



Persecution and Destruction of the Ukrainian Church by the Russian Bolsheviks

by Gregory Luznycky, Ph.D.

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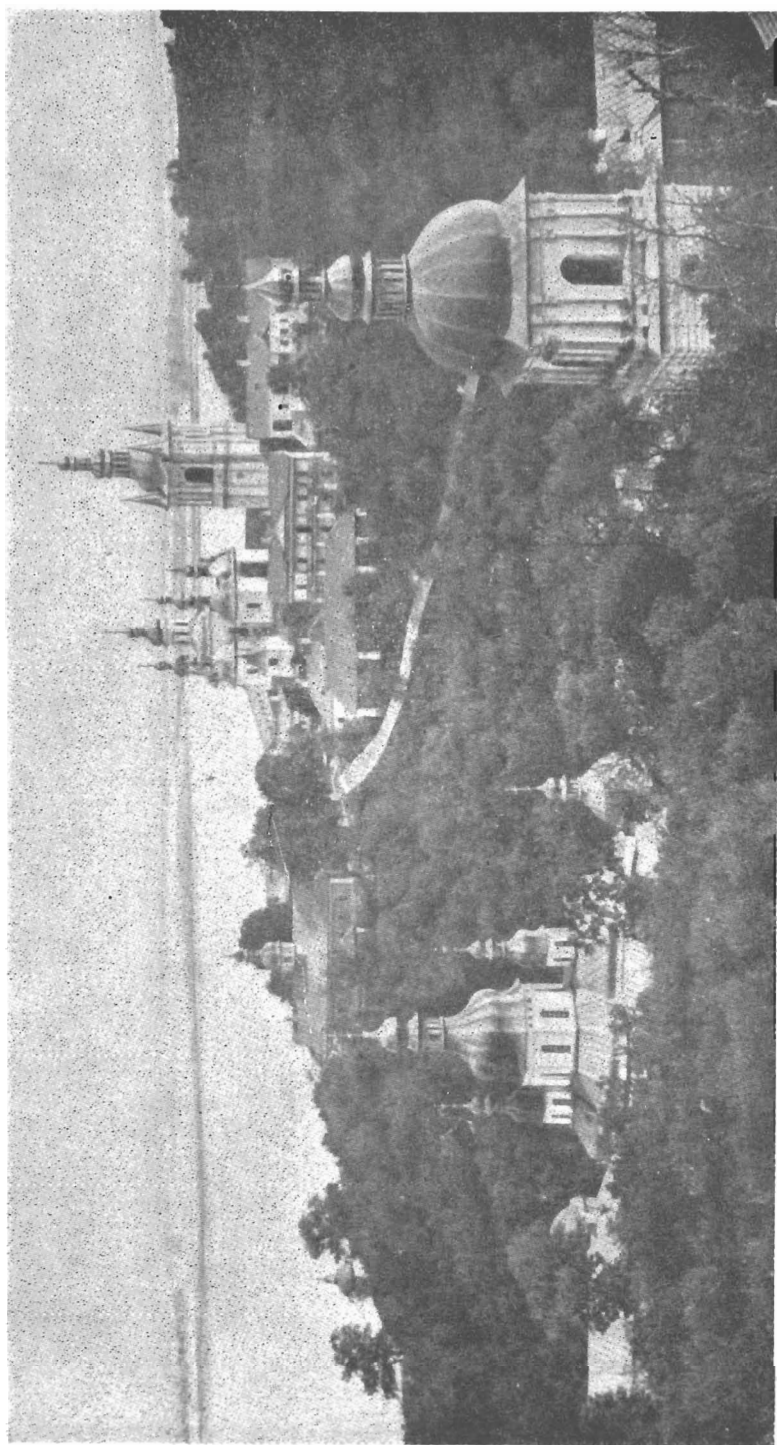
THE ORIGIN AND TRAITS OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

The Christian Church of every people has its special traits, which are imparted to it by the particular people or nation. Conditioned on the one hand by the spiritual qualities of a given nation, and by social and state systems on the other hand, the Christian Church throughout the millenium of its development is of necessity different everywhere, although in its basic foundations it maintains the same and identical laws of Christ and the same Gospel.

In order to understand properly the historical facts of the destruction of the Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic Churches by the Russian Orthodox Church, it is necessary to study the source of this destruction and to analyze the origin and characteristic traits of Russian Orthodoxy, in which the Russian government educated its people throughout its whole history — first the government of the Princes, then the Czars and now the Bolsheviks.

The basic principle of the religious education of the Russian people is that the ruler is sent by God. This principle permeates all modes and customs of the Russian people, the original tribal and family life, and is underscored in the official hierarchy of the Russian system of government and in Russian folklore as well. Regardless whether this principle is of Byzantine or of Oriental (Mongol) origin, it exists and has been a dominant feature of the Russian Church of all times. In connection with this Divine mission of every ruler of the Russian state throughout its history, there appear other characteristic traits of Russian Orthodoxy—that is, the Russian Church—traits which contrast sharply with those of other Orthodox Churches of the Slavic East, such as the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Orthodox Churches.

In the first place is that of intolerance, which is a natural consequence of despotism, or more specifically, the identification of the authority with God. The intolerance of the Russian Orthodox Church is especially marked with respect to all Christian churches and religions. In turn, this intolerance engenders narrow-mindedness of the Russian Orthodox Church and its total submission to the state system, no matter whether the head of the state is a man of faith or an atheist, or whether the government favors religion or not. Thus the characteristic traits of Russian Orthodoxy, because



Pecherska Lavra, the oldest and most famous Ukrainian Monastery in Kiev and the source of Christianity in Eastern Europe; now changed into an anti-religious museum.

of identification of authority with God, run in two directions: traits which characterize the mutual relations between the Russian Church and the Russian state. For us, the more important subject of study is the relationship between the Russian Church and the Russian state, because it constitutes the source of the destruction of the Ukrainian Church on all the territories of Ukraine, regardless of whether it was Orthodox or Catholic.

As a result of identification of authority with God, that is, the total dependence of the church on the state, in the course of the centuries there developed the four principal traits of the Russian Church: an apodictic attitude, false humbleness, enslavement of human dignity, and backwardness.¹

The Ukrainian Church, on the other hand, developed from the very beginning in an entirely different direction, because from its inception the Ukrainian Church was independent of the authority of the state, and above all, had direct liaison with Western Europe. As a result, it developed the traits which were diametrically opposed to those of the Russian Church.

The prime characteristic trait of the Ukrainian Church is a complete tolerance toward other religions, coupled with a complete independence of the state. Moreover, the state authority was even controlled by the church in Ukraine. There are cases wherein the clergy opposed the ruler in defense of Christ's teachings and justice, for which it not only went unpunished, but the ruler very often surrendered to the will of the church, an outcome which was impossible in Muscovy.²

Tolerance, innate to the Ukrainians, was strengthened by virtue of the fact that the commercial route between West and East ran through the Ukrainian lands.³ Hence the Ukrainians served as the first liaison with Western Europe; it was through them that commercial and cultural influences passed from the West to the East, and vice-versa. It was due to Ukrainian tolerance that the Ukrainian Church was able to enrich itself culturally and scientifically and succeeded in attaining a spiritual affinity with Western Europe, which led to full unity with the Roman Catholic Church through the Union of Brest. On the other hand, the Church's independence of the state, the mutual cooperation between the two, and, above all, the preservation by the Church in Ukraine of the basic Christian

¹ von Schelting, Al.: *Russland und Europa im russischen Geschichtsdenken*. A. Francke Ag. Verlag, Bern 1948. pag. 78. . . . die unfreie, byzantinische, bzw. russische Kirche, die der "puissance materielle" des Staates unterlegen und unterworfen ist und, "eine Art christliches Khalifat" zu werden tendiert.

² Luznvtvsky, H.: *Ukrainska tserkva mizh skhodom i zachodom* (The Ukrainian Church between East and West), Philadelphia, 1954, p. 76.

³ Zakrzewski, St.: *Zagadnienia Historyczne*, t. II Lwów 1936. p. 32.

values, enabled the Church to assume the spiritual leadership in Ukraine when the Ukrainian people lost their statehood. In the course of the history of Ukraine, when its Orthodox Church was subdued by the domination of Moscow, the other Ukrainian Church, the Catholic, waged an unrelenting struggle for truth and justice; for dignity and Christ's virtues. It was small wonder that the Ukrainian Metropolitans of Galicia were uncrowned rulers of the Ukrainian people.

Simultaneously with the separation of, or rather the parallelism between the Church and the state in Ukraine, the lay and monastic clergy in Ukraine constituted a totally different class from the clergy in Muscovy. While the Russian clergy by its very nature comprised state officials or, more specifically, executors of state laws and decisions and as such could not enjoy the trust and confidence of the people,⁴ the Ukrainian Catholic clergy, because it defended the Ukrainian people as a whole, was very close to the people and therefore was held in respect and affection by them. These diametrical differences between Russian Orthodoxy on the one hand, and Ukrainian Orthodoxy or Ukrainian Catholicism, on the other, were especially evident with regard to the monastic clergy. For instance, in Ukraine no monastery would be located far from a populated place; the opposite was generally true of monasteries in Russia. In Ukraine monks were presumed to be good servants of the people; consequently, the monastic order in Ukraine had a social foundation. In this respect, too, the Russian monasteries differed radically: their monks lived exclusively for themselves and were wholly shut off from the world.⁵

The oldest monastic orders in both the Eastern Church and in Ukraine, the Basilians and the Studites, not only were not isolated, but, on the contrary, their members were always available for social service and assistance to the people.

In the Western Church as well as in the Ukrainian Church, the monks and missionaries were always among the first propagators of God's truth. In Russia the process was always reversed: the Russian armies would conquer foreign lands, whereupon the Russian Church would conduct its "mission" and try to "unite" the conquered peoples.⁶

⁴ Luschnetzky. Gr.: *Die Oekirche der Gegenwart, Blick nach Osten*, 1, 2 42. 1948, Klagenfurt-Wien.

⁵ Yefymenko, Alexandra: *Yuzhnaia Rus. I-II (Southern Rus. I-II)*, St. Petersburg, 1905. Bulgakov N. A., *Prepodobnij Yosyph Volokamskij*, St. Petersburg 1865.

⁶ *Zapiski Vasilia Luzynskogo, archiep. Polotskogo (Diaries of Vasili Luzhynsky, Archbishop of Polotsk)*, Kazan, 1885; G. Shavel'sky: *Poslednoe vozsoyedinenie z pravosl. tserkoviu uniatov Beloruskoy eparchiy*, St. Petersburg, 1910.

Throughout its whole history, "unions" and "unifications" with the Russian Church were always accompanied by bloody persecution on the part of the Russian police and army. Such "unifications" invariably were subsequently recorded in Russian history as "free and voluntary."

Because of its unqualified subservience to the ruler, the laws of the Russian Church were always very fluid. Thus we see in Russian history that church dignitaries not infrequently compromised their own authority and prestige in dealing with state rulers, broke church rules and condoned arbitrary policies of the rulers, policies which were in opposition to both the church and Christian laws. For example, Metropolitan Danilo not only justified the divorce of Prince Vasili from his wife Solomani, but even ordered the arrest of the Princess. Czar Ivan IV, who personally killed his own son, not only was not condemned by the Russian Church, but he forced the church to praise his act and give him permission to marry for the fourth time. When Metropolitan Philip referred to the murder and blasphemy committed by Czar Ivan the Terrible, he had to pay for it with his own head.⁷

Abbot Joseph of the Volokolamsk Monastery wrote to Prince Vasili III:

"The Czar by his nature is a man, but by his authority, given by God, he has taken God's image."⁸

Thus when Czar Ivan IV killed Abbot Kornilo of the Pskov Monastery, he could order to be inscribed on his victim's tombstone the epitaph:

"The earthly ruler sent him to the Divine Ruler."

At the beginning the Russian princes, and later on the Russian Czars, would appoint and depose metropolitans and bishops; raise bishoprics to archbishoprics, and so forth. Finally, Czar Peter I liquidated the patriarchate and established a **synod** in 1721 for which he provided a statute whose principal article read:

"I recognize the All-Russian monarch as being the supreme judge of this Ecclesiastical Collegium."¹⁰

When later on Arsene Macevych, a Ukrainian and the Archbishop of Rostov (1697-1772), suggested to Empress Elizabeth (1741-1762) the form of the oath be changed and that Jesus Christ, and not the Czar, be considered the head of the **synod**, he was arrested and tortured to death in the prison at Revel.¹¹

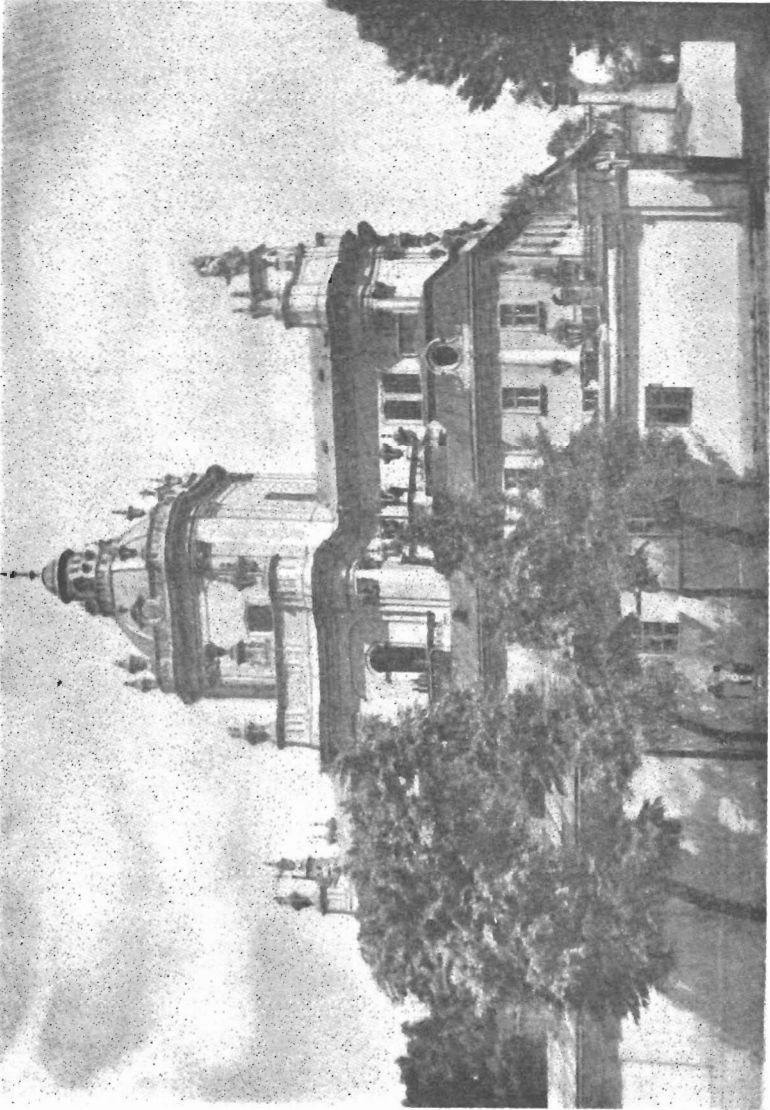
⁷ Karamzin, I. M.: *Istoria Gosudarstva Rossiyskogo (History of the Russian Empire)*, Moscow, 1903.

⁸ Koneczny, F.: *Litwa a Moskwa w latach 1449-1492, (Lithuania and Moscow in the Years 1449-1492)*, Wilno, 1929.

⁹ Curtiss, Y. S.: *Church and State in Russia*, New York, 1940.

¹⁰ Luznytsky, H.: *The Ukrainian Church between East and West*, p. 445.

¹¹ Luznytsky: *op. cit.* 447.



St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Lviv which was transformed into a Russian Orthodox Church by the Soviet government.

By an **ukase** of Peter I in 1721 the entire clergy was put under police surveillance, employing what came to be known as the "institute of inquisitors." The head of the **synod**, known as the **ober-prokuror**, was over the **proto-inquisitor**, who in turn ruled over provincial **inquisitors**, who in their turn employed a great number of assistant inquisitors.

In 1727 this "institute of inquisitors" was abolished. Czar Nicholas I (1825-1855) subjected the clergy to the supervision of the police. Bishops and metropolitans were also put under the control of the gendarmes. The so-called "Spiritual Regulation," or statute for the clergy, obligated priests to report to the police all "political" rumors they might hear at confessions. Failure to comply carried the penalty of death.¹²

It is clear that such arbitrary policies in church matters on the part of the rulers could not contribute to any strengthening of the foundations of the Church, and hence the instability of the laws in the Russian Church to this very day. The last attempt to unite with the Catholic Church (the Union of Florence, 1439), which ended in Moscow with the arrest of Cardinal Isidore, Metropolitan of Kiev (1441), not only failed to strengthen the Russian Church, but led Prince Vasili, "the supreme arch-shepherd," to the religious schism. Prince Vasili dethroned Metropolitan Isidore, whom he had recognized at the beginning and who had been consecrated by the Patriarch of Constantinople and had been recognized by the Pope of Rome. In so doing the Russian prince created a separate Russian Church, which promptly broke off relations with the Orthodox East, which was united with Rome at that time.¹³

From 1448 on (the year marking the beginning of the recognition of the Muscovite Princes and the Czars as heads of the Russian Church) the new Church never belonged to any of the Patriarchates of the East and has been schismatically separated from the Catholic Church up to the present.

As long as the Russian Church was under the nominal jurisdiction of the Byzantine Patriarch, one could at least talk of a legal status of the church. But after the "election" of the first metropolitan of the "independent" Russian Church (Iona, in 1448, whose "election," as well as those of all subsequent metropolitans, was arranged by the Czar), all rules and laws of the Russian Church were promulgated and regulated by the monarchs. Needless to say, the laws reflected the will and whims of the rulers and, more often than not, redounded to their advantage.

¹² Ibid., p. 447.

¹³ Chodynicki, K.: **Kościół prawosławny a Rzeczpospolita Polska**, (The Orthodox Church and the Polish Republic), Warsaw, 1934.

But we must not think that the Russian people in their majority were not pious and religious or that the people, as such, were against the church. On the contrary, the need of the church as a religious entity and the belief in God were strongly developed in the Russian people. But for centuries the Russian people had been under despotic rule, the ruler being equated to God, at the least. Although they sensed the shortcomings of their church, they had no way of comparing it with any other church and so had to be content with what they had. This explains why leading representatives of Russian literature (Dostoyevsky) and the philosophers (Berdayev) preached either atheism or mysticism.

We must also analyze another factor, which plays perhaps the most important role in the persecution of the Ukrainian Church by Moscow — the rite. We know from history that Moscow persecuted the Catholic Church (Latin Rite) here and there, but not to the extent of its bloody persecution of the Ukrainian Church. This phenomenon is explained by the fact that the Slavs of Eastern Europe have always been deeply attached to their rite; very often the outer form, expressing their liaison with God, is more important than the content. This is very typical of the Ukrainians, for whom the dogmas or canons of the church are something they prefer to leave to their clergy, in whom they have the utmost confidence. The Eastern rite of Ukraine and Russia acquired a stable form, although there are great differences in the liturgical language, ornamentation of the churches, that is, church art, and some differences in priests' garb and in the Masses themselves, because of the fact that for centuries the center of the Christian faith for all Eastern Europe was Kiev, capital of Ukraine. When the Ukrainian Church united with the Holy See, the rite remained the same. Nothing was changed in the form, but the content itself changed in essence, something to which the Slavs of Eastern Europe did not pay much heed. This basic change in the Ukrainian Church has become a great menace for the Russian Church in that it set a precedent. A union with the Apostolic See, which had not effectuated any change in the form, could influence the Russian Church to follow suit and thus undermine the power of the state. The Latin Catholic rite was not and is not dangerous for the Russian state and for the Russian Church, inasmuch as it always has been alien for Slavic Eastern Europe. But an entirely different matter was that of the Ukrainian Church, which had the same Byzantine rite as the Russian Church but which was united with the Universal Catholic Church. Such a Ukrainian Church, independent of the state power, could not be brooked within the Russian state.

Therefore, during World War I, when the Russian troops cap-



Servant of God, Metropolitan of Halych and Archbishop of Lviv, Count Andrey Sheptytsky.

tured Lviv, seat of three Catholic archbishoprics and one Catholic metropolitanate, the Czarist occupation authorities did not arrest Polish Archbishop J. Bilczewski or Armenian Catholic Archbishop J. Theodorovich, but they immediately arrested and deported to Siberia Count Andrey Sheptytsky, Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan and the uncrowned ruler of the Ukrainian people.

And when the Ukrainian Orthodox Church preferred to be the church of the Ukrainian people and not an instrument of the Russian government, it was ruthlessly destroyed in accordance with the principle that only the Russian Church could be tolerated by Moscow.



St. Nicholas Military Cathedral in Kiev, built by Hetman Ivan Mazepa in 1690, destroyed in 1934-35.

THE BLOODY PERSECUTION OF THE UKRAINIAN CHURCH UNDER THE CZARIST REGIME

The bloody persecution of the Ukrainian Church by Moscow was initiated by Czar Peter I, (1682-1725) whom the Russian government and Russian historians have dubbed "The Great." Although throughout history Ukrainian bishops and clergy had been murdered by the Russian authorities and there had taken place some forcible "conversion" of people to the Russian Church, there had been no planned persecution. But the year of 1705, which saw Peter I enter the city of Polotsk during the Swedish-Polish war as an ally of the Polish King August II, can be considered as the date of the beginning of the savage and bloody persecution of the Ukrainian Church by Moscow.

On July 11, 1705, Czar Peter I, visiting the Catholic churches, entered the Cathedral of the Basilian Fathers during vesper services, being held by Rev. Theophanus Kolbychynsky. Upon seeing the portrait of St. Josaphat, a martyr for the Union of the Ukrainian Church with Rome (slain in 1623 and canonized in 1867), Czar Peter I went to the **iconostasis** where Father Kolbychynsky stood and slew him.¹⁴ Then he ordered his troops to take over the church and monastery, and three Basilian monks, Rev. Jacob Kizykovsky, Rev. Constantine Zayachkivsky and Rev. Knyshevych, were hanged upon seizure and their bodies burned. He ordered all other Basilian monks put in jail.¹⁵

The same year, upon another order of Peter I, the Russian police arrested Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Dionisius Zhabokrytsky (1696-1715) of Lutsk, who died in prison refusing to accept Russian Orthodoxy. At the same time, Prince Golovkin, in the name of Peter I and upon his order, announced that full freedom of religious worship existed in the Russian empire.

There was another method used by Moscow with respect to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, a method systematically employed in Russian policy: infiltrating an organization and destroying it from within. The end of the 17th century, with the Ukrainian Kozak

¹⁴ Pciesz, J. Dr.: *Geschichte der Union der Ruthenischen Kirche mit Rom*, I Band, Wien, 1878, Band II, Wien, 1880, p. 273.

¹⁵ Oljancyn, D.: *Aus dem Kultur und Geistesleben der Ukraine*, "Kyrios," 1937 No. 3, p. 268, Berlin.

state gravely weakened under the blows of Poland and Moscow, was an exceedingly opportune time for such disruptive tactics to be used against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The Muscovite Patriarchate (established by the Czar in 1589) tried by all means—including bestowal of honors and gifts—to win over the higher and lower Ukrainian clergy and to place under its “protection” the dioceses and monasteries. The latter would immediately be subjected to Russification policies insofar as the Ukrainian rite was concerned. When finally, under pressure of the Muscovite Patriarchate (and the Czarist government) a newly-ordained metropolitan of Kiev, Prince Gedeon Chetvertynsky, received consecration from Patriarch Joachim of Moscow (1673-1690) in 1685, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church found itself enslaved by Moscow. Because of the fact that until 1685 the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1686 Patriarch Dionisius of Constantinople (1686-1687) was bribed into turning jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church over to the Muscovite Patriarchate.¹⁶ Metropolitan Gedeon was forbidden to use the ancient title, “Metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus,” and in 1721 Czar Peter I abolished the title of Kievan Metropolitan, leaving only that of archbishopric.¹⁷

During the reign of Empress Catherine II (1762-1796) the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was subjected to even more thorough-going Russification. In the Academy of Kiev all courses had to be given in the Russian language, the liturgical Church Slavonic language had to be pronounced with the Russian accent and in accordance with the rules of the Russian language, and the Ukrainian rite was gradually supplanted by the Russian rite.¹⁸ Churches in the Ukrainian style were forbidden, and the clergy had to wear cloth of the Russian style.¹⁹

In 1786 Empress Catherine II confiscated all church estates in Ukraine, and from that time on the clergy was subsidized by the state. All Ukrainian schools were either Russified or liquidated completely. While in 1740 there were 866 schools in left-bank Ukraine (on the left side of the Dnieper River), in 1800 there were none.²⁰

All the higher ecclesiastical posts in Ukraine went to the Russians or to those Ukrainians who recognized the Russian authority.

¹⁶ Luznytsky: *op. cit.*, p. 429; Ohloblyn, A.: **Moskovska teoria III Rymu (The Russian Theory of the Third Rome)**, Munich, 1951.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 444.

¹⁸ Miliukov, P.: **Oчерки по истории русской культуры (Outlines of the History of Russian Culture)**, St. Petersburg, 1905.

¹⁹ Kitowicz, J.: **Opis Obyczajów za panowania Augusta III**. Wrocław 1951. Biblioteka Narodowa No. 88.

²⁰ Miliukov: *op. cit.* Vol. II p. 40.

LES MISSIONNAIRES

MOSCOVITES

CHEZ

LES RUTHÈNES UNIS

Études sur les persécutions
qui ont eu lieu
dans le diocèse de Khelm (Chelm)
royaume de Pologne

PARIS

TYPOGRAPHIE TOLMER ET ISIDOR JOSEPH

13, RUE DE TOUR-SAINT-GERMAIN, 43

1876

The "White Book" about the persecution of the
Ukrainian Catholic Church under Russia.
(Written in French).

Abbots of monasteries were Russians, while Ukrainian monks were deported to the interior of Russia and thrown into monastery-prisons. The elective right of Ukrainian monasteries was abolished, while abbots and archimandrites were appointed by Moscow.²¹

The reigns of Empress Catherine II and Czars Nicholas I and Alexander II were marked by the most violent excesses in the persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

At the time of the reign of Catherine II the Ukrainian Catholic Church on those Ukrainian territories which were under the authority of Poland had developed to a great degree. In 1764, for instance, in right-bank Ukraine (on the right side of the Dnieper

²¹ Luznytsky: op. cit., p. 447.

River), there were 1,902 Catholic parishes, and only 19 Orthodox parishes. The expansion of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was due in great measure to the missionary schools of the Basilian Fathers. One such outstanding school run by the Basilian Monastery was in the city of Uman and had 400 students from all parts of Ukraine.

The growth and development of the Ukrainian Catholic Church greatly perturbed the Empress because it was apparent that the Ukrainian Catholic Church on the Ukrainian lands under Poland could easily spread to the Ukrainian lands under Russia. An opportunity for suppression came in the form of an appeal for the help of Polish King Stanislaw August Poniatowski to Catherine II, (1764-1795) because of disorders in Poland. This opportunity was exploited by Orthodox Bishop Gervasius Lincevsky (1757-1769), whose diocese contained a few Orthodox parishes in right-bank Ukraine. The bishop began an extensive "action of converting" the Ukrainian population to the Orthodox faith. His task was facilitated by the deplorable social and economic conditions in Poland at the time, and especially by the popular hatred for the Polish nobility (*szlachta*), totally unbridled and demoralized on the eve of the partitions of Poland.

The national and social oppression of the Ukrainian population by Poland was dexterously exploited by Moscow. Hundreds of Russian Orthodox monks were dispatched to Ukrainian villages to spread falsehoods and calumnies against Catholicism and to instigate the population against the Catholic priests. As a result a bloody uprising erupted in the course of which the insurgents attacked Catholic villages, killed Catholic priests and took over their parishes. In 1760-1765 the Orthodox "occupied" some 80 Ukrainian Catholic parishes in which Russian monks, many without sacerdotal ordination, were installed as "Orthodox priests."²²

On the eve of the uprising, which is known in the history of Ukraine as *haydamachyna*, in 1767, Bishop Gervasius issued a pastoral letter to the Ukrainian population in Poland in which he promised the "maternal protection" of Empress Catherine II for all those who would leave the Union, that is, the Catholic Church.²³

The uprising, erupting in 1768, saw several Ukrainian cities, 30 Ukrainian villages and at least 1,000 homesteads (farms) burned completely. At least 300 Ukrainian Catholic priests were killed because they refused to accept Orthodoxy and the authority of Empress Catherine II. In the city of Uman alone all the monks of the Basilian Monastery were murdered, while three city wells were filled with the corpses of its 400 students.²⁴

²² Luznytsky: op. cit., p. 417-424.

²³ Ibid., p. 417-424.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 449-482.

According to the reports of Apostolic Nuncio A.M. Durini (who was in Poland from 1766-1771), at least 40,000 people perished in 1768.

Such slaughter was not expected even by Empress Catherine II herself. She dispatched troops to put down the uprising and ordered the death penalty for those who refused to accept her "maternal protection." The rebellion was suppressed, but in those villages where the Ukrainian Catholic priests had been murdered, Russian Orthodox priests took over. When the parishioners attempted to evict the Orthodox priests and bring in Catholic priests, Russian troops appeared and arrested the peasants, confiscated their properties and imposed heavy monetary levies on the villages.

In 1771 Catherine II ordered General Rumiantsev, commander of the Russian troops in Ukraine, to render all "armed assistance" to Orthodox priests and to arrest all "Uniates" (that is, Catholic Ukrainians) and "Uniate priests" (Ukrainian Catholic priests) who wanted to return to their former parishes.²⁵ Thus the prisons in Berdychiv, Uman, Bila Tserkva and Polonne Velyke became filled with Ukrainian Catholic priests and faithful. In but one prison in Berdychiv on Christmas in 1773 there were incarcerated 53 Ukrainian Catholic priests, many of whom were released only by death.

Through the efforts of Nuncio J. Garampi (1772-1775), Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Maximilian Ryllo of Kholm (whose diocese was under the Austrian jurisdiction) was allowed to visit Ukraine under the Russian domination. He was able to secure the release of several Ukrainian Catholic priests from imprisonment. But when under the influence of his appearance the Ukrainian population began leaving Orthodoxy, and returning to the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Russian General Shyrkov arrested Bishop Ryllo on April 17, 1774 in the city of Berdychiv and accused him of committing "abuses against the Orthodox."

Both the Austrian government and Nuncio Garampi protested this arrest of an Austrian citizen and demanded his immediate release. Unwilling to engage in conflict with the Austrian empire Catherine II released Bishop Ryllo on June 2, 1774. The bishop was escorted to the border and expelled with the interdiction never to enter the Russian empire again.²⁶

During this bloody persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church the first partition of Poland occurred in 1772. The Ukrainian lands of Poland went under Austrian jurisdiction and rule.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 449-482.

²⁶ Ammann, A. M.: *S. J. Abriss der Ostslawischen Kirchengeschichte*, Wien 1950 p. 442.



Martyrdom of Ukrainian Catholics in Kholmshchyna. (14th century painting).

Catherine II proved to be a ruthless persecutor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as well. One of her first acts was the confiscation of the estates of all the Ukrainian Orthodox monasteries. During the time of Metropolitan Samuel Myslavsky of Kiev (1783-1796) the Russian pronunciation in the liturgical Church Slavonic languages was introduced in the churches of Ukraine. (In Russia proper in the 17th century Orthodox Ukrainians were ordered to be "rebaptized," inasmuch as baptism in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was considered "invalid" by the Russians).

At the same time the Ukrainian church rite was deprived of all Ukrainian traits and habits, such as the oath of newlywed couples during the wedding service. In Ukraine the Gospel had been read by a deacon with his face to the faithful, but the Russians imposed their custom of reading the Gospel with the deacon facing the altar. Finally, the Russian Holy Synod prohibited the use of all liturgical books save those published by Moscow.

True, for the benefit of the outside world, Russian rulers always "assured citizens of Russia full religious freedom"; but these assurances were not worth the paper on which they were written. For instance, upon receiving the Archdiocese of Polotsk as a result of the first partition of Poland in 1772, Catherine II in a treaty with Poland on September 18, 1773, guaranteed "full untouchability and

freedom" to Catholics of the Byzantine rite, that is, to Ukrainians and Byelorussians.²⁷

Soon thereafter a proclamation (**ukase**) was issued which decreed that whenever a "uniate" parish (that is, a Catholic of Greek or Byzantine rite) lacks a priest or someone dies, the village must be asked what priest it desires, so that the government could make such a priest available for the village." But the interpretation of the **ukase** was quite different in practice; the villages as such were not asked about their preference for priests, but only the village mayors, who were either Russians or of Russophile orientation. It was clear that "the population" everywhere demanded Orthodox priests. Thus in but three years (1781-1783) the Catholic Archdiocese of Polotsk lost about 800 churches and 100,000 faithful.

"Freedom" of the Union, that is, the freedom of the Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite, was also assured by the Treaty of Grodno of July 13, 1793, during the second partition of Poland, by Article VIII, which read literally, as follows:

"Roman Catholics of both rites, who according to Article II of the present treaty are transferred under the domination of Her Imperial Majesty of all Russia, will be able to profess their religion freely not only in the whole Russian empire, in accordance with the prevailing tolerance, but also in the provinces, ceded according to Article II; they will preserve the present status of their inherited properties. On the same basis Her Imperial Majesty of all Russia promises irrevocably herself and in the name of her successors and heirs to maintain for the above-mentioned Catholics of both rites for time eternal in an untouched state all their privileges, properties and churches, to guarantee them free profession of religion of both rites in the provinces, which under the basis of the present treaty went under her authority."²⁸

Empress Catherine II solemnly swore to this guarantee in 1793, but in that very same year she called a secret council in Petersburg, at which it was decided to create an "Orthodox Missionary Institution" for the purpose of destroying the Ukrainian Catholic Church. This organization was created upon the suggestion of Archbishop Eugene Bulgaris (1716-1806), and it was put under the direction of Bishop Victor Sadkovsky of Minsk, who was allotted 20,000 rubles annually in costs for that purpose. The Russian military commands were ordered to give whole-hearted assistance and cooperation to such "missions," including the use of sheer force, if necessary.

On April 25, 1794, in the city of Slutsk, Volhynia, Russian Bishop Sadkovsky issued an appeal to the Ukrainian Catholic clergy and

²⁷ Luznytsky, p. 449-450.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 450-453.

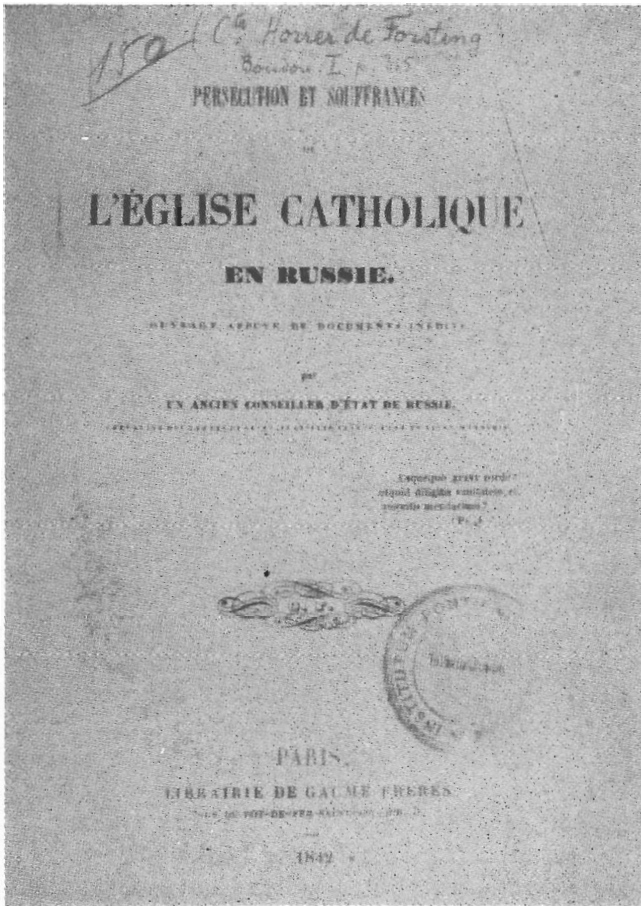
population, calling upon them to "return" to the ancestral faith, that is, Orthodoxy, because the Union with Rome, he said, was introduced "by force" and "against the will of the people." At the same time, Russian missionaries, accompanied by troops, entered the dioceses of Lutsk, Volodymyr, Pinsk and Kholm and began their "conversion." The procedure was quite simple: if two or three Orthodox faithful in a Catholic village or town wanted to have their village "converted," they appealed to the Russian troops for help. The latter descended upon the village, occupied the Ukrainian Catholic Church and arrested the priest. All those Catholics who dared to protest were summarily arrested and sent to Siberia. In order to facilitate the "conversion," Catherine II issued several **ukases** stressing the following: those people whose ancestors had accepted the Union with Rome in 1595, must return to Orthodoxy, the churches which had been built by the Orthodox even before the Union, must be returned, and the village as a whole must come back to the Orthodox fold. At least 100 families (in individual dwellings) had to live in one village to be able to constitute a parish; otherwise, the villages were to be incorporated into neighboring parishes. Thus in 1795 some 2,300 Ukrainian Catholic parishes were "converted" to Orthodoxy.

In 1795 Empress Catherine II issued an **ukase** whereby she liquidated the Ukrainian Catholic dioceses of Lutsk and Brest in Volhynia and that of Pinsk in Polissia. In their stead she established 4 Orthodox dioceses in Podolia, Volhynia, Byelorussia and Lithuania.

As a consequence, out of 5,000 Ukrainian Catholic parishes of the dioceses of Kiev, Lutsk and Volodymyr, barely 200 remained by 1796. In the years 1773-1796, during the reign of Catherine II, a total of 8,000,000 Ukrainians "voluntarily returned" to Orthodoxy; a total of 9,316 Catholic churches were taken away from the Catholics and transformed into Orthodox churches, and 145 Basilian monasteries, which were in the above-mentioned three dioceses, were closed,²⁹ thus leaving only one Basilian Province under Austrian rule. In liquidating the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Basilian Order, Catherine II at the same time enriched the Russian treasury, and all church lands in the Kiev archdiocese were parcelled out among her favorites.

In the last year of the reign of Czar Alexander I (1825), after a slight respite during the reign of Czar Paul I, son of Czar Peter III and Catherine II, the Ukrainian Catholic Church possessed 4 dioceses, 1 metropolitan, 2 bishops, 3 auxiliary bishops, 3 diocesan seminaries, 1,476 parochial churches, 1,985 priests, 37 monasteries (with 507 monks), 10 convents (with 80 nuns) and 1,427,570 faith-

²⁹ Ibid., p. 452. and also, Pelesz. op. cit. II Band p. 290 and ff.



The "White Book" on the persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Russia. Written in French.

ful. But with the ascent to the throne of Czar Nicholas I, there began the greatest and bloodiest persecution yet of the Ukrainian Catholic Church by Moscow. Its destruction was systematically planned according to the three axioms of Czar Nicholas I (1825-1855), this veritable "policeman of Europe": autocracy, Orthodoxy and the Russian people.³⁰

In his meeting with Pope Gregory XVI (1845) Czar Nicholas I referred to himself as an "Orthodox Christian," but in fact he was a Russian Orthodox for whom the Russian empire was a "Divine State." He himself was head of the Church of the entire empire. He considered it a political necessity to destroy the Catholic Church,

³⁰ Luznytsky, op. cit., p. 462 and ff. and bibliography. Pelesz. op. cit.

since, according to his belief, his "Divine State" could not be a real state if part of its subjects, specifically the Ukrainians and Byelorussians, could remain Catholic. They had to be either destroyed or dispersed in the "Muscovite sea," that is, to belong to one and the same Orthodox Church under the authority of the Czar.

By an **ukase** of 1826 Czar Nicholas I banned the printing and distribution of Catholic prayer books and other religious publications.³¹ On February 16, 1832, a Czarist **ukase** abolished the office of Provincial Superior (**proto-ihumen**) of the Basilian Fathers and closed the novitiate of the same order. On July 17 of the same year the Basilian Order was abolished and all its estates and properties confiscated by the Orthodox Church and the Russian government. Some of the monks were incarcerated in individual cells in monasteries, where they died without regaining freedom. Many were deported to Siberia.

According to another **ukase** of 1832 the offspring of mixed marriages (Catholic and Orthodox) had to be registered as Orthodox. The Catholic priests of the Latin rite were prohibited from administering Holy Communion to Ukrainians, even to the dying. Also, joint Masses of Greek and Roman Catholic priests, as well as joint church processions and parades, were forbidden. Ukrainian Catholics were also prohibited from attending Masses in the Roman Catholic churches. All Ukrainian Catholic schools were closed.

The Ukrainian Catholic Episcopate was ordered by the Russian government to use at Masses only those church books which were printed in Moscow in 1831; all other books were proscribed. Also Low ("Reading") Masses were abolished in the Ukrainian churches, while the so-called "side altars" in Ukrainian churches were ordered removed. Ukrainian Catholic holidays, such as St. Josaphat's and Corpus Christi, established by the Holy See, were also abolished. The priests were forbidden to preach and teach catechism, or to explain the differences between Catholicism and Orthodoxy.

By an **ukase** of 1833 Czar Nicholas I ordered his governors to appoint Orthodox priests to Ukrainian Catholic parishes. If a particular parish had once been Orthodox, its Ukrainian Catholic priest was speedily arrested by Russian police, and the parish was declared "Orthodox." All Ukrainian Catholic chapels were destroyed, while the building of new edifices, or even the remodeling of old Ukrainian Catholic churches, was strictly forbidden. Orthodox parishes were exempted from taxation, and so forth.

But the complete and final liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church on the territory of the Russian empire began in 1837. In

³¹ Ibid., p. 667.



Medal issued by the Russian Orthodox Church in commemoration of the bloody destruction of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in 1839.

that year all Catholic priests, along with their parishes, had to sign a “voluntary consent” to Orthodoxy. When the clergy refused to obey, Russian army and police forces did the rest. Hundreds of priests perished in their own parishes under the **knouts** of the Russian gendarmes; 160 Ukrainian Catholic priests were deported to Siberia, and about 800 other priests and monks were sent to various prisons and monasteries. Hundreds of the faithful were killed in this “missionary action,” and entire villages were razed to the ground.

In the fall of 1838 an official and “formal act of union” was announced in the city of Polotsk. At that time Metropolitan Josaphat Bulhak of Kiev, who had been interned, still lived; without his signature the “act” was considered illegal. But neither the threats of the government and the intervention of Czarist Minister Bludov nor promises of high rewards and “honors” by Czar Nicholas I could induce Metropolitan Bulhak to sign the “act of union.” It was only after his death on March 25 of the same year (allegedly by poisoning) that the “act of union” of the Ukrainian Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church was announced. This “act” was signed in the name of two and a half million Ukrainian Catholics by barely 21 priests, who, incapable of resisting tortures, “accepted” Orthodoxy.

Count N. A. Protasov, **over-procuror** of the Holy **Synod**, wrote in the document: “I thank God and accept (the ‘union’).” For the occasion Czar Nicholas I ordered the striking of a commemorative medal with the inscription “Victory of Orthodoxy” on one side,



The last Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan in Kiev,
Josaphat Bulhak (1817-1838).

and "Rejected by Violence (1596) - - United by Love (1839)" on the other side.³²

In 1842 the Apostolic See issued a **White Book** in the Latin, French, and Italian languages, on the martyrdom of the Catholic Church on the Ukrainian territories.³³

Remnants of the Ukrainian Catholic Church under Russian domination survived past 1842 in the provinces of Kholm and Pidlasiya, because these territories as a result of political moves were incorporated into the so-called Polish Kingdom, which after 1815 were attached to Russia. The Russian government began liquidating the Ukrainian Catholic Church on these territories in 1836.

³² *Russkiy Vestnik*, 1864, *Vospominanie o greko-uniyatskoy tserkve* (*Reminiscences about the Greek-Uniate Church*), Archbishop A. Zubko, *Zapiski Iosifa (Semashko), Memoirs of Joseph (Semashko)*, Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 1883.

³³ *Documenta Pontificum Romanorum Historiam Ucrainae Illustrantia* Vol. II. 1700-1953. Romae 1954. *Documenta Gregorii PP. XVI*, p. 353-378.

As in the other Ukrainian provinces, the Russian government here forbade the use of any liturgical books other than the Russian. This was followed by confiscation of churches, and the like. But inasmuch as the bloody persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine provoked deep indignation and resentment in the world, the Czar decided to proceed cautiously. At first the Russian government arrested more active Ukrainian Catholic priests (1849), at the same time fostering Orthodoxy by sponsoring "free Orthodox courses," organizing Orthodox dormitories for daughters of Ukrainian Catholic priests, and the like. The Ukrainian Catholic Seminary in the city of Kholm was subordinated to the Russian government, thus depriving the Ukrainian Catholic Church of its educational center.

In 1863 the Poles and a considerable number of the Ukrainian intelligentsia organized a bloody anti-Russian uprising, which was brutally suppressed by the Russians. This gave them an additional pretext to persecute the Ukrainian Catholic Church. On June 30, 1864, the Russian government issued an **ukase** whereby it abolished the jurisdiction of the Catholic diocese of Kholm and subordinated the Ukrainian Catholic clergy to a "Governmental Commission for Religious Affairs." Nothing was to occur without the approval of this Commission; all church properties were taken over by the Russian government.

The four remaining Basilian monasteries in the provinces of Kholm and Pidlasia (those at Kholm, Zamost, Lublin and Bila) also were liquidated. There remained only the Basilian Monastery in Warsaw. On January 1, 1865, the government began deporting Ukrainian Catholic priests, among them Rev. I. Kalynovsky, administrator of the Kholm Diocese, who was taken on October 3, 1866, to Viatka to die there the death of a martyr.

The imposition of Orthodoxy upon the Ukrainian population was accompanied by bloodshed and torture. In many villages and towns where the people tried to defend the Ukrainian Catholic priests or resisted the liquidation of their churches, the Russian government ordered indiscriminate torture and executions. Such heinous measures were undertaken in the villages and towns of Dokudiv (near Bila), Kodnia, Dreliy and Pratulyn. When the Russian officials demanded the keys of the church in Dokudiv, the inhabitants formed a cordon around the church and momentarily prevented its violation. As a result, the whole male population was arrested, while all women were given 80 lashes with the **knout**. In Kodnia Russian troops fired upon the unarmed inhabitants, killing several men and women. The same took place in the village of Pratulyn: for three days the inhabitants defended their church, and



The Metropolitan of Galicia, Archbishop of Lviv, Cardinal Michael Levytsky (1816-1858) whose epistle to the entire Catholic World concerning the religious persecution of Ukrainian Catholics in Russia, contains the complete text of the oration of Pope Gregory XVI about the persecution, delivered on Nov. 22, 1839.

only after the massacre of 15 peasants did the Russians have their way. In the village of Dreliv 9 peasants were slain and many were tortured so severely that they succumbed. By March, 1874, 43 priests had been deported to Russian monasteries in the interior, 22 had been thrown into local prisons, while 61 Basilian monks had been arrested and deported to Siberia, where they perished without ever regaining their freedom.

Count Tolstoy, Minister of the Interior, issued a strict order to the civilian and military authorities of the Lublin and Sidlets gou-

bernias, calling upon them to “watch the action of conversion to Orthodoxy,” to send all recalcitrant elements to the courts, and to use arms if necessary.

After this bloody preparation for the “union with Orthodoxy,” a formal action followed. Governor Gromeka sent agents throughout the provinces of Kholm and Pidlasia who by force and ruse gathered “voluntary” signatures from the peasants for the “union.” At the end of 1875 the country commissioners ordered all villages to send to the city of Bila two delegates and their priests who were to sign “formally” an appeal for the restoration of Orthodoxy. Those who signed were given cash awards, while those who refused were arrested and sent to the prison in Lublin, whence they were deported to Siberia.

The “act” was signed by only 13 priests; all others had been arrested and deported.

In May of 1875 the “appeal” was sent to Petersburg. Naturally, Czar Alexander II “received and approved” the petition, and in Kholm and Petersburg the same year solemn celebrations were held in commemoration of the “union” of the Ukrainian Catholic population of the provinces of Kholm and Pidlasia with the Russian Orthodox Church.



St. Andrews Church in Kiev, turned into a state hog-raising farm.

MARTYRDOM AND LIQUIDATION OF THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH BY THE RUSSIAN BOLSHEVIKS

There is not the slightest doubt that the revolution of 1917 in Russia constituted a serious blow against the Russian Orthodox Church; but this blow was not an expression of anti-religious feeling. Rather, it was directed against an arm of the Czarist government, as the Russian Orthodox Church was considered to be. Here we have to rectify the basic historical error which is constantly parroted by White Russian emigres to the effect that the October Revolution in Russia destroyed the Orthodox Church. This statement has no basis in fact; the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USSR bears the contrary.

On November 1, 1917, the Holy **Synod** was dissolved, but on December 4, 1917, Metropolitan Tikhon of Moscow (Vasili Belavin, 1865-1925) became the Patriarch of Russia. And if here and there the Orthodox Church was subjected to persecution (confiscation of church property, banning of religion in schools, arrest and deportation of the clergy to Siberia) its structure was left intact. After the death of Tikhon in 1925 and an interim rule of his deputy, Peter Krutitsky, Metropolitan Sergev (I. Starogrodsky) became the new Patriarch. After the latter's death in 1944, Sergey Shymansky assumed the throne of the Russian Patriarch under the name of Alexei (1945).

Thus there was no interruption in the historical sequence of the Russian Patriarchate.

On August 29, 1927, a new **Synod** convened. The participants included two metropolitans (Sergey of Nizhno-Gorod and Serafim of Tversk, five archbishops (Sylvester of Vologda, Alexei of Khotyn, Anatole of Samara, Paul of Viatka, Philip of Zvenigorod and two bishops (Constantine of Sumy and Sergey of Serpukhov). These hierarchs prepared a pastoral letter addressed to all the faithful and the clergy of the "Holy All-Russian Orthodox Church" in which they called for "unconditional loyalty to the Soviet government," because "we are with the people" and "with our government" and because "we intend to remain Orthodox" and "at this moment we do recognize the Soviet Union as our fatherland." The letter expressed deep scorn for those Orthodox bishops and priests who had



The ruins of a part of the Pecherska Lavra which the Bolsheviks destroyed by explosion in 1941.

escaped abroad to "harm the fatherland," and excommunicated them, because "every blow directed against the Soviet government is also a blow against the Orthodox Church."

This pastoral letter was issued at the time when the principal slogan of the Soviet government was the motto of Lenin: "Religion is the opiate of the people," a time when this government was openly persecuting and closing the churches, officially installing "atheistic leagues" and, in general, conducting a campaign against Christianity as a whole.

Thus, the year of 1927, that is, ten years after the revolution, may be considered the beginning of a new period in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, which throughout the centuries had served the Princes and then the Czars. Now it was serving the Soviet government, still having as its purpose not the spiritual well-being of the people or a missionary role, but the interests of the state and Russian imperialism, exclusively.

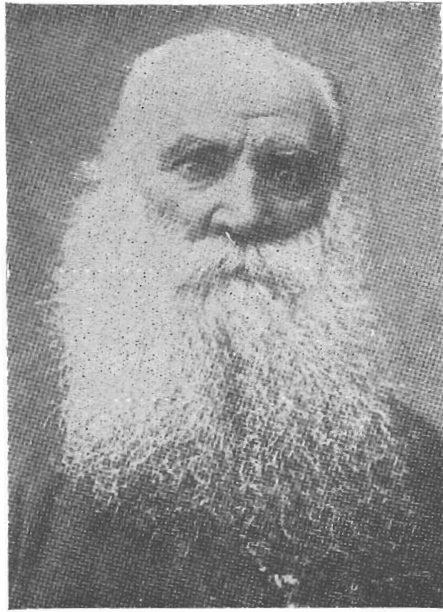
The activities of the Russian Orthodox Church today are conducted in a two-pronged direction: internal activities, with the purpose of dominating the minds and souls of the people of the USSR, and external activities for the purpose of making and establishing

the closest connections possible with other Christian churches, save the Catholic Church. The overall objective of these activities abroad is identical with that of the Soviet government: the conquest of the world. This would entail not only rule by the communist government of the USSR, but the spiritual and religious control of the world by the Russian Orthodox Church as well. As in the times of the Princes and Czars, the Russian Orthodox Church is an instrument of the Russian communist government and Russian imperialism. The sole distinction is that during the reign of the Czars the Russian Orthodox Church enjoyed a privileged and official position, whereas under the Soviet regime it has only semi-official protection. When the Soviet government needed the support of the Russian Orthodox Church, it knew how to get it promptly. During the German-Soviet war in 1941-45 Patriarch Sergey collected 8 million rubles for tanks, while his deputy Alexei gathered 1 million rubles for "the wives and children of Red Army men." In 1946 the Archbishop of Krasnoyarsk received a Stalin Prize, and many Russian Orthodox priests were elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR as deputies.

Whenever the Soviet government no longer needs the help of the Russian Orthodox Church, either **Bezbozhnik**, the official organ of the Atheistic League, or **Bolshevik**, official organ of the Communist Party, reminds the citizens of the "ten commandments for atheists," which include the following:

"Never forget that the clergy are the most intransigent enemies of the communist state," and "you can never be a good Communist, if you are not a convinced atheist. Atheism is organically connected with communism, and both concepts are the bases of the Soviet government."

In the light of the atheists' "second commandment" — "remember that Stalin, who gave the Russian people a constitution, is head of the atheists not only in the USSR, but in the whole world" — Stalin was able to grant permission in 1943 for the election of bishops and a patriarch. The Russians then needed the support of the church. **Zhurnal Moskovskoy Patriarkhii**, official organ of the Patriarchate of Moscow, in its every issue during the war praised the bravery and heroism of the "Russian people" and called for resistance to and revenge upon the "fascist invaders." (After the war the same journal attacked "American imperialism" and aired all the other baseless accusations of Moscow against the United States). In 1941-43 there appeared in the USSR a great number of religious books, richly illustrated with portraits of Russian Orthodox prelates and which were replete with "truths about religion" in the USSR, mainly to the effect that the "Church of Christ" was develop-



Ukrainian Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev Vasyl Lypkivsky, tortured to death in a Bolshevik prison in 1938.

ing freely in the Soviet Union and therefore it was the duty of every Orthodox citizen to defend his land and fight Hitler.

“Our Orthodox Holy Church bestows its heavenly blessings on the all-national effort and will bless everything which is done by every Russian man for the defense of his fatherland,”³¹ wrote Alexei, then Metropolitan of Leningrad (1941). Therefore, as far as the Soviet government was concerned, the Russian Orthodox Church fulfilled its duty with respect to the Soviet state.

But entirely different measures were applied to the Ukrainian Church after the fall of the Russian empire. On January 1, 1919, the government of the Ukrainian National Republic announced the establishment of the independence of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (in fact, there was no true Ukrainian hierarchy in Ukraine). Subsequently, the All-Ukrainian Church Council was created, and on May 5, 1920, separation from the Russian Orthodox Church was effectuated and establishment of a national church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church, was organized under the interim direction of the Church Council.

But the Russian Orthodox Church could not tolerate the exist-

³¹ *Pravda o religii u Rossii (Truth About Religion in Russia)*, Patriarchate of Moscow, 1942.

ence of a church other than Russian. Hence Metropolitan Mykhail, Exarch of the Patriarchate of Moscow, at a meeting of bishops in February 1921, promptly excommunicated all those who recognized the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church.³⁵

In October, 1921, in the ancient Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev, the First All-Ukrainian Orthodox Council took place, at which it was decided to approve the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church and to implement a new church organization throughout Ukraine.

The Council appealed to Russian bishops in Ukraine to ordain Ukrainian bishops for the Ukrainian Church. Not a single Russian bishop replied favorably to this appeal. Then by a decision of the Council it was decided to ordain first bishops for Ukraine, independent of Moscow, according to the practice during the first centuries of Christianity in Ukraine — by show of hands of all the presbiters. Thus, the first metropolitan of the renewed Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church was Vasyl Lypkivsky. He also became the Metropolitan of Kiev and actual head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church.

Several new bishops were ordained from the ranks of Ukrainian Orthodox priests, who had a regular priestly education and ecclesiastic studies. Metropolitan Lypkivsky ordained 17 new bishops and by 1927 the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church already had 30 bishops, 2,300 priests and about 3,000 parishes in Ukraine, Siberia, Central Asia, Canada and the United States.

Such a rapid growth of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church, which stood on a position totally inimical to communism and the Russian Orthodox Church as well, could not remain unchallenged by the Soviet government, which began maneuvering to dislodge the Ukrainian Church from within — a traditional method of the Russian Czars. With the approval and initiative of the Soviet government there was established in May of 1923 the so-called “Living Church” and, later on, a “**Synod** Orthodox Church,” that is, a new church organization common to both Ukraine and Russia.³⁶

By establishing such a new “church” the Soviet government endeavored to have one church organization for both the Russian and Ukrainian peoples and thus gain the possibility of Russifying the religious movement in Ukraine, which represented a great potential danger for Bolshevism and possessed a purely Ukrainian national character. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks wanted con-

³⁵ Luznytsky, pp. cit., p. 545-547.

³⁶ **Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwoerterbuch fuer Theologie und Religionswissenschaft. II Aufl. V Band “Ukraine,”** et. 1341-42, Tuebingen, 1931.



The Monastery of Vydubyci, built in the XI-XVIII centuries. All precious objects have been removed, the golden ornaments of the altars scratched off. The altars themselves have been burnt. The church of the monastery is used as a storehouse for objects impounded by the NKVD.

trol of the whole religious movement so that they could manipulate it at will. The "Synod Church" had about 8 million people in Ukraine and about 4 million in Russia, and about 33 dioceses in both countries. In March, 1926, this church received permission from the Soviet government to open an ecclesiastical seminary, a privilege heretofore given only to Baptists and Evangelics. When on July 29, 1927, Metropolitan Sergey, deputy of the Patriarch of Moscow, made a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet government, a number of Russian Orthodox bishops were released from exile and the "Synod Church" was merged with the Russian Orthodox Church, thus becoming an instrument of the Soviet government and recognizing the communist power legally.

From that time on (1927) a bloody persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church by Moscow ensued, ending in 1936 with the Ukrainian Church organization being totally liquidated and destroyed.

In the very same fashion the Soviet government destroyed the attempts of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky of Galicia to re-establish the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine.

Prior to 1914, that is, the outbreak of World War I, the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Western Ukraine had developed to a great extent and had become a powerful factor in the national rebirth of

the Ukrainian people not only in Galicia, but in Bukovina, Carpatho-Ukraine and among the Ukrainian emigrants in the United States, Canada and Brazil. As such it came to be considered as the most dangerous threat to the Russian empire. This was especially so after the revolution of 1905 in Russia, following which hundreds of Ukrainian leaders found refuge and work in Lviv and other cities of Galicia. The Czarist government attempted at all costs to sow dissension among the Ukrainian Catholic clergy in order to weaken the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Galicia.

When in 1914 World War I broke out, Russian troops succeeded in a few weeks in occupying Lviv, capital of Western Ukraine, and the Czarist government resorted to its well-tested practice of persecution of the Ukrainian leaders and closed all Ukrainian newspapers and national organizations. The Russians also attacked the Ukrainian Catholic Church by arresting and deporting hundreds of priests and monks.

Among the first victims of this planned persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church was its head, Metropolitan Count Andrey Sheptytsky, who was arrested and deported into the interior of Russia. Following the Russian troops into Galicia were Russian Orthodox priests, headed by Archbishop Eulogius, for the purpose of "converting" the Ukrainian Catholics to Orthodoxy. Archbishop Eulogius occupied the palace of Metropolitan Sheptytsky in Lviv and, with the aid of Russian gendarmes, tried to implement his "mission." The Austro-German offensive, however, changed his plans; with the retreat of the Russian troops he and his priests escaped to Russia.³⁷

The outbreak of the revolution in 1917 found Metropolitan Sheptytsky in a Russian monastery in Suzdal, a detention center to which Russian Czars sent the most recalcitrant ecclesiastical non-conformists. Immediately upon his release by the Provisional Government of Kerensky, Metropolitan Sheptytsky returned to Kiev, where he began to renew the Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite. Exercising the prerogatives of a Patriarch given to him by the Holy See, Metropolitan Sheptytsky created three exarchies of the Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite: Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Russian; and he organized Ukrainian Catholic parishes in Kiev and in other cities of Ukraine, where he placed those Ukrainian Catholic priests who had been deported from Western Ukraine and who, when released, had remained in Ukraine. The re-establishment of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the capital of Ukraine had wide repercussions and success. A new church was built and numerous

³⁷ *Tsarsky Vyazen, 1914-1917*. Lviv 1918. (*Czarist Prisoner 1914-1917*); Dr. Stepan Baran. *Mytropolyt Andrey Sheptytsky*. Munich, 1947.



St. Nicholas the Good Church in Kiev, demolished in 1934.

Ukrainians, whose ancestors had been Catholics and who had been forced to accept Russian Orthodoxy, now returned to Catholicism.

With the conquest of Ukraine by the Russian Bolsheviks, the Ukrainian Catholic Church, as was the case with the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church, was the first target of persecution. In 1929 the Soviet government deported Rev. V. Shechepaniuk, Ukrainian Catholic pastor of Kiev, to Siberia, where he died, and his church was transformed into a "cooperative restaurant."³⁸

Both the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church and the renewed Ukrainian Catholic Church could not be tolerated by the Soviet authority for two reasons: both churches were Ukrainian churches and as such were deemed anti-Russian: both churches stood firmly on Christian principles and the Christian faith.

The measures of the Soviet government against these churches were ruthless. The hierarchies and the clergy, and the faithful as well, were arrested at random and deported or executed as "enemies of the people." All Ukrainian churches, monasteries and other monuments of Ukrainian national culture were indiscriminately destroyed by the so-called "Liquidating Committees," which had the power and authority to close churches and confiscate church property.

On the basis of the law on the "separation of the church from the state," all church schools were closed down, while church ornaments and libraries were confiscated and the clergy deprived of the rights of citizens. The children of the priests had no right to study in the Soviet schools, nor were they eligible for government posts; every bishop, priest, sexton and even church choir director was considered to be an "enemy of the people." If not arrested, they had to carry special cards identifying them as "servants of the religious cult." They were not allowed to buy at government stores, nor could they stay at any hotel. Soviet post offices refused to accept any church literature.

The Soviet government organized public anti-religious debates, at which special agitators ridiculed religion and the church. Those who dared to defend the church were marked for arrest and deportation, and as a rule, disappeared forever.

Thus in the years 1927-1937 the entire hierarchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church was physically destroyed, including Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivsky, 9 archbishops and 22 bishops.³⁹

³⁸ Prokoptschuk, Gr. Dr.: **Der Metropolit**. Muenchen 1955. S. 125.

³⁹ Proto-yerei Mvtrophan Yavdas: **Ukrainska Avtokefalna Pravoslavna Tserkva, 1921-1936 (The Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church, 1921-1936)**, Documents of History, Munich, 1956. Also: **L'Ukraine dans le cadre de l'Est European**, Louvain, Paris, 1957, p. 122.



Southwestern elevation of the Three Saints Church (Trysviatytska or Vasylivska Tserkva) built in the 12th century in Kiev, rebuilt in the 17-18th centuries. This church was destroyed in 1935 and in its place was erected a building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

Upon pressure of the Bolshevik government Metropolitan Lypivsky was forced to resign as head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church and was placed under "house arrest" from 1927-1937. In 1937 he was arrested by the NKVD and sent to Siberia, where he died in the late 30s. His successor, Metropolitan Nestor Sharaiivsky, was arrested and tortured, and died soon after his release from prison in 1929. The next head, Metropolitan Mykola Boretsky, was arrested in 1930 and deported to the Solovetsky Islands.*

Along with the Ukrainian Orthodox hierarchy the Soviet government arrested, deported or executed about 2,400 priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church.

In the years 1934-36, the Soviet government intensified its drive against Ukrainian churches, chapels and monasteries, and other priceless monuments of Ukrainian culture. In Kiev alone it destroyed St. Nicholas Cathedral, erected in 1690-1693 (it was demolished in 1934); St. Nicholas Monastery Church, built in the 18th century; the Mykhailivsky Gold-Plated Cathedral, erected in

* Following is a list of those Ukrainian Orthodox hierarchs who were arrested and deported by the Soviet government:

Joseph Oksiuk, archbishop of Lubny and Myrhorod, deported to Siberia in 1935;

Constantine Malushkevych, archbishop of Uman, arrested and deported in 1937;

Alexander Yaroshenko, archbishop of Kharkiv, arrested and deported to Central Asia in 1926;

The archbishop of Zhytomyr (no name), arrested in 1928 and deported to the Solovetsky Islands;

Yuriy Mikhnovsky, bishop of Zolotonosha, arrested and executed in 1937;

Constantine Krotevych, archbishop of Poltava, arrested in 1930 and deported to Siberia;

Ivan Pavlovsky, archbishop of Chernihiv, arrested in 1936 and deported to Central Asia;

Volodymyr Dakhnivnyk-Dakhivsky, bishop of Pereyaslav, arrested in 1930 and deported;

Theodosius Sheriev, archbishop of Pryluky, arrested and deported to Siberia in 1936;

Volodymyr Sambirsky, bishop of Lypovets, arrested and executed in 1935;

Mykola Karabinevych, bishop of Mohyliv, arrested in 1935, deported to Siberia;

Yukhym Kalishevsky, bishop of Cherkassy, arrested in 1936 and deported;

Yakiv Chulaiivsky, bishop of Hlukhiv, arrested in 1931 and deported to Siberia;

Antin Hrynevych, bishop of Balta and Moldavia, arrested in 1931 and deported;

Hryhory Mozolevsky, bishop of Konotop, arrested in 1936 and deported;

Alexander Chervynsky, bishop of Nizhyn, arrested in 1932 and deported;

Yuriy Teslenko, bishop of Bila Tserkva, arrested in 1931 and deported to Siberia. (He returned after 10 years of exile and died in 1943);

Hryhory Storozhenko, Titular Bishop of Kiev, arrested in 1936 and deported;

Petro Romodanov, bishop of Sumy, arrested in 1930 and deported;

Konon Bey, bishop of Kaniv, arrested in 1928 and deported;

Maksym Zadvirniak, bishop of Proskuriv, arrested in 1931 and deported.



Church of St. Cyril, erected in 1140, destroyed in 1934.

the 12th century and destroyed in 1934; Holy Trinity Church, erected in the 12th century; Uspensky Cathedral (12th century) in Podol; Bohoyavlenky Cathedral of 1695 in Podol; Ilinsky Church; SS. Peter and Paul Church; St. Nicholas the Good Church; the Church of the Nativity; St. Olga's Church; the Belfry of the St. Cyril Monastery of the 18th century, and others.

In St. Sophia's Cathedral the Soviet government established a museum, while famed Pecherska Lavra also was transformed into an anti-religious museum. Destroyed also were religious monuments, statues and cemeteries (such as the tomb of Askold, the Shevatsky and Florivsky cemeteries, the Statue of St. Olga, and others).

In Kharkiv 6 churches were destroyed: St. Nicholas Cathedral, the Church in Osnova, Holy Ghost Church, Resurrection Church, St. Dmytro Church, and the Greek Church. St. Andrew's Church was transformed into a movie house; the Church on Klochivska Street was made into a society for the deaf and mute; the Cathedral was converted into a radio station; Annunciation Church became a machine parts store, and the Church at the Ozeriansky Bazaar was transformed into a City Archive.

In Poltava 7 churches were destroyed: Uspensky Cathedral, Epiphany Church, Resurrection Church, Trinity Church, Christ Church and monastery, and the Nativity-Holy Virgin Church. The Preobrazhenska and Kladbyshenska Churches were transformed into grain collecting stations, and St. Nicholas Church was converted into a machine repair shop.

The Holy Trinity-Illinsky Monastery in Chernihiv, one of the most outstanding religious edifices, erected in the 17th century, was turned into a state hog-raising farm.

Altogether, the Soviet government destroyed in 1934-36 about 75 to 80 per cent of all the churches in Ukraine.⁴⁰

In the first days of the Soviet power in Ukraine the Soviet government issued a decree authorizing the confiscation of all church treasures. As a result, great treasures, which had been preserved in various churches and monasteries in Ukraine, were expropriated by the communist government. Although it is difficult to estimate the value of these treasures, it must have been very high if we are to judge from occasional communiques that appeared in the Soviet press.

For instance, **Chervona Pravda**, No. 94 of 1922, wrote:

"In Kiev the Commission of Expropriation has begun its work. From the Pecherska Lavra and St. Sophia Cathedral it has expro-

⁴⁰ Yavdas, op. cit., pp. 101-105; **Mytropolyt Vasyl Lypkivsky, Vidrozhennia Tserkvy v Ukraini**. "Dobra Knyzhka" 1959.



St. Dmytro, 11th century, and St. Michael Monastery in Kiev.
Destroyed in 1934.

priated 1 **pood** and 19 pounds of gold, 533 carats of diamonds and 231 **poods** of silver . . .”

In Kharkiv, **Komunist**, No. 161 of 1922, disclosed:

“According to the reports of the Commission of Expropriation of church treasures, the following was obtained in the provinces of Chernihiv, Kremianchuh, Zaporozhe, Katerynoslav, Poltava, and Podilia: 254 **poods** of silver, 2 **poods** of gold, 126 diamonds, 60 **zolotniks**, 6,554 golden rubles, and much more . . .”

According to official statistics compiled by the “Union of Fighting Atheists,” the number of closed churches in Ukraine was given by years: in 1924-25 — 46 churches closed; 1926 — 28; 1927 — 58; 1928 — 97; 1929 — 136; 1930 — 234; 1931 — 350.⁴¹

The number of “Atheistic Brigades” in the Soviet Union in 1931 was 2,964, of which number 749 operated in Ukraine. In 1928 the “Union of Fighting Atheists” had 2,421 branches in the USSR; in 1929 it had 3,121; in 1930 — 8,928; in 1931 — 55,600, and in 1932 — 60,000.⁴²

In 1936 the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Church ceased to exist as a religious organization: the ground for the Russian Or-

⁴¹ Yavdas, pp. 101-105.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 101-105.

thodox Church in Ukraine was prepared. All dioceses, including the metropolitanate of Kiev, were subordinated to the Patriarchate of Moscow, and the Russian Orthodox Church began to share the domination of Ukraine with the Communist Party.

All the priceless treasures of Christian culture which had been preserved in Ukraine for the past 1000 years disappeared. In this objective of the Bolsheviks wholehearted assistance was received from the Russian Orthodox Church.



St. Mary's Protection Church in Kiev, destroyed in 1934.

MARTYRDOM AND LIQUIDATION OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH BY THE RUSSIAN BOLSHEVIKS

With the outbreak of World War II and the fall of Poland, the Western and Northern Ukrainian lands found themselves under Russian Bolshevik occupation from the fall of 1939 until 1941.

Significantly, the Soviet authorities, with the exception of their confiscating church properties and imposing high taxes on churches, refrained from open persecution of religion. This, of course, was a tactical maneuver not to antagonize the Ukrainian population of Western Ukraine, and world opinion as well. Eventually, the teaching of religion was banned in the schools, and all religious objects, including crosses, were ordered removed from the classrooms. But these measures evoked a great reaction on the part of the population. The peasantry, despite their meager resources, met church taxes. The Ukrainian peasants supplied Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky as well as the Basilian Monastery in Lviv with food and necessities. Every day of the week the Ukrainian Catholic churches were filled with thousands of worshippers, despite the fact that the Soviet government abolished Sundays as well as all holidays as days of observance.

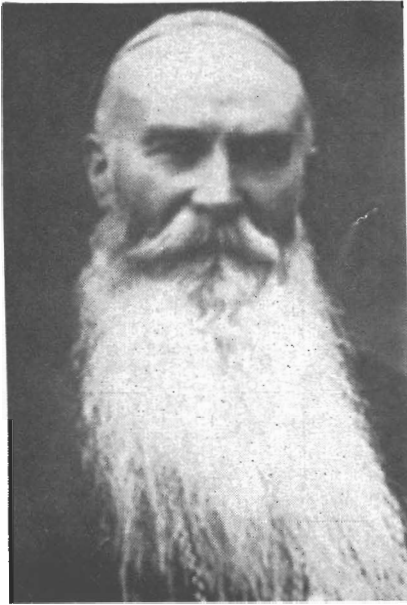
Here and there Ukrainian priests were arrested by the NKVD.

In such cases Metropolitan Sheptytsky appealed to Nikita S. Khrushchev, Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, or to Stalin himself. The Bolsheviks usually treated Metropolitan Sheptytsky with respect as they knew that he had once been a "Czarist prisoner" and enjoyed tremendous prestige among the Ukrainian people.⁴³

In June, 1941, the German-Soviet war broke out, and up to the end of 1944 all Ukrainian lands were under the domination of Nazi Germany. Although the Germans treated the Ukrainians very harshly, the Ukrainian Catholic and the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalic Churches were not persecuted by Hitler.

In 1944 the Soviet troops re-occupied all the Ukrainian lands, including Western Ukraine. As already mentioned, during the first Soviet occupation of Western Ukraine there had been no nation-wide persecution of the church, although a number of Ukrainian Cath-

⁴³ *Der Metropolit*, op. cit. S. 205.



Bishop of Peremyshl, Josaphat Kocylovsky, OSBM., (1876-1947), tortured to death in a Bolshevick prison.



Bishop of Stanislaviv, Gregory Khomyshyn, arrested and tortured to death in a Bolshevick prison in Kiev, in January 1947.

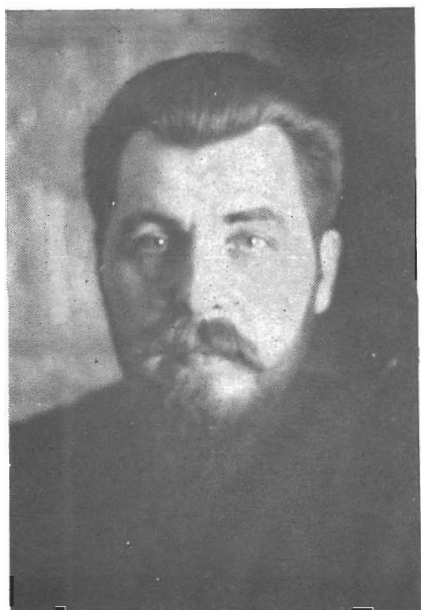
olic priests had been executed (among them Rev. Dr. Mykola Konrad and Rev. Dr. Ishchak).

The widespread persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church began with the arrival of the Soviet troops in 1944, especially after the death on November 1, 1944, of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky (reportedly poisoned by the Soviet police). (The Metropolitan throne went to Bishop Joseph Slipy, former Rector of the Ecclesiastical Seminary in Lviv).

Immediately after the death of Metropolitan Sheptytsky the Soviet government addressed itself to the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy - which included Metropolitan Joseph Slipy; Bishop Josaphat Kocylovsky OSBM, of Peremyshyl; his Auxiliary Bishop, Gregory Lakota; Bishop Gregory Khomyshyn of Stanislaviv and his Auxiliary Bishop, Ivan Latyshevsky — and ordered it to break away from Rome and recognize the Patriarchate of Moscow.¹⁴

The entire Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy of Western Ukraine refused to comply with this order, as did another Ukrainian Catholic prelate, Bishop Mykola Charnetsky, C.S.S.R., Apostolic Visitor in Northwestern Ukraine.

¹⁴ *L'Ukraine dans le Cadre de l'Est Europeen*, Louvain-Paris, 1957. L. Leskovytsch, "La situation religieuse en Ukraine," p. 115 and ff.



Metropolitan of Halych, Archbishop of Lviv, Joseph Slipty, arrested and exiled by the Bolsheviks April 11, 1945.



Auxiliary Bishop of Lviv, Nykyta Budka, arrested and tortured to death in a Bolshevik prison in Karaganda, Siberia, September 6, 1949.

The Russian reaction was, as always, harsh and cruel. In the spring of 1945 the NKVD arrested all the Ukrainian Catholic bishops, and Patriarch Alexei of Moscow appointed Bishop Macarius as the head of the Orthodox Church in Western Ukraine. The metropolitanate of Galicia-Lviv was abolished, and its territory incorporated into the Kiev metropolitanate; Orthodox Metropolitan Ioan of Kiev received the new title, "Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia," while Bishop Macarius was appointed "Bishop of Ternopil."

At the end of World War II and during the retreat of the German troops from Ukraine, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians either were deported by the Nazis or fled before the advancing Soviet troops. With them left some 200 Ukrainian Catholic priests, most of whom received permission to do so from their bishops. The overwhelming majority of Ukrainian Catholic priests, however, remained, along with their bishops, in Ukraine.

But it was not enough for the Russians to imprison the Ukrainian Catholic episcopate in order to "effectuate union with the Orthodox Church." They also had to remove "recalcitrant and disobedient" Ukrainian Catholic priests. Thus, after the arrest of the Ukrainian Catholic bishops the Soviet government initiated a na-



Auxiliary Bishop of Peremyshl, Gregory Lakota, arrested and exiled by the Bolsheviks, June 26, 1946.



Auxiliary Bishop of Priashiv, Vasyl Hopko, arrested and exiled in 1946 by the Bolsheviks.

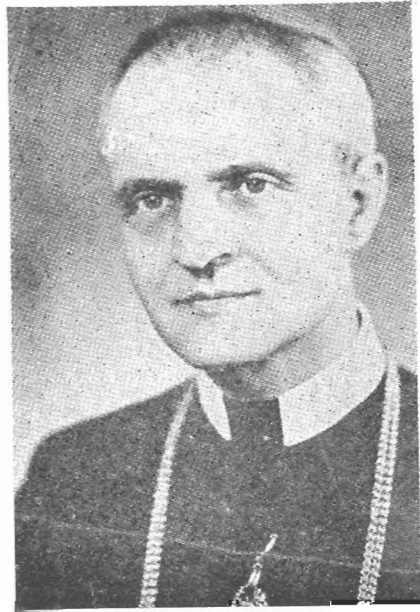
tion-wide and bloody persecution of Ukrainian Catholic priests in 1945, a well-planned action which resulted in the arrest, deportation and execution of 800 of their number.

Having cleared the road for the "union," Moscow proceeded apace. It selected three apostate priests, Rev. Dr. Havriyil Kostelnyk, Rev. Dr. M. Melnyk and Rev. A. Pelvetsky, of the Lviv, Peremyshl and Stanislaviv dioceses, respectively, to form the so-called "Committee of Initiative" for "union" with the Russian Orthodox Church. This group, under the leadership of Bishop Macarius, the chief architect of destruction of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, submitted a request on May 28, 1945, to the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic to "lead our church out of the state of anarchy into a state of consolidation for transforming it into the Orthodox church." The appeal was replete with declarations of loyalty to the Soviet government and "generalissimo Stalin."

On June 18, 1945, the Soviet government sent a reply to the apostate group which was signed by P. Khodchenko, "Representative of the Council of People's Commissars for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church on the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic." It approved the group as the



Bishop of Mukachiv, Theodore Romza (1944-1947), poisoned by the Bolsheviks, November 1, 1947.



Apostolic Visitor and Bishop of Priashiv, Pavlo Goydych, OSBM, arrested and exiled by the Bolsheviks January 15, 1951, († 1960).

“sole interim church administrative organ” and gave it the authority to administer the Ukrainian Catholic parishes for the realization of “union” with the Russian Orthodox Church.⁴⁵

The same group also issued an appeal to the Ukrainian Catholic clergy, in which it sharply attacked the Union of Brest (1596), calling it a “historical anachronism,” and declared that it itself “stands and would stand firmly on sincere patriotism with respect to the Ukrainian SSR and the whole Soviet Union, because it is the dictate of common sense and the Ukrainian heart.”

The purpose of the “Committee of Initiative” was not only to “unite the Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church,” but also to persuade the clergy and faithful “not to indulge in unnecessary struggle and sacrifices.” The appeal ended with an invitation to priests and to sextons as well to join the “Committee of Initiative.”

In February of 1946, 13 priests from Lviv were sent to Kiev to negotiate with Metropolitan Ioan the “voluntary union” of the Ukrainian Catholic clergy with Orthodoxy (all the Ukrainian Catholic bishops were already in Soviet prisons). Metropolitan Ioan

⁴⁵ *Diannia Soboru Hreko-Katolytskoi Tserkvy u Lvovi, (Proceedings of the Greek-Catholic Church in Lviv)*. Lviv 1946.



Apostolic Visitor, Bishop Mykola Charnetsky, C.S.S.R., arrested and exiled by the Bolsheviks, April 11, 1945.

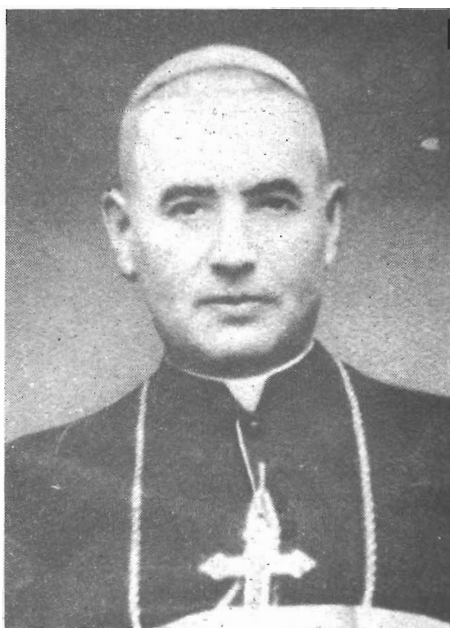


Apostolic Visitor of Ukrainian Catholics in Germany, Msgr. P. Werhun, arrested and exiled by the Bolsheviks in 1945.

ordained Rev. A. Pelvetsky to become bishop of the Stanislaviv († 1957) diocese and Rev. M. Melnyk to become bishop of the Drohobych-Sambir diocese (because part of the Peremyshl diocese, including the city of Peremyshl itself, was under the administration of Communist Poland). The consecrations took place on February 24 and 25, 1946.

Having two newly-appointed bishops who constituted the new hierarchy, Moscow ordered a **sobor** or congress of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, which was called by these two bishops (although the **sobor** was illegal from the viewpoint of Canon law, inasmuch as “bishops” Pelvetsky and Melnyk were no longer members of the Ukrainian Catholic Church). Hence on March 8-10, 1946, in Lviv there gathered 216 priests and 19 lay delegates, all of whom were guarded by the NKVD. The **sobor** decided to “liquidate the decisions of the Council of Brest of 1596,” to separate from Rome and to “return to the Holy Orthodox Church, to implore his Holiness Alexei, Patriarch of Moscow and of all Rus, to accept us into the All-Rus Orthodox Church.”

When the decision of the Lviv “**sobor**” was made known to the people, a wave of protests and indignation swept Western Ukraine. The Ukrainian Catholic clergy drafted a protest over the signature



Auxiliary Bishop of Stanyslaviv Ivan Latyshevsky, arrested and exiled by the Bolsheviks, April 11, 1945.

of some 300 priests which was dispatched to the Soviet government (a copy of the letter reached Ukrainian circles in Western Europe). In it the Ukrainian Catholic clergy stressed its unwavering loyalty to the Apostolic See and rejected any and all negotiations with the Russian Orthodox Church, declared that the so-called “sobor” had been called by the Soviet government and not by the Ukrainian Catholic Church, pointed out that all the delegates had been brought in under the armed guard of the NKVD, that all “resolutions” had been prepared under threat of execution, and that all “welcome telegrams” from the country had been sent by the NKVD.

In reply to this protest the Soviet government stepped up its persecution of Ukrainian Catholics. In Kiev the Soviet government prepared a secret trial of all Ukrainian Catholic bishops, who were charged with “high treason” and with “collaboration” with the Germans.

As a result of the trial the following sentences were imposed:

Metropolitan Joseph Slipy — condemned to hard labor and sent to a concentration camp in Vorkuta;



The Trinity Monastery (17th c.) in Chernihiv turned into a state hog-raising farm ("svynoradhosp").

Bishop Mykola Charnetsky, Apostolic Visitor for Ukrainian Catholics in Volhynia, Kholm, Pidliasia and Polissia – life imprisonment (eventually released, he died in Lviv in 1958) ;

Bishop Nykyta Budka, Auxiliary of the Lviv Diocese, condemned to life imprisonment, although he was a Canadian citizen (he died in prison in 1949) ;

Bishop Ivan Latyshevsky, condemned to hard labor in Siberia (died in 1958) ;

Bishop Gregory Khomyshyn of Stanislaviv, after torture during questioning, died in prison on January 17, 1947 ;

Bishop Gregory Lakota, Auxiliary of the Peremyshl Diocese, condemned to life imprisonment in concentration camps (he died in 1950).

On the basis of the Yalta Agreement the city of Peremyshl, the seat of another Ukrainian Catholic Diocese, went under Communist Poland. As a consequence the Polish Communist police arrested Bishop Josaphat Kocylovsky, OSBM, and after subjecting him to inhuman torture in the prison in Rzeszow, handed him over to the NKVD in Lviv. After some time the NKVD, for purposes of propaganda—to the effect that “there is freedom of religion” in the USSR, released him from prison, sent him back to Peremyshl and proposed that he accept the “presidency in the **sobor** of Lviv.” This he promptly rejected. On June 27, 1945, he was re-arrested and sent

to a prison in Kiev, where he died during questioning on September 21, 1947.

Along with the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy, the following also were arrested: all members of episcopal consistories (Lviv, Peremyshl and Stanislaviv); all professors of Ukrainian Catholic Seminaries (Lviv, Peremyshl and Stanislaviv), and all members of Ukrainian Catholic orders: Basilian Fathers, the Redemptorist Fathers and the Studite Fathers, as well as several orders of Ukrainian Catholic nuns, among them the Basilian Sisters, Studite Sisters, Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Sisters of the Holy Family, Sisters of St. Josaphat, Missionary Sisters, Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Divine Service. All monasteries were closed down or converted into clubs or archives, or simply razed to the ground, as for instance the Basilian Monastery in Hoshiv, which contained priceless historical monuments and books.

In 1947 a new wave of persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church broke out. Remnants of the Ukrainian Catholic clergy who had remained in their parishes, now declared Orthodox, stubbornly refused to follow the instructions of the Patriarchate of Moscow and continued to consider themselves Catholic priests. During church Masses they failed to mention either the Russian patriarch or the Soviet government. As a result, the Soviet government intensified the persecution and declared all Ukrainian Catholic priests to be "spies of the Vatican" and "American imperialists." Any Ukrainian Catholic priest who would not declare openly for Orthodoxy was arrested and deported.

Hundreds of Ukrainian Catholic priests were compelled to give up their priestly duties officially. They continued, however, to administer them secretly, thus making the Ukrainian Catholic Church the "Silent Church" or the underground church.

After the bloody destruction of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Western Ukraine, the Soviet government advanced to the last Ukrainian territory where the Ukrainian Catholic Church still existed — Carpatho-Ukraine.

The political events which had swept this segment of the Ukrainian land since 1938 had a somewhat unfavorable impact upon the Catholic dioceses. The so-called Arbitration decision of November 2, 1938, had given to Hungary the city of Uzhorod, along with the cities of Mukachiv and Berehovo, and had split the Diocese of Mukachiv. In 1939 Carpatho-Ukraine had declared its independence and Rt. Rev. Msgr. Augustine Voloshyn had become its first president. But after the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and its occupation by the Germans, Carpatho-Ukraine was seized by Hungary. Scores of Catholic parishes of the Mukachiv Diocese remained under



Transfiguration of Our Lord Church in Chernihiv, erected 1036.
destroyed in 1934.

Slovakia, which at that time declared its independence. Under Slovakia was another Ukrainian Catholic diocese, that of Priasiv, which was under the administration of Bishop Paul Goydych, OSBM. Because of the fact that the occupational government of Hungary refused to accept a Ukrainian bishop after the death of Bishop O. Stoyka of Mukachiv in 1943, the Apostolic See appointed Bishop M. Dudash, OSBM, as temporary Apostolic Administrator, and as his Auxiliary, Rev. Dr. Theodore Romzha, professor of the Ecclesiastic Seminary in Uzhorod, who became an independent Bishop-Ordinary of the Mukachiv Diocese after the war.

At the end of October, 1944, Soviet troops occupied Carpatho-Ukraine and the persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church began. In November, 1944, the NKVD organized the so-called "People's Council" as a provisional government for Carpatho-Ukraine. Under duress and threats it issued a "manifesto" in which it appealed to "Father Stalin to accept the people of Carpatho-Ukraine into the brotherly union of peoples of the USSR."

At that time the Diocese of Mukachiv had 461,555 members, 459 churches, 354 priests, and 35 Basilian Fathers who lived in three Basilian Monasteries. The Soviet troops were given the order to confiscate the Catholic churches and "turn" them over to so-called "village committees," which as a rule consisted of Communists, and to expel the Catholic priests. In December of 1944 a special delegation, headed by the monk T. Sabol, OSBM, journeyed to Moscow to negotiate the "union" with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Parallel with this action, the NKVD was busy arresting Ukrainian Catholic priests in Carpatho-Ukraine.*

At the beginning of 1945 the Bolsheviks established in Uzhorod a committee for "cultural affairs" under the chairmanship of Communist Petro Lintur. The "People's Council" promulgated a law according to which every citizen would become Orthodox. At the same time communist agitators gathered signatures of those who wanted to become Orthodox, promising them land grants and "monetary gifts."

* Here is a partial list of those Ukrainian Catholic priests who were arrested, deported or executed at that time:

Rev. Petro Demenovych (Rakhiv); Rev. Stepan Chyzmar (Nove Selo); Rev. Eugene Pasulka (Trebushany); Rev. Ivan Ehreshia (Bohdaniv); Rev. Dmytro Popovych and Rev. Mykola Rusynok (Hust); Rev. Eugene Ortal (Uzhorod); Rev. Stepan Danielovych (Imshad); Rev. Cornelius Elesh (Trostnyk); Rev. Fedir Durnevych (Zhniaty); Rev. Mykhailo Mykula (Zavydiv).

In addition, Catholic churches were taken over in the villages of Nyzhni Selytsi, Lyicha, Nankovo, Lysychiv, Vuchkovo, Shandoriv, Vyshni Yaseni-Strunkiv, Horinchovo-Manastyrtsi, Zavydiv, Cherveniv, Kanora, Kryva-Preteresova, Chumaliv, Lukova, Nyzhnia Bystra, Shyroky Luh, Kalyna, and others. Catholic priests were expelled from the villages of Kosheliv, Kushnytsi, Kraynyk, Tereblia, Goronda, Ruske, Kriachevo, and others.



Uspenska (Assumption) Cathedral of the Kiev Pecherska Lavra, ruined in 1941

On June 29, 1945, Carpatho-Ukraine was officially incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR, and the persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church assumed an official and planned character.⁴⁶ Mass arrests and “show trials” of Catholic priests became daily occurrences at which Catholic priests and the Vatican were represented as “thieves and spies.” This policy, however, did not deter Bishop Theodore Romzha, who performed frequent missions throughout the country, from helping priests who were in jail and accepting back to Catholicism those priests who under duress had renounced it previously. The population as a whole extended full and unwavering support to him, despite the terror and persecution rampant in Carpatho-Ukraine.

On October 22, 1946, the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, upon the advice of the NKVD, dispatched Orthodox Bishop Nestor of Uman, Ukraine, to Carpatho-Ukraine, charging him with the task of liquidating the Ukrainian Catholic Church. It is to be recalled that Bishop Nestor, who participated in the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Galicia, was an old hand at these matters. He was made bishop of the Priasiv-Mukachiv diocese. Al-

⁴⁶ R. H. Holhota Unii v Karpatski Ukraini. (The Golgotha of the Union in Carpatho-Ukraine). *Zhyttia i Slovo*. “Dobra Knyzhka” I. 1948-1949. Nov. 3-4. pp. 327-346.

though the Soviet government announced that with his arrival the authority of Bishop Theodore Romzha ended, the population refused to recognize Bishop Nestor. He aggrieved the populace at once by imposing high taxes even on Orthodox churches and by his interdiction of religious instruction in the schools. Also, reports circulated that Bishop Nestor was in reality an NKVD security officer.

On March 22, 1947, the MVD arrested and deported all Basilian Fathers from their monastery at Chernecha Hora, near Mukachiv, and in their stead it placed Russian Orthodox monks, among whom were many MVD officers who, depending on the occasion, could swiftly change from cassock to MVD uniform.

It was clear that Bishop Romzha was a great impediment in the "missionary" work of Bishop Nestor, and therefore had to be dealt with accordingly. In October, 1947, when Bishop Romzha was returning from a mission to the village of Yakhiv in the company of two priests and two seminary students, his horse-drawn cart was rammed by a Soviet armored car. All five passengers were thrown into a ditch. When the crew of the armored car saw that they were still alive, they beat their victims with rifle butts, leaving finally in the belief that they were dead. But in the evening the victims were found still alive by a group of peasants, who took them to a hospital in Mukachiv. In the hospital Bishop Romzha regained consciousness, and after a few days he recovered, minus all his teeth and with one arm broken. But on October 31, 1947, the director of the hospital ordered all medical personnel of the ward where Bishop Romzha was kept to leave the hospital with the exception of one nurse. That night he died "suddenly," apparently from poisoning.

On August 28, 1949, Vicar General Irenius Kondratovych was compelled to announce the "abolition" of the Union of Brest and to declare "union" with the Russian Orthodox Church. All priests who refused to accept Orthodoxy were arrested and deported to Siberia, and the Ukrainian Catholic Church was declared "illegal."

This travesty was repeated on April 28, 1950, when 844 delegates of local and district "committees" voted in Priasiv for "union" with the Russian Orthodox Church. The assemblage declared that the "Greek-Catholic Church in the Priasiv area has ceased to exist" and that all faithful "should return to the bosom of the Orthodox Church." In January, 1951, the communist government of Czechoslovakia conducted a "show trial" in Bratislava at which it condemned Bishop Paul Goydych, OSBM, to life imprisonment. Subsequently, his successor, Bishop Vasyl Hopko, was also arrested. In 1959 the last Ukrainian Catholic prelate, Bishop M. Dudash, OSBM, was arrested and condemned on spurious charges of "crimes against the state."

Thus the "union" with the Russian Orthodox Church was finally accomplished, through terror and bloodshed.

As a result of the actions of the Russian Orthodox Church, five Ukrainian Catholic dioceses were liquidated. Deported and murdered were two Apostolic Visitators and 11 Bishops. Out of 2,951 Ukrainian Catholic lay priests (as of 1939), 50 per cent were deported or killed and 20 per cent escaped abroad; the rest are underground. Out of 520 monks, only 78 remain alive today; out of 1,090 Ukrainian Catholic nuns only 30 per cent still live. Of 3,040 parishes and 4,400 churches and chapels, fully one-fourth went into the hands of Russian Orthodox priests; the remainder are either closed or have been destroyed. The Soviet government destroyed 15 monasteries and closed one Ecclesiastical Academy, 2 Seminaries, 9,900 Catholic primary and 380 Catholic secondary schools. It suspended 35 Ukrainian Catholic publications and 38 Ukrainian Catholic newspapers and reviews, and liquidated 41 Ukrainian Catholic organizations and social institutions.

Everything was accomplished "voluntarily," according to the Soviet government, which prides itself on its "most liberal" constitution, especially its Article 123, which guarantees every Soviet citizen "the right to free religious worship."

The tragic history of the Ukrainian Catholic and the Ukrainian Orthodox Churches, their persecution, martyrdom and liquidation by the brutal force of the Soviet Russian government is a record unique in the world for its inhumanity and barbarity. This record can never be erased from the annals of Russian history or from the conscience of the Soviet leaders, whatever their names or title may be.

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