

**DR. LEV MYDLOVSKY**

**BOLSHEVIST  
PERSECUTION**

**OF  
RELIGION  
AND  
CHURCH  
IN  
UKRAINE**

**1917 — 1957**

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OF RELIGION AND CHURCH  
IN UKRAINE  
1917-1957**

**INFORMATIVE OUTLINE**

by

***Dr. Lev. W. Mydlowsky***

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

Communism such as it is practised in the U.S.S.R. is not merely a synthesis of distorted Marxism and the tyranny which prevails in Russia ever since the time of the Tzar Ivan the Terrible. Nor is Communism merely a modern form of the colonialism and imperialistic expansion of Russia. Communism is all these things and, at the same time, it is also a pseudo-religion which excludes the existence of true faith in God in its sphere of influence.

Communism destroys every religious or idealistic philosophy of life and moral principles, in order to overthrow tradition and civilisation which are based on unchangeable ethical principles that are binding for man's conscience. Communism negates the freedom of the human will in order to transform man into a being that has no will of its own and to make man conform to the living conditions of the totalitarian order of society.

Communism exterminates every form of culture which is not connected with it as regards ideology.

Christianity spread to Ukraine over a thousand years ago, and it was on the basis of Christianity that the Ukrainian Church and the entire Ukrainian Christian culture and civilisation, which ensured the general development and independence of the Ukrainian people, developed.

For this reason the Communist leadership decided to destroy Ukrainian religious, ecclesiastical, and national cultural life, in order to force a Communist "religion of atheism" on Ukraine and in this way to subjugate Ukraine spiritually. In this way, too, the Communists are trying to extinguish the hope of Divine Justice in the hearts of the Ukrainian people and to paralyse the spirit of their fight for freedom; they are trying to transform the pious Ukrainian people into a formless mass of Soviet slaves.

## I. CENTRAL AND EAST UKRAINIAN TERRITORIES<sup>1)</sup>

### 1) THE FIRST REPRESSIVE MEASURES

The first aggression on the part of Soviet Russia against Ukraine began on December 27, 1917, when the Bolshevik troops launched a general offensive against the Central and East Ukrainian territories. And the beginning of Communist persecution of religion and the Church in Ukraine goes back to this date.

One of the first victims of Communist anti-religious terrorism in Ukraine was the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Kyiv, Volodymyr Bohoyavlensky, who was murdered there by Bolshevik partisans on January 25, 1918.<sup>2)</sup>

On the strength of the decrees issued by the Soviet Russian state power on December 4, 1917, and January 23, 1918, the Communists began to confiscate the property of the Church, both the buildings of churches and monasteries and also things of value belonging to the churches (icons, chalices, valuable vestments, etc.).

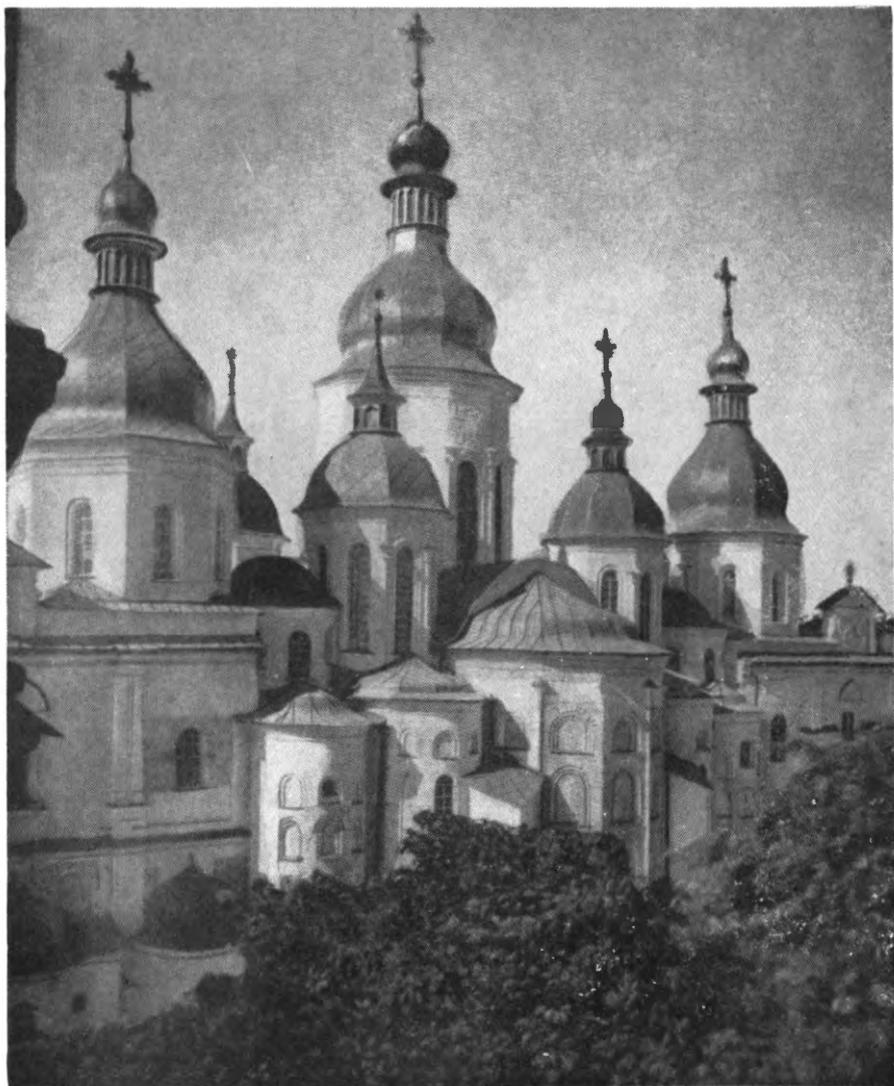
The Communists based their anti-religious policy on Point 13 of their Party programme (confirmed at the 8th Congress of the Bolshevik Party in 1919), which proclaimed "scientific materialism and atheism" as the ideological foundation in setting up a Communist order of society. It is true that the decree of January 23, 1918, conceded the Church the formal right to exist, but repressive police measures on the part of the Communist administration restricted its activity to an ever-increasing degree. It was, for instance, impossible to publish ecclesiastical writings, or hold religious instruction in the schools. The Communist administration dissolved theological academies and seminaries in order to put an end to the training and studies of candidates for the priesthood.

From the very outset, Bolshevik terrorism was directed against the clergy, and, in particular, against the monks. When Bolshevik troops seized in January, 1918, the monastery in Lubni (in the district of Poltava), their commander made the twenty-five monks who were still there and their abbot, Ambrosius, line up and arrested them; the commissar, Bakay, then gave orders that they were all to be shot. In January, 1918, the Communists drove most of the

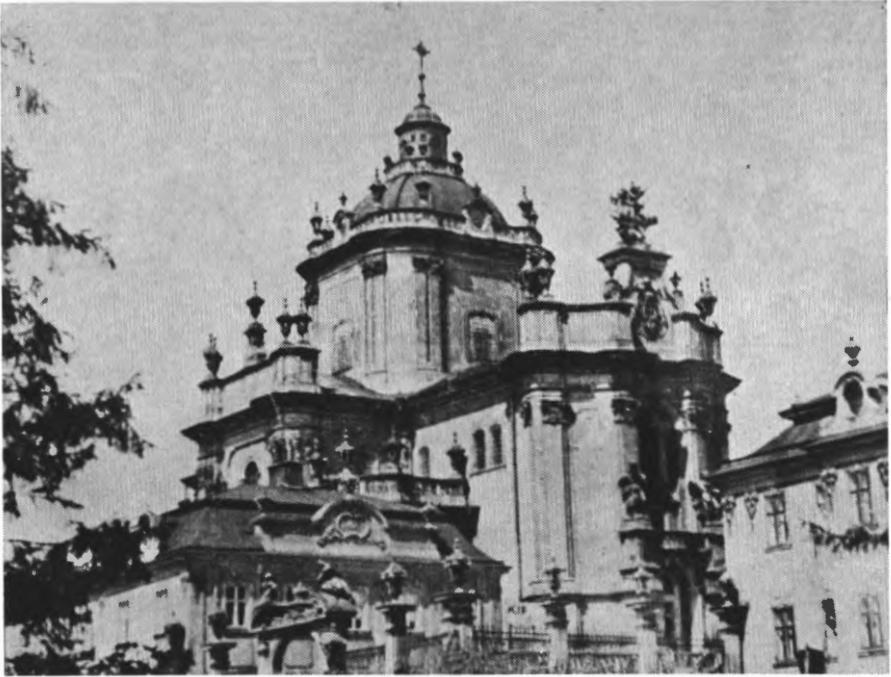
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1) In the following footnotes the number of the bibliographical note will be given in *parenthesis* after the name of the author and abbreviated title of the work in question.

2) F. Heyer: *Die orthodoxe Kirche* (2), p. 45-46.



ST. SOPHIA'S CATHEDRAL—KYIV



ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL—LVIV

monks out of the monastery in Sviatohorsk (in the district of Kharkiv) and then proceeded to ransack the church of the monastery. In the monastery itself they set up a "convalescent home," and transformed the church into an "anti-religious museum." In June, 1918, the Communists carried out a raid on the Holy Cross monastery near Poltava and on July 4th of the same year, they shot Father Nilus, a monk who had remained behind in the monastery.<sup>3)</sup>

We have only quoted a few examples which illustrate the extent to which the monks were persecuted and the monasteries raided by the Communists; but the same also applies, in slightly different variations to almost all the monasteries and churches of monasteries in Central and East Ukraine. This campaign reached its culmination with the fate that befell the Pechersky monastery (the cave-monastery) in Kyiv, which was the centre of monastic life in the whole of Central and East Ukraine. In the year 1926 there were still about 500 monks in this monastery. Their abbot, Hermogenes Holubynsky was arrested by the Communists. Only seven monks were left behind in the monastery and they, too, were deported in 1928, when the monastery was closed down and transformed into an "anti-religious museum." It was only after World War II that some of the monastery buildings were handed over to the monks of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>4)</sup>

## *2) THE UKRAINIAN AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCH AND SOVIET EXPERIMENTS IN THE CHURCH QUESTIONS*

The decree issued by the Russian Soviet government on January 23, 1918, fundamentally "regulated" the affairs of the Church inasmuch as it deprived the latter of its public legal character and status. From now onwards, communities of the Church were only to be allowed to continue to exist as private societies. This decree was extended to apply to Ukraine, too, by the Communists in 1919. The Church was also deprived of its right of ownership of property. Only if they paid rent for the future "state property" were church communities to be allowed by the administration to use church buildings for the purpose of worship. In addition, the Church was likewise strictly forbidden to engage in any form of charitable activity.

In spite of this constant persecution of the Church, of the bishops, priests and the faithful, most of the people of Central and East Ukraine unwaveringly retained their Christian faith and did their utmost to preserve the organised forms of Church life, at least within the very limited rights which the Soviet decree at that time conceded to church communities as private societies. In 1921 the

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<sup>3)</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>4)</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

Greek Orthodox Ukrainians detached themselves from the supremacy of the Moscow Patriarchate which had been forced on them, and established the revived Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which under the spiritual leadership of its Metropolitan, Basil (Vasyl) Lypkivsky, included the whole of Central and East Ukraine and in 1927 numbered about 3,000 parishes, more than 3,000 priests and 34 bishops.

That this was possible under the Communist regime is explained by the fact that though the Soviet state power, in keeping with the Communist ideology of a militant atheism (based on Karl Marx's theory about religion as "opium for the people"), fought the Church again and again all the time, and continues to fight it even today, this fight, however, assumes various forms according to time and circumstances. And, incidentally, the same thing to some extent also applies to Soviet economic policy. When the Communists were threatened by an economic catastrophe as a result of their economic experiments at the time of the so-called "military Communism" Lenin, at the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1921, proclaimed the so-called "New Economic Policy" (NEP), which partly — but only to a very limited extent — restored private property in industry and trade, exclusively in order to be able to exploit private initiative for the economic consolidation of the Communist state.

In their fight against the Church the Communists resorted to various methods in turn, ranging from comparative tolerance — whenever the situation demanded that the people should for the time being be pacified — to ruthless terrorism. During the transition period up to 1926 the Communist state power endeavoured to destroy the organisation of the Church from within, by making use of the so-called "Living Church," founded in 1923, which in a similar way to the "New Economic Policy" was to become the instrument of the Communists for the purpose of consolidating their regime. The Communists also took part in the founding of the so-called "Active Church" so that, with the help of the latter's functionaries, they might be able to compromise religion and the Church in the eyes of the population. Thus, one of these functionaries, for instance, who posed as an orthodox priest, at the end of divine service — obviously at the instructions of the Communist elements — publicly declared in the church that he had so far been telling the people "lies" and would now, therefore, relinquish his office as a priest. In order to make this atheistic demonstration more striking, he tore off his priest's vestments and threw his priest's cross on the floor and trampled on it. Some time later, he was appointed leader of a "circle of atheists" and devoted himself to a lively anti-religious activity.<sup>5)</sup>

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<sup>5)</sup> Prof. H. Vashchenko: Vidnovlennia U.A.P.Ts. (5), p. 8.

### 3) ATHEISTIC PROPAGANDA AND INCREASED TERRORISM

The Communist Party continued to intensify its atheistic propaganda to an ever-increasing degree. For this reason a "Union of Atheists" was officially founded (with its seat in the central headquarters in Moscow), which was run by the Communist Party and was most generously supplied with all the necessary propagandist means (press, radio station, the right to hold public meetings, mobile propaganda vans and ships, anti-religious museums, so-called Communist training centres, etc.); the journals, "Bezbozhnik" ("The Godless") and "Antireligioznik" ("The Anti-Religious"), published by this "Union of Atheists" at the state's expense, were circulated in huge numbers by the Soviet authorities.

The Communist authorities exerted considerable pressure in order to make the population take part in the anti-religious campaign which they themselves organised, and readily resorted to threats and punitive measures against all those who openly refused to take part in this campaign. The Communists arranged public anti-religious rallies, usually at Christmas and Easter, which were for the most part attended by members of the "Union of Atheists" and of the Komsomoltsi (Young Communists) and by countless semi-criminal elements of the rabble. They donned priests' vestments and, holding a crucifix in their hand, held wild masquerades in the streets and ridiculed God, religious faith, the Church and the priesthood. They tried to provoke the faithful who had assembled in the churches for divine service, by screaming, shouting and whistling; sometimes they even forced their way into churches where they then started maltreating and beating the priests and the members of the congregation and demolishing pictures of saints and sacred vessels. All this was done either at public instigation or with the tacit permission of the Communist authorities.

These sacrilegious demonstrations were a prelude to a large-scale campaign which was intended to destroy completely religious and Church life in Central and East Ukraine. According to an official decree issued by the Soviet government on April 8, 1929, the Church ceased to exist legally as a hierarchic organisation. From now onwards, the Communist administration systematically began to close the churches and to use church buildings for other purposes or else to demolish them. Such measures were carried out in accordance with the government and Party directives, as can be seen, for instance, from the following order which was issued to a Party functionary in the village of Petrovo (in the district of Pyatykhatka):

"In accordance with the directives of the District Executive Committee, the church in your village is to be converted into a granary for storing state grain. This order must be carried out within 48 hours and the competent authorities must be notified to the effect that it has been carried out."<sup>6)</sup>

<sup>6)</sup> V. Kravchenko: *I Chose Freedom* (3), p. 120.

Similar orders were issued to most of the towns and villages throughout Central and East Ukraine and they were all carried out in the same way. In Kyiv, where prior to the Bolshevik occupation there had been 140 churches, only two churches were later allowed to remain open, and that was chiefly in order to be able to demonstrate Soviet "tolerance" to foreigners. In many other towns not a single church was allowed to remain open. Moreover, both in Kyiv and elsewhere countless churches were demolished, which, as monuments of the Ukrainian architecture of the 12th to 17th century, were of great artistic and historic value; in Poltava fourteen such churches were demolished. In Odessa nineteen churches were demolished on one single occasion in 1937.<sup>7)</sup>

#### 4) THE SYSTEMATIC OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE CHURCH

The Communist Party and government not only made it impossible for the priests to administer their sacred office legally and for the faithful to fulfil their religious duties legally, but they also tried to force the priests by terrorist measures to publicly renounce their office. The priests were officially designated as the "non-working element" and for this reason were denied certain elementary civil rights. The authorities frequently refused to give bishops and priests permission to remain in the place where they held office and had them deported to far-off districts; the priests were likewise officially forbidden to carry out the religious duties of their office, including religious instruction, outside the church building. Those who violated this order were punished with five years imprisonment in a concentration camp (with penal servitude). Because of their "social origin," the children of the clergy were excluded from instruction at school and were not entitled to receive a normal wage if they had not publicly severed all connections with their parents.

The Communist administration imposed such exorbitant taxes on the priests and the parishes that, as a rule, they were not in a position to pay them; and this fact, of course, provided the authorities with the desired "legal" reason for dissolving the church parishes. In the town of Proskuriv, for instance, the Provost of the cathedral, Father Okolovsky, was to pay a yearly tax of 5,000 roubles, whilst his colleague in Zhytomyr was to pay as much as 35,000-40,000 roubles.<sup>8)</sup> As a result of these exorbitant taxes a number of parishes in Poltava collapsed in 1931. And most of the communities of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church were liquidated by this "cold" method.

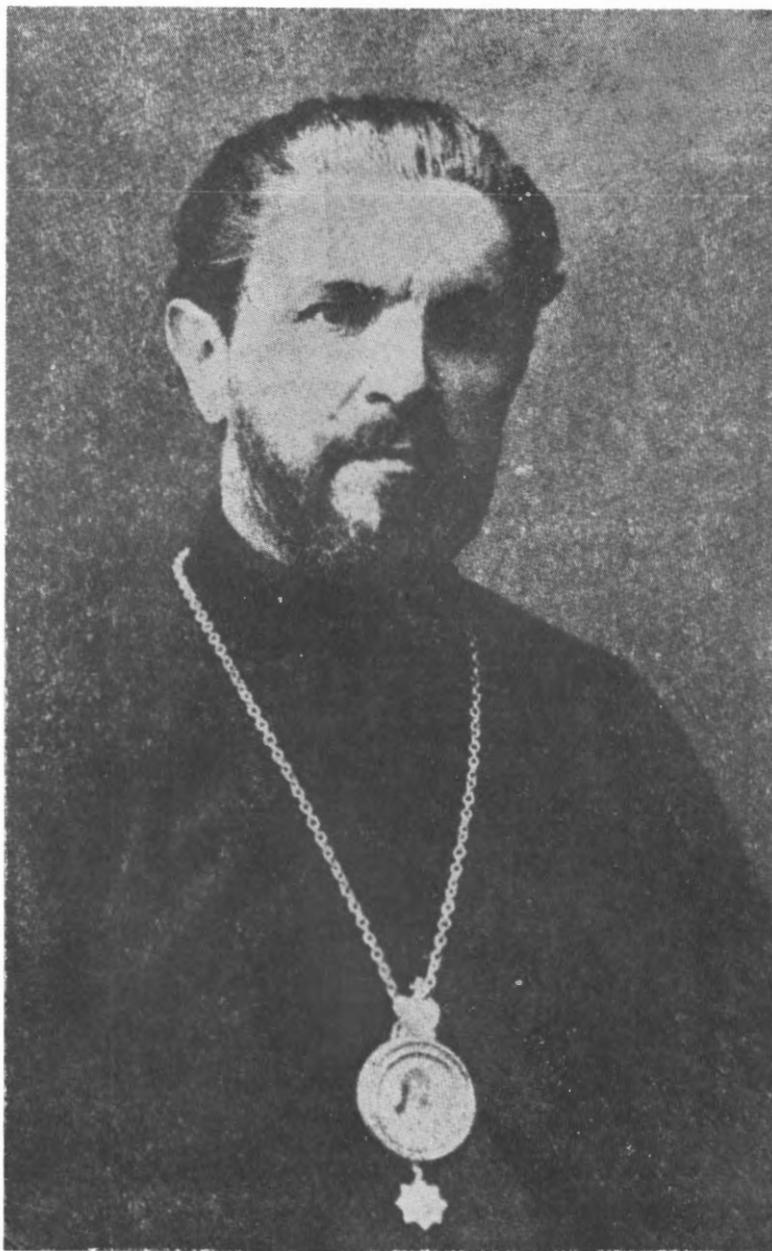
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<sup>7)</sup> F. Heyer, loc. cit. (2), p. 112-113; B. Mikorskiy: *Razrusheniye* (11), passim.

<sup>8)</sup> F. Heyer: *Die orthodoxe Kirche* (2), p. 112.



**METROPOLITAN  
VASYL (BASIL) LYPKIVSKY,**  
*Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox  
Church. Imprisoned in 1929. Fate unknown.*



METROPOLITAN  
MYKOLA BORETSKY,  
*perished in NKVD jail.*

The Communist authorities likewise confiscated and destroyed religious and liturgical writings. Employees and foremen were in effect forbidden to attend divine service and to take part in church rites, such as baptism, weddings, and funerals, etc. The Soviet government not only abolished all the Church feast-days, but also Sunday as a holiday, by introducing a "five-day week" (later, a six-day week") so that the faithful amongst the "workers" would not be able to attend divine service on Sundays.

The next stage in the extermination of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church consisted in mass arrests of bishops, priests, professors of theology, secular advisers of the Church, vergers and other servants of the Church, as well as prominent persons amongst the faithful.

One of the first victims of this period of systematic persecution was Archbishop Alexander Yareshchenko of Kharkiv, who was arrested by the Secret State police (GPU) in April, 1926. At the same time, the cathedral in Kharkiv was also closed down. The Archbishop was, first of all, taken to Moscow and then deported to Tashkent (in Central Asia). Soon afterwards, the Proto-Deacon Potiyenko and several other ecclesiastical heads were also arrested and put into concentration camps. The head of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivsky, was arrested by the GPU the first time in 1927 and the second (and last) time in 1929; nothing definite is known as regards his further fate, but it is highly probable that he was tortured to death by the Bolsheviks. Soon afterwards, his successor, Metropolitan Mykola (Nicholas) Boretsky, was also arrested and sent to the penitentiary in Solovki (on the White Sea), where he became insane as a result of the tortures he was forced to endure. He died in a mental institution in 1935.

The following heads of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church were likewise arrested and imprisoned during this same period:

The Archbishops Nestor Sharayivsky, Yuriy (George) Mikhnovsky, Stepan (Stephan) Orlyk, Yosyp (Joseph) Oksiyuk, Ivan (John) Pavlovsky, Constantine Maliushkevych, Constantine Krotevych, Mykola (Nicholas) Pyvovarov; the Bishops Hryhoriy (Gregory) Storozhenko, Pylyp (Philip) Buchylo, Alexander Chervinsky, Peter Romodanov, Yukhym (Euthymius) Kalishevsky, Mykola (Nicholas) Shyray, Peter Tarnavsky, Volodymyr Bzhoznovsky, Yuriy (George) Zhevchenko, Mykola (Nicholas) Karabinevych, Mark Hrushevsky, Anthony Hrynevych, Maxim Nadvirniak, Hryhoriy (Gregory) Mozalevsky, Yuriy (George) Teslenko, Mykhaylo (Michael) Mal-iarevsky, Volodymyr Samborsky, Volodymyr Dakhivnyk-Dakhivsky, Yakiv (Jacob) Chulayivsky, Konon Bey, Theodosius Serhiv, Yuriy (George) Prokopovych.<sup>9)</sup>

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<sup>9)</sup> Protolyerey M.: Ternystym Shlyakhom (4), p. 6.

All these ecclesiastical dignitaries of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church were sent to concentration camps, most of them to Siberia, as for instance Bishop Yuriy (George) Teslenko, who developed tuberculosis whilst interned and died of this disease after he had eventually been released from the concentration camp. Other bishops and archbishops died under dreadful conditions whilst interned in concentration camps, and a number of them were probably shot. Actually, there was not a single bishop of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church left in the whole of Soviet Ukraine after 1932.

During this same period the Soviet government imprisoned over 3,000 priests of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church; they were forced to endure dreadful tortures, some of them were shot or murdered, and the rest were put into concentration camps. The same fate befell the secular adviser of the Church, too, Professor Volodymyr Chekhivsky, who was arrested in 1929 and sentenced to death; the death sentence was, however, revised and, instead, he was sentenced to ten years imprisonment in the penitentiary in Solovki, but was later sentenced to another 20 years imprisonment and was taken to a secret camp in East Siberia. Several hundred secular advisers of the Church and thousands of prominent persons amongst the faithful suffered the same fate in the course of this anti-religious terrorism.

##### 5) *THE DESTRUCTION OF THE UKRAINIAN AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCH*

At the end of January, 1930, the Communist Party and the Soviet police forced the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, by repressive measures, to disband, that is to say, to declare that it had ceased to exist; and in this connection mock trials were held in which the accused were the heads of this Church. The Communists endeavoured to motivate the repressive measures which they took against the Church by legally and factually unfounded arguments, arguments which from the political point of view were demagogic, as for instance, that the Ukrainian Church was "an anti-Soviet, counter-revolutionary and nationalistic organisation," that the entire administrative and ideological leadership of this Church was only concerned with "training the masses in an anti-Soviet spirit," and that the leaders of this Church were acting "in the interests of the international counter-revolution," etc.

In reality, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church had existed on an entirely legal basis and had carried on its activity by legal means, inasmuch as it respected the Soviet state constitution and obeyed the orders issued by the government. It even complied with certain requests of the Soviet state power which, under normal

conditions, no church in the world would be obliged to fulfil; for instance, at the request of the GPU, Metropolitan Vasyl (Basil) Lypkivsky resigned from office in 1927.

The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church looked after the spiritual welfare of its faithful and trained them in a religious spirit; it did not concern itself with political affairs, but, for understandable reasons, of course objected to the Communist Party and the Soviet state power trying to enforce their policy on the life of the Church.

That the Communists were in this case intent upon completely exterminating religion, can be seen from the fact that they demolished about 90 per cent of all the churches in Soviet Ukraine or else converted them into storage depots, garages, stables, clubs, cinemas and anti-religious museums, etc.<sup>10</sup>) Even Christian cemeteries were frequently demolished and the gravestones used for paving streets; church-bells were melted down and used for various industrial purposes.

In 1936, the last parish, which had previously declared its adherence to the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, was officially dissolved<sup>11</sup>), and thus the last vestige of the existence of this Church as an organised community on Soviet Ukrainian soil was now obliterated. Those priests and monks who had still engaged in their profession were now obliged to do so illegally. They went from place to place, preaching the Divine Word to the population and hiding from the police. Those who were caught, were shot, as for instance the monk Pylyp (Philip) in 1937 and the abbot Arsenius, some time before 1941. The police system of informers made it practically impossible for the priests to continue their religious activity even in secret, as is proved by the words of the priest Volodymyr B. of Poltava: "With the aid of all their satanic organisations — the Party, the Komsomol (Communist Youth organisation) and the Soviet trade unions — the Bolsheviks are even making it impossible for us to worship Christ in caves and catacombs, in forests and deserts. Fear of losing their last piece of bread, that is, their jobs, has forced the people to surrender their souls in despair to spiritual slavery."<sup>12</sup>)

The destruction of monuments of Ukrainian Christian civilization and culture, as for instance the Church of St. Michael's Monastery in Kyiv, which dated back to the 12th century and on the site of which there now stands the building of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, was likewise a demonic feature of the extermination of religious life in Soviet Ukraine at that time.

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<sup>10</sup>) Eighth Interim Hearings (7), p. 249.

<sup>11</sup>) Protolyerey M.: Ternystym Shlyakhom (4), p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>) F. Heyer: Die orthodoxe Kirche (2), p. 129.

## **II. THE WEST UKRAINIAN TERRITORIES INCLUDING CARPATHO-UKRAINE**

### *1) THE BLOODSHED OF THE FIRST SOVIET OCCUPATION*

The Soviet Union occupied West Ukraine for the first time in September, 1939, on the strength of a treaty with Nazi Germany; the second Soviet occupation of West Ukraine — this time including Carpatho-Ukraine — took place in 1944. The Church which existed in these Ukrainian territories was the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (that is, a Catholic Church with an Eastern Rite).

At the time of the first occupation, the Metropolitan of Galicia, Count Andreas Sheptytsky, did his utmost to prevent anything from happening which might give the Communists cause to persecute the Church. In his pastoral messages to the priests (December, 1939) he admonished them to comply with all the orders issued by the Soviet state power provided that these were not contrary to the Divine Law.

But the Communist rulers were not in the least interested in the good intentions of the heads of the Church and in their willingness to exist legally side by side with the administration. They promptly liquidated the Catholic press, all Catholic publishing firms and schools, religious societies and monastic and nuns' orders. At the same time, the Soviet state power ordered the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, that is to say all bishops, priests and faithful, to sever all connections with the Vatican, even though the Church was authorised to uphold such relations on the strength of the Concordat of 1925, Article 1, the Concordat of 1929, Article 4, and the "Modus Vivendi" of 1928, Article 1, and regardless of the fact that these agreements, from the point of view of international law, were to continue to be valid.



ARCHBISHOP OF POLTAVA AND ODESSA  
YURIY ZHEVCHENKO,  
*executed.*



ARCHBISHOP OF VOLYN AND ZHYTOMYR  
STEPAN ORLYK,  
*perished in NKVD jail.*

The priests were designated by the administration as "cult servants" and were obliged to pay such exorbitant taxes (from 5,000 roubles a year upwards) that it was practically impossible for them to make regular payments. If they were in arrears, the church in question was closed down, for the churches, too, were taxed. The administration forbade the priests to visit members of their church who were in hospital, and to give religious instructions in the schools; it closed down theological seminaries and began to confiscate the property of the Church.

Even in those days the Soviets were already intent upon liquidating the Ukrainian Catholic Church; above all, they were anxious to sever the latter's connections with the Vatican. They planned to consecrate Father Dr. H. Kostelnyk as bishop and he was then to proclaim the severance of the Ukrainian Catholic Church from the Vatican. When he refused to do so, the police put his seventeen-year old son into prison.

The outbreak of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, prevented the Soviets from carrying out all their plans in this respect. But even so, the Soviet police had time enough to arrest a large number of priests immediately after the outbreak of the war, who were then either deported to the East or else murdered in a most dreadful way. Many of them were crucified; others had their stomachs slit open by the Bolsheviks, who then placed murdered babies in the stomachs of their victims. The twenty-seven priests who were bestially murdered in June and July, 1941, during the Soviet retreat from West Ukraine, included the following: Father Prof. Dr. Mykola Konrad of Stradche (near Lviv), who was murdered on June 26, 1941, Father Dr. Ishchak of Sykhiv (near Lviv), Father Roman Bodnian of Borshchiv (near Peremyshlyany), Father Petro Dutko of Knyazhpil, Father Kebuz of Makova, Father Rychakivsky of Uhryn', Father Y. Chemerynsky of Lviv, Father Y. Sterniuk, Father Boyarsky, and Father Kletsan.

## 2) THE ILLEGALITY OF THE SOVIET ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

During the second Soviet occupation of West Ukraine, which began in the early summer of 1944, the policy pursued by the Soviets as regards the Church was, at first, to all outward appearance moderate, but in essence treacherous; in view of the fact that the country was at war, the Soviets did not want to turn the pious Ukrainian people against themselves by adopting repressive measures right from the outset.

There are certain reasons to assume that Metropolitan Andreas Sheptytsky, who died on November 1, 1944, was poisoned by the Bolsheviks<sup>13)</sup>, who later voiced a completely unfounded suspicion

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<sup>13)</sup> Communist Takeover and Occupation of Ukraine (6), p. 32.

that this was done by the Metropolitan's successor, the then Archbishop, Joseph Slipy. Metropolitan Andreas Sheptytsky happened to be an obstacle to the plans of the Bolsheviks since he enjoyed the greatest esteem amongst the population of Ukraine.

His successor, Metropolitan Joseph Slipy, conducted the affairs of the Church in such a manner that the Soviet state power could not reproach him. He even donated 100,000 roubles in the name of the Ukrainian Catholic Church for the welfare of the Soviet soldiers who had been wounded in the war.<sup>14)</sup>

But already during the winter of 1944/45, the Bolsheviks began to harass the priests, namely by demanding that they should attend meetings at which Communist agitators criticized and ridiculed the Catholic Church; in this way the Bolsheviks aimed not only to undermine the morale of the population and bring discredit on the priesthood, but also to provoke individual priests to make unwise remarks.

In spring 1945, the Bolsheviks intensified their propaganda against the Church very considerably, thus paving the way for more concrete repressive measures.

On April 11, 1945, the Bolsheviks arrested five West Ukrainian Catholic bishops: the Archbishop-Metropolitan Joseph Slipy, the Bishops Nykyta (Nicetas) Budka and Mykola (Nicholas) Charnetsky in Lviv, and the Bishops Hryhoriy (Gregory) Khomyshyn and Ivan (John) Lyatyshevsky in Stanyslaviv. At the same time, other members of the priesthood were also arrested, namely the Fathers M. Galiant, Kovalsky, Kunytsky, Gorchynsky, Beley, Sampara, Trush, Bilyk, Hodun'ko, and various others; Father Hodun'ko died a few days later as a result of the dreadful tortures inflicted on him during the police "interrogations." At the same time, the Apostolic Visitant for Catholic Ukrainians in Germany, Father Dr. P. Verhun, was arrested in Berlin<sup>15)</sup>. He died in exile on February 7, 1957, in Angarsky Poselok, district of Krasnoyarsk (East Siberia).

It was not until eleven months later, in March 1946, that the indictment against the incarcerated bishops was formulated by the Soviet Prosecutor in Kyiv. He accused them (on the strength of Article 54, sub-section 1a and 2, of the Criminal Code of the U.S.S.R.) of "high treason," of "collaboration with the enemy" and of "hostile, criminal offences against the fatherland"; all these "crimes" had allegedly been committed by the bishops in question during the German occupation of West Ukraine between 1941-1943.

The West Ukrainian Catholic bishops never collaborated with the German occupation forces at all. Naturally, it was unavoidable that they should be obliged to have formal contact with the German

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<sup>14)</sup> Ibid., p. 32-33.

<sup>15)</sup> Fate of Ukrainian Catholics (8).



**THE MONASTERY OF THE CAVES IN KYIV (Pecherska Lavra),**  
*the most venerable in Eastern Europe, dating back to the 11th Century. A part of it has been transformed by the Bolsheviks into an anti-religious museum, and its main monument, the Church of the Assumption, seen on the right, was mined and blown up by them in 1941, during World War II.*



**ST. MICHAEL'S MONASTERY IN KYIV (12th Century),  
*demolished by the Bolsheviks in 1934 to erect a building for the  
Regional Headquarters of the Communist Party***

administration (just as had previously been the case with the Soviet administration) in the course of carrying out their ecclesiastical duties, as for instance when it was a case of appointing a priest for the Ukrainian workers who had been forcibly abducted and taken to Germany, or of appointing priests as army chaplains in the Ukrainian Division. How unfounded and ridiculous the accusation of "high treason" on the grounds of collaboration with the German occupation forces was, can be clearly seen from the following facts:

During the German occupation Archbishop Joseph Slipy was placed under police surveillance and was interrogated on several occasions by the Gestapo. The Gestapo detained Bishop Mykola Charnetsky in Lviv and refused to give him permission to go to his diocese Kholm-Pidlyashshia-Volhynia. All the other bishops, too, were harassed by the Gestapo, which searched their dwellings and threatened them with imprisonment and actually imprisoned many of the co-workers of the bishops.

The West Ukrainian Catholic bishops committed no offences whatever against the U.S.S.R., and the Soviet court had no concrete evidence at all which might have incriminated them. For this reason they were imprisoned for eleven months so that an indictment could be prepared against them in the meantime. In the end, the Soviet military tribunal in Kyiv — although it was not competent in this case — conducted the trial in secret (the public were excluded) and sentenced the Metropolitan of Lviv, Archbishop Joseph Slipy, the Canadian subject, Bishop Nykyta Budka, and Bishop Ivan Lyatyshovsky to 8 years hard labour in a penitentiary, Bishop Hryhoriy Khomyshyn to 10 years, and Bishop Mykola Charnetsky to 5 years.

Quite apart from all this, the Polish Communist police arrested the Bishops Josaphat Kotsylovsky and Hryhoriy (Gregory) Lakota in Peremyshl (Przemysl), in September 1944, the first time, and the second time in June 1946, and finally handed them both over to the Soviets. Bishop Josaphat Kotsylovsky died in a Soviet prison on November 17, 1947, as a result of the dreadful tortures which were inflicted on him. Bishop Hryhoriy Lakota was taken to a concentration camp near Vorkuta where he died on November 12, 1950, according to accounts given by the monks, Father Jean Nicholas of Paris (a member of the order of Assumptionists) and Father Petrus Leoni, S.J., who returned from Siberia.

Bishop Hryhoriy (Gregory) Khomyshyn, who was eighty, died in prison on December 24, 1945. Bishop Nykyta (Nicetas) Budka, who had formerly worked in Canada (from 1912 to 1926), was deported to Karaganda and died there on October 6, 1949.

The sentence imposed on Metropolitan Yosyp (Joseph) Slipy ended in 1954, but the Soviets then sentenced him — without any legal reason whatever — to another 25 years imprisonment. A complete invalid as a result of the hard labour he was forced to do, he is now in Maklakovo, district of Yenisei, Krasnoyarsk region.

Bishop Mykola (Nicholas) Charnetsky was imprisoned in the notorious concentration camp in Vorkuta (West Siberia), in camp No. 5110/33/1-7 for hard labour; despite the fact that his sentence ended in 1950, he was not released until 1956, when it was ascertained that he was suffering from an incurable disease. He died on April 2, 1959 at the age of 75.

Bishop John Lyatyshevsky was released in 1956, but was forbidden to perform his ecclesiastical duties. He died on November 29, 1957, in Stanyslaviv, as a result of sufferings during his 10 years imprisonment in Kazakhstan. The Soviets, incidentally, have now released a number of priests, but have moreover, made it impossible for them to get regular employment, so that most of them on their release from concentration camps are faced by poverty and starvation. In 1957 the Soviets have once more started arresting priests — including a number who were released only recently — and deporting them to concentration camps.

### *3) THE FORCIBLE LIQUIDATION OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE THREE WEST UKRAINIAN DIOCESES*

The actual reason for the incarceration of the seven West Ukrainian Catholic bishops was that they refused to break with the Vatican, and to be subordinated to the administration of the Moscow Patriarchate, that is to say, of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Bolshevik regime had only allowed the Russian Orthodox Church, which was under its control, to continue to exist, in order to spread Soviet influence with the aid of this Church and pave the way for the political expansion of Bolshevism. The Ukrainian Catholic Church, too, by being subordinated to the administration of the Moscow Orthodox Patriarchate, was likewise to come under the control of the Bolshevik regime and become the instrument of the latter's policy. When the above-mentioned bishops, however, refused to comply with this unfair request they were put into prison for no legal reason at all and were sentenced without legal evidence. At the same time, the Communist administration, with the aid of its police system, began to make preparations to unite the Ukrainian Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church forcibly. High ecclesiastical dignitaries and priests were arrested and, at the same time, a large-scale propaganda campaign was conducted against the Pope and against the bishops who were loyal to the Vatican. Eventually, a kind of meeting was held in Lviv (Lemberg) from March 8 to 10th 1946, in the course of which 216 members proclaimed the union of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church. This meeting, though designated as a "church synod" could not lay claim to any authority, since the participants included renegates and even agents of the secret state police, some



ARCHBISHOP OF KHARKIV AND ALL SLOBOZHAN-DISTRICT  
ALEXANDER YARESHCHENKO,  
*perished in NKVD jail.*





**METROPOLITAN**  
**Count ANDREAS SHEPTYTSKY,**  
*Metropolitan of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.*  
*Died in Lviv in 1944.*



ARCHBISHOP  
JOSEPH SLIPY,

*After the death of Metropolitan Count Andreas succeeded to the Metropolitan See of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Sentenced to 8 and then to 25 years of imprisonment. Exiled to Siberia.*

of whom were disguised as priests; but since the meeting had the police power of the Soviet administration on its side, its illegal decrees were regarded as valid.

On the other hand, however, the protest made by the 300 authorised representatives of the Ukrainian Catholic priesthood, who held a conference in Lviv, was ignored by the Soviet state power in Moscow.<sup>16)</sup> In this protest from July 1, 1945, which was addressed to the then Deputy Premier, Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet anti-religious policy was exposed and the request was made that the bishops who had been arrested should be released and the freedom of the religion restored. The only result of this protest was that still more persons were arrested.

After this forcible subordination of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to the Moscow Patriarchate, the Ministry for Internal Affairs (MVD) began to exert pressure on the priests to make them sign statements to the effect that they had "voluntarily united" with the Russian Orthodox Church. Those who refused to be intimidated by threats, were arrested, tortured and deported to concentration camps. In 1946, about 800 priests were arrested and many of them were tortured to death.<sup>17)</sup> The following priests are known to have been murdered for certain: T. Chanyzh, V. Mykytiuk, Telep, M. Koltuniuk, I. Seredovych, M. Holovach, D. Nimelovych (his body was found quartered), H. Syvak, Ya. Kneychuk, T. Kaminsky, S. Salash, Ya. Shchyrba, M. Matsiuk, V. Radosha, V. Bolinsky, M. Kachorovsky, I. Demyanchuk, O. Konkoliovsky, I. Sorokeych, A. Sembratovych, M. Dobriansky, P. Voytovych, P. Volyanovych, L. Sogar, O. Bilyk, M. Plakhta, S. Koroliuk, Huchko (and all his family), and Archpresbyter M. Galiant.

The Soviets even set up special concentration camps, exclusively for priests, in West Ukraine (as for instance in Horodok, Lavriv, Krekhiv, Sambir and near Lviv), where they were to be "re-educated," that is to say subjected to physical and spiritual tortures. Those who continued to adhere to their faith unwaveringly were deported en masse to Siberia, Karaganda, Vorkuta, etc., where most of those who survived are still interned today; in Mine No. 8 alone, in Vorkuta, there were 32 priests and scores of monks from Lviv. Naturally, very many of the priests who were deported at that time have in the meantime died as a result of the dreadful conditions in the prisons and concentration camps, the heavy work which they were forced to do and the physical tortures which they had to endure. Clementius Sheptytsky, the abbot of the Studite order and brother of Metropolitan Andreas Sheptytsky, who died in 1944 under mysterious circumstances, was imprisoned by the Soviets in Vladimir on the Klyazma (region of Moscow) and died as a result of the tortures inflicted on him.

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<sup>16)</sup> First Victims (1), p. 39.

<sup>17)</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

In parishes whose priests had been arrested, the Soviet administration frequently closed down the church at once or else converted it into a storage depot. In Zarvanytsia, for instance, the church was converted into a granary and the monastery into stables. In Hoshiv the monastery was ransacked and subsequently the Soviet police was billeted there. In Luzhany and in Zastavna (both in Bukovyna) all the churches were converted into granaries or so-called "houses of culture." In many other towns and villages, too, churches were profaned or else handed over to the Russian Orthodox priests. It was in this way, that is to say with the help of the organs of the MVD, that the Russian Orthodox Bishop, Macarius, seized possession of the Cathedral of St. George in Lviv.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (that is to say, a Catholic Church with an Eastern rite) had enjoyed a legal status in Ukraine, namely on the strength of the Concordat of August 3, 1925, between the Vatican and Poland, which was never revoked and thus is still legally valid today. The Soviet government thus arbitrarily violated an agreement which is internationally valid.

It was not until some time later that the Moscow press agency, TASS, announced in an official communiqué that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had ceased to exist in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as from January 1, 1948, and had no longer any rights; this official confirmation was thus published almost two years after the actual application of measures of violence. In reality, the Ukrainian Catholic Church continues to exist in West Ukraine secretly, in the catacombs of the 20th century. The Soviets persecute its priests and its faithful mercilessly. In Zoloty Potik (district of Rohatyn), for instance, the MVD shot the priest, Telishchuk, and thirty farmers solely because they refused to go over to the Russian Orthodox Church.

#### 4) THE CRIMES OF THE SOVIET REGIME IN CARPATHO-UKRAINE

The Soviet Army occupied Carpatho-Ukraine at the end of 1944. From the very outset, the Soviets began to ransack churches and burn the holy books used for divine service (as for instance in Uzhhorod-Tseholnia, Ploskiv, Radvanets, etc.). Soon afterwards, the Soviet administration began to confiscate churches and to arrest Ukrainian Catholic priests, including P. Demyanovych (who was later shot), E. Pasulka, I. Egreshiy, D. Popovych, I. Popovych, M. Rusynok, E. Ortutay, K. Yelesh, I. Minyok, Durnevych, I. Daniyelyovych, T. Skyba, O. Mondiy.<sup>18)</sup> Quite apart from these measures, Father Dr. Augustin Voloshyn, the former President of the Republic of Carpatho-Ukraine (1939), was arrested in Prague; he died in prison in Kyiv, in 1945, allegedly "during interrogations"<sup>19)</sup>.

<sup>18)</sup> R. N.: *Holhota Uniyi* (9), p. 330.

<sup>19)</sup> Father M. Buchko: *Mene vykynuly* (8), p. 4.



**CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS IN KYIV,**  
*built by Hetman Ivan Mazepa at the end of the 17th Century, demolished  
by the Bolsheviks in 1934.*



WOODEN CHURCH AT BUSOVYSKO, WEST UKRAINE  
(18th Century).

*A typical example of original Ukrainian wooden church architecture.*

The faithful were forced to go over to the Russian Orthodox Church and many were arrested because they refused to do so. The priests were forbidden to give religious instruction (even in church, too). Catholic publishing firms were closed down and Catholic printing businesses were confiscated. In addition, the theological seminary in Uzhhorod was also closed down by the Soviet administration.

In order to compromise the priesthood in the eyes of the population, the Communists arranged "show trials" in which priests were accused of various fictitious "crimes"; but this measure did not prove successful, since the population was not sufficiently convinced by Communist propaganda in the court.

On October 22, 1945, the Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church, Nestor, arrived in Carpatho-Ukraine. The Communists placed an elegant car at his disposal so as to enable him to travel all over the country and disseminate propaganda for Russian orthodoxy. But since he was not particularly successful in this undertaking, the Soviet administration in 1946 began to bring pressure to bear on the Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Theodore Romzha, in the capital, Uzhhorod, in order to force him, his priests and the faithful to join the Russian Orthodox Church. This pressure was intensified to an ever-increasing degree. A representative of the Soviet government, who travelled from Kyiv to Uzhhorod specially for this purpose, explicitly told Bishop Romzha that "there can be no Catholic Church in the Soviet Union."

On March 22, 1947, the MVD closed the largest monastery in Carpatho-Ukraine, that of the Basilian Order in Chernecha Hora near Mukachiv; all the monks were arrested as they refused to go over to Russian Orthodoxy. Like other monasteries, this monastery was later handed over to Russian Orthodox monks.

But since the majority of the population continued to adhere unwaveringly to their Catholic faith in spite of all persecutions and loyally supported their courageous Bishop Romzha, the Communists decided to get rid of him, but in a different way to what was customary in Galicia, where the arresting of the bishops evoked considerable indignation on the part of the population. The Communists now, therefore, arranged a traffic accident. On October 27, 1947, as Bishop Romzha was driving along in a horse-drawn carriage — and, incidentally, he was on the right side of the road — on his way to consecrate a church in the village of Lokhovo (near Mukachiv), his carriage was intentionally rammed by an army truck and he himself was seriously injured. Soviet soldiers, who jumped down from the truck, then beat him with the butts of their rifles and left him lying unconscious in the road, in the firm conviction that he was dead; he was later found by civilian passers-by, who took him to the

hospital in Mukachiv, where after an operation, he began to recover. On October 31st, however, the hospital staff was unexpectedly replaced by new staff, and during the night from October 31 to November 1, Bishop Romzha died, — after obviously having been poisoned by the new staff, as is corroborated by the fact that about an hour before his death a telephone inquiry came through to the hospital from Uzhhorod, as to whether the Bishop was still alive or whether he had already died.<sup>20)</sup>

After the murder of Bishop Theodore Romzha and after a still more intensified Communist propaganda campaign on behalf of Russian Orthodoxy, the Soviets on August 28, 1949, actually carried out the forcible union of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Carpatho-Ukraine with the Russian Orthodox Church; all the Ukrainian Catholic priests who refused to go over to the Russian Orthodox Church were arrested and deported to concentration camps. Here, too, the Ukrainian Catholic Church was deprived of all its rights and was declared illegal, regardless of its legally guaranteed status under the Czecho-Slovak administration (1919-1937).

On the Western border of Carpatho-Ukraine, in the district of Priashiv (Preshov), which after World War II continued to remain in the possession of the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia, the Communist administration on March 28, 1950, arrested the Ukrainian Catholic Bishop, Pavlo (Paul) Goydych, of Priashiv and completely demolished his residence; soon afterwards, his deputy, Bishop Vasyl (Basil) Hopko, was likewise arrested in Priashiv. In January 1951, a mock trial was staged against Bishop Goydych in Bratislava (Pressburg), but from the point of view of propaganda it was not a success. Bishop Goydych, who had no reason whatever to feel guilty, gave his evidence so courageously that the Communist court stopped the broadcast report of the trial and thus it had no propagandist effect whatever. For no legal reason at all and in spite of the fact that there was no incriminating evidence against him, Bishop Goydych was sentenced to imprisonment for life and died on July 19, 1960, in the Leopoldovo Prison. Thereupon, Bishop Hopko was not brought to trial before a court at all, but was simply left in a concentration camp.

On April 28, 1950, it was declared at a meeting held by Communists in Priashiv that Greek Catholic Church had ceased to exist in the diocese of Priashiv. Chronologically, this was the last of the Ukrainian Catholic dioceses to be forcibly liquidated by the Communists under the pretext of the "will of the people." With the consent of the Communist administration, the Russian Orthodox Church appropriated the entire Church property of this diocese, — churches, monasteries, schools, printing businesses, etc. The population, however, continues to adhere unwaveringly and secretly to its religious faith which is persecuted by the Communists.

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<sup>20)</sup> R. N.: *Holhota Uniyi* (9), p. 345-346.



**BISHOP**  
**JOSAPHAT KOTSYLOVSKY,**  
*Died in a Soviet prison in 1947.*



BISHOP  
GREGORY KHOMYSHYN,  
*Died in a Soviet prison in 1945.*

BISHOP  
NYKYTA BUDKA,  
*Died in Central Asian exile in 1949.*



## 5) THE BALANCE-SHEET OF VIOLENCE

As a result of the Communist persecution of religion and the Church in West Ukraine and Carpatho-Ukraine, the life of the Catholic Church there was completely disorganised. This is obvious from the following comparison of the status of the Ukrainian Catholic Church there in 1939 and its status at present<sup>21)</sup>:

<i>STATUS IN 1939</i>	<i>STATUS AT PRESENT</i>
Dioceses	5 All liquidated.
Circuits of Apostolic Administrators or Visitators ... ..	2 All liquidated.
Bishops	10 All deprived of their rank and office and arrested or deported (1 murdered, 7 died in prison).
Secular priests ... .. 2,950	About 50 per cent imprisoned (or murdered), about 20 per cent fled or hid, about 30 per cent forced to give up their religious faith.
Priests in orders ... .. 520	
Nuns ... .. 1,090	
Parishes ... .. 3,040	The majority handed over to the Russian Orthodox Church; church buildings partly used for profane purposes.
Churches and chapels ... .. 4,440	
Monasteries ... .. 195	
Ukrainian Catholic primary schools ... .. 9,900	All communised or closed down.
Ukr.-Cath. secondary schools 380	
Ukr.-Cath. colleges ... .. 56	
Ukr.-Cath. publishers ... .. 35	All liquidated or confiscated.
Ukr.-Cath. journals ... .. 38	
Other Ukrainian Catholic institutions ... .. 41	

Although the official Constitution of the Soviet Union ensures freedom of religion to all Soviet citizens (Article 123), the Soviet state power has actually deprived the population of West Ukraine and Carpatho-Ukraine of the right to follow their religious faith within the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and the latter has been liquidated by terrorist measures. In addition, a considerable part of the population, starting with the primary schools, has been forced to take part in the anti-religious atheist movement.

<sup>21)</sup> First Victims (1), p. 64-68.

### **III. THE CHURCH POLICY OF THE SOVIETS IN RECENT YEARS**

#### *1) THE REACTIVATION OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH*

During the war between the U.S.S.R. and Nazi Germany the Soviet government changed its tactics in the field of Church policy, and there were three main reasons for this:

1) neither with the aid of their atheistic propaganda nor by their terrorist measures were the Bolsheviks able to exterminate religious sentiment and faith in God among the majority of the population of the Soviet Union;

2) the demands of the war made it essential that there should be a more favourable attitude on the part of the population towards the administrative authorities;

3) the Bolshevik leaders in Moscow decided to allow the Russian Orthodox Church the right to exist, in order to make it more subservient to themselves and to use it to achieve the aims of their imperialistic policy both among the peoples in the Soviet Union who had been subjugated by Moscow and among the free peoples in other countries.

The Bolsheviks explain their political manoeuvre with the re-activation of the Russian Orthodox Church to the outside world in the usual manner, namely by distorting facts. The U.S.S.R. official for Church Affairs, G. Karpov, stated in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchy" (1948, No. 8) that "the Church in the Soviet Union, in accordance with the wish of the people, has been separated from the State for the past thirty years and enjoys complete freedom in its internal religious activity; and in this respect the mutual relations between the Church and the State are completely normal."

On the other hand, however, the chairman of the Party Executive Committee in the Council of the People's Commissars subsequent by Ministerial Council) of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), Mironov, during World War II gave a select group of the top-ranking Communist leaders in Moscow the following reasons for this tactical change in Church policy:

"Comrades," he explained, "we have had to make some concessions to believers, especially as so many of the Red Army soldiers are drawn from backward villages where religion still has a considerable hold. Also the enemy is making use of our anti-religious attitudes for propaganda purposes, and the improved relations with the Russian Church cuts the ground from under them. Then there is another important consideration: our armies soon will be moving into Slav countries which have not had the benefit of Communist education. Of what value will the Pan-Slav Committee in Moscow be if we continue the old policy with regard to the church?"

"Our new religious policy will be valuable in smashing the anti-Soviet propaganda of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and other religious groups. Therefore do not underestimate the wisdom of our Party's action. We must in the next period, take a broad view of the problem. We have the chance to draw the Orthodox Church in other countries closer to Russia and make Moscow the Third Rome."

"But Comrade Mironov," one of the men present spoke up, "isn't there a danger that the new generation, which will one day take our place, may be spoiled by religious superstition?"

"Don't worry on that score," he replied, smiling. "There is neither soil nor sap on which religion can feed in the U.S.S.R. After all, the press, theatre, radio, schools, literature — all the forces of the mind are in the Party's sole control. It's clear to everyone that young man with religious inclinations cannot possibly make a career. If he is not on our side spiritually and politically, there is no place for him. This is our supreme advantage."

"Remember, the Church is separated from the state — and the schools are in the hands of the state. The Komsomols, you may be sure, will be a stronger force than the priests. Are we such idiots that we will turn over the new generation to the priests?"<sup>22)</sup>

For these reasons the Bolshevist government allowed the Russian Orthodox Church the right to exist, inasmuch as the head of the latter in return for this concession stated that he was willing to observe the instructions of the state administration. Since then, the Russian Orthodox Church has been completely under the control of the Bolshevist government. And, as a former officer of the "Propaganda Service" of the Ministry of the Interior of the U.S.S.R., Yuriy Rastvorov, recently affirmed very rightly, it is "completely dependent on the State, and the State conducts all activities of the Church in the Soviet Union"<sup>23)</sup>.

Although the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.S.R. has a formal hierarchial system of organisation and its own religious ritual and although its functionaries formally exercise the functions of priests, it is in character not a religious institution, but a political instrument of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Bolshevist

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<sup>22)</sup> V. Kravchenko: I Chose Freedom (3), p. 432-433.

<sup>23)</sup> Sworn Testimony (12).

government, both as regards their internal and their foreign affairs. The Russian Orthodox Church has no religious authority whatever, since its bishops and its priests are not pastors in the true sense, but merely the executors of the orders issued by an atheistic state power. And what is more, some of these bishops and priests are themselves Communists and atheists in disguise. This fact is corroborated by the following incidents:

One day, a young couple went to the monastery in Chernecha Hora near Mukachiv (Carpatho-Ukraine) and asked to see the person in charge. An official of the Ministry of the Interior (MVD) of the U.S.S.R. appeared, attired in police uniform. When he learnt that the young couple had come to see him about their wedding, he left the room and returned after a little while in the role of a priest and attired in priest's robes<sup>24</sup>).

In Zabolotiv (in the district of Stanyslaviv, Western Ukraine) a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church demanded half a litre of gin from the members of his congregation before he would go to church to hold the service, — as he put it, so that the service would turn out a good one (“Ukrainisch-Katholische Korrespondenz,” No. 12-36, October 1, 1947, St. Peter, Austria).

It is hardly surprising that there are such priests as these who are recognised by the Soviet state, for the candidates for the office of priest in the Russian Orthodox Church are no better. Indeed, the Kyiv Communist daily, “Radyanska Ukrayina,” of February 16, 1957, describes them as follows:

“Two youths who were half-drunk appeared in the doorway of the X-ray room.

— We want to be X-rayed!

— Wait your turn, please, — they were told.

The two young fellows thereupon began to shout and swear and finally got violent. In fact, they carried on to such an extent that they broke the latch on the door to the X-ray room and smashed several chairs. Men of the militia (i.e. the municipal police) eventually arrested the two rowdies, who turned out to be two students at the Kyiv Theological College, Tymofiy Rodin and Oleksiy Kondryshyn.”

And the above-mentioned Yuriy Rastvorov states explicitly: “When the government permitted the Orthodox Church to operate more freely, the Church organised Seminaries, I think one or two, and a couple of people — not a couple but many people — from M.V.D. headquarters were sent to the Seminaries as students.” And he adds: “They sent officers, counter-intelligence officers, to the seminaries, and later they became bishops in many churches in the Soviet Union.”<sup>25</sup>)

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<sup>24</sup>) R. N.: Holhota Uniyi (9), p. 342.

<sup>25</sup>) Sworn Testimony (12).

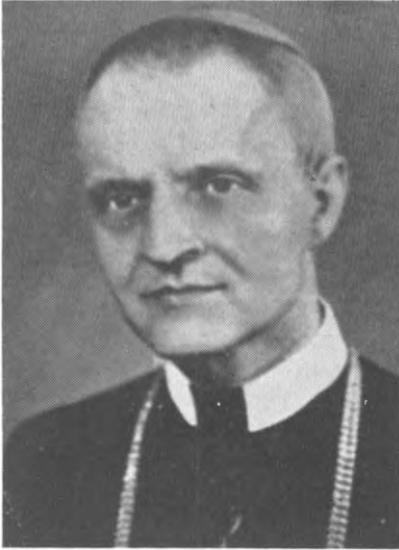


**BISHOP  
GREGORY LAKOTA,**

*Died in the Vorkuta concentration  
camp in 1950.*

**BISHOP  
JOHN LYATYSHEVSKY,**  
*Sentenced to 8 years penal servitude,  
but imprisoned for 10 years  
in Kazakhstan. Died in 1957.*





**BISHOP  
PAUL GOYDYCH,**  
*Sentenced to life imprisonment.  
Died in Leopoldovo Prison,  
Czechoslovakia, in 1960.*

**BISHOP  
BASIL HOPKO,**  
*Imprisoned in a concentration camp  
in Czechoslovakia.*



## 2) COMMUNIST MESSIANISM AND THE ADVANCE TO ATHEISM

As far as Bolshevik dominion is concerned it is actually immaterial what kind of spiritual activity the Russian Orthodox Church practises; indeed, it is of advantage to the Communists if this Church, as a result of the activity and conduct of its bishops and priests, compromises itself and religion, since in this way it facilitates the task of atheistic propaganda amongst the population.

Bolshevik state power is only concerned with seeing that the Russian Orthodox Church, controlled by this same power, influences the orthodox-minded population of the U.S.S.R. in the direction of Bolshevik interests, russifies the religious life of the Ukrainian people and of other non-Russian peoples in the Soviet Union and also spreads Moscow's influence abroad. From the point of view of Russian imperialistic policy a particularly important task of the Russian Orthodox Church consists in isolating the population of the U.S.S.R. and, above all, of Ukraine from the West spiritually, that is to say to cut them off from the influence of Western ideas and culture and from the true conception of religious faith and of national and individual freedom. Thus, as far as the Bolsheviks are concerned, the Russian Orthodox Church in its actual function is merely an instrument to consolidate their dominion over the peoples of the Soviet Union and of the satellite states and a means by which to realise the plans of Soviet Russian political expansion.

The Russian Communist leaders have adopted their Messianist programme from tsarist Russia and have expanded it considerably. In former times this programme of Russian Messianism, known as Pan-Slavism, was limited to the Slav peoples. In theory Pan-Slavism aimed to effect the union of all Slavs and the liberation of all the Slav peoples who were still under the dominion of Austria-Hungary and Turkey. In practice, however, the case was very different. The Russians endeavoured to liberate Slav peoples only for the purpose of incorporating them in the Russian empire and under Russian rule. In this way Russia wanted to extend her dominion to the countries of Central Europe and, via the Balkans, to gain control of the Mediterranean coast.

The Russian Communists by resorting to the watchwords of the international unity and solidarity of the proletariat have now encompassed all the peoples with their Bolshevik Messianism. For forty years Communist Moscow has been disseminating propaganda for the "liberation of all peoples from the capitalistic yoke" and is now aiming to rule the whole world, after it has succeeded in the past conquering almost all the Slav countries (with the exception of Yugoslavia) and many other countries, too (Hungary, Rumania, Albania, Northeast Prussia and the three Baltic states), and has managed to extend the government and administration practices of Bolshevik doctrine to the Chinese mainland (including Tibet), North Korea, North Vietnam and East Germany.

In connection with these far-reaching plans of the Russian Communists regarding the conquest of the world, the Russian Orthodox Church also furthers its own Messianist claims, namely to elevate Moscow above Rome, that is to make Moscow a religious world-centre. Since time immemorial the Russians have always manifested a hostile attitude to Rome, the apostolic capital of the Catholic Church confessions, since they are of the opinion that the leadership over all the Christians in the world should belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. Bolshevist state power tolerates the Messianism of the Russian Orthodox Church, since this trend helps it to extend its political influence in the free countries of the world still further.

The representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church actively support the so-called "peace campaigns" of Moscow at world congresses and establish contacts with other ecclesiastical organisations in the world which Russian Communist foreign policy could not reach by direct means. The Russian Orthodox Church helps red Moscow's ideological influence to infiltrate imperceptibly into these organisations by arousing sympathy in the world for the alleged "religious rebirth" in the U.S.S.R. and by endeavouring in this way to influence public opinion favourably as regards the Bolshevist regime prevailing in the Soviet Union, its "liberal" home policy and the its "peace-loving" foreign policy.

But however eagerly the Russian Orthodox Church fawns on the Bolsheviks, it is only tolerated by them in so far as they need it at the present time. Fundamentally, the Bolsheviks have not changed their atheistic programme at all. And this is proved by the following facts:

1) Paragraph 58 (Article 10) of the Criminal Code of the U.S.S.R., which stipulates that "religious propaganda" shall be severely punished, still holds good; but the fact that it is not applied at present with regard to the Russian Orthodox Church merely proves that the Bolsheviks in the present situation wish it to continue to exist, since this is to their political advantage. But the Bolshevist state power only allows the Russian Orthodox Church to exist within certain limits. The legal conditions which exist in the Soviet Union with regard to the Church are described as follows by a member of the Supreme Federal Court of the U.S.A., Williams O. Douglas, who has visited the U.S.S.R.:

"The Soviets confiscated all church property, taking title to all land and buildings. The churches occupy the property merely at the sufferance of the government."

"The church is not juridical person in Soviet law. That is to say, the church cannot defend its property rights in the courts nor receive bequest under wills. (Soviet courts have winked at that prohibition by recognizing bequests made to ministers or priests.)"

"The church is subject to the income tax, paying 13 per cent of all its revenues to the state."

"The youth of Russia are taught that religion is evil, that atheism is the true faith. These teachings are dinned into their ears, beginning with the nursery."

"The state has destroyed the pulpit, as we of the West know it. Today no priest, no minister would dare preach social justice from his pulpit, except and unless the social justice he championed fits precisely the Communist pattern."<sup>20</sup>)

2) The Bolsheviks have by no means renounced atheism as their ideological basic principle, and they continue their anti-religious propaganda quite officially, but merely in a different form, with new methods, more skilfully and less demonstratively. The fact that the aims of the Bolsheviks in this respect have remained unchanged is, for instance, corroborated by the officious journal "Sovietskaya Pedagogika" ("Soviet Pedagogics") of May 1955, — that is to say already in the post-Stalinist era under the present "collective dictatorship" of Khrushchev in the Kremlin. In the said issue of this journal the following basic and current instructions are given for Soviet teachers:

"The Soviet school, as an instrument of Communist training, must adopt an uncompromising attitude towards religion. But there can be nothing more harmful than to combat religion by ridicule, application of force or official pressure, which is what still occurs in some schools even nowadays. This only makes religious-minded parents hostile towards the school. The pupils must be warned not to behave in a tactless manner towards priests, since this is only likely to increase the biased opinion of the orthodox-minded... Pedagogic and educational work is to be carried out in such a way that all the pupils become capable of resisting all religious influence. But this is not all. The Soviet school must instil into the children an uncompromising hostility towards religion as well as the desire to combat religion. It is also the duty of the school to train conscious and completely convinced atheists... Religion is the strongest remnant of capitalistic ideology and the most powerful weapon of capitalistic circles. In our country there are thousands of religious functionaries engaged in preserving and spreading religious prejudices. But there is no reason to hope that religion will die out of its own accord, and we must therefore interfere with it and accelerate its annihilation."

Bolshevist power is thus merely juggling with a relative freedom of religion, for actually it has not given up the fight against religion; on the contrary, it has recently intensified it. It is true that the Bolsheviks have conceded the Russian Orthodox Church a certain right of existence, but only under the complete control of the state administrative system. Just as the Patriarch of this Church, as far as all ecclesiastical matters are concerned, is subordinated to a Communist Party official — the President of the Council for Religious Cults under the Ministerial Council of the U.S.S.R., so, too,

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<sup>20</sup>) Russian Journey, by William O. Douglas (13), p. 193-194.

are the bishops subordinated to Communist Party officials, the authorised regional functionaries of this same Council. So-called religious freedom exists in the U.S.S.R. in order to pacify the orthodox-minded population a little, but, above all, in order to deceive the West, to demonstrate the new "liberal" course of Soviet home policy to the world and to be able to show Western tourists a small number of churches which have been reopened, — an unusual occurrence in Soviet reality.

If there really were a genuine freedom of religion in the U.S.S.R., then Ukrainian bishops and priests would not have been imprisoned or deported, nor would the Ukrainian Catholic Church have been forbidden and forced to exist underground; if there really were such a genuine freedom of religion, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church would be allowed to exist side by side with the official Russian Orthodox Church.

The population of Ukraine, however, wants to have its own Church. And the youth of Ukraine is courageous enough to defend religious faith openly. In a letter to the editor of the Kyiv Bolshevik periodical "Molod' Ukrainy" ("The Youth of Ukraine"), which was published in issue No. 65 of April 2, 1957, a young Ukrainian of the village of Hraniv (in the district of Vinnytsia) writes as follows: "I have read numerous articles in your organ, in which you talk about the alleged "opium" — religion, and maliciously attack decent-living Christians, and I have decided to write to you in order to make it clear to you that not we, the faithful, are living under the spell of an opium, but you, the unbelieving. In writing this, I refer to the prophecies of Our Lord and to the writings of the Prophets and Apostles. In every way you scorn all that is most valuable in mankind, — religious faith, by ascribing to religion much that it does not preach. What are the best qualities in a good person? Faith, hope and charity. You affirm that we do not know truth. We know truth. Read our Creed and your eyes will be opened!"

But the Bolshevik state power, as usual, completely ignores the voice and the will of the people and realises Soviet "religious freedom" in practice by continuing to arrest the Ukrainian priests and the faithful who are endeavouring to obtain the legal recognition of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, that is to say the permission for it to exist openly. Thus the above-mentioned American judge, William O. Douglas, is perfectly right when he affirms, on the strength of his own personal observations, that religion is suppressed in the Soviet Union and that the state continues to introduce atheism in spite of the fact that the majority of the population is striving to preserve religious faith. He writes as follows:

"Once there were tsars in the Kremlin who oppressed the people. The people withstood the oppression and continued to worship Christ the King. There are new dictators in the Kremlin. But Christ continues to live on in the hearts of the people."<sup>27</sup>)

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<sup>27</sup>) Ibid. (13), p. 205.



**BISHOP**  
**NICHOLAS CHARNETSKY,**  
*Imprisoned for ten years. Died in 1959.*



BISHOP  
THEODORE ROMZHA,  
(1911-1947)

*Catholic Bishop of Uzhorod (1944-1947), Carpatho-Ukraine.  
Martyred by the Communists during his Pastoral duties ,  
October 27 - November 1, 1947.*

The above facts prove that, although the Communist leaders in the U.S.S.R. have changed their tactics with regard to religion and the Church, and although they are using the Russian Orthodox Church for the purposes of Bolshevik home and foreign policy, they still continue to adhere unchangeably to the principles of atheism and to endeavour as obstinately as ever to destroy true religious faith. But the Bolsheviks will never succeed in doing so, for "The spirit of Christ will live on after the names of the dictators are forgotten"<sup>28</sup>). The free states of the world, however, should not look on indifferently whilst Communism violates the conscience of mankind, but should, in the name of the United Nations Charter, expose the anti-religious tyranny of the Communists and should make it their business to act as the protectors of the subjugated people of Ukraine and of all the other peoples enslaved by Moscow.

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<sup>28</sup>) Ibid., p. 205.

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