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Oksana Vysoven

Olga Shkolna

Alina Zadorozhnya

Yuriy Figurnyi

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# USE OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE AFFAIRS OF RELIGIOUS CULTS BY THE TOTALITARIAN REGIME TO FIGHT AGAINST PROTESTANT COMMUNITIES IN UKRAINE

By Oksana Vysoven, Olga Shkolna, Alina Zadorozhnya, Yurii Fihurnyi

**Oksana Vysoven**, Doctor of Historical Sciences (Dr. Hab. in History), Associate Professor of the Department of History and Culture of Ukraine and Special Historical Disciplines, Hryhoriy Skovoroda University in Pereyaslav, Pereyaslav, Ukraine.

Email: [vysoven.oxsana@gmail.com](mailto:vysoven.oxsana@gmail.com)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0061-2301>

**Olga Shkolna**, Doctor of Art History (Dr. Hab. in Art History), Professor, Head of the Department of Fine Arts, Borys Grinchenko Metropolitan Kyiv University, Kyiv, Ukraine.

E-mail: [dushaorchidei@ukr.net](mailto:dushaorchidei@ukr.net)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7245-6010>

**Alina Zadorozhnya**, Candidate of Historical Sciences (Ph. D. in History), Senior Researcher, Chief Custodian of the Funds of the National Historical and Ethnographic Reserve “Pereyaslav,” Pereyaslav, Ukraine.

E-mail: [alina0906@ukr.net](mailto:alina0906@ukr.net)

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9537-9054>

**Yurii Fihurnyi**, Candidate of Historical Sciences (Ph. D. in History), Senior Researcher, Senior Researcher of the Department of Ethnology and History of Ukraine, Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, Kyiv, Ukraine.

E-mail: [ukr.etnolog\\_fus@ukr.net](mailto:ukr.etnolog_fus@ukr.net)

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6463-0920>

## Abstract

The article analyzes the use of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults in the fight against Protestant communities in Ukraine by the totalitarian government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In the 1940s, the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults, created by the order of J. Stalin, directed all of its activities to the unification of Protestant communities and their comprehensive subordination to the totalitarian government. In the 1950s and 1960s the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults continued to successfully perform the registration, control, punitive, and repressive functions towards Protestant communities in Ukraine and practiced systematic control of prayer meetings of believers, religious practices, rites, etc. The employees of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults brusquely disrupted marriage and funeral ceremonies and gave instructions regarding the repertoire of wedding songs, funeral services, and leisure of believers of Protestant communities. In the 1970s the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults carried out active preventive and repressive actions against Protestant communities, paying special attention to unregistered communities and their leaders. In the 1980s the role of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults was gradually neutralized as the Soviet totalitarian system began to degrade and lose its repressive potential; therefore, the decisions of the Communist Party and Soviet bodies were implemented formally and nominally.

**Keywords:** Ukraine, Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults, Protestant communities, Evangelical Baptist Christians, the USSR, Ukrainian SSR, totalitarian government, repressions.

## **Introduction**

For about 70 years in the Soviet Union, there were attempts to eliminate faith in God and instead force people to believe in the Communist Party and its ideals. God was to be replaced by the main Communist boss, initially, it was Volodymyr Lenin, then Joseph Stalin and other successors. Ukraine, which at that time was part of the USSR, experienced many terrible trials. The totalitarian government exerted a great deal of repressive pressure on believers, and in particular, on Protestant communities, attempting to turn them away from God and liquidate their organizational structures. However, despite the intense pressure and repression, faith in God remained intact, and the USSR collapsed.

It seemed that these events were already a distant past, and only scientists continued to be interested in it. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, the Russian authorities, represented by its leader, Vladimir Putin, for whom the collapse of the USSR became the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 21st century, decided to restore the USSR 2.0. For the sake of this imperial goal, the Russian Federation has attacked Ukraine and is trying to liquidate the Ukrainian state and political nation and revive the Soviet Union. It is the third year already, Ukraine is defending its statehood, destroying the attackers, and aiming towards victory with the support of a coalition of democratic partner countries led by the USA.

It is necessary to know the history of Ukraine well in order to not repeat our own mistakes and learn from others' mistakes. Belief in God teaches not only to be merciful and humane, but also helps believers to be true citizens and patriots; to love and protect the homeland from attackers, and to educate the younger generation to respect Christian and universal human values. Therefore, by studying the repressive measures of the communist government against the Protestant communities in Ukraine, we thus can point to instances in the past that will help the citizens of the Ukrainian state to counter the Russian information aggressive propaganda, which, using all its powerful resources, praises the USSR in every possible way and suppresses the truth about repression, terror, and millions of murdered people.

## **Creation and Activity of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults in the 1940s.**

The Second World War was a great challenge for the communist government. Only a rigid vertical hierarchy of power, a powerful repressive mechanism, enormous human potential, the mobilization of all resources, and the active assistance of the USA and other allies helped the USSR to withstand the struggle against Nazi Germany. The comprehensive involvement of religious organizations, including Protestant communities, was also of great

importance in this systemic mobilization policy. At the same time, the Soviet government was afraid of the revival, strengthening, and spread of the Christian religion in society, so the communists tried to control totally their activities and number.

It was for this purpose that in 1944 the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults was created at the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (hereinafter the CARC). This allowed Stalin's regime to not only use special repressive bodies, at the beginning the Ministry of State Security (hereinafter referred to as the MGB), then the Committee for State Security (hereinafter referred to as the KGB), but also to use legal structures that specially dealt with religious issues and totally controlled religious communities.<sup>1</sup>

Stalin also tried to demonstrate to the allies, especially the US leadership, that the Soviet government terminated repressions against believers and started to legally negotiate with them. Such a political gesture made by J. Stalin eventually popularized his image among left-wing political forces in the US, but all of this was just hoax. The CARC was not a political body genuinely able to function, but a Soviet simulacrum, a cover for the activities of special repressive bodies of the USSR in relation to believers.

As archival documents testify, the CARC performed not only a supervisory and registering function, but also a controlling, punitive, and repressive one. The duties of CARC representatives include enforcing control over religious communities in the regions and, if necessary, visits to the locality to clarify the circumstances. In the information report on the work of the Representative of the CARC at Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereinafter CM USSR) in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (hereinafter Ukrainian SSR) for April-July 1948, it was indicated that the CARC should first of all send its leaders and workers to Zakarpattia, Chernivtsi, Kamianets-Podilsk, Stalinsk, and Dnipropetrovsk regions with the aim of uniting communities of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) with Evangelical Christians-Baptists.<sup>2</sup>

After the government backed All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (hereafter AUCECB) was created in 1945, the main task of the CARC was to unify all

<sup>1</sup> Комитет государственной безопасности Украинской ССР. 10 отдел. Тематический перечень документальных материалов оперативного архива КГБ УССР на лиц, проводивших антисоветскую деятельность, маскирующую религиозной догматикой и исполнением религиозных обрядов. ГДА СБУ. Ф. 1. 3. Оп. 1. Д. 511. Л. 5. [State Security Committee of the Ukrainian SSR. 10 department Thematic list of documentary materials of the operational archive of the SSC (KGB) of the Ukrainian SSR on persons who conducted anti-Soviet activities masked by religious dogma and the performance of religious rites. SSA SSU. F. 1. 3. I. 1. Case. 511, p. 5].

<sup>2</sup> МГБ – УССР Отдел «О» Отчеты уполномоченного по делам религиозных культов (1948-1949 гг.) ГДА СБУ. Ф. 2. Оп. 4. Д. 14. Л. 4. [Ministry of State Security – Ukrainian SSR Department "O" Reports of the Commissioner for Affairs of Religious Cults (1948-1949) SSA SSU F. 2. 4. I. 4. Case. 14, p. 4].

Protestant communities in order to control them more effectively. For this purpose, meetings were constantly convened where the situation around this issue was discussed and ways to merge as soon as possible the religious communities of the Christians of the Evangelical Faith (hereinafter CEF) with the Evangelical Christian Baptists (hereinafter ECB). This was done to prevent the activities of illegal communities that were not controlled by state religious institutions and state security agencies. Thus, thanks to the security agencies, the CARC managed to prevent an underground Pentecostal congress in the city of Dniprodzerzhinsk.<sup>3</sup>

In order to unite the illegal communities of the CEF with the ECB of the CARC, senior clergy were sent to the region where there were problem communities of the CEF. These regions consisted of Lviv, Rivne, and Ternopil, where Ponomarchuk, the assistant of the senior presbyter of the ECB in the Ukrainian SSR went. To Chernivtsi and Kamianets-Podilsk regions went Patkovskiy, the assistant of the senior presbyter of the ECB in the Ukrainian SSR while Mitskievich, the executive secretary of the senior presbyter of the ECB in the Ukrainian SSR, went to Stalinsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Voroshilovgrad regions. These measures accelerated the liquidation of the remnants of some of the groups of Pentecostals.<sup>4</sup>

Representatives of the CARC, having broad powers, used rudeness in administering the believers. For example, F.T. Prokopenko, representative in the Volyn region, in his practical work with believers, used administrative coercive methods and began massively to close their communities.<sup>5</sup> P.T. Serdiuchenko, the authorized representative of the CARC, received practical instructions from the CARC regarding the study of the situation and the closure of some religious communities in the Kamianets-Podilsk region. From the first steps of his practical work on cults in an entrusted region, he took a prosecutorial approach in relations with religious figures. He used such harsh administrative methods that he was summoned to the CARC to report on his work. He was given detailed explanations and instructions on all work issues. The leaders of the CARC believed that the policy of greater tolerance should be followed because one cannot expect the rapid extinction of religion in the regions<sup>6</sup>

A similar situation in relations with believers was recorded in the work of Zaretskyi (Cherkasy district) with the leaders of religious communities, such as the assistant of the representative of religious community of the Seventh Day Adventists (hereinafter SDA)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

Bondar, and with Linyvyi, the former senior presbyter of the Kyiv region, as well as with Kaliuzhnyi, the presbyter of the Zhashkiv community of the ECB.<sup>7</sup>

In the information report on the work of the representative for Religious Cults under the Council of Ministers of the USSR in the Ukrainian SSR for October-December 1948, it is stated that the most important tasks of the government regarding religious cults was completed during that year. On a daily basis quantitative reduction of religious communities and the closing of prayer houses was achieved. Permanent supervision of the activities of religious communities; systematic reception of the leadership of the spiritual centers of the ECB, SDA, and others, as well as presbyters of the ECB regional centers for the purpose of constant supervision of the activities of religious cults was accomplished. They observed the decline and growth in religious activity and great attention was paid to revising the presbytery personnel, in particular regarding the removal of politically unreliable people from leadership.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the report also indicated the achievements of practical work with religious cults during the year, which was noted in the following manifestations: the attempts to limit and implement missionary work by religious communities (in the Kharkiv, Stalin, Kamianets-Podilskyi, and Voroshilovgrad regions), and in limiting the activity of sectarians regarding organizational strengthening of grassroots communities and strengthening of religious propaganda among the population, especially young people (Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk). A case of gross violations of the legislation on cults by senior presbyters of the ECB (Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Kirovohrad, Zhytomyr) was noted as was the distribution of politically hostile religious literature in some religious communities of the ECB (Zhytomyr region).<sup>9</sup>

The work of the CARC in only one year brought significant results, such as a decrease in both the number of the ECB communities and the number of its leaders. In particular, on January 1, 1948, there were 1,832 communities, on January 1, 1949, there were 1,638; Accordingly, there 26 senior presbyters were reduced to 25, 1,204 presbyters became 1,167. The 433 executive secretaries became 370, the 367 deacons became 360 and the 77 regents became 69. It was concluded that a decrease in both the number of communities and cult clergy took place.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-36.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> МГБ – УССР Отдел «О» Отчеты уполномоченного по делам религиозных культов (1948-1949 гг.) ГДА СБУ. Ф. 2. Оп. 4. Д. 14. Л. 36. [Ministry of State Security – Ukrainian SSR Department "O" Reports of the Commissioner for Affairs of Religious Cults (1948-1949) SSA SSU F. 2. 4. I. 4. Case 14, p. 36].

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

The CARC performed its main task perfectly and systematically. For a variety of reasons, it closed religious communities of the ECB and dismissed senior presbyters and executive secretaries. Politically disloyal senior presbyters were replaced by loyal ones, who in turn interfered in the internal affairs of local communities and determined who would be a deacon or a regent.

As noted in the report of the representative P. Vilkhovyi, the decrease in the number of religious communities was the result of daily work on the dissolution and liquidation of communities and the poor connection of small territorially distant from each other. As a result, a significant number of the cult leaders were left without communities.<sup>11</sup> According to archival information, with the assistance of the CARC, from 1945 until the end of J. Stalin's rule, namely until March 1953, not a single prayer house was officially opened, but thousands were closed.<sup>12</sup>

The policy of the CARC was aimed at cultivating in presbyters such features that would correspond to implementing the instructions of the Soviet and party bodies. As recorded in the documents, the check on the loyalty of the CARC totalitarian government of the presbyters contributed to the fact that the pro-government presbyters began to involve ordinary believers in the work on the collective farm, even on Sundays. In particular, Synelnikov, the presbyter of the Vovchan community of ECB, and Korchevskyi, the presbyter of the Dnipropetrovsk region, who was an assistant of the field brigade of the collective farm (kolkhoz), sent all the believers, who had gathered for the prayer meeting, to work on Sundays at the collective farm, so that there were no days off for the collective farm workers, with the following words: "Don't you know where your place is today, you will always have time to pray, and work is not waiting for us, go to work!"<sup>13</sup> In a private conversation with the representative of the CARC, Korchevskyi stated: "We worked honestly in the collective farm, that's why we are respected, and we earned good money this year: we got enough bread for two years, and we stuffed everyone with vegetables."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> Переписка с уполномоченным Совета по Запорожской и Закарпатской, Измаильской и Киевской областей Украинской ССР по вопросам снятия с регистрации и закрытия молитвенных домов. Том II. (1949 г.). ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 2. Д. 71. Л. 172. [Correspondence with the representative of the Council for Zaporozhye and Zakarpattia, Izmail and of the Kiev Regions of the Ukrainian SSR on issues of deregistration and closure of prayer houses. Volume II. (1949). CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 2. p. 71. p. 172].

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>14</sup> МГБ – УССР Отдел «О» Отчеты уполномоченного по делам религиозных культов (1948-1949 гг.) ГДА СБУ. Ф. 2. Оп. 4. Д. 14. Л. 60. [Ministry of State Security – Ukrainian SSR Department "O" Reports of the Commissioner for Affairs of Religious Cults (1948-1949) SSA SSU F. 2. 4. I. 4. Case. 14. p. 60].

Representatives of the CARC collected information about exemplary senior presbyters of the ECB, who fulfilled all orders of the totalitarian government. For example, Melnikov, the senior presbyter of the ECB in the Dnipropetrovsk region, in connection with the questions from believers about the reasons why the collective farm did not give them a day off on Sundays for prayer (during the harvesting campaign), wrote and sent a special appeal to all believers that, first of all, it is necessary to fulfill a civic duty to the Soviet state, and then take care of one's personal needs.<sup>15</sup> This is also confirmed by a letter written by the ECB community of the Zhashkiv district of the Kyiv region, which was addressed to the senior presbyter of the Kyiv region, regarding their preparation for the Festival of the Harvest, in which it was noted that members of the Protestant community were announced in the prayer meeting that this year at the Festival of Harvest only those brothers and sisters who have spent this year in a pure and holy life, worked well in the collective farm and harvested collective farm sugar beets from the fields in a time manner, have the right to preach a sermon, are allowed to read an article from the "Brotherhood Bulletin" journal, or sing a solo or a duet.<sup>16</sup>

Officials of the CARC used all means to take advantage of the believers' honest attitude to work to strengthen their merciless exploitation in the collective farms. Senior presbyters, having received methodical instructions from authorized officials, even on religious holidays, in particular the Festival of Harvest, dedicated to harvesting, expressed gratitude from the pulpit to those brothers and sisters in faith who worked well on the collective farm. Another presbyter from announced the pulpit that the best milkmaid of the collective farm, named after Petrovskiy, would get a special thanks and the best bouquet of flowers, which is on the altar, and this grateful gesture and the Festival of Harvest holiday kindled in the community members the love of the Lord and love for collective farm work. Many brothers and sisters had to work like this during the next year as well, so they would be worthy participants of the collective farm feast on the next Festival of Harvest.<sup>17</sup>

In the post-war period, officials of the CARC kept under scrutiny those ECB communities whose presbyters did not want to be used as a tool of propaganda or punishment of believers. The authorized persons especially carefully monitored the activities of senior presbyters who, despite their prohibitions, tried to preach God's word among non-believers and young people. As noted in the report, there is an effort by community leaders to do missionary work among the population to attract new members to their ranks. In the statement

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 61.



of the assistant senior presbyter in the Chernivtsi region, Ponomarov, it was noted that the believers themselves are engaged in recruiting new members to the community, especially women in the villages who visit the apartments of non-believers and conduct talks with a man who drinks, smokes, lies, or goes to other women, but this is forbidden by God to the believers of the Protestant church.<sup>18</sup>

RSRK representatives accurately monitored the activity of community leaders. For doing missionary activities and organizing a youth club and youth choir through the spiritual center of the ECB, the senior presbyter Holik was dismissed from his post.<sup>19</sup> In October 1948, for the presence of young people at a prayer meeting in the village of The Ozeriaine community of Zboriv district of Ternopil region, the community was deregistered, and the presbyter was suspended from his post.<sup>20</sup>

Presbyters who conducted baptism ceremonies for new believers received the maximum punishments from the representatives. According to the law on religious cults, the day and time of the ceremony for baptism were established. All this had to be coordinated with the authorities, who set new obstacles for new believers. Even if they followed the instructions, the presbyters fell into disfavor with the CARC officials.

In one of the letters written by the presbyter of the Chuhuiv community ECB, Kryvosheiev, to the senior presbyter in the Ukrainian SSR Andreiev, who in turn directed it to the CARC, it was stated:

Dear brother Parchevskyi was invited for conducting the baptism. The baptism took place on August 1 at 7 in the morning on the beautiful banks of the Siverskyi Dinets River. The choir was singing solemn hymns all the time, about 200 people attended. At the end of the whole process, some called it a work of God, others scolded, some mocked, but our hearts rejoiced. At the end of the meeting, a love meal was prepared with excellent food, at least 160 people participated. During dinner, some brothers spoke the words of God, the choir sang all the time, and the youth string orchestra played.<sup>21</sup>

According to the representative of the CARC, this fragment from the letter became reliable evidence of religious propaganda in the ECB community.

In addition, the representatives monitored to ensure that the believers did not perform material social service, as, in their opinion, this was one of the forms of propagating their faith.

<sup>18</sup> МГБ – УССР Отдел «О» Отчеты уполномоченного по делам религиозных культов (1948-1949 гг.) ГДА СБУ. Ф. 2. Оп. 4. Д. 14. Л. 61. [Ministry of State Security – Ukrainian SSR Department "O" Reports of the Commissioner for Affairs of Religious Cults (1948-1949) SSA SSU F. 2. 4. I. 4. Case. 14, p. 61].

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> МГБ – УССР Отдел «О» Отчеты уполномоченного по делам религиозных культов (1948-1949 гг.) ГДА СБУ. Ф. 2. Оп. 4. Д. 14. Л. 63. [Ministry of State Security – Ukrainian SSR Department "O" Reports of the Commissioner for Affairs of Religious Cults (1948-1949) SSA SSU F. 2. 4. I. 4. Case. 14, p. 63].

In order to ban this type of service as well, CARC collected information about such cases through its agents. For example, in the community of ECB in Orynyn village of the Orynyn district of the Kamianets-Podilskyi region, under the leadership of the believer R. P. Burkovska, born in 1919, a mutual assistance fund in money, products, and clothes was created. In total, 1,000 rubles of money, 80 kg of bread, 32 kg of corn, 70 kg of potatoes, 26 liters of milk, 3 kg of butter, and 21 sets of clothes were distributed.<sup>22</sup> According to the representative, despite the repeated warnings of the senior presbyter in the Kamianets-Podilskyi region, Lukianchuk, to stop this form of work, the believers continued material service, so the question of his removal from the post of senior presbyter was raised through the spiritual center of the ECB in the Ukrainian SSR, and the ECB community of the village of Orynyn was closed for violation of the existing law on cults.<sup>23</sup>

Officials of the CARC even interfered in such minor issues as the performance of spiritual verses, songs, etc. by believers. All of this was regarded as religious propaganda. "Some of them," P. Vilkhovyi noted, "went beyond religiosity and had an anti-Soviet character. Among them were 'Unfavored,' 'You are walking the road of life,' and 'Take your time, sister.' According to our recommendations, the senior presbyter of the Ukrainian SSR, Andreiev, sent a special letter to these places banning all these poems, which do not have the appropriate permission of the spiritual center."<sup>24</sup>

So, in the 1940s, CARC, in relation to Protestant communities, created a number of mechanisms aimed at unifying the Protestant church and subordinating it to state and party work. Stalin's officials who headed the CARC were an important link after the special services of the MGB-KGB in the systematic persecution of Protestant communities. In order to control and destroy the religious communities of the CARC, an estimated scheme of deregistration and termination of Protestant communities was developed that was used by the local authorized bodies. Such a repressive policy of the CARC in the religious sphere led to the closing of thousands of prayer houses throughout the Ukrainian SSR and did not permit even a single one to officially open.

### **Peculiarities of Functioning of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults in the 1950s and 1960s.**

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> МГБ – УССР Отдел "О" Отчеты уполномоченного по делам религиозных культов (1948-1949 гг.) ГДА СБУ. Ф. 2. Оп. 4. Д. 14. Л. 64-65. [Ministry of State Security – Ukrainian SSR Department "O" Reports of the Commissioner for Affairs of Religious Cults (1948-1949) SSA SSU F. 2. 4. I. 4. Case. 14, pp. 64-65].

In the 1950s and 1960s, CARC continued to successfully perform its registering, controlling, punitive and repressive function toward religion and believers. In particular, in the 1950s, the control of the CARC representatives over religious communities only intensified, especially in its second half. The practice of monitoring prayer meetings of believers, religious practices, rites, etc. continued. Special importance was even attached to the performance of marriage songs, most of which were simply prohibited. In general, officials of the CARC directly declared to believers that singing psalms, even of marital content, and other religious works are not allowed in the apartments of the bride and groom.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to marriage ceremonies, burial rituals were also prohibited. According to P. Vilkhovyi, Soviet legislation allowed conducting public religious rites in prayer houses and churches, but concerning religious rites for the deceased, they should be held only in the house and not in the yard of the deceased. Therefore, CARC officials recommended that funeral processions on the way to the cemetery should not perform religious songs, stressing that this order should be introduced gradually by explaining these provisions to clergy of the cult and so that it does not cause any dissatisfaction among presbyters and believers.<sup>26</sup>

It was forbidden to hold tea parties in prayer houses to collect money for communities, by the order of the Chairman of the CARC Polianskyi. Addressing the believers, he noted that according to Article 364 of the Administrative Code of the Ukrainian SSR, religious communities have the right to raise funds only for the maintenance of prayer houses and religious property. Accordingly, Polianskyi emphasizes that the raised funds can be spent only on relevant purposes and not on treating some persons; this is written in chapter 15 of the Instructions of the Secretariat of the Presidium of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee. Chapter 10 of the Administrative Code of the Ukrainian SSR allows raising funds for religious communities and spending it only for specific purposes related to the maintenance of a prayer house and religious property. The Chairman of the CARC noted that in addition to these directive norms, which religious communities need to be guided by the very statute of the Union of ECB approved in 1948 in Moscow which denied such actions, because paragraph

<sup>25</sup> Переписка с старшими пресвитерами ВСЕХБ и ВСАСД на Украине по вопросам относящихся к религиозным культам за 1953 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 2. Д. 166. Л. 80. [Correspondence with senior presbyters of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists and the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists in Ukraine on issues related to religious cults for 1953. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 2. Case. 166, p. 80.]

<sup>26</sup> Переписка с Советом по делам религиозных культов при СМ СССР по вопросам снятия с регистрации и закрытия молитвенных домов по областям УССР за 1954 год. Том I. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 2. Д. 171. Л. 154-155. [Correspondence with the Council for Religious Affairs under the USSR Council of Ministers on issues of deregistration and closure of prayer houses in the regions of the Ukrainian SSR for 1954. Volume I. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 2. Case 171, pp. 154-155.]

43 emphasized that choristers who participate in the choir voluntarily must perform their service without profit.<sup>27</sup>

The CARC officials, through senior presbyters, collected detailed information about the opposition believers to the AUCECB, who, after serving considerable terms of imprisonment for their religious beliefs, returned from places of detention and were the first to declare about their "Pharisee service." Therefore, their activities were monitored by senior presbyters who provided information about their movements both to the security agencies and to the authorized representatives of the CARC, who all worked together to destroy the opponents of the communist regime. In particular, the senior presbyter of the ECB in the Dnipropetrovsk region, N. Melnikov, collected detailed information for the senior presbyter in the Ukrainian SSR, A. Andreiev, regarding the visit to Protestant communities in the Stalin region, who in turn forwarded it to the CARC. In the report, N. Melnikov emphasized that among the persons who returned from imprisonment, from among the former well-known people of their time, three currently live in the Stalin region: Mykhailo Yehorovych Ziubanov, a former preacher of the Krasnoarmiiska community who travels around communities, Harazha, who lives in Makiivka, does the same as Ziubanov; and Zernov, who at his time was a well-known presbyter in Donbas.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the comprehensive anti-religious work of CARC officials in the 1950s, they failed to achieve significant success. In the report of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (hereinafter CC CPU) to M.D. Hladerevskyi for 1959, comrade Zuiev, the CARC representative at the Executive Committee of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council of People's Deputies, analyzing the results of his work for two to three years, noted that the exit from religious communities is still insignificant, and in 1958, the number of religious communities even increased. He saw the reason for this, on one hand, in the increased activity of believers in carrying out religious propaganda and recruiting new members, and on the other hand, in the fact that although atheistic propaganda had spread significantly, this propaganda still did not sufficiently cover the believers themselves, who fall under the impact of their activists. Zuiev noted that from August 7-9, 1959, he went to Kryvyi Rih, a large industrial center of Ukraine, and together with the propaganda and agitation department of the city committee of the CPU, he analyzed

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>28</sup> Переписка с религиозными обществами УССР по вопросам относящихся к религиозным культам за 1955 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 1. Д. 203. Л. 9-13. [Correspondence with religious societies of the Ukrainian SSR on issues related to religious cults for 1955. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 1. Case. 203, pp. 9-13.]

the facts of the activation of "sectarians," as well as the reviewed and outlined new measures to limit the activities of religious cults and re-educate their followers, especially young people. Zuiev also noted that there are currently four active ECB religious communities in Kryvyi Rih, the largest of which is the central one, located on Lesya Ukrainka Street, 13 (Dzerzhynskiy district), that has 463 members and has already prepared 53 new and so-called "friendly people." In general, according to his calculations, for the last 12 years (from 1947 to 1958), the number of members of four religious communities of the ECB increased significantly. Namely, in 1947 there were 602 people, but as of January 1, 1959, there were 1004 people. The representative of the CARC emphasized that the growth of the number of believers of the ECB is due to baptisms from year to year, so in 12 years, four communities baptized 332 people, of which the central religious community baptizes the most.<sup>29</sup>

The atheistic attack of the communist regime was accompanied by a number of measures that were controlled by the local CARC officials. In 1959, in the report of A. Oleinikov, the authorized representative of the CARC on cultural mass work and scientific and atheistic propaganda among the population of the district, region, and city of Kyiv, it was stated that according to the resolution of the CC CPU dated February 12, 1959, it was discussed at meetings of all primary party organizations, where it was decided to draw up measures to strengthen scientific and atheistic propaganda among the population (this was done in all districts of the region and the city of Kyiv). A meeting was held for heads of clubs and libraries regarding the tasks of the cultural and educational organization and scientific and atheistic propaganda among the population. To help atheist lecturers, as well as agitators, a consultant worked at the office of political knowledge of the CC CPU, and an exhibition of scientific and atheistic literature was organized. Because of these activities, scientific and atheistic propaganda among the population has recently improved significantly. Exhibitions of scientific and atheistic literature were organized in village clubs, and lecture propaganda intensified. In the last four months, the lecturers of the district Union gave 180 lectures on the dissemination of scientific and political knowledge. So, for example, comrades from the Soviet Party constantly conducted individual work with the believing sisters Zubko from the village of

<sup>29</sup> Информации, докладные записки и справки Уполномоченного при СМ УССР, представленные в высшие партийные органы республики за 1959 г. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 2. Д. 266. Л. 18-19. [Information, detailed notes and reports of the Plenipotentiary at the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, submitted to the highest party bodies of the republic for 1959, CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 2. Case 266, pp 18-19].

Zhytni Hory, Skriabin from the settlement of Rokytno, Kasianenko from the village of Movchanivka, and others.<sup>30</sup>

In order to stop the growth of religious communities and the number of new believers, on the instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (hereinafter CC CPSU), CARC developed a new regulation on the AUCECB, which was adopted in 1960. After the publication of the new regulations, the controlling bodies, including the CARC, intensified repression against believers intending to liquidate the largest religious centers. According to the instructions of KGB, officials of the CARC had to further limit the activities of the clergy and leaders of legal communities.

Opposition believers, in turn, accused the CARC of repression against them, noting that this body was specially created by the Soviet government to regulate relations between the state and the church within the framework of the law, therefore, it should know about violations of the law by the state bodies, as it directly deals with these issues. But in reality, it does not correct the situation. On the contrary, the CARC and its local representatives commit major violations against believers and the church. Namely, the believers emphasize that a wide network of CARC representatives, in a centralized way, carries out violent actions through illegally appointed loyal servants of the church and, acting through them, destroys the church. The believers were most outraged by the fact that in the Soviet laws it was prescribed that the CARC representatives should receive from servants and presbyters lists of communities of believers who attend religious meetings, information about “friendly persons,” and even information about guests arriving from other communities.<sup>31</sup>

According to K. Polonnyk, the authorized representative of the CARC at the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, as of September 25, 1961, 79 communities were deregistered, including 56 ECB.<sup>32</sup> Other were under strict control of support groups at district executive committees, which also helped to close legal communities of believers.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Справки о проведенной культурно-массовой и научно-атеистической пропаганде населения в районах, областях и г. Киеве в 1959 году. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 2. Д. 279. Л. 1. [Reports on cultural-mass and scientific-atheistic propaganda of the population in districts, regions and the city of Kyiv in 1959. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 2. Case. 279., pp 1].

<sup>31</sup> Документи о деятельности и положении т.н. «Совета церквей ЕХБ» (раскольников), протоколы, обращения, отчеты) за 1962 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 2. Д. 360. Л. 5-6. [Documents on the activities and position of the so-called. “Council of ECB Churches” (schismatics), protocols, appeals, reports) for 1962. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 2. Case . 360, pp. 5-6].

<sup>32</sup> Переписка с старшими пресвитерами ВСЕХБ на Украине по вопросам относящимся к религиозным культам за 1961 год. Л. 38. [Correspondence with senior presbyters of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Ukraine on issues related to religious cults for 1961. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 7, p. 38].

<sup>33</sup> Дело № 20 с планами и справками по линии церковников и сектантов (1962 г.). ГДА СБУ. Ф. 1. Оп. 1. Д. 1423. Л. 43. [Case No. 20 with plans and information on the line of churchmen and sectarians (1962). SSA

The leadership of the KGB instructed the CARC, as well as local financial organizations, to register all permanent communities and remove from register communities that evade socially useful work, to strictly control their activities, and to review the positions of the CARC regarding the control of the missionary activities of believers.<sup>34</sup>

Special attention of the CARC was directed to monitoring the activities of unregistered communities of the ECB and supporters of the opposition Council of Churches of the ECB. Their main task was to either join them to the AUCECB or completely liquidate them. In order to collect information about the number of members of unregistered communities, their activity, and location, they entrusted this to their agents from the AUCECB, who, entering in confidence to opposition believers, collected the necessary information about them and submitted it to the CARC in written form. Thus, the information notes the employee of the AUCECB, P.K. Shatrov, reported that as a result of measures taken by the Soviet bodies and the apparatus of the authorized representative, the position of unregistered groups in the legal churches of the ECB is the following: a group of 19 supporters of the so-called Council of Churches of the ECB in the village of Mytytsia, Krasyliv district, headed by I. P. Baranets, joined the Khmelnytskyi legal church of the ECB. Out of 43 seceders in the village of Malynychy, 14 believers together with the preacher Z. F. Vdovin. entered this church. Some "seceders" of the Khmelnytskyi group also began to visit the latter. But its head, I. A. Baraniuk, told the representative on August 13, 1968: "We... are following the right way, as we are fighting for the truth, which is written in the Bible, not legislation." On October 22, 1968, the regent of the group, also the head of the region of supporters of the Council of Churches of the ECB, A. V. Levchuk, was sentenced to five years in prison for illegal activities. At that time, differentiation was taking place in these groups. About 25 people lived in the city of Kamianets-Podilskyi, some of whom attended the legal church of the ECB. Others continued to be led by Herasym Abramovych Iliashyk, who recorded radio broadcasts from capitalist countries on religious topics, then gathered his co-religionists and listened to the recordings. That is why H. Iliashek was under the close supervision of the KGB. In general, there were not 50 supporters of the Council of the Church of the Russian Orthodox Church in the city, but 34. On October 18, 1968, the leader of this group, I. A. Kostiukov, in a conversation with the representative of the CARC, stated that they were seriously thinking about unifying believers.<sup>35</sup>

SSU. F.1. I. 1. Case. 1423. S. 43].

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Документи о деятельности и положении так называемого Совета Церквей ЕХБ (раскольники) (стенограммы, беседы с представителями «Совета», информации, справки, обращения за 1968 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 5. Д. 117. Л. 139-143. [Documents on the activity and position of the so-

CARC officials and KGB employees involved senior presbyters of the AUCECB for planned measures for preventing illegal activities of members of the underground Council of Churches of the ECB in Kyiv and other regions. They supposed the mobilization through the spiritual center of the presbytery and preaching staff to carry out individual work among ordinary members of the underground with the aim of discrediting opposing or rival religious communities.

In order to carry out such a mobilization and develop a method of individual work with ordinary participants of the underground in order to limit the influence of the Council of Churches of the ECB on them, the senior presbyter of the ECB in the Kyiv region, Kaliuzhnyi, asked the representative of the CARC to allow him to hold a regional meeting of presbyters and heads of executive bodies of the registered communities of the ECB, as well as to invite certain presbyters from among the supporters of the Council of Churches of the ECB. The total number of participants in the meeting was planned to be 170 people. He planned to discuss the following issues: 1. Information from senior presbyter Kaliuzhnyi on the situation in the communities of the region and information from senior presbyter in Ukraine Melnikov about the work of the AUCECB. 2. Information of individual presbyters about the methods of influence of the Council of Churches of the ECB on members of registered communities and measures against these methods. 3. Discussion of the recommendation of the presbytery on the fight against the supporters of the Church Council of the ECB and the elimination of the schism in the ECB. 4. On the strict observance of the Soviet legislation on cults in the registered ECB communities and the termination of the trips of certain groups of believers to other communities.<sup>36</sup>

The employees of the AUCECB prepared such reports for the CARC for further preventive and punitive repressive measures, which were applied to the faithful supporters of the Council of Churches of the ECR in the 1960s. Officials of the CARC collected all the

called Council of Churches of the ECB (dissenters) (transcripts, conversations with representatives of the "Council", information, reports, appeals for 1968. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 5. Case. 117. 139-143].

<sup>36</sup> Информации, доклады, записки уполномоченного Совета по УССР представленные в высшие правительственные и партийные органы республики о религиозной обстановке, процессах, явлениях в религиозных организациях, о состоянии контроля за выполнением законодательства о культах за 1969 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф.4648. Оп.5. Д.128. Л. 132-133. [Information, reports, notes of the authorized Council for the Ukrainian SSR presented to the highest governmental and party bodies of the republic about the religious situation, processes, phenomena in religious organizations, about the state of control over the implementation of the legislation on cults in 1969. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 5. Case.128, 132-133].



information in the regions where the opposition believers lived, including a list of names of leaders, guests, children, and young people.<sup>37</sup>

The CARC was provided with information about the arrests and sentences of active members of the ECB Council of Churches.<sup>38</sup> All of this was done systematically, purposefully, and comprehensively with the aim of finally ending the activities of opposition communities of believers.<sup>39</sup> Thus, in the 1950s and 1960s, the CARC continued to successfully perform registering, controlling, punitive, and repressive functions towards the Protestant communities in Ukraine. The control of the representatives of the CARC over the Protestant communities only intensified. The practice of monitoring prayer meetings of believers, religious practices, rites, etc. continued. Special attention of the CARC was directed to monitoring the activities of unregistered communities of the ECB and supporters of the opposition Council of Churches of the ECB. CARC officials and KGB employees involved senior presbyters of the AUCECB for planned measures for preventing the religious activities of members of the underground Council of Churches of the ECB.

### **Functioning of the Council for Affairs of Religious Cults in the 1970s.**

In the 1970s, CARC, through its officials in the regions, continued to systematically collect information about the activity of believers in both registered and unregistered communities. Particular attention was paid to the celebration of feasts by believers, especially since the number of young people and children in churches was strictly controlled by the authorities. For example, in the report of N. Borysk, the authorized representative of the CARC in the Kharkiv region, for 1970, it was noted that the Easter holidays were relatively actively celebrated in the ECB communities in the city of Kharkiv on the premises of the central community. On the first day of Easter, 550 people were present, including 60-65% women. The money raised for these three days of Easter amounted to 25-35 rubles. In the Yasna-Poliana community on the first day of Easter, about 200 people were present, the money raised for 3 days was 30 rubles, inspection bodies established no incidents on the days of the Easter holiday.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Документи о деятельности и положении так называемого Совета Церквей ЕХБ (раскольники) (стенограммы, беседы с представителями «Совета», информации, справки, обращения за 1968 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 5. Д. 117. Л. 137-138. [Documents on the activity and position of the so-called Council of Churches of the ECB (dissenters) (transcripts, conversations with representatives of the "Council", information, reports, appeals for 1968. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 5, Case 117, 137-138].

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 120-127.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 128-131.

<sup>40</sup> Информации Уполномоченного Совета по областям Украинской ССР о религиозных праздниках и происшествиях за 1970 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 5. Д. 189. Л. 39-40. [Information of the

I. Bubiakov, the representative of the CARC in the Khmelnytsk region, wrote that the Easter services in the registered communities of this cult were held mainly for one hour, three hours, four hours, and six hours on April 26, 1970. In the Khmelnytsk city church of the ECB, there were several Baptists secessionists with two children of preschool age, there were no other children present. The choir included seven young people. Sermons had an evangelical character and alternated with the performance of choral psalms.<sup>41</sup>

In order to prevent the mass visit of believers to celebrate Easter, the CARC officials developed social and industrial activities on Sunday, in which many Baptists participated. Therefore, as noted in the report, on April 26, 1970, on the first day of Easter, only a small part of the believers attended daytime prayer meetings, 40-45%, and in the evening, up to 70-80%. On the second day of Easter, attendance was also low, at 50%. This greatly reduced the activity and number of prayer meetings compared to 1969. This time, the CARC representatives almost did not see "guests" from other regions. They explained this by their successful work and the persuasion and warning of individual presbyters who abused the invitation of guests from other religious communities.<sup>42</sup>

The CARC not only appointed representatives in the regions, but also interfered in the internal affairs of the ECB church by appointing and approving senior presbyters. This post required the appointment of people loyal to the instructions of the party and Soviet bodies.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, CARC officials continued to control the material service of believers. They gave instructions to the AUCECB employees on how to spend funds from the mutual aid fund, advised the head of the AUCECB and senior presbyters in the regions to change their attitude to deducting funds to the "peace fund," and took an active part in it.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, in the 1970s, CARC continued to systematically collect information about the activity of believers in both registered and unregistered Protestant communities through its officials in the regions. Special attention was paid to the celebration of holidays by believers,

Authorized Council for the Regions of the Ukrainian SSR about religious holidays and incidents in 1970. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 5. Case. 189, pp. 39-40].

<sup>41</sup> Информации Уполномоченного Совета по областям Украинской ССР о религиозных праздниках и происшествиях за 1970 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 5. Д. 189. Л. 25. [Information of the Authorized Council for the Regions of the Ukrainian SSR about religious holidays and incidents in 1970. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 5, Case 189, p. 25].

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-70.

<sup>43</sup> Переписка с старшими пресвитерами Всесоюзного Совета евангельских христиан-баптистов на Украине по вопросам относящемуся к религиозным культам за 1970 год. Том I. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 5. Д. 221. Л. 9-11. [Correspondence with senior presbyters of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists in Ukraine on issues related to religious cults for 1970. Volume I. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 5. Case 221, pp. 9-11].

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 92-99.

in particular, the CARC representatives strictly controlled the number of young people and children in Protestant churches.

### **Liberalization of the Activities of the Council for Religious Cults in the 1980s.**

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the CARC continued to actively monitor the activities of supporters of the Council of Churches of the ECB together with local Soviet administrative bodies. As noted in the reference of the authorized representative of the CARC in the Volyn region, Maslov, the supporters of the Council of Churches of the ECB are under constant control; a set of measures is applied to prevent illegal meetings; preventive work is carried out with believers of unregistered "sects" and their leaders; measures are being taken to expose and prevent the illegal actions of "sectarian fanatics-extremists"; individual work is carried out with Christian mothers at their place of residence and work, the work of the women's councils in the city of Lutsk, Kovel, and Kivertsi is intensified; active propaganda of Soviet legislation on religious cults and reasoned criticism of slanderous fabrication regarding issues of freedom of conscience and the position of believers in the USSR is carried out.<sup>45</sup>

Officials of the RSRK in the regions until the first half of the 1980s continued to terrorize the believers of the ECB, setting up ambushes on the way to prayer houses, together with local authorities and law enforcement officers, they unexpectedly attended religious services, threatening reprisals for violating the laws of the Ukrainian SSR. With the assistance of the authorities, the purposeful practice of closing down religious communities continued.<sup>46</sup>

The use of presbyters loyal to the Soviet regime against the opposition continued. Thus, in one of the letters, the authorized representative of the CARC in the Volyn region, H. Ya. Hulko, informed his head about the improper behavior of the presbyter of the CEF of Lutsk, V. Rykhliuk, regarding A. A. Nesteruk, the presbyter AUCECB of Volyn Region, A. A. Nesteruk. After that, V. A. Rykhliuk was summoned to the authorized CARC for a preventive

<sup>45</sup> Информации, докладные записки, справки, поступающие от Совета по областям и г. Киеву, о религиозной обстановке, о состоянии контроля за соблюдением законодательства о культах 1978 год. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 7. Д. 75. Л. 55. [Information, detailed notes, reports from the Council of Regions and the City of Kyiv, about the religious situation, about the state of control over compliance with the legislation on cults of 1978. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 7. Case. 75. P. 55].

<sup>46</sup> Документы о регистрации и снятия с регистрации, об освоении и сносе закрытых культовых зданий религиозных объединений по областям УССР (выписки из протоколов заседаний союзного и республиканского Советов, представления облисполкомов, заключения уполномоченных Совета за 1982 г.). ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 7. Д. 21. Л. 2; 164; 166-168. [Documents on registration and deregistration, on the development and demolition of closed cult religious buildings united by regions of the Ukrainian SSR (excerpts from the minutes of meetings of the Union and Republican Soviets, submissions of regional executive committees, conclusions of authorized Soviets for 1982). CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 7. Case 21. 2, 164; pp. 166-168.]

conversation, but this did not resolve the conflict between the presbyters. Therefore, the representative decided to "neutralize the extremist actions" of V. A. Rykhliuk with the hands of his co-religionists.<sup>47</sup>

Employees of the CARC apparatus attempted to totally control the lives of religious communities, including the disruption of marriage ceremonies of believers. Thus, more than one marriage ceremony in the city of Makiivka, Donetsk region, was stopped with the participation of an employee of the CARC, L. A. Serpilin. Representative of the CARC Serpilin proudly wrote in his report that the materials on persons guilty of organizing such group violations of the laws of the Ukrainian SSR were personally sent by him to the prosecutor's office in Makiivka.<sup>48</sup>

In the second half of the 1980s, there was a tendency to soften the attitude of the CARC employees towards the Council of Churches of the ECB and its supporters. If in the 1960s and 1970s for the illegally printed documents (self-published) found during the search, a considerable term of imprisonment was prescribed, but now a suspended sentence was given, mainly limited to the consideration of the case by the administrative commission. Gradually, the practice of discussing behavior at the place of residence and work began to subside.

To confirm these words, we provide the information of the senior inspector of the CARC, V. G. Sereda. He noted that as early as 1980, for the atheistic measures of the regional executive committee to stop the unofficial activities of religious seceders in the Crimea, in the city of Simferopol, it was planned to prepare and hold a meeting of four working sessions for public condemnation of the illegal anti-social activities of V. P. Shokha, but this was not done. V. G. Sereda was very outraged by the fact that V. P. Shokha was considered a valuable specialist in his workplace, and the workers sometimes jokingly called him a "saint" or "priest." Only after one of the leaders of the religious community of believers in the city of Saky, Y. T. Nazarenko, was brought to administrative responsibility 17 times in 1981 and 6 times the

<sup>47</sup> Информации, справки уполномоченных Совета по областям и г. Киеву о деятельности зарегистрированных религиозных общин, о процессах и явлениях, происходящих в религиозных обществах РПЦ, старообрядческой католической и протестантской церквей, иудейской религии, ЕХБ и пятидесятников за 1983 год. Том I. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 4. Д. 237. Л. 107-109. [Information, reports of the authorized representatives of the Council in the regions and the city of Kyiv on the activities of registered religious communities, on processes and phenomena occurring in the religious communities of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Old Believer Catholic and Protestant churches, the Jewish religion, the ECB and the Pentecostals for 1983. Volume I. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 4, Case 237, pp. 107-109].

<sup>48</sup> Информации уполномоченных Совета по областям о наличии и деятельности находящихся вне регистрации религиозных объединений пятидесятников, иеговистов, сторонников Совета церквей ЕХБ, униатов (1984 г.). ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 7. Д. 274. Л. 6-8; 9-10. [Information of the authorized representatives of the Council by region about the presence and activities of unregistered religious united Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, supporters of the Council of Churches ECB, Uniats (1984). CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 7., Case. 274, pp. 6-8; 9-10].

following year, was the management forced to react. Thus, in 1982, information about V.P. Shokha's anti-social behavior was heard at a work meeting of employees, but at the same time, there was no public discussion and condemnation of his extremist actions.<sup>49</sup>

In the second half of the 1980s, the work of CARC representatives increasingly had a declarative nature. Reports and information about work with religious organizations have become fewer, the main violations of the legislation on cults (teaching religion to non-adults, performing rites, processions, and other ceremonies outside the prayer house) for which, for example, in the 1970s believers would have at least received a fine, but now they were only recorded by the representatives.<sup>50</sup>

Despite this liberalization, even shortly before the collapse of the USSR in 1991, employees of the CARC apparatus continued to perform their control and supervisory functions, but they now had an exclusively formal and nominal character.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, in the first half of the 1980s, CARC tried to continue to control systematically the activities of Protestant communities in Ukraine. Thus, the CARC, together with local Soviet administrative bodies, actively monitored the activities of supporters of the Council of Churches of the ECB. But already in the second half of the 1980s, the role of the CARC was gradually eliminated as the Soviet totalitarian system began to weaken and degrade, therefore, the decisions of the party and Soviet bodies were implemented only formally.

## Conclusions

Having analyzed the use of the CARC by the totalitarian authorities of the USSR to fight against the Protestant communities in Ukraine, we arrive at the following conclusions.

<sup>49</sup> Информации уполномоченных Совета по областям о наличии и деятельности находящихся вне регистрации религиозных объединений пятидесятников, иеговистов, сторонников Совета церквей ЕХБ, униатов (1984 г.). ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 7. Д. 274. Л. 19-21. [Information of the authorized representatives of the Council by region about the presence and activities of unregistered religious united Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, supporters of the Council of Churches ECB, Uniats (1984). CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 7. [Case. 274, pp. 19-21].

<sup>50</sup> Информации, справки, статьи о зафиксированных нарушениях профилактических мероприятиях по их предупреждению и мерах административного и уголовного воздействия (1985). ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 7. Д. 321. Л. 16. [Information, documents, articles about recorded violations of preventive measures for their prevention and measures of administrative and criminal impact (1985). CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 7. . 321, pp. 16].

<sup>51</sup> Информации, справки, статьи, отчеты и другие материалы о зарегистрированных нарушениях законодательства о культах, профилактических мероприятиях по их предупреждению и мерах административного и уголовного воздействия (копии приговоров) 1988 г. ЦДАВОВУ України. Ф. 4648. Оп. 7. Д. 437. Л. 9-11. [Information, documents, articles, reports and other materials about registered violations of the legislation on cults, preventive measures for their prevention and measures of administrative and criminal impact (copies of sentences) of 1988. CSAGBGA of Ukraine. F. 4648. I. 7. Case. 437. 135, pp 9-11].

First, in the 1940s, CARC created towards Protestant communities a number of mechanisms aimed at their unification and subordination to the totalitarian regime. To control and destroy Protestant communities, the officials of the CARC developed a scheme for deregistration and termination of Protestant communities, which was used by local authorized bodies. Such repressions in the religious sphere resulted in the closing of thousands of Protestant prayer houses throughout the Ukrainian SSR and did not allow to open officially even a single one.

Second, in the 1950s and 1960s, CARC continued to successfully perform the registering, controlling, punitive and repressive functions towards the Protestant communities in Ukraine. The control of the representatives of the CARC over the Protestant communities intensified. The practice of monitoring prayer meetings of believers, religious practices, rites, etc. continued. Special attention of the CARC was directed to monitoring the activities of the unregistered ECB communities and supporters of the opposition Council of Churches of the ECB.

Third, in the 1970s, CARC, through its officials in the regions, continued to systematically collect information about the activity of believers in both registered and unregistered Protestant communities. Particular attention was paid to the celebration of holidays by believers. Specifically, the CARC authorities strictly controlled the number of young people and children in Protestant churches. CARC not only appointed representatives in the regions, but also interfered in the internal affairs of Protestant communities in Ukraine, by appointing and approving senior presbyters.

Finally, in the 1980s, CARC tried to continue to control the activities of Protestant communities in Ukraine. Thus, the CARC, together with local Soviet administrative bodies, monitored the activities of supporters of the Council of Churches of the ECB. The role of the CARC was gradually reduced as the totalitarian power in the USSR began to weaken and degrade, resulting in the decisions of the party and Soviet bodies being implemented only formally and nominally.

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