

SOVIET PERSECUTION OF RELIGION IN UKRAINE



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OF RELIGION
IN UKRAINE**

**WORLD CONGRESS OF FREE UKRAINIANS
TORONTO CANADA
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FOREWORD

This brochure deals with the persecution of religion and religious believers in Soviet Ukraine. It documents violations of the fundamental human right to freedom of conscience, violations which contradict the international accords relating to human rights to which the Soviet Union is a signatory.

The present publication is part of the international efforts, initiated in 1976 by the World Congress of Free Ukrainians, in defence of religion in Soviet Ukraine. The purpose of this booklet, and the campaign in general, is to inform international public opinion about the plight of believers in Ukraine and to encourage it to speak out against these violations of international legality. Without the sustained pressure of world public opinion it can hardly be hoped that protests of persecuted believers will be heard by the Soviet government, or that it would effectively enforce the constitutional and international guarantees of freedom of conscience in Soviet Ukraine.

In particular, we are asking all men and women of good will to join with us in demanding that the Soviet authorities release all clergy, monastics and believers imprisoned for their religious practices and beliefs; that the Soviet government remove the illegal and unjust prohibition of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and some other religious denominations in the Ukrainian SSR; and that it return the children taken from their parents because of the latter's raising them in accordance with their religious beliefs.

*Commission on Human Rights of the
World Congress of Free Ukrainians*

June, 1976

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St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev (11th Century) was transformed into a museum in the 1930's.

CHRISTIANITY IN UKRAINE

The Ukrainian people accepted Christianity from Byzantium around the year 988 A.D., during the reign of Prince Volodymyr the Great, before the separation of the Eastern and Western branches of the Church (1054).

Due to its Byzantine origin, the Church of Rus'-Ukraine was linked with the Patriarchate of Constantinople as the separate Metropolitan See of Kiev, which enjoyed broad autonomy.

Under Volodymyr, the Church's organization was based on the principle of harmony with the state. Kievan Rus' became a major centre of cultural, artistic and scholastic endeavours, much of this being the result of the activities of individual churches and monasteries. The first works of a historical nature were produced at this time, with facts being recorded in narrative form in the chronicles, the biographies of prominent church leaders, and in the accounts of the construction of houses of worship.

The Mongol invasion of Rus' in the middle of the 13th century interrupted the normal development of the Orthodox Church. The country emerged from Mongol-Tartar rule politically divided. Henceforth ecclesiastical life developed under different conditions in the separate parts of the former Kievan realm.

In 1299, the Metropolitans of Kiev moved their residence northwards—first to Novgorod and then to Moscow. This evoked a strong reaction from the Galician-Volynian principality, which persuaded Constantinople to establish a separate metropolitanate in Halych. The fall of the Galician-Volynian realm in the middle of the 14th century brought an end to the separate Galician-Volynian Metropolitanate.

The presence of the Kievan metropolitans in Muscovy, on the other hand, helped raise the prestige and political strength of that principality and prepared the groundwork for the separation of the Metropolitan See of Moscow from the Patriarchate of Constantinople (1448), and, eventually, the establishment of a Moscow Patriarchate in 1589.

Under the re-established Metropolitanate of Kiev, the capital city of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church enjoyed virtual independence (autocephaly) from Constantinople. This was particularly true during the 17th century, when the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, protected by the Kozak (Cossack) Host and the generosity of its Hetmans, reached its pinnacle of power and development. It was the mainstay of the contemporary renaissance of Ukrainian cultural life and emerged as one of the leading centres of theological learning, religious literature and art in the Orthodox East.

Following the Treaty of Pereyaslav in 1654, which eventually brought the greater portion of Ukraine under the hegemony of Moscow, the Kievan Metropolitanate was subordinated to the Patriarchate of Moscow in 1687.

Before long, the Kievan Metropolitanate had lost all its dioceses, except for the Kievan eparchy itself, each being brought under the direct jurisdiction of the Russian Church. After 1721, Kievan metropolitans were no longer elected by councils, but were appointed by the Russian Tsar from among the candidates proposed by the Holy Synod in St. Petersburg.

The Synod also took over the right to appoint hegumens for Ukrainian monasteries. Persistent efforts were made by the Synod to "purge" the characteristic Ukrainian elements from church texts and rites. Russian was introduced as the



The Assumption church in the Monastery of the Caves (Pecherska Lavra), Kiev, (11th century), destroyed in 1941. See cover for destroyed remains.



St. Michael's "Golden-Domed" Church, Kiev, (12th century), demolished by the Soviet government in 1934.

language of instruction at the Mohyla Academy in Kiev. After 1799 no Ukrainians were appointed to the Metropolitan See of Kiev. Thus, the Russian government effectively destroyed the autonomy and the distinctive features of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

THE CHURCH AND THE UKRAINIAN STATE

The Revolution of 1917 and the proclamation of an independent Ukrainian National Republic gave rise to a strong movement for the autocephaly or independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from Moscow.

In the fall of 1917, an All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council was formed by patriotic Ukrainian clergy and laymen. Challenging the authority of the newly-restored Moscow Patriarchate and of the Russian episcopate in Ukraine, the Council demanded the ukrainization of the Church, complete autocephaly from Moscow, and the restoration of the traditional form of conciliar government (*sobornopravnist*). Bitterly opposed by the bishops, the Council appealed directly to the Patriarch of Moscow, Tikhon, who approved, with certain modifications, the convocation of the First All-Ukrainian Sobor (Council) to decide the fate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The Sobor was called for the beginning of 1918. Faced with the hostility of the Russian episcopate to the Ukrainian cause, the Sobor could not reach any major decisions before its deliberations were interrupted by the first Soviet Russian invasion of Ukraine in early February. When, after the Russian retreat, the Sobor reconvened in the summer of 1918 under the new Hetman regime, the conservative pro-Russian faction were seen to have made substantial gains. They voted to expel the representatives of the Ukrainian autocephalist movement from the Sobor. Defying the Ukrainian Government's appeals, the Sobor resolved in favour of a very limited autonomy for the Ukrainian Church, with extensive controls and veto power assigned to the Patriarch of Moscow.

In December, 1918, the new Directorate replaced the Hetman regime as the government of the young Ukrainian state. It realized that it must take a firm stand even in ecclesiastical matters if the Ukrainian Church was to become truly national in character and independent of Moscow. Therefore, on January 1, 1919, the Directorate passed the **Law on the Supreme Authority of the Ukrainian Church**, which formally proclaimed the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under its own Synod. The renewed invasion of the Ukrainian National Republic by the Russian armies, both Red and White, however, made it impossible for the Ukrainian Government to implement this legislation.

THE UKRAINIAN AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCH

The second Soviet Russian invasion of Ukraine did not prevent the Ukrainian church movement from continuing its struggle for the liberation of the Orthodox Church from Russian control.

During the first half of 1919, the Ukrainian church movement took advantage of new Soviet church legislation to "register" a number of "ukrainianized" parishes under a reconstituted All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council. Temporarily disbanded during the occupation of Kiev by the White Army of General Denikin (August-December, 1919), in the early months of 1920 the Council resumed and expanded its activities, assuming the form of an independent "Union of Ukrainian Orthodox Parishes". Soon afterwards, however, the Kievan Bishop Nazarii suspended all the clergy of the Ukrainian parishes. In direct reaction to this move, on May 5, 1920,

the Council issued a formal proclamation of the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

In October, 1921, the First All-Ukrainian Sobor of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was convened. It confirmed the autocephaly of the Church and undertook a number of canonical reforms. Since none of the Russian bishops in Ukraine had agreed to join the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church or to ordain its episcopate, the Sobor decided to follow the precedent of the early Alexandrian Church in which, until the middle of the third century, the primates (patriarchs) were consecrated not by the bishops, but by the laying on of hands by a council of twelve presbyters. Accordingly, the Sobor, which included 30 priests, twelve deacons and numerous lay delegates, ordained Archpriest Vasyl Lypkivsky as Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, and Archpriest Nestor Sharaiivsky as his deputy and Archbishop of the Kievan diocese. They, in turn, consecrated four bishops for other dioceses.

The struggle for the control of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church thus culminated in the division of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine into two distinct ecclesiastical entities: the Russian (Patriarchal) Church which retained control over all the "old" bishops and most of the clergy, as well as the habitual allegiance of the conservative majority of believers, and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), embracing the more nationally-conscious believers, including virtually all the Orthodox Ukrainian intelligentsia.

By 1923, there appeared in Ukraine yet a third Orthodox group—a "progressive" Living Church, soon replaced by a more moderate Renovatianist (Synodal) Church—an offshoot of the frustrated reform movement in the Russian Church. Despite strong government support, it failed to attract many followers, with the exception of the largely Russified urban middle class. It quickly declined upon losing its preferential status when a *modus vivendi* was reached between the Patriarchate and the Soviet government in 1927.

In spite of bitter opposition from the Russian Church, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church swiftly grew throughout Ukraine, and spread into the Ukrainian settlements in Kuban, in Kazakhstan and Western Siberia, as well as among Ukrainian emigres in Manchuria, Yugoslavia and Western Europe. In 1924 the UAOC dispatched Archbishop Ivan Teodorovych to the United States to assume the spiritual leadership of Orthodox Ukrainians in North America.



Metroplitan Vasyl Lypkivsky, the first head of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) (1921-27).

By the middle of the decade, the UAOC encompassed several million faithful served by some 34 bishops, 1500 clergy and having 1200 parishes.

THE SOVIET SUPPRESSION OF THE UKRAINIAN AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCH

After 1922, the Soviet authorities undertook increasingly severe repressive measures against the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) and unsuccessfully attempted to infiltrate it and fragment it. In 1926 Metropolitan Lypkivsky, several bishops and a large number of clergy were arrested and imprisoned for varying lengths of time or exiled, while the All-Ukrainian Church Council was forcibly disbanded because of its allegedly nationalistic nature. At the Second All-Ukrainian Sobor, held in October, 1927, Soviet authorities forced the dismissal of Metropolitan Lypkivsky, and the less outspoken Mykolai Boretsky was appointed the new Metropolitan.

However, by 1929, even this period of "toleration" by the Soviet authorities came to an end. A new wave of persecution descended upon the autocephalist episcopate and clergy, and most of the Ukrainian parishes were closed. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was linked by the Soviet police with the "underground" League for the Liberation of Ukraine (*Spilka Vyzvolennia Ukrainy*) to "prove" that it was guilty of "counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet activities". In January, 1930, the authorities staged an "Extraordinary Sobor" of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which resolved to "dissolve" formally the central and regional Church organs. Most of the UAOC parishes were suppressed. With the greater part of its leadership under arrest or deported, the remnants of the Church were allowed to continue a closely-controlled existence, under Metropolitan Ivan Pavlovsky of Kharkiv, as the "Ukrainian Orthodox Church", until its final suppression during Stalin's purges in the late 1930s.

The losses of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church under the Soviet regime were extremely heavy, including three metropolitans (M. Boretsky—arrested in 1938; I. Pavlovsky—deported in 1937; and V. Lypkivsky—arrested in 1938), some 20 archbishops and bishops, approximately 1,150 priests, and many thousands of lay members of regional and parish councils of the UAOC. Of the entire UAOC,



Volodymyr Chekhivsky, the lay leader of the UAOC, arrested in 1929, perished in a Soviet concentration camp.



Metropolitan Mykolai Boretsky, second primate of the UAOC (1927-1930).



Metropolitan Ivan Pavlovsky, head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (1930-1936).



Metropolitan Polikarp Sikorsky, Administrator of the revived Ukrainian Autocephalous Church in German-Occupied Ukraine (1942-44).

only 270 priests and two bishops could be located in Ukraine in late 1941.

The Russian Orthodox (Patriarchal) Church in Ukraine had also come under attack as Stalin's regime undertook a violent anti-religious campaign against all denominations in the USSR. During the 1930s many churches were closed, along with the remaining monasteries and convents. Exarch Konstantin (Diakov) was arrested in 1937. By 1938, all remaining Patriarchal bishops and large numbers of clergy were imprisoned or deported. At the time of the German invasion in mid-1941, no more than a handful of Russian Orthodox parishes were still in existence in Soviet Ukraine. Nevertheless, the Russian Orthodox Church was not as completely suppressed as had been the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and, before long, following the Soviet annexation of Western Ukraine in 1939, the moribund Moscow Patriarchate was called upon by the regime to assist in the "Sovietization" of the Orthodox Church in the newly-occupied territories.

Following the Nazi-German occupation of Ukraine in 1941, there occurred a spontaneous revival of religious life which led to the re-establishment of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church under the leadership of Archbishop Polikarp (Sikorsky) of Lutsk. UAOC, however, had to contend with another Orthodox group—the Autonomous Church—which, although primarily Ukrainian in composition, continued to recognize the spiritual authority of the Moscow Patriarchate. 1943-44 saw the reoccupation of Ukrainian territories by Soviet troops. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was immediately and totally suppressed and its flock was once again forcibly incorporated into the official Russian Orthodox Church. Autocephalist priests and lay leaders who did not willingly accept "reunification" were deported to forced labour camps. Some clergymen, including Metropolitan Buldovsky of Kharkiv, were stripped of their sacerdotal functions by the Moscow Patriarchate.

Singled out by the Soviet government as the most "patriotic" Church, the Russian Orthodox Church now enjoyed privileges denied other denominations. Not only was it allowed to retain the churches and monasteries reopened in Ukraine during German occupation, but also to establish jurisdiction over the Orthodox parishes in Bukovyna and Transcarpathia and to displace the forcibly-dissolved Ukrain-

ian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church in Western Ukraine.

Since 1944 an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church has existed only outside the USSR. Continued propaganda attacks against the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in the Soviet press attest to the sympathies it continues to enjoy among the Ukrainian flock of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

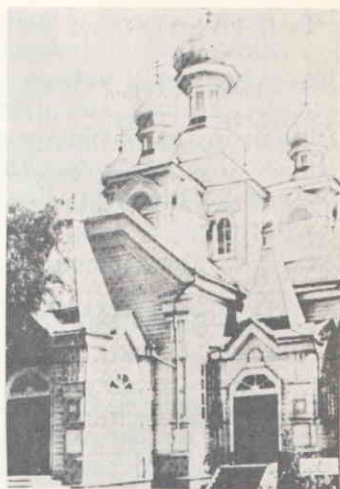
THE UKRAINIAN CHURCH IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINE

Although the Orthodox Church in Ukraine was granted autonomy by the All-Russian Sobor in 1918, it has been treated, both in name and in ecclesiastic practice, as an integral part of the Russian Orthodox Church. Since 1921 it has been termed an "Exarchate," but the title of the "(Patriarchal) Exarch of Ukraine" accorded to the metropolitans of Kiev and Halych has invested them with little power other than some delegated responsibilities for the Church in the Ukrainian SSR and occasional representative functions abroad. Each of the diocesan bishops takes turns participating in the sittings of the Holy Synod in Moscow, of which the Metropolitan of Kiev is a permanent member.

After World War II, the Russian Orthodox Church in the Ukrainian SSR reportedly embraced some 8,500 churches with approximately 6,800 priests, organized in 19 dioceses. It also maintained three theological seminaries with nearly 500 students and some 38 monasteries and convents. The majority of the active congregations were located in the Western *oblasti* (provinces). Under Khrushchev, increasingly severe legal and administrative restrictions were imposed upon the Church's activities. Anti-religious propaganda increased and the instruction of atheism became widespread in the school system as well as in various aspects of daily life.

As a result of this mounting pressure, between one-half and two-thirds of the churches, and four-fifths of the monastic institutions, as well as two (Kiev and Lutsk) of the three theological seminaries in Ukraine, have been closed. These closings have taken place despite the resistance of believers, as recent cases in Chernihiv, Zhytomyr and in the Transcarpathian oblast have demonstrated. Their protests and petitions have been ignored.

The Church of the Epiphany in Zhytomyr, taken away from the parishioners by the Soviet authorities in 1973.



There are currently 18 dioceses within the Ukrainian Exarchate, with a total of some 2,500 to 3,000 churches.* The number of clergy, however, is much lower, and there exists a real problem in replacing the priests who have died or been deprived of "registration" by the authorities. The only surviving theological seminary is in Odessa, which in 1973-74 had an enrollment of some 117 students. Many congregations remain without a priest, with cases of believers themselves performing religious rites reported, although at the same time the Moscow Patriarchate "exports" Ukrainian clergy to minister to Russian Orthodox parishes outside the USSR. Since 1966, the post of the Exarch of Ukraine has been occupied by Archbishop, now Metropolitan, Filaret (Denysenko), who has demonstrated complete loyalty to the regime by his frequent endorsement of Soviet policies both at home and abroad and who evidently enjoys the confidence of the authorities. Nevertheless, four dioceses (Sumy, Luhansk-Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk-Zaporizhzhia and Khmelny-

* According to K. Z. Lytvyn, the present Chairman of the governmental Council for Religious Affairs in the Ukrainian SSR, there are "close to 4.5 thousand parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church [and] over 1,100 congregations of the Evangelical Christians [and] Baptists" in Soviet Ukraine. In our estimate, this is a grossly inflated figure produced to impress the West with the alleged freedom of conscience in the Ukrainian SSR (K. Z. Lytvyn, "Svoboda sovisti—nevid'iemne pravo liudyny" (Freedom of Conscience—An Inalienable Human Right), *Visti z Ukrainy*, Kiev, No. 15 (April 8, 1976), p. 5.

tsky) have been vacant for some time. Although publication of the Ukrainian-language monthly *Pravoslavnyi visnyk* (Orthodox Herald) was resumed in 1968, there exists a great shortage of service books, Bibles, and prayerbooks.

There are nine monastic institutions surviving in Ukraine: two monasteries (Pochaiv and Odessa) and seven convents (the Pokrovsky and Florovsky in Kiev, at Oleksandrivka near Odessa, at Mukachiv and Chumaliv in Trans-Carpathia, Korets in Volyn and Zolotonosha in Cherkasy oblast). Repeated attempts to close the famous Pochaiv Lavra monastery in Volyn have to date been successfully frustrated by the adamant resistance of monks and believers, as well as by adverse publicity abroad.

Ukrainian has been banned as a liturgical language and, outside Western Ukraine, Russian is used predominantly as the language of sermons and church administration in the urban centres.

Although the Russian Orthodox Church enjoys, relatively speaking, the best treatment, it too is subject to continuous anti-religious pressure. The persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox and other religious believers continues. Administrative harassment and discrimination are common occurrences. Known believers are barred from all public service, including the teaching profession, and from all the responsible positions that, under the so-called *nomenklatura* system, are reserved for members of the Communist Party and the Komsomol. Individual clergymen and believers are persecuted. The best known recent victim of Soviet repression against the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy is Father Vasyl Romaniuk.

Father Vasyl Romaniuk was born in 1925 into a peasant family. First arrested in 1944 for "national-religious activity," he was sentenced to 10 years at forced labour while his family was deported to Siberia.

Vasyl Romaniuk studied theology and in time became parish priest for the Orthodox congregation in the village of Kosmach, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. In 1970, his home was searched and several books were confiscated.

After the trial of the Ukrainian dissident historian, Valentyn Moroz, on November 27, 1970, he wrote a letter in Moroz's defense to the Supreme Court of the Ukrainian SSR. As a result, after having been transferred from Kosmach to Pokuttia in 1971, Romaniuk was himself arrested during the mass arrests of intelligentsia in Ukraine in January of 1972. Charged under Article 62 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrain-



Father Vasyl Romaniuk.

ian SSR with alleged "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda," he was sentenced in July of that year to 7 years' imprisonment and 3 years of exile. At present he is in camp 381/1-6 in the Mordovian ASSR.

In the summer of 1975 two appeals from Romaniuk reached the West: one addressed to the World Council of Churches in Geneva and the other to Pope Paul VI, calling upon them to speak out in defense of incarcerated Ukrainian cultural leaders and those being persecuted for their religious convictions.

On August 1, 1975, in protest against the consistent violations of human rights in the USSR, Father Romaniuk declared a hunger strike and vowed to continue it until such time as he received a Bible from camp authorities. Though his hunger strike lasted almost 3 months, no Bible was provided him.

THE FORCIBLE "REUNION" OF THE UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLICS WITH THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church dates back to 1596, when the Council of Brest proclaimed the Union of Ukrainian and Belorussian dioceses with the Roman Apostolic See. According to the terms of the Union, the Ukrainian Uniates retained all the rituals and customs of the Orthodox Church, such as the Divine Liturgy and the canons, etc., while recognizing the Pope as the head of the Church.



St. George's Cathedral (1744-70) of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Metropolitans in Lviv.

Initially, the Ukrainian Uniates were under the authority of the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom. However, following the three partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, the Uniates were divided between the Austrian and Russian Empires. While the tsars persecuted and eventually forced the Uniates within the boundaries of the Russian Empire into a "reunion" with the Russian Orthodox Church, the Uniate Church in Austrian-ruled Galicia came to play a pre-eminent role in Ukrainian cultural, social, and political development. Although by the end of the 19th century the leadership of Ukrainian life in Galicia had passed into the hands of the secular intelligentsia, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, headed by Metropolitan Sheptytsky, retained its pivotal integrating role during the short-lived period of Ukrainian statehood and the subsequent Polish occupation of Western Ukraine.

The Nazi-Soviet partition of Poland in September 1939 resulted in the annexation of Western Ukraine to the USSR, bringing down upon the Uniate Church the first wave of



Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, primate of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, (1900-1944).

Communist persecution. Between September 1939 and June 1941, all Greek Catholic monasteries and convents, church schools, publications, charitable institutions and lay organizations were suppressed. The diocesan seminaries of Lviv, Pere-myshl and Stanislav were closed. All the Church's land holdings were nationalized. As for the clergy, discriminatory taxation was imposed upon it and a number of its members arrested. Over 40 priests were either deported or executed (in the Lviv diocese alone 28 priests disappeared without a trace). At the same time the Communists unleashed a campaign of anti-religious propaganda, some of it aimed specifically at the Uniate Church. Nevertheless, for the time being, the Soviet authorities stopped short of implementing in the newly-acquired territories some of the most destructive provisions of Soviet ecclesiastical legislation, due possibly to their still insecure position in these territories and their growing anxiety about the threat of a Nazi invasion.

After the three-year-long German occupation of Western Ukraine during World War II, the Soviet regime re-established its hold over Galicia by the summer of 1944 and before long the Soviet armies also occupied Transcarpathia (Carpatho-Ukraine) with its Greek Catholic diocese of Mukachiv.

After a brief period of relative tolerance that lasted until March 1945, the Uniate Church was subjected to a campaign of slander and intimidation in the Soviet Ukrainian press. Acting in concert with the Kremlin, the newly-elected Patriarch of Moscow, Aleksei, issued, early in 1945, a pastoral letter inviting the Ukrainian Uniates to "rejoin" voluntarily the Russian Orthodox Church.

On April 11, 1945, the entire Greek Catholic hierarchy in Western Ukraine, including Metropolitan Josyf Slipyi and his Vicar-General, Bishop Nykyta Budka; Bishop Mykola Charnetsky, Apostolic Visitor for Volyn; Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn of Stanislav and his coadjutor, Bishop Ivan Liatyshesky, was arrested by the NKVD. In late May the police rounded up leading members of the secular and monastic clergy. On June 22, 1945, the Soviet occupation authorities in Berlin arrested Mgr. Petro Verhun, Apostolic Visitor for Ukrainian Catholics in Germany. On June 26-27, 1946, the Communist Polish authorities seized and extradited to the USSR Bishop Josafat Kotsylovsky of Pere-myshl and his coadjutor, Bishop Hryhorii Lakota.

At the same time the 1929 Soviet legislation on "religious cults" was now brought into full force in Western Ukraine.



Metropolitan Yosyf Slipyi, Archbishop Major of the Ukrainian Catholic Church; imprisoned by the Soviet government from April 1945 to January 1963. Named a Cardinal in 1965.



Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn of Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk); imprisoned in April 1945, died in a Kiev prison in December 1945.



Bishop Yosafat Kotsylovsky of Peremyshl, arrested by the Communist Polish authorities and 'extradited' to the USSR in June 1946; died in a prison camp near Kiev in November 1947.



Mykyta Budka, Auxiliary Bishop of Lviv; arrested in April 1945, died in captivity in Karaganda, Kazakhstan, in October 1949.



Mgr. Petro Verhun, Apostolic Visitor for Ukrainians in Germany, arrested in June 1945, died in Siberian exile in February 1957. The picture was taken during his exile.

This included nationalization of all remaining church property and the "registration" of all clergy.

On May 28, 1945, the so-called "Action Group for the Reunion of the Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church" appeared on the scene. It was headed by Rev. Havryil Kostelnyk from the Lviv diocese and included two other Uniate priests, Mykhailo Melnyk, Vicar-General of the Peremyshl diocese, and Antonii Pelvetsky, "representing" the Stanislav diocese, as well as a layman, S. Khrutsky (an Orthodox believer), who acted as secretary. They were guided by the newly-ordained Orthodox bishop of Lviv, Makarii (Ok-siiuk), who was dispatched to Galicia by the Moscow Patriarchate following the arrest of the Uniate episcopate.

The first step of the "Action Group," whereby it proclaimed itself as the only legal leadership of the Church to be recognized by the Soviet authorities, encountered determined opposition from the Ukrainian Catholic clergy and laymen. A group of 300 Uniate priests signed a protest against the usurpation of authority by the "Action Group" and appealed for the release of the arrested episcopate. Nevertheless, on June 18, 1945, the Soviet government, in contravention of its own Separation Decree, recognized the "Action Group" as

...the sole provisional, ecclesiastical and administrative organ having the right to direct, without reservation, the existing Greek Catholic parishes in the Western *oblasti* of Ukraine and promote their reunion with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The government ordered that the names of those clerics who refused to submit to the "Action Group" be forwarded to the official Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church.

On December 4, 1945, the Patriarchal Exarch in Kiev, Metropolitan Ioan (Sokolov) issued a message to Ukrainian Greek Catholics calling on them to break away from Rome and to join the Russian Orthodox Church.

The "Action Group" now undertook a campaign of intensive indoctrination designed to "persuade" the Uniate clergy conducted by the leaders of the "Group," reportedly in the presence of Soviet security officials. At these conferences the Uniate clergy was asked to renounce the Union. At first, anti-Uniate arguments were used. Then threats of "de-registration" were brought into play. If the clergyman was not yet "convinced" of the need for the "reunion," the NKVD (Soviet secret police) took over. If NKVD "persuasion" failed to break the resistance of a "recalcitrant" cleric, he was summarily sentenced to forced labour or deportation, the average sentence being 10 years.

In this way, some 986 priests, or 49% of the entire Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy, were "convinced" by March, 1946, of the need for "reunion." Yet there were 1,020 "recalcitrant" priests, 740 of whom were imprisoned, deported or in hiding and 280 of whom were still at large as of March, 1946.

Prior to the Lviv "Sobor" (Council), the entire "Action Group" was secretly accepted into the Russian Orthodox Church at ceremonies in Kiev, during which two of its leaders—Pelvetsky and Melnyk—were secretly consecrated Orthodox bishops. Thus, ironically, the purported "Sobor" of the Uniate Church was to be convened and guided by clerics who had already ceased to be members of that Church.

Meanwhile, in Kiev, at the beginning of March 1946, having refused to be "converted" to Russian Orthodoxy, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishops were indicted for their alleged "traitorous activities and collaboration with the German occupation forces." In a secret trial the following June the hierarchs were sentenced to long terms at forced labour: Metropolitan Slipyi was condemned to 8 years; Bishop Kholmshyn—10 years; bishops Budka and Liatyshevsky—8 years each; and Bishop Charnetsky—5 years. Mgr. Verhun received 10 years at forced labour.



Mgr. Hryhorii Lakota, Auxiliary Bishop of Peremyshl; died in captivity in Vorkuta, Northern Russian SFSR in November 1950.



Bishop Teodor Romzha of Mukachiv-Uzhhorod, died in mysterious circumstances in November 1947.

Preceded by the public Procuracy announcement about the indictment of the entire Ukrainian Catholic episcopate, a "Reunion Sobor" was staged in Lviv from March 8 to 10, 1946. No election of delegates was held in advance. The agenda and rules of the "Sobor" were not published beforehand. The event itself was withheld from public knowledge until after the "reunion" was proclaimed. Only 216 clerics and 19 laymen, allegedly "representing" the entire Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, participated in the "Sobor" by invitation of the "Action Group."

At this gathering, held in the presence of Soviet officials, the leaders of the "Action Group" appointed themselves as the presidium of the "Sobor," announced their agenda, and presented reports and resolutions. By means of an open vote it was "resolved" to annul the 350-year-old Union with Rome and to "return" to Orthodoxy and to the Russian Orthodox Church. At this stage the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate "received" the "prodigals" into the Russian Orthodox Church. Only then was the rest of the Uniate Church informed of its liquidation.

Shortly after this, the "Action Group" leaders travelled to Moscow for the "reunion" festivities held by the Moscow Patriarchate. On this occasion, Kostelnyk (now raised to the rank of Protopresbyter) informed T.A.S.S. reporters that the liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was of a perfectly "voluntary" nature: all conversions had occurred



The Roman Catholic Church of the Dominican Order in Lviv, transformed into an antireligious museum.

by “personal declarations” of the clergy, “there were no arrests of Greek Catholic clergy either before or after the Sobor; and, as for the arrests of the episcopate and “several priests,” they were arrested not in their ecclesiastical capacity, but “as citizens of the U.S.S.R., for their treasonable activity.”

In Carpatho-Ukraine (Transcarpathia), the Soviet authorities did not even resort to the fabrication of a “Sobor.” Instead, after the mysterious death of Bishop Teodor Romzha of Mukachiv, from injuries suffered in a collision with a Red Army truck, the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia was “reunited” with the Russian Orthodox Church on August 28, 1948, with the reading of an “act of reunion” in a Mukachiv church by a renegade priest.

The losses suffered by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the Ukrainian SSR as a result of this "reunion" are shown in the following table, comparing the position of this Church prior to World War II with that in 1950:

In 1939		By 1950
Dioceses	4	All dioceses liquidated.
Territory of Apostolic Visitor	1	Liquidated.
Bishops	8	All imprisoned, condemned, died in prison, killed or exiled.
Parishes	2,772	Taken over by the Russian Orthodox Church; some liquidated.
Churches and Chapels	4,119	Seized by the Russian Ortho- dox Church or closed.
Monasteries and Convents	142	Confiscated and closed by the authorities; a few trans- ferred to the Russian Ortho- dox Church.
Other church institutions		All liquidated.
Secular Priests	2,638	Fewer than half forced into the Russian Orthodox Church. Others imprisoned or in hiding.
Monastic Clergy	164	Dispersed, imprisoned together with three Provisional Superiors.
Brothers	193	Dispersed or imprisoned.
Seminarians	229	Dispersed or refugees.
Nuns	580	Dispersed.
Faithful	4,048,515	Many imprisoned or deported for their faith; majority resisting passively.

The 1946 "Sobor" was illegal in terms of both Catholic and Orthodox canon laws. The Soviet government's involvement in the "Sobor" was equally illegal.

In terms of Catholic Church law the Lviv "Sobor" was illegal because Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishops neither convened nor participated in it. Nor was Father Kostelnyk granted the power by the leadership of the Catholic Church

to call a sobor. In fact he did not even ask the higher church authorities for such permission. By the time of the "Sobor," he, together with other members of the "Action Group," had already secretly joined the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus the "Sobor" which had as its goal the liquidation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, for this reason alone cannot be called Catholic—it was in fact, uncanonical.

From the viewpoint of Orthodox Church law, although two secretly consecrated Orthodox bishops from among the "Action Group" attended the "Sobor" and though the conduct of this gathering was entirely in the hands of the then-secret Orthodox clerics—it was not an Orthodox sobor since its members claimed to represent the Greek Catholic Church and its "delegates" were nearly all Greek Catholics. It is obvious that the council of a particular church can only deal with the affairs of that particular church and no other.

There can be no doubt that the Soviet government was the real initiator of the "Sobor", since it was the government which had vested the uncanonical "Action Group" with supreme authority within the Greek Catholic Church, endorsed its programme of "reunion" with the Russian Church, and employed its propaganda media and the police to compel the rank and file clergy to submit to the "Action Group." The "Sobor" was convened with the permission and aid of the Soviet authorities, with their representatives present during the proceedings; which were also recorded on film by Soviet cameramen. The government's involvement in calling this "Sobor" was also evident from the eagerness with which the authorities, the police and the courts proceeded to implement its decisions.

This involvement of the Soviet government was also illegal. By sponsoring the 1946 "Sobor" and by recognizing the latter's decisions as having the force of law, the Soviet authorities violated their own constitution (Art. 104 of the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR), which separates the church from the state. Even if the "Sobor" had been canonically convened, it still would not have had any juridical power as far as the state was concerned. For this reason the Soviet authorities had no right to use the decisions of the "Sobor," as they have been to this day, to justify their repeated refusals to "register" Ukrainian Greek Catholic congregations.

The forcible nature of the "reunion" of the Ukrainian Catholics generated desperate resistance on the part of the faithful. Its most violent manifestation was the assassination

of the two principal figures involved in the "reunion". Father Kostelnyk, who led the "reunion," was killed in September 1948. His Bolshevik counterpart, the writer Yaroslav Halan, who was the principal mouthpiece of the vast propaganda campaign against the Church in the Soviet Ukrainian media, was assassinated in the following year.

For years a portion of the Uniates, particularly the urban intelligentsia, boycotted the "reunited" churches, attending instead the few Roman Catholic churches remaining in Western Ukraine. In numerous priestless parishes the faithful refused to allow Russian Orthodox clergy to take over the local church.

As for the clergy who "accepted" Orthodoxy, their forcible "conversion" was in form only and they remained Uniates at heart, continuing to observe the traditional Greek Catholic practices.

IN THE CATACOMBS

Ukrainian Catholic communities continue to exist in the Soviet Union almost thirty years after the official abolition of their Church. Numerous references in Soviet sources are proof of this. Other evidence, including documentation coming from Uniate sources in Ukraine, conclusively demonstrates that the Russian Orthodox Church has not been accepted in the Western Ukrainian *oblasti*. The most telling proof of this is the fact that the Soviet propaganda apparatus and Orthodox Church representatives are continuously waging a vigorous campaign against the Ukrainian Catholic Church—through books, pamphlets, periodicals and television programmes, movies, lectures and exhibits—designed to falsify the historical record of this Church, slander its leaders and the clergy, and intimidate its faithful.

The priests of the Catacomb Church are those who did not convert to Russian Orthodoxy in 1945-49 and remained Catholics, formally giving up public exercise of their clerical duties. After 1946, a significant portion of the Uniate laymen continued to depend on the services of the "illegal" priests and monks. The number of these "illegal" clerics increased after the mid-fifties, with the return of those "recalcitrant" clergymen who had completed their sentences or who benefited from the post-Stalin amnesties.

Widespread hopes that de-Stalinization would lead to the restoration of the Ukrainian Church caused a marked in-

tensification of covert Uniate activities. By 1957 the Russian Orthodox Church in Galicia was loudly appealing to the government to intervene as more and more of the recent "converts" began to repudiate Orthodoxy. Before long the Communist authorities dispelled any doubts about official policy towards the Ukrainian Catholic Church by arresting a number of priests and unleashing a new wave of anti-Uniate propaganda.

Notwithstanding this, the number of priests, slightly augmented by secret ordinations in exile, increased in Western Ukraine in the 1950s and after. The Soviet press reported the existence of secret theological "seminaries" in the 1960s (Ternopil, Kolomyia) in connection with the arrests of their organizers.

Today the underground Uniate Church is said to embrace at least 300-350 priests, headed by three or more secret bishops. They recognize the authority of the Church's primate, Archbishop-Major Josyf Slipyi, who after nearly eighteen years imprisonment was released by the regime in 1963 and allowed to leave for Rome.

A certain number of Ukrainian Catholic priests live outside Western Ukraine, in exile or as free settlers in Siberia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, and also in Eastern Ukraine, often serving their flocks from afar.

Members of religious communities and monastic orders have maintained close contact with each other and most have remained faithful to their vows. In a few cases they have preserved the nuclei of communal living. In 1974, a clandestine Uniate convent was uncovered by police in Lviv.

Almost invariably these clergymen and monastics hold full-time secular jobs or have now retired from such employment. The identities of the older clergy seem to be known to the Soviet police who frequently subject them to searches, interrogations, and fines but stop short of arrests unless they have extended their activities beyond a narrow circle of friends in private homes. However, it appears that Soviet authorities are much more ruthless in dealing with the "new," secretly-ordained priests.

The harassment of the "recalcitrant" clergy escalated in 1968—evidently in connection with the legalization of the Uniate Church in Czechoslovakia—into a large-scale campaign against the "illegal" Uniate clergy. Many of these were subjected to searches, interrogations, fines, and beatings. In January 1969 the KGB (Soviet secret police) arrested an



Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky of Lutsk, secretly ordained in 1963; imprisoned by the Soviet authorities during 1945-55 and 1969-72; released from the USSR in 1972, died in Winnipeg, Canada, in July 1973.

Photo from the Archives of I. Syrotynsky.

underground Uniate bishop, Vasyl Velychkovsky, and two Uniate priests, sentencing them to three years imprisonment each for alleged violations of the "law on cults." (After completing his sentence, in early 1972, Bishop Velychkovsky was allowed to leave the USSR. His health ruined by his imprisonment, he eventually settled in Canada where he died on June 30, 1973.)

Some of the "illegal" religious activities carried out by the priests and the faithful are: holding of religious services, education of children in the Catholic faith, baptisms, wedding rites, confessions and anointments of the ill, funerals, copying religious materials, prayer books, icons, church calendars, and possession of religious books and other sacred objects. Soviet sources reveal numerous instances of this. A recent example is the case of Rev. Ivan Kryvy who was arrested in 1973 for organizing the printing of a Ukrainian Catholic prayer book (actually a reprint of a prayer book published in Canada in 1954) in three consecutive editions (1969, 1971, and 1972) totalling 3,500 copies. The work was done by two employees of the Lviv state printing shop who were also arrested in 1973, together with another person involved in the distribution of these materials. In the same manner, the clandestine printers also produced 150 copies of a "Carol and Church Songs" book, and 150 copies of the "Missal."

The most active lay people and clergy of the "illegal" Church try to use legal means to defend their Church. Already in 1956-57 there were cases where the believers tried to legalize their Ukrainian Catholic communities according to Soviet law by petitioning the proper authorities to permit



Ukrainian historian Valentyn Moroz, imprisoned from 1965 to 1969. Sentenced again in 1970 to 14 years of imprisonment and exile.

their parish congregation to operate openly. A number of such petitions were sent in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including an appeal from the Ukrainian Catholics of the city of Stryi which reached the West in 1972. All of these petitions were refused. Most recently, a Ukrainian Catholic priest, the Rev. Volodymyr Prokopiv, was arrested for accompanying a delegation of Ukrainians to Moscow with a petition, signed by large numbers of faithful from the Lviv region, asking for the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

The Soviet response to such petitions was to sharpen repressive measures against the activist Uniate clergy, monastics and lay people and to intensify their propaganda.

The cause of the persecuted Ukrainian Catholics was taken up by the Ukrainian dissent movement. Its organ, the **Ukrainian Herald**, has, since 1970, carried accounts of the harassment, searches, arrests and trials of the Uniates, and has editorially condemned the "wanton liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church by the henchmen of Beria" as "illegal and anti-constitutional." A leading Ukrainian dissenter, the historian Valentyn Moroz, devoted part of his "Chronicle of Resistance" to the nation-building role of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Western Ukraine and equated the regime's anti-Uniate struggle with an attack upon "the spiritual structure of the nation."

In recent years Lithuanian Catholic dissenters, in their petitions to the Soviet authorities and in their underground **Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church**, have joined the Ukrainian dissenters in calling for the lifting of the illegal ban on the Ukrainian Catholic Church. In September 1974 from a leading Russian Orthodox dissenter, Anatolii Levitin-Krasnov, came an appeal to Sakharov's Human Rights Com-

mittee in Moscow calling on it to raise its voice in defence of the Uniates and other persecuted religious groups. "The Union in Western Ukraine," wrote Levitin-Krasnov, "is a massive popular movement. Its persecution means not only religious oppression, but also restriction of the national rights of Western Ukrainians."

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN UKRAINE

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Although it is not prohibited, the Roman Catholic Church has been on the decline due to anti-religious government policies.

In the course of Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign of 1959-1964, the overwhelming majority of Roman Catholic churches were closed. At present there also exists a serious lack of clergy as a result of the unavailability of facilities for their training. The remaining Roman Catholic parishes in Ukraine are without a bishop or vicar-general of their own.

A representative case of the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church is that of the **Rev. Bernard V. Mitskevych (Mickevicius)**. The parish priest in the town of Stryi, Western Ukraine, Rev. Mitskevych was arrested at the end of 1973 and sentenced to an undisclosed term of imprisonment. His "crimes" consisted of attempting to recruit new members to his congregation from among the local townfolk, repairing the dilapidated church building, teaching religion to children, and organizing prayer meetings.

THE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS AND BAPTISTS

The Evangelical Christians and Baptists enjoy by far the largest following of any Protestant group in Ukraine, being particularly strong in the industrialized urban centres where most of the Orthodox churches have been closed.

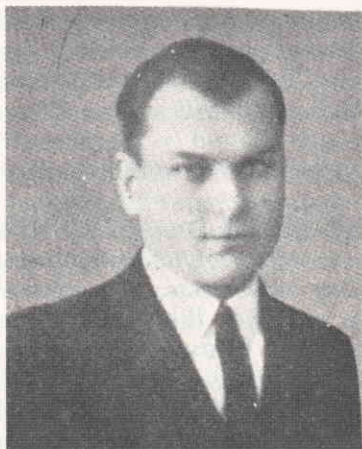
The more radical wing of this church split away from the government-recognized All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (ECB) in the early 1960s, in protest against its passive position *vis-à-vis* government interference into internal church affairs. Popularly known as the **initsiatyvnky**, the dissidents formed a Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians and Baptists, which is banned and severely persecuted by the authorities for its insistence on religious freedom. During the past decade its adherents have suffered repressions more severe than has any other religious group in Ukraine.

At least 43 *initsiatyvnyky* from the Ukrainian SSR are known to be currently serving various sentences. The total number no doubt far exceeds this. Among the victims of Soviet repressions two leading Baptist dissidents should be mentioned:

Pastor Georgii Vins of Kiev, the executive secretary of Churches of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists and one of its foremost activists, was arrested in March 1974 and in January 1975 was sentenced to 5 years in prison and 5 additional years in exile for his "unauthorized religious activities." Vins is currently serving his prison term in Tabaga, Yakut ASSR.



Pastor Georgii Vins.



Pastor Teodosii Dovhaliuk.

Borys Zdorovets, having previously served a term of 7 years' imprisonment and 3 years' exile for his religious activities, was again arrested in May 1972 for his role in organizing a mass Baptist prayer meeting in a forest near Kharkiv. Zdorovets was brought to trial only in August 1973, at which time he was sentenced in a closed court to 3 years in a severe-regime camp and 7 years' exile. He is currently serving his sentence at Perevalsk, Voroshylovhrad oblast, Ukrainian SSR.

Several reports have reached the West of the deaths or severe illnesses of reform Baptists under mysterious circumstances in Soviet prisons and labour camps.

UKRAINIAN REFORMED AND LUTHERAN CHURCH

Banned since World War II in Soviet Ukraine are the Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church and the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. Dating from the 1920s, the two Churches had by 1939 about 30 congregations and some 15 ministers each with a combined total of 10,000 followers in Western Ukraine. During the first Soviet occupation, a number of Reformed and Lutheran ministers and laymen were arrested or deported. Among them was the Reformed Pastor Teodosii Dovhaliuk who met a martyr's death in a concentration camp on the Solovetsky Islands in 1943, and the Lutheran Pastor Teodor Yarchuk who disappeared after his arrest by the NKVD in 1939. Other ministers of the two churches were imprisoned by the Soviet authorities after 1944. Some of them, including Lutheran preacher S. Ostapovych, were still in Siberian exile as late as 1973.

Today, of the evangelical denominations, only Hungarian Calvinists in Transcarpathia—some 80 to 100 thousand strong—are allowed by Soviet authorities to worship legally, albeit under strict governmental supervision.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

Although officially "recognized" by the state, the Seventh Day Adventists, like other religious groups, have been subjected over the past two decades to recurrent attacks and slander. During Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign, the central body of the Soviet Adventists was suppressed. More than half of the Adventist churches have been closed. As in the case of other religious groups, the Adventists are not allowed to offer religious instruction to their children. As a result, there have been cases of children being forcibly taken away from their parents because of the latter's "violation" of this ruling.

One such case was that of two sisters, Mariia Floreskul and Orysia Kondriuk from Berehomet, Chernivtsi oblast. In early 1976, they were both sentenced to "prolonged incarceration" for practising their religion and attempting to teach it to their nine-year old orphaned nephew.

PENTECOSTALS

Also active in Ukraine are the Pentecostals, the more radical wing of which has refused to join the "official" Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists. It continues its activities underground.

Recently some independent Pentecostal congregations have been registered by the authorities in Kharkiv, Odessa and Chernivtsi. This has occurred because they apparently "turned away from fanatical rites and began to conduct legal activities." But other Pentecostal communities continue to experience administrative harassment and persecution.

One of the better-known persecuted Pentecostal believers is **S. H. Salamakha**, a senior presbyter for Voroshylovhrad oblast. He was tried in March 1973 and sentenced under article 209-1 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR for "unauthorized religious activities" to a term of 5 years' imprisonment and 4 years' exile.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The Jehovah's Witnesses are banned in the Soviet Union as a sect whose doctrines allegedly have an "anti-state and fanatic character." The Jehovah's Witnesses have been severely persecuted and many of them (primarily from Ukraine) are reportedly imprisoned or have been sent into exile.

An example of such a case is that of **Vira Iovna Bozhar**, born in 1924. She was arrested in 1963 and sentenced under article 62 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" to 7 years' severe-regime labour camp and 5 years' exile.

JUDAIC COMMUNITIES

The Jewish population of the Soviet Union has long endured religious and national persecution, the two being closely intertwined. This persecution has been intensified as a result of the anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli overtones of official Soviet propaganda.

In the Ukrainian SSR, where some 800,000 Jews reside, most of the Judaic religious communities have been disbanded, with only eight synagogues and one active rabbi remaining. Most of the Jewish cemeteries have been destroyed. Recently the cemetery in Sarny, **Rovno oblast**, has been turned into a refuse dump.

The Jewish population in the Ukrainian SSR is not allowed any central or regional representation, and contacts with Jewish religious centres abroad are prohibited. There is a ban in the USSR in general on the teaching of Hebrew, and, since 1949, of Yiddish as well. There are no facilities in Ukraine for the production of religious articles, and no Judaic



Jewish cemetery in Kiev (present view).

publications. Moreover, the lack of facilities for the training of new rabbis and cantors, the administrative harassment of Jewish believers, and the often slanderous anti-Judaic propaganda are threatening the very survival of Judaism in Ukraine.

SOVIET COMMUNISM AND RELIGION

Soviet religious policy has been shaped by a complex interplay of ideological and practical considerations. While the underlying principle of Soviet religious policy has been atheism, the totalitarian nature of the regime led it to surround institutional religion with a myriad of administrative and police controls. At the same time, the tactical opportunism of Lenin and his successors has led them occasionally to subordinate their anti-religious zeal to the overriding concerns of political survival and the maximization of political power. Moreover, Soviet religious policy has had to take into account such factors as the tenacity of religious beliefs among the population, the identification of religion with nationality and culture, as well as foreign public opinion.

Marxism-Leninism views religion as a socially-harmful "illusion" resulting from peoples' ignorance and fear of the natural and social forces that control their existence in a class society. In Lenin's words, "religion is a sort of spiritual moonshine in which the slaves of capital drown the image of man and their demand for a life more or less worthy of human beings." To the founder of the Soviet state the idea of God consisted of "filth, prejudices, sanctification of ignorance and

stupor on the one hand, and of serfdom . . . on the other." Religion, proclaimed the Bolsheviki, is nothing but a psychological tool used by the exploiters to keep the oppressed classes docile, apathetic and incapable of overthrowing the *status quo*. However, since religion does not answer any universal human need, according to Marxism-Leninism, but was only an element of the antagonistic class system, the abolition of classes would bring about its demise. Through a combination of education and the operation of socio-economic forces generated by the proletarian revolution, the toiling masses were to liberate themselves fully from the "fetters of religion." This vulgarized version of Marxist atheism has been elevated in the USSR to the position of an established state "confession," a status similar to that accorded before 1917 to Russian Orthodoxy.

THE KREMLIN'S CHURCH POLICY

Although the Soviet regime has never abandoned its goal of eventually eliminating all "religious remnants" in society, it was never above sacrificing its ideological scruples for the sake of immediate political advantage when faced with a threat to its existence or presented with a promising political opportunity. Over the nearly six decades that have elapsed since the Bolshevik seizure of power, Soviet church policy has

*Belfry of St. Michael's
"Golden-Domed"
Church in Kiev during
the Soviet demolition
of this 12th century
church in 1934.*



continuously vacillated between attacks on all institutional religion, churches and clergy, on the one hand, and attempts to "sovietize" and to use them for the regime's political ends, on the other. Accordingly, while discriminating legally, politically and economically against every religious group and all believers, the Communist regime has also discriminated among churches and sects in terms of their political compatibility with and usefulness to the state, rewarding collaborators and punishing opponents.

During its first years, the Soviet regime concentrated its attacks on the Moscow Patriarchate and the Catholic Church, which were accused of political opposition to the regime and collusion with its internal and external enemies. But at the same time, the schismatic elements in these Churches and some other religious groups were accorded concessions for tactical political reasons. Notwithstanding this, all the religious groups suffered to a greater or lesser degree from discriminatory Soviet legislation, beginning with the Soviet Russian **Decree on the Separation of Church from the State and School from the Church** of February 5, 1918. The new laws transferred all church property, including all houses of worship, to the State. Religious communities were deprived of the status of juridical person, while the clergy and their families were stripped of their civil rights. Organized religious instruction of minors was made a criminal offence. All theological schools were closed, as were eventually all monasteries and convents. Abusive regime-sponsored anti-religious campaigns were accompanied by the harassment of believers and their exclusion from all positions of any importance.

During the 1920s the regime shifted its tactics in the direction of "sovietization" of individual churches and sects, including the displacement of the "disloyal" religious leaders with those willing to accept a platform of absolute loyalty to the Soviet state and prepared to submit to far-reaching regime controls over the external and internal activities of their respective religious groups. By 1927 these conditions were accepted by the Moscow Patriarchate in return for limited and uncertain tolerance extended to the Church by the regime—but at the price of alienating many Orthodox bishops, clergy and believers, who considered such a compromise with the atheist state to be incompatible with the integrity and spiritual mission of the Church. Most other religious groups in the USSR were forced to make the fateful choice between surrender to the regime and retreat into the catacombs.

These dearly-won concessions did not last long. By 1929 Stalin's regime had embarked on a violent country-wide anti-religious campaign. More and more churches and prayer houses of all faiths were closed down by the authorities or upon the fabricated "demands of workers." Growing numbers of bishops and clergy were banished, imprisoned or executed. The situation worsened during the late 1930s culminating by the end of the decade in the near total suppression of institutional religion in the Soviet Union, and especially in Ukraine. In the process the Soviet authorities destroyed the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and physically liquidated most of its bishops and many thousands of its faithful. On the eve of the Second World War only a handful of churches remained open within the pre-1939 borders of the Ukrainian SSR.

Following the Nazi invasion of the USSR Stalin completely reversed his tactics towards religious communities. Fearing for the very survival of the Soviet regime, Stalin silenced anti-religious propaganda and offered significant concessions to the Russian Orthodox Church and other denominations in the hope of harnessing all the potential of the Soviet Union in its struggle against Nazi Germany. The special status now accorded to the Russian Orthodox Church was underlined in September, 1943, when Stalin and Molotov received three senior Orthodox hierarchs, an event that symbolically cemented a "concordat" between the Kremlin and the Moscow Patriarchate. After the re-establishment of Soviet rule in Ukraine, this new "symphony" between the atheist state and the Russian Church was manifested in their joint struggle against the revived Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church. The Soviet authorities and the police now employed terror to help the Russian Church forcibly displace these national Ukrainian churches, absorb their following and indoctrinate the "reunited" faithful in Soviet patriotism.

The chief beneficiary of Stalin's new religious policy, the Russian Orthodox Church, was placed under a separate "Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church" attached to the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR in October 1943. All other denominations were grouped together under a parallel "Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults" established in the summer of 1944.

The rise of Khrushchev signalled the regime's retreat from Stalin's course in the direction of an increasingly mili-



Church on the Economic Gates of the Pecherska Lavra, 1696-1698. The Kievan Monastery of the Caves, "cleared" of monks in 1961.



Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Yaremche, in the Carpathians, transformed into an antireligious museum.

tant anti-religious policy. After mid-1954, a systematic atheist indoctrination and propaganda effort was resumed by the Party. By the end of the decade a massive Union-wide anti-religious campaign was launched by Khrushchev, inflicting heavy losses on organized religion in the USSR. Some of the concessions that Stalin had granted to the "loyal" religious groups were now withdrawn as "departures from Leninist principles."

Between 1959 and 1964 this campaign involved gross violations of legality by Soviet authorities, mass closings of houses of worship and monastic and theological institutions, and the selective application of terror against those individuals and groups that actively opposed the violations of their "constitutionally-guaranteed" religious rights. The Russian Orthodox Church alone had lost some 10,000 churches by 1965, with only 7,500 remaining open according to an official 1966 report. Significantly, in contrast to the anti-religious campaign of 1929-38, the attack on religion under Khrushchev did not involve the persecution of the "loyal" ecclesiastical and sectarian leaders who were now compelled to prove their loyalty by "voluntarily" restricting the scope of their activities and by joining the authorities in public denials of any religious persecution in the Soviet Union. Their subservience to the regime, more than the regime's anti-religious measures,

was the principal cause behind the rise of dissent and protest movements within the "legal" religious groups in the USSR.

The impact of Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign was especially felt in Ukraine with its heavy concentration of religious communities. Between one-half and two-thirds of congregations there were suppressed between 1959 and 1964 as were the overwhelming majority of the Orthodox monastic and theological institutions. The only Orthodox publication in Ukrainian—**Pravoslavny visnyk** (The Orthodox Herald)—was discontinued in 1963 (its publication was resumed only in 1968). For a number of years the Church was prevented from filling the several vacant diocesan sees; some hierarchs and a number of clergy, especially the monks, were publicly charged with criminal offences.

Khrushchev's removal from the leadership in October 1964 inevitably gave rise to believers' hopes for a reversal in Soviet church policy. Though there was a noticeable decline in the momentum of the anti-religious campaign, the authorities stopped short of restoring to religious groups the concessions withdrawn during the 1959-64 campaign; nor would they reopen the closed churches, monasteries or theological schools.

In reaction to Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign and the refusal of the authorities to correct his abuses as well as in protest against the subservient church leaders, religious dissent was manifested more and more frequently within several "recognized" denominations, most notably the Evangelical Christians and Baptists (ECB) and the Russian Orthodox Church. The Orthodox dissenters have been calling merely for the government's observance of its own laws, for the return to the believers of the illegally closed churches, monasteries and seminaries, and the implementation of the principle of separation of church and state. The Baptist dissidents have been asking, in addition, for the legalization of their separate church organization (known since 1965 as the Council of Churches of ECB), for the abolition of the legal and administrative restrictions on the private teaching of religion to children, and for the lifting of the 1929 ban on "religious propaganda" (since atheists have the right to conduct "anti-religious propaganda"). Such extensions of the scope of religious freedom, they argue, would be consistent with the Separation Decree and the Soviet Constitution, and it would be in line with the international human rights conventions signed by the Soviet government.

Typically, the Soviet reaction to religious dissent has been to have the "loyal" Church leaders deny the substance of the dissidents' complaints, to slander the dissenters in the official media as politically subversive, anti-social elements, and to apply administrative harassment, police repressions and judicial reprisals against those dissidents who cannot be "persuaded" to repudiate their critical views.

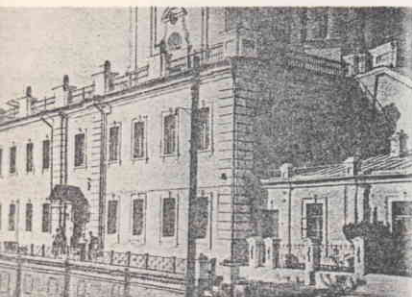
Since 1969 the evident frustration of the Communist Party over the limited achievements of its anti-religious activities and, in particular, over the growing acceptance by the intelligentsia and the youth of religious traditions and symbols as important links with the past and as integral elements of national culture, have led the Party to renew the emphasis on mass anti-religious propaganda, especially in Western Ukraine. Along with the growing anti-religious activities and publications (mostly directed against the non-Orthodox denominations), came the usual public complaints about too great a leniency shown by the authorities towards "religious prejudices" in society. It is likely that the pendulum of Soviet church policy will once again swing towards more violent forms of anti-religious struggle.

THE U.S.S.R. AND INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES OF FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

The Soviet Union is signatory to a number of international accords in which it pledges to promote the observance of human rights for all, notwithstanding their religious beliefs or practices.

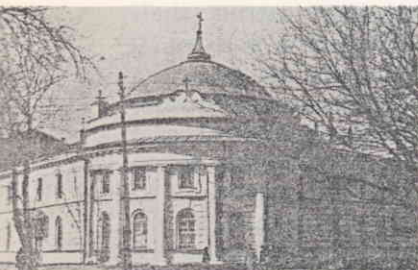
Among other things, the USSR has specifically pledged

- 1) To respect a person's "right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" and his right "to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance;"
- 2) To "promote understanding, tolerance and friendship" among all religious groups through its educational system;
- 3) To ensure the parents' rights to choose the type of education that would "ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions;"
- 4) To recognize each citizen's right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and to be elected to public office, and to "have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country;"



The Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kiev, closed in 1960.

The Volyn Orthodox Theological Seminary in Lutsk, closed by the Soviet authorities in 1964.



The Orthodox Vvedenskyi Convent in Kiev, disbanded during Khrushchev's antireligious drive.

- 5) To ensure religious minorities' right to profess and practice their own religion.

These points are to be found in the **United Nations Charter**, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** and the **Convention Against Discrimination in Education**—documents which the Soviet Union has signed or ratified.

Unfortunately, these pledges are honoured more in the breach than in the observance. There are many examples where the Soviet Union has pledged internationally to do one thing, but internally has done the reverse. For example, the Soviet Union has pledged to ensure the parents' rights to choose their children's religious and moral education.* Yet,

* **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (hereinafter **Civil Rights Covenant**), art. 18(4); see also, **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, art. 26; **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, art. 13(3); **Convention Against Discrimination in Education**, art. 5(1).

according to the Soviet Ukrainian Decree on the Separation of the Church from the State of January 22, 1919:

The teaching of religion is prohibited in all state, municipal or private educational institutions where a general education is given. (Art. 9)

This point is reiterated in Chapter X, Art. 356, of the Administrative Code of the Ukrainian SSR of October 12, 1927, which incorporated the 1919 Separation Decree and all other legislation on "religious cults."

Not only can religion not be taught in an educational institution, but it is forbidden to teach religion to children and youth under 18, even under the auspices of a religious association. Theoretically, only parents may instruct their own children in religion. Even if parents wish to pass on to their child their religious beliefs in their own home, at the present time they are likely to be exposed to public harassment or may even be threatened with the loss of their parental rights. There are known instances of children being taken away from devout parents by the authorities, especially in the cases involving members of the "banned" religious groups. The believers' parental rights have been jeopardized by the vaguely worded provisions of the 1969 Code on Marriage and Family in the UkrSSR. This Code obliges the parents to raise their children in harmony with the public school—the school which actively combats religion—and in the spirit of the "moral code of builders of communism."

Numerous restrictions attempt to limit religious groups exclusively to "the performance of religious rites." Article 3 of the Instruction of the Secretariat of the Presidium of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee **On the Procedure of the Organization, Activities, Reporting and Liquidation of Religious Associations and on the System of Registration of the Membership of Religious Associations and Servants of Cult** (June 23, 1932) states:

The religious association may not:...

- d) organize special prayer or other meetings for children, youth and women;
- e) organize scriptural, literary, sewing, labour or other meetings, groups, circles, sections, or such for teaching religion;...
- g) organize libraries and reading rooms....



The Trinity Church of the Orthodox convent in Chernihiv, closed during Khrushchev's antireligious campaign.



Ukrainian Catholic church of the Redemptorist Fathers in Ternopil, demolished by the authorities in the summer of 1962.

Not only do the various Soviet laws on religion contravene international accords, they also violate the Soviet Ukrainian Constitution which guarantees certain religious freedoms. Specifically, according to Article 104 of the Soviet Ukrainian Constitution, the church is separated from the state and the school from the church. The Constitution also grants "freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda," but in so doing, it implicitly prohibits "religious propaganda."

The immense scope of the state's control over the external and internal activities of religious groups is readily seen from the number of published laws dealing with religious groups, starting with the previously mentioned 1919 Separation Decree, Chapter X of the Administrative Code of the Ukrainian SSSR, and the Instruction of the Secretariat of the Presidium of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee. There are also the **UkrSSR Criminal Code** (Arts. 138-139 supplemented with Art. 209 in 1961); Decrees of the Presidium of the Ukrainian SSR **On Administrative Liability for Violation of Legislation on Religious Cults** (March 26, 1966) and **On the Amendment of Article 138 of the UkrSSR Criminal Code** (March 26, 1966); and the Soviet Ukrainian equivalent of the June 23, 1975 Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR **On Introducing Amendments and Additions to the Decree "Law on Religious Associations" of April 8, 1929**, which consolidates most of the previously published legislation on "religious cults."

Even more detrimental to freedom of religion are the illegal unpublished instructions of the Soviet authorities. In fact, in some cases, these unpublished instructions on how the published laws should be implemented often contradict the laws they are supposed to interpret. Such is the case with two



Ukrainian Catholic Chapel in Zarvanytsia - the site of popular pilgrimages - dynamited by the Soviet authorities in July 1960.

unpublished instructions: **On the Application of the Law on Cults** (issued on March 16, 1961, by the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church), and **On the Inventory of Religious Organizations, Prayer Houses and Buildings, and the Procedure for the Registration of the executive Organs of Religious Associations and Servants of Cults** (issued on October 31, 1968, by the Council for Religious Affairs). Another document which is still kept secret is the full text of the law which defines the rights, duties and powers of the Council for Religious Affairs. In December 1965, this Council replaced the two earlier agencies of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the administration of church-state relations—the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults.

Constitutional “guarantees” of freedom of conscience in the USSR are nullified by the perversion of legality which characterizes the entire Soviet administrative system where unpublished administrative orders take precedence over published ones, where decrees prove to be of higher order than statutes, and where the latter are used in fact to emasculate the provisions of the Soviet Constitution and of international agreements ratified by the USSR.

The combined effect of all the Soviet published and secret laws and instructions on “religious cults” is to invest the state with sweeping powers *vis-à-vis* religion, religious groups and individual believers:

- 1) The power to legalize or ban any local religious con-

gregation through the procedure of obligatory "registration," or denial or withdrawal of such "registration" from local congregations. Soviet law also demands that a list of members' names be submitted to the local authorities, which enables the latter to discriminate against the believers at their place of employment or in the allocation of housing, among other things.

2) The power to grant, deny or withdraw the "registration" required of every minister of religion ("servant of a cult") without which he cannot legally exercise his religious functions.

3) The power to lease, to deny, or terminate such a lease to a religious congregation of all the houses of worship in the USSR, which are owned together with their contents by the state. This arrangement allows for the liquidation of functioning churches. Deprived of its church, a religious congregation must obtain separate permission on each occasion it wishes to meet in a private home. This permission is usually denied.

4) The right to remove any member of the executive committee elected by an open vote of each congregation to administer its affairs. Often this right is stretched in practice to keep in office subservient local congregation officials long after they have lost the confidence of the membership of the religious association.

5) The authority to allow, disallow, or to close, theological schools, monastic institutions, religious publication, as well as regional and national meetings of religious groups and clergy, and even general meetings of local congregations.

It is important to note that the Soviet government has arbitrarily banned certain religious groups. Though the government of the Soviet Union and Soviet Ukraine agreed internationally to ensure the right of religious minorities to profess and practise their own religion (**Civil Rights Covenant**, Art. 27), yet, according to secret government instructions:

Not eligible for registration [i.e. banned] are religious associations and groups of believers which belong to sects the doctrines of which have anti-state and fanatic character: Jehovah's Witnesses, True Orthodox Christians, the True Orthodox Church, Adventists-Reformists, Murashkovites, etc.



The Yaniv Cemetery in Lviv: the vandalized graves of Ukrainian soldiers who died during Ukraine's war of independence, 1918-20.

These instructions are open-ended and allow for arbitrary additions to the list of "prohibited" churches and sects. This is facilitated by the fact that no published Soviet law offers definitions of "sects," and "anti-state" or "fanatical" religious doctrines. By far the largest of the "banned" religious groups in Ukraine are the Ukrainian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. It is significant that at no time has the Soviet government published a law or decree banning the Uniate Church. The authorities evidently prefer to hide this ban behind the fiction of the "self-dissolution" of the Uniate Church by the so-called "Sobor" of 1946. In clear violation of their own constitutional separation of the church from the state, the "resolutions" of this pseudo-Sobor are given the force of state law in Soviet administrative and judicial practice.

Thus, regardless of its international commitments to respect a person's right to freedom of conscience and religion, the Soviet Union severely restricts this right. The immense powers over religious activities vested in the Soviet government have been used and are being used by it to negate the constitutional guarantees of freedom of conscience, to practise political discrimination against and among religious groups, to minutely control their internal activities, and to strangle at will institutional religion in Ukraine.

YOU CAN HELP THE CAUSE OF BELIEVERS IN UKRAINE

The persecution and repression of religious believers in the Soviet Union are flagrant violations of fundamental human liberties as recognized by the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These illegalities cry for the intervention of world public opinion. International peace depends on the observance of human rights everywhere, regardless of national boundaries.

You, as a concerned individual, can help the persecuted believers in Soviet Ukraine by writing to the addresses given below. You can also inform your friends, your congregation or organization about the plight of believers in Soviet Ukraine. Perhaps they, too, would be willing to extend their support to the cause of freedom of conscience and religion.

Particularly, we ask you to express your concern for:

- the granting of an immediate and general amnesty to all Ukrainian clergy, monastics and believers imprisoned for their religious practices or beliefs, or for exercising their right to freedom of conscience;
- the removal of the illegal and unjust prohibition of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, and other religious denominations in the Ukrainian SSR;
- the return of children taken away from their parents because of the latter's raising them in accordance with their religious practices and beliefs.

PLEASE EXPRESS YOUR CONCERN IN WRITING
TO ANY OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev,
Secretary-General of the Central Committee
of the CPSU,
The Kremlin,
Moscow,
U.S.S.R
- 2) World Council of Churches
150, route de Ferney
1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland.
- 3) His Holiness
Pope Paul VI
The Vatican.
- 4) The Government of your country.

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*Ruins of the Assumption Church
in the Kievan Monastery of the
Caves, (Pecherska Lavra) after
its destruction by the Soviets in
1941.*

