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# PROTESTANTS IN SOVIET UKRAINE IN THE 1920S TO 1930S: POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL ASPECTS

By Roman Sitarchuk

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## Abstract

**The aim.** The article offers a general political-historical analysis of the Protestant movement in the context of the party-state policies of Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s and 1930s. **Scientific novelty.** The study of state-church relations of polyconfessional Ukrainian society in general and Protestant currents, in particular, actualizes a new scientific understanding of the state religious policy at different stages of development of the historical past and present. **Research methods.** The research project studies Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Seventh-day Adventists, and Pentecostals, utilizing the principles of objectivity, ideological pluralism, complexity, methodologies of mathematical statistics, comparative studies, and problem-chronological method. The study is based on the use of archival materials of two central and four regional archives of Ukraine. **Main results.** The study identified two periods in the development of the Protestant movement. The first (1920-1928) was marked by the external tolerance of the state authorities to the Protestants, but at the same time it secretly aimed at discrediting them by splitting Protestant organizations. Yet, during this period, Protestants expanded their activities and built their own institutions Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) are marked by the greatest activity and territorial mobility. The second (1929–1939) stage was marked by an open anti-Protestant policy, oppression, and the destruction of Ukrainian Protestant institutions by Soviet authorities. Many Protestant communities decreased in number, but continued to operate without registration, semi-legally, until the late 1930s.

**Keywords:** Seventh-day Adventists, Baptists, Soviet authorities, evangelical Christians, number, organization, politics, sectarians, persecutions, evangelical Christians (Pentecostals).

## The Statement of the Problem

The multi confessional structure of Ukraine and the presence of freedom of religion encourage scientists to study the problem of state-church relations. The study of the relationship between the state and the church contributes to the emergence of a new scientific and historical understanding of state's religious policy. The relationship between the state and the Protestant confessions remains an urgent issue for Ukrainian Protestants. To trace the

patterns of such Christian currents of formation, development, and place in the modern socio-religious palette, it is necessary to trace their past, especially in the fateful periods for the history of Protestants, among which are the first years of Soviet rule in Ukraine, namely the 1920 and 1930s. The study includes Protestant Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Seventh-day Adventists, and Pentecostals, addressing their activities according to the time of their emergence in Ukraine.

The term "sectarians" to denote Protestant believers is used to preserve the authenticity of reproductions of quotations from archival materials, to represent the author's style of Soviet literature.

### **The Purpose**

The aim of the study is to carry out a general political-historical analysis of the Protestant movement in Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s and 1930s in terms of the party-state policy. The proposed motivation of the study involves solving the following tasks: to characterize the evolution of the formation of Protestant institutions in Soviet Ukraine in these years; to trace the main stages of the party-state policy regarding the studied denominations; to analyze the quantitative changes of Protestant communities.

### **The Analysis of Scientific Research and Publications**

Literature about the Protestants of the period under study is small. V. Ulasevych, the secretary of the All-Ukrainian Anti-Religious Commission during the time under investigation,<sup>1</sup> provides one of the first official accounts on the situation, varieties, and amount of "sectarianism" in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. A thorough description of the "sectarian" movement, in general, is given in the collective work under the general editorship of O. Klibanov.<sup>2</sup> There are also works on the coverage of certain Protestant movements: B. Tikhomirov,<sup>3</sup> L. Mitrokhin,<sup>4</sup> A. Yartsev<sup>5</sup> were engaged in the in-depth and

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<sup>1</sup> Вікторія Уласевич, *Сучасне сектантство* (Київ: Держвидав України, 1925), 31. Ulasevich, Victoria. *Modern sectarianism*. Kyiv: State Publishing House of Ukraine].

<sup>2</sup> А. Клибанов, ed., *Критика религиозного сектантства (Опыт изучения религиозного сектантства в 20-х – начале 30-х годов): сборник статей* (Москва: Мысль, 1974), 263. [Klibanov, A., ed. *Criticism of religious sectarianism (Experience in the study of religious sectarianism in the 20s - early 30s): a collection of articles*.]

<sup>3</sup> Б. Тихомиров, *Баттизм и его политическая роль*. (Москва: ГАИЗ, 1929), 64. [Tikhomirov, B. *Baptism and its political role*.]

<sup>4</sup> Л. Митрохин, *Баттизм и современность (философско-социологические очерки)* (Санкт-Петербург: РХГИ, 1997), 480. [Mitrokhin, L. *Baptism and Modernity (Philosophical and Sociological Essays)*.]

<sup>5</sup> А. Ярцев, *Секта евангельских христиан*, 4th ed. (Москва: Безбожник, 1930), 52. [Yartsev, A. *Sect of Evangelical Christians*. 4th ed. Moscow: Atheist].

diverse study of Baptism and Evangelical Christianity, Adventism - O. Belov,<sup>6</sup> Christians of the Evangelical faith (Pentecostalism) - F. Garkavenko,<sup>7</sup> N. Gurich.<sup>8</sup> An important account of the history of Protestantism, in general, was written by V. Lyubashchenko.<sup>9</sup> The "gaps" in the coverage of the issue are partially filled in the works of the Protestants themselves. In particular, the period of the 20s and 30s of the history of Seventh-day Adventists is described in a collective monograph edited by O. Parasei and M. Zhukalyuk<sup>10</sup> and a single work by M. Zhukalyuk.<sup>11</sup> The Evangelical Baptist movement is portrayed in the work *History of Evangelical Baptists in the USSR*,<sup>12</sup> a monograph by L. Zhabko-Potapovich.<sup>13</sup> In addition, materials from Protestant conventions were used.<sup>14</sup>

### The Source Base of the Research

Most of the information about the situation of Protestant associations and state policy towards them in this period is contained in documents found in the following archives: the Central State Archive of Supreme Authorities of Ukraine, the Central State Archive of Public Associations of Ukraine, the State Archives of Zaporizhia region, State Archives of Odesa region, State Archives of Poltava region, State Archives of Kharkiv region.

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<sup>6</sup> А. Белов, *Адвентизм*, 2nd ed. (Москва: Изд-во полит. литературы, 1973), 239. [Belov, A. *Adventism*. 2nd ed. Moscow: Publishing house polit. literature].

<sup>7</sup> Ф. Гаркавенко, *П'ятидесятники та їх віра* (Київ: Вид-во політ. літ-ри України, 1966), 80. [Harkavenko, F. *Pentecostals and their faith*.]

<sup>8</sup> Н. Гурич, "Трясуны и их организатор Воропаев," *Атеист*, no. 55 (1930): 116–28. [Gurich, N. "Tremors and their organizer Voropaev." *Atheist*],

<sup>9</sup> В. Любащенко, *Історія протестантизму в Україні : курс лекцій* (Львів: Просвіта, 1995), 350. [V. Lyubashchenko. *History of Protestantism in Ukraine: a course of lectures*].

<sup>10</sup> А. Парасей and Н. Жукалюк, *Бедная, бросаемая бурей : исторические очерки к 110-летнему юбилею Церкви адвентистов седьмого дня в Украине* (Київ: Джерело життя, 1997), 340. [Parasei, A., and N. Zhukalyuk. *The Poor Thrown by the Tempest: Historical Sketches for the 110th Anniversary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine*.]

<sup>11</sup> Н. Жукалюк, *Вспоминайте наставников ваших : история Церкви Адвентистов седьмого дня в личностях* (Київ: Джерело життя, 1999), 672. [N. Zhukalyuk, *Remember your mentors: the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in personalities*.]

<sup>12</sup> *История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР* (Москва: Изд. Всесоюз. совета евангельских христиан-баптистов, 1989). [*History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR*. Moscow: Publishing house. All-Union. Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists].

<sup>13</sup> Л. Жабко-Потапович, *Христове світло в Україні. Історія українського евангельсько-баптистського руху* (Чикаго: Вид. Всеукраїнського Евангельсько-Баптистського Братства, 1991), 180. [L. Zhabko-Potapovich. *The light of Christ in Ukraine. History of the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist movement*. Chicago: View. All-Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Brotherhood].

<sup>14</sup> *Всеукраїнський съезд баптистов: запись засідання Першого Всеукраїнського съезда баптистов, состоявшегося в г. Києва с 1 по 8 октября 1918 г.* (Київ, 1918), 30 [*All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists: recording of the meeting of the First All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists, held in Kiev from October 1 to October 8, 1918*.]; *Всеукраїнський съезд баптистов: запись засіданий Четвертого Всеукраїнського съезда баптистов, состоявшегося в г. Харькове с 12 по 17 мая 1925 г.* (Харьков, 1925), 12. [*All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists: recording of the sessions of the Fourth All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists, held in Kharkov from 12 to 17 May 1925*.]

The research includes a number of methodological principles. These include, above all, the principle of objectivity, which focuses on socio-political neutrality, requiring a comprehensive analysis of historical facts, events, and processes. Adherence to the principle of historicism ensures the study of the patterns of development of the Protestant movement, its development, and connection with specific historical conditions. Ideological pluralism<sup>15</sup> is followed, such as in the comparison between the opinions of historians and archival sources on the total number of Ukrainian Protestant believers. The calculation of their number involves using mathematical statistics, comparative analysis, and a complex methodology. The construction of the study in the logical-temporal dimension determines the need to use the problem-chronological method.

### **The Research Results**

With the establishment of Soviet power in the Ukrainian lands, the policy of Protestant associations, as well as all religious movements in general, underwent evolutionary changes. If in the sphere of state and law the Bolshevik party leadership in the early 1920s declared religious tolerance, in practice its attitude towards religious organizations was determined by Communist Party, government decrees, "closed" instructions, memos of top officials, and other steps taken intended to curtail religious freedoms. The further development of Soviet Ukraine testified to the contradiction between the freedoms proclaimed by the state and the anti-religious strategy and tactics of the government, which provided for the participation of state bodies, cult organizations, mass media, individual societies, and so on. Such measures of the Bolshevik Party at the national level were aimed at the complete demise of the church as a social institution and particularly Protestant denominations. In August 1920, the government of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (hereinafter: UkrSSR) adopted a resolution "On the harmonization of the legislative practice of the UkrSSR and the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic on the separation of church and state." The Ukrainian version of the decree "On the separation of church and state and school from the church" (adopted on January 22, 1919) agreed with its Russian version. As a result, Ukrainian Protestant organizations, as well as those in the territory of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (hereinafter: RSFSR), lost the right of legal personality.<sup>16</sup> In August 1921, by a decision of the plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian

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<sup>15</sup> Ideological pluralism is when scientists work with the same sources, but interpret the results of the study of archival materials in different ways.

<sup>16</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 8. Оп. 1. Спр. 1216. Арк. 176(зв.); Ф. 2. Оп. 1. Спр. 590. Арк. 3; Оп. 3. Спр. 348. Арк. 10. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

Communist Party of Bolsheviks (hereinafter: The Central Committee of the RCP (B)), studies and records of Protestant denominations were initiated (according to the official documents of the time called "sectarian movement and sectarian groups."<sup>17</sup>

In 1922, the "Directive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to Soviet and Party Bodies on Attitudes Toward Sects and Policies Concerning Religious Groups in General" was issued, declaring the necessity and expediency of direct state intervention in religious matters.<sup>18</sup> In September of the same year, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union sent a secret letter to the local authorities, emphasizing the inadmissibility of holding "general congresses of all sectarian groups and communities, given the presence of certain bourgeois and anti-Soviet organizations." Protestant societies were declared "deeply hostile in their social structure" and should be fought "carefully and thoughtfully" as against the old church.<sup>19</sup>

Measures aimed at the destruction of evangelical denominations continued; the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in June 1923 gave the relevant instructions to the bodies of the State Political Administration. The orders called for the following measures: to liquidate all unregistered communities and send their leaders abroad; to prevent the import of "sectarian" literature from abroad and the spread of printed media; not to allow missionary activity of preachers; use all means to discredit "sectarians" politically and morally; to clean the Red Army of anti-militarist elements."<sup>20</sup>

However, there were no significant changes in Protestant denominations until the mid-1920s. The Higher Attestation Commission (established in 1924) stated that "sectarianism is not quantified, we have more or less accurate data only on the number of communities, their composition..."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, in January 1925, a circular was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union № 78 "On the sectarian movement and anti-religious propaganda" which stated that the exact number of Protestants is not known but "in this connection the growth of sectarianism must be taken into

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<sup>17</sup> А. Клибанов, ed., *Критика религиозного сектантства (Опыт изучения религиозного сектантства в 20-х – начале 30-х годов): сборник статей* (Москва: Мысль, 1974), 14. [A. Klibanov, ed. *Criticism of religious sectarianism (Experience in the study of religious sectarianism in the 20s - early 30s): a collection of articles.*]

<sup>18</sup> В. Пашенко, *Православ'я в Україні. Державно-церковні стосунки. 20-30-і рр. XX ст.* (Полтава: Априорі, 1995), 38–39. [V. Pashchenko. *Pravoslav'ya in Ukraine. Sovereign-church stosunki. 20-30-i pp. 20th century.*]

<sup>19</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 748. Арк. 85, 161, 162. [TsDAGO of Ukraine]

<sup>20</sup> *Архивы Кремля : в 2-х кн. Политбюро и церковь. 1922–1925 гг.*, vol. 2 (Новосибирск: Сибирский хронограф, 1998), 345–346. [*Kremlin archives: in 2 books. Politburo and Church. 1922-1925*]

<sup>21</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 1842. Арк. 23. [TsDAGO of Ukraine]

account."<sup>22</sup> The main responsibility for the implementation of the decision was assigned to the departments of cults of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. However, the problem of personnel and the low level of executive discipline led to the situation that the orders of the central government on the ground were carried out sluggishly and dishonestly. In the second half of the 1920's, party directives on the re-registration of and research on Protestant communities were issued almost annually until 1929.<sup>23</sup>

Later (1930), the recommendations of the Bolshevik leadership to combat Protestant movements were updated. Central and local government agencies stressed the "desirability of [creating] a split among sectarians in the attitude to the Soviet government." Simultaneous they urged the creation of regional and all-Ukrainian "sectarian associations" to technically facilitate their registration and "exercise greater control over their activities."<sup>24</sup> At the same time, it was warned that the union should be formed only when "the top of the sect will be taken under full control."<sup>25</sup> From 1925, clergy of all denominations were registered at their place of residence,<sup>26</sup> restricting the activities of preachers (evangelists) and elders territorially, assigning them to the place of work of a particular district or community.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the Bolsheviks began to use administrative means of influencing the clergy: taking note for compliance with the relevant requirements of the authorities, arrests, exile.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the head of the Middle Southern Baptist Association, O. Bukreev, was arrested only for the fact that the organization headed by him did not register the charter in time.<sup>29</sup>

Persecution of pastors negatively affected the ties between church associations or unions, caused their isolation, and destroyed the internal unity of denominations. Believers repeatedly complained that local authorities confiscated houses of worship and that village executive committees arbitrarily invaded prayer meetings and destroyed religious literature. Force was also used against "sectarians." The October 1926 resolution of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs forbade foreign nationals to preach and officiate in Soviet

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<sup>22</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 7519. Арк. 7–8 [TsDAGO of Ukraine]; ДАПО. Ф. 9032. Оп. 1. Спр. 122. Арк. 11. [ДАРО]

<sup>23</sup> ДАОО. Ф. 7. Оп. 1. Спр. 2412. Арк. 5; ДАПО. Ф. Р-2068. Оп. 1. Спр. 455. Арк. 3, 12, 17; Спр. 458. Арк. 42; Спр. 459. Арк. 31 [ДАОО]; ДАХО. Ф. 3. Оп. 1. Спр. 301. Арк. 14. [ДАНО]

<sup>24</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 2007. Арк. 26; Оп. 6. Спр. 66. Арк. 112 – 113. [TsDAGO of Ukraine]

<sup>25</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 2006. Арк. 17. [TsDAGO of Ukraine]

<sup>26</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1051. Арк. 22. [TsDAVO of Ukraine]

<sup>27</sup> Нежный А. И. Комиссар дьявола. Москва : Протестант, 1993. С. 133.

<sup>28</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 8. Оп. 1. Спр. 1216. Арк. 121, 122; ДАПО. Ф. П-9032. Оп. 1. Спр. 37. Арк. 82 [TsDAVO of Ukraine]; ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 16. Спр. 6. Арк. 51. [TsDAGO of Ukraine]

<sup>29</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 966. Арк. 36. [TsDAVO of Ukraine]

Ukraine.<sup>30</sup> To isolate organizations and facilitate their activities, the authorities tried to limit and sever Protestant ties with their European and world centers.

The Bolshevik government required universal military service, which had negative implications for the activities of the Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Adventists, and Christians of the Evangelical faith.<sup>31</sup>

In the mid-1920s, persecution of Protestant believers became widespread, as the People's Commissariat of the Interior and the State Political Administration repeatedly reported in special reports.<sup>32</sup> This provoked a reaction from the central government, the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, which in 1923 sent a circular to the provincial executive committees explaining that sectarians had the same rights in the USSR as other believers and that government officials should not make any arrests nor disperse any meetings, even if these groups were not yet registered. It was emphasized that "those responsible for "beating sectarians and extortion against them and for other crimes will be brought to justice."<sup>33</sup> However, such abuses by the local government did not stop, as they were the result of the duality of state policy: on the one hand--to some extent the declarative Soviet legislation on cults--and on the other, secret documents of party bodies and intelligence services, which in practice were more important than official decrees.

Despite this policy of the authorities, Protestants formed their institutions at various levels. An **autonomous Ukrainian association of Baptists** had already existed for almost seven years. In October 1918, the First All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists was held in Kyiv. The convening of this regional assembly was prompted primarily by the loss of ties with the All-Russian Center for Baptists, as civil war broke out in Bolshevik Russia; Ukraine was an independent state at the time. At this forum, the "Draft of Desired Articles of the Religious Law" was adopted, which the Baptist leaders D. Pravoverov and F. Balikhin handed over to the representative of the Ministry of Confessions of the Ukrainian State present at the Congress for consideration when drafting the law on religion. The Congress delegates also approved the "Draft Statute of Evangelical Baptist Communities."<sup>34</sup> Analysis of the content

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<sup>30</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1051. Арк. 7. [TsDAVO of Ukraine]

<sup>31</sup> Р. Сітарчук, "Про радянську мілітаристську політику щодо протестантських об'єднань в Україні (20-і рр.)," in *Історія релігій в Україні : у 2-х кн. Кн. 2.*, ed. М. Бандрівський (Львів: Логос, 1999), 115–17. [Sitarchuk, R. "On the Soviet militaristic policy towards Protestant associations in Ukraine (1920s)." In *History of Religions in Ukraine: in 2 books. Book 2.* edited by M. Bandrivsky,]

<sup>32</sup> ДАОО. Ф. 7. Оп. 1. Спр. 1605. Арк. 28 [ДАОО]; ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 16. Спр. 34. Арк. 102, 103; Оп. 20. Спр. 1811. Арк. 80 – 81; Спр. 2684. Арк. 23. [TsDAGO of Ukraine]

<sup>33</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 1. Спр. 2185. Арк. 19. [TsDAVO of Ukraine.]

<sup>34</sup> *Всеукраїнський съезд баптистов: запись заседания Первого Всеукраїнского съезда баптистов, состоявшегося в г. Киева с 1 по 8 октября 1918 г.* (Київ, 1918), 30; [All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists:



of the documents showed that Ukrainian Baptists expected the state to significantly expand its powers. They demanded: granting communities of believers the right of a legal entity; complete freedom of conscience, religion, assembly, missionary activity; and the right to organize their own societies, to register stamps, etc. However, the events of the Civil War did not allow the Ukrainian Baptists to realize their plans.

The National Baptist Union was formed at the Second All-Ukrainian Congress, which took place in May 1921 in Yelisavetgrad (now Kropyvnytskyi). D. Pravoverov was elected chairman of the Ukrainian Association of Baptist Christians. The next forum took place the following year in Kyiv.<sup>35</sup> His decisions were aimed at strengthening national unity and resolving internal issues. The Congress also adopted a resolution on the entry of the Ukrainian Union into the All-Russian Union of Baptists, but in practice, this did not happen, as the latter could not "meet the needs of the Ukrainian brotherhood, and sometimes issues related to the legislation of the Ukrainian Republic."<sup>36</sup>

The Fourth All-Ukrainian Congress, held in May 1925 in Kharkiv, was decisive in the organizational design of the Baptist movement in Ukraine. About 300 delegates took part in its work<sup>37</sup>. P. Aleshko, a member of the board of the All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations, described the factors that contributed to the creation of the organization as follows: administrative division and "autonomy of Ukraine," unloading the complex work of the All-Union Brotherhood, being in full contact with it.<sup>38</sup> The Moscow Baptist leadership recognized the expediency of organizing an All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations.<sup>39</sup>

The approved draft statute of the Union was registered by the government of the UkrSSR. A council headed by A. Kostyukov was elected to conduct business. The primary associations of communities and groups did not have a special board, they were given the right to convene constituent congresses. The activities of the Union could be terminated both by a decision of its members and by a resolution of the People's Commissariat of Internal

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*recording of the meeting of the First All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists, held in Kiev from October 1 to October 8, 1918.]*

<sup>35</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 2. Спр. 572. Арк. 2. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>36</sup> *История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР* (Москва: Изд. Всесоюз. совета евангельских христиан-баптистов, 1989), 200–201. [*History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR*. Moscow: Publishing house. All-Union. Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists].

<sup>37</sup> *Всеукраинский съезд баптистов: запись заседаний Четвертого Всеукраинского съезда баптистов, состоявшегося в г. Харькове с 12 по 17 мая 1925 г.* (Харьков, 1925), 12. [*All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists: recording of the sessions of the Fourth All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists, held in Kharkov from 12 to 17 May 1925.*]

<sup>38</sup> ДАЗО. Ф. 316. Оп. 3. Спр. 20. Арк. 40. [DAZO].

<sup>39</sup> *Всеукраинский съезд баптистов: запись заседаний Четвертого Всеукраинского съезда баптистов, состоявшегося в г. Харькове с 12 по 17 мая 1925 г.* (Харьков, 1925), 12. [*All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists: recording of the sessions of the Fourth All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists, held in Kharkov from 12 to 17 May 1925.*].

Affairs or other relevant authorities of the USSR.<sup>40</sup> The All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations consisted of 12 regional associations. The Federal Union of Baptists of the USSR could contact them without intermediaries (collect donations, send evangelists, etc.), but only after prior agreement with the Ukrainian center.

In October 1925, the board of the All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations received permission from the government to convene a congress of German Baptists in Odesa,<sup>41</sup> which became part of the organization on an autonomous basis. However, the merger of the two organizations did not eliminate all the contradictions in inter-organizational relations. As early as 1926, they were exacerbated by the acceptance by German Baptists of compulsory military service in the Red Army.<sup>42</sup>

The fifth forum of the All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations took place in May 1928 in Kharkiv; 390 delegates and 86 guests arrived. About 1,000 communities were registered as part of the All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations. The Federal Union of Baptists of the USSR was represented by its chairman M. Odintsov and board member P. Ivanov-Klishnikov, and German Baptists by I. Pritskau.<sup>43</sup> The content of the issues on the agenda was traditional. The board of the Union had expanded considerably in recent years and had the following departments: organizational, evangelistic, choral, legal, publishing, financial, training, home construction, and others.<sup>44</sup> This indicated an increase in the number of organizations and the expansion of its functions. A. Kostyukov was re-elected chairman of the union, O. Bukreev his deputy, and F. Kosolapov treasurer. The council of German Baptists included G. Velias, K. Zimmermann, D. Brown, F. Herman, and I. Pritzkau.<sup>45</sup> Its powers extended to the territory of Odesa, Mykolaiv, Volyn, and Zhytomyr districts.<sup>46</sup>

The above-mentioned forum of the All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations was the last, as the authorities later banned such meetings.<sup>47</sup> Only the German Baptists formed an independent all-Ukrainian union and in 1929 received permission to hold their next plenum.

Separately, the organization of **Evangelical Christians** also developed. In the early 1920s, two regional associations of the All-Russian Union of Evangelical Christians operated in Soviet Ukraine: Western Ukrainian branch with its center in Kyiv (headed by S.

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<sup>40</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 264. Арк. 11–11 зб. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>41</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 951. Арк. 240. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>42</sup> ДАОО. Ф. 7. Оп. 1. Спр. 915. Арк. 38–39. [ДАОО].

<sup>43</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 264. Арк. 12. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>44</sup> ДАХО. Ф. 845. Оп. 2. Спр. 937. Арк. 230. [ДАХО].

<sup>45</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 264. Арк. 21–22. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>46</sup> ДАОО. Ф. 969. Оп. 5. Спр. 650. Арк. 17. [ДАОО].

<sup>47</sup> ДАХО. Ф. 845. Оп. 2. Спр. 937. Арк. 208. [ДАХО.]

Sudarev<sup>48</sup>) and the Southwestern branch with its center in Odesa (headed by I. Motorin<sup>49</sup>). In 1925, the South-Western Regional Association was headed by A. Serdyuk. The same year, to eliminate the existing difficulties in leading local communities, two other Ukrainian regional departments of evangelical Christians were organized: Podilsky, with the center in Vinnytsia (chairman - K. Shapoval,<sup>50</sup>) and Volynsky, with the center in Zhytomyr (chairman - E. Bulgakov, or according to other sources V. Kryzhanivsky.<sup>51</sup>) Thus, in Ukraine in 1925, four regional associations of Evangelical Christians functioned as branches of the All-Russian Union of Evangelical Christians.

In the 1920s, Evangelical Christians began to outpace Baptists in terms of community growth. For example, in Kharkiv County in 1921, 13 of the identified communities belonged to Evangelical Christians and only four to Baptists.<sup>52</sup>

The structure of Evangelical Christian communities was almost the same as that of the Baptists. They consisted of 50 or more believers. Some members were separated into a group. The maximum number of believers in the communities varied. For example, in the village of Stara Petrovka of the Zaporozhye district, the Evangelical Christian community included 247 people,<sup>53</sup> and in the village Turners of Lebedyn district had 300.<sup>54</sup> The large number of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the communities was explained not only by their effective missionary work but also by their territorial peculiarities, as one community could include believers from several surrounding settlements. Thus, 40 communities from 215 settlements were grouped into the Zinoviev Regional Baptist Association. Each community consisted of approximately five territorial and administrative units.<sup>55</sup> However, in certain regions, several organizations operated simultaneously in one village. For example, in 1925, within the Gulyaevka village in the Odesa region, there were two Baptist communities of 112 and 155 people.<sup>56</sup>

In the mid-1920s, Ukrainian Evangelical Christians significantly intensified their activities, and the leaders of the All-Russian Union of Evangelical Christians could no longer respond quickly to the processes taking place on the ground. Circumstances required the

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<sup>48</sup> ДАХО. Ф. 845. Оп. 2. Спр. 411. Арк. 8. [ДАХО].

<sup>49</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 2180. Арк. 17. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>50</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 200. Арк. 34–35. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>51</sup> ДАХО. Ф. 845. Оп. 2. Спр. 411. Арк. 8 [ДАХО]; ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 2007. Арк. 17 зв. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>52</sup> ДАХО. Ф. 92. Оп. 1. Спр. 328. Арк. 26. [ДАХО]

<sup>53</sup> ДАЗО. Ф. 316. Оп. 3. Спр. 33. Арк. 88. [ДАЗО].

<sup>54</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 1222. Арк. 124. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>55</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 264. Арк. 66. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>56</sup> ДАОО. Ф. 7. Оп. 1. Спр. 349. Арк. 12. [ДАОО]/

creation of an all-Ukrainian center that would coordinate the activities of local Evangelical Christian organizations. In addition, after the administrative-territorial reform in 1925 and the replacement of the provinces by districts, the structure of regional associations of Evangelical Christians had to line up with the new territorial division of the republic. Evangelical Christian councils were established in the centers of each administrative-territorial unit to "represent before the authorities and to facilitate communication with them on all matters of the Evangelical movement."<sup>57</sup>

However, the transition to a new division did not remove all questions about the status of Evangelical Christians in the republic. In some cases, the authorities refused to recognize the legitimate activities of district associations, citing the lack of a "single coordination center and a single statute for Evangelical Christians."<sup>58</sup> This accelerated the formation of an all-Ukrainian union.<sup>59</sup> The first All-Ukrainian Congress of Evangelical Christians took place in May 1926 in Kharkiv. It was chaired by J. Zhidkov, V. Bykov, and V. Egorov. The new regional entity was called the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians. V. Yegorov was elected chairman, S. Sudarev and I. Tarasyuk were elected deputies. The council of the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians included 24 people.<sup>60</sup>

The statute of the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians, approved by the government in June 1926, stated that the purpose of the union was to promote the Evangelical Christian communities, which was beyond the power of local associations, including the proper dissemination of gospel truth, payment of dues, and military service by members of the association, etc.<sup>61</sup>

The All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians included eight regional branches (later regional unions): 1) Kyiv (united 12 districts), 2) Kharkiv (five districts), 3) Southwest, or Odesa (five districts and the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic), 4) Ekaterinoslav (five districts), 5) Podolsk (four districts), 6) Donetsk (five district), 7) Volyn (three districts), 8) Melitopol (one district).<sup>62</sup> The center of the union was located in Kyiv, though later it was moved to Kharkiv. Each oblast association had its own council and was autonomous from the others. Controversial issues that arose in the communities were

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<sup>57</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 2180. Арк. 7. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>58</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 2180. Арк. 15. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>59</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 951. Арк. 453. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>60</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 2180. Арк. 53 зв. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>61</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 263. Арк. 172. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>62</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 2180. Арк. 53 зв.. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

considered at fraternal meetings and those that arose between organizations were addressed by specially created commissions.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, after the establishment of the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians, the disputes between the leaders over the direction of the organization's development did not end. One group, led by V. Egorov, called for the expansion of the union's autonomy, and another, led by I. Motorin, defended the pro-Russian position and insisted on expanding the powers of the council of the All-Russian Union of Evangelical Christians in Ukrainian territories. Under pressure from the All-Union Center, a new council was elected at the January 1928 plenum of the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians. I. Motorin became its chairman instead of V. Egorov, J. Khodyush, J. Kuplevakhsy, and M. Gorgovan became its members. The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR explained the reason for the re-election of the plenum by the former leaders of the resolution and "suggested that the new leaders of the union be more attentive and precise in implementing the resolutions of the Soviet authorities."<sup>64</sup>

The plenum proposed some changes to the organization's charter, in particular: the refusal to hold regular business meetings, which spread abroad, and their convening only once every three years, instead of spiritual conventions and biblical conversations.<sup>65</sup> Leaders of other Protestant denominations had similar ideas.

In parallel with the Baptist and Evangelical Christian communities, **the Seventh-day Adventist** movement developed a similar structure. In September 1920, the Fourth Congress of the All-Russian Seventh-day Adventist Union was held in Moscow, which determined six conferences of regional associations (including Western Russia and South Russia) (excluding Western Ukraine, Transcarpathia, and Bessarabia), which included believers from Soviet Ukraine.<sup>66</sup>

At a new congress in August 1924, the All-Russian Union was reorganized into the All-Union Seventh-day Adventist Federal Union. Its governing body was the All-Union (otherwise known as the Central) Council, headed by G. Lebsack, who from 1921 actually

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<sup>63</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 263. Арк. 172. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>64</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 263. Арк. 12–13. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>65</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1067. Арк. 52. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>66</sup> А. Парасей and Н. Жукалюк, *Бедная, бросаемая бурей : исторические очерки к 110-летнему юбилею Церкви адвентистов седьмого дня в Украине* (Київ: Джерело життя, 1997), 252. [A. Parasei and N. Zhukalyuk. *The Poor Thrown by the Tempest: Historical Sketches for the 110th Anniversary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine.*]

headed the union.<sup>67</sup> Of the 85 delegates to the Congress of Adventists from Ukrainian lands, 23 were representatives, led by I. Lvov.

According to the decisions of the Moscow Congress, the regions of Eastern Ukraine and Belarus were reorganized into the Western Ukrainian Union, which included Kyiv, Chernihiv, Odesa, Volyn, Poltava, Ekaterinoslav, Vitebsk provinces and Crimea. In May 1925, a congress of this union was held in Kyiv, which was attended by 65 delegates and as many guests. The union was renamed the All-Ukrainian Seventh-Day Adventist Association based in Kyiv. The association consisted of 196 communities and groups of 39 elders. The leadership of the council of the All-Ukrainian Association of Seventh-day Adventists consisted of I. Lvov (chairman), A. Auzin (secretary - treasurer), members: G. Raus, V. Dyman, S. Tkachenko, and others.<sup>68</sup> Among the religious and organizational issues discussed at the forum, the issue of establishing a Seventh-day Adventist institute in Kyiv, convening Bible courses, etc. was discussed. However, a significant part of the decisions of the Congress was not implemented due to unfavorable domestic political circumstances.

In January 1926, the Azov Union and the Adventists of the Moldavian ASSR joined the All-Ukrainian Seventh-day Adventist Union.<sup>69</sup> At that time, the All-Ukrainian Union consisted of six regional associations: 1) Middle Dnieper (center was in Bila Tserkva, chairman - V. Dyman), 2) Podolsk (Vinnytsia, S. Tkachenko), 3) Volyn (Zhytomyr, A. Hryts), 4) Lower Dnieper (Poltava, K. Fisenko), 5) Black Sea, which included the territory of the Moldavian ASSR (Odessa, J. Reimer), 6) Azov (Dnepropetrovsk (now: Dnieper), J. Kraus).<sup>70</sup>

The number of Seventh-day Adventists in one community was smaller than that of Baptists and Evangelical Christians - about 15 believers,<sup>71</sup> due to the generally smaller number of their believers.

The regular congress of the All-Ukrainian Seventh-day Adventist Association was held in May 1927 in Kyiv and did not make significant changes in the activities and structure of the organization.<sup>72</sup> The government of the UkrSSR refused to convene the next congress of the union in 1929 (chaired by G. Tsytrat). Only regional organizations were allowed to hold meetings.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>69</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 951. Арк. 431. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>70</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 2234. Арк. 89 зв. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>71</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 951. Арк. 561. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>72</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 2234. Арк. 16. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>73</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1059. Арк. 8, 12. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

Starting in 1928, congresses were banned at the All-Union level. The authorities agreed only to the activities of the All-Union Seventh-day Adventist Council, which consisted of five presidium members and 11 preacher leaders (by region).<sup>74</sup>

The fourth movement of Protestants, **Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals)** began to be organized during the Soviet era and their first steps were related to the activities of I. Voronaev, who in 1921, together with like-minded people, created the first house of prayer for Christians of the Evangelical faith.<sup>75</sup> Later, this movement developed a wide missionary activity similar to the Baptists, Evangelical Christians, and Adventists. Evangelical Christian organizations emphasized equality more than the others, which was especially attractive to women believers who had greater opportunities for self-realization. The Moldovan regional association of Pentecostals was headed by a woman. These and other factors allowed Christians of the Evangelical Faith to attract many believers and actively expand their geographical boundaries for several years.

In September 1924, the Odessa Regional Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith was established,<sup>76</sup> which numbered almost 400 believers who were "well organized and disciplined, had sufficient financial support."<sup>77</sup> The rapid growth of the Christians the Evangelical Faith required the creation of a single focal point. An attempt to organize an all-Ukrainian unification in July 1925 failed, as permission to hold a congress was not received from the State Political Administration.<sup>78</sup>

The All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith was established in September 1926 in Odesa. The board consisted of I. Voronaev (chairman), V. Koltovych, S. Mikhno, V. Pavlov, S. Alekseyuk, A. Kushnereva, I. Podlesny.<sup>79</sup> The All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith was divided into divisions that coincided with the district division and subdivision in the UkrSSR. In 1926, the Union had eight departments with registered statutes: Odesa, Mykolaiv, Zinoviev, Kremenchuk, Vinnytsia, Shepetivka, Kryvyi Rih, and Ekaterinoslav.<sup>80</sup> The average number of members in one Pentecostal community

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<sup>74</sup> А. Парасей and Н. Жукалюк, *Бедная, бросаемая бурей*, 44–45. [A. Parasei, and N. Zhukalyuk. *The Poor Thrown by the Tempest*. pp 44-45.]

<sup>75</sup> Ф. Гаркавенко, *П'ятидесятники та їх віра* (Київ: Вид-во політ. літ-ри України, 1966), 14. [F. Harkavenko. *Pentecostals and their faith*, p. 14.]

<sup>76</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 2179. Арк. 12. [TsDAVO of Ukraine]/

<sup>77</sup> ДАОО. Ф. 7. Оп. 1. Спр. 915. Арк. 38–39. [ДАОО].

<sup>78</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 200. Арк. 210. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>79</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1057. Арк. 16. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>80</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 2179. Арк. 9. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

was smaller than in the Evangelical Christian or Baptist community but exceeded the Adventist one.

At the Second All-Ukrainian Congress in October 1927, the creation of the Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith of the USSR was proclaimed, which consisted of unions of republics, which were divided into divisions and subdivisions (on the principle of all-Ukrainian).<sup>81</sup> The Pentecostal communities were represented by 53 delegates. The congress was chaired by I. Voronaev, who was elected head of the union. The deputies were F. Faleyev (from Tashkent) and P. Belinsky, the secretary was G. Ponurko. The Moscow communities were represented by A. Frolov and the communities of the Moldavian ASSR by F. Bespalov.<sup>82</sup> The center of the union was later planned to be moved to Moscow.

During 1928–1929, congresses of Christians of the Evangelical Faith<sup>83</sup> were convened twice more in Odesa, and although we do not know for sure about the consideration of issues at these forums, we can say that by the end of the 1920s Pentecostals in Ukrainian lands had outlined their own beliefs, formed a structure, and determined their statutory documents. However, the organization of the All-Union Association of Christians of the Evangelical Faith was not completed.

It is appropriate to quote an excerpt from a secret note of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine in 1928: "It is necessary to state the fact of significant achievements of religious associations in the direction of strengthening and organizational design of all legalized religious churches and sectarian associations, which now have well-functioning central and local apparatuses."<sup>84</sup> As we can see, government agencies recognized the significant achievements of Protestant denominations in the public life of Soviet Ukraine.

There are numerous reasons for the quantitative growth of Protestants. The most important of these are the loss by the Russian Orthodox Church of its former privileged position; the organizational stability of Protestantism, formed on the principles of religious and social democracy; development of movements without the support of the state, which involved persistence in achieving goals; the introduction of new religious legislation that equated Protestants with other believers and enabled them to do extensive missionary work; the specifics of the organization and worship of Protestant communities (live sermons, the

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<sup>81</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 264. Арк. 31. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>82</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 264. Арк. 23–26. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>83</sup> Н. Гурич, "Трясуны и их организатор Воронаев," *Атеист*, no. 55 (1930): 117. [N. Gurich. "Tremors and their organizer Voronaev." *Atheist*]; ДАОО. Ф. 1234. Оп. 1. Спр. 905. Арк. 21. [ДАОО].

<sup>84</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 16. Спр. 34. Арк. 102–103. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].



opportunity for everyone to participate in the ministry, broad charity, constant mutual assistance, etc.); the urgency and attractiveness of the socio-political slogans of the Protestants with calls for a common brotherhood and property equality, which at the beginning of the Soviet period was welcomed by the authorities because they coincided with the ideology of the new regime.

A significant factor that clearly characterizes the place occupied by Protestant associations in the socio-religious life of Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s was the dynamics of their numbers. Therefore we will focus on it separately. It is difficult to give a comprehensive answer about the actual number of Protestants in Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s. Initially, Soviet official statistics deliberately overestimated the number of believers to exaggerate the "sectarian threat," arguing that the anti-religious struggle had intensified, but in the second half of the 1920s the number of Protestants was reported as in decline to show their own achievements in the fight against "sectarian obscurantism." Surviving archival materials are inconsistent, offering an incomplete collection of information about religious communities by government agencies. For example, in January 1923, according to local authorities in the Kiev province, there were almost 300 "sectarians." When, at the insistence of the republican leadership, the census was conducted again, it turned out that in January 1924 their number increased to almost 4,000.<sup>85</sup> A similar situation with the registration of Protestant communities was observed in other regions of Ukraine.<sup>86</sup> Indirectly, this was due to the fact that the quantitative calculation of religious movements was carried out by different government departments, none of which was fully responsible for their work, so often their reports on the number of Protestants had significant differences.<sup>87</sup> In addition, local control over religious communities was exercised by one person, less often by two, and this work was usually an additional burden to the main one. The territorial and administrative reform carried out in 1925 also had a negative effect on accounting, as the destruction of the provincial structure and its replacement by a district one brought even greater chaos to the statistical reporting of local authorities.

Protestants, themselves, may not have given the full figures. In 1925, for example, the Baptists admitted this, writing that there was no evidence of their exact number in the USSR and that "the union could only indicate the approximate number of communities and

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<sup>85</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 1846. Арк. 26. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>86</sup> ДАХО. Ф. 845. Оп. 2. Спр. 411. Арк. 28. [ДАНО].

<sup>87</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 1846. Арк. 1, 22, 27 [TsDAGO of Ukraine]; ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 213. Арк. 143. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

workers in them."<sup>88</sup> This was possibly because they "considered members of their communities to be only those baptized and did not include family members and sympathizers, which could increase the total by five times."<sup>89</sup> In calculating the number of Protestants, we used a variety of sources and elements of comparative methods.<sup>90</sup>

In 1925, Ukrainian Baptists cited two significantly different figures for the number of believers in their denominations: 200,000<sup>91</sup> and 40,000.<sup>92</sup> The first probably included the total number of supporters of the community, and the second figure recorded the number of documented community members. The latter figure is confirmed by archival materials. According to some sources, the High Attestation Commission in 1925 numbered 34,000 Baptists,<sup>93</sup> according to others 36,700.<sup>94</sup> Materials from archival sources in 1925 made it possible to calculate the average number of Baptists in one district to be about 1,200 people.<sup>95</sup> By multiplying this figure by the number of districts in Ukraine, the total figure is 50,000. Indirectly, these figures are confirmed by the Fourth All-Ukrainian Congress of Baptists, which referred to 1,000 communities within the All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations.<sup>96</sup> Assuming that the average number of members in the community is 50, we get the same number of 50,000 believers. Thus, by the mid-1920s, there were at least 50,000 Baptists in Ukraine.

The archives of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs and the High Attestation Commission contain data that shows virtually the same number of Evangelical Christians in the mid-1920s, which was almost 68,000 community members.<sup>97</sup> Given the

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<sup>88</sup> "Скільки баптистів в мирі?," *Баптист України*, no. 3 (1926): 44. ["How many Baptists are there in the world?" *Baptist of Ukraine*].

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Р. Сітарчук, "Про кількісне зростання членів українських протестантських конфесій у перше десятиріччя радянської влади," *Наукові записки з української історії*, no. 10 (2000): 261–71. [R. Sitarchuk. "On the Quantitative Growth of Members of Ukrainian Protestant Denominations in the First Decade of Soviet Power." *Scientific notes on Ukrainian history*].

<sup>91</sup> Л. Жабко-Потапович, *Христове світло в Україні. Історія українського євангельсько-баптистського руху* (Чикаго: Вид. Всеукраїнського Євангельсько-Баптистського Братства, 1991), 142. [L. Zhabko-Potapovych. *The light of Christ in Ukraine. History of the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist movement. Chicago: View. All-Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Brotherhood*].

<sup>92</sup> В. Любашенко, *Історія протестантизму в Україні : курс лекцій* (Львів: Просвіта, 1995), 244. [V. Lyubashchenko. *History of Protestantism in Ukraine: a course of lectures*].

<sup>93</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 2007. Арк. 17. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>94</sup> Вікторія Уласевич, *Сучасне сектантство* (Київ: Держвидав України, 1925), 14. [Victoria Ulasevich. *Modern sectarianism*. Kyiv: State Publishing House of Ukraine].

<sup>95</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 968. Арк. 6 [TsDAVO of Ukraine]; ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 2006. Арк. 95; Спр. 2007. Арк. 11; ДАЗО. Ф. 316. Оп. 3. Спр. 33. Арк. 58, 58 зв., 88. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>96</sup> ДАЗО. Ф. 316. Оп. 3. Спр. 20. Арк. 40. [DAZO].

<sup>97</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 213. Арк. 138; ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 2006. Арк. 83; Спр. 2007. Арк. 17. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

incomplete registration of religious communities, it is safe to say that there were at least 70,000 Evangelical Christians in Soviet Ukraine in the mid-1920s.

According to the High Attestation Commission, in 1925 Adventists numbered 4,130 members of communities and groups.<sup>98</sup> Almost the same number was given by Adventists at the All-Ukrainian Congress--4453 believers,<sup>99</sup> who were the third part of the All-Union Brotherhood, which in 1925 consisted of 12,282 members.<sup>100</sup> This number of Ukrainian Adventists is partially confirmed by the data of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs on the composition of their regional associations.<sup>101</sup>

The registration of Christians of the Evangelical Faith by the state authorities was not actually conducted probably until 1925. It is known that at that time there were 19 communities of Christians of the Evangelical Faith in eight districts, the average number of each was more than 200 believers.<sup>102</sup> In 1925 in the USSR, there were about 4,000 Christians of the Evangelical Faith. The following year, the rapidly growing Union (as evidenced by the materials of its first all-Ukrainian congress) doubled, and thus had almost 8,000 members.<sup>103</sup>

In the mid-1920s, the growth rate of Protestants slowed down as a result of many factors, including deletion of people who did not fully join the organizations due to their lower spiritual level, which led to their expulsion from membership; interfaith competition for believers; the influence of anti-religious propaganda, the policy of oppression by the state, etc. However, the growth of Protestants did not stop, although it was not as large as in the first half of the 1920s.

In 1928, the All-Ukrainian Union of Baptist Associations had about 60,000 members,<sup>104</sup> an increase of six percent each year, so in 1929 it may have had nearly 65,000 members.

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<sup>98</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 2007. Арк. 17. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>99</sup> А. Парасей and Н. Жукалюк, *Бедная, бросаемая бурей : исторические очерки к 110-летнему юбилею Церкви адвентистов седьмого дня в Украине* (Київ: Джерело життя, 1997), 41. [A. Parasei and N. Zhukalyuk. *The Poor Thrown by the Tempest: Historical Sketches for the 110th Anniversary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine.*].

<sup>100</sup> В. Любашенко, *Історія протестантизму в Україні : курс лекцій* (Львів: Просвіта, 1995), 264. [V. Lyubashchenko. *History of Protestantism in Ukraine: a course of lectures*].

<sup>101</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 951. Арк. 211,393,433,561; там само. Спр. 2234. Арк. 88–88 зв.; ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1059. Арк. 4. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>102</sup> А. Ярцев, *Секта евангельских христиан.*, 4th ed. (Москва: Безбожник, 1930), 26. [A. Yartsev. *Sect of Evangelical Christians*. 4th ed. Moscow: Atheist]; ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 2179. Арк. 3 зв. [TsDAVO of Ukraine]; ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 2007. Арк. 11 [TsDAGO of Ukraine]; ДАОО. Ф. 3. Оп. 1. Спр. 1551. Арк. 37. [ДАОО].

<sup>103</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 2. Спр. 2179. Арк. 18 [TsDAVO of Ukraine]; ДАОО. Ф. 969. Оп. 5. Спр. 650. Арк. 16. [ДАОО].

<sup>104</sup> Б. Тихомиров, *Бантизм и его политическая роль.* (Москва: ГАИЗ, 1929), 16. [B. Tikhomirov. *Baptism and its political role.*]

The All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians grew by an average of nine percent<sup>105</sup> annually in the second half of the 1920s, and by 1929 may have had about 95,000 members. These figures are confirmed by the data of A. Yartsev, one of the thorough researchers of the history of Evangelical Christians and Baptists of the 1930s in Ukraine. He estimated that the number was 154,000.<sup>106</sup>

The All-Union Seventh-day Adventist Union grew by more than 3% annually: in 1925 it consisted of 12,282 believers, growing to 12,697 in 1926, and 13,404 in 1928.<sup>107</sup> In Soviet Ukraine the growth rate of the Adventist population was higher than the all-Union rate and, according to our estimates, was 4% annually; in three years the Union grew by 573 members, numbering 5073 believers in 1928.<sup>108</sup> Thus, by 1929, there were probably about 5,300 members of Seventh-day Adventist communities in Ukraine.

In the second half of the 1920s of all Protestant churches, Christians of the Evangelical Faith were marked by the greatest quantitative activity and territorial mobility.<sup>109</sup> Thus, according to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, in 1926 they were registered in nine districts of the republic, and in 1927 in 11.<sup>110</sup> The materials of the Second Congress of the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians (1927) indicate the presence of 17,000 members of communities and groups.<sup>111</sup> Thus, since 1925, the All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith had grown by more than 50% annually.

During 1927-1928, the rate of increase in Protestant numbers slowed somewhat, and the most important factor in this situation, in our opinion, is their acceptance of compulsory military service under the pressure of the authorities since the mid-1920s. After that, a certain outflow from youth organizations began. At the same time, by 1928 the situation had stabilized, migration between the associations had virtually ceased, and the growth in membership was largely due to internal growth (for example, through the coming of age of children of community members).

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<sup>105</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5 Оп. 2. Спр. 2180. Арк. 13, 118; Оп. 3. Спр. 263. Арк. 29, 92 зв., 155; Спр. 1056. Арк. 40 зв.; Спр. 1067. Арк. 52. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>106</sup> А. Ярцев, *Секта евангельских христиан.*, 4th ed. (Москва: Безбожник, 1930), 40. [Yartsev, A. *Sect of Evangelical Christians.* 4th ed. Moscow: Atheist].

<sup>107</sup> А. Белов, *Адвентизм*, 2nd ed. (Москва: Изд-во полит. литературы, 1973), 264. [A. Belov. *Adventism.* 2nd ed. Moscow: Publishing house polit. literature].

<sup>108</sup> В. Любашченко, *Історія протестантизму в Україні : курс лекцій* (Львів: Просвіта, 1995), 264. [V. Lyubashchenko. *History of Protestantism in Ukraine: a course of lectures*]; ДАОО. Ф. 7. Оп. 1. Спр. 915. Арк. 39 [ДАОО]; ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1059. Арк. 4 [TsDAVO of Ukraine]; ДАХО. Ф. 845. Оп. 2. Спр. 1096. Арк. 8, 50. [ДАХО].

<sup>109</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1057. Арк. 31 зв. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>110</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 5. Оп. 3. Спр. 1064. Арк. 9–10. [TsDAVO of Ukraine].

<sup>111</sup> Н. Гурич, "Трясуны и их организатор Воронаев," *Атеист*, no. 55 (1930): 116. [N. Gurich. "Tremors and their organizer Voronaev." *Atheist*].

The situation of Protestant organizations in the 1930s underwent significant changes due to new challenges in state legislation and the Bolshevik anti-religious course, especially after 1929. The "new stage" in the history of Protestants in Soviet Ukraine was determined by the open willingness of the authorities to destroy their organizations. Following the resolution of the All-Union Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR "On Religious Associations" in 1929, almost all activities of Protestant organizations were banned. Any statements made by believers about their doctrine were considered ideological sabotage. The ban extended to all Protestant publications.

To mitigate political allegations, Protestants were forced to declare their loyalty to the government. For example, in 1929, the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians sent a circular to local communities, in which, in addition to assuring the authorities of allegiance, it also proposed to exclude from the community those "clearly guilty of counterrevolutionary activities." Baptists re-elected church leaders, dismissing compromised figures. However, atheists immediately described all these Protestant measures as a "political masquerade."<sup>112</sup> Despite the constant statements of Protestant leaders about the loyalty of their organizations to the government, it deprived believers of significant legal rights and labeled them "enemies of the people" and began total repression against Protestants in the 1930s, especially their leadership.

The Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith was the first Protestant denomination in Soviet Ukraine to be destroyed. Its central apparatus and some of the most influential figures in 1930 were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for "active anti-Soviet activities."<sup>113</sup> After the imprisonment of Ukrainian leaders of Pentecostals, the leadership of the union moved to Moscow for a while, but later the Moscow administration was arrested.<sup>114</sup> Left without leaders, the Pentecostal organization disintegrated, and its local communities began to operate illegally. Data from 1937 in the Vinnytsia region shows there were 764 Christians of the Evangelical Faith, organized in 70 communities, and that part of the Pentecostals operated in Poltava and the suburbs of Kharkiv.<sup>115</sup>

Baptist communities in Ukraine, which were re-registered in the early 1930s, continued to operate. Thus, in the summer of 1930 in Kharkiv, 60 newly admitted members of communities were baptized, in Oleksiyivskyi district 132, in the village of Mirny of

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<sup>112</sup> Л. Митрохин, *Баттизм и современность (философско-социологические очерки)* (Санкт-Петербург: РХГИ, 1997), 392–393. [L. Mitrokhin. *Baptism and Modernity (Philosophical and Sociological Essays)*.]

<sup>113</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф.1. Оп. 23. Спр. 4555. Арк. 346. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>114</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф.1. Оп. 20. Спр. 5484. Арк. 181–182. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>115</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф.1. Оп. 20. Спр. 7105. Арк. 1, 7. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

Krasnokutsky district 35.<sup>116</sup> In some communities, there was a significant increase in numbers. For example, in the Khonzhonkivka labor colony in the Makiivka district, the Baptist community increased from 50 in 1932 to 300 in 1934.<sup>117</sup> However, after a wave of repression in the late first half of the 1930s, many communities were left without leaders, deprived of registration, ceased official activities, and moved to a semi-legal position. It is known that in the Vinnytsia region in 1937 there were 87 Baptist communities with 1,595 members,<sup>118</sup> in Kharkiv the united community of Baptists and Evangelical Christians in 1940 had 1,175 members.<sup>119</sup>

In the 1930s, a significant number of active evangelical Christian communities still existed in Ukrainian lands. In 1935 to 1937 they functioned in Odesa, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Dnipropetrovsk regions.<sup>120</sup> In Vinnytsia region at that time there were 133 communities of Evangelical Christians with a total of 1894 believers.<sup>121</sup> However, there was no single all-Ukrainian center, and local communities were subordinated directly to the All-Union Center, which continued to exist until the late 1930s.

By the mid-1930s, there were three commissioners of the Seventh-day Adventist Central Council in Soviet Ukraine: J. Reimer in the Kyiv region, F. Gladkov in the Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions, and G. Gadyukin in the Vinnytsia region. In the Vinnytsia region in 1937 there were 62 Adventist communities with a total of 803 members.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, the Kyiv community (200 people), headed by V. Dyman,<sup>123</sup> continued to function. The great majority of Adventist communities in the second half of the 1930s were semi-legal and believers were baptized at night.

In 1937, the leaders of the Adventist movement tried to create a single governing center. To this end, under the leadership of the previously convicted Presbyterian I. Tarasovsky, they held four meetings with the participation of representatives of Poltava, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv. In addition to the main issue, others were discussed: "refusal to serve in the

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<sup>116</sup> ЦДАВО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 7. Спр. 178. Арк. 54 [TsDAVO of Ukraine]; ДАХО. Ф. 1486. Оп. 1. Спр. 161. Арк. 1, 10, 38. [ДАНО].

<sup>117</sup> *Безвірник*, no. 6 (June 1934): 35. [*Unbeliever*].

<sup>118</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 7105. Арк. 1. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>119</sup> ДАХО. Ф. 69. Оп. 1. Спр. 374. Арк. 295. [ДАНО].

<sup>120</sup> *История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР* (Москва: Изд. Всесоюз. совета евангельских христиан-баптистов, 1989), 225. [*History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR*. Moscow: Publishing house. All-Union. Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists]; *Безвірник*, no. 1 (January 1935): 28. [*Unbeliever*]; *Безвірник*, no. 8 (August 1935): 39 [*Unbeliever*].

<sup>121</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 7105. Арк. 1. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>122</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 7105. Арк. 1. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>123</sup> Н. Жукалок, *Вспоминайте наставників ваших : история Церкви Адвентистов седьмого дня в личностях* (Київ: Джерело життя, 1999), 297. [N. Zhukalyuk. *Remember your mentors: the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in personalities.*].

army, assistance to those repressed by the Soviet authorities" and so on.<sup>124</sup> However, the Adventist leaders failed to do so because the organization was exposed by the People's Commissariat of the Interior.

The number of Protestants in the 1930's decreased partly due to the influence of anti-religious propaganda, and largely due to state anti-religious legislation, physical harassment of believers, and their forced relocation outside the republic to Siberia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and so on. Thus, according to L. Mitrokhin, if in Frunze (Kyrgyzstan) the Baptist community in 1930 numbered 150 people, in 1933 it was already 1850; in Tokmak, respectively, 12 and 90, and in many other areas the community was created anew.<sup>125</sup> According to the researcher, the rapid growth of Protestant immigrants in these regions, where there were few before, would correspond with a decrease in the number of areas where the density of Protestant representation has traditionally remained high, particularly in Ukraine.

Evidence that in the 1930's the Protestant movement in the Ukrainian lands did not stop, in our opinion, are their quantitative indicators in the 1940's. In 1946, in the Ukrainian lands, the united Evangelical Baptists had 1,880 communities with 94,000 members, which was 70% of the all-Union figures.<sup>126</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Union had 141 congregations, which is estimated to be more than 2,000 believers.<sup>127</sup> In 1945, about 500 Pentecostal communities with a total of about 25,000 believers were registered in Ukraine.<sup>128</sup>

Protestant communities were able to grow, especially during the German occupation. However, this growth could not have taken place without at least partial preservation of the remnants of the former Protestant organization. Interestingly, in the postwar years in legalized unions, their administrative apparatus was partially represented by the leaders of the movements of the period of the 1920s and 30s.<sup>129</sup>

The intensification of persecution by the authorities was perceived by believers as a confirmation of the idea of the sinfulness of the world, exacerbated anti-social sentiments and feelings of alienation from secular life, its values, and ideals. The registered congregations were replaced by illegal prayer meetings, family meetings of "brothers and sisters," joint reading of the Gospel and singing of spiritual songs. They were perceived by believers as a

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<sup>124</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 7105. Арк. 7. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>125</sup> Л. Митрохин, *Баттизм и современность (философско-социологические очерки)* (Санкт-Петербург: РХГИ, 1997), 395. [L. Mitrokhin. *Baptism and Modernity (Philosophical and Sociological Essays)*.]

<sup>126</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 23. Спр. 4556. Арк. 10. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>127</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 23. Спр. 4556. Арк. 136. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>128</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 23. Спр. 4555. Арк. 346. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

<sup>129</sup> ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 23. Спр. 4555. Арк. 48. [TsDAGO of Ukraine].

kind of island of salvation, the embodiment of true philanthropy as opposed to the cruelty of the outside world. The Protestant faith was not destroyed by the influence of atheism. They were driven underground, entered the deeper networks of culture, waiting for their time.<sup>130</sup>

### **The Conclusions**

In conclusion, there are two periods in the development of the Protestant movement in Soviet Ukraine during the interwar period. The first (1920–1928), was when the policy of the Bolshevik state towards Protestants was outwardly loyal, at the same time, covertly aimed at discrediting and splitting Protestant organizations. During this time, Protestants were given the opportunity to expand some aspects of their activities, to move to building their own institutions, to increase the number of their supporters, especially in the mid-1920s. In the second half of the 1920s, the growth rate slowed down somewhat, both due to internal factors in the development of denominations and due to government policies.

The second period (1929-1939) was a time of legislative restrictions and de facto open anti-Protestant policies and the use of force against Protestant associations and their leaders. By curtailing the activities of Protestant unions and repressing their leaders, the Bolshevik government destroyed Ukrainian Protestant institutions. All local associations at the regional level were dissolved, while many Protestant communities continued to operate without registration, semi-legally until the late 1930s.

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<sup>130</sup> Л. Митрохин, *Бaptизм и современность (философско-социологические очерки)* (Санкт-Петербург: РХГИ, 1997), 395. [L. Mitrokhin. *Baptism and Modernity (Philosophical and Sociological Essays).*]



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