

Paul Werth  
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Topic: "Foreign Faiths" and Religious Toleration in the Russian Empire 1772-1914.

This research project investigates one important dimension of Russia's cultural heterogeneity that has received comparatively little attention in the historical literature: confessional diversity and religious toleration. Beginning with the incorporation of substantial Catholic and Jewish populations after the first partition of Poland (1772), as well as the appearance of Catherine II's clearest statements of religious toleration (1773), the project focuses on the construction of a system for administering "foreign faiths" (i.e., non-Orthodox confessions) and on the various problems that arose for the state over the course of the nineteenth century in the context of managing confessional diversity while explicitly privileging Orthodoxy. The project focuses particular attention on the remarkable religious reform of 1905, which was followed by an arduous and acrimonious legislative battle in the State Duma, principally in 1907-11. From the standpoint of the humanities, this project will offer important insights concerning the role of religion in the constitution of community, in creating a sense of individuality, and in serving as a tool of administration. In terms of current policy concerns, the project will offer a nuanced and historically grounded account of a "right" that is, in contemporary terms, usually understood to be "universal." My research suggests that such rights, in fact, exist situationally and need to be understood in the larger context. From this perspective, the project will aid policy makers in navigating the gap between national particularity and larger claims of universality.

The sources for the study are a combination of archival and published. The archival sources originate primarily in the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) in St. Petersburg, and represent the production of government institutions most directly involved with managing confessional diversity in the years 1772-1914. Foremost among these is the Department for the Religious Affairs of Foreign Faiths, founded (with a slightly different name) in 1810, which oversaw the religious affairs of all non-Orthodox faiths (Catholicism, Lutheranism and various Protestant sects, Uniates, Armeno-Gregorians, Muslims, and Buddhists), as well as Old-Belief (Staroobriadchestvo) and Russian sectarianism after 1909. Other archival sources consulted originated in the Holy Synod (which oversaw the affairs of the Orthodox church), the Ministry of State Domains (which oversaw the affairs of foreign colonists and Kalmyk Buddhists), and the Council of Ministers (which oversaw the government's production of proposed legislation for the Duma), and several other smaller or tertiary institutions.

In terms of published sources, the project draws on published commentaries on projected laws, journal articles, and the reaction of the press in the parts of Russia where the issue of religious toleration was most relevant (western provinces, Transcaucasia, the Volga region, trans-Baikal, etc.). Given the chronological, confessional, and geographic scope of my research, the project inevitably has a substantial synthetic character, in that it draws heavily on existing scholarship on the elaboration of certain issues—for example, on the Jewish question, on sectarianism, and on the legislative process in the State Duma.

This has involved consultation with both pre-revolutionary works and scholarship produced more recently. (During the Soviet period, these questions received very little attention from scholars). Here one should note that several younger Russian scholars are producing excellent work on these issues.

At the present, the research on this project continues, but I am nonetheless able to offer some provisional conclusions based on the work so far. Obviously, these are subject to substantial revision and rethinking, especially since the research is currently continuing.

The basic system for administering "foreign faiths" in Russia was constructed between the 1770s and 1853. The incorporation of lands from Poland in 1772 created the need to establish some sort of order for the administration of Catholics, which was duly constructed from the 1780s until the publication of a statute (*Polozhenie*) for Catholicism in 1801. At about the same time, the state constructed a roughly analogous system in the east and south for Muslims (the Tauride and Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assemblies, both established in the 1780s). This experience served as a model for the creation of similar institutions and statutes for Protestants (1832), Judaism (1835), the Armeno-Gregorian Church (1836), and finally for Buddhists in Eastern Siberia (1853). Although there were a few other statutes published subsequently—for example on Caucasian Muslims in 1872—these essentially supplemented already existing practices. Institutionally, the administration of these faiths was concentrated in the Department of Religious Affairs of Foreign Faiths, which was established in 1810 and found a permanent home within the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1832. As this brief sketch suggests, the 1830s probably represented the key period in this process of institution-building.

An important aspect of administering this system involved defining the exact parameters of the privileged status of Orthodoxy vis-à-vis these "foreign faiths," which was defined in broad terms in the Empire's basic law. The law thus secured for Orthodoxy a monopoly on the right to proselytize, prohibited apostasy from Orthodoxy, and secured the pre-eminence of Orthodoxy in the case of mixed marriages (for example, such marriages had to be performed in an Orthodox church, and the non-Orthodox spouse was obligated to promise that any children resulting from the marriage would be baptized and raised in Orthodoxy). Thus an entire chapter of the project is devoted to the relationship between Orthodoxy and heterodoxy, both in law and in practice.

The recognition of "foreign faiths" also involved a complex process of negotiation between the state and representatives of those various faiths. For if those faiths, through the creation of statutes and institutions of administration, gained recognition and thus important rights of confessional practice, then they were also obliged to accept a substantial degree of state intervention in their affairs. Births, marriages, and deaths, for example, represented a crucial arena of state administration; to the extent that these events were, for most subjects of the empire, invested with religious significance, it was the clergy who kept such records and thus became, in effect, state servitors. As a result, the state had to determine who exactly constituted the "clergy" of these faiths—a task that was fairly straightforward in the case of Catholicism and Lutheranism, but considerably more problematic in the case of Mennonites, Muslims, and Buddhists. Particularly towards the end of the nineteenth century, as new religions and sects began to emerge with greater frequency, the question arose: to what extent was the state committed to the integrity and unity of these "foreign faiths." Could the state permit "schism" within Lutheranism, for example, and if so, under what circumstances? To what extent was the state responsible for protecting Armenians from the "propaganda" of Evangelical

missionaries (many of them American), who were making their way across the border from Ottoman Turkey? These are questions about which I am still gathering information.

In some ways, the appellation "foreign faiths" was a misnomer, since the practitioners of these faiths constituted something close to one-third of the empire's population by the late nineteenth century. Yet, that designation underscored the important fact that virtually all of these faiths had religious connections that went across the empire's borders. Catholics, of course, recognized the spiritual authority of the Pope (as did Uniates), which compelled the Russian government to conduct diplomatic relations with Rome as part of their administration. Muslims regarded pilgrimage to Mecca as a sacred obligation, but especially given Russia's complex relationship with the Ottoman Empire, these trips needed to be regulated by the imperial government. Buddhists in the trans-Baikal region regarded the Dalai-Lama in Tibet and the Khutukhta in Urga (Mongolia) as spiritual leaders and maintained important religious contacts across the Russian-Chinese border. Protestants in Europe and the US were quick to criticize the Russian government for what they saw as violations of religious freedom in the Baltic provinces and elsewhere. Yet these connections also afforded opportunities for Russian authorities. For example, after the Polish insurrection of 1863, in order to break ties between Uniates and Catholics, the government was able to invite Uniate clergy from Galicia and "Ugrian Rus" (Transcarpathia) to serve the small Uniate population in the Kingdom of Poland (this community was eventually "reunified" with Orthodoxy in 1875). More substantially, the status of the Armenian Patriarch in Echmiadzin as the Catholics of all Armenians (from Russian Armenians, to the substantial communities of Persia and Ottoman Turkey, to the newer communities in western Europe and the US) gave the imperial government an important tool for influencing politics abroad, especially in Turkey.

The research project identifies 1905 as the linchpin in the development of Russian religious policy on "foreign faiths" (and also sectarianism). The structures and practices up until that time can be considered "the system of religious toleration," whereby the privileged status of Orthodoxy was secured while granting substantial religious freedoms to other faiths. From 1905, under the influence of both reformist elements in the Russian bureaucracy and the revolutionary pressures at that time, one sees an attempt to implement "freedom of conscience"-a higher degree of religious freedom that focused on the individual, rather than the community, as the bearer of religious consciousness. Here, however, the struggle was intense, for many recognized (rightly, in my opinion) that a system of "freedom of conscience" was incompatible not only with the privileged status of Orthodoxy, but also with the notion that every citizen was obligated to belong to one faith or another. Aside from some important legislation on Old Believers, the State Duma, State Council, and the government itself could not agree on the basic principles that would have created a new religion enshrined in law. Most of the projected laws were frozen in a legislative stalemate when the First World War began. As a result, the order after 1905 was constructed along more provisional lines that were defined largely on the basis of administrative directive. Still, the ukazes and manifestos of 1904-5 created a substantially new religious order that legalized transfer from Orthodoxy to other Christian faiths and even transfer from Christianity to non-Christianity in certain specific circumstances. And archival evidence makes clear that "Prime Minister" P. A. Stolypin, until his assassination in 1911, remained committed to expanding religious freedom, even as the Ministry he oversaw (Internal Affairs) took a somewhat more conservative turn on these issues around 1909. The main problem, it would appear, was that both the Russian

state and Russian society were fundamentally divided over the basic principles that were now to lay at the foundation of the new religious order, as formulated in law.