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BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORIES AND SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE OLD BELIEVERS WANDERERS IN
THE FIRST THIRD OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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Table of contents

0. Introduction (Resume)	5
0.1. Preface	5
0.2 Novelty of the research	9
0.2.1 Problematizing the Wanderers' Escapism	10
0.2.2. De-exoticizing the Religious Dissident Experience	12
0.2.3. Russian modernities as seen "from below"	12
0.3 The purpose of the study	14
0.4 Research objectives	14
0.5 Object of the research [Объект исследования]	14
0.6 Subject of the research [Предмет исследования]	14
0.7 Research Methodology and the challenge of representativity	15
0.8 State of the Art	19
0.9 Sources	30
0.9.1 Manuscripts and Documents of the Wanderers	30
0.9.2 Documents from the institutional archives	31
0.9.3 Criminal cases	32
0.9.4 Press materials, memoirs and works of fiction.....	33
0.10 Chronological framework	34
0.11 Geographic framework	35
0.12 Research design	36
0.12.1 Chapter 1	36
0.12.2 Chapter 2	37
0.12.3 Chapter 3	38
0.12.4 Chapter 4	39
0.13 Some notes on translation	40
Chapter 1. The Wanderers in the State from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. ..	42
1.1. The True Orthodox Christians wandering. Issues and challenges of a (self)identification	42
1.2. The Church of the Fleeing. A brief overview of the history and ideological transformations of the Wanderers from the second half of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century.	48
1.2.1. The ideology of the Wanderers and the historical context of its origins	48
1.2.2. The eternal flight of Evfimii. The formation of ideology and the confessionalization of the Wanderers.	53
1.2.3. The World-renouncers and the Shelterkeepers. The differentiation of Wanderers' modes of existence.	55
1.2.3. Patriarch Nikita Semyonov. Centralization of the hierarchy and the new splits	58
1.3 The Wanderers through the eyes of the outside world	62
1.3.1 The "discovery" of Wanderers	62
1.3.2 Declarative and Actual Catacombs of the Wanderers	65
1.3.3 External discourses on Wanderers and their legal status from their "discovery" to 1917.	68
1.3.3.1 The Wanderers as "the religious fanatics"	68
1.3.3.2. Wanderers as an anti-state sect.....	77
1.3.4. Legal status of the Wanderers	80
1.3.5. The Wanderer's metaphorical underground	85
1.3. Conclusion	88

Chapter 2. The Wanderers and the Modernizing domains of the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet State	93
2.1 On the Wanderers' statistics	93
2.2. The World-Renouncers into the Millers. The Wanderers and the Late Imperial Entrepreneurship	100
2.2.1. Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin) and his biographical trajectory from birth to the beginning of the 20th century.....	100
2.2.2. Construction of the Danilov Steam Mill. Involvement of the Wanderers in a Capitalist Activity	103
2.2.2. Centralization of the hierarchy and the schism.....	111
2.2.3. The Wanderers Open to the Public.....	123
2.2.4. The Wanderers under the Old Regime	125
2.3. The Wanderers in the Early Soviet State	130
2.3.1 Soviet Religious Policy and the Wanderers	130
2.3.1. The Millers into the Artelshchiki. The Wanderers and the Soviet agricultural cooperation.....	136
2.3.2. Forced Break of the Wanderers from the Soviet Space and Retreat into the Underground.....	145
2.3.3. The Wanderers in the Early Soviet State.....	152
Chapter 3: The Wanderers' Literary Underground. Resistance and adaptation in the face of repression and persecution	154
3.1 Introduction. The Wanderers in Catacombs.....	154
3.2. On the Wanderers' religiosity	155
3.3. The Wanderers and self-mortifications	157
3.4 Biographical and Ideological trajectories of Khristofor Ivanovich (Zyryanov).....	160
3.4.1 Ryabinin's disciple	160
3.4.2 "A country chap" in his first "Soviet house".....	163
3.4.3. The Wanderers on the Soviet Trial.....	168
3.5. On the Wanderers' Gender Modes.....	174
3.6 The Challenges and Tensions of the Underground.....	179
3.7 The Wanderers and the Resistance Strategies.....	184
3.8 Transformation of the Underground Networks	190
Chapter 4. The Wanderers and Stalinist Modernity	195
4.1 Introduction.....	195
4.2 Biographical and Ideological Trajectory of Maksim Ivanovich Zalesskii.....	198
4.2.1 Autobiographies of a Wanderer.....	198
4.2.2 A Peasant to Wanderer.....	199
4.2.3 Raising the Wanderer	201
4.2.4 The Wanderer in Quest of a Social Niche	209
4.2.5 The Wanderer Acquires a Social Niche	214
4.3 Being a Soviet Wanderer	223
5. Conclusion	232
5.1 Biographical Trajectories and Social Transformations of the Old Believers Wanderers in the First Third of the 20th Century	232
5.1.1 External and internal conditions of the Wanderers' opening at the beginning of the 20th century.....	232
5.1.2. Biographical Trajectories of the Wanderers	234
5.1.3. Social niches occupied by the Wanderers	236
5.1.4. Social Transformations of the Community	236
5.1.5 Wanderers and the World Around.....	238
5.2 Being a Normal Old Believer.....	241

5.3 Epilogue. Those who are still wandering	244
5.4. Conclusions put to the defense.....	248
6. <i>List of Sources and Literature</i>	250
6.1 Abbreviation.....	250
6.2 Primary sources.....	250
6.3 Published primary sources	254
6.4 Press materials.....	255
6.5 Statistical and legislative compilations, law codes, catalogs, encyclopedic dictionaries	256
6.6 Bibliography	257
<i>Acknowledgments</i>.....	283

0. Introduction (Resume)

“Und du”, sprach ich betreten, “wer bist denn du?”

“Ein Wanderer”.

“Was ist das?”

“Das ist Einer, der auf der Flucht ist vor dem Leben”.

“Seltsam!”

(“Der Wanderer”. Leopold von Sacher-Masoch).¹

0.1. Preface

The first third of the 20th century marked a time of radical transformations in the political and social landscape of Northern Eurasia². Thus, members of the ethnic, social, and religious communities that constituted this complex and diverse landscape faced the need to rethink their place in the modernizing spaces of the Late Russian Empire and the emerging Soviet state. Representatives of one of the radical branches of the priestless Old Belief, the True Orthodox Christians wandering or the Wanderers [stranniki] (also known as runaways [beguny] or escapists [skrytniki]), were no exception. They had some success in commerce, organized industrial enterprises, cooperated in agricultural artels, and collaborated with the Soviet authorities. How was it possible that the bearers of arguably the most pessimistic eschatological worldview among Old Believers did not get lost in the swirl of the transformations of political and social regimes in the late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state, but found their place in this whirlwind?

¹ "And you", I spoke, embarrassed, "who are you?"

"A Wanderer."

"What is that?"

"That is one who is fleeing from life".

"Strange!"

Von Sacher-Masoch L. Der Wanderer // Project Gutenberg. URL: <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/sacher-m/wandrer/wandrer.html> (last accessed 27 dec 2021).

² The concept of "Northern Eurasia" is understood as a vast geographic space from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, in which the main driver of historical development are spontaneous processes of intercultural, interethnic and interreligious self-organization. For a detailed description see *Gerasimov I., Glebov S., Mogilner M., Semenov A. Glava 1. Politicheskaja Ekologija: Formirovanie Regiona Severnoi Evrazii* // *Ab Imperio*. 2014. no. 1. P. 249-288.

In contrast to the conventional historiographical tradition that offers a dichotomizing view on the relations of the Wanderers (and, more broadly, Old Believers) with the world beyond the boundaries of their communities as a dialectic relationship between an archaic religious tradition and a modernizing world, this thesis offers a de-exoticization of the Wanderers by showing their inalienability from processes unfolding in the country they lived. It is thus not the story of a group of radical escapists confronting the hostile realities of the modernizing world, but of members of the religious community who were seeking, and (against all odds) finding their place in the political and social turbulence of the first third of the 20th century.

It is common in the academic literature to consider the Wanderers as the most non-conformist religious tradition in the diverse world of the Old Believers. The materials of the Wanderers' self-representation, their ideological declarations and doctrinal principles also demonstrate that consistent escapism is at the center of their religious ontology. Following this logic, interaction with the "outside" world, "corrupted" as a result of the canonical and ritualistic reforms of Nikon and the church reforms of Peter the Great, appears to be extraordinary for the Wanderers. However, the analysis of the practices of their interaction with this "outside" world and the involvement of the Wanderers in the social processes which took place outside their communities during the period under consideration allows to question this vision. Despite their own ideas about the limits of acceptable external interaction, the Wanderers successfully adapted to the realities of the surrounding environment in both the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state.

At first glance, the Wanderers could hardly "fit" into the modernization processes unfolding in the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state in the first third of the 20th century. They did not fit into the templates of a nationalizing Russian Empire where, from the point of view of state institutions, belonging to the Orthodox (Nikonian) Church and ethnic Russianness were virtually inseparable. Although the vast majority of the Wanderers were ethnic Great Russians, the gloomy eschatology that formed the basis of their ontology and their outspoken disloyalty to the

highest registers of authorities made the Imperial officials, local and central, look upon the Wanderers with suspicion. Moreover, at the beginning of the period under consideration, the protagonists of this study existed on the verge of illegality, even after the publication of the Edict "On Strengthening the Principles of Religious Tolerance" (1905). The debate about the existence of "fanatic"³ practices in their midst took place in the press and was reflected in the documents of the Imperial bureaucracy until the very end of the Old Regime. This debate had a direct impact on the legal status of the Wanderers who, in the absence of an unambiguous legal decision on their "fanaticism", could be persecuted by local authorities at their discretion.

The Bolsheviks cared little about the status of the Old Believers, let alone the Wanderers. With the issuing of the decree "On Separation of Church and State" (1918), representatives of all religious movements of the former Russian Empire were equalized before the law. The Wanderers were not left out. However, the new Soviet authorities were hardly too concerned about integrating the radical Old Believers into the emerging Soviet space. Except for the enthusiasm of Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич, who in the early 1920s came up with the idea of patronizing the existing sectarian and Old Believer communes and organizing new ones, the high-ranking Soviet officials were not eager to contemplate what place the Old Believers would occupy in the workers' and peasants' state. Moreover, in their interactions with local authorities, as will be shown, the Wanderers often experienced hostility on the grounds of being religious fanatics, kulaks, and profiteers.

Thus, the Wanderers developed their own strategies for interacting with the outside world, maneuvering between aversion on the part of the Old Regime, misunderstanding and hostility from various registers of the Soviet power, and their own dogmatic ideas about the limits of acceptable contacts with the "outside" world. However, despite such unfavorable conditions, it was during this period that some Wanderers showed extraordinary abilities to engage with social spaces outside their own communities, finding themselves in the Late Imperial commerce and

³ This refers to the Russian term "izuvernyi," the meaning of which will be explained below.

entrepreneurship, Early Soviet agricultural cooperative movement, and working for Soviet law enforcement agencies.

The research focuses on the biographical trajectories of the Old Believers-Wanderers of three different generations (born in the 1850s, 1870s, 1890s), united by the fact that their activity took place in the first third of the 20th century. However, in a broader sense, the work is devoted to the study of Russian (Imperial and Early Soviet) modernity and the vernacular experience of it among representatives of a small religious community scattered across the vast territory from Arkhangel'sk to Nev'yansk.

Of course, the morphology⁴ of Russian modernity (or modernities), as well as the general legitimacy of applying this term to Russian history of the first half of the 20th century, is still a subject of academic debate⁵. This research is a contribution to this discussion. By using an example of the Wanderers, the work demonstrates how the nature of Russian modernity was seen by those who became involved in the processes associated with it, adapted to the realities of modernizing spaces, and occupied the social niches opening up in these spaces⁶.

According to established historiographical conventions, modernization processes with their ethno-national and class languages of political mobilization pushed aside the traditional religious basis for the construction of solidarities. In the context of this study, it is planned to show that Russian modernity of the early 20th century "spoke" not only the languages of nation and class, but also the language of theological debates, council minutes, sermons, and apocalyptic writings⁷. The purpose of this study is to show that the experience of the involvement of a marginalized

⁴ Morphology refers hereafter to the structure and forms of phenomena and processes.

⁵ This discussion is described in detail, for example, in: *David-Fox M.* Modernost v Rossii i SSSR: otsutstvuiushchaia, obshchaia, alternativnaia, perepletennaia? // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2016. no. 140. P. 19-44.

⁶ Here I am following Frederick Cooper, not trying to give any more perfect definition of modernity than existing ones, but trying to hear what those who have been part of the associated processes have to say about it. *Cooper F.* Colonialism in question. Berkeley, 2005. P.115

⁷ Here I follow Heather Coleman and Adeeb Khalid who showed, using Russian Baptists and Turkestan Jadids as examples, how members of religious communities engage in modernizing processes and reconfigure their ideologies according to new modern languages and principles of political mobilization. However, unlike Coleman, in this study I do not cover the term "religion" under the term "culture" when referring to the modern intertwining of religion/class/nation languages. *Coleman H. J.* Russian Baptists and spiritual revolution, 1905-1929. Bloomington, 2005; *Khalid A.* Making Uzbekistan. Ithaca, 2015.

group in the processes of political and social transformation of the first third of the 20th century can be as normal as that of millions of their contemporaries. Thus, this experience is one option in the diversity of the "normal" Late Imperial and Early Soviet individual and collective modernity experience. Consequently, one may conclude that the processes associated with modernization and modernity had an enormous impact even on those who (at least rhetorically) chose a break with the outside world as the core of their ontology. In other words, if even⁸ the Wanderers were engaged in and adapted to the processes of modernization, is it possible to imagine that anyone would have been left out of these processes?

In this study it will be demonstrated that the Wanderers had no urgent need to establish capitalist productions, to cooperate in agricultural artels, or to pursue a career in the Soviet state security service. On the contrary, they would inevitably have encountered many countervailing factors in attempting to change their comfortable and settled mode of existence within the purely spiritual realm. Nevertheless, the protagonists of this study have ventured to make this change and, at various stages, have successfully integrated into external social domains. Thus, the main question of this study can be formulated as follows: Why did the bearers of the most pessimistic of the many Old Believers' ideologies, despite numerous potential obstacles, voluntarily and consciously engage in the broad processes of political and social transformation of the first third of the 20th century, and what can such an experience of engagement tell us about the nature of these processes themselves?

0.2 Novelty of the research

The novelty of this research is determined by the application of several approaches. Each of them is intended to problematize or develop existing historiographical conventions: from narrowly specialized ones concerning the historiography of Wanderers to the historiography of the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state.

⁸ The word "even" is used here not because the Wanderers were convinced world-renouncers, but because the Wanderers in question were hardened pragmatists and rationally and carefully strategized the development of their community.

These approaches can be categorized as follows (see "State of the Art" for more details).

0.2.1 Problematizing the Wanderers' Escapism

Since the 1960s, scholars from Novosibirsk, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, and Moscow, during archaeological expeditions to the places of the remote residence of Old Believers, have managed to collect a huge amount of religious and everyday materials and documents, which have become the main sources for the history of the Old Belief⁹. The works of N. N. Pokrovskii, N. Yu. Bubnov, N. D. Zolnikova, and A. I. Maltsev, written on the basis of the received sources, were groundbreaking for their time and became fundamental in the historiography of the Old Believers' communities.

It must be said, however, that there are two categories of sources that paint at least two opposite pictures of how the relationship between the Wanderers (and Old Believers in general) and the space outside their communities was arranged. If we rely (as the aforementioned authors did¹⁰) exclusively on materials produced by the Wanderers for their own use, that is, documents of a liturgical, ecclesiastical and bureaucratic nature, one can conclude that this is a community which is radical in its eschatological outlook, whose members have severed all contacts with the outside world in anticipation of the End of Times. When analyzing such sources, historians of the Old Believers who worked in the second half of the 20th century came to the fair conclusion that they were dealing with a preserved archaic community. Moreover, some researchers even considered it possible to apply the Medievalist analytical framework to the history of Old Believers in the 20th century¹¹.

A completely different picture is drawn if we analyzed the documents of the relations of Wanderers with the authorities of different levels and the testimonies of external authors who had

⁹ *Crummey R.O.* The Novosibirsk School of Old Believers Studies//Crummey R.O. Old Believers in a Changing World. Ithaca, 2011. P. 167-189.

¹⁰ Pokrovskii did use criminal cases, but mostly in relation to the 18th century Old Believers. *Pokrovskii N. N.* Antifeodalnyi protest uralo-sibirskikh krestian-starobriadtsev v 18 v. Novosibirsk, 1974.

¹¹ For example, Natalia Zolnikova put it in this vein, pointing to the features of the archaic religious consciousness of the Old Believers. *Zolnikova N.D.* "Svoi" I "chuzhie" po normativnym aktam staroverov-chasovennykh // Gumanitarnye nauki v Sibiri. no. 2, 1998. P. 54-59. Such notions are also echoed by the statement of Irina Paert who wrote that the post-Soviet Old Believers managed to "revitalized their devotion to medieval Russian spirituality". *Paert I.* Old Believers: Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850. Manchester, 2003. P. 3.

the opportunity to study the modes of existence of the Wanderers ethnographically. In such materials, the Wanderers appear extremely integrated into communities outside their own groups, rational individuals, able and ready, if necessary, to play by the rules of the "corrupted" world. Thus, the view of the Wanderers as hardened isolationists, based on the believers' own perceptions of themselves, is unable to explain the diversity of their strategies of interaction with the world around them. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that for all the importance of research in the second half of the twentieth century, authentic manuscripts and documents in isolation from other sources gives a lopsided view of the radical Old Believers, at least when it comes to the Wanderers of the 20th century.

By the beginning of the twentieth century a significant gap between the ideological escapism of the Wanderers and the actual practices of engagement with the world around them turns out to be very noticeable. It is difficult to trace the genealogy of this gap, since until "the discovery" of the religious movement in 1850 we have no option but to rely on vernacular sources. However, one can say that at the very moment of "the discovery", when outside researchers gained access to the study of the Wanderers, this gap was already evident. Moreover, in the future this gap will only increase up to a certain time. Thus, this study is an attempt to "collide" these two categories of sources on the history of Wanderers. Such an approach was conceived in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the history of the Wanderers' social transformations, which would be written on their behalf, but which would use the explanatory potential of external sources when necessary. While the following statement may seem self-evident to someone, it must be stated. This study will show that regardless of the radicality of the religious ideology to which they adhere, people living in the 20th century cannot possess the worldview of their 17th century fellow believers.

0.2.2. De-exoticizing the Religious Dissident Experience

This dissertation also seeks to problematize perceptions of the Old Believer community as a separate entity¹² whose members have experienced political and social transformation in a way different from that of their Nikonian or other neighbors. This refers to attempts to present the Old Believers as carriers of a particular economic ethical mode which gave rise to the phenomenon of a particular Late Imperial Old Believer entrepreneurship. As will be shown, in the case of the Wanderers, for all the importance of religious rhetoric and ethics for them, their experience of the Late Imperial entrepreneurship and Soviet cooperation was not much different from that of their non-Old Believers contemporaries. Moreover, in some cases this ethic proved to be rather an obstacle to their economic activity. In addition, such exoticizing perceptions to be problematized include the opposite view of the Old Believers as an archaic community of radicals whose members constitute an unsuitable component for the integration into a modern or modernizing domain. As will be shown, although eschatology was indeed in the core of their ontology, the Wanderers were equally proficient in writing theological manuscripts and in interacting with state officials through bureaucratic means.

0.2.3. Russian modernities as seen "from below"

This study examines the experience of engagement with the processes of political and social transformation through an analysis of the biographical trajectories of several Wanderers. Although this approach itself is not fundamentally novel, it must be said that the Wanderers whose biographies are to be analyzed prove to be of a particular interest for such an approach.

The starting biographical positions of the Wanderers were not like those of the hereditary Nikonian clergy of Laurie Manchester¹³ and the political and literary figures of Mark Steinberg¹⁴. The Wanderers in question were born to provincial Russian peasant families and early in their life

¹² See for ex. The Old Believers as a photographic negative of the official society in *Crummey R. O. The Old Believers and the world of Antichrist: The Vyg community and the Russian State 1694-1855*. Madison, 1970. XIII; Or the Old Believers as a subculture in *Robson Roy R. Old Believers in Modern Russia*. DeKalb, 1995.

¹³ *Manchester L. Holy fathers, secular sons: Clergy, intelligentsia, and the modern self in revolutionary Russia*. DeKalb, 2008.

¹⁴ *Steinberg M. D. The Russian Revolution, 1905-1921*. Oxford, 2017. Chapters 7 and 8.

became members of a semi-legal religious society. They were not part of the political public sphere, had no systematic secular education, and although they were literate, their version of literacy (functional i.e., liturgical and theological) was more of an obstacle for them to build relationships with the world around them. Thus, the experience of the Wanderers can serve as an example of the Late Imperial and Early Soviet experience of their contemporaries with a similar habitus, who belonged to the lower social classes. However, unlike the millions of their contemporaries, the peasants and provincial workers, the experience of the Wanderers turns out to be a pronounced one, since the very mode of their relations within the community involved written self-reflection in the form of the acts of regular councils, letters, and sermons. In other words, unlike other members of the lower classes, who could "speak" only in their body language or imitate a hegemonic discourse¹⁵, the Wanderers actively wrote and discussed in a written form the social processes of which they were a part. Thus, in the context of this study, I focus on this particular view of Russian modernities "from below". It seems that the Wanderers are perfectly suited to such an approach, first, because of their social status, and second, because of their tendency to reflect and ability to express their experiences in a writing form.

Aleksandr Etkind, in his several works, argued for the relevance of applying postcolonial categories of "hegemon/subaltern" to the relations between the Narodniks and Bolsheviks, on the one hand, and the sectarians (in the broad sense), on the other. Thus, speaking of "the sinister silence of the Russian religious underground"¹⁶, he directly postulated the idea that "in Russia the people were subaltern, and everyone spoke on their behalf, together and discordantly: writers, scientists, officials, priests"¹⁷. This study seeks to refute these assumptions by showing that the Russian religious underground was neither silent nor a sinister one. It "spoke" a lot and clearly "formulated" its attitude toward the processes unfolding in the country. Moreover, as this thesis

¹⁵ *Gerasimov I.* Plebeian modernity: Social practices, illegality, and the urban poor in Russia, 1906-1916. – Woodbridge, 2018. P. 1-17.

¹⁶ *Etkind A. M.* Khlyst. Misticheskie sekty i russkaia literatura. Nachalo dvadtsatogo veka. M., 1998. P. 104.

¹⁷ *Etkind A. M.* dVnutrenniaia kolonizatsiia. Imperskii opyt Rossii. M., 2017. P. 307.

will show, until the beginning of the 1930s this space, in fact, cannot be fully even called an underground, given the degree of external integration of the Wanderers.

0.3 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the biographical trajectories of Wanderers and the social transformations their communities underwent, during the political and social turbulence of the first third of the 20th century.

0.4 Research objectives

- to shed light on an understudied period in the history of the Wanderers as representatives of a community experiencing the key events of the first third of the 20th century
- to identify external and internal conditions of the Wanderers' opening at the beginning of the 20th century;
- to describe and analyze the biographical trajectories of Wanderers in question;
- to trace transformations of the Wanderers' community, its social and hierarchical structure and modes of interaction with the world around them;
- to determine what external social niches were available and desirable to the Wanderers during this period.

0.5 Object of the research [Объект исследования]

The object of the research is a set of documents of theological, historical, and biographical nature, which came out from the pen of the Old Believers-Wanderers and describe the activities of representatives of the religious group in the first third of the 20th century, as well as documents of the Late Imperial and Soviet administrative institutions related to the interaction of Wanderers with the state, as well as materials of criminal cases against the Wanderers, newspaper publications, and memories of witnesses of the processes under analysis.

0.6 Subject of the research [Предмет исследования]

The subject of the study is the biographical trajectories of the Wanderers, refracted through the experience of integration into the modernizing domains of the Late Russian Empire and the

Early Soviet state and the social transformations that the Wanderers community underwent in the process of adaptation to the unfolding of broad political and social processes of the first third of the 20th century.

0.7 Research Methodology and the challenge of representativity

This research represents a social history of adherents of a small religious community. Thus, the thesis traces the medium-term social transformations of the community, and uses illustrative biographical trajectories of the Wanderers involved in broad processes of political and social change in the first third of the 20th century as the main subject of analysis.

It is important to say that this research does not deal with reconstructing the biographies of the Wanderers, but with their biographical trajectories. As will be shown below, the protagonists of this work sometimes made considerable efforts to confuse the possible researcher of their biographies. Quite remarkably, the exact year of birth of none of the people in question is known. In addition, reconstructing the biographies of people who often spent at least part of their lives avoiding contact with state registration institutions is a daunting task¹⁸. Consequently, the analysis of biographical trajectories seems to be a more productive approach.

In this research, the biographical trajectory represents an imaginary graph connecting points in a coordinate system where the axes are chronology on the one hand and the degree of involvement of a particular Wanderer in processes and domains outside the Wanderers' communities on the other. First, an analysis of such trajectories makes it possible to assess the extent to which Wanderers' perceptions of the acceptable degree of involvement in external processes and domains have been transformed. Second, the location of a Wanderer at a particular point in the imaginary graph speaks to the peculiarities of the social reality in which the Wanderer may have taken one or another position in the world around him. In other words, it is impossible to fully reconstruct the biography of a particular Wanderer. However, it is possible to testify that

¹⁸ On the difficulties of writing a biography of the Wanderers and on the historical value of criminal cases against members of this religious movement see *Dutchak E. E.* Biografiia starovera-strannika: problemy rekonstruktsii // Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. 2007. no. 302. P. 80-83.

this Wanderer was in 1910 a peasant of the village of Voloski (Olonets province), in 1926 a spiritual leader, and in 1931 an employee of the OGPU. Based on this data, we can talk about what social niches might have been available to a particular person at a particular point in time, and in a particular geographic setting.

Several works have had a notable methodological or ideological influence on this study. First, it is Jane Burbank's work on township courts in the Late Russian Empire¹⁹. Moving away from the traditional view of social history as the history of collectives and groups²⁰, Burbank succeeded in writing the history of the Late Imperial peasants not as an impersonal entity, but as individuals capable of speaking and acting in accordance with their individual beliefs and aspirations.

Another important work in the field of social history is the Ilya Gerasimov's "Plebeian modernity: Social practices, illegality, and the urban poor in Russia, 1906-1916"²¹, dedicated to the practices of daily (most often criminal) interaction among the residents of Late Imperial cities, who were able to find a common language of interrelationship despite their very different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This work, on the one hand, has been a very important model of how the insignificant facts of everyday life, separated from ideologized interpretations, can create a new understanding of the complex and diverse, yet natural and organic, social reality of the past. In my research I willingly adopt this approach. On the other hand, this work provoked me to argue with it in order to prove that people detached from the means of production of the Late Imperial hegemonic discourse (exactly the kind of people Gerasimov referred to as plebeian society) were capable of expressing themselves not only in body language, as the author claimed, comparing representatives of the lower urban classes to Turgenev's short story character Gerasim²². The Wanderers were nothing at all like mute Gerasim. They spoke much and clearly, albeit in the ornate language of theology and religious polemics. This dissertation is precisely an

¹⁹ *Burbank J.* Russian peasants go to court: Legal culture in the countryside, 1905-1917. Bloomington, 2004.

²⁰ *Burbank J.* Russian peasants go to court. P. XV.

²¹ *Gerasimov I.* Plebeian modernity.

²² *Gerasimov I.* Plebeian modernity. P.1-17.

attempt to show what the language of the "silent" peasants and townspeople of the Late Russian Empire might sound like and what actual social reality could be caught from this language.

Among other works ideologically and methodologically akin to this thesis are several studies from different years that, despite their varying geographical and chronological contexts, in one way or another represent attempts to demonstrate the complexity and diversity of modes of interaction of religious communities and individuals with Modern and modernizing ideologies and domains. Similarly, to these studies, this dissertation intends to show that such modes of interaction are not at all limited to the binary opposition of archaic religion vs. secular modernity taken as a given.

Among such works, research on Skoptsy (castrators) by Laura Engelstein²³, who showed that a work on a religious community even with the most extraordinary ideologies and practices can be written with deep respect for the protagonists and without seeking to exoticize or archaize them. Here it is also worth mentioning a monograph on Father John of Kronstadt written by Nadezhda Kizenko²⁴, who showed how religious teachings can absorb elements of modern discourses and successfully adapt to exist in a rapidly changing world. Also, worth mentioning here are two works that are not directly related either to each other or to this dissertation, but which seem to address similar problems of highlighting the non-dichotomous and non-antagonistic relationship of religion and modernizing and modern societies. First book is Pamela Klassen's work on the Anglican missionary and radio enthusiast Frederic Du Vernet, who in the challenging multicultural context of colonial Canada in the 1920s developed a complex worldview system in which a radio (and other technical innovations) served as a way to transmit spiritual messages telepathically²⁵. Second book is the work of On Barak, who, using the example of colonial and semi-colonial Egypt in the 19th and 20th centuries, has shown how modern temporalities

²³ *Engelshtein L.* Skoptsy i tsarstvo nebesnoe. M, 2002.

²⁴ *Kizenko N.* A prodigal saint: Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian people. University Park, 2000.

²⁵ *Klassen P. E.* The story of radio mind: a missionary's journey on Indigenous land. Chicago, 2018.

embodied in technological innovations (trains, streetcars, telegraph) did not supplant traditional (Islamic) temporal regimes, but produced new, symbiotic²⁶.

As it was said, this dissertation is written in the social history genre. The focus of the analysis is predominantly on the life trajectories of three Wanderers of different generations and backgrounds. This approach inevitably raises the question of the relevance of such an analysis and the possibilities of extrapolating its results to broader social contexts. Here it must be said that, first, as will be shown below, behind the figures of these three Wanderers lurk broader groups of their like-minded and coreligionists with similar biographical trajectories. Second, although I insist that this work is a social history, it is hard to deny that the researches are in some way influenced by prominent works in microhistory²⁷ and their authors' approach to working with such a category of quantitative sociology as representativity.

The problem of generalizing the results of a particular case study and, in general, the relationship between particularity and universality in the sense of historical knowledge are still the subject of lively debates among theorists of microhistory and its critics²⁸. Like the micro-historians who have to fight back perpetually against critics who force them to maneuver between "Scylla of the Exemplar" and "Charybdis of the Anecdote"²⁹, it seems appropriate to take the following theoretical approach.

Although, as has been said, behind my three protagonists stand many of their fellow believers, certainly all three biographical trajectories are exceptional in their own way (as is the life trajectory of any human being is). The reason for their uniqueness lies at least in the fact that

²⁶ Barak O. *On time: Technology and temporality in modern Egypt*. Berkeley, 2013.

²⁷ Like Carlo Ginzburg's seminal work, this research focuses on the transformations of the religious worldview of a particular individual who is prone to theological creativity (see Chapter 4). *Ginzburg C. The cheese and the worms: The cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller*. Baltimore, 2013; As in the work of Natalie Zemon Davis, this research seeks to discern behind the insignificant facts of Wanderers' everyday lives, the texture of their social reality. *Davis N. Z. The Return of Martin Guerre*. Cambridge, 1983; As in other classic work in microhistory, this research will also deal with the biographies and autobiographies of people of the margins, from whom it would seem difficult to expect a propensity to perpetuate their lives in conventional written form. *Davis N. Z. Women on the margins: three seventeenth-century lives*. Cambridge, 1995.

²⁸ *Atnashev T., Velizhev M. Mikroistoriia i problema dokazatelstva v gumanitarnykh naukakh // Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2019. no. 6. P. 83-121; Representativity as a problematic category is one of the key issues of microhistory addressed in *Magnússon S. G., Szijártó I. M. What is microhistory? Theory and practice*. Abingdon, UK and New York, 2013.

²⁹ *Atnashev T., Velizhev M. Mikroistoriia i problema dokazatelstva v gumanitarnykh naukakh*.

at different times they were leaders of local communities of the Wanderers or even of the entire religious movement, as in the case of the protagonist of Chapter 2 Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin). They are exceptional when compared to the mass of ordinary Wanderers, who in turn are in some sense exceptional against the background of their Nikonians or any other neighbors. This exceptionalism, in the context of this research, will be understood in accordance with the concept of "normal exception" widely spread in microhistorical studies.

The use of the concept implies that a certain kind of exceptionality or some "rule-breaking" on the one hand can be seen as a variant of the social norm³⁰, while, on the other hand, allows one to learn more about unconventional social relationships that may have an unexpected impact on the broader historical context³¹. In addition, an analysis of such normal exception, understood as a liminal or full-fledged state of marginality³², allows one to tell something about the boundaries of the domains of norm and marginality, which correlates with Carl Schmidt's ideas about the preciousness of paradoxes and exceptions³³.

0.8 State of the Art

From the very moment of their "discovery" in 1850 the Wanderers became an attractive object of study for historians, ethnographers, and theologians. Typically, Synodal authors have focused on the examination of the "immoral life" of the sectarians and the flaws of their theological conceptions³⁴. At the same time, some of the Synodal schismatologists [raskolovedy] quickly turned their attention to the political dimension of the Wanderers' dogmatics, trying to find a subversive anti-state capacity in it. This tradition of referring to texts of religious sources as an

³⁰ Magnússon S. G., Szijártó I. M. What is microhistory? P.54-55.

³¹ Renders, H. and De Haan, B. The limits of representativeness: Biography, life writing and microhistory // *Storia della Storiografia*. 2011. no. 59-60. P. 39-40.

³² Renders H. The limits of representativeness: Biography, life writing, and microhistory. Renders H., De Haan B. (ed.). *Theoretical discussions of biography: approaches from history, microhistory, and life writing*. Leiden, 2014. P. 132.

³³ "The exception is more interesting than the rule. The rule proves nothing; the exception proves everything: It confirms not only the rule but also its existence, which derives only from the exception. In the exception the power of real life breaks through the crust of a mechanism that has become torpid by repetition". *Schmitt C. Political theology: Four chapters on the concept of sovereignty*. Chicago, 2005. P.15.

³⁴ Rozov A.I. Stranniki ili beguny v russkom raskole. III. Organizatsiia sekty // *Vestnik Evropy*. 1873. Vol. 1. No. 1. P. 262–295; *Ivanovskii N.I. Vnutrennee ustroistvo sekty strannikov ili begunov*. SPb., 1901.

encrypted language of political protest proved extremely influential in further studies on the Wanderers³⁵. The approach to the religious tenets as the language of grassroots social movements was developed by the Narodniks and authors associated with them, who agreed with their Synodal colleagues on the existence of the political potential of the Wanderers, hoping to tame it and make it serve the common revolutionary struggle.

The main figure of this historiographical tradition in the 19th century was the prominent schismatologist Afanasii Shchapov. Shchapov interpreted the dogmatics and theological findings of the Wanderers as a kind of what will later be called “weapons of the weak”³⁶ of the oppressed and subjugated peasants, who channeled their social protest into theology³⁷. Shchapov's ideas were developed by the next generation of Narodniks and Marxists. Iosif Kablitz (under the pseudonym Iuzov) interpreted the radical Old Believers' eschatology as a popular protest against the growing dominance of non-Orthodox and foreigners in the higher administrative structures of the Empire³⁸. Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich viewed the Wanderers' movement as an example of the consequences of class contradictions in pre-industrial societies³⁹. Georgii Plekhanov also interpreted the ideology of the Wanderers as a reflection of the depressing social position of the peasantry, but was still more critical of them. He noted that the "protest" of the Wanderers was not primarily aimed against the institution of autocracy itself or the autocratic system of oppression. According to Plekhanov, the Wanderers saw the Antichrist in specific "non-pious tsars," which hardly made the Wanderers potential allies of the revolutionaries⁴⁰.

This tradition of a politicized view of the Wanderers is contrasted by the work of Ivan Pyatnitskii, who tended to describe the movement as a predominantly religious phenomenon⁴¹.

³⁵ *Liprandi I. P.* Kratkoe obozrenie sushchestvuiushchikh v Rossii raskolov, eresei i sekt: kak v religioznom tak i v politicheskom ikh znachenii. Leipzig, 1883.

³⁶ *Scott J. C.* Weapons of the Weak. New Haven, 2008.

³⁷ *Shchapov A. P.* Zemstvo i raskol. SPb, 1862.

³⁸ *Iuzov (Kablits) I.* Russkie dissidenty: Starovery i dukhovnye khristiane. SPb, 1881.

³⁹ *Bonch-Bruevich V.D.* Izbrannye sochineniia: V 3 t. M., 1959. Vol. 1.

⁴⁰ *Plekhanov G.V.* Istoriiia russkoi obshchestvennoi mysli. Plekhanov G.V. Sochineniia. M; L., 1925. Vol. 20. Similar conclusions were drawn by the Narodnik Ivan Kharlamov, who, unlike his fellow revolutionaries, paid considerable attention not only to the social, but also to the religious foundations of the Wanderers' teachings in his work. *Kharlamov I.N.* Stranniki: Ocherk iz istorii raskola // Russkaia mysl. 1884. no. 4-6. P. 34-85.

⁴¹ *Pyatnitskii I.K.* Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. Sergiev Posad, 1906.

Pyatnitskii's work instantly became the most important comprehensive study of the Wanderers at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, introducing the reader to the way of life and ideology of the Wanderers, and, most notably, being partly based on sources that came out from under the pen of the Wanderers themselves.

Soviet historians took little interest in the study of Wanderers, and those who did, predominantly adhered to the tradition of the social and politicized interpretation once established by Shchapov and his followers. Nikolai Nikol'skii viewed the Wanderers' movement as a protest against the intense secularization of the Empire in the 18th century⁴², while Pavel Ryndziunskii and Alexandr Klibanov interpreted it as a result of the growing economic inequality among the peasants⁴³.

In the late Soviet and post-Soviet historiography, a special place is occupied by the research of A. I. Maltsev, who worked with the manuscripts of Wanderers obtained as part of the afterwar archaeological expeditions. In his seminal work "The Old Believers-Wanderers in the 18th and First Half of the 19th Centuries"⁴⁴, Maltsev demonstrated the inadequacy of the "social approach" for studying the Wanderers, pointing out that repressions by the Imperial authorities against the Old Believers led to an increase in their numbers and consolidation, while the liberalization of religious policy, on the contrary, caused schisms within the communities.

The aforementioned authors focused mainly on the study of the 18th- and 19th-century Wanderers' communities and contributed to the debate about the nature of this religious movement. For all the importance of the mentioned above studies for this dissertation, it must be said that it is clear that the Wanderers of the 20th century have little resemblance to the isolationist Wanderers of the 18th and early 19th centuries who were the subject of classical studies on Wanderers. The first third of the 20th century marks a unique period in the history of the Wanderers. Neither before

⁴² Nikol'skii, N.M. *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi. M., 1988*

⁴³ Ryndziunskii P.G. *Gorodskoe grazhdanstvo doreformennoi Rossii. M., 1958; Klibanov A.I. Narodnaia sotsialnaia utopiia v Rossii: Period feodalizma. M., 1977.*

⁴⁴ Maltsev A. I. *Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v. Novosibirsk, 1996.*

nor after that time the Wanderers had attempted so intensely to expand their presence and establish themselves in social domains outside their communities.

This thesis proposes to problematize some of the arguments put forward by scholars of the 20th century Wanderers. In the past 20 years, this particular period of the Wanderers' history has attracted the attention of several researchers. In "Preparing God's Harvest: Maksim Zalesskii, Millenarianism, and the Wanderers in Soviet Russia"⁴⁵ Irina Paert, using the complex hybrid worldview of the Wanderer Maksim Zalesskii (also one of the protagonists of this study) who found it acceptable to work for the OGPU, showed how the popular millenarianism of Wanderers interacted with Soviet Marxist eschatology. Elena Dutchak studied the Siberian taiga Wanderers and the transformation of their beliefs and social structure under the influence of external historical processes and their adaptation resources, which allowed the believers to maintain their isolated way of life to the present day⁴⁶. Sergei Petrov focused on cases of the positive interaction between the Wanderers and the newly emerged Soviet authorities in the early 1920s⁴⁷. Danila Raskov, in his work on the economic history of late imperial Old Believers, turned to the history of the economic activities of Wanderers to prove the influential historiographic concept of the Old Believers' particular economic ethic⁴⁸.

The aforementioned authors focused on the problems of interaction and integration of the carriers of a radically eschatological worldview, the millenarian archaicists, into the modernizing society, whose very attempt to contact with the modernity should surprise the researcher. There is no doubt that, on an ideological level, the views of the Wanderers proclaimed in their theological writings were indeed radically escapist. However, the idea of this research is to look also at the

⁴⁵ Paert I. Preparing God's Harvest: Maksim Zalesskii, Millenarianism, and the Wanderers in Soviet Russia // *The Russian Review*, 2005. No. 64(1). P. 44-61.

⁴⁶ My work often raises the same issues as Dutchak's research. However, the geographical context turns out to be essential. As will be shown below, there is a chasm between the Wanderers in question and their Siberian co-religionists, studied by Dutchak. Dutchak E.E. *Iz "Vavilona" v "Belovod'e": adaptatsionnye vozmozhnosti taezhnykh obshchin staroverov-strannikov (vtoraia polovina 19-nachalo 21v.)*. Tomsk, 2007.

⁴⁷ Petrov S.G. *Starovery-stranniki i Sovetskaia vlast': ocherk istorii stranstvuiushchikh pravoslavnykh khristian dlia predsedatelia VTsIK M.I. Kalinina*. // Romodanovskaia E.K. (ed.). *Traditsii otechestvennoi dukhovnoi kultury v narrativnykh i dokumental'nykh istochnikakh 15-21 vv. sbornik nauchnykh trudov*. Novosibirsk, 2010. P. 191-213.

⁴⁸ Raskov D.E. *Ekonomicheskie instituty staroobriadchestva*. SPb, 2012.

practices of the Wanderers' interaction with the world around them, which cannot be explained merely by taking as a given that the Wanderers were radical millenarians. As will be shown in the following chapters, the Wanderers were radical Millenarians insofar as their Millenarianism did not run counter to the pragmatics of their inclusion in broader processes. Moreover, the Wanderers discussed below were not an isolationist community, nor did they seek to wall themselves off from the world and the turbulent economic and social life of the first third of the 20th century.

Here it seems productive to follow Douglas Rogers, who pointed out that the historiography of the Old Faith tends to view the Old Believers as someone who is outside of modernity/state/authority and therefore represents a kind of opposition pole to modernity/state/authority⁴⁹. This research proposes to normalize the Late Imperial and Early Soviet experiences of the Wanderers by showing that by the early 20th century they were not separated from the outside world by an insurmountable wall of the religious underground. In fact, there was a significant gap between their declarative escapism and their actual practices of interaction with the social spaces outside their communities. Apparently, the Wanderers themselves were aware of this gap and sought to bridge it by adapting their ideology to the already existing practices of interaction. These attempts at adaptation led, in turn, to the large-scale social transformations within the community: splits or, on the contrary, new alliances. Thus, the contribution of the study to this historiographical discussion is to consider the processes of interaction of Wanderers with the surrounding modern space not through the opposition “the traditional community” vs. “the modernity”, but from the perspective of how the community, not separated from the modernizing world, uses the opportunities of that world to expand its presence in it.

It is necessary to also mention the larger historiographic tradition of exoticizing the Late Imperial and Early Soviet experience not only of the Wanderers, but also of the Old Believers in general. This tradition has several incarnations, but its general interpretative message is to show

⁴⁹ Rogers D. *The old faith and the Russian land: a historical ethnography of ethics in the Urals*. Ithaca, 2016. P.30.

the extraordinary character of the Old Believers' experience of external transformations. One should start with the historiography of the Late Imperial Old Believers capitalism. Since this work directly deals with the economic activities of Wanderers, it should be noted that the materials on which the study is based, allow to discuss the ideas about the features of the Old Believers' economics and economic ethics, in particular with the works dedicated to the Old Believers' urban entrepreneurship⁵⁰.

There is no doubt that the economic activity of the active part of the urban Old Believers had its own distinctive features. The sum of these features fits comfortably into a plot that might be called "Old Believers' Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism," along the lines of Max Weber's classic work⁵¹. However, putting aside the romantic narrative of Late Imperial Old Believers entrepreneurship as an example of alternative Russian modernization "with a Christian face"⁵² or modernization "on the basis of Russian Orthodox values"⁵³ one should point out that attempts to say something about the Late Imperial Old Believers in general are fraught with the danger of its essentialization. The Old Believers never formed a single community, not only dogmatically, but also socially. Therefore, any generalizations based on the examples of successful merchants and industrialists, who constituted only a tiny layer in the sea of peasant and petty-bourgeois Old Believers need to be clarified. In addition, the concept of the "Golden Age of Old Believers,"

⁵⁰ See, for example: *Kerov V. V.* "Se chelovek i delo ego...": konfessionalno-eticheskie faktory staroobriadcheskogo predprinimatelstva v Rossii M., 2004; *Kerov V. V.* Dukhovnyi stroi staroobriadcheskogo predprinimatelstva: alternativnaia modernizatsiia na osnove natsionalnoi traditsii. Ekonomicheskaiia istoriia: ezhegodnik. 1999, P. 195-234; For a quintessence of notions about the exclusivity of the Old Believer capitalist experience, conditioned by a special moral and ethical qualities, see *West J. L.* Merchant Moscow Images of Russia's Vanished Bourgeoisie. New Jersey, 1998. P. 13-16, 61-71, 165. A somewhat more problematizing and less idealizing view of the relationship between religious ethics and the capitalist practices of the Old Believer merchants and industrialists is presented in *Rieber A. J.* Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia. Chapel Hill, 1982. However, the findings of this work on the urban and often educated Old Believers' religion-based propensity toward capitalism are still difficult to extrapolate to the vast and diverse mass of their coreligionists. In addition, Rieber's conclusions about the kinship between Old Believers' quest for church autarchy and ethnocentric modern Russian nationalism do not seem indisputable. Ibid. P.138,165. On top of that, it seems to take a lot of effort for the reader to recognize the mysterious sect of "Shore dwellers" as simply the Old Believers-Pomortsy. Ibid. P. 160. An example of a more focused, and therefore much less inclined to generalization, work on the Old Believer entrepreneurship *Iukhimenko E. M.* Rakhmanovy: kuptsy-staroobriadtsy, blagotvoriteli i kollektcionery. M., 2013.

⁵¹ *Weber M.* Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus. Vol. 1614. München, 2004.

⁵² *Kerov V. V.* "Se chelovek i delo ego..."; *Kerov, V. V.* Dukhovnyi stroi staroobriadcheskogo predprinimatelstva;

⁵³ *Kerov V. V.* "Se chelovek i delo ego...". P.590

which lasted from 1905 to 1917⁵⁴, requires clarification. In this logic, the Golden Age ends with the "apocalypse" of October 25, 1917, when the shift of political regimes and the Bolsheviks' policy toward industrialists and entrepreneurs (regardless of their confessional affiliation) allegedly put an end to the possibility of modernization according to Old Believers' templates. As will be shown, the economic activity of the protagonists of this work did not stop on October 25, 1917, but only transformed, adapting to political and social changes. Moreover, it would be fair to say that the real "Golden Age" came for the Wanderers precisely under the Early Soviet regime, at the initiative of which all legal restrictions on the protagonists of the study were lifted.

There are also examples of the reverse exoticization of the Old Believers' experience. These include perceptions of the Old Believers as bearers of a dark religious worldview incompatible with the integration into modern realms. This position is held, for example, by Leonid Heretz in his work on the Late Imperial religiosity and the "traditional culture of the Russian peasantry"⁵⁵. This traditional culture (as the quintessence of which the ideology of the Old Faith is considered⁵⁶), according to Heretz's logic, turned out to be too pessimistic, eschatological and inert, thus preventing any attempts at Russian modernization "from below".

To begin with, the author analyzes the worldview of the 20th century Old Believers on the basis of the writings of the Fathers of the Schism of the mid-17th century and applies Western Christian categories to the events and processes of Russian church history, describing the sides of the Schism in terms of "reformation"/"counter-reformation". Attempts to portray the Old Believers as archaic traditionalists⁵⁷ look especially problematic, not only for the 20th century, but also for the earlier history of the Old Faith⁵⁸. And most importantly, as will be shown in this work, at least

⁵⁴ Best expressed in *Robson Roy R.* Old Believers in Modern Russia. DeKalb, 1995; see also Chapter 4. "The beginning of the 20th century. The Golden Decade" in *Iukhimenko E. M.* Staroobriadcheskii tsentr za Rogozhskoi zastavoiu. 2-e izd. M., 2012; also "the watershed of 1917" is considered in *Kerov V. V.* "Se chelovek i delo ego...". P. 50.

⁵⁵ *Heretz L.* Russia on the eve of modernity: popular religion and traditional culture under the last tsars. Cambridge, 2008.

⁵⁶ *Heretz L.* Russia on the eve of modernity. P. 42

⁵⁷ *Heretz L.* Russia on the eve of modernity. P. 45, 53, 56.

⁵⁸ On the Old Belief as a space that provides conditions for a greater (compared to the synodal space) realization of the female agency see. *Paert I.* Old Believers: Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850. Manchester, 2003; *Bushnell J.* Russian Peasant Women Who Refused to Marry: Spasovite Old Believers in the 18th-19th Centuries. – Bloomington, 2017. On the innovations of the Old Believers' literary tradition see. *Panchenko A. M.* Avvakum kak

the Old Believers of the early 20th century not only did not perceive modernization as the apocalypse, but on the contrary, did their best to march with it and put it to their service, and at certain stages were its pioneers.

Here one should also mention the works of Aleksandr Etkind. Although Etkind explores the external perceptions of religious dissidents rather than analyzes their actual ideologies, practices, and modes of living, at times the author goes on to describe the dissenters and sectarians themselves. At such moments (for example, by expressing the controversial idea of the kinship between the Wanderers and the Whips (Khlysty⁵⁹) Aleksandr Etkind seems to adopt the optics of his protagonists: the Narodniks, Bolsheviks, and Silver Age writers, who romanticized the dissidents and sometimes failed to adequately describe their ideologies and practices.

Etkind's very idea that for the Late Imperial public - the poets, novelists and revolutionaries - the sectarians became the embodiment of the collective Other seems to be a generalization. As will be shown in this dissertation, the external perception of the Wanderers was never static; it was constantly transforming as the Empire had been modernizing and nationalizing, and then following the fluctuations of the Early Soviet policies. Moreover, these transformations were multidirectional: from the construction of the legend of ritual murders allegedly common among the Wanderers to the attempts of officials and journalists to normalize the Wanderers, proving their loyalty to the monarchy and the absence of fierce rituals in their milieu. And yet, as the Empire has been nationalizing, the Wanderers have been increasingly perceived not as the Other, but as a deviant group, but nevertheless a part of the national domain. In other words, journalists and public politicians increasingly came to understand the Wanderers primarily as ethnic Russians and only secondarily as radical religious dissidents.

Here it is also worth mentioning the work by Boris Mironov which is not about the Old Believers at all, but which nevertheless operates with a similar exoticizing optics aimed at

novator // Russkaia literatura. 1982. no. 4. P. 142-152; Komarovich V.L., Likhachev D.S. Protopop Avvakum // Istoriiia russkoi literatury. Vol. 2, Part 2: Literatura 1590-1690 gg. M.-L., 1948. P. 302-313.

⁵⁹ Etkind A. M. Khlyst. P. 5.

contrasting "popular traditionalism" and "modernization". I do not share the pessimistic view of Boris Mironov on the Russian peasantry and the lower urban classes of the late 19th century as a stronghold of anti-modern traditionalism nourished by Orthodox Christianity⁶⁰. Although Mironov's work on social history and statistics of the Russian Empire is a monumental and very important, I do believe that there are things that cannot be measured quantitatively and are alien to statistical causal explanations. It will be shown below that the radically Orthodox, semi-peasant, semi-urban milieu of the Wanderers was capable of forming remarkably energetic and enterprising people, for whose activity religion sometimes was more an aid than a hindrance.

It is also necessary to refer to "The Old Faith and the Russian Land" by Douglas Rogers (2010), which dwells on how the Old Believers Pomortsy, who inhabited several villages around the town of Sepych on the Upper Kama, developed a particular ethical regime enabling them to adapt to the changing world around them in the 19th as well as in the 21st century⁶¹. These ethical regimes represent a clear division of secular and spiritual responsibilities between different generations of Pomortsy. According to Rogers, older Pomortsy lead an almost monastic life, distancing themselves from all worldly things, while the younger ones live a secular life, getting involved in various external social processes until they reach an elderly age and join the ranks of the elders. In many ways, what Rogers describes does rhyme with what this research seeks to address. Both the Wanderers and the Pomortsy are the priestless Old Believers, both representing a kind of textual community, united by a common understanding of a particular corpus of theological texts⁶². Both the Wanderers and the Pomortsy have experienced several painful

⁶⁰ *Mironov B. N. Sotsialnaia istoriia Rossii perioda imperii (18—nachalo 20 v.)*. Vol. 1. SPb., 2003. P. 337-345. This view of Russian Orthodoxy as a particular religious and cultural system, characterized by the detachment of its adherents from worldly concerns in the passive expectation of an afterlife reward for the hardships of earthly life, sounds a lot like Richard Pipes' famous prejudiced vision of the role of Orthodoxy in Russian history. To give a sense of what this is all about, it is fair to quote the following Pipes's passage: "The basic doctrinal element in Orthodoxy is the creed of resignation. Orthodoxy considers earthly existence an abomination, and prefers retirement to involvement. It has always been keenly receptive to currents emanating from the orient which preached withdrawal from life, including eremitic and hesychast doctrines striving for total dissociation from earthly reality... Among Russian peasants in that age of rationalism there spread sectarian movements of an extreme irrational type such as western Europe had not seen since the Reformation". *Pipes R. Russia under the Old Regime*. New York, 1974. P. 221-222. For a critique of this view, see famous *Freeze G. L. "Handmaiden of the state? The Church in Imperial Russia reconsidered."* *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. 1985. no. 36.1 P. 82-102.

⁶¹ *Rogers D. The Old Faith and the Russian Land*.

⁶² *Rogers D. The Old Faith and the Russian Land*. P. 77. The analytical concept of "textual communities" was

schisms throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. As will be shown below, the Wanderers also adapted a peculiar idea of dividing areas of responsibility into spiritual (world-renouncers) and worldly (benefactors) (just not along generational lines). Both the Pomortsy of Sepych and the Wanderers share many ideological and practical nuances common to the world of the Old Faith, from resolving major issues in polemical councils to the idea of separation from the world as the only way to salvation. In addition, some toponyms found in Rogers's work - Vereshchagino, Okhansk and Sepych itself - will also appear on the pages of this research as locations of the Wanderers' activity.

However, for all these similarities, there are also significant differences between the Pomortsy of Sepych and the Wanderers. One of such disparities is the fundamentally different approaches of the two communities to the relationship with the geographical space. Localized on a relatively small territory of the upper Kama River, the Pomortsy contrast sharply with the profoundly fluid Wanderers. Although, as will be seen below, the Wanderer doctrine did not prescribe obligatory geographical movements, in reality my protagonists travelled great distances, finding themselves in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kazan'. Their fluidity, in contrast to the sedentariness of the Pomortsy of Sepych, seems to have influenced their social outlook; they were adept at navigating a cycle of social transformation and quickly grasped the ideological swings of

originally developed by historian Brian Stock to study medieval heterodox Christian movements. *Stock B.* The implications of literacy: Written language and models of interpretation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. New Jersey, 1983. The idea that Old Believers' groups can be productively examined as textual communities has been widespread among researchers of the Old Faith for a relatively long time although the very approach to the application of this concept has been the subject of debate. It seems that the first to use this analytical category to study the Old Faith was Robert Crummey who studied the first priestless communities of the 17th century. *Crummey R. O.* Old Belief as Popular Religion: New Approaches // *Slavic Review*. 1993. Vol. 52. no. 4. P. 700-712. Later on, Aleksandr L'vov in his work on Russian subbotniks and Ekaterina Romanova in her work on Old Believers' self-immolations pointed out the imperfections of Crummey's approach to the use of the concept. *L'vov A. L.* Prostonarodnoe dvizhenie iudeistvuiushchikh v Rossii 18-20 vekov: metodologicheskie aspekty etnograficheskogo izucheniia. SPb., 2007. P. 38. *Romanova E.* Massovye samosozhzheniia staroobriadtsev Rossii v 16-19 vekakh. SPb.: 2012. P. 48-49. Briefly, the disagreement between them was that Crummey placed the responsibility for maintaining and interpreting the textual canon on the educated elite within the community, while L'vov and Romanova insisted on a common understanding of texts within communities regardless of the elitist or non-elitist position of each community member. As will be shown below, it is fair to apply to the Wanderers both the concept of "textual community" (in L'vov and Romanova's understanding) and Rogers' concept of a "moral community", i.e., a community of people united by a common system of ethical obligations. However, as the case of Wanderers reveals, their strategies for inclusion in wider processes cannot be explained exclusively by their shared collective understanding of certain texts or by a system of ethical commitments. *Rogers D.* The Old Faith and the Russian Land. P. 17.

political regimes in search of social niches suitable for themselves. Furthermore, unlike the rural Pomortsy, the Wanderers cannot be fully described as either peasants or city dwellers. Although some of them lived in large cities, in reality they always found themselves on the border between urban and rural areas, often crossing this border many times in the course of their lives for long periods. The subjects in question felt equally equipped for life in a metropolis and in a remote province. It seems that their inquiring eyes were simultaneously directed towards both the city and the countryside in search of opportunities to find their place and establish themselves there. This mobility, along with a broad intellectual outlook⁶³, seems to have had a marked influence on both the style and etiquette of their interaction not only with the world around them (they did it skillfully), but also in their interactions with each other. In particular, this is reflected in the bureaucratic formalism of the Wanderers. Addressing the persons by their patronymic name, a recognizable trait of communication among Russian villagers, common in the texts of the Pomortsy of Sepych⁶⁴, is completely unimaginable among the Wanderers. Even bitter enemies addressed each other by their full names in correspondence or in polemical texts.

But the main thing that distinguishes the protagonists of this study from Rogers's Old Believers is the strategies of exercising agency in their interactions with the world around them. The difference is rooted in the same relationship between the fluid dynamics of the Wanderers and the localized statics of the Rogers's Pomortsy. While transformations of the world around them were literally falling on the heads of the villagers of the Upper Kama, the Wanderers, despite a plethora of complicating factors, sought and found ways to deploy these transformations in their own service. In other words, the Wanderers were active participants and beneficiaries of these processes, which contrasts sharply with the static adaptation strategies of the Pomortsy, often forced to fit into a social landscape imposed from outside. In some sense, in the case of the Wanderers, their active and dynamic agency, therefore, indicated a limit to the objectifying

⁶³ As will be seen below, the Wanderers not only actively read secular literature, but also published books for the secular audience themselves.

⁶⁴ Rogers D. *The Old Faith and the Russian Land*. P.75.

capacities of political and social processes in the first third of the 20th century to reformat the spaces in which they operated.

To summarize this part, it can be said that the main historiographical task of the research is a comprehensive analysis of an understudied, but eventful, period in the history of the Wanderers. Although individual works have dealt with the activity of the Wanderers in parts of this period or, as Elena Dutchak's work, have examined the Siberian isolationist Wanderers, the history of the Wanderers as an integral part of the communities around them has not, in fact, yet been written. However, writing a history of the Wanderers themselves is only one task of the thesis. In addition, my research is specifically intended to position the Wanderers not only in the context of broader urban and rural communities, but also to include them in the history of the sociopolitical transformations of the first third of the 20th century, using the example of the Wanderers to show the multifaceted nature of these processes.

0.9 Sources

The work is based on the "collision" of different categories of the sources. It relies primarily on the theological, biographical, and epistolary documents of the Wanderers themselves. However, to contextualize the research, I also draw on a wide range of external materials, from criminal records and documents of the Imperial and Soviet bureaucracies concerning interactions with the Wanderers to materials from the Late Imperial and Early Soviet press. Documents related to the activities of the Old Believers in the first third of the 20th century can be roughly divided into several categories according to the logic of how they were collected.

0.9.1 Manuscripts and Documents of the Wanderers

Postwar Leningrad, Novosibirsk, and Moscow archaeographers and historians, through numerous expeditions into remote parts of the USSR, managed to collect a large number of theological and liturgical texts, letters, and personal documents of the Wanderers. These documents, written for the needs of the Old Believers themselves, draw a picture of a space separated from the outside world. This domain possesses its own chronology, historiography,

language (Church Slavonic combined with Russian in the pre-revolutionary orthography), and its own sense of the historical moment. Of course, in fact the Wanderers were not separated from the world, and even the very transformation of their theological doctrines reflects the influence of external political and social processes. Thus, such materials do not reflect the Wanderers' reality, but are the key to understanding the idealized view that the Wanderers have of themselves. However, in addition to the factual data on the events analyzed, on the basis of such documents it is possible to discern how the ideology of the Wanderers was transformed, what caused splits and strife within the movement, and how their community was organized in general, from a vernacular point of view. In the framework of this study, I have processed a significant number of such sources collected from the archives of St. Petersburg (BAN, GMIR), Moscow (ORKiR National Library of Moscow State University), and Yaroslavl' (GAYaO).

As we shall see below, in the 1910s the Wanderer community split into two irreconcilable camps. As it happened, years later, even the documents of the two rival communities (letters, minutes of councils, and liturgical and theological manuscripts) ended up in archives in different cities. These materials, which are central to this work, are collected in two manuscript collections: the Kargopol manuscript collection of the Library of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and the Verkhokamsk manuscript collection of the Scientific Library of Moscow State University in Moscow.

0.9.2 Documents from the institutional archives

In this research, the archival document represents a situation when my protagonists interacted with the state. This type of materials includes appeals of the Old Believers to state authorities, letters to officials, and petitions to solve routine problems of the community. By appealing to the state bodies and institutions (local or central), the Wanderers manifested their readiness for an external interaction or cooperation. The majority of such petitions can be found in the archives of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the People's Commissariat of Justice (GARF. F. A 353 and F. 1235) and local administrative archives (GAYaO. F. R-383, F. R-

514, R-773 and many others), which were the main recipients of the Wanderers' petitions. Such materials are sometimes presented as contradictory to sources from the previous category. For example, in their own writings the Wanderers tend to see themselves as the stubborn custodians of "the ancient piety" and consistent world-renouncers, while documents of their interaction with the authorities at various levels draw a picture of active individuals capable of adapting to any external political and social conditions. Thus, it is necessary to analyze these two categories of sources together, paying attention to how the gap between ideology and the practices of engagement in the processes of the surrounding world undergoes transformation.

0.9.3 Criminal cases

In addition to moments of interaction (or attempts at interaction), it is impossible to avoid the evidence of confrontations, given that the Wanderers spent a certain part of the period (before 1917 and after 1929) on the edge of illegality. This refers first and foremost to criminal cases against the Wanderers. A criminal case is an excellent way to look at them from the outside to notice and describe what their own authentic sources miss. The Imperial or Soviet investigator, indifferent to theology, focused on a variety of things that seemed obvious to the Old Believers. How did their networks work? How was their everyday life organized? How did they move over vast distances, for example, from Altai to Arkhangel'sk? While trying to answer these questions, the investigator becomes an ethnographer who does not fully understand what he is dealing with, but tries to examine in detail what he observes⁶⁵. The research analyzes the Late Imperial and Early Soviet criminal cases against the Wanderers from Yaroslavl' (GAYaO. F. 346), Vyatka (GASPIKO. F. P-6799), and Perm' (GOPAPO. F. 643/2) collected from the respective regional archives.

⁶⁵ Similar optics are analyzed in *Ginzburg, C. Clues, myths, and the historical method*. Baltimore, 1989. P. 156-164. On criminal ethnography see *Verdery K. Secrets and truths: ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police*. Budapest, 2014; on the archives of the Soviet antireligious institutions and the value that the materials they contain may have, see *Luehrmann S. Religion in secular archives: Soviet atheism and historical knowledge*. New York, 2015.

0.9.4 Press materials, memoirs and works of fiction

There is a complex of sources devoted to the Wanderers, although only indirectly related to their actual life. These sources include the Imperial bureaucratic documents, which discuss the legal status of the Wanderers, and the materials of the Late Imperial and Soviet press. The specificity of these materials lies in the fact that the actors involved in their formation, with few exceptions, did not have any real encounters with the Wanderers. As mentioned above, under the Old Regime, Wanderers consistently avoided contact with central authorities. Thus, they were deprived of the opportunity to directly influence the development of their legal status. The imperial administrative authorities were forced to rely mainly on the Synodal expertise and newspaper articles in discussing the activities of the Wanderers. Synodal missionaries, with few exceptions, tended to describe the Wanderers at the request of the administrative authorities as a fanatic and politically subversive community, listing in great detail the gruesome rituals and religious practices allegedly carried out by the Wanderers. Late imperial journalists also succeeded in constructing an image of "the obscure sect". In the 1910s (in the shadow of the Beilis affair), newspapers were gripped by a wave of stories about ritual murders allegedly carried out by the Wanderers. This synodal-tabloid narrative about "the Wanderers-fanatics" was successfully adapted and picked up by the Soviet anti-religious press, which supplemented accusations of frightening rituals with accusations of being the kulaks and of profiteering. Certainly, the data contained in such sources must be viewed with caution. With few exceptions, each of the sources reveal the author's insufficient knowledge of the actual way of life of the Wanderers. Nevertheless, this category of sources is particularly valuable for this research because it represents the pure experience of constructing the external image of the Wanderers and enables the reconstruction of the discursive context faced by Wanderers in the course of engaging in the broader domains and processes.

0.10 Chronological framework

Scholars focusing on the history of Old Believers in the 20th century tend to agree that the transformations of the political regimes of 1917 are a kind of watershed, fragmenting the Old Believers' history into two unequal periods. As the former, it is usually accepted to consider the period from 1905 to 1917, portrayed as the "Golden Age" of Old Believers. The concept of the "Golden Age" implies an unprecedented flowering of religious, cultural and economic life of Old Believers, following the publication of the Edict "On strengthening the principles of religious tolerance" (1905), which actually removed the last obstacles to the full integration of Old Believers. Respectively, the October Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent radical transformation of political regimes, following the logic of the concept, is described in apocalyptic colors, as foreshadowing the coming era of anti-religious persecution and drastic restrictions on the economic and religious life of the Old Believers. Thus, these two periods appear to researchers quite different from each other and connect together only in long *durée* works on the history of Old Believers⁶⁶.

The materials that form the basis of this study allow us to take a new look at such a periodization by questioning the "1917 rupture," as well as the concepts of the "Golden Age" and the time of anti-religious persecution that followed it. The concept of the "Golden Age" can hardly be applied to the history of the protagonists of this research, inasmuch as they continued to live in a semi-legal regime even after 1905. Moreover, the Wanderers were fully emancipated only with the issuance of the decree "On the Separation of Church and State" (1918). Thus, in the first decade of the Soviet regime, the Wanderers obtained the possibility of a fully open existence for the first time, which many of them successfully took advantage of. In addition, one of the hypotheses of this research is that the patterns which were used to build strategies for integrating the Wanderers into the Soviet social space were established during the first decade of the 20th century, when a part of the Wanderers first tried to openly interact with what they considered "external" space.

⁶⁶ For instance, works by Elena Dutchak and Douglas Rogers.

Thus, it turns out that a chronology periodized in the format "1905 - 1917" vs "1917 - 1937" is hardly suitable for describing the activity of Wanderers in this period.

The choice of the early 20th century (with no reference to 1905) as the lower chronological boundary of the study seems expedient, since it was during this period that active debates about the possibility of participation in economic activity began among the Wanderers, which is a kind of prologue to the subsequent events described in the dissertation.

Setting a higher chronological boundary for the study is somewhat more problematic. At the end of the 1920s, the growing hostility of the authorities toward sectarians, which in the Soviet religious taxonomy included the Wanderers, as well as the launch of collectivization, which homogenized the economic agricultural landscape, practically deprived the active part of the Wanderers of the possibility of legal existence. The community that grouped around the Danilov mill, to which a significant part of the study is devoted, had gone underground by 1930. However, it is at this moment that a part of the Wanderers, who had avoided contact with the state in the 1920s, start trying to interact with it. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1930s it was impossible to be both a Wanderer and a Soviet citizen. Believers had to choose between living in hiding in constant fear of repression or breaking with their religious past and finally integrating into the Soviet social domain. This moment of elimination of the possibility of dual (religious and civil) loyalties, which came about by the mid-1930s, will be the higher chronological boundary of the study. Thus, the chronological frame is chosen so as to trace the history of the Wanderers from the emergence of the idea of the possibility of coexistence with the outside world in the early 1900s to the impossibility of such coexistence in roughly the mid-1930s.

0.11 Geographic framework

Since my focus is on specific trajectories and social transformations, in a spatial sense the research follows the biographies of my protagonists. The traces of my protagonists lead along their routes from Danilov to Arkhangel'sk, from Yaroslavl' to Vyatka, from the Komi region to Perm. In some sense, the movement of the protagonists of this work proves to be an obstacle to

delineating the spatial boundaries of the study. Of course, regional specificity played an enormous role in the transformation of the Imperial regimes in the first third of the 20th century. However, this study focuses on individuals whose relationship with geographical space is arranged differently from many other communities. Thus, since the study deals with representatives of a religious movement based on the ideology of spiritual and practical nomadism, I deliberately leave my research geographically unrooted.

Here it should also be said that the ethnic composition of the Wanderers was (with the exception of tiny communities of Komi Wanderers)⁶⁷ extremely homogeneous. Looking at the biographies of the Wanderers, it is almost impossible to find any representatives of other ethnic groups among them. Thus, the study focuses on a community, though not rooted in the usual space of physical geography, but, nevertheless, homogeneous in terms of ethnicity or at least in terms of the Russian language they spoke.

0.12 Research design

The work consists of 4 chapters, supplemented by an introduction and concluding section.

0.12.1 Chapter 1

The chapter is dedicated to reconstructing the historical context of the events in question. The central idea of this chapter is to prove that by the beginning of the twentieth century the Wanderers were maintaining a relatively comfortable mode of existence. If the heroes of the study would attempt to change this mode, they would inevitably encounter a number of countervailing factors: the need for a drastic ideological transformation and the necessity of a full contact with the outside world, which looked upon the Wanderers if not with hostility, then at least with mistrust.

⁶⁷ *Prokuratova E. V.* Staroobriadcheskaia kultura Komi kraia 18-20 vekov: knigopisnaia deiatelnost i literaturnoe tvorcestvo udorskikh staroverov. SPb, 2010. On the prominent mentor of the Wanderers, Prokhor Filippovich Ilyin-Vinogradov, who was of Komi-Zyrian origins, see: *Prokuratova E.V.* Strannicheskoe soglasie na Udore v kontse 19 – nachale 20 vv.: nastavnik P.F.Ilin // Khristianstvo i Sever. Po materialam 6 Kargopol'skoi nauchnoi konferentsii. M., 2002. P. 154–165.

The first section of the chapter is devoted to the positioning of the Wanderer movement in the coordinate system of the Old Faith and the Eastern Christianity in general. The second paragraph is devoted to an overview of the history of the Wanderers' movement from its origins in the late 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century. The review will demonstrate how the ideology of the Wanderers changed, what challenges the group faced, and how these people dealt with the challenges. In the course of this part, important aspects of the Wanderers' worldview will also be analyzed. The third paragraph deals with the history of the external perception of the Wanderers from the moment of their "discovery" in 1850 to the beginning of the 20th century. This paragraph analyzes the semi-legal status of Wanderers, the evolution of debates about their juridical status, and the external discourses on Wanderers: Synodal, academic, and public. In addition, the actual mode of existence of the Wanderers, which differed significantly from their self-declared underground existence, will be described and analysed in detail.

0.12.2 Chapter 2

The chapter is devoted to the history of economic activity and adaptation of the Wanderers to the political and social transformations that occurred in the first third of the 20th century. It analyses the dynamics of the Wanderers' fully-fledged engagement with the processes of modernization as well as the development of new strategies of interaction with the surrounding world and the changing political regimes. The biographical trajectory of the prominent 20th-century Wanderer theologian and mentor Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin) (185?-1938) is used as a relevant object of analysis.

Ryabinin was born in the 1850s in the Urals, where he was also baptized as a Wanderer, but that did not prevent him from working as a shopkeeper in Nev'yansk for several more years. In 1880 Aleksandr Vasilievich was accused of the ritual murder and condemned to penal servitude, however escaped during the transit to the place of detention and joined the Yaroslavl' Wanderers. Here he made a profound spiritual career and by 1910 had become the leader of the whole community of the Wanderers. Ryabinin initiated and enthusiastically integrated the Wanderers

into domains outside the community. Under his leadership in Danilov (Yaroslavl' Province), the Wanderers mastered capitalist production (running a steam mill), founded a religious school, and tried to influence public opinion about themselves by publishing books and writing articles for the broader public. After 1917, the Danilov community under the leadership of Ryabinin continued its economic and spiritual activities, despite the difficult history of relations with the local Soviet authorities. By the end of the 1920s, however, integration was halted, contrary to their aspirations. Collectivization and the radicalization of the Soviet religious policy put an end to the 20-year history of the Wanderers' open existence. Moreover, for the first time (at least since the 1850s), the Wanderers displaced from Soviet space found themselves in the actual, rather than declarative, underground and were forced to continue their spiritual activities in constant fear of being arrested. Ryabinin himself, after the liquidation of his Danilov project and a brief imprisonment, moved to Kazan', where he died in hiding in the late 1930s.

A side topic of the chapter is an analysis of statistical information regarding Wanderers (and, more broadly, Russian religious dissidents) and academic debates on the issue.

0.12.3 Chapter 3

The chapter is devoted to the biography of Ryabinin's younger associate, Khristofor Ivanovich (Zyryanov) (187?-1937), and demonstrates the consequences of the contact of the Wanderers with Russian modernity. Zyryanov, who was born in a village in Perm' and joined the Wanderers at the age of 25, became one of the major preachers and apologists for Ryabinin's ideas. After 1917 he also participated in the creation of another labor cooperative of the Wanderers, actively interacted with Soviet officials and in solving his daily problems reached the Vice Commissar of Justice of the USSR. However, after the Wanderers went underground, his views on the surrounding Soviet space dramatically transformed.

In the early 1930s in the Murashki area of the Vyatka district of the Nizhnii Novgorod region (the northern part of today's Kirov region) about sixty Wanderers accepted a voluntary death, no longer wanting to live in a "corrupted by the Antichrist" world. The initiator of the wave of

poisonings, drownings, and self-immolations was Khristofor Ivanovich, who was arrested in 1936 and sentenced to death a year later. This case of collective suicide can easily be described as an actualization of the traditional Old Believer escapist strategy, religiously motivated self-murder or as a response to the excesses of Soviet religious and agricultural policies, which left no space for Old Believers-peasants to exist by the beginning of the 1930s.

However, as this chapter shows, the Vyatka Wanderers were neither convinced isolationists nor uncompromising dissidents in their relations with the Soviet authorities. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the historical trajectory of a group of people, the final point of which was group suicide. My hypothesis is that this grim practice was not made possible because the Wanderers were radical underground millenarians who decided to take such a move on the eve of the Doomsday. On the contrary, the Vyatka Wanderers decided to take this desperate measure because, after several decades of the intense and open economic activity, they found themselves unable to maintain this unprecedented regime of existence after being squeezed into the underground by Stalin's social and religious policies.

The description of the Vyatka events is inseparably linked to an analysis of the position of women in the community of Wanderers, since the overwhelming majority of those who committed suicide were females. In addition, in this part the particularities of the underground existence of the wanderers and the transformation of their network of communication and assistance are examined.

0.12.4 Chapter 4

This chapter is devoted to the biographical trajectory of Ryabinin's opponent, Maksim Zalesskii. Maksim Ivanovich was born to a Nikonian family and became a Wanderer at the age of 16. At the moment when Ryabinin and his associates became involved in economic activities, Zalesskii took the side of Aleksandr Vasilievich's opponents. Living semi-legally among the Wanderers who found the capitalist activities of their co-religionists unacceptable for the next 20 years, Zalesskii even made a profound spiritual career. However, in 1931, at a time when the

Wanderers' community was forced to go underground, Zalesskii himself opened up to the outside world to become an agent of the OGPU. In the following years, Zalesskii engaged in religious expertise for the Arkhangel'sk law enforcement agencies, pursued a civilian career, and broke with the Wanderer community. This part of the study analyzes why Zalesskii chose this particular moment for engaging in external processes rather than opening himself up to the world along with Ryabinin in the 1910s, and what this choice can tell us about the differences and nature of the modernization and social transformations that unfolded in the Russian Empire and the Soviet state in the 1910s and early 1930s.

0.13 Some notes on translation

The language of many of the documents referred to and terms employed below are extremely difficult to be translated into English properly. Even the term "strannik" itself cannot be unambiguously translated by the English word "Wanderer". Still, the Russian verb "stransvovat"" implies a slightly different type of one's movement and relationship with geographic space than the English verb "to wander". The use of this English verb, which in some ways means one's aimless contemplative relocation, turns "strannik" into a vagabond rather than a person fleeing from the Antichrist. From the point of view of vernacular ideology, it would be more correct to call the protagonists of this research "escapists" or "runaways". However, in spite of this, the very few English-language studies devoted to this subject use this translation: "Wanderers".

Perhaps this translation goes back to one of the first non-Russian literary works dealing directly with the Wanderers, the novel "Der Wanderer" written by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1870)⁶⁸. This short story was meant to be a prologue to an unfinished collection of novels "Das Vermächtnis Kains" (Legacy of Kain)⁶⁹. In the story, the protagonist, traveling through the Galician periphery of the Habsburg Empire, encounters the Wanderer on the road. The story

⁶⁸ For the text of the novel see: *Von Sacher-Masoch L. Der Wanderer* / Project Gutenberg. URL: <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/sacher-m/wandrer/wandrer.html> (last accessed 27 dec 2021)

⁶⁹ *Bach U. E. Tropics of Vienna: Colonial Utopias of the Habsburg Empire*. New York, 2016. P. 23. In the same Chapter 1 Ulrich Bach demonstrates von Sacher-Masoch's political utopianism and "colonial" view of the Slavic ethnic minorities of the Habsburg state. In von Sacher-Masoch's imagination, part of these minorities were the Wanderers, whose geographic area of activity was, in fact, incredibly far from Galicia.

features a conversation between the protagonist and this representative of "der seltsamen Sekte" (the strange or weird sect), whose members cut all social ties to have no family, no home, and no homeland. As a result of this conversation, the protagonist is imbued with romantic ideals of escapism and ponders the frailty of earthly riches. Although von Sacher-Masoch's *Wanderer* bears little resemblance to his famous namesake, "Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer" (*Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*), painted by Caspar David Friedrich (1818), the term seems to have caught on in the non-Russian historiography of the religious movement in question.

In order not to deviate from historiographical tradition, in this work I also refer to "stranniki" as "the Wanderers". The self-designation of the religious community "Istinno pravoslavnye khristiyane stranstvuyuschie" I translate literally as "True Orthodox Christians wandering". In addition, I translate the terms used by external actors to refer to the Wanderers as "runaways" (*beguny*), "escapists" (*skrytniki*), and "undergrounders" (*podpol'niki*).

The Wanderers, unhesitatingly, considered themselves Orthodox Christians and actively manifested this verbally and in writing. At the same time, however, throughout the entire period under consideration, at least one other institution declaring its Orthodoxy existed and was active in different incarnations. It is the dominant (until 1918) Orthodox Church (also known as the Greek-Russia's Orthodox Church, the Synodal Church, the Russia's Orthodox Church⁷⁰, and since 1943 the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate⁷¹). Nevertheless, in order to avoid confusion, I will rely on the self-identification of my protagonists. That is, where necessary, and unless otherwise noted, I will refer to the Wanderers as Orthodox, and the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church as Nikonians or (before 1918) Synodal Orthodox.

The translation of the remaining authentic terms will be accompanied by explanations in the body of the research.

⁷⁰ *Tsy-pin V.* Vedomstvo pravoslavnogo ispovedaniia // *Pravoslavnaia entsiklopediia*. Vol. 7. M., 2004. P. 369.

⁷¹ On the elections of Patriarch Sergii (Stargogorskii) and the establishment of this religious institution in 1943, see *Odintsov M.I.* Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov nakanune i v epokhu stalinskogo sotsializma 1917-1953 gg. M., 2014. P. 279-284.

Chapter 1. The Wanderers in the State from the late 18th century to the early 20th century

1.1. The True Orthodox Christians wandering. Issues and challenges of a (self)identification

“The tsarist regime persecutes and exiles and imprisons the True Orthodox Christians, and does not give us a full freedom of conscience. It did not allow us to be called the True Orthodox Christians, but imposed on us the various names of schismatics, apostates, sectarians and old believers, the names we do not accept. For this alone we must hide”⁷². So says an example of self-representation of the Wanderers, a manuscript dating from the first half of the 20th century. Indeed, the above-mentioned labels have been unacceptable to the Wanderers throughout much of the history of the religious movement. Wanderers could call themselves True Orthodox Christians wandering or hiding, but hardly any of them called themselves the Old Believers or especially sectarians. So why do we still classify the Wanderers as part of the realm of the Old Faith, contrary to their authentic declarations? In what case can we actually call an individual or a group Old Believer or Orthodox? And is there any unavoidable opposition between these two terms?

To begin with, the post-Schism milieu of Russian Orthodoxy presented an incredibly complex religious landscape. To structure it along the lines of the Nikonian Church on the one hand and the Old Believers’ communities on the other would be an enormous oversimplification. This would have left beyond many of those religious groups which commonly referred to as grassroots movements such as the Khlysts (literally – Whips, more accurately Flagellants) and the Skoptsy (literally – eunuchs or castrators). The confessionalized and hierarchized Uniate parishes on the Western and Southwestern borders of the Russian Empire would also be out of the scope. Moreover, difficulties in classifying individuals and groups are inevitable, whatever the smallest segments of classification the Orthodox landscape of the Russian Empire might be divided into.

⁷² OR BAN. Kargopol’skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 255. L. 1ob – 2.

For example, in what terms should we describe those who identify themselves as Orthodox but who may not be so in terms of synodal theology, such as the Wanderers themselves? Or how should we classify those who identify themselves as Orthodox and whose Orthodoxy is recognized from the point of view of the Synodal Church, but for whom there was often no clear boundary between Orthodoxy and their own authentic beliefs and practices, such as the Volga and Ural Finno-Ugric or Turk peoples⁷³?

To avoid such contradictions, it seems more productive to speak of the religious situation in the Russian Empire as the reality of a multi-Orthodox religious landscape. This landscape is characterized by the presence of a number of religious groups declaring their Orthodoxy, but in fact differing from each other in terms of ideologies and practices, as well as in legal terms, through a taxonomic legislative system that gives the privileged position to the Synodal Nikonian Church.

In this research I draw on the language of self-description of my protagonists. I hope that this remark would help to avoid some confusions among the multitude of Orthodoxies presented in the territory of the Russian Empire. Since matters of theology are beyond the scope of this study, I speak of the Wanderers as Orthodox Christians, according to their self-identification, and regardless of the extent of their deviation from the theological “norm” of Orthodoxy. In other words, if the Wanderers call themselves Orthodox, in the context of this research I see no reason to doubt the legitimacy of such identification.

If the issue of the Orthodoxy of the Wanderers can be resolved through an appeal to their language of self-description, what about their affiliation or non-affiliation with the domain of the Old Faith? The Old Faith, of course, is much more of an analytical category than a real-life attribute. Old Believers neither in the 17th century nor in the 21st century constituted a single movement either dogmatically, socially or geographically. Regarding the many ideological divergences that were the object of particular attacks by Nikonian missionaries, the reason for this

⁷³ On the problems of Nikonian missionary activity in the region, which population had a complex and multifaceted religious identity see: *Werth P. W. At the margins of orthodoxy: Mission, governance, and confessional politics in Russia's Volga-Kama region, 1827-1905.* Ithaca, 2002.

should be sought in the dissident status of the Old Believers themselves. The world of the non-Synodal Orthodoxy has been to varying degrees legally marginalized since the period of the Schism. On the one hand, it has led to numerous rounds of persecution of the religious dissidents. However, on the other hand it has left the non-Synodal theology outside of the state ideological control. The theologians of Old Believers could elaborate their doctrines without looking back to the authorities, which marginalized them in advance. In this sense, in terms of a religious seeking, those whom we call the Old Believers had more opportunities to express their theological creativity comparing with the theologians of the Nikonian Church. It was this factor that seems to have determined the diversity of ideologies and practices which researchers usually identify as of the Old Believers. Thus, as mentioned above, there is little in common among the Old Believers of different movements and traditions, and sometimes even within the same branch. The ideological distance between priestly and priestless Old Believers turns out to be as great as the social distance between the Moscow Old Believers merchants and, for example, their fellow believers – the residents of Taiga monasteries. Although the theology, textuality and practices of Old Believers of different orientations may differ considerably, there is something that links these disparate religious branches together. To a certain extent such a link is the common genealogy of these religious movements.

As is well-known, in the 1650s, a part of the Orthodox clergy and laity severed ties with the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in response to Patriarch Nikon's canonical and ritualistic reforms. In 1656 the Moscow Church Council [pomestnyi sobor] condemned the two-fingered crossing and some other customary Russian Orthodox practices⁷⁴. Scattered individuals and groups, who felt that gaining proper spiritual experience in the reformed Orthodox church was no longer possible, found themselves in a dangerous legal position, given that breaking with the Church was a high crime by the standards of the 17th-century Muscovy. However, these people became truly outlaws in 1666-1667, when the Great Council of the Orthodox Church in Moscow,

⁷⁴ Cherniavsky M. The Old Believers and the new religion // Slavic Review. Vol. 25. no. 1. 1966. P. 10.

also attended by the Alexandrian and Antioch patriarchs, anathematized all of the “old” religious practices⁷⁵. Thus, in fact, the Council recognized the opponents of the Nikonian reforms as heretics. The consequence of this was a mass persecution of those who adhered to the old rite. The responsibility for persecuting heretics fell squarely on the shoulders of the civil authorities. However, the repressions did not stop the mass rejection of the reforms, and in 1685, Tsarevna Sophia issued "12 Articles" [12 statei] which allowed the torture and death penalty to be applied to heretics⁷⁶. Thus, those who in the future would be called Old Believers were outlawed and subjected to torture and burning for the next 30 years.

In 1716 the "12 articles" were repealed by Peter the Great, who established a domain for legal existence for the Old Believers on condition of payment of a double tax and registration as schismatics. The establishment of a space for open existence immediately split the emerging community of Old Believers. Some believers took advantage of the new opportunities by registering. However, another part found such registration unacceptable, unwilling to declare themselves as schismatics for reasons ranging from a reluctance to pay high taxes to fears of revealing to state authorities their affiliation to the dissidents⁷⁷. Thus, the term "schismatic" [raskolnik] acquired not only a religious but also a legal meaning, and “the schismatics” divided among themselves into the legal registrants and the illegal non-registrants. The familiar term "Old Believer" came into the legal lexicon much later. Although there was some struggle in the first major anti-Schismatic Nikonian writings over who had the right to define their faith as "old", Nikonians or Old Believers⁷⁸, the term received official recognition as a marker of a follower of

⁷⁵ *Crummey R. O.* The Old Believers & the World of Antichrist. P. 4.

⁷⁶ *Zenkovskii S. A.* Russkoe staroobriadchestvo. M., 2009. Vol. 1. P. 300. On Sophia's short period of rule as the greatest challenge to the religious dissidents of Muscovy. *Hughes L.* Sophia, Regent of Russia, 1657-1704. New Haven, 1990. P. 120-133.

⁷⁷ *Zenkovskii S. A.* Russkoe staroobriadchestvo. M., 2009. Vol. 2. P. 365.

⁷⁸ For example, Nikonian Metropolitan Dimitrii of Rostov (Tuptalo), subsequently canonized, wrote in his most famous anti-Schismatic work about who has the right to call his faith "old" in this way: “And if the schismatic faith be called the old faith, is it not because they have renewed the old heresies?”. *Dimitrii (Tuptalo), mitropolit Rostovskii*, Rozysk o raskolnicheskoi brynskoii vere, o uchenii ikh, o delakh ikh, i Iziavlenie, Iako Vera Ikh Neprava, Uchenie Ikh Dushevredno, i Dela Ikh Ne Bogougodny. M., 1824. P. 80. Furthermore, Dimitrii of Rostov states many times in his work that “their [of Schismatics, i.e., Old Believers – note IK] faith is not the old faith, but the new faith”, meaning that it is the Nikonians who adhere to the old (i.e. true Orthodox faith) while their opponents introduce distorting innovations. See for ex.: *ibid.* P. 82.

the pre-Nikonian rite only during the reign of Catherine the Great, under the conditions of the liberalization of religious legislation⁷⁹. However, for some of the believers who consistently refused to register during the 18th century, the two terms "schismatic" and "Old Believer" appeared to be synonymous, since they implied their own ideological surrender and acceptance of the identification imposed by the "godless" authorities.

As has already been said, the Wanderers did not find it possible for themselves to be called the Old Believers, and from the point of view of the language of self-description, it would be a mistake to call them so. However, here one should point out a certain ambivalence of the Wanderers' approach to using the term "Old Belief" as well as with the historicization and genealogy of the non-Synodal Orthodoxy. The ambivalence lies in the fact that the Wanderers distinguished at least two understandings of their own belonging/not belonging to a milieu of the Old Believers. On the one hand, if "to be Old Believer" meant compromising with the authorities and accepting this purely external label as a self-title, such identification was unacceptable to the Wanderers. At the same time, if the question was about the Old Belief as a kind of genealogical religious tradition going back to the Schism of the 17th century and then to the Baptism of Kievan Rus (988), then belonging to such a tradition was not only acceptable, but also desirable for the Wanderers.

In their manuscripts and historical accounts there are no references to those religious figures who are commonly recognized as the leaders of the emerging 17th century Old Believers. They do not refer to Protopop Avvakum, Deacon Feodor, and other important Old Believers spiritual figures who were the first to attempt interpreting the events of the Schism theologically and who outlined the ways of dogmatic development of the Old Belief. At the same time, the Wanderers put much effort on proving their succession to, for example, the martyrs of Solovki⁸⁰ and the Vyg

⁷⁹ *Paert I.* "Two or Twenty Million?": The Languages of Official Statistics and Religious Dissent in Imperial Russia // *Ab imperio*. Vol. 2006. no. 3. 2006. P.81.

⁸⁰ On the rebellion of the Solovetskii Monastery's monks who refused to accept the canonical and liturgical reforms of the Russian Church and on the violent suppression of this rebellion (1668-1676) see *Robson R. R.* *Solovki: The story of Russia told through its most remarkable islands*. New Haven, 2004. P. 94-114.

Old Believer monasteries of the 17th and 18th centuries⁸¹. In the writings of the Wanderers in the 18th century and in the 20th century⁸², they made repeated attempts to prove that it was the True Orthodox Christians wandering who were the actual heirs of those who had not betrayed the Old Faith at the time of particularly brutal persecution. In addition, the Schism of the 17th century held a special place in the historical writings of the Wanderers. One of their historical reviews, written for an external reader in 1920, directly postulated the Schism as the starting point of the Wandererism: "In terms of flight and hiding, the community [of the Wanderers] had its beginning with the reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich and the patriarchy of Nikon. It arose on the ground of protest against the new non-Orthodox traditions and doctrines introduced into the Russian church by Nikon, and was determined to do so in the name of preserving the True Orthodox faith in fulfillment of prophecy"⁸³.

Thus, the Wanderers themselves avoided being called the Old Believers. It is also clear that the term is rather an external analytical category unable to describe the diverse and fragmented space of non-Synodal Orthodoxy, which was in constant dogmatic development. Moreover, Old Belief as a concept of self-identification implied for Wanderers the acceptance of a certain undesirable way of interacting with the outside world - "registration as a schismatic". Nevertheless, the search for genealogical continuity to the events of the Schism complicates the Wanderers' approach to the use of the concept of the Old Faith. Coming back to the question of the conceptual opposition between Orthodoxy and Old Belief and Wanderers' authentic perceptions of this opposition, I propose the following solution to this issue. In this study I suggest to move away from attempts to binarily contrast these two concepts and propose to consider the Wanderers as both the Orthodox and Old Believers. Consequently, my protagonists are Orthodox, based on their

⁸¹ On the Vyg monasteries (Olonets province), which in the early 18th century became a major center of the Old Believers, and on the economic and cultural activities of monasteries' residents see *Iukhimenko E. M. Vygovskaia starobriadcheskaia pustyn': Dukhovnaia zhizn i literatura. M., 2002; Crumme R. O. The old believers and the world of Antichrist.*

⁸² On the polemical struggle of the Wanderers for proving their own succession in relation to Vyg. *Maltsev A. I. Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 vv. Novosibirsk, 1996. P. 39, 104.* The Wanderers' work, published in 1911, is entirely devoted to the apology of their own succession to the rebellious monks of Solovki. *Petrov S. V. Struya. Kazan, 1911.*

⁸³ GARF. F.1235. Op. 56. D. 26. L. 87-87ob.

self-descriptive language and the fact that they belong to the multi-Orthodox space of the Russian Empire. At the same time, they are the Old Believers, not in the sense of self-identification, inclusion in some analytical category or acceptance of a particular way of interacting with the outside world, but in the sense of vernacular conceptions of their own genealogical continuity with the pre-Schism historical religious tradition as they understood it.

1.2. The Church of the Fleeing. A brief overview of the history and ideological transformations of the Wanderers from the second half of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century.

1.2.1. The ideology of the Wanderers and the historical context of its origins

An eschatological idea of a complete break with the corrupted world and the need to hide from it is at the heart of Wanderers' ontology. This idea, needless to say, is not fundamentally new either for Russian Orthodox thought, or for the ascetic or mystical Christian traditions⁸⁴ in general. To varying degrees, the origins of the Wanderers' ideology can (or can't) be traced both to the grassroots religious movements of the Russian Middle Ages⁸⁵ and to the fully mainstream ideological Orthodox quests of the Russian Early Modern history⁸⁶. In any case, the scope of this study does not include a search for the intellectual roots of the Wanderers' ideology, whereas in the absence of reliable sources any assumptions on this subject would look speculative⁸⁷.

⁸⁴ It must be said that scholars found the roots of the idea of separation from an evil world in pre-Christian philosophical and religious quests, for example in the philosophical concepts of Plato. *Brakke D.* The Gnostics: myth, ritual, and diversity in early Christianity. Cambridge, 2012. P. 54. From the very beginning of the spread of Christianity, this idea was embodied in a great variety of religious teachings and ideologies, which are sometimes defined by the umbrella term "Gnosticism". *Ibid*, 62. The most persistent institutionalised form of the idea of breaking with the world is probably Christian (and especially Orthodox) monasticism: for the pre-monastic forms of Christian asceticism see: *Finn Richard OP.* Asceticism Before Monasticism: What the First Monks Owed to the Early Christian Churches. The Oxford Handbook of Christian Monasticism (Ed. by Kaczynski B. M.). New York, Oxford, 2020. On the heyday of early Christian monasticism see *Christie D. E., Burton-Christie D.* The word in the desert: Scripture and the quest for holiness in early Christian monasticism. New York, Oxford, 1993. For a brief overview of history of the early Christian and Byzantine monasticism see: *Kenworthy S. M.* The Heart of Russia: Trinity-Sergius, Monasticism, and Society after 1825. New York, Oxford, 2010. P. 9-11. For a history of Russian monasticism see. *Sinitsyna N. V.*, ed., *Monashestvo i monastyri v Rossii, 11–20 veka: Istoricheskie ocherki.* M., 2005.

⁸⁵ The alleged continuity between ideologies of Old Believers and Russian heretical movements of the late Middle Ages was a particular object of attention by Synodal missionaries, see for ex.: *Zhuravlev A.I.* Polnoe istoricheskoe izvestie o drevnikh strigolnikakh i novykh raskolnikakh tak nazyvaemykh staroobriadtsakh. SPb., 1795.

⁸⁶ The Russian monastic movement of the 15th-16th centuries, known as the Nestyazhateli (Non-Possessors) led by St Nilus of Sora, embodied similar ideals of severance from the material world, according to Florovskii, a major Nikonian church historian. *Florovskii G. V.* Puti russkogo bogosloviia. M., 2009. P. 36-38.

⁸⁷ For example, Aleksandr Panchenko pointed out the lack of direct evidence of the influence of late medieval heresies

The Schism of the mid-17th century (whether one considers it a social⁸⁸, political⁸⁹, or predominantly religious phenomenon⁹⁰) shook the foundations of the Early Modern Muscovite society and led to an exponential outburst and radicalization of eschatological expectations. The idea of the necessity of a decisive break with the world corrupted by the Nikonian reforms had occupied the minds of all the major Old Believer thinkers since the Schism. However, from the moment the old rite was limitedly legalized in 1716, ideas of escapism among Old Believers' intellectuals ran in parallel with opinions on the acceptability of limited conformism⁹¹. The outlines of these two trajectories had already emerged in the Pustozersk prison, where, despite their similar plight, Avvakum and his fellow-unfortunate Deacon Feodor became irreconcilable opponents on the question of the reversibility or irreversibility of the eschatological process⁹².

These two schools of thought are conventionally classified as optimistic and pessimistic: adherents of the so-called concept of the sensual Antichrist and of the spiritual Antichrist. In the first (optimistic) case, the Antichrist reigning as a result of the Nikonian reforms represented a concrete figure (the patriarch or the Tsar). In this case, the eschatological process was potentially reversible in the event of, for instance, the Antichrist's defeat or death, and the wounds he inflicted on the spiritual community could potentially be healed. As a rule, this view was held by the Old Believers who accepted the priesthood. An alternative position was held by Old Believers, who

on later Russian religious culture. *Panchenko A. A.* Khristovshchina i skopchestvo: folklor i traditsionnaia kultura russkikh misticheskikh sekt. M., 2002. P. 103-104.

⁸⁸ The socio-economic factors of the Schism have been pointed out in particular by Soviet historians. *Pokrovskii N.N.* Antifeodalnyi protest uralo-sibirskikh krestian-starobriadtsev v 18 v. P. 5-7; *Nikol'skii N.M.* Istoriia russkoi tserkvi. P. 114-139; *Gur'ianova N. S.* Krestianskii antimonarkhicheskii protest v starobriadcheskoi eskhatologicheskoi literature perioda pozdnego feodalizma. Novosibirsk, 1988; *Klibanov A. I.* (ed.). Russkoe pravoslavie: vekhi istorii. M., 1989. P. 153-229.

⁸⁹ See, for example, an influential work on the Schism and the further persecution of the Old Believers as an embodiment of the political transformations of 17th- and 18th-century Russia *Cherniavsky M.* The Old Believers and the new religion. P. 1-39. Although Georg Michels himself has written that he considers the Solovki rebellion (1668-1676) to be an event that goes beyond the history of the Schism, it is still worthwhile to refer to his work on this rebellion here, since he argued that the rebellion was caused by an internal church political disagreement between center and periphery. *Michels G.* The Solovki uprising: religion and revolt in Northern Russia // *The Russian Review* No. 51.1 1992. P. 1-15.

⁹⁰ On the religious dimension of the Schism itself, see for ex. *Kartashev A.V.* Smysl starobriadchestva // *Sbornik statei, posviashchennyi P.B. Struve.* Prague, 1925; *Pascal P.* Avvakum et les débuts du Raskol. La crise religieuse au 17e siècle en Russie. Paris, 1938.

⁹¹ *Maltsev A. I.* Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v. P. 3.

⁹² *Zenkovskii S. A.* Russkoe starobriadchestvo. Vol. 1. P. 261-263.

insisted that the eschatological process is linear and irreversible, priestly succession is interrupted, and the world is hopelessly corrupt and devoid of any spiritual grace. As a rule, such a position was endorsed by representatives of various branches of the priestless Old Belief⁹³.

Needless to say, such a differentiation of the ideologies of the Old Faith is rather simplistic. For example, it is not quite applicable to the analysis of the ideological transformations of the Old Believers – Chasovennye, who shifted in the 19th century from a pessimistic to an optimistic position⁹⁴. In addition, the protagonists of this study, the Wanderers, as Maltsev pointed out, adapted a complex worldview system that included elements of both eschatological approaches⁹⁵. It should also be said here that it would be mistaken to assume that the adaptation of an ideological system directly impacted the modes of interaction of groups and individuals with the outside world. After all, it was the Vyg priestless Old Believers, representatives of the Pomortsy concord and adherents of the concept of the spiritual Antichrist, who first managed to establish a mutually beneficial mode of interaction with the Petrine state at the beginning of the 18th century⁹⁶.

As has already been mentioned, Old Believers have never been a unified movement. Moreover, before the beginning of the 18th century it would be difficult at all to speak of any confessionalized communities within the masses of opponents of the Nikonian reforms⁹⁷. Later, as a result of the impossibility to find a unified solution to urgent problems (about the priesthood, the sacraments, the nature of the eschatological process), the ideological space of the adherents of the Old Faith underwent a series of major splits that have not been overcome to this day. However,

⁹³ On these two concepts see Cherniavsky M. *The Old Believers and the New Religion*. P. 20; the most detailed work on this issue is *Gur'ianova N. S. Krestianskii antimonarkhicheskii protest v starobriadcheskoi eskhatologicheskoi literature perioda pozdnego feodalizma*.

⁹⁴ The Chasovennye is in many ways a unique branch of the Old Belief. While retreating in the mid-19th century from the position of the admissibility of the priesthood, they retained many attributes characteristic of priestly branches, such as the hierarchical institution of mentorship and, for the most part, accepting the dogma of the "sensual" nature of the Antichrist. *Zolnikova N.D. Eskhatologiya eniseiskogo starovera-knizhnika chasovennogo soglasiia Isaia Nazarovicha (1970-e gg.) // Ural'skii sbornik: Istorii. Kultura. Religii. - No.2 – Ekaterinburg, 1998. P.76*

⁹⁵ *Maltsev A. I. Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v. P. 123-156.*

⁹⁶ *Cherniavsky M. The Old Believers and the new religion. P. 23; Crummev R. O. The Old Believers and the World of Antichrist. P. 67-70.*

⁹⁷ Until the 18th century, as Aleksandr Lavrov has shown, it was almost impossible to draw a line between Nikonians and Old Believers. *Lavrov A. S. Koldovstvo i religii v Rossii, 1700-1740 gg. M., 2000. P. 39-74.* Describing the long process of separation of Old Believers and Nikonians and the confessionalization of the Old Faith' domain during the first third of the 18th century, Lavrov also pointed out that it was Peter's decree of 1716 that created the social structure of the Old Faith. *Ibid. P. 61.*

it was not only theological concerns and contradictions that caused the Old Believers' strife. In many ways, it was the liberalization of state policy toward Old Believers that became a challenge for a particular community. In the case of the Wanderers, it was Catherine the Great's attempt to create conditions for the integration of Old Believers by expanding their legal space that contributed to the formation of the Wanderers as a separate confessional movement among the priestless Old Believers⁹⁸.

The ideology of the Wanderers originated in the 1760s from the Moscow priestless Filippovtsy, who had broken away 30 years earlier (1737) in their turn from the Pomortsy of Vyg⁹⁹. The Old Believers - Pomortsy were already quite radical by the standards of Old Belief, denying marriage and advocating the minimization of relations with the state. However, even such radicalism was deemed too moderate by ideologists of the Filippovtsy, which led to their separation into an autonomous community. The Filippovtsy became notorious for promoting the practices of suicide and self-immolation as a means of completely shielding themselves from attempts at intervention of the outside world¹⁰⁰. However, even among the adherents of this tradition, who occupied the radical flank of the Old Faith, there were those for whom community registration (as part of Catherine's policy of liberalizing religious legislation) appeared acceptable in the 1760s. In response to the willingness of some of the Filippovtsy to register, a small number of their co-religionists preached not just the unacceptability of any registration, but moreover, the impossibility of further coexistence with the world of the Antichrist¹⁰¹.

Unfortunately, there is not enough information about the first such communities. The spread of these escapist ideas did not temporally coincide with the formation of the Wanderers movement into a separate religious community with its own ideology and dogmatic boundaries. The first

⁹⁸ *Maltsev A. I.* Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v. P. 2.

⁹⁹ *Crummey R.O.* Old Believer Communities: Ideals and Structures. N. Lupinin, D. Ostrowski, J.B. Spock (eds) *The Tapestry of Russian Christianity: Studies in History and Culture*. Columbus, 2016. P. 297.

¹⁰⁰ *Pul'kin M. V.* Shestvie "ognennoi smerti". *Istoriko-geograficheskii aspekt staroobriadcheskikh samosozhzhzenii v kontse 17-18 v.* // *Klio*. 2005. no. 2. P. 100.

¹⁰¹ *Maltsev A. I.* Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v. P. 23.

Wanderers of the 1760s, with few exceptions, did not leave behind any doctrinal or other texts¹⁰² and soon, as Maltsev put it, “left the historical stage”¹⁰³. However, before they dissolved into the diverse sea of the non-Synodal Orthodoxy, they nevertheless prepared the ground for the ideological quest of the next generation of Filippovitsy. It was to this generation that monk Evfimii, literally the founding father of the Wanderers as an autonomous religious movement, belonged.

The exact date of Evfimii's birth, as well as many details of his life including his birth name, are unknown. According to the Wanderers hagiographic tradition¹⁰⁴, which in this part overlaps with the materials of later criminal investigations into the Wanderers' activities, Evfimii originally came from peasants of the Pereyasavl' district of the Vladimir province. The date of his birth, according to Maltsev, must be somewhere between 1743 and 1744¹⁰⁵. In 1764-1765 the future preacher was drafted into the army, but soon left the service at his own will. In 1767 he joined the Filippovitsy community in Moscow, and in a short time gained prestige among local Old Believers through his abilities in iconography, calligraphy, and the Holy Scripture studies¹⁰⁶. Evfimii joined the Filippovitsy at a difficult time for the religious movement. The community was torn by disagreements over registration, the permissibility of self-immolation, and tensions between two influential parties, the Pomorian (not to be confused with the Pomortsy) and the Muscovite. Although the disagreements were formally resolved by the mid-1770s, hostility between the communities persisted even after the reconciliation¹⁰⁷. Under such circumstances, Evfimii went to Pomor'e, where he took monastic vows on August 8, 1777.

While residing in Pomor'e, he found himself at the center of several conflicts with co-religionists, being found guilty in these clashes time and again¹⁰⁸. When leaving Pomor'e, he was even symbolically defrocked [rasstrizhen] by a local mentor, who tore the kamelaukion¹⁰⁹ from

¹⁰² Ibid. P. 58-59

¹⁰³ Ibid. P. 61.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. P. 79.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. P. 79-80

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. P. 80-82

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. P. 82-83

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. P. 84-89

¹⁰⁹ Monk's headdress in the Eastern Christian Orthodox tradition.

his head. Evfimii, however, did not deny his monastic status, and later made repeated attempts to prove the illegality of the actions of the pomorian mentor¹¹⁰. Returning to Moscow in 1778, Evfimii quarreled also with local co-religionists, who in the opinion of the future Wanderer were not strong in their piety: some had a state passport, while others bribed to send somebody else instead of themselves to hypocritically attend the Nikonian church¹¹¹. Numerous conflicts and indelible insult inflicted on him by pomorian mentor forced Evfimii to leave Moscow for Yaroslavl' province in 1780. In 1781 Evfimii demonstratively broke communion with the Filippovtsy¹¹², and in the same year raised the question of the necessity to rebaptize the Filippovitsy due to the sinfulness of their mentors¹¹³.

1.2.2. The eternal flight of Evfimii. The formation of ideology and the confessionalization of the Wanderers.

Evfimii's most important ideological work, under the long title "A Talk about the Present Disagreement of Some with Each Other in the Ancient Ecclesiastical Adherence. Thus, some have excommunicated themselves from the registered, while the flock has been told that it is better to hide behind the Antichrist's priests, thinking that they have the right to do so. Others have separated from both of these, moreover, for fear of being baptized by them, for which reason we also write this inscription in the year 7292, March 28th"¹¹⁴, dated 1784. This peculiar declaration of views, addressed to the Muscovite Filippovtsy, contained the main points of the doctrine developed by Evfimii, in which he reached the eschatological culmination of his ponderings.

While for the Filippovtsy the distinction between the Old Believers living outside the space of legality and ordinary laymen was not decisive, in his proclamation Evfimii drew this boundary very clearly. According to Evfimii's logic, it was no longer enough for salvation simply to be a

¹¹⁰ Ibid. P. 89

¹¹¹ Ibid. P. 96

¹¹² Ibid.. P. 98

¹¹³ Ibid. P. 103

¹¹⁴ «Razglagolstvie o nastoiashchem nyne mezhdou soboiu v drevletserkovnom posledovanii nekikh z drug drugom nesoglasii. Ov ubo ot zapisnykh otluchisia, pastviti zhe vozmnev luchshe ukryvaiushchikhsia za antikhrisovymi zhretsami. V tom i voznepshcheva byti sebe prava. Drugii zhe oboikh sikh otluchisia k tomu zhe i kreshchenie ot nikh boiasia priiati, cheso radi i posla k nemu nachertanie 7292 leta, marta 28».

devout Old Believer layman. His teaching was based on the idea that only Christians who were in an immediate escape mode, that is, those who refused any contact or interaction with the outside, could be saved amidst a corrupted world. The final point of Evfimii's break with his former co-religionists was his act of self-baptism as a Wanderer on October 7, 1784¹¹⁵. After becoming a Wanderer, Evfimii almost immediately baptized seven more of his adherents, establishing among them a small congregation that remained with him until his death in 1792¹¹⁶.

According to Evfimii's teaching, before the Schism the Orthodox Christians had a choice between a righteous ascetic life in a hermitage and a sinful life in the world. The Nikonian reforms shook this arrangement, and the ecclesiastical reforms of Peter the Great (especially consistent legal restrictions on the activities of monasteries) made such a choice no longer possible. However, the canonical and bureaucratic innovations of the turn of the 17th-18th centuries were not the only things that concerned the ideologist of the Wanderers. Evfimii declared Peter the Great's tax reform (1724), which established social stratification of the population of the Russian Empire, to be the worst challenge to Orthodox Christians. The fragmentation of society into different ranks, the distribution of land and tax differentiation for various social groups, according to Evfimii, led to the final damage to the Russian Orthodox world. It was no longer possible for a true believer to live in such a world¹¹⁷.

Evfimii managed to create a unique socio-religious doctrine of consistent escapism. According to this fairly pessimistic doctrine, people have no power to change history by reversing the process of the deterioration of the world, but they have the ability to flee from the evil in order to live in a hermitage in accordance with their religious ideals, without coming into contact with a ruining world¹¹⁸. On these grounds, at the end of the 18th century, a small group of former Filippovtsy formed a separate religious group with its own ideology and practices. Thus, the

¹¹⁵ *Maltsev A. I. Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v. P. 111-113*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid. P. 116*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid. P. 119-121*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid. P. 156*

general Old Believer's idea of separation (moderate or extreme) from the outside world was brought to an ideological peak by the Wanderers.

As Maltsev and Ryndziunskii have pointed out, the preaching of the Wanderers was especially successful among the peasantry¹¹⁹. Obviously, for many men and women joining the Wanderers was an opportunity to break away from a familiar but unwanted social environment and drastically change one's life scenario. However, it would be wrong to limit the range of possible motivations of potential Wanderers exclusively to social reasons. There were a considerable number of neophytes who came to the teachings of Evfimii, considering this the only way to obtain an authentic religious experience. And yet, it should be noted that the pre-reform peasantry had enough reasons (apart from religious ones) for breaking with the world and joining the Wanderers¹²⁰. This choice could be attractive for the women who were unwilling to marry¹²¹ or for the men who sought to break with serfdom or escape from the need to find sustenance and land in the densely populated areas of the Empire. Nor should we forget desertion and escape from imprisonment¹²², a strategy that might even have seemed quite attractive to some, given the canonical example of the Evfimii's biography. As will be shown later, the protagonists of this study were people of various biographical trajectories: fugitive criminals, hereditary Wanderers, and students of Nikonian religious schools. However, in each case, religious motivation for conversion was intertwined with social ones, complementing rather than excluding each other.

1.2.3. The World-renouncers and the Shelterkeepers. The differentiation of Wanderers' modes of existence.

The ideas of Evfimii are undoubtedly important for understanding the Wanderers' ontology. Somehow, the ideology born out of his polemic with the Filippovitsy has been having a decisive influence on the Wanderers to this day. The main nerve of this ideology, the minimization of

¹¹⁹ Ibid. P. 196-197; *Ryndziunskii P.G.* Gorodskoe grazhdanstvo doreformennoi Rossii. P. 482-483.

¹²⁰ *Livanov F.V.* Raskolniki i ostrozhniki. Ocherki i rassказы. Vol. 4. SPb., 1873. P. 62-63

¹²¹ On this strategy of exercising female agency among the women of the Old Faith's priestless branches, see *Bushnell J.* Russian Peasant Women Who Refused to Marry.

¹²² *Maltsev A. I.* Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoii polovine 19 v. P. 196.

contact with the world beyond the Wanderer, will remain a fundamental constant of the Wanderers' worldview, including the period considered in this study. However, during his lifetime the founding father of the religious movement did not succeed in developing all aspects of his doctrine in detail. In addition, until the early 19th century, the Wanderers remained a small group of radicals in the diverse space of the Old Faith and did not care much about attracting new followers. Thus, the responsibility for the theological development of the doctrine fell to the next generation of the Wanderers who, facing the many challenges, realized the need for doctrinal evolution.

Soon after Evfimii's death it became clear that maintaining the eschatological strain set by the founder over the long distance was no easy task. The Wanderers faced the need to interact with a “corrupted world”, especially those of them who lived in the densely populated areas of Yaroslavl’ and neighboring provinces. Such difficulties forced the Wanderers to design a unique model of religious and social structure. This model, to put it simplistically, can be summed up as justifying two modes of existence for Orthodox Christians¹²³.

The core of the community or the Church per se (in the Christian sense of the word) consisted of baptized Wanderers (the world-renouncers or *mirootrechentsy*) who lived directly in the mode of flight. As they were baptized, they took on a new name¹²⁴ and severed all contact with the outside world. They were charged with carrying out spiritual practices, leading congregations, proselytizing, and developing the doctrine. They also took a vow not to own property and not to accept state documents¹²⁵. The responsibility for relations with the outside world fell to their co-religionists “benefactors” or “shelter-keepers” [*blagodeteli* or *strannopriimtsy*] who lived in the

¹²³ Ibid. P. 184-185.

¹²⁴ The wanderer historian Maksim Zalesskii (see Chapter 4) wrote the following about the change of name: "As entering a wandering [*strannihcestvo*] people are obliged to change their names. This is done through baptism. From that time onwards a person, having received a new name, uses his/her new name on every occasion, adding his/her patronymic name to it. Family name remains in the world, and is neglected because it is thought to attach a Wanderer to a place and former homeland. On the one hand, by this the person more clearly carries out an ideal of wandering, on the other hand, in case of danger of arrest or interrogation, it is easier and more convenient for the Wanderer to escape from the hands of the *uriadnik* or the church warden [*tserkovnyi starosta*], who, seeing another name and not being able to establish the last name, release the person, believing that it is not the person they are looking for". OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. L. 103. Quoted from *Prokuratova E.V. Strannicheskoe soglasie na Udore v kontse 19 – nachale 20 vv.* P. 164.

¹²⁵ *Maltsev A. I. Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervo polovine 19 v.* P. 184-185.

world. Formally, these lay Wanderers were not full-fledged members of the community¹²⁶. The term "Wanderers" cannot be applied to them, even though they may have embraced the tenets of the Wanderers' doctrine. However, their activities were vital to their fellow believers. Benefactors supported communities financially and provided the Wanderers with shelter and support during their relocations¹²⁷.

Here a fair question arises, how could a person who fell out of the legal space leave his property as an inheritance? Apparently, this problem was solved by the Wanderer doctrine itself, which suggested that the baptized should not be connected to the world. Consequently, we may assume that inheritance in favor of unbaptized relatives was carried out at the moment of bureaucratic "death," so that the Wanderer began his flight without being bound by official ties of property.

Until the early 19th century, the baptism of a Wanderer meant a beginning of the one's immediate flight. However, after the death of Evfimii, there emerged the practice of baptizing the laymen on the condition that the one baptized vows to flee in the future. Often this practice was carried out superficially, already on one's deathbed. In such a case, the dying person was taken out of the house and thus began her "flight"¹²⁸. In the early 19th century, this profanation of the ritual became the subject of polemics among the leaders of the religious movement¹²⁹. This polemic resulted in a split of the community in the 1820s. The point of disagreement among the antagonists, apart from the baptismal ritual, was the question of whether it was permissible for Wanderers to use money. The so-called Evfimists [Evfimity] (actually, the Wanderers who are discussed in this study) insisted on the admissibility of "delayed" flight and the use of money. Representatives of several communities held the opposite view, considering life in the hermitage to be the only possible way of salvation and rejecting money, which, in their view, had the seal of the Antichrist (the Imperial double-headed eagle). Some of the latter even refused to consume salt,

¹²⁶ Ibid. P. 186.

¹²⁷ Ibid. P. 187-188.

¹²⁸ Ibid. P. 187.

¹²⁹ Ibid. P. 187-189.

regarding the involvement of government agencies in its sale as being demonic in nature¹³⁰. The Euphemists won this long polemic by attracting the majority of believers to their side, however, agreeing to retain the practice of "delayed" flight¹³¹. Thus, for some time the boundary between baptized and unbaptized Wanderers appeared to be clearly defined once again.

1.2.3. Patriarch Nikita Semyonov. Centralization of the hierarchy and the new splits

In the 1840s, Nikita Semyonov, the major reformer and ideologist, acknowledged as an outstanding figure by representatives of all the Wanderers' communities that are discussed in this study, became the leader of the Wanderer community. According to the 1950s hagiographic text "Historical Account of the Ancient Elder Nikita Semyonov" written by nun Raisa, Nikita Semyonov (Mercurii Semyonovich Kiselyov) was born in 1800 in one of the villages near Yaroslavl¹³². The future reformer's mother passed away early, and his father, a tailor, moved to Moscow as a migrant worker, taking his son with him as an apprentice. The tailor's trade, however, held little interest for the young man, unlike the various religious gatherings he attended in Moscow. Although he was a Nikonian by birth, Mercurii eagerly began to study the dogmatics of various Old Believer communities. Driven by his religious curiosity, the young man went to Pomor'e, where, according to the "Account," he was baptized as a Wanderer under the name of Nikita by the 107-year-old elder Aleksii¹³³. Upon the death of the elder, the 25-year-old Nikita moved to the village of Sopyolki (Yaroslavl' Province). The local Wanderers quickly discerned a gifted preacher in their new co-religionist, and by the 1840s Nikita's authority was sufficient to become the leader of the local community¹³⁴.

In 1854, Nikita Semyonov was arrested in Vologda Province during the notorious investigation into the activities of the Wanderers, which is discussed in detail in the next part of this chapter. He was imprisoned for several years. During this time, according to Pyatnitskii, he

¹³⁰ Ibid. P. 187-191.

¹³¹ Ibid. P. 192.

¹³² The name of the village, according to the memories of nun Raisa, is consonant with the name "Vorobino". ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1429. L.1.

¹³³ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1429. L. 2-3.

¹³⁴ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1429. L. 2-3.

even returned to the fold of the Nikonian Church and offered his services as an informer to the police¹³⁵. Despite such rumors, however, in 1858 Nikita escaped from imprisonment to return to his fellow believers with a program of radical reorganization of the hierarchy of the religious movement.

In 1860 Nikita presented to his adherents the so-called "Articles", a doctrinal document (19 chapters and 84 paragraphs) dedicated to the hierarchical structure and subordinate relationships within the community. As the basis of the structure, the traditional hierarchical organization of the Eastern Orthodox churches was taken as an example. The document prescribed the following order of organizing the hierarchy and canonical geography. The smallest unit of division of the canonical territory was "predel" [literaly "a limit"] with clearly delineated geographical boundaries and a minimum number of 100 Wanderers. It was governed by "the eldest brother" [stareishii brat] or "elder" [stareishii] of the predel. This rank was equivalent to that of bishop in Christian churches. Two or three predels constituted a "country" ["strana"], governed by its elders, whose rank was likened to that of metropolitan or patriarch. A "chief elder," the formal head of the Church, was elected in a council from among the eldest brothers of the countries¹³⁶. According to the Articles, this seat was to be given to the elder "who surpasses others in honor".

Here it is important to note some vagueness in the formulation of the equivalence of the rank of the elder of the country - "metropolitan or patriarch". This "or" played an essential role in the subsequent events that this study focuses on. The uncertainty or, more accurately, the ambiguity of how this "or" might be interpreted would lead to serious consequences for the Wanderers' world in the early 20th century.

The problem is that, according to the hierarchical organization of the Eastern Orthodox churches, which was the guideline for Nikita Semyonov, the difference in the area of spiritual responsibility and the boundaries of canonical authority between the patriarch and the metropolitan

¹³⁵ *Pyatnitskii I.K.* Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. P. 78-79.

¹³⁶ Maltsev A. I. Problemy tserkovnoi organizatsii i upravleniia v sochineniiakh staroverov-strannikov (vtoraia polovina 19 - nachalo 20 veka) // *Istoricheskie i literaturnye pamiatniki* "vysokoi" i "nizovoi" kultury v Rossii 16–20 vv. 2003. P. 160-161.

is fundamental. Moreover, this difference directly affects the overall structure of the Church and the hierarchical relations within it. If the countries were likened to metropolitanates, their heads would be in direct subordination to a single patriarch, the chief elder, who would have full authority to interfere in the affairs of the metropolitanates and bishoprics. The Church itself would thus resemble one of the autocephalous [pomestnye] Eastern Orthodox churches (e.g., Bulgarian, Russian, or Antiochian). In the case of several patriarchies, the chief elder would be given only primacy of honour over the other patriarchs, similar to the primacy of the patriarch of Constantinople over the other patriarchs of the autocephalous Orthodox churches. In this case, the formal patriarch would have no canonical rights to intervene into the affairs of the patriarchies and ecclesiastical communities that are subordinate to them. In this case, the Church of the Wanderers would resemble the Universal Church, that is, a set of autonomous Eastern Orthodox churches with the formal primacy of one patriarch¹³⁷.

The motives for this fateful ambiguity of wording are not entirely clear. On the one hand, the introduction of a clear hierarchical structure speaks of Nikita Semenyov's general intention to centralize the Wanderer community. On the other hand, "the Articles" nevertheless specifically stipulated that the power of the elders should be strictly limited to the canonical territory under their control¹³⁸. The latter remark indicates that Nikita Semyonov stood for a certain autonomy of the communities after all. In addition, "the Articles" described in detail the procedures for the election and dismissal of the elders of all levels of authority¹³⁹.

"The Articles" were adopted on June 25, 1860, at the Wanderers' Council by the votes of 37 elders¹⁴⁰. Nikita Semyonov (1860) himself was elected the chief elder and remained in that rank until his death in 1894¹⁴¹. However, three years after the adoption, the Wanderers found themselves

¹³⁷ On the organizational structure of the Orthodox churches, see *McGuckin J.A.* *The Orthodox Church: An introduction to its history, doctrine, and spiritual culture.* Hoboken, 2010. P. 30-80.

¹³⁸ *Maltsev A.I.* *Problemy tserkovnoi organizatsii i upravleniia v sochineniakh staroverov-strannikov (vtoraia polovina 19 - nachalo 20 veka).* P. 162.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* P. 162.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* P. 195.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* P. 161.

divided again, this time along the lines of acceptance and non-acceptance of “the Articles”. On one side of the community of Wanderers was Nikita Semyonov himself and his supporters, on the other side was the opposition to him (anti-article-followers [protivostateiniki]), led by several authoritative elders from Siberia and Pomor’ye. The opponents of “the Articles” accused Nikita of trying to impose autocracy and equated him to Patriarch Nikon and the Roman Pope¹⁴². Despite several attempts at reconciliation, this split was not ended, and the two branches of Wanderers subsequently took parallel paths. In the context of this research, I focus on the Wanderers-stateiniki [literally – the Wanderers-article-followers], the more numerous and monolithic (up to a certain time) branch of the True Orthodox Christians wandering¹⁴³.

The adoption of “the Articles” seems to be an important milestone in the history of the Wanderers. However, as Maltsev has revealed, already Roman Loginovich, Nikita Semyonov's successor, pointed out in his letters to fellow believers that the postulates of “the Articles” have appeared to be largely formal for the daily life of the Wanderers¹⁴⁴. Nevertheless, in the 20th century the significance of Nikita Semyonov's authority and his ideological heritage was still considerable. Moreover, the Wanderers would repeatedly refer to the authority of “the Articles” during the processes of further reforming the structure of the religious movement.

It is important to say that Nikita and his followers insisted in every possible way that the Articles were not an innovation, that they merely reproduced the traditional early Christian hierarchical structures¹⁴⁵. This apology of continuity was not accidental. The very idea of the continuity of their own religious tradition is another (apart from eschatology) main pillar of the ontology of the Wanderers. A Wanderer, as has already been said, would hardly call himself an Old Believer, let alone a schismatic. The Wanderers, in self-descriptive terminology, are

¹⁴² Ibid. P. 162.

¹⁴³ *Maltsev A. I. Stat'i Nikity Semenova (1860 g.) i raskol strannicheskogo soglasiia. Istoriia tserkvi: izuchenie i prepodavanie. Ekaterinburg, 1999. P. 194-196.*

¹⁴⁴ *Maltsev A. I. Problemy tserkovnoi organizatsii i upravleniia v sochineniakh staroverov-strannikov (vtoraia polovina 19 - nachalo 20 veka). P. 166.*

¹⁴⁵ *Maltsev A. I. Problemy tserkovnoi organizatsii i upravleniia v sochineniakh staroverov-strannikov (vtoraia polovina 19 - nachalo 20 veka). P. 165-166.*

Christians, heirs of the first Christians who suffered under the Roman emperors, adherents of a tradition whose founder is, as the 20th-century historical manuscript of the Wanderers says, "the God-man our Lord Jesus Christ" [Bogochelovek Gospod' nash Isus Khristos]¹⁴⁶ rather than apologists of the Old Rites of the mid-17th century.

This idea of continuity is based on the conviction that the True Orthodox Christian wandering managed to preserve and carry throughout 2000 years the teachings of Christ in their undistorted form. It was not the Wanderers who stood out from Filippovtsy or Pomortsy, who, in their turn, stood out from the mass of believers and who broke with the Nikonian Church in the mid-17th century. From the vernacular perspective, the Wanderers, in contrast to all abovementioned, are *zealots and watchmen of ancestral piety* [revniteli i khraniteli drevlego blagochestiia] who defended Orthodoxy from heretics from the very first, ancient Arius and Nestorius, to the Filippovtsy in the late 18th century and the anti-arcticle-followers in the 19th century, and will keep defending it until the Second Coming. Thus, the history of the Wanderers, written by the Wanderers themselves, is the story of the only true line of Orthodoxy, from the foundation of the Christian Church to the present day, and of two thousand years of unsuccessful attempts by heretics to undermine it with pernicious theological and other innovations¹⁴⁷.

1.3 The Wanderers through the eyes of the outside world

1.3.1 The "discovery" of Wanderers

The Wanderers' history described above, based on the Wanderer's own documents, does not mention one important actor, or rather a group of actors, which in the Wanderers' records are usually covered by the general essentializing term "the outside world"¹⁴⁸. First of all, this term

¹⁴⁶ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1974. L.1.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, "A Brief History of the Church," written in the 1950s by the monk Nikita. ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1974. L. 1-5ob.

¹⁴⁸ The "outside world" is not the most common name for a realm that lies outside the Wanderers' domain. The frequency with which the Wanderers use the terms "world of the Antichrist," "kingdom of the Antichrist," or even "face of the earth" is much higher (*Maltsev A. I. Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v.* P. 31, 138, 143-144). As will be seen below, this realm was not strictly external to the Wanderers, but was inseparable from their own lives. Still, it is fair to call this surrounding world "external" because the Wanderers themselves called it so. *Maltsev A. I. Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v.* P. 71,100. In addition, from a Christian perspective, an area outside the Church appears to be "outside," which is probably reflected in the Wanderers' use of the term.

refers to the state and those of its representatives (e.g., the police and synodal schismatologists), which must have been responsible for the production of public discourses on the Wanderers. This state of affairs partly reflects the reality. While the liberalization or hardening of the Imperial religious policy had a direct impact on the ideology and daily life of the Wanderers, the two worlds existed in part as parallel until the mid-19th century. Wanderers skillfully avoided unwanted contact with the state, and the central authorities were de facto unaware of their existence.

Prior to 1850 the Wanderers managed to keep their activities more or less secret, at least from the highest registers of the Imperial authorities. Although some Wanderers came to attention of law enforcement agencies¹⁴⁹, police, officials, and Synodal missionaries were unable to discern a full-scale religious network behind these sporadic incidents. Pyatnitskii pointed out that the underlying reasons for this situation were the insufficient number of police units and the indifference of the provincial local authorities¹⁵⁰. A "discovery" of the Wanderers took place in 1850, in Yaroslavl' Province, as a result of an investigation conducted by high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. These events unfolded under the circumstances of stricter Imperial religious policies in the late period of the reign of Nicholas I¹⁵¹, and this largely determined the extent and harshness of the persecution of the Wanderers that resulted from the "discovery". From this point it becomes possible to discuss and analyze the external discursive perceptions and transformations of the legal position of the Wanderers. Thus, in this part of the thesis the question of external discourses on the Wanderers, their formation and transformation, and the way external actors saw Wanderers at the time of the events described will be considered.

In the late 1840s, a gang of robbers led by a man named ataman Pashka rampaged in Yaroslavl' Province¹⁵². A wave of crimes (mainly robbery and homicides), committed by Pashka and his accomplices, affected several provincial districts immediately. Reports on these crimes

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 222; *Pyatnitskii I.K.*, 1906. *Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole*. P. 18-20.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. P. 21-22.

¹⁵¹ On the persecution of the Old Believers as a consequence of Nikolai's homogenizing policy of nation-building from above see: *Marsden T.* *The crisis of religious toleration in imperial Russia: Bibikov's system for the Old Believers, 1841-1855*. New York, Oxford, 2015.

¹⁵² *Pyatnitskii I.K.* *Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole*. P. 23-24.

rapidly reached the Vice-Governor Murav'yov, who initiated a large-scale criminal investigation¹⁵³. In the course of the investigation, searches of several peasant huts near Yaroslavl' revealed the Old Believers' hiding places and prayer houses as well as several persons who refused to reveal their names and origins¹⁵⁴. At the same time an unknown peasant came to Murav'yov in person, claiming that a whole sectarian network was operating in the village of Sopyolki, some 15 kilometers from Yaroslavl¹⁵⁵.

In the summer of 1850 information about the spread of a "new sect" of the Old Believers in Yaroslavl' Province has reached the Minister of Internal Affairs Perovskii. Minister immediately, on June 14, sent to Yaroslavl' an official on special assignments, Count Yulii Stenbock-Fremor. On August 9, another official of the Ministry of Internal Affairs joined the commission. This time it was a poet and Slavophile Ivan Aksakov, who left a detailed description of the investigation in his reports¹⁵⁶ and letters home¹⁵⁷.

As a result of numerous interrogations, by 1851 the commission succeeded in uncovering a secret network of Wanderers in Sopyolki, within walking distance of the main city of the province¹⁵⁸. This network comprised of not only local peasants, but also several wealthy merchants¹⁵⁹. The work of the commission was suspended temporarily in 1851, only to return to the investigation the following year, during which 180 suspects were brought to trial¹⁶⁰. By the time the work of the commission was over on September 10, 1854, it was planned to sentence the guilty suspects to corporal punishment and hard labor (25 persons), to exile to the Transcaucasian Region (12 persons) and to correctional labor [ispravitel'nye raboty] (97 persons). Thirteen more men and women were supposed to be kept under police supervision, and 33 people died during the investigation, before they could reach the court¹⁶¹. However, as a result of several legislative

¹⁵³ Marsden T. The crisis of religious toleration in imperial Russia. P. 95.

¹⁵⁴ Pyatnitskii I.K. Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. P. 25.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. P. 25.

¹⁵⁶ Aksakov I.S. Kratkaia zapiska o strannikakh ili begunakh (1851) // Russkii arkhiv. 1866. no. 4. P. 627–644.

¹⁵⁷ Aksakov I.S. Pisma k rodnym, 1849-1856. M., 1994.

¹⁵⁸ Pyatnitskii I.K., 1906. Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. P. 26.

¹⁵⁹ Marsden T. The crisis of religious toleration in imperial Russia. P. 100.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. P. 95-96.

¹⁶¹ Nagradov I. S. Deiatelnost' Iaroslavskoi sudnoi komissii po rassmotreniiu dela staroobriadtshev-strannikov (1852–

changes and the intervention of the new Emperor Aleksandr II in 1857, who curtailed the Nikolai repression, the outcome of the investigation for the Wanderers was more lenient. Five Wanderers were sentenced to deportation to Eastern Siberia and deprivation of estate rights, 22 were sent to settlement in the same region, and five people who had publicly broken with the Wanderers were punished for vagrancy and den-keeping [pritonoderzhatel'stvo]¹⁶².

Nikita Semyonov himself was captured in 1854 in Vologda¹⁶³. The leader of the Wanderers fairly soon began to give testimony. Believing in the sincerity of Nikita's "correction" the criminal court sentenced him to exile in Yaroslavl. However, it soon became clear from the evidence of the detained Wanderers that Nikita Semyonov had not abandoned his spiritual activities. He was arrested again and imprisoned in July 1856 in the Solovetskii monastery "for spiritual exhortation" [dlya duhovnogo uveschevaniya]. However, after several attempts to escape his status was eventually changed and by 1858, he resided in Solovki as an ordinary prisoner. On July 20, 1858 during the visit of Aleksandr II to the Solovetskii monastery Nikita was honored with a short conversation with the monarch. During this conversation Nikita repented of his religious errors and expressed a desire to take the Nikonian monastic vows. The tsar complied with Nikita's request and granted him such an opportunity, thus depriving him of his prisoner status. Two days after taking the monastic vows, Nikita Semyonov escaped from the Solovetskii monastery and had never again been apprehended by the police agencies¹⁶⁴.

1.3.2 Declarative and Actual Catacombs of the Wanderers

From the previous parts of this chapter, based primarily on sources from under the pen of the Wanderers, it might seem that one is speaking of a deeply clandestine religious organization. Indeed, since the time of Evfimii, a radical break with the outside world has been not only a pillar of the Wanderers' ontology, but also the language in which they have spoken to the outside world,

1854 gody) // Vestnik KGU. 2013. no.6. P. 30-31.

¹⁶² Ibid. P. 30-31.

¹⁶³ *Pyatnitskii I.K.*, 1906. Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. P.77.

¹⁶⁴ *Kolchin M. A.* Ssylnye i zatochennye v ostrog Solovetskogo monastyria v XVI-19 vv. Istoricheskii ocherk. M., 1908. P. 137-138; *Pyatnitskii I.K.*, 1906. Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. P. 77-80.

above all to the state. Consequently, it is not surprising that, if one relies only on vernacular sources, one might get the impression that Wanderers actually existed in the catacombs. By the 1850s, however, there was a significant gap between declarative Wanderer escapism and actual practices of interaction with the outside world. Thus, sources based on the Stenbock Commission investigation portray a discrepancy between the actual and imagined boundaries of the religious underground of the Wanderers.

It was not only the unexpectedness and suddenness of the "discovery" of a highly organized sectarian network 300 kilometers from Moscow and 15 kilometers from Yaroslavl' that shocked the participants of the investigation. To a greater extent, it seems that the bureaucrats from the capital were shocked by the fact that this "discovery" was unexpected and sudden only for them, the visiting officials. Extrapolating from his own Slavophile notions of the cohesion and sobornost'¹⁶⁵ of the "Russian people"¹⁶⁶, Ivan Aksakov could not help but notice how different these ideas were from the picture that appeared before him in the course of the investigation. In spite of his overall disgust at the discovered sectarians, Aksakov was most upset by how integrated into the local community the Wanderers turned out to be.

In Sopyolki, the de facto capital of the Wanderers, as Aksakov writes, "there is not a single Orthodox Christian, although the entire village is registered as the Orthodox according to the police lists, and all residents under interrogation testify that they belong to the Russian Orthodox Church"¹⁶⁷. Registered as Orthodox parishioners, local Wanderers were notified by *desyatskie*¹⁶⁸ when outside officials arrived, so that they could "hypocritically" attend the church in time for the arrival of the visitor¹⁶⁹. There are also indications that some of the Wanderers served as

¹⁶⁵ Sobornost' is a Russian noun derived from the verb "sobirat", meaning to gather or assemble. Sobornost' in the Orthodox sense refers to the unity of believers participating in a spiritual life. For a long polemic among Russian philosophers and theologians on what to understand by this term, see: *Shevzov V.* Russian Orthodoxy on the eve of revolution. New York, Oxford, 2003. P. 30-53.

¹⁶⁶ On the Slavophiles and their views on the Old Believers as an obstacle to the construction of an Orthodox Russian nation see: *Dunn E.* A Slavophile Looks at the Raskol and the Sects // *The Slavonic and East European Review.* 1966. Vol. 44. no. 102. P. 167-179.

¹⁶⁷ *Aksakov I.S.* Pisma k rodnym, 1849-1856. P. 171.

¹⁶⁸ A low-ranking local official elected by the community.

¹⁶⁹ *Aksakov I.S.* Pisma k rodnym, 1849-1856. P. 171.

churchwardens in Nikonian churches¹⁷⁰. In addition, the *sotskie*¹⁷¹ chosen by the local civic communities, among whom there were many Wanderers, were probably also dependent on sectarians¹⁷². Aksakov also reports on the bribes received by priests and police from Wanderers¹⁷³. The official draws particular attention to the clothing of the sectarians, who were dressed richly "and even flamboyantly," and to their almost total literacy¹⁷⁴. In one of his letters, Aksakov, noting the general hostility of the population toward Petersburgers¹⁷⁵, writes: "Indeed, soon Russia will be divided into two halves: Orthodoxy will be on the side of the treasury, the government, the unbelieving nobility and the clergy turning away from faith, while all the others will turn to schism"¹⁷⁶.

Aksakov's account does not resemble a description of a deeply conspiratorial cell of the radical sectarians cut off from the outside world. On the contrary, it is he and his colleagues from the Interior Ministry Commission that appear as an outside element to the local space, which the Wanderers are an integral part of. Pyatnitskii also noted this, describing the general indifference toward the Wanderers of Yaroslavl' officials and their colleagues from neighboring provinces, the police and the clergy, who knew about the spread of the sect, but were unwilling to engage in combating it¹⁷⁷. Nevertheless, it was the enlightened bureaucrats who, along with the synodal schismotologists also unsympathetic to the Wanderers, became responsible for producing discourses on this religious movement for a long time. Public discourses about the Wanderers influenced the development of the religious legislation, thus often bringing the Wanderers to the brink of illegality.

¹⁷⁰ *Aksakov I.S.* *Kratkaia zapiska o strannikakh ili begunakh* (1851). P. 634.

¹⁷¹ Low-ranking local officials, a level higher than *desyatskie*.

¹⁷² *Sinitsyn I.* *O raskole v Yaroslavskoi gubernii // Kel'siev V. (ed.). Sbornik pravitel'stvennykh svedenii o raskolnikakh.* No. 4. London, 1862. P. 131-132.

¹⁷³ *Aksakov I.S.* *Kratkaia zapiska o strannikakh ili begunakh* (1851). P. 636; 639-642.

¹⁷⁴ *Aksakov I.S.* *Pisma k rodnym, 1849-1856.* P. 171.

¹⁷⁵ In a brief note, drafted in addition to the multi-page report, Aksakov wrote that "the people see us, especially the officials, as servants of the Antichrist." *Aksakov I.S.* *Kratkaia zapiska o strannikakh ili begunakh* (1851). P. 632.

¹⁷⁶ *Aksakov I.S.* *Pisma k rodnym, 1849-1856.* P. 177.

¹⁷⁷ *Pyatnitskii I.K.*, 1906. *Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole.* P. 20-22

1.3.3 External discourses on Wanderers and their legal status from their "discovery" to 1917.

Until 1917, the legal status of Wanderers was not clearly regulated by the existing laws. Moreover, sometimes the Wanderers were not covered at all by legal documents classifying the religious movements of non-Synodal Orthodoxy. Thus, in 1845, five years before the "discovery" of the Wanderers, Metropolitan Filaret issued a legislative classification of sects and Old Believers branches¹⁷⁸. The classification proposed a division of all non-institutionalized religious movements existing within the Empire into the less harmful [menee vrednye] (like the priestly Old Believers), the harmful (the priestless Old Believers who are loyal to the Imperial power), and the most harmful (sectarians and Old Believers who reject marriage and prayer for the tsar)¹⁷⁹. Needless to say, the Wanderers, still unknown to the highest registers of power at that time, found no place in any of these categories. As a result, the legal status of the Wanderers has been the subject of debate since the "discovery" and has never been clearly defined. There may be several reasons for this, but the main issue of the debate on legal status was the question of proving or disproving the spread of "fanatic practices" among the Wanderers and the anti-state nature of their teachings.

1.3.3.1 *The Wanderers as "the religious fanatics"*

Almost immediately after the "discovery" the synodal literature was quick in awarding the Wanderers with the title "fanatics" (izuvery)¹⁸⁰. Dahl's dictionary defined the word "fanaticism" as follows: "A fanaticism is a false, stubborn belief, with hatred of dissenters and a willingness to suffer for it; bigotry, intolerance"¹⁸¹. In its current meaning the word describes a person who in

¹⁷⁸ Paert I. "Two or Twenty Million?". P. 84.

¹⁷⁹ Erofeev K. B. Poniatie "izuverskie sekty" v otechestvennom zakonodatelstve // Iuridicheskaja mysl. 2017. no. 4. P. 24.

¹⁸⁰ The variant of the translation of the term "izuver" as "fanatic," which I borrow from Paul Werth's work, although it seems most appropriate, still cannot fully convey the connotations that the Russian term has. Werth P. W. *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford, 2014. P. 205. Thus, although the term originally meant rather a person who committed an act of apostasy, later on the noun "izuverstvo" acquired tangible bodily connotations, and the act "izuverstvo" itself began to mean the act of inflicting severe bodily harm on oneself or others. In this sense, the term was widely used to describe the so-called Skoptsy's practices of "big seal" and "small seal", i.e., the ritual removal of the penis and testicles of male Skoptsy and the removal of breasts of their female co-religionists. Engelshtein L. Skoptsy i tsarstvo nebesnoe. P. 29.

¹⁸¹ Dal' V. Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka. Vol. 2 : I - O. SPb; M., 1881. P. 35.

intolerance and fanaticism (initially religious) reaches the point of extreme cruelty¹⁸². At the time of the events described, the term also seems to have contained religious connotations and was associated with manifestations of religious radicalism. Vasilii Kliuchevskii in his “Russian History course” wrote: "Church persecution raised the fanatics among the Old Believers, according to whose words thousands of seduced people burned themselves for the salvation of their souls, and church pastors burned self-immolation preachers for the same sake"¹⁸³. Kliuchevskii's employment of the term in this particular context seems very telling. Thus, he condemns the deeds of both sides of the schism, yet it is the Old Believers he refers to as fanatics. Thus, the term “fanaticism” [izuverstvo] as understood in the second half of the 19th century implies an extreme manifestation not just of a religious fanaticism, but specifically of a non-Synodal (sectarian or Old Believers') religious fanaticism. The term will outlive the Old Regime and become an element of Bolshevik anti-religious discourse¹⁸⁴. Moreover, after 1917 it would be widely applied to representatives of the former Synodal Church as well.

As applied to religious movements, the term entered the legislation in 1845 as part of Article 212 of “the Penal and Correctional Code”¹⁸⁵. "The Code" stipulated for the followers of "heresies combined with rampant fanaticism" [svirepoe izuverstvo] punishment in the form of "deprivation of all rights of estate and exile: from European Russia to the Transcaucasian region, from the Caucasian and Caspian regions and from the Georgian-Imeretian province to Siberia, and in Siberia – to the most remote places, to be settled separately from other settlers and old-timers".¹⁸⁶ However, the legislators' notion of "rampant fanaticism" certainly matched only the Skoptsy, who practiced religiously motivated castration. In the case of the Wanderers, the resolution of the question of whether they practiced some kind of fanatical rituals stretched over 70 years.

¹⁸² Izuver / Tolkovy slovar Efremovoi. URL: <https://lexicography.online/explanatory/efremova/%D0%B8/%D0%B8%D0%B7%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%80> (Last accessed January 4, 2022).

¹⁸³ *Kliuchevskii V. O. Sochineniia v deviaty tomakh*. Vol. 1. M., 1987. P. 334.

¹⁸⁴ On the continuity of the pre-revolutionary and Soviet anti-sectarian rhetoric see. *Panchenko A. A. Krovavaia etnografiia: legenda o ritual'nom ubiistve i presledovanie religioznykh men'shinstv // Otechestvennye zapiski*. 2014. no. 1. P. 226-239.

¹⁸⁵ *Ulozhenie o nakazaniakh ugovolnykh i ispravitel'nykh*. SPb., 1845. P. 75.

¹⁸⁶ *Ulozhenie o nakazaniakh ugovolnykh i ispravitel'nykh*. SPb., 1845. P. 73.

In many respects the lack of a clear definition of fanaticism led to the fact that when it was not obvious, very different practices could be covered by the term. Until the end of the 19th century, “fanaticism of the Wanderers” in Synodal and publicist literature usually meant the murders of children and immoral lifestyle (as a consequence of rejection of the marriage)¹⁸⁷. Such literature depicted the horrors of underground sectarian life, with its suspected promiscuity (sometimes incest was also mentioned¹⁸⁸) and vagrancy¹⁸⁹.

In the materials of the Second Missionary Congress in Moscow (1891) it was stated directly: "The debauchery [razvrat] caused by such a doctrine [of the Wanderers], and the crimes caused by this debauchery such as infanticide, etc. find abundant food in the joint vagrancy and frequent dwellings in different secret places of men and women [together; here author means that the cohabitation of the Wanderers of both genders leads to sexual intercourse – IK] of the sect. Thanks to the vagrancy of sectarians this debauchery spreads throughout all the places of Russia visited by them"¹⁹⁰. The schismatologist Fyodor Livanov noted the incredible voluptuousness of the Wanderers' leaders¹⁹¹, while his colleague A.I. Rozov argued that it was common practice among the leaders of the movement to have several mistresses living together¹⁹². Both Livanov and Rozov also reported infanticide as a logical consequence of this way of life¹⁹³.

A special mention should be made of how the wanderers buried their dead. They avoided burying their co-religionists in public, not to mention burials in the Nikonian cemeteries. Burials were carried out secretly, often outside the village or city or using the backyards of benefactors'

¹⁸⁷ For example, famous schismatologist and novelist Pavel Melnikov pointed out the fanatical nature of the Wanderers' doctrine. *Mel'nikov A. P. V pamiat P.I. Mel'nikova (Andreia Pecherskogo)*. Vol. 9. Nizhnii Novgorod, 1910. P. 8, 30, 204, 216.

¹⁸⁸ *Kandaritskii A.P. Opyt sistematicheskogo posobiia pri polemike s staroobriadtsami s kratkim ocherkom razvitiia drevnikh sekt i russkogo raskolostaroobriadchestva*, Sterlitamak, 1907. P. 77.

¹⁸⁹ Not only the synodical schismatologists, but also, for example, the ethnographer Narodnik Prughavin, described the wanderers in a similar way: *Prugavin A. S. Samoistreblenie. Proivavleniia asketizma i fanatizma v raskole // Russkaia mysl*. 1885. Book 2. P. 146.

¹⁹⁰ *Skvortsov V. M. Vtoroi Missionerskii s'ezd v Moskve*. M., 1891. P. 22.

¹⁹¹ *Livanov F.V. Raskolniki i ostrozhniki. Ocherki i rasskazy*. Vol. 4. SPb., 1873. P. 169-170.

¹⁹² Rozov A.I. *Stranniki ili beguny v russkom raskole*. III. Organizatsiia sekty // *Vestnik Evropy*. 1873. Vol. 1. Book 1. P. 293-294. For more on the supposedly widespread promiscuity among the Wanderers see *Vishniakov A.G. (Veskinskii A.) Stranniki ili beguny [Ocherk iz noveishei istorii raskola]*. M., 1864. P. 292-294.

¹⁹³ *Livanov F.V. Raskolniki i ostrozhniki. Ocherki i rasskazy*. Vol. 4. P. 66, *Rozov A.I. Stranniki ili beguny v russkom raskole*. III. Organizatsiia sekty. P. 293-294.

households as gravesites¹⁹⁴. Unlike many other religious movements, the Wanderers were not tied to the graves of their relatives and acquaintances. They did not put memorials on their graves or return there for commemoration rituals. The exception, of course, were those cases where the family members secretly buried a wanderer relative in their household. Even in this case, however, the burial sites were probably not objects of veneration.

The disappearance of people certainly raised the suspicions of the police or the Nikonian clergy. By the end of the 19th century, these secret burials had translated into a legend of “the Red Death” [*krasnaya smert'*] – the ritual strangulation of fellow believers by Wanderers¹⁹⁵, supposedly guaranteeing the latter the status of a martyr¹⁹⁶. Diverse legends of the Red Death coincide mainly with the following description of the ritual. A group of Wanderers allegedly pounces on a fellow believer (usually already on his deathbed) with pillows and blankets (red bedding is often mentioned) in order to asphyxiate him. Sometimes there was mention of a specialist called for this purpose, the “strangler”.

Until the end of the 19th century there is almost no direct mention of the possible existence of the Red Death among the Wanderers in synodal or ethnographic literature¹⁹⁷. The authors of major publications on the Wanderers in the second half of the 19th century, Subbotin, Liprandi, and Rozov, while being generally skeptical about “schismatic” movements, did not mention the practice of ritual murder among the Wanderers¹⁹⁸.

¹⁹⁴ *Pyatnitskii I.K.* Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. P. 129; *Dmitrievskii V.* Sovremennyi raskol v Iaroslavskoi eparkhii i borba s nim. Statisticheskii ocherk. Yaroslavl', 1892. P. 91-92. Pyatnitskii pointed out that there are suspiciously few graves in the Sopiolki cemetery. *Pyatnitskii I.K.* Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. P. 72.

¹⁹⁵ For a detailed analysis of the history of such accusations against Khlysty, Skoptsy, and members of certain branches of the Old Faith, as well as on the transformation of these accusations from the 17th century to the 20th, and on the connection of such incriminations with the most famous legend of ritual murder, the blood libel, see *Panchenko A. A.* Khristovshchina i skopchestvo. P. 153-170.

¹⁹⁶ *Skvortsov V. M.* Sushchestvennye priznaki i stepen vrednosti [russkikh] misticheskikh i ratsionalisticheskikh sekt i raskolnichikh staroobriadcheskikh tolkov. Kiev, 1896. P. 18.

¹⁹⁷ Pavel Melnikov in his “Report on the Present State of the Schism in Nizhnii Novgorod Province” (1857) mentions a certain sect of stranglers [dushil'schiki], but does not associate it with the Wanderers. *Mel'nikov A. P.* V pamiat P.I. Mel'nikova (Andreia Pecherskogo). Vol. 9. P. 229. The mysterious sect of stranglers (also not associated with the Wanderers) is also mentioned in *Izvlacheniiia iz rasporiazhenii po delam o raskolnikakh pri imperatorakh Nikolae i Aleksandre II, popolnennye zapiskoi Melnikova.* Leipzig, 1882. P. 67-68; *Zaleskii K.A.* Varshavskaia sudebnaia palata. Prerekaniia i drugie iuridicheskie voprosy, razreshennye Obshchim sobraniiem i Osobym prisutstviem Varshavskoi sudebnoi palaty. Vol. 1. SPb., 1886. P. 294, 300.

¹⁹⁸ *Subbotin N. I.* Nechto “o strannikakh” po sluchaiu prisoidineniia k tserkvi odnogo iz nastavnikov sekty. M., 1868; *Liprandi I.P.* Kratkoe obozrenie russkikh raskolov, eresei i sekt. M., 1870; *Rozov A.I.* Stranniki ili beguny v russkom

Presumably, the legend of the Red Death appeared at the turn of the century. In 1895, the magazine "Mir Bozhii" [God's world] published an article about a certain sect of "undergrounders stranglers" [podpol'niki-dushiteli] that was active in the woods of the Tsarevokokshaisk district of Kazan province¹⁹⁹. Although the article did not mention the Wanderers, the ritual itself was described exactly as it appeared in later narratives of the Red Death. And still, by 1901 the idea that the Wanderers allegedly practiced the ritual murder had not yet become widely popular. At least a quite critical encyclopedic article on the Wanderers in Brockhaus and Efron's 1901 dictionary does mention the ritual murders among the many "crimes" of the Wanderers²⁰⁰. However, after 1901 it becomes nearly obligatory part of the literature on Wanderers.

Several court cases accusing the Wanderers of committing the sinister ritual took place at the turn of the century. In 1897, in several villages of Kargopol'skii district of the Olonets province, human burials were discovered, presumably belonging to the local Wanderers. However, despite the fact that the investigators considered the very existence of ritual murders among the Wanderers a proven fact (though not calling the ritual a "Red Death"), the investigation quickly came to the conclusion that the deaths of the buried were non-violent by their nature²⁰¹. In the same year, two more peasant Wanderers ended up in the dock on charges of the ritual murder in Shuya (this time the phrase "Red Death" was pronounced in the courtroom). However, thanks to the efforts of Vasilii Maklakov, a lawyer and later prominent politician, the Wanderers were acquitted²⁰². In 1912, the Wanderers were also involved in a criminal case of ritual murder in Kazan Province, but were found innocent for the lack of *corpus delicti*²⁰³.

The spread of the myth of the Red Death often had unexpected consequences. Thus, the Wanderers were defended by people who could hardly be expected to be sympathetic to this

raskole // Vestnik Evropy. 1872. no. 11. P. 260–302; no. 12. P. 519–542; 1873. no. 1. P. 262–295.

¹⁹⁹ Sekta dushitelei // Mir Bozhii. Ezhemesiachnyi literaturnyi i nauchno-populiarnyi zhurnal dlia iunoshestva i samoobrazovaniia. 1895. June. P. 234-235.

²⁰⁰ Stranniki // Brokgauz F. A., Efron I. A. (eds.). Entsiklopedicheskii slovar. Vol. 31a. SPb., 1901. P. 724.

²⁰¹ GARF. F.102. Op.95. D.510. L.35-36ob.

²⁰² *Levenstim A.A.* Fanatizm i prestuplenie. SPb., 1898. P. 27-30; *Kabanov A. E.* Staroobriadtsy vladimirskikh i kostromskikh zemel'. Ivanovo, 2010. P. 192-194.

²⁰³ GARF. F.124. Op. 51. D.814.

religious movement. A Synodal schismatologist and professor of theology Nikolai Ivanovskii, in a work published in 1901 based on his lectures at the Kazan missionary "Fellowship of St. Gurii" cited at least one conviction for such a murder against the Wanderers in the 1880s²⁰⁴. However, Ivanovskii insisted on the unproven nature of the accusations, most of which were based on rumors that had never been confirmed²⁰⁵. This opinion was echoed by Pyatnitskii, who was also closely associated with the Synodal schismatology²⁰⁶.

At the same time, some academic ethnographers did not doubt in authenticity of the Red Death practiced by the Wanderers. Aleksandr Prugavin, in his work on various manifestations of religious fanaticism among Old Believers, referred to the case of ritual murder committed by the Wanderers (however, without calling the ritual "Red Death") in Ivanovo, Vladimir province in 1883. Prugavin did not doubt the reality of the ritual murder, describing his informant as "a serious man"²⁰⁷. In 1904 the academic journal "Etnograficheskoe obozrenie" published a short article "Strangler among the Russian schismatics" in which ethnographer Vladimir Bogdanov, describing his trip to the Kineshma region (Kostroma province at that moment), gave information about the existence of the "golubishniki"²⁰⁸ sect. The customs of this sect allegedly included the murder of old men by a professional strangler. The author hypothesized a possible "ethnological" connection of the "Russian death cult" [русский культ смерти] with similar practices of ritual strangulation in India through "the meditation of our still little-explored aliens [representatives of non-Slavic ethnic groups – inorodtsy – IK]"²⁰⁹. In the response article, the prominent Russian ethnographer Dmitrii Zelenin acted as an expert. Relating to the rumors he had heard, Zelenin asserted that this ritual was indeed common among the Wanderers²¹⁰.

²⁰⁴ *Ivanovskii N.I.* Vnutrennee ustroistvo sekty strannikov ili begunov. P. 93.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* P. 94-95.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* P. 160-161.

²⁰⁷ *Prugavin A. S.* Samoistreblenie. Proiavlennii asketizma i fanatizma v raskole. P. 146.

²⁰⁸ By "golubishniki" the author actually meant the Wanderers, who occasionally were called "golbeshniki" because of the distinctive shape of the tomb crosses in the form of a hut ("golbets").

²⁰⁹ *B. VI. [Bogdanov V.]* Dushila u russkikh raskolnikov // *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*. 1904. no. 2. P. 160-161.

²¹⁰ *Zelenin D.K.* «Krasnaia smert'» u russkikh staroobriadtsev // *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*. 1904. no. 3. P. 67-68.

Perhaps the most scandalous episode of accusations of the ritual murders against the Wanderers dates back to 1911. In October of that year in Saratov the corpse of Ivan Kabankin, a cabby who had disappeared a month before, was found. On November 19, 1911, the "Saratovskii vestnik" published a short article about the Kabankin case. According to "Vestnik", the son of the deceased, forty-year-old Timofei Ivanovich, was suspected of the murder. The article also argued that the murder was of a ritual nature, that is, it was a so-called Red Death, a custom of "godly" strangulation attributed to the Wanderers, to whom the Kabankins belonged²¹¹. The very next day the investigation was over – the pathologist found no signs of Kabankin's violent death²¹². However, the wave of newspaper articles caused by the discovery of Kabankin's corpse quickly spread throughout the Empire.

The Wanderers' entry into public (not expert) discourse was akin to their second "discovery". Newspapers ranging from the liberal "Birzhevye vedomosti" to the nationalistic "Yuzhnyi krai" frightened readers with the spread of a dangerous sect of stranglers. The Wanderers-stranglers suddenly "sprang up" in Transbaikalia, Altai, Perm, Sarapul, Kazan, and Shuya²¹³. Journalists described the imagined sect as something "monstrous, bloody, and inhuman" listing the killing of old men and children as its main foundations²¹⁴. The moral panic caused by rumors of the spread of ritual murder among the Wanderers fell on the fertile ground of the unfolding "Beilis affair"²¹⁵. However, the described xenophobic hysteria had an important distinguishing feature. Unlike Beilis or the Multan Udmurts accused of the ritual murder of a Russian peasant (1892-1896)²¹⁶, the

²¹¹ GMIR. F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. khr. 59. L. 1

²¹² K sekte dushitelei // Saratovskii vestnik: [ezhednevnaia obshchestvenno-politicheskaia gazeta]. no. 256. 1911, November, 20. P. 6.

²¹³ A collection of publications on the Kabankin affair was assembled by Bonch-Bruевич and is kept in the State Museum of the History of Religion (GMIR). F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. khr. 59.

²¹⁴ GMIR. F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. khr. 59. L. 6 ob.

²¹⁵ On the Beilis affair see *Weinberg R.* Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis. Bloomington, 2013.

²¹⁶ *Geraci R.* Ethnic minorities, anthropology, and Russian national identity on trial: The Multan case, 1892-96 // *The Russian Review*. 2000. Vol. 59. no. 4. P. 530-554. On the ideological distance between the accusations against the Udmurts and against Beilis see *Mogilner M.* The Empire-Born Criminal: Atavism, Survivals, Irrational Instincts, and the Fate of Russian Imperial Modernity // *Nicolosi R. and Hartmann A. (eds.) Born to be Criminal: The Discourse on Criminality and the Practice of Punishment in Late Imperial Russia and Early Soviet Union. Interdisciplinary Approaches.* Bielefeld, 2018. P. 31-62.

newspaper publications discussed the ethnically Russian Wanderers, visually indistinguishable from the common people.

On the one hand, such a feature was designed to frighten the reader even more, but on the other hand, the recognition of the obvious Russianness of the sectarians for some producers of discourses served as the basis for attempts to justify the denigrated Wanderers. The two authors of the articles about the Kabankins, the Bolshevik Bonch-Bruevich and his ideological antagonist the nationalist Kromov, came to the same conclusion in their papers published in the wake of the Saratov incident: the Wanderers were Russian and therefore incapable of committing ritual murder. In his publication in the newspaper "Stolichnaya Kopeika" Bonch-Bruevich said it quite directly: "I absolutely do not imagine the possibility of existence of ritual murders in Russia, among the Russian people. It cannot be"²¹⁷. Kromov's logic was more twisted, but nevertheless also appealed to the ethnicity of the Wanderers. He, in turn, pointed out that the accusations of ritual murder by the Wanderers were an attempt by the "Jewish press" to shift public attention from the Beilis case to the Russian Wanderers. In his article in "Poltavskie Vedomosti" of December 9, 1911 Kromov stated: "... the numerous and diverse defenders of the Jews will throw in our faces the existence of the sects of fanatics among us Russians. They will say: what moral right do you have to accuse the Jews of what your people are guilty of?"²¹⁸.

However, newspaper interest in the Wanderers waned as suddenly as it began. A few months later, the number of such publications rapidly declined. Perhaps this suggests that the fear of a large underground organization of stranglers did not resonate in the hearts of readers. Despite the scope of anti-sectarian hysteria, the newspaper campaign did not lead to any repressive consequences for the Wanderers.

The existence of the Red Death ritual has never been confirmed by any trial or police investigation. Nevertheless, the legend of the Red Death proved to be extremely tenacious, and even outlived the Old Regime, so that Soviet lawyers and experts in religion were forced to prove

²¹⁷ GMIR. F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed.khr. 59. L. 10-11.

²¹⁸ GMIR. F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed.khr. 50. L. 9-9ob.

its groundlessness²¹⁹. Turning to the Wanderers themselves, as is shown in Chapter 2, they were painfully aware of their reputation as "stranglers," and attempts to justify themselves to the public became a way for them to voluntarily expose themselves to the outside world.

The ambivalence of discursive approaches to Kabankin's "Red Death" case and the unexpected normalization of Wanderers in the Russian nationalist's article fit well into the context of the processes of nationalization of the Empire unfolding since the last quarter of the 19th century and especially intensifying in the first decade and a half of the 20th century²²⁰. Following the modernizing logic of nationalization, the Empire was being reorganized along the boundaries of nationality or ethnicity, in contrast to the previous religion-based system of organization. Moreover, the nationalization of the Empire entailed transformations in the organization of majority-minority relations. Thus, the case of the Udmurts and the Beilis affair are eloquent examples of the radicalization of this reorganization. However, when it came to individuals and communities who cannot be binarily classified into majority and minority groups, contradictions such as those described emerged. Of course, at the beginning of the 20th century the perception of Russian nationality was discursively closely tied to Nikonian Orthodoxy²²¹. However, as the ambivalence of the perception of the Wanderers during the tumult surrounding the Kabankin affair shows, at certain moments nationality becomes the determining factor of normalization, and confessional identification turns out to be of secondary importance. Aleksandr Etkind in his several works pointed out that for the Late Imperial public sphere the sectarians were the embodiment of the collective Other²²². However, there seem to be reasons to problematize such

²¹⁹ In 1924, Vassilii Shumov, an expert on religion at the People's Commissariat of Justice, in response to a report on a ritual that allegedly took place in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, denied the very fact of the Red Death and directly compared such rumors to a blood libel. GARF. F. A353. Op. 7. D.9. L. 34–35.

²²⁰ On the rise of 'nationality' over 'religion' in process of defying the boundaries of construing nation see *Maierova O.* From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology. Madison, 2010. P.93; on the historical context of the nationalizing Russian Empire see: *Kivelson V. A., Suny R. G.* Russia's Empires. New York, Oxford, 2017. P. 202; on nationalization "from above" at the level of symbols and representations of the tsarist power see *Wortman R.* Scenarios of power: Myth and ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the abdication of Nicholas II. Princeton, 2006. P. 245-409; on the politics of russification and russifications see *Miller A.* Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research. Budapest, 2008. P. 45-65.

²²¹ *Kumar K.* Visions of empire: How five imperial regimes shaped the world. Princeton, 2017. P. 273-276.

²²² *Etkind A. M.* Khlyst. P. 3-4; *Etkind A. M.* Vnutrenniaia kolonizatsiia. P. 303-330.

a generalizing view, since by the 1910s it had become clear that nationalization, if not made Wanderers part of the collective Self, could at least have contributed to their discursive normalization. Thus, the view of the location of sectarians (and Wanderers in particular) in the binary system of the Self and the Other in the Late Empire turns out to be more complex than Etkind assumed.

The Late Imperial officials, journalists, and politicians' understanding of the connection between the categories of nationality and religion seems incredibly complex and confusing indeed. Although in the case of Kromov and Bonch-Bruевич's remarks one could argue to the contrary, Paul Werth's opinion that from the point of view of the officials in charge of religious matters, religious affiliation never became completely separate from nationality²²³ seems to be fair after all. No doubt, as the Empire has been modernizing and nationalizing, it became apparent to some public actors that there is a significant group of ethnically Russian Old Believers within the Empire, whose legal status differs significantly from that of their Russian Nikonian neighbors. However, this process of public recognition that being Russian did not necessarily mean being Synodal Orthodox was proceeding slowly and convolutedly. And yet, as will be shown below, this process may have been accelerated not only in the shadow of the Beilis affair (as in the case described above), but also as a result of forced nationalization of the Empire during the First World War²²⁴.

1.3.3.2. Wanderers as an anti-state sect

The anti-state focus of the Wanderers' ideology has also become part of their external image. From the very "discovery", the anti-state preaching of the Wanderers has been the subject of criticism by Synodal and loyalist experts. The extreme skepticism of the Wanderers toward the highest registers of authority has been reported by officials dealing with sectarians since the

²²³ Werth P. W. *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia*. Oxford Studies in Modern European History. New York, Oxford, 2014. P. 152-153, 172.

²²⁴ On the intense nationalization of the Empire during the War see Lohr E. *et al.* *Nationalizing the Russian empire: The campaign against enemy aliens during World War I*. Cambridge, 2003.

1850s²²⁵. Metropolitan Filaret was a particularly vehement accuser of the Wanderers for their unwillingness to contact the state²²⁶. The same authors who accused the Wanderers of fanaticism insisted on the subversive nature of their doctrine. Vladimir Dahl in his “Explanatory Dictionary” directly put the fanaticism of the Wanderers in the same sentence as their unwillingness to obey the authorities²²⁷. Moreover, while various experts disagreed that the Wanderers practiced infanticide, polygamy or Red Death, none of the experts who wrote about the Wanderers seemed to doubt that the members of this religious movement were radically antagonistic to the state.

In addition, as was shown in the historiographical section, by the end of the 19th century politically engaged authors who wrote about the Wanderers (primarily Populists and Bolsheviks) generated an entire tradition of viewing the theology of Wanderers as a form of social or anti-state protest. In the Wanderers, Shchapov saw a revolt against the consistent state policy of the enslavement of individuals²²⁸. Recognizing the existence of apologists for monarchical rule as such among the Wanderers²²⁹, Kablitz in his turn enthusiastically described how they do not remove their hats when they meet with officials²³⁰. In his collection of newspaper articles, Bonch-Bruевич underlined references to the hostility of the Wanderers to the state²³¹. Of course, the anti-monarchism of the Wanderers and the Narodniks had little correlation with each other. One cannot disagree with Etkind that the Narodniks and Bolsheviks imagined sectarians, romanticizing and ideologizing them²³². Nevertheless, authors who have pointed to sectarian anti-monarchism in a politico-romantic or politico-alarmist way (as Synodal and loyalist experts did) have agreed in concluding that it is one of the pillars of the Wanderer ontology. Thus, in a peculiar way the carriers

²²⁵ *Al'ibev*. O raskole v Iaroslavskoi gubernii // Kel'siev V. (ed.). Sbornik pravitelstvennykh svedenii o raskolnikakh. No. 2. London, 1861. P. 42-44; *Sinitsyn I.* O Zapiska o strannicheskoi ili sopolkovskoi eresi i o merakh k pregrazhdeniiu ee vliianiia P. 59–183; *Liprandi I.P.* Kratkoe obozrenie russkikh raskolov, eresei i sekt. P. 15–16.

²²⁶ *Belikov V.I.* Deiatelnost' moskovskogo mitropolita Filareta po otnosheniiu k raskolu. Kazan, 1895 P. 23-25; 241-242; 561.

²²⁷ *Dal' V.* Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka. Vol. 4 : P - Izhitsa. SPb; M., 1881. P. 344.

²²⁸ *Shchapov A.P.* Zemstvo i raskol. P.321.

²²⁹ *Iuzov I.* Russkie dissidenty. P. 212.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* P. 209.

²³¹ GMIR. F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. khr. 50. L. 2.

²³² *Etkind A. M.* Vnutrenniaia kolonizatsiia. P. 303-330.

of opposing political views worked together to produce a discourse on the anti-monarchist Wanderers.

Some attempts to problematize perceptions of the uncompromising attitude of the Wanderers toward the higher registers of the Imperial power appeared only in the mid-1910s. An example of such an attempt was the report submitted by the prosecutor of the Kazan Judicial Chamber, Vladimir Baltz, to the Minister of Justice Miliutin in 1912²³³. The formal reason for the report was the prosecutor's investigation of the alleged Red Death episode in Kazan province. Baltz, like many of his predecessors, convinced of the invalidity of the legend of ritual murder, appealed to the minister with a proposal for the full legalization of the Wanderers, in view of their noninvolvement in any fanaticism. Besides, in his report Baltz especially focused on the point that the doctrine of the Wanderers is not fundamentally anti-monarchist either. From the prosecutor's point of view, this is confirmed by the fact that the Wanderers' benefactors are quite law-abiding, they serve in the army and have not been caught up in the revolutionary riots of 1905-1906. Baltz goes on to say directly that the Wanderers are a kind of monarchists who pray, though not for the emperor, but for his return "to ancient piety"²³⁴. One might assume that the prosecutor would be concerned about religious tolerance in general, if not the fact that two years before Baltz had been actively involved in the criminal prosecution of the Vaisovites, representatives of a radical religious and political movement of Muslims of the Volga region that had existed in the region from the 1860s to the 1920s²³⁵. Thus, Baltz singles out the Wanderers, contrasting them with the "true anti-state" Vaisovites. However, despite the fact that Miliutin agreed with Baltz's arguments, this bureaucratic correspondence actually had no legal consequences for the Wanderers. Thus, the legal position of the Wanderers from the time of their "discovery" until 1917 was poorly regulated,

²³³ GARF. F. 124. Op. 51. D.814. L. 1-8 ob.

²³⁴ GARF. F. 124. Op. 51. D.814. L. 5.

²³⁵ GARF. F. 124. Op. 51. D.814. L. 7; on the Vaisovites see *Usmanova D. Vaisovskii Bozhii Polk Staroverov-Musulman: Iazyki religioznogo, Soslovnogo, Politicheskogo i Natsionalnogo Protivostoianiiia v Rossiiskoi imperii //Ab Imperio, 2006. no. 3. P. 255-271.*

while perceptions of their extreme anti-monarchism remained predominant in discourses on them. Moreover, after 1917, they themselves learned to benefit from these perceptions.

1.3.4. Legal status of the Wanderers

Throughout the period from 1850 to 1917, the image of the Wanderers in public and expert discourse remained generally marginalized, if not demonized, with the rare exceptions mentioned above. However, the extremely prejudiced and negative assessments of their activities were not enough to legally legitimize the persecution of the Wanderers on the basis of their doctrine alone, bringing them into the same position as the Skoptsy²³⁶. From the point of view of lawmakers, there were yet significant differences between the fanatics-Wanderers and the fanatics-Skoptsy. Probably the only legislative provision in the text of which an equal sign was drawn between the Skoptsy and the Wanderers were the rules on the proceedings of cases of seduction into the schism [sovrashchenie v raskol], issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1866. Thus, Article 6 of this document envisaged some reduction of penalties for Old Believers, who converted to the Nikonian Orthodoxy during the period of investigation. However, in the footnotes to the document, it was stated that such indulgences did not apply to the Skoptsy and the Wanderers²³⁷. Yet, the lack of legal acts directly criminalizing adherence to a religious movement did not mean that the Wanderers existed within the legal framework. Already in the decision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs dated to October 23, 1859, with reference to the instruction of Aleksandr II, it was prescribed to avoid the application of "legal provisions about the schismatics" to the Wanderers, and to punish them only for having no passport and vagrancy²³⁸. The same position was confirmed in 1891 in an official address of the Synod to the Minister of the Interior, which stressed the need to continue the prosecution of Wanderers under the criminal provisions for vagrancy²³⁹. Thus, the logic of prosecuting the Wanderers not for belonging to the religious community, but for civil

²³⁶ On Skoptsy see *Engelshtein L.* Skoptsy i Tsarstvo Nebesnoe; *Panchenko A. A.* Khristovshchina i skopchestvo.

²³⁷ *Sobranie postanovlenii po chasti raskola.* SPb., 1875. P. 635.

²³⁸ *Ibid.* P. 571.

²³⁹ *Vedomstvo pravoslavnogo ispovedaniia. Obzor deiatelnosti vedomstva pravoslavnogo ispovedaniia za vremia tsarstvovaniia imperatora Aleksandra III.* SPb., 1901. P. 298.

crimes proved to be highly viable. Thus, from the late 1850s to 1917 the Wanderers who were detained in various regions of European Russia and Siberia were not formally charged with their religious affiliation, but were arrested and brought to trial for having no passports²⁴⁰, refusing to pay taxes²⁴¹, keeping dens²⁴², illegal burials²⁴³, anti-government propaganda²⁴⁴, and seduction into the schism²⁴⁵.

The last and the longest attempt to criminalize the Wanderers was made at the very beginning of the 20th century. In 1899, the discussion of this issue was initiated by the governor of Olonets province, who was concerned about the spread of the Wanderers in his region. The governor appealed to the Minister of Internal Affairs with a proposal to recognize the sect as particularly harmful and punish its followers, like the Skoptsy, under Article 203, that is, by the fact that the suspect belongs to a religious movement. As a result of nine years of bureaucratic iterations, the Ministry of Justice made a decision in 1908 that it would be inexpedient to apply the article about belonging to a fanatic teaching to the Wanderers. According to the logic of ministry officials, the decrees on blasphemy (Art. 74) and punishable propaganda (Art. 90)²⁴⁶ are enough "to protect the Orthodox faith," and Art. 203 and 84 (seduction into the schism) "can be applied without any special legal provisions to that effect"²⁴⁷.

Thus, the legal status of the Wanderers was not entirely defined. On the one hand, individually the Wanderers were not persecuted for their religious beliefs. On the other hand, the very ideology and practices of the Wanderers could easily be interpreted by local officials and policemen as corresponding to criminal articles. Of course, it is impossible to distinguish the Wanderers themselves from the general mass of subjects of the Russian Empire who were

²⁴⁰ Bratskoe slovo: Zhurnal, posviashchennyi izucheniiu raskola. Izd. pri Bratstve sv. Petra mitropolita N. Subbotinym. 1884. no.9 . P. 508; *Dutchak E. E.* Iz "Vavilona" v "Belovod'e". P. 109.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.* P. 118.

²⁴² *Skvortsov D.I.* Ocherki tverskogo raskola i sektantstva. M., 1895. P. 50.

²⁴³ *Ivanovskii N.I.* Staroobriadcheskoe begunstvo v ego proshedshem i nastoiashchem // *Strannik*. 1892. Vol. 2. P. 469.

²⁴⁴ RGIA F. 821 Op. 133. D.112. L. 4-6; GARF F.124. Op.52. D. 315. L. 1-2.

²⁴⁵ RGIA F. 821 Op. 133. D.112. L. 27-27 ob.

²⁴⁶ Under this article the Wanderers were charged with spreading speculations about the Antichrist nature of Imperial authority.

²⁴⁷ RGIA. F. 1405 Op. 543. D.592. L. 34-34 ob.

convicted of vagrancy or passportlessness. Consequently, it is impossible to assess how intensive the persecution of the Wanderers by the imperial law enforcement agencies was. Obviously, there was some tendency, if not toward legislative normalization of Wanderers, then at least toward their practical normalization. As already mentioned, the Empire was rapidly nationalizing, reshaping itself along the lines of nationality rather than religion. The result of this transformation was a smooth discursive normalization of the Wanderers. They were still thought of as marginalized, but as marginalized inside rather than outside the national body, thus preventing their total demonization.

One could say that the First World War served as an influential catalyst for the inclusion of the Wanderers in the emerging national body. The Wanderers discursively became, albeit a deviant, but still a part of the nation, which needs to be protected from external threats. In 1915, the journalist Er. Pecherskii in his article "The Sect of Stranglers" in the newspaper "Ranee utro", once again proving the absurdity of the legend of the Red Death, put it forthrightly: "We deeply resent the vile lies disseminated about us by the German newspapers. And at the same time, we slander *ourselves*: we spread ridiculous disgraceful stories about *ourselves*. Why? In the name of what?"²⁴⁸. In the same year, an Interior Ministry circular on measures to combat sectarians, sent to local police departments, contained a list of harmful sects, exclusively Protestant groups, which by the logic of the document were associated with the propaganda of pro-German attitudes under the conditions of the First World War²⁴⁹. The absence of the Wanderers in such a list also seems in many ways to illustrate this process of their gradual normalization. The absence of the Wanderers in such a list also seems to be an illustrative indicator of this process of their gradual discursive normalization.

It was not only the absence of a clear legislative assessment of the religious movement that led to the fact that the Wanderers existed in a "gray zone" between the gradually legalizing Old

²⁴⁸ RGIA F.821. Op.133. D.112. L. 39-39 ob.

²⁴⁹ GAYaO F.906 Op.4. D.1147. L. 9-13. On the up to this date anti-German patriotic turn in the ideology of Russian Baptists see *Coleman H. J. Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution*. P. 92-108.

Believers and the Skoptsy. Still, the main reason for the possibility of such a mode of existence seems to be the Wanderers' own rigid ideas about the boundaries of permissible interaction with the state. The status of Old Believers underwent serious positive revisions after 1874 (recognition of marriages on condition of registration in police registers)²⁵⁰ and after 1883 (granting the right to hold public office and receive passports on general grounds)²⁵¹. However, the liberalization of the state policy in relation to the Old Believers²⁵² implied a number of reciprocal steps on the part of believers. In 1874 it was a question of registration in police registers, in 1883 it was a question of consent to receive passports. Neither of these was acceptable to the Wanderers, who, indeed, continued to identify infernal traits in the Romanov state and its bureaucratic procedures.

What did it mean for the Wanderers to exist in the "gray zone"? Jane Burbank described the Russian imperial legal system with the term Imperial rights regime²⁵³. Such a regime implied the existence of a complex umbrella legal matrix that allowed a wide range of diverse imperial citizens access to the legal system. Thus, both the Russian peasant applying to the township court and the Caucasian or Central Asian Muslim applying to the Islamic court turned out to be integrated into a single but extremely diverse Imperial legal system and through this into the institution of citizenship per se. In the case of the Wanderers, staying in the "gray zone" meant existing outside this inclusive legal system that is, outside the boundaries of citizenship. Moreover, not being in touch with the Imperial rights regime was largely voluntary for them and was fully consistent with their general anti-state agenda before 1917.

In 1905 the "Decree on Strengthening the Principles of Religious Tolerance" virtually legalized the activities of almost all branches of the Old Faith, allowed the apostasy from Nikonian Orthodoxy and conversion to other faiths, including the Old Believers²⁵⁴. As with previous

²⁵⁰ *Werth P. W.* The Tsar's foreign faiths. P. 91.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.* P. 148.

²⁵² Here it must be said that the liberalization of policy towards the Old Believers was uneven. On the periphery of the Empire, it developed more rapidly than in the center. *Gorizontov L.E.* Raskolnichii klin. *Polskii vopros i staroobriadtsy v imperskoi strategii // Slavianskii almanakh*, no. 1997. 1998. P. 140-167.

²⁵³ *Burbank J.* An imperial rights regime: Law and citizenship in the Russian Empire // *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. 2006. Vol. 7. no. 3. P. 397-431.

²⁵⁴ On Conversions from Nikonian Orthodoxy to Old Belief after 1905 see *Kuziner I.* «My teper pered soboi vidim dve tserkvi». *Perekhody v staroobriadchestvo Belokrinit'skogo soglasiia i osobennosti multipravoroslavnogo*

measures of gradual liberalization of religious policy, the Decree required a reciprocal commitment to dialogue on the part of the Old Believers. So, introduced on October 17, 1906, "Regulations on the Procedure of Establishing Communities by Followers of the Old Believer Confessions and the Rights and Obligations of Such Persons," prescribed specific procedures for registering communities at local government bodies²⁵⁵. Despite the fact that the Edict of 1905 suggested that it was theoretically possible for Wanderers to exist legally, the need to interact with the state proved once again to be unacceptable to the Wanderers. Moreover, according to reports from local authorities, the Edict was perceived by the Wanderers as an "Antichrist trap" set up by the authorities to tempt believers into legalization and to force them away from their traditional mode of the "flight"²⁵⁶. Thus, one can say that the existence in the "gray zone" of legality was in many ways a deliberate ideological choice for the Wanderers.

So, summing up the preliminary results, several factors contributed to the presence of the Wanderers at the border of illegality. First, we are talking about perceptions of the Wanderers in public and expert discourse, which, although not translated into specific legislative measures, nevertheless created a certain stigmatizing atmosphere in the offices of officials responsible for regulating religious life. Thus, for instance, clippings from newspaper articles about alleged episodes of the Red Death were used as arguments in bureaucratic discussions of the legal status of Wanderers²⁵⁷. Although no episodes were ever confirmed, the very fact that such discussions were initiated and did not cease until 1917 testifies the high degree of marginality of the Wanderers in the eyes of the bureaucrats. Second, certainly the ambivalent, semi-legal status of the Wanderers was embodied in the threat of being arrested and punished for vagrancy or other non-religious crime under the criminal code. However, the most important factor complicating their legal

religioznogo landshafta posle 1905 goda // Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov v Rossii i za rubezhom. 2020. Vol. 38. no. 2. P. 345–376.

²⁵⁵ Tserkovnye Vedomosti. SPb., 1906. no. 43. P. 458–465; on the perception of the "Regulations" by the Old Believers (not the Wanderers) themselves and on the struggle to improve it see *Seleznyov F. A.* Sud'ba zakonoproekta o staroobriadcheskikh obshchinakh (1905-1914) // Vestnik Nizhegorodskogo universiteta im. N. I. Lobachevskogo. 2008. no. 1. P. 130-140.

²⁵⁶ RGIA. F. 821. Op. 133. D.188. L. 209 ob.

²⁵⁷ RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D.112. L. 39.

position seems to be the Wanderers' own consistent ideological aversion to any interaction with the authorities. Thus, the existence in the "gray zone," despite all the legislative twists and turns, to a certain extent, turned out to be the Wanderers' own ideologically motivated choice by the beginning of the 20th century. The Synodal missionary from Vologda, Polyanskii, in his notes on disputes with the Old Believers, sharply but perhaps accurately characterized this voluntary semi-illegality in this way: "I do not consider it persecution to imprison vagrants who have no passport: the Wanderers procure their persecution themselves - they are playing at it" [stranniki-beguny sami sebe dobyvaiut gonenie, — oni igraiat v nego]²⁵⁸. Moreover, as it is argued below, it cannot be said that the Wanderers were hindered by this choice and had considerable difficulty in maintaining this mode of existence.

1.3.5. The Wanderer's metaphorical underground

From the morphology of the mode of living in the "gray zone" of semi-illegality described above, one gets the impression that the representatives of this religious movement were actively hiding from the outside world. On the one hand, the Wanderers erected the walls of their underground by themselves, guided by their own doctrinal tenets, and without taking any action aimed at legalization. On the other hand, actors from the outside world reinforced the boundaries of this underground, demonizing the Wanderers through discourses of anti-state fanatics or marginalizing them through the ambiguity of their legal status. However, the paradox of the regime of the Wanderers' existence that took shape by the beginning of the 20th century is that, with all these inputs, their catacombness was becoming more and more metaphorical.

At first, Wanderers were tightly connected to the outside world through a network of benefactors. Such benefactors could include locally influential people, primarily merchants. Thus, according to Pyatnitskii, during the persecutions of the 1850s, Nikita Semyonov was sheltered by the influential Moscow merchantess Shaposhnikova²⁵⁹. Baltz reports that the merchants

²⁵⁸ *Polianskii I.V.* Zapiski missionera Vologodskoi eparkhii sviashchennika I. Polianskogo. No. 2. M., 1891. P. 41.

²⁵⁹ *Pyatnitskii I.K.* Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole. P. 78.

Rukavitsins were among the sponsors of the Wanderers in Perm²⁶⁰, while the molasses magnates Ponizovkins were perennial sponsors of the Yaroslavl' Wanderers²⁶¹. Historian Kabanov writes that in Vladimir and Kostroma provinces the Wanderers were also sponsored by local molasses magnate Maksim Osipov, shoe factory owner Mikhail Buzykalov, and grocery and "colonial" goods merchant Fyodor Kut'in²⁶². The Kargopol' Wanderers, as historian Maksim Pul'kin pointed out with reference to the Olonets Nikonian missionary Dmitrii Ostrovskii, were also generously sponsored by a local "Christ-loving" merchantess²⁶³.

As will be shown in the next chapter, the Wanderers were not financially strapped for their daily lives and sometimes handled huge sums of money. Moreover, the Wanderers were not separated from the local urban and peasant communities of the towns and villages in which they lived. This is evidenced by Aksakov's letters and reports, and by the report of Alyabiev, the chairman of the commission investigating the activities of the Wanderers in 1853²⁶⁴. Pavel Melnikov in his report to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the state of Old Belief in the Nizhnii Novgorod region in 1854 stated that among the patrons of the Wanderers were local merchants, burgomasters, and even noblemen²⁶⁵. Ostrovskii, in his study on the history of the Kargapol' Wanderers, reported on their active proselytizing work and open preaching in the 1860s²⁶⁶ and cited an episode of how local peasants, armed with stakes, freed a Wanderer caught by the police from the guards in 1873²⁶⁷. In one of the Tver' districts the Wanderers felt so safe and lived so

²⁶⁰ GARF. F. 124. Op. 51. D.814. L. 2.

²⁶¹ On the Ponizovkins' molasses production enterprises see *Schenikov V. N.* Ponizovkinskaia pristan. Yaroslavl', 2010. In addition to the direct testimony of the Wanderers themselves (see for example The Wanderers' reports on Agafia Ponizovkina's financial contribution to the community OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 127-128) the connection between the Ponizovkins and the Wanderers is confirmed by numerous sources independent on each other, among which both the documents of the investigative surveillance of the Wanderers (GARF. F. 124. Op. 51. D.814. L. 2), and their liturgical documents (e.g., the Wanderers' memorial books [synodiki] contain the list of members of the Ponizovkin dynasty). ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 2272. L. 1ob.

²⁶² *Kabanov A. E.* Staroobriadtsy vladimirskikh i kostromskikh zemel'. P. 69.

²⁶³ *Pul'kin M.* Staroobriadtsy-stranniki vo vtoroi polovine 19-nachale 20 v. (na osnove otshetov kargopol'skikh missionerov) // Gosudarstvo, religiiia, tserkov v Rossii i za rubezhom. 2020. Vol. 38. no. 3. P. 213.

²⁶⁴ *Aliabiev.* Zapiska o strannicheskoi ili sopolkovskoi eresi i o merakh k pregrazhdeniiu ee vliianiia. P. 68-71.

²⁶⁵ Melnikov A. P. V pamiat P.I. Melnikova (Andreia Pecherskogo). Tom. 9. P. 219-221.

²⁶⁶ *Ostrovskii D.V.* Kargopol'skie "beguny" [Sekta "Khristovvykh strannikov"] (Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk). Petrozavodsk, 1900. P. 16.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* P. 18. On the defiantly open activity of the Kargopol' Wanderers see also *Pul'kin M.* Staroobriadtsy-stranniki vo vtoroi polovine 19-nachale 20 v. (na osnove otchetov kargopol'skikh missionerov). P. 216-217.

openly that in 1881 one of them reported his fellow believers to the police in order to force them to maintain secrecy²⁶⁸. Thus, it would be imprudent to assume that the Wanderers existed in some kind of underground isolated from the outside world. On the contrary, it seems that for representatives of local village and urban communities the Wanderers living nearby did not present themselves as a gloomy sect of isolationists. On the contrary, from the evidence cited above one gets the impression of a strong integration of the Wanderers into social spaces outside their communities. So strong, in fact, that peasants armed with stakes would repel Wanderers from the police. That is, they felt the attack on the Wanderers as an attack on members of their own community. Until a certain time, however, at least for the higher registers of imperial power, the invisibility of the Wanderers was still literal.

Nevertheless, even this invisibility soon became metaphorical. Thus, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Wanderer underground became permeable to the views of the Imperial authorities. Detailed lists of Kargapol' Wanderers and benefactors were published in the 1900 "Olonets Eparchial Vedomosti"²⁶⁹. The structure and members of the Wanderers' communities, sometimes living almost openly, were reported in diocesan accounts for the Vladimir governor²⁷⁰. In the same Vladimir province, the Shuisky district governor possessed full information about the members of the local Wanderers' communities, knowing them by names²⁷¹. Many knew about the activities of the Wanderers discussed in the following chapters of this work, including the police. The police reports included in the Baltz report reached the Minister of Justice in 1912²⁷². Moreover, the reports contained accurate information both about the Wanderers themselves (with their real last names) and about the sponsors of the community, the Ponizovkins. However, despite all this, even if the Wanderers did end up in the hands of the police, by the 1900s, if the case was brought to trial, the defendants were acquitted with lenient sentences.

²⁶⁸ *Skvortsov D.I.* Ocherki tverskogo raskola i sektantstva. P. 50.

²⁶⁹ *Kazanskii K.I.* O raskole v Troitskom prikhode, Kargopol'skogo uezda. Petrozavodsk, 1900. P. 5-6, 9.

²⁷⁰ RGIA F. 821. Op. 133. D.188. L. 208 – 212ob.

²⁷¹ Ibid. L. 215 – 215ob.

²⁷² GARF. F. 124. Op. 51. D.814.

Thus, by the beginning of the 20th century, a paradoxical regime of Wanderers' existence had developed. With the declared antagonism on both sides, the relations of the Wanderers with the authorities (from local to Imperial) evolved in such a way that in practice the categories of "persecution"/"underground" became metaphorical for both sides. In other words, in the 50-70 years since the notorious "discovery," the Wanderers have practically stopped hiding, while the authorities have practically stopped persecuting them. This mode of existence in the metaphorical underground seemed to suit the Wanderers. It did not imply the surrender of their own ideological views on the limits of permissible interaction with the state, while in practice it created the conditions for an almost open existence. Although it seems that the gap between the dogmas elaborated by Evfimii and the extent of the Wanderer's integration into broader social spaces at the beginning of the 20th century is enormous, there is no reason to think that this gap concerned believers. At least the polemical literature and the protocols of their councils of these years do not reflect this concern.

1.3. Conclusion

So, one can say that at the beginning of the 20th century the Wanderers existed quite comfortably in their metaphorical underground. The cynically remarked by Polyanskii "playing at persecution", on the one hand, justified monetary support from the sponsors, and, on the other hand, in the case of detection of the Wanderers saved them from major criminal trouble. In addition, willingly or unwillingly, the Wanderers organized their comfort space in such a way that they would face a number of countervailing internal and external factors if they attempted to leave it.

First, the most important reason that prevented the Wanderers from opening up completely to the outside world was their escapist dogmatism itself. The Wanderers held firmly to their own renunciation of the world, although they often understood the boundaries of this world in a very blurred way. However, for the Wanderers, any secular activity or interaction in general with space outside the spiritual realm continued to be inaccessible. The baptized Wanderers did not bind

themselves to secular activities both because their religious worldview did not allow it and because they had no practical need for it. The sponsors provided the community with everything it needed and the Wanderers had no need to take care of the material sphere of life. In addition, the Wanderers' ideologically conditioned spiritual nomadism remained an important component of their ontology and prevented any kind of spatial entrenchment in the form of secular activity.

The dogmatics did not prescribe the obligatory movement of the Wanderers in the physical-geographical space. The Wanderers made their most important movements in the landscape of eschatological geography, hiding (at least declaratively) in a spiritual space beyond the reach of the Antichrist who had established this power over the world in the days of Nikon and Peter. Baptism as a rupture with the corrupted world is the most crucial move for the Wanderer from the static imperial social system of coordinates into the dynamic space of eschatological unrootedness. Such a transition seemed to imply a complete break with the former mode of existence and deprived a Wanderer (if he still wanted to remain a Wanderer) of a way back into the world. Thus, the Wanderer' status was incompatible with any secular activity, which, even if it did not bind him to a physical-geographical space, would have made his "eternal flight" reversible. Moreover, open participation in secular activities would have implied the positioning of the Wanderers in the imperial social space, which in the conditions of the post-reform modernizing empire would have meant inclusion in certain formal hierarchical and bureaucratic relations with the state. Such inclusion did not seem acceptable for the Wanderers, even though they were somehow part of broader urban and rural social spaces. For the leaders of the movement, the distance from the secular space was apparently even greater. Archbishop Nikolai of Vladimir and Suzdal reported to the governor in 1910 that leaders of the Wanderers refuse to take money in their hands²⁷³.

The second reason which hindered the full-fledged and open integration of the Wanderers into the Late Imperial social domain was their idea of the continuity of their own religious tradition and its ideological persistence and constancy. As has been shown above, the Wanderers justified

²⁷³ RGIA. F. 821. Op. 133. D. 188. L. 208ob – 209.

any ideological, practical or hierarchical transformations of their communities by obligatory appeal to the already existing Christian dogmas and practices of the ancient Christianity. Thus, it was important for believers to emphasize the inseparability of their own tradition from the religious tradition established by the incarnated God Jesus Christ. Under such ontological prerequisites, it would have been rather problematic to change their mode of existence abruptly. An ideological justification for the Wanderers' opening would have required considerable theological effort, given that, theologically speaking, once corrupted, the world still remained corrupted and unfit for open existence. In other words, the Wanderers had no reason to believe that the nature of the imperial power had changed since Peter the Great's time and had become less heretical or wicked. Hence, from the ideological point of view, the Wanderers had no reason to change the mode of existence chosen in the 18th century. Of course, in practice, this mode of existence no longer resembled the way of life prescribed by Evfimii, but up to a certain time this gap did not cause ideological or practical dissonance among the Wanderers. In their own eyes, the Wanderers were still the heirs of Evfimii, the Old Believers of Vyg, the Solovki martyrs, medieval Russian saints, and the persecuted Christians of the Roman Empire.

One of the external factors that pressured the Wanderers by the early 20th century was, in fact, their vaguely defined legal status. As has been shown above, this vagueness, as imperial religious policy liberalized, often turned out to be the Wanderers' own ideological choice. However, there is no reason to assume that those Wanderers who ventured into bureaucratic contact with the state would have been welcomed into the imperial confessional system. Even the bureaucratic debates that ended in denial of the fanaticism of the Wanderers demonstrate a low level of tolerance toward the religious community. For example, the case initiated by the governor of Olonets in the 1900s did not lead to a complete rejection of the persecution of the Wanderers, but it did confirm the permissibility of their punishment under non-religious criminal articles. Even those officials and journalists who advocated for stopping demonizing the Wanderers, such as Baltz and Kromov, did not deny that they were talking about a potentially subversive religious

ideology. Thus, even though Baltz raised the question of decriminalizing the Wanderers as a community, he nevertheless did not deny that individual members could be prosecuted for anti-state propaganda²⁷⁴. Although Kromov did not admit the existence of the Red Death among the Wanderers, he wrote even harsher words: "From the state point of view, from the point of view of order, the Wanderers are undoubtedly a criminal sect and as such are liable to persecution"²⁷⁵. Thus, possible external social integration would have been complicated by the fact that open Wanderers would no longer be able to exist in a "gray zone," and that their status would have had to be clearly legislated. However, it does not follow from the aforesaid that the Wanderers would have acquired legal status easily and immediately, even assuming the gradual discursive normalization that was unfolding during this period.

Finally, another thing that hindered further integration of the Wanderers into a broader society was the expert and public discourses about them. Throughout the period since their "discovery," Wanderers have been perceived by the producers of these discourses as something incompatible with the modernizing imperial space. Their practices and dogmatics (real and imagined) were described in almost medical terms, as a depressing deviation that affected a part of the constructing Russian nation. "Oh, woe! The Wanderers' obscurantism! When will you pass away, when will you dispel?" [Ekh, gore-gore! Temnota begunskaia! Kogda proidesh ty, kogda razveeshsia?] wrote a journalist of the liberal "Volzhsky Vestnik" in 1899 about the secret funerals of Wanderers²⁷⁶. Rozov described the practices of Wanderers as a "sad ulcer," a "disgusting mental illness"²⁷⁷. For Ivanovskii the Wanderers were "lost sheep"²⁷⁸, while Prugavin described them as victims of a "wild, gloomy doctrine"²⁷⁹. Even those among the Narodniks and Bolsheviks who regarded the Wanderers as a partly ideologically sympathetic form of the social protest tacitly

²⁷⁴ GARF. 124.51.814 – 6ob.

²⁷⁵ GMIR F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. 59.– 9ob.

²⁷⁶ GMIR. F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. khr. 50. L. 5ob.

²⁷⁷ Rozov A.I. Stranniki ili beguny v russkom raskole. III. Organizatsiia sekty P. 295. On the Late Imperial Psychiatrists' View of Sectarianism as a Mental Illness see *Mogilner M.B.* Homo imperii: istoriia fizicheskoi antropologii v Rossii (konets 19 - nachalo 20 v.). M., 2008. P. 364.

²⁷⁸ Ivanovskii N.I. Vnutrennee ustroistvo sekty strannikov ili begunov. P.100.

²⁷⁹ Prugavin A.S. Samoistreblenie. Proiavleniia asketizma i fanatizma v raskole. P. 139.

agreed that, because of their archaic nature, the Wanderers were not capable of transforming their theological protest into a class protest on their own. Thus, overcoming the hegemony of such discourses would have required a willingness on the part of the Wanderers to intervene in the public sphere. This would take a considerable effort from representatives of the predominantly peasant and urban underclass, far distanced from the spaces where these discourses were produced. It might seem, however, that those who renounced the world should not be very concerned about public opinion of themselves. However, as will be shown in the following sections of this research, the Wanderers were familiar with studies and newspaper articles about themselves, and were highly sensitive to attempts to smear their public image.

The main idea of this chapter is to show that the Wanderers had not the slightest reason to leave their comfortable "gray zone" of the metaphorical underground and change their mode of existence. If they attempted to go beyond the boundaries of their settled space, they would inevitably face the necessity of their own ideological withdrawal and the resistance of the outside world, which looked upon them with squeamish skepticism. Nevertheless, the Wanderers existed in a mode of metaphorical rather than literal underground, and thus were part of social spaces broader than their own. At the beginning of the 20th century, these spaces were actively transformed and modernized, introducing new social and economic niches and opportunities. The Wanderers were not cut off from the outside world and, therefore, were part of these modernizing processes. Therefore, in spite of all the dangers that the attempt at engagement into these processes would entail, some of them nevertheless decided to undertake it and set in motion the process of changing their own mode of existence. Thus, being the last Christians of the corrupted world in their own eyes, and sectarians, schismatics, convinced millenarians, fanatics, anti-monarchists and deviant Russians in the eyes of outside observers, Wanderers set sail on the waves and whirlpools of the transforming social domain of the Late Russian Empire.

Chapter 2. The Wanderers and the Modernizing domains of the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet State

2.1 On the Wanderers' statistics

Before describing the trajectory of the integration of the Wanderers into the modernizing domain of the late Russian Empire, it is necessary to determine the size of the community in question. Evfimii managed to baptize no more than seven people before his death in the late 18th century. However, by the early 20th century his successors have managed to form a small but centralized community whose representatives spread over a vast territory from the Tver' Province in the West and Olonets in the North to Western Siberia in the East²⁸⁰. The Wanderers, of course, were not uniformly distributed throughout the regions. The Yaroslavl' province, with its famous Wanderers' capital, the village of Sopyolki, represented the most important center of the religious movement. The surrounding provinces of Vladimir, Kostroma, Vologda, and Ivanovo also constituted zones of the Wanderers' activity. The geography of the Wanderers then stretched eastward through Nizhnii Novgorod, Saratov, Vyatka, crossed the Urals near Perm' and Sarapul, and eastward from the factories of Ekaterinburg Province spread across the huge territory of Siberia to Biysk and Tomsk by a network of sporadic communities and taiga hermitages. At the same time, Pyatnitskii's reports that the Wanderers in their travels reach almost as far as Persia²⁸¹ find no verification in the sources of the 20th century, and look like an attempt to exoticize them.

The statistics of the Old Believers and Russian religious dissidents in general have been the subject of political and historiographical debate for at least a century and a half²⁸². The very area of such statistics, even at the time when it was relevant, became a field of clashes between various

²⁸⁰ In 1895 the Council of the Wanderers held in the village of Chentsovo (Yaroslavl' province) decided to divide the entire territory of the Wanderers's presence into 5 administrative districts [okrug] or countries: Yaroslavl' district, Vichuga district, Vologda district, Kargopol' district, and Kazan district. The latter district covered a vast territory, including either the Volga (Saratov predel), the Urals (Tagil predel), and later - Siberia (Tomsk predel). OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 17ob-18. On the later inclusion of Tomsk predel into the Kazan district see *Kabanov A.E. Staroobriadtsy vladimirskikh i kostromskikh zemel'*. P. 68-69.

²⁸¹ *Pyatnitskii I.K. Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole*. P. 83.

²⁸² *Paert I. "Two or Twenty Million?"*.P. 75-76.

statistical approaches (who to count? how to count?) and political biases of the actors of counting (who counts?). It should be said that a century and a half later, even the use of the methodology of digital humanities does not provide a clear answer to the famous question posed by Prugavin at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries - "2 or 20 million?"²⁸³.

The difficulty with this question is that no matter how one counts the number of religious dissidents, the final picture cannot capture the diversity of existing forms of religious life. Furthermore, this statement is applicable not only to the religious sphere. There is no doubt that any statistics is an attempt to corral the natural diversity of any social domain into rigid bureaucratic categories, thereby constructing imaginary communities²⁸⁴. Similarly, the bureaucratic identification of religious dissidents failed to correlate with their self-identification, as shown in the part of this study devoted to the problem of the positioning of the Wanderers in the space of Russian Orthodoxy. Officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Synodal bureaucrats developed complex classifications of schismatic movements, seriously estimating the number of sects with bizarre names like "dymniki"²⁸⁵ that probably never existed in reality. In addition, individuals who formally belonged to the Nikonian Church, but were practicing the old rite, were out of the statistical field. And it is not even a question of the Edinovertsy²⁸⁶ here, but of believers who since the time of Peter the First perceived no contradiction in being registered as parishioners of the Synodal church, while remaining crypto-Old Believers²⁸⁷.

However, it was not only the irrelevance of analytical categories that hindered the accumulation of accurate statistics. A significant number of Old Believers (including the

²⁸³ *Eremeev P.V.* I vse zhe, dva milliona ili dvadtsat? Chislennost staroobriadtsev Rossiiskoi imperii v 19—nachale 20 vv // *Elektronnyi nauchno-obrazovatelnyi zhurnal Istoriia*. 2016. Vol. 7. no. 7 (51).

²⁸⁴ *Darrow D.* Census as technology of Empire // *Ab Imperio*. 2002. No. 4. P. 145. However, these Imaginary Communities may well become tangible by constructing themselves around the public discourses that appeal to them. *Ibid.* P. 146; *Anderson B.* *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, 1983.

²⁸⁵ *Paert I.* "Two or Twenty Million?". P. 91

²⁸⁶ Edinoverie is a religious movement established in 1800 by Nikonian Metropolitan Platon (Levshin) to integrate loyal Old Believer communities into the structure of the Nikonian Church. Such communities are canonically subordinate to the Nikonian Church, while using the old rites in their worship. *White J.* *Unity in Faith?: Edinoverie, Russian Orthodoxy, and Old Belief, 1800–1918*. Bloomington, 2020.

²⁸⁷ *Paert I.* "Two or Twenty Million?". P. 79; *Kirillov I. A.* *Statistika staroobriadchestva [izdanie zhurnala "Staroobriadcheskaia mysl"]*. M., 1913. P. 5.

Wanderers) avoided participation in censuses and registrations, considering such activities a threat to their own piety²⁸⁸. Some of them even took radical steps, like the Old Believer (not the Wanderer) Fyodor Kovalev, who buried 25 people alive near Tiraspol' in order to escape the 1897 census²⁸⁹. Thus, even with the most calibrated and sophisticated statistical classification, those who refuse to be counted would remain outside the scope.

It should be said that the statistics of dissidents represented an intertwining of actors' logics and methodologies, which led to complete inconsistency in the data provided by the local police, parish clergy, and the bureaucratic instances of the Interior Ministry. Among many variants of information collection, it is possible to allocate several approaches, depending on the actors of statistics and their intentions²⁹⁰. First, statistics of religious dissidents were collected by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which organized statistical expeditions into the areas where the "schism" was spreading. Officials assigned to the expeditions engaged in quantitative police ethnography, revealing the true number of dissenters through investigations and interrogations. For example, the largest statistical commissions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, conducted in the 1850s and 1860s with the participation of Melnikov and Aksakov, revealed a huge gap between the official statistics of dissidents, based on the information provided by local authorities and clergy, and the real state of affairs²⁹¹. An Old Believer and economist Ivan Kirillov justly called this method of data collection initiated by the central authorities "intelligence behind the enemy lines" [*razvedka v tylu vruga*]²⁹². Secondly, parish priests and local police also provided a data on dissenters. These statistics were based mainly on personal observations and statistics on the regular non-acceptance of the Holy Sacraments in the Nikonian churches. "Private researchers" (the most trustworthy, as Prughavin put it²⁹³) engaged in a kind of participant observation, traveling around

²⁸⁸ *Paert I.* "Two or Twenty Million?". P. 92.

²⁸⁹ *Sikorskii I.A.* *Epidemicheskie volnye smerti i smertoubiistva v Ternovskikh khutorakh (bliz Tiraspolia)* *Psikhologicheskoe issledovanie professora psikiatrii i nervnykh boleznei pri universite sv. Vladimira I.A. Sikorskogo.* Kiev, 1897.

²⁹⁰ *Prughavin A.S.* *Staroobriadchestvo vo vtoroi polovine 19 veka.* M., 1904. P. 8-9.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.* P. 9-10.

²⁹² *Kirillov I.A.* *Statistika staroobriadchestva.* P. 3.

²⁹³ *Prughavin A.S.* *Staroobriadchestvo vo vtoroi polovine 19 veka.* P. 13.

the Empire and living in the communities of the dissidents. The 1897 census, which counted about 2.2 million Old Believers and sectarians throughout the Empire, also made it possible to collect data based on personal testimonies of the dissidents²⁹⁴. In addition, after 1905 representatives of certain branches of Old Believers also attempted to quantify the number of members of other branches of the Old Faith²⁹⁵.

Needless to say, each of these data collection logics was flawed and can be justly criticized for methodological imperfections. In addition, each of the groups of actors has been reasonably accused of deliberately overstating or understating the data. However, as Irina Paert convincingly demonstrates by disputing traditional historiographical notions of conscious understatement of the state statistics on dissidents²⁹⁶, at least the higher authorities of the modernizing empire were not at all interested in deliberate understatement of the number of schismatics and sectarians. On the contrary, following the logic of "intelligence behind enemy lines", the imperial bureaucracy sought to know the exact number of potentially subversive religious elements. As Paert notes, "Statistics provided a sense of security: the fact that religious dissent could be measured meant that it could be managed"²⁹⁷.

However, if the imperfection of "statistics from above" can only be explained by methodological flaws and not by deliberate distortion of numbers, other actors of the statistics on dissidents can easily be suspected of intentionally distorting the number of dissenters. For example, local officials, police, and parish clergy seem to have been directly interested in underestimating the real number of the Old Believers and sectarians²⁹⁸, since a high number of dissidents in the area under their jurisdiction would directly indicate the inefficiency of their work. Those whom Prugavin called "private researchers", namely narodniks Kablitz and Prugavin himself, can be reproached for overstating statistics in an attempt to demonstrate the depth of the

²⁹⁴ F. 821 Op. 133. D.21. L. 443.

²⁹⁵ One such example is the work of an Old Believer economist, Ivan Kirillov. *Kirillov I. A. Statistika staroobriadchestva.*

²⁹⁶ *Paert I. "Two or Twenty Million?"*. P. 96-97.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.* P.96.

²⁹⁸ *Kirillov I.A. Statistika staroobriadchestva.* P. 3-4.

social split in the Imperial society. Thus, by romanticizing the dissidents, politically engaged authors demonstrated the vertiginous statistical dynamics of the domain of non-Synodal religiosity: Kablitz's 13-14 million of the dissidents in 1881²⁹⁹ have become Prugavin's 20 million in 1902³⁰⁰, to become Bonch-Bruевич's 35 millions of in 1903³⁰¹.

Thus, the question of dissident statistics appears to be fundamentally intractable, given the diversity of the religious landscape of the late Russian Empire, which even the most elaborate and sophisticated methodological apparatus would not have been able to capture. Not to mention the fact that the actors of information collection were unequivocally biased in their intentions and did not aim to capture this diversity on paper. Consequently, one can speak about the number of Old Believers in the Late Empire only very approximately and only when the affiliation of individuals is unambiguous and expressed in belonging to a particular community or confession. Otherwise, we must say that by the beginning of the 20th century there were from 2 to 20 million Old Believers and sectarians in the Russian Empire.

When it comes to the Wanderers, external statistics can hardly be at all relevant for the accounting of people who had chosen the purpose of their lives to avoid being included in these statistics. Thus, comparisons of state and parish statistics with researchers' observations, as in the case of other Old Believers, appear dissonant with each other. For example, in the early 1890s in Danilov (Yaroslavl' Province), the future capital of the Wanderers and at that time already an important center of the religious movement, according to reports from the local archpriest there was not a single True Orthodox Christian wandering³⁰².

The 1897 census counted 6,076 male and 6,712 female Wanderers³⁰³ living in the whole Empire. This figure is partially close to reality (although a bit overstated). However, it is quite inconceivable that so many of the Wanderers or shelterkeepers would voluntarily report their

²⁹⁹ *Iuzov I.* Russkie dissidenty. P. 44.

³⁰⁰ *Prugavin A.S.* Staroobriadchestvo vo vtoroi polovine 19 veka. P. 11.

³⁰¹ *Etkind A.M.* Khlyst. P. 37.

³⁰² *Dmitrievskii V.* Sovremennyi raskol v Yaroslavskoi eparkhii i borba s nim. Statisticheskii ocherk. Yaroslavl', 1892. P. 21-22.

³⁰³ RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D.21. L. 445.

religious affiliation. Furthermore, another reason to doubt such statistics is the fact that subsequent attempts to count the Wanderers have ended in failure and could not demonstrate such coherent and reliable figures. Moreover, any attempt at counting the Wanderers faces usual problems associated with counting the number of dissidents - a lack of understanding of who to count and how to count them.

One example of an attempted count, initiated by the Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Confessions in 1909³⁰⁴, seems illustrative. In response to a circular sent out to the provinces ordering data on local Old Believers and sectarians, the Department, as regards counting the Wanderers at least, received contradictory and evidently unsatisfactory statistics. If given the unclear methodology of data collection, in Yaroslavl' and Kostroma provinces the number of the Wanderers more or less corresponds to the reality (a little over a thousand in each province)³⁰⁵, then the statistics for the remaining provinces gives a confusing picture.

Thus, in the report on the Perm' province, Wanderers appeared to be divided into two categories at once: "Wanderers" [stranniki] per se and "Runaways" [beguny]. It is not quite clear what communities or individuals were referred to by these terms, but in the final statistics the number of "Runaways" (500) greatly exceeds the number of "Wanderers" (69)³⁰⁶. In Nizhnii Novgorod Province, the Wanderers did not find a place among the categories of dissidents, but the provincial authorities managed to count 16 shelterkeepers allocated as a separate category³⁰⁷. In Vyatka province, officials failed to count the Wanderers at all due to "their secret way of life"³⁰⁸. In reports from the rest of the provinces the Wanderers either did not appear or were insignificant in number. Thus, this attempt to collect statistics (at least in the part of the Wanderers) bore all the well-known flaws of the previous attempts - not understanding at the level of statistical categories who should be counted and difficulty in counting the Wanderers, who refused to participate in

³⁰⁴ RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D.21. L. 3.

³⁰⁵ RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D.21. L. 234, 256.

³⁰⁶ RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D.21. L. 30-31.

³⁰⁷ RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D.21. L. 162.

³⁰⁸ RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D.21. L. 65.

such campaigns. Although, as shown in the previous chapter, the activities of particular communities may have been transparent to the Imperial authorities of various levels, attempts to quantify the entire network of the Wanderers in any way have been unsuccessful.

Nevertheless, the case of the Wanderers seems to be unique among the many communities of religious dissidents. The processes of hierarchization launched by Nikita Semyonov, which led to the establishment of clear numerical boundaries of communities, as well as the relatively small number of the Wanderers, to a certain extent allows one to rely on vernacular statistics. Of course, the Wanderers had no need for cyclical or regular collection of numerical data about themselves. Such data is rough and fragmentary. Nevertheless, these few accounts correlate with each other, which allows us to assume that they are reliable. Thus, the Wanderer-author of the first half of the 20th century, monk Nikita (not to be confused with Nikita Semyonov), estimated the number of the Wanderers to be 2-3 thousand souls as by 1917³⁰⁹. The Wanderers arrested in the late 1920s reported during interrogations that the total number of their co-religionists was 2,000³¹⁰. These figures, verified by two independent sources, seem to be quite relevant, and it is planned to rely on this vernacular statistics in the following part of this research. It is worth noting that the schismotologist Nikolai Subbotin, estimating the number of the Wanderers in 1868, also stated the figure of 2,000 people³¹¹.

Thus, the Wanderers were a small but consolidated and centralized religious community, many of whose members may have known each other personally because of their frequent movements, as was the case of the protagonists of this study.

³⁰⁹ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. no. 1974. L. 11.

³¹⁰ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. L. 362.

³¹¹ *Subbotin N.I.* Nechto "o strannikakh" po sluchaiu prisoiedineniia k tserkvi odnogo iz nastavnikov sekty. P. 24.

2.2. The World-Renouncers into the Millers. The Wanderers and the Late Imperial Entrepreneurship

As the previous chapter showed, the Wanderers had many reasons not to leave their comfortable metaphorical underground. However, in this part it will be demonstrated that despite these countervailing factors, some of the Wanderers found it possible to fundamentally change the mode of existence and re-established links and hierarchies within the community in order to respond to the challenges of the times. Why, against all odds, did the Wanderers decide on this internal revolution, to find themselves even more integrated into the world outside their community? To answer this question in this part of the study I focus on the analysis of the biographical trajectory of the most important figure in the history of the Wanderers in this period, the energetic community leader and major theologian and preacher Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin).

2.2.1. Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin) and his biographical trajectory from birth to the beginning of the 20th century

Aleksandr Vasilievich Ryabinin (also known as Pavel Ryabinin (birth name), also known as Aleksandr Vasiliev, also known as monk Arsenii) (1852?-1938) was a man of unique biography, who learned from Nikita Semyonov³¹², the witness of the Nicholas persecution of the Wanderers, and who taught those who would have to undergo the Stalinist repression in the 20th century³¹³. The materials relating to his biography are fragmentary, often contradictory, and always biased. Depending on the author and the context in which it is written, Ryabinin's biography becomes a hagiography written by his followers³¹⁴, a biography of a heretic drawn up by his opponent³¹⁵, a

³¹² *Maltsev A.I.* Istoricheskii rasskaz inokini Raisy o drevnem startse Nikite Semenoviche // Romodanovskaia E.K. (ed.) *Issledovaniia po istorii literatury i obshchestvennogo soznaniia feodalnoi Rossii*. Novosibirsk, 1992. P. 204.

³¹³ "On the 11 Sufferers of the 20th Century", dedicated to the tragic fate of the wanderers repressed in Cheboksary in 1941, provides information about a direct connection between some of them and Ryabinin. ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhnekamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434-2. L. 3-7ob.

³¹⁴ See for ex. *Maltsev A.I.* Staroobriadcheskaia povest 20 v. "Poslednie dni i konchina ottsa Arseniia" // Soktoev A. B. (ed.) *Traditsiia i literaturnyi protsess : [Sbornik statei : K 60-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia E. K. Romodanovskoi] / Rossiiskaya akademiya nauk. Sibirskoe otdelenie, Institut filologii*. Novosibirsk, 1999. P. 433-440.

³¹⁵ Such, for example, are the materials of Maksim Zalesskii, Ryabinin's longtime opponent, who left a detailed description of the events in question. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77.

criminal chronicle if it is a newspaper article, or a memoir of a wise and mysterious person, as he appears in the fictional autobiography of Maksim Gor'kii, who probably met him³¹⁶.

Pavel Ryabinin was born in 1852 (according to other sources in 1855)³¹⁷ to a peasant family in the Visimo-Utkinsk factory of the Verkhotur'e district of Perm' province. Approximately in 1871-1872 he was baptized by a local Wanderer under the name of Aleksandr. However, in 1880, according to most of his biographies, Ryabinin happens to be a clerk in the shop of a certain Vasili Kuznetsov (according to other sources - Sobolev³¹⁸) in the Nev'yansk factory in the Yekaterinburg district of Perm' province, which is hardly consonant with his Wanderer status³¹⁹.

Even the briefest retelling of this part of Ryabinin's biography makes assumptions about the irreversibility of the Wanderers' renunciation of the world questionable. Wanderers' communities do not appear to be spaces separated from the world, into which it is difficult to enter, and being in which means the impossibility of worldly activity. It is not known what compelled Ryabinin to temporarily abandon his spiritual path to work as a clerk. However, the fact that he subsequently managed to reach the very top of the Wanderer hierarchy, although other Wanderers were aware of his worldly career, suggests that such crossings of imaginary boundaries between the Wanderer space and the outside world were not strictly condemned and it did not close the door to a further spiritual career.

In Nev'yansk factory in 1880 Ryabinin found himself at the center of a situation³²⁰ that brought him to the dock. Aleksandr Vasilievich, along with the shop owner, was accused of murdering the latter's wife, who had disappeared shortly before. The investigation quickly established that Ryabinin and Kuznetsov belonged to one of the radical branches of Old Believers

³¹⁶ *Gor'kii M. V liudiakh*. L., 1927. P. 193-196.

³¹⁷ *Maltsev A.I. Staroobriadcheskii nastavnik inok Arsenii (A.V. Riabinin). Materialy k biografii // Gumanitarnye nauki v Sibiri*. 2000. no. 2. P. 68-71.

³¹⁸ *V-lii. Zhivushchie o Khriste vseгда nenavidimy*. Kazan, 1916. P. 10.

³¹⁹ A favorable newspaper article "About the "elder" Aleksandr Vasiliev", published in December 1914 in the Yaroslavl' "Severnaya gazeta", which, however, contained many biographical inaccuracies, stated that after initiation and before working as a clerk, Ryabinin was wandering after all. *O «startse» Aleksandre Vasileve // Severnaia gazeta*. no. 306. 1914, December, 21.

³²⁰ This episode is not reflected in Ryabinin's later biographies, compiled by his followers, but it is mentioned in the 1916 Wanderer book "Those who live about Christ are always hated". *V-lii. Zhivushchie o Khriste vseгда nenavidimy*. I-VI.

(the newspaper materials, however, did not call them the Wanderers). At the trial, the defendants reported that the missing woman was alive, but due to her illness, she was baptized as a Wanderer and went to the hermitage³²¹. However, the investigation insisted that Kuznetsova was poisoned by her husband and Ryabinin. "Ekaterinburgskaya nedelya" also reported that Ryabinin had sent an encrypted letter from prison to fellow believers, asking them for "perjured testimony" in his defense in court, but the letter was intercepted and served as important clue to the police³²². Despite the lack of any evidence of the murder (and of Kuznetsova's death in general)³²³, Ryabinin was sentenced to 10 years of hard labor in 1882³²⁴.

This crime story seems remarkable from two perspectives at once. First, as can be seen, the legend of the Red Death had apparently not yet taken shape by 1882. Thus, Ryabinin and Kuznetsov were accused of poisoning, not strangulation. In addition, there were no references in the press materials to the fact that the defendants were the Wanderers and that ritual murder is a common practice among sectarians (according to Ekaterinburgskaya nedelya, Ryabinin and Kuznetsov belonged to the "luchinkovtsy" sect). Second, and more important to the storyline of this chapter, it seems that despite his work as a clerk and the temporary cessation of the "flight" Ryabinin did not lose contact with his religious movement. The fact that the shopkeeper and his wife were explicitly connected to the Wanderers³²⁵ and the fact that Ryabinin was employed in the shop once again testifies to the depth of the Wanderers' integration and inclusion into broad social domains.

Although Ryabinin's short employment ended with a prison term for him, he had not reached a hard labor camp. A source from the pen of Ryabinin's opponent Zaleskii (see Chapter 4) and the Yaroslavl' "Golos" (both extremely biased informants) report that Aleksandr Vasilievich

³²¹ *Khronika // Ekaterinburgskaia nedelia*. no. 29. 1882. July, 28.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ Ryabinin even offered, if released on bail, to find Kuznetsova and bring her to the court. *V-lit. Zhivushchie o Khriste vseгда nenavidimy*. IV.

³²⁴ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 209.

³²⁵ The later sources reported that Kuznetsov himself fell ill after his sentence and was baptized into the Wanderers before his death. *V-lit. Zhivushchie o Khriste vseгда nenavidimy*. P. 12.

managed to escape by bribing a vagrant who agreed to swap identities with the convict³²⁶. So, the former clerk began his escape again, appearing in 1885 in Yaroslavl' province in the circle of Nikita Semyonov's disciples³²⁷. Although information about Nikita Semyonov's attitude toward Ryabinin is contradictory³²⁸, his career quickly took off. Soon he took the place of assistant to the elder of the Kazan predel, and after the death of Nikita Semyonov in 1894 and a short period of leadership of the next elder Roman Loginovich (died in 1900) in 1900 he became in fact the second person in the Wanderers' hierarchy, assistant to the newly elected chief elder, Kornilii Petrovich (Pyatakov)³²⁹. Ryabinin's rise seems swift, given that the resolution of the 1894 Wanderers' Council that confirmed Roman Loginovich as a head of the Church does not contain Aleksandr Vasilievich's signature among the signatures of the 27 most authoritative Wanderers' leaders³³⁰. However, according to the text of the 1900 council resolution, Ryabinin is already one of two assistants to the new leader Pyatakov³³¹. Thus, it is likely that between 1894 and 1900 Ryabinin must have somehow earned the credibility of the coreligionists to become the second person in the Wanderer hierarchy within such a short period of time.

2.2.2. Construction of the Danilov Steam Mill. Involvement of the Wanderers in a Capitalist Activity

This part of the study deals with one of its most important, though inanimate, protagonists, the Danilov steam mill, an enterprise organized by the Wanderers, which became both a financial pillar and the cause of the community split. Before proceeding directly to the analysis of the events

³²⁶ *Cherez 40 let* // Golos. no. 208. 1914, September, 11; OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 209-210. A similar case of defendants escaping from court and joining the Wanderers in Novgorod Province in 1867 was mentioned by the former Wanderer Kosatkin in his article for a Nikonian magazine. *Strannicheskoe soglasie, osnovannoe begunom Mikhailom Kondratevym v 1874 godu* // Bratskoe slovo. Vol. 1. Part 2, 1876. P. 235.

³²⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 209-210.

³²⁸ Ryabinin's follower, nun Raisa, writes that Nikita Semyonov saw in Aleksandr Vasilievich "a talented student". ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1420. L. 7. Zalesskii, on the other hand, reports that the mentor treated Ryabinin with distrust. *Maltsev A.I. Staroobriadcheskii nastavnik inok Arsenii*. P. 69.

³²⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 88.

³³⁰ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 1434. L. 43.

³³¹ *Ibid.* L. 43ob – 44. However, there is a document drawn up before Nikita Semyonov's death (i.e., before 1894), which mentions that Aleksandr Vasilievich is the eldest of the Yaroslavl' country. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 301. L. 3. It is hard to say if it refers to Ryabinin or to another Wanderer Aleksandr Vasilievich Lubentsov, who came to the attention of Stenbock's commission in the middle of the 19th century. *Pyatnitskii I.K. Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole*. P. 128.

associated with the mill, it is necessary to make a few clarifying remarks. By the beginning of the 20th century the Wanderers were financially dependent on their benefactors. In the case of the Yaroslavl' Wanderers, these benefactors were the local merchants Ponizovkins. The Wanderers themselves did not participate in any secular activities, carrying out only spiritual and organizational duties. Declaratively, they remained world-renouncers, and up to this moment no social or political transformation of the outside world had forced the Wanderers to change this aspect of their ideology. The situation discussed below represents a unique moment in which the actual Wanderers themselves became involved in secular activities. Such a situation was nonsense even for the Wanderers who were most open-minded toward the outside world. In this regard, we have a significant conflict of sources, which requires an explanation. The fact is that Ryabinin and his adherents throughout the whole period in question claimed that Aleksandr Vasilievich himself was not directly involved in the organization of the economic enterprise in Danilov. At the same time, his opponents in their letters and speeches convincingly argued for the contrary. From their point of view, Ryabinin was the main initiator of the economic activities of the Wanderers.

Thus, the remark that should be made here is that the information about Ryabinin's economic and commercial activities directly comes from sources that came out from under the pen of his opponents. Consequently, it should be taken with a fair amount of criticism. However, regardless of the extent of Aleksandr Vasilievich's actual involvement in the management of the mill, both categories of sources converge in demonstrating the specific intension of Ryabinin and his like-minded collaborators. This intention, as it is seen from the later events, was to integrate into external secular social domains and to expand presence of the Wanderers in the surrounding world.

Approximately by 1909 some of the Yaroslavl' Wanderers, whose informal leader was Ryabinin, had the idea of putting the surplus "stagnant" capital³³², which was formed as a result of donations from benefactors, into financial circulation³³³. The chief elder of the Wanderers Kornilii

³³² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 84

³³³ Ibid. L. 94.

Pyatakov favored the idea³³⁴. So, in Danilov, under the leadership of Ryabinin, a grocery store and a nickel-smelting workshop had been established. As the source testifies, almost from the moment the shop was opened, it sold not only groceries, but also tobacco³³⁵, which, of course, seems strange, given the unequivocally negative attitude of the Old Believers to tobacco smoking. Here already there is a noticeable gap between the Wanderer's ideology and the practice of commercial activity. The commerce carried on by the baptized Wanderers under Ryabinin's leadership undermined the existing division of the community into distinct zones of responsibility - spiritual and secular. Thus, this state of affairs represented an unprecedented situation for the Wanderers. As Ryabinin's opponent Maksim Zaleskii notes in his writings, at this juncture the Wanderers once "homeless and unsettled had felt the need to establish a class of merchants and industrialists within the community"³³⁶.

Moreover, Ryabinin deliberately begins to employ the baptized Wanderers rather than worldly laypeople. In this way he implements a model of production organization in which his employees work for free, in the order of the monastic obedience³³⁷. It is necessary to say that entering this peculiar economic monastery meant accepting baptism, that is, the beginning of flight. This practice of baptism among the Wanderers at the beginning of the 20th century was largely formal in nature and was often carried out on one's deathbed, except, of course, for the cases when young adepts felt a zeal for monastic life³³⁸. Obviously, Ryabinin was not interested in recruiting of the aged Wanderers. On the contrary, his main goal was to hire able-bodied people capable of working in his commercial enterprise, and eventually he succeeded in achieving this goal³³⁹.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid. L. 99.

³³⁶ Ibid. L. 101.

³³⁷ Ibid. L. 102.

³³⁸ The 25-year-old Wanderer Kolotushkin is mentioned by Zaleskii in OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. L. 48. Maksim Zaleskii himself began his flight at the age of 16, but there were special reasons for this, which will be discussed below. The Wanderer's document "Charter of the Brethren" [Ustav bratstva], dating from the same period, which regulated certain practices of their daily existence, imposed many restrictions on young believers in general. For example, it was not recommended that a newly initiated young Wanderer leave the shelter at all. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 2-2ob.

³³⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 113.

It is also important that by raising funds on their own (without relying on benefactors), the Danilov Wanderers questioned the traditional model of the social structure of their religious community, in which a layer of sponsors, responsible for interacting with the outside world, played an essential role. However, surprisingly, at this stage Ryabinin's commercial activities do not cause open protest from the coreligionists. Commercial venture was supported by the chief elder, and Ryabinin's credibility has not been questioned by his fellow believers until a certain moment. Moreover, he continued his ascent up the hierarchical ladder.

However, despite Ryabinin's enthusiasm and the employment innovations, his first experience of commercial activity ended in failure. Among the reasons for the failure, the source points out the frequent change of managers, which resulted in the loss of a part of the funds.

However, Ryabinin did not despair³⁴⁰. By 1910 a new project was being drawn up - the organization of a steam mill. Ryabinin even went to the capital to consult on the construction with a foreman named Belozarov, who was firmly rooted in St. Petersburg, while still being a Wanderer (yet unbaptized)³⁴¹. The only thing left to do was to find a like-minded person living legally to buy the land to build the mill. Such a person was found, it was Ivan Vinogradov, under whose name a plot of land was purchased for 1350 rubles³⁴². The construction of the mill did not go smoothly and was aggravated by drunkenness of the workmen and the nominal administrator Vinogradov, who was actively involved in the construction. Additionally, there were more unpleasant excesses like the theft of building materials from the dacha of the Ponizovkins, long-time sponsors of the community³⁴³. The total cost of organizing the mill was 22,843 rubles³⁴⁴, that is, the cost of

³⁴⁰ Ibid. L. 100-101.

³⁴¹ This indirectly indicates that by the early 20th century Wanderers had spread quite widely throughout the Empire, engaging in quite secular labor even in the capital. Ibid. – L.104. Again, this did not set the Wanderers apart from the thousands of Yaroslavl' peasants who went to Petersburg as migrant workers (otkhodniki). *Lur'e L. Piterishchiki russkii kapitalizm pervaia popytka*. SPb., 2011.

³⁴² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 103.

³⁴³ Ibid. L. 107.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. L. 111.

construction was enormous by the standards of the time³⁴⁵. And, nevertheless, the mill was built and registered under the name of the partnership, formally established by the two benefactors³⁴⁶.

It seems noteworthy that the mill represented only a part of the infrastructure run by the Danilov Wanderers. At the mill Ryabinin organized a theological school, which trained propagandists of wanderlust: missionaries and polemicists. Zalesskii reports that Ryabinin's true purpose was to train recruiters for the unpaid workers³⁴⁷. However, the need for such recruiters is questionable, given that this role was handled by the mill's founding father himself, who actively toured the nearby provinces, where he successfully recruited new workers, emphasizing the eschatological meaning of the mill project and calling to work "for the benefit of the Church of Christ, persecuted by the Antichrist"³⁴⁸. The school quickly gained popularity among the Wanderers' youth and some merchant families (Utkovs, Chazovs, Romanovs), who sent their children to study literacy and theology under Ryabinin³⁴⁹.

So, in 1910, a group of the Wanderers under the leadership of Aleksandr Vasilievich Ryabinin involved in the capitalist flour milling industry. Moreover, the cooperative partnership of *mukomoly* (Millers) turns out to be organized directly at the peak of the all-Russian cooperative movement³⁵⁰. Thus, the very period in which the Danilov mill appears proves the inseparability of the Wanderers from the broad modernization processes in the Russian Empire. However, one should still answer the question: why did the Wanderers find themselves in need of this mill?

It is doubtful that the Danilov community was in poverty and felt the demand for funds for its daily needs in excess of the alms received from their sponsors. The rapidity with which the Wanderers managed to raise 22,000 rubles indicates otherwise. Danila Raskov explained the activity of the Ryabinintsy in the world through the eschatology³⁵¹, rhyming this story with the

³⁴⁵ Zalesskii pointed out that the cost of a cow in the neighboring Arkhangel'sk Province was between 18 and 23 rubles, which allows one to estimate the scale of the funds invested.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.* L. 111.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.* L. 112.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.* L. 113.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.* L. 114.

³⁵⁰ *Kotsonis Ia.* *Kak krestian delali otstalymi: selskokhoziaistvennyye kooperativy i agrarnyi vopros v Rossii, 1861-1914.* M., 2006 P. 10.

³⁵¹ *Raskov D.E.* *Ekonomicheskie instituty staroobriadchestva.* P. 204.

Weberian Protestant ethic. However, it seems that the eschatology appears to be only auxiliary for the Wanderers in this case. Thus, the Wanderer theology serves Ryabinin when it comes to recruiting labor and turns out to be of secondary importance when it comes to the tobacco trade or to working on Sundays and holidays³⁵². My hypothesis is that some Wanderers were looking for ways to overcome their own (baptized Wanderers) isolation, and one such way was the financial autonomy of the community. However, the main reason should be sought in the Edict "On Strengthening the Principles of Religious Tolerance" (1905), which set in motion the religious landscape of the Empire.

The significance of the Edict, published on April 17, 1905, for the Old Believer groups and communities, as well as the assessment of the possibility of implementing its provisions in practice, are currently the subject of an academic discussion. Some scholars are inclined to conclude that its publication did not lead to positive changes in the position of the Old Believers to the extent that they expected it³⁵³. Other scholars, on the contrary, note that the Edict set up all the conditions for the existence of full-fledged confessional institutions³⁵⁴ or even put the Old Believers' legalized confessional institutions in a privileged position compared to the position of the Nikonian Church³⁵⁵. Nevertheless, in the post-1905 situation, some of the Old Believer

³⁵² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 118. Unfortunately, Ryabinin's response to such accusations is not known. The source cites only his excuse about the tobacco trade: "We know it is not all right, but there is nothing we can do about it" [Znaem, chto ne ladno, da delat' nehego]. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 118. Working on holidays seems to be an extraordinary phenomenon even for representatives of the less radical communities before this period *Mironov B.N.* Sotsialnaia istoriia Rossii perioda imperii (18—nachalo 20 v.). Vol. 1. P. 328-329. By 1910, however, attitudes toward holiday work seemed to be changing. The fact that in the early 1910s the Wanderers found it acceptable to work on holidays does not set them apart from some of their Nikonian neighbors. For example, Ilya Gerasimov cited reports that in 1912 some Nikonian peasants also found it possible to work during Easter week, which was quite unimaginable even a couple of years ago. *Gerasimov I.* Modernism and Public Reform in Late Imperial Russia: Rural Professionals and Self-Organization, 1905–30. New York, 2009. P. 106.

³⁵³ Konfessionalnaia politika Vremennogo pravitelstva Rossii: sbornik dokumentov. M., 2017. P.32. See also *Shishkina E.V.* Zakonodatelnoe regulirovanie deiatelnosti staroobriadcheskikh shkol Rossiiskoi imperii v 1905—1917 gg. (na materialakh ural'skogo regiona) // Vestnik Permskogo universiteta. Seriia: Istoriia. 2018. no. 1 (40). P.135. On the political struggle to improve legislation regarding Old Believers after 1905, on the political mechanisms used by Old Believers and why this struggle was not successful see *Waldron P.* Religious reform after 1905: Old Believers and the Orthodox church // Oxford Slavonic Papers. 1987 Vol. 20. P. 110-139. The Old Believers' perception of the Decree's provisions as insufficient and unrealizable under the existing state system is documented, for example, in the pages of contemporary periodicals. *Protokoly chastnogo sobraniia staroobriadtsev posle 6 vserossiiskogo s'ezda staroobriadtsev 2-5 avgusta 1905 g. v N. – Novgorode* // «Staroobriadets», 1906 g. no.7. P. 814.

³⁵⁴ *Seleznyov F.A.* Sud'ba zakonoproekta o staroobriadcheskikh obshchinakh (1905-1914) // Vestnik Nizhegorodskogo universiteta im. NI Lobachevskogo. 2008. no. 1. P.139-140.

³⁵⁵ *Safonov A.A.* Gosudarstvo i konfessii v pozdneimperskoi Rossii: pravovye aspekty vzaimootnoshenii. M., 2017. P.147-148.

communities (primarily the large and prominent priestly Belokrinitsa concord) began to integrate into state structures (from deputies elected to the Duma³⁵⁶ to the campaign to establish the position of the Old Believer chaplains in the army³⁵⁷), and most importantly, to struggle to expand their confessional space.

In 1905 the Nikonian Church lost its state-sanctioned monopoly on proselytizing³⁵⁸. The unpreparedness of the Synodal Church to exist in a situation of open ideological competition³⁵⁹, the crisis of relations between the Church and the Imperial government, and the need to change its own structure and ideological foundations³⁶⁰ led to significant transformations in the entire religious landscape of the Empire.

Under such conditions, open theological polemics between representatives of the Nikonian Church and the Old Believers of different traditions (and between representatives of the Old Believers of different branches themselves) became the main field of the battle for the adepts. The major Old Believer branches found themselves prepared for such struggle. In particular, the Belokrinitsa hierarchy even had its own stars of theological disputes. Preachers Ivan Lukin, Dmitrii Varakin, and Feodor Melnikov in the period after 1905 proved to be extremely in demand wherever religious disputes were held. Their missions had a huge geographic coverage and were generally successful³⁶¹.

While the large Old Believers' hierarchies had trained speakers to conduct disputes and defend their doctrine, smaller community of the Wanderers was probably less prepared for the open competition. According to Zalesskii, Ryabinin was concerned about the low educational level of the Wanderers³⁶². The community needed funds to establish an educational center. While money for the daily necessities was generously provided by the Ponizovkins, the quest for funds for the

³⁵⁶ *Werth P.W.* The Tsar's Foreign Faiths. P. 225.

³⁵⁷ *White J.M.* Battling for legitimacy: Russian Old Believer priests on the frontlines of the First World War, 1914–1917 // *First World War Studies*. no. 8(2-3). P. 93-113.

³⁵⁸ *Werth P. W.* The Tsar's Foreign Faiths. P. 226.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.* P.209.

³⁶⁰ *Shevzov V.* Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution. New York, Oxford, 2003.

³⁶¹ *Kuziner I.* «My teper pered soboi vidim dve tserkvi». P. 355.

³⁶² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 93.

maintenance of the theological school might have led Ryabinin and his adherents to the idea of enabling their financial independence from the benefactors.

It is hard to define what was paramount in the "mill-university" scheme. On the one hand, the mill, which brought in a steady income, let the school be maintained without involvement of sponsors. On the other hand, the functioning of the school allowed to justify the existence of the mill and, from the Wanderers' point of view, controversial ways of trading and organizing labor in the production. In addition, the need for a stratum of intermediaries-benefactors that existed almost from the time of Evfimii appeared to be no longer so undisputed. Now the Wanderers themselves could interact with the outside world and financially support their existence, while the need for a layer of intermediary benefactors was no longer so indisputable to them. Thus, this widening of the gap between Euphemist escapist theology and actual practices of existence is seemingly reaching its limits. However, even at this point Ryabinin's activities do not provoke counteraction from his fellow believers.

The materials that describe the process of the construction of the mill differ greatly from each other in the light of the events that are discussed below. For example, Ryabinin's biographies penned by adherents contain no mention of the mill at all, but provide information about the theological school, organized by Aleksandr Vasilievich³⁶³. The author of the 1916 apologetic volume about the Wanderers "Those who live for Christ are always hated", V-lii, who was close to Ryabinin, in turn, did not hesitate to declare that "in the town of Danilov, as well as in the entire Danilov district, there is no mill that is owned by the elder Aleksandr Vasilievich"³⁶⁴. On the contrary, the protocols and records of the Wanderers' councils convened by Ryabinin's opponents focus on accusing him of worldly economic activity. Maksim Zaleskii, the major vernacular historian of the Wanderers in the first half of the 20th century, directly accused Ryabinin of turning

³⁶³ See, for example, some of the abovementioned posthumous biographies compiled by his followers - "The Historical Account of the Nun Raisa" and "The Last Days and Death of Father Arsenii". ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed khr. 1429; *Maltsev A. I.* Staroobriadcheskaia povest 20 v." *Poslednie dni i konchina ottsa Arseniia*". P. 433-440.

³⁶⁴ *V-lii.* Zhivushchie o Khriste vsegda nenavidimy. P. 14.

the Wanderers into the merchants and capitalists³⁶⁵. Nevertheless, the mill, in whatever terms the events surrounding it might be described, proved to be the trigger of the most tremendous transformations of the Wanderers' world, which Ryabinin's opponents called "the stripping of the church, brought to life by the mill and the trade"³⁶⁶. This trigger turned out to be not the fact of open economic activity, but the fact that a person of spiritual status was involved in the direct management of industrial and commercial facilities. It is now almost impossible (and was hardly possible at the time of the events described) to ascertain the extent of Ryabinin's involvement in the running of the mill. Ryabinin himself argued for the godliness of commercial activities, and then denied any involvement in them³⁶⁷. However, this story quickly went far beyond the dispute over the permissibility of secular activities for a clergyman.

2.2.2. Centralization of the hierarchy and the schism

In the same year of 1910, one of the most important events in the history of the religious group took place. Ryabinin, whose authority had evidently already gained sufficient weight, convened a council and deposed Kornilii Pyatakov from the chief elder and replaced him on August 21, 1910³⁶⁸. It is reported that at the same council he repeatedly spoke out about the mill, according to the report of the source, reacting sharply to any criticism of his industrial initiative and threatening to excommunicate his opponents³⁶⁹. Thus, Ryabinin's authority over the mill and the school was supplemented by spiritual authority. Of course, Aleksandr Vasilievich's power was only nominal, for since Nikita Semyonov's "Articles" the chief elder was only the first among equals. However, the elimination of the relative autonomy of the communities has already becoming only a matter of time.

³⁶⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 101.

³⁶⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 5.

³⁶⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298. L. 1, 6. See also Ryabinin's letter to his opponents *Prokuratova E. V.* Staroobriadcheskaia kultura Komi kraia 18-20 vekov. P. 459-460.

³⁶⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 119.

³⁶⁹ In particular, someone named Shpakov was excommunicated for disagreeing with Ryabinin: Ibid. L. 116-117. His opponents later reminded Ryabinin of his preaching of the God-pleasingness of trade. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 2; OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 350. L. 7.

Here it is important to discuss the vernacular way of describing the social transformations of the Wanderers. It is worth beginning with what the councils and gatherings in question represented in general. The culture of the Wanderers' councils includes a special language (most of the councils were transcribed in Church Slavonic), bureaucratic standards, paperwork etiquette and a set of procedures which made the councils' decisions legitimate. Thus, the considered gatherings formally inherit the traditions of Christian polemical councils of the first millennium. The gathering of delegates is accomplished through sending out invitations with a scheduled date³⁷⁰. As delegates, the spiritual representatives of the canonical provinces attending the Council are called upon to participate in the discussions on issues significant to the Church. The results of these discussions are reflected in the final resolutions and are countersigned by the delegates³⁷¹. Lay persons were allowed to participate in the discussions, but their votes remained rather advisory.

The information that can be gleaned from the materials of the councils and polemical conversations, as well as from outside documents, is controversial. If the event was organized by Ryabinin's sympathizers, the final resolution looks like a triumph of Aleksandr Vasilievich's side, if the meeting was initiated by his opponents - exactly the opposite. Consequently, in describing such documents, I do not aim to find out whose side is telling the truth, but to focus on capturing the social transformation of a particular group as it is seen from within the transforming community.

So, the newly appointed chief elder Ryabinin found a way to navigate between adherence to dogma and the desire to increase the profits of the enterprise. Tobacco was still available at the mill's shop, and in addition, work did not stop on Sundays and church feasts³⁷². Ryabinin's next step was to appropriate the church fund kept at Sopyolki. Ryabinin arrived in Sopyolki, and

³⁷⁰ See the example of the long negotiations to convene a council in Vichuga country in 1926. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 104. L. 5-12.

³⁷¹ See, for example, the minutes of the dispute in Sopyolki (1913), which ends with the following bureaucratic statement. "In witnessing all of the above, we, who are present and listening to all of these disputes, sign our names with our own hands". OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298. L. 29.

³⁷² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 118

"showing rudeness" to the custodian of the treasury, Aleksandr Grigorievich, took possession of the necessary funds. This event forced the benefactress and sponsor of the Yaroslavl' Wanderers, Agaphia Ponizovkina (heir to the estate of the Ponizovkins), to terminate her traditional almsgiving to the community³⁷³. Thus, within a short time Ryabinin managed to concentrate in his hands not only canonical authority over the wandering communities, but also substantial financial resources. The Wanderers' communities now found themselves directly dependent on the favor of the chief elder. However, the situation in which Ryabinin turned out to be the only source of welfare for numerous groups of Wanderers, of course, could not meet everyone's needs. The opposition was led by two persons - the leader of the Vichuga (Kostroma province, later Ivanovo-Voznesensk or Ivanovo province) Wanderers, Fyodor Mikhailovich, and the former elder, Kornilii Pyatakov. In the vernacular historiography of the Wanderers, this movement became known as the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, after the names of the leaders.

It is worth saying that although in this research it is stressed that the Late Imperial and Soviet experience of Old Believers hardly seems extraordinary against the background of their compatriots of other religious affiliations, there is one detail which makes the Old Believers truly unique. This peculiarity is the ability to turn an insignificant minor conflict into an event of apocalyptic magnitude. As shown by Douglas Rogers and Dominic Martin, this is relevant not only when it comes to the 17th century, but also to the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries³⁷⁴. Moreover, as shown by these authors and as verified by my sources, such conflicts quickly turn into schisms, the wounds of which would not be healed for decades. Douglas Rogers quite justly observed that it does not mean at all that Old Believers superstitiously paid disproportionate attention to ritual or theological trivia³⁷⁵. On the contrary, what to an outsider might seem a trifle, in the ontological perspective of Old Believers was a matter of life and death. Dominic Martin attributed this phenomenon to the particular ability of Old Believers to attach fundamental significance to events

³⁷³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 128.

³⁷⁴ Rogers D. *The Old Faith and the Russian Land*. P. 71-103; Martin D. *The Last Men before the Last: A Russian Messianic Revival in the Twilight of History // Beyond Neoliberalism*. London, 2017. P. 155-179.

³⁷⁵ Rogers D. *The Old Faith and the Russian Land*. P. 76.

in the present through conversion and the relationship of this event to the historical narrative of the Schism and Christianity in general. There is no doubt that the Wanderers (like many other Old Believers), even when engaged in secular activities, saw themselves as the center of the universe and the last Christians on earth³⁷⁶. This sense of self-importance seems to have been largely responsible for the extent to which their everyday conflicts acquired such importance.

In the winter 1911, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy gathered in Vichuga to jointly draft a letter of accusation to Ryabinin. Ryabinin had already appeared in March in person in Vichuga district. However, during the disputes with the "opposition" the parties failed to reach an agreement³⁷⁷. In the same 1911 the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy incognito went to Danilov³⁷⁸, where during the investigation it was found that Ryabinin directly supervises the trade and economic activities of the Danilov enterprise. The materials of the investigation were enough to convene a council in September 1911 in the village of Sokerikha near Vichuga. Agaphia Ponizovkina also took part in the work of the council, urging the Wanderers to remain the Wanderers not manufacturers. In discussing the situation, Ryabinin apparently encountered considerable hostility from the "opposition" and eventually conceded. He left Danilov, shifting the management of the mill to the nominal owners³⁷⁹. In response, Ponizovkina resumed regular "alms-giving" in favor of the Wanderers³⁸⁰.

However, Ryabinin was not satisfied with defeat. By this point, he had taken another step toward strengthening his authority. Upon the death of the leader of one of the predels, Aleksandr Vasilievich violated the election procedure (bypassing the leader of this Vichuga country, Feodor Mikhailovich) and directly appointed the predel's new elder. For this purpose, it was necessary to divide the predel into two parts: one part was ruled by an elected elder, the other by Ryabinin's

³⁷⁶ See, for example, the outline of the Wanderers' theological classes from this period. In it, in answer to the teacher's question, "How many true faiths are there in the world?" an unequivocal response is suggested: "One (i.e., of the Wanderers). The rest are heresies". OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 56. L. 18ob.

³⁷⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 134.

³⁷⁸ Ryabinin did not consent to an open investigation on his activities.

³⁷⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 141.

³⁸⁰ Ibid. L. 141.

protégé Spiridon Kuzmich. The operation was explained by the establishment of the principles of stauropogion (direct subordination of the monastery or in this case the predel to the head of the Church)³⁸¹. The establishment of the foundations of stauropogia marked a milestone for Ryabinin in the implementation of the already crystallizing concept of an "autocephalous church" with a single Patriarch at its head, which would be developed later³⁸². The idea, of course, contradicted the principle of "Universalism" [vselenskost'] associated with the autonomy of communities and defended by his opponents, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy.

The contradictions between the parties escalated, and the situation eventually led to a break between the two ideological fractions. The schism took shape at several councils held in 1912-1913. Ryabinin's adherents (hereafter "the Millers") in Penza in October 1912³⁸³ and in Kazan in May 1913³⁸⁴, and their opponents (the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy) in the village of Sokerikha near Vichuga in the same May 1913³⁸⁵ in the absence of representatives of the opposite side sealed the split by mutual anathemas, thereby forming two hostile movements within the Wanderers. An attempt at a polemical conversation that took place in Sopyolki in March 1913 demonstrated a complete lack of understanding between the opponents - the "Millers" refused to admit Ryabinin's involvement in the flour-milling activity and trade and championed the centralization of the hierarchy, their opponents the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy took the opposite stand³⁸⁶.

The period of schism (1911-1913) was extremely eventful for the Wanderers. First and foremost, it included numerous councils, polemical conversations in person and in absentia, and disputes by correspondence. However, two documents seem to reflect most fully the positions of the parties and their perceptions of each other as of the end of 1913. These are the polemical compilation "The Enlightener" of the Millers and the "Acts of the Council in the Vichuga country

³⁸¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298. L. 15ob – 20ob.

³⁸² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298. L. 2 – 3.

³⁸³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 279. L. 6.

³⁸⁴ Bubnov N. Iu. Staroobriadcheskie gektoografirovannye izdaniia Biblioteki Rossiiskoi akademii nauk: posledniaia chetvert 19-pervaia chetvert 20 v. Katalog izdaniia i izbrannye teksty. SPb., 2012. P. 406 – 407.

³⁸⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173.

³⁸⁶ For the minutes of the dispute see OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298. A brief introduction into arguments of the sides see in Maltsev A. I. Problemy tserkovnoi organizatsii i upravleniia v sochineniiakh staroverov-strannikov (vtoraia polovina 19-nachalo 20 veka). P.171.

held in September 7420-7421 [1913]" of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy. It must be said that these sources must be taken critically with regard to the representation of the views of the opposite side. Both the Millers and the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy often deliberately distorted and exaggerated the viewpoints of their opponents in order to emphasize the absurdity of their rivals' arguments.

In "The Enlightener" of the Millers, the centerpiece of the schism was the issue of Ryabinin's patriarchy and the likening of the Wanderer community to the autocephalous Eastern Christian church. The first and most extensive part of the volume is devoted to the justification of this position. As arguments, Ryabinin's defenders, who probably compiled the volume under his guidance, presented numerous references to the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Early Church Fathers about the harm of having many heads for any community³⁸⁷. A large part of the justification of the one-man rule was also devoted to an apologia for St. Peter's seniority over other apostles. And in the description of the figure of Peter in the pages of the volume, it is easy to surmise the personality of Ryabinin himself³⁸⁸. Having broken down the arguments of their opponents on the issue of the centralization of the hierarchy, the Millers moved on to answering the charges of commercial activity and the establishment of the mill. It should be said that Ryabinin's adherents chose a cunning polemic tactics. Thus, as the text of the volume demonstrates, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy stood on the point that the trade and milling were not acceptable in principle to either laymen or the Wanderers in the context of the unfolding eschatological process³⁸⁹. This was a clear overstatement on the part of the Millers. As will be shown below, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy accused only Ryabinin directly of trading through figureheads, trampling on his spiritual status. Whereas the mill and the trade itself, if carried out by laymen, did not seem to the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy something reprehensible. However, Ryabinin and his associates refused to acknowledge their leader's explicit involvement in secular activities. Instead, the Millers took their opponents' argument to the extreme and had no trouble proving,

³⁸⁷ For example, it has been argued that the bees, the cranes, and the flocks of sheep had one ruler and leader. ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 8.

³⁸⁸ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 15-38.

³⁸⁹ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 104-111

through quotations from scripture and hagiographic writings, that "commerce is essentially innocent, and the saints traded, too"³⁹⁰. The same argument was also made when considering the mill issue³⁹¹. In addition, the Millers seem to have groundlessly attributed to the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy a loathing for the theological school in Danilov and preaching in general³⁹². At least in the writings of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy this thought does not seem to be reflected.

While for the Millers the centralization of the hierarchy was the key issue, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy in the "Acts of the Council in Vichuga Country" began squarely with accusations against Ryabinin of his involvement in the trade and flour-milling business³⁹³. In order to affirm their position on the inadmissibility of worldly activity for a clergyman under the conditions of the unfolding apocalypse, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy cited Revelation - "then the woman fled into the wilderness" (Rev. 12:6) [meaning that in the midst of the apocalypse faithful Christians have no option but to hide and flee]. Following the quotation, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy ironically added "but not with the mill"³⁹⁴. Thus, the attitude of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy to Ryabinin's secular activities was unambiguous: "worldly affairs are the bonds"³⁹⁵ [zhiteiskie dela sut' uzy].

In total Ryabinin's opponents counted about 31 guilts of Aleksandr Vasilievich, of which only a small part concerned the questions of centralization. In these paragraphs the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy reproached Ryabinin for striving for power and imitating the heretic Roman Pope³⁹⁶. The rest of the Millers' leader's sins were the tobacco trade³⁹⁷, illegal councils³⁹⁸, embezzlement of the Church money³⁹⁹, and some minor transgressions like "hairy heresy" (the Millers no longer trimmed their growing hair "into a pot" like their opponents did⁴⁰⁰). In addition, as the Kornilo-

³⁹⁰ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 104-108.

³⁹¹ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 108-110ob.

³⁹² ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 88-93ob.

³⁹³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 60.

³⁹⁴ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L.14ob – 15.

³⁹⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L.15.

³⁹⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 171.

³⁹⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 111.

³⁹⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 111.

³⁹⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 174-175.

⁴⁰⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 153.

Fyodorovtsy claimed, Ryabinin forged some protocols of polemical conversations, supplementing their text after these protocols had been certified by the signatures of the participants.⁴⁰¹

It should be said that Ryabinin and his associates skillfully sidestepped direct questions about the leader's participation in secular activities and insisted that Aleksandr Vasilievich only managed the school and had nothing to do with the management of the mill and the trade. The Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, in their turn, insisted on proving the opposite. Such a situation made further debates unproductive. However, the positions of the parties seem to be quite delineated.

For the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy labor practices could not exist in isolation from dogmatics. Existence in the mode of the launched eschatology did not provide, from their point of view, opportunities for secular activity, which remained the sphere of responsibility of the benefactors. However, one should not reduce the explanation of the schism only to ideological disagreements. It is likely that personal grievances of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy leaders added to these differences: of Kornilii Pyatakov for his overthrow from the chief elder and of Fyodor Mikhailovich for Ryabinin's interference in the affairs of the canonical territory under his control. In addition, the need for preachers and missionaries was not entirely apparent to many of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy. For example, some of Fyodor Mikhailovich's benefactors and followers believed that the Wanderers ought to attract new believers not by preaching, but by an example of pious life⁴⁰². The steam mill, on the other hand, rather became a symbol of the schism and a formal cause for it.

The Millers, despite the fact that Ryabinin said he had nothing to do with the mill, consistently declared the thesis that the mill and the trade were a source of funds for the maintenance of the school and the training of preachers. Preaching, therefore, is necessary even now, in the face of the world ending, for "those who reject the schools are foolish and cursed" [otvergaiushchie uchilischa glupy i prokliaty]⁴⁰³. Moreover, while the Millers argued that only benefactors (i.e., unbaptized members of the community) were engaged in the trade and the milling

⁴⁰¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 128.

⁴⁰² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 11ob – 12.

⁴⁰³ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 92.

business, they acknowledged that they saw no problem in giving interest-free loans to benefactors to keep the business going, since "and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Mat. 5:42) [i khotiashchago ot tebe zayati ne otvrati]⁴⁰⁴. Thus, Ryabinin's model offered not only an adaptation to the realities of the Late Imperial entrepreneurship through the organization of high-tech production, but also a new mode of relations within the community, where baptized Wanderers themselves became sponsors for the benefactors.

Thus, one can identify three vectors of transformation of the community of the Wanderers pursued by Ryabinin: centralization of the hierarchy, financial independence of the Wanderers, and expansion and retention of their own space (in particular through the means). At the same time, the way in which these goals were achieved was only partly dependent on the tenets of dogmatics for the Millers. Dogmatics served them when it was appropriate and appeared to be of secondary importance when conflicted with the practices of achieving the goals. Moreover, the ideology and practices could exist in an autonomous manner for the Millers. Probably the reason for this autonomy was the gap (which had existed at least since the 1850s) between the escapist dogmatics of the Wanderers and their actual practices of inclusion in the surrounding world.

This gap allowed the Millers greater flexibility at a time when there emerged an opportunity to engage in capitalist activity for them. Of course, it is impossible to say for sure whether Ryabinin ran the steam mill in Danilov and, if so, to what extent he was involved in this process. However, the organization of the mill and the shop fit well within the overall context of the transformation of the Wanderers' community conceived by Ryabinin in the late 1900s.

It also must be said that Aleksandr Vasilievich and his associates sometimes showed cunning, if not guile, to overcome their opponents. In 1913, for example, a group of benefactors from Kineshma (Kostroma Province, later Ivanovo-Voznesensk Province) drafted a letter for their baptized co-religionists, which was offered to be read at one of the polemical disputes. While rebuking Ryabinin's commercial activity and its justification through a reference to Holy Scripture,

⁴⁰⁴ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 116.

the benefactors stated the following: "We also know that the vastness and depth of the Holy Scriptures have not always served as a means for men to discover the truth, and not infrequently to obscure it; the latter has always happened when men have sought by the authority of the Holy Scriptures to justify certain of their actions which they knew would bring condemnation." [my znaem takzhe i to, chto obshirnost' i glubina svyatogo pisaniia ne vseгда sluzhila liudiam sredstvom k vyiasneniiu istiny, a ne redko i k zatmeniiu ee, poslednee sluchalos' vseгда, kogda liudi stremilis avtoritetom sviatogo pisaniia opravdat' te ili inye svoi postupki, kotorye kak oni znali vyzovut u liudei osuzhdenie]⁴⁰⁵. This innocuous statement was picked up by the Millers and shortened so that its meaning was completely distorted: "We also know that the vastness and depth of the Holy Scriptures have not always served as a means for men to discover the truth, and not infrequently to obscure it; the latter has always happened" [my znaem takzhe i to, chto obshirnost' i glubina sviatogo pisaniia ne vseгда sluzhila liudiam sredstvom k vyiasneniiu istiny, a ne redko i k zatmeniiu ee, poslednee sluchalos' vseгда]⁴⁰⁶. This shortened statement, cited in "The Enlightener" as an illustration of Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy's views, seemed already heretical for it was calling into a question the authority of the Scriptures. Accordingly, on the basis of this quotation the Millers accused the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy of heresy and apostasy, finding a way to switch discussion from polemics concerning the trade to polemics concerning the heresy into which the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy had allegedly fallen.

So, within a short period of time the Wanderers' social structure has undergone significant changes. In addition, a concomitant factor of these transformations was the schism, which the Wanderers, in spite of numerous attempts, never succeeded in overcoming. The Millers became enthusiastically involved in the processes associated with the Late Imperial capitalism, namely the cooperative movement. In addition, through financial independence, they succeeded in transforming the mode of relations within the community, putting an end to monetary dependence on benefactors. At the same time, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, having broken with Ryabinin, lost

⁴⁰⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 350. L. 11-11ob

⁴⁰⁶ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 133

their access to the community's fund, and found themselves even more dependent on the alms of sponsors than before⁴⁰⁷. In addition, the biographical trajectories of other protagonists of this research also crossed the events of the schism. In 1913, the 37-year-old preacher Khristophor Ivanovich (Zyryanov)⁴⁰⁸ (see Chapter 3) took an active part in the polemical dispute in the village of Sopyolki on Ryabinin's side, while the charges against Ryabinin at the council in the Vichuga country among other Wanderers were signed by one of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, 20-year-old Maksim Ivanovich Zalesskii⁴⁰⁹ (see Chapter 4).

Danila Raskov suggested that one of the reasons for the conflict might have been the fact that the mill was a steam mill, that is, a high-tech modern facility, which might have alienated some "archaic" Wanderers from the project. This assumption seems quite symptomatic for an exoticizing approach to the history of the Old Believers of the 20th century. It should be said that in the pages of polemical documents the sides accuse each other of many sins from likening the Roman popes to the wrong hairstyle. However, there is no evidence in such texts that this particular type of the mill caused controversy. In addition, in the case of the Danilov, Yaroslavl' and other Wanderers of the surrounding provinces there is no evidence of any technophobia⁴¹⁰. The Wanderers were open to using technology: apart from the mill built on the advice of the foreman of the capital, this is evidenced, in particular, by the fact that they willingly used technical innovations in everyday life as well. During a search in the Danilov community in the early years of Soviet rule (6-7 years after the events described), the Wanderers were found to have an Erickson field telephone, foreign-made drawing instruments, a photographic camera, parts for electrical wiring, and toilet soap⁴¹¹. Thus, the Wanderers (at least the ones in question)⁴¹², for all the

⁴⁰⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 188-189

⁴⁰⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 349. L. 1.

⁴⁰⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 183ob.

⁴¹⁰ Meanwhile with the outbreak of World War I, technophobia gripped even a large number of the secular urban dwellers, far more included in the Late Empire's public spheres. *Aksenov V.B. Tekhnika i ee fobicheskie obrazy v povsednevnom soznanii rossiiskikh obyvatelei v 1914-1916 godakh // Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana. 2019. no. 1 (25). P. 38-52.*

⁴¹¹ GARF F. 1235. Op. 56. D. 26. L. 79-82.

⁴¹² Here it should be said that the Wanderers in question were very different in their well-being from their Siberian co-religionists, described by Elena Dutchak. A similar search of the Wanderers who lived on the river Ikxa (today - Novosibirsk region) in 1933 revealed the extreme poverty of their everyday life. For example, among the household

importance of eschatological rhetoric that heralded the end of the world, were keeping up with the times and sometimes even technologically advanced over their Nikonian neighbors.

Fifty years before this split, Sepych of Douglas Rogers witnessed a very similar split between two local Pomortsy groups. At stake there were the same familiar issues of community autonomy⁴¹³, the participation of spiritual leaders in secular activities⁴¹⁴, and the clash of new and traditional models of economic relations⁴¹⁵. Rogers linked this split in Sepych to changes in the economic landscape of the village in the period following emancipation in 1861⁴¹⁶. Although the agendas of both splits (in the 1860s in Sepych and of the Wanderers in 1911-1913) are relatively the same, one can hardly extrapolate Rogers' conclusions to the events of 1911-1913. Yet these splits were half a century apart and took place in very different socio-political contexts⁴¹⁷. The rising issues of community autonomy and the transformation of economic relations among the Wanderers can hardly be put down to the consequences of the emancipation of the peasants. Rather, it is still more about the competitive post-1905 imperial religious landscape, the desire to gain a foothold in which caused the Wanderers to become involved in entrepreneurship, which in turn led to tensions within the community.

It should be said that the schisms of the early 20th century, which for the first time ran not only and not so much along dogmatic lines, were not an exclusively the Wanderers' affair. The Edict of 1905 set in motion many complex processes including disintegrating ones within the previously persecuted Old Believers' communities and groups. This time the lines of schism ran not only along theological boundaries, but also along the clergy/ laymen/sponsors⁴¹⁸ boundaries,

items there were only two axes, two iron buckets, old boots and a pillow. *Dutchak E.E.* Iz "Vavilona" v "Belovod'e". P. 274.

⁴¹³ *Rogers D.* The old faith and the Russian land. P. 85.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.* P. 86-87.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.* P. 72, 92.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.* P. 72.

⁴¹⁷ It would be more productive to compare the Sepych split with the schism of the Wanderers in the first half of the 1860s, when Nikita Semyonov's "Articles" split the community into "arcticle-followers" and "anti-arcticle-followers".

⁴¹⁸ *Seleznyov F.A.* Sudba zakonoproekta o staroobriadcheskikh obshchinakh (1905-1914). P.130.

and, during the tumultuous social and political life between February and October 1917, along the boundaries of social strata within the Old Believer communities⁴¹⁹.

2.2.3. The Wanderers Open to the Public

The Wanderers, unlike representatives of other Old Believers' movements, did not engage in overt political activity and did not interact with imperial officials in the hope of influencing their position. This distinguishes them from other Late Imperial religious movements, such as the Tatars-Waisovites, who in the same period reconfigured themselves from an eschatological group to a political movement⁴²⁰. However, this does not mean that the Wanderers did not seek to strengthen their position in the space beyond the Wanderers' community. This is confirmed both by the very fact of more or less open capitalist activity, and, for example, by the fact that the Wanderers, though declaring themselves world-renouncers, nevertheless cared about their image in the eyes of the world "corrupted by the Antichrist".

On September 26, 1911, the Yaroslavl' newspaper "Golos" published a short piece entitled "The Wanderers"⁴²¹. The text began with the following observation: "Among the local followers of the sect of the Wanderers, some absolutely non-Wanderer desires on the part of the leaders of the sect have recently begun to be noticed". The author further claimed that despite their declared renunciation of the world, one of the leaders of the sect fell into temptation and persuaded the Wanderers to build a mill. The Wanderers registered the mill as the property of one of the laymen, while the real control over the finances is exercised by this very sect leader. The article did not mention any names, stating only that the sponsor of the Yaroslavl' Wanderers was the local manufacturer P. (probably meaning one of the Ponizovkins). However, it is quite clear that the article referred to Ryabinin and the Danilov steam mill.

⁴¹⁹ *Kliukina Iu.V.* Staroobriadsy i politicheskie partii (1905-1917) // Problemy istorii Rossii. 2003. Vyp. 5: Na perekrestkakh epokh i traditsii. P. 327-349.

⁴²⁰ *Usmanova D.* «Vaisovskii Bozhii polk staroverov-musul'man». P. 255–271.

⁴²¹ Even the title itself ironically put the name "Wanderers" in quotation marks. *Stranniki* // Golos. no. 214. 1911, September, 23.

Such materials, apparently, were perceived very sensitively by the Wanderers. In the "Acts of the Council in the Vichuga Country," describing the events that took place two years after the publication of the note, among other charges against Ryabinin, he was accused of having "marred our [of the Wanderers] fame" by building the mill. In support of this accusation there was a reference to the article in the newspaper "Golos"⁴²². In addition, in the same part of the text the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy lamented that, thanks to Ryabinin, in the eyes of the public the Wanderer "instead of the world-renouncer turned out to be the flour miller" [«strannik vmesto mirootrechnika okazalsya mukomel'nikom»]⁴²³.

However, if the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy were left only to lament the marring of their own fame in the eyes of the surrounding world, the Millers found themselves ready to struggle for an improvement of the external image of themselves. It was during this period that the books published by the Wanderers in 1911 and 1916 in Kazan and designed for the mass public, saw the light of day. The first of these volumes, "Struya" [Stream], written by a person named S.V. Petrov⁴²⁴, was largely devoted to the apology of the Wanderers, as opposed to other Old Believers' movements. However, the fact that a certain place in the volume was given to refuting speculations about the revolutionary-political character of the Wanderer movement, and to proving its "purely religious" nature⁴²⁵, indicates that the work was addressed not only to the Old Believer readers.

Another such work is the book "Zhivushchie o Khriste vsegda nenavidimy" [Those who live for Christ are always hated], written by "the wretched and sinful elder V-lii," who was probably close to Ryabinin, and published in 1916 by V.V. Klimin, the benefactor under whose name Ryabinin's house in Danilov was registered⁴²⁶. This work represented a comprehensive and methodical refutation of rumors about the religious movement, from the Red Death to the Nev'yansk murder allegedly committed by Ryabinin.⁴²⁷

⁴²² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 16.

⁴²³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. L. 16.

⁴²⁴ Petrov S.V. Struya.

⁴²⁵ Ibid. P. 31-34.

⁴²⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 95

⁴²⁷ V-lii. Zhivushchie o Khriste vsegda nenavidimy.

It should be said that the inclusion of representatives of marginalized religious groups in the public sphere⁴²⁸ could take various indirect paths. Using example of the Molokan community in Baku, Nicholas Breyfogle showed how in 1892 the struggle for the construction and registration of a building for prayer was more of a battle for symbolic inclusion in the public sphere of the city than for the possession of the building as such, since the Molokans according to their doctrinal logic did not really need a special building for worshipping⁴²⁹. Hence, following Breyfogle, it seems appropriate to consider these attempts on the part of the Wanderers to justify themselves in the eyes of the society also as a quest to enter the public sphere.

Such interventions of the Wanderers into the space of the public sphere could not be imagined before the 1910s. However, as it can be seen, the Wanderers opened themselves to the world in different ways, and not only through economic activity. The inclusion of the Wanderers in modernization processes, integrating them into spaces beyond the Wanderers' one, has brought the Wanderers into an awareness of themselves as participants in the general Imperial public sphere. Under such conditions, they made an attempt to break with their own external discursive objectivization, declaring their subjectivity and their intention to participate in the production of discourses about themselves.

2.2.4. The Wanderers under the Old Regime

The year 1914 began for the Wanderers with the preparation for a new reconciliation council. Long and difficult negotiations between the Millers and the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy continued throughout winter and almost the entire spring. Finally, on May 14, 1914, the Wanderers agreed

⁴²⁸ A classic study of the public sphere as a feature of modern bourgeois civil society. *Habermas J.* *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* Trans. Thomas Burger. Cambridge, 1989. On the peculiarities of the public sphere in the Russian context see *Bradley J.* "Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia // *American Historical Review.* 2002. Vol. 107. no. 4 P. 1084–1123.

⁴²⁹ *Breyfogle N.B.* *Prayer and the Politics of Place: Molokan Church-Building, Tsarist Law, and the Quest for a Public Sphere in Late Imperial Russia // Sacred stories: Religion and spirituality in modern Russia.* 2007. P. 222-52. Unlike the Wanderers and Breyfogle's Molokans, Russian Baptists entered the public sphere in a literal rather than symbolic way by distributing literature and preaching in public places. *Coleman H. J.* *Russian Baptists and spiritual revolution, 1905-1929.* P. 222-223.

to hold a council, though without agreeing on the exact date and place⁴³⁰. However, the following events seriously disrupted the Wanderers' plans for the reconciliation.

In early May, in the midst of negotiations about holding the council, one of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy adherents, Pyotr Mikhailovich, received to his address in Vichuga an anonymous letter. The author stated that he had learned from a fellow gendarme that the internal turmoil of the Wanderers had become known to the "government" and the police and had attracted their attention⁴³¹. In this regard, the author warned that the gendarmerie set surveillance on the Wanderers, learned about the intentions of holding the council and even guaranteed 500 rubles to anyone who would reveal the location of the council⁴³².

At the end of June, when all negotiations were concluded, Pyotr Mikhailovich received another, more detailed, anonymous letter, sent from the steamship headed from Nizhnii Novgorod to Rybinsk (Yaroslavl' province). It said that investigator Shulinskii from Kazan, who was in charge of work on the Wanderers, had managed to intercept a large corpus of the Wanderers' documents, among which were materials about the schism, as well as the names and addresses of members of the community, including benefactors. The author of the letter also hinted that the Millers could have been involved in the fact that these documents had fallen into the hands of the police, since the materials referred primarily to the activities of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy. At the end of the letter, the anonymous author set an appointment for Pyotr Mikhailovich to meet in Kineshma on St. Peter's Day on the steamship "Po Volge", promising him to help deal with the situation⁴³³.

It is not known how this meeting ended or if it took place at all. In any case, it seems that none of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy were arrested during this period. However, in a strange way, this almost spy story probably led to unexpected consequences for the Millers. Thus, at the end of the

⁴³⁰OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 350. L. 37ob-38. Later, the Wanderers did agree to hold a council in September of that year in the Vichuga country. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 350. L. 55

⁴³¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 350. L. 66ob.

⁴³² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 350. L. 67.

⁴³³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 350. L. 69-72.

summer, the old Nev'yansk affair once again reminded Aleksandr Vasilievich Ryabinin of itself. On August 13, 1914, a month before the council, he was arrested. As the Yaroslavl' "Golos" correspondent reported in his article "40 Years Later", a runaway convict, "patriarch of all Russia" of the Wanderers and owner of a flour-milling company Aleksandr Ryabinin was detained on a river steamship coming from Vetluga.⁴³⁴ It had also been reported that Ryabinin was being followed for about two years, and that the acting head of the Yaroslavl' detective police himself had been warned about his river voyage⁴³⁵.

It cannot be stated directly that the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy were somehow involved in a sophisticated game with the police and surrendered Ryabinin to the gendarmes. The name of the real informer may have been encrypted in one of the sources that belonged to the pen of the one of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy's associates. The document is a freestyle paraphrase of a newspaper article about Ryabinin's arrest, but in place of the informant's name is a cipher made up of characters from the Cyrillic, Latin and Greek alphabets, which I could not decipher at this stage. Moreover, the reference to the newspaper article about Ryabinin's arrest leads to a non-existent issue of "Golos"⁴³⁶. In addition, it is not quite clear why the author needed to cypher the name of the informant, if he could simply not write it. Nevertheless, the use of the cipher indicates that the name of the informant was known to the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, which makes one wonder about their involvement in Ryabinin's arrest again.

Maksim Zalesskii, whose education among the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy coincided with the period of the schism, gave the following version of the events leading up to the arrest. A teacher Natalia Kurlina was invited by Ryabinin to a hermitage of the Wanderers in the village of Ilyinskoe, in the estate of Rukavitsin (the nominal owner of the Danilov steam mill). Rukavitsin, if Zalesskii is to be believed, had a "vicious relationship" with Kurlina. Ryabinin had found out

⁴³⁴ Cherez 40 let // Golos. no. 208. 1914, September, 11.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ The source indicates that this is issue No. 181 of the newspaper "Golos", published on Wednesday, August 14, 1914. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 350. In 1911, however, August 14 was a Thursday, and no. 181 of "Golos" was published on Friday, August 8. Moreover, the article in question could not be found in any of the issues of August and September 1914.

about it, fired Kurlina and refused to pay her salary. Kurlina threatened to report to the authorities about Aleksandr Vasilievich' activities if Ryabinin did not give her money⁴³⁷. Soon after this conflict, Ryabinin was arrested.

It remains unknown whether Kurlina carried out her threat or whether it was some cunning Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy intrigue, but from 1914 until April 1918 Ryabinin had been held in the Aleksandrovskii Prison Castle in Irkutsk⁴³⁸. As will be shown below, the arrest of the leader did not force the Wanderers to abandon the idea of industrial and commercial activity. On the contrary, even in Ryabinin's absence, his associates were able to adapt skillfully to the challenges of post-revolutionary times. The transformation of the Wanderers' world that Aleksandr Vasilievich initiated turned out to be so profound and successful that the processes launched by the leader continued to unfold autonomously of his personality.

The previous chapter showed how many counteracting factors hindered the open integration of Wanderers into the social domain of the Empire. However, Ryabinin found a way, if not to circumvent each of these obstacles, then at least to minimize the damage of overcoming them. Thus, the Millers did not abandon their own escapist ideas, but placed them in the service of their capitalist activities, encouraging to work for the good of the "Church persecuted by the Antichrist". They did not disregard their own notions of continuity and the unacceptability of ideological innovations, proving in councils and polemical disputes that even the first Christians, persecuted by the Roman emperors, traded⁴³⁹, and that it was those who claimed the unacceptability of secular labor who introduced innovations. The Wanderers close to Ryabinin also found a way to resist the production of compromising discourses about themselves by becoming actors of the public discourse. In addition, Aleksandr Vasilievich, in an attempt to expand the Wanderer space with the help of educated preachers, made the Wanderers independent of the favor of the sponsors. Semi-legal status also ceased to be a hindrance for Wanderers who wished to occupy the social

⁴³⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 279. L. 16.

⁴³⁸ Ibid. L. 17.

⁴³⁹ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 104.

niches opening up in Late Imperial Russia. In addition, the fact that Ryabinin was arrested not for any religious offence, but for a 40-year-old criminal episode, albeit far-fetched, shows that semi-legality has ceased to be a significant hindrance to the Wanderers on their way to discovering themselves to the world.

The Wanderers still refused to interact with the higher registers of Imperial power, but that does not prevent the events around the mill from being called the beginning of the Wanderers' opening to the world. The fact that the Wanderers opened up and were able to anchor themselves in a space outside their own community determined strategies of the Millers' adaptation to the challenges of the times for years to come. There is no doubt that eschatology was an integral part of the Wanderers' ontology and had a marked influence on the practices of the believers. Questions of a religious and theological nature were of extreme concern to the Wanderers, regardless whether they were hiding in the taiga hermitages or selling flour and tobacco in Danilov. However, a pragmatic approach to exploiting a preexisting gap between escapist dogmatism and actual social inclusion allowed the Millers to use this gap to successfully adapt to the processes associated with the Late Imperial modernization.

The credit for inclusion in these processes belongs not only to Ryabinin. Obviously, by the beginning of the 20th century the very social and economic space of the Late Empire had been transformed. These transformations led to opening up of the new opportunities and social niches. In particular, this trend was expressed in the wide spread of the cooperative movement. Thus, the domain of the Late Imperial grassroots capitalism turned out to be inclusive and heterogeneous enough to accommodate the diversity of those who entered it. Moreover, as we shall see below, this space also survived the Old Regime, remaining inclusive and attractive for the external interactions until the late 1920s.

No doubt the entrepreneurship of the Wanderers had its own peculiarities, at least because the Millers had to adapt their ideology as it conflicted with the pragmatics of commercial activity. But what is left of that history if one tries to imagine that it is not about the Wanderers? What is

left of it is the plot about how, in the early 20th century, a former clerk initiates the advanced capitalist production, breaking with the traditional system of economic dependence accepted in his community. Is the fact that its protagonists belong to one of the most radical Russian religious movements a key aspect of this narrative? On the one hand, in the case of the Wanderers we see that the influence of the modernizing processes reached even those who dedicated their lives to renouncing the world. On the other hand, it is clear that the Wanderers, at least those discussed in the study, were in reality not an isolated community of escapist fanatics. They responded to challenges of the modernizing world as befits people of their social status – peasants and the townspeople of the lower and middle classes.

2.3. The Wanderers in the Early Soviet State

2.3.1 Soviet Religious Policy and the Wanderers

Aleksandr Pyzhikov in his provocative conspiratorial work "The Roots of Stalinist Bolshevism" argued that many of the top leaders of the Soviet state had Old Believer roots and hence absorbed the worldview and values of the Old Faith, which later merged organically with the ideology of Marxism in their minds⁴⁴⁰. The author draws parallels between the concepts of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the Old Believers' ideologies and following/deviating the Bolsheviks party line, between the eschatology of Old Believers and the Bolshevik utopianism, between aversion to the Nikonian Church in both movements, and so on. Among those whom Pyzhikov lists as "crypto-Old Believers" are M.I. Kalinin, G.I. Myasnikov, A.G. Shlyapnikov, N.I. Yezhov, V.M. Molotov, and many others. Of course, the fact that the author, relying on some Bolsheviks' origins from the area populated by the Old Believers, makes a conclusion about their Old Faith background looks doubtful, given the extremely heterogeneous pre-revolutionary religious landscape of the Russian Empire. Assumptions about possible Wanderer experience of Yezhov, based on the fact of very little information about his early years look farfetched at all. However, the main proof that Pyzhikov's arguments are at most a speculation is that Bolshevik leading

⁴⁴⁰ Pyzhikov A.V. Korni stalinskogo bolshevizma. M., 2017.

ideologues and officials had very little idea about who the Old Believers were and what to do with them.

The only Bolshevik official whose origins can be unequivocally described as Old Believer was Aleksandr Shlyapnikov, one of the leaders of so-called "workers' opposition"⁴⁴¹. Liliana Riga in her work on how the Late Imperial experience of the Bolsheviks transformed into their own approaches to governing the post-imperial diversity even calls Shlyapnikov a "devout Old Believer"⁴⁴². However, since Shlyapnikov joined the Bolshevik party, he had no history of proved contacts with the Old Believers. Moreover, he had never engaged neither in elaboration of the Soviet religious policy nor in registered interactions with his former co-religionists during the period. In the 1920s the Old Believers were seeking for a Soviet statesman who could represent their interests, appealing to a wide range of Soviet bureaucrats, but Shlyapnikov had never been considered to be a relevant figure.

Indeed, many of the Bolsheviks might have religious affiliation in the past. Probably each of them, if born in the Russian Empire, was inscribed in the metric of the Nikonian church, mosque, kościół or synagogue, that is, underwent a religious initiation rite appropriate to his or her confession⁴⁴³. However, at least as the sources of this work demonstrate, there were very few cadres in the Bolshevik Party who had any idea who the Old Believers were⁴⁴⁴, let alone the Wanderers. This state of affairs seems logical, since Bolshevik ideologists did not need to know much about the followers of the Old Faith. The Old Believers were not as antagonistic to officials

⁴⁴¹ *Allen B.* Aleksandr Shlyapnikov, 1885–1937: Life of an Old Bolshevik. Leiden, 2015. P.9.

⁴⁴² *Riga L.* The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire. Cambridge, 2012. P. 262.

⁴⁴³ For a curious take on the Orthodox background of participants in the Bolshevik revolution and the Civil war see: *Kenworthy S. M.* Rethinking the Russian Orthodox Church and the Bolshevik Revolution // *Revolutionary Russia*. 2018. Vol. 31. no. 1. P. 1-23.

⁴⁴⁴ A rare example of a detailed statement about the Old Believers made by a top Soviet official is perhaps the article by Nadezhda Krupskaya, written already in the late 1920s. By this point, the Soviet authorities had an unequivocally hostile view of religious believers, which is reflected in the text. Thus, Krupskaya writes: "Old Believers were not so much about religion as about their particular class organization. Old Believers covered the most reactionary, especially exploitative part of the kulaks. In the village the "strong" peasants were usually the leaders of the Old Believers... The fight against the kulaks, profiteers at the same time is the best way to fight the Old Believers". *Krupskaia N.K.* Bibliotechnoe delo. Izby-chital'ni. Klubnye uchrezhdenii. Muzei. M., 2014. P. 108.

as the representatives of the Nikonian Church, and interaction with them was not as strategically important as, for example, interaction with the Muslim communities of the Caucasus⁴⁴⁵.

The small number of political figures who had even a vague idea of Wanderers includes Vasilii Shumov, an official in the 8th and later 5th (on the separation of church and state)⁴⁴⁶ People's Commissariat of Justice, Pyotr Krasikov, the Head of the same department, and Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, one of the most important Bolshevik ideologists, student of religion and ethnographer. Shumov conducted an expertise on an alleged case of the Red Death in Ivanovo-Voznesensk Province⁴⁴⁷ and met with a delegation of the Wanderers in the mid-1920s along with Krasikov (on this see Chapter 3).

Bonch-Bruevich should be discussed individually. To begin with, Bonch-Bruevich can hardly be called an erudite expert in all things relating to the Old Believers. Not only his fantastic quantitative assessments of the non-Synodal Orthodoxy are at issue here. Even before the revolution he was criticized by his colleagues in religious studies for the low quality of his expertise on the Old Believers⁴⁴⁸. Concerning the Wanderers, in the Bonch-Bruevich archive at the Museum of the History of Religion the materials about them are divided into three units of storage at once: “the Red Death performers” [krasnosmertniki]⁴⁴⁹, “the Undergrounders”⁴⁵⁰, “the Runaways”⁴⁵¹. This indirectly suggests that Bonch-Bruevich did not fully understand the subjects of his expertise. Moreover, while Bonch-Bruevich was approached by representatives of various religious movements, including the Old Believers⁴⁵², the Wanderers themselves tried to seek other intercessors among the Bolsheviks.

⁴⁴⁵ A good example of Bolshevik strategic pragmatism is the institutionalization of Sharia courts in the North Caucasus during the Civil War, as a way of attracting local Muslim leaders to their side. *Bobrovnikov V.* Al-Azhar and Shari'a Courts in Twentieth Century Caucasus // Middle Eastern Studies. 2001. Vol. 37. no. 4. P. 1-24.

⁴⁴⁶ *Odintsov M.I.* Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov nakanune i v epokhu stalinskogo sotsializma 1917-1953 gg. M., 2014. P. 64-65

⁴⁴⁷ GARF. A353. Op. 7. D. 9. L. 34-35.

⁴⁴⁸ For an example of criticism of the Bonch-Bruevich expertise voiced by another Late Imperial scholar of religion, Semyon Bondar', see RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133 D. 112. L. 42-42ob.

⁴⁴⁹ GMIR F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. 59.

⁴⁵⁰ GMIR F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. 109.

⁴⁵¹ GMIR F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. 50.

⁴⁵² For example, the Yaroslavl' Pomortsy, in resolving their conflict with the local authorities, appealed specifically to Bonch-Bruevich "as to a person who is familiar with our life". GMIR. F. 2. Op. 9. Ed. 57. L. 10.

January 23, 1918 marked the publication of the Decree “On Separation of Church from State and School from Church”⁴⁵³. Paradoxically, the first religious emancipation in the history of the former Russian Empire was the brainchild of the new atheist government. The decree of 1918, which deprived the formerly dominant Church of its privileged position, had a positive effect on the legal status of members of those religious movements, which before the revolution were at least in a fragile legal position, if not persecuted. Those suspected (rightly or wrongly) of fanaticism for years, such as the Skoptsy and the Wanderers, found themselves on a par with the representatives of the former Synodal Church before a harsh (but indifferent to theological nuances) law⁴⁵⁴.

The Wanderers were not involved in the notorious projects of the first years of Soviet power aimed at rapprochement with sectarians. They were not part of the "United Council of Religious Communities and Groups" whose representatives took part in drafting the decree "On Exemption from Military Service for Religious Beliefs" of January 4, 1919⁴⁵⁵. As far as it follows from the sources, they did not respond in any way to the proclamation of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture "To the Sectarians and Old Believers Living in Russia and Abroad" of October 5, 1921⁴⁵⁶, which provided privileges for former religious dissidents in obtaining the land for taming. Moreover, in the case of the proclamation, the document did not keep pace with reality. By 1921, the Wanderers no longer needed an invitation from the state to work the land. By that time their labor cooperative, reassembled on the basis of the steam mill collective, was already functioning in Danilov.

The Wanderers suddenly appeared in the text of Circular No. 237 "On the procedure for examining cases of exemption from military service on religious grounds" of the People's

⁴⁵³ SU [Sobranie zakonov i rasporiazhenii Rabochego i krest'ianskogo pravitelstva RSFSR, izdavaemoe Narodnym komissariatom iustitsii] RSFSR, 1918. no. 18, St. 263.

⁴⁵⁴ On the discussion on the decree, the context of the discussion, and the reaction of believers see: *Odintsov M.I.* Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov nakanune i v epokhu stalinskogo sotsializma 1917-1953 gg. P. 48-51.

⁴⁵⁵ Art. 192 Sobranie zakonov i rasporiazhenii pravitelstva za 1919 g. Upravlenie delami Sovnarkoma SSSR M. 1943. P. 281-282. On the process of drafting the decree see *Protasova A. V.* Osvobozhdenie ot voinskoi povinnosti po religioznym ubezhdeniiam sektantov khristianskogo tolka v pervye gody sovetskoi vlasti v 1917-1924 gg. // *Izvestiia vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii. Povolzhskii region. Gumanitarnye nauki.* 2021. Vol. 58. no. 2. P. 47-55.

⁴⁵⁶ GARF. F. 3316. Op. 2. D.8. L. 84-85.

Commissariat of Justice of the RSFSR of November 5, 1923, where they are listed among "the religious sects, which appeared under Tsarism and which consider the refusal to perform a military service to be one of their obligatory tenets"⁴⁵⁷. The Wanderers were mentioned in the text in a rather strange way: "the Netovtsy (runaways or Wanderers who only received the so-called 'second baptism')".

This wording reflects some familiarity of the authors of the decree with the religious practices of the Wanderers, in particular with the fact that after a "second baptism"⁴⁵⁸ the believer is obliged to begin his flight. In addition, it indicates the involvement of the Wanderers themselves in the drafting process of the document. In addition, it is known that the delegation of the Wanderers was accepted by Krasikov, one of the authors of the decree, just two months before its publication⁴⁵⁹ (see Chapter 3). On the other hand, as has already been said, the Wanderers were extremely sensitive to notions of their own exclusivity and non-similarity to other movements of the Old Believers, while in this formulation they appear to be a kind of the Netovtsy, a completely different branch of the Old Faith. This inconsistency suggests that if the Wanderers had anything to do with the drafting of the decree, it was only indirect, otherwise they would hardly have agreed to be confused with the Netovtsy.

In this part of the thesis, I argue that there was no systematic and centralized Soviet religious policy toward the Wanderers (or even Old Believers in general). As will be shown, until the end of the 1920s, interaction between the Wanderers and the Soviet authorities (local and central) was sporadic and chaotic. For example, in the early 1920s the Wanderers had conflicts with local authorities and resolved conflicts through appeals to the central authorities. However, at the end of the 1920s, local authorities could already conceal the Wanderers and avoid informing the Center about their activities in the territory under their jurisdiction. Thus, the relationship between the Wanderers and Soviet officials consisted of many ad hoc contacts with little predictable outcome

⁴⁵⁷ *Ezhenedelnik sovetskoi iustitsii*. 1923. no. 44. P. 1028.

⁴⁵⁸ From the Wanderers' point of view, this was the first and only baptism, as formal Nikonian baptism was not considered to be a real one.

⁴⁵⁹ GARF. F. A353. Op. 8. D. 8. L.82-83.

for either side. This prevents any generalization of Soviet strategies and approaches in dealing with the Wanderers.

Of course, it is fair to ponder why a targeted policy is needed at all for the interaction with such a small group of the population. However, probably the absence of any coherent and engineered policy is not only true for interactions between Soviet authorities and Old Believers. This is also true for the field of interaction of various registers of the Bolshevik authorities with religious groups and individuals in general, at least when it comes to the first post-revolutionary decade. Here it is difficult not to agree with Victoria Smolkin that Soviet religious policy was driven primarily by improvisation and pragmatics, and did not represent any systematic approach aimed at destroying religion⁴⁶⁰. Guided by their own progressist Marxist beliefs, the few Bolsheviks who addressed the issue of religion assumed that as a socialist/communist society was built, the need for faith would disappear⁴⁶¹. Religion, which according to Krasikov was just "an outdated way of the reality theorizing"⁴⁶², following this logic was to die on its own. However, it quickly became apparent that religion was not going to die of natural causes, and the triumphant revolutionaries had to find ways to coexist with it⁴⁶³.

Nevertheless, in this part of the study I will insist that it is impossible to identify any systematic Soviet religious policy until at least the late 1920s. Here it is more a matter of a combination of chaotic, pragmatic, and improvisational ad hoc tactics, not always aimed against religious communities, but sometimes even seeking to gain alliances with believers⁴⁶⁴. However, even this unsystematic approach was enough to make the so-called "Golden Age of sectarianism"

⁴⁶⁰ *Smolkin V.* *A Sacred Space Is Never Empty.* New Jersey, 2018. P. 22.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.* P. 15-16.

⁴⁶² *Krasikov P.* *Krestianstvo i religiia (Doklad po religioznomu voprosu na sezde kommunarov, v dekabre 1919 goda).* // *Revoliutsiia i tserkov.* no. 6-8. 1919. P. 1-15.

⁴⁶³ *Smolkin V.* *A Sacred Space Is Never Empty.* P. 15-16.

⁴⁶⁴ On the Soviet religious policy and Soviet militant/scientific atheism as a controversial phenomenon see also: *Luukkanen A.* *The party of unbelief: The religious policy of the Bolshevik party.* Helsinki, 1994; *Pospelovskii D. V.* *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' v 20 veke.* M., 1995; *Peris D.* *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless.* Ithaca, 1998; *Odintsov M. I.* *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov nakanune i v epokhu stalinskogo sotsializma 1917–1953 gg.*

possible⁴⁶⁵. This "Golden Age" was accompanied by a rapid increase in the number of followers of former religious dissidents, primarily Protestants of various groups and the Old Believers⁴⁶⁶.

However, the reasons for the success of this kind of "the sectarian flourishing" cannot be reduced to the haphazardness or absence of Soviet religious policy, and certainly not to the liberalization of state policy towards believers.⁴⁶⁷ In the case of the Wanderers, as in the case of Coleman's Baptists and Khaleed's Jadeeds, it is more likely a continuation of processes within religious communities that began at the beginning of the century. Thus, post-revolutionary religious emancipation and the absence of a centralized religious policy during the first 10 years of the Soviet Union did not set in motion a religious revival, but only allowed the unfolding processes to take full effect.

2.3.1. The Millers into the Artelshchiki. The Wanderers and the Soviet agricultural cooperation.

The inter-revolutionary period was marked by the flowering of the Old Believers' public politics⁴⁶⁸. The Old Believers of various branches used this time to hold numerous meetings and form joint committees, which would be included in the political struggle for the rights of followers of the Old Faith. Some of the Old Believers' politicians even spoke about their rights in terms of the right to national self-determination: "All the peoples and tribes inhabiting Russia take care of themselves, demand all sorts of rights and benefits for themselves, loudly expressing their needs, desires and aspirations. And only the Old Believers, the true Russian people, remain silent, do not make any demands or even simple desires"⁴⁶⁹.

⁴⁶⁵ Coleman H.J. Russian Baptists and spiritual revolution, 1905-1929P. P. 154, 224.

⁴⁶⁶ See for ex.: Freeze G. Subversive Atheism: From Antireligious Campaign to Religious Revival in Ukraine in the 1920s // State Secularism and Lived Religion in Russia and Ukraine. Ed. Catherine Wanner. New York and Washington DC, 2012. P.27-62. Wanner C. Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism. Culture and Society after Socialism Series. Ithaca, 2007. P.43-46.

⁴⁶⁷ The idea that the 1920s were a period of "religious NEP" does not seem quite appropriate to me, as it suggests that this was some sort of Bolshevik intentional policy. As the sources on which this work is based suggest, it is difficult to speak of any universal Bolshevik approach to religious policy. Rather, the polyphony of different pragmatic and chaotic approaches was involved. On the idea of the religious NEP see *Nezhiviykh N.A.* Religiozniy NEP. Gosudarstvenno-tserkovnye otnosheniia v 1920-e gg. (na materialakh Zapadnoi Sibiri) Omsk, 2012.

⁴⁶⁸ Kerov V.V. Staroobriadchestvo v 1917 g // Rossiiskaia istoriia. 2018. no. 1. P. 143-160.

⁴⁶⁹ *Prestupnoe molchanie staroobriadtsev* // Slovo Tserkvi. 1917. no. 18.

However, the speaker quoted here clearly underestimated the loudness of the political statements of the followers of the Old Faith. The urban Old Believers-capitalists expressed their demands and desires quite loudly. This period was unique in the history of the Old Faith, not only because of their political activism, but because, perhaps for the first time since the mid-17th century, the period was marked not by divisions of the Old Believers, but rather by unions of representatives of different branches, albeit political.

However, it must be said that open political life was the privilege of only a very small group of urban Old Believers, while the vast masses of rural Old Believers were most likely completely indifferent to the political projects of their coreligionists. At least, as Elena Borovik shows, almost a year of open Old Believer political life resulted in developing a political program almost identical to the Kadet agenda by the urban Old Believers, industrialists and merchants, while the rural Old Believers, like other peasants, confidently voted for the Social Revolutionaries in the elections to the Constituent Assembly⁴⁷⁰.

The Wanderers did not participate collectively in the political life of 1917. They did not ally or cooperate with other Old Believers. The February Revolution did not seriously affect the lives of the Wanderers. The only consequence of the fall of the autocracy for the Wanderers was the closure of a number of hopelessly stalled criminal cases against them in the courts between February and October of 1917⁴⁷¹. Ryabinin, as a prisoner convicted under a criminal rather than a religious-criminal article, remained in the Irkutsk prison, while the steam mill in Danilov continued to operate, providing the Wanderers with the means of subsistence.

In contrast to the February Revolution, the October Revolution significantly changed the repertoire of the Wanderers' strategies of interaction with the state. The religious tolerance enshrined in Soviet legislation made possible a situation in which Wanderers, for the first time, had an opportunity for a dialogic interaction with the state agencies which had only appeared in the pre-October life of the Wanderers in order to put them on the dock. From 1917 to 1929, the

⁴⁷⁰ *Kliukina Iu. V. Staroobriadtsy i politicheskie partii (1905-1917)*. P. 339-340.

⁴⁷¹ GAYaO. F.346 .Op.4. T.4. D. 7173.

Danilov Wanderers community enjoyed a legal status and exhibited an amazing ability to integrate itself into the newly emerging Soviet space.

In his work "A Brief History of the Church" written in the 1950s, the vernacular historian, a Wanderer monk Nikita, described the Early Soviet experience of the Wanderers as follows:

"The advent of Soviet power, though godless, was not greeted with hostility by the Wanderers. For the Wanderers waited and even saw in this people's power a liberator from monarchical oppression and persecution of their faith. Feeling the freedom given by the new Soviet government, the Wanderers emerged from their hiding places, the vast majority of them leaving their wandering lifestyle to enjoy the rights of Soviet citizens. The same was perhaps true of the rest of the cautious Wanderers: because they saw, from the moment the church separated from the state, that their religious freedom was not restricted in any way. Further, the constitution granting freedom of conscience and other democratic rights utterly summoned the Wanderers from their underground. The Wanderers began to live openly, to organize collectives, operative [apparently cooperative] artels, to build houses of worship, etc."⁴⁷²

Of course, such a late retrospective text imbued with Soviet discursive elements and clichés is not a relevant source for analyzing how the revolutionary and post-revolutionary events were perceived by the Wanderers. However, the last sentence of Nikita's account accurately reflects the actual activities of the Wanderers during this period. Some of the Wanderers began to live openly, organized artels and built houses of worship. In other respects, however, the relationship between the Danilov Wanderers and the various incarnations of the Soviet power was far from idyllic, but this did not prevent the believers from doing their best to hold their ground in the emerging Soviet space.

Sources on the history of the Danilov community of this period are fragmentary. The Millers themselves, in their later works, did not describe in detail their economic activity during this period, limiting their accounts to the spiritual school history. The volume of the documents on

⁴⁷² ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1974. L. 11.

interaction between the local or central Soviet authorities and the Wanderers is not large and does not allow a thorough recreation of the way of life of the Wanderers. However, even these rare documents, combined with the factual information contained in the writings of Ryabinin's opponents, primarily Maksim Zalesskii, allow us to imagine how the Millers spent the first decade of the Soviet power and what place they found for themselves in the Soviet space.

The Danilov Steam Mill, a financial pillar and symbol of the Wanderers' split, was nationalized and transferred under the management of the local City Council in August 1920⁴⁷³. This event was preceded by several conflicts between the Wanderers and the local authorities.

It is known that in November of 1919 the District Transport Emergency Commission (UTChK) carried out a search in the Danilov flour milling artel, probably on suspicion of the profiteering⁴⁷⁴. The search resulted in the seizure of more than 80 items⁴⁷⁵. A long inventory of the items seized contained many things ranging from a field telephone and wiring materials to shoe leathers, cloth, sugar, and candies, as stated in a note, "received for the day of Soviet propaganda". In April 1920 there was an even more unpleasant incident for the Wanderers. The Danilov cooperators, according to them, for the first time in the 250-year history of their religious movement, dared to hold an open funeral for their co-religionist Rogozhnikov⁴⁷⁶, after registering his death in all necessary institutions⁴⁷⁷. However, the Danilov authorities (primarily UTChK) doubted that it was Rogozhnikov who was buried. The suspicions were raised by the fact that the deceased was reportedly a defendant in a certain unknown criminal case⁴⁷⁸. A commission consisting of doctors, representatives of UTChK and the police exhumed Rogozhnikov's corpse in order to identify the deceased. Such a procedure, quite expectedly, aroused in the Wanderers "a feeling of deep disgust".⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷³ GAYaO.F. P-247 Op.1 D. 599 – L. 29.

⁴⁷⁴ GARF F. 1235. Op. 56. D.26. L. 84ob.

⁴⁷⁵ The inventory of items seized is described in Ibid. L. 79-82.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. L. 84.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid. L. 87.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. L. 77.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. L. 77-77ob.

After such an insult, the Wanderers had no choice but to go to Moscow⁴⁸⁰. An appeal to Mikhail Kalinin, submitted to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in early June 1920, contained complaints of persecution committed by the local authorities, requests for returning belongings requisitioned during the search, and for the protection from the confiscation of theological literature. In addition, the Wanderers petitioned for the permission for the baptized believers to reside without any official documents⁴⁸¹. The letters were written in plain language for the Soviet bureaucrat and contained Soviet discursive elements, reflecting the fact that the Wanderers were well acquainted with the realm of the Soviet ideology and were able to draw benefit from it. For example, the author of application refers to members of his community as "workers and peasants wandering". In addition, the applicant reports that "they [the Wanderers] lived under Tsarism secretly beneath the protection of their lay followers and carried the usual nickname of 'revolutionary communists' given to them by Tsarist servants"⁴⁸².

The Wanderers also attached to their applications a multi-page "Overview of the history of Orthodox Christians wandering" with a detailed account of the history and dogmatics of the confession, written according to the rules of the pre-reform orthography and the chronology from the creation of the world⁴⁸³. The text began with a brief review of the history of community from Nikon⁴⁸⁴ to the October Revolution and continued with a listing of features of the doctrine, a number of which clearly show attempts to demonstrate loyalty to the supposed readers from Mikhail Kalinin's office:

⁴⁸⁰ The phenomenon of Old Believer deputations and practices of interaction with various branches of Soviet power still remain understudied. Even though there are known examples of how Old Believers of different branches in their attempts to solve urgent problems reached (sometimes literally on foot) the highest Soviet bureaucratic instances. On the Old Believers who went to Lenin to resolve an armed conflict with the local authorities in the town of Uren (Kostroma Province), see: *Nagradov I.S. Kostromskie krest'iane-starobriadtsy v usloviakh revoliutsionnykh potriasenii (1918–nachalo 1920-kh godov) // Vestnik Kostromskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. 2013. Vol. 19. no. 5. P. 63–66.*

⁴⁸¹ GARF. F. 1235. Op. 56. D.26. L. 85.

⁴⁸² Ibid. L. 84.

⁴⁸³ Ibid. L. 86–104ob.

⁴⁸⁴ Among the glorious ideological predecessors of the Danilov Wanderers was mentioned Avvakum, not a typical character for their hagiographic and historiographic traditions. Ibid. L. 95ob.

"16. The wandering Christians recognize civil authority to watch over the state order and teach that the world can't exist without authority.

17. The civil authority is obeyed as far as its commands are not harmful to the true Orthodox confession

...

27. "To no political party, neither monarchical, nor anarchical, nor democratic, etc., they have belonged, do not belong and cannot belong. By virtue of their purely religious convictions, they can be neither revolutionaries nor counter-revolutionaries"⁴⁸⁵.

"Overview of the History" also mentions the Wanderers' conscious non-acceptance of identification documents, a common cause of conflicts between them and the Soviet authorities (primarily the local Soviets and the Cheka) in the first post-revolutionary years:

«23. "The passport fastening to the place of residence and citizenship is not and cannot be accepted because of the renunciation of the world"⁴⁸⁶.

However, these stipulations of Wanderers' dogmatics regarding the rejection of documents applied only to already baptized Wanderers. The unbaptized, according to the text, have "citizenship rights on an equal footing with all citizens of the R. S. F. S. R."⁴⁸⁷.

In addition to these obvious indications of loyalty, the "Overview of the History" contained extensive and lengthy ponderings of the Wanderers on the nature of the Antichrist and debunking the legend of the Red Death. The Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy are also mentioned in the work, but only in order to absolve the Millers of responsibility to the Soviet authorities for the possible disloyalty of the "heretics"⁴⁸⁸.

The presence of "Overview of the History" in the folder of bureaucratic documents is an illustration of the dual mode of existence of the Millers, both as a religious community and as a labor collective integrated into Soviet economic sphere and able and willing to play by its rules.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. L. 98-99ob.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid. 98ob – 99.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid. L. 87.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. L. 104ob.

Thus, the language of "Overview of the History" replete with theological terminology and the very manner of writing distinguishes it from other complaints, statements, and bureaucratic documents of the Danilov Wanderers of this period. One can even assume that the "Overview of the History" is an unsolicited initiative of the direct deputy to Kalinin, Potap Morozov, whose signature is under this text. The fact is that the Wanderers quickly learned "to speak Bolshevik"⁴⁸⁹. In their petitions to Kalinin (with the exception of "Overview of the History") they skillfully appeal to their working-class status and their experience of persecution under the tsarist regime⁴⁹⁰. Their correspondence with the Danilov authorities in no way reveals religiosity of the artel workers. The Millers skillfully defend their labor rights, take advantage of the opportunities of bureaucracy, and even certify their documents with their own stamp having a hammer and a sickle⁴⁹¹. Unfortunately, the results of the Wanderers' appeal to Kalinin are unknown to us. Except for the marginalia of the chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, who requested information about the community from the Yaroslavl' Executive Committee, there is no information about further interactions between the Wanderers and Kalinin.

For about ten years the mill was an important center of attraction for the Wanderers from all over Russia. During this time, the community clustered around it probably gained a sufficient experience of the economic activities and interaction with the surrounding world. Thus, even now having lost this peculiar "anchor", it has remained in place in Danilov. After the nationalization of the mill in 1920, the Wanderers petitioned to organize an agricultural artel. If the source is to be

⁴⁸⁹ As Irina Roldugina pointed out with regard to the example of Early Soviet "queers", marginal groups within Soviet society learned to speak Bolshevik long before Stephen Kotkin's Magnitogorsk workers, which is also true for the Old Believers. *Roldugina I. "Pochemu my takie liudi?": Rannesovetskie gomoseksualy ot pervogo litsa: novye istochniki po istorii gomoseksualnykh identichnostei v Rossii // Ab Imperio, 2016. no. 2. P. 204; Kotkin S. Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization. Berkeley, 1995.*

⁴⁹⁰ Here the Wanderers are not alone among other Old Believers, who quickly learned how to speak Bolshevik. For example, the Pomortsy of Yaroslavl, who appealed to the Council of People's Commissars in 1920 to resolve the conflict with the local authorities, already perfectly mastered the art of communication with the Soviet official and possess the skills of politically correct self-presentation. They appealed to the Soviet legislation, skillfully pointed out the hardships of life under the Old Regime, and even called their community a "commune". *GMIR, F. 2, Op. 9, Ed. 57.* Moreover, even the Nikonian monks of the Sergius Trinity Lavra soon after 1917 found themselves speaking Bolshevik to the Soviet authorities, pointing out that monasteries were not least labor brotherhoods and had the right to possess land under Soviet legislation. *Kenworthy S. M. The Heart of Russia: Trinity-Sergius, Monasticism, and Society after 1825. New York, Oxford, 2010. P. 302.*

⁴⁹¹ Used, in particular, for correspondence with the Department of Cooperation, Artisan and Smallscale Industry of Yaroslavl' in 1920. *GAYaO F. P-247. Op. 56. D.599. L. 2.*

believed, the Millers' petition was received favorably by the local authorities, even despite the tumultuous history of relations between the community and the Danilov authorities. They were given the land of a former Nikonian nunnery, as well as timber and a loan for buying a farm implements⁴⁹². This is how the cooperative "Aksioma", one of the many sectarian agricultural communes that emerged in the early years of Soviet power, came into being in Danilov⁴⁹³. The spiritual school, which became the largest educational center for the Wanderers, was also preserved within its walls⁴⁹⁴.

At the very same time, Ryabinin, who had been released from Aleksandrovsk's prison cell as early as April 22, 1918, reappeared in Danilov⁴⁹⁵. During his absence from Danilov, Aleksandr Vasilievich accepted a monastic vow, and from that time he became known as monk Arsenii⁴⁹⁶. His journey from Irkutsk to Danilov seems to have been a difficult one, given the lack of reports about him between 1918 and 1921 and the fact that he had to make his way through a territory ravaged by the Civil War.

Rare documents concerning interaction of the Wanderers with local authorities do not indicate any conflicts during most of this period. In 1925, in the registration form of the religious community, the Danilov Wanderers, contrary to their own fundamental principles, even registered themselves as sectarians⁴⁹⁷. In addition, the document characterizes the community, consisting of

⁴⁹² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. L. 68.

⁴⁹³ On the experience of the agricultural communes of the Dukhobors, Molokans, and New Israelites, some of which were formed chronologically before "the Aksioma". see *Danilova E.* «Vyrazhaem polnuiu gotovnost pomogat Sovetskoi vlasti...». *Nedolgiy opyt integratsii dukhovnykh khristian v sovetskuiu ekonomiku 1920-kh gg // Gosudarstvo, religii, tserkov v Rossii i za rubezhom*, 2018. no. 36(3). P. 60-80. On the Bolshevik projects for the establishment of sectarian agricultural communes, see *Etkind A.* *Russkie sekty i sovetskii kommunizm: proekt Vladimira Bonch-Bruevicha // Minuvshee. Istoricheskii almanakh. M. - SPb., 1996. Vol. 19. P. 275-319.* On the re-registration of the Old Believer women's hermitage as an artel in Altai province in the 1920s. *Kupriianova I.V.* *Khoziaistvenno-pravovoe polozhenie Beloretskogo skita v 1920-e gg. // Nauchnye chteniia pamiati IuS Bulygina: Sbornik nauchnykh statei. Ed. by Iu. M. Goncharova. Barnaul, 2004. P. 119-122.* Not only "sectarian" communities re-grouped into labor communes and artels in the early years of the Soviet regime. At times Nikonian monasteries (including women's ones) also registered as agricultural artels in the early 1920s as well. *Dubovka D.G.* *V monastyr s mirom: v poiskakh svetskikh kornei sovremennoi dukhovnosti.* SPb., 2020. P. 44-47; *Beglov, A. I.* *V poiskakh «bezgreshnykh katakomb».* *Tserkovnoe podpole v SSSR. M., 2008. P. 32-33.*

⁴⁹⁴ The Danilov Theological School was the alma mater for several prominent Wanderers who took leadership after Ryabinin's death. This is evidenced, for example, by the Wanderers' martyrologic manuscript "On the 11 Sufferers of the 20th Century". ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434-2.

⁴⁹⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 279. L.17.

⁴⁹⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78 – L.68.

⁴⁹⁷ It is unimaginable that the Wanderers would have adopted the "god-awful" title "sectarians" for themselves before the October. Nevertheless, in the 1925 registration form of the Wanderers' religious community in Danilov, it became

middle-class peasants, as faithfully carrying out all orders of the Soviet authorities and paying taxes on time⁴⁹⁸.

The labor practices tested by Ryabinin at the mill were successfully adapted to the new conditions. Employees of “Aksioma”, both female and male, worked in the collective farm fields for a whole week, regardless of church holidays. In addition, the artel itself brought in a steady income. Even staunch opponents of the Millers called “Aksioma” a model farm⁴⁹⁹. As Ryabinin said in a conversation with a fellow believer in 1926: "We now have a collective instead of the mill, the laymen work at it and feed us, so we are not in need of any bread"⁵⁰⁰. In addition to its economic purpose, “Aksioma” became a kind of shelter for the Wanderers from all over the country, where they, often undocumented, could stay in relative safety⁵⁰¹.

At the same time, in the fall of 1926 in the village of Savinskaya near Vichuga, the last attempt at a conciliatory council of the Wanderers, which split in 1911-1913 into the Millers and the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, took place⁵⁰². It should be said that if one looks at the protocols of the council in isolation from the historical context, one might think that the opponents met somewhere in a parallel universe. Neither in the transcripts nor in the retelling of the events of the council are there any time markers. The fact that the events took place near industrialized Ivanovo in the 9th year after October 1917 is only hinted at. Thus, for example, the delegates are wary of crossing the village with their books in the daytime⁵⁰³.

Long negotiations and logistical problems preceded the Council: a whole library of books and originals of the works of Nikita Semyonov and Roman Loginovich had to be delivered to

acceptable for them to write the name of their community in the "Name of Sect" column of the questionnaire. However, it would be fair to assume that the Wanderers could have been registered as sectarians without their consent. GAYaO. F. P-514 Op.1 D. 427. L. 1.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ The label "exemplary farm" belongs, in particular, to the pen of Maksim Zalesskii, a supporter of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. L. 69.

⁵⁰⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. L. 70. However, there are reports that when preparing for the 1926 council, Ryabinin complained that he had no funds to organize it. Kargopol'skoe sobranie 104. L. 96-96ob.

⁵⁰¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. – L. 69-70.

⁵⁰² For the minutes of the polemics and the acts of the council, see OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 104.

⁵⁰³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 114-114ob.

Savinskaya to be quoted at the debates⁵⁰⁴. The council itself took place in the dire atmosphere of the old conflict that had arisen with the construction of the steam mill and the beginning of the centralization of the hierarchy. Accusations against Ryabinin of arbitrarily obtaining the status of a monk were added to the old controversies⁵⁰⁵. Ryabinin testified that the story of the mill began with the need for a theological school because the movement lacked educated preachers⁵⁰⁶. The heat of passion, as witness Zalesskii reports, was so high that the parties broke out in shouting⁵⁰⁷, and once it almost came to a fight⁵⁰⁸. Ryabinin and his associates ridiculed the benefactors who tried to participate in the dispute⁵⁰⁹. The Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, in turn, disparagingly called Ryabinin's kamelaukion a hat⁵¹⁰, and referred to him by the name Aleksandr Vasilievich rather than his monk name Arsenii. In the end, the two sides did not agree on any of the issues in dispute and departed, as they had arrived, as enemies. Thus, the trajectories of the two communities of Wanderers drifted apart and practically never crossed over again.

2.3.2. Forced Break of the Wanderers from the Soviet Space and Retreat into the Underground

Contrary to the Wanderers' multiple statements, made both in correspondence with Soviet officials⁵¹¹ and in the historical chronicle of monk Nikita, that the Soviet authorities gave the Wanderers an open life, one cannot say that the relationship of the Danilov Wanderers and the Soviet authorities was fully harmonious. The Wanderers may have been persecuted, as mentioned above, for being undocumented or on suspicion of profiteering. However, the ease with which the Wanderers learned to play by the Soviet state's rules once again confirms the assumption that some of them were highly prepared to integrate and hold their positions in the emerging Soviet domain.

⁵⁰⁴ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 94-99ob.

⁵⁰⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 111ob-112ob.

⁵⁰⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 103-103ob.

⁵⁰⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 106.

⁵⁰⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 126ob

⁵⁰⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 102.

⁵¹⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 102.

⁵¹¹ GARF F. 1235. Op. 56. D.26. L. 84-84ob.

However, the transformation of the Soviet political regime by the end of the 1920s brought the Wanderers back to the verge of illegality.

Here is how monk Nikita writes about this period:

“... The Soviet government began to see the Wanderers as people harmful to the state, conducting religious agitation among the population and calling the government representatives godless and the Antichrists, by this ["they"] aroused the wrath of the Soviet authorities against the Wanderers. For such preaching, the government ceased its tolerance for the Wanderers and began to persecute them. Then the most active of the Wanderers again remembered their former illegal way of life and strengthened in their faith went back into hiding”⁵¹².

However, it seems that Nikita overrates the capacity and radical nature of the Wanderers' dissidence in the late 1920s. As far as it is known from reports on the activities of Ryabinin and “Aksioma” during this period, the Danilov community was not engaged in the anti-Soviet agitation. There are even reports that at the Council of 1926 Ryabinin's associates claimed that at the present moment "the Antichrist has been silenced" and the persecution has ceased⁵¹³. And yet, by 1929, the Danilov Artel and the Wanderers who worked in it or studied at the local theological school found themselves under attack from three sides at once by the maturing undergoing the Cultural Revolution Stalinist regime.

Certainly, the sharp hostility of the Soviet authorities to all sorts of sectarians was part of broader processes, which in Soviet studies were referred to as the "Cultural Revolution of 1928-1931," by analogy with the Chinese political campaign of 1966-1976⁵¹⁴. In addition to the antireligious campaigns, collectivization and industrialization, this period was marked by mass campaigns to improve literacy and promote hygiene and sobriety, the fight against bourgeois specialists⁵¹⁵. The economic breakthrough and the ensuing cultural transformation, initiated from

⁵¹² ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. no. 1974. L. 11ob.

⁵¹³ Kargopol'skoe sobranie 104. L. 114-114ob.

⁵¹⁴ On a genealogy of the term see *David-Fox M.* What Is Cultural Revolution? // *The Russian Review*. 1999. Vol. 58. no. 2. P. 181-201; On the grassroots nature of the Cultural Revolution, see *Fitzpatrick S.* Cultural revolution in Russia 1928-32 // *Journal of Contemporary History*. 1974. Vol. 9. no. 1. P. 33-52.

⁵¹⁵ *David-Fox M.* What Is Cultural Revolution? P. 199.

above, were designed to do away with the vestiges of the Old Regime and the forced "retreats" of the NEP, such as a "backward" economy with a significant private sector, peasant ignorance and religious remnants. The goal of these pervasive processes was an economically and ideologically homogeneous socialist space⁵¹⁶. It is difficult to imagine that in such a space there would have been a suitable social niche for the Wanderers (at least without a serious transformation of their modes of existence). However, as will be shown in Chapter 4, there were wanderers who decided to become part of the Stalinist social domain precisely under these conditions.

"Aksioma" came under attack from several directions at once. First, it was no secret to any of the local authorities that "Aksioma" was a labor but also a religious collective. By 1929 this duality had become unacceptable from the point of view of Soviet legislation. Point 17 of the Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People's Commissars "On religious associations" from April 8, 1929 forbade sectarians to form any agricultural associations and ordered them to join the state collective farms⁵¹⁷. In addition, the Soviet authorities' attitude toward sectarians of all kinds was sharply radicalized. The regime of limited tolerance, or to be more precise, simply a haphazard approach, was done away with. Sectarians were no longer perceived as companions, though deviant and archaic, but still carrying the ideals of collectivity. Now they appeared as harmful and alien to the Soviet domain⁵¹⁸.

For the first time since the beginning of the 20th century, anti-Wanderer literature began being published again. Several anti-religious books published in 1930-1932 gave fairly accurate information on the dogmas of the Wanderers, the 1911-1913 schism, the mill and the personality

⁵¹⁶ Here I agree with the view that the New Economic Policy was a period in which the ideological Bolshevik mainstream had to reckon with the complex socio-cultural nature of society, with the legacy of pre-revolutionary Russia finding itself in irreconcilable conflict with the aims and ways of the Bolshevik-inspired forceful transformation of the society. At least the Bolsheviks did not make a consistent attempt to eradicate this diversity. However, the Cultural Revolution put an end to this state of affairs. *Rosenberg W.G.* "Introduction. NEP Russia as a "transitional" society" // *Russia in the Era of NEP. Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture*. Ed. by Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexandr Rabinovich and Richard Stites. Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1991. P. 3. For similar ideas on the end of the NEP, as the end of a regime of limited pluralism and the permissibility of limited economic, cultural and social hybridity, see: *Gerasimov I., Glebov S., Mogil'ner M.* *Gibridnost': Marrizm i voprosy iazyka imperskoi situatsii* // *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 2017. no. 2. P. 174-206.

⁵¹⁷ Text of the decree: SU RSFSR, 1929, no. 35, st. 353.

⁵¹⁸ On the change in the Soviet ideologists' attitude toward sectarians at the end of the 1920s see *Engelshtein L.* *Skopty i Tsarstvo nebesnoe*. P. 237-238.

of Ryabinin⁵¹⁹. In addition, as can be seen from these works, the authors used the text of the "Acts of the Council in the Vichuga country" of 1913⁵²⁰, and one of the authors, named Shchepkin, even provided reprints from the original "Acts" as illustrations⁵²¹. Apparently, the anti-religious propagandists lacked fresh sources, because all the main events of the history of the Wanderers, painted by them, did not move beyond 1913. While the events of the schism are reported accurately, at least chronologically, the 1920s data represent a compilation of episodes of the sabotage of religious activists, which are difficult to verify and attribute to the Wanderers.

On the pages of these texts, the Wanderers become, as they did 60-70 years before, bearers of a subversive political ideology, behind whose backs one can see the kulaks lurking. In his 1932 work "Runaways from the Revolution" some Mikhail Popov declares: "The preaching of runawayism [begunstvo] is the preaching of the class enemy, frightened by the revolution and being squeezed by the pressure of the socialist attack"⁵²². In addition, Popov called for caution against the alleged loyalty of the Wanderers and listed several cases of anti-Soviet agitation on their part⁵²³.

Two years earlier, in his 1930 work on the Ural sectarians and Old Believers, Shchepkin goes even further in his criticism of the Wanderers. On the pages of this book/booklet, familiar narrative of the Wanderers' fanaticisms re-emerges again. Thus, the author provides few cases of baptism in icy water, after which believers perished⁵²⁴. In addition, in the 13th year after the October Revolution, the old legend of the Wanderers' ritual murders revives. Thus, Shchepkin cited the story of a certain Wanderer from Sepych, sick with typhus, who was baptized on his deathbed but suddenly recovered. In such a situation, his fellow believers found nothing better than to strangle the convalescent⁵²⁵. Thus, the wave of Soviet anti-sectarian propaganda that rose

⁵¹⁹ *Schepkin I.V.* Ural'skie sektanty prezhde i teper'. Sverdlovsk, M., 1930. P. 18-20; *Popov M.V.* Sektantstvo IPO prezhde i teper'. M., Ivanovo, 1931. P. 21-27; *Popov M.* Beguny ot revoliutsii [Sakta strannikov-begunov]. M., Ivanovo, 1932.

⁵²⁰ *Popov M.V.* Sektantstvo IPO prezhde i teper'. P. 21-27.

⁵²¹ *Schepkin I.V.* Ural'skie sektanty prezhde i teper'. P. 19-21.

⁵²² *Popov M.* Beguny ot revoliutsii. C. 7

⁵²³ *Ibid.* P. 26-30.

⁵²⁴ *Schepkin I.V.* Ural'skie sektanty prezhde i teper'. P. 27.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.* P. 27-28.

at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s resurrected the almost forgotten images and plots that used to be found in the synodal missionary literature under the Old Regime. Once again, the Wanderers turned out to be politically unreliable fanatics, practicing religiously motivated homicide⁵²⁶. This time the Wanderers were no longer able to justify themselves publicly though.

The second "sin" of the Wanderers from Danilov in the eyes of the Soviet authorities was that "Aksioma" was an artel. By the end of the 1920s, artels, regardless of what and where they produced, became the target of systematic attacks⁵²⁷. In the context of the unfolding cultural revolution, this type of collective organization was perceived by the ideologues of the new Soviet labor relations as a double threat. Artels were synonymous with the legacy of the past, since their collectives were usually organized on the basis of compatriots and personal acquaintances (exactly the case of "the Aksioma"). Moreover, in the eyes of the ideologists of industrialization artels looked like a backward form of production organization, while it was assumed that predominantly handicraft artels were to give way to mechanized production in the future⁵²⁸. In addition, by the late 1920s, as Oleg Kharkhordin notes, artels were viewed with suspicion by authorities at various levels, since they were usually organized by grassroots enthusiasts, rather than under the strict control of the Soviet leadership⁵²⁹.

Finally, under the conditions of collectivization unfolding according to unified, descended from above templates, the Soviet agricultural space no longer needed companions like sectarian artels or sectarian collective farms⁵³⁰. The Soviet rural economy was to become homogeneous and free of any ideological dualism of the Old Regime and the NEP. It was during this period that a large number of anti-religious materials on sectarian collective farms were published, depicting

⁵²⁶ In the case of these works, however, the phrase "Red Death" does not appear in the pages of the texts.

⁵²⁷ *Kuromiya H.* Workers' artels and Soviet production relations // Fitzpatrick S. et al. (ed.). *Russia in the era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture*. Bloomington, 1991. P.76.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.* P.81.

⁵²⁹ *Kharkhordin O.V.* Oblichat' i litsemerit' genealogiia rossiiskoi lichnosti. SPb., 2016. P.119. In English: *Kharkhordin O.* The collective and the individual in Russia: A study of practices. Berkeley, 1999.

⁵³⁰ *Danilova E.* «Vyrzhaem polnuiu gotovnost pomogat Sovetskoi vlasti...». P. 76-78. On the ideological preconditions and techniques of the implementation of collectivization see *Lewin M.* *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: a Study of Collectivization*. Trans, by Irene Nove. Evanston, 1968. On Peasant Strategies of Resistance to Collectivization see *Fitzpatrick S.* *Stalin's peasants: Resistance and survival in the Russian village after collectivization*. New York, Oxford, 1996.

their leaders as kulaks hidden behind the mask of religion, and their workers as exploited victims of their religious and labor mentors⁵³¹.

By the end of the 1920s, the Danilov authorities logically took a renewed interest in “Aksioma” activities. Searches took place twice a day. Nevertheless, the artel existed for several more years. The exact date of Aksioma's liquidation is unknown; it seems to be 1929 or 1930. The Wanderers were evicted, but were paid in cash for the buildings and the land.⁵³² Thus, by about 1930 the network of the Wanderers communities under Ryabinin's leadership had gone underground. Here it is important to emphasize that there is a huge difference between the metaphorical underground of the Wanderers before 1918 and the literal underground since 1930. The Wanderers did not return to the familiar transparent catacombs in which they existed under the Old Regime. Forcing them out of Soviet space meant launching a fundamentally different mode of existence, remotely familiar from the first half of the 1850s, when the discovery of the Wanderers resulted in a wave of persecutions. However, none of the Wanderers who lived in the early 1930s, even the oldest of them like the 80-year-old Ryabinin, had any such experience. Thus, Stalin's repressive homogenization of the Soviet social space accomplished what even the harshest Tsarist persecution of Old Believers was incapable of doing: it drove the Wanderers into the literal underground. Thus, after 12 years of open life and 20 years of open economic activity, the Wanderers were forced to exist in an underground regime that was completely new to them (For a description of what the clandestine existence regime represented and of the consequences of launching it, see Chapter 3).

Maksim Zalesskii wrote in the 1930s about the psychological state of Aksioma's former members as follows: "The disappointment that befell Ryabinin's party at the liquidation of Aksioma proved to be significant. It ruined any attempt to organize new collective farms on a

⁵³¹ *Klibanov A.I.* *Klassovoe litso sovremennogo sektantstva*. L., 1928; *Shpitsberg I. A.* *Sviatoi Vasilii Griaznov, zashchita podmoskovnykh akul tekstilnoi promyshlennosti*. M., 1929; *Alekseev, I., Shishakov, V.A.* *Kulatskie okopy (Religiia i vodka v derevenskom bytu)*. M., 1930; *Putintsev F.M.* *Kulatskoe svetoprestavlenie (Sluchai pomeshatelstva i massovogo religioznogo psikhoza na pochve kulatsko-provokatsionnykh slukhov o "Kontse sveta")*. M., 1930; *Morozov I.M.* *Sektantskie kolkhozy*. M., L., 1931.

⁵³² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. L. 71.

similar platform. From the agitators now one could hear neither praise for the collective farms nor the desire to preach wandering and shelter under their banner. Now in their party one could hear the degradation, the return to the old ways, the hope for the help of the entrepreneur [chastnik] exclusively..."⁵³³.

Only very general biographical information about the underground part of Ryabinin's biography is known. According to the hagiographic accounts, after the liquidation of "Aksioma" Ryabinin moved to Kazan', where he spent his allotted time in prayer and asceticism⁵³⁴. His health was deteriorating, and on October 20, 1938, on the feast of Intercession of Our Lady, the patriarch-reformer passed away⁵³⁵.

Maksim Zalesskii wrote that the Ryabinin party (the Millers) proved to be economically agile and quick-witted in transferring funds into industrial capital. And it is difficult to disagree with his assessment. Aleksandr Vasilievich, also known as Pavel Ryabinin, also known as monk Arsenii, was the most prominent leader of the Wanderers in the first third of the 20th century. Without his enthusiasm, economic savvy, cunning, and tenacity, it is impossible to imagine the Wanderers engaging in capitalist activity as vigorously as the Millers did from 1910 to 1930. His reforms changed social structure of the Wanderers, allowing baptized Wanderers to obtain agency not only in spiritual but also in secular affairs. One of my arguments is that the Wanderers were already included in a broad social space by the early 20th century and could hardly escape involvement in the modernizing processes of the Late Empire and the Early Soviet state. Nevertheless, it must be said that if the engine of this involvement had been someone other than Ryabinin, the probability of success in the integration of the Wanderers would have been much lower.

⁵³³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. L. 71.

⁵³⁴ There is information that Ryabinin was arrested and convicted in Tatarstan in 1933, having been in prison for slightly more than a year. However, his hagiographic biographies do not mention this fact, while an investigation file, which would confirm his conviction, is not available or is still being classified in the relevant archives.

⁵³⁵ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1429. L. 8.

2.3.3. The Wanderers in the Early Soviet State

Thus, in the first decade of Soviet rule, the last stronghold of the ideological escapism of the Wanderers - non-interaction with the authorities - fell. Why did these people find it acceptable to interact with the Soviet state given that such contact with the Imperial regime was impossible for them?

The explanation that the Old Believers found it more acceptable to come into contact with the Soviet authorities than with the Imperial regime because, for the archaic consciousness, a heretic (in this case the Romanov state, associated with the Nikonian Church) is scarier than a godless man⁵³⁶, does not seem quite satisfactory. Leaving aside theological polemics and religious quests, as long as one considers this part of the Wanderers' existence to be alien to the modernizing world, none of the actions of the Danilov Wanderers reveal their archaic worldview. On the contrary, these were a group of commoners who successfully pursued high-tech production and sought to maximize the benefits of it at minimal cost. Although the relations between the Millers and the Soviet authorities (especially the local ones) were complicated and often conflictual, there is no doubt that the Early Soviet space until the end of the 1920s seemed quite suitable for the Wanderers, otherwise they would not have stayed in Danilov for such a long period. By 1930, however, the legal possibility of their existence in Danilov had been eliminated for reasons beyond the Wanderers' control.

If it had been up to them alone, Ryabinin and his comrades could probably have kept the artel going for as long as they wished; there is no evidence of open conflicts with the authorities between 1920 and 1929. Irina Paert cites Ryabinin's participation in polemical disputes with atheists as an example of the Wanderers' opposition to Soviet religious policy⁵³⁷. However, there is almost no information in the documents examined about the views of the Danilov Wanderers on

⁵³⁶ For example, Zolnikova wrote that the roots of this perception should be sought in the features of the archaic religious consciousness of Old Believers, for whom the internal enemy is more dangerous than external, a heretic is more dangerous than an infidel, or in this case a non-believer. *Zol'nikova N.D. "Svoi" i" chuzhie" po normativnym aktam staroverov-chasovenykh // Gumanitarnye nauki v Sibiri. no. 2, 1998. P. 54-59.*

⁵³⁷ *Paert I. Preparing God's Harvest. P. 50.*

their own existence under the conditions of the atheist state and measures they took to resist the atheist propaganda of the 1920s. This does not seem to suggest that the Wanderers were in any way consistently opposed to the atheist pressure of the state or that the Wanderers were uncomfortable with the sociopolitical realities of the 1920s.

Neither Ryabinin nor his associates testified that the eschatological process that had been unfolding since the time of Nikon and Peter the Great had stopped with the construction of the steam mill. They continued to live in anticipation of the end of times, although this did not prevent them from adapting to the changing world (which they were a part of) by joining the Late Imperial urban or rural capitalism or the Early Soviet agricultural cooperation in every way they could regardless the obstacles.

Chapter 3: The Wanderers' Literary Underground. Resistance and adaptation in the face of repression and persecution

3.1 Introduction. The Wanderers in Catacombs

By the early 1930s the Wanderers found themselves literally in the underground for the first time since at least the early 1850s. Although by the early 1930s, as discussed below, the link between the Wanderers and benefactors who sheltered and supported them was still in existence, the cultural-revolutionary transformation of the Soviet social space resulted in rapid thinning of this link. Existence in such a regime no longer bore much resemblance to the "persecution play" of the late 19th century and early 20th century.

This chapter discusses several aspects of the Wanderers' underground existence and its implications. The following paragraphs focus on the biographical trajectory of Khristofor Ivanovich (Zyryanov), a Permian peasant and leader of the Vyatka/Kirov⁵³⁸ Wanderers. In the first half of the 1930s Zyryanov came to conclusion that under conditions of persecution the True Christians had no choice but self-mortification⁵³⁹. Khristofor Ivanovich's teachings rapidly spread throughout the territory under his canonical control. As a result, by the mid-1930s about 60 Wanderers, inspired by the leader's preaching, decided to voluntarily give up their lives.

Zyryanov's preaching, which remained marginal even to those Wanderers who went underground during those years, illuminated several problematic points important to this research. It is this range of issues that is to be addressed in the pages of this chapter. First, the sudden radical eschatologism of the Wanderers, who neither before nor after these events did the self-immolation, requires explanations. Second, the trajectory of Zyryanov's ideological transformations shows that the preacher and the members of his community were neither hardened millenarians nor dissidents

⁵³⁸ In 1934, at the height of the events described, Vyatka was renamed Kirov.

⁵³⁹ In terms of the Wanderers - "samoumerschvlenie" [literally self-mortification] or "smert' Khrista radi" [death for Christ's sake].

in their dealings with the Soviet authorities. Consequently, they must have had good non-ideological reasons for daring to carry out such grim acts. Third, the overwhelming majority of those who died under Zyryanov's influence were women, which seems like an appropriate occasion to analyze the gender hierarchy of the Wanderers. Finally, if the Vyatka deaths were exceptional for the Wanderers, what were their strategies and daily tactics of resistance to the pressure of the Soviet repressive authorities? Did the Wanderers resist at all? And how did they themselves perceive the situation in which, after so many years of first semi-open and then open life, Wanderers were forced to hide in the woods or basements of benefactors, facing daily fear of arrest?

3.2. On the Wanderers' religiosity

Before turning to a description of the history of the Vyatka Wanderers, it is necessary to note one peculiar feature of my protagonists' religiosity. If one compares the Wanderers with their contemporaries the Old Believers-Chasovennye, who at the same time dwelt in the Yenisei taiga and left detailed descriptions of their daily life⁵⁴⁰, one remarkable distinction catches the eye. An important part of the daily life of the Siberian Chasovennye is demon possession and exorcism practices⁵⁴¹. While possession and klikushestvo were not alien to the priestless Old Believers neither in the early 18th century⁵⁴² nor in the early 21st century⁵⁴³, not a single account of possessed Wanderers can be found in the sources. The only mention of klikushestvo associated with the Wanderers is found in an atheist pamphlet authored by Mikhail Popov (1931)⁵⁴⁴, a source that can hardly be called reliable⁵⁴⁵. The question arises: why have representatives of this radical religious movement, unlike other Old Believers, never been possessed?

⁵⁴⁰ *Pokrovskii N. N. (ed.). Uralo-Sibirskii paterik: teksty i kommentarii: V trekh tomakh. M., 2014.*

⁵⁴¹ *Pokrovskii N. N. (ed.). Uralo-Sibirskii paterik. P. 137-138, 151.*

⁵⁴² *Crummey R.O. The old believers and the world of Antichrist. P. 65-66.*

⁵⁴³ *Khristoforova O.B. Oderzhimost v russkoi derevne. M., 2016.*

⁵⁴⁴ *Popov M.V. Sektantstvo IPO prezhde i teper'. P. 47.*

⁵⁴⁵ For a very real encounter between Soviet agitators and klikushi Old Believers see *Paert I.P. "Bes kommunistov ne liubit...": narodnoe palomnichestvo, klikushi i sovetskaia vlast na Urale (K voprosu o narodnom blagochestii) // Ural'skii sbornik. Istoriia. Kultura. Religii. no. 5. Ekaterinburg, 2003. P. 281 – 293.*

It would be fair to suggest that the Wanderers in question, unlike the Siberian Old Believers, were too tightly bound to the modernizing spaces of the Russian Empire and the Soviet state to practice klikushestvo and exorcism. However, as Cristine Worobec pointed out in one of the most comprehensive studies of demonic possession in Imperial Russia, modernization did not mean the eradication of such phenomenon. On the contrary, in the late 19th century epidemics of possession, as Worobec showed, often occurred in villages near railroad stations⁵⁴⁶.

It seems that the absence of possession can rather be explained by the specific features of the Wanderers' mode of existence. Whatever the geographical, cultural and social conditions in which the phenomenon of possession occurs, at least two ingredients are necessary for its proper manifestation. First, a stable sedentary community must be present. Second, there must be a general public that is capable not only of witnessing the manifestation of possession, but also of interpreting it correctly⁵⁴⁷.

In the case of the Wanderers, both of these ingredients seem to be absent. Even assuming that their doctrine did not prescribe permanent movements, in fact, the baptized Wanderers rarely lingered in one place for long. The constant rotation of community members led to the fact that they (at least the ones discussed in the research) never formed a stable localized group anywhere. It is impossible to imagine a village inhabited exclusively by baptized Wanderers, while villages inhabited only by representatives of other branches of Old Believers are commonplace. In addition, the (albeit metaphorical) underground regime made open displays of possession, usually loud and visible, impossible. Is it possible to imagine a Wanderer publicly speaking in a demonic voice or convulsing in a town or village square? Probably not. The important religious activities of the Wanderers did take place behind closed doors, whether the neighbors knew about them or not.

It seems that this narrow question "why have the Wanderers never been possessed?" refers to the broader and more crucial for understanding religious movement issue of the absence of any

⁵⁴⁶ *Worobec C.D.* Possessed: Women, witches and demons in Imperial Russia. DeKalb, 2001. P. 8-9.

⁵⁴⁷ *Panchenko A. A.* Khristovshchina i skopchestvo. P. 321-341; *Khristoforova O.B.* Odezhimost v russkoi derevne. P. 175; *Worobec C. D.* Possessed. P. 205-206; *Boddy J.* Spirits and selves in Northern Sudan: The cultural therapeutics of possession and trance // *American Ethnologist*. 1988. Vol. 15. no. 1. P. 11, 14.

mysticism in the everyday life of the Wanderers at all. Unlike the Siberian Chasovennye, who encountered supernatural forces on a daily basis⁵⁴⁸, the Wanderers lived, in Max Weber's terms, in a completely "disenchanted world"⁵⁴⁹, in a demythologized domain, completely devoid of any mysticism. In the texts which constitute the source base of this thesis, there are no mentions of the Wanderers' interactions with divine or supernatural realms. This religious aspect, important for understanding the essence of the Wanderer community, might be called, by a term half-borrowed from Weber, disenchanted religiosity.

This does not mean that the Wanderers were less religious or more secularized in the Weberian way than the Siberian Chasovennye. As has been said many times before, their doctrines meant everything to them. Otherwise, this research would have made no sense, since the Wanderers would have simply merged with the peasants and townspeople around them. However, in spite of all their involvement with the world around them, the Wanderers still remained the Wanderers.

One contemporary Wanderer and ideological heir to Ryabinin, describing in a correspondence with me his view of the conflict over the Mill and the 1911-1913 schism, said that for the Millers "the form of labor has no essential, much less dogmatic content." This remark seems to me to be true not only for the Millers or and their labor practices, but also of the Wanderers in question in general. They were not at all inclined to mythologize or dogmatize their entire everyday reality, which in many ways explained their pragmatic flexibility in integrating into the domains of the world around them.

3.3. The Wanderers and self-mortifications

Turning to the history of the Vyatka Wanderers, one should begin with the notion that collective suicides (primarily self-immolations or gari) of members of a religious community are

⁵⁴⁸ The main collective work of Chasovennye of the Yenisei Taiga, the hagiographic chronicle "the Ural-Siberian Patericon", covering the period from the 18th to the mid-20th century, is filled with descriptions of many mystical aspects of daily life of the religious community: from possessions to miracles and omens. *Pokrovskii N. N. (ed.). Uralo-Sibirskii paterik: teksty i kommentarii: V trekh tomakh. M., 2014.*

⁵⁴⁹ *Weber M.* The vocation lectures. Indianapolis, 2004. P. 13.

firmly associated in the Russian social imagination with the Old Believers, who thus reacted to attempts at intervention into their life by the state⁵⁵⁰. Vyatka self-mortifications thus seem to be an actualization of a "traditional" Old Believer strategy in the face of repression, this time, however, repression by the Soviet atheist regime, as Maltsev pointed out⁵⁵¹. However, such an interpretation raises several questions.

To begin with, in one of the most comprehensive works on the Old Believers' gari in the 17th - 19th centuries Ekaterina Romanova, considering this phenomenon as a complex socio-religious practice⁵⁵², convincingly showed that the Old Believers' suicides could be caused by many intertwined factors. Among these factors, "gari as a response to persecution" is merely one of many options⁵⁵³. Second, it is obvious that it would not be productive to compare the strategies and practices of the 17th century isolationist Old Believers to their 20th century coreligionists who inhabited the modernizing domains of the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state and actively interacted with those domains. Regardless of how much the Old Believers would like to prove otherwise, the world in which they lived was constantly changing, and they were changing with it. Third, the Wanderers themselves, who are called the most radical of all the priestless branches of the Old Faith, never knew such a practice. The founder of the Church of the Wanderers Evfimii, when he was a follower of the Filippovtsy, belonged to that flank of community whose representatives condemned religious suicide⁵⁵⁴. In case of the Wanderers, prior to the Vyatka

⁵⁵⁰ The self-immolations of Old Believers of various branches peaked at the end of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century. While the historiography of this phenomenon is vast and suggests various interpretations of these collective suicides, none of those who studied self-immolations seems to have doubted that self-immolations are an important cultural marker of precisely the history of Old Believers. For a historiography of the gari see for ex: *Pul'kin M.V. Samosozhzheniia staroobriadtsev (seredina 17 – 19 v.)*. M., 2013. P. 8-20.

⁵⁵¹ *Maltsev A.I. Strannicheskii nastavnik 20 veka Khristofor Ivanov i ego uchenie // Romadanovskaya E. K. (ed.) Problemy istorii, russkoi knizhnosti, kultury i obshchestvennogo soznaniia. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov: [K 70-letiiu akad. Nikolaia Nikolaevicha Pokrovskogo] / Rossiiskaya akademiya nauk, Sibirskoe otdelenie, Institut istorii, Sib. otdelenie Arkheograficheskaya komissiya. Novosibirsk, 2000. P. 57-64.* In addition, Elena Dutchak also spoke of the Vyatka events as an example of the actualization and radicalization of the wanderer strategy of breaking with the world. *Dutchak E.E. Iz "Vavilona» v «Belovode"*. P. 276-277.

⁵⁵² Further, I will follow Romanova in referring to self-mortification as a practice rather than an act. As Romanova noted, such a consideration allows a broader description of the complex nature of religious suicide, including, in addition to the act of suicide itself, the actions of a ritual nature, the way in which oral and written texts that legitimize self-mortification are interpreted, and many other conditions under which the act takes place. *Romanova E. V. Massovyie samosozhzheniia staroobriadtsev v Rossii v 17-19 vekakh*. P. 46-47.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.* P. 251-252.

⁵⁵⁴ *Maltsev A.I. Starovery-stranniki v 18 - pervoi polovine 19 v.* P. 82.

events, only two dubious episodes of religious suicide are known. The first of them is not entirely credible⁵⁵⁵, and the connection of the second with the Wanderers does not seem evident⁵⁵⁶. In addition, despite the radical nature of the Wanderers' ideology, before the 1930s, none of their prominent dogmatists ever wrote about the possibility of self-immolation in the case of persecution.

The Vyatka events draw attention of researchers twice. Maltsev in one of his works attempted to reconstruct the teachings of Khristofor Ivanovich on the basis of a polemical manuscript of his opponents. The scholar was able to establish the very fact of the existence and spread of Zyryanov's teachings. At the same time, the historian had no opportunity to study in detail the essence of the preacher's ideology, since the only source available to Maltsev was the manuscripts of Zyryanov's opponents. It must be said that Maltsev, a leading expert on the manuscripts of the Wanderers, did not refer in this work to sources documenting their interactions with the state. However, paleography, the main method of the Novosibirsk school of Old Believers studies, to which the historian belonged, does not look like an exhaustive approach for the study of Old Believers in the 20th century, as they were already sufficiently integrated into the world around their communities and were able to interact with it.

As has been mentioned before, the semantic gap between the manuscripts of the Wanderers (theological or historical) and the documents of their interaction with the authorities is enormous. If one considers these types of sources in isolation, two very different pictures of the Wanderers emerge. In the first case, it is a community of radical world-renouncers; in the second, it is a religious group able and willing to play by the rules of the outside world. In this chapter I use both types of sources, but focus predominantly on the investigative cases against the Wanderers. Of

⁵⁵⁵ There are reports about the self-immolation of 15 Wanderers in 1860 in the Kargopol' District written by the Olonets missionary Dmitrii Ostrovskii. However, it must be said that among the numerous accusations of Wanderers of fanaticism, debauchery, and ritual murders made on pages of newspapers and literature, the Kargopol' self-immolations do not seem to have been reflected in later literature on wanderers. *Ostrovskii D.V. Kargopol'skie "beguny"*. P. 12-17.

⁵⁵⁶ In 1915, in Tomsk District, the Guzhikhin family, who belonged to either the Filippovtsy or the Wanderers, preferred to burn themselves alive to allow a local uriadnik to inspect their farmstead. RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D.112. L. 56.

course, investigative documents do not provide an exhaustive picture and are unequivocally biased in interpreting the events. At the same time, criminal ethnography, which looks under the microscope at the accused Wanderers, is able to capture what is not reflected in the Wanderers' theological manuscripts, what seems irrelevant or too trivial to the Wanderers: their everyday life. In other words, the investigators were not too concerned with theology, but rather with the biographies of the Wanderers, their secular backgrounds, their communication networks, and their relationships within the community.

The second important research on the Vyatka events is the work of Natalia Komelina, who for the first time has included in the academic field the materials of some investigative cases concerning the Wanderers⁵⁵⁷. In addition, Komelina has demonstrated, particularly on the basis of fieldwork, how the story of the Vyatka Wanderers transformed from a criminal episode into a folklore narrative that has been alive and circulated in the Kirov region to this day. In this chapter I do not seek to demonstrate the external perception of the Wanderers' suicides, but rather to understand how these events could have occurred in the 1930s and what led the Wanderers to the idea of committing a collective suicide⁵⁵⁸.

3.4 Biographical and Ideological trajectories of Khristofor Ivanovich

(Zyryanov)

3.4.1 Ryabinin's disciple

The main protagonist of this chapter Emelyan Ivanovich Zyryanov (also known as Khristofor Ivanovich) was born in the village of Verkhnyaya Zastupova, Ilyinsk volost', Perm' District, Perm' Province, in 1874⁵⁵⁹. The family belonged to the layer of middle-income peasants

⁵⁵⁷ Komelina N.G. "Khristofor Zyrianov i ego posledovateli v Viatskom krae: iz istorii konfessionalnykh stereotipov"// Rossiia-Zapad-Vostok. Literaturnye i kulturnye sviazi. 2013. no. 1. P. 147-177.

⁵⁵⁸ Here I follow Rebecca Moore, who studied perhaps the most widely reported mass religious suicide of the 20th century, the poisoning of some 900 followers of the "Peoples Temple" in Jonestown, Guyana in 1978. In this study Moore shows that behind the religious undertones of the suicides, there were many very secular - racial, gender and class - conflicts and tensions that made this tragic event possible. *Moore R. Understanding Jonestown and Peoples Temple. Santa Barbara, 2018.*

⁵⁵⁹ Here it should be said that in the list of settlements of Ilyinskaya volost as of 1904 there is no such village. Among the villages with a similar name, only Dal'naya and Blizhnaya Zastupova were present. See Spisok naseleennykh mest Permskoi gubernii. 1904. Prilozhenie k sborniku Permskogo zemstva. Perm', 1905. P. 244. Since the information

and was firmly associated with the Wanderers. Zyryanov's mother and brother were eventually baptized as Wanderers⁵⁶⁰, and the latter, Gorgonii Ivanovich⁵⁶¹, was also a defendant at the 1936 Zyryanov trial⁵⁶². The only thing that is known about his father is that he was long dead by the time Zyryanov was put in the dock for the last time⁵⁶³. The future preacher was trained as a blacksmith, but soon chose a religious career over manual work. At the age of 25, Emelyan Zyryanov began his flight, being baptized under the name of Khristofor⁵⁶⁴.

Most of Khristofor Zyryanov's biographical information is derived from his testimonies in criminal cases from the 1930s. Such an experience of self-representation is certainly not an exhaustive source of information about a man who spent most of his life trying (at least declaratively) to minimize contacts with the Imperial or Soviet law enforcement agencies. Nevertheless, it can be said that it was in the period before 1917 that Zyryanov's hierarchical elevation apparently began. The transformation of the social space of the Wanderers and their hierarchical organization in 1910-1913, caused by the activity of Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin), allowed Zyryanov to prove himself as a skillful preacher. The transcripts of his polemical speeches, available in the manuscript collection of the Library of the Academy of Sciences (BAN), are virtually the only authentic sources on Khristofor Ivanovich's pre-revolutionary activities.

As mentioned above, in 1911-1913 the community split over the issues of the Wanderers' participation in secular economic activity and the centralization of the hierarchy. The Wanderers for whom such activity seemed permissible and the centralization of the hierarchy perceived to be justified rallied around Ryabinin. Accordingly, their opponents, the Kornilo-fyodorovtsy, adopted the opposite view. The future radical preacher of self-mortifications, Khristofor Ivanovich, stood

about the place of birth was learned from Zyryanov during the investigation, it can be assumed that he deliberately distorted the name of his native village.

⁵⁶⁰ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 361-362.

⁵⁶¹ GARF. F. P-1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 2.

⁵⁶² In addition, there seems to be reason to believe that Vitalii Ivanovich, a major Wanderers' preacher, was another brother of Khristofor. One of the sources gives indirect evidence of this. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 171.

⁵⁶³ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 361-362.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

with the Wanderers, for whom the external integration was acceptable. Moreover, Zyryanov joined the Millers and became an active promoter of Ryabinin's ideas.

The schism shook the foundations of the Wanderers' world order and required both sides to mobilize intellectual resources to participate in theological debates. It was from Ryabinin's side that the 38-year-old "Disciple of Aleksandr Vasilievich, Khristofor Ivanovich" was summoned to participate in the polemical discussion in the village of Sopyolki in September 1913⁵⁶⁵. In the course of the debates Khristofor Ivanovich concentrated mainly on the apologetics of the centralization of the Wanderers' hierarchy. Zyryanov evidently enjoyed sufficient authority among the coreligionists, who entrusted him with representing their interests in the discussion on 4 of 6 questions debated in Sopyolki⁵⁶⁶.

Despite the fact that technically the debates did not end with the reunion of the parties, "the preacher of the Gospel, sinful man Khristofor Ivanov"⁵⁶⁷ – as he himself signed under the protocol of the discussion – successfully conducted his part of the polemics. In the protocols there are signatures of the Wanderers who joined Ryabinin exactly after these debates⁵⁶⁸. In addition, Zyryanov's dogmatic and moralistic speeches, in which the preacher actively defended one-man rule - in the absence of which "there will be no church, but a two-headed serpent"⁵⁶⁹ – were actively noted down and sent out by co-religionists⁵⁷⁰, which also testifies to his authority.

Thus, by 1917, nothing indicated that the successful preacher and adherent of the Millers, that were intent on expanding their domain, was a future radical escapist. Zyryanov belonged to that party of the Wanderers that temporarily triumphed. The eschatological pessimism intrinsic to the Wanderers (at least on the level of ideology) did not hinder their activity: the Danilov steam mill and theological school functioned well. Spiritual reforms were also gradually being carried out: the hierarchical vertical was being aligned with Ryabinin's plan. An important part of these

⁵⁶⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 349 – JI. 1.

⁵⁶⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298 – JI. 2ob, 3ob, 16, 21ob.

⁵⁶⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298 – JI. 29.

⁵⁶⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298 – JI. 29 – 29ob.

⁵⁶⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 349, Kargopol'skoe sobranie. 350. –127ob.

⁵⁷⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 349, Kargopol'skoe sobranie. 350. – JI. 127-127ob.

processes was also the activity of Zyryanov, whose authority and prominence among the Wanderers was on the rise. Like his mentor Ryabinin, in the next thirteen years Zyryanov did not deviate from his path of inclusion in external social spaces despite numerous challenges, while the integration potential of the local community, which Khristofor Ivanovich lead, continued to expand.

3.4.2 “A country chap” in his first “Soviet house”.

"The freedom given by the new Soviet government," praised by monk Nikita, encouraged not only the Danilov Wanderers who grouped around Ryabinin. Khristofor Ivanovich confidently kept pace with his Danilov adherents while by 1922 already being the elder of the Vyatka predel (a status equivalent to the rank of metropolitan)⁵⁷¹.

Around the same period, an event occurred that was extraordinary even for this party of the Wanderers, who were striving to expand their own domain. If Potap Morozov probably reached only as far as Mikhail Kalinin's Office, Khristofor Ivanovich went even further in his attempts to interact with top Soviet officials. In 1923, Zyryanov, a future propagandist of self-mortification, personally met in Moscow with Pyotr Krasikov, Vice People's Commissar of Justice, head of first the 8th and then the 5th ("religious") Departments of the People's Commissariat and one of the authors of the 1918 decree⁵⁷². This meeting appears to be known from a single source: a letter from a Wanderer Polikarp Kustov to Krasikov written in 1925. The short letter contained a request for assistance in the release of several Altai Wanderers arrested for their lack of documents. However, for the most part, the author reminded Krasikov of their meeting in 1923, which Kustov attended along with "our pastor Khristofor Ivanovich"⁵⁷³. Even without taking into account the further tragic events associated with the figure of Zyryanov, the fact that the baptized and high-ranking Wanderer met with a representative of the highest register of power speaks volumes about the

⁵⁷¹ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 361

⁵⁷² *Odintsov M.I.* Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov nakanune i v epokhu stalinskogo sotsializma 1917–1953 gg. P. 48-49.

⁵⁷³ GARF. F. A353. Op. 8. D.8. L. 83.

scale of the post-1917 transformations of the boundaries of acceptable contact between the Wanderers and the authorities.

It is worth saying that Kustov writes with remarkable cordiality to Krasikov, the chief lawyer for religious affairs in the young atheist state, whose duty was to prepare a legislative ground for the coming elimination of religious vestiges:

"As a kind mother [caring] for her children you insistently told me and offered just to point the way for the protection of our persecuted religious community and you will do everything ... You brought me, a country chap, into a tremendously good building. It was [my] first Soviet house, where Vasiliï Andreyevich [Gidulyanov, a People' Commissariat for Justice official and expert on church affairs] and I drank tea and talked about God with various representatives"⁵⁷⁴.

In addition, Kustov mentions Krasikov's mediation in the matter of exemption of the Wanderers from military service, which was discussed in the previous chapter.

Krasikov granted Kustov's request, recommending in his letter to the OGPU "...that when detaining these sectarians for being undocumented, the certification of local known citizens, under the guarantee of which they could be released from arrest, be taken into account"⁵⁷⁵. Khristofor Ivanovich, unlike Kustov, did not mention this meeting in his testimony and, according to the sources available to me, did not ask Krasikov for protection in any of three criminal cases in which he performed as a defendant. In 1923, before meeting Krasikov, Zyryanov had been arrested for an unclear reason by the Vyatka OGPU⁵⁷⁶, and perhaps this episode led him to seek the patronage of the Vice Commissar. Anyway, Krasikov appears in the finale of this story under much darker circumstances than a joint tea party.

The 1923 arrest did not force Zyryanov abandon the search for ways to interact with the Soviet domain. In 1924, under his leadership, the agricultural artel "Labor Enthusiasts" [literally "Lovers of labor" – "Lyubiteli truda"] was organized⁵⁷⁷ in the village of Grady in Vyatka

⁵⁷⁴ GARF. F. A353. Op. 8. D.8. L. 82-83.

⁵⁷⁵ GARF. F. 5263. Op. 1. D.55. L. 159.

⁵⁷⁶ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 380.

⁵⁷⁷ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 353.

Province⁵⁷⁸. The artel was probably established and functioned on the principle of the Danilov "Aksioma," which combined economic and theological centers under its roof. Vyatka artel workers engaged in artisanal tannery and bookbinding craft⁵⁷⁹, and, after accumulating sufficient funds, leased a water mill in the village of Danilovka (Vyatka province)⁵⁸⁰. Thus, the two artels of the Wanderers that existed in the 1920s happened to be similar not only in religious and economic practices, but also in sense of toponymic, building their activities around two geographically distant Danilov mills.

However, Soviet tolerance for the Vyatka Wanderers, as well as for their Danilov co-religionists, did not last long. The first signal warning of impending challenges sounded for Khristofor Ivanovich in 1927. During the all-USSR census secret cells and prayer houses of the Wanderers were discovered at Murashi Railway Station (Vyatka province)⁵⁸¹. This information appeared in the local press. Newspaper articles began to detail the everyday life of the discovered "sectarians" and information about their connection with the Grady artel⁵⁸². In spite of the fact that this time Zyryanov himself probably did not come to attention of the authorities and journalists, for the Vyatka Wanderers this episode marked the beginning of the break of their mode of existence. In 1928, a year before "Aksioma" in Danilov was shut down, "Labor Enthusiasts" was liquidated in Grady⁵⁸³.

Nevertheless, neither liquidation of the artel, nor the gradual squeezing of the Wanderers into the underground seems to have shaken Khristofor Ivanovich's integrative optimism. He was still looking forward to the expansion and strengthening of the Wanderers' domain. After the dissolution of the Grady artel, Khristofor Ivanovich began to develop a plan to organize a new

⁵⁷⁸ This area is now a part of the Murashi district of the Kirov region on the border with the Republic of Komi.

⁵⁷⁹ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 366.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ *Novaia sekta «podpolshchikov»* // Rabochaia gazeta (Moskva), 1927. January, 9.

⁵⁸² *Pod kulatskim kablukom* // Viatskaia pravda, 1927 goda. November, 18.

⁵⁸³ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 365.

labor collective⁵⁸⁴. In addition, in 1929 he appeared in Vereshchagino in the former Perm' Province to conduct disputes and missionary work⁵⁸⁵.

However, times were already quite unfavorable for the preaching, let alone for the new economic initiatives. In 1929, the Vyatka District Department of the OGPU learned that within the borders of Khalturinsk District on the border with Komi Autonomous Oblast and North Dvina Province, "a sect of 'True Wandering Christians' (undergrounders)" had thrived, denying the existence of the Soviet authority, not recognizing it and refusing to comply with state taxes and duties⁵⁸⁶. Zyryanov and 16 his followers were arrested.

The discovery and arrest of the Wanderers led to a surge of interest in the atheist press in the "sectarians-undergrounders" allegedly carrying out counterrevolutionary activities in a remote part of the Vyatka region⁵⁸⁷. But no matter how hard journalists tried to link Khristofor Ivanovich and his co-religionists with former capitalists, kulaks, and undefeated White Guardians, in 1929 it was Soviet citizens, often with quite conventional biographies, who were brought on trial: cab drivers, peasants, postal and telegraph workers, and a greaser at the Murashi railway station⁵⁸⁸. Zyryanov himself, though he refused to sign investigation documents that included his real last name⁵⁸⁹, was not radical in his testimony toward the authorities. He recognized the socialist revolution as just⁵⁹⁰ and insisted that the Wanderers "do not oppose science and culture, but put God in the first place"⁵⁹¹. The main factor that turned Zyryanov away from the Soviet authorities, he said, was its godlessness and ignorance in matters of faith⁵⁹². However, such a strategy did not help the preacher

⁵⁸⁴ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 364.

⁵⁸⁵ Bezgodov A.A. "Starovery-stranniki v Vereshchaginskom raione Permskoi oblasti v 1920-kh-1930-kh godakh" // Tserkov. Bogoslovie. Istorii. Materialy V Mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-bogoslovskoi konferentsii, posviashchennaia Soboru novomuchenikov i ispovednikov Tserkvi Russkoi. Ekaterinburg, 2017. P. 287.

⁵⁸⁶ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 344.

⁵⁸⁷ *Podpolniki* // Viatskaia Pravda. no. 17. 1930. January, 14; *Sekta podpolnikov* // Nizhegorodskaia Kommuna. no. 2. 1930, April, 20. In addition, Zyryanov emerged among the protagonists of the atheistic pamphlet "Runaways from the Revolution". *Popov M.* Beguny ot revoliutsii. P. 30.

⁵⁸⁸ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 380-383.

⁵⁸⁹ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 361-362.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 362.

⁵⁹² GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 361-363.

to avoid punishment. Khristofor Ivanovich (more precisely, Emelyan Zyryanov) was convicted under Articles 58.10 and 58.11 and sentenced to 3 years in the Solovetskii Correctional Camp⁵⁹³.

Prior to this sentence, the trajectories of Zyryanov and Ryabinin seem to follow similar patterns. Both began their flight in their youth, both actively defended the ideas of economic engagement and the one-man rule for the Church in the first quarter of the 20th century. After 1917, both Zyryanov and Ryabinin enthusiastically entered into interaction with the fledgling Soviet domain. The two artels that appeared within 700 km of each other in the first half of the 1920s also eloquently testify to the resemblance of their trajectories. In addition, by the early 1930s Zyryanov and Ryabinin, along with their followers, had gone underground.

It is difficult to determine exactly what was the relationship between the Danilov and Vyatka Wanderers. No reliable sources are available. It is known that Zyryanov did not participate in the polemical council in Savinskaya in 1926. At least his signature does not appear in the transcript. Nevertheless, further events show that until the mid-1930s, the community of Vyatka Wanderers and Zyryanov himself were in canonical subordination to Ryabinin. Accordingly, we can conclude that the relationship between Vyatka and Danilov did not cease. Ryabinin and Zyryanov, like their adherents, may well have shared not only spiritual but also economic experience.

After 1929, however, the paths of the Vyatka Wanderers and their Danilov adherents began to diverge. Having found themselves in the underground, Ryabinin and Zyryanov reacted to the new circumstances quite differently. The 1929 sentence seems to be a pivotal point in the history of Zyryanov's ideological transformations. Underground, which for a long time had been more of an ideological category than a practical one for the Wanderers, was now the only mode of existence available.

The Wanderers had every reason to perceive these events as a disaster. The long and difficult process of expanding their own domain, fueled by the energy of Ryabinin and his associates, not the least of whom was Khristofor Ivanovich, tragically stopped, never allowing the Wanderers to

⁵⁹³ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 459.

fully reveal their integration capacity. The Wanderers' readiness for external integration was shaken neither by the hostility of the Late Imperial authorities nor by their own dogmatism, which strictly limited the repertoire of acceptable models of interaction with the outside world, nor by the transformation of political regimes in 1917, nor by the numerous difficulties of adjusting to existence in the new Soviet domain. By the end of the 1920s, they still seemed ready to exist in Soviet space on the condition that it would accept them, if not as they were, then at least allow them to adapt. By the 1930s, however, this space had uprooted them and forced them to settle back into the already forgotten underground. A large part of the Wanderers, led by Ryabinin, more or less managed this task, at least keeping the canonical continuity of the religious movement intact. However, Zyryanov and a small group of his associates interpreted Evfimii's ideas of escape from the world literally.

In 1931, Zyryanov due to health conditions was transferred from the Solovetskii camp into exile in Krasnoborsk, 70 km from Kotlas (Northern Krai, today's Arkhangel'sk region)⁵⁹⁴. Here Khristofor Ivanovich was assigned to work on birch bark harvesting, but soon found the production norms unbearable and fled 9 months before the expiration of his term⁵⁹⁵. For about two years he wandered around the nearby regions: Ural region and the Autonomous regions of Udmurtia and Komi, residing at several benefactors' houses.⁵⁹⁶ On August 4, 1933, Zyryanov was arrested again and sentenced to five years of exile in the Northern Krai⁵⁹⁷. Almost immediately, however, he managed to escape from custody to return to the Vyatka woods and begin his last preaching.

3.4.3. The Wanderers on the Soviet Trial

At the end of November 1936, in Kirov (formerly Vyatka) a visiting session of the Supreme Court considered the case of the "counterrevolutionary sect IPKhS"⁵⁹⁸. The activities of the "sect," as the court found out, were connected with numerous episodes of religious suicides⁵⁹⁹. The exact

⁵⁹⁴ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 8. D.SU-10180. T. 1. L. 12.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 8. D.SU-10180. T. 1. L. 12-13.

⁵⁹⁷ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 8. D.SU-10180. T. 1. L. 244.

⁵⁹⁸ Abbreviation for the True Orthodox Christian wandering [Istinno-pravoslavnye khristiiane stranstvuiuschie].

⁵⁹⁹ The case quickly became known to A. Y. Vyshinsky, who in turn in September 1936 brought the circumstances of

circumstances of the discovery and arrest of the Wanderers are unknown, as is the exact date of Khristofor Ivanovich's arrest. Probably he was arrested at the end of February or the beginning of March 1936, at least during this period most of people involved were arrested⁶⁰⁰. Besides Zyryanov, his brother Gorgonii Ivanovich and 16 other people were put on trial. Their biographies are poorly consistent with exoticizing images of the Wanderers as marginal escapists fleeing the corrupted world. Among the accused were, for example, Kolpashchikov, a collective farmer and former member of the village soviet; Kuzma Sitnikov, an assistant machinist; Ivan Sitnikov, a shoemaker; Plekhov, a carpenter and former chairman of the collective farm⁶⁰¹. This last investigative case against Emelyan-Khristofor Zyryanov in 1936 contained gruesome details about the activities of the defendant and the others involved. Zyryanov himself did not deny these details in court, nor did he deny his own participation in the murders, insisting only that the "feats" [podvigi] (i.e. suicides) of his associates were voluntary⁶⁰².

Zyryanov's teaching, as it is described during the investigation and in polemics with his opponents⁶⁰³, develops the idea that the Christian self-mortification in conditions of persecution is God-pleasing. The preacher, according to his own words, had read the Bible and the books about martyrs and concluded that "for three thousand years the Church has been practicing self-mortification" and that such practices might again be in demand during the period of repression⁶⁰⁴. Maltsev, who worked with the manuscripts of Zyryanov's opponents, cited the following quote from the preacher: "I permit you to die... as a precaution, so that you may not be apostates. If not confessors [ispovedniki] and ascetics [podvizhniki], then all are apostates. On this prophetic basis I permit self-mortification"⁶⁰⁵.

the case to Kalinin and Kaganovich, which apparently explains the scope of the trial. RGASPI F.82, Op.2, D. 886 JI.127-128.

⁶⁰⁰ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.134.

⁶⁰¹ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.76ob-77.

⁶⁰² GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.78ob.

⁶⁰³ Authentic sources in which Zyryanov's teachings would have been presented by himself or his followers have not been preserved. Consequently, Khristofor Ivanovich's ideas can be reconstructed only on the basis of investigative cases and works of his opponents (as Maltsev did). Both of these sources, of course, require critical reading.

⁶⁰⁴ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 92ob-93.

⁶⁰⁵ *Maltsev A.I. Strannicheskii nastavnik 20 veka Khristofor Ivanov i ego uchenie. P. 67-68.*

Khristofor Ivanovich claimed that the suicides began in the Vyatka predel without his direct involvement while he was imprisoned in the 1929 case⁶⁰⁶. One of the first episodes described in detail was the self-immolation of a 25-year-old Wanderer Olimpiada in 1932. The young woman turned to Zyryanov for a blessing for the "feat" but upon receiving it, she started questioning her decision. The preacher then refused to bless her suicide, but soon, as he claimed, under the pressure of Olimpiada, who changed her mind again, he gave his blessing back. Then the woman climbed a bonfire and set herself aflame⁶⁰⁷. In the same year of 1932, approximately 20 other women-Wanderers drowned themselves. Some of them lived with Khristofor Ivanovich for 2-3 weeks before committing the "feat", listening to his moralistic speeches about the soul-saving nature of voluntary departure from the earthly world.⁶⁰⁸

The methods of suicide chosen by the Wanderers varied in ingenuity, but were always accompanied by intolerable anguish of the participants. Seventeen-year-old Taisia Kryukova managed to drown herself in an icy river only on the second attempt. During the first time, despite the fact that Zyryanov's companion Plekhova was pushing the girl away from the edge of the ice-hole, she managed to get out of the water at the last moment. Zyryanov told the girl to rest in order to repeat the "feat" again. Her second attempt was successful⁶⁰⁹. Fifteen-year-old Maria Pestrikova had fasted for two days and then took poison, dying after 3 days of agony⁶¹⁰. Wanderers Galina Kiprianovna and nun Seraphima committed a "feat in the smoke" [podvig v ugare], first locked themselves in a heated bathhouse and then drank several liters of cold water. However, Serafima survived, subsequently quit wandering, and got even married by the time of the trial⁶¹¹.

Of course, the materials of any investigative case from the 1930s against a "counterrevolutionary group" require critical analysis. It is easy to imagine that the Vyatka Wanderers were pressured into self-incrimination and perjury. The details of daily life (and death)

⁶⁰⁶ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.96ob.

⁶⁰⁷ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.95ob.

⁶⁰⁸ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 96.

⁶⁰⁹ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.69ob-70.

⁶¹⁰ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 86.

⁶¹¹ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 97.

in the Wanderer's underground do indeed look shocking. One could assume that there might have been the fabrication of a Soviet investigator with a fertile imagination. However, the credibility of the Vyatka events is confirmed by the fact that in addition to the Soviet prosecutor, another prosecutor, monk Arsenii (Ryabinin), participated in absentia in the trial. The Vyatka events seemed to be something outrageous and extraordinary not only to Soviet lawyers, but also to the Wanderers - Millers, to whom Zyryanov himself had belonged until recently. Among the many accusations brought against him during the trial, Zyryanov himself was most concerned about one – the conciliar decision for his excommunication, drawn up by the Wanderers of other predels, led by Ryabinin⁶¹².

Rumors of his preaching eventually reached the coreligionists living along the territory from Kargopol' to Siberia, who went underground following the repressions started in the late 1920s. Wanderers unanimously agreed that Khristofor Ivanovich's teaching was unprecedented and heretical. A multi-page resolution to depose Zyryanov from the leadership of the Vyatka predel and to excommunicate him, signed by Ryabinin and his associates, was drawn up in 1936⁶¹³ and delivered to the Vyatka predel with Wanderer Fedora⁶¹⁴. Fedora, despite the fact that she was not one of Khristofor Ivanovich's adherents, was also arrested under this case, and the conciliar decision fell into the hands of the investigators and was read at the trial⁶¹⁵.

Obviously, in Zyryanov's imagination, the trial against him involved two sides of the accusation at once: the Soviet court and the former co-religionists, and the preacher did not quite divide these sides between themselves. During the interrogation, he could start blaming Ryabinin and the members of the council, declaring in Soviet court the illegitimacy of Ryabinin's "crowd of Yids" [sonmishche zhidovskoe]⁶¹⁶. In addition, Zyryanov asked the court for a copy of the

⁶¹² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. L. 68.

⁶¹³ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 7-20.

⁶¹⁴ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 80.

⁶¹⁵ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 68.

⁶¹⁶ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 92ob.

council's decision⁶¹⁷, probably in order to prepare for some future polemic, and was extremely verbose in his accusations against former fellow believers.

In his last word, Khristofor Ivanovich praised his followers "who died by self-mortification for the idea of God, just as the Soviet government praises its heroes who died for the idea of communism"⁶¹⁸ and again blamed Ryabinin who excommunicated him⁶¹⁹. He concluded that he was ready to accept any punishment, but "in [his] soul [he] wants to be free" and urged the court to prove in practice (by a mild sentence) that religion is not persecuted in the Soviet state⁶²⁰.

It took five days for the Supreme Court to find 15 of 18 defendants guilty of counterrevolutionary activities on November 27, 1936. Zyryanov was sentenced to death, the others to various terms from 3 to 10 years⁶²¹. Contrary to his own beliefs about the God-pleasingness of martyrdom for the faith, Khristofor Ivanovich even petitioned for clemency⁶²², but his request was rejected. On December 9, Zyryanov received an execution order to be signed and left his last message on a sheet of paper: "According to a fair chronology, the year 1945⁶²³ November 27. I do not accept my former last name. A True Orthodox Christian world-renouncer wandering Khristofor Ivanov. I am not a sectarian and have no sect"⁶²⁴.

This last remark by Zyryanov seems telling. Zyryanov knew how to act pragmatically and obviously found it acceptable to interact with Soviet jurisprudence, as can be seen from his rather skillful rhetorical and bureaucratic attempts to challenge the verdict. At the same time, even at the threshold of his death, he remained consistently faithful to the doctrine to which he had devoted his life, and he felt it necessary to testify to this faithfulness. Thus, fearing to damage his piety by signing a verdict containing his abandoned last name and the title "sect," he wrote a universal formula for declaring his faith, understandable to Wanderers in both the 18th and 20th centuries.

⁶¹⁷ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 72ob.

⁶¹⁸ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 108ob.

⁶¹⁹ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 108ob.

⁶²⁰ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 109.

⁶²¹ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 128-134.

⁶²² GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 159.

⁶²³ On a variety of types and systems of chronology of the Wanderers, which makes it difficult to accurately date some sources, see: *Maltsev A.I.* Starovery-stranniki v 18 – pervoi polovine 19 v. P. 163-165.

⁶²⁴ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 181.

Three months later, the original of the Zyryanov case reached the deputy chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR Pyotr Krasikov⁶²⁵ and until part of the case was transferred to the State Archive of the Russian Federation, it probably remained in the archive of the Supreme Court. It is difficult to speculate whether Zyryanov's former interlocutor Krasikov remembered his old acquaintance when he got his hands on the investigation file, but the very nature of the episodes of this story related to Krasikov in 1923 and 1936 seems symbolic. In 13 years, Khristofor Ivanovich evolved from one of the "country chaps" guests in the "Soviet house" to an executed suicide preacher.

There is one peculiarity of Zyryanov's story which should be mentioned. In the Wanderer's collective martyrological and historical works of the second half of the 20th century one cannot find any mention of Khristofor Ivanovich. Maksim Zalesskii, the major chronicler of the history of the Wanderers and ideological opponent to the Millers, to whom Khristofor Ivanovich belonged, does not mention him either. However, the really strange thing is that there is no mention of his sinister activity in the Soviet atheist literature contemporary to the events described. For an atheist journalist, there could hardly be a more exemplary anti-hero who embodied the most grotesque Soviet atheist clichés: a former petty nepman-artelshchik, a religious radical, a suicide preacher, and, as will be shown below, a rapist. Although the atheist literature knew about Zyryanov before the Vyatka events, the Soviet public did not learn the grim story of the "Vyatka murderer" for many years afterwards, until the 1970s and 1980s⁶²⁶. As Komelina showed, by that time Zyryanov's story itself had already become part of a local Kirov folklore, enriched with specific Soviet narrative elements⁶²⁷. This is how in local oral legends one of Khristofor's victims, the

⁶²⁵ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 177.

⁶²⁶ Thus, Vyatka events became the basis for a series of articles by journalist Aleksandr Shamaro in the journal "Science and Religion". *Stantsiia "Bezbozhnik" // Nauka i religiia*, no. 1. 1974; *Stantsiia "Bezbozhnik" // Nauka i religiia*, no. 2. 1974. In addition, in 1981 the Dzerzhinsk writer Aleksandr Sizov published a fiction novel "The Forest Stash", in which he retold the story of Khristofor Zyryanov. *Sizov A.A. Studenoe vodopole. Rasskazy i povest. Gor'kii*, 1981.

⁶²⁷ *Komelina N. G. Khristofor Zyrianov i ego posledovateli v Viatskom krae*. P. 157-158.

hereditary⁶²⁸ Wanderer Maria Pestrikova turned into a Soviet pioneer deceived into a sect⁶²⁹. But why didn't the very Zyryanov's name itself become synonymous for "religious fanatics" in Soviet atheist publications? The only explanation seems to be that religious suicides in the twentieth year of the Soviet state may have seemed to some of the ideological workers too ugly a rudiment that needed to be concealed⁶³⁰.

3.5. On the Wanderers' Gender Modes

Before turning to an analysis of Zyryanov's ideological transformations that led him to the preaching of self-mortification, it is necessary to analyze an important aspect of the social organization of the Wanderers' community that became especially noticeable during the Vyatka events. The vast majority of the Vyatka Wanderers who committed "the feats" were women. The only exception seems to be the death of 8-year-old boy Vanya Novgorodtsev⁶³¹.

The entire Wanderers' community was characterized by a significant gender imbalance. According to the testimonies of believers the number of members of the Church was 200 men and 1,800 women in 1929⁶³². Despite this imbalance, the history of the Wanderers, at least until the middle of the 20th century⁶³³, is a history of men and their power, both spiritual and physical. In this part of the story, Zyryanov's masculine power is embodied not only in the propaganda of suicidal ideas among his subordinate women, but also in a literal sexualized violence.

⁶²⁸ If the investigative files are to be believed, both her mother (Khristinia) and grandmother (Anna Kryukova) were the Wanderers. GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 89; GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616. T. 1. L. 217.

⁶²⁹ It probably occurred because the author of the only short article about Zyryanov published in 1936 in *Kirov Pravda*⁶²⁹ aimed to make the story more contrasting and thus rendered Pestrikova a pioneer. *Khristoliubivye ubiitsy // Kirovskaia pravda*. no. 181. 1936. August, 6.

⁶³⁰ As was the case, for example, with the classified results of the 1937 All-Union census, which showed that the majority of Soviet citizens, despite 20 years of anti-religious propaganda and repression, remained religious. On the census, see *Corley F.* Believers' responses to the 1937 and 1939 Soviet censuses // *Religion, State and Society: The Keston Journal*. 1994. no. 22.4. P. 403-417.

⁶³¹ GARF. F. P-1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 67ob.

⁶³² GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 362.

⁶³³ Irina Paert pointed out that in the second half of the 20th century women took the leading role in the Old Believers' communities. This was possible, first, because men were more often targeted during repression, and, second, because women were able to remain in the private economic sector, for example, as housewives. *Paert I.P.* Staroobriadchestvo Urala v gody stalinskoi «revoliutsii sverkhu»: repressii, protest i vyzhivanie // *Problemy istorii Rossii*. 2001. no. 4: Evraziiskoe pograniče P. 214.

Information that the preacher persuaded female believers to get into sexual relations appeared as early as in the 1929 case⁶³⁴. The information of such episodes was known to the Wanderers of other predels, and it was mentioned in the Council's resolution on Zyryanov's excommunication⁶³⁵. However, it seems that in the first half of the 1930s the preacher's craving for sexual relations became uncontrollable. During interrogations and face-to-face confrontations, the victims of Khristofor Ivanovich made plenty of such accusations against the preacher. Particularly detailed information was obtained from Chazova, a former follower of Zyryanov, who described how the preacher "used her as a woman"⁶³⁶. Kristofor Ivanovich was also reported to have harassed Maria Pestrikova before she poisoned herself, telling the girl that "if you love your shepherd, then you will also love God"⁶³⁷. Witness Novoselova recounted how Zyryanov tried to kiss her on the lips⁶³⁸. The former Wanderer Perinova told the story of how in her childhood she was beaten to the point of "insensibility" by the preacher and his associates, and how she became a victim of sexual harassment by Zyryanov as she grew up⁶³⁹. Khristofor Ivanovich categorically denied this part of the accusations, and claimed to be defamed. In response to Perinova's accusations of trying to kiss her, the mentor replied that he "had two kisses, spiritual and sinful. We had an impassioned kiss."⁶⁴⁰.

It must be said that despite the outward patriarchal nature of religious ideologies somehow related to the Old Belief, and the masculinity of the Old Believers' spiritual institutions, it is hard to say that the position of women in the world of the Old Faith implied lack of agency, especially when the historical context and the status of women in neighboring non-Old Believers' communities are taken into account. Since the Schism of the mid-17th century, the first Old Believer martyrs Evdokia Urusova and Feodosia Morozova, who starved to death in Borovsk in

⁶³⁴ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 357.

⁶³⁵ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.18.

⁶³⁶ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 92.

⁶³⁷ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 86ob.

⁶³⁸ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 88.

⁶³⁹ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 98ob.

⁶⁴⁰ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 98ob.

1675⁶⁴¹, have been important, almost hagiographic examples of Christian fortitude for Old Believers regardless of their gender⁶⁴². Belonging to the Old Believers at different historical stages also contributed to the extension of women's sexual and matrimonial agency, given, for example, the possibility of not getting into an unwanted marriage for religious reasons, which was common in some priestless communities in the early 19th century, and virtually unimaginable in the Nikonian communities⁶⁴³.

As for the Wanderers, it has been said that their history is a history of men, written by men for men, in which women are given only a secondary and usually voiceless role. One can learn about the position of the female Wanderers only from hints and circumstantial evidence scattered in polemical manuscripts. So, it is known that until 1895 women could lead communities composed entirely of women. Such leaders were assigned the informal rank of "bolshukhi"⁶⁴⁴ [literally "bigger ones"]⁶⁴⁵. At the Council in the village of Chentsovo (Yaroslavl' region) in the summer of 1895, the chief elder Roman Loginovich expressed strong criticism of women's rule⁶⁴⁶ and this practice was abolished⁶⁴⁷. However, as Zalesskii reported, Roman Loginovich still allowed one of the Ponizovkins, Dorsida Nikitichna, to lead a mixed-gender community⁶⁴⁸. At first glance, such a decision seems inconsistent. However, as will be shown below, the assignment of Dorsida was rather logical in the gender frame of reference in which the Wanderers existed.

The women's issue also became one of the points of contradiction between the Millers and the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy during the 1911-1913 schism. One of Ryabinin's many "guilts", according to his opponents, was that he "by his sole authority, without the advice of the Church,

⁶⁴¹ *Zenkovskii S.A.* Russkoe staroobriadchestvo. Vol. 1. P. 250.

⁶⁴² *Paert I.* Old Believers: Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid*; *Bushnell J.* Russian Peasant Women Who Refused to Marry.

⁶⁴⁴ In Russian peasant communities the term was usually used to refer to the most authoritative woman in the family. *Palibina A.S.* Kulturno-istoricheskie predposylki stanovleniia russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi kak subekta sotsialnoi zashchity semi // Gosudarstvo, obshchestvo, tserkov v istorii Rossii 19 - 21 vekov. 2015. P. 266-267.

⁶⁴⁵ In addition to vernacular sources, schismotologist Rozov also reported on the admissibility of women's leadership by the Wanderers. *Rozov A.I.* Stranniki ili beguny v russkom raskole, part 3. P. 273.

⁶⁴⁶ Roman Loginovich's arguments were the temptation that female leaders can allegedly cause to the male Wanderers, as well as the contradiction of this tradition to the Scripture for "Let your women keep silence in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:34). OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 301. L.150ob-152.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

⁶⁴⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L.86.

appointed persons of the female sex as abbesses in various predels"⁶⁴⁹. Such actions, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy argued, went against the Roman Loginovich's decisions and the Christian ecclesiastical tradition. The Millers in their "Enlightener" responded unequivocally in the course of the polemic - "[in the past] women led and ruled over women and men"⁶⁵⁰, meaning that such practices do not contradict the Church tradition. Moreover, it is worth noting that Ryabinin received his controversial (in the eyes of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy) status of a monk from a woman, the nun Agniya⁶⁵¹. Besides, the women's strategy of joining the Wanderers as a way to break undesirable matrimonial ties was still relevant during the period described. The 1929 court case mentions Anna Pestrikova, who was forcibly married off but joined the Wanderers (also the party of Millers), preferring the spiritual life to an unwanted marriage⁶⁵².

The Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, in comparison with the Millers, obviously look much more conservative when it comes to women's inclusiveness. However, it is noteworthy that, as in the days of Roman Loginovich, exceptions were made for women of a certain financial status. It suffices to recall Agafia Ponizovkina, the financial pillar of, first, all the Wanderers, and then the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy. Neither her gender nor her lay status prevented her from actively intervening in the financial and power affairs of the Church during the conflict over the mill.

Of course, in terms of intersectional gender theory, which assumes the simultaneous existence of multiple systems of differences and inequalities that complicate binary gender categorization⁶⁵³, there is nothing in common between the Ponizovkins and the nameless and voiceless female Wanderers. The Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy also clearly understood the difference between a woman and a wealthy woman and, unlike the more flexible Millers, followed the

⁶⁴⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 301. L. 148ob

⁶⁵⁰ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. L. 372.

⁶⁵¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 104. L. 48.

⁶⁵² GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. T. 3. L. 378.

⁶⁵³ See classic *Crenshaw K.* Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Policies // University of Chicago Legal Forum 1989, no. 1. P. 139-167; more recent: *Yuval-Davis N.* Intersectionality and feminist politics // European journal of women's studies. 2006. Vol. 13. no. 3. P. 193-209; *Hankivsky O.* Women's health, men's health, and gender and health: Implications of intersectionality // Social science & medicine. 2012. Vol. 74. no. 11. P. 1712-1720. For a historical examination of the relationship between gender hierarchies and religiosity, see for ex. *Katajala-Peltomaa S.* Demonic possession and lived religion in later medieval Europe. New York, Oxford, 2020. P. 18-19.

traditions established by Roman Loginovich. In their frame of reference, formed before the 1911-1913 schism, only a woman involved in sponsoring the community could achieve a high position. It was not even necessary for her to become a spiritual figure.

Douglas Rogers attributed similar debates among the Pomortsy of Sepych in the 1860s to patriarchal rebellion against growing influence of women after 1861. As Rogers also noted, those Pomortsy who took patriarchal positions were further away from the centers of community capital concentration than those who advocated limited inclusion⁶⁵⁴. In the case of the Wanderers, similar processes seem to be involved. The Millers, who operated with their own capital, were not opposed to women's leadership of their communities, while The Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy reckoned with the authority of only those women on whom they were financially dependent. However, this does not explain at all why the mode of sexualized violence established among the Wanderers led by Zyryanov took place precisely in the community of the Millers. After all, despite the fact that this part of the Wanderers became more and more attuned to female inclusiveness over time, the position of women in the Zyryanov community for many of them was barely tolerable because of the leader's sexual abuse.

The explanation should begin with the fact that for the rest of the Millers the situation in the Vyatka community has been the subject of unanimous condemnation. In the council's decision on the excommunication of Zyryanov, special emphasis was placed on the fact that the reason for breaking off canonical relations with him was not only his preaching of self-mortification, but also his "unlawful rapprochement with the female sex"⁶⁵⁵. These double accusations, which were repeated later by the Soviet court as well⁶⁵⁶, suggest that both the sexualized violence and the preaching of suicide had the same background. I suppose, putting aside the personality traits of

⁶⁵⁴ Rogers D. *The old faith and the Russian land*. P.97.

⁶⁵⁵ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.18.

⁶⁵⁶ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.128-134. The verdict separately listed the sentence on each of the charges against Zyryanov. Apart from the Articles 58/10 (counter-revolutionary propaganda or agitation) and 58/11 (organizing counter-revolutionary activities), under which he was sentenced to death, the resolution also listed Zyryanov's five-year sentence under Article 154 (forcing a woman to have sexual relations). For Khristofor Ivanovich, of course, this separation of sentences no longer mattered. On cumulative basis, he was sentenced to the death penalty. GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.133.

Khristofor Ivanovich himself, that the reasons for both could have been the traumatic experience of "failing" into the underground and the threat of the collapse of the community.

3.6 The Challenges and Tensions of the Underground

In less than 10 years, Zyryanov and his adherents went from the office of Deputy Commissar Krasikov to preaching suicide. On this path, full of optimistic economic and proselytizing projects, the Vyatka Wanderers must have experienced something that led to a radical transformation of their ideological views and brought them to the idea that they could not continue living under persecution. The purpose of this section is to answer a question: why did the collective suicide of Zyryanov's 60 followers⁶⁵⁷ become possible at all, given that neither Zyryanov nor the other Millers were distinguished by any particular escapism which might lead to such radical actions?

To follow, perhaps, the simplest interpretation, labeling Khristofor Ivanovich an insane religious fanatic, would be to deny the agency of some 60 of his associates who dared to do their "feats". Even considering the power that the preacher had over his followers, especially young women and children, it must be kept in mind that the introduction of a radical and unprecedented practice of self-mortification could not be an autocratic decision; it required a certain unanimity among community members.

The interpretation of the Vyatka events as a response to religious persecution in the 1930s does not seem fully productive either. By the time the self-mortifications began, the Wanderers had existed in an atheistic state for 15 years, often facing hostility of the authorities. Before Zyryanov's preaching, however, the Wanderers had no idea not only of self-mortification, but also of any kind of open opposition to the Soviet regime. In addition, such an approach (suicide as a response to intervention from the outside) would lead to the fact that the Vyatka deaths would appear to be the language of voiceless and desperate people, for whom there is no other way of speaking in the conditions of being in the hegemonic Soviet domain. In this way, the Vyatka Wanderers would resemble the protagonist of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's classic work, the

⁶⁵⁷ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 2ob.

Indian woman whose suicide (sati) when menstruating was the only available expression for an individual trapped in a hegemonic discourse that is foreign to her - an expression in the body language⁶⁵⁸. However, it seems that in the case of the self-mortifications described, no dialogue or response is involved, since self-mortifications as a speech do not have an interlocutor, of course, except God. The "feats" were performed publicly (within the community), but in secret from anyone outside, the martyrs were buried in secrecy, and if law enforcement had not learned of these events, this story would have remained an intra-Wanderer affair.

Attempts to portray the Wanderers as religious isolationists able to speak to the outside world only in the language of gari, seem superficial. First, the Wanderers were by no means isolationists. They successfully responded to the challenges of the times throughout the period until the early 1930s and energetically occupied the social niches that opened up as the world around them modernized. In addition, it was under the conditions of the Soviet state that a new generation of believers grew up (Pestrikova, Kryukova, Novgorodtsev). Second, the Wanderers were well aware of the morphology of contemporary Soviet discourse and knew how to manipulate its elements. After all, it was mostly Soviet peasants and workers, that had lived in a socialist state for nearly 20 years, who ended up in the dock during the trial. Chazova, the victim of Zyryanov's harassment, requested in an appeal to the court that her social origin should be corrected from "daughter of a miller" to "daughter of a middle-class peasant [serednyak]" in her questionnaire⁶⁵⁹. Khristofor Ivanovich himself compared his followers to Soviet heroes, wrote appeals using the possibilities of the legal bureaucracy, and urged to prove the absence of persecution of religion (that is, he called for compliance with Soviet law). Thus, it is hard to say that the protagonists of this chapter are incapable of a mutually intelligible dialogue with the Soviet domain of the 1930s. On the contrary, the rules of this dialogue were well known to them.

⁶⁵⁸ *Chakravorty Spivak G. Can the Subaltern Speak? // Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader.* (eds.) Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York, 1994. P. 66-111.

⁶⁵⁹ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L.21.

Certainly, Zyryanov's personal charisma and talent for persuasion, the excesses of Soviet religious policy, often violent at the local level, and isolation from any public sphere could all have influenced the tragic choice of the Vyatka Wanderers to a greater or lesser degree. At least Zyryanov's ability to persuade came in handy for convincing the collective farmers to bring their children into the community. However, throughout their 150-year history the Wanderers, unlike the Old Believers of other branches, despite their difficult relationship with the outside world, still did not find such practices possible. The invention (not revitalization) of self-mortification came about in the extreme circumstances in which the Wanderers found themselves for the first time in their history.

My hypothesis is that it was this involvement in modernizing spaces that was fatal for the Vyatka Wanderers. For more than two decades they steadily expanded the field of their own interaction with the outside world, engaged in economic cooperation, attempted to centralize their hierarchy, wrote books for wide readership, met and interacted with Soviet officials. This path seems to have been thorny and difficult for them, given the constant pressure of pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary authorities and the constant need to rethink their own isolationist doctrine. Nevertheless, difficulties did not stop the Wanderers for nearly thirty years, until in the late 1920s this process of external integration was tragically halted by collectivization, urbanization⁶⁶⁰, and the homogenization of Soviet social space.

This is how Christians, after many years of existence in a semi-legal and then in a legal space, found themselves literally underground, illegal. Not every Wanderer could exist in this mode: during this period many Christians broke with wandering (see Chapter 4). Some of the believers were able to adapt to the new conditions, despite the constant fear of ending up on the

⁶⁶⁰ On mass Soviet urbanization under conditions of industrialization and the consequences of the influx of peasants into the cities see for ex. *Hoffmann D.L.* Peasant Metropolis: social identities in Moscow, 1929-1941. Ithaca, 1994. On urbanization that destroyed the established religious networks of Old Believers see *Paert I. P.* Staroobriadchestvo Urala v gody stalinskoi «revoliutsii sverkhu». P. 213. In one investigative case, the Wanderers themselves complained that moving their co-religionists to cities seriously threatened the network integrity of the religious movement GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616. T. 1. L. 100-101.

dock at the next trial against the Wanderers, of which there were many in the 1930s and 1940s⁶⁶¹. Probably not yet old (unlike the 80-year-old Ryabinin who died in 1938) and ambitious, Khristofor Ivanovich perceived the severity of the new circumstances particularly painfully. If one believes the retelling of his speeches from the investigation case, the underground daily life was burdensome for the preacher: "It became difficult to live in hiding, even in the woods. There is no lodging. No food, and in order not to fall into the hands of the Antichrist – the Soviet authorities, one has to commit the feat of self-mortification⁶⁶².

It seems appropriate to compare the underground experience of the Wanderers with that of their contemporary Nikonian clerics, monks, and laymen, whose experience of the catacombs is described in Aleksei Beglov's work⁶⁶³. Like the Wanderers, the Nikonians did not necessarily sever all ties with Soviet society when they went into hiding, often continuing to work in quite secular positions at Soviet institutions and enterprises⁶⁶⁴. However, the gradual intensification of pressure on the Nikonian church institutions, which started since the October Revolution, seems to have paved the way for the underground Nikonian infrastructure to begin to take shape as early as the beginning of the 1920s⁶⁶⁵. Paradoxically, the Wanderers, despite the fact that, according to their own ideological declarations, the underground was their habitual mode of existence, in practice proved unprepared for life in literal catacombs. Moreover, the 1920s, in contrast to the Nikonians,

⁶⁶¹ During the 1930s, several waves of repressions were experienced by the Wanderers of Vichuga. *Kabanov A.E. Staroobriadtsy vladimirskikh i kostromskikh zemel'*. P. 73-75. By 1940, the Permian pre-del was defeated. GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616. T. 1 и 2. Eleven Wanderers were sentenced to execution during the trial in Cheboksary in 1941. These eleven became the protagonists of the Wanderers' martyrologic work "On the 11 Sufferers of the 20th Century". ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434–2. On this trial see *Berman A.G. Staroobriadtsy-stranniki v Chuvashii v 30-kh - 40-kh godakh 20 veka // Arkhivy i nauka: istoricheskii aspekt i sovremennye realii. Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem, posviashchennoi 75-letiiu so dnia obrazovaniia Gosudarstvennogo istoricheskogo arkhiva Chuvashskoi Respubliki (Cheboksary, 27-28 oktiabria 2016 g.)* Cheboksary, 2017. P. 353-362. In 1946, the Ivanovo female Wanderers found themselves in the dock. *Kabanov A.E. Staroobriadtsy vladimirskikh i kostromskikh zemel'*. P. 76-77.

⁶⁶² GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 100ob. L. 2.

⁶⁶³ *Beglov A. V poiskakh «bezgreshnykh katakomb»*. It is also interesting that the similarity between the self-designations "True Orthodox Christians" (Nikonians) and "True Orthodox Christians wandering" (Wanderers) led to the fact that the numerically small Wanderers could be mistaken for the more numerous and widespread Nikonian Catacomb Christians. Thus, the investigative cases against the Wanderers ended up in the collection of investigative cases against the Nikonians compiled by the human rights association "Memorial". This accident greatly simplified access to the materials that served as sources for this research.

⁶⁶⁴ *Beglov A. V poiskakh «bezgreshnykh katakomb»*. P. 46, 79, 80, 83-84, 124.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.* P. 40.

was a time of unprecedented openness for them. Even despite the difficulties of living in an atheistic state, they encountered direct attacks only at the very end of the 1920s, ten years after the Nikonians did. Thus, the unexpected experience of the underground in the early 1930s was even more sudden and traumatic for them.

For those whose activity coincided with the first third of the 20th century, a period of the Wanderers' self-discovery and search for and then finding their place in a hostile world, a return to the Evfimian practices of underground existence of the second half of the 18th century was no easy task. Exiled from a modernizing world (albeit a Soviet godless one) they seem unable to come to terms with the impossibility of being part of it. For the protagonists of this chapter, this unbearability of the underground was felt especially sharply, and this probably led to the tragic events in the Vyatka/Kirov region.

What happened in the Zyryanov community was in every way exceptional and unacceptable to all other Wanderers. This could only happen in circumstances where the community was somewhat disconnected from its contacts with co-religionists. The marginalized regime of sexualized violence can probably also be attributed to the effects of the marginalization of the community and the danger of its disintegration. The Wanderers of the turn of the 1920s and 1930s (including women, often still young) nevertheless had a choice between the dismal and dangerous underground and legalization in the Soviet domain. The choice in favor of the latter was made, for example, by Perinova. Thus, it may have taken a great deal of effort on the part of the leader and his like-minded supporters to keep the community from disintegrating. So, if Zyryanov's spiritual power was not enough to keep the Vyatka Wanderers united, physical power might come into play.

It is also worth mentioning that although the practice of self-mortification employed by the Wanderers for the first and last time in their history vaguely echoes the practice of strangulation described in the legend of the Red Death, there is no evidence that Zyryanov was guided by this plot when he formulated his grim doctrine. Since its invention in the late 19th century, the legend

of the Red Death, like any other plot of ritual murder among the Wanderers, has been and remains pure fiction, incompatible with the disenchanting religiosity of the Wanderers.

3.7 The Wanderers and the Resistance Strategies

Thus, the Vyatka events and Zyryanov's preaching were the marginal response of a small group of the Wanderers to a plenty of challenges of the first half of the 1930s and the suddenness of finding themselves in the underground. What, then, could have been the prevailing reactions and strategies of the Wanderers in the conditions of the underground? Is it possible at all to speak of a uniformity of the Wanderers' reactions in the face of being squeezed into the space of illegality? And is it possible to describe these reactions in terms of resistance?

Historiography devoted to the strategies of reaction adopted by members of the religious communities which found themselves in similar conditions during the 1920s and 1940s presents a rich palette of possible ways to adapt to the conditions of interwar (and postwar in the case of the Galician Uniates and the Ukrainian and Moldavian Jehovah's Witnesses) Soviet social domain. No doubt, both Nikonian clergy and laity and representatives of what might be called religious minorities (though that term is entirely absent from the official Soviet vocabulary) worked their way through the maelstrom of events of the first third of the 20th century in different ways. However, the Stalinist cultural revolution seems to have equaled them in the unprecedented and extreme pressures they faced. But even in the face of universal persecution, the Wanderers still had their own particular strategies of reaction or adaptation.

In a classic work on grassroots strategies of resistance to colonial hegemony, James Scott articulated the prominent concept of weapons of weak⁶⁶⁶. The term usually refers to strategies of passive (or at least not articulated) everyday resistance – petty sabotage, deliberately negligent work, spreading rumors and jokes about superiors, passivity and insubordination to the orders and demands of superiors, etc. The concept was soon transferred to the "Soviet ground". Religious manifestations and apocalyptic rumors as weapons of the "weak" Soviet peasants against the

⁶⁶⁶ Scott J.C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. London, 1985.

excesses of collectivization were examined in the classic works of Lynn Viola⁶⁶⁷ and Sheila Fitzpatrick⁶⁶⁸. In several works Viola also drew attention to the fact that The Old Believers (along with Protestants) may have been the catalyst for apocalyptic rumors in the countryside⁶⁶⁹.

It must be said, however, that in the variety of apocalyptic rumors it is quite difficult to single out directly of Old Believers (let alone of the Wanderers). Moreover, the mere likening of the state to the Antichrist in the speeches of the peasants gives no reason to say that the peasants are Old Believers or are under the influence of some stable Old Believers' ideological patterns. In addition, it is difficult to determine what was more present in the apocalyptic rumors: the inertia of the Orthodox eschatological tradition or the fears of the large-scale transformations of the village at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s.

To begin with, of course, the diversity of almost open religious life in the 1920s, almost hidden in the 1930s, partially legalized⁶⁷⁰ and partially even more limited⁶⁷¹ in the 1940s is not confined to the repression-resistance paradigm. Accordingly, the idea of arming all Soviet believers with weapons of the weak does not seem productive. For many Soviet Baptists⁶⁷², Soviet Evangelicals and Pentecostals⁶⁷³, Soviet Nikonians (both Renovationists⁶⁷⁴ and Sergianists after

⁶⁶⁷ Viola L. *The Peasant Nightmare: Visions of Apocalypse in the Soviet Countryside* // *The Journal of Modern History*. 1990. Vol. 62. no. 4. P. 747-770.

⁶⁶⁸ Fitzpatrick S. *Stalin's peasants: Resistance and survival in the Russian village after collectivization*. New York, Oxford, 1996. P. 6-7. Emily Baran noted that Fitzpatrick did later abandon the idea of religiosity as a weapon of the weak. Baran E. B. *Dissent on the margins: how Soviet Jehovah's Witnesses defied communism and lived to preach about it*. New York, Oxford, 2014. P. 5-6.

⁶⁶⁹ Viola L. *The Peasant Nightmare*. P. 753; Viola L. *Peasant rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the culture of peasant resistance*. New York, Oxford, 1999. P. 51-52.

⁶⁷⁰ On Stalin's "U-turn" toward religion during World War II, see Miner S. M. *Stalin's Holy War: religion, nationalism, and alliance politics, 1941-1945*. Chapell, 2003, especially chapter 4. It should be noted that the Belokrinitsa concordat of the priestly Old Believers was legalized in 1941, before the legalization of the Russian Orthodox (Nikonian) Church in 1943. Latyshau K.A. *Savetskae staraverstva u vaennoy gady // Vjalikaja Ajchynnaja vajna u ljose belaruskaga naroda : matjeryjaly mizhnar. navuk. kanf., Minsk, 23–24 kras. 2020 g. rjedkal.: A. G. Kahanoŭski (gal. rjed.) [i insh.]*. Minsk, 2020. P. 121.

⁶⁷¹ The persecution of the Galician Uniates and Jehovah's Witnesses, which took place at almost the same time as the legalization of the Nikonian, Islamic, and Jewish religious institutions, will be discussed below.

⁶⁷² Coleman H.J. *Russian Baptists and spiritual revolution, 1905-1929*. P. 5

⁶⁷³ Catherine Wanner in her work on Ukrainian Charismatic Christians describes a model of believer behavior that she calls "defiant compliance," which she explains as follows: «It is the delicate balance of confrontation through submission, of couching acts of total defiance in apparent acts of compliance, that distinguishes the evangelical response to state mandates they found objectionable». Wanner C. *Communities of the Converted*. P. 86.

⁶⁷⁴ Roslof E.E. *Red Priests: Renovatism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*. Bloomington, 2002.

1927⁶⁷⁵), Soviet Central Asian Muslims⁶⁷⁶, Soviet Buddhist Renovationists⁶⁷⁷, and even Soviet Skoptsy⁶⁷⁸ it was not an issue to believe in God and be a socialist, communist, or at least a loyal Soviet citizen at the same time⁶⁷⁹. The Wanderers can fairly be added to this long list. Before they were pushed into the underground against their will, at least the Millers had a strong belief in the necessity of giving to Soviet Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

However, there were also religious movements for which representatives did not have even the hypothetical possibility of a dual identity. For example, Galician Greek Catholics forcibly "reunited" with the Russian Orthodox (Nikonian) Church⁶⁸⁰ and Pentecostals who practiced glossolalia, or "speaking in tongues", fell into this category⁶⁸¹. Emily Baran also made a fair observation that one group of believers did resist, openly and without employing the cunning weapons of the weak. This refers to the Jehovah's Witnesses, whose existence was first confronted by Soviet law enforcement agencies and ideologists after the War, with the final annexation of Western Ukraine and Moldova. Jehovah's Witnesses openly refused to serve in the army, to participate in any Soviet loyalty rituals, and their children did not join the Pioneers or the Komsomol organizations⁶⁸². Relatively small in number, they proved to be a serious challenge to the Soviet authorities, which ensured their complete illegality almost until the fall of the Soviet regime⁶⁸³. In fact, this position of Jehovah's Witnesses was not a purely Soviet phenomenon. In

⁶⁷⁵ Part of the Nikonian clergy and laity recognized the declaration of loyalty to Soviet power by Metropolitan Sergii (Stargorodskii), Deputy Patriarch of the Patriarchate (1927). The declaration stated explicitly that "We want to be Orthodox and at the same time recognize the Soviet Union as our civil homeland, whose joys and successes are our joys and successes, and whose failures are our failures". Quoted from *Odintsov M.I.* *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov nakanune i v epokhu stalinskogo sotsializma 1917-1953 gg.* P. 164.

⁶⁷⁶ On the Central Asian Jadids and Communist Muslims, their cooperation with the Bolsheviks, and their nation-building projects in the interwar USSR see *Khalid A.* *Making Uzbekistan. On the institutionalization of Soviet Islam and the forging of a Soviet-Muslim identity during the Great Patriotic War and its aftermath* see *Tasar E.* *Soviet and Muslim: the institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia.* New York, Oxford, 2017.

⁶⁷⁷ *Sinitsyn F.L.* *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i buddisty (1917-1946 gg.)* // *Rossiiskaia istoriia.* 2013. no. 1. P. 62-76.

⁶⁷⁸ *Engelshtein L.* *Skoptsy i tsarstvo nebesnoe.*

⁶⁷⁹ Here I develop the thought expressed in *Baran E.B.* *Dissent on the margins.* P. 5

⁶⁸⁰ Shlikhta N. «Ukrainskii» kak «Ne-pravoslavnyi», ili kak greko-katoliki «Vossoediniialis» s Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkoviu (1940-1960-e gg.) // *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov v Rossii i za rubezhom.* 2014. no.4 (32). P. 208-232.

⁶⁸¹ On the Soviet Pentecostals' choice between the practice of glossolalia and legality and on the persecution of those who opted for the former, see *Nikol'skaia T.K.* *Avgustovskoe soglashenie i pozitsii piatidesiatnikov v 40-50-kh gg.* 20 v. // *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov v Rossii i za rubezhom.* 2010. no.4. P. 124-133.

⁶⁸² *Baran E.B.* *Dissent on the margins.* P. 5.

⁶⁸³ However, as Tatyana Vagramenko showed, even among the Witnesses there were people who found cooperation with the Soviet authorities possible and who even considered such cooperation useful for the religious community. *Vagramenko T.* *Secret Operations of the Soviet Security Services against the Jehovah's Witnesses in Ukraine (1949—*

the first half of the 20th century, the Jehovahists' open unwillingness to be both citizens of Earthly and Heavenly cities was a problem for a wide range of modern political projects from the Third Reich⁶⁸⁴ to liberal states with a long history of institutionalized religious pluralism like the United States⁶⁸⁵ and Canada⁶⁸⁶.

The Wanderers bore little resemblance to the uncompromising Jehovah's Witnesses. To begin with, one can hardly speak of any consistent resistance or anti-Soviet activity by the Wanderers as a community. First, they (at least the Millers⁶⁸⁷) had considerable experience not only of negative, but also of productive interactions with the Soviet authorities before the repressions. Second, as has already been said, throughout the 1920s there was nothing to indicate that the Wanderers (at least the Millers) opposed the Soviet authorities. Irina Paert provided information that Ryabinin participated in disputes with atheist propagandists as early as in the 1920s⁶⁸⁸. Zaleskii mentions the Wanderer Zharnikov from the village of Navolok (Arkhangel'sk Province) who also participated in disputes with Soviet propagandists in the 1920s⁶⁸⁹. However, it is difficult to unequivocally define participation in disputes as resistance to the regime. After all, participation in public debates allowed the Wanderers to be part of the public sphere, localized at the site of the disputation. Moreover, the very fact of the disputation suggests that each side allowed the possibility of non-violent influence on the worldview of the other or the audience. In the 1930s no debate or polemic was possible⁶⁹⁰. The Wanderers were excluded even from such very limited public spheres. From this point on, instead of anti-religious propagandists, the

1955) // ISTORIYA. 2021. Vol. 12. no. 8 (106).

⁶⁸⁴ *Penton J.* Jehovah's Witnesses and the Third Reich. Toronto, 2016.

⁶⁸⁵ See for ex. *Manwaring D. R.* Render Unto Caesar: The Flag- Salute Controversy: A Study of the Jehovah's Witnesses' Legal Struggle against Constitutional Flag Salute in Public Schools. Chicago, London, 1962.

⁶⁸⁶ A brief overview of the problematic (from the point of view of Canadian legislation) aspects of Witness doctrine and trials against Jehovahists. *Beaman L.G.* Defining harm: Religious freedom and the limits of the law. Vancouver, 2008. P. 19-28.

⁶⁸⁷ The more radical position of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy in relation to the Soviet regime will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁶⁸⁸ *Paert I.* Preparing God's Harvest. P. 50.

⁶⁸⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 214-217.

⁶⁹⁰ The martyrology "On the 11 Sufferers of the 20th Century" reports that any public debate has been impossible since 1930. ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434-2. L. 7ob.

responsibility to influence the worldview of the Wanderers was finally taken over by the law enforcement agencies.

As mentioned above, in the great mass of the anti-Soviet apocalyptic rumors it is hardly possible to recognize the voice of the Wanderers. Moreover, it seems that to look for their voice in this eschatological polyphony is in many ways a pointless exercise. The Wanderers, at least three of my protagonists and their other educated co-religionists were experts and professionals in the field of eschatology. In some ways they made eschatology their *raison d'être*. Their apocalyptic narratives (see the next chapter for one of these) were based on the complex theological foundations of the Christian apocalyptic tradition. These narratives had little in common with rural folkloric eschatology, characterized by an abundance of colorful images ranging from the technophobic (electricity and airplanes as harbingers of the End of Days) to the naively monarchic (waiting for a “good Tsar”, a liberator from the Bolsheviks)⁶⁹¹. Yet the Wanderers were not technophobes, much less monarchists, and, for them, such narratives must not have seemed alien or unreasonable. In other words, in terms of the depth of eschatological inquiry, the Wanderers had as much to do with the collective-farm theologians as the philharmonic performers had to do with the amateur musicians.

Certainly, individual anti-Soviet, but rather anti-kolkhoz, manifestations of the Wanderers could have taken place during the period of collectivization. In his chronicle of the history of the Wanderers Zalesskii mentioned two such "troublemakers". Dedov, the former Miller from the village of Volosovo (Arkhangel'sk Oblast), preached about the impending end of the world, while Rudometov from Kargopol' (Arkhangel'sk Oblast) was active in the anti-kolkhoz propaganda⁶⁹². However, the evidence that the Wanderers believed that the Soviet authorities were the Antichrist and consolidated around this idea seems to be present only in the pages of the investigative

⁶⁹¹ On these and many other plots of the 19th- and 20th-century Russian eschatology, whose dawn seems to have occurred precisely in the early 1930s, see *Bessonov I.A. Russkaia narodnaia eskhatologiiia: istoriia i sovremennost. M., 2014. P. 123-310.*

⁶⁹² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 218-219.

cases⁶⁹³. In the Wanderer's own sources describing the events of the 1930s, the Soviet government is not perceived as something infernal. A biography of Wanderer Stefan, written in hagiographic style in the postwar period, is a very typical example of how the Wanderers spoke of Soviet power. This work is largely a description of the penitentiary experience of a man who went through several prisons and concentration camps in the late 1930s and early 1940s. However, Soviet institutions are described quite neutrally, only as a background to the Wanderer's hagiographic path⁶⁹⁴.

Another major text dealing with the repression of the 1930s is "On the 11 Sufferers of the 20th Century", a collective martyrology describing the trial of the Wanderers in Cheboksary in 1941. This work, probably written in the late 1950s, not only attributes no infernal overtones to the actions of the Soviet law enforcement agencies⁶⁹⁵, but is also loaded with Soviet discursive elements relevant to the period of its writing. The Cheboksary martyrs are likened to the heroes of the "civil wars"⁶⁹⁶. The Soviet army service of one of the protagonists becomes a respectable stage in his hagiographic path⁶⁹⁷. Moreover, there are also concrete markers of the early Thaw, well-known from quite secular literature and fiction. The persecutors of the Wanderers are called "agents of Beria, evil hangmen," while the martyrs were taken away in "the chyorny voron" [black raven] to be executed⁶⁹⁸.

One of the few exceptions is the historical work of monk Nikita, which has already been quoted above. Nikita wrote the following:

"... The Soviet government began to see the Wanderers as people harmful to the state, conducting religious propaganda among the population and calling the government representatives

⁶⁹³ *Kabanov A.E.* Staroobriadtsy vladimirskikh i kostromskikh zemel'. P. 201-204; GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 94. As Coleman noted, anti-Soviet Baptist organizations also existed only on the pages of Soviet prosecution documents. *Coleman H.J.* Russian Baptists and spiritual revolution, 1905-1929. P. 218-219. The Siberian Wanderers, as Dutchak showed, were much more inclined to attribute the Soviet regime to the Antichrist; *Dutchak E.E.* Iz "Vavilona" v "Belovod'e". P. 272-273.

⁶⁹⁴ Aftobiografiia Stefana / «Staraiia vera v dokumentakh»

URL: <http://starajavera.narod.ru/stefanJitie.html> (Last accessed 25.11.2021).

⁶⁹⁵ The text refers to Soviet law enforcement and judicial institutions as "godless," but does not endow them with any of the traits of the Antichrist. ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434-2. L. 2ob, 9ob, 11ob.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid. L. 1.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid. L. 5ob.

⁶⁹⁸ The anonymous author calls it exactly "voron," not "voronok". This term "black raven" [chyorny voronok] itself is a euphemism for the Soviet GAZ M-1 car which was used by the NKVD-MGB-KGB staff to transport detainees and prisoners. ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434-2. L. 11ob-12.

godless and the Antichrists. By this ["they"] aroused the wrath of the Soviet authorities against the Wanderers.”⁶⁹⁹

It is easy to see the contradictory construction of this passage. "...the government began to see the Wanderers as... by this ["they"] aroused the wrath of the Soviet authorities against the Wanderers....". The ambiguous wording with which Nikita describes the causal relationship between the religious agitation of the Wanderers and the repression leaves room for at least two opposing interpretations. The first is that the "government" unreasonably began to view the Wanderers as propagators of apocalyptic attitudes. The second is that the repression imposed by the "government" was a reaction to the real subversion of the Wanderers. It is legitimate to assume that in some cases both the first and the second could have taken place. However, Nikita's text seems more likely to chide his too radical co-religionists than to condemn the policies of the Soviet authorities. Nikita himself clearly does not consider the "Soviet government" to be an emanation of the Antichrist, and describes its actions in completely neutral terms.

Of course, this does not mean that particular Wanderers could not sincerely consider a distant higher or some concrete local Soviet authority to be the Antichrist and develop their individual or group strategies on the basis of such beliefs. However, it seems that the idiom "Soviet power is the Antichrist" has not become part of the mainstream Wanderers' theology, at least for Ryabinin's followers. Thus, it seems that the Wanderers had no ideological basis for developing collective strategies of resistance. The Soviet regime was godless (with which its representatives themselves would agree) for the Wanderers, but not infernal. Even during the most difficult period of repression the Wanderers sought to avoid contact with it rather than to manifest their antagonism to the regime through texts or actions.

3.8 Transformation of the Underground Networks

The Soviet project of anti-religious modernity was never uniform and, until the institutionalization of Soviet scientific atheism in the late 1950s, was not even clearly

⁶⁹⁹ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1974. L. 11.

articulated⁷⁰⁰. However, if one believes that this project was only a radical version of the modern secularism and therefore sought to displace religious manifestations from the public space and to erect clear boundaries between the secular-public and the private-religious⁷⁰¹, then it seems that the Wanderers met its requirements as best as possible. The very social structure of the community implied a clear division between worldly benefactors and world-renouncers, who engaged in spiritual activities nominally beyond the view of the outside world. However, it seems that the urbanization and repressions of the 1930s completely threw this system out of any balance.

As mentioned above, in the 1930s and 1940s there were several trials of the Wanderers. In the course of the trial of the Wanderers from Perm' in 1939-1940, investigators obtained a long list of addresses and names of benefactors from all over the country, where the Wanderers could receive shelter and safe haven during their flight. As the main defendant, an elder of the Permian predel and one of Ryabinin's disciples Tiurtii Georgievich (Nazarenkov) pointed out during his interrogation, urbanization and being in the underground in the 1930s had a strong influence on the Wanderers. Their shelters, which used to be "in the woods," have now moved into urban apartments⁷⁰². The list of 123 benefactors seized from Nazarenkov proves this. The wide geography of the network of shelters from Leningrad to Abakan (Khakassian Autonomous Region) was almost entirely urbanized. The major centers of the Wanderers emerged in Kazan, Sarapul (Udmurtian Autonomous Region), Perm' and Vyatka/Kirov, the countryside around which had been the centers of the Wanderers' activity before. Thus, in the 1930s, the Wanderers' benefactors moved to the cities, joining the general flow of peasants moving to the nearest industrial centers⁷⁰³.

⁷⁰⁰ On the debates surrounding this institutionalization and on Soviet scientific atheism as a worldview project alternative to religion, see *Smolkin-Rothrock V.* The ticket to the soviet soul: science, religion, and the spiritual crisis of Late Soviet atheism // *The Russian Review*. 2014. Vol. 73. no. 2. P. 171-197.

⁷⁰¹ *Wanner C.* Communities of the Converted. P. 35, 52; *Smolkin V.* A Sacred Space Is Never Empty. P. 9; *Sadomskaya N., Dragadze T.* Soviet Anthropology and Contemporary Rituals [with Discussion] // *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*. 1990. Vol. 31, No. 2-3. P. 245-255; *Dragadze, T.* The domestication of religion under Soviet communism // *C. Hann (ed.), Socialism: Ideals, Ideologies, and Local Practice*. London, Routledge, 1993. P. 141 – 151. On secularism as the modern project that seeks to draw clear boundaries between the secular and the sacred *Asad T.* *Formations of the Secular*. Redwood City, 2020.

⁷⁰² GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616. T. 1. L. 62-63, 100-101.

⁷⁰³ On the drastic intensification of urbanization in the late 1920s and 1930s, see e.g. *Pivovarov Iu.L.* *Urbanizatsiia Rossii v 20 veke: predstavleniia i realnost' // Obschestvennye nauki i sovremennost*. 2001. no. 6. P. 103.

The baptized Wanderers, who remained mostly in the countryside, appeared to be left on their own, according to Nazarenkov's testimony in the course of the investigation. To survive, they harvested mushrooms and berries in the woods for sale, worked as babysitters, engaged in handicrafts⁷⁰⁴. It seems that this state of affairs increased the distance between the world-renouncers and the benefactors and contributed to the erosion of the networks of their interaction⁷⁰⁵.

The example of the Baldin family, benefactors in several generations from Chentsovo (Yaroslavl' region), stands as an illustrative one. In 1916 Yakov Baldin was arrested for keeping an unregistered prayer house for the Wanderers. From the testimony of the participants in the trial it became known that for several years there had been gatherings of up to 100 Wanderers in Yakov's house. In addition, a local Nikonian priest complained to the police that Baldin refused to let him inside the house for inspection. The jury found Baldin guilty and sentenced him to pay 40 rubles to the treasury, which he was exempted from on the basis of the Provisional Government Decree "On Amnesty" of March 6, 1917⁷⁰⁶.

While Yakov Baldin, even under the fairly mild repressive policies of the Old Regime, was able to maintain a kind of secrecy and autonomy from the outside world, for his son Baldin Jr. who grew up under the new Soviet conditions, it was no longer possible. Zalesskii provides the following story. Baldin Jr. was drafted into the Red Army in the 1920s and became close to several of his fellow soldiers during his service. After his demobilization, Baldin got a job as a shoemaker, but like his father, he was closely connected with the Wanderers. In his house Aleksandr Petrovich, one of the Kornilo-fyodorovtsy leaders who had been paralyzed, found refuge. At the same time, Baldin's military friends were employed by the OGPU, and after a while they rose to high positions. They also did not lose touch with their Red Army comrade. It was probably no easy task

⁷⁰⁴ GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616. T. 1. L. 62-63, 101-102.

⁷⁰⁵ Elena Dutchak noted that in the case of the Siberian wanderers, on the contrary, the repression served to strengthen the bond between the world-renouncers and the benefactors in this period. *Dutchak E.E. Iz "Vavilona" v "Belovode"*. P. 273.

⁷⁰⁶ GAYaO. F.346 Op.4 T.4 D. 7173; Text of the decree: *Konfessional'naia politika Vremennogo pravitelstva Rossii*. M., 2018. P. 100-101.

for Baldin Jr. to keep in touch with both the Wanderers and the OGPU officers simultaneously. In the late 1930s he told his comrades that he was harboring a Wanderer in his home. The paralyzed Aleksandr Petrovich was arrested. Baldin later, if Zaleskii is to be believed, regretted his actions and blamed himself for betraying his fellow believer⁷⁰⁷.

Since the late 18th century, the Wanderers have learned to more or less successfully remain invisible to the central authorities, while local state institutions have been more willing to indifferently turn a blind eye to their existence than to actively pursue them. Stalinist modernity⁷⁰⁸ offered a different type of distribution of power and the involvement of the commoners in the relationship with this power. Yakov Baldin could hold meetings of 100 people in his house (it is clear that such meetings could not remain unnoticed) and not let the local priest on the doorstep. Yakov's son was already firmly connected to the outside world, particularly through his experience in the Red Army, and could not shelter even one paralyzed Wanderer in his home.

The feature of the 1930s repressions is that for the first time since the short period of persecution in the early 1850s it targeted not only the baptized Wanderers, but also their network of lay believers. Benefactors found themselves in the dock in the cases against Zyryanov, 1929⁷⁰⁹, 1933⁷¹⁰, 1936⁷¹¹, and in the cases against the Perm⁷¹² and Cheboksary Wanderers⁷¹³. As a rule, the sentences for the benefactors did not differ in severity from the sentences for the world-renouncers. Moreover, in Cheboksary both the baptized and unbaptized Wanderers were sentenced to death by firing squad.

This part of the research does not seek to compare the brutality of imperial persecution to that of the Stalinist repression. Obviously, the fine of 40 rubles imposed on Yakov Baldin in 1916 is not comparable in terms of harshness to the shooting of the Wanderers in 1941. The purpose of

⁷⁰⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. L. 44-45.

⁷⁰⁸ See chapter 4.

⁷⁰⁹ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D.SU-4939. L. 342-343.

⁷¹⁰ GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 8. D.SU-10180. L. 237.

⁷¹¹ GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 3.

⁷¹² Mentioned in the text of the entire case. GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616.

⁷¹³ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434-2. L. 2.

the aforementioned is to show how much the nature of the Wanderers' underground has changed within 20 years and how productive and all-pervasive the Stalinist regime has been in the sense of consciously or unwittingly generating unbearable conditions for existence in the catacombs. Moreover, this regime became such in a very short period of time, since in 1926 it was still possible to hold a large-scale council in Savinskaya. It is not only about repression and the need to hide not just from the central authorities, but also from local law enforcement agencies and even co-religionists as in the case of Baldin Jr. The processes of urbanization also seem to have taken a serious toll on the Wanderers' network. Putting aside the tragic and extraordinary path of the Vyatka Wanderers, under such conditions the Wanderers had only two options. Staying in hiding, always in fear of sudden arrest, or trying to find a place for themselves in the modernizing Stalinist domain. The next chapter will focus on the Wanderers who chose the latter.

Chapter 4. The Wanderers and Stalinist Modernity

4.1 Introduction.

The previous chapter described the hardships faced by the Wanderers in the underground and the strategies of their response to finding themselves in these literal catacombs. Up to this point, the Late Imperial and Early Soviet historical trajectories of the Wanderers community had developed in parallel and in similar scenarios to other communities that we might characterize as religious minorities. The Wanderers went from self-discovery in the early 20th century to vigorous interaction with the Soviet authorities in the 1920s, to finally being forced underground by the early 1930s by Stalin's cultural revolution. This could have been the predictable and teleological end to this story. However, it seems that to put a period here would be to deprive of the opportunity to speak out those Wanderers who found their voice at this very difficult time for the community. This chapter will focus on those Wanderers for whom the Stalinist cultural revolution turned out to be a time of opportunity, for it opened up new and attractive social niches for them.

This chapter is devoted to the perspective on interwar Stalinism⁷¹⁴ of those who sought to engage with it. Although, as mentioned in the introduction, the debate on the applicability of the term “modernity” to Russian and Soviet history has not ceased for decades, this chapter will show that these new social conditions of the 1930s were perceived by those who existed within them as new, modern, allowing them to redefine their identity within some novel framework. Certainly, in its various manifestations, the Stalinist regime could be both a variant of multiple “Western”

⁷¹⁴ Speaking of Stalinism, I will rely on the definition of David Hoffman “Stalinism can be defined as a set of tenets, policies, and practices instituted by the Soviet government during the years in which Stalin was in power, 1928–53. It was characterized by extreme coercion employed for the purpose of economic and social transformation. Among the particular features of Stalinism were the abolition of private property and free trade; the collectivization of agriculture; a planned, state-run economy and rapid industrialization; the wholesale liquidation of so-called exploiting classes, involving massive deportations and incarcerations; large-scale political terror against alleged enemies, including those within the Communist Party itself; a cult of personality deifying Stalin; and Stalin’s virtually unlimited dictatorship over the country”. *Hoffmann D.* (ed.). *Stalinism: the essential readings*. Hoboken, 2002. P.2.

modernity⁷¹⁵ and possess notable neo-traditionalist or even archaic traits⁷¹⁶. However, as will be shown below from the perspective of some of the Wanderers and in terms of the social niches this regime opened up for them, 1930s Stalinism looked extremely attractive precisely in its modernity and its striving for the future. In addition, while the Wanderers were bearers of disenchanting religiosity, at least one Wanderer was able to grasp the familiar and attractive eschatological intonations in the constantly fluctuating Soviet ideology of the turn of the 1920s and 1930s⁷¹⁷.

The main protagonist of this chapter is a man who has already been repeatedly mentioned above, Maksim Ivanovich Zaleskii (1894? - 1975)⁷¹⁸, the son of a peasant, an amateur historian, who at various times worked in a sausage store and a timber yard, and as a part-time OGPU-NKVD-MGB agent. Besides, what seems most important in the light of this study, from 1911 to 1931 Maksim Ivanovich was a Wanderer – world-renouncer and one of the followers of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy.

In this introductory section of the chapter, it should also be said that while working for the OGPU-NKVD-MGB, Zaleskii was in fact an informer or, as one might call him in Russian, “stukach”⁷¹⁹. This social niche (if it can be called so) is deeply rooted in the history of the Russian law enforcement system. However, despite the fact that from at least the late 17th century to the present day, informers have been an important part of the activity of the developing institutions of

⁷¹⁵ See for ex. *Kotkin S.* Modern times: The Soviet Union and the interwar conjuncture // *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. 2001. Vol. 2. no. 1. P. 111-164; *Hoffmann D.L.* European modernity and Soviet socialism // *Russian modernity*. London, 2000. P. 245-260. Anna Krylova also pointed out that in the early 1930s a particular post-Bolshevik language of Soviet modernity began to emerge, accompanying a shift away from the Bolshevik collectivist understanding of society toward a gradual division between the individual and the social. *Krylova A.* Soviet modernity: Stephen Kotkin and the Bolshevik predicament // *Contemporary European History*. 2014. Vol. 23. no. 2. P. 190-192.

⁷¹⁶ *Fitzpatrick Sh.* Introduction // *Stalinism: New Directions*. London and New York, 2000. P. 1-15; *Martin T.* Modernization or neo-traditionalism? Ascribed nationality and Soviet primordialism // *Russian Modernity*. London, 2000. P. 161-182.

⁷¹⁷ On Soviet-Marxist secular eschatology see *Halpin I.* From darkness to light: Class, consciousness, and salvation in revolutionary Russia. Pittsburgh, 2000.

⁷¹⁸ This is only one of the versions of the dating of his life. Zaleskii himself indicated in various documents different years of his birth, but we know that he was born in either 1893 or 1894. In addition, Nikolai Bubnov, a member of the archaeological expedition of the Library of the Academy of Sciences to the Arkhangel'sk region, who personally acquainted with Zaleskii, reported that Maksim Ivanovich died on January 1, 1975. *Bubnov N.Iu.* Poslednii skit kargopol'skikh skrytnikov v D. Zales'e // *Vestnik Syktyvkarского universiteta. Seriya gumanitarnykh nauk*. 2019. no. 1 (9). P. 42.

⁷¹⁹ "Stukach" is a Russian euphemism for a snitch. Literally, someone who "knocks" that is, who reports to state law enforcement agencies about observed offenses and crimes.

a political investigation⁷²⁰, during the period of the Great Terror, contrary to the established cultural perceptions, only a small proportion of political cases were based on the informers' reports⁷²¹. Nevertheless, in the Russian and Soviet social imagination a negative image of the *stukach*, who reported for self-serving purposes, was firmly entrenched. As a rule, informers did not leave behind memories and declarations that would shed light on their understanding of the ethical side of their activities. However, Maksim Ivanovich is clearly not the case. The case of Zalesskii turns out to be even more valuable, since Maksim Ivanovich described in detail what motivated him when he became engaged in interaction with law enforcement agencies. Thus, in addition to all said above, Zalesskii's story allows us to demonstrate how the mechanisms of the Soviet repressive machine of the 1930s were seen by those who maintained its productivity.

Zalesskii's biography has already been the subject of research. Irina Paert, in her article of 2005, showed how in Maksim Ivanovich's imagination the popular millenarianism of the Wanderers intertwined with the millenarian Soviet ideology and how this intertwining led him to collaborate with the Soviet law enforcement agencies⁷²². In my research, first, I place the case of Zalesskii in the broader context of the history of the Wanderers of the first third of the 20th century; second, I use a broader range of sources that allow me to better understand the biographical path of Maksim Ivanovich. Finally, third, the explanation of Zalesskii's collaboration with the OGPU by the juxtaposition of the Soviet millenarianism and the eschatology of the Wanderers in his worldview does not seem complete. So, below I'm trying to figure out what else might have driven Zalesskii to make his pivotal choice.

⁷²⁰ As Yevgenii Anisimov notes, almost all political affairs from the late 17th century and throughout the 18th century began with denunciations. *Anisimov E. Derzhava i topor: tsarskaia vlast', politicheskii sysk i russkoe obschestvo v 18 veke*. M., 2019. P. 48. In addition, it is worth mentioning the "thief detective", in fact a thief and at the same time a police agent Van'ka Kain, who was active in Moscow in the mid-18th century, and whose biography in many aspects resonates with the biography of Zalesskii. *Akel'ev E. Syshchik iz vorov" Van'ka Kain: Anatomiiia" Gibrida // Ab Imperio*. 2018. Vol. 2018. no. 3. P. 257-304; for a brief historical overview of the transformation of the external perception of the culture of denunciation from neutral to negative in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union see *Kozlov N.D. Fenomen donosa: (Analiz dokumentov 1944-1953 gg.) // Svobodnaia mysl'*. 1998. no. 4.

⁷²¹ *Khlevniuk O.V. Khoziain: Stalin i utverzhdienie stalinskoi diktatury*. M., 2010. P. 336-337.

⁷²² *Paert I. Preparing God's harvest*. P. 44-61.

Certainly, religious faith (including belief in the unfolding eschatological process) was extremely important to the Wanderers. However, equally indispensable to the Wanderers was their own pragmatic flexibility, which enabled them to vigorously occupy the appropriate social niches that opened up for them in the course of the Late Imperial and the Early Soviet modernization. In other words, I believe that the Wanderers, including Zalesskii, were not millenarians detached from the world, who could only be attracted to Soviet space by Ideological semantics remotely resembling their own religious ones. Interwar Stalinism should have offered the Wanderers something else to satisfy their pragmatic need to be part of broader social domains. And even though the time of religious companions for the Soviet authorities ended in the late 1920s, the complex, multifaceted and to a certain extent modern Stalinist social domain had something to offer to the Wanderers.

4.2 Biographical and Ideological Trajectory of Maksim Ivanovich Zalesskii

4.2.1 Autobiographies of a Wanderer

Even the biographical fact of the protagonist's birth raises many questions. If the year of his birth can be determined more or less accurately, then answering the question of what his real name was is a somewhat more difficult task. At least two autobiographies of Zalesskii are known. One of them was written in the late 1920s for the Yaroslavl' Natural History Society, and the second (much more detailed) was compiled in the 1950s and 1960s for an unidentified reader. These biographies meaningfully coincide in describing the chronology of the history of the Wanderers until the late 1920s, but often diverge in the details concerning the life of Zalesskii himself. One such detail is the very year of the author's birth (1893 in the first biography, 1894 in the second)⁷²³. Another important detail is his real last name.

Autobiographies, of course, are not a source for reconstructing real events or determining their authenticity. Autobiography is a treacherous genre, especially when it comes to an autobiography of a man with such an ornate and mysterious life trajectory as Zalesskii. His

⁷²³ In this research I employ the dating used in the later and much more detailed autobiography.

autobiographies and his ego-documents in general are a creative description of both a Wanderer and a Soviet citizen. As will be shown, this ambivalence and dualism makes it impossible to catch his biography in the methodological nets deployed by Sovietologists of different generations, who have interpreted in different ways the mass of autobiographies written in the same years as those of Zaleskii⁷²⁴.

His autobiographies have little in common with the peculiar Soviet genre of questionnaires (file autobiographies), which were filled out by millions of Soviet citizens and, as Sheila Fitzpatrick pointed out, directly influenced the formation of their identities⁷²⁵. Zaleskii was not obliged to write his life story. At least there are no evidence to the contrary. In addition, he did not know how to write a Soviet autobiography and had little idea of the rules by which it is to be written. His ego-documents are the product of his own enthusiasm, the desire to simultaneously find a social niche and preserve the history of the Wanderers of which he was a part. Thus, in the first place, his autobiographies are a source about how this Wanderer wanted to portray himself in the eyes of someone who, as Maksim Ivanovich probably imagined, would one day study the history of his little religious movement on the basis of Zaleskii texts.

4.2.2 A Peasant to Wanderer

It is known that Maksim Ivanovich was born in the village of Voloski, 15 km from Kargopol, and at birth he was named Fyodor. In his first autobiography of 1929-1930 he calls his father Ivan Ivanovich Zaleskii⁷²⁶. In the later, Zaleskii mentions his real last name as Smirnov⁷²⁷. Among the two versions of his family name "Zaleskii" looks more like a pseudonym than "Smirnov," given that there is a village called Zaless'e near Kargopol, where he lived for a time. However, it is also known that Zaleskii-Smirnov had a brother, Stepan Ivanovich⁷²⁸ whose documents raise

⁷²⁴ For a classic survey on the role of autobiographical texts in the formation of the Soviet subject, see *Halfin I. Terror in My Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial*. Cambridge, 2003. A detailed overview of the history of the transformation of the genre of Soviet autobiographies (although Zaleskii autobiographies can be called Soviet only in part) see *Zaretskiy Y. Confessing to Leviathan: The Mass Practice of Writing Autobiographies in the USSR // Slavic Review*. 2017. Vol. 76. no. 4. P. 1027-1047.

⁷²⁵ *Fitzpatrick S. Tear off the masks!* Princeton, 2005. P. 14-18.

⁷²⁶ GAYaO. F.P221. Op.1. D. 313. L. 29.

⁷²⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L.1.

⁷²⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 66.

the question of the real last name of Maksim Ivanovich. Stepan fought in the Red Army during the Civil War⁷²⁹, worked in the district party committee in the village of Plesetsk (Northern Krai - Arkhangel'sk region⁷³⁰), and then as a political officer fought at the fronts of the Great Patriotic War and was awarded the Order of the Great Patriotic War, 2nd degree, and the Order of the Red Star⁷³¹. In addition, in the first half of the 1930s, Stepan studied at the All-Union Communist Agricultural University named after Sverdlov at the Central Executive Committee⁷³². Wherever Stepan Ivanovich studied or worked or fought, he was recorded as Stepan Zalesskikh in the relevant questionnaires. This fact further complicates the investigation of his brother's real last name⁷³³. Taking into account such discrepancies, nevertheless, in the following I will refer to my protagonist as Zalesskii, as he called himself in his later and most detailed writings.

Fyodor Ivanovich was born to a large peasant family of eight children. He completed 3 classes of a Nikonian parochial school. Under the influence of a local Nikonian missionary, the family even discussed the issue of assigning the boy, a gifted student of the parochial school, to study in a seminary⁷³⁴. However, Fyodor Smirnov remained in Voloski because his family had no money to afford further education. In addition, as he himself recalled, his relatives also had no "affinity for priests". At the age of 17, in 1911, during the season of reaping, Fyodor got fatigued or fell ill (perhaps he had an exacerbation of heart condition, which he mentioned later on). The young man was at death's door, and his mother insisted that he take a vow to become a Wanderer

⁷²⁹ OBD «Memorial». TsAMO. Kartoteka politrabotnikov. Nomer iaschika Zakliazminskii – Zamakhovskii. ID uchetnoi kartochki 1913557958. URL: <https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=1913557958&p=123> (Last accessed 3. 12. 2021).

⁷³⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 66.

⁷³¹ OBD «Memorial». TsAMO. Kartoteka politrabotnikov. Nomer iaschika Zakliazminskii – Zamakhovskii. ID uchetnoi kartochki 1913557958. URL: <https://obd-memorial.ru/html/info.htm?id=1913557958&p=123> (Last accessed 3. 12. 2021).

⁷³² GARF. F. P5221. Op. 70. D.540.

⁷³³ Perhaps the issue here is the widespread problem of last name ambiguity in the Soviet 1920s. As anthropologist Albert Baiburin writes, when the first Soviet identity documents were issued, it turned out that not all Soviet citizens had concrete last names. Moreover, during the first Soviet decade, citizens actively used the legal opportunity to change their surnames at their own discretion. Therefore, it may well be that brothers who lived apart during the 1920s ended up with different last names. *Baiburin A. K. Sovetskii pasport istoriia - struktura - praktiki*. SPb, 2017. P. 209, 388-389.

⁷³⁴ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 1-3

if he recovered⁷³⁵. After a quick recovery, the vow was fulfilled. The young man was baptized with the name Maksim.

This is such a stunning point that needs to be discussed in more detail. It is an obvious fact that the local peasants, the parents of Zalesskii, had no internal contradictions of existence within the Late Imperial multi-Orthodox landscape that was described in Chapter 1. When they needed to take advantage of the developed educational infrastructure, they sent a child to a Nikonian church school. Hence, no doubt, they were recorded in the local parish books as parishioners of the Synodal Nikonian church. However, in the moment of mortal danger, when a "real" religious miracle is required, Fyodor-Maksim's parents knew that they could turn to the bearers of "real" or "stronger," from their point of view, religiosity - the local Wanderers. This demonstrates, first, that the Wanderers are an important part of this local peasant community, and, second, that the underground of local Wanderers is completely permeable to their neighbors⁷³⁶. In addition, it seems that from the perspective of a believer who is unaffected by a theological purism, the multi-Orthodox situation is perceived as natural: for an education one goes to the Nikonians, but when it is necessary to make a covenant⁷³⁷ with God, one goes to those whom he considers closest to the Lord, the Wanderers.

4.2.3 Raising the Wanderer

Thus, the former peasant Fyodor Smirnov-Zalesskii-Zalesskikh, now known as the Wanderer Maksim Ivanovich began his flight in 1911 at the age of 18. After being baptized, he was transferred for religious training, first to the village of Efremovskaya, then to the village of

⁷³⁵ Ibid. L. 5-6. Zalesskii further mentioned that a Wanderer known to his mother lived in the village of Chertovitsy nearby. Such vows in the hope of recovery were apparently not uncommon for the Wanderers. Dutchak cites information about several investigative cases against Permian peasant women who, during a difficult childbirth, vowed to hand the child over to the Wanderers in case she was born alive. *Dutchak E.E. Iz "Vavilona" v "Belovod'e"*. P. 122.

⁷³⁶ As missionary Ostrovsky reported, in the second half of the 19th century, the Wanderers spread throughout Kargopol'skii district and were extremely active in it. There is no doubt that this activity was no secret to the local peasants, many of whom were involved in the Wanderers' networks. Ostrovskii D. Kargopol'skie «beguny». P. 7.

⁷³⁷ Such a "deal," apparently, was not something extraordinary for the peasant milieu. Almost forgotten in today's Orthodoxy the practice of covenants, that is, promises given to God, the saints, or holy places to perform some spiritual work (such as pilgrimage or taking monastic vows) was widespread in Russian villages. *Kormina Zh. V. Palomniki etnograficheskie ocherki pravoslavnogo nomadizma monografiiia*. M., 2019.

Zaruchevye, and later to the village of Rayevskaya (all of Vologda province, later Arkhangel'sk region) until finally he found himself in Oparinskaya in 15 km from his birthplace⁷³⁸. The Wanderer's training included the study of prayers and the reading of theological texts. As Zalesskii himself wrote, "the young body was hardened through [reading] books and prayers"⁷³⁹. Influenced by his studies, the young Wanderer came to believe firmly in the idea of "wandering for the sake of God, ... having neither home, nor village, nor family"⁷⁴⁰. Describing this period of his life, Zalesskii recounts an episode of a meeting with the Nikonian bishop of Kargopol, Varnava (Nakropin) (1862-1924). During one of his travels, Maksim Ivanovich and another Wanderer encountered the bishop's cortege on the road. Varnava crossed the travelers. In response, if Zalesskii is to be believed, the Wanderers replied snidely to the Nikonian priest, "We have no need in your crosses, to hell with them"⁷⁴¹.

Maksim Ivanovich began his flight at an extremely tense time for the religious movement. The events of the 1911-1913 schism were in full swing. Zalesskii's spiritual mentors clearly gravitated toward the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy and were fierce denouncers of Ryabinin. Not surprisingly, the young Wanderer was drawn into the conflict precisely on the part of opponents of the ideas of hierarchical centralization, trade activity, and the smooth self-discovery of the Wanderers. In 1913, the signature of the 20-year-old Zalesskii appears under the charges of Ryabinin by the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy in the pages of "Acts of the Council in the Vichuga country held in September 7420-7421". In a commentary to his signature Zalesskii wrote: "According to the indication of the divine scripture I find Aleksandr Vasiliev guilty, and [he] is to be punished in accordance with the sacred rules. Sinful Maksim Ivanov"⁷⁴². In his later autobiography, the protagonist of this chapter described the essence of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy and the Millers conflict

⁷³⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 6-8

⁷³⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 8-9.

⁷⁴⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 11.

⁷⁴¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 12-13.

⁷⁴² Kargopol'skoe sobranie 173. L. 183ob.

as follows: the Danilov school of Ryabinin turned from the way of the ancestors and tried to create a kind of hierarchy, where Ryabinin would be the chief elder⁷⁴³.

In 1914 Maksim Ivanovich was assigned to the community of the Wanderers near the station "Sereda"⁷⁴⁴ (Kostroma province, later Ivanovo-Voznesensk province) to study under the supervision of Iosif Anfinogenov (Vazhnov), the assistant of the elder of the Yaroslavl' predel⁷⁴⁵. The eventful life of the world around him in the second half of the 1910's passed by Zalesskii. He "almost imperceptibly missed the time of his conscription in the first year of the "Imperialist slaughter"⁷⁴⁶. In addition, the revolutionary events of 1917 are completely absent from any of his autobiographies.

What really bothered Maksim Ivanovich was the process of his theological training led by his mentor, Vazhnov. Zalesskii pays special attention to the fact that the teacher, "the science lover" and "the passionate admirer of history", tried to instill in his pupils not only theological knowledge, but also encouraged reading of secular fiction and scientific literature⁷⁴⁷. Vazhnov amassed an invaluable library, which included writings by Russian classical authors from Griboyedov to Leskov, and works by both secular (Karamzin, Solovyov, and many others) and Synodal historians, particularly by Metropolitan Platon (Levshin)⁷⁴⁸. In addition, in his later autobiography, Zalesskii mentions that during this time he read "The ABC of Communism" by Nikolai Bukharin and "Program of the VIII Congress of the VKP(b)"⁷⁴⁹.

Maksim Ivanovich places special emphasis on the history of his training. His teachers, in Zalesskii's description, seem traumatized by the schism that occurred, the encroachment on the autonomy of the Wanderers' communities brought into question by Ryabinin's reforms. Under the

⁷⁴³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 14-15.

⁷⁴⁴ Present-day Furmanov city in the Ivanovo region.

⁷⁴⁵ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 31ob.

⁷⁴⁶ Zalesskii uses this expression, a common Early Soviet title for the First World War, in his autobiography of 1930. Apparently, by this time his language was already saturated with Early Soviet ideological clichés. Ibid. L. 33.

⁷⁴⁷ According to Ekaterina Melnikova, who studied peasant practices related to books within this period, although until the end of the 1930s books were relatively rare in the village, in case it was necessary, an enthusiastic peasant still had no trouble getting the necessary books, even freshly published ones. *Mel'nikova E. A. "Voobrazhaemaia kniga" ocherki po istorii folkloro o knigakh i chtenii v Rossii*. SPb, 2011. P. 14, 113.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid. L. 31ob-32ob.

⁷⁴⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 28.

influence of mentors for Zalesskii, the Wanderers' sobornost' or principle of universalism of the church (that is, the autonomy of communities), violated by the events of 1910-1913, and the ideas learned during his training, which he calls "democratic," appear to be inseparable. He writes explicitly about this, calling his teacher Vazhnov "an ardent admirer of democracy-sobornost"⁷⁵⁰.

It is worth noting here that even among the representatives of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, the supposedly isolationist wing of the Wanderers, the process of teaching the newcomers was not limited to the study of their own theological writings. Once again, the Wanderers appeared to be open to external knowledge. Zalesskii writes that he went with his mentor to second-hand booksellers in Yaroslavl' and Nizhnii Novgorod to acquire rare books for the Wanderers' library⁷⁵¹. It is likely that in the process of reading 19th century Russian secular literature and Soviet political works, Zalesskii somehow juxtaposed the "democratic ideas" gleaned from his reading with the events surrounding the Wanderers' schism. Of course, the terminology he operates in his autobiographies of the 1930 and 1950s is often borrowed from the Soviet ideological lexicon of different periods. However, it seems that it is this secular reading that becomes, for Zalesskii, the source of the language of description and explanation of the events of 1911-1913.

The reconfiguration of the Wanderers' social structure and the cessation of dependence on outside subsidies to the community, caused by Ryabinin's actions during his rise to power, hardly had a serious impact on the financial well-being of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy before 1917. They still lived on donations from the Ponizovkins. After the October Revolution, however, the situation clearly changed. Being left without merchant funding, continuing to exist in metaphorical underground, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy still made no consolidated attempts to contact the Soviet authorities. Moreover, in the minutes of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy Council, held in 1921 in the country of Vichuga, they blamed their fellow believers that "some, completely forgetting the fear of God and the time of the last world Antichrist, dared to take food ration cards"⁷⁵².

⁷⁵⁰ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 31ob-32ob.

⁷⁵¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 21-22.

⁷⁵² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 81. L. 76.

However, the fact that part of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy rejected ration cards does not indicate that they chose a consistently isolationist strategy for themselves and truly went into hiding. Zaleskii colorfully describes how, after the Revolution, his fellow Wanderers developed whole market networks, delivering manufactured goods from Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Kineshma to remote villages, to the North and across Volga, exchanging these products for food from the local population. Zaleskii wrote about it this way: "The struggle for bread was a friendly and entertaining one for the Wanderers. They, generally speaking, did not experience the kind of starvation and sickness that afflicted the worldly population"⁷⁵³.

In 1917 Zaleskii returned to Kargopol'skii District⁷⁵⁴. Here for several years he was constantly changing his place of residence, staying with several hosts. Zaleskii wrote in his autobiography of 1930, that he had several conflicts with some of his shelter-keepers about his views on the Soviet power, which Maksim Ivanovich allegedly openly sympathized for⁷⁵⁵. The latter seems to be an attempt to please the reader of his autobiography of 1930 (on who was its reader see below). Zaleskii's notebooks from this period sometimes show ideological turbulence, but there is no consistent sympathy for the Soviet authorities in them. On the contrary, in his diary of 1922-1923, Maksim Ivanovich grieves that some "close relative who is a Party member" (perhaps his brother Stepan) no longer wants to know his former co-religionists. Zaleskii laments "how political fanaticism can narrow the views of an educated and peaceful-looking man"⁷⁵⁶.

In the same diary he writes:

"...got the book 'Handbook of Peasants'⁷⁵⁷ today and read almost all of it. Some of the data is very useful. But at the same time I have to point out the obvious fact, namely, to tell us personally about the rights of citizens in a godless organism is to promote the planting of what our conscience

⁷⁵³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 190-192. On the phenomenon of meshochniki, as well as on the functioning of such grassroots markets and networks for the delivery of goods from the city to the village and back again after 1917, see: *Davydov A.Iu.* Meshochniki i diktatura v Rossii. 1917-1921 gg. SPb., 2007.

⁷⁵⁴ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 33.

⁷⁵⁵ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 33ob.

⁷⁵⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 319. L. 39.

⁷⁵⁷ A Soviet ideological bulletin designed for a distribution among the peasants, which also contained anti-religious passages.

does not allow. It is less a sin to lose everything without rights than with rights ... to plant godlessness. It is not without God's providence that rights are taken away. This more clearly and distinctly separates the members of the heavenly city from the earthly city"⁷⁵⁸.

And yet in this diary, in which events are dated according to the chronology from the creation of the world and which is full of religious thoughts, the seeds of a complex worldview are already emerging, which would later lead him to a quest and the acquisition of a particular social niche in the Soviet space of the 1930s. On September 29 Zalesskii wrote: "If humanity engaged in a synthesis of science and religion, all the contradictions of science and religion would be resolved by reason, which is driven by science, and heart (religion) [both – IK] have their origin in God"⁷⁵⁹. In describing his theological polemic with a fellow believer, accustomed to interpreting Scripture literally, Zalesskii expressed himself very harshly: "Now is not the time of revelation, but of research, criticism, reassessment of mined values, the struggle for a new life and consequently, revelation, although for a time, has lost credit, we need to speak on the basis of science, defend the rights of physical science, of materialism, but this pathetic old man with his scripture goes to a place where his texts cause harm"⁷⁶⁰.

Zalesskii was not the only one of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy who already in the first half of the 1920s thought about the godliness of the October Revolution and the subsequent transformations of the social space of the former Russian Empire. One such thinker was Nikolai Pyatakov (a namesake or relative of the former chief elder of the Wanderers and later one of the leaders of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy Kornilii Pyatakov) from the village of Kuvakino (Northern Krai - Arkhangel'sk region). In the early 1920s Nikolai Pyatakov preached a teaching in which the fall of the Romanov state was interpreted as the fall of the kingdom of the Antichrist. Zalesskii quoted his interpretation of "45 Days"⁷⁶¹. The countdown from the fall of the Antichrist to the imminent coming and reign of the Savior, according to Pyatakov, began "with the defeat of the

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid. L. 46.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid. L. 18ob-19.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid. L. 48.

⁷⁶¹ A period of unfolding Christian apocalypse from the fall of the Antichrist kingdom to the Second Coming of Christ.

autocracy and with it the defeat of the rights of the dominant church, after the withdrawal of wealth from merchants and capitalists and the complete and final liquidation of the entire bourgeois-capitalist estate”⁷⁶². However, it must be said that such terminology and rhetoric belong more to Zalesskii himself and his way of thinking of the 1930s. Therefore, one can assume that Pyatakov's prophecy was at least stylistically processed and, most likely, ideologically reinterpreted by Maksim Ivanovich⁷⁶³.

The Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy could indeed have diametrically opposed views on the Soviet power ranging from extreme hostility (as in the case of the anathema against those who accepted the ration cards) to preaching the God-pleasingness of the Revolution. Nevertheless, unlike the Millers, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy for the most part did not leave their metaphorical underground, and this, after the cessation of merchant funding, gradually led to the plight of the community. Zalesskii recalled how in 1923-1925 the Kargopol' Wanderers had to earn their living by picking up the remains of the harvest from the peasants' fields. In addition, even in the relatively safe 1920s, the undocumented Wanderers felt threatened by the risk of arrest⁷⁶⁴. Zalesskii wrote that he was afraid to travel long distances. Trying to board a train, he once had to hide from a militia officer, to whom he seemed suspicious⁷⁶⁵. Nevertheless, this mode of existence is still very difficult to call a literal underground. For example, when Zalesskii found himself in poor health, he went without further ado to Ivanovo to see a Jewish doctor named Tsalkin, who found the Wanderer to have a heart condition.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. L. 7-8.

⁷⁶³ There are also eschatological works by one of the Millers followers, Anastasiya, dating from the same period, which are the rarest example of female wanderer theology prior to the 1940s or 1950s. These works also reflect the Soviet social and political realities of the 1920s and 1930s. It is noteworthy that Anastasiya, giving a detailed analysis of contemporary world political relations, unlike Zalesskii and Pyatakov, sees the unfolding process of democratization of certain political regimes as a negative symptom of the apocalypse. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 253.

⁷⁶⁴ Zalesskii provides reports of searches conducted on benefactors in the post-revolutionary period and arrests of the Wanderers, which, however, did not lead to severe consequences. The arrested Wanderer Kolotushkin from the village of Reutovo (Ivanovo-Voznesensk Province) was arrested, taken to the executive committee at Sereda Station, and left in the corridor to await his fate. Kolotushkin spent several hours in the corridor of the executive committee, but nobody came to him. He left the building and fled. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. L. 48-49.

⁷⁶⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76 JI. 29-30.

⁷⁶⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76 JI. 43.

At least until 1926 there was a long-running polemic with the Millers aimed at overcoming the 1911-1913 schism, but in fact it deepened the split even further. Correspondence and local debates concerning the fateful questions of centralization, economic activity, and stauropegia lasted until the Council of 1926⁷⁶⁷. The schism still required the mobilization of intellectual resources on both sides. It seems that Zalesskii's literacy and broad outlook made him an important intellectual resource for the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, who, unlike the Millers and their theological school in Danilov, did not engage in systematic training of polemicists, relying rather on individual training of the young Wanderers.

By the second half of the 1920s, the sinful elder Maksim Ivanov (as he himself signed at age 31⁷⁶⁸) had become a major historian and chronicler of the Wanderers' past and present, recording the most important events he had witnessed and working on biographies of his religious mentors. In addition, he managed to make a considerable spiritual career – in 1926 he was already serving as a senior of Kargopol' predel⁷⁶⁹ that is, he had a rank equivalent to that of bishop. Zalesskii also proved himself as a polemical theologian at the Council of 1926. In his later autobiography he wrote that he successfully carried out the important part of the polemic entrusted to him⁷⁷⁰.

However, despite Zalesskii's gradual advancement in his spiritual career, he himself does not seem to have been satisfied with the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy's position. For him it was becoming evident that the schism could not be overcome by means of polemics and debate. He notes that the Millers' preachers seemed more educated and eloquent than his like-minded⁷⁷¹. In addition, unable to endure the internal disorder of the Church, many of the Wanderers quit their religious life⁷⁷². At the same time, rumors probably reached Zalesskii that the Millers of Danilov had been evicted by the Soviet authorities, which by 1930 had done away with this center of Maksim Ivanovich's opponents. Thus, in a strange way, Zalesskii and the Soviet authorities found themselves on the

⁷⁶⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76 JI. 32-42.

⁷⁶⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 104. L. 94-94ob.

⁷⁶⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 81. L. 75.

⁷⁷⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 76. L. 49.

⁷⁷¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 76. L. 48.

⁷⁷² OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 76. L. 49.

same side in the struggle against the Millers' capitalists and autocrats. Under such circumstances, Zalesskii decided to try to find a new social niche for himself, this time outside the community of Wanderers.

At the end of January 1931, on the doorstep of the Yaroslavl' Natural-Historical Society (hereinafter – YaEIO [Yaroslavskoe Estestveno-Istoricheskoe Obschestvo]) a pot-cut man with a blond moustache and a wispy beard appeared⁷⁷³. He brought a ruled notebook, which contained neat handwriting of the author's essays on the history of the Wanderers and other Old Believer communities⁷⁷⁴. The visitor was already familiar to the staff of the society: two years before, he had submitted to the YaEIO his historical essays concerning the Wanderers of the Northern Krai⁷⁷⁵. This time, however, among the manuscripts brought by the visitor there was a twenty-page text entitled "Autobiography of Smirnov-Zalessk. M.I."

4.2.4 The Wanderer in Quest of a Social Niche

The YaEIO was founded in 1864⁷⁷⁶ and since its establishment has been primarily engaged in kraevedenie (studies of local history and nature)⁷⁷⁷. At different times the members of the society were famous Russian scientists – geologist Grigori Shchurovskii, zoologist and anthropologist Anatolii Bogdanov, geographer and traveler Pyotr Semyonov (Tyan-Shanskii). Zalesskii never mentioned why he decided to contact this particular institution. Probably he encountered the activities of the YaEIO in the 1920s. The 1920s were the heyday of the Russian (or Soviet) kraevedenie⁷⁷⁸. By the beginning of the 1930s, however, this blossom had been over.

⁷⁷³ On the last page of his large-format notebook Maksim Ivanovich pasted his own photo. GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 39.

⁷⁷⁴ As it was said in Chapter 2, in one of these texts, Zalesskii mentioned the "Siberian rogue A.V." [sibirskii prokhodimets A. V.] who forced some of the Wanderers "to deviate from the teachings and practices of the ancestors". Of course, by "the Siberian rogue" he meant Ryabinin. GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 25.

⁷⁷⁵ GAYaO F.P-221. Op.1. D.300.

⁷⁷⁶ *Istoriia / Iaroslavskii muzei-zapovednik*. URL: <https://yarkremlin.ru/museum/history/> (Last accessed 7.12.2021).

⁷⁷⁷ The definition given by the prominent Soviet philologist Dmitrii Likhachev seems to capture the essence of this scientific field most fully: "Kraevedenie belongs to the type of complex sciences. It combines natural history, history, art history, history of literature, science, etc. The unifying principle is that all this data refers to a particular area. There can be an enormous amount of information. But geography, unlike Kraevedenie, does not attach as much importance to individual remarkable people, the history of science, the history of literature, the history of art (particularly architecture). Kraevedenie is closer than geography to history in general and closer to the study of individuals (in the local setting, of course)". *Likhachev D.S. Kraevedenie kak nauka i kak deiatel'nost' // Likhachev D.S. Russkaia kultura*. M., 2000. P.159.

⁷⁷⁸ *Loskutova M.V. "Nauka oblastnogo masshtaba": ideia estestvennykh raionov v rossiiskoi geografii i istoki*

At this time, such societies, which had enjoyed a certain autonomy until then, began to be systematically sovietized and repressed⁷⁷⁹. Moreover, a few months after Zalesskii's appeal, the YaEIO would be totally liquidated⁷⁸⁰.

Autobiography from 1930 felt like a verbose description of one's life, written for a potential employer. Moreover, Zalesskii pushed the reader to the idea that the most appropriate social niche for the author would be intellectual activity within the framework of the Soviet kraevedenie. Maksim Ivanovich proved that he was no stranger to physical labor and had some experience in repairing houses and weaving hobnails, baskets, and handbags⁷⁸¹. However, a severe heart condition forced him to leave physical work and become a worker in the intellectual field⁷⁸². He put particular emphasis on how he left hard physical labor in fact involuntarily. Then, he described in detail and with references to the literature he had read, how he began to study the history of the Wanderers and to systematize their archival documents.⁷⁸³

While at the beginning of the text he reported that he had been a member of the Wanderers' religious community for 20 years, the later text of this autobiography of Zalesskii was full of disappointment in his fellow believers. Zalesskii lamented that "the paint on the ideals of wandering was gradually slipping off"⁷⁸⁴. In the text of his autobiography, which towards the end of the text becomes a declaration of author's views, he even spoke of the need to "cast aside all the above-worldly as an illusion"⁷⁸⁵ and of his desire "to participate in the historical development and cultural rising of the masses"⁷⁸⁶. In concluding his text, Maksim Ivanovich wrote that "for too long [he] had been confined in a closed vessel, isolated from society and its tasks" and hoped "to find [in the YaEIO staff] sympathy and attention," promising "to compensate for all this" with

kraevedcheskogo dvizheniia 1920-kh gg. // *Ab Imperio*. 2011. no. 2. P. 83-121.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ Kuznetsova O. V. K 150-letiiu uchrezhdeniia Ustava Obshchestva dlia issledovaniia Iaroslavskoi gubernii v estestvenno-istoricheskom otnoshenii (1864 g.). URL: <https://www.yararchive.ru/publications/details/210/#note26> (Last accessed 7.12.2021).

⁷⁸¹ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 34ob-35.

⁷⁸² GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 35-35ob.

⁷⁸³ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 35ob-36ob.

⁷⁸⁴ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 36ob.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.* L. 37ob.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.* L. 36.

"persistent and stubborn work on that front of building socialism, which I will be more capable of doing" [nastoichivo-upornoi rabotoi na takom fronte stroitel'stva sotsializma, na chto okazhus' bolee sposobnym]⁷⁸⁷.

Zaleskii was very clear about why he wrote his essays on the history of the Wanderers and brought them to the Soviet institution:

"We⁷⁸⁸ have endeavored to bring to the environment [i.e., to the light, i.e., to make manifest] the key messages of the Wanderers, and thus to relieve from further hesitation and misunderstanding those comrades who in their practical work against the counter-revolution have to come into contact with the chiefs and bosses [vozhakami i zapravitami] of the community, in inquiries and trials to give appropriate opinions about them and generally being well acquainted with ideology will be easier to grasp the main thread of their understandings of various questions of social and political character"⁷⁸⁹.

In sum, Zaleskii wants to be useful to Soviet power as he understands it. However, he fluctuates over which of the emanations of this Soviet power he can be of greater benefit, the law enforcement or the cultural one. So, for example, after that passage about his knowledge being useful to "comrades" in inquests and trials, he also recalls the cultural value of his texts and documents. He writes: "We are inclined to think that, for the whole history of Russian culture in general, something characteristic and suitable for science, for illuminating the historical progress of thought in the various branches of the Russian schism, can be emphasized in this [his work on the history of the Yaroslavl' Wanderers]"⁷⁹⁰.

Needless to say, the YaEIO was far from being a purely Soviet institution. The fact that Maksim Ivanovich tried to move to a legal position through interaction with it shows that he was not fully aware of how Soviet institutions were organized in general. Zaleskii came to the YaEIO

⁷⁸⁷ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 38.

⁷⁸⁸ Zaleskii speaks of himself in the plural, which probably, in his opinion, should have given the text a more scientific tone.

⁷⁸⁹ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 37.

⁷⁹⁰ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 37ob.

in order to legalize himself as a historian or Kraevedenie scholar in the Soviet system (monolithic as he thought). Thus, literate and functionally educated (as polemicist and theologian) Maksim Ivanovich probably hoped that he would find a social niche to suit himself and be useful to the Soviet kraevedenie, enriching it with his knowledge of the Wanderers. Probably such an employee might well have been appropriate for the YaEIO in the mid-1920s, but not at the end of its existence. Obviously, in its last days, the YaEIO was not a suitable place for employment. As a consequence, Maksim Ivanovich could not legalize himself as a scholar. Thus, in his later notes, Zalesskii did not mention whether a response was received from the YaEIO (nor did he mention the fact that he wrote an autobiography for the Society).

Maksim Ivanovich appealed to the YaEIO in an attempt to escape from his collapsing community. In his 1930 autobiography (as well as in later notes), he paints a picture of the desolation and decay that had plagued the Wanderers' community by the early 1930s. Many of his co-religionists abandoned the religious path. In addition, many of the remaining Wanderers were subjected to repressive pressure⁷⁹¹, which Zalesskii explained by the fact that "the Wanderers had centuries of traditional relations with the wealthy class" so they were hostile to the new (Soviet) environment⁷⁹². However, according to Maksim Ivanovich, the local Soviet officials were equally to blame for the repression. He wrote that both sides had lost their trust in each other, in part because "immature people" had seized power, and their inept actions had brought about misunderstanding and conflict with the Wanderers⁷⁹³.

By the early 1930s Zalesskii, as he saw it, was faced with a choice, which he described in one of his historical sketches as follows: "...either to surrender my conclusions and switch to new, more rational forms of being, or to find myself in the ranks of the counter-revolutionaries, stumbling into the old, the obsolete."⁷⁹⁴ His draft notebook also contains the following notation: "...the successful extinction of both the Wanderers and the adherents is noticeable, not along the

⁷⁹¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. L. 42-43.

⁷⁹² Ibid. L. 42.

⁷⁹³ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. L. 49-50.

⁷⁹⁴ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 78. L.64.

lines of Christ and his doctrine of wandering, but as a class-alien ideology that has littered its basic principle with various capitalist superstructures, additions and inclinations as clearly showing counterrevolutionary activity in the person of the chiefs"⁷⁹⁵.

A few words should be said here about the language used by Zalesskii in his autobiographies and draft notes. To begin with, this language, full of Soviet ideological clichés, appears both in the documents of self-representation (autobiographies), which were written with an outside reader in mind, and in his drafts and diary entries. Furthermore, it must be said that the language of both autobiographies and the 1930s and 1950s is virtually identical, which speaks to the stability and organic nature of this language for Zalesskii.

The fact that the Wanderer writes using such peculiar Soviet language can only be surprising if one believes that Zalesskii really lived the isolated life of an underground hermit. Neither Maksim Ivanovich's readings, interests, nor movements reflect his isolationism. Although he belonged to the less outwardly integrated wing of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy Wanderers and, unlike the Millers, did not engage in long-term interaction with Soviet authorities at various levels, living in different Soviet villages, he somehow absorbed Soviet discursive elements and rhetorical clichés of the 1920s-1930s. That is, he engaged in a search for a social niche, while not fully versed in the structure of Soviet institutions, but knowing exactly what the staff of these institutions would like to hear.

Unfortunately, Zalesskii was too late to find a social niche within the framework of the YaEIO. He did not manage to find a place for himself as a historian or scholar in kraevedenie. However, the Soviet domain itself found him and offered him a suitable vocation. In August 1931, a pivotal event for the True Orthodox Christian sinful elder Maksim Ivanovich happened. He was arrested in the village of Maly Khalui (Northern krai - Arkhangel'sk region) while traveling without documents. Zalesskii writes, recalling this moment in his later autobiography - with the arrest, "a new story of my wanderings opens up"⁷⁹⁶.

⁷⁹⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 279. L. 46.

⁷⁹⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 65.

4.2.5 The Wanderer Acquires a Social Niche

In early August 1931, Zalesskii and his traveling companion named Ershov traveled from the village of Antonovskaya to the village of Oshevsk (both in Arkhangel'sk region). On approaching Maly Khalui, they noticed a crowd of young people. The travelers tried to go around the crowd, but the young men spotted them, considered them suspicious, detained them, and handed them over to the militia. Ershov was released after a short time, while Maksim Ivanovich was transported to the OGPU detention prison in Arkhangel'sk⁷⁹⁷. Zalesskii recalled that during this trip at a stop at the Plesetskaya station⁷⁹⁸ he met his brother Stepan, whom he had not seen for many years, and who worked as an instructor at the district committee in Plesetskaya⁷⁹⁹. Stepan recognized his brother, and even managed to pack some food for him on his way.

Zalesskii recounted a dramatic conversation he had with another detainee through the cell door when he was in the OGPU prison in Arkhangel'sk. The interlocutor told Zalesskii about the local unwritten rules - "if they take you out at 3-4 am, you can say goodbye to your life, you won't come back here"⁸⁰⁰. Indeed, it seems that a suspicious person arrested without documents at the height of the struggle against kulaks had little chance of breaking free from the OGPU detention facility. However, during the interrogation Zalesskii seems to have been quite verbose, especially when the questions concerned his religious views and attitude toward certain religious movements. Convinced that the person in front of him is a kind of expert on the issues of various faiths, investigator Sh. offered the arrested man to become a freelance employee of the OGPU.

Zalesskii in his later autobiography conveyed the explicit speech of the investigator in this way:

"It is not difficult for you, as a good expert in such matters, to do this work; it should also serve to the benefit of believers, purifying them from alien class elements, and it is important for the authorities that we will have grounds for not applying sanctions against them. We will not

⁷⁹⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 63-65.

⁷⁹⁸ The present-day town of Plesetsk in the Arkhangel'sk region.

⁷⁹⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 66.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid. L. 76 -76.

consider you an employee, but a consultant. We find it an urgent necessity to have such a person, precisely because the printed textbooks on the Schism are quite out of date, and we are not familiar with them. Simpler and truer: we need an up-to-date and animated handbook [sovremennyi i zhivoi spravochnik] especially in the conditions of Arkhangel'sk, where, along with the local population very prone to Old Belief and schism, many exiles arrive, and among them are prominent persons from sectarians who have not previously been found among the local population»⁸⁰¹.

Zalesskii later described his own reflections at that moment as follows:

“So here was supposed work, and with it the consciousness that on the scales the matter of truth, open, revolutionary, without masks and embellishments, it this truth, required the conscience to agree to the supposed work, which basically does not require an unconditional recognition of atheism as immutable truth, but is reduced entirely to the observance of revolutionary legality for a period of struggle against the counter-revolutionary kulaks”⁸⁰².

A possible reader of his texts could doubt the voluntariness of Maksim Ivanovich's cooperation with the OGPU, believing that it was the result of pressure from the investigator. Zalesskii, anticipating such skepticism, wrote that his ideological transformation took place long before his arrest:

“The broad views and correct assessment of modernity [sovremennosti] that we have learned from long ago are the result of a gradual and painstaking study of history, the result of empathy and sympathy for those parties, groups and concords, on which we have spent a dozen years to study them. It was a pleasure for us to work with those individuals, from whom the air of democratization, the air of sobornost', the air of collegiality in leadership, and the rejection of the clamp of individual leaders, who set out to introduce the idea of autocracy and individualism into the church sphere, in whatever sphere of life it might manifest itself. A striking example of this is the schism that occurred among the Wanderers”⁸⁰³.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid. L.63-84.

⁸⁰² Ibid. L.85.

⁸⁰³ Ibid. L.87.

Later he added:

"...the class shaking [vstriaska klassovaia] was necessary, it shook the faithless [legkovernykh] like husk, garbage, chaff, which, having fallen into the cleaned sifted grain, clogged it and made it look unpleasant... By agreeing to work honestly and conscientiously in clearing up the above-mentioned layers, we on the one hand help the state to fight against the counterrevolution, the underground one, that is, the one which, under the banner of faith, exploits the labor of its members. On the other hand, Christianity itself, by checking itself and its leaders more precisely, moves more quickly toward spiritual perfection"⁸⁰⁴.

Maksim Ivanovich agreed to the offer of the investigator. In his explanations above, which hardly sound like excuses at all, Zalesskii recalled the 1911-1913 schism, the polemics about centralization and economic activity. It seems that in the past two decades he has finally found the right language to comprehend the dramatic history of the Wanderers of the first third of the 20th century. Thus, the fight against kulaks became identified with the fight against the already defeated Millers and their unscathed associates, who had destroyed the unity of the Wanderers' community. He seemed to feel that he had finally been called to its side by some force that could solve the Wanderers' troubles better than the Wanderers themselves, who were mired in futile disputes. This force for him turned out to be the Soviet power (as he understood it), along with which they would now lead a righteous "soborno-democratic" struggle against "the capitalists-heretics".

It is worth saying that the work in the OGPU is indeed hardly only the result of an accidental arrest. First, already in his 1930 autobiography Zalesskii wrote that his works could help "comrades" in their "practical work in the struggle against counterrevolution". Moreover, he recommended himself as "an active worker in the struggle against the internal schism".⁸⁰⁵ Second, even before the YaEIO story, ambiguous phrases appeared in his notes, perhaps indicating a willingness to cooperate with law enforcement. Thus, telling in his notes of the early 1920s about a certain suspicious woman spotted outside his home, he writes that "this should be reported to the

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid. L.91.

⁸⁰⁵ GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. L. 33.

right place.”⁸⁰⁶ Thus, the choice between the Soviet cultural niche and the Soviet law enforcement social niche, which arose before Zalesskii when he wrote his autobiography 1930, was resolved by itself. Cultural work was inaccessible, while the OGPU found a place for an informant knowledgeable in matters of religion.

Having been released from the OGPU prison, Zalesskii soon returned triumphantly to the Nadporozh’e volost of the Kargopol’ district, where he had resided before his arrest. The chairman of the local village council knew of Maksim Ivanovich's arrest and, as Zalesskii recalled, was stunned by his swift return from the OGPU prison. Zalesskii wrote that people had already "buried" him⁸⁰⁷. This mere mention of the chairman's reaction says a great deal about the regime of underground existence that Zalesskii led before his arrest. Even though, as was shown in the previous chapter, many Wanderers did go underground in the early 1930s, things were somewhat different in Zalesskii's case. Obviously, even before the arrest the chairman knew who Zalesskii was and what he was doing. Consequently, the existence and activities of the Wanderers were not a secret to the local Soviet authorities. Moreover, soon Zalesskii, not without difficulty, but still received a certificate of residence on the territory of the village council⁸⁰⁸.

Soon Maksim Ivanovich also met the militia officer who arrested him. He was also surprised to see the Wanderer again. However, it seems that it was no longer that humble Maksim Ivanovich, whom the officer had taken to Arkhangel’sk. Zalesskii recalled that in response to this surprise he said that if the policeman himself were caught by the Arkhangel’sk OGPU, he would not be able to get out of there so soon. In his autobiography from the 1950s, Maksim Ivanovich remarked that he answered the officer with the words "Kulaks' coats, in which you dressed your wife and sister... will keep you there some longer". He went on to note, not without satisfaction, that these words

⁸⁰⁶ In Russian the phrase “to report to the right place” [peredat’ kuda sleduet] actually means to report to a certain law enforcement agency about some violation of the law. OR BAN. Kargopol’skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 319. L.48ob.

⁸⁰⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol’skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 92.

⁸⁰⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol’skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 93.

proved prophetic. With or without Zalesskii's assistance, his former escort was indeed arrested later⁸⁰⁹.

Maksim Ivanovich lived in Kargopol'skii District for about two more years. During this time, as Zalesskii remembered, he collected information about religious and social sentiments in the district in secret from the local authorities and relayed it directly to a man from the Arkhangel'sk OGPU⁸¹⁰. Although he was in good standing with his curators, the people around him, including his parents, with whom he apparently resumed a relationship after legalization, were wary and distrustful of him⁸¹¹.

Zalesskii's activities as an agent for the state security agencies spanned the 1930s and 1940s. During this time, he made dozens of trips within the region. Zalesskii quickly became involved in the work – he went on his first long-distance assignment in the first year after his employment in 1932⁸¹². It was an arduous journey through the Komi autonomous region in order to gather information about people from all over the USSR who had been sentenced to exile in this northern part of Russia. During the trip, Zalesskii made acquaintances with the exiles, finding out their political and religious views. In Ust'-Kuloma (Komi Autonomous Region) Zalesskii wrote a short poem dedicated to some "friends," whose names he never divulged. This poem seems to reflect to some extent this man's complex worldview as it was formed during his second year at the OGPU. Thus, in this poem, images of Christian consolation and humility and of hard work for the benefit of the motherland are intertwined. In particular, it contained the following lines:

«No restless sleep, no fatigue

Neither the pile of affairs nor the heap of tumult

Have not dimmed the pity.

But only inspired labor.

⁸⁰⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 94.

⁸¹⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 95.

⁸¹¹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 96.

⁸¹² Under one of his poems there is the date "1932" and the place of writing is Ust'-Kulom in the Komi Autonomous Region. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 352. L. 2ob.

I saw consolation in my work.

I wanted to bring some good to the country

And you, my friends, are my torment⁸¹³.

You've helped me with this»⁸¹⁴.

Unfortunately, in his later autobiography he reported on many of his agent missions vaguely, often withholding information on the results and omitting the consequences of his missions for the objects of his surveillance. Although his main field of investigative activity was religious sentiments (mainly in Arkhangel'sk region and Komi autonomous region (later the autonomous republic)), over time he became involved in other kinds of investigations. For example, in 1943 he inspected the Tsenogorsk lumberyard for possible embezzlement of products and the use of sugar to make a moonshine⁸¹⁵. Even before that, in 1942, in the midst of the Great Patriotic War, Zalesskii was mobilized and served in the Arkhangel'sk region, first as a telephone operator, and then as a member of some "special department to combat counterrevolutionary manifestations in the local areas [na mestakh]"⁸¹⁶. As a member of the "special department" in 1942 he was sent to Kotlas. In his autobiography he wrote about this trip as follows: «From that time... my special work activity began, in travel and journey, for assignments not to be made public"⁸¹⁷.

Still, his main field of activity was religious sentiment. In the early 1930s Zalesskii investigated the activities of the Nikonian "Krestiki" [small crosses] movement in Tot'ma (Vologda Region)⁸¹⁸. In addition, he made three trips to Griazovets district of Vologda region⁸¹⁹,

⁸¹³ I assume that Maksim Ivanovich added this word for the sake of rhyme. In the context of the poem, there is nothing about the torment his friends would bring him.

⁸¹⁴ «Ni son trevozhnyi, ni ustalost'

Ni gruda del, ni vorokh smut

Ne pomrachili etu zhalost'

A tol'ko vdokhnovili trud

V trude ia videl uteshen'e

Ia pol'zu dat khotel strane

A vy druz'ia moe muchen'e.

Vy etim pomogali mne» OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 352. L.2

⁸¹⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L.179.

⁸¹⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 168.

⁸¹⁷ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 168.

⁸¹⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 97.

⁸¹⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 98.

collected information on the religious underground in Vilegodsk district (Arkhangel'sk region) in 1944⁸²⁰, and on the activity of Baptists among the special resettlers in Velsk (Arkhangel'sk region) in 1946⁸²¹. In the same year, he checked reports concerning rumors about the appearance of the miraculous icon in the village of Kachem (Arkhangel'sk region)⁸²².

Zalesskii carried out these and other similar assignments until the late 1940s. However, although Zalesskii claimed his cooperation with the OGPU as a way to "sift" the Wanderers community from harmful elements, his materials also do not contain any information about his undercover work among former co-religionists, although he may have concealed such information. In particular, he does not mention in his notes the case of Khristofor Ivanovich (Zyryanov). Not only did Zalesskii almost certainly know Zyryanov personally (as a polemicist the latter had participated in the most important polemic councils⁸²³), the Vyatka mentor was one of Ryabinin's followers, and, in light of Zyryanov's gruesome deeds, this fact could once again have made Zalesskii feel convinced of the correctness of his ideological choice.

In his autobiography of the 1950s Zalesskii, recalling the 1930s, often wrote about his compassion for the victims of repression. Recalling the corpses of exiles seen in the early 1930s on the road from Syktyvkar to Ust'-Kuloma, he wrote: "Were these persons so criminal and vile before society that they receive death in the woods?"⁸²⁴ He criticized the head of the OGPU of Ust'-Kulom Sazhin for cruelty in his work⁸²⁵. At the same time, however, Zalesskii did not give any ethical assessments of his own work in the OGPU in his texts. Moreover, his retrospective compassion for the victims of repression seems to be partly the result of his absorption of the ideological clichés of the Thaw, during which he apparently wrote this version of his autobiography. Thus, he terms the repressions themselves (as a process) "the cult of personality".

⁸²⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L.259-261.

⁸²¹ Ibid. L. 243.

⁸²² Ibid. L. 247.

⁸²³ As a representative of a remote Wanderers community, Zyryanov is mentioned in a description of the events of the 1911-1913 schism, apparently compiled by Zalesskii. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. L. 155.

⁸²⁴ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 105-106.

⁸²⁵ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 128-129.

For example, he speaks of the "excesses" committed by the OGPU in the Vilegodskii district against the repressed, as follows:

“Here the terror method of intimidation was usually in use, which is very far from the method of re-education. The excesses allowed from above with regard to ordinary people who needed to be re-educated were not registered here. Later, during the struggle with the cult of personality in the center, a lot was written about it, they tried to correct the situation, but here in this remote area, when the war was not over, the cult of personality certainly manifested itself, gave seedlings, perhaps, and the fruit soaked with sorrow”⁸²⁶.

Maksim Ivanovich saw himself as a carrier of knowledge inaccessible to the Soviet authorities, an expert whose work was in demand under the conditions of the Stalinist modernization unfolding in the early 1930s with its collectivization and purges. Zaleskii even called himself a "handbook"⁸²⁷. Maksim Ivanovich's creditability in the eyes of the state security agencies seems quite high - he addressed the chairman of the OGPU district department in Ust'-Kulom (Komi autonomous region - Autonomous Republic of Komi) by the name - "Sasha"⁸²⁸. In 1938, perhaps with the assistance from the NKVD, after only 7 years after his legalization, he became the head of the timber yard⁸²⁹.

In between missions, Zaleskii did not miss opportunities for civilian employment of any kind. In addition to the timber mill, at various times he also worked as a supply agent for a pig farm and a laundry, as a revenue accountant for a sausage store⁸³⁰. However, in the late 1940s Maksim Ivanovich was forced to leave his freelance work in the state security agencies. His health was deteriorating and, in addition, his undercover missions, in his words, were no longer paid for⁸³¹. Zaleskii took a job at a sanitary station, where he finished his career⁸³². After quitting his

⁸²⁶ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 263.

⁸²⁷ Ibid. L.147.

⁸²⁸ Ibid. L. 127-128.

⁸²⁹ Ibid. L. 155.

⁸³⁰ Ibid. L.147-148.

⁸³¹ Ibid. L.200.

⁸³² Ibid. L.200.

job, Zalesskii concentrated on writing the history of the Wanderers, received his pension in 1957, and continued to live in his native village of Voloski⁸³³ until his death in 1974 or 1975.

As time passed, his writings became less and less religious. He made no mention of contacts with co-religionists, although while working on the history of the Wanderers he corresponded and met with certain "friends"⁸³⁴ whose names he never made known. All that resembled his experience as a spiritual figure was an unusual hobby - writing the history of a little-known religious movement. Irina Paert also cited information she received in 2001 from Zalesskii's neighbors that he had even begun attending a Nikonian church before his death⁸³⁵. In addition, Nikolai Bubnov, who met him in the early 1970s, also referred to Maksim Ivanovich as "the former escapist"⁸³⁶.

Before moving on to an analysis of this remarkable biographical trajectory, it must be said that the volume of Zalesskii's intellectual heritage – notes of an autobiographical nature, his research materials on the history of wandering – is enormous, although many of them are repetitive in content⁸³⁷. It is impossible not to pay tribute to Zalesskii as an enthusiastic historian, he recorded in detail all the events known to him and made detailed biographical footnotes in the text. Unfortunately, he omitted many details of his own personal life. Thus, on page 167 of his autobiography, in an account of the period of the Great Patriotic War, the reader first discovers that the author was married, and yet only in connection with the mention of the death of his wife in 1942⁸³⁸. Much of what Zalesskii wrote about is beyond the scope of this study. In the pages of this chapter, I cite only a small portion of his texts, which dealt with very different topics. Nevertheless, the detail with which he describes the peculiarities of everyday life of the exiles or,

⁸³³ Ibid. L.205.

⁸³⁴ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 207.

⁸³⁵ Paert I. Preparing God's Harvest. P. 56.

⁸³⁶ Bubnov N.Iu. Prilozhenie// Khristianstvo i Sever. M., 2002. P. 223. In addition, Bubnov pointed out that Zalesskii was unaware of the locations of the Wanderers' hermitages around where he lived. *Bubnov N.Iu. Poslednii skit kargopol'skikh skrytnikov v derevne Zales'e*. P. 41.

⁸³⁷ Almost all of his literary heritage was collected in the 1960s-1970s during archaeographic expeditions of scientists from the Leningrad Library of the Academy of Sciences. Zalesskii's works (several dozen items) constitute a significant part of "the Kargapol' collection" and are kept in the manuscripts section of the Library.

⁸³⁸OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76, JI. 167. Zalesskii also mentions briefly that after the War he once again " found a life partner". OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76, JI. 199.

for example, the black markets in the Russian North or the tensions in inter-ethnic relations in Komi republic make Zalesskii's materials a precious source on the social history of the Soviet era.

4.3 Being a Soviet Wanderer

Zalesskii may seem to have stopped thinking about questions of faith when he became a worker in the OGPU and, as he promised in his autobiography for the YaEIO, "casted aside all the above-worldly as an illusion". By the 1940s he seems indeed to have reflected less (at least in writing) on the spiritual matters and concentrated more and more on the secular affairs. However, in the initial period after legalization he nevertheless did not abandon his religious work, developing a complex theological system in which the Soviet ideology of the 1930s was intertwined with the eschatology of the Wanderers. In his "Overview of the History of Wanderers," probably compiled after his employment with the OGPU, Zalesskii reaches the peak of an inconsistent mixing of Soviet and Christian eschatological images. The harlot of Babylon mentioned in the Apocalypse of John the Revelator (Rev 17:1-2, 5) became for him a symbol of autocracy, the horns of the apocalyptic beast (Rev 17:3) - "the very people who suffer under the yoke of the harlot, embittered by their toil"⁸³⁹.

Developing his ideas, Maksim Ivanovich wrote:

«The forgotten and trampled forces from the grassroots of the people masses, having torn off and thrown off the fetters of autocracy in their formidable revolutionary movement and struggle will know no mercy, they hear a voice from above, from the past, ordering to repay what she [the harlot – IK] repaid herself, even in revolutionary revenge, these forces have the compulsion to double the suffering of the harlot, i.e., to double the cup of misery which she offered to the workers. i.e., the cup of misery and, by which she drew for the subjugated people the evil, to draw to her double. How much she boasted of her right, of her power and might, of her truth and infallibility so much give her shame and humiliation»⁸⁴⁰.

⁸³⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. L. 196.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid. L. 197.

How could such fascinating apocalyptic images and pragmatic aspirations to find a suitable secular social niche coexist in one mind? Who was this man with such a complex interwoven worldview and a biographical trajectory deserving an adventure novel? The autobiography of 1930 discovered in the Yaroslavl' archives allows one to problematize the vision on Zalesskii presented by Irina Paert, who portrayed him as a bearer of the popular millenarianism, who found in the secular Bolshevik eschatology familiar and attractive connotations⁸⁴¹. This autobiography is by no means written by an ardent believer who swears an oath to the Soviet power in hope of obtaining from it the repressive tools to purge his own community. It is hard to imagine a person who declares the need to "cast aside all the above-worldly " as a fanatic. It is the text of a rational man seeking a social niche suitable for his talents and abilities, in order to escape from a stunted community that had become too small for him. Tellingly, he preferred cultural work to that of law enforcement.

Nevertheless, one cannot call him an unprincipled pragmatist and opportunist either. Certainly, the Soviet ideological discourse of the 1920s and 1930s, filled with Marxist eschatology, became for Zalesskii the organic language of explaining the dramatic events he had witnessed. In a similar way, Ryabinin's struggle for the centralization of the Church became a struggle for autocracy, and the struggle against centralization initiated by his opponents became a movement for democratization. The ill-fated mill turned out to be a symptom and consequence of the capitalization of the once homeless Wanderers, which poisoned their world order. Thus, Maksim Ivanovich came to a genuine and legitimate conclusion: the Soviet power (as he understood it), unknowingly, served the true interests of the Wanderers, much more effectively than his fellow Wanderers themselves.

This chapter analyzes the biographical trajectory of a man whose life and creative activity took place from the 1920s to 1940s, and who, even in spite of his declared underground regime of existence, could not escape the influence of Bolshevik or Stalinist ideological discourses. Thus, in

⁸⁴¹ Paert I. *Preparing God's Harvest*. P.46.

this part of the research it is impossible to avoid talking about the phenomenon of Soviet subjectivity. That is, it is necessary to locate what place Zalesskii's case occupies in the diverse system of coordinates of studies of Soviet subjectivity.

Subjectivity in Soviet studies and in studies of modern political regimes in general is usually understood as: 1) the identity of the individual formed through the interaction of the latter with the ideological discourse; 2) the individual's desire "to understand herself as a subject of her own life"; 3) the subject's worldview and identity and the way she sees her place in the system of her own kind⁸⁴². In the case of Maksim Ivanovich and his penchant for self-reflection and reflection on his place in the social domains of Wanderers and of Soviet society, all three definitions do not seem to contradict, but complement each other.

The historiography of Soviet subjectivity is relatively young yet intense and has itself become a subject of research⁸⁴³. It originated and developed in the mainstream of American Sovietology, inheriting to and arguing with Sovietologists of previous generations, who are roughly grouped into the totalitarian⁸⁴⁴ and revisionist⁸⁴⁵ schools. Stephen Kotkin's "Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization"⁸⁴⁶ published in 1995 is generally regarded as a pioneer study exploring Soviet subjectivity. Kotkin adopted Michel Foucault's ideas about subjectivity as a process of the individual making sense of herself within the framework set by the modern state through discourses and practices. Using this analytical toolkit, the historian analyzed how the workers of Magnitogorsk under construction pragmatically used the discursive possibilities of

⁸⁴² *Pinskii A.* Posle Stalina: pozdnesovetskaia subektivnost' (1953-1985): sbornik statei. Pinskii A. (ed.). SPb, 2018. P. 11-14.

⁸⁴³ *Naiman E.* On Soviet Subjects and the Scholars Who Make Them // *The Russian Review*, 2001. No. (60)3. Pp. 307-315; *Uhl K.* Oppressed and Brainwashed Soviet Subject» or «Prisoners of the Soviet Self»? Recent Conceptions of Soviet Subjectivity' // *Bylye gody*. 2013. no. 28. P. 4-10.

⁸⁴⁴ The "totalitarian school" in Soviet studies usually refers to a group of related and unrelated American historians and political theorists who during the Cold War regarded the Soviet state as a textbook example of a totalitarian regime, Soviet society as a rigid vertical hierarchy, and who described the everyday life of the Soviet citizen in Orwellian terms. About historians (and not only) belonged to this intellectual tradition. *Engerman D.C.* Know your enemy: The rise and fall of America's Soviet experts. New York, Oxford University Press, 2009.

⁸⁴⁵ Revisionists often referred to social historians of the 1970s and 1980s who focused on the grassroots participation of Soviet citizens in social and political processes. On the revisionist shift in Soviet studies see: *Fitzpatrick Sh.* Revisionism in Soviet history // *History and Theory*, 2007. no. 46 (4). P. 77-91.

⁸⁴⁶ *Kotkin S.* Magnetic Mountain. Classic work on discourses of power that contribute to the formation of the identity of the subject: *Foucault M.* The subject and power // *Critical inquiry*. 1982. Vol. 8. no. 4. P. 777-795.

Soviet ideology (in particular, learning to speak the language produced by the regime) to occupy a certain place in the social system of the interwar Soviet state.

The presence of such a pragmatic subject (autonomous in the early review works⁸⁴⁷, liberal in the later ones⁸⁴⁸) almost immediately after the publication of "Magnetic Mountain" became the subject of criticism by the next generation of Soviet subjectivity scholars. Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck, in their analysis of interwar autobiographies and diaries of Soviet workers, Party members and students insisted on the integrity of the worldview of the Soviet subject, in which there was no room for any autonomous subjectivity. In their understanding, the subject shaped himself not by a pragmatic desire to conform to the ideological expectations of the state in search for a better place in its social system, but by an energetic and sincere self-work on his own worldview and identity⁸⁴⁹.

Developing the idea of the pervasive nature of the Soviet discourse, Juiliane Fürst used the example of postwar opposition youth groups to show that even resistance to the regime could only be expressed through the discursive means of official ideology⁸⁵⁰. However, the impossibility of existing outside a standardized discourse did not mean that the agency of the subject doomed to indoctrination dissolved in Soviet subjectivity. In particular, Anna Krylova uses the experience of the young representatives of the first post-revolutionary Soviet generation, whose own creative agency found its embodiment in normative Soviet subjectivity⁸⁵¹. Among the important studies of Soviet subjectivity (during the Stalin period) there is also the work "The Collective and the Individual in Russia. A Study of Practices"⁸⁵² by Oleg Kharkhordin, in which the author insisted

⁸⁴⁷ Halfin I., Hellbeck J. Rethinking the Stalinist Subject: Stephen Kotkin's "Magnetic Mountain" and the State of Soviet Historical Studies // *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 1996. no. 64. Pp. 456-463

⁸⁴⁸ Krylova A. The tenacious liberal subject in Soviet studies // *Kritika: explorations in Russian and Eurasian history*, 2000. Vol. 1. no. 1. Pp. 119-146.

⁸⁴⁹ On the one's work on the construction of the Self in the realm of Soviet autobiography: Halfin I. *From darkness to light: Class, consciousness, and salvation in revolutionary Russia*; in the realm of the Soviet diaries: Hellbeck J. *Revolution on my mind: Writing a diary under Stalin*. Cambridge, 2009.

⁸⁵⁰ Fürst J. Prisoners of the Soviet Self? Political Youth Opposition in Late Stalinism // *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2002. no. 54. P. 353-75.

⁸⁵¹ Krylova A. *Identity, Agency and the 'First Soviet Generation'* // *Generations in 20th Century Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. P. 101-121.

⁸⁵² Kharkhordin O. *The collective and the individual in Russia: A study of practices*. Berkeley, 1999.

on the decisive role of not only discourse, but also Soviet collective practices in the formation of the subject. Nevertheless, Zalesskii's convoluted and complex path seems elusive for interpretation by any of the approaches to analyzing the ways in which the Soviet subject formed herself. If Zalesskii did become a Soviet subject, it does not seem to be by any of the ways that the aforementioned researchers have suggested.

To begin with, Zalesskii was "born" outside the Soviet "cosmos," which conditioned the lifetime reincarnation of heterogeneous workers and peasants into a set of conscious Soviet subjects⁸⁵³. By 1917 he was already a member of a fairly radical religious movement. Moreover, he was a member of its presumably isolationist wing. Until 1931 he was cut off from areas of direct influence by the ideology or Soviet practices. His subjectivity was shaped neither in school, nor in a factory or collective farm, nor in any other point of concentration of ideological efforts. These non-standard starting conditions certainly left a mark on the "Soviet side" of his worldview.

Zalesskii, unlike Kotkin's workers, spoke Bolshevik with a noticeable religious "accent". The morphology and vocabulary of his language were the outcome of an intertwining of both Soviet ideological and religious clichés. In addition, Zalesskii's language lacked many of the cornerstone elements of the Soviet language of the early 1930s: he did not mention Stalin⁸⁵⁴, the "party" was used only in reference to the ideological branches of the Wanderers, the use of the term "communism" was almost exceptional for him. In addition, he used the term "opposition" in reference to the group of his fellow believers Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, implying their opposition to Ryabinin. This suggests that Maksim Ivanovich did not fully master the grammar of Soviet discourse. Otherwise, he would not have chosen a term so overloaded with negative connotations to describe his associates during Stalin's struggle with the so-called "opposition" groups within the Bolshevik Party in the late 1920s and 1930s.

⁸⁵³ *Hellbeck J.* Revolution on my mind. P. 6.

⁸⁵⁴ With one neutral exception in the form of a reference to the spreading of rumors about Stalin's imminent death in 1942 among the subjects of his surveillance. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 169.

Zalesskii could also hardly be called a repentant sinner, unlike the protagonists of Igal Halfin. He did not renounce himself in order to forge his new Soviet self. Regretting only that he broke out of hiding too late⁸⁵⁵, he offered himself to the Soviet authorities (unknowingly represented by the YaEIO) as he was, believing that he could be of use to them as he was. Zalesskii's autobiographies and his diaries full of religious reflections do not appear to be stamped narratives of the acquisition of Soviet subjectivity such as those described in paradigmatic studies of the Soviet subject. At the time he wrote his first autobiography, he could not have known about how such Soviet texts were to be written. He did not conceal his underground working career. To some extent, he was proud of it and justified its inconsistency in relation to the non-underground. Striving not to remain on the sidelines of the historical process, he did not disown the history of the Wanderers, which, in his view, only took a wrong turn (in the case of the Millers) or "stalled" (in the case of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy). In his reflections on his work at the OGPU cited above, one feels a desire to bring the history of the Wanderers back into motion by merging it with Soviet ideology and history.

Until the early 1930s, Zalesskii was not a member of Soviet collectives and was not influenced by collective practices, unlike the protagonists of Kharkhordin. It is also difficult to measure him against Anna Krylova's protagonists. The difference between the Soviet youth of the 1930s and the 37-year-old (by 1931) Zalesskii is that the Soviet ideological system could hardly be seriously concerned with educating or re-educating the latter, and this required Maksim Ivanovich to make a much greater effort to transform his self in the course of forming his subjectivity.

It seems that the radical framework proposed by Juiliane Fürst could be productive for interpreting the Zalesskii case. In the case of the Wanderers, it seems that Soviet ideological discourse, however it may have been transformed during the period in question, is indeed capable of penetrating even the most hidden parts of the Wanderers' domain. This applies not only to

⁸⁵⁵ GAYaO. F.P221. Op.1. D. 313. L. 38.

Zalesskii, whose Soviet subjectivity was formed under the difficult conditions of a religious environment of the Wanderers, who tended to isolation. The idea of pervasive Soviet discourses is also apparent when one thinks of Zyryanov, who used Soviet clichés in his last speech, or of the text "On the Eleven Sufferers," also imbued with Soviet discursive elements such as references to the Civil War.

However, not to downplay the importance of ideology, it seems that to understand this incredible biographical trajectory it is not enough to attribute everything only to the pervasive nature of the Soviet (and generally modern) discourses. If one looks back at the stories of Ryabinin, Zyryanov (until the early 1930s), Zalesskii and other Wanderers whose active life came in the first third of the 20th century, one can see that there is something else that unites them. This something is a quest to find opportunities to belong to domains and collectives much broader than the Wanderers' community.

Above all, Zalesskii was a Wanderer, that is, a person with a strong but disenchanting religiosity and with an irresistible urge to find an up-to-date social niche that matched his talents in an ever-changing world. For Zalesskii, the gap between the radicalism of ideology and the pragmatism of everyday life that was intrinsic to his older comrades was also natural. Like his predecessors, he skillfully manipulated this gap, often artfully justifying practices of interaction with the world around him through a flexible ideology. Like his predecessors who built mills, organized themselves into cooperatives, and invaded the public sphere prior to him, Zalesskii sought his place in the maelstroms of the 1930s. As it happened, the only social niche available to him was that of a freelance employee at the OGPU. However, as in the case of his predecessors, the emergence of this niche was the result of external processes of Soviet modernization.

Like his predecessors, Zalesskii found an entirely modern niche for himself⁸⁵⁶. And while Soviet modernity is still a subject of debate, there is no doubt that for Zalesskii "Soviet" meant

⁸⁵⁶ On the modernization aspect of the Great Terror and on how and why this modernization failed. *Shearer D.* Stalinist Repression, Modernity, and the Social Engineering Argument // Harris J. (ed.). *The anatomy of Terror: Political Violence under Stalin*. Oxford, 2013. On the fact that state repression, justified by modernization intentions, is not purely a part of the Soviet history see *Holquist P.* *State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet*

“modern”. Of course, Maksim Ivanovich did not know the word “Modernite”⁸⁵⁷, and from his point of view modernization did not mean social engineering or social intervention by some outside force. But this does not mean that he did not feel that the world around him was changing dramatically.

His language is full of oppositions between "old" and "new," where the old is clearly understood as the withering domain of the Wanderers, and the new is firmly associated with the Soviet domain (as he understands it). He writes of his fellow believers, who by the early 1930s are trying to avoid contact with the outside world, that they live "the old way". For example, Zalesskii says of the Wanderer Zharnikov, who had an anti-Soviet attitude, that he held to the rule "to live the old way"⁸⁵⁸. Describing the process of writing his "History of Wanderers" Maksim Ivanovich speaks of the importance of this work as follows: "As manuscripts in a single copy, they must await the time when a deeper and closer look at the old culture, the old life, the paternal [otecheskie] orders and customs will be more intense."⁸⁵⁹ The new/old opposition is most clearly expressed in the fragment of his reflections on the choice between the community of Wanderers, which is drifting further and further underground, and his legalization within the Soviet sphere, already cited above: "...either to surrender my conclusions and switch to new, more rational forms of being, or to find myself in the ranks of the counter-revolutionaries, stumbling into the old, the obsolete."⁸⁶⁰

Maksim Zalesskii's case is remarkable but not unique among the Wanderers or among former religious minorities in general. In the early 1930s many of the Wanderers went legitimate to become accountants⁸⁶¹, statisticians⁸⁶², or collective farmers⁸⁶³. Also among such biographies are

Totalitarianism // *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*. 2003. P. 19-45.

⁸⁵⁷ As Michael David-Fox remarked, in the Russian language it is generally difficult to find a meaningful equivalent to the word "Modernity". *David-Fox M. Crossing borders: Modernity, ideology, and culture in Russia and the Soviet Union*. Pittsburgh, 2015. P. 6.

⁸⁵⁸ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 215.

⁸⁵⁹ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 76. L. 207.

⁸⁶⁰ OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. L. 64.

⁸⁶¹ As the Wanderer Perinova from Vyatka. GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 98.

⁸⁶² As the Wanderer Vorozhtsova from Vyatka, too. GARF. F. P1005. Op. 1a. D. 1084. L. 98.

⁸⁶³ Like the Wanderer Chazova from the Perm' region. GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616. T. 1. L. 121.

the life path of Nikifor Latyshev, a follower of Skoptsy who embraced the revolution and became a correspondent of Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич⁸⁶⁴ for many years, or Ivan Grishinin (agent alias Krestinskii), Jehovah's Witness and KGB Agent in Postwar Soviet Galicia⁸⁶⁵.

To conclude, it must be said that Maksim Zalesskii was very much a part of the unfolding process of mass repression in the 1930s. As it is already mentioned, his memoirs and other documents are an amazing and rare testimony of the Stalinist repressions of a man who, if one may say so, was on the other side of the repressions from the victims of terror.

Oleg Khlevnyuk quite convincingly proved that Stalin himself played the most important role in the unfolding of the repression⁸⁶⁶. In his debate with American revisionist historians who assumed a rather spontaneous nature of the Great Terror, due to the struggle of political elites or even matching the demands of the population⁸⁶⁷, Khlevnyuk showed that the flywheel of repression always unfolded in a top-down direction. However, the case of Zalesskii suggests a curious opportunity to look at repression through the eyes of an ordinary participant. Of course, the complicated motivations that drove Zalesskii are difficult to extrapolate from and imagine that many of the ordinary participants in the terror, informers and agents of the VChK-OGPU-NKVD-MGB-KGB, also saw their work as an eschatological (in a religious way) mission. Nevertheless, it is clear that the repression created specific social niches for professionals and carriers of a certain category of knowledge, as was the case of Zalesskii.

⁸⁶⁴ *Engelshtein L.* Skoptsy i Tsarstvo nebesnoe.

⁸⁶⁵ *Vagramenko T.* Secret Operations of the Soviet Security Services against the Jehovah's Witnesses in Ukraine (1949—1955).

⁸⁶⁶ *Khlevniuk O.V.* Khoziain: Stalin i utverzhenie stalinskoi diktatury. It must be said that Fitzpatrick's recent work on Stalin's inner political circle somewhat problematizes Khlevnyuk's unequivocal view. *Fitzpatrick Sh.* On Stalin's Team: The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics. Princeton, 2015.

⁸⁶⁷ Such works include, for example *Getty J.A.* Origins of the Great Purges. The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933–1938. Cambridge, 1985; *Rittersporn G.T.* Stalinist Simplifications and Soviet Complications. Social Tensions and Political Conflicts in the USSR, 1933–1953. Paris, 1991.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Biographical Trajectories and Social Transformations of the Old Believers Wanderers in the First Third of the 20th Century

The introduction to this research stated several objectives to be achieved within the framework of this thesis. This part is devoted to summarizing the analysis of the biographical trajectories and social transformations of the Wanderers who happened to lead and participate in the above-described thirty-year journey through the labyrinths of Russian modernities.

5.1.1 External and internal conditions of the Wanderers' opening at the beginning of the 20th century

Here one must go back to the beginning again and, as stated, describe the external and internal conditions in which the Wanderers at the beginning of the 20th century attempted to change their accustomed mode of life. As was shown in Chapter 1, these conditions were not favorable to the inclusion of the Wanderers in the broader external political and social processes. The True Orthodox Christian wandering were a tiny group of religious dissidents, treated by many outside observers as fanatics and radical escapists, unable and unwilling to make the slightest contact with the outside world. Rumors of the Red Death proved unfounded time after time, and as the Empire nationalized, the rumors were received with growing skepticism. However, this did not prevent the mass spread of this legend, which led to the entrenchment of the grim image of "wandering stranglers" in the Late Imperial social imagination.

If the Red Death remained a fantasy of some schismotologists and sensation-seeking journalists, the Wanderers' aversion to the imperial authorities and even to the very idea of limited cooperation with them was very real. Descriptions of the Wanderers as the most hardened anti-state "sectarians" far exceed in frequency the reports of the ritual murders they allegedly practiced. Even the most sympathetic experts had no doubt that nothing was more unacceptable for the Wanderers than the contact with the state. One cannot say that this was not the case. Although the Wanderers formally had opportunities for legalization (especially after 1905), I am not aware of a

single example of the Wanderers taking advantage of such an opportunity. Although the doctrine of the Wanderers has undergone serious transformations since the time of Evfimii, its "anti-state" part does not seem to have changed at all until 1917. The Romanov state indeed remained for them an emanation of the Antichrist, cooperation with whom would undoubtedly lead to spiritual damage. The Wanderers held this understanding steadfastly until the fall of the Old Regime.

Another problem for the Wanderers on the road to their own opening to the outside world was their absolute certainty that no doctrinal or practical innovation was possible. Although these innovations (from the Wanderers' point of view, the revitalization of once-existing practices or theological precepts) have in fact been introduced by the Wanderers continuously throughout their history, there have been some limitations even to their flexible approach to doctrinal work. The opening before the Antichrist would be impossible to justify by appeal to any pre-existing Orthodox or ancient Christian tradition. In this sense, their legalization and contact with the authorities after 1917 does seem logical. After all, the Antichrist (the Old Regime) was defeated, while the Soviet power was not perceived so critically by the Wanderers.

In addition to external and internal theological factors, the Wanderers had quite mundane reasons for not getting involved in the broader social processes. Their mode of existence in the "gray zone" was quite comfortable for them. It did not involve serious persecution, while allowed the Wanderers to maintain the areola of the last Christians fleeing from the Antichrist. At the same time, their metaphorical underground connected the Wanderers firmly with the outside world through networks of benefactors while also providing excellent protection from the eyes of the occasional visiting officials. There is no information that the Wanderers discussed in this research would have needed funds for daily necessities. By external standards, the Church's budget was, if not enormous, quite sufficient for a long, comfortable existence, even if the benefactors suddenly stopped providing alms to the Wanderers.

So, the Wanderers had many reasons not to leave their comfortable underground. However, with the organization of economic activity in Danilov, they dramatically changed their mode of

existence. The reason for this was that the Wanderers, not being completely isolated from the outside world, simply could not stand aside of the processes that were unfolding in it. The 1905 edict opened up many public spheres in the form of printed or face-to-face religious polemics. Under such conditions, it was impossible for the Wanderers to avoid engaging in a battle for the flock under common (i.e., open) rules. In order that they might not lose in this battle, the Wanderers needed a spiritual school, and to establish it they needed extra resources. Like so many peasants and townspeople in the Empire, the Wanderers quite logically turned to local cooperative economic activity. This rather functional "opening up" drew the Wanderers into the broader social processes to such an extent that only the Stalinist cultural revolution managed to push them out of such processes, yet at the same time opened the door for other Wanderers, such as Zaleskii.

5.1.2. Biographical Trajectories of the Wanderers

For nearly 40 years the Wanderers have witnessed and participated in numerous external processes and events, and have experienced many triumphs of integration in and tragedies of isolation from it. All these years, despite the cataclysms of schisms and the many difficulties of adaptation, they have pursued their goal of maintaining their presence in the world around them, strengthening it and expanding it. Sometimes they succeeded brilliantly, sometimes despite their efforts such attempts ended in failure. All of these processes had a direct impact on their complex and intricate biographical trajectories, which were the main subject matter analyzed in this research.

The monk Arsenii or Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin) began life before the abolition of serfdom, became a victim of an anti-sectarian campaign, but instead of becoming a convict became a disciple of the prominent theologian Nikita Semyonov. Ryabinin's ingenuity and enthusiasm broke the community out of its dependence on merchants and magnates, and elevated him to the top of the Wanderers' hierarchy. Such ingenuity and enthusiasm were enough for the community to withstand the revolutionary transformations of 1917 and successfully adapt to the new economic and social conditions. However, even Ryabinin's energy was not enough to keep the community

on the surface under the pressure of the Stalinist social policies. Thus, the outstanding leader of the Wanderers, who had done everything for their opening, ended his life in a deep underground.

Khristofor Ivanovich (Zyryanov) worked his way up from a peasant blacksmith to an intellectual leader of the religious group. Moving in the same ideological vein as Ryabinin, Zyryanov never tired of fighting to expand the room of the Wanderers and ensure its sustainability. In his struggle he organized economic activities and reached the higher Soviet offices. But by the end of the 1920s, even these efforts proved to be not enough to keep him in the legal domain. The tragedy of the underground led him to the understanding that it was impossible for the Wanderers to exist in isolation from the outside world. This understanding drove Zyryanov to the brink of marginality and turned him from an intellectual leader into a suicide propagandist. Thus, Zyryanov's trajectory ended up with his excommunication by fellow believers and a death sentence by a Soviet court.

Maksim Ivanovich Zalesskii was born to a peasant family and attended a Nikonian school. At the beginning of the 20th century, during the rapid modernization of the Russian Empire and the unfolding of large-scale political and social processes, he became a member of a small religious community whose representatives were notorious for their radicalism and fanaticism. As part of this community, he experienced a schism in the movement and joined the part of the community that resisted the opening of the Wanderers to the outside world. Being in the familiar domain of the metaphorical underground with his like-minded fellows, he made an impressive spiritual career. However, in the late 1920s, at a time when the Wanderers were forced to leave their metaphorical underground to inhabit a literal one, he instead burst into the Soviet cosmos to become an active participant of the Stalinist modernization.

It is no coincidence that these ornamental biographical trajectories have taken such a convoluted form. They are the logical result and reflection of the equally ornamental trajectories of the Late Imperial and Soviet modernities. These trajectories were so convoluted because

Russian modernity itself seemed like a labyrinth with many dead ends and unexpectedly opening passages and niches and with no guarantee of any way out of this maze.

5.1.3. Social niches occupied by the Wanderers

The Wanderers discussed in this study did not invent social niches, but adapted to external niches that already existed. Ryabinin was not a pioneer of late imperial cooperation, neither he nor Zyryanov were inventors of early Soviet farm collectives, and Zalesskii was by no means the first secret OGPU employee. The very political and social, as well as economic and ideological, transformations that unfolded in the first third of the 20th century in the vast area of Northern Eurasia, part of which was occupied by the Wanderers, led to the opening of specific social niches. Some of these niches turned out to be quite suitable or even desirable for the Wanderers. Moreover, the protagonists of this research have been shown to have sought and occupied these niches not because of any great admiration for the Old or the New Regime (in the latter case, perhaps, Zalesskii serves as an exception). By occupying them, they intended to take advantage of the political or economic opportunities of these niches to expand, consolidate, or purify the Wanderers' domain.

The variety of social niches and opportunities that made wanderers' biographical trajectories so rich is in turn itself a reflection of the complex and inclusive political, social, religious, cultural, and economic landscape of the Late Empire and Early Soviet Union. It is these complexity and inclusiveness that are responsible for the fact that anyone could find a place in this landscape. Even those who believed that since the mid-17th century the world had been invaded by the Antichrist.

5.1.4. Social Transformations of the Community

During the first third of the 20th century, the Wanderers' community underwent a number of fundamental transformations. The Wanderers experienced a major schism, splitting into two irreconcilable cohorts. The Millers managed to centralize the hierarchy and get rid of financial dependence on benefactors. They succeeded in establishing their roots in Danilov. Their economic infrastructure allowed them to survive the revolutionary transformation of political regimes and,

though they lost the mill, maintained their religious and economic hearth in Danilov until the late 1920s, when the Millers were forced to abandon it.

The very mode of openness of their existence also changed. In the 1900s, the Millers went from existing in the "gray zone" of the metaphorical underground to an almost open existence in Danilov, and from 1918 to a completely open existence. Moreover, in the Late Empire this opening also led to attempts at inclusion in the public sphere, while in the early Soviet period it pushed the Wanderers to take the most radical step of voluntarily opening up to central authority. These transformations of the mode of openness unfolded in step with the transformations of Danilov's educational and economic infrastructure. Having lost it, the Wanderers hid from the eyes of the outside world, keeping in touch with only a handful of courageous benefactors.

At the same time, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy attempted to maintain their customary mode of existence in metaphorical underground, relying on financial injections from benefactors. They still relied on the former hierarchical structure, which implied a certain canonical autonomy of the communities. After October 1917, transformations in the economic landscape and the logical depletion of benefactors' wealth undermined the community's financial foundations, but nevertheless did not lead to a massive change in the mode of existence. Visible to nearby rural and urban communities and invisible to strangers, the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy were still on the borderline of openness and underground. In the late 1920s they, like their opponents, went into literal underground, which in their case, presumably, was not so dramatic, unlike the Millers, who fell right into the underground after two decades of openness. In addition, it was from this, if one may say so, "conservative" environment and precisely in this period that Maksim Ivanovich Zalesskii "opened" himself to the Soviet authorities.

While previously the Millers' community had transformed radically and significantly, and the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy community had not transformed at all, both had one end ahead of them: a break with the outside world in the early 1930s. It is difficult to assess the success of the underground strategies of these two communities, but it seems that the centralized and

consolidated Millers have been more successful in maintaining their own canonical continuity. Unlike the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy, whose traces are lost in the late 1930s, the Wanderers, who trace their succession to Ryabinin, exist to this day.

5.1.5 Wanderers and the World Around

The main question this dissertation aims to answer can be put like this: how was it possible that the bearers of perhaps the most pessimistic eschatological worldview among the Old Believers did not get lost in the swirl of the transformations of political and social regimes in the late Russian Empire and the early Soviet state, but managed to find their place in this whirlwind? Now, in conclusion, I can finally propose an answer to this question.

For all the pessimism and eschatological character of the religious doctrine of the Wanderers, they were in fact not cut off from the world around them. On the contrary, they belonged to social realms far broader than their own religious ones. At the very least they were part of urban and rural communities. Their activities were no secret to their neighbors and often to local secular authorities and Nikonian clerics. In the case of a visit of a guest official, the Wanderers could always rely on the active assistance of their neighbors and the silence of the local administration, which did not want to reveal to their superiors the existence of "sectarians" in the territory under their control. The Wanderers were not confused by such large-scale transformations because they were an absolutely integral part of the environments in which these processes unfolded. Late imperial and early Soviet modernities did not suddenly intrude into their lives. Like their Nikonian, Muslim and other neighbors, the Wanderers learned the basics of capitalism, tried to break into public space, sharpened their communication skills with Soviet officials, by trial and error and with incredible persistence.

Consequently, the first part of the question posed can be answered as follows. Wanderers simply could not help becoming part of these processes, because they were not separated from the social domains in which these processes were unfolding. On the contrary, it was those who wished

to remain on the sidelines who had to make efforts to conserve their mode of existence. This is exactly what happened to the the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy.

What can be said about the processes and conditions under which the Wanderers opened, given this story? Certainly, the conditions under which the Millers opened and maintained their openness throughout the 1910s and 1920s were fundamentally different from those under which Zalesskii "opened".

Favorable to the establishment and reproduction of political, social, cultural, and religious diversity, the Late Imperial and Early Soviet environment was a fertile ground for those Wanderers who sought to expand their presence in the world. Of course, it would be logical to say that the Stalinist cultural revolution put an end to this "blossoming of a thousand flowers" and brought into this natural chaos of diversity a clear ideological and practical toolkit for structuring it along the lines of normativity and deviation with quite tragic consequences for those who happened to be "deviant". However, the case of Zalesskii allows one to say that even the domain of high Stalinism in the 1930s remained to a certain extent inclusive. Simply the social niches it opened up were very specific and different from those opened up by the Late Imperial capitalism and early Soviet socialism (for the most part merely the absence of a uniform Bolshevik policy toward "inherited" diversity). Ryabinin, Zyryanov, and Zalesskii all pursued the same goal – to strengthen the community (in the case of Zalesskii through its purification of poisonous elements) and employed the same strategies for this purpose – using the opportunities of the outside world to achieve their ends. What changed at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s from the perspective of the Wanderers' experience?

The very difference in the nature of social spaces in the 1910s-1920s and 1930s seems to have been the following. In both the 1910s and 1920s, a Wanderer had a choice between an open existence and a metaphorical underground, and in addition, he or she had options to exist simultaneously in these two modes or even to sever all ties with the world at all. In the early 1930s, the Wanderers were faced with a very different choice between a reckless transition to the Soviet

domain and the harsh regime of the literal underground. The fate of Zalesskii, who broke with the Wanderers some time after his legalization, is illustrative here.

The fact that the social niches that Stalinist modernization was opening up attracted precisely someone like Zalesskii also seems telling. He came to the OGPU as an expert and professional in the field of religious movements, that is, unlike the Millers, who had little to share with the Soviet authorities, let alone the Romanov state. Thus, it was no longer a question of unconcerned political regimes of the 1910s and 1920s, which demanded nothing in return from the Wanderers. It was now about a mutually beneficial exchange. Zalesskii needed the Soviet power, and the state needed him. Had Zalesskii been educated by the Millers, no doubt his fate would have turned out differently. But he was brought up by those for whom the Late Imperial capitalist activities of some of the Wanderers had exposed the inequalities among once "homeless" co-religionists and became a symbol of the schism. If Zalesskii was really going to purge the Wanderers' community of the heretics-capitalists, he seemed to have come to the right place. The Soviet power seemed quite capable of helping him with this.

However, Zalesskii's work for the OGPU proved to be unlike the cohesive struggle alongside the Soviet power against the Millers and for the purification of the religious community. Most likely, Zalesskii's job did not deal with the Wanderers at all. Otherwise, he would have been aware of Zyryanov's activities in Vyatka. Moreover, the Stalinist regime of the 1930s proved to be extremely productive in the sense of transforming the subject who fell into its "millstones". Thus, by the mid-1930s Zalesskii had in fact ceased to be a Wanderer and had become a Soviet commoner. In other words, his agency as a Wanderer (or his anger at the Millers) dissolved without trace into his Soviet agency as a state security agent.

The Stalinist regime of the 1930s was inclusive and attractive in terms of opportunities and social niches, but it also drew a clear line between Soviet and anti-Soviet, normative and criminal. Under such conditions it was possible to be a Soviet commoner or a Wanderer in the underground, but not both at once.

The homogenizing logic of the Stalinist regime had finally done away with the old world, with its secret shelter cellars that everyone in the neighborhood knew about, the "secret" councils and meetings of a hundred people, the tacit agreement of mutual invisibility between local officials and the Wanderers, and other hallmarks of "playing at persecution". The new world was structured according to very different rules. It was no longer a visiting official, gendarme, or militia officer who posed a threat, but one's own neighbor. This Foucauldian-focused⁸⁶⁸ principle of the distribution of modes of visibility finally made any dual modes of existence impossible.

5.2 Being a Normal Old Believer

Aleksandr Etkind, in his polemic with Laura Engelstein (both published works related to the old Russian sects in the short period of 1997-1999), reproached the latter for refusing to engage in much theoretical literature and relying on the testimony of "renegades" or "the last surviving members"⁸⁶⁹. In Etkind's view, Engelstein in her work on Skoptsy trivialized her protagonists. Indeed, in Engelstein's work, the Skoptsy were not exotic at all, but rather quite ordinary and pragmatic bearers of the same disenchanted religiosity as the Wanderers described above. If normalizing the Wanderers means trivializing them, may my heroes forgive me for their trivialization, because their experience seems to me to be a perfectly normal experience among the equally normal experiences of their contemporaries.

Theological matters are beyond the focus of this research. So, I cannot determine definitively whether any of my protagonists were "renegades" or heretics. All I know is that, at least during the period described, each of them considered himself a True Orthodox Christian wandering and acted as his conscience and religious worldview told him to. In organizing economic activities, developing cooperative projects, entering the offices of Soviet officials, and agreeing to cooperate with the OGPU, none of them had any doubt that in doing so he was not ceasing to be a Wanderer.

⁸⁶⁸ This refers to the paradigmatic understanding of a modern power as an all-controlling and all-penetrating substance, described in *Foucault M. Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. New York, 1977.

⁸⁶⁹ *Etkind A. M. Non-fiction po-russki pravda. Kniga otzyvov*. M., 2007, P. 91-107. This article was a response to the criticism of Etkind outlined in *Engelstein L. Paradigms, pathologies, and other clues to Russian spiritual culture: Some post-Soviet thoughts // Slavic Review*. 1998. Vol. 57. no. 4. P. 864-877.

They were pragmatists, but at the same time they were staunch believers. Wherever the whirlwinds of the first third of the 20th century took them, their religious beliefs always came first. Consequently, I see no reason to doubt their sincere conviction that being a wanderer and being active in the world at once do not mean becoming a “renegade”. The Wanderers opened themselves to the world because they believed that this opening (or rather, these openings) would benefit the religious community to which they had devoted a significant part of their lives.

Each of the described biographical trajectories seems vertiginous to the outside observer. But most striking of all is the fact that, for the protagonists of this research, their biographical trajectories do not seem to have been something extraordinary. At least in writing, they did not pay attention to the large-scale fluctuations of their life trajectories. On the contrary, for either Ryabinin, Zyryanov or Zalesskii their life paths and the social transformations of the community they belonged to were logical. Of course, during the first third of the 20th century, the community underwent a series of radical transformations that changed its way of existence and social structure enormously. However, Ryabinin, the initiator of the most ambitious transformation process, has hardly doubted that he and his associates have not deviated an inch from the testaments of Nikita Semyonov, Evfimii, the martyrs of the Solovetskii monastery, the medieval Russian saints or the first Christians who hid in the Roman catacombs.

For my protagonists there was no contradiction in keeping up with the times and being a follower of a quite radical religious tradition. For them, their experience was not exotic, nor was it the experience of a "renegade". It lay within the variety of normal experiences of their contemporaries. Similarly, the experiences of many other Old Believers who endured political and social transformation during this period were not exotic or anecdotal.

Aleksandr Kostrov, in his work on the history of the Transbaikalian Old Believers in the same period, provided the colorful story. In 1928, the secretary of a party cell in the village of Nikol'skoe in Transbaikalia complained to the higher Soviet authorities that the local anti-Soviet-minded Old Believers' mentors refused to give his daughter a funeral, which forced him to bury her without

religious rites. Moreover, as the secretary writes, the mentors followed the coffin, shouting that the deceased was "damned" [propashchii], and eventually would not even allow the girl to be buried in the cemetery⁸⁷⁰. Which of the actors in this sad story is a "real" or "normal" Old Believer? A Communist father who believes that his daughter's burial was "improper" from a religious perspective and finds it necessary to complain about it to a higher (in fact atheist) authority, or spiritual leaders who believe that the corpse of a Communist's child could desecrate the local cemetery? Who is responsible for drawing a clear line between the "normal" and "abnormal" experiences of Old Believers?

The idea of this research was to stop being surprised that the Old Believers, who are found to be actively involved in broad political and social processes, are not at all like the Lykov family, who were hiding from the outside world in the Khakassian taiga until the end of the 1970s⁸⁷¹. As the matter of fact, the Lykovs, the merchants and millionaires Morozovs, and, for example, Maksim Zalesskii were equally the Old Believers. Which of these very different life paths is the "true" experience of the Old Believer? The answer is each of them. Thus, returning to the Kostrov's story, both the communist father who wants his daughter to be buried in an Old Believer cemetery and his opponents who curse him turn out to be equally normal Old Believers.

Similarly, Rodion Nifontov, a Wanderer who became chairman of the village council in the village of Kharlushi in the Urals, turns out to be a normal Old Believer⁸⁷². As does Maria Sharova, an Old Believer nun, who in the 1920s made a career from chairman of the local Soviet committee in the village of Nizhniaya Kur'ya near Tomsk to a member of the Siberian Executive Committee⁸⁷³. As do the Old Believers of the Transbaikalian villages of Mukhorshibiri and

⁸⁷⁰ *Kostrov A.V.* Staroobriadchestvo Baikalskoi Sibiri v" perekhodnyi" period otechestvennoi istorii (1905-1930-e gg.). Irkutsk, 2010. P. 309-310.

⁸⁷¹ On the hermit family of Old Believers, who hid from Soviet power for about 40 years and were discovered at the end of 1978 by a group of Soviet geologists in the Khakass Autonomous Region, see. *Peskov V.M.* Tazhnyi tupik. M., 1990.

⁸⁷² *Sliadnev M.* Staroobriadchestvo na Iuzhnom Urale (politika mestnykh gosudarstvennykh organov po otnosheniiu k staroobriadcheskim religioznym obedineniiam. 1917 - 2002 gg.) // *Evrasiiskii zhurnal regionalnykh i politicheskikh issledovani.* 2003. Vol. 10. no.2(3). P.251.

⁸⁷³ *Shigapov S.R.* Sovetskaia vlast' i starovery: razvitie vzaimootnoshenii v 1920-1930-e gg. (Na materialakh Tomskogo uyezda) // *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta.* 2016. no.3(41). P. 47.

Novaya Bryan', who in 1926 actively promoted their candidates in the Soviet elections⁸⁷⁴. As does Ivan Kirillov, who has already been mentioned in the paragraph on the statistics of the Old Believers, the theologian who became a Soviet economist⁸⁷⁵. As does Stepan Nosov, an Old Believer from Pechora, a collective farm accountant and bookkeeper at a horse rental station, who fought almost the entire Great Patriotic War and since the 1950s has written numerous eschatological texts⁸⁷⁶. As does an Old Believer Irodion Uralskii (Vladimir Tokmenin), who at the end of the 20th century composed a huge eschatological work, in the pages of which he interpreted the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 as a tragic symptom of the coming apocalypse, and found features of the Antichrist in the actions of the first Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev⁸⁷⁷. As do the Old Believers of Sepych, the Russian Far East⁸⁷⁸, and Romanian Bukovina⁸⁷⁹, who masterfully found ethical ways to be both devout believers and loyal citizens of their respective socialist states⁸⁸⁰.

5.3 Epilogue. Those who are still wandering

As has been said, traces of the Kornilo-Fyodorovtsy got lost in the late 1930s. The activities of the Millers also went undocumented for some time. The Siberian Wanderers, which Elena Dutchak wrote about, became visible to the local Soviet authorities again at the end of the 1950s. In 1958, in the Tomsk-Chulymskaya taiga, 100 Wanderers were discovered living in hermitages and keeping in touch with their worldly benefactors⁸⁸¹. Later on, law enforcement agencies,

⁸⁷⁴ *Kostrov A.V.* Staroobriadchestvo Baikalskoi Sibiri v" perekhodnyi" period otechestvennoi istorii (1905-1930-e gg.). P. 272

⁸⁷⁵ *Anisimova V.N.* Drugaia zhizn'. K biografii I.A. Kirillova // Staroobriadchestvo: istoriia, kultura, sovremennost. no.16. M., 2018. P. 11-14.

⁸⁷⁶ *Melikhov M.V.* Pechorskii staroobriadcheskii pisatel' S.A. Nosov. Videniia, pis'ma, zapiski. M., 2005.

⁸⁷⁷ *Počinskaja I.V.* Eine altgläubige Interpretation der Joannesapokalipse aus jüngster Zeit // Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas. 2015. no. 3. P. 430–443.

⁸⁷⁸ *Martin D.A.* Loyal to God: Old Believers, oaths and orders //History and Anthropology. 2017. Vol. 28. no. 4. P. 477-496.

⁸⁷⁹ *Naumescu V.* The end times and the near future: the ethical engagements of Russian Old Believers in Romania // Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. 2016. Vol. 22. no. 2. P. 314-331.

⁸⁸⁰ Moreover, as Robert Crummey showed 50 years ago, these conclusions can rightly be extrapolated not only to the Old Believers of the 20th century, but also to the Old Believers of the 18th and 19th centuries. For even as they existed under conditions of successive persecutions, they always found a way of mutually beneficial cooperation with the persecutors. *Crummey R. O.* The Old Believers and the world of Antichrist.

⁸⁸¹ *Dutchak E.E.* Iz" Vavilona" v" Belovod'e". P. 284-285.

journalists, and members of archaeographic expeditions came into contact with them⁸⁸². Apparently, a number of such taiga dwellings exist in this area to this day.

It is difficult to say whether any of these Siberian Wanderers are the canonical successors of Ryabinin and the Millers in general. As Elena Dutchak's research shows, in these lands there were communities of Wanderers of many different branches, which, since the second half of the 19th century, had not been widespread in the European part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Among them there were the Bezdenezhniki, heirs of the Wanderers who refused to use money in the first third of the 19th century, and the Antiarcticle-followers, heirs of the Wanderers who refused to accept Nikita Semyonov's reforms in the mid-19th century. For lack of precise data on the direct hereditary connection between the Siberian Wanderers and Ryabinin, I will refrain from making any assumptions on this point.

There is conflicting evidence concerning who led the Millers after Ryabinin's death. The Permian Wanderers under interrogation testified that Aleksandr Afanasievich (Korovin) was the next chief elder⁸⁸³. Martyrologic manuscript "On the 11 Sufferers of the 20th Century" states that Vasilii Ivanovich, shot in the framework of the case against the Wanderers in Cheboksary, was the Ryabinin's successor⁸⁸⁴. It should be said that both alleged leaders were trained at the theological school in Danilov⁸⁸⁵. Further on, the traces of the Wanderers are lost for some time. The next time the Wanderers come to the attention of Soviet law enforcers in the early 1960s in a completely unexpected part of the USSR.

In the winter of 1963-1964, several people accused of "calls for the violent overthrow or change of the constitutional order or violent infringement of the integrity of the Republic of Kazakhstan" were brought before a Kazakh SSR court. A newspaper account of the case stated

⁸⁸² Ibid. P. 283-305.

⁸⁸³ GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616. T. 1. L. 18.

⁸⁸⁴ ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434–2. L. 2

⁸⁸⁵ The Korovins are mentioned by Zalesskii as one of the wealthy families whose children attended this school. OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed.khr. 77. L. 114. Vasilii Ivanovich's education in Danilov is also mentioned in "On the 11 sufferers". ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434–2. L. 2-3.

that the defendants promoted an illegal way of life and called for refusal of military service⁸⁸⁶. It was reported that the defendants belonged to a large-scale underground "sect IPKhS" [an abbreviation for the True Orthodox Christians wandering]. To his own question "What is IPKhS?", the journalist answered, "IPKhS are hiding places in quiet houses. IPKhS are dank dens in the taiga. IPKhS are gloomy, sullen glances, clenched teeth, wolfish hatred in humbly downcast eyes"⁸⁸⁷.

The case, which was investigated for four years, brought four people to the dock: 92-year-old Chief elder monk Varlaam (Grigorii-Vasilii Nikolaevich Perevyshin), two of his fellow believers who were living illegally, Mina Bogatyryov and Aleksandr Vasiliev and one benefactor, 27-year-old welder Viktor Karlin from Alma-Ata. In February 1964 the court sentenced the four Wanderers to varying terms of 3 to 7 years⁸⁸⁸. It seems that these events received a certain attention from the public. The émigré newspaper "Posev" wrote about the Wanderers persecuted by the Soviets⁸⁸⁹. Moreover, émigré journalists, like their Soviet counterparts, tended to overrate the scale of IPKhS activities: "The IPKhS case shows the extent which the underground is now reaching in the country, how its organization and technical means are being improved"⁸⁹⁰.

Monk Varlaam, apparently, was indeed the leader of the Wanderers during this period. At least this is evidenced by a letter from the Kemerovo Wanderers written in 1960 and addressed to Varlaam, but for unknown reasons, ended up in the archives of the State Museum of the History of Religion⁸⁹¹. In this letter, the Wanderers of Mariinsk asked Varlaam, as the superior leader of the religious community, to halt the drunkenness and debauchery of the leader of the local community, monk Georgii.

⁸⁸⁶ *Poslednee stranstvie* // *Smena*, no. 891, 1964, July.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁸ Due to his advanced age, Varlaam received a suspended sentence after just a couple of months. Archive of the human rights organization "Memorial". F. 167; 1953-1991 gg. The personal card of Perevyshin.

⁸⁸⁹ *Delo o razvetvlenom podpol'e «IPKhS»* // *Posev*. no. 2-3. 1964. January, 17. The memoirs of émigré political Evgenii Vagin about his meeting with the Wanderers in the prison camp were also published in the American newspaper "Russkaya Zhizn". *Put' k vere* // *Ruskaia zhizn'*. no. 8701. 1977, July, 7.

⁸⁹⁰ *Delo o razvetvlenom podpol'e «IPKhS»*.

⁸⁹¹ GMIR. Collection 1. Op. 7. Ed. khr. 23.

As if to loop this history, just as Maksim Gor'kii met Ryabinin in Nizhnii Novgorod at the beginning of the century, another Soviet novelist happened to meet one of these "Kazakh runaways" in the prison camp. One of the most famous late Soviet dissident writers, Andrei Sinyavskii, convicted in 1966 to seven years in prison, left a short, idealized memoir of his prison mate "grandpa" Mina (Bogatyryov) [dedushka Mina]. In his "Essays on the Popular Faith", Sinyavskii writes how he was surprised to find Mina weeping in the barracks over the death of Soviet Marshal and former Stalinist high-ranking official Kliment Voroshilov. To Sinyavskii's logical question as to whether it was worth mourning such a monstrous figure, Mina replied, "After all, his soul is going straight to hell right now!". Trying to add flourish to the romantic image of Mina's Christian virtue, Sinyavskii added: "The government itself was not too sad about the death of the former marshal and Soviet president at the time: Voroshilov had outlived his time. And, perhaps, the only one in the whole country who sincerely pitied him was grandpa Mina". Mina should have been released in the late 1960s to live under supervision legally. However, if Sinyavskii is to be believed, after his release "grandpa" Mina avoided legalization, dissolved into the underground, and "leads the entire church of runaways-wanderers scattered throughout Russia."⁸⁹²

Of course, this fragmentary information given by Sinyavskii and Soviet and émigré journalists raises questions rather than clarifying anything. How did the Wanderers end up in Kazakhstan? What did their underground existence look like? Was it metaphorical or literal? In answering the first question, one can assume that the Wanderers found themselves in Kazakhstan along with the thousands of people sent here in camps and exile during the Stalinist period. As for the underground, apparently it was still permeable and for some reason attractive, since the Wanderers managed to entice the still quite young proletarian Karlin into it. For the rest, unfortunately, these and other pieces of information that I have do not allow me to speak accurately about the late-Soviet and post-Soviet activities of the Wanderers.

⁸⁹² Sinyavskii A.D. *Ivan-durak. Ocherk narodnoi very* Parizh. 1991 P. 415-416. I found a reference to this story in the work of Aleksandr Etkind. *Etkind A. Krivoe gore: pamiat' o nepogrebennykh*. M.: 2016. P. 170.

Are the Wanderers active today? If I had had to answer this question a year ago, I would say that with the exception of small isolated hermitages in Siberia, where some rather elderly Wanderers live, there is no data on their activity. However, some time ago I stumbled upon an Internet blog called "IPKhS" whose author published some documents related to the Wanderers. At first it seemed to me that the blog was only containing documents that had already been published on the Internet. But at some point, I noticed that the author started posting examples of previously unpublished materials. That's how I knew he had access to authentic sources. I wrote him and we began a short correspondence. The author of the blog really did identify himself as a Wanderer from Moscow. He also put me in touch with his fellow believer from a small town 60 kilometers from St. Petersburg.

It turned out that both Slave of God S. from Moscow and Igor K. from St. Petersburg are the ideological heirs of Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin). With a notable distrust of secular scholars, both of my informants still found it possible to share with me some information about contemporary Wanderers, and I am grateful to them for this.

What do the Wanderers do today? The same things they did a hundred years ago. My informants work at secular jobs, which, of course, does not prevent them from being devout believers. They support their fellow Wanderers living in hermitages in Siberia and the Yaroslavl' region. Women play a significant role in the spiritual life of the community, but the leader is still a man – someone named Slave of God V. Religious polemics and theological disputes moved long ago from village huts and city backyards to the Internet. There, on Facebook and on forums dedicated to the Old Faith, the Wanderers, just as a hundred years ago, unsparingly argue to other Old Believers and Nikonians the truth of their faith and the coherence of their teachings with the teaching of the God-Man Lord Jesus Christ.

5.4. Conclusions put to the defense

1. Contrary to their own declarations of consistent isolationism, by the early 20th century the Wanderers were significantly integrated into broader social communities and existed

in a quite comfortable mode, an attempt to change which would have led to confrontations with a multitude of opposing factors.

2. As the Russian Empire nationalized and modernized, a gradual discursive normalization of the Wanderers proceeded. However, this process was never completed, thus affecting the legal position of the Wanderers.
3. Prior to 1918 the Wanderers existed in a legal "gray zone," in the absence of a clearly defined legislative ban on their doctrine and largely due to their own reluctance to legalize their communities.
4. The Wanderers entered the legal realm only in 1918, along with Soviet religious emancipation.
5. Despite conflicts with local authorities, the 1920s marked a period of fully open existence for some of the Wanderers for the first time in their history.
6. With the onset of Stalin's Cultural Revolution, the Wanderers found themselves in a situation of literal religious underground for the first time since at least the 1850s.
7. The social structure, theology, and religious and secular practices of the Wanderers changed radically as a result of their involvement in the broad social and political processes that unfolded in the Late Empire and the Early Soviet State.
8. The complex and florid biographical trajectories of the Wanderers are a reflection of external social and political processes associated with different and heterogeneous emanations of Russian Modernity (Late Imperial, Early Soviet, Stalinist).
9. Wanderers responded so actively to the opportunities and social niches that opened up as the imperial space transformed, because they were not separated from the changing world around them, rather they were an integral part of it.

6. List of Sources and Literature

6.1 Abbreviation

GARF – State Archive of Russian Federation

GASPIKO – State Archive of Social and Political History of Kirov region

GAYaO – State Archive of Yaroslavl' region

GMIR – Archive of State Museum of History of Religion

GOPAPO – Perm State Archives of Social and Political History

OR BAN – Section of Manuscripts, Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences

ORKiR NB MGU - Section of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Scientific Library,
Moscow State University

OBD «Memorial» - A generalized electronic databank containing information about Soviet soldiers who fell, died, and went missing during the Great Patriotic War and in the postwar period.

RGASPI - Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History

RGIA - Russian State Historical Archive

6.2 Primary sources

Archive of the human rights organization “Memorial”. F. 167. Kopii uchetykh kartochek zaklyuchennykh politlagerei

GARF F. 1235. Op. 56. D. 26. Perepiska s mestnymi ispolnitelnymi komitetami po zayavleniiam chlenov tserkovnykh obshchin ob osvobozhdenii sluzhitelei kul'ta ot voennoi sluzhby, o razreshenii bogosluzheniya i vozvrashchenii rekvizirovannykh predmetov kul'ta

GARF. F. 124. Op. 51. D.814. Delo o religioznoi sekte "begunov" i "strannikov" v Kazanskoi gubernii v 1912 g.

GARF. F. 5263. Op. 1. D.55. Perepiska VTsIK s NARKOMINDELKOM, Narkombstom, GPU ob ob'edinenii pravoslavnoi i katolicheskoi tserkve, ob arestakh sluzhitelei kul'ta, o zhalobakh na nepravilnye deistviya mestnykh vlastei po otnosheniiu k religioznym

obedineniyam i po dr. voprosam kul'ta

GARF. F. A 353. Op. 8. D. 8. Materialy po sektantstvu (Zayavlenie i zapiska predstavitelei sektantskikh techenii o neobkhodimosti vosstanovleniya deiatelnosti osooi komissii "Orgkomsekt" pri Narkomzeme i obshchei reformy po sektantskomu voprosu, v sviazi s postanovleniem KhIII sezda RKP, s prilozheniem materialov k zapiske, broshiura "Delo Berlinskogo pravoslavnogo prikhoda", zaiavleniia, spravki o deiatelnosti sektantskikh grupp i drugie dokumenty.

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GARF. F. P5221. Op. 70. D. 540. Zalesskikh S.I.

GARF. F.102. Op.95. D. 510. O posledovatelyakh raskol'nicheskoi sekty begunov

GARF. F.3316. Op. 2. D.8. K sektantam i staroobryadtsam, zhivushchim v Rossii i zagranitse, 5 oktyabrya 1921 g.

GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 4. D. SU-4939. Obvinitel'noe zaklyuchenie po delu Zyryanova 1929 goda

GASPIKO. F. P-6799. Op. 8. D. SU-10180. Obvinitel'noe zaklyuchenie po delu Zyryanova 1933 goda.

GAYaO F. P-247. Op. 56. D. 599. Otchety Danilovskoi arteli mukomolov za yanvar-avgust 1920 g.

GAYaO F.906 Op.4. D. 1147. Perepiska s Departamentom politsii o sektantakh

GAYaO F.P-221 Op.1 D. 313. Stat'i i zapisi staroobryadtsev v raskol, zametka o strannikakh Yaroslavskogo kraja i avtobiografiya Smirnova-Zalesskogo M.I.

GAYaO F.P-221. Op.1. D. 300. Istoricheskie ocherki iz istorii strannicheskikh nastavnikov Severnogo kraja.

GAYaO. F. 346. Op.4. T.4. D. 7173. Delo o krestyanine der.Chentsovo Iaroslavskogo uezda Ia.M.Baldine, obvinyaemom v ustroistve staroobryadcheskoi molel'ni "Strannikov" pri

svoem dome.

GAYaO. F. P-514. Op.1 D. 427. Kollektiva "Aksioma" v gorode Danilove.

GMIR F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. 109. Gazetnye vyrezki po voprosam pravoslaviya i sektanstva v Rossii. Podpol'niki

GMIR F. 2. Op. 26/106. Ed. 50. Gazetnye vyrezki po voprosam pravoslaviya i sektanstva v Rossii. Beguny.

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GOPAPO. F. 643/2. Op. 1. D.13616. Sledstvennoe delo Nazarenkova T. G. 1939 g.

OBD «Memorial». TsAMO. Kartoteka politrabotnikov.

OBD «Memorial». TsAMO. Kartoteka politrabotnikov.

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 104. Deyaniia bol'shogo besedno-razbiratel'nogo i sudebnago sobora v Vychugskoi strane 7435 goda sentyabrya 25-go i po 1-e oktiabrya

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 173. Akty Soborov 7420-7421 v Vychugovskoi strane

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 253. Sbornik staroobryadcheskii

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 255. My, istinno pravoslavnye khristiane, dlia toho tol'ko ukhodim iz svoikh domov, dlya svoego dushevnogo spaseniya

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 279. Materialy k rabotam po istorii staroobryadchestva i strannichestva. Iz arkhiva M.I. Zalesskogo

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 298. Beseda v sele Sopyolki v 7421 (1913) godu, 15go marta.

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 301. Sobornoe opredelenie na voprosenie Feodora Pavlovicha i vsekh kargopol'skikh strannikov o vozmozhnosti obshcheniia i zhitel'stva s zhenskimi polom lish v sluchayakh krainei nuzhdy.

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OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 77. M.I. Zalesskii. Obshchii Ocherk strannichestva (politicheskie i ekonomicheskie vzglyady rukovoditelei 18-20vv)

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 81. Opredeleniya soborov.

OR BAN. Kargopol'skoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 78. Istoricheskii ocherk Kargapol'skikh strannikov v biografiiakh ikh rukovoditelei za vremia s 1845-1940gg

ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhnekamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1434. «Prosvetitel'», sbornik nachala XX v.

ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1429. «Istoricheskii rasskaz inokini Raisy». 1957 g. (7465, 12 marta).

ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 1974. «Ocherk istorii tserkvi».

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ORKiR NB MGU. Verkhokamskoe sobranie. Ed. khr. 2272. Sinodik begunskii. XX v.

RGASPI F. 82. Op. 2. D. 886. Soobshchenie A.Ya. Vyshinskogo o rezul'tatakh sledstviya po delu kontrrevoliutsionnoi organizatsii "Vyatskii predel (prikhod) istinno-pravoslavnykh stranstvuiushchikh khristian". 22 sentyabrya 1936 g.

RGIA F. 821 Op. 133. D.112. Departament dukhovnykh del inostrannykh ispovedanii Ministerstva vnutrennikh del. O proyavlenii, rasprostraneni i uchenii sekty "begunov"

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RGIA. F. 1405 Op. 543. D.592. Ministerstvo yustitsii. 1903 g. 2. Obshchee deloproizvodstvo. Delo o sostavlenii zaklyucheniya Ministerstvom yustitsii po vzbuzhdennomu v Ministerstve vnutrennikh del olonetskim gubernatorom voprosu o priznanii sekty "strannikov" (inache "begunov" ili "srytnikov") osobenno vrednoi v politicheskom i religioznom otnosheniiax i o razreshenii presledovat' chlenov sekty v ugolovnom poriadke

RGIA. F. 821 Op. 133. D. 21. Departament dukhovnykh del inostrannykh ispovedanii Ministerstva vnutrennikh del. Statistika sektantov i staroobryadtsev za 1909-1910 gg. i spravki po perepisi 1897 g.

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