

Parasey, Alexander (1912–2007)

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Dmitry O. Yunak graduated in Finance and Economics from a Soviet secular educational institution and completed a six-year course of Theology at an underground SDA Theological Institute (Moldova, USSR). In the Soviet times, he served as a pastor, administrator, and bible/history professor in the underground Theological Institute. In 1990, he was appointed as Treasurer and Publishing Ministries Director for the USSR Division. After the Euro-Asia Division was organized in 1991, Dmitry O. Yunak served as ESD auditor and under treasurer. He was the author of a dozen of SDA history books and scores of other publications. He owns a major SDA history archive.



A. F. Parasey, 1985.

Photo courtesy of Galina Stele.

Alexander Fyodorovich Parasey was an Adventist pastor, translator, and church administrator in Ukraine.

Early Years and Conversion

Alexander Fyodorovich Parasey was born June 3, 1912 in Vornovitsya, a village in the district of Khotin, Chernovitsky Region. His parents Fyodor Parasey and Ekaterina Litovchuk were Orthodox Christians. Young Alexander was also baptized as an Orthodox. From an early age his mother told him Bible stories. In 1919, when Fyodor Parasey, his father, returned home from the First World War, he brought with him some devotional literature including the *Blagaya Vest* magazine, *The Real Truth Bible Readings*, and *Steps to Christ* by Ellen G. White. The regiment in which he had served was stationed at Lesnye Rakhny, a village in the district of Vinnytsia, in the Governorate of Podolsk. The owners of the house where he stayed were Adventists. It was they who acquainted Fyodor Parasey with the Adventist message. It was four years later that Fyodor Parasey was able to find other Adventists, and in 1924 he and his entire family became the first Adventists in the village.

Ministry Firsts, Second World War

At that time Khotin District was part of Romania. Hence, the young Alexander Parasey learned Romanian. In 1936 the local Adventist church recommended him for studies at the Braşov Bible Institute. Parasey studied at the Adventist School in Collonges, France, and after graduation served as a missionary in Madagascar. However,

he wished to preach the gospel in his own country.

During the war years, in 1940, Alexander Parasey visited Bessarabia and spent about a month in Romanovka. There he stayed with the large family of Nikolai Arkalevsky and worked as a Bible worker. It is important to note that from the beginning of the Second World War, Romania, supported by Germany, occupied the western part of Ukraine for the second time. Parasey was brought by Romanian troops to a concentration camp in city of Botoșany, where he was held hostage from 1942 to 1944. In 1944, he was released by the Soviet Army and sent to Siberia. Finally, he was called up for military service. He served at a quartermaster depot in East Prussia until the end of the war.

Ordination and Marriage

On his return from the war in 1945, Parasey was called to serve as a Bible worker in the city of Chernovtsy. In the autumn of 1946, G. A. Grigoryev invited Parasey to Moscow where he was ordained to pastoral ministry, along with F. V. Melnik and A. G. Galladzhhev. Parasey was then assigned to serve as a senior pastor for Moldova.

On September 10, 1946, in city of Tulchyn (Tul'chyn or Tulchin), Parasey married Nadezhda Antonovna Grinenko. At his marriage ceremony he delivered the sermon himself, while the marriage ceremony was performed by a local elder. He did this because he was worried about the guests. He wanted to give them "spiritual food." The newly married couple shared common interests in studying the writings of Ellen G. White. Hence, they began a project of translating Ellen G. White's books into Russian. They had two children, daughter Larisa and son Alexander.

Administrative Ministry

In the same year of 1946, Parasey, in cooperation with Semyon Melnichuk and Parfenyi Kostomsky, proceeded with registration of new churches in Moldova. Despite his official position, Parasey was sometimes faced with ridiculous situations. For example, in the early 1950s he happened to conduct the communion service in the church in Romanovka. Suddenly he noticed that the Chief of the District Committee for State Security, by the name of Korolyov, entered the church building. That person was drunk and, with his head uncovered, demanded wine. Parasey refused this demand at which point Korolyov burst into a rage, interrupted the service, and took Parasey into custody at the police station where the pastor spent the night. The next morning Korolyov came to the police station and directed that he be set free. Having returned to Chisinau, Parasey reported on this incident to the Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs. As a result, Korolyov was dismissed from the Committee for State Security for abuse of rights.

In 1955 Parasey was invited to Moscow to serve as secretary-treasurer for the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists and as pastor for the Moscow church. In 1959, when Aleksei G. Galladzhhev retired as the president of

the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists in Ukraine, Parasey moved to Kiev to replace him. That period of Parasey's ministry was difficult. He was often confronted with open opposition.

Parasey was twice a delegate from Ukraine to General Conference sessions (in 1975 and 1985) and served, for some time, on the GC Executive Committee.²

Later Years

Aside from administrative responsibilities, Parasey published a number of works. For more than a decade he was involved in the illegal publication of an ecclesiastical and spiritual magazine, *Svetilnik*, from the late 1960s to early 1970s in Kiev. Parasey was the author of a book *The Academy in Wilderness* [no date] about Joshua in the Bible, and of a big collection of topics based on the Revelation and titled *The Apocalypse*. He was the co-author of *Desolate and Driven by the Storms of Life* (Djereho Zhyttia, 1997) as well as the author of many tracts and articles in Adventist papers and magazines. Towards the end of their lives, Nadezhda and Alexander Parasey lived in Boyarka, Kiev. In 1988 Nadezhda Parasey died. Alexander Parasey died in 2007 at the age of 95.

Contribution

As an administrator, Alexander Parasey was ardently committed to the unity of the church. He played a key role in keeping the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine united. He strived for reconciliation among dissenting congregations. According to N. A. Zhukalyuk,

From 1976 to 1978, A. F. Parasey was among those who strived for reconciliation and recovery from the dissent in Adventist congregations in Ukraine. Thereafter, up to the 4th All-Ukrainian Session of Seventh-day Adventists in 1988, he served as co-chair (together with N. A. Zhukalyuk and V. I. Prolinsky) of the SDA Church in Ukraine. He who had a higher theological education and worked with those who had never studied at Adventist educational institutions, never made a show of his attainments or prided himself in his knowledge.³

Aside from translating the works of Ellen G. White into the Russian language, Nadezhda Parasey's stenographic knowledge helped the church in keeping records. She also served as translator for Alf Lohne and Robert Pierson when they visited Russia. Parasey's contribution can also be seen his role in providing and translating Adventist literature for the members of the Adventist Church in Ukraine.

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NOTES

1. N. A. Zhukalyuk, "50 let v sluzhenii." *Nastol'nyy kalendar' sluzhiteley tserkvi khristian adventistov sed'mogo dnya na 1987 god*. M, 1987, kept in the author's private archives.
2. R. R. Hegstad, "The Day in Vienna," *General Conference Bulletin*, July 13, 1975, 2.
3. N.A. Zhukalyuk. *Vspominaite nastavnikov vashikh* (Kiev: Djerelo Zhyttia, 1999), 275-277, 280-284.

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