

Chapter Title: Protest from the Margins: A Human Rights Campaign Led by Evangelical Women in the Soviet Union, 1964-1987

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Book Title: Freedom of Conscience in (Post)Soviet Space

Book Subtitle: Legacies of Michael Bourdeaux and the Keston Archive

Book Editor(s): Julie K. deGraffenried, Michael Long, Xenia Dennen

Published by: Cornell University Press, Northern Illinois University Press. (2025)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/jj.24653174.13>

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CHAPTER 6

Protest from the Margins

A Human Rights Campaign Led by Evangelical Women in the Soviet Union, 1964–1987

April L. French

In February 1964, three women gathered clandestinely for what they called an All-Union Conference of Relatives of Evangelical Christian-Baptist Prisoners. Four years earlier, a debate had broken out among Evangelical Christian-Baptist (ECB) congregations over whether the church should acquiesce to the intensifying demands of the antireligious Soviet government. The state demanded that local religious organizations maintain their official registration by submitting to the Law on Religious Associations—a 1929 law designed to confine worship to officially sanctioned buildings and to prohibit children’s attendance at religious services, among other things. During the intradenominational debate, some ECB believers formed the Action Group (Initsiativnaia Gruppya), which by 1965 would become the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (CCECB), splitting from the officially recognized All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB).¹ Such public defiance provoked Soviet officials to subject many of these breakaway evangelicals to arrest, show trials, and imprisonment for violating the Law on Religious Associations.

Before their initial meeting, the three founding members of a new organization—called the Council of Prisoners’ Relatives (CPR) by Keston College personnel—had collected information on at least 155 ECB

members who had been imprisoned since 1961. The founders saw this record keeping about ECB prisoners and the reporting of this information to their co-religionists as two central tasks of their fledgling organization. A third task was to petition the Soviet government to review all cases of those imprisoned “for the Word of God” and of children removed from their parents “for a religious upbringing,” with the goal of complete rehabilitation of the prisoners and full restoration of their co-religionists’ parental rights and the unconditional return of their children.² Although the CPR was initially a provisional committee, the women would continue their activism with a steady rotation of leading members until September 1987. Their organization thus ran for over twenty-three years, making it the longest-standing human rights organization established and operating within the confines of the Soviet Union. In comparison, the well-known human rights samizdat publication, *The Chronicle of Current Events*, was active for sixteen years from 1968 to 1983—eight years fewer than the entire activity of the CPR, whose samizdat *Bulletin* ran for a total of seventeen years (1971–87).³

This essay examines the work of the Council of Prisoners’ Relatives and considers its underexplored influence. Despite its significance—including the frequent citation by Western organizations of their letters and petitions during the Cold War as evidence of human rights violations in the Soviet Union, thanks in large part to Keston College—most historians of Soviet Protestantism have mentioned the group only briefly in their wider analyses. Setting the stage with historical and organizational context, the essay goes on to explore the story of Aleksandra Kozorezova, opening a window into the way women’s daily realities often sharpened their rights consciousness and dually subversive activism in the Council of Prisoners’ Relatives.

Historical Context

The evangelical movement emerged in the Russian Empire in the late 1860s and early 1870s in three separate locales: Ukraine, the Transcaucasus region of Georgia and southern Russia, and St. Petersburg. Although these early groups had clear links to Western European believers—to German Baptists and Mennonites in the southern regions, and to Lord Radstock, an evangelical Anglican, in St. Petersburg—they quickly acquired their own Slavic forms. From these three initial geographic centers, evangelicalism spread to the rest of the Russian Empire. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the strongest two denominations—the Baptists

and the Evangelical Christians—had formed. These denominations maintained their distinctiveness while continuing their cross-denominational relationships well into the Soviet period. During World War II, after fifteen years of crushing repression against believers, the Soviet state allowed a joint denomination of Evangelical Christians-Baptists to be established. Following its establishment, the ECB denomination experienced a period of sustained rebuilding and evolution, despite internal factions and external oppression, as their congregations navigated a tenuous relationship with an atheistic state.⁴

Believing it “impossible to build a communist future without . . . freeing [people’s] consciousness from ‘religious prejudices and superstitions,’” Mikhail Suslov, the head of the Communist Party’s Agitation and Propaganda Department from 1947 to 1982, unleashed an anti-religious campaign in late 1958 with the approval of Nikita Khrushchev.⁵ During this campaign, authorities employed multiple tactics, from antireligious propaganda to sharpening the legal code concerning religious believers, from the removal of registration and the closing of churches to instigating very public confessional modifications that led to internal conflict. In 1960 authorities added two laws to the criminal code, designed to thwart the activities of religious believers: Article 142, on the separation of church from state and church from school, and Article 227, on religious leaders inciting citizens to neglect civic duties or to abstain from social life. From 1961 to 1964 alone, over eight hundred Jehovah’s Witnesses, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, and unregistered ECB believers were arrested under suspicion of violating Articles 142 and 227, many of them sentenced to three to five years in labor camps.⁶ During the antireligious campaign, authorities began closing prayer houses for all religious confessions and stripping congregations of their registration across the Soviet Union, especially from early 1961 when the Council of Ministers passed a secret resolution “on the improvement of monitoring the fulfilment of the Law on Cults.”⁷

Among the most pernicious aspects of the antireligious campaign was the way religious-affairs officials manipulated the leadership of national religious organizations with a “divide and conquer” strategy, playing on long-simmering tensions.⁸ In December 1959 the AUCECB approved a Letter of Instruction to all pastors across the Soviet Union, the contents of which “fully reflected Soviet religious policy.”⁹ In early 1960 they distributed the letter, informing pastors of policies and procedures that must be followed to facilitate or maintain each congregation’s official registration. The Letter of Instruction demanded, inter

alia, the cessation of “zealous proselytism,” a reduction in “the baptism of young people between the age of eighteen and thirty,” and a ban on children’s presence at church services.¹⁰ This letter, and the development of new statutes for the AUCECB from 1960 to 1963, ignited a union-wide split.¹¹

AUCECB leaders chose to send these letters to assure institutional survival. Once ECB pastors and congregations found out about the letter and the new constitution, however, some justifiably regarded these documents to be a result of state pressure on registered communities. The documents precipitated a split between those who believed it traitorous to register with an atheist state that would dare mandate how to worship and those who chose to remain in the AUCECB to worship in registered communities. The AUCECB leadership refused to revoke their controversial instruction letter and new statutes until 1963. By then, it was too late. The rupture was sealed in 1965 when the break-away faction formed into a separate denominational organization, the CCECB. Since this separatist organization rejected the state’s demand to register, its members experienced much more official repression than AUCECB members, including nearly two hundred who were imprisoned by the end of 1964.¹² The CCECB subsequently saw its members as martyrs and identified their group as the true Christian church, willing to suffer imprisonment and even death for the sake of their faith.¹³

Despite multiple failed attempts at unity, boundary lines were drawn and leaders and activist laity took sides. Most ECB believers across the nation were forced to choose camps by 1966, the split occasionally crossing family lines. The 1960s and 1970s were particularly taxing for those from unregistered ECB congregations. In 1967 alone, eight hundred of the thirteen hundred religious believers subjected to fines or warnings were ECB believers.¹⁴ CCECB leaders justified their tenacious civil disobedience by the call to remain faithful to the end and to suffer for the faith, as the martyrs of early Christianity had done. With such calls, they implied or stated outright that AUCECB believers were not faithful, having capitulated to religious-affairs officials, and could not therefore be considered true Christians. As early as 1961, congregations that sided with the Action Group began writing complaint letters to Soviet officials.¹⁵ The newly established CPR began adding their own letters on behalf of their imprisoned and oppressed family members in 1964.¹⁶

The CPR—established and run by women—became the most active evangelical political action group in the Soviet era. By 1966 its members had selected a highly respected woman, Lidiia Vins (1907–85), to lead

the organization. She was the widow of Petr Vins (1898–1937), a missionary to the Far East in the early Soviet period who was sentenced to death by shooting in Siberia in 1937, and the mother of Georgii Vins (1928–98), a key leader of the CCECB who was serving his first stint in prison at the time. From 1967, the CPR began sending out semi-regular “emergency messages” to Soviet leaders to inform them “about concrete instances of new illegal actions and repressions” by officials against ECB believers.¹⁷ Lidiia Vins was imprisoned in 1970 for nearly three years for her provocative work with the CPR.¹⁸

In 1971 other women—who kept the work of the CPR going while Lidiia Vins was in prison—started collating letters from CCECB-affiliated congregations to reprint in the samizdat *Bulletin*. Despite unrelenting attempts by the state to undermine the group’s epistolary activism, the underground publication of the *Bulletin* went on uninterrupted for seventeen years due to clandestine networks and an extensive system of hidden mimeograph printing presses around the Soviet Union. Women functioned as the primary compilers and printers of the *Bulletin*. The underground publisher Khristianin (Christian) started printing the *Bulletin*, among other publications including portions of the Bible, as early as 1972 (figure 6.1).¹⁹

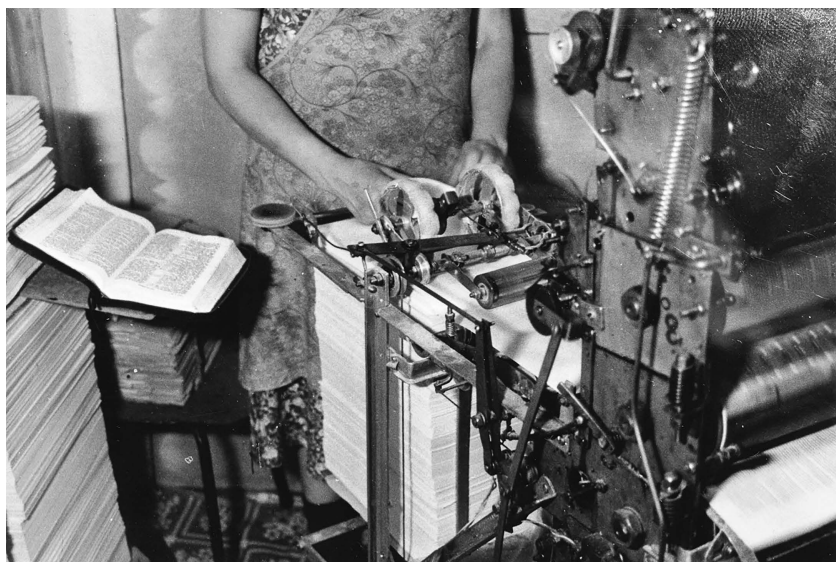


FIGURE 6.1. Anonymous woman working at a Khristianin printing press somewhere in the Soviet Union. Photo from The Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

From 1971 to 1987, the CPR produced 143 issues of the *Bulletin*.²⁰ With an average of over eight issues per year, the *Bulletin* consisted primarily of a reproduction of various petitions, complaints, and declarations made by CPR and CCECB churches to Soviet leaders and international organizations. Through the *Bulletin* and a flood of separate letters, they spread the news of the plight of religious believers in the Soviet Union to an international audience. Considering the anti-Western stance of Communist authorities, this dissemination of information to the West greatly annoyed state and party officials. In 1980 Soviet religious-affairs officials noted the “systematic” nature of the CPR “network of information gathering” established for their “libelous speculations and illegitimate demands set forth in illegally published bulletins.”²¹

The women of the CPR used their extensive network to gather signatures for open letters, including one dated May 1977 and addressed to Brezhnev and others “from Christian mothers living on the territory of the USSR,” which gathered an astonishing 4,131 signatures on 166 pages. In the letter, they demanded that any limits on parents giving their children a religious upbringing should be abolished, among other things.²² The network of trust fostered by the CPR among their co-religionists in the preceding thirteen years increased their ability to gather so many signatures within a short time. I. A. Gordeeva argues that the CPR “activated within the underground brotherhood [the CCECB] the mechanisms to form horizontal structures of trust, networks of mutual assistance and support, [and] the reproduction of traditions of social solidarity.”²³

CCECB women in Omsk were active members and assistants of the CPR from the mid-1960s until the late 1980s, influenced by their connection with Lidiia Vins, who had lived in Omsk in the 1930s and 1940s. Aleksandra Timofeevna (Andrienko) Kozorezova, the mother of ten children and a tireless advocate for religious freedom in the Soviet Union, spearheaded this activism.²⁴ She and her family had been members of the breakaway ECB faction since at least 1963, refusing to join the local congregation that regained registration in 1964, while demanding they be granted the freedom of conscience enshrined in the Constitution of the USSR.²⁵ Kozorezova’s husband Aleksei—who led CCECB congregations in Omsk, Siberia, and Voroshilovgrad (now Luhansk), Ukraine—was imprisoned three times, spending a total of twelve and a half years in prison between 1966 and 1985. In 1966, by virtue of her husband’s first arrest, show trial, and imprisonment,

Kozorezova became a member of the CPR. Despite the daily hardships she and her family faced, she accepted the role as head of the CPR in 1979 when Lidiia Vins emigrated to the United States. Kozorezova led the organization until 1987.

Aleksandra Kozorezova

Multiple episodes from Kozorezova's life not only reveal the way believers adapted to antireligious Soviet state tactics, but they also open a window into the development of CPR activism. In November 1958 Kozorezova was kicked out of the Communist Youth (Komsomol) organization at the Omsk Medical Institute, where she was in her final year of study to become a physician. The provincial religious-affairs commissioner reported this as a necessary measure, since Kozorezova had "entered the Baptist sect."²⁶ Having been raised in a Baptist family and baptized in 1956, she likely had not been active in the Komsomol for some time. In the earliest months of the antireligious campaign, however, Komsomol representatives would have found it politically expedient to report that they had culled from their membership a religious believer deemed to be in blatant violation of communist ideals. After her expulsion from its Komsomol organization, Kozorezova was also expelled from medical school, having completed all but one semester.²⁷

By late 1963 the Kozorezov family and several others decided not to join their co-religionists who were appealing for registration, knowing that to remain unregistered would lead to further oppression at the hands of local authorities.²⁸ In May 1966 Aleksei Kozorezov traveled to Moscow to protest the violation of believers' rights at the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.²⁹ Aleksei recounts that when he and two others from Omsk made the decision to go, he told them, "Only one who believes he will not return home should go." On May 27, nine days after Aleksei returned safely to Omsk, local authorities arrested him. Several months later, at a show trial against him and two Mennonite women, he was sentenced to three years in prison (figure 6.2). He recalls that for someone who expected death, three years was an easy form of suffering, even in the notorious Vladimir prison.³⁰

In August 1967, acting as a CPR member after her husband's arrest, Kozorezova joined four other women in signing a lengthy petition to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The petition enumerated the ways the Soviet state had been violating the rights of their

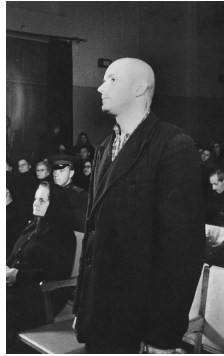


FIGURE 6.2. Show trial of Aleksei Kozorezov, Omsk, autumn 1966. Arkhiv Omskogo gosudarstvennogo istoriko-kraevedcheskogo muzeia (OGIKM), OMK 7528.38.

co-religionists, including the imposition of exorbitant fines; the breaking up of religious meetings and weddings; the searching of homes and confiscation of property; the arrest, show trials, and unjust imprisonment of leaders; the interrogation of their children at school; and the removal of children from their parents.³¹ Although copies of some letters written by Soviet dissidents to their government had earlier made their way to the West, this appeal to the United Nations was apparently the first by religious dissidents addressed to an entity in the West and requesting intervention in the defense of the human rights of Soviet citizens. Nadezhda Beliakova and Miriam Dobson argue that through this “pioneering appeal,” CPR members “went further than many dissidents; in addition to condemning the regime’s failure to implement its own legislation, they also noted and condemned inconsistencies between Soviet laws and decrees.” The letter also demonstrated that “the CPR had fully adopted the concept of human rights” well before the Helsinki Accords.³² The final paragraph of the letter reads: “We would not have considered appealing to international organizations had we even the slightest bit of hope that our petitions before the Government of the USSR would bear positive results. But the ruthless war against unregistered congregations is spreading . . . The facts of persecution we have here delineated are only a tiny speck of all that has taken place.”³³ This was the first of a flood of appeals from the CPR to the West.

Kozorezova’s signature on the letter provoked authorities in Omsk to launch a criminal investigation against her for “libel against Soviet legitimacy.” She recalled, “They had decided to take [my] children [from

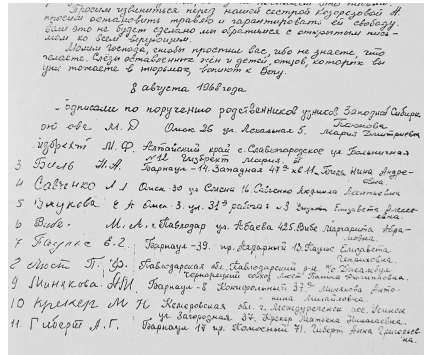


FIGURE 6.3. Xerox copy of the final paragraphs and signature page of the 1968 handwritten declaration letter by Kozorezova's co-religionists. Photo from The Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society, Baylor University, Waco, Texas. KCRPS, SU-Ini-6-8-5, 1968.

me] and to place them into a communist boarding school. So I secretly left Omsk with my eight young children and we lived illegally in the homes of believers until my husband was released [from prison] in 1969.”³⁴ In August 1968, eleven of Kozorezova’s friends sent a letter to Brezhnev and others about the libel in an Omsk newspaper that accused her of “carrying on subversive work” (figure 6.3).³⁵ Kozorezova’s friends demanded that the state apologize to her, that “this persecution cease and that her freedom be guaranteed,” closing with a provocative statement reflecting Jesus’s words from the cross: “We beg the Lord to forgive you, since you do not know what you are doing.”³⁶

After Aleksei Kozorezov’s release from prison in 1969, Kozorezova and their children returned to Omsk. One reason their church had chosen to remain unregistered was the Soviet mandate that children not be allowed to attend religious services. They felt God commanded them to give their children a religious upbringing. A May 1970 report to the provincial Communist Committee described teachers’ efforts to instill an atheistic upbringing at the school attended by the Kozorezov children:

Concrete atheistic work is being conducted at School No. 66, where the children of A[leksei] Kozorezov study. . . . The class leaders [teachers] for the classrooms where the Kozorezov children study observe these children’s behavior and social-activity level. They have noticed that the younger children, Misha Kozorezov (a pupil in grade 1) and Galia Kozorezova (grade 3) conduct

themselves more freely in their collectives. They are highly social with their comrades, and in their behavior one does not sense a difference from the other children in their classrooms. The conduct of Petia (grade 3) and Liuba (grade 5) is much more withdrawn. They do not participate in the life of the collective, try to avoid social assignments, and do not go on excursions to films or the theater. In conversations with their teacher(s), they explain this as a desire “only to study.” Class leaders . . . have had several conversations with these children’s parents about this and have argued that such behavior separates the children from the collective and makes their schoolwork more difficult. In response, the parents categorically stated that the school’s job is to teach a child grammar, but the parents’ job is to give their children a proper upbringing. When . . . Liuba Kozorezova’s class leader led a conversation [with the parents] about their daughter joining the Pioneers, Aleksandra Kozorezova replied, “I do not forbid my children from joining the Pioneers, but then they must forget God. They can choose for themselves who is most important to them.”³⁷

Kozorezova’s reported response to her daughter’s teacher reflects both a strong stand to give her children a Christian upbringing and an uncompromising desire that they choose to follow God, without denying that it was ultimately each child’s choice whether to join the Communist children’s organization.

Soviet scholars who conducted a study of religiosity in the 1960s concluded that many believers were young people, which not only went against the Marxist-Leninist notion of religion withering away but also pointed to religion being transmitted via the family. The leader of this study “considered this a failure of the Soviet school system and argued that teachers had to familiarize themselves with the family lives of their students by regularly visiting their homes.”³⁸ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the tactic of teachers conducting welfare checks at the homes of “sectarians” spread across the Soviet Union. Although such visits were conducted under the guise of ensuring that children were being properly cared for, school officials often used home visits to attempt to draw students away from religious belief. The report about representatives from the school in Omsk frequenting the Kozorezov home in 1970 betrays such mixed motives: “Teachers and class leaders have visited the Kozorezov family several times to learn their living conditions and to observe the children. Unfortunately, however, conversations with them

and attempts to pull them away from religion have thus far brought about no tangible results.”³⁹ In light of the challenges Kozorezova and her children had faced the previous few years, it was foolish to have expected tangible results.

Because CCECB believers refused to register their congregations, officials considered their religious meetings illegal gatherings. Women and married couples regularly hosted worship services and prayer meetings at their homes, often resulting in steep fines.⁴⁰ The illegal status of the Omsk CCECB congregation posed significant challenges for its members, since local officials frequently disrupted their worship services.⁴¹ In one instance, two women from the Omsk city council were assigned “to present [themselves on February 13, 1971] at the gathering of the sectarian group . . . at the home of the Kozorezov family and officially to certify the illegality of such an assembly.”⁴² Based on these women’s reports, they had no idea what they and their male companion were about to get themselves into. As they entered Aleksandra Kozorezova’s kitchen, they heard people singing a hymn behind a closed and guarded door. That winter evening, however, they would never see who was behind the door.⁴³ After a decade of repressive tactics, Kozorezova was prepared. She came out of the room with five or six of her children, who stood in front of her while she guarded the door. Kozorezova reportedly spoke for most of the forty-five minutes that the unwelcome strangers stayed at her home. All the while, her co-religionists remained completely silent, having stopped singing as soon as they realized officials had arrived. After gathering the officials’ names and employment numbers, Kozorezova defiantly told them that they could stay there until 10 p.m. and no later, that they would not get beyond the kitchen, that this was her house to which she had invited friends, that this gathering was in no way illegal, and that these city officials were therefore acting disrespectfully by coming to her home uninvited. She continued:

You can fine me, throw me into prison, remove my children from me, but I will never deny God, because God gives me life. . . . You officials would find a better use of your time by putting other places in order, where there is drunkenness, prostitution, and corruption. In our faith, there is absolutely no such disorderliness, so leave us believers alone and in peace. You have absolutely no right to interfere with our faith and to follow us everywhere. I officially declare that I refuse to attend any administrative commission, and you will not do anything to me.⁴⁴



FIGURE 6.4. Show trial of Iurii Mikhailovich Terekhov, Nikolai Romanovich Savchenko, Fedor Akhimovich Poiunov, and Aleksei Timofeevich Kozorezov (left to right), Omsk, July 23, 1971. OGIKM, OMK 7528.41.

Both officials' reports concluded that Soviet authorities should not tolerate such impudence, since it could lead to mass disturbance. Arguing that these sectarians bring only harm, the officials recommended that the danger must be countered with further antireligious work.⁴⁵

Kozorezova's husband Aleksei sat among those behind the door on that February evening. He and three other leaders from this congregation were arrested at their workplaces three months later—on May 14, 1971—charged with *tuneiadstvo* (social parasitism—i.e., not working but freeloaded off society and the government). At their show trial, Kozorezov was sentenced to five years in a labor camp (figure 6.4).⁴⁶

In the CCECB world, prisoners and their families were seen as heroes of the faith, but life was difficult. When their husbands were incarcerated, women were in essence civilly widowed—left to raise their large families alone with little or no financial means.⁴⁷ CCECB congregations and the women of the CPR called the children of ECB prisoners “orphans” while their fathers were away, although their mothers usually remained in the home.⁴⁸ The use of this term indicates that the father was the parent whose presence offered the greatest economic security and protection. Given these families' subsistence living and

decreased sense of safety, co-religionists offered support and encouragement. And many of these civilly widowed women, including Aleksandra Kozorezova, took up the pen and continued their epistolary activism through the CPR.

By 1975, partly due to Kozorezova's open activism with the CPR, Omsk officials again threatened her with arrest, so she packed up her ten children and elderly mother and fled to Voroshilovgrad, Ukraine.⁴⁹ Soon after she arrived there, KGB officials threatened criminal charges if she did not stop her work with the CPR. Recalling that time many years later, she wrote: "[At that time,] the image of Esther came to me. Esther told the king, 'How can I endure to see the calamity that will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?' With my whole heart, I internally repeated those words. I then told the KGB official, 'I cannot be indifferent when it comes to those who are imprisoned for the work of the church.'"⁵⁰

Kozorezova became the director of the CPR in 1979. The early 1980s were particularly trying for her family.⁵¹ Her husband was arrested in late December 1980, at which time local authorities were already building a case against her.⁵² In a January 1981 letter to Communist officials, Kozorezova wrote: "I cannot cease the work of petitioning as long as there is even one Christian prisoner in the Soviet Union, as long as believers are victimized. My husband and I never had, nor could we ever have, evil intentions against the authorities. . . . We, as believers who love the Lord and Christ's Church, are opponents of godlessness [and] atheistic dogma."⁵³

In August 1981 Kozorezova was sentenced to a three-year suspended sentence of probation.⁵⁴ Less than a year after her sentence came to an end, authorities began compiling another case against her. The prosecutor in Voroshilovgrad coordinated a multi-site search of at least eleven believers' homes across the Soviet Union in connection with her case on July 12, 1985. That day, officials searching a home in Donetsk told believers that Kozorezova would be arrested on July 15, and the news spread quickly to her. Thus began a period when she was forced underground for more than a year and a half, as authorities launched a widespread criminal investigation and pestered her co-religionists about her whereabouts.⁵⁵ In a letter to Soviet officials, dated December 15, 1985, Kozorezova acknowledged she had to leave her children "to continue [her] entrusted ministry in illegal conditions."⁵⁶ Only in 1987—with the easing of restrictions that accompanied glasnost and perestroika under Gorbachev—was Kozorezova able to return home. She remained

the CPR's leader until the last ECB prisoners were released after a targeted amnesty by the Supreme Soviet in February 1987 and a more far-reaching amnesty in July 1987.⁵⁷

Discourse Analysis

Kozorezova took part in the compilation of the *Bulletin* from as early as 1974 for as many as 131 of the *Bulletin*'s 143 issues. Based on their letters and publications, the women of the CPR and their co-religionists defined a true evangelical as one who opposes the "world"—that is, the antireligious state—and is called to defend the right to true freedom of religion, being prepared to suffer bodily harm and potential social deprivation for the sake of Christ. They perceived themselves to embody true evangelicalism as an expression of heroic suffering at the hands of a "godless" state that was persecuting them. These dual themes of suffering and persecution are clear in CPR and CCECB epistolary activism. Indeed, the discourse in the *Bulletin* lines up well with Olena Panych's examination of several memoirs of CCECB leaders. She argued that their "biographical canon" included:

1. An active interpenetration of the mystical into everyday common practices.
2. The image of a "faith hero" as a persecuted . . . fighter for the right to confess [one's] own religious beliefs, in spite of repeated repression by the atheistic authorities—almost always including the element of suffering "for the sake of the faith and God's work" or "for the sake of God's Word."
3. A self-understanding of the faith hero as "a physical and spiritual successor to the historical destiny of [one's] parents who also lived as faith heroes and martyrs," thereby perpetuating a "special kind of 'martyr habitus' [that] was transmitted over generations with the help of consciously maintained historical memories from the Soviet period, . . . bec[oming] part of a habitual, axiomatic tradition of recalling past sufferings."
4. An artistic and rhetorical form [that] contributes to an "aura of factuality" projected onto a depicted reality.⁵⁸

Kozorezova's writing in the CPR *Bulletin* in 1974 and 1975 reflects similar themes. In a letter to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Nikolai Podgorny, she wrote in exceptional detail

about events that took place on June 5, 1974, when a female investigator came with a crew of strong male *druzhinniki*—a voluntary people's patrol called on to protect public order—to search the Kozorezov household in Omsk in connection with a case against Georgii Vins. Toward the end of the search, a confrontation ensued. The *druzhinniki* violently twisted the arms of Kozorezova's children and elderly father before dragging her away to a government vehicle by her hands and feet for interrogation, to the dismay of her wailing children. In Kozorezova's complaint letter, she writes to Podgorny:

It does not cease to amaze me that the heads of your just, democratic state allow such actions. Where are the justice, equal rights, and defense of the rights of women and children that you proclaim so loudly to the whole world? Or do those rights only extend to the ruling class of atheism? In their fierce malice, it is apparent that atheists have decided to destroy our family physically. But, Comrade Podgorny, I have now informed you of this personally. And if anything happens to my husband, to me, or to our children, you will be responsible.⁵⁹

A later edition of the *Bulletin* printed an August 1974 reply to Kozorezova from Podgorny's office, stating that local officials had not violated the law during the search of her home.⁶⁰

By fall 1974 believers complained that local officials were building a case against Kozorezova.⁶¹ As that threat grew stronger, she fled with her family to Voroshilovgrad sometime in 1975, as described above.⁶² In October 1975 Kozorezova informed Podgorny and other authorities that she had just sent a letter to Amnesty International about her family's situation:

I consider it my duty to notify you that I have sent a declaration to Amnesty International. . . . My husband . . . is serving a second term of punishment for his convictions, for his sincere faith in God. . . . After the Christian wives of prisoners from the city of Omsk sent a declaration to you,⁶³ agents of the Prosecutor of the Lenin District of Omsk conducted a search of our home in June 1974. My children had to witness them dragging me away from home by my hands and feet to interrogate me at the prosecutor's office. Yet, in response to my complaint to you about that illegal action, you [i.e., Podgorny's office] stated that the prosecutor's agents had acted correctly and according to the law. . . [Since you

have responded negatively to my many previous petitions,] I have therefore decided to turn to Amnesty International at this time.⁶⁴

In her declaration to Amnesty International, Kozorezova cited the Helsinki Accords, signed a few months earlier by Brezhnev,⁶⁵ and enumerated the arbitrary ways her husband, family, and co-religionists had been treated by Soviet officials:

My husband . . . is now being deprived of his freedom for a second time . . . On May 14, 1971 he was once again arrested, and on July 23 of that same year he was sentenced by the Omsk Provincial Court to five years . . . in a strict-regime camp. He has once more been separated from his family. Ten young children have been left without their father. The family is without its breadwinner. The intolerable burden of raising children alone has once again been placed upon my female shoulders. Our seven sons are growing up without their father, and of course our daughters also need their father. . . . The head of the prison camp has announced to me that my husband has the Gospels in his possession and that they will find them and will punish my husband again for reading literature considered illegal for the camp . . . I would not be surprised if in the last months before my husband's [scheduled] release, [prison officials] were to attempt to destroy his health or to kill him. Having briefly described the state of my husband and family, I ask you today to petition before our government for the release of [my husband and other falsely accused believers who are now in prison] . . . Their wives and children have also been deprived of their breadwinning fathers by the harshness of their sentences. Once I send this letter to you, the Soviet authorities might accuse me of libel and charge me with a crime, but I fear God above all and therefore scorn [any accusations of] libel.⁶⁶

This letter demonstrates her courage to stand up to Soviet authorities as she petitioned for her family's and co-religionists' rights. She describes her family's plight in desperate terms. The varied language and tone in the two documents from October 1975—equal portions strength and desperation—is representative of thousands of similar letters sent by ECB believers and widely distributed by the CPR.

One cannot help but notice the gendered complexity in the letters Kozorezova wrote. On the one hand, she led an organization run by women that appealed insistently for the religious freedom of their

co-religionists. On the other hand, her letters exhibit a traditionalist evangelical view of gendered norms. Although Kozorezova was highly educated, she was able to work only menial jobs as the mother of ten children, one with special needs. As a result, she found it difficult to run her household without the support of her breadwinning husband. Many ECB women faced similar challenges in negotiating the complexities of their faith, their families, and a society run by an antireligious government.⁶⁷

Ann Komaromi claims that “the style of [unregistered Baptist] reporting remained far more emotional and personal” than that of other dissident groups in the Soviet Union.⁶⁸ Beliakova and Dobson concur, arguing that the “assertive attitude” adopted by the Baptists “distinguished [their statements] most from other samizdat appeals, whether secular or religious.”⁶⁹ Certainly CCECB writers were assertive while standing up for their rights and demanding that Soviet central officials take charge of renegade local officials before God’s wrath came down on Soviet leaders and the entire Soviet Union. With the threat of God’s wrath pouring out on those who infringed on the freedom of religion declared by the 1948 UN Declaration or the Helsinki Accords, biblical motifs and the contemporary language of human rights frequently coalesced. From 1964 to 1987, the CPR facilitated the distribution of thousands of letters to Soviet officials and entities in the West. Gordeeva argues that through their assertive activism, the CPR “created a cult of martyrs for the faith on the examples of heroic self-sacrifice that bound the movement together and inculcated their youth.”⁷⁰

Dual Subversion and Questions of Effectiveness

The story of the CPR is one of dual subversion. Kozorezova and her friends overtly challenged Communist hegemony. In the CPR perspective, the atheistic state sought to obliterate believers, and hence they saw this as a fight for the survival of fellow Baptists as well as evangelical traditions, values, and convictions. This was apparent when Kozorezova invoked Esther as an example in 1976, reflecting a mindset that informed the impassioned letters she and other CPR members wrote. Likewise, Lidiia Vins argued that their letters “needed to have teeth, . . . so that those who read [them] felt they had been bitten.”⁷¹ Mikhail Shaptala, who led the CCECB denomination from 1966 to 1969, took issue with Lidiia Vins and the radical way the CPR “started to dictate conditions to the government” in that period. In his memoir,

he relates what he said to Vins: "Who are we that we should write all these reports? You are forgetting in which country we are located."⁷²

Shaptala's memoir demonstrates that the women of the CPR also subverted the norms of CCECB culture, which invoked biblical justifications for female submission. Although the civilly widowed women saw it as an extension of their call to be good "helpmeets" to their absent husbands, whom they extolled as heroic models of true evangelicalism, they turned that call into a purposeful activism for religious freedom. Membership in the CPR gave these wives a vehicle to exercise bold leadership in a way that was otherwise proscribed. Some ECB men were not particularly pleased at the women's provocative audacity and called the CPR a bunch of "strong-willed women."⁷³ According to Walter Sawatsky, women's leadership of the CPR, which became "the second spokesman for the CCECB and reflect[ed] a more intense negativist tone than the CCECB itself," was problematic, since men "placed a very heavy emphasis on the subordination of women and fe[lt] uncomfortable that women [we]re *de facto* leaders of their movement."⁷⁴ Indeed, within a month of Aleksandra Kozorezova being named the leader of the CPR, nineteen pastors from Central Asia signed a petition to the leadership of the CCECB requesting that the CPR be brought under the strict control of the CCECB, that a pastor be named as the chief editor of the *Bulletin*, and that "acerbic language" be removed from CPR petitions addressed to the Soviet government.⁷⁵ Based on the strong language that continued to be used in their petitions and Kozorezova's ongoing leadership of the CPR for eight more years, this petition seems not to have been given significant weight at the time.

Varying interpretations of CPR effectiveness began in the 1960s and continue in the post-Soviet era. Was the CPR a model of suffering heroism that effected the liberation of ECB prisoners, or at least drew national and international attention to their plight, as many CCECB believers and some conservative Western Christians insisted? Or in writing such sharply worded letters, was the CPR unnecessarily provocative, inciting persecution by Soviet officials and stirring up Baptist leaders against their movement, as argued by registered Baptists and members of the World Council of Churches?

These opposing assessments of CPR activism are two sides of the same coin: the CPR was both heroic and provocative. On the one hand, its bold letters and advocacy did occasionally bring change. An ECB leader in Novosibirsk, for example, recounted how the CPR's fast-acting network saved him and his Baptist brothers from being put on trial

in Kazakhstan for attempting to smuggle censored religious literature into Siberia, because Kazakh authorities did not want to be reported to high-level Soviet officials or international observers, as the CPR had threatened.⁷⁶ On the other hand, the CPR also provoked a negative assessment by AUCECB leaders, whom the CPR regularly labeled as traitors to the true Gospel for their complicity with the state.⁷⁷ CPR letters and the *Bulletin*, as well as letters to them from co-religionists, regularly called out state and party leaders for violating human rights. Such writings only further inflamed state officials against the “extralegal and antisocial” sectarians who were spreading “fabrications,” as Vladivostok’s commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs described them in 1983.⁷⁸

As the atmosphere in the Soviet Union shifted toward greater freedoms, the CCECB decided in September 1987 to cease the work of the CPR and to form a new division, the Otdel Zastupnichestva (Department of Intercession). The CCECB leadership announced this decision to believers in the first publication of the Department of Intercession in April 1988. In the announcement, they expressed “gratitude to the Lord and to all who labored” in the CPR, whose “temporary mandate and limited mission” had now been “fulfilled.” The Department of Intercession would be a new permanent commission led by “brother ministers on a collegial basis,” with some CPR staff continuing to serve.⁷⁹ This decision thereby allowed men—by 1988 no longer primary targets for arrest, show trials, or imprisonment—to make a clean break by taking the leadership away from strong-willed women.⁸⁰

Aleksandra Kozorezova’s work of drawing attention to the plight of her co-religionists continued unabated until the last ECB prisoner was released in late 1988. Soon after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, evangelicals started to emigrate in a steady flow, primarily to the United States and Germany. The Kozorezov family joined them, emigrating from Ukraine to the United States in 1991. Aleksandra Kozorezova died in an auto accident near Seattle in 2006 at age seventy.

The life and advocacy of Kozorezova and her fellow CPR members exhibit the importance of evangelical women’s networks of mutual support. Their acute sense of rights consciousness was forged by years of discrimination at the hands of the Soviet government. As these women imparted their faith and tradition to the next generation, they also subverted both patriarchal standards and state norms and laws through their work with the CPR. Despite the establishment of the Department

of Intercession, at least partially designed to supersede the women's leadership, CPR women have continued to be celebrated by successive generations of ECB believers for their historical legacy.⁸¹

Notes

I dedicate this essay to Rev. Canon Dr. Michael Bourdeaux, a generous colleague to me for the last twelve years of his life. Many thanks to the Keston Institute for a research scholarship, the Institute for International Education for a Fulbright Study/Research Grant to Siberia, and Brandeis University for the Irving and Rose Crown Fellowship. I also want to thank colleagues with the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, the Evangelical Studies Unit of the American Academy of Religion, and the history department at the University of Wyoming for their enthusiastic reception of earlier versions of this work. Additional gratitude to Miriam Dobson for feedback on this essay.

1. Those who subscribed to the views of the Action Group were called *initsiativniki*. The group, however, soon changed its name to the Organizational Committee (Orgkomitet), before finally becoming the Council of Churches (Sovet Tserkvei) in 1965. One can find all of these organization and adherent names in archival documents across the former Soviet Union, dated well into the 1970s.

2. Arkhiv Gosudarstvennogo muzeia istorii religii (GMIR), kol. 1, op. 8, d. 689. Several of the women connected with this organization were arrested or placed in a psychiatric hospital in the spring of 1964 and were only released after a nationwide petition campaign by CCECB believers. I. A. Gordeeva, "Religioznoe podpol'e kak sreda formirovaniia grazhdanskogo obshchestva," *Vestnik RGGU* 62/11, no. 1 (2011), 78.

3. The Russian term *samizdat* means "self-published" and refers to documents that Soviet dissidents used to work around the extensive censorship of anything that did not fall in line with Marxist-Leninist ideology. Nadezhda Beliakova has argued that the *Bulletin* was "the longest-running rights-defending samizdat organ in the USSR." Nadezhda Beliakova, "Kollektivnye praktiki tipichnoi obshchiny evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v pozdnem SSSR," *Gosudarstvo, religii tserkov' v Rossii i zarubezhom* 30, nos. 3–4 (2012), 307. The CPR's main publication, *Biulleten' Soveta rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR*, is cited hereafter as "CPR Bulletin."

4. Several works explore aspects of this history, including *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov SSSR* (Moscow: Vsesoiuznii sovetskiy evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov, 1989); S. N. Savinskii, *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukrainy, Rossii, Belorussii (1867–1917)* (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 1999); S. N. Savinskii, *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukrainy, Rossii, Belorussii (1917–1967)* (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 2001); Heather J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905–1929* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Tat'iana Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm i gosudarstvennaia vlast' v 1905–1991 godakh* (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii universitet Sankt-Peterburga, 2009); Albert W. Wardin, Jr., *On the Edge: Baptists and Other Free Church Evangelicals in Tsarist Russia, 1855–1917* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013); Walter

Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981).

5. Tatiana A. Chumachenko, *Church and State in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev Years*, ed. and trans. Edward E. Roslof (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2003), 149.

6. Emily B. Baran, *Dissent on the Margins: How Soviet Jehovah's Witnesses Defied Communism and Lived to Preach about It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 81–82; Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 188–90; Petr Dashkovskii and Natal'ia Zibert, *Gosudarstvenno-konfessional'naia politika na iuge zapadnoi Sibiri v kontse 1917–seredine 1960–kh gg.*, vol. 3 of *Etnokul'turnye i religiovedcheskie issledovaniia v Evrazii*, ed. A. V. Gorbato (Barnaul: Altaiskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2020), 80.

7. Dashkovskii and Zibert, *Gosudarstvenno-konfessional'naia politika*, 80, 98. Authorities closed some two thousand prayer houses of all religions from 1960 to 1962 alone (91). At the Twenty-Second Congress of the CPSU in October 1961, Khrushchev declared the necessity of a “more effective system of scientific atheist propaganda . . . , one that . . . will prevent the dissemination of religious views, especially among children and adolescents.” N. S. Khrushchev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Documents of Current History 18 and 19 (New York: Crosscurrents Press, 1961), 177.

8. A move against Orthodox priests came in 1961. On its leadup, see Chumachenko, *Church and State in Soviet Russia*, 165–88. On the bishops' council in 1961 that stripped priests of power in their parishes, see Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church: A Contemporary History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 45–46, 53–69.

9. Tat'iana Nikol'skaia, “Istoriia dvizheniia baptistov-initsiativnikov,” in vol. 3 of *Al'manakh po istorii russkogo baptizma*, ed. M. S. Krakhmal'nikova (Saint Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 2004), 71.

10. Michael Bourdeaux, *Religious Ferment in Russia: Protestant Opposition to Soviet Religious Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 20. The earliest known version of this letter was reprinted by Arkhiv Samizdata: Vsesoiuznyi soviet EKHB, “Instruktivnyi list starshim presviteram,” in *Dokumenty Baptistov (EKHB)—chast' 1*, vol. 14 of *Sobranie dokumentov samizdata* (Munich: Arkhiv Samizdata, Radio Free Europe, 1973), AS no. 773, scanned at the Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society (KCRPS), Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Cited henceforth by AS no.

11. For a review of developments in AUCECB statutes, see “Appendix I: Constitution of the ECB Church in the USSR,” in Bourdeaux, *Religious Ferment*, 190–210.

12. For a synopsis of this history, see A. V. Sinichkin, “Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR s dekabria 1959 po 1966 god: Istoriia i analiz krizisa v bratstve EKHB,” Bachelor's diploma, Moskovskaia Bogoslovskaiia Seminariia Evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov, 2001.

13. See Olena Panych, “A Time and Space of Suffering: Reflections of the Soviet Past in the Memoirs and Narratives of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists,”

in *State Secularism and Lived Religion in Soviet Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Catherine Wanner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 218–43.

14. I. M. Sovetov, “Sovet po delam religii pri SM SSSR: Struktura, funktsii i osnovnye napravleniia deiatel’nosti (Epokha V. A. Kuroedova, 1966–1984 gg.),” Rossiiskoe Ob”edinenie Issledovatelei Religii, <https://rusoir.ru/president/president-works/president-works-268/> (accessed January 31, 2022). It is unclear how many from the CCECB were fined, but they likely constituted a significant majority of those eight hundred administrative punishments. In this same period, ninety Pentecostals, twenty Adventists, and eighty Orthodox believers encountered the same punishment.

15. “Dokumenty Initsiativnoi gruppy i Orgkomiteta po sozyvu vsesoiuznogo s”ezda evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov (August 1961 to May 1966),” AS nos. 770–72.

16. Vremennyi sovet rodstvennikov uznikov, “Soobshchenie o 95 baptist-skikh uznikakh,” July 5, 1964, AS no. 780.

17. GMIR kol. 1, op. 8, d. 698, ll. 1ob–2ob, dated August 20, 1967. Other emergency messages are available at KCRPS SU-Ini-11-4-CPR-S (August 1968); AS no. 617 (March 1970); KCRPS SU-Ini-6-1972-S CPR (1972).

18. Lidiia Vins became a member of CPR in 1966 when her son Georgii was imprisoned, the same year she signed her first letters via CPR (e.g., GMIR kol. 1, op. 8, d. 719) and was selected as its leader. “Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov,” Fond podderzhki gonimyykh khristian Rossii i stran SNG, <https://www.fondsp.ru/news/read/sovet-rodstvennikov-uznikov-evangel'skikh-hristian-baptistov> (accessed March 14, 2017).

19. On the secretive nature of the printing-press network, see Nikol’skaia, “Istoriia dvizheniia baptistov-initsiativnikov,” 87–88.

20. This included two unnumbered supplementary issues. Collections of these samizdat bulletins can be found in repositories around the world, primarily KCRPS, Arkhiv Samizdata (Radio Free Europe, Munich), and the Archive of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (A-RSEKhB, Moscow), in addition to single issues located in archives throughout the former USSR. The full collection of the CPR *Bulletin* was recently published online, allowing scholars to engage with their discursive evolution more substantially. *Biulleten’ Soveta rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov (1971–1987)*, Russkii Baptist, <http://rus-baptist.narod.ru/08.htm> (accessed January 25, 2021).

21. Beliakova, “Kollektivnye praktiki,” 308–9, citing Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. R-6991, op. 6, d. 1759, ll. 95–96.

22. Beliakova, “Kollektivnye praktiki,” 309, citing GARF f. R-6991, op. 6, d. 1121, ll. 37–38, 44–54. See the text of the letter (without signatures) reprinted in Nadezhda Beliakova and Miriam Dobson, ed., *Zhenshchiny v evangel’skikh obshchinakh poslevoennogo SSSR, 1940–1980-e gg.* (Moscow: Indrik, 2015), 328–35. An incomplete version of a translation of the letter is in the Keston collection: KCRPS SU-Ini-6-33-S-1977.

23. Gordeeva, “Religioznoe podpol’e,” 79.

24. Liudmila Leont’evna Savchenko, oral history interview (OHI) by April L. French, June 2 and 9, 2015, Omsk; Beliakova and Dobson, *Zhenshchiny v*

evangel'skikh obshchinakh, 324n202. Lidiia Vins and her family moved to Kyiv from Omsk in 1946, when Aleksandra Andrienko (later Kozorezova), whose family was a part of the ECB congregation in Omsk, was ten years old.

25. On August 31, 1949, officials stripped the Omsk ECB Church of its registration, as a result of which believers lived outside the law in that city for nearly fifteen years. Gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv Omskoi oblasti (GIAOO), f. R-2603, op. 1, d. 43, l. 1; GIAOO f. P-17, op. 1, d. 7250, l. 32.

26. GIAOO f. P-17, op. 1, d. 7541, l. 12. The report calls her by her maiden name, Andrienko, ignoring that she had changed her surname to Kozorezova when she married Aleksei Timofeevich Kozorezov a year earlier.

27. GARF f. R-6991, op. 6, d. 3127, ll. 8–9; CPR *Bulletin*, no. 29 (1976), 11–12.

28. N. R. Savchenko, “Istoriia Omskoi Tserkvi (iz vospominanii N. R. Savchenko),” unpublished document provided to the author by Liudmila Savchenko.

29. This protest, on May 16–17, 1966, ended up being “the largest civil protest action of the ‘stagnation’ era,” according to Nikol’skaia. Organized by leaders of the CCECB to protest the violation of believers’ rights, between four hundred and six hundred individuals made it to Moscow. Several believers were prevented from leaving their city of residence or interrupted on their way to Moscow by local or regional officials. For more information, see Tatyana Nikolskaya, “Human Rights Advocacy of Baptist Initiators,” *Changing Societies & Personalities* 1, no. 4 (2017): 340–43.

30. Aleksei T. Kozorezov, “Lesnaia Tserkov’,” *Nasledie vernykh*, April 27, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6G6S4bYmFyc&list=PLXzQfCGpmticr0tvz-SwHChCrr92Kg4ow&index=7> (accessed October 22, 2024). On the charges against Kozorezov, see GIAOO f. R-2603, op. 1, d. 50, ll. 52–54, 58; L. L. Savchenko, *U Boga pishetsia pamiatnaia kniga: Biografiia N. R. Savchenko* (Moscow: Khristianin, 2012), 24, 26.

31. Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov, “Veruiushchie prosiat zashchity ot bezzakoniia,” August 15, 1967, AS no. 515. Reprinted in Beliakova and Dobson, *Zhenshchiny v evangel’skikh obshchinakh*, 368–92, and translated into English as “Appeal II: From Five Baptist Women to U Thant,” in *Christian Appeals from Russia*, ed. Rosemary Harris and Xenia Howard-Johnston (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1969), 33–62.

32. Nadezhda Beliakova and Miriam Dobson, “Protestant Women in the Late Soviet Era: Gender, Authority, and Dissent,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 58, no. 2 (2016), 131.

33. Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov, “Veruiushchie prosiat zashchity ot bezzakoniia,” AS no. 515, 22.

34. “Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov.”

35. The author has not yet located the specific newspaper article referenced in this letter.

36. Rodstvenniki uznikov Zapadnoi Sibiri, “Zaiavlenie,” August 8, 1968, copy sent to Brezhnev and others, KCRPS SU-Ini-6-8-S. This letter was translated into English as “Appeal V: From Western Siberia,” in Harris and Howard-Johnston, *Christian Appeals*, 77–83.

37. GIAOO f. P-17, op. 1a, d. 999, ll. 82–83. The word “God” was not capitalized, but it is capitalized here since this is what Kozorezova would have done.

38. Victoria Smolkin, *A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: A History of Soviet Atheism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 153. See also Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. P-606, op. 4, d. 80.

39. GIAOO f. P-17, op. 1a, d. 999, ll. 83–84.

40. GIAOO f. R-437, op. 9, d. 2340, ll. 28–30; Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Novosibirskoi oblasti (GANO), f. R-1418, op. 1, d. 192, l. 7; Arkhiv Omskogo gosudarstvennogo istoriko-kraevedcheskogo muzeia (OGIKM), OMK-7406/1-15, September 1960; OGIKM OMK-7528/13–35, May 1962; KCRPS SU-Ini-6-4-S and SU-Ini-6-17-S.

41. Savchenko, OHI, June 2 and 9, 2015, Omsk.

42. GIAOO f. R-437, op. 9, d. 2340, l. 25.

43. These women’s reports can be found at GIAOO f. R-437, op. 9, d. 2340, ll. 23–30.

44. GIAOO f. R-437, op. 9, d. 2340, l. 26. The reports do not capitalize the word “God” here, but the author has capitalized the word based on how Kozorezova would have intended in her own speech.

45. GIAOO f. R-437, op. 9, d. 2340, ll. 27, 30.

46. On the arrest, trial, and imprisonment of these men, see Savchenko, *U Boga pishetsia*, 47–49, 74–77. The irony of these men being arrested at their workplace and accused of freeloading was not lost on their co-religionists.

47. Thanks to ChaeRan Freeze, who suggested the concept of women being “civilly widowed” in a discussion of their realities.

48. Within the CPR *Bulletin* alone, petitioners used the term “orphan” to describe children whose fathers were imprisoned more than four hundred times over the course of seventeen years.

49. Savchenko, OHI, June 2 and 9, 2015, Omsk; “Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov.”

50. “Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov.” She was referencing Esther 8:6.

51. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 79 (1980), 29; no. 87 (1980), 6, 25; no. 88 (1980), 5–14, 35–37; no. 89 (1980), 7–8; no. 90 (1980), 5; nos. 91–92 (1981), 11–12, 15–16; nos. 93–94 (1981), 8, 10, 13–15; nos. 94–95 (1981), 7; nos. 95–96 (1981), 25; no. 106 (1982), 6, 55; no. 107 (1982), 48–51; no. 110 (1982), 18–19; no. 111 (1982), 81–2; no. 112 (1983), 18; no. 115 (1983), 50–51, 60–61; no. 117 (1983), 52–56; no. 118 (1983), 5, 78–79; no. 119 (1984), 5, 30; no. 120 (1984), 24, 33, 43; no. 122 (1984), 22–23, 57; no. 123 (1984), 5, 63–64; no. 124 (1984), 65; no. 126 (1984), 49–51; no. 128 (1985), 68; no. 130 (1985), 5.

52. “Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov”; CPR *Bulletin*, nos. 92–93 (1981), 10–11. Aleksei Kozorezov was sentenced to three years, but officials fabricated additional charges for another year soon before he was to be released.

53. CPR *Bulletin*, nos. 92–93 (1981), 11.

54. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 97 (1981), 7. A suspended sentence in the Soviet Union meant the individual was allowed to serve their sentence via probation rather than incarceration. The individual was allowed to live at home, but with certain restrictions of freedom.

55. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 131 (1985), 7, 9, 11–12, 20–23, 29–30, 33, 80–82; no. 132 (1985), 21, 22, 26, 69.

56. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 133 (1985), 16–18.

57. Bill Keller, “Soviet Releasing Some Prisoners under New Law,” *New York Times*, February 8, 1987; Celestine Bohlen, “Soviets Set First Amnesty for Political Prisoners,” *Washington Post*, June 25, 1987.

58. Panych, “A Time and Space of Suffering,” 223–26, 238. Regarding the “aura of factuality,” Panych is drawing on Geertz’s definition of religion. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 90.

59. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 16 (1974), 25.

60. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 18 (1974), 11.

61. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 17 (1974), 6–7.

62. “Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov”; Savchenko, OHI, June 2 and 9, 2015, Omsk.

63. KCRPS SU-Ini-6-8-S, dated March 1974 (signed by both Kozorezova and Vins).

64. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 27 (1975), 28.

65. Although CCECB believers had long been citing the violation of their human or civil rights in letters and appeals, they began using the Helsinki Final Act as a clarion call in their complaints addressed directly to Brezhnev nearly immediately after the accords were signed. In the CPR *Bulletin*, believers had discussed the violation of their civil or human rights in approximately twenty reproduced letters from 1971 to September 1975, sometimes citing the UN’s Declaration of Human Rights or the Soviet Constitution. In contrast, within a few weeks of the signing of the Helsinki Accords in July–August 1975, petitions and complaints began citing the accords prolifically: twenty-one letters printed in the *Bulletin* mentioned the accords from August to December 1975, and at least fifty letters mentioned them in 1976.

66. CPR *Bulletin*, no. 27 (1975), 29–31.

67. This analysis is slightly modified from April L. French, “Council of Prisoners’ Relatives,” in *Voices of the Voiceless: Religion, Communism, and the Keston Archive*, ed. Julie deGraffenried and Zoe Knox (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 39–41.

68. Ann Komaromi, “Samizdat and Soviet Dissident Publics,” *Slavic Review* 71, no. 1 (2012), 83.

69. Beliakova and Dobson, “Protestant Women,” 131.

70. Gordeeva, “Religioznoe podpol’e,” 82. Gordeeva goes on to argue that this led them “to exaggerate and even distort” reality and that “an underground syndrome led the *initsiativniki* to a genuine mania [about perpetual] surveillance.”

71. Beliakova and Dobson, “Protestant Women,” 131.

72. Mikhail Shaptala, *Kak eto bylo* (Cherkasy: Smirna, 2011), 66; N. A. Bondarenko, “Formirovanie sistemy religioznogo dissidentstva v ramkakh

‘otdelenogo’ bratstva EKhB vo vtoroi polovine 1960–kh gg.: Ukrainskie realii,” *Khristianskoe chtenie*, no. 1 (2017), 398.

73. Beliakova and Dobson, “Protestant Women,” 131.

74. Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*, 242.

75. Central Asian Association of ECB Churches, “O Sovete rodstvennikov uznikov,” July 9, 1979, reprinted in Nikolai Klassen, *Gonimaia tserkov’* (Heimerzheim: Self-published, 2004), 153–54.

76. Vitalii Nikolaevich Karman, OHI, May 15, 2015, Novosibirsk. This incident was reported in a religious-affairs report (GANO f. R-1418, op. 1, d. 242, l. 21), the accuracy of which Karman strongly disputes. Nikol’skaia discusses some additional positive changes brought on by CCECB advocacy, including that of the CPR. Nikolskaya, “Human Rights Advocacy,” 349.

77. An example of provocative language against the AUCECB is in Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov, “Sbornik dokumentov vtorogo Vsesoiuznogo s’ezda rodstvennikov uznikov Evangel’skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR” (samizdat, 1970), part 1, 32; KCRPS SU-Ini-11-4-CPR-S Second Congress. Nikol’skaia provides examples of times that officially registered ECB Christians were also caught up in the net of state retribution against CCECB believers. Nikolskaya, “Human Rights Advocacy,” 348–49.

78. GARF f. R-6991, op. 6, d. 2562, ll. 1–9. See also GANO f. R-1418, op. 1, d. 242, ll. 34–42.

79. This announcement was reprinted in “Sovet rodstvennikov uznikov,” *Vestnik Istiny*, no. 3 (2001), 33. It is unclear how many CPR women continued their work with the Department of Intercession or for how long. The Department of Intercession continues to disseminate information about believers who are reportedly under oppression in various locations, including various post-Soviet countries, China, India, Germany, and the United States. Many separatist Baptists emigrated to the latter two countries, taking their long-developed “martyr habitus” with them.

80. Nikol’skaia claims this transition was a mere reorganization, but the 1988 announcement claims a clear distinction between the two organizations. Nikolskaya, “Human Rights Advocacy,” 348,

81. In one celebratory publication by the International Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists—the successor organization to the CCECB—on the forty-fifth anniversary of the ministry of both the Council of Prisoners’ Relatives and the Department of Intercession, all but seven of the seventy-four pages are dedicated to the legacy and influence of the Council of Prisoners’ Relatives. The special edition of *Vestnik Istiny*, nos. 4–5 (2009) is titled “45 let sluzheniia Soveta rodstvennikov uznikov i Otdela zastupnichestva MSTs EKhB.”