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# RELIGIOUS REVIVAL OF PENTECOSTALS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE IN 1941-1943

By Anton Shchelkunov and Svetlana Karpova

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## Annotation

The article studies the Pentecostal religious revival during the German occupation of the territory of the Ukrainian SSR. The study reveals that the Pentecostal religious organization, destroyed as a result of the Stalinist repressions, revived rapidly in 1941-1943. Analyzing the religious revival of Pentecostals, the authors of the article come to the following conclusions. 1) In the specific conditions of the Nazi occupation, an episcopal structure emerged among the Soviet Pentecostals, which is not otherwise characteristic of this religious movement. 2) At first, the occupation authorities were neutral or supportive of Pentecostals and did not interfere with the activities of Pentecostal communities; however, in the summer of 1943, the policy of the occupiers became extremely inconsistent. In some regions, the occupiers banned activities of Pentecostals, and, in others, they tried to use the group for propaganda purposes. 3) At the initial stage of the religious revival, the Pentecostals set themselves the task of uniting with other branches of Evangelical Christians, principally with the Baptists. Differences in the missionary approaches of the churches, however, led Pentecostals to have conflict with the Baptists, who in turn attracted the Nazis to their side and contributed to the repression against the Pentecostals. This conflict was one of the factors that shaped the relationship between Pentecostals and Baptists in the post-war period. 4) During the occupation, the leaders of the Episcopal Church did not display vivid anti-Soviet or pro-Nazi sentiments. This research results are important for understanding the history of Pentecostals and Protestantism in general, in the USSR and in the post-Soviet space.

Keywords: Pentecostals, Episcopal Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith, religious revival, occupation, the Great Patriotic War.

## Introduction

Pentecostals are one of the largest Protestant movements in the post-Soviet era, which unites several hundred thousand believers. Despite the large following of the Pentecostal movement and its social weight in the post-Soviet space, the religious revival of Pentecostals during the Nazi occupation, and what obstacles it faced, has been studied very little. The historiography of the revival of Pentecostalism during the years of occupation is meager. Scholarship is limited to the work of V. I. Franchuk, which has a pronounced apologetic

character;<sup>1</sup> the work of A. T. Moskalenko, published in 1973, in which the story of the religious revival of the Pentecostals is presented in an extremely biased way;<sup>2</sup>; the work of M. I. Odintsov and A.S. Kochetova, which examines not the process of the religious revival of Pentecostals in the occupied territories, but the inclusion of Pentecostals in the Soviet system of church-state relations in 1944-1945;<sup>3</sup> and dissertation research by T. V. Grusheva, which simply states the very fact of a religious revival in the occupied territories of Ukraine.<sup>4</sup>

A large number of scholarly works are devoted to the process of the religious revival of the Orthodox Church during the years of occupation, while the revival of unorthodox religious organizations in many respects remains a blank spot in historiography. This article is an attempt to fill the existing gap.

In the collective memory of Ukrainian and Russian Pentecostals, the religious revival of 1941-1943 is almost completely absent. The informal, oral, and family history of the revival also has not seemed to survive.<sup>5</sup>

In the late 1920s in the USSR, there were several hundred communities of Evangelical Christians in Ukraine, in the central regions of Russia, in Siberia, in the Caucasus, and the Urals. In 1930-1932, the formal Pentecostal religious organization was destroyed. Spiritual leaders were repressed, with many dying, including the founder of the Pentecostal movement in the USSR, I. E. Voronaev. By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, there was not a single legally operating Protestant community in the territory of the eastern regions of the Ukrainian SSR.<sup>6</sup> The Pentecostals were no exception. Some kind of religious life could only exist underground, under the constant threat of repression.

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<sup>1</sup> Франчук, В. И. *Просила Россия дождя у Господа. – Т. 1-2* (Ровно, 2002), с. 641 – 647. [Franchuk, V. I. *Russia asked the Lord for rain.* (Rovno, 2002) pp. 641 – 647].

<sup>2</sup> Москаленко, А. Т. *Пятидесятники* (Москва, 1973), с. 68 – 70. [Moskalenko, A. T. *Pentecostals.* (Moscow, 1973), pp. 68 – 70].

<sup>3</sup> Одинцов, М.И., Кочетова, А.С. *Конфессиональная политика в Советском Союзе в годы Великой Отечественной войны 1941–1945 гг.* (Москва, 2014), с. 263 – 284. [Odintsov, M.I., Kochetova, A.S. *Confessional policy in the Soviet Union during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.* (Moscow, 2014), pp. 263 – 284].

<sup>4</sup> Грушевая, Т. В. *Советское государство и секта пятидесятников в Украине (начало 1920-х- 1991 гг.)*. автореферат диссертации на соискание ученой степени кандидата исторических наук (Запорожье, 2000), с. 13. [Grusheva, T. V. *Soviet state and the Pentecostal sect in Ukraine, early 1920s-1991.* Dissertation abstract for the degree of candidate of historical sciences. (Zaporozh'ye, 2000), p.13].

<sup>5</sup> Shchelkunov A. "Religious revival in 1941–1943 in the family and collective memory of the Christian Church of the evangelical faith" *Holocaust Studies: A Ukrainian Focus*, Vol. 11., 2020, pp. 140 – 149. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33124/hsuf.2019.11.06>

<sup>6</sup> Sectoral state archive of the Security Service of Ukraine. Found. 1. Inventory. 1. File. 1104. Page. 134 – 135. ("File" hereinafter – "F"; " Page" hereinafter – "P").

## **Restoration of a Religious Organization**

On the eve of the war, some active members of the All-Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith were free, including presbyters: G. G. Ponurko, D. I. Ponomarchuk, S. P. Gulyaev, D. Kh. Boyun and D. D. Trukhanov. All of them were members of the Administration of the All-Ukrainian Union CEF created in the 1920s by I. Voronaev. Presbyters Ponurko and Ponomarchuk, who were repeatedly convicted for their religious beliefs, led the process of rebuilding the Pentecostal religious organization. G. Ponurko spent a total of 9 years in the Gulag camps, and D. Ponomarchuk spent 6 years in exile in the Far North. At the end of 1941, they began to contact the German occupation authorities in order to legitimize the resurgent Pentecostal religious communities.

To simplify organizational contacts and give weight in the eyes of the occupation administration, presbyters Ponurko and Ponomarchuk were elected bishops at the congress on October 2, 1942, which was held in Dnepropetrovsk under the chairmanship of presbyter D. F. Boyun. However, apparently, such an innovation, as the appearance of bishops and the possibility of building a centralized hierarchical structure along the lines of Orthodox churches, caused no understanding, and perhaps even discontent among many Pentecostals. Therefore, in less than a month, on November 1, 1942, a new congress was assembled.

The second congress, which took place on November 1-2, 1942, in the city of Pyatikhatki, became the founding congress of the revived Pentecostal religious organization, which was called the Episcopal Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith in Ukraine (ECCEFU). It was attended by 35 delegates from the communities of Dnepropetrovsk, Kirovograd, and Poltava regions. The undisputed leader and architect of the new organizational structure of the Pentecostals was Gavrilo Ponurko. At the beginning of the congress, he was called either “the commanding presbyter of the Pyatikhat Church,” or “representative of the entire brotherhood of the Churches of Christians of the Evangelical Faith,” or “bishop - representative of all churches.”<sup>7</sup> This may indicate that, between the first and second conventions, his bishop’s title was not yet recognized by all communities. The work of this congress was directly led by Ponurko himself, who was elected chairman. At this congress, the need for the existence of bishops in the specific historical conditions of the German occupation was confirmed. However, the power of the bishops was limited by the creation of an "Episcopal College" of 13 members. G. Ponurko was elected bishop-chief of the Episcopal College, with D. I. Ponomarchuk elected bishop deputy chief. The Episcopal College also included: Secretary

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<sup>7</sup> State Archives of Security Service of Ukraine in Dnipro (hereinafter SA SSU in Dnipro). F. II-21827. P. 130

of the College I. Poddubny, Treasurer, I. Zhuravel, Presbyters S. Gulyaev, D. Boyun, D. Trukhanov, I. Luginets, T. Bessarab, F. Shokalo, D. Tryukhan, P. Lavrik and A. Bidash. According to the decision of the congress, the Episcopal College had all the spiritual and economic powers of a permanent governing body of the churches of Christians of the Evangelical faith. The Episcopal College was located in the village of Pyatikhatka.<sup>8</sup>

At this congress, a number of important decisions were made, which would lead to the restoration of the destroyed religious organization and further successful missionary activity. The pre-war, underground existence of communities may have had a negative impact on liturgical practices, in that the influence of folk traditions inevitably led to the formation of ritual practices far from conventional Christianity. Therefore, at the congress it was decided “to develop, on the strictest basis of the word of God, uniform rules for the performance of all religious rites and send them to places.”<sup>9</sup> During the war years, however, uniformity in worship was never achieved, especially as at all Pentecostal congresses it was said that discord in church services leads to negative consequences. Apparently, the lack of clergy, due to pre-war repressions, led to misguided behavior among believers, so it was decided that “the fulfillment of sacred requirements: baptism, breaking bread, marriages and others by non-ordained brothers is considered unacceptable.”<sup>10</sup> The right to appoint and ordain new clergy belonged exclusively to the Episcopal College. However, it was not possible to quickly or systematically eliminate such problems since the Episcopal College has been made to reiterate the inadmissibility of performing rites by non-ordained clergymen.

In total, during the Nazi occupation, the Pentecostals held 5 congresses, which they themselves often called “sobor,” apparently wanting to distance themselves from such events held by the Soviet authorities: 1) in Dnepropetrovsk, October 2, 1942; 2) in Pyatikhatki, November 1-2, 1942; 3) in Kamensky (Dneprodzerzhinsk), March 2, 1943; 4) in Alexandria, June 20, 1943; 5) in Kamensky (Dneprodzerzhinsk), September 1-2, 1943.

During the occupation, Pentecostals carried out active missionary work. In June 1941, there was not a single legally operating community; by October 1942, there were about 200 churches with a declared total number of believers of 5,000.<sup>11</sup> In July 1943, about 350 communities were already operating on the territory of Ukraine with a total number 10,000 believers;<sup>12</sup> thus, in just six months, the total number of Pentecostals doubled.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.133.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.137.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.143.

In the context of the rapid growth of the Pentecostal Church members and congregation, an attempt was made to convene an all-Ukrainian congress, but the German occupational authorities forbade it. Then, under the guise of a congress of the Alexandria region, a kind of general congress of Pentecostals was held, which took place on July 20, 1943, in the city of Alexandria. 41 people attended, representing communities from Kirovograd, Poltava, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa, and Donetsk regions. At this congress, the charter of the Episcopal Church of Evangelical Christians was formally adopted.

This congress also discussed the problems that arose during missionary work. The first, and most acute, was the shortage of clergy. For example, the missionary Slobodyanyuk "serves with the gospel of Christ 20 churches that are located at a great distance from one another"; and Ishchenko, the missionary of the Gayvoronovsky district (some areas of modern Vinnitsa, Odessa, and Kirovograd regions) "serves 17 churches with up to 600 members."<sup>13</sup> During the entire occupation, the personnel issue was very acute and was never fully resolved. In total, during the occupation, "more than 100 people were ordained as priests."<sup>14</sup> However, given the dynamics of growth in the number of Pentecostals, this number of clergymen could not satisfy the needs of all communities for spiritual guidance and regular religious rituals. In connection with this, there was also an acute problem of religious education for both ordinary believers and potential clergy. Therefore, with the revived and newly created Pentecostal communities, Sunday schools for children, "Christian youth circles," and "sister circles" for women were actively created. The Pentecostals tried to cover all age groups of their co-religionists with spiritual enlightenment, but this was not enough to solve the acute personnel problem of the Pentecostal church at that time. In order to train ministers of the church, the Episcopal College tried to create Bible courses for preachers and regency courses. However, under the conditions of occupation, the implementation of these educational projects was not possible. Bible courses were never created, and the regency courses, which were nevertheless organized in Kamensky (Dneprodzerzhinsk), could only be attended by Pentecostals living in this city. It was not possible for believers from other places to attend these courses.<sup>15</sup>

As early as 1942, the Episcopal College made a "petition to the government in Ukraine for permission to issue bibles, gospels, song books and other spiritual literature."<sup>16</sup> However, the Nazis pursued a deliberate policy of preventing the importation of the Bible and other

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.144.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

Christian literature to the occupied Soviet territories. Therefore, in September 1943, acknowledging the impossibility of obtaining “spiritual Orthodox literature,” it was decided to print on their own literature, at least “the charter of the CEF brotherhood, the charter of the Christian youth and the charter of sister circles, as well as the dogma and send it to all churches.”<sup>17</sup> Due to the fact that Ukraine was, at that time, the arena of military operations, however, this initiative also failed.

### **The Relationship of Pentecostals with the German Occupation Authorities**

The Nazis did not develop a unified strategy regarding religious policy in the occupied Soviet territories. In general, the German occupation authorities treated the Pentecostals favorably and did not try to forcibly unite them with the Baptists, as was done in the Third Reich before the war.<sup>18</sup> As stated in the Episcopal College: “There are no obstacles from the authorities anywhere, they even assist in providing premises for prayer houses and freeing church ministers from labor service.”<sup>19</sup> However, much depended on the concrete German official, and, after military defeats at the front and the beginning of total mobilization in the Third Reich, the attitude towards Pentecostals was changing. Some representatives of the occupying power tried to use the Pentecostals for propaganda purposes.

At the Pentecostal convention in Alexandria on June 20, 1943, representatives of the occupation administration were present. At the beginning of the congress, a “prayer of thanksgiving was made for the granted freedom of religion,” after which “all delegates and guests for the permission of the congress express gratitude to the *gebitskommissar* by standing up through the authorized representatives from the commissar.”<sup>20</sup> However, mainly intra-religious problems were discussed at this congress. Perhaps some statements of loyalty and support for the occupiers on the part of the Pentecostals could have taken place at the congress in Kamensky (Dneprodzerzhinsk) on March 2, 1943. A similar assumption can be made from the fact that the Episcopal College destroyed all the materials and documents from this congress; the only record of it is in some other documents. The Ukrainian historian O. Korotaiev, referring to the documents of the Soviet secret services, claims that G. Ponurko was an agent of the Gestapo, and the Episcopal Church of KhEV worked in close cooperation with

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>18</sup> Oleksandr Korotaiev, "The Work of the Nazi Special Services Among the Protestants of the Reichkommissariat Ukraine (According to the Top-secret Materials of the NKVD-NKGB)," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*: Vol. 41: Iss. 8, Article 2, 2021. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol41/iss8/2>.

<sup>19</sup> SA SSU in Dnipro, F. II-21827. P. 133.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

and under the control of the Gestapo and the Ministry of Propaganda. He cites the active cooperation of a number of presbyters with the occupation authorities.<sup>21</sup> However, G. Ponurko was not accused by the Military Tribunal of collaboration with the Gestapo. He was convicted in August 1945, under Article 54-10, of anti-Soviet agitation using the religious prejudices of believers.<sup>22</sup> In our opinion, there is no evidence in the documents of the investigation and court that G. Ponurko was an agent of the Gestapo. When analyzing religious life in the occupied Soviet territories, it is important to critically approach the black-and-white scheme created by the Soviet state security agencies, later enshrined in the narrative of the Great Patriotic War. According to this heroic myth, people in the occupied territories could only behave in two ways: either to actively cooperate with the occupiers, or to fight heroically against the occupiers and their collaborators. In our opinion, the reality is much more complicated. People forced to live under occupation often defended their personal or group interests not related to the victory or defeat of one of the parties to the conflict. Representatives of all confessions sought to revive a full-fledged religious life, while among them there were only a few active collaborators. While some *gebitskommisars* tried to use the Pentecostals for propaganda purposes and increase the loyalty of the local population, others prohibited the activities of the Pentecostals.

In the Nikolaev general region, the activities of Pentecostals were prohibited. The ban on their activities was the result of a conflict between Pentecostals and Baptists. One of the target groups of the missionary activity of the Pentecostals was the Baptists, who began to move into the communities of the Episcopal Church, which naturally did not please the Baptist leadership. The leader of the Baptists of the Nikolaev region, F. Mitryaev, was, for some reason, in good standing with the invaders, so the Germans took the side of the Baptists. The local *gebitskommisar* demanded that the Pentecostals join the Baptists and recognize Mitryaev as their leader. The Pentecostals rejected this claim. As a result, in the summer of 1943, the occupation authorities of the Nikolaev general region banned Pentecostal activities in the controlled territory. The presbyters I. Luginets and F. Sherstyuk, who were sent by the Episcopal College to organize the Nikolaev diocese, were arrested and held in custody until April 1944, when they were released in Odessa by units of the Soviet army.<sup>23</sup> During the same summer, the activity of Pentecostals in the Nikopol was banned. Bishop-chief G. Ponurko arrived to settle the conflict with the occupation administration. Upon arrival in Nikopol, he

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<sup>21</sup> Korotaiev, *op. cit.*, "The Work of the Nazi Special Services Among the Protestants of the Reichkommissariat Ukraine, pp. 21-23. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol41/iss8/2>.

<sup>22</sup> SA SSU in Dnipro. F. II-21827. Pp. 100-123.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62- 63.

was also arrested. He, and the Pentecostals in general, were accused of "working among the faithful for the strengthening of Soviet power." Ponurko explained that this was not the case.<sup>24</sup> This position satisfied the Germans, and G. Ponurko was released. The occupation authorities of Nikopol came to the conclusion about the pro-Soviet activities of the Pentecostals because some "well-wishers" showed the Nazis the statement of the Union of CEF from 1926, in which the Pentecostals declared their loyalty to the Soviet authorities. Who exactly did this is not indicated in the documents. However, Nikopol borders on the Mykolaiv region, so it can be assumed that the ban on the activities of the Pentecostals was the result of the influence of the Baptists, who wanted to liquidate the competing Protestant church with the help of the Nazis and slandered the Pentecostals to accomplish that end.

### **The Relationship between Pentecostals and Baptists and the Question of Their Unification**

At the beginning of its activity, the Pentecostal Episcopal Church considered the possibility of uniting with other non-orthodox Christian denominations. Already at the founding congress, on November 2, 1942, the "Resolution on the unity of all Christians of the Episcopal Church of CHEV with other Christian movements" was adopted.<sup>25</sup> In it was said: "about the need for our prayer for this unity and the aspiration of all Christians of the Evangelical faith and unity with all the children of God on earth, such as Baptists, Evangelists, Christians, Mennonites, and others... On this issue, all those present at the council with joyful faces and eyes full of tears of joy unanimously accepted the clarifications with warnings."<sup>26</sup> Thus, at the initial stage of the church revival, the Pentecostals considered it desirable and necessary to unite with the Baptists. At this council, A. Bidash, the future leader of the Pentecostals and an implacable opponent of association with the Baptists, was present and accordingly voted "for" the association. However, the question of a possible association was soon removed. The active missionary activity of the Episcopal Church of CEF led to the transition of many Baptists to Pentecostalism. For example, V. Belykh, the future leader of the late Soviet and post-Soviet Pentecostals, describes in his memoirs how he, together with a group of Baptists, converted to Pentecostalism in 1943.<sup>27</sup> Such missionary activity led to some

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-20b.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>27</sup> Бельх, В.И. По следам Христовым (воспоминания) [Belykh, V.I. *Po sledam Khristovym (vospominaniya)* [In the footsteps of Christ (memoirs)]. Available at: <https://phchurch.org/articles/2017/5/25/--1>

tension between the Pentecostals and the Baptists, so the Baptists turned to the occupying authorities for help. The Nazis tried to solve the problems by way of arrests and bans. Thus, the involvement of the Nazi repressive apparatus in interfaith confrontation aggravated the contradictions between Pentecostals and Baptists and undermined trust between them, thereby destroying the basis for a possible unification.

### **Comprehension of Stalin's Anti-Religious Policy among Pentecostals.**

Stalin, along with the entirety of Soviet leadership, were convinced that religious citizens were sworn enemies of the USSR. During the Great Patriotic War, Christian denominations demonstrated that the myth of their anti-Soviet-ness was nothing more than a convenient excuse for mass anti-religious repressions. However, the topic of persecution was painful for religious Soviet citizens. During his arrest, G. Ponurko was found to have a poem on his person, dedicated to the memory of Pentecostals, who were repressed by the Soviet state for their religious beliefs. The verse, by an unknown author, was written during the occupation, as a swastika is depicted on a notebook sheet. The presence of a swastika on such a personal document indicates the understanding of the *Wehrmacht's* victories as a kind of Providence of God. However, in the poem itself there is no anti-Soviet rhetoric, there is only a chanting of the religious feat of people who suffered for their Christian faith. It reads:

You suffered in prisons and exile,  
You know the bonds of chains,  
You have experienced many sorrows  
From proud treacherous people.  
Everyone died without a murmur  
They prayed to the creator for the enemies ...  
... We will never forget you  
Fighters for the freedom of Christ  
We honor your memory  
Let's Praise Jesus Christ.<sup>28</sup>

The author of this poem understood the suffering of his co-religionists exclusively in a religious spirit, as the fulfillment of God's plan. Stalinist repressions took place, not because the Soviet government is wholly evil, but because it should be so, since the world does not accept the true followers of Christ; the victims of the Stalinist terror suffered for their faith, just like the first disciples of Christ. In a similar vein, Chief Bishop G. Ponurko explained the

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<sup>28</sup> SA SSU in Dnipro., F. II-21827. Package of documents.

reasons for the defeat of the pre-war Union CEF to his co-religionists: “since 1929, due to some reasons beyond our control, it began to end its activities and in 1930 it was completely liquidated. The chairman of the former Union and some of its members were completely out of action, and some of them died[, after which the activities of the Union had completely stopped]... In 1941, some of our brothers were returning from a long, distant journey and the ways of God began to resume work again.”<sup>29</sup> Ponurko delivered this speech on November 1, 1942, when Pyatikhatka were in the deep rear of the German army, and, as it might have seemed then, the USSR had lost the war. However, Ponurko does not voice his claims to the Soviet authorities and does not seek to politicize the repressions he and his co-religionists experienced. He understands them in an eschatological way, as signs of the impending Apocalypse. Repressions, World War II, and other sufferings were understood as signifiers of the end of the world, for which it was necessary to prepare on a personal, rather than social, level. The politicization of the experienced repressions takes place only in 1943, and most likely under the pressure of the Nazi occupation authorities. At the council in Alexandria, G. Ponurko again returns to the reasons for the liquidation of the pre-war All-Ukrainian Union CEF. In his report, he specified these “some reasons beyond the control of the administration.” The activities of the HEV board were terminated because “some of the members in exile, concentration camps, and prisons died.” G. Ponurko and D. Ponomarchuk told the congress delegates that each of them had been twice sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in concentration camps and exile. In their view, they were saved only by the fact that “in the far Arctic, God heard the cries of those who endured persecution for the word of God and returned them from a long, long journey.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, we can conclude that the systematic pre-war anti-religious terror did not lead to the formation of a specific political or national identity among the Pentecostals. As a result, the Episcopal Church was not active in social and political life in the occupied territories.

### **Pentecostals on the Eve of the Return of Soviet Power**

The defeat of the German troops in 1943 clearly raised the question before the leaders of the Pentecostals how the Soviet authorities would treat the revived Episcopal Church CEF after the expulsion of the invaders. Their pre-war experience suggested the need to prepare for a new wave of repression. Therefore, in the city of Kamensky (Dneprodzerzhinsk) on September 1-2, 1943, the last congress of Pentecostals took place during the period of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp.132-133.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

occupation. Despite the fact that some of the delegates could not come, it was attended by 63 people who represented communities from Kiev, Vinnitsa, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Dnepropetrovsk, and Zaporozhye regions. It was the largest Pentecostal congress during the years of occupation. Although the congress was called regional, it represented communities from different regions that were still under occupation. At this council, decisions were made in the event of harsh repressions by the Stalinist regime. Council delegates asked the Episcopal College to ordain as many presbyters and deacons as possible. The personnel issue was especially acute in the Kremenchug, Kiev, and Gorodishche dioceses. The congress also discussed the issue of the early formation of dioceses in the Vinnitsa region and the selection of clergy for them.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the presbyters, evangelists and deacons, four people were elected as leading presbyters with the right of episcopacy: F. Shokalov, union evangelist; H. Petukh, presbyter of the church of Pushkarev; N. Kuzmenko, presbyter of the church of Kirovograd; and A. Bidash, presbyter of the church of Pyatikhatka.<sup>32</sup> It must be assumed that by electing the maximum possible number of bishops, presbyters, evangelists, and deacons, the Pentecostals were preparing for a possible transition to an illegal situation, hoping that, with greater numbers, not everyone could be arrested, and the organizational structure of the Pentecostal church would be preserved even after the expulsion of the Nazi regime. With these same considerations in mind, by September 1943, the Episcopal College had created 16 dioceses: Dnepropetrovsk, Verkhnedneprovsk, Kamenskaya, Pyatikhatka, Krivoy Rog, Nikopol, Zaporozhye, Mariupol, Tavria, Alexandria, Kremenchug, Nikolaev, Kirovograd, Gorodishchen, Gayvoronov, and Kiev.

At the same time, not all leaders of the Episcopal Church were ready to calmly await their fate after their release. One of the spiritual leaders of the Pentecostals, Presbyter D. F. Boyun, head of the Dnepropetrovsk diocese, who directly led the revival of the Pentecostal church in Dnepropetrovsk and its environs, decided to leave his pastoral ministry and renounce his faith. Attempts to influence him and return him to a religious organization were unsuccessful. Boyun was firm in his decision to break with Pentecostalism and was deprived of the right to serve as a pastor: “the brotherhoods, which, for their part, showed him love and respect, which Boyun rejected, the council decides to approve the decisions of the commission and once again proposes to bring a worthy fruit of repentance before the Lord and work in His field, which brother Boyun did not accept.”<sup>33</sup> D. Boyun was a presbyter and a member of the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 154-155.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.156.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.157.

CEF Board back in the 1920s; he experienced firsthand all the horrors of the Stalinist repressive machine. His personal experience was fueled by Nazi propaganda; therefore, he was sure that, after his release, repressions would follow for his active religious activities. All this prompted him to withdraw from the religious life. It is difficult to say how many Pentecostals from the community led by Boyun followed his example, but, for the entire Episcopal Church of CEF, Boyun's denial of the faith was in many ways a shock, since the discussion of his act became one of the main issues at the last convention of the Episcopal Church.

## **Conclusion**

The reconstruction of the Pentecostal religious organization on the territory of the USSR took place during the Nazi occupation. Eastern Ukraine became the center of the religious revival, where Pentecostal leaders who survived the Stalinist repressions created the Episcopal Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith. Thanks to active organizational and missionary work, Pentecostal communities arose in most of the *Reichskommissariat* "Ukraine."

The specific conditions of the religious revival, such as the need to cooperate with the German occupation authorities, led to the emergence of an episcopate--not characteristic of the Pentecostal movement. At first, some Pentecostals were ambivalent about the emergence of the episcopate. During the occupation, there were only two bishops in the Episcopal Church of CEF: Chief Bishop G. Ponurko and his deputy D. Ponomarchuk. New candidates for episcopal rank were identified only on the eve of liberation and became bishops after the expulsion of the German troops. From this we can conclude that, initially, the election of bishops was perceived as a forced and temporary measure. After the end of the war, the episcopacy had to be temporarily abolished. However, the organization of the hierarchical structure has proven its effectiveness, because of which the Soviet and post-Soviet Pentecostals are led by bishops to this day.

During the years of occupation, a conflict arose between Pentecostals and Baptists. In this conflict, the Baptists enlisted the support of the occupation authorities, accusing the Pentecostals of having a pro-Soviet orientation, as a result of which the Nazis arrested a member of the Episcopal College, presbyter I. Luginets, and another official, presbyter F. Sherstyuk; they also banned the activities of Pentecostals in the Nikolaev General Region and in the Nikopol *Gebitkommisariat*. This became one of the reasons for the fundamental reluctance of the Pentecostals to enter into a single alliance with the Baptists after the war.

On the territory of the USSR in pre-war and war times there were different groups and directions of Pentecostals; however, it was the Episcopal Church of Pentecostals that became

the organizational core around which the bulk of Soviet Pentecostals rallied after the end of World War II.

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