

East Russian Mission

JÓN HJÖRLEIFUR STEFÁNSSON

Jón Hjörleifur Stefánsson, M.A.,
is a Ph.D. candidate, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

The East Russian Mission was a short-lived church unit in the ever-expanding work in Russia. It operated from 1907 to 1910 and was then subdivided, mostly into church units for the new Siberian Union Mission.

Territory and Statistics

Period: 1907-1910.

Territory: Governorates of Astrakhan, Orenburg, Ufa, Samara, and Samaratov (and "Asiatic Russia" until 1909).

Population 12,035,000;¹ membership 441;² churches 19.³

Origin of Seventh-day Adventist Work in the Territory

The first quarter report about the East Russian Mission listed Adventists in the following communities: Altata, Archeda, Franzosen, Gnadenfeld, Holstein, Kana, Kondratovka, New Galka, Nikolajev, Norka, Orenburg, Paulskoj, Popovka, Rosenberg, Saratov, Straßburg, Ural, and Warenburg.⁴ Adventist missionary work in the Russian Empire started in the late nineteenth century, and work in these communities began at different times as the work expanded and church units multiplied. One such church unit was the East Russian Field, established in 1906, which preceded the East Russian Mission.

Organizational History

Shortly after the East Russian Conference had been organized, further reorganization was required. 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.⁵ This field was without leadership through 1906. At the annual German Union meeting in late January to 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, with the rest of the territory forming the Caucasian Conference.⁶ At the close of its first quarter there were 454 members.⁷ Initial officers were president, H. J. Löbsack; secretary, H. Ostwald; and G. Hetze, J. Wuckert, G. Lehmann, and A.

Gondar.⁸ The mission belonged to the German Union.⁹

By now the work in Russia required its own union. Three Russian fields—the Caucasian Conference, the Middle Russian Mission, and the East Russian Mission—came together at a meeting in Riga, on October 25, 1907, where the Russian Union was organized.¹⁰

At the start of 1909 Siberia was removed from the East Russian Mission and the Siberian Mission was formed.¹¹ The Siberian Union Mission was organized in 1910 and started operation at the beginning of 1911. As part of the union's organization, the East Russian Mission was abolished.¹² Its territory went to Siberian church units which were formed at the same time—the Ural and Volga Missions. The governorates of Orenburg, Samara, and Ufa went to the Ural Mission and those of Astrakhan and Saratov went to the Volga Mission.¹³ The changes took effect at the commencement of 1911.¹⁴

The church units that continued working in the territory of the former East Russian Mission were the various fields of the Siberian Union Mission.

List of Presidents

H. J. Löbsack (1907-1909); J. F. Hinter (1909-1910).¹⁵

SOURCES

Annual Statistical Report. Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1910-1911.

Conradi, Ludwig R. "Progress in the European Division." *ARH*, November 10, 1910.

Conradi, Ludwig R. "Reise-Erfahrungen." *Zions-Wächter*, March 4, 1907.

Conradi, Ludwig R. "Reise-Erfahrungen." *Zions-Wächter*, December 2, 1907.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1906-1922.

Turowski, H. "Sitzung des Russische Union." *Zions-Wächter*, December 16, 1907.

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

"Vierteljahrsbericht der deutschen Union-Konferenz vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1907." *Zions-Wächter*, May 6, 1907.

Wägele, Th. "Dritte allgemeine Jahresversammlung des Ostrussischen Missionsfeldes." *Zions-Wächter*, November 15, 1909.

NOTES

1. *Annual Statistical Report* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1910), 10.
2. From the last quarterly report of the mission: "Berichte der Russischen Union vom 1. Oktober bis 31. Dezember 1910," *Zions-Wächter*, February 6, 1911, 48.
3. *Annual Statistical Report* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1910), 10.
4. "Vierteljahrsbericht der deutschen Union-Konferenz vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1907," *Zions-Wächter*, May 6, 1907, 138.
5. The cities listed are apparently all in the Caucasus, for instance: Sochi, Sochumi, and Yerevan. "Vierteljahrsbericht der deutschen Union-Konferenz vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1906," *Zions-Wächter*, May 7, 1906, 154. It was given as the "Asiatic Russian Mission" in the *SDA Yearbook* (1906), 75.
6. Ludwig 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.
7. "Vierteljahrsbericht der deutschen Union-Konferenz vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1907," *Zions-Wächter*, May 6, 1907, 138.
8. "East Russian Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1908), 113.
9. "Vierteljahrsbericht der deutschen Union-Konferenz vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1907," *Zions-Wächter*, May 6, 1907, 138.
10. Ludwig R. Conradi, "Reise-Erfahrungen," *Zions-Wächter*, December 2, 1907, 394; H. Turowski, "Sitzung des Russische Union," *Zions-Wächter*, December 16, 1907, 409.
11. I did not locate minutes or articles about the occasion when the mission was organized. It first appeared in the first quarter report of 1909 in *Zions-Wächter* and in the *SDA Yearbook* of 1909. In the latter, the church unit has a superscript comment that states that the mission was "cut off from East Russian Mission, Jan. 1, 1909," so it must have been organized sometime the year prior, in 1908. For the statistics, see "Vierteljahrsbericht der Russischen Union vom 1. Januar bis 31. März 1909," *Zions-Wächter*, May 3, 1909, 159.
12. Ludwig R. Conradi, "Progress in the European Division," *ARH*, November 10, 1910, 7.
13. "Volga Mission" and "Ural Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1911), 110-111.
14. Ludwig R. Conradi, "Progress in the European Division," *ARH*, November 10, 1910, 7.
15. Th. Wägele, "Dritte allgemeine Jahresversammlung des Ostrussischen Missionsfeldes," *Zions-Wächter*, November 15, 1909, 375.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000