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BIOGRAPHICAL TRAJECTORIES AND SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE OLD BELIEVERS
WANDERERS IN THE FIRST THIRD OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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Preface

The first third of the 20th century marked a time of radical transformations in the political and social landscape of Northern Eurasia¹. Thus, members of the ethnic, social, and religious communities that constituted this complex and diverse landscape faced the need to rethink their place in the modernizing spaces of the Late Russian Empire and the emerging Soviet state. Representatives of one of the radical branches of the priestless Old Belief, the True Orthodox Christians wandering or the Wanderers [stranniki] (also known as runaways [beguny] or escapists [skrytniki]), were no exception. They had some success in commerce, organized industrial enterprises, cooperated in agricultural artels, and collaborated with the Soviet authorities. How was it possible that the bearers of arguably the most pessimistic eschatological worldview among Old Believers did not get lost in the swirl of the transformations of political and social regimes in the late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state, but found their place in this whirlwind?

In contrast to the conventional historiographical tradition that offers a dichotomizing view on the relations of the Wanderers (and, more broadly, Old Believers) with the world beyond the boundaries of their communities as a dialectic relationship between an archaic religious tradition and a modernizing world, this thesis offers a de-exoticization of the Wanderers by showing their inalienability from processes unfolding in the country they lived. It is thus not the story of a group of radical escapists confronting the hostile realities of the modernizing world, but of members of the religious community who were seeking, and (against all odds) finding their place in the political and social turbulence of the first third of the 20th century.

It is common in the academic literature to consider the Wanderers as the most non-conformist religious tradition in the diverse world of the Old Believers. The materials of the Wanderers' self-representation, their ideological declarations and doctrinal principles also demonstrate that consistent escapism is at the center of their religious ontology. Following this logic, interaction with the "outside" world, "corrupted" as a result of the canonical and ritualistic reforms of Nikon and the church reforms of Peter the Great, appears to be extraordinary for the Wanderers. However, the analysis of the practices of their interaction with this "outside" world and the involvement of the Wanderers in the social processes which took place outside their communities during the period under consideration allows to question this vision. Despite their own ideas about the limits of acceptable external

¹ The concept of "Northern Eurasia" is understood as a vast geographic space from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean, in which the main driver of historical development are spontaneous processes of intercultural, interethnic and interreligious self-organization. For a detailed description see (I. Gerasimov., S. Glebov, M. Mogilner, A. Semyonov, "Glava 1. Politicheskaia Ekologiya: Formirovanie Regiona Severnoi Evrazii", *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2014): 249-288).

interaction, the Wanderers successfully adapted to the realities of the surrounding environment in both the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state.

At first glance, the Wanderers could hardly "fit" into the modernization processes unfolding in the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state in the first third of the 20th century. They did not fit into the templates of a nationalizing Russian Empire where, from the point of view of state institutions, belonging to the Orthodox (Nikonian) Church and ethnic Russianness were virtually inseparable. Although the vast majority of the Wanderers were ethnic Great Russians, the gloomy eschatology that formed the basis of their ontology and their outspoken disloyalty to the highest registers of authorities made the Imperial officials, local and central, look upon the Wanderers with suspicion. Moreover, at the beginning of the period under consideration, the protagonists of this study existed on the verge of illegality, even after the publication of the Edict "On Strengthening the Principles of Religious Tolerance" (1905). The debate about the existence of "fanatic"² practices in their midst took place in the press and was reflected in the documents of the Imperial bureaucracy until the very end of the Old Regime. This debate had a direct impact on the legal status of the Wanderers who, in the absence of an unambiguous legal decision on their "fanaticism", could be persecuted by local authorities at their discretion.

The Bolsheviks cared little about the status of the Old Believers, let alone the Wanderers. With the issuing of the decree "On Separation of Church and State" (1918), representatives of all religious movements of the former Russian Empire were equalized before the law. The Wanderers were not left out. However, the new Soviet authorities were hardly too concerned about integrating the radical Old Believers into the emerging Soviet space. Except for the enthusiasm of Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич, who in the early 1920s came up with the idea of patronizing the existing sectarian and Old Believer communes and organizing new ones, the high-ranking Soviet officials were not eager to contemplate what place the Old Believers would occupy in the workers' and peasants' state. Moreover, in their interactions with local authorities, as is shown, the Wanderers often experienced hostility on the grounds of being religious fanatics, kulaks, and profiteers.

Thus, the Wanderers developed their own strategies for interacting with the outside world, maneuvering between aversion on the part of the Old Regime, misunderstanding and hostility from various registers of the Soviet power, and their own dogmatic ideas about the limits of acceptable contacts with the "outside" world. However, despite such unfavorable conditions, it was during this period that some Wanderers showed extraordinary abilities to

² This refers to the Russian term "izuvernyi," the meaning of which is explained in the body of the research.

engage with social spaces outside their own communities, finding themselves in the Late Imperial commerce and entrepreneurship, Early Soviet agricultural cooperative movement, and working for Soviet law enforcement agencies.

The research focuses on the biographical trajectories of the Old Believers-Wanderers of three different generations (born in the 1850s, 1870s, 1890s), united by the fact that their activity took place in the first third of the 20th century. However, in a broader sense, the work is devoted to the study of Russian (Imperial and Early Soviet) modernity and the vernacular experience of it among representatives of a small religious community scattered across the vast territory from Arkhangel'sk to Nev'yansk.

Of course, the morphology³ of Russian modernity (or modernities), as well as the general legitimacy of applying this term to Russian history of the first half of the 20th century, is still a subject of academic debate⁴. This research is a contribution to this discussion. By using an example of the Wanderers, the work demonstrates how the nature of Russian modernity was seen by those who became involved in the processes associated with it, adapted to the realities of modernizing spaces, and occupied the social niches opening up in these spaces⁵.

According to established historiographical conventions, modernization processes with their ethno-national and class languages of political mobilization pushed aside the traditional religious basis for the construction of solidarities. In the context of this study, it is planned to show that Russian modernity of the early 20th century "spoke" not only the languages of nation and class, but also the language of theological debates, council minutes, sermons, and apocalyptic writings⁶. The purpose of this study is to show that the experience of the involvement of a marginalized group in the processes of political and social transformation of the first third of the 20th century can be as normal as that of millions of their contemporaries. Thus, this experience is one option in the diversity of the "normal" Late Imperial and Early Soviet individual and collective modernity experience. Consequently, one may conclude that the processes associated with modernization and

³ Morphology refers hereafter to the structure and forms of phenomena and processes.

⁴ This discussion is described in detail, for example, in (M. David-Fox, "Modernost v Rossii i SSSR: otsutstvuiushchaia, obshchaia, alternativnaia, perepletennaia?", *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 140 (2016): 19-44).

⁵ Here I am following Frederick Cooper, not trying to give any more perfect definition of modernity than existing ones, but trying to hear what those who have been part of the associated processes have to say about it. F. Cooper, *Colonialism in question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 115.

⁶ Here I follow Heather Coleman and Adeeb Khalid who showed, using Russian Baptists and Turkestan Jadids as examples, how members of religious communities engage in modernizing processes and reconfigure their ideologies according to new modern languages and principles of political mobilization. However, unlike Coleman, in this study I do not cover the term "religion" under the term "culture" when referring to the modern intertwining of religion/class/nation languages. (H. J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and spiritual revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2005); A. Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

modernity had an enormous impact even on those who (at least rhetorically) chose a break with the outside world as the core of their ontology. In other words, if even⁷ the Wanderers were engaged in and adapted to the processes of modernization, is it possible to imagine that anyone would have been left out of these processes?

In this study it is demonstrated that the Wanderers had no urgent need to establish capitalist productions, to cooperate in agricultural artels, or to pursue a career in the Soviet state security service. On the contrary, they would inevitably have encountered many countervailing factors in attempting to change their comfortable and settled mode of existence within the purely spiritual realm. Nevertheless, the protagonists of this study have ventured to make this change and, at various stages, have successfully integrated into external social domains. Thus, the main question of this study can be formulated as follows: Why did the bearers of the most pessimistic of the many Old Believers' ideologies, despite numerous potential obstacles, voluntarily and consciously engage in the broad processes of political and social transformation of the first third of the 20th century, and what can such an experience of engagement tell us about the nature of these processes themselves?

Novelty of the research

The novelty of this research is determined by the application of several approaches. Each of them is intended to problematize or develop existing historiographical conventions: from narrowly specialized ones concerning the historiography of Wanderers to the historiography of the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state.

These approaches can be categorized as follows (see "State of the Art" for more details).

Problematizing the Wanderers' Escapism

Since the 1960s, scholars from Novosibirsk, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, and Moscow, during archaeological expeditions to the places of the remote residence of Old Believers, have managed to collect a huge amount of religious and everyday materials and documents, which have become the main sources for the history of the Old Belief⁸. The works of N. N. Pokrovskii, N. Yu. Bubnov, N. D. Zolnikova, and A. I. Maltsev, written on the basis of the received sources, were groundbreaking for their time and became fundamental in the historiography of the Old Believers' communities.

⁷ The word "even" is used here not because the Wanderers were convinced world-renouncers, but because the Wanderers in question were hardened pragmatists and rationally and carefully strategized the development of their community.

⁸ R. O. Crummey, "The Novosibirsk School of Old Believers Studies" in *Old Believers in a Changing World*, ed. R.O. Crummey (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 167-189.

It must be said, however, that there are two categories of sources that paint at least two opposite pictures of how the relationship between the Wanderers (and Old Believers in general) and the space outside their communities was arranged. If we rely (as the aforementioned authors did⁹) exclusively on materials produced by the Wanderers for their own use, that is, documents of a liturgical, ecclesiastical and bureaucratic nature, one can conclude that this is a community which is radical in its eschatological outlook, whose members have severed all contacts with the outside world in anticipation of the End of Times. When analyzing such sources, historians of the Old Believers who worked in the second half of the 20th century came to the fair conclusion that they were dealing with a preserved archaic community. Moreover, some researchers even considered it possible to apply the Medievalist analytical framework to the history of Old Believers in the 20th century¹⁰.

A completely different picture is drawn if we analyzed the documents of the relations of Wanderers with the authorities of different levels and the testimonies of external authors who had the opportunity to study the modes of existence of the Wanderers ethnographically. In such materials, the Wanderers appear extremely integrated into communities outside their own groups, rational individuals, able and ready, if necessary, to play by the rules of the "corrupted" world. Thus, the view of the Wanderers as hardened isolationists, based on the believers' own perceptions of themselves, is unable to explain the diversity of their strategies of interaction with the world around them. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that for all the importance of research in the second half of the twentieth century, authentic manuscripts and documents in isolation from other sources gives a lopsided view of the radical Old Believers, at least when it comes to the Wanderers of the 20th century.

By the beginning of the twentieth century a significant gap between the ideological escapism of the Wanderers and the actual practices of engagement with the world around them turns out to be very noticeable. It is difficult to trace the genealogy of this gap, since until "the discovery" of the religious movement in 1850 we have no option but to rely on vernacular sources. However, one can say that at the very moment of "the discovery", when outside researchers gained access to the study of the Wanderers, this gap was already evident.

⁹ Pokrovskii did use criminal cases, but mostly in relation to the 18th century Old Believers. N. N. Pokrovskii, *Antifeodal'nyi protest uralo-sibirskikh krestian-starobryadtsev v 18 v.* (Novosibirsk: Nauka. Sibirskoe otделение, 1974).

¹⁰ For example, Natalia Zolnikova put it in this vein, pointing to the features of the archaic religious consciousness of the Old Believers (N.D. Zolnikova, "Svoi" I "chuzhie" po normativnym aktam staroverov-chasovenykh", *Gumanitarnye nauki v Sibiri*, no. 2 (1998): 54-59). Such notions are also echoed by the statement of Irina Paert who wrote that the post-Soviet Old Believers managed to "revitalized their devotion to medieval Russian spirituality" (I. Paert, *Old Believers: Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 3).

Moreover, in the future this gap will only increase up to a certain time. Thus, this study is an attempt to "collide" these two categories of sources on the history of Wanderers. Such an approach was conceived in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the history of the Wanderers' social transformations, which would be written on their behalf, but which would use the explanatory potential of external sources when necessary. While the following statement may seem self-evident to someone, it must be stated. This study will show that regardless of the radicality of the religious ideology to which they adhere, people living in the 20th century cannot possess the worldview of their 17th century fellow believers.

De-exoticizing the Religious Dissident Experience

This dissertation also seeks to problematize perceptions of the Old Believer community as a separate entity¹¹ whose members have experienced political and social transformation in a way different from that of their Nikonian or other neighbors. This refers to attempts to present the Old Believers as carriers of a particular economic ethical mode which gave rise to the phenomenon of a particular Late Imperial Old Believer entrepreneurship. As is shown, in the case of the Wanderers, for all the importance of religious rhetoric and ethics for them, their experience of the Late Imperial entrepreneurship and Soviet cooperation was not much different from that of their non-Old Believers contemporaries. Moreover, in some cases this ethic proved to be rather an obstacle to their economic activity. In addition, such exoticizing perceptions to be problematized include the opposite view of the Old Believers as an archaic community of radicals whose members constitute an unsuitable component for the integration into a modern or modernizing domain. As is shown, although eschatology was indeed in the core of their ontology, the Wanderers were equally proficient in writing theological manuscripts and in interacting with state officials through bureaucratic means.

Russian modernities as seen "from below"

This study examines the experience of engagement with the processes of political and social transformation through an analysis of the biographical trajectories of several Wanderers. Although this approach itself is not fundamentally novel, it must be said that the Wanderers whose biographies are to be analyzed prove to be of a particular interest for such an approach.

¹¹ See for ex. The Old Believers as a photographic negative of the official society (R. O. Crummey, *The Old Believers and the world of Antichrist: The Vyg community and the Russian State 1694-1855* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), XIII; Or the Old Believers as a subculture (Roy R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995).

The starting biographical positions of the Wanderers were not like those of the hereditary Nikonian clergy of Laurie Manchester¹² and the political and literary figures of Mark Steinberg¹³. The Wanderers in question were born to provincial Russian peasant families and early in their life became members of a semi-legal religious society. They were not part of the political public sphere, had no systematic secular education, and although they were literate, their version of literacy (functional i.e., liturgical and theological) was more of an obstacle for them to build relationships with the world around them. Thus, the experience of the Wanderers can serve as an example of the Late Imperial and Early Soviet experience of their contemporaries with a similar habitus, who belonged to the lower social classes. However, unlike the millions of their contemporaries, the peasants and provincial workers, the experience of the Wanderers turns out to be a pronounced one, since the very mode of their relations within the community involved written self-reflection in the form of the acts of regular councils, letters, and sermons. In other words, unlike other members of the lower classes, who could "speak" only in their body language or imitate a hegemonic discourse¹⁴, the Wanderers actively wrote and discussed in a written form the social processes of which they were a part. Thus, in the context of this study, I focus on this particular view of Russian modernities "from below". It seems that the Wanderers are perfectly suited to such an approach, first, because of their social status, and second, because of their tendency to reflect and ability to express their experiences in a writing form.

Aleksandr Etkind, in his several works, argued for the relevance of applying postcolonial categories of "hegemon/subaltern" to the relations between the Narodniks and Bolsheviks, on the one hand, and the sectarians (in the broad sense), on the other. Thus, speaking of "the sinister silence of the Russian religious underground"¹⁵, he directly postulated the idea that "in Russia the people were subaltern, and everyone spoke on their behalf, together and discordantly: writers, scientists, officials, priests"¹⁶. This study seeks to refute these assumptions by showing that the Russian religious underground was neither silent nor a sinister one. It "spoke" a lot and clearly "formulated" its attitude toward the processes unfolding in the country. Moreover, as this thesis will show, until the beginning of the 1930s this space, in fact, cannot be fully even called an underground, given the degree of external integration of the Wanderers.

¹² L. Manchester, *Holy fathers, secular sons: Clergy, intelligentsia, and the modern self in revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008).

¹³ M. D. Steinberg, *The Russian Revolution, 1905-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 223-357.

¹⁴ I. Gerasimov, *Plebeian modernity: Social practices, illegality, and the urban poor in Russia, 1906-1916* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), 1-17.

¹⁵ A. M. Etkind, *Khlyst. Misticheskie sekty i russkaya literatura. Nachalo dvadtsatogo veka* (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1998), 104.

¹⁶ A. M. Etkind, *Vnutrennyaya kolonizatsiya. Imperskii opyt Rossii* (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017), 307.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the biographical trajectories of Wanderers and the social transformations their communities underwent, during the political and social turbulence of the first third of the 20th century.

Research objectives

- to shed light on an understudied period in the history of the Wanderers as representatives of a community experiencing the key events of the first third of the 20th century
- to identify external and internal conditions of the Wanderers' opening at the beginning of the 20th century;
- to describe and analyze the biographical trajectories of Wanderers in question;
- to trace transformations of the Wanderers' community, its social and hierarchical structure and modes of interaction with the world around them;
- to determine what external social niches were available and desirable to the Wanderers during this period.

Object of the research

The object of the research is a set of documents of theological, historical, and biographical nature, which came out from the pen of the Old Believers-Wanderers and describe the activities of representatives of the religious group in the first third of the 20th century, as well as documents of the Late Imperial and Soviet administrative institutions related to the interaction of Wanderers with the state, as well as materials of criminal cases against the Wanderers, newspaper publications, and memories of witnesses of the processes under analysis.

Subject of the research

The subject of the study is the biographical trajectories of the Wanderers, refracted through the experience of integration into the modernizing domains of the Late Russian Empire and the Early Soviet state and the social transformations that the Wanderers community underwent in the process of adaptation to the unfolding of broad political and social processes of the first third of the 20th century.

Research Methodology and the challenge of representativity

This research represents a social history of adherents of a small religious community. Thus, the thesis traces the medium-term social transformations of the community, and uses illustrative biographical trajectories of the Wanderers involved in broad processes of political and social change in the first third of the 20th century as the main subject of analysis.

It is important to say that this research does not deal with reconstructing the biographies of the Wanderers, but with their biographical trajectories. As is shown, the protagonists of this work sometimes made considerable efforts to confuse the possible researcher of their biographies. Quite remarkably, the exact year of birth of none of the people in question is known. In addition, reconstructing the biographies of people who often spent at least part of their lives avoiding contact with state registration institutions is a daunting task¹⁷. Consequently, the analysis of biographical trajectories seems to be a more productive approach.

In this research, the biographical trajectory represents an imaginary graph connecting points in a coordinate system where the axes are chronology on the one hand and the degree of involvement of a particular Wanderer in processes and domains outside the Wanderers' communities on the other. First, an analysis of such trajectories makes it possible to assess the extent to which Wanderers' perceptions of the acceptable degree of involvement in external processes and domains have been transformed. Second, the location of a Wanderer at a particular point in the imaginary graph speaks to the peculiarities of the social reality in which the Wanderer may have taken one or another position in the world around him. In other words, it is impossible to fully reconstruct the biography of a particular Wanderer. However, it is possible to testify that this Wanderer was in 1910 a peasant of the village of Voloski (Olonets province), in 1926 a spiritual leader, and in 1931 an employee of the OGPU. Based on this data, we can talk about what social niches might have been available to a particular person at a particular point in time, and in a particular geographic setting.

Several works have had a notable methodological or ideological influence on this study. First, it is Jane Burbank's work on township courts in the Late Russian Empire¹⁸. Moving away from the traditional view of social history as the history of collectives and groups¹⁹, Burbank succeeded in writing the history of the Late Imperial peasants not as an impersonal entity, but as individuals capable of speaking and acting in accordance with their individual beliefs and aspirations.

Another important work in the field of social history is the Ilya Gerasimov's "Plebeian modernity: Social practices, illegality, and the urban poor in Russia, 1906-1916"²⁰, dedicated to the practices of daily (most often criminal) interaction among the residents of

¹⁷ On the difficulties of writing a biography of the Wanderers and on the historical value of criminal cases against members of this religious movement see E. E Dutchak, "Biografiya starovera-strannika: problemy rekonstruktsii", *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, no. 302 (2007), 80-83.

¹⁸ J. Burbank, *Russian peasants go to court: Legal culture in the countryside, 1905-1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, XV.

²⁰ Gerasimov, *Plebeian modernity*.

Late Imperial cities, who were able to find a common language of interrelationship despite their very different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This work, on the one hand, has been a very important model of how the insignificant facts of everyday life, separated from ideologized interpretations, can create a new understanding of the complex and diverse, yet natural and organic, social reality of the past. In my research I willingly adopt this approach. On the other hand, this work provoked me to argue with it in order to prove that people detached from the means of production of the Late Imperial hegemonic discourse (exactly the kind of people Gerasimov referred to as plebeian society) were capable of expressing themselves not only in body language, as the author claimed, comparing representatives of the lower urban classes to Turgenev's short story character Gerasim²¹. The Wanderers were nothing at all like mute Gerasim. They spoke much and clearly, albeit in the ornate language of theology and religious polemics. This dissertation is precisely an attempt to show what the language of the "silent" peasants and townspeople of the Late Russian Empire might sound like and what actual social reality could be caught from this language.

Among other works ideologically and methodologically akin to this thesis are several studies from different years that, despite their varying geographical and chronological contexts, in one way or another represent attempts to demonstrate the complexity and diversity of modes of interaction of religious communities and individuals with Modern and modernizing ideologies and domains. Similarly, to these studies, this dissertation intends to show that such modes of interaction are not at all limited to the binary opposition of archaic religion vs. secular modernity taken as a given.

Among such works, research on Skoptsy (castrators) by Laura Engelstein²², who showed that a work on a religious community even with the most extraordinary ideologies and practices can be written with deep respect for the protagonists and without seeking to exoticize or archaize them. Here it is also worth mentioning a monograph on Father John of Kronstadt written by Nadezhda Kizenko²³, who showed how religious teachings can absorb elements of modern discourses and successfully adapt to exist in a rapidly changing world. Also, worth mentioning here are two works that are not directly related either to each other or to this dissertation, but which seem to address similar problems of highlighting the non-dichotomous and non-antagonistic relationship of religion and modernizing and modern societies. First book is Pamela Klassen's work on the Anglican missionary and radio

²¹ *Ibid*, 1-17.

²² L. Engelstein, *Skoptsy i tsarstvo nebesnoe* (M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002).

²³ N. Kizenko, *A prodigal saint: Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian people* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2000).

enthusiast Frederic Du Vernet, who in the challenging multicultural context of colonial Canada in the 1920s developed a complex worldview system in which a radio (and other technical innovations) served as a way to transmit spiritual messages telepathically²⁴. Second book is the work of On Barak, who, using the example of colonial and semi-colonial Egypt in the 19th and 20th centuries, has shown how modern temporalities embodied in technological innovations (trains, streetcars, telegraph) did not supplant traditional (Islamic) temporal regimes, but produced new, symbiotic²⁵.

As it was said, this dissertation is written in the social history genre. The focus of the analysis is predominantly on the life trajectories of three Wanderers of different generations and backgrounds. This approach inevitably raises the question of the relevance of such an analysis and the possibilities of extrapolating its results to broader social contexts. Here it must be said that, first, as is shown, behind the figures of these three Wanderers lurk broader groups of their like-minded and coreligionists with similar biographical trajectories. Second, although I insist that this work is a social history, it is hard to deny that the researches are in some way influenced by prominent works in microhistory²⁶ and their authors' approach to working with such a category of quantitative sociology as representativity.

The problem of generalizing the results of a particular case study and, in general, the relationship between particularity and universality in the sense of historical knowledge are still the subject of lively debates among theorists of microhistory and its critics²⁷. Like the micro-historians who have to fight back perpetually against critics who force them to maneuver between "Scylla of the Exemplar" and "Charybdis of the Anecdote"²⁸, it seems appropriate to take the following theoretical approach.

Although, as has been said, behind my three protagonists stand many of their fellow believers, certainly all three biographical trajectories are exceptional in their own way (as is the life trajectory of any human being is). The reason for their uniqueness lies at least in the

²⁴ P. E. Klassen, *The story of radio mind: a missionary's journey on Indigenous land* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

²⁵ O. Barak, *On time: Technology and temporality in modern Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

²⁶ Like Carlo Ginzburg's seminal work, this research focuses on the transformations of the religious worldview of a particular individual who is prone to theological creativity (see Chapter 4). (C. Ginzburg, *The cheese and the worms: The cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2013); As in the work of Natalie Zemon Davis, this research seeks to discern behind the insignificant facts of Wanderers' everyday lives, the texture of their social reality. (N. Z. Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983); As in other classic work in microhistory, this research will also deal with the biographies and autobiographies of people of the margins, from whom it would seem difficult to expect a propensity to perpetuate their lives in conventional written form. (N. Z. Davis, *Women on the margins: three seventeenth-century lives* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

²⁷ T. Atnashev and M. Velizhev, "Mikroistoriia i problema dokazatelstva v gumanitarnykh naukakh", *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 6 (2019): 83-121; Representativity as a problematic category is one of the key issues of microhistory addressed in (S. G. Magnússon, I. M. Szijártó, *What is microhistory? Theory and practice* (Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge, 2013).

²⁸ Atnashev and Velizhev. *Mikroistoriia i problema dokazatelstva*.

fact that at different times they were leaders of local communities of the Wanderers or even of the entire religious movement, as in the case of the protagonist of Chapter 2 Aleksandr Vasiliievich (Ryabinin). They are exceptional when compared to the mass of ordinary Wanderers, who in turn are in some sense exceptional against the background of their Nikonians or any other neighbors. This exceptionalism, in the context of this research, is understood in accordance with the concept of "normal exception" widely spread in microhistorical studies.

The use of the concept implies that a certain kind of exceptionality or some "rule-breaking" on the one hand can be seen as a variant of the social norm²⁹, while, on the other hand, allows one to learn more about unconventional social relationships that may have an unexpected impact on the broader historical context³⁰. In addition, an analysis of such normal exception, understood as a liminal or full-fledged state of marginality³¹, allows one to tell something about the boundaries of the domains of norm and marginality, which correlates with Carl Schmidt's ideas about the preciousness of paradoxes and exceptions³².

State of the Art

From the very moment of their "discovery" in 1850 the Wanderers became an attractive object of study for historians, ethnographers, and theologians. Typically, Synodal authors have focused on the examination of the "immoral life" of the sectarians and the flaws of their theological conceptions³³. At the same time, some of the Synodal schismatologists [raskolovedy] quickly turned their attention to the political dimension of the Wanderers' dogmatics, trying to find a subversive anti-state capacity in it. This tradition of referring to texts of religious sources as an encrypted language of political protest proved extremely influential in further studies on the Wanderers³⁴. The approach to the religious tenets as the language of grassroots social movements was developed by the Narodniks and authors associated with them, who agreed with their Synodal colleagues on the existence of the

²⁹ Magnússon and Szijártó, *What is microhistory?*, 54-55.

³⁰ H. Renders and B. De Haan, "The limits of representativeness: Biography, life writing and microhistory", *Storia della Storiografia*, no. 59-60 (2011.): 39-40.

³¹ H. Renders, "The limits of representativeness: Biography, life writing, and microhistory," in *Theoretical discussions of biography: approaches from history, microhistory, and life writing*, ed. H. Renders and B. De Haan, (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 132.

³² "The exception is more interesting than the rule. The rule proves nothing; the exception proves everything: It confirms not only the rule but also its existence, which derives only from the exception. In the exception the power of real life breaks through the crust of a mechanism that has become torpid by repetition". (C. Schmitt, *Political theology: Four chapters on the concept of sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 15).

³³ A.I. Rozov, "Stranniki ili beguny v russkom raskole. III. Organizatsiia sekty", *Vestnik Evropy*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1873): 262-295; N.I. Ivanovskii, *Vnutrennee ustroistvo sekty strannikov ili begunov* (SPb.: zhurnal "Missionerskoe obozrenie").

³⁴ . P. Liprandi, *Kratkoe obozrenie sushchestvuiushchikh v Rossii raskolov, eresei i sekt: kak v religioznom tak i v politicheskom ikh znachenii* (Leipzig, 1883).

political potential of the Wanderers, hoping to tame it and make it serve the common revolutionary struggle.

The main figure of this historiographical tradition in the 19th century was the prominent schismotologist Afanasii Shchapov. Shchapov interpreted the dogmatics and theological findings of the Wanderers as a kind of what will later be called “weapons of the weak”³⁵ of the oppressed and subjugated peasants, who channeled their social protest into theology³⁶. Shchapov's ideas were developed by the next generation of Narodniks and Marxists. Iosif Kablitz (under the pseudonym Iuzov) interpreted the radical Old Believers' eschatology as a popular protest against the growing dominance of non-Orthodox and foreigners in the higher administrative structures of the Empire³⁷. Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич viewed the Wanderers' movement as an example of the consequences of class contradictions in pre-industrial societies³⁸. Georgii Plekhanov also interpreted the ideology of the Wanderers as a reflection of the depressing social position of the peasantry, but was still more critical of them. He noted that the "protest" of the Wanderers was not primarily aimed against the institution of autocracy itself or the autocratic system of oppression. According to Plekhanov, the Wanderers saw the Antichrist in specific "non-pious tsars," which hardly made the Wanderers potential allies of the revolutionaries³⁹.

This tradition of a politicized view of the Wanderers is contrasted by the work of Ivan Pyatnitskii, who tended to describe the movement as a predominantly religious phenomenon⁴⁰. Pyatnitskii's work instantly became the most important comprehensive study of the Wanderers at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, introducing the reader to the way of life and ideology of the Wanderers, and, most notably, being partly based on sources that came out from under the pen of the Wanderers themselves.

Soviet historians took little interest in the study of Wanderers, and those who did, predominantly adhered to the tradition of the social and politicized interpretation once established by Shchapov and his followers. Nikolai Nikol'skii viewed the Wanderers' movement as a protest against the intense secularization of the Empire in the 18th century⁴¹,

³⁵ J. C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

³⁶ A. P. Shchapov, *Zemstvo i raskol* (SPb.: D.E. Kozhanchikov, 1862).

³⁷ I. Yuzov (Kablits), *Russkie dissidenty: Starovery i dukhovnye khristiane* (SPb.: tip. (b.) A.M. Kotomina, 1881).

³⁸ V.D. Bonch-Bruевич, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, Vol. 1 (M.: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1959).

³⁹ G.V. Plekhanov, *Istoriia russkoi obshchestvennoi mysli*, Sochineniia, Vol. 20 (M.; L.: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925). Similar conclusions were drawn by the Narodnik Ivan Kharlamov, who, unlike his fellow revolutionaries, paid considerable attention not only to the social, but also to the religious foundations of the Wanderers' teachings in his work. (I.N. Kharlamov, “Stranniki: Ocherk iz istorii raskola”, *Russkaya mysl'*, no. 4-6 (1884): 34-85).

⁴⁰ I.K. Pyatnitskii, *Sekta strannikov i ee znachenie v raskole* (Sergiev Posad: tip. Sv.-Troitskoi Sergievoi lavry, 1906).

⁴¹ N.M. Nikol'skii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi* (M.: Politizdat, 1988).

while Pavel Ryndziunskii and Alexander Klibanov interpreted it as a result of the growing economic inequality among the peasants⁴².

In the late Soviet and post-Soviet historiography, a special place is occupied by the research of A. I. Maltsev, who worked with the manuscripts of Wanderers obtained as part of the afterwar archaeological expeditions. In his seminal work "The Old Believers-Wanderers in the 18th and First Half of the 19th Centuries"⁴³, Maltsev demonstrated the inadequacy of the "social approach" for studying the Wanderers, pointing out that repressions by the Imperial authorities against the Old Believers led to an increase in their numbers and consolidation, while the liberalization of religious policy, on the contrary, caused schisms within the communities.

The aforementioned authors focused mainly on the study of the 18th- and 19th-century Wanderers' communities and contributed to the debate about the nature of this religious movement. For all the importance of the mentioned above studies for this dissertation, it must be said that it is clear that the Wanderers of the 20th century have little resemblance to the isolationist Wanderers of the 18th and early 19th centuries who were the subject of classical studies on Wanderers. The first third of the 20th century marks a unique period in the history of the Wanderers. Neither before nor after that time the Wanderers had attempted so intensely to expand their presence and establish themselves in social domains outside their communities.

This thesis proposes to problematize some of the arguments put forward by scholars of the 20th century Wanderers. In the past 20 years, this particular period of the Wanderers' history has attracted the attention of several researchers. In "Preparing God's Harvest: Maksim Zalesskii, Millenarianism, and the Wanderers in Soviet Russia"⁴⁴ Irina Paert, using the complex hybrid worldview of the Wanderer Maksim Zalesskii (also one of the protagonists of this study) who found it acceptable to work for the OGPU, showed how the popular millenarianism of Wanderers interacted with Soviet Marxist eschatology. Elena Dutchak studied the Siberian taiga Wanderers and the transformation of their beliefs and social structure under the influence of external historical processes and their adaptation resources, which allowed the believers to maintain their isolated way of life to the present day⁴⁵. Sergei Petrov focused on cases of the positive interaction between the Wanderers and

⁴² P.G. Ryndziunskii, *Gorodskoe grazhdanstvo doreformennoi Rossii* (M.: Izd-vo Akad. nauk SSSR, 1958); A.I. Klibanov, *Narodnaya sotsialnaya utopiya v Rossii: Period feodalizma* (M.: Nauka, 1977).

⁴³ A. I. Maltsev, *Starovery-stranniki v 18-pervoi polovine 19 v.* (Novosibirsk: Nauchno-izdatel'skii tsentr "Sibirskii khronograf", 1996).

⁴⁴ I. Paert, "Preparing God's Harvest: Maksim Zalesskii, Millenarianism, and the Wanderers in Soviet Russia", *The Russian Review*, no. 64(1) (2005): 44-61.

⁴⁵ My work often raises the same issues as Dutchak's research. However, the geographical context turns out to be essential. As is shown, there is a chasm between the Wanderers in question and their Siberian co-religionists, studied

the newly emerged Soviet authorities in the early 1920s⁴⁶. Danila Raskov, in his work on the economic history of late imperial Old Believers, turned to the history of the economic activities of Wanderers to prove the influential historiographic concept of the Old Believers' particular economic ethic⁴⁷.

The aforementioned authors focused on the problems of interaction and integration of the carriers of a radically eschatological worldview, the millenarian archaicists, into the modernizing society, whose very attempt to contact with the modernity should surprise the researcher. There is no doubt that, on an ideological level, the views of the Wanderers proclaimed in their theological writings were indeed radically escapist. However, the idea of this research is to look also at the practices of the Wanderers' interaction with the world around them, which cannot be explained merely by taking as a given that the Wanderers were radical millenarians. As is shown in the following chapters, the Wanderers were radical Millenarians insofar as their Millenarianism did not run counter to the pragmatics of their inclusion in broader processes. Moreover, the Wanderers discussed were not an isolationist community, nor did they seek to wall themselves off from the world and the turbulent economic and social life of the first third of the 20th century.

Here it seems productive to follow Douglas Rogers, who pointed out that the historiography of the Old Faith tends to view the Old Believers as someone who is outside of modernity/state/authority and therefore represents a kind of opposition pole to modernity/state/authority⁴⁸. This research proposes to normalize the Late Imperial and Early Soviet experiences of the Wanderers by showing that by the early 20th century they were not separated from the outside world by an insurmountable wall of the religious underground. In fact, there was a significant gap between their declarative escapism and their actual practices of interaction with the social spaces outside their communities. Apparently, the Wanderers themselves were aware of this gap and sought to bridge it by adapting their ideology to the already existing practices of interaction. These attempts at adaptation led, in turn, to the large-scale social transformations within the community: splits or, on the contrary, new alliances. Thus, the contribution of the study to this historiographical discussion is to consider the processes of interaction of Wanderers with the surrounding

by Dutchak. (E.E. Dutchak, *Iz "Vavilona" v "Belovod'e": adaptatsionnye vozmozhnosti taezhnykh obshchin staroverov-strannikov (vtoraia polovina 19-nachalo 21v.)* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2007).

⁴⁶ S.G. Petrov, "Starovery-stranniki i Sovetskaia vlast': ocherk istorii stranstvuiushchikh pravoslavnykh khristian dlia predsedatelia VTsIK M.I. Kalinina," in *Traditsii otechestvennoi dukhovnoi kultury v narrativnykh i dokumental'nykh istochnikakh 15-21 vv. sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, (ed.) E.K. Romodanovskaya (Novosibirsk: Izdatelstvo Sibirskogo otdeleniia Rossiiskoi akademii nauk, 2010), 191-213.

⁴⁷ D.E. Raskov, *Ekonomicheskie instituty starobryadchestva* (SPb.: SPbGU, 2012).

⁴⁸ D. Rogers, *The old faith and the Russian land: a historical ethnography of ethics in the Urals* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 30.

modern space not through the opposition “the traditional community” vs. “the modernity”, but from the perspective of how the community, not separated from the modernizing world, uses the opportunities of that world to expand its presence in it.

It is necessary to also mention the larger historiographic tradition of exoticizing the Late Imperial and Early Soviet experience not only of the Wanderers, but also of the Old Believers in general. This tradition has several incarnations, but its general interpretative message is to show the extraordinary character of the Old Believers' experience of external transformations. One should start with the historiography of the Late Imperial Old Believers capitalism. Since this work directly deals with the economic activities of Wanderers, it should be noted that the materials on which the study is based, allow to discuss the ideas about the features of the Old Believers' economics and economic ethics, in particular with the works dedicated to the Old Believers' urban entrepreneurship⁴⁹.

There is no doubt that the economic activity of the active part of the urban Old Believers had its own distinctive features. The sum of these features fits comfortably into a plot that might be called "Old Believers' Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism," along the lines of Max Weber's classic work⁵⁰. However, putting aside the romantic narrative of Late Imperial Old Believers entrepreneurship as an example of alternative Russian modernization "with a Christian face"⁵¹ or modernization "on the basis of Russian Orthodox values"⁵² one should point out that attempts to say something about the Late Imperial Old Believers in general are fraught with the danger of its essentialization. The Old Believers never formed a single community, not only dogmatically, but also socially. Therefore, any generalizations based on the examples of successful merchants and industrialists, who constituted only a tiny layer in the sea of peasant and petty-bourgeois Old Believers need to be clarified. In

⁴⁹ See, for example: V. V. Kerov, *"Se chelovek i delo ego...": konfessionalno-eticheskie faktory staroobryadcheskogo predprinimatelstva v Rossii* (M.: EKON-INFORM, 2004); V. V. Kerov, "Dukhovnyi stroi staroobryadcheskogo predprinimatelstva: alternativnaia modernizatsiia na osnove natsionalnoi traditsii", *Ekonomicheskaya istoriya: ezhegodnik* (1999), 195-234; For a quintessence of notions about the exclusivity of the Old Believer capitalist experience, conditioned by a special moral and ethical qualities, see J. L. West, *Merchant Moscow Images of Russia's Vanished Bourgeoisie* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 13-16, 61-71, 165. A somewhat more problematizing and less idealizing view of the relationship between religious ethics and the capitalist practices of the Old Believer merchants and industrialists is presented in A. J. Rieber, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982). However, the findings of this work on the urban and often educated Old Believers' religion-based propensity toward capitalism are still difficult to extrapolate to the vast and diverse mass of their coreligionists. In addition, Rieber's conclusions about the kinship between Old Believers' quest for church autarchy and ethnocentric modern Russian nationalism do not seem indisputable (Ibid, 138,165). On top of that, it seems to take a lot of effort for the reader to recognize the mysterious sect of "Shore dwellers" as simply the Old Believers-Pomortsy (Ibid, 160). An example of a more focused, and therefore much less inclined to generalization, work on the Old Believer entrepreneurship (E. M. Yukhimenko, *Rakhmanovy: kuptsy-staroobryadtsy, blagotvoriteli i kolleksionery*. (M.: Izdatel'skii dom Tonchu, 2013).

⁵⁰ M. Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, Vol. 1614 (München: CH Beck, 2004).

⁵¹ Kerov, "Se chelovek i delo ego..."; Kerov, *Dukhovnyi stroi staroobryadcheskogo predprinimatelstva*.

⁵² Kerov, "Se chelovek i delo ego..." , 590.

addition, the concept of the "Golden Age of Old Believers," which lasted from 1905 to 1917⁵³, requires clarification. In this logic, the Golden Age ends with the "apocalypse" of October 25, 1917, when the shift of political regimes and the Bolsheviks' policy toward industrialists and entrepreneurs (regardless of their confessional affiliation) allegedly put an end to the possibility of modernization according to Old Believers' templates. As is shown, the economic activity of the protagonists of this work did not stop on October 25, 1917, but only transformed, adapting to political and social changes. Moreover, it would be fair to say that the real "Golden Age" came for the Wanderers precisely under the Early Soviet regime, at the initiative of which all legal restrictions on the protagonists of the study were lifted.

There are also examples of the reverse exoticization of the Old Believers' experience. These include perceptions of the Old Believers as bearers of a dark religious worldview incompatible with the integration into modern realms. This position is held, for example, by Leonid Heretz in his work on the Late Imperial religiosity and the "traditional culture of the Russian peasantry"⁵⁴. This traditional culture (as the quintessence of which the ideology of the Old Faith is considered⁵⁵), according to Heretz's logic, turned out to be too pessimistic, eschatological and inert, thus preventing any attempts at Russian modernization "from below".

To begin with, the author analyzes the worldview of the 20th century Old Believers on the basis of the writings of the Fathers of the Schism of the mid-17th century and applies Western Christian categories to the events and processes of Russian church history, describing the sides of the Schism in terms of "reformation"/"counter-reformation". Attempts to portray the Old Believers as archaic traditionalists⁵⁶ look especially problematic, not only for the 20th century, but also for the earlier history of the Old Faith⁵⁷. And most importantly, as is shown in this work, at least the Old Believers of the early 20th century not only did not perceive modernization as the apocalypse, but on the contrary, did their best to march with it and put it to their service, and at certain stages were its pioneers.

⁵³ Best expressed in Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia*; see also Chapter 4. "The beginning of the 20th century. The Golden Decade" in E. M. Yukhimenko, *Starobryadcheskii tsentr za Rogozhskoi zastavoiu*, 2-e izd. (M.: YaSK Rukopisnye pamiatniki Drevnei Rusi, 2012), 143-184; also "the watershed of 1917" is considered in Kerov, *"Se chelovek i delo ego..."*, 50.

⁵⁴ L. Heretz, *Russia on the eve of modernity: popular religion and traditional culture under the last tsars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 45, 53, 56.

⁵⁷ On the Old Belief as a space that provides conditions for a greater (compared to the synodal space) realization of the female agency see (Paert, *Old Believers: Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia*; J. Bushnell, *Russian Peasant Women Who Refused to Marry: Spasovite Old Believers in the 18th-19th Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017). On the innovations of the Old Believers' literary tradition see A. M. Panchenko, "Avvakum kak novator", *Russkaya literatura*, no. 4 (1982): 142-152; V.L. Komarovich and D.S. Likhachev, "Protopop Avvakum", *Istoriia russkoi literatury*, Vol. 2, Part 2: Literatura 1590-1690 gg. (1948): 302-313.

Here one should also mention the works of Aleksandr Etkind. Although Etkind explores the external perceptions of religious dissidents rather than analyzes their actual ideologies, practices, and modes of living, at times the author goes on to describe the dissenters and sectarians themselves. At such moments (for example, by expressing the controversial idea of the kinship between the Wanderers and the Whips (Khlysty⁵⁸) Aleksander Etkind seems to adopt the optics of his protagonists: the Narodniks, Bolsheviks, and Silver Age writers, who romanticized the dissidents and sometimes failed to adequately describe their ideologies and practices.

Etkind's very idea that for the Late Imperial public - the poets, novelists and revolutionaries - the sectarians became the embodiment of the collective Other seems to be a generalization. As is shown in this dissertation, the external perception of the Wanderers was never static; it was constantly transforming as the Empire had been modernizing and nationalizing, and then following the fluctuations of the Early Soviet policies. Moreover, these transformations were multidirectional: from the construction of the legend of ritual murders allegedly common among the Wanderers to the attempts of officials and journalists to normalize the Wanderers, proving their loyalty to the monarchy and the absence of fierce rituals in their milieu. And yet, as the Empire has been nationalizing, the Wanderers have been increasingly perceived not as the Other, but as a deviant group, but nevertheless a part of the national domain. In other words, journalists and public politicians increasingly came to understand the Wanderers primarily as ethnic Russians and only secondarily as radical religious dissidents.

Here it is also worth mentioning the work by Boris Mironov which is not about the Old Believers at all, but which nevertheless operates with a similar exoticizing optics aimed at contrasting "popular traditionalism" and "modernization". I do not share the pessimistic view of Boris Mironov on the Russian peasantry and the lower urban classes of the late 19th century as a stronghold of anti-modern traditionalism nourished by Orthodox Christianity⁵⁹. Although Mironov's work on social history and statistics of the Russian Empire is a

⁵⁸ Etkind, *Khlyst*, 5.

⁵⁹ B. N. Mironov, *Sotsialnaya istoriya Rossii perioda imperii (18—nachalo 20 v.)*, Vol. 1 (SPb.: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003), 337-345. This view of Russian Orthodoxy as a particular religious and cultural system, characterized by the detachment of its adherents from worldly concerns in the passive expectation of an afterlife reward for the hardships of earthly life, sounds a lot like Richard Pipes' famous prejudiced vision of the role of Orthodoxy in Russian history. To give a sense of what this is all about, it is fair to quote the following Pipes's passage: "The basic doctrinal element in Orthodoxy is the creed of resignation. Orthodoxy considers earthly existence an abomination, and prefers retirement to involvement. It has always been keenly receptive to currents emanating from the orient which preached withdrawal from life, including eremitic and hesychast doctrines striving for total dissociation from earthly reality... Among Russian peasants in that age of rationalism there spread sectarian movements of an extreme irrational type such as western Europe had not seen since the Reformation". (R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1974), 221-222). For a critique of this view, see famous G. L. Freeze, "Handmaiden of the state? The Church in Imperial Russia reconsidered.", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, no. 36.1 (1985): 82-102.

monumental and very important, I do believe that there are things that cannot be measured quantitatively and are alien to statistical causal explanations. It is shown that the radically Orthodox, semi-peasant, semi-urban milieu of the Wanderers was capable of forming remarkably energetic and enterprising people, for whose activity religion sometimes was more an aid than a hindrance.

It is also necessary to refer to “The Old Faith and the Russian Land” by Douglas Rogers (2010), which dwells on how the Old Believers Pomortsy, who inhabited several villages around the town of Sepych on the Upper Kama, developed a particular ethical regime enabling them to adapt to the changing world around them in the 19th as well as in the 21st century⁶⁰. This ethical regime represent a clear division of secular and spiritual responsibilities between different generations of Pomortsy. According to Rogers, older Pomortsy lead an almost monastic life, distancing themselves from all worldly things, while the younger ones live a secular life, getting involved in various external social processes until they reach an elderly age and join the ranks of the elders. In many ways, what Rogers describes does rhyme with what this research seeks to address. Both the Wanderers and the Pomortsy are the priestless Old Believers, both representing a kind of textual community, united by a common understanding of a particular corpus of theological texts⁶¹. Both the Wanderers and the Pomortsy have experienced several painful schisms throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. As is shown, the Wanderers also adapted a peculiar idea of dividing areas of responsibility into spiritual (world-renouncers) and worldly (benefactors) (just not along generational lines). Both the Pomortsy of Sepych and the Wanderers share many ideological and practical nuances common to the world of the Old Faith, from resolving major issues in

⁶⁰ Rogers, *The Old Faith*.

⁶¹ Rogers, *The Old Faith*, 77. The analytical concept of "textual communities" was originally developed by historian Brian Stock to study medieval heterodox Christian movements. B. Stock, *The implications of literacy: Written language and models of interpretation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983). The idea that Old Believers' groups can be productively examined as textual communities has been widespread among researchers of the Old Faith for a relatively long time although the very approach to the application of this concept has been the subject of debate. It seems that the first to use this analytical category to study the Old Faith was Robert Crummey who studied the first priestless communities of the 17th century. R. O. Crummey, “Old Belief as Popular Religion: New Approaches”, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 52, no. 4 (1993): 700-712. Later on, Aleksandr L'vov in his work on Russian subbotniks and Ekaterina Romanova in her work on Old Believers' self-immolations pointed out the imperfections of Crummey's approach to the use of the concept. (A. L. L'vov, *Prostonarodnoe dvizhenie iudeistvuiushchikh v Rossii 18-20 vekov: metodologicheskie aspekty etnograficheskogo izucheniia* (SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2007), 38; E. Romanova, *Massovye samosozhzheniia starobryadtsev Rossii v 16-19 vekakh* (SPb.: Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2012), 48-49). Briefly, the disagreement between them was that Crummey placed the responsibility for maintaining and interpreting the textual canon on the educated elite within the community, while L'vov and Romanova insisted on a common understanding of texts within communities regardless of the elitist or non-elitist position of each community member. As will be shown below, it is fair to apply to the Wanderers both the concept of "textual community" (in L'vov and Romanova's understanding) and Rogers' concept of a "moral community", i.e., a community of people united by a common system of ethical obligations. However, as the case of Wanderers reveals, their strategies for inclusion in wider processes cannot be explained exclusively by their shared collective understanding of certain texts or by a system of ethical commitments. (Rogers, *The Old Faith*, 17).

polemical councils to the idea of separation from the world as the only way to salvation. In addition, some toponyms found in Rogers's work - Vereshchagino, Okhansk and Sepych itself - also appear on the pages of this research as locations of the Wanderers' activity.

However, for all these similarities, there are also significant differences between the Pomortsy of Sepych and the Wanderers. One of such disparities is the fundamentally different approaches of the two communities to the relationship with the geographical space. Localized on a relatively small territory of the upper Kama River, the Pomortsy contrast sharply with the profoundly fluid Wanderers. Although, as is seen, the Wanderer doctrine did not prescribe obligatory geographical movements, in reality my protagonists travelled great distances, finding themselves in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kazan'. Their fluidity, in contrast to the sedentariness of the Pomortsy of Sepych, seems to have influenced their social outlook; they were adept at navigating a cycle of social transformation and quickly grasped the ideological swings of political regimes in search of social niches suitable for themselves. Furthermore, unlike the rural Pomortsy, the Wanderers cannot be fully described as either peasants or city dwellers. Although some of them lived in large cities, in reality they always found themselves on the border between urban and rural areas, often crossing this border many times in the course of their lives for long periods. The subjects in question felt equally equipped for life in a metropolis and in a remote province. It seems that their inquiring eyes were simultaneously directed towards both the city and the countryside in search of opportunities to find their place and establish themselves there. This mobility, along with a broad intellectual outlook⁶², seems to have had a marked influence on both the style and etiquette of their interaction not only with the world around them (they did it skillfully), but also in their interactions with each other. In particular, this is reflected in the bureaucratic formalism of the Wanderers. Addressing the persons by their patronymic name, a recognizable trait of communication among Russian villagers, common in the texts of the Pomortsy of Sepych⁶³, is completely unimaginable among the Wanderers. Even bitter enemies addressed each other by their full names in correspondence or in polemical texts.

But the main thing that distinguishes the protagonists of this study from Rogers's Old Believers is the strategies of exercising agency in their interactions with the world around them. The difference is rooted in the same relationship between the fluid dynamics of the Wanderers and the localized statics of the Rogers's Pomortsy. While transformations of the world around them were literally falling on the heads of the villagers of the Upper Kama,

⁶² As is seen, the Wanderers not only actively read secular literature, but also published books for the secular audience themselves.

⁶³ Rogers, *The Old Faith*, 75.

the Wanderers, despite a plethora of complicating factors, sought and found ways to deploy these transformations in their own service. In other words, the Wanderers were active participants and beneficiaries of these processes, which contrasts sharply with the static adaptation strategies of the Pomortsy, often forced to fit into a social landscape imposed from outside. In some sense, in the case of the Wanderers, their active and dynamic agency, therefore, indicated a limit to the objectifying capacities of political and social processes in the first third of the 20th century to reformat the spaces in which they operated.

To summarize this part, it can be said that the main historiographical task of the research is a comprehensive analysis of an understudied, but eventful, period in the history of the Wanderers. Although individual works have dealt with the activity of the Wanderers in parts of this period or, as Elena Dutchak's work, have examined the Siberian isolationist Wanderers, the history of the Wanderers as an integral part of the communities around them has not, in fact, yet been written. However, writing a history of the Wanderers themselves is only one task of the thesis. In addition, my research is specifically intended to position the Wanderers not only in the context of broader urban and rural communities, but also to include them in the history of the sociopolitical transformations of the first third of the 20th century, using the example of the Wanderers to show the multifaceted nature of these processes.

Sources

The work is based on the "collision" of different categories of the sources. It relies primarily on the theological, biographical, and epistolary documents of the Wanderers themselves. However, to contextualize the research, I also draw on a wide range of external materials, from criminal records and documents of the Imperial and Soviet bureaucracies concerning interactions with the Wanderers to materials from the Late Imperial and Early Soviet press. Documents related to the activities of the Old Believers in the first third of the 20th century can be roughly divided into several categories according to the logic of how they were collected.

Manuscripts and Documents of the Wanderers

Postwar Leningrad, Novosibirsk, and Moscow archaeographers and historians, through numerous expeditions into remote parts of the USSR, managed to collect a large number of theological and liturgical texts, letters, and personal documents of the Wanderers. These documents, written for the needs of the Old Believers themselves, draw a picture of a space separated from the outside world. This domain possesses its own chronology, historiography, language (Church Slavonic combined with Russian in the pre-revolutionary orthography), and its own sense of the historical moment. Of course, in fact the Wanderers

were not separated from the world, and even the very transformation of their theological doctrines reflects the influence of external political and social processes. Thus, such materials do not reflect the Wanderers' reality, but are the key to understanding the idealized view that the Wanderers have of themselves. However, in addition to the factual data on the events analyzed, on the basis of such documents it is possible to discern how the ideology of the Wanderers was transformed, what caused splits and strife within the movement, and how their community was organized in general, from a vernacular point of view. In the framework of this study, I have processed a significant number of such sources collected from the archives of St. Petersburg (BAN, GMIR), Moscow (ORKiR National Library of Moscow State University), and Yaroslavl' (GAYaO).

As we see, in the 1910s the Wanderer community split into two irreconcilable camps. As it happened, years later, even the documents of the two rival communities (letters, minutes of councils, and liturgical and theological manuscripts) ended up in archives in different cities. These materials, which are central to this work, are collected in two manuscript collections: the Kargopol manuscript collection of the Library of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and the Verkhokamsk manuscript collection of the Scientific Library of Moscow State University in Moscow.

Documents from the institutional archives

In this research, the archival document represents a situation when my protagonists interacted with the state. This type of materials includes appeals of the Old Believers to state authorities, letters to officials, and petitions to solve routine problems of the community. By appealing to the state bodies and institutions (local or central), the Wanderers manifested their readiness for an external interaction or cooperation. The majority of such petitions can be found in the archives of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the People's Commissariat of Justice (GARF. F. A 353 and F. 1235) and local administrative archives (GAYaO. F. R-383, F. R-514, R-773 and many others), which were the main recipients of the Wanderers' petitions. Such materials are sometimes presented as contradictory to sources from the previous category. For example, in their own writings the Wanderers tend to see themselves as the stubborn custodians of "the ancient piety" and consistent world-renouncers, while documents of their interaction with the authorities at various levels draw a picture of active individuals capable of adapting to any external political and social conditions. Thus, it is necessary to analyze these two categories of sources together, paying attention to how the gap between ideology and the practices of engagement in the processes of the surrounding world undergoes transformation.

Criminal cases

In addition to moments of interaction (or attempts at interaction), it is impossible to avoid the evidence of confrontations, given that the Wanderers spent a certain part of the period (before 1917 and after 1929) on the edge of illegality. This refers first and foremost to criminal cases against the Wanderers. A criminal case is an excellent way to look at them from the outside to notice and describe what their own authentic sources miss. The Imperial or Soviet investigator, indifferent to theology, focused on a variety of things that seemed obvious to the Old Believers. How did their networks work? How was their everyday life organized? How did they move over vast distances, for example, from Altai to Arkhangel'sk? While trying to answer these questions, the investigator becomes an ethnographer who does not fully understand what he is dealing with, but tries to examine in detail what he observes⁶⁴. The research analyzes the Late Imperial and Early Soviet criminal cases against the Wanderers from Yaroslavl' (GAYaO. F. 346), Vyatka (GASPIKO. F. P-6799), and Perm' (GOPAPO. F. 643/2) collected from the respective regional archives.

Press materials, memoirs and works of fiction

There is a complex of sources devoted to the Wanderers, although only indirectly related to their actual life. These sources include the Imperial bureaucratic documents, which discuss the legal status of the Wanderers, and the materials of the Late Imperial and Soviet press. The specificity of these materials lies in the fact that the actors involved in their formation, with few exceptions, did not have any real encounters with the Wanderers. As mentioned above, under the Old Regime, Wanderers consistently avoided contact with central authorities. Thus, they were deprived of the opportunity to directly influence the development of their legal status. The imperial administrative authorities were forced to rely mainly on the Synodal expertise and newspaper articles in discussing the activities of the Wanderers. Synodal missionaries, with few exceptions, tended to describe the Wanderers at the request of the administrative authorities as a fanatic and politically subversive community, listing in great detail the gruesome rituals and religious practices allegedly carried out by the Wanderers. Late imperial journalists also succeeded in constructing an image of "the obscure sect". In the 1910s (in the shadow of the Beilis affair), newspapers were gripped by a wave of stories about ritual murders allegedly carried out by the Wanderers. This synodal-tabloid narrative about "the Wanderers-fanatics" was

⁶⁴ Similar optics are analyzed in (C. Ginzburg, *Clues, myths, and the historical method* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1989), 156-164). On criminal ethnography see (K. Verdery, *Secrets and truths: ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014); on the archives of the Soviet antireligious institutions and the value that the materials they contain may have, see (S. Luehrmann, *Religion in secular archives: Soviet atheism and historical knowledge* (New York: Oxford History and Archives, 2015).

successfully adapted and picked up by the Soviet anti-religious press, which supplemented accusations of frightening rituals with accusations of being the kulaks and of profiteering. Certainly, the data contained in such sources must be viewed with caution. With few exceptions, each of the sources reveal the author's insufficient knowledge of the actual way of life of the Wanderers. Nevertheless, this category of sources is particularly valuable for this research because it represents the pure experience of constructing the external image of the Wanderers and enables the reconstruction of the discursive context faced by Wanderers in the course of engaging in the broader domains and processes.

Chronological framework

Scholars focusing on the history of Old Believers in the 20th century tend to agree that the transformations of the political regimes of 1917 are a kind of watershed, fragmenting the Old Believers' history into two unequal periods. As the former, it is usually accepted to consider the period from 1905 to 1917, portrayed as the "Golden Age" of Old Believers. The concept of the "Golden Age" implies an unprecedented flowering of religious, cultural and economic life of Old Believers, following the publication of the Edict "On strengthening the principles of religious tolerance" (1905), which actually removed the last obstacles to the full integration of Old Believers. Respectively, the October Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent radical transformation of political regimes, following the logic of the concept, is described in apocalyptic colors, as foreshadowing the coming era of anti-religious persecution and drastic restrictions on the economic and religious life of the Old Believers. Thus, these two periods appear to researchers quite different from each other and connect together only in long *durée* works on the history of Old Believers⁶⁵.

The materials that form the basis of this study allow us to take a new look at such a periodization by questioning the "1917 rupture," as well as the concepts of the "Golden Age" and the time of anti-religious persecution that followed it. The concept of the "Golden Age" can hardly be applied to the history of the protagonists of this research, inasmuch as they continued to live in a semi-legal regime even after 1905. Moreover, the Wanderers were fully emancipated only with the issuance of the decree "On the Separation of Church and State" (1918). Thus, in the first decade of the Soviet regime, the Wanderers obtained the possibility of a fully open existence for the first time, which many of them successfully took advantage of. In addition, one of the hypotheses of this research is that the patterns which were used to build strategies for integrating the Wanderers into the Soviet social space were established during the first decade of the 20th century, when a part of the Wanderers first

⁶⁵ For instance, works by Elena Dutchak and Douglas Rogers.

tried to openly interact with what they considered "external" space. Thus, it turns out that a chronology periodized in the format "1905 - 1917" vs "1917 - 1937" is hardly suitable for describing the activity of Wanderers in this period.

The choice of the early 20th century (with no reference to 1905) as the lower chronological boundary of the study seems expedient, since it was during this period that active debates about the possibility of participation in economic activity began among the Wanderers, which is a kind of prologue to the subsequent events described in the dissertation.

Setting a higher chronological boundary for the study is somewhat more problematic. At the end of the 1920s, the growing hostility of the authorities toward sectarians, which in the Soviet religious taxonomy included the Wanderers, as well as the launch of collectivization, which homogenized the economic agricultural landscape, practically deprived the active part of the Wanderers of the possibility of legal existence. The community that grouped around the Danilov mill, to which a significant part of the study is devoted, had gone underground by 1930. However, it is at this moment that a part of the Wanderers, who had avoided contact with the state in the 1920s, start trying to interact with it. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1930s it was impossible to be both a Wanderer and a Soviet citizen. Believers had to choose between living in hiding in constant fear of repression or breaking with their religious past and finally integrating into the Soviet social domain. This moment of elimination of the possibility of dual (religious and civil) loyalties, which came about by the mid-1930s, is the higher chronological boundary of the study. Thus, the chronological frame is chosen so as to trace the history of the Wanderers from the emergence of the idea of the possibility of coexistence with the outside world in the early 1900s to the impossibility of such coexistence in roughly the mid-1930s.

Geographic framework

Since my focus is on specific trajectories and social transformations, in a spatial sense the research follows the biographies of my protagonists. The traces of my protagonists lead along their routes from Danilov to Arkhangel'sk, from Yaroslavl' to Vyatka, from the Komi region to Perm. In some sense, the movement of the protagonists of this work proves to be an obstacle to delineating the spatial boundaries of the study. Of course, regional specificity played an enormous role in the transformation of the Imperial regimes in the first third of the 20th century. However, this study focuses on individuals whose relationship with geographical space is arranged differently from many other communities. Thus, since the study deals with representatives of a religious movement based on the ideology of spiritual and practical nomadism, I deliberately leave my research geographically unrooted.

Here it should also be said that the ethnic composition of the Wanderers was (with the exception of tiny communities of Komi Wanderers)⁶⁶ extremely homogeneous. Looking at the biographies of the Wanderers, it is almost impossible to find any representatives of other ethnic groups among them. Thus, the study focuses on a community, though not rooted in the usual space of physical geography, but, nevertheless, homogeneous in terms of ethnicity or at least in terms of the Russian language they spoke.

Research design

The work consists of 4 chapters, supplemented by an introduction and concluding section.

Chapter 1

The chapter is dedicated to reconstructing the historical context of the events in question. The central idea of this chapter is to prove that by the beginning of the twentieth century the Wanderers were maintaining a relatively comfortable mode of existence. If the heroes of the study would attempt to change this mode, they would inevitably encounter a number of countervailing factors: the need for a drastic ideological transformation and the necessity of a full contact with the outside world, which looked upon the Wanderers if not with hostility, then at least with mistrust.

The first section of the chapter is devoted to the positioning of the Wanderer movement in the coordinate system of the Old Faith and the Eastern Christianity in general. The second paragraph is devoted to an overview of the history of the Wanderers' movement from its origins in the late 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century. The review will demonstrate how the ideology of the Wanderers changed, what challenges the group faced, and how these people dealt with the challenges. In the course of this part, important aspects of the Wanderers' worldview will also be analyzed. The third paragraph deals with the history of the external perception of the Wanderers from the moment of their "discovery" in 1850 to the beginning of the 20th century. This paragraph analyzes the semi-legal status of Wanderers, the evolution of debates about their juridical status, and the external discourses on Wanderers: Synodal, academic, and public. In addition, the actual mode of existence of the Wanderers, which differed significantly from their self-declared underground existence, is described and analysed in detail.

⁶⁶ E. V. Prokuratova, *Staroobryadcheskaia kultura Komi kraia 18-20 vekov: knigopisnaia deiatel'nost' i literaturnoe tvorchestvo udorskikh staroverov* (SPb: Institut russkoi literatury (Pushkinskii dom), 2010). On the prominent mentor of the Wanderers, Prokhor Filippovich Ilyin-Vinogradov, who was of Komi-Zyrian origins, see: E.V. Prokuratova, "Strannicheskoe soglasie na Udore v kontse 19 – nachale 20 vv.: nastavnik P.F.Ilin" in *Khristianstvo i Sever. Po materialam 6 Kargopol'skoi nauchnoi konferentsii* (M., 2002), 154–165.

Chapter 2

The chapter is devoted to the history of economic activity and adaptation of the Wanderers to the political and social transformations that occurred in the first third of the 20th century. It analyses the dynamics of the Wanderers' fully-fledged engagement with the processes of modernization as well as the development of new strategies of interaction with the surrounding world and the changing political regimes. The biographical trajectory of the prominent 20th-century Wanderer theologian and mentor Aleksandr Vasilievich (Ryabinin) (185?-1938) is used as a relevant object of analysis.

Ryabinin was born in the 1850s in the Urals, where he was also baptized as a Wanderer, but that did not prevent him from working as a shopkeeper in Nev'yansk for several more years. In 1880 Aleksander Vasilievich was accused of the ritual murder and condemned to penal servitude, however escaped during the transit to the place of detention and joined the Yaroslavl' Wanderers. Here he made a profound spiritual career and by 1910 had become the leader of the whole community of the Wanderers. Ryabinin initiated and enthusiastically integrated the Wanderers into domains outside the community. Under his leadership in Danilov (Yaroslavl' Province), the Wanderers mastered capitalist production (running a steam mill), founded a religious school, and tried to influence public opinion about themselves by publishing books and writing articles for the broader public. After 1917, the Danilov community under the leadership of Ryabinin continued its economic and spiritual activities, despite the difficult history of relations with the local Soviet authorities. By the end of the 1920s, however, integration was halted, contrary to their aspirations. Collectivization and the radicalization of the Soviet religious policy put an end to the 20-year history of the Wanderers' open existence. Moreover, for the first time (at least since the 1850s), the Wanderers displaced from Soviet space found themselves in the actual, rather than declarative, underground and were forced to continue their spiritual activities in constant fear of being arrested. Ryabinin himself, after the liquidation of his Danilov project and a brief imprisonment, moved to Kazan', where he died in hiding in the late 1930s.

A side topic of the chapter is an analysis of statistical information regarding Wanderers (and, more broadly, Russian religious dissidents) and academic debates on the issue.

Chapter 3

The chapter is devoted to the biography of Ryabinin's younger associate, Khristofor Ivanovich (Zyryanov) (187?-1937), and demonstrates the consequences of the contact of the Wanderers with Russian modernity. Zyryanov, who was born in a village in Perm' and joined the Wanderers at the age of 25, became one of the major preachers and apologists for

Ryabinin's ideas. After 1917 he also participated in the creation of another labor cooperative of the Wanderers, actively interacted with Soviet officials and in solving his daily problems reached the Vice Commissar of Justice of the USSR. However, after the Wanderers went underground, his views on the surrounding Soviet space dramatically transformed.

In the early 1930s in the Murashki area of the Vyatka district of the Nizhnii Novgorod region (the northern part of today's Kirov region) about sixty Wanderers accepted a voluntary death, no longer wanting to live in a "corrupted by the Antichrist" world. The initiator of the wave of poisonings, drownings, and self-immolations was Khristofor Ivanovich, who was arrested in 1936 and sentenced to death a year later. This case of collective suicide can easily be described as an actualization of the traditional Old Believer escapist strategy, religiously motivated self-murder or as a response to the excesses of Soviet religious and agricultural policies, which left no space for Old Believers-peasants to exist by the beginning of the 1930s.

However, as this chapter shows, the Vyatka Wanderers were neither convinced isolationists nor uncompromising dissidents in their relations with the Soviet authorities. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the historical trajectory of a group of people, the final point of which was group suicide. My hypothesis is that this grim practice was not made possible because the Wanderers were radical underground millenarians who decided to take such a move on the eve of the Doomsday. On the contrary, the Vyatka Wanderers decided to take this desperate measure because, after several decades of the intense and open economic activity, they found themselves unable to maintain this unprecedented regime of existence after being squeezed into the underground by Stalin's social and religious policies.

The description of the Vyatka events is inseparably linked to an analysis of the position of women in the community of Wanderers, since the overwhelming majority of those who committed suicide were females. In addition, in this part the particularities of the underground existence of the wanderers and the transformation of their network of communication and assistance are examined.

Chapter 4

This chapter is devoted to the biographical trajectory of Ryabinin's opponent, Maksim Zalesskii. Maksim Ivanovich was born to a Nikonian family and became a Wanderer at the age of 16. At the moment when Ryabinin and his associates became involved in economic activities, Zalesskii took the side of Aleksandr Vasilievich's opponents. Living semi-legally among the Wanderers who found the capitalist activities of their co-religionists unacceptable for the next 20 years, Zalesskii even made a profound spiritual career. However, in 1931, at a time when the Wanderers' community was forced to

go underground, Zalesskii himself opened up to the outside world to become an agent of the OGPU. In the following years, Zalesskii engaged in religious expertise for the Arkhangel'sk law enforcement agencies, pursued a civilian career, and broke with the Wanderer community. This part of the study analyzes why Zalesskii chose this particular moment for engaging in external processes rather than opening himself up to the world along with Ryabinin in the 1910s, and what this choice can tell us about the differences and nature of the modernization and social transformations that unfolded in the Russian Empire and the Soviet state in the 1910s and early 1930s.

Conclusions put to the defense

1. Contrary to their own declarations of consistent isolationism, by the early 20th century the Wanderers were significantly integrated into broader social communities and existed in a quite comfortable mode, an attempt to change which would have led to confrontations with a multitude of opposing factors.
2. As the Russian Empire nationalized and modernized, a gradual discursive normalization of the Wanderers proceeded. However, this process was never completed, thus affecting the legal position of the Wanderers.
3. Prior to 1918 the Wanderers existed in a legal "gray zone," in the absence of a clearly defined legislative ban on their doctrine and largely due to their own reluctance to legalize their communities.
4. The Wanderers entered the legal realm only in 1918, along with Soviet religious emancipation.
5. Despite conflicts with local authorities, the 1920s marked a period of fully open existence for some of the Wanderers for the first time in their history.
6. With the onset of Stalin's Cultural Revolution, the Wanderers found themselves in a situation of literal religious underground for the first time since at least the 1850s.
7. The social structure, theology, and religious and secular practices of the Wanderers changed radically as a result of their involvement in the broad social and political processes that unfolded in the Late Empire and the Early Soviet State.
8. The complex and florid biographical trajectories of the Wanderers are a reflection of external social and political processes associated with different and heterogeneous emanations of Russian Modernity (Late Imperial, Early Soviet, Stalinist).
9. Wanderers responded so actively to the opportunities and social niches that opened up as the imperial space transformed, because they were not separated from the changing world around them, rather they were an integral part of it.

Information about the organization in which the research was carried out and about the scientific supervisor

The dissertation was completed at the Department of History of the St. Petersburg School of Arts and Humanities at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education National Research University Higher School of Economics in cooperation with University of Turin (Italy). Academic Supervisors – candidate of science in cultural studies, Professor of the Department of Sociology of the St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Asian studies at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education National Research University Higher School of Economics Jeanne Kormina; PhD (History), professor of the Department of Historical studies at the University of Turin (Italy) Alberto Masoero.

The list of published papers on the topic of the dissertation: Publications in journals included in the Higher School of Economics' list of high-level journals, and in journals indexed in the Scopus, Web of Science databases:

Kuziner I. E. Millenaristy, kapitalisty, kooperatory: pozdneimperskii i rannesovetskii opyt staroobriadcev-strannikov //Ab Imperio. – 2021. – T. 2021. – №. 2. – P. 25-59.

Kuziner I. E. Krasnaia smert Kabankina: staroobriadtsy-stranniki i russkoe ritualnoe ubiistvo v pozdneimperskoi Rossii //Antropologicheskii forum. – 2021. – №. 49. – P. 60-87.

Kuziner I. E. «My teper pered soboi vidim dve tserkvi». Perekhody v staroobriadchestvo Belokrinitckogo soglasiia i osobennosti multipravoslavnogo religioznogo landshafta posle 1905 goda //Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov v Rossii i za rubezhom. – 2020. – T. 38. – №. 2. – P. 345-376.