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FACING THE OLD BELIEVERS. THE EXPERIENCE OF AUSTRIAN AND PRUSSIAN OFFICIALS IN BUKOVINA AND NEUOSTPREUSSEN*

Abstract

This paper discusses the interactions and confrontations of the Austrian and Prussian officials with the religious community of the Russian Old Believers. They took place in two European regions: Bukovina (nowadays divided between Romania and Ukraine) and Neuostpreussen (nowadays divided between Poland and Lithuania) beginning at the end of the eighteenth century. The author discusses the officials' associations and misunderstandings regarding the Old Believers. The authorities could not easily distinguish the Old Believers from the Orthodox Christians and had problems recognising their language. In many cases, improper data resulted in failed actions. There was a constant tension between the positive assessment of the Old Believers' diligence and their refusal to fulfil the requirements of the state, like an oath-taking, military service, metrical registration, or inns' building. The consequent resistance of the communities was often stronger than the administrative enforcement, thus revealing the limits of the modern enlightened bureaucracy in practice in the countryside.

Keywords: Old Believers, Bukovina, Neuostpreussen, Austria, Prussia, Enlightenment

I INTRODUCTION

Social interactions have long been the central sphere of interest in the humanities. It is worth noting here that the more distant from each other the participants are, the more interesting are their interactions. This certainly applies to the topics analysed by historians. When writing about past societies, we try to trace various interactions that occurred between

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people of different cultural backgrounds and experiences. Nowadays, a prominent example of studying such interactions is provided by post-colonial studies. However, staying in the Old World, we can still examine plenty of curious relations between the *governing* and the *governed*.¹

In this article, the *governing* were the enlightened officials of the modern German states, namely Austria and Prussia, and the *governed* – the Russian religious community of Old Believers. Both groups confronted each other beginning at the end of the eighteenth century in two European regions: Bukovina (nowadays divided between Romania and Ukraine); and Neuostpreussen (nowadays divided between Poland and Lithuania). The story of Austrian and Prussian officials' encounter with the Old Believers offers an excellent opportunity to compare similar problems, which took place in the same period in two places far apart from each other. Basing this study on the Austrian and Prussian documentation, an attempt is made first to reconstruct the events, and then to analyse the misunderstandings and misconceptions discovered in the process in a broader historical context.

The main issue here is the degree of success the modern monarchies attained in imposing their regulations on such a specific group of subjects as the Old Believers. Did the states fail and, if so, why? What did the officials' encounter with the Old Believers look like in the Austrian and Prussian cases? What were the similarities and differences? How and to what extent did the authorities recognise with whom they were dealing? What associations did these meetings create in their minds, and what mistakes did they make as a result? Although it is much more difficult, I also try to determine why some aspects of governing – such as oath-taking, inns, or separation of the settlements – mattered so much to the Old Believers in Bukovina and Neuostpreussen.

The central focus of the article is on examining actions and actors, as well as their way of thinking. This case study leads to more general

¹ In this expression I quote the title of an inspiring book by Antoni Mączak, *Rządzący i rządzani. Władza i społeczeństwo w Europie wczesnonowoczesnej* (Warszawa, 1986). For a summary in English, see the following reviews: Adam A. Hetnal, 'Rządzący i rządzani. Władza i społeczeństwo w Europie wczesnonowoczesnej by Antoni Mączak', *Journal of Modern History*, lxi, 2 (1989), 352–4; Robert J.W. Evans, 'Antoni Mączak, "Rządzący i rządzani. Władza i społeczeństwo w Europie wczesnonowoczesnej"', *American Historical Review*, xciii, 4 (1988), 1038–9. A different reference provides a study of a society without government: James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven–London, 2009).

questions, which are discussed in concluding remarks. The analysed issues provide an insight into the long-lasting discussion on the essence of modernity's intercourse with problems of religion and social governance.

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Before we can start to investigate the sources, it is necessary to introduce the arena and the actors briefly. We begin with the province of Bukovina, created in 1775, when the Russian-Turkish war was over, and the Habsburg 'mediating' monarchy annexed the north-western part of Moldavia, already being occupied by the Austrian forces. As an Austrian province, Bukovina was later famous for its peaceful multicultural society. In order to strengthen the economics of the province, the new rulers organised a colonisation action, welcoming settlers of various origins.²

At the same time, the last decades of the eighteenth century marked the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian state, which was partitioned between Russia, Austria and Prussia. In the third partition in 1795 Prussia annexed the borderland of the former Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and established there a new province called Neuostpreussen (New Eastern Prussia). This research focuses on the northern part of this province, later named the Suwałki region (Polish: *Suwalszczyzna*, Lithuanian: *Suwalkija*). The area was underdeveloped, rural, and sparsely populated. Moreover, it had already been multi-ethnic (Poles, Lithuanians, Belarussians, Jews) and multi-religious (various Christian denominations, Jews, and even Muslims), offering

² The literature about Austrian Bukovina is very rich. To introduce the topic, publications from various periods and in different languages can be used, e.g. Raimund F. Kaindl, 'Geschichte der Bukowina', chap. 3: *Bukowina unter der Herrschaft des österreichischen Kaiserhauses (seit 1774)* (Czernowitz, 1898); Emanuel Turczynski, *Geschichte der Bukowina in der Neuzeit. Zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte einer mitteleuropäisch geprägten Landschaft* (Wiesbaden, 1993); Mihai-Ştefan Ceauşu, *Bucovina habsburgică de la anexare la Congresul de la Viena. Iosefinism şi postiosefinism (1774–1815)* (Iaşi, 1998); Stepan S. Kostyshyn (ed.), *Bukovyna. Istorychnyj narys* (Chernivtsi, 1998); Constantin Ungureanu, *Bucovina în perioada stăpânirii austriece (1774–1918). Aspecte etnografice şi confesionale* (Chişinău, 2003); Kurt Scharr, *Die Landschaft Bukowina. Das Werden einer Region an der Peripherie 1774–1918* (Wien-Köln-Weimar, 2010). There is also a multi-volume bibliography of Bukovinian studies: Erich Beck, *Bibliographie zur Kultur und Landeskunde der Bukowina...* (München-Dortmund-Wiesbaden, 1966).

new challenges and experiences for the military and civil servants from 'old' Prussia.³

The community of the Old Believers (Russian: *старообрядцы*) originated in Russia in the second half of the seventeenth century as a result of their resistance to the reforms undertaken in the Russian Orthodox Church by the patriarch Nikon. The opponents considered the changes in liturgy or religious books as harmful to the original and the only true religion. Since Church and state affairs in Russia were strictly connected, the conflict was both religious and political from the very beginning. The tsars ordered severe persecutions against the 'schismatics' (*расколники*), who viewed the Church and state rulers as the servants of the Antichrist. The strongest wave of persecution occurred at the turn of the seventeenth century during the reign of Peter the Great, who was forcing the modernisation and westernisation of Russian society. The Old Believers divided themselves into different factions (*согласие*), following the teachings of certain spiritual leaders. Worth mentioning here among them is Philip, active in the first half of the eighteenth century, from whom the commonly used name 'Philippians' (*Филипповцы*) comes. In general, the central division among the Old Believers was between those who had their own priests and spiritual hierarchy and those without any clergy, i.e. Priestists and Priestless (*поповцы vs беспоповцы*).⁴

The Old Believers searched for possibilities to abandon the reign of the Antichrist. As a result, they fled into the most remote parts of the

³ For more on Neuostpreussen, see Ingeburg C. Bussenius, *Die Preussische Verwaltung in Süd- und Neuostpreussen 1793–1806* (Heidelberg, 1960); Jan Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie pod zaborem pruskim. Prusy Nowowoschodnie (Neuostpreussen) 1795–1806* (Poznań, 1963).

⁴ For books in English, see Robert O. Crummey, *The Old Believers & the World of Antichrist. The Vyg Community & the Russian State 1694–1855* (Madison–London, 1970); Georg B. Michels, *At War with the Church. Religious Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Stanford, 1999); Irina Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760–1850* (Manchester–New York, 2003). Some classic works in Russian are worth mentioning (all available online): [Andrei Zhuravlev], *Polnoe istoricheskoe izvestie o drevnikh strigolnikakh i novykh raskolnikakh, tak nazyvaemykh staroobryadtsakh, sobrannoe iz potaennykh staroobryadcheskikh predany, zapisok i pisem, tserkvi Soshestviia Svyatago Dukha, chto na Bolshoy Okhte, protoereem Andreeem Ioannovym* (St. Peterburg, 1855); Grigorii V. Esipov, *Raskolnichii dela XVIII stoletii* (St. Peterburg, 1861–3); Mikhail I. Lileev, *Iz istorii raskola na Vetke i v Starodubie XVII–XVIII vv.* (Kyiv, 1895); Pavel I. Melnikov, 'Ocherki popovschiny', in *id.*, *Sobranie sochineny*, vii (Moskva, 1976), 191–555.

vast Russian territories, especially Siberia. Others migrated to neighbouring countries: Poland-Lithuania, Sweden, Moldavia, Wallachia, the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire. The latter two cases demonstrate that the Old Believers considered even Muslim-ruled states as better places to live than the territories controlled by the tsars.⁵

This movement coincided with the outflow of serfs, who were trying to avoid their tough feudal burdens in Russia. While the situation of peasants in Poland-Lithuania in the eighteenth century was strenuous as well, in Russia it was much worse. It is quite possible that some fugitives were 'Orthodox' in the official understanding, and that only in their new places of settlement did they accept the religious views of the other escapees, thus becoming Old Believers themselves.⁶

The first evidence of the Old Believers' presence in Lithuania actually comes as early as in the 1670s. In the beginning, they settled in the eastern provinces, close to the Russian border. However, during the eighteenth century, their settlements began appearing further westwards. This move to the west was accelerated in 1772 when Russia annexed easternmost parts of the Polish-Lithuanian State during the first partition. In the 1780s many Old Believers settled in western Lithuania, i.e. in the future Neuostpreussen.⁷ They established several villages in the forests belonging to the royal economy⁸

⁵ Dmitriy V. Sen, *Kazachestvo Dona i Severo-Zapadnogo Kavkaza v otnosheniyaakh s musulmanskimi gosudarstvami Prichernomor'ya (vtoraya polovina XVII – nachalo XVIII v.)* (Rostov-na-Donu, 2009). For an English summary, see the review: Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, 'The Cossacks of the Don and of the North-Western Caucasus in Their Relations with the Muslim States of the Black Sea Region (Second Half of the Seventeenth Century – Beginning of the Eighteenth Century)', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 103 (2011), 174–8.

⁶ Antonina A. Zavarina, 'Iz istorii poselenia starobryadtsev v Latgalii', in *Ateizm i religia (nekotorye problemy ateisticheskogo vospitaniia v latviiskoy SSR)* (Riga, 1969), 153–72; *ead.*, 'Iz istorii formirovaniia russkogo naseleniia v Latvii vo vtoroy polovine XVIII – nachale XIX v.', *Latvijas PSR Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis*, ii (1977), 70–84.

⁷ A reliable outline of the origins and development of the Old Believers community in Poland-Lithuania is provided by Eugeniusz Iwaniec, *Z dziejów starobrzędowców na ziemiach polskich XVII–XX w.* (Warszawa, 1977).

⁸ Economy (Polish: *ekonomia*) was an administrative unit of the estates belonging to the Polish-Lithuanian royal domain. For more on the economies in the eighteenth century, see Edward Stańczak, *Kamera saska za czasów Augusta III* (Warszawa, 1973); Stanisław Kościałkowski, *Antoni Tyzenhauz: podskarbi nadworny litewski*, i–ii (London, 1970).

of Grodno (Belarussian: Гродна),⁹ where the colonisation action was in progress.

The Old Believers in Bukovina are better known as Lipovans. The origin of this name is uncertain. Despite many stories about legendary lime trees (*lipa* in various Slavic languages), it is more likely a shortened form of 'Philippians'.¹⁰ Their history was already described at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1896 Raimund Friedrich Kaindl and Johann Polek, the two primary authors of regional historiography, independently published books on this topic.¹¹ Both historians provided rich appendixes containing various sources, which offer further analytic possibilities, including the governing authorities' concepts of and reactions to the Old Believers.

Contacts in Neustpreussen can be traced thanks to the documentation on swearing oaths of loyalty to the new Prussian government, which is preserved in the Prussian Privy State Archives (Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, GStA PK) in Berlin. These materials have already been mentioned in historiography,¹² but without a more in-depth analysis.

II EVENTS IN NEUSTPREUSSEN

Neustpreussen was a new and artificial entity, created after the 1795 final partition of Poland-Lithuania from the various pre-existing provinces. The seat of its government (*Kammer*) was located in Białystok. Extensive competences were given to the governor, minister Friedrich Leopold von Schrötter,¹³ who was also responsible for the neighbouring

⁹ Here and below, contemporary official place names are provided in brackets if they differ from the historical Polish or German forms.

¹⁰ Johann Polek, *Die Lippowaner in der Bukowina*, 1 (Czernowitz, 1896), 8–9; Zoja Jaroszewicz-Pieresławcew, 'Starobrzędowcy na Bukowinie', in Kazimierz Feleszko (ed.), *Bukowina po stronie dialogu* (Sejny, 1999), 137–8.

¹¹ Raimund F. Kaindl, *Das Entstehen und die Entwicklung der Lippowaner-Colonien in der Bukowina* (Wien, 1896); Johann Polek, *Die Lippowaner in der Bukowina*, 1–2 (Czernowitz, 1896–1898).

¹² Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie pod zaborem pruskim*, 235–6; Iwaniec, *Z dziejów starobrzędowców*, 84.

¹³ For more on Friedrich Leopold von Schrötter (1743–1815), see Gottlieb Krause, 'Schrötter, Friedrich Leopold Freiherr von' in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, xxxii (Leipzig, 1891), 579–82.

provinces of Western and Eastern Prussia (Westpreussen, Ostpreussen). Neuostpreussen was divided into districts (*Kreis*), whose number and borders remained subject to some changes. The Suwałki area first belonged to the district of Wierzbołów (Lithuanian: Virbalis), which in 1797 was divided into three units with seats in Wigry, Kalwaria (Lithuanian: Kalvarija) and Mariampol (Lithuanian: Marijampolė).¹⁴ The chief representative of the royal authority was each district's *Landrat*. The separate offices administered the royal domain, created from the former properties of the dissolved monasteries and the Polish-Lithuanian royal demesne.¹⁵ Thus, the Old Believers' settlements established in the Grodno economy joined the Prussian domain. The government demanded all the subjects of the new province to swear an oath of loyalty. On 11 May 1797, the Białystok governorate reported to Berlin that a group of Orthodox Christians (*Glieder der altgriechischen Gemeinde*) from Głęboki Rów¹⁶ refused to swear an oath, claiming that their religion forbade them to swear oaths at all. The civil servants were surprised since Orthodox monks of the province had already sworn without complaints.¹⁷

On 21 May, Minister von Schrötter stated that this could be simply a misunderstanding. He ordered some Orthodox monks to be sent to Głęboki Rów to convince the people there of the necessity to swear an oath.¹⁸ On 24 May the district authorities from Wierzbołów obliged the problematic community to swear an oath by 14 June.

As a response, the only written statement of the people in question was formulated. Since it was written in German, it is not a direct expression by the Old Believers themselves. They apparently prepared it with the aid of a translator, who could have been one of the local civil servants. There is a possibility that their words were first translated from Russian to Polish, and only then to German. The writing was signed on 6 June in Gremzdy¹⁹ by five representatives: Ivan Grigorov

¹⁴ Wąsicki, *Ziemie polskie pod zaborem pruskim*, 31–8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 176–84.

¹⁶ A village situated 12 km to the north-east of Suwałki. All the distances are measured in a straight line, according to Geoportal: <http://mapy.geoportal.gov.pl>.

¹⁷ Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (hereinafter: GStA PK), I HA, Geheimer Rat, Rep. 7A Neuostpreussen, no. 6, 4.

¹⁸ GStA PK, I HA, Geheimer Rat, Rep. 7A Neuostpreussen, no. 6, 5 = GStA PK, II HA, General Direktorium Neuostpreussen (hereinafter: GDN), no. VI 1041, 1.

¹⁹ Now Głuszyn, a village situated 5 km to the south-east from Krasnopol. On the Topographic Map of the Kingdom of Poland (Mapa topograficzna Królestwa

from Iwaniszki;²⁰ Ivan Davidov from Szuriszki;²¹ Laveiley Matiesov from Leszczewo;²² Larivon Pontufov from Lipina;²³ and Spiridon Simienov from Gremzdy. They asked for permission to not take an oath based on religious tolerance in Prussia. They promised that they would be faithful to the king, respect the law and fulfil their duties in a timely fashion. Later on, they argued that they had been living under the Polish rule for half a century without being forced to swear an oath. Throughout all the past turbulent years they had not involved themselves in any quarrels, living peacefully and working on their farmsteads. And they wished to go on in such fashion.²⁴

The next document, signed by Schrötter on 11 June in Wierzbołów, is the first one that expresses the thought that the people protesting against swearing an oath were not Orthodox, but they belonged to a 'special sect' (*besondere Secte*). The minister obliged the district authorities to clarify whether those people really had not sworn any oaths during the former regime and whether their religion forbade them to swear an oath at all. Further, he expected answers to the following questions: Do they have their own priests? Do they have any religious authorities in Russia? Do they have churches? How many of them are there in the district and in the whole province?²⁵

On 29 June, the governorate reported that in Russia there were many members of the sect, whom both the Uniates (Greek Catholics) and the Orthodox Christians considered schismatics.²⁶ Their number in the Wierzbołów district was unknown. It was assumed that they were quite numerous because they lived in the vicinities of various towns: Filipów, Jeleniewo, Przerośl, Suwałki, Sejny, Wiejsieje (Lithuanian: Veisiejai) and Łoździeje (Lithuanian: Lazdijai). They had two houses of worship (*Bethäuser oder Malennas*); at Klonorejsć²⁷ and

Polskiego, 1839, col. VI, section III, <http://polona.pl/item/3742198/41/>) it is referred to as 'Gremzdy Ruskie czyli Głuszyn'.

²⁰ A village situated 6 km to the east of Przerośl.

²¹ Later Szury, a village situated 6 km to the south-west of Szypliszki and 6 km to the north-east of Jeleniewo.

²² Later Zaleszczewo, a village situated 5 km to the east of Jeleniewo.

²³ A village situated to the north of Szury; no longer in existence.

²⁴ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 2–3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁷ A village situated to the east of Głęboki Rów.

Huta²⁸ and a private house of worship at Iwaniszki. Having no priests, they used to elect from among themselves a spiritual leader, known as 'Nastawnik', who was not subject to any hierarchy.²⁹ The Old Believers refused to show the officials their prayer book. They provided only a copy of a fragment concerning swearing an oath. In this case, it is certain that it was first translated into Polish, and then from Polish to German (*Extract, der aus der altgriechischen Ursprache zuerst ins pohlnische und sodan ins deutsche übersetzt werden*).³⁰ Apparently, there was no possibility of a direct translation. The document provides another interesting piece of information about an attempt to force the Old Believers to swear an oath to the commander of the Polish 1794 uprising, Tadeusz Kościuszko. Then the Old Believers had escaped to the forests or Eastern Prussia. It was stressed that very rarely would they marry people of another denomination. The document concludes that the Old Believers were not to be forced to swear an oath, and that strict observation of them and research about their religion should be implemented.³¹

As an appendix to the document summarised above, two fragments from the prayer book were attached, containing biblical quotations together with commentaries about banning oaths. Quotes were from the Gospel of Matthew and the Letter of James, as follows: "But I tell you – do not swear at all. Not by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by earth, for it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Do not swear even by your head, for you cannot make one hair black or white. Let your words be 'Yes' and 'No'. Anything more than this is of evil origin";³² "But above all my brothers, do not take oaths, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor any other sort of oath. Rather, let your 'yes' be 'yes', and your 'no', 'no', so that you do not fall under judgement".³³ Swearing an oath was thus considered

²⁸ A village situated 5 km to the south-west of Przerośl and 6 km to the north-west of Filipów.

²⁹ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 7v.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8v.

³² Matt. 5:34–7. See text with comments: William F. Albright and Christopher S. Mann (ed.), *Matthew*, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven–London, 2011), 66–7.

³³ James 5:12. See text with comments: Luke T. Johnson (ed.), *The Letter of James. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven–London, 1995), 325–9.

as a major sin and resulted, among other things, in exclusion from the community prayers.³⁴

On 28 July, Minister von Schrötter ordered a thorough investigation into the Old Believers' population and places of inhabitation. Apparently, because of military needs, he was especially interested in the number of men aged between twenty and sixty.³⁵

The first research was carried out by the inspector of the newly established colonies (*Colonie-Inspector*) von Wegner (whose first name remains unknown). His report has not been preserved. The regional authorities considered it as untrustworthy tales (*märchenhaft*). Therefore, the task was given again to the Wigry *Landrat* George Christian von Hippel, whose achievements were described in the report by the Białystok governorate dated 26 January 1799.³⁶ Hippel had to study the history of the sect, its current situation, and the possibilities of 'civilising' it. His report is the most detailed description of Neuostpreussen's Old Believers, and it will be thoroughly analysed further in a separate section of this article below. Here it is necessary to say only that based on Hippel's data, the regional authorities proposed establishing separate communes for the Old Believers and introducing 'improved' education and state control, including metrical registration (births, marriages, and deaths). Schrötter was satisfied with this information and accepted the proposals on 20 November 1802.³⁷

The last record is dated 11 May 1803 and contains the division of the Old Believers' settlements into two official communes, with centres in Głęboki Rów and Pogorzałek,³⁸ where, according to this document, their houses of worship were located. There were sixteen villages ascribed to Głęboki Rów, located within 1–5 miles from the communal centre in the Wigry and Kalwaria districts, and 12 villages ascribed to Pogorzałek, within a distance of 1.5–7 miles, all in the Wigry district.³⁹

The Napoleonic invasion cut off the contacts between the Old Believers and Prussian officials. In 1807 Neuostpreussen ceased to exist, and its territories became a part of the Duchy of Warsaw.

³⁴ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 9–9v.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12–12v.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 13–18v.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20–2.

³⁸ Pogorzelec, a village situated 6 km to the west of Giby.

³⁹ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 23–5.

III HIPPEL'S REPORT

The first studious inquiry about the Old Believers in Neuostpreussen was effected by the Wigry *Landrat* mentioned above and recorded in 1799.⁴⁰ George Christian von Hippel (1766–1813) was a Lutheran, studied law in Königsberg, and worked in Neuostpreussen from 1797 to 1806. He was highly esteemed as a reliable official with valuable knowledge and allegedly trusted by the local people.⁴¹ This latter feature seems to have been of great importance because he managed to get close to the Old Believers and collect some interesting and reliable data from them directly.

Hippel scrupulously provided his sources. He used books of Church history, published by two Lutheran clergy historians from Göttingen, Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1693–1755)⁴² and Johann Rudolf Schlegel (1729–90).⁴³ Data about the Old Believers is included in the last volume written by Schlegel.⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, this was Hippel's primary source, with some fragments inserted literally into his descriptions of the genesis and history of the Old Believers in Russia.

There had to be, however, other sources for Hippel's relations. He provided more details than Schlegel by mentioning Filip Pustowskiat, from whom the name 'Philippians' would originate; noting that the Old Believers and Orthodox Christians each called the other 'schismatic', discussing internal divisions among the Old Believers, and finally, stating that the first emigrants from Russia settled in the Polish-Lithuanian state in 1676 and only in the second half of the eighteenth century in the Grodno royal economy, which was to become a part of the province of Neuostpreussen.⁴⁵

The Old Believers' trust in Hippel is evidenced by the fact that they handed him their prayer book, something they had long refused

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13–18v.

⁴¹ Rolf Straubel, *Biographisches Handbuch der preußischen Verwaltungs- und Justizbeamten 1740–1806/15*, i (Munich, 2009), 423.

⁴² Gernot Wießner, 'Mosheim, Johann Lorenz von', in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, xviii (Berlin, 1997), 210–11.

⁴³ Richard Hoche, 'Schlegel, Johann Rudolf', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, xxxi (Leipzig, 1890), 384–5.

⁴⁴ Johann R. Schlegel, *Johann Lorenz von Mosheim Kirchengeschichte des Neuen Testaments...*, vi (Heilbronn, 1788), 69–72.

⁴⁵ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 13v–14, 16v.

to do. The book was read with the help of the Basilian monks from the Greek Catholic monastery at Supraśl, since they knew the Church Slavonic language in which it was written. The book was a catechism using a question-and-answer formula, with some biblical quotes. It was printed in the royal printing house in Grodno in the year 1796 from the *Creation of the World* (1788), based on the original published in Moscow in 1715 (1627).⁴⁶

Hippel was the first to describe an Old Believers' church (a simple wooden quadrangle building with a thatch roof) and divine service in this region. Priests' functions were given to the members of the community, described as ignorant peasants. A potential spiritual leader only had to possess the ability to read. Hippel himself took part in an Old Believers' service. According to his relation, the prayer began with singing psalms, then reading from the Gospel without any comments and once again singing. He explained that the Old Believers had nothing against the Catholics' or Protestants' presence during the liturgy, excluding only Orthodox Christians.⁴⁷ Obviously, during the prayer, Hippel understood little and then only with the help of an interpreter. He could only assume that he heard psalms (*angeblich Psalmen*). His recounting also describes forms of private devotion, religious customs, and convictions that differentiated the Old Believers from the Orthodox Christians.

An opinion already widespread during that time was that the Old Believers did not know the institution of marriage. Hippel stated that, on the contrary, they considered it inseparable, the same as Catholics and Orthodox Christians. The significant difference was that there was no need for a church ceremony; instead, the only requirement was the blessing of the parents. The gossip that they stole women from each other originated because of the custom of kidnapping girls by bachelors, who would take them until the parents gave their blessing. In the Hippel's opinion, marital fidelity was widespread, more than among the neighbouring Catholics.⁴⁸

Later on, Hippel mentioned that burial places were to be found near almost every settlement. The Old Believers had no church record books and no schools. Nor did they have their own courts, so when

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 14v.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15–15v.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

necessary they were judged by the Polish courts, like all the other Polish-Lithuanian subjects.⁴⁹

The document also contains the numbers of the Old Believers, according to the military data (*Canton-Aufnahme*). In the whole Neuostpreussen, there were supposed to be 333 householders, with 405 sons aged under 16 and 217 sons aged 16–45. Altogether it was supposed that there were about 2,000 people.⁵⁰

Hippel emphasised that the communities described stood out as better in agriculture than their (Polish or Lithuanian) neighbours. Fields were carefully cleared, cultivated, and fertilised; cattle numerous and well-groomed; and the people diligent and entrepreneurial. On the other hand, the Old Believers were considered by both Hippel and inspector Wegner as uneducated, superstitious, primitive, fierce, malignant and stubborn. They were accused of having a tendency to steal.⁵¹

The inquiry carried out by Hippel aroused the interests of both officials and scholars in Prussia. Curiosity concerning this particular 'sect' resulted in articles presenting it to the German reader, published in the Berlin press.⁵² Two of the articles were based on Hippel's relations, and one mentioned him personally.⁵³ The first one, by a certain Rochow⁵⁴ provides a different number of the Old Believers in Neuostpreussen: 955 families, i.e. many more than according to the previously cited sources.⁵⁵ It is worth noting that he called them 'our co-citizens' (*unsre neuostpreußischen Mitbürger*).⁵⁶ The author of the second article, known only as 'S', claimed that the Old Believers had little knowledge about their history and religion.⁵⁷ Somewhat

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16–16v.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 16v.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 16v–17.

⁵² Rochow, 'Einige Nachrichten über die in Neuostpreussen befindlichen Philipponen', *Neue Berlinische Monatsschrift*, 1 (1799), 403–22; [August L.] Schlözer, 'Anmerkungen, die Raskolniken überhaupt und die Russischen Filiponen besonders, betreffend', *Neue Berlinische Monatsschrift*, 2 (1802), 91–113; S., 'Die Philipponen in Neuostpreussen', *Neue Berlinische Monatsschrift*, 10 (1803), 99–115.

⁵³ S., 'Die Philipponen in Neuostpreussen', 101.

⁵⁴ Possibly Friedrich Eberhard Rochow (1734–1805), a notable person of the Prussian Enlightenment; see Binder, 'Rochow, Friedrich Eberhard Freiherr v.', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, xxviii (Leipzig, 1889), 727–34.

⁵⁵ Rochow, 'Einige Nachrichten', 403.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 410.

⁵⁷ S., 'Die Philipponen in Neuostpreussen', 101–2.

different is the publication by the famous historian from Göttingen, August Ludwig von Schlözer,⁵⁸ who wrote mostly about the roots of the Old Believers community, using Russian literature on the topic and placing it in the broader context of religious and political history.⁵⁹

IV EVENTS IN BUKOVINA

Like Neuostpreussen, Bukovina was a new entity arising from international politics – a strip of land cut off from its historical state context. At the beginning of the Austrian rule the new territory was governed by military administration, headed by generals Gabriel von Splény (1775–8) and then Karl von Enzenberg (1778–86).⁶⁰ They were directly subordinated to the Aulic War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*) in Vienna, whose president at that time was Count Andreas Hadik, one of the closest collaborators of Emperors Maria Theresia and Joseph II.⁶¹ In 1786, Joseph II decided to incorporate Bukovina into the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria (territories annexed by Austria in 1772 through the first partition of Poland-Lithuania). Until 1848 Bukovina remained a district (*Kreis*) of this province, with a seat in Czernowitz (Ukrainian: Чернівці).⁶²

The Old Believers had been living in Bukovina already before its annexation to the Habsburg Monarchy. The first known settlements were established in the estates of the Orthodox monasteries. These were Lipoweny or Mitoka Dragomirna (Romanian: Lipoveni), belonging to the monastery of Dragomirna, and Klimoutz (Romanian: Climăuți) in the property of the Putna monastery. It is difficult to determine whether the elders of Dragomirna and Putna knew what precisely the

⁵⁸ Martin Peters, *Altes Reich und Europa. Der Historiker, Statistiker und Publizist August Ludwig (v.) Schlözer (1735–1809)*, Forschungen zur Geschichte der Neuzeit. Marburger Beiträge, vi (Münster, 2005).

⁵⁹ Schlözer, 'Anmerkungen', 91–113.

⁶⁰ For more on the rule of Gabriel Anton, Baron Splény de Mihály (1734–1818) and Karl Freiherr von Enzenberg (1725–1810) see Kaindl, *Geschichte der Bukowina*, Abschnitt 3, 17–23.

⁶¹ For more on Andreas Hadik von Futak (1711–90), see Constantin von Wurzbach, 'Hadik von Futak, Andreas Graf', in *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, vii (Wien, 1861), 166–8.

⁶² Kaindl, *Geschichte der Bukowina*, chap. 3, 19–23.

religion of the new settlers was. However, it could have been of less importance for them as the monasteries belonged to the Moldavian, not Russian, Orthodox Church, and they simply needed farmers on their estates. Unfortunately for them, the monasteries could not gain any profits from the new settlements since the Austrian government confiscated all their properties in the 1780s. As a result, Lipovans' villages became part of the state-managed Orthodox Religious Fund of Bukovina.⁶³

Lipoweny and Klimoutz were thus established without any involvement of the state. Until 1782 there was no mention at all about the Lipovans in any record of the Austrian administration.⁶⁴ A turning point was the visit of Emperor Joseph II to Bukovina in 1783.⁶⁵ The ruler met some Lipovans in Suczawa (Romanian: Suceava) and was very fond of them. From that moment onward, they could always count on the highest support. Their religious freedom was guaranteed, as well as some fiscal privileges for their new settlements. The emperor ordered the preparation of a broader plan for the establishment of the Lipovans' settlements in the lands confiscated from the monasteries.⁶⁶ Soon further immigrants came to Klimoutz and to a new village next to it, called Fontina Alba (Ukrainian: Біла Криниця).⁶⁷ For a short time, some Old Believers lived in Hliboka (Ukrainian: Глибока). However, the immigration did not reach such a scale as had been planned. There were many obstacles regarding civil or ecclesiastical regulations and relations with the local authorities. In the following decades, the Old Believers in Bukovina established some other settlements as well, but their number in the province would never become significant.

⁶³ Kurt Scharr, *Der griechisch-orientalische Religionsfonds der Bukowina 1783–1949. Kontinuitäten und Brüche einer prägenden Institution des Josephinismus* (Wien–Köln–Weimar, 2020); Vasyl Botushanskyi, 'Pravoslavnyi relihijnyi fond Bukovyny (1786–1918 rr.): social'no-ekonomichnyi aspekt', in *id.*, *Narysy z istoriyi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvy Bukovyny (kinec' XVIII – pochatok XX st.)* (Chernivtsi, 2012), 6–47.

⁶⁴ Kaendl, *Das Entstehen*, 10–11.

⁶⁵ For details of this journey, see Johann Polek, *Joseph's II. Reisen nach Galizien und der Bukowina und ihre Bedeutung für letztere Provinz* (Czernowitz, 1895).

⁶⁶ Kaendl, *Das Entstehen*, 11–15; Polek, *Die Lippowaner*, 1, 4–8.

⁶⁷ For a spatial history of these two settlements, see Kurt Scharr, 'Die Entwicklung des "ländlichen Raumes" am Beispiel der Ansiedlerorte Fontinaalba und Klimoutz', in *Der Franziszeische Kataster im Kronland Bukowina Czernowitzer Kreis (1817–1865). Statistik und Katastralmappen*, ed. by Helmut Rumpler, Kurt Scharr, and Constantin Ungureanu (Wien–Köln–Weimar, 2015), 56–68.

An important difference between the Old Believers in Neuostpreussen and Bukovina was that in the latter province most of them belonged to the faction having priests. Already in the 1780s an Old Believers' monastery was built in Fontina Alba. This was done without any administrative permission and in the same period when Catholic and Orthodox monasteries were being dissolved in all Habsburg territories, so the existence of the monastery in Fontina Alba became a tinderbox for a long time.

V

ASSOCIATIONS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS

The linguistic aspect is highly interesting, in particular as regards the expressions and analogies that were used when writing about the Old Believers. The ideas and actions of the (then) modern administration frequently resembled a comedy of errors, and the similarity between Austrian and Prussian states in this respect may illustrate the point.

The first and most common mistake was to perceive these people as Orthodox Christians, which led to many misunderstandings. For example, in Prussian documents they were many times referred to as 'Altgriechen'; in Austrian as 'Altrussische'.

Emperor Joseph II wrote to count Hadik in 1783 that their religion was 'truly schismatic' (Orthodox): "Their religion is the true schismatic one and the only difference [with the Orthodox Church of Bukovina] is that their services are held in Illyrian, like in Russia, and not in the Wallachian language".⁶⁸ The emperor thus perceived the use of another liturgical language, which he called 'Illyrian' (apparently having reference to Serbo-Croatian) as the only distinction between the people described and the local Orthodox Christians in Moldavia. The connotation with the Church language in Russia was correct; however, calling the Church Slavonic language 'Illyrian' was obviously a mistake, which resulted from a failure to see the difference between the various Slavic languages (although Church Slavonic indeed has Southern Slavic roots). Consequently, the emperor suggested providing

⁶⁸ *Ihre religion ist die wahre schismatische, und will man nur darin einen unterschied finden, dass sie ihren gottesdienst illyrisch wie in Russland und nicht in wallachischer sprache halten wollen.* Polek, *Die Lippowaner*, 1, 25–6 [Annexe 6].

Lipovans with a priest from Slavonia (a region in what is today north-eastern Croatia).⁶⁹

The Prussian administration noticed quite quickly (in June 1797) that the people involved in the oath-swearing quarrel were not Orthodox. Instead, they belonged to a *besondere Secte*.⁷⁰ In contrast, it took the Austrian government a much longer time to perceive the difference. Eight years after the incorporation of Bukovina, Karl von Enzenberg in 1783 still used exactly the same wording as his Prussian colleague, albeit to reject any claim of the people concerned to a special status: *keine besondere secte, sondern die altrussische religion*.⁷¹

Moreover, the data about the Old Believers' religion was highly misleading. Based on some talks, in 1784 Enzenberg could only write that they followed the teachings of the apostle Philip, from whom the name 'Philipowaner' would arise; they did not believe in the Holy Spirit; they would not use weapons or tobacco, and would not eat wild meat and hare; and apparently they believed in the wandering of souls.⁷² In fact, while indeed they rejected the use of weapons and tobacco, the rest was just fiction.

The Old Believers did not clarify their situation to the Austrians either. In their opinion, they were Orthodox, whereas those legitimising Russian Church hierarchy (the 'Orthodox' in its official meaning) were not Orthodox. The Old Believers called their opponents 'Nikonians' (Russian: *Никониане*) from the name of the reformer patriarch Nikon.⁷³

Undoubtedly, the Old Believers spoke Russian. While living in Bukovina and Neuostpreussen, they had to learn how to communicate with their local neighbours. What is interesting, however, is the perception of these languages by the authorities, whose representatives used German as their mother tongue. Joseph II's misconception was described above. Another case comes from a letter written by Enzenberg to Hadik in 1784. The governor wrote that a settlement contract signed between the owner of Hliboka, Thadeus Turkul, and the Lipovans had been prepared in Polish because for them this was

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 26 [Annexe 6].

⁷⁰ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 4v, 7, 13.

⁷¹ Polek, *Die Lippowaner*, 1, 26 [Annexe 9].

⁷² *Ibid.*, 77 [Annexe 79].

⁷³ Iwaniec, *Z dziejów staroobrzędowców*, 32.

the easiest language to understand from among all used in this country (*vor allen denen hierlandes üblichen sprachen*).⁷⁴ Polish was indeed used in the region, although more widely later, when Bukovina became a part of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria. However, it could be expected that the first-choice language would be Ukrainian (or better yet at the time, ‘Ruthenian’). It was the dominant language in the north of Bukovina and much more similar to Russian than Polish. It is possible to assume that the language called Polish, in reality, was Ukrainian or some mixture of the two. On the other hand, though, the family Turkul, living for generations in the Polish-Moldavian borderland had indeed been accustomed to the Polish language.⁷⁵ Since the document has not been preserved, the actual language it was written in has to remain speculation.

Many years later, in an 1817 journey diary of Emperor Francis I, it was stated that the inhabitants of northern Bukovina, up to the Siret river valley, spoke Polish, and further south – Moldavian.⁷⁶ In this case, Moldavian has to be identified with Romanian (a common term for it) and Polish – with Ukrainian, as this was the dominant language in northern Bukovina. Apparently, Austrian politicians could not distinguish the Slavic languages from each other. For them, Ukrainian could be Polish, and Church Slavonic could be Illyrian.

When writing about the Old Believers, some analogies were provided. The most common was a comparison with a Protestant denomination known as Mennonites.⁷⁷ The similarity was first mentioned in a document by the Białystok governorate in 1797.⁷⁸ Indeed many analogies can be found in Hippel’s relation from 1799. He reported that the Old Believers perceived an earthly order as something non-Christian, precisely as did the Mennonites and Anabaptists. The Old Believers’ refusal to enlist in military service was common with Jews as well as with the Mennonites, and other Christian ‘sects’.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Polek, *Die Lippowaner*, 1, 76 [Annexe 79].

⁷⁵ Mariusz W. Kaczka, ‘The Gentry of the Polish-Ottoman Borderlands: The Case of the Moldavian-Polish Family of Turkul/TurkuleŃ’, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 104 (2011), 129–50.

⁷⁶ *Die Reisetagebücher des österreichischen Kaisers Franz I. in die Bukowina (1817 und 1823)*, ed. by Rudolf Wagner (Munich, 1979), 34.

⁷⁷ Peter J. Klassen, *Mennonites in Early Modern Poland & Prussia* (Baltimore, 2009).

⁷⁸ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 7.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

Very similar observations were made later in Bukovina. In 1819, the Galician government from Lviv formulated a request to Vienna, stating that Lipovans should be freed from cattle vaccination, swearing an oath, and military service because of their religious beliefs, as had already been done with the Mennonites.⁸⁰ On the following session of the court chancellery, Lipovans were even equated with the Mennonites and Anabaptists (*Die Lippowaner gehören zur Secte der Mennoniten oder Wiedertäufer*).⁸¹ The response to the request from Lviv thus concerned Mennonites or even, in conclusion, *mennonitischen Lippowaner*.⁸²

In both regions, the sources present a generally favourable opinion about the Old Believers. They are described as good farmers, peaceful, laborious, studious, talented, and firm. They neither cursed nor drank alcohol and very rarely was there any complaint against them.⁸³ Moreover, they made rapid progress in organising their settlements and agriculture.⁸⁴ As has been noted, their most enthusiastic supporter was Emperor Joseph II himself, who called them “one of the best and most laborious kinds of people”.⁸⁵

VI FAILED ACTIONS

Local and state authorities had to manage such useful, yet strange and problematic, groups of subjects. Concepts based on the improper data described above could not be very fruitful. The sources reflect an optimistic attitude, although many state requirements were not implemented for decades. However, it is worth noting that the officials were learning along the way. The need for accurate information resulted in detailed inquiries that gradually improved their knowledge about the Old Believers, their religion, and their beliefs and customs. In the Czernowitz district office, a specialised employee able to communicate in Russian was responsible for contacts with the Lipovans.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Kaindl, *Das Entstehen*, 112 [Annexe 59].

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 112 [Annexe 60].

⁸² *Ibid.*, 113 [Annexe 59].

⁸³ Polek, *Die Lippowaner*, 1, 24 [Annexe 2].

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 75–80 [Annexe 79].

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 29 [Annexe 14]: “...mir als eine der besten und arbeitsamsten gattung menschen bekannt sind”.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 75 [Annexe 79].

The modern administrative approach towards religion was frequently highly critical. The overall positive assessment of the Old Believers was once even enhanced by a statement that those good people could not believe in what they wanted 'before the enlightened world'.⁸⁷

Another reaction common to both Neuostpreussen and Bukovina officials was the conviction that the Old Believers' resistance to the state requirements arose only from mistakes and misunderstandings, and that a thorough explanation of what was sought and why would convince them. The remedy for all the problems would be education.

Prussian officials in Neuostpreussen thought that it could only be because of a mistake that the Old Believers refused to swear an oath to the Prussian king.⁸⁸ The authorities were surprised because the Orthodox monks from the monasteries in Zabłudów, Bielsk and Drohiczyn swore an oath of allegiance without hesitation. The local officials threatened the disobedient subjects that they would be treated as if they had resigned from all the Prussian laws and privileges.⁸⁹ Then an idea originated to send to them some monks from the monasteries mentioned above, as teachers and mediators.⁹⁰ We can assume that the Old Believers would not have welcomed those Orthodox monks warmly.

In Bukovina in 1818, there was an attempt to introduce oath-taking and cattle vaccination. The Czernowitz district office suggested persuasion.⁹¹ Later on, this strategy proved to be totally unsuccessful, and the problematic communities were freed from these duties.⁹² In 1784 the Lipovans' request for a document guaranteeing them religious tolerance was rejected because it was considered unnecessary since all Orthodox Christians (*nichtunirten*) had already been given the privilege of tolerance.⁹³ Another problem was the dependence on the Church

⁸⁷ Polek, *Die Lippowaner*, 1, 24 [Annexe 2]: "Vor eine aufgeklärte welt scheint es seltsam, dass kirchenvorstehers ... einen jeden ungestöhrt bei deme, was er glaubet, belassen".

⁸⁸ GStA PK, I HA, Geheimer Rat, Rep. 7A Neuostpreussen, no. 6, 1, 5.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁰ GStA PK, I HA, Geheimer Rat, Rep. 7A Neuostpreussen, no. 6, 5; GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 1.

⁹¹ Kaindl, *Das Entstehen*, 112 [Annexe 58].

⁹² *Ibid.*, 112–13 [Annexes 59–60].

⁹³ Polek, *Die Lippowaner*, 1, 27 [Annexe 10].

hierarchy. The authorities, always perceiving Lipovans as the faithful of the Orthodox Church, insisted on their subordination to the bishops of Bukovina and did not understand why they so stubbornly refused.⁹⁴ Enzenberg decided to postpone this issue until the Lipovans would understand their error.⁹⁵

A serious perturbation occurred with the implementation of the church record books, registering births, marriages and deaths among the Old Believers, particularly in *Neuostpreussen*. In 1799 the Białystok governorate pointed out that the church record books were obligatory with no exceptions. Once again, the belief in the power of persuasion can be observed: ‘We believe that a reasonable and cautious commissar would fulfil his task easily, when he would mildly show them the reasons and the aim, why these books have to be kept and that it would be only for their own good.’⁹⁶

In fact, behind the optimistic façade lay a more realistic and severe plan: the Old Believers would have legal obstacles with inheritance unless they introduced the church record books.⁹⁷ The obligation to provide them was affirmed by Frederick William III of Prussia in 1802. His writing included a further instruction as to who should keep those books in case no one from the Old Believers’ community would do so. The options included local civil servants, magistrates of towns in proximity, or even, if necessary, Roman Catholic parish priests.⁹⁸ We can only speculate as to how the argument would have progressed further, since Prussian rule in Neuostpreussen ended soon thereafter and its requirements were not fulfilled.

Metrical registration remained a problem for the next rulers of this territory: the Napoleonic Duchy of Warsaw, the autonomous tsar-reigned Kingdom of Poland after the Congress of Vienna, and the Russian administration after the November Uprising of 1830–1. The implementation of record books was fulfilled only in the 1840s and, as it had been proposed already in 1802, these were run by the

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 51 [Annexe 46]; 82 [Annexe 80].

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 51 [Annexe 46]: “...ihren irrthum begreiflich ... zu machen”.

⁹⁶ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 17v–18: “Wir glauben, dass ein vernünftiger und behutsamer Commissarius, wenn er ihnen die Gründe und den Zweck warum diese Bücher geführt werden müssen und dass solches zu ihrem eigenen Besten gereiche mit Glimpf vorstelle, seinen Auftrag mit Glück ausführen werde”.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 21–1v.

town magistrate of Suwałki.⁹⁹ Only in that decade did the obligation to keep record books become a matter of dispute in Bukovina. The situation was exactly the same. The state wanted the Old Believers to register, while they kept on stubbornly refusing.¹⁰⁰

The Old Believers were against any use of weapons; therefore, service in the army was unacceptable for them. This was a severe concern for the modern monarchies, which were trying to introduce standard obligatory military service. In 1797, Białystok reported to Berlin that members of ‘the sect’ had never served in the army, and in the times of the Polish rule they had paid a certain amount of money instead.¹⁰¹ Because their refusal was insurmountable, they were freed from military service, just like the Mennonites or Jews.¹⁰²

In Bukovina, already in 1783, Governor Enzenberg accepted the request concerning freeing Lipovans from military service. He justified it in a practical way, writing that they lacked any talents or tendencies in this direction.¹⁰³ However, throughout the following years, this privilege was not so obvious. The petition for freeing the family of the Fontina Alba village leader, Larion Petrowicz, from military service in 1802 illustrates this point.¹⁰⁴ In 1817, the whole community of Klimoutz asked for the exemption from the military service,¹⁰⁵ and the court chancellery reaffirmed their right in 1819.¹⁰⁶

The problem of inns and the selling of alcohol in Lipovans’ villages was much discussed in Bukovina (this issue was absent in Neuostpreussen). As is known, the Old Believers were forbidden to drink alcohol at all. In one of the first documents concerning Lipovans, from 1783, Enzenberg reported that they wanted no inns in their settlements.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, a contract from 1784 between Lipovans and the owner of Hliboka, Thadeus Turkul, obliged them to buy alcohol only

⁹⁹ Krzysztof Snarski, ‘Wspólnota staroobrzędowców w świetle suwalskich akt stanu cywilnego z lat 1849–1866’, in Michał Głuszkowski and Stefan Grzybowski (eds), *Staroobrzędowcy za granicą* (Toruń, 2010), 57–67.

¹⁰⁰ Kaindl, *Das Entstehen*, 65–7.

¹⁰¹ GStA PK, II HA, GDN, no. VI 1041, 8–8v.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰³ Kaindl, *Das Entstehen*, 89 [Annexe 5].

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 103 [Annexe 40].

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 111 [Annexe 57].

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 112–13 [Annexe 60].

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 89 [Annexe 5].

in an inn in Hliboka.¹⁰⁸ Exactly at the same time, the community of Klimoutz complained to Enzenberg that the Putna monastery (the owner of the village until its confiscation by the state) built an inn there. The governor promised its demolition.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the inn matter remained a constant element of bureaucratic correspondence in the first decade of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁰ It appears in the already-mentioned petition from 1817 as well.¹¹¹ For the authorities, it was difficult to understand that Lipovans really did not want an inn, which obviously caused a loss to the state treasury due to the diminishment of the expected income from the liquor trade. At some point, an official directly cast doubt on the religious reasons for rejecting inns, and commented snidely that some Lipovans could not live without alcohol.¹¹²

Because the Old Believers were perceived as hard-working and industrious farmers, the idea grew that they could be dispersed among the Moldavian peasants, offering them some good examples, so as it was thought about the German colonists in Bukovina. The Lipovans adamantly refused. They wanted to live only in separate villages, as Enzenberg reported with regret already in 1783.¹¹³ They requested a guarantee that they would live without others (and without an inn).¹¹⁴

Living in a Lipovan village was relatively attractive because of the fiscal privileges given by the government. As a result, another concern of the Bukovinian authorities was the 'lipovanization' of the people from other denominations, who were seeking better living conditions and thus coming to the Old Believers settlements.¹¹⁵

The remedy for all the problems, as has been mentioned, was deemed to be education. The documentation from both regions and from many years demonstrates this characteristic way of thinking. The enlightened elites believed that the lower classes did things against 'their own good' only because of ignorance and misunderstanding. The prevailing official optimism repeatedly stated that the opponents would

¹⁰⁸ Polek, *Die Lippowaner*, 1, 74 [Annexe 76].

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 79 [Annexe 79].

¹¹⁰ Kaindl, *Das Entstehen*, 103–11 [Annexes 41–55].

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 111 [Annexe 57].

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 107–8 [Annexe 48].

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 88 [Annexe 4].

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 89 [Annexe 5].

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 76–9.

be convinced, and that progress in the future would be guaranteed, through proper education. This, however, never came about.

VII LIMITS OF THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

Bukovina and Neustpreussen were two contact zones between the eighteenth-century state administration and the ultra-conservative religious group of the Old Believers. In both regions, the contacts had to be very intensive, since the Old Believers lived in state-managed estates. The matters described show the limits of the concepts of the (then) modern enlightened monarchy in practice in the countryside.

The Old Believers were by no means the only religious community that raised concerns and awareness and was examined by the Austrian and Prussian officials of the newly established provinces. Imposing state control over the confessional structures was vital for imposing control over the subjects. Therefore Austria and Prussia introduced many changes with regard to the dominant Churches in Bukovina and Neustpreussen, i.e. Orthodox and Roman Catholic, respectively. In Bukovina, the seat of the Orthodox bishop was moved from Radautz (Romanian: Rădăuți) to Czernowitz, the new capital of the province. Most monasteries were dissolved, and the Orthodox Religious Fund of Bukovina was created from the former bishops' and monasteries' properties. Thus Fund financed the priests' salaries. The system of parish metrical registration was introduced.¹¹⁶ Similarly, in Neustpreussen, a new Catholic diocese was created with a seat in Wigry, the former residence of one of the dissolved monastic communities. The authorities kept tables on the loyalty of the priests and required them to announce official regulations from their pulpits.¹¹⁷ Even more dependent on state support (or its

¹¹⁶ For more on the Orthodox Church in Bukovina, see Mykhailo Chuchko, *“Y v'zyat Boha na pomoshch”: sotsial'no-relihiynny chynnyk v zhytti pravoslavnoho naseleण्या pivnichnykh volostey Moldavs'koho voyevodstva ta avstriys'koyi Bukovyny (epokha pizn'oho seredn'ovichchya ta novoho chasu)* (Chernivtsi, 2008); Botushans'kyj, *Narysy z istoriyi; Ionel-Mugurel Martiniuc*, ‘Practici și repere administrative în Biserica Ortodoxă din Bucovina (1774–1918)’, *Analele Bucovinei*, xxii, 1(44) (2015), 141–63.

¹¹⁷ For more on the Roman Catholic Church in Neustpreussen, see Ryszard Sawicki, *Między ołtarzem a tronami obcych mocarstw. Biskupi diecezji wigierskiej – działalność pastoralna, społeczna i polityczna* (Warszawa, 2018).

deficiencies) were the young and small communities of Catholics in Bukovina and the Protestants in both provinces.¹¹⁸ However, the most severe ‘civilising’ projects concerned the Jews, who were the subjects of obligatory registration, were deprived of running rural inns (and were urged to work in agriculture), forbidden to gather in towns, and even subject to temporal expulsion (from Bukovina).¹¹⁹ Thus, the officials’ attitude towards the Old Believers was representative of much broader tendencies.

The eighteenth century is often referred to as the age of enlightened absolutism, uniting and aligning the unlimited power of the rulers with the wise and progressive ‘enlightened’ world views. Absolute monarchs promoted the modernisation of their realms, implementing various reforms in the areas of administration, education, military issues, religion, culture, etc.¹²⁰ The modern states introduced standardised procedures, aimed at legibility and the simplification of space and society.¹²¹ This was true of both Prussia and the Habsburg Monarchy.¹²²

¹¹⁸ E.g. Erich Labouten, ‘Der evangelische Anteil am deutschen Leben in der Bukowina’, in Fritz Lang (ed.), *Buchenland. Hundertfünfzig Jahre Deutschtum in der Bukowina* (München, 1961), 257–68; Józef Krętosz, *Archidiecezja lwowska obrządku łacińskiego w okresie józefinizmu (1772–1815)* (Katowice, 1996); Jan Bujak, ‘Z dziejów kościoła katolickiego na Bukowinie’, in Kazimierz Feleszko (ed.), *Bukowina po stronie dialogu* (Sejny, 1999), 164–75.

¹¹⁹ For Bukovina, see Johann Polek, *Statistik der Judenthums in der Bukowina* (Wien, 1889); Samuel J. Schulsohn, *Die Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina unter österreichischer Verwaltung 1774–1918. I. Abteilung: Die Vertreibung der Juden aus der Bukowina 1774–1783* (Berlin, 1928); Hugo Gold (ed.), *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina*, i–ii (Tel Aviv, 1958–62). For the Suwałki region: Artur Eisenbach, *Emancypacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich 1785–1870 na tle europejskim* (Warszawa, 1988); Marcin Wodziński, “‘Wilkiem orać’. Polskie projekty kolonizacji rolnej Żydów 1775–1823”, in *Małżeństwo z rozsądku? Żydzi w społeczeństwie dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. by Marcin Wodziński and Anna Michałowska-Mycielska (Wrocław, 2007) 105–29; Artur Markowski, *Między Wschodem a Zachodem: rodzina i gospodarstwo domowe Żydów suwalskich w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku* (Warszawa, 2008).

¹²⁰ For a useful introduction to this vast topic, see *Lexikon zum aufgeklärten Absolutismus in Europa. Herrscher – Denker – Sachbegriffe*, ed. by Helmut Reinalter (Wien–Köln–Weimar, 2005).

¹²¹ This issue has been thoroughly presented by James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven–London, 1998).

¹²² For recent comments on the Habsburg Monarchy, see Franz A.J. Szabo, ‘Camaralism, Josephinism, and Enlightenment: The Dynamic of Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1740–92’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, xlix (2018), 1–14. One may find information on further literature there.

In the sources cited above, there are numerous descriptions of the tendencies toward a stricter control over the whole society, including all of the minorities.

In the European historiography of recent decades, the concept of 'enlightened absolutism' has been questioned. The concept is often considered a myth, coming from the theory of the state and the journalism of the epoch.¹²³ Many scholars have shown that the supposedly 'absolute' power of the rulers was, in fact, limited and mostly declaratory in nature.¹²⁴ The most serious resistance against the reforms introduced by the enlightened despots came from various social classes who sought to protect their traditional laws and customs. The social opposition marked the real boundaries of enlightened absolutism.¹²⁵ The mere issuance of a multitude of edicts by the authorities did not result in their enforcement. Many decrees remained on paper only and were never, or at least only partly, implemented.¹²⁶

In both regions described in this article, the 'rational' progressive thinking of the authorities was confronted with the 'irrational' strong religious beliefs of the Old Believers. However, in reality, the authorities were not so clearly 'rational' in their actions, nor were the dissenters so 'irrational'. It is known that the Prussian *Landrats* were first and foremost noblemen and landowners, not 'rational state-oriented' civil servants. Moreover, the members of the lower classes behaved 'rationally' according to the realities of their everyday life. Their resistance to the reforms resulted not from ignorance, stupidity, or backwardness, but from their efforts to keep on the subsistence level.¹²⁷

At the same time, apart from religious matters both the Austrian and Prussian officials were usually very fond of the Russian settlers' behaviour and laboriousness. It corresponds well with the results of some studies concerning the fate of the Old Believers in Russia.

¹²³ Nicholas Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism. Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy* (London, 1992).

¹²⁴ Ronald G. Asch, 'Absolutismus', in *Lexikon zum aufgeklärten Absolutismus*, 15–21.

¹²⁵ Andreas Gestrich, 'Die Grenzen der aufgeklärten Absolutismus', in Helmut Reinalter and Harm Klueting (eds), *Der Aufgeklärte Absolutismus im europäischen Vergleich* (Wien-Köln-Weimar, 2002), 275–89.

¹²⁶ James Van Horn Melton, 'Absolutism and "Modernity" in Early Modern Central Europe', *German Studies Review*, viii, 3 (1985), 383–98.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 392–5.

A well-known phenomenon is the economic success of many Old Believers, mostly in Russian trade and industry in the nineteenth century. Various scholars have discussed the background of their entrepreneurship, considering their religious ethics and their position as pariahs inside the Russian society predominantly, although, in truth, the factors were many and somewhat more complicated.¹²⁸ Highly illustrative is the case of the Moscow Old Believer communities, which became the centres of the textile industry, with their religious leaders acting as businessmen. The religiously-motivated rule of common property resulted in the accumulation of capital while offering charity for the poor could also mean employing them in the textile factories.¹²⁹ A social aspect is also worth noting, i.e. the contacts and diffusion of professional skills between various religious groups among the Russian entrepreneurs.¹³⁰

Economic success on a small scale was also noticeable among the rural communities of the Old Believers outside Russia. One possible explanation is that only those more courageous and active members would risk fleeing their country.¹³¹ Although this is probably true, it would apply to all the other emigrants as well. Similarly, the approbation of the state officials can be ascribed simply to their appreciation of the progress in the settlement process. Even in the Old Believers' homeland during the reign of Catherine the Great, the need for expanded settlement justified the official acceptance of the 'schismatic' settlers in the Lower Volga region.¹³²

¹²⁸ Andreas E. Buss, *The Russian-Orthodox Tradition and Modernity* (Leiden–Boston, 2003), 59–73. One may find further literature in this work. For recent comments, see Kirill M. Tovbin, Roman Y. Atorin, and Kirill Y. Kozhurin, 'Pravoslavnoe starobryadchestvo kak variant rossiyskoy tsivilizatsii: metodologiya issledovaniy', *Vestnik slavyanskikh kultur*, xlix (2018), 16.

¹²⁹ William L. Blackwell, 'The Old Believers and the Rise of Private Industrial Enterprise in Early Nineteenth-Century Moscow', *Slavic Review*, xxiv, 3 (1965), 407–24.

¹³⁰ Valery V. Kerov, 'Konfessionalnye osnovy delovoy kultury i delovogo povedeniia predprinimatelskikh soobshchestv v Rossii XVIII–XIX vv.', *Vestnik Rossiyskogo universiteta družby narodov*, series: *Istoriia Rossii*, iii (2008), 51–64.

¹³¹ Arnold A. Podmazov, 'Starobryadchestvo v sisteme ekonomicheskogo razvitiia (k voprosu o religioznoy determinirovannosti khozyaystvennoy deyatel'nosti)', in *Russkie v Latvii*, iii: Ilarion I. Ivanov (ed.), *Iz istorii i kultury staroveriia* (Riga, 2003), 173–82.

¹³² Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital. The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia 1762–1804* (Cambridge, 1979), 95.

It is also worth noting here that the ‘enlightened despotism’ of Catherine the Great was pragmatically tolerant toward religious minorities in general. After the first partition of Poland-Lithuania, a Roman Catholic Church hierarchy was established in Russia, with an archbishopric in Mogilev. The ‘schismatic’ Greek Catholic Church was also tolerated. For a short time, even Jews were treated equally with all the other subjects, although their place of inhabitation was soon limited to the Pale of Settlement in the western provinces of the Empire.¹³³ So too for the Old Believers the time of persecutions ended (but only until the reign of Nicholas I), enabling their business development discussed above.¹³⁴ However, this did not result in the return of their fellow worshippers from emigration.

To conclude, contrary to their official optimism and all their favourable opinions of the Old Believers, the Austrian and Prussian authorities could not force them to fulfil the requirements of the state. Some issues were discussed and argued for many years. On the other hand, it should be reiterated that the officials were working to develop their knowledge. Although at the beginning their contacts with the Old Believers consisted of a series of misunderstandings and blunders, they tried to amend this situation. This is best reflected in the story of *Landrat Hippel’s* mission, presented in detail above.

Regardless of the reservations discussed above, the cases described show the limits of the ‘absolute’ power of the ‘enlightened’ authorities. Although state planners usually (and erroneously) pretended to be superior to their subjects,¹³⁵ even a small foreign religious group was able to resist the demands of the modern state bureaucracy. The Old Believers managed to preserve their customs and only very slowly accepted the official demands of the government, using various methods from the rich repertoire of lower classes’ resistance.¹³⁶ Although less numerous and more adjusted to the modern world, the Old Believers still continue to live in scattered communities in the Bukovina and Suwałki regions.

Proofreading James Hartzell

¹³³ John D. Klier, *Russia Gathers her Jews. The Origins of the “Jewish Question” in Russia, 1772–1825* (Dekalb, 1986), 53–80.

¹³⁴ Crummey, *The Old Believers*, 193–218.

¹³⁵ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 323.

¹³⁶ For a broader account of this topic see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven–London, 1985).

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