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HERETICS AND COLONIZERS:

RELIGIOUS DISSENT AND RUSSIAN COLONIZATION OF TRANSCAUCASIA, 1830-1890

Nicholas B. Breyfogle

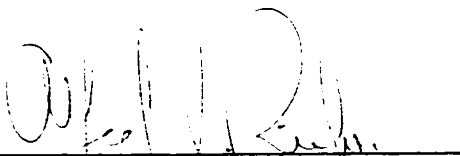
A DISSERTATION

in

History

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1998



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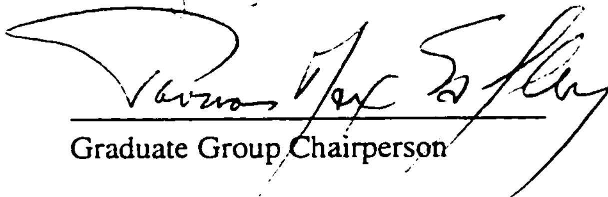

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1998

For my parents,
Josephine and Peter Breyfogle

and for my wife,
Jillian Gustin

Acknowledgments

It is with great pleasure that I express my thanks to the many people and organizations who have helped and supported me during the completion of this dissertation. My greatest debt is to the members of my dissertation committee, both official and unofficial. Alfred Rieber has been a model advisor from the outset: intelligent, supportive, productively critical, and a born teacher. He stuck with me early on in graduate school while I searched to find my way, suggested this dissertation topic which has proven so fruitful, and has remained deeply involved in my work despite the ocean between us. Ann Matter has also been a remarkable teacher and scholar. She guided me through the study of religion and has been a generous source of support, guidance, and friendship. The late Jack Reece taught me much of what I know about European history, as well as what it means to be a successful and dedicated teacher. More importantly, he showed friendship and believed in my ability as an historian at times when I doubted myself.

Ron Suny has been a wonderful friend and mentor. He unfailingly supported my work and enlightened me about Transcaucasia and imperialism. Laura Engelstein has also been an invaluable mainstay of this project. She generously critiqued many chapters, enriching my work with her deep knowledge of sectarian and Russian history. Roy Robson has been a true friend and colleague, bringing vital insight to my work as well as touring me through Philadelphia's best restaurants. Sheila Fitzpatrick always found time to discuss, help, and support my research despite all of her commitments and accomplishments. Finally, John Bushnell also deserves thanks for his generous support and comments over many years, but especially in the final year of the project.

This dissertation owes an enormous debt to the efforts of all these scholars. Without their help, the project would not be what it is today.

I owe many thanks to the Russian history community at the University of Chicago who took me in while I lived in Chicago. Much of my training and insight into Russian history comes from Chicago's workshops and discussions. Special appreciation goes to Josh and Kim Sanborn who have been wonderful friends, both here and in Russia. Frequent conversations with Josh did much to clarify my thinking. Much appreciation goes to Richard Hellie, Terry Martin, Steve Bittner, Chris Burton, Matt Lenoe, Jon Bone, Amy Randall, and all of the members of the Chicago Russian Studies Workshop for their comments, critiques, and post-workshop beers. While in Chicago I had the great fortune to take part in the meetings of the Midwest Russian History Workshop. My thanks to those who made comments on a chapter that I presented, especially to Paul Werth, who has been a great friend and colleague ever since.

My colleagues at Penn provided me not only with a rich intellectual environment but also friendship and many laughs. Beth Clement waded through much of my work, helped me negotiate the trials and tribulations of graduate life, talked me into playing soccer even when I didn't feel like it, and remained a friend throughout. Gabriella Safran edited numerous chapters, painstakingly unraveling my ponderous prose, and helped to make living in Russia fun. Liam Riordan, Max Page, and Paul Howard (the original squash-sushi group) kept my body sound and my spirit free. They have been true friends filled with sage advice, brilliant thoughts, and funny stories. Max Collins unflaggingly kept my spoken Russian in working order. Other friends deserve note for their friendship and support: Kristen Stromberg, Kathryn Johnson, Sue Schulten, Jim Heinzen, Michael Kahan, Sumantra Sen, Catherine and James Murdock, Mark and Beth

Meier, Curt King, Russ Kazal, Abby Schrader, Kirsten Wood, and Lesley Rimmel. My thanks go also to the faculty and staff of the History Department at Penn. The dissertation was supported by grants from the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program, the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Many people helped to make my year in Russia an enjoyable and productive experience. My deepest thanks goes to the archivists and scholars in Russia who took time from their busy and difficult schedules to help me in my research and discuss history over tea: especially B. V. Anan'ich, L. G. Zakharova, I. V. Tarasova, S. A. Inikova, A. Iu. Polunov, I. V. Poltavskaia, S. I. Varekhova, I. V. Mulina, S. A. Kozlov, and all the staff at RGIA, GMIR, GARF, and OR RGB. Heather Coleman's advice, good humor, intelligence, and willingness to adventure not only facilitated my research in profound ways, but also made my stay in Russia a pleasure. John Strickland was a perfect apartment-mate who taught me about opera and Russian Orthodoxy over more Baltikas than I care to remember. Thanks also go to Jörg Baberowski who helped me navigate the archives and regaled me with hysterical stories. My fond thanks also go to my friends in St. Petersburg and Moscow who have shared with me all that is great in Russia and repeatedly made my trips to the *rodina* a pleasure.

Alison Pion, comrade in history, read many of the chapters in their early stages, made invaluable comments and critiques, and supported me despite all my stress and anxieties. Jack McIntosh of the University of British Columbia Library has been a great bibliographic help, moral support, and host when I worked in UBC's Dukhobor collections. John Staples provided invaluable help both in Russia and Toronto and illuminated the Milky Waters region for me.

On a sad note, Charlotte Gustin did not live to see the dissertation completed. Although I'm sure she wouldn't recognize herself in these pages, she is in them. Her caring and giving example taught me about human courage and the possibility for one person truly to make a difference. Bill Breyfogle died many years before I was born, but his books on my shelves have been a constant reminder that Breyfogles could be writers.

The dissertation is in part dedicated to my parents, Jo and Peter Breyfogle. With tremendous love and understanding, they have unfailingly supported me throughout graduate school. They gave me my love for learning, and have always encouraged me to reach for the best and make all that I can out of this life. Last but not least, the dissertation is dedicated to Jillian Gustin, my wife. She has lived with this project daily and I'm sure knows more about Russian history than she would want, or certainly ever expected. She has shared my highs and my lows, and her love, caring, and humor have been a constant inspiration. This dissertation is but a small token for all that these three people have given me.

ABSTRACT

HERETICS AND COLONIZERS: RELIGIOUS DISSENT AND RUSSIAN COLONIZATION OF TRANSCAUCASIA, 1830-1890

NICHOLAS B. BREYFOGLE

ALFRED J. RIEBER

This dissertation examines the settlement of Russian religious dissenters (Dukhobors, Molokans, and Subbotniks) in Transcaucasia from 1830 to 1890. During this period, tsarist officials promoted the relocation of sectarians [*sektanty*] to Transcaucasia—to the exclusion of other Slavs—in an effort to isolate their "heretical infection" from Orthodox Russians. Using previously unexamined archival materials written by the settlers themselves, this study explores Russian frontier colonization at ground level. It examines the migration experience, investigates the role of the periphery in nineteenth-century Russian history, and sheds light on the development of the Russian Empire. Since religious non-conformists comprised the majority of Russian migrants, this dissertation also discusses questions of popular religiosity and the role of religion in Russian society and polity.

Whereas existing scholarship describes Russian empire-building as a bilateral encounter between state representatives and indigenous peoples, this study demonstrates that Russian colonists played a vital role in constructing Imperial Russia as a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional entity. The sectarian-settlers influenced Russia's imperial enterprise through their interactions with tsarist authorities, local inhabitants, and Transcaucasia's ecology. Tsarist officials were obliged to rely on these "pernicious heretics" to administer the region because there were so few other Russians in Transcaucasia. Paradoxically, these "pariahs" came to be considered "model colonists."

The dissertation also asserts that a primary effect of Russian imperial expansion was to provide arenas on the frontier in which Russians (in this case religious dissenters) were able to forge alternative existences—"new worlds"—beyond those possible in the central provinces. The Transcaucasian frontier proved a fertile ground for contesting labels, manipulating categories, and refashioning notions of self and community. Distant from central power, and in dynamic interaction with a wide array of non-Russian peoples, the sectarians constructed and solidified new religious beliefs, social structures, economic practices, cultural systems, and identities. The use of non-conformists as colonizers loosened traditional links between Orthodox Christianity and Russian ethnicity, redefining Russian nationality.

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Abbreviations

Archives:

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

Published Sources:

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

Government Institutions

MGI	Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennykh Imushchestv [Ministry of State Domains]
MVD	Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del [Ministry of Internal Affairs]

Archival and Published Citations:

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

Introduction

"Migration and colonization of the country constituted the fundamental features of our history, to which all other features were more or less directly connected."

— V. O. Kliuchevskii

"History shows us no people which from its first appearance has manifested as persistent and indestructible a drive to colonize as the Russians."

— August von Haxthausen[1]

On October 20, 1830, Tsar Nicholas I issued a decree which fundamentally altered two previously unconnected aspects of Russian history.[2] It redirected the trajectory of Russian colonialism in the Empire's southernmost region—the newly incorporated provinces of Transcaucasia[3]—while simultaneously recasting the fate of Christian religious dissenters throughout the Empire. The 1830 edict ordered that thenceforth all religious sectarians [*sektanty*] who were classified as "most pernicious" (including Dukhobors, Molokans and Subbotniks, but not Old Believers) were to be relocated to Transcaucasia, by either forcible exile or voluntary resettlement. The

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[1]V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Sochineniia v deviati tomakh* (Moscow: Mysl', 1987) 1:50-51 and August von Haxthausen, *Studies on the Interior of Russia*, ed. S. Frederick Starr, trans. Eleanore L. M. Schmidt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 176.

[2]*PSZ* (2), t. 5, otd. 2, 1830, no. 4010, pp. 169-170. The decree can also be found in RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, ll. 1-1ob and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 104-106.

[3]Today Transcaucasia comprises the new republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. On the process of Russian expansion into Transcaucasia, see Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Firuz Kazemzadeh, "Russian Penetration of the Caucasus," in *Russian Imperialism from Ivan the Great to the Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 239-263; John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London: Longmans, Green and co., 1908); Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1-11.

legislation was a conscious effort on the part of the tsarist state to utilize the Empire's periphery as a means to segregate sectarian Russians from Orthodox ones. From 1830 until the 1880s, Tsarist policy promoted the relocation of dissenters to the exclusion of all other Slavs in an effort to eliminate what state and spiritual leaders saw as their heretical "infection" of Orthodox subjects. Although small numbers of Russians had moved to Transcaucasia before 1830, the decree turned a trickle into a torrent. Over the course of the next fifty years, tens of thousands of dissenters left central Russia for the southern frontier. Until the 1890s, these non-conformists comprised the majority of ethnic Russians in Transcaucasia.[4] That religious dissenters dominated the settler communities did much to define the character of Russia's imperial presence in the region by inextricably linking popular religiosity with Russian Imperialism.

This study examines the settlement of Russian religious dissenters in Transcaucasia between 1830 and 1890. In so doing, it provides a window onto the development and internal functioning of the Russian Empire, and the role of the frontier in nineteenth-century Russian history. The dissertation views events from the "on-the-ground" perspective of the settlers themselves, as well as from the vantage of central and local authorities. It explores the interrelations between Russian colonists, indigenous peoples, and state authorities. Finally, it investigates the internal development of the sectarians' communities in their new environment. Why did the Tsarist administration decide to earmark the Transcaucasus for the settlement of religious non-conformists, and why did the dissenters take up the state's offer in such

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[4]*Svod statisticheskikh dannykh o naselenii Zakavkazskago kraia, izvlechennykh iz posemeinykh spiskov 1886g.* (Tiflis: 1893). According to these statistics, sectarians comprised more than seventy-five percent of the Russian population in Transcaucasia in the mid-1880s. Soldiers and administrators made up the majority of the remainder. The dissenters' percentage of the Russian population dropped drastically in 1890s and 1900s with the advent of a new and aggressive policy of settlement in the Transcaucasus of Orthodox Russians. See D. I. Ismail-Zade, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo v Zakavkaz'e: 30-e gody XIX-nachalo XX v.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1982), esp. 94-283 and Firouzeh Mostashari, "Tsarist Colonial Policy, Economic Change, and the Making of the Azerbaijani Nation: 1828-1905 (Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995), 225-250.

large numbers to relocate there voluntarily? What was the fate of the migrants once they arrived in their new homes? How did their religious, economic, social, and cultural practices, as well as their notions of self-identity, evolve in their new context? What consequences did this migration have for the destiny of Russian imperialism, for the history of Transcaucasia, and for the future development of these branches of Christianity?

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there has been an explosion of interest in the imperial aspects of Russian history and the non-core, "frontier" regions of the Russian empire.[5] Traditionally, scholarship has tended to describe Russian imperialism as a geopolitical and administrative process defined by military conquest, political administration, and macro-economic integration. In this approach, historians depicted an Empire which functioned unidirectionally from the central Russian core outwards.[6] More recently, scholars of Russian Empire have taken cues from the

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[5]Paul Werth, "Subjects for Empire: Orthodox Mission and Imperial Governance in the Volga-Kama Region, 1825-1881" (Ph. D. diss., University of Michigan, 1996); Nathaniel Knight, "Constructing the Science of Nationality: Ethnography in Mid-Nineteenth Century Russia" (Ph. D. diss., Columbia University, 1994); Robert Paul Geraci, "Window on the East: Ethnography, Orthodoxy, and Russian Nationality in Kazan, 1870-1914" (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1995); Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Virginia Martin, "Law and Custom on the Steppe: Middle Horde Kazakh Judicial Practices and Russian Colonial Rule, 1868-1898" (Ph. D. diss., University of Southern California, 1996); Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Mark Bassin, "Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early 19th Century," *American Historical Review* 96 (1991): 763-794; Thomas M. Barrett, "Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the North Caucasus," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (fall 1995): 578-601; Wayne Dowler, "The Politics of Language in Non-Russian Elementary Schools in the Eastern Empire, 1865-1914," *Russian Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 516-538; Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996); and see also the articles in *Russian Review* 53, no. 3 (July 1994) and *Russian History* 19, nos. 1-4 (1992).

[6]On this tendency in general, see Michael Rywkin, ed., *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1988); Hunczak, ed., *Russian Imperialism*; Alton S. Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria, 1552-1740* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); and John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917: The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). On this trend in Transcaucasian historiography, see D. M. Lang, *The Last Years of the Georgian Monarchy, 1658-1832* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); Atkin, *Russia and Iran;* Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*; O. E.

historiography of Western European imperialism. They have widened the scope of study to include "events and developments in the outlying regions," the formation of empire in the localities, and the interrelations between metropole and colonies. At the same time, they have shifted the thematic focus to cultural, representational, and linguistic issues: "cultures and their fragments," "iconographies of the 'other,'" identity formation, and "knowledge-structuring paradigms."[7] Yet most historians have continued to characterize the development of the Russian Empire as the binary encounter of Russian domination (be it political, military, cultural, or linguistic) and native response (whether accommodation or resistance), and have been particularly interested in the formation of national identity among the colonized peoples.[8]

Absent from this story of imperial expansion are the millions of Russian settlers who migrated to the frontier as part of Russian Empire-building and their influential role in constructing and constituting Imperial Russia as a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional entity.[9] Thomas Barrett has eloquently underscored this gap in our knowledge in his

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Tumanian, *Ekonomicheskoe razvitie Armenii* 2 vols. (Erevan: Armianskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1954); *Kolonial'naia politika Rossiiskogo tsarizma v Azerbaidzhane v 20—60-x gg. XIX v.*, 2 vols., (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk, 1936-37); Mostashari, "Tsarist Colonial Policy;" and L. H. Rhinelander, "Russia's Imperial Policy: The Administration of the Caucasus in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Slavic Papers* 17, nos. 2&3 (1975): 218-235.

[7]The quotations are taken from Bower and Lazzerini, *Russia's Orient*, xiv, 4.

[8]See, for instance, Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*; Vartan Gregorian, "The Impact of Russia on the Armenians and Armenia," in *Russia and Asia: Essays on the Influence of Russia on the Asian Peoples*, ed. Wayne Vucinich (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), 167-218; David Lang, "A Century of Russian Impact on Georgia," in *ibid.*, 219-247; Mostashari, "Tsarist Colonial Policy;" Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); idem., *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); idem., ed., *Transcaucasia: Nationalism and Social Change* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1983); and Audrey Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1992).

[9]Of late, there have been certain notable exceptions to this absence. See Willard Sunderland, "Making the Empire: Colonists and Colonization in Russia, 1800-1850s" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1997); idem., "Peasants on the Move: State Peasant Resettlement in Imperial Russia, 1805-1830s," *The Russian Review* 52 (October 1993): 472-485; idem., "Russians into Iakuts? 'Going Native' and Problems of Russian National Identity in the Siberian North, 1870s-1914," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (winter 1996): 806-825; Barrett, "Lines of Uncertainty;" idem., "Crossing Boundaries: The Trading Frontiers of the Terek Cossacks," in *Russia's Orient*, eds., Brower and Lazzerini, 227-248; and Robert E. Jones, "Runaway Peasants and Russian Motives for the Partitions of Poland," in *Imperial Russian*

recent investigation of the North Caucasus in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although his voice remains almost alone in the historiography.

> What has been missing, and what is essential to an understanding of how the borderlands fit into the Russian Empire, is a history of those who moved there and lived at the edge of empire, how diverse people interacted there, their cultural exchanges, and the new landscapes, economies and societies that they created. ... a history of society, economy, and transcultural contact in one borderland region of Russia helps to "ground" our understanding of the empire, an understanding that is all too often portrayed from the perspective of the center, and only in terms of policies, institutions, and cultural representations.[10]

By arguing that scholars have neglected the function of colonists in their study of the Russian Empire, I do not mean to imply that historians have not broached the topics of resettlement or migration at all. Whether to the borderlands, to cities, abroad, or seasonally within the provinces of central Russia, historians have long realized that movement was an inalienable characteristic of the Russian people throughout the nineteenth century, with important ramifications both for the point of departure and the place of destination.[11] The great nineteenth-century Russian historian, V. O. Kliuchevskii, wrote in his *Kurs russkoi istorii* that: "The history of Russia is the

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Foreign Policy, ed. and trans. Hugh Ragsdale (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1993), 103-116.

[10]Barrett, "Crossing Boundaries," 228-229. The sentences are in reverse order in the orignal.

[11]See for example: Francois-Xavier Coquin, *La Sibérie: Peuplement et immigration paysanne au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Institut D'Études Slaves, 1969); idem., "Faim et Migrations Paysannes en Russie au XIX siècle," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* Tome XI (April-June 1964): 127-144; E. I. Druzhinina, *Iuzhnaia Ukraina v 1800-1825 gg.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1970), esp. 69-172; David Moon, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation on the Eve of Reform: Interaction Between Peasants and Officialdom, 1825-1855* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992), 23-61; Joseph Bradley, *Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanization in Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), esp. 103-141; Timothy Mixter, "The Hiring Market as Workers' Turf: Migrant Agricultural Laborers and the Mobilization of Collective Action in the Steppe Grainbelt of European Russia, 1853-1913," in *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800-1921*, ed. Esther Kingston-Mann and Timothy Mixter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 294-340; Jeffrey Burds, "The Social Control of Peasant Labor in Russia: The Response of Village Communities to Labor Migration in the Central Industrial Region, 1861-1905," in ibid., 52-100; Evel G. Economakis, "Patterns of Migration and Settlement in Prerevolutionary St. Petersburg: Peasants from Iaroslavl and Tver Provinces," *Russian Review* 56 (January 1997): 8-24; Sunderland, "Making the Empire;" Judith Pallot and Denis J. B. Shaw, *Landscape and Settlement in Romanov Russia, 1613-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); and Barbara Alpern Engel, *Between Field and City: Women, Work, & Family in Russia, 1861-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

history of a country undergoing colonization."[12] S. M. Solov'ev placed no less importance on the uninterrupted process of colonization in formulating his overarching framework for Russian history and what he saw as Russia's stark retardation and immaturity in comparison with Western Europe.[13]

Despite the emphasis placed by these pre-revolutionary historians on migration and colonization, scholarship of these processes has exhibited distinct limitations. First, the focus has been on the legislative and demographic aspects of population movement, ignoring the voices and perspectives of the migrants themselves. We know surprisingly little about the personal meanings and experiences of resettlement beyond the composite picture of laws and numbers.[14] Second, historians have, not unexpectedly, concentrated on the post-Emancipation period.[15] Third, western scholarship has been

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[12]Kliuchevskii, *Sochineniia* , 1:50.

[13]See the discussion of Solov'ev's interpretation in Mark Bassin, "Turner, Solov'ev, and the 'Frontier Hypothesis': The Nationalist Signification of Open Spaces," *The Journal of Modern History* 65 (September 1993): 473-511.

[14]This is especially the case regarding studies of Transcaucasia. Extant scholarship of sectarian resettlement in the Transcaucasus tends to be either legislative or statistical in approach, and has been particularly concerned with socio-economic questions. It includes Ismail-Zade, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo*; idem., "Russian settlements in the Transcaucasus from the 1830s to the 1880s," in *The Molokan Heritage Collection*, ed. Ethel Dunn and Stephen P. Dunn (Berkeley: Highgate Road Social Science Research Station, 1983), section 3; I. V. Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy v Armenii (30—50-e gody XIX v.), *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta Seriia IX Istoriia* no. 3 (May-June 1974): 58-66; idem., "Russkie begletsy v Zakavkaz'e (k istorii formirovaniia russkoi diaspory v 1830-1850-e gody)," *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* no. 1 (1995): 53-66; and idem., *Khoziaistvennyi i obshchestvennyi byt russkikh krest'ian vostochnoi Armenii (konets XIX—nachalo XX vv.)* (Erevan: Izd-vo AN Armianskoi SSR, 1985). However, a series of volumes of collected essays from Moscow's Institute of Anthropology and Ethnology have taken an increasingly broad approach to the study of the sectarian-settlers in the Transcaucasus. See V. I. Kozlov and N. A. Dubova, eds., *Russkie starozhily Azerbaidzhana*, 2 vols., (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1990); V. I. Kozlov and A. P. Pavlenko, eds., *Dukhobortsy i Molokane v Zakavkaz'e* (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1992); and V. I. Kozlov, ed., *Russkie starozhily Zakavkaz'ia: Molokane i Dukhobortsy* (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1995). For the statistical historiographical trend more generally, see S. I. Bruk and V. M. Kabuzan, "Migratsiia naseleniia v Rossii v XVIII—nachale XX veka (chislennost', struktura, geografiia)," *Istoriia SSSR* no. 4 (July-August 1984): 41-59 and V. A. Aleksandrov, I. V. Vlasova, and N. L. Pushkareva, *Russkie: Etnoterritoriia, rasselenie, chislennost', istoricheskie sud'by (XII-XX vv.)* (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1995).

[15]See, for example, Edward Judge, "Peasant Resettlement and Social Control in Late Imperial Russia," in *Modernization and Revolution: Dilemmas of Progress in Late Imperial Russia* , eds. Edward Judge and James Simms (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992): 75-93; Steve G. Marks, "Conquering the Great East: Kulomzin, Peasant Resettlement, and the Creation of Modern Siberia," in *Rediscovering Russia in Asia: Siberia and the Russian Far East*, eds. Stephen Kotkin and David Wolff (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1995): 23-39; and Donald Treadgold, *The Great Siberian Migration:*

preoccupied with attempts to apply F. J. Turner's "Frontier Thesis" to Russia, either in toto or by way of comparison.[16] Fourth, and most important to our story here, when historians have written about the process of Russian resettlement to the Empire's periphery, it has been discussed almost exclusively as a "peasant question" and an "internal" process. A. A. Kaufman, in his seminal *Pereselenie i Kolonizatsiia* (1905), saw Russia's peripheral regions as "a continuation of Russia," and peasant settlers as internal migrants rather than external colonists.[17] Yet, as this dissertation will show, to describe the phenomenon simply as internal population movement, with its nationalistic implications for a Russian Manifest Destiny, belittles the complexity of Russia's resettlement process and the salience of settlers to the construction of Empire. There is no doubt that migration was a vital component of nineteenth century Russian peasant history. However, as we will discuss in the following chapters, peasant resettlement was more than simply a passive offshoot of Russian empire-building, it was also an outcome-producing force. The settlers' activities, goals, efforts, and experiences were powerful agents in shaping the contours of the Russian empire in its manifold aspects—spatially, politically, economically, religiously, ethnically, and culturally.

While existing scholarship describes Russian imperialism as a bilateral encounter between state agents and indigenous peoples, this study demonstrates that Russian Empire-building was more than a pas de deux. Russian colonists played a vital role as a third force in the colonial encounter, both as actors and those acted upon. The sectarian-

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Government and Peasant in Resettlement from Emancipation to the First World War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

[16]Examples of efforts to use Turner's thesis in the Russian case include: Pallot and Shaw, *Landscape and Settlement*, esp. 13-32; Donald W. Treadgold, "Russian Expansion in the Light of Turner's Study of the American Frontier," *Agricultural History* 26, no. 4 (October 1952): 147-152; Joseph L. Wieczynski, "Toward a Frontier Theory of Early Russian History," *The Russian Review* 33, no. 3 (1974): 284-295; and the special issue of *Soviet Geography* 30, no. 3 (March 1989).

[17]See the discussion in Firouzeh Mostashari, "The Politics of Colonization: Sectarians and Russian Orthodox Peasants in Nineteenth Century Azerbaijan," *Journal of Central Asian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1996): 16-18.

settlers strongly influenced the course of Russia's imperial enterprise through their interactions with colonial authorities, with local inhabitants and with Transcaucasia's ecology. Tsarist officials were obliged to rely on these "pernicious heretics" to administer the region because there were so few other Russians in Transcaucasia. Both willingly or not, the sectarian-settlers performed military, administrative and economic functions vital to the Russian imperial cause. In return, they received a variety of privileges including access to arms, tax breaks, and permission to travel and trade abroad. As a result, these "pariahs" paradoxically came to be considered by tsarist officials as "model Russian colonists" who comprised the advance guard of "russification" [*obrusenie*] and the bulwark of Russia's presence in the region.[18] However, the sectarians often performed these functions on their own terms and with their own notions of their purpose in Transcaucasia. Tsarist practices of banishing sectarians, criminals, and other "undesirables" to the borderlands forced local officials to use as colonizers people who felt neither a sense of colonial mission, nor held a stake in Russian state power. Efforts to refashion outcasts into colonists proved transformative not only for the settlers but also for Russian imperialism.

In other words, rather than the linear, center-out relationship that contemporary scholarship describes, this study of Russian settlers in Transcaucasia demonstrates that Russia's center and periphery were linked in an interactive system in which the colony was as likely to influence the metropole as the reverse. Attempts to resolve internal tensions by sloughing problems off to the periphery proved impermanent because, as a contiguous landmass, the Russian empire could never fully separate itself from its unwanted people.

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[18]Russification took on a variety of forms in different parts of the Russian empire. Compare with E. C. Thaden, ed., *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) and Weeks, *Nation and State*.

The relationships between Russian settlers and local Transcaucasians also helped fashion the structure of Russian imperialism. The types and tenor of these interactions are essential to understanding what the Russian imperial presence meant to the colonized peoples. Outside of urban areas, local Transcaucasians interacted with the sectarian-settlers more frequently than with tsarist officials and military personnel—indeed in these rural parts, the dissenters in many respects represented Russia. Day-to-day contacts created bonds and tensions between peoples and cultures who were left to devise their own relations and mutual preservation. In their encounters, sectarian-settlers and the wide variety of ethno-confessional groups in Transcaucasia forged relations not dissimilar to what Richard White has called "the middle ground:" "... the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages.... a common, mutually comprehensible world."[19] In sectarian–local interactions, patterns of violence coexisted with those of mutual aid, economic exchange, and cultural transformation. Rather than unidirectional domination and accommodation/resistance, locals often dictated the terms of inter-ethnic encounters and the "colonizers" accommodated as frequently to Transcaucasia as the reverse.

In addition to seeing a triad of actors at work in the formation of Empire, I argue that a primary effect of Russian imperial expansion was to provide an arena on the frontier in which Russians (in this case religious dissenters) were able to forge alternative existences—"new worlds"—beyond those possible in the central provinces. Indeed, the Transcaucasian frontier proved a fertile space for contesting labels, manipulating categories and refashioning notions of self and community. First, the option to relocate to Transcaucasia provided these religious dissenters with new possibilities to escape unwanted circumstances and to fulfill their aspirations for a better

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[19]Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ix-x.

life. Second, in outlying Transcaucasia—distant from central power—these religious dissenters were left alone to regulate their own communities. In these spaces, and in dynamic interaction with a wide array of non-Russian ethnic groups and differing physical landscapes, they constructed and solidified new religious beliefs, social structures, economic practices, cultural systems, and identities. Third, the use of non-conformists as colonizers loosened traditional links between Orthodox Christianity and Russian ethnicity. In the process, it transformed the meanings of both national (*russkii*) and imperial (*rossiiskii*) identity for both the sectarians and tsarist officials. In examining these new worlds, this study uncovers Russian peasant communities that were dynamic, vital, and volatile.[20]

Widening the lens of study to include the Russian settlers also has important implications for our understanding of Russia's place in the larger picture of Europe's interactions with the extra-European world in the nineteenth century. So much of our general picture about European imperialism derives from the study of the British and French (and to a lesser degree Dutch) cases. Yet, throughout the nineteenth century, Russia must be considered one of the great imperialist states and its colonial experiences need to be integrated into a larger European framework. Historians of Russia have long argued that the relationship between metropole and colony in the Russian case was differently integrated and mutually-influential because the Russian Empire was a contiguous landmass—an internal empire rather than an overseas empire.[21] However,

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[20]On the frontier, the traditions and structures of central Russian peasants which resisted change were more quickly altered or discarded in the face of new imperatives. For an overview of "slow history" and questions of "cohesion, strategy, and equilibrium" among the central Russian peasantry, see Ben Eklof, "Ways of Seeing: Recent Anglo-American Studies of the Russian Peasant (1861-1914) *Jarbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* 36 (1988)," pp. 61-64.
[21]On the relationship between center and periphery, and its impact on administrative structures in Russia, see Alfred J. Rieber, "Struggle Over the Borderlands," in *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 67-68. See also the call "for careful interrogation of the relationship of colonial state to metropolitan state" in the historiography of western European states. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between

as I assert here, Russia's overland Imperialism was also distinct from western European variants because of its relatively aggressive practice of settling peasants in its colonies. This practice granted these agrarian colonists a seminal role in the process of Empire-building. As such, the Russian empire contrasted sharply from British India, for example, where "[b]y the middle of the nineteenth century, India's colonial society was marked by a sharp disjunction between a small, alien ruling group, British in culture, and a quarter of a billion Indians whom the British effectively controlled."[22] Indeed, the Russian case was similar to certain types of western European colonialism that had recourse to settling outcasts or adventurers in their colonies—such as the British in Australia and Canada and the French in Algeria.[23] The Russian Empire, it will be clear, was formed through the interaction among state agents, indigenous peoples, as well as Russian settlers. This tripartite model challenges the universal applicability of the binary frameworks that have dominated much of recent scholarship on European imperialism.[24]

While not a part of Russian historiography, studies of the "new worlds" forged on imperial frontiers have yielded rich results in the scholarship on North America. Indeed, recent studies in the history of the American West have revised our understanding of the form and function of frontier regions, and of the experiences of

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Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds., idem. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-56.

[22]Bernard S. Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds., Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 165.

[23]John Comaroff highlights a not dissimilar process involving the Boers in South Africa in his discussion of three models of colonialism among Europeans: state colonialism, settler colonialism, and civilizing colonialism. See his "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa," in *Tensions of Empire*, eds., Stoler and Cooper, 178-191.

[24]For the founding texts, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: 1979) and idem., *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: 1993). Scholars of western European imperialism have begun to challenge these binary constructions. In a recent collection of essays reevaluating European imperialism, Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler assert that in the future "scholars need to attend more directly to the tendency of colonial regimes to draw a stark dichotomy of colonizer and colonized without themselves falling into such a Manichaean conception." Stoler and Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony," 3.

settlers in creating and transforming them.[25] In my study of Russian settlement on the empire's Transcaucasian periphery, I draw on the insights and parallels of these revisionist studies of North American frontiers. Recently, scholars have argued that the American frontier was characterized not simply by isolation, as Frederick Jackson Turner's school asserted, but also by "connectedness." They also claim that the transformation of "frontiers" into "regions" is best understood as a "process" which involved such diverse developments as "species shifting," "market making," "land taking," "boundary setting," "state forming" and "self-shaping." Moreover, these new studies have shifted focus to examine the day-to-day experiences of settlers as they attempted to resolve "the chief puzzle facing all frontier communities: whether to reproduce the ways of the old world or abandon them for the new."[26] In discussing the historiography of the lower Mississippi valley in eighteenth century North America, Daniel Usner asserts that "[the] focus on geopolitical affairs has long obscured the ordinary people who actually shaped society and economy within the region yet remained overshadowed by a few great men acting upon the grand stage of diplomacy."[27] William Cronon adds:

> By keeping close to the land, frontier and regional history can move back and forth between the nitty-gritty details of ordinary life—activities like growing crops, raising children, building homes—and the larger meanings people have attached to such activities. It can embed people and their communities in the most abstract of historical processes without losing sight of what it was like to live through those processes.[28]

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[25]See for example William Cronon, George Miles and Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking American's Western Past* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992); Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II and Charles E. Rankin, eds., *Trails: Towards a New Western History* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1991); Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1992); White, *The Middle Ground*; and William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).
[26]These concepts come from William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, "Becoming West: Toward a New Meaning for Western History," in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking American's Western Past*, eds. idem. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), 3-27.
[27]Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 4.
[28]Cronon et. al. "Becoming West," 8.

Since religious sectarians comprised the majority of Russian migrants to Transcaucasia before 1890, this dissertation is also a story about popular religiosity and the role of religion in Russian society and polity.[29] Like the historiography of Russian empire, the study of religion in pre-revolutionary Russian history has also undergone a certain rebirth in western historiography.[30] On occasion, the two historiographical shifts have been linked and scholars have explored the importance of religious questions to Russian empire, particularly concerning missionary efforts to convert non-Orthodox peoples and the demands for rights to their faiths by Russia's colonized peoples.[31]

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[29]In my discussion of popular religion, I incorporate frameworks form a rich body of sociological and anthropological literature. Examples of such scholarship include, but are not limited to, Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967); Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915. Reprint, New York: George Allen and Unwin, 1964); Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, (New York: Routeledge, 1992); Bryan R. Wilson, ed., *Patterns of Sectarianism: Organization and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements* (London: Heinemann, 1967); Natalie Zemon Davis, "From 'Popular Religion' to Religious Cultures," in *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. Steven Ozment (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1982): 321-341; Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); and Robert Anthony Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

[30]Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, ed. *Russian Traditional Culture: Religion, Gender and Customary Law* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992); Stephen K. Batalden, *Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993); Christopher Chulos, "Peasant Religion in Post-Emancipation Russia: Voronezh Province, 1880-1917" (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1994); idem., "Myths of the Pious or Pagan Peasant in Post-Emancipation Central Russia (Voronezh Province)," *Russian History* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 181-216; John Eugene Clay, "Russian Peasant Religion and its Repression: The Christ-Faith [*Khristovshchina*] and the Origins of the 'Flagellant Myth, 1666-1837" (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1989); idem., "The Theological Origins of the Christ-Faith [*Khristovshchina*]," *Russian History* 15 (1988): 21-41; Robert O. Crummey, "Old Belief as Popular Religion," *Slavic Review* 52, no. 4 (winter 1993): 700-712; Laura Engelstein, "Rebels of the Soul: Peasant Self-Fashioning in a Religious Key," *Russian History* 23, nos. 1-4 (1996): 197-213; Gregory Freeze, "Subversive Piety: Religion and the Political Crisis in Late Imperial Russia," *Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 2 (June 1996): 308-350; Roy R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995); Vera Shevzov, "Chapels and the Ecclesial World of Prerevolutionary Russian Peasants," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 3 (fall 1996): 585-613; Christine Worobec, "Witchcraft Beliefs and Practices in Prerevolutionary Russian and Ukrainian Villages," *Russian Review* 54, no. 2 (April 1995); and the special issue of *Revue Des Études Slaves* 69, no. 1-2 (1997) on the Old Believers and Sects.

[31]Paul Werth, "Baptism, Authority, and the Problem of *Zakonnost'* in Orenburg Diocese: The Induction of over 800 'Pagans' into the Christian Faith," *Slavic Review* 56, no. 3 (fall 1997): 456-480; idem., "Subjects for Empire;" Geraci, "Window on the East;" Daniel Brower, "Russian Roads to Mecca:

This study's discussion of the sectarians continues the recent trends to see religious beliefs and practices as vital forces and independent actors in Russia rather than the passive and secondary entities that earlier scholarship tended to depict. In contrast to the socio-economic reductionism of most Soviet-era scholarship on the sectarians, I regard sectarianism as a socio-cultural complex of behaviors and meanings that included dedication to faith and theology, practices of everyday life, and social, economic, and political activity.[32] The dissertation also underscores the importance of religious questions to the formation and the Russian empire. Religious considerations played central roles in the formation of policy—both "secular" as well as "spiritual"—in the central corridors of power, and in the everyday lives of Russian sectarians. For instance, religious imperatives were the catalytic forces behind the state's decision to colonize Transcaucasia. They also spurred sectarians to move to Transcaucasia. Moreover, a plurality of Russia's sectarians came to find their home in the Transcaucasus, thereby providing a thriving territorial core for the sectarian population which until then had been spread often thinly around the central provinces.[33] The result was a spiritual ferment and vibrant religious life that breathed new strength into religious movements that had been increasingly constricted in the central Russian provinces.

Religious Tolerance and Muslim Pilgrimage in the Russian Empire," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 3 (fall 1996): 567-584; and Michael Khodarkovsky, "'Not by Word Alone': Missionary Policies and Religious Conversion in Early Modern Russia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no. 2 (April 1996): 267-293.

[32]A. I. Klibanov is perhaps best example of this reductionism, but D. I. Ismail-Zade also suffers from rigid theoretical parameters. A. I. Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii (60-e gody XIX v. —1917 g.)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965) and Ismail-Zade, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo*.

[33]Significant numbers of sectarians were also found in Siberia and, between 1802-1840, in New Russia.

Introducing the Actors: Who were the Religious Sectarians?

This study focuses on three communities of religious sectarians who may be called Russia's "indigenous" Christian sects: Dukhobortsy, Molokane (and their different sub-sects: Pryguny, Obshchie, Postoiannye, Dukhovnye), and Subbotniki (also called Iudeistvuiushchie and Zhidovstvuiushchie).[34] These religious communities broke away from the Orthodox Church to embrace different forms of theology and practice. I differentiate them from "imported" Western Protestant sects such as Baptists (and Shtundists), Mennonites, and Pentecostals because of their Russian origin; and from Old Believers, who considered themselves the true practitioners of Orthodoxy. In addition to these religious distinctions, I leave out of this project Protestant sects, Old Ritualists, and other Russian sects (such as the Khlysty and Skoptsy) because they did not migrate to Transcaucasia, or did so in such small numbers as to be tangential to the story.

"Sectarians" did not accept the label "sectarian" placed upon them by religious and secular authorities, believing that they practiced and upheld true Christianity in the face of the debauched Orthodox Church and the misguided faith and rituals of other sectarians. Without making judgments on legitimacy or truth, I will use the term "sectarian" in this study because of its widespread historical usage; and such English equivalents as dissenter and non-conformist in order to avoid repetition. I should also note that throughout much of the nineteenth century, Russian authorities used the more inclusive word *raskol'niki* [schismatics] to refer to those communities that I label "sectarians" here. Only in the second half of the nineteenth century did tsarist discourse

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[34]Dukhobortsy are usually translated as "Spirit-Wrestlers," Molokans as "Milk-drinkers," and Subbotniks and "Sabbatarians."

evolve to apply the term raskol'nik almost exclusively to Old Believers and consistently to separate *sektanty* from *staroobriadtsy*.

While I have divided the Russian religious world neatly into categories, these divisions should not be reified. In their beliefs and practices, these sectarians shared much in common with each other, and with the Russian Orthodox Church from which they consciously separated themselves. At the same time, the process by which groups and individual believers were labeled Dukhobor, Molokan or Subbotnik was fraught with changes and incongruities. Rather than discrete groups, Dukhobors, Molokans, and Subbotniks should be understood as forming part of a spectrum of religiosity with the hues and shades of faith and practice often blending with one another.

These different religious movements shared many similarities with other sectarian groups, Old Believers, and Orthodox Christians. Each of these varieties of Christianity came from similar spiritual roots in the Eastern Christian tradition, and "sectarians" and their "Orthodox" neighbors were not always easily discernible in their day-to-day religiosity.[35] Those who did make a switch to a sectarian faith from Orthodoxy frequently continued to attend Orthodox services and fulfill Orthodox religious practices, in part out of tradition, and in part to avoid persecution for their change of faith. Moreover, while Dukhobor, Molokan and Subbotnik religious beliefs and practices were distinct in many vital respects, they shared certain commonalties: complete and intense opposition to the Orthodox Church, refutation of the need for priests and hierarchies (or any other mediators in a relationship with God),[36] and abjuration of Orthodox sacraments (notably water baptism), icons, saints, relics, candles and churches. The Dukhobors, Molokans and Subbotniks also shared certain

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[35]Clay, "Theological Origins" and Pierre Pascal, *The Religion of the Russian People* (London: Mobrays, 1976).

[36]In one small exception, certain Subbotnik communities did attempt to integrate Jewish Rabbis into their communities and religious services.

social and political viewpoints that developed from these common religious beliefs. They rejected secular authorities such as the Tsar and state officials, and opposed the power of landowners and other social elites, arguing that all humans were equal.

The origin and use of sectarian labels were also problematic. Dukhobor, Molokan and Subbotnik were all names that tsarist religious official gave to these people and were later taken up, to varying degrees, by the sects themselves. Struggles erupted between state labels and self-generated names and notions of self. Such contestations provide a fruitful point of access into the larger question of the structures, meanings, and fluidity of identity (be it political, social, religious, gender, or ethnic) in Imperial Russia.[37] For instance, Molokans called themselves "Spiritual Christians," whereas official sources used the same term as an umbrella expression to encompass Dukhobors and Khristovers as well. In addition, tsarist authorities and religious officials were not always cognizant of fine theological distinctions, and applied labels to people practicing non-Orthodox aspects of faith without considering whether their beliefs and practices actually corresponded to those subsumed under the category "Dukhobor," "Molokan," or "Subbotnik." Cases abound of petitions from sectarians expressing their consternation at having been categorized as Dukhobor, say, when they considered themselves Molokans.[38] Furthermore, the labeling of religious beliefs varied regionally. Individuals categorized as belonging to one denomination by administrators later came to realize that they shared little in common with those ostensibly belonging to the same confession in the neighboring province.[39] Such blurred boundaries between

[37]Alfred Rieber, "The Sedimentary Society," in *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, eds., Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Gregory L. Freeze, "The *Soslovie* (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 11-36; Elise Kimmerling Wirtschafter, *Social Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997); Barbara Alpern Engel, "Engendering Russia's History: Women in Post-Emancipation Russia and the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 2 (summer 1992): 309-321.
[38]See, for instance, GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, n.d., ll. 124-127.
[39]See, for example, GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 1-5.

groups were exacerbated by the fact that these religious movements were not necessarily self-aware groups from the beginning, nor were their theological beliefs and practices defined explicitly at the outset. Like many other religious movements, these communities underwent substantive changes in their religiosity over the decades.

Despite the similarities and complicating factors, there were divergent beliefs among the Dukhobors, Molokans, and Subbotniks and they consciously saw themselves as distinct from each other. At the heart of the Dukhobor faith lay the belief that the spirit of God resides in all human beings and the essentials of the Dukhobor faith included "the knowledge and recognition of God by internal feeling and experience."[40] As the recent observers of Dukhobor life, Woodcock and Avakumovic have written, "the central, constant element in Dukhobor Christianity ... is the belief in the immanence of God, in the presence within each man of the Christ spirit, which not merely renders priesthood unnecessary, since each man is his own priest in direct contact with the divine, but also makes the bible obsolete, since every man can be guided, if only he will listen to it, by the voice within."[41] In place of the Bible, Dukhobors maintained a strong oral tradition of psalms and hymns known as the Living Book [*Zhivotnaia kniga*] through which they transmitted their religiosity from generation to generation.[42] Since all humans are deified, Dukhobors recognized no social distinctions, and refused to take part in violence towards others because such actions literally represented violence against God. The Dukhobors were ruled by a single Christ-leader. In each generation, they believed, a personification of Christ would appear who would manifest the strength and characteristics of the son of God,

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[40]Orest Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh* (Kiev: 1832), 48.
[41]George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 19. See also my discussion in "Building Doukhoboriia: Religious Culture, Social Identity and Russian Colonization in Transcaucasia, 1845-1895," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 27, no. 3 (1995): esp. 27-34.
[42]The Living Book was published just after the turn of the century. V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, ed., *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev* (St. Petersburg: 1909).

such as the absence of sin and an incapacity to be wrong, and who would lead the Dukhobor community. The Christ-spirit, and leadership, was passed hereditarily from generation to generation within one bloodline.

Like Dukhobors, Molokans completely denied the Orthodox Church, its sacraments, rites, saints, icons and relics. They also forsook any specially designed church buildings. Unlike Dukhobors, Molokans believed that the Bible's Old and New Testaments were the only source of religious authority and spiritual teaching. However, while Molokans found no truth outside the Holy Scriptures, they consciously interpreted the Bible "allegorically." They derived their justification for doing so from two places in the Bible in particular: "the word kills, the spirit gives life" and "it is necessary to bow to God in spirit and in truth." As a result, Molokans understood all sacraments in allegorical or spiritual terms. For instance, they did not practice water baptism because they understood the word water in the non-literal sense of "living water" (from John 7:38) and believed that baptism was concluded by hearing the word of God and living in a Godly way. Molokans were also characterized by their fascination with the coming of the apocalypse, and their tendency to fracture into many sub-sects based on small theological differences and the power of charismatic leaders. During the nineteenth century a variety of Molokan groups appeared, including Molokane Donskago tolka, vodnye, pryguny, postoiannye, obshchie, dukhovnye, voskresniki and presniki.[43]

The Molokans' teachings were also filled with social and political components. They believed that Christ was the only true ruler and that all humans are "brothers" and equal, and there was no cause for either rich or poor people to exist. Molokan communities did have elders [*startsy*, *nastavniki*], but these leaders were not considered

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[43]Some of these names referred to similar groups, but varied because of regional differences in nomenclature.

to have received any special powers from God. Despite their extra responsibilities in the community, they were to be approached as equal to others spiritually. Politically, Molokans did not recognize the Tsar as the earthly arbiter of heavenly power, although they did respect the Tsar as a secular authority. However, Molokans refused to obey laws that they believed contradicted divine law. Most pronounced here was their refusal to fulfill military service and swear oaths.[44]

In contrast to Molokans and Dukhobors, Subbotniks adhered to some, or all, of the tenets and laws of Judaism (or at least their interpretation of these laws and tenets). Scholars and tsarist officials have posited three different origins of the Subbotniks. First, tsarist officials frequently saw the Subbotniks as the progeny of the interaction of Jews and Orthodox Russians. Second, other commentators have argued that the Subbotniks represented another appearance among Russians of the "Judaizer heresy" which dates back (although not continuously) to the fifteenth century. Finally, scholars have noted that the Subbotniks also arose from a divergent wing of the Molokans. Indeed, the history of Molokans and Subbotniks in Russia are so intertwined that it is difficult at times to separate the one from the other. From their outset, Molokans argued amongst themselves whether or not they were required to follow the Mosaic dietary laws as well as other Old Testament practices in their lives. If Christ had followed Old Testament practices, and kept Old Testament holidays, should not they also? Certain Molokans began to celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday and to keep Mosaic holidays. Those Molokans who held the Sabbath on Sunday became known colloquially as *voskresniki* [Sunday-ers], and the Mosaic Molokans as *Subbotniki*. The followers of

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[44]N. B-v, "Molokane," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* T. 19, ch. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1896): 644-646; A. Iv. Masalkin, "K istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov: I Molokane," *Kavkaz* no. 306 (1893): 2-3; "Istoricheskiia svedeniia o molokanskoi sekte," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* (September 1858): 42-80 and (November 1858): 291-327; N. Kostomarov, "Vospominaniia o molokanakh," *Otechestvennyia zapiski* no. 3 (1869): 57-78; Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, *Russian Dissenters* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962 (1921)); and Fedor Vasil'evich Livanov, *Raskol'niki i ostorozhniki: ocherki i razskazy*, 4 vols., (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. Khana, 1872-1873).

the Subbotnik tendency of the Molokans soon merged with those branches of the Judaizers found in Russia to form a separate religious movement.[45]

Subbotniks debated throughout the nineteenth century over exactly what aspects, and to what degree, a true believer should follow the dictates of Mosaic law, and how close to Judaism a Christian should shift to worship God properly. As a result, the beliefs and practices of those who considered themselves Subbotniks, or who the state labeled as Subbotniks, varied widely. On one end of the spectrum were Subbotniks who kept the Sabbath on Saturday, believed the Old Testament to be of greater importance than the New, and considered themselves Christians. At the other end were those who identified themselves as Jewish, followed Jewish law only, hired Rabbis to conduct their services in Hebrew, and embraced the Talmud in place of the Bible.[46] In between these poles, Subbotniks followed any combination of the above-mentioned practices as well as circumcision, Jewish dietary restrictions, Jewish holidays (and especially Passover), and Jewish services conducted in Russian.

The Archaeology of the Settler Experience: Sources

The majority of sectarians who settled in Transcaucasia were peasants, although there was also a not inconsequential number of merchants and *meshchane*. The personal experiences of Russian peasants in nineteenth-century Russia, especially

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[45]A. Iv. Masalkin, "K istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov: II Subbotniki." *Kavkaz* no. 307 (1893): 2; Il'ia Zhabin, "Selenie Privol'noe, Bakinskoi gub., Lenkoranskago uezda," in *SMOMPK* vol. 27 (Tiflis: Tip. Kantseliarii glavnonachal'stvuiushchago grazhdanskaiu chastiu na Kavkaze, 1900), Otdel II, 42-94; "Subbotniki," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* T. 31 (St. Petersburg: 1901): 874-875; "Iudeistvuiushchie," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* T. 13, ch. 2 (St. Petersburg: 1894); "Zhidovstvuiushchie," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* T. 11, ch. 2 (St. Petersburg: 1894); "'Subbotniki' v Erivanskoi gubernii," in *Pamiatnaia knizhka Erivanskoi gubernii na 1912 g.* (Erevan: 1912), Literaturnyi otdel, ch. III, 1-11; and N. M. Astyrev, "V gostiakh u dukhobortsev i subbotnikov," in *Na taezhnykh progalinakh. Ocherki zhizni naseleniia vostochnoi Sibiri* (Moscow: tip. D. I. Inozemtsev, 1891).

[46]In Transcaucasia, these latter Subbotniks were called *Gery*.

before emancipation, are difficult to unearth.[47] In available sources, peasant voices are almost always mediated through the perspectives and assumptions of elite culture. In reading descriptions about the peasantry, we learn as much if not more about the ethnographers, state officials, priests, statisticians, or writers who relate them. The Transcaucasian sectarians represent an exception to this silence. In place of the usual absence of peasant-generated sources, the dissenters left behind a rich collection of letters, memoirs, group histories, liturgical texts, and artwork, much of it unpublished. These sources permit the sectarians to tell their own story and bring to life aspects of colonization and popular religious belief and practice that are absent in other studies of these topics which rely on state-produced documentation alone.[48]

The sectarians' articulation of their histories resulted from three factors. First, literacy spread rapidly to the sectarian communities in the second half of the nineteenth century, much as it did to other Russians. The dissenters, especially Molokans, began to record their histories and theology and to publish those documents already in their possession.[49] Second, in the wake of the Dukhobor movement of 1895-1899 and the immigration of large numbers of Dukhobors and Molokans to North America at the turn of the century, V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, an ethnographer and future Bolshevik leader, began a systematic ethnographic study of Russia's sectarians. Writing to sectarian communities both in Russia and North America, he asked them to record their life

[47]On the historiography of peasant Russia, see Eklof, "Ways of Seeing;" Esther Kingston-Mann, "Breaking the Silence: An Introduction" in idem and Timothy Mixter, eds., *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800-1921* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3-19; and David Ransel, "Rural Russia Redux," *Peasant Studies* 18, no. 2 (1991): 117-129.

[48]This study also uses state archival sources and published statistical and ethnographic studies.

[49]Examples of the publications from this period include: S. K. Zhabin, *K dukhovnomu svetu. Kratkii kurs Zakona Bozhiia dlia dukhovnykh khristian (postoiannykh molokan)* (Tiflis: 1912); N. F. Kudinov, *Stoletie Molokanstva v Rossii 1805-1905 gg.* (Baku: Parovaia tipo-lit A. M. Promyshlianskago, 1905); *Otchet komiteta po okazaniiu pomoshchi ranenym voinam pri Bakinskoi Obshchin Dukhovnykh khristian (Molokan). S 7-go Sentiabria 1914 g. po 28-oe Fevralia 1915 g.* (Baku: Tip. Bakinskago T-va Pechatnago Dela, 1915); *Otchet o Vserossiiskom s"ezde dukhovnykh khristian (Molokan), sostoiavshemsia 22 iiulia 1905 goda* (Tiflis: 1907); and the journals *Molokanin, Molokanskii vestnik*, and *Dukhovnyi khristianin.*

stories and to send any letters or documents from their past that they might have with them. They responded to his request with gusto. Bonch-Bruevich published many of these source materials in a series of volumes before the revolution.[50] However, the majority remain unpublished and are housed today in St. Petersburg's Museum of the History of Religion (GMIR) and the Manuscript Division of the Russian State Library (OR RGB) in Moscow.[51] Third, in immigration, both Molokan and Dukhobor communities began to write down their histories and theological principles in order to retain their faith and cultural distinctiveness in their new homes, and to pass on to their children.[52]

Of course, these sources come with their own biases and much be approached with the same critical caution as all documents. Although there are materials and stories dating back to the eighteenth century, the majority were written down only at the turn of the century and suffer from certain distortions of hindsight. This is especially true because many were published following the Dukhobor uprising of 1895-1899 in Transcaucasia. This pacifist movement, which was severely persecuted by tsarist authorities, represented a watershed in the relations between state and sectarians and altered the sectarians' notions of themselves and their past. Nonetheless, these sources

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[50]See V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, *Programma dlia sobranii svedenii po issledovaniiu i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva i raskola* (St. Petersburg: 1908) and his multi-volume series *Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva*, 4 vols., (Christchurch: 1901-1902) and *Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva i raskola*, 6 vols. (numbered 1-5, 7), (St. Petersburg: 1908-16).
[51]Only cursory information has been published about these archives. On GMIR, see V. I. Rutenburg, "Kratkii putevoditel' po fondam lichnogo proiskhozhdeniia rukopisnogo otdela Muzeia istorii religii i ateizma," in *Ateizm, religiia, sovremennost'* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973). On OR RGB, see S. V. Zhitomirskaia, ed., *Vospominaniia i dnevniki XVIII-XX vv.: Ukazatel' rukopisei* (Moscow: Kniga, 1976) and S. V. Zhitomirskaia, L. V. Gapochko, and B. A. Shlikhter, "Arkhiv V. D. Bonch-Bruevicha," *Zapiski otdela rukopisei*, vyp. 25 (Moscow: 1962).
[52]Examples of these publications include: Peter Malov, *Dukhobortsy: ikh istoriia, zhizn i borba* (Thrums, B. C.: 1948); V. A. Sukhorev, *Istoriia dukhobortsev* (Winnipeg: 1944); Koozma Tarasoff, Plakun Trava: The Doukhobors (Grand Forks, B. C.: Mir Publications Society, 1982); S. F. Reibin, *Trud is mirnaia zhizn. Istoriia dukhobortsev bez maski* (San Francisco: 1952); John K. Berokoff, *Selections from the Book of Spirit and Life* (Whittier: 1966); and Maksim Gavrilovich Rudometkin, *Utrenniaia zvezda* (Los Angeles: Raduga Printing Co., 1915).

offer an exceptional window onto peasant life and popular religiosity and help to revive the voice of the peasantry in Russian history.

Chapter 1

Toleration Through Isolation: The Edict of 1830 and the Origins of Russian Colonization in Transcaucasia

The edict of October 20, 1830 legislatively laid the foundation for the systematic and long-term settlement of ethnic Russians in Transcaucasia. As the following chapters demonstrate, its passing altered the fate of religious sectarians throughout the empire while simultaneously transforming the process of Russian imperialism in the Transcaucasus. This chapter explores the origins and goals of this seminal decree in order to provide context to the sectarians' history in Transcaucasia. Why did state authorities chose sectarians, of all possible Russians, to be the primary settlers in Transcaucasia; and how was it that the destiny of Russian colonization in this southernmost region of the empire came to be inextricably linked with the fate of religious dissent? In the process of answering these questions, the chapter acts as a case study of bureaucratic decision-making in pre-reform Russia; sheds light onto the interrelations between center and periphery; and underscores the importance of religious forces to the construction of empire. In addition, it explores the transition in policy making from Alexander I to Nicholas I. Rather than a sharp shift in legislative practice, many of the restrictive policies that Nicholas implemented towards religious dissenters were actually conceived in the last years of Alexander's reign.

With the 1830 edict, legislators attempted simultaneously to combine three goals: to reduce religious dissent in the heartland; to ensure the fulfillment of state obligations (particularly to strengthen frontier defense through military service); and to provide colonists for newly conquered Transcaucasia. Of the three objectives, by far the most important was the desire to weaken the sects and reduce their ability to spread their

"heresy" by isolating them on the Empire's Transcaucasian periphery.[1] Such segregation took on two forms. Those sectarians found guilty of spreading their heresy, of "tempting" or converting others, or of insolence towards the Orthodox church and its priesthood, were impressed into Caucasian military service or exiled to the Transcaucasus. Other religious dissidents were encouraged to undertake voluntary resettlement on the Empire's periphery in order to purge the interior provinces. Officials envisioned different possible outcomes in implementing the decree. At the very least, certain administrators hoped to control the spread of the sectarian "infection" by physically removing them from the vicinity of Orthodox Russians. Others saw the policy as a means to eliminate the sectarians altogether either by exterminating or converting them to Orthodoxy. Exile to a remote and dangerous area of the empire would reduce their life chances; the mere threat of banishment to the borderlands (and offers of tangible rewards) might convince others to convert to Orthodoxy.[2]

Second, the edict aimed to ensure that these religious non-conformists, despite their status as "especially dangerous," would nevertheless perform services and fulfill responsibilities beneficial to the Empire. Thus, persons found guilty of religious crimes were sent into military service in the volatile Caucasian region where they could perform their state obligations without fear that they would infect other Russians with their beliefs. Finally, the law of 1830 was also designed to initiate the process of Russian colonization of Transcaucasia—although, in the minds of legislators, this was by far the least important aspect of the decree. Those sectarians unable to complete military service, women, and all voluntary settlers were to be sent to Transcaucasia in order to

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[1]RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1833, d. 33, ll. 9ob-10; RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23322, 1846, l. 8; RGIA f. 1268, op. 8, d. 275, 1856, l. 2; and K. S-A., "Russkie raskol'niki, poselenye v Bakinskoi gubernii," *Kavkaz* no. 9 (January 21, 1868): 2.

[2]*PSZ* (2) t. 5, otd. 2, 1830, no. 4010, p. 169, articles 1, 2, 4-6, 8; RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3212, 1841-1843, l. 1; RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, ll. 19-19ob: *AKAK* vol. 7, doc. 415, p. 466; and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, n.d., ll. 47-78, 113-131.

begin populating the region as part of Russia's larger colonial project in its southern borderlands. Officials in Transcaucasia were charged to map out places for settlement appropriate "as much in respect to populating the region as in respect to terminating the means to spread the sectarian faith."[3]

This new era in religious and colonial policy was not developed and imposed solely by policy-makers in the highest ranks of government. Rather, the 1830 rescript was forged during the preceding thirty years by the triangular interaction of central decision-makers, local authorities, and the sectarians themselves, each with their own demands, goals, and actions. Policy evolved not so much from the implementation of a preconceived vision but from the twists and turns of bureaucratic bargaining to produce often unanticipated outcomes. It also resulted from a shift in Alexander I's religious policies during the latter years of his reign which generated increasingly intolerant legislation. In examining these protracted negotiations about the place of sectarians in Russian society and polity, we witness a clear example of the contingent and often haphazard policy-making process of early nineteenth-century Russia. We also see the powerful influence of events and decisions in the Empire's periphery on central legislation.

The administration's decision to send "especially pernicious" sectarians to the Transcaucasus appears paradoxical. Having only recently been brought within Russia's borders, Transcaucasia remained volatile and only nominally under Russian control.[4]

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[3]*PSZ* (2) t. 5, otd. 2, 1830, no. 4010, p. 169, articles 2, 3. On the goal of colonization, see also "Istoricheskiia svedeniia o molokanskoi sekte," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* (November 1858): 293.

[4]On the process of Russian expansion into Transcaucasia, see Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Firuz Kazemzadeh, "Russian Penetration of the Caucasus," in *Russian Imperialism from Ivan the Great to the Revolution*, ed. Taras Hunczak (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 239-263; John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London: Longmans, Green and co., 1908); Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1-11; Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 42-95; and Audrey Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity under Russian Rule* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1992), 1-20. On the

In addition, tsarist authorities considered the dissenters to be disloyal, disrespectful to Tsar and government, and a threat to state power. Why, then, did the tsarist administration send "heretical pariahs" *en masse* to a region which might seem to require settlement of the most loyal and willing subjects in order to stabilize Russian control and successfully incorporate Transcaucasia into Russia?

The answer to this question lies in the fact that the edict of 1830, and its transplantation of Russian colonists into Transcaucasia, was primarily driven by the need to resolve internal tensions caused by religious heterogeneity, not by concerns of empire-building or colonialism. The edict attempted to solve an essential dilemma of tsarist religious policy: how to regulate a multi-confessional empire in which one faith—Orthodoxy—was not only privileged, but state-sponsored and considered a national church.[5] For Russian officials, this question became increasingly pressing over the course of the 18th century. The combination of imperial expansion, which brought large numbers of Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Protestants and "pagans" into Russia, and the proliferation of schismatic and sectarian religious movements in the central provinces brought the tsarist government face to face with the demands of rapidly expanding religious diversity.[6]

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difficulties in controlling the region, see also Stephen F. Jones, "Russian Imperial Administration and the Georgian Nobility: The Georgian Conspiracy of 1832," *Slavonic and East European Review* 65, no. 1 (1987): 53-76; Firouzeh Mostashari, "Tsarist Colonial Policy, Economic Change, and the Making of the Azerbaijani Nation: 1828-1905 (Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995); and Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London: Frank Cass & co., 1994).

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

[6]On the proliferation of new sectarian movements in the eighteenth century, see F. V. Livanov, *Raskol'niki i ostorozhniki: ocherki i razskazy*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. Khana, 1872-1873); Orest Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh* (Kiev: 1832), 3-24; John Eugene Clay, "Russian Peasant Religion and its Repression: The Christ-Faith [*Khristovshchina*] and the Origins of the 'Flagellant Myth, 1666-

Beginning with Peter III, and especially during the reigns of Catherine II and Alexander I, the autocracy confronted this dilemma by introducing varying degrees and forms of religious toleration.[7] Their tolerance had its limits, however. Russian monarchs proved unwilling to accept any challenge to the preeminence of the Orthodox Church, and especially could not condone the growth of Russian Christian sectarians at the expense of Orthodoxy. Both Catherine II and Alexander I struggled continuously to find an acceptable middle ground between outright acceptance and complete criminalization of non-Orthodox Russians—a middle ground that would permit the sects' existence, even grant them certain civil rights, while simultaneously considering them apostates whose beliefs could not be permitted to thrive. During the first third of the nineteenth century, tsarist policy-makers developed the practice of what I will call "toleration through isolation" in response to this dilemma. That is, non-Orthodox Russians could be tolerated in the Russian Empire only if they were completely separated from the Orthodox population. Thus, in 1830, Russian officials strove to resolve the dilemma of religious diversity by taking advantage of the Empire's vast size to isolate sectarians on the periphery. Although the edict included a stipulation to ensure their proper settlement in the region, its goal was primarily to rid the central provinces of the religious non-conformists. Only in the final stages of policy formation did tsarist officials give any thought to what would happen to the settlers—or indeed to Transcaucasia—once these Russians arrived.

1837" (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1989); idem., "The Theological Origins of the Christ-Faith [*Khristovshchina*]," *Russian History* 15 (1988): 21-41; Laura Engelstein, "Rebels of the Soul: Peasant Self-Fashioning in a Religious Key," *Russian History* 23, nos. 1-4 (1996): 197-213; S. A. Inikova, "Tambovskie Dukhobortsy v 60-e gody XVIII veka," *Vestnik Tambovskogo universiteta. Ser. Gumanitarnye nauki* vyp. 1 (1997): 39-53.

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

The exploitation of the borderlands as a safety valve to release social, political and religious tensions was by no means unique to Transcaucasia at this time. One need only look to the use of Siberia as a dumping ground for criminals and political dissidents during the tsarist period to realize that this case formed part of a larger relationship between periphery and center.[8] However, the expulsion of sectarians to Transcaucasia was different in important respects to the exile of criminals to Siberia. It was devoid of the latter's harsher aspects such as civil execution and branding. Moreover, it involved not only state-imposed banishment but also voluntary resettlement of non-conformists to the region.[9]

At the same time, the example of the Transcaucasian sectarians is distinct from instances of Russian colonization elsewhere in the Empire because of the religious impetus for population movement. In their examination of the reasons for state-sponsored settlement of Russians in the non-Russian periphery in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, historians have pointed to military, economic, and "social transformation" factors as the driving forces.[10] In contrast to the existing historiography, we see here a case of Russian borderland colonization in which

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[8]G. F. Fel'dshtein, *Ssylka: ocherki eia genezisa, znacheniia, istorii i sovremennago sostoianiia* (Moscow, 1893), especially pp. 147-185; Mark Bassin, "Turner, Solov'ev, and the 'Frontier Hypothesis': The Nationalist Signification of Open Spaces," *The Journal of Modern History* 65 (September 1993): 473-511; and Alan Wood, "Crime and Punishment in the House of the Dead," in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, eds. Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 215-233.

[9]Wood, "Crime and Punishment," esp. 217-224 and Abby M. Schrader, "The Languages of the Lash: The Russian Autocracy and the Reform of Corporal Punishment, 1817-1893," (Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996): 178-234.

[10]Francois-Xavier Coquin, *La Sibérie: Peuplement et immigration paysanne au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Institut D'Études Slaves, 1969); Richard Pipes, "The Russian Military Colonies, 1810-1831," *Journal of Modern History* 22 (1950): 205-219; Denis J. B. Shaw, "The Settlement of European Russia during the Romanov Period (1613-1917)," *Soviet Geography* 30, no. 3 (March 1989): 207-228; Marc Raeff, "In the Imperial Manner," in *Catherine the Great: A Profile*, ed. idem. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 197-246; and Willard Sunderland, "Making the Empire: Colonists and Colonization in Russia, 1800-1850s" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1997), 8-51.

religious factors prompted state-sponsored colonial settlement, while military and economic considerations played a decisively secondary role.[11]

Corporatism, National Religions, and the Sectarian Dilemma

To better understand the etiology of the 1830 decree, we must explore the intellectual framework in which Russians were working in regards to the sectarians. In the background of Russia's policies of religious toleration during the early nineteenth century lay a belief in the close relationship between religion and ethnicity which permeated (in various guises) educated circles through much of the Imperial period. Indeed, on a broad level, Russian notions of the connections between religious and national affiliation restricted the choices available to policy-makers, making the somewhat clumsy policy of "toleration though isolation" seem like the best possible option.

Like many other multinational empires, Imperial Russia applied a corporatist approach to religious toleration: tolerating non-Orthodox confessions as corporate groups rather than allowing freedom of conscience to individual believers. In his discussion of the structures of toleration in multinational empires, Michael Walzer argues that:

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

[11]On religiously based population movement not part of state policy, see Robert O. Crummey, *The Old Believers and the World of Antichrist: The Vyg Community and the Russian State, 1694-1855* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 3-38.

or another version of religious orthodoxy and sustaining a traditional way of life.[12]

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

> As a rational being, she believed neither in forcible conversion nor in the persecution of religious minorities, provided that her subjects all had religion, and fulfilled the religious duties it imposed on them. Religion was to her a valuable element in the preservation of public order and the maintenance of public and private morality, but it should never be allowed to rival the influence of the government.[13]

In Imperial Russia the corporatist approach to religious pluralism led to a frequent coupling of religious affiliation and nationality [*narodnost'*]. Writing on these questions at the turn of the century, the jurist M. A. Reisner argued that nineteenth-century Russian officials and intellectuals believed religion to be the "foundation of nationality," and that each ethnic group naturally possessed its own "national religion."[14] The primordial religion for Russians was Orthodoxy—just as Judaism was for Jews and Islam for Tatars. The nineteenth-century French observer of Russia, Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, echoed these views. "For Russians, 'Catholic' means 'Pole' and 'Protestant' means 'German.'" Elsewhere he added: "[i]n the eyes of the masses, indeed of the highest classes and the government itself, no one is a true and thorough Russian who is not Orthodox."[15]

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

[13]Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 503. For a discussion of her policies of religious toleration more generally, see ibid., 503-518 and A. M. Ammann, "Church Affairs," in *Catherine the Great: A Profile*, ed. Marc Raeff (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 294-297.

[14]The following discussion is drawn from Reisner, *Gosudarstvo*, especially pp. 194-196 and Bobrishchev-Pushkin, *Sud*, 1-50.

[15]Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians*, vol. 3, *Religion* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), 45 and 511, respectively. I will argue in chapter three that the bonds between Orthodoxy and Russianness were at times stretched and even severed briefly. For suggestive comments on the evolving relations between nationality and religious affiliation in the case of Russians and

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

> As [Russia] extended her frontiers in Europe and Asia, she had to make legal room for the religions of the annexed countries. At every acquisition the Tsars engaged to respect the religion of their new provinces. They were and remained for all that the Orthodox Tsars, jealously bent on preserving for their own Church her ancient monopoly amid their old subjects. ... The other cults, introduced in to the empire by conquest, were sanctioned for the conquered peoples, not for the Russian of Old-Russia. The Pole was allowed to remain a Catholic, the Tatar a Mussulman, the German a Protestant, the Jew a Jew, but the Russian was to remain Orthodox. ... For the Russian Church, as has already been pointed out, is not only a State church, but an essentially national one, so strongly knit by history and habits to the existence of Russia that it really seems as though, outside of her, one cannot be a Russian. In the eyes of the government as well as of the people, the quality of Orthodox Christian is (even now) the surest pledge of patriotism and loyalty.[16]

Without overlaying religious and national identity quite as unproblematically as Leroy-Beaulieu, recent scholarship has also underscored how these two webs of constructed and coded meaning existed in dynamic and mutually-influential interaction. In particular, scholars have discerned a vital nexus between Orthodox Christianity and Russian nationality. This coupling derives in great part from the emphasis placed on Orthodoxy during the reign of Nicholas I as an integrative and educational tool of Empire—a vital pillar of those beliefs and practices known as Official Nationality.[17] Indeed, Theodore Weeks has written recently that "throughout the empire the terms 'Russian' and 'Orthodox' were nearly always treated as obvious synonyms" in the nineteenth century. Importantly, Weeks finds that this linkage continued in one form or

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Orthodoxy, see Gregory Freiden, "Romans into Italians: Russian National Identity in Transition," in *Russian Culture in Transition*, vol. 7 of *Stanford Slavic Studies*, ed. idem. (Stanford: 1993), esp. 243-251.

[16] Leroy-Beaulieu, *Empire of the Tsars*, 508-510.

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

another into the twentieth century, despite state-sponsored efforts to sever the bond: "St. Petersburg's policy toward Russians in the Kingdom of Poland after 1905 ... to redefine 'Russian' in a nonreligious manner ... was an effort doomed to failure."[18]

The parameters of Russian religious tolerance towards sectarians during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were broadly constructed around these national notions of religion. As Russians who were not Orthodox, the sectarians represented a unique dilemma and a problematic case in an intellectual environment of ethnically-based, corporatist religions. Reisner argued: "[t]he schism [*raskol*] fractures the unity of Orthodoxy as the exclusive, ideal basis of the dominant nationality [*narodnost'*]."[19] Leroy-Beaulieu added: "[T]o such Russians as would feel inclined to leave the pale of the Orthodox Church no way seems open but to drop their nationality, since their country repulses them."[20] Indeed, sectarians stood at the margins of Russian society in the first decades of the nineteenth century, banished there by both secular and spiritual authorities. From a religious perspective, they were considered heretics, well outside the flock of the Orthodox Church. As well as being lost souls, consensus among state officials held that sectarians were by their very nature—fanatical, given to absurd views, lacking respect in their teachings for earthly authority—disloyal to state and Tsar, and threats to the very existence of these cornerstones of the Russian Empire.[21] Lurking in the background was the example of the religious fractures of Western Europe which Russian officials viewed as perilous to state and national unity.[22]

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[18]Theodore Weeks, "Defending Our Own: Government and The Russian Minority in the Kingdom of Poland, 1905-1914," *The Russian Review* 54 (October 1995): 544, 540.
[19]Reisner, *Gosudarstvo*, 195.
[20]Leroy-Beaulieu, *Empire of the Tsars*, 510.
[21]On sectarians as a political threat see, for example, "Istoricheskiia svedeniia," 291-292 and V. M. Skvortsov, *Zapiska o dukhobortsakh na Kavkaze* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 1-7.
[22]GARF f. 109, op. 3 (sekretnyi arkhiv), d. 1495, 1855, l. 2.

To grant toleration to the sectarians was not a simple matter, then, given Russia's corporatist and national approach to religious diversity. In addition to putting aside theological opposition to heresy, toleration of sectarians required a fundamental revision of the meanings of Russianness. Throughout the Imperial period, Russian leaders' liberating actions towards the sectarians were circumscribed by these corporatist, national notions of religious affiliation. This fact helps us to understand why, despite the inclination to implement policies of tolerance in the empire—generated both by enlightenment rationalism and mystic piety—tsarist officials strove simultaneously to restrict the sectarians. It was not until 1904-05 that sectarians received civil rights to their religious practices alongside those of other non-Orthodox Christian denominations in Russia.[23]

Toleration, Restriction, and Isolation: Religious Dissent in the Reign of Alexander I

The reign of Alexander I (1801-1825) is not unjustifiably considered a high point of religious toleration towards non-Orthodox Christians in Imperial Russia.[24] In comparison with his predecessors, Alexander took a more lenient approach to the question of how to rule a multi-confessional society, particularly towards the sectarians. While Catherine II had implemented broad practices of religious toleration. she had not always extended such acceptance to the Russian sectarians. The sectarians' religiosity led them to reject the power of the Tsar and his/her government. Catherine, with her enlightenment-derived, utilitarian religious tolerance, could not countenance such a

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[23]See, for example, Solov'ev, *Pol'nyi krug* and Iasevich-Borodaevskaia, *Bor'ba za veru.*
[24]For general discussions of religious toleration in the reign of Alexander I, see *Obzor meropriiatii*, 43-48; E. R. "Russkii raskol," 516-532; and P. N. Miliukov, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul'tury*, vol. 2, no. 1, *Tserkov', Religiia, Literatura* (Moscow: Progress-Kul'tura, 1994), 127.

challenge to state power, and continued to enforce strict measures against the spread of sectarian religious tendencies.[25]

Alexander, with his leanings to mystical Christianity, was quick to extend tolerance even to these religious movements—albeit on a restricted and piecemeal, case-by-case basis. In the first half of his reign, by far the majority of his declarations concerning the sectarians were specifically directed towards one denomination: the Dukhobors. According to the letter of the law, his tolerance applied only to this one sect. However, his acceptance of the Dukhobors opened up, indirectly and at times directly, both a discursive and legislative space in which other sectarian confessions, and particularly the Molokans, found greater freedom to exist.

We should note that Alexander's tendencies to tolerance did not necessarily reflect a simple acceptance of religious pluralism or freedom of conscience for religious minorities. In his final years on the throne, Alexander turned away from his initial practices of tolerance. Moreover, even during the early years of his reign, the Tsar implemented a Janus-like religious policy which aimed simultaneously to carve out a legal niche in which Russian religious dissenters could exist, while simultaneously trying to restrict their spread and eliminate their "errors of faith." On one hand, Alexander decriminalized religious non-conformity and mandated the separation of "heresy" from secular or civil crimes. Affiliation to a sectarian faith was no longer considered a criminal act in and of itself, although certain public displays of religious non-conformity were deemed criminal disturbances of public order.[26] At the same time,

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[25]Madariaga, *Russia in the Age*, 122; George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), 30-31; James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 254-255. For a discussion of Catherine's more lenient treatment of the Old Believers, see *Obzor meropriiatii*, 21-27 and Madariaga, *Russia in the Age*, 517-518.
[26]Public displays included prayer houses, public marriage or burial ceremonies, and preaching or religious discussions within earshot of Orthodox Russians.

Alexander granted religious dissenters civil rights not substantially less than those of Orthodox Russians, particularly freedom from persecution.

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

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

service useful to the state (especially militarily, but also economically) despite their status as religious criminals.

Extending Toleration

When Alexander I became Tsar in March 1801, many of his first actions concerned the fate of religious non-conformists in Russia.[27] Only one week following his ascension to the throne, Alexander ordered the return to their former homes in the New Russian provinces of all Dukhobors who had been summarily banished to Siberia by his father.[28] Moreover, within a month of becoming Tsar, Alexander issued a rescript to all military and civil governors that ordered a fundamental alteration of state treatment of Russia's sectarians. He declared that, thenceforth, when dealing with those "who have deviated from the correct faith and the rightful Holy Church" because of their "simplicity and ignorance," spiritual authorities were to replace "severity" and "coercion" with "meekness, patience and diligent insistence which alone can assuage the cruelest heart and lead them from inveterate stubbornness." The new Tsar asserted that the persecution of sectarians which had characterized the religious policies of his forebears (and especially his father, Paul I) had accomplished little and had not "corrected" the non-conformists. Rather, such mistreatment had led them to a "common bitterness" and entrenched the apostates in their false beliefs. Alexander ordered that not even "the smallest oppression" was to be used in efforts "to bring [the dissenters] to

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[27]These religious declarations formed part of a larger oeuvre of legislative acts that revised much of Paul I's legislation. See Allen McConnell, *Tsar Alexander I: Paternalistic Reformer* (Arlington Heights, Il.: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1970), 22-25; Marc Raeff, *Understanding Imperial Russia: State and Society in the Old Regime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 113-145; and Alexander M. Martin, *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries: Russian Conservative Thought and Politics in the Reign of Alexander I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997), 15-90.
[28]"O poselenii dukhobortsev v Novorossiiskom krae," *Russkaia Starina* 98 (May 1899): 396; Gary Dean Fry, "The Doukhobors, 1801-1855: The Origins of a Successful Dissident Sect" (Ph. D. diss., The American University, 1976), 86; and for the 1799 order sending the Dukhobors into exile, see *SPChR* (1860) vol. 1, pp. 771-772.

reason and point [them] on the true path." Patience, good example and respectful treatment were to be the order of the day. Accompanying this shift in relations to the non-conformists, Alexander asserted that the primary concern of tsarist officials should be to ensure that the "general public order everywhere would not be disturbed." Officials were not to prosecute religious deviation per se, but those sectarians who did disrupt the social peace were to be tried to the harshest extent of the law.[29]

Over the course of the first twenty years of his reign, Alexander issued a series of decrees both expanding and reinforcing this original statement of religious tolerance towards the Dukhobors. In November 1801, Alexander wrote to the governor of Slobodsko-Ukraine gubemiia in response to an uprising of Dukhobors in that region. Upon returning from exile in Siberia, the Dukhobors had burst into rebellion because of debilitating poverty, the severe treatment they received from religious officials in New Russia, and particularly the forceful nature of the priests' "admonitions." Alexander assigned the governor the task of reasserting order among the Dukhobors while also defending them from all persecution on the part of local authorities.[30]

> Reason and experience long ago demonstrated that the intellectual delusions of simple people are only exacerbated by debates and elegant admonitions. Only with inattention, good example and tolerance will [the errors] be obliterated and disappear ... Such is the rule with which the local administration should behave towards [the Dukhobors]... These admonitions should in no way take on the form of interrogations, torture and open violence to the rites of their beliefs.[31]

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

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[29]*Obzor meropriiatii*, 49. These notions reflected Alexander's worldview more broadly. As one historian has described: Alexander's "favorite theme [was] the law, not caprice, must rule supreme in the state." McConnell, *Tsar Alexander I*, 24.
[30]"Zapiski Moskovskago martinista senatora I. V. Lopukhina," *Russkii arkhiv* 52, kn. 1 (1884): 87-88 and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 17-18.
[31]*SPChR* (1875), p. 17.

> The general rule, taken by me in cases of error of this kind, consists of not doing violence to conscience and not entering into investigations of the internal profession of faith. At the same time, any external signs of deviation from the Church are not permitted, and any temptations to lure people from the Church are strictly forbidden, not as a heresy, but as a disruption of the general good and order.[32]

In the same letter Alexander ordered that in dealings with the Dukhobors in Tambov province, tsarist authorities were to use priests who were "meek" and of "good morals," not to enter into arguments with the Dukhobors, and to strive to return the Dukhobors to the true faith not through "force or obligation," but by their "good example" and "holy life." In order to avoid the conflicts between Orthodox and non-Orthodox villagers common in Tambov province, Alexander ordered both spiritual and secular authorities to refrain from coming into contact with Dukhobors, and especially from visiting their homes.[33] As long as the Dukhobors continued to fulfill their obligations and duties to state power, and did not disrupt the general good by openly luring others to their faith, the Dukhobors were not to be punished for their heresy and were to be left alone in the internal profession of their faith.[34]

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

> Does it befit an enlightened Christian state to return those in error to the bosom of the Church through harsh and severe means, torture, exile and other similar methods? The teachings of the Savior of the world, who came to earth ... to save the fallen, cannot be taught through violence and punishments ... True faith is produced by God's blessing through persuasion, edification, meekness, and, above all, good example. Severity never persuades, it only embitters. All the measures of strictness exhausted on the Dukhobors over the course of the thirty years up to 1801 not only

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[32]*SPChR* (1875), p. 25. Also found in *PSZ(1)* t. 27, 1802-1803, no. 20629, p. 470.
[33]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 25-26 and N. Varadinov, *Istoriia Ministerstva vnutrennikh del,* vol. 8, supplementary, *Istoriia rasporiazhenii po raskolu* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1863), 63-64. Alexander again underlined the need to approach the sectarians in Tambov with tolerance and good behavior in another letter to the Tambov governor later in 1803. See *PSZ* (1) t. 27, 1803, no. 20904, p. 848.
[34]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 25-26.

failed to wipe out that sect, but significantly increased the number of their followers.[35]

Alexander continued this letter, asserting that even though the Dukhobors were in error in their religious beliefs, they "must feel that they exist under the protection and patronage of the laws, and only then can we reliably expect them to love and feel an attachment to the Government, and to exact their fulfillment of its laws...."[36]

The policies and practices of Alexander I concerning religious toleration attracted a degree of international attention. The French ambassador to Russia, the Comte de Noailles, wrote in his report to Paris in 1817 that the decree of December 21 1816 "merits note for the principles of religious tolerance that it established ... [The Dukhobors] should not be bothered in any manner for their religious belief, but, on the contrary, treated and protected like the other subjects of His Imperial Majesty."[37]

Alongside these declarations of tolerance towards religious diversity—and despite Alexander's reluctance "to do violence to conscience"—the Tsar continued efforts to ensure that activities which threatened to disrupt "public order" would be swiftly and strictly punished. An example from Astrakhan guberniia shows the boundaries of Alexander's religious toleration. In 1802, Dukhobors descended "noisily, in whole crowds" into a village marketplace and "openly began to spread their depravity [*razvrat*]." Upon being sent to the local court, the Dukhobors not only refused to deny their errors but also renounced any obedience to, and recognition of, state authorities. Reflecting Alexander's distinction between fanatical leaders and believer-followers, the central instigators of the disturbance were exiled as criminals to the Kola peninsula, whereas the others were granted monarchical mercy.[38]

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[35]*SPChR* (1875), p. 47.
[36]*SPChR* (1875), p. 48.
[37]Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich, *Imperator Aleksandr I: opyt' istoricheskogo issledovaniia* (St. Petersburg: 1912), vol. 2: 260-261.
[38]Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 28-29.

Three other examples also demonstrate Alexander's severe response to religious activity which challenged social tranquillity. In 1802, a Dukhobor "teacher-fanatic" in Saratov province persuaded the majority of his village, including women and children, to barricade themselves in a cave filled with wood for the purpose of self-ignition.[39] With the fire already blazing, other villagers became aware of what was going on and intervened, pulling the half-dead Dukhobors out of the flames and smoke. When brought to trial, those who repented their errors and rejoined Orthodoxy were permitted to return to their homes. However, the "depraved" were exiled with hard labor or incarcerated in a monastery.[40] Elsewhere in 1802, an estate peasant form Tambov named D'iakov displayed "obvious disobedience" towards his landlord and was taken to court. There, he and his family demonstrated "disobedience to all legal authority, originating from errors of faith." In response to their denial of the state's and landlord's authority, the D'iakov family was banished to Kola.[41] Moreover, in 1807, Alexander made efforts to stop the spread of the "false teachings" of the Dukhobors in Siberia. He asserted that Dukhobors who were overtly seducing others to the Dukhobor faith, and disrupting public order, were to be sent into military service in Siberia. Those who were incapable of military service were to be sentenced to work either in the Nechersk factories, or in the state salt factory in Selengin.[42]

The Origins of Isolation

The idea of sectarian segregation did not originate with policy-makers in St. Petersburg. It arose among the dissenters themselves. then was embraced by tsarist

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[39]While self-immolation was a common practice among Russia's Old Believers, this is the only case on record describing the Dukhobors involved in such practices and should not be considered typical of the sect. On Old Believer self-immolation, see Crummey, *Old Believers*, 45-57, 187-192, passim.
[40]Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 29.
[41]Fry, "Doukhobors," 109.
[42]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 36-37. See also *Obzor meropriiatii*, 46.

officials. Not unexpectedly, religious non-conformists and tsarist authorities had divergent expectations of what isolation would mean in practice.[43] Sectarians requested isolation as a means to escape Orthodox persecution, to strengthen their economic prospects, and to evade the surveillance of state officials. In contrast, Imperial authorities saw isolation as a method to restrict contact between dissenters and Orthodox Russians: to halt sectarian proselytism and to exterminate the dissenting faiths. They also believed that the geographic concentration of sectarians would facilitate Orthodox proselytizing among the dissenters.

The policy of isolation came into being in this context of trying to realize Alexander's dual goals—tolerating the existence of the religious dissenters and ensuring them civil rights, while simultaneously attempting to break them of their heresy and to prevent any further spread of the non-conformist faith. By physically separating religious non-conformists and Orthodox Russian subjects into discrete, unconnected communities, Alexander believed that he had found the best means to achieve toleration and restriction simultaneously. Such segregation was also in keeping with Russian beliefs in the linkage between ethnicity and religious affiliation because isolation represented the closest approximation of a national homeland for the sectarians.[44]

The story of isolation began in 1801 when Senators I. V. Lopukhin and Iu. A. Neledinskii-Meletskii were sent to Kharkov province to investigate a series of Dukhobor complaints about their conditions of life upon returning from exile in Siberia. During the investigations, Dukhobors presented Lopukhin with a petition requesting that they be amalgamated into a separate, mono-confessional colony. While coming to know the Dukhobors, Lopukhin began to condone their faith and to sympathize with them in the

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

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

face of maltreatment by local tsarist officials.[45] He relayed the Dukhobors' request for isolation to the Tsar using a language which consciously merged Alexander's emphasis on legal treatment for non-conformists with the desire to lead them back into the Orthodox Church. Lopukhin asserted that, first, the formation of a Dukhobor colony would quiet the sectarians' unrest, by removing them from the harassment and animosity of Imperial officials in the region. Second, such segregation would all but eliminate the Dukhobors' ability to spread their beliefs to others. Finally, Lopukhin argued, concentrated settlements would facilitate the conversion of Dukhobors to Orthodoxy. Their concentration would help well-educated, moral, and patient priests in their task of bringing the Dukhobors back to Orthodoxy by giving them ease of access to large numbers of Dukhobors at once.[46]

Alexander agreed whole-heartedly with Lopukhin's proposal and immediately set in motion the consolidation of a separate Dukhobor colony in New Russia. In January 1802, the Tsar granted permission for any Dukhobors in the New Russian provinces to settle together in a region known as *Molochnye vody* [Milky Waters] on the banks of the Molochna river in Melitopol' uezd.[47] Alexander I wrote to the Governor of New Russia to outline his reasons for isolating the Dukhobors. He argued that the concentration of Dukhobors, separate from other Russians, would be an effective policy "both with respect to the ruin being endured by these people, and also that I consider such separation to be the most reliable means for the cancellation [*pogashenie*] of their heresy and for the suppression of its influence on others."[48]

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

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

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

[48]*SPChR* (1875), p. 18. Alexander's opinion can also be found in *PSZ*(1) t. 27, 1802, no. 20123, pp. 27-28. On December 9, 1816, in a letter to the Kherson military governor, Alexander echoed these

The terms of settlement in Melitopol' district reflected a tsarist policy that was at once concerned with the welfare of the Dukhobors as Russian subjects and desirous of the termination of the sect (through conversion to the Orthodox Church and the prevention of any external manifestations of the faith). To facilitate their new lives, Alexander granted the Dukhobors extremely generous material conditions for settlement relative to the Empire's average peasant.[49] The Dukhobor settlers were assigned relatively large land allotments (at least fifteen desiatinas per soul, although frequently more) and received five-year tax relief. Alexander reiterated his desire that local officials "defend them [the Dukhobors] from any restrictions, and work to favor their settlement." The newly arriving Dukhobors were to be settled as closely as possible to their co-religionists who already lived near Molochnye vody. However, as part of Alexander's two-pronged religious policy, local officials also were told to ensure that these Dukhobors did not break any civil laws and especially did not harbor illegal runaways, nor attract anyone at all to their sect.[50]

By choosing isolation as the solution to religious diversity, the decree of 1802 mandating a separate Dukhobor colony was a seminal first step towards the 1830 edict. However, it differed in important respects from the later legislation. Permission to settle in the Melitopol' uezd applied only to those Dukhobors already living in New Russia and was not a blanket permission for Dukhobors from anywhere in Russia to move to Molochnye vody. Moreover, the legislation of 1802 applied only to Dukhobors and did not concern other sectarians, such as Molokans or Subbotniks, who were also beginning to appear in great numbers in the central provinces during these years.

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original reasons for settling the Dukhobors in New Russia: to prevent their further ruin and maltreatment and, through separation, to lead to suppression of the sect. See *SPChR* (1875), p. 47.
[49]For details on the Dukhobors' conditions of settlement in the Milky Waters region, see *SPChR* (1875), pp. 18-19; Fry, "Doukhobors," 103-108; "Poselenie dukhobortsev na r. Molochnoi" *Russkaia starina* 100 (October 1899): 240; Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Doukhobors*, 35-61; and Sunderland, "Making the Empire," 138-157, 174-216.
[50]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 28-30.

Over time, the decision to concentrate Dukhobors in one part of New Russia was extended to Dukhobors living in other Russian provinces. The broadening of the scope of isolation came in response to the demand of Dukhobors elsewhere in the Empire. They had heard about the favorable conditions granted their brethren and requested to join them in the Molochna region in order to unite with their co-religionists and to save themselves from the persecution that they felt they suffered at the hands of tsarist officials and their Orthodox neighbors.[51] Indeed, the 1802 legislation generated a mass of petitions from religious non-conformists throughout the Empire.[52] Alexander granted the Dukhobors' desire in 1804, arguing that the relocation of these sectarians would remove the causes for "discord" between the Dukhobors and Orthodox Russians, and that by settling the Dukhobors in one place, "the very surveillance of them [the Dukhobors] would be more active."[53] In granting the dissenters' demands, tsarist officials moved slowly towards a more general policy of toleration through isolation. Thus, as with the initial decision to bring the Dukhobors together into one settlement, here again the actions of the Dukhobors themselves pushed the administration to take new actions.

The number of Dukhobors in New Russia grew rapidly in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Dukhobors from many parts of the Empire—Tambov, Voronezh, Finland, Siberia, Archangel, the Caucasus, and the Don region—requested and received permission to settle in New Russia.[54] Others were forcibly exiled to Molochnye vody by state order. In February of 1805, for instance, Dukhobors living in the Azov

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[51]Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 26.
[52]The petitions of Dukhobors in Tambov and Voronezh provinces in 1804 to be resettled to Melitopol' uezd were particularly important in widening the scope of dissenter segregation. Fry, "Doukhobors," 130-131.
[53]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 27-30; and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 65-66.
[54]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 28-30, 62-63; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 79; Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 26; Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Doukhobors*, 37.

fortress were ordered to relocate to Melitopol' uezd as a means to "avert the spread of this sect, so that the followers of the sect would be scattered as little as possible."[55]

Tsarist officials also expanded the scope of the segregation policy beyond the Dukhobor sect and began, albeit inconsistently, to bring other sectarians together in one proscribed place, as they had been doing with the Dukhobors. In 1816, Alexander I ordered that all Ikonobors[56] in the Empire "who remained unrepentant in their errors" be relocated to Molochnye vody.[57] In the 1820s, tsarist officials began both to banish Molokans, and to grant their requests, to settle in Melitopol' uezd alongside the Dukhobors.[58] In the early 1820s, for example, the Ministry of the Interior received a petition from 306 Molokans in Tambov province who wanted to be relocated, along with their families, to Tauride province so that they could be with their religious brethren, and because they found themselves unable to meet their annual taxes in their current location.[59]

Similar policies of isolation and segregation can also be seen in the case of the Subbotniks, although with characteristics unique to the sect. Unlike Dukhobors and Molokans, Subbotniks were not sent to New Russia, but rather isolated in the North Caucasus, particularly in Astrakhan guberniia. Moreover, while there were many voluntary migrants among the Subbotniks (especially to the towns), their settlement in the Caucasus was more frequently a form of punishment or exile than in the case of Dukhobors and Molokans migrating to the Molochna region. Banishment to the Caucasian frontier as punishment frequently elicited the restrictive results desired by

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[55]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 30-31.
[56]Ikonobor was a term used in certain parts of Russia to refer to the adherents of a religiosity similar to, or the same as, Dukhobors. After 1830, Ikonobors were amalgamated with the Dukhobors in state parlance and statistic. See Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 26.
[57]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 44-45.
[58]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 62-63, 66-67.
[59]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 129.

Russian authorities. There were numerous cases of Subbotniks who refused to be resettled and preferred to convert to Orthodoxy to avoid relocation southwards.[60]

As the Subbotnik example demonstrates, New Russia was not the only location in the Russian Empire in which sectarians were isolated during the reign of Alexander I. In 1804, for example, Dukhobors who had been exiled to Ekaterinburg for work in the mines (and who were later moved to Irkutsk guberniia) were not permitted to settle in New Russia because the distance that they would be forced to travel to relocate posed too serious an obstacle. Instead, Alexander decreed that local officials should set up a Dukhobor colony in Irkutsk on the basis of the one near Molochnye vody.[61] Moreover, even when presented with the option, not all Dukhobors wanted to go to the Molochna colony. In 1811, for instance, as many as 4,000 Dukhobors from a variety of provinces petitioned the Tsar to create a Dukhobor settlement in the recently incorporated lands of Bessarabia similar to the one in Melitopol' uezd. Serious consideration was given to this plan even though it was eventually rejected out of fear of possible French invasion.[62]

Assailing Alexander's Tolerance

Beginning in the 1810s, but especially in the 1820s, criticisms of Alexander I's religious policies arose from a myriad of sources, including the Tsar himself. They took a variety of forms, and came from differing perspectives. While critics often proposed mutually exclusive solutions, the majority called for some combination of less tolerance and more complete isolation for sectarians. Critics evinced frustration with

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[60]On the Subbotniki in the North Caucasus, see GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, ll. 79-112; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 593, 1820-1840, ll. 21-29; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 95, 99; and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 62-63.
[61]*PSZ* (1) t. 28, 1804-1805, no. 21845, pp. 1134-1136.
[62]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 78. Fry, "Doukhobors," 132-134. Petitions came from Voronezh, Tambov, Saratov, Astrakhan, and Orenburg provinces. Apparently some Dukhobors and Molokans did clandestinely relocate to Bessarabia in the 1820s and 1830s. See Fry, "Doukhobors," 134.

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

Alexander himself grew impatient with the results of his policies. He found himself in constant conflict over their application with local officials who generally preferred to continue their previous, more oppressive approach to sectarianism. Regional officials either could not recognize, or were unwilling to recognize, the distinction that Alexander was making between persecuting faith and persecuting acts of faith that broke civil laws or threatened the well-being of the state and its people. Despite the Tsar's orders, sectarians continued to suffer at the hands of local officials simply for professing their faith. Many of these local officials took advantage of the wording of Alexander's declarations of tolerance and imposed the prohibition on public "manifestations" [*okazatel'stvo*] of sectarianism in the widest possible sense, allowing them, in effect, to persecute non-conformists for their adherence to another faith.[63]

A group of Molokans described how Alexander's "benevolent views towards them and his orders in their favor have been evaded, so that some of their families are yet separated by banishment."[64] In one case (1816-1818), Dukhobors from New Russia complained to Alexander that twenty of their brethren had been exiled to Siberia "not for any crimes, but only for being Dukhobors." Alexander responded

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[63]*Obzor meropriatii*, 45. Catherine II ran into similar problems when her tolerance towards Old Believers was blocked in its application by the long-standing practices of Russian officials. As one nineteenth century Russian commentator described the obstacles: "The Synod and Senate still did not assimilate the new directive and remained true to the old tendencies; lower powers, secular and spiritual, did not stop constricting schismatic communities." E. R., "Russkii raskol," 508.
[64]Quoted in Fry, "Doukhobors," 168.

immediately, ordering that all Dukhobors mentioned in the petition be returned from exile and settled in Molochnye vody. He underscored his discontent with their banishment by demanding that Siberian officials spare no expense for their trip back, so that no Dukhobors were lost "by exhaustion in transit."[65]

In response to the evasions of local authorities, Alexander ordered in 1818 that in the future, "when Dukhobors are uncovered, then, before they are taken to court, before even the local administration issues any command about prosecuting them in court," the details of the case were to be sent to Alexander for prior review. In ordering this surveillance of the treatment of religious dissenters, Alexander struggled to avoid evasions of his policy by local officials.[66] Left in the position of watchdog, chastising officials when they ignored the laws, Alexander began himself to rethink his policies.

In addition to ignoring Alexander's relatively tolerant approach, local officials openly protested his policies. For example, they complained bitterly about settling Dukhobors in Melitopol' uezd. In 1816, Alexandre de Langeron, Governor-General of New Russia, voiced to Alexander his vehement opposition to the policy of isolating the Dukhobors in New Russia.[67] He demanded the dissenters' removal from Tauride guberniia for leading "dissipated lives," and found them guilty of converting Orthodox neighbors to their heresy. He also argued that the Dukhobors were not "Christian schismatics" [*raskol'niki*], but rather some other religious tendency that had lost all connection to Christianity. Alexander boldly defended the Dukhobors' right to exist in Melitopol', and demanded proper treatment for them. But, Langeron offered a more radical solution to the problem of the Dukhobors: increasing their isolation. Rather than

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[65]Fry, "Doukhobors," 167-168; *SPChR* (1875), p. 54.
[66]*SPChR* (1875), p. 55. For an example where Alexander's demand for prior review halted local prosecution of Dukhobors, see Fry, "Doukhobors," 170.
[67]For a detailed analysis of Langeron's opposition to the Dukhobors under his rule, see Fry, "Doukhobors," 141-154, 164-165; *SPChR* (1875), pp. 46-49; and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 79-81.

keep them in New Russia, Langeron argued, the Dukhobors "should move to another area, where the residents are not Christian."[68] Thus, Langeron argued for expanding the policy of isolation that had developed under Alexander I in order to prohibit any possible contact with Christian, and especially Orthodox, people.

In another case, M. M. Speranskii voiced his concerns about St. Petersburg's Dukhobor policy in response to the appearance of Dukhobors in the diocese of Penza in 1816. He found that the settlement of Dukhobors in the Molochna region represented at least "indifference, with a certain tinge of patronage," if not "true encouragement" to the non-conformists. Such patronage was unacceptable in the case of the Dukhobors since their doctrine was "so close to the spirit of liberty and civil equality, that the least curvature or deviation left of this line—where presently they still stand—could produce a very powerful shock among the people." Despite a deep disenchantment with the isolation policy, Speranskii stopped short in this letter of demanding an end to the Molochnye vody settlements. However, he did underscore the problems inherent in the existing practice of giving the sectarian settlers in New Russia generous land allotments and other economic perquisites. "What differences in land, in taxes, in obligations ... God save us if our peasants, or particular landowners, learn of these differences."[69]

Speranskii was not the only tsarist official to voice concern that the settlement of sectarians in the Molochna area was only serving to strengthen the non-conformists' position in Russian society, and to attract Orthodox Russians into the dissenting faiths. In 1822, the governor of Tauride guberniia declared in a report to the Ministry of the Interior that the Orthodox population [*narod*] believed that Molokans received special state patronage. The governor argued that this view of Molokan privilege derived from two sources. First, both Orthodox and Molokan Russians misinterpreted the Tsar's

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[68]Quoted in Fry, "Doukhobors," 153.
[69]Speranskii's report is discussed in ibid., 154-162.

declaration of toleration for the Dukhobors in 1816, believing that the ruling not only protected all religious non-conformists from persecution, but that, through it, the state actively sought to protect the sectarians and to invite "all to join the heresy."[70] Second, the large land allotments held by dissenter-settlers (relative to others in New Russia as well as peasants elsewhere in the empire)—at times reaching as much as 37.5 desiatinas per adult male—led people to see the religious dissenters as state-sponsored.[71]

By the mid 1820s, such high organs of government as the Ministry of Interior, Committee of Ministers and State Council also raised their voices against the existing policy of isolating sectarians to New Russia. They agreed that the original intent of government policy had been to distance the sectarians from Orthodox Russians in order to halt the spread of the heresy and induce the dissenters to convert to the "path of truth." Despite initial successes, an eruption of new followers was soon recorded. As soon as the settlers in Tauride province were able to root themselves in their new homes, and appreciate the benefits—large land allotments, a healthy climate, relative religious freedoms and unification with other sectarians—they concluded that the government was looking after them. They believed this state patronage was not only a conscious effort on the part of St. Petersburg to ease their lot in life, but also an invitation for others to follow their example.[72] Consequently, the Ministry of Internal Affairs asserted, many of those sectarians who had masqueraded as Orthodox by

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[70]For the declaration, see *SPChR* (1875), pp. 46-49.
[71]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 130. On Dukhobor land allotments and other information on land holding in New Russia, see RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, ll. 29-40, 54-61ob, 81-82ob, 123-128ob, and 132-135; RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3331, 1841; RGIA f. 383, op. 1, d. 234, 1838; and GAKhO (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Khersonskoi oblasti) f. 14, op. 2, d. 70, 1821-1833. My deepest thanks go to John Staples for bringing the final two RGIA references to my attention, generously sharing his research with me, and permitting me to read his microfilm copy of the GAKhO document.
[72]State representatives also pointed to the appearance of Quakers in Russia as an important factor in the continued increase in the number of sectarians. MVD officials reported that these Quakers spread the idea among peasant villagers that the Tsar looked favorably upon their intention to convert to a sectarian faith. They then offered to compile lists of those desirous of conversion which would then be presented to the Tsar. Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 227-228.

following its outward practices in order not to be exiled were now no longer concerned about the repercussions of open sectarianism. They began to declare themselves as sectarians to provincial officials and put forward requests for transfer to Molochnye vody. In addition, certain Dukhobor communities sent agents to New Russia for reconnaissance. Upon receiving good reports, they too began to display their religious non-conformity openly and also petitioned for resettlement.[73]

These state agencies were not incorrect when they asserted that the sectarians themselves viewed Alexander's toleration as a sign of complete acceptance and even encouragement. Throughout the nineteenth century, Russian sectarians saw the reign of Alexander I as a golden age. In his manuscript history of the Molokans (c. 1910), I. G. Vodopianov described how the Molokans had been savagely persecuted in the late eighteenth century, but that Alexander I, "the Blessed Tsar granted [us] freedom."[74] Dukhobor communities described their experiences under Alexander I in a similar fashion. Only during his reign, they believed, "did they begin to look on us as human beings."[75]

Alexander's toleration-restriction religious policies also failed to resolve the contradictions and conflicts that arose from Orthodox and non-Orthodox Russians living together. Despite the increase in the number of dissenters sent into isolation in New Russia or the Caucasus, many others—indeed the majority—still remained among the Orthodox.[76] Tensions arose in this multi-denominational setting because tsarist state

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[73]Varadinov *Istoriia*, 227-228.
[74]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 237, 1910, l. 40. See also the descriptions of the centennial of Molokan freedom celebrated in 1905: N. F. Kudinov, *Stoletie Molokanstva v Rossii 1805-1905 gg.* (Baku: Parovaia tipo-lit A. M. Promyshlianskago, 1905); "Molokanskii s"ezd v Zakavkaz'e i otmennoe k nemu vnimanie namestnika," *Missionerskoe obozrenie* X, no. 11 (August 1905): 289-291; and "Vserossiiskii s"ezd molokan," *Missionerskoe obozrenie* X, no. 9 (June 1905): 1416.
[75]V. V. Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane v Zakavkaz'e, Shiity v Karabakhe, Batchi i Oshumoedy v Srednei Azii, i Ober-Amergau v Gorakh Bavarii* (Moscow: Tipo-litografiia Tovarishestva I. N. Kushnerev, 1900), 4-6. In this vein, see also Novitskii, *O Dukhobortsakh*, 28.
[76]Woodcock and Avakumovic, *Doukhobors*, 38.

policy applied different laws to people of different religious affiliations living in the same village or town. The case of Subbotniks living in the town of Aleksandrov, Astrakhan guberniia, in the early 1810s reflects the legal and social problems of multi-confessional living.[77] Half of the merchants and lower-middle-class townspeople in Aleksandrov were Subbotniks. The Caucasian provincial administration complained in the 1810s that because they held to the law of Moses, the Subbotniks "refused to fulfill community duties on Saturdays, such as the transport of state provisions, the sending of convicts in stocks, the giving of wagons, etc.," and refused to swear oaths of allegiance to the Tsar.[78]

The number of Subbotniks in Aleksandrov caused serious problems in elections to public offices. Subbotniks were prevented from holding public office because tsarist law required elected officers to swear an oath in order to hold a position of authority. In addition, despite Alexander's tolerance for the existence of religious non-conformists within the Empire, he was unable to countenance the possibility that they might hold positions of influence from which they could lure Orthodox subjects into error. However, in 1813, an Orthodox inhabitant of the town sent a petition to local officials requesting that Subbotniks be permitted to take part in the elections and be elected to public posts. The petition explained that because Subbotniks had been barred from holding elected office, the obligations and duties of all public office holding rested solely on the Orthodox half of the town--a grossly disproportionate burden. The petitioner believed that these extra responsibilities were not only juridically unfair, but

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[77]The case of the sectarians living in Aleksandrov presents a dilemma of nomenclature. Sources describing the non-conformists of this town vary in the way they label the sectarians. Some sources call them Subbotniks, others label them as Molokans, and others still, "Molokans who professed the Jewish faith." This multiplicity in naming reflects a more general confusion among officials over how to divide these dissenting faiths. I have called these people Subbotniks because the sources give every indication that these inhabitants should be classified under the rubric of Subbotnik as I have defined them in the Introduction.

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

also reduced the economic capabilities of the Orthodox population who were forced to expend their energies in administration. By granting the Subbotniks freedom from duty, the existing legal set-up provided the Orthodox with a material impetus to join the Subbotniks.[79]

In reply, the Minister of the Interior argued that it was impossible to permit the Subbotniks to take part in elections because of the required oath of allegiance. In stark contradiction to the opinions of the Orthodox petitioner, the Ministry of the Interior believed that the deprivation of Subbotniks of the right to be elected to such positions of responsibility showed them that sectarian religious affiliation brought no benefit to their civilian life. Rather, it deprived them of rights and advantages from which subjects of the Orthodox faith profited.[80] The Committee of Ministers agreed with the essence of the decision by the Ministry of the Interior not to permit the Subbotniks to take part in the elections, but also took the petitioners concerns more seriously. The Committee asserted that "the burden of carrying out public office, falling only on the shoulders of the inhabitants of Orthodox faith, would be for them onerous and would divert them from their occupations, and could cause disruption in their own businesses." They also argued that the "irresponsible freeing of the Subbotniks from the fulfillment of public office, representing for them a preferred relief of duty, could give others a reason to convert to their heresy, solely to evade election to public office, always burdensome for the citizen." In consequence, the Committee of Ministers advised that the Subbotniks should be prevented from being elected to public offices, but that those Orthodox town-dwellers who were elected in their stead must be given sufficient recompense for their work.[81] Instead of service in public office, the Subbotniks of Aleksandrov were

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[79]*PSZ* (1) t. 32, 1812-1815, no. 25529, p. 741.
[80]Ibid..
[81]Ibid., 740-741 and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 42-43.

required to pay an annual sum (88 rubles and 66.5 kopecks) which would represent a third of the salaries of public officials of the town.[82] Although the authorities reached a compromise here, the case of the Subbotniks in Aleksandrov reflected the pressing problems posed by the close proximity of Orthodox and non-Orthodox given the government's practice of applying different laws to different groups. Such cases elicited a demand for greater isolation of sectarians from Orthodox, and for changes to the policies established in the early part of Alexander I's reign.

The final, most important complaint about Alexander's policies—both for the Tsar and his critics—was that despite his faith in the ability of tolerance to bring the sectarians back into the Orthodox fold and to reduce the quantity of religious non-conformists in the empire, their numbers had in fact increased over the course of Alexander's reign.[83] Hints that the number of dissenters was on the rise began to appear already in 1811 with the petition of Tambov Dukhobors requesting to be resettled to Bessarabia. The petitioners claimed to represent as many as 4,000 souls, and their sheer numerical size attracted the attention of tsarist authorities, who began to see the Dukhobors in a new, threatening light.[84] The numerical increases continued into the reign of Nicholas I. In 1826, information concerning the sectarians began to flow into the capital as a result of various efforts that Alexander I launched to collect intelligence. Rather than a decline and geographic restriction of the number of sectarians, governors were in fact reporting an increase in the number of sectarians in the Empire, and the religious non-conformists remained widely dispersed.[85]

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[82]*SPChR* (1875), p. 43. These rules and regulations concerning the holding of public office were later extended to the Dukhobors, see *SPChR* (1875), p. 57 and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 81.
[83]For a general statement of this fact, see *Obzor meropriatii*, 47.
[84]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 78-79, 228.
[85]For the government's statistics on the number of dissenters in 1826 and 1827, for example, see Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 157-180.

Reformulating Religious Policy

In the face of these growing criticisms of his religious policy, and in particular of its failure to solve the problems that it set out to confront, Alexander I began to reformulate his policies towards the sectarians. The shift began in the final five years of his reign and carried over into the rule of Alexander's successor, Nicholas I. Indeed, changes in religious policy towards the sectarians that historians have generally attributed to Nicholas I were in fact the progeny of a process of policy reevaluation and transformation begun under Alexander I. The transformation was piecemeal, and the 1820s were a time of debate and experimentation, in which tsarist authorities searched desperately for a new religious policy. With each modification, Russian authorities laid the groundwork of the edict of 1830.

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

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

disseminators of these faiths were tried harshly in criminal court.[86] Skoptsy, who suffered particularly harsh treatment in the latter years of Alexander's reign, were sent into military service in Siberia and Georgia, while those incapable of such service were settled in Irkutsk guberniia.[87] Moreover, in March of 1820, Alexander agreed to a proposal of Speranskii that, because of the distance of the region from central power, Dukhobors and other schismatics [*raskol'niki*] accused of disseminating their faith in Siberia "could be taken to criminal court immediately and judged not for being part of the schism, but for external deeds, involving unruly behavior or the disruption of decorum and order."[88] In granting this power to the local Siberian authorities, Alexander backed away from his earlier efforts to retain final authority over all affairs involving the sectarians, re-empowering local officials to take action against the sectarians.[89]

Surveillance of all schismatics also increased dramatically in the 1820s—in part to collect information about the dissenters, in part to prevent the spread of their faiths. Alexander I increased the financial resources available to the Orthodox missionaries charged with saving the Subbotniki from their false faith.[90] In the final year of his life, Alexander ordered the formation of a Secret Committee on schismatic affairs. Among the primary goals of the Committee was the collection of information (especially demographic) on the sectarians in the Russian Empire.[91]

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[86]*Obzor meropriiatii*, 48; E. R., "Russkii raskol," 527-531; and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 62-63.
[87]On the Skoptsy, see *SPChR* (1875), pp. 67, 81.
[88]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 57-58.
[89]Alexander's original decision to wield full power in all cases involving sectarians is found in *SPChR* (1875), pp. 54-55.
[90]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 80-81.
[91]*SPChR* (1875), p. 78; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 191; and I. P. Liprandi, "Kratkoe obozrenie sushchestvuiushchikh v Rossii raskolov, eresei i sekt kak v religioznom tak i v politicheskom ikh znachenii," in *Sbornik pravitel'stvennykh svedenii o raskol'nikakh*, vyp. 2, ed. V. Kel'siev (London: Trubner & Co., 1861), 91-169. Extensive materials from this Committee can be found in RGIA f. 1473, op. 1, especially d. 49, 54, 55, 60, and 62. On other efforts, outside the Committee, to gather information about the Dukhobors, see RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1826, d. 46.

In 1825, in the midst of these growing restrictions, and in response to the growing sense among St. Petersburg's authorities that Alexander I's religious policies were failing to achieve their ends, the Minister of the Interior, Vasilii Sergeevich Lanskoi, proposed a new variant on the isolation model. His proposal, an early variant of 1830, altered the existing policy of segregation in two important ways. First, it changed the location for forced settlement. Second, it introduced a two-tiered system of isolation, in which those sectarians considered particularly dangerous and who had been convicted of spreading their sectarian faith were exiled to even farther reaches of the Empire than those who simply professed the faith. Lanskoi recommended that those people who actively spread "heresy" should be charged in criminal court for disturbance of the public peace and then exiled to Eastern Siberia where they would be put to hard labor.[92] In contrast, Lanskoi proposed that all Dukhobors, Molokans, Ikonobors, and Dukhovnye Khristiane who were of "free" social status—, that is, merchants, meshchane, Cossacks, state and court peasants, and odnodvortsy—should be sent for settlement to Western Siberia. In order to enhance the isolation, Lanskoi also argued that these sectarian settlements should house no more than 100 people per village, and that the villages be distanced from any Orthodox settlement by at least 25 *versts* (approximately 25 kilometers).

The Committee of Ministers took Lanskoi's proposal seriously as a solution to Alexander's unsatisfactory policy of isolation in New Russia. They wrote to the Governor-General of Western Siberia for information on lands where they might settle and segregate the dissenters. In the interim, however, the Tsar (now Nicholas I) interjected his opinion that, rather than simply banish the guilty dissenters as Lanskoi proposed, it would be better to enroll able-bodied sectarians in military service, while

[92]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 228.

those who were incapable would be settled in Siberia. In this manner, Nicholas asserted, the maximum service would be extracted from the sectarian subjects of the Empire and their potential contributions to the general welfare could be directed where it would do the most good. However, from 1825 through until 1830, the governors-general of both Western and Eastern Siberia did not answer inquiries about appropriate land allotments—perhaps exhibiting their resistance to the new plan through silence. As a result, Lanskoi's vision for reformulating the isolation policy was stalled for the second half of the 1820s.[93]

While the central authorities explored new practices of isolation in Siberia, additional legislation aimed at restricting contact between those sectarians who might spread their faith and Orthodox Russian subjects. In February 1825, in an effort that foreshadowed aspects of the 1830 legislation, new measures were promulgated against the Subbotniki, who had increasingly aroused concern within the government.[94] The Committee of Ministers ordered all governors to arrest Subbotnik leaders and their assistants, sending those capable into military service while those not capable were ordered settled in Siberia. In order to prevent any communication with Orthodox inhabitants and the spread of their heresy, Subbotniki were to be settled separately from others, watched closely by local authorities, and denied passports to travel from their villages.[95] As with other sectarians, this decree outlawed external display of their heresy, as well as actions to tempt others into the faith.[96] Subbotniks were also prevented from holding high office. Moreover, officials believed that the presence of

[93]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 228-229.
[94]See *SPChR* (1875), pp. 74-78; *PSZ* (1) t. 40, 1825, no. 30436a, pp. 397-408; *PSZ* (1) t. 40, 1825, no. 30483, pp. 465-467; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 271-277; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 593, ll. 25-27; and Antoine Scheikevitch, "Alexandre Ier et l'hérésie Sabbatiste," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 3 (1956): 223-235.
[95]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 271. These laws were not to be applied to the Subbotniki who lived in Aleksandrov uezd, Caucasus guberniia.
[96]External signs included meetings in house for prayer, circumcision, marriage and funeral rites, as well as any other rituals that were not in accord with the Orthodox Church.

Jews near Russian communities helped spread the Subbotnik heresy. Thus, all Jews were to be forcibly relocated out of those districts where Subbotniks lived and not permitted to return to those regions for any reason.

The Synod made Transcaucasia a primary alternative for the isolation of non-conformists when it added its own supplementary rules to the February 1825 decree. On September 15, 1825, the Synod argued—and Alexander agreed—that Subbotnik leaders and assistants who were to be exiled into military service should only be sent to front line units in Georgia, "on the assumption that they, not knowing the Georgian language, cannot spread their false teachings among the local inhabitants." Their belief that ethno-linguistic differences would prevent transmission of the sectarians' ideas to the peoples of Transcaucasia foreshadowed the debate that followed in the late 1820s regarding the appropriateness of Transcaucasia as a place of segregation which I will explore in the following section. To further increase their isolation, and inhibit any proselytizing, the decree of September 15 also required that once assigned to posts in Georgia, the Subbotnik soldiers were neither to be relieved from duty, nor granted temporary leave to visit their original homes and families. The Synod argued in the decree that separating them from their "native land and cutting them off forever from their relatives and friends would produce in the followers of the sect a fear of remaining any longer in their apostasy."[97]

In a similar case, an edict of April 10, 1826 stated that those serfs who espoused the Dukhobor "heresy" should be sent into military service, with those incapable of military service exiled to Siberia for settlement. In addition, efforts were made to restrict the mobility of the Melitopol' Dukhobors. A decree stated that they were

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

thenceforth to be denied passports to absent themselves from their villages for work purposes, and they were to be permitted short-term leaves form their domiciles only with the knowledge of the local police.[98]

Under Alexander I, the government experimented with a variety of approaches to the question of religious pluralism in the Empire. By the end of his reign, it was moving toward harsher measures as it searched for a workable policy towards the sectarians. The period began with Alexander's introduction of tolerance towards sectarianism—in part as a weapon against religious dissent—and evolved into "toleration through isolation" as a result of the Dukhobors' request for segregated settlement. In the 1810s and 1820s, a rising tide of dissatisfaction with these policies spread through the central and provincial bureaucracy. During the 1820s, a rash of new and uncoordinated legislation and proposals appeared concerning the sectarians as tsarist officials grappled with the persistent problem of governing a multi-confessional state without endangering the stable and reputedly loyal majority. During the decade, many component parts of the 1830 edict (isolation, military service, and limitation of the spread of sectarians) were gradually adopted as Russian policy-makers edged closer to the watershed decree.

Dukhobors in Cossack Clothing: Choosing Transcaucasia

The final form of the 1830 edict—including the specific choice of Transcaucasia as the location to gather sectarians, and the conscious notion of using them as colonists—was prompted by a specific incident: the problems caused by the appearance of

[98]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 86-87 and Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 229.

Dukhobors among the Don Cossacks in the 1820s. The case of the Don Dukhobors forced officials to take decisive action after years of muddling. In this way, regional issues in the Don region led to the solidification of an overall policy regarding the sectarians throughout the Empire.[99]

Cossacks professing the Dukhobor faith had been appearing with increasing regularity among the Don Cossacks since at least the early 1820s.[100] The Don leadership considered the Dukhobors to be a threat to the smooth running and social stability of their units. They feared the spread of the heresy on religious grounds, and also because they believed that such pacifist non-conformists made undependable soldiers. In their efforts to remove the Dukhobor influence from these Cossacks—and to prevent any further spread of the "heresy"—found the prevailing practice of sending sectarians to settle in New Russia as punishment was no longer useful. Not only were such measures no longer a punishment, but they could have the reverse affect of prompting others to convert to the Dukhobor faith. Exile to New Russia freed the individual from all military responsibilities and allowed the settler to live a quiet, relatively well-off existence. Transcaucasia and Siberia were the logical alternatives to New Russia as a place of exile. The combination of military requirements in the

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[99]The debates surrounding the fate of the Don Dukhobors were profoundly important in the formation of the edict of 1830, and thereby the fate of sectarians in general for much of the nineteenth century. While clearly cognizant of these events, Russian scholars of the Dukhobors have downplayed or practically ignored the importance of the case of the Don Cossack Dukhobors in the fate of sectarians in the nineteenth century. The premier historian of the Dukhobors, S. A. Inikova, attaches no importance to the events. Other scholars of Russian sectarian migration to Transcaucasia, such as A. I. Klibanov, I. V. Dolzhenko, and D. I. Ismail-Zade, do not mention the incident at all. See S. A. Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia i khoziaistvenno-kul'turnye kontakty kavkazskikh dukhobortsev s mestnym naseleniem," in *Dukhobortsy and Molokane v Zakavkaz'e*, eds. V. I. Kozlov and A. P. Pavlenko (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1992), 45.

[100]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1822, d. 10; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1824, d. 18; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1824, d. 47; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 7; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1827, d. 34; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1828, d. 139; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1828, d. 145; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1829, d. 149; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 3-5, 75-78; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, n.d., ll. 47-78, 113-131; and *SPChR* (1875), pp. 69, 78, 83.

Caucasus and the silence of Siberian officials lead to the choice of the Transcaucasus as the new place of settlement for Russia's sectarians.

In 1824, Ataman Lieutenant-General Ilovaiskii reported that 57 Dukhobors had appeared in two Don stanitsy. Following an established discourse about the Dukhobors, he described them as intransigent and stubborn in their errors and underscored the severe threat posed by their ability to attract others to their "delusions." According to previous practice, the response of Don officials had been to strip the "offender" of his duties and association with the Don Cossacks, and send the individual involved to New Russian Dukhobor colony in Molochnye vody as part of Alexander's isolation policies. In the 1824 case, however, Ilovaiskii argued that these earlier methods were failing to solve the problem: "this measure, so beneficial in regards to civilian Dukhobors, can bring about the opposite result among Cossacks who are obligated to military service."[101] He reported that the newly converted Dukhobors tended to come from families of Old Believers. These individuals, Ilovaiskii argued, were using conversion to the Dukhobor faith as a means to escape military service, because resettlement to Dukhobor communities in Tauride guberniia not only provided for them all of the advantages of a quiet and bountiful life, but also relieved them of all "cares, labors and dangers" attached to life as a Don soldier. Ilovaiskii was further concerned that the possibility of this easier option would prove sufficient to motivate other Cossacks to convert in order to leave behind the perils and travails of Cossack life for the relatively easy life of a settler in the Crimea.

Ilovaiskii confronted tsarist officials with the dilemma that the existing punishment might actually have the undesired effect of enticing others to the heresy.

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[101]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 1-1ob.

To avoid this problem, he proposed that those Don Cossacks discovered in the future adhering to the Dukhobor faith should not be sent to Tauride guberniia, but resettled on the Caucasian Line. There they would not be able to escape military service and "will be required ... continually to serve with weapons in hand against the mountain predators [*khishchniki*] [and] the Dukhobor heresy on the Don will not only weaken but will be completely destroyed. Meanwhile those infected by [the heresy] will perform real service, for which they are being lost forever under the existing arrangement."[102]

The response of Alexander I to Ilovaiskii's proposal reflected the general concern in St. Petersburg that the Dukhobors, like all subjects, be made to fulfill their obligation of service to the state. The Emperor found the plan sound but insisted that two questions needed to be resolved before any other action was taken. First, was there sufficient land in the Caucasian oblast' where the Dukhobors could be settled to carry out Cossack service? Second, did not the tenets of the Dukhobor faith prevent those who join it from carrying arms at all and performing military service?[103] The Committee of Ministers concluded that whatever their faith might say in principle, it had not prevented the Dukhobors, or any other sectarians, from carrying out military service in the past.[104] Nothing, they argued, should prevent the Dukhobors from performing their duties in the Caucasus. The Committee added that such exile would also act as a strong deterrent to other Cossacks who might have been thinking of converting. Concerning the availability of land, the Committee expressed their opinion that the Caucasus was large and sparsely populated, but the question could only be determined by the regional administrators.[105]

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[102]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 1-1ob; *PSZ* (2), t. 1, 1826, no. 126, p. 188; and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 3.
[103]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 1ob-2 and *PSZ* (2), t. 1, 1826, no. 126, p. 188.
[104]Dukhobor sources also indicate that they did reluctantly fulfill military service when required to do so. However, Dukhobor leaders often counseled new draftees not to kill anyone and to shoot into the air if they were ever actually in battle. See, for instance, OR RGB f. 369, K. 42, d. 2, 1950, ll. 396-398.
[105]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, l. 2 and *PSZ* (2), t. 1, 1826, no. 126, p. 189.

The nature of life on the Caucasian frontier, where the ministers were considering sending the Don Dukhobors, must be kept in mind. As they were well aware, service in the Caucasus was for all intents and purposes the equivalent of a death sentence. Whereas the average death rate per thousand troops in the Empire as a whole was 37.4 men, the rate in the Caucasus was much higher: 67 men per thousand troops. In Europe, the average was only 20 men per thousand at that time. More staggering was the fact that of these 67, only 5.8 died as a result of combat-related incidents. The remainder fell prey to widespread disease and an unfamiliar climate. Indeed, the contemporary traveler Robert Lyall made note that Georgia was commonly known as the "cemetery of the Russian army."[106] Russians often called the Caucasus the "warm Siberia" or "southern Siberia."[107]

General A. P. Ermolov, the Administrator-in-Chief of Georgia and the Caucasian Region, proposed his own solution to the sectarian problem while replying to the MVD on November 12, 1825 concerning the availability of land to settle the Dukhobors on the Caucasian Line.[108] He argued that, while there was no doubt that the spread of Dukhobors among the Don Cossacks certainly could not be tolerated, their spread might be even more dangerous in the Caucasian oblast', home to representatives from a large number of sects and schisms who could easily be tempted into the Dukhobor deviation. Because of their proximity to the border, these religious non-conformists could neither be eradicated nor restrained by those measures used in the central provinces. Rather than relocate them to the Caucasus oblast', Ermolov recommended that the Don Cossack Dukhobors be settled in segregated communities

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[106]Quoted in Fry, "Doukhobors," 229-230, note 55.
[107]Respectively, D. I. Ismail-Zade, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo v Zakavkaz'e: 30-e gody XIX-nachalo XX v.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1982), 50, note 75, and Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1.
[108]On Ermolov more generally, see Michael Whittock, "Ermolov: Proconsul of the Caucasus," *Russian Review* 18, no. 1 (1959): 53-60 and A. P. Ermolov, *Biograficheskii ocherk* (St. Petersburg: Izd. Imp. russkago voenno-istoricheskago obshchestva, 1912).

outside the boundary line of Russian military consolidation, where there would be no shortage of land for settlement. Ermolov saw this as the best solution to two problems. First, he wanted to separate the Dukhobors as much as possible from the stanitsy of other Cossacks who lived along the Caucasian boundary line. Second, he wanted to fulfill what he saw as the principal goal of the Don Dukhobors' resettlement: to move them to a region where by dint of absolute necessity they would be forced to defend their property and their families with arms, and through these martial activities be of benefit to the state. Ermolov ended by requesting information on the number of Dukhobors to be exiled, under what conditions they would move, and when the migration would take place.[109]

The Ministry of the Interior (MVD) took center stage in the next act of the debate over the fate of the Don Dukhobors. Upon receiving Ermolov's opinion, they immediately voiced deep concerns with his plan. The MVD particularly feared the results of distancing the Dukhobors from other Cossack armies stationed in the Caucasus. They worried that either the Dukhobors would enter into secret, subversive interactions with the neighboring "mountain peoples" [*gortsy*], or would move abroad, since nothing prevented them from abandoning Russia.[110] The MVD reasoned that Ermolov's report itself corroborated their fears because of his assertion that the proximity of the Caucasian oblast' to the border prevented the eradication and restraint of sects and schisms. The MVD entirely dismissed Ermolov's objections that the spread

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[109]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 13-13ob. It should be noted that Ermolov's decision here stands in contrast to his earlier opinions on the matter of sectarians in Transcaucasia. Indeed, he had in fact been among the first tsarist officials to raise objections to the settlement of sectarian Cossacks in Tauride province. In 1817, presaging Ilovaiskii, Ermolov had argued that the exile of Dukhobors from the Caucasian Cossacks to New Russia would act as an enticement to others to join the sectarians. Instead Ermolov had found that there were sufficiently small numbers of sectarians among the Caucasian Cossacks that they posed little threat. He even went so far as to assert that they could be permitted to conduct their own religious services in agreement with their consciences. See GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 6.
[110]Here the MVD pointed to the Nekrasov Cossacks as an example of those who fled the country.

of the Dukhobor heresy in the Caucasian oblast' posed any threat. They believed that interaction with Orthodox subjects would be difficult because the oblast' was so distant from the central provinces and because the population of the region was so scattered.[111]

The MVD's objections, however, were themselves dismissed by the State Council, the Committee of Ministers, and the Emperor (now Nicholas I), all of whom sided with Ermolov's plan. On December 29, 1825, the Committee of Ministers affirmed their support of Ermolov's opinion, and declared that the settlement of the Don Dukhobors beyond the perimeter of the Caucasian Oblast' fulfilled two purposes. First, finding themselves in constant contact with the "mountain peoples," they would be forced by necessity to defend themselves, their property and their families. Second, the grim fate of these Dukhobors would restrain other Don Cossacks from joining the sect. Moreover, the Committee added, the idea that they would run away was without foundation since the Dukhobors would have nowhere to which to run, other than to the "mountaineers," who, the Committee was sure, would attack them.[112]

The most detailed and critical view of the Dukhobors—one with which the Tsar agreed—was voiced by Ober-Egermeister Pashkov, the Chair of the Department of Laws of the State Council, on February 6, 1826.[113] His virulent and aggressive dislike for the Dukhobors, and open desire for their eradication, stands out markedly from the more moderate opinions heard to this point. He argued that the Dukhobors posed an enormous threat to "Church, Throne, and Fatherland" because they were different from other *raskol'niki* in many respects. They concealed themselves behind a veil of respectability and modesty, and with this mask they were able to trap the weak in faith

[111]*PSZ* (2), t. 1, 1826, no. 126, pp. 189-190. The Ministry of Finance joined the MVD in voicing their opposition to Ermolov's proposal.
[112]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, l. 19 and *PSZ* (2), t. 1, 1826, no. 126, p. 190.
[113]The following discussion is drawn from RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 20-21ob; *PSZ* (2), t. 1, 1826, no. 126, pp. 190-192.

and spread their heresy. Pashkov underscored how provincial statistics demonstrated a rapid spread of the Dukhobors' faith. He argued that few obstacles to this spread appeared to be working, and that while the Dukhobors had expanded only among the lower sosloviia to that point, there was a significant possibility that they would expand beyond those bounds in the near future. Pashkov found the anti-sectarian measures to have been too lenient, and demanded nothing short of the annihilation of the Dukhobor communities.

Pashkov supported Ermolov's proposal as the best means by which to correct the moral evil that the Dukhobors represented; to subdue them by fostering obedience to state power and law; and to protect Orthodox people for the good of the state. He cited five reasons in support of Ermolov's plan. First, he believed that settled among hostile people, the Dukhobors would be required to defend themselves. In doing so, not only would they complete their service for the state, but, more importantly, they "will come themselves to understand the necessity and benefit of the institutions of government power and with full obedience to them will soon realize that no community can exist without a head and authorities."[114] Second, he declared that exile of the Dukhobors outside the Caucasian oblast' would prevent any means for them to spread their "spirit of depravity," which he saw as deeply harmful to the "good health" of the Empire. Third, he echoed others in claiming that the exile would serve as a "moral lesson" for those who might think of attaching themselves to the heresy. Fourth, the exile of the Dukhobors would not only separate "evil" subjects from "good" ones, but would clear out the central provinces of "unruly and audacious" sectarians and thereby permit obedient, Orthodox subjects to "enjoy a peaceful tenure in the homes of their ancestors." Pashkov perceived an additional advantage in Ermolov's proposals: settled outside of

[114] RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 20ob-21.

the Caucasian oblast', the Dukhobors would act as substitutes for non-sectarian subjects, who would otherwise have to take the risks as settlers in the region. In Pashkov's arguments, we see the first articulation of the idea that the settlement of sectarians in Transcaucasia would not only isolate the Orthodox faithful from contagion and rid the central provinces of their influence (the initial and primary goal), but simultaneously would assist in achieving the goal of colonizing and controlling the newly conquered territories. .

Pashkov concluded by refuting potential objections to his analysis. He noted that there would be those who said that the Dukhobors were people not accustomed to great military feats, and that settling them so close to the wild mountain peoples, so "skilled in the arts of war," was tantamount to meaningless mass slaughter. In response, he argued that "their own necessity will be their teacher" [*sobstvennaia ikh nuzhda budet im uchitelem*] and this necessity would furnish them the means to ward off complete communal extinction. Pashkov assumed that part of Ermolov's plan included giving them weapons, tools, and training them in martial skills. However, Pashkov added ominously that no military operation was without casualties. "Is it not more useful to the government to occupy the border, which demands strict defense, with a group of people who by their spirit and rules are dangerous to the general good, than have such people support the interior of the state? The loss of evil-doers [such as the Dukhobors] who are intransigent and unable to leave their anarchic heresy should not be considered a loss for the state."[115]

Almost as an afterthought, Pashkov added an opinion that further altered the plan to send sectarians to the Caucasus, broadening its application to include all Dukhobors in the Empire. He wrote that should there be insufficient Dukhobors among

[115]Ibid., l. 21ob.

the Don Cossacks to populate the territory beyond the Caucasian line, then he proposed that Dukhobor settlers from other provinces be chosen to fill out the complement. Nicholas agreed to Pashkov's addendum and ordered exile to the Caucasus of those merchants, lower-middle class, odnodvortsy, state and royal [*udel'nye*] peasants who belonged to the Dukhobor and Molokan sects for settlement with the Don Dukhobors.[116] In response, the MVD requested information from the Empire's governors concerning an official tally of Dukhobors and other sectarians in the Empire.[117]

The policy-making process took yet another turn when Ermolov received information on the number of Dukhobors to be resettled. Finding the amount far too small, he began to backpedal on his proposal to settle sectarians beyond the Caucasian line. Ermolov had initially assumed that there would be sufficient Dukhobors exiled from the Don Cossacks in order to form their own separate stanitsa, strong enough to defend itself, or at least strong enough to hold out until help could arrive from neighboring stanitsy. Since Ilovaiskii proposed to exile only 86 Dukhobor men, among whom only 24 were actually serving at the time, Ermolov wrote to the MVD stating that it was no longer feasible to settle them according to his initial plan. "[T]o settle them separately in the vicinity of the local mountain people would mean to give them up as sacrifices the first time that the mountaineers attacked." Since it was also not possible to settle the Dukhobor Cossacks among other Cossacks on the Caucasian Line for fear of contagion, Ermolov recommended that the Don Dukhobors be exiled to Siberia. There they could be settled separately from others and also serve state interests alongside Siberian Cossacks, but without all of the dangers that life in the Caucasus entailed.

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[116]Ibid., ll. 37-37ob.

[117]Ibid., l. 51. Regarding the number of Dukhobors, see RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1826, d. 46.

Ermolov was no longer willing to take on the extra responsibility, and drain on resources, that protecting the exposed Dukhobors appeared to entail.[118]

During the following year, little is found in the surviving documents regarding the relocation of the Dukhobors from the Don region, except for the lone voice of the Ataman of the Don Cossacks. With increasing concern, he wrote to the MVD reminding them that the Dukhobors still remained among the Don Cossacks and that, as a result, the number of Dukhobors was growing as they attracted other Cossacks to their faith. The Ataman desperately wanted to be rid of the Dukhobors before they could do any more harm. With each letter he reported further conversions to the Dukhobors and voiced his grave concern that with each conversion the strength of the Don Cossack fighting force was decreasing.[119]

Part of the delay, we must assume, was connected to the change in command in the Caucasus from Ermolov to his successor General I. F. Paskevich.[120] Paskevich further complicated the question of resettling the Don Dukhobors by bringing his own proposal to the table—a plan which earmarked Transcaucasia as the location for sectarian resettlement instead of the Caucasian Line.[121] No matter how much supervision and surveillance, he argued, settling the Don Dukhobors just outside the

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[118]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 29-30, 53ob-54ob. This letter voicing Ermolov's concern is dated April 9, 1826. It is unclear how much of Ermolov's proposal was genuine concern for the sectarians, how much was simply a desire to be rid of them as a problem, and how much it was fear of the vast resources that would be necessary to expend in order to help keep them alive.

[119]On the repeated correspondence of the Don officials concerning the continued presence of Dukhobors in their ranks, see ibid., ll. 79-80ob, 85-86, 102, 111-112 and RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1828, d. 139.

[120]Ermolov was replaced as Chief Administrator in the Caucasus as a result of his connections to the Decembrists. The silence was also the result of intra-ministerial squabbling within the MVD. While discussions raged between the central administration and their local representatives, another debate was taking place inside the MVD itself over which department was responsible for the sectarians. the question of jurisdiction fell between the Department of State Properties and Public Buildings and the Department of Police. Each struggled to place responsibility for the sectarians on the other. The terms of the debate centered around the former's claim that exiled sectarians fell under the purview of the Police, while the latter asserted that those sectarians who resettled voluntarily, or by the proposal of local officials, were the responsibility of the State Properties Department. The documents give no clear outcome to this bureaucratic squabbling. RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 74ob-77, 82-84.

[121]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61 ll. 46-46ob and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, ll. 70-72.

Caucasian line could not entirely prevent interaction between them and the Line Cossacks settled near them. Rather than resolving the Dukhobor problem, it would simply shift it from the Don region to the Caucasus because the Dukhobors would find it relatively easy to spread their false teachings among the Caucasian Cossacks.

The danger of heretical contagion was augmented, Paskevich continued, because Russia's southern border was unstable and likely to be pushed farther and farther south with every Russian military success. Under these conditions, Dukhobor settlements located just outside the boundary of the Caucasian oblast' would soon find themselves in the middle of southward moving Cossack villages and defense systems. The Dukhobors could be moved along with the movement of the frontier, but Paskevich did not endorse this option, finding it disruptive both for the Dukhobors and for the regional administrators. Since Ermolov's plan was not sufficiently efficacious in preventing any further spread of the Dukhobor faith, Paskevich proposed that the Don Dukhobors be settled in Georgia, or another Transcaucasian province. There they would be deprived of all opportunity to preach their dogma because their neighbors' differing languages and cultures prevented communication.[122] At the same time, Paskevich also envisioned that the sectarians would serve as an important barrier to attack by predators [*khishchniki*]. Paskevich relayed to the Don Ataman that resettlement of the Dukhobors would have to be postponed until suitable land for their settlement was found.

The choice of the exact location in Transcaucasia for settlement was left with the military governor in Tiflis, Sipiagin[123]. While Paskevich had suggested that the Dukhobors be settled in Georgia, Sipiagin found the proposed location to be a threat to the spread of the sectarian faiths among Orthodox peoples. To settle the Dukhobors in

[122]Here Paskevich echoed the views of the Synod regarding the Subbotniki of September 1825 (discussed above). It is unclear whether he did so consciously or inadvertently.
[123]Initials for Sipiagin are not given in the sources.

Georgia proper would be far from a sufficient impediment to further sectarian expansion because dialogue between Christian groups was inevitable—even if they were as culturally distinct as Georgians and Russian sectarians. In consequence, Sipiagin reported to Paskevich that he could find no other place for settlement of the Dukhobors than the lands of the Talysh khanate, in the so-called Muslim provinces [*Musul'manskie provintsii*] in the eastern part of Transcaucasia. As further justification for his choice of location, Sipiagin added, prophetically, that the climate of Talysh would in all likelihood kill many of the sectarians until they became accustomed to it.[124]

Paskevich made one final adjustment to Sipiagin's proposal when he wrote to the MVD about the arrangements for sectarian settlement. Rather than the Talysh khanate, as the Tiflis governor recommended, Paskevich now listed the Karabakh and Shirvan oblasts of the Muslim provinces as the point of destination. He believed that this location could not have been better in terms of isolation and the prevention of the spread of the sectarian faith. With the exception of Russian military personnel and administrators there were no other Orthodox in the vicinity. Paskevich argued that it would be difficult for sectarians to enter into any kind of relationship with either the Muslim or the non-Muslim peoples[125] inhabiting these regions because of cultural, linguistic, and religious differences. The sectarians would find nothing but infertile ground in any conversion efforts. Moreover, the interaction of sectarians with the local inhabitants would also be seriously impeded by sheer demography and geography. The population density in the Karabakh province, for example, there were no more than four people per quadratic verst.[126]

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[124]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, ll. 73-74 and GMIR f. 2. op. 7, d. 594, l. 4.
[125]Paskevich listed Armenians, gypsies and Nestorians.
[126]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, ll. 77-78.

St. Petersburg's acceptance of Transcaucasia as the holding area to isolate sectarians from the Orthodox faithful was by no means decided at the outset. Indeed, it was only through a process of negotiation, and no small amount of contingency, that the two other candidates for resettlement, the North Caucasus and Siberia, fell by the wayside. Throughout all of the discussions over the fate of the Don Dukhobors, Siberia was also being vetted as a potential location for the settlement of the religious dissenters, as Lanskoi, and later Ermolov, proposed.[127] However, despite repeated missives from central authorities requesting information on the possibility of settling the sectarians in Siberia, Siberian authorities maintained their silence. Whether this was a conscious decision on the part of local officials to postpone or prevent the movement of sectarians into their jurisdiction, or whether it was simply the result of long and poor communication lines, cannot be gleaned from the existing documents. Whatever the cause of their inaction, the result was the same. On May 18, 1828, after repeated requests for information, the MVD became impatient with waiting for a response from Siberia and abandoned any thoughts they had of using Siberia as a repository for the sectarians. From that point on, Transcaucasia became the sole remaining candidate for the vessel in which to segregate the sectarians.[128]

Throughout the process, the MVD more than any other agency, acted as the voice of support for the Dukhobors. The State Council believed that the loss of Dukhobors could not be considered a loss for the state, and Sipiagin justified settling the Dukhobors in the Muslim Provinces of Transcaucasia because there they would likely die in large numbers before adapting to the climate. In contrast, the MVD repeatedly called for better treatment for the Dukhobors. In June of 1828, they wrote to

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[127]Lanskoi's proposal is discussed above.

[128]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 88-89ob. For the repeated efforts to obtain a response form Siberia, see ibid., ll. 48, 50-51, 59.

Paskevich, saying that the recent peace conducted with Persia facilitated the process of finding greater "means and comforts" [*sposobov i udobstva*] for the settlers. In this same letter, the MVD reiterated its emphasis on the importance of continued state service on the part of the sectarians. In a discussion of the choice of land for resettlement, MVD reminded Paskevich to pick a location "... so that they are settled as much as possible in the most advantageous place for the continuation of service and for the protection and provisioning of their families, together with distance [to impede] the conversion of others to their religion."[129]

Conclusion

The 1830 edict set in motion long-term Russian settlement in Transcaucasia, although this was not the intent of the decree's authors. Indirectly and unexpectedly, Alexander's inclinations to "toleration through isolation" led ultimately to the settlement of ethnic Russians in this recently incorporated region on the empire's southern periphery. Only after the Dukhobors' request for a separate settlement did Alexander I's introduction of tolerance in tandem with restrictions lead to the practice of segregation. Dissatisfaction with Alexander's initial policies, and especially the continued spread of sectarian groups, led Russian officials to reformulate their treatment of sectarians in the early 1820s. In the ensuing bureaucratic debates over what path to follow, the contours of the 1830 rescript began to take shape. However, only with the rapid spread of Dukhobors among the Don Cossacks did tsarist administrators hit upon a broadly accepted revision of their religious policy: enhanced segregation of sectarians in the distant (and unsafe) periphery of Transcaucasia. The specific choice of the

[129]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 90-93ob. Quotation is found on l. 93ob. See also GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, ll. 75-76.

Transcaucasus as the location to gather sectarians, and the idea of using the dissenters as colonists, was prompted by this specific incident.

The events leading up to the 1830 decree provide insight into bureaucratic decision-making and policy formation in pre-reform Russia, and the mutual influences of central authorities, local officials, and Russian subjects in this process. Russia was not only "underinstitutionalized and undergoverned," as S. Frederick Starr has described, but its governance was uncoordinated and inconsistent.[130] Initiative for policies frequently originated from below, from both regional officials and from non-governmental subjects. The decision-making process included a series of proposals, counter-proposals, and compromises involving different branches of government and social groups during which the original policy intent could be fundamentally transformed. Decisions were made in the absence of sufficient or desired information. Local officials resorted to evasion and sabotage of central policies they found inconvenient or inappropriate. Choices made to solve one problem often had unexpected and unwanted ramifications in other areas. Moreover, whereas most scholarship depicts a wide rift between the tolerance of Alexander I and the intolerance of Nicholas I, the sectarian example reveals that the shift in religious policy attributed to the later Tsar was already in full swing under his predecessor.

Despite the fact that the sectarians did come to be seen as colonial settlers, and took on imperialist roles (discussed in chapters three and four), their potential contribution as colonizers was only a minor factor in sending them to the region. Indeed, the decision to relocate Russian colonists to the Transcaucasus resulted from the desire to rid the interior provinces of religious undesirables—people for whom tsarist

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[130] S. Frederick Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830-1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 349, passim. Although, in a country as vast and diverse as nineteenth-century Russia, inconsistency may have been an appropriate solution to provide flexibility.

Russia could find no place within their "national" framework of religious affiliation—not to colonize the frontier. Preliminary to 1830, those officials who did concern themselves with what would happen to the relocated non-conformists did not envision them as agents of Russian empire-building. Rather, they generally saw the sectarians as valueless people who would likely perish in Transcaucasia from the climate or indigenous peoples, and whose existence (and sacrifice) could only to serve the state by sparing the lives of Orthodox Russians. However, as discussed in the next chapter, if the state had one goal in mind in opening up Transcaucasia for sectarian segregation, the religious dissenters themselves had very different desires and expectations in their decisions to relocate to Transcaucasia.

Chapter 2

To a Land of Promise: Sectarians on the Move

The edict of 1830 opened a new and striking chapter in Russia's long history of borderland settlement. Although small numbers of Russians had moved to Transcaucasia before 1830, the decree opened the floodgates of large-scale resettlement.[1] Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, but especially in the 1830s and 1840s, tens of thousands of sectarians left central Russia for the Transcaucasus. The possibility of movement engendered a vast range of opportunities for the sectarians, permanently altering their lives. This chapter examines sectarian resettlement from the vantage of the migrants themselves: their lived experiences, the personal and social ramifications of relocation, and the cultural meanings of migration. Once state laws gave them the option, why did these religious dissenters choose to relocate, and how did they experience the voyage itself and their initial years in Transcaucasia?

Resettlement had a very different significance for sectarian-settlers than it did for state officials. As discussed in the preceding chapter, from the state perspective, sectarian relocation was a story of Russian endeavors to regulate a multi-confessional empire in which one faith was privileged, and to mastermind and harness the movement of the population. From the sectarian vantage, resettlement was understood in personal terms of material well-being and religious self-expression—a process saturated with aspirations and life-altering consequences. Resettlement was inevitably a momentous event in the life of a sectarian. It required leaving behind everything and everyone that

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[1] On the small military settlements, see D. I. Ismail-Zade, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo v Zakavkaz'e, 30-e gody XIX—nachalo XX v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982): 34-35. On the few illegal Russian settlers in Transcaucasia before 1830, see A. Iunitskii, "Sektantskiia gnezda na Kavkaze (v predelakh Bakinskoi gubernii)," *Khristianskoe chtenie* vyp. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1895): 142-146.

these Russians had ever known, to migrate (often on foot) to a part of the world which differed in almost every way from their homelands. Whereas state officials tended to see sectarian relocation in corporatist terms—the movement of an undifferentiated bloc of people—the non-conformists understood the experience not only as their communal fate as sectarians, but also as a personal voyage.

Sectarian resettlement took three forms: forced exile by government or court order; the legal, voluntary [*dobrovol'no*] decision to migrate of individuals, families or communities of sectarians; and illegal, clandestine [*samovol'no*] running away. Settlers came from a variety of different provinces originally, but primarily Tambov, Tauride, Voronezh, Orenburg, Saratov, Samara, Astrakhan, the North Caucasus, and the Don Region.[2] While overwhelmingly peasant in social make-up, sectarian settlers also included merchants, meshchane and odnodvortsy. State peasants predominated the ranks of rural migrants, since the 1830 decree gave permission only to state peasants voluntarily to resettle to Transcaucasia. Serfs did make their way in significant numbers to Transcaucasia, but almost always clandestinely because the existing laws gave them no legal opportunity to relocate. Moreover, despite the fact that Transcaucasia was legally open only to sectarian settlers, many Orthodox Russians took the opportunity to relocate there as well.

It is difficult to discern with any accuracy the total number of sectarians who resettled to Transcaucasia, or through what channel (exile, voluntary, clandestine). Official statistics tend to vary widely, and do not include all of the clandestine migrants. Nonetheless, the broad parameters of the resettlement can be seen. There were important regional variations concerning the relative percentage of each type of migrant:

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[2]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 61, 67-71 and I. V. Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy v Armenii (30–50-e gody XIX v.)," *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, Series IX, Istoriia, 29, no. 3 (May-June 1974): 59.

relatively more exiles in Tiflis guberniia, and large numbers of both exiles and clandestines in Baku guberniia. Studying various villages in what was then Erevan guberniia, I. V. Dolzhenko found that of 343 families, 284 (82.8%) arrived voluntarily, 56 (16.3%) were exiled, and 3 families (0.9%) arrived illegally.[3]

A myriad of mutually influential reasons impelled these people to confront the challenges and uncertainties of a cross-country trek and settlement in a new home. In general, scholars of Russian migration to the periphery before the Great Reforms have privileged the economic origins of resettlement, such as land hunger, famine, and utopian legends of a land of milk and honey.[4] However, for voluntary sectarian migrants to Transcaucasia the impetus was found in a combination of factors. Of primary importance were religious stimuli: either the promise of greater freedom in the practice of their faith or the apocalyptic expectation of the imminent coming of Christ's kingdom on earth. These combined with economic considerations of a better material life on the frontier, social motives to escape unwanted family circumstances, and longings to avoid military service. Of course, those sectarians earmarked for exile had little choice but to make the trip. We should note that sectarian settlers—whether exiled, voluntary or clandestine—did not move to Transcaucasia with any sort of a colonial mission in mind, despite the fact that they came to play imperialist roles once there. Unlike Russian missionaries, soldiers, traders, and administrators, the religious dissenters went neither to bring civilization to those without, nor to proselytize, to

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[3]As discussed below, the number for clandestines appears to be far too low. Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 60.

[4]I. V. Dolzhenko, *Khoziaistvennyi i obshchestvennyi byt russkikh krest'ian vostochnoi Armenii (konets XIX—nachalo XX vv.)* (Erevan: Izd-vo A. N. Armianskoi SSR, 1985), 18-39; François-Xavier Coquin, *La Sibérie: Peuplement et immigration paysanne au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Institut D'Études Slaves, 1969); David Moon, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation on the Eve of Reform: Interaction Between Peasants and Officialdom, 1825-1855* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1992), 23-61; and K. V. Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy XVII–XIX vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), 237-326.

defend the strength of the empire, to russify the colony, or develop its economic relationship with the metropole.[5]

Having decided to migrate to Transcaucasia, voluntary settlers became leading actors in the drama of resettlement—both to their benefit and their ruin. With the quality and content of their future at stake, they could not afford to be otherwise. Despite state efforts to micro-manage their movement, legislation more often took the form of a reaction to sectarian activities rather than an initiative from the center. Indeed, the story of sectarian relocation to the southernmost frontier reveals much about the space between, around, and within the laws and administrative structures where Russian subjects struggled to carve niches for themselves. It also exposes the negotiations between state power and the needs and desires of individuals and collectives.

Although the sectarian-settlers took to the road in anticipation of a better life for themselves in Transcaucasia—at least an escape from their current reality if not a full-fledged Shangri-La—many migrants, particularly those arriving in the 1830s, found quite the opposite. Despite the best efforts of both state and sectarian to make resettlement succeed as smoothly as possible, the land of promise often turned out to be a land of tragedy. The months traveling to Transcaucasia were fraught with pain, suffering, and deprivation. The unfamiliar climate killed as many as half of each contingent of settlers during their first years in their new homes. Those who did survive the early trials were forced quickly to adapt their economic practices to suit their new ecology, and labored to bring the local environment as much as possible under their

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[5]On missionaries, military men, traders, and administrators who moved to the empire's borderlands, see, for example, Paul Werth, "Subjects for Empire: Orthodox Mission and Imperial Governance in the Volga-Kama Region, 1825-1881" (Ph. D. diss., University of Michigan, 1996); Daniel Brower and Edward Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Michael Khodarkovsky, *Where Two Worlds Met: The Russian State and the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600-1771* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); and Thomas Barrett, "Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the North Caucasus," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (fall 1995): 578-601.

control. By the mid-1840s, however, the sectarian-settlers not only had come to a modus vivendi with the different Transcaucasian ecologies, but even began to flourish economically.

The resettlement process elicited inconsistent and conflicting attitudes of state officials towards sectarians. As discussed in chapter one, a prominent objective of the 1830 decree—albeit not unanimously agreed upon—was the extermination of the sectarians. However, in the actual course of relocation, rather than letting them perish, Russian authorities frequently came to the rescue of those non-conformists who experienced hardship and deprivation in transit. In part, this contradiction between policy and practice reflects an inherent tension in the 1830 edict between eliminating the sects and fulfilling service obligations to the state. Dead or starving sectarians made poor servitors. At the same time, decisions to provide support to sectarian-settlers rested on an individual official's morality and therefore varied widely according to personality. Coming face to face with the human suffering of migrants, local and regional officials were more likely to provide aid to the sectarians than their central counterparts who viewed the sectarians from afar, seeing them less as people and more as a corporate entity.

Exiling the Heretics

Tsarist officials exiled Russian sectarians to Transcaucasia from 1830 to the end of the nineteenth century, with the majority banished between 1830 and 1860.[6] The

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[6]RGIA f. 1284, op. 222-1897, d. 65, ll. 13-22; RGIA f. 1149, op. 6t.-1866, d. 108; RGIA f. 398, op. 53, d. 17201, 1889; RGIA f. 381, op. 2, d. 808, 1849; RGIA f. 1284, op. 200, d. 15, 1843; RGIA f. 1284, op. 218, d. 14, 1878; RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1834, d. 71; OR RGB f. 648, K. 46, d. 2, ll. 19-20; and I. Ia. Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni zakavkazskikh sektatorov" *Kavkaz* no. 135 (1878): 1.

frequency and form of exile varied from denomination to denomination. Most Dukhobors who relocated to the Transcaucasus were exiled in entire communities, either from the Don Cossacks in 1830 or from the Molochna region of New Russia, 1841-1845. In contrast, Molokans and Subbotniks were more frequently exiled as individuals or in small groups, arriving in Transcaucasia almost annually.

Officially, the Russian state exiled sectarians to Transcaucasia as punishment for such "crimes against faith" [*prestupleniia protiv very*] as "spreading their heresy and attracting others to it, and also for temptations, unruly behavior, and insolence towards the Orthodox Church and its priesthood."[7] According to the letter of the law, it was not a crime in and of itself to be a sectarian.[8] In practice, however, wide scope existed for an uneven implementation of the laws because the wording was poorly defined and decisions often rested with local priests or administrators. It was never entirely evident exactly what actions could be construed as "spreading," "tempting," or "converting" an Orthodox subject to some form of sectarianism. All public manifestations of sectarian rites and practices were expressly illegal—such as marriage and burial ceremonies that took place in public spaces, or the existence of sectarian prayer houses—but prayer meetings in private homes and Subbotnik circumcision, for example, were manifestations of belief that fell into a more ambiguous legal zone. Although not explicitly forbidden, such practices were nonetheless frequently punished.[9] Moreover, it was never exactly clear whether attempts to spread heresy had to be successful in order to be prosecuted, nor was it well defined whether an individual could be convicted

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[7]*PSZ* (2) T. V, otd. 2, 1830, no. 4010.
[8]Alexander I removed the act of holding "heretical" beliefs from the category of criminal offenses. In addition to the discussion in chapter 1, see *SPChR* (1875), p. 181 and GARF, f. 109, op. 3 (sekretnyi arkhiv), d. 1495, 1855.
[9]For one effort to clear up this confusion, see *PSZ* (2) T. 18, otd. 2, 1843, No. 17218.

for teaching a sectarian faith to his/her children.[10] As a result of these ambiguities, many sectarians were forcibly exiled simply for adhering to their faith.

Local officials (both secular and spiritual) often took advantage of the power of exile to settle personal scores and rid themselves of unwanted sectarians. The circumstances surrounding the exile of the Molokan I. E. Podkovyrov in 1889 highlight the instrumental uses of banishment.[11] Podkovyrov was a well-off peasant who lived in the Don Military Oblast'. In a bitter memoir, he recounts how one night he gave shelter to two Cossacks in one of his barns as a gesture of kindness to weary travelers. Not long after, however, local officials accused him of converting these Cossacks to the Molokan faith. In court, those who Podkovyrov had been charged with leading astray were called as witnesses. They testified that he had not converted them since they had been Molokans for a number of years beforehand, and the case was dismissed. However, local religious authorities, unhappy with the decision, brought a new trial against Podkovyrov with new witnesses. The second time, he was found guilty, stripped of all rights and punished with exile to Transcaucasia. Podkovyrov (and others charged with him) were put in prison, treated harshly and, like so many exiles, made the trip south on foot and under guard, in manacles and special prisoner's clothing.[12] Only following the religious toleration laws of 1905 was Podkovyrov able to return to his place of birth and to his family.

Podkovyrov wrote two songs about his trial and exile that reveal the human dimension of forcible resettlement.

Song no. 1 (May 15, 1889)

[10]For a case where teaching one's children was seen as spreading heresy, see RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3175, 1841-1842.
[11]The story which follows is drawn from GMIR, f. 2, op. 8, d. 300, n.d.
[12]On the procedure for moving the exiles to Transcaucasia in general, see GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 13 and the section "On the Road" later in this chapter.

They called us to trial.
Before the court we stood.
Judges asked us questions,
Punished us in our cases,
Read the decision
For the third time:
Exile us to Transcaucasia.
Our heads and legs lost their nerve
And all our limbs grew weak.
Black crows attacked us,
Pecked at us on the road.
Then some people fought,
And others shed tears,
Many growled like lions,
And many cried and sobbed.
Children, give me help.
I will subdue all the troubles in my heart.
My heart beats in me,
From my eyes tears flow.
In shackles they chained us
And to Transcaucasia they drove us.

Nas na sud pozvali
Pred sudom my stoiali
Sud'i nas voproshali
V delakh nashikh ustratali
Vychitali ukaz
V tretii raz:
Soslat' nas za Kavkaz.
Ruki nashi i nogi orobeli
I vse chleny oslabeli
Chernye vrany nas brali,
Na puti klevali.
Kto vsled branilsia
A kto proslezilsia;
Mnogie kak l'vy rychali
A mnogie plakali i rydali
Daite deti mne pomogi:
Ukroshchu ia v serdtse vse trevogi.
Serdtse vo mne b'etsia
Iz glaz sleza l'etsia.
V kandaly nas zakovali
I za Kavkaz pognali

Song no. 2 (September 18, 1889)

They drove us to Transcaucasia
Took the shackles from our legs
The sergeant took us over
And gave us to a caravansary.
I walked around the town.
I looked all around me
And was happy
That I had received freedom.
On the second and third day I walked around
On the fourth, I went out,
But I did not find pleasure
My happiness flew away;
All spiritual sweetness.
Tired, I sat down
And sang this song:
Late, late in the evening
All the people were resting
And having been cruelly locked up alone
In deep, dreary silence
A sorrowful prisoner, breathing heavily
Past midnight I sit without sleep.
A farewell song I sing
At the prison window.
Fly wild winds

Za Kavkaz nas prignali
Kandaly s nog sniali
Starshina prinial,
V karavan-sarai sdal.
Ia po gorodu khozhu
Na vse storone gliazhu
I raduius' tomu
Chto svobodu poluchil.
Na vtoroi i tretii den' khozhu
Na chetvertyi vykhozhu,
No utekhi ne nakhozhu
Uletela moia radost',
Vsia dukhovnaia sladost'
Utomivshis' ia sel,
Etu pesniu zapel:
Pozdno pozdno v vecherok
Otdykhali ves' narod,
A zhestok zakliuchen na edine
V glubokoi unyloi tishine
Skorbnyi uznik; tiazhelo vozdykhalo
Za polnoch' sizhu bez sna
Pesn' proshchal'nyi zapevalo
U tiuremnago okna
Buinye vetry poletite

To my beloved homeland	V moi liubimyi krai rodnoi.
Carry news about me.	Obo mne vy vest' snesite
What has happened here to me.	Chto sluchilos' zdes' s mnoi.
Let my friends know	Pust' druz'ia moi uznaiut
That my turn to suffer has come.	A mne prishla stradat' chereda
Let them not wait for me	Menia pust' ne ozhidaiut
In my homeland ever.	V krai rodnoi nikogda.
Such a day will not come	Den' tot ne nastanet
That I will be in my homeland.	Chtoby na rodine mne byt'
My life withers with sadness	Zhizn' moia grust'iu zavianet
In a country of alien tribes.	V chuzhe-plemennoi strane.
They banished me to Transcaucasia	Menia v izgnan'e Zakavkaz' poslali
They chained my freedom to the mountains of the Caucasus,	Moiu svobodushku k goram Kavkaza prikovali
Deprived me of my kin and friends,	Lishili vsekh rodnykh-druzei
And abandoned me alone here	I odnogo zdes' brosili menia
Stole me from my wife and children.	Otniali ot zhen'e i ot detei
For them I have died forever	Dlia nikh ia umer navsegda.
Amen.[13]	Amin'.

Podkovyrov's songs voice the personal helplessness and frustration of banishment. While he laments the violent treatment of police and court official, he reserves the most space to relate the spiritual anguish of being torn away in shackles from friends, family, and his native land, without any expectation to see them again. Podkovyrov's use of imagery strengthens the songs' impact. Officials who escorted the exiles on the journey are rendered as "black crows" who "pecked" at them, and angry convicts became growling lions. Moreover, Podkovyrov reminds us that exile was simultaneously a group and individual tragedy. His first song describes events in communal terms of "us" and "we." At times all the exiles appear to act as if inextricably of one mind and body ("our heads and legs lost their nerve"). Once in Transcaucasia, his emphasis shifts to "I" and the sense of personal loss and suffering overshadows the group misfortune. The wind turned into his only connection to family, friends, and homeland. Despite being freed from his shackles upon arrival, and initially feeling that his problems were solved, Podkovyrov soon discovered that his woes remained. Even

[13]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 300, n.d., l. 1-1ob.

with a certain physical liberty, his spirit remained "chained to the mountains of the Caucasus."[14]

Podkovyrov's experiences are echoed in the story of another sectarian exile.[15] "First they shaved the right side of my head, then the blacksmith put my legs in shackles and tightly riveted the anvil. This first change brought an awfully unpleasant sensation in my body; it was awkward to walk ... it was painful especially at night during my sleep." "Treated like animals" on the journey, he felt no consolation after he arrived and was released in Transcaucasia. "Immediately my happiness was turned into sadness when I suddenly felt alone in this entirely unfamiliar land and among foreign people."[16]

Among the many instances of forcible exile to Transcaucasia, the state-enforced resettlement of Dukhobors from Melitopol' uezd, Tauride guberniia was quantitatively the largest. Approximately 4,000 Dukhobors relocated to Transcaucasia between 1841 and 1845—a number so large that they had to be moved in five different parties over the four-year period.[17] Central ministries and legislative organs saw the exile as an opportunity for "the annihilation [*unichtozhenie*] of the Dukhobor heresy" and "the eradication [*iskorenenie*] of the dangerous Dukhobor sect."[18]

The impetus for this mass movement centered officially around state charges of heinous crimes committed by the Dukhobors in the 1820s and 1830s. A special investigative commission formed in the 1830s accused the Molochna Dukhobors of torture, live burial, robbery, rule by a despotic oligarchy, granting refuge to military

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[14]My thanks to Gabriella Safran for her help in translating and interpreting these songs.
[15]His denomination is not listed.
[16]Quoted in Firouzeh Mostashari, "The Politics of Colonization: Sectarians and Russian Orthodox Peasants in Nineteenth Century Azerbaijan," *Journal of Central Asian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1996): 18-19.
[17]For full details of the migration see RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3212, 1841-1843; RGIA f. 384, op. 2, d. 977, 1841; RGIA f. 565, op. 4, d. 13676, 1842-1845; *AKAK* v. 9 ch. 1, docs. 19, 29, 35, 38, 43, 44, and 48; *AKAK* v. 9, ch. 2, docs. 510, 516, 523, and 526; and Gary Dean Fry, "The Doukhobors, 1801-1855: The Origins of a Successful Dissident Sect" (Ph. D. diss., The American University, 1976), 286-307.
[18]Respectively, RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3212, 1841-1843, l. 1 and *SPChR* (1875), p. 256.

deserters and insubordination of authority.[19] For their transgressions, Tsarist officials ordered the Dukhobors banished to Transcaucasia in 1839. The declaration informing the sectarians of their fate came two years later and asserted:

> And for all the mercy and good deeds that [Alexander I] showered on you, [he] demanded only that you live in peace and harmony among yourselves and not violate state laws and decrees. [Yet] hardly had you settled on the land allotted for you, when in the name of your faith, and with the command, or consent, of your false leaders and teachers, you began—and continue to this day—to murder people, torture them tyrannically, shelter deserters and vagabonds, hide crimes committed by your religious brethren, and disobey and scorn the power and commands of state and Tsar. Many of your co-religionists knew about these acts, which are against both God's and human law, and not only did they not inform the administration, but, quite the opposite, attempted to hide them and keep them secret. ... [For these crimes] you can no longer remain here and must be sent to such a place where you will be deprived of the means to bring harm to those around you.[20]

From the moment of the decree's promulgation, there has been a great debate (and no resolution) over the veracity of these charges, especially from the Dukhobors who deny them vociferously.[21] Whether they were true or not became somewhat of a moot point because certain Tsarist officials, both local and central, came to believe the accusations to be valid and acted towards the Dukhobors accordingly. However, while the crimes served as the official, public rationale for banishment, it is also clear that three other factors played at least some role in bringing about the decision to exile: revenge, diminishing isolation, and land allotment problems in the Molochna region. First, a variety of sources indicate that the Dukhobors suffered frequently from the bribery and blackmail efforts of local officials, and that their extortion "filled many an

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[19]Graphic descriptions of the crimes can be found in the commission's case reports, see PJBRMA, file 399.

[20]PJBRMA, file 758, l. 1.

[21]See Aylmer Maude, *A Peculiar People: the Doukhobors* (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1904), 121-126; Fry, "The Doukhobors," 270-283, 300-303, 351; and Peter Malov, *Dukhobortsy, ikh istoriia, zhizn' i bor'ba* (Thrums, British Columbia: 1948), 23-24.

official pocket."[22] Indeed, local authorities were so aggressive in these demands for bribes that when the Dukhobors at one time refused the exactions, "a single irate police official brought about the forced Caucasian migration" on trumped up charges as revenge.[23]

Second, as New Russia became increasingly incorporated into the core of the Russian empire—reflecting a shift from "periphery" to "center" in official characterizations of the area—the region's population tripled from 1803-1844. By far the majority of these new settlers were Orthodox Russians. As a result, the Dukhobors' segregation from Orthodox Russians rapidly diminished, and with it went the original rationale for concentrating the non-conformists in the Molochna region. While there is evidence to indicate that tsarist officials moved the New-Russian Dukhobors to Transcaucasia—further into the periphery—as an immediate means to reintroduce barriers to inter-denominational contact, it was not the only reason.[24] If the primary concern behind their banishment to Transcaucasia had been to reinforce isolation, then Tsarist authorities would logically have exiled the Molokans settled in the Molochna region as well. Tied in with the question of segregation was a burgeoning land crisis in New Russia. Tsarist officials and settlers in New Russia faced the dilemma of diminishing per capita land holdings because of the pressure of increasing migration from the central provinces. The Dukhobors held a relatively larger share of land than their neighbors (not as much as the Mennonites, but certainly more than the Molokans, Orthodox Russians, and Nogai). Tsarist administrators relieved the strain by moving

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[22]Moritz Wagner, *Der Kaukasus, und das Land der Kosaken* , quoted and translated in a review in *The Westminister and Foreign Quarterly Review* 50, no. 1 (1849): 272.
[23]Fry, "The Doukhobors," 278.
[24]Ibid., 283-286.

the Dukhobors out and filling their places with Orthodox Russians, and occasionally with Molokans.[25]

With the proclamation of the exile decree, the Dukhobors were offered the option of forcible relocation or conversion to Orthodoxy if they wished to remain in New Russia, and given a month to decide. Only a handful decided to convert and remain behind. For the majority who left, the relocation meant suffering and hardships. Despite the fact that Tsarist authorities knew about the proposed exile from 1839 on, they often waited until the last minute before informing a Dukhobor community of their deportation. The German zoologist Moritz Wagner, while traveling in Russia, noted that because "[the Dukhobors] had to sell their little possessions in all haste in order to begin their pilgrimage to the Caucasus, they fell into the hands of usurers and cheats, who gave them scarcely a tenth part of the value; and not a few official personages made handsome profits on the occasion."[26] The Dukhobors, like Podkovyrov, were escorted by military detachments while in transit. French geologist, Xavier Hommaire de Hell, wrote about passing "two large detachments of exiles escorted by two battalions of infantry."[27]

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[25]On population size and land holding in New Russia see Fry, "The Doukhobors," 186-193; RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, ll. 29-40, 54-61ob, 81-82ob, 123-128ob, and 132-135; GMIR f. K1, op. 1, d. 6, 1890; RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3331, 1841; RGIA f. 383, op. 1, d. 234, 1838; *PSZ* (2) t. 5, otd. 2, 1830, no. 4010, article 12; and GAKhO (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Khersonskoi oblasti) f. 14, op. 2, d. 70, 1821-1833. My deepest thanks go to John Staples for bringing the final two RGIA references to my attention, generously sharing his research with me, and permitting me to read his microfilm copy of the GAKhO document. For the use put to Dukhobor land following their departure, see RGIA f. 383, op. 5, d. 4319, 1842-1848 and "O poselenii gosudarstvennykh krest'ian Pravoslavnago ispovedaniia na zemliakh, ostavshikhsia v Melitopol'skom uezde posle vyslannykh za Kavkaz Dukhobortsov," *SPChR* (1875), pp. 309-310. Regarding Transcaucasian Dukhobor efforts later to retrieve some of the value of the land taken from them in New Russia see GMIR, f. K1, op. 1, d. 5, 1865-1867 and RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1886, d. 44.
[26]Wagner is quoted in *Westmininster and Foreign Quarterly Review* , 271-272. See also RGIA f. 384, op. 2, d. 977, 1841.
[27]Xavier Hommaire de Hell, *Travels in the Steppes of the Caspian Sea, The Crimea, The Caucasus, &c.* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1847), 81. Similarly, Joseph Elkinton relates that the mother of the future Dukhobor leader, Peter Verigin, described to him how "she was driven with her little children, at the point of the bayonet." Joseph Elkinton, "The Doukhobors: Their Character and Economic Principles," *Charities* 13, no. 10 (December 3 1904): 252.

The examples of Podkovyrov and the Molochna Dukhobors highlight the individual human tragedy and group experience of Russia's religiously-based practices of exile. Their stories show how Russian officials saw Transcaucasia as little more than a receptacle for unwanted subjects. In their decisions to banish sectarians, the authorities were motivated exclusively by concerns with the interior Russian provinces—exiling the dissenters *from* the center, rather than relocating them *to* the periphery to serve some purpose there. In consequence, Russia populated Transcaucasia with Russians who were filled with antagonism and bitterness for the mistreatment of officialdom. Unlike the voluntary settlers we will discuss now, exiled sectarians had no desire to migrate to Transcaucasia, and, if Podkovyrov is any indication, many wanted nothing more than to return to their former homes.

Voluntary Settlers: Motives for Migration

While the cases of exile stand out for their pathos, banished sectarians comprised only a minority of the settlers. By far the majority of sectarians who resettled to Transcaucasia did so voluntarily. The impetus to embark on such a life-altering endeavor can be placed into two broad categories, what we can call push and pull factors. Push factors included the desire to escape hardships in their home villages of central Russia: religious persecution, restrictive laws, economic distress, disagreeable family situations and military service. Pull forces attracted sectarians to Transcaucasia with promises of a better life on the frontier: the imminent appearance of Christ's kingdom on earth in Transcaucasia, economic bounty in a land of milk and honey, greater religious freedoms, waiting family members, and liberty from the extortion of

landowners, priests and local officials. The interaction of push and pull influences fostered the desire to resettle, although the actual confluence of particular forces was case-specific.[28] Reasons for resettlement crossed the boundaries of social grcups, and often the urban-rural divide. While two peasant families might resettle for entirely different purposes, the rationale for relocation could be identical for peasants and meshchane, for instance. Moreover, causes of migration also cut across confessional boundaries as sectarians of different denominations shared similar motives to move.

The particular combination of push and pull factors was delineated in great part by the context in which the sectarians made their decisions: the types of knowledge a would-be sectarian migrant possessed and the manner in which such information was obtained. While potential settlers could accurately judge their present state of affairs, their knowledge of the possibilities offered by life on the frontier was fragmentary and often unreliable. Information came frequently through rumors, legends, or exaggerations—generally characterized by visions of an impending utopia—which were spread through the preaching of a few particularly strong personalities. This is not to intimate that sectarians went blindly to their fate. Even while led on by hearsay, they could also know a great deal about what awaited them in Transcaucasia. A constant flow of information was provided by scouts, correspondence of family members already *in situ*, and migrants who returned from the Transcaucasus, either permanently or seasonally. As a result, certain sectarian-settlers relocated south with a remarkably clear idea of what to expect.

Sectarians of all denominations moved to Transcaucasia in order to escape oppressive, arbitrary treatment by secular and religious officials. While severe conduct towards them served as an impetus for elective resettlement, it played an even larger role

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[28]On the interaction of push and pull factors elsewhere in the Russian empire, see Moon, *Russian Peasants*, 23-61.

in the case of serf-runaways who, unlike state peasants, were not granted the option of legal, voluntary migration.[29] Sectarian sources recount vast numbers of incidents of poor treatment by *pomeshchiki*, priests and local officials: beatings, torture, sexual assault, the stockade, exile into penal servitude, draft into military service out of turn and in disproportionate numbers, and payment of more than their fair share of bribes.[30] According to a Molokan saying: "the priest betrays and the policeman tortures." Indeed, when Orthodox priests failed to convert sectarians, they often turned to civil authorities and landowners to beat and intimidate non-Orthodox to perform Orthodox rites.[31] Dukhobor peasants in Tambov province were flogged for their refusal to follow Orthodox practices until "discolored with black-blue bruises and wales ... and could hardly stand on their feet," and a few of them were knouted to death.[32] Molokans relate how clergy called them "heathen," coerced them to bow before icons and kiss the cross, and forcibly baptized their children—all of which were against the tenets of their faith—and beat the sectarians bloody if they refused.[33] Molokan serfs recalled how "to crown his [the pomeshchik's] malice, he forced them to milk pigs and to nurse pedigree dogs

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[29]GMIR, f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, l. 2 and I. V. Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy v Zakavkaz'e (k istorii formirovaniia russkoi diaspory v 1830—1850-e gody)," *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* no. 1 (1995): 54. See the discussion later in this chapter on clandestine migration.

[30]In addition to the examples discussed below, see also RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, l. 16; GMIR, f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, l. 1; GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 237, 1910, l. 40; I. E. Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka i Novo-Ivanovka Elisavetpol'skago uezda," *IKOIRGO* 19 (1907-1908) (Tiflis, 1909), otd. 1, 226; and E. R., "Russkie ratsionalisty," *Vestnik Evropy* 16, kn. 7 (July 1881): 286. On the persecution of the Dukhobors see Maude, *A Peculiar People*, 121-126. On bribes see GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 300, l. 2.

[31]*Spirit and Life—Book of the Sun. Divine Discourses of the Preceptors and the Martyrs of the Word of God, the Faith of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, of the Religion of the Spiritual Christian Molokan-Jumpers*, ed. Daniel H. Shubin, trans. John Volkov (n.p.: n.p., 1983), 12-13, 18.

[32]Maude, *A Peculiar People*, 124-125. Another case of local priests and officials mistreating and "oppressing" sectarians by "torturing two [Dukhobors] with lashes and knouts" is found in GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 6.

[33]GMIR, f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, ll. 1ob-2.

and bear cubs at their own breast."[34] Other Molokans described how they "ran away from landowners who with every possible means exhausted [them] with harsh work."[35]

In one anomalous (and seemingly fantastical) story that the Molokan N. M. Anfimov recorded, a particularly enraged pomeshchik decided to punish a Molokan for his faith by hanging him up on a cross with express orders not to take him down until the pomeshchik decreed he could be removed. As the tale goes, the suffering Molokan was forgotten when one of the noble's best hunting dogs became sick and he was required to take her to town for medical treatment. Some days later the pomeshchik returned to be reminded that the now-dead Molokan was still hanging on the cross. To add insult to injury, the priest opposed the request of the deceased's family that he be buried according to the practices of their faith. The landowner intervened with beatings and violence to quell the Molokan community's frustration with an Orthodox funeral.[36]

The accuracy of these sectarian sources requires special comment because, to some, sectarian narratives seem extreme and embellished. Nonetheless, they are important even if not believed verbatim because they offer a valuable and unique illustration of the sectarians' own sense of their place within Orthodox Russian society. Over the course of their existence in Russia, sectarian communities developed an acute sense of victimization and martyrdom by the Orthodox. Indeed, even Tsarist officials themselves realized that the unnecessary mistreatment of sectarians had caused a culture of persecution in their communities.[37] On top of the poor treatment they received from Orthodox Russia, their religious identity developed in part from a larger Christian sense

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[34]*Spirit and Life*, 14.
[35]N. M. Leont'ev, "Dukhovnye khristiane sela Ivanovki, Geokchaiskago u. Bakin. g. (Svedeniia dlia nastol'nago kalendaria dukhovnykh khristian," *Dukhovnyi khristianin* 4, no. 1 (January 1909): 18.
[36]GMIR, f. 2, op. 8, d. 234. n. d..
[37]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 402-403. In this example, state authorities were concerned that local practices of incarcerating sectarians for long periods of time while they waited for trial, even when the charges were minimal, were causing a feeling of intense persecution and abuse among the non-conformists.

of persecution, and in part was perpetuated by those intelligentsia supporters who conceived of sectarians and Orthodox in value-laden positive and negative terms.

Internal Synodal documents uphold sectarian claims of mistreatment. For instance, in a review of grievances by religious dissenters in Saratov guberniia, the Synodal investigator found that their complaints of persecution from authorities arose in part from their own "fanaticism," but also from "the stern actions of certain priests that were sometimes incongruous with good sense." In consequence, the concluding letter from the Chancellery of the Synod to the Chancellery of the Over-Procurator included a reminder that in their everyday interactions with sectarians, as well as in efforts to restrict them, representatives of Orthodoxy were not to step outside the boundaries of the law.[38]

In addition to the willful actions of civil and spiritual officials, sectarians also exercised their option to relocate in response to conflicts with Orthodox neighbors within their village. Molokans describe a mutual hatred that developed between themselves and Orthodox villagers. In one request for resettlement, the petitioners mention suffering much "unpleasantness" [*neudovol'stviia*] on the part of their neighbors.[39] Disagreeable relations between adherents of different confessions are reflected in the frequency with which Orthodox villagers allowed sectarians to leave their commune. As a general rule, communes were reluctant to permit their members to move out because their loss reduced the number of agricultural laborers available and, at times, increased the tax and recruit burden for those who remained. Nonetheless, many communities believed that liberating themselves from the disagreements and

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[38]RGIA f. 797, op. 11, otd. II, st. 1, d. 28271, 1841-1842, ll. 1-2, 6ob.
[39]RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, ll. 4, 16.

disturbances of a multi-confessional situation was more important than the economic hurdles that the loss of the sectarians would engender.[40]

Sectarians also voluntarily departed their homes in central Russia in an effort to free themselves from a web of legally mandated restrictions to the fulfillment of their religious lives. Such hindrances increased markedly in the 1830s and 1840s.[41] Both spiritual and secular authorities redoubled their efforts to "weaken" the dissident faiths, restrict their spread and convert sectarians to Orthodoxy.[42] Public manifestations of their teachings—such as prayer houses, prayer meetings, public preaching of their faith "in earshot of Orthodox people," and attempts to convert an Orthodox subject—were increasingly and severely punished.[43] Officials even strove to introduce systems to "preempt " future signs of sectarianism. State power became more and more invasive in the daily lives of sectarian communities through aggressive police surveillance and intervention, intelligence gathering to discover who were sectarian leaders (and then exile them) and how their religious communities functioned, and frequent arrests and exile (with the arrestees subjected to "admonitions" and conversion efforts by Orthodox priests).[44] Orthodox primary schools were ordered built in all communities with sectarian inhabitants, which children of all denominations were required to attend.[45]

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[40]See, for example, RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1151, 1831-1834, ll. 21-21ob; RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, l. 34ob and RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 508, ll. 7-7ob.
[41]V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, a Bolshevik and ethnographer of sectarian life, has noted that the number of decrees against sectarians increased dramatically during the reign of Nicholas I. From 1730 to 1801 there were 12 such decrees, and 59 under Alexander I. Nicholas I issued 495 decrees on the persecution of sectarians, whereas his son Alexander II promulgated only 189 from 1855 to 1873. V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, tom 1, *O religii, religioznom sektantstve i tserkvi* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1959), 304. For a different interpretation of the trajectory of Russian law towards the sectarians see Fry, "The Doukhobors," 1-2, passim, who argues that the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I are better understood as a continuum of increasingly rational treatment.
[42]*SPChR* (1860), vol. 2, pp. 267-268, 281-284, 289-290, 333-335, 345, 496-497; *SPChR* (1875), p. 140-141, 144-146, 154-156, 189-191, 236-237, 397-398; and *PSPRVP*, pp. 740-741, 889.
[43]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 124, 189-191.
[44]*SPChR* (1860), vol. 2, pp. 295-296, 321-327, 345, 415-417 *SPChR* (1875), pp. 140-141, 151-152, 217, 267-268, 397-398, 469-470. For a case of exile from the Molokan perspective, see OR RGB f. 648, k. 46, d. 2, ll. 19-20.
[45]*SPChR* (1860), vol. 2, pp. 312-313.

Marriages between Orthodox and sectarians were forbidden.[46] Although not officially sanctioned in all cases, Molokan children were often baptized into Orthodoxy without the consent of their sectarian parents and raised in Orthodox families.[47] Moreover, new laws no longer allowed sectarians to hire Orthodox (or members of any other faith for that matter) to serve their recruit responsibilities; a replacement was required to come from within their sect. This law was particularly burdensome for sectarian groups because they eschewed violence and military service on ethical and theological grounds.[48]

In contrast, Transcaucasia offered relative religious autonomy. The combination of distance from central authority and the region's recent incorporation into the Empire meant that the local administration lacked the men and resources to govern the region effectively, leaving sectarian settlers unhindered by outside secular or spiritual powers. For example, the chief administrator of the Caspian oblast' noted in an 1843 report on his domain that there was an insufficient quantity of Orthodox priests in the oblast' to pursue the conversion of sectarians, and that as a result 1843 saw only one conversion to Orthodoxy.[49]

Sectarians of all denominations chose to move to take advantage of the greater religious liberty provided by the periphery's power vacuum. Chief administrator of the Caucasus Baron G. V. Rozen wrote to the Ministry of the Interior that "... to prohibit them [from practicing their religion] is impossible in Transcaucasia since they all voluntarily, and at their own expense, resettled here from central provinces with the

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[46] *SPChR* (1860), vol. 2, pp. 290-294.
[47] *SPChR* (1875), pp. 153-154, 210, 433.
[48] *SPChR* (1875), pp. 202-203, 229-230, 266; *SPChR* (1860), vol. 2, p. 348; *PSZ* (2) T. 18, otd. 2, 1843, No. 17446 and RGIA, f. 1268, op. 1, d. 433, l. 25. Most sectarians did serve out their military duties but they remained uncomfortable with the requirement, see OR RGB f. 369, K. 42, d. 2.
[49] RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 650, 1844, ll. 25ob-26. On the vacuum of power and distance from forces of order, see also GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, l. 4ob and P. A. Iunitskii, "Sud i delo nad al'ty-agachskimi skoptsami na Kavkaze," *Tserkovnyi vestnik* no. 20 (May 14, 1892): 318.

expectation that they would not encounter any prohibition in the fulfillment of their rites."[50] Writing of their own experiences, Molokans elucidated that they "... arrived from within Russia to this wild Transcaucasia with its many tribes for calm and quiet so that they could praise the name of God unimpeded."[51]

Quests for liberty of spiritual practice and freedom from persecution were not the only religious factors that drew sectarians to the southern frontier. An even more important motivation to relocate was the widespread reports in the early 1830s of the imminent end of the world and coming of the thousand-year kingdom of God.[52] Such rumors, which appeared widely in 1832 and predicted the apocalypse in 1836, were stimulated by the circulation of a book entitled *The Triumphant Tale of the Christian Faith* [*Pobednaia povest' khristianskoi very*]. Dispersion of the rumors and the varying specifics of the content had more to do, however, with the sermons of a series of traveling preachers than with sectarians reading the book themselves.[53] The first of these was the Molokan Nikitin Ivanov from Tauride guberniia. Having read the *Triumphant Tale*, he abandoned his life in the Molochna region and set off for the borders of Persia where, in his opinion, the opening of the thousand-year kingdom of Christ would take place. Going through towns and villages where Molokans lived, he preached of Christ's impending arrival in the south. While only a few of those to whom he preached actually took to the road with him, he planted the belief that the kingdom of

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[50]RGIA f. 1284, op. 197-1837, d. 143, ll. 1-1ob.
[51]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 324, ll. 1-1ob. However, the settlers did not escape entirely the interference of state and Orthodox and examples abound of their dashed expectations. See for example, RGIA f. 1284, op. 198-1838, d. 66; and GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, passim.
[52]Unless otherwise noted the following discussion draws from "Istoricheskiia svedeniia o Molokanskoi sekte," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* (November 1858): 294-309; August von Haxthausen, *Studies on the Interior of Russia*, ed. S. Frederick Starr, trans. Eleanore L. M. Schmidt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 154-155 and Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 135, 1. The two best general studies of utopian legends are Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, esp. 237-326 and A. I. Klibanov, *Narodnaia sotsial'naia utopiia v Rossii XIX vek* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1978), esp. 140-210.
[53]The role of charismatic leaders was notable in providing the impetus to resettle outside of a purely religious context as well. RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1151, 1831-1834, l. 29.

Christ would begin in 1836, and the idea spread rapidly among Molokans. Their leaders began to preach that "the time of the triumph of spiritual Christians over heathens has come; soon the heavenly redeemer will appear and on the holiday of Easter gather together from north to east all his chosen people, from where He will rule with them for one thousand years ... and this time is close, since signs of the coming of Christ have already appeared ..."[54]

Inspired by the message of these sermons, Molokans often did not wait for Christ to gather them together but left immediately from the unpropitious north. The question that remained was where exactly the site of the new Jerusalem would be. Some said Tauride guberniia, others Persia, and a third group—the majority—pointed to the Transcaucasus.[55] In 1833, long wagon trains stretched from various guberniias to the Caucasus as Molokans hurried to meet God in His promised land. As future citizens of the new Jerusalem, they went to the new land in exultation and joy, often singing psalms and spiritual songs, and thereby attracting attention and other crowds to their entourage. The author of an article in *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* continues the story: "Of those Molokans who either personally had not decided to leave their native land [*rodina*], or who were held back from resettlement by the government or their pomeshchiki, many sold their homes, ceased farming and waited impatiently for the heavenly redeemer. Even Orthodox peasants, in the midst of whom lived Molokans, were among the agitation. ... Many Orthodox were so weak of faith that, joining the Molokan heresy, they left behind their homeland and property, and together with the wandering heretics went in search of the promised new Jerusalem."[56]

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[54] "Istoricheskiia svedeniia," 297-298.
[55] Later, Molokans came to believe that in his second coming Christ would appear on Mount Ararat.
[56] "Istoricheskiia svedeniia," 302.

When 1836 did finally arrive, Molokan enthusiasm for resettlement grew stronger. Even the unmasking of several false prophets in the interim had not dampened their hope for the kingdom of Christ on earth.[57] A number of false Christs appeared at the appointed moment for His coming. Molokans met such Christs ecstatically and collected together in full faith to listen to their sermons. One Christ convinced his listeners to stop all work, devote themselves to singing and prayer, put on their holiday clothes and go to Transcaucasia, but only after bringing him their money and possessions. On the way, some felt grief for the houses and possessions that they left behind and desired to turn back. They demanded the return of their money and voiced doubts about his divinity. To calm these fears, the Christ convincingly carried out the miracle of bringing a woman back to life. The doubters were brought to their knees in tears. They asked for forgiveness for their doubts, and the trek to the Promised Land resumed.[58]

However, it was not simply for greater freedom in the exercise of their religious faith that sectarians chose to move, but also for economic reasons. In tandem with the laws restricting sectarian religious activities, a spate of legislative obstacles impeded their economic success.[59] Laws restricted sectarian travel, even in cases of dire economic necessity, to within a radius of 30 versts (approximately 30 kilometers) from their home village or town.[60] In consequence, sectarians were denied the right to own,

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[57]Quite the opposite, complaints came in from Orthodox Russians that fanatical Molokans were invading their churches during services, throwing rocks, shooting at icons, and generally disrupting worship. Ibid., 304.

[58]Expectations of the coming of the kingdom of God did not end in 1836. There are a number of recorded incidents of sectarians in Transcaucasia leaving behind their possessions, debating what clothes to wear to meet Christ, and then heading off to various parts of the region in order to be there for the opening of the thousand-year kingdom. See, for example, A. Dunaev. "Molokane sekty obshchikh." ed. M. A. Kal'nev, *Russkie Sektanty, ikh uchenie, kult i sposoby propagandy*. (Odessa: 1911), 65-68.

[59]On these laws in general see "Istoricheskiia svedeniia," 309-310 and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 40-41.

[60]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 121-122, 156-157, 254-255. For an example of the occasional exceptions to these travel restrictions, see the case of a Molokan serf whose owner requests permission for him to travel to transport grain and other products to the closest shipping docks, *SPChR* (1875), p. 305.

or utilize, land located more than 30 kilometers from their official place of residence.[61] New tsarist laws forbade these non-conformists from registering in a merchant guild. If they were already inscribed as a merchant, they could remain so but they were prohibited from moving to a higher guild and their children were denied the right to inherit that social designation.[62] In a similar vein, government decrees banned sectarians from transferring their registration from one commune [*obshchestvo*] to another—an act designed to thwart efforts to move from a rural to an urban soslovie, but which also applied to the movement from one urban commune to another.[63] In 1842, Molokans and Dukhobors who were odnodvortsy were outlawed from owning serfs.[64] Finally, Tsarist officials passed legislation which prohibited Orthodox Russians from living with or working for sectarians, and vice versa.[65]

There is clear evidence that these laws were more than paper restrictions in the lives of Russia's sectarians and that they provided a strong impetus to resettle to Transcaucasia.[66] The Soviet historian I. V. Dolzhenko goes so far as to assert that the state passed the 1835 law preventing sectarians in a peasant soslovie from registering in an urban one precisely in order to push rich, trading sectarians south.[67] In one example, Timofei Petrov, a Molokan meshchanin from Tambov guberniia, complained in his petition for resettlement of drastic limitations placed on him and his business activities because of his faith. He described how existing legislation and treatment by officials interfered in his life by denying him passports for trips out of town and by

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[61]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 254-255, 267-268.
[62]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 189-191. Relatedly, sectarians were forbidden from receiving the title of honored citizen. *SPChR* (1875), p. 149
[63]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 189-191.
[64]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 307-308 and *PSZ* (2) T. 17, otd. 2, 1842, No. 15543.
[65]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 156-157, 189-191, 367 and *PSZ* (2) T. 22, otd. 2, 1847, No. 21006.
[66]In the face of this wave of legislation designed to impede them, sectarians faced the choice among three options: suffering, migrating or pretending to be Orthodox and hiding their true faith.
[67]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 60.

prohibiting him either to hire Orthodox workers to work for him, or to have Orthodox people in his house. In the end, his petition for migration was denied because the governor feared that granting such permission would lead either to a mass of similar petitions from local Molokans or to the swelling of Molokan ranks with anyone desirous of movement—both results the governor considered dangerous for state and social order.[68] In another illustration, Subbotnik odnodvortsy from Saratov guberniia, frustrated by legislative barriers, sent an ultimatum to the state in 1837 either to give them month-long passes to work outside their villages—contrary to the law at that time—or move them elsewhere where they could make a living.[69]

In tandem with these legal restrictions, economic pressures also sparked sectarian resettlement. The 1830s in Russia were a time of failed harvests, famine, the rampant spread of cholera, and increasing landowner exactions from serfs.[70] Testimony of the sectarians themselves colors in the picture of immiseration. Molokan odnodvortsy from Tauride guberniia asked for permission to resettle "... because in our village of Astrakhanka there are no forests whatsoever, the water supply is insufficient and failed harvests are common; quite the opposite is true in the Transcaucasian provinces where everything is extremely abundant."[71] In many petitions to relocate, sectarians highlighted a permanent insufficiency of land.[72] In other cases, they pointed to the more immediate problem of a failed harvest.[73] Both Soviet historians of Transcaucasia and historians of Russian resettlement in general have privileged this

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[68]RGIA f. 1284, op. 205-1850, d. 166, ll. 2-2ob.
[69]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23160, ll. 1-1ob.
[70]Moon, *Russian Peasants*, 23-61; R. E. McGrew, *Russia and the Cholera, 1823-1832* (Madison: 1965); and François-Xavier Coquin, "Faim et migrations paysannes en Russie au XIXe siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 11 (April-June 1964): 127-144.
[71]RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1151, 1831-1834, ll. 1-1ob.
[72]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 49.
[73]RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, ll. 49-49ob and RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 2ob-3.

economic explanation.[74] In her study of the first Russian settlers in Armenia, I. V. Dolzhenko draws upon an array of statistical work on the impoverishment of peasants in the central provinces—and especially the problem of land shortage—in order to explain peasant desire to move, either voluntarily or as runaways.[75] In his standard work on the history of religious sectarianism in Russia in the nineteenth century, A. I. Klibanov adds the argument (albeit without citing much evidence) that only poor and middling state peasants chose to resettle in an effort to improve their economic situation. Unlike their poorer neighbors, wealthier peasants had much to lose and little to gain from resettling, especially as they could take advantage of those who were moving to increase their wealth. Richer peasants not only could enlarge their land holdings by buying cheaply the land of those who left, but also augment their wealth by giving credit at usurious rates to the settlers as aid for their trip.[76]

In contrast to the difficult conditions in which they lived, sectarians (and especially Molokans) heard through the grapevine that a land of plenty waited for them in Transcaucasia. As one nineteenth-century commentator described these beliefs:

> [The rumors which began to circulate] of faraway Caucasian lands were filled with the most unbelievable notions about the new Promised Land: about a land of milk and honey, about heavenly manna, occurring there with a thickness of one and a half arshin [approximately 42 inches], about forests filled with every sort of fruit tree and teeming with game ... In a word, these secret places, in their opinion, had been chosen by God himself for persecuted people.[77]

Rumors did not have to depict a Shangri-La in order to prompt sectarians to resettle. The simple fact that they had somewhere to go where they would be accepted was often

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[74]For general studies see Willard Sunderland, "Peasants on the Move: State Peasant Resettlement in Imperial Russia, 1805-1830s," *Russian Review* 52 (October 1993): 477-478 and Coquin, "Faim et migrations," 127-137.

[75]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 60 and idem., "Russkie begletsy," 53-55.

[76]A. I. Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 148.

[77]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 135, 1. The ellipses are in the original. By far the best discussion of the prevalence of rumors of "faraway lands" in Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, 237-340.

enough. For instance, a rumor that induced some sectarians to migrate was "...that this being a new region, settlement would be permitted to any newcomer."[78]

While the sectarian-settlers did not find their utopia in Transcaucasia, they did encounter greater economic opportunities than their co-religionists in the central provinces. The central government passed a series of laws during the 1830s and 1840s that served to equalize the status of those sectarians specifically and exclusively in Transcaucasia with Orthodox Russians.[79] As the historian of Russian settlement in the Transcaucasus, D. I. Ismail-Zade, has asserted: "the broadening of their rights lifted them from the category of the persecuted and gave them the status of that portion of the Russian population which, from the Tsarist viewpoint, was to become the bulwark of the regime in the borderlands."[80] Among these rights, in 1836, official sanction for work trips was given to the region's sectarians in recognition of the desperate economic situation that many found themselves.[81] In 1843 Molokans were also given permission to travel to Persia in order to trade and work.[82] Moreover, sectarians were permitted in 1846—in stark contrast to the situation of their brethren elsewhere in the empire—to hire and be hired by Orthodox people as long as the workers or employers were not ethnically Russian (i.e. they could be Georgian Orthodox).[83] By the end of the 1850s, they were permitted to live and work in towns—and in fact were considered important

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[78]RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 650, 1844, l. 8.
[79]These laws and decrees are discussed in chapter 3.
[80]D. I. Ismail-Zade, "Russian settlements in the Transcaucasus from the 1830s to the 1880s," in *The Molokan Heritage Collection*, ed. Ethel Dunn and Stephen P. Dunn (Berkeley: Highgate Road Social Science Research Station, 1983), section 3: 58-65, the quotation is from 64.
[81]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23322, 1846, ll. 2-2ob.
[82]RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1842, d. 476, ll. 2-2ob, 5ob, 7, 15; RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 433, 1843-1848, ll. 18-18ob; and *SPChR* (1875) p. 335. In that same year, regional officials in Transcaucasia drew up plans to allow a group of Molokans and Subbotniks to go to Astrakhan for a few months in order to buy agricultural implements. This trip was seen by Transcaucasian officials as highly beneficial to the region since they expected that the sectarians would introduce "European" farming equipment and techniques to the indigenous inhabitants, while helping to break up what was perceived as an Armenian trade monopoly. In the end, central authorities denied the request to grant the sectarians passports for these reasons.
[83]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23322, 1846.

components to the growth of urban life and their presence in towns was purposely fostered by the Viceroy.[84] Large numbers of sectarians migrated to Transcaucasia specifically to take advantage of these liberating decrees. By far the majority of Subbotniks, for example, moved to Transcaucasia to benefit from the relative economic advantages that life in Transcaucasia granted peoples of sectarian faiths.[85]

In addition to religious and economic issues, family factors also impelled Russian sectarians to embark for Transcaucasia. In certain instances sectarians migrated to Transcaucasia to escape disagreeable family situations. Indeed, resettlement was, on occasion, a form of de facto divorce. Here we can look, for example, at the case of a young Molokan woman who fled her home in Astrakhan guberniia, as many women did, in order to escape her Orthodox husband who was abusing her because of her Molokan faith. She secretly migrated with an uncle who was legally resettling to Transcaucasia. Upon her arrival, she changed her name, remarried (this time to a fellow Molokan who caught her eye) and began her life anew. Later, this young woman's mother (also a Molokan) requested official permission to settle with her daughter after the mother's husband abandoned her for a new wife in Tauride guberniia.[86] In similar fashion, among the Dukhobors banished from the Don Cossacks in 1830, seventeen married women chose to break ties with their husbands, leaving them behind as they resettled south with their children.[87]

Equally important in prompting sectarians to resettle was the appeal of joining family members who had already moved south, either exiled or voluntarily. Much has been written highlighting the centrality of the family unit to Russian peasants, and

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[84]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 865, 1848-1852.
[85]*AKAK* vol. 8, docs. 43 and 48; *PSZ* (2) t. 12 (addendum), 1837, no. 10093a, pp. 1-2; *SPChR* (1875) p. 200; and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 593, 1820-1840, ll. 24-27.
[86]GMIR, f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 46-47. For a not dissimilar example, see RGIA f. 1268, op. 6, d. 233, 1852, ll. 1-1ob.
[87]GMIR, f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, l. 120.

indeed the resettlement of sectarians to Transcaucasia supports these notions. The family foundation was frequently challenged by the confluence of Tsarist religious and resettlement policies, leaving peasants in the often untenable situation—economically, socially and emotionally—of surviving without the support systems of the family. Reunion in Transcaucasia was seen as a solution to these problems. Moreover, even if the desire to unite with relatives (or friends, fellow villagers, and co-religionists [*edinomyshlenniki*], for that matter) did not play a role in the decision to move, these people almost always acted as conduits in the resettlement process. For those peasants wishing to escape their predicament—and this was especially the case for those who were contemplating running away— relatives on the frontier provided both a geographic destination and the comfort that someone would take them in once they arrived.[88]

In one incident, two women from Tambov guberniia petitioned in 1841 for resettlement to Transcaucasia.[89] They explained that their husbands had been exiled there in 1839 for supporting the Spiritual Christian faith[90] and spreading it to their children. The petitioners were left with the children, five of whom were very young, "...without any means for subsistence, so that we [now] are deprived of practically any daily sustenance and shelter" and requested to move before ruin overtook them completely.[91]

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[88]In addition to the cases cited below, see also RGIA f. 1268. op. 8, d. 275, 1856, l. 2 where petitioners explain that they wish to move to Transcaucasia "...in order to live together with relatives forcibly sent there by government order," and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 46-47. On requests to join co-religionists see GMIR, f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 49; RGIA f. 1284, op. 197-1837, d. 37, l. 4; and RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1151, 1831-1834, ll. 1-1ob.

[89]RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3175, 1841-1842.

[90]Molokans also called themselves Spiritual Christians.

[91]RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3175, 1841-1842, l. 14. Their request was denied despite the support of the obshchestvo and spiritual consistory. The Tambov Chamber of the Ministry of State Properties noted that existing laws forbade the resettlement of multi-denominational families and that some of the children of the petitioners' families remained Orthodox. Notably, two of the children directly stated their opposition to the proposed migration and reunification with their fathers specifically because their fathers were Molokans. For a similar case, see OR RGB f. 648, k. 46, d. 2, ll. 48-49, in which two Molokan women, inhabitants of Transcaucasia, request that their husbands, who had been arrested, be allowed to join them in Transcaucasia in order to lighten their economic burden.

Not all cases of families desiring re-unification involved members of the same faith. In fact, many petitions for resettlement to Transcaucasia came from Orthodox family members left behind. In one instance, an Orthodox husband, whose wife and children were Molokans and had requested to go to Transcaucasia along with other co-religionists from their village, also applied to move with them since he desired to remain "forever inseparable" from his wife.[92] In another incident, in 1836, former NCO Drobshev, Orthodox, requested permission to join his family—father, mother, wife and four children, Molokans originally from Orenburg guberniia—in the Transcaucasus. Drobshev related how he was born Orthodox to parents who were then Orthodox and he married an Orthodox woman before leaving for military service. While serving his term, the family converted to the Molokan faith and practiced in secret for many years to avoid persecution. They resettled to Transcaucasia for unstated reasons and informed Drobshev of their actions by letter. When his military term came to an end he wished to join them. His request was allowed, reflecting a state policy which placed the sanctity of the family ahead of complete sectarian isolation and did not split families because of differences in faith.[93]

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[92]RGIA f. 1284, op. 197-1837, d. 37, l. 4.

[93]RGIA f. 1284, op. 197-1837, d. 33. The question of what to do with sectarians who wished to resettle, or were designated for banishment, but whose families contained Orthodox members was hotly debated in the 1830s and 1840s. Russian officials discussed three options. First, they considered splitting the family apart, so the sectarians would relocate south and the Orthodox relatives would remain in the interior, but officials feared the socio-economic ramifications of dividing families. Second, they looked at keeping the family together in the interior, but this defeated the intent of the 1830 legislation to isolate sectarians in the periphery. Third, tsarist authorities considered sending both Orthodox and sectarian together to Transcaucasia if the former was willing to move, but this option necessitated the sacrifice of Orthodox Russians to the sectarian periphery. From 1830 until 1846, tsarist officials utilized a "pro-family" policy designed to keep the family intact as much as possible. The law prevented sectarians with Orthodox family members from migrating to Transcaucasia. In the same vein, although a less frequent occurrence, Orthodox relatives were permitted to relocate to the Transcaucasus along with their sectarian kinsmen if they so desired. After 1846, Russian legislation granted sectarians in multi-confessional families the option to split the family and leave their Orthodox relations behind. See RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 169, 175-176ob, 180-180ob, and 186-187; RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, ll. 8-9; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 80; RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 15, l. 2; RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23401, 1846-1847; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 202-1847, d. 118.

Sectarians also saw migration as a means to avoid military service, which their religious beliefs could at best tolerate, but never condone. There was no military conscription in Transcaucasia until 1887 and hearsay abounded that application for resettlement meant freedom from army duty.[94] Echoing one such rumor, one Molokan woman explained that she and others had moved to Transcaucasia, "as a result of an appeal by Prince M. S. Vorontsov who promised a fifty-year reprieve from military service."[95] However, despite these expectations for immediate liberation from enlistment, the laws regarding resettlement were designed specifically to enforce the fulfillment of such duties by not allowing anyone to migrate who was in the first two ranks for call-up.[96] As a result, many simply fled clandestinely to avoid service. Efim Trefilovich Klyshnikov, a peasant from Tambov (and eventual father to V. V. Ivanov, one of the leaders and originators of Baptism in Russia) fled to Transcaucasia in 1840 (where he joined his family who had already migrated there) in order to escape military service, which he considered against his religious principles.[97]

Finally, the chain reaction to news of resettlement was a stimulus to sectarian migration from their native lands. In one incident, 206 Molokans from Orenburg guberniia had received permission to resettle in 1832. Once the news spread, another petition for resettlement appeared from 602 Molokans, and then another from 104. These later petitions explicitly cited the fulfillment of the previous request as impetus for their efforts.[98]

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[94]RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1151, 1831-1834, ll. 12-12ob, 37ob. On the conflict of military service with Dukhobor religious beliefs, and the accommodation they reached with this state obligation, see OR RGB f. 369, k. 42, d. 2, l. 396.
[95]Leont'ev, "Dukhovnye khristiane," 18.
[96]RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 15, l. 4.
[97]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, l. 1.
[98]RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, l. 16. See also RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1151, 1831-1834, ll. 1-1ob.

Clandestine Migration: Runaways and Vagabonds

In addition to the thousands of Russian sectarians who migrated to Transcaucasia voluntarily and legally, many others did so illegally and clandestinely [*samovol'no*]. These runaways [*beglye liudi, begletsy*] and vagabonds [*brodiagi*]—part of a long tradition of peasant flight in Russian history—included a large percentage of serfs and army deserters mixed in with a wide assortment of individuals and families from differing social, religious and regional backgrounds.[99] The clandestines included both those who were granted short-term passports for work elsewhere in the empire and decided to go to Transcaucasia instead; those who were granted short-term passports to work in Transcaucasia and did not return to their registered place of habitation at the end of the passport's duration; and those who were granted no travel papers whatsoever and simply picked up and left for the south.[100] Although Transcaucasia had been demarcated solely for sectarian settlement, runaways included both Orthodox and non-conformist Russians, with many of the former taking up sectarian religious affiliation once in Transcaucasia. Most cases of illegal settlement involved Molokan and Subbotnik settlers; there were very few instances of runaways settling with Dukhobors.

The underlying reasons for *samovol'no* resettlement to Transcaucasia were much like those for voluntary resettlement described above. However, there were many restrictions, both for sectarians and Orthodox, that could prevent them from resettling legally and force them to do so illegally. Draftees unhappy with the terms of their military service, especially in the Caucasian borderlands, would frequently desert.

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[99]Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 228 and Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 54-55. On peasant flight more broadly, see Jerome Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 266-68, 309-10, 552-54, 559 and Moon, *Russian Peasants*, 23-61.
[100]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 1-2ob, 4 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 433, 1843-1848, ll. 46-46ob.

Moreover, resettlement policies were designed almost exclusively for state peasants. Serfs, be they Orthodox or sectarian, were left with only illegal options to move. Finally, even if eligible for legal resettlement, peasants faced many hurdles that could dash their hopes. At various stages of the petition process, either the family, obshchestvo, Spiritual Consistory, local, regional and central administrations, or the Transcaucasian authorities could deny or delay resettlement for any number of reasons.[101] Factors barring or retarding migration included opposition to losing the economic contribution of a family member, non-fulfillment of military service, having an Orthodox family member, not being up-to-date on tax payments, no land or poor harvest in the Transcaucasus, fear on the part of authorities that permission would spark a mass of similar petitions or even conversions from nearby Orthodox Russians, and purely arbitrary decisions. Denied at any step, would-be migrants often took matters into their own hands and set off for Transcaucasia.

It is difficult to determine with any accuracy the number of Russian settlers to Transcaucasia who arrived clandestinely, since statistics reveal only those who were discovered.[102] In one article, I. V. Dolzhenko found that of 343 families she studied in Erevan guberniia, only 3 (0.9%) came illegally.[103] However, even the most impressionistic reading of non-quantitative sources belies such official statistics.[104] Dolzhenko herself presents a very different picture of the number of clandestine settlers in a more recent article where she notes that a tsarist investigation in the late 1850s

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[101]See, for example, RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1831, d. 136, 1831-1843, ll. 36-36ob; RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3175, 1841-1842; RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23160, 1842; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 205-1850, d. 166.
[102]For incomplete, official statistics, see RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 650, 1844, l. 8 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 342, 1842-1849, ll. 16-17ob.
[103]Dolzhenko "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 60.
[104]See for instance, Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 228-229 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860.

uncovered as many as 1,100 illegal runaways—a number she considers only the tip of the iceberg.[105]

While it is impossible to determine the numbers of runaways among Russian peasants, there are specific periods in which sudden floods of clandestine migrants appeared in Transcaucasia. The first such time was in the early 1830s when, as noted above, religious and economic factors impelled large numbers of Russians to pick up and leave their homes for the periphery.[106] The second time of mass influx occurred during and after the Crimean war. An official report discussing the appearance of these vagabonds described how many peasants from interior provinces accompanied military caravans to Transcaucasia. By far the majority of these civilians were given permission to do so as part of the war effort. However, there were many others who took advantage of the size of the caravans, as well as the general disorder of wartime, to make their way surreptitiously to Transcaucasia (and elsewhere). With the end of the war, some moved to the Ottoman Empire, while "the remainder dispersed through the region [Transcaucasia] and, working as day laborers, went from place to place and were able to support their existence in that way."[107] The number of clandestines in the Transcaucasus generated by the Crimean war was further bolstered by army deserters. Soldiers who abandoned the army supplied a steady flow of runaways every year, but their numbers increased at the end of the War with many troops choosing not to return to their official places of habitation.[108]

There were enormous regional variations in unsanctioned migration to Transcaucasia, with certain areas receiving a disproportionately large percentage of the

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[105]Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 65.
[106]On peasants who ran away in the 1830s because of economic hardships, see the discussion above in the section "Motives for Migration" and RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 2ob-4.
[107]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 1-2ob.
[108]Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 228. Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 55.

runaways. This is not surprising, considering the mechanics of *samovol'no* settlement to Transcaucasia. Sectarians were essentially the only ethnic Russians in the region outside of military personnel and administrators. Their settlements provided the sole option for runaways to find shelter, provision and work—a process that was aided by the relative isolation of these villages from state surveillance. As one nineteenth-century observer noted: "[the runaways] found among them not only safe and secure shelter, but also a full guarantee from any administrative prosecution."[109] As a result, the greater the concentration of sectarian settlers—such as in the so-called Muslim Provinces[110] in the 1830s—the more clandestine runaways.

In addition to finding employment and support from the legal Russian settlers, the clandestines also discovered that they could register quasi-legally in a sectarian village. Sectarian-settlers in Transcaucasia compiled the official census registers themselves and in doing so often forged these lists to include family members who did not exist, or who had died. "For an agreed-upon price, [the settlers] began to take vagabonds and deserters into their community in the places on the lists that were not actually filled [with live humans], calling them by forged names."[111] Whereas the majority of registrants in this process did so under a false name and with a concomitant change of official identity, a sizable group did retain their original names.[112] Whatever the appellation, such registration frequently also required a change in religious affiliation to a sectarian faith if the vagabond was Orthodox.[113] A commission investigating

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[109]Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 228. On the work relationships that developed among runaways and legal sectarian settlers, see Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 58.

[110]The Muslim Provinces encompassed the region of eastern Transcaucasia that would become Erevan, Elisavetpol', and Baku guberniias in the second half of the nineteenth century.

[111]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, l. 5ob.

[112]On name changes, see for instance GMIR, f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, l. 1 and Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 229-230. For both changing name and keeping name, see RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 11ob-12.

[113]Such registration of Orthodox Russians in Molokan villages brings up important questions about the plasticities of religious identity—and of identity in general—in Imperial Russia. Indeed, conversion—both between sects and Orthodoxy as well from one sect to another—was characteristic of

samovol'no settlers commonly found families where a grandfather would be younger than his son or grandson, or where family members (such as a husband and wife, or brothers) would not know each other.[114] In one case, investigators discovered 135 empty places in the false family registers that the villagers had not yet succeeded in selling to vagabonds.[115] Investigators also frequently found instances similar to this one in Vorontsovka, in which one family's official registration included two brothers of wives "without explanation of their family names and from whence they hailed."[116]

Two case studies elucidate the process of clandestine migration. In 1833, authorities uncovered runaways from Tambov, both estate and economic peasants, among the Molokan settlers of Karabakh. They had secretly made their way to Transcaucasia by blending in en route with parties of exiled Tambov Molokans. "[D]esiring to legalize their situation, they appealed in Karabakh to the Molokan obshchestvo with the entreaty that they take them into their sect." The Molokans agreed to the plea based on Isaiah 21:14, which describes the giving of water and bread to travelers in flight. However, the Molokans only agreed to take in these passportless people because the village elder [*sel'skii starosta*] had secured the agreement of the local police officer to register non-passported people in the community. In return for his cooperation, the policeman demanded 100 rubles per registrant. By pooling their resources the Molokan community was able to pay for one runaway who did not have

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the religious life of Russian settlers in Transcaucasia. Such changes in religious identification took place both for spiritual and social or material reasons. In the case of the latter, such religious mobility took advantage of legislation for personal dividend. Also, it underscores that official or external identifications were held in less esteem by the sectarians than internal faith and religious practices. For a larger discussion of this theme, see chapter 5. Moreover, the registration of Orthodox in Molokan villages may go far in explaining the sudden mass conversion to Orthodoxy of Molokans from the village of Alty-Agach, one of the most important clearing houses for runaways. See RGIA f. 1268, op. 7, d. 359, 1853 and GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902.

[114]Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 63.

[115]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 6-6ob.

[116]Quoted in Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 59.

sufficient funds.[117] In another incident, runaways, deserters and criminals were found in the villages of Topchi and Alty-Agach in Shirvan provintsiia. Here the deserters (from the Don Cossacks) and criminals were involved in a number of illegal activities. In addition to living there without permission, they were making their own coins, forging documents, and receiving money from state sources in Tiflis based on false documents they had created. In this latter case, investigators charged the Molokans with harboring runaways and criminals and converting Orthodox into their faith.[118]

Runaways found that they could also "legalize" themselves in the region by buying forged documents under another name, such as passports and temporary leave papers, in towns (especially Tiflis). However, this approach could prove to be much more dangerous than buying one's way onto sectarian village registers. High rates of illiteracy among the runaways meant that vagabonds were unable to read what was actually printed on the documents they were obtaining, often with unwanted results. One vagabond, Ivan Vasil'ev, bought a passport in a bazaar in Tiflis that had already expired. However, Vasil'ev did not suffer from this mistake because the local authorities were having equally as hard a time in reading Russian documents. Although it was past the time limit, Georgian officials in a nearby village let him pass without altercation.[119]

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[117]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 22-23.
[118]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 23-25. In a further case, two men claiming to be brothers (economic peasants from Saratov province) arrived in the town of Shusha in 1836. They presented the authorities there with papers releasing them from their former community, explaining that they were Molokans who had relocated to Shirvan province with the family of the first brother. They had been delayed because of sickness and the rest of the family had gone on without them. Even though their names were not on the list of those to be resettled with that group of Molokans, the authorities nevertheless permitted them to go meet their families. However, upon arriving in the village to which their family had migrated, it quickly became clear that they had no relations there and their story began to change rapidly. It became evident that their travel documents from the obshchestvo were forgeries and it was even uncertain whether they were Molokans. Local officials began to suspect that one of them was even a renowned criminal and vagabond who was already subject to prosecution by the regional administration. GMIR, f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 26-27.
[119]Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 57.

In response to the surge of runaways who migrated clandestinely to Transcaucasia under cover of the Crimean War, the Viceroy, Prince A. I. Bariatinskii set up a commission in 1858 (and another one later) to investigate the vagabond problem. The investigators uncovered an intricate system of harboring runaways as well as villages that were almost entirely composed of illegal settlers. The village of Novo-Ivanovka in Elisavetpol' uezd was one such case. Beginning in the early 1850s, nine families of clandestine migrants settled in the location of the future village. "Out-of-the-way wooded thickets, the complete absence of even Tatar villages nearby turned this small Molokan village into the primary center to which runaways and deserters began to flock, and bit-by-bit they founded two contiguous villages—Baglydzha and Ak-Kilisa, later turned into Novo-Ivanovka."[120]

The actual response of Tsarist officials to clandestine migration to Transcaucasia was much less severe than the laws decreed. Although running away was patently illegal, the perpetrators did not always suffer harsh consequences when caught and almost always were permitted to remain in Transcaucasia.[121] This is not to say that punishment was not meted out. Even when allowed to settle in Transcaucasia, many

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[120]Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 228. Samisi (Tiflis uezd) was another village which was comprised entirely of clandestine migrants. Beginning with the relocation of 10 Molokan families, the settlement grew quickly into a village of 30 families and 320 people, attracting migrants primarily from Saratov province and including a not insignificant number of Orthodox Russians among the sectarians. A third village of this type was Privol'noe (Borchalo district) where investigators uncovered 90 people who were vagabonds, clandestine runaways and deserters. Under the influence of an Orthodox missionary, these runaways converted to Orthodoxy—those who had been born Molokan were baptized into the Orthodox Church, those who had been seduced from Orthodoxy received unction, and some who had received baptism as children were baptized a second time. RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 8-9.

[121]Unlike the North Caucasus, officials in Transcaucasia took no extraordinary measures to curb illegal running away. In response to a spate of illegal settlement, special laws had been applied to the North Caucasus region in order to punish the runaways and prevent further human seepage into the area. In 1842, the Chief administrator for Transcaucasia, E. A. Golovin, moved to have these special laws also applied in Transcaucasia. However, these efforts at instituting harsher laws concerning runaways in Transcaucasia came up against opposition, from central authorities who believed that extant, empire-wide laws were sufficient. When Golovin's successor, A. I. Neidgart', took over (and Vorontsov after him), he agreed with the central decision and saw no need for special laws. RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 342, 1842-1849, ll. 10-14ob. 16-17ob, 25-25ob.

runaways were tried and could receive corporal punishment, such as one hundred hits with a birch rod.[122] However, Tsarist officials were primarily interested in punishing those people who were found guilty of falsely registering clandestines, harboring vagabonds, giving false testimony, and aiding designated recruits to run away after being drafted. By the mid-1850s Tsarist authorities had taken to granting amnesty to runaways, allowing them and their families to register in Transcaucasia without penalty or prosecution (except for police surveillance and certain minor restrictions). Hundreds of clandestine migrants took advantage of these amnesties to come forward, declare themselves and embrace the opportunity to escape hiding and settle themselves legally in Transcaucasia. Only in the case of military service were Tsarist authorities quick and determined to ensure that the runaway completed his obligations to the fullest—whether for a deserter to finish out his term, or for a clandestine migrant to enter the draft lottery, like others from his official village of residence.[123]

There were four primary reasons why state officials permitted the runaways to stay in Transcaucasia without much in the way of punishment. First, vagabonds were often unwanted in the central provinces. In one example, a group of both economic and estate peasants were uncovered in Karabakh province as illegal migrants. Local officials did not return them from Transcaucasia despite the fact that state officials starkly threatened the Molokan community in which they were found with severe punishment if they were ever caught harboring runaways again. Tsarist officials permitted the clandestines to remain because neither the peasant commune nor the pomeshchik wanted their peasants back. On one hand, their legal owners considered these clandestines to be dangerous and unreliable because they had run away once

[122]On being taken to trial and punished for running away, see RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 650, 1844, l. 8; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 593, 1820-1840, ll. 30-31; and *SPChR* (1875) pp. 213-214. On corporal punishment see GMIR, f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 47; and l. 27 for permission to remain in the Transcaucasus.
[123]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 3ob-29 and Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 62-64.

already, and particularly because they had joined a Molokan community. On the other hand, the law required the commune and landowner to cover the expense of transporting their runaways back to the interior, and the costs that would be incurred did not make sense economically. The serf owner in this case requested compensation for his lost "property," but the Ministry of the Interior decided against setting the costly precedent that such reimbursement would entail.[124]

Second, there were simply too many clandestines to punish without a serious material handling problem. In one case alone, tsarist agents would have been required to apply punishments to well over 700 people simultaneously.[125] Third, the runaways played important economic roles that administrators were loathe to disrupt, as well as an imperialist function by increasing the Russian presence in the region. As one government report stated: "all those Molokans registered under a false name work in the transport trade, in the fields making hay and growing grain, and also work as artisans. Overall, they are a hard-working and beneficial people."[126] Another report added that "the deprivation of so sizable a number of good workers would be felt by the economy of the region."[127] At the same time, from the mid-1840s on, state authorities strove to increase the relative presence of Russian settlers in Transcaucasia as part of their process of imperial integration.[128] Finally, local officials feared a violent reaction from the sectarians if they were to press too hard. In Shirvan guberniia, for example, the authorities generally called for strict regulation of Molokan villages and enforcement of registration policy. However, a local official involved in one case argued forcefully—

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[124]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 23; RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1834, d. 106, ll. 3-4, 9-11; E. R. "Russkie ratsionalisty," 285; *SPChR* (1875), pp. 133-134; and *AKAK* vol. 9 ch. 1, doc. 28, p. 27.
[125]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 13ob-15ob.
[126]Quoted in Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 62.
[127]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 254, 1860, ll. 15ob-16.
[128]See the discussion in chapter 3 as well as GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, l. 2 and Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 62.

although perhaps unrealistically—against taking any decisive action against the runaways, fearing that such actions would only lead to a united armed uprising by the Molokans and criminals hiding in their villages.[129]

On the Road

If the settlers' reasons for migrating were manifold, the actual experience of resettlement to Transcaucasia varied equally as widely. Initial efforts on the part of state agents to manage the population movement were chaotic and not well coordinated because of the vast distances within the empire, the often-incompetent bureaucrats who ran local affairs and (consciously and unconsciously) interpreted laws in their own fashion, and the vagaries of the Russian climate. To be fair, the structure of resettlement did undergo a process of reform and rationalization from 1830 through the 1850s that not only made it more efficient but also resulted in fewer deaths on the part of migrants.[130] However, state administrators simply could not envisage and then prepare for all the permutations caused by the sectarians' needs, desires and actions. Settlers repeatedly took matters into their own hands when they sensed that events were not going to their advantage—sometimes to their benefit, sometimes to their ruination—in an effort both to force the hand of the state and to assure proactively their desired outcome. State officials were left with the difficult tasks of trying to catch up as their subjects surged ahead, or alternatively trying to manage a social process that threatened constantly to billow beyond their control.

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[129]GMIR, f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 24-25. See Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 61, for an indication that the local official was not entirely off-base in his estimations.

[130]Compare, for example, the differences in resettlement practice between the regulations of December 13, 1832, December 14, 1842, and May 2, 1843, as well as the efforts to reform the May 1843 rules later that year. *SPChR* (1875), pp. 113-115; RGIA f. 1263, op. 1, d. 791, 1832, ll. 292ob-297; RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 15; *SPChR* (1875), pp. 328-335; and *AKAK* vol. 9, ch. 2, doc. 515.

As described above, certain sources depict joyous sectarians going to Transcaucasia, happily singing psalms and basking in the expectation of the coming kingdom of Christ and their assured place within it. Another report indicated that a contingent of Skoptsy banished to Transcaucasia for settlement enjoyed a relatively carefree trip to the south. They were "resettled there not as arrestees ... and while on the road, they enjoy complete freedom, stay in unrestricted apartments and visit their religious brethren who also receive them into their homes for visits, and through these means they spread the Skoptsy heresy."[131]

A more common story, though, was of great hardship and suffering during the journey. Most groups arrived in Transcaucasia completely exhausted, starving and ragged.[132] The actual journey generally took at least six months, and often more than a year if the settlers were caught unexpectedly by winter and forced to stop during those months.[133] Official settlers moved in large groups with adults walking the whole way while children rode in wagons, if they were lucky enough to have them. Much happened to families during those months. Children were born, migrants died, romances formed, livestock perished or were consumed for lack of other food, and some settlers underwent a change of heart about resettlement and took the only action possible to return to their original homes: conversion to Orthodoxy.[134]

The sectarian-settlers, whether exiled or having received permission for resettlement, followed one of two preordained routes. The original and primary route took migrants from their home province through Stavropol', where settlers from different points of origin were formed into larger groups for the trip through the

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[131]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 403-404.
[132]*Spirit and Life*, 19-20. RGIA f. 1263, op. 1, d. 791, 1832, ll. 292ob-297; RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, ll. 91ob-94ob; RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23401, 1846-1847; RGIA f. 1284, op. 202-1847, d. 118; and especially RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 15, passim.
[133]RGIA 1284, 196-1831, d. 136, 1831-1843, l. 130.
[134]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 75-77; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, 1825-1832, ll. 199-199ob. See chapter 5 for a discussion of the practices and meanings of conversion in this context.

Caucasus mountains. The settlers then traveled via Vladikavkaz and Tiflis to Shusha where they were dispersed to their specific places of settlement in the region.[135] Timing was critical for this route, with the settlers needing to reach Stavropol' between April and May. Arriving earlier would mean that they would not have "warm shelter" as they moved towards the mountains, depriving "their horses of sufficient pasturage." Arriving later meant that they would traverse the mountains in May or June "when the melting snow can be very difficult.... For new settlers from Russia, travel through Transcaucasia in July and August is highly ruinous because of the local heat which burns away the grass in the steppe area."[136] Moreover, if they arrived too late in Transcaucasia, the sectarians found themselves unable to sow winter crops which they desperately needed to survive their initial months. However, to reach Stavropol' by May required settlers to set off in late winter or early spring when the roads were awash in mud from the thaw and "the land was without fodder for the horses or oxen who were pulling their wagons."[137] In response to all of the problems posed by this first route, a second itinerary into Transcaucasia was opened up which took settlers down the east side of the Caucasus through Astrakhan, Kizliar, Derbent, and Shemakha to their final place of residence. The migrants were to pass through Kizliar in August so that they could arrive in their new homes in September "when the heat ends in Transcaucasia and the ground fodder once again begins to appear."[138]

Whereas state officials, in theory, provided exiled sectarians with provisioning during the their migration, tsarist law, especially in the 1830s, required voluntary

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[135]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 4, 13; *SPChR* (1875), p. 114.
[136]*AKAK* vol. 9 ch. 2, doc. 515, p. 600.
[137]*AKAK* vol. 9 ch. 2, doc. 515, p. 600 and *SPChR* (1875), p. 330.
[138]*AKAK* vol. 9 ch. 2, doc. 515, p. 600. Ismail-Zade, "Russian," p. 61. The second route was particularly appropriate since the majority of sectarians came to live in eastern Transcaucasia. After the mid-1840s, the Stavropol' route was used for exiled sectarians and those voluntary migrants to be settled in the Georgian region. The remainder (the majority) relocated to Transcaucasia along the Kizliar route.

settlers to pay their own way and provide for all their possible needs while in transit.[139] Without experience in accumulating sufficient resources, voluntary migrants frequently began their travels unprepared for the arduous task ahead of them. At the same time, these settlers often found themselves unexpectedly impoverished before they left. When selling their immovable and unwanted property before embarking, they almost always received well below the market value for the goods because buyers realized that migrants would sell cheaply for fear of having to abandon those belongings which they could not transport with them.[140] The settlers' incapacity to provide for themselves forced authorities to intervene in order to prevent mass starvation and complete disaster.[141] Chief Administrator of the Caucasus and Transcaucasus, Rozen, noted in 1833 that "sectarians, while on the road through the Caucasian line, are often in a condition of extreme need and require provisions of bread." Indeed, Rozen negotiated a cessation in the resettlement process in 1833-1834 because poor harvests in the Caucasus had caused "a painful insufficiency" of foodstuffs available to the already-ravaged sectarians in transit. To buy enough grain to satisfy the migrant needs was "only possible at extremely high cost."[142] Moreover, although state laws required that local officials along the route were to grant food and shelter to banished sectarians, the exiles frequently complained that the promised goods were not always forthcoming, leaving them hungry and destitute.[143]

In the face of these devastating outcomes and weighty obstacles to successful resettlement, the sectarian-settlers endeavored to act proactively to ensure success by controlling the time, manner and location of resettlement. In 1833, Orenburg Molokans

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[139]*SPChR* (1875), p. 114.
[140]Orekhov, "Ocherki," no. 135, 1.
[141]See, for example, RGIA f. 384, op. 2, d. 1288, 1842-1845.
[142]RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1831, d. 136. l. 95, 118-118ob, 130. RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, ll. 138ob-139.
[143]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, n.d., ll. 121-122.

requested permission to resettle immediately so that they would have time in their new place of residence to sow crops and cut hay.[144] Other petitioners, revealing how they conceived of the potential dangers that lay ahead, urged to be allowed to migrate in the company of another group of sectarian-settlers "... in order that [we] will run no danger marching through wild, Asiatic places."[145] Dukhobors asked to be settled in areas where they could be in easy contact by wagon with Shusha and other towns in order to foster trade.[146] Other settlers requested specific towns in which to settle.[147]

Despite their efforts to shape the terms of their relocation, migrants were by no means unified or steadfast in their hopes and expectations. They were likely to change their views with some frequency in the face of harsh realities or confused reports—a fact that complicated state efforts to control their movement.[148] In their initial petition, a group of Molokans from the village of Astrakhanka, Tauride gubemiia asked to send scouts down to Transcaucasia to begin the process of selecting and preparing land. A few months later they wrote again, saying that since the first petition they had received correspondence from co-religionists in Transcaucasia who assured that the land there was "definitely suitable." As a result, they were now willing to resettle without sending prior representatives, and in fact preferred not to since time wasted dispatching and waiting for scouts could be used for planting grain and preparing housing in their new homeland. In this same letter to the government, the petitioners further requested that the number of Molokans permitted to resettle not be restricted to the list of those initial petitioners since the number of potential migrants had grown significantly. Despite the opinions voiced in this letter, scouts did in fact make a trip to Transcaucasia and

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[144]RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, l. 4.
[145]RGIA f. 1284, op. 197-1837, d. 9, ll. 3-4.
[146]RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, l. 71ob.
[147]RGIA f. 1263, op. 1, d. 791, 1832, ll. 287-288ob. They were not always granted what they wanted, however, see RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23160, 1842, ll. 8-8ob.
[148]The following discussion is drawn from RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1151, 1831-1834. ll. 1-50.

returned disillusioned. They revoked their desire to resettle stating that the land was not suitable and that "... by their [Molokan] way of life, they cannot live with the indigenous population." However, not all Molokans agreed with this evaluation of the prospects of life on the frontier and the list of those wanting to resettle grew to more than 1082 (from roughly 200).[149] A further petition highlights the growing dissension within the Molokan ranks. The petitioners explained that the scouts had unfairly labeled the land unusable since they had not actually gone to the specific land set aside for them. Moreover, two negative scouts had disregarded the opinion of a third one who found the conditions perfectly acceptable. Confusion continued to reign as Molokans wavered in their desire to resettle. All the while, local authorities struggled vainly to ascertain which of those Molokans who at any particular moment evinced a desire to move met all of the state's criteria for resettlement, and to prevent those who did not from leaving on their own.

In other cases, sectarians stopped sowing their fields, sold their houses, possessions, grain stores and livestock—everything not entirely necessary for the trip—and lived in rented rooms, bivouacs or specially prepared wagons before receiving the state's final permission to resettle. These potentially ruinous actions ensued from a combination of three factors: their certainty of receiving future consent for resettlement, pure excitement at the prospect of moving, and the attempt, through threats of falling into complete economic collapse, to bend the will of the state to let them leave immediately. It was a dangerous gambit trying to force the state's hand in this manner, especially after the implementation of specific laws which denied permission to resettle to those who stopped sowing or sold their property before receiving official resettlement

[149] At this stage, the number had become so large that the obshchestvo was on the verge of blocking their movement entirely since the departure of all these people would have left the community with an insufficient number to pay taxes and provide their allotted share of military recruits, and would have confronted those who remained behind with the very real possibility of complete ruination. see Ibid., ll. 21-21ob.

permission. However, in the face of complete immiseration state officials usually had little option but to yield to the sectarians' designs and grant them the right to move.[150]

For example, a group of Molokans and Subbotniks, odnodvortsy and state peasants from Saratov guberniia, had their second petition for resettlement turned down by the Ministry of State Properties, after having had their first accepted by the Ministry of the Interior. Soon thereafter, they wrote to the Ministry of the Interior explaining that, in expectation of quick resettlement, they had left their fields fallow, sold property that they could not take with them for low prices, and had reached the point where they could no longer provide for themselves in their current location. In fact, according to their missive, all eighteen families were forced to find shelter in one *izba*. An inter-departmental debate ensued over whether permission should be granted or if the law of May 3, 1838 should be applied. This law specifically denied permission to resettle to those who began the resettlement process without permission from higher authorities. In the end, it was agreed that there was no reason to detain them since their current state of ruination would require them to rebuild from scratch in their current place of residence anyway.[151]

In another instance, would-be-migrants from Orenburg who received permission to move had their departure held up by a temporary review of the whole sectarian resettlement venture by the Ministry of the Interior. In response, they wrote that they were now in desperate economic straits and without the basic requirements to sustain human life. The letter ends with a not-so-veiled warning to local authorities concerning the dire material circumstances that awaited them—"the complete poverty menacing us"—if they were not allowed to move to Transcaucasia that very summer.[152]

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[150]For a comparative example, see Sunderland, "Peasants on the Move," 480.
[151]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23160, 1842, l. 2-16ob.
[152]RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839. ll. 16ob-17, 30. For the background to the decision of the Ministry of the Interior temporarily to suspend sectarian resettlement to Transcaucasia because of the

The experiences of these Orenburg Molokans likewise serve as an explicit example not only of the general confusion surrounding early resettlement endeavors but also of another gambit used by settlers: simply setting off on their own after they had obtained general permission to relocate but before receiving the official go-ahead to begin traveling.[153] In 1833, unexpected reports filtered into the Ministry of the Interior from the Governor of Saratov of 170 Molokan odnodvortsy from Orenburg who, having received permission to resettle to Transcaucasia, had been held up in Saratov guberniia by the onset of cold weather and poor harvests in the regions through which they were traveling. They were having great difficulties continuing on their way, especially because there were many young children in their company. News of their movement to Saratov guberniia came as a complete surprise to the authorities in Orenburg who had not given these Molokans permission to take to the road, and had specifically asserted that they were not allowed to set off by themselves (nor to travel in large groups). The officials were deeply annoyed that they had set out at such an inauspicious time of year.[154] The Molokans entreated the local Saratov authorities to let them remain there until the arrival of spring made further progress possible. The Ministry of the Interior permitted them to stay until spring, but under the condition that they be watched closely in order to prevent any spread of their faith. They rented apartments and bought grain from the inhabitants of the village of Tiagloe.

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extreme opposition of local officials to the process, see RGIA f. 1263, op. 1, d. 791, 1832, ll. 287-299.

[153]The following discussion is drawn from RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, ll. 19-21, 47-61, 71-73ob and 95-98ob.

[154]The issue of the timing of resettlement was a focal one in discussions between Transcaucasian and central officials. In an earlier migration (1831) a group of sectarians arrived in the Caucasus Oblast' only in the fall and experienced severe problems crossing the mountains. In consequence they were forced to winter among the local inhabitants and Cossacks until the weather permitted the continuation of their journey. Such stoppages were considered very dangerous by the authorities since "... their presence could serve to spread the heresy in the Caucasus Oblast', where there are already sects and Old Believers." RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, ll. 90-90ob. On the original restrictions supposedly placed on the departure of the Molokans, see RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, l. 9.

Reports from the Caucasus the next spring showed that the harvest had failed, and orders were sent that the erstwhile settlers should now stay in Tiagloe until such time as there was a good harvest. However, the Molokans had already been sent on their way by the Saratov governor before he received word to hold them there. He had hastened them on their journey after complaints by the diocesan bishop that their presence acted as a temptation to the Orthodox and that there had been conversions to the heresy.[155] When the Molokans finally arrived in Transcaucasia the confusion continued. Since there had been no official permission to begin the journey authorities had little idea how many Molokans had actually left, and, therefore, the number who were supposed to arrive. The problems of state administrators were compounded by the fact that there were no reliable lists of those supposed to resettle, since a not insignificant number of those given permission to move had in fact decided to remain in Orenburg guberniia at the last minute. Moreover, Transcaucasian officials reported that 1147 Molokans had arrived from Orenburg, a great many more than expected. Without accurate lists there was no means to ascertain who was actually permitted to be there and how the taxes for these resettlers were to be divided between Transcaucasia and Orenburg guberniia, especially since those migrants who did arrive had been devastated by the journey.

The process of resettlement aggravated fault lines within families. Once again the Orenburg Molokans serve as a prime example. In their attempts to compile a list of those Molokans wishing and eligible to resettle, Orenburg officials discovered families in the midst of power struggles and fragmentation. For instance, families divided between those who wished to migrate and those who wished to stay put—a fracture that

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[155]A. I. Klibanov goes to great length here to demonstrate the enormous impact that these travelers had upon the spiritual lives of the Orthodox villagers and on the spread of Molokanism. Klibanov, *Narodnaia sotsial'naia utopiia*, 149-159.

tended to split along confessional lines. There was the case of a Molokan woman who had intended to follow her father to Transcaucasia but who was forced to remain with her husband since the latter did not wish her to go. In another case, a man began to have doubts about his Molokan convictions and decided to remain in his home village even though his father wanted him to move with the rest of the family—especially since the wife and children of the son were Molokans who planned to resettle. In another incident, the husband wanted to resettle but was prevented from doing so by a wife and children who converted to Orthodoxy and wished to stay put. Similarly, three wives converted to Orthodoxy and decided to remain in Orenburg area despite their husbands' continued intention to relocate. As noted previously, these cleavages created strain as well as opportunities for escaping unwanted family situations. For state officials it complicated their efforts to control the process of resettlement. It forced them to weigh the sanctity of the family versus the imperative to isolate sectarians—whether they would split families according to confession and resettle those who wished it, and what they would do with children who were not of age to decide for themselves.[156]

Resettlement was not necessarily a one-way ticket for sectarians. Many retained ties to their original place of residence in the central provinces, and some went back and forth from one to the other. Indeed, recently settled Molokans often petitioned to be allowed to leave their new homes in order to work temporarily in the central provinces, and maintained contact with relatives who remained behind.[157] Moreover, migration could be impermanent, with individuals staying a few years in Transcaucasia and then returning.[158]

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[156]RGIA f. 383, op. 30, d. 149, 1832-1839, ll. 31-41. For another example, see RGIA f. 1284, op. 198-1838, d. 87. See the discussion in footnote no. 93.
[157]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 597, l. 2. See also, Dolzhenko, "Russkie begletsy," 56-57.
[158]On seasonal migration elsewhere in the empire, see Coquin, "Faim et migrations," 136-137.

As well as being an example of clandestine migration, the case of Aleksei Gus'kov and his family illustrates that resettlement did not necessarily mean a permanent break with the village of origin.[159] The Gus'kov clan moved between Orenburg guberniia and Transcaucasia multiple times in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1842, the family was tried and found guilty of leaving its place of residence in Orenburg guberniia without proper papers and for twice converting from Orthodoxy to Molokanism.[160] Under questioning, Gus'kov related the while he was away working in a nearby town, he heard news that another peasant from his village had abducted his wife and son. (There is some question here whether the wife and son simply left freely with this other man.) Gus'kov immediately demanded permission and proper papers from his commune to go after them, which he received. However, for reasons unexplained, at the volost center the volost clerk took away his papers and held him for thirteen days before Gus'kov escaped. He found his wife and daughter in Astrakhan.[161] But, instead of returning to their Orenburg village, the family made for the town of Shemakha in the Transcaucasus with the intention of joining relatives who had been sent there for settlement. Akulina, his wife, corroborated the story, adding only that she had left Orenburg with the express purpose of joining her co-religionists and relatives living in Transcaucasia, and that she and the abductor had engaged in no sexual relations. During the investigation which accompanied their arrest in 1842, more information about the family's past came to light. In 1835, they had left their home in Orenburg guberniia without official permission and moved to the Transcaucasian village of Alty-Agach until 1836. There they stayed with Gus'kov's mother, who had been

[159]The case is found in RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 508.

[160]A Molokan (or other sectarian) was considered to have twice converted from Orthodoxy if he/she officially switched denominations from a dissident faith to Orthodoxy and then was found to be practicing a sectarian faith again.

[161]At this juncture the abductor disappeared from the story without explanation.

exiled for converting Orthodox to the Molokan faith. In 1836, however, for unexplained reasons they procured false papers and set off for their former home in the Russian interior. Along the way, they were apprehended, punished and returned to their Orenburg homes. In the 1843 proceedings, Gus'kov escaped punishment for his vagabondage by converting to Orthodoxy, and he and his family settled in Transcaucasia.

Another illustration of the ties that continued to bind settlers to their home villages is the story of Petr Bezzubtsov's family.[162] In 1846, Bezzubtsov and his wife approached the Caucasian Viceroy and requested to be officially registered in the village of Prishib' where they had been living, explaining that they had been Molokans for many years. This last statement contradicted documents proving their official conversion to Orthodoxy a few years earlier when they were living in Tambov guberniia. However, they had changed religious affiliation to Orthodoxy "... not out of spiritual conviction; but solely because of the wish to free themselves from court action and imprisonment, to which they were subject for supporting the Molokan sect." Once freed from arrest, however, they procured passports from the sel'skoe nachal'stvo and went to Prishib'. They had been living there ever since, staying with various families in the village. The passports, given in 1843 for the purpose of work outside the village, were good only for a one-year absence and so their presence in Transcaucasia had been illegal since the documents' expiration. While on his one-year passport, Bezzubtsov sent word to his Orthodox mother of his wish to remain in Prishib' and asked for an extension.[163] However, she refused to grant such a request despite his supplications because she wanted her son home. Bezzubtsov then turned to the Viceroy in a effort to circumvent his mother's control and make official his presence in the Transcaucasus.

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[162]Their story is found in RGIA f. 1284, op. 204-1849, d. 799.
[163]While in prison, his mother had looked after his children and baptized them all into Orthodoxy.

His efforts failed, and he and his family were brought to trial for clandestine resettlement and twice converting to Molokanism.

Promised Land, Tragic Land: Towards a New Life on the Frontier

The sectarians did not always find the world that they expected would be waiting for them in Transcaucasia. If the trip itself was not enough to weaken, impoverish or kill the sectarians, their initial years in their new homes put an end to many more. Especially in the 1830s and early 1840s, new arrivals from the central provinces suffered terribly from Transcaucasia's climate. Problems ranged from the impact of new diseases and heat to non-potable water and a soil and climate not appropriate to grow the crops to which they were accustomed. These problems led to widespread hunger, staggeringly high rates of death, and the desire to be moved to other, less dangerous parts of Transcaucasia to settle. The local administration proved inexperienced and incompetent in its attempts to solve the problems.

By the mid-1840s, however, the sectarian-settlers found ways to ameliorate their lives. In response to the restrictions and challenges of the region's geography, the migrants changed and adapted their economic practices, complementing their settled agriculture with an emphasis on livestock raising and the wheeled-transportation trade. So successful were these adaptations that by mid-century the Russian villages had become so markedly wealthy that Russian officials considered them entirely indispensable to the region's economy. In the process of settlement and economic development, moreover, the Russian settlers left their mark on the region's environment, just as it had deeply scarred them in their initial years.

For the first settlers in the 1830s, tsarist authorities set aside land in the so-called Muslim provinces near the Caspian sea in the former Khanates of Karabakh and Talysh—land which was uninhabited in tsarist estimation. Officials believed that, isolated there, the sectarians would be unable to spread their heresies, and also would interfere the least with the local Muslims and Armenians. In these early years, Russian authorities also chose this land based upon what they thought would be its appropriateness for settled agriculture. In their opinion, Transcaucasia's lowlands represented such arable land with its "warm climate, water, fertile soil and quite large and flat land plots."[164] However, the administrators did not take into account that there was a reason that these lands were traditionally unpopulated. In summer, eastern Transcaucasia's low lying areas turned out to be killing zones because of the proliferation of malaria, polluted drinking water and the oppressive summer heat.[165] One Russian author writing at the end of the nineteenth century described the Lenkoran district before the Russians' arrival as "completely barren, without forest, without people, and considered an extremely unhealthy place that was visited only in winter by the nomads."[166] The region's indigenous peoples—primarily Muslim nomads—had long ago learned to use such low-lying areas only for winter habitation, taking to the mountain regions as the snow receded in spring to escape the summer's heat.

The settlers suffered from a series of climate-related diseases and rates of death among the sectarian-settlers were high.[167] While the statistics on the death rate are not

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[164]A. N. Iamskov, "Environmental Conditions and Ethnocultural Traditions of Stockbreeding (the Russians in Azerbaijan in the 19th and early 20th Centuries)," paper given at 12th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Zagreb, Yugoslavia, July 24-31, 1988. (Moscow: Nauka, Central Dept. of Oriental Literature, 1988), 3.
[165]Ibid.
[166]"Vlianie malarii na kolonizatsiiu Kavkaza," *Kavkazskii Kalendar'* LIV (1899): otd. II, 57.
[167]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 135, 2. High mortality was also common among Russians settling in other parts of the Empire and European colonial settlers elsewhere in the non-European world. See Barrett, "Lines of Uncertainty," 583; Iu. T. Pyshnova, "Historical-Geographic Aspects of the Development and Settlement of the Black Sea Coast of the Caucasus," *Soviet Geography* XV, no. 3 (March 1974): 160; Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: The Epic of Australia's Founding* (New York:

entirely reliable—no two sets of numbers are identical—they do present a general overview of the profound fatalities that the sectarians suffered upon arrival in Transcaucasia. See Table 1.

Table 1. Mortality Among Sectarian-Settlers to Transcaucasia in 1830s

Location	Dates	Number of Settlers	Numbers of Deaths	Deaths as Percentage of Settlers
1) Topchi	1834–1838	2186[a]	919 (458 m, 461 f)[b]	42%
2) Alty-Agach	1835-1838	785[a]	158 (78 m, 80 f)[b]	20%
3) Dudakchi	1832-1838	156 families (1832-34)[b]	618 (306 m, 312 f)[b]	NA
4) Kizyl-kishliag	1830-1838	660[a]	131 (57 m, 74 f)[b]	19.8%
5) Karabakh province – Dizan & Zangezur magalas	1831-1834	903[c]	470[c]	52%

Sources:

[a] AKAK vol. 10, doc. 293, p. 285.

[b] AKAK vol. 8, doc. 60, p. 82.

[c] GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 67, 70-71, 77.

Notes: Other statistical sources for Topchi list 898 deaths (436 m, 463 f)[c] for the years 1834-1836, or 50% of settlers; for Alty-Agach, 152 deaths (66 m, 86 f)[c] for 1835-1836, or 19.5% of settlers; and for Karabakh province, 1830-1837, 593 deaths (300 m, 293 f)[c], or 67% of settlers.

The first group of sectarians to arrive in Transcaucasia were the exiled Dukhobors from the Don Cossacks in 1830. The military-regional administrator of the

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Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), especially 84-128; and Lois Greren Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: the Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," in Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Pleck, eds. *A Heritage of her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979): 25-57.

Muslim Provinces, colonel Miklashevkii, was responsible for choosing the exact place of their settlement. He set aside land for them in Karabakh province and prepared for their arrival, ordering the construction of 50 solid mud huts "with spacious outer entrance halls," wood for fuel, and stores of wheat, millet and barley for each family.[168] Despite good intentions, grave errors were made in the preparations. The first location demarcated for the Dukhobors (in a place called Shaba-kishliag, near the village of Gasanriz) was in a valley which proved inaccessible to wheeled transport and lacked sufficient pasture land for the settlers' livestock. Weakened and destitute from the journey, the Dukhobors arrived to their new homes in August 1830 in the midst of the worst affects of the debilitating summer heat. The heat and humidity were "murderous," and were exacerbated by the fact that the mud huts built for them were done so in the style of nomad winter housing which were designed for heat retention.[169] In consequence, the Dukhobors sent a delegation to Tsarist authorities to demand a new place of settlement.[170] Although the Dukhobors moved to a new location, Kizyl-Kishliak, their trials did not end. Cholera spread widely through the settlers' communities as well as other fevers caused by the bad water they were forced to drink.[171]

"Wholesale death" was the result.[172] Between August 20 and September 20, 1830, alone, twenty-two Dukhobor exiles succumbed to the climatic conditions—that is, 8.3% of the 265 that arrived perished within one month.[173] By March 1831, the death toll had mounted to fifty-eight settlers.[174] The problems that the Dukhobors faced

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168GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, ll. 113, 121; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 75-76; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 145-147, 151-152.
169GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, l. 123.
170GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 76.
171*AKAK* vol. 8, doc. 60, p. 81 and *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 293, p. 287.
172GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, l. 123.
173GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 77.
174GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, l. 124.

from the heat, humidity and disease were compounded by the fact that the harvest was poor in the first few years. In 1831 in particular, agricultural produce was entirely insufficient and the Dukhobors found themselves with no choice but to petition the administration for 175 quarters [*chetverti*] of wheat on credit so that they would have something to sow for 1832.[175] As the man directly in contact with the starving Dukhobors, Miklashevskii struggled to alleviate their situation. He requested funds to give each Dukhobor family two milk cows in order to feed their families better, but the request was denied by authorities higher up the chain of command.[176]

After the Don Dukhobors in Karabakh, one of the first Russian villages set up in Transcaucasia, and one of the most tragic, was Topchi in Shirvan uezd of the Caspian oblast'. Molokans began to arrive in this village in 1834 and suffered "ruin" and "devastation" from the difficulties of the "oppressive" climate and "unhealthy," "swampy" land.[177] One Molokan memoirist described Topchi as a "place from Hell" where the "severe climate" killed 8 people every day from May through October each year.[178] Molokans lived in Topchi for twelve years, and buried as many as 2,000 people, piling twelve coffins in each grave. Every year the Topchi Molokans petitioned the local Tsarist authorities for permission to move elsewhere to escape the terrible toll of their new environment, but for each of those twelve years their requests were denied. As one Molokan memoirist wrote: "the Molokans had to endure much, and carry a great deal on their shoulders in the name of their faith."[179]

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[175]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, l. 128.
[176]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 78.
[177]N. Kalashev, "Selenie Ivanovka, Lagichskago uchastka, Geokchaiskago uezda, Bakinskoi gubernii," *SMOMPK* vyp. 13 (Tiflis: Tip. Kants. glavno. grazh. chastiiu na Kavkaze, 1892), otd. II. 238 and Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 1.
[178]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 324, n.d., ll. 1-1ob. Other Molokan sources repeat this assertion of a death rate of eight people per day. See GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 237, 1910, l. 43.
[179]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 324, n.d., ll. 1-1ob and Leont'ev, "Dukhovnye khristiane," 18-19. For a request to move from Topchi that was denied, see GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 597, 1835-1840, l. 10. See also Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 1.

The unlucky settlers to Topchi only escaped their living nightmare by personally prostrating themselves before the Viceroy, M. S. Vorontsov, in 1846. One Molokan author recounts the incident in dramatic terms.

> In the place called Topchi the climate was very severe and saturated with fever [*likhoradochnyi*] and many people died there, up to 8 people per day. The village elders heard that the Viceroy, Prince Mikhail Semenovich Vorontsov would be passing close to Topchi. The entire community, both old and young, went out to the road to ask the Viceroy to grant them permission to relocate to a new place, with an easier climate. When Vorontsov rode up to them, the weather was rainy, and all the elders, wives and children who stood by the road on the steppe, fell down onto bended knee in the mud. They cried: "Your eminence, our father [*otets rodnoi*], have pity on us, we are all sick, we are dying from fever. We bury every day three, five, eight corpses. Move us to another climate." [180]

In response to the sight of the destitute Russian settlers, a journalist reported that Vorontsov declared: "Oh God, what horrors." He quickly granted them permission to move to an area in Tiflis guberniia that the Molokans named Vorontsovka in honor of their savior.[181]

The village of Alty-Agach, located not too distant from Topchi, also suffered in its first few years of existence, although not to the degree of Topchi. As Table 1 indicates, the death rate among settlers to Alty-Agach was approximately half that of Topchi. In great part, this lower mortality resulted from Alty-Agach's much higher elevation. Located 3501 feet above sea level, the climate was substantially cooler than in lower lying areas (like Topchi) and less susceptible to disease.[182] Nevertheless, the Molokan settlers to Alty-Agach also experienced periods of extreme deprivation and disease, and like their brethren in Topchi frequently demanded to be resettled. In one

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[180]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 237, 1910, l. 43. For a different version of this story, although with the same basic outlines, see GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 324, ll. 1-2.

[181]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 1. Other former villagers from Topchi moved to the nearby village of Alty-Agach.

[182]S. I. Pokhilevich, "Selenie Alty-Agach, Shemakhinskago uezda Bakinskoi gubernii," *SMOMPK*, vyp. 1. (Tiflis: Tip. Glavnago Upravleniia Namestnika Kavkazskago, 1881), 89-90. The author notes that Baku dwellers would often come to area of the village during the summer months in order to escape the severe heat of the city.

letter of complaint to Tsarist authorities, the Molokans described Alty-Agach's location as inappropriate for settled agriculture because it was mountainous, and disease-ridden because of the village's proximity to "plague- [*chumnoi*] and cholera-riddled Tatar graveyards."[183] The settlers in Alty-Agach also suffered from high winds which blew dry air across their lands for almost half the year, often killing their sown grains and vegetables.[184]

If the sectarian-settlers in the Caspian and Karabakh regions—especially Topchi and Kizyl-Kishliak—suffered from heat, disease and foul water, the Dukhobors who were exiled to Akhalkalaki district in Tiflis province between 1841 and 1845 suffered from a different set of difficulties. The land chosen for them to settle on was a plateau rising 8,000 feet above sea level—an area known as the Wet Mountains [*Mokrye gory*]. Reporting in 1844 about their condition, one Tsarist official noted that because of this height "not even barley grows [there] and the snow does not recede until the end of May." He found them "condemned to death by starvation" because traditional Russian agricultural produce could not be grown there.[185] Relating the travails of his forebears, the Dukhobor historian Peter Malov echoed this assessment, describing "deep snow drifts, long winters and bitter frosts" and noting that neither grains nor vegetables could be grown.[186]

One important outcome of these initial difficulties posed by settling the sectarians in Transcaucasia was that the settlers frequently moved multiple times from one village to another in Transcaucasia before finally arriving at a place where they could survive. Such multiple relocations generally followed the pattern of arriving in lowlands and

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[183]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 597, l. 4.
[184]Pokhilevich, "Selenie Alty-Agach," 90.
[185]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23,300, 1844, ll. 1-1ob. (This report is also found in *AKAK* vol. 9, doc. 532, pp. 629-630.)
[186]Malov, *Dukhobortsy*, 23-24. In this regard, see also S. A. Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia i khoziaistvenno-kul'turnye kontakty kavkazskikh dukhobortsev s mestnym naseleniem," in *Dukhobortsy and Molokane v Zakavkaz'e*, eds. V. I. Kozlov and A. P. Pavlenko (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1992), 45.

ravines and then moving up to mountain areas "where the land and climate were more suitable."[187] For instance, in 1832, Molokans settled in Dudakchi but "because of a burning climate and insufficient amount of land" the settlers moved in 1839 to another location called Bazar-chai. However, the settlers were forced to move on again in 1840 when they realized that the climate there did not allow grain to ripen. They lived temporarily in the village of Kara-bulak, from whence they settled permanently to the village of Borisy in 1842.[188] In a similar case, Molokan settlers arrived first to Aladina but "because of the hot, unhealthy climate and high death rates" they relocated to Bazar-chai in 1839. There they also suffered from the "severity of the climate" and moved on in 1841 to Balukai, where they then founded a permanent settlement.[189] In these two cases, the settlers gained permission to resettle from local authorities. However, there were many other cases in which sectarian settlers, having been denied permission from the authorities to move, simply took matters into their own hands and left fatal locations to wander through Transcaucasia in search of a better site.[190]

Such movement within Transcaucasia granted the settlers a potentially new lease on life. Many only survived because they were able to escape form the perilous locations that Tsarist officials had originally picked out for them. However, such frequent movement from one location to another also exacerbated many of the economic problems that the settlers faced by denying them the opportunity to set down roots and begin agricultural cultivation in earnest. Settlers in the village of Giulistan, for example,

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[187]One nineteenth-century commentator described this movement from lowlands to high in epic, essentializing terms: "The lowlands with their fevers and artificially irrigated fields in which ripen grapes, cotton, rice and maize, could not attract the attention of the Russian colonizer, who has been accustomed from the time of Riurik only to the old wooden plow." A. I. Masalkin, "Iz istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov. Ch. III, Sektanty, kak kolonizatory Zakavkaz'ia," *Kavkaz* no. 333 (Dec. 16, 1893): 2.
[188]*AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 293, p. 284.
[189]Ibid..
[190]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 58; Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 226-227; and Kalashev, "Selenie Ivanovka," 238-241.

suffered general economic distress caused by "frequent resettlement which leads them to extreme disarray."[191] As one Tsarist official noted, much cannot be expected from "people moved from one place to another, moved even through a series of places of habitation."[192]

In response to these tremendous difficulties, the sectarians took whatever action they could to mitigate the harsh circumstances. Their responses can be grouped into four categories: petitions, conversion, transforming the environment, and adaptation to the local ecology. In reaction to their destitution and sickness, settlers demanded that state agents take measures to keep them alive and facilitate their resettlement. Officials at all levels of Russian administration began to concern themselves with how better to go about the settlement of the sectarians in order to avoid future such rates of mortality—and perhaps even to elicit some benefit from their presence in the Transcaucasian colony. To confront immediate problems, tsarist officials gave the settlers direct aid and grants of money, food and resources to help the sectarians through the hard times. This assistance reached such a level that one state administrator lamented the amount of treasury funds that were required to feed the Dukhobors settled in the Mokrye gory.[193] In addition, state officials also began to consider more carefully the climate, soil, and location and quantity of the land they would allot to the sectarians in the future.[194] By the mid-1840s, Russian authorities realized better how to settle the sectarians in Transcaucasia, as evidenced by the much less fatal process of Russian migration to Erevan province in the 1840s.[195] Authorities chose to settle the incoming sectarians in

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[191] *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 293, p. 287.
[192] RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23300, 1844, l. 2.
[193] RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23300, 1844, l. 1ob.
[194] RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d, 23300, 1844, ll. 2-3ob. See also *AKAK* vol. 9 ch. 2, doc. 532, pp. 629-630.
[195] Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 58-61; N. D. Dingel'shtedt, *Zakavkazskie sektanty v ikh semeinom i religioznom bytu* (St. Petersburg, 1885), 1-3; and A. F. Liaister, "'Pryguny' v Erivanskoi gubernii (stranichka iz istorii religioznykh iskanii russkago cheloveka)," in *Pamiatnaia Knizhka*

six villages near Lake Sevan [Gochka], and these groups nowhere near approximated the death rates of their forebears in the Caspian and Karabakh regions. As an official document stated, authorities took into account that "all these places have a healthy climate, highly fertile soil, forests not far away, and abundant water."[196]

A second option was to return to the central Russian provinces from whence they came. However, according to Tsarist law, the only possible means to receive permission to return to the "rodina" was to convert to Orthodoxy.[197] That many Dukhobor exiles form the Don Cossacks did so—50 of the 266 arrivals converted to Orthodoxy in order to be able to leave Transcaucasia immediately—emboldened Chief Administrator of the Caucasus, I. F. Paskevich, to conclude that "the climate of their present place of settlement has a large impact on the conviction to leave behind their errors and harmful heresy."[198]

Third, the sectarian-settlers did all they could to tame and transform the hostile climate to their needs. Most prominently, the settlers occupied themselves with such infrastructural work as gaining access to water, cutting down trees to make way for fields and villages, and carving out access roads from their new villages to markets and towns. When sectarian settlers first arrived in 1835 to settle in the village of Alty-Agach in Shirvan' uezd, they found a large forested area in which to make their new homes. Over the first few years, the sectarians took great pains to deforest the area to make way for their village and for their agricultural fields. In doing so, the settlers were able (to a degree) to carve a place for themselves within the local ecology in which they could

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Erivanskoi gubernii na 1912 g. (Erevan: Tip. Gubernskago Pravleniia, 1912), Literaturnyi otdel, ch. II, 1-6.

[196]Quoted in Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 58.

[197]For a selection of related laws see *PSZ* (2), T. 5, otd. 2, 1830, No. 4010 and *PSZ* (2) T. 22, otd. 2, 1847, No. 20889. I discuss the question of conversion at length in chapter 5, and will only touch on it in a cursory manner here.

[198]RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, ll. 19-19ob. This quotation can also be found in *AKAK* vol. 7, doc. 415, p. 466.

survive. Alty-Agach became one of the more prosperous Russian settlements in the region. In doing so, they dramatically changed the pre-existing ecology. Whereas the forest had been home to a variety of species of animals—such as deer, antelope [*dzheirany*], wild boar, bears, martens, foxes and badgers—this biodiversity was eliminated due to the deforestation and Russian hunting.[199] In contrast to the settlers in Alty-Agach, Dukhobor settlers to Elisavetpol' province found no forest nearby their new settlements and were forced to bring wood to build their homes through difficult mountain passes—a feat that required them to expend large amounts of scarce energy, time and resources.[200]

Access to water posed another problem for many Russian villages, and was not as easily solved as the question of deforestation. The case of Ivanovka in Baku guberniia is exemplary. Despite an abundance of annual rainfall, the villagers of Ivanovka found themselves in a constant battle to ensure sufficient water for themselves because there were no rivers, streams or lakes in the immediate vicinity of the settlement. In order to water their animals, the villagers constructed ponds in the village which captured the rainwater. For the human inhabitants, the closest source of potable water was found three kilometers away [3 versts]. To obtain the water, villagers were required to load barrels onto a wagon and hitch it up to anywhere from one to three pairs of bulls (depending on the weather) in order to drag the wagon through the steep terrain. The village generally sent older women and younger boys to fetch the water, and sent them at the crack of dawn because it was cooler in summer at that time, and in winter they found that the morning frost made the roads more passable. In times of drought,

[199]Pokhilevich, "Selenie Alty-Agach," 91.
[200]V. V. Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane v Zakavkaz'e, Shiity v Karabakhe, Batchi i Oshumoedy v Srednei Azii, i Ober-Amergau v Gorakh Bavarii* (Moscow: Tipo-litografiia Tovarishestva I. N. Kushnerev, 1900), 4.

both humans and animals in Ivanovka were forced to obtain water from the closest irrigation ditch.[201]

Finally, as a result of these climatic uncertainties, Russian settlers transformed their economic practices in fundamental ways. While not abandoning settled agriculture, they diversified their economic practices in order to avoid an over-reliance on the production of grains and vegetables that had been the center-point of their economic practices prior to migration to Transcaucasia. Particularly important in this process of economic diversification was the sectarian-settlers' tendencies to focus increasing amounts of energy on livestock raising and the transportation trade.[202]

The Dukhobors settled in *mokrye gory* discovered that neither grains nor vegetables grew particularly well in their region of settlement, but tall grasses could be cultivated in abundance. With so much fodder available to them, the Dukhobors increasingly took to livestock raising as their primary economic activity.[203] The Molokans who settled in Vorontsovka from Topchi underwent a similar transition in their economic practices. Despite the fact that Vorontsovka became one of the most well-off and economically successful villages in Transcaucasia, the transplanted Molokans initially faced difficulties there. Although the soil was relatively rich, the refugees from Topchi were cursed with extraordinarily heavy rainfall their first few

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201 Kalashev, "Selenie Ivanovka," 247-248. Kalashev noted that local tsarist officials worked hard to enhance access to water in the region by expanding man-made irrigation efforts in order to help all inhabitants of the region, Russian and non-Russian, to confront the difficulties in obtaining water in that area.

202 See for example I. L. Segal', "Russkie poseliane v Elisavetpol'skoi gubernii (statistichesko-etnograficheskii ocherk)," *Kavkaz* no. 41 (February 14, 1890): 3; Iamskov, "Environmental conditions," 3-4; Kh. A. Vermishev, "Ekonomicheskii byt gosudarstvennykh krest'ian v Akhaltsikhskom i Akhalkalakskom uezdakh, Tiflisskoi gubernii," in *MIEBGKZK* , T. III, (Tiflis, 1886), ch. 2, 1-284; N. A. Abelov, "Ekonomicheskii byt gosudarstvennykh krest'ian Elisavetpol'skogo uezda Elisavetpol'skoi gubernii," in *MIEBGKZK* , T. VII. (Tiflis: 1887), 1-140; and A. Kalantar, "Merinosy v Zakavkaz'e," *Kavkazskoe sel'skoe khoziaistvo* no. 206 (Dec. 18, 1987): 839-841.

203 Malov, *Dukhobortsy*, 23-24.; Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 45; and *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 98, p. 123. On their great success and wealth from livestock raising, see Vermishev, "Ekonomicheskii byt," 18-50 and Kalantar, "Merinosy," 839-841.

years. As a result, they found that the grains they planted would not ripen, leaving them solely with a harvest of straw. Confronted with failed grain harvests, but plenty of hay, they turned quickly to livestock raising as their primary means of livelihood—a shift that became a permanent aspect of their economic activities.[204]

Conclusions

The incorporation of Transcaucasia into the Russian empire, and the state's decision to isolate sectarians there, opened a wide vista of opportunities and possibilities for Russia's religious dissenters. These opportunities were themselves a seminal outcome of Russian empire-building. Perhaps most importantly, tsarist policies granted sectarians mobility. Non-conformists from all denominations and social backgrounds took advantage of the chance to relocate in an effort to remedy hardships that threatened them: religious persecution, economic distress, unbearable family realities, and the weight of military service. Migration to Transcaucasia also provided the sectarians with the possibility to actualize their dreams and aspirations: Christ's kingdom on earth, a land of milk and honey, and a fresh start freed from previous familial bonds. The process of resettlement was chaotic and, as often as not, the settlers did not find what they were looking for. Families collapsed, communities fell into disagreement, and the road to Transcaucasia proved perilous and capricious. Nonetheless, the sectarians did what they could to benefit from the opportunities that the interaction of Russian imperialism and religious policy offered them. They petitioned to migrate on their own terms, took to the road on their own timing, and moved back and forth between the

[204]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 2. On the later success of Vorontsovka, see A. D. Eritsov, "Ekonomicheskii byt gosudarstvennykh krest'ian Borchalinskogo uezda Tiflisskoi gubernii," in *MIEBGKZK*, T. VII, (Tiflis, 1887), 367-534 and A. M. Argutinskii-Dolgorukov, "Borchalinskii uezd, Tiflisskoi gubernii v ekonomicheskom i kommercheskom otnosheniiakh," in *RTKE* (Tiflis: Izd. Zakavkazskoi zhelieznoi dorogi, Tip. Ia. I. Libermana, 1897), 1-323.

interior and Transcaucasia in order to profit from both regions. When prevented from realizing the option to resettle to Transcaucasia, both sectarians and Orthodox migrated there clandestinely.

Sectarian resettlement to Transcaucasia was both an individual and group experience. State legislation made large-scale resettlement possible by setting sectarians legally apart. Their shared official standing as "sectarians" helped to define the parameters of their actions. Orthodox Russians who desired to move to Transcaucasia were almost always required at some point to take up sectarian affiliation and collective identity. However, as well as being a group process affecting specific communities of people, the migrants understood the journey in individual terms. Sectarians from different social groups and branches of Christianity relocated for a variety of reasons—religious, economic, social, military—each reflecting personal choices and exigencies. Just as their motivations for migration were diverse, the sectarians also underwent a wide spectrum of case-specific experiences while traveling to Transcaucasia.

Despite state laws and administrative structures governing the migration process, these Russian subjects took matters into their hands and forced state officials into a reactive role. Historians such as K. D. Kavelin and P. N. Miliukov have described peasants as, respectively, "Kaluga dough" or "plasma-like" to show how little impact the state had upon them.[205] Yet sectarian settlers to Transcaucasia were more proactive and aggressive than this depiction indicates. In their efforts to escape the hardships of central Russia and to fulfill their aspirations for economic prosperity and greater religious and social freedom, these people seized opportunities and acted independently

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[205]Quoted in Alfred J. Rieber, "The Sedimentary Society," in *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 345-346.

to make real the promise of a new life in Transcaucasia—even in the face of a difficult trip and dismal conditions.

If the sectarian settlers left their homes with certain expectations in mind, a colonial mission was not among them. The absence of imperialist designs is important to understanding the contours of Russian Empire-building, and the role of peasant colonization therein. Russian religious policy populated the Transcaucasus with Russians—both exiles and voluntary settlers—who felt little or no attachment to Russian state power, and who had their own agendas in migrating to the frontier. However, as we will see in the following two chapters, while their aspirations were often at odds with the Russian state's imperialist project, these settlers began to take on the role of Russian colonizers, both from the perspective of state officials and in their own minds.

Chapter Three

Heretics and Colonizers: Changing Roles and Transforming Identities in the Context of Empire

Dukhobors, Molokans, and Subbotniks arrived in Transcaucasia as outcasts, unwanted in the central provinces, and as migrants in search of a better life for themselves on the frontier, including being part of Christ's New Jerusalem. However, their appearance in the borderlands set in motion a series of processes that were neither predicted by the people who sent them their, nor expected by the settlers. The sectarians' move to Transcaucasia expanded the possible roles available to them as subjects of the realm. Resettlement also profoundly altered the attitudes of state officials toward the sectarians, and of the dissenters to the state and themselves. This chapter examines the imperial functions that the sectarian-settlers took on; traces the formation of a new typology of identities on the frontier between the "pernicious sectarian" and the "Russian colonist;" and explores how the boundaries of the sectarians' identity—both self-labeled and self-defined—were negotiated and re-negotiated around these two tropes from mid-century on. In doing so, this chapter underscores how resettlement to Transcaucasia transformed the meanings of identity, and the place of sectarians in Russian polity and society. Labels and characterizations were contingent, contextual, and contested, and these contingencies and contestations lay at the foundation of how state and subject acted towards one another.

The views of state officials towards the sectarians shifted drastically in the years following the dissenters' resettlement to Transcaucasia. In the opening decades of the 1800s, both secular and religious authorities considered the non-conformists to be

"pernicious heretics" who by their very nature (fanatical, easily deluded, likely to fall under the sway of charismatic leaders) posed a serious threat not only to the Orthodox Church, but to the well-being of the state and its people as well. A large body of legislation restricting the activities of the sectarian population—as well as extra-legal oppression—reflected these beliefs. However, an entirely different identity—the "Russian colonist"—was introduced in official correspondence (and briefly overshadowed the pariah categorization) when the sectarians began arriving in the southern borderlands in the 1830s and 1840s. In these multiethnic provinces, sectarians comprised the majority of those people who state authorities considered "Russian"—and thereby the majority of those subjects officials assumed to be inherently loyal and dependable (by virtue of their Russianness). Tsarist officials came to rely on these religious dissenters to administer the region and the banished non-conformists ironically became quasi-representatives of state power, taking on administrative, economic, and military functions in the imperial enterprise. The development of the "Russian colonist" identity alongside the "pernicious heretic" was accompanied both by a corpus of legislation that greatly favored the Transcaucasian sects and by the rapidly developing opinion that these sectarians were loyal and dependable subjects who contributed in positive ways to the progress of the Empire. Despite sharing the same legal, social, and religious categorizations, sectarians settled in Transcaucasia were granted benefits and privileges as colonizers, whereas their brethren in the interior provinces continued to suffer under suffocating restrictions (especially during Nicholas I's reign).

The sectarians' sense of self-identity followed a similar trajectory.[1] In the early nineteenth century, sectarians considered themselves true Christians, claimed spiritual descent from the early Christian fathers, and compared themselves favorably to a

[1] It should be noted, however, that despite this analogous progression, state and sectarian frequently did not share the same definitions of who was "Russian" or a "loyal subject."

corrupt and misguided Orthodox Church. Although the specific religious beliefs and practices varied from sect to sect, generally they saw themselves as people chosen by God and found communal identity with God's world, not with any earthly state or ethnic community.[2] In consequence, they often refused to perform state obligations such as pay taxes or fulfill military service. However, with their resettlement to Transcaucasia, they began to forge bonds of identity with worldly communities—although their religious affiliation and spiritual separateness remained a vital force in their sense of self. In multicultural Transcaucasia, the sectarians' identification with Russian ethnicity was enhanced by day-to-day interactions with ethno-cultural "others." Moreover, in the new role of frontier "colonists," sectarian-settlers found themselves with both a stake in, and an influence on, the Russian state. Their sense of identification as Russians and Russian subjects grew alongside their religiously-derived self-definitions.

Thus, in state-labeling and sectarian self-definition, settlement on the frontier fostered new, often competing notions of identity. Simultaneously, there existed socially and politically inclusive and exclusive characterizations. The relations between state and sectarian became a slippery spiral in which evolving state labeling of sectarians provided an impetus for a reformation of sectarian self-identity in regards to the state. The new forms of sectarian identification then propelled even further shifts in state categorizations, and the mutually reinforcing relations continued. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the result was an ambivalent understanding on the part of tsarist administrators of a sectarian's place in the Russian empire. The constructs of "Russian colonist" and "pernicious sectarian" existed together uncomfortably, each attaining preeminence in different contexts and at different times. In part, this inconsistency

[2]This was especially true of the Dukhobors, and slightly less so with the Molokans. It must be stressed that each sectarian community did not find commonalty with other sectarian groups.

arose from the existence of many different perspectives inside the regime, including voices from local, regional, and central levels, as well as secular and spiritual views. As with state labels, the parameters of sectarian self-identification were also fluid, ambiguous, and at times mutually contradictory.

The formation of identities, however contextual and impermanent they may have been, produced outcomes and parameters of their own. As they struggled to carve a niche for themselves within state power, sectarians frequently used discursive strategies that exploited the "Russian colonist" category in order to give themselves validity and underscore their membership and influence in Russia, both *russkii* and *rossiiskii*. Simultaneously, those representatives of the state and Orthodox Church who believed that Orthodox Christianity was a prerequisite to entrance into the Russian community, often couched their efforts to discredit sectarians in language that abrogated the "Russian colonist" components of their identity while playing up the "pernicious heretic."

Constructing Identity

Recent scholarship has argued that the meaning of identity is often constructed or "imagined" through "difference"—by a process of comparison with a constructed "other"—and that the negotiation of difference is most deeply experienced by historical actors (and most clearly discerned by historians) at the margins.[3] In the context of these recent insights, the Transcaucasian sectarians are fertile ground for the examination of how the boundaries of identity were being drawn in Russia at different times. They were doubly marginalized: socially and religiously by virtue of their religious non-

[3]John Shotter and Kenneth J. Gergen, eds., *Texts of Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1989); Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (New York: Verso, 1991). Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969).

conformity, and geographically by their location in Russia's borderlands. Such dual marginality provides vital points of insight into the different currents of identity extant in late-Imperial Russia.

Three issues of definition must be addressed before further discussion. First, my understanding of identity draws heavily from the scholarship of community psychology and its examination of "sense of community." The latter is commonly defined by four elements:

> The first element is *membership*. Membership is the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness. The second element is *influence*, a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members. The third element is reinforcement: *integration and fulfillment of needs*. This is the feeling that members' needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group. The last element is *shared emotional connection*, the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences.[4]

Second, I will examine here both the internal generation and expression of sectarian self-identity, as well as the formation and imposition of state characterizations of these people. I also highlighting the negotiations between the two. In an empire such as Russia which attempted to impose a system of rigid categories on an extremely heterogeneous population, and which applied different systems of laws to different classification groups, the struggle over labels and identities was of paramount importance to the outcomes of everyday life. State policy decisions towards sectarians, and the reverse, grew from such identity constructions.

Third, in discussing the relations between state and sectarian, what "Russian" identity meant in the case of Imperial Russia deserves close inspection. Membership in the Russian community in the nineteenth century—with its attendant privileges and

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[4]The four elements are taken from David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis, "Sense of Community. A Definition and Theory," *Journal of Community Psychology* 14 no. 1 (1986): 8-20, quotation is on 9. Italics are in the original.

obligations—was constructed on two, often intersecting planes. These planes reflect the linguistic distinction between the two words for "Russian:" *rossiiskii* and *russkii*. The former type was political and imperial, in which officials strove to create loyal subjects—whatever their ethnicity, native language, or religion—providing positive service for *Rossiia*. These *rossiiskii* "subjects" forged bonds of communal identity with each other and with the empire (demonstrating a varying combination of membership, influence, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection).[5] The latter type was ethnic. The Russian Empire was certainly *russkii* dominated and, mirroring Europe-wide trends, "Russian" identity came increasingly to be defined in terms of ethnicity as the nineteenth century progressed.[6] Since Russia (*Rossiia*) was at once a multiethnic state as well as a "Russian" (as opposed to "Romanov") empire in which Great Russians and their culture were predominant, these two processes of national self-definition did not always run parallel courses, nor did they have similar content and goals. Yet both were extant and constantly affecting each other in late Imperial Russia.[7] I will examine here both *rossiiskii* and *russkii* identity, for short-hand calling the former "state" identity and the latter "ethnic" identity.

Sectarians in the Service of Empire

As discussed in chapter one, in their decision to isolate sectarians in Transcaucasia, tsarist policy-makers were primarily concerned with purging the core

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[5]The case of the Georgian nobility and Armenian bourgeoisie is illustrative here. See Ronald G. Suny, "Russian Rule and Caucasian Society in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: The Georgian Nobility and the Armenian Bourgeoisie," *Nationalities Papers* VII no. 1 (Spring 1979): 53-78.
[6] For a rigorous definition of ethnicity in the context of national identity see Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 21-46, passim.
[7]Theodore Weeks, "Defending Our Own: Government and the Russian Minority in the Kingdom of Poland, 1905-1914," *The Russian Review* 54 (October 1995): 540-541 and Hans Rogger, "Nationalism and the State: A Russian Dilemma," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* IV no. 3 (April 1962): 253-264.

provinces of unwanted heretics who they considered dangerous pariahs and inherently disloyal fanatics. However, by placing them in a new context, the dissenters' movement to the periphery provided them with different possibilities to act as servants of the state. Once on the frontier, the sectarian-settlers began, wittingly and unwittingly, to perform functions which authorities considered vital to the Russian imperial cause in the region. In administrative, economic, and military arenas, the settlers proved themselves to be superlative contributors to the building of Empire. Initially, the non-conformists advanced the Russian imperial cause as an unintended offshoot of their daily socio-economic practices. As tsarist officials came to realize the settlers' potential assistance, they began deliberately to create colonizing functions and responsibilities for them. In the colonialist services that the sectarians performed, we can see the importance of settlers to Russia's imperial project throughout the empire. However, the non-conformists never became state bureaucrats and did not simply follow state dictates. Rather, they supported Russian state power as independent agents in their own way and, at times, on their own terms.

The sectarians played a seminal role in upholding the imperial power structure and enforcing Russian notions of legality through their actions as unofficial agents of the police. Molokans from Alty-Agach relate how they frequently chased after robbers and bandits who had stolen from them. When they captured thieves, they turned them over to tsarist police, thereby aiding these officials in their jobs.[8] In a further example, an NCO of the Georgian line's No. 8 battalion was entrusted to escort four Azerbaijanis to the provincial capital of Shemakha to be tried in court for robbery on September 30, 1845. To carry out the task, the military man arranged for twenty sectarians from the village of Novogol'skoe (Lenkoran uezd, Shemakha guberniia) to form an armed guard

[8]GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, l. 14. However, as will be discussed in chapter four, the police frequently turned the robbers loose without punishment, much to the Molokans' chagrin.

who would accompany the arrested men. The convoy was ambushed not far outside the village by as many as 300 "predators" and a shoot-out resulted between the sectarians and the bandits. In the midst of the battle, the arrested men attempted to escape. Three of them were killed and the other wounded.[9] In the end, the convoy was able to beat back the attack.

Another case of the sectarians acting unofficially to police the region is found in the events of March 1849. Aleksei Dobrynin, starshina of Vorontsovka (Aleksandropol' uezd, Tiflis guberniia), discovered that predators [*khishchniki*] had stolen four horses from the village's stables. With Dobrynin at the head, a posse of armed Molokan villagers set off in open chase after the thieves, and finally caught up with them just as the sun began to set behind the hills. The three armed robbers opened fire on the pursuers as the latter came into range. One villager was wounded in the shooting. Undeterred, Dobrynin rushed the thieves with guns blazing, seized one of them, and recovered the stolen horses. He and the posse returned to Vorontsovka later that night with the thief in tow and handed him in to the police. The robber turned out to be a Turkish border raider. In the official report of the incident, the Viceroy, Prince M. S. Vorontsov noted that "this courageous and entirely new act of the Russian settlers had such a strong influence on the predators [*khishchniki*], that since then neither Russian settlers, nor neighboring Armenians have been subjected to their attacks and robbery."[10]

Not all chases ended successfully, however. A memoir of a Dukhobor settler the of village of Orlovka (Akhalkalaki uezd, Tiflis guberniia) relates events that took

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[9]RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 433, 1843-1848, ll. 51-51ob.

[10]RGIA f. 1268, op. 3, d. 438, 1849, ll. 1-1ob. Vorontsov was so impressed that he requested permission to award Dobrynin with the honored cloth caftan as encouragement for other settlers to react in a similar way to the attacks of robbers in the future. Vorontsov's request was denied because all public honors and decorations were forbidden by law (February 13, 1837) to members of those sects considered most pernicious. See ll. 2-4ob for discussion of this law and Vorontsov's claim for the need for an exception.

place at the time of the Russo-Turkish fighting of the mid-1850s. Orlovka was close to the Turkish border and suffered greatly during the warfare. When Russian soldiers stationed in the village pulled out, Turkish thieves attacked and stole the Dukhobors' livestock. A group of villagers set out to catch the thieves, only to fall into the hands of the robbers themselves. Most of the Dukhobors were able to break free and take refuge in a nearby Armenian village. However, the author's father was not among the lucky ones. Captured by the bandits because his horse proved slow, he was never seen again, leaving his young son to reflect on the "horrors" that might have befallen his lost father.[11]

The sectarian-migrants played important roles in the administration of Transcaucasia by providing certain forms of infrastructural support to Russia's imperial presence. Sectarian communities housed many of the local administrative personnel and apparatus because tsarist officials considered Russian villages to be more appropriate locations for such governing structures than native ones. For example, the Molokan village of Ivanovka (Geokchai uezd, Baku guberniia) possessed the district's police station, medical office, communal court, and forest administration. The concomitant police officers, court secretary and bailiff, forest wardens, and medical personnel [*fel'dshery*] also lived in the village.[12] The settlers expedited the movement of men and information along communication routes. Sectarian villages provided stopping points for tsarist officials traveling through the region and the non-conformists supplied horses and wagons used by these officials on the road.[13] In the development of the postal system, sectarian villages also figured prominently. The centrality of the sectarian

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[11]OR RGB f. 369, K. 42, d. 2, 1950, l. 402. In the midst of the ethnic fighting and various wars that ravaged Transcaucasia, the Russian sectarians also had ample opportunity to hide both Armenians and Azerbaijanis from the attacks of the other. See, for instance, GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 295.
[12]N. Kalashev, "Selenie Ivanovka, Lagichskago uchastka, Geokchaiskago uezda, Bakinskoi gubernii," *SMOMPK* vyp. 13 (Tiflis: Tip. Kants. glavno. grazh. chastiiu na Kavkaze, 1892): otd. II, 243-244.
[13]GMIR f. K1, op. 1, d. 4, 1886.

villages to the postal structure is witnessed in the case of the Molokans of Nikolaevka (Lenkoran uezd, Shemakha guberniia). In 1847, the villagers petitioned regional authorities to be moved to another location, citing great economic suffering because of an insufficient amount of land. In response, local authorities stressed that the village could not be relocated because it contained a postal station. Rather than move the postal station to one of the surrounding Muslim villages, the officials decided instead substantially to reduce the taxes and obligations of the Russian settlers in order to maintain their presence in the communication structure.[14] In 1848, Viceroy Michael Vorontsov recognized their contributions to the mail system when he asserted that an increase in the number of Molokans in Transcaucasia "will contribute to the lowering of existing costs for the upkeep of postal stations, and in this way to the reduction of the considerable expenditures from taxes."[15]

Sectarians also supplied support systems for the imperial administration on other levels such domestic and holiday services. Many sectarians, particularly women and young girls, worked as domestic servants for tsarist bureaucrats. They went both permanently and seasonally to Transcaucasia's urban centers "where there exists a strong and constant demand for domestic servants in private homes." Similarly, women from Molokan and Subbotnik families quickly monopolized the laundry business in Erevan.[16] Moreover, sectarians provided holiday destinations for tsarist bureaucrats escaping the unbearable summer heat in towns. Konstantinovka near Lake Sevan

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[14]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 772, 1848. The importance of sectarian villages to the mail system is also seen in RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1888, d. 73.
[15]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 865, 1848-1852, ll. 3-3ob.
[16]The quotation is from S. Kolosov, "Russkie sektanty v Erivanskoi gubernii," *Pamiatnaia Knizhka Erivanskoi gubernii na 1902 g.* (Erevan: Tip. Gubernskago Pravleniia, 1902), otd. IV, 154. See also N. B., "Ozero Gochka (iz vospominanii o zakavkazskom krae)," *Kavkaz* no. 61 (1861): 330 and Petr Egorov, "Zakavkazskaia dorozhnaia zapiski 1851 goda: doroga ot Tiflisa do Shemakhi i g. Elisavetpolia," *Russkii Invalid* no. 218 (October 11, 1857): 903.

[Gochka][17] (Novobaiazet uezd, Erevan gubemiia) served as a dacha location to which Russian administrators went every year for the entire summer to evade the "heat, dust and gnats" of Erevan. The villagers rented part or all of their houses to officials on holiday, and moved themselves to the shed, or squeezed into a "cold" corner of the hut. The administrators' annual escape to Konstantinovka became so standard that certain villagers built separate two- or three-room houses specifically for the purpose of renting to those officials who wanted a larger space or more privacy. For the use of their huts, the settlers received thirty to thirty-five rubles per season, whereas for the larger,]expressly-designed summer houses the rent was between fifty and seventy rubles. The sectarians' economy increasingly came to rely on this extra injection of cash and "the villagers of Konstantinovka waited with impatience [each year] for the officials to come from Erevan for the summer."[18]

There is no end of examples of the high praise that was heaped upon the sectarian-settlers for having fulfilled the economic component of the state's imperialist goals.[19] They provided an enormous boost to the economy by dominating and greatly expanding the transportation industry—at least until the appearance of the railways in the 1870s. Sectarians became the principal means for the transportation of passengers within cities. They also gained preeminence in the movement of produce and goods both within Transcaucasia and also between Persia and Russia. By enhancing the convenience of regional commerce, they increased both the frequency of trade as well as

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[17]This lake had two names in the nineteenth century. Sevan is the name in Armenian and the variant used in atlases today. Gochka is the Azerbaijani name and was the term employed by tsarist officials and geographers before the revolution.

[18]A. I. Masalkin, "Iz istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov. Ch. III, Sektanty, kak kolonizatory Zakavkaz'ia," *Kavkaz* no. 333 (December 16, 1893): 3 and Kolosov, "Russkie sektanty," 148. Similarly, the Molokan village of Alty-Agach (Shemakha uezd, Baku gubemiia) served as a summer destination for the inhabitants of Baku in order to escape the "severe heat" of the city because its height above sea level left it more temperate. S. I. Pokhilevich, "Selenie Alty-Agach," in *SMOMPK*, vol. 1 (Tiflis: Tip. Glavnago Upravleniia Namestnika Kavkazskago, 1881), 90.

[19]For a discussion of their economic success see, Masalkin, "Sektanty, kak kolonizatory, " no. 333: 3 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, ll. 1-1ob.

the quantity of goods which passed through the region. This expansion of exchange represented an important aspect of Russian plans to develop the "colony" economically by strengthening trade links between Russia and the "East" through the conduit of Transcaucasia.[20]

In addition to enlivening trade, the location of the settlers' villages—often along transportation routes—further facilitated the passage of goods through Transcaucasia. Throughout the year these settlements provided rest stops for weary travelers and merchant caravans. This was especially important in winter when refuge from snowstorms and freezing weather was frequently hard to find on the long stretches of road between urban centers. Moreover, the villages in Erevan guberniia, for example, also worked hard during winter snows and *rasputitsa* to maintain the roads in functioning condition.[21]

In terms of agriculture, a member of an 1856 state expedition remarked that "land ... put into the hands of the conscientious Dukhobors becomes plowed and pasture land, with communal uses and important results for the region that would never come about in the hands of the indigenous population."[22] Officials were impressed with the manner in which the settlers grew and distributed types of food previously unknown in Transcaucasia. Administrators also believed that the Russian presence in the region would bring to the indigenous peoples desperately needed (in the officials' view) European agricultural techniques, implements and tools. For instance, tsarist officials found the sectarians' introduction of Russian-style flour mills to be of significant value to the development of the region's economy.[23]

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[20]*AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 97, p. 120; *AKAK* vol. 12 (1893), ch. 1, doc. 18, p. 38; and RGIA f. 381, op. 2, d. 2014, 1858, ll. 22-23ob.
[21]N. B., "Ozero Gochka," 330.
[22]Quoted in S. A. Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia i khoziaistvenno-kul'turnye kontakty kavkazskikh Dukhobortsev s mestnym naseleniem," *Dukhobortsy i Molokane v Zakavkaz'e*, eds. V. I. Kozlov and A. P. Pavlenko (Moscow: Institut Etnologii i Antropologii RAN, 1992), 48.
[23]*AKAK* vol. 12 (1893), ch. 1, doc. 18, p. 38.

Particularly important in the eyes of tsarist administrators and other Russian observers was the impact that the sectarian-settlers had in the artisanal sphere. Viceroy Prince A. I. Bariatinskii noted that the sectarian-settlers "increased the number of artisans [in the region], of which hitherto there had been a complete insufficiency."[24] In a similar vein, one journalist happily reported in 1861:

> Now we have joiners and carpenters, blacksmiths and other skilled craftsmen, drivers of passenger coaches at stations, wagon drivers [*izvozchiki*] in the towns, ... , traders of wood and other materials. There are very decent bakers ...[25]

Perhaps most importantly, the sectarians provided invaluable support, both willingly and unwillingly, to tsarist military operations in Transcaucasia. The settlers did not actually fight in the Russian army both because their religious beliefs led them to pacifism and also because the inhabitants of Transcaucasia were exempt from military conscription until 1887.[26] However, the non-conformists did provide other vital contributions to the Russian military cause such as transportation, provisioning, housing, and health care. In some instances the sectarians paid dearly for their assistance—in human life and in material well-being—in others, they benefited financially. The degree of the sectarians' assistance, and their willingness to aid the Russian forces increased as the century progressed.

The Molokans settled in Alty-Agach (Shemakha uezd, Baku guberniia) became an integral component of Russian military efforts against Caucasian "mountaineers" [*gortsy*] from the 1830s through the 1850s. In a memoir, one Molokan relates how almost immediately after they arrived in the 1830s, Russian armies began to use the village as a staging point for their engagements. Passing through the village, troops

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[24]*AKAK* vol. 12 (1893), ch. 1, doc. 18, p. 38.
[25]N. B. "Ozero Gochka," p. 330. See also T. B. "U beregov Kaspiia (tri goda nazad), ch. II Baku," *Kavkaz* no. 3 (1881): 1.
[26]See RGIA f. 932, op. 1, d. 318, 1889, l. 10ob concerning the implementation of conscription in Transcaucasia in 1887.

would spend the night billeted in Molokan houses. The army leadership forced sectarian hosts to provide the soldiers with beds, food, and drink, and to transport the army's supplies and equipment As the Molokan memoirist recalls: "on [our] shoulders they moved on to the theater of war." The Molokans were far from content with this arrangement. While they chafed against the need to supply the armies from their own food stores, they were particularly aggrieved by the restrictions on the practice of their faith that the presence of so many Orthodox Russians entailed. Both military leaders and the Orthodox priests who came along with the soldiers were afraid that the Molokans' religious beliefs would have a deleterious impact on their fighting force. In consequence, these secular and spiritual officials stringently forbade the Molokans from practicing their faith, even in the privacy of their own homes or in the forest far away from the village. They searched out, captured, and then beat severely with birch rods those Molokans who were found praying in a non-Orthodox manner. That the Orthodox extended the beatings to women (and especially young girls) incensed the Molokans even further. Although the Molokans ended up providing valuable assistance to the Russian military effort against the mountaineers, their interaction with the soldiers left them wondering: "in what way were these oppressors any better then the Turkish *bashi-buzuki*?"[27]

The dissenters were more willing assistants during the Crimean War (1853-1856), although here too they often suffered for their efforts. In a report to St. Petersburg of 1857, viceroy Bariatinskii noted the indispensable contribution of the sectarians to the fate of Russian forces during the war through the transportation of large quantities of military personnel and equipment.[28] The Molokans of Novo-Saratovka

[27]GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902. ll. 1-5. A *bashi-bazouk* was a Turkish irregular soldier. The term was used colloquially in Russian to denote a bandit, brigand, ruffian, or cutthroat.
[28]*AKAK* vol. 12 (1893), ch. 1, doc. 18, p. 37.

(Elisavetpol' uezd and guberniia) provided food aid to the Russian forces during the Crimean war. "Throughout the entire period of the military actions, they prepared zwiebacks for the soldiers from flour which they received in Delizhan, handing over the zwiebacks in Aleksandropol'."[29]

In the process, however, many of the villages located near the border were devastated by the fighting. Villagers from Elenovka (Novobaiazet uezd, Erevan guberniia), mostly Subbotniks but also some Molokans, were almost all evacuated to Aleksandropol' once the war broke out and put into active non-combatant service. "From there they transported fodder and firewood for provisioning the army." During the war years, the foundation of the settlers' economy was disrupted. They were unable to work their land for two years and the majority of their livestock fell into the hands of the military.[30] Similarly, the Dukhobor village of Orlovka (Akhalkalaki uezd, Tiflis guberniia) also suffered during the Crimean War. Situated near the Turkish border, Russian soldiers were billeted in large numbers in their village at the outbreak of the war in 1853. When the Russian soldiers pulled out, the Orlovka Dukhobors faced a series of trials as detachments of Turkish troops appeared in their village. As was the Dukhobor tradition, the village elder came forward to meet the advancing armies with a table, bread, and salt (symbols of hospitality and peace). However, the lead Turkish rider charged and felled the Dukhobor leader where he stood, leaving him lying "bloodstained" by the table. The Turkish occupation was accompanied by appropriations and even enslavement. Ottoman soldiers freely took the Dukhobors'

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[29]I. E. Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka i Novo-Ivanovka Elisavetpol'skago uezda," *IKOIRGO* XIX (1907-1908), otd. 1, 228.
[30]Zakharii Nikitin, "Iz selenii Elenovki, Novobaiazet. uezda (Proiskhozhdenie Elenovki i khoziaistvennyi byt' naseleniia), *Kavkazskoe sel'skoe khoziaistvo* no. 126 (June 6, 1896), 2170.

possessions, their livestock, and many of the villagers (both men and women) as well, a number of whom were never seen again.[31]

The sectarians supplied their most extensive and sustained wartime assistance during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878.[32] As in earlier conflagrations, the sectarians themselves refused to fight, but they provided other invaluable services. As in the Crimean war, Molokans in Transcaucasia (and especially from the village of Vorontsovka (Borchalo uezd, Tiflis guberniia)) gave shelter to troops as they moved through the region, prepared zwieback for them, delivered it to detachments at Aleksandropol' and Kars, and provided hay and fodder for the cavalry's horses. In addition, they sent out an "enormous" quantity of horses and wagons which were used for evacuating the sick and wounded, and for carrying artillery equipment to the front.[33]

Russian military efforts relied even more on the vital activities of the region's Dukhobors. State sources reveal that in 1876, even before the outbreak of the war and of his own volition, Aleksei Zubkov, the Dukhobor leader, sent out as many as 400 wagons with drivers to help transport military personnel, goods, and equipment closer to the front. Once the war broke out, the Dukhobors were ubiquitous in providing a variety of support services to the military. When cavalry units became stuck on the road because of snowdrifts and *rasputitsa* making roads impassable, the Dukhobors came to the rescue. They cleared the roads and then brought wagons to carry the cavalry's equipment and facilitate their journey. Throughout the war, the Dukhobors "consistently and efficiently" maintained 400 wagons that were used ceaselessly to transport the sick and wounded from the front, bring provisions to the soldiers, and carry shells and other ammunition to the artillery regiments. The Dukhobor transport

[31]OR RGB f. 369, k. 42, d. 2, 1950. ll. 402-404, 407.
[32]In addition to the examples listed below, see also RGIA f. 932, op. 1, d. 319, 1889, l. 5.
[33]I. Ia. Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni zakavkazskikh sektatorov," *Kavkaz* no. 136 (June 17, 1878): 1 and GARF f. 579, op. 1, d. 2580, 1913, l. 3.

team was particularly important in the battle over Ardagana. When the Russian soldiers were coming to the last of their provisions, the Dukhobors led a daring trip into the battle zone to bring needed food and fodder from the stores in Akhalkalaki. Throughout the war, Dukhobor women prepared zwieback for the troops and organized fodder for the horses. Indeed, tsarist authorities noted that the Dukhobors were also repeatedly the first to fulfill requisition orders for hay. When typhus went on a rampage through the military hospitals, as many as 1,500 soldiers were evacuated to the village of Gorelovka, where they were not only housed in "comfortable quarters" but even fed meat which the Dukhobors gave them specially to help them recover. At the same time, the Transcaucasian Dukhobor community gave 1,000 rubles to the Red Cross Society for its efforts in helping the sick and wounded.[34]

The supply lines were so tenuous during the war that without the aid of the sectarian-settlers the outcome might well have been disastrous. Indeed, regional authorities in Transcaucasia considered the contribution of the Dukhobors to the Russo-Turkish was so indispensable that they petitioned intensely to have Aleksei Zubkov decorated—a act that was against existing laws preventing sectarians from receiving any external awards.[35] Following the war Grand Duke Michael, then viceroy, traveled to Dukhobor villages personally to thank them for their help and to pay honor to the elders who had led them. As a reward, the viceroy promised the choicest land allotments in the newly conquered Kars territory to any Dukhobors who wished to resettle there.[36]

Dukhobor support for the Russian military efforts was both beneficial and costly for the Dukhobor community. The constant use of so many wagons and horses resulted

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[34]RGIA f. 1284, op. 218-1881, d. 34, ll. 8-10ob, 13ob-16ob and OR RGB f. 369, k. 42, d. 2, 1950, ll. 406-407.
[35]RGIA f. 1284, op. 218-1881, d. 34. The law of February 13, 1837 prevented members of the most pernicious sects from receiving public honors or decorations.
[36]OR RGB f. 369, k. 42, d. 2, 1950, ll. 407-408.

in frequent breakdown, and the Dukhobors were required to work constantly to maintain their fleet in working order. Despite sustained repair efforts, their transport system suffered immeasurable damage from the war effort and many horses perished. No less devastating was the human suffering. Typhus spread rapidly among the drivers who, having contracted the disease at the front, brought it back into the Dukhobor settlements. As many as 140 Dukhobors died.[37] In contrast, however, the Dukhobors also made a handsome profit from the war effort. While they provided much of their support for free, some of their transport services came at a price. For instance, during the movement of two grenadier units through the Borzhom pass, the Dukhobors rented out 1,200 wagons with drivers. In the spring of 1878, they rented a similar number of wagons to assist the return of troops, supplies, and equipment, and worked diligently to clear the roads. In addition, many Dukhobors made their fortune supplying livestock, horses, foodstuffs, and services to the army.[38] Dukhobors described the scene in their villages during the war to V. D. Bonch-Bruevich in the following way:

> They [the soldiers] bought up everything from us: eggs, milk, butter, vegetables, sauerkraut which we prepared in large quantities, potatoes, baked bread, and chicken. Everything was sold to the soldiers coming through the village. Those who spent the day or passed the night, paid well for everything: for the samovars, the bath, a place to spend the night, and for sheets. Many of our sisters worked as domestics for the soldiers. The officers bought from us large amounts of smooth woolen cloth [*sukno*], towels, linen, all homespun. They really liked our attire, especially women's apparel, which they bought for their domestics as a present. And from all of this, many among us became rich.[39]

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[37]RGIA f. 1284, op. 218-1881, d. 34, ll. 9-9ob, Kh. A. Vermishev, "Ekonomicheskii byt gosudarstvennykh krest'ian v Akhaltsikhskom i Akhalkalakskom uezdakh, Tiflisskoi gubernii," in *MIEBGKZK* , t. III, (Tiflis: 1886), ch. 2: 41; OR RGB f. 369, k. 43, d. 1, 1950, l. 813; and OR RGB f. 369, k. 42, d. 2, 1950, l. 407.

[38]RGIA f. 1284, op. 218-1881, d. 34, ll. 10-10ob; OR RGB f. 369, k. 45, d. 4, 1953, ll. 40-41; Vermishev, "Ekonomicheskii byt," 41; and A. I. Klibanov, *History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia (1860s-1917)*, trans. Ethel Dunn (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), 119, 204.

[39]OR RGB f. 369, k. 45, d. 4, 1953, l. 41.

"Pernicious Sectarians" and "Russian Colonizers"

The attitudes of tsarist officials towards the sectarians changed drastically after their resettlement to Transcaucasia—an evolution in labeling which reflects the fertile possibilities of the frontier for the transformation of identity. During the opening decades of the nineteenth century, Russian authorities negatively branded the non-conformists as politically and strategically pernicious dissenters and heretical pariahs. Once in Transcaucasia, however, a new classification—the Russian colonist—appeared alongside the "pernicious heretic" as tsarist bureaucrats came to see the sects as colonizers and representatives of imperial Russia's interests in the borderlands. Indeed, in the words of contemporaries, state officials began to view the sectarian-settlers "not as exiles, but rather as the first pioneers of the future wide colonization of a wild region" and as model colonists who raised "high the banner of Russian [*russkii*] culture" in the southern borderlands.[40] This new, positive characterization had widespread implications for the formation of state policy, significantly reducing for Transcaucasian sectarians the restrictions and oppression that their brethren continued to face in the interior provinces. However, despite the birth of the pioneer identity, the preceding characterization as religious dissenters did not disappear. As the nineteenth century progressed the "Russian colonist" and "dangerous heretic" labels competed for prominence in the minds of tsarist officials and in the formation of policy.

The change in attitude towards the sectarians did not take place immediately. The initial reception of local officials to the arrival of religious non-conformists reflects the existing discourse of sectarians as a political and strategic threat, and outside the

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[40]For the "first pioneers" quotation, see Masalkin, "Sektanty, kak kolonizatory," no. 333: 2. For the imagery of the banner see Ilarion Dzhashi, "Obshchestvo Slavianskoe, Elizavetpol'skoi gubernii i uezda," *SMOMPK*, vyp. 27 (Tiflis, 1900), otd. 2: 31 and A. K. Borozdin, *Russkoe religioznoe raznomyslie* (St. Petersburg, Prometa, 1907), 175.

bounds of acceptable subjects. Chief Administrator of the Caucasus Baron G. V. Rozen pleaded with the Ministry of the Interior in the early 1830s to cease any further settlement of sectarians to the provinces under his governance. He argued that the relocation of such pernicious sectarians generated no benefit either for the state or the region. He contended that sectarian settlers hindered the indigenous inhabitants in their nomadic migrations, and ended the possibility of allowing Turkic peoples and other tribes form Persia to settle in the Russian empire. He asserted forcefully that, in the future, the concentration of such an unreliable population in so strategically vital an area could be harmful to the Empire. For Rozen the danger derived from the "ingrained prejudice" of sectarians and "their natural fervor and struggle for self-interest" which would very negatively affect the indigenous populations—"only just becoming accustomed to order"—by inhibiting the development of their devotion and dedication to the government. The result would be a reluctance on the part of the local inhabitants voluntarily to contribute to the administration of the region and to the support of Russia's armies in times of need. Moreover, in debates over the resettlement process that took place between Rozen and the Ministry of the Interior, the threat of sectarian contagion remained at the forefront. Rozen argued that the settlement of sectarians in Transcaucasian towns posed a danger to the armed forces stationed in those urban centers because they would spread the anti-state content of their religious non-conformity.[41]

The Ministry of the Interior disagreed with Rozen, however, and downplayed the negative implications of sectarian resettlement in the region. The MVD argued that because the sectarians would be settled in small villages at large distances from each other, they would never reach a sufficient concentration to have any sort of a meaningful

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[41]RGIA f. 1263, op. 1, d. 791, 1832, ll. 287-291ob.

impact on the defense or administration of the region. The Ministry overruled Rozen, and the policy of resettlement remained firmly in place. However, while local and central officials disagreed on the degree of potential harm, neither saw any benefit from the resettlement to Russian empire-building in Transcaucasia. In the MVD's optimistic estimation, the dissenters would do no damage to the imperial enterprise. The boon of relocation was found solely in distancing these unwanted pariahs from the Orthodox faithful in the interior Russian provinces.[42]

Similar views to Rozen's were heard from Commandant Orlovskii[43] who was placed in charge of sectarian settlement in Shirvan province in the early 1830s. The settling of the new arrivals turned into a debacle that resulted in the immiseration of the sectarian-settlers. Orlovskii attempted to explain his own mistakes in the implementation of settlement policy by writing to superiors that the fault lay with the Molokans, describing them as "extremely disloyal" people who provided refuge for runaways and vagabonds and who, despite being well-off people, begged aid from the treasury. Another tsarist official, Petrusevich, described the same Molokans as "lazy." In doing so, these administrators consciously manipulated the existing "pernicious heretic" identity for their own ends.[44]

The paradigms soon changed, however. By the mid-1840s, the relationship between state authority and Transcaucasian sectarians shifted as a "Russian colonist" identity arose alongside that of the "pernicious sectarian." This change came about in part as a result of changing the context in which the dissenters lived to the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Transcaucasus. State attitudes toward the resettled sectarians metamorphasized from seeing religious non-conformity as the primary essence of these

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[42]RGIA f. 1263, op. 1, d. 791, 1832, ll. 296-297.
[43]No initials are given for Orlovskii in the report.
[44]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 597, 1835-1840, ll. 4, 6.

people—and the well-spring of their opposition to state power—to spotlighting their Russian ethnicity and the enormous service that sectarians could provide for state power on the Empire's frontier. Russian authorities were driven by an ethnic logic which considered Russians to be inherently more dependable and reliable than non-Russians when it came to supporting the state, even if the Russians were not Orthodox.[45] As such, officials not only expected the sectarians to be involved in the administration and integration of the region, but also set out specific roles in this vein. However, as discussed above, the success of the sectarian-settlers in fulfilling the Empire's administrative, economic, and military goals far exceeded initial expectations. As a result, Russian authorities began to realize that these non-Orthodox Russians could be productive, contributing, and loyal subjects of the Empire. The categorization of the religious dissenters as political liabilities and untrustworthy subjects who threatened to topple both Tsar and *otechestvo* faded into the background.

The transformation also had much to do with the character of Namestnik M. S. Vorontsov (1845-1854). As the historian Anthony Rhinelander relates in his biography of Vorontsov: "[He] would look for the strength of a particular group even though it might not appear to fit into a traditionally reliable category."[46] In Transcaucasia, Vorontsov began to see the sects as a vital, crucial component of the Russian efforts. During his tenure, the characterization of sectarian-settlers as "dangerous heretics" faded far into the background

The shift in the views of Russian authorities can be witnessed in the following 1845 quotation from the journal of the Caucasus Committee. The Committee argued that the settlement in Transcaucasia of Russian sectarians was:

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[45]However, as already noted, Russian authorities did successfully co-opt Georgian and Armenian elites into the framework of imperial rule. These hierarchies of assumed loyalty could not always be followed because of a lack of Russians. See Suny, "Russian Rule," 53-78.
[46]Anthony L. H. Rhinelander, *Prince Michael Vorontsov: Viceroy to the Tsar* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 86.

> extremely beneficial, both in the political sense, acting to consolidate Russian dominion there and to integrate the region into the empire, and especially in the economic sense, strengthening as much as possible the territory's industrial activity and spreading different, previously unknown, forms of agriculture.... There is no doubt that the gradual strengthening of Russian settlement in Transcaucasia will increase there all forms of agricultural industries, which are found today in the most dissatisfactory condition.[47]

Viceroy Vorontsov agreed wholeheartedly with this evaluation of the contributions of the sectarians as well as the need to increase as much as possible the Russian presence in the area. In a report of 1848, Vorontsov lauded the sectarian-settlers.

> The settlement here of an agricultural population brings to the region unquestionable benefit, a fact of which I am more convinced every day. This is especially true of the Molokans who carry out transport of a variety of sorts and provide the indigenous peoples with an example of how to work the land and a variety of artisanal activities. They bring to the region more benefit than the German colonists who have long been settled here.[48]

This shift in attitudes was not simply an intellectual evolution, but also produced concrete legislative results. Vorontsov instituted a series of new polices which multiplied the privileges extended to sectarian migrants. He did so in an effort to attract more dissenters to the region in the future, smooth their transition, and facilitate their lives and colonizing practices once they arrived. In 1847, Vorontsov set up a Commission for the Organization of Settlements in Transcaucasia. In contrast to the views of his predecessors who had attributed the initial difficulties of the settlers to their "laziness" and "fanaticism," Vorontsov blamed the inactivity and total disregard of the local Chamber of State Properties for all of the settlers' problems.

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[47]*AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 97, pp. 119-120. The Caucasus Committee added, reflecting the original intent of the 1830 decree, that a further benefit of increasing the Russian presence in Transcaucasia was that it would "deprive [the sectarians] of the means to spread their schism among the Orthodox people of the internal provinces." Quotation is on p. 120.
[48]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 865, 1848-1852, ll. 3-3ob.

> The principal reason for the impaired condition of those Russian migrants ... settled here [was] the unsatisfactory actions of the Chamber of State Properties, who, in designating lands for settlement, did not think about the climate of the location, the quality and specific quantity of lands, and also did not have positive certification that the allotted land truly belonged to the treasury.[49]

In response to the failures of this government department, Vorontsov, "wanting as much as possible to ameliorate the condition of the Russian migrants settled in Transcaucasia," ordered the creation of a new bureaucratic department to oversee the proper settlement of the sectarians.[50] In a similar vein, Vorontsov successfully lobbied in 1848 so that voluntary settlers to Transcaucasia received an eight-year tax break from the moment of their arrival, an enormous increase form the three year privilege they had previously received.[51] Vorontsov also strove to ameliorate the health of the settlers. Also in 1848, the Commission for the Organization of Settlements requested funds to hire a doctor and three *fel'dshery* to tend to the settlers and reduce the vast rate of death.[52]

As a means to facilitate their material conditions and their new function as colonizers, Vorontsov also organized for Transcaucasian sectarians to receive economic benefits not available to their brethren in the interior provinces . A decree issued in January, 1846 made the Transcaucasus an exception to the law that "most pernicious" sectarians were not permitted either to work for, and live in the house of, Orthodox people, or to hire Orthodox to work for them or have Orthodox people live with them. Such restrictions had significantly restrictive consequences on the economic well-being of sectarians in the internal Russian provinces. However, lawmakers agreed that in Transcaucasia sectarians should be permitted to hire or live with indigenous Orthodox

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[49]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 533, 1847-1848, ll. 1-1ob.
[50]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 533, 1847-1848, ll. 1-2ob. RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 1021, 1848-1853, ll. 5ob-14.
[51]*SPChR* (1875), pp. 400-401.
[52]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 1021, 1848-1853, ll. 34-35.

inhabitants (primarily Georgian). This exception, however, specifically forbade sectarians from hiring/being hired and living with Russian Orthodox because of the threat that such interaction would facilitate the spread of the sectarians' "dangerous teachings," and the temptation to deviate into heresy. Vorontsov ensured the implementation of this policy in order to expand the settlers' economic opportunities, and because he did not fear any resulting spread of the sectarian faith because of the linguistic and cultural differences between Russian sectarians and Georgian Orthodox. by de-emphasizing the possibility of the "heresy" spreading, Vorontsov minimized the threatening identity of the sects.[53]

Vorontsov also made efforts to enhance the sectarians' role in the imperial process by increasing their presence in Transcaucasia's towns.[54] When Vorontsov came to office, existing legislation restricted sectarian urban settlement as a means to ensure their segregation from the Orthodox Russian administrators and military personnel stationed in metropolitan areas. Sectarians were permitted to register only in those towns populated primarily by Muslims and Armenians so as to avoid any on-going contact with Orthodox peoples (especially Russians). In 1848, however, Vorontsov lobbied to increase the number of towns in which sectarians could officially register. In his efforts to strengthen Russia's imperial presence, he wanted to use them as the foundation of a Russian urban estate in Transcaucasia. He argued that the settlement of sectarians in Transcaucasian towns "would little by little create a lower-middle class society [*meshchanskiia obshchestva*]" and "that the formation here of an urban soslovie would not simply be beneficial, but is absolutely necessary, and the

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53RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23322, 1846 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 566, 1847-1848, ll. 11-12, passim.
54The following discussion is drawn from RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 865, 1848-1852, ll. 1-13 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 6, d. 177, 1852. See also RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23470, 1848, ll. 1-8.

sooner the better." He considered the settlement of Russian sectarians, not only the beginning of this process, but in fact the best means in which to accomplish it.

To support his request to expand the sectarians' urban presence, Vorontsov noted that one consequence of the permission to allow sectarians in Transcaucasia to work for Georgian Orthodox people was that the dissenters hired themselves out temporarily to work for urban dwellers in a variety of towns. He reported that such interaction had not led to the spread of the sectarians' beliefs among Orthodox Russians. Indeed, in his argumentation, Vorontsov entirely de-emphasized the "pernicious heretic" characterization. Moreover, he found that sectarians in the "Muslim" towns of Shemakha guberniia lived relatively prosperously. They worked as "transporters and artisans and greatly facilitated the inhabitants of those towns in the acquisition of necessary goods." The viceroy further pointed out that Transcaucasian towns lacked sufficient numbers of artisans and workers [*rabochie liudi*]. As a result, the local administration found that it was required to conscript military personnel to perform basic economic functions—tasks that the military would have used hired hands to perform in the central provinces. As the towns in Transcaucasia, and especially Tiflis, increased in size, the absence of artisans and other workers was becoming increasingly acute. In order to counter the difficulties posed by the lack of such workers, central authorities agreed to Vorontsov's plan and ruled to permit the sectarians to settle in any Transcaucasian towns (with the exception of Tiflis) with the viceroy's permission.

However, despite his positive estimation of the sectarian-settlers as productive colonizers, and his legislative efforts to support them, Vorontsov continued to see them as distinct and inferior subjects because of their religious non-conformity. For the good of the empire, he advocated their segregation from Orthodox Russians.[55] As a result, in

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[55]As discussed in chapter one, a primary goal of the 1830 sectarian resettlement policy was to isolate Orthodox Russians from non-Orthodox ones.

addition to contributing in economic, administrative, and military ways to Russia's imperial project in Transcaucasia, the sectarians played one other seminal function in the defining the course of Russian imperialism: as an obstacle to the settlement of Orthodox Russian colonists. At each occasion when tsarist authorities considered relocating Orthodox Russians into Transcaucasia, local officials barred such an action unless the Orthodox settlers could be located at a great distance from the sectarian-settlers. In this way, the sectarians' presence in Transcaucasia acted as a dam helping to block large-scale Russian migration until the late 1880s.[56] As Vorontsov wrote in April of 1850, the settlement of Orthodox Russians in Transcaucasia:

> is not only premature, but even dangerous to a certain degree, because the coming together [*sblizhenie*] of Orthodox with the sectarians [*raskol'niki*] who are found here would be harmful for Orthodoxy and would spread the *raskol* among Russian Orthodox settlers. Such a rapprochement is one of the primary reasons why sectarians are sent from Russia to Transcaucasia.[57]

In a separate case in 1850, Vorontsov wrote to the Minister of State Properties that even though there was land available in Transcaucasia on which to settle ethnic Russians, this land was found in places "where Orthodox settlers would be required to settle either with sectarians or extremely close to them." In consequence, Vorontsov found the prospect of Orthodox settlement "inconvenient."[58]

"Russian Colonists" versus "Pernicious Dissenters"

By the end of Vorontsov's rule, two competing visions of the place of the Transcaucasian sectarians in the Russian imperial enterprise existed—one inclusive, one

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[56]Before 1890, some Orthodox Russian peasants did migrate to the Transcaucasus, but did so inconsistently, in very small numbers, and to regions located at a great distance from the sectarians. These Orthodox migrants frequently proved incapable of successfully setting up permanent, economically viable settlements. See RGIA f. 1268, op. 4, d. 363, 1850-1855; RGIA f. 1268, op. 4, d. 13, 1850; and *AKAK* vol. 12 (1893), ch. 1, doc. 18.

[57]*AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 42, p. 47.

[58]RGIA f. 1268, op. 4, d. 363, 1850-1855, l. 4.

exclusive. During the following decades, tensions between these two tropes resulted in an ambivalent understanding of the sectarians' place in the Russian empire. The dual constructs of "Russian colonist" and "pernicious sectarian" existed together uncomfortably, each attaining preeminence in different contexts and at different times. From the perspective of the government, the sense of the sectarians as superlative colonists and unsurpassed representatives of Russia in the borderlands remained a dominant descriptor. Yet, the characterization of the politically dangerous sectarian, having been downplayed by Vorontsov, returned to prominence under his successors. It existed concurrently, and not always uncomfortably, with the positive evaluation of their contribution as colonizers.

The report filed by A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, Chief Administrator in the Caucasus, to Alexander III in 1890 is exemplary of the Janus-like attitude of state representatives towards the sectarians in Transcaucasia, seeing them simultaneously as "pernicious sectarians" and "model colonists." In the vary same breath, Dondukov-Korsakov described the sectarians as exceptional colonists while also raising fears of the dangers that their religious beliefs posed to the sanctity of the state. He began by praising their colonizing skills. "Despite their isolated situation among nationalities alien to them and the unfavorable climatic and soil conditions, [the sectarians] all attained considerable material well-being, through which they showed their perfect qualities as colonizers and greatly contributed to the economic success of the country." The combination of their economic contribution, their vital assistance to Russian forces during the Russo-Turkish war, and "their significance in the process of russifying the southern borderlands [*znacheniia ikh v dele obruseniia kraia*]" led Dondukov-Korsakov

to conclude that "one can only meet with approval the idea of settling in the newly incorporated Kars Oblast' up to 10,000 Russian sectarian souls from Transcaucasia."[59]

However, he was quick to add that all possible measures should be taken to prevent efforts on the part of the sectarians to proselytize or manifest externally any signs of their faith. For Dondukov-Korsakov, this was particularly true concerning those cases where under the guise of religious teachings, sectarians were actually preaching political content which was "threatening to the existing state order of our Fatherland [*Otechestvo*]." He feared that the spread of sectarian teachings would prove corrupting "on the Russian element, who serve as our political strength in this borderland." His answer to this threat was two-fold. On one hand, he proposed an enlargement of the presence of Orthodoxy in Transcaucasia by an aggressive policy of building churches and increasing the number of trained Russian priests (consciously distinguished form Georgian Orthodox priests). On the other hand, he suggested a rapid expansion of the number and scope of state schools, which would clearly demonstrate to the latter the errors of their ways by bringing enlightenment to the sectarian population.[60]

In combination with the long-standing antipathy towards sectarians and the preexisting trope of the "pernicious heretic," three additional processes stimulated a renewed concern among officials over religious identities: first, the process of forming new sub-sects (such as the Pryguny) and other sectarian activities in the Transcaucasus; second, the spread in Russia of sectarian groups who drew their religious origins from western Protestantism, especially the Baptists and Shtundists; and third, a transformation in the perspective of the central authorities regarding the importance of

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[59]RGIA f. 932, op. 1, d. 319, 1890, ll. 5-5ob.
[60]Ibid.

Orthodoxy to Russia that coincided with the ascension of K. P. Pobedonostsev to the role of Synodal Over-Procurator.

In 1858, viceroy Prince A. I. Bariatinskii voiced concern over the presence of sectarians in Transcaucasia, and especially their tendency to break into sub-sects (and here he concentrated on the Pryguny).[61] In a direct linkage of religious affiliation to disloyal state identity he described the Pryguny as "an absurd, anti-societal sect" which "destroys communal life and weakens respect for and obedience to authorities."[62] More generally he saw all sectarians as second-rate state servants (Orthodox Russians being first-rate), noting their fanaticism, a lack of "hard rules in their faith," their latent harmful influence on neighboring Muslim inhabitants, the possibility that the sectarians would leave Russia for Turkey, and the threat of the seduction of Russian soldiers into religious error (especially deserters who often found shelter in sectarian villages).[63] In an effort to break sectarians from their religious "errors" he proposed providing an enormous twenty-five-year tax break for all Transcaucasian sectarian who converted to Orthodox Christianity.[64]

Despite all of these criticisms, however, we must note the reluctance of the Ministry of State Properties (MGI) to grant Bariatinskii's petition and their strong disagreement that there was any need for conversion at all. In challenging Bariatinskii's assertions, the MGI argued that sectarians were excellent colonists, a boon to the region, and that since the 1830s regional leaders had consistently requested increases in

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[61]In contrast, for his simultaneous belief that sectarians were a vital colonizing element see RGIA, f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858.
[62]RGIA f. 381, op. 2, d. 2014, 1858, ll. 17ob-18. On the Pryguny in general, see RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 481, 1857 and N. D. Dingel'shtedt, *Zakavkazskie sektanty v ikh semeinom i religioznom bytu* (St. Petersburg, 1885).
[63]RGIA f. 381, op. 2, d. 2014, 1858, ll. 3ob-4, 17ob-18, 23-23ob.
[64]While, this was a huge jump from the existing laws which mandated only a three-year tax holiday for converts, it fell far short of the lifetime respite from taxes granted to Muslims who converted to Orthodoxy. Nonetheless, Bariatinskii argued that the conversion of a sectarian to Orthodoxy was far more important to the health of the empire than the conversion of a Muslim because the sectarians were Russians. RGIA f. 381, op. 2, d. 2014, 1858, l. 4ob.

the rate of sectarian resettlement. Such argumentation, and the final result that the new tax incentives for conversion were not granted, reflects how strongly the "Russian colonist" identity of sectarians had gripped central state officials even if it was being challenged by authorities at the local level.[65]

Second, the valuation of Transcaucasian sectarians as loyal and contributing members of the state community was further undermined by the appearance in the late 1860s of Shtundists, Baptists and Pashkovites in various parts of the Russian empire, and especially of Baptists in Transcaucasia after 1877.[66] Inspired by Western Protestantism, they were considered exceptionally dangerous to the well-being of the Russian state, both for the content of their beliefs (and its rapid spread), but especially because the theology came from outside of Russia, and thereby threatened the Russian state and the meanings of Russianness at their very core.[67] Dukhobors, Molokans, and Subbotniks were separate religious phenomena, but the eruption of Baptists and Shtundists tainted all religious dissenters in the eyes of tsarist authorities.

In the mid-1880s, for example, the Exarch of Georgia described the Baptists as a grave threat not only to the Orthodox Church (a menace, he added, even greater than Polish Catholicism) but also to the state because Shtundists and Baptists "are imminent enemies of Russia and allies of Protestant Germany." "Infection" by these foreign faiths, he continued, destroyed "all sympathy for the Russian people [*russkii narod*]," and for its ideals, legends, and folk beliefs. Such saturation "with hate both for Orthodoxy and for Russian nationality [*russkaia narodnost'*]" would result in the

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[65]Ibid., ll. 22-31ob.

[66]On the history of these groups in general, see A. I. Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii* (60-e gody XIX v. - 1917 g.) (Moscow: Nauk, 1965), 187-285; Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, *Russian Dissenters* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962 (1921)), 331-335; and Andrew Blane, "Protestant Sects in Late Imperial Russia," in *The Religious World of Russian Culture*, vol. II, ed. idem. (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), 267-304.

[67]On the views of central Tsarist authorities concerning the threat of these new religious movements see A. Iu. Polunov, "Gosudarstvo i religioznoe inakomyslie v Rossii (1880-nachalo 1890-kh godov)," in *Rossiia i Reformy: Sbornik statei*, vyp. 3, ed. M. A. Kolerov (Moscow: n.p., 1995), 126-141.

destruction of family structures and lead to secular marriages. In addition to the ravaging of Russianness, the Exarch maintained, the beliefs of these Baptists also spawned "tremendous revolutionary power."[68] Chief Administrator in the Caucasus, A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, continued in this vein. He asserted that such foreign sects separated a Russian person from his "native Orthodoxy" [*rodnago emu pravoslaviia*]. By dragging him to German Protestantism, such religious movements destroyed in him and his descendants any sympathy for the Russian people, their way of life, and their social and religious beliefs. "In a word, it makes them non-Russian."[69]

In addition to this general unease, the presence of Baptists in the Transcaucasus presented special problems to the administrators of the region. For Dondukov-Korsakov, such deformation of the Russian character represented a severe security risk to the integrity of the Russian Empire in the southern borderlands. The threat derived in part from the conversion of Molokans to the "foreign" Baptist faith.[70] Thus, the social foundation upon which Russian colonization in Transcaucasia relied was being swayed into the "German faith." Tsarist officials explained the ease of Molokan conversion by the fact that sectarians lacked the anchor of Orthodox teachings to keep them from deviating into "heresies." Also, Molokans were "generally very receptive to any form of rationalistic religious teachings, and they zealously read and spread forbidden books containing religious false-teachings ..."[71] In consequence, the appearance of Baptists and Shtundists in Russia made all Transcaucasian sectarians suspect in the eyes of the state and thereby bolstered the growing idée fixe of both secular and religious central

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[68]RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1885, d. 74, ll. 11ob-12ob.
[69]RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1886, d. 75, ll. 4, passim. For similar attitudes and beliefs, see also *Sektanty Kavkaza* (Tiflis: tip. Kantseliarii glavnonachal'stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chastiiu na Kavkaze, 1890), passim.
[70]Concern was also raised because some Armenians converted to the Baptists.
[71]RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1885, d. 74, ll. 14-14ob.

authorities that membership in the Orthodox Church was a prerequisite for faithful service to *Rossiia* and Russian ethnicity.[72]

Third, Pobedonostsev's assumption of the position of Over-Procurator—followed in short order by the ascension of his pupil Alexander III to the throne—heralded a severe and sudden shift in the relationship between state power and non-Orthodox Christian groups in the Empire. In the spirit of the Great Reforms, his predecessors had moved to tolerate a degree of religious non-conformity.[73] The result had been a policy towards religious dissenters characterized by benign indifference at worst, and conciliatory acceptance at best, in which religious faith was not considered in and of itself an offense. In stark contrast, Pobedonostsev forcibly believed, in the words of the historian Alexander Polunov, that "a vital society can be united solely by one power (autocracy) and one faith."[74] He argued that politics could not be separated from morality/spirituality, and that religion was irrevocably tied to nationality. "Our enemies are cutting us off from a mass of Russian people and making them into

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[72]While very real in their minds, the Transcaucasian authorities' fears of mass conversion to the "de-Russianizing German faith" appear overstated. Although most of the Baptists in Transcaucasia were previously Molokans, sectarian sources demonstrate that the propensity for conversion to the Baptist faith of Molokans was not numerically great in Transcaucasia and that the fears on the part of state authorities were exaggerated. (See GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d.; GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925; GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., and the discussion in chapter five.) However, Dondukov-Korsakov and others based their assumptions on a particular case where a group of former Molokans, who had converted to the Baptist faith, petitioned the state to be granted the same rights as all Baptists under the new law of March, 1879. State officials responded that, first, the law of 1879 covered only German Baptists, not Russians who converted to the faith, and second, that the petitioners could not be considered Baptists (despite their claims of conversion) since dissenters from the Orthodox church were not entitled to move of their own will from one religious faith to another, and as Molokans were doubly ineligible for the new law. See RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1882, d. 44; RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1886, d. 75, ll. 6-6ob; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1885, d. 74. ll. 7ob-8.

[73]Peter Waldron, "Religious Toleration in Late Imperial Russia," in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, eds. Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 109-111.

[74]On Pobedonostsev and the new direction of religious policy in the Empire see Polunov, "Gosudarstvo," passim, quotation is on 130; idem., "Politicheskaia individual'nost' K. P. Pobedonostseva" *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta Seriia 8, Istoriia* no. 2 (1991): 42-48; and D. K. Burlaka and S. L. Firsov, eds., *K. P. Pobedonostsev: Pro et Contra* (St. Petersburg: Izd. Russkogo Khristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 1996), esp. 80-275 which is a reprint of Pobedonostsev's *Moskovskii Sbornik*. For a critique of Pobedonostsev's one state-one nation-one religion policy, in which I. V. Tregubov argued that "Orthodoxy cannot guarantee the welfare of Russia," see GARF f. 124, op. 5, d. 267, 1896, ll. 4-5ob.

Germans, Catholics, Muslims and others, and we are losing them for the Church and for the Fatherland forever."[75] Under these new currents of central policy, the sectarians of Transcaucasia found themselves increasingly besieged for their religious non-conformity. State officials characterized them—and formed policy based on these classifications—as threats to Fatherland, Society and Russian nationality [*otechestvo, obshchestvo,* and *russkaia natsional'nost'*].

Despite the revival of the "pernicious sectarian" characterization, with its unease concerning the loyalty of sectarians to the state, the newly formed "model colonist" simultaneously remained a powerful descriptor. Not only did there remain a deep acceptance of their role as colonizers and representatives of Russian imperial power in the borderlands, but their identity as "Russian colonists" continued to exert a strong influence on the direction of Tsarist colonial and ethnic policy in the region—especially because of their good track record with local officials. As Tiflis governor Shervashidze wrote in 1895:

> The Caucasus administration considered [the Dukhobors] Russian [*russkii*] people, Russian by blood and by soul, victims of their faith and neglected in the Turkish border in the midst of foreign tribes ... Resettled among so unpropitious conditions, enduring deprivation and dire straits, they, thanks to persistent work and a prudent lifestyle, not only attained material well-being, but forced the surrounding population to respect them. In the far borderlands, ... they raised high the Russian banner. Stretched out over three guberniias among the poor native peoples, their flourishing villages were pleasing oases. From the political perspective, they represented staging points for Russian affairs and influence in the region.[76]

In 1857, less than a year before his attack on the Pryguny and proposed twenty-five year tax benefit to converts, Bariatinskii echoed this positive perspective. He

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[75]Quotation is from a letter to E. F. Tiutcheva, December 20, 1881. The letter is reprinted in Aleksandr Polunov, ed. "K. P. Pobedonostsev v 1881 godu (Pis'ma k E. F. Tiutchevoi)," in *Reka Vremeni, Kniga pervaia, Gosudar'-Gosudarstvo-Gosudarstvennaia sluzhba* (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 1995), 185.

[76]Shervashidze is quoted in Borozdin, *Russkoe religioznoe raznomyslie*, 175.

reported to the Caucasus Committee that the settlement of Russian sectarians in Transcaucasia "has been highly beneficial for the growth of agriculture and industry here," and pointed to their seminal contributions during the Crimean War. As a result of this approving estimation, Bariatinskii argued to increase the number of Russian settlers in the region and lamented the lack of state land on which to settle them. In order to increase the possibilities of settling more Russian sectarians in Transcaucasia, Bariatinskii lobbied successfully to have them settle on unoccupied parcels of land owned by local nobles. This was a highly irregular request because the settlers were officially state peasants and therefore could not legally be settle on land not owned by the state. Indeed, Vorontsov had proposed this as a solution to the land crisis in 1850 and had been turned down. However, by 1858, the desire to increase the Russian population in Transcaucasia had grown to such a degree that both Bariatinskii and authorities in St. Petersburg were willing to increase the influx of sectarians and allow them to make their new homes on noble land.[77]

During the viceroyship of Grand Duke Michael Nikolaevich (1862-1882), the official characterization of sectarians as effective colonizers produced economically beneficial results for the dissenters. Such was the case for the Molokans of Vorontsovka (Borchalo uezd, Tiflis guberniia) in their efforts to buy land from the Georgian noble on whose property they had been settled. In the mid-1840s, the villagers of Vorontsovka had been settled on land belonging to General-Major Prince Makarii Orbeliani and had entered into a contract with him which was due to end in 1871. Unhappy with the structure of the agreement—especially the requirement to pay *obrok* and their insecure property situation—the Vorontsovka Molokans declared their

[77]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, ll. 1-28 and *AKAK* vol. 12 (1893), ch. 1, doc. 18, p. 37-42. The question of the relations between the settlers and the Georgian and Muslim landowners on whose land they settled is discussed at length in chapter four.

intention in 1869 to migrate to the North Caucasus upon the termination of the contract where they believed they could acquire their own land. Grand Duke Michael made his extreme dissatisfaction with this prospect plain in a letter to the Caucasus Committee. "Such a disappearance of so considerable a Russian population from an area which has both political as well as strategic importance would have extremely unfavorable consequences."[78] To underline his point, Grand Duke Michael highlighted his belief in the vital importance of sectarians in Transcaucasia more generally.

> Time and experience have demonstrated that the settlement of Russian settlers brings great benefit to the region in economic and industrial respects. Especially important is their settlement near our borders both for political as well as for military goals. For, each settlement strengthens the Russian element there and increases convenient means of conveyance, so important during wartime ....[79]

Reflecting this "colonist" classification of sectarians, the Chief Administration of Transcaucasia made efforts to retain the Molokans in Vorontsovka. It proposed that the settlers buy from Orbeliani the land that they had been using for more than twenty-five years (eight thousand desiatinas in total, seven thousand desiatinas of arable and pasture land and one thousand desiatinas of forest). However, an enormous chasm existed between Orbeliani's asking price (based on the land value), and the amount that the sectarians could afford to pay. In their efforts to keep the settlers in place, tsarist officials negotiated the price down from twenty rubles per desiatina to seven, but even then the Molokans did not have the 56,000 rubles necessary to purchase the land. As a result, local authorities agreed to the settlers' request for a loan to bridge the difference. Grand Duke Michael supported this plan in no uncertain terms. Again, he pointed to the "great importance" of Russian settlements so near to the border, and to the benefit that

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[78]RGIA f. 1268, op. 14, d. 77, 1869-1870, ll. 1ob-2.
[79]RGIA f. 1268, op. 14, d. 77, 1869-1870, ll. 1-1ob. In his review of the region of 1867 Senator Prince Bagration-Mukhranskii made almost identical comments about the great military, economic, and political importance of the sectarian-settlers in the Transcaucasia, and particularly the Molokans of Vorontsovka. See Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 1.

would be wrought from transforming these Russian peasants into private proprietors. In the final result, Vorontsovka's Molokans received 32,000 rubles in a no-interest loan which they were to pay back over a fifteen year period, and were also given 8,000 rubles as a one-time grant which they were not require to repay. Thus, since tsarist officials so valued the sectarians' imperialist functions on the frontier and were willing to go to great lengths to retain the "Russian colonizers" in the region and strengthen their position there, the Molokans only had to pay 16,000 rubles for land which had been originally valued at 160,000 rubles.[80]

Furthermore, towards the end of the 1880s, tsarist officials considered using the sectarians as colonists in Central Asia. Local officials in what Russians then called the Transcaspian region [Turkmen region] argued that "Molokans represent an extremely appropriate element for the Russian colonization of the region."[81] Indeed, a number of Molokan families moved to lands east of the Caspian Sea during the late 1880s and early 1890s. They did so in part because they wished to escape land shortages in Transcaucasia, and in part because tsarist authorities wished to increase the Russian presence in the area and recognized the skills and experiences of the sectarians in this regard.[82]

Even when Orthodox Russians began to move into Transcaucasia in the late 1880s, local officials repeatedly noted how their skills as colonizers paled severely in comparison to the abilities and achievements of the sectarians. There are many examples in the sources in which Transcaucasian officials lamented the failings of the Orthodox colonists in comparison with the sectarians. Instead of the sturdy, adaptable,

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[80]RGIA f. 1268, op. 14, d. 77, 1869-1870, ll. 1-21ob; RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1885, d. 22, ll. 1-5ob; and Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 1.
[81]RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1888, d. 73, ll. 1-1ob.
[82]RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1888, d. 73; A. N. Kuropatkin, *Soobrazheniia nachal'nika Zakaspiiskoi oblasti po voprosu o pereselenii v Zakaspiiskuiu oblast' dukhoborov-postnikov* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), appendices 1-5; Masalkin, "Sektanty, kak kolonizatory," no. 333: 3.

economically successful non-conformists, Orthodox settlers drank too much, proved to be poor farmers, and frequently returned to the interior provinces after a short time.[83] The opinions of ethnographer I. E. Petrov capture the views prevailing among both tsarist officials and Russian commentators.

> In the history of Russian colonization in the Caucasus, sectarians played an extremely visible role. Even the most fervent opponents of sectarianism cannot but recognize them as excellent colonizers of the region, who with their impeccable sober lives, well-designed economy, highly regarded comfortable circumstances, won respect among the cultured indigenous population.... Instinctively, the student of Russian colonization in the Caucasus makes the parallel between the sectarians and today's settlers, and without any choice, sadly has to realize that the palm of primacy ... must be given, not to the present-day settlers, but to the sectarians.[84]

Lieutenant-General A. N. Kuropatkin even argued that the sectarians could be held up as models for the Orthodox Russian settlers to imitate.

> By the solid construction of their villages, the way that they carry out their agriculture, their friendly, harmonious lives, mutual help, and hard-working ethic, the Dukhobors ... constituted a dependable colonizing element and could serve as a useful example for the population around them ... not only the indigenous peoples but also the Russian population in the area.[85]

The "model colonist" typology continued into the twentieth century, with important repercussions for the role of sectarians in the running of empire. Around the turn of the century, elections to the Lenkoran town Duma at times returned a larger percentage of Muslims than Russian law permitted. In consequence, the governor stepped in and appointed Molokans to fill the excess seats. The choice of Molokans rested consciously on their Russian ethnicity and their labeling as the most loyal subjects. However, this was especially true at the end of the nineteenth century when Tsarist opinion of Armenians—who, as Christians, had been Russia's traditional

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[83]See for example, GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1884, d. 88, ch. 2, ll. 3-4 ; RGIA f. 560, op. 26, d. 86, 1894, ll. 70ob-71; "O pereselentsakh v Karsskoi oblasti" *Kavkaz* no. 22 (August 1, 1890), 2; and *AKAK* vol. 12 (1893), ch. 1, doc. 18, p. 40.
[84]Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 247.
[85]Kuropatkin, *Soobrazheniia nachal'nika,* 15, 40.

support in eastern Transcaucasia—was rapidly taking a negative turn because of the rise of Armenian nationalist-separatist groups. The consequence of this politics of ethnic categorization permitted the Molokans a much larger representation in governing bodies than their population numbers demanded.[86]

Sectarians View Tsarist Authority

The sectarians' own sense of their place within the Russian state—of their "state identity"—also underwent transformations similar to the changes in official characterizations of them. Molokans, Dukhobors, and Subbotniks arrived in Transcaucasia as self-defined outsiders in the tsarist state. Once in Transcaucasia, however, as state persecution receded, as state authorities treated them as colonists, as they found new roles and opportunities to serve, and as they received attendant benefits, the sectarians feelings of membership in, and influence on, the Russian state grew rapidly. Alongside their sense of religious community arose a feeling of state affiliation and the voicing of such a self-identification. As a result, sectarians in Transcaucasia possessed two different self-identities—dissenter and colonizer—upon which to draw in their interactions with Russian state authority. Of the three sectarian communities, Molokans embraced Russian state power more strongly than either Dukhobors or Subbotniks.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, sectarians identified themselves as true Christians who stood outside the arbitrary and temporary laws of human rulers. Molokans, for instance, claimed that the life of the true Christian was

[86] *Vsepodanneishii otchet o proizvedennoi v 1905 godu po Vysochaishchuiu poveleniiu Senatorom Kuzminskim Revizii goroda Baku i Bakinskoi gubernii* (St. Petersburg), 359. On changing tsarist perspectives on the Armenian population see RGIA f. 1287, op. 38, d. 3471, 1898-1907 and Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 31-93.

one of independence from human laws and coercion. The power of humans did not apply to those filled with the teachings of Christ. Indeed, earthly powers applied only to "sons of the earth" and since Molokans were of God's world not of this one—referring to John 17:14: "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"—worldly powers were of no consequence to them. Thus, Molokans asserted that they would obey only the higher law found in the commandments of God, not transitory laws that changed with the people or regimes which made them.[87]

A similar sense of self was found among the Dukhobors who asserted that "there is no Fatherland [*otechestvo*] on earth for us, we are wanderers on the earth."[88] In response to the question posed in a psalm "why do you not obey the government?," Dukhobors responded "I am a Christian, have known truth and profess the law of my Lord, Jesus Christ, and I cannot do that [obey the government], not because I do not want to, but because He who sent me into this life and gave me indubitable law as guidance for this life does not want it ..."[89] In distinction to the Molokans, Dukhobor theology asserted that the spirit of Christ passed from generation to generation embodied in their leader. That their chief was the incarnation of the son of God gave even further impetus to the Dukhobor community not to show obedience to the Tsar or the Russian state.[90]

These religious beliefs, and the discourse of Christian identity, deeply and concretely affected the relationship between sectarian and state in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Sectarians frequently refused military service, did not pay

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[87]A. I. Masalkin, "K istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov: I Molokane," *Kavkaz* no. 306 (Nov. 18, 1893), 2. Biblical translation is from the Revised Standard version.
[88]V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, ed. *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev*, vol. 2 of *Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkago sektantstva i raskola* (St. Petersburg: 1909), 99, psalm 78.
[89]Ibid., 84, psalm 60.
[90]V. M. Skvortsov, *Zapiska o dukhobortsakh na Kavkaze* (n.p.: V. Skvortsov, 1896), 3-4; Gary Dean Fry, "The Doukhobors, 1801-1855: The Origins of a Successful Dissident Sect" (Ph. D. diss., The American University, 1976), 348-350; and I. Kharmalov, "Dukhobortsy: Istoricheskii ocherk," *Russkaia Mysl'* V, no. 11 (November 1884): 138-161.

their taxes, were accused of harboring criminals and deserters, denied the authority of both spiritual and secular hierarchies, challenged the institution of serfdom, preached their faith to others and, especially in the case of the Dukhobors, constructed their own leadership structures with their own laws and systems of justice.

However, following their move to Transcaucasia, sectarians came to associate themselves with the Russian state. They began to vocalize a sense of Russian state identity along with their emphasis on being God's people. For instance, on the occasion of the visit of Alexander II to Tiflis in 1871, Vasilii Emel'ianov Shubin, a Prygun, wrote songs in praise of the Emperor.

We, natural sons of Russia	My, prirodnye syny Rossii
Will sing these verses	I budem pet' stikhi sii,
And with thundering voices praise	I gromozvuchno vospevat'
And glorify the Emperor!	Imperatora proslavliat'!
The Emperor is a great Tsar,	Imperator velikii Tsar',
Ruler of all Russia	Vsei Rossii Gosudar'
Anointed by God our Father!	Pomazannik Bozhii otets nash!
We are ready to make all sacrifices for you.	My gotovy na vse zhertvy za vas.
To take up arms against enemies	Opolchat'sia protiv vragov
For the Tsar, all Russian people are ready.	Za tsar russkii narod gotov.
We are your faithful subjects	My, vernopoddannnye vam,
And you are Autocrat of us all	A Ty Samoderzhents nam,
We praise you out of love	My iz liubvi Tebia slavim
And wish you health.	I zdraviia Vam zhelaem.[91]

Similarly, on the ascension of Alexander III to the throne, Molokans from the village of Alty-Agach (Shemakha uezd, Baku guberniia) wrote to the Tsar expressing their "heavy and sad feelings" at the "martyr's death" of Alexander II and their "true subject happiness" for the reign of the new monarch.[92]

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[91]Quoted in N. D. [Nikolai Dingel'shtedt], "Pryguny (Materialy k istoriia obruseniia Zakavkazskago kraia)," *Otechestvennyia zapiski* no. 10 (1878): 410-411. See pp. 410-414 for the continuation of this song and other similar verses that Shubin composed to honor the Tsar.
[92]RGIA f. 1284, op. 220-1882, d. 32, ll. 1-1ob.

The new self-identification grew up in part from the state's more tolerant treatment of sectarians in Transcaucasia after the mid-1840s. As one Russian journalist described the transformation in a newspaper article in 1868:

> From the time that local police powers terminated their strict surveillance of, and interference in, the religious affairs of the sectarians, the dissenters no longer have cause to nourish any hostile feelings towards the government because they no longer suffering any constraints on their conscience. They find in the local powers support and defense against the surrounding Muslim settlements, and from experience, the sectarians now know how necessary are ... [these] powers. From this, it is not surprising that Molokans genuinely reject the liberal points of their founders' teachings, and that reports of local administrators assert that all Russian sectarians constitute the most obedient and peaceful population.[93]

Moreover, in response to the perquisites and privileges that they received as Russian colonists in Transcaucasia, sectarians began to show increased respect for the Tsar and earthly authority, and to conceive of themselves as contributing subjects of the Russian empire. In 1884, when the Molokans of Vorontsovka had paid off the treasury loan that they received in order to buy land from Prince Orbeliani, they wrote to thank the Tsar for his financial help. The letter reflects both the transition in their views towards the state as well as a desire to be seen by tsarist authorities as loyal subjects. In gratitude for the monetary aid the Molokans organized a celebration during which they prayed for the Tsar.

> Our goal [is]... to offer up our prayers [to God] ... for the repose... of the deceased Monarch Alexander Nikolaevich's martyred soul. And [we pray] so that God will not take away his blessing from the venerable house of the Russian Throne, and so that God inalienably will crown with wisdom ... his Majesty the Emperor Alexander Aleksandrovich III so that we under his blessed regal patronage will live in peace and quiet. And [we pray] so that the Almighty God with His powerful hand will threaten all the Tsar's enemies who make an attempt upon the peaceful life of Russia. ... Long live the Russian Tsar!! Each soul, putting his hand to his chest, reverently pours out ardent prayers to God about the blessed Russian Tsar![94]

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[93]K. S-A., Russkie raskol'niki, poselenye v Bakinskoi gubernii," *Kavkaz* no. 10 (January 24, 1868): 3.
[94]RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1885, d. 22, ll. 1-3ob.

While the Vorontsovka Molokans praised the Tsar in their letter of thanks, they were also sure to underscore that they used Molokan rites and prayers, not Orthodox. Thus, even though the Molokans now showed greater deference and respect for the Tsar, the transition to loyal servitors did not include an abandoning of their religious beliefs and practices.

Vocalization of their sense of integration in the state community continued into the twentieth century. Molokans in Kars oblast' in 1908, for example, expressed to local officials their "true subject love" to Russia and "devotion and readiness to champion with might and main the defense of Tsar and dear Rus." Furthermore, they underlined how, despite all of the hardships of life on the frontier, they had, in the name of Russia, borne heavily the tasks of colonization.[95]

In tandem with the public expression of their state identification, sectarian communities also became more willing and reliable in the fulfillment of their obligations as subjects.[96] We have already discussed the wide-ranging roles that the sectarians played as "colonizers." Governors' reports also attest to their new relationship with state power. In 1878, for example, no antagonistic relations between sectarians and either the local authorities or Orthodox priesthood were noted. Quite the opposite, the conduct of sectarians was "industrious" and "exemplary" and they accorded state officials full respect and obedience.[97] A police file discussing Erevan guberniia in 1883 relates: "Russian sectarian-Molokan settlers ... remain devoted to the government and preserve their Russian distinctiveness."[98] Discussing the Dukhobors in the period between 1878 and 1894, General-Lieutenant A. N. Kuropatkin, then administrator of

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[95]*Karsskii oblastnoi s"ezd dukhovnykh khristian 1-go, 2-go i 3-go iiunia 1908 g v sel. Vladikarse, Karsskago uchastka i okruga* (Kars: Karsskaia Oblastnaia tip., 1908): 4-5.
[96]Masalkin, "Molokane," 2; and Skvortsov, *Zapiska*, 10-11.
[97]RGIA f. 1268, op. 24, d. 231, 1879-1880, ll. 30ob-31, 157ob-158, 216ob, 674-674ob.
[98]GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1884, d. 88, ch. 2, l. 20ob.

the Transcaspian region, related how the Dukhobors punctually paid their taxes and "conscientiously" fulfilled their state obligations, and that no complaints about the Dukhobors came to the local authorities.[99]

Their new-found sense of affiliation with the Russian state did not permanently eclipse the earlier sense of religious uniqueness and non-recognition of state power, however, as the example of the Vorontsovka Molokans demonstrates. The non-conformists held dual identities: even while voicing a discourse of state association, a theologically-based sectarian disenchantment from state power also remained prominent. On one hand, the settlement of sectarians in separate, isolated communities in Transcaucasia—left, for the most part, to their own devices with their own communal leaders and systems of justice—bolstered the bonds of their socio-religious identity as Molokan, Dukhobor, or Subbotnik.

On the other hand, the sectarians felt their membership and influence in the state community recede in the face of advancing "modernization" and an increasing state presence in Transcaucasia as the nineteenth century progressed, especially in the 1880s and 1890s. Molokans, for example, evinced extreme frustration over the continued prohibition of erecting their own prayer houses.[100] They also requested permission to build their own schools and raged against the state schools that began to appear in their communities (with their heavy doses of Orthodox Christianity) after the 1880s. The introduction of obligatory military service in 1887 upset Molokans intensely. In part, this was because bearing arms was at least ostensibly against their faith. But it was also because Molokans found no sympathy for the tenets of their faith once in the service. They were forced to eat foods forbidden by their dietary restrictions. Molokans killed in

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[99]Kuropatkin, *Soobrazheniia nachal'nika,* 19.

[100]On the Molokan desire for prayer houses, see RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1889, d. 92; RGIA f. 1284, op. 222-1893, d. 81; RGIA f. 1354, op. 3, d. 1267, ll. 46-58; RGIA f. 1284, op. 222-1899, d. 114; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 222-1905, d. 35.

the line of duty were buried according to Orthodox rites. In addition, they were increasingly fed up with billeting passing military troops. In the economic sphere, from the 1870s on, Molokans also suffered from land shortage and a general material downturn that made tsarist taxes even more onerous.[101] For Dukhobors, as for Molokans, the imposition of military service was a great blow to their sense of commonalty with state power. However, the Dukhobors also voiced deep frustration with the arbitrary and despotic application of authority by local Tsarist officials. These often non-Russian bureaucrats and policemen increasingly demanded bribes and beat the Dukhobors if they were slow or refused to pay.[102]

The lid of this slow boiling pot came off in the mid-1890s with the widely publicized Dukhobor movement—an event which represented a definitive split between state and sectarians. The Dukhobors refused military service (the first large-scale, organized refusal since the military reforms). They renounced the power of all earthly governments, declined to carry out any state obligations, and burnt all arms in their possession as a symbol of their new-found renunciation of violence and all state power. Local tsarist authorities responded with brutal violence to this opposition and horribly mistreated the Dukhobors. At the end of the century and in conjunction with world-wide publicity, Dukhobors moved en masse to Canada in order to escape severe oppression and complete economic collapse. Following in the wake of these events, Molokans inhabiting Kars oblast' lobbied for emigration to America, and made preparations for such a move by sending scouts across the sea.[103]

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[101]GARF f. 102, 5 d-vo, op. 1901, d. 509, ll. 50-51 and Masalkin, "Sektanty, kak kolonizatory," no. 333: 3.

[102]See, for instance, GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 3, 1898.

[103]A comprehensive analysis of the Dukhobor uprising is beyond the scope of this dissertation. On the Dukhobor movement and arms burning, see GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1895, d. 1053, ch. 1; OR RGB f. 369, k. 42, d. 2, 1950; OR RGB f. 369, k. 44, d. 1, 1950; George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 84-106; A. N. Kuropatkin, *Soobrazheniia nachal'nika zakaspiiskoi oblasti po voprosu o pereselenii v Zakaspiiskuiu oblast' dukhoborov-postnikov* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.); N. S. Zibarov, *O Sozhzhenii oruzhiia dukhoborami* (Purleigh,

Concomitant with this disillusionment with state authority—and perhaps also caused by it—there was a return to prominence of the Christian discourse of the early nineteenth, a narrative shift that reflects a renewed importance of religion in the formation of self-identity. A manuscript "About the Molokan Sect" seized by police from a Molokan house in 1901 read:

> ... the foundation of the moral life of a true Christian should be complete independence from any human laws and coercion. Spiritual Christians have no need of earthly power, human laws which they are obliged to fulfill and especially those which are at variance with the teachings of the word of God, such as: serfdom, wars, military service, oaths. Rather they should run away. Since it is impossible openly to resist the government and fulfill its demands, Spiritual Christians, imitating the first Christians, should hide from it [the government], and their brothers in faith are obliged to take them in and hide them.[104]

In similar vein the Dukhobors also returned to their religiously based anti-government, anti-patriotic stance. Police records report them saying: "There is one Tsar, in heaven, there should be no Tsar on earth." "The Russian emperor, the Persian Shah, the Turkish Sultan, are equally dear to us as brethren, they are all God's creation." "We do not recognize a fatherland on earth, all people are our compatriots. We are 'members of the Christian community of universal brotherhood.'"[105]

The "anti-state" activities and renewed Christian rhetoric of the 1890s made the Transcaucasian sectarians increasingly suspect in the state's eyes. Tsarist authorities were unnerved by their refusal of military service, desire to leave the rodina and fiery anti-State, religious discourse—all examples that the sectarians were moving outside of state control. They worried themselves over the influence of members of the

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Maldon Essex, England: A. Tchertkoff, 1899); and Peter Brock, "Vasya Pozdnyakov's Dukhobor Narrative," *Slavonic and East European Review* 43, (December 1964): 152-176 and (June 1965): 400-414. On the Molokans' disaffection with Russia and plans for emigration at the turn of the century, see GARF f. 102, 5 d-vo, op. 1901, d. 509.

[104]GARF f. 102, 5 d-vo, op. 1901, d. 509, l. 46.

[105]From GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1895, d. 1053, ch. 1, translated in Andrew Donskov, "On the Doukhobors: From the Imperial Russian Archival Files," *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes Ethniques au Canada*, XXVII, no. 3 (1995), 254.

oppositional intelligentsia on the sectarian radicals. Being sectarians, the officials assumed that they were easily duped and followed blindly the leadership of the intellectuals in defiance of the Fatherland.[106] Moreover, they gravely feared any anti-state influence that the sectarian-colonists might have on Transcaucasia's indigenous inhabitants. As Russians and model colonists, state authorities took for granted that the sectarians would hold great authority and honor among the native populations and could easily lead their neighbors politically astray.[107]

Russians or Non-Russians: Religious and Ethnic Identity in the Imperial Context

In Transcaucasia, the settlers' ethnic identification also underwent profound changes. As discussed in chapter one, throughout much of the nineteenth century, a vital nexus existed in the minds of elite Russians between Orthodox Christianity and Russian ethnicity. In the internal provinces, sectarians were classified first of all by their religious dissent and tended to be categorized as non-Russians, or at least dubious Russians. By placing these religious dissenters in the midst of the multiethnic

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[106]GARF f. 102, 5 d-vo, op. 1901, d. 509, ll. 43-43ob and f. 102 3 d-vo. op. 1895, d. 1053, ch. 1. State officials were not unwise to be concerned about the influence that representatives of the intelligentsia might have since both populists and Social Democrats saw the sectarians as the conscious element of the Russian peasantry and thereby a potentially revolutionary force. For instance, the populist S. M. Kravchinskii argued that ". . . we see that our peasantry, in its intellectual awakening, shows a remarkable tendency to run into religious channels. Dumb and inert in the domain of politics, it is in the founding of religious sects that our peasantry has formulated its most cherished ideals and social aspirations. Here they exhibit not only great intellectual activity but also unlimited moral energy." However, some recent scholarship has demonstrated how the sectarians were also using the intelligentsia for their own ends as much as the other way around. S. M. Kravchinskii [Stepniak], *The Russian Peasantry: Their Agrarian Condition, Social Life and Religion* (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion, 1977 (rpt. 1888)), 234; V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, *Izbrannye sochineniia* II (Moscow: Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1961), 30; and on the manipulation of intelligenty by sectarians see Josh Sanborn, "Pacifist Politics and Peasant Politics: Tolstoy and the Doukhobors, 1895-99," *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes Ethniques au Canada* XXVII no. 3 (1995): 52-71.

[107]There are indications that this was true, but not because of some innate greatness of Russians, as the authorities thought. GARF f. 102, 5 d-vo, op. 1901, d. 509, ll. 51ob.

Transcaucasian frontier, their ethnicity as Russians came into bold relief. The writings of Russian intellectual elites that romantically described and essentialized the inhabitants of the Caucasus as "other" enhanced this process of defining the parameters of who was Russian and who was not.[108] There was a clear sense among the administrators that the sectarian-settlers were ethnically and culturally Russian. Russian anthropologists journeyed to the sectarians' villages to examine their height, eye color, hair color, and even the age when beards first appeared (among a myriad of other physical characteristics), in an investigation of the impact on "Great Russians" [*velikorussy*] of living in Transcaucasia.[109] Indeed, the term *velikorussy* appeared frequently in published works on the Transcaucasian sectarians.[110]

Not only was their "Russianness" spotlighted by Transcaucasia's multiethnic context, but the sectarians' growing state identity as "colonizers" also changed fundamentally the parameters of what "Russian" denoted to state authorities (as well as influencing what "religious sectarian" signified). The evolution from "heretics" to "colonizers" derived from official assumptions about identity: that ethnic Russians made the most reliable subjects, and that despite their non-Orthodoxy, the sectarians could still be considered Russian. As tsarist officials came to embrace sectarians as model colonists, the state's discourse which had anathematized their religious identity was interjected with ethnic labels that lauded their Russianness. As noted above, the sectarian-settlers took on important imperial roles as an unofficial militia to police the local inhabitants. On reading a report of the incident described above in which

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[108]Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); idem., "Nineteenth-Century Russian Mythologies of Caucasian Savagery," in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, eds. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, 80-100; and Katya Hokanson, "Literary Imperialism, *Narodnost'* and Pushkin's Invention of the Caucasus," *The Russian Review* 53 (July 1994): 336-352.
[109] A. I. Ivanovskii, "K antropologii zakavkazskikh velikorussov," *Russkii antropologicheskii zhurnal* 6, nos. 1&2 (1905): 141-158.
[110]See for instance, Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 247; Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 1; and Borozdin, *Russkoe religioznoe raznomyslie*, 175.

Molokans had fought off an attack of bandits as they escorted arrested Azerbaijanis to court, the Emperor corrected the nomenclature of lower bureaucrats: "it does not follow to call them sectarians, but simply Russian settlers [*russkie poseliane*]."[111] This statement—unexpected given the importance of Official Nationality to Nicholas' reign—was a clear expression of the Tsar's definition of what is Russian, and the acceptance of Transcaucasian sectarians into the "Russian" fold.

Perceived differences in ethnicity—based on language, culture and blood—between various groups in Transcaucasia played an important role in defining the scope of activities that state policy permitted to sectarians in their new home. Policy makers based their initial decision to settle the sectarians in the eastern part of Transcaucasia (rather than in Georgia) on the belief that Muslims and Russians were so distinct linguistically and culturally that there could be no possibility of social interaction and, thereby, of the sectarians spreading their faith.[112] In debates over whether the sectarian settlers could be permitted to register as inhabitants of Transcaucasian towns, state characterizations of the dissenters as Russians were of paramount importance. Baron Rozen argued that sectarians could be located in towns with Muslims and Armenians because of the cultural and linguistic chasms between them.[113] A similar ethnic logic was at work in decisions to settle dissenters on the land of Georgian nobles. Prince Vorontsov asserted that the settlement of sectarians so close to Georgian serfs "categorically cannot have any harmful consequences, ... because of the sharp differences in way of life, customs, and ideas that exist between Russian and Georgian peasants...."[114] Moreover, ethnic considerations were at the forefront in Vorontsov's

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[111]RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 433, 1843-1848, ll. 51-51ob.
[112]See the discussion in chapter one.
[113]RGIA f. 1263, op. 1, d. 791, 1832, ll. 287-298; RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, ll. 72ob-73ob; *AKAK* vol. 8, doc. 34, p. 34; and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, ll. 17-18.
[114]*AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 42, p. 47.

decision to allow sectarians to work for and hire Orthodox Georgians. Russian officials believed that no harmful results to Orthodox Christianity were likely because of the differences in language and "in the peculiarities of the moral-spiritual formation of each people [*v osobennosti nravstvenno-dukhovnago obrazovaniia oboikh narodov*]." Allowing the interaction between Georgians and sectarians was considered safe in regards to the spread of their beliefs, yet dissenters were still forbidden to hire or work for Orthodox Russians in Transcaucasia.[115]

Sectarian self-identity shifted similarly to state constructs. In the new context of Transcaucasia, day-to-day interaction with ethnic "others" solidified their identification as Russians. In the public expression of their sense of self, ethnic descriptors separating a Russian "us" from a non-Russian "them" infiltrated the discourse of "true Christians" and "God's people." Sharing the vocabulary of state authorities, sectarians described their new neighbors as "uncivilized," "wild," and "Asian."[116] Molokans, for example, saw themselves as ethnically and culturally distinct from their new neighbors, describing them as "strange and baffling creatures of Asiatic and Mohammedon stock" who carried knives and guns and whose language and customs were incomprehensible to the colonists.[117] In 1847. Molokans from all over Transcaucasia met in the village of Borisy with the goal "that here among multi-tribal Asian peoples we Molokans would not lose our faith and our Russian nation [*russkaia natsiia*]."[118] Other Molokans underlined how, despite all trials and tribulations of life on the frontier, they had "remained Russian in blood and in spirit."[119] The sense of "us" and "them" hardened

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[115]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23322, 1846 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 566, 1847-1848.
[116]See for example, GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, l. 2; RGIA f. 1284, op. 197-1837, d. 9. ll. 3-4; and RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1151, 1831-1834, l. 23.
[117]*Spirit and Life—Book of the Sun. Divine Discourses of the Preceptors and the Martyrs of the Word of God, the Faith of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, of the Religion of the Spiritual Christian Molokan-Jumpers*, ed. Daniel H. Shubin, trans. John Volkov (n.p.: n.p., 1983), 20.
[118]GMIR f:. 2, op. 8, d. 324, n.d., l. 1
[119]*Karsskii oblastnoi s"ezd*, 4-5.

because of the initially antagonistic relations between Russian settlers and their Transcaucasian neighbors which were filled with stories of theft, property destruction, violence, murder and rape.[120]

However, as with their state identity, the ethnicity of sectarians in Transcaucasia—both self-labeled and state-categorized—became increasingly bi-polar as the nineteenth century progressed. There was no consensus among state officials and sectarians about whether the Transcaucasian religious non-conformists were "Russian," and, more generally, what constituted ethnically "Russian." In certain contexts, state representatives and journalists asserted steadfastly that sectarians were Russians—in doing so they underscored that cultural, linguistic and racial factors could be sufficient to define what was "Russian." In others, they included Orthodox Christianity as a necessary component. Similarly, sectarians flip-flopped between describing themselves as Russian and not.

Subbotniki in Transcaucasia did not consider themselves Christian sectarians.[121] Many, if not most, saw themselves as Jewish, or at least a branch of Judaism. "Considering themselves followers of the teachings of God's original chosen people, they do not consider themselves *raskol'niki* or sectarians and wherever they run into the necessity of describing themselves they will say and write "Jewish faith" [*veroispovedaniia iudeiskago*]."[122]

> Even more absurd must be the fact that they sometimes considered themselves not Russians [*russkie*] by extraction [*proiskhozhdeniiu*], and to the question ... "Who are you?" [*Kto ty?*], they answer: "Subbotnik."

120These antagonistic relations are discussed at length in chapter four. See also GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 597, passim; GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, ll. 13-14; *Spirit and Life*, 20; and I. V. Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy v Armenii (30—50-e gody XIX v.)," *Vestnik Moskovskago Universiteta Seriia IX Istoriia* no. 3 (May-June 1974): 58-59.
121On the Subbotnik faith in general, see the Introduction; A. I. Masalkin, "K istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov: II Subbotniki." *Kavkaz* no. 307 (November 19, 1893), 2.; N. St-v, "Obychai i zakon v brachnykh delakh subbotnikov," *Kars* no. 41 (October 8, 1891), 3.; and T. B., "U beregov kaspii: VII V Lenkorane," *Kavkaz* no. 58 (March 14, 1881), 2-3.
122Masalkin, "Subbotniki," 2.

> "Can it be that such a people [*narod*] exists?" you ask further. "Yes, a people." And so you are able to speak in Subbotnik language [*govorit' po subbotnicheski*]? The Subbotnik becomes quiet ... or begins to go on about some nonsense that "such a language should exist and that it does and that many of them speak Hebrew [*po evreiski*]" making a shrewd transition ...[123]

Subbotniki of the village of Elenovka in Erevan guberniia employed for a short time a Jewish rabbi in order to lead their services, although the dismissal of the rabbi from the community reflected the very large differences that did exist in culture and practice between Russian Jews and Subbotniki. Furthermore, in the town of Lenkoran officials gave permission to a group of twenty-two Jews who arrived in the region to intermarry with Subbotniki (since there were no female Jews in the area). This intermarriage facilitated a coming together of religions as the Jews taught Subbotniki the secrets and rites of their faith.[124]

Yet both Tsarist officials and prominent publicists regarded Subbotniki as Russians and sectarians. As one newspaper author wrote:

> Coming from the Russian family, belonging to her in spirit and in flesh, having left at one time from their shared religion and taken up the laws of Moses, Subbotniki should not be permitted to merge with the Jewish nation [*evreiskoiu natseiu*] which is entirely foreign to them in ancestry ... since the separation of them from the Russian people who are tied to them by blood [*ibo otdelenie ikh ot krovno-sviazannago s nimi russkago naroda*] ... would castrate the feeling of national self-love [*natsional'nago samoliubiia*], and ... would tear them away from a united body ... By necessity Russian sectarians are separated from the Empire's governing Church. But the law does not separate them from the nation, and by placing them in the situation of *raskol'niki*, it joins them to the Russian family, and prohibits only the further spread of their newly adopted faith (or heresy from the Orthodox point of view) which is considered dangerous for society and the interests of the dominant religion.[125]

Another author asserted:

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[123]Ibid.

[124]T. B., "U beregov," no. 58: 2.

[125]N. St-v., "Obychai ," 3.

> ... being in all respects Russian [*russkie*], in language, customs, situation and clothing, they sometimes call themselves Jews, or simply *zhidy*, they give Biblical names to their children (...), circumcise them, and adopt many external signs of Judaism. But, in general, I repeat that these people are those self-same Russians ... good souls, hard-working and honest.[126]

The different interpretations of what it meant to be Russian held by state and Subbotniki came into conflict. These disaccords cast light on the general tsarist policy of ethnic identification by blood and faith. For example, in the late 1880s, Subbotniki from the village of Elenovka (Erevan guberniia) announced to local authorities that they planned to acquire a Bible with the words "in memory of the miraculous saving of the Emperor" embossed in gold on the front cover along with the Tsar's initials and a crown inlaid on the top. As symbol of their loyalty to the Tsar, the villagers declared that they would display their tribute to the royal family's survival of an 1888 train derailment in their synagogue.[127] This gesture was on the surface a manifestation of peasant faith in the all-powerful leader of their state, which may have reflected any combination of true devotion or the attempt to portray themselves as such. However, it catapulted into the spotlight ongoing struggles over identity and its meaning in Russian society—and definitions of the ethno-religious identity of Subbotniki in particular.

In response to the announcement of their intentions concerning the Bible, local officials began to investigate where the Subbotniki had received permission to build their synagogue. Tsarist law specifically forbade sectarians from building prayer houses. In contrast, Jews, as representatives of an officially recognized non-Russian religious faith, were entitled to places of worship.[128] No specific permission for the

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[126]T. B., "U beregov," no. 58: 2. Italics in original.

[127]Masalkin, "Subbotniki," 2. Orthodox peasants elsewhere in Russia also took actions, especially building chapels, to commemorate the "miracle by the mercy of God," as it came to be known popularly, that saved the royal family. See Vera Shevzov, "Chapels and the Ecclesial World of Prerevolutionary Russian Peasants," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 3 (fall 1996): 599-600.

[128]More generally, Jews operated under an entirely different set of laws, with their own freedoms and restrictions. For instance, tsarist law recognized marriage by Jewish rites as a legal union, yet only regarded sectarian marriages as cohabitation.

Subbotnik synagogue had been issued. The governing authorities asserted that Subbotniki were Russian by blood, culture, and language; that a Subbotnik could only be a sectarian-raskol'nik; and that the laws pertaining to Jews could never apply to "Judaized Russian people [*iudeistvuiushchim russkim liudam*]." The synagogue was ordered closed.

This struggle between the demands of individuals and communities to define their own identities and the efforts of state authorities to label and categorize their subjects according to other criteria illustrates the intricate interaction between religious, ethnic and state identities. Subbotnik claims to, and Tsarist denials of, Jewish-ness had very real ramifications in their day-to-day lives as the closing of the synagogue suggests. Moreover, while giving spiritual faith its full due, there is a clear sense here that the actions of the Elenovki represented a performance with very clear goals: first, to define their community as Jewish in an attempt to carve a niche within the existing categories and take advantage of religious freedoms that the laws bestowed on certain groups; second, by dedicating the Bible to the Tsar, to depict themselves as loyal and dependable subjects of the Empire and thereby to ensure a place in the category of members in good standing.[129]

Subbotniki were not the only Transcaucasian sect to experience tension between religious and ethnic identity. The ultra-Orthodox priest, Ioann Vostorgov, in describing a trip through Transcaucasia with the Exarch of Georgia in 1903, wrote of the Molokan desire to emigrate to America: "something painful is felt in this striving to leave the Fatherland [*rodina*], where they live richly and freely ... With the conversion to sectarianism a Russian person loses patriotic feeling. It is a strange affair, but to the question: 'are you Russian?' he never gives an affirmative answer, but declares: 'no I'm

[129]However, in this case, their expressions of faithfulness proved insufficient to achieve the desired religious ends.

a Molokan.' From this comes the ease with which sectarians decide to emigrate, ..."[130] A similar negation of Russian ethnicity was made in the case of the Dukhobors in Transcaucasia in a report by the governor of Tiflis guberniia, Prince G. D. Shervashidze. Here again, the answer to the question "Are you Russian?" was "No, we are Dukhobors."[131] In her field work among the Dukhobors in the 1980s, the Russian ethnographer-historian Svetlana Inikova found that "to the question about nationality they all answered "I am a Dukhobor." She also found that only in the 1930s, when the census specifically forbade it, did the Dukhobors stop labeling themselves by their religious confession when asked to state their nationality [*natsional'nost'*].[132]

The sources leave little doubt that as the nineteenth century progressed, religious identification continued to claim as powerful a hold on both state-generated ethnic labels and a sectarian's sense of self as the Russian identity formed in the mid-nineteenth century. However, the narration of a priest such as Vostorgov was not always a simple retelling of the "facts," and should be read on two other levels. First, by coupling the Molokans' denial of ethnicity in favor of confessional identity and their rejection of *Rossiia* implicit in the desire to emigrate—a doubly damning combination—Vostorgov strove to discredit the sectarians in the eyes of both state power and public opinion. Second, his story also served to entrench the view, both for himself and for the reader, that adherence to the Orthodox faith was a prerequisite for being both Russian and a loyal subject.

Russian officials, however, were not the only ones skilled in the manipulation of categories of identity. Sectarians themselves realized that in the face of any harsh

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[130]Ioann Vostorgov, "Puteshestvie vysokopreosviashchenneishago Aleksiia, ekzarkha Gruzii, po Karskoi oblasti, Erivanskoi i Tiflisskoi guberniiam," *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, T. IV (Moscow: 1916, rpt. 1995), 125.
[131]OR RGB f. 369, k. 44, d. 1, 1950, l. 133.
[132]Svetlana Inikova, "Voina i ustnoi traditsii dukhobortsev," (unpublished manuscript given to the author), 5. The article has been published in German translation in *Bios* no. 1 (1990).

treatment for their religious non-conformity they needed to take up the discourse of their "Russian colonist" identity—i.e., their Russian ethnicity and track record of service and support to the state—in order to mitigate the legal barriers that hindered them as dangerous sectarians. For instance, during a police interrogation concerning anti-state activities in connection with efforts to emigrate, the Molokan Ivan Samarin declared himself "a devoted servant of the Emperor and the Fatherland [*otechestvo*]."[133] In another example, petitioners from the village of Vorontsovka wrote to the Caucasian Namestnik in an effort to free their preacher and spiritual leader who had been arrested for spreading the Molokan faith. In their appeal, they went to great lengths to underscore the assistance that their forefathers supplied the Russian Empire both during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 and during the Tatar-Armenian violence of 1905.[134] Moreover, in a petition for permission to resettle to P. N. Miliukov, Molokans form Orenburg guberniia, following the lead of their Transcaucasian co-religionists, accentuated that they were "native Russian people [*korennye russkie liudi*]" who had provided a great service to the Russian state during the Crimean and Turkish wars. They further asserted that they would carry out the obligations of all subjects and believed that they should not suffer simply because they were sectarians.[135]

Of course, when a Molokan or Dukhobor placed religious affiliation first, it did not preclude a simultaneous bond with ethnic and/or state community. Indeed, whereas state categories dealt in sharp parameters of "us" and "them," individual self-definition did not always do so. At any given moment or context, sectarians possessed, and could potentially manifest, a whole spectrum of self-definitional identities and affiliations (which along with national and religious could also include social, gender, generational,

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[133]GARF f. 102, 5 d-vo, op. 1901, d. 509, l. 49ob.
[134]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 196, 1913, ll. 1-1ob.
[135]GARF f. 579, op. 1, d. 2580, 1913, l. 3-3ob.

familial, local, to name but a few), of which only one was at the surface. As such, not all of the proclamations by sectarians to be Russian and faithful subjects, should be understood, in whole or in part, as pure manipulation of discursive categories. Many did in fact see themselves in such ethnic and state terms while simultaneously realizing the benefit that could be derived from voicing such loyalties at appropriate moments.[136]

In a different though related vein, sectarian gestures of "national" identity were often transformed from their original configuration into unexpected results by their religious beliefs and affiliation. Such was the case with the infirmary sponsored by Baku Molokans during World War I.[137] Of their own volition the Molokan congregation in Baku orchestrated the opening of an infirmary to treat wounded soldiers and, in so doing, aid in Russia's war effort. Members of the congregation donated a building for the clinic as well as beds and supplies for thirty-three patients. They staffed the infirmary with volunteer women and girls from the Molokan community. To those who were healed and sent back into battle, the Molokans gave quantities of clothing and supplies to aid them. The congregation also contributed money to the Baku town government for the maintenance, in the Molokans' name, of ten beds on the military-medical train dedicated to the Tsarevich. Moreover, they donated even more money to the Red Cross.

However, the infirmary was almost shut down after only a few months of operation. A local Orthodox priest insisted on hanging on the infirmary's wall a

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136 For a discussion of different levels of interpersonal systems see Jim Orford, "Theories of Person-in-Context" in *Community Psychology: Theory and Practice* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1992), 26-29. Eric Hobsbawm makes a similar argument in his discussion of national identity. "Men and women did not choose collective identification as they chose shoes, knowing that one could only put on one pair at a time. They had, and still have, several attachments and loyalties simultaneously, including nationality, and are simultaneously concerned with various aspects of life, any of which may at any one time be foremost in their minds, as occasion suggests." E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 123.

137 The following discussion is drawn from *Otchet komiteta po okazaniiu pomoshchi ranenym voinam pri Bakinskoi Obshchin Dukhovnykh Khristian (Molokan) c 7-go Sentiabria 1914 g. po 28-oe Fevralia 1915 g* (Baku: Tip. Bakinskago T-va Pechatnago Dela, 1915).

"general icon." Icons were "contradictory to the fundamental principles" of the Molokans. Indeed, the congregation had been sufficiently disturbed by the fact that each wounded person brought in their own bedside icon according to their faith. But they had not opposed the practice based on their support of freedom of conscience. However, the general icon for the clinic directly challenged what they perceived as their own religious freedoms, and more importantly, completely denied the Molokan origins and identity of the infirmary. After deciding not to close it, and briefly contemplating handing the operation over to the city to run, one member of the congregation agreed to take over its management. He did so, without any financial assistance from the Molokan community, because he did not feel his religious faith attacked by the icons—an action that reflects just how personally variable notions of national and religious identity could be within any given community.

Conclusions

"Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun."[138]

The Transcaucasian frontier provided the sectarians with new opportunities and possible roles as members of the Russian state. Following their resettlement, the former pariahs took on vital functions in the construction and administration of the Russian Empire in Transcaucasia. In so doing, they became an influential third force in the process of Empire-building alongside state officials and local peoples. They supplied Russian imperial power with an essential support system and Russian authorities came

[138]Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5.

to rely on their contribution. However, the non-conformists often furnished their assistance on their own terms, and in this sense they should not be understood simply as another arm of the state. Rather than fight in the Russian army, for instance, they provided a military infrastructure which was in line with their non-violent religious tenets and which granted them financial opportunities. The salience of quasi-independent settlers to the imperial process sets Russia aside from other European imperialist powers in the nineteenth century who relied on political and military administrators.

This investigation also underscores how the Transcaucasian frontier supplied fertile soil for the growth of new sectarian identities, both in terms of sectarian self-definition and the external labeling of state officials. Rather than being a place solely of conquest and domination versus accommodation and exchange, as much scholarship describes, the Transcaucasian periphery was also the site of powerfully creative forces. Alongside existing notions of self arose additional characterizations as the "Russian colonist" appeared next to the "dangerous sectarian." Old and new were often in tension. The dissenters' frontier societies were vibrant, switching rapidly from one to the other, as were the labels of state authorities. Indeed, the mutual interplay of identities was relational, contextual, and complex, with ever-shifting definitions and parameters, cynical manipulation of the meanings of categories, and a multiplicity of players in the process of (self-)labeling. In the process, the content and meanings of such categories as "sectarian," "Russian" and "loyal subject" were constantly open to definition and re-definition. Thus, while in certain contexts sectarian religious identification (whichever faith it might be) precluded a sense of community with the state, in other circumstances, sectarians took up the mantle—and the benefits—of state servitors and were lauded by state officials as model subjects. Moreover, in the first

scenario, state officials considered sectarians politically pernicious and functionally outside of the fold of loyal and acceptable subjects by virtue of their non-conformist religion. In the latter context, their much-praised state service altered the meaning state authorities gave to sectarianism by pushing most of the negative connotations into the background.

These fledgling state characterizations and self-definitions affected the relations between government and non-conformist, both in the formation of policy and in the willingness of sectarians to perform state service. From the viceroyship of Prince Vorontsov onwards, state officials viewed the sectarian-settlers both as "model colonists" and "dangerous fanatics" simultaneously. As a result, state policy flowed inconsistently from these dual labels. Thus, Prince Bariatinskii could both laud the sectarians as Russian pioneers and demand more of them for the region while also lobbying to increase the benefits of conversion to Orthodoxy because the non-conformists were "disobedient to authority." Such incongruities reflect a larger struggle in Russian governance between ideology and practice; in this case, between assumptions about the innate desirability of Orthodox Russians and the experiential realization of the sectarians' superior capabilities. They also reflect how practice could moderate ideology. Despite official, ingrained opposition to their religious identity, the dissenters' colonizing contributions modified state policies towards them in Transcaucasia. Moreover, the inconsistencies further demonstrate the fundamental importance of geographic location in tsarist Russia. By privileging Transcaucasian sectarians, tsarist labeling and actions were contingent on where in the empire a dissenter lived—a fact which highlights the regional diversity of experience among Russian subjects in nineteenth-century Russia.

This chapter has also touched on the question of Russian national identity. In Imperial Russia, religious and national identity were two webs of constructed and coded meaning that existed in dynamic and mutually-influential interaction. As discussed in chapter one, scholars have traditionally discerned a vital nexus between Orthodox Christianity and Russian nationality. Yet, not all subjects of the Empire who were considered, or considered themselves, to be "Russian" subscribed to the Orthodox faith. The interrelations of confessional, ethnic, and state identity among the Transcaucasian non-conformists belie any simple linkage between Russian nationality and Orthodox religion. Under one set of conditions, the classification of Transcaucasian sectarians as "Russian" was based on a combination of linguistic, cultural, and racial criteria that made their "Russianness" unproblematic. Yet, in other circumstances identification as "sectarian" problematized and de-stabilized their Russianness, moving religious dissenters outside the boundaries of who was Russian.

Moreover, while scholars such as E. J. Hobsbawm have pointed to an increased emphasis on ethnic and linguistic factors as sole determinants of nationality in Europe as the nineteenth century progressed, the case of the Transcaucasian sectarians demonstrates that religious identity remained an important factor in the construction both of national identity and of sense-of-self in late Imperial Russia.[139] At the same time, an analysis of identity among the Transcaucasian sectarians demonstrates that the agents of modernization—railroads, education, and military conscription, for example—did not necessarily act as agents of nation-building, as has been noted in other parts of Europe.

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[139]Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 102. This is not to argue that ethnicity did not become increasingly salient in the formation of Russian nationality through the nineteenth century. This study of sectarians in Transcaucasia does bear out to a degree Hobsbawm's interpretation of ethnicity ascendant.

Indeed, the appearance of "modernity's" agents did much to push the sectarians outside the "Russian" fold.[140]

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[140]This argument is found most pervasively in the historiography of modern France. See Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976). For counter-arguments see Charles Tilly, "Did the Cake of Custom Break?" in John M. Merriman, ed., *Consciousness and Class Experience in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Homes and Meier Publishers, 1979), 17-44 and Caroline Ford, "Religion and the Politics of Cultural Change in Provincial France: The Resistance of 1902 in Lower Brittany," *Journal of Modern History* 62 (March 1990): 1-33.

Chapter Four

Frontier Encounters: Conflict and Coexistence Between Settlers and Non-Russian Transcaucasians

> *The history of Indian-white relations has not usually produced complex stories. Indians are the rock, European peoples are the sea, and history seems a constant storm. There have been but two outcomes: The sea wears down and dissolves the rock; or the sea erodes the rock but cannot finally absorb its battered remnant, which endures. The first outcome produces stories of conquest and assimilation; the second produces stories of cultural persistence. The tellers of these stories do not lie. Some Indian groups did disappear; others did persist. But the tellers of such stories miss a larger process and a larger truth. The meeting of sea and continent, like the meeting of whites and Indians, creates as well as destroys. Contact was not a battle of primal forces in which only one could survive. Something new could appear.*[1]

Richard White's discussion of the historiography of Indian-white relations in North America also accurately characterizes recent scholarship on the interactions between Russians and non-Russians in the tsarist empire. It too has depicted cultural contact in dichotomous, conflictual terms: a Russian sea crashing wave after wave upon the rocky shores of its borderlands. Historians have described the meeting of Russians and their neighbors as an unbalanced encounter of Russian ascendancy and indigenous response. They have traced the effects of Russian rule, the imposition of one culture on another, and, more recently, the interactions of state agents (such as soldiers, officials, ethnographers, and missionaries) with locals. As a recent study contends: "the cultural and social encounter was inherently unequal" and "those who held the instruments of

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[1]Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ix.

political power also controlled the terms in which that communication took place."[2] Nineteenth-century Russian authorities shared some of these perspectives. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the sectarian-settlers evolved in the minds of Tsarist officials from dangerous pariahs into "model" Russian colonizers. Behind this new perception lay the assumption that the dissenters would act as conduits of Russian cultural norms and economic practices—of civilization in general—to Transcaucasia's native peoples. From the perspective of Russian administrators, such socio-cultural transference was to be both unidirectional (Russian to native) and progressive, lifting the indigenous peoples up the civilizational hierarchy.[3]

In contrast to this "collision" narrative, the frontier encounters between sectarian-settlers and Armenians, Azerbaijani Turks, and Georgians suggest a very different story. In Transcaucasia, the non-conformists not only encountered an unfamiliar and forbidding climate, but also a wide variety of indigenous peoples.[4] For most Russian dissenters, this was their first experience living near—for many, their first contact ever with—non-Slavic peoples. Native Transcaucasians had come to know Russians as soldiers, but the sectarians' migration was their inaugural encounter with

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[2]Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), xvii.

[3]For a general discussion of these attitudes see Willard Sunderland, "Russians into Iakuts? 'Going Native' and Problems of Russian National Identity in the Siberian North, 1870s-1914," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (winter 1996): 806-825; Yuri Slezkine, *Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); and Seymour Becker, "The Muslim East in Nineteenth-Century Russian Popular Historiography," *Central Asian Survey* 5, no. 3/4 (1986): 25-47.

[4]Although they are awkward, I use terms such as "indigenous peoples," "locals," "natives," and "Transcaucasians" to refer to non-Russians in the region. The large number of different ethnic and religious groups in Transcaucasia, and rapidly changing ethnic mix, make such terms into gross generalizations. In some cases such descriptors are hardly applicable. For instance, while I include Armenians as "native" in comparison to the sectarians, many had only recently settled in Transcaucasia following Russia's incorporation of the region, and many others arrived after the sectarians. See George Bournoutian, "The Ethnic Composition and the Socio-Economic Condition of Eastern Armenia in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in *Transcaucasia: Nationalism and Social Change*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1983), 69-86; Vartan Gregorian, "The Impact of Russia on the Armenians and Armenia," in *Russia and Asia: Essays on the Influence of Russia on the Asian Peoples*, ed. Wayne Vucinich (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), 167-218; and N. G. Volkova, "Etnicheskie protsessy v Zakavkaz'e v XIX-XX vv." in *Kavkazskii Etnograficheskii Sbornik*, (1969)

Russians as civilian neighbors, and especially as non-conformist Christians. In this relatively unregulated region of the Russian empire, these disparate peoples were left to negotiate the boundaries of a space in which to interact; to delineate modes of interconnection suitable for their new, shared context; and to construct beneficial economic relationships and patterns of mutual survival. In these negotiations, rather than the unequal subjugation of one party by the other, no one group played a consistently predominant role and the Russian colonists were not necessarily privileged in the encounter. Lines of power and dependency fluctuated and it was never entirely clear who was "colonizer" and who "colonized." The forces of acculturation and accommodation altered both settlers and locals, and proved especially transformative for the Russian settlers. In the process, "new worlds" were created.

The meeting of sectarians and local Transcaucasians produced five forms of interaction which moved and evolved simultaneously in contradictory and often unpredictable directions: land disputes, partial "enserfment," violent clashes, economic bonds and mutual aid, and economic exchange and cultural transformation. First, the settlement of sectarians in Transcaucasia unbalanced previous patterns of land use and valuation and produced struggles with local inhabitants over land allotments. Second, communities of dissenters settled on land owned by Georgian and Muslim notables. They entered into uneven contracts with these native elites that left the colonists in a subordinate position. Third, in response to what the settlers saw as the brutality and banditry of Transcaucasian Muslims, and in a stark reversal of their religious tenets, groups from within these formerly pacifist communities turned to violent reprisals. Fourth, the growth of mutual assistance and intricate, collectively beneficial economic relations—a "frontier exchange economy"—also characterized native-sectarian

interrelations.[5] Indeed, antagonism was only one side to a complicated and multifaceted set of relations. Finally, economic interactions led to the growth of reciprocal influences. They developed first and foremost in the economic sphere through the exchange of agricultural practices, implements and subsistence strategies. From there, they expanded—albeit slowly and only partially—into other realms as peoples swapped languages and cultural practices along with goods and services.

This complex picture of the relations between the non-conformists and the peoples of Transcaucasia resulted in part from the profound ethnic and religious heterogeneity of the region, and its kaleidoscopic character.[6] The sectarians settled near a plethora of distinct peoples and communities, and their mutual interactions varied drastically depending on the ethnicity, religious affiliation, social status (peasant, landowner or merchant), and economic lifestyle (settled farmer, nomad, or urban trader) of the indigenous people involved. Relations also differed according to the beliefs and practices of the different sectarian groups.

While violence coexisted with economic interactions and mutual support throughout the period under investigation, the patterns of interaction changed over time. As day-to-day contacts created both tensions and bonds, settlers and natives constantly made and remade both themselves and their cross-cultural interactions.[7] Conflict

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[5]The idea of "frontier exchange" is developed in Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1992).

[6]On this rapidly evolving ethnic "salad bowl," see Volkova, "Etnicheskie protsessy," and Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 7-8. On the diversity of the Caucasus more broadly, see John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London: Longmans, Green and co., 1908), xxi-xxxviii.

[7]See Marshall Sahlins for a persuasive argument about the relationship between "structure and event." "Every reproduction of culture is an alteration, insofar as in action, the categories by which a present world is orchestrated pick up some novel empirical content." Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 136-156, the quotation is from 144. In this vein, see also White, *Middle Ground*, 52, where he argues that "[t]he result of each side's attempts to apply its own cultural expectations in a new context was often change in culture itself. In trying to maintain the conventional order of its world, each group applied rules that gradually shifted to meet the exigencies of

predominated in the wake of initial contact because the appearance of the settlers abruptly disrupted existing structures. As relations settled down through a series of compromises, economic exchange and mutually supportive relationships came to the fore. This is not to say that fighting disappeared, or that ties of mutual assistance and trade did not exist from the outset, because these distinct forms of interaction endured in different guises throughout the nineteenth century. In contrast, conflicts over land remained a constant aspect of settler-native contacts during the entire period of this study.

Marking Boundaries and Disputing Land

The sectarians' settlement in Transcaucasia altered the region's human ecology and destabilized existing systems of land ownership and usage. Bitter land conflicts resulted from the fact that non-conformists often settled on lands already in use by indigenous Transcaucasians. For natives relying on settled agriculture, this practice reduced the amount of land they could put under cultivation. For nomads in eastern Transcaucasia, the Russians' settled lifestyle disrupted long-standing patterns of migration and pasturing. In both cases, Russian settlement caused suffering and aroused anger among locals. In clashes over real estate, sectarians and natives took matters into their own hands in an effort to resolve what they considered to be unfair situations. They occupied and used lands allotted to others, allowed their livestock to trample crops, and openly fought over access to land. Both settlers and local Transcaucasians (especially Armenians) turned to state authorities as an arbiter, and on occasion tsarist officials intervened to resolve the differences. Petitions to tsarist

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particular situations. The result of these efforts was a new set of common conventions, but these conventions served as a basis for further struggles to order or influence the world of action."

officials demanded rights to use land and complained of misdeeds and unacceptable disparities. Local inhabitants objected particularly that Russians unfairly received larger allotments of land per soul. As population pressures increased over the course of the nineteenth century, the flurry appeals by Transcaucasians to remedy inequalities grew more frequent and ardent. At the same time, sectarians insisted in their own petitions that whatever differences in the apportionment of land, even they did not have sufficient land to feed themselves adequately.

Conflicts over land distribution and demarcation were complicated by the peculiarities of Transcaucasian agricultural structures and land use patterns which varied enormously within regions and among ethnic groups. Rural dwellers in Transcaucasia occupied a full spectrum between settled, semi-nomadic and nomadic, although nomadism increasingly predominated the further east one went towards the Caspian Sea. Serfdom was prevalent in Georgia until 1871, while other forms of lord-peasant relations (and Church-peasant ties) existed elsewhere. The incorporation of these regions into the Russian empire had deep repercussions for the socio-economic structure, expanding the power of the Georgian nobles, while disrupting the relationships between peasants and beks in the *Musul'manskie provintsii* [Muslim Provinces] of eastern Transcaucasia.[8]

Eastern Armenia, subsequently Erevan guberniia, serves as an example of the socio-economic complexity.[9] Armenians, a minority of the population, were almost exclusively a settled people living agriculturally or practicing a profession. At the time

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[8]The most specific and valuable socio-economic and land use information (divided by region) is found in the seven volume series *MIEBGKZK* (1886-87). See also V. D. Mochalov, *Krest'ianskoe khoziaistvo v Zakavkaz'e k kontsy XIX v.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1958); Ronald Grigor Suny, "'The Peasants Have Always Fed Us': The Georgian Nobility and the Peasant Emancipation, 1856-1871" *Russian Review* 38, no. 1 (January 1979): 27-51; idem, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 63-112; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, 17-23; and Bournoutian, "Ethnic Composition."
[9]Bournoutian, "Ethnic Composition," 69-86.

of incorporation in 1828, the region's Muslims were divided ethnically among Persians, Turks and Kurds. The Persians were almost exclusively a settled population; the Turkish inhabitants ranged from settled, semi-nomdic to nomadic; and the Kurds were primarily nomadic. In his study of Eastern Armenia, George Bournoutian separates the nomadic peoples into three types:

> semi-settled nomads, who depended on agriculture and followed seasonal local migrations limited to thirty miles or less; settled peasants, who seasonally grazed their flocks on mountain pastures in the daytime and generally returned to their villages in the evening; and nomads with distinct summer and winter camps.[10]

These nomadic peoples utilized more than half of the land in the region. Sectarians were state peasants who practiced settled agriculture and local livestock pasturing. Their relations to their new neighbors depended on the socio-economic (and to a lesser degree, ethnic) background of the local peoples whose lands they bordered.

There has been disagreement, both among commentators at the time and also among scholars more recently, over the nature of Russian state policy regarding land distribution during Russian settlement. Soviet historians have painted the picture of Russian settlement in Transcaucasia within strict parameters of exploiter/exploited. The historian G. A. Orudzhev, for example, points to "the flagrant infringement of the land rights of native peasants. Tsarist colonizers, when settling Russian peasants in Azerbaijan, robbed land from the local inhabitants and with every act aroused clashes between the Azerbaijani and Russian peasants."[11] Regarding Armenia, the Soviet historian O. E. Tumanian asserts that Russian officials settled the sectarians in regions

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[10]Ibid., 72.

[11]G. A. Orudzhev, "Iz istorii obrazovaniia russkikh poselenii v Azerbaidzhane," *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk AzSSR: Istoriia, Filosofiia, Pravo* no. 2 (1969): 21. See also A. N. Iamskov, "Environmental Conditions and Ethnocultural Traditions of Stockbreeding (the Russians in Azerbaijan in the 19th and early 20th Centuries)," paper given at 12th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Zagreb, Yugoslavia, July 24-31, 1988. (Moscow: Nauka, Central Dept. of Oriental Literature, 1988), 5 and A. I. Klibanov, *History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia (1860s-1917)*, trans. Ethel Dunn (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), 122.

where the native population already suffered from extreme land shortage. In order to demonstrate the disregard of Russian officials for the native peoples, he cites a state project for settling Russians in Novobaiazet and Aleksandropol' uezds. "If in newly acquired regions in every colony one was to stop in the face of discontent and protests on the part of the local population, then not only in other countries, but also here in Russia, enormous tracts of land would have remained empty until now, which are today populated with hard-working and productive landowners [read: Russian colonists]."[12]

While there are important insights in the Soviet analysis, the intentions of tsarist colonization policy involved a complex mixture of concern for, and maltreatment of, the Transcaucasian peoples. There was no consistent privileging of the sectarian-settlers because, even if Russian, they were still religious dissenters and pariahs unwanted in the central provinces.[13] Moreover, in many cases, regional authorities were genuinely concerned about the economic welfare of the indigenous population and they did not automatically take land to give to the Russian settlers. Already in 1832, Baron G. V. Rozen voiced his concerns that the settlement of sectarians in Transcaucasia would "constrain the indigenous inhabitants in regards to their nomadic encampments and pastures."[14] In a report from 1843, state authorities made clear that if the sectarians were to be resettled in Transcaucasia, then it was to be done on free and empty land without causing any "inhibition" or "restriction" on the native population.[15] In the settlement of Russians in Armenia, the authorities' stated policy was that "the Russian

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[12]Quoted in O. E. Tumanian, *Ekonomicheskoe razvitie Armenii* 2 vols. (Erevan: Armianskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1954), 1: 41-42.
[13]On the changing state characterizations of the sectarians, see chapter three.
[14]RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1831, d. 136, l. 9ob.
[15]RGIA f. 932, op. 1, d. 83, [1843], l. 47. See also RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, l. 1ob.

settlements would interfere as little as possible with the indigenous peoples already settled there."[16]

Other incidents reflect the continued attentiveness of tsarist officials to the needs of the local peoples as the nineteenth century progressed. An 1847 government report documented the economic difficulties experienced by the sectarian-settlers in the village of Nikolaevka (Lenkoran uezd, Shemakha (later Baku) guberniia). The community had received less than ten desiatinas per family (the officially allotted amount of land for Russian settlers), and state officials saw this deficit as the root of their troubles. Local authorities lamented that there was no possible means to alleviate their distress by increasing their holdings because the village was surrounded by Tatar villages, who were themselves suffering from a lack of land. Instead of taking property from the locals, the administration proposed a reduction in Nikolaevka's taxes and obligations as the only means to ease their burden.[17] In an 1853 case, the local administration found itself with extra land on its hands and debated whether to keep this land in trust for the natural growth of the sectarian population, or whether to give it to the local peoples who were in much greater need for land than the sectarians.[18] In 1866, when tsarist authorities were debating the cessation of sectarian resettlement to Transcaucasia altogether, those who supported an end to relocation argued that treasury land was desperately needed by a large portion of the native inhabitants.[19]

Despite a degree of concern for the welfare of Transcaucasia's indigenous peoples—motivated in part by a fear of disorder—the interests of the sectarian-settlers did frequently come first. Officials allotted more land per family to Russian settlers than

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[16]I. V. Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy v Armenii (30—50-e gody XIX v.). *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta Seriia IX Istoriia* no. 3 (May-June 1974): 58-59. She is quoting a document from the Armenian archives.
[17]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 772, 1848.
[18]RGIA f. 1268, op. 7, d. 411, 1853, l. 1.
[19]RGIA f. 1149, op. 6t-1866, d. 108, l. 5, passim.

was the regional norm—arguing that as newcomers they would need more help to survive.[20] On a number of occasions the Russian dissenters were given land on which to settle that had been taken from local inhabitants. In certain cases, tsarist authorities did not realize that the native peoples had any claims to the land in question because of misunderstandings (and incompetence) in accurately surveying the region. In other instances, they understood quite clearly what they were doing. Even if official policy endorsed the settlement of Russian peasants on land that officials considered unoccupied, there was not always a sufficient amount of such unused land to meet the needs of the settlers.[21] In such cases, native land was confiscated. The indigenous population was moved elsewhere, usually without their consent, and they were given tax benefits as well as direct grants from the treasury's coffers in order to defray the costs of relocating.[22]

For instance, in order to provide what Russian officials believed to be sufficient amounts of land, Dukhobors in Akhaltsikhe uezd were granted land from neighboring Armenian communities. Certain Dukhobor villages received 1,240 desiatinas that were already under use by the village of Khandazhaly. The official order for this land transfer stated that this action was only to be taken if it could be done so without harming or antagonizing the inhabitants of these villages.[23] In a similar case, the Molokans of Elenovka were given 1,300 desiatinas of land from the Armenian villages of Ordakliu, Chercher and Nizhniaia Akhta. Official orders in this regard added that "it

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[20]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23300, 1844, ll. 2-2ob.
[21]Throughout the nineteenth century officials debated furiously exactly how much occupied/unoccupied land there was in Transcaucasia, how to define habitable/inhabitable land, and how much land each type of people needed in order to survive.
[22]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 59 and Gregorian, "Impact of Russia," 183-184.
[23]*AKAK* v. 10, doc. 98, p. 123.

is necessary that these 1,300 desiatinas be added to that side [of the Molokan village] where it would be more convenient for the Molokans to use."[24]

In addition to settling Russians on lands claimed by local inhabitants, the settlement of Russians in permanent villages did much to disrupt long-standing patterns of nomadic migration, especially in eastern Transcaucasia.[25] The settlement of the villages of Topchi and Alty-Agach in the early 1830s provide very clear examples of the conflicts and tensions over land use.[26] In the mid-1830s, Molokan families settled in these villages and "actively set to the construction of dwellings, started vegetable gardens near their homes and sowed fields (some more than 70 desiatinas) with millet (primarily), flax, oats, peas and hemp." Although the land which they had been given was defined as treasury land, local inhabitants previously had used it for farming [*sostoiali na otkupe*] and pasturing their flocks.[27]

Soon after the sectarian-settlers' arrival, nomads from the Shirvan and Kubin regions appeared and settled themselves on or near the lands designated for the Molokans. The former set up camp five to six kilometers [four to five verst] away from the colonists, while the latter as little as eighty-five to one hundred meters [forty to fifty *sazhen*] away. The Kubin nomads not only permitted their herds to graze on the

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[24]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 63.
[25]Russian administrators in the nineteenth century subscribed to a hierarchy of humanity in which settled peoples ranked higher—were more civilized—than nomads. As a general rule, in the demarcation of lands throughout the Empire, officials paid little attention to nomadic needs and hoped to encourage them to adopt a settled lifestyle. For comparison, see Sunderland, "Russians into Iakuts?" esp. 808-811; Daniel Brower, "Kyrgyz Nomads and Russian Pioneers: Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Turkestan Revolt of 1916," *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* 44, no. 1 (1996) 41-53; Virginia Martin, "Barïmta: Nomadic Custom, Imperial Crime," in *Russia's Orient*, eds. Brower and Lazzerini, 249-270; Dov Yaroshevski, "Attitudes towards the Nomads of the Russian Empire under Catherine the Great," in *Literature, Lives, and Legality in Catherine's Russia*, eds. A. G. Cross and G. S. Smith (n.p.: Astra Press, 1994); and Michael Khodarkovsky, *Where Two Worlds Met: The Russian State and the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600-1771* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).
[26]The discussion that follows is drawn from GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 597, 1835-1840.
[27]The matter was further complicated by the fact that the lands in question lay on the boundary between two neighboring administrative districts—Shirvan and Kubin— and that there was a preexisting and long-standing conflict between the nomadic communities from these provinces over rights to the use of this land.

meadows designated for Molokan livestock but also to trample down and devour the crops on lands sown with grain by the new settlers. Seeing the devastation caused by the neighboring nomads, Russian arrivals the following year refused to settle in these villages or prepare for permanent settlement in the area, neither building dwellings nor sowing crops. The sectarians petitioned Chief Administrator Rozen, claiming that they had not received appropriate protection from the local commandant (Orlovskii) and demanded reimbursement for their losses: trampled grain (400 *tagoe*) and hay (500 *stogov* [ricks]).

There was deep disagreement among Russian officials over who to blame for the hostility between the natives and the Alty-Agach and Topchi settlers. Some found fault with the local inhabitants, asserting that throughout the late 1830s, the local nomads had attempted forcibly to drive off the Molokans and prevent them from settling in the region. They continued illegally to permit their flocks to trample and destroy the lands cultivated by the sectarians. In September 1835, an official reported that Kubin nomads built bivouacs near the Molokan settlement and "harmed the Molokans in all possible ways."[28]

In contrast, when Baron Rozen sent one of his administrators (Petrusevich) to resolve the land disputes between the Molokans and nomads, the agent reported that the boundaries of the land designated for the Molokans had not been demarcated sufficiently clearly. As a result, the Molokans, "being too lazy to clear their lands of blackthorns and shrubs," seized possession of other strips of land that were not designated for them.[29] Petrusevich ordered the return to their rightful owners of the parcels of land that the Molokans had seized. At the same time, he compensated the Molokans with an additional allotment of 1,000 desiatinas. However, Petrusevich did not blame the

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[28]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 597, 1835-1840, l. 5.
[29]Ibid., l. 6.

Molokans alone and also placed a large share of the blame for the tensions on the shoulders of the nomads. "Over the course of three years already they [the nomads] provoked a fight over their fields and hayfields, using the latter without permission of the local administration."[30]

As a result of Petrusevich's report, Rozen decided that the only way to prevent further conflict was to establish permanent mediation between the settlers and the nomads. He stationed a Cossack captain in the Molokan villages annually during the time between the sprouting of the grain's shoots until its harvest for the purpose of defending the fields from the nomads' herds. In addition, he made the local Muslim notables fully responsible for any future destruction of the Molokans' crops.[31]

The size of the settlers' land grants figured prominently in the disputes between sectarians and locals. Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks were all incensed that the sectarians received a great deal more land per soul than they did. The sectarians' land allotments could be as high as six times those of the settled local population, although it varied greatly from region to region within Transcaucasia.[32] In the 1880s, investigators from the Transcaucasian Statistical Committee found that the sectarians in Elisavetpol' uezd, Elisavetpol' guberniia were endowed with more land than the surrounding indigenous population—and this despite the fact that the sectarians complained incessantly about insufficient quantities of land to support themselves.[33] At times, local administrators found it necessary to increase settler allotments for economic reasons. For example, in Akhaltsikhe uezd, Dukhobors suffered from a lack of land. Since the Dukhobors were primarily livestock farmers, the authorities decided in 1847

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[30]Ibid., l. 7.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Gregorian, "Impact of Russia," 184 and the articles in *MIEBGKZK* and *RTKE*.
[33]N. A. Abelov, "Ekonomicheskii byt gosudartsvennykh krest'ian Elisavetpol'skogo uezda, Elisavetpol'skoi gubernii," in *MIEBGKZK* , T. VII, (Tiflis: 1887), 14.

that they would require a double portion of land in order to provide sufficient pasturage, and the Dukhobors received sixty desiatinas per family.[34]

Such practices of land redistribution caused hardships for the natives and engendered a sense of maltreatment. It also produced conflicts between locals and Russians concerning land quality, the establishment of land norms, and the distribution of meadows, watering holes and pasture land. Such conflicts, disputations, and complaints continued throughout the nineteenth century. In Erevan guberniia in the 1840s and 1850s, for example, both Russian and Armenian peasants complained vigorously about the illegal use, or even seizure, of land on the part of their neighbors.[35] Russian villagers of Sukhoi-fontan (Erevan guberniia) engaged regularly in "skirmishes" with nomadic Tatars who encroached upon their lands and attempted to drive their livestock through the fields and meadows that the villagers were cultivating. Indeed, when the sectarians from Sukhoi-fontan went to their fields, they did so armed not only with the necessary agricultural tools but also "with guns in their hands," which they used to attack those Tatars who destroyed their crops.[36] Molokans living in Marazy (Shemakha uezd, Baku guberniia) in the late 1860s, found themselves ceaselessly contesting the borders of their land with the nomadic Tatars who lived near the village.[37]

Furthermore, there were frequent conflicts between the Dukhobors of Goreloe and Spasskoe (Akhalkalaki uezd, Tiflis guberniia) and their Armenian neighbors over access to state lands. In 1864, Dukhobors from these villages used force to expel shepherds from the nearby Armenian village of Satkha who were pasturing their flocks

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[34]*AKAK* v. 10, doc. 98, p. 123.
[35]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 63.
[36]S. Kolosov, "Russkie Sektanty v Erivanskoi Gubernii," *Pamiatnaia Knizhka Erivanskoi gubernii na 1902 g.* (Erevan: Tip. Gubernskago Pravleniia, 1902), otd. IV, 151.
[37]K. Gorskii, "Marazinskaia sel'skaia shkola," *Kavkaz* no. 130 (1871): 2.

on meadow land belonging to the treasury. Soon thereafter, the Armenians reasserted their rights to use these state lands and drove out the Dukhobors and their herds.[38]

Similar conflicts between nomadic Tatars and settled Russians continued throughout the century. The Dukhobor village of Rodionovka (Akhalkalaki uezd, Tiflis guberniia) suffered frequently, since its pasture lands abutted those of neighboring Tatars. The Dukhobors found their crops constantly damaged and their herds chased away to make room for Tatar livestock to graze on Dukhobor lands. Armed Muslims attacked Dukhobors who attempted to cultivate the sectarians' allotted land. In 1884, the villagers petitioned the authorities requesting that people of some other nationality and religion who were more "conscientious" than the Muslims be settled next to them in order to end the ceaseless struggle for use and control of these lands.[39]

The reconstruction of land arrangements to make space for the colonists also produced an unrelenting flood of petitions and complaints to the administration. The grievances of local inhabitants centered around the larger land holdings of the Russian sectarians. There were numerous petitions from Armenians living in Akhalkalaki uezd, Tiflis guberniia demanding that their land allotments be increased to the same size as those of the neighboring Dukhobors.[40] In a similar vein, Armenians from the village of Makravank (Novobaiazet uezd, Erevan guberniia), complained to the administration in 1866 about a shortage of land. They insisted that "the Molokan village Konstantinovka has so much land that they are not in a position to sow it all, and as a result they farm out their land [*otdavat' na otkup*] to us for prices that are very profitable for them."[41] Other petitions decried redistricting of land that reduced native access to land. In 1866,

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[38]S. A. Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia i khoziaistvenno-kul'turnye kontakty kavkazskikh dukhobortsev s mestnym naseleniem," in *Dukhobortsy and Molokane v Zakavkaz'e*, eds. V. I. Kozlov and A. P. Pavlenko (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1992), 55.
[39]Ibid., 48.
[40]Ibid., 47.
[41]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 64.

the inhabitants of the village of Nizhniaia Akhta petitioned the Viceroy of the Caucasus requesting the return of the land that had been taken from them:

> By the will of the administration, Molokans settled and established themselves at a point near the postal station Nizhniaia Akhta. As a result of their settlement, our agricultural land, which is fertile and close to the village, was cut off and given to them. We were left only with land that is rocky and far away in the Akhmagan mountains.[42]

Simultaneously, in their petitions, Russian peasants frequently approached state officials in Erevan with complaints that the lands of their communes were being seized illegally by neighboring Armenian villages.[43]

Conflicts between Russian settlers and Transcaucasians did not revolve solely around access to land and land usage. They are also touched on other economic questions. In one instance, when Transcaucasians heard of state plans to apply a reduced tax rate to the Molokans, they quickly petitioned the authorities demanding similar treatment.[44]

Russian Settlers and Local Elites

The social status of the locals involved greatly altered the interactions over land between Russian settlers and indigenous Transcaucasians. The settlement of sectarians on property belonging to local landowning elites—especially Georgians but also Muslims—produced interrelations distinct from Russian relocation on or near land used by Transcaucasian peasants and nomads. The practice of settling sectarians on estate lands contradicted tsarist laws. Russian dissenters who relocated to Transcaucasia,

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[42]Ibid., 63.
[43]Ibid.
[44]GARF f. 102, 5 d-vo, op. 1901, d. 509, l. 51ob. On Russians receiving lighter tax burdens, see also Gregorian, "Impact of Russia," 184.

whatever their original social designation in the interior provinces, were juridically considered state peasants after their arrival on the frontier. Tsarist regulations required state peasants to live on state land and to pay taxes solely to the treasury. Nonetheless, beginning in 1841, tsarist officials in Transcaucasia permitted some settlement of Russian sectarians on land belonging to local notables on an *ad hoc* basis. The settlers were granted uncultivated land in order not to aggravate the condition of neighboring Georgian or Azerbaijani serfs and bonded peasants. However, it was not until 1858 that St. Petersburg agreed to a general policy of such settlement and, in the interim, many requests by Transcaucasian officials for such settlement were turned down.[45]

Settling sectarians on notables' land did not mean "enserfment" in a strict sense of the word, but the landowners gained many of the benefits of more serfs. The dissenters retained their official status as state peasants and entered into "mutual" contracts with the landowners that defined the rights and responsibilities of each side. The Viceroy, Prince A. I. Bariatinskii, writing to the Caucasus Committee in 1857 endorsed a region-wide policy of settlement on private lands as mutually profitable for both settlers and owner. He claimed that "in the future, this example can act as a good influence for the spread of mutual agreements and transactions between peasants and landowners, both in this region and in the internal guberniias," thereby holding up the case of Russian settlers and Transcaucasian nobles as a model for the rest of the empire.[46]

The practice of settling sectarians on the lands of Transcaucasian notables had its origins in four factors. First, sectarians found themselves living on private land because of changing tsarist policy towards local elites. Land belonging to Muslim notables in

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[45]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858. On requests that were turned down, see *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 95, 1845, p. 118.
[46]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, l. 4ob.

eastern Transcaucasia was confiscated in 1841 as part of a state-sponsored "russification" effort to weaken the elites and provide state-owned land for the Russian colonists to live on. In 1842, tsarist policy shifted away from this practice and the property was returned to the original owners, leaving recently-settled Russians inhabiting private land. Such was the case with the lands of Begliar-bek Begliarov.[47] In 1841, Molokan settlers founded the village of Borisy (Shusha uezd, Shemakha guberniia) on his former lands that the state had confiscated. The following year, the property, with the Molokans on it, was returned to his possession.[48]

Second, sectarians found themselves on the property of indigenous landowners as a result of the inability of tsarist administrators properly to demarcate land boundaries in Transcaucasia. Dissenters settled on land that tsarist officials had initially labeled state-owned, but which later came under dispute by local landowners. For example, Molokans settled in 1843 in Aleksandropol' uezd in the Armenian oblast' on land that administrators demarcated as treasury property. However, the Orbeliani family soon challenged the state for ownership of the land, and in 1853 after a protracted court battle they regained possession.[49]

Third, and most importantly, tsarist officials settled the incoming sectarians on the properties of the local elites in an effort to provide adequate land to support all the dissenters they wanted to relocate to Transcaucasia. This was part of the tsarist policy of strengthening their control by increasing the number of ethnic Russians in the region. However, they faced a dearth of available state property to achieve this end, especially

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[47]He is also named Karabakh-bek Begliarov in some documents.
[48]RGIA f. 1268, op. 15, d. 86, 1870, l. 1. For a discussion of the shifts of tsarist policy towards local elites more broadly, see Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, 12-13 and L. H. Rhinelander, "Russia's Imperial Policy: The Administration of the Caucasus in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 17 (1975): 218-35. The Skoptsy settled in the village of Staraia-Talysha experienced a similar fate to the Molokans of Borisy when the land they were on was returned to Talysh-bek Begliarov. *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 293, p. 287.
[49]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, ll. 9-9ob.

because they were reluctant to antagonize the indigenous inhabitants in the process. Without sufficient treasury land to increase the number of Russians while not taking land from the locals, tsarist officials (and especially Viceroys Prince M. S. Vorontsov and Bariatinskii) turned to the "unused" land of notables as an alternative.[50]

Finally, Russian colonists settled on private land because the local notables desired it. Georgian nobles such as Princes Chavchavadze and Dadiani approached the regional administration with proposals to settle sectarians on their lands.[51] They recognized the profits and benefits that could be derived from placing Russian peasants on their property, such as bringing areas under cultivation that had formerly been unused, and increasing the rents they received.

The specific advantages sought by the landowners varied widely in terms of money, kind, and service. For instance, Begliar-bek Begliarov demanded two silver rubles, two *chetverts*[52] of wheat and half of barley from each household annually in return for land and free access to wood for construction. In contrast, Talysh-bek Begliarov, insisted on ten percent of their total harvests (in addition to the prevailing local amount for a given year), as well as two work days annually per settler at the landowners discretion.[53] Similarly, the Georgian Prince Dadiani of Mingreliia preferred a combination of service and rent in kind: one laborer from each family was to work for the Prince for one day each week, and twenty percent of all their produce was to be paid to him.[54]

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[50] *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 42, 1850, pp. 46-47; *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 95, 1845, p. 118; *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 97, 1845, pp. 119-123; and *SPChR* (1860), pp. 417-430.
[51] RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23297, 1844-45; RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 866, 1845-46; *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 95, 1845, p. 118; and *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 97, 1845, pp. 119-123.
[52] One chetvert is a dry measure equal to 2.099 hectoliters.
[53] *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 293, p. 287.
[54] *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 97, 1845, p. 120.

Individual members of the Georgian Orbeliani[55] family in Erevan and Tiflis guberniias drew up quite different forms of contracts. Most of the Orbeliani entered into written contracts lasting anywhere from ten to thirty years. They included mutual rights and responsibilities and specific cash payments. However, the sectarians living on the land of Princess Maria Orbeliani and Princes Ivan and Makarii Orbeliani were governed only by a verbal agreements. In the case of Ivan and Makarii, the settlers found that the landowners' exactions arbitrarily changed from year to year. The sectarians on Orbeliani land in Erevan guberniia received thirty desiatinas of arable land, pasture land, access to wood, and permission to build mills, gardens, and other economic structures. In return they were required to pay rent in cash (*obrok*) of between seven and ten rubles per family. At the end of the contract's thirty years, the landowners reserved the right to set new conditions. In contrast, in Tiflis guberniia, each prince entered into a different form of contract. Initially the Dukhobors living on Orbeliani in Borchalo uezd were required to pay one chetvert for each desiatina that they had under cultivation. After a few years, and the exodus of some of their number, the terms changed to payment in cash. Settlers on the land of staff-captain Prince Ivan Orbeliani paid an annual rent of 330 rubles (equivalent to 23 rubles 57 kopecks per family). Nearby on the land of Princess Maria Orbeliani, they paid 1 silver ruble per family annually.[56] In all the cases the right to move away from the landowners land was either denied completely or seriously restricted.

Whatever the specific terms of the contracts binding sectarians and Transcaucasian landowners, the local elites strove to obtain all the economic benefits of a serf economy without assuming any responsibilities. Since the settlers were state peasants, Georgian and Muslim nobles required state agents from the Ministry of State

[55]Most state sources use the russified version of the family's name, Orbelianov.
[56]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, ll. 9-15ob.

Properties to act as middlemen for them. For instance, the Orbeliani in Erevan guberniia would only agree to sign a contract if the rent money was first collected by a local representative from the Ministry of State Properties, then deposited in the local uezd treasury, and finally transferred to an Orbeliani agent. The Orbeliani family further required that "in enforcing the collection of these moneys, and in all other situations, the Princes Orbeliani should have no direct relations with the peasants."[57] Similarly, when Begliar-bek Begliarov revised the terms of his contract with the Molokans on his land, he demanded that the money be paid to him via the treasury, not by the Molokans directly as had originally been the case.[58] Moreover, Prince Dadiani requested that any misdeeds and legal problems involving settlers on his Mingrelian lands were to be handled solely by government officials.[59]

If the landowners generally embraced the opportunity to have Russian settlers work their lands, the sectarians themselves were almost universally dissatisfied by the arrangement. Their discontent arose from socio-economic exploitation—the "burdensome" nature of the contracts—and was devoid of any ethnic aspects.[60] Molokans in the villages of Novo-Saratovka and Vorontsovka (Aleksandropol' uezd, Tiflis guberniia) who had been settled on lands belonging to the Orbeliani family, "feared enslavement from the Orbelianis and began to look for a new place to live that would be on state-owned land" in the late 1840s and early 1850s.[61] Many Molokans from Vorontsovka did leave during these years for Elisavetpol' uezd. Those who stayed behind remained dissatisfied with their economic situation. As their contract with the Orbelianis was coming to an end in the late 1860s, they repeatedly voiced their

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[57]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, l. 11.
[58]RGIA f. 1268, op. 15, d. 86, 1870, l. 1ob.
[59]*AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 97, 1845, p. 120.
[60]*AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 293, p. 287.
[61]I. E. Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka i Novo-Ivanovka Elisavetpol'skago uezda," *IKOIRGO* 19 (1907-1908) (Tiflis, 1909), otd. 1, 226.

unhappiness with the relationship to tsarist authorities. The Molokans found the payment of *obrok* rent to be economically disadvantageous, and were particularly frustrated by the economic "insecurity of their property situation" that resulted from "dependence" on a landowner who held the power to change the terms of their rental agreement.[62] Even a group of Dukhobors who had asked specifically to be settled on the lands of the Orbeliani family in Borchalo uchastok, Tiflis guberniia, soon changed their minds. The conditions that the Molochna Dukhobors found in *Mokrye gory* when they arrived in Transcaucasia (1841-1845) were so adverse that they requested relocation to the Orbeliani property.[63] However, they were dissatisfied with the situation there too and were reluctant to build homes or begin farming. They demanded to be moved again, this time to treasury land and within a few years they relocated to Elisavetpol' uezd.[64]

The contracts that Transcaucasian landowners and the sectarians entered into governing land usage and remuneration belie any simple categorization of the power relationships between colonizer and colonized in Transcaucasia. In this instance, socio-economic power structures overshadowed the ethnic hierarchies of colonial power systems, to the detriment of the Russian peasant colonists. At the same time, the settlement of colonists on landlord land presents two aspects of Russian imperialist policy at loggerheads. On one hand, Russian policy in Transcaucasia from 1842 onward involved an effort to enlist the support of local elites in Russia's empire-building project both by granting them privileges and ceasing to antagonize them. As

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[62]They threatened the administration that they would relocate to the North Caucasus at the end of the contract where they believed that they could acquire private land. As discussed in chapter 3, state authorities intervened in this case in order to keep the sectarians in the village. The treasury granted the Molokans credit of 32,000 rubles to use to buy land from the Orbeliani, which they paid back over fifteen years. See RGIA f, 1268, op. 14, d. 77, 1869-1870, l. 1ob, passim and I. Ia. Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni zakavkazskikh sektatorov," *Kavkaz* no. 136 (1878): 1.

[63]See the discussion in chapter two about their initial difficulties.

[64]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, ll. 13ob-14; *AKAK* vol. 10, doc. 98, 1847, p. 123; and Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 45.

Ronald Suny has noted: "The aim and result of Vorontsov's policies was to reduce the opposition to Russian rule in the Caucasus and to forge an alliance between the Russian state and Georgian nobility...."[65] On the other hand, tsarist authorities wanted to increase the presence of ethnic Russians in the region. They did so because they considered Russians, by virtue of their ethnicity, to be the most loyal subjects and wanted to reduce the need to rely on non-Russians in the future . When the drive to increase the number of Russians in the region required the state to settle Russian colonists on private land, one aspect of the Russian imperialist agenda overshadowed another. Since Tsarist authorities considered the native elites to be of higher social standing than the Russian colonists—and therefore the recipients of certain prerogatives—the settlers entered into uneven relationships with indigenous notables. By settling the sectarians on landowner property under such contracts, tsarist officials placed the very Russian colonists considered the advance guard of "russification" in the region in a economically subordinate position to Georgian and Muslim notables.

Pacifists into Pacifiers: Violence and Colonial Contact

The memoirs and narratives of sectarian-settlers, as well as official documents and the writings of contemporary ethnographers and journalists, are filled with complaints about robbery, banditry, attacks, murder, kidnapping, rape, and other forms of violent and exploitative treatment perpetrated by indigenous Transcaucasians on the Russian colonists. Sectarians, like Russian officials, perceived clear distinctions regarding the characteristics of the different indigenous peoples with whom they came

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[65]Ronald Grigor Suny, "Russian Rule and Caucasian Society in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: The Georgian Nobility and the Armenian Bourgeoisie, 1801-1856," *Nationalities Papers* VII, no. 1 (spring 1979), 60.

into contact. There is not a single mention in the sources of Georgians mistreating colonists despite the fact that the Russian settlers interacted with them regularly. In contrast, Russians depicted Armenians as shifty double-dealers. For example, the Dukhobors of Slavianka (Elisavetpol' guberniia) claimed that Armenians "never missed the opportunity to short-change and swindle" them.[66] A police report from 1883 echoed this opinion, highlighting that the "Armenian traders and settlers [in Kars oblast'] are deft fleecers and exploiters of the simple Russian population, and in particular of the Dukhobors."[67] However, it was the "Tatars"[68] (and other Muslim peoples from Persia and the Ottoman Empire) who aroused the greatest fear and distrust among the Russian colonists.

Attempts to unearth the causes of what Russians perceived as Tatar violence have elicited a variety of responses. Russian officials and other contemporary commentators attributed the acts of theft and violence to the Tatar mountain culture—to their "wild," "Asian" and "uncivilized" ways.[69] As one administrator expressed the prevailing interpretation, in Transcaucasia "the murder of humans has been carried out on the road of life since the dawn of time, and the land is soaked to the depths with human blood from many wars."[70] In his report on the conditions of the sectarians of October 1844, a Tsarist official, Gageimeister, noted that "the theft of livestock is a common affair among the Tatars, but their stealing from each other comprises a system

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[66]V. V. Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane v Zakavkaz'e, Shiity v Karabakhe, Batchi i Oshumoedy v Srednei Azii, i Ober-Amergau v Gorakh Bavarii* (Moscow: Tipo-litografiia Tovarishestva I. N. Kushnerev, 1900), 21.
[67]GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1884, d. 88, ch. 2, ll. 9-9ob.
[68]Tsarist officials used the word "Tatar" as a residual category and catch-all designation for Muslims in Transcaucasia from a large variety of ethnic backgrounds: especially Turks, Persians, Kurds and Lezgins. I will use the term "Tatar" during this study in part because of its historical usage, and in part because tsarist census records make difficult any efforts to see what ethnic groups were being referred to by "Tatar" at any given moment. Whenever possible I will use the more specific name for each ethnicity included under this umbrella term.
[69]See Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 135: 2; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 489, 1928, l. 1; and GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 352, 1935, l. 12.
[70]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 489, 1928, l. 1.

of collective responsibility [*krugovaia poruka*]. Russians are not accustomed to such a form of self-regulation and the state hardly wishes them to become used to such a manner of settling affairs."[71] The central archives are filled with thousands of nineteenth-century police reports detailing acts of robbery and violence on the part of Tatars. These sources indicate that the dissenters were by no means the sole targets of such crimes, and also reinforce the perspective of Tatars as especially violent and disposed to theft.[72]

Thus, Russians generally understood the antagonistic reception of sectarian-settlers to be the result of a primordial violence on the part of Muslim mountaineers that would have existed with or without the sectarians' presence. Yet, as discussed above, the sectarians' appearance in Transcaucasia altered the form and intensity of the antagonism by threatening the economic existence of both settled farmers and, especially, nomads. In the origins of the violence, the changes wrought by the Russian colonists' arrival played a seminal role.

Moreover, in categorizing the Transcaucasian peoples in this manner, Russian sectarians and other commentators were mirroring with remarkable clarity a discourse widespread in Russia about the Transcaucasian peoples. Understandings of Georgians in weak, feminized terms as lazy, incompetent and hence non-threatening; of Armenians as wily, commercial types and rootless traders (as Caucasian "Jews" as some Russians

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[71]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23300, 1844, l. 2ob. This report can also be found in *AKAK* v. 9, ch. 2, doc. 532, pp. 629-630.

[72]See the annual reports on criminal actions for 1856-1857 in RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 100, 1857-58. There are equivalent versions for other years. See, for instance: RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 74, 1858; RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 46, 1859; RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 62, 1860-61; RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 44, 1861; RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 46, 1862; RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 32, 1863; and RGIA f. 1268, op. 11, d. 28, 1866. For comparison, Moshe Gammer describes the martial qualities of the "mountaineers" in neighboring Chechniia and Dagestan, and highlights that "robbery" played an important cultural role in the negotiation of power and economic benefits, and that violence and feuds played an important role in notions and practices of justice. Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London: Frank Cass & co., 1994), 18-21. On differing definitions and cultural meanings of "theft", see also Martin, "Barïmta."

called them); and of Muslims as uncivilized, naturally martial people, were pervasive tropes in Russian cultural representations of their southern neighbors.[73] The vocabulary that sectarians used to describe natives reflects a certain appropriation of this dominant discourse.[74] In this context, there is some reason to doubt whether Tatars were the sole source of violent attack. It is possible that colonists would describe their assailants as "Tatar" following an attack simply because they expected violence to come only from those people.

Whatever the origins of the violence and whoever the perpetrators, both the sectarians and Russian officials believed that the violence originated from the Tatars alone, and that such people were inherently predisposed to armed robbery and martial activities. Colonists and administrators took action within the parameters of such assumptions and beliefs. Despite religious prohibitions, members of the sectarian communities embraced violent tactics, meeting hostility with even greater hostility as a deterrent. In so doing, they accommodated themselves to what they perceived as the prevailing form of inter-personal and inter-group relations.

The sectarians were no strangers to violence. As discussed in chapter two, the non-conformists regularly suffered the verbal and physical assaults of local officials, landlords, priest and neighboring Orthodox villagers in the central provinces. Some non-conformists had been forced to serve in the military before resettlement. Moreover,

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[73]Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 175-212; Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 31-51; Seymour Becker, "The Muslim East in Nineteenth-Century Russian Popular Historiography," *Central Asian Survey* 5, no. 3/4 (1986): esp. 32-33; Austin Lee Jersild, "From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire," in *Russia's Orient*, eds. Brower and Lazzerini, 101-114; Gammer, *Muslim Resistance*, 25-26; and Abby M. Schrader, "The Languages of the Lash: The Russian Autocracy and the Reform of Corporal Punishment, 1817-1893" (Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 164-165. However, as Susan Layton has pointed out, the meanings attributed by different Russians to the images of these peoples were not always uniform. See her "Nineteenth-Century Russian Mythologies of Caucasian Savagery," in *Russia's Orient*, eds. Brower and Lazzerini, 80-100.

[74]On the sectarians' language, see the discussion at the beginning of this section and in chapter three.

if the official reports about the Dukhobors in New Russia are true, they also used violent means to regulate the internal functioning of their communities.[75] However, the use of force they described in contacts with Tatars—bands on horseback attacking villages and taking hostages, highway brigandage, murder, different weapons—represented something new and unfamiliar. The settlers attached different meanings to the violence in Transcaucasia, feeling initially overwhelmed and easily victimized by what they saw as an unfathomable culture of criminality.

Extant sources yield a multitude of examples of Tatar violence towards sectarian-settlers. The painter V. V. Vereshchagin visited Dukhobor and Molokan villages in the 1860s. He quotes a Dukhobor from the community of Slavianka, Elisavetpol' guberniia, saying that Tatars "robbed you in broad daylight, seized you, tied your hands behind your back and held a knife to your throat, all the while others carried off your horses."[76] Often they killed Dukhobors in the process. A contemporary journalist, I. Ia. Orekhov described how the Molokans in Baku guberniia had been settled "between half-wild indigenous people who are hostile and envious," gangs of whom "would conduct open attacks on their settlements" and carry off young girls and boys from among the sectarians' communities as hostage-prisoners.[77] A Dukhobor in Elisavetpol' guberniia lamented the frequency with which Tatars would confront Russians on the road, demanding that they give up their goods or else have their horses slaughtered.[78]

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[75]Discussed at length in chapter two. This violence was a primary cause for the decision to exile the Dukhobors from New Russia to Transcaucasia in the 1840s.
[76]Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane*, 21 and also 4.
[77]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 135: 2. See also *Spirit and Life—Book of the Sun. Divine Discourses of the Preceptors and the Martyrs of the Word of God, the Faith of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, of the Religion of the Spiritual Christian Molokan-Jumpers*, ed. Daniel H. Shubin, trans. John Volkov (n.p.: n.p., 1983), 20.
[78]I. E. Petrov, "Dukhobory Elisavetpol'skago uezda," *IKOIRGO*. XVIII, no. 3 (1905-06): 176.

The attacks and robberies depicted in the sources threatened everything from life and limb to material well-being to psychological state. Many sectarians died or suffered physically from the attacks of the local population. A Dukhobor story tells of the particularly gruesome demise of one of their brethren, a certain Vereshchagin.[79] He had completed his military service and had seen action at Sevastopol' in the Crimean War, where he received medals for his bravery. Upon his release he moved to the village of Troitskoe (Akhalkalaki uezd, Tiflis guberniia). For his service, Vereshchagin received a pension and he regularly walked on foot to Tiflis to obtain it. On his way home one day after receiving the money, a band of Tatars—who had seen him in town and realized what he was carrying—set upon him on the road. They hacked him with an ax, stole his money and left him in pieces by the roadside.[80]

Police reports indicate that other incidents of robbery were equally violent, and had equally tragic results. One November night in 1856, two Molokans, Evstrat and Ivan Sherbakov, from Shemakha [later Baku] guberniia were on their way home from Tiflis in their wagons when they were met on the road by five armed Tatars intent on robbery. Noting the bandits' designs, the Molokans drove their horses forward at full speed. The Tatars made chase, firing their rifles and brandishing their sabers. In the melee, one Molokan horse was badly injured by the slash of a Tatar sword, and the other horse was hit by a bullet in the side. The injured horse pulled up and the Molokans succumbed to the robbers.[81] In a further incident in Shushin uezd in late March 1857, two Russian brothers from the village of Borisy were returning home from the river Kura where they had gone to buy fish. They were met on the road by four

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[79]He is unrelated to the painter V. V. Vereshchagin mentioned above. The sources give no initials for him.

[80]OR RGB f. 369, K. 42, d. 2, 1950, l. 398. Despite winning medals, Vereshchagin's biographer asserts that, for religious reasons, he did not actively take up arms during the war.

[81]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 100, 1857-58, l. 18.

armed "Muslims" on horseback. The attackers shot one brother dead and stole property from them worth 152 silver rubles.[82]

Theft and banditry caused the sectarians substantial material losses. In 1847-1848 alone, the Armashen commune reportedly suffered losses from robbery of up to 1,767 rubles.[83] Moreover, 58 horses and cattle, as well as property with a total value of 1,573 rubles, was stolen from the villagers of Vorontsovka and Saratovka (respectively, Borchalo uezd, Tiflis guberniia and Elisavetpol' uezd and guberniia) in 1848.[84]

The attacks also took a psychological toll on the Russian settlers. V. V. Vereshchagin recorded the Dukhobors describing the terror in which they lived.

> You head off somewhere and don't know whether they [Tatars] are waiting for you in back. And you arrive home, and not even necessarily from a long trip, and you say to yourself: Thank you God! Night is approaching quietly and there was no theft in the village. Everyone thanks God, and maybe tomorrow, somehow we will survive.[85]

The initial response of the sectarian-settlers was to turn to the state for protection. On many occasions they petitioned the local and regional authorities with complaints of mistreatment on the part of their new neighbors, demanding immediate action for their defense. However, the sectarians found the response of state officials to be ineffectual at best and their stories relate their frustration with the local authorities. After attacks or robberies, Molokan villagers from Alty-Agach frequently captured the thieves and presented them, along with an official complaint, to the police to be punished. Despite their initiative, the Molokans consistently found that the police would

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[82]Ibid., l. 86.
[83]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 46.
[84]I. V. Dolzhenko, "Istoriia pereseleniia i osnovaniia russkikh selenii v Zakavkaz'e," in *Russkie starozhily Zakavkaz'ia: Molokane i Dukhobortsy* , ed. V. I. Kozlov (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1995), 33.
[85]Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane*, 21.

set these "Tatar-thieves" free almost immediately and all of the Molokan efforts in rounding up their persecutors were immediately undone.[86]

V. V. Vereshchagin heard similar grievances from the Dukhobors about the ineffectuality of state actions. The Dukhobors complained to him that in the face of Tatar attacks there was nowhere to turn for justice, especially in the court system. As one Dukhobor related to Vereshchagin: "They pull you into court in the very middle of the work day. They summon you, and in the town they say to you that the thieves involved in your case have not been found—and you sign, brother, on this piece of paper to say that you are content—and there the affair comes to an end."[87]

There were three reasons for the failure to prosecute. First, representatives from various indigenous groups maintained a strong presence among Tsarist officialdom in Transcaucasia, both at the regional level (in Tiflis), and especially as local administrators, police and lower-level bureaucrats. They tended rarely to have much sympathy for the sectarian interlopers.[88] In an annual police report for Kars oblast' for 1883, the author vented his frustration about the selection of Armenian administrators in the region. He found them to be untrustworthy, given to nepotism and favoritism, and adherents to "that cult [*kul't*], which deliberately, consistently and finely develops an ill will, ... one can even say hatred, towards all those who carry a Russian name and to Russian people in general."[89] Second, as we have seen in chapter three, even many

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[86]GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902, l. 14.
[87]Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane*, 21.
[88]On the issue of Armenians and Tatars taking up positions in the local administration see N. D. [Nikolai Dingel'shtedt], "Pryguny (Materialy k istoriia obruseniia Zakavkazskago kraia)" *Otechestvennyia zapiski* no. 10 (1878): 381-383. On the general policy of stocking the Caucasian civil service with native elites, see Anthony L. H. Rhinelander, *Prince Michael Vorontsov: Viceroy to the Tsar*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 169-184. On the ebb and flow of native officials in the administration of eastern Transcaucasia, see Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, 10-17. For comparison, note the similarities found in the administration of the western borderlands in Stephen Velychenko, "Identities, Loyalties and Service in Imperial Russia: Who Administered the Borderlands?" *Russian Review* 54, no. 2 (April 1995): 188-208.
[89]GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1884, d. 88, ch. 2, ll. 8ob-9ob.

Russian authorities in Transcaucasia initially did not want the sectarians settling in Transcaucasia, and often ordered local officials to do what they could to eliminate the non-conformists.[90] Finally, and most importantly, the failure of state officials to secure the existence of Russian settlers in the region derived from their powerlessness to do so. Transcaucasia had only recently been joined to the Russian empire. Not only had there not been time to build Russian administrative structures in Transcaucasia, but the Russian empire was still many years from fully controlling the region even militarily, due both to internal opposition and the attacks of external forces from Turkey and Persia.[91]

The authorities' response to Dukhobor complaints of Tatar attack in 1847 reveals the problems facing tsarist officials in their efforts to control the region. In order to put an end to the banditry of both "neighboring and foreign" Tatars, from which the Dukhobors suffered "incessantly," Viceroy Vorontsov sent orders to establish a line of "permanent residential pickets" [*obyvatel'skie pikety*] that would run from the town of Akhalkalaki to the Armenian village of Shestony. They were to be composed of inhabitants from local Tatar villages, since there were no other people available to perform the policing tasks. While ordered to secure the passage from Akhalkalaki to Aleksandropol', they were also entrusted with guaranteeing the safety of the Dukhobors from robbers and were required to take responsibility in case of attacks from Tatar co-villagers. Thus, state policy placed representatives of the very people who the Dukhobors considered to be their attackers in positions responsible for their defense.

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[90]In this regard, see chapter three as well as GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 597, 1835-1840, passim and N. D., "Pryguny," no. 10, 382.

[91]On opposition from within the newly incorporated territories, see Stephen F. Jones, "Russian Imperial Administration and the Georgian Nobility: The Georgian Conspiracy of 1832," *Slavonic and East European Review* 65, no. 1 (1987): 53-76; Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, 9; Firouzeh Mostashari, "Tsarist Colonial Policy, Economic Change, and the Making of the Azerbaijani Nation: 1828-1905 (Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995); Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*; and Gammer, *Muslim Resistance*.

However, the affair took an unexpected turn when, despite these direct orders, the local official from Akhalkalaki uchastok recruited members of the Dukhobor community instead of Tatars in these crime-control efforts. The Dukhobors complained bitterly that they were being ordered to take up policing activities, since it contradicted their religious teachings and took them away from valuable economic activities.[92]

In the face of constant attack and an alternately unresponsive and impotent state, at least some Molokans and Dukhobors across Transcaucasia could see no other solution but to take matters into their own hands, or perish. Despite the tenets of their faiths, which forbade violence and killing, the sectarian-settlers started to meet their attackers on the latter's own, violent terms. In so doing, they accommodated to what they understood as the prevailing practices of the region underwent a profound change in religiosity as a consequence of their relocation to the Transcaucasian frontier. However, this transformation was not a cultural appropriation of native forms, but rather a shift within their own cultural framework from non-violence to violence. Instead of borrowing Azerbaijani models of violence, they reacted with structures of aggression more typical of Russian culture. Moreover, in making this change, the sectarians realized General A. P. Ermolov's prediction that once in the Caucasus they would be forced to take up arms and defend themselves, their property and their families.[93] They also won a large degree of respect for so acting and succeeded in reducing—although never eliminating—attacks on the part of Transcaucasians on their communities.

Discussing the need to compromise their ethical stance, the Dukhobor Petr Malov relates how:

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[92]*AKAK* v. 10, doc. 98, p. 123 and *AKAK* v. 10, doc. 100, p. 124.
[93]See Chapter one.

> [the Dukhobors'] immense farms and large quality of livestock represented a constant temptation for the bellicose native population, and raids and robberies did not diminish but became more frequent. They found it necessary to protect their property and thus, little by little, the Dukhobors began to acquire their own weapons. On that soil, bloody dramas were performed and even murders occurred on both sides.[94]

Other sources relate how the Dukhobors "ceased to forgive the Tatars for their insults" and began to fight back.[95] Dukhobor communities formed detachments of armed and uniformed "Cossacks" who defended their co-religionists and provided permanent bodyguards to Dukhobor leaders. Tsarist officials later complained that the Dukhobors' military regalia made them look too much like regular Cossacks, to the detriment of Tsarist authority in the region.[96] Soviet historian A. I. Klibanov describes the Dukhobors' militarization in the following terms: "mounted Cossacks, armed with sabers, daggers and revolvers, under the command of local chiefs, existed in a number of Dukhobor villages, carried out military training and were subordinate to the overall command of 'the sergeant-major.'"[97] Moreover, Dukhobors began to try native Transcaucasians in their own courts rather than taking those they considered culprits to the nearby courts in town. In doing so, they ensured that the reprisals meted out to their persecutors would be as stern as their collective conscience would allow.[98]

In addition to embracing violence and arming themselves, the Dukhobors also began to fortify their farms in order to provide protection for their communities. Svetlana Inikova, an ethnographer and Dukhobor expert, argues that the construction of barns and sheds changed as a result of the violence that the Dukhobors met in Transcaucasia. On a visit to the Dukhobor communities in the 1980s, she noted that

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[94]Petr Malov, *Dukhobortsy, ikh istoriia, zhizn' i bor'ba*, kn. 1 (Thrums, B. C.: 1948): 25-26.
[95]Petrov, "Dukhobory," 176.
[96]B. N. Terletskii, "Sekta Dukhoborov," in *Russkie sektanty, ikh uchenie, kult, i sposoby propagandy*, ed. M. A. Kal'nev (Odessa: 1911), 10-11.
[97]Klibanov, *History of Religious Sectarianism*, 122-123.
[98]Terletskii, "Sekta Dukhoborov," 10-11.

barns from the mid-nineteenth century were built with metal grates as a way to turn them into defensible fortresses. Similarly, sheds had windowless walls, and the only windows were on the roof—a design that was typical of Tatar dwellings of the time.[99]

Other sectarians told similar stories. When Molokans from Alty-Agach complained to the Viceroy Vorontsov about the violence of the Tatars, he replied: "Is it really possible that you cannot cope with the Tatars yourselves?" In the wake of this rebuke, the Molokans began to take matters in their own hands and mete out their own justice. In their memoirs, Molokans describe hunting down and castrating Tatars who they felt were guilty of "dishonoring" their women. They also relate how they would "shoot Tatars like hares" in cases of vandalism or when a Russian had been injured or murdered.[100]

The journalist Orekhov reported in the 1870s that "the most somber [*mrachnyi*] rumors about the settler-Molokans reign in the midst of the surrounding indigenous people. The Molokans, the natives say, burn thieves—their enemies—should they happen to fall into the Molokans' hands. One hears such a variety of stories with the most unbelievable contents." The indigenous population asserted that the Molokans subscribed to the frequent use of "the law of lynching," blood reprisals and savage punishment.[101] Another Russian journalist commenting on sectarian-Tatar relations asserted in 1871 that the sectarian-settlers had very little compassion for those who were not their co-religionists. "Their toughness stands in sharp relief in the struggle for life and death with the neighboring Tatars. They do not even consider the latter to be people and they strive to exploit them in all possible ways."[102]

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[99]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 46.
[100]GMIR f. 14, op. 3, 1962, 1902, l. 13-14. Vorontsov's quote is as relayed by a Molokan writer.
[101]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 135: 2.
[102]K. G., "Obshchii vzgliad na vnutrenniuiu zhizn' russkikh sektantov v zakavkazskom krae," *Kavkaz* no. 141 (1871): 2.

While traveling across Transcaucasia on missionary work, one of the first Russian Baptists, V. V. Ivanov, witnessed an altercation between Molokan wagon drivers and a young Tatar who attempted to steal from them.[103] At one stop along the road, a Tatar man stole the horse cloth off of one of the Molokans' horses. The wagon drivers caught the Tatar and began to beat him savagely while swearing at him "with the most obscene words" in Azerbaijani Turkish. Following the beating, the Molokans demanded a ruble from the Tatar to reimburse them. The thief gave them all the money that he had in his pockets, but was short fifteen kopecks from the ruble demanded. The drivers started to beat and torture the man anew, refusing to stop until he paid them what they wanted. Ivanov intervened on behalf of the Tatar, asking the Molokan wagon drivers to leave him alone, but the latter would not stop the violence until they received their money. In the end, Ivanov advanced the missing 15 kopecks in order to free the Tatar. The story ends with the Molokans in a state of embarrassment for having acted so brutally to the Tatar and for having taken Ivanov's money.[104]

The sectarians received a modicum of state support in their efforts to ensure their own security. The understaffed tsarist officials in the region not only granted permission to the sectarian settlements to arm themselves and form paramilitary bands for their own defense, but even helped them acquire weapons. By the order of Viceroy Vorontsov, small groups of armed guards were recruited from the inhabitants and placed under the leadership of the sel'skii starshina in order to protect villagers from robbery, theft, and attack.[105] In the case of Dukhobors in Akhalkalaki uezd, Tiflis guberniia, initially ten people from the most populous village, and five from the

[103]Ivanov was by no means an impartial observer of Molokan practices and it is clear that he intends to denigrate Molokan Christianity with this story. Nonetheless, his depiction of their violent behavior toward a Muslim is not atypical and similar stories can be found in a variety of other types of sources.
[104]GMIR, f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, l. 9.
[105]RGIA f. 1268, op. 3, d. 438, 1849, ll. 1-1ob.

remaining five villages were assigned to the local militia. However, local officials later reduced numbers to five and three respectively. The Molokans of Lori uezd maintained a militia of six people. Officials found it inexpensive to support the militias. They needed only to supply weapons, salaries being considered unnecessary because the recruits were on temporary assignment.[106] In 1854, local officials, unable to defend the Dukhobors in Elisavetpol' uezd, allowed them to acquire 913 weapons at wholesale prices.[107]

Sectarian sources reveal little about how they reacted and gave meaning to these changes in their behavior and morals. The adoption of violent tactics represented such a direct challenge to their religious beliefs and could hardly have come about without heated and continued debate. Yet, contemporary sources give no indication of spiritual struggles or soul-searching within the sectarian communities. It was only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that discussion of this question turns up in the sectarians' own writings—first with the appearance of Baptists in Transcaucasia in the late 1870s, and shortly afterward with the Dukhobor pacifist uprising of 1894-1899. As Ivanov's story demonstrated, Baptists in Transcaucasia took the lead in criticizing the Molokans for their using force as a *modus operandi.* Moreover, from the mid-1880s on, the Dukhobors experienced a crisis of conscience over the compromises made during their years in Transcaucasia regarding the use of violence (and other tenets of their faith). After 1886, the majority of Dukhobors in Transcaucasia came to embrace a radical, pacifist religiosity. As a consequence, the Dukhobor community split sharply between those who adopted non-violence and a minority who remained unperturbed by the contradictions between armed action and their religious beliefs. In asserting their

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[106]*AKAK* v. 10, doc. 100, p. 124.
[107]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 46.

newly rediscovered pacifism, the radical majority soon became involved in an anti-military, anti-tsarist movement.[108]

Extant sources do not make concrete distinctions between the Molokans and Dukhobors in terms of the frequency and forms of violence, and there are no references to the Subbotniks in discussions of settler violence. What is clear, however, is that in their use of force, Dukhobors and Molokans did not simply appropriate the forms of violence used by the natives. They resorted to weapons whose design was originally Caucasian, in part because these were the weapons most readily available to them. Yet, in response to kidnapping, highway robbery or taking of flocks, for example, there is no indication that the settlers engaged in hostage-taking, banditry or livestock theft of their own—all responses that the Tatars may have expected within their cultural system.[109] Although they described their actions as defensive and prompted only by the Tatars' actions, the sectarians generally reacted with extreme measures and greater violence than was done to them. Descriptions of burning culprits alive, castrating rapists, hunting criminals and setting upon thieves in large numbers to inflict beatings all

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[108]A comprehensive analysis of the Dukhobor uprising is beyond the scope of this dissertation. On the Dukhobor movement and arms burning, see GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1895, d. 1053, ch. 1; OR RGB f. 369, k. 42, d. 2, 1950; OR RGB f. 369, k. 44, d. 1, 1950; George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 84-106; A. N. Kuropatkin, *Soobrazheniia nachal'nika zakaspiiskoi oblasti po voprosu o pereselenii v Zakaspiiskuiu oblast' dukhoborov-postnikov* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.); N. S. Zibarov, *O Sozhzhenii oruzhiia dukhoborami* (Purleigh, Maldon Essex, England: A. Tchertkoff, 1899); and Peter Brock, "Vasya Pozdnyakov's Dukhobor Narrative," *Slavonic and East European Review* 43, (December 1964): 152-176 and (June 1965): 400-414.

[109]For comparison, see Gammer, *Muslim Resistance* and Martin, "Barïmta." On notions and practices of justice among Azerbaijanis, the following excerpt from an Azerbaijani novel describing the general Azerbaijani reaction to the Russian court system implemented in the 1860s and 1870s is helpful. Quoted in Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan*, 16-17.

> Not because the Russian judges are bad or unjust. On the contrary, they are mild and just, but in the manner that our people dislike. A thief is put in jail. There he sits in his clean cell, is given tea, even with sugar in it. But nobody gets anything out of this, least of all the man he stole from. People shrug their shoulders and do justice in their own way. In the afternoon the plaintiffs come to the mosque where wise old men sit in a circle and pass sentence according to the laws of Shari'a, the law of Allah: An eye for an eye, a tooth for tooth. Sometimes at night shrouded figures slip through alleys. A dagger strikes like lightening, a little cry, and justice is done. Blood feuds are running from house to house.

reflect an approach to violence that was preemptive as much as retaliatory, hoping to ward off future mistreatment through the use of excessive force to spread fear. One cannot but notice the similarities in the justification of force between the non-conformists and General Ermolov who stated:

> I desire that the terror of my name should guard our frontiers more potently than chains and fortresses, that my word should be for the natives a law more inevitable than death. Condescension in the eyes of Asiatics is a sign of weakness, and out of pure humanity I am inexorably severe. One execution saves hundreds of Russians from destructions, and thousands of Mussulmans from treason.[110]

The manner in which settlers' applied violence was channeled by ethnic factors. Whereas the non-conformists took up arms against those natives who insulted, attacked or stole from them, they took no similar actions towards Orthodox Russians who caused them injury in other ways. Writing at the turn of this century, one Molokan author from Alty-Agach (Shemakha uezd, Baku guberniia) lamented with hindsight, that the Molokan community never considered imposing force on those Orthodox Russians who lived in their village and persecuted the Molokans for their faith. Rather than meet the Orthodox attacks with an eye for an eye, they succumbed meekly to the actions of Russian soldiers and priests who commandeered food and lodging, chased Molokan women, and aggressively prevented the Molokans from gathering for prayer services on the Sabbath. The Molokans did not believe that they were in any position to fight back against the Orthodox Russians in their village. They sent petitions to regional authorities about their treatment but received no reply. They quickly realized that in their village the only sources of authority were the priest, police, and teacher, all of whom met the Molokans' petitions with further violence and mistreatment. The Molokans became disheartened, believing that no person outside their little region would ever save

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[110]Quoted in Baddeley, *Russian Conquest*; 97.

them from Orthodox persecution and feeling impotent to act against Russian officials.[111]

The sectarian-settlers' turn to violence produced two primary results. First, as discussed in chapter three, the armed militias of sectarian villages came to take on important roles in the administration of the Transcaucasus. By protecting themselves, the sectarians also provided an unofficial armed force that aided in implementing Russian law and maintaining peace and Russian sovereignty on the frontier. A second important outcome was that the colonists' use of force began to "tame" what the sectarians described as the "hideous" and "disgraceful" [*bezobraznyi*] behavior of the Tatars.[112] Official sources indicate that over the course of the nineteenth century, the rates and degree of violence and theft dropped to a level that was virtually ignored by Russian officialdom. Whereas official reports from the first thirty years of the Russian sectarian presence in Transcaucasia are filled with frequent comment about the difficult relations between them and the natives, police reports from the 1880s rarely report any conflict at all. For instance, the governors' report for Elisavetpol' guberniia for 1878, as well as the Political Reviews of Baku guberniia for 1884 and 1887, all describe the relations between the sectarians and the native peoples to be "good," "amicable" and "peaceful," with only rare misunderstandings.[113]

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[111]GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902, ll. 9-14. Yet, if the sectarians were driven by ethnic considerations in their violent treatment of the indigenous Tatars, they did not articulate a religiously-based ideology of racial domination like the Boer settlers in South Africa. Boers justified their subjection of blacks to brute force, and their belief that "eternal servitude was the divine calling of blacks," by referring to the Biblical story of Ham—"a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers" (Genesis 9:24). Russian sectarians developed no such divinely inspired explanation to vindicate their violence towards Transcaucasia's Muslims. On the Boers, see John Comaroff, "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 180-181. The Biblical reference is form the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

[112]GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902, l. 13-14.

[113]See RGIA f. 1268, op. 24, d. 231, 1879-1880, l. 158; GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1885, d. 59, ch. 37, l. 2; and GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1887, d. 9, ch. 36, l. 2.

The settlers became widely respected for their capacity for violence. Natives no longer saw them as potential victims and in some cases openly feared them. A contemporary analyst reported that: "the local inhabitants ... are frightened of them [the Russians], because in cases of attack, the theft of livestock, etc., all the commune acts like one person, energetically pursuing and prosecuting the violator of property."[114] Another Russian commentator claimed that by meeting force with force, the sectarians had gained the respect of their neighbors. "For the simple Tatar the word 'urus,' which they use to call any Russian, is united with a ... respect and deference in their interactions with him [a Russian], although the right to that respect was paid for dearly by them [the sectarians] through struggle."[115]

It bears noting that tsarist officials and Russian commentators also attributed the reduction in violence and theft to moral forces as well as aggressive measures. They asserted that the cultural values and social practices of the non-violent, anti-militarist sectarians—their "good morals"—began to influence those around them. Existing sources make it impossible to judge precisely the impact of the sectarians' example, or to say definitely just how "good" the settlers morals were. Russian observers likely described the moral influences of settlers on locals partly as they believed they should have been. Discussing the Russian sectarians in Erevan guberniia, the local journalist S. Kolosov asserted that the sectarians' "peaceful morals and the absence of the habit of carrying daggers or revolvers ... have an effect on the spiritual way of life of the indigenous population, which sees that a Russian person behaves with confidence and trust towards other people, expects from them humane relations rather than attack, and looks upon the surrounding population not as enemies from whom each minute he can

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[114]A. G. Dekonskii, "Ekonomicheskii byt gosudarstvennykh krest'ian v Shushinskom i Dzhebrail'skom uezdakh, Elisavetpol'skoi gubernii," *MIEBGKZK* t. IV, ch. 1: 232.
[115]A. I. Masalkin "Iz istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov. Ch. III, Sektanty, kak kolonizatory Zakavkaz'ia," *Kavkaz* no. 333 (December 16, 1893): 3.

expect attack, but as upon his brothers. All of this deeply affected the morality of the native peoples."[116] Similar voices echoed throughout Transcaucasia, describing the restraining and peaceable influences of the sectarians on those around them and asserting that the settlers' economic success instilled respect for the Russian settlers and their achievements.[117]

The belief of tsarist officials in the pacifying effect of the sectarians on their neighbors affected colonial policies in Transcaucasia. In 1848 in Erevan guberniia, a tsarist official proposed to construct a Molokan village at a specific location "for the prevention of plundering and robberies on the part of nomadic inhabitants."[118] Similarly, in the late 1880s, the governor of Baku came to the conclusion that the best means to confront the serious problem of crime in Kubin uezd would be to settle Russians in the area. As such, he ordered the settlement of twenty Molokan families "as an experiment" into a part of the region that was particularly violent, and where Russian soldiers had engaged in pitched gun battles with the local "robbers." The experiment was a "shining" [*blestiashchii*] success and crime rates in the region dropped dramatically.[119]

Although violence and theft were much reduced, conflict did not completely disappear. Indeed, violence remained a central component of the relations constructed between the settlers and the natives, although the quantity and the quality of the violence changed. From the 1860s through the turn of the century, there were periodic reports of neighboring Tatars stealing Russian livestock, of Lezginy openly attacking Russian

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[116]S. Kolosov, "Russkie sektanty," 152.
[117]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 49; "Iz Signakhskago uezda (kor. Kavkaza)," *Kavkaz* no. 15 (Feb. 1, 1877): 3; Masalkin "Sektanty kak kolonizatory," no. 333: 3; Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 143: 1; Kh. A. Vermishev, "Ekonomicheskii byt gosudarstvennykh krest'ian v Akhaltsikhskom i Akhalkalakskom uezdakh, Tiflisskoi gubernii," in *MIEBGKZK* , t. III (Tiflis, 1886), ch. 2, 42-43; Kuropatkin, *Soobrazheniia nachal'nika,* 15; and Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 247.
[118]The officials' report is quoted in Tumanian, *Ekonomicheskoe razvitie,* 1: 41.
[119]RGIA f. 560, op. 26, d. 86, 1984, ll. 70ob-71.

communities, and, after 1905, of Armenians attacking Molokan communities.[120] Moreover, the sectarian villagers in Novo-Saratovka and Novo-Ivanovka complained that their horticulture suffered at the hands of robber-Tatars. According to the contemporary commentator I. E. Petrov, Tatars in the process of moving their herds through Transcaucasia often took advantage of the lack of serious supervision of the gardens and would mercilessly chop down the trees and ruin the gardens of Molokans. It was also not uncommon for the local Tatars to unearth the trees and carry them to their own homes where they would re-plant them in an effort to cultivate orchards like the Molokans did. The Molokans frequently caught these thieves red-handed and would forcibly exact payment of a few rubles for each tree. The practice of stealing trees was so common that middlemen appeared between the Molokans and Tatars who would propose to sell the Tatars trees from the Molokans' orchards at prices well below what they would be forced to pay if they were caught stealing the trees.[121]

Economic Relationships and Bonds of Mutual Reliance

Coterminous with the violence, antagonism, and land tensions, colonists and Transcaucasians entered into an ever-evolving web of economic interrelations and mutually beneficial relationships. Upon their arrival in Transcaucasia, especially in the 1830s and 1840s, the sectarian-settlers could not have survived their initial trials without the direct assistance and employment opportunities offered by their neighbors. Over the course of the century, however, the forms of aid and support changed markedly. The

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[120]GARF f. 102, oo d-vo, op. 1907, d. 100, t. 1, ch. 2, ll. 131-132ob and T. B., "U beregov Kaspiia (iz putevykh zametok i vospominanii) Tri goda nazad, ch. IX, V Malorusskoi kolonii," *Kavkaz* no. 75 (1881): 1.

[121]Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka" 241, 247. There is no mention of the ethnicity of the middlemen.

settlers and natives became intertwined in increasingly elaborate bonds of reciprocal assistance and intricate trade networks that worked for common economic benefit. Moreover, as the sectarians became settled and progressively prosperous, it was the indigenous Transcaucasians who benefited from, and in some cases relied on, the material benefits that the Russian settlers had to offer.

The growth of economic ties was facilitated by a process of economic specialization in which both consciously and unconsciously settlers and natives took on different economic functions and filled complementary niches.[122] They produced different types of foodstuffs, generally reflecting traditional cuisine of the communities. Thus, Russians continued to focus much of their efforts on potatoes, cabbages, carrots, beets and other vegetables that they brought with them to Transcaucasia.[123] The sectarian-settlers quickly dominated the transport trade where they concentrated much of their economic activities. Natives and colonists valued different livestock. Russians preferred to raise horses, while indigenous peoples favored oxen.

As discussed in chapter two, the religious dissenters invariably appeared in Transcaucasia destitute and ravaged from the trip. Indigenous Transcaucasians provided invaluable assistance to the newly arriving Russian settlers, although not always willingly. On the order of local Tsarist officials, the native peoples supplied any number of the following services: built temporary dwellings to shelter the new arrivals, sowed fields for the settlers before they arrived, billeted the sectarians while they set themselves up, provided seed for future sowing, donated wheat and other foodstuffs for

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[122]On economic specialization and the relations between Russians settlers and natives in the North Caucasus, see Thomas Barrett, "Crossing Boundaries: The Trading Frontiers of the Terek Cossacks," in *Russia's Orient*, eds., Brower and Lazzerini, 227-248.

[123]N. I. Grigulevich, "Osnovnye komponenty pitaniia russkikh starozhilov, azerbaidzhantsev i armian, in *Dukhobortsy i Molokane v Zakavkaz'e*, eds. V. I. Kozlov and A. P. Pavlenko (Moscow: IE RAN, 1992), 60-89.

eating (directly, as well as indirectly through Russian taxation), and prepared wood for fuel and the construction of houses.[124]

For example, when the Dukhobors arrived in Transcaucasia in the early 1830s, the Tiflis military governor Gen-I. Strekalov ordered the local inhabitants[125] to sow the land allotted to the Dukhobors before the settlers' arrival, and later to harvest the crops with their own livestock and tools. When it proved too difficult for the Dukhobor settlers to access the lands that had been allotted for them because the lack of roads prevented wheeled transport, the state officials agreed to move them elsewhere. While the settlers were waiting for their new homes to be built, they were billeted with local inhabitants in nearby villages—a common practice while they set up their new residences.[126]

In a similar vein, initial economic setbacks suffered by the majority of sectarians during their first few years in their new homes frequently meant that the settlers were forced to turn to the indigenous peoples in search of material aid for survival. In 1846, Molokan settlers to Vorontsovka (Borchalo uezd, Tiflis guberniia) suffered severe economic hardship during their first few years there, despite the region's rich agricultural promise. The area suffered from unusually heavy rains during these years ruining the grain. In response to these hard economic times, they hired themselves out to neighboring Armenians as farm workers. Without the payment for this work, the settlers would have starved.[127] Hiring out as agricultural laborers became a pattern. Indeed, in the first twenty years of Russian settlement, by far the majority of sectarian-

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[124]See RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1831, d. 136, 1831-1843, ll. 37-37ob, 83ob-84; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, l. 121; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 142-142ob.

[125]These people were likely Muslims, although official Russian reports did not specify any particular ethno-confessional groups simply labeling them "indigenous peoples" [*tuzemtsy*].

[126]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, l. 76. After the first few waves of sectarian arrivals, however, the practice of housing Russian settlers in native villages ceased. Thereafter the sectarian-settlers lived temporarily with their co-religionists during the period of acclimatizing and setting themselves up. Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 61.

[127]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 2.

settlers found themselves with no other economic alternative than to supplement their own agricultural activities with work for their neighbors.

Local administrators quickly saw that the sectarians would suffer unbearable deprivation without the material aid and economic opportunities of supplementary work in the natives' fields. The administration permitted the sectarians to travel within Transcaucasia on temporary passports in order to enhance their incomes by taking advantage of seasonal work in various parts of the region. Moreover, to avoid what they saw as certain catastrophe if anything should block that assistance, local officials lobbied successfully to make Transcaucasia an exception to the empire-wide ban on permitting any economic interaction between Orthodox subjects and sectarians considered "most pernicious." As discussed in chapter three, Vorontsov claimed that the cultural and linguistic differences between Russian sectarians and Georgian Orthodox would guarantee that the dissenters' beliefs could not poison the faithful. The Tsar lifted the prohibition in the region because there could be no fear of contagion, and the Russians would be destitute unless they were allowed to work for the local inhabitants.[128]

Beginning in the late 1840s and early 1850s, the economic relations between the groups shifted markedly as Russians and Transcaucasians entered into a variety of economic contacts and arrangements. The patterns of hiring began to equalize. Rather than the local population solely hiring Russian settlers, the latter began to look for paid laborers from among their neighbors to help run their increasingly profitable agricultural ventures. Transcaucasians found the settlers to be a source of material benefit. The Dukhobors in Akhalkalaki uezd frequently hired Armenians as laborers in their fields. They also employed Armenians and Kurds as shepherds. Indeed, Russians widely

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[128]RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23322, 1846 and *SPChR* (1875), p. 359.

considered nomads to be the best shepherds available in the region and regularly hired them, rather than their co-religonists, to look after their flocks.[129]

Colonists and natives rented excess or unused land, as well as livestock, from each other. Sectarian settlers leased their allotments to neighboring inhabitants. Subbotniks from Erevan guberniia focused their economic energies on the transport trade and leased their lands to neighboring Armenians for cultivation.[130] Elsewhere in Erevan guberniia, as noted above, Armenians from the village of Makravank complained to the local administration about the way in which Molokans form Konstantinovka had so much land on their hands that they were able to rent it out to be farmed by others for a very profitable return.[131] Russians also hired land from natives. They "leased alpine land in summer and lowlands in winter from aborigines" in order to pasture their flocks.[132] In other cases, sectarians rented land for crop-growing purposes, such as the case of the Molokans in Marazy who rented a very large amount of unused land (for the very low price of two rubles per desiatina) which belonged to the neighboring nomads.[133] The Dukhobors preferred to raise horses—which they considered more profitable—yet they still needed oxen which they hired from Armenians in order to plow the rocky soil in the region.[134]

Other economic relations also characterized sectarian-local interactions. Since many sectarian and native villages were intermixed in a single sel'skoe obshchestvo, the different ethnicities were required at times to make certain economic decisions

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[129]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 50; Iamskov, "Environmental Conditions," 5-6; and Masalkin, "Sektanty kak kolonizatory," no. 333: 3.
[130]"'Subbotniki' v Erivanskoi gubernii," *Pamiatnaia knizhka Erivanskoi gubernii na 1912 g.* (Erivan: 1912), literaturnyi otdel, ch. III, 9.
[131]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 64.
[132]Iamskov, "Environmental Conditions," 5-6.
[133]T. B., "U Beregov," ch. 10: 2.
[134]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 50.

together.[135] Moreover, Armenians and Georgians not infrequently set up inns or taverns in the settlers' villages, taking advantage of the sectarians' opposition to drink to profit form the human traffic—military, bureaucratic and merchant—that came through the colonists' villages.[136]

The sectarians produced for, and traded on, the regional market, entering regularly into contact and signing contracts with the local inhabitants of the region.[137] Through their dominance of the transportation industry, the sectarian-settlers concluded agreements with Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijani Turks, and Kurds—merchants, artisans and peasants—to move produce all over Transcaucasia.[138] Many Subbotniks from the village of Privol'noe (Lenkoran uezd, Baku guberniia) sold bread as well as other products to Tatar agents from a nearby village. The Muslim traders would then take these products to be sold in Baku and bring the money back to the Russians after they had taken their cut.[139] In Elisavetpol' guberniia, sectarians themselves marketed their surplus production to nearby villages and in local towns.[140] However, not all sectarian villages entered into market arrangements to the same degree. Many remained isolated and inward looking economically, producing what they needed for village consumption. The village of Marazy, for instance, carried out very little trade with neighboring towns and peoples, with the exception of the sale of some bread in exchange for certain products that they could not make themselves.[141]

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[135] D. I. Ismail-Zade, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo v Zakavkaz'e (30-e gody XIX-nachalo XX v.* (Moscow: Izd. Nauka, 1982), 61. The exception to this rule was the Dukhobors who were administratively separated into their own communes.
[136] Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 2.
[137] On producing for a regional market, see Ibid.
[138] Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 65.
[139] Il'ia Zhabin, "Selenie Privol'noe, Bakinskoi gub., Lenkoranskago uezda," in *SMOMPK*, vol. 27 (Tiflis: Tip. Kantseliarii glavnonachal'stvuiushchago grazhdanskaiu chastiu na Kavkaze, 1900), otdel II: 49, 51.
[140] I. L. Segal', "Russkie poseliane v Elisavetpol'skoi gubernii (statistichesko-etnograficheskii ocherk)," *Kavkaz* no. 41 (February 14, 1890): 3.
[141] Gorskii, "Marazinskaia shkola," 2.

In the closing decades of the century, the development of small-scale factories and other industrial work among the sectarian communities broadened the range of economic contacts with Transcaucasians. For instance, the villages of Novo-Ivanovka and Novo-Saratovka (Elisavetpol' uezd and guberniia) both started enterprises that produced glazed tiles and building lumber. These products were used not only by the Russian villagers, but also by the surrounding Armenians and Tatars who provided a strong demand for the products for building their houses.[142] Moreover, after the turn of the century, Russians and indigenous inhabitants began to enter into joint ventures. In 1903, for instance, a Molokan and Armenian went into business together to begin a pig-farming enterprise in the Novo-Ivanovka/Novo-Saratovka area—an even more surprising union because of the Molokans' long-standing ban on the consumption of swine.[143]

Soviet historians have argued that the economic relations which developed between the local population and the sectarians represented a vivid form of class and colonial exploitation.[144] In contrast, contemporary commentators evaluated these socio-economic relations much differently. Writing in the late nineteenth century, the statistician Kh. A. Vermishev noted very good relations between the Dukhobors and their native farm hands. Indigenous farm workers found that once they had gained the trust of their sectarian bosses that they could count on borrowing money, food, and other help from the Dukhobors in times of trouble. The Dukhobors maintained a large store of both funds and grain in their "Orphan Home"—an institution whose purposes included the provision of help to the less well off in their communities and to those Dukhobors who were suffering bad agricultural times. From this store, they frequently

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[142]Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 242.
[143]Ibid., 236.
[144]See especially Klibanov, *History of Religious Sectarianism*, 122.

gave out interest-free loans to their brethren and soon this practice expanded to the surrounding population as well. Vermishev asserts that the Dukhobors initially gave interest-free loans to their neighbors, but realizing that this privilege was being taken advantage of—especially in the case of Armenian merchants trading in Dukhobor'e[145]—they raised their loan rate to between five and ten percent; this was still well below the going rate in the region of twenty percent.[146] In Kars oblast', in times of harvest failure the Dukhobors would give grain from their communal stores free of charge to the surrounding neighbors.[147]

Assistance from the sectarians came not only in times of poor harvest, but also during other natural disasters. Although outside of the chronological parameters of this study, the case of Dukhobor aid following an earthquake in 1899 is exemplary of the relations of mutual aid that developed. On December 19, 1899, Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, and Gori uezds of Tiflis gubemiia suffered a severe earthquake. Twenty-one villages, primarily Armenian, were affected. Despite living more than one hundred kilometers from the affected area, the Dukhobors appeared on the scene in large numbers to help. They provided one hundred and thirty wagons with horses and worked ceaselessly to transport victims to medical aid. They did so without any request for payment, saying that as Christians they were obligated by conscience to help in every manner that they could.[148]

Although never to the same degree as in the first few decades, the sectarian-settlers did continue to benefit form the aid and support of those around them. For instance, when the water well in the village of Marazy dried up, the Russian villagers

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[145]Dukhobor'e was the name given to the region in Akhalkalaki uezd, Tiflis gubemiia in which the Dukhobors lived. See "Dukhobor'e," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* t. 11, ch. 1 (St. Petersburg: 1893), 253.
[146]Vermishev, "Ekonomicheskii byt," *MIEBGKZK* t. 3, ch. 2: 42-44 and Petrov, "Dukhobory," 176.
[147]V. P. Bochkarev, "Karsskaia oblast'," In *RTKE* (Tiflis: Izd. Zakavkazskoi zheleznoi dorogi, Tip. Ia. I. Libermana, 1897), 370.
[148]GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1899, d. 4365, ll. 48-54ob.

availed themselves to the water in the well of a Tatar village approximately two kilometers away. The sectarians were exceptionally slow to re-dig their well, and the taking of water developed into a quasi-permanent relationship.[149]

Technology Transfer, Cultural Exchange

As part and parcel of the formation of these ever-widening economic relationships and mutual bonds, sectarian-settlers and local Transcaucasians entered into a process of appropriation and exchange involving economic techniques, technology, and, to a smaller degree, cultural practices. Nineteenth-century Russian commentators and state officials praised the sectarians' "russification" of the local economy through the introduction of Russian agricultural practices and products, as well as their "civilizing" of the local peoples through the example of their morality, honesty, sobriety, work ethic, and prosperity.[150] One journalist, describing Tiflis guberniia, noted that the Molokans' "strict morals, settled life, hard work, economic success, internal harmony, [and] few crimes ... have had a charming effect on our Georgians."[151] Only a few scattered voices demurred. One official argued that "the closed nature of the sectarians' lives impedes their rapprochement [*sblizhenie*] with, and useful influence on, the neighboring native peoples."[152] Whether the sectarians were successful or unsuccessful as a civilizing force, Russian narratives of acculturation at this time depicted the process as one-way: Russian to Transcaucasian. As A. I.

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[149]Gorskii, "Marazinskaia shkola," 2.
[150]In addition to the examples discussed below, see Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Sratovka," 247; P. Paul', "Iz sel. Elenovki, Erivanskoi gubernii (o vliianii russkikh na korennoe naselenie Novobaiazetskago uezda," *Kavkazskoe sel'skoe khoziaistvo* no. 169 (Apr. 3, 1897): 230; Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 143: 1; Kuropatkin, *Soobrazheniia nachal'nika*," 15; and "Iz Signakhskago uezda," 3.
[151]"Iz Signakhskago uezda," 3. This description of the impact of the sectarians' way of life can also be found in Masalkin "Sektanty kak kolonizatory," no. 333: 3.
[152]GARF f. 102, 3 d-vo, op. 1884, d. 88 ch. 2, ll. 20ob-21.

Masalkin, a journalist for the newspaper *Kavkaz*, described the relations: "[the sectarians] have adopted nothing from the indigenous peoples, who stand in every respect poorer and lower than the sectarians."[153]

Contrary to these claims, the reality of settler-native contact did not follow a simple trajectory. Nineteenth-century Russian commentators frequently painted a distorted picture both of the direction of influence as well as the degree to which economic and cultural appropriation took place at all. First, mutual exchange and influences were not as uni-directional as these accounts make out. As Richard White has described in the North American context, on the "middle ground" formed by the meeting of these peoples, each group became "more like [the other] by borrowing discrete cultural traits ... so that they shaded into one another."[154] In nineteenth-century Transcaucasia, the primary nodes of appropriation and transference between sectarian-settlers and local Transcaucasians took place on the economic plane. Observers witnessed a not insignificant transfer of agricultural implements and economic practices between natives and settlers. The Russians brought with them tools, ways of production, livestock, and foodstuffs that were often unknown in the region beforehand. Many of these proved impractical in the new ecology and were abandoned by the settlers in favor of local variants. At the same time, Transcaucasians also accepted certain Russian tools, breeds of livestock, and subsistence strategies, believing them superior and more profitable.

Second, in terms of the degree of appropriation, those minority of Russian voices who saw the communities as too separate for any meaningful cultural exchange to take place were closer to the mark. Social, cultural, and religious systems proved more impervious to reformulation than economic ones, and the appropriation of social

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[153]Masalkin, "Sektanty kak kolonizatory," no. 333: 3.
[154]White, *Middle Ground*, x-xi.

or cultural practices appeared more rarely. While the sectarian-settlers were indisputably transformed through the borrowing of various Transcaucasian cultural practices, the extent of such "nativization" was much less marked than in comparison with other borderland regions of the Russian empire, such as Siberia and the North Caucasus. "Russification" was also relatively less apparent despite significant sectarian influences on the local populations.[155] The principal exception to this characterization was in the arena of language acquisition in which Russians, Azerbaijani Turks, Armenians and Georgians living near each other became bi-, tri-, and even quaterlingual.

An essential arena of blending and exchange between settlers and locals was in the realm of livestock and agricultural produce, what historians of North America have called "species shifting."[156] In terms of animal life, the most stunning case came with the importation of the Merino variety of sheep. On their forced exile from New Russia, the Dukhobors brought this fine-fleeced sub-species with them. Known for the very high quality and profitability of its wool, this breed began to push out the traditional kinds of sheep tended for generations by Kurds, Azerbaijani Turks, Armenians. The wool from Merinos fetched almost twice the amount per pound as the wool from sheep traditionally found in Transcaucasia . Over the course of the century, Armenians, Kurds, and Azerbaijani Turks also began themselves to raise this type of sheep, with

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[155]In his exploration of the North Caucasus, Thomas Barrett argues that "the boundaries between colonist and native, between Cossack and 'enemy,' indeed between Russia and 'the Orient,' could be rather loose and at times nonexistent." For a North American comparison, Richard White, in his discussion of Indian-White relations in the Great Lakes region, asserts that "no sharp distinctions between Indian and white worlds could be drawn. Different peoples, to be sure, remained identifiable but they shaded into one another." Barrett, "Crossing Boundaries, " 229; White, *Middle Ground*, xi. See also Sunderland, "Russians into Iakuts?" 806-825; Thomas Barrett, "Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the North Caucasus," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (fall 1995): 578-601; and John Mack Faragher, "Americans, Mexicans, Métis: A Community Approach to the Comparative Study of North American Frontiers," in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, eds. William Cronon, George Miles and Jay Gitlin (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992)
[156]Cronon et al., "Becoming West, 11.

extremely profitable results. In doing so, they increased the region's international trade by sending this wool to Russia and elsewhere.[157]

Writing about changes wrought to agriculture in Erevan guberniia, the journalist Kolosov asserted that Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks learned truck farming [*ogorodnichestvo*] from the sectarians' example. "Before the settlement of Russians, the indigenous population sowed very few beets and carrots, and did not plant potatoes at all. The Russians widely spread the culture of these plants and now in many places the natives are introducing vegetable gardens." The author asserted that the annual production of potatoes for Novobaiazet and Aleksandropol' uezds alone was 300,000 chetverts [629,700 hectoliters] whereas in the 1830s none had been grown at all.[158] Throughout Transcaucasia, other commentators echoed Kolosov in describing the appearance of vegetable farming among Transcaucasians, and especially of traditional Russian vegetables.[159]

Sectarian-settlers underwent an even greater degree of acculturation in the arena of food and drink than the locals. Russians took from Azerbaijani Turks certain types and foods and modes of food production. They borrowed a variety of dairy products and processes from their Azerbaijani neighbors, including sour milk (*gatykh*), cottage cheese (*pendir*) and *airan* (drink fermented from milk). The sectarians also introduced to their diet a variety of local fruits and vegetables: aubergine, dried fruit, patila sweets (*tursh-lavash*) and thick boiled grape juice (*doshab*). In contrast, they were indifferent to dishes such as *dovga*, *ovdukh* (cooked sour milk with wild herbs), *agyz* and *bulama* (molasses from grape juice). Although the sectarians integrated a variety of Azerbaijani

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[157]A. Kalantar, "Merinosy v Zakavkaz'e," *Kavkazskoe sel'skoe khoziaistvo* no. 206 (December 18, 1987): 839-841; Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane*, 20; "Otchet Kn. Vorontsova s. 25-go marta 1845 g. i 1-e ianv. 1846 g." in *AKAK* vol. 10, p. 835; Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 42: 3.
[158]Kolosov, "Russkie sektanty," 151.
[159]See Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 247; Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 40: 3; Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 49; and Grigulevich, "Osnovnye komponenty pitaniia," passim.

foods and dishes into their diet, they attached different cultural valences to these foods than they did to Russian cuisine. The more culturally meaningful the meal, the more likely that traditional Russian dishes would predominate. Whereas daily, and certain festive, tables were covered with a much greater variety of local foodstuffs and dishes (such as pilaf, shashlyk and dolma), funeral repasts continued to be dominated by such Russian staples as cabbage soup (*shchi*), noodles, meat, potatoes, tea and sweets.[160]

Indigenous Transcaucasians took from the sectarians the use of different types of agricultural implements and a variety of other economic practices. For instance, Armenians and Tatars in Erevan guberniia adopted scythes, pitchforks, harrows, threshing blades, and rakes of Russian design. In imitation of the Russians, Transcaucasians also began to replace oxen—which they used both for field work and transportation—with horses, preferred by the Russian settlers. Moreover, according to one author: "Native villagers on the banks of lake Sevan [Gochka] were completely unfamiliar with the fishing method of using large nets ..." and they adopted this system of fishing from the Russians. The author further claims that Transcaucasians learned from Russians a process of curing fish by drying them—the trade in which proved very profitable for the locals.[161]

While the impact of sectarian implements and practices transformed certain aspects of the economy of Transcaucasians, the Russian settlers adopted local economic practices. The Dukhobors, for instance, were quick to adopt the local design for a thresher (made from wood, stones and pebbles) which replaced the stone thresher brought with them from New Russia. Dukhobors in Kars oblast' embraced what they

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[160]N. I. Grigulevich, "Cultural and Ecological Peculiarities of the Traditional Diet of the Russians in Azerbaijan" paper given at the 12th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Zagreb, Yugoslavia, July 24-31, 1988 (Moscow: Nauka, Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1988); idem., "Osnovnye komponenty pitaniia," 60-89; and idem., "Pitanie kak odin iz osnovnykh pokazatelei adaptatsii pereselentsev," in *Russkie Starozhily Zakavkaz'ia: Molokane i Dukhobortsy*, ed. V. I. Kozlov (Moscow: IE RAN, 1995), 183-208.
[161]Paul', "Iz sel. Elenovki," (1897): 230.

called "Turkish" agricultural practices of "plow deeper, sow earlier," because the summer heat dried the top layers of soil and crops planted too late were subject to the effects of late-August frosts.[162] However, across Transcaucasia, sectarians continued to use the traditional, heavier Russian plow instead of the lighter plow favored by local farmers.[163]

The Russian settlers also brought with them the usage of four-wheeled, deep-bed wagons which came very quickly to replace the two-wheeled *arbas* used by locals to that point.[164] Through the combination of their dominance of the transport trade and introduction of new crops, the sectarians facilitated the growth of market farming among local Transcaucasian farmers, not only by introducing crops that Russians in Transcaucasia and the central provinces would buy, but also by facilitating the transport of these and other goods through the region.[165] As the century progressed, Armenians and Tatars began to copy the sectarians' wagon design and entered into the transport trade themselves in competition with the settlers. Indeed, the sectarian monopoly of the carriage trade was challenged not only by the appearance of railroads, but also by the entry of Tatars into the trade. Not only would they transport goods for less remuneration than the Russians, but they also would work as drivers throughout the summer when many of the sectarians reverted to field work. The transportation trade provided an increasingly important income supplement to Armenian and Muslim villages situated on the main arteries of the region.[166]

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[162]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 49-50.
[163]Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 41: 3.
[164]The sectarians' wagons were originally a German design introduced into Russia through German settlement in New Russia.
[165]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 49.
[166]Kolosov, "Russkie sektanty," 151; N. B., "Ozero Gochka (iz vospominanii o zakavkazskom krae)," *Kavkaz* no. 61 (1861): 330; Paul', "Iz sel. Elenovki," (1897): 230; and Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 245.

Much in the manner that settlers and locals exchanged and changed their economic implements and practices, so too can we witness the evolution of architectural styles. As discussed in chapter two, when the sectarians first arrived in Transcaucasia, the local administrators commissioned housing to be built for them in the style of nomad winter housing, and not in traditional Russian style.[167] The sectarians quickly abandoned the local architectural format, which they found too hot in the summer months, and returned to constructing their houses and villages in a style more closely approximating their homes in central Russia. The new houses were not identical, however, reflecting the influence of Transcaucasia's environment and peoples. Settler dwellings were more likely to be made out of stone in Transcaucasia than the traditional Russian wood, especially in those areas of Tiflis and Elisavetpol' guberniias where lumber was difficult to come by. They were also designed with relatively flatter roofs than the steep slopes of peasant housetops in the internal Russian provinces.[168] Moreover, as noted above, Dukhobors in Akhalkalaki uezd appropriated certain defensive aspects of Tatar construction (windowless buildings with grates) in order to defend themselves from attack.[169]

The impact of the Russian settlers on the architecture of the surrounding population was perhaps even more keenly felt. Describing the influences of sectarian-settlers in Erevan guberniia, S. Kolosov noted that:

> In the past, and today also in some of the isolated places of the guberniia, houses are built [by indigenous peoples] without windows. In villages close to Russian settlement, such construction has become a thing of the past. The houses, although with flat roofs, invariably are built with windows and the native person takes advantage of constant light in their dwellings ...[170]

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[167]GMIR, f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, l. 123.
[168]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 1.
[169]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 46.
[170]Kolosov, "Russkie Sektanty," 151-152.

In a similar description of Erevan guberniia, P. Paul' noted that the indigenous people borrowed construction designs from the Russians and built their houses with windows and tile roofs, in place of the "shanties" [*lachuga*] with one opening in the roof in which they used to live.[171]

In order to conduct trade and to negotiate their differences, Russian settlers were required to learn a variety of the local languages. Indeed, the very large differential in population size between the settlers and the natives left a preponderant share of the responsibility for communication to the sectarians. The ethnographer Kalashev reported that in the village of Ivanovka (Geokchai uezd, Baku guberniia), the Russian settlers spoke very fluent Azerbaijani Turkish as a result of their "constant interactions" with their Tatar and Armenian neighbors. Indeed, Kalashev was particularly surprised to find that even though Russian was their native language, it was not uncommon to hear conversations among Russians conducted in a local tongue even when no natives were around.[172] In the process of learning these languages, many Armenian and Azerbaijani words passed into the sectarians' Russian, especially words dealing with economic and agricultural topics.[173] Similarly, indigenous peoples who lived near sectarians learned to speak Russian. Petrov asserts that it was not uncommon in the last few decades of the nineteenth century to find Muslim nomads in the mountains who spoke such a pure, vernacular Russian that "... if it wasn't for his clothes, you could think that in front of you stood a Great Russian *muzhik* from Tambov or Saratov guberniias."[174]

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[171]Paul', "Iz sel. Elenovki," (1897): 230. See also Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 247 for reference to the construction of "wood huts [*domiki*] under red-tile roof" in imitation of the sectarians.
[172]N. Kalashev, "Selenie Ivanovka, Lagichskago uchastka, Geokchaiskago uezda, Bakinskoi gubernii," *SMOMPK*, vyp. 13 (Tiflis: Tip. Kants. glavno. grazh. chastiiu na Kavkaze, 1892): otd. II, 274. S. Kolosov also found similar multi-lingualism on the part of the sectarians in Erevan guberniia. Kolosov, "Russkie Sektanty," 154. On Russians learning to speak local languages, see also Vereshchagin, *Dukhobortsy i Molokane*, 36-37; Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 52; and Ismail-Zade, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo*, 86.
[173]Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 52 and Ismail-Zade, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo*, 86-88.
[174]Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 247.

Despite the mutual appropriation of languages and of certain economic techniques and technologies, Russians and Georgians, Azerbaijani Turks and Armenians remained distinct and non-influential in most of their social and cultural practices. During the nineteenth century, settlers and natives perceived each other as both ethnically and religiously different, remaining rooted in notions of "us" and "them."[175] Dukhobors, for instance, maintained their religiously-based sense of distinctiveness throughout their tenure in Transcaucasia, believing themselves to be "chosen people." Upon their arrival in the 1840s, they found extremely strange the local population's clothing, external appearance, *arbas* hitched to oxen, and methods of plowing.[176] This sense of difference and distinction was not one-way by any means. For example, Transcaucasians initially looked upon the Dukhobors as murderers and criminals whom they "avoided like lepers."[177]

As a consequence, sectarians and Transcaucasians lived isolated from each other in separate geographical and cultural communities. They maintained traditional structures of village governance and justice, divided domestic labor in their own ways, and raised their children according to long-standing cultural practices. They continued to celebrate different holidays separately and utilized distinct ceremonial forms, to name but a few fundamental distinctions. Moreover, there were few documented cases of inter-ethnic marriage between Russians and Transcaucasians.[178] Discussing the Russian settlers of Eastern Armenia, I. V. Dolzhenko states that "marriages to non-believers were forbidden" by the sectarian communities—a rule which appears to have applied equally to both Christian and Muslim Transcaucasians.

[175] In this vein, see also the discussion in chapter three.
[176] Inikova, "Vzaimnootnosheniia," 51-52. See also Kuropatkin, *Soobrazheniia nachal'nika*, 15 on Dukhobor "isolation" and "arrogance."
[177] Vermishev, "Ekonomicheskii byt," *MIEBGKZK* t. 3, ch. 2: 42.
[178] Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 66. For an exception to endogamous marriage practices, see RGIA f.1268, op. 3, d. 443, 1849-1850. Compare the lack of intermarriage to the case of North America, see White, *Middle Ground*, 1-93.

There were three exceptions to this physical separation. First, male Russian sectarians traveled throughout the region as wagon drivers and were exposed to a whole spectrum of different ways of life—innovations which, on occasion, they brought back into their own communities.[179] Second, as time progressed, it was more common to find small numbers of non-Russians living in sectarians' villages. These natives tended to be in the employ of Russians and had moved permanently to the Russian villagers in order to reduce travel time.[180] Third, non-Russians occasionally, but not always, moved into sectarian villages when they were the owners of the villages' tavern or inn.[181] However, these were minor exceptions which serve to prove the rule that, while they might interact and acculturate on the economic plane, their domestic lives remained isolated from each other and culturally non-influential.

Particularly in the area of religion, there was very little overlap between the Russian dissenters and the indigenous Transcaucasians, and no marked exchange of beliefs or practices.[182] Notably, the lack of religious acculturation supported the initial assumptions of tsarist policy-makers that by settling the sectarians in Transcaucasia "... surrounded by Muslims and Armenians, they will not have the means to spread their schism [*raskol*]."[183] Instances of inter-ethnic conversion appeared only on the rarest of occasions. Exceptions found in the archives include an Armenian man who took on the Molokan faith, and a Dukhobor woman who petitioned the authorities unsuccessfully for the right to change her faith to Armenian-Gregorian.[184] Moreover, the explosion of the Prygun branch of the Molokans onto the Transcaucasian stage

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[179]Dolzhenko, "Pervye russkie pereselentsy," 65.
[180]On the existence of mixed villages see Petrov, "Seleniia Novo-Saratovka," 231-232, 243.
[181]Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni," no. 136: 2.
[182]For general statements of this trend, see GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 545, 1893, l. 21 and *Sektanty Kavkaza. Stat'ia* (Tiflis: Tip. Kantseliarii glavnonachal'stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chastiiu na Kavkaze, 1890), 4.
[183]RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, l. 19. See also the discussions in chapters one and three.
[184]For the former, see GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., l. 23. For the latter, see RGIA f.1268, op. 3, d. 443, 1849-1850.

attracted a small number of Armenians into the faith. According to contemporary commentators, the dynamism and magnetism of the Prygun leader Maksim Rudometkin, together with the ecstatic nature of the religious ceremonies, was so forceful as to draw non-Russians to the prayer services regularly.[185]

Conversion by Georgian Orthodox or Muslims to a sectarian faith and the reverse was almost unheard of. There is a brief mention in the annual report of the Exarch of Georgia for 1883 that Georgians were being tempted, along with Russians, by the allure of the sects (especially Molokans and Baptists) living nearby. The author notes that the propaganda of the sectarians was succeeding primarily because they were able to propagandize young Georgians who were brought into sectarians' homes to work as servants. The author notes that this "vacillation" in faith is something new, stating that "from time immemorial the mass of the people were solid in their faith in Orthodoxy." Only three years later, however, in the report for 1886, the Exarch reported that despite the temptation and a certain wavering in their faith "sects do not appear among the Georgians."[186]

Similarly, almost no indigenous influence was found in the clothing of Russian settlers, or the reverse. Sectarian clothing styles (both everyday and holiday wear) remained almost identical to the patterns found in central Russia. Dukhobors clothing underwent certain changes in Transcaucasia, but these were internally generated rather

[185]On the appearance of Armenians in Prygun prayer services, see N. D. "Pryguny," no. 10: 387; Kolosov, "Russkie Sektanty," 145; and Dunaev, "Sekta Prygunov" in *Russkie sektanty, ikh uchenie, kult, i sposoby propagandy*, ed. M. A. Kal'nev (Odessa: 1911), 190 for a photo that is labeled an Armenian Prygun. Pryguny believed that the spirit of God entered into the bodies of the faithful during services, causing them to jump, dance and move uncontrollably, as well as to go into trances and speak in tongues. Presumably the rumors of sexual impropriety brought against the Pryguns for the very physical nature of their prayer services would have attracted even the strongest non-believer at least to witness the event. On the Pryguny in general, see N. Dingel'shtedt, *Zakavkazskie sektanty v ikh semeinom i religioznom bytu* (St. Petersburg, 1885).

[186]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 367a, 1857-1858, l. 4-4ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 48, 1862, l. 14ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 208, 1866, l. 15ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 365, 1871, l. 19; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 951, 1883, l. 26-26ob; and RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, l. 53.

than a function of borrowing indigenous patterns. The solitary cross-over was that Russian men began to wear "arkhaluki" made from satin lasting and felt. Indeed, change in clothing was only seen in male settlers who, because of their economic activities, were in much more frequent contact with the people around them.[187]

Frontier Encounters

The types and tenor of the "on-the-ground" interactions of sectarian-settlers and Armenians, Azerbaijani Turks, and Georgians are vital to a broader understanding of Russia's presence in Transcaucasia and the meanings of the frontier to Russian history. In contrast to the focus of existing scholarship on state authority and native elites, this chapter's analysis of the relations between colonists and locals underscores the importance of Russian settlers as a third force in the colonial process. Especially in rural areas, local Transcaucasians interacted with sectarian-settlers more frequently than with Russian state agents. Indeed, for many Transcaucasians, the sectarians came to represent both Russia and Russians.[188] How Transcaucasians experienced Russian imperialism on a day-to-day basis was defined in great part by their relationships with Russian settlers.

This chapter also demonstrates that Transcaucasia was more than simply an arena of imperial dominance and native resistance. It was not always clear who was "colonizer" and who "colonized," or in which direction power flowed. Tsarist officials

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[187]Kalashev, "Selenie Ivanovka," 275; Kolosov, "Russkie sektanty," 154; and S. A. Inikova, "Istoriia i simvolika dukhoborcheskogo kostiuma" *Zhivaia starina* no. 1 (1994): 29-36. Compare this to what one American observer called "the curious commingling of civilized garments and barbaric adornments," among the métis on the Mexican-American border. Quoted in Faragher, "Americans, Mexicans, Métis," 104.

[188]Petr Egorov remarked on this fact during his travels through Transcaucasia when he noted that "the indigenous peoples call all Russian peasants 'Molokans.'" Petr Egorov, "Zakavkazskiia dorozhnyia zapiski 1851 goda: doroga ot Tiflisa do Shemakhi i g. Elisavetpolia," *Russkii invalid* no. 217 (October 10 1857): 817.

and nineteenth-century commentators publicly touted the russification [*obrusenie*] of the local inhabitants by the sectarians' presence in the region. In a similar vein, recent studies of Russia's imperial project by western historians have described colonial contact as unequal and unidirectional: waves pounding on rock. Yet, the dynamic process of accommodation and exchange in which the settlers and natives existed influenced all people involved. In their daily interactions, it was more often the locals who dictated the terms of the relationship. The combination of the extreme difference in numbers between the two groups—a small drop of sectarians in the sea of Transcaucasians—a terrain unfamiliar to the settlers, and the fact that the sectarians did not always receive advantageous treatment from state officials, meant that it was the settlers who accommodated and acculturated to the Transcaucasians' world as much as, if not more than, the natives to the Russian one. Moreover, in the settlement of dissenters on the lands of local elites, the "colonizers" were thrust into a subordinate position to the "colonized."

Furthermore, the chapter highlights another overarching theme of the dissertation: that the Transcaucasian frontier provided a fertile space for the creation and germination among Russians of new social and cultural systems not possible in central Russia. In this case, through the interactive, ongoing, and unpredictable interrelations of settlers and natives, Russian colonization shaped and transformed the Russian colonists along with the colonized region and peoples. The resettlement of religious dissenters to Transcaucasia produced a spectrum of relations with local inhabitant: a simultaneous blend of conflict, mutual support, economic transactions, and cultural transference and accommodation. Of these, the negotiation of violence and conflict was not only a defining feature of the common landscape co-created by these different peoples, it was also the point of greatest cultural transformation. In reaction to their

new context, the sectarian settlers underwent a fundamental change in their religiosity, accepting violence as a means to resolve differences and transforming from pacifists into "pacifiers."

Finally, despite mutual accommodations, profound transformations, and growing socio-economic bonds, the natives and sectarians in Transcaucasia remained relatively isolated from each other, and unchanged by their meetings, in comparison with other Russian frontiers and especially with colonial situations elsewhere. This separation resulted in great part from the fact that the Russian colonists in the Transcaucasian case were religious dissenters. As I discussed in chapter two, the sectarians did not relocate to Transcaucasia with notions of colonization in mind: neither as witting agents of Russian state power to fulfill the enterprise of Russian imperial expansion,[189] nor to civilize other peoples, nor on a religious mission to convert non-believers. As a result, the non-conformists remained in many respects consciously separate from the natives, cherishing their new found isolation and independence and interacting with their neighbors primarily on an economic level.

In the meeting of settlers and locals, the Transcaucasian frontier proved transformative. New worlds were created and changes wrought by their contact. But frontier encounters were not the only context in which the sectarians experienced metamorphosis (consciously or unconsciously). The southern frontier, with its less-regulated spaces, also gave the sectarians the opportunity to reformulate their religious identities and practices through conversion. It is to the explosion of religious refashioning that we will turn in the next chapter.

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[189]As discussed in chapter three, they did develop into that role.

Chapter Five

Religious Refashioning in a New Land: Conversion in a Multi-Confessional Society

The Transcaucasian frontier provided a rich setting and powerful opportunities for Russian sectarian-settlers to refashion themselves and their communities on many levels. The resettlement of Dukhobors, Molokans, and Subbotniks to Russia's periphery brought sectarians from disparate parts of the empire together for the first time into their own separate enclaves. On this undergoverned frontier, the sectarians found themselves with opportunities to formulate alternative existences distinct from their previous experiences in the interior provinces. This process of sectarian re-definition was characterized in their religious lives by conversion from one Christian persuasion to another. While the exact frequency of such denominational switching cannot be quantified with any exactness from existing sources, sectarian denominational change nonetheless persisted throughout the nineteenth century.

Conversion functioned on many distinct, yet dynamically interactive levels in the sectarian communities. At its core, altering religious affiliation was a personal expression of religiosity and an individual choice of religious identity. However, in the Russian empire, with its dominant, state-sponsored Church and restrictive religious policies, conversion was never solely an act of personal faith. Beyond being a spiritual choice, conversion had profound legal, political and socio-economic implications for the convert. Indeed, religious identity was a politically charged site—like ethnicity, social status or gender—and Tsarist jurisprudence applied separate sets of laws to the members of different religious faiths. These laws defined how individuals would be

treated by state power—where people could live, what work they could perform, how they could act in public, and what public offices they could hold. Intricate legal networks strictly regulated movement from one religion to another and frequently state officials, not the individual, defined the religion to which a person officially adhered. Furthermore, as we have seen, the very possibility of conversion—and particularly the fear of Russian subjects leaving the Orthodox Church—channeled Tsarist policy towards both religious dissenters and Transcaucasia in specific directions. In this political-legal context, Russian subjects at times switched denominations consciously in order to manipulate the laws and take advantage of the perquisites attached to certain religious categories.

Switching religious affiliation played a dynamic social role in sectarian villages through the development of what can be termed a "culture of conversion." With the exception of the Dukhobors, Transcaucasian sectarians lived in multi-denominational villages on the periphery of a multi-confessional, multi-ethnic empire. The settlers' colonies were daily confronted with the physical presence of a religious "other" and the rival socio-religious beliefs and practices attendant with such immediacy. In this setting, the potential, if not the reality, of conversion was ever-present. Communities were persistently involved either in confronting the consequences of conversion, contemplating the prospect of changing faiths, attempting to ward it off, or (more rarely) struggling to inspire it in others.[1] Moreover, conversion was simultaneously a *result* of the multi-denominational context and an influential *force* in the social mechanics of each community. Social tensions, especially in the family, were both

[1]The pervasiveness of conversion was augmented by the fact that many sectarians were themselves converts from Orthodoxy (or the children of converts from Orthodoxy) and the notion of changing faith was not something foreign to them.

created and resolved by conversion. Communal relations were substantively redefined in the wake of a change of religious affiliation.

From an analytical perspective, an examination of the different aspects of the conversion process among the sectarians demonstrates the relative permeability of the boundaries of religious affiliation and the meanings found at the nexus of faith and identity. Tsarist officials believed that the high incidence of sectarian denominational switching represented a weakness of faith and reflected the spiritual poverty of these apostates from the Orthodox Church. However, approached differently, such conversion also reveals a distinct understanding of the meanings of religious identity as well as the very great concern and intensity with which these Russians strove to ensure their salvation in the next life.

In piecing together the processes and meanings of denominational switching among Transcaucasian sectarians, researchers encounter certain obstacles.[2] Perhaps more than other forms of historical information, tales of conversion, whether autobiographical or biographical, carry with them a reconstructive agenda, which reflects the post-conversion needs and goals of the convert or author. In different ways, each of the types of sources available must be understood in terms of how the author chose to represent a change of faith, and the "facts" therein need to be approached with caution. This is particularly true in the case of Baptist conversion narratives, which tended to be highly formulaic and renovationist in structure and content.[3]

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[2]Sources for this chapter include reports of civilian, military and Church officials, depositions of converts to state authorities, descriptions and discussions of conversion by journalists, ethnographers and other outside commentators, and both autobiographical and biographical narratives of conversion written by the sectarians themselves.

[3]On the difficulties of using conversion stories as evidence in general, see the discussion in David Snow and Richard Machalek, "The Sociology of Conversion," *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (1984): 175-178. On the specific case of the Russian Baptists, see Heather Coleman, "Becoming a Russian Baptist: Conversion Narratives and Personal Experience" (paper presented at the Midwest Russian History Workshop, spring 1997), 1.

A second hurdle to the study of conversion among Transcaucasian sectarians is the question of their illiteracy. Consequently, for the better part of the nineteenth century the sources are much less revealing about the personal-psychological aspects of conversion than they are about the political, social, and religious components. By default, the discussion that follows focuses disproportionately on the latter. Like the sources themselves, this chapter is notably silent on internal mental processes whose prominent role in the conversion process has been amply documented in other contexts.[4]

Defining "Conversion"

Theologians, social scientists and believers have long struggled with definitional and methodological problems surrounding the switching of faith. What is conversion? When has conversion taken place and who decides if conversion has occurred? Is conversion a process or a sharp change, the result of the accumulation of small changes or triggered by a specific moment? How much change is necessary for a conversion? How should conversion be understood and what meanings are given to conversion by the convert and by his or her community? There has been little consensus over the centuries, with almost as many answers to these questions as there have been converts. In fact, each of the different Christian denominations claiming adherents among the Russians in Transcaucasia—Orthodox, Molokane, Pryguny, Dukhobortsy, Subbotniki and Baptists—held a distinct understanding of the parameters, meanings, and timing of conversion (just as each denomination had different notions of what it meant to be

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[4]See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience; a study in human nature; being the Gifford lectures on natural religion delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1902), 157-209 and James Scraggs and William Douglas, "Issues in the Psychology of Religious Conversion," *Journal of Religion and Health* 6, no. 3 (July 1967): 204-216.

Christian). Moreover, none of these religious groups was monolithic in its understandings of conversion, each possessing a variety of shadings. Such variances in understanding conversion were not simply academic but played important roles in the unfolding of conversion processes among the sectarians.

From its very outset, conversion has played a prominent role in Christianity. Jesus Christ's call to "repent" and "follow me" was exemplified by the celebrated conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus. This almost instantaneous and complete transformation, accomplished through divine intervention, has provided the traditional and popularly accepted understanding of conversion.[5] In her study, *Luther on Conversion*, Marilyn Harran summarizes:

> Conversion had a rich and varied set of meanings and contexts during the Medieval period. Perhaps its most predominant meaning until the late Middle Ages was in reference to a change of life from secular to monastic. In the subsequent period, as in the case of Francis of Assisi, conversion meant less an outward change, certainly no longer one necessarily involving a departure from the world, and more a change of heart that allowed one to pursue the vita apostolica in the world.[6]

Recently, psychologists, theologians, sociologists, and anthropologists have posited other definitions, each asserting that conversion "involves radical personal change."[7] In his still classic work, William James argued that conversion is "the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities."[8] The sociologists John Lofland and Rodney Stark wrote that "[w]hen a person gives up one such perspective or ordered

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[5]Revised Standard Version of the Bible, *Matthew* 4: 17 and 19, and *Acts* 9: 1-19, respectively.
[6]Marilyn Harran, *Luther on Conversion: The Early Years* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 52-53.
[7]Snow and Machalek, "Sociology of Conversion," 169.
[8]James, *Varieties*, 157.

view of the world for another we refer to this process as *conversion*."[9] Other scholars have tried to resolve the problem of defining conversion by restricting its meaning to a narrowly demarcated set of events—the complete reorientation of the soul—and coining other terms to capture other forms of religious transformation. Thus, academics have conceptualized distinctions between conversion proper and "adhesion" ("the possibility of participating in religious groups and rituals without assuming a new way of life"), "alternation" ("reversible and less comprehensive" conversion), "consolidation" ("the adoption of a belief system or identity that combines two prior but contradictory world views or identities") and "regeneration" ("enthusiastic adoption of a belief system that had not been taken seriously previously").[10]

In response to these not-entirely-satisfactory efforts to split different forms of religious switching into delineated categories, other scholars have moved to construct a definition of conversion that is widely inclusive.[11] Perhaps the most eloquent enunciation of this all-embracing definition is found in Lewis Rambo's *Understanding Religious Conversion*. He argues that:

> Conversion is a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and orientations. ... (a) conversion is a process over time, not a single event; (b) conversion is contextual and thereby influences and is influenced by a matrix of relationships, expectations, and situations; and (c) factors in the conversion process are multiple, interactive, and cumulative. There is no one cause of conversion, no one process, and no one simple consequence of that process.

Later, Rambo continues:

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[9]John Lofland and Rodney Stark, "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective," *American Sociological Review* 30, no. 6 (December 1965): 862. Italics in the original. In this vein, see also Peter Berger, who argues that "migration between religious worlds implies migration between their respective plausibility structures." Peter Berger. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969): 51.
[10]See the summary discussion of these definitional categories in Snow and Machalek, "Sociology of Conversion," 169-170. Quotations are from this review article.
[11]See, for example, Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) and V. Bailey Gillespie, *The Dynamics of Religious Conversion* (Birmingham, Ala: Religious Education Press, 1991).

... conversion is *actively constructed* by a religious group and by the wishes, expectations, and aspirations of the convert or potential convert.... [C]onversion is what a group or person *says* it is.[12]

Rambo's conceptualization of conversion best encompasses the experiences of Transcaucasian sectarians. Denominational switching was indeed contextual, influencing and influenced in a web of "dynamic forces," with multiple causes, various processes and diverse consequences. The other definitions are unable to assimilate the vast spectrum of conversion phenomena experienced by the Transcaucasian sectarians. However, while following in the wake of Rambo's "holistic model" of conversion, the following discussion will diverge at points because of the specifics of Transcaucasian case. For instance, the Transcaucasian conversions include only what sociologists have termed "denominational switching" (and Rambo calls "institutional transition")—"the change of an individual or group from one community to another within a major tradition"—as opposed to the migration from one distinct faith to another (say from Christianity to Islam), or the transformation of an individual from not having faith to having faith.[13] Moreover, in contrast to Rambo's work, which focuses on "cultural, social, personal and religious" aspects, this study of conversion in Transcaucasia also incorporates a discussion of the political and economic components which were particularly important in the Russian case.[14]

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[12]Rambo, *Understanding*, 5, 7. Italics in original. See also the variety of human activities that Rambo believes fall under the rubric of conversion on pp. 2-3 as well as the discussion on pp. 171-174.
[13]Rambo discusses five "ideal types" of conversion: 1) apostasy or defection ("the repudiation of a religious tradition or its beliefs by previous members"), 2) intensification ("the revitalized commitment to a faith with which the convert has had previous affiliation"), 3) affiliation ("the movement of an individual or group from no or minimal religious commitment to full involvement with an institution or community of faith"), 4) institutional transition and 5) tradition transition ("the movement of an individual or a group from one major tradition to another"). Rambo, *Understanding*, 12-14. In this regard, see also his discussion of Lofland and Skonovd's "conversion motifs," on pp. 14-16. Note should be made of the problematic case of the Subbotniki. For the most part, Subbotniki considered themselves to be Jews and of the Jewish faith, and in this sense Russian converts to the Subbotniki can be understood as "tradition transition." Yet, Tsarist officials tended to lump them in with other sectarians and generally refused to accept that a Russian could become a Jew. Jews, for that matter, also did not generally accept Subbotniks as Jews.
[14]Rambo, *Understanding*, 7-12.

Pathways and Statistics of Denominational Switching

Four pathways of conversion can be demarcated among the Transcaucasian sectarians: either to or from Orthodoxy, between sectarian denominations, and, beginning in the late 1860s, conversion from an indigenous Russian sect to the Baptist faith. With sect-Orthodox or sect-sect switching, change in denominational allegiance sometimes happened more than once in the life of an individual. A person might go back and forth multiple times between two denominations (especially in the case of sect-Orthodox) or migrate through a series of denominations. Conversion to the Baptists was almost always a one-time switch. Movement to and from Orthodoxy involved all sectarian groups, although since the Molokane comprised the majority of Transcaucasian sectarians, they represented by far the largest contingent of converts in either direction.

It is almost impossible to quantify with any accuracy rates of conversion among Russian sectarians in Transcaucasia. While annual statistics on conversions from sectarianism to Orthodoxy were kept by various state and Church institutions, figures for the other three routes of conversions are virtually non-existent. Even in the case of sectarian-to-Orthodox switching, the statistics are not uniformly helpful. Data is more complete after 1860 and comparison among years is problematic since information was collected in different geographic divisions (guberniia, diocese or Exarchate) at various times and by differing branches of officialdom. Moreover, the figures are frequently untrustworthy. In the Transcaucasus, the tsarist administration was thinly stretched and statistics hard to collect. Both civil and spiritual officials had reasons, depending on

particular circumstances, either to downplay or exaggerate rates of conversion in their jurisdictions in an effort to influence policy or to protect their bureaucratic positions.[15]

However, despite these restrictions, certain general trends in conversion can be discerned.[16] First, sectarians in Transcaucasia converted primarily as individuals or in small family units and groups of friends rather than in large numbers.[17] Second, conversion involving Russian sectarians in Transcaucasia was almost exclusively an intra-ethnic affair. Only on the rarest of occasions were instances found of inter-ethnic conversion.[18]

The most rewarding information about the statistical rates of conversion exists regarding the switching from sectarianism to Orthodoxy. By far the majority of such switching occurred soon after the arrival of a sectarian-settler in Transcaucasia (within five years of resettlement). I. L. Segal', head of the Transcaucasian Statistical Committee in the 1880s and 1890s, noted that of the 128 Russians to convert to Orthodoxy from sectarianism or Old Belief between 1867 and 1890, 80% were new

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[15]For the distortion of conversions for the purpose of positing a case before the central authorities see, for example, RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 865, 1848-1852.

[16]Unfortunately, there is insufficient data to make any conclusions about the connections between gender and conversion. The only longitudinal figures are those of Segal', who highlighted that of the 128 converts from sectarian faiths to Orthodoxy from 1867 to 1890, 100 were male while the remaining 38 were female. However, culling information from other sources seems to belie such a stark gender bias. I. L. Segal', "Russkie poseliane v Elisavetpol'skoi gubernii (statistichesko-etnograficheskii ocherk)," *Kavkaz* no. 42 (February 15, 1890): 3.

[17]This generalization did not hold in two spheres: the extensive conversions that followed in the wake of resettlement and the handful of cases of large-scale conversion that took place among settled sectarians. See below.

[18]Exceptions found in the archives include an Armenian man who took on the Molokan faith, and a Dukhobor woman who petitioned the authorities unsuccessfully for the right to change her faith to Armenian-Gregorian. For the former, see GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., l. 23. For the latter, see RGIA f.1268, op. 3, d. 443, 1849-1850. Movement by Georgian Orthodox or Muslims to a sectarian faith and the reverse were almost unheard of. RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 48, 1862, l. 14ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 208, 1866, l. 15ob; and RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 365, 1871, l. 19; There is a brief mention in the annual report of the Georgian Exarchate for 1883 that Georgians were being tempted along with Russians by the allure of the sects living nearby. However, only three years later, in the report for 1886, the Exarch reported that despite the temptation and a certain wavering in their faith "sects do not appear among the Georgians." RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 951, 1883, ll. 26-26ob and RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, l. 53.

arrivals.[19] Also, of the 266 Dukhobors earmarked for banishment from the Don region in 1830, by 1831 fifty individuals had converted to Orthodoxy and requested permission to return to their original homes.[20] Of 903 Molokan settlers who arrived in Transcaucasia from Tambov guberniia and the town of Kishinev between 1831 and 1834, 94 converted to Orthodoxy and returned to the interior provinces. These ninety-four converts represent 10.4% of the total migrants as well as 21.7% of those settlers who survived relocation.[21] Moreover, of the 425 families who relocated to Shirvan guberniia from 1834 to 1838, 118 souls converted to Orthodoxy.[22]

Once sectarians had settled in Transcaucasia and survived the initial hardships, the rate of conversions to Orthodoxy fell dramatically.[23] Two exceptions were the large-scale conversion of Molokans to Orthodoxy that took place in the village of Alty-Agach in 1853, when 15 families (61 people) converted to Orthodoxy simultaneously, and the conversion to Molokanism of more than 200 Russian Orthodox villagers (more than thirty families) in Borchalo uezd, Tiflis guberniia in the 1880s.[24]

In consequence, the majority of conversion cases took place in the 1830s and 1840s when the volume of sectarian resettlement was at its highest, the conditions facing the sectarians were the harshest, and the local authorities were the least

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[19]Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 42: 3. For similar evidence see GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., ll. 34-35; RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1833, d. 33, ll. 1-5ob; and RGIA f. 1284, 196-1835, d. 73, l. 1.
[20]RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, ll. 19-19ob; *AKAK* vol. 7, doc. 415, p. 466; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1835, d. 46, 1835-1839, ll. 14-16ob.
[21]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., l. 67.
[22]*AKAK* vol. 8, doc. 60, p. 82. Other documented cases reflect smaller conversion rates, however. Of the 73 Molokans who arrived in the village of Alty-Agach in Baku guberniia from Orenburg guberniia in the 1830s, 4 converted to Orthodoxy (5.5%). Of 1,645 Molokan settlers from Orenburg guberniia to the villages of Topchi and Alty-Agach, 28 converted to Orthodoxy (1.7%). See GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., l. 68.
[23]Segal' makes this point in "Russkie poseliane," 42: 3.
[24]RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1884, d. 71; RGIA f. 1268, op. 7, d. 359, 1853; Grigorii Buniatov, "Byt' russkikh krest'ian Loriiskago uchastka, Borchalinskago uezda, Tiflisskoi gubernii," *SMOMPK* vyp. 31 (Tiflis: Tip. Kants. glavno. grazh. chastiiu na Kavkaze, 1902): otd. II: 103; and I. V. Dolzhenko, "Religioznyi i kul'turno-bytovoi uklad russkikh krest'ian-sektantov Vostochnoi Armenii (XIX - nachalo XX v.)," in *Dukhobortsy i Molokane v Zakavkaz'e*, eds. V. I. Kozlov and A. P. Pavlenko (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1992), 10-11.

welcoming and accommodating. Instances of conversion to Orthodoxy decreased thereafter, declining rapidly during the 1840s and 1850s and then leveling off. From the end of the 1850s on, conversion to Orthodoxy remained constant and numerically small, varying in its exact totals from year to year.

Table 1: Sectarian Conversion to Orthodoxy in Transcaucasia[25]

Year	Number of conversions		Sect of Convert (if given)
1856[t]	96		
1858[t]	25		
1860[t]	3		
1861[g]	14		
1862[g]	27		24 Molokans, 3 Dukhobors
1863[g]	43		41 Molokans, 2 Dukhobors
Average 1856-1863/year		34.67	
1870[g]	6		
1878[t]	0		
1883[g]	6		6 Molokans
1886[g]	3		3 Molokans
Average of final four listings/year		3.75	
Average conversions/year:		22.3	

Key:
[t] Conversions in entire Transcaucasian region
[g] Conversions in Georgian diocese

Conversion from Orthodoxy to sectarianism is much harder to quantify. Only in cases where there was any sort of mass conversion—such as the case in Borchalo uezd in the 1880s—was any record kept of the number of people involved. Despite the lack of reliable statistics, other information indicates that the rate of conversion from Orthodoxy to sectarian denominations increased over the course of the nineteenth century. This augmentation likely resulted from the increased migration of Orthodox

[25]RGIA f. 1268, op. 9, d. 10, 1858, l. 6; RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 170, 1860, ll. 28, 92, 137ob, 179ob, 374; RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 156, 1861; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 48, 1862, l. 14ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 90, 1863, l. 19ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 133, 1864, l. 26ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 365, 1871, l. 18ob; RGIA f. 1268, op. 24, d. 231, 1879-1880, ll. 30ob, 157ob, 216ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 951, 1883, l. 23; and RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886.

Russians to Transcaucasia beginning in the early 1880s. The larger volume of Orthodox peasants living near sectarian communities—when there had been none or few in the preceding decades—opened a much greater possibility for the spread of sectarianism.[26]

Records for conversion from one sect to another are even fewer. Both official and sectarian sources note the phenomenon, but they are silent as to the statistical contours of such conversion.[27] Patterns of sect-to-sect conversion varied greatly from one sectarian group to another. As a general rule, Dukhobors rarely altered their religious affiliation.[28] The frequency of changes in religious affiliation was more noticeable among other sectarian denominations. Outside of joining the new branches of Molokanism that appeared in Transcaucasia—particularly the Obshchie and Pryguny—switching of religious affiliation tended to occur primarily between Molokane and Subbotniki, with the greater part of the flow going from the former to the latter. One source, while asserting that the rate of denominational change was a "trickle," did believe that the switching of Molokane to Subbotniki had increased over the course of the century.[29]

In Transcaucasia, converts to the Baptist faith came almost exclusively from among the ranks of the Molokans. There exist no statistics for the number of conversions to the Baptists. However, the general trajectory can be gleaned by extrapolating from census information. Thus, while the Baptist population in Transcaucasia was almost zero in 1868 (the year of the first Russian to convert to the

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[26]On this trend, see for instance RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 951, 1883, ll. 26-26ob; RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, l. 57; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1884, d. 71.

[27]*AKAK* vol. 11, doc. 4, p. 2. However, sources describe every possible permutation of conversion from one sect to another. See, for example, K. S-A, "Russkie raskol'niki, poselenye v Bakinskoi gubernii," *Kavkaz* no. 10 (January 24, 1868): 3.

[28]Note Segal' "Russkie poseliane," no. 42: 3. See RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1884, d. 71, ll. 15-16 for a case when two Dukhobors joined the Molokans.

[29]"'Subbotniki' v Erivanskoi gubernii," in *Pamiatnaia knizhka Erivanskoi gubernii na 1912 g.* (Erevan: 1912), literaturnyi otdel, ch. III: 2-3.

Baptist faith), it had reached 582 people (304 men, 278 women) in 1886.[30] In one specific instance, Pavlov claimed to have baptized forty-nine people in four months (1876-1877) on his first missionary trip through Transcaucasia.[31]

Reasons for Conversion

Spiritual leaders, social scientists, and scholars of religion have expended much energy attempting to determine what confluence of forces and aspirations prompts conversion.[32] Yet with every new study the origins of conversion have become less and less clear. Without even attempting to breach divine or other-worldly explanations, sociologists Snow and Machalek list six different factors in their review of the causes of conversion: "psychophysiological responses to coercion and induced stress," "predisposing personality traits and cognitive orientations," "situational factors that induce stress," "predisposing social attributes," "a variety of social influences," and " causal process explanations involving the confluence of a range of elements."[33]

The range of reasons that brought Transcaucasian sectarians to convert were equally varied. While conversion resulted in each case from a very individual and contextual combination of factors, the impulse to conversion among the Transcaucasian sectarians can be broadly grouped into three categories: political-legal, social, and

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[30]*Svod statisticheskikh dannykh o naselenii zakavkazskago kraia izvlechennykh iz posemeinnykh spiskov 1886 g.* (Tiflis: 1893).
[31]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., l. 123.
[32]Snow and Machalek, "Sociology of Conversion," 167-190; Rambo, *Understanding;* William Sims Bainbridge, "The Sociology of Conversion," in *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, eds. H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1992), 178-191; and Marc Musick and John Wilson, "Religious Switching for Marriage Reasons," *Sociology of Religion* 56, no. 3 (fall 1995): 257-270.
[33]Snow and Machalek, "Sociology of Conversion," 178-184. See also Bainbridge's exploration of "strain theory" and "social influence theory," in "Sociology," 178-191 as well as Lofland and Stark's distinction between "predisposing conditions" and "situational contingencies," in "Becoming a World-Saver," 864.

religious-spiritual. In the actual experiences of the converts, however, these distinctions were not necessarily consciously understood, and incidents of conversion derived primarily from a seamless combination of agents from each of these three categories.

Political-legal Motivations

Political-legal causes of conversion were "situational forces" which involved efforts on the part of Russian subjects to utilize the avenues presented them by the legal structures of Tsarist religious policy to better their material situation. For Transcaucasian sectarians political-legal inducements to conversion were most prominent under two sets of circumstances: to control their access to mobility (or stasis) and to escape prosecution for certain crimes. Political-legal motivations for conversion played a role only in sectarian conversions to or from Orthodoxy since Tsarist officials were fundamentally unconcerned with sect-to-sect conversion.

An extensive set of laws defined the relationship between religious identity and mobility. As stated in the October 20, 1830 laws, sectarians of various sorts were to be resettled, either forcibly or voluntarily, to Transcaucasia. Once designated for relocation, the only way for them to stave off or reverse migration was through conversion to Orthodoxy. Put simply, sectarian identity provided mobility (both desired and undesired) while Orthodox identity would block such movement, and Russians took advantage of these legal niches.[34]

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[34]On the legal parameters of conversion, see RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1833, d. 33; RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1835, d. 73; RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23279, 1844; RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 433, 1843-1848, ll. 28-28ob; and *PSZ* (2) t. V., otd. 2, 1830, no. 4010. On avenues of mobility open to Orthodox Russians, see Willard Sunderland, "Making the Empire: Colonists and Colonization in Russia, 1800-1850s" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1997); idem., "Peasants on the Move: State Peasant Resettlement in Imperial Russia, 1805-1830s," *The Russian Review* 52 (October 1993): 472-485; and Francois-Xavier

The process of resettlement to Transcaucasia prompted conversion in both directions between Orthodoxy and sectarianism. The prospect of forcible resettlement impelled religious non-conformists to switch denominations to Orthodoxy before any movement took place in order to avoid all of the perils attendant on migration. According to the laws, sectarians who converted before starting out to Transcaucasia were to remain in their present community or with their *pomeshchik*. Many who were registered to resettle petitioned the authorities informing them of their desire to return to Orthodoxy and remain in their current homes. In one case, Molokans who had been granted permission to resettle voluntarily to Transcaucasia changed their minds, converted to Orthodoxy, and under the terms of such conversions petitioned to remain in their present domiciles.[35] In a variation on this theme, a woman from among the Don Cossacks immediately had her young son baptized into Orthodoxy, despite remaining a Dukhobor herself, when she heard that her family had been earmarked for resettlement and did not wish him to suffer the strains of relocation. Her son was left under the care of an Orthodox guardian while she and other relatives departed for Transcaucasia.[36] Conversion from sectarianism to Orthodoxy also took place in transit to Transcaucasia as a result of the rigors of the journey and homesickness.[37]

In contrast, Orthodox peasants in the internal provinces declared their conversion to one of the sectarian faiths in order to leave their current place of residence and, in many cases, to join family members who had left for Transcaucasia.[38] Others who had held to a sectarian faith in secret now came forward and publicly declared their beliefs

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Coquin, *La Sibérie: Peuplement et immigration paysanne au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Institut D'Études Slaves, 1969).

[35]RGIA f. 384, op. 3, d. 1149, 1846-1851, l. 64. See also RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1829, d. 149, ll. 5-5ob and RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 225-225ob, 236.

[36]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, l. 184.

[37]Ibid., ll. 199-199ob, 201-201ob.

[38]Ibid., ll. 225, 232-232ob, 238.

and affiliation.[39] In related cases, as discussed in chapter two, Orthodox-to-sectarian denominational switching occurred among runaways in order for the sectarian communities clandestinely to register them in their villages.

The legal imperative that all sectarians who relocated to Transcaucasia could only move back to the internal provinces if they converted to Orthodoxy was an incentive for large numbers of sectarians to convert. The government also offered generous terms for converts to return to the interior provinces. Once in Transcaucasia, Orthodox converts were given permission to resettle in the internal provinces, register themselves in the town or village of their choosing (but with the prior agreement of the community involved and not in their former place of residence) and obtain a three-year tax privilege that was intended to encourage conversion and lessen the burden on their new community. State officials enforced the policy of non-return to former communities because they feared that the sectarian members of the community might persecute their former neighbors or tempt them back into their "heresy." Significantly, this non-return policy also permanently freed former estate peasants from landlord control. Tsarist officials rightly understood that few sectarians would agree to return to their former homes if it also necessitated a return to bondage.[40]

The physical and psychological shock of resettlement caused terrible suffering and a high mortality rate.[41] Under such harsh conditions, many sectarians chose to switch their religious affiliation to the despised Orthodox faith rather than to endure greater deprivation. At the same time, many settlers suffered from homesickness. An observer in the regional newspaper *Kavkaz* described the scenario:

> Hardly have they arrived in Transcaucasia when the sectarians look around them at the conditions and realize that life is impossible for them here ... The desire

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[39]GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, n.d., ll. 116-177 and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., ll. 46-47.
[40]RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1833, d. 33, passim.
[41]See chapter two.

> to return to their *rodina* grows and comes to seize the very essence of the new settler. And thus, what the convictions and the exhortations of the local clergy could not accomplish is attained by the craving to return to the rodina. In Transcaucasia they forget the martyrdom that they suffered for their faith. They forget all of the ruin and everything else that they were forced to live through during the hard trip across the Caucasian mountains. Neither the generosity of the soil, nor the luxurious environment, nor the sight of the happy-go-lucky—and yet always well-fed—indigenous person, is enough to deter them from the dream of their home village.[42]

The archives abound with cases of families or small groups of sectarians who converted to Orthodoxy after they arrived in Transcaucasia and then petitioned for permission to return to their native provinces.[43] Indeed, Tsarist officials realized from the outset that the hardships of life on the Transcaucasian frontier worked better than any missionary effort in bringing the sectarians back to the "bosom" of Orthodoxy.[44] On writing to the Minister of the Interior about the mass conversion of Don Dukhobors to Orthodoxy immediately following their forcible relocation to Transcaucasia, I. F. Paskevich, Chief Administrator of the Caucasus, asserted: "From this one should conclude that the climate of their current place of settlement exerts a large force on their conviction to leave their error and dangerous heresy."[45] Moreover, attempting to build on this success, the Viceroy, Prince A. I. Bariatinskii proposed in the late 1850s to increase the term of the tax break granted converts who returned to the central provinces from three to twenty-five years.[46]

The impact of the environment and peoples of Transcaucasia on the conversion patterns of the newly arriving settler was by no means constant over time. Evidence shows that the rate of conversion following migration was greatest in the 1830s and

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[42]"K voprosu o zakavkazskikh sektantakh," *Kavkaz* no. 84 (April 18 1881): 2. An almost identical description is also found in Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 42: 3.
[43]See for example, RGIA f. 1284, 196-1835, d. 73, l. 1 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 156, 1861.
[44]See for example, RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 279, 1846-1847, l. 1.
[45]*AKAK* vol. 7, doc. 415, p. 466. This quotation is also found in RGIA f. 379, op. 1, d. 1043, 1830-1837, ll. 19-19ob.
[46]RGIA f. 381, op. 2, d. 2014, 1858.

1840s when times were most difficult for the new settlers and declined form the 1840s or 1850s on. However, Segal' has argued that the rate of conversion among new arrivals began to increase again sometime in the 1870s or 1880s as a result of the cessation of subsidies from internal sectarian communities. For many years, newly arriving sectarians encountered agents from among their religious brethren whose duty it was to distribute funds to the new arrivals. The moneys were remittances sent by family members and other sectarian zealots in the internal provinces to aid their confrères overcome the dangers of the frontier. The money was not necessarily a large amount, but was sufficient to help the new arrivals through the potential for early catastrophe. However, by 1890, this vital service had disappeared almost entirely. According to Segal', the decline in subsidies resulted from a changing of the guard among the sectarians. While the earlier sectarian-settlers had tended to be ardent in their support for their faith, the new agents who came to take their place were often corrupt. When the new arrivals reported abuses to their benefactors in Russia, the remittances from the internal sectarian communities dried up completely.[47]

It should be noted that despite all of the hardships of the frontier and the material benefits of conversion, only a minority of sectarian-settlers took the option of converting and returning. For most sectarians, animosity towards the Orthodox Church proved an insurmountable obstacle to a return. Moreover, sectarian communities such as the Dukhobors were held together by such tight bonds of faith and allegiance that separation was almost unthinkable. The mass exile of Dukhobors from the Milky Waters region of Tauride guberniia between 1841 and 1845 reflects this case. The Dukhobors numbered more than 4,000 people. Yet despite their state-mandated

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[47]Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 43 (February 16 1890): 3.

relocation, only a handful converted before migration or on the road to Transcaucasia.[48] Moreover, once in Transcaucasia, conversions to Orthodoxy were also very few. Even in the face of a failed harvest and other deprivations, the Dukhobors remained impervious to the material temptations of conversion.[49]

The second prominent political-legal cause for resettlement revolved around the legal guarantee of amnesty for those who were charged with crimes against faith if they converted to Orthodoxy.[50] The case of Petr Bezzubtsov and his family is illuminating in this regard. Before their resettlement to Transcaucasia, he and his wife had been arrested for converting to the Molokan faith and "seducing" their children into the "heresy." However, soon thereafter they converted to Orthodoxy, "not out of spiritual conviction, but solely because of the wish to free themselves from court action and imprisonment, to which they were subject for supporting the Molokan sect." Despite the fact that, after their incarceration, Bezzubtsov and his wife "precisely fulfilled all Christian [Orthodox] obligations" until they left Tambov guberniia, they both resumed practicing the Molokan faith as soon as they moved to Transcaucasia.[51]

Such opportunism also engendered the possibility of multiple conversions. Indeed, incidents of recidivism among converts who switched denomination in search of (im)mobility or acquittal were widespread. In cases which did not involve any spiritual rebirth or fundamental religious change, converts were likely to return to their former practices, habits, and beliefs once the external catalyst for change disappeared.

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[48]See RGIA f. 383, op. 4, d. 3212, 1841-1843, ll. 64-65, 68ob, 70-71; RGIA f. 565, op. 4, d. 13676, 1842-1845, l. 34; and RGIA f. 384, op. 4, d. 977, 1841, passim.
[49]RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1844, d. 19, ll. 2-3.
[50]*PSZ* (2) t. 19, 1844, no. 17753 and RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 433, 1843-1848, ll. 28-28ob. While this law applied, in theory, only to those who were being investigated for religious crimes, there is evidence that local officials did on occasion extended it to individuals who were being charged with other types of criminal activity. See, for example, GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902, l. 6. For comparison, see the case of two Kalmyks in Transcaucasia in RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 724, 1847-1848.
[51]RGIA f. 1284, op. 204-1849, d. 799, ll. 3ob-8. The experiences of Aleksei Gus'kov also demonstrate this conscious usage of the legal ramifications of conversion to escape persecution. See RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 508, ll. 4ob-6, 7ob-11ob, 15-16.

For instance, Anna Donetskova, a Molokan who was registered by state authorities for banishment to Transcaucasia, converted to Orthodoxy in order to avoid separation from her Orthodox husband. However, once the contingents of sectarians for resettlement had left, she soon reverted to Molokanism.[52] The potential for recidivism was not lost on the authorities who were very concerned to ensure the "sincerity" of the conversion and prevent any return to former sectarianism.[53] Whether before or after relocation, the laws required that local spiritual authorities investigate the conversion and officially vouch for its sincerity. Without clerical verification, no conversion was accepted by Church authorities or the state as genuine.[54] Moreover, those who left Orthodoxy more than once faced stiff penalties and were denied any privileges if they returned to Orthodoxy for a second time.[55]

Social Causes of Conversion

The social origins of denominational switching took on a variety of forms: the impetus created by a host of family situations; disagreements with the original religious community; the attraction of differing social practices of other communities; and the influence of ethnic constructs in the specific case of the Subbotniki. Indeed, as Segal' wrote : "This switching is not always determined by a conviction in the superiority of beliefs of one sect as compared to another sect, but very often by personal relations to

[52]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1829, d. 149, ll. 5-5ob. In another case, three Cossacks of the Kuban voiska had been exiled along with their families to Tauride guberniia in 1816 because of their conversion to Dukhoborism. However, they were permitted to return to the Kuban because they converted to Orthodoxy while in exile. However, later authorities realized that these families had returned to their old Dukhobor ways and, in consequence, they were exiled to Transcaucasia. GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., l. 42. See also the cases in RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 232-232ob, 236.
[53]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 164-164ob, 175-175ob, 219-219ob.
[54]RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1835, d. 73, ll. 2-4.
[55]*PSZ* (2) t. V, otd. 2, 1830, no. 4010 and *PSZ* (2) t. XI, otd. 2, 1836, no. 9494.

the community. Even the most paltry dissatisfaction with one's co-religionists, neighbors, relatives or wife is sufficient to leave one's faith and join another."[56]

Family dynamics served as a seminal catalyst of conversion. The prompting of family members brought individuals to convert. Such familial influence came from all directions—wives on husbands, husbands on wives, parents on children, siblings on each other, parents-in-law on their children-in-law—and ranged from example to suggestion to physical violence.[57]

Moreover, conversion occurred as a consequence of the absence of family, or the distancing of an individual from their home and village. For instance, sectarian-settlers found the agricultural potential of much of the land in Transcaucasia insufficient to support their communities and as a result turned to a variety of non-agricultural endeavors to make ends meet.[58] Among these was the practice of sending younger family members to local towns to work as domestic servants in the households of Russian officials, especially in Erevan during the winter. Most often, young women and girls (both married and unmarried) entered domestic service (although boys did also). In consequence, it was not uncommon for these women, separated for long periods of time from their families, communities, and faith to fall in love with Russians living in the towns, such as soldiers, clerks and other officials. These sectarians would join the Orthodox faith and marry their new-found loves, leaving behind husbands or wives and other relatives.[59] The same process operated in reverse. One local journalist

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[56]Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 42: 3.
[57]See for instance, GMIR, f. 2. op. 7, d. 594, n.d., l. 46; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 111-112, 225, 232-232ob, 235ob-236, 237, 238; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1884, d. 71, ll. 10-11ob. Such pressure and prompting did not come solely from family members, but also from friends and acquaintances. In one instance, Efimiia Zholnina, a Molokan woman from the village of Prishib' in Baku guberniia, declared that she took up the Orthodox faith not as a result of any desire on her part, "but through the persuasion of the soldier's wife [*soldatka*] Avdot'ia Goliaeva." RGIA f. 1268, op. 5, d. 475, 1851-1852, l. 2.
[58]See chapter three.
[59]Reflecting assumptions that women were more easily tempted, contemporary observers asserted that this tendency was less marked on the men who went into the towns to work than on the women.

pointed out that it was especially those Orthodox who lived near Molokans in areas with a smaller number of churches and clergy that were most susceptible to the magnetism of the sectarian faiths—and rural Transcaucasia must be understood as a region with a relative paucity of Orthodox buildings and servitors.[60]

Russians also changed denominational affiliation in order to realize a form of de facto divorce. Such divorce was particularly common in cases of sectarian-Orthodox (and the reverse) and sect-to-sect conversion, and was not witnessed among Transcaucasian Baptists. In cases involving transference to or from Orthodoxy, certain laws concerning marriage were germane. Sectarian marriage had no legal standing, was officially recognized only as cohabitation and was not registered in any official capacity. A person married by sectarian rites who converted to Orthodoxy was entirely free to marry again, since no marriage had occurred in the Church's eyes.[61]

For women, conversion acted as a means to escape the harsh torments that a tyrannical husband or father-in-law could inflict. In one case, a Molokan *udel'naia* peasant from Saratov guberniia named Aleksandra Kanygina recounted how "because of a disagreeable life with her husband, Grigorii Kozlov, a Molokan, and desirous of obtaining a divorce from him, she converted to Orthodoxy...." However, she later felt guilty for her actions and ran away in 1843 to the Transcaucasus. There she married a second time, to a Russian Molokan settler, and began once again to follow the Molokan faith.[62] In another example from the mid-nineteenth century, two married Molokan

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Egorov, p. 903. See also Vorontsov's mention of the tendency of those sectarians in urban settings, surrounded by Orthodox Russians, to convert to Orthodoxy. RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 865, 1848-1852, ll. 2-2ob.

[60] S-A, "Russkie raskol'niki," no. 10 (January 24, 1868): 3.

[61] See the discussion in Dolzhenko, "Religioznyi," 18. See also the case of Vlas Karev in RGIA f. 1284, op. 196-1835, d. 46, ll. 1-1ob, 10-10ob, 19ob-21, 24-25ob.

[62] RGIA f. 1268, op. 6, d. 233, 1852, ll. 1-1ob. In this vein, see also GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, n.d., ll. 116-117.

women "baptized themselves" and converted to Orthodoxy. Thereupon, they abandoned their former lives and moved to Tiflis with a baby.[63]

The same device also provided husbands the opportunity to extricate themselves from a marriage without legal repercussions. In a petition to the authorities, a Molokan woman from Tambov province related that she had married her husband in 1877 according to Molokan rites, lived with him for ten years, and had children with him. However, the husband became enamored with another woman. He quickly converted to Orthodoxy, without ever asking his original wife whether she wished to join him in Orthodoxy, and married the other woman.[64]

The use of religious switching as a means of divorce was also a prominent reason for conversion from one sectarian faith to another, especially from the Molokane to the Subbotniki. The diverging structures of Molokan and Subbotnik marriage practices explains this one-way trend. For Molokans, marriage, while not a sacrament like in the Orthodox Church, was nevertheless considered a serious act. Divorce was frowned upon by the community and difficult to attain. A Molokan desiring divorce was required to have his or her request for separation approved in a public hearing of the village elders, and Molokan communities only infrequently permitted the remarriage of a divorced person. In contrast, divorce among Subbotniks was accomplished simply by the announcement of the intention to do so, and was as available to women as to men. Once individuals were divorced, Subbotnik communities generally raised no objections to their remarriage.[65] In consequence, those Molokans who wished to leave their

[63]Dolzhenko, "Religioznyi," 18.
[64]RGIA f. 1284, op. 222-1892, d. 74, ll. 2-3ob.
[65]On marriage and divorce among Subbotniki, see for example, "Subbotniki v Erivanskoi gubernii," 9; Il'ia Zhabin, "Selenie Privol'noe, Bakinskoi gub., Lenkoranskago uezda," in *SMOMPK* vol. 27 (Tiflis: Tip. Kantseliarii glavnonachal'stvuiushchago grazhdanskaiu chastiu na Kavkaze, 1900), otdel II: 54-55; A. I. Masalkin, "K istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov: II Subbotniki," *Kavkaz* no. 307 (November 19, 1893): 2; N. St-v, "Obychai i zakon v brachnykh delakh subbotnikov," *Kars* no. 41 (Oct. 8 1891): 3. On the Molokans, see A. I. Masalkin, "K istorii zakavkazskikh sektantov: I Molokane," *Kavkaz* no. 306 (November 18, 1893): 3 and S-A., "Russkie raskol'niki," no. 10 (Jan. 24, 1868): 3.

marriage—whether because of its poor quality or because they loved another—could do so by converting to the Subbotniki. Thus, the ease and flexibility of Subbotnik marriage-divorce practices acted as a pressure outlet for Molokans who felt constricted and oppressed by the stricter marital patterns of their faith—a valve that was daily apparent to Molokane who lived next to Subbotniki in multi-denominational villages.[66]

While the prospect of divorce prompted many sectarians to change religions, the desire to marry someone of a different denomination led to conversion on only a minority of occasions. Multi-denominational families were not an uncommon sight in sectarian communities, with the exception of the Dukhobors who married only within their faith. In one case, a family in Lenkoran included the father who was Subbotnik, while the mother was Molokan, and the remainder of the family adhered either to Orthodoxy or to the Old Belief.[67] Moreover, Subbotniki and Jews married each other without conversion on either side.[68] Despite the general acceptance of multi-denominational marriages, there were some incidents of conversion in order to marry. Such conversion occurred most commonly in cases when one of those wanting to marry adhered to Orthodoxy and the other converted from sectarianism although there were incidents among couples from two different non-conformist faiths. In one example, a Dukhobor joined the Old Believers because he had been smitten by a young Old Believer girl and proposed to her. On conversion, he broke with his Dukhobor wife and two children.[69]

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[66]Masalkin, "Subbotniki" no. 307: 2. V. Zaitsev, *Iz lichnykh nabliudenii nad zhizn'iu zakavkazskikh sektantov* (St. Petersburg: Tip. V. V. Komarova, 1899), 5.

[67]T. B., "U beregov Kaspiia (iz putevykh zametok i vospominanii) Tri goda nazad, ch. VII, V Lenkorane," *Kavkaz* no. 58 (March 14, 1881): 2. See also I. Ia. Orekhov, "Ocherki iz zhizni zakavkazskikh sektatorov," *Kavkaz* no. 143 (June 25, 1878): 1; St-v, "Obychai," no. 41: 3; Masalkin, "Molokane," no. 306: 3; and Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 42: 3.

[68]T. B., "U beregov," no. 58: 2 and St-v, "Obychai," no. 41: 3.

[69]For sectarian-Orthodox incidents, see Petr Egorov, "Zakavkazskaia dorozhnaia zapiski 1851 goda: doroga ot Tiflisa do Shemakhi i g. Elisavetpolia," *Russkii Invalid* no. 218 (October 11, 1857): 903 and GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 298, 1903, ll. 6-7. For the Dukhobor-Old Believer example, see Zaitsev, *Iz lichnykh nabliudenii*, 5.

Converts also chose to switch denominations because of the attractions held out by the different social systems constructed by differing religious groups. The journalist Masalkin argued that the rapid spread of Molokanism through Russia's interior provinces in the nineteenth century had much to do with the appeal of the Molokans' communal and anti-statist doctrines to Orthodox peasants. It was rare to find truly poor Molokans since they believed in a divinely mandated, moral requirement for richer brethren to help their less fortunate neighbors. In consequence, Molokans tended to live much better than their Orthodox neighbors. Allured by the prospect of a better, more secure life—freed from "the terrible knout" and "the yoke of slavery"—Orthodox villagers took up the teachings of the Molokan faith.[70]

As in the case of marriage and divorce, the relative moral freedom of the Subbotnik communities represented a primary reason for the switching of religious allegiance from the Molokans to the Subbotniks. For instance, among the Molokans, the use of tobacco and alcohol was officially (and often in practice) forbidden, whereas such "vices" were openly practiced by Subbotniki. Molokans who found it hard to live under the drinking ban often converted to the Subbotniki.[71] According to a contemporary observer of the Transcaucasian sectarians, over the course of the century the desire grew to escape the rigors of Molokan morality by conversion to the Subbotniks because of the corrupting influence of modern, urban culture. The author noted that the increase in public drunkenness, theft and debauchery among Molokans were subject to a very serious punishment from the community at large. He further noted that it was almost always youths who converted since the desire to partake in the

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[70]Masalkin, "Molokane," no. 306: 3.
[71]Masalkin, "Subbotniki," no. 307: 2. See also Zaitsev, *Iz lichnykh nabliudenii*, 5.

excitement of urban culture was felt most profoundly among the younger generation of sectarians, both male and female alike.[72]

Discord within a religious community also prompted conversion. The case of Timofei Sergeev Khoritonov reflects how the path to conversion could be the result of actions (in this case lechery) that were only indirectly related to systems of belief and could result from events outside of an individual's control (here, banishment form the community).[73] In 1875, Khoritonov completed his military service and, for reasons unstated, marked this occasion by leaving the Orthodox religion and converting to the Pryguny along with his wife and children. For eleven years they formed part of a Prygun community in Transcaucasia until Khoritonov was banished by them because of his "weakness" for women. Through the intercession of a friend, Khoritonov and his family were welcomed into the Molokan faith and soon thereafter he became one of their leaders. Khoritonov's rapid ascent through the Molokan spiritual hierarchy resulted for the most part from his enormous monetary gifts to the Molokans' communal fund to help their poorer brethren. Soon, however, the same pattern of unacceptable behavior towards women repeated itself. The Molokan community was divided over what to do with him. For six months they argued amongst themselves about whether his good deeds should act as compensation for his inappropriate behavior. During this time the financial situation of the community took a disastrous and unexpected turn.

A little more than two weeks after a particularly heated argument about Khoritonov's fate, in which he had been forcibly driven from the preacher's rostrum, the police searched the house of the community treasurer, confiscated the Molokans' communal fund and arrested the treasurer. Through direct intervention, the community was able to free the treasurer, but could not persuade the local authorities to return their

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[72]"Subbotniki v Erivanskoi gubernii," 3-4.
[73]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 298, 1903, ll. 1-5.

money. Since the existence of the fund had been common knowledge to all people in the region for many years, the Molokans sought an explanation for its sudden confiscation. The evidence pointed to Khoritonov. The suspicion that he had somehow orchestrated the seizure of the money was reinforced during questioning of the women to whom Khoritonov had made his "heinous" proposals. The community's leaders voted to banish Khoritonov from the village, dragged him out of a communal meeting "by the scruff of his neck" and warned him that if he ever showed his face again he would face dire physical consequences. Humiliated and expelled, Khoritonov petitioned the Exarch of Georgia, stating that after twenty years among the sectarians he wished to repent his spiritual errors and return to the bosom of the Orthodox Church along with his family.

Social constructions of ethnic identity provided further impetus to conversion, most notably in the case of the Subbotniki. While the ethnicity of the Subbotniki was a point of debate in the nineteenth century, in the opinion of most sectarians (and the Subbotniki themselves), the Subbotniki were Russians who had become Jews.[74] In the context of a generally anti-semitic Russian culture, Subbotniki on occasion abandoned their faith out of a frustration being called Jewish. Zaitsev, a soldier who served in Transcaucasia, relates the story of a Subbotnik who joined the Molokans because he no longer wanted to remain a "Yid" [*zhid*]. Declaring himself to be a Russian, he described "Yids" as "monkeys" and added that their Tsar was not the Russian Tsar "but some Yid ... in England ... and they send him taxes. Well, to hell with them!" he concluded spitting on the ground with disgust.[75] Tsarist authorities consciously exploited Russian antipathy to Jews in their efforts to convert Subbotniki to Orthodoxy.

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[74]On the debate over the ethnicity of the Subbotniki see Nikolai Varadinov, *Istoriia Ministerstva vnutrennikh del.* Vol. 8, *Istoriia rasporiazhenii po raskolu* (St. Petersburg, Tip. Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1863), 279-281. See also the discussion in chapter three; GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, l. 88; and "Subbotniki v Erivanskoi gubernii," 4.

[75]Zaitsev, *Iz lichnykh nabliudenii*, 5.

In 1825, for example, the Committee of Ministers informed governors that "since nothing can have as big an impact on the simple people as disdain, contempt and being made fun of," local officials should use the terminology "*zhid*" and "*zhidovskaia sekta*" henceforth when referring to the Subbotniki. The name "Subbotniki" was not sufficiently descriptive, they argued, "and does not produce a repugnance in [the Russian people]" in the way that "Yid" did.[76]

Religious-Spiritual Reasons for Conversion

The reorientation of an individual's relationship to the sacred or a restructuring of the meanings of faith also prompted migration from one denomination to another. Individuals and groups converted because of a certainty of the superiority of one faith over another in providing the surest path to eternal salvation and the best manner of fulfilling a Christian life. Russians in Transcaucasia converted because of a deep concern for salvation, a reinterpretation of the writings of the New Testament, a reformulation of understandings of Christ and water baptism, and the attraction of the practices, services, and rituals of another denomination. Such religious origins of conversion were almost non-existent in cases of switching to Orthodoxy, but played a vital role in the other three forms of transference under discussion here. Religious causes were especially prominent in the case of conversion to the Baptists. While the emphasis on complete spiritual rebirth in Baptist recountings of conversion derives in part from the reconstructive functions of their conversion narratives, the weight they placed on religious factors illustrates of the relative importance that their experience with the divine played in their conversions in comparison with the other three pathways.

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[76]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 273.

The most detailed accounts of the religious motivations for denominational switching come from Baptist converts. While their stories differ in certain personal ways, the various narratives of conversion of Transcaucasian Molokans who switched to the Baptists share certain characteristics and a fundamental framework. Here I am drawing on the conversion stories (some autobiographical, some biographical) of four of the principal leaders of the Baptist movement in Transcaucasia: N. I. Voronin, V. V. Ivanov, V. G. Pavlov, and G. U. Gorbachev.[77] Each case of conversion to the Baptists involved a prolonged spiritual journey in search of Christian truth and the keys to salvation. For each, the pivotal moment in that voyage was the acceptance of water baptism (not generally practiced by the Molokans) as part of Christian practice necessary for salvation. They first came into contact with this idea through the *vodianyi* [waterers] strain of Molokanism.[78] Seeking scriptural assurance, they searched the Bible and, in Pavlov's case, also a wide range of other religious writings. Indeed, literacy was central to each of their conversion stories, convincing them that the Molokans were mistaken. The conversion was further helped along by the intervention of an advocate for the Baptists—in which the German Baptist Kalveit played a seminal role in the conversion of Voronin (the first Russian convert to the Baptists in Transcaucasia), and then Voronin played a seminal role in the conversion of the others.[79] Moreover the decision to convert was further aided by the inability of Molokan elders and preachers satisfactorily to answer the questions concerning water baptism and other religious topics.

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[77]For Voronin see GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 10-11 and GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 19, 24-26; for Ivanov see GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 15-18 and GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, ll. 3-6; for Pavlov see GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 8-21, 27-36; and for Gorbachev see GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 13ob-14ob

[78]On the so-called *vodianyi* (or *vodnogo kreshcheniia*) strain of Molokanism, see GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, ll. 3-5 and GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n. d., ll. 6ob-7ob.

[79]Note should be made that Ivanov tries to downplay the role of "foreigner" such as Kalveit in his narrative of conversion, instead highlighting that the Baptist faith in Russia was of Russian origin and derived from former Molokans. GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, ll. 10-11.

The story of Pavlov's conversion took a distinct course. Once Voronin and Ivanov acknowledged that water baptism was essential to salvation, only the very act of baptism itself remained to complete the conversion journey. In contrast, Pavlov perceived many intermediary steps on the road to conversion. Even though he accepted the truth of water baptism, Pavlov doubted that he possessed a "live faith" in Christ, was consumed by a "sinful lust" in his heart, and still felt spiritually "dead." Pavlov passed the next few months wrestling with himself to find the road to repentance and surmount his "state of sin." Only slowly did he come to know that "God is love" and to place all his "hope in God." Throughout, Pavlov developed an increasingly personal and direct relationship with God, especially in his prayers when he abandoned the Molokan practices of repeating memorized texts in favor of finding his own words and thoughts.[80]

Other religious factors prompted subsequent Baptist-converts to switch denominations. Another early Baptist leader and former Molokan preacher, Semen Gerasimovich Rodionov converted under pressure from Voronin. As Voronin preached his new faith among his former co-religionists, Rodionov engaged him in a defense of the Molokan faith. After one vigorous debate, Voronin reportedly announced: "Look, with you it could be as it was with the Apostle Paul." These words deeply affected Rodionov and soon thereafter he declared himself ready for baptism into the Baptist faith.[81]

Moreover, Semen Nikitin relayed to the writer Uspenskii that his reasons for converting to the Baptists had less to do with water baptism and more to do with other Molokan religious beliefs.

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[80]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 27-36.
[81]Ibid., l. 27.

> Here's why, my friend: I can't understand Christ Molokan-fashion. The Molokans, you know, consider him a human being; they say he was born of flesh; but I *can't* understand that. My head is not willing to understand how such goodness can come from man! Human beings do not have what is in Christ.... That's the very reason I fell away from them.... Here, among the Baptists, my soul feels more at ease. That's why.[82]

As in the case of the Baptists, Russians converted from Orthodoxy to one of the sectarian faiths as a result of reading the Holy Scriptures themselves (or by having the scriptures read to them by a fellow villager). By investigating, without the mediation of a priest, the meanings of the Old and New Testaments, Gospels, Psalters and other religious writings (often including "apocrypha"), these Russians began to understand Christianity in a way different from that mandated by the Orthodox Church and found new spiritual vistas opened to them.[83] Moreover, others found their systems of belief regenerated by the words of traveling preachers. As discussed in chapter two, belief in the imminent coming of the apocalypse spread like wildfire among Molokans in the 1830s. During this wave of millenarianism, roaming preachers also attracted Orthodox peasants to Molokanism with their visions of Christ's second coming.[84]

Converts also found reason to change confessions in the appeal of the rituals and practices of other denominations. In an article about the sectarians of Baku guberniia, one contemporary analyst related how the structure of the Molokans' customs and services held a large appeal for the Orthodox laity. He pointed to the relative simplicity of the their prayer meetings, the greater clarity of Molokan prayers and readings form the Holy Scriptures, and the relative intelligibility of the language used by Molokan

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[82]Quoted in A. I. Klibanov, *History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia (1860s-1917)*, trans. Ethel Dunn (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), 27. Italics in original.
[83]See for example: RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 445, ll. 1-1ob, 3ob-6; GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, ll. 116-117; RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1829, d. 149, ll. 1-1ob; and RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 205-206, 225, and 234-240ob.
[84]Please see the discussion in Chapter two and "Istoricheskiia svedeniia o Molokanskoi sekte," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* (November 1858): 302.

religious leaders in their discussions of dogma, ritual, and religious writings.[85] The attraction of the rites of other denominations also figured prominently in sect-to-sect conversion. In one example, an author in the regional newspaper *Kavkaz* pointed out how converts were drawn to the Pryguny because of their animated prayer services, daring escapades under the influence of the holy spirit, "frenzied prophets," and the process by which they publicly exposed depraved and ingrained sinners. The author further underscored how people switched to the Obshchie because of the appeal of their socio-religious practices—especially the "extreme propriety" of meetings and their communal social and economic structures.[86]

Finally, I will briefly discuss certain personal-psychological tendencies that combined with socio-religous motivations to prompt conversion. There appears to have been a strong sense of what social scientists have called "seekership" among certain sectarians. The sociologists Snow and Machalek write that "'seekers' are more likely to undergo conversion precisely because they are in active pursuit of just such self-transformation." Seekership "evokes the image of one on a journey for personal and spiritual development and meaning."[87] In the case of the Transcaucasian sectarians, such seekership appears to have been not solely a spiritual voyage in search of other-worldly salvation, but also a quest for earthly salvation—i.e. to find a religious denomination which could provide the individual with a certain social and material life. This seekership further reflects the "culture of conversion" that existed among Transcaucasian sectarians. "Seekers" switched denominations for two reasons. First, the boundaries between religious groups were relatively permeable in the minds of

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[85] S-A , "Russkie raskol'niki," no. 10: 3.
[86] Ibid. See also the examples in Zaitsev, *Iz lichnykh nabliudenii*, 5.
[87] Snow and Machalek, "Sociology of Conversion," 180.

sectarians. Second, they interpreted conversion as an option within the confines of their socio-cultural environment.

Zaitsev, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, deplored the lack of spiritual firmness as a weakness of the sectarian faiths. Zaitsev relates how one day he came upon one of his Molokan friends who was smoking, an act forbidden to Molokans. When questioned, the friend replied that he had been a Molokan but had now switched confessions and was a Subbotnik. "Isn't it great?" he rhapsodized. Zaitsev, puzzled that such religious swapping was possible, continued to press, asking how such alteration could be. The friend replied: "Who knows? Perhaps I'll return to the Molokans ..." On further inquiry, it became clear that this was not the first change of religion undergone by the friend, but only one stop on a long spiritual vagabondage. He had tried [*poproboval*] being a Dukhobor and a Prygun but had returned to being a Molokan since he had not liked them. "We are freely able to do that."[88]

In another example cited by Zaitsev, a Molokan acquaintance approached him one day to ask if there were many religions in the world, to which Zaitsev replied in the affirmative. Zaitsev asked in return why the Molokan had posed the question, to which the latter replied rapturously: "Oh it would be great to experience all faiths." In fact, Zaitsev continued, his interlocutor was visibly upset that he would not be able to come to know all faiths, and especially not be able to marry within each faith.[89]

Motives in Tandem

While converts might switch denominations for any one of these political-legal, social or religious reasons, typically conversion was caused by a mutually reinforcing

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[88]Zaitsev, *Iz lichnykh nabliudenii*, 4-5.
[89]Ibid., 5.

combination of factors from at least two of these categories. The case of the large-scale, indeed sensational at the time, conversion to Orthodoxy of 15 families (61 people) of Molokans in Alty-Agach in 1853 reflects the confluence of forces driving to conversion. From the perspective of state power, the origins of the denominational switching in this case were found in the spiritual regeneration of the converts.[90] In contrast, sectarian sources accounted for the conversions through both political-legal and religious factors. In Alty-Agach, the instigators of the switching, Orlov and Mironov, had been wealthy traders and zealous Molokans. However, they became embroiled in certain public contracts which went awry, and they resorted to fraud in order to resolve the problem. Caught by local authorities in their deceptions, they sought to escape severe penalties by converting to Orthodoxy and began to preach the necessity of water baptism. Others quickly went over to their side.[91] Thus, political-legal forces played a vital role in the Alty-Agach conversion.

However, sectarian sources also highlight that religious considerations were simultaneously at work. Prior to the conversion incident, the village of Alty-Agach had been the regional center of that strain of Molokanism—nicknamed *vodianye* by their Molokan opponents—that asserted the necessity of water baptism to salvation and a true Christian life. In the mid-1840s, these Molokans (along with certain others in Baku guberniia) publicly and openly baptized themselves with water and held communion.[92] As it turns out, Mironov and Orlov were the leaders of the *vodianye* movement in Alty-Agach. Many if not all of the Alty-Agach converts to Orthodoxy already held certain theological and ritual practices in common with the Orthodox—certainly many more

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[90]RGIA f. 1268, op. 7, d. 359, 1853, ll. 1-2.
[91]GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902, ll. 5-6 and GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, ll. 6ob-7ob.
[92]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, ll. 3-5; and GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, ll. 6ob-7ob.

than other Molokans—and as a result their transition to Orthodoxy did not require so great a leap.

In addition, the village of Alty-Agach was one of the central clearinghouses for the illegal registration of runaways in Transcaucasia from the 1830s through the 1850s. Many of these clandestine settlers were Orthodox in religion when they arrived, but were required to join a sectarian (and usually Molokan) faith in order for the sectarian community to agree to register them in the village. As the result of the large numbers of "illegals," a not insignificant proportion of former Orthodox concentrated in the Molokan community of Alty-Agach.[93] While there is no evidence to determine whether there was any overlap between the 1853 converts and those former Orthodox runaways, it is not unreasonable to assume that the presence of clandestines had at least some impact on the religious trajectory of the village and the likelihood of conversion.

Personal Consequences, Social Outcomes: The Meanings of Conversion

The outcomes and repercussions of conversion among Transcaucasian sectarians were widely varied in form and multifaceted in content. Conversion had consequences both for the individual convert and the community in which the convert lived. The effects of conversion were felt on such diverse levels as personal identity, religious beliefs and practices, family dynamics, social interactions, economic systems and political-juridical structures.[94] The results of denominational switching produced enormous change and fundamental continuity, long-lasting and short-term results. In cases of multiple conversion, initial consequences of denominational switching could be

[93]See the discussion in chapter two and GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., ll. 22-25.
[94]Given the available sources, little information exists concerning personal or psychological consequences of changing faith.

reversed or altered by a further conversion.[95] Most importantly, the consequences of conversion were culturally constructed by the importance attached to the act either by the individual, his/her community, state officials, or outside investigators. The ramifications of conversion were frequently understood dissimilarly by convert and community, and could be differently perceived by one or the other as time passed.[96]

Despite the omniformity of potential consequences, certain patterns emerge in the conversion experiences of Transcaucasian sectarians. Each of the four pathways of conversion under consideration here had its own distinct consequences. Movement between Orthodoxy and sectarianism almost always produced a sharp break, shattering social, familial, and juridical structures and tearing village communities apart. Since the causes of such conversion tended to be political-legal, the consequences affected the convert's place in Russian society. Sect-to-sect changes of confession appear to have had much less tumultuous results. As a result of the relative religious and social proximity of these denominations, conversion rarely required radical change in personal identity, social practices, or religious activities. For the convert to the Baptist faith, the process of conversion was understood as the pivotal, focal, all-transforming moment in life. Heather Coleman has written that: "At the center of what it means to be a Baptist is the notion of justification by faith alone, and testifying to a personal conversion experience is the prerequisite for membership in the Church. ... Conversion was the pivotal event structuring believers' accounts of their lives."[97] In contrast to Orthodox-sectarian conversion, the social and legal repercussions of Baptist conversion were more ambiguous. However, in all cases, the socio-legal meanings of Baptist

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[95]See, for example, RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 232-232ob.
[96]For a theoretical discussion of the consequences of conversion, see Rambo, *Understanding*, 142-164 and Douglas Hollan, "Pockets Full of Mistakes: The Personal Consequences of Religious Change in Toraja Village," *Oceania* 58, no. 4 (June 1988): 275-289.
[97]Coleman, "Becoming a Russian Baptist," 1.

conversion for both state officials and the sectarian communities changed over time, hardening into hatred.

Conversion from Sectarianism to Orthodoxy

Alteration of religious affiliation from a sectarian denomination to Orthodoxy had potentially large political-juridical consequences for the individual. Most cases of sectarian-to-Orthodox conversion proceeded without difficulty within the legal system. Once the conversion was verified, those on trial were released, and the convert was permitted to resettle in Russia's internal provinces enjoying tax privileges, the choice of social status, and a new lease on life.[98] However, the outcome of many cases remained in dispute.

One of the most fundamental problems revolved around the question of whether a conversion had taken place at all. The example of Koz'ma Konovalov in Shemakha illustrates the cases in which the Orthodox Church's official proofs of conversion were subsequently denied by the individual concerned. Konovalov arrived in Transcaucasia in 1834 from Orenburg guberniia as a Molokan. In 1840, however, the spiritual authorities recorded his interest in joining the Orthodox Church, and he was baptized later that year. According to local priests, Konovalov regularly attended church, confessed annually and took the sacraments until 1856 when they reported that Konovalov had fallen away from the Church. In 1857, the priest in Alty-Agach encountered Konovalov, who began to express himself insolently and insultingly about another priest in the region. Konovalov also declared that the only way that he would

[98]While most converts to Orthodoxy wished to return to the Russian interior, there were those new Orthodox who petitioned to be allowed to stay in Transcaucasia but to move to one of the towns. To take care of these people, authorities changed the laws in 1836 to permit converted sectarians to remain in Transcaucasia if they so desired. From then on, conversion to Orthodoxy had a further consequence of bestowing mobility within Transcaucasia as well. GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., ll. 34, 38.

take part in Orthodox religious services was when he was drunk, and that this other priest had regularly permitted him to do so. Witnesses confirmed Konovalov's anti-Orthodox tendencies, relating that he had "seduced" others into Molokanism. When confronted with criminal charges for recidivist apostasy and the conversion of others away from Orthodoxy, he refuted the charges, arguing that he had never converted to Orthodoxy and denying ever having had the sacraments administered to him. Whether Konovalov made these declarations in an effort to avoid punishment, or whether he truly believed that he had not ever converted to Orthodoxy despite taking part over the years in some of the religious practices, is not elucidated by the documents. However, the difference became moot in Konovalov's case. State officials refused to accept Konovalov's self-declaration of religious affiliation. They declared that he had been Orthodox and in consequence of their imposition of religious identity on him, Konovalov was exiled to Siberia for military service.[99]

The question of whether conversion had taken place at all, and who defined when conversion had taken place was particularly complex with respect to children. Among converts to the Dukhobors in the Don region in the 1820s there were many children who converted along with their parents. Both local and central authorities argued that for these children, no conversion had actually taken place because they "cannot yet have an understanding of religion." Thus, on the basis of age, state authorities denied these children (and their parents) the opportunity to choose their own religious identity and insisted on imposing a state-defined identity. The label from "above" had enormous repercussions for the children since as Orthodox they were not permitted to relocate

[99]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 255, 1859.

with their parents to Transcaucasia and instead were required to remain among the Don Cossacks with guardians.[100]

The government's legal requirement that the sincerity of a conversion be attested to by a member of the clergy had unintended results that were often highly damaging to the convert. In 1881, the regional newspaper *Kavkaz* sharply criticized this policy.[101] The author noted that many conversions of sectarians to Orthodoxy reportedly occurred as a direct result of the pain and suffering of resettlement. Upon arriving, the settlers began to dream of home and converted to Orthodoxy in order to realize their hopes. The author lamented that "external conversion"—i.e. visible manifestations of faith such as public expression of repentance, regular church attendance, taking of sacraments, fulfillment of Orthodox rites—was not sufficient for a sectarian to receive permission to return to the rodina because an official attestation of the conversion's sincerity was required. The author was perturbed that the new converts were required to prove their faith to a degree far beyond the requirements held out for the rank and file Orthodox laity. Indeed, for the great mass of Orthodox adherents who were not converts, the clergy were content with annual outward demonstrations of faith, and no religious official judged the religiosity of their "souls and hearts." The author questioned the assumption in the legislation that a priest could penetrate into the recesses of the human soul and thereby attest to the sincerity of belief or repentance—especially when few priests or missionaries had any such inclination. He deplored the lack of standardized questionnaires or required procedures for clerical verification.

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[100]RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 166-166ob, 180ob. While officials agreed that young [*maloletnyi*] children were unable to make decisions about their religious affiliation, there was debate among different levels of state authority over what exact age represented the cut-off for "young," or at what age a person reached an age of decision to choose religion. See ibid., l. 226ob. In fact, conversion to Orthodoxy raised all sorts of questions for state authorities about how they should treat the family. Officials struggled to figure out what to do in the case where one family member converted to Orthodoxy while the other remained in the sectarian faith. GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 594, n.d., l. 34.
[101]"K voprosu," no. 84: 1-2.

Local ecclesiastical officials possessed enormous bureaucratic power as a result of the required verification—and in Transcaucasia the shortage of clergy meant that the decision was frequently left in the hands of one individual. The author asserted that like all men given power, these priests were tempted to abuse it, and often at the expense of the convert. Cases abounded in which recent arrivals in Transcaucasia were forced to wait anywhere from two to six years following their conversions to Orthodoxy in a state of limbo before they received permission to return to the rodina, since the local priests purposely delayed the process. It was not uncommon for elderly settler-converts to die waiting for their conversion to be certified. The author acknowledged the possibility that the conversion was feigned for material advantage. Yet, genuine or not, he concluded, the requirement of certification of the local spiritual administration left the converts adrift in a foreign region often without family.

In a clear rhetorical device, the author focused on the distress of young women converts. Without social and familial supports, these women found themselves in such dire economic straits that prostitution, crime (including theft or running away back to the *rodina*), or suicide were their only options. Such experiences, and the illegitimate children who might result, made their re-entry into anything resembling respectable lives nearly impossible. The author concluded that verification and the desire to return to the *rodina* did not lead to true repentance and the "enlightenment" of mind and spirit, which the Russian state and Church claimed were their sole aims, but rather to "rude depravity and the loss not only of their spiritual, but also of their physical purity." The author echoed other critics of state religious policy by advocating revocation of the verification requirement so that those who did return to the Orthodox fold would do so "in good health and with their lives intact."

Equally unexpected and ruinous results flowed from the legal requirement that converts to Orthodoxy in Transcaucasia receive advance acceptance from the community in central Russia to which they wished to be registered before they could be granted official permission to move. This extended the web of consequences of individual conversion well beyond the confines of Transcaucasia. On occasion, communities were unwilling to accept a new convert to their ranks. This posed a fearful dilemma for sectarian converts to Orthodoxy who generally had left their villages, stopped their agricultural work, sold their immovable property, and were living off their meager savings in expectation of imminent permission to return to the interior. Refusal of the community to accept the convert often plunged him/her into despair, and under these circumstances, converts routinely returned to their sectarian faith. In 1847, the law requiring advance permission from the community of choice was altered in an effort to solve the problem.[102]

In addition to the political-legal sphere, sectarian conversion to Orthodoxy had profound consequences for the convert in both family and community relations, regularly producing fissures and separation in both cases. Only under duress were such converts permitted to remain in their village or with their family—and this immediate removal of social and familial supports could have dire results for the convert. For instance, in 1847, twenty-three-year-old Ul'iana Radionovna Zholnina, a married Molokan woman from the village of Prishib' (Lenkoran uezd, Baku guberniia) was baptized into the Orthodox Church. Following her baptism into Orthodoxy, Zholnina's parents would no longer permit her to enter the house. In his deposition to the authorities, the father related that this refusal stemmed less from disgust over her religious choice than from his fear of punishment if local officials came to believe that

[102]RGIA f. 1268, op. 2, d. 279, 1846-1847 and RGIA f. 381, op. 1, d. 23279, 1844, ll. 6-8.

he wanted to re-convert her to Molokanism. Left without a home, Zholnina was forced to leave her village and go to the local town of Lenkoran in search of shelter. For a few weeks, she lived there by finding shelter in different houses from night to night. Zholnina soon fell sick; doors successively shut in her face from fear of infection. Without money to pay for a stay in the infirmary, Zholnina was left with no option but to reject the Orthodox faith that she had recently joined and return to the refuge of her family and its Molokan faith. Her father continued to fear the repercussions of allowing her back in the house. He permitted her to return because he realized that she would otherwise die, but was careful to inform the *starshina* of his actions to underscore that he had played no part in her return to sectarianism.[103]

Conversion to Orthodoxy had other familial consequences in the form of de facto divorce. Through their change of denomination, both male and female converts to Orthodoxy could separate from their spouse or other relatives and start a new life.[104] These divorce-conversions, however, also had significant consequences for the spouse left behind by the convert. The case of the Molokan woman whose husband converted to Orthodoxy in order to marry an Orthodox woman vividly illustrates the problem. Following his departure, she and her children were left without any means to support themselves. In response, she turned to the local spiritual authorities to force her husband to return. However, they replied that her marriage had no authority since it had not been registered in the *metricheskie knigi* [marriage register] and had not been conducted according to Orthodox rites. She then turned to the civil authorities, demanding that her marriage either be recognized as still in force or that her husband be forced to provide support. The Ministry of the Interior replied that it could not uphold her request. She was denied the right to call herself his wife, and even more

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[103]RGIA f. 1268, op. 5, d. 475, 1851-1852.

[104]RGIA f. 1268, op. 6, d. 233, 1852 and RGIA f. 1284, op. 222-1892, d. 74.

importantly, she and her children were reduced from his merchant social status to the *meshchanin* status of her father, and they were required to use her father's name.[105]

While conversion from sectarianism to Orthodoxy could entail fundamental social and familial changes for the convert, denominational change frequently created even greater outcomes for the convert's community and family. The relatively large-scale conversion to Orthodoxy in Alty-Agach in 1853 provides a particularly vivid example of conversion's multi-faceted implications. The permanent presence of Orthodox people in this formerly sectarian village irrevocably changed the overall fate of Alty-Agach. In both the short-term and long-term, the conversions altered the role of state authorities in the village, the community's internal interactions, and the future development of Christianity among Russian sectarians in Transcaucasia as a whole.

The Alty-Agach case further demonstrates how the meanings ascribed to conversion could vary widely among those affected. State officials were ecstatic over their victory in the war for Orthodoxy. In the Viceroy's 1853 report to the Caucasian Committee, Prince M. S. Vorontsov's excitement penetrates his stiff, bureaucratic language at the prospect that Orthodoxy had finally gained a beachhead among the Transcaucasian sectarians.[106] Indeed, there appeared to be sound reasons for his celebration since, according to local officials, the many fissures and disagreements among the sectarians in Shemakha guberniia created favorable conditions for more conversions to Orthodoxy. For the Molokans, the conversions had quite opposite meanings. While state officials granted medals to Mironov and Orlov in reward for leading so many Molokans to Orthodoxy, Molokan villagers considered them (and the other converts) to be villains.

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[105]RGIA f. 1284, op. 222-1892, d. 74, l. 2-3ob. I did not come across a similar file for the Transcaucasus.
[106]The official discussion is drawn from RGIA f. 1268, op. 7, d. 359, 1853.

The conversion brought an increased state presence into Alty-Agach and fundamentally divided the village community between Orthodox and sectarian. Given the circumstances, Vorontsov argued that the government should show strong approval for the converted sectarians in an effort to influence the neighboring sectarians. The Viceroy had already ordered the construction of a temporary chapel for the village, the selection of a suitable priest to minister to the new converts, and the resettlement of other Orthodox Russians in Alty-Agach. Vorontsov also asked the Caucasian Committee for funds to build an Orthodox church in Alty-Agach, to acquire the implements necessary for religious services, and to pay annual salaries for appropriate clergy. The latter sum was vital, he believed, so that at the very outset the new converts would not be weighed down by the expenses of Orthodox spiritual requirements. At the same time, this money was designed to provide the clergy with sufficient support in the long-term so as to avoid any need for them to resort to extortion or bribery of their new flock for their own upkeep—extortion that would deter the remaining Molokans in Alty-Agach from following "the good example of their fellow villagers."

Vorontsov requested a tax break for those Molokans who had converted or would convert to Orthodoxy and remain in Alty-Agach. He also demanded an amnesty for runaway sectarians who converted to Orthodoxy. According to information from the Shemakha military governor, certain sectarians were afraid to convert to Orthodoxy because they were runaways and feared that the zealous Molokans of the village, who would resent them for leaving the sect, would attempt to exact revenge by informing the authorities. In consequence, Vorontsov requested that any such information about runaways that came to light as a result of a conversion to Orthodoxy should be left without any punitive action. With certain alterations and addenda, these requests were all granted.

Sectarian sources fill in other details of what happened in the village following the conversions.[107] Mironov and Orlov petitioned the authorities for the immediate building of a church in the village. The Molokans were in for a surprise when official permission was accompanied by an order that forced them to build the church themselves—a church that they hated desperately not only as a symbol of all that they considered debauched about the Orthodox Church, but also as a visible reminder of their persecution at the hands of the Tsarist theocracy. With curses and rods beating on their backs, the Alty-Agach Molokans laid the bricks. The new priest forced the Molokans to pay one hundred rubles each year for his housing; day and night a member of the Molokan community was required to stand guard in front of the church.

The fate of the Molokan community depended on the personality of the resident priest. Indeed, the coming of a new priest entailed new consequences and new meanings of the 1853 conversion. The tenure of the initial priest was remembered by Molokans at the turn of the century as a time of relative freedom, despite their hatred of the Orthodox presence in the village and the rigors of building, supporting and guarding the church. Unlike in the 1890s, they were permitted during those earlier years to hold their own religious meetings, as well as bury their dead and conduct marriages according to their own rites, to the accompaniment of singing. This freedom was completely shattered, however, with the appearance of the priest Aleksei Aleksandrovich Levocheskii in the 1890s. Levocheskii forbade the Molokans from meeting for prayer on Sundays until after the end of the Orthodox service (claiming that their singing disrupted his services). He forced them to move into another house for their services because the original building was a few *sazhen'* short of the eighty *sazhen'* distance mandated by law between Orthodox and sectarian houses of prayer.[108]

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[107]GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902.
[108]One *sazhen'* equals approximately seven feet.

He further forbade singing during their marriage and funeral services. Despite these restrictions, Levocheskii continued to demand one hundred rubles each year for his upkeep and that of the church. When the Molokans dared to meet for morning prayer, Levocheskii sent the police to arrest and disperse them.[109]

The conversion of the Alty-Agach villagers to Orthodoxy had enormous repercussions for the development of Christianity among Russians in Transcaucasia as a whole. Since Mironov and Orlov had been the leaders of the *vodianyi* strain on Molokanism in the region, this current of Molokan thought became irrevocably connected, and tainted, with conversion to Orthodoxy. From that point on, for the Transcaucasian Molokans, the acceptance of the need for water baptism to attain salvation was considered a return to the hated "paganism" of Orthodoxy. On one hand, the *vodianyi* current of Molokanism was immediately and permanently exorcised (at least publicly) from the vibrant theological discussions that had heretofore characterized the Molokan communities. Over the remainder of the century, the parameters of Transcaucasian Molokan religious thought were constricted and directed through different channels. On the other hand, the association of water baptism with Orthodoxy that resulted from the Alty-Agach conversions had repercussions for the spread of the Baptists in Transcaucasia. With their emphasis on water baptism, the Baptists elicited suspicion and antagonism from Molokan communities, who initially considered the Baptists to be Orthodox wolves in sheep's' clothing. The Molokan belief that the

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[109]The Molokans of Alty-Agach did not believe that they were in any position to fight back against the vagaries of the Orthodox presence in their village. They sent petitions to the local civil authorities about their treatment (especially at the hands of Levocheskii) but received no reply. In return for their petitions, and their desire freely to practice their faith, they were threatened with exile and beatings. On occasion Levocheskii blackmailed them into complying with his requests by threatening to conduct Orthodox services all day, leaving the Molokans no time to pray to God. The Molokans were disheartened, believing that no person outside of their little region would ever hear about their trials. GMIR f. 14, op. 3, d. 1962, 1902, ll. 9-11.

Baptists were the same as the Orthodox prevented any possibility of widespread expansion of the Baptists in Transcaucasia.[110]

The case of Timofei Sergeev Khoritonov, who shuttled from Orthodoxy to the Pryguny and the Molokans and then back again to Orthodoxy, further highlights the potentially tremendous implications that sectarian-Orthodox conversion could have on the convert's political-legal reality, family, and social environment.[111] Through a combination of Khoritonov's promises to use his experience as a Molokan preacher to induce other Molokans to "see the light" and convert to Orthodoxy, as well as the lack of a strong missionary program in the region, the Georgian Exarch not only agreed to accept Khoritonov back into the Orthodox Church but also made him an Orthodox missionary at a wage of fifty rubles. The Transcaucasian spiritual authorities jumped at this opportunity to utilize a former Molokan preacher in the service of Orthodoxy, and Khoritonov, twice jettisoned from sectarian communities, became a man of influence among the Orthodox.

However, Khoritonov abused his new-found position of power to settle old scores and augment his personal wealth. In one example, Khoritonov used his authority to have his Molokan daughter's husband and the latter's brother arrested on trumped-up charges of insulting the Orthodox clergy and the Tsar as a way of settling a personal score. Following the arrest, they disappeared without a trace. In another case, Khoritonov promised to use his position as a missionary in order to procure a wife from among the Molokans for a local doorman, in return for which Khoritonov would receive ten rubles. However, the plan became complicated when the girl whom Khoritonov had singled out for the doorman turned out to be in love with another man (also Orthodox). When she converted to Orthodoxy, she did so to marry her lover and

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[110]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, ll. 6ob-7ob.
[111]GMIR f. 2, op. 8, d. 298, 1903, ll. 4-9.

not the doorman. Khoritonov brought the weight of his influence to bear on her and finally she saw no option than to marry the doorman. However, when the new bride discovered that her husband had little money to support her, she changed her mind and moved in with her lover. The whole affair took on a "soap opera" ending when the doorman came after his wife and beat her for her betrayal. Sensing no other escape, the woman and her lover killed the doorman, for which they were caught, convicted and punished.

Switching from Orthodoxy to a Sectarian Denomination

Conversion from Orthodoxy to sectarianism carried similarly prodigious consequences for both convert and community as did switching from a sectarian denomination to the Orthodox Church. Leaving Orthodoxy was also governed by a spate of government legislation and resulted in state intervention of some form or another. On one hand, it is clear that all converts to sectarianism experienced at least the threat of punishment, if not actual criminal prosecution, for their "apostasy."[112] On the other hand, some newly converted sectarians benefited from these laws, opening the way to resettlement to Transcaucasia, for instance.

The change in religious affiliation from Orthodoxy to a sectarian denomination was often accompanied by the beginning of a double life for the convert. In order to escape persecution for their new faith, converts routinely hid their change in religion from state and Church authorities, as well as their Orthodox neighbors, and continued outwardly to profess Orthodoxy. Thus, the switching of denomination did not

[112]For sources describing the prosecution and punishment, see for example, RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 218, 1860; RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 255, 1859; RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 508; RGIA f. 1284, op. 204-1849, d. 799.

necessitate an alteration in patterns of religious practice, even if it did signify an important change in an individual's religious beliefs.[113]

The development of a dual existence is seen clearly in the case of Iosif Iudin, a scribe in the Caspian Chamber of the Criminal and Civil court. He hailed from Orenburg guberniia but had been stationed in the town of Shemakha at the beginning of the 1840s. Iudin kept his conversion to Molokanism secret, both while he was in school in Orenburg guberniia (where the conversion took place) and also after he was stationed in Transcaucasia. Fearing punishment, he did not manifestation his new faith or openly join a Molokan community. Rather, he continued to attend the Orthodox Church and, according to Church records in 1841, went to confession. While Iudin maintained the external impression of adherence to Orthodoxy, he carried out the rules of the Molokan faith in secret. In Shemakha he lived in a Molokan house where both the house's owner and the Molokan laborers who came every day to work there knew that Iudin was Molokan, and with them he practiced the Molokan faith privately. It is unclear how long this double life would have continued had not Iudin's Molokanism become somehow known to the authorities.[114]

The relatively large-scale conversion of Orthodox peasants to Molokanism in various villages of Borchalo uezd, Tiflis guberniia[115] in the 1880s vividly illustrates the social, familial and political outcomes of departure from the Orthodox Church.[116] In the short-term, the conversion opened the floodgates of conflict within the villages as families fought among themselves, neighbors battled each other, and Church and state

[113]See for example the case of Anna Donetskova which is discussed in both GMIR f. 2, op. 7, d. 596, n.d., ll. 116-117 and RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1829, d. 149, ll. 1-1ob, as well as the many cases found in RGIA f. 1284, op. 195-1825, d. 61, ll. 180, 205-206, 236, 237.
[114]RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1843, d. 445, ll. 1-1ob, 3ob-6.
[115]The primary villages involved were Novo-Pokrovka, Nikolaevka, and Dzhelal-Olgy.
[116]RGIA 1284, 221-1884, d. 71 and Buniatov, "Byt' russkikh krest'ian," 103

authorities directly intervened in the "infected" villages in an effort to counteract the harm they believed the newly-converted Molokans posed.

All the Orthodox—village assemblies, local spiritual and civil authorities, the Georgian Exarch, and A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, the Chief Administrator of the Caucasus—were unanimous in their agreement that the continued cohabitation of the converts in the Orthodox villages was intolerable and that the only solution lay in the physical separation of the two religious groups through the banishment of the Molokans. In Nikolaevka, for instance, 30 members of the commune (with only 42 families registered) signed a petition to the authorities asking for the immediate removal of the converts. The Georgian Exarch feared the enormous potential for the spread of Molokan propaganda among the remaining Orthodox villagers—and thereby the great harm posed to Orthodoxy in general—that the continued presence of the converts represented. The uezdnyi nachal'nik of Borchalo uezd mirrored these opinions, writing in support of their banishment that "the co-habitation [*sovmestnoe zhitel'stvo*] of Molokans and Orthodox in one village is accompanied by ceaseless hostile clashes among the peasants and leads to a weakening of the people's morality as well as to the serious disruption of their economy."[117]

Reports indicate that the fears about cohabitation held by the various layers of Orthodox society were not without foundation. Accounts abound detailing the mutual animosity of Orthodox and Molokans. Following their conversions, the converts declared their change of confession openly in village assemblies in an effort to publicize their choice and attract others to their faith. The converts in Novo-Pokrovka publicly mocked their Orthodox co-villagers, disparaged the Church's Holy Sacraments, derided the Orthodox clergy and were generally impertinent towards the Orthodox Church. The

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[117]RGIA 1284, 221-1884, d. 71, l. 2-3, 12-13.

activities of the new Molokans among their Orthodox converts only increased in scope and size as time passed. In response, local spiritual officials strove to convince the converts to return to Orthodoxy, but all efforts and admonitions failed to produce even the slightest indication of the desire for re-conversion.

Moreover, Orthodox villagers continued to complain about the often aggressive activities of their new Molokan neighbors, particularly family violence. In a typical case, a recent convert to Molokanism, Fedor Loktionov, viciously beat his wife because she continued to practice Orthodox rites and carry out the sacraments. Other new Molokans successfully forced their wives and families to convert. Those women who were sufficiently strong to resist their husbands' efforts to drag them away from Orthodoxy regularly endured the trial of having to watch their children raised according to Molokan rites, realizing that these children would not attain eternal salvation. Yet rarely could any individual hold out for long in the face of such physical and mental pressure. One woman clung to Orthodoxy while her husband became a Molokan and her recently deceased child was buried according to Molokan practices. She succumbed soon after to the pressure of her husband to join him. Furthermore, children who converted to Molokanism no longer considered it their obligation to support their aged parents who remained Orthodox. To add insult to injury, these children offered their parents food during Orthodox fasts which the devout were not permitted to touch.[118]

In the long-term the conversions in Borchalo uezd led to the fracturing of existing Russian villages and to the formation of a new village in the region. Under what appears to have been mutual agreement, the newly converted Molokans left their homes of many years, bought land from a local landholder and set up a new all-Molokan

[118]Ibid., ll. 10ob-12.

village in the region named Novo-Mikhailovka.[119] For these converts, the new village represented the opening of a new social and economic life, since their fortunes became intimately tied to the wealthy and regionally influential neighboring Molokan village of Vorontsovka.[120]

Conversion Between Sectarian Faiths

Whereas sectarian conversion to or from Orthodoxy produced marked consequences both for the convert and for the community in which the convert existed, extant sources record few such repercussions following conversion form one sectarian faith to another. The social and religious structures in which the Transcaucasian Molokane, Pryguny, and Subbotniki lived meant that, in most cases, the migration from one sectarian denomination to another did not require the convert to change or leave behind his/her original "plausibility structures."[121] (The Dukhobors were a distinct exception to this generalization.) Although a change to another sectarian denomination did require the individual in question to dissociate themselves from their former religious commune, they were rarely required either to leave their families or their village commune. Thus, converts continued to take part in the economic structures of the village and the cycles of agriculture. The similarities of the sectarian faiths—

[119]The Molokans wished to escape the interference of, and conflict with, the Orthodox world around them. From the state perspective, legal imperatives prevented the authorities from forcibly moving the Molokans out of the Orthodox villages and so officials had to rely on the voluntary decisions of the Molokans to leave. On the legal restrictions, see RGIA 1284, 221-1884, d. 71, ll. 3, 7-7ob.
[120]Buniatov, "Byt' russkikh krest'ian," 97-145; A. M. Argutinskii-Dolgorukov, "Borchalinskii uezd, Tiflisskoi gubernii v ekonomicheskom i kommercheskom otnosheniiakh," in *RTKE* (Tiflis: Izd. Zakavkazskoi zheleznoi dorogi, Tip. Ia. I. Libermana, 1897), 1-323; and A. D. Eritsov, "Ekonomicheskii byt gosudarstvennykh krest'ian Borchalinskogo uezda Tiflisskoi gubernii," in *MIEBGKZK*, t. VII (Tiflis: 1887), 367-534.
[121] "Plausibility structures," is from Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 45.

holidays and festivals tended to be shared, dietary patterns and restrictions were not dissimilar—did not necessitate large changes in many religious practices for the convert.

Conversion to another sectarian faith rarely seems to have prompted fractures within the family. Cases of husbands and wives splitting or fighting after the conversion of one of them to another sect are few, and as mentioned above, cases of multi-denominational families in Transcaucasia were far from unusual. In one case where there was a family split, however, the parents of a Subbotnik girl from Aleksandropol' who switched denominations to the Molokans refused to take her back into the house or forgive her decision.[122]

The transition from one sectarian faith to another—and from Orthodox to sectarian, for that matter—was facilitated by the lack of complicated rites of admission for the neophyte.[123] Without much exception, the convert needed only to repudiate her/his former affiliation and could begin to attend the services of the new one.[124] The absence of any requirement for adult circumcision among the Subbotniki exemplifies this lack of potential hurdles to admission. They were, in contrast, active practitioners of circumcision for their new born males.[125] Despite the lack of a formal requirement, however, there were recorded incidents of circumcision of converts.[126] For the Pryguny, the rites of admission to the faith were simple and not time consuming. Baptist leader Pavlov described them in the following manner:

> In their meeting, the repentant person asks for everyone to pray for him. At the same time either he himself, or the whole group or the leader would loudly confess his sins. And if his repentance is sincere—a fact that was known to their preachers by means of an internal revelation ... then everyone present,

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[122]Zaitsev, *Iz lichnykh nabliudenii*, 5. On the prevalence of multi-confessional marriages, see for example, T. B. "U beregov," no. 58: 2-3.
[123]This was in stark contrast to the verification requirements of Orthodoxy and the process of education leading to baptism among the Baptists.
[124]Segal', "Russkie poseliane," 42: 3.
[125]Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 97.
[126]See, for example, GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, l. 43.

men and women, place their hands on the head of the penitent as a sign of the fact that now he is forgiven his sins and that they have accepted him into the community [obshchina].[127]

Molokan Converts to the Baptists

Conversion of Transcaucasian sectarians to the Baptist denomination produced a variety of consequences, varying between short-term and long-term outcomes as well as between personal and socio-political results. The convert considered the change to be a complete transformation of worldview and re-orientation and faith, although the break was not always so comprehensive. For the communities and state officials around the convert, the initial outcomes of conversion tended to be negligible in comparison with those in the long-term since both state officials and other sectarians were unsure what meaning to give to the Baptist conversions. Within the matter of a few years, however, Baptist converts were met with increasing antagonism by all around them—a fact that had striking and widespread consequences for all involved.

As depicted in Baptist conversion narratives, denominational switching represented a personal rebirth and the most pivotal event in the life of the convert. Faith took on a new and vital importance, to which everything else was subjugated. Indeed, such conversions did in fact drastically alter the direction of the lives of both Pavlov and Ivanov. With their new mission to spread Baptist teachings, they traveled through Transcaucasia and even abroad, preaching and learning the faith. They took on these new tasks often to the detriment of other aspects of their lives. Ivanov, for example, neglected his economic activities in order to spread the faith, leaving his wife and family in oppressive poverty.

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[127]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, l. 96.

However, the consequences of conversion to the Baptist faith did not entail a complete rupture with their past on the level of day-to-day religious practice. This is not to say that there were not significant differences in the practice of faith. Indeed, the Baptists' distinct prayer services—with direct prayer to God, free-form sermons, and absence of greeting to each member of the congregation as he/she entered—intrigued many Molokans .[128] However, many former Molokans strove to keep certain aspects of their past faith in their new religious practices. The result was dissension and eventual fracturing within the fledgling Baptist community between those who held to the German Baptist traditions and those Molokans who wished to incorporate part of their religious heritage into their new faith.

Among the Molokans who converted to the Baptists, many continued to use Molokan hymns and psalms, and to sing them in the unique Molokan style [*po molokanskii*]. They also wished to retain the practice of bowing when singing and praying.[129] Moreover, the Russian and German Baptists communities were also divided over the question whether a Baptist (and former Molokan), whose wife had died, could be permitted to marry a Molokan woman. The majority of Russian Baptists, reflecting their old Molokan toleration of inter-denominational marriages, were not opposed, while the German Baptists (along with certain Russians) claimed that marriage to an unbeliever went against the Baptist faith. In the end, the communities sent to Germany for a published copy of the tenets of faith, which upheld the view that such a marriage was not permitted. Those involved were ordered to stop the wedding,

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[128]On the differences see for example, GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 23-23ob.

[129]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 13, 24-28. Although this was not a point of dissension, the foods prepared to celebrate Easter were the same as those that had always been cooked by the Molokans. See ibid., l. 34-35ob.

but this decision met with strong opposition, and the Tiflis Baptist community fractured even further.[130]

The impact of Baptist conversion on the family of the convert took two trajectories. Both began with strong initial resistance. However, on one course the family accepted the truth of the Baptist faith, themselves converted and in that manner not only saved the family but bound it ever more tightly together. On the other route, the initial opposition grew in intensity until the tension tore the family apart.

In the three primary cases described in the conversion narratives—those of Voronin, Ivanov, and Pavlov—all three experienced strong initial resistance and animosity to the prospect of their conversion from their wives and parents (in Pavlov's case since he was only sixteen years old and unwed). In each case, the family members were greatly fearful of the prospect of Baptist conversion both because they saw it as a reversion to Orthodoxy and because the souls of the converts would not be saved. All three converts kept their conversion secret initially from their families (not to mention their communities), although the word tended to come out quickly. The spouses and parents were very upset. There followed a period when the wives or parents struggled to bring the convert back to the Molokans. However, through the influence of the converts and through their own reading of the Gospels, and despite the initial horror at the conversions, the wives and parents of all three Baptist leaders themselves came to agree with their husbands/sons in the truth of Baptist teachings.

The case of Pavlov illustrates many of these larger trends of the familial consequences of Baptist conversion.[131] Pavlov's switch to the Baptist faith initially provoked enormous opposition on the part of his parents. Pavlov relates in his conversion narrative that his mother, like many Molokans, vehemently opposed the

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[130]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 47-48.
[131]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 27-36.

embryonic Baptist faith in Tiflis. She believed that it was another form of Orthodoxy, because of its emphasis on water baptism. She strove desperately to prevent him from going to the Baptist meetings.[132] On the night of his baptism, she came into his room after his late return home in order to feel his hair to see if it was wet from the baptism. It had dried before his return, but the fact of his conversion was not kept secret for long. Rumors quickly spread among the Molokan community. When she discovered what her son had done, his mother was driven to despair and cried uncontrollably. She believed that by accepting baptism Pavlov was now "dead" and his soul was lost for salvation.

Pavlov's mother did not remain passive for long, however, and she struggled to bring him back to what she considered to be the true path. She rarely left him in peace when he was home, showing him passages from the Scriptures. She argued from them that, by accepting baptism, he had gone against her will, and that those who do not respect their parents break the rules of God. Pavlov argued back, also citing the scriptures. In the face of such repeated scenes, his former deep love for his mother was replaced with hate. As it became clear to his mother that her tactics was failing, she decided to embark on even stricter measures by throwing him out of the house, but only for a night. Gripped with remorse and fear for her only son, she let him back in the next morning and thereafter almost entirely refrained from attacking Pavlov for his new faith.

However, the prospect of Pavlov's father's return from a business trip in Vladikavkaz held out the possibility of renewed punishment. Pavlov's father had written from the road saying that he had heard of the baptism and hoped that the news was only a vicious rumor. If it was true, the father lamented deeply that he had ever

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[132]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 32-34.

taught Pavlov how to read and write. On his return, Pavlov's father cried repeatedly at the thought of his son's baptism and his eternal death, and prayed that God would set his son back on the path of truth. However, over time, both of Pavlov's parents became increasingly convinced of the truth of Baptist beliefs. The turning point came one day when Pavlov's father invited Molokan leaders to his house to convince Pavlov of the error of his ways. However, Pavlov's father was highly unimpressed with the leaders' incapability to match Pavlov's knowledge of the Scriptures. From that day the father's doubts about the Molokan faith grew.

Not all family conflicts ended so peacefully. Gerasim Ul'ianovich Gorbachev, another founding father of the Russian Baptists, faced unceasing family persecution for his decision to join the Baptist congregation. Gorbachev had suffered for many years under the despotic treatment of his father-in-law, Tolmosov, who was the head of their village. Tolmosov was vehemently opposed to the Baptists who he called "water rats." Gorbachev kept his conversion and baptism secret. However, when rumors began to spread, Tolmosov came down on him brutally and kept his son-in-law under a very strict eye. In consequence, Gorbachev was forced to stop practicing the Baptist faith entirely. Over time, he became increasingly isolated in the Molokan community as a whole and lived in perpetual fear, only leaving the village to take communion alone in the fields.[133]

The response of family members to the conversion of a relative to the Baptists became more intense as time progressed. Ivanov, for instance, found that while he had been received warmly by relatives as he toured Transcaucasia on his first missionary effort, they were cold at best to him when he arrived on a second tour. Ivanov's uncle, Nazar Trefimovich, who had been openly hostile from the outset to Ivanov's new faith,

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[133]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 13ob-14ob

became even more indignant at his nephew's desire to preach when Ivanov arrived on his second missionary trip. Furthermore, in other families, Molokans began to persecute converts. Fathers beat their sons. Husbands beat their wives. Wives beat their husbands. Nazar Trefimovich harshly chastised the wife of his grandson, who had converted to the Baptists. He forced her to carry out Molokan rituals and practices, did not permit her to attend Baptist meetings, and showered her with malicious insults to the point that she had no alternative but to leave her husband and return to her parents.[134]

The reaction of the Molokan communities to Baptist conversions was initially ambivalent but developed into hatred in the following months and years. On the one hand, other sectarian communities were curious at first about the new faith and the incidence of switching to the Baptists stirred up widespread discussions.[135] On the other hand, the sectarians were also wary of this new faith because they considered it to be the same as Orthodoxy, and distrusted the emphasis on water baptism after the events in Alty-Agach. The linkage with Orthodoxy was bolstered in the sectarians' minds by the fact that the Baptists initially suffered little persecution at the hands of state officials. The result of these ambivalent reactions was two-fold. First, Molokans and Subbotniks initially did not switch to the Baptists because they considered them to be Orthodox. Second, the sectarians took few definitive actions against the Baptists because they feared state repercussions. As such the Baptists could preach more freely among the Molokans. However, when state persecution started (and it came in earnest as if to make up for lost time), the sectarians realized that Orthodox and Baptists were not one and the same. The Baptists soon became and remained the Molokans' biggest

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[134]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, ll. 14-15.
[135]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 26-27.

enemy until well into the twentieth century.[136] However, Tsarist persecution occasionally enforced solidarity between the different non-conformist groups as martyrs for faith. When some of the Transcaucasian Baptists leaders were exiled for their activities, Molokans came out in the hundreds to see them off and gave money to the exiles to help them on the journey.[137]

Immediately following the appearance of Baptists in Transcaucasia, the criticism of Molokan leaders was milder and mainly verbal. When Molokan elders came to know of a conversion, they were filled with "great sorrow." They rushed to admonish the convert and discuss the errors of faith that had led her/him astray in the hope of bringing that individual back to the true path. In the case of Voronin, for instance, nearby Molokans strove to explain to him why water baptism had been forbidden in their faith, why baptism was to be understood spiritually as a baptism by the holy spirit, and that water baptism did not bring salvation. In addition to these theological remonstrances, they also pointed out that water baptism was a large first step back to the hated Orthodox Church.[138] Similarly, on his first missionary rounds Ivanov was met in different villages by relatives who were saddened that he had "abandoned the faith of his fathers" but they were still willing to take him in as an honored guest.[139]

Within a few years, however, the conversions of Molokans to Baptists introduced fault lines into the Molokan communities and provoked a strong, at times violent, response from the latter in defense of their faith. Quickly, Molokan elders came to realize the dangerous threat that Baptists posed: it was "a stream that threatened to wash away the very foundations" of their faith.[140] In the elders' increasingly vigorous

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[136]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d.., ll. 28ob-29 and N. F. Kudinov, *Stoletie Molokanstva v Rossii 1805-1905 gg.* (Baku: Parovaia tipo-lit A. M. Promyshlianskago, 1905), esp. 82-89.
[137]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d.., ll. 29ob-30.
[138]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d.., ll. 12-12ob.
[139]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, l. 10.
[140]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, l. 14.

efforts to protect the Molokan communities from Baptist infiltration, many villages split along generational lines. Whereas the elders "took up arms" to block the Baptists at every turn, a coterie of young Molokans undid these efforts by permitting the Baptist to preach among them. For example, when Ivanov was traveling in Transcaucasia preaching the new faith, he "gained many passionate friends among the youth." In defiance of their elders' campaign against Ivanov, they "formed an ecstatic circle of friends around [him]" and made space for Ivanov to preach.[141]

Within a few years, the opposition to the Baptists had grown so strong that not even the young supporters could mitigate the violent opposition of the Molokan elders. Ivanov found his meetings disrupted by the curses and cries of Molokan leaders who rained down insults and taunts on him. "Search him," the elders cried, "he has cigarettes in his pocket." Ivanov often found his meetings broken up by crowds of Molokans brandishing sticks, and he was forced to flee for his life and followed by threats: "clear out of our village before we fracture your skull with stakes."[142] Furthermore, Baptist sources claim that Molokans intentionally spread rumors that Baptists used crosses, crucifixes and icons in their services in an effort to discredit them in the eyes of other sectarians in Transcaucasia.

While on missionary work, Pavlov and Rodionov found themselves not infrequently run out of a village immediately by angry Molokans and Subbotniks.[143] When they were permitted to remain in the village, sectarian leaders argued forcefully with them on doctrinal and theological issues. The Molokan *stariki* preached unceasingly to their flock to distrust the intentions of the Baptists, and they spared no effort in pointing out the differences in Baptist belief and practice in order to

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[141]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, l. 10.
[142]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, l. 14.
[143]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 83, 91-92.

anathematize them. For instance, the elders underscored that Baptists did not follow the dietary restrictions that the Molokans and Subbotniki held dear.[144] Moreover, Pavlov and Rodionov, as former Molokans, were labeled as traitors who once had known the true path but who had turned their backs on righteousness for a return to Orthodoxy. Pointing to the martyrdom that the sectarians had suffered at the hands of the Orthodox—how the Orthodox faith "had taken strips of skin" from the Molokans—the elders played up the unpalatable nature of such a return.

The political-legal outcomes of Baptist conversion followed a not dissimilar trajectory to the social and familial. State responses were almost non-existent to begin with, but quickly grew into intense persecution. Indeed, the life-altering personal consequences of conversion to the Baptists did not necessitate a change in juridical or political status, because state power did not always recognize the individual's new expression of identity. In one example, new converts from the Molokans to the Baptist faith in Tiflis petitioned the governor to receive the rights given to Baptists by the law of September 12, 1879. For the Viceroy, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, the formation of the Baptist communities in Tiflis was a split within the community of "Russian sectarians-Molokans," one that took place in order for the converts to take advantage of the September 12 law. This law stated that Baptists were legally permitted to profess their faith and carry out their rituals and practices according to their traditions and customs and without hindrance from state officials. In addition, they were granted the right, provided they obtain permission from the local governor, to build special prayer houses for their religious services.

The Tiflis governor gave permission in 1880 to these new Baptists to act as if the laws applied to them. However, Dondukov-Korsakov was not so sure how to decide

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[144]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 83, 89-90.

this case since his files provided no guidelines to help him decide "who can be considered an adherent to the Baptist faith" and nothing concerning "whether one or another sectarian ... [can] join by his own will to one or another religious faith." Dondukov-Korsakov argued to the Minister of the Interior that he would not prevent Molokans (or any other apostates from the Orthodox Church) from forming Baptist communities, since the government did not consider Baptists to be "pernicious" sects, while Molokans and other sectarians in Transcaucasia were considered to "most pernicious." The Minister of the Interior disagreed with Dondukov-Korsakov, asserting that the law of September 12, 1879 could not be applied to Molokans since they were apostates from Orthodoxy. In consequence of this ruling, the newly converted Baptists implicitly had their efforts to define their own spiritual identity denied on a legal level because of their Molokan past. They were denied the right to hold the same privileges as others who called themselves Baptists.[145]

One Baptist author has argued that full-scale persecution of the Baptists did not begin until the Baptists began to spread their faith into internal Russian provinces. As long as they were only affecting sectarians in distant Transcaucasia, central state officials found no problem with them. Whether this interpretation is true, there was much confusion among state officials about who the Baptists were and what they represented. While some Tsarist authorities saw the Baptist conversion simply as an offshoot of Molokanism, others saw the Baptists as a branch of the Lutherans, and in either case they did not require much attention. In one incident, the local police accused Pavlov and Rodionov of missionary preaching and baptizing and insisted that they sign a document promising that they would henceforth no longer spread the Lutheran faith. Not surprisingly, Pavlov and Rodionov both signed without a second thought.[146]

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[145]RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1882, d. 44, ll. 1-3.
[146]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., l. 123.

However, Tsarist authorities soon thereafter came to see the political and social meanings of these Baptist conversions in a new light. They began to persecute Baptists as their primary religious enemy (much to the relief of other sectarian communities).[147]

Spreading and Defending the Faith: Proselytism and Missionary Work

Proselytism characterized the interactions between different denominations in Transcaucasia. Efforts to augment the ranks of the saved were particularly substantive among the Orthodox and Baptist Churches in Transcaucasia—although in often dissimilar manners and with very different kinds of success. While the following discussion will focus on these two cases, it should be noted that the other sectarian denominations made varying efforts to spread their faiths. Molokans did not have an organized missionary project like the Orthodox or Baptists. However, there is evidence to indicate that they did proselytize among neighboring Russians in Transcaucasia and that Orthodox officials considered such undertakings a serious threat.[148] Subbotniki appear to have made some efforts—although not well articulated or systematized—to spread the word of their faith, but found few receptive listeners.[149] Dukhobors and Pryguny in Transcaucasia made virtually no attempts to bring others into their religious communities, staying as isolated as possible.[150]

Both the Orthodox Church and the sectarian communities erected defenses against conversion. Many of these were strictures that threatened some form of punishment, or

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[147]On the antagonism of state authority towards the Transcaucasian Baptists, see RGIA f. 1284, op. 221-1886, d. 75; RGIA f. 1284, op. 222-1897, d. 65, ll. 13-22; and *Sektanty Kavkaza. Stat'ia* (Tiflis: Tip. Kantseliarii glavnonachal'stvuiushchego grazhdanskoi chastiiu na Kavkaze, 1890).
[148]A. Iunitskii, "Priemy molokan k sovrashcheniiu v ikh sektu pravoslavnykh," *Tserkovnyi vestnik* no. 3 (January 19, 1889): 46-47 and RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 951, 1883, ll. 26-26ob.
[149]"Subbotniki v Erivanskoi gubernii," 3.
[150]RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, ll. 57ob-58ob and Segal', "Russkie poseliane," no. 42: 3. This isolation was particularly strong in the case of the Dukhobors who lived in enclosed communities separated from other Russians in the region.

social banishment. In other cases, physical punishment was used to dissuade a potential convert. In an incident from the 1850s, a Molokan from the village of Alty-Agach was accused by the authorities of torturing fellow villagers who expressed a desire to take up the Orthodox faith.[151]

Orthodox Missionary Work

Given its privileged relationship to state power, it is not surprising that the Orthodox Church maintained the most systematized and extensive missionary structures of all Christian denominations. In fact, the Orthodox Church was the only confession legally permitted to proselytize in the Russian Empire. In the Transcaucasian arena, legal incentives to conversion to Orthodoxy and punishments of those who would leave the state Church were augmented by missionary efforts directed at non-Orthodox Russians that increased in size and scope as the nineteenth century progressed.[152] Yet, despite the growth of the missionary movement, organized Orthodox proselytism rarely achieved the outcomes desired by Church officials and only accounted for a very small share of the sectarian conversions to Orthodoxy.

In Transcaucasia, Orthodox authorities structured their missionary efforts around dialogue and peaceful means to convince the sectarians of their errors—a policy in the tradition of Alexander I.[153] Experience had demonstrated that, in the face of punitive measures, sectarians only became more entrenched in their communities and emboldened in their beliefs.[154] The missionary endeavor included a variety of means:

[151]RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 218, 1860, ll. 1-2.
[152]Missionary activities in Transcaucasia worked towards the conversion not only of sectarians (*inovertsy*) but also of all the varieties of inoslavtsy found in the region. The discussion which follows focuses only on the former.
[153]On the religious policies and practices of Alexander I, see chapter one.
[154]See, for instance, RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 48, 1862, ll. 14ob-15.

the "unimpeachable example" and "edifying life" of those clergy who entered into contact with them; the education of missionaries in the internal workings and structures of sectarian communities; restraint and good treatment on the part of the local administration; and support from the local administration towards the missionary endeavor.[155]

More specifically, in rural Transcaucasia, clergy—much like their counterparts in the interior provinces—attempted to bring the Orthodox faith to the sectarians by traveling through the region and visiting sectarian villages, where they would conduct Orthodox services and carrying out discussions [*besedy*] on religious topics with the "heretics" in order to demonstrate to the latter the errors of their ways.[156]

A much more organized and diverse effort at missionary work was conducted in the towns of Transcaucasia where resources were greater and the hardships of life on the road could be avoided. The urban mission among Russian non-conformists grew rapidly in the 1880s. In 1882, for example, Church authorities in Tiflis inaugurated a discussion series at the Seminary Church in order to confront the Christian sects. They organized nine weekly discussions along with a public lecture which took place on Sundays. Each week a different topic was broached in a format that allowed for a formal presentation of the topic at hand by Orthodox representatives as well as the opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions and make objections.[157] These meetings appear to have been popular among the Tiflis sectarians and served a variety of functions for them: as another location in which to discuss the religious matters always

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[155]RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, ll. 62ob-63.
[156]See, for example, RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 208, 1866, l. 5ob and RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, ll. 17-17ob. These travels served a second purpose for the Orthodox clergy: to gain information about the sectarians in order to understand them better and thereby facilitate the process of bringing them to Orthodoxy.
[157]Topics included the reverence of icons, the sources of Christian teachings such as the Holy Scriptures and sacred Traditions, non-canonical texts, the Church and its hierarchy, the history of the Christian Church and the worship of the "life-giving" cross.

at the front of their minds; as a chance to confront the attack of the Orthodox Church; and as a legal opportunity to spread the teachings of their faith by voicing their interpretations within the rubric of the question and answer period. Sectarian groups proposed to donate money for these discussions in order to pay for the lighting in the cathedral and the building of benches for attendees to sit on. The Baptist community in Tiflis even offered the use of their large meeting hall for public discussions, although the Orthodox clergy demurred.[158]

A second aspect of the missionary effort in Transcaucasia was directed at forestalling conversion out of Orthodoxy by introducing four measures. They held discussions with the faithful outside of religious services and spread brochures of a religious-moral orientation among their flock. They made certain that the priests assigned to Orthodox villages alongside sectarian communities were people of sufficient education, impeccable moral behavior and capable of polemics with sectarians. Finally, those religious dissenters found spreading their faith among the Orthodox population were banished to low-population areas in Transcaucasia—or often sent outright to other areas of the Empire, especially Siberia—and those propagandizers who appeared from abroad to spread their faith (particularly in the case of the Baptists) were immediately deported.[159]

Contemporary Orthodox officials did not consider their missionary efforts in Transcaucasia to be successful. However, as a result of their biases, Church authorities did not always fully comprehend the sources of these shortcomings. In the 1880s, the Georgian Exarch explained the serious failure of the missionary effort to produce any tangible flow of converts to Orthodoxy or stem the growth of the sectarian

[158]In addition to representatives from sectarian denominations, these public meetings were also attended by representatives of other faiths, especially Muslims and Jews. RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 951, 1883, ll. 28-29ob.
[159]RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, ll. 58ob. On exile to Siberia, see also RGIA f. 1268, op. 10, d. 218, 1860.

denominations by pointing to four factors. First, he called attention to the failures of the Orthodox clergy of the region. Priests were lazy, unmotivated and lacked sufficient education to carry out the delicate task of spreading the faith. The Orthodox administrative structure in the region provoked frequent absences of the priests from their parishes as well as recurrent transfers of clergy from one parish posting to another. Moreover, the Exarch complained that the ethnically Georgian clergy—who comprised the majority of Orthodox religious representatives—were even more unprepared and incapable of ministering to the sectarians than their Russian counterparts. He considered sectarianism to be a "Russian religious ailment" from which the Georgian people did not suffer. As a result they had much less vested interest in combating its spread and made little effort to learn about the sectarian faiths.[160]

The Exarch was correct to point out the personal failings of the clergy. However, there were other aspects of the clerical failings that he did not include in his reports. By far the greatest obstacle to successful missionary work was the very small number of Orthodox clergy in the region—a lack of priests which was acute well into the 1870s.[161] Moreover, the quality of the clergy in Transcaucasia suffered from the fact that the Transcaucasus was far from the first choice of qualified missionaries and other clergy. Orthodox priests appear to have taken whatever measures possible in order to avoid having to go south, leaving an impoverished pool of candidates.[162]

Second, the Exarch also pointed to the lack of support of the missionary process provided by local civil authorities. They remained "cold to the interests of the Church," not only refusing assistance but on occasion directly counteracting the efforts of the Church's representatives. The Exarch argued that the cause of this indifference to the

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[160]RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 951, 1883, ll. 19-20, 30ob-31 and RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, ll. 61-61ob.
[161]RGIA f. 1268, op. 1, d. 650, 1844, ll. 25ob-26.
[162]RGIA f. 797, op. 24, d. 96, otd. III, st. I, 1854-1858, ll. 26-33, passim.

Church's fate ensued from the non-Russian ethno-religious origins of the majority of Transcaucasia's local officials. They worked to sabotage the fortunes of Russian Orthodoxy and cloaked their opposition under the pretext of avoiding unrest among the sectarian-settlers. As a result, in 1886, the Exarch called for all Transcaucasian officials to be Orthodox, so that with their official powers and their good example they would bring veneration to the Orthodox faith and its Church.[163]

As discussed above, there was some truth to the Exarch's complaint that the civilian authorities were doing little to help the cause of the Orthodox Church in Transcaucasia. However, other sources indicate that it was not simply Armenian or Muslim officials who were less than sympathetic to the Orthodox cause in the region. Indeed, at the very heights of the regional administration, the Viceroy, Prince Vorontsov, while believing firmly in Orthodoxy as the one true path, also accepted the sectarians on a more or less equal footing with other Russian subjects in his jurisdiction.[164]

Third, the Exarch argued that the failure of Orthodox proselytism developed from what he conceived as the "ignorance" and "blind faith" of the sectarian faithful. He found that they were incapable of logical thought and unable to understand their theological errors even when they were demonstrated to them by enlightened Orthodox missionaries. The Exarch asserted that only through a long-term sojourn among the sectarians could a missionary realistically hope to convince them of Orthodoxy's truth. However, such close and long interaction was hard to accomplish because the

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[163]RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 951, 1883, ll. 30ob-31 and RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, ll. 61ob-63ob.

[164]See chapter three. See also the disinterest of the Minister of State Properties to Bariatinskii's proposal to increase privileges given converts to Orthodoxy as incentive. RGIA f. 381, op. 2, d. 2014, 1858.

Molokans, Dukhobors, Subbotniks, and Baptists resisted the activities of Orthodox missionaries in their midst.[165]

Finally, the Exarch highlighted the abilities and zeal of sectarian leaders and preachers, as well as the latter's tendency to attack the Orthodox Church whenever possible, as a prime reason for the poor showing of Orthodox missionary efforts. For example, Dukhobor leader Lukeria Kalmykova wielded, he believed, "almost Tsarist, dictatorial power." The leaders of the Transcaucasian Baptists, he continued, were on the whole very well versed in the Holy Scriptures and possessed great eloquence. In the case of Subbotniki, Jewish rabbis reinforced the sectarians' beliefs through both sermons and brochures, and in doing so made the hearts of the Subbotniki "inaccessible to Orthodox enlightenment."[166]

While there was some truth to his accusations, the Exarch's interpretation of the characteristics of the sectarians and their leaders reflects his Orthodox perspective. There were other factors which explain the sectarians' lack of interest in joining the Orthodox Church. Like the Exarch, sectarians believed that they had found true Christianity and the path to salvation in the practices and beliefs of their particular denomination. In addition, sectarians harbored animosity and distrust of all Orthodox and especially Orthodox priests. They retained bitter memories of the persecution from priests in the internal provinces before the move to Transcaucasia. Conversion to Orthodoxy represented a return to "paganism."[167]

Moreover, the very fact that the sectarians had been brought together into discrete, self-governing communities in Transcaucasia vastly strengthened their sense of religious identity and greatly hampered Orthodox missionary efforts. By collecting the

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[165]RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, ll. 60-60ob.
[166]RGIA f. 796, op. 442, d. 1124, 1886, l. 61.
[167]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., l. 11ob and see also chapter two.

sectarians in these communities, Tsarist policy had unwittingly provided the arena in which social, economic, and political bonds became even more closely intertwined with religious ones to form an over-arching sense of community. This fact was not lost on contemporary observers. Maior Iurkovskii wrote to the Ministry of the Interior in 1843 concerning the recently resettled Dukhobors from Tauride gubemiia. He noted that the settlement of the Dukhobors together "in one whole mass" with their elders able to influence them on a daily basis had greatly bolstered them in their faith. Iurkovskii argued that the only manner to ensure the conversion of the Dukhobors to Orthodoxy would be to settle one Dukhobor family alone in a village otherwise populated by Russian Orthodox. If necessary, children should also be separated from their parents. In such a case of spiritual and social isolation, Iurkovskii asserted, the exhortations of spiritual authorities would indeed bear fruit and push the Dukhobors to return to the Orthodox fold.[168]

Baptist Proselytism

Missionary work also developed quickly among the Baptists of Transcaucasia. Baptist missionaries traveled to sectarian villages and spread their word by holding discussions with the inhabitants and preaching in prayer services. While the Baptists worked outside of the law and without the aid of the resources available to the Orthodox Church, they were in many respects more successful in their efforts to convert Transcaucasian sectarians. In addition to the strong spiritual appeal of their message, Baptist missionaries were able to succeed where the Orthodox missionaries failed for three reasons. First, Transcaucasian Baptists, such as V. V. Ivanov, were able to gain

[168]Both the Ministry of the Interior and the Holy Synod did not agree to Iurkovksii's proposals. RGIA f. 1284, op. 200-1844, d. 19.

access to Molokan communities in a manner only dreamed of by Orthodox priests through their Molokan family connections. Second, Baptists initially had the advantage that their faith was a novelty to the Transcaucasian sectarians, many of whom heard rumors (both true and false) about the new faith and were curious to come and hear the Baptists speak. Finally, Baptist preachers attracted many Molokans to their meetings because of the emotional appeal of the baptismal ceremonies. Baptism was conducted in a festival air—like a traveling show—that attracted people from miles around.[169]

The stories of the missionary efforts of Ivanov and Pavlov provide a glimpse into the world of Baptist proselytism. From 1874 to 1877, Ivanov conducted two missionary trips in Transcaucasia and Pavlov one. In both cases, these newly converted Baptists focused their missionary attentions on Molokan communities. In part, this was because of the early Baptists' ease of access to Molokan society. However, the Baptists also feared a crackdown by the authorities if they tried to spread the faith too publicly among the Orthodox population.[170]

Before setting out on his first missionary trip, Ivanov organized financial credit from a representative of the British Bible Society in order to purchase 100 rubles worth of copies of the New Testament and Psalters, which he planned to sell on his missionary journey. He organized his travel by contracting with three Molokan wagon drivers to take him across Transcaucasia to Baku guberniia. By agreeing to take him , these Molokans unwittingly served to spread the Baptist faith.[171]

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[169]These aids in spreading the faith disappeared quickly, however. While the family ties, curiosity about the new faith, interest in the structure of Baptist services, and fascination with the festival-like qualities of the baptisms were a means to gain entry to the sectarian communities, the latter quickly realized the threat that the Baptists posed and entry into their communities became increasingly restricted. I am looking specifically at Baptist proselytizers of Transcaucasian origin, not those foreign representatives of the Baptists who were circulating in the large towns in Transcaucasia at the time.
[170]GMIR, f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 28ob-29 and GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., l. 82.
[171]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, ll. 8-9.

Ivanov's father and grandfather had been very prominent Molokans who were respected throughout the Molokan community in Transcaucasia. As a result of this "regal" lineage, Ivanov was freely given the rostrum to speak in Molokan meetings while on his first missionary trip in 1874-1875. Ivanov's son, describing his father's missionary activities wrote that "[i]n each of these villages, the name of his father and grandfather gave him the initial access to the Molokan meetings."[172] He moved from village to village, staying with relatives and friends who kindly put him up, despite the fact that most of them "deeply mourned" that he had "abandoned the faith of his fathers." Moreover, Ivanov's efforts were rewarded because of the curiosity of the Molokans and others who came in large numbers personally to see the new faith in action.[173]

Ivanov's experiences on his second missionary trip were very different from those he experienced on the initial voyage. In the place of welcome on the part of his relatives and family friends, he found only grudging acceptance of him into their homes and villages. Rather than the large audiences who came to hear him preach in the first trip, he found the crowds diminished. This was in part because they realized the threat posed to their faiths by the Baptists' growth and in part because their curiosity about the new denomination's teachings had been satisfied. Only in the town of Baku, which he had not visited on the first trip, did Ivanov find anywhere near the type of acceptance with which he had been greeted on his first journey. In Baku his family heritage once again granted him access to the preacher's platform in various congregations. However, in order to avoid arousing immediate opposition to himself and his Baptist teachings, Ivanov did not immediately preach about water baptism, but rather about

[172]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, l. 10.
[173]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 516, n.d., ll. 23-23ob.

more neutral topics such as repentance and the granting of forgiveness. Only in discussions following the service did he address the issue of water baptism.[174]

The missionary experiences of Pavlov and Rodionov were in many ways similar to those of Ivanov. Like Ivanov, they found their way into the sectarian villages and access to the pulpit greatly aided by their former Molokan identity, although by the time that they were on the road, the negative backlash had already begun, and they found certain villages entirely unreceptive.[175] However, Pavlov and Rodionov sparked enormous interest in their missionary activities through their baptismal rites.[176] The series of baptisms carried out by Pavlov over the course of his trip were usually very well attended, with hundreds of spectators from nearby villages—and often enticed non-Russians as well as sectarians. On one of the first baptisms that they conducted in the village of Mikhailovka, Pavlov and Rodionov found themselves swarmed by people as they made their way to the site of the baptisms. Many spectators had gone on ahead to ensure that they would not miss the show. In other regions, entire villages came to watch.[177]

For these people, the sight of grown humans standing in various bodies of water—rivers, ponds, and streams—sometimes in the most inclement weather, undergoing an entrance ritual, was an event that they had never before witnessed. The proceedings held great fascination: to watch people standing in the water, to listen to the preaching of Pavlov, to see the layout of the site around the point of baptism with its canopies and special areas, and to hear the singing. These were all aspects that turned the baptism from simply a religious moment into a public spectacle.

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[174]GMIR f. K1, op. 8, d. 470, 1925, ll. 14-16.
[175]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 82-123.
[176]For descriptions and discussions of the baptisms see GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 102-104, 107-108, 112-114, 116-117.
[177]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 102-104, 112-114.

Baptisms elicited two responses from the spectators. On one hand, the audience remained silent and respectful throughout the service, understanding the significance of what they were watching. It was a serious ritual moment in the lives of these individuals and a moment that required proper respect. At the same time, baptism was also a solemn moment for the sectarian spectators because they were watching their former co-religionists take a path that would eventually deny them salvation. The audience was often active in their refusal to take part in a baptism. In one case, one woman who was to be baptized was required to prepare for the ceremony alone because there were no women Baptists in the village and neither her relatives nor any other women from the village, would "lift a finger" to help her because they opposed her decision to convert.[178]

On the other hand, such baptisms could have a momentous impact on the people watching, sometimes leading them to convert also. In the village of Chukhur-Iurt, for example, the sight of an 83-year old man standing in the pond on the verge of baptism brought a woman in the audience to loud fits of tears and sobs. "Oh God, here is such an old man who is being baptized and we are all still serving the devil," she cried out.[179]

Conversion in a Larger Context

In the sectarian's multi-denominational villages, and Russia's multi-confessional Empire, denominational switching was a persistent, powerful, and deeply permeating force in the nineteenth century. For the sectarians, the process of conversion interacted dynamically with their religious, social, and political lives, with causes and

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[178]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., ll. 102-103.
[179]GMIR f. 14, op. 2, d. 104, n.d., l. 108.

consequences in each case. Indeed, their experiences blur the distinctions among these categories and belies any definitive demarcations. Sectarian religious identity became a flash point that defined individuals, gave meaning to their experiences, and could be manipulated for material gain both socially and politically. It was also a point of conflict, as individual actors and state authorities clashed over the power to define identity and to determine when a conversion had actually taken place—and therefore over the power to apply sets of laws and determine people's earthly fates.

Such religious mobility raises important questions about the meanings of religious identity, the interaction of religious identity with religious practice, and the contours of peasant religiosity. These patterns of conversion reflect a conception of the boundaries of the spiritual community as fluid and permeable. On one level, they demonstrate the vast importance that salvation in the next world held in the daily lives of certain sectarians. On another level, they represent a religiosity in which spiritual belief and practice were not necessarily tied to denominational affiliation.

This chapter has also demonstrated that the process of colonizing the Transcaucasian frontier profoundly affected the patterns and meanings of conversion in Imperial Russia. Indeed, a primary significance of imperial expansion into Transcaucasia was that it made possible new identities, social structures, and cultural systems; in this case, by redefining the spectrum of religious beliefs and practices of these Russian subjects. Tsarist legislation made religious affiliation the key by which sectarians could gain entrance to, or exit from, Transcaucasia. Such rules affected the manner in which Russians viewed denominational belonging, weighting religious identification with meanings that it had not possessed before 1830. Simultaneously, these laws colored Russian colonization with a religious hue because religious identification, and the ability to manipulate it, became a defining component of the

Russian colonists' experiences. Moreover, the settlement of Transcaucasia affected the practices of religious switching among Russians by bringing members of a variety of different faiths together in one place. In such a multi-confessional environment, religious faith and affiliation took on new meanings and importance in the lives of the colonists—significance that was in many respects distinct from the meanings attributed to conversion by religious non-conformists before resettlement to Transcaucasia began.

Conclusion

The history of the Molokans, Dukhobors, and Subbotniks who resettled to Transcaucasia between 1830 and 1890 is, on one level, a narrative about the changing fate of specific communities. Their stories, both individual and communal, are filled with aspirations and disappointments, achievement and tragedy, suffering and joy. While some sectarians were exiled to the southern borderlands for their religious beliefs, many others chose to migrate southwards in the hope of a better life for themselves. Once there, they encountered new neighbors, opportunities, and an unfamiliar environment. They experienced high mortality rates as well as economic success; conflict and coexistence with local Transcaucasians; evolving relations with Russian state power; greater freedom in their religious practice and a vibrant spiritual life; and rapidly changing notions of self-identity. In the process, they altered the world around them, just as it changed them. However, as well as being the story of certain groups of people, the mass resettlement of Russian non-conformists to Transcaucasia also grants us insight into three crucial aspects of Russian history: the formation and maintenance of the Russian empire (particularly at the local level through the daily activities of Russian migrants); the meanings of the frontier to Russian history; and the form and function of popular religion in the nineteenth century.

This study has argued that a fuller understanding of the tsarist empire requires an examination of the Russian colonial settlers who relocated into Russia's non-core regions. The sectarian-settlers were an active force in the formation of empire in Transcaucasia through their interactions with tsarist officials and non-Russians. First, the settlers performed a variety of economic, military, and administrative functions in Russia's empire-building enterprise, both consciously and accidentally. Second, the

sectarians' presence altered the course of Russian imperialism in the region by blocking the settlement of Orthodox Russians. Third, in the interactions between migrants and Transcaucasia's ethnically diverse communities, we see the ground-level formation of Russia' multi-ethnic, multi-confessional empire. On one hand, the meaning of the Russian presence in the region—what "Russian" denoted to the colonized—was defined as much, if not more, by the daily contact between non-Russians and settlers as by the locals' relations with state authority. On the other hand, how locals understood Russian state power was also affected by the way tsarist officials mediated (or did not mediate) between the settlers and non-Russians.

While they performed empire-building functions, the colonists were not simply cogs in an imperialist machinery. They represented independent actors in the colonial encounter who at times challenged the Russian state's imperialist designs, at times supported them, and at other times were oblivious or uninterested in them. When they arrived in Transcaucasia, the sectarians felt no sense of colonial mission, nor held a stake in Russian state power. Throughout their tenure in the region, they maintained their own priorities, needs, and goals: including religious freedom, eternal salvation, and economic prosperity. Thus, although the dissenters supported the Russian military during wartime, they did so on their own terms: as non-combatants and for a handsome price.

Similarly, tsarist administrators did not see the sectarian-settlers solely as unqualified agents of empire, there to fulfill central designs. Authorities continued to distrust the sects for their religious non-conformity (despite all that they did in the service of the empire). Officials inconsistently supported settler demands in interactions with the local peoples. Moreover, tsarist practices of settling sectarians on the lands of local non-Russian elites thrust the "colonizers" into a position subordinate to the

"colonized." When tsarist authorities upheld the social rights of local notables over the colonialist prerogatives of Russian settlers, they were challenged by the conflicting power structures of Russian imperialism.

In addition to underscoring the integral role that sectarian-settlers played in the process of empire-building, this study has also provided a window into two seminal functions of frontier regions in nineteenth-century Russia. First, as well as being loci of colonial contact between Russians and non-Russians, the borderlands were areas in which the tsarist government consciously segregated undesirables in an effort to resolve difficulties in the center. As discussed in chapter one, Russian officials used Transcaucasia's physical distance to isolate the "heretical infection" of sectarian Russians from Orthodox ones—a policy which exemplifies Russia's often haphazard process of empire-building.

Second, and more importantly, peripheral zones also served as social and geographic spaces in which Russian migrants found opportunities (social, economic, religious, and in terms of identity) not available in the central provinces. In examining Russians on the frontier, we see a Russian peasant society that was more dynamic, vital, and volatile than the traditional historiographical picture of stagnation and immobility allows. Significantly, as this case highlights, it was often Russia's outcasts who received the benefits (and costs) of the frontier's possibilities and power to transform.

The Transcaucasian frontier was a vital and creative space in which sectarians transformed themselves and their communities. They forged new identities as they debated which old practices to recreate in their new environment and which ones to abandon or fashion anew. Sectarian resettlement in Transcaucasia also endowed old identities and categories with new meanings. The growth of the sectarians' "colonizer"

classification changed what "sectarian" denoted in Russian society and polity. By granting them the opportunity to act in the interests of the empire, tsarist officials came to realize that non-Orthodox Russians could be productive and loyal subjects of empire. Moreover, the decision to isolate sectarians in Transcaucasia profoundly affected the meanings that Russian peasants attached to sectarian religious identity, prompting conversions both to and from Orthodoxy. Those people who desired to resettle could make themselves eligible to do so through conversion. The sectarian-settlers who wished to return to the central provinces, could similarly change denominations in order to escape the periphery.

Transcaucasia's differing physical landscapes and unfamiliar socio-ethnic mix also changed the sectarian-settlers in fundamental ways. First, despite their initial difficulties, the sectarians who relocated to Transcaucasia availed themselves of economic opportunities not available in their home provinces—such as large-scale livestock raising and the transportation trade—which brought them a relatively high standard of living. Second, since non-Russian Transcaucasians tended to dictate the terms of inter-ethnic encounters, the sectarian "colonizers" accommodated more frequently to Transcaucasia than the reverse. Their interaction with Muslim Azerbaijanis altered sectarian practices concerning violence and their treatment of other humans—a profound change in their moral codes.

In examining the colonial experiences of the settlers, this dissertation has also expanded our understanding of the function of religion in Russian society. First, and perhaps most obviously, religious beliefs, practices, and categories were not simply confined to a separate, spiritual arena, but were integrated into all aspects of Russian experience. As is clear from the history of the Transcaucasian sectarians, religious and imperial history were intertwined and mutually influential in nineteenth-century Russia.

Religious concerns—the tensions of a multi-confessional empire combined with efforts to apply policies of religious tolerance—were the underlying causes of the dissenters' relocation to Transcaucasia. Issues of imperialism played a secondary role in the fate of the newly-acquired lands.

Not unexpectedly, religious forces were also prominently at work in the lives of the non-conformists. The expectation of Christ's second coming, combined with the search for greater religious freedom, impelled many of the migrants to move to Transcaucasia. The settlers also maintained a sense of religious self (as distinct from Orthodox Russians) in tandem with their new-found ethnic and state identities. At the same time, religious affiliation proved to be a flexible label for the dissenters. They were often willing to change religious denomination in an effort to gain access to mobility, ameliorate economic situations, or escape unwanted family situations. Thus, confessional identification was a legal category that Russian subjects were willing to manipulate just as they did other state categorizations.

In sum, this dissertation provides a new historical perspective on Russian imperialism and borderland colonization in which popular religiosity and tsarist religious policy played leading roles. As Dukhobors, Molokans, and Subbotniks struggled to ensure eternal salvation and make a better life for themselves on this earth they, both wittingly and unwittingly, help to construct empire and transform imperial Russia.

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Microfilmed documents from *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Odesskoi oblasti* (fond 89, opis 1)

Rossiiskaia Gosudarstvennaia Biblioteka, Otdel' Rukopisei (OR RGB), Moscow:

fond 369	V. D. Bonch-Bruevich
fond 648	A. I. Klibanov

Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv (RGIA), St. Petersburg:

fond 379	Departament gosudarstvennykh imushchestv ministerstva finansov
fond 381	Kantseliariia ministra ministerstva gosudarstvennykh imushchestv
fond 383	Pervyi departament ministerstva gosudarstvennykh imushchestv
fond 384	Vtoroi departament ministerstva gosudarstvennykh imushchestv

fond 391 Pereselencheskoe upravlenie
fond 396 Departament gosudarstvennykh zemel'nykh imushchestv ministerstva gosudarstvennykh imushchestv
fond 398 Departament zemledeliia ministerstva gosudarstvennykh imushchestv
fond 560 Obshchaia kantseliariia ministra finansov
fond 565 Departament gosudarstvennogo kaznacheistva ministerstva finansov
fond 573 Departament okladnykh sborov ministerstva finansov
fond 733 Departament narodnogo prosveshcheniia
fond 796 Kantseliariia Sinoda
fond 797 Kantseliariia ober-prokurora Sinoda
fond 821 Departament dukhovnykh del inostrannykh ispovedanii (MVD)
fond 919 I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov
fond 932 A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov
fond 1149 Departament zakonov gosudarstvennogo soveta
fond 1152 Departament ekonomii gosudarstvennogo soveta
fond 1263 Komitet ministrov
fond 1268 Kavkazskii komitet
fond 1282 Kantseliariia ministra ministerstva vnutrennikh del
fond 1284 Departament obshchikh del ministerstva vnutrennikh del
fond 1287 Khoziaistvennyi departament ministerstva vnutrennikh del
fond 1291 Zemskii otdel ministerstva vnutrennikh del
fond 1354 Obshchie sobraniia i soedinennye prisutstviia kassatsionnykh departamentov senata
fond 1405 Ministerstvo iustitsii
fond 1473 Sekretnyi komitet po delam raskola
fond 1485 Reviziia senatora N. M. Reinke sudebnykh ustanovlenii Tiflisskoi sudebnoi palaty
fond 1574 K. P. Pobedonostsev
fond 1661 K. S. Serbinovich

Periodicals

Dukhovnyi khristianin
Etnograficheskoe obozrenie
Istoricheskii vestnik
Izvestiia Kavkazskogo otdela Imperatorskogo Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva
Kars
Kaspii
Kavkaz
Kavkazskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti
Kavkazskii Kalendar'
Kavkazskoe sel'skoe khoziaistvo
Molokanin
Molokanskii vestnik
Missionerskoe obozrenie
Otechestvennye zapiski

Pamiatnaia knizhka Erivanskoi gubernii
Pravoslavnoe obozrenie
Pravoslavnyi sobesednik
Russkaia mysl'
Russkaia starina
Russkii arkhiv
Russkii vestnik
Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik
Tserkovnyi vestnik
Tserkovnye vedomosti
Vestnik evropy
Vestnik Gruzinskogo Ekzarkhata
Zapiski Kavkazskogo otdela imperatorskogo geograficheskogo obshchestva
Zhivaia starina

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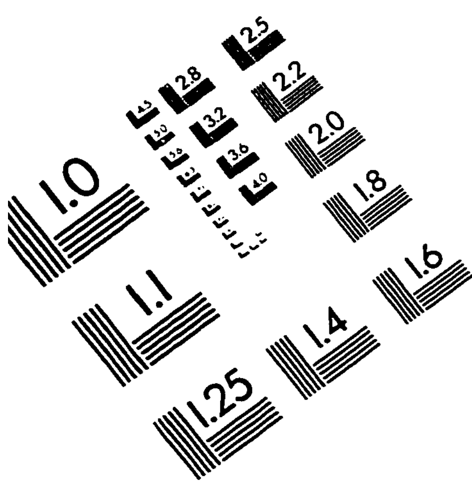
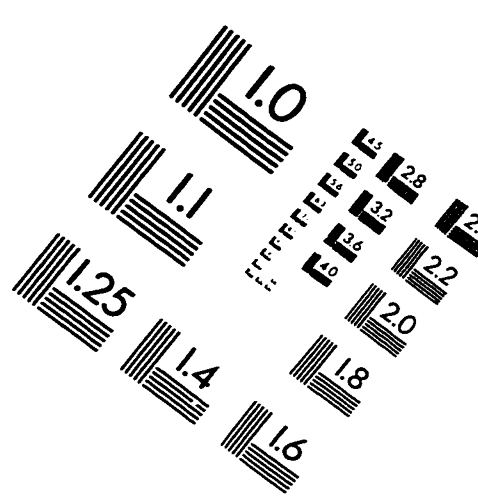
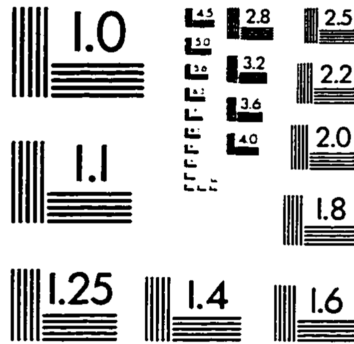
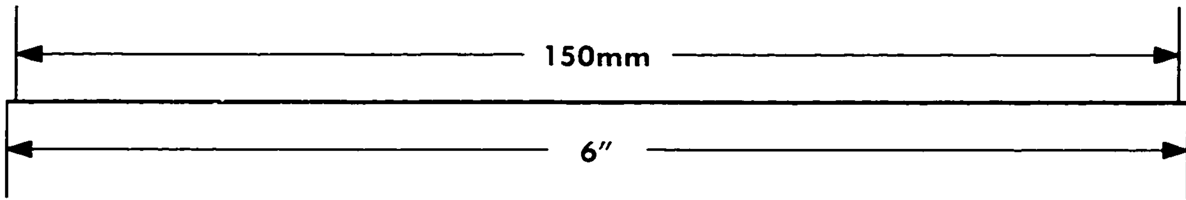

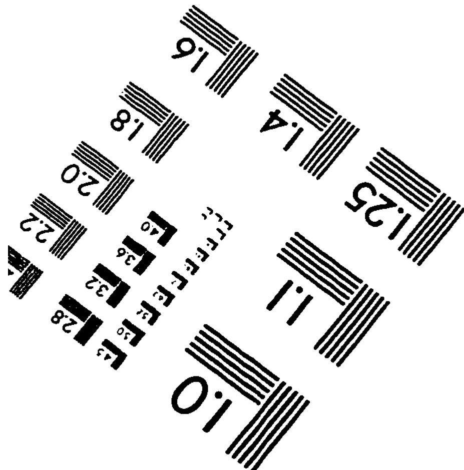

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