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VOLYN CONFESSORS OF THE “SPIRIT MOVEMENT”: SURVIVAL PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF SOVIET TOTALITARIANISM

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Abstract

The trajectories of the modern “Spirit Movement” affirm qualitatively new phenomena in the Ukrainian evangelical movement and religious life in the region. The rapid development of Pentecostalism in the Volyn region, where a third of all Pentecostals in the Ukraine live, its active entry “into the world” and its capacity for creative contextualization, necessitate a scholarly analysis of the “Spirit Movement.” It is revealed that the Pentecostal movement in the Volyn region during the time of the totalitarian period functioned as an association of Christians united not by institutional context but by a common charismatic experience. The indifferent attitude of its adherents to the societal challenges of the time was an typical identifying characteristic of this movement.

Key words: Volyn region, Pentecostals, religious underground, totalitarian period.

Introduction

The worldwide growth in the number of Evangelical Christian of Holy Pentecostal supporters prompts us to investigate its regional specifics. 2020 was a jubilee year for Pentecostals of the Volyn region since a hundred years ago the pioneers of the Ukrainian Pentecostal movement, Porfyrii Ilchuk, Trokhym Nahornyi, and Yosyp Antoniuk, began anointing the baptized with the Holy Spirit on these territories. Although the Volyn region is traditionally an Orthodox territory, the Protestant boom of the first third of the twentieth century affected the socio-religious situation during the entire totalitarian period in this cultural-historical landscape. The spread of those baptized with the Holy Spirit movement was caused by the social and religious context of the inter-war period. Basically, Pentecostalism established itself as an alternative worldview to the prevailing denomination (Orthodox) in the region. It should be noted that just before the Second World War, the Volyn region was already the location with most of the Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith communities of the whole of Western Ukraine.

The purpose of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Pentecostal movement in the Volyn region during the totalitarian period (1939-1990). **The methodological** basis of the study consists of general scientific principles for the analysis of religious phenomena and processes, that is, objectivity, historicism, impartiality, and ideological and methodological pluralism. During the analysis of archival documents and printed articles, the sociological method of informal (traditional) analysis of documents was used, which involves interpretation of documents--clarification of main thoughts and ideas through, interpretation, generalization of content, and logical substantiation of conclusions--which illuminates the specific features of Pentecostal movements functioning in Volyn region during the indicated time frame (1939-1990).

In the first third of the 20th century, the adherents of the Spirit movement created a missionary model for the realization of church life in the historical and cultural landscape we have identified. In their own understanding, every church member was potentially seen as an evangelist with an inherent vocation and prophetic empowerment, including women. The formation of the need for such a church model was anchored in its adherents through a personal experience of the Holy Spirit alongside eschatological expectations.

However, the totalitarian epoch consolidated a different, episcopal model of the church, which was primarily linked to the need to understand the struggle for its own survival and adaptation in a new, artificially imposed All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (AUCECB), which was established in Moscow in 1945. The leaders of the Holy Spirit movement of the Volyn region were invited to merge with and join this Union. Interestingly, this association was not the invention of the Soviet authorities. Back during World War II, the Nazi authorities demanded that Pentecostals artificially unite with Baptists and abandon the practice of glossolalia (considered as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, “the gift of speaking in tongues,” the main attribute of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which shifts to the center of Pentecostal religious practices).

It is worth noting that the religious policy of the totalitarian state (1949-1990) toward Pentecostals was based on a new model that emphasized control and influence over the leadership and believers, adjusting the internal and external relations of these communities in the direction necessary for the regime. Reinforcing such statements, we should note that the state directed its potencies primarily to the assimilation of the Pentecostal movement in the new centralized union of Protestants. This focus was especially dangerous for Pentecostal believers in the Volyn region, for they basically faced the threat of ending their autonomous development and transforming their own identities.

In spite of pressure and government interference in the creating and functioning of the AUCECB, joining the association provided legal status for Pentecostals, and the clergy were guaranteed to retain their previous “clerical titles”: senior presbyter, presbyter, or deacon. Analogous to the rigid, artificially created structure at the center chaired by the AUCECB Presidium, an organizational structure also began to take shape in the regions. In each region, the association was headed by a senior presbyter, under the control of and reporting to the state authorities (primarily representatives of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults) and, as a consequence, the latter influenced the believers through them. All ministers of the AUCECB, from the national to the local levels, were potentially regarded by the official authorities as its agents. Personal files were created for some of them and they were given agential pseudonyms. The development of a network of agents among Protestant leaders constituted one of the primary tasks set by the state security apparatus for their representatives in the regions, including Volyn.¹ Empirical evidence of this is provided by a document which states:

To change fundamentally our attitude toward joining the agency among the church laymen and the sectarians. We need to get to the point where the overwhelming majority of our agents constitute the leaders and activists of church-sectarian formations. Then we will have few agents, but with these agents we will be able to solve important operational tasks more successfully than before. From among the average believers, only those persons should be involved in intelligence work with the KGB, who according to their data, can in a relatively short time occupy a leading position in church-sectarian groups.²

For the Pentecostals of Volyn region, the fulfilment of the August Agreement of 1945 in practice meant complete assimilation into the newly formed structure. As a result, the religious practices of the “Spirit Movement” were also transformed. In fact, the established goal of achieving liturgical and dogmatic uniformity required the transformation of the religious practices of the religious population of this region. Despite the threats of sanctions in case of non-compliance with the terms of the union from the official authorities, part of the Volyn region’s Pentecostals perceived such a “merger” as their own liquidation. In fact, the

¹ Ирина Панчук, *Релігійно-церковний комплекс Волинського регіону: особливості інституціональних процесів в умовах суспільно-політичних трансформацій (1939р. – початок XXI ст.)*. [The Religious and Church Complex of the Volyn Region: Peculiarities of Institutional Processes in the Context of Social and Political Transformations (1939 - the beginning of the XXI century)]. (Рівне, О.Зень, 2017), p. 157.

² Дмитро Коваль, *Християни віри євангельської Володимирецького району Рівненської області: становлення та розвиток. (1920–1988 роки)* [Christians of the Evangelical Faith of Volodymyrets district of Rivne region: formation and development (1920-1988)]. (Рівне, Дятлик М. С., 2018), pp. 199-200.

official authorities using the structures of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists, included the possibility to liquidate the Pentecostals, describing the movement as

a mystical sect with doctrinal elements which negatively influence the mental state of a person and are capable of various anti-state tendencies (“prophecies”). It was impossible not to consider this sect, which had tens of thousands of its adepts. It was also impractical to register Pentecostal communities on common grounds with the Evangelical Christians-Baptists. The merger of the Pentecostals with the Evangelical Christians-Baptists was therefore a very successful form of issue resolution.³

As an aspect of the struggle to survive and preserve the religious practices of the Spirit Movement's confessors, a new effort to preserve its own identity emerged. Furthermore, it took place among Pentecostals who were members of the Evangelical Christian-Baptists Union, as well as among illegal Pentecostals. First of all, it was based on a maximum adaptation of Pentecostal religious practices to the social reality of the time. Approaches to the process of religious practice organization contained strategies for adaptation by followers of the religious community, which appeared as a carrier of religious experience, value orientations, and behavior patterns in the new historical and cultural circumstances of proclaimed atheism (in Volhyn). As a response to the restrictions and prohibitions of the official authorities, the followers of the Spirit movement developed their own system for evangelization, which facilitated the quantitative growth of their adepts. In particular, members of the baptized with the Holy Spirit movement used birthdays, weddings, and family celebrations as occasions for evangelization. A believer's funeral was also combined with a liturgy.

However, the incorporation into the Evangelical Christian-Baptists Union by Pentecostals, who had competed with the Baptists for a long time, did not contribute to overall unity. Eventually doctrinal and ceremonial differences also appeared. In general, forced merging was in fact only a product of the Soviet reality. The Union's unviability was predictable from the first days of its formation and when the opportunity arose, in the late 1980s, Pentecostals began to leave the artificially created union in large numbers. Glossolalia (which was the main sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit) was one of the stumbling blocks. In fact, for example, one of the provisions of the August Agreement of 1945 was to state that unfamiliar language without interpretation is a fruitless gift, and therefore this

³ Володимир Франчук, *Просила Россия дождя у Господа. Евангельское движения в Евразии. Материалы и документы*. [Russia asked the Lord for rain. The Evangelical movements in Eurasia. Materials and documents]. (Одесса, 2003).

practice should be refrained from during public meetings. It is understandable that this provision caused indignation among Pentecostals and contributed to an increase in conflict.

The cracks in the Union already began to show after its formation. During the years 1946–1948, the newly-formed institution entered a phase of acute internal conflict. The Volyn region was demonstrative in this respect. Pentecostals wishing to leave the AUCECB actively started to seek ways to leave the Union. For this purpose, P. Ilchuk and M. Kalenyk met with communities in the Rivne region and privately tried to line up like-minded people around themselves at secret meetings. On March 16–17, 1948, in Dniprodzerzhynsk, a town of the Dnipropetrovsk region, an unlawful convention of Pentecostal activists was held, with the Volyn region ministers, Representatives P. A. Ilchuk (Hoshcha district, Rivne region) and A. V. Nikitchuk (Zdolbuniv town, Rivne region), present. As a result of this convention, the Pentecostal activists appealed to AUCECB on the premise of a violation of the August Agreement. Subsequently, all the congress participants were arrested. P. Ilchuk and A. Nikitchuk received sentences of 10 years imprisonment under Article 5 “for anti-Soviet activities within a religious sect.” A particular argument of the judgment of conviction was the presence of anti-Soviet literature. For example, during the search of P. Ilchuk, Christian magazines such as “*Light to Enlightenment*,” “*Sower of Truth*,” “*Guest*,” and “*The Way of Faith*” were discovered.⁴

M. Kalenyk took the leadership of “the entire missionary center of Ukraine” after the arrest of the aforementioned Pentecostal leaders.⁵ The newly formed Missionary Center was the central Pentecostal body in Ukraine, consisting of five ministers: chairman – M. Kalenyk (Hoshcha district), deputy – M. Nycheporuk (Poliany village, Berezne district), missionaries: M. Udodyk (Poliany village, Berezne district), Kh. Maksimov (Bohushi village, Berezne district), and I. Prokopchuk (Bronne village, Berezne district). Protection of the doctrine and strict adherence to the Pentecostal doctrines became the organizing principles of the center, which motivated all the believers. For this purpose, during the three years of its operation, the Missionary Center held three meetings of ministers: in August 1948 in Berezne district (attended by 20 people), in the autumn of 1949 in Berezne (attended by 25 people), and in May 1950 in the Vitkovychi village (attended by 20 people).⁶

Therefore, we can see that the Pentecostal communities’ activity never left the agenda of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults. For resolution, it sent the Assistant Senior

⁴ Франчук, *Просила Россия дождя у Господа*.

⁵ *Історія релігії в Україні: у 10 т. Т. 6: Пізній протестантизм в Україні* [History of religion in Ukraine: in Vol. 10 Vol. 6: Late Protestantism in Ukraine]. (Київ; Дрогобич, Коло, 2007), p. 248.

⁶ Коваль, *Християни віри євангельської Володимирецького району*, pp. 248.

Presbyter of the Evangelical Christian-Baptist of the Ukrainian SSR, Ponomarchuk, to the Volyn, Rivne, and Ternopil regions to identify supporters of the Holy Spirit the movement. On the basis of archival analysis, we note that his actions led to the liquidation of a number of Pentecostal communities. In particular, the authorized representative of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults in Rivne region, Voloshkevych, pointed out in December 1949, that

in the village of Shvydkist, Stepan district, Rivne region ... nevertheless, this church has violated and roughly violates the said merger agreement by holding loud prayers, allowing conversations in so-called other languages without interpreters at liturgical services, prophesying in the form of forecasts, wandering preachers, and so on. And this is why ... we disclaim all responsibility and ask you to dismiss and take it off the register.⁷

Similar information was submitted in relation to a church in the Luden village of Rivne region and a the church in the Hlynsk village of Zdolbuniv district.⁸ The Evangelical Christian-Baptist community of the Mykhalyn village of Berezne district of Rivne region, was taken off the register (registered on December 26, 1946) in March 1949 with a statement that their registration was conducted under false conditions (in particular, their Pentecostal orientation was concealed).⁹ A similar situation took place with the Evangelical Christian Baptist community of the Liudyn village of Vysotsk district of Rivne region, where the community was deregistered in June 1949 as having been registered “under false pretense.”¹⁰ Such argumentation for closing the community was applied in the process of de-registration of the Evangelical Christian-Baptist communities in the Brykiv village of Korets district of Rivne region (1949), the Meniatyn village of Sosnovskyi district of Rivne region (1949), the Korost village of Stepan district of Rivne region (1949), the Ploska village of Zarichne district of Rivne region, Verbcha village of Verbskyi district of Rivne region (1951) and the village of Sviatoie of Mizoch district of Rivne region (1953).¹¹ This list is not exhaustive.

As part of the conspiracy, all the ministers of the Missionary Center of Rivne region were arrested and convicted. This caused an increase in the number of Pentecostal communities that became part of the religious underground of Rivne region.

Pentecostalism by its nature is a movement with many theological combinations, with many currents and doctrines, and the ability to manifest charismatic ideas. It is worth noting

⁷ Ibid, p. 250

⁸ Панчук, *Релігійно-церковний комплекс Волинського регіону*., p. 163.

⁹ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.23, p. 1.

¹⁰ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.24, p. 1.

¹¹ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.23, pp. 1-4.

that the confessors of the “Spirit Movement” of Volyn region during the totalitarian period were not monolithic either. The lion's share of them were Pentecostals who joined the AUCECB and illegal Pentecostals (communities that were not registered with state authorities which gave the right for legal meetings to conduct religious practices). It should be stressed that Volyn region had a concentration of Voronaiev Pentecostals (mostly refusing to unite with the Evangelical Christians-Baptists), Zionist Pentecostals, Sabbatarian Pentecostals, and descendants of the Polish Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith, which was coordinated by the East European Mission headed by H. Schmidt (the so-called Pentecostals of Schmidt's direction). The most numerous group that entered the AUCECB of Volyn region were the Voronaiev Pentecostals and Schmidt's Pentecostals. Although we should note that among Pentecostals of both directions, the forced merger with Evangelical Christians-Baptists brought to life an illegal Pentecostal movement which established the idea of social isolationism and formed the Pentecostal believer with an immanent “trench mentality,” to use L. Andronoviene's expression.¹² This, in turn, led to the segregation of Christians of the Evangelical Faith from the rest of Volyn society. Thus, an informational report to the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults, the authorized representative for the Ukrainian SSR (for October-December 1949), focuses attention on the part of the Pentecostals (“Holy Rollers” as they were mostly called by the Baptists), who had not expressed a desire to merge with the Baptists and became illegal. In particular, the authorized representative of the Council for the Rivne region in his report for the fourth quarter of 1949 notes: “I came to the conclusion that the Holy Rollers ‘center’ is the Berezne district, and M. S. Kalenyk is their leader” (Dymytrivka village, Hoshcha district of Rivne region). The document also points out his supporters (“prophetic preachers”): M. Udodyk (Poliany village of Berezne district of Rivne region), I. Prokopchuk (Bronne village of Berezne district of Rivne region), I. Molot (Vytkovychi village of Berezne district of Rivne region), K. Vasylets (Bohushi village of Berezne district of Rivne region), and others. The total number of “Holy Roller” Pentecostals increased due to the intense activity of the “prophetic preachers,” from 511 members (March 1949) to 1,500 members (January 1950).¹³ According to official data for the year 1949, the number of believers who had not joined the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Rivne region was 14,733 people and in the Volyn region 8,697 people.¹⁴

¹² Andronoviene L. Parushev P. “Church, State, and Culture: On the Complexities of Post-soviet Evangelical Social Involvement.” *Theological Reflections: Euro-Asian Journal of theology*. . Vol. 3 (2004): 194-212.

¹³ Франчук, *Просила Россия дождя у Господа*. (Одесса, 2003)

¹⁴ Ibid.

Starting from the late 1940s, Pentecostal leaders began to return from the detention facilities. Imprisonment provided them with a special martyrdom halo. They in fact became the most authoritative, most charismatic ministers and leaders of the movement. Their conception of the world became unquestionable, and therefore incontestable. As M. Mokiienko put it, "...The subjective spiritual experience, the conversion of which expressed itself in loyalty to beliefs becomes a determining factor of the community's centralization."¹⁵ Therefore, the tendency to hierarchy clearly started to dominate, and a significant aspect of the identity of pre-World War II Volyn region Pentecostalism was transformed: the transition from a missional to an episcopal model of church organization.

The second wave of mass returns of Pentecostal leaders took place in the mid-1950s. At one time, they had refused to join the military service, were convicted for "anti-Soviet activities," or were involved in the events of 1948 (Pentecostal movement for withdrawal from the Baptist Union). Thus, in November 1955 Porfyrrii Ilchuk, who had returned from punishment camp, visited a number of Pentecostal communities in the Ternopil region (both illegal and those that had merged with the Evangelical Christians-Baptists) to preach sermons.

As a result, the number of communities operating openly, but without registration, in the Volyn region significantly increased during 1956. Pentecostals began to struggle for self-registration of their communities and the recognition of their own religious center. In the Evangelical Christians-Baptists communities of the Volyn region, leadership transitions to Pentecostals began to dominate. This is empirically confirmed by archival materials. For example, a report states, "Pentecostals dominate in the Evangelical Christians-Baptists community of the Ilin village of the Hoshcha district, seizing influence in society, they introduce dogmas and rituals of the Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) at prayer meetings and in this regard, they grossly and systematically violate legislation on cults."¹⁶

In addition, small Pentecostal unions operated in deep cover. For example, Evangelical Christians Saints Zionists were revealed in the Rivne region (1950). They were only known to have been active in Polissia until 1940. Sabbatarian Pentecostals functioned in Volyn. These groups were so few in number that the officials in their reports suggested that

¹⁵ М. М. Мокієнко, "П'ятидесятництво: особливості богословської та соціальної ідентифікації." Спеціальність 09.00.14 – богослов'я. [Pentecostalism: features of theological and social identification. Specialization 09.00.14 – Theology], p. 402.

¹⁶ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.11, file.101, p. 49; Ірина Панчук, *Релігійно-церковний комплекс Волинського регіону*., pp. 168-169.

the members of this religious community would disappear by themselves. Evangelical Christians Pentecostal Zionists were active in the Volyn part of the Ternopil region. It is difficult to speak about the quantitative composition of such communities in the Volyn region, given their illegitimate status and desire to hide any information about themselves from local authorities, but we note that the Pentecostal presence was pervasive in this region. Eventually, in this process, unwillingness to register such communities was not only determined by the official authorities; religious leaders themselves viewed this procedure as an act of state interference in internal church matters, which was regarded by believers as a deviation from the purity of the faith. Thus, the party functionaries aimed to destroy the congregational structure of the minority churches by limiting opportunities for social activity, regulating community lifestyle patterns, and forcing believers to engage in “underground activity.” We believe that interference by the official authorities on religious matters was the main reason for the creation of the religious underground. After all, the deep religious convictions of most Protestant believers were impossible to eradicate either by means of violence (repression), ideology (the image of the “sectarian enemy”) or administration and organization (requirement of legal functioning within an authorized legal religious union).

On August 15-20, 1956, at the Congress in Kharkiv city, in the presence of representatives from different regions of Ukraine (although, practically with the absence of representatives from the western regions of Ukraine, except for Moisei Murza from the Rivne region),¹⁷ a new system of doctrines was adopted, the “Articles of faith system of Christians of Evangelical faith.” The activation of the illegal Pentecostal movement was the trigger for such institutional changes. In addition, important decisions of the Congress included: the revival of the activities of the independent Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (based on an official letter of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults requesting registration of Pentecostal communities); the adoption of the common name – Christians of the Evangelical Faith; and the development of ways of activation of the illegal communities, For a Pentecostal believer, service in the Soviet army was declared not a sacred duty to the homeland, but a matter of conscience.¹⁸

However, the pressure on the Pentecostals remained high. With the assistance of the official authorities, the local media of the Volyn region began a massive information attack on supporters of the movement of those baptized with the Holy Spirit. Sometimes these publications were clearly absurd and aimed primarily at discrediting the morality of believers.

¹⁷ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.78, p. 65.

¹⁸ Панчук, *Релігійно-церковний комплекс Волинського регіону*: p. 169.

In addition, attention was focused on the rare cases of Pentecostal believers' cooperation with the German authorities or the nationalist underground in order to discredit them publicly. That contributed to the image of the Pentecostals in official documents and the press as a guileful enemy of their homeland, who refused "to defend the homeland with arms in his hands" and who did not participate "in public and political life."¹⁹ Denouncing the presbyters of these religious communities caused a reputational blow against these Pentecostal communities. Alongside "leadership of forbidden sects," leaders were also accused of a "parasitic lifestyle." For following such a "scheme," Vasyl Shevchuk, a Presbyter of the unregistered Pentecostal community (separated from the Evangelical Christians Baptists in 1957) of the Verba village of Dubno district, was convicted in 1961.²⁰ In the Rivne region, law enforcement bodies and the state security services brought 26 people to trial under similar accusations in one year.²¹ According to reports of a senior Evangelical Christians-Baptists presbyter, at the beginning of 1967, there were 25 unregistered communities of Pentecostals in the region.²² The total number of congregants was more than 800 people.²³

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, despite differences in the doctrine and cultic religious practices of the AUCECB, the confessors of the spirit movement began to express their concern about a new wave of affiliations to the Union. It should be noted that such affiliations, despite the concerns of the leaders of the Pentecostal religious underground, had become a means to legitimize activity. However, it did not solve the problem of the Pentecostal underground, and in the Volyn region it remained the most numerous among the forbidden religious traditions, and those who merged in most cases disobeyed the leadership of legal communities and subsequently adhered to Pentecostal religious practices. Empirical data indicate that 1,285 Pentecostal believers came from the religious underground to registered communities in the Rivne region during the 1970s.²⁴

¹⁹ І.І.Панчук, *Інституціональні процеси в релігійно-церковному комплексі Волинського регіону в умовах суспільно-політичних трансформацій (1939 – початок XXI ст.)*. – Спеціальність 09.00.11 – релігієзнавство [The institutional processes in the religious-church complex of the Volyn region in the conditions of social and political transformations (1939 – the beginning of the XXI century). Specialty 09.00.11 – Religious Studies.]. (Kyiv: НПУ ім. М. П. Драгоманова, 2018), p.191.

²⁰ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.106, p. 27.

²¹ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-688, exposition.13, file.370, p. 55.

²² In the city of Rivne, Behen village, Kornyn village, Shpaniv village, Voloshky village, Cherepashnyk village, Oleksandriia village, Bystrychi village, Poliiany village, Malynsk village, Hrushivka village (Berezhne region), Kolodiivka village (Hoshcha region), Verba village, Pereniayn village (Dubno region), Hlynsk village, Tsurkiv village, Stepanivka village, Novomalynsk village (Zdolbuniv region), Hlazheva village, Solomka village (Kostopil region), Kurazh village, Moshchanytsia village (Ostroh region), Tynne village, Chabel village (Sarny region) and the Zionist Pentecostals at the Sribne village and Honoradka village.

²³ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.145, p. 48.

²⁴ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.275, p. 13.

It should be noted that the functioning of the Pentecostal religious underground remained a persistent problem in the reports of the Councils. In order to reduce its radical wing, the practice of isolated registration (subject, of course, to a lack of institutionalization within the governing center) of religious communities of the Spirit Movement's supporters was adopted by the official authorities. Thus, communities of Christians of Evangelical Faith were registered in the villages of Poliany, Krasnosillia, Zbuzh, and Kurazh of Rivne region,²⁵ and after 1976, the Rivne Pentecostal group was autonomously registered.²⁶ Some Pentecostal leaders also decided to take advantage of the possibility of autonomous registration. They planned to create a separate department within the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the future.²⁷

However, relations with the leaders of the registered communities remained quite difficult. One of the well-known ministers of unregistered Pentecostals of Volyn, H. Filimonchuk, wrote in his memoirs that during the congress of unregistered Pentecostals in the town of Lutsk (late 1960s-early 1970s), a well-known preacher from the Rivne region with his son was not allowed into the building where the preachers and presbyters gathered, because he belonged to the Baptist Union. At that Congress it was decided "not to communicate with the registered churches, not to participate in the breaking of the bread with them, and not to attend their meetings."²⁸ In fact, this event was the first organizational congress of unregistered Pentecostals in western Ukraine.

In the early 1970s (1972) unregistered Pentecostals of the Volyn region institutionalized themselves into the Western Brotherhood. Three bishops were elected: F. Artyshchuk in Novovolynsk, V. Boiechko in Lviv, and O. Hryshchuk in Rivne. Moreover, the official authorities tried to use the influence of Pentecostal spiritual leaders for "preventive" work in a potentially emigrant environment. In the late 1970s, this movement became significantly more active and was positioned in the Volyn region as an active form of resistance to the "anti-evangelical legislation." The mass appeal of 69 families from the village of Zhadeni of the Dubrovitsa district (in 1977, and subsequently 31 families again in 1978) to the government regarding emigrating abroad is an empirical confirmation of this.²⁹ This movement was eventually destined to defeat. Although on the one hand, the West

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.258, p. 25.

²⁷ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.262, p. 14.

²⁸ Дмитро Коваль, *Християни віри євангельської Володимирецького району Рівненської області: становлення та розвиток. (1920–1988 роки)* [Christians of the Evangelical Faith of Volodymyrets district of Rivne region: formation and development (1920-1988)]. (Рівне, Дятлик М. С., 2018), pp. 299.

²⁹ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-204, exposition.12, file.275, p. 48.

supported this as one of the means of putting pressure on the USSR, the West was primarily interested in the emigration of the intellectual elite, and the Pentecostals, for the most part, had no higher education at all, and thus no prospect of enriching Western intellectual space. In addition, Pentecostals traditionally had large families, and this was a kind of social burden for the country to which they wanted to emigrate. Criminal charges awaited the campaigners for the “emigration of believers from the USSR due to religious motives” movement. For example, in 1983, Rivne Regional Court considered a case on the charge of the believer of Christians of Evangelical Faith, V. S. Shyliuk, who “conducted emissary trips to various parts of the country in order to spread emigration sentiments among the believers and to meet with other leaders of this . . . campaign.”³⁰ He was sentenced to imprisonment for three years for such actions, as well as for producing “handwritten pieces in verse, prose and printed texts...discrediting the Soviet state and social order.”³¹

Thus, as a consequence of Soviet interference in the immanent functioning of the Spirit Movement’s, some Pentecostals entered the religious underground, which in terms of diversity and number of believers was not inferior to the registered cells. Indeed, the deep religious convictions of most Pentecostal believers could not be eradicated either forcibly (repression), ideologically (the image of the “sectarian enemy”) or administratively and organizationally (the requirement that the group operate within a legal religious union with the introduction of increasing restrictions on religious activity). In such a way Pentecostals have tried to form or have formed their own subculture. The latter was a social space in which members of the Protestant subculture avoided the rest of society and lived in isolation and tried to work together with like-minded people. Atheistic propaganda was used in Soviet society to create a negative myth about “sectarians” in society, especially their leaders. In particular, this was clearly reflected in the Volyn region through a barrage of anti-religious publications in the local media, lectures, exhibitions and antagonistic pamphlets. These publications highlighted the fanaticism of believers, which often led to both physical and mental illness (according to documentary evidence and testimonies of participants). As a consequence, a negative myth about Pentecostals was cultivated in the public consciousness, causing social indifference and making a social identification of believers impossible, which led to the simplification of the identification characteristics of believers.

³⁰ State Archives of Rivne region, fund R-688, exposition.13, file.392, p. 73.

³¹ Ibid, p. 73-74.

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