

Maintaining the Old Rite in Modern Russia: Feodor Permiakov's 'Vypiski' of 1910 in a Historical Context

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The beginning of the twentieth century found the Russian Empire strained politically, socially, economically, and, very soon, militarily. Within that same period, the breakaway Russian Orthodox groups known as *staroobriadtsy*, more commonly referred to as Old Believers (though properly translated as Old Ritualists),¹ likewise found themselves in a period of extreme transition. After breaking away from the Russian Orthodox Church in the mid-seventeenth century over liturgical and ritualistic changes introduced by Patriarch Nikon, the state and Church deemed the Old Believers as *raskol'niki* (or schismatics), creating a centuries long relationship marked by periods of begrudging acceptance to extreme persecution of the Old Rite. However, in attempt to offset the growing political and social discord sparked by Bloody Sunday, Tsar Nicholas II's *Ukaz* "On Beginning the Improvement of Religious Toleration," in April 1905 officially ended oppression against the Old Rite.² For the first time in the movement's history, the Old Rite and its followers of both the *popovtsy* (priestly) and *bespopovtsy* (priestless) branches could freely, and openly, express their faith, in theory.³ As Imperial Russia found itself facing an unknown future in the face of rapid industrialization and social changes, as well as the rise of political extremism, many Old Believer communities found

¹ It is important to note that while more commonly referred to in English as "Old Believers" the Russian term *staroobriadtsy* is more properly translated as "Old Ritualists." This is an important distinction in understanding the origins and history of the *staroobriadtsy* movement as those who recognized themselves as *staroobriadtsy* maintained dogmatic orthodoxy with the Russian Orthodox Church but objected to changes in rituals and the introduction of spellings in liturgical books. Therefore, throughout this dissertation I use the more popular term "Old Believers" and the proper term "Old Ritualists" interchangeably and similarly refer to the general movement as either the "Old Belief" or "Old Rite."

² For greater detail on the Revolution of 1905, see Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905* Vol. 1 and 2, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

³ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii* Ser. III, Vol. 25 (Saint Petersburg, 1916), 257 – 58. Hereafter *PSZ*.

themselves with their first opportunity to define themselves and their religious beliefs in response to the changes around them. Particularly, Old Rite religious centers such as the *bespopovtsy* Preobrazhenskoe Cemetery and *popovtsy* Rogozhskoe Cemetery in Moscow saw the events around 1905 as a means to justify their faith not only to their own co-religionists, but also to greater Russian society.

Legally for the first time, the Old Believers could freely discuss and present their understanding of their Orthodox faith in the Russian public sphere. Things such as religious services, construction projects, philanthropy, industry and publishing, then, became major assets to the Old Rite in the immediate years following the onset of religious toleration. This paper will explain how the period of toleration became a critical period in the Old Believer attempts to understand, define, and present their faith to larger audiences through published media in Late Imperial Russia. The purpose of this paper, then, is to put toleration era Old Ritualist publishing into a historical context—specifically that such publications often focused on the goal of providing a more unified definition and identity for the Old Rite for both its followers and the greater Russian public sphere. Furthermore, this paper explains that the increased effort by the Old Rite Press and individuals, such as the Riabushinskii brothers, to define the Old Rite religiously, ideologically, culturally, and politically to reflect the goals and ideals of many Old Believer communities, particularly in Moscow, as the defenders of true Russian Orthodoxy and the ideals of the Third Rome Doctrine. One such major work that I will discuss is Fedor Permiakov’s “Vypiski” of 1910, or its full translated title, *Extracts from the Holy Scriptures and Holy Teachings of the Church Fathers and Teachers. About the introduction of false teachings by Patriarch Nikon and his successors (Vypiski iz Sviashennogo i sviattootecheckago Pisaniia i tvorenii sviatikh ottsov i uchitelei tserkvi. O vnesenii patriarkhom Nikonom i ego preemnikami*

novizne i lozhnago ucheniia), an important work that attempted to provide a complete dialogue of the Old Rite's disagreements with the Russian Orthodox Church and defend the Old Rite's claim as last true Orthodox Christian faith. Permiakov's *Vypiski* provides a published collection of Old Rite rituals, theology, and ideology and proves to be an extremely important document in understanding how members of the Old Rite understood their faith and persisted in the centuries before and years after the events of 1905.

Ultimately then, a major question that this paper looks to respond to is why the period from 1905 to 1917 was such a critical period for Old Believers to publish works in order to understand and define their own faith, centuries after the initial split with the Russian Orthodox Church. First and foremost, the most important answer to this question is that post-1905 Russia provided the first opportunity for the Old Ritualists *to define themselves and their faith*.⁴

Feodor Permiakov's *Vypiski*, published by Pavel Riabushinskii's printing house in 1910, was then part of a larger trend amongst the Old Rite in Late Imperial Russia to truly define the movement religiously, culturally, and ideologically. Using a combination of scripture, Christian texts, as well as Old Believer and Russian Orthodox Church writings, Permiakov attempts to provide an overall picture of the Russian Orthodox Old Rite historically, spiritually, and culturally. While only the first volume was ever published, Permiakov's *Vypiski* ultimately was designed to be a complete collection of Old Rite rituals, practices, beliefs, and religious and historical disagreements with the Russian Orthodox Church. Ultimately, the *Vypiski* grew from the growing trends within the Old Rite in post-1905 Russia as an attempt to provide a unified

⁴ See for more detailed examples see, Peter T. De Simone, "An Old Believer 'Holy Moscow' in Imperial Russia: Community and Identity in the History of the Rogozhskoe Cemetery Old Believers, 1771 – 1917," (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 2012), 223 – 94, Roy R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), and James L. West, "The Neo-Old Believers of Moscow: Religious Revival and Nationalist Myth in Late Imperial Russia," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 – 3, 1992, 5 – 28.

understanding of the Old Rite as a religious and cultural movement in Russian and Christian history.

Prior to 1905, the only legal and official narrative on the *raskol* and Old Believers came from the state and Church who painted the Old Believers as ignorant, stubborn, and even dangerous schismatics.⁵ Furthermore, the earliest attempts at creating a historiography on the Old Rite began during the height of tsarist oppression against the movement under the reign of Nicholas I. By the mid and second half of the nineteenth century, some of the most vocal and ardent opponents of the Old Rite, such as Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow and the historian Nikolai Subbotin, firmly entrenched the idea of the Old Believers as heretical traitors to the Russian State and Russian Orthodoxy.⁶

However, even while the Church and tsarist authorities often vilified the Old Rite, opponents such as Subbotin often noted and praised the Old Believer love for religious texts.⁷ Communities such as Rogozhskoe Cemetery became famous even in nineteenth century Russia

⁵ For greater detail on the history of the relationship between the Tsarist State, Russian Orthodox Church, and Old Rite see for example, Robert O. Crummey, *The Old Believers and the World of Antichrist* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), Irina Paert, *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760 – 1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) and “Regulating Old Believer Marriage: Ritual, Legality, and Conversion in Nicholas I’s Russia,” *Slavic Review*, 63 no. 3 (Fall 2004), 555 – 76, Roy R. Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), Serge A. Zenkovsky, *Russkoe staroobriadchestvo: Dukhovnye dvizheniia semnadsatogo veka* (Munich, 1970) and De Simone, “An Old Believer ‘Holy Moscow.’”

⁶ See for example Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, *Sobranie mnenii*, vol. 4, 84. Quoted in, N. I. Subbotin, ed., *Bratskoe Slovo*, 1891, 445. Also, writing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the historian, and hostile critic of both the Old Rite and Rogozhskoe Cemetery, Nikolai Subbotin applauded Nicholas’ attempts to destroy the “shameful” and “deplorable” existence of Rogozhskoe Cemetery because of the community’s adherence to the *Belokrinitskaya* Hierarchy. For Subbotin, his duty, then, was to provide a historical explanation of not only the stubbornness and insulting (to the Russian Orthodox Church) nature in Rogozhskoe, but also a justification for Nicholas’ and Filaret’s open hostility and desire to oppress Rogozhskoe Cemetery into submission to the tsarist state and the Russian Orthodox Church. N. I. Subbotin, “Iz istorii Rogozhskago Kladbisha,” in, N. I. Subbotin, ed., *Bratskoe Slovo*, 1891, vol. 2, 446 – 47.

⁷ See *Ibid.*

for its library and collection of ancient Russian manuscripts and religious service books.⁸ Book culture and literacy then, became one of the defining characteristics of the Old Rite as communities often actively collected pre-Nikonian texts and manuscripts in order to “protect” them from corruption or destruction.⁹ Publishing too played a role in Old Rite culture as well before 1905. However, in order to circumvent legal restrictions on using printing presses or print houses, Old Rite publications often needed to be either illegally printed by private individuals or arduously copied by hand.¹⁰ Ironically, throughout the nineteenth century, while the state and Church portrayed Old Believers as “ignorant” for rejecting the Nikonian reforms, the Old Rite notoriety for their book culture also sparked fear of Old Believers preying on the often less educated and illiterate Orthodox populations. Communities such as Rogozhskoe Cemetery became prime targets for opponents such as Metropolitan Filaret who stated that the community became a threat to “teach the schismatic ways.”¹¹ With such concern on the part of the authorities about the Old Rite, internal dialogue and debate on the Old Rite itself often proved difficult between communities.

Ultimately then, in the years following 1905, Old Rite communities saw publishing as a vital opportunity to define themselves as a movement and beacon of their ideal Christian community. This period was to serve as an example of the triumph of the Old Rite’s continued efforts to play a role in Russia’s religious, social, cultural, and political progress. With the *Ukaz* on toleration in April, and the aftermath of the October Manifesto, Old Believers sought to not

⁸ See De Simone, “An Old Believer ‘Holy Moscow,’” E. M. Iukhimenko, *Staroobriadcheskii tsentr za Rogozhskoi zastavou* (Moscow, 2005), V. E. Makarov, *Ocherk istorii Rogozhskogo kladbisha v Moskve (K 140-letiu ego sushestvovaniia: 1771 – 1911 gg.)* (Moscow: BARC, 1994), and Roy Robson, “The Old Believer Press: 1905 – 1914,” in *Russia’s Dissenting Old Believers*, Georg Michels and Robert Nichols eds., (Minneapolis: Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs, 2009), 277 – 90.

⁹ De Simone, “An Old Believer ‘Holy Moscow,’” 106 – 47.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Sobranie postanovlenii po chasti raskola*. (Ministry of the Interior, St Petersburg, 1875), 142 – 43. Hereafter *SobranieMVD*.

only define themselves to their surroundings but also as the defenders of the Third Rome Doctrine and Russian Orthodoxy. In regards to publishing, various Old Believer individuals, communities, and printing houses needed to ask themselves how religious freedom would (and should) shape Old Believers' ability to express their own faith and ideals. Furthermore, during this period, the Muscovite Old Believer communities at *Preobrazhenskoe* and *Rogozhskoe* Cemeteries viewed their communities as the spiritual center for the entire priestless and priestly branches respectively and saw the development of an Old Believer press as a means to define the Old Rite movement as well as shaping Old Rite as a whole.

Furthermore, the new driving force behind the Old Believer emphasis on publishing reflected a growing shift within the Muscovite Old Rite communities themselves. Specifically, a major driving force behind this new emphasis on defining the Old Rite openly in the public sphere was because many of the Muscovite Old Believer's wealthier merchant families experienced dynastic changes as sons took over their family businesses.¹² This younger generation of merchants, such as Riabushinskii brothers, carried new ambitions and goals on how best to use their wealth, economic influence, and personal values to shape both their communities as well as the Old Rite in the early twentieth century.

Publishing therefore became the means for the Old Rite to create its public identity and define its own ideology.¹³ As noted by historians such as Roy Robson and James West, in post-1905 Russia, Old Believers felt a growing need to both present their ideology in the public

¹² For greater detail on the Moscow and Old Believer merchantry see, De Simone, "An Old Believer 'Holy Moscow,'" Alfred J. Rieber *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), and William Blackwell, "The Old Believers and the Rise of Private Industrial Enterprise in Early Nineteenth Century Moscow." *Slavic Review*, 24 no. 3 (Sep. 1965), 407 – 424.

¹³ Robson, *Old Believers in Modern Russia*, 4 – 5, and "The Old Believer Press," 278 – 79.

sphere as well as attempt to define both the Old Rite as a faith and Old Believer ideology.¹⁴ Defining the Old Rite through increased publication then served these two goals.

Legally able for the first time, many Old Believer individuals and communities sought to finally present their “version” of the *raskol* and explain their own ideology to the Russian public. One of the primary, and most important narratives that Old Believers now presented was that they viewed their faith as the last example of Ancient Russian Piety—the one true Christian faith remaining in all of Christendom. More specifically, Old Believer publications seemingly returned to the narratives of the mid-seventeenth century that the Old Rite championed Russia’s true destiny—the Third Rome Doctrine.¹⁵ Within this idea, that Moscow was the Third Rome and final bastion of Christianity before the End Times, Old Believer publications presented the argument that it was *the Russian Orthodox Church and tsarist state* that split from Russia’s true cultural and historical path. Particular amongst such proponents was the wealthiest family in all Late Imperial Russia, the Riabushinskii brothers. The eight sons born to Pavel Mikhailovich Riabushinskii were not only noted for their financial success and business skills, but were ardent Old Believers and prominent members of Rogozhskoe Cemetery.¹⁶ Prominent amongst the brothers in both the public sphere and efforts to publish the Old Believer Third Rome ideology were Pavel Pavlovich and Vladimir Pavlovich.

Permiakov’s *Vypiskii* too reflects this Old Rite sentiment that it was the Church and state who split away from the Old Rite and the Third Rome Doctrine. Permiakov’s opens his work with the statement, “The missionaries, theologian and pastors of the dominant church, have over

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ For examples on how specific Old Rite communities adapted this narrative to their historical and cultural development through history see, Crummey, *Old Believers in the World of Antichrist*, De Simone, “An Old Believer ‘Holy Moscow,’” and Paert, *Religious Dissent*.

¹⁶ For greater detail on the Riabushinskiis’ influence in the Rogozhskoe community, see De Simone, “An Old Believer ‘Holy Moscow,’” 223 – 94.

the past two and a half centuries, accuse us Old Believer Christians for separating from their church. They claim that Patriarch Nikon... did not bring in any errors in the ritual and customs of the established church. This accusation is false.”¹⁷ Permiakov’s fifth and sixth chapters (“About the Ancient Russian Church” and “The Criteria of the Withdrawal of Piety”) provide a combined explanation of how the Russian Orthodox Church fell from its true destiny. In Chapter 5, Permiakov uses historical texts, such as the letters of Patriarch Theophanes of Jerusalem and Patriarch Jeremiah of Constantinople recognizing the elevation of Job to the First Patriarch of Moscow, the famous legend of the White Cowl of Novgorod, and the famous letter by the monk Filofei to Vasily III establishing the idea of the “Third Rome Doctrine” as a basis for the Ancient Russian Church—the Church of the Old Rite.¹⁸ Chapter six, however, provides evidence from the Gospels and other religious and prophetic texts, predominately from the Book of Daniel and Gospels of Mark and Luke, proclaiming the eventual reign of Antichrist by a power-hungry “beast.”¹⁹ Permiakov even notes in his introduction to the chapter, “Temptations will come. False prophets will make heresy, changing the Divine Law, and rise in the ranks of the Church. The Antichrist will sit on the throne of the Church, will attack people, and will drive away the faithful. These were the prophecies for 1666. Nikon’s treason of Orthodoxy.”²⁰

As for further justification of Nikon’s corruption of the Church and turn away from the Third Rome Doctrine, Permiakov devotes an entire chapter discussing the origins for Nikon’s efforts to editing Russian liturgical texts. Particularly, Permiakov notes that Nikon’s primary advisors in conforming the Russian texts to their contemporary Greek counterparts, the monk

¹⁷ Feodor Permiakov, *Vypiski iz Sviashchennago i sviatootechneskago pisaniia, i tvoreniia sviatykh ottsov i uchitelei tserkov: o vnesenii patriarkh Nikonom i ego priemnikami novizn i lozhnago ucheniia; chast I*, (Moscow: P. P. Riabushinskii, 1910).

¹⁸ Permiakov, *Vypiski*, 21 – 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23ob – 27ob.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23ob.

Arseny the Greek and former Uniate Bishop and Metropolitan of Giza Paissi Ligarid, had both been deposed from the Orthodox Church due to their pro-Papal Uniate Church in the Ukraine.²¹ Referring to Arseny as “A Jesuit and traitor to Orthodoxy” and providing excerpts from Russian historians and letters from Constantinople to Nikon and Aleksei regarding the pair’s excommunication, Permiakov argues that it was their influence, combined with Nikon’s hunger for power, that introduced “the Catholic heresy into Russia.”²² Permiakov further notes that, “[The Ancient Russian Church] had made no corrections or distortions. The new books were translated from modern Jesuit publications. The new Greek books contained the heresies of Catholicism. The Ancient Slavic books agreed with our ancient and holy manuscripts.”²³ Many of the first introductory chapters of the *Vypiski*, then follow the larger trend of proclaiming the Old Rite as *the true* Russian Church and that contrary to the known narrative, it was the Nikonian Church who broke away from them and the idea of Moscow and the Third Rome.

The Old Believers in the early twentieth century were not the first to proclaim the Old Rite as defender of the Third Rome Doctrine, but rather the doctrine proved to be at the very heart of the ideological divide between the Old Rite and Imperial Russia. Historians Daniel

²¹ The Uniate Church in Ukraine, or the present day “Eastern Catholic Church,” found its origins in the resentment toward Muscovy’s rise to prominence amongst the Russian principalities and as a rival Christian kingdom to Poland. Prior to the mid-fifteenth century, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church held the title of Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus’ even though the Metropolitan did not reside in Kiev since the late thirteenth century. In response to the Russian Church’s rejection of the attempted unification of Orthodoxy and Catholicism at the Council of Florence in 1439 resulting in Metropolitan Ioan’s election in 1448 as the Metropolitan of Moscow and All Rus’, contributed to the growing political divide between Muscovy and Kiev who resented the Grand Prince of Moscow’s growing influence. In response, Kiev elected its own Metropolitan in 1458, Gregory II, recognized by both the King of Poland, Casimir, and Pope Calixtus III eventually setting the foundations of the Uniate Church in Polish-controlled Russian lands as an independent Orthodox Church loyal to the Pope rather than the Metropolitan of Moscow. However, as Gregory was a disciple of the deposed Metropolitan Isidore, the Moscow Metropolitanate continued to champion itself, successfully, as the remaining bastion of untainted Orthodox Christianity. See Fr. John Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow: Historical and Theological Studies* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1996), 108 – 110, 134 – 36, Dmitri Stremoukhoff, “Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine,” *Speculum*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (January 1953), 87 – 89, and Gustave Alef, “Muscovy and the Council of Florence,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (October 1961), 399 – 401.

²² Permiakov, *Vypiski*, 28 – 34.

²³ *Ibid.*, 30.

Rowland and Marshall Poe note that it was the Old Ritualists who invoked the Third Rome Doctrine far more often than either tsarist or Church officials. As Poe argues in particular, that by the late seventeenth century even, “the doctrine was ignored by secular authorities, who were uninterested in its imperial implications, and it was later banned by clerics, who recognized it as an article of the heretical Old Believer faith. In the eighteenth century, ‘Third Rome’ survived in Old Believer writings, but it was almost entirely forgotten by mainstream Russian culture.”²⁴ As Rowland also notes, “By the second half of the seventeenth century, [the concept of Moscow the Third Rome] was under attack and by the 1700s was discarded by everyone except the Old Believers.”²⁵ As both scholars note, in fact, it would not be until the mid-nineteenth century that tsarist and Church authorities took greater interest in the Third Rome Doctrine, and in particular of how to combat the Old Believers.²⁶

However, as Rowland notes, concurrent with the rise of the Third Rome Doctrine was a growing sense of the Russian lands as a New Jerusalem, or New Israel. Whereas the Third Rome proclaimed direct inheritance of the Roman-Byzantine political and spiritual legacy based in Christianity, New Jerusalem proclaimed the Russian people as God’s new Chosen People as passed from Israel and through Rome and Constantinople. As Rowland notes, with the rise of Nikon to Patriarch “New Jerusalem” began to take precedence in Russian Orthodox Church ideology. For example, Nikon went so far as to “attempt to create archeologically correct versions of buildings existing in contemporary Jerusalem”²⁷ such as recreating the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Nikon’s new spiritual center, the New Jerusalem monastery. As Rowland

²⁴ Marshall Poe, “Moscow, the Third Rome: The Origins and Transformations of a ‘Pivotal Moment,’” *Jahrbucher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (2001), 413.

²⁵ Daniel B. Rowland, “Moscow – The Third Rome or the New Israel?” *Russian Review*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Oct. 1996), 594.

²⁶ See, *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 610.

argues, under Nikon the New Jerusalem ideology took greater precedence, at least within the Russian Orthodox Church, over the Third Rome Doctrine.²⁸ Using Rowland's conclusion, it can be argued then that the issue of defending the Third Rome Doctrine and its political, social, cultural, and religious implications can be tied into the essence of the Old Rite as a whole.

Such an argument was not lost on Old Rite philosophers such as Vladimir Riabushinskii, who in a series of essays published by the printing house owned by his brother Pavel in the years immediately following toleration argued that the Third Rome Doctrine remained a critical component of to the core of Old Believer ideology and identity. A common theme in Vladimir's writing portrays Nikon's reforms, and Tsar Alexei's support for the reforms, as not only the corruption of Russian Orthodoxy and rejection of the Third Rome Doctrine, but the official negation of Russian history and identity. For example, Riabushinskii writes:

The idea [of Moscow the Third Rome] filled the Russian soul with pride and awe, for it warned that only through the wickedness of the Third Rome – Moscow – and the collapse of piety give the world over to the power of the Antichrist. Thus our ancestors grew a sense of responsibility not only for ourselves but for others, and therefore feared falling into heresy... Muscovite Orthodoxy held the Greeks in suspicion.²⁹

In regard to Nikon's rise to power and attack on Russian piety and history and the Old Rite's purpose, he continued:

As to the reasons behind Nikon's "greekification" one only needs to look at his character – it was his love of power...the old prayer books were declared corrupt, evil, full of errors, clearly concluding for the people: All of the Russian Church Hierarchs of the previous centuries, including the most famous, respected, even the

²⁸ Ibid., 608 – 12.

²⁹ Vladimir P. Riabushinskii, *Staroobriadchestvo i russkoe religioznoe chuvstvo* (Moscow-Ierusalim: "Mosti," 1994), 12 – 13.

most beloved saints, have obviously been all, without exception, either heretics or ignorant.... Therefore, for the enlightenment of the Russian spirit one must understand the meaning of the Old Believers and need to consider what role they played in the history of Russian culture... for it is the Old Believers, and their religious phenomenon, that are most acquainted with the history of this spiritual feeling in Russia, especially in the period from the late 17th century to the present day, and therefore becoming all the more important to gain a proper understanding of Russian Orthodoxy, and indeed the Russian reality.³⁰

Similar to Riabushinskii, other Old Believer theologians and philosophers such as I. A. Kirillov and V. G. Senatov used phrases such as “national mourning” and “oppression of the Russian idea” to describe the Nikonian Reforms’ effects on the Third Rome Doctrine.³¹ As displayed by the writings of Riabushinskii, Kirillov, and Senatov, leading Old Believers began openly identifying the Old Rite as the defender of Russian piety *and* Russian history.

Ultimately then, in the years following 1905, tying the Old Rite to the Third Rome Doctrine served as a cornerstone in creating a unified identity for the Old Rite as a whole. Particularly for individuals such as Pavel and Vladimir Riabushinskii, this need to define the Old Rite movement on the whole would not only, hopefully, create a greater sense of unity amongst the various branches of Old Believers, but also allow the Old Rite to begin to take a place within post-1905 Russia socially, culturally, and, most importantly, politically. As James West argues, the basis for the Riabushinskiis’ drive into politics was “the incentive of being an outsider” and a desire to unite all sects of the Old Rite to “join in the struggle for political and religious freedom.”³² In the aftermath of 1905, a true problem for the Old Rite was political isolation. For

³⁰ Ibid., 15 – 20.

³¹ See for example, I. A. Kirillov, *Tretii Rim: Ocherk istoricheskogo razvitiia idei russkogo messianizma* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo “Tretii Rim,” 1996), 47 – 62 and V. G. Senatov, *Filosofia istorii starobriadchestva* (Moscow: Biblioteka zhurnal “Tserkov’,” 1995).

³² James L. West, “The Riabushinskii Circle: Burzhuaziia and Obschestvennost’ in Late Imperial Russia,” *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, Edith W.

groups to the left such as the Constitutional Democrats the Old Rite held “far too narrow class interests” to be of any support to their cause.³³ Conversely, individuals on the political right, such as T. I. Butkevich, rejected Old Believers as a threat to the stability of the state. Beginning in 1906, Butkevich even appealed directly to Nicholas and State Duma for the need to rescind all of the rights granted to Old Believers since the 1905 *ukaz* on religious toleration stating later in 1909 that: “The essence of the *raskol* is not in its religious foundations, but in its sociopolitical motivations, in its permanent opposition to government power.”³⁴

As West argues, the issue for the Riabushinskiis and their efforts to bring the Old Rite into national politics ultimately was the need to present the Old Believers as a unified entity.³⁵ Initially, then, the Riabushinskii brothers organized mass meetings of fellow Old Believer merchants and later, in 1906, called for an All-Russian Congress of Old Believer Peasants in Moscow.³⁶ Unfortunately, little came of such gatherings due to the diversity of the Old Believers themselves along spiritual lines (such as between priestly and priestless), or even social and cultural differences (such as between Old Believers from the city or rural areas).³⁷

From such failed attempts to find a means to unite their fellow Old Believers, it became more apparent that the Old Rite, in fact, lacked a common sense of the movement’s own history and beliefs. Ultimately then, the years following toleration allowed Old Believer publications to alleviate such issues by defining and discussing the very tenants of the Old Rite in the public

Clowes, et. al. eds, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 43. Also see, West, “The Neo-Old Believers,” 5 – 28.

³³ West, “The Riabushinskii Circle...” 45 – 46.

³⁴ T. I. Butkevich, quoted in, Alexandra S. Korros, “Nationalist Politics in the Russian Imperial State Council: Forming a New Majority, 1909 – 1910,” *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia*, Mary Schaeffer Conroy, ed., (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1998), 209.

³⁵ West, “The Riabushinskii Circle,” 44 – 47, and “The Neo-Old Believers of Moscow,”

³⁶ Rieber, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs*, 295 and West, “The Riabushinskii Circle,” 45

³⁷ West, “The Riabushinskii Circle,” 45 – 46.

sphere. Old Believer newspapers and journals such as *Narodnaia gazeta* and the Riabushinskii funded *Tserkov'* provided question and answer columns responding to growing concerns for Old Believers in the early twentieth century. However, both *Narodnaia gazeta* and *Tserkov'* did not shy away from openly professing their goal of hoping to galvanize the Old Rite into a unified political movement. *Narodnaia gazeta* specifically urged that the Old Rite could not rest on the “victories” of 1905 and that as a “moderate force” the Old Rite could save Russia from the anarchy of the “Reds” and the re-establishment of the Old Regime by the “Blacks.”³⁸ Similarly, *Tserkov'* further championed the idea that the *raskol*, was the result of the Russian Orthodox Church and the state breaking away from the people, and that the Old Rite represented to true “Russian religious soul” of the people, which only the Old Rite could defend in the current political chaos.³⁹

However, hindering such goals was the fact that the Old Rite remained far from unified in most regards. As witnessed in reader letters to *Tserkov'* there was even very little consensus or understanding over the various Old Rite beliefs and disagreements with the mainstream church or relationship between branches, leading *Tserkov'* to urge that the time was ripe to “end artificial divisions” and create “one spirit, one soul, bound by family ties, one history, one centuries-long suffering.”⁴⁰ With such a sentiment then, for Old Rite leaders such as the Riabushinskiis, it became more clear that the Old Rite desperately needed to define this “one soul” in Late Imperial Russia.⁴¹

³⁸ *Narodnaia gazeta*, No. 184, August 10, 1906, 1.

³⁹ See for examples from *Tserkov'* see publications from: February 17, 1908, 240; December 20, 1909, 1432; and March 28, 1910, 338.

⁴⁰ *Tserkov'*, July 6, 1908, 929.

⁴¹ For a general look at how Old Believers responded to this growing need see Roy Robson's *Old Believers in Modern Russia* and “Liturgy and Community among Old Believers, 1905-1917,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4

Possibly one of the most important aspects of Permiakov's *Vypiski*, then, was that it attempted to explain many of the origins of Old Rite rituals and practices with their basis for disagreement with the mainstream church. For example, Permiakov explored the origins of one of the most significant, visible, and well-noted disagreements with the mainstream church—the Old Rite insistence on using two fingers to make the sign of the cross. Throughout his work, Permiakov uses ancient Christian texts to justify this very symbolic Old Rite ritual. Permiakov quotes, St. Ephrem the Syrian that “the sign of the cross is a weapon for the Christian, it is the conqueror of death, it sows hope in the faithful, gives light to the meek, deposes heresy, and the symbol of an Orthodox faith and salvation of the Church.”⁴² Permiakov also provides ancient texts such as the writings of St. Peter of Damascus and St. John Chrysostom emphasizing the origins of the two-fingered cross as one of the earliest declarations of the Church Councils. Permiakov quotes Peter, “it was passed by the saints and Holy Fathers to refute the heretics and unbelievers; for two fingers and a single hand represents the crucified Lord Jesus Christ in two natures, and in a single hypostasis.”⁴³ Ultimately, knowing that the sign of the cross plays a crucial role in defining the Old Rite, Permiakov's work provides a historical account of the origins of the insistence, and seeming justification for the Old Rite's continued use of the two-fingered cross.

One of the more interesting aspects of the *Vypiski*, however, is that Permiakov also provides some accounts on the origins of some of the Old Rite's cultural aspects. One such example is an entire chapter devoted to the issue of shaving beards. Particularly following Peter the Great's reforms and attempts at Westernization in the early eighteenth century, a common

(Winter, 1993), 713 – 24. For a look how specific communities such as Rogozhskoe Cemetery attempted to define themselves during this period see, De Simone, “An Old Believer ‘Holy Moscow’ in Imperial Russia.”

⁴² Permiakov, *Vypiski*, 63.

⁴³ St. Peter of Damascus, quoted in, Permiakov, *Vypiski*, 64.

trait of the Old Rite was that its men refused to shave their beards—thereby making them susceptible to Peter’s infamous “beard tax.”⁴⁴ Part of the dilemma for the Old Rite after Peter the Great then was the state’s insistence that shaving (not just trimming) one’s beard was permissible and based more in superstition. However, once again, Permiakov looks to ancient spiritual texts justifying the Old Believer insistence on not shaving. Beginning with Mosaic Law in Leviticus (Lev 19:27 – You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard.), Permiakov provides religious texts justifying the need for men to maintain beards, such as quoting St. Jerome: “If a man shaves with a razor, that deprives him of [God’s] beauty.”⁴⁵ Beards were only one of a number of chapter’s in Permiakov’s first volume of the *Vypiski* that focused on Old Rite cultural traits and rituals. One can see that Permiakov’s efforts at using ancient texts to describe Old Rite identity in the early twentieth century served the larger purpose of providing a greater sense of identity for the Old Rite centuries after the initial split with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Ultimately, then, works such as Permiakov’s *Vypiski* fit into the greater trends in Old Believer publishing aimed to provide a greater understanding of the Old Rite spiritually and ideologically in Late Imperial Russia. The purpose of works like the *Vypiski* then ultimately served the dual goal to both define the Old Rite as a movement as well as potentially push Old Believers toward unity into a single movement. For prominent Old Believers such as the Riabushinskiis, open dialogue and publishing Old Believer ideology appeared as the best means to define the Old Rite in the Russian public sphere of Late Imperial Russia for both the general public and the Old Rite itself. Ultimately, however, the efforts for Old Rite unification failed as

⁴⁴ For the details of the beard tax see, *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, Ser. I, vol. 6, (St. Petersburg, 1830), 641 – 42, 720, and vol. 10, 624 – 26.

⁴⁵ St. Jerome, quoted in, Permiakov, *Vypiski*, 175ob.

the era of toleration was not everything the Old Believers hoped. Toleration was too short lived as not only did the Old Rite continue to meet political and spiritual resistance but also with the onset of the First World War and Bolshevik Revolution, the Old Rite once again found its goals disrupted by the forces of the Russian state.