

# Russian Israel<sup>1</sup>

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## **Introduction**

One of the most remarkable religious phenomena in Russia is the rise and development of Russian Israel—a clandestine movement which originated within the Orthodox church, developed its own unique interpretation of Orthodoxy, and spread in the Caucasus and the black-earth provinces of Voronezh and Tambov to reach a half-million members by the Revolution of 1917. Led by "living Christs," who were thought to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that they had the authority of Christ himself, the Israelites met clandestinely to pray, sing, and be possessed by the Holy Spirit. Although Israel split several times into small sects, there are still members who survive in the Caucasus and Tambov oblast.

This movement grew out of Orthodoxy and represents one of the popular variants of Orthodoxy that emphasized the possibility of a spiritual transformation through ascetic discipline and the charismatic authority that such a direct link to God provided. This type of Orthodoxy was not limited to Israel or other movements regarded by the church hierarchy as "sectarian;" popular nineteenth-century saints cults such as that of Serafim of Sarov and John of Kronstadt resemble "Israel" in their devotion to charismatic holy men. The theme of spiritual transformation through ascetic practice—rather than through obedience to the hierarchy or participation in the sacraments—is found

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in many popular Russian religious movements, including those of the Faith of Christ, the Castrates, and the Spiritual Christians.<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately the most dynamic Israelite movements broke with the church. Vasilii Semenovich Lubkov, a Voronezh peasant and the founder of the movement known as "New Israel", formally broke with the church after the declaration of religious liberty in 1905. But his break with the church accompanied a change in the emphasis of the movement. Lubkov's New Israel in its songs and rituals emphasized not the spiritual transformation through ascetic discipline—indeed, Lubkov relaxed asceticism—but the building of the kingdom of God.

### The Origins of "Israel"

In the 1820s, Abbakum Ivanovich Kopylov (1756-1838), a serf in Tambov Province, had a vision of heaven and hell during one of his frequent fasts. He came away from the experience convinced that he had a divine responsibility and divine authority to preach a new gospel with himself as Christ. For all this, he apparently still considered himself part of the Orthodox Church, since immediately afterwards he went to Bishop Afanasii (Teliat'ev, fl. 1810-42) of Tambov (1824-29) and confessed the entire story. According to the movement's own oral tradition, Afanasii approved of Abbakum's plans, and said that he himself had once had a similar vision but had proved unworthy of that calling. To aid Abbakum, the bishop gave him a copy of Tikhon

2. The celibate members of the Faith of Christ [*khristovoverie*, *khrisovshchina*] arose in the late seventeenth century from the more radical priestless Old Believers; J. Eugene Clay, "The Theological Origins of the Christ-Faith [*Khristovshchina*]," *Russian History* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 21-41; idem, "God's People in the Early Eighteenth Century: The Uglich Affair of 1717," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 26, no. 1 [Jan./Mar. 1985]: 69-124. In the 1760s, their penchant for self-mortification caused some of them to castrate themselves and form a new movement known as the castrates; Laura Engelstein, "Rebels of the Soul: Peasant Self-Fashioning in a Religious Key," *Russian History* 23, no. 1-4 (Spring/Summer/Fall/Winter 1996); Karl Konrad Grass, *Die russischen Sekten*, 2 vols., (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1907-13). The Spiritual Christians, a spiritual tradition including both the Dukhobors and their Molokan offshoot, began as a radical eschatological movement in the 1750s in Tambov and Voronezh provinces; later they were exiled to Ukraine and the Caucasus; Nikolai Gavrilovich Vysotskii, comp., *Materialy iz istorii dukhoborcheskoi sekty* (Sergievskii posad: Tipografiia I.I. Ivanova, 1914); Nicholas B. Breyfogle, "Building Doukhoboriia: Religious Culture, Social Identity and Russian Colonization in Transcaucasia, 1845-1895," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 27, no. 3 (1995): 24-51. The Spiritual Christians rejected the sacraments, icons, and hierarchy of the Orthodox Church and instead sought direct communion with the Holy Spirit. For a survey of religious dissenters in Russia, see Frederick Conybeare's old but useful work *Russian Dissenters* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), originally published (1921).

(Sokolov) of Zadonsk's *On the Duties of Every True Christian* and a service book for the liturgy.<sup>3</sup>

If such a meeting really did take place, it involved a radical misunderstanding between the Orthodox bishop and the founder of Israel. Perhaps Abbakum really did meet with the bishop, or some other Orthodox representative, and filtered words of instruction or exhortation through his own peculiar hermeneutic.<sup>4</sup> More likely, however, the Israelites created this story to prove their continuity with and superiority to official Orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, this tale demonstrates the Orthodox roots of "Israel" and its close connection with popular saints cults, such as that of Tikhon of Zadonsk, who was canonized in 1861. Israel demonstrated many similarities with an increasingly charismatic, popular Orthodox piety which arose in the 1820s and 1830s around such figures as Serafim of Sarov (d. 1833, canonized in 1903) and, later, Ioann (Sergiev) of Kronstadt (1829-1908, canonized 1990).

Kopylov taught his followers that they could achieve salvation by following an ascetic regimen of fasting and prayer adopted from Orthodox monastic discipline. He extended Orthodox fasting rules to the entire year, held long and intense prayer meetings, and enjoined celibacy on his followers. Severe fasting was particularly significant; after a forty-day fast from both food and water, Kopylov was so transformed that he actually saw God.

All of these disciplines served one purpose—to sanctify the adepts. As a means of purification and self-mortification, Kopylov's followers, who called themselves the Union of Pilgrims [*bogomol'skii soiuz*], ate nothing for up to a week. In their religious meetings, Kopylov and his prophets exhorted the pilgrims through preaching, the reading of religious literature, the singing of church hymns and other spiritual chants which he had composed himself, and symbolic prophetic actions [*deistviia*]<sup>5</sup>—a sermon or prophecy in action. Biblical prophets often had recourse to such symbolic actions: Isaiah (fl. 742-687 B.C.) walked naked through the streets of Jerusalem for three years to predict

3. *Materialy dlia issledovaniia russkikh misticheskikh sekt, vypusk pervyi: Khristovshchina*, 3 volumes, edited by Ivan Georgievich Aivazov (Petrograd: Tipografiia P. Ia. Sinchenko, 1915-16) 1:142. This story is taken from the report of an assessor of Tambov province who investigated Kopylov's movement.

4. The Italian miller Mennochio of Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) also filtered the teaching of the magisterium through his own peculiar hermeneutic—unfortunately for him, since the Inquisition executed him for his heretical views. He is a much less important figure than Kopylov, since there is no evidence that Mennochio represented anyone other than himself (despite Ginzburg's arguments), whereas Kopylov was the leader of a significant minority religious movement.

the Babylonian captivity; to predict the same event, Ezekiel (fl. 593-571 B.C.) lay on his side two hundred thirty days in all (Ezekiel 4:1-17).

In addition to praying and singing, the pilgrims also experienced the descent of the Holy Spirit on their assemblies. Those who were filled with the Spirit danced (in imitation of King David before the ark), prophesied, and spoke in tongues. According to A. Zotov, one of Kopylov's followers, the Spirit fell upon those people who "truly fasted and were observant;" they wept, then felt great joy, and with their clairvoyant power, they unmasked the secret sins of their fellows and told the future.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most scandalous of Kopylov's disciplines was spiritual marriage: an informal union between a male and a female adept, usually not legally married, who slept together without having sex. Ideally, spiritual spouses provided edifying companionship for one another; by overcoming the temptation to engage in intercourse while sleeping together, the couple at once demonstrated their elevated spirituality and gave the Holy Spirit an opportunity to overcome their baser physical desires.

The church and state might have tolerated such unions had they been within legal marriages; the popular life of St. Alexis the Man of God, a Roman nobleman who abandoned his bride on his wedding night to avoid being defiled by sexual intercourse, was well known and widely circulated. Other vitae, such as the tales of Iuliania Osorina of Lazarevo and of Prince Petr and Fevroniia of Murom, also provided illustrations of married couples who gave up sexual intercourse.<sup>6</sup> But the Union of Pilgrims did not respect the legal bonds of marriage when choosing a spiritual spouse, and even when they lived up to their sexless ideals, their behavior seemed quite scandalous. For example, in 1851 the nineteen-year-old peasant girl Praskov'ia Pershenkova of Kirsanov district testified that she slept with her spiritual husband Agap Aleksandrov but resisted the temptation to have sex with him: "We sleep together, lying side by side on each others arms, we kiss each other, ... but we commit no sin."<sup>7</sup> Needless to say, church leaders regarded such statements with both skepticism and alarm.

Abbakum's preaching ultimately led to his arrest in the 1830s.

5. D. G. Konovalov, *Religiozniy ekstaz v russkom misticheskom sektantstve* (Sergiev posad: Tipografiia Sv.-Tr. Sergievskoi Lavry, 1908), 197-98.

6. *Zhitie Iulianii Lazarevskoi: povest' ob Iulianii Osorinoi*, ed. T. R. Rudi, and R. P. Dmitrieva, *Novye imena v nauke* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1996); Serge Zenkovsky, ed., *Medieval Russia's Epic Chronicles and Tales* (New York: Penguin, 1974) 290-300, 391-99.

7. D. G. Konovalov, *Religiozniy ekstaz v russkom misticheskom sektantstve* (Sergiev posad: Tipografiia Sv.-Tr. Sergievskoi Lavry, 1908), 45-46.

Brought before the Borisoglebsk district court, Kopylov ultimately attracted the attention of the tsar's Committee of Ministers who were increasingly concerned to uproot dissent of any kind. Although Kopylov was judged to be worthy of exile to the Caucasian frontier (where the Russian state was waging a bitter war against the Muslim guerilla fighter Imam Shamil), his age saved him from that fate. The Committee determined that the octogenarian should be imprisoned in the Ascension hermitage of Moscow diocese where he could be carefully watched and instructed. But in April 1838 before the sentence could be carried out, Kopylov died.

Upon Kopylov's death his movement split into two factions, one led by his son Filipp (d. 1848), the other by an old companion, Perfil (or Porfirii) Petrovich Katasonov. Under Filipp, the Israelites expanded from its base in Borisoglebsk district to Kirsanov and Tambov districts. The provincial authorities in Tambov opened an investigation into this new religious movement in 1848, an investigation which lasted for over twenty years. Unfortunately, most of the thirteen volumes of reports that this inquest produced was destroyed.<sup>8</sup>

Ten years after his father's death, Filipp also died and was succeeded by his spiritual wife, Anis'ia Ivanovna Kopylova. Anis'ia's party remained faithful to the stringent asceticism of the movement's founder. Because of their frequent fasts, they were commonly called "fasters" [*postniki*]. A powerfully charismatic figure, Anis'ia Kopylova led her followers for forty-four years after her husband's death. By the end of the 1860s, her community had multiplied to include Riazan', Penza, Saratov, Simbirsk, and Voronezh provinces. Known as the "carrier of the Holy Spirit," "the dear mother [*matushka*, a term of endearment often given to the wives of priests]," and even "Theotokos" [the Mother of God], Kopylova ruled her community absolutely, and maintained control even after being exiled in 1870 to Povenets in the far northwestern province of Olonets. Only in 1881 was she allowed to return to her native village of Perevoz, where she served as leader until her death in 1892.<sup>9</sup>

The Fasters survived Anis'ia's death in 1892 and still existed in Rasskazovo village in the Tambov region as late as 1959, when

8. Semen Dmitrievich Bondar', *Sekty khlystov, shaloputov, dukhovnykh khristian, Saryi i Novyi Izrail i subbotnikov i iudeistvuiushchikh: kratkii ocherk* (Petrograd: Tip. V. D. Smirnova, 1916), 15.

9. "Tambovskie khlysty, imenuiushchie sebja postnikami ili bogomolami, i ikh zabluzhdeniia," *Tambovskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* 28.3 (1 March 1888): 439-55, 552-569, 622-37; Ivan Georgievich Aivazov, "Tambovskie postniki," *Missionerskoe obozrenie* 6 (1901): 190-203.

TABLE 1  
LEADERS OF "RUSSIAN ISRAEL"

- Abbakum Ivanov •
- KOPYLOV  
(1756-1838)
- Perevoz Village •
- Kirsanov Distr. •
- Tambov Province •

Perfil/ Parfentii/  
Porfirii  
Petrov KATASONOV  
(1808-1885)  
Perevoz Village  
"Israel"

Filipp  
Abbakumovich  
KOPYLOV  
(d. 1848)  
Perevoz Village  
"Fasters" [postniki]

See Table 2

Anis'ia Ivanova  
KOPYLOVA (d. 1892)  
Perevoz Village

Eremai Davidov  
KUDRINO (b. 1836)  
and  
Evdokiia Ivanova  
ENGOVITA  
(b. 1886)  
Tsvetovka Hamlet  
Borisogleb Distr.  
Tambov Province

Dmitrii Nikolaevich  
PONFEROV  
(fl. 1892-1912)  
Rasskazovo Village  
Tambov District  
Tambov Province

Nastas'ia Mikhailova  
IAKUTINA-UKOLOCHEVA  
(fl. 1892-1912)  
Fedorinov Farmstead  
on the border of  
Tambov and Kirsanov  
Districts, Tambov  
Province

Sources: Bondar', *Sekty khlvstov; Tret'iaikov, Sektantstvo v Tambovskoi gubernii* (St. Petersburg, 1911), 39-46.

Aleksandr Il'ich Klivanov led an ethnographical expedition from the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union. His informant, Ivan Vasil'evich Selianskii, a member of Anis'ia's movement, numbered his co-religionists at a hundred.<sup>10</sup>

10. Aleksandr Il'ich Klivanov, "Beseda s postnikom I. V. Selianskim," *Voprosy istorii religii i ateizma* 9 (1961): 241-42.

## The Katasonovite Movement

P. P. Katasonov's movement proved to be more significant numerically and more widespread geographically. By virtue of his powerful personality, Katasonov united a large number of theologically disparate, nominally Orthodox congregations. To tighten his control over his followers, he appointed seven "archangels," each of whom functioned as bishop over his own territory. The archangels oversaw and validated the leaders of individual congregations and maintained contact with them through travelling Cossack merchants. Funds collected by his various communities reached him by the same means.<sup>11</sup>

The new christ also initiated an aggressive program of evangelism. Claiming to be the true people of God, Katasonov's followers adopted the name "Israel." The "Israelites" set up way stations for Orthodox pilgrims, fed and sheltered them at their own expense, and engaged them in religious conversation in an attempt to convert them. In their efforts to evangelize, they also joined Orthodox societies for the distribution of religious literature and vigorously pressed their point of view. One of the most important members of the Katasonovite hierarchy, Petr Lordugin, died in 1890 as an active member of the Orthodox Palestine Society.<sup>12</sup> In essence, Katasonov had created a clandestine church with its own hierarchy, communication system, theology, budget, and missions program.

Over time, Katasonov also introduced significant reforms to the discipline of the movement. First, he relaxed the dietary restrictions by permitting the consumption of fish, onions, garlic, and potatoes. By the 1870s, he even permitted his followers to drink alcohol. Meat, however, remained a forbidden item.<sup>13</sup>

Accused of preaching "flagellantism [*khlystovstvo*]," a violation of article 196 of the Criminal Code, Katasonov was arrested in 1872 and exiled to the Transcaucasus by the Saratov Circuit Court. This sentence only enhanced Katasonov's reputation among his followers; a widely distributed photograph of the religious leader in chains became an object of veneration, proof of his status as a martyr. But within a year, Katasonov repented, formally returned to Orthodoxy, and received a pardon that allowed him to return home to Tambov province in 1873.

11. Fedoseevets, "Sredi sektantov. (Iz putevykh zametok)" *Slovo* (Feb. 1861): 37-40. See also the instructions from Katasonov published by the missionary Ivan Georgievich Aivazov, *Materialy dlia izsledovaniia russkikh misticheskikh sekt*. Issue 1. *Khristovshchina* vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: P. Ia. Sinchenko, 1915): 184-88.

12. Aivazov, *Materialy* 1:400-402.

13. Semen Dmitrievich Bondar', *Sekty khlystov, dukhovnykh khristian, staryi i novyi izrail, i subbotnikov i iudeistvuushchikh* (St. Petersburg, 1916) 25-26.

## 88 COMMUNAL SOCIETIES

TABLE 2  
KATASONOV

Fedor Kirillovich POSLENICHENKO	Semen Ivanovich BEREZHNOI		Fedor Prokhorov MALIUKOV	Ivan NELIAPIN
Uvar ERMOLENKO	Ivan MORDASOV		Petr Iakovlev SVINOGUZOV	Grigorii SHEVCHENKO
			Matrena Dmitrievna CHERKASSOVA	
Vasilii Fedorov MOKSHIN	Agafia "Gania" BASHKETOVA	Nikita ERGURNEV	Petr Danilov LORDUGIN	Egor Lavrent'ev MATVEEV
Tikhon BELONO ZHKIN	Roman Petrov LIKHACHEV	Ekaterina ERGURNEVA		Praskov'ia Savel'eva MATVEEVA
Vasilii Semenovich LUBKOV	Ivan Ustinovich KIR'IANOV		Gerasim Chernykh (prophet of Mokshin)	Dar'ia Egorovna Kasatkina

Settling in Borisoglebsk, Katasonov registered as a townsman. Despite his declaration of repentance for his religious activities, Katasonov continued to lead his movement.

Katasonov's death in December 1885 created a major crisis for his followers, who splintered into over a dozen different factions. In the words of one of his successors, Vasilii Lubkov:

Fiefdoms formed: in Voronezh province there was Ivan Markov; in Don oblast', Semen Berezhnov and Ustin'ia Ivanovna; in Kuban' oblast', Roman

Likhachev; in Stavropol' province, Iakov Kliushin; in Georgievsk, Tersk province, Petr Danilovich Lordukhin; in Vladikavkaz, Ivan Fadeev, etc.<sup>14</sup>

Besides these factions, Katasonov's two spiritual wives, Matrena Maksimovna and Avdot'ia Maksimovna, also led a group in Katasonov's home province of Tambov. At first Petr Danilovich Lordugin led the most important bloc headquartered in Piatigorsk, but his death, a mere five years later, left his followers in incompetent hands.

### New Israel

In Voronezh, a community called New Israel rose on the ashes of the Katasonovite movement. Vasiliĭ Fedorovich Mokshin (d. 1894), a peasant of Dankov village, Voronezh district and province, had joined Israel when he lived in Taganrog where he worked in a bakery. There he met the soldier Maksim Lavrent'evich Shevchenko (who later became an "archangel" of New Israel), the host of the Katasonovite prayer meetings. After he returned to Voronezh, Mokshin was arrested and convicted of violating article 196 of the Criminal Code and exiled to the Transcaucasus. Like his master Katasonov, Mokshin gained a pardon by formally repenting of his errors. In 1883, he returned to Voronezh, where he continued to lead his movement until his death eleven years later.<sup>15</sup>

Mokshin's movement was confined to Voronezh province. His followers considered Mokshin to be Christ and the Son of God, and called him by the endearing name of "Papa" [*papasha*]. They regarded his exile to the Transcaucasus as part of his passion.

Like Katasonov, Mokshin established an ecclesiastical hierarchy, including twelve apostles, prophets, and his own spiritual wife. He further reduced the ascetic demands on his followers: he permitted the consumption of meat and allowed his followers to beget children with both their spiritual and their legal wives. Many followed Mokshin's own example and had both a spiritual and a legal wife.

In the meantime, the remarkable Vasiliĭ Semenovich Lubkov (1869-1931?) was being groomed to assume the christhood of the Voronezh party, which post he assumed in 1894, when he was but twenty-four years old. Born on Christmas Eve in 1869 in the town of Bobrov, Voronezh province, Lubkov joined Mokshin's movement while he was still a teenager. An ecstatic experience led him to preach the faith openly and at the tender age of eighteen, he was arrested for

14. Vladimir Dmitrievich Bonch-Bruevich, *Novyi Izraĭl Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva i staroobriadchestva*, vol. 4 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia B. M. Vol'fa, 1911), LVI.

15. Bondar, *Sekty khlystov*, p. 57.

violating article 196 of the Criminal Code. The Voronezh Circuit Court found him guilty and exiled him to Transcaucasia in October 1890.<sup>16</sup>

A sincere admirer of the Dukhobors, Lubkov had two major goals: to eliminate the inherent instability which had plagued "Israel" since its founding, and to reunite all the houses of "Israel" into a movement independent of Orthodoxy and under his undisputed leadership. To this end, he instituted a series of administrative and liturgical reforms designed to centralize his ecclesiastical and spiritual authority. In 1894, while still in Transcaucasia, he followed Katasonov's example in choosing his own seven archangels to preside over seven regions in which his followers lived. He rewarded Maksim Lavrent'evich and Kharitina Nazar'evna Shevchenko, two of Mokshin's followers who were Lubkov's early supporters, by making each of them archangels.

On 3 February 1895, he further developed the hierarchy by solemnly installing four "evangelists," twelve "apostles," twelve "prophets," and seventy-two people "equal-to-the-apostles" to occupy the new posts of leadership. In 1900, he ordered all of his followers who had been married in the Orthodox church to divorce and choose new partners in a New Israelite rite. After the 1905 decree of religious liberty, Lubkov led the New Israelites in officially declaring their independence of Orthodoxy. Each of these reforms was ritually validated by special ceremonies [*sodeistvie*<sup>17</sup>] in which hundreds of his followers participated. These ceremonies were extensions of the symbolic prophetic actions (*deistvie*), the "sermons in deeds" which originally were spontaneously performed by a prophet before a small congregation. Lubkov's ceremonies, however, carefully followed a liturgical script of his own composition and were meticulously recorded in the "spiritual alphabet," an enciphered chronicle which was copied and recopied by self-appointed archivists.<sup>18</sup>

Although Lubkov was more successful than the other Katasonovites—Vladimir Dmitrievich Bonch-Bruevich, the Bolshevik expert on sectarianism, estimated his following to number at least 100,000—he failed to meet his goals. Most of the other "Israelite" factions (figures vary from 15,000 to 500,000 as to the number of adherents of these groups) spurned his efforts at reunification, and the state soon resumed its repression of non-Orthodox Christianity; by 1912, Lubkov and his followers faced trials in Smolensk, Khar'kov, Vladikavkaz, and Voron-

16. Vladimir Dmitrievich Bonch-Bruevich, *Novyi Izrail'*, *Materialy k istorii i izuchenii russkogo sektantstva i staroobriadchestva*, vol. 4 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia B. M. Vol'fa, 1911) LXIII; Bondar, 'Sekty khlystov', p. 56-59.

17. Ethel Dunn translates this word by "co-action," which I find less than satisfactory (Klibanov, *History of Religious Sectarianism*, 80).

18. Bonch-Bruevich, *Novyi Izrail'*, LXXX-CVII, 140-41.

ezh Circuit Courts on charges of violating article 196. Having lost hope of establishing the New Age in Russia, the Voronezh christ and a thousand of his disciples emigrated to Uruguay, where they established a colony in San Xavier, near Montevideo. There they remained until 1926, when the relatively liberal Bolshevik policy toward the "sects" lured them back.<sup>19</sup> Lubkov and about seven hundred of his followers returned to establish a colony named "New Israel" on the Manych River in Rostov oblast.

Unfortunately for Lubkov, these relatively liberal policies did not last; the Stalinist laws on religion, passed in 1929, placed heavy restrictions on all religious activity and in 1931 Lubkov and his close associates Arkhip Sergeevich Poiarkov (the archangel Raphael<sup>20</sup>), Andrei Fedorovich Poiarkov (the archangel Michael<sup>21</sup>), and Trofim Evfimovich Zhidkov were convicted of anti-Soviet activity.<sup>22</sup> The "New Israel" commune was renamed "Red October," and became a collective farm—though it maintained ties with the New Israelite community in San Xavier well into the 1960s.<sup>23</sup>

The German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 resulted in a temporary and partial relaxation of religious persecution: for example, in 1943 Stalin allowed the Russian Orthodox Church to choose a new patriarch, created a legal national organization for the Baptists, and permitted Muslims to elect a mufti, or spiritual director. But because of their isolation and small number, the Russian Israelites did not immediately benefit from the change in policy. Only in 1954, the year after Stalin's death, were they allowed to hold a congress, which took place in Labinsk, a city in Krasnodar krai.<sup>24</sup>

Under Soviet rule, the Russian Israelites, like other native religious movements, became predominantly a movement of the elderly. Worshiping for several hours on Sundays, they continued to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to speak in tongues. Their worship and theology has come more and more to resemble the more dynamic Pentecostals. But while the Pentecostals have had great success in attracting young people, especially after the Soviet parliament passed a law on religious toleration in 1990, the Russian Israelites are dying out.

19. A. Romanov and A. Shamaro, "Tritsaf let spustia" *Nauka i religiia* (May 1961): 30-35.

20. Aivazov, *Materialy*, 3:407.

21. Bondar, *Sekty khlystov*, p. 61.

22. F. Fedorenko, *Sekty, ikh vera i dela* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1965), 114-15.

23. S. Golosovskii and G. Krul', *Na Manyche "sviashchemom": sektantskoe dvizhenie sredi molodezhi* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia gvardiia, 1928).

24. Undated letter written in 1984 from an anonymous New Israelite of Armavir, Krasnodar krai (in the author's possession).