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East Russian Conference

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The East Russian Conference was a short-lived conference in southwestern Russia. It operated from 1906 to 1907 and was then divided into the Caucasian Conference and the East Russian Mission.

Territory and Statistics

Period: 1906-1907.

Territory: Astrakhan, Don District I, Kuban, Orenburg, Samara, Saratov, Stavropol, Terek, Ufa, and Ural governorates.

Population 17,655,350; membership 973; churches 32.¹

Organizational History

Adventist mission work in the Russian Empire commenced in Crimea, South Ukraine, and the Caucasus in the mid-1880s. This led to the organization of the Southern Russian Conference under the German Union with more than 700 members in 1901.

In a matter of a few years, church membership had increased to 950, which made it feasible to create a new mission in addition to the conference. There were other reasons for reorganization as well. "As for years the existing laws made it dangerous for the Germans to meet with the Russians, our ministers could visit the native brethren but very little, and they naturally kept aloof, and many of the Russians seemed opposed to uniting with the Germans in conference membership." Many of the Russians were also opposed to the tithing system. A meeting was called at Alexandrodar, Stavropol, in mid-October 1905. This was the first time Conradi was able to meet with the Russian believers, and he used the opportunity to schedule many daily meetings with them, listen to their concerns about a joint organization, and to explain the biblical basis of the tithing system.²

At the end of the meetings, it was decided that both the German and Russian believers in the territory would be part of the Southern Russian Conference, which changed its name to the East Russian Conference. It was also decided to cut off part of the territory to form a new mission. These organizations took effect at the beginning of the next year on January 1, 1906. The conference was comprised of Astrakhan, Don District I, Kuban, Orenburg, Samara, Saratov, Stavropol, and Ufa. The new South Russian Mission was comprised of Bessarabia, Don District II, Kherson, Taurida, and Yekaterinoslav. The beginning membership was 774. H. J. Löbsack continued as the conference president.³

The extended mission called for further reorganization after little more than a year. Until then, the Adventist Church had been working in European Russia. By 1906 the work had spread east to Asian Russia and the European denominational organ, *Zions-Wächter*, listed a new "Russio-Asian Field" in the German Union.⁴ This field was without leadership through 1906. At the annual German Union meeting in late January and early February 1907, it was decided to remedy this. The Russio-Asian field and the Volga region (Astrakhan, Orenburg, Samara, Saratov, and Ufa) of the East Russian Conference formed the East Russian Mission. The rest of the conference was renamed the Caucasian Conference, in accordance with its remaining territory ("Cis- and Trans-Caucasus and [Don] District I"). H. J. Löbsack continued as the conference president and became president of the new mission as well.⁵

The church units continuing the work in the territory of the former East Russian Conference were the Caucasian Conference and the East Russian Mission, the latter of which included all of Asian Russia.

List of Presidents

H. J. Löbsack (1906-1907)

SOURCES

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Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1906-1908.

"Vierteljahrsbericht der deutschen Unionkonferenz vom 1. Okt. Bis Dez. 1905." *Zions-Wächter*, February 5, 1906.

"Vierteljahrsbericht der deutschen Union-Konferenz vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1906." *Zions-Wächter*, May 7, 1906.

"Vierteljahrsbericht der Deutschen Unionkonferenz vom 1. Oktober bis 31. Dezember 1906." *Zions-Wächter*, February 4, 1907.

NOTES

¹. "East Russian Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1907), 82; "Vierteljahrsbericht der Deutschen Unionkonferenz vom 1. Oktober bis 31. Dezember 1906," *Zions-Wächter*, February 4, 1907, 43.[?]

2. L. R. Conradi, "The Meeting at Alexandrodar," *ARH*, March 8, 1906, 14-15.?
3. Ibid.: "East Russian Conference" and "South Russian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1906), 73, 75.?
4. Vierteljahrsbericht der deutschen Union-Konferenz vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1906," *Zions-Wächter*, May 7, 1906, 154. It was listed as the "Asiatic Russian Mission" in the *SDA Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1906), 75.?
5. L. R. Conradi, "Reise-Erfahrungen," *Zions-Wächter*, March 4, 1907, 65; "Caucasian Conference" and "East Russian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1908), 112-113.?

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