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Situation of Religious Communities in the USSR National Autonomies in 1985–1991: The Case of the Khakass Autonomous Region

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Abstract: The authors consider the situation of religious communities in the Khakass Autonomous Region in the context of the state-religious policy of the USSR during the period of perestroika in 1985–1991. The study was carried out on the basis of the records of state Soviet, party institutions and religious associations stored in the National Archive of the Republic of Khakassia and the State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, as well as regulatory documents. In the course of the research it was established that in Khakassia, as well as throughout the country, from 1985 religious life was intensified. At the same time, the Commissioners of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory characterized the religious situation in Khakassia as turbulent from the 1960s and asked for a dedicated post for this national autonomy. It was found that the largest part of the religious communities in the region belonged to different trends of Protestantism, although there were also followers of Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Islam. In Protestant communities there was an increase in missionary work, and in some cases they wanted to avoid contacts with authorities. The liberalization of the state policy was not always adequately reflected in the actions of the authorities of the Khakass Autonomous Region. There was found relationship between ethnic and religious processes. It was noted that Khakassians tended towards Pentecostalism and Jehovah's Witnesses; representatives of German and Polish nationalities tended towards the communities of Catholics, Lutherans, and Seventh-day Adventists. In addition, in the region there was recorded an increase in the preaching activities of religious leaders from Sweden and the United States.

Keywords: M.S. Gorbachev, ethnicity of believers, Russian Orthodox Church, Old Believer Church, Islam in Khakassia

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Положение религиозных общин в национальных автономиях СССР в 1985–1991 гг.: на примере Хакасской автономной области

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Аннотация: Рассмотрено положение религиозных общин в Хакасской автономной области в контексте государственно-конфессиональной политики СССР в период перестройки в 1985–1991 гг. Исследование проводилось на основе делопроизводственной документации государственных советских, партийных, учреждений и религиозных объединений, хранящихся в Национальном архиве Республики Хакасия и Государственном архиве Красноярского края, а также нормативно-правовых документов. В процессе исследования установлено, что в Хакасии, как и во всей стране, с 1985 г. происходила активизация религиозной жизни. При этом Уполномоченные Совета по делам религий при СМ СССР по Красноярскому краю характеризовали религиозную обстановку в Хакасии как беспокойную еще с 1960-х гг. и просили о выделении отдельной должности для данной национальной автономии. Установлено, что наибольшая часть религиозных общин в регионе относилась к разным направлениям протестантизма, хотя также присутствовали последователи православия, католичества, ислама. В протестантских общинах происходило усиление миссионерства, а в ряде случаев наблюдалось стремление уйти от контактов с органами власти. Либерализация политики государства не всегда находила адекватное отражение в действиях органов власти Хакасской автономной области. Установлена взаимосвязь этнического и религиозного процессов. Отмечается склонность хакасов к пятидесятничеству и течению свидетелей Иеговы, представителей немецкой и польской национальностей к общинам католиков, лютеран, адвентистов седьмого дня. Кроме того, в регионе зафиксирована активизация проповеднической деятельности религиозных лидеров из Швеции и США.

Ключевые слова: М.С. Горбачев, этническая принадлежность верующих, Русская православная церковь, старообрядческая церковь, ислам в Хакасии

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Introduction

The population of the Soviet Union was characterized by ethnic and religious diversity; it is also typical of modern Russia. One of the key factors of the Soviet power authority from the very beginning of its establishment was the right of the nations to self-determination. Due to the special attention to national policy, one of the directions of which was the regulation of religious processes, the country's leadership created national territorial entities. During the period of perestroika, there was a rise in nationalism in the autonomous republics of the Soviet Union, which intensified considerably by the late 1980s – early 1990s. At the same time, in Khakassia, as, for example, in Karelia or Moravia, the influence of the nationalist movement was limited¹. At the same time, the ac-

¹ A.N. Shcherbak, L.S. Bolyachevec, and E.S. Platonova, “Istoriia sovetskoi natsional'noi politiki: Kolebaniia maiatnika? [History of Soviet national policy: Pendulum swings?],” *Politicheskaiia nauka*, no. 1 (2016): 100–123.

tivity of religious associations in the wake of democratization and change of course in the field of state-religious relations in the Khakass Autonomous Region was very intense.

The general trends of state-religious relations in the USSR were considered by M.I. Odintsov², M.V. Shkarovskiy³, T.K. Nikolskaya⁴ and other researchers. The works of these authors provide an analysis of the main legal documents, the bodies of the central and regional authorities which determined the activities of religious denominations in different years of Soviet power, including during the period under review. As part of the study of the history of dissent in the USSR, A.M. Alekseeva touches on the aspects of the relationship between the authorities and the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches, Pentecostals and Seventh-day Adventists⁵. Certain aspects of the history of Protestantism in Southern Siberia, including Khakassia, are presented in the collective monograph by A.A. Badmaev, Ch.O. Adigbay, V.A. Burnakov, D.M. Mansheyev⁶. The work gives a general description of the religious situation in Khakassia during the Soviet era; in particular, it presents in detail the relationship between the state and Protestant associations in the 1920–1950s, and also raises questions about the situation of Khakassian Protestants in the 1960–1980s. F.L. Sivatskiy⁷, A.A. Korolev, L.A. Koroleva, A.N. Molkin⁸ paid attention to the problem of emigration sentiments among Soviet Pentecostals in Khakassia. It is also worth mentioning the study by A.P. Yarkov dedicated to the problem of the spread of Islam in Khakassia. He examines the historical and modern aspects of this issue noting that for a number of reasons Islam did not become the dominant religion in the region⁹. At the same time, in modern historical science, significant gaps are found in the study of the situation of religious communities in the context of the state-religious policy of the USSR through the example of the territories of national autonomies, including Khakassia.

In this regard, the purpose of the work is to study the situation of the religious communities in the Khakass Autonomous Region in the context of the state-religious policy of the USSR in 1985–1991.

The study was carried out on the basis of the record keeping documentation of Soviet, party, government institutions and religious associations stored in the fund “Executive Committee of the Khakass Regional Council of People's Deputies” (F. R-39) in

² M.I. Odintsov, *Gosudarstvo i tserkov' v Rossii. XX vek* [State and church in Russia. XX century] (Moscow: Luch Publ., 1994); Idem, “Rossiia stroit svetskoe gosudarstvo (1985–1997) [Russia builds a secular state (1985–1997)],” *State, Religion and Church in Russia and Worldwide – Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii za rubezhom*, no. 3–4 (1997): 134–172.

³ M.V. Shkarovskii, *RPC v 20 v.* [ROC in the 20th century] (Moscow: Veche; Lepta Publ., 2010).

⁴ T.K. Nikol'skaya, *Russkii protestantizm i gosudarstvennaia vlast' v 1905–1991 godakh* [Russian Protestantism and state power in 1905–1991] (St. Petersburg: European University Press at St. Petersburg Publ., 2009); Idem, “Revival or Crisis? Challenges of ‘Perestroika’ for the Confessions of Russian Protestantism,” *Nations and Religions of Eurasia*, no. 2 (2021): 121–131, [https://doi.org/10.14258/nreur\(2021\)2-09](https://doi.org/10.14258/nreur(2021)2-09)

⁵ L.M. Alekseeva, *Istoria inakomyслиia v SSSR: noveishii period* [History of dissent in the USSR: the newest period] (Moscow: Moscow Helsinki Group Publ., 2012).

⁶ A.A. Badmaev, Ch.O. Adygbai, V.A. Burnakov, and D.M. Mansheev, *Protestantizm i narody Iuzhnoi Sibiri: istoria i sovremennost'* [Protestantism and the peoples of Southern Siberia: history and modernity] (Novosibirsk: Institut arheologii i etnografii SO RAN Publ., 2006).

⁷ F.L. Sivatskii, “Emigratsiia veruiushchikh iz SSSR v 60–80-e gody (na primere piatidesiatnicheskikh organizatsii Krasnoiar'skogo kraia) [Emigration of believers from the USSR in the 60–80s (using the example of Pentecostal organizations in the Krasnoyarsk Territory)],” in *Prava cheloveka v Rossii: proshloe i nastoiashchee. Sbornik dokladov i materialov nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii* (Perm: Izdatelstvo gazety Zvezda Publ., 1999), 109–112.

⁸ A.A. Korolev, L.A. Koroleva, and A.N. Molkin, “Dvizhenie piatidesyatnikov v SSSR. 1950–1980 gg. [Pentecostal movement in the USSR. 1950–1980],” *Genesis: istoricheskie issledovaniia*, no. 6 (2013): 125–131, <https://doi.org/10.7256/2306-420X.2013.6.9378>.

⁹ A.P. Yarkov, “Islam of the Khakassia (In the Context of the Idea of ‘All Turks Are Muslims’),” *Narody i religii Evrazii*, no. 16 (2018): 99–110, [doi.org/10.14258/nreur\(2018\)3-09](https://doi.org/10.14258/nreur(2018)3-09)

the National Archive of the Republic of Khakassia. There was also used the record keeping documentation of the authorized representative of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory (F. R-2384) stored in the State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Territory. It includes analytical and informational notes, reports, business correspondence of the authorized representative of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory with the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, with the Krasnoyarsk Regional Council of People's Deputies, the Khakass Regional Council of People's Deputies and with religious associations. In addition, there were used normative legal acts of state and party bodies regulating state-religious relations and the activities of religious organizations in the USSR.

Methodologically, the work is based on the system approach. Within the framework of this approach, state-religious relations are considered as a system in which changes occur in the forms of interaction between institutions of state power and religious associations.

General characteristics of religious processes in the Khakass Autonomous Region

When M.S. Gorbachev was in power, the policy towards religion initially developed in the same trends as under his predecessors, and it was focused on control by the state and party bodies over the activities of religious denominations and the degree of religiosity of the population. At the same time, considerable shifts towards the liberalization of state-religious relations during the period of perestroika in the country were manifested in an appeal to traditional spiritual values, including religious ones. As in the situation with national policy which was one of the sources of legitimacy of the Soviet government, state-religious relations were built in order to increase the loyalty of believers to the leadership of the USSR. One of the goals of the positive turn in state policy was the support of the political course by the Russian Orthodox Church¹⁰. During the period of M.S. Gorbachev's reforms, there gradually took place serious changes in the state-religious policy in the USSR. In April 1988, the Council for Religious Affairs submitted to the Council of Ministers of the USSR a bill "On freedom of conscience and religious organizations in the USSR" aimed at eliminating discrimination against believers and religious denominations¹¹. In 1990, the law "On Freedom of Religion" was adopted which served as the starting point for the transformations of state-religious relations in the RSFSR and Russia¹². Under this law, religious associations gained the rights of a legal entity and the opportunity to independently interact with international organizations. The Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR was abolished by the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR dated August 24, 1990, and its functions began to be performed by the Ministry of Justice of the RSFSR. In addition, there was a Committee on Freedom of Conscience, Religion, Mercy and Charity under the Supreme Council of the RSFSR¹³.

The reasons for the transformations were the tense religious situation against the backdrop of democratization of the political system and glasnost, destructive nationalist tendencies in the regions of traditional Uniate church and Islam, changes in the ratio of

¹⁰ L.A. Koroleva, and O.V. Mel'nichenko, "Sovetskaia partiino-gosudarstvennaia politika v otnoshenii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi tserkvi v 1985–1990 gg. [Soviet party-state policy in relations with the Russian Orthodox Church in 1985–1990]," *Vestnik Volzhskogo universiteta imeni V.N. Tatishcheva*, no. 1 (2012): 160–168.

¹¹ A.P. Torshin et al., eds. *Istoriya gosudarstvennoy politiki SSSR i Rossii v otnoshenii religioznykh organizatsiy v 1985–1999 gg.* [History of state policy of the USSR and Russia towards religious organizations in 1985–1999] (Moscow: OLMA Media Grup, 2010), 31–35.

¹² M.I. Odintsov, "Rossiia stroit svetskoe gosudarstvo."

¹³ L.A. Koroleva, and O.V. Mel'nichenko, "Sovetskaia partiino-gosudarstvennaia politika," 160–168.

Catholic and Protestant religions, the active position of the clergy and believers, and ideological confrontation with the West¹⁴.

When studying the situation of religious communities in national autonomies that included the Khakass Autonomous Region, which was part of the Krasnoyarsk Territory¹⁵, of particular importance is the ethnicity of believers. In this case, it should be emphasized that great attention in the USSR during the perestroika period was paid to the religious communities, in which the ethnic aspect was clearly visible in a more consolidated form. The country continued to implement the resolution of the CPSU Central Committee of July 17, 1974 “On measures to improve work among citizens of German nationality.” In this regard, for example, all religious associations of representatives of German nationality in Khakassia were registered and operated under the control of local authorities¹⁶. Thus, the local executive committees paid special attention to the communities of the Roman Catholic Church, Lutherans, and Seventh-day Adventists. There was also taken into account the fact that the adherents of Jehovah's Witnesses groups were mostly Khakassians¹⁷.

In Khakassia, as throughout the country, from 1985, religious life intensified considerably. The believers were preparing to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity in Russia; spiritual education was developing. At the same time, preparations were being conducted for the 43rd All-Union Congress of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (ECB) and the 1st All-Union Congress of Seventh-day Adventists. During that period, the supporters of the Council of Churches of the ECB in Siberia began to create large groups far from the cultural and industrial centers of the Krasnoyarsk Territory¹⁸. In Chernogorsk a new wave of emigration sentiments began among Pentecostals, which caused more tension in their relations with government authorities.

It is important to note that already from the 1960s the commissioners of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory characterized the religious situation in Khakassia as turbulent. From the early 1980s, they repeatedly petitioned for the introduction of the post of commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR specifically for the Khakass Autonomous Region due to the large area of the Krasnoyarsk Territory and the significant number of religious organizations in the national autonomy. By 1985, in Khakassia there were 19 religious communities, of which 11 were registered¹⁹.

The largest part of the religious communities in Khakassia belonged to the branches of Protestantism. According to V.A. Burnakov, the activities of Protestant religious organizations negatively influenced the Khakass ethnic culture, which was manifested in the leveling of ethnic consciousness, alienation from one's ethnic group, rejection of an active civic position, and intolerance of dissent. It was a different position of the authorities, the Khakass intelligentsia, and the elders of the Khakass clans that could affect the situation²⁰. However, it is important to emphasize that in Soviet times, even with a negative attitude towards religion on the part of the authorities and the public, the number of

¹⁴ I.I. Maslova, “Gosudarstvenno-konfessional'naiia politika v SSSR: povorot kursa v 1985–1988 gg. [State-confessional policy in the USSR: reversal of course in 1985–1988],” *Izvestiia Vuzov. Povolzhskii region. Gumanitarnye nauki*, no. 4 (2015): 43.

¹⁵ On December 15, 1990, Khakassia seceded from the Krasnoyarsk Territory. On July 3, 1991, the Khakass Autonomous Region was transformed into the Khakass Soviet Socialist Republic within the RSFSR.

¹⁶ Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Krasnoyarskogo kraia [State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Territory] (hereinafter – GAKK), f. P-2384, op. 1, d. 42, l. 7.

¹⁷ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 707, l. 60.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, d. 42, l.3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 94.

²⁰ A.A. Badmaev, Ch.O. Adygbai, V.A. Burnakov, and D.M. Mansheev, *Protestantizm i narody*.

communities of Baptists, Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses in Khakassia gradually increased, including due to the inclusion of ethnic Khakassians as their adherents.

Another feature of the confessional map of the Khakass Autonomous Region in the period under review is the small number and low activity of some religious communities. Thus, for example, in the village of Borodino of the Bogrady district there was a Catholic group of 8 people²¹. In the village of Bondarevo of the Beysky district there was a group of Molokans which consisted of 9 believers. By the end of the 1980s, the local authorities recorded the appearance of some representatives of True Orthodox Christians in Abakan²².

Situation of the communities of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church

A significant indicator of changes in state-religious relations in the country was M.S. Gorbachev's meeting with Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Pimen in 1988 and the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity in Russia. As throughout the country, in Khakassia there was recorded an increase in the number of church rites due to the preparations for this holiday. Moreover, by 1985, there were only 2 communities of the Russian Orthodox Church in Khakassia, which had been officially registered earlier²³. The largest community of the Russian Orthodox Church was in the city of Abakan, the capital of the autonomous region, with an approximate number of 500 people. The Commission for Assistance to the Abakan City Executive Committee for Observance of Legislation on Religions noted that the believers were loyal to the authorities and did not violate the laws²⁴. During the first half of 1985, the revenues of the Abakan Orthodox community increased by 11% compared to the previous year, including by 54% from rites. By 1988, there were already 600 believers in the community. The St. Nicholas Church in Abakan was allowed to ring the bells on religious holidays²⁵. The community of the Russian Orthodox Church in the town of Abaza of the Tashtypsky district was more active, despite its small number of 60-80 people. Due to the preparations for the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity, the altar decorations in the church building were renovated, new icons were painted, and the upcoming event was mentioned in sermons²⁶. Unlike the community in Abakan, the church in Abaza was attended by young people. At the same time, there was an influx of believers from the Tashtypsky and Askizsky districts of the region and the Kemerovo region. The community members kept in touch with Krasnoyarsk, Abakan, Novosibirsk, and also listened to foreign radio broadcasts of the Orthodox service in London on Easter Day. From the early 1980s, a struggle for power began in the community. The situation stabilized in 1987 with the coming of Rector S.N. Efimov²⁷, who contributed to the increase in the number of parishioners, paid off the debt to the diocese, and bought a house for the church²⁸.

It is important to note that during the period of perestroika, in the Soviet Union the Russian Orthodox Church got the opportunity to reinforce its position. From 1985 to

²¹ Nationalnyi Archiv Respubliki Khakassii [National Archives of the Republic of Khakassia] (hereinafter – NARKh), f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2437, l. 1.

²² GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 57, l. 38.

²³ Ibid., d. 42, l. 6.

²⁴ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2372, l. 64.

²⁵ GAKK, f. P-2384, op. 1, d. 58, l. 1.

²⁶ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2372, l. 65.

²⁷ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 57, l. 3.

²⁸ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2631, l. 6.

1990, 3,402 Orthodox parishes were opened, and thus their number almost doubled²⁹. By the end of the 1980s, the number of communities of the Russian Orthodox Church in Khakassia also doubled. In 1988, an Orthodox community was established in the town of Chernogorsk³⁰. In 1989, an Orthodox community appeared in the village of Shira of the Shirinsky district³¹. However, in Khakassia there were fewer Orthodox communities compared to the neighboring regions of Western Siberia - Altai Territory, Novosibirsk Region, etc.³² The Orthodox communities were also inferior in number to the Protestant associations in the region.

The communities of the Old-Rite Church did not become widespread in Khakassia either. Initially, the very appearance of Old Believers communities in Khakassia did not attract attention of the local authorities. The district executive committees noted the small number and almost complete lack of activity in the Old Believers' communities. In 1986 in the village of Birikchul of the Askizsky district, there were 10 Old Believers who were under the supervision of the local executive committee³³. However, in subsequent years the number of believers of this community increased to 22³⁴. Another Old Believers' community was located in the village of Verkhniy-Tashtyp of the Tashtypsky district which included 30 people. From 1979–1980, Old Believers from the Tuva Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the Altai Territory gathered in Verkhniy-Tashtyp. Noteworthy is the fact that the Old Believers refused to get registered and conducted worship services on holidays. Some families of Old Believers in this district were in the village of Tashtyp and in Abaza³⁵. The increase in the number of people in Old Believers groups caused local authorities' criticism of the activities of regional commissions to assist executive committees in complying with legislation on cults.

Communities of Muslims, the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists, the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches

During the period under review, there were a few Muslim believers in Khakassia. In October 1986, in Chernogorsk there appeared the only group of Muslims in Khakassia at that time numbering 11 people; it almost immediately applied for registration, but due to its small number it remained registered for a long time with the local authorities³⁶. In the fall of 1987, on the initiative of the community, the Tatar cemetery was fenced off³⁷. By the end of the 1980s, the Muslim community increased to 21 believers³⁸. Neither in the Soviet times, nor later Islam became widespread in Khakassia³⁹, which is due, to a certain extent, to the peculiarities of the ethnic composition of the region and cultural and historical processes.

In Khakassia the first place in the number of communities, including officially registered ones, was occupied by the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists.

²⁹ A.N. Kashevarov, "Gosudarstvenno-tserkovnye otnosheniia v period 'Perestroiki' 1985–1991 gg. [State-church relations during the period of 'Perestroika' 1985–1991]," *Obshchestvo. Kommunikatsiia. Obrazovanie* (2015): 115.

³⁰ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 595, l. 18.

³¹ *Ibid.*, d. 63, l. 22.

³² P.K. Dashkovskiy, and N.S. Dvoryanchikova, *Sovetskaia i rossiiskaia gosudarstvenno-konfessional'naia politika na iuge Zapadnoi Sibiri* [N.S. Sovetskaia i rossiiskaia gosudarstvenno-konfessional'naia politika na iuge Zapadnoi Sibiri] (Barnaul: Izd-vo Alt. un-ta Publ., 2022), 67–75.

³³ *Ibid.*, d. 42, l. 94.

³⁴ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2372, l. 36.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, d. 2437, l. 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 64.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, d. 2631, l. 47.

³⁸ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 57, l. 35.

³⁹ A.P. Yarkov, "Islam of the Khakassia (In the Context of the Idea of 'All Turks Are Muslims')," *Narody i religii Evrazii*, no. 16 (2018): 99, doi.org/10.14258/nreur(2018)3-09 .

During the period of perestroika, the activities of Baptist communities began to increase. The fact is that in 1985 in Los Angeles there took place the World Congress of Baptists, in which a delegation from the USSR participated⁴⁰. The same year, after the World Congress, the 43rd All-Union Congress of the Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists was held in the Soviet Union. Due to the increased activities of Baptists in Khakassia, under special control was the community of the village of Znamenka of the Bogradsky district which consisted mainly of German and Polish people. In 1987, there were 48 believers in it, 14 of them were baptized in 1986. The believers actively maintained contacts with the communities of the region and the territory⁴¹.

In April 1986, a plenum of the All-Union Council of the ECB took place, the reason for which was changes in the leadership team. After the All-Union Plenum, events were held in the regions of the country. Thus, there was organized a regional seminar-meeting of the clergy of the All-Union Council of the ECB in the Krasnoyarsk Territory and the Tuva Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic⁴². The participants of the seminar-meeting went to the service in the community of the village of Znamenka. It was attended by Deputy Chairman of the All-Union Council of the ECB M.Ya. Zhidkov, Deputy Senior Presbyter for the RSFSR P.K. Shatrov, senior presbyter for Western Siberia K.P. Borodinov and senior presbyter for the Krasnoyarsk Territory N.A. Poberei. At this meeting, in very careful formulations, it was proposed to intensify the activities of the community and attract young people⁴³. Subsequently, the believers implemented this through regular prayer meetings and attracting more men to deliver sermons. There was an increase in the number of youth in the community, and baptisms were held⁴⁴.

Similar services with the participation of the All-Union and regional leadership of the Council of the ECB were held in the communities of Abakan, Chernogorsk, as well as in the Pentecostal community of A.A. Miller in Chernogorsk. The participants of the events expressed to Deputy Head of the Regional Executive Committee E.F. Filatova satisfaction with the situation of the communities⁴⁵. The local authorities, in turn, allowed N.A. Poberei to conduct missionary activity among Jehovah's Witnesses from the village of Beltyrsky of the Askizsky district⁴⁶. In addition, representatives of the All-Union Council of the ECB met with Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory N.A. Lushchikov; during the meeting the believers asked for more religious literature⁴⁷.

In the largest community of the All-Union Council of the ECB in Abakan, children and young people attended the meetings. In 1985, there were 266 people in it⁴⁸, and the number of followers constantly increased due to the joining of other believers and unregistered communities⁴⁹. By 1988, this community already included 288 people⁵⁰. In 1988, in the registered communities of the All-Union Council of the ECB in Khakassia there were 394 believers and the unregistered ones included only 11 people⁵¹.

In addition to the increase in the number of believers and the rejuvenation of the communities of the All-Union Council of the ECB, the intensification of religious life

⁴⁰ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 58, l. 10.

⁴¹ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2437, l. 1.

⁴² GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 58, l. 8.

⁴³ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2437, l. 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid., d. 2631, l. 2.

⁴⁵ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 58, l. 15–16.

⁴⁶ Ibid., l. 17.

⁴⁷ Ibid., l. 14.

⁴⁸ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2437, l. 77.

⁴⁹ Ibid., d. 2372, l. 65.

⁵⁰ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 57, l. 31.

⁵¹ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2530, l. 3.

was expressed in the holding of large-scale holidays. Thus, a group of Evangelical Christian Baptists of the village of Kopyevo of the Ordzhonikidzevsky district held a wedding according to a religious rite; it was attended by 85 believers including 20 children and 45 young people from Abakan, Krasnoyarsk, Achinsk, Chernorechensk. This group held a harvest festival with the participation of believers from the town of Uyar and the village of Iyus of the Ordzhonikidzevsky district⁵².

By the end of the 1980s – early 1990s, the relations between the communities of the All-Union Council of the ECB and local authorities were reasonably good. M.Ya. Zhidkov thanked the authorities of Khakassia for their constructive policy towards believers⁵³. Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory A.V. Adaikin supported the requests of the local leadership of the All-Union Council of the ECB. Thus, he petitioned the Chairman of the Khakass Regional Executive Committee for assistance in the sale of a car to senior presbyter of the All-Union Council of the ECB for the Krasnoyarsk Territory and the Tuva Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic I.V. Bezrukikh⁵⁴. Another petition by A.V. Adaikin was sent to the head of the passport office of the Abakan City Department of Internal Affairs regarding the registration of permission to travel to Norilsk for I.V. Bezrukikh and deacon of the Abakan community of Evangelical Christian Baptists I.S. Skorev in order to meet with their fellow believers and make decisions on intra-confessional issues⁵⁵. At the same time, the reaction of the community supporters to the fact of mandatory registration of its activities with local government bodies caused mixed reaction. Some believers considered registering a group as a sin and did not recognize the legislation on cults.

Unlike the communities of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists, the movement of supporters of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches did not become widespread in Khakassia. By 1985, there were only two groups of “Initiatives” in Abakan numbering 28 believers⁵⁶. In V.G. Kravchuk’s group there were 23 people, whereas previously there had been 50–60 believers. The fact is that the believers of this group resumed contacts with the registered community on the issue of unification⁵⁷. At the same time, the group continued to independently conduct services violating the legislation on cults⁵⁸. At a joint meeting of the commission for promoting compliance with legislation on cults and the administrative commission, the leader of the group explained that he recognized the laws of the Soviet regime, but for him of primary importance was the Gospel⁵⁹.

The supporters of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches of Abakan did not recognize the legislation on cults. In particular, they were not satisfied with the bans on religious education of children and women, as well as on helping the needy, moving for prayer meetings, preaching in stadiums and in the media⁶⁰. By 1988, the community of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches of Abakan amounted to 47 people. The local authorities tried to legalize their activities through merger with the registered community or to register it autonomously⁶¹. Other small groups of the Union of Evangelical

⁵² NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2372, l. 19.

⁵³ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 63, l. 51.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, d. 216, l. 56.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 57.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, d. 42, l. 7.

⁵⁷ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2372, l. 65.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, d. 2437, l. 92.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 93.

⁶⁰ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 57, l. 8.

⁶¹ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2631, l. 102.

Christian Baptist Churches were in the Altaysky, Ordzhonikidzevsky and other districts of the region⁶².

In the late 1980s, in the Krasnoyarsk Territory, prayer meetings of Protestants in cultural and educational institutions became more frequent, the reason for which was various holidays, such as the 1000th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity in Russia, the harvest festival, the holiday of unity and others. They were organized by the missionaries of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches from other regions of the USSR. For example, such a service was held in Khakassia by supporters of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches from the town of Prokopyevsk of Kemerovo region⁶³. In addition to the violation of the legislation on religion, the local authorities were alarmed by the fact that the Prokopyevsk community of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches had contacts with co-religionists from the Federal Republic of Germany⁶⁴. In 1989, A.G. Vall, the head of the community of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches in Abakan was fined for holding an illegal meeting that announced a religious service. Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory A.V. Adaikin was against the fine, but the members of the administrative commission did not heed his view⁶⁵. The service was attended by the instructor of the regional executive committee, the deputy chairman of the regional executive committee, the deputy head of the city police department and the senior investigator of the prosecutor's office⁶⁶. The believers continued the meeting and distributed the Gospel, despite the police warnings from loudspeakers⁶⁷. Thus, the authorities continued to use administrative methods of influence on religious communities⁶⁸.

Situation of Pentecostal Communities

A complicated situation was in Khakassia with two large Pentecostal communities. In 1985, the registered community in Chernogorsk amounted to 176 believers, and the unregistered one – 67 believers. In addition, there was a small group of Pentecostals of 7 people in the village of Znamenka of the Bogrady district⁶⁹. The leader of this group did not recognize the legislation on cults, refused to get registered and held meetings illegally⁷⁰. There was also a group of three Pentecostals in the village of Ochury of the Altaysky district⁷¹.

From its inception, the believers of the registered community in Chernogorsk neither violated the law, nor applied to leave the country, nor refused to serve in the army. The community established close ties with other regional communities, as well as with those of the Union republics and Western countries. Thus, believers from the Krasnoyarsk Territory, Ukraine, and the Baltic States attended their meetings. A.A. Miller, the leader of this community participated in the ECB congress in March 1985, and in May believers from Sweden came to his community⁷². The community increased due to baptisms. Thus,

⁶² GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 57, l. 35.

⁶³ Ibid., d. 64, l. 2.

⁶⁴ Ibid., d. 63, l. 40.

⁶⁵ Ibid., l. 41.

⁶⁶ Ibid., l. 43.

⁶⁷ Ibid., l. 44–45.

⁶⁸ I.I. Maslova, "Gosudarstvenno-konfessional'naiia politika v SSSR: povorot kursa v 1985–1988 gg. [State-confessional policy in the USSR: reversal of course in 1985–1988]," *Izvestiia Vuzov. Povolzhskii region. Gumanitarnye nauki*, no. 4 (2015): 49.

⁶⁹ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 42, l. 7.

⁷⁰ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2437, l. 9.

⁷¹ Ibid., l. 5.

⁷² Ibid., l. 63.

in 1987, 21 people got baptized. The community annually increased by 10–15 people through the baptism of young people from large families of believers. It is important to note that there were a lot of young people and children in this community, and the meetings were regularly attended by 40–50 schoolchildren.

In September 1987, a wave of emigration sentiments arose in the registered community – 156 people applied to leave the USSR for Israel. According to the regional executive committee, head of the community A.A. Miller also submitted an application to the Supreme Council of the RSFSR to emigrate⁷³. It should be noted that the emigration which became widespread in the 1980s, including that of believers from the USSR, had various reasons. Among them was not only the lack of work and livelihood, military conflicts, but also the desire to live in prosperous Western countries, as well as the fear that freedom of conscience would not last long in the Soviet Union⁷⁴. During that period there was a prophecy among Pentecostals that the period of persecution was over and they would be allowed to go to the “Promised Land.” Due to this situation, the community was visited by instructor of the Khakass Regional Executive Committee N.S. Volkov and Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory A.N. Lushchikov. They held a conversation in the community about the need for the unity of the party and the citizens, nationalities and peoples, believers and non-believers⁷⁵.

A significant reason for the dissatisfaction of believers of the registered Pentecostal community and mass applications to leave the country was the policy of local authorities and the negative attitude of compatriots. Thus, on local television, there was shown the movie “I believe” about the Pentecostals of Chernogorsk filmed in a negative way and with distortion of facts. The believers emphasized that the country's leadership treated religion differently. However, they faced negative attitude at work, “because people consider that sectarians are American spies.”⁷⁶

Another reason for the rise in emigration sentiments in Chernogorsk was the support of believers by the families of G.L. and P.P. Vashchenko, P.S. Chmykhalov who went abroad in 1982–1983. The families that had emigrated sent invitations to their relatives. In addition, during the period of perestroika, development of democracy and glasnost, the control by party and Soviet bodies over the activities of believers was considerably weaker compared to the previous periods of state-religious policy of the USSR⁷⁷.

In the unregistered group of Pentecostals in Chernogorsk there were also many people who wanted to go to Israel. The children of the believers did not attend physical education, singing, or military classes. In the group there were cases of refusal to serve in the army⁷⁸. The believers still refused to get passports. There were a lot of young people in the community. Thus, of 130 people, 52 were minors. In September 1987, on the instructions of G.L. Vashchenko who exerted a direct influence on the life in the unregistered community, its head A.M. Luzgin was dismissed. Instead, a 13-member “governing council” was elected. In 1987, 15 believers from this community moved abroad. As of August 1, 1989, 68 families of believers (200 people in total) left the Krasnoyarsk Territory⁷⁹.

It is noteworthy that in the late 1980s, in Khakassia there appeared Pentecostal reformists. This movement is a vital part of the Pentecostal movement. Thus, the Protestant

⁷³ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2631, l. 45.

⁷⁴ T.K. Nikol'skaya, “Revival or Crisis?” 128.

⁷⁵ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2631, l. 50.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 57.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, l. 88.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, d. 2372, l. 52, 55.

⁷⁹ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 63, l. 24.

community “Church of Glorification” in Chernogorsk applied for registration⁸⁰. This community largely consisted of young people who maintained constant communication with foreign believers. The country's authorities viewed such contacts as a desire of Western clerical centers (the USA, Sweden, Finland) to create their own branches⁸¹. In January 1990, 35 people from Abakan and Chernogorsk took part in the conference of Charismatics in the Baltics which was held by Western religious authorities (American Sam Valley and Swede Carl-Gustav Severin). From abroad the church received material assistance, necessary equipment and literature. The church members were engaged in active missionary activities and posted notices about services in public places. For example, in December 1989, a service was held in Abakan with the participation of Swedish tourists led by Carl-Gustav Severin. The local authorities informed the Swedish Ambassador to the USSR and the USSR Foreign Ministry about this⁸². It should be emphasized that during the perestroika period, mass evangelization was not uncommon in the country; Protestant preachers spoke in stadiums, cinemas, and cultural institutions⁸³.

Such activity of believers and connections with the West caused bureaucratic obstacles to the process of registering a religious organization. The officials of the local executive committee pointed out violations and inaccuracies in the registration documents to head of the church R.I. Belosevich⁸⁴. At the same time, as an exception, the “Church of Glorification” celebrated Easter in the premises of the cultural center due to the arrival of believers from the USA, Finland, Sweden, Norway and cities of the USSR⁸⁵.

During the discussion of the issue of registration of the “Church of Glorification”, Deputy Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee E.F. Filatova noted that due to the emergence of the bill on freedom of conscience, it is necessary to consider religious issues carefully, especially in national territories, including Khakassia⁸⁶. Despite all the difficulties, the “Church of Glorification” was registered in 1990 and received permission to build a house of prayer⁸⁷. To study the Bible, the community sent its members to the Bible Center “Word of Life” (Sweden, Uppsala). By 1990, in the RSFSR there were about 100 communities of the “Church of Glorification” which amounted to 6 thousand people⁸⁸.

It is especially necessary to dwell on the reasons for the popularity of Protestant denominations in Khakassia, including Pentecostal communities. Among them are the socio-economic and spiritual crisis in the country, financial support from the West, active preaching activities, openness and gullibility of local residents, and lack of educational work⁸⁹. For the same reasons, other branches of Protestantism were popular in Khakassia – Baptism, Jehovah's Witnesses. In our opinion, it was the crisis phenomena in socio-economic and cultural life and the specificity of the Khakass mentality that were paramount factors, which became a suitable field for the active preaching activities of Protestants. During the Soviet period of history, a lot of educational work was carried out, and financial support from the West was not considerable. At the same time, the number of believers

⁸⁰ ГАКК, ф. П. 2384, оп. 1, д. 63, л. 26.

⁸¹ Ibid., д. 744, л. 2.

⁸² Ibid., л. 4.

⁸³ Т.К. Nikol'skaya, “Revival or Crisis?” 124.

⁸⁴ ГАКК, ф. П. 2384, оп. 1, д. 744, л. 3.

⁸⁵ Ibid., л. 11.

⁸⁶ Ibid., л. 24.

⁸⁷ Ibid., л. 28, 47.

⁸⁸ Ibid., д. 733, л. 1.

⁸⁹ B.A. Burnakov, “Piatidesiatniki v Khakasii [Pentecostals in Khakassia],” *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury*, no. 15 (2005): 445.

in Protestant communities in Khakassia increased. It should be noted that the number of adherents of various Protestant communities was also increasing in other regions of Siberia – Altai Territory, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo and Omsk regions⁹⁰.

Communities of Seventh-day Adventist and Jehovah's Witnesses⁹¹

It should be emphasized that there was also gradually increasing the number of Seventh-day Adventists that in 1985 were represented by several communities in Khakassia. The registered community of Abakan consisted of 25 people. The believers had well-established connections with the Baltic republics and the Far East⁹². The authorities paid particular attention to this community not only because of the large number of young people in it, but, above all, because of the national composition of the believers. The fact is that the community consisted mainly of ethnic Germans. Therefore, the local authorities carried out educational work with the believers patiently and without pressure⁹³. There were small groups of Seventh-day Adventists in the Tashtypsky district of the Khakass Autonomous Region, for example, at the Kharachul station (5 people). The group maintained contacts with Abakan and the Kemerovo region⁹⁴. In addition, the Seventh-day Adventists in Abaza sometimes traveled to the Kemerovo region. In 1986, a group of Seventh-day Adventists in the settlement of Maina of the town of Sayanogorsk applied for registration⁹⁵. In total, by 1990, there were already 12 communities of Seventh-day Adventists in Khakassia which amounted to about 90 people.

It is important to emphasize that in the second half of the 1980s, in Khakassia there increased the number of Lutheran communities. The registered Lutheran community was located in the village of Iyus of the Ordzhonikidzevsky district which included 16 believers⁹⁶. In 1986, a group of 10 Lutherans was registered in the village of Bograd of the Bogradsky district⁹⁷. There were also Lutheran communities in other villages of this district – in Bolshaya Erba and Znamenka. The total number of the Lutherans in the area was 36 believers; most of them were ethnic Germans⁹⁸. The Lutheran communities in Khakassia recognized the legislation on cults⁹⁹. Thus, the Lutherans of Bolshaya Erba and Znamenka of the Bogradsky district submitted an application for registration¹⁰⁰. However, based on the recommendations of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the executive committee of the regional council to take into account small groups of believers, the Lutheran communities of the Bogradsky district were placed only under the control of the local authorities¹⁰¹.

In Khakassia there also increased the number of adherents of the Protestant movement Jehovah's Witnesses⁹¹. In 1985, they operated in Abakan, the Askizsky and Ordzho-

⁹⁰ P.K. Dashkovskiy, and N.S. Dvoryanchikova, "Peculiarities of the situation and activities of protestant communities in the Omsk region in the mid-1960s – mid-1980s," *Voprosy Istorii*, no. 10–2 (2021): 183–193; Idem, *Sovetskaia i rossiiskaia*, 73–75; E.A. Serova, "Communities of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Kemerovo region in the mid-1940s – the first decade of the 2000 s," PhD thesis, Kemerovo, 2013, etc.

⁹¹ Jehovah's Witnesses is included in the list of non-profit organizations in respect of which the court has made a final decision to liquidate or prohibit activities on the grounds stipulated by the Federal Law "On Countering Extremist Activities."

⁹² NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2372, l. 65.

⁹³ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 736, l. 3.

⁹⁴ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2437, l. 39.

⁹⁵ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 504, l. 8.

⁹⁶ Ibid., d. 42, l. 86.

⁹⁷ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2372, l. 6.

⁹⁸ Ibid., d. 2437, l. 1.

⁹⁹ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 522, l. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., l. 26, 34.

¹⁰¹ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2530, l. 5.

nikidzevsky districts with a total number of 147 believers¹⁰². In 1986 in the village of Bel-tirsky of the Askizsky district, the number of Jehovah's Witnesses⁹¹ increased from 21 to 31 believers¹⁰³. This group was characterized by homogeneity of the national composition, since 30 believers were ethnic Khakass. The members of the group did not recognize the legislation on cults and evaded registration¹⁰⁴. In the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR and local Councils of People's Deputies, 13 people refused to vote due to religious beliefs¹⁰⁵.

The largest community of Jehovah's Witnesses⁹¹ in Khakassia was in Abakan, it included 120 people. The meetings of this community were held secretly in 9 groups; therefore the local authorities could not record them¹⁰⁶. At the same time, in Abakan and Achinsk there were found secret printing houses with photocopying equipment¹⁰⁷. In the houses of Jehovah's Witnesses⁹¹, regular inspections were carried out by inspectors of the Fire Safety Supervising Agency. In 1987 in the village of Bely Yar of the Altaisky district, in the house of E.V. Zayarko there were discovered and confiscated three copies of "The Watchtower" and two copies of study guides of the Bible. Such literature was published by the Brooklyn Center (USA), so it was confiscated from believers¹⁰⁸.

By the end of the 1980s, in Khakassia there intensified the work on the legalization and registration of religious communities. Ahead of the adoption of the new law on freedom of conscience, local authorities noted an increase in the number of religious associations and the amount of work with them. In this regard, the territorial and regional executive committees, the commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory continued to send requests to the central office of this body for the introduction of the post of commissioner for the Khakass Autonomous Region, including due to the fact that in December 1989 Khakassia became self-governed¹⁰⁹.

Conclusions

Thus, the study revealed that in 1991 in Khakassia there were 7 communities of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2 communities of the Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church, one community each of Catholics, Muslims, Jews, Molokans, the "Church of Glorification," "Christian Mission," 15 communities of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, 13 communities of Pentecostals, 9 communities of Seventh-day Adventists, 5 Lutheran communities, 10 communities of Jehovah's Witnesses⁹¹.

During the period of perestroika, religious life intensified in the associations of the Christian faith. In Protestant communities, there was a considerable increase in missionary work, and they tended to avoid contacts with the authorities. The liberalization of the state policy was not always reflected in the actions of the local authorities of the Khakass Autonomous Region which tried to resolve the issue with more stringent measures. It is important to note that the commissioners of the Council for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Krasnoyarsk Territory advocated the rights of believers not only in theory, but also in terms of assistance to religious communities. It was the national aspect that played an important role in state-religious relations in Khakassia. When pursuing policies towards believers, the local authorities took into account

¹⁰² GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 42, l. 7.

¹⁰³ NARKh, f. P-39, op. 1, d. 2372, l. 36.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., l. 39.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., l. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., l. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., l. 69.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., d. 2631, l. 34–35.

¹⁰⁹ GAKK, f. P. 2384, op. 1, d. 64, l. 38; Ibid., d. 707, l. 2.

the following factors: the Khakass tended to Pentecostalism and the movement of Jehovah's Witnesses⁹¹; German and Polish believers belonged to the communities of Catholics, Lutherans, Seventh-day Adventists; the preaching activities of religious authorities from Sweden and the USA. In general, in the Khakass Autonomous Region the same trends were observed in the implementation of state-religious policy as in other regions of Siberia, but taking into account the historical features of the formation of the ethnic and religious landscape of the region.

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