

Little Russian Conference

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The Little Russian Conference was a pre-USSR church unit located mostly in modern day Ukraine. It operated from 1912 to sometime between 1917 and 1920.

Territory and Statistics

Territory: The Governorates of Chernigov, (Kharkov until 1912), Kiev, Kursk (from 1912), (Podolia until 1912), and Poltava¹

Membership (1915): 666²

Churches (2915): 22³

Origin of Seventh-day Adventist Work in the Territory

The first Adventist mission work in Russia took place in Crimea in the late nineteenth century, when Russian emigrants to America sent Adventist literature back home. While Adventists began work in many other places in the Empire, the work in Crimea spread north to the neighboring Governorates.

Organizational History

The Little Russian Mission was organized at the Russian Union meeting in Moscow, March 18–29, 1908. For its formation, the Governorates of Chernigov, Kiev, Podolia, and Poltava were cut off from the Middle Russian Mission, as well as the Kharkov Governorate from the South Russia Conference.⁴ The changes took effect at the start of the following year.⁵ At the end of its first quarter, the mission's membership was 376.⁶ Initial officers were the advisory committee member and minister J. Perk, advisory committee member J. T. Böttcher, licentiate J. Pilkevitsch, missionary licentiates P. Sviridov and S. Provalovsky, and missionary nurses Rosa Kleist and Olga Naukas.⁷ The mission became part of the Russian Union.⁸

Three and a half years after its organization, at the Russian Union meeting in Riga, Latvia, in April 1912, the Little Russian Mission's territory was modified and it was organized into the Little Russian Conference. The Podolia Governorate was moved to the Black Sea Mission, which was organized at the same meeting. The Kharkov

Governorate became part of the Azov Conference, also organized at the meeting. The Little Russian Conference gained the Kursk Governorate from the Middle Russian Mission.⁹ The Little Russian Conference thus comprised the Governorates of Chernigov, Kiev, Kursk, and Poltava.¹⁰ At the close of its first quarter, the Mission's membership was 572.¹¹ Its initial officers were President J. Perk, Secretary C. Chmälevsky, Treasurer P. Brandt, D. Zybalsky, and J. Klotschko.¹²

By 1913 it had become untenable to administrate the work in the immense empire as one union. At the European Division Council in Budapest, commencing October 30, it was decided to divide the Russian Union into the East and West Russian Unions.¹³ The Little Russian Conference became part of the West Russian Union.¹⁴

Due to World War I and the Russian Revolution and its subsequent civil war and upheavals, information on Russian church units is mostly missing in the *Yearbook*, the *Annual Statistical Report*, and Adventist magazines for several years (1918–22). The last *Yearbook* entry for the Little Russian Conference is in 1917. In 1923, when detailed information about Russia reappears, the conference had been dissolved sometime before and its territory divided between various new church units. The city of Kiev became part of the Kiev Union District (organized in 1917); the Kiev Governorate, excepting the city, part of the Dnieper Conference (organized in 1919); and the Kursk and Poltava Governorates part of the East Ukrainian Conference (organized in 1920). These church units belonged to new unions as well—the Kiev Union District and the Dnieper Conference to the West Russian Union, and the East Ukrainian Conference to the South Russian Union.¹⁵

List of Presidents

Little Russian Mission Advisory Committee: J. T. Böttcher and J. Perk, 1910–11. President: J. Perk, 1912.

Little Russian Conference Presidents: J. Perk, 1912–14; H. J. Löback, 1915–1917.

SOURCES

Annual Statistical Report. Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1915.

“Berichte der Russischen Union vom 1. Oktober bis 31. Dezember 1912.” *Zions-Wächter*, February 17, 1913.

Böttcher, J. T. “Russia.” *ARH*, May 13, 1909.

Conradi, Ludwig R. “European Division Council in Budapest.” *ARH*, December 18, 1913.

Conradi, Ludwig R. “New Developments in Eastern Europe.” *ARH*, July 4, 1912.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Various years. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

“Vierteljahrsbericht der Russischen Union vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1909.” *Zions-Wächter*, May 3, 1909.

NOTES

1. "Little Russian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1917), 130.
2. *Annual Statistical Report* (1915), 6.
3. *Annual Statistical Report* (1915), 6.
4. J. T. Böttcher, "Russia," *ARH*, May 13, 1909, 19. The article about the meeting states that all the territory for the Little Russian Mission was taken from the Middle Russian Mission. The *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, however, lists Kharkov Governorate not under the Middle Russian Mission but the South Russian Conference before the formation of the Little Russian Mission. "South Russian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1908), 112–13; (1909), 115. In 1910 it then states about the Little Russian Mission: "Cut off from Middle Russia, and South Russia." "Little Russian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1910), 110.
5. "Little Russian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1910), 110.
6. "Vierteljahrsbericht der Russischen Union vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1909," *Zions-Wächter*, May 3, 1909, 160.
7. "Little Russian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1910), 110.
8. J. T. Böttcher, "Russia," *ARH*, May 13, 1909, 19; "Little Russian Mission," *Yearbook* (1910), 110.
9. For the organization of the Little Russian Mission into a conference and its territorial change, see Ludwig R. Conradi, "New Developments in Eastern Europe," *ARH*, July 4, 1912, 11–12; "Middle Russian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1912), 117; "Azov Conference," "Black Sea Mission," and "Little Russian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1913), 110, 111.
10. "Little Russian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1913), 110.
11. "Berichte der Russischen Union vom 1. Oktober bis 31. Dezember 1912," *Zions-Wächter*, February 17, 1913, 93.
12. "Little Russian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1913), 110.
13. Ludwig R. Conradi, "European Division Council in Budapest," *ARH*, December 18, 1913, 12.
14. "Little Russian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1914), 111.
15. For the division of the territory of the Little Russian Conference between subsequent church units, see "Kiev Union District," "Dnjepr Conference," and "East Ukrainian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1923), 104–106.

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