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Ukrainian Evangelical Peasants as “Cultural Pioneers” of Late Imperial Russia

After 1861 a cultural dialogue between Russian indigenous religious dissenters and German and Mennonite colonists precipitated the spread of evangelical culture and various radical religious sects among the peasants of the southern frontier in the Russian Empire. These new sects among Russian and Ukrainian peasants were reminiscent of those in the West three and a half centuries earlier. The overwhelming majority of these groups, which were called the Ukrainian Stundists by their contemporaries, shared the theology and practices of their Western counterparts. They became predecessors of different evangelical Christian churches in southern Russia, including Baptists (Stundo-Baptists), Adventists and Pentecostals.¹ The role of these radical sects in the transformation of social relations and culture in the southern part of the Russian Empire has been ignored, disparaged, or misinterpreted by professional historians both in and outside Russia. Even those who write about Russian and Ukrainian education have been generally inclined to overlook the peasant religious sects' educational practices.²

"Conservative Russian intellectuals understood that the literacy and industry of Stundists comprised elements of social, economic and cultural progress."

From the very beginning of Ukrainian Stundism even the Orthodox press described the new peasant dissidents in positive terms. Orthodox journalists contrasted the “good morality,” “sobriety,” and diligence of the Stundist peasants with “the prevalent alcoholism all over the countryside.” Conservative Russian intellectuals understood that the literacy and industry of Stundists represented elements of social, economic and cultural progress. During the first decades of Stundism they continued to consider incorporation of Stundists into the mainstream of Orthodox Christianity deeming them

representative of the most religious peasants.³ One Orthodox author noted that the success of Stundism and its attractiveness to local peasants resulted from the Stundist requirement of a “virtuous, honest, sober and industrious life.”⁴ Even opponents of the evangelical movement had to acknowledge in 1880 that peasant Stundism was “a considerable step forward compared with the ignorant and superstitious mass of our peasantry.”⁵ At the outset the Orthodox clergy had hopes about the return of the dissidents to the church. Some priests even praised a revival of religious piety among the local peasants. When they realized that the Stundist peasants were persistent in their dissent for which they felt no need for repentance, Orthodox leadership turned to the police requesting that the dissenters be prosecuted.

Both the local administration and the police commended the morality and virtuous lifestyle of the Stundist peasants during the movement's early days. In January 1875 the prosecutor from Odessa district sent a special report to the Ministry of Justice in which he defended Stundist peasants and accused the local Orthodox clergy of ignorance regarding their religious needs. He noted that “the best, the most intelligent and industrious peasants were joining the Stundist movement.”⁶ The governor of

Kherson also cited positive features of the movement and explained this as a natural reaction of the “intelligent part of peasantry” to the corruption and ignorance of the Orthodox priests.⁷ No reports of criminal activity among the Studists can be found in the province of Kiev, in areas with strong Stundist influence, after the arrival of Stundism in 1870.⁸

On August 24, 1903, in his letter to the Ministry of the Interior, the General Governor of Kiev, Volynia and Podolia praised the Ukrainian Stundo-Baptists as well. He insisted that all the Stundist peasants from Volynia could speak, read and write not only in their native, Ukrainian, but also “the good literary Russian language.” Their talented activists composed prayers following the text of Holy Scripture, and they used the melodies of the folk songs or composed their own melodies for religious hymns. Some Stundists were musically literate and even used sheet music for their ceremonies.⁹ In Volynia Stundists were considered “the most obedient taxpayers, sober and industrious peasants, and overall, the most peaceful and easy to get on with settlers, who did not create the problems either for the court or for the local administration.”¹⁰

In 1877 a popular Russian newspaper wrote about Ukrainian Stundists as “notable for their enterprise, love for work, persistence and energy in pursuit of their economic goals and tasks, as either workers or manufacturers. The Stundists respect work so much that they reject any kind of pleasure, even a slight one, which they consider a waste of time . . . Although they reject decorations and luxury, Stundists at the same time appreciate everything beneficial to life. For instance, nearly every Stundist (even the poorest one) strives to get a watch and then, with purely German exactness, tries to plan his time and activity according to his watch.”¹¹

The Stundists changed the symbolic elements of everyday life often expressed in terms of their material culture. They demonstrated a keen interest in rational symbology by placing their instruments and tools, rather than Orthodox icons, in the so-called “red corner” (the sacred honorable position) of the peasant house. They placed the Bible (and a text of the New Testament, in particular) in the important central position in their home, usually on a decorated linen napkin in the center of the desk where all members of the household could easily access it. One correspondent of the Orthodox newspaper described his impressions after his first visit to Levko Lieber, the Stundist preacher in the village of Luchina in Skvira district (the province of Kiev). “On a wall where peasants usually keep the sacred icons, I saw,” he wrote, “various carpenter’s tools: a saw, planes and other instruments. Different religious books were left on the table and apparently were read with great respect.” The author was surprised when he found all the pages in the Stundist’s Bible covered with Levko’s dense handwriting, comments on the content of the biblical text.¹²

Stundist communities often transformed the lifestyle of their villages and offered new priorities to their Orthodox neighbors. In some localities they eradicated hard drinking and introduced a culture of reading. Before 1878 in the village of Liubomirka (the province of Kherson), a center of Ukrainian Stundism, there were two taverns [“kabak”], and peasants spent all their free time there drinking vodka and smoking tobacco. After 1878 the local peasants, who joined the Stundist community (“more than a half of the village households belonged to the sect”), stopped visiting the taverns and petitioned the local administration to close them. As a result of this initiative, the taverns were closed. Later, using the money they had saved because of the closing of the taverns, the Stundists bought a fire-engine for their village. Moreover, the Stundist community collected 100 roubles every year to buy books for the

local school. The Liubomirka Stundists sent their children to this school and supplied the school and teachers with everything they needed. According to one journalist, who visited Liubomirka in 1880, the school library was one of the best he had ever seen in the Ukrainian countryside. The library collection included not only religious literature approved by the Orthodox censorship, but also books on history, nature, geography and science. Because of the Stundist support, the school acquired modern equipment, furniture, and maps. Indeed, the nearly all aspects of the Liubomirka peasants' existence were affected. They read newspapers and tried to introduce in their everyday life the innovations about which they had learned.¹³

All observers noted the new work ethic among the dissident peasants, who were honest and kept their promises. They celebrated fewer holidays and worked more than their Orthodox neighbors. Their achievements in agriculture were more impressive than that of their Orthodox counterparts. Many became prosperous farmers. In part, their success resulted from their temperance campaign (The normal Orthodox peasant spent more than one third of his budget on vodka).¹⁴ During the public trial of the Kherson Stundists in 1878 all their Orthodox neighbors praised their lifestyle. One Orthodox witness told the court that the Stundist peasants "lead virtuous lives, they do not steal and do not drink alcohol." Another Orthodox peasant explained to the judge that it was impossible "to find bad people" among the Stundists. "I can say only good things about them," he continued, "There are neither thieves nor drunkards among them. Moreover, anybody who was alcoholic or criminal after joining the sect would be transformed into a virtuous person."¹⁵ The peasant dissidents themselves understood the social and cultural significance of their virtuous lifestyle for Russian society. In February 1886, in their petition to the governor of Kherson the Stundo-Baptists from the village of Ingul asked for permission to establish a meeting for worship. Appealing to the governor's sense of reason and fair play they elucidated their usefulness for the Russian state and society:

We spend our free time with our families, praying for our Tsar and reading religious books. So we contribute to strong family relations, to order and discipline in the countryside. Meanwhile, our Orthodox brothers spend their free time in the bars drinking alcohol fighting each other and disturbing people. They waste their savings on vodka and tobacco and as a result are unable to pay taxes, whereas we save money and pay the state taxes on time. The majority of the Orthodox peasants are poor, and they ask for state support and assistance. We have no poor members because we support all those who need help. As a result, we do not ask for state support. Moreover, we try to strengthen the state and provide it with virtuous, literate and loyal citizens, who will be 'the good family men and women,' the useful members of the society, true patriots of their country and loyal subjects of the crown.¹⁶

The historical evidence suggests that Stundism had a particular appeal for women. In a conversation with an Orthodox missionary, a peasant woman who had joined the Stundist village community in the province of Kiev tried to explain how Stundism improved family life. "I don't want to quit Stundism," she said, "because the new faith led our husbands to a new life." She explained that before joining Stundism they drank vodka and beat their wives and children. Because of the drinking problems many peasant families lost their savings and land. "When my Alexei (husband) joined the Stunda," she continued, "we began a new life."

Vodka, quarrels, fights, bad language, and all misery disappeared from our life. Instead of vodka we are drinking now tea with sweets. We spend our free time reading the New Testament and praying. Our children are fond of reading the religious books. They don't go to the streets where their Orthodox classmates use bad language and smoke tobacco. In contrast to the Orthodox peasants, we and our children understand the Gospels and religious rituals. Our Orthodox peasant neighbors always drink on holidays and do not care about their families. Moreover, they were ignorant of religious theory and practice. When they visit the church they stand like poles and do not understand either liturgy or readings from the Bible.¹⁷

These comments may help to explain the popularity of an emerging level of dissent among Ukrainian peasant women. Stundism precipitated changes among other members of the Ukrainian peasant family as well. Stundist peasants developed a reputation for treating their wives and children with respect, a penchant that helped to define their concept of family relations. What struck Orthodox observers as especially unique, however, was the lack of hierarchy in the Stundist family. The Stundist father behaved as an equal to women and children in his family, while in Orthodox families, as one commentator remarked, "the father was feared by everyone." The Stundist altered the patriarchal way of life and in so doing introduced a new, more liberal and democratic pattern in the Ukrainian village. In contrast to their Orthodox neighbors, Stundist women became active and conscious participants in local religious communities. The Stundist man's wife was "his helpmate and bosom friend, with a share in his joy and trouble."

She was his sister in the assembly for worship. Her voice may be heard there in praise or prayer. She sits down with him at the same Lord's Table, and, with equal rights acknowledged before God, and the Stundist husband would never think of curtailing her rights or slighting her position in his own household. It rarely happens that a Stundist inflicts corporal punishment on his children. The law of love is the law of his home.

According to this idealized portrayal of Stundist family recorded by one Orthodox author, Stundist women even organized their meetings where they discussed problems occurring among female members of Stundist communities.¹⁸ According to at least some Orthodox missionaries, the Stundist communities represented a positive example for Ukrainian and Russian peasants because "sectarians live like members of one family and in this regard they serve as an exemplary model of brotherly relations, help each other by advice and in a material way, and in their contacts they are tender and cordial."¹⁹ The Stundists created a system of mutual peasant assistance. They supported their co-religionists and the most impoverished peasants in the village and considered it a central Christian principle to help those most in need.²⁰

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The most important economic and cultural contribution of the Stundists to the development of the Ukrainian countryside was the spread of a new culture of the written word. The written, memorized word of the scripture became the center of Stundist peasant culture, and proper reading and comprehension of the Bible formed the main

the peasants themselves."

epistemological framework for every Stundist community. As a result, the Stundists became the first peasant teachers and organizers of the new peasant schools in the Ukrainian provinces. From the very beginning of Ukrainian Stundism the main concern of peasant dissenters was their illiteracy. Therefore, they supported existing primary schools and established their own school and became the first peasants to create their own system of religious education in the southern Russian Empire. Moreover, their schools were the first in the Ukrainian countryside founded by the peasants themselves.

In November 1886, responding to a complaint from the local priest, a police officer from Chigirin district in the province of Kiev closed the Stundist peasant school in the village of Topilovka. As the police investigation discovered, before 1885 all the Stundist children had gone to the local Orthodox primary school where they had read the Psalter and other religious books in the Church Slavonic language. But the Stundist parents were disappointed with the Orthodox school and especially with the obligatory reading in Slavonic. They considered such an education to be a waste of time. They explained to their Orthodox neighbors that teaching and reading in Russian was easier, more useful and more intelligible for peasant children than an education based on Church Slavonic. As a result, the Stundists removed their children from the Orthodox primary school and organized their own peasant school in Topilovka. In 1885 their activists opened such a school in a large house owned by Nikita Dynda and invited Dem'ian Nedal'chenko, a literate peasant from Topilovka and a member of the local Stundist congregation, to teach. Over the course of one year he taught the basics of Russian by reading the Gospels to peasant children from both Stundist and Orthodox families. When the police closed the school at the end of 1886 nineteen students, including one Orthodox boy, were enrolled there. The police confiscated fourteen copies of a textbook on Russian elementary grammar and copies of the Gospels in the Russian vernacular. But they were unable to open a criminal case against the Stundists, because all the confiscated books had been published with the permission of the state censor. According to the archival evidence, peasant evangelicals established more than 100 primary schools in the Ukrainian provinces of the Russian Empire by 1905.²¹

The Stundist "reformation" was a "cultural revolution" among the Ukrainian peasants. Local Stundists took care of the schools in their villages. In the village of Karlovka in the province of Kherson they collected money and bought the new books for the Karlovka primary school. A part of the new collection contained the books sent from evangelicals in St. Petersburg and the German colonies. The local administration, however, fired the teacher of this primary school when it discovered that she had assigned the students evangelical literature as their homework. Half of the students in the Karlovka primary school were children of local Stundists. Consequently, the Stundists decided to organize their own school. They established a Sunday school and invited the children from Orthodox families to come. The local Stundist peasants taught in this school, which grew in popularity among peasants from neighboring villages as well.²² Under pressure of local Orthodox clergy, the local police raided Stundist villages and closed their schools.²³

Stundist activists pioneered the establishment of a kindergarten and elementary school system for poor children in the Ukrainian provinces. The first Stundist kindergarten was recorded in 1899-1903 in the city of Kiev.²⁴ In March 1899 Iulia Karpinskaia, the widow of a military officer, asked the city administration for permission to open "people's kindergartens, which would take care of religious,

moral and physical education of the children from the poorest families of Kiev; and for this purpose these kindergartens would use simple games and handicrafts that would be easily understood by the small children.”²⁵ One of her ideas was that her kindergartens could protect the morality of children from poor families, and could save them from the dangerous influences of city streets. The first complaint against Iulia Karpinskaia came in September 1899 from an educational official in the city administration. He reported to his superiors that Karpinskaia had no degree in education and was therefore not allowed to establish elementary schools. Meanwhile she collected money among the inhabitants in Kiev and established three kindergartens with 200 children. Chief among the concerns of the educational officer there was that, without any permission from the educational department, Karpinskaia hired Jewish teachers to teach in her kindergartens. More than a half of her students were Christians, and the rest were Jews.²⁶ This situation underscored growing linkages between Stundists and Jews and drew unfavorable attention to their amicable relations.

Eventually, the Orthodox clergy leveled a more serious complaint at Karpinskaia. In March 1902, the Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia, reported to the Holy Synod that Karpinskaia had joined the Stundist sect in Kiev in 1900. According to his report, she decided to unite the Stundists and all evangelical groups in the province of Kiev into a unified movement in which intellectuals and peasants collaborated. This vision helps explain why she opened the elementary schools in Kiev and used them as meeting place for various dissidents. The most important meeting place for Stundists was her kindergarten on Predslavinskaia Street, where she taught the Gospels and invited Stundists to instruct the children. Under pressure from the Orthodox clergy, the police closed the three kindergartens. Then Karpinskaia opened another kindergarten without permission from the authorities. She invited talented peasants from the Ukrainian countryside to teach and work as tutors in her kindergarten. The most famous peasant teacher was Valentina Kukolenko, a peasant woman who was literate enough to teach the Gospels and the Russian language in Karpinskaia’s kindergarten.²⁷

The local administration sent the case to the court in June 1901 where Karpinskaia was fined and ordered to close her school, both penalties she strongly resisted. Notwithstanding persecution and heavy fines, her kindergarten remained open until the end of 1902. A police officer reported that in 1902 34 boys and 32 girls aged seven to twelve were enrolled there: The majority of these children came from very poor families. The school had no established rules of admittance or education, and children of from all socio-economic backgrounds were admitted free of charge. The school provided divinity classes, where they focused attention on biblical studies, and classes of reading and writing, where they taught children the basics of Russian language. Karpinskaia taught the Gospels to children from dissident families, and another teacher supervised the reading of the Bible for children from Orthodox families. Four other teachers, all of them Stundist peasant women, taught needlework and handicrafts. Most popular among the smallest children, according the police officer, were lessons of “how to make the artificial flowers, baskets, rugs and hand-bags from pieces of cloth.”²⁸ The policeman emphasized the useful and practical subjects in the elementary school. Such subjects obviously corresponded to the religious ethos of the Ukrainian evangelicals with their orientation to the rational and pragmatic elements of education.²⁹

Despite the conservative character of Baptist meetings, the Stundo-Baptist peasant women played a more prominent role in the life of

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their congregations than Orthodox peasant women did in their parishes. Contemporary observers noted that the Stundist women not only were active participants in the worship meetings, but they also preached sermons, and read and commented on the Bible. Male Baptist ministers frequently joined Orthodox critics in expressing deep reservations about the Baptist women's attempts to preach and discuss the Gospels in their meetings. Such women's behavior, they opined, contrasted with St. Paul's classic advice: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith

the law." [I Corinthians, 14:34]³⁰ Stundist peasant women represented "a culture of reading" in the Ukrainian countryside. As they gained literacy they spent their free time reading and discussing the Bible and other religious books in the family circle. For the first time in the history of the Ukrainian peasantry, women in peasant households began to consciously opt for reading various forms of literature to the exclusion of performing regular household chores. Moreover, Stundist women took pride in their ability not only to read the Bible, but also to understand religious rituals and ceremonies. During a conversation with an Orthodox missionary one Stundist peasant woman from the province of Kiev tried to contrast "the positive pastime of the Stundist family;" that is, reading and no consumption of alcohol, with the lifestyle of what she described as a typical Orthodox peasant family accustomed to strong drink and little reading.³¹

The Stundist women were consciously aware that they were different in many of their behaviors from other peasant women. They participated in discussions organized by Orthodox missionaries where they developed a reputation for their sophisticated responses to questions about religion and the Bible. Some quoted and interpreted the Bible during those discussions. Many tried to attract Orthodox neighbors to their meetings and even organized special proselytizing campaigns among Orthodox peasant women. In one village near Kherson in 1894-95, the wife of Pavel Tsurkan, the local miller and a Stundist preacher, met their customers, the local Orthodox peasant women, at their mill, and talked with them about the Bible and how religion could help them in their lives. Eventually, she organized a separate Stundist worship meeting for those peasant women who were attracted to her preaching at the mill. Following the local priests' complaints, the police closed this meeting in 1895, arrested all peasant women who participated, and imposed a fine on them.³²

Stundist women actively participated in the dissemination of "a culture of reading" among peasants. They read books to their neighbors and tried to help their children learn how to read and to write. Some of them became teachers in Stundist schools. Iulia Karpinskaia, who invited Stundist peasant women to teach in Kiev, in 1901 hired Valentina Kukolenko, a local peasant woman to teach the Russian language and the Holy Scripture to peasant children from the Ukrainian villages. It is worth noting that peasant teachers such as Kukolenko routinely taught with female Jewish teachers from the Kiev.³³ The faculty comprised a fascinating collaboration of peasant and city women of different ethnic origins. The Ukrainian and Jewish women, moreover, worked together with children from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Officials of the Ministry of Education discovered in Karpinskaia's kindergarten Russian, Ukrainian, and Jewish students sitting and learning together in one classroom. By combining the students, the Stundist women had broken the Ministry's rules. What was remarkable in this case was

that the Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish women evangelicals, who taught in the kindergarten, were also of different social origins. Iulia Karpinskaia came from a noble and wealthy Russian family, Valentina Kukolenko was a Ukrainian peasant, Anna Pushkareva was a Russian peasant, and their Jewish co-religionists came from families of city artisans and traders. These women united their efforts in one noble cause--to educate children from impoverished families and help them to build better lives. Unfortunately, the local administration and Orthodox clergy aborted these efforts. A major factor in the closing of Karpinskaia's kindergarten was police officials' discovery of the the unusually independent role of the women organizers and women teachers; no men were involved in the venture. Yet in retrospect, their efforts may be viewed a unique example of purely feminine activity within the Ukrainian evangelical movement.

Despite obstinant resistance from conservative Baptist ministers, women became the recognized leaders of some Stundist communities. In 1893 Matriona Khodzitskaia, a peasant woman from the province of Kiev, organized a Stundist meeting for worship in her house and "seduced in her sect," not only members of her family, but also her Orthodox neighbors. As one Orthodox missionary described her, Khodzitskaia "was a pretty woman of 46 years; she was very eccentric, with a huge energy and good skills in reading and writing."³⁴ The same missionary noted that Matriona had been famous even before for her "depraved behavior." Her notoriety evolved out of a series of scandalous extra-marital love affairs with local peasant that had resulted in the birth of illegitimate children. Her entry into the evangelical community transformed her life, and she became an "exemplary wife and mother." Matriona was, in several respects, a new type of Stundist leader. She was literate, writing her own sermons to preach at the meetings, and collecting her own library of religious literature. In his report to the Kiev governor, an Orthodox missionary noted that Matriona always carried with her religious books and used them during discussions with her neighbors. Her copy of the Gospels bore the marks of her hand-written notes and comments. While preaching, she always urged local peasants to think and act rationally. She used biblical texts to educate peasant women and modeled a lifestyle that differed significantly with the traditional patriarchal Orthodox way of life.³⁵

By developing a culture of reading and practical schooling, the Stundists, who comprised a significant part of rural population in the provinces of Kherson and Kiev by 1900, contributed to modernization of the Ukrainian countryside and to the formation of "human capital" in the sense of skills, education, and various rational social practices.³⁶ Stundist peasant activists represented a new generation of Ukrainian peasants who, through intensive reading, memorization, and discussion of scripture, developed new intellectual abilities. In their disputes with their religious opponents, including Orthodox missionaries and local clergy, they demonstrated not only high moral standards, but also their natural intellectual aptitude for generating new ideas and cultural forms.³⁷ They became the first "cultural pioneers" among peasants of late imperial Russia. The peasant evangelicals not only tried to modernize the Russian and Ukrainian countryside they also sought to restore respect for human dignity by forming a new mentality as literate and progressive farmers. Unfortunately, the repressions initiated by some within the Orthodox Church prevented these popular versions of modernization from developing and flourishing.

Yet the historical memory of the people currently living in Ukraine keeps alive the story of the legendary Stundists as their "cultural pioneers".³⁸ The people from central and southern Ukraine still

refer to all evangelicals as “the Stundists.” Despite mass persecution under the tsarist and Soviet regimes, the evangelical sects of southern Ukraine remain the most numerous and influential religious congregations in the post-Soviet state. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the continuing existence of millions of evangelicals in the regions of the former “Ukrainian borderlands” of the Russian Empire serves as remarkable evidence of the vitality of the “Stundist cultural revolution” and the legacy of the first Ukrainian peasant pioneers of evangelical Christianity.

NOTES

1 The word “Stundism” was derived from German word “die Stunden” – “the hours.” The German Pietists who settled in southern Russia and Ukraine spent their “free hours [freie Stunden]” after the church service reading and discussing the Bible in their homes. That is why their neighbors, German Lutherans, called them Stundists. Later on, in the 1860s the Russian administration borrowed this word and called the first peasant evangelicals, who collaborated with German Protestants, “the Ukrainian (Khokhol) Stundists” as well. Beginning with only twenty members in 1862 the Stundist sect among the Ukrainian peasants grew to thousands and spread over southern and central Ukraine in the 1870s. During the 1880s Stundism reached the provinces of Tavrida, Ekaterinoslav, Poltava, Kharkov, Chernigov, Volynia and Podolia (there were 2,956 dissidents in the province of Kherson in 1886, 2,006 in the province of Kiev in 1884, 300 in the province of Ekaterinoslav). Overall, in 1885 the members of the Ukrainian Stundist meetings, who were registered by the local police, numbered more than seven thousand people. The number of Stundists had grown from 200 in 1872 to 5,002 in 1890 in Kiev province, from 20 in 1862 to 4,648 in 1890 in Kherson province, from 300 in 1888 to 1,000 in 1897 in Ekaterinoslav province. What these figures do not reveal is that Stundist influence was much greater than the numbers suggest. In fact, Stundists dominated the villages in which they comprised more than two percent of local population, influencing no less than one third of population there. In his report to the tsar, the Kherson governor noted in 1890 that the Stundist sect controlled the rural population “on the three fourth of the entire territory of the province.” According to our calculations, in the main provinces of the southern Russian Empire: in Kiev, Podolia, Volynia, Kherson, Tavrida, Ekaterinoslav, Kharkov, Bessarabia, Stavropol’, and Astrakhan’ between 1891 and 1895 the police registered no less than 20,000 Stundist activists. See in detail: Sergei I. Zhuk, *Russia’s Lost Reformation: Peasants, Millennialism, and Radical sects in Southern Russia and Ukraine, 1830-1917* (Baltimore, MD, 2004), 177-178.

2 Only the recent studies by Nicholas B Breyfogle and Heather Coleman emphasized cultural pioneering efforts of Russian indigenous evangelicals. See: Nicholas B. Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia’s Empire in the South Caucasus* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2005), and Heather J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington, IN, 2005).

3 As one author noted: “If we will analyze the every day life of the Stundist households and compare their morality with the rest of peasant population, their sobriety with the prevalent alcoholism all over the countryside, and their striving for literacy, which is a necessity for them because of their religious principle to read the Holy Scripture by themselves, we, of course, must admit that the Stundists are not harmful, and that they are of benefit to the country from the economic point of view; because everybody knows that hard drinking is the major evil which leads to the tremendous damage of the

economic prosperity of our common folks.” Khersonskie eprkhial’nye vedomosti (hereafter – KherEV), 1876, No. 14, 186.

4 Kievskie eparkhial’nye vedomosti (hereafter – KEV), 1880, No.18-19, 12.

5 In 1880 - 1882 the Orthodox periodical published a positive description of the local Stundists: “We see the true understanding of the main Christian rituals among the Stundists. We can find even a restoration of the ancient Christian custom of repentance among them.” KEV, 1880, No. 32-33, 9; 1882, No. 16, 293.

6 A text of the report was published in: Alexii [Dorodnitsyn], Materialy dlia istorii religiozno-ratsionalisticheskogo dvizhenia na iuge Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XIX-go veka (Kazan', 1908), 225-237.

7 Alexii, Materialy, 260-264.

8 Vera i razum, 1886, No.20, Kn.2, 401.

9 Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (hereafter – RGIA) f.1284, op.222, d.29, l.78, 96ob.-97, 99.

10 RGIA, f.1284, op.222, d.29, l.97.

11 F.A.Shcherbina, "Malorusskaya shtunda," Nedelia, 1877, No. 2, 58-59.

12 I. Savchenkov, “Shtundisty s. Luchina, Skvirskogo uezda, Kievskoi gub.,” KEV, 1882, No. 3, 66-67.

13 Alexei Iuzhnyi, “Na dneprovskikh porogakh I dva dnia u shtundistov,” Vestnik Evropy, 1881, No. 7, 399-419. See especially pages 408-419.

14 E.R., “Russkie rathionalisty,” Vestnik Evropy, 1881, No. 7, 318-320. The Stundists tried to establish their own agricultural colonies with the new technology and new organization of work beginning in the 1880s. But their economic efforts were aborted by the local Orthodox clergy, who generated anti-Stundist rumours among the peasants. See about this in: *Missionerskoe obozrenie* (hereafter – *MO*), 1896, March, 27-33.

15 Golos, 1878, No. 108; Delo, 1883, No. 2, 186.

16 Alexii, Materialy, 335-336.

17 KEV, 1894, No.19, 585.

18 A citation is from: John Brown, *The Stundists. The Story of a Great Religious Revolt* (London, 1893).63-64. The English author used verbatim this description from a Russian Orthodox publication.

D. Protasov, "Shtundism i razbor ego uchenia," *KherEV*, 1883, No. 22, 1016-1017.

[19](#) *MO*, 1899, July-August, 103.

[20](#) The Orthodox press interpreted cases of material assistance of the Stundists as their ideological means to attract poor peasants to Stundism. See, for example, *KEV*, 1883, No. 6, 125-126.

[21](#) Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi istorichnyi arkhiv Ukrainy (hereafter - Ts DIAU), f.442, op.837, d.24, l.1ob.-2ob., 4ob.-50b.

[22](#) *KherEV*, 1891, No. 18, 561-565.

[23](#) *KherEV*, 1896, No. 17, 437. In the village of Izhitskoe of the Tiraspol' district the police closed the Stundist primary school where the local peasant teachers taught 16 children, including 9 Orthodox and 7 Stundists students.

[24](#) TsDIAU, f.707, op.317, d.77, l.102, 103, 105, 110, 136, 143a; RGIA, f.797, op.72, 2otd., 3st., d.131, l.1-6ob.

[25](#) RGIA, f.797, op.72, 2otd., 3st., d.131, l.5.

[26](#) TsDIAU, f.707, op.317, d.77, l. 110, 136.

[27](#) RGIA, f.797, op.72, 2otd., 3st., d.131, l.5ob.

[28](#) RGIA, f.797, op.72, 2otd., 3st., d.131, l.6.

[29](#) Intellectual sympathizers tried to support the Stundist efforts in education. Evangelical intellectuals such as Karpinskaia became the organizers and the first teachers of the Stundist schools. A noble lady, a daughter of the colonel of Russian Army, Ol'ga Zenkova, established a secret school for the children from the Stundist families in her house in Kiev in 1903. See in: TsDIAU, f.442, op.854, d.308, l.1-5, 8.

[30](#) *KherEV*, 1886, No.2, 76. Orthodox authors were especially indignant at the active role of women in the Stundo-Baptist meetings, because such women's activity contrasted to what St. Paul said about women in the meetings for worship: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." [I Timothy, 2:11-12]

[31](#) *KEV*, 1894, No. 583-585.

[32](#) *KherEV*, 1895, No.15, 442.

[33](#) RGIA, f.797, op.72, 2otd. 3st. (1902), d.131, l.5ob.; TSDIAU, f.707, op.317 (1899-1902), l.105, 110.

[34](#) TsDIAU, f.442, op.691, d.272 (1893-1907), l.23, 74ob.

[35](#) The local police stopped her Stundist activities and exiled her to Trans-Caucasia for five years together with other Stundist leaders in June of 1894. See: TsDIAU, f.442, op.691, d.272 (1893-1907), l.97-97ob.

[36](#) Some scholars characterized “human capital” as “entrepreneurial ability in acquiring information and adjusting to the disequilibria inherent in the process of modernization.” See Theodore W. Schultz, Investing in People. The Economics of Population Quality (Berkeley, 1981), 23.

[37](#) The police reports and documents of the Orthodox Church confirmed the fact of the unique mental abilities of the Stundist peasants. See for example a portrayal of the intellectual abilities and moral standards of Vasilii Orda, the Stundist activist from the province of Poltava. RGIA, f.1284, op.222 (1894), d.31, ll ob.-4.

[38](#) I refer to the famous metaphor, which was coined in 1878 by Russian liberal intellectuals: D. Kulikovskii, “Kul’turnye pionery,” Slovo, 1878, No. 4, 95-126; 1880, No. 12, 57-77

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