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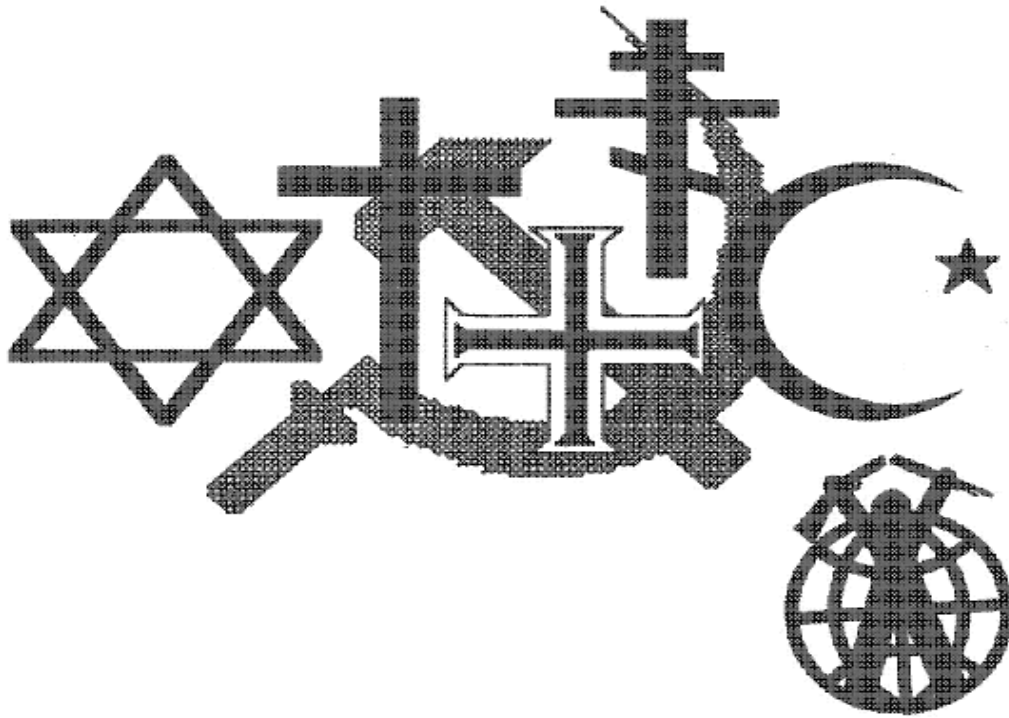
Occasional Papers on

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Religion in Eastern Europe

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**SACRED ARCHITECTURE AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN
THE CONCEPT OF THE “RUSSIAN WORLD”**

FOOLING THE WEST: KGB MANIPULATING SOVIET PROTESTANTS

SOVIET SECURITY AGENTS FIGHTING RELIGION IN UKRAINE

POST-SOVIET HISTORY OF JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES IN UKRAINE

Edited by Paul Mojzes

Co-edited by Beth Admiraal and H. David Baer

OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON RELIGION IN EASTERN EUROPE

Vol. XLIII, No. 10 (December 2023)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Mark R. Elliott, a frequent contributor to OPREE and editor emeritus of the East-West Church and Ministry Report, has just published *Taken by Surprise: The Asbury Revival of 2023*, an account of perhaps the first spiritual awakening of the digital age, which occurred at his alma mater. He negotiated an agreement with the publisher providing for a complimentary pdf of the book for any readers of English in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe who would desire a copy. *To request a complimentary pdf copy of Taken by Surprise for an eligible individual*, send the name, location, and email to Dr. Elliott at emark936@gmail.com. The only restriction is that the pdf is not to be forwarded to recipients in the West. Those in the West may purchase a copy from www.seedbed.com or from Amazon.

Endorsement

Mark Elliott, a well-trained historian with a thorough knowledge of Asbury University's record of earlier awakenings, is perfectly positioned to offer this balanced, superbly researched, insightful, but still probing account of the much-publicized revival that took place at Asbury in February 2023.

Mark Noll, Ph.D., University of Notre Dame emeritus professor of history and author of *America's Book: The Rise and Decline of a Bible Civilization, 1794-1911* (2022).

For a print interview with Dr. Elliott, use the link below for "Taken by Surprise: Spiritual Awakening Hits a Historian's Hometown," *Light and Life Magazine*, October 2, 2023; lightandlife.fm/taken-by-surprise.

For a newly released video interview with Dr. Elliott from Seedbed Publishing use either link below:

<https://seedbed.com/church-historian-investigates-the-asbury-revival-of-2023/>

https://youtu.be/3LTkiW_pjU8?si=Jq6CI8L-Q9wBqTM5

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Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Security Bodies in the Fight Against Religion and Religious Communities on the Territory of Ukraine

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STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF SOVIET STATE SECURITY BODIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES ON THE TERRITORY OF UKRAINE

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Abstract

The article analyzes the strategy and tactics of state security agencies in the fight against religion and religious Protestant communities on the territory of Soviet Ukraine. The communist totalitarian system, in order to maintain its dominant position in society and fully master the consciousness of its population and influence its spiritual life (the strategic task), shortly after the end of the Second World War, in 1946 in the system of the newly formed Ministry of State Security of the Soviet Union of the Socialist Republics and its republican departments created new special operational departments endowed with extraordinary powers to carry out punitive and repressive and complex preventive actions (the tactical tasks). The “O” (operational) department of the Ministry of State Security of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was formed as a part of these functional divisions, which was engaged in the supervision of religious organizations, sects, groups, etc., and this special department “O” was engaged in the planning and implementation of operational work on “agent and operational development of sectarians.” In its work it relied on a number of punitive, repressive, and preventive measures, which were discussed carefully at special meetings, the reports and minutes of which were classified. Only recently the “top secret” seal has been removed from them. The execution of tasks related to the desacralization and liquidation of the prayer houses of the Evangelical Baptist Christians relied on operational commissioners and their agencies. For the successful implementation of tasks related to the liquidation and termination of the prayer houses of Evangelical Baptist Christians, the special services of the State Security Committee combined skillfully punitive, repressive, and preventive methods and systematically involved the cultural, educational, and artistic intelligentsia of Soviet Ukraine.

Keywords: Ukraine, Ukrainians, Christianity, Evangelical Baptist Christians, religion, faith, state security bodies; tactics, strategy, repression; preventive measures.

Introduction

“Unpunished evil returns!” This wise maxim is more relevant than ever during the Russian-Ukrainian war. After the defeat of the Nazi regime in World War II, the Nuremberg trials were held somewhat later. For almost a year, from November 20, 1945, to October 1, 1946, the International Military Tribunal tried the leading political, economic and military leaders of Nazi Germany. Importantly, this tribunal did not only convict specific defendants, but also collected, systematized, and made public substantial evidence of Hitler's crimes that helped delegitimize the misanthropic regime and ultimately de-nazify Germany. The Bolshevik regime, which, along with the Nazis, was an active organizer of the Second World War, especially in its first stage in 1939-1940, escaped condemnation because, as a result of a series of military and political measures, it became a member of the anti-Hitler coalition and turned out to be on the winning team, not the defeated one. In 1991, when the Soviet Union ceased to exist, there was a real opportunity to hold Nuremberg 2 and condemn the Bolshevik-Communist regime for their crimes against humanity: famines, genocides, repressions, wars, etc., but the republican former Communist Party and Soviet leaders of that time managed to divert public attention from this urgent issue. Thus, a real opportunity to condemn the Bolshevik-Communist ideology and punish its functionaries was lost. And already at the beginning of the 21st century, the new head of Russia, Vladimir Putin, announced publicly that the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereinafter – the USSR) became the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century. Since then, he and his team of imperial chauvinists have begun a purposeful process of reincarnating the totalitarian monster. A series of local wars eventually turned into a full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war, and taking into account that the Kremlin has a powerful nuclear arsenal, the atomic apocalypse becomes a terrifying reality for all humanity. That is why it is necessary to study and analyze the past, especially the Bolshevik-Communist one, since the misanthropic and terrorist practices that were used by party and Soviet functionaries at the time are being implemented actively in all spheres of life now, including the spiritual and religious ones, in Russian, Belarusian, and some other Central Asian countries autocracy.

Strategy and Tactics of the Special Services of the Ministry of State Security-State Security Committee of Ukraine in the Development of Mechanisms for Combating Religion and Protestant Religious Organizations

During the period of Soviet totalitarianism, the special services of the Ministry of State Security—the State Security Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (hereafter the MGB-KGB of the Ukr. SSR) were a reliable tool for suppressing any disobedience and keeping the population of the Ukrainian SSR under strict control. Total control over the religious sphere of life of the population of the USSR was one of the important, strategic directions of the activity of the Soviet state security bodies.

Carrying out the tasks of the communist leaders, the officials of the MGB (during 1946–1953) and the KGB (during 1954–1991) developed a number of agent and operational and preventive measures in the fight against Protestant communities, which were successfully implemented by its employees and agents. The planning and implementation of operational work on the “agency-operational development of sectarians” was based on a number of punitive-repressive and preventive measures, which were discussed carefully at special meetings, the reports and protocols of which were classified, and only recently, the stamp “top secret” has been removed from them. Thanks to the analysis of these kinds of documents, it is possible to imagine clearly the scope of the work of investigative and punitive repressive measures, which were carried out in the period of the second half of the 20th century by the bodies of the MGB-KGB regarding active leaders and members of religious denominations of the Baptist orientation.

The leaders of the totalitarian state believed and convinced their citizens that the Protestant Church is a breeding ground and spreader of reactionary ideology, and its members lead an anti-Soviet way of life, therefore the mission of the special services was to subjugate and destroy its religious centers.¹

Even during the Second World War, the leader of the USSR, Joseph Stalin, counting on the support of bloody massacre, changed his policy towards them. He realized that terror and violence alone could not eradicate people's faith in God, so he resorted to their “cunning subjugation” with the help of an extensive system of specially trained operatives and their agents. Thus, the reports of the special services indicated that

...repressive measures against the leaders and active participants of sectarian formations do not lead to the complete elimination of anti-Soviet underground sects and the separation of believers from them, because after the arrest of the leaders of the sects, other persons specially trained for this position become their leaders. In this regard, along with the arrests

¹ Дело № 23 с указаниями, справками, докладными записками и другими обобщенными документами (1957-1958 гг.). ОГА СБУ. Ф. 2. Оп. 26. Д. 23. Том 2. 353 л. [Case No. 23 with instructions, certificates, memos and other generalized documents (1957-1958). Regional State Administration of the SBU. F. 2. Op. 26. D. 23. Volume 2. 353 l.]

of organizers and leaders of sectarian formations, it is necessary to strengthen anti-religious propaganda to reveal the reactionary essence of sectarian ideology.²

In 1946, department No. 5 was created in the system of the newly formed MGB of the USSR and its republican departments, and as part of these functional divisions, a special department “O” (operational) of the MGB of the Ukrainian SSR with special powers was formed, which was officially only involved in the supervision of religious organizations and sects, groups, etc., and did not interfere in any way in the life, daily life, and spiritual practices of the confessions.³

However, a comprehensive, professional analysis of the reports and minutes of meetings of the special department “O” shows that the main task performed by its full-time employees was not only the supervision of the activities of religious organizations and their accounting, but primarily the planning and implementation of agent and operational, repressive, punitive, and subversive measures against leaders and active members of communities. Therefore, it was assumed that the special services, with the help of their agents among the leaders of the “sectarian formations,” would take control of the activities of the “sectarians” and would gradually and systematically destroy the community from the inside, by the hands of the agents, until the complete liquidation of all its cells.

In 1959, the agent apparatus had about 2,000 agents along the lines of churches and “sects,” a large part of whom held leading positions in religious organizations. As it was stated in the special message, “the presence of agents from the number of bishops, deacons, and other authorities of the Orthodox Church, presbyters and leaders of sectarian organizations of the SDA-EBC (Seventh-day Adventists and Evangelical Christian Baptists), etc., is an excellent basis for punitive and preventive measures to limit missionary activity of religious associations and their influence on the backward part of the population, reducing the number of church-sectarian links, stopping their growth and, if possible, completely banning the distribution of illegal sectarian literature”. Also, the agency had to collect the necessary materials regarding the split of religious communities and the separation of believers from them.

Authoritative and conscientious agents belonging to the leadership of the “sectarian formations” of the special services were directed to carry out a series of measures that would

² Перелік справ ф. 1. 3 відділ УДБ НКВС УРСР – 2 управління НКДБ КДБ УРСР. Історія фондоутворення. ГДА СБУ. 28 арк. [List of cases f. 1. 3rd department of the UDB of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR - 2nd department of the NKGB of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR. History of fund creation. GDA SBU. 28 sheets].

³ Перелік справ ф. 1. 3 відділ УДБ НКВС УРСР – 2 управління НКДБ КДБ УРСР. Історія фондоутворення. ГДА СБУ. 28 арк. [List of cases f. 1. 3rd department of the UDB of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR - 2nd department of the NKGB of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR. History of fund creation. GDA SBU. 28 sheets].

curb the “reactionary” missionary activity of churches and sects and ensure a decrease in the authority of influential religious organizations of the Ukrainian SSR⁴.

In order to separate believers from religion in the middle ranks of religious organizations, agents-leaders had to strengthen divisive and preventive measures and openly carry out work in the direction of inclining community members to stop completely their activities. Another part of the agents was directed to work on operational calculations and planning and was preparing for nomination to leading positions in “church-sectarian formations with the prospect of their split.”⁵

The special services attached great importance to the training of agents in the ability to introduce disagreements and confrontations into the religious environment, which led to a loss of trust between ordinary members and leaders of the church, “separation from religious leaders and further splitting from the middle.”⁶ The leadership of the special services considered it expedient to train foreign "sectarian centers" of proven and politically literate agents with the task of denying “provocative opinions about Soviet validity and beneficial influence on emigration.”⁷

Atheist propaganda was an important direction of agent and operational work performed by the special services. The most authoritative agents of the state security were entrusted with the preparation of brochures and articles on atheistic topics for publication in the press under a pseudonym. It was also supposed to introduce differences and strife among religious organizations with the help of agents who managed “sectarian formations.” In particular, to use for this purpose the Evangelical Baptist Christians (hereinafter referred to as EBC) against the Pentecostals, the law-abiding Orthodox against the Uniates, Catholics and, “sectarians.”⁸

Party leaders raised at the congresses the issue of strengthening atheist measures among the population. Thus, in the decisions of the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (hereinafter referred to as the CPSU), which was held in Moscow from January 27 to February 5, 1959, it was stated that the KGB authorities should strengthen preventive measures against citizens who have walked on a path incompatible with communist worldview. It was also indicated that its operatives must, first of all, remember that prevention is a set of complex Chekist measures that were carried out after a conversation with the object of prevention, because one conversation will not be able to change a person's worldview, so it was necessary

⁴ Ibid., ark. 194.

⁵ Ibid., ark. 194.

⁶ Дело № 23 с указаниями, справками... (1957-1958 гг.). Л. 195. [Case No. 23 with instructions, certificates... (1957-1958). L. 195.]

⁷ Ibid., ark. 195.

⁸ Ibid., ark. 195.

to prepare carefully. And only after that, start implementing the case, having a clear plan for carrying out preventive measures for it is very important to act correctly in relation to the object.⁹

All preventive measures against believers were schematically divided by the state security authorities into the following types:

- a) secret tracking of the object of prevention followed by a conversation with him in the KGB,
- b) a summons to the KGB bodies through official channels,
- c) prevention of objects with the participation of the public, namely the leadership of party, Komsomol, and trade union bodies at the place of work or study,
- d) prevention of public bailout,
- e) prevention with the help of partnership courts,
- e) prevention through the press,
- g) work with the object of prevention through an appearance in the press with his or her remorse.¹⁰

At the same time, analysts of special services saw that this list of measures for prevention objects was insufficient, due to the fact that they came under the influence of bourgeois ideology, which was introduced into the republic from abroad. The most effective methods of the special services were considered to be a combination of prevention and repression.¹¹

In the report of Tikhonov, the deputy head of the KGB under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, it was indicated that the repression of believers was justified because they did not recognize Soviet laws, refused to protect the homeland, work in collective farms and the defense industry, and separate young people from public influence in order to raise them into religious fanatics.¹²

In the report note of the special services, under the label “completely secret,” a number of methods were proposed for the liquidation of illegal religious formations and to carry them out by bringing them to criminal responsibility and working actively with ordinary “sectarians.” An example of a successful combination of preventive and repressive measures was the work of the KGB Office of the Crimean Region to eliminate the illegal formation of “Pentecostal sectarians.” The leadership of this formation numbering five people was arrested, and the preventive work of the Soviet party activists was carried out with the ordinary members. Persons who provided

⁹ Ibid., ark. 195.

¹⁰ Дело № 23 с указаниями, справками... (1957-1958 гг.). Л. 202. [Case No. 23 with instructions, certificates... (1957-1958). L. 202.]

¹¹ Ibid., ark. 198.

¹² Ibid., ark. 27-28.

accommodation for prayer meetings were fined and warned of eviction from the building if they did not stop their activities.¹³

The special services considered the “compromise of church-sectarian authorities” to be a successful method of combating the EBC communities. An example of the effectiveness of this method was the operation against Semenov, the Pentecostal leader in the Hayvoron and Ulyanovsk districts of the Kirovohrad region. Using intelligence information about Semenov's cohabitation with a woman who was specially introduced to the sect, the special services began to spread information among believers about his violation of religious morals. After that, Semenov fled to another region, the groups of believers he led disintegrated, and some joined the legal community of the EBC¹⁴.

The KGB bodies used successfully the influence of the public in the fight against the church. It was believed that this method was the most successful for breaking up religious organizations. These measures were prepared on the basis of materials provided by the KGB bodies and were carried out with the consent and active participation of party and Soviet bodies.¹⁵

The demonstrative debunking of the “reactionary activities of sectarians” in the press, radio, television, and cinema, etc., was also carried out at the request of the KGB special services. In particular, the report noted “recently, articles and statements of former members of “church-sectarian organizations” who have left religion have been systematically published in regional and district newspapers. This has a positive effect on the demoralization of religious communities, detaches believers from church-sectarian activities.”¹⁶

In a report marked “top secret” dated by October 17, 1959, to the head of Department No. 4 of the KGB under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Lieutenant General E.P. Pitovranov reported on the results of the intelligence and operational work of the state security agencies of Ukraine in “the fight against enemy elements among churchmen and sectarians for the period from 1944 to 1959.” According to this report, during this specified period, the security authorities, with the help of agents and operatives, succeeded in forcibly uniting more than 12,000 Pentecostals with the EBC communities. Thus, thanks to arrests and preventive work, the activity of religious organizations in Ukraine was paralyzed in 1954–1955.¹⁷

¹³ Ibid., ark. 202.

¹⁴ Дело № 23 с указаниями, справками... (1957-1958 гг.). Л. 203. [Case No. 23 with instructions, certificates... (1957-1958). L. 203.]

¹⁵ Ibid., ark. 202.

¹⁶ Ibid., ark. 203.

¹⁷ Дело №31 с докладными записками, справками и другими документами по линии церковников и сектантов (1959-1961 гг.). ОГА СБУ. Ф.1. Оп.1. Д.1424. Л.1-3. [Case No. 31 with memos, certificates and other

The major role in the liquidation of illegal communities was played by the agency from legal communities, in particular, the authoritative agency from legal church formations that had to be used actively regarding the demoralization and liquidation of illegal communities, including the EBC. In addition, the special services of the KGB used agents from the legal communities of the EBC, in particular regional presbyters and presbyters of communities, to make impossible the quantitative growth of religious organizations, including the missionary activity of illegal preachers and the reception of young people in the communities.¹⁸ The KGB authorities attached great importance to the implementation of individual preventive and educational work among believers, both by the forces of their employees and the communist party activists. In their opinion, a positive example can be the work carried out by operatives in the Mykolaiv region with the help of Verkhohamov, who was one of the leaders of the Baptist underground. Information was received that Verkhohamov disagreed with Romanenko, the leader of the underground, on a number of dogmatic issues. Using this circumstance, operatives held a “conversation” with Verkhohamov, during which, using specific examples of scientific achievements, the reactionary essence of their “sect” was explained to him, and it was also proved that the activities of its leaders, which were carried out under the guise of religion, were criminal in nature. As a result, he was cut off from the community. Then he began to speak in cultural centers and local printed organs, on the radio, at city enterprises with lectures, in which he debunked the reactionary essence of the community and religion as a whole. At the same time, the report noted, he was currently a member of the Union for the Dissemination of Atheistic and Political Knowledge.¹⁹

Particularly active measures to strengthen agent and operational work among the faithful were applied after the amnesty of 1955–1956, as about 3,000 active leaders of various churches returned to the republic from prisons and began missionary activities with the aim of organizing underground communities.²⁰ According to the information of the deputy head of department No. 4 of the KGB under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, Lieutenant Colonel Zubatenko, dated November 2, 1959, the growth of legal communities of the ECB during 1954–1958 had a clear dynamic due to the admission of new members and young people in “1954 total of 1228, of which 496 young people. There were 1,338 communities. In 1955, there were 2,690.

documents related to churchmen and sectarians (1959-1961). Regional State Administration of the SBU. F.1. Op.1. D.1424. L.1-3.]

¹⁸ Дело №23 с указаниями, справками ... (1957-1958 гг.). Л.204. [Case No. 23 with instructions, certificates... (1957-1958). L. 204.]

¹⁹Ibid., ark. 205.

²⁰Дело № 23 с указаниями, справками... (1957-1958 гг.). Л. 2-3. [Case No. 23 with instructions, certificates... (1957-1958). L. 2-3.]

of which 561 youth. There were 1,351 communities. In 1956, there were 3,326, of which 920 youth. There were 1,348 communities. In 1957 3,170, of which 762 youth. There were 1,348 communities. In 1958 2,929, of which 797 youth. There were 1,339 communities.”²¹

The amnesty of the church activists led to the fact that only two legal communities of EBC and Seventh-day Adventists (hereafter SDA) in Ukraine increased by 17,500 members over two years, including 5,000 young people. The attendance of young people to study at the seminary increased threefold.²²

In order to prevent the formation of illegal “church-sectarian formations” in 1954-1959, 66 agents were appointed to their leadership, which made it possible to control fully the activities of these groups and carry out measures on their development or demoralization. This gave positive results for the special services, in particular, during the five years of the work of the intelligence and investigative activities in combination with public influence, “more than 8,000 members of illegal church-sectarian groups stopped their underground activities, and about 2,000 left religion altogether.”²³

An example of the exemplary actions of the special services and their agents was their compromising of authoritative religious figures, the so-called “pure Baptists” Litvinenko and Zyubanov, who returned from prison and managed quickly to get the support of 2.000 believers and organize illegal prayer meetings. Due to the activity of the agency, the special services succeeded quickly in slandering the leadership of the community, which is why part of their supporters left religion altogether, and the other part joined the ECB.²⁴

Agency-operational work regarding “sectarians” was always planned in advance. The main tasks that the operatives set for the communities of ECB for the following years were complete liquidation of underground illegal sects or their joining to legal communities of the ECB by

- creation of conditions for reducing the number of preachers and their missionary activities with the aim of attracting new people, especially young people, to the communities,
- quantitative reduction of religious communities; strengthening of preventive work among “church members and sectarians in the direction of paralyzing their reactionary hostile influence on the backward part of the population and separation of believers from religion,”

²¹ Дело № 31 с докладными записками... (1959-1961 гг.). Л. 12-13. [Case No. 31 with memos... (1959-1961). L. 12-13.]

²² Ibid., ark. 3.

²³ Ibid., ark. 6.

²⁴ Дело № 31 с докладными записками... (1959-1961 гг.). Л. 6. [Case No. 31 with memos... (1959-1961). L. 6.]

- interception of communication channels of religious organizations with foreign “sectarian centers and use of these channels for operational purposes.”²⁵

The execution of these tasks relied on the agency, “especially from the circle of sectarian authorities, and in necessary cases, the implementation of repressive measures against the leadership of religious organizations that continue anti-Soviet activities.”²⁶

In addition, it was decided that in this direction, with the consent of Communist Party and Soviet bodies and with their active participation, various printed literature, cinema, radio, theaters, lectures on scientific and atheistic topics, as well as meetings of workers and peasants, and personal conversations with believers were used by these activists and operatives.²⁷

As it was noted in a secret note from 1959 by V. Nikitchenko, the head of the KGB under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine

in the work on the demoralization of illegal communities of the ECB, it is necessary to use actively the presbyterial composition of the legal communities of the ECB. With its help, it is possible to force a certain circle of participants of illegal formations to stop underground activities. Appropriate instructions in this direction should be given to the representatives of the Council on Orthodox Church and Religious Cults. In order to prevent the activities of leaders and members of underground groups who were in an illegal position, the prosecutor's office and the police need to strengthen the fight against anti-social, parasitic elements in accordance with the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated by 23.07.1951, as well as on the basis of Chapter 10 of the Administrative Code of the Ukrainian SSR, approved by the central executive committee of Ukraine from November 12, 1927.²⁸

A total of 120 people from among the leadership and active members of the ECB community were arrested during 1943-1961 with the participation of employees and their state security agents.²⁹

In a secret report signed by Colonel V. Sukhonin, the head of department № 4 of the KGB under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, dated January 13, 1960, about the results of work among some churchmen and sectarians in the republic of Ukraine for 1956-1960, the following statistics are presented:

a) Illegal “sects,” including Baptist ones, stopped their underground activities:

in 1956, the underground activities of 11 illegal religious organizations, including 4 Baptist communities, were ended: ECB and ASD, for example, in 1957 – four religious organizations,

²⁵ Ibid., ark. 8.

²⁶ Ibid., ark. 8.

²⁷ Ibid., ark. 8.

²⁸ Дело № 31 с докладными записками... (1959-1961 гг.). Л. 27. [Case No. 31 with memos... (1959-1961). L. 27.]

²⁹ Ibid., ark. 31.

in 1958 – 18 religious organizations, in 1959 – 63 religious organizations, in 1960 – 129 religious organizations, Refused religious practices in 1958 - no information, in 1959 - 195 people, in 1960 - 350 people. Believers of Christian communities arrested for anti-Soviet activities: 1956 – 45 people, 1957 – 148 people, 1958 – 142 people, 1959 – 42 people, 1960 – 21 people.³⁰

In the early 1960s, thousands of churches and prayer houses were closed. Mass anti-religious propaganda began, which was combined with slander against believers. In turn, KGB authorities intensified repression against believers; in particular, they declared a complete ban on the activities of unregistered communities. On December 1, 1960, the bodies of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR received secret data signed by Colonel Sekarev, the deputy head of the 4th department of the KGB administration under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, about the accounting of all church communities, among which special attention was paid to the ECB community. In particular, in 1,273 ECB communities there were 1,273 presbyters, 203 preachers, 105,776 church members, including 2,333 people in unregistered groups.³¹

In the secret message No. 2 of the KGB administration under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, it was reported that

at the end of 1960, in the territory of a number of regions of the Ukrainian SSR and other republics of the Soviet Union, the leaders of illegal Baptists, who are opposed to the new regulation on the ECB community recently adopted at the initiative of the Soviet authorities, launched active work on the territory of a number of regions of the Ukrainian SSR and other republics of the Soviet Union which limits the activities of the Baptists. The leaders of these groups, Prokofiev and Kryuchkov, are in favor of removing all restrictions on missionary work, as well as against the registration of Baptist communities throughout the territory of the USSR, against the participation of believers in socio-political and cultural events, service in the Soviet army, and joining a trade union. They rely on young people in their work. Prokofiev and Kryuchkov managed to attract to their side more than 1,000 Baptists, who are a part of 120 illegal groups of the ECB. These groups are most active in the Kharkiv, Donetsk, Odesa, Kirovohrad, Zhytomyr, and Kyiv regions. In December 1961, using the American exhibition “Transport USA” in Kharkiv, supporters of Prokofiev tried to send anti-Soviet letters to the World Baptist Union through the exhibition's employees. Organized measures managed to prevent this.³²

For the first half of 1962, in the secret work plan of Department 5 of the 2nd Department of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR, which was approved by Lieutenant Colonel Kallash, the deputy head of the 2nd Department of the KGB at the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, it was clearly stated:

³⁰ Ibid., ark. 31.

³¹ Дело № 31 с докладными записками ... (1959-1961 гг.). Л. 42. [Case No. 31 with memos... (1959-1961). L. 42.]

³² Дело № 20 с планами и справками по линии церковников и сектантов (1962 г.). ОГА СБУ. Ф. 1. Оп. 1 Д. 1423. Л. 29-30. [Case No. 20 with plans and information regarding churchmen and sectarians (1962). Regional State Administration of the SBU. F. 1. Op. 1 D. 1423. L. 29-30.]

to analyze the data received by the KGB regarding the missionary activities of certain authorities, oppositionally oriented evangelical Baptist Christians, to prepare and conduct with operatives of the UKDB of Kharkiv, Donetsk, Sumy, Crimea, Zaporizhzhya, Odesa, Cherkasy, and Kirovohrad regions, with their participation to develop specific measures to prevent the hostile activities of illegal youth groups of the ECB. Implementation depended on Stepanenko, Annenko in January-February 1962.³³

The activities of the dissenting believers of the ECB caused a reaction from the KGB special services. In those regions, where most of them were, the special services started punitive and repressive measures, including closing the houses of worship. In response to the closing of prayer houses, believers went underground and joined the opposition “initiative group” of the ECB. According to the information provided in the report dated June 28, 1962, by Colonel Sekarev, the deputy head of the 3rd department of the 2nd department of the KGB under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, “out of the eight illegal communities of the ECB that were closed in recent years in the Donetsk region, they began to conduct illegal activities. One of them is an ECB community village Krasny Liman (110 people) and others. After the closure of two ECB prayer houses in the city of Izmail and in Peresyp (district of Odesa), believers who numbered about 180 people began to gather for prayers illegally, and actually got out of the control of the authorities. In the villages of the Rivne region (Kornyn, Kvasyliv, Ilyin, Vytkovycha, Kolovert) after the closure of the ECB communities, the majority of its members, who were formerly Pentecostals, moved to an illegal status. Thus, according to the secret reports of the 2nd Directorate of the KGB, “by 1962, there were already 90 unregistered ECB communities (2,760 people) in Ukraine, which held their prayer meetings in illegal conditions.”³⁴

In order to stop the process of creating illegal communities of the ECB, it was planned to take measures during February-March 1962 to search for O. Prokofiev, the leader of the “Young Baptists” initiative group. For this purpose, it was planned to send operatives of the 5th department to the KGB Office of the Donetsk, Kharkiv, Sumy, Odesa, Kirovohrad, and Zaporizhzhia regions for the organization and development of identification of family and organizational ties, as well as for the recruitment of new agents from members of illegal groups, the so-called “Young Baptists” and the organization of events of a divisive and preventive nature, compromising the leaders of illegal groups in front of ordinary participants. It was also supposed to study the possibility of using in this direction the results of the investigation and the trial in the case of Lozovoy, Zdorovets and other Baptists arrested by the KGB Office of the Kharkiv

³³ Дело № 20 с планами и справками ... (1962). Л.3. [Case No. 20 with plans and certificates ... (1962). L.3.]

³⁴ Ibid., ark. 49.

region. The implementation was entrusted to the operational officer of the KGB, Major M. Annenka, who reported that he had met the stated deadlines, O. Prokofev was arrested in April 1962.³⁵

In the 1960s special services of the KGB intensified close supervision of the leaders and spiritual centers of the EBC, which were operating legally in the Ukrainian SSR. But operatives and agents of the special services paid special attention to the unregistered community of the Council of Churches of the EBC and its active participants. With the participation of the KGB in the 1960s and 1970s, the vast majority of all leaders of unregistered communities were arrested; some of them served several terms of imprisonment, only H. Kryuchkov managed to avoid arrest. Thus, on May 19, 1966, after the trip of G. Vinns and M. Khoryov, members of the Organizational Committee of the Council of Churches, to the reception hall of the Central Committee of the CPSU in Moscow, they were arrested and placed in Lefortovo prison. On November 30, G. Vince was sentenced to three years in the camps. In 1970, his mother was also arrested and sentenced to three years in general regime correctional labor camps.³⁶

The files of the Security Service of Ukraine contain declassified documentary materials from the operational archive of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR about their struggle with members of illegal “sectarian groups” in the 1950s and 1980s. In letter file No. 722 in 8 volumes of the Ukrainian SSR there are materials from 1959 to 1973. Two of the KGB Directorates of the Ukrainian SSR, “contain orientation, instructions on number of work and reference materials on the communities of Evangelical Baptist Christians (EBC) existing on the territory of the republic, including, one direction of the community of “Prokofievs,” who were named after O. Prokofiev, the head of the illegal community of the EBC and his supporters.”³⁷

In 1973–1974, the special services identified and arrested illegal leaders, discovered an underground printing press, and destroyed its printed products and equipment. G. Vinns was among those re-arrested in March 1974. He was sentenced to ten years in correctional labor

³⁵ Дело № 20 с планами и справками ... (1962). Л. 3-4. [Case No. 20 with plans and certificates ... (1962). L. 3-4.]

³⁶ О. П. Лахно “Виступ «ініціативників» як прояв офіційної опозиції в середовищі віруючих євангельських християн баптистів у СРСР.” *Наука. Релігія. Суспільство*. № 1. 2010. С. 100. URL: <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/> [O. P. Lakhno The speech of "initiatives" as a manifestation of official opposition among the believers of Evangelical Christians Baptists in the USSR. *Science. Religion. Society*. No. 1. 2010. P. 100]

³⁷ Комитет государственной безопасности Украинской ССР. – 10 отдел. – Тематический перечень документальных материалов оперативного архива КГБ УССР на лиц, проводивших антисоветскую деятельность, маскирующую религиозной догматикой и исполнением религиозных обрядов. ОГА СБУ. Л. 10. [State Security Committee of the Ukrainian SSR. – 10th department. – A thematic list of documentary materials from the operational archive of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR on individuals who carried out anti-Soviet activities, masked by religious dogma and the performance of religious rituals. Regional State Administration of the SBU. L. 10.]

camps in Yakutia. When the case of G. Vinns received international publicity, in 1979 he was deprived of citizenship and deported abroad by the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.³⁸

During 1974-1976, the authorities of the KGB Directorate in Kyiv and the Kyiv region conducted an investigation against the head of the Kyiv community, previously convicted for illegal religious activities related to the production and distribution of religious propaganda literature. After his release from prison, he became a member of the leadership of the body of the Kyiv community of schismatic Baptists called the "Fraternal Council" and was the community's treasurer.³⁹ In the 1980s, the special services carried out a series of agent and operational measures against the believers of the opposition Council of Churches of the EBC. In particular, in 1983-1987, the KGB Office of the Kyiv region arrested illegal Baptists and convicted them.⁴⁰

Conclusions

Having analyzed the strategy and tactics of the state security bodies of the Ukrainian SSR in the fight against religion and Protestant religious communities on the territory of Soviet Ukraine, we made the following conclusions:

First, the communist totalitarian system, in order to maintain its dominant position in society and master completely the consciousness of its population and influence its spiritual life (strategic task), shortly after the end of the Second World War, in 1946 in the system of the newly formed MGB of the USSR and its republican departments, they created new special operational departments, endowed with extraordinary powers, to carry out punitive, and repressive and complex preventive actions (tactical tasks).

Secondly, as a part of these functional divisions, a special department "O" (operational) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR was formed, which was engaged in the supervision of religious organizations, sects, groups, etc., as did the higher party leadership (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine).

Thirdly, this special department "O" of the MGB-KGB of the Ukrainian SSR was engaged in systematic planning and comprehensive implementation of operative and research work regarding the agent and operational development of believers, with the aim of discrediting them and bringing about the final liquidation of religious communities.

³⁸ Лакно О.П. Виступ «ініціативників»... С. 100. [Lakhno O.P. Speech of "initiatives".... P. 100.]

³⁹ Комитет государственной безопасности... Л. 40. [State Security Committee... L. 40.]

⁴⁰ Комитет государственной безопасности... Л. 41. [State Security Committee... L. 41.]

Fourthly, the special department “O” of the MGB-KGB of the Ukrainian SSR relied in its work on a complete system of punitive, repressive, and preventive measures, which were carefully discussed at special meetings, the reports and protocols which were classified. Only recently has the seal “top secret” been removed from them.

Fifth, the implementation of tasks related to the desacralization of religious Protestant communities, the persecution of their leadership, and the liquidation of the ECB prayer houses by the state security authorities of the Ukrainian SSR relied on the operational representatives of the MGB-KGB of the Ukrainian SSR and their agents.

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