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MEMORY, TRAUMA, AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

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Abstract

The so-called 'memorial turn' triggered a huge shift in historical studies of the late 20th century. It brought into focus stories of the 'small people' previously left out from the 'grand narrative.' For post-Soviet countries, the memorial turn can be perceived as an indicator of changes in society associated with the opportunity and interest of previously oppressed social groups and religious movements in finding their "roots," when the reconstruction of personal history becomes the history of the church and strengthens collective identity. In this essay, we attempted at reconstructing the traumatic history of the "little" people in the context of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our main source was Pavlo Derevinsky's memoir treatise, where he gave an account of his father's life and of the persecutions he experienced. The author of the treatise goes beyond the narration of the story of one person and appeals to the idea of a common past, creates important prerequisites for strengthening collective identity. The memoirs, too, provide an opportunity to look differently at the problem of religious and collective identity, often viewed, as limited to the preservation of traditions, religious symbolism, dogma, norms, or teachings. The memoirs, however, became an important tool for creating a collective identity based on a common traumatic story, which, due to the author's constant parallels between the past and the present, created a special feeling of community. Thus, belonging to common history, gives, too, an awareness of belonging to a certain group, nation, and country.

Keywords: memorial turn, the role of memory, religious identity, preservation of history, memories, Pavlo (Pavel) Derevinsky.

The Problem Statement. The second half of the 20th century witnessed several methodological turns: "linguistic," "anthropological," "visual," "cultural," "postmodern," "sociological," "memorial" to name but a few. Each of the turns signified a shift in the focus of

the research problem, came with its own set of tools and preferred range of sources. The “memorial turn” has significantly changed the face of modern historical science previously constructed around a chosen set of historical events. The “memorial turn” made historians focus on the memory of the past living as preserved by individuals or social groups, on methods of transfer of memory, and its social functions. For post-Soviet countries, the ‘memorial turn’ turns into an indicator of social changes associated with the concern of previously oppressed social groups and religious movements in finding their "roots." Thus, the reconstruction of personal history becomes the history of the church and strengthens collective identity. Therefore, the most popular tool for socio-humanitarian analysis has always been the “conceptual link “memory - identity – trauma.”¹

Attention to the church's past and the wide use of memoirs became an important component of the memorial turn. However, most importantly, memoir writing has become a way of overcoming traumatic personal experiences and giving meaning to tragic events, which is also the case with the memoir under analysis. Lorina Repina rightly points out that "the creation of a historical narrative (narration), through which all experience, recorded in memory in the form of separate events, is again formed into a certain integrity, within which these events acquire meaning."²

In this essay, we shall examine how memory shapes the collective identity of a religious group. Based on the ego documents,³ we attempt at reconstructing the traumatic history of the ‘little people’ in the context of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Given that memory "being in the process of constant evolution" is open to both the dialectics of memorization and amnesia,⁴ we tried to evaluate the "experience of reconquering one's history," based on Pavlo/Pavel Derevinsky's memoir treatise devoted to the life of his father. We shall examine how the author of the treatise goes beyond the simple narration of personal history, appeals to the religious community’s common past, and creates important prerequisites for strengthening the collective identity.

¹ Л. Репина, “Опыт социальных кризисов в исторической памяти,” in *Кризисы переломных эпох в исторической памяти*, ed. Л. Репина (Москва: ИВИ РАН, 2012), 9, <http://roii.ru/crises/roii-crises-1.pdf>. [L. Repina, “The Experience of Social Crises in Historical Memory,” in *Crises of Turning Epochs in Historical Memory*, ed. L. Repina (Moscow: IVI RAN, 2012), 9.]

² Ibid., 15.

³ The term "ego-documents" was introduced at the end of the 20th century by the Dutch historian Jakob Presser. He suggested calling a group of sources coming from a specific person and, as a rule, written in the first person as ego-documents. The most common types of ego documents studied by specialists are diaries and letters. In addition, such sources include notebooks, memoirs, and autobiographies. Putting in the first place in his term "ego" from the Latin "I," Presser removed questions about bias and other "vices" of private statements.

⁴ П. Нора et al., *Франция-память* (СПб.: Издательство Санкт-Петербургского университета, 1999), 20. [P. Nora et al., *France-memory* (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg University Press, 1999), 20.]

This treatise, too, is a witness to the “democratization of history,” the making of a “different” from the one presented in textbooks history. After all, the construction of alternative history is directly associated with the post-Soviet emancipation of religious groups and individuals, for whom the legalization of forbidden topics and the reconquest of their past and their history has become a necessary component of the assertion of their identity. As the French historian, Bernard Genet succinctly put it, albeit concerning a different historical period: “A social group, political society, civilization is determined primarily by their memory, that is, their history, but not the history that they had in reality, but the one that historians created for them.”⁵

We shall refer to the methodological approaches formulated by the French historian Pierre Nora for this study deals with the problems of identity and memory. We agree with his statement about the opposition of historical memory and history and consider his principle of differentiating historical memory and history to be fair: “Memory is an absolute, and history knows only the relative. At the heart of history is destructive criticism against spontaneous memory. Memory is always suspicious of history, whose true mission is to destroy and supplant it. History is the delegitimization of the past we have lived through.”⁶ It is difficult to argue with this statement, especially considering the struggle against the past of small religious movements, and those who were deprived of the right to their history. These included, perhaps in the first place, the Soviet Protestant churches, the prejudice towards which has not yet been completely overcome.

In the framework of the study, we shall use concepts such as “historical memory” and “collective identity.” Speaking about historical memory, we mean a set of stereotypical ideas about the common past for members of a separate group, as well as a certain set of historical messages transmitted by memory carriers and subjectively refracted reflections about past events, especially personal negative experiences, oppression, injustice towards religious movements or social strata to which the individual belongs. In its turn, collective identity is largely determined by the idea of a common history of the members of a given community. It captures “the inherent human need to feel like a part of a wider set and to perceive such

⁵ Б. Гене, *История и историческая культура средневекового Запада* (Москва: Языки славянской культуры, 2002), 19. [B. Gene, *History and Historical Culture of the Medieval West* (Moscow: Languages of Slavic Culture, 2002), 19.]

⁶ П. Нора et al., *Франция-память*, 20-21.

belonging as a value".⁷ At the same time, it is the result of a group awareness of the identity and differences with people included in other communities.⁸

The Source Base of Research. In the study, we used mainly two types of sources. To the first type belong archival documents issued by state institutions of Russia and Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union; official documents: decrees, and orders. To the second type belongs a document, which is usually referred to as "source of personal origin" or "ego documents." We are using as a case study a short memoir treatise dedicated to the history of the life and work of Yakov Emelyanovich Derevinsky (1897-1937), the pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Christian Church, repressed and shot in 1937. Almost 70 years later, his son, Pavel Yakovlevich Derevinsky (1929-2007), restored his father's life path, as well as the motives for his arrest and execution. A treatise published in the 1990s got as the title words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Remember them that are in bands..." (13:3).⁹ Although it deals mainly with personal history, it goes far beyond being a mere biography. It is in the first place the result of Pavel Derevinsky's long-standing reflections about the peculiarities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's history under totalitarianism and the experience of recapturing its history.

The author, resorting to generalizations, appealing to the idea of a common past, and motivating his contemporaries to fulfill the same tasks, creates an important borderline for strengthening collective identity. One should keep in mind that the text was written sixty-eight years after the events described. This rather long period raises the important question: why the author did not record the events earlier when they were still fresh in the memory? Pavel Derevinsky himself explains that a lot of, "interesting past [that] went unrecorded, sunk into eternity."¹⁰ However, as the author points out, given the religious oppression that existed in the USSR, not everything could be recorded and stored for such records could easily become a reason for accusations: "Every record is material; for some it is history, but for the "others" it

⁷ Г. Кнабе, *Жажда тождества: Культурно-антропологическая идентификация. Вчера. Сегодня. Завтра* (РГГУ, 2003), 5. [G. Knabe, *Thirst for Identity: Cultural-Anthropological Identification. Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow* (RGGU, 2003), 5.]

⁸ О. Астафьева, "Коллективная идентичность в условиях глобальных изменений: динамика устойчивого и укоренение становящегося," in *Вопросы социальной теории. Альманах ежегодник*, ed. Ю. Резник and М. Тлостанова, Vol. 5. (Москва: Издательство Независимого института гражданского общества, 2011), 224. [O. Astafeva, "Collective identity in the context of global change: the dynamics of the sustainable and the rooting of the emerging," in *Issues of Social Theory. Almanac Yearbook*, ed. Y. Reznik and M. Tlostanova, Vol. 5. (Moscow: Publishing House of the Independent Institute of Civil Society, 2011), 224.]

⁹ П. Деревинский, *Мемуары. Помните узников...* : *Рукопись* (Киев, 1990). [P. Derevinskiy, *Memoirs. Remember the prisoners...*: *Manuscript* (Kyiv, 1990).]

¹⁰ Ibid., 10.]

is temptation and material for accusation".¹¹ On the other hand, these almost seventy years of distance between publication can be considered also as a strong side of the source, since the author's memories and childhood experiences are refracted through the prism of his own rich experience of existence under a totalitarian regime.

For many years, Pavel Derevinsky held the unofficial, but very responsible post of the Chair of the Kyiv community of the SDA. He was privy to many details of the church life and often found himself at the forefront of the long-lasting struggle of the state against the church. Therefore, he associated the fate of the repressed father with the general history of the church; a separate life became part of the narrative of church history, which ultimately leads to the phenomenon of collective memory creation.

This source brings back to life the voices of those who stood at a low level of the social hierarchy, the voices that earlier "were too quiet." This kind of document was usually of limited use; it was treated as an auxiliary and illustrative material about the life of the 'prominent' actors. However, in the 20th century, a significant change took place in approaches to the writing of history, indeed, as in all areas of socio-humanitarian knowledge. Specialists began to be interested in the random, individual, and unique – all that concerned the "little" people. Taras Tsimbal, in the preface to the collection of articles titled "New Approaches to Historical Writing," when explaining the essence of the changes, noted that modern historical science is trying to move away from the speculative history of "big people." From now on, history's heroes are "invisible figures of history—ordinary people" and its aimed at "writing the story of the common people, not the elite minority; not to build a national narrative, but to reflect pluralism and opposition of narratives, suppressed voices." And hear "the other voices living in the garden."¹²

Thus, the importance of the documents "from below" lies in recording the memory of the minority. We can collect from them those shreds of evidence that could not get into the official documents or that, for various reasons, fall out of the stories about famous people. Memoirs often help to restore the missing facts and details that can be decisive for the reconstruction of an event.

However, working with memoirs means accepting its essence, aptly captured by Natalya Kolokoltzeva: "The memoirist always and in all cases conveys the facts subjectively."¹³ The

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² П. Берк, ed., *Нові підходи до історіописання* (Київ: Ніка-Центр, 2010), 9. [P. Berk, ed., *New approaches to historiography* (Kyiv: Nika-Center, 2010), 9.]

¹³ Н. Колокольцева, "Характеристика документов личного происхождения... по истории сибирского купечества второй половины XIX — начала XX в.," *Известия АлтГУ. Исторические науки и археология*,

subjectivity of the source determined by the author's religious views, his/her worldview, education, understanding of political processes, assigned tasks, and his presumptive audience. Of course, a scholar has a right to be selective while working with the memoirs, but "one cannot demand from the author that he ceases to be himself, that he renounces his experience, his passions, his vision of the world and people."¹⁴ The author's reflections, emotional assessments, "a different look" at well-known events endow such sources with particular value. Moving away from the dispassionate recording of past events, they turn a history into confession, justification, and meditation on the author's part. Therefore, the subjectivity of memoirs can be regarded not like a flow, but an opportunity to grasp experiences excluded from other narratives.

Another issue with memoirs can be unintentional inaccuracies. After all, the memoirs were written more than sixty years later, and therefore they can carry memory errors. The author draws our attention to this inevitable fact at the very beginning of his story: "It is difficult to start a story about the days gone by and years of a past life when the memory is already beginning to weaken and much has long been forgotten. Time flew by quickly, and even now, it flies without stopping, it seems like tape on a reel; at first, it seems like the circles slowly disappear, and then, when closer to the end, the coils seem to spin faster until everything reaches the end. That has all started spinning in my memory since the time I began to memorize. Everything is written on the tape of my memory; one is erased, and the other is written down, and some part is kind of stored."¹⁵ The author, speaking about the "storage" of individual facts, is trying to say that it is impossible to forget something for he adds: "Although everything seems somehow far away, [as] in an old shabby picture, I still remember."¹⁶

We would like to conclude this small discussion of memoirs as a source with one last remark made by contemporary scholar Vladimir Kabanov. When characterizing memoirs, he noted that their special strength was granted by the fact that the Soviet history is poorly reflected in documents.¹⁷ Here he cites Roy Medvedev, who stated that the Soviet history "...

no. 6 (2019): 58, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/harakteristika-dokumentov-lichnogo-proishozhdeniya-po-istorii-sibirskogo-kupechestva-vtoroy-poloviny-xix-nachala-xx-v>. [N. Kolokoltseva, "Characteristics of documents of personal origin... on the history of the Siberian merchants in the second half of the 19th — early 20th centuries," *Izvestia of AltGU. Historical Sciences and Archeology*, no. 6 (2019): 58]

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Деревинский, *Мемуары*, 10.

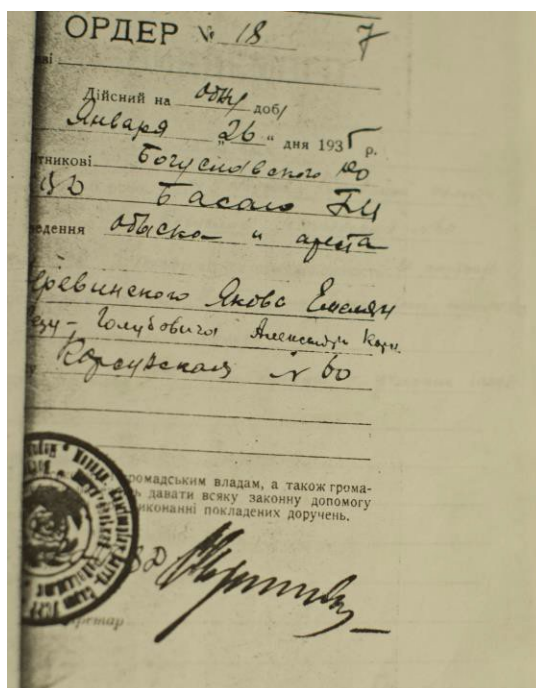
¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ В. Кабанов, "Исторические источники советского периода," in *Источниковедение: Теория. История. Метод. Источники российской истории: Учеб. пособие*, ed. И. Данилевский et al. (Москва: РГГУ, 2000), 635, <http://window.edu.ru/resource/215/42215/files/index.html>. [V. Kabanov, "Historical sources of the Soviet period," in *Source Studies: Theory. Story. Method. Sources of Russian history: Proc. allowance*, ed. I. Danilevsky et al. (Moscow: RGGU, 2000), 635]

is much less reflected in documents than in the minds of people."¹⁸ Therefore, we aspire to compensate for that lack of information going for such an ambiguous but indispensable source.

Yakov Derevinskiy: A Person and His Fate

A brief outline of the biography of the heroes of the memoirs, Yakov Emelyanovich Derevinsky (1897-1937) follows. He began his ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1920 in the city of Nizhyn, acting as a "trial Bible worker." He also served in the Nizhyn district and some villages in the Poltava region. In 1926, he was arrested for the first time for "anti-Soviet activity," a standard charge for pastors back then. The communities where he worked were actively expanding, which was considered a crime by the Soviet authorities. After four months, he was released and continued to minister in the same places. In a short period, under his leadership, the Nizhyn community grew to 85 people and became the largest community in the Chernihiv region. In 1932, Yakov Derevinsky was transferred to the small town of Boguslav (Kyiv region). In the summer of 1934, near Boguslav in Talny (today a city in the Cherkasy region of Ukraine, part of the Zvenigorod district), Yakov Derevinsky was detained for two weeks in a pre-trial detention cell and was ordered not to appear in those places again.



**Fig 1. The arrest warrant for Yakov Derevinsky and A.K. Reza-Golubovich
(Rotea, 1997)**

¹⁸Ibid.

In December 1934, after the assassination attempt on the First Secretary of the Leningrad Regional Committee of the Communist Party, repressions began throughout the country. On the night of January 25-26, 1935, from Friday to Saturday at 2 am, Yakov Derevinsky was arrested and charged with communicating with foreign countries and for his "... activities in the countryside" (Fig. 2). A member of the church Anatoliy Reza-Golubovich was arrested on a similar charge.

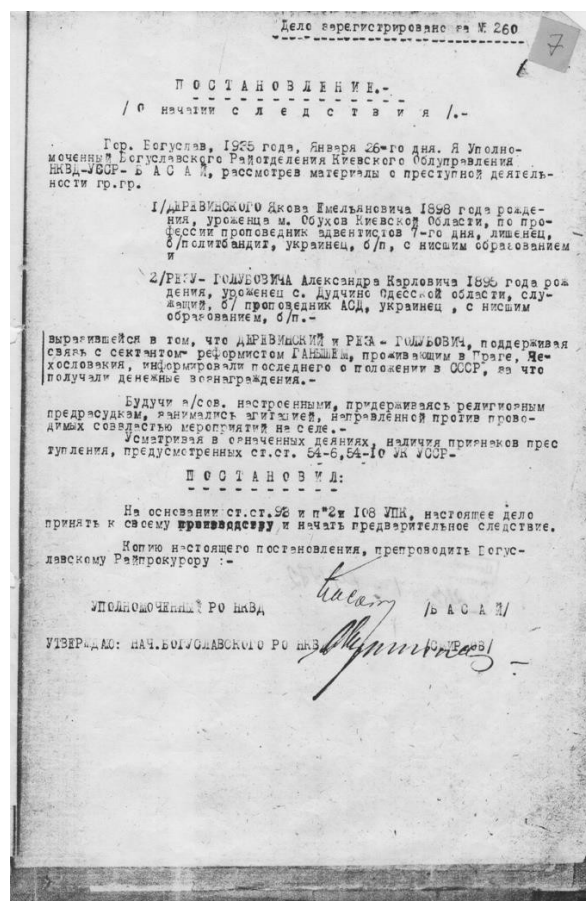


Fig. 2. The decision to start the investigation against Yakov Derevinsky and A.K. Reza-Golubovich with the wording of the charges.

In October 1935, the investigation ended, and Yakov Derevinsky was sentenced to three years in a forced labor camp and sent to the northern region of Karelia.

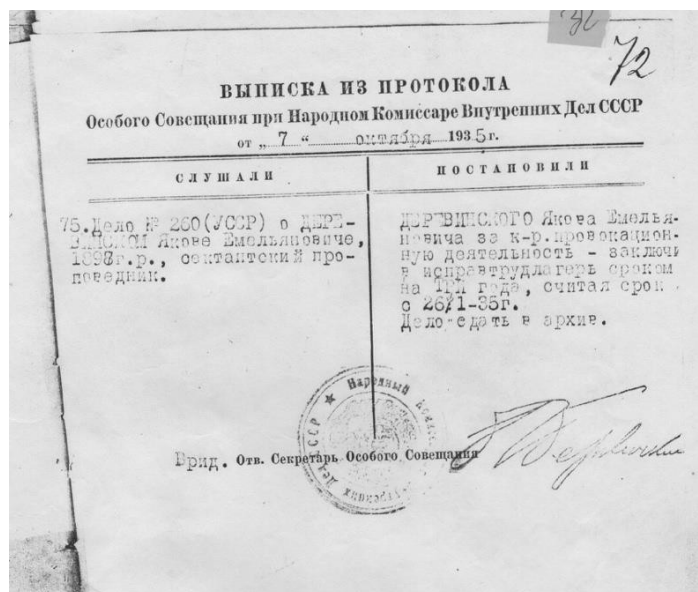


Fig. 3. Extract from the protocol on the conclusion of Yakov Derevinsky to a labor camp

Since 1935, Yakov Derevinsky served a sentence in forced labor camps in Karelia. By the decision of the "troika" of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Karelian Republic of 20.09.1937, Yakov Derevinsky was sentenced to death by shooting, which was carried out on 04.10.1937 near Kem. In the summer of 1937, the family received the last letter. To an inquiry about the prisoner's condition in May 1938, an answer was received that Yakov Derevinsky was "convicted a second time and deprived of correspondence".

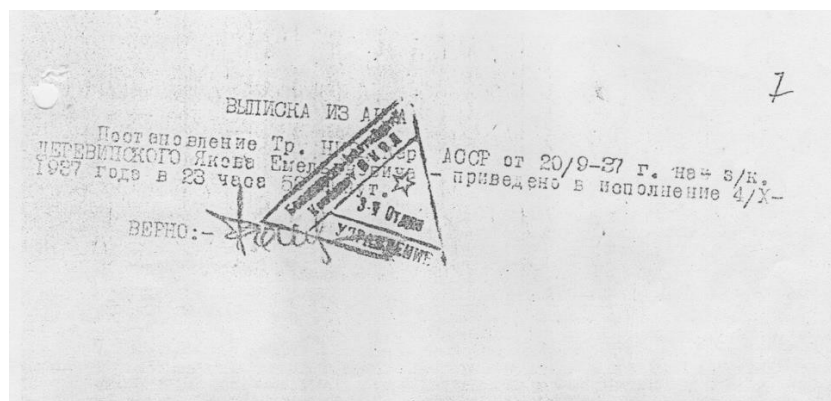


Fig. 4. Extract on the execution of the sentence on the execution of Yakov Derevinsky

The Great Terror and the "Little Men"

This brief sketch of the life and death of Yakov Derevinsky reflects a typical faith of religious leaders and believers in the times of the "Great Terror" which was an attempt to completely erase the past and build a completely "new communist world." French historian,

Pierre Nora, the author of the concept of the "places of memory," meditating upon similar post-revolutionary events in French history, noticed that the revolution resulted in two important things, firstly, "... a gap in the temporal continuity of the nation, which completely rejected the past under a common name of the Old Order"; and secondly, "a break in the very principle of collective identity took place, which introduced the bacillus of conflict, discord, and even civil war into the national body."¹⁹ Undoubtedly, the Soviet society also experienced a similar infection with the "bacillus of the conflict."

Due to the conflict artificially created by the authorities, the persecution of the church in the Soviet Union began from the very first years of the emergence of the Bolshevik state. Repressions, and a war against the people, reached their peak during the aforementioned "Great Terror" in 1937, affecting without exception all social groups, clergy of various religious denominations included. Despite many works written about the Great Terror, the "small" movements and churches, their leaders, they remain in the shadows. At best, their history is concealed by the shadow of the dominant church, so the repressions of Protestant churches' members are reported in the general statistics of convicts for religious views. This approach significantly distorts the scale of the phenomenon. Very often, as in the case of our heroes, religious figures were artificially "sewn" on political accusations, espionage, terrorist activities, which transferred them into the category of so-called "political bandits." For example, the minister of the church Yakov Derevinsky was accused of espionage under Art. 54-6 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and repressed by the Special Meeting at the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR dated 07.10.1935 (Fig. 3). In the extract from the minutes of the Troika's meeting dated September 20, 1937, by whose resolution he was sentenced to death, one can read that Yakov Derevinskiy was convicted of ties with the Czech "terrorist" Ganesh and the counter-revolutionary activities (Fig. 5)

¹⁹ Нора et al., *Франция-память*, 7.

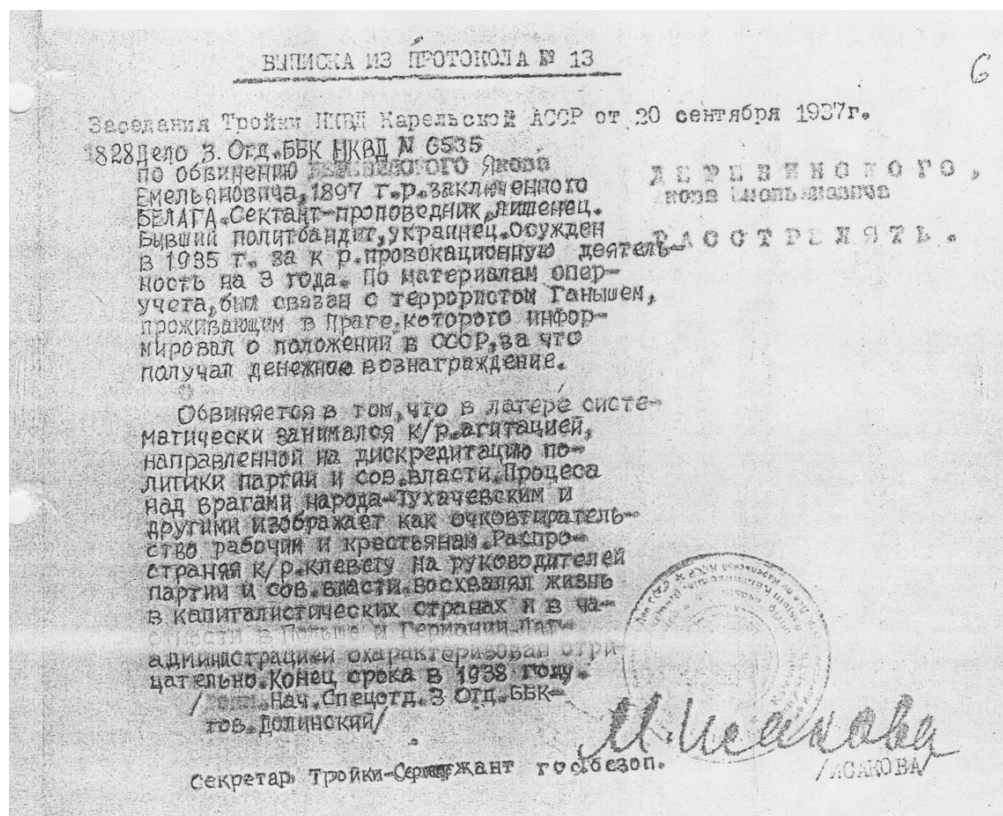


Fig. 5. Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the NKVD troika of the Karelian ASSR №13

This practice was very common for the freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion was declared in the constitution of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic of 1918 and 1936. Moreover, the condemnation of religious leaders under articles related to "political banditry" led to a shift in the accents of the perception of repressions by society, inclined to sympathize with the convict for religious views, but at the same time, categorically demanding the extermination of "politically unreliable," "spies," and all kinds of "pests" that hindered the construction of a "bright future." It is worth mentioning that in modern post-Soviet society, discussions often arise that repression and the fight against political opponents were a painful but necessary means of building a "new society." In addition, history textbooks and scholarly articles often mention repressions only casually or even try to justify them by showing their inevitability, arising from the peculiarities of the development of "revolutionary logic" or the psychology of the people. They tend to idealize the era and lead to the idea that repressions were justified and necessary since they contributed to the industrialization of the Soviet Union and its victory in World War II.²⁰ Vesenkiy, in his essay "The repressed will

²⁰ О. Кузьмина, ed., *История России: Учебное пособие для иностранных обучающихся* (СПб.: Университет ИТМО., 2016), <https://books.ifmo.ru/file/pdf/2011.pdf>. [O. Kuzmina, ed., *History of Russia: Textbook for foreign students* (St. Petersburg: ITMO University., 2016),]

never be rehabilitated ...” bitterly remarked: “In school textbooks, there is almost or simply nothing about this terrible period in our history ...”.²¹

The concealment of the scale of the repressions, as well as the attempt to shift the emphasis, contradicts the individual memory of those who survived this period. Here lies the foundations of conflict between historical memory, personally experienced, and official history. For, as we have already mentioned: "History is the delegitimization of the past experienced."²² This statement illustrates well the situation after the Bolshevik coup of 1917, when the authorities laid a rigid boundary between different social groups, proclaiming a significant part of the population as enemies and counterrevolutionaries. First of all, this was manifested in the Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of 1918, which in section four and article 65 defined the circle of persons who were deprived of voting rights: “They do not elect and cannot be elected, even if they belonged to one of the above categories: a) persons who resort to hired labor for the purpose of making a profit; b) persons living on unearned income, such as interest on capital, income from enterprises, income from property, etc. c) private traders, trade and commercial intermediaries; d) *monks and clergymen of churches and religious cults*; (accentuation is ours. – P.K., S.D); e) employees and agents of the former police, a special corps of gendarmes and security departments, as well as members of the royal house that reigned in Russia; f) persons recognized in accordance with the established procedure as mentally ill or insane, as well as persons under guardianship; g) persons convicted of mercenary and defamatory crimes for a period established by law or a court sentence.”²³

The Constitution clearly defined the "enemies of the working people" to which, along with criminals, the mentally ill, representatives of the police of the tsarist regime, belonged the ministers of churches. In the future, the category of citizens who will forcibly be exposed to marginalization will receive the derogatory name '*lishentsy*' – “disenfranchised.”

‘*Lishentsy*’ and Their Position within the State

Let us briefly outline the situation of those who fell into the category of disenfranchised. Modern historian Evgeniya Goryunova quite rightly stated that the creation of such a category

²¹ В. Весенкий, “Репрессированных реабилитировать не удастся никогда...,” *Литературная газета*, November 3, 1999. [V. Vesenkiy, “The repressed will never be rehabilitated...,” *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, November 3, 1999.]

²² П. Нора, “Между памятью и историей. Проблематика мест памяти,” in *Франция - память*, 20–21.

²³ Ю. Кукушкин and О. Чистяков, *Очерк истории Советской Конституции* (Москва: Политиздат, 1987), 256-257. [Yu. Kukushkin and O. Chistyakov, *Essay on the history of the Soviet Constitution* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), 256-257.]

as the disenfranchised became "one of the first manifestations of massive political repression against a certain category of the population".²⁴ However, the main goal of such stratification of society was undoubtedly an attempt to create a situation in which "the revolution could define its friends and enemies."²⁵ In the *Book of Memory*, the authors cite terrible statistics, claiming that after the adoption of the first Constitution by the Fifth Congress of Soviets in July 1918, about 20% of the population lost their voting rights.²⁶ The procedure for enrolling in the "disenfranchised," in addition to the obvious enemies of the authorities, "... developed based on the logic of revolutionary 'legality' punished those who were pointed to by the 'arrow of the compass of proletarian vigilance.'"²⁷

The matter was done quickly, decisively, without "petty-bourgeois hesitation."²⁸ True, according to the official data of the 1926 census, out of almost 147 million citizens of the RSFSR more than a million people (1,040,894 people) belonged in the category of "disenfranchised," whom "the revolution determined as its enemies." Only heads of families were counted here. This number, as we will see later, was much higher. The practice of dividing society into "friends" and "enemies" enshrined in the Constitution has revealed a tendency towards rapid growth. In just three years, the category of disenfranchised people increased more than three times to 3,716,855 in 1929. Judging by the data given by the researcher Sergey Krasilnikov, 282,835 clergymen were included in the category of disenfranchised in 1929.²⁹

One should keep in mind that in addition to the repressed heads of families for almost two decades of the existence of the category of "disenfranchised" (1918-1936), discrimination hit all family members, who also lost their jobs, right to education, livelihoods, and minimal comfort. Pavel Derevinsky recalls a striking incident:

At the beginning of 1935, the Boguslav community³⁰ was closed and all its members moved to an illegal position, to house churches. So far everything was quiet and calm,

²⁴ Е. Горюнова, "Начало массовых политических репрессий в крымской деревне в 20-х годах XX века," *Культура народов Причерноморья*, no. 31 (2002): 88. [E. Goryunova, "The Beginning of Mass Political Repressions in the Crimean Village in the 1920s," *Culture of the Peoples of the Black Sea Region*, no. 31 (2002): 88.]

²⁵ Г. Стародубець and В. Стародубець, "Позбавленці" в соціальній структурі радянського села 1920-х років," *Наукові записки ВДПУ ім. М.М. Коцюбинського. Серія: Історія*, no. 27 (2019): 19. [G. Starodubets and V. Starodubets, 'Deprived' in the social structure of the Soviet village in the 1920s, "Scientific notes of the VSPU named after M.M. Kotsyubynsky. Series: History, no. 27 (2019): 19.]

²⁶ В. Кириллов, *Книга памяти* (Екатеринбург: УИФ "Наука," 1994), 24. [V. Kirillov, *Book of Memory* (Ekaterinburg: UIF "Nauka," 1994), 24.]

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 24.

²⁹ С. Красильников, *На изломах социальной структуры. Маргиналы в послереволюционном российском обществе (1917 - конец 1930-х гг.)* (Новосибирск: Новосибирск. гос. ун-т., 1998), 15. [S. Krasilnikov, *At the breaks of the social structure. Outcasts in post-revolutionary Russian society (1917 - late 1930s)* (Novosibirsk: Novosibirsk State University, 1998), 15.]

³⁰ Boguslav, a city in the Kiev region of Ukraine. Included in the Obukhov district.

but in the first ten days of January, during the Christmas holidays, one evening the lights suddenly went out. My father went out into the yard and saw an electrician coming down from the post. He asked him "Why did the light go out?" The electrician replied that there was an order for the energy sales office, that the "disenfranchised" were forbidden to use electricity, therefore they cut off the electricity supply. And we lit the miracle kerosene lamp. It was still possible to put up with this, and with the fact that "house churches" began to be held. So, we spent three Saturdays at home church.³¹

Discriminatory measures towards '*lishentsy*' manifested themselves in various forms and concerned not only heads of families. "... The deprivation of rights extended to all family members of a clergyman, that is, wife and children."³² Pavel Yakovich gives an example of how his mother, being the wife of a "dispossessed," had no right to get a job anywhere. But at the same time, she was admitted to the school of cutting and sewing. This seemed to be an ordinary fact that caused Pavel Derevinsky's surprise even after many years: "How her father put her in this school, no one knew, not even the mother herself; even though she had completed the entire course of study, [she] did not know how she got into this school."³³ She graduated from school and even with honors, "... but she did not receive the graduation document since the wife of the "'disenfranchised'" "is a clergyman".³⁴ This was part of a general strategy to inflict maximum moral and material damage on the disenfranchised since without receiving a document, a person could not apply for a job.

The growth of the number of the discriminated was closely intertwined with the intensification of the anti-religious struggle. In May 1929, the XIV All-Russian Congress of Soviets of the RSFSR, known for its anti-church orientation, took place. The provision on freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda was removed from the fourth article of the Constitution and the concept of "freedom of religious confessions" was introduced. In the conditions of the formation of totalitarianism, this innovation gave an unlimited opportunity for atheists to criticize the Church, but, at the same time, the Church was constitutionally prohibited from criticizing atheism. At the same XIV Congress, the command was given to categorically fight against two main enemies – churches and religions.³⁵

Given the increase in the intensity of anti-religious propaganda, the living conditions of the disenfranchised have catastrophically worsened. Amongst the discriminatory measures, one can mention the possibility of dismissing a disenfranchised person as unreliable; higher

³¹ Деревинский, Мемуары. 19.

³² Ibid., 3.

³³ Ibid., 4.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ XIV Всероссийский съезд Советов РСФСР. Бюллетень, vol. 12, 1929, 24. [XIV All-Russian Congress of Soviets of the RSFSR. Bulletin, vol. 12, 1929, 24.]

taxes designed for them, and special ones (like the military) were assigned since the children of the disenfranchised were not drafted into the cadre of the Red Army. The children of "disenfranchised" were subject to expulsion from the senior classes of secondary schools, technical schools, and universities. They, too, were expelled from cooperatives, which, under the conditions of the card system of 1929-1935, automatically deprived them of the opportunity to receive goods and food. And last, they could be evicted from apartments and large cities.³⁶ The situation of the disenfranchised worsened even more in 1933 during *Holodomor*—the artificially created famine recognized now as a genocide of Ukrainians. Pavel Derevinsky, recalling those events, briefly says that "With God's help, we also survived this difficult year, although not without losses."³⁷

Analyzing the economic and social situation of the disenfranchised, S. A. Krasilnikov notes that people deprived of "civil rights became pariahs of society. They were barely able to support their existence, suffering from scarcity of bread and water. In personal affairs of the disenfranchised, there are screaming appeals out of despair, where people begged to give them any job so that they do not starve to death. However, the disenfranchised could not get a permanent job, nor often a permanent place of residence. The circle was closed. Such people have always been suspicious. That is why they were the first to become victims of the 1934-1938 repression."³⁸

The family members of the "disenfranchised" and the repressed faced the most difficult choice: to stay in the family or to abandon it and thereby, at least slightly improve their situation. Thus, the authorities artificially provoked conflict and a gap between spouses and between generations. Remembering this Pavel Derevinsky wrote: "Although some [repressed preachers] returned, either they did not find their families, or their families were in a dilapidated state. Rarely did anyone find a family alive. Some of the families perished, and some stalled like grain caught in the thorns of life, disappeared after such experiences."³⁹

³⁶ С. А. Красилышков, *Сerp и Молох. Крестьянская ссылка в Западной Сибири в 1930-е годы* (Москва: "Российская политическая энциклопедия" (РОССПЭН), 2003), 117, https://nkvd.tomsk.ru/content/editor/PUBLIKACII/Monografii/Sergej-Krasilnikov-Serp-i-moloh_compressed.pdf. [S. A. Krasilyshkov, *Sickle and Moloch. Peasant exile in Western Siberia in the 1930s* (Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopedia (ROSSPEN), 2003), 117]

³⁷ Деревинский, *Мемуары*, 17.

³⁸ Кириллов, *Книга памяти*, 30–31.

³⁹ Деревинский, *Мемуары*. 25.

Making Sense of Suffering: Derevinskiy on His Experiences

Struggle for survival and political injustices in the eyes of Pavel Derevinsky does not acquire a tragic tint, rather the opposite: "As for difficulties, our family was accustomed to them, put up with them and did not file any complaints about them ... at that time there were people who lived in much worse conditions." ⁴⁰ Then he points out that the oppression only strengthened the ministers and the church as a whole: "Well, if you look at it from the spiritual side, then the father was devoted to the cause of God; working spiritually, I understood that a minister of the Church of God is a warrior of God who must endure all the hardships of everyday life. He tried to follow this himself, in the way he raised his family and taught the people. They did not chase after wealth, but lived an exemplary, modest Christian life, drawing examples from the Word of God, as the Apostle Paul said: "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" (Acts 20:24)." ⁴¹

Numerous reminiscences and references to biblical texts, moderate moralizing, all these points to the author, for whom memories (memory) are a way of preserving and transmitting culture in time to construct the future. Concern for the future of the church prompted to turn to the past and become a link with the future. As Pierre Nora ⁴² very accurately remarked: "Indeed, the idea that any nation, group, the family had about its future dictated to it that it must withhold from the past to prepare this future; this was precisely the meaning of the present, which was only a connecting thread." ⁴³ Awareness of the importance of experiences in constructing the future of the church runs like a red thread through the memoirs. For example, the author states,

[I]t would be nice to find and collect materials from the life of work and everyday life of our preachers in the past difficult times, [to know better] how they lived and worked in the God's field. This will provide a good introduction to church members and young workers. True, there are already some books, such as "On the Thorny Path" by Pavel and Anna Matsanov, as well as "Remember your mentors" by Nikolay Zhukalyuk; "Poor, Thrown by the Tempest" by Nikolay Zhukalyuk and Aleksandr Paraseya. These are wonderful books, but there is little in them of materials about our preachers who gave their lives in a difficult field, working in the God's field! ... Therefore, I think that it would be good if our veteran preachers also remembered their past labors and submitted materials to the general history of the Church. There would be several volumes" ⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Pierre Nora (fr. Pierre Nora; born November 17, 1931, Paris) is a French historian, author of the concept of "places of memory". President of the Association "For Freedom of History". Researcher of historical memory. Known for the monumental edition of "Places of Memory" (Les Lieux de mémoire).

⁴³ П. Нора, "Всемирное торжество памяти," *Журнальный зал*, 2005, <https://magazines.gorky.media/nz/2005/2/vsemirnoe-torzhestvo-pamyati.html>. [P. Nora, "Global celebration of memory," Journal Hall, 2005]

⁴⁴ Деревинский, *Мемуары*. 7.

Pointing to the importance of such recollections, he, after the emotional phrase “But you still need it.”⁴⁵ refers to an important argument: “After all, even in eternity, they will remember the great struggle with evil. Isaiah 33:18: “You will think back to this time of terror, asking, “Where are the Assyrian officers who counted our towers? Where are the bookkeepers who recorded the plunder taken from our fallen city?”⁴⁶

The author puts all the stories into his conclusions, reflections, and edifications, understanding and hoping that the “Memoirs” will be sure to be read. As it was aptly noted: “No one would ever write his notes if he was not convinced that not only during his lifetime but also after his death, someone will read or see them”⁴⁷ Seems that Derevinskiy was also aware of his future audience for he used verbs and pronoun in the first-person plural. This is how the author, built a special communicative space with readers, which allowed him to get closer to the audience and created a sense of collective identity. For example, he stated that “We must strengthen our faith by showing participation in the preaching of the Gospel”⁴⁸ or “We are indebted to continue their spiritual work.”⁴⁹ and even more “And we took it [the cross] and carried it our whole life.”⁵⁰ or “This is also what our fathers preached, to whom we are indebted to continue their spiritual work.”⁵¹ He goes on later with “... we should also not forget the instructions”⁵² He shows us “... what we need to do to be successful in continuing the work begun by the church of God, in which our forefathers and fathers participated to bring the work of God to the end.”⁵³ “He sends us all to invite people to the wedding feast ”⁵⁴ Such inclusivity not only grants the cooperation between the author and the reader but also allows us to actualize the past.

Another strategy was to make comparisons between the church members of past and present and highlight the similarity of their tasks. For example, “Today the church members and ministers face the same task, or maybe the lack of time even doubles this task set by Jesus Christ Himself.”⁵⁵ These statements intended to emphasize another facet of collective identity. Here one can recall the research of William Sumner on the nature of social groups and conflicts

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.,

⁴⁷ А. Тартаковский, *Русская мемуаристика XVIII — первой половины XIX века : От рукописи к книге* (Москва: Наука, 1991), 14. [A. Tartakovskiy, *Russian memoirs of the 18th - first half of the 19th century: From a manuscript to a book* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 14.]

⁴⁸ Деревинский, *Мемуары*. 39.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 45.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁵¹ Ibid., 45.

⁵² Ibid., 43.

⁵³ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

between them. Sumner uses the term "we-group," which can be successfully applied in our case. According to Sumner, "the constant danger of war with strangers is what unites the members of the we-group from within and does not allow disagreements to develop in it that would weaken it"⁵⁶

The use of biblical phrases and metaphors, in fact, also highlights the main features of collective identity and factors of the organizing center "we-group". This is the "Banner" (truth) and a common "enemy" (sin) that is to fight. Here are a few quotes that support our statement "... this is the Banner that inspired all the faithful servants of Christ to serve God, to fight against sin,"⁵⁷ "this relay race - the banner of God's truth reached and was passed into the hands of our grandfathers, fathers, brothers, sisters, mothers, who did not hide it, but carried it on"; "The banner of the Church of God has been passed on to the present generation by the relay race, it has been handed over to reliable hands. And now it inspires the faithful children of God to preach the Gospel, which was once commissioned by Jesus Christ."⁵⁸

Similar authors' references to the origins of the church and the incorporation into its centuries-old history of the names of church members and pastors who were shot during the repressions (V.S.Dyman, Y.K. Reimar, S. Belmesenko, A.K. Reza-Golubovich, E Klyuvak, Kuzemko, Gutnik), help to accept the loss by focusing on maintaining the tradition of protecting the faith. They also drive the construction of the collective identity. As Jan Assman aptly put it, the collective identity in many respects "depends on how much it is alive in the minds of group members and can motivate [highlighted by us] their thinking and activity."⁵⁹

In his eyes, the Memoir's idea of a common past is of fundamental importance for community cohesion and motivation: "Now, seeing everything that happens in reality and remembering their faith, we must strengthen our faith, showing participation in the preaching of the Gospel."⁶⁰ For Pavel Derevinsky, traumatic pages of history are significant events that serve as an example of resilience and a guideline for imitation: "The work of the Church of God today shows that their faith reached its goal, for it was strong and [stemmed] from a pure

⁵⁶ У. Г. Самнер, *Народные обычаи. Исследование социологического значения обычаев, манер, привычек, нравов и этики*, trans. М. Добрякова (Dover, Inc, 1959), 17, <http://ecsocman.hse.ru/data/238/114/1217/RUBEV12x20-x200010-32.pdf>. [W. G. Sumner, *Folk Customs. An inquiry into the sociological significance of customs, manners, habits, mores and ethics*, trans. M. Dobryakova (Dover, Inc, 1959), 17]

⁵⁷ Деревинский, *Мемуары*. 38.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Я. Ассман, *Культурная память, письмо, память о прошлом и политическая идентичность в высоких культурах древности* (Москва: Языки славянской культуры, 2004), 142. [Ya. Assman, *Cultural memory, writing, memory of the past and political identity in the high cultures of antiquity* (Moscow: Languages of Slavic Culture, 2004), 142.]

⁶⁰ Деревинский, *Мемуары*. 39.

heart. Their prayers were sincere, full of a doubtless faith that the Lord heard them in different life circumstances. And their life passed in different conditions; thus, only prayers gave them relief for the soul, wherever they were. They were scattered in different places. Some were in hard labor, some in torment and suffering, others in solitary confinement in prisons, and others in front of the barrel of a weapon – the dying minutes of life. But all of them were guided by strong faith, hope, and love for God that He would not leave in desolation and would bring His righteousness into the light so that many people could repent and be saved."⁶¹ Here we see a convinced person, in whose eyes torment gives meaning to faith. Suffering itself fits into the context of the life of the church and works as its indispensable component, along with patience. Moreover, sufferings become evidence of the truth of the chosen path. The creation of meaning from trauma ultimately leads to a new awareness of a separate, personal story as an organic part of the history of the whole movement, where events, traumatic in nature, unite group members and lead to the creation of a collective identity.

Conclusions

Summing up, we can say that the “memorial turn” inherent to the new historical science allowed scholars to shift the research focus from the “major” events and personalities to the memory of the past of separate “small” individuals or minor social groups. This essay attempted addressing the history of those whose voices have been suppressed for a long time. We believe that such studies are especially relevant for post-Soviet countries, where previously banned religious movements finally were allowed to research and recreate their history.

Memoirs become key sources for such attempts. The memoirs of Pavlo Derevinsky show how a reconstruction of personal history is transformed into the history of the church and becomes an instrument for strengthening collective identity. We are aware that working with a corpus of sources of personal origin has its pros and cons for the memoirist conveys facts extremely subjectively, through the “lenses” of his own experience. However, the author’s personal experience, his/her worldview, subjective assessments, reflections, emotions – all this constitutes a “different look” at well-known events, which turns the historical grand narrative into polyphony.

Of course, the topic of repression is not novel, and at the first sight has been sufficiently explored by fellow historians. However, the history of non-mainstream movements and

⁶¹ Ibid.

churches remains marginalized or even distorted for convicted religious figures were often repressed with political accusations, as Yakov Derevinsky, who was convicted of having links with a Czech “terrorist”.

We drew attention to the [debatable] idea of Pierre Nora that history produces destructive criticism directed against memory and that history tries to de-legitimize the past experienced. In this case, memoirs become a tool for recreating their history for those who were deprived of it. The author of the treatise managed to go beyond the mere biography sketch and created a space for a common past. The memoir treatise by Pavlo Derevinsky is a result of the author's reflections on his own childhood memories and experience as an adult under a totalitarian regime. The fate of the repressed father, presented as part of the narrative of the history of the church, served to strengthen the collective memory, without which the progressive development of a separate religious movement is difficult to conceive. At the same time, it proves to be an example of the democratization of history and an experience of creating a “different” history. In its turn, the struggle to reconstruct one's past and one's history shows collective and religious identity in making.

Writing these memoirs was crucial in overcoming personal trauma. The author created a historical narrative through which the experience of the past, recorded in memory in the form of fragmented traumatic events, received certain integrity. Within the framework of this integrity, tragic events acquired meaning and became a motivating factor for the modern church. A sociolinguistic analysis of the memoir showed the use of special linguistic constructions to create the necessary communication with readers and, as a result, a sense of collective identity.

The memoirs, too, provide an opportunity to look differently at the problem of religious and collective identity, often limited to the following pre-scripted lenses: via preservation of traditions, religious symbolism, dogma, norms, or teachings. The memoirs, however, became an important tool for creating a collective identity based on a common traumatic story, which, due to the author's constant parallels between the past and the present, created a special feeling of community. Thus, belonging to common history, gives, too, an awareness of belonging to a certain group, nation, and country.

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