius: Institut litovskogo iazyka, 2005), 260–90, here 279.

34 Pogodin, *Ostzeiskii vopros*, 109, 111.

35 Alexei Miller, “The Empire and the Nation in the Imagination of Russian Nationalism,” in *Imperial Rule*, ed. Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (Budapest–New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 9–26, here: 21; idem, *Imperiia Romanovykh i natsionalizm: Esse po metodologii istoricheskogo issledovaniia* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006), 162–63.

36 See the categorizations in Bassin, “Geographies of Imperial Identity,” and esp. 55–63 on “national empire.”

37 M. Nevzorov and V. Zabolotnii, *Pribaltiiskii krai: Istoricheskii ocherk i opisanie gubernii Estliandskoi, Livliandskoi i Kurliandskoi* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie redaktsii narodnogo zhurnala “Mirskoi vestnik”, 1870), 6. This formulation comes from Pogodin, *Ostzeiskii vopros*, 11–12.

a specifically Russian history of the region was needed if one wanted to alter its conditions. In this context, it was not only “conquest” or “reconquest” in the name of the dynasty that counted: imperial possessions were justified through a tradition of the continuous peaceful impact of Russian culture on the territories and peoples of a borderland. Theodore Weeks has claimed that it is impossible to understand “Russian attitudes and ‘state interests’ as perceived by contemporaries . . . without an appreciation of the historical lessons lurking behind Russians’ perceptions of their role in these lands” (meaning broadly the “western territories”).<sup>38</sup> In the case of the Baltic provinces, in this process of re-writing of history, the Russian *mission civilisatrice* of the late nineteenth century received a mythical predecessor during the tenth and eleventh centuries in order to prove the long lasting (peaceful) dominance of “Russia” in the region.<sup>39</sup> Convinced that the Germans were only illegitimate intruders who came with “fire and sword,” this discourse eventually integrated the conflict with the Baltic provinces into the story of the historical antagonism between the Germanic and Slavic worlds.

It has to be stressed that in early twentieth century Russian-language literature related to the Baltic provinces, Samarin’s historical argument was firmly established. Russian publications issued on the occasion of the bicentennial of the *de facto* incorporation of Estland and Livland into the Russian Empire in 1710 left no doubt about who the legitimate ruler in the littoral was. Next to the traditional argument of imperial conquest in 1710, most of them also promoted the thesis that the strong, pre-Catholic Russian (-orthodox) influence on the littoral was interrupted by the Germans only in early thirteenth century. Consequently, the Russian state had a historical right to rule in the littoral, which, due to its geographic situation, had to become part of this state sooner or later.<sup>40</sup> The Estonian-born magis-

38 Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 92–93.

39 In more detail, see Brüggemann, *Licht und Luft des Imperiums*, 271–88.

40 See, as an example: Pavel G. Pshenichnikov, *Russkie v Pribaltiiskom krae (Istoricheskii ocherk)* (Riga: Russkii natsional’nyi klub “Russkaia beseda”, 1910). Cf. Ivan I. Vysotskii, *Ocherki po istorii ob’edineniia Pribaltiki s Rossiei (1710–1910 g.g.)*, vyp. 1–4 (Riga: A. Nitavskii, 1910); Ivan I. Rogozinnikov, *K dvukhsotletiiu prisoeдинeniia Estliandii k derzhave Rossiiskoi: Eestimaa Weneriigi Walitsuse alla saamise kahesaja-*

ter of the Ecclesiastical Academy in St. Petersburg, Ivan Iur'ens (Joann Jürgens), supported the nationalist Russian view on the local past, emphatically claiming that prior to the Catholic crusade, the littoral had reached an exceptionally high level of cultural development solely due to the early Russian *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>41</sup>

The following discussion of right-wing activists' reactions to the revolutionary events in 1905–1906, which were essentially a presentation of various models for a “Russian” future of the littoral, demonstrates that regardless of the level of personal experience in the Baltic provinces, the protagonists of this debate created a utopian vision of the region in which everything was turned upside down. In many ways, the process of mental appropriation of the provinces as historically and culturally part of Russia had gone so far that many authors were ready to project the idealized situation in Russia proper onto the completely different realities that existed in the littoral. In contrast, it must be stressed that there was actually no danger in 1905–06 that the empire would lose its outlet to the Baltic Sea or that the German *Reich* would have been ready to take over the territory. It might even be argued that the region never was so integrated into the empire-wide structures as in the decade following the chaotic days of the revolution.<sup>42</sup>

### Visions of the End of Empire at the Baltic Sea

In his speech at the St. Petersburg branch of the *Slavianskoe Blagotvoritel'noe Obshchestvo* on December 30, 1905, the former rector of the Universities of Warsaw and Iur'ev, Anton S. Budilovich, set the tone for the alarm-

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*aastaseks mälsetuse päevaks* (Tallinn: Izdanie Osobogo Komiteta po sooruzheniiu pamiatnika Imperatoru Petru I v gor. Revel, 1910); Ivan A. Iur'ens, *Pribaltiiskii kraj pod russkoi vlast'iu: K 200 letnemu iubileiu prisoidineniia Pribaltiiskogo kraia k Russkoi derzhave (4 iulia 1710 – 4 iulia 1910 g.)* (Riga: Rizhskoe Petropavlovskoe Bratstvo, 1910).

41 Iur'ens, *Pribaltiiskii kraj*, 6–10. Cf. the work of a Latvian author who despite supporting the legitimacy of Russian rule in the littoral demanded more rights for its inhabitants: Petr M. Tokarev (Pēteris Dreimanis), *Baltiiskii vopros: Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk I (K 200 letiiu prisoidineniia Lifliandii i Estliandii k Rossii 1710–1910)* (Riga: A.A. Pavlov, [1910]).

42 See, e.g., Ulrike von Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit: Deutsche, Letten, Russen und Juden in Riga, 1860–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); Hendriksson, *Vassals and Citizens*; Brüggemann and Wezel, “Nationally indifferent.”



ist discourse of Russian nationalists that dominated the debate during and immediately following the revolutionary events. The well-known Slavist made it clear to his audience that if nothing happens, the “Northern Capital” might find itself very soon only 20 *verst* “from the enemy” (meaning the Finns in this paragraph). In the Baltic provinces, the situation was no less serious because the main centers were cut from the rest of the empire during the course of the revolution. The new governor of Livland province, Vasilii U. Sollogub, had to force his way from Dvinsk to Riga with weapon in hand. The region had been temporarily cut off from imperial control. In his speech, Budilovich also stressed the brutality with which Estonians and Latvians allegedly massacred German nobles and pastors. This reminded him of the way they had fought the Catholic crusaders in the early thirteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

Budilovich blamed the recent escalations on “foreign propagandists” (British, Japanese, Jews, the *soiuz inodordtsev Rossii*, professors, doctors, and engineers, as well as the *soiuz soiuzov*), but there was one party he criticized the most for the *ostzeishchina* (a pejorative term denouncing German rule in the Baltic Provinces), as he called it: the rulers of the empire. Since Peter I, they had always only thought about how to preserve local customs and traditions instead of “fostering the Russian (...) element” there.<sup>44</sup> The Germans, he continued, now would say that everything happened because of the Russification policies of “Murav’ev, Manassein, and Bobrikov,” but in fact, the Germans just wanted to divert attention away from the real problem. In Budilovich’s eyes, the real problem was quite the opposite: there hadn’t been a Murav’ev, Manassein, or Bobrikov consistently present in the borderlands.<sup>45</sup> What Budilovich expressed here was the well-known argu-

43 Anton S. Budilovich, *O poslednykh dvizheniakh v srede chudskikh i letsikh plemen Baltiiskogo poberezh’ia. Rech’ v torzhestvennom sobranii Spb. Slavianskogo blagotvoritel’nogo obshchestva, 30 Dekabria 1905 g.* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V.D. Smirnova, 1906), 7–8, 13. Interestingly enough, this braveness, which was usually seen as a positive aspect of the character of the *tuzemtsy* (as long as it was directed against the Germans), now turned against the Russians. On ethnographic stereotypes virulent in Russian perception of the Estonians and Latvians, see Brüggemann, *Licht und Luft*, 149–80.

44 Budilovich, *O poslednykh dvizheniakh*, 18.

45 Ibid., 19. Budilovich here refers to three Russian governors resp. officials active in non-Russian regions: N. M. Murav’ev (Governor-General of Vilna 1863–65), N. A. Manassein (the later Minister of Justice who



ment used by advocates of full *sliianie* ever since the era of Peter I, when the Russian government continuously acted against “real” Russian interests in the Baltic borderland. He asserted that St. Petersburg governed the region politically, but failed to do so in the ethical and spiritual sense. As a result, Budilovich concluded, Russia’s power on the Baltic Sea coast was destined to end soon. In the final passages of his speech, he used the specter of the Germanization of the whole coastline from Lübeck to Torino to communicate the vulnerability of St. Petersburg itself.<sup>46</sup>

For Budilovich, the empire needed the littoral “like light and air” (*kak svet i vozdukh*) because it provided the only access to the Atlantic Ocean. Therefore, he rhetorically asked his audience, “do we really want to allow this access to the world to be cut off (...) by a system of alien autonomies?”<sup>47</sup> It is interesting that right-wing authors with a more liberal orientation like Oktobrist and expert in financial law Eduard N. Berendts came to a very similar conclusion about the situation; but the two men offered completely different solutions. In early 1906, Berendts argued that without the Baltic borderlands, the empire could not make any use of its vast territory. He called it the “tragedy of Russia’s historical situation” that every time the government aims to foster “Russian statehood” in the *okrainy*, its adversaries criticize its “national chauvinism.” For this reason, he called for more attention to be paid to the cultivation of local languages and more local autonomy; that is, “autonomy in the strict sense,” which would leave local self-administration to local powers without jeopardizing “state unity.”<sup>48</sup>

For Budilovich, in contrast, leaving local questions to local populations would spell political suicide. He advocated for a system modeled after the all-Russian zemstvo, where demographic majorities would be shielded

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carried out a revision of Livland Province during 1882–83), and N. I. Bobrikov (Governor-General of Finland 1898–1904), who in the eyes of popular nationalists, had become the (good) exceptions to the rule of too many liberal officials sent out by the center due to their “Russifying” policies in the borderlands.

46 Ibid., 24.

47 Ibid.

48 Eduard N. Berendts, “Ob avtonomii Baltiiskikh gubernii, Pol’shi i Finliandii” (Publichnye lektsii, chitannye v Iaroslavle 27 ianvaria i 2 fevralia 1906 g.), in *Koe-cto o sovremennykh voprosakh*, ed. Eduard N. Berendts, 35–108 (St. Petersburg: Tip. M.M. Stasiulevicha, 1907), here 57–60.

against the “grasps” (*zakhvaty*) of the “minority of newcomers” (*prishloe men’shinstvo*)—meaning Baltic Germans who had already been settled in the littoral for nearly seven centuries. In order to make this system work in the interest of the imperial nation, he proposed the large-scale migration of Russian peasants into the provinces.<sup>49</sup> But, as we shall see, this was easier said than done. Yet, Budilovich in general agreed with Berendts on the issue of local languages. If the reforms of the early 1890s introduced Russian as language of instruction in all schools—a measure abandoned, by the way, in 1905<sup>50</sup>—Budilovich proposed an educational system for the Baltic provinces “patterned after the Russian-alien schools of Il’minskii [*po tipu russko-innородcheskikh shkol Il’minskogo*],” which (Budilovich most definitely intended) would provide a foundation for the integration of Estonians and Latvians into the Russian world.<sup>51</sup>

In this context, it is interesting to note what exactly the Russian public knew about Estonians and Latvians; that is, the potential secessionists whose own elites did not see independent states as a possibility in the near future of their communities. The uneasiness exhibited by many Russian observers toward these “natives” also has to do with the traditional image of peasant populations distributed in the aforementioned ethnographical writings that introduced the Baltic provinces to Russian readers. In this literature, the reader would rarely learn that, for example, Estonians and Latvians were almost completely literate. Ethnographic information tended to come from Enlightenment writings and was, on the whole, hopelessly outdated. Why should anybody in the empire be concerned about the national

49 According to the census of 1897, 5.4 percent of the population was composed of Russians in the three Baltic provinces (including Belorussians and Ukrainians); Riga counted almost 17 percent of its population and Reval 10 percent as Russians. Brüggemann, *Licht und Luft*, 311–13.

50 See Indrek Kiverik, “Baltisakslased ja vene riigivõim 19. saj. II poolel: vene keele kasutuselevõtmisest Balti kubermangude ametiasutustes ja koolides” [Baltic Germans and the Russian state in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Introduction of Russian in state offices and schools of the Baltic province], in *Vene impeerium ja Baltikum: venestus, rahvuslus ja moderniseerimine 19. sajandi teisel poolel ja 20. sajandi alguses*, eds. Tõnu Tannberg and Bradley D. Woodworth, 11–68 (Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 2010).

51 Budilovich, *O poslednikh dvizheniakh*, 21. On the “schools of Il’minskii” see Robert Geraci, *Window on the East. National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 47–85; Seppo Lallukka, “Kazan’ Teacher Seminary and the Awakening of the Finnic Peoples of the Volga-Ural Region,” *Studia Slavica Finlandensia. Tomus IV* (Helsinki: Neuvostoliittoinstituutti, 1987), 143–65.

aspirations of peasants whose favorite entertainment was swinging (in the case of Estonians) and solving riddles (in the case of Latvians)?<sup>52</sup>

However, something was going on in these provinces which were traditionally regarded as “German.” In his book *Pribaltiiskaia Smuta* (Baltic “Times of Troubles”), an allegory of the empire completely losing control already apparent in the title, author “Vega” (the pseudonym for V. V. Geiman, a journalist for the right-wing populist *Novoe Vremia* [New Times])<sup>53</sup> described a situation in which Estonians and Latvians could now be found in much higher levels of hierarchy than previously thanks to the traditional sympathies of Russian bureaucrats toward oppressed nations.<sup>54</sup> Eventually, the victories in local elections (presumably a hint to the Estonian victory in Revel’ in 1904) “made the heads [of these young nationalities] spin.” But even more alarming must have been his claim that both collectives now also have national anthems that they would sing with unceasing emotion on every occasion.<sup>55</sup> The real danger for Russia was not to be seen in peasant populations singing national melodies; in Vega’s eyes, it was that these peoples would voluntarily join Germany and become proud parts of the *Vaterland* sometime in the near future. The only way to prevent this development, according to Vega, was to bring the Russian administration in order, so it would no longer be paralyzed if it had to move beyond punishing poor peasants. If nothing changed, Vega claimed boldly, Latvians, sooner rather than later, would call for the assistance of the German *Reich* themselves. From their point of view, Vega added emphatically, this would even be the right choice because Russia was paralyzed, when it came to realizing reforms: “seas of paper and ink” would never be enough to keep the provinces loyal.<sup>56</sup>

52 Karsten Brüggemann, “Fremde im eigenen Imperium. Russische ethnografische Beschreibungen finnisch-er und baltischer Völker an der Ostsee im späten Zarenreich,” in *Nation und Sprache in Nordosteuropa im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Konrad Maier (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 49–73.

53 Andreeva, *Pribaltiiskie nemtsy*, 52.

54 “Vega”, *Pribaltiiskaia smuta* (St. Petersburg, Russia: Izd. A.S. Suvorina, 1907), 25; cf. Bradley D. Woodworth, “Patterns of Civil Society in the Modernizing Multiethnic City: A German Town in the Russian Empire Becomes Estonian,” *Ab Imperio* 7, no. 2 (2006): 135–62. Toomas Karjahärm has convincingly argued that it was first and foremost the lower levels of local provincial administration that gradually became filled with Estonians. See his *Vene impeerium ja rahvuslus: Moderniseerimise strateegiad* (Tallinn: ARGO, 2012), 153–62.

55 “Vega”, *Pribaltiiskaia smuta*, 25–26.

56 Ibid., 130.

The German danger was a well-established rhetorical figure in Russian nationalist discourse at least since Danilevskii's *Rossiiia i Evropa*. The question of how to improve the situation in the Baltic borderland led to another characteristic element of these writings: the belief that the *russskost'* of officials and even colonists was the key to a solution of the Baltic question that would be in the empire's interests.<sup>57</sup> This attitude was especially true for those Russian nationalists who actually lived in the Baltic provinces. It was in their writings first and foremost that we find quite imaginative solutions for the "Baltic question," thereby revealing a mind-blowing tendency to completely ignore actual local conditions. This tiny segment of the Russian population in the region, however, quite effectively used the weekly *Okrainy Rossii*, established in 1906 (and mentioned in the introduction of this chapter), to communicate its ideas to the capital.<sup>58</sup> It was in their publications that the call for a thorough "Russification" (a term offering a wide array of interpretations) prevailed to such an extent that more neutral observers might have noticed the absence of any consideration as to how the realization of the proposed measures might affect the position of the empire in the littoral.

Mikhail Dolbilov has written about the "discursive trap" set by the rhetoric of the state that Russian officials often faced when they visited the Western borderlands. This was also true for officials visiting the Baltic provinces. Born and raised in Russia proper, their ideas of the state they lived in were shaped by the "all-imperial context." Realizing that quite a lot of the usual elements of the Russian environment—the cultural anchors Russian tourists had already looked for in the littoral during the era of Nicholas I—were not displayed in the same way and were less meaningful in the "borderland context" was a shock.<sup>59</sup> In the Baltic provinces, the

57 Richard Wortman, "The 'Integrity' (*Tselost'*) of the State in Imperial Russian Representation," *Ab imperio* 12, no. 2 (2011): 20–45.

58 At least on one occasion (see the introduction to this chapter) we know that this chauvinist paper was read by His Majesty as well. Diakin, *Natsional'nyi vopros*, 242; Andreeva, *Pribaltiiskie nemtsy*, 104. See also Toomas Karjahärm, *Ida ja Lääne vahel: Eesti–Vene suhted 1850–1917* (Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, 1998), 165–68. Yet it is hard to measure the actual influence of papers like "Okrainy Rossii." See Weeks, "Official and Popular Nationalism," 429.

59 Mikhail Dolbilov, "Russification and the Bureaucratic Mind in the Russian Empire's Northwestern Region in the 1860s," *Kritika. Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 2 (2004): 245–71.

situation was even worse because of the Lutheran and utterly non-Slavic environment. Obviously, especially after the events of 1905, when Latvian and Estonian revolutionaries challenged state authority locally, the only feasible solution seemed to be to finally make the foreign region as Russian as possible. One of the standard demands in this regard was the proposal of administratively merging the three Baltic provinces with the St. Petersburg or Pskov provinces, a demand that actually dates back to Pavel Pestel's "Russkaia Pravda." Such a reform, however, eventually would have only deepened the "discursive trap" in raising the expectations concerning the *russkost'* of the Baltic region. To some extent, this was exactly what happened after the Alexander Nevskii Cathedral was opened on Revel's Toompea hill, the traditional bastion of the Baltic German elite, in 1900. Just a few years before the turmoil of the first revolution, the *Pravitel'stvennyi Vestnik* proudly declared that this church would finally confirm "the victory of Orthodoxy and the Russian State."<sup>60</sup>

Apparently, the most prolific exponent of this extreme right-wing Russian diaspora in the Baltic provinces was Ivan Vysotskii, the editor of the Riga-based Russian newspaper *Rizhskii vestnik* (1903–13). If Weeks described official politics in the Baltic provinces "as a combination of administrative centralization and the protection of minorities from an alien and hegemonic foreign culture,"<sup>61</sup> then for people like Vysotskii, protecting minorities meant first and foremost protecting the small number of Russians in the Baltic provinces. He never went so far as Budilovich in terms of his thinking regarding the defense of Estonians and Latvians against the Germans. In a memorandum sent to Provisional Governor-General Aleksandr Meller-Zakomel'skii in 1907, Vysotskii argued that Russians as the first and

60 Quotation in Haltzel, *Der Abbau*, 104. See Richard S. Wortman, "The 'Russian Style' in Church Architecture as Imperial Symbol after 1881," in *Architecture of Russian Identity: 1500 to the Present*, ed. James Cracraft, Daniel Rowland, 101–116 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Karsten Brüggemann, "Wie der Revaler Domberg zum Moskauer Kreml wurde: Zur lokalen Repräsentation imperialer Herrschaft im späten Zarenreich," in *Imperiale Herrschaft in der Provinz: Repräsentationen politischer Macht im späten Zarenreich*, ed. Jörg Baberowski, David Feest, and Christoph Gumb (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2008), 172–95.

61 Weeks, "Official and Popular Nationalism," 424. On Vysotskii, see Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit*, 143–45.

oldest *kulturtregery* in the region were entitled to political representation despite their small share of the population of 5.4 percent in 1897. Moreover, of all inhabitants, only the Russians possessed a kind of supra-national quality as born go-betweens, whereas the other nationalities were not able to free themselves of their national prejudices.<sup>62</sup> Resting on the authority of such figures as Fedor Dostoevskii and Vladimir Solov'ev, Vysotskii claimed that due to the "softness of the Slavonic nature," Russian nationalism could never be aggressive or anti-human and would always only become active in terms of defending "the interests of the Russian nationality, the Russian religion, and Russian culture" against the aggressions of *inovertsy* and *inorodtsy*.<sup>63</sup> This was written in 1910, when Vysotskii had already left the Okto-brists in order to join the Union of the Russian People.

How Vysotskii imagined this natural Russian conciliator to act in the Baltic provinces if, at the same time, it was the obligation of every Russian to preserve the possessions of the Emperor and take arms against the "annihilators of the spiritual and material values of the Russian people" (meaning virtually all inhabitants of the littoral) remains a secret. In order to bring local administration into conformity with Russia, he proposed the introduction of *zemstva* in the Baltic provinces with the caveat that at least one third of all representatives in each province should be Russians. Only such a composition could serve the interests of the empire, meaning, of course, the interests of the ruling nationality, in order to lead to the complete *sliianie* (merger) of the littoral with Russia.<sup>64</sup>

Much like in the case of Budilovich, it was an almost mythical belief in the qualities of the Russians that motivated people like Vysotskii. Pavel Pshenichnikov, the author of a book on the Russians in the Baltic provinces, firmly supported the view that only Russian officials were capable

62 *Trudy Osobogo Soveshchaniia pri Vr. Pribaltiiskom General-Gubernatore, uchrezhdenного Vysochaishim Ukazom 28 noiabria 1905 g.* (Revel: A. Mikvits, 1907); "Zapiska predsedatelia Russko-Pribaltiiskogo Soiuza 17 oktiabria I. I. Vysotskogo Osobomu soveshchaniu pri vremennom pribaltiiskom general-gubernatore, 1907 g.," in *Imperskaia politika*, 144–50, here 145, 147.

63 Ivan I. Vysotskii, *Sushchnost' i znachenie russkogo natsionalizma* (Riga: "ASTRA", 1910), 21–22.

64 "Zapiska, predsedatelia," 149–50.

of merging the region with Russia proper.<sup>65</sup> However, Vysotskii knew how difficult it was to define this category: to be fluent in Russian and a Russian subject was not enough in his eyes to be “really” Russian.<sup>66</sup> And indeed, what was the category of *ruskost*’ worth if, during the campaigns for election to the State Duma in 1907, some Russians from Iur’ev openly supported German candidates, claiming that the share of Russian deputies in the Duma was sufficient for the preservation of Russian interests? A sharp protest from the Iur’ev Oktobrists, which was fully supported by the correspondent of *Okrainy Rossii* (possibly Vysotskii himself), came to the conclusion that co-nationals who opted for the Germans apparently were not “real Russians.”<sup>67</sup> Apparently, not even birth was enough for Vysotskii who, besides all obstacles, remained true to his principles when in 1908 he demanded that only “real Russians” (*korennye russkie*) be promoted to service in the administration of the Baltic provinces. “Real Russians,” in his view, were only those who supported the ideals of Alexander III. In order to guarantee peace in the provinces, he suggested fixing this regulation with a tsarist *ukaz*.<sup>68</sup> How the ideals of Alexander III, which were abhorred by old and new local elites alike, would guarantee peace in the littoral was a question he obviously never asked. In 1910, he concluded, after all, that “hard work” was still to be done in the provinces.<sup>69</sup>

Actually, this demand appears in the most radical vision of Russification in the Baltic provinces known to the author thus far. Written by Vysotskii and the Riga chief of police Nikolai Balabin,<sup>70</sup> this document was titled “Measures for the Affirmation and Maintenance of Russian Influence in the *Pribaltiiskii krai*.”<sup>71</sup> Most strikingly, the authors predicted that

65 Pshenichnikov, *Russkie*, 26–27.

66 Vladislavs Volkovs, “Das Riga der Russen,” in *Riga: Portrait einer Vielvölkerstadt am Rande des Zarenreiches 1857–1914*, eds. Erwin Oberländer and Kristine Wohlfart (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), 115–56, here 151.

67 RUSSKII, “Iur’ev Lifl.,” *Okrainy Rossii*, no. 5 (1907): 79–80.

68 “Mery k utverzhdeniiu i podderzhaniuu russkogo vliianiia v Pribaltiiskom krae (1908),” in *Imperskaia politika*, 336–42, here 339–40, 341–42.

69 Vysotskii, *Ocherki po istorii. Vyp. 1, Russkaia gosudarstvennost’*, 37–38.

70 Karjahärm, *Ida ja Lääne vahel*, 170.

71 “Mery k utverzhdeniiu.”



the “artificially bred (not without support from the government)” Estonian and Latvian cultures are “doomed to die slowly”; these cultures had to be replaced with Russian culture, a process that might be accelerated with state interference. The number of Russian-born officials was to be increased and non-Russian cultural associations were to be strongly controlled by the government. In order to marginalize the non-Russian character of the region, the authors suggested creating two administrative units along ethnographic borders *Revel'skaia* and *Rizhskaia* provinces. Thus, according to this plan, the traditional topography based on the traditions of German *Ritterschaften* (corporations of nobility) should be erased; terms like *Eston-skaia* or *Latyshskaia* were, of course, out of the question since the “separatists” were not to be encouraged topographically.

Most important, the authors suggested demographic “Russification,” or in their words, Russian “colonization,” thus recalling Russia’s *mission civilisatrice* in the East, which was realized by peasant migration to Siberia. This had been suggested already in late 1905 by Budilovich, who dreamt of a broad colonization movement “like in the times of our *veche*-communities and old principalities,” evoking Russia’s assumed domination of the Baltic region prior to the arrival of Catholic missionaries and colonization.<sup>72</sup> Of course, this Russian colonization was to be supported by the state also in terms of large subsidies for cultural efforts aimed at raising the national consciousness of both old and new Russians in the provinces. As I have discussed elsewhere, Russian westward colonization to the Baltic Sea was debated officially in correspondence between Prime Minister Stolypin and the Baltic Provisional Governor-General Aleksandr N. Meller-Zakomel'skii in 1908. It seems to me that the quoted memorandum by Vysotskii and Balabin (found in Stolypin's papers) might have eventually convinced the Prime Minister that the risks and the costs of such a large-scale program would outweigh the benefits.<sup>73</sup>

In this document, the authors made their goals clear first and foremost in terms of security: they suggested the settlement of Russian fisher-

72 Budilovich, *O poslednykh dvizheniakh*, 23.

73 Brüggemann, “Representing Empire.”



men along the Baltic coastline in order to defend the state border. In their view, *inorodtsy* collectively were to be singled out as potential traitors, and the blurred category of *russkost'* again was used as a single marker of loyalty.<sup>74</sup> In the context of these radical ideas, it is striking that after 1905, not even people like Vysotskii promoted the idea of making the Estonians and Latvians into Russians anymore. In this regard, the conversion movement of the 1840s and the decade of reforms under Alexander III were nostalgically recalled as wasted opportunities. The authors did not bother with the question of what to do with Estonian and Latvian fishermen; but, at the same time, the governor-general did, at least to some extent, because he had to guarantee peace and order in the provinces entrusted to him. Meller-Zakomel'skii was a nationally minded officer who was, by no means, a defender of the traditional conditions in the Baltic provinces, and he, of course, had no sympathy for the German nobility there. But when Prime Minister Petr A. Stolypin asked him to suggest effective measures to foster Russian statehood (*gosudarstvennost'*) and culture in the Baltic provinces in 1908, Meller-Zakomel'skii provocatively suggested that if the state really wants to support "Russian principles" in the littoral, the government had to organize Russian colonization on a mass scale; but it could not forget to compensate all those Estonians and Latvians who would be replaced by the newcomers with lands in Siberia and organize their resettlement.<sup>75</sup> Quite naturally, a massive project like this was out of the question.

In their project, Vysotskii and Balabin went so far as to demand that Russian peasants from the central provinces be settled along railway lines in order to protect those vital lines of imperial communication from "Latvian or Estonian bands."<sup>76</sup> In this way, they advocated an ethnic preponderance to preserve state integrity that actually did not fit the multicultural landscape of the borderland at all. The authors' radical vision to rule lands and peoples in opposition to both the demographic majority and the old elites

74 "Mery k utverzhdeniiu," 339.

75 Meller-Zakomel'skii to Stolypin, October 30, 1908, in *Imperskaia politika*, 313–14; see also Diakin, *Natsional'nyi vopros*, 251.

76 "Mery k utverzhdeniiu," 338–39.

alike almost logically led the authors to create a warlike scenario in which the government would survive only with the help of extraordinary measures and, if necessary, the military.

A memorandum about the situation of the Russians in the Baltic provinces produced in Meller-Zakomel'skii's chancellery in Riga offered a devastating picture.<sup>77</sup> Compared with Estonians and Latvians, the littoral's Russians' rates of illiteracy (although on par with those in St. Petersburg and Moscow) were high, and their education standards low. The memorandum suggested that any serious attempt to improve the economic situation of local Russians only (not to mention tens of thousands of future colonists) would have to involve at least 50,000 people in need of land. State land was partly rented out and, therefore, not immediately available. The text only implicitly suggested that it would be extremely difficult to communicate this redistribution of land to the masses of landless *inorodtsy*. Concerning the colonization project, however, the author was even more skeptical, since Latvians and Estonians displayed more endurance in their work and were better educated in the rural economy compared to average Russian peasants (not to mention the differences between Baltic sea fishing and Russian inland fishing). Thus, he doubted the competitiveness of Russian peasants from the internal provinces in the local environment without significant funds provided by the government and local authorities.

Finally, the author of the memorandum made clear that strengthening "Russian principles" in the Baltic provinces meant squaring the circle. Whereas he convincingly described the Estonians' and Latvians' strong ambitions toward the "self-determination of their tribes," he argued in the same paragraph that the only way to improve "Russian principles" was to "attract" Estonians and Latvians "to Russian culture and Russian statehood."<sup>78</sup> But he offered no ideas about how this might ultimately be realized. In Vysotskii's and Balabin's mind, the state should establish and support local Russian theaters because "nothing conquers the sympa-

77 P. Koshkin, "Svedeniia o russkom naselenii v Pribaltiiskom krae, 1908," in *Imperskaia politika*, 315–32.

78 Ibid., 332.

thies of the *inorodtsy* for Russian culture so easily and imperceptibly as the admiration (*obaianie*) for Russian art.”<sup>79</sup> At the time, however, Estonians and Latvians had already quite successfully created their own national cultures with the establishment of their own theaters and operas. The *obaianie* for Russian culture was secured via translations into Latvian, just like one Riga-born Russian sarcastically had predicted already in 1901. According to him, Latvians of all social strata loved their translated Dostoevskii and Tolstoi at a time when Russian peasants as a rule had still no clue as to who these writers were.<sup>80</sup>

### Securing the Loyalty of the Baltic Provinces after the Revolution of 1905

A former governor of Livland province, Mikhail A. Zinov’ev, who resided in Riga from 1885 to 1895, stated in his first report to Alexander III that Riga was surely one of the “most valuable pearls in His Majesty’s crown.” According to him, however, it was rather “absurd” to turn this pearl into Smolensk or Tula because the empire could only learn from local institutions.<sup>81</sup> Two decades later, Meller-Zakomel’skii had learned during his time in Riga from 1906 to 1909 that transforming the Baltic provinces “into Smolensk and Tula” was not only “absurd”: it would potentially lead even to a revival of the civil war that had ravaged parts of the provinces in 1905 and 1906. Eventually, the provisional governor-general demonstrated that *russkost*’ as an indicator of loyalty could be quite misleading. Like Zinov’ev, he pragmatically sensed the particular conditions in the Baltic provinces without trying to artificially impose onto the Baltic region criteria that were valid in the all-imperial context.

Promoting *russkost*’ in the Baltic provinces as a means to defend the empire eventually did not convince even a staunch monarchist and military

79 “Mery k utverzhdeniiu,” 337.

80 Ch. Vetrinskii [Vasilii E. Cheshikhin], *Sredi Latyshei. Ocherki* (Moscow: Izdanie S. Dorovatovskogo i A. Charushnikova, 1901), 28.

81 Zinov’ev’s report on the year 1885, as quoted in Alexander von Tobien, *Die Livländische Ritterschaft*, vol. 1. (Riga: Löffler, 1925), 156, 159; Ea Jansen, “Aleksander III venustusreformid ja eesti avalikkus”, *Acta historica Tallinnensia*, vol. 3 (Tallinn: Ajaloo instituut, 1999), 47–50.

man like Meller-Zakomel'skii. In his position he had to pacify a region disoriented and shattered by months of socially and ethnically motivated violence. Most interestingly, he actually supported Vysotskii's idea of ethnic curiae for the Russians because they had more historical rights to be represented in the capital than did the Latvians. The general-governor also shared Vysotskii's view of the Russians as born negotiators, and he suggested to St. Petersburg that the Baltic provinces might be well represented in the State Duma solely by Russian deputies. Possibly to the dismay of Vysotskii, however, he favored the Riga Old Believers as potential representatives in Petersburg, thus choosing a segment of the population that, in many aspects, was better integrated into local society.<sup>82</sup> In the long-term perspective, the advice Minister of the Interior Ivan N. Durnovo gave to the governor of Estland province, Prince Sergei V. Shakhovskoi, in early 1894 to "manage affairs in a routine manner" was the recipe of state officials in the Baltic provinces for years to come.<sup>83</sup>

After the excitement of the revolutionary period, the Russian nationalists in the littoral also reduced their alarmist rhetoric to a minimum. In the literature published on the occasion of the bicentennial of the incorporation of the provinces into the empire, an author like the teacher Pavel Pshenichnikov, whose text on the tragic fate of Russians as "foreigners" in the Baltic provinces was published by the Riga-based "Russian National Club 'Beseda,'" did not reproduce the apocalyptic vision of the *Okrainy Rossii* article cited at the beginning of this chapter. In contrast, he was sure that the littoral would become permanently and tightly connected "with great Russia," even if he made the important reservation that this was possible only with the help of governmental reforms to be executed soon.<sup>84</sup>

82 Meller-Zakomel'skii to Stolypin, October 14, 1908, in *Imperskaia politika*, 295–97, here 297. On the Old Believers in Riga, see Vasilii V. Rozanov, "Fedoseevtsy v Rige," *Novoe vremia*, August 27, 1899 (and in *Oko-lo tserkovnykh sten. Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Respublika, 1995), 22–28; Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen*, 66–67.

83 L. [Nikolai A. Leisman], "Kniaz' Sergei Vladimirovich Shakhovskoi," in *Iz arkhiva kniazia Sergeia Vladimirovicha Shakhovskogo*, t. 1 (St. Petersburg: V.M. Eriks, 1909, I–XL, here XXXV, XXXVII (quot.).

84 Pshenichnikov, *Russkie*, 27. Unfortunately for the author, the planned agrarian, zemstvo, and church reforms were never realized. See Andreeva, *Pribaltiiskie nemtsy*.

Even Vysotskii was sure that the “unification process” was becoming ever more visible in the everyday life of the provinces, and that the “fundamental frame” for the “unification with Russia and the Russian people of the Baltic provinces and their multiethnic inhabitants (*raznoplemennoe nase-lenie*)” already existed.<sup>85</sup> By this “frame,” he obviously referred to the third State Duma, which, in his view, had the potential to revitalize the old Russian representative body of *zemskii sobor*.<sup>86</sup>

In any case, concerning the antagonism between the interests of empire and nation, Vysotskii was quite aware of in 1910, he was convinced that Russia was still far from “major conflicts” between these “contradictory interests.” Neither the Finnish nor the Polish, the “German-Latvian” or the most serious of all, the Jewish question, in his view posed that kind of danger because Russia would solve all these problems in a “human-progressive, good-hearted direction” without any repressions against “national self-esteem” (*natsional’noe samoliubie*).<sup>87</sup>

Vysotskii, therefore, provides a good example of the crystallizing effect the 1905 revolution had on the right-wing milieu of Russian nationalists, especially those who lived in the non-Russian borderlands. After the “Pribaltii-skaia smuta,” any visions about a peaceful “Russification” of the Latvians and Estonians had become irrelevant. These were only consequential for nationalists who advocated a national empire to envision a large-scale Russian colonization of the littoral as the last resort of their expectations (not the least because the Germans, the other tiny demographic minority in the provinces, allegedly did the same). Voting as a form of legitimate representation was accepted also by Vysotskii and others, but in a nationalizing environment, small ethnic groups facing these new conditions had no chance. The demographic majorities in the littoral, the Estonians and Latvians, however, would not voluntarily leave their homeland (and one might wonder if resettlement or rather deportation to Siberia of tens of thousands of local peasants would still fall under the category of respecting “national self-esteem”).

85 Vysotskii, *Ocherki po istorii. Vyp. 1, Russkaia gosudarstvennost’*, 37.

86 Vysotskii, *Sushchnost’*, 15.

87 Ibid., 16–17.

Finally, in hoping that the state would help realize their dreams of a truly Russian Baltic borderland, nationalists in the empire, like Budilovich, or in the provinces, like Vysotskii, bet on the wrong horse. The continuation of the “coalition of aristocracies” with the Baltic nobilities, which was already much criticized at the time, not only provided no answer to the question of how to deal with the fact that, actually, the center increasingly needed to maintain its ties with the political representatives of the Estonians and Latvians (for example, as city leaders or Duma deputies). This traditional estate-based cooperation all of a sudden had no future because it came to an end, by and large, in August 1914 with the beginning of the Great War against Germany. When in late 1916 a project was presented to the Duma that aimed at the introduction of *zemstva* in the three provinces (Kurland and southern Livland were occupied by the German army at the time), the government was obviously helpless, even if this project would have meant full administrative “Russification,” without, however, the necessary numbers of Russians living in the littoral. Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei D. Sazonov put it bluntly in his comment: this project would create a “system of national self-administration” in the provinces that was not tolerable because “little tribal groups” in the borderland should not be empowered by imperial law. Of course, the Germans could not maintain their previously dominant position, but without a “carefully thought out system of curiae-elections,” no balance of “all elements of the inhabitants” could be established.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, to keep the balance between the interests of the empire—to keep the provinces loyal and quiet—and those of the Russian nation—to establish firm Russian control in the provinces—was indeed to square the circle. In this political stalemate, any solution one might think of would meet with the protests of at least one of the parties involved. After August 1914, the demographic majorities whose delegates in the Duma constantly demanded more rights for their loyal war effort felt entitled to raise the price for their consent to reforms. Only when the Provisional Government in

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88 S. Sazonov's statement, May 15, 1916, in *Imperskaia politika*, 392–93.

1917 eventually revoked the alliance of aristocracies and agreed to give local power to the demographic majorities was this stalemate broken. But by this point, the radical ethnic utopia of Vysotskii and Budilovich finally lost its relevance and, as one may argue, gave way to the nationalizing agendas of the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians.

# Russian Jews and the Russian Right: Why Were There No Jewish Right-Wing Politics in the Late Russian Empire?

Vladimir Levin

Several academic works have influenced research discourse more because of their impressive titles rather than their content, which is important in its own right.<sup>1</sup> One of them is John D. Klier's study, "Why were Russian Jews not *Kaisertreu*?" Klier asked why Jews were not loyal subjects of the Russian Empire, like they were in the neighboring German and Austro-Hungarian empires. To answer this question, Klier described how the tsarist regime equated Jews with its enemies, the Poles, and imposed anti-Jewish legislation starting in the 1860s and especially after 1881. Finally, he stated that "the judeophobic mindset of the imperial government created conditions that actively encouraged the movement of Jews into political opposition. . . . It became literally impossible for Jews to join the right-wing of Russian politics."<sup>2</sup>

To a large extent, Klier's conclusion is correct and easily observable. However, in asking a question about Jewish political behavior, Klier was not actually speaking about the Jews, but about the approaches and measures implemented by another actor, the imperial government. In his construction, the Jews are not the subject of politics but an object; their po-

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1 For example, Mark Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia 1600–1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983); Ada Rapoport-Albert, "Hagiography with Footnotes: Edifying Tales and the Writing of History in Hasidism," *History and Theory: Essays in Jewish Historiography* 27 (1988): 119–59.

2 John Doyle Klier, "Why Were Russian Jews Not *Kaisertreu*?" *Ab Imperio*, no. 4 (2003): 41–58, quote on p. 57–58.



litical choices are explained as a reaction, not as an action. The aim of this chapter, in contrast, is to examine the attitudes and approaches of *Kai-sertreu* Jews as political actors in the Russian Empire. While the participation of Jews in the revolutionary movement has been a constant subject of discussion in historiography since the 1900s,<sup>3</sup> and Jewish liberals were added to the discussion starting in the 1980s,<sup>4</sup> Jews with a conservative and monarchist *Weltanschauung* have been ignored by scholars for a century.

For the sake of this research, I will employ a simplified depiction of the political map of pre-revolutionary Russia, dividing it into two broad categories, the left and the right, therefore disregarding the very significant differences within those camps. While the left sought drastic changes and was commonly defined as “the opposition,” the main prerequisite for belonging to the right was loyalty to the existing regime. The right, or conservative, camp included the extreme right, which believed in unlimited autocracy and opposed capitalism and parliamentarianism, the Russian Nationalists who sought to convert the empire into the national state of the Russian people, the liberal Union of October 17, who preferred constitutional mon-

3 See, among many others: *Istoriia evreiskogo rabocheho dvizheniia v Rossii i Pol'she* (Geneva: Zagranichnyi komitet Bunda, 1901); *Di gesbikhte fun yidisher arbeter-bund* (Vilnius: Bund, 1906); N. A. Bukhbinder, *Istoriia evreiskogo rabocheho dvizheniia v Rossii* (Leningrad: Akademicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1925); Avrom Kirzhnits, *Der yidisher arbeter: Khrestomatie tsu der gesbichte fun der yidisher arbeter, revoliutsionerer un sotsialistisher bavegung in rusland*, 4 vols. (Moscow: Shul un bukh, 1925); *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie sredi evreev* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vsesoiuznogo obshchestva politkatorzhan i ssyl'no-poselentssev, 1930); Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers Movement in Tsarist Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Henry J. Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia: From Its Origin to 1905* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972); Matityahu Mintz, *Be borokhov: ha-ma'agal ha-rishon, 1900–1906* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1977); Robert J. Brym, *The Jewish Intelligentsia and Russian Marxism: A Sociological Study of Intellectual Radicalism and Ideological Divergence* (London: Macmillan, 1978); Moshe Mishkinsky, *Reshit tnu'at ha-poalim ha-yehudit be-rusiyah: megamot yesod* (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbutz Ha-me'uhad, 1981); Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews and the Politics of Nationality: The Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Tsarist Russia, 1892–1914* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004); Vladimir Levin, *Mi-mahapekhah le-milhamah: Ha-politikah ha-yehudit be-rusiyah, 1907–1914* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2016), 229–348.

4 See, for example: Robert M. Seltzer, “Jewish Liberalism in Late Tsarist Russia,” *Contemporary Jewry* 9 (1987/88): 47–66; Alexander Orbach, “The Jewish People's Group and the Jewish Politics, 1906–1914,” *Modern Judaism* 10 (1990): 1–15; Christoph Gassenschmidt, *Jewish Liberal Politics in Tsarist Russia, 1900–1914: The Modernization of Russian Jewry* (New York: Macmillan, 1995); Levin, *Mi-mahapekhah le-milhamah*, 129–225.

archy and sought further moderate reform, and a variety of different groups in-between. Loyalty to the tsar and his government and the rejection of revolutionary changes was their common denominator.

Research on *Kaisertreu* Jews in Russia is not an easy task. Since any political activities were outlawed before the 1905 Revolution, those who wanted to change things—the revolutionaries—quite naturally produced much more written evidence of their ideas and actions than those who were pleased with the existing situation, that is, the loyalists. Thus, we have many more sources, both primary and secondary, on the underground People's Will (*Narodnaia Volia*), whose activists assassinated Alexander II in 1881, than on the underground Holy Brotherhood (*Sviashchennaia Druzhina*), which appeared in 1881 in order to prevent a future regicide.<sup>5</sup> Baron Horace (Goratsii) Gintsburg (Günzburg),<sup>6</sup> a person who could rightfully be called “the spokesman” of Russian Jewry, might have been one of the members of this Holy Brotherhood.<sup>7</sup> Gintsburg was one of the richest Jewish entrepreneurs of the period and one of the most prominent examples of a *Kaisertreu* Jew; as such, he will be discussed below. There is no doubt, however, that he was not alone. As the famous economic historian Arcadius Kahan noted, the entrepreneurs would “better be thought to restore equilibrium and promote their own economic and social status than to destroy an order.”<sup>8</sup>

It is hard to define the number of Jewish conservatives who were content with the existing order, but their presence is more than certain. If we

5 On *Sviashchennaia Druzhina*, see Stephen Lukashevich, “The Holy Brotherhood: 1881–1883,” *The American Slavic and East European Review* 18 (1959): 491–509; Iu.A. Pelevin, “‘Sviashchennaia družina’ protiv narodovol’cheskoi emigratsii,” in *Budushchego net i ne mozhnet byt’ bez nauk...* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2005), 604–34.

6 On Gintsburg, see Ilia Vovshin, “Mishpahat gintzburg ve-yetzirat ha-plutokratiyah ha-yehudit ba-imperiya ha-rusit” (PhD thesis, Haifa University, 2015).

7 For the best discussion of Gintsburg's participation in *Sviashchennaia Druzhina*, see Vovshin, “Mishpahat gintzburg,” 190–91. See also Lukashevich, “The Holy Brotherhood,” 493; Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 30; Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews: Reform, Reaction and Anti-Semitism in Imperial Russia, 1772–1917* (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993), 57.

8 Arcadius Kahan, *Essays in Jewish Social and Economic History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 87.

draw a parallel between one's social-economic status and political views, we may assume that members of the higher status groups were more inclined to conservatism. Arcadius Kahan estimated the size of the Jewish bourgeoisie (defined as hereditary and personal nobility, honorary citizens, and guild merchants) in the Pale of Settlement in 1897 as 16,847 families.<sup>9</sup> Since strict adherence to religion—as it will be demonstrated below—might also be considered a sign of conservatism, we may add those 19,127 Jews whom the 1897 census registered as employed in “religious services” in the Pale.<sup>10</sup> According to these criteria, approximately 36,000 Jews might have been considered conservatives according to their social status. This number, which is clearly an underestimation, is comparable with the combined membership of 78,000 in four Jewish revolutionary parties at the peak of their popularity, which was obviously inflated for propagandistic reasons.<sup>11</sup>

The 1905 Revolution made political and societal activities more or less legal; it created the major arena for political action, the elected State Duma; and it removed the majority of restrictions on mass media. The possibilities for the expression of political views multiplied from participation in the Duma elections, to subscribing to and reading various newspapers, and membership in political parties or quasi-political organizations. While left-wing political forces still could not operate freely, the government tolerated and supported right-wing parties, organizations, and newspapers. This chapter examines the strategies conservative Jews employed to express their political views in the last decade of the Russian empire, when the public activities of right-wing forces became widespread. What options were open to them in Russian conservative politics? Which groups in right-wing political circles were willing to accept like-minded Jews? My main argument is that Jews with conservative political convictions attempted to find a common language with some right-wing groups and to cooperate with them on tactical issues. At the same time,

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<sup>9</sup> Kahan, *Essays*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>11</sup> The Bund claimed around 33,000 members; the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party around 27,000; the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party ca. 12,000; and the Poalei Zion between 5,000 and 6,000 members. See Levin, *Mi-mahapekhab le-milhamah*, 232, 241, 247, 256.

the total rejection of Jews by the right-wing politicians was beginning to show cracks after 1907, and especially during World War I.

## Jews and the Right

The most obvious choice for Jews who identified themselves with the tsarist regime and the values of the Russian Empire as the state of Russians was to convert to Russian Orthodox Christianity, which meant they stopped being Jews according to the imperial law. Indeed, there were several baptized Jews who became active in Russian right-wing circles, for example Ilia Gurland or Saveli Efron (Litvin).<sup>12</sup> This strategy, however, was very personal and not many individuals were prepared to use it.<sup>13</sup> Those Jews who remained true to the tenets of Judaism but shared conservative political views and wished to participate in political activities had to look for other options. It is possible to speak about three strategies that, at least in theory, were open to conservative Jews after the 1905 Revolution and the emergence of public and parliamentary politics: (1) joining Russian right-wing organizations; (2) establishing Jewish right-wing organizations; and (3) cooperating with the Russian right.

### Joining Russian right-wing organizations

The option to join right-wing organizations was almost nonexistent for Jews in Russia since all right-wing monarchist organizations explicitly prohibited Jews and baptized Jews from entering their ranks.<sup>14</sup> Those organizations professed strong, sometimes mystical antisemitism, and according

12 On Gurland, see A. Likhomanov, "I.Ia. Gurliand and evreiskii vopros v Rossii," *Vestnik Evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve* 4 (1993): 142–53; on Efron, see Svetlana Natkovich, "Savelii efron ve-ha-midrag ha-anti-shemi: le-dyukano shel mashmitz," *Zion* 83 (2018): 33–69.

13 On conversions in the Russian Empire, see Ellie Schainker, *Confessions of the Shtetl: Converts from Judaism in Imperial Russia, 1817–1906* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

14 See, e.g., the 1905 bylaws of the Union of the Russian People, A. Chernovskii, ed., *Soiuz russkogo naroda: po materialam Chrezvychainoi sledstvennoi komissii Vremennogo pravitel'stva, 1917 g.* (Moscow–Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1929), 414. A useful introduction to Russian right-wing organizations in English is Don C. Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

to Semion Goldin, considered Jews to be “the Other” of the Russian state.<sup>15</sup> They were clearly not interested in mobilizing Jewish support. For example, the head of the Union of the Russian People in Odessa, Count Alexei Konovnitsyn, published an appeal to Jews in August 1907, in which he demanded that Jews reject revolution and express repentance. He also insisted that Jews unite in a union “under the banner of the Union of the Russian People.” This wording made it clear that Konovnitsyn did not want Jews in his Union of the Russian People, but he did encourage them to organize separately under the same slogans.<sup>16</sup> Joining right-wing organizations or activities could be dangerous for Jews: Ilya Gerasimov described a case in Kazan, when a Jew Kissin participated in the “patriotic” demonstration in October 1905, but ended up as a victim of the anti-Jewish pogrom.<sup>17</sup>

The only party on the loyalist part of the Russian political spectrum that attempted to attract Jewish followers was the Union of October 17 (the Octobrists). In 1906, a “group of Jews-members” of the Union published a brochure in which they called on “the Russian Jews” to join the party and to support it in the elections to the State Duma.<sup>18</sup> Notably, the copy of the brochure in the National Library of Israel bears the ex libris of Ahad Ha’am (Asher Zvi Ginsberg), the ideologue of cultural Zionism whose general political views were quite conservative.<sup>19</sup> The moderate liberal Union of October 17 could hardly be called a genuine right-wing party.<sup>20</sup> However,

15 On antisemitism on the Russian right, see Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics*; Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*. On Jews as “the Other” of the Russian Empire, see Semion Goldin, “Evrei kak poniatie v istorii imperskoi Rossii,” in *Poniatia o Rossii: K istoricheskoi semantike imperskogo perioda*, vol. 2 (Moscow: NLO, 2012), 374. Cf. a phrase of a historian of the Russian Right, Andrei Ivanov, that the notion of a Jew was “a kind of definition of concentration of the global evil” [opredelenie neкоеgo sosredocheniia mirovogo zla] – A.A. Ivanov, *Pravye v russkom parlamente: ot krizisa k krakhu (1914–1917)* (Moscow–St. Petersburg: Al’ians-Arkheo, 2013), 431.

16 Chernovskii, *Soiuz russkogo naroda*, 230.

17 Ilya Gerasimov, *Plebeian Modernity: Social Practices, Illegality, and the Urban Poor in Russia, 1906–1916* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018), 69.

18 *Vozzvanie k russkim evreiam ot gruppy chlenov-evreev partii “Soiuz 17-go oktiabria”* (Moscow: Tip. Zabalueva, 1906).

19 On Ahad Ha’am, see Steven J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha’am and the Origins of Zionism* (London: Peter Halban, 1993).

20 On the Union of October 17, see, for example, A.Ia. Avrekh, *Stolypin i tret’ia дума* (Moscow: Nauka, 1968); Ben-Cion Pinchuk, *The Octobrists in the Third Duma, 1907–1912* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974); Valentin Diakin, *Samoderzhavie, burzhuaizii i dvorianstvo v 1907–1911 gg.* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1978).

from the very beginning it supported the government, and its position regarding the Jewish question was ambiguous. The demand for equal rights for all appeared in its program, but the Octobrists in the Duma never even attempted to put it to a vote; moreover, they often voted for new restrictions on Jews.<sup>21</sup> The prominent Russian-Jewish socialist Mark Ratner wrote in 1912: "the tendencies to go hand in hand with the Octobrists that appeared in certain circles of bourgeois Jewry, were immediately suppressed when the genuine political mood of this party, [which was] not ready to do anything to establish the equality of nationalities and the removal of the Jewish lack of rights, became clear."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the abovementioned brochure is the only evidence that the Union of October 17 had any Jewish members.

#### Establishing Jewish right-wing organizations

While Jews could not join right-wing unions, they could, theoretically, establish their own right-wing organizations. However, we know about only one such organization, founded in Odessa in 1910–11. Its name was "The Society of Jews Praying for the Wellbeing of the Tsar and the Government" (*Hevrat mitpalelim li-she'loma shel malkhut*), and its aim was to disseminate among Jews "the importance of belief in God and of the devotion to the autocracy and government." Odessa's governor, Ivan Tolmachiov, one of the few high-ranking administrators who clearly distinguished between the loyal "Jewish masses" and the "harmful" Jewish intelligentsia, supported this society.<sup>23</sup> The bylaws of the "Society of Jews Praying for the Government" were approved not at the provincial level, as could have been done according to the 1906 law on public associations, but by the deputy minister of the interior, Sergei Kryzhanovskii. Newspapers, however, ridiculed the establishment of the society and described it as a trick by a certain *melamed*

21 For an analysis of the Octobrists' position on the "Jewish question," see Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 263–67. See also Levin, *Mi-mahapekhab le-milhamah*, 66–67.

22 M.B. Ratner, "Politicheskie dvizheniia," *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 13, ed. A. Garkavi and L. Katsenel'son (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvo dlia nauchnykh evreiskikh izdaniia and Brokgauz-Efron, 1912), 645.

23 On Tolmachiov's attitude to Jewish religious Orthodoxy, see Vladimir Levin, "Orthodox Jewry and the Russian Government: An Attempt at Rapprochement, 1907–1914," *East European Jewish Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2009): 192–93.

(a teacher in a private one-room Jewish religious school), Lev (or Moisei) Kenis, to get permission for opening a private synagogue in his apartment.<sup>24</sup>

It is not accidental that the only Jewish right-wing society was a religious one, “praying for the tsar,” and not, for example, one that promoted street demonstrations. Jewish monarchism was very often (but not always) closely connected to religion. Religious orthodoxy was the most conservative force on the “Jewish street,” and it always stressed that deep devotion to religious observance includes loyalty towards the existing regime and fierce opposition to revolutionary movements. Ilia Lurie has already pointed out the amazing similarity between the anti-modernist views of Rabbi Sholom Duber Schneersohn of Lubavitch and the conservative thinking of the highest Russian officials of the late nineteenth century, like, for instance, Konstantin Pobedonostsev.<sup>25</sup>

The opposition of orthodox rabbis to Jewish revolutionaries before 1905 has been discussed by several scholars,<sup>26</sup> and recently David Fishman researched the Orthodox rabbis’ display of loyalty in 1901–04.<sup>27</sup> The loyalist and monarchist views of these rabbis were expressed in their speeches and writings on particular occasions, while attempts to found an organization were unsuccessful. Some Orthodox leaders tried to create an organization “Mahzikei Ha-Dat” in 1901–03, but their plans failed.<sup>28</sup> Some leading rabbis might have been involved in discussions regarding the idea of a con-

24 See *Hed ha-zman* 37 (February 12, 1910): 1; *Hed ha-zman* 51 (March 1, 1911): 3; *Evreiskii mir* 9 (March 4, 1911): 33–34; *Evreiskii mir* 12 (March 25, 1911): 26; Chernovskii, *Soiuz russkogo naroda*, 296–97.

25 Ilia Lurie, *Milhamot liubavich: hasidut habad be-rusiyah ha-tsarit* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2018), 240–42.

26 Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale*, 104–10; Eli Lederhendler, *Jewish Responses to Modernity: New Voices in America and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 69–76; Gershon Bacon, “The Rabbinical Conference in Kraków (1903) and the Beginning of Organized Orthodox Jewry,” in *Let the Old Make Way for the New: Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Eastern European Jewry Presented to Immanuel Etkes*, ed. David Assaf and Ada Rapoport-Albert, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2009), 215\*–17\*.

27 David Fishman, “The Kingdom on Earth Is Like the Kingdom in Heaven: Orthodox Responses to the Rise of Jewish Radicalism in Russia,” in *Let the Old Make Way for the New: Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Eastern European Jewry Presented to Immanuel Etkes*, ed. David Assaf and Ada Rapoport-Albert, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2009), 227\*–59\*.

28 On Mahzikei Ha-Dat, see Vladimir Levin, “Kneset israel: ha-miflagah ha-politit ha-ortodoksit ha-rishonah ba-imperiyah ha-rusit,” *Zion* 76 (2011): 34–35.



servative political party of orthodox Jews, formulated by Faivel Meir Gets, which apparently took place in 1903. The aim of the party was to oppose antisemites on the one hand and the Jewish revolutionaries on the other. The existence of such a party would have been enough, according to Gets, to remove “the responsibility for rebels” from “all Jews of our country.” At the same time, notwithstanding his proclaimed conservatism and loyalty to the regime, Gets stressed that the party must strive for the full emancipation of Jews, but not through violence and rebellion.<sup>29</sup> In other words, Jewish conservatives could support the existing regime but not in the issue of Jewish civil equality.

Only after the subduing of the revolutionary turmoil did some prominent orthodox leaders begin working on the creation of an orthodox political party. After several preparatory steps undertaken during 1907, the “Knesset Israel” society was officially announced in January 1908.<sup>30</sup> The governor of Vil’na Dmitrii Liubimov approved the bylaws of the new organization, regarding it as having “a pure conservative character without anti-governmental aims,” that aroused opposition from the “Jewish youth and progressive-minded Jews.”<sup>31</sup> However, neither the bylaws of Knesset Israel nor its public charter written by Rabbi Haim Ozer Grodzensky included any reference to conservatism or loyalty to the regime. In fact, both documents contained direct references to the legal equality of Jews.<sup>32</sup> The authorities used this demand for emancipation in the bylaws to ban Knesset Israel in 1911.<sup>33</sup> However, the activities of Knesset Israel had already ceased

29 The text was published in Hebrew in 1907, Dr F. M-r [Faivel Meir Gets], *Ad matai tabrishu! Kol kore le-shlumei emunei israel* (Vilna, 1907) and printed again as the last chapter of a Russian brochure, M.B. [Faivel Meir Gets], *V svete pravdy* (Moscow, 1908). In the Russian brochure (p. 3), Gets claimed that the text was prepared in 1903. For the discussion of Gets’s plans, see Levin, “Knesset israel,” 38–39.

30 On Knesset Israel, see Levin, “Knesset israel”; Vladimir Levin and Ilia Lurie, “Formirovanie evreiskoi ortodoksal’noi politiki,” in *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda v Rossii: ot razdelov Pol’sbi do padeniia Rossiiskoi imperii, 1772–1917*, ed. Ilia Lurie (Moscow and Jerusalem: Gesharim–Mosty Kul’tury, 2012), 387–88.

31 Russian State Historical Archives (RGIA), f. 821, op. 9, d. 63, l. 31–36.

32 *Ustav obshchestva ‘Kneset Israel’* (Vilna, 1908), 2; *Sefer ha-takanot me-agudat kneset israel* (Vilna, 1908), 2; Aharon Surasky, *Raban shel israel: prakim be-masekhet hayyav u-foalo shel ... rabbi haim ozer grodzensky ... mi-vilna* (Bnei Brak: Netzah, 1971), 40; Haim Ozer Grodzensky, *Abiezer: kovetz igrot*, ed. Aharon Surasky vol. 1 (Bnei Brak: Netzah, 1970), 257–60, vol. 2, 626–27; Haim Ozer Grodzensky, *Iggerot r. haim ozer*, 2nd edition, vol. 2 (New York: Yeshiva u-Metivta Rabeinu Yaakov Yosef, 2001), 93–96.

33 *Severo-zapadnyi golos* 1573 (January 29, 1911): 3.



two years earlier, in the winter of 1908–09, when its founders abandoned their attempts to create a viable organization and joined the discussion with German Orthodox rabbis over the establishment of Agudat Israel. On the one hand, the first attempt to establish an orthodox political organization failed since the traditional values Jewish orthodox leaders wished to preserve did not include mass political activities. On the other hand, politics during the 1905 Revolution, which served as the reference point for the founders of Knesset Israel, were so anti-government that even the most conservative Jewish leaders refrained from expressing their conservatism. They did not dare using monarchist rhetoric in their public appeals, and many of them probably sincerely believed that the discrimination against Jews should be eliminated from Russian legal codes.

The first years after the end of the 1905 revolution were marked by the high hopes of Jewish orthodoxy to cooperate with the government. I have discussed this attempt at cooperation elsewhere;<sup>34</sup> here I would like to stress only one aspect of Orthodox activity. In the years 1907–10, countless texts produced by leading rabbis reiterated the idea that the strict adherence to the values of Judaism demanded loyalty to the tsar and the state. This was the main argument of Orthodoxy in its search for support from the government of Petr Stolypin. On several occasions, orthodox leaders adopted the mode of behavior specific to Russian monarchist unions.<sup>35</sup> For example, the assembly of orthodox rabbis in Warsaw opened on December 30, 1908 with a prayer for the tsar, the singing of the Russian imperial anthem, and the sending of a telegram to the tsar through Stolypin. The next day, the rabbis cabled new year greetings to Stolypin, the Governor General of Poland, the Governor of Warsaw, and the governors of their provinces.<sup>36</sup> The assembly of orthodox rabbis in Vil'na in April 1909 also prayed for the tsar and thanked the Ministry of Interior, the Governor General and the *polizeimeister*.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, the efforts of Ortho-

34 Levin, "Orthodox Jewry and the Russian Government."

35 On the rituals of right-wing organizations, see Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Political Symbols and Rituals of the Russian Radical Right, 1900–1914," *Slavonic and East European Review* 76 (1998): 441–66.

36 Levin, "Orthodox Jewry and the Russian Government," 193.

37 *Ibid.*, 195.

doxy in 1909–10 were fruitless and did not garner any flexibility in the government attitude toward their case. In subsequent years, the hopes for cooperation with the government disappeared and disillusioned orthodox leaders became less effusive in expressing their monarchism.<sup>38</sup>

### Cooperation with the Russian right

While those Jews who professed rightist and monarchist views could not join Russian organizations and did not succeed in establishing parallel Jewish ones, they could try to cooperate with right-wing parties on tactical issues. Since all right-wing organizations opposed the very idea of Jewish equality, the prerequisite for such cooperation was pushing the issue of full emancipation aside.

This was the politics conducted by one of the two Jewish members of the Third Duma, Lazar Nisselovich. Nisselovich believed that there were among the Octobrists and the rightists “honest, goodhearted people with a decent soul,” whose antisemitism was due to a lack of knowledge about the Jewish question. In November 1907, he told a Jewish newspaper that “we can—in private talks and constant meetings—show them their error and prove their injustice toward and abuse of Jews in order to destroy [their] prejudice against us and turn their hearts to our good.”<sup>39</sup> In April 1908, Nisselovich indeed spoke with the heads of the non-oppositional factions in the Duma about the introduction of a bill on Jewish emancipation. He received promises from the leader of the Right Faction Count Alexei Bobrinskii, the head of the Moderate Right Faction Count Vladimir Bobrinskii, and the leader of the Octobrists Aleksandr Guchkov that they would not oppose the transfer of the bill to the commission.<sup>40</sup> This move, however, did not materialize, and from then on, Nisselovich no longer counted on the support of the moderate and extreme right. His most important initiative in the Duma, the bill on the abolition of the Pale of Settlement, was introduced in

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 196–98.

<sup>39</sup> I. Solodukha, “Sihah im ha-deputat l.n. nisselovich,” *Hed Hazman* 61 (November 10, 1907): 1.

<sup>40</sup> “Okolo Gosud. Dumy,” *Rassvet* 16 (April 26, 1908): 18–19; “O evreiskom predstavitel'stve v Dume,” *Rassvet* 16 (April 26, 1908): 1–4; L.N. Nisselovich, “Pravda prevyshe vsego I,” *Rassvet* 26 (June 29, 1912): 5.

1910 with the signatures of 166 Octobrists (in addition to all oppositional Duma members). The Octobrists, however, also made sure that the bill was never discussed in the parliamentary commission, and that it “died” there.<sup>41</sup>

Nisselovich’s attempts to cooperate with pro-government forces and even with antisemites were not fruitful. Nonetheless, similar tactics were proposed during the elections to the Fourth Duma in 1912.<sup>42</sup> For example, the crown rabbi of Pavlograd in Ekaterinoslav province, Elyakim Belen’kii, suggested that one half of Jewish voters should vote for the opposition and the other half for right-wing parties.<sup>43</sup> Genrikh Sliozberg, one of the most prominent Jewish activists, said in 1912 that there is a difference between the extreme right faction, which is “pointedly antisemitic” and the Nationalist faction, “which has a political program, it stands on the basis of the Manifesto of 17 October, and deals not only with the Jewish question but has other goals as well.” Sliozberg hoped it would be possible to make arrangements with the Nationalists since “they are our old acquaintances.”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the majority of the Nationalist faction leaders were gentry from the southwestern region—the traditional area of Jewish settlement since the sixteenth century.<sup>45</sup> The only immediate result of Sliozberg’s statement was that his political adversaries did not miss the opportunity to accuse him of *shtadlanut*—the traditional practice of lobbying for Jewish interests through personal intercession, which was considered to be self-humiliating by proponents of mass politics. Taking into account that the idea of making arrangements with the Nationalists was

41 On the episode with the bill, see Levin, *Mi-mahapekhab le-milhamah*, 75–91.

42 On Jewish participation in the elections to the Fourth Duma, see Levin, *Mi-mahapekhab le-milhamah*, 97–112.

43 Sh. [Leo Shternberg], “Po stopam g. Nisselovicha,” *Novyi Voskhod* 30 (July 26, 1912): 1; D.S. [Daniel Pashmanik], “Nad kem smeiotēs?” *Rassvet* 32 (August 10, 1912): 5–7.

44 V.Gr. [Vladimir Grossman], “A geshprakh mit h. sliozberg,” *Haint* 125 (May 31, 1912): 2; Obozrevatel’, “Otkliki izbiratel’noi kampanii,” *Rassvet* 31 (August 3, 1912): 11–13.

45 On the Russian Nationalists, see Robert Edelman, *Gentry Politics on the Eve of the Russian Revolution: The Nationalist Party, 1907–1917* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1980); Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 278–82; D.A. Kotsiubinskii, *Russkii natsionalizm v nachale XX stoletii: Rozbreniie i gibel’ ideologii Vserossiiskogo natsional’nogo soiuza* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001); Klimenti I. Fedevitch and Klimenti K. Fedevitch, *Za Viru, Tsaria i Kobzaria: Malorosiis’ki monarkhisty i ukrains’kyi natsional’nyi rukh (1905–1917 roku)* (Kiev: Krytyka, 2017).

expressed in the framework of Sliozberg's electoral campaign in Odessa, it is logical to suppose that he hoped to attract affluent Jews, who comprised 45 percent of voters in the first curia in that city.<sup>46</sup>

All in all, attempts to cooperate with right-wing organizations did not bring about the expected results. The expectations of conservative Jews did not coincide with the attitudes of Russian right-wing politicians.

### Jews on the Right

In his seminal work *On Modern Jewish Politics*, Ezra Mendelsohn stated that "the Jewish right is more difficult to define than the Jewish left."<sup>47</sup> Speaking about the interwar period, he singled out Agudat Israel and Revisionist Zionism as the Jewish right. However, while this distinction works in the framework of Jewish politics, it does not translate well to the general political spectrum that existed in "the officially antisemitic empire."<sup>48</sup> The above description of attempts to find a common language with the Russian right mentions several Jewish activists who could be defined as potentially *Kaisertreu*. The analysis of their *Weltanschauung* shows, however, a major difference between them and their Russian loyalist counterparts, notably their demand for Jewish emancipation.

It is hard to define the views of Lazar Nisselovich, which seem to be quite eclectic. He belonged to the faction of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets) in the Third Duma, but severely criticized the faction and its leader Pavel Miliukov for their tactics regarding the Jewish question. His attempt to enlist the support of Rabbi Sholom Duber Schneersohn of Lubavitch in the electoral campaign for the Fourth Duma may testify to the closeness of his views with those of one of the most conservative Orthodox leaders in the empire, but there is no way to confirm this assumption.<sup>49</sup>

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46 On the elections to the Fourth Duma in Odessa, see Levin, *Mi-mahapekhab le-milhamah*, 100–102.

47 Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 33.

48 Ibid., 60.

49 Levin, *Mi-mahapekhab le-milhamah*, 102–3. On Schneersohn, see Lurie, *Milhamot liubavich*.

Genrikh Sliozberg, in contrast, was known for his conservative outlook.<sup>50</sup> In his memoirs, completed in Paris in 1933, he stressed that he did not join any party in 1905–06 although the majority of Jews supported the Kadets. According to Sliozberg,

It was impossible for Jews to support the candidates of the extreme right-wing parties and even Octobrists. . . . Not because the Jews were of a radical disposition in the general political sense and accepted all points of the Kadet program, including the autonomy of Poland (one of the major differences between the Kadets and the Octobrists), emancipation of women etc. But the Party of People's Liberty [Kadets] was the only one besides the revolutionary parties that openly included in its program the equalization of Jewish rights with those of other populations. The Octobrists did not dare to do this, in my mind, not because of antisemitism and not because of the lack of understanding of the necessity for equality of all citizens before the law in a constitutional state, but out of tactical considerations. In this respect, they wanted to go hand in hand with the right and reactionary elements and not to differ significantly from the mood of the government, whose support they sought.<sup>51</sup>

This description reveals a very positive approach to the Octobrists. According to Sliozberg, they were neither antisemites nor anti-constitutionalists, but their tactic was to follow the government, and therefore, they did not support Jews.

In his other works written after the 1917 revolution, Sliozberg expressed even more right-wing views. For example, he wrote that the “granting of the constitution in 1905 was a little bit premature,” since the reforms proclaimed on December 12, 1904 “improved the regime and gradually in-

50 On Sliozberg's *Weltanschauung*, see Brian Horowitz, “Genrikh Sliozberg: shtrikhi k politicheskomu portretu,” *Vestnik Evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve* 2(15) (1997): 186–205, although the author does not discuss Sliozberg's general political views.

51 Genrikh Sliozberg, *Dela minuvshikh dnei: zapiski russkogo evreia*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1934), 191–92.

roduced the expansion of liberties.”<sup>52</sup> He also clearly preferred the State Council to the State Duma since it had no extreme politicians on either the right or left.<sup>53</sup> One may consider these views to be a result of the revolution and emigration, but it seems that Slizberg was always a conservative who cooperated with the Kadets simply because of their position on the Jewish question. According to his memoirs, after the publication of the October Manifesto in 1905, he left a meeting of the Union of Unions with the words “the struggle for the change of the regime is accomplished.”<sup>54</sup> Slizberg even wrote that he was known as an “antirevolutionary conservative activist,”<sup>55</sup> and this was how others remembered him.<sup>56</sup> It seems that if not for the Jewish question, Slizberg clearly could have been a member of the Octobrist party or even of the moderate wing of the Union of Russian Nationalists.

Slizberg’s conservative political views found expression in his praise of the loyalty of Baron Horace Gintsburg, under whose auspices Slizberg began his career as the defender of Jewish interests in the courts and governmental agencies.<sup>57</sup> As early as 1910, Slizberg stressed that “the main instrument” of Gintsburg’s struggle for Jewish rights “was his absolute and complete loyalty.”<sup>58</sup> In the 1930s, he wrote that Gintsburg’s “loyalty was preserved even after the revolutionary storm of 1905, notwithstanding the bad period of the pogroms that marked the victory of that revolution, and the sympathy of the tsar for the Union of the Russian People, which organized those pogroms.”<sup>59</sup> In another place, Slizberg mentioned “the deep loyalty [of Gintsburg] to the government and the dynasty.”<sup>60</sup>

Baron Horace Gintsburg was not the only Jewish notable to remain loyal to the regime in all matters except for the issue of Jewish equality. It

52 Genrikh Slizberg, *Dorevoliutsionnyi stroi Rossii* (Paris, 1933), 120.

53 Ibid., 116–17.

54 Slizberg, *Dela minuvshikh dnei*, 3: 175–76.

55 Ibid., 3: 176.

56 Ia. G. Frumkin, “Iz istorii russkogo evreistva (vospominaniia, materialy, dokumenty),” in *Kniga o russkom evreistve ot 1860-kh godov do revoliutsii 1917 g.* (New York: Soiuz russkikh evreev, 1960), 81.

57 On Slizberg’s activities, see Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 325–34.

58 Genrikh Slizberg, “Baron G.O. Gintsburg i pravovoe polozheniie evreev,” *Perezhitoe* 2 (1910): 112.

59 Slizberg, *Dela minuvshikh dnei*, 3: 187.

60 Genrikh Slizberg, *Baron G.O. Gintsburg. Ego zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’* (Paris: Pascal, 1933), 59.

seems that all his sons, as well as other prominent families such as the Brodskii in Kiev and the Vysotskii in Moscow had a very conservative *Weltanschauung*.<sup>61</sup> The Jewish nouveaux riche also followed suit. For example, Moses Ginsburg, who made a fortune from supplying the Russian Pacific Fleet and the Port Arthur fortress, and who virtually replaced the Gintsburgs as the main benefactor of the St. Petersburg Jewish community, was described by the emigrant antisemitic newspaper *Chasovoi* in 1936 as “a great Russian patriot,” who was “at the same time a devoted monarchist and pious Jew.”<sup>62</sup>

Pious Jews, like the Russian monarchists, used to quote a verse from Proverbs 24:21, “My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change” as proof that Jewish Orthodoxy was devoted to the throne.<sup>63</sup> David Fishman’s research of the Orthodox display of loyalty in 1901–04 demonstrates that “some rabbis were ideological—even theological—monarchists; others believed that loyalty to the state was a religious duty; still others believed that the profession of loyalty and gratitude toward the tsar was prudent *realpolitik* for the vulnerable Jewish minority.”<sup>64</sup> Some Orthodox Jews opposed the idea of emancipation. Thus, in December 1906, a certain Peretz Zilberberg asked the ministers of the Interior and Finances not to grant Jews equal rights because it would be harmful for Jews and the state. Another anonymous petition stated that the “genuine Jews” do not need emancipation since their religion does not allow them to serve in the army and governmental offices.<sup>65</sup> Such views characterized only extreme Orthodoxy, and only the most conservative rabbis could ignore the anti-Jewish politics of the Russian state. The mainstream of Orthodox leaders considered emancipation a legitimate political goal as the examples of Knesset Israel and the party proposed by Faivel Meir Gets have shown.

61 On the political loyalty of the Gintsburg family, see Vovshin, “Mishpahat gintzburg,” 240.

62 Aleksandr Pilipenko, “Moisei Ginsburg – ‘blagodel’ nashego Tikhookeanskogo flota’ (k istorii evreiskogo predprinimatel’sтва v Rossii),” *Vestnik Evreiskogo universiteta* 2(20) (1999): 290 note 5. For a biography of Ginsburg, see also: *M.A. Ginsburg: sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris: Pascal, 1933); *Moses Ginsburg: His Life and Work* (Paris, 1936); Sliozberg, *Dela minuwshikh dnei*, 3: 293–97.

63 Levin, “Orthodox Jewry and the Russian Government,” 194.

64 Fishman, “The Kingdom on Earth Is Like the Kingdom in Heaven” 258\*.

65 RGIA, f. 1284, op. 224, 1906, d. 131, l. 145–67.

Faivel Meir Gets, who formulated the idea of the conservative party, was an interesting figure who belonged to several camps simultaneously and, therefore, has not attracted sufficient scholarly attention. He was a Talmudic scholar who studied at the university (a fairly common occurrence) but did not abandon religious observance (not very common). He served as the learned Jew of the Vil'na educational district (i.e., he was a state official) and, at the same time, maintained close ties to orthodox rabbinical leaders, participated in the Russian and German Jewish press, and was a friend of the Russian philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev.<sup>66</sup> As one of the last *maskilim*, Gets was at home in German-Jewish culture and probably was influenced by the example of German-Jewish conservative politicians like Gabriel Riesser, who combined German patriotism with the struggle for Jewish emancipation. Similarly, the conservative political views of Gets included emancipation of the Jews, as seen in the program discussed above.

In addition to notables and pious Jews, some Zionists might have shared conservative views, or at least understood the feelings of Russian nationalists, and been indifferent to the future of Russia. Indeed, the Zionist movement in Russia carefully avoided interference in Russian politics before the 1905 Revolution; however, this was not a matter of principle but rather behavior that enabled its semi-legal existence and its avoidance of police repression. When the Zionists entered politics in 1905 and converted their organization into a political party at the Helsingfors Conference in November 1906, they adopted the demands of emancipation and national rights for Jews.<sup>67</sup> This clearly

66 On Gets see I.Ch. [Ilia Cherikover], "Gets, Faivel Meer Bentzelovich," *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 6 (St. Petersburg, 1910), 467; Sliozberg, *Dela minuvshikh dnei*, 3: 256–57; Semion Dubnov, *Kniga zhidni*, vol. 1 (Riga, 1934), 160; vol. 2 (Riga, 1935), 13, 25; *Yabadut lita*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv: Am Ha-Sefer and Iggud Yotzei Lita be-Israel, 1972), 142. On Solov'ev see Brian Horowitz, "Vladimir Solov'ev and the Jews: A View from Today," in *The Russian-Jewish Tradition: Intellectuals, Historians, Revolutionaries* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2017), 198–214 and literature cited there.

67 On Zionists joining the political struggle, see Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 134–69; on their transformation into a political party, see Alexander Orbach, "Zionism and the Russian Revolution of 1905: The Commitment to Participate in Domestic Political Life," *Bar-Ilan* 24–25 (1989): 7–24; Matityahu Mintz, "Work for the Land of Israel and 'Work in the Present': A Concept of Unity, a Reality of Contradiction," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York and London: New York University Press, 1996), 161–70; Vladimir Levin, "Politics at the Crossroads—Jewish Parties and the Second Duma Elections, 1907," *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 2 (2004): 129–46.



placed them in the oppositional segment of Russian politics. An attempt by Zeev Jabotinsky, a young and charismatic Zionist leader, to conclude an electoral agreement with right-wing landowners in the elections to the Second Duma in the province of Volhynia was driven not by ideological affinity but by rational calculation. Jabotinsky thought that such an agreement might bring about the election of several “progressive” members of the Duma, Jews among them.<sup>68</sup> After the failure of this combination, the Zionists never again tried to cooperate with the Russian right. Some of them fiercely criticized the Kadets but did so from the position of Jewish civil and national equality.<sup>69</sup>

Despite discrimination and the intensification of state anti-Jewish politics before 1914, the beginning of World War I caused an outburst of patriotic feelings among the empire’s Jews. Their expressions were very similar to those of other Russian subjects. In St. Petersburg for example, the festive prayer for the well-being of the imperial family and the victory of Russian arms was held in the Choral Synagogue, and a telegram expressing loyalty was sent to the tsar. Then a demonstration of Jews bearing portraits of the tsar and national flags marched to the office of the city governor and to the Winter Palace. At the Palace Square, the participants kneeled and sang the national anthem three times. They continued on to Anichkov Palace, the home of the dowager empress, and sang the anthem there too. On their way back to the synagogue, they again sang the anthem in front of the provincial governor’s office and the barracks of the military fleet.<sup>70</sup> Similar prayers for the victory of Russian arms in synagogues were accompanied by street demonstrations that included displaying the tsar’s portrait, flying flags, and singing the national anthem in many Russian cities and towns, starting with Odessa and ending with small shtetls like Ovruch and Brichany.<sup>71</sup> Some of those prayers took place on the birthday of the heir to the

68 On this episode, see Vladimir Levin, “Russian Jewry and the Duma Elections, 1906–1907,” *Jews and Slavs* 7 (2000): 242–43.

69 On the political activities of the Russian Zionists in 1907–1914, see Levin, *Mi-mahapekhab le-milhamah*, 183–209.

70 *Novyi Voskhod* 29 (July 24, 1914): 11; *Hatzfirah* 177 (August 3 [16], 1914): 2.

71 For the description of the prayer in the Great Synagogue of Odessa, which was followed by a demonstration with the emperor’s portrait and for the prayer in the Brody Synagogue, see *Hatzfirah* 180 (August 6

Russian throne, Alexis, on 30 July/12 August, which strengthened the display of dynastic loyalty. We do not know who organized those demonstrations or who participated in them, but their broad geographical spread and their similarity to spontaneous displays of non-Jews (and their typological likeness to the usual behavior of the monarchists' unions) enable us to speak about sincere expressions of loyalty.<sup>72</sup> The demonstration of loyalty to the tsar was an accepted form for the expression of patriotism and loyalty to the country that did not involve the profession of monarchism or Russian nationalism. However, it is hard to imagine liberals or radicals kneeling in front of the emperor's palace.<sup>73</sup>

Public expressions of Jewish loyalty to the tsarist regime became more common after the Revolutions of 1917 and the Civil War. Probably the best known figure was the prominent Zionist publicist Daniel Pasmanik who proclaimed his monarchism and Russian nationalism in the 1920s, as recently discussed by Taro Tsurumi.<sup>74</sup> But he was not alone. For example, one of the participants of a Russian-Jewish meeting in Berlin in 1923 said that, "9 out of 10 Jews miss the tsar."<sup>75</sup> There is no reason to suspect that such feelings were not sincere. In contrast to the expressions of loyalty made while the regime was alive, there were no benefits to be derived from such statements in the 1920s. In fact, quite the opposite was true: Pasmanik was ostracized by the Zionist movement for his Russian nationalism. However, the views

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[19], 1914): 2. For the prayer and street demonstrations in Novgorod-Severskii and Ovruch, see *Hatzfirah* 175 (July 31 [August 13], 1914): 1; *Hatzfirah* 183 (August 10 [23], 1914): 2. See also the prayer and demonstration with the emperor's portrait in Bolgrad: *Hatzfirah* 180 (August 6 [19], 1914): 2; prayer and public demonstration in Kursk: *Hatzfirah* 181 (August 7 [20], 1914): 2; prayer followed by a telegram to the emperor in Grodno: *Hatzfirah* 182 (August 8 [21], 1914): 2; prayer and demonstration in Berdichev: *Hatzfirah* 183 (August 10 [23], 1914): 2.

72 On ceremonies and demonstrations in August 1914, see Boris Kolonitskii, "*Tragicheskaiia erotika*": *obrazy imperatorskoi sem'i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow: NLO, 2010), 73–98.

73 For the discussion of Jewish soldiers' patriotism and the desire to defend the Fatherland against the enemy, see Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917: Drafted into Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 259–64.

74 Taro Tsurumi, "Jewish Liberal, Russian Conservative: Daniel Pasmanik Between Zionism and the Anti-Bolshevik White Movement," *Jewish Social Studies* 21 (2015): 151–80. On Pasmanik's shaking hands with Purishkevich in Crimea, see Oleg Budnitskii, *Rossiiskie evrei mezhdu krasnymi i belymi (1917–1920)* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), 206.

75 Oleg Budnitskii and Alexandra Polian, *Russko-evreiskii Berlin, 1920–1941* (Moscow: NLO, 2013), 182.

expressed in the 1920s could have not reflected opinions from before the revolution. It is logical to suppose that the antisemitic tsarist regime might have looked less bad after the Bolshevik revolution, the Civil War, and emigration. Nonetheless, it is not very common for people to completely change their political outlooks. Therefore, the sympathy expressed in the 1920s for the fallen tsarist regime is an indicator that such sympathy was—or could have been—in existence, in one form or another, before 1917.

### The Right and the Jews

Jews eager to cooperate with the right were usually antagonized by its antisemitism, but the right was by no means homogeneous or static. Without delving deeply into the issue of the rightist *Weltanschauung* and its transformation, I intend here to recall changes in attitudes towards Jews that might have permitted, in theory, the possibility of cooperation between conservative Jews and Russian monarchists and rightists.

While during the 1905 Revolution the hierarchy of hostile ethnic groups and nationalities was very clear for right-wing politicians, and the Jews were viewed as the major danger, the pacification of the country and routine political activities after 1907 made this hierarchy less unambiguous than before. If the attempts of Jewish politicians to find a common language with the right began in 1907, it took more time for the rightist politicians to change their views on the Jews. In 1911, Vladimir Krupenskii and his followers left the Nationalist faction in the Duma and established a new faction of Independent Nationalists. The ideology behind the split was the differentiated view of non-Russians put forth by Krupenskii. He claimed that certain groups of *inorodtsy*—Germans, Tatars, Armenians, Greeks, and Moldovans (Krupenskii came from Bessarabia where Moldovans were the majority)—were capable of assimilation into the Russian people and therefore should be emancipated; however, Finns, Poles, and Jews could not be assimilated.<sup>76</sup> In spite of his vision of Jews as incapable of assimilation,

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<sup>76</sup> Kotsiubinskii, *Russkii natsionalizm*, 41.

Krupenskii proposed an electoral agreement to the Jews of Bessarabia in 1912. In exchange for the support of his party against the group of Vladimir Purishkevich, he offered the Jews representation in the Duma in the form of one seat from the province of Bessarabia.<sup>77</sup> In the context of Russian right-wing antisemitism, which viewed Jews as a mystical body primordially hostile to Holy Russia, Krupenskii's proposal was not simply a technical electoral alliance. It was a kind of legitimization of Jews, a redefinition of them in political terms, a recognition of their position as voters. In other words, Krupenskii did not become a philosemite, but he did begin to view the Jews as legitimate partners in Russian politics.

We can view as a similar statement the article about the Beilis Affair written by a prominent leader of the Russian Nationalist Party, Vasilii Shulgin and published in 1913. Contrary to all right-wing activists who fiercely supported the accusation of Mendel Beilis as guilty of ritual murder, Shulgin, claimed that there was no evidence of the ritual character of the murder and Beilis' guilt.<sup>78</sup> As his long political career shows, Shulgin also did not become a philosemite, but he saw no need for artificially invented assaults on the humanity of Jews. Krupenskii and Shulgin could be described as "rationalistic" antisemites who did not invest Jews with "supernatural" qualities but treated them as one among many groups of Russian subjects.<sup>79</sup>

The beginning of World War I intensified this tendency. Jewish newspapers in August 1914 quoted the most prominent Russian antisemites, Vladimir Purishkevich and Alexei Shmakov. The former said that the Jews are Russian citizens and ready to protect the country with their lives,<sup>80</sup> and the latter welcomed the patriotism of Jews.<sup>81</sup> The change in Purishkevich's attitude toward the Jews and its numerous public expressions caused con-

77 Kh. Grinberg, "K vyboram v Bessarabii," *Rassvet* 35 (August 29, 1912): 20–21; Yehudi pashut [Moshe Kleinman], "Be-tfutsot israel (hashkafah klalit)," *Ha-shiloah* 27, no. 2 (August 1912): 187.

78 The article is quoted in Shulgin's memoirs, *Gody* (Moscow: Novosti, 1990), 148–51.

79 Cf. Sergei Podbolotov, "'True-Russians' Against the Jews: Right-Wing Anti-Semitism in the Last Years of the Russian Empire, 1905–1917," *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2001): 201.

80 *Hatzfirah* 175 (July 31 [August 13], 1914): 1.

81 *Hatzfirah* 187 (August 14 [August 27], 1914): 2.

fusion among extreme rightists.<sup>82</sup> This sudden benevolence was an indicator of a rearrangement of the hierarchy of enemies. Germans held the first place, thus making the others look less threatening.

In spring 1915, one of the key monarchist activists in Moscow Vasilii Orlov began to speak about abolition of the Pale of Settlement and even about civil equality for Jews.<sup>83</sup> In June 1915, Orlov established a new right-wing monarchist organization, the Motherland's Patriotic Union (*Otechestvennyi patrioticheskii soiuz*), the bylaws of which did not include the clause prohibiting Jews from becoming members but did explicitly prohibit Germans from joining.<sup>84</sup> The theoretical possibility that Jews might become members of the Union triggered loud protests and ostracism by other right-wing organizations.<sup>85</sup>

In August 1915, two other important developments took place. The first was the partial abolition of the Pale of Settlement by the Russian government. This drastic step was taken under pressure from the Allies after the mass expulsions of Jews from the front areas by the Russian army,<sup>86</sup> but it also shows that the conservative ministers assumed the Jewish danger to be less serious than before. The second development was the establishment of the Progressive Bloc in the Duma and State Council. The Bloc included the majority of factions in the Duma, among them Krupenskii's Independent Nationalists and Shulgin's Progressive Nationalists, who also split off from the Nationalist faction. The Bloc's program demanded "an entrance to the path of abolishing restrictions on the rights of Jews."<sup>87</sup> While for the Ka-

82 Ivanov, *Pravye v russkom parlamente*, 337–41.

83 Iu. I. Kir'ianov, *Pravye partii v Rossii, 1911–1917* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), 219–21. The leader of the "Right Group" in the State Council, Count Alexei Bobrinskii, also spoke in favor of the abolition of the Pale of Settlement. See Ivanov, *Pravye v russkom parlamente*, 175.

84 The founder of the Union, Vasilii Orlov, was not unambiguous about the matter and stated in a private letter, "we just temporarily remained silent about them [the Jews], that's all" and called it "necessary, reasonable tactics." See Chernovskii, *Soiuz russkogo naroda*, 188.

85 Kir'ianov, *Pravye partii*, 225.

86 Semion Goldin, *Russkaia armia i evrei, 1914–1917* (Moscow and Jerusalem: Mosty Kul'tury, 2018), 354–61. On the expulsions, see also Semion Goldin, "Deportation of Jews by the Russian Military Command, 1914–1915," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 1(41) (Spring 2000): 40–73; Eric Lohr, "The Russian Army and the Jews: Mass Deportation, Hostages and Violence during World War I," *Russian Review* 60 (2001): 404–19.

87 Michael F. Hamm, "Liberalism and the Jewish Question: The Progressive Bloc," *Russian Review* 31 (1972): 163–65; Rafail Ganelin, "Gosudarstvennaia дума i antisemitskie tsirkuliariy 1915–1916 godov," *Vestnik*

dets such an ambiguous formula was a betrayal of their principle of equality for all, it satisfied Russian nationalists. Though it did not promise emancipation, the program nonetheless recognized that the rights of Jews should be increased, contrary to the numerous statements of the Nationalists in previous years.

All this demonstrates that the reading of the imperial Russian ethno-political map by right-wing forces was changing. Starting in the 1870s and especially during the 1905 Revolution, the Jews were seen as the most dangerous enemy Russia faced. As time passed, the Jewish danger was perceived as less threatening, and some right-wing politicians began to distinguish between individual Jews and the collective Jew. They began to view Jews as a national collective, hostile like the Polish nation, for example, but not a mystic entity striving to destroy Holy Russia. With the start of World War I, the Germans became the omnipotent mystical enemy.<sup>88</sup> Even those who continued to persecute Jews blamed them for being German supporters, that is, not for being the archenemy of Russia, but for being collaborators.

There were many common features of the older hatred of Jews and the newly developed hatred of Germans. Eric Lohr stated that “for extreme right-wing organizations ... traditional anti-Semitic and anti-Polish themes merged seamlessly with new anti-German themes.”<sup>89</sup> However, the appearance of the German archenemy led to a reappraisal of the place of the Jews. According to Mikhail Lykosov, “German imperialism temporarily replaced the Kahal” in rightists’ rhetoric.<sup>90</sup> The antisemitism of the right-wing by

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*Evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve* 3(10) (1995): 4–37; Goldin, *Russkaia armia i evrei*, 361–70. On the reaction of the extreme right to the establishment of the Bloc, see Kir’ianov, *Pravye partii*, 240–41; A.A. Ivanov, *Poslednie zashchitniki monarkhii: Fraktsiia pravyykh IV Gosudarstvennoi dумы v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny (1914–fevral’ 1917)* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2006), 63–75; Ivanov, *Pravye v russkom parlamente*, 142–201.

88 On politics relating to those Germans who were Russian subjects, see Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); A.Yu. Bakhturina, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii: gosudarstvennoe upravlenie i natsional’naia politika v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny (1914–1917 gg.)* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), 78–116.

89 Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*, 24.

90 Cited in: Ivanov, *Pravye v russkom parlamente*, 297. Cf. also the opinion of Aleksandr Repnikov: “World War I made the Jewish question less relevant in comparison with the question regarding ‘the German domination [zasil’e],” A.V. Repnikov, *Konservativnye kontseptsii pereustroistva Rossii* (Moscow: Academia, 2007), 326.

no means disappeared, but the importance of Jews as a hostile group diminished.<sup>91</sup> Thus, discussions about the abolition of the Pale of Settlement contained the idea that Russia could not fight with Germany and the Jews at the same time.<sup>92</sup> Some right-wing leaders preferred to concentrate on the fight against Germany and reach a kind of “peace” or “truce” with the Jews. Instead of the complete exclusion professed earlier, they now adopted a policy of including the Jews in the ranks of those citizens fighting against Germany (but decidedly not of Jews’ integration into the Russian people). The Germans became “the Other” of Russian right-wing politicians during World War I.

### Conclusions

As the discussion above has demonstrated, there were groups among Russian Jewry who were loyal to the monarchy and professed conservatism in varying degrees. However, their acceptance of the existing order did not include discrimination against the Jews, and despite their conservative political views, they strived to improve the situation of the Jews in Russia and to win full emancipation for them. Only very marginal groups voiced anti-emancipation demands.

Notwithstanding the full endorsement of discriminatory politics by the right-wing politicians, there were *Kaisertreu* Jewish activists who attempted to find common ground with them. Many others, it might be supposed, were eager to do so, but were antagonized by the virulent antisemitism of the monarchists, Russian nationalists, and even right-wing liberals.

The antisemitism of the right, however, underwent changes after the end of the 1905 Revolution and especially after the outbreak of World War I. Had this change among some of the right-wing politicians been persistent, it might have enabled right-wing Jews to take a more active stance in Russian conservative politics. The Bolshevik takeover in 1917 and the

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91 For similar statements, see Goldin, *Russkaia armia i evrei*, 361–62.

92 Ibid., 354, 358, 371–72.

Civil War that followed, however, reversed this tenuous trend in favor of the “normalization” of the perception of Jews in the eyes of the Russian right. The association between the Bolsheviks and the Jews intensified antisemitism and once again, those Jews who were willing to fight the Bolsheviks were prevented from joining the White Russian armies.<sup>93</sup> Thus, hatred of Jews barred any sort of genuine cooperation between Russian and Jewish conservatives.

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93 On the Jews and the Jewish question during the revolution and the Civil War, see, e.g., Budnitskii, *Rossiiskie evrei mezhdru krasnymi i belymi*.





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