

Documents

Soviet Local Authorities Combat Religion

Details on how local authorities in the USSR combat religious belief is given in this report, dated 6 September 1978, which was issued by the town soviet of Tiraspol (Moldavian SSR). Commissions for "monitoring the observance of laws on religious cults" were originally established during Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign (1959-64) and were first mentioned in Partiinaya Zhizn (Party Life) No. 2, January 1964 (pp. 22-6). A variety of organizations appear from this document to be involved in anti-religious work, and all these groups are co-ordinated by the monitoring Commissions, which work closely with the local soviets.

MOLDAVIAN SSR

DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF TIRASPOL TOWN SOVIET OF PEOPLE'S DEPUTIES

6 September 1978 Report No. 18

*Measures to establish closer control
over the observance of the laws on
religious cults in the town of Tiraspol.*

The executive committee of the Tiraspol town soviet of people's deputies has noted that the Commission monitoring the observance of the laws on religious cults, and the public bodies of the town and the village of Dnestrovsk have carried out the work assigned to them concerning the observance of the "Regulations on religious associations in the Moldavian SSR", and have made a study of the situation among religious sects and groups of believers.

In cases where the laws on religious cults were being openly violated by believers, measures were taken against them by means of administrative and social pressure.

For infringing paragraph 25 of the "Regulations on religious associations in the Moldavian SSR" by carrying out a baptism in the waters of the River Dnestr on 9 July 1978, I. N. Kolomii-chuk - a member of the executive of the council of twenty (*dvadtsatka*) in the congregation belonging to the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists [AUCECB] - was fined 50 roubles by the administrative Commission of the [town soviet's] executive committee.

The Commission is constantly carrying on individual work with the leaders of religious associations and with individual members. This work is carried out at the believers' place of employment. From time to time seminars are also arranged, with the participation of inspectors from the Town Department of Internal Affairs, to study the legislation on religious cults, to discover where forbidden religious meetings are held and to ban them.

Comrade A. V. Shlyakhin, a lecturer at the medical institute and a member of the Commission, was of great assistance in this field, as were I. S. Nikitin, a lecturer at the M. V. Frunze state-farm technical college, and others.

In addition, the executive committee of the town soviet of people's deputies notes that the religious situation remains complex. There is still a wide-

spread network of religious associations in the town: a church of Old Believers, a congregation of All-Union Evangelical Christian Baptists (legal), a congregation belonging to the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists [CCECB] (schismatics), a Pentecostal congregation, a group of SDA's (Seventh Day Adventists) and a few individual Jehovah's Witnesses.

Despite constant surveillance of the activities of religious associations, individual members of the AUCECB (presbyter J. Ya. Pauls) and the CCECB (presbyter I. F. Zaver'tyayev) break the laws on cults, and there are attempts to defy the local authorities (baptizing in the river Dnestr).

Over the last few years, a rise in the membership of AUCECB and CCECB congregations has been observed; this is due basically to persons of German nationality who have settled in the town. People from the nearby villages of Slobodzeisk district have been christened and baptized, and have been accepted as members of religious congregations. The congregation belonging to the CCECB avoids registration under all kinds of pretexts and refuses to adopt a loyal stance. This congregation has an anti-social attitude and every year sends letters containing slanderous fabrications to the highest Party and Soviet authorities.

The increasing activity of religious associations can be attributed above all to slipshod individual work by management, housing committees and officials of administrative and social organizations with regard to believers at their places of employment and residence.

The town Commission monitoring the observance of the laws on religious cults (Comrade I. A. Andreev) has not fully ensured the coordination of activities by the town's industrial centres and social organizations in order to observe strictly and carry out the "Regulations on religious associations in the Moldavian SSR", confirmed by a Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Moldavian SSR on 19 May 1977.

The executive committee of the Tiraspol town soviet of people's deputies has come to the following decisions:

1. To note that the Commission monitoring the observance of the laws on religious cults, industrial management and

social organizations have insufficiently promoted individual work with believers concerning the strict observance of the legislation on cults.

2. To make it obligatory for the leaders of industry and social organizations, i.e. Comrade A. I. Bolshakov at the Kirov factory, Comrade V. S. Solovyov at the Forty-Year Anniversary of the Komsomol factory, Comrade L. I. Kuklin at the Car Trailer factory, Comrade A. O. Blumental at the Souvenir factory, Comrade I. I. Dobrovolsky at the "Elektromachine" factory, Comrade V. M. Ryzhy at the ambulance station, and Comrade Ya. I. Sheiko at the "Yury Krymov" Motor Vessel, to work out concrete measures advancing individual work with believers, to involve public opinion more widely in this work and not to permit cases of infringement of citizens' rights in the course of the work. They are to submit proposed measures to the town Commission monitoring the observance of the laws on religious cults by 1 October 1978.

3. The town Commission monitoring the observance of the laws on religious cults is to make a permanent study of the subject matter of evangelization carried out by religious associations, not permitting them to influence children and young people, not allowing religious assemblies by unregistered sects and groups and making full use of administrative and social measures to put pressure on violators of the laws on cults.

The Commission is to hold regular seminars together with local inspectors of the Town Department of Internal Affairs, heads of and chairmen of house and street committees concerning the study and observance of the laws on religious cults. Once every quarter, an information report on the work done is to be read out at a meeting of the Commission.

4. The Town Department of People's Education (Comrade V. S. Vesnin) is to mobilize the pedagogical collectives of the schools in order to discover religious pupils and pupils from religious families in good time, to carry out active individual work with them and their parents. Proposed measures in this area should be submitted to the town Commission by 1 October 1978.

Visits by schoolteachers to prayer meetings held by AUCECB and CCECB

congregations are considered advisable, to exert a more effective influence on believers and their children.

The Town Department of Education is to exercise more control over the atheist education of pupils in their lessons, in after-school groups, in homework and in pre-school children's institutions.

5. As a measure of control in fulfilment of this decision, in the first quarter of 1978 the executive committee [of the town soviet] is to examine the question of atheist education of pupils in schools Nos. 4, 5, 7, 11, 14 and 15.

6. The monitoring Commission is to render practical assistance to factories

and educational centres in organizing and carrying out individual work with believers.

7. With the aim of engaging in a more active struggle against the believers, the secretary of the executive committee (Comrade I. A. Andreev) is to strengthen the membership of the Commission monitoring the observance of the laws on religious cults by including teachers of German who have a knowledge of atheism.

CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
V. G. SINEV

SECRETARY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
I. A. ANDREEV

PLAN OF MEASURES TO BE TAKEN

by decision of the executive committee of Tiraspol town soviet of people's deputies, 6 September 1978

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
1 A seminar to be set up, with the participation of representatives of the Town Department of Internal Affairs, to discuss:	October 1978	
(a) religious organizations and their activities in the town;		A. V. Shlyakhin
(b) knowledge of the "Regulations on religious associations in the Moldavian SSR";		I. A. Andreev
(c) the tasks of local inspectors monitoring the observance of legislation on religious cults.		V. M. Dobrovolsky
2 It will be the task of leaders of industry and public organizations, i.e. the following:		leaders of industrial organizations
A. I. Bolshakov at the Kirov Factory,		
V. S. Solovyov at the Forty-Year Anniversary of the Komsomol Factory,		
L. K. Kuklin at the Car-Trailer Factory,		
I. M. Dobrovolsky at the "Electromachine" Factory,		
V. M. Ryzhy at the ambulance station,		
A. V. V. Panin at AK 2809,		
Ya. I. Sheiko at the "Yury Krymoy" Motor Vessel		
(a) to explain to religious believers the "Regulations on religious associations in the Moldavian SSR"	permanently from October 1978	
(b) to analyse together with believers Roshchin's article in <i>Literaturnaya Gazeta</i> , No. 17, 1976,		

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
<p>"Whom are American congressmen defending?"</p> <p>(c) to analyse together with believers L. Lerov's article in <i>Ogonyok</i>, Nos. 33-35, August 1978, "Who is profiting from this?"</p> <p>(d) to work out concrete measures intensifying individual work with religious workers</p> <p>(e) not to permit either cases of harassment of believers because of their religion or openly religious activity among the workers on the part of the believers. Measures taken are to be submitted to the town Commission monitoring the observance of the laws on religious cults.</p>	<p>by 15 October 1978</p> <p>by 1 October 1978</p>	
<p>3 Comrade V. S. Vesnin, head of the Town Department of Education, is to take the following measures:</p> <p>(a) concentrate the forces of the schools' pedagogical collectives on the religious pupils already discovered and on pupils from religious families, also on the detection of religious parents;</p> <p>(b) set up a system of effective individual atheist work with pupils and their religious parents;</p> <p>(c) find out and compile lists of religious parents in the schools;</p> <p>(d) send two or three teachers every Sunday to prayer-meetings, in order to discover which children attend them, so that they can be stopped, and also in order to study the sermons. The teachers are to be asked for written information on each pupil attending a prayer-meeting;</p> <p>(e) hold a practical-scientific conference of teachers and pioneer leaders to discuss the religious activities in the town and their influence on children and young people, means of intensifying atheist education in lessons and as part of the system of the extended working day, ways of detecting religious pupils and individual work with them and their parents;</p> <p>(f) atheist schools, circles and clubs are to be set up in the town's schools, with the use of visual aids and wide recommendation</p>		<p>Town Department of Education</p>

Measures	Date	Person Responsible
<p>of atheist literature; a subscription to the journal <i>Science and Religion</i> and the series "Scientific Atheism" (index no. 70075) is to be organized among the teachers.</p> <p>Measures on these subjects are to be worked out and submitted to the monitoring Commission.</p>		
<p>4 For methods of carrying out the above measures, applications are to be made to Comrade V. S. Vesnin, head of the Town Department of Education, and the town Commission.</p>		
<p>5 The town Commission monitoring the observance of the laws on religious cults is to make a permanent study, through public opinion in the town, of the subject matter of sermons in religious congregations and of anti-social incitement by preachers.</p>		
<p>6 The monitoring Commission and the Department of Internal Affairs are not to permit religious assemblies of unregistered congregations or groups, such as the CCECB, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, reformed Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses or house synagogues.</p> <p>Every time such assemblies take place, the strictest social and administrative measures are to be taken against the preachers and house-owners.</p>	permanently	
<p>7 The monitoring Commission is to hold a seminar with the supervisors and child-minders of all Administrations for Housing Allocation (<i>ZhEU</i>)¹, and representatives of street and house committees on the following subjects:</p>	October 1978	
<p>(a) religious organizations and their activities in the Housing Administration districts;</p>		A. V. Shlyakhin
<p>(b) the "Regulations on religious associations in the Moldavian SSR";</p> <p>the measures taken by officials of local representatives and the public not to allow religious assemblies by unregistered congregations and groups;</p>		I. A. Andreev
<p>(c) administration for housing allocation (<i>ZhEU</i>), and heads of</p>		Dobrovolsky

Measures	Date	Person Responsible
housing and building associations (<i>ZhPET</i>) ² are to work out measures for preventing religious assemblies and stepping up individual work with believers in their places of residence.	by 1 November	
Measures to be submitted to the town Commission	1978	
8 Town Department of Internal Affairs: Comrade V. M. Dobrovolsky is to work out and submit to the Commission measures detailing every religious family, its composition, religious denomination, the number of children and their age.	by 1 November	Town Department
A list is to be made of the addresses of house-owners who allow religious assemblies, choir-singing and instruction on their premises. Religious assemblies are not to be permitted in the homes of believers; on each occasion a formal case is to be drawn up concerning such assemblies and the preachers and house-owners are to be made answerable to the public and administrative authorities.	1978	of Internal Affairs
Each month, the monitoring Commission is to be informed in writing of the measures taken.	permanently	
9 The town Sanitary-Epidemiological Centre (Comrade I. P. Andrushenko) is to constantly check on the sanitary-epidemiological condition of the font for christening children, the condition of the christening water and the sanitary condition of the synagogue building.	monthly	
Prosecution is to follow in all cases where sanitary norms are not observed, and servants and representatives of the religious cult are to be made answerable to the administrative authorities.	permanently	Administration for Communal Housing (<i>UZhKKh</i>) ³
10 The monitoring Commission is to be given practical aid by industrial plants, institutions and educational establishments in organizing and carrying out atheist activities among the workers, especially among young people.	permanently	I. S. Nikitin A. V. Shlyakhin
11 The monitoring Commission is to take measures to register congregations of the CCECB, Pentecostals	permanently from the 4th quarter of 1978	Monitoring Commission

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
and Adventists, to which end their presbyters Zavertyaev, Melnichuk and Mukhartov are to be summoned. Their attention is to be drawn to the "Regulations on religious associations in the Moldavian SSR".		
12 The town monitoring Commission and administrative organs are to study the anti-social and anti-state activities of religious congregations and take measures to ensure observance of the law on religious cults. The law on cults must be brought to the notice of the leaders of religious congregations.	Ditto	Ditto
Measures are to be taken against Reformed Adventist parents A. S. Mukhartov, G. M. Gorchakov and P. F. Sindula, whose children attend school No. 15 and have been absent from classes on Saturdays for eight school years.	1978	Monitoring Commission, administrative authorities
Together with the Town Department of Education, the Commission is to check the facts concerning religious work with children and young people conducted by the CCECB congregation, such as organized Bible study, learning of religious hymns as a choir, creation of religious and musical religious schools;	permanently	Monitoring Commission, Town Department of Education
distribution of religious and anti-Soviet literature among young people and at places of work;	permanently	Monitoring Commission
listening to and recording on tape western religious and anti-Soviet propaganda, playing it at prayer meetings.	permanently	management at places of work
ON CONFIRMATION OF SUCH ACTIVITIES HAVING TAKEN PLACE, THE ORGANIZERS ARE TO BE MADE ANSWERABLE BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES AND HELD CRIMINALLY RESPONSIBLE.	permanently	Monitoring Commission, administrative authorities

SECRETARY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
CHAIRMAN OF THE MONITORING COMMISSION,
I. A. ANDREEV

¹ *Zhilishchno-eksploatatsionnoe upravlenie. Tr.*

² *Zhilishchno-postrochnoe eksploatatsionnoe tovarishchestvo. Tr.*

³ *Upravlenie zhilishchno-kommunalnogo khozyaistva. Tr.*