

# Rasputin - an understanding for both Russians and non-Russians.

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**Very few names in the 20th century invoke as much revulsion as the name Rasputin.** The only thing positive that can be said about him is that he is dead.

Not too much is known about the boy who was born Gregory Efimovich Novykh. His birth date is either 1869 or 1872 – depending upon who you listen to. Born to peasant stock in Siberia, he quickly found he had this knack for getting into trouble with authorities.

Rasputin was the type of boy every girl's father had nightmares about. Just the thought of having 'that' for a son in law would make the sturdiest of men cringe.

By the age of 15, Rasputin found he liked girls, and he liked girls allot. A kid armed with the libido of a bull rabbit on steroids with a mixture of Viagra earned him a rather dubious reputation. He also discovered Vodka at the age of 15 which he liked equally as well as he liked getting into trouble and equally as well as he liked young women.

His debauchery earned him the nick name of "the rake". Not a kind expression in the Russian language.

His last name was changed to Rasputin, which means in Russian 'debauched one'. A fairly accurate description by anyone's account. There are oral traditions that say that even though Rasputin was a seedy character, he seemed to have a Svengali like hold over animals, and legend also states he walked up to one of his parent's friends and denounced the man as a horse thief. The next day, the horse was found in the 'victims' barn yard. But like all legends, nothing can be established.

At the age of 18, Rasputin underwent a religious transformation of sorts. He decided that it was God's will that he should study religion. He was supposed to have been introduced to the Khlysty sect – they preached that one could attain forgiveness only if one immersed them self in sin. They also preached that a person could only be close to God after numerous and heavy sexual encounters. Rasputin grabbed onto this doctrine as if it were his personal holy grail, and he started practicing this faith with full vigor.

At age 19 he met, and married, a young girl. Even less is known about her. Rasputin's bride, Proskovia Fyodorovna, fell into married life and she bore Rasputin four children.

Family life did not suit Rasputin's wandering eye and his spirit for spreading the Khlysty gospel. He walked out on his wife and children.

His journey took him to both Greece and Jerusalem – for what ever reason, he earned a reputation of being a 'holy man'. A far cry from the Rasputin everyone knew back home in Siberia. He also study fringe subjects such as mysticism and incorporated that into his already skewed religious views.

Allegedly Rasputin had gained the attention of Aleister Crowley. Crowley who would be later called "The Beast" was a mad man, the type of person who would make the Marquee De Sade look like a Red Cross volunteer.

It is not know who was the master and who was the student in the Rasputin/Crowley combination, but there are heavy suggestions that these two men had several love affairs with each other – after all, they were from the same mold.

Rasputin lacked the educational background and had dropped his studies, but he found he was also a consummate actor. A charlatan at heart and playing a holy man went well for Rasputin. Somehow, ecumenical flim-flam people seem to get an inordinate amount of attention, and publicity.

In 1904, an heir to the Romanov throne was born, Tsarevich Alexi Romanov. The Tsar and Tsarina's hopes were brutally slammed to the ground when it was discovered that Alexi had hemophilia. A recessive gene from Queen Victoria (The Tsarina was Victoria's grand daughter) was the cause of Alexi's hemophilia.

From the Romanov point of view, this was a total disaster as Alexi would never reach the age to assume the throne – people with hemophilia did not live long. Plus, this was their son – the parents were heart broken. At all costs, no matter what they might be, the news had to be kept from the Russian population.

Sometime around 1905, Rasputin found himself on the streets of St. Petersburg. He had a reputation as a 'Holy Man'; he had a following because he seemed like the genuine thing, and who could ask for more?

Also in Rasputin's favor was that the church leaders were looking for the type of person who could hold sway over the high society and the peasants. Someone who would lead everyone back to the embrace and sway of the church.

Rasputin was the candidate. He came from peasant stock – this was a good thing as Rasputin could speak the language of the peasants. The church leaders needed a person who could capture the imaginations, hearts, and pocket books of high society through mystical gibberish, and an occasional 'miracle'. Rasputin's talent for acting got him the job.

It did not take long before the religion of Rasputin was the fashion statement in St.

Petersburg. The monk had tripped into a gigolo's paradise. Women gravitated to him and not having an affair with Rasputin put one on the outside looking in.

There were those though who took a different view of Rasputin. They saw him for what he was, a bottom feeding, slithering, piece of dung.

Rasputin didn't like bathing and you could smell him coming three days before his arrival. He ate with his fingers and you'd be able to tell what he had eaten that week just by looking at his beard. His abusive enjoyment of Vodka became the thing of legends. All in all, a pretty swarthy person.

Now enters Anya Vyrubova, a close friend of the Tsarina. Anya was riding a train that derailed. She was in pretty rough shape and in a coma. The doctors had resigned themselves to the very real possibility that Anya would not survive.

Our mad monk, who was always at the right place, at the right time, made his way to Anya's bedside. Rasputin took Anya's hand and he kept calling her name and telling her to awake. The doctors shrugged their shoulders and walked away. Rasputin continued his vigil for several hours, and Anya awoke. The doctors were shocked, and Rasputin drenched in sweat went into a side room and collapsed into a chair – that nice added touch of melodramatics.

The doctors declared this to be a miracle, Rasputin declared he wanted Vodka, and Anya declared she wanted something for her headache.

Comas are still not understood, even by today's standards. A person can come out of a coma within hours, days, weeks, months, or even years. Some people never recover. It is one of those who knows type thing. Rasputin just got lucky, that is all. The church leaders had their miracle man, and they were very pleased. St. Petersburg was abuzz with this god send of a holy man.

The religion of Rasputin stated that one had to immerse one self into sin so that one could find forgiveness and in the prudish and repressed Victorian values, this was every woman's dream come true. Soon Rasputin's social calendar was full by women wanting to feel the hand of God touching their soul via Rasputin's staying power and her crotch. Never before, in high society, had there been such a fool's paradise. Rasputin had charm and a sense of humor – in layman's language, he was a ladies man.

Anya, meanwhile, was praising the healing powers of Rasputin to the Tsarina. The Tsarina, a loving mother, kept this in the back of her mind because of Alexi's Hemophilia. A child stricken with Hemophilia suffers from bleeding that does not stop as quickly as people who are not stricken. Usually, the hemorrhages involve muscles and joints with painful swelling or a lack of movement of an arm or leg. The good news is that most hemorrhages will stop, unless the injury is so great that the person wouldn't stand a chance anyhow. The pain though is agonizing and for a parent to watch their child

suffering is gut wrenching.

The Church leaders informed the Tsar, the official head of the Orthodox Church, about this mysterious monk who had brought Anya back to the world of the living. They boasted of his claims of being a prophet. The Tsar tucked this in the back of his mind because of the suffering of his son.

In October 1912, Alexi sustained an injury and he's hemophilia was out of control. He laid painfully for a week and a half. The Tsarina acted and she sent a telegram to Rasputin explaining the situation in hopes that Rasputin could intervene. Rasputin was supposed to have telegraphed back and said the child would not die and his bleeding would stop.

Legend has it, when Rasputin's telegram arrived at the palace, Alexei's bleeding stopped. There can be a number of explanations for this – timing being one, and the telegram ended the Tsarina's hysteria and that cause Alexi to start relaxing to the point where his blood pressure lowered and his little body had a chance to start damage control. Regardless, the Tsarina was now convinced that Rasputin had saved her son.

Doctors knew little about Hemophilia and if they had, Alexei's miracle recovery would have been no mystery at all. Usually, in about 5 to 10 days, the body will start the recovery process very quickly, the bleeding stops, and the patient is back to normal.

Rasputin soon became a fixture in the royal palace, much to Nicolas's chagrin. Rasputin, Russia, and the royal family were now on the highway to hell.

The mad monk not only gained the full attention of high society, but he also gained the attention of the police. His apparent free access to the palace, his actions and probably a number of angry husbands all added up to one thing – the monk had something up his sleeve and needs looking into.

Rasputin enjoyed the night life, and his alcohol. He embarrassed himself on more than one occasion, and there is a story that one night he got so drunk that he got up on a table, dropped his pants, and exposed himself. Dancing around, he was supposed to have said he did this for the Tsarina all the time. Hmmm. The rumor mill cranked out gossip tidbits as if there were no tomorrow.

People started believing that the mad monk had effervesced a Svengali like hold on the royal family, and the silence from the throne made matters worse. Never mind that Rasputin enjoyed the celebrity status this reputation gave him.

Rasputin set up shop and his days consisted of a leisurely breakfast. Between 10 am to 1 pm, he had calling hours, open to any St. Petersburg citizen. Later in the afternoon, he called at the Alexander Palace at Tsarskoe Selo, the family's favorite residence, for the family's news. He became a rather busy man administering to the needs of women whose

soul he wanted to save in his version of redemption.

The police tried to tell Nicolas that the mad monk was a con artist, a lush and seedy person not to be trusted. Nicolas and other parts of the royal family had absolute disdain for Rasputin, and Nicolas was growing increasingly annoyed with Rasputin's continual presence around the royal house. The major stumbling block was the Tsarina – she was fully convinced Alexi's only hope was squarely in the squalor of Rasputin. The Tsar, a loving father and husband, was torn between putting Rasputin away and the pleadings of his wife. Love for his family went against Nicolas's better judgment and Rasputin stayed.

World War One gripped all of Europe, and the Russian Army had taken one brutal beating after another. In September 1915, the Tsar took over as commander in chief of the Russian military and he left for the front hoping to lead the army to victory. This left Rasputin hovering over the royal family like a bad smell.

The Tsarina listened to Rasputin and his advice about how to conduct the affairs of a nation. Rasputin also used his influence to take revenge on the church leaders who were also becoming very, very, concerned about the mad monk.

The Tsarina was from Austria – one of Russia's adversaries in the war. This raised suspicions as the Tsarina never really professed her love and loyalty to Russia. Rumors of treachery started circulating. Rasputin's presence at the royal household was viewed with equal malice and people started talking that there was more to the relationship between Rasputin and the Tsarina than met the eye. Rasputin, in his public drinking binges, broadcast that he controlled the throne and the matters of state.- things started getting ugly, in no uncertain terms. People were a gasp at the thought of the Tsar bravely fighting at the front and behind his back the Tsarina found comfort in the arms, and bed, of another man.

The people believed Rasputin had heaved the Tsarina in his shadowy nether world, and she allowed her daughters to be lured into the snare only to be defiled and the flower of their pureness forever stolen by the 'mad monk'. The mere thought of the Tsarina betraying her marriage vows, and the virginal daughters thrown into unholy depravity, was too much to stomach.

News of the staggering losses at the front at the hands of Germany and Austria was being thrown at the people daily via the press. The press published several letters supposedly penned by the Tsarina to Rasputin that painted a picture of intrigue and a fatal stab at the very word Tsarina. Nicolas's refusal to meet with his people in 1905 came back in full vengeance. All of this provided Lenin with fodder for his venomous spoken and written outrage. Nicolas's return from the front threw him and his family into the epicenter of the maelstrom of a raging sea of emotions and anger by a people who felt betrayed by the very woman they called Tsarina.

It is 'she' who has done all this bad to Russia they cried. There was no food and

starvation gripped the land because of 'she'. The ugly and certain death of the Russian army was because 'she' was first an Austrian and now a traitor to the very land she helped rule over. Russia was scarred and it was 'she' who was responsible.

From the people's lips also came the name Rasputin. It was 'he' who had led the royal family to ruin. It was 'he', like the serpent from the Garden of Eden, which had bewitched the Tsarina. It was 'he' who had violated the purity of the royal daughters. It was 'he' who worked his dark arts to blind a Tsar from the misery of his people. It was 'he' who stained, in blood and unholy beings, the throne of Russia.

The German high command had found a willing ally in Rasputin and surrounded him with spies to protect him. Germany could undermine Russia from within very effectively and so they did. Lenin had also been a German secret weapon for he too could dishevel a nation in turmoil and Germany made sure Lenin had a great deal of funding.

Germany's plan worked.

Prince Felix Yussupov was closer to the pulse of the people than the Tsar had ever been. He and several other members of the royal family decided it was high time to rid Russia of the mad monk who had blackened and infected everything. They decided to kill Rasputin.

The plans were made – Rasputin would be invited to the home of Yussupov, and there they would bring an end to 'it' once and for all. They made no secret of their plan either – probably in hopes of holding at bay the fire storm brewing or at least to give the people hope that an end was close at hand.

The means was chosen – deadly cyanide. They would invite Rasputin to spend the evening, feed him cyanide laced pastries and wine, and then dispose of the body.

On December 16, 1916, Rasputin accepted the invitation of Prince Yussupov to come and spend time. Rasputin was told that the Prince's wife had wanted to meet Rasputin. Rasputin showed up at the door, and he was led to a basement room, designed for entertaining, and given poisoned wine, and was invited to enjoy the poisoned pastries. The conspirators told Rasputin that the Prince's wife would be down shortly. They left Rasputin alone.

Stories conflict as to whether Rasputin ate any of the pastries, but he surely enjoyed the poisoned wine – as he enjoyed alcohol no matter what form. After some time had passed, the conspirators returned to the room and saw what they believed was a dead monk. Rasputin showed no signs of life. Checking to see if they were finally rid of Rasputin, they decided to shake him. When they did, Rasputin came back to life. Yussupov was so startled he panicked. Someone produced a gun and shot the monk at point blank range. Rasputin stumbled up the steps and out onto the yard screaming that he was going to tell the Tsarina everything.

In the yard, Rasputin took two more bullets and went down. The conspirators began savagely beating the body with anything they could get their hands on. Confident he was dead; they tied the body up, drove to the Neva River, and threw Rasputin in the icy waters.

The effort, no matter how noble, was too late. The irreparable damage had been done. Russia was imploding in on itself.

Rasputin's evil pallor cannot be understated in any sense of the word. He was the spawn of everything the very gates of hell could conceive of. His name is reviled and despised; the very memory of him should bring a shudder from the lips of anyone mentioning his name.

Sometime during the revolution, his body was exhumed and burned until there was nothing left of this satanic incarnate.

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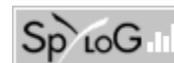
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## History of the Khlyst Movement in Russia, 1850-2000

Original title: "The Historiography of the Khlyst Movement in Russia in the Second Half of the 19th and the 20th Centuries"

This chapter is devoted to the historiography of the Khlyst movement in Russia during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The Khlysts, who were known as *Khlystovshina* or *Bozhii ludi* [God's People], were a mass religious movement. The sect, which was formed in the 17th century, existed until the 20th century, and their great development did not go unnoticed. Over the course of several centuries, the Khlysts attracted the attention of a great number of researchers, mostly clerics and various officials whose work brought them into contact with the Sectarrians. [Also see: [Khlysts, Wikipedia.org](#); and [Summary of Russian Mormon Research](#), by James Scott.]

During the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the problem of Sectarrianism grew. It was a matter of concern not only for researchers, but also for ordinary people. There were a lot of [rationalist](#) and mystic sects in the territory of the Russian empire, and Old Believers and Sectarrianism were becoming a serious danger to the Russian Orthodox Church, which commanded a position of strength, not susceptible to weakness. The overdue formation of a religious policy, coupled with repressive measures taken to solve the Sectarrian problem, made people hostile to the state and Orthodoxy. Harsh conditions, discontent with their spiritual life, and semi-illiteracy were responsible for people joining the sect. For over three centuries, Russian Sectarrians had attracted great attention from other people. Many mysterious rituals and strange beliefs were attributed to the Khlysts, and they were regarded as followers of either an alien religious movement or an original rural Russian belief system. They were also thought to be the most dangerous sect, and were attacked in all possible ways, being accused of debauchery, the ritual murder of children and other bloodthirstiness. The greatest strength of the Khlyst sect was drawn from its mystery, and that was the reason why its original leaders had insisted that its members should strictly obey the rules of the Orthodox Church, often encouraging them to be over-zealous in their obedience in order not to give the sect away.

The researchers of the 19th century knew more about the Khlysts than we do now. Although they never managed to make a full and objective analysis of the movement, a variety of opinions about the sect tells us how important the issue was for the people during our period of study. For this reason, the historiography of the Khlyst movement is very topical, representing an extensive sphere of research.

During the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, the attitude of researchers towards the Sectarians was quite biased; they simply copied the attributes of the Khlysts mechanically from each other, without any proper investigation. Research of a more professional nature only appeared at the beginning of the 20th century, when the problem of a religious policy became more marked. For clear ideological reasons, the Khlysts were insufficiently studied in the USSR, although the period at the end of the 1980s going into the 1990s can be noted as the time when everything connected with mysticism became very popular.

Scientists have paid greater attention to the history of the movement in the 17th and 18th centuries, and as a result, the study of the history of the movement during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of 20th century has suffered. The historiography of the Khlyst movement represents a very interesting field for research because, while there were a lot of volumes devoted to the Old Believers, because many historians were interested in researching this movement, only very few studied the Khlyst sect. The history of its study is in itself interesting and special. On the one hand, there are many volumes devoted to how it came into existence, but on the other hand, the main aspects of most of this research concern rituals, beliefs and folklore. These works are devoted to the history of the sect in the 17th century, the time when it first appeared. There are, however, exceptions to this type of research, as reports by missionaries and priests, published in theological magazines, usually contain quite useful information about the sect.

Most materials traditionally used by researchers concerning the Russian mystic sects were collected and published during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

One of the first works devoted to this sect was a note by the Kaluga priest Ivan Sergeev. Entitled *Iz'yasneniye raskola, imenuemogo khrystovshina ili khlystovshina* [The Explanation of the Schism Called Khrystovshina or Khlystovshina], it was submitted to the Synod in 1809. Sergeev had been admitted to the community and participated in *radenya* [divine service assembly]. He was also one of the first to write about the sect and supply the authorities with necessary information (1).

The works devoted to the Khlysts started to appear in the early 1860s. The first researchers of the sect were officials of the Home Office, among them the professor of law N.V. Varadinov, who had written the history of the Home Office. This eighth, additional book was devoted to a history of decrees on the schism (2). Using the facts, Varadinov showed the attitudes between the Church and power structures on the one hand, and the Church and the Khlysts on the other. Being an expert on the history of law, he managed to collect and analyse a significant number of documentary sources – decrees and decisions connected with the schism. He also showed and

characterised the stages of the government's activity regarding the Old Believers.

Theological researches contributed greatly to investigating *khlystovshina*. They were the first to draw public attention to the sect and the fact that it was so widely spread. They began to write about it actively. One of the first was a professor of the Kazan Spiritual Academy I.M. Dobrotvorskii, whose monograph *Lyudi Bozh'i. Russkaya sekta tak nazyvaemykh dukhovnykh khristian* [People Divine. Russian Sect of So-called Spiritual Christians] was published in Kazan in 1869.

The work of Dobrotvorskii received some criticism. In his book, he designated "the doctrine about mysterious death and mysterious revival" as ostensibly typical for the Khlyst sect. But this was based only on the letters and notes of Vasiliy Radaev, who, as Dobrotvorskii stated in his book, was the Khlyst's prophet. He also wrote about the depravity of the Khlysts. However, the great merit of Dobrotvorskii's work was the publication of 85 Sectarian church motets which had been collected by him (3).

Dobrotovskii's work was preceded by some other publications by church authors. However, they involved a minimal quantity of additional material. For example, G. Protopopov's *Opyt istoricheskogo obozreniya misticheskikh sekt v Rossii* [Experience of a Historical Review of Mystic Sects in Russia] (1867) (4), suggested that the Russian sects should be divided into the following groups: "mystic" ('Khlysts', 'Castratos', 'Napoleonits', 'Racers' and 'Montans') and "rationalist" ('Molokans', 'Dukhobors') (5). According to the book, the Khlysts was a dangerous sect, and the author declared that it was crucial for the church and the government to fight it.

N.I. Barsov's report, *Russkiy prostonarodnyi mistitsizm* [The Russian Demotic Mysticism], published in 1860-1870, is of some interest, along with his collection of Sectarian motets (103 texts) (6). The advantage of his works lies in the critical approach to P.I. Melnikov's works *Taynye sekty* [Secret Sects] and *Belye golubi* [White Pigeons], and Dobrotovskii's *Lyudi Bozhii. Russkaya sekta tak nazyvaemykh dukhovnykh khristian* [Divine People. Russian Sect of So-called Spiritual Christians] (7). In his works, Barsov detailed the contents of all the communications concerning the Khlysts that he was aware of, although he repeated an old mistake of his predecessors. He also wrote that Vasiliy Radaev was a Khlyst, and he made some reasonably practical remarks about the genesis of the Khlysts as well as writing about the prospects for research on the sect's folklore. Moreover, following the priest Sergeev, he tried to see a certain theological doctrine behind the tradition of the sect.

F.V. Livanov devoted a whole series of writings to the Khlysts and the Eunuchs. He described a history of the Tatarinova sect with its divine service cult (8). However, he did not check the information. He expressed confidence that the Khlysts was a political organization which posed danger to the state and society, and basically focused on the sect's history and ceremonial

practice. However, the style of the book *Dissenters and Jailers* [or: *Schismatics and Criminals*] can hardly be called scientific, as it was written in a non-academic, popular style. When reading Livanov's works, one might think that he must have written them for ordinary illiterate people with the purpose of making them afraid of the Khlysts. As a result, his book is of little scientific value and the information in his works should be carefully checked.

One of the best-known researchers of the schism was the writer P.I. Melnikov. He showed his writing talent in the third part of the novel *Na gorakh* [On Mountains]. He was also famous for his non-academic, popular works such as the articles *Tainye sekty* [Secret Sects] and *Belye golubi* [White Pigeons], published in *Russkiy byulleten'* [The Russian Bulletin] in 1868 and 1869, as well as his scientific research about the Castratos, which was published along with documentary materials in the archive of the Home Office. Later, it was included in the collected works of Melnikov (9). As a writer, Melnikov based his research about the Khlysts on oral communications without checking their reliability. One can forgive a writer for using of unchecked information, but as long as Melnikov was a researcher and an official of special orders, he should have chosen his sources of information more carefully. Unfortunately, he made the same error when writing *Otchet o sostoyanii raskola v Nizhegorodskoy gubernii* [The Report on the Condition of the Schism in the Nizhniy Novgorod Province], for the Home Office. This certainly reduces the quality of his work considerably (10).

His articles *Tainye sekty* [Secret Sects] and *Belye golubi* [White Pigeons] did not show a methodical approach to the stated facts, but as these products are literary, rather than scientific, their usage for research of the Khlysts is considerably limited in any case. However, the author probably did not aim to write a scientific work and so frequently altered the facts. The facts given in the novel *Na gorakh* [On Mountains] are even less reliable.

A.P. Shchapov's volumes are of great interest. In 1858, his thesis *Russkiy raskol staroobryadchestva* [Russian Schism of the Old Believers] was published (11). He considered the schism to be not only religious, but also a historical, domestic and social phenomenon. Later he developed the ideas in his book *Zemstvo i raskol* [Zemstvo and Schism] (12).

Shchapov's approach to the problem of Sectarianism was the best thought out and compared very favourably with all his contemporaries. His ideas on the genesis of the Russian Khlysts are still of scientific interest. In trying to present the Russian schism of the 17th century as a reaction of regional and federal tendencies to growing state centralization, he assumed that the collision resulted in mass and local religious creativity becoming more intense. He noticed, quite reasonably, that there was some kind of new belief which was distinct from official Orthodoxy in the rural environment, and, in his opinion, the reason for it was the lack of knowledge about Christianity, and semi-illiteracy among the people. The suppression of the Russian peasants generated religious imposture; that is, the occurrence of imaginary 'Christs' and 'prophets'.

Nevertheless, the quality of Shchapov's research was much better than that of those who followed. Unfortunately, he never continued his work on the Khlyst movement.

One of the researchers of the 1860s was V.I. Kelsiev. His research was followed by the publication of the four-volume *Sbornik pravitelstvennykh svedeniy o raskolnikakh* [Collection of Government Data on Dissenters] (London, 1860-1862) and the two-volume *Sobraniye postanovleniy po chasti raskola* [Assembly of Decisions in Connection with the Schism] (London, 1863). It was one of the largest publications of sources on the history of the schism.

The second edition of *The Collection of Decisions in Connection with Schism* contained materials about the Khlysts. It included a communication from the participants of the 1852 expedition who took part in research on the schism in the Nizhniy Novgorod, Kostroma and Yaroslavl provinces. It also included a classification of the dissenting movements which fell into three categories: Orthodox, Molokanstvo and the belief of the 'Divine People'. He referred to the Khlysts as Divine People, saying that there was not much known about them ([13](#)).

In 1867, a series of articles entitled *Sviatorusskie dvoeveri* [Double-faith Believers of Holy Russia] was published in the magazines of Saint Petersburg ([14](#)). Kelsiev's work has advantages such as the publication of some important documents as well as quite a few stories about the Khlysts' bloodthirstiness, albeit without any proper facts that could prove these statements.

In 1872, another government work about the Khlysts was published ([15](#)), written by the Moscow official of the Ministry of Justice, N.V. Reutsky. He actively used documents from the Moscow archives: "authentic sources and original papers", which were practically unknown to previous researchers. However, neglect of reference to the documents considerably reduces the quality of his work, although he pointed out in his research that the attitude towards the legend about the Khlyst's "Sabaof" Danila Philippovich should be changed to a critical one.

Ten years later, in 1882, Reutskiy published an original addition to the monograph – the article that contained a history of the Khlyst movement in Moscow in the first half of the 19th century ([16](#)).

B.V. Andreev was one of the followers of Schapov's ideas. Andreev tried to find a new approach to the question of Sectarianism and his attempt does deserve approval, although he worked with unreasonably narrow frameworks of research, which was certainly a drawback. Andreev followed the basic idea of many researchers who tried to find the roots of the Khlyst movement anywhere but in the Russian environment, presenting these religious movements as an alien phenomenon. Moreover, he stated in his work that the Khlysts were predecessors of the Castratos, which gives rise to a number of objections.

In the eighties and nineties of the 19th century, interest in the Khlyst sect increased considerably. Hundreds of research works and articles devoted to the Khlysts were published. They were the works of seminary students such as K.V. Kutepov, I.G. Ayvazov, N.G. Vysotsky, T.I. Butkevich, N.I. Ivanovsky etc.

The thesis of the teacher of the Kazan spiritual academy, the archpriest K.V. Kutepov, is of great interest. For example, in the monograph *Sekty khlystov i skoptzov* [Sects of the Khlysts and Castratos] (17), the author was not too anxious to criticize any sources, and tried to unify all the data known to him about the Khlysts, but he aimed to show the harmful affect which the Khlysts had had. In 1900, Kutepov's 'research' was republished without any changes, which emphasized the unwillingness of the author to change his approach to the problem of the sect.

In 1908, D.G. Konovalov published the monograph *Religiozniy ekstaz v russkom misticheskom sektantstve* [Religious Ecstasy in the Russian Mystic Sectarianism] (18). The views in the book were different to those of other research. In his work, he did not rank Radaev as a Khlyst, whereas he had previously been considered to be almost the ideologist of debauchery, though he was not a Sectarian at all. That has been proved and confirmed by experts from the Moscow Spiritual academy. Another advantage of Konovalov's work was that he proved that the *12 Commandments* of Danila Philippovich were of a later origin than previously thought (19).

However, the works of Konovalov contain a number of drawbacks. In spite of the fact that he found a new approach to the problem of Sectarianism, he did not manage to fully develop his ideas. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Konovalov's ideas were more progressive than those of many of his colleagues.

I.G. Aivazov and N.G. Vysotsky were of a theological orientation. In 1910, Aivazov published some archival materials about the Khlysts and the Castratos (20). Unfortunately, he did not bother to order the documents he used, or make comments about them. This, as well as the irreconcilability of Aivazov to Sectarianism, means we cannot trust the information in his work completely. Therefore, his research should be subject to strict criticism.

In 1915, a book by Professor and Archpriest T.I. Butkevich entitled *Obzor russkikh sekt i ikh tolkov* [The Review of Russian Sects and Their Significance] was published (21). The author gave a detailed description of the Khlysts as a fanatical and extremely harmful sect. This publication served as a reference book for missionary work for a long time. Nearly all sects which were known about at that time were described in it. The author offered a detailed analysis of Khlyst doctrines, representing them as unequivocal. The ideas of Butkevich were typical of the majority of historians and theologians. He could not be reconciled to Sectarianism and wrote about the real need to fight it. Therefore, it is necessary to treat such research carefully.

In 1912, N.I. Ivanovskiy, Professor of the Kazan Spiritual Academy and official Councillor of State, had his book entitled *Rukovodstvo po istorii i oblicheniyu staroobryadcheskogo raskola* [The Manual of the History and Censure of the Old Believers' Schism] published (22). It was a textbook for missionaries and priests. Ivanovskiy was more constrained in his ideas on the sect. In the articles published in the Ministry of Justice's magazine, he weighed all the 'pros' and 'cons' of the Khlysts, fairly assessing and criticizing the new legislation (23).

A.S. Prugavin was one of the best known historians of the schism. From 1877, he was known as an ethnographer and a publicist. He worked on the history of the Old Believers and Sectarianism as well as the problems of a religious policy in the Russian Empire. Prugavin's works on the Khlyst movement are of great interest to us (24). In his opinion the Khlysts were a very advanced group of people.

Prugavin's *Bunt protiv prirody* [The Revolt Against Nature] is completely devoted to the Khlysts of the Samara province, a place where he had lived for some years owing to his work. According to him, the Khlysts were innocent victims of prosecutions by the authorities, and especially by the clergy.

Prugavin compared the Khlysts to the Mormons, in the way that they were thought of in society at that time. In his opinion, the Khlysts were the sanest of people, and he denies all rumours concerning general debauchery, while admitting that if there had been any instances, they would have been exceptions.

V.D. Bonch-Bruevich also contributed to the scientific development of the problem of Sectarianism. He saw huge revolutionary potential in Sectarians who resisted oppression and repression by the state. In his opinion, the Khlyst sect was the most united against the state. He wrote that the Khlysts supported revolutionary movement in the Russian villages (25).

In the multi-volume edition *Materialy po istorii sektantstva i staroobryadchestva* [Materials on the History of Sectarianism and Old Believers], Bonch-Bruevich expressed the same point of view on the schism. However, his research did not result in anything new.

Among the researchers of the Soviet period, it is necessary to pay attention to A.I. Klibanov, whose teacher was V.D. Bonch-Bruevich (1960-1970). Klibanov published the whole series of monographs, articles and literary sketches devoted to the history and public role of Russian heretical movements and sects, including the Khlysts (26). However, his works on the history of khristoveriy, as he called them, were mostly based on the research of previous authors.

In 1950-1960 Klibanov organized and led sociological and historical expeditions for studying

“modern religious beliefs” (and, in particular, sectarianism) in central areas of Russia. However they did not discover much. In 1959 in Tambov regional center Rasscazovo managed to get acquainted with several *postniki* – followers of one of the khlyst’s branches, formed in 1820th by peasant Abakum Kopylov (27). But, anyhow, Klibanov’s works were, as a matter of fact, unique within the framework of the Soviet religious studies of a post-war period. Unfortunately, they actually did not bring anything new in studying of the sect in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of 20th century.

When speaking about research of the history and culture of Russian Sectarrians in latter years, it is necessary to note A.M. Etkind and A.A. Panchenko.

A. Etkind’s book entitled *Khlyst: sekty, literatura i revolyutsiya* [Khlyst: Sects, Literature and Revolution] (28) (his thesis for his doctoral degree at the University of Helsinki), is devoted to Russian religious communities during the 19th and 20th centuries, and the influence of their ideas and collective forms of life on intellectuals and literature. Communal sects in Russia paved the way for the victory of Bolshevism. The author traced the destiny of Russian communal Sectarrianism during the Soviet period. The archival materials he collected, together with the facts testifying to the interaction of communistic Sectarrianism and Bolsheviks in construction of a new society, are valuable. He also considered the display of *Khlystovstvo* in the creation of figures in literature during the period known as the “silver age” as an innovation in native science.

A. A. Panchenko’s monograph called *Khrystovshina i scopchestvo: folklor i traditsionnaya kultura russkikh misticheskikh sekt* [Khrystovshina and Scopchestvo: The Folklore and Traditional Culture of Russian Mystic Sects] represented the first regular research of cultural tradition of the two mass religious movements from the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Panchenko considered the folklore and rituals of *Khrystovshina* and *Scopchestvo* (Castratos) in the wider context of the religious culture of the common people from the 17th to the 20th centuries. However, he hardly studied *Khrystovshina* in the 19th century at all, limiting it to a brief summary. As a whole though, Panchenko’s work is worthy, and has great scientific interest (29).

In conclusion, it is necessary to note that the historiographic review allows us to create a representation of the development of Khlyst research in Russia. Lack of sources left by the Sectarrians makes the research more complicated, and for this reason, we have to turn to numerous articles, brief literary sketches, and textbooks by missionaries on the subject of the schism, in our search for information. There has been quite a lot of research in this area, although we need to bear in mind that most of it is of poor quality. The historiography is a very important aspect of studying this religious movement, and its study is a priority.

## Notes

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5. *Ibid.*
6. Н.И. Барсов, *Русский простонародный мистицизм* [Russian Mysticism of Common People], “Христианское чтение” [Christian Reading], 9, 1869.
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14. В.И. Кельсиев, *Святорусские двоеверы* [Double-faith Believers of Holy Russia], “Заря” [Dawn], 10, 1869.
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17. Кутепов, *Секты хлыстов и скопцов* cit.
18. See: Д. Коновалов, *Религиозный экстаз в русском мистическом сектантстве* [Religious Ecstasy in the Russian Mystical Sectarianism], Sergiev Posad 1908.
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  21. Т.И. Буткевич, *Обзор русских сект и их толков с изложением их происхождения и верования и с опровержением последнего* [Review of Russian Sects and Their Senses With a Statement of Their Origin, Distribution and Dogma and With a Refutation of the Last], Petrograd 1915.
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  26. See: А.И. Клибанов, *Реформационные движения в России* [The Reformation Movements in Russia], Moscow 1960; А.И. Клибанов, *История религиозного сектантства в России* [A history of Religious Sectarianism in Russia], Moscow 1965; А.И. Клибанов, *Религиозное сектантство и современность* [The Religious Sectarianism and the Present], Moscow 1969; А.И. Клибанов, *Проблемы изучения и критики религиозного сектантства* [Problems of Studying and Criticism of Religious Sectarianism], Moscow 1971.
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