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Oleksandr Korotaiev  
*Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, Ukraine*

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# ALL-UNION COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS AND BAPTISTS AS A PRODUCT OF WORK OF SOVIET SPECIAL SERVICES

By Oleksandr Korotaiev

**Oleksandr Korotaiev**, PhD Student of the Department of history of Ukraine, Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, Ukraine. Academic interests: History of Religions in Ukraine (20th cent.), History of Soviet Security Services. E-mail: korotaev013@gmail.com

## Abstract

The purpose of the study is to show the work of the Soviet special services in the 1940s among the evangelical denominations of the Ukrainian SSR, which consisted of the formation of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (hereinafter ACECB). The study of the work of the Soviet special services among the Protestant denominations of Ukraine during WWII and in the post-war period is generally a poorly studied topic of modern historical science. The article attempts to fill this gap by highlighting the work of the NKVD-MGB bodies among Evangelical Christians and Baptists, which aimed to create a controlled religious union of the ACECB and an apparatus of republican and regional commissioners. It is shown that the ACECB, as a religious union of completely different Protestant denominations, was artificially formed in the 1940s by Soviet special services in order to control and reduce their numbers. It has been exposed that the positions of leadership in the ACECB were held by secret agents of the Soviet state security agencies. Their surnames and secret pseudonyms are disclosed, as well as the content of their agent-operative work. The results of the study will help in the research practices of historians and the other humanities. The scientific novelty of the article lies in the fact that it contains concrete historical processes examined through the prism of the work of the Soviet bodies of state security; their place and role in these processes are scrutinized. Type of article: theoretical, analytical.

**Key words:** Protestants, Evangelical Christians and Baptists, Ukrainian SSR, repression, Soviet security services, VChK-KGB.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

It is well-known that the Communist Party of the USSR, while hiding behind democratic slogans, pursued a purposeful anti-religious policy in the country. The leaders of this anti-religious policy have traditionally been considered the Council on Religious Cults under the USSR Cabinet of Ministers (hereinafter the CRC) and its republican and oblast

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<sup>1</sup> VChK (ВЧК) – Всероссийская чрезвычайная комиссия по борьбе с контрреволюцией и саботажем (All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage) – the name of the Soviet state security bodies in 1917-1922.

KGB (КГБ) – Комитет государственной безопасности (State Security Committee) – the name of the Soviet special security services in 1954-1991.

commissioners. However, it is less well-known that the main body for the implementation of the anti-religious policy of the Communist Party was not so much the CRC as the relevant departments of the USSR State Security Bodies, which, in the words of the secretary general of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, L. Kaganovich, dating back to 1925, were the “acting force” of the party, its “eyes and ears,” and “of all state organizations and institutions [...] are the closest and most closely related to our Communist Party.”<sup>2</sup> Justifying the need for the implementation of the Communist Party’s religious policy by the Soviet security agencies, their founder F. Dzerzhinsky noted that “the church’s policy of collapse should be pursued by the VChK, not by anyone else. Only VChK can maneuvered for the single purpose – dissipation [...]”<sup>3</sup> Against this background, a study of the work of the VChK-KGB bodies in the religious environment may most accurately reveal the true policies of the Communist Party, and indicate the purpose, content and methods of its implementation, which in turn will foster de-communization more effectively, so necessary for Ukrainian society today. Up to this point, there has been little to no specific research on this topic.

## Historiography

The issue of the emergence of the ACECB was considered in Soviet historiography. In the context of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists (hereinafter EC and B) movement, the authors of the joint work *History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR* argue that this union of evangelical communities of the USSR arose at the initiative of the believers themselves.<sup>4</sup> The same point of view is defended by a number of contemporary Russian historians, such as S. Savinsky,<sup>5</sup> M. Odintsov and A. Kochetova.<sup>6</sup> They are opposed by

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<sup>2</sup> SSU BSA. Found. 13. File 373. Page 5b., 9 ("Found" hereafter – "F"; " Page" hereafter – "P").

<sup>3</sup> SSU BSA. F. 13. File 663. P. 237.

<sup>4</sup> *История евангельских христиан-баптистов в СССР* / гл. ред. А. М. Бычков. (Москва: ВСЕХБ, 1989), 624 с. [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR / Ch. ed. A. M. Bychkov. (Moscow: VSEKHB, 1989), 624 pp.].

<sup>5</sup> С. Савинский. *История евангельских христиан баптистов Украины, России, Белоруссии (1867 – 1917)*. (СПб.: Библия для всех, 1999), 424 с.; С. Савинский. *История евангельских христиан баптистов Украины, России, Белоруссии. II (1917 – 1967)*. (СПб.: Библия для всех, 2001), 441 с. [S. Savinsky. History of Evangelical Christians Baptists in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus (1867 – 1917). (St. Petersburg.: Bible for all, 1999), 424 pp.; S. Savinsky. History of Evangelical Christians Baptists of Ukraine, Russia, Belarus. II (1917 – 1967). (St. Petersburg: Bible for all, 2001), 441 pp.].

<sup>6</sup> М. Одинцов. А. Кочетова. *Конфессиональная политика в Советском Союзе в годы Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945*. [M. Odintsov and A. Kochetova. Confessional policy in the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945. (Moscow: Scientific and political book; Political encyclopedia, 2014). 317 pp.].

Western and Ukrainian historians, the most famous being W. Sawatsky,<sup>7</sup> V. Voynalovich,<sup>8</sup> O. Bazhan, and Y. Danilyuk.<sup>9</sup> They suggest that the initiator of the creation of the ACECB was not the believers themselves, but the Soviet government. Considering that the archives of the Soviet special services, which were involved in the implementation of religious policy in the USSR, remained classified for a long time, the answer to this question was open. With the change in the political situation in Ukraine, the Supreme Council of Ukraine adopted the Law “On Access to the Archives of the Repressive Bodies of the Communist Totalitarian Regime of 1917-1991” (09.04.2015), which gave historians the opportunity to research the archives of the KGB. Subsequent scientific publications of L. Babenko,<sup>10</sup> O. Vysoven,<sup>11</sup> and O. Trygub<sup>12</sup> shed light on the work of the KGB in the Protestant environment of Ukraine. However, there are no studies that address the nature of the formation of the ACECB and the role of the Soviet special services in this process. This article is an attempt to fill this gap and provide an answer to the question posed. Therefore, the aim of this study is the author’s attempt to highlight the content of work carried out by Soviet security agencies in the Protestant milieu of the USSR, in particular among the largest Protestant denominations, EC and B, as well as to reveal the forms and methods of its implementation.

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<sup>7</sup>В. Заватски. *Евангелическое движение в СССР после Второй мировой войны*. (Москва: Гарант, 1995). 559 с. [W. Sawatsky. *Evangelical movement in the USSR after the Second World War*. Moscow: Garant, 1995. 559 p.].

<sup>8</sup>В. Войналович. *Партійно-державна політика щодо релігії та релігійних інституцій в Україні 1940 – 1960-х років: політологічний дискурс*. (Київ: Світогляд, 2005). 741 с. [V. Voynalovich. *Party-State Policy on Religion and Religious Institutions in Ukraine in the 1940s and 1960s: Political Science Discourse*. Kyiv: Svitoglyad, 2005. 741 pp.].

<sup>9</sup>О. Бажан, Ю. Данилюк. *Випробування вірою: Боротьба за реалізацію прав і свобод віруючих в Україні в другій половині 1950-х – 1980-ті рр.* /НАН України; Інститут історії України; Головна редакційна колегія науково-документальної серії книг “Реабілітовані історією”. (Київ: Інститут історії України НАНУ, 2000). 329 с. [O. Bazhan and Y. Danilyuk. *Test of faith: Struggle for the realization of rights and freedoms in Ukraine in the other half of the 1950s - 1980s*. /NAS of Ukraine; Institute of History of Ukraine; Head of the editorial board of the scientific-documentary series of books "Rehabilitated and History". Kiev: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2000. 329 pp.].

<sup>10</sup>Л. Бабенко, “Протестантські конфесії в оперативних розробках радянських органів державної безпеки (1940–1950-ті рр.)”. *Історія релігій в Україні: Науковий щорічник*. 2018. Вип. 28. Частина I. С. 348-366 [L. Babenko, “Protestant confessions in the operational stores of the soviet bodies of state security (1940-1950-th)”. *History of Religion in Ukraine: Scientific scholar*. 2018. Iss. 28. Chapter I. P. 348-366].

<sup>11</sup>О. Висовень, “Агентурно-оперативна та профілактична робота органів МДБ-КДБ УРСР щодо громади євангельських християн-баптистів (друга половина ХХ ст.)”. *Етнічна історія народів Європи*. 2017 р. Вип. 53. С. 123-129. [O. Vysoven, “Agent-operative and prophylactic work of the MGB-KGB USSR bodies of the community of Evangelic Christians and Baptists (second half of the XX century)”. *Ethnic history of the people of Europe*. 2017 p. Iss. 53. P. 123-129].

<sup>12</sup>О. Trygub, “Agent-Operational Activities of Soviet Security Services in A Protestant Environment (1945-1953)”. *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*. Vol. 41: Iss. 4, Article 7. 2021. <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol41/iss4/7>. Accessed 01.17.2021.

The source of the research is a whole complex of recently declassified completely secret reports on the work of the 2nd Department of the NKVD-MGB<sup>13</sup> of the Ukr. SSR “on the Church-sectarian line,” which are stored in the funds “ГДА СБУ/GDA SBU” (Service Security of Ukraine Branch-Wise State Archive, hereinafter SSU BSA) and the archival holdings of the Service Security of Ukraine regional offices. A separate set of sources are archival materials on the work of the Commissioner for Religious Cults of the USSR, which are stored in the “ЦДАБО/TsDAVO” (Central State Archives of Supreme Authorities and Governments of Ukraine, hereinafter CSA SAU).

### **The Main Material and Results**

The work of the Soviet security organs in the religious environment during the war (and in the early postwar years) was to some extent a counter-response to the actions of the German special services in this direction. The fact is that the Nazi regime took into account the errors of the Bolsheviks on the “religious issue” and, in contrast, began to actively use the church’s institute to strengthen its power. In 1933, Nazi power was recognized as “established by God” by the Secretary General of the Baptist Union of Germany (Germ. Baptistbund), P. Schmidt.<sup>14</sup> For this, in 1937, with the assistance of the Gestapo, the Union of Pentecostals of Germany (Germ. *Elim-Gemeinden*) was joined to the Baptistbund, and in 1941, the Union of Free Christian Churches of Germany (Germ. *Bundes freikirchlicher Christen*). As a result of such actions, Baptistbund became one of the largest religious associations in Europe, was renamed the Union of Free Evangelical Churches (Germ. *Bundes Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden*, BEFG) and supported all activities of the Nazi authorities on an ongoing basis.<sup>15</sup> The BEFG Management Center was located in Berlin and was headed by Federal Director, P. Schmidt, who, according to Soviet intelligence services, was a Gestapo agent.<sup>16</sup>

As the Reich’s authority spread to other European countries, the BEFG authorities, who were already under the influence of the Baptist Unions of Poland, Romania and

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<sup>13</sup> NKVD (НКВД) – Народный комиссариат внутренних дел (People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs) – the name of the Soviet state security bodies in 1934 – April 1943.

MGB (МГБ) – Министерство государственной безопасности (Ministry of State Security) – the name of the Soviet special services in March 1946 – April 1954.

<sup>14</sup> P. Spanring, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Arnold Koster: Two Distinct Voices in the Midst of Germany’s Third Reich* (Turmoil. Lutterworth, 2014), p. 99.

<sup>15</sup> S. Zimmermann, *Zwischen Selbsterhaltung und Anpassung. Die Haltung der Baptisten-und Brüdergemeinden im Nationalsozialismus*. (Wölmersen, 2004), p. 76.

<sup>16</sup> State Archives of Cherkasy region (SA ChR). F. P-5625. Inventory (hereinafter – Inv.) 1. File 9742. P. 2.

Slovakia, were also subject to it. (As the Reich's authority was spreading to other European countries, the BEFG authorities were subjecting the Baptist Unions of Poland, Romania and Slovakia to their influence.)<sup>17</sup> With the occupation of the territory of Ukraine and with the assistance of German special services, five (Volyn-Podolsk, Nikopol, Zhytomyr, Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk) regional associations of ECB were formed in the Reich Commissariat.<sup>18</sup> In December 1942, from these five regional associations the All-Ukrainian Committee of Evangelical Christians Baptists (ACECB) was established in Zhytomyr under the guidance of the "well-known resident of German special services," V. Husaruk, and with the assistance of P. Schmidt, with its center in Rivne (chairman V. Husaruk), whose board supported all actions of the occupying power.<sup>19</sup> On January 12, 1943, at the conference in Rivne, on V. Husaruk's suggestion, a decision was made to form the three Protestant religious unions of Ukraine (ACECB, Free Christians, and the Union of Churches of Christ), modelled by BEFG, only the Free Evangelical Church. modelled after BEFG, subordinate to BEFG.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the Gestapo-favored religious associations, the NKVD bodies began work on forming a Protestant religious union controlled by them. The first step in this direction came in 1942, "in an explicit order, without proper official registration,"<sup>21</sup> in which eight people, five of whom were evacuated from the Gulags (four from Evangelical Christians, and four from Baptists), formed the management center of the future religious organization called All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (ACECB).<sup>22</sup> Based on information from the NKVD and according to the report of the NKVD Colonel I. Polyanskiy, "the united Council began its activities with publishing and distributing patriotic exactions to the sectarians of both directions"<sup>23</sup> and established official relations with the world Baptist centers in the USA and England.<sup>24</sup> In terms of church canons, the newly formed Council lacked legitimacy and could not claim union leadership. This was due, first of all, to the lack of representative power from the local communities of EC and B, since the members of the Council were not elected "from below," at the All-Union Congress of these communities, but were, on the contrary, nominated "from above" by NKVD bodies

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<sup>17</sup> Zimmermann. *Zwischen Selbsterhaltung und Anpassung. Die Haltung der Baptisten-und Brüdergemeinden im Nationalsozialismus*, p. 74.

<sup>18</sup> State Archives SSU (hereafter SA SSU) in Dnipro. F. 6(P). Inv. 1. File P-24066. Vol.1. P. 131.

<sup>19</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 572. P. 169.

<sup>20</sup> SA SSU in Dnipro. F. 6(P). Inv. 1. File П-24066. P. 117.

<sup>21</sup> Г. Крючков. *Великое пробуждение XX столетия*. (Москва: МСЦ ЕХБ, 2008), с. 15. [G. Kryuchkov. *The Great Awakening of the 20th Century*. (Moscow: MSTs YEKhB, 2008), p. 15].

<sup>22</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 6. P. 135b, 136b.

<sup>23</sup> Крючков. *Великое пробуждение XX столетия*. p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 6. P. 7, 32.

from among their secret staff (for example, the head of ACECB, J. Zhidkov, (became an agent of the GUGB NKVD in the 30s).<sup>25</sup> Secondly, at the time of the formation of the ACECB, the vast majority of EC and B communities of the USSR were in the occupation zone and formed other governing bodies, such as the Committee of the Free Evangelical Church, which were subordinate to BEFG. Therefore, a number of tasks were presented to the NKVD bodies, namely “to defeat” all Protestant unions formed in the occupied territory, to formalize the ACECB as a governing center for EC and B in the USSR, and to subordinate all the communities that were part of the “defeated” unions of EC and B to the ACECB.<sup>26</sup>

These tasks were carried out by the NKVD bodies as the USSR territories were liberated from the German invaders. Thus, on January 26, 1944, by the directive of the People’s Commissar of the Security Service of the Ukr. SSR, S. Savchenko, all heads of regional departments of the National Security and Defense Council were ordered, on the territory freed from the enemy, to begin active agency-operative work among the Protestant communities of Ukraine. The People’s Commissariat of the Ukr. SSR demanded that NKGB<sup>27</sup> leaders account for Protestant communities in their responsible territories, eliminate “pro-fascist centers” among them, and replace their leaders with “verified agents” in order to spread the influence of the NKGB “on peripheral communities and groups” through them.<sup>28</sup> Following the order of the People’s Commissariat, the NKGB bodies began to launch a number of centralized undercover projects, such as the “Zaviet” (“Covenant” on Jehovah’s Witnesses), “Proroki” (“Prophets” on Pentecostals), “Orakul” (“Oracle” on Seventh-day Adventists), “Ozhyvshyie” (“Revived” undercover case on the Baptists of the Kiev oblast) etc., aimed at the elimination of “anti-Soviet formations” among the “clergy and sectarians that arose during the occupation period.”<sup>29</sup> As a result, the liquidation of the Rivne ACECB and the Free Evangelical Church took place. Some of their executives were arrested, namely V. Skrynnik (Kyiv Oblast Association of ECB), D. Shapovalov (Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Association of ECB), I. Tatarchenko (Kirovograd Oblast Association of ECB), and others. The communities that were part of the above-mentioned associations, on the fear of possible

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<sup>25</sup> А. Савин, “Сотрудничество с тайной полицией как специфическая форма политической адаптации верующих в советском государстве (1920–1940-е гг.)”. *Вестник Омского университета. Серия “Исторические науки.”* Вып. № 3 (3), с. 44. [A. Savin, Cooperation with the secret police as a specific form of political adaptation of believers in the Soviet state (1920-1940s). *Omsk University Bulletin. Series "Historical Sciences"*. Iss. 3 (3), 2014, p. 44].

<sup>26</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 539. P. 200.

<sup>27</sup> НКГБ (НКГБ) – Народный комиссариат государственной безопасности (People's Commissariat for State Security) – the name of the Soviet special services in April 1943 – March 1946.

<sup>28</sup> SSU BSA. F. 9 (Ukr. SSR). File 74 P. 13, 14.

<sup>29</sup> SSU BSA. F. 13. File 375. P. 35, 121, 126

arrests, were recruited to the agent network by the deputies of the dismissed leaders (A. Trinadtsatko<sup>30</sup> and M. Melnikov<sup>31</sup>).

According to the report of S. Savchenko on the work performed by the bodies of the National Security Service of the Ukr. SSR during the period 1941-1945, it was found that as a result of the agency operations, 87 “anti-Soviet organizations and groups” were liquidated and 875 people were arrested from their membership (for comparison: on all “lines” of work, 84,677 people were arrested during the war by the NKVD-NKGB bodies).<sup>32</sup> As for the number of secret agents recruited into the NKVD’s–NKGB’s agent network as a result of the conducted operations, it is not possible to establish it now, but judging from the total number of secret agents recruited by NKVD’s–NKGB’s during the war (102,642 people), we see that the priority direction in the execution of operational tasks was the recruitment of the object of development, not its condemnation.<sup>33</sup>

Following the “cleansing” of Protestant communities from the “unreliable element,” the NKGB authorities began work on the official registration of the ACECB as a governing center for them. The NKGB could not directly deal with this matter, and therefore, on the authority of the People’s Commissariat of the National Security of the USSR, V. Merkulov, on May 19, 1944, the Council on Religious Cults (hereinafter CRC) was created under the CPC of the USSR, which was to act as a kind of mediator in state-church relations. In order to effectively use the CRC as a cover for the anti-religious activities of the National Security and Defense Agency, the Colonel of the National Security and Defense Council, I. Poliansky, was appointed as its head. He simultaneously held two positions, the head of the CRC and deputy head of the 5th division of the 2nd Office (counterintelligence and fight against religion) of the NKGB of the USSR.<sup>34</sup> As a result of such actions, it can be argued that the CRC became the successor to the cult departments operating under NKGB. At the official level, the religious departments dealt with the registration and accounting of religious communities and monitored the observance of Soviet legislation on cults. In the secret documentation of the Soviet special services, state security officials were instructed to use the statistics available in the religious departments about the religious communities registered with them in order to strengthen control over them and gradually limit their religious activity

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<sup>30</sup> SSU BSA. F. 6. File 58633 фп. Vol.1. P. 24, 28.

<sup>31</sup> SSU BSA. F. 2. Inv. 21. File 2750. P. 65.

<sup>32</sup> SSU BSA. F. 13. File 375. P. 35, 36.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. P. 174.

<sup>34</sup> Полянский, Иван Васильевич [Polyanskiy, Ivan Vasilyevich]. [http://old.memo.ru/history/nkvd/kto2/kto\\_2-0908.html](http://old.memo.ru/history/nkvd/kto2/kto_2-0908.html). Accessed: 25.06.2021.



until liquidation. They had to use their work in cult departments as official cover for their anti-religious activities, and offices as a place for secret meetings with the agency.<sup>35</sup> Following the example of I. Polyanskiy, the post of the deputy head of the CRC of the USSR (P. Vilkhovyi) and the post of the head of the anti-religious department of the NKGB-KGB of the Ukr. SSR was simultaneously held by the so-called “Leading sectarian” of the country—Colonel V. Sukhonin). Following the above instructions, V. Sukhonin systematically organized secret meetings in the CRC office with the Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church (hereafter ROC) Ioann<sup>36</sup> (“*Ptitsin*” agent) and the other agents from the church directories.<sup>37</sup> After his release from the KGB (1960), V. Sukhonin stayed on in the CRC as an oblast commissioner for Kyiv and Kyiv oblast. Following the example of senior management, the employees of the regional departments of the NKGB-KGB of the Ukr. SSR also held two positions at the same time—in the anti-religious departments of the NKGB-KGB and in the positions of deputy regional commissioners in the CRC, where they also engaged in agency-operative work.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that, created under the project of V. Merkulov and headed by I. Polyanskiy CRC, like its predecessors, the cult departments continued to serve as an official cover for the work of Soviet chekists in the religious environment of the USSR.

Immediately after the creation of the CRC, the NKGB bodies began to actively use it to form a religious union under their control. In October 1944, already through the CRC, the NKGB organized a meeting in Moscow of 45 EC and B ministers “inclined to cooperate with the authorities.”<sup>39</sup> As I. Polyanskiy reported, at this meeting “in accordance with the scheduled plan, the unification of the previously existing separately and independently Union of Baptists with the Union of Evangelical Christians into one union with a single united leadership (*ACECB* – Auth.) at the head” took place.<sup>40</sup> The newly formed religious union was named, by analogy with the name of its governing center, the “All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists” and was registered with the CRC. Formally, the decision to create the ACECB was made by the participants themselves, but given that they were

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<sup>35</sup> SSU BSA. F. 13. File 373. P. 33.

<sup>36</sup> Г. Санников. *Большая охота. Разгром вооружённого подполья в Западной Украине*. (Москва: Олма-пресс, 2002), с. 73. [G. Sannikov. *Big hunt. The defeat of the armed underground in Western Ukraine*. (Moscow: Olma-press, 2002), p. 73].

<sup>37</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 1102. P. 299.

<sup>38</sup> Санников. *Большая охота. Разгром вооружённого подполья в Западной Украине*, p. 80.

<sup>39</sup> Л. Алексеева. *История инакомыслия в СССР: новейший период*. (Москва. 2012), с. 150 [L. Alekseyeva. *The history of dissent in the USSR: the latest period*. (Moscow, 2012), p. 150].

<sup>40</sup> Крючков. *Великое пробуждение XX столетия*, p. 15.

agents of the National Security and Defense Agency (e.g. J. Zhidkov, A. Andreyev, A. Trynadiatko, etc), as well as evidence from the mentioned report by I. Polyanskiy, the initiator of the formation of the ACECB was in actuality the NKGB.

At the same meeting, the “Regulations” (the statute on the activities) of the ACECB was adopted, under which the ACECB was recognized as the single governing body and at the same time the single religious union for all EC and B communities in the USSR. In order to effectively guide the local communities that were to be members of the ACECB, the “Regulations” introduced, by analogy with the CRC, the positions of the Republican and oblast commissioners (i.e. senior presbyters) of the ACECB. The position of the Republican presbyter of the ACECB was equal to the rank of the metropolitan in the ROC, and the position of the oblast presbyter of the ACECB was identical to that of the diocesan priest in the ROC. By the requirements of the “Regulations,” republican presbyters could only be appointed by the ACECB, and the oblast presbyters, with the approval of their nominations from the ACECB, could only be appointed by the republican ones. The oblast presbyters, in turn, in agreement with the republican ones, “ordained” the presbyters of local religious communities (so-called “local” presbyters, a holy order of EC and B, identical to the rector of the parish in the ROC.)<sup>41</sup> At the same meeting, the first republican presbyters of the ACECB were appointed (A. Andreyev for Ukraine, V. Chechnev for Belarus, etc.). After the meeting, I. Polyanskiy secretly prohibited the republican and regional commissioners of the CRC, contrary to the requirements of the Constitution of the USSR and the current norms of the Soviet legislation on cults, to register local religious communities EC and B that did not wish to unite with each other and join the ACECB.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the ACECB became the only recognized body by the Soviet Union religious authority for all the communities of EC and B of the USSR.

From the point of view of the church canon, the newly formed Union of the ACECB, and its governing body of the same name, were illegitimate, since the decision on their formation was made not at the All-Union Congress by delegates from all local communities of the ECB, but by a meeting of forty-five ministers “inclined to cooperate with the authorities.”<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the content of the ACECB “Regulations” they adopted, and the hierarchy they introduced, contradicted Scripture, since they completely stripped local communities of self-government, transferring the full power over them to the hands of the

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<sup>41</sup> CSA SAU. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 2. P. 1, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid 4b, 5.

<sup>43</sup> Алексеева. *История инакомыслия в СССР: новейший период*, p. 150.

ACECB and its appointees, which could have sabotaged the decisions of the Moscow meeting. Realizing this, the NKGB bodies began work aimed at making the leaders of the local communities of the EC and B of the USSR recognize all decisions of the Moscow meeting as legitimate.

To this end, a special, completely secret order under No. 157 of December 12, 1944, was issued personally by the USSR People's Deputy Commissariat of the USSR. On page one of the document, the People's Commissariat ordered the heads of all republican NKVD to assist the ministers of local communities of EC and B to comply with the provisions of the ACECB and "through the agents take the necessary preventive measures aimed at ending the harmful activities of those (*sabotaging decisions of the AECB*–Auth.) members of communities."<sup>44</sup> In order to establish effective centralized control of the NKGB over the activities of these local communities, page two of the decree required,

With the assistance of the commissioners of the Council for Religious Cults at the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine [...] to introduce through the commissioner of "ACECB" Andreyev (Ukraine) [...] the institute of oblast commissioners in those areas where the presence of large numbers of registered communities for operational reasons will necessitate centralization of management and oversight of their activities. As those authorized, under proper pretext, it is necessary to nominate proven agents.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, it can be concluded that, having formed from its agents the central office of the ACECB in Moscow, the NKGB undertook the formation of its peripheral bodies (republican and oblast commissioners–senior presbyters) on the ground.

Reporting to Moscow on the progress of the execution of this order in Ukraine, S. Savchenko noted that, after the expulsion of the Germans from the territory of the USSR and the implementation of the above-mentioned agent-operative activities by the NKGB bodies,

the leading presbyterian-preaching asset of evangelical Christians and Baptists (*who escaped repression*–Auth.) [...] was disoriented, believing that their devotional worship would be forbidden, and therefore, feeling guilty (*of cooperation with the occupying authority*–Auth.), did not show any particular activity. However, convinced that there was an "ACECB" in Moscow, made up of well-known sectarian authorities, they took steps to legalize their communities and more willingly reunite Baptists with Evangelical Christians, recognizing the jurisdiction of the ACECB.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> SSU BSA. F. 9 (US/SR). File 19. P. 223b.

<sup>45</sup> SSU BSA. F. 9 (US/SR). File 19. P. 223, 224.

<sup>46</sup> SSU BSA. F. 13. File 375. P. 168.

From S. Savchenko's report, it can be concluded that the liquidation of the German (BEFG) and pro-German (Free Evangelical Church) Protestant centers disoriented the remnants of their leadership. This "disorientation" was also used by the NKGB to "orient" them to joining the ACECB and to register with the CRC. To this end, the NKGB started recruiting them as its agent workers, and sent A. Andreyev, the Republican presbyter of the ACECB in Ukraine to centralize their activities.

The NKGB Colonel of the USSR, I. Polyanskiy, personally petitioned the Deputy Chairman of the CRC, L. Korinets, for providing A. Andreyev with housing in Ukraine that could also serve him as the office, as well as the product ration cards, telephone, fuel, and other necessary household items.<sup>47</sup> Arriving in Kiev in July 1944, A. Andreyev was immediately provided with a dwelling (110 m<sup>2</sup>) in the Podilskyi district of the capital (53<sup>A</sup> Lenin St.),<sup>48</sup> a good salary (not less than 2000 rubles monthly),<sup>49</sup> as well as all the communal conditions necessary for him to work and live. The NKGB was so attentive to A. Andreyev for good reason. The fact is that Alexey Andreyev also held two "posts," the Republican presbyter of the ACECB and the secret agent of the 2nd NKGB Office under the pseudonym "Ryazanskiy."<sup>50</sup> A. Andreyev began his career at the OGPU<sup>51</sup>-KGB in 1923 from a denunciation at the OGPU of the USSR in the name of E. Tuchkov (6th anti-religious department), in which he asked E. Tuchkov to liquidate the so-called "krasnovorotska" community of Evangelical Christians in Moscow, which did not recognize the decision of the IX All-Union Association of the Evangelical Christians (hereinafter AAEC) on compulsory military service for believers and withdrew from the union.<sup>52</sup> A. Andreyev's denunciation to the OGPU bodies led to the dispersal of four AAEC communities in Moscow and the condemnation of 117 people (19 people were shot; 18 people died in the camps; 15 were sent to "lifelong settlement," the total sentence of prisoners condemned to camps was 391 years; the total sentence of condemned to exile was 171 years).<sup>53</sup> After the brutal reprisal against the

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<sup>47</sup> *Церковь должна оставаться церковью. Необратимые десятилетия 1917—1937 годы в истории евангельского и баптистского движений.* (Москва: МСЦ ЕХБ, 2008), с. 42. [The church must remain the church. The irreversible decades of 1917-1937 in the history of the Evangelical and Baptist movements. (Moscow: MSTs EChB, 2008), p. 42].

<sup>48</sup> CSA SAU. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 94. P. 87.

<sup>49</sup> В. Бойко. *Дух Святой научит вас всему.* (Киев, 2005), с. 67. [V. Boyko. The Holy Spirit will teach you everything. (Kiev, 2005), p. 67].

<sup>50</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 1103. P. 14.

<sup>51</sup> OGPU (ОГПУ) – Объединенное государственное политическое управление (United State Political Administration) – the name of the Soviet security organs 1923-1934.

<sup>52</sup> Archives of the Kremlin, 1998, p. 410.

<sup>53</sup> *Архивы Кремля. В 2-х кн. Кн. 2. Политбюро и церковь (1922—1925 гг.).* (Новосибирск–Москва: Сибирский хронограф, Российская политическая энциклопедия, 1998), 647 с. [Archives of the Kremlin. In

“krasnovorotsy,” A. Andreyev’s authority at the AAEC was “strengthened,” and he was delegated, under the sanction of the OGPU, first to the Baptist World Congress in Stockholm (1923) and then to Toronto (1928) as a representative from the AAEC. In 1930, A. Andreyev was appointed as a presbyter of the central Moscow community of the AAEC, and in 1935 he permanently settled in Moscow. In 1940, he, together with M. Orlov (the chairman of the Union of the AAEC), was seconded in agreement with the NKVD to the occupied Baltic states (under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact), where he worked to persuade local leaders of EC and B to cooperate with the NKVD. “For his good service”, A. Andreyev (like M. Orlov), was never repressed by the Soviet authorities. In 1942, under the auspices of the NKVD, on the base of the AAEC, a temporary board of directors of the ACECB was established in Moscow.<sup>54</sup> According to the testimony of K. Voronayeva, the wife of the Pentecostal missionary, I. Voronayev-Cherkassov, who was shot in 1937, A. Andreyev was a member of the Communist Party of the USSR and had a party membership card.<sup>55</sup>

As stated in the order of V. Merkulov, and based on the report by S. Savchenko, the NKGB wanted A. Andreyev’s hands to “guide” the heads of the local communities of the ECB of the Ukr. SSR to cooperate with him through their entry into the ACECB and registration with the CRC. Taking into account the Baltic experience and the character of A. Andreyev, he was fully suitable for the NKGB’s mission to carry out this work in Ukraine, where at that time 70% of the ECB communities (2,174; 110,000 people in number) of the entire USSR were concentrated.<sup>56</sup> The mechanism of realization of the tasks set before him, A. Andreyev disclosed in his reports to the CRC and the NKGB, some of which, after literary processing, were published in the printed organ of the ACECB, the *Fellowship Bulletin*. For example, the *Fellowship Bulletin* of 1946 (No. 2) describes the visit of A. Andreyev and the Secretary General of the ACECB A. Karev to the Zakarpatska oblast in order to encourage local communities of free Christians and Baptists to unite with each other and to join the ACECB. The algorithm of A. Andreyev’s and A. Karev’s actions was very simple. Arriving

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2 Vol. Vol. 2. The Politburo and the Church (1922-1925). (Novosibirsk and Moscow: Russian political encyclopedia, 1998), 647 pp.].

<sup>54</sup> Ю. Патлань. “Из истории Красноворотской общины евангельских христиан в Москве”. *Научно-культурологический журнал*. Вып. 6 (339). <http://www.relga.ru/Environ/WebObjects/tgu-www.woa/wa/Main?textid=5419&level1=main&level2=articles> [Yu. Patlan. “From the history of the Krasnovorotsk community of Evangelical Christians in Moscow”. Scientific and cultural journal. Issue 6 (339). Accessed: 25.06.2021].

<sup>55</sup> Testimony of Yekaterina Voronayeva, ca. 1960-1964. Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Archive. <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15799coll14/id/194312>. [Listen from 53:00-59:00]. Accessed: 25.06.2021.

<sup>56</sup> CSA SAU F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 4. P. 81, 82.

in the oblast center (Mukachevo), the “brothers” visited the office of the oblast commissioner of the CRC, where they were briefed accordingly and received the address of the senior Baptist presbyter of the Zakarpatska oblast (E. Stumpf). Visiting E. Stumpf, the brothers received information about the number and location of Protestant communities in the oblast and the names of their ministers. Having received the addresses of the communities and the names of their ministers, A. Andreyev and A. Karev informed them about the mandatory general meeting to be held in the central community of the oblast (Mukachevo), where E. Stumpf was the presbyter. The agenda of the meeting was as follows: 1. Notification of the participants of the meeting on the ground (from here we see that the local ministers had in advance received a task from E. Stumpf to carry out preparatory work in their communities upon joining the ACECB); 2. Drawing up an accurate list of communities and groups in the Zakarpatska oblast and their leaders; 3. A. Karev’s report on the formation and activities of the ACECB; 4. A. Andreyev’s report on the work of the ACECB in Ukraine and the Soviet legislation on cults (i.e. the possibility of obtaining registration only through joining the ACECB). 5. Resolution on the union of Baptists and free Christians of the Zakarpatska oblast with each other and with the ACECB; 6. Information on military matters (i.e. compulsory military service for all members of the ACECB); and 7. Questions and Answers. During the conference, the presbyters of the local Christian and Baptist communities “unanimously” voted to unite with each other, register their communities in the CRC, and join the ACECB. After the meeting, an institute of oblast leadership of the Zakarpatska oblast of the ACECB was formed through A. Karev and A. Andreyev, composed of the oblast commissioner of the ACECB (E. Stumpf), his assistants (two people, one from Baptists and the other one from Free Christians) and a secretary. The legitimacy of the newly formed body and its leaders was “unanimously” recognized by the community presbyters present. On their behalf, an act was drawn up to unite the Free Christians of the Zakarpatska oblast with the Baptists and joining them in the ACECB. Free Christians “voluntarily” renounced the dogmatic features of their doctrine (in matters of baptism and communion) and “willingly” adopted the Baptist doctrine. Paragraph 2 of the act approved the compulsory registration by the local officials of all communities of the oblast in the CRC and the monthly collection of funds in favor of the ACECB.<sup>57</sup>

This unanimity in the vote for joining the ACECB can be explained by analyzing the testimony of one of the participants of a similar meeting for unification of Christians of

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<sup>57</sup> *Братский вестник*, 1946 г. Вып. 2. С. 30-44 [Fellowship Bulletin, 1946. Iss. 2. Pp. 30-44].

Evangelical Faith (hereinafter CEF) with the ACECB, Bishop A. Bidash. According to the bishop, even before the meeting, representatives of the ACECB and their “sympathizers” informed its participants on the ground that the ACECB was the only legal union and at the same time a leading center recognized by the Soviet authorities for all Protestant denominations close to Baptist by their doctrines. Therefore, if the representatives of CEF did not vote at the meeting for reunification with the ACECB, they would not be able to legally engage in religious activities and would be arrested by the NKVD<sup>58</sup>. On the other hand, if CEF communities did join the ACECB, they and their leaders would be registered with the CRC. Registration of communities in the CRC would give them the official status of a religious organization (without the right of legal entity), and their presbyters the status of ministers of worship. Under this status, the state will be able to assist them, if necessary, in providing premises for engaging in religious activities, transport, construction materials, etc., and release their ministers from work at the farms or at the collective farms. As “employees of Soviet institutions,” they would receive food cards and other necessities for unobstructed religious activity.<sup>59</sup> The need for cooperation with the NKGB, after registration of the local communities and their inclusion in the ACECB, was not conveyed to their leaders by the representatives of the ACECB. But, as it emerged from the analysis of the p. 4 of the aforementioned order of V. Merkulov under No. 157, it was the entry into the ACECB and the registration with the CRC that was to be used by the republican NKGB to provide these communities with “verified agent workers.”<sup>60</sup>

Analyzing the report of the Deputy People’s Commissar of the NKGB of the Ukr. SSR, P. Drozdetsky, to Moscow about work among the Protestants, we can conclude that during the NKVD agent-operative activities in the Zakarpatska oblast, E. Stumpf, the regional leader of the Baptist sect, was recruited, as “enjoying authority and trust among the sectarians,” under the pseudonym “*Alpha*,” and given that he was “personally acquainted with all the preachers of the sectarian communities of the Zakarpatska oblast,” he was sent to “develop” their leadership to spread the influence of the NKVD among them.<sup>61</sup> The result of this development was the decision of the Presbyterians of the Zakarpatska oblast to accept the “proposal” of A. Karev and A. Andreyev to unite with the ACECB. Thus, their regional meeting in Mukachevo was nothing but the culmination of the work of the NKGB of the

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<sup>58</sup> SA SSU in Dnipro. F. 6(P). Inv. 1. File II-19560. P. 51b, 145b, 146.

<sup>59</sup> CSA SAU. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 11. P. 18.

<sup>60</sup> SSU BSA. F. 9 (USSR). File 19. P. 224.

<sup>61</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 566. P. 67.

USSR, made through E. Stumpf. The main purpose of this work was not so much to unite the Baptists and free Christians of Zakarpatska oblast with each other and with the ACECB, but to establish through this association and the registration of communities with the CRC the control of the NKGB over them (p. 4 of V. Merkulov's order). A. Karev and A. Andreyev by their actions only gave to the work of the NKVD, so to speak, the church canonicity and completed it, appointing the regional commissioner of the ACECB in the Zakarpatska oblast the agent of the NKGB "*Alpha*," i.e. E. Stumpf. Through E. Stumpf, control over the activities of local presbyters, and through them the activities of members of their communities, completely passed into the hands of the NKGB.

By the same analogy, the NKGB bodies, through A. Andreyev and their sectarians on the ground, held "uniting" meetings between Evangelical Christians and Baptists in other areas of the USSR, but not everywhere was the union between them as smooth as in the Zakarpatska oblast. For example, in the Stalin (Donetsk) oblast there was a movement of the so-called "Pure Baptists" who did not want to unite with Evangelical Christians. This movement spread to the neighboring Voroshilovgrad (Luhansk), Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhzhya oblasts, where the positions of Baptists were stronger than those of Evangelical Christians.<sup>62</sup> But, receiving timely signals from the agency ("*Bis*" and "*Zvonok*"), the NKGB instituted an "*Evangelisty*" ("Evangelists") agency case, during which some "fanatical" leaders of "Pure Baptists" were repressed, and part of the "moderate" ones were inclined to unite with Evangelical Christians in the ACECB.<sup>63</sup> In addition to the "Pure Baptists" in Ukraine, there were other groups among the EC and B who simply refused to be a part of ACECB on the terms offered to them. According to the reports of agents, all of them were gradually destroyed by the NKGB bodies. In order to eliminate them, the oblast UNKVD implemented a number of agency cases in Kyiv—"Iudy" ("Judases"), Drohobych—"Fanatiki" ("Fanatics"), Kamianets-Podilsky—"Sviatiteli" ("Lights"), and other oblasts of Ukraine.<sup>64</sup> The implementation of the aforementioned agency operations accelerated the unification processes between EC and B and "strengthened" among them the authority of A. Andreyev and the oblast presbyters of the ACECB.

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<sup>62</sup> П. Яроцький, голов. ред. *Історія релігії в Україні. В 10 т. Том 5. Протестантизм.* (Київ – Дрогобич: Коло, 2007 р.), 387 с. [P. Yarotskyi, Ch. red. *The history of religions in Ukraine at 10 vol. T. 5. Protestantism.* (Kyiv – Drohobych: Kolo, 2007), p. 387].

<sup>63</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 565. P. 29-31.

<sup>64</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 565. P. 22, 25, 31, 33.



Due to such fruitful cooperation between the NKGB and their secret agents, in February 1946 the process of unification of EC and B was completed in Ukraine, and the Institute of Oblast Commissioners of the ACECB was established. A. Andreyev submitted his report to the ACECB on this issue, which was published in the *Fellowship Bulletin*. The report began with the following words:

The work entrusted to you, with the help of God, has been fulfilled. In a short time, we have brought together communities of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in Ukraine [...]. During the war, some of the leading brothers left our churches. The Lord has made it possible to single out (*in their stead* – Auth.) notably zealous ministers, oblast senior elders who, with special love and zeal, carry out their ministry [...] in their designated areas, assisting in the registration [...] by participating in the upbringing of members of the churches and their presbyterian composition and, in general, direct the life and activities of the churches.<sup>65</sup>

In parallel with A. Andreyev's report to the ACECB of Ukraine, the report on the termination of work on unification of EC and B into one association was sent on February 25, 1946, to the NKGB of the USSR and S. Savchenko. In it the People's Commissar of the NKGB of the Ukr. SSR reported that "in order to subordinate our influence of the activity of the main sectarian current in Ukraine of Evangelical Christians and Baptists, we completed the work of establishing an institute of senior oblast presbyters of the ACECB and promoted for these positions —————<sup>66</sup> from among sectarian authorities."<sup>67</sup> From the analysis of other completely secret documents, I have established that these "sectarian authorities" were three deputies of A. Andreyev, agents with routing possibilities: "Antip" (last name is being established),<sup>68</sup> A. Mitskevych ("Kosarev"), he is also authorized by the ACECB in the Kiev oblast<sup>69</sup> and D. Ponomarchuk ("Berezovskiy").<sup>70</sup> Oblast presbyters of the ACECB in the Dnipropetrovsk oblast (M. Melnikov, agent "Mirgorodskiy"),<sup>71</sup> in the Mykolaiv oblast (F. Mitryayev, agent alias is being established at this time),<sup>72</sup> in the Kherson region (K. Kalibabchuk, agent "Petrovskiy")<sup>73</sup> and in other oblasts of Ukraine.<sup>74</sup> A list of all their

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<sup>65</sup> *Братский вестник*, 1946 г. Вып. 2. С. 51 [Fellowship Bulletin, 1946. Iss. 2. P. 51].

<sup>66</sup> Considering the top confidentiality of the document, the names of the agents in the text were not printed, and later they had to be handwritten by the NKGB officer in the signature line (which was done on the original document, which was sent to Moscow). However, these names were not written in the copy of the document kept in SSU BSA, and the signature line was left blank.

<sup>67</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 565. P. 2.

<sup>68</sup> SSU BSA. F. 13. File 511. P. 19.

<sup>69</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 1105. P. 51.

<sup>70</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 564. P. 21.

<sup>71</sup> SSU BSA. F. 2. Inv. 21. File 2750. P. 65.

<sup>72</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 573. P. 154.

<sup>73</sup> SSU BSA. F. 11. File 1131. Vol. 1. P. 287, 291.

<sup>74</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 565. P. 44.

names was printed by the presidium of the ACECB in the *Fellowship Bulletin* for 1946 No. 1-3.

In the framework of the conducted research I have established that in addition to the oblast presbyters, the NKGB also recruited their deputies (“*Kosar*” agent of Voroshilovgrad, present Luhansk oblast),<sup>75</sup> presbyters of local communities (P. Shokalo from Kryvyi Rih),<sup>76</sup> and active members of local communities (Y. Polyakov, agent “*Nikolay*” Kyiv),<sup>77</sup> etc.

As a result of such actions, the total number of the ACECB apparatus in the Ukr. SSR in 1947, according to P. Vilkhovyi, was 1905 people (one republican presbyter; three of his deputies; 25 senior oblast presbyters; nine of their assistants, and 1,867 presbyters of local communities). Analyzing the newly created hierarchical structure of the ACECB, the Republican commissioner of the CRC in the Ukr.SSR, P. Vilkhovyi, noted that

the organizational structure in the sect before 1944 was more "democratic." Unlike in the past, the current structure of the sect brings to the fore the Presbyterian composition, as the main leaders not only of the spiritual but also of the entire life of the community, becoming more similar in this case to the hierarchy of the ROC. The current structure eliminated the blurry "democracy" of the sect, handing over the governance in all matters of community life and activity to the hands of the senior ACECB presbyter of the Ukr.SSR, facilitating the selection of appropriate presbyterial staff, and regulation of their activities by the commissioners of the Council on Religious Cults.<sup>78</sup>

It is this rigorous “organizational structure in the sect” that allowed the NKGB to control, through the CRC and the institute of authorized ACECB, the “lives and activities” of literally every member.<sup>79</sup>

In order to extend their control through the ACECB and other Protestant organizations in the USSR, the NKGB organized, in the same scenario, the joining of the All-Ukrainian and All-Polish Union of Evangelical (so-called Pentecostal) Christians, fellowships of the Baltic States (Latvia and Estonia), the Reformed Church of Zakarpattia, the Union of Christians in the Spirit of the Apostles, the Union of Colossians of Christ, the Union of Churches of Western Ukraine and Belarus. As a result of the “enlargement” operations, the ACECB became the largest religious union of the ECB, not only in the USSR but also in the world. Because of this, its chairman J. Zhidkov was elected Vice-President of the World Baptist

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<sup>75</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 564. P. 22.

<sup>76</sup> SA SSU in Dnipropetrovsk region. F. 6(P). P. 129, 271.

<sup>77</sup> SSU BSA. F. 3. Inv. 1. File 203. P. 403.

<sup>78</sup> CSA SAU. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 27. P. 86.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

Union twice (1955 and 1960) and used this post for 10 years to spread USSR “peacekeeping” activities in the international arena and to refute “rumors” of persecution of believers in the USSR.

According to the MGB data of the Ukr. SSR, as of 1949 the total number of its agent apparatus on the “line of sectarians” was already 3,047 people.<sup>80</sup> Placing their agents in senior positions at the ACECB, the MGB with their personnel began to corrupt it from within. Initially, the ACECB made military service with firearms in hands for all its members compulsory.<sup>81</sup> It then obliged all communities to celebrate national holidays (May Day and November, V. Lenin Remembrance Day, Victory Day over Japan, Stalin’s Constitution Day, etc.) on a par with religious ones.<sup>82</sup> Through its letters of instruction distributed through republican and oblast elders, the ACECB forbade, contrary to the Soviet legislation on cults, the participation (and later presence) of children in worship, reduced the number of baptisms by setting age restrictions (people under the age of 18-25 were not allowed to be baptized)<sup>83</sup>, limited the number of preachers (no more than 3-5 people per congregation), and censored sermon content,<sup>84</sup> The ACECB also banned evangelism and providing financial help to poor members of the community, closed Sunday schools, etc.<sup>85</sup> Instead, in 1947, in the *Fellowship Bulletin*, the Presidium of the ACECB of Ukraine openly declared that “Communism is the vital ideal of all the Soviet people.”<sup>86</sup>

The watchful eyes of the secret agents steadily oversaw their subordinate flock’s fulfilment of instructions of the center. Those who refused to comply with the ACECB directives or tried to counteract them immediately came into the view of the MGB. For example, in 1946, a group of local presbyters of the ACECB in the Vinnytsia oblast began to express disagreement with one another about a number of requirements of their center (service in the army and restrictions on missionary activity). In response, the management MGB of the Vinnytsia oblast brought on them the “*Faraony*” (“Pharaohs”) agency case, resulting in a group of dissatisfied people being repressed and their dissatisfaction suppressed.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 1102. P. 35.

<sup>81</sup> *Братский вестник*, 1945. Вып. 1, С. 7. [Fellowship Bulletin, 1945. Iss. 1. P. 7].

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13-15.

<sup>83</sup> CSA SAU. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 110. P. 56.

<sup>84</sup> CSA SAU. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 95. P. 31, 32.

<sup>85</sup> CSA SAU. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 2. P. 24, 50.

<sup>86</sup> *Братский вестник*, 1947 г. Вып. 4. С. 7 [Fellowship Bulletin, 1947. Iss. 4. P. 7].

<sup>87</sup> SSU BSA. F. 16. Inv. 1. File 565. P. 22-26.

Due to such coordinated activity of the leadership of the ACECB and the NKGB-MGB, for the period from 1944 to 1947, according to P. Vilkhovyi, the number of ECB communities in the ACECB of the USSR decreased from 2,174 (110,000) to 1,875 (95,457).<sup>88</sup> At the beginning of 1950, the MGB bodies of the Ukr.SSR had already developed, through their agents-ministers, 3,540 people for “anti-Soviet activity on the line of sectarians” (for 211 agent cases 1,635 people, for case-forms 1,529, for accounting and supervisory cases 376 people).<sup>89</sup> In 1960, the personal and work case of the agent A. Andreyev-“*Ryazanskiy*” (died in 1966) was already six volumes of “pastoral” work done by him in the “spiritual field” of the USSR (for comparison: the personal and work case of the agent “*Ptitsin*” a Metropolitan of the ROC of Ukraine Ioann (I. Sokolov) in 1960 was only one volume).<sup>90</sup>

## Conclusions

Thus, it can be concluded that by proclaiming the postwar legalization of religion in the USSR at the official level, the Soviet authorities still continued to conceal a policy of eliminating Protestant organizations at the unofficial level. For this purpose, as before the war, it was implemented by the NKVD-MGB. Unable to apply the “effective Chekist measures” of the 1930s in the context of the official legalization of religion, the NKGB-MGB underhandedly decided to eliminate Protestant organizations not from the outside, through open repression, but from within—through gradual disintegration with the help of agents. In order to cover this work, the NKGB, through the CRC, coercively created the legendary (imaginary) religious union of the ACECB in 1944, in which it introduced the institute of commissioners (republican and oblast presbyters). During the period from 1944 to 1948, using repression, blackmail, manipulation, bribery, and other illegal activities, the NKVD-MGB succeeded in unifying the USSR’s largest Protestant denominations. They promoted this union to the rank of a “verified agency” with trusted operatives/agents from a number of adaptive members of the clergy willing to compromise, who assisted in gradually decomposing the Protestant communities from within.

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<sup>88</sup> CSA SAU. F. 4648. Inv. 4. File 4. P. 81, 82.

<sup>89</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 1102. P. 34, 35.

<sup>90</sup> SSU BSA. F. 1. Inv. 1. File 1424. P. 80, 81.

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