



## Original Research Article

## POOR AND BURDENED: RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PRIESTS IN ST.PETERSBURG DIOCESE AND ALEKSANDROVSK UEZD AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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### Abstract

This article polemicalises with the post-Soviet school of the historians of Russian Orthodox priesthood, such as the school of M. Gromyko, whose approach is on the whole celebratory rather than seeking to uncover the full reality of priests' conditions. Their aspiration to recover the priesthood from the long period of historical neglect and scorn and show fully the priests' close connection with peasants is laudable and yields fascinating findings, however, what is lacking is a down-to-earth analysis of the actual conditions of priests.

**Key words:** Russian Orthodox, Priesthood, Polemicalises, Uezdy

### Introduction

In 1903 the Saint-Petersburg Agricultural Committee published the minutes of a meeting at which the members of the Committee discussed the peasants' use of credit, the recent developments in cattle-breeding and the economic significance of the peasant commune.<sup>2</sup> Among the most important issues discussed at the meeting was a proposal to introduce agriculture as a subject in seminaries and make priests able to supervise the working practices of peasants so as to improve productivity.<sup>3</sup> Both proposals aimed at extending parish priests' duties beyond the spiritual ones. All the members of the Committee acknowledged that 'the rural parish priest was a member of the society most closely connected to the peasantry',<sup>4</sup> despite the fact that the Committee was a totally secular body made up exclusively of the local intelligentsia<sup>5</sup> whose attitude to rural priests was highly ambivalent.

This article polemicalises with the post-Soviet school of the historians of Russian Orthodox priesthood, such as the school of M. Gromyko, whose approach is on the whole celebratory rather

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<sup>2</sup> *Trudy mestnykh komitetov o nuzhdakh sel'skokhoziaistvennoi promyshlennosti* v.36 (Saint-Petersburg, 1903 - 1904).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41.



than seeking to uncover the full reality of priests' conditions.<sup>6</sup> Their aspiration to recover the priesthood from the long period of historical neglect and scorn and show fully the priests' close connection with peasants is laudable and yields fascinating findings, however, what is lacking is a down-to-earth analysis of the actual conditions of priests.

Recent *critical* historians of the Russian priesthood are much more inclined to draw attention to the actual lifestyles of priests and, in particular, to the mismatch between the ever-increasing responsibilities of priests and their poor economic conditions; they are in agreement that at the turn of the twentieth century rural parish priests were one of the two most oppressed social groups in the Russian Empire (peasantry being the other).<sup>7</sup> However, most of them treat the subject in broad terms or within long time periods.<sup>8</sup> But, as Tatiana Leont'eva has stated, 'generalisations are quite useless... one needs to look at the real circumstances, at the real social environment'.<sup>9</sup> This article constitutes an attempt to provide a focused analysis of parish priests' conditions in Russia at the turn of the twentieth century. It uses published material from the Saint-Petersburg Diocese and previously-uncited in this particular context manuscript sources from the Murmansk regional archive to explore the conditions of parish priests in the selected *uezdy*<sup>10</sup> of the Saint-Petersburg Diocese and Aleksandrovsk *uezd* in the Archangel Diocese during a short period preceding the 1905 Revolution. The brevity of the period enables the author to give an in-depth picture of the spiritual, social and administrative pressures placed on priests and a detailed technical exploration of their material affliction. Also, the close consideration of the period between 1899 and 1904 offers particularly interesting insights for other reasons. In this period spiritual and social demands on rural parish priests seem to have been as high as they had never been before, while the Church administration, with its ever-growing bureaucracy which resulted from its incorporation into the secular administrative apparatus, created a suffocating working environment for priests. Even more important is the fact that the duties of priests multiplied with little corresponding reward. The state had been attempting to alleviate priests' economic conditions since the 1860s.<sup>11</sup> Here the author looks at the fruit the state's attempts bore in forty years' time and concludes that the government demonstrated little managerial thinking when dealing with the provision of priests' material support. The article will also show how numerous demands for money (money collections or *sbory*) from parishes for diocesan and extra-diocesan organisations and charities drained parish resources which could otherwise have been used for the benefit of priests. The article might offer one of the clues to the roots of the 1905 Revolution, because by looking at the oppression of one social order it implies how oppressed the other social orders could be in the Russian society or how the oppression of one social order could have had a profound negative influence on all the others.<sup>12</sup>

The next section describes the main sources used and the localities in Saint-Petersburg and Archangel Dioceses from which our examples are taken. The following section discusses the spiritual and administrative responsibilities of priests in the chosen localities. The third section provides an

<sup>6</sup> For examples of such an approach see T.A.Listova, S.V.Kuznetsov, Kh.V.Poplavskaja (eds.), *Pravoslavnaia zhizn' russkikh krest'ian XIX – XX vekov: itogi etnograficheskikh issledovaniï* (Moscow, 2001); M.M.Gromyko, A.V.Buganov, *O vozzreniiakh russkogo naroda* (Moscow, 2000); M.M.Gromyko (ed.), *Pravoslaviie i ruskaia narodnaia kul'tura* (Moscow, 1993); M.M.Gromyko, *Mir russkoi derevni* (Moscow, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> T.G.Leont'eva, *Vera I progress: pravoslavnoe sel'skoe dukhovenstvo Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XIX – nachale XX vekov* (Moscow, 2002); A.N.Rozov, *Sviashchennik v dukhovnoi zhizni russkoi derevni* (Saint-Petersburg, 2003); S.L.Firsov, *Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' i gosudarstvo v poslednee desiatiletie sushchestvovaniia samoderzhavii v Rossii* (Saint-Petersburg, 1996); G.L.Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in nineteenth-century Russia: crisis, reform, counter-reform* (Princeton, 1983); S.V.Rimskii, *Rossiiskaia tserkov' v epokhu velikikh reform* (Saint-Petersburg, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> E.N.Ropakova, *Uezdnye prikhody Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka* (PhD dissertation, Saint-Petersburg, 1993); N.G. Druzhinkina, *Pravoslavnye prikhody v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XIX – nachale XX veka (na primere Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii)* (Saint-Petersburg, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> T.G.Leont'eva, *Vera i progress*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Uezd* = an administrative subdivision of the empire.

<sup>11</sup> See S.V.Rimskii, *Rossiiskaia tserkov' v epokhu velikikh reform* (Saint-Petersburg, 1997); I.Dobroklonskii, *Rukovodstvo po izucheniiu istorii russkoi tserkvi* (Saint-Petersburg, 1900) and *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei*, issues in the years 1903 and 1904 for the discussion of the state's attempts to alleviate priests' material conditions.

<sup>12</sup> See T.Leont'eva, *Vera i progress*.

analysis of the quality of the economic provision of the parish priests and the burdens of money collections. In the conclusion broader problems are discussed.

### Main Sources for the Study

#### Published sources

##### *Periodicals*

*Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik*, 1895, 1896, 1899;  
*Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii izdavaemye pri zhurnale Otdykh hristianina*, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904

These two periodicals were the unique Church periodicals in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese. They aimed at informing the reader about the state of affairs in the Diocese. *Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik* contained analytical and polemical articles the most substantial and numerous of which were the articles encouraging priests to be more active in their parishes and the articles discussing the financial provision of parish clergy. The issues also contained various charities' appeals. Unfortunately, the periodical had a very short life-span: it started in 1895 and was closed abruptly in 1899.

It was succeeded by *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii izdavaemye pri zhurnale Otdykh hristianina* which first came out in 1901 and had a much longer life-span. The journal had a small 'official part' (*offitsial'naia chast'*) containing the copies of the Holy Synod's decrees and the minutes from clerical meetings and a large 'unofficial part' (*neoffitsial'naia chast'*) containing polemical articles and sermons. From its very start it published a large number of polemical articles on the problems in the Church, most importantly, financial issues.

*Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia o Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii. Izdanie Sankt-Peterburgskogo istoriko-statisticheskogo komiteta. Issues IX, X* (Saint-Petersburg, 1884, 1885);

*Pamiatnaia kniga po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (Saint-Petersburg, 1899)

The analysis of the material provision of parish priests in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese is based on the data derived from these two sources. Facing the impossibility of accessing the Central State Historical Archive of Saint-Petersburg, the author had to find the published sources which would contain an exhaustive or nearly exhaustive data on the priests' material provision in the Diocese. *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (hereafter *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia*) is the one of the only two published sources that contains such information, albeit it was created fifteen years earlier than the period under consideration. *Pamiatnaia kniga po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (hereafter *Pamiatnaia kniga*) is the second of the two published sources which provides the data needed for the analysis of the priests' material provision.

#### Unpublished archival material

The Murmansk regional archive contains documents that had been coming from the State Archive of Leningrad, Archangel regional archive and local archives since 1939.<sup>13</sup> *Klirovye vedomosti* are among the most valuable sources for the study of the parish clergy. *Klirovye vedomosti* are manuscript books providing detailed information about each parish: the physical state of the church buildings and chapels, the money donated for the church and parish clergy, the capitals of both the church and parish clergy, the state of the parish school and parish charities, the brief biography and behaviour of each member of the clerical staff, the characteristics of the church warden and other matters. They were filled in by the parish clergy and church wardens. *Klirovye vedomosti* are available only in regional or consistorial archives. The archive collections presented a number of problems. Firstly, the documents are relatively sparse which naturally does not permit the fuller treatment of the subject as one might desire. The collections have not been classified carefully and are

<sup>13</sup> *Arkhivnaia spravka*, pp.1 – 3.

not in chronological order. As a result in most cases it is impossible to trace the full process of any matter initiated in parishes. For example, in some cases we only have *blagochinnyi*'s requests with no possibility of finding out how priests responded because there is no document; in other cases there are priests' responses but no *blagochinnyi*'s answers. The third typical example is when there was a brief written exchange between the *blagochinnyi* and a parish priest the outcome of which is unknown because documents were lost or put in a different *delo*.

### The Setting

The Saint-Petersburg Diocese was situated in the European North-West of the Empire. It was one of the biggest dioceses and the home of the imperial capital.<sup>14</sup> Three of the *uezdy* in this Diocese – Novaia Ladoga, Luga and Gdov – have been selected for the close analysis. They were chosen for a number of reasons: as one can see from the tables below, they were the largest in the diocese, their rural economies were least likely to have been drawn into serving the economic needs of the capital (with the exception of Novaia Ladoga *uezd* which had several factories) and the majority of people in these dioceses were peasants.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 1. Total number of rural parishes**

Saint-Petersburg <i>uezd</i> including Peterhoff <i>blagochinie</i>	26
Iamburg	20
Gdov	43
Tsarskoe Selo	15
Shlissel'burg	13
Novaia Ladoga	54
Luga	42
Total	211

Source: *Pamiatnaia kniga po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (Saint-Petersburg, 1899), pp. 211 - 475

**Figure 2. Number of parishioners per *uezd***

Saint-Petersburg <i>uezd</i> including Peterhoff <i>blagochinie</i>	60999
Yamburg	38605
Gdov	125590
Tsarskoe Selo	41189
Shlissel'burg	20732
Novaia Ladoga	73122
Luga	92777

Source: *Pamiatnaia kniga po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (Saint-Petersburg, 1899), pp. 211 - 475

**Figure 3. Number of priests per *uezd***

Saint-Petersburg <i>uezd</i> including Peterhoff <i>blagochinie</i>	34
Yamburg	21
Gdov	50
Tsarskoe Selo	18
Shlissel'burg	14
Novaia Ladoga	54
Luga	45

Source: *Pamiatnaia kniga po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (Saint-Petersburg, 1899), pp. 211 - 475

Our second locality, Aleksandrovsk *uezd*, was part of the Archangel Diocese situated in the far European North of the Empire. The *uezd* was peripheral, characterized by harsh climatic conditions and poor communications.<sup>16</sup> The population consisted of the permanent and temporary

<sup>14</sup> *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia o Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii I* (Saint-Petersburg, 1869).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, issue 9, p.70.

<sup>16</sup> Kozlov, *Materialy dlia geografii i statistiki Rossii*, pp. 102 – 104.

Russian settlers and the indigenous Lopari tribe.<sup>17</sup> By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century all the Lopari were Orthodox.<sup>18</sup> Below are the tables providing basic statistical information on the *uezd*.

**Figure 4. Names of the parishes in each *blagochinie***

1 <sup>st</sup> <i>blagochinie</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>blagochinie</i>
Kil'din	Kashkarantsy
Notozero	Varzuga
Lovozero	Chapoma
Pechenga	Tetrino
Pazretsk	Kuzomen'
Teriberka	Ponoi
Gavrilovsk	

Source: *Kratkoe istoricheskoe opisaniie prikhodov i tserkvei Arhangel'skoi eparkhii. Vypusk III. Uezdy: Onezhskii, Kemskaia i Kol'skii* (Archangel, 1898), pp. 212 – 261

**Figure 5. Number of parishioners and priests per *blagochinie***

**1<sup>st</sup> *blagochinie***

Parishioners	Priests
1923	7

**2<sup>nd</sup> *blagochinie***

Parishioners	Priests
3901	6

Source: *Kratkoe istoricheskoe opisaniie prikhodov i tserkvei Arhangel'skoi eparkhii. Vypusk III. Uezdy: Onezhskii, Kemskaia i Kol'skii* (Archangel, 1898), pp. 212 – 261

As we will show the material conditions of priests in these two localities provide a startling contrast and point out forcefully the grave mismanagement of priests' material provision in the centre in comparison to the periphery.

## Chapter 2. Spiritual Duties and Administrative Pressures

The analysis of the periodicals published in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese reveals that the moral and social expectations placed on rural parish priests grew substantially by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: they were supposed not only to minister services and rites and lead a highly moral life, but also to be good preachers, exemplary catechisers, teachers and establishers of parish charities. The *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* (hereafter *Izvestiia*) published a growing number of articles which demanded the priest to be socially active in his parish. In N1 of the 1901 issue of the *Izvestiia* one contributor urged priests to establish various parish organisations in which parishioners could actively participate. He gave an example of a 'parish house' which he described as 'the centre of education for the whole parish, not just children'.<sup>19</sup>

Articles in the Saint-Petersburg diocesan periodicals frequently discussed what good preaching and an ideal sermon should be. In many it was repeatedly claimed that ideal preaching should be 'not eloquent but lively and related to the life of the parishioners'.<sup>20</sup> An unknown author complained in N35 of the 1895 issue of *Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik*: '[it is most unfortunate that] there are still people who dislike preaching'.<sup>21</sup> A contributor to the *Izvestiia* complaining about the lack of active preaching in Novaia Ladoga *uezd* wrote: 'in many cases priests

<sup>17</sup> K.V. Kozmin, 'Istoricheskii obzor Murmanskogo berega', *Izvestiia ArkhOIRS I* (1915), pp. 1 – 8.

<sup>18</sup> Kozlov, *Materialy dlia geografii*, p. 219; D.N.Ostrovskii, *Putevoditel' po Severu Rossii* (Saint-Petersburg, 1898), p.86.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15; *Izvestiia* 4 (1902), p.2.

<sup>20</sup> *Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik* 37 (1895), p.861; 35 (1895), p.800.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.800

do not prepare sermons. Those sermons that they have do not correspond to specific needs of their parishes... They should compose sermons on their own... this is a hard work for a priest... firstly, he does not have much time to do this. Secondly, he has grown used to the bureaucratic language of reports and accounts so it is not easy for him to adopt the language and style appropriate for a sermon'.<sup>22</sup> The stress was now put not so much on the 'right kind of preaching' as on improvisation and liveliness of preaching. Many of the review sections in the *Izvestiia* were devoted to the books about preaching.

Apart from establishing various parish organisations, priests were supposed to be actively teaching at parish schools. Manuscript sources from Aleksandrovsk *uezd* contain several documents related to the parish school in a small remote village of Kashkarantsy that would thoroughly convince anyone venturing to criticize parish priests that teaching at parish schools was far from an easy endeavour.<sup>23</sup> The 'Classroom journal of catechism lessons for 1898 – 1899' contains a plan for classes in catechism for children from 8 to 14 of age. The plan appears to be very thorough and well-structured: apart from the close study of the Bible it included a close consideration of each dogmatic statement in the Athanasian Creed.<sup>24</sup> Pupils were supposed to receive a systematic knowledge of the Orthodoxy by the end of the course.

Apart from the catechism, the documents show that a typical parish school programme included the grammar of the Russian language,<sup>25</sup> written and spoken Russian language, arithmetic, dictation and calligraphy.<sup>26</sup> The following table shows the number of lessons held in Kashkarantsy parish school each year: (table 1)<sup>27</sup>

Lessons	First semester (half a year)	Second semester
Basic Catechism	50	16
Church singing	15	9
Church-Slavonic – grammar	34	17
Reading Russian	71	31
Dictations	70	22
Copying from books	64	17
Essays	44	26
Good handwriting	61	21
Maths	88	31

It is clear that following such an intensive teaching programme in a sparsely populated *uezd* and challenging climatic conditions on top of attending to the parishioners' spiritual needs was an undisputed achievement of the priests.

To these spiritual and social duties of priests an enormous burden of administrative pressures was added. The following examples of these pressures are taken from the manuscript sources from Aleksandrovsk *uezd*. They show that absolutely any matter the *blagochinnyi* inquired about had to be reported. In 1904, for example, the priest of a tiny parish of Rynda that had just been established in Aleksandrovsk *uezd* sent the following reports to the *blagochinnyi*: two income-expenditure books, a report on married couples (*kniga brachnykh obyskov*) for the years 1903 and 1904, two parish register books (*metricheskie knigi*), four copies of the *klirovye vedomosti*, information on the payments received for the burial rite, three copies of the information (*vedomosti*) A and 'vedomosti B, C, E and

<sup>22</sup> *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* 9 (1903), p.19.

<sup>23</sup> Gosudarstvennyi Arkiv Murmanskoi Oblasti (GAMO), f.11-I.

<sup>24</sup> GAMO, f.11-I, op.1, d.8.

<sup>25</sup> GAMO, f.11-I, op.1, d.10, l.40.

<sup>26</sup> GAMO, f.11-I, op.1, d.10, l.9.

<sup>27</sup> GAMO, f.11-I, op.1, d.10, l.40.

F' (the author was not able to identify the subject of the latter items because of the lack of the document).<sup>28</sup>

Some *fondy* contain *dela* with letters from the *blagochinnyi* requiring reports concerning day-to-day matters in a number astounding for such a small and distant *uezd* as Aleksandrovsk.<sup>29</sup> The greatest number of reports was concerned with the building and maintenance of churches. A letter sent on 5th of November, 1903, from the *blagochinnyi* to all the parishes contained the following order: 'the building of a church and all maintenance works must be described in detail in separate reports. It is also imperative and absolutely necessary to refer to the articles in the Consistorial regulations [which give permission for the maintenance works]'.<sup>30</sup> In Teriberka in 1902 a request 'to allow use the 117 roubles 25 copecks interest from 700 roubles of the church capital for the instalment of new altarpieces in St. Elijah church and the church of the Mother of God' was sent to the *blagochinnyi*.<sup>31</sup> The instalment of these altarpieces, the fortification of the basement in one of the churches and the building of the fence around the parish cemetery was very closely and persistently monitored by the *blagochinnyi*. It is evident from the fact that a considerable correspondence with regard to these matters between the *blagochinnyi* and the Teriberka parish had been generated in that year.<sup>32</sup>

The *blagochinnye* often sent books and journals to the parish clergy in their *blagochinie*. It was mandatory for the clergy to report their reception. For example, on 7<sup>th</sup> of June, 1900, the clergy of the Lovozero parish reported to the *blagochinnyi* that 'the two service journals ... and four issues of 'Theology in Conversations' have been received by us'.<sup>33</sup> There are many reports of this sort in other *dela* and *fondy*.<sup>34</sup>

The number and content of sermons was also to be reported. At a set time during the year the *blagochinnyi* required all parish priests in his *blagochinie* to send brief reports on the number and content of sermons they pronounced at services and outside services. We find examples of these reports from Pazretsk, Kildin and Teriberka parishes.<sup>35</sup>

The *blagochinnyi* regularly required the information on who did and who did not confess and receive the Holy Communion. In addition, *blagochinnye* often inquired into the ways priests encouraged people to 'fulfill their Christian duty' (i.e. confessing and receiving the Holy Communion): if they traveled enough within the parish, visited their parishioners and performed rites in their households and the like.<sup>36</sup>

Every year the parish priest had to send copies of the parish registers. These were large folios filled in by the priest with detailed information on births and deaths. The section on births required them to put down the information on every single birth: the name of the child, its parents' and godparents' names and the place of birth. Similarly, the section on deaths had to include the information on the names of the deceased, the causes of their death and the priest who administered the burial rite.<sup>37</sup>

The clergy also had to send reports on the mortality in their parish when epidemics were rife.<sup>38</sup> A unique consistorial order sent on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, 1901, asked the *blagochinnyi* 'to send out eight copies of the following book to the parishes "How to prevent and cure abscess of children's

<sup>28</sup> GAMO, f. I-17, op.1, d.286, l.2.

<sup>29</sup> For example, the *fond* of Varzuga Uspenskii parish, f. I-8.

<sup>30</sup> GAMO, f.I-7, op.1, d.89, l.55.

<sup>31</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.256, l.7.

<sup>32</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.256, ll. 7,8,9.

<sup>33</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, o.1, d.207, l.8

<sup>34</sup> For example, f.I-17, d.269

<sup>35</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.207, ll.26 – 32; d.233, ll.5, 6.

<sup>36</sup> GAMO, f.I-7, op.1, d.85, ll.19, 21.

<sup>37</sup> An example of such a folio is in the Umba parish *fond* in GAMO, f. I-19, op.1, d.155a.

<sup>38</sup> GAMO, f.I-7, op.1, d.85, l.37.

eyes” by doctor Reich. In every parish priests should raise awareness of the illnesses described in this book by conversing with parishioners’.<sup>39</sup>

The clergy were supposed to report regularly about the Old Believers and sects. For example, on 21<sup>st</sup> of November, 1900, the clergy of the Notozero parish sent such report to the *blagochinnyi*.<sup>40</sup>

Since about 1880s the clergy also had to report to the *blagochinnyi* on the origins of brides and bridegrooms who wanted to be married in a parish other than their own immediately after they announced the intent to get married to the parish priest. This was called a *brachnyi obysk*. In order to obtain the necessary information the priest of the parish where the marriage ceremony was to be held had to send a request to the parish where the bride and bridegroom originated. This could be a long and cumbersome process.<sup>41</sup> An example of such a request can be found in ‘Instructions and correspondence of the *blagochinnyi* of the second Aleksandrovsk *blagochinie*’ *delo*. A request sent from Kashkarantsy to Varzuga says: ‘the clergy of the Kashkarantsy parish asks your parish clergy to find out from the records about the maiden Melaniia Kuznetsova currently residing in the Kashkarantsy village’.<sup>42</sup>

Parish priests not only had to send all these reports to the *blagochinnyi*; they also had to endure his close scrutiny of the reports. Any mistakes could be punished ruthlessly: the *blagochinnyi* could fine the clergy that sent him wrong information.<sup>43</sup> Some of the *klirovye vedomosti* which the author looked at are dotted with abundant marks made by the *blagochinnyi* in red ink.<sup>44</sup> An interesting letter illustrating the ruthlessness of this scrutiny was sent to the *blagochinnyi* by the clergy of the Teriberka parish: ‘this is our income-expenditure book for the three-year period, 1900 – 1903. We have revised it as you required. However, we are perplexed why you have written “21 roubles 15 copecks” for the year 1900. We did not receive this money at all in that year. Therefore we ask you to inform us when you correct this misinformation. [It appears that] you *besmeared* (*peremarat*) all across the income-expenditure report we sent you in the first place only to put this misinformation in the end’.<sup>45</sup>

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I have shown that priesthood in rural parishes was an unenviably demanding calling. By the beginning of the twentieth century moral and social responsibilities of priests were very high as the analysis of the Saint-Petersburg diocesan periodicals have shown, while highly bureaucratized Church administration with its unceasing controls and constant demands for various reports created a suffocating working environment for priests as our manuscript sources have shown.

### Chapter 3. The Material Provision of Rural Parish Priests

The responsibilities of and pressures placed on priests were high, as it has been demonstrated in the previous section. However, the reward for their hard work was unfair, to say the least. In this section a detailed technical exposition of the grave mismanagement of priests’ material conditions in the selected *uezdy* of the Saint-Petersburg Diocese is given. It is contrasted to the relative well-being of priests in Aleksandrovsk *uezd*. In the final part of the chapter it is demonstrated in detail using both periodicals and archival material how the money collections from parishes or *sbory* diverted valuable resources from priests and parishes.

<sup>39</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.230, l.2.

<sup>40</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.207, l.7.

<sup>41</sup> *Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik* all issues (1899).

<sup>42</sup> GAMO, f.I-7, op.1, d.85, l.2.

<sup>43</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.5.

<sup>44</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.203; f.7-I, op.1, d.81; f.I-17, op.1, d.283.

<sup>45</sup> GAMO, f.17-I, op.1, d. 253, l.7.



At the turn of the twentieth century, there was a growing awareness of despicable material conditions of priests.<sup>46</sup> The mismatch between rural priests' spiritual and administrative pressures and their exceedingly poor remuneration was glaring. The Saint-Petersburg diocesan periodicals featured an increasing number of articles that discussed the issue of the 'unbearable material conditions of the clergy'<sup>47</sup> and, in particular, the practice of asking for emoluments with an alarming outspokenness and even poignancy. In 1902 *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* published a moving article based on a story about a certain father Parfenii. The story was contributed by the priest's close friend. Here it is quoted in an abridged version.

... [I knew him as a student] ... he could have become a true apostle of the Russian Church... However, after eight or ten years of service he became despondent and addicted to alcohol... I met him [shortly before he died] and he told me about his life ... The parish where he was ordained was one of the poorest in the *uezd*... There were only thirty-three *destyatin* of land for the clergy which yielded thirty roubles per year. Regular parish collections for the benefit of the clergy yielded from thirty to forty roubles. There were no other sources of income. Father Parfenii had a big family and, naturally, had to support it. [Having no other alternative] the poor father "*poshel v pobor*" (bargaining for emoluments). At first, he was very anxious about this ... he even became physically ill, [not to say that] sometimes he was really desperate. Then he had grown used to it... he began to drink so his consciousness and reason might not disturb him... he died of tuberculosis. Before his very death he said: 'I wanted to shine before God like a candle! I wanted to serve Him with all my strength! But these terrible conditions, the whole atmosphere with its excessive care about daily bread ruined me....'<sup>48</sup>

It will be shown that state-based source of support comprising state salaries and the interest on the clerical capital was minimal in most parishes. In addition, priests were not allowed to use the interest on the capitals of their churches, while the clerical land yielded too little. Faced with this unfortunate situation priests could either resort to the community-based source of support (which was mainly emoluments) or, had the local community ceased to provide them, be thrown into abject poverty because the state support was too poor.

### 3.1 Let us first assess the adequacy of the state support of rural parish priests.

The author has established multiple criteria to assess the adequacy of state salaries. Here three hundred roubles per annum are taken as a minimum or a benchmark salary. If the priest received three hundred roubles per year he could hope to attain a little more stability and gradually move away from the dependence upon the community-based means of support. What are the criteria that make three hundred roubles a benchmark salary? The table below provides useful information:

**Figure 6. Salaries of state employees**

Factory worker	180 roubles per annum
A factory worker in Saint-Petersburg	From 300 to 420 roubles p.a.
Labour aristocracy	From 600 to 960 roubles p.a.
Lowest ranks of civil servants ( <i>mladshie chinovniki</i> )	240 p.a.
Zemstvo doctors	960 p.a.
Doctors' assistants	420 p.a.
Rural medical assistants	660 p.a.
Gymnasium teachers	From 960 p.a. to 1200 p.a.

Source:

[http://www.talers.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=81&Itemid=108&limitstart=2](http://www.talers.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=81&Itemid=108&limitstart=2)p

<sup>46</sup> *Rukovodstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* (1899, 1903, 1904), 19 (1903), p.51; *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* 6, 7 (1902); *Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik* 28 (1899), p.3.

<sup>47</sup> *Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik* 45 (1899), p.10.

<sup>48</sup> *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* 8 (1902), p.11.

It can be seen that having an irregular timetable, greater responsibilities and pressures a parish priest in receipt of 300 roubles p.a. earned little more than a civil servant of the lowliest rank. He also earned significantly below a rural medical assistant. At the same time, he could still be considered fortunate, because the majority of his fellow priests in the selected *uezdy* of the Saint-Petersburg Diocese received much less than 300 roubles of state salary as will be shown.

Secondly, 300 roubles was the latest revised endowment from the treasury. Most of the priests in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese were first endowed with the state salary of 240 in 1840s and 1850s. Later, in 1880s immediately before our period the treasury revised and raised the salary to 300.<sup>49</sup> However, far from all of the priests received the revised salary.

In *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* in a few instances the parish clergy made it clear that their provision was inadequate. For example, the parish clergy in Kusyagi, Novaia Ladoga *uezd*, acknowledged that 649 roubles derived from emoluments and donations for the whole clerical staff were ‘not enough’.<sup>50</sup> The clergy in *pogost* Gvozdno admitted that 537 roubles p.a. for the clergy (approx. 360 for the priest) from emoluments and donations constituted a ‘very poor income’.<sup>51</sup>

The formal criteria of the assessment of the state salaries being established, the analysis of state salaries in Novaia Ladoga, Gdov and Luga *uezdy* of the Saint-Petersburg Diocese as for 1899 can be given.

In Novaia Ladoga *uezd* out of 54 priests only three received significantly above 300 roubles p.a.<sup>52</sup> Eighteen received 300 roubles p.a.<sup>53</sup> The overwhelming majority, however, received 240<sup>54</sup> or below 240 (from 205 to 220) roubles p.a. which was significantly below the benchmark of 300.<sup>55</sup>

Out of 45 parish priests in the Luga *uezd* 16 priests received 300 roubles of state salary per annum.<sup>56</sup> Four priests received the amount significantly above 300.<sup>57</sup> 25 priests received 240 roubles or below.<sup>58</sup> One priest was not endowed with the salary.<sup>59</sup>

The analysis reveals a curious trend which further confirms that the material provision of the priests was mismanaged. Priests in less populous parishes tended to receive more state salary, while the priests in more populous parishes received less. It was somewhat of a paradox: since the introduction of state salaries on a large scale in the 1840s and 1860s the government discouraged the priests’ reliance on the community-based means of support, but at the same time it hoped that the more parishioners a priest had the less salary he needed because a large community would be capable of providing for him.

The priest of St. Paraskeva parish in Verkhovina, Novaia Ladoga *uezd* catered to 348 people, the smallest parish of the *uezd*, yet he received 494 roubles 80 copecks of the yearly state salary.<sup>60</sup> The priest of the Holy Prophetess Anna’s church in Vigota village was the only one in the first *blagochinie* of Novaia Ladoga *uezd* who received a formidable sum of 600 roubles of the state salary per year.<sup>61</sup> By contrast, his fellow priests in the sprawling Zabolot’e parish (4603 people) received 240 and 170

<sup>49</sup> *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia o Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* 9 (1884), p.17.

<sup>50</sup> *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia*, p.311 – 312.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>52</sup> *Pamiatnaia kniga*, p.420, 421, 390, 380, 381.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 382 – 383, 397, 400-401, 404-405, 404-406, 406-407, 407-408, 408-409, 411-412, 413-414, 418-419, 421, 422-423, 423-424, 425, 426.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 372-373, 374, 378-379, 383, 384-385, 389-390, 390-392, 393-394, 399, 401-402, 402-403, 404, 407-408.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 375, 376-377, 379, 387, 385-386, 388-389, 392-3, 395-396, 396-397, 398-399, 417-418, 426-427.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 430, 436-438, 440-441, 442-443, 450-454, 457-458, 460-461, 462-463, 466-467.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 431 – 434, 438-439, 447-448.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 429, 434-436, 439-440, 445-446, 447, 452-453, 454-455, 456, 459, 461-466, 467-475.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 439.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.380-381.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 390.

each.<sup>62</sup> The priests in receipt of the salaries higher than 300 roubles looked after the smallest parishes in the *uezd* with 915<sup>63</sup>, 525<sup>64</sup> and 628 parishioners respectively.<sup>65</sup> All other parishes had between 1000 and 2000 people: their priests, except those few who received 300 roubles, all received between 200 and 240 roubles. In the third *blagochinie* the priest in Pashskii *pogost*, the largest village in the *blagochinie* (3285 people) received the smallest salary (200).<sup>66</sup> The priest of the Masel'gsk parish, the third largest parish of the *blagochinie* (22122 parishioners) received a miniscule sum of 213 roubles.<sup>67</sup>

The asset which the state could have used to render priests more prosperous and more independent of the local community was the interest on the clerical capital. The author would argue that the State Bank should have given more interest on clerical capitals. The sums stored in the State Bank as clerical capitals were in many cases ample, but the interests on them received by the parish priests were miniscule. The detailed analysis of the amounts of clerical capital and interests received on them in Gdov *uezd* will reveal this profound mismatch.

In the first *blagochinie* out of 10 parishes four did not have any clerical capital at all.<sup>68</sup> The majority had in the range between 150 and 500 and hence the priests there received the interest in the range between 4 and 13 roubles.<sup>69</sup> In the second *blagochinie* out of 15 parishes two did not have any clerical capital,<sup>70</sup> four had above 1000 with their priests receiving 29, 43, 67 and 81 roubles of interest on these.<sup>71</sup> The rest had the clerical capital in the range between 150 and 800 with modest interests between four roubles and 23 roubles.<sup>72</sup> In the third *blagochinie* three parishes did not have any clerical capital.<sup>73</sup> Two had 100 roubles which yielded a miniscule sum of 2 roubles for the priest.<sup>74</sup> The majority had between 375 and 800. A large sum of 2174 in one parish yielded only approximately 70 roubles for the priest.<sup>75</sup> 851 roubles could yield only 23 roubles p.a. for the priest.<sup>76</sup>

In Novaia Ladoga *uezd* only five parishes had in the range between 2000 and 7000 roubles put in the bank as the clerical capital. From the lowest to the highest the capitals in this range yielded 67, 94, 143, 187 and 159 roubles p.a. for the priest. For example, the priest in Podberezh'e parish received 187 roubles on 6585 roubles which was the largest clerical capital in the *uezd*.<sup>77</sup> The priest in Kusyagi village, received 1 rouble per annum on 100 roubles of the clerical capital.<sup>78</sup>

The state could have compensated for this inadequacy of provision if it allowed parish priests access to their churches' capital. However, the access was denied. The parish priest in Krasnye Gory, 1<sup>st</sup> *blagochinie* of Luga *uezd*, received a miniscule sum of 200 roubles of the state salary p.a. and did not have access to 2427 roubles of the church capital.<sup>79</sup> The church capital of 5500 roubles, the most substantial church capital in the *uezd*, was owned by the parish church in Tursk *pogost*, 2<sup>nd</sup> *blagochinie*. The priest who earned 240 roubles of the state salary and 8 roubles of the clerical capital p.a. could not access that capital.<sup>80</sup> There were very few exceptions.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 378 – 379.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 397.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 400 – 401.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 400 – 401.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 417 – 418.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 426 – 427.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 293 – 294, 292, 2901, 290, 285 – 286.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 282 – 283, 286-287, 288-289, 291-292.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp.309, 299-300.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 304-305, 301-302, 307-308, 297-298.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp.294-5, 295-6, 297, 298, 299, 302 – 303, 304, 306 – 307, 308.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp.313-314, 317-318, 327.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. pp. 325, 326.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp.320 – 321.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 314- 315.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 388 – 389.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 377.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 435 – 436.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 459.

In Novaia Ladoga *uezd* most churches had between 1000 and 4000 roubles.<sup>82</sup> In a number of cases the church capital was above 4000.<sup>83</sup> Yet the clergy did not have access to this money. The priest in Pashskii *pogost*, for example, received 200 roubles p.a. and did not have access to the most formidable church capital of 26724.<sup>84</sup>

The other source of income the priests might have used was clerical land, however, the land yielded an insignificant income. *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* and *Pamiatnaia kniga* contain a few figures from which an average amount of the income from the clerical land can be discerned. The clergy of St. Nicholas church in Rli, Gdov *uezd* had 33 *desyatin* of land but ‘it yielded little’.<sup>85</sup> The parish clergy of Staraiia Ladoga, Novaia Ladoga *uezd*, lent 58 *desyatin* of good land lent which yielded 80 roubles per year for the whole clerical staff.<sup>86</sup>

Having a poor support from the state and the clerical land, the priests were forced to either rely on emoluments and donations or fall into abject poverty, had the community ceased to support them. The problem was that having introduced state salaries first in the 1840s in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese and then on a larger scale from 1860s onwards, the government explicitly prohibited emoluments, as *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* tell us: ‘when the priests were endowed with salaries emoluments were prohibited. The prohibition was enforced through village authorities who forbade peasants to give priests *ruga* or any payments for the administration of rites’.<sup>87</sup> The fact that emoluments and other elements of community-based source of support are not mentioned in *Pamiatnaia kniga* further confirms that officially the practice of giving emoluments was supposed to have ceased by 1899. *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* inform that after the endowment of the priests with state salaries in the 1840s in a few parishes of the Saint-Petersburg Diocese the practice had indeed stopped.<sup>88</sup> In Petrovskii *pogost*, Luga *uezd*, for example, ‘after the endowment of the parish clergy with the state salary other elements of material support provided by the community ceased’.<sup>89</sup>

It is, however, all reasonable to believe that in our period the non-state, community-based sources of financial support were still at the basis of priests’ material standing in the majority of parishes, however desperate the authorities were trying to eliminate them. The *klirovye vedomosti* and *prikhodo-raskhodnye knigi* from Aleksandrovsk *uezd* show that the priests still received emoluments and *ruga* in 1900.<sup>90</sup> It is reasonable to believe that priests in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese too still relied on emoluments. In almost all the parishes in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese the first salaries were introduced in 1840s and 1850s, however, as *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* show, emoluments and *ruga* were not eliminated after 1850s.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, it is unlikely that these means of support were eliminated by 1899 either. The escalating number of angry articles castigating emoluments in the Saint-Petersburg diocesan periodicals points quite aptly that they were still very much in place.<sup>92</sup>

In some instances the fact that the priests continued receiving emoluments and other community-based sources of support after being endowed with the state salary is clearly stated in the sources. In the parish church of Butkov *pogost*, Novaia Ladoga *uezd*, for example, ‘the income from emoluments and land remained after the clergy had been endowed with the state salary in 1844’.<sup>93</sup> The other pointer is the fact that since the last endowment with the state salary in the 1840s and

<sup>81</sup> *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* 9 (1884), pp. 469 – 472.

<sup>82</sup> *Pamiatnaia kniga*, pp. 383, 389, 391, 393, 396, 398, 400, 412, 418, 420, 423.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 374, 375, 394, 377, 387, 402, 406.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417.

<sup>85</sup> *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* 9, p. 180.

<sup>86</sup> *Pamiatnaia kniga*, pp. 385 – 386.

<sup>87</sup> *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* 9, p.17.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.152 – 153.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.415.

<sup>90</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.203, l.28; f.I-17, op.1, d.232, l.35; f.I-7, op.1, d.78, l.20.

<sup>91</sup> Examples can be found in *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* 9 on pp.391, 395, 396; *ibid.* 10, p. 283. Also see the section on emoluments below.

<sup>92</sup> See chapter two of the dissertation.

<sup>93</sup> *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia*, p. 391.

1880s, in 1899 there had not been any increase of the salary for most of the priests in the low-salaried category.

For example, many priests who were last endowed with 200 roubles of the salary in 1843 remained with 200 roubles in 1899, especially in Gdov *uezd*,<sup>94</sup> as the *Pamiatnaia kniga* shows.

Having endowed the priests with state salaries the government aimed at gradually moving priests away from the reliance on the community-based sources of support. The following analysis of the proportions of the community-based and state-based sources of support for the year 1899 is a significantly levelled speculation, because the figures for emoluments are for the year 1885. In Novaia Ladoga *uezd* twenty out of 54 were the parishes where the state means of support of parish priests superseded the community-based means of support. Seventeen were the ones where the state and community-based means of support were roughly equal. In thirteen parishes the community-based means of support were significantly larger than the state means of support.

In Gdov *uezd* in twelve parishes the state-based means of support superseded the community-based means of support. In a very few cases it was explicitly stated that emoluments ceased after the priests were endowed with the salary. The parish priest in Kuroksha village, for example, received 300 roubles and ‘almost no income’ from emoluments.<sup>95</sup> In six parishes the state means of support were roughly equal with the community-based means of support. In 24 parishes the state means of support were lagging behind the community-based means of support. The priest of St. Nicholas church in Kamennyi *pogost* received 224 roubles of salary and the interest on the clerical capital. His income from emoluments and donations yielded approximately 402 roubles p.a.<sup>96</sup> The priest in Pavlovo received 211 roubles of state salary and the interest on the clerical capital. His income from emoluments and donations amounted to slight more than 402.<sup>97</sup>

This analysis shows that the state-based sources of support – the salary and the interest on the clerical capital – were so inadequate that had the community refused to support its parish priest he would have been thrown into an abject poverty.

Not only potentially creating a conflict, because in many cases a priest had to *ask* for them, emoluments and other community-based sources of support were highly unpredictable and unstable. They never gave priests complete assurance. *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* show that there was never a correlation between the number of parishioners and the amount they paid for rites or donated. The priest could receive 266 roubles per year in emoluments and donations from 759 parishioners.<sup>98</sup> By contrast, the priest in a parish with a much higher population of, say, 1251 parishioners could receive about the same amount.<sup>99</sup>

In a number of cases the contributors to the *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* commented on the poor quality of and the uncertainty about the receipt of certain types of community-based sources of support. In the article on the parish of the Holy Cross in Shizhnema it was stated that emoluments and donations were ‘insignificant’.<sup>100</sup> The parishioners in village Gorodische ‘refused to give *ruga*’ to the clergy.<sup>101</sup> In Pchevo parishioners gave to the clergy *Petrovschina* and *Osenschina* that consisted of 10 sacks of oats and rye and ‘was not always of a good quality’. Moreover, the priest ‘could never rely on its due return’.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> See page 35 of the dissertation.

<sup>95</sup> *Istoriko-statisticheskie svedeniia* 10, p.278; *Pamiatnaia kniga*, pp. 326 – 327.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141 – 142.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144- 151.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 192 – 193.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 319 – 321.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 213 – 216.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211 – 212.

### 3.2 The material provision of rural parish priests in Aleksandrovsk uezd

The bishop of Saint-Petersburg was expressing a bitter truth when he said that ‘most of the priests in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese are poorer than their counterparts on peripheries’.<sup>103</sup> The priests in most parishes in Aleksandrovsk *uezd* were indeed much better provided with the state means of support than their fellow priests in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese. They did not have to rely heavily on emoluments and donations. In fact, these community-based means of support constituted a small part of the priest’s income in most of the parishes. The following are the statistical tables that have been compiled on the basis of the two types of sources. The population figures have been derived from the printed source *Kratkoe istoricheskoe opisanie prikhodov i tserkvei Arkhangel’skoi eparkhii. Vypusk 3. Uezdy Onezhskii, Kemskii i Kol’skii* (Archangel, 1898). Other figures have been derived from the manuscript sources. The tables compare the state- and community-based means of support of the priests in the biggest parishes of the *uezd*.

**Figure 7. Kil’din parish**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> blagochinie

Year	State salary and clerical capital (roubles per annum)	Emoluments and donations for the priest (roubles per annum)
1900	490 <sup>104</sup>	53 <sup>105</sup>
1901	490 <sup>106</sup>	35 <sup>107</sup>
1902	490 <sup>108</sup>	41 <sup>109</sup>
1903	490 of salary and 200 of clerical capital <sup>110</sup>	49 <sup>111</sup>
Population	no more than 300 <sup>112</sup>	

**Figure 8. Notozero parish**

Year	State salary and clerical capital (roubles per annum)	Emoluments and donations for the priest (roubles per annum)
1900	392 of state salary; 100 of capital and 25 of travel money <sup>113</sup>	65 <sup>114</sup>
1901	392 of salary and 100 of clerical capital <sup>115</sup>	84 and 30 from fishing <sup>116</sup>
1902	392 of salary and 100 of capital <sup>117</sup>	111 <sup>118</sup>
1903	500 of clerical capital; 392 of the salary <sup>119</sup>	94 <sup>120</sup>
Population	No more than 400 parishioners <sup>121</sup>	

<sup>103</sup> *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* 1 (1903), p.8

<sup>104</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.203, l.28.

<sup>105</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.203, l.28.

<sup>106</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.232, ll.31 – 44.

<sup>107</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.232, ll.31 – 44.

<sup>108</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.235, ll.4 – 5.

<sup>109</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.235, ll.4 – 5.

<sup>110</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.283, ll.33 – 46.

<sup>111</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.283, ll.33 – 46.

<sup>112</sup> *Kratkoe istoricheskoe opisanie*, p. 250.

<sup>113</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.203, ll.30, 31, 32.

<sup>114</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.203, ll.30.

<sup>115</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.232, l.51.

<sup>116</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.232, l.56.

<sup>117</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.235, ll. 4,5.

<sup>118</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.235, ll. 4,5.

<sup>119</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.283, ll.65-75.

<sup>120</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.283, ll.65-75.

<sup>121</sup> *Kratkie istoricheskie svedeniia*, p. 212.

**Figure 9. Lovozero parish**

Year	State salary and clerical capital (roubles per annum)	Emoluments and donations for the priest (roubles per annum)
1900	392 of salary <sup>122</sup>	171 <sup>123</sup>
1901	400 of salary; 300 of clerical capital <sup>124</sup>	90 of emoluments; 2-5 from <i>tonia</i> <sup>125</sup>
1902		
1903	400 of salary; 400 of clerical capital <sup>126</sup>	159 <sup>127</sup>
Population	no more than 500 <sup>128</sup>	

**Figure 10. Teriberka parish**

Year	State salary and clerical capital (roubles per annum)	Emoluments and donations for the priest (roubles per annum)
1900	588 of salary <sup>129</sup>	192 <sup>130</sup>
1901	588 of salary <sup>131</sup>	151 <sup>132</sup>
1902	No information found, but in all probability the state salary remained the same	188 <sup>133</sup>
1903	200 of clerical capital and 600 of state salary <sup>134</sup>	148 <sup>135</sup>
Population	no more than 150 parishioners <sup>136</sup>	

**2<sup>nd</sup> blagochinie**

In the second *blagochinie* the situation was more mixed.

The Varzuga parish was, by and large, an exception from the rule. It was the oldest and the most populated parish in the *uezd*. Here the level of emoluments and voluntary donations for priests was the highest in the *uezd* while the state salary the lowest.

**Figure 11.**

Year	State salary for the priest (roubles per annum)	Emoluments and donations for the priest (roubles per annum)
1900	None <sup>137</sup>	577 <sup>138</sup>
1901	294 <sup>139</sup>	590 <sup>140</sup>
1902	294 <sup>141</sup>	60 – 80 <i>monthly</i> <sup>142</sup>
Population	No more than 800 in 1900 <sup>143</sup>	

<sup>122</sup> GAMO, f.17-I, op.1, d.203, l.43.

<sup>123</sup> GAMO, f.17-I, op.1, d.203, l.43.

<sup>124</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.203, l.65.

<sup>125</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.203, l.65.

<sup>126</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.283, l.80.

<sup>127</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.283, l.80.

<sup>128</sup> *Kratkie istoricheskie svedeniia*, p.215.

<sup>129</sup> GAMO, f. 17, op.1, d.235, ll.4,5.

<sup>130</sup> GAMO, f. 17, op.1, d.235, ll.4,5.

<sup>131</sup> GAMO, f. I-17, op.1, d.232, l.102.

<sup>132</sup> GAMO, f. I-17, op.1, d.232, l.102.

<sup>133</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.235, ll.4,5.

<sup>134</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.283, l.115.

<sup>135</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.283, l.115.

<sup>136</sup> *Kratkie istoricheskie svedeniia*, p.230.

<sup>137</sup> GAMO, f.I-7, op.1, d.78, l.20.

<sup>138</sup> GAMO, f.I-7, op.1, d.78, l.20.

<sup>139</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.81, l. 14.

<sup>140</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.81, l.14.

<sup>141</sup> GAMO, f.I-7, op.1, d.83, l.13.

<sup>142</sup> GAMO, f. I-7, op.1, d.83, l.13.

<sup>143</sup> *Kratkie istoricheskie svedeniia*, p. 247.

It can be seen that the state and the Church administration had gravely mismanaged the material provision of priests in the centre of the Empire while on the periphery it provided them with ample endowments. Why was it the case? Certainly, the sparseness of the population and its frequent absence from the church in Aleksandrovsk *uezd* rendered it quite impossible for the priests to rely heavily on emoluments and donations. On the other hand, taking into consideration the two facts, firstly, that the *uezd* was situated on the border of the Empire and, secondly, that the imperial government was concerned with the protection of its borders the pragmatic political thinking behind throwing much of the state resources to support peripheral priests can be clearly seen. Orthodoxy served a political purpose of uniting a diverse border population that often came into contact with Norwegians, Finns and Swedes.<sup>144</sup>

At the same time, the mismanagement of the material provision of priests right in the centre of the Empire cannot be excused. The exposition of this mismanagement has hopefully provided ample support for the statement made in the introduction that rural parish priests were one of the two most economically oppressed social groups.

### 3.3 The *Sbory*

Whether poor or rich every parish was required to participate in diocesan collections or “*sbory*”.<sup>145</sup> *Sbory* were of two types. Extra-parochial diocesan organisations such as spiritual colleges, miscellaneous diocesan needs and the construction of churches in the diocese were supported largely and in some cases exclusively with the money sequestered from the parish church money on a regular basis.<sup>146</sup> The second type of collections was the collections for various extra-diocesan, Empire-wide or even foreign charities.<sup>147</sup> These were the collections from parishioners that took place at services and church feasts. Many of these organisations and charities bore no relevance whatsoever to the donating parish, because the donating parish was either situated in the peripheral *uezd*, as in the case of Aleksandrovsk *uezd* or the charity that asked for donation was foreign.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Saint-Petersburg Diocese all the extra-parochial diocesan institutions and needs sequestered up to 49 per cent of income of church in each parish.<sup>148</sup>

Saint-Petersburg diocesan periodicals contain a significant number of leaflets asking to collect money from parishes for various extra-diocesan organisations. The Orthodox Missionary Society was one of the most prominent of these organisations. It regularly collected money from parishes.<sup>149</sup> *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii and Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik* published the Society’s requests to collect money.<sup>150</sup>

The most striking fact about the *sbory* was how many illegal collections from parishes were made each year all across the Empire at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>151</sup> From the Saint-Petersburg periodicals the author discovered some of the most striking examples of this abuse of ‘people’s religious sensibilities’.<sup>152</sup> In 1902 *Izvestiia* published a story contributed by a priest:

In May, one of my parishioners, a wealthy peasant, received a man who introduced himself as a monk from the Old Jerusalem. This man asked my parishioner to donate something for his monastery. The parishioner gave to him seven roubles. In August another monk brought a letter which was allegedly written by the Patriarch Damian himself (the Patriarch of Jerusalem). In this letter the said Patriarch thanked my parishioner for his donation; the letter suffered from appallingly poor

<sup>144</sup> P.V.Fedorov (ed.), *IV Ushakovskie chteniia* (Murmansk, 2007), p.47.

<sup>145</sup> Malevinskii, *Instruktsiia*, pp.293, 294.

<sup>146</sup> *Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik* 2 (1895), p.11; 3 (1895), p.11.

<sup>147</sup> Malevinskii, *Instruktsiia*, p. 296.

<sup>148</sup> Ropakova, ‘Deiatel’nost’ tserkovnykh starost’, p.116.

<sup>149</sup> *Sankt-Peterburgskii dukhovnyi vestnik* 2 (1895), p.2.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*; *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* 18 (1903), unofficial part, pp.1 – 3.

<sup>151</sup> Malevinskii, *Instruktsiia*, pp. 75 – 76.

<sup>152</sup> *Izvestiia po Sankt-Peterburgskoi eparkhii* 20 (1902), unofficial part, pp. 13 – 15.



grammar and was written in a very bad corrupted Russian which betrayed southern origins of its author (the priest is alluding that the letter has been written by someone well-versed in forgery and deception, not the alleged Patriarch).<sup>153</sup>

In 1903 *Rukhodovstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* published an angry article chastising the monks from Athos for frequent requests for money collections from the parishes in the Russian empire: 'the monks from Athos must cease their pillaging invasions of Russia!' (*Afontsam pora prekratit' svoi nashestviia na Rossiyu*). 'Sadly', the author continued, 'secular authorities do not care about it!'<sup>154</sup>

These being mere glimpses of the yoke of the *sbory*; one should turn to our manuscript sources from Aleksandrovsk *uezd* in order to understand how pressurised could rural parishes be by the yoke of the *sbory*.

In 1900 the *blagochinnyi* of the first *blagochinie* in the *uezd* sent a letter stating the number of collection mugs each church must have regardless of the level of its income: 'according to the consistorial decree, each parish should have ten collection mugs: for the clerical poor, the diocesan parish schools, the poorest churches in the Empire, the spread of the Orthodoxy in Caucasus, the spread of the Orthodoxy among the pagans, the two churches in Jerusalem, for the afflicted Slavs, the Orthodox mission in Japan and for the Orthodox in Palestine'.<sup>155</sup>

The Consistory put pressure on the parishes to take out (*obnosit'*) the collection mugs as regularly as possible and report to the *blagochinnyi* whether the collection had taken place.<sup>156</sup>

Some diocesan charities were particularly demanding: 'the collection mug for the benefit of the diocesan clerical poor should be taken out at each service in all churches of the diocese. It should be also taken out on the occasions when people are more likely to donate: at baptisms, church marriages and funerals'.<sup>157</sup>

There were also many one-off collections for various extra-diocesan ventures which added to the burden of regular collections. In 1901, for example, the Consistory obliged all parishes in Aleksandrovsk *uezd* to collect money for two Lithuanian monasteries.<sup>158</sup>

In the archive there are deposited *blagochinnye*'s reports on how much various extra-diocesan organisations managed to collect in particular parishes and from the whole *uezd*. Some of the figures were simply extraordinary given the remoteness, relative poverty and sparseness of the population in the *uezd*. On the reverse of the ukase decreeing the collection for the building of the church in Ashkhabad in 1902 the *blagochinnyi* wrote a draft report of how much had been collected for this church. We learn from the draft that in the Lovozero parish 9 roubles 30 copecks had been collected, in the Gavrilovo parish 14 roubles 21 copecks while the Kildin parish collected 1 rouble. In total, 38 roubles 94 copecks had been collected from the first *blagochinie*.<sup>159</sup>

The *blagochinnyi*'s report on 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 1902, stated that 2 roubles 65 copecks were collected for the building of the Cathedral in Vladivostok (the far eastern end of the country).<sup>160</sup>

The Consistorial decree from 14<sup>th</sup> of February, 1902, stated that 9 roubles were collected from the 1<sup>st</sup> *blagochinie* for the enlightenment of the pagans in the Empire.<sup>161</sup> The same report indicated that 4 roubles 80 copecks were collected for the Orthodox Mission in Caucasus.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> *Rukhodovstvo dlia sel'skikh pastyrei* 21 (1903), p.104.

<sup>155</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.211, l.11

<sup>156</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.211, l.11

<sup>157</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.211, l.10

<sup>158</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.43.

<sup>159</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.10a.

<sup>160</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.53.

<sup>161</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.57.

In 1902 4 roubles were collected from the *uezd* for the Orthodox Mission in Japan<sup>163</sup> and 10 roubles for the Orthodox pilgrims in Palestine.<sup>164</sup> In 1901 9 roubles were collected from the 1<sup>st</sup> *blagochinie* for the afflicted Slavs.<sup>165</sup>

In 1904 for various missions the Kil'din parish donated 62 copecks, Notozero 1 rouble, Lovozero 22 roubles, Pechenga 1 rouble, Teriberka 9 roubles.<sup>166</sup>

In 1904 from all parishes 735 roubles were collected for the diocesan spiritual colleges.<sup>167</sup>

The collections for diocesan and extra-diocesan organisations created difficulties and put pressure upon parishes. There are numerous examples that illustrate this.

In 1900, for example, the *blagochinnyi* of the 1<sup>st</sup> *blagochinie* circulated the following letter to all the parishes: 'it has been discovered that in many churches there are no money collections for the benefit of clerical poor or the Orthodox Missionary Society... these collections, however, must be made during celebrations, church services and the administration of rites because they are required by secular (!) and ecclesiastical law'.<sup>168</sup> The *delo* contains a rather desperate response of the priest from the Teriberka parish: 'there are 5 mugs in our church. They are for the benefit of the Orthodox Missionary Society, two church schools, clerical poor and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. During the Liturgy and vespers all the mugs are taken out in turns. There are also other collections that usually take place at the end of September: for the Red Cross and the convent in Kholmogory. Make no mistake about this: five mugs are taken out at every Liturgy. Is it not excessive for the Teriberka parish which is small and rather poor?'<sup>169</sup> Presumably, the priest was reprimanded by the *blagochinnyi* for this daring answer, for in about six months the priest wrote: '[as you have requested] instead of collecting the money from the parishioners for these organisations we are using some of the church money'.<sup>170</sup>

Whether desperately poor, moderately well-off or rich, parishes had to participate in various money collections which diverted much of the resources from priests, churches and parishioners. We have no archival in-depth evidence from the Saint-Petersburg Diocese but it can be reasonably believed that the pressure was even higher there than in Aleksandrovsk *uezd* because it was the capital diocese of the Empire. It might be true that all these organisations could have not survived without voluntary donations, but what relation do the Orthodoxy in Jerusalem or Caucasus bear to the poor Kil'din parish thousands and thousands miles away? Yet it is quite remarkable that despite being one of the poorest in Aleksandrovsk *uezd*, the Kil'din parish still managed to collect the money for these organisations.

This section has shown that for the majority of the parish priests in the selected *uezdy* of the Saint-Petersburg Diocese the provision from the state-based sources of support was low, in many cases minimal. Having many responsibilities and being under constant administrative and moral pressure, parish priests earned little more than the *chinovniki* of the lowliest rank and much less than medical assistants in villages. The state did not raise the interest on clerical capitals while the Church administration did not allow the priests to access the capitals of churches, although it might have been done. Therefore, the priests had either to rely heavily on the community-based sources of support or, had the community refused to support them as the government commanded, be thrown into abject poverty. Community-based sources of support were very unstable and unpredictable; they also created ground for conflict and endangered priests' social status as the analysis of the articles in the

<sup>162</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.58.

<sup>163</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.66.

<sup>164</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.64.

<sup>165</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.70.

<sup>166</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.274, p.21.

<sup>167</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.269, l.21.

<sup>168</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.211, l.1.

<sup>169</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.211, l. 5.

<sup>170</sup> GAMO, f.I-17, op.1, d.211, l.4.

Saint-Petersburg periodicals has shown. In Aleksandrovsk *uezd* the parish priests were better remunerated with the state salary and also had to rely less on the community-based sources of support which reveals the paradoxes of the imperial government's resource management. As the published and archival sources illustrate all the parishes in the Empire had to participate in regular *sbory* for diocesan and extra-diocesan organisations and charities. It has been demonstrated that the *sbory* diverted many valuable resources from priests and churches.

### Conclusion

Historians who are critical of the Russian Imperial past begin to recognise that the hierarchy's disrespect and pressure of rural priests and the mismanagement of their resources might have had profound and far-reaching circumstances. T.Leont'eva, for example, maintains an argument that the rural parish priest could have been the main stabilising force in the village caught up in the newly born world of uncertainty and turmoil after the Great Reforms in the 1860s.<sup>171</sup> In the long-run, she argues, one of the causes of the Russian Revolution in 1917 was the failure of rural priests to exert this stabilising influence, because they had a poor financial base and were weighted down with administrative and moral pressures.<sup>172</sup>

The author is deeply convinced that there is an even broader problem than this which is yet to be solved: the profoundly dysfunctional attitude of an oppressive centralized state to its servants. This attitude is manifest in the state's disregard of their social and administrative burdens, disrespect of their opinions and unwillingness to engage on a constructive level with the provision of their good material well-being. The events of 1905 and 1917 demonstrated with extraordinary power how dangerous this position could be for the state itself.

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<sup>171</sup> Leont'eva, *Vera i progress*, pp. 125, 96.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.