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M. Yu. Davydova

Volgograd, Russian Federation

Sectarian Religious Reformation Teachings in the Saratov Gubernia of the Russian Empire in the Second Half of the 19th–Early 20th Century

Abstract

The article aims to determine features of sectarianism development in the Saratov gubernia (province) in the pre-revolutionary period. Drawing upon both published and archival materials from federal and local archives (i.e., materials of the Saratov Gubernial Statistical Committee from the State Archive of Saratov Region, fond 421) the author succeeds in evidentiating a two-fold increase in number of sectarians in the region and identifying cluster areas of various teachings. Record-keeping materials of the Chancery of the Synod and those of the Department of Religious Affairs of Foreign Faiths of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Russian State Historical

Archive, fonds 796 and 821), as well as records of the Chancellery of the Saratov Governor and those of the Saratov gubernia government, and the Prosecutor of the Saratov regional court, and the Saratov Theological Consistory (State Archive of Saratov Region, fonds 1, 2, 10 and 135) enable the author to trace the evolution of sectarianism in the studied period. Religious reformation movement was not a mass country-wide movement. Sectarrians numbered about 0,3–0,4% of the population, different teachings having their cluster areas in the gubernia. Sectarian teachings were spreading not only among the Great Russian, but also among German and to a lesser degree Jewish population. The author concludes that there was a significant diversity of sects; most of the doctrines known in Russia and even some peculiar ones were abundant in the gubernia. The period is characterized by emergence of new rationalistic sects of Shtundists and Baptists that incorporated some of Molokans and Protestants. Alongside these there continued traditional sects. Besides, in late 19th century there appeared new local sects of all kinds, including some tending to anti-monarchist and anti-government sentiment. Their popularity is indicative of social instability in the region.

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Keywords

Sources, archives, Sectarianism, Saratov Volga region, Kamyshin uyezd (district), Tsaritsin uyezd, Atkarsk uyezd, Molokan Jumpers (Pryguny), Topuny, Enochians (Jenochowcy), Otrechency.

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About author

Davydova Marina Yurievna, PhD in History, Economic theory, history and law department, Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Volgograd State Technical University, assistant professor, Volgograd, Russian Federation, +7-960-871-24-73, saamu@rambler.ru

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