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Lutheranism in Russia and the Soviet Union: Another Response to Filatov and Stepina

GERD STRICKER

Sergei Filatov's publications have made an enormous contribution to the analysis of religious life in postcommunist Russia. His articles in the volume *Religiya i obshchestvo*, sponsored and financed by Keston Institute, give a lively overview of the variety and complexity of new religious developments in Russia since *perestroika*, as well as highlighting problematic issues. Filatov is a sociologist with a remarkable understanding of socio-religious issues. He is not a historian, however, so he is to be forgiven for not always providing an adequate historical context. In his article 'Lutheranism in Russia: amidst Protestantism, Orthodoxy and Catholicism' (*RSS*, 31, 4, December 2003, pp. 367–84) my friend Filatov quotes me on several occasions, and the impression may arise that some of his historical errors are based on my writings, so I feel I must point out the places where he is on the wrong historical track. Let me say, however, that I am in full agreement with the up-to-date, accurate and important analysis of the current standing of the various branches of Lutheranism in the former USSR which he and Aleksandra Stepina provide in this article.

The Ingermanlanders: a Bridge between Scandinavian and Russian Lutheranism?

Filatov has a good deal to say about the Scandinavian Lutheran tradition, which was allegedly introduced into Russia by the Lutheran Ingermanlanders. The question arises: what does 'the Scandinavian Lutheran tradition' actually mean? Filatov never explains. Perhaps he means a high church tradition that emphasises the liturgy. Such a tradition was indeed widely influential in Lutheranism in the Russian Empire.

The Ingermanlanders, or Ingrians, are a Finnish people. Those living to the south of the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga were subject to the princes of Novgorod in the Middle Ages and from 1478 to the grand dukes in Moscow, who later became the tsars. The region was annexed by Sweden in 1617 and regained by Peter the Great in 1702 at the beginning of the Great Northern War; from 1703 he built St Petersburg in the heart of the Ingermanlanders' territory. The Finnish Ingermanlanders were deported to Siberia in the late 1930s, but were allowed to return to their Baltic homeland after Stalin's death and now live in Leningrad *oblast'* again. They are mostly Lutherans, like the peoples in the Baltic provinces of Estland and Livland that, along with Ingermanland, were incorporated into the Russian Empire at the Peace of Nystad (1721) (Tschoerner, 1996, pp. 94–97). The third Russian Baltic province, the former Duchy of Courland, which had belonged to Poland since 1561, became part of the Russian Empire at the Third Partition of Poland in

1795. Estland, Livland and Courland (today's Estonia and Latvia) had originally been the territory of the Teutonic Order, which from 1186 christianised the Baltic peoples of the region (the Ests, Livs, Letts, Kurs and (later in German East Prussia) the indigenous Prussians (Pruzen). Under the rule of the Order the indigenous peoples declined into a peasant underclass, with the status virtually of serfs. The ruling class were the descendants of the Teutonic Knights, who owned the land in the Baltic region and also *de facto* owned the inhabitants except for those who managed to rise into the German ruling class; the towns were purely German; supplies from Germany never dried up. The Order built a state that as far as efficiency was concerned was a model for its time and for its location on the 'edge' of Europe. In the 1520s the German ruling class in the Order's lands, and even most of the clergy there, embraced the Reformation; the leadership in Reval (now Tallinn), for example, introduced it into Estonia in 1524 (Kahle, 1985, p. 34; Wittram, 1956, pp. 35–86): this was earlier than in many other parts of the Holy Roman Empire. The Baltic serfs also compulsorily became Lutherans: they were not even asked (Wittram, 1956, pp. 35–55). The lands of the Order, now mostly Lutheran, soon fell apart in the Livland War (1558–82/95). Estland and Livland went to Sweden; Courland (as mentioned above) came under Polish rule. They were already by now well-established Lutheran provinces, which were regarded as 'German' and where the non-German peasant underclass was hardly heeded. Nothing changed in the social setup throughout the 140 years of Swedish and the 220 years of Polish rule. It was the local German body of knights¹ that communicated with the Swedish and Polish kings. Under Swedish rule the Lutheranism of Estland and Livland received its Scandinavian stamp; with its German clergy and its German, Estonian and Latvian congregations it became an integral part of Scandinavian Lutheranism. Until almost the end of the nineteenth century practically all pastors in the Baltic provinces were German, but it was a condition of their ordination that they should also be able to preach in Estonian and Latvian. From the time of the Reformation German pastors laid the foundations of the later Estonian and Latvian literary languages and their grammar, beginning with translations of Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* and other key Reformation texts.

Nothing changed in the situation when Peter the Great conquered the Baltic provinces. He granted Estland and Livland a *de facto* inner autonomy, which involved various privileges, and Catherine the Great did the same for Courland in 1795. German was designated the official language of administration and Lutheranism (not Orthodoxy) the leading religion (first in Livland and Estland, and later in Courland).

Conservative Baltic German Lutheranism was marked by Scandinavian features: it was high-church and liturgical. These features did not however suit the mentality of the Estonians and Latvians: they preferred a plain warm spontaneity to stiff ceremonial. The Pietist Graf Nikolaus Ludwig Zinzendorf, the founder of the Herrnhut Brethren community in Saxony,² spent a short time in the Russian Baltic provinces in 1736, where the Estonian and Latvian peasants responded enthusiastically to his preaching. The peasants did not (and could not) formally withdraw from the high church of their German masters, but they saw the focus of their spiritual life in the Pietist 'brethren communities' (*Brüdergemeinschaften*) (Wittram, 1956, pp. 149–65) which they formed in Zinzendorf's spirit and for which they built large prayer houses on the outskirts of their villages. Tension between these 'brethren communities' and the official German church was frequently high, one reason being that at the time of Romanticism and 'national awakening' the brethren communities became national institutions for the Estonians and Latvians, which ever more opposed the German hegemony. National feelings amongst Estonians, Latvians and Finnish Ingermanlanders against the German church leadership increased during the second half of the nineteenth century within the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in Russia, and not much could be done to tackle the causes of this tension until the First World War.

In 1832 Emperor Nicholas I issued a decree establishing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia (ELCR)³ which included all Lutherans in the Empire: Estonians, Latvians, Germans and Ingermanlanders. It also included the Reformed congregations.⁴ The supreme bishop (*summus episcopus*) in this state church (as in the Orthodox Church) was the Russian Emperor himself. Culturally this multinational church was German. The official language and *lingua franca* in the church was German. Teaching was in German at the theological faculty of the German university in Dorpat (Tartu) in Livland (founded 1632, refounded 1802; now in Estonia) where all Lutheran and some Reformed theologians in the Russian Empire studied (with the exception of the pastors of the Ingermanlander parishes who were Finns or studied in the Grand Duchy of Finland, also an autonomous part of the Russian Empire). The church leadership⁵ comprised almost exclusively Baltic Germans (some of Swedish origin).⁶ At the same time, in its liturgical style this church was Scandinavian: first, because for a long time most of the Lutheran pastors even in the interior of the Russian Empire had been Baltic Germans who had been thoroughly imbued in the Scandinavian style, and second, because the Dorpat theological faculty was unambiguously Scandinavian in character and transmitted this even to those Germans who had been born in Russia and who started attending the faculty in increasing numbers in the last third of the nineteenth century.

The Lutherans in Russia itself – from St Petersburg to Vladivostok – had come to Russia in various waves of immigration from all German states. They had been invited by Catherine the Great (the Volga Germans in 1763) and by Alexander I (the Black Sea Germans in 1803). Catherine herself was born a German princess: Sophie Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst. The Potestants among them⁷ brought the full variety of Lutheran traditions with them from their homelands: Hessen, Württemberg, Baden, Bavaria, Saxony, Mecklenburg. The Volga Germans left their homelands for economic reasons, but a large proportion of the Black Sea Germans, Swabian Pietists, had accepted the invitation to come to Russia for religious reasons. These Protestant Black Sea Germans with a definite Pietist background were particularly sensitive about religious matters. In their villages (in today's southern Ukraine) conflicts between pastors and congregations often arose; their causes were a good deal more complex than Filatov describes them.

In Württemberg even today Lutheranism is liturgically much more modest than in North Germany or Scandinavia – or in the Baltic states at the time we are discussing. Pastors trained at Dorpat and bringing their high-church liturgical ritual to the Black Sea Germans' villages met determined resistance in Pietist parishes. The Swabian Pietists saw them as representatives of a Baltic-Scandinavian tradition that they rejected. Conflicts abated only from about 1860, when sons of the Black Sea (and also Volga German) colonists were able to study theology at Dorpat and as pastors began to reconcile the Scandinavian tradition with the tradition of their villages.

It was thus Baltic German Lutheranism with its Scandinavian stamp which was the decisive formative influence on the whole of Lutheranism in the Russian Empire. It was the German clergy in Estonia, Latvia and later Courland who formed the bridge between Scandinavian (i.e. Swedish) Lutheranism and Lutheranism in the Russian Empire. The Finns, whom Filatov highlights particularly as bearers of the 'Scandinavian tradition' (p. 369), played no role in this context. They were statistically insignificant, they in fact tended strongly towards Pietism (see below for more on both these points), and they concentrated exclusively on Finland. They were tillers of the fields who resembled the Estonians and Latvians in their lack of any spiritual pretensions. Moreover, they had no educated urban intelligentsia. Like the Baltic peoples, the Ingermanlanders had belonged

to the Swedish Lutheran Church (from 1617 until about 1700).⁸ When Ingermanland became part of the Russian Empire the Ingermanlanders were, it is true, separated from Sweden and from their Finnish kin, but until 1917 most of their pastors came from Finland; the Ingermanlanders among them had done their theological studies in Helsinki. What is more, after they were incorporated by the Russian bureaucracy into the ELCR (founded in 1832) they still remained orientated towards Finland and took little interest in what was going on in the united church to which they now officially belonged. The Ingermanlanders had no influence of any kind on the Lutheran Church in the Russian Empire.

Statistics for 1914 for the Lutheran Church in Russia⁹ reveal the Ingermanlanders and Finns as very small groups in the united church (Meyer, 1918, p. 98). Out of 3.7 million members 1.3 million were Latvians, 1.1 million Estonians, 1.1 million Germans (200,000 Baltic Germans and 900,000 Russian Germans in the rest of the Russian Empire), and just 145,000 Finns and Ingermanlanders. The parishes in Ingermanland were divided amongst three deaneries (*Propsteibezirke*) (Schlüsselburg, Ost-Ingermanland and West-Ingermanland) (Amburger, 1998, p. 100) comprising 21 parishes (with some 50–60 branches in small villages); they were under the jurisdiction of a special Ingermanlander provost or dean (*Ingermanländer Oberkirchenvorsteheramt*). The Marienkirche near Nevsky Propekt in St Petersburg had a congregation of 15,000 Finns and 2400 Ingermanlanders (1890). This figure should be compared with 55,000–60,000 Germans in St Petersburg alone, as well as another few thousand colonists in German villages in St Petersburg *guberniya*.¹⁰

In the Soviet Union

The October Revolution of 1917 concentrated most of the Estonians and Latvians in their new states. Estonia was formed from the old province of Estland and northern Livland, Latvia from southern Livland, Courland and the hitherto Polish (and hence Catholic) Latgalia. Meanwhile the border changes meant that several tens of thousands of Estonians and Latvians found themselves in the Soviet–Baltic border country, this time on the Soviet side. The Ingermanlanders in Petrograd *guberniya* were cut off from their cultural centres in Finland by the now almost impermeable frontier. Filatov is wrong when he says that the ELCR¹¹ ceased its activities during the turmoil of war, revolution and civil war. In 1918 it moved its administrative headquarters from Petrograd to Moscow. In 1920 a provisional synod produced Temporary Regulations (*Temporäre Bestimmungen*) (for the text see Stupperich, 1959, pp. 223–30) with which it sought to react to the new political, statistical and geographical circumstances. The church had lost its 337 Baltic parishes: more than 670 churches altogether (including all their branches). In 1924 a General Synod of the church then produced a new Constitution (Stupperich, 1959, pp. 231–43).

A survey from 1922 (Kahle, 1974, pp. 505–10) gives the following church structure. The top church body was the Bishops' Council (*Bischofsrat*). This replaced the earlier General Consistory (*Generalkonsistorium*). To this were subordinated Higher Church Councils (*Oberkirchenräte*) (HCCs) to run the parishes in the various regions of the Soviet Union. *Oberkirchenrat* was the new name for *Konsistorium* as the body in charge of an ethnically defined church region, or diocese (*Bistum*). Each HCC was to be headed by a bishop. The geographical areas under the jurisdiction of the HCCs varied greatly in size since the main criterion for the church leadership was the national one. The aim was that the national minorities should feel themselves adequately represented by their own HCC. There were two German HCCs (Moscow and Petrograd/Leningrad) (147 so-called '*Kirchspiele*' with some 1300 branches), a Latvian HCC (five *Kirchspiele* with some 25

branches), an Estonian HCC (four *Kirchspiele* with some 20 branches) and an Ingermanland-Finnish HCC (22 *Kirchspiele* with some 65 branches).¹² These figures show that after the separation of the Russian Baltic provinces the church now consisted of more than 80 per cent German parishes.

Filatov says (p. 371) that in 1923 a Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church split off from the German-dominated ELCR. He is presumably referring to the following sequence of events.

Since tsarist times the Ingermanland-Finnish parishes had been culturally and theologically orientated towards Finland – mainly because their pastors usually came from the Grand Duchy of Finland, and the few native-born Ingermanlander pastors had all received their theological training in Helsinki. This orientation towards Finland was reflected in the particular character of the spirituality of the Ingermanland Lutheran parishes. Since the second half of the nineteenth century Finnish Lutheranism had been dominated by Pietism and the ‘national awakening’, including a strong Finnish patriotism.¹⁴ The vehicle for this evangelical Pietist spirituality was the Finnish Evangelical Union which had just as much influence in Ingermanland as in Finland itself. The Ingermanland-Finnish parishes were not particularly interested in the Lutheran state church of Russia because they had been forced to join the latter by the tsarist bureaucracy: the Ingermanlanders were supposed to have no institutional or church ties to Finland.

Lutheran Ingermanlanders certainly made efforts after the 1917 Revolution to split off from the former Lutheran state church and to organise themselves independently.¹⁴ On 27 January 1919 a committee of Ingermanland-Finnish parishes was formed, a kind of synod comprising seven pastors, seven teachers from church schools and 19 laypeople. Uncertainty and hesitation were evident in the fact that this committee had several different names (the Ingermanland-Finnish Consistory, for example). Apparently the committee soon started trying to move back closer to the leadership of the old Lutheran state church. It may well be that the Soviet authorities were exerting pressure: they would have calculated that a dissatisfied Finnish minority would be a destabilising element in the Lutheran Church, threatening schism and weakening the church from within.

On 11 January 1921 a synod of the Finnish-Ingermanland parishes in Petrograd determined what its future relations were to be with the now Moscow-based Bishops’ Council of the ELCR, and also recognised its financial responsibilities towards the church. From that time the Ingermanlanders were represented at sessions of the Bishops’ Council, either by delegates or through postal votes. In a document of 1923 (in Russian, for the Soviet authorities) the Ingermanland HCC is called ‘The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in the North-west of the Soviet Union’. Perhaps Filatov was referring to this document when he wrote about an Ingermanlander church splitting off in 1923.

The Ingermanlanders were connected in numerous ways to the ELCR, even though the contacts cannot be described as intensive. The head of the ELCR, Bishop Conrad Freifeldt¹⁵ (based in Petrograd), installed Dean (*Propst*) Felix Fridolf Relander in 1921 as bishop of Ingermanland in the Finnish Marienkirche in Petrograd. In 1923 Relander had to return to Finland for health reasons (he died two years later). Dean Selim Hjalmar Laurikkala was chosen as his successor in 1924 and installed on behalf of the Bishops’ Council of the ELCR by the bishop of the Estonian parishes in the Soviet Union, Oskar Palsa, in the Marienkirche.¹⁶ The German bishops Conrad Freifeldt and Arthur Malmgren¹⁷ occasionally attended Ingermanland regional synod meetings. The Ingermanlanders did an important service for the ELCR when a Finnish pastor and his Ingermanland parish provided a refuge for all students at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Leningrad¹⁸ whose residence permits had been withdrawn by the city authorities.

As far as internal church life was concerned, however, the Ingermanlanders continued

as in tsarist times to be orientated towards Finland and to practise the same strict Pietism. Since the October Revolution in 1917 almost all the pastors had left Ingermanland;¹⁹ they had been born in the Grand Duchy of Finland and automatically received citizenship of the new Finnish state and thus had no problem in avoiding Soviet persecution by emigrating. An acute shortage of pastors was meaning that former teachers in church schools and cantors were being ordained as pastors; although the church leadership in Moscow, under its then leading bishop Theophil Meyer,²⁰ had spoken out strongly against this practice, it nevertheless had to be adopted in practically pastorless Ingermanland. Teachers and cantors of proven ability and who were all members of the Pietist Finnish Evangelical Union, or closely associated with it, were ordained. Four of these 18 new 'pastors' were able to catch up on their theological education in the theological seminary in Leningrad.

To summarise, then, the Ingermanland Lutherans were a peripheral phenomenon in the whole spectrum of the ELCR. In tsarist times they were a very small minority in the church (4 per cent of its membership, including Finns), their revivalist Pietist spirituality was quite different from the high-church style of the church leadership in St Petersburg, and (to a large extent because their clergy were either born in Finland or educated there) they were completely orientated towards Finland. In Soviet times the Ingermanland Lutherans apparently decided after some initial hesitation to join the former Lutheran state church again, but within this structure they continued more or less to live their own life. Since almost all their pastors had emigrated to Finland the Ingermanlanders were forced to adopt the practice of ordaining competent laypeople, a practice rejected by the church leadership in Moscow. In no sense did the Ingermanlanders function as a bridge between Scandinavian Lutheranism and Lutheranism in the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union. This bridging role was played by the German Balts who were based in Estland, Livland and St Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad and played a dominating role in the ELCR, and by the German-language theological faculty in Dorpat (Tartu).

Lutheran 'Brethren Communities' in Russia²¹

A good deal of what Filatov writes about the Lutheran 'brethren communities' in the areas of German colonisation often does not correspond to historical reality, particularly as far as the connections between Pietism, the Prayer 'hour' (*Stunde*), Stundism and the Baptist faith are concerned.

A very large proportion of the Swabian colonists who came to Russia in the early nineteenth century and who were settled in the Black Sea region (Brandes, 1993, pp. 91–105) had left Württemberg for religious reasons. They were mostly Pietists (*'die Frommen'*, *'die Stillen im Lande'*) and pietist dreamers and had been feeling increasingly alienated from the Protestant church in Württemberg which was becoming ever more characterised by rationalism. Many of them went to America in search of places of refuge where they could practice their own brand of piety; some tens of thousands went to Russia too.

The '*Stunde*' described by Filatov is still a feature of Pietism among the Swabians in Württemberg. They gather once a week or more, mostly in private homes, for 'prayer hours' (*'Gebetsstunden'*) during which they sing pious revivalist songs, read the Bible, study Bible texts and pray intensively.²² The Pietists brought the tradition of the '*Stunde*' with them to southern Russia (today southern Ukraine). As Filatov correctly notes, there was a chronic shortage of clergy in the area, and the Black Sea Germans continued with the '*Stunde*' in order to fill the spiritual vacuum in their new villages.²³ However, the situation was rather different from the way Filatov describes it, and a good deal more

complicated. It is incorrect to say, for example, that the 'church' in the sense of the well-organised official church existed only in the cities and that Lutheranism in the countryside (that is, in the German 'colony' villages) consisted exclusively of brethren communities. That would have meant that the developments described below which led to the formation of brethren communities would have been fully representative of village Lutheranism. The fact of the matter is that a symbiosis of the 'official church' with its pastors and the brethren communities was typical for the Lutheran villages in southern Russia. The brethren communities played a relatively greater role among the Black Sea Germans and a relatively smaller role among the Volga Germans,²⁴ corresponding to the degree to which the pastors of the 'official church' were able to tend their flocks in the villages. Relations between the pastors and the 'brethren' in the villages were characterised by frequent tension but were not basically negative. Some pastors understood the need to involve the brethren communities in the life of the parish.

In 1900 there were some 3500–4000 German 'colonies' in the Russian Empire; some had over 10,000 inhabitants and some only 10–20 families.²⁵ The larger colonies had churches and the smaller ones prayer houses; in the smallest settlements the faithful gathered privately, and if a pastor came they would meet in the barn of a farmhouse. Sixty per cent of the German 'colonists' were Lutherans and 4–5 per cent Reformed; the remaining third were in Catholic and Mennonite villages. We are thus talking about a total of some 2300 (larger and smaller) Protestant 'colonies' in the Russian Empire. They were organised in 202 '*Kirchspiele*' or '*Pfarreien*'.²⁶ The pastor in the central village would have a number of villages in his care; most of these would have a church or a prayer house. Most *Kirchspiele* would consist of between four and 15 villages; but in the far east of Siberia there were as many as a thousand parishioners scattered in small communities hundreds of miles apart, which the pastor based in Irkutsk could visit only once a year, in winter. There were also a good many communities in other parts of Russia, for instance in Volynia, which the pastors could visit only a few times a year. On such occasions there would be several services with proper sermons and the Eucharist; there would be baptisms, weddings and confirmations, visits to the sick and meetings with local church elders and teachers.²⁷ As an official of the Russian Empire the pastor would also have to complete the state register. Discussions with the teacher were very important since when the pastor was away in other villages the teacher would take the services and read sermons officially approved by the church leadership in St Petersburg. The Lutheran Church never managed to overcome the problem of a shortage of clergy in Russia.

From the very beginning the Pietists with their '*Stunde*' were in competition with the official church in far-flung villages that the pastor could visit only occasionally. Over the decades, while the spiritual situation barely improved in the German 'colony' villages²⁸ (Catholic as well as Lutheran), the '*Stunde*', which had originally been an individual event, developed into a more structured institution: the 'brethren community' ('*Brüdergemeinschaft*'). This became a closed group that accepted only the 'born again': those who had had a personal encounter with Christ, who had repudiated their sinful life, repented and converted. Only when a believer had completed this process of spiritual rebirth could the solemn ceremony of reception into the brethren community take place: a spiritual rebaptism.

Even in villages where the brethren community was strong, however, the other colonists were sceptical of it or rejected it altogether. In communities that were not regularly visited by a pastor the tendency was often to attend church on Sundays only. The 'brothers' and 'sisters' would look down on those they disparaged as 'Sunday Christians'; the latter would mock their sanctimonious and self-righteous neighbours 'prayer-brothers' and 'prayer-sisters' ('*Betbrüder*', '*Betschwester*'). There were a number of Pietist-inclined

pastors (who had come to Russia straight from Württemberg), and these won the trust of the brethren communities, but the majority of pastors had been trained in the theological faculty at Dorpat with its high-church tradition, and more or less firmly rejected the Pietists' plain legalistic fundamentalism. In the 'brethren gatherings' ('*Brüderversammlungen*') which had replaced the '*Gebetsstunden*' a simple table with a Bible on it sufficed (no candles!) in a plain prayer room; the 'born again' brothers and sisters, whose preachers were all laypeople, rejected everything else.

Thus the Baltic-Scandinavian liturgical heritage and the plain worship style of Swabian Pietism came up against each other. However, although there was often tension between the pastors and Pietist parishioners, they stayed together in one institution,²⁹ for they had a good deal in common. The brethren communities might feel that the official church did not understand them, and might criticise the latter heavily for secularism and bureaucratism (as a state church); but the brothers and sisters still received the Eucharist from the pastor and were married and had their children baptised by the pastor; and the brethren communities were almost fanatical in their adherence to infant baptism, which kept them in the Lutheran church despite all their affinity with the Baptists.

Persecution under Stalin in the Great Terror of the late 1930s was followed by the deportation of Germans to Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia.³⁰ The official Lutheran church collapsed after its pastors were arrested (Stricker, 1997/2000, pp. 392–419). It now fell to the brethren communities to maintain Lutheranism, in a simple, Pietistic and often strange form, reduced to a fundamentalist and legalistic lay theology. This form of Lutheranism had no problem with organising itself in the absence of pastors and official church structures and under external pressure. In these extreme circumstances 'Church Christians' who remained believers joined the brethren communities. The official church was dead but the brethren communities survived.

Since the mid-1970s the Lutheran World Federation has succeeded in persuading a number of German Lutheran brethren communities to introduce liturgical services; in return they have received Bibles, hymn books and religious literature in the German language. However, these liturgical services have not replaced the brethren gatherings; they have merely been added on as an optional extra. Pastor Haralds Kalniņš of Riga, who from 1973 was sometimes allowed to visit the German Lutheran parishes in the deportation areas, was recognised by the Soviet authorities in 1980 as superintendent of the German Lutherans in the Soviet Union, with the rights of a bishop (the right to ordain pastors, for example); in 1988 (during the *perestroika* period) he was officially installed as bishop. Since the early 1990s the Evangelical Church in Germany (*Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*) (EKD) has been organising and financing the reconstruction of a Lutheran Church in the former Soviet Union. Today this Lutheran Church of the German tradition is called the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Central Asia (ELCROS).³¹ Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the complex problems so well described by Filatov have arisen. It was this collapse that gave the EKD (along with other churches) the opportunity to intervene actively in Russia. Probably unintentionally, the EKD has been building a Lutheran Church with a German profile and based on German traditions. Tensions both old and new have duly emerged between the new official church (ELCROS) under its archbishop, Prof. Dr Georg Kretschmar in St Petersburg, and the old fraternal communities with their evangelical and fundamentalist principles. The latter maintain that the new Lutheran parishes that have been formed on the basis of secular societies of city-dwelling Germans, in which ethnic Russians are also making their influence felt, are regrettable examples of liberal 'cultural Protestantism'. They say that baptism is not taken seriously, they criticise the ordination of women, ecumenism, feminism and the free interpretation of the Bible as aberrations that have been forced on

the brethren communities by the Lutherans of the EKD. Some brethren communities have left the ELCROS on these grounds, and some brethren communities of the German tradition have even joined the traditional and conservative Ingermanland Lutherans; the latter, with an eye to accepting German communities, have been setting up centres in Siberia. Most brethren communities, however, are ceasing to exist, since most of their members have been part of a mass exodus to Germany.³²

Meanwhile the EKD continues to finance the ELCROS (Filatov, p. 374); and indeed the ELCROS is still dependent on this drip-feed from Germany. Every effort is being made to enable the ELCROS to stand on its own feet financially, but so far without success. Its member communities are too poor, and have perhaps grown used to the idea that the ELCROS is being almost completely financed by the churches in Germany. The question of finance constantly comes up in Germany and at all the synods of the ELCROS.

'Stundists' in the Nineteenth Century

Filatov makes a direct connection between so-called 'Stundism', which originated in today's Ukraine in the 1870s, and the German Lutheran brethren communities. He says that it was participants in the German 'Stunde' who developed into the 'Stundists' who were involved in the 'Stundist uprisings' of the 1870s. However, by the 1870s the '*Gebetsstunde*' had been superseded by the 'brethren community' for over 40 years. 'Stundism'³³ has more to do with Mennonite brethren communities and with Reformed communities in southern Ukraine; it is connected only indirectly and peripherally with the Lutherans (Istoriya, 1989, pp. 56–66).

As noted earlier, the German colonists who arrived in the Black Sea region, especially those who immigrated between 1815 and 1820, had a very strong religious motivation. There was continual religious unrest and ferment in the 'southern Russian' German 'colonies', and it affected Catholic and Mennonite villages too. Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox believers were also involved. Thousands of these were employed as seasonal workers in German 'colonies'; the Black Sea Germans (unlike the Volga Germans) were rich and needed extra labour at harvest time. Most of the summer seasonal labourers lodged with their hosts year after year, and joined in with their religious life. The brethren communities seem to have made most impression on them: the morning and evening prayers in Protestant and Mennonite families and the 'brethren gatherings' which took place several times a week. When they went home to their Orthodox villages after the harvest many of them would want to continue the practices they had learnt from their German hosts. They would ask their priests for Bibles, ask them to discuss particular verses with them and sing revivalist hymns in German in their own homes. The priests, at a loss, would often end up calling in the police; there would be punishments, beatings, even arrests. None of this succeeded in putting an end to the dissident groups, but on the contrary provoked spontaneous resistance. In Kherson and Kiev *gubernii* in 1870–73 Orthodox Russians and Ukrainians in some 60 villages processed to their churches and laid down their household icons before the doors, thus announcing their renunciation of Orthodoxy. None of this protest was organised, and it is impossible to trace its subsequent development clearly. The dissidents did not unite and did not form an independent movement; they tended towards the Baptist faith and were absorbed by it, particularly by the Evangelical Christians. Coming out of Orthodoxy, this movement thus flowed into the Baptist faith, bringing with it elements of traditional Russian sectarianism (like the sect of the Molokans which was similarly largely absorbed into the Baptist faith in the second half of the nineteenth century). 'Stundism' is not a very precise term; it embraced various dissident movements within Orthodoxy and manifested it in various ways in addition to

that described above, for example a very strong Stundist movement in Kiev *guberniya* in the late 1870s. In 1883 it was estimated that there were between 3000 and 10,000 Stundists in 'southern Russia' (Diedrich, 1985, pp. 471f.).

The fact that the word 'Stundism' has become so widely known is a success story for Russian propaganda, which was energetically directed against anything German in the context of Great Russian chauvinism.³⁴ It was very handy for the Russian authorities to be able to put a German label on any trouble and to blame alleged German 'saboteurs' who were stirring up unrest among the Russians and preparing the ground for a military attack by the German Empire. This is the wider context within which the concept of the 'Stundist movement' is to be understood: Russian nationalist ideologues wanted to use it to foist onto the Germans the responsibility for a movement among Russians and Ukrainians away from the Orthodox state church, to stigmatise the movement as a German initiative and to warn genuine Russian patriots to keep away from it. This 'Stundism' has little more than an etymological link with the German 'Stunde'. True, it was inspired by German Pietists in the German Black Sea 'colony' villages, but from an ethnic point of view it was a Russian-Ukrainian movement.

Various Matters

Filatov is incorrect in saying that the church led by Bishop Haralds Kalniņš³⁵ was ever a part of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Kalniņš was appointed 'superintendent'³⁶ of the German Lutherans in the Soviet Union in 1980 by the Soviet Council for Religious Affairs (CRA).³⁷ He had been a Latvian pastor in Riga but the CRA in Moscow named him as head of a church of Lutheran Germans which was completely independent of the Latvian archbishop and the Latvian Lutheran Synod and which had no connection with Latvia at all. When the Soviet Union collapsed Riga became the capital of a sovereign state. However, the parishes of which Kalniņš was now bishop were located mainly in Siberia and Central Asia. The leadership of these parishes could obviously not be based abroad, in Riga for example. In a restoration of the pre-1917 situation, St Petersburg was designated the centre of the future ELCROS, but the elderly Bishop Kalniņš, who was born in 1911, was not prepared to move to St Petersburg; his assistant Prof. Dr Georg Kretschmar³⁸ was therefore elected as deputy bishop in 1991 and leading bishop in 1994 (archbishop since 1999). After retiring as bishop of the ELCROS in 1994 Kalniņš was until his death in 1997 the bishop serving the four or five German-speaking parishes in Latvia, but even in this role he was in no way subordinate to the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church or its archbishop.

The 'United Lutheran Church' and its founder, Joseph Baron, are part of the most recent history of Lutheranism in Russia, about which a good deal is as yet unclear. Amidst rumour, speculation, assertions and slander by those involved it is impossible to establish the truth. Baron is an elusive and enigmatic figure who appeared in the Lutheran world from an evidently Catholic background and was soon being prepared as his successor by Bishop Kalniņš; later he disappeared into Catholic circles again, but now he is serving in the St Petersburg parish of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia in Exile as an auxiliary pastor.

In his article 'Response to Filatov and Stepina on Lutheranism in Russia' (*RSS*, 31, 4, December 2003, pp. 385–90) Baron complains that the 'United Lutheran Church' was manipulated into the ELCROS; but the reality is very far from clear. In St Petersburg at the time many people were of the opinion that the 'United Lutheran Church' in fact comprised just one or two real parishes and that the other five or six,³⁹ which were always being talked about, existed only on paper. It was said that Baron was proceeding with the

registration of parishes only in order to gain possession of church buildings and church property to which such newly registered parishes could lay claim (Stricker, 1991, p. 11).

Baron was never consecrated as a bishop, as he claims, but as a superintendent.⁴⁰ Moreover, there is serious dispute about his appointment as a superintendent of the 'United Lutheran Church'. He was appointed on 31 March 1991 by Archbishop Eriks Mēsters, who had however been removed by the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia in 1989 because (in the words of Dean Modris Plate, speaking for the majority of Synod members) for Mēsters 'the goodwill of the Soviet state has always been more important than the wellbeing of his church' (Stricker, 1989b). As a deposed bishop living in retirement he had neither the canonical nor the spiritual authority to consecrate anyone for any post in the church, and Baron's consecration at Mēsters' hands has no canonical validity.

I have felt it necessary to correct some of Filatov's historical passages. Nevertheless I concur fully with his central arguments. The Lutheran scene in the former Soviet Union today is colourful, confusing and often no cause for complacency, and Filatov is surely right in his conclusions. If the contending groups can avoid bringing about each other's shipwreck, but succeed in cooperating in various fields in mutual recognition and the tolerance of diverse views, the Lutheran Church can potentially play a key role, for example as a crucible of the Russian intelligentsia, in Russia's further cultural development.

Notes

1. 'Ritterschaft': this was the local ruling corporation of German nobles (the so-called 'Baltic barons').
2. He responded to the plight of the Bohemian Brethren, who were driven out of their homeland, by offering them a new home on his estates in Saxony in 1722. This was the origin of the Herrnhut Brethren.
3. For the statute of this new ecclesiastical organisation, signed personally by Nicholas I, see Stupperich, 1959, pp. 38–204.
4. For the history of the ELCR, see Stricker, 1997/2000, pp. 324–419; for the few Reformed parishes see *ibid.*, pp. 353–56.
5. The (General) Consistories ((*General-*)*Konsistorien*) in the three Baltic provinces and in St Petersburg and Moscow were led by secular presidents – mostly lawyers – and ecclesiastical vice-presidents: (general) superintendents ((*General-*) *Superintendenten*) (later bishops).
6. All the presidents and (general) superintendents of the central church administration and of the St Petersburg and Moscow consistories are listed in Amburger, 1998, pp. 84–86. Many of them have Swedish names, like the last bishop, Arthur Malmgren (1860–1947).
7. The confessional breakdown of the German immigrants to Russia was: over 60 per cent Lutheran; 4–5 per cent Reformed; 22 per cent Catholic; 13 per cent Mennonite.
8. Finland, which was added to the Russian Empire as a Grand Duchy, also belonged to Sweden until 1809.
9. Neither the Lutherans in the Grand Duchy of Finland nor the (predominantly German) Lutherans in the Russian Kingdom of Poland belonged to the ELCR founded in 1832: they had their own church structures.
10. Petersburg Germans comprised the descendants of the generation of craftsmen, architects, officers and academics invited by Peter the Great, both Baltic Germans and Germans from the German Empire. In 1881 they numbered some 65,500 (49,500 Russian subjects and 16,000 German subjects) and in 1900 some 55,000 (44,000 Russian subjects and 11,000 German subjects) (Busch, 1995, pp. 28 f.).
11. It continued to be called 'Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Russland' in Soviet times, at least in German-language publications. Filatov speaks of an 'Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Soviet Union'; he is evidently referring to official Russian-language documents.

12. In 1917 there were 25 *Kirchspiele* in Ingermanland, looked after by 30 pastors (Kahle, 1974, pp. 225ff.).
13. Here, as in many other respects, the developments in Estonian and Latvian Lutheranism were similar: patriotism and nationalism were bound up with aggressive anti-German sentiments.
14. For more information relating to the following exposition of the relationships among the Ingermanland Lutherans see Kahle, 1974, pp. 223–37.
15. Conrad Raimund Freifeldt (1847–1923) was general superintendent of the ELCR from 1892 and bishop from 1896; he was recognised as head of the church by the synod of 1920 that adopted the Temporary Regulations. See Amburger, 1998, p. 317.
16. Laurikkala refused to use the title ‘bishop’ and continued to use the title ‘*Propst*’ (‘dean’ or ‘provost’) as head of the Ingermanland parishes.
17. Arthur Leopold Malmgren (1860–1947) was general superintendent of the Petrograd Consistory from 1916 and bishop of the Petrograd HCC from 1924. He was forced (or allowed) to leave the Soviet Union in 1936 and died in Leipzig in 1947 (Amburger, 1998, pp. 408f.).
18. Tschoerner, 2002, pp. 64ff. Officially this seminary, founded in 1925, was called a Bible high school (*Biblische Hochschulkurse*) as a result of a directive by the Soviet authorities, who wanted to keep the words ‘theological’ and ‘seminary’ out of its title.
19. Of the pre-1917 Ingermanlander pastors ‘soon there were only three, then two, and then finally just one left’ (Kahle, 1974, p. 226).
20. Alexander Theophil Meyer (1865–1934) was a member of the St Petersburg General Consistory from 1915 and from 1924 bishop of the Moscow HCC and leading bishop of the ELCR (Amburger, 1998, p. 415f.).
21. I would prefer to translate ‘*Brüdergemeinschaften*’ as ‘brethren communities’ rather than ‘fraternal communities’.
22. On the whole question of Lutheran ‘brethren communities’, the shortage of pastors in Russia and ‘Stundism’ see Stricker, 1997/2000, pp. 348–53, 356–58, 370–79.
23. In nineteenth-century Russia these German villages were officially called ‘colonies’ and the German settlers ‘colonists’; these terms were still in colloquial use in Soviet times.
24. In 1914 there were 400,000 Volga Germans, 380,000 Black Sea Germans, 200,000 Volynia Germans, 100,000 Germans living in the cities, 100,000 Germans in Siberia, 25,000 Germans in the Caucasus, 100,000 Mennonites and 200,000 Baltic Germans. By 1930 there were still some 400,000 Volga Germans, the number of Black Sea Germans had risen to 450,000, the number of Volynia Germans had fallen to some 150,000, and the villages of the Siberian Germans were gradually filling up with deported farmers accused of being ‘kulaks’.
25. In the territory of the Volga Germans some ‘colonies’ were real towns: Balzer (11,100 inhabitants), Frank (11,557), Grimm (11,788), Katharinenstadt (11,962), Norcka (14,234) (1912 figures). See Beratz, 1923, pp. 284–91.
26. Here we are talking only about the German ‘colonies’ in Russia itself, not about the 337 ‘*Kirchspiele*’ in Estland, Livland and Courland.
27. Every German village had a school that was run and paid for by the church. Teachers (called ‘*Kuesterlehrer*’, ‘*Schulmeister*’ or ‘*Kantor*’) were trained in special seminaries called ‘*Centralschulen*’ and they deputised for the pastor (or the priest in Catholic villages) in his absence. See: Stricker, 1989a; Stricker, 1994; Stricker, 1997/2000, pp. 420–81.
28. The ‘colonists’ in Russia did not generally exhibit a high level of piety, but they were naturally members of the parish out of tradition, and after the village mayor the pastor, (church) schoolmaster and parish elders were the most important figures in the village.
29. In contrast to the situation with the Lutherans, a similar situation with the Mennonites in 1861 had led to a split: the ‘Mennonite Brethren’, who resembled their Lutheran counterparts, split off from the traditional Mennonite communities (later known as ‘Old’ or ‘Church Mennonites’) (Stricker and Sawatsky, 1984).
30. A few weeks after the Nazi invasion of the USSR in 1941 Stalin had all the Germans of European Russia deported beyond the Urals on the grounds that they were German spies; they were demoted to the status of second-class citizens without voting rights or the right to leave their place of exile (Stricker, 1997/2000, pp. 221–61). This regime lasted from 1941 to 1955.

31. ELCROS is actually an abbreviation of an older name, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States, but the abbreviation is still used today. It is also used in German in the form ELKRAS (*Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Russland und anderen Staaten*).
32. Between 1986 and the end of 2002 some 2.5 million Russian Germans left the (former) Soviet Union for Germany (the figure includes Russian spouses).
33. For a detailed investigation of Stundism, see Diedrich, 1985, pp. 327–469.
34. From 1871 the privileges of the Germans in Russia, which had been granted to them ‘in perpetuity’ when they arrived, were rescinded: freedom from military service and administration in the German language up to *raion* level. Russification of German schooling also began.
35. His mother was German and he spoke perfect German; he studied at the St Chrischona evangelical seminary near Basel and then until the outbreak of the Second World War worked as a pastor in German parishes in Alsace.
36. A superintendent ranks below a bishop in the Lutheran hierarchy.
37. For more information on the following see Stricker, 1997/2000, pp. 372, 374, 378, 388.
38. Georg Krestchmar, born 1925, was a professor of church history in Hamburg and Munich.
39. Filatov gives a 1993 figure of ‘some 30 communities’ for this church that existed between 1991 and 1996; this figure is new to me.
40. See note 36.

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(Translated from the German by Philip Walters)