

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the USSR during World War II

EUGENE ZAITSEV

Eugene Zaitsev is director of the Biblical Research Institute and the Institute for Bible Translation at the Euro-Asian Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The article uses extant sources to examine the almost undocumented travails of the SDA Church in the Soviet Union during the World War II (1939-1945).

Introduction

The World War II (1939–1945)¹ is probably the least studied period in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the USSR, for several reasons. First of all, state policy aimed at eradicating religion from life in Soviet society. By the beginning of the war, due to the Soviet state's policy against the church, practically all Protestant associations, including the Adventist Church, had ceased their legal and factual existence. Their revival and official registration would take place only at the end of the war. Although in 1939–1940 the territories of the Baltic States, Western Belorussia, Western Ukraine, and Moldavia, where there were many Protestant congregations including Adventist ones, had been added to the USSR, they had not yet been integrated into the life of Soviet society. Information about them is scattered and contradictory in nature. Finally, the Council for Religious Affairs, whose records serve as the main official source of information about the history of Russian Protestantism in this period, was not established until 1944.

The Socio-Political and Religious Situation in the USSR on the Threshold of the War

During the 1930s the Soviet state began taking a tougher stance against religious organizations. The central purpose of the policy on religion was to reduce, as much as possible, the place that religion and the church had in Soviet society. Religious groups were attacked as “anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary” phenomena and organizations. This included imposing administrative and criminal measures, extrajudicial acts, and repression. In broad terms, such a policy was a manifestation of the general political course chosen by Stalin and his associates. In general, this course can be described as the construction of “barracks socialism” with a minimum of personal rights and freedoms for citizens of the USSR.²

In 1938, the Permanent Commission on Cults, which had been established to resolve issues related to the activities of religious organizations, was dismissed. This meant the elimination of the very possibility of contact

between the government and religious organizations, which became a natural consequence of the party and Soviet institutions' policy aimed at building a "non-religion society." Efforts by a small number of public figures who were members of the Commission, including its chairman Petr A. Krasikov, who sought to rectify the incorrect course of the state's church policy, were in vain.³ At the all-Union level, only one departmental structure was left which dealt with the problems of religion and the church – the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the USSR (NKVD). A special department in the Secret Political Directorate operated "for combating church and sectarian counter-revolution."⁴

The plan of the Union of Militant Atheists, established in 1925, was to turn the Soviet Union into a country of mass atheism. The Central Council of the Union of Militant Atheists was active in implementing both its own plans and state tasks. Its chairman Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, the main anti-religious leader of the time, urged active, offensive actions at the "anti-religious front." By 1940, the Union had 96,000 groups and more than 3 million members. Circulation of anti-religious publications between 1928 and 1940 reached 140 million copies⁵ By the end of the 1930s, there was wide agreement among Communist Party members and Soviet activists of the necessity of totally eliminating religion.⁶

Churches and prayer houses were forcibly closed all over the country. Orthodox church buildings were turned into production workshops, warehouses, and clubs, while monasteries were used as prisons and colonies. The campaign to close the churches was conducted primarily in the countryside. The Union of Militant Atheists mobilized the Communist Party and trade union organizations, cultural centers, and production committees for this purpose. The collection of signatures for closing a church was encouraged, while collection of signatures against its closure was considered counter-revolutionary and punished accordingly.

To combat Protestant organizations, the Communist Party and Soviet agencies often emphasized their foreign origin and membership in international church organizations. They considered the leaders of Protestant communities enemies, spies, and agents of the West.⁷ The main Protestant churches, therefore, ceased to exist. As early as 1929 the Union of Baptists was dissolved, its buildings were confiscated, the work of training ministers was stopped, and all printed media were discontinued. The Union of Evangelical Christians ceased to exist after the arrest of its leader Y. I. Zhidkova. The Mennonite Brotherhood shared the sad fate of the Baptists and evangelical Christians. The leaders were arrested, the prayer houses closed, and the believers' assemblies stopped.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was not an exception to the rule. Like all other religious organizations, it experienced ideological and physical pressure from the state. Initially, the Adventist Church was boycotted by all publishing houses, printing houses, and post offices, which meant the end of the publication of any spiritual literature. Then churches and prayer houses started being closed, and police arrested active Adventist members en masse. It was particularly hard for the Adventists during this difficult period due to a rather strange initiative by the Soviet government. In 1929 it introduced a six-day week, with five workdays and one day off⁸ It was

virtually impossible for Adventists to find a job that would allow them to freely observe the Sabbath. Faithful church members had to, at best, change their jobs several times a year, and at worst to remain unemployed and be seen as “parasites.” Many believers were declared “disenfranchised.” This meant that they could not get medical aid or receive bread cards, did not have the right to vote, and could not get a job at a factory or at a government agency.

Due to the liquidation of local church conferences and in order to preserve at least some kind of leadership over congregations, the 1931 Seventh-day Adventist All-Union Council, established the Integrated Union with a council of five people, and introduced the institution of commissioners. However, by the end of the 1930s, all members of the council and all the Integrated Union’s commissioners had been arrested and convicted. During this period the Soviet government repressed about 150 ordained ministers and elders, and more than 3000 members of the church.⁹ T. N. Nikolskaya notes that if until the mid-1930 religious ministers and activists were usually sentenced to exile or various terms of imprisonment, in the late 1930s they were typically given the death penalty.¹⁰

Soviet authorities did not leave family members of the repressed ministers, including children, at peace. They were considered sons or daughters of a “public enemy.” Mothers were intimidated and threatened that their children would be taken away if they continued to educate them in their religious faith. Church ministers who were not imprisoned could be arrested for only one single visit to the family of a repressed person, and for rendering them any kind of assistance. For this reason, many church members were deprived of church communication, including the opportunity to participate in the Lord’s Supper, for a long time.¹¹

Responsibility for managing the church in this difficult period rested with G. A. Grigoryev. The last original working document, dated April 1934, written in uneven handwriting and signed by Heinrich J. Löbsack after his arrest, read:

To regional and district commissioners of the SDA All-Union Council in the USSR. Hereby I entrust Grigorey Andreyevich Grigoriev, a former authorized representative for the West Siberian Region, current member of the Central Council, to conduct the activities and management of the Seventh-day Adventist All-Union Council temporarily until re-election. (The date is unreadable) April 1934.¹²

From this moment until the end of the Second World War, G. A. Grigoriev would remain the only representative of the All-Union (Integrated) Council.

During the years of Stalinist repression, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia was virtually annihilated. Like the associations of Russian Baptists and Pentecostals, it was considered a “class alien organization to workers,” which should be combatted decisively. The main Bolshevik expert on issues of “sectarianism,” F. M. Putintsev, reported in 1935 “to the top” that in the Far Eastern district alone the number of Protestant congregations decreased by nearly 75 percent. In 1929 there had been 311 Protestant congregations in the

territory of the Far Eastern district, and in 1932 there were only 86 of them.¹³

Conventional Policy of the Soviet Union during the War

For the Soviet Union the war started on June 22, 1941, when Nazi Germany invaded Russia. The war, called “The Great Patriotic War” in Soviet history textbooks, became a serious test for everyone in the vast country. Many cities were destroyed and villages burnt down. Casualties in the USSR reached 26.6 million people. The Patriotic War required the mobilization of not only organizational, financial, and material resources, but also moral, spiritual, and patriotic ones.

Ten days after the beginning of the war, the head of the Soviet government and the Communist Party, Joseph Stalin, addressed the nation over the radio. This was one of the few speeches addressed not to “Communists, Komsomol members and non-Party people,” but to the heart of every Soviet person. Thus it began with the words: “Comrades! Citizens! Brothers and sisters! The soldiers of our army and navy! To you I address, my friends! . . . A serious danger looms over our Motherland.”¹⁴ The appeal to Soviet citizens as brothers and sisters, more common in the church environment, emphasized the fact that religion, despite a long-term campaign to impose an atheistic worldview, was still an integral part of the life of many Soviet people. This appeal indicated that now, in the face of a national threat, the Soviet authorities would have to revise their attitude towards religion. In short, it would require a change in the confessional policy of the state.¹⁵

From the time of the all-Union census of 1937 it had not been a secret for the party-Soviet leadership that a significant part of the Soviet Union’s population considered themselves believers. In the first months of the Great Patriotic War, the inadequacy and perniciousness of the state policy towards religion and the church formed in the 1930s became obvious. The illusions about the successful and universal “overcoming” of religion and the victory of the atheistic movement had dissipated, giving way to the truth – there were millions of believers in the country who were unfairly restricted in their ability to satisfy their religious needs freely and openly.¹⁶

Many researchers note that the patriotism of Soviet people in the first days of the war was to no small extent fuelled by the Orthodox Church.¹⁷ Following the appeal of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) of Moscow and Kolomna, who spoke on the very first day of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, other religious groups such as the Renewal Orthodox Church, the Georgian Orthodox Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church as well as the leaders of Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist organizations, expressed their patriotic position. The sense of patriotism turned out to be stronger than past and bitter grievances. Addressing believers with patriotic messages, they called upon them to fulfil their religious and civil duty properly and to render all possible material assistance to the needs of the front and the home front.¹⁸

At the beginning of the war, the authorities intended to build constructive relations with Protestant organizations as well. As T. N. Nikolskaya noted,

Patriotism, readiness to defend one's country, did not always mean readiness to fight with arms in hand. Believers prayed for their homeland, conscientiously worked in industry, agriculture, hospitals, servicing the Soviet Army, collected money to help orphans, wounded, war-affected areas, etc., were ready to serve in medical and other detachments that do not require carrying weapons, used international relations to support the USSR.¹⁹

Thus, the Baptists, for instance, had the opportunity to address their fellow believers abroad. In February 1942, they reported on their activities to the President of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), D. G. Rashbrook, voicing their desire to unite with the evangelical Christians into a single alliance²⁰ and expressed their hope to establish permanent ties with foreign co-religionists. The established Provisional Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists took a patriotic position during the war. In particular, in an appeal letter to the believers, its leaders wrote:

In our days, Europe shudders under the wheels of the military machine of Hitler's Germany. Hitlerism inscribed on its banner: "The conquest of the world! The enslavement of mankind! The re-establishment of a new cult of Nazism on earth!" The danger for the work of the Gospel is great ... Germany wants to match the name of the bloody Fuhrer against the name of Christ dear to all the Christians. May God save humanity from this! Three great powers: our native Russia, England, and the USA have united ... their weapons to repel the formidable forces ... of aggression ... and to save Europe from the danger of enslavement looming over it. Let every brother and every sister fulfil their duty to God and to the Motherland in the hard days that we are experiencing. We, the believers, will be the best warriors on the front and the best workers in the home front! Our beloved Motherland should remain free.²¹

Members of local congregations of Evangelical Christians and Baptists organized garment tailoring and repair services, collection of clothes and other items for the families of the deceased and for the soldiers, helped in caring for the wounded and the sick in hospitals, and cared for orphans in orphanages. They used the money collected in the congregations to build the "Merciful Samaritan" sanitary plane, which was used to take seriously wounded soldiers to the rear.²²

Silent recognition of the patriotism of believers and religious organizations was felt in the position of the government authorities, which during the first two years of the war actually adopted an approach of non-interference in the country's church life. As a result, general church fundraising and extracurricular activities were conducted; there were no obstacles to mass worship and ceremonies; churches' publishing activities expanded; religious centres were recognized *de facto* and allowed to establish links with foreign religious organizations; churches and prayer houses opened; and some religious leaders were released from prison.

During the war all public anti-religious propaganda stopped and the Union of Militant Atheists was terminated. Instead, the official press published articles about the patriotic activities of the Orthodox Church. Paradoxical as

it may sound, the war in some sense was salutary for religion in the Soviet Union, contributing to a warming of relations between the state and the church.

Then the Soviet government took steps to settle the relationship, primarily the one with the Russian Orthodox Church. A special body, the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, headed by G. G. Karpov, was set up under the Council of People's Commissars to connect the government with the Orthodox Church.²³ The Council started to function in September 1943. The task of the Council included the organization of relations between the state and the Church. At the local level this task was fulfilled by the Council's commissioners, who acted as a liaison between local authorities and the church.

Confessional Policy of Germany in the Occupied Soviet Territory

In order to better understand the situation in which religious organizations, including Protestants in the occupied territory, found themselves, it is important to pay attention to the religious policies of the Germans.²⁴ The German strategy of destroying the USSR in the course of the "blitzkrieg" was largely founded on the hope that the dissatisfaction of Soviet people with its political regime, including its national and religious policy, would become a kind of ally of the Third Reich in the struggle against Bolshevism. Hence the significant attention the Germans paid to religion in the territory they occupied. In an effort to take control over the activities of religious organizations, the occupation authorities set up departments for administering church affairs under city councils. Their activities included the selection of church personnel, administering churches, scheduling church services, etc.

The documents of various German departments recorded significant religious revival in the Soviet territories occupied during the first months of the war. The main department of imperial security, for example, noted that "among the part of the population of the former Soviet Union freed from the Bolshevik yoke, there is a strong desire to return to the authority of the church or churches, which is especially true to the older generation, while the younger generation looks at it indifferently." In that regard, it was suggested that a "new class of preachers," trained and capable of "interpreting religion to the people" free of national history, traditions, and culture, should be admitted to the occupied territories.²⁵

Considering the role of Orthodoxy, special attention was paid to the activities related to the Russian Orthodox Church in the occupied territories. The leadership of the Third Reich aimed at destruction of the Russian Orthodox Church as a historical and national-cultural phenomenon. It was supposed to be replaced by the same "new" religion and a state church, which the ideologists of Nazism were planning to set up.²⁶

In general, German authorities sought to make maximum use of religious issues in the occupation zone for their ideological purposes. The press, flooded with materials about "terror," unleashed by the Bolsheviks against religion and believers, simultaneously emphasized that the new government would bring religious freedom. The invaders persistently "recommended" that the priests, in sermons and during church ceremonies, express

loyalty to Hitler and the Third Reich, as well as hold special prayer services for the victory of the German army and the “salvation of the Motherland” from the Bolsheviks. The distribution of all sorts of religious and edifying literature was also encouraged.²⁷

The Ministry of Occupied Eastern Territories, created for the civil administration of the territories of the USSR seized during the war, sought to use Protestants for its own purposes as well. Thus, in Belarus, permission was obtained to set up a Pentecostal center headed by the “bishop” I. K. Panko. The occupation authorities gave the All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians permission to resume their activities under Ponurko’s direction.²⁸ By the end of 1943 the union included almost 350 congregations with over 11,000 members. It should be mentioned that the occupation authorities insisted on uniting (as they had in Germany) Pentecostals with evangelical Christians and Baptists of Ukraine,²⁹ who could also function freely. However, not all leaders and believers took this step. At the same time, leaders who opposed the association were subjected to Gestapo arrests and imprisonment. In Western Ukraine, the resurgent Pentecostalism was subjected to violence by Ukrainian nationalists (Banderites). A number of church ministers were killed by the Nationalist Security Service. In general Protestant organizations (Lutherans, Evangelical Christians, Baptists, Pentecostals, Adventists) had the opportunity to function in the occupied territory. According to data collected later by Soviet state security agencies, during the years of occupation up to 4,200 Protestant congregations resumed their legal activities in the Ukraine alone. For example, whereas in 1940 there were 426 prayer houses of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the Ukrainian SSR, in 1942 there were 2,778, and they had about 100,000 believers.³⁰

The Creation of the Council for Religious Affairs under the CPC of the USSR

On May 19, 1944, the Council of People’s Commissars adopted a resolution to set up another state body, the Council for Religious Affairs, which administered “relations” with all other religious organizations, except for the Orthodox ones. On June 6, 1944, I. V. Polyansky was approved as the organization’s chairperson. The rights and responsibilities, as well as the area of competence and organizational structure of the new council, were similar to the ones of the Council for the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Council’s responsibilities included considering the questions raised by leaders of religious cults, drafting legislative acts and resolutions related to the issues of these religious cults, monitoring the correct and timely implementation throughout the territory of the USSR of laws and decrees by the USSR Government related to religious cults, the general recording of churches and prayer buildings, and the compilation of statistical reports on data submitted to the Council by local Soviet bodies.³¹

The Council supported religious organizations’ and believers’ petitions related to their spiritual activities, registration of religious congregations, opening religious buildings, and publication of religious literature. In late

February 1945, the Soviet government, on the recommendation of the Council for Religious Affairs, decided to defer mobilization of the clergy of a number of churches, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church.³²

The Council had its own representatives in the Councils of People's Commissars of union and autonomous republics and in regional and district executive committees. In early 1945, a manual entitled "Instruction on the Activities of Commissioners" was developed and approved, in which the main directions of their activities were determined and specified.

The very first reports received by the representatives of the Council for Religious Affairs already showed how difficult it was for local authorities to accept the need to ensure citizens' rights to freedom of conscience and the rights of religious groups. There were widespread refusals to consider any requests from believers regarding setting up prayer houses, administrative sanctions regarding applicants for registration, and red tape in the application process. The representatives reported that local authorities "dodged" believers' requests to return to them the religious buildings that had been confiscated for state and public use. In addition, local authorities did not allow believers to hold meetings, did not let the clergy into settlements, did not allow the repair of religious buildings, arbitrarily closed existing prayer buildings, confiscated property of religious societies, unduly arrested clergymen, insulted believers, and broke up prayer buildings.³³

I. V. Polyansky, in his work, tried to take into account the political views of religious leaders, their patriotic attitude during the occupation of the Soviet territory, and their loyalty to the reestablished Soviet power. At the same time, the Council for Religious Affairs was extremely harsh towards those religious associations that the state referred to as "anti-state, anti-Soviet and fanatical sects." These included the Adventist Reform Movement, Dukhobors, Malevans, Methodists, Molokans, the new Israel, Pentecostals, Satanists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Skoptsy, Khlysty, and some others. The Council (as the state in general) perceived them not so much as religious, but as political organizations, and therefore did not consider it possible even to raise the question of their legalization and subsequent registration. All of them were under the constant control of state security agencies.

One of the religious movements to which the Council for Religious Affairs paid considerable attention was the evangelical movement. This was primarily due to the gradual liberation of the territories of Belarus and Ukraine, previously occupied by fascists, accomplished by the Soviet troops in 1944. Before re-establishing Soviet power, the task was to formulate a policy towards numerous evangelical organizations that operated here: Evangelical Christians, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Adventists. This process turned out to be very, very difficult. Official authorities had a more or less favorable position towards Russian Orthodoxy, and all other churches, denominations, associations, and cults had to prove their right to exist. Negative attitudes towards them had already risen in connection with the fact that during the years of occupation the evangelical congregations, in general, managed to restore organizational ties, opened prayer houses, and even resumed the activities of previously closed centers.

In the autumn of 1943, leaders of the Provisional Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists were permitted to return from evacuation to Moscow and begin restoring church structures and establishing permanent ties with fellow believers abroad. In October 1944, a conference was held in Moscow, which would later be called the 37th All-Union Congress of Evangelical Christian Baptists. Following the discussion of the main issue of merging the organizations, they adopted a resolution. It read: "Burying all disagreements of the past, from two unions – the union of Evangelical Christians and the Baptist Union – to create one union – the Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists with the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists as the governing body, residing in the city of Moscow."³⁴ The materials of the congress were made public in the first issue of the journal ACECB, *Bratsky Vestnik*, the publication of which was sanctioned by the authorities. In 1945, during the so-called "August meeting," Pentecostals were included in the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church during the War

The war was a serious shock for the entire Soviet society, including Seventh-day Adventists. The war was particularly difficult for Adventists given the fact that for historical reasons among the Adventists there were many ethnic Germans. During the war they were arrested as "unreliable" and taken to forced labor camps or mobilized into the labor army. Adventists who refused to bear arms were mobilized to civilian facilities, in mines, in logging, and constructing military installations. Church veteran Arnold Rebein recalls that the situation of the Adventists drafted into the labor army hardly differed from the conditions in a detention camp.³⁵ Despite these difficulties, Adventists generally considered being drafted into the labor army as a real opportunity to serve the Motherland without taking up arms.³⁶

At the same time, members of Adventist congregations, along with the entire Soviet people, did everything in their power to support the war effort: they served in the Red Army, did their duty in medical units, worked as translators, drivers, signalmen, military musicians, etc. Seventh-day Adventist pastor D. O. Yunak recalls that

Among the Adventists there were those who served in combat units, some were taken as sappers, some as communication officers, someone was sent to the most dangerous sections of the front – a lot depended on the commanders who either understood the feelings of believers, or vice versa – they mocked, they tried to break their religious views.³⁷

The only representative of the All-Union (Integrated) Council of the Seventh-day Adventist Church remaining at large by the beginning of the war, G. A. Grigoryev, along with the leaders of other religious associations living in Moscow, was evacuated in October 1941 to Ulyanovsk, where he stayed until August 1942.³⁸ According to Grigoriev's memoirs, reported by Pastor V. I. Sorokin, on the eve of his departure, Joseph Stalin summoned him, remembering that many years ago he told him about the prophecies of the Bible. Summoning him, Stalin asked: What did he think, according to the Bible, would the Germans take Moscow? Brother Grigoriev replied, "They will

not. The world empire, according to the book of the prophet Daniel, will no longer be, Europe will not be united under the rule of Hitler. God will punish Hitler through Russians.⁴⁹

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Pacifism

For many believers, including Adventists, the war sharply aggravated the problem of military duty and weapon bearing. This was especially true for convicted pacifists. The Criminal Code of the RSFSR, even in peacetime, dictates various degrees of punishment for evasion of military service due to religious reasons: from application of the rules of the Red Army's disciplinary Charter (correctional labor or 1 to 5 years of imprisonment) to the death penalty.⁴⁰ And this despite the fact that the Law on Military Obligations of August 13, 1930 provided for the possibility for traditional pacifist sects to do civil service instead of military, or (in wartime) to serve in the auxiliary parts of the Red Army. In practice, this law was not observed, and for evasion of military duties due to religious convictions, pacifists generally bore criminal responsibility. M. Y. Krapivin notes that between 1935 and 1941 there were no recorded cases of religious pacifists exercising their right to alternative service.⁴¹

The law on universal military service, adopted on September 1, 1939, did not allow refusal to serve in the Red Army for any reason at all, including religious beliefs. Pacifistic believers who were drafted against their will and who refused to take up arms were punished by military courts.⁴² The Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, I. V. Polyansky, in his "Report on the Religious Situation in the USSR" to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist party of the Bolsheviks, mentions the fact that an Adventist third-year student of the Dnepropetrovsk Medical Institute, being called to the Red Army, refused to take up arms. Six students of the Medical Institute came to the military registration and enlistment office to apply for his release from military service. Commenting on this situation, Polyansky noted that

The leader of this community, just like many members, is looking at the military service negatively, allowing each believer to resolve this issue "in line with his conscience." However, those members of the community who agree to take up arms and serve in the Red Army, are excluded from the community.⁴³

It should be noted that at the end of the war, Protestants, along with the current ministers of other religions and confessions, were exempted from conscription into the army according to the decision of the commission for exemptions and draft postponement adopted on February 26, 1945. But this option was extended only to elders of Evangelical Christians, Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists elders and preachers.⁴⁴

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has never adopted the tenet of completely abandoning any form of military service, as manifested in the extreme version of the pacifist position. Adventists were ready to fulfil their civic duty as long as the orders of the authorities and the military command were not in conflict with their conscience and God's law.⁴⁵ The following examples narrate the life of some leaders and church members who faced the Law on General Military Duty during the War. It should be noted that many leaders and members of the church

managed to avoid this law only because they had already been repressed earlier and served their sentence in the Gulag for their faith, and their imprisonment lasted during the wartime.⁴⁶

In January 1944 the senior pastor in the Zhitomir region (Ukraine), Vitaliy G. Slyusarenko, and local ministers Kalenik, Kalinchuk, Lavrenchuk, and Ivan and Veniamin Tarakhtelyuk were drafted into the army. For refusing to take the military oath, they were all arrested and thrown into the prison of Berdichev. A few days later, exhausted and hungry, the half-dressed people were taken to the frost and put against a long wall. The verdict was read: execution. Several shots rang out simultaneously, but none of the men fell – the marksmen shot over their heads. In this way prison authorities tried to frighten the believers and get them to take up arms, so they could be sent to the front. These believers were ready to face death under a hail of bullets and splinters in order to save the wounded or engage in other work, but they refused to kill. The brave prisoners were taken back to the cell. The next day Ivan Tarakhtelyuk was shot and killed, but the rest of the men remained unshakable. Consequently, the authorities announced a new sentence: ten years in prison. They were sent to Zhitomir prison, and then to Syktyvkar (Komi ASSR) for heavy and dangerous work related to logging. Adventist prisoners had to live among criminals, thieves, and murderers, subject to starvation and harsh temperatures. The guards treated the believers with the utmost contempt, considering them traitors to their homeland.⁴⁷

There were cases when Adventists refused to take up arms and were offered the opportunity to fulfil their duty to the motherland through service without weapons. This happened to a young preacher, a graduate of the Bible Institute in Brasov, Romania, Alexander F. Parasei. During the war, he was in a Romanian concentration camp in Botosani. In 1944, the prisoners of the concentration camp were liberated by the Red Army, and Alexander found himself in the military unit of the Third Byelorussian Front, where he served as the head of the uniforms warehouse. He reached Berlin with his detachment and met Victory Day on May 9, 1945, in Lower Silesia, from where he was demobilized and returned home.

Unusual was the fate of another Adventist minister, Ignat S. Bondar, who on the first day of the war, on June 22, 1941, was summoned to the military enlistment office and sent to the Lukyanovka barracks. In the military unit, located in Brovarsky forests, Bondar served as an instructor for chemical protection. After the 600,000-strong grouping of Soviet troops was surrounded, most of the soldiers were taken prisoner. Bondar miraculously managed to escape captivity, and returned home to Kiev. Before the war all the ministers of the Adventist church in Kiev were repressed, the congregation was closed, and the prayer house was confiscated. Now, under the conditions of German occupation, Bondar was actively engaged in rebuilding the destroyed community of believers, and he began to conduct worship services with a small group in a basement-like damp room. Soon the authorities gave the community a house of the Karaite Kenesa (Karaite synagogue) and in the difficult time of war, in just one and a half years, the Kiev church baptized 185 new members.

Even more surprising was the fate of Dmitry K. Kolbach, a graduate of the Warsaw Theological Seminary, which he left in 1939. Before the invasion of German troops in the USSR, Kolbach, a talented musician, organized in his

hometown of Pozharka, Volhynia (Ukraine), a large brass band consisting of 30 musicians. With the outbreak of the war, all the members of the orchestra, young people of military age, received draft notices requiring them to come to the military commissariat and subsequently get sent to the front. The young minister decided to propose to the military commissar to take the entire Adventist orchestra along with their instruments into a musical division so that they could all complete their military service in this manner. The proposal was accepted, and by the end of the war, having fulfilled its civic duty, the whole orchestra returned to its home community.

A truly difficult life was that of Adventist preacher Vitaliy I. Prolinsky, who was baptized in 1943. The village of Uladovka, where he lived, was completely burned down by the Nazis on January 9, 1944. Over 400 people were burnt or shot to death that day – including Vitaliy's father. Vitaliy, along with other young members of the church, was captured by the Germans and sent to a concentration camp. For refusing to work on Saturdays, he and his friends were sentenced to death by shooting. Yet just at the moment when the escorts had already received permission from the camp commandant to shoot the "Sabbatarians," the American air force arrived, and during the air raid the young Adventists managed to escape and hide in the nearest forest. After the liberation of Ukraine from Germany, Vitaliy was drafted into the active army, where he served in the construction battalion until the end of the war.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Collaboration

It was mentioned earlier that the German authorities in the occupied territory tried to use religion in order to persuade the population to join their side. Thanks to the promotion of the new authorities, the life of many Protestant congregations intensified noticeably. In the occupied territories they even held church congresses and established Protestant alliances.⁴⁸ Many prayer houses, closed under the Soviet authorities, were opened, and religious centers in many regions were restored. Vitaly Nikitchenko, chairman of the republic's KGB (1954–1970), in his report to the Central Committee of the Ukraine's Communist party, stressed that during the occupation there was a revival in sectarian movements, "the doctrine of which is based on the anti-Soviet platform" such as the Pentecostal Zionists, the Reformed Adventists, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Il'inians, the True Orthodox Church, the Podgornovtsy, the Joannites, the Innokentyans, the Khlysty, the Murashkovtsi, and others.⁴⁹

This revival of Protestant activities in the occupied territories would later turn against them. After the liberation of these territories by the Red Army, many religious ministers and activists were convicted of complicity with the occupation regime. The accusation of collaboration would become one of the main arguments against Russian Protestantism in the post-war years.⁵⁰

The question of the collaboration of Russian Protestants remains open to this day. Although such accusations of believers regarding cooperation with the occupiers were often used in anti-religious propaganda, in specific cases it is difficult to verify whether a particular employee or member of a Protestant community actively

cooperated with the invaders and whether he was a believing Protestant at that moment.

It is known that the occupation authorities and representatives of the special services actively supported and “infiltrated” the Adventist community, especially the members of the Adventist Reform Movement. As Soviet counterintelligence established later, in the occupied territory, individual reformers cooperated with the new administration and they were used for special propaganda, intelligence, and counterintelligence work. Activists of the Kiev Adventist community, Yakov and Vladimir Reiner, voluntarily cooperated with the German authorities and campaigned for loyalty to the invaders. The son of F. Gladkov, a Seventh-day Adventist minister responsible for the Kharkov and Dnipropetrovsk region, and pastor of one of the congregations in Donbass, served the Germans distributing anti-Soviet leaflets.⁵¹

One can imagine the conflicting feelings experienced by believers in the occupied territories during wartime when they were forced to determine their attitude towards the new government. Living in the Soviet Union, many of them had experienced oppression on religious grounds, had survived persecution for their faith, and had lost loved ones. The constant violation of rights and freedoms and a brutal insult to religious feelings had certainly incited a negative attitude towards the Soviet authorities. Even more complex was the attitude towards the Soviet authorities of the people living in territories recently annexed to the USSR, where national and political problems were added to religious ones. It is not a secret that some of them believed German propaganda, which promised freedom of religion, and went on to cooperate with the new authorities on matters of religious activity.

After the war, many collaborators would experience all the horrors of the GULAG once again, condemned by the Soviet authorities for assisting the occupation forces. G. Ponurko, who was actively involved in the reconstruction of the Union of Evangelical Christians in the occupied territory of Ukraine, was arrested in April 1945, charged with collaboration, and sentenced to prison until 1954.⁵² The head of the Adventist Reform Movement, V. A. Shelkov, was sentenced to death in 1945 for his ties with the German invaders. Two months later, the death sentence was replaced by ten years of imprisonment.⁵³ On September 17, 1955, a decree was issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR entitled “On the amnesty of Soviet citizens who collaborated with the occupiers during the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945.”

Restoration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Organization

Returning to Moscow in August 1942, G. A. Grigoriev made efforts to restore the activities of Adventist congregations in the liberated Soviet territories. As soon as some territory was liberated from the occupation and as postal services were re-established, Grigoriev sent encouraging letters, assuring believers of the unyielding, prayerful support from church leadership. He constantly stressed the need to restore at least some organization in order to make it easier to solve the problems of the church ravaged by repressions and the war.

The authorities did not impede the revival of the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists (AUCSDA). At Grigoriev's request, F. V. Melnik and A. G. Galladzhev were allowed to move to Moscow and take part in the work of the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists. I. V. Polyansky assisted A. G. Galladzhev in moving to Moscow. In a letter to the representative for the Kazakh SSR, N. Sabitov, he wrote:

In Moscow there is the "All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists" – the centre of a widespread and significant religious organization. Currently this center is represented for various reasons only by its chairman, G. Grigoriev. Grigoriev applied to the Council for Religious Affairs for permission for a number of senior officials of the organization to move to Moscow in order to staff its center and improve its efficiency. Alexey Georgiyevich Galladzhev, currently residing in the South-Kazakhstan region, is chosen as one of these workers . . . I ask you to take urgent measures to ensure that Galladzhev gets the pass and other documents necessary to travel to Moscow together with his daughter Rosanna Alekseevna Galladzeva (13–15 years old), without any hindrance. Report to the Council via telegram when executed.⁵⁵

By the autumn of 1945, the first post-war composition of the Administrative Council of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was formed. Under the All-Union Centre they set up an institution of republican commissioners, who started to visit congregations and served as a link between them and the center. They sent letters to Adventist congregations in the Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus and elsewhere, reading:

At its recent meeting on November 21 this year (1945), the All-Union Seventh-day Adventist Council assigned the work functions for the sake of productivity and planned work as follows: G. A. Grigoryev – chairman of the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists; A. G. Galladzhev is his deputy and secretary; F. V. Melnik is a cashier (treasurer). In the forthcoming Week of Prayer, we all have the privilege of offering our prayers to God so that He will continue to help us successfully build, restore or renew the ways for the Eternal Gospel (Isaiah 58:12) so that the ship of our faith keeps travelling under the power of the Holy Spirit unhindered.⁵⁶

In addition, the new management of the All-Union Council of Seventh-day Adventists requested the timely sending of statistical and financial reports to the center, as well as organizing "collection of donations for the needs caused by the destruction during the war and for the widows and orphans of the families of front-line soldiers." They recommended putting the collected money in local state-owned banks, as did the believers of other confessions.

All these efforts produced positive results. In 1946 there were in the USSR 300 congregations with 13,300 members and about 75 ministers. The largest number of them operated in Ukraine, Moldova, and the Baltic States. In the RSFSR only a few congregations were registered, in Moscow, Gorky, Rostov-on-Don, Taganrog, and Stavropol. In Central Asia not a single church was registered.

Correspondence with the leaders of the World Organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church resumed. Grigoryev sent letters to General Conference president Charles Watson, not knowing that his presidential term

had expired in 1936. This fact indicates the degree of isolation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Soviet Union. Immediately after the allies opened the second front, the stream of postal mail rushed into Moscow. Edgar Chernyavsky in his brochure on P. A. Matzanov wrote:

Our brothers abroad knew nothing about the situation of the Church in the Union. All ties were broken, but since the United States entered into an alliance with the USSR in the fight against fascism, brothers started sending letters to the old, known address of the mailbox in Moscow to learn something about the fate of the Church. The mailbox was constantly filled with letters, but there was not a single Adventist who could deal with this correspondence. When Grigoriev returned to Moscow, all this correspondence was handed over to him.⁵⁷

At the same time, unresolved problems in the relationship with the state persisted. Permission to hold a congress to elect leaders was not given. Many Adventist congregations were refused registration, so they actually worked illegally, sometimes seeking formal recognition for years.⁵⁸ P. S. Kulyzhsky recalled:

Unregistered congregations were then in a very difficult situation. Leaders of registered congregations could not attend them, as the authorities did not give them permission to do so. Unregistered congregations did not have the right to apply for their religious center. And so, it turned out that the whole Adventist community was divided in two groups: the sons and stepchildren. This was the situation of unregistered churches in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.⁵⁹

Many state leaders did their best to restore their pre-war policies, aimed at the complete eradication of religion from the life of the Soviet society. The chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs at the Council of Ministers of the USSR, I. V. Polyansky, in his Memorandum to the Central Committee of the AUCP (B) (All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks) of August 31, 1945, expressed extreme concern over the widespread activation of the operations of religious organizations. He writes that,

The growth of religious activity of believers ... is observed everywhere and in all religious groups. In some republics, districts, and regions this growth is slower, and in others it is faster, sectarians (Evangelicals, Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Pentecostals, etc.) are active in one place, and in the other – Muslims, Old Believers, Jews, Catholics, etc. The activity of believers is expressed in the application to the Authorized Council for the registration of religious congregations, the increase in religious rites (baptism, wedding), the involvement of children and youth in the religious activities of a cult, etc.⁶⁰

The chairman of the Council was particularly concerned about young students turning to God. Giving numerous examples of this trend, he, in particular, mentioned that for the previous two to three years a group of the "Seventh-day Adventist sect," consisting of 12 people, had emerged and taken shape among the students of the Dnepropetrovsk Medical Institute.⁶¹

To resume publication of periodicals of the Seventh-day Adventist church, P. A. Matzanov, who had a solid experience in publishing, was invited to move from Riga to Moscow in 1947. From 1929 to 1940, every three months he had published a magazine titled *Review of World Affairs* in Russian. With a circulation of several thousand copies, the magazine was distributed mainly among the Russian population in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

By 1947 the AUCSDA included the following members: G. A. Grigoriev as the chairperson; A. G. Gallaghev as secretary-treasurer; P. A. Matzanov as deputy chairman and editor; F. V. Melnyk; an elder of the Moscow Seventh-day Adventist Church; and B. D. Yakovenko, an authorized representative of the Council for the Ukraine. The AUCSDA office was located at building no. 22, 1st Meshchanskaya street (now Prospekt Mira), next to the Greek Embassy. Grigoriev and Matzanov lived in the same house with their families.

Members of the AUCSDA, using their authority, actively visited congregations and became acquainted with the situation on the ground. Elders and pastors were ordained wherever they were needed. Besides Ukraine, representatives of the AUCSDA were appointed in Moldova, Latvia, and Estonia. All the leading members of the Adventist Church met in Moscow annually to resolve current issues.

A year later, in 1948, permission was received from the Council for Religious Affairs to expand the Council first to 11, and then to 17 people, including the Audit Commission. The expanded Council was called the "Plenum." Such a name was given to this supreme organ of Adventist administration in the USSR, not in accordance with the *Church Manual*, but based on the model of the Soviet state system of administrative-party management that listed a chairman, the presidium, the plenum, and the congress. At the end of 1948, the "Plenum" of the AUCSDA already had 13 members. Its members constantly travelled around the country, facilitating the registration of old and new congregations through local authorities, and recreating the vertical organization of church administration.

One cannot say that all members of the church were satisfied with the established all-union organization. Some did not want to recognize the church leadership, shaped, as they thought, by the will of one person. There were doubts about the legitimacy of the leadership approved by the Council for Religious Affairs. It is true that the post-war church organization was not formed according to the church charter, and the top five church leaders were not elected by delegates sent to the congress from all congregations and conferences. But it should be remembered that there was simply no possibility of holding a congress in line with the canons of the international Seventh-day Adventist Church. The very fact of contacts between church leaders and the state, which was also changing its religious policy and making concessions to many religious organizations and believers, cannot be charged to anyone. These religious leaders, due to the historical circumstances in which they found themselves when they were called to build up the church, are worthy of recognition, for they sincerely and bravely fulfilled their duty to God, the Motherland, and other believers.

Conclusion

Summing up this research, one should emphasize once again how extremely difficult Adventist existence could be in some parts of Europe and how complex is the problem posed by the scarcity of information on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Soviet Union during the period under study. The Church faced the war almost without a head. Church leaders, most pastors, and elders were oppressed. Some organizational activities of the church had not been carried out since 1931, and all of the church's printed publications had been closed.

At the same time, the analysis of the socio-political situation in the country and the nature of state-church relations – painstakingly collected information about the state of religious organizations, including Protestant ones – allows us to conclude that the Seventh-day Adventist Church remained viable, and despite the circumstances related to the war, continued to live its inner life, hidden from external view. Believers gathered together, held worship services, and prayed for their loved ones who had gone to war or were in prison. Inter-congregational ties had practically ceased. Information about the establishment of any centralized church organization in the temporarily occupied territory was not found. It was not possible to find documents reflecting the position of the church leadership in relation to the war. Therefore, in those difficult circumstances, each member of the church acted in accordance with his or her own conscience, trying to be faithful to God and to their civic duty. God led his church through the crucible, and by the end of the war, thanks to a change in state-church relations, it was possible to set up a centralized church-governing body, to establish contacts with all congregations, and to begin the slow and gradual restoration of the church's life.

SOURCES

Abdusamedov, A. I. Aleynik, R. M. Aliyeva B. A. et al. "Soyuz Voinstruyushchikh Bezhbozhnikov SSSR." In *Ateisticheskiy Slovar*, ed. M. P. Novikova. Moscow: Politizdat, 1985, 2nd revised ed., 240–241.

Chernyavskiy, E., P. A. Matsanov. *Fenomen Rukovoditelya Adventistkogo Dvizheniya v Sovietskoy Soyuz*. Riga: Self-published, 1997.

Departmental State Archive of the Ukrainian Security Service (OGA SBU). Fond 1, Description 21, Case 2, List 16.

Duplenskaya, E. N. "Soviet po Delam Religioznykh Kultov pri SM SSSR: Istoriya Sozdaniya, Osnovnye Napravleniya Deyatelnosti." *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy I Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Moscow, 2004.

Fedorenko, F. *Sekty. Ih Vera I Dela*. Moscow: Publishing House of Political Literature, 1965.

Fokin, D. A. "Kak Zhili I Trudilis Veruyushchiye v Voinu: Povsednevnyaya Kultura Protestantov v Period Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny." *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy I Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 12, Collection of articles. Saint Petersburg: Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2016.

Seventh-day Adventist Church Archives in Russia, *Reports of AUCSDA Board meetings*, 1920–1934, Leningrad.

Gosudarstvennyy Arhiv Rossiiskoy Federatsii (GARF) (State Archive of Russian Federation), Fond 6991, Description 3, Case 12, List 99–100.

Heinz, Daniel. "Adventisty Sed'mogo Dnya I Otkaz ot Uchastiya v Voyennyh Deystviyah v Rossiyskoy Imperii." *Dolgiy Put' Rossiyskogo Patsifizma: Ideal Mezhdunarodnogo I Vnurenego Mira v Religiozno-Filosofskoy I Obshchestvenno-Politicheskoy Mysli Rossii*, ed. T. A. Pavlov. Moscow: [n.p.], 1997.

Istoriya Yevangeliskikh Khristian-Baptstov v SSSR. Moscow: Izdatelstvo VSEHB, 1989.

Katin, M. I. "Tretiy Reih: Ideologi Natsizma o Formirovani 'Novoy Religii', ob Otnoshenii k Pravoslavnoy Ruskoj Emigratsii I o 'Novom Religioznom Poryadke' na Okkupirovannoy Sovietskoy Territorii." *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy I Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 10, Collection of articles. Saint Petersburg: Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2014. 62–80.

Krapivin M. Y. and Dalgatov, A. G. "Sektantskiy Antimilitarizm I Problemy Stroitel'stva Rossijskih Vooruzhennyh Sil (1918–1939)," *Vlast', Obshhestvo I Reformy V Rossii (XVI – nachalo XX* Saint Petersburg: [n.p.], 2004.

Kurlyandskiy, I. A. *Stalin, Vlast, Religiya (Religioznyy i Tserkovnyy Factory vo Vnutrenney Politike Sovetskogo Gosudarstva v 1922–1953)*. Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2011.

Nikolskaia, T. K. *Russki protestantizm i gosudarstvennaia vlast v 1905–1991 godah*. St. Petersburg: Publisher House of the Europe University of St. Petersburg, 2009.

Nikolskaya, T. N. "Russkiye Protestanty v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny, 1941–1945." *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy I Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 12, Collection of articles. Saint Petersburg: Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2016.

Odintsov, M. I., Chumachenko, T. A. *Sovet po Delam Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi pri SNK SSSR (SM SSSR) i Moskovskaya Patriarchia: Epoha Vzaimodeystviya i Protivostoyaniya. 1943–1965*. Saint Petersburg: [n.p.], 2013.

Odintsov, M. I., Kochetova, A. S. *Konfessionalnaya politika v Sovietskoy Soyuz v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945*. Moscow, 2014.

_____. "Patrioticheskoye Sluzheniye Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny." *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy i Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 2, Collection of Articles. Moscow: The Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2005. 363–381.

_____. "Sovietskoye Gosudarstvo i Religioznye Organizatsii v SSSR v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945." *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy i Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 12, Collection of articles. Saint Petersburg: The Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2016.

_____. *Vlast I Religiya v Gody Voyny* (Gosudarstvo I Religioznye Organizatsii v SSSR v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945). Moscow: Rossiyskoye Obyedineniye Issledovatelye Religii, 2005.

- Prikazchikova, O.B. "Deyatel'nost Postoyannoy Tsentralnoy Komissii po Voprosam Kultov (1929–1938)." *Vestnik PSTGU II: Istoriya Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi* 31 (2009): 41–76.
- Putintsev, F. M. *Politicheskaya Rol i Taktika Sekty*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Antireligioznoe Izdatel'stvo, 1935.
- Rebein, A. *Po Milosti Tvoey...* Zaokskyy: Istochnik Zhizni, 1997.
- Rossiisky Gosudarstvennyy Arhiv Socialnoy i Politicheskoy Istorii (RGASPI) (Russian State Archive of Social Political History), Fond 17, Description 125, Case 92, List 23–25.
- Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov v Gody Voiny 1941–1945* Collection of documents. Moscow, Krutitskiy courtyard publishing house, 2009.
- Sankt Peterburgskiy Martirolog*. Saint Petersburg, 2002.
- Shkarovsky, M. V. *Politika Tretyego Reiha po Otnosheniyu k Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi v Svete Arhivnykh Materialov 1935–1945 Godov* (collection of documents). Moscow, 2003.
- Teppone, V. V. *Iz Istorii Tserkvi ASD v Rossii*. Moscow: [n.p.], 1990.
- Vedeneyev, D. V. *Ateisty v mundirah. Sovetskiye Spetssluzhby i Religioznaya Sfera Ukrainy*. Moscow: Self Published, 2016.
- Voronin, L. E. *Adventism i Reformism*. Stavropol: [n.p.], 1983.
- Yunak, D. O. *Istoriya Tserkvi Hristian Adventistov Sed'mogo Dnya v Rossii, 1886–1981*, vol. 1 Zaokskyy: Istochnik Zhizni, 2002.
- _____. *Istoriya Tserkvi Hristian ASD v Rossii*, vol. 1. Zaokskyy: Istochnik Zhizni, 2002.
- _____. *Istoriya Tserkvi Khristian ASD v Rossii*, 2 vols. Zaokskyy: Istochnik zhizni, 200
- Zhukalyuk, N. A. *Vsponinayte Nastavnikov Vashih (Istoriya Adventistov Sedmogo Dnya v Litsah)*. Kyiv: Self Published, 1999.

NOTES

1. The name *The Great Patriotic War* will also be used in this article. This is the name used for the war in USSR history textbooks.
2. For more detailed information about this period in state-church relations in the USSR, see I. A. Kurlyandskiy, *Stalin, Vlast, Religiya (Religioznyy i Tserkovnyy Faktor vo Vnutrenney Politike Sovetskogo Gosudarstva v 1922–1953)* (Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2011).
3. For more detailed information about the activities of the Commission on Cults see O.B. Prikazchikova, "Deyatel'nost Postoyannoy Tsentralnoy Komissii po Voprosam Kultov (1929–1938)," *Vestnik PSTGU II: Istoriya Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi* 31 (2009): 41–76.

4. M. I. Odintsov, *Vlast i Religiya v Gody Voyny* (Gosudarstvo i Religioznye Organizatsii v SSSR v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945) (Moscow: Rossiyskoye Obyedineniye Issledovateley Religii, 2005), 12.
5. A. I. Abdusamedov, R. M. Aleynik, B. A. Aliyeva et al., “Soyuz Voinstruyushchikh Bezhbozhnikov SSSR,” in *Ateisticheskiy Slovar*, ed. M. P. Novikova (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985, 2nd revised ed.), 240–241.
6. M. I. Odintsov, “Khozhdeniye po Mukam,” *Nauka i Religiya* 7 (1990): 56, 57.
7. M. I. Odintsov, Kochetova A.S. *Konfessionalnaya Politika v Sovetskom Soyuze v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945* (Moscow, 2014), 24.
8. The seven-day week was returned on June 26, 1940, under the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, “On Shifting to 8-Hour Working Day, Seven-Day Week, and on Prohibiting Unauthorized Leave of Workers and Officers from Factories and Institutions.”
9. For more information about the Adventist church members repressed in the 1930s, see N. A. Zhukalyuk, *Vspominayte Nastavnikov Vashih (Istoriya Adventistov Sedmogo Dnya v Litsah)* (Kyiv: Self Published, 1999); Dmitry O. Yunak, *Istoriya Tserkvi Khristian ASD v Rossii*, 2 vols. (Zaokskyy: Istochnick zhizni, 2002). The Saint Petersburg Martyrology contains information about ten Seventh-day Adventists repressed in that period. See *Sankt-Peterburgskiy Martirolog* (Saint Petersburg, 2002), 404–405.
10. T. K. Nikolskaia, *Russki protestantizm i gosudarstvennaia vlast v 1905–1991 godah* (St. Petersburg: Publisher House of the Europe University of St. Petersburg, 2009), 102.
11. From the memoirs of a daughter of repressed Adventist pastor Anton F. Grinenko, who died in GULAG in 1943. See N. A. Zhukalyuk, *Vspominayte Nastavnikov Vashih*, 133–134.
12. From the Seventh-day Adventist Church Archive, *Reports of AUCSDA Board meetings*, 1920–1934, Leningrad, 235.
13. F. M. Putintsev, *Politicheskaya Rol i Taktika Sekt* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Antireligioznoe Izdatel'stvo, 1935), 405.
14. *Pravda*, June 3, 1941, 1–2.
15. For further information, see M. I. Odintsov, A. S. Kochetova, *Konfessionalnaya politika v Sovetskom Soyuze v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945* (Moscow, 2014). The authors describe in detail practical changes in the position and activities of the Soviet authorities which made a large contribution to the “religious renaissance” in the Soviet Union during the war and promoted widespread patriotic activities of believers and religious organizations, both within the inner regions of the USSR and in the temporarily occupied Soviet territory. They also study the foreign policy factor, which positively affected the religious policy of the Soviet state.

16. M. I. Odintsov, "Sovietskoye Gosudarstvo i Religioznye Organizatsii v SSSR v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945," *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy i Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 12, Collection of articles (Saint Petersburg: The Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2016), 8.
17. M. I. Odintsov, "Patrioticheskoye Sluzheniye Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny," *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy i Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 2, Collection of Articles (Moscow: The Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2005), 363–381.
18. For further details see M. I. Odintsov, A. S. Kochetova, *Konfessionalnaya Politika v Sovietskoy Soyuz v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945*.
19. T. N. Nikolskaya, *Russkiye Protestanty v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945*, 48.
20. It is important to draw attention to this situation, witnessing the existence of objective tendency of related churches to unity, independent from the state.
21. *Istoriya Yevangeliskikh Khristian-Baptstov v SSSR* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo VSEHB, 1989), 229.
22. Ibid.
23. About the foundation and activities of the Council, see M. I. Odintsov, T. A. Chumachenko, *Sovet po Delam Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi pri SNK SSSR (SM SSSR) i Moskovskaya Patriarchia: Epoha Vzaimodeystviya i Protivostoyaniya. 1943–1965* (Saint Petersburg: [n.p.], 2013).
24. M. V. Shkarovsky, *Politika Tretyego Reiha po Otnosheniyu k Russkoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi v Svete Arhivnykh Materialov 1935–1945 Godov* (collection of documents) (Moscow, 2003). Documents on the policy of German authorities towards religious cults in the occupied territory were published in *Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov v Gody Voyny 1941–1945*: Collection of documents (Moscow, Krutitskiy courtyard publishing house, 2009), 519–649. See also: M. I. Katin, "Tretiy Reih: Ideologi Natsizma o Formirovanii 'Novoy Religii', ob Otnoshenii k Pravoslavnoy Russkoy Emigratsii I o 'Novom Religioznom Poryadke' na Okkupirovannoy Sovietskoy Territorii," *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy I Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 10, Collection of articles (Saint Petersburg: Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2014), 62–80.
25. Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvennyy Arhiv Socialnoy I Politicheskoy Istorii (RGASPI) (Russian State Archive of Social Political History), Fond 17, Description 125, Case 92, List 23–25.
26. About the main features of the "new religion" see M. I. Katin, "Tretiy Reih: Ideologi Natsizma o Formirovanii 'Novoy Religii', ob Otnoshenii k Pravoslavnoy Russkoy Emigratsii I o 'Novom Mirovom Poryadke' na Okkupirovannoy Sovietskoy Territorii."
27. M. I. Odintsov, and A. S. Kochetova, *Konfessionalnaya politika v Sovietskoy Soyuz v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny 1941–1945*, 99.
28. The chairman of the Union, G. I. Ponurko, was recognized by the German authorities as the "bishop of the Episcopal church of Christians of Evangelical faith." This title was more common for the German authorities. A significant factor for approving this candidacy was that Ponurko

had spent nine years in prison, suffering for his faith.

29. According to some information, this union ("united Christ's Church") was to include the Seventh-day Adventists. See D. V. Vedeneyev, *Ateisty v mundirah. Sovetskiye Spetssluzhby I Religioznaya Sfera Ukrainy* (Moscow: Self Published, 2016), 122.
30. See *Ibid.*, 122.
31. E. N. Duplenskaya, "Soviet po Delam Religioznyh Kultov pri SM SSSR: Istoriya Sozdaniya, Osnovnye Napravleniya Deyatelnosti," *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy I Sovremennyy Aspekty* (Moscow, 2004).
32. Gosudarstvennyy Arhiv Rossiiskoy Federatsii (GARF) (State Archive of Russian Federation), Fond 6991, Description 3, Case 12, List 99–100.
33. See, for instance, *ibid.*
34. *Istoriya Yevangel'skikh Hristian-Baptistov v SSSR*, 232.
35. A. Rebein, *Po Milosti Tvoyey...* (Zaoksky: Istochnik Zhizni, 1997), 129.
36. D. A. Fokin, "Kak Zhili I Trudilis Veruyushchiye v Voinu: Povsednevnyaya Kultura Protestantov v Period Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny," *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy I Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 12, Collection of articles (Saint Petersburg: Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2016), 69.
37. *Ibid.*
38. The information found in some publications, for instance D. O. Yunak, *Istoriya Tserkvi Hristian Adventistov Sed'mogo Dnya v Rossii, 1886–1981*, vol. 1 (Zaoksky: Istochnik Zhizni, 2002), 328), that G. A. Grigoryev was sent out of Moscow in autumn 1941 and taken to Ulyanovsk, where he lived near Patriarch Aleksiy (Simanskiy), is not completely accurate. In Autumn 1941, Grigoryev, along with leaders of other religious centers, was evacuated to Ulyanovsk. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church of that time, Metropolitan Sergiy (Starogorodskiy), elected as the patriarch only in September 1943, lived there at the same time as well. Metropolitan Aleksiy (Simanskiy) spent the war in blockaded Leningrad and visited Ulyanovsk for only a few days in 1943. He was elected as the patriarch only in January 1945.
39. This and other such "memoirs" have no documented evidence, and therefore can be considered only mythologization of the past.
40. See articles 68, 69, 594, 595 193–13. The Criminal Code of RSFSR. (Moscow: [n.p.], 1938), 36–37, 43–44, 98.
41. M. Y. Krapivin and A. G. Dalgatov, "Sektantskiy Antimilitarizm I Problemy Stroitel'stva Rossijskikh Vooruzhennyh Sil (1918 – 1939)," *Vlast', Obshchestvo I Reformy V Rossii (XVI – nachalo XX)* (Saint Petersburg: [n.p.], 2004), 441.

42. Thus an Adventist minister, I. M. Cherkasov, was convicted for refusing to take up arms twice, during the Soviet-Finn war and the Great Patriotic War. See Yunak, *Istoriya Tserkvi Hristian Adventistov Sed'mogo Dnya v Rossii*, vol. 1, 277.
43. GARF. F.R. – 6992. op. 3. d. 10. l. 69.
44. Letter from Chairman I.V. Polyanskiy to the chairman of the Novgorod regional union, March 8, 1945. State archive of Novgorod Region (GANO). Fond 4110, Description 4, Case 23, List 1.
45. D. Heinz mentions three main reasons why Adventists adopted the principle of refusing to take part in military actions bearing weapons. 1. Conviction that taking part in military activities contradicts the Christian faith, especially the commandment “Thou shalt not kill.” 2. Eschatological tendency to nonconformity and distance from all worldly matters. 3. Unwillingness to profane the Sabbath by doing the service. See Daniel Heinz, “Adventisty Sed'mogo Dnya I Otkaz ot Uchastiya v Voyennykh Deystviyakh v Rossiyskoy Imperii,” *Dolgiy Put' Rossiyskogo Patsifizma: Ideal Mezhdunarodnogo I Vnurenego Mira v Religiozno-Filosofskoy I Obshchestvenno-Politicheskoy Mysli Rossii*, ed. by T. A. Pavlov (Moscow: [n.p.], 1997), 173.
46. Thus, the deputy chairman of the All-Union Council, I. A. Lvov, repressed in 1934, spent over 20 years in the camps and as an exile, and was released only in 1955, 10 years after the end of the war. See N. A. Zhukalyuk, *Vspominayte Nastavnikov Vashih*, 273.
47. *Ibid.*, 272–273.
48. T. N. Nikolskaya, “Russkiye Protestanty v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voiny, 1941–1945,” *Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskiy I Sovremennyy Aspekty*, Issue 12, Collection of articles (Saint Petersburg: Russian Scholars of Religion Union, 2016), 45.
49. Departmental State Archive of the Ukrainian Security Service (OGA SBU). Fond 1, Description 21, Case 2, List 16.
50. Nikolskaya, *Russkiye Protestanty v Gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voiny*, 121.
51. OGA SBU, F. 9, D. 89, L. 105–108. Cited from D. V. Vedeneyev, *Ateisty v Mundirah. Sovietskiye Spetssluzhby I Religioznaya Sfera Ukrainy* (Moscow: [n.p.], 2016), 123.
52. V. Franchuk, *Proshla Rossiya Dozhdy u Gospoda*, vol. 2 (Kyiv: [n.p.], 2002), 364.
53. F. Fedorenko, *Sekty, Ikh Vera I Dela* (Moscow: Publishing House of Political Literature, 1965), 194. Although in some Soviet sources Shelkov is mentioned as “an active aider of Fascists,” specific charges mention only his studying at German language courses and organizing about ten groups of Adventist-Reformers in the region of the Caucasus Mineral Waters. See L. E. Voronin, *Adventism I Reformism* (Stavropol: [n.p.], 1983), 58–59.
54. Dmitry O. Yunak, *Istoriya Tserkvi Hristian ASD v Rossii*, vol. 1 (Zaokskyy: Istochnik Zhizni, 2002), 318.

55. See GARF, Fond 6991, Description 3, Case18, List 1.
56. Cited from Yunak, *Istoriya Tserkvi Hristian ASD v Rossii*, 318–319.
57. See E. Chernyavskiy, P. A. Matsanov, *Fenomen Rukovoditelya Adventistkogo Dvizheniya v Sovietskoy Soyuz* (Riga: Self-published, 1997; typewritten). The first, currently known official message from General Conference president V.G. Branson was sent to P. Matsanov in December 1953. In line with the rules of that time, the letter was initially delivered to the Council for Religious Cults. In it, representatives of the Adventist society in the USSR were invited to take part in the 1954 General Conference session in San Francisco, and if it was not possible, to report the activities of Adventists in the Soviet Union. See GARF, Fond 6991, Description 4, Case 10, List 28, 29, 32, 33.
58. For instance, the Adventist community in Leningrad in 1946 was never registered, despite petitions from A. G. Galladzhev, P. A. Silman, and others. In 1955, A. I. Kholodkov, visiting the community from Moscow, managed to buy a house, but the church was denied registration for the reason that it was a redevelopment area.
59. V. V. Teppone, *Iz Istorii Tserkvi ASD v Rossii* (Moscow: [n.p.], 1990), 124.
60. GARF, Fond 6991, Description 3, Case 10, List 61–73.
61. Ibid.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000