

White Book

on the religious persecution

in Ukraine

First victims  
of Communism



Rome 1953

# **F i r s t v i c t i m s o f C o m m u n i s m**

**White Book on the religious persecution  
in Ukraine**

**(Translated from the Italian)**

**A. P.**

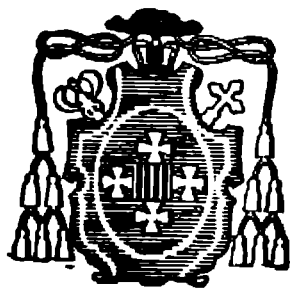
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*With Ecclesiastical Approbation*

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This present « Withe Book » has been composed by the Ukrainian Catholic priests resident in Rome. It has been revised, corrected and verified by competent ecclesiastical authorities, and has been printed under the direction of the same priests.

Published by « *Analecta O.S.B.M.* » - Rome



**VISITATOR APOSTOLICUS**  
**pro Ucrainis Catholicis**  
**in Europa Occidentali**

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**P R E F A C E**

*To the countless ranks of the martyrs in the first three centuries of the Church of Christ each subsequent epoch has added its own, for in every epoch the prophecy of Jesus has been verified in one place or another: « If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you » (John XV, 20).*

*« In our days — as the Holy Father states in his latest Encyclical of December 15, 1952, « Orientales Ecclesias » — and perhaps more than in the past centuries, the Church of Jesus Christ, and in particular its ministers are subjected to persecution, lies, calumnies, and affliction of every kind ».*

*Among the 60,000,000 Catholics who today are suffering under the Communist yoke of Moscow, the first were 5,000,000 Ukrainian Catholics who in the defense of the faith had to endure suffering, mourning, and injury. The first victims of the terrible persecution were ten Ukrainian Catholic Bishops. « Some of them — continues the Holy Father in the same Encyclical — have already gone to meet a glorious death, and therefore, as may be hoped, from their*

*place in Heaven, turn their eyes with great love upon their sons and companions in the struggle, and implore for them the most powerful help of God ».*

*The « White Book on the Religious Persecution in the Ukraine » which we present to our kind readers, speaks of the martyrdom of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, of its pastors - Bishops and priests, as well of its faithful, true heroes of the faith in these years since the war.*

*As an introduction, for the sake of information, we have added a brief historical outline of this people « more dear than ever » to the paternal heart of the Holy Father, perhaps because so unfortunate through the course of their history, a people suffering for centuries for the cause of Church unity.*

*The sad events of their history were until the present little known; « Fecit, cui prodest », so that the truth may not be known. But the Holy Father, the Common Father of all Christians, defender of the oppressed, and guardian of the truth, has now for the second time since the War by means of two Encyclicals « Orientales Omnes » and « Orientales Ecclesias », drawn the attention of faithful Christians of the whole world to the tragic condition of the Ukrainian Church, and asks the help of prayers united to His own continuous holy prayers amidst « tears which He cannot restrain in such bitter grief ».*

*We cherish the hope that all the Catholics of the world responding devotedly and generously to the august exhortation of the Holy Father, shall raise to the Lord fervent prayers to obtain the liberation of the Ukrainian people from their extreme anguish, so that after the Calvary of today there may follow as quickly as possible the moment propitious for the canticle of the Resurrection.*

Rome,

January 16, 1953.

J. BUCHKO  
Tit. Bishop of Cadi  
Apostolic Visitor

# HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

## ***Christianity and Catholicism in Ukraine (988-1917)***

The origins of Christianity in Ukraine (1) are hidden in the dimness of the ninth century. About this time the new principality of Kiev (Kyiv) began entering into close political and commercial relations with Byzantium. These contacts with the Greeks, as well as with other Slavic people already converted to Christianity, contributed immensely to the propagation of the faith among the Ukrainian people.

The first converts were soldiers of the ruling princes, and merchants trading with foreign countries. However, these were not too numerous. One learns from their history that in the first part of the tenth century a notable number of Christians swore to maintain the peace treaty in the Church of Saint Elias in Kiev, when Prince Ihor concluded a treaty with the Greeks (944).

Princess Olha wife of Prince Ihor, became queen after the death of her husband, and was the first of the reigning family to

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(1) At the beginning of the year 1939 Ukraine had a surface area of 742,000 km<sup>2</sup>, with 49,000,000 inhabitants (cfr. *Encyclopedia-Ukrainian*, München-New York, vol. 1, p. 23) All the Ukrainians in the world, according to the statistics of the year 1932, were 45,000,000. That is, 39,340,000 Orthodox, 5,160,000 Catholics, and about 500,000 of other religions. Cfr. *Statistica della Gerarchia e dei fedeli de rito orientale*, Roma, 1932.

The ethnographic territory of Ukraine extends from the western slopes of the middle ranges of the Carpathian mountains to the marshes of Pripet, on the western and northern boundaries, facing on its southern boundaries the Black Sea on one side, near the mouth of Danube, and the outskirts of Caucasus, on other side. It was not, however, entirely incorporated within the actual Soviet Republic of Ukraine, even after the territorial expansion of this Republic that took place with the annexation of Western Ukraine up to the so called Curzon Line, and Carpathian Ukraine. A broad strip of southern Ukrainian territory, not to mention Crimea and Kuban, remain always annexed to the Russian Soviet Republic. Cfr.: *In Difesa del Cattolicesimo Ucraino*, Roma, 1946.

embrace the Christian religion. Her subjects, the Boyars, followed her example in large numbers. Later her grandson, Prince Vladimir the Great (972-1015), decided to extend the Christian faith to the entire population of his state. In the year 988 all the people in the capital were officially and collectively baptized in the Dnieper river in the presence of Prince Vladimir, his family, his court, and the clergy.

From this moment the Christian faith began to spread throughout the whole land, casting its influence on the daily life of Ukraine, transforming it into a stronghold of Christianity. From here it radiated the faith to the neighboring countries to the East and North.

Through Ukraine, the religion of Christ was diffused in the boundless regions of the North, where later the principality of Moscow (cradle of the future Russian Empire) was formed.

Stories of contacts between Rome and Ukraine are based on legends dating back to Saint Andrew the Apostle, brother of Saint Peter, who, supposedly, made a journey across the Rus-Ukrainian territory, and, planting a cross on the banks of the Dnieper river, predicted the rise of the Ukrainian capital, Kiev. After centuries of Germanic (Goths, Vandals) and Mongolian invasions, even before the foundation of the Christian Ukrainian State under Prince Vladimir the Great (972-1015), Ukraine knew Rome through the Pontifical Legations (974-977) and her first Bishop-Apostle, Saint Adalbert. Once they had embraced Christianity in the Byzantine rite, the Ukrainian people never ceased turning towards the West. Often exchanged Legations (991-992-993, 1000-1001, 1008, c.) maintaining alive the influence of the Church of Rome. When the successor of Yaroslav the Wise (1017-1654), Izyaslav-Demetrius, was dethroned by his two brothers, he turned to the great Pope Gregory VII, who in the years 1075, received his son, Yaropolk-Peter. This prince placed his father's kingdom in the hands of the Vicar of Christ and then accepted it from the same Pope. From the end of the year 1054 on, the Catholic spirit of the Ukrainians was threatened by the menace of the schism of Michael Cerularius, introduced by the metropolitans, bishops and Greek monks sent from Byzantium. The native Ukrainian clergy, with the help and support of the princes and the faithful, kept its contacts with the



*His Holiness Pope Pius XII*  
*Defender of Christianity*



West unaltered. But, unfortunately, the tremendous Mongolian invasions in the thirteenth century, followed by the Kiev massacres in 1240, the decimation of the population, the fall of the kingdom and Ukrainian independence, paved the way for schism. Only the princes of Western Ukraine were able to save Galicia and Volyn where the young Prince Daniel succeeded in stemming the disastrous incursion of the Mongols. He had received moral encouragement from the Ecumenical Council of Lyon (1245), where, through the representative of the Ukrainian Episcopate, Peter, he presented an exact picture of the imminent danger which threatened all Europe. In 1253, Pope Innocent IV, from Rome, offered the royal crown to the courageous Prince (1253); and his successors did all in their power to maintain relations with the West. This was very difficult because of the « Iron Curtain » of the times set up by the Mongolian anti-European policy, imposed upon the captive populations — the enslaved satellites of the strong and powerful Grand Khan of the Mongols.

The Mongolian domination in Ukraine brought sorrowful consequences. Completely weakened, she was unable to recover the strength necessary to re-establish her independence. Therefore the Ukrainian princes sought allies in Lithuania in order to resist the assaults of the Mongolian and Tartar hordes. The Lithuanians became masters of the territory in Western Ukraine, and became strongly influenced by the culture of Kiev. In the meantime, Casimir, king of Poland, joined forces with Hungary, and taking advantage of the enfeebled condition of the Ukrainians, conquered Galicia in the year 1349.

The contact with Poland brought to the Ukrainian people a still greater influence from the West.

But Poland, as the occupying force, did not desire the Ukrainian Christians of the Oriental rite to integrate themselves into the structure of the European Catholic world, thus pushing the people, and the clergy always nearer the schismatic East, where, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Moscow obtained supremacy.

The repeated efforts of the Ukrainian Hierarchy to escape schism proved to be futile. Only after the conference held at the end of the fourteenth century, due to the efforts of the Metropolitan

Gregory at the Council of Constance (1415-1416), was the Union of the Church finally accomplished. They adopted the proposal which Isidore, Metropolitan of Kiev, had fervently advocated at the Council of Florence (1439). Following the Council, Isidore became a most zealous defender and promotor of the Union. As a result of these activities he was imprisoned in Moscow from where he escaped and fled to Rome. There, invested as Cardinal, he continued to direct the struggle for the Union. Nevertheless, the political opposition and persecution of the occupying forces doomed the great victory in Florence to failure. The Church of Ukraine fell into an abyss of decay from where, persistently, she sent forth an imploring call to Rome for help (1476-1501).

At last, from these depths, the entire Episcopate turned towards Rome, and in the years 1595-1596, concluded the famous Union of Berestya, extended afterwards to all Ukrainian territory. Pope Clement VIII, during various audiences in the years 1595-1596, received the emissaries of the Ukrainian Bishops (Potij, Terletskyj). Then during the eighteenth century, through heroic efforts and constant contact with the Holy See of Saint Peter and the frequent visits of metropolitans, bishops, religious, procurators of the Ukrainian Church in Rome, and the students of the Roman Colleges, the Oriental Catholic Church of Ukraine was finally re-established and returned once more to its golden epoch. The three centuries following the year 1596 are one prolonged hymn to the Unity of the Church and to the Vicar of Christ — successor of Peter. The ageless story is written in the blood of the faithful of Ukraine.

During this glorious period, there were many martyrs for the cause of the Union, of which the most eminent is Saint Josaphat, Archbishop of Polock (martyred in 1623). The Muscovite emperors persecuted and shed the innocent blood of Ukrainian Catholics with their own hands (for instance, Peter I at Polock 1705). After Peter the First, who died in 1725, Ukrainian Catholicism suffered particularly under Catherine II (1763-1796), Nicholas I (1825-1855), and Alexander II (1855-1881), that is, when Poland, the occupying force in Ukraine, lost its prestige as a great power and was divided among the three neighboring empires: Moscow, Prussia, Austria, 1772, 1793, 1795.

The greater part of Ukrainian territory passed under the regime of Moscow which, after this victory, appropriated to itself the name of Russia, a name taken from an antique Ukrainian denomination, « Rus ». In the course of a single century of Muscovite rule (1772-1875) Ukrainian Catholicism was almost completely destroyed by the drastic methods of bureaucracy, the police, and public taxes. Only that portion under the denomination of Austria, from 1772, remained Catholic. There the Ukrainian Catholics, after an initial weakening caused by government reforms, developed into a real ecclesiastical province with its own Metropolitan at Lviv, capital of Western Ukraine (Galicia). This group of more than five million Catholic Ukrainians, in spite of numerous internal and external difficulties, sustained its allegiance to the Catholic Church, especially during the World War (1914-1918), despite the attacks of Russia. This was the last of czarist Russia's assaults on Ukrainian Catholicism, for in 1917 the White danger ceased and gave place to the Red (2).



*Cathedral of St. John the Baptist  
(Pryashiv)*

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(2) A.G.W., Roma e Ucraina, « Osservatore Romano » no. 229, 30th of September, 1950, p. 4.

# I

## THE UKRAINIANS IN CONTACT WITH COMMUNISM (1917 - 1952)

### **1) *Destruction of organized Ukrainian society - The State (-1925)***

The revolution which broke out in March, 1917, in Petrograd immediately extended to subjugated Ukraine. Towards the middle of March, 1917, at Kiev, capital of Ukraine, the « Ukrajinska Centralna Rada » (national parliament) was constituted. It met in Kiev, March 20, 1917, and began at once to form a new government and organize the life of the autonomous State of Ukraine. The people recognized it as legitimately representing the Nation, and as the expression of their freedom. Although the heads of the anti-Czarists at Petrograd did not abandon the imperialistic aims of the Czar, yet understanding the situation, the « Provisional government » began negotiating with Kiev for an eventual agreement.

Ukraine, in this period, accepted to be an autonomous state, within a federation including all the people of the Czars ex-empire, where as Petrograd recognized only a single autonomy, and was contrary to any form of federation. As a compromise, a « de facto » autonomy was established, though with limited powers. Meanwhile the « Provisional government » at Petrograd fell on October 25, and the Bolsheviks took possession.

Thus the « Centralna Rada », freed from its obligations to the « government », launched the « III Universal » (appeal), and proclaimed the Republic of Ukraine. A little later, that is, January 22, 1918, with the « IV Universal » (appeal), it proclaimed full

independence. In the meantime various revolutionary Soviet committees sprang up, and invoked the aid of the armed Bolsheviks in Petrograd to destroy the legitimate national Ukrainian government.

In November, 1918, Bolshevik armed forces, without declaring war, penetrated Ukraine. Moscow answered the remonstrances of Kiev by pretending entire ignorance of the action, asserting that the Red troops depended on the Ukrainian Soviet government (3). Later, on December 24, Soviet Russia refused to recognize Ukrainian sovereignty. The Commissary for the people of Foreign Affairs made known that «after the annulment of the peace treaty of Berestya », it proposed to cancel immediately all decrees regarding the ex-citizens, and consider invalid all the documents issued by the Ukrainian government(4). These proclamations were followed by violence, and Russian Soviet troops entered the territory of the Ukrainian Republic by force, some time before the formal declaration of war, January 16, 1919. The young Republic of Ukraine, notwithstanding the heroism and valor of her officers and soldiers, fell into the hands of the phantom Soviet Ukrainian government imported from abroad (5). The Bolsheviks immediately took political advantage of their military success, and imposed on Ukraine the Soviet rule already in vigor in Moscow.

A so-called Congress of the Soviets of Ukraine, formed and controlled by Moscow, on March 10, proclaimed Ukraine as a «free and independent State »» with a Soviet Constitution. But already on the following May - 18, 1920, the Executive Central Committee of the Social Soviet Republic of Ukraine was deliberating the federation with the R.S.F.S.R. (6).

In theory Ukraine had been promised sovereignty and independence: she could maintain and direct diplomatic relations with foreign countries, and maintain her own army, declare war or conclude peace, have her own monetary system etc. In reality the Communist government of Moscow directly controlled the organi-

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(3) With headquarters in Kharkiv.

(4) Bondioli R.. «Ucraina - La terra martire ed indoma », Rome, 1939, p. 104.

(5) The Ukrainians had also to resist two czarist generals, Denikin and Wrangel who were approaching from the south..

(6) Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

zation and command of the army, the national economy, the railroads, and finances (7). Under these conditions independence was a mere mockery.

As soon as the new constitution of the U.S.S.R. was approved (January 31, 1924), the IX Congress of the Soviet Ukraine revoked its own constitution and accepted the one drawn up by the Kremlin (May 10, 1925). This new constitution, in fact, gave to the U.S.S.R. authority over all international relations, modification of the frontiers, declaration of war and conclusion of peace, stipulations of international contracts, organization of the army, the state budget, the monetary system, organization of credit, concessions, taxes, transports, post and telegraph, civil and penal legislation, and labor. What remained of the Republic of Ukraine?

## **2) Destruction of the predominant class in Ukraine - Landowners (-1935)**

With the suppression of Ukrainian sovereignty and independence as a State, the Bolsheviki began to concentrate on its physical and spiritual destruction, forcefully merging the innumerable races within the Soviet Union into a single Soviet people. Ukraine's wealth depended upon the agricultural classes, and above all, upon the cultivation of wheat. Thus in the years 1921-22, following the military and revolutionary destructions, (and also disasters from natural causes, when wheat, vital basis of Ukraine's prevailing agricultural class had failed), Moscow seized this opportunity to exterminate the class of small and medium farmers who had been for centuries the support and defence of national Ukrainian independence (8). Because of this reason, the poor and famished were prevented from receiving help from Europe or America; in fact, the Soviet Union, as an economic unit, exported food supplies from the regions stricken with famine. Foreign witnesses can testify that

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(7) Bondioli R., *Ucraina*, p. 104.

(8) D'Herbigny M., « L'aide Pontificale aux enfants affamés de Russie », in « *Orientalia Christiana* », vol. IV-1, No. 14, April-May, 1925, p. 6. Cfr. AAS, XIII, 1, 1921, no. 11, p. 428; *Bulletin of the Lviv Archdiocese*, XXXVI, no. 2, June 30, 1923; *Bulletin of the Peremyshl Diocese*. no. 3, 1923, p. 38-39.

in the years 1921-1922, in many cities of Ukraine (for example Kherson), more than 85 % of the inhabitants died of hunger (9).

But the farming population could not be destroyed so easily. After the famine came the « New political economy » (N.E.P.) and a renewal of the weakened forces. The Ukrainian farmers objected to becoming again the land slaves of the new leaders who, for this reason instituted the so-called « collectivization » from 1929-1932, determining to eliminate the well-to-do farmers (called « Kurkuls »); their slogan was: « suppression of the Kurkuls as a class ». This actually meant the physical extermination of an immense number of honest laborers of the soil, and above all, the persecution of Ukrainian farmers, the mainstay of national independence. This suppression of the « Kurkuls » as a class signified in fact, the suppression of Ukraine as a nation, for 70 % of Ukraine's population was composed of independent farmers.

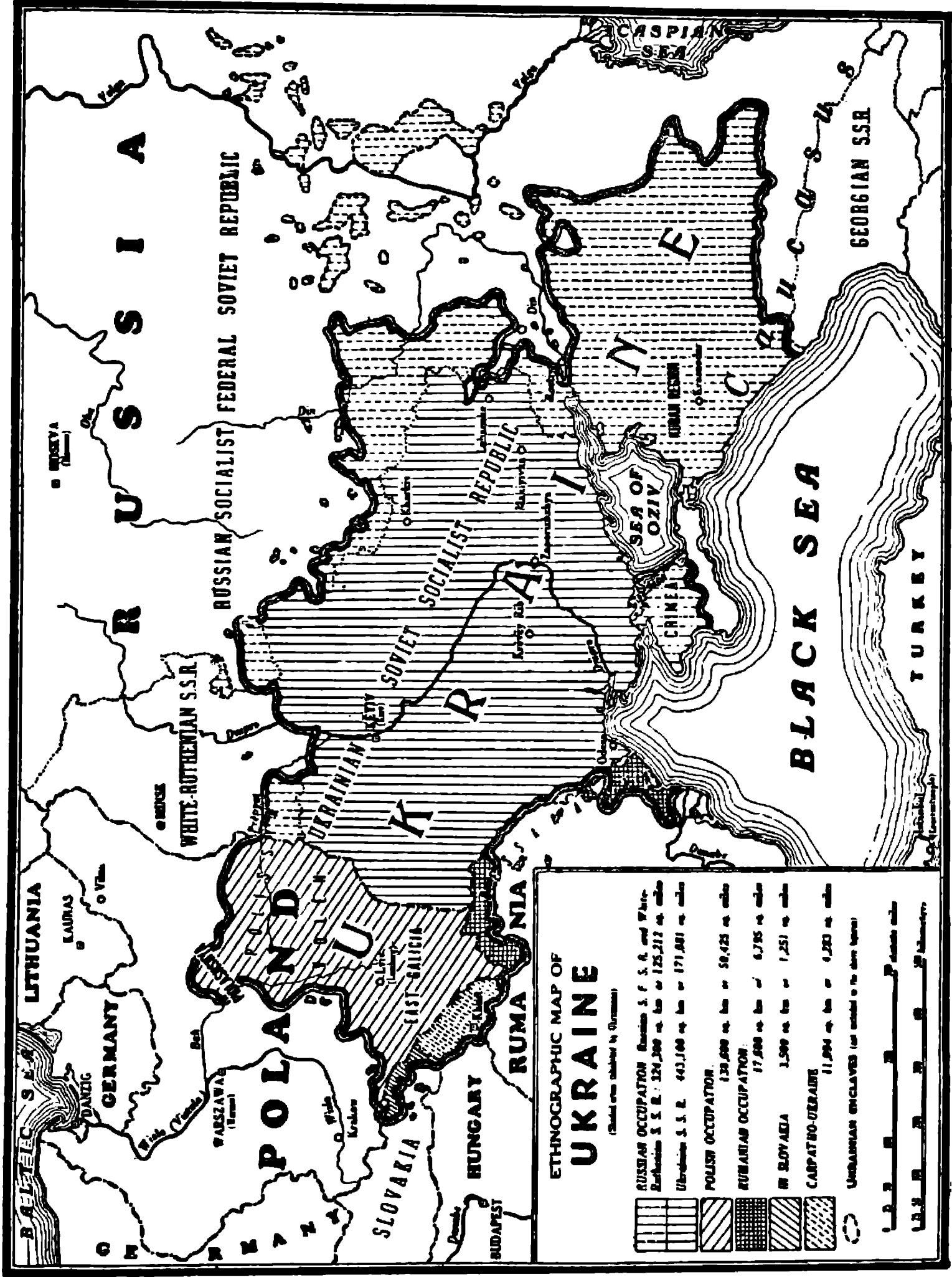
Following this decree, millions of Ukrainians were annihilated, and not only the « Kurkuls », but also the intellectual proletariat and workmen. The elimination of the « Kurkuls » in Ukraine was motivated by political and national, not social reasons. The « obstinate » were exiled to Siberia and the far North. They were literally uprooted from their native soil, sent away with their elders and children, insulted, reviled, and slandered in words and in print. At Taiga and Tundra, in the frozen Pechora or at Murmansk, they were abandoned to the mercy of the climate and unutterable privations (10).

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(9) *Ukrainska Zahalna Encyklopedia (Ukrainian General Encyclopedia)*, Vol. III, call. 639.

(10) The appeal of the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Galicia to all men of good will, to draw the attention of world to the atrocities in Eastern Ukraine under the Bolshevik yoke, *Pravda (Truth)*, XII, No. 30, July 30, 1933.

« Ukraine is in agony. The people are dying from hunger. The anthropophagous system of state capitalism based on injustice, deceit, atheism and corruption, has brought the rich country to complete ruin. His Holiness, Pius XI, the visible Head of the Catholic Church, has protested emphatically against everything that in Bolshevism opposes Christianity, God, and human nature, and warned the whole Catholic world of the terrifying consequences of such crimes. With this protest we concur. We already see the consequences of the Communist regime: each day it becomes more frightening. The sight of these crimes horrifies human nature and makes one's blood run cold. Being unable to extend material aid to our dying brothers, we implore the faithful to beseech from Heaven by their prayers, fasts, mortifications and all other works, divine



**ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP OF UKRAINE OF 1939**

(From: *Ukraine. A Series of seven Radio Addresses* given by Prof. W. Simpson, Saskatoon 1939)



In that period, there was a great loss both of human life and the rich produce of the earth. But despite this appalling tragedy, the people did not collapse either physically or morally. The immediate consequences of this entire tragedy were: a) national revival; b) economic ruin and famine on a national scale that could easily have been averted in an economic entity such as the U.S.S.R.

The Famine of 1932-33, was organized as a means of breaking the backbone of the nation. Its aim was to destroy the lower and middle agricultural class; and on the ruins of the traditional system, to create a state-production of wheat based, not on the work of farmers, but on machines.

The industrialization of the country was enforced at all costs and with a criminal waste of human life. In this way it was hoped to crush the moral resistance of the Ukrainian people against the new regime, and render them docile and obedient to the Kremlin.

Masses of Ukrainian farmers perished before the eyes of the whole world: entire villages and regions were wiped out. More than five million people were inhumanly exterminated in this way

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assistance. Furthermore we protest before the whole world against the persecution of children, the poor, the sick and the innocent. On the other hand, we summon the persecutors before the Tribunal of almighty God. The blood of famished and enslaved laborers who till the soil of Ukraine, - cries to heaven for vengeance, and the plaint of the half - starved reapers has reached God in Heaven. We implore the Christians of the world, all those who believe in God, and especially all our fellow - countrymen, to unite with us in protest to make known our grief even in the most remote corners of the earth. We also ask all the radio stations to broadcast our voice to the whole world; perhaps it may also reach the impoverished, desolate homes of the famine-stricken and the persecuted. Thus at least the thought that they are remembered and pitied by their brothers far away, and supported by their prayers, may be a consolation to them amidst untold sufferings and imminent death. And all you, the suffering, the famished and the dying, pray to the Merciful Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Accept these sufferings in atonement for your sins and the sins of the world, repeating with Our Lord: « Thy will be done, o heavenly Father ». Death voluntarily accepted from the hands of God is an holy offering which, united with the sacrifice of Christ, will lead you to Paradise and bring salvation for all the people. Let our hopes be in the Lord ».

Given in Lviv, on the Feast of St. Olga, July, 1933.

† Andrew Sheptytskyj, Metropolitan

† Gregory Khomyshyn, Bishop of Stanyslaviv

† Josaphat Kotsylovskyj, Bishop of Peremyshl

† Gregory Lakota, Auxiliary Bishop of Peremyshl

† Niceta Budka, Tit. Bishop of Patara

† John Buchko, Auxiliary Bishop of Lviv

† John Latyshevskyj, Auxiliary Bishop of Stanyslaviv

and all foreign aid was blocked. Stores overflowed with Ukrainian wheat—but was denied to the Ukrainians themselves. Meanwhile the Bolsheviks were conquering European and world markets with the produce of Ukrainian soil, creating real « dumpings », inciting the Chinese revolution, and promoting in other countries the evil Communist campaign.

Untold suffering brought the Ukrainians to the very limits of human tragedy-cannibalism. Innumerable documents and eye witnesses can testify to the heart-rending scenes of hunger that perhaps may more clearly explain this sad and frightful page in Ukraine's history. Statistics would demonstrate that in 15 years (1920-1935) the landowners, the stronghold of Ukrainian society, were considerably weakened physically and morally. The decrees of the first Five-Year Plan show undoubtedly on what direction his policy was tending.

Thus in July, 1929, with the decree, « New Methods for directing Industry », the Ukrainian Industrial trusts were suppressed, and all organizations were absorbed by the pan-unionistic formations. The Commissariat of the People for Agriculture in the U.S.S.R. was created by the decree of November, 1929, and completely absorbed the Ukrainian Commissariat.

### **3) Destruction of the Ukrainian individual - The Elite (-1939)**

The former ruling and intellectual classes in Ukraine were destroyed during the period of the revolution and civil war (1917-1921). The new men who emerged during the period of national liberation and sovereignty of Ukraine were obliged, after the defeat, either to seek refuge in the West (through emigration), or form part of the new mode of life begun in the years 1920-1925, i.e. the period of the so-called « Ukrainization ». The « Ukrainization », directed by the Kremlin, disoriented many of the intellectuals. It was hoped that, despite the hardships of the civil war, eventually freedom of life and fuller national development could be obtained. But this brief dream was followed by a crude and dreadful awakening. The famine of 1921-1922, the « collectivizations » and « in-

dustrializatioms », were clear warnings to the ruling class within and without the Ukrainian Communist party.

During this time there was born in the wery heart of the Communist party a new reactionary movement directed against the tyranny of Moscow; it was a strong and decisive revindication of Ukrainian rights. This group headed by Shumskyj, Maksymovych, Khvylovyj, and Volobujev, assumed a position of hostility toward Muscovite centralization, favoring independence. A reign of terror, a succession of purges, began in 1933, directed against party members also. These purges were caused only by deviations from Marxism, as is shown by the statistics of those « purged ». In one year, 1933, 27,000 of the 125,000 Communist card-holding members were expelled. 1,300 members of Communist youth organizations were driven out and with them: 240 secretaries of the provincial committees; 250 heads of Executive Committees; 150 leaders of the Commission for Control; 1000 functionaries of the Commissariat for Public Instruction; 2000 employed in the Cooperatives; 300 professors.

In the year 1934, out of 267,000 members of the party, 51,712 were expelled for being nationalists. Thus the struggle against the leading classes continued. And even in the year 1937, it was said in official Communist circles that « the war against the Ukrainian nationalists had only begun ». In 1932-1939 the Bolsheviks suppressed — « liquitated » the intellectual class of Ukrainians: scientists, writers, artists, officers; thousands upon thousands of those who formed the elite of the nation.

They were exterminated by Bolshevism in order to deprive the Ukrainian people of their leading class, their spiritual elite who defended liberty, justice, and the rights of man. Thus the most famous writers met a violent death: Kosynka, Falkivskyj, Antonenko-Davydovych, Pluznyk, Teneta, Zahul, Johansen, Kulish, Pylypenko, Slissarenko, Draj-Khmara, Brasayuk, Ivchenko Shkurupij, Vlyzko, Spol, Epyk, Pidmohylnyj, Voronyj, Zerov, and many others... Thus perished also the painters: Padalka, Sidlar, Vrona; the University professors: Hermajse, Yefremov, Doroshkevych; the generals: Yakir, Dubovyj, Tiutiunyk and others. Their numbers are as countless as the tragedy of Ukraine is profound.

- Many eminent Ukrainian communists committed suicide: the Minister of Public Instruction, Skrypnyk; the writer Khvylovyj; Lubchenko, head of the government, etc etc.

All these were ardent patriots, honest sons of workmen and farmers. Among them was also the famous author Irvian who came to Ukraine from Canada. With these, perished all those Ukrainian communists of Western Ukraine who believed in Stalin and entered the Soviet Union in order to « construct Soviet Ukraine in a fraternal alliance » with Red Moscow. They were suppressed for being Ukrainian communists. Many living witnesses could tell where such Communists as Hritsai, Badan, and Krushelnytskyj were killed. Besides the intellectuals, writers, and artists of great name, multitudes of the « intelligentsia » — anonymous and unknown — were suppressed. And all this occurred for one reason alone: they were Ukrainians, and perhaps 20 years before had manifested in some way their hostility toward the regime of Muscovite occupation. For this they were regarded as « enemies of the people », and put to death.

Considering these crimes perpetrated on the Ukrainian people and according to the Bolshevik statistics, not less than 10 million men perished between the years 1927 and 1939. According to the census of 1927, Soviet Ukraine had a population of 32 million; with the new census of 1939 the population amounted to only 28 million. Here one might note that even those condemned to death were counted, and executions deferred until after the conclusion of the census. Comparing this difference of 4 million between the census of the years 1927 and 1939, and considering the natural increase which, after 12 years, should have been at least 6 or 7 million, one arrives at the conclusion that the loss of life due to the anti-Ukrainian campaign was over 10 million.

#### **4) Destruction of Christianity in Ukraine - Ukrainian Orthodox Church (-1941)**

The year 1917, with the fall of the government of the Czars, brought enormous changes to the Ukrainian Church, both Catholic and Orthodox. The revolution had freed the Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytskyj from prison, and suspended the persecutions of the

Orthodox Church of Moscow against the Catholic Ukrainians in Galicia. The Orthodox Church of Ukraine began to acquire liberty and independence (autocephalic), supported in her efforts by the national Ukrainian government (1918-1919). In Russia, the government passed into the hands of the Communist party on October, 1917. Already in December Bolshevik Russia began a war against the Ukrainian State, and by 1920 completely subdued it. New problems confronted the Ukrainian Church, particularly with the advent of the new Communist regime. The Bolsheviks quickly attacked the Church as an institution, and in the year 1917 withdrew all its privileges. They were abolished November 1917, and on the 24th of December, of the same year, the Church was banished from the schools. On January 23, 1918, a decree was issued declaring the separation of the State and schools from the Church. This last decree dispossessed the Church of all rights of ownership, juridic powers, influence on public life, and, above all, even the right to engage in cultural activities and to promote works of charity. Finally in January, all ecclesiastical real estate, including churches and monasteries, was confiscated. The State assumed the right to rent out these ecclesiastical possessions as places of worship to religious communities comprising no less than twenty members, provided they previously obtained special permits. It also reserved to itself the right to use them for other purposes. On February 18, 1920, a Ministerial circular declared illegal all ordinances of the Episcopal Curia. Only those parishes not dependent on the bishops were permitted to function; however even these were obliged to be registered by the civil authorities (decree of August 10, 1922). In 1922, orders were issued to confiscate all possessions of the Church. The false reason given was to assist a people menaced by famine. As a result of opposition to these rapines 84 bishops and about 1000 priests were deposed or suppressed; Veniamyn, Vladimir, the Metropolitan of Kiev, and the Catholic Canon Budkevych were condemned to death. The Patriarch of Moscow was arrested. The government promoted divisions within the Orthodox Church, formed it into a tool of its own, so called the « living church » (Vvedensky, Kransnytsky, Bishop Antonin), and dispersed or arrested the bishops who dared oppose it.

The Patriarch Tychon excommunicated the leaders of the « living church ». Whereupon the « council » of that Church elected a new Patriarch designated by government: it abolished the celibacy of bishops and permitted second matrimony to priests, and instituted the « Supreme Soviet » of the church, declaring the fight against capitalism a Christian duty. After the death of Patriarch Tychon the election of a successor was prohibited. His substitutes were arrested one after the other (Peter, Sergius). In 1926 the Ukrainian Metropolitan Lypkivskyj incurred the disfavor of the Communists and consequently his followers were arrested and deposed.

Only the Patriarchal Church remained under the direction of Sergius who, freed from prison, recognized the Bolshevik government and promised full collaboration (May 20, 1927).

In Ukraine these persecutions had commenced in 1928, the legislation of the Soviet of Moscow, as regards religion, being integrally enforced. The local Communists, and above all, the Russian Communists, had every interest to destroy the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, for dating from the year 1917, this Orthodox Church had commenced openly to separate from the Patriarchal Muscovite Church (Tychon), intending in this way to free itself of Russian Domination. In 1921, Basil Lypkivskyj was elected head of the Autocephalic Church of Ukraine. This organization progressed rapidly and in 1925 numbered approximately 80 bishops, 2,300 priests, 1,200-1,500 parishes and about 10 million faithful.

Besides this there were other Orthodox Churches in Ukraine: the Patriarchal (under the jurisdiction of the patriarch Tychon), the Synodal, the Old Apostolic « living church », and others of less importance. Thus in Ukraine there existed a great confusion among the Orthodox Churches, of which the Bolsheviks took advantage to destroy the Church and Christianity in general, pitting one against the other for the destruction of all. We arrive then at the point where the Autocephalic Ukrainian Orthodox Church (January 28, 1930) disintegrated under the pressure of the Bolsheviks and their propaganda against everything Ukrainian, whether ecclesiastical or cultural. After the year 1930 the persecution against the Church as an institution ceased. The Church at that time was governed by the Metropolitan Sergius who assumed the position and dignity of

Metropolitan of Novgorod, Moscow, and Substitute of the Patriarchal See, and finally on November 2, 1945, was elected Patriarch of Moscow. From 1939 on the government used the Church for internal and foreign politics and as an instrument in the struggle against Catholicism. During the whole period of persecution in the Republic of the Soviet Union, one can draw up approximately the following losses, attributing a proportionate measure of them to the population of Ukraine. From 1917 to 1923, 25 bishops and 1215 priests were barbarously murdered. From 1917 to 1935, 217 bishops and 27,000 priests were suppressed. Between the years 1917-1937 about 42,800 people within Church circles were arrested.



*St. George's Cathedral  
(Lviv - Western Ukraine)*

## II

# THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND COMMUNISM

### **1) *The First Communist Occupation: War Against the Faith (1939-1941)***

While the events, briefly related above, were taking place in Eastern Ukraine, momentous historical events took place in Western Ukraine, which remained under Austro-Hungarian rule till 1918. Then Ukrainian people, concomitantly with other nations, proclaimed their Independence and formed the Republic of Western Ukraine (November 1, 1918). After suffering a defeat in the war with Poland, and in virtue of a decision decreed by the Council of Ambassadors on March 15, 1923, it was annexed to Poland. The new ruling authorities, from the outset, embarked upon an imprudent policy toward this national minority, which constituted a part of the new Polish state. The guarantees of autonomy remained unfulfilled; economic collaboration was out of question; cultural development was impeded in all possible ways. The Ukrainian Catholic Church, it is true, did possess a certain degree of independence, but it was constantly under pressure to accept the Latin rite. This was envisaged as a step towards the polonization of the Ukrainians.

On November 13, 1924, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Volyn, Polisia and Kholmshchyna, (which were annexed to Poland), was formed into an Autocephalic Church. But in the decade of years preceding World War II it was completely brought under control of the Polish state, which, following the example of the Russian Czars, set itself up as the head of the said Church. This state of affairs worsened considerably owing to the political pro-



cesses, the « pacification » in 1930, the destruction of former Catholic churches in Kholmshchyna, etc., and prevailed until the beginning of World War II in 1939.

Following the collapse of Poland in 1939, the Ukrainian Catholic Church suffered its first appalling baptism of fire under German and Russian occupation. The twenty-two months of the first Soviet occupation of Galicia, as described by the venerable Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytskyj, Archbishop of Lviv, were an application of the militant atheistic principles adopted in Spain during the Civil War. The occupation of Galicia and Volyn by Soviet troops was accompanied by catching shibboleths like: « Liberation of the Ukrainian people from the yoke of Polish capitalism », « Reunion with the Mother Country ». But with Galicia reunited, and order established, they once again resorted to enslaving the people physically and morally under the Communist regime of Moscow. That which took twenty years to accomplish in Eastern Ukraine was achieved here in the short space of two years, namely: nationalization of industry and private property; collectivisation of the estates of small landowners; arrest of prominent politicians, scholars, and economists; suppression of organizations and societies, in order to eliminate the ruling class in Western Ukraine, that had remained voluntarily with their own people despite the Communist regime. Within this frame of national and political events, the Communist government began its war against the Catholic Church. It had already destroyed Christianity in Eastern Ukraine. But here, in Western Ukraine, it encountered the first time Ukrainian Catholicism as a strongly organized body, preserved vigorous by centuries of struggle for existence. The Ukrainian Catholic Church met the new authorities loyally, but with unflinching courage (11).

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(11) Another page of history has been turned, a new era has come. Let us meet it with humble prayer, with a firm confidence in the infinite goodness and divine mercy of Jesus Christ who ordains all things for the glory of God and our welfare... We shall obey the government; we shall observe its ordinances insofar as they do not oppose the divine Law; we shall keep far from politics and secular affairs and we shall continue to labor zealously for Christ's cause among our people ». Suppl.; Documents from the time of the Bolshevik occupation, in « Bulletin of the Lviv Archdiocese, LII, No. 9-10, Sept. - Oct., 1939, P. I.



**ANDREW SHEPTYTSKYJ OSBM**

*Metropolitan of Halych, Archbishop of Lviv,  
Bishop of Kamenets*

*Born 29-7-1865 — elected 17-6-1399 — died 1-11-1944*

In December, 1939, the Metropolitan of Lviv, Andrew Sheptytskyj, exhorted the priests of his diocese in a pastoral letter to comply in so far they did not oppose with all government orders the divine law and warned them against participation in political and worldly affairs, but told them to continue laboring zealously and unremittingly for the cause of Christ among the Ukrainian people (12). Precise and detailed instructions for the clergy followed in the wake of this pastoral letter. Since the Russian authorities confiscated all typewriters, printing presses, and mimeographs, the letters to each of the 1,276 parishes had to be written by hand. Thus the guiding voice of the Metropolitan reached the priests although with some delay. The Metropolitan was well aware of the fact that within a year's time he would lose many of his priests, not only because the diocesan seminaries of Lviv, Pere-myshl, Stanyslaviv, were, or would be closed, but also because the Soviets had unanimously decreed the suppression of all monasteries and religious institutions. The arrests and deportations were soon to begin and the priests were to be the first victims. Heavy taxes were imposed on the clergy, who were labeled « ministers of the cult », while many others were driven from their parishes (13). The Metropolitan protested vehemently against these wanton plundering (14).

He sent his priests to celebrate Mass in the churches of the suppressed monasteries, and set them up as parishes; the religious students and seminarians were sent to parishes deprived of their respective pastors. Realizing that many of the faithful were to be deported, he fervently exhorted his priests to accompany these victims of brutal hatred, and to render them moral solace, and administer to their spiritual needs. To protect the faith of the people from the assaults of atheistic communism he earnestly recommended to his priests the preaching of the Gospel, especially instructions in Catholic Doctrine (15).

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(12) *Ibid.*, LIII., No. 1, 1940. p. 10.

(13) *Il Cristianesimo nell'Unione Sovietica*, p. 277-278.

(14) *Supp., Documents*, LII. No. 9-10., 1939, p. 2.

(15) « I impose upon all the duty of giving religious instructions. Every priest shall teach some pious and intelligent individuals how to administer the Sacrament of Baptism to the newly borns in case of lack of priests ». *idid.*, p. .1

The hospitals were of special concern to the Metropolitan. There the sick and dying, regardless of faith, were denied all spiritual aid, for the priests were barred by the Soviet authorities from visiting them (16). The Metropolitan, embittered by such unprecedented cruelty, sent a protest to the government at Kiev. He stated that, « in Soviet hospitals the dying were treated worse than in European prisons where the condemned to death were always granted their last wishes ». Needless to say the Metropolitan's protests were stubbornly disregarded. Thereupon he ordered the priests living near hospitals to visit them immediately, and permitted them to bring Holy Communion in secret to the patients (17). Thus the practices of the Catacombs were once more revived in the twentieth century. Sisters, who worked in the hospitals as nurses, greatly aided the priests (18).

Meanwhile Soviet-run schools began to corrupt the souls of little children. The government immediately banished all religious instruction from the schools, prohibited the recitation of prayers before and after classes, and removed all religious images from the classrooms. Once again the Metropolitan firmly protested, this time in an open letter to Comrade Zarchenko, provincial head of the Board of Education during the first Bolshevik occupation (19). In December, 1939, he wrote a moving letter to the youth of

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(16) Nagurski, Metropolitan Sheptytskyj, in « Zytia i Slovo », 1948-1949, p. 162-163.

(17) Suppl.; Documents, LIII, No. 2., p. 15.

(18) Nagurski J., *ibid.*, p. 163.

(19) « Incidents of moral constraint of children by fanatical atheist propaganda », wrote the Metropolitan, « compel me to turn to the Board of Education » and firmly protest against this corruption of their consciences. I shall not give the names of those guilty since it is not my purpose to incriminate nor to harm them. It is rather a question of principle that concerns me.

« Article 123 in the constitution of Stalin affirms: To assure the citizens the liberty of conscience, the Church in U.S.S.R. is separated from the State and the school from the Church...

« This article grants at the same time the parents the liberty to educate the children in their faith and gives them the right to demand that the school respect their will in regard to the education of the children, that is, the school educates their children according to the desires of the parents, or at least the school does not meddle with religious questions nor antagonize the faith of the children and their parents. In fact, in accordance with this Constitution, everyone is free to profess his own religion. »... Supplement; Documents... LIII, No. 3, March 1940, pp. 38-30.

the country warning it of the grave dangers to which it would be exposed (20). Thus the Ukrainian Catholic Church, guided by Metropolitan Andrew sustained continued attacks from the Soviet government and its occupying forces. But in spite of this she continued her efforts for the conversion of the East, and intrepidly faced the difficulties that were becoming daily more and more involved (21). In a pastoral letter to the clergy the Metropolitan announced an archdiocesan Synod which was to convene on May 2, 1940, (22). Its directives were intended to render more effective apostolic labors of the priests (23). This first Synod which assembled under the surveillance of the N.K.V.D. had its victims of communist arrest (24).

At this time the Bolshevik leaders put forth measures of their own in attempt to squelch the Faith and destroy the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Galicia. The most important of these measures was to undermine the authority of Metropolitan Sheptytskyj by

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(20) « My dear children! Do me this favor, copy this letter for yourselves and frequently refer to it and also remind others of its contents. With this letter I bid farewell, since I don't know if God will permit me to labor and pray for You much longer... Beware of the sin against the Faith, remain attached to the Holy Church. As betrayal of the native country, so too the betrayal of the Holy Church, our Mother who from infancy till death guides us and lends her hand in all our needs, is a shameful crime. Most of all, my dear children, I recommend to you frequent reception of the Sacraments. They will not remind you of this in the schools, remind yourself of it ». Ibid. LII. No, 9-10, Sept. Oct. 1939, p. 7-8.

(21) « A contest has been announced for the parishes of Kiev, Odessa, Vynnycia, Kharkiv and Poltava. It is requested that all be prepared for any sacrifice, which may be necessary or at least useful for the cause of the Union of our separated brethren and the baptized or non baptized atheists. The characteristic of our deportment and work are:

« For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake: that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in our mortal flesh. (II Cor. IV, 11).

« Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no fixed abode. And we labor, working with our own hands, we are reviled: and we bless. We are persecuted: and we suffer it. We are blasphemed: and we entreat. We are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now. (I Cor. IV, 11-13) » Ibid., LIII, No, 2, Feb., 1940, p. 12.

(22) Ibid., N. III, p. 29-33.

(23) Ibid., LV, No. 1, p. 11-17.

(24) The Metropolitan declared « Among the prominent participants in the Synod, 2 priests are dead, 14 other participants are arrested as victims of the actual conditions in which we live ». Nagurski J. « Metropolitan Sheptytskyj »... pp. 167-168.

nominating a pseudo-Metropolitan for Lviv and Halych. This move was an initial step toward a complete break between the ecclesiastical province of Galicia and the Holy See. The Reverend Gabriel Kostelnyk, D. D., director of the ecclesiastical review « Nyva » (25), was asked to accept this office; however, he immediately rejected it with an emphatic: « No » (26). The outbreak of the German-Russian war in June, 1941, prevented any further realization of this plan.

With the withdrawal of Red troops from Western Ukraine the N.K.V.D. murdered thousands upon thousands of prisoners among whom there were many priest (27). In the footsteps of the retreating Russian forces came the German army which was to occupy Western Ukraine for four years. The oppressed people welcomed their « liberators » with great joy. However, their hopes were quickly shattered. The new occupation was no better than the old and left behind many victims and sorrowful memories. But this four year period has been mentioned only for historical reasons, and has no place in this documentation. As a real menace, it has now disappeared.

After this painful epoch we now come to the second act of this frightful drama of Communist persecution,-that still goes on.

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(25) The philosopher, and author of the works: « A Hymn to God », and « Three methods of thinking ».

(26) The Bolsheviks could not find anyone who would accept the dignity of Metropolitan of Galicia, because of the great authority of Sheptytskyj.

In order to induce the Rev. G. Kostelnyk to accept the nomination, in February 1941 the N.K.V.D. arrested his beloved 17 year old son, Bohdan. In spite of the Rev. Kostelnyk's refusal, the negotiations were continued. Very often Fr. Kostelnyk was summoned to appear before the General Commander of the N.K.V.D. to continue the conversations which always began with the same intimidation, that the fate of his son Bohdan depended upon his decision. The declaration of war between Germany and Russia interrupted these conversations but at the same time all traces of Bohdan disappeared. Cfr. KHOMIAK M.. « The Struggle of the Catholic Church with Communism », *Logos*, Vol. 1, No. 4, October-December 1950, pp. 285-286.

(27) « During this regime », the Metropolitan wrote « God has granted our Church and our people the supreme grace of the sacrifice of martyrdom for many of His faithful. It seems an undeniable fact that at the present time the hatred of Christ and His Church is the principle motive of our persecutions. They who endured these persecutions till death were convinced that they suffered for the Catholic Faith ». NAGURSKI J., Metropolitan Sheptytskyj... p. 167.

## **2) The second Communist Occupation: War against Catholicism (1944-1952)**

During the first Soviet occupation the Ukrainian people and clergy successfully resisted the atheistic propaganda; but after the equally painful period of the Nazi occupation, the victorious Soviet Union launched its second attack. When the Russian troops occupied Galicia (Western Ukraine) for the second time in 1944, the Ukrainian Catholic Church had the following ecclesiastical boundaries: the archdiocese of Lviv, the dioceses of Peremyshl and of Stanyslaviv, the Apostolic Administration of the Lemki and the territory of the Apostolic Visitor for Volyn. After the demarcation of the Polish and Ukrainian frontiers, the so-called « Curzon Line », a large part of the diocese of Peremyshl and the entire Administration of the Lemki fell within the boundaries of Poland, while the dioceses of Lviv and Stanyslaviv and a great part of the diocese of Peremyshl re-entered Soviet Ukraine (28).

The communists, at least at first, maintained a cunningly respectful attitude towards the Church, entirely different from their policies of 1939. Soldiers and officers attended the religious services; hostile propaganda was imperceptible; perverse literature was prohibited. Even crucifixes were allowed in civil hospitals. But all religious propaganda was persistently prevented from the outset: no more religious books or papers treating on religious subjects, were allowed to circulate. In fact, all religious publications and diocesan printing offices stopped operating. Religious instruction was permitted in the churches; however, schools were obliged to remain secularized, and abstain from any religious manifestations. Churches were reopened so that religious holidays could be celebrated. On Easter Day, to add to the joy of the population, even the price of liquor was lowered. Seminaries were allowed to exist. Not only priests and students of Theology were exempted from military service and obligatory work, but even the seminarians and ecclesiastical singers, and in some places, the Presidents of Confraternities. The churches paid very moderate taxes. Convents that the German Command had returned to religious com-

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(28) MOJOLI G., *Dietro il sipario di ferro*, in « *Ecclesia* » IX, No. 10, October 1949, p. 534.

## JOSEPH SLIPYJ

Metropolitan of Halych,  
Archbishop of Lviv, Bishop  
of Kamenets

Born February 17, 1892

Elected Tit. Archbishop of  
Serre November 11, 1939

Metropolitan from Novem-  
ber 1, 1944

Imprisoned April 11, 1945

Condemned to forced labor  
in Siberia



## NICETA BUDKA

Born June 7, 1877

Elected Tit. Bishop of Pa-  
tara July 7, 1912

First Bishop for Catholic  
Ukrainians in Canada  
till 1926

Later Vicar General of Lviv

Imprisoned April 11, 1945

Condemned to forced labor  
in Siberia



munities were allowed to remain as religious property. It seemed that after the concessions made to Christianity by the USSR in 1941-43, and the following years, the Catholic Church could now breathe freely under the Bolshevik regime. The elaborate funeral allowed for the death of the Metropolitan of Lviv, Monsignor A. Sheptytskyj, who died November 1, 1944, assisted by his brother Fr. Clement, religious Sisters and his family, seemed to confirm these illusions. But the Soviet authorities soon began taking inventory of property owned by churches and monasteries and making lists of their personnel. Pressure was being applied on ecclesiastical authorities demanding them to express publicly their respect for the Soviet State and its Dictator. Public prayers in the churches were requested on the victory of the Red Armies. But, as a whole, the attitude of the Soviets towards the Catholic Church — was one of sly waiting. They wanted to create the impression of complete change, on their part, towards religion, — and in this way, gain the sympathies of the Ukrainian population for the Bolshevik government (29).

This attitude, however, towards the Ukrainian Catholic Church slowly changed. The enthronement of the new Metropolitan, His Excellency Joseph Slipyj, was celebrated with all pomp and regularity. However soon after, many considered that it was absolutely necessary to obtain from the civil authorities a « *modus vivendi* » permitting the Ukrainian Catholic Church to continue its ecclesiastical activities. As a remedy gesture the Metropolitan Joseph Slipyj offered 100.000 rubles in the name of the Ukrainian Catholic Church for the war-wounded. This modest sum of the Catholic Metropolitan, perhaps larger in proportion to that offered by the Patriarch of Moscow for the purchase of munitions for the Red Army, was carried to Moscow by a delegation composed of Rev. Kostelnyk, Rev. Clement Sheptytskyj, Rev. Buchynskyj and Rev. Kotiv.

Contrary to expectations, however, the delegation was not received by Stalin himself, but by a few of his functionaries, who told them that Government's favor depended on contribution and collaboration from the Church in the struggle against the partisan

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(29) *Il Cristianesimo nell'Unione Sovietica*, p. 279-280.

movement, particularly strong in Ukraine. The Metropolitan Joseph Slipyj, in his official communications to the clergy and faithful, — repeatedly reminded them of the obligations *imposed* by the Fifth Commandment, and the great doctrine of Christian charity; the exhortations, nevertheless, were considered insufficient.

One could already foresee an inevitable persecution, judging by the Government's attitude. In the autumn and winter of the year 1944, Soviet authorities commenced summoning the clergy of regional centers for conferences and meetings. The speakers, treating of subjects pertaining to ecclesiastical and historical ideology began, in general terms, to disparage the history of the Church, and to dishonor Rome, the Papacy, and the Catholic Church. The priests were obliged to listen to these instructions (30) which were precisely meant for their « re-education ».

The first step in this direction was the publication of a article by Volodymyr Rosovych, on April 6, 1945, « With Cross and Knife ». It was directed against the late Metropolitan A. Sheptytskyj. This article was first published in the periodical « Free Ukraine » (Vilna Ukraina) in Lviv, and then printed in a separate leaflet for distribution among the people. These preparations served as initial steps toward an open persecution. Five Ukrainian Bishops were arrested (on April 11, 1945) at Lviv and Stanyslaviv: The Metropolitan J. Slipyj, the Archbishop of Lviv, Mons. N. Budka, Vicar General of the Metropolitan, Mons. N. Charnetskyj, Apostolic Visitator of Volyn, Mons. G. Khomyshyn, Bishop of Stanyslaviv, Mons. G. Latyshevskyj, Auxiliary of Stanyslaviv, and Mons. P. Verhun, Apostolic Administrator for Ukrainians resident in Germany, arrested in Berlin (31).

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(30) The N.K.V.D. always summoned priests for crossexaminations, which lasted from evening till the following morning.

(31) During the first days of March, 1946, the Public Ministry of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine published an official accusation against the Bishops of Galicia. The purport of this document is: « Slepoj I.A., Metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Church, Charnetskyj N.A., Budka N.M., Khomyshyn H.L., Latyshevskyj I.J., Bishops of the Catholic Church, were arrested because of traitorous activity and collaboration with the German occupation forces.

« At the time of arrest, documents were found in the possession of the above mentioned persons, which reveal their criminal complicity with German Fas-

Shortly after, many of the major dignitaries of the Chapters and dioceses were also arrested. The students of two Seminaries (Lviv and Stanyslaviv) were conscripted for military service in the Red Army. For ten consecutive days the police searched the Cathedral of St. George and the Archbishop's palace and carried off the archives, many religious articles and furniture. A similar search was made of the Bishop's palace at Stanyslaviv.

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cist occupier, in particular with the Gestapo, the police, and the Intelligence Service.

« During the trial, the arrested confessed their guilt of having participated in hostile activities against the U.S.S.R.

« In accordance with the orders of the German authorities, following the Union of Western Ukraine with the U.S.S.R., the accused participated in anti-Soviet propaganda by encouraging the clergy and the faithful to resist the Soviet regime.

« After the German Fascist pillagers invaded Ukraine, Slepoy, Charnetskyj, Budka and Latyshevkyj gave themselves up to the disposition of the German occupation authorities.

« The accused narrated during the trial, that they profited from their position as leaders in the Greek Catholic Church, that they aided in sending the Ukrainian people to forced labor in Germany. They also favored the plunderings conducted by the German occupation authorities.

« In accordance with the instructions of the Gestapo, in July, 1941, Slepoy, Charnetskyj, Khomyshyn and Latyshevskyj, with their pastoral letters and allocutions began to incite frequently the clergy and the faithful of the Catholic Church to cooperate with the Germans in establishing local occupation offices and to take an active part in provisioning the German army and also to favor the army of the invaders in their struggle with the Red Army.

« According to the documents and confessions of the accused, in April, 1943, Slepoy agreed with Dr. Wechter, Governor of Galicia, to represent the Greek Catholic Church in a committee charged with the formation of the Division « SS Galizien ».

« In fulfilling the subversive agreement with the Germans, the accused Slepoy, Budka and the others instructed all the Catholic priests to cooperate immediately in forming the Division « SS-Galizien ». The priests were to enter the Divisions as chaplains.

« The criminal activities of the accused have been confirmed by numerous witnesses and documents.

« The case of Slepoy I.A., Charnetskyj N.A., Khomyshyn H.L., Budka N.M., and Latyshevskyj I.J., accused of crimes in Art. 54-1-a and 54-11 of the Uk. USSR, is being submitted to the Military Tribunal for examination.

« An editor of "Servizio Informazioni Chiesa Orientale" commented that the accusation could have referred to only one of the Bishops, who governed a diocese in 1941, that is Most Rev. Gregory Khomyshyn, Bishop of Stanyslaviv. Most Rev. G. Latyshevskyj was his Auxiliary and Vicar General. Most Rev. Slipyj and N. Budka were subject to the late Metropolitan Sheptytskyj. (He died November 1, 1944).

Most Rev. N. Charnetskyj the Apostolic Visitor for the Ukrainians in

**GREGORY KHOMYSHYN**

**(1867-1946)**

**Elected Bishop of Stany-  
slaviv April 6, 1904**

**Imprisoned April 11, 1945**

**Died in prison for the  
Catholic Faith 1946**



**JOHN LATYSHEVSKYJ**

**(1879-?)**

**Elected Tit. Bishop of  
Adada November 24, 1929**

**Imprisoned April 11, 1945**

**Probably dead already for  
the Catholic Faith**

The Metropolitan J. Slipyj, a few hours before his arrest, — predicted the tragedy, and wished to delegate his powers to two priests. They were unwilling to believe in the imminent danger and refused to accept. Following the arrest of His Excellency Metropolitan of Lviv, several Canons proceeded to elect the Vicar Capitular, but he also was arrested soon after (32). In 1945 the trial of the imprisoned Bishops began. The trial against the Metropolitan J. Slipyj should have been held at Lviv, but took place instead in Kiev behind closed doors. Although accused only of certain «crimes» committed by his predecessor (33), contrary to all expectations he was condemned to deportation and eight years of forced labor (34). The 80 years old Bishop of Stanyslaviv, Msgr. G. Khomyshyn, was condemned to ten years of forced labor (35). Msgr. Charnetskyj, «an agent of the Vatican» was condemned to five years (36) and Msgr. N. Budka (37) and Msgr. J. Latyshevskyj to 8 years. A dreadful panic seized the clergy when informed of what had happened to its Bishops. Deprived of their Leaders,

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Volyn, was forced by the Germans to leave his territory and obliged to live in Lviv...

«It is known that Most Rev. Sheptytskyj did not favor the German occupants. He was often searched by them and disturbed during the day or night. Further more, many of his intimate collaborators were arrested. Due to these conditions it is very improbable that the three bishops had anything to do with the German «SS-Waffen». However it is known that two sons of Rev. Kostelnyk were fighting against the Red Army; nevertheless by the Soviet authorities he was selected to direct the movement of separation from Rome.

«This diverse attitude towards Kostelnyk proves that the bishops were arrested and condemned precisely because they refused to comply with Moscow. Rather than have them extolled as martyrs, the real motive was concealed. Therefore we have here the official act of accusation. «L'Osservatore Romano, 1946, No. 241, p. 3.

(32) MOJOLI G., *Dietro il sipario di ferro...* p. 534.

(33) For example he received German officials to his palace.

(34) He served one year of his prison term in Kiev, two in Siberia.

At present time he is presumably somewhere in Northern Russia, together with other ecclesiastical dignitaries among whom also the Auxiliary Bishop of Peremyshl, the Most Rev. G. Lakota. *Ibid.*, p. 535.

(35) He died in a Kiev prison in January, 1947. *Ibid.*, p. 535.

(36) He has served two years already in Siberia doing hard labor as a carpenter.

(37) Due to unbearable suffering he fell into a state of semiconsciousness. *Ibid.*, p. 535.

**NICHOLAS CHARNETSKY!**

**Born December 12, 1884**

**Elected Tit. Bishop of  
Lebedo January 1, 1931**

**Imprisoned April 11, 1945**

**Condemned to forced labor  
in Siberia**



**PETER WERHUN**

**Born 1890**

**Apostolic Visitator for  
Catholic Ukrainian emi-  
grants in Germany (with  
residence at Berlin)**

**Deported into Siberia**

outlawed and persecuted, the priests knew their hour of trial had come (38).

The Soviet authorities then published an order prohibiting all religious ceremonies. Only those priests were allowed to celebrate who were « registered » by competent state-officials. In every parish, a committee of twenty persons was appointed and charged with the administration of the Church's property (39).

A few weeks after arrest of the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops, a « Movement for the reunion of the Greek Catholic Church with the Orthodox Church » was established in Lviv, — under Soviet direction. This « Movement » was in the hands of the lapsed Kostelnyk. As director of ecclesiastical Review and with his great prestige among the clergy, he succeeded very quickly in deceiving many of the priests and Ukrainian intellectuals. He held conferences, wrote anti-catholic propaganda and threatened with loss of the parishes and deportation those who resisted. The « Movement » held the three Ukrainian Catholic dioceses in its grasp, and found some collaborators even among the priests, as M. Melnyk of Peremyshl, and A. Pelvetskyj of Stanyslaviv (40).

Campaigns of propaganda were always accompanied and protected by the police, who obliged the Deans, through threats of arrest to assemble the priests of each district. Many were forced to yield to this abuse of authority, but the greater part preferred rather imprisonment and deportation (41). The first step of this « Movement » was to clear its proceedings with the « Council of Commissaries of Popular Soviet Ukraine ». The Movement was recognized as the temporary ecclesiastical administrative organ for the direction of the Catholic Ukrainian Church, and was authorized in the future, to regulate all juridical questions concerning the administration of parishes and their reunion with the Orthodox Church. It was also obliged to transmit to the Plenipotentiary of the Russian Orthodox Church a list of all the priests and superiors of monasteries who refused to submit to its jurisdiction (42). This was the first official act of the Soviet Ukrainian Government in

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(38) The deans were prohibited to issue any orders.

(39) *Ibid.*, p. 534.

(40) *Ibid.*, p. 534.

(41) *Ibid.*, p. 535.

(42) *Il Cristianesimo nell'Unione Sovietica*, pp. 285-286.

regard to the Ukrainian Church in Galicia. It was a direct violation of the Soviet Constitution, which states that the Church in the Soviet Union is separate from the State, — and that the latter does not interfere with the former. With this act, the group of spies accusing the Ukrainian Catholic Church, was officially recognized as an ecclesiastical authority.

Almost simultaneously, three pastoral letters were published: 1) Of the Patriarch of Moscow Alexis to the Ukrainian Catholic faithful in Galicia (43), 2) of Makarius, Orthodox Bishop of Lviv and Ternopil, 3) of Rev. Kostelnyk to the clergy of the western territories of Ukraine. The last letter vilifies the past history of the Catholic Church of Ukraine (44) and speaks of the « Movement » which is to lead the Ukrainian Church to union with the entire Orthodox. Pan-Russian Church.

At the end of the letter Kostelnyk invites all priests and ecclesiastical singers to enter the « Movement ». In the above mentioned Government's appeal of May 28, 1945, the group directing the « Movement » assures the clergy that no other authority except its own will be recognized for the administration of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (45). This was written to the clergy on May 28, but the formal recognition of the « Movement » by the civil authorities bore the date of June 18, 1945. Naturally, the great majority of the Ukrainian Catholic clergy opposed the action of the « Movement ». Over 300 courageous priests signed a protest to the Vice-President of the Ministers of the Soviet Union U.V. Molotov, on the 1. of June, 1945, — against the activity of this « Movement », condemning it as harmful both to Church and State (46).

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(43) SCHWEIGL G.M., *Il Nuovo Statuto della Chiesa Russa e l'Art. 124 della Costituzione Sovietica*, pp. 94-97.

(44) *Il Cristianesimo nell'Unione Sov.*, pp. 284-285.

(45) *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

(46) « After the arrest — wrote the priests — of the entire Episcopate and a great number of priests of the Catholic Church in Western Ukraine, and in consequence of the prohibition to elect a member of the Catholic clergy as our head, our Church finds itself in a very abnormal situation. Such a situation has been complicated still more by the fact that at Lviv there has been constituted a « Committee for the fusion of the Catholic Church with the Orthodox Church ».

« In the present letter we simply wish to make known our position before Soviet Ukraine, and to present our request to the Government.

« We make known in the first place that we profess, and we wish to



With the birth of the « Movement », the second stage of persecution began. The police called all the priests to city reunions and urged them to accept the schism. If some proved obstinate, they were summoned to a private interview with the agent of NKVD, and then presented two documents to sign: with the first they consented to take part on the « Movement » and with the second they testified to their freedom of choice. Those not willing to sign could leave the room, but were arrested in the street or in their homes, — on some pretext or other, and then were browbeaten, until they signed the documents. A few priests wanting to escape imprisonment, were obliged to hide, or flee from their parishes. Some joined the Poles and were transferred from Ukraine to Poland. Others joined the Ukrainian Partisans in the forests. According to the news still arriving from abroad in 1946, — more than 500 Ukrainian priests of the diocese Lviv, were in prison. An Armenian priest returning from Lviv, who had been imprisoned in 1946 with

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profess in the future, patriotism towards the Soviet Ukrainian Republic and towards the U.S.S.R., and that we want to fulfil conscientiously all our duties towards the State. We do not want, at any cost, to meddle with what is called politics, but only to dedicate ourselves entirely to the salvation of the souls of our brethren and our own. This, we think, is the most useful task that we can perform for the prosperity not only of the Church, but also of the State.

« Our attitude towards the work of Father Kostelnyk is completely negative. We condemn his activity as harmful, as absolutely opposed to the tradition of the Church, and contrary to the truth proclaimed by Christ: « There shall be but one flock and one shepherd ». For this reason it is clear that we cannot listen to a voice inciting to apostasy from the Faith.

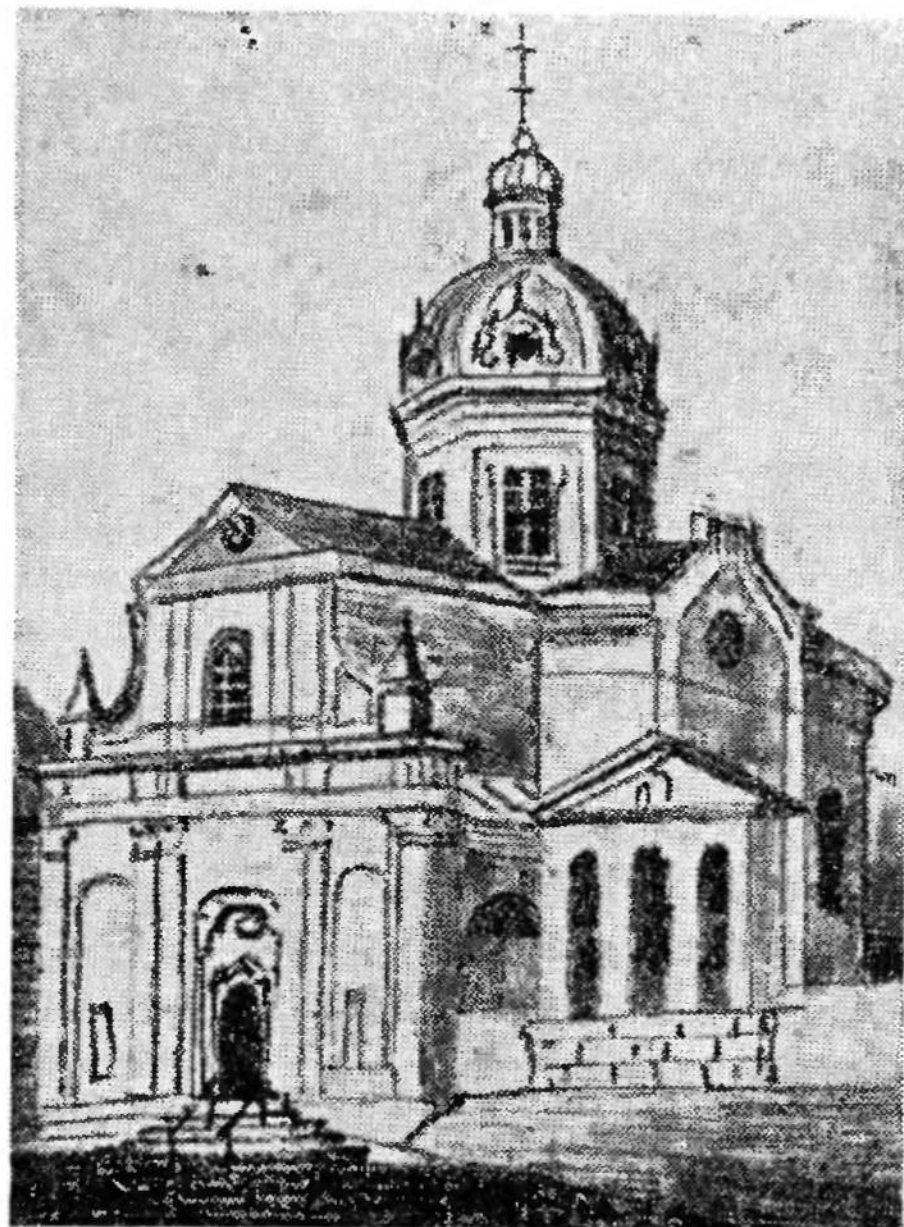
« In the present situation, there could quickly develop one of those religious wars which always, as history teaches, do nothing but harm, not only to the Church but to the whole nation.

« We ask our government therefore to liberate our Bishops, beginning with our Metropolitan. While awaiting this liberation, we ask the government to make it possible for us to settle the questions regarding our Catholic Church. Until the liberation of the Metropolitan and the Bishops, we ask that a canonically legal organism may administer the whole ecclesiastical province of Lviv.

« We want to believe that the government will receive our request and will come to our aid, and since the Constitution of Stalin guarantees to all citizens, and thereby to us also, freedom of conscience and of religious worship...

« In the name of justice, in the name of the glorious victory of the U.S.S.R., we ask for ourselves, for our people of Western Ukraine, that liberty of ecclesiastical administration which we have enjoyed these last centuries, and to which, according to the Soviet laws, we have a right ». - *In difesa del Cattolicesimo ucraino*, p. VI-VIII.

**CATHEDRAL OF  
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
(PEREMYSHL)**



**CATHEDRAL OF  
RESURRECTION  
(STANYSLAVIV)**

Catholic Ukrainians there, says the number of Ukrainian priests in jail was about 800. A railway worker related that during one night in the prison of Chortkiv, 150 Ukrainian Catholic priests of the district of Ternopil were deported to Siberia.

Some churches were closed after the arrest or deportation of their priests. Before their arrest, they advised the people, in case of necessity, to baptize the children even without a priest, and pray at home on Sundays and Church holidays. Strange to say, the Soviet authorities did not impose apostasy on the faithful. At first the people could not understand this treatment of the priests by the Government, but on perceiving the truth, they were filled with consternation and dismay. In some places they could attend latin churches, but after the departure of the Polish people, the latin churches were sequestered. The people, the faithful, members of Confraternities etc., — were desperate; in the hour of death, there would be no one to hear their confession or comfort them. Meanwhile, there has been prepared a « Pseudo-Council » which was to petition the Patriarch of Moscow, for the admission and the reunion of Ukrainian Catholic Church with the Ortodox Russian Church. With this in view, Kostelnyk publised a pamphlet: « The Apostle Peter and the Roman Popes, or the dogmatic foundations of the Papacy » (47) in which the author denies the supremacy of Peter and the Roman Bishops. He employs the old arguments of the « orthodox » and protestants, — long ago proven false. The Pseudo-Council took place at Lviv, from the 8th to the 10th of March, 1946. 204 priests and 12 laymen were present at this « Synod ».

It is unknown how many of them were agents of the secret police of the N.K.V.D. No catholic leaders were present, and the direction was completely in the hands of apostates. Kostelnyk declared in his appeal that the Union with Rome in 1596 was concluded only for political reasons and to favor Poland. The Ukrainians, he said, should now separate from their foster-mother (Rome), and reunite with the real mother, the Patriarchal Church of Moscow. He strongly attacked the Catholic Church and the Popes. Another orator accused the Pope of collaborating with Hitler to bring all Russians under « Latin slavery ». The 9th of March, the

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(47) Lviv, 1945.

above named apostates, Melnyk and Pelvetskyj (48), already ordained Orthodox bishops even before this « Synod », — together with the dissident bishop Macarius of Lviv, and Nestor of Mukachiv, « abjured the latin errors ». The « Synod » sent a telegram of homage and respect to the Patriarch of Moscow, Alexis, and to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. It also sent a letter directed to the clergy and faithful of the Western Ukraine, plus a message of homage to the « great General » Stalin, and to the Head of the Government of Soviet Ukraine.

The afternoon of March 10th, in the Cathedral of St. George of Lviv, a solemn ceremony was held to celebrate the « reunion ». The orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev, John, presided at the event and delivered an address (49). In the Synod's decrees it was said that the Union with Rome was concluded only under pressure of the Polish nobility, — as a means of denationalizing the Ukrainian and White-Ruthenian people. Now, thanks to the heroism and victories of the Soviet Union, all Ukrainians were united in the Soviet Ukrainian Republic and therefore it would be absurd to maintain the Union with Rome. This Union would only create hatred and war between brothers. The « Synod » therefore declared the Union of Berestya annulled. Everything was put under the Patriarchate of Moscow, — and the decrees of the « Synod » were forwarded to the Council of Ministers of Ukraine and the President of the Council for the affairs of the Orthodox Church. In the same decrees, the Vatican was censured for maintaining relations with Fascism, and sentiments of profound gratitude were expressed to the Soviet Ukrainian Government for the liberation together with the promise of unflinching allegiance to the Nation.

After this, at the beginning of April 1946, a delegation from the same « Synod », with Rev. Kostelnyk as leader, went to Moscow, — where it was received at the airport by a member of the « Soviet for the affairs of the Orthodox Church ». On 5th of April the delegation was received by the Patriarch Alexis. Two days later the Patriarch held a solemn ceremony in the Cathedral, assisted by the two Bishops Melnyk and Pelvetskyj. Karpow, the Head of the above mentioned « Soviet » was present

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(48) *Il Cristianesimo nell'Unione Sovietica*, p. 289.

(49) *Ibid.*, p. 289.

at the banquet which followed and next day they were all at the reception held at the residence of the same « Soviet ».

Everything about this « reunion » points to political trickery. A small group of priests allowed itself to be terrorized into complicity with Moscow's schemes. But the great majority of priests resisted firmly, preserving unshaken the faith in the only real Church of Christ (50). The schismatic Bishop of Lviv, Makarius published in the official bulletin of the diocese the list of Ukrainian priests agreeing to the schism. There were 1111, 532 in Lviv, 302 in Peremyshl and 277 in Stanyslaviv. Even if these figures be correct, it is necessary to bear in mind for a just evaluation of the tragic event, that before the war, there were in Galicia 2950 priests, 300 of whom, with about 300,000 faithful, had escaped as refugees; therefore over 1500 priests would remain still faithful to the Catholic Church. There are reasons, however, for doubting the truth of these figures (51). In the end one must remember the severe circumstances under which the priests lapsed: imprisonment and deportation of the entire ecclesiastical Hierarchy, with the consequent disorganization of the clergy; the organized terror of the schismatic Church and the draconian methods of the N.K.V.D.; the anxiety of the clergy concerning the fate of their families; the pressure of the Soviet authorities, denouncing the Catholics as reactionaries, fascists and traitors to the democratic cause of the people. All this explains the apostasy in terms of political pressure and not religious conviction.

The passing of those priests into schism, is, in any case, open to a great deal of questioning. But what can be denied, is that in spite of terror, more than one thousand five hundred Catholic priests still preserve the faith amidst misery and torture, compensating with their own martyrdom for the weakness of others (52).

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(50) Ibid., p.291.

(51) A few examples well suffice. According to their Directory Rev. Severian Jaminskyj « reconciled with the Ortodox Church », died in 1947, whereas he actually died in October 1942. Vladimyr Khomiak, pastor of Maslatyci, signed the « reunion » with an explicit reservation « not to break relations nor to change the Dogma and Sacred Canon ». Also the following names appeared in the Directory: Rev. Basil Bolinovskyj — who was shot; Rev. Michael Kachorovskyj, — who was hung; Rev. John Kupyna, — who was deported. -MOJOLI G., *Dietro il sipario di ferro...* pp. 535-536.

(52) Ibid., p. 536.

**JOSAPHAT  
KOTSYLOVSKYJ OSBM  
(1876-1947)**

**Elected Bishop of Pere-  
myshl January 29, 1917**

**Died imprisoned for the  
Catholic Faith January 17  
1947**



**GREGORY LAKOTA  
(1883- ? )**

**Elected Tit. Bishop of  
Daonio February 10, 1926**

**Auxiliary of Peremyshl**

**Deported into USSR**

**Probably dead already for  
the Catholic Faith**

### **3) Ukrainian Catholics in Communist Poland**

After the second occupation of Galicia by the Soviet troops (1944) and the renewal of the Polish Communist State, a part of the ethnographic Ukrainian territory remained within Poland. According to the Bolshevik Government, even here the Catholic Church of the Ukrainians was to be destroyed. The persecution was to level the Church in the territory of Apostolic Administrator of Lemki, and a great part of the diocese of Peremyshl. The Communist Government disregarded any consideration of Ukrainian nationality at first. At Peremyshl (Episcopal See) they brought back all the schools which existed before the War, plus some Ukrainian institutions. But the Basilian Fathers living in Zasiannia, were molested and annoyed.

In other cities, such as Yaroslav, Lezaysk, Porokhnyk it was worse, and frequently there was open conflict, pillage, and massacre of Ukrainians.

The agreement between Soviet Ukraine and Communist Poland, wherein the ethnical minorities were to be exchanged, — was concluded in September 1944. Thus the Ukrainians residing in Poland were to be « returned to their native country » in the Ukrainian State. This repatriation was carried out with force and brutality (53). The palace of the Ukrainian Bishop of Peremyshl was searched many times, as also the monastery of the Basilian Fathers. Finally on the 19th of September 1945, were arrested and imprisoned at Ryashiv a priest and 17 illustrious citizens, — following by the arrest of H. Exc. J. Kotsylovskyj, Bishop of Peremyshl, two days later (54). After two months those who were not priests were released after declaring that they were repatriating to Ukraine. Instead, Msgr. Kotsylovskyj and another priest, a member of the Chapter of Peremyshl, would not make this declaration, stating that by the will of the Holy See, they were bound to the See of Peremyshl, — and only the Holy Father could release them from this obligation. The office of Public Security then delivered

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(53) *Il Cristianesimo nell'Unione Sovietica*, pp. 291-292.

(54) Most Rev. Josaphat Kotsylovskyj, foreseeing the deportation, wrote: « In case of my arrest and deportation, I humbly beg to notify the Holy Father that I place before Him my vow of fidelity and absolute devotion until my last breath, last beat of my heart, asking for his paternal blessing ». *L'Osservatore Romano*, No 288, Dec. 9-10, 1946.

Mgsr. Kotsylovskyj, after two months of imprisonment, to the Soviet police. From then on he was continually maltreated. On January 8, 1946, he was transferred to Mostyska, situated beyond the Curzon Line, in the diocesan territory of Peremyshl (55). There, the agents of N.K.V.D. tried to persuade him to acknowledge the Patriarch of Moscow, Alexis, as his superior and head. But seeing firmness of the Catholic Faith, and readiness with which he would face torture, or even death, in preference to betraying his Church, they conceded him temporary freedom.

On the 24th of January 1946, he was declared free to return to Peremyshl. In the course of six months, Security agents went every month, and even more often, to spy on the Bishop's activity. On June 25, 1946, he was visited by the Vice Mayor Felczynski, with other military and civil representatives, plus a score of Security agents. He was then forced to enter an automobile, and after passing the Polish-Soviet frontier, was delivered to the Soviet police of the N.K.V.D. and imprisoned, at first in Lviv, then in Kiev, and at last confined to a home for the aged, 12 miles from Kiev. There he died on the 17th November 1947 (56).

The day after the arrest of Bishop Kotsylovskyj, the Chapter of Peremyshl (57) with its Auxiliary Bishop G. Lakota was taken into custody and transferred to the prison of Lviv, and a month later to that of Kiev (58). Them followed all the Ukrainians on this side of Curzon Line. It would take the genius of Dante to describe the heart-rending scenes which took place during the transfer of these Ukrainians, who were so attached to their homes in the Carpathian mountains. The priests, who left with the faithful, well knew the fate that awaited them with the transfer. Many of them, to avoid the danger of apostasy, remained in Poland, where some adopted the Latin rite temporarily, in order to continue their pastoral work. Others were arrested by the police and condemned to forced labor in Poland.

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(55) He was transferred by five agents of N.K.V.D. in a freight train transporting coal. Most Rev. J. Kotsylovskyj became seriously ill during this journey.

(56) MOJOLI G., *Dietro il sipario di ferro...*, p. 535.

(57) Rev. Roman Reshetylo, Rev. John Kuzych (Rector of the diocesan seminary), and Rev. Nicola Hrytsylak.

(58) Probably at the present time they are in Northern Russia together with Metropolitan J. Slipyj and other ecclesiastical dignitaries.



#### **4) The Condition of the Church under the Communists in Carpatho-Ukraine**

For the past thousand years, the last stretch of Ukrainian territory which lies to the south of the Carpathian mountains has been heir to the shifting fortunes of the Balkan countries, and often placed in circumstances differing radically from those of the rest of Ukraine. Until 1918 Carpatho-Ukraine was under Hungarian rule. With the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Western Ukraine (Galicia) was placed under custody of the Polish Army, while Eastern Ukraine was under that of the Red Army. This left Carpatho-Ukraine in a position in which it was unable to survive alone, and sought federation with Czechoslovakia, retaining however a regional autonomy. The sad history of Czechoslovakia's capitulation in 1939 is the same as that of Carpatho-Ukraine. In 1944 the Red Army, advancing in pursuit of the defeated Germans, occupied Carpatho-Ukraine for the first time, and thus forced upon that territory an immediate contact with Communism. The Ukrainian diocese of Mukachiv then numbered 641,000 Catholics, 281 parishes, 354 priests, 85 seminarians, 459 churches and chapels, 31 schools with an enrollment of 2360 students, and 8 monasteries housing 85 religious of both sexes. The diocese suffered a heavy loss with the death of His Excellency Stojka, whose duty of keeping high the spritual level of his people was assumed by the Apostolic Administrator, Nicholas Dudas. Meanwhile the military situation became continually more desperate, transforming the land itself into a field of agonizing battle. Then on September 24, 1944 Msgr. Theodore Romza was consecrated Bishop in the episcopal palace of Uzhorod, and soon after assumed administration of that diocese, realizing the innumerable difficulties confronting him. As the Red Army drew closer, the Germans ordered the complete evacuation of Uzhorod. It was only through the intercession of Msgr. Romza that the order to evacuate the civilians was rescinded. Then on October 27, 1944 the Red Army entered Uzhorod, capital of Carpatho-Ukraine.

The Episcopal See, the various religious houses (with the exception of the orphanage at Khust) were immediately transformed into military hospitals, and afterwards were confiscated alto-

gether. Despite this, nearly all the priests carried on their spiritual duties.

The Soviets occupied the territory with every intention of remaining. With this end in view they employed a crafty diplomacy to win the favor of the people, from whom they expected active collaboration in annexing Carpatho-Ukraine to Soviet Ukraine. They therefore avoided at first any conflict with Church Authorities. A day or so after the Red Army occupied Uzhorod, the Communist Commander visited Bishop Romza assuring him of the good will of the Red Army toward the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Later, on November 6, he invited His Excellency to speak at the Anniversary celebration of the Bolshevik revolution. Msgr. Romza felt himself obliged to choose the lesser of the two evils and to accept the invitation. In his brief address he thanked God that the war had not claimed too many victims nor inflicted excessive damage; he exhorted the people to welcome the liberating soldiers with joy, and asked them to pray for peace. The newspapers however published so distorted a version of the Bishop's address that he protested vigorously against the falsification of facts, but to no avail, since he was told that the Soviet authorities had merely published what the Bishop should have said, in accordance with the directives he had received (59).

With military activity now confining itself to the Slovak frontier, the popular assemblies promoted by the communists began taking place in the towns and cities of Carpatho-Ukraine. Aided by the Soviet Military Command, the assemblies turned their energies against the Church and clergy, causing the imprisonment of not a few priests, of whom some were released only through intercession of prominent figures (60). In November 1944 the schismatic faction began a campaign against the Catholics, and where the latter were found in relatively smaller number, the schismatics took possession of their churches, banished both the priests and their families, and even encouraged some arrests.

Following this, the schismatics began a campaign against the

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(59) Ibid., p. 536 Cfr. R.N. « The Golgotha of the Union in Carpatho-Ukraine » in « Zytia i Slovo » 1948-1949, pp. 327-329.

(60) One of the arrested — Rev. Peter Damianovich — a 70 year old pastor of Rakhiv, was shot. Ibid., p. 330.

Catholics even in those cities where the latter constituted the majority, so that within a few months after Soviet occupation, the Catholics lost 15 churches, including parishes and missions.

Despite Bishop Romza's vigorous protests to the military and civil authorities (61), the promise of an investigation was the only assurance he received. The churches nevertheless continued in the possession of the schismatics. On the 26th of November, the delegates from the popular assemblies met at Mukachiv in a general congress, presided over by the two representatives of the Soviet military and political authorities, Tulpanov and Weiss. The purpose of the congress was to elect a National Council which would govern temporarily Carpatho-Ukraine. It goes without saying that any refusal to sign the « manifesto » would provoke the customary imputation of fascism ad nazism, with the concomitant punishment of deportation to Siberia or forfeiture of all rights. Those elected to the National Council were atheists and communists. Ukrainian was at first established as official language, to change later to Russian. Bishop Romza was asked to make a declaration both denying the existence of any religious persecution in Russia and condemning the violence used during the German and Hungarian occupation. Because the Bishop did not make such a false declaration he was labeled a fascist, an enemy of the Soviet people, while at the same time the newspapers vied with one another in producing anti-Catholic and anticlerical literature. Bishop Romza was summoned before General Petrow who in turn was joined by General Mechlis, the political representative of the Soviets.

General Mechlis ranted furiously against the clergy and the Catholic Church, asserting that although some kind of religion was necessary within the State structure, nevertheless it would be highly desirable to break all ties with Rome and become independent of the Vatican, and to omit any mention of Roman Pontiff during the liturgical ceremonies, since the Pope had aligned himself with the Fascists and therefore drawn upon himself the hatred of the people. The situation became even worse when the schismatic Church sent Theophan Sabov, Superior of a schismatic

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(61) Represented by Col. Tulpanov, a fanatical enemy of the Catholic Church. *Ibid.*, pp. 328, 330.

**THEODORE ROMZA**

**(1911-1947)**

**Bishop of Uzhorod 1944**

**Martyred by the Communists during his Pastoral duties October 26 — November 1, 1947**



**HOLY CROSS  
CATHEDRAL OF  
UZHOROD (Mukachiv)  
(Carpatho Ukraine)**

monastery, as head of a delegation to Moskow, with the purpose of petitioning that his Church be placed under the protection of the Patriarch of Moskow. The local press meanwhile multiplied its attacks against the Catholic clergy, accusing it as usual of collaboration with the Germans.

During the first weeks of 1945, a bureau handling matters pertinent to public worship was established at Uzhorod, and was placed in charge of Peter Lintur, a confirmed atheist, and a communist fanatic. Following this, laws were promulgated granting the liberty to change one's religion without any necessary formalities. Laws also declared as confiscated any parochial property belonging to Catholics in the event that 2/3 of the Catholic population should become schismatic. Even the agrarian reform furnished the communists with innumerable pretexts to make things unbearable for the Catholic parishes (62). On January 11, Bishop Romza visited the civil authorities in an effort to reach some kind of understanding and to try to defend the clergy against false accusations. Although it appeared at first that an understanding had been reached, the situation really became worse. Then Bishop Romza, convinced that his every effort with the Communists was useless, decided to fight for the rights of the Church, for the churches that had been confiscated, and for the priests languishing in prison.

In March, 1945, with the modest means of transportation at his disposal, he began visiting his parishes to confer with his priests; any communication by mail was impossible. It required a month to complete his visitation, which in the end revealed itself to be a demonstration of fidelity of the people toward the suffering Church, and its visible head, the Holy Father. In the interim, all institutes dedicated to charity or education were expropriated, while the authorities, forbade teachers to assist at ceremonies of worship. Catechetical instructions which during 1944 had been allowed in the schools for one hour weekly were now forbidden even in the churches (63). The secret police agents of the N.K.V.D. exercised a continual control over the preaching; they censured any priest who dared to preach that Christ's Church

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(62) *Ibid.*, pp. 329-333.

(63) MOJOLI G., *Dietro il sipario di ferro...*, pp. 536-539.

is invincible, or who proposed the martyrs for the faith as examples to the people. These agents demanded that the priests preach about the happy life existing in the Soviet Union, and exhort the people to join the Red Army, and similar things. In the press there continually appeared some article or other, especially in the Sunday editions, against the Faith, the Vatican, the Pope, the Church, or against some particular priest. At the same time praise and admiration were lavished at the schismatics, who were considered victims of former regimes. The contention of course was devoid of all truth. Let it be noted with regret that many of the schismatic priests in Carpatho-Ukraine did in point of fact join the Communist party, while most of them expressed at least the wish to be received.

The Catholic priests who as catechists taught in public schools were relieved of their jobs, and all youth organizations were incorporated into those associations already functioning on communist-atheist lines. Because some of the youngsters continued going to church, the communists inaugurated hikes and sport events to divert them from their religious obligations, and tried to corrupt them in any possible way. The diocesan seminary, divested of everything it possessed, had to remain closed. However in March, 4th and 5th year classes of theology were assembled, and these students completed the abbreviated course of studies. In Monsignor Alexander Chira, the Papal Prelate, Bishop Romza found a worthy councilor and support during those trying days. Often enough the Papal Prelate was summoned before the Security agents and questioned for minute information concerning the Church. The agents both coaxed and threatened him, in order to win him over to schism. During the early part of July two colonels of the N.K.V.D. called Msgr. Chira before them and proposed to make him a Bishop in view of the fact that the actual Bishop was not cooperating properly with the Soviets. Msgr. Chira replied that he was bound by the same laws and obligations as Bishop Romza, and that the Faith was dearer to him than life itself or any worldly honors. Furthermore, he concluded, the Pope would not nominate a Bishop to a See which already possessed one. To this the Communists replied that they could obtain his nomination by the Vatican through the agency of a third state which still main-

tained relations with the Vatican. Monsignor Chira refused emphatically to consider proposals of this kind. Similar pressure was placed on the Basilian Fathers at Mukachiv. In the meantime Carpatho-Ukraine was annexed to the Soviet Ukraine on June 29. On October 22, a Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church held in Moscow nominated Nestor, former bishop of Uman, as Bishop of Mukachiv-Pryashiv. Nestor was of course merely a puppet in the hands of Moscow. Shortly after his nomination he returned to Carpatho-Ukraine, chose the Orthodox Cathedral of Mukachiv as his See, and began the organization of the Orthodox schismatic Church.

The local press published an article stating that Bishop Romza's jurisdiction, had ceased with the arrival of the new Orthodox Bishop, who in turn would assume charge of the Catholic Cathedral at Uzhorod and the Catholic diocese of Mukachiv.

Bishop Nestor did not succeed in winning the confidence of the people because of the heavy taxes levied on them, as well as the prohibition against religious worship. Among the Orthodox faithful it was rumored that the Bishop was an agent of the N.K.V.D.

While in Galicia the persecution of the Ukrainian Catholics was becoming progressively worse, in Carpatho-Ukraine the anti-Catholic literature of Kostelnyk was becoming more pronounced, but it had no noticeable effect on the people. Rather than induce them into schism, the communist threats and deportations had the opposite effect of confirming the priests and faithful in their religion. The financial problem of the clergy, caused by the complete confiscation of ecclesiastical benefices, was solved by the generous donations of the people (64).

When the Communists destroyed the Catholic Church in Galicia, there began an intensified persecution of the Church in Carpatho-Ukraine. Several times Bishop Romza was summoned before the agents of the N.K.V.D. for questioning, and was reminded of the « Misdeeds » of the Church, the Pope, and the hierarchy who, it was claimed, collaborated with fascism, and were unfriendly toward communism and the Soviet Union. It was customary after these questionings for the communists to attempt winning the

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(64) Ibid., p. 539.

Bishop over to the schismatic Church. His one and only reply to this was always: « Suffering and death are preferable to betraying the Church » (65).

What was the reaction of the people to these harsh measures adopted by the N.K.V.D.? Some examples are cited in the footnote (66), and in the story of the feast of the Assumption. On March 22 the Local Assembly summoned the superiors from among the Basilian Fathers; Fr. Anthony Mondyk (Provincial) and Fr. John Satmari (Superior of the monastery at Mukachiv) were asked to sign documents by which they became members of the schismatic Church. Two days after their refusal to comply some agents of the N.K.V.D. drove them to an old dilapidated monastery in Imstychiv, near Bilki, where they were made to wait until their final deportation (67). When news of the deportation reached the Bishop, he sent a protest to the Soviet Government. On Good Friday and Easter Sunday, (April 11, and 13, 1947), he preached two stirring sermons from his cathedral pulpit on the wickedness of the powers of hell. Nor did an occasion ever escape the saintly Bishop for encouraging his flock to fidelity to the Church. After Easter Monsignor Romza began another visitation of his parishes. His spirit of faith and fearless piety had a strong influence not only over the Catholics, but also over the schismatics; thus the latter, in ever increasing numbers, began returning to the true fold. While the agents of the N.K.V.D. were resolved to eradicate Catholicism by making its practice more and more difficult, the feast of the Assumption kept drawing closer, and with it the occasion

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(65) R. N., *The Golgotha...*, pp. 339-339.

(66) During the Pentecost in 1946, Bishop Romza left Uzhorod for Sevlush and Kumiaty Velyki. When news of the bishop's arrival spread, many faithful from distant localities came in entire processions. Usually in the village of Boroniava on the Feast of St. Elias three to four thousand faithful were present, but when they knew that the bishop would arrive, twenty thousand came. With tears in their eyes they listened to the sermon and solemnly swore to persevere in the faith of their ancestors.

Annually, approximately twenty five thousand people came to the Basilian Fathers' monastery in « Chernecha Hora » for the Feast of the Assumption, however in 1946 there were fifty thousand present. The Communist government in order to impede these Catholic manifestations, imposed a tax of 20,000 rubles. When the people heard of this during the sermon, within an hour they deposited this large sum. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

(67) *Ibid.*, pp. 341-342.



for the enormous pilgrimages to Mukachiv which were customary at this time. Bishop Romza had been told not to go to Mukachiv under penalty of arrest. The Soviet government had decided to liquidate the Catholic Church during the feast of the Assumption. Orthodox Bishop Nestor invited the schismatic Exarch of Kiev to Mukachiv for the occasion, but the latter sent three mitred prelates as his representatives.

From Odessa came Bishop Sergius, from Volyn Bishop Barlaam, and from Stanyslaviv Bishop Anthony, accompanied by representatives from the various parts of Ukraine.

For the feast of the Assumption, approximately 3,000 schismatics came to Mukachiv, accompanied by their bishops. The Catholics numbered about 80,000. That the plans of the Communists had been foiled was more than evident. Equally evident was the necessity to remove the fearless Bishop, Romza, whose noble sentiments were epitomized in his oft-repeated axiom: « Everywhere and forever we are in God's hands; should we suffer for the Faith, let us be grateful to Him for the grace by which He strengthens us for martyrdom ». Bishop Romza's liquidation was soon an accomplished fact (68). The destruction of the Catholic

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(68) His death has been described by a person absolutely trustworthy: « The honour of our martyr demands that you be informed exactly concerning his death. On October 27, 1947, in company with two priests and two clerics, he was returning in a carriage from Lavky, where on the preceding day he had consecrated a church. Along the road between Cereivtsi and Ivanovtsi, a truck loaded with soldiers and policemen threw itself at the carriage, with the evident intention of overturning it, killing the Bishop, and of then asserting that he had been the victim of an accident. But Providence did not permit it: the horses were killed by the blow, the carriage went to pieces, but the travellers remained unhurt. Then with iron bars his enemies did what the premeditated collision had failed to do: they hit him on the head, then they calmly went off. At the time of the misfortune the bishop was reciting the rosary. Our dear martyrs were transported to the hospital of Mukachiv, where they found that the bishop's jaw had been fractured in two places, nearly all his teeth gone, and numerous bruises on his body. While the others injured recovered quickly enough, the bishop had to go to meet death. On October 29, there entered the hospital a nurse destined for the section where the bishop lay; the sisters were kept at a distance. Before her arrival the bishop was improving noticeably: he could not yet eat, but he was fed through a tube placed in his mouth between his closed jaws. On the last morning of his life he went to Confession: being unable to receive Communion, he begged to have the Blessed Sacrament brought to him, and he made a brief adoration, weeping warm tears. With an effort he pronounced a few words encouraging all to preserve the faith and to pray. He passed

**PAUL GOJDICII OSBM**

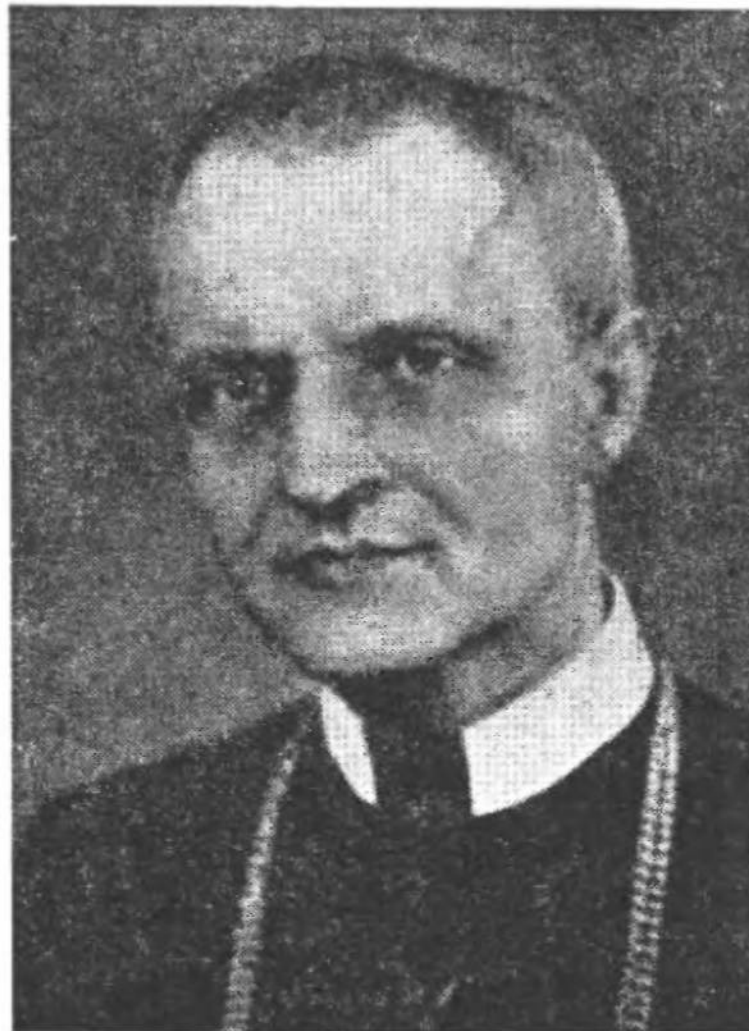
**Born July 17, 1888**

**Elected Tit. Bishop of  
Arpsa March 7, 1927**

**Apostolic Administrator and  
later Bishop of Pryashiv**

**Imprisoned 1950**

**Condemned to life imprisonment  
January 15, 1951**



**BASIL HOPKO**

**Born April 21, 1904**

**Elected Tit. Bishop of  
Midila November 9, 1946**

**Auxiliary of Pryashiv**

**Interned in concentration  
camp**

Church in Carpatho-Ukraine, begun in February 1946, reached its completion in April 1949. With every means in its possession, by imprisonment, exile, forced labor, and even death, the ugly demon of religious persecution, unleashed by the atheist government, continued with increasing determination to oppress and destroy the Catholic clergy of Ukraine because of its unwavering spiritual loyalty to the Holy See. The Catholic priests who had ministered at one time to profoundly Catholic communities, were now replaced by the puppets sent by the Patriarch of Moscow.

After the destruction of the Catholic Church in Galicia and Carpatho-Ukraine, only two Ukrainian bishops were left who enjoyed a measure of liberty, Monsignor Paul Gojdich, Bishop of Pryasiv, and Monsignor Basil Hopko, his Auxiliary (69). However the Communist program of religious persecution was begun at a later date in this diocese on the Czech border, and was completed by April 28, 1950. The so-called « People's Trial » which took place in Bratislava between the 12th and 16th of January, 1951, condemned Monsignor Gojdich, 62 years of age, to prison on the customary charge of « crimes » against the People's Republic of Czechoslovakia. Among other « criminal » charges, he was accused of writing a pastoral letter during the war asking his priests to go to Ukraine and substitute the Ukrainian priests who have been deported from their parishes by the Communists during the latter's retreat before the oncoming Germans.

Besides the false accusation that he had helped some Ukrainian partisans to escape to the American Zone of Germany across Czech territory in the summer of 1948, Monsignor Gojdich was also found guilty of having nominated five priests who were to

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away at 12.30 a.m. of the night of November 1st, probably poisoned with gas a few hours before by the nurse; she had as an accomplice the director of the hospital, a Jew, who had sent away all the personnel of the staff. Even in agony the bishop's face showed intimate peace of soul. His speech was gone, but everything in him spoke: his eyes, his smile. An innumerable crowd of faithful filed around the bier, placing a kiss on the corpse, and touching it with small objects of devotion as if to sanctify them. We are left orphans in terrible times, but we have the certitude of having a protector in heaven ». Mojoli G., *Dietro il sipario di ferro...*, p. 539, Cf. R. N. *Golgota...* pp. 334-336.

(69) At the present time he is awaiting trial.

succeed him in the event of his arrest. Bratislava witnessed the evil travesty of justice which has become an essential part of Communist « democracy ». It is a well known fact that Monsignor Gojdich was arrested because he refused to hand over the cathedral keys to the Communist-directed schismatics. These were under the leadership of Bishop Alexis Dekhterev, a Soviet citizen sent by the Patriarch of Moscow with orders to drag Bishop Gojdich, his diocese, and all the Ukrainian Catholics of Czechoslovakia into schism. The charges of espionage and treason were trumped up by the Communists only after the Bishop's arrest in an effort to justify themselves before the bar of world opinion (70). Bishop Gojdich's Auxiliary Monsignor Hopko, is still waiting trial which is being prepared, undoubtedly in the best traditions of Communist injustice (71).

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After this summary of the tragic events that have befallen Ukraine, it is proper to quote Our Holy Father Pope Pius XII who discussed the matter on the occasion of the 350th Anniversary of the Union of Berestya (1595-1596). In His Encyclical « *Orientalis Omnes* » (72) the Sovereign Pontiff, mindful of the continual suffering to which the Ukrainian Catholic Church has been subjected, writes: « For We have learnt with great grief that, in those territories which have recently been made over to the sway of Russia, Our dear brethren and sons of the Ukrainian people are in dire straits in consequence of their fidelity to the Apostolic See; every means are being employed to take them away from the bosom of their mother, the Church, and to induce them, against their will and against their known religious duty, to enter the communion of the dissidents. Thus it is reported that the clergy of the Ukrainian rite have complained in a letter to the civil government that in Western Ukraine, as it is called today, their Church has been placed in an extremely difficult position; all its bishops and many

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(70) The last Ukrainian bishop condemned to prison, in « *L'ora dell'azione* » A.V.N. 4, Jan 27, 1951, p. 9.

(71) Also the Ukrainians residing in Yugoslavia are persecuted by the Communist government, as related by Croatian martyrology. The Oriental bishop, Janko Simrak, died in prison.

(72) AAS., vol XXXVIII, No 11, January 23-24, 1946, pp. 33-63.

of its priests have been arrested; and in the same time it has been prohibited that anyone should take up the government of the same Ukrainian Church » (73). And further on He says: « These griefs cut us the more deeply because while the cruel war was yet raging almost all the nations of the world, through a gathering of their representatives, solemnly proclaimed, among other things, that no persecution of religion must ever be undertaken. This has given us hope that peace and true liberty would be granted everywhere to the Catholic Church, the more so since the Church has always taught, and teaches, that obedience to the ordinances of the lawfully established civil power, within the sphere and bounds of its authority, is a duty of conscience. But, unfortunately, the events we have mentioned have grievously and bitterly weakened, have almost destroyed, our hope and confidence so far as the land of the Ukrainians are concerned » (74). Even then the Pope foresaw the flagrant injustice which would be perpetrated in the name of « Popular Trials », when he says: « We are well aware that this harsh and severe treatment is speciously attributed to political reasons. But this is no new procedure used today for the first time; very often in the course of the centuries the enemies of the Church have hesitated to make public profession of their opposition to the Catholic Faith and to attack it openly; they brought cunning and subtle allegation that Catholics were plotting against the State. In the very same way the Jews accused the Divine Redeemer himself before the Roman governor, saying « We have discovered that this man is subverting the loyalty of our people, forbids the payment of tribute to Caesar » (Luke XXIII, 2) (75).

Eight years of suffering and persecution have dragged on, during which the Ukrainian Catholic Church has taken to the catacombs and has carried on encouraged by the fatherly counsel of the Pope, who wrote the following in his Encyclical: « in this sad and anxious state of affairs our fatherly heart goes out especially to those who are so harshly and bitterly oppressed by it, and first of all to you, Venerable Brothers, the bishops of the Ukrainian people. Great as are the trials which afflict you, you are

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(73) Ibid., pp. 58-59.

(74) Ibid., pp. 59-60.

(75) Ibid., p. 59.

more burdened with anxiety for the safety of your flocks than for the injuries and sufferings inflicted upon yourselves, in accordance with the words » the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep » (J. X. 11). As a father We next address you, our beloved sons who have received the seal of the priesthood, and must therefore follow more closely in the footsteps of Christ « who suffered for us » (I. Pet. II, 21), and still more than others must bear the brunt of battle. We exhort you to continue steadfastly and inflexibly to stand firm in your faith in these lamentable times; continue to uphold the weak and support the wavering... Lastly We address all of you, Catholics of the Ukrainian Church. We share your sorrows and afflictions with a father's heart. We know that previous snares are being set for your faith. There seems ground for fear that in the near future still greater hardships will befall those who refuse to betray their sacred religious allegiance. For that reason We even now exhort you in the Lord, beloved sons, to be terrified by no menaces or injuries, to be moved by no danger of exile or risk even of life ever to abjure your faith and your fidelity to Mother Church »(76).

The Ukrainian Catholics today draw a great measure of their hope and strength from the splendid words of Christ's Vicar: « in the midst of every kind of sorrow and affliction remember » that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared to the glory to come that shall be revealed in us » (Rom. VIII, 18.). « But the Lord keeps the faith with us; he will strengthen you, and keep you from all harm » (2 Thess, III, 3.). We have absolute confidence that, by the inspiration and help of divine grace, you will respond courageously and with a will to these exhortations of ours; and we foresee and humbly pray that better and more peaceful times will come for you from the merciful Father, the God who gives all encouragement » (2 Cor. I, 3.) (77).

For eight long years the Bishops, priests and people of Ukraine have remained faithful to the counsels of the Pope, even during the darkest hours of trial. Because of this, they have drawn upon themselves the admiration of all christianity, an admiration expressed so well by the Holy Father in his recent

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(76) Ibid., pp. 60-62.

(77) Ibid., pp. 62-63.

Encyclical « *Orientalis Ecclesias* » (December 15, 1952) in which he refers to the martyrdom of the Ukrainian Church in the following words:

« For the present, however, We sadly turn Our thoughts and affection to another people, truly dear to Us, namely, to the people of the Ukraine, among whom are not a few of the faithful, who look towards Rome with immense desire and earnest love, and venerate this Apostolic See as the center of the Christian religion and as the infallible teacher of Christian truth by reason of the mandate of Jesus Christ (Cf. Matt. 16, 18-19; John 11, 15-17; Luke 22, 32).

This people, nevertheless, as We have learned with overwhelming grief, are oppressed in no smaller degree with persecution and find themselves already for some time in a situation no less grave than the other peoples of whom We have spoken to you, Venerable Brothers, in this letter.

In a special way We would recall the memory of those Bishops of the Oriental Rite, who were among the first in the defense of their religion to endure hardship, affliction and outrage; who, transported to the city of Kiev, were there tried and condemned to various punishments - in the city of Kiev, We say, whence once shone forth throughout all those regions the light of Christian doctrine, and whence Christian worship was propagated. Some of these have already met a glorious death, and so, as one may hope, from the abode of heavenly blessedness, which they enjoy, lovingly look down upon their sons and their companions in their unarmed struggle, and implore for them the all-powerful protection of God.

Besides, We cannot pass over in silence those faithful of the Latin and Oriental Rite, who, after being driven from homeland and hearth, and deported into unknown and distant lands, are now there deprived of their rightful priests, who could console, help and direct them, and extend to them the heavenly comforts of religion.

All this is for Us a cause of grief so heart-rending that We cannot restrain Our tears. Meanwhile We beseech the all-compassionate God and Father of Mercy that He would deign graciously to enlighten those who are responsible for such a sad

state of affairs, and that He would deign likewise to put an end as soon as possible to the accumulation of so many evils ».

With the same Encyclical the Pope has assured the Ukrainian people of the most precious help in any hour of trial — the help of God, implored by the Universal Church for its suffering brothers in Ukraine:

« In order to obtain these things, We desire, Venerable Brothers, that you have public prayers said and that you exhort the faithful entrusted to you to perform also works of penance, so that the Divine Majesty, outraged, by so many and so grave offenses, may be appeased. Since, next January, there will be celebrated as usual in many places the octave of prayers for the unity of the Church, it seems to Us particularly opportune that, especially on that occasion, earnest supplications should be made to God, not only that there be verified as soon as possible the desire of the Redeemer: "Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are" (John 17, 11); but also that the prisons may be opened and the chains unlocked which today pitifully afflict so many for heroically having tried to defend the rights and institutions of religion; and also that Christian truth, justice, concord and peace, which are the greatest gifts of all, may triumph everywhere ».

With these solemn words the Pope reminds us of the promise made by Christ to Peter, which has been a source of great strength to Christianity down the ages: « thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it » (Matth. XVI, 18.).



# CONCLUSION

## 1. A Comparison of the Ukrainian Catholic Church's Losses in Ukraine

<i>In 1939</i>	<i>Today</i>
Dioceses . . . . . 5	All dioceses liquidated by Communists;
Territory of Apostolic Administrator and Visitor . . . . . 2	Liquidated by Communists;
Bishops . . . . . 10	All imprisoned, condemned, died in prison or assassinated;
Secular Clergy . . . . . 2950	50 % imprisoned, 20 % hidden or refugees, 30 % forced into schism;
Regular Clergy . . . . . 520	Dispersed, imprisoned together with three Provincial Superiors;
Seminarists . . . . . 540	Dispersed or refugees;
Nuns . . . . . 1090	Dispersed;
Faithful . . . . . 4,283,000	Many imprisoned or deported for their faith; majority resisting passively;
Parishes . . . . . 3040	Liquidated or occupied by schismatics;
Churches and Chapels . . . . . 4440	Closed or occupied by schismatics;
Religious Houses . . . . . 195	Confiscated, closed or occupied by schismatics;
Other Institutes . . . . . <i>All</i>	Liquidated;
Catholic Schools:	
<i>elementary</i> . . . . . 9900	}
<i>secondary</i> . . . . . 380	
<i>higher Institutes</i> . . . . . 56	
Catholic Associations . . . . . 41	All suppressed;
Catholic Press . . . . . 38	All suppressed;
Catholic Editorial Houses . . . . . 35	All suppressed;

## **2. The change in the juridical situation of Ukrainian Catholicism**

*In 1937*

### **The State Recognizes :**

1. - *The existence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.* (Concord. 15.VII.1929, art. 1; Concord. 2.VII.1925, art. 1; « Modus vivendi » 1928.1.III.-I)

2. - *Free Government according to the Divine and Church's Canon Laws.* (Concord. 15.VII.1929, art. 1; Concord. 2.VII.1925, art. 1; « Modus vivendi » 1928 - I; Const. 121).

3. - *The freedom of religious confession and public religious manifestations* (ibidem).

*In 1947*

### **The State :**

1. - *Proclaims Separation of Church and State.* (Const. of USSR. art. 123).

2. - *Controls all activities of the Church according to the civil laws pertaining to private associations.* (Coll. Laws, art. 10; NKVD. Inst. 16.I.1931, n. 328; ibidem art. 6).

3. - *Prohibits, hinders or impedes:*

a) juridical organization of worship;

b) official adherence of members to worship;

c) organization of manifestations of worship;

d) collection of offerings for worship;

e) propagation or religious faith;

f) development of charity activities;

g) founding of clubs, libraries etc.

(Const. of USSR, art. 123; Coll. Laws, art. 11; NKVD. Inst., art. 3).

4. - *The freedom of relations with the Apostolic Holy See granted to the Hierarchy and all the faithful.* (Concord. 1925 art. 1; Concord. 1929, art. 4; « Modus vivendi » 1928 - I).

5. - *All civil rights to every citizen regardless of faith.* (Concord. 1925, art. 1; Const. 128, n. 1).

6. - *Privileges to Clergy:*

a) exemption from military service;

b) exemption from seizure;

c) exemption from public offices, appointments, burdens etc. (Concord. 1925, art. 5; 1929, art. 8).

7. - *To the Holy See the Appointment of Bishops.* (Concord. 1925, art. 2; 1929, art. 5; « Modus vivendi » 1928, 4).

8. - *To the Church and the Ministers of Worship the freedom:*

a) of speech (preaching);

b) of press (pastoral letters etc.);

c) of meetings;

d) of processions;

e) of organizations;

f) of schools (seminaries etc.);

4. - *Combats the authority of the Apostolic See and prohibits all relations with it (in fact).*

5. - *Applies the marxist-theory, « the struggle of the social classes » to members of the Church (fact and theory).*

6. - *Considers the Clergy unworthy:*

a) of defending the Fatherland;

b) of the privilege of competency;

c) of public offices.

7. - *Imprisons Catholic Bishops (fact).*

8. - *Recognizes to all citizens the freedom of antireligious propaganda:*

a) in speech;

b) in press;

c) in meetings;

d) in processions;

e) in demonstrations;

And assures for this purpose:

a) paper and press;

b) buildings;

- g) of libraries;  
h) of orphanages;  
i) of hospitals; (Concord. 1925 art. 2; 1929, art. 8; Const. 125).

9. - *Religious assistance:*

a) to military;   
b) to the sick; (Concord. 1925, art. 7; 1929, art. 18; «Modus vivendi» 1928, 4; - Const. paragraph. 128, n. 2).

10. - *The freedom of religious teaching in public schools and the Hierarchy's right to intervene in appointment of religion-teachers.* (Concord. 1925, art. 13; 1929, art. 20; Const. parag. 130).

11. - *The civil effects of religious marriage and protects its unity and indissolubility.*

12. - *The free administration of goods to the Ecclesiastical Authority.* (Concord. 1925, art. 14; 1929, art. 13, 14; «Modus vivendi» - 2; Const. parag. 123, n. 1).

13. - *The exemption from taxes for Churches, Chapels,*

c) assistance (means of transportation and propagan-da) (Const. of USSR Art. 123).

9. - *Prohibits religious assistance:*

a) to military;   
b) to the sick, etc.

10. - *Realizes a complete separation of School and Church by prohibiting:*

a) religious teaching in public and private schools;   
b) religious teaching to more than three children per teacher; permitting (in theory!) religious teaching to one's own children only; (Const. of USSR, art. 123; Decr. for Associat. of Relig. Apr. 8, 1929, parag. 84).

11. - *Attributes the civil effects to civil marriages only; protects divorces.*

12. - *Confiscates all Ecclesiastical goods (nationalization), allowing only a limited use of buildings and objects of worship.* (Coll. Laws of USSR, art. 13).

13. - *Collects taxes with all rigor for the use of buildings*

Seminaries, etc. (Concord. 1925, art. 15).

14. - *Dowries and Subsidies to:*

- a) Bishops;
  - b) Parish priests;
  - c) Chapters;
  - d) Teachers of religion in public schools;
  - e) Professors in diocesan Seminaries;
  - f) For construction of churches, etc.;
- (Concord. 1925, art. 24; 1929, art. 11).

and objects of worship. (Decr. for Associat. of Relig. Apr. 8, 1929, art. 39).

14. - *Proclaims Separation of Church and State.*

(Decree of Separation of Church and State. Jan. 23, 1918).



# **APPENDIX**

## **I**

### **DISCOURSE OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE PONTIFICAL COLLEGE OF ST. JOSAPHAT**

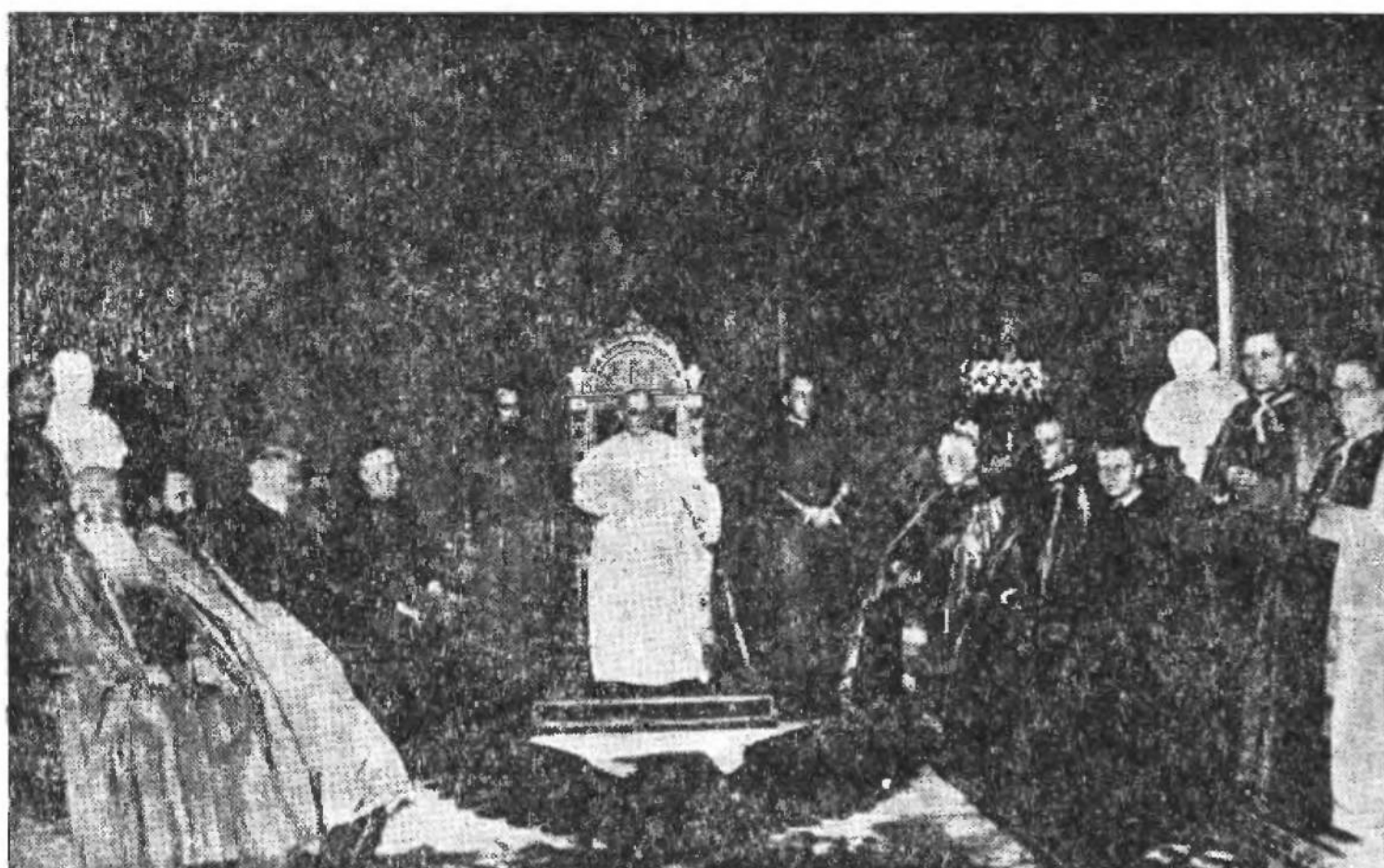
**(November 14, 1952)**

With particular affection We welcome you, beloved sons, Superiors and students of the Pontifical College of St. Josaphat, on the happy occasion of the twentieth anniversary of its foundation, so fittingly celebrated on the day sacred to the memory of the heroic champion of the unity of the Church and indomitable martyr of fidelity to this Apostolic See, of your saintly Patron, whose illustrious example should be an inspiration and guide, now, to your preparation for the priesthood, and to your apostolic work in the future.

His memory, just as your presence around Us, leads Us in spirit into the midst of that beloved portion of the Church of Oriental Rite, which you here represent, today so severely tried, desirous as We are of telling those dearly beloved sons that the heart of the Common Father beats, suffers and hopes with them and for them, as if oppressed by the same afflictions as they and filled with the same apprehensive anxieties.

What a multitude of emotions, at once sweet and sad, awakens within Our soul the memory of the foundation of your College, which, through the solicitude and munificence of Our glorious Predecessor Pius XI, arose in its new building on the height of the Janiculum Hill like a Roman beacon of Catholic faith, and therefore unquenchable, for your distant fatherland.

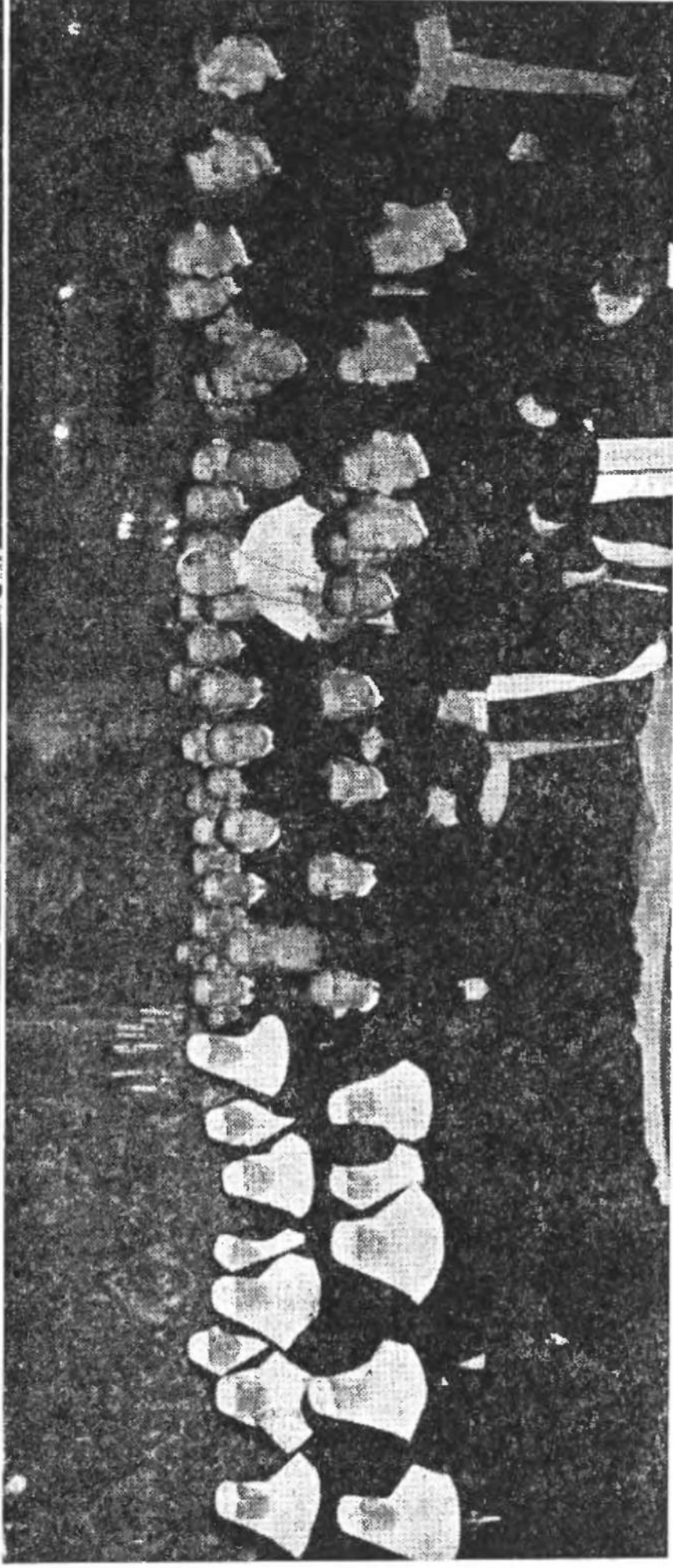
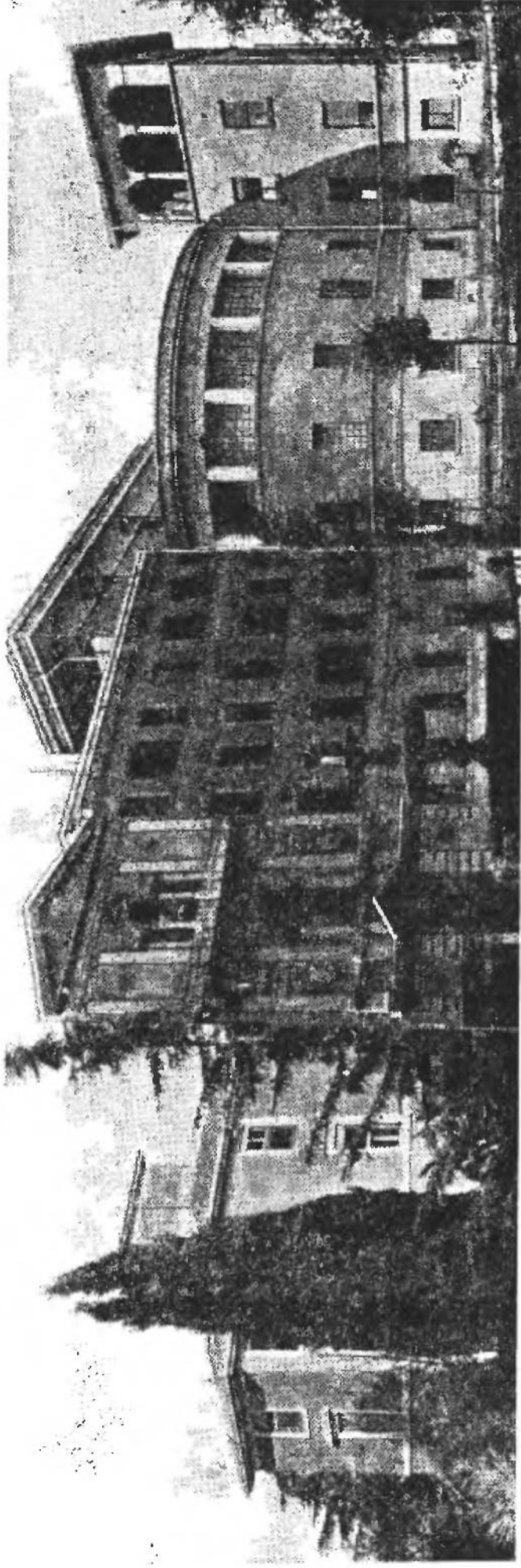
All of your Venerable Bishops on that occasion were happy to assist at the joyful ceremony of the inauguration in Rome, nor would the presence of the Reverend Metropolitan, Andrew Sheptytskyj, have been missing, if he had not been prevented by sickness. His noble life was afterwards cut off, not so much by his advanced age as by the sufferings of his shepherd's soul, stricken together with his flock. His name, therefore, will remain for ever blessed in the Church of God, which will remember his ardent zeal for the souls entrusted to him, and his manly courage in safeguarding even the



*Audience of the Ukrainian Catholic Episcopate with His Holiness  
Pope Pius XI, 1929*

civic heritage of his people, especially through the foundation of the library and of the museum destined to collect and preserve whatever concerns the history and the customs of the Ukraine.

In the course of these twenty years how many changes there have been for that beloved part of the flock of Christ, and how many vacancies in the ranks of its sacred Hierarchy; some Prelates dead in prison in witness of their faith; others, torn away from their Dioceses, continue to grieve in the hardships of exile, or else



*Papal audience granted to the Pontifical Ukrainian College of St. Josaphat*

*Rome, November 14, 1952*

*Above buildings, left to right: General Curia of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate;  
General Curia of the Basilian Fathers; Pontifical College of St. Josaphat*



share, together with so many others of Our beloved sons, the bread of tears in concentration camps, guilty only of their loyalty to the Eternal Shepherd.

If the fact of the coming, twenty years ago, to Rome of so many worthy Bishops witnessed to the flowering at that time of the Catholic religion and Christian life in your lands, today, unfortunately, their enforced absence sadly testifies to the dispersion of the flock also, as the Divine Master foretold: « I will smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered » (Mark 14, 27). There remains to comfort Us only your presence, Venerable Brother, John Buchko, and in your presence We seem to see all of the most dear Ukrainian people faithful to Us.

But who is it that can probe the ways of Providence, which orders all things mightily and sweetly to the end fore-ordained by Divine Wisdom? Sweet indeed is the path which opens before you, as it were, the precious gems of a new season, in your dedication and preparation for Holy Orders, to be ready to pour into the spiritual life of your people the lymph of a religious revival, whenever it shall please God to dissipate the storm-clouds darkening the heavens above them, and to give back to them the joyousness of a renewed Spring-time. It is at the same time a hard road, although rich in glory, that assigned by the same Divine Providence to so many of your Prelates, priests and faithful, who with their sufferings and blood are preparing the way for the spiritual resurrection of your Dioceses, just as three Centuries ago the martyrdom of your heavenly Patron was the seed of a flourishing revival in the ages which followed.

For the moment that is only a hope, but it is not a vain hope, especially as it is founded on that fervent devotion which your people have always cherished for the merciful Mother of God, in Whose honor they built Churches and Altars in every corner of their land. May Her intercession make it possible for numerous and suitable young men aspiring to the priesthood to come from the Ukraine to this Pontifical College, in addition to those from the Americas and from the various countries of Western Europe where your scattered families are settled today.

And you, beloved sons: the Church is educating you almost beneath the shadow of the Vatican Basilica, where there was held,

in-1867, on the occasion of the Jubilee celebrations for the martyrdom of the Prince of the Apostles, the solemn canonization of S. Josaphat — the first Saint of Oriental Rite to be canonized in moder times: let it be your care to learn from such illustrious and venerable memories an ever more profound, unswerving fidelity to this Chair of truth and bond of unity in the faith and universal love, which has been a flaming light and beacon for your people, for whose salvation you have been called by God.

With these sentiments We impart to you, to your Superiors and teachers, to all those who are devoting themselves to your intellectual and spiritual formation, to your dear ones, to all Our other beloved sons and daughters here present, and to your Country which We love so dearly, Our paternal Apostolic Blessing.



*First Audience of the Ukrainian Bishops —  
Memorial Medal of the Union of Berestya 1595  
(Rome)*

**II**

**ENCYCLICAL LETTER**  
**“THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES,”**

OF  
HIS HOLINESS  
PIUS XII  
BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE  
POPE  
ENCYCLICAL LETTER  
TO OUR VENERABLE BROTHERS  
THE PATRIARCHS, ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS AND OTHER LOCAL ORDINARIES  
OF THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES  
HAVING PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE

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**VENERABLE BROTHERS**  
**HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION**

The Oriental Churches, rendered illustrious by the doctrine of the Holy Fathers, and bathed by the blood of martyrs in ancient times, in more recent ages, and also in our own day, have always formed in a special manner the object of Our solicitude, a fact which is known to all. Indeed, as soon as We, without any merit of Our own, but through the inscrutable design of God, were raised to the Chair of the Prince of the Apostles, We turned Our mind and heart to you, and to those also who « find themselves outside the Catholic Church » (Cf. Radio message, March 3, 1939; A.A.S. XXXI, Ser. II, Vol. VI, p. 86), and whom We ardently desire may return as soon as possible to the fold of the Common Father, the abode of their ancestors (Cf. Encyclical « Summi Pontificatus »; A.A.S. XXXI, Ser. II, Vol. VI, Pp. 418-419; and Encyclical « Mystici Corporis »; A.A.S. XXXV, Ser. II, Vol. X, pp. 242-243). We

have given you other proofs of Our paternal benevolence during the course of Our Pontificate. As is known to you, We have conferred the dignity of the Roman purple on another of your Bishops, the Patriarch of the Armenians of Cicilia, and We are providing for the codification of the Canonical Laws which affect you: a work of the greatest importance, and one which is already in part completed. But it is not necessary to speak at length of matters without doubt already well known to you; as for the rest, We have followed in the footsteps of Our predecessors (Cf. Encyclical "Rerum Orientalium"; A.A.S. XX, Vol. XX, p. 277), who from the very first days of Christianity not only surrounded your ancestors with a particular affection, but were accustomed besides to grant them all possible aid on every occasion when they were besieged by heresy or groaned under the terror and persecutions of enemies. Thus it was that through the Apostolic Authority entrusted to the Prince of the Apostles and to His Successors by the Divine Redeemer, the Roman Pontiffs defended the integrity of Catholic doctrines in the First and Second Councils of Nicea, in the First Second and Third of Constantinople, and in those of Ephesus and Chalcedon; and when a lamentable dissension separated a great part of the Oriental Churches from Rome, they not only reprovved it through their Legates in the Fourth Council of Constantinople, but they exerted themselves in every manner possible in order that, in the common interest, the situation might be happily resolved. After numerous, praiseworthy and difficult efforts, they were able to do this in the Council of Florence, although against the hopes of all good men the deliberations taken were not afterwards put into practice. Again when the Eastern regions were invaded by new peoples who devastated even the sacred places of Palestine, consecrated by the Divine Blood of Jesus Christ, the Roman Pontiffs then urged the Christian Princes to the great undertaking of the defense of religion. Nor has this eager solicitude and this benevolence of Our Predecessors towards your fellow-countrymen become less in intensity or diminished in Our day, but rather appear to be ever increasing. As you in fact know, many were sent among you to expose Catholic doctrine and to convince all to return to the highly desired unity of faith and of rule. Here, too, at the See of Peter was founded a Sacred Congregation with express purpose of

regulating the interests and rites of the Oriental Church. Thus also there was founded an Institute for Oriental Studies with the object of cultivating and promoting with every care a suitable knowledge of all matters concerning you.

At the present time, unfortunately, other motives require Our care and solicitude. In many regions where the Oriental Rite particularly flourishes, there has been unleashed a new tempest, which seeks to overthrow, devastate and destroy in misery flourishing Christian communities. If in past centuries some particular dogma of Catholic doctrine was impugned, today, on the contrary, as you well see, they rashly go even further. They seek to banish from public life and the domestic scene, from the universities, from the schools, and from the life of whole populations sacred rights, institutions and laws indeed, all that is divine or that has relation to divinity, almost as if they were dealing with matters of mythology and evil-omen.

Therefore, however greater the accumulation of evils which oppresses a most elect part of Christianity, in that degree, Venerable Brothers, is Our benevolence towards you increased, that much more ardent is the paternal love which We cherish for you all.

And in the first place We wish that it be most clearly manifested to you that We consider your sorrows and your grief as Our own, and that there is nothing We desire more ardently than to bring some relief to your sufferings, above all by means of Our prayers and those of every Christian for all those who are being persecuted for having defended, as was necessary, the Catholic religion and its sacred rights.

We know that today there are multitudes of the faithful in Oriental regions who weep bitterly as they see their Bishops put to death or dispersed, or so impeded that they are unable freely to address their flocks and, as they rightfully should, exercise over them their authority; as they behold so many of their churches destined to profane uses or left in squalid abandon; as they realize that no longer in these churches can they now raise up to heaven in prayerful union their voices harmonized in the wonderful modulations that are prescribed in your Liturgy, to call down the dew of heavenly graces that minds be elevated, hearts consoled and remedy found for such great evils.

We know that many from among you have been sent to prisons and concentration camps, or if they are living in their homes, are unable to exercise those sacrosanct rights which are theirs; that is, not only the right to profess their faith in the intimate sanctuary of their own consciences, but also to be able to teach it openly, to defend and propagate it in the family circle for the proper education of the children, and in the school, for the proper training of the pupils.

On the other hand We also are aware that the faithful of the Oriental Churches, in fraternal union with their brethren of the Latin Rite, are together bearing with fortitude the sorrowful burdens of these persecutions, and in like manner are together sharing in the martyrdom, the triumph and the glory that are resulting therefrom. Indeed, they are persevering with heroic courage in their faith. They are resisting the enemies of Christianity with the same unconquerable fortitude with which your forebears did in times past. They are raising their supplications to Heaven if not publicly, at least in private. They are remaining faithfully attached in closest union to the Roman Pontiff and to their pastors. So also are they continuing to revere, beseech and love in a very special way the Blessed Virgin Mary, most loving and powerful Queen of Heaven and of earth to Whose Immaculate Heart they have all been consecrated by Us. All this is unquestionably the augury of most certain victory in the future, of that victory, however, which flows not from the blood of men in conflict among themselves, nor is nourished by unbridled desire for earthly power, but which is founded on just and legitimate liberty: on justice, practiced not only with words but also with facts, justice to citizens, peoples and nations; on peace and fraternal charity, which unites all in the bonds of friendship; on religion, above all, which rightly orders customs, moderates private aspirations by placing them at the service of the public welfare, raises up minds to heaven, and, in fine, protects civil society and the peace of all.

This is the object of Our most ardent hope. But in the meanwhile, however, the information that reaches Us is such as to render more bitter Our sorrow. By day and by night We turn with paternal solicitude Our mind and Our heart to those who have been confided to Us by divine mandate (Cf. John 21, 15-17), and who

We know are treated in so unworthy a manner as to be the object of calumnies for their firm attachment to the Catholic faith, and to be deprived of their legitimate rights, not excluding at times even those so innate to human nature that whenever they are trampled upon by violence, fear or other means, the very dignity of man is lessened and subjected to injury as a result.

Among these saddening communications brought to Our notice, there is one which in these latest days has afflicted more than any other not only Us, not only all Christians, but also all those who hold in honor the dignity and liberty of citizens. We would refer to Bulgaria, where there existed a small but flourishing community of Catholics, and where a terrible catastrophe has caused profound mourning in the Church. With the usual method of accusations, public crimes were imputed to the ministers of God. Among these, Our Venerable Brother, Eugene Bossilkoff, Bishop of Nikopol, was condemned to death, together with other of his priest collaborators in the pastoral ministry. Furthermore, many others already are imprisoned or impeded by the restraint of public authority, and to these are added a not inconsiderable number of Catholics punished in various ways, and thus invested with the same distinction and honor. As a duty of conscience, We raise Our protest against all of this, while to the whole of Christendom We denounce the injury inflicted upon the Church. These victims, in fact, have been condemned as enemies of the State not only because of having professed, but also for having striven openly and strenuously to defend the Catholic religion, when in truth they are second to none in their love of country, respect for public authority and their observance of the law, provided these be not contrary to the natural, divine or ecclesiastical law.

What indeed has happened, especially in more recent times, in Bulgaria, unfortunately has been happening already for some time amongst other peoples where the Church of the Oriental Rite flourishes, namely, amongst the peoples of Rumania, of the Ukraine and among many other peoples also.

As far as the first nation is concerned, by an Apostolic Letter of last March (Cf. A.A.S., XLIV, Ser. II, Vol. XIX, p. 249 ff), We have already protested vehemently against the many afflictions by which the faithful of your own and the Latin Rite are oppressed,

and with fatherly sympathy We have exhorted them all to persevere, with that indomitable steadfastness by which they are distinguished in the religion of their forefathers.

For the present, however, We sadly turn Our thoughts and affection to another people, truly dear to Us, namely, to the people of the Ukraine, among whom are not a few of the faithful, who look towards Rome with immense desire and earnest love, and venerate this Apostolic See as the center of the Christian religion and as



*Cathedral of St. Sophia (Kiev - XI. C.)*

the infallible teacher of Christian truth by reason of the mandate of Jesus Christ (Cf. Matt. 16, 18-19; John 11, 15-17; Luke 22. 32).

This people, nevertheless, as We have learned with overwhelming grief, are oppressed in no smaller degree with persecution and find themselves already for some time in a situation no less grave than the other peoples of whom we have spoken to you, Venerable Brothers, in this letter.

In a special way We would recall the memory of those Bishops of the Oriental Rite, who were among the first in the defense of



their religion to endure hardship, affliction and outrage; who, transported to the city of Kiev, We say, whence once shone forth throughout all those regions the light of Christian doctrine, and whence Christian worship was propagated. Some of these have already met a glorious death, and so, as one may hope, from the abode of heavenly blessedness, which they enjoy, lovingly look down upon their sons and their companions in their unarmed struggle, and implore for them the all-powerful protection of God.

Besides, We cannot pass over in silence those faithful of the Latin and Oriental Rite, who, after being driven from homeland and hearth, and deported into unknown and distant lands, are now there deprived of their rightful priests, who could console, help and direct them, and extend to them the heavenly comforts of religion.

All this is for Us a cause of grief so heart-rending that We cannot restrain Our tears. Meanwhile We beseech the all-compassionate God and Father of Mercy that He would deign graciously to enlighten those who are responsible for such a sad state of affairs, and that He would deign likewise to put an end as soon as possible to the accumulation of so many evils.

Nevertheless, Venerable Brothers, in the midst of so many and such great calamities, on account of which Our soul and yours are overwhelmed with grief, We have reason to derive some consolation from news We have received. For it is made known to Us that those who are reduced to such a lamentable and critical situation remain steadfast in their faith with intrepid constancy as to excite Our admiration and the admiration of every honest person. Let all these receive from Us this merited recognition of Our paternal praise, and may it serve to increase and strengthen more and more their fortitude. And let them know for certain that We, as the Common Father Whom "the care for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11, 28) urges and the "love of Christ implies" (ibid. 5, 14), raise up each day ardent supplication that the reign of Jesus Christ, bearer of peace to souls, to peoples and to nations, may everywhere triumph.

Before the sad spectacle of these afflictions-which have stricken not only Our sons among the laity, but more especially those, who,

raised to the priestly dignity, are for that very reason afflicted, that the words of Sacred Scripture may be verified; « I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered » (Matt. 26, 31; Cf. Mark 14, 27; Zach. 13, 7)—We feel obliged to recall to the mind of all that throughout the course of the centuries, not only among civilized but also among barbaric peoples, the ministers of religion have always been treated, in so far as they are intermediaries between God and men, with due honor and veneration. When, moreover, the Divine Redeemer after the dispelling of the darkness of error, taught to us heavenly truth and through His profound condescension wished to make us partakers in His eternal priesthood, this showing of honor and veneration was then greatly increased, so much so that Bishops and priests were regarded as most loving Fathers, desirous of nothing else than the common good of the people entrusted to their care.

Yet the Divine Redeemer has said Himself: « No disciple is above his teacher » (Mat. 10, 24); « if they have persecuted me they will persecute you also » (John 15, 20); « blessed are you when men reproach you, and persecute you, and, speaking falsely, say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. Rejoice and exult, because your reward is great in heaven » (Matt. 5, 11-12).

We should not wonder, therefore, if in Our days, and perhaps more than in past centuries, the Church of Christ, and in a particular way its ministers, is made to suffer from persecutions, falsehoods, calumnies and afflictions of every kind; but rather place Our secure trust in Him, Who if He has already foretold these future calamities, wished also to forewarn us with these words: « in the world you will have affliction. But take courage, I have overcome the world » (John 16, 33).

Do not be downhearted, therefore, Venerable Brothers. Just as your ferebears overcame so many difficulties, wiles and dangers by fighting with heroic fortitude even unto martyrdom, so also you who belong to the Oriental Church, together with the faithful of the Latin Rite, trust in the aid of heavenly grace and be not afraid. Supplicate together the Lord and His Most loving Mother, praying especially for those who are today in greatest danger, that they may be endowed with Christian fortitude.

Pray too that all may finally understand certain truths, which

are, in fact, clearer than the light of the sun, namely: that « the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but powerful before God » (2 Cor. 10 4), that the Church does not seek temporal power but the eternal salvation of souls, that she does not intrigue against governing authorities, but, by means of the Gospel teachings which are capable of forming first-class citizens, she strengthens the very foundations of human society. If, therefore, she is allowed to enjoy the liberty given her by God, if she is allowed to display her strength publicly and carry on her activities openly in the midst of the people, she can undoubtedly contribute much towards promoting the common good, towards, bringing the various classes of citizens closer together in justice and in concord, and towards leading all nations to that true peace and tranquility, which, just as it is desired by all, must also be willed by all.

In order to obtain these things, We desire, Venerable Brothers, that you have public prayers said and that you exhort the faithful entrusted to you to perform also works of penance, so that the Divine Majesty, outraged by so many and so grave offenses, may be appeased. Let all remember the words of Sacred Scriptures: « Pray for those who persecute and calumniate you » (Matt. 5, 44); « let the members have care for one another. And if one member suffers anything all the members suffer with it » (1 Cor 12, 25-26). It is necessary, furthermore, to imitate the example of the Divine Redeemer Who, in the midst of terrible pain cried out from the Cross: « Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing » (Luke 23, 34). It is necessary likewise to fill up in our flesh what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ for His Body, which is the Church (Cf. Col. 1, 24). Wherefore, not only must we pray to God for our distressed sons and brothers, but we must willingly offer up to Him our sufferings, our voluntary penances and afflictions.

If, towards the numberless persons in those regions who are suffering infirmity, sorrows and anxieties, or who are in prison, We cannot put into practice the words of Jesus « I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me » (Matt. 25, 36), there is nevertheless, some way in which we can accomplish the same thing: namely, by our prayers and works of penance we can beseech the Most Merciful God to send His comforting angels

to these our suffering brothers and sons, and to grant them most copious gifts from on high which will console and fortify their minds and elevate them to heavenly things.

In a particular manner, however, We desire that all priests who are able to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice every day should make a remembrance of those Bishops and priests, who, far from their churches and their faithful, have not the possibility of ascending the altar to offer the Divine Sacrifice and nourish themselves and their faithful with that divine food, from which our souls attain a sweetness surpassing all desire and receive that strength which leads to victory. And, united together in fraternal union, let the faithful who approach the same holy table and partake of the same sacrifice do likewise. In such wise that in every part of the world and in all the rites which constitute the ornament of the Church, there shall be raised to God and His Heavenly Mother unanimous voices imploring the divine mercy on behalf of those afflicted communities of Christians.

Since, next January, there will be celebrated as usual in many places the octave of prayers for the unity of the Church, it seems to Us particularly opportune that, especially on that occasion, earnest supplications should be made to God, not only that there be verified as soon as possible the desire of the Redeemer: « Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are » (John 17, 11); but also that the prisons may be opened and the chains unlocked which today pitifully afflict so many for heroically having tried to defend the rights and institutions of religion; and also that Christian truth, justice, concord and peace, which are the greatest gifts of all, may triumph everywhere.

As an earnest of that and as a pledge of Our paternal benevolence, We impart from Our heart to you, Venerable Brothers, to the flocks entrusted to your care, and in a particular manner to those living in these difficult conditions, the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at Rome, from St. Peter's, on the fifteenth day of December, 1952, in the fourteenth year of Our Pontificate.

*PIUS PP XII.*

### **III**

## **SERMON OF HIS EXCELLENCY MSGR. J. BUCHKO**

***On the Occasion of the Triduum for the persecuted  
Ukrainian and Rumanian Catholics  
- Rome, February 1, 1953***

Your Eminencies, your Excellencies, and my dear Brethren,

As president of this manifestation of charity I greet you cordially and thank you from my heart for kindly accepting our humble invitation. We are meeting together for a Triduum of prayers for our brothers who are persecuted for the Faith by the godless governments in our native land, Ukraine, and Rumania. You join with us in prayer to obtain for our brothers from God's infinite mercy the grace of comfort in their countless sufferings, the grace of perseverance in their resistance, and, if it please God, liberation as soon as possible from their chains and from this atrocious persecution, so that the Kingdom of Christ may be triumphantly established upon the ruins of Satan's kingdom.

It was in accordance with the exhortations of the Holy Father recently renewed in his unforgettable Encyclical « *Orientalis Ecclesias* » that we arranged for this Triduum of prayer and penance, more particularly in aid of our brethren in Ukraine and in Rumania. But at the same time we pray for all who are persecuted, of whatever rite, nationality or race. We pray for Bulgars, Czechs, Albanians, Lithuanians, Lettonians, Esthonians, Chinese, Croats, Poles, Slovaks and Hungarians, nor do we forget our separated brethren the non-Catholics, when they are persecuted for their faith in Christ, Our God and Saviour. We pray also for the persecutors themselves, that they may be enlightened by divine grace and cease to act in a way that offends God even more deeply than it injures their victims.

- We cherish the hope that our manifestation of solidarity with the sufferers, together with our fervent prayers and works of penance, may bring them great spiritual comfort and strengthen even more their admirable and exemplary resistance. Holy Scripture assures us of it in the text: « A brother who is helped by his brother is as a strong city ».

We hope that our prayers will be efficacious through the union with the prayers of the Holy Father, who joins his tears and prayers with ours; thus the whole Church prays with us now, just like in the early times its Church prayed for St. Peter who was in prison and her prayers were answered without delay..

I must confess that this manifestation of solidarity and charity is especially comforting to us Ukrainians, blood brothers of those who are persecuted.

To say the truth, it is only now, since the appearance of the Holy Father's Encyclicals in 1945 and 1953, that our Ukrainian Church on this side of the Curtain has broken the silence that reigns on the other side; hitherto it has been in the strictly literal sense Church of silence, reduced to silence by most cruel persecution beyond the curtain that is impenetrable to the eyes of the world. Our heroic Bishops, priests and people were by no means really silent, for, as the Holy Father says, their chains cried aloud and preached Christ in the fullest and noblest manner. But the Ukrainian Church was condemned to silence by the free world, and even, sad to say, by the Catholic world. For various reasons, no mention was made of the arrest of the first Ukrainian Bishops. Perhaps for fear of irritating the great ally in the victory over Hitler, but probably also because, they were insufficiently acquainted with the methods of Communist tribunals. People believed the base statement of the Russian telegraphic agencies that the Bishops had been brought before the Soviet court at Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, and condemned as war criminals and enemies of the people for their collaboration with the Nazi regime. In consequence, profound silence was kept with regard to the Ukrainian Church even by Catholic papers, with a few slight exceptions; and if it was mentioned at all, the accounts were confused and inaccurate, with errors in the names of the Bishops, their nationality and their rite. It seems really curious that in

speaking of the persecution of the Catholic Church it should be thought necessary to discuss the political allegiance of the sufferers, since everyone knows that it is not on any political grounds that they are persecuted, but for being Catholics, and Catholics of the Oriental Rite; that is what has been the crime of the Ukrainians in the eyes of Moscow, whether Czarist or Communist, for the past three hundred years. It was plain that many chose to ignore the Ukrainian people, a great people, since it numbers forty million, and so severely tried. They chose to ignore its aspirations and the Calvary it has suffered, especially its persecution by Moscow for the Catholic faith and in particular for the dogmatic truth of the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff and its fidelity to the Holy Apostolic Roman See. The thousands upon thousands of Ukrainian martyrs in the 19th century, in a persecution that was called Neronian, were forgotten, and the recent martyrdom of the country was passed over in silence.

But the Holy Father, the guardian of the truth and the defender of the persecuted and oppressed, has deigned to break the silence, first with the Encyclical «*Orientalis omnes*» and recently with «*Orientalis Ecclesias*», expressing his admiration for the heroic resistance of our Bishops and people, and calling upon the whole world to prayer.

It is our hope that the martyrdom of our people will soon come to an end, and that the Ukrainian Church, now maimed and mutilated, will flourish anew, fulfilling the prophetic words of Pope Urban VIII, «*Per vos mei Rutheni Orientem convertendum spero*».



## **IV**

# **THE AGE LONG PERSECUTION OF THE UKRAINIAN CHURCH AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES**

**(by A. G. Welykyj)**

The first duty of Christians and Catholics in the frightful danger threatening the whole of Christendom today, is to implore God's help by prayer and to seek out the fundamental reasons for this calamity, so as to remove them as far as lies in their power. The present talk is not a detailed statistical statement, but a modest contribution towards seeking a remedy. In accordance with the principal motive of Pius XII's latest Encyclical, we turn our thoughts at the present moment and in a special way to the people and the Church of Ukraine, which for a long time, and indeed for many centuries, has been suffering persecution for God's cause. Instead of asking, as people do in our days, HOW, WHEN and HOW MUCH, we will simply ask WHY, and endeavor to find a reply.

The Ukraine became a Christian country during the great dispute within the Church about the year 1054. The period of two hundred years before that date (that is from Photius to Cerularius) and two hundred years after (that is from Cerularius to the fall of the Latin Empire of the Crusaders at Constantinople) is a period during which took place the spiritual, psychological, and formal separation of the Oriental Church from Rome. In Ukraine, it was the period of missions and baptisms, ending in the victory of Christianity over the pagan spirit of the people. Thus occupied within itself by the establishment of the Gospel in private and public life, the Ukraine had no great share in the general process of separation between East and West; though shortly afterwards,



it was the first to suffer from it, since within its territory that separation disrupted the unity of the Ukrainian people from every point of view psychological, religious, ecclesiastical, territorial, and national. In that distant time we find the most glorious period in the history of the Ukraine as a Christian nation: the political and ecclesiastical leadership of Kiev in Eastern Europe.

Towards the middle of the thirteenth century, however, there was a change in the grouping of political and ecclesiastical forces



*Coronation of Prince Daniel 1253 (by Andreychyn)*

in the European world. In spite of the reconstruction of the Byzantine Empire, the center of political force in the East was displaced. When, at the end of the Crusades, the West ceased to take an interest in the affairs of the East, the conquering and ravaging forces of the Ottomans and Mongols destroyed Byzantium, and the happy period of a great and independent Ukraine came to an end. The Mongol hordes reached Silesia; the Ottoman army stood on the farther shore of the Bosphorus. Threatened with this deadly peril, the Eastern European world sought various ways and

means of escape. The Emperor of Byzantium and the Patriarch went so far as to form the Union of Lyons with the Church of Rome; the Princes of Western Ukraine sought in the West and in Rome, and after the first Council of Lyons, King Daniel of Halych was crowned by Innocent IV; unlike the Emperor and the princes who looked toward the West, the princes of Moscow tried to placate the great Cham by collaboration, and this at the expense of neighboring states, especially the Ukraine, which refused to submit to the Mongol yoke. Thus was Eastern Europe divided into two parts, the one politically and ecclesiastically favorable to an understanding with the Catholic West (Byzantium, Ukraine), the other hostile to any understanding (Moscow and the Mongols). This period saw the beginning of efforts for the union of the Churches, and also the beginning of struggles against it.

With the passing of years (approximately two centuries), the terms of an agreement were found at the Council of Florence. It is enlightening to note that representatives of Byzantium (the Emperor and the Patriarch) were present at Florence, and Isidore, the Metropolitan of Kiev, from ecclesiastical Ukraine, the only remaining force in that country, which had already been politically divided between Poland, Lithuania and Muscovy. Moscow, allied with the Mongols in the hope of succeeding to their power, and averse to any union with the West, was not only absent from Florence, but took the lead in a struggle against any unification. It was in fact Moscow, and Moscow alone, that rejected the Union of Florence, rebelling against the Patriarch of Constantinople and against its own immediate ecclesiastical Superior, the Metropolitan of Kiev, who was even thrown into prison; Byzantium was declared to have fallen from orthodoxy, and little by little the idea was put forward of a « third Rome » at Moscow, which took upon itself the defense of orthodoxy, especially after the fall of Constantinople and its own victory over the Mongols.

Thus, five centuries ago, Moscow made itself the political and ecclesiastical center of hostility to the West and to Rome, and continued to play this part until it culminated in the aggression of our own day, in grand style and on a vast scale. In this way, the Union of Florence, the first bridge joining East and West, broke down under the blows of Moscow. This was the first great

achievement of the rulers of Moscow, who, with ecclesiastical support as defenders of orthodoxy and the « third Rome », became the leaders of Eastern Europe. To this day, Moscow has met with no defeat in its imperialistic forward march, extending its boundaries across the whole of Asia to the Pacific Ocean in the East, and to the Baltic Sea in the West. Attacks from Poland and Lithuania were never successful, though they sometimes reached the very suburbs of Moscow, as at the beginning of the seventeenth century; similarly, the Turkish wars only served to gain new territory for Moscow; Napoleon failed, and in our own day, Hitler failed, though the former burned the capital and the latter bombarded it with his guns. All these struggles turned to the profit of Moscow, which continually gained fresh territory and ever enlarged its political and imperialistic aims. Its ecclesiastical claims grew in proportion, all these aspects of power being united in the person of the Czar.

It will be interesting to know whether, in its ecclesiastical forward march, Moscow has been as continually victorious as in the political sphere. Considering its history we might feel some surprise that up to the present it has launched no ecclesiastical attack against the West, but has remained on the defensive. The reason is that its dreams of ecclesiastical domination met with serious defeats in the past, and this has prevented it from taking the offensive. The severest blow to its ambition to be the « third Rome » was dealt by the Union of the Ukrainian and White Ruthenian Church with Rome at Berestya in 1595, which up to our own day has barred the way to any ecclesiastical offensive from Moscow; the bond with the Metropole of Kiev was dissolved in 1448, and in 1589 a Patriarchate of Moscow was created, but Moscow has never been able to go further and cross the barrier formed by Catholicism of Oriental rite in the Ukraine and White Ruthenia.

The Union mentioned above has been attributed to various motives, political, opportunist, etc., but a reading of the contemporary documents clearly shows us another reason, the determination of the Ukrainians to regain their place as leaders and guides in the ecclesiastical sphere, which they had lost through the political action of their neighbors. And indeed, the end of the sixteenth century was a most favorable time for such an aim.

The last Czar of the Rurikide dynasty, which also ruled Kiev, had just died after ten years of weak government. A race for power began between various claimants, a false Demetrius and others; it is known as the « smutnoje vremja » — the period of gloom. It was just at that time that the Union of Berestya was formed. In both political and ecclesiastical circles there was the same desire to regain the position that Kiev had held in preceding centuries. The Bishop Legate at Rome, Hypatius Potij, wrote thus in the memorandum that he left for the Roman Curia during his legation in 1595: « Their coming into the Church is of great advantage and significance, since besides the evident gain of so many millions of souls to the Catholic Church, it gives good hope that the Church of Moscow also, and those who groan under the Turkish yoke, will follow their example and will be united with the Church of Rome; that this may easily happen will be seen for the following reason. Russia, which is ruled by Poland and is in obedience to the Holy See, stands between Muscovy and Greece, so that it can easily communicate with both and exhort them to leave the schism ». After explaining how this may be done for Greece, he continues thus: « The Muscovites, through their close contact with Russia in the matter of customs and commerce, and especially because they recognize that their religion first came to them from here, and to this day visit the churches of Kiev with great veneration and send gifts to them, may easily be persuaded to join the Union of Berestya. Finally, and principally, seeing how kindly the Holy See has treated the Russians, allowing them to keep their own ceremonies, the others and especially the simple Muscovite people, will not hesitate to submit to the Apostolic See, being convinced of that kindness and good-will which they would never have thought possible in the Roman Church ». (*Analecta OSBM*, v, I, fasc. 2-3, p. 370).

Thus in those remote times and afterwards, the Catholic Church in Ukraine was looked upon as the bridge between Christian East and West. The great men of that day labored ceaselessly, with the blessing and help of the Roman Pontiffs, to enlarge and strengthen it. This they did by the union of the dioceses of Peremyshl, Lviv, Lutsk, and Mukachiv to form a long, broad strip or corridor of territory from the Black Sea to the Baltic,

protecting the Western Catholic Church against any tendency to expansion on the part of the Russian Church, and acting at the same time as a zone of infiltration for Catholicism towards the East. We can scarcely wonder that Moscow did not remain passive and indifferent while this was going on, but, having recovered from its « period of gloom », made every effort to break down and destroy the bridge and corridor both by direct and indirect action,



*Ukrainian Martyrs for the Catholic Faith in Kholmshchyna  
1874-1875 (painted 1876)*

creating a pseudo-hierarchy at Kiev and instigating wars and internal dissensions throughout the Ukraine.

With this purpose, about the middle of the seventeenth century, Moscow made use of Catholic Poland, defeated in war, and imposed as the first and essential condition of peace, the direct destruction of the Union of the Ukrainian Church; to the same end were used the movement of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Having thus drastically weakened Catholicism in the Ukraine, Moscow established direct and absolute dominion over both the Cossacks and the Orthodox Ukrainian Church (1685), which for nearly half a century served as an instrument for the destruction of Catholicism

in the Ukraine. However, Moscow, could register only outward success, for the deep springs of vitality contained in Catholicism gave rise to new life in the following decades, and it flourished almost throughout the national territory of Ukraine and of White Russia. Thus in spite of all apparent success, Peter I, at war with Sweden and Poland in the early years of the eighteenth century, could only give vent to his rage against the Ukrainian Catholics by bloody persecution. Pius XII writes of this period in his Encyclical in 1945: « Almost all the Ukrainian people who then dwelt within the boundaries of Poland at last enjoyed Catholic unity » (page 12). « Nevertheless », he continues, « through the inscrutable design of God, it happened that towards the end of the eighteenth century that same community, in the region which was annexed to the Russian Empire at the partition of Poland, was afflicted by many persecutions and vexations, at times most violent and bitter » (page 13). And again, « a few years before the dismemberment of Poland there was a new and equally bitter persecution against the Catholics. When the troops of the Empress of Russia invaded Poland, many churches were seized by armed force, and priests who refused to deny the faith were seized, ill-treated, thrown into prison, and fearfully tormented with hunger, thirst, and cold » (page 33). From this authoritative statement, we pass on from the end of the eighteenth century and come to what happened under the Czars Nicholas I and Alexander II in that very nineteenth century which was marked by the resurrection of nations and of peoples. It would take too long to relate even a part of the horrors that took place during the so-called re-union of Catholic Ukraine with the Patriarchate of Moscow. That most painful period is summed up by Pius XII in a rhetorical question: « Who can recount, Venerable Brethren, the suffering, losses, and privations then inflicted upon the most noble Ukrainian people, whose sole crime was to have protested against the mortal injury by which they were dragged by force and by fraud into schism, and to have strived with all their power to preserve the faith? » (page 14). We do not venture to reply to this question, for all that we could say would be very far from the whole truth. We leave this in the Hands of God. To mention only the two crucial years 1839 and 1875, the violence and horrors then suffered are the subject of the laments and tears

of the Roman Pontiffs then reigning. At the Consistory of November 22, 1839, Gregory XVI wept over the ruins of our Church: « O, miseram (1) et infelicem rerum conversionem! O, durissimam et nunquam satis lamentandam Ruthenae gentis calamitatem!... Fatemur quidem, Nos initio adduci nequaquam potuisse, ut fidem iis omnibus adhiberemus, quae hac tristi de re fuerant rumore perlata... ingens etiam nos tenent sollicitudo de carissimis ex ea gente filiis, qui nec artibus illusi, nec minis perterriti, nec exempli pravitate seducti firmiter in catholicae communionis vinculo perstiterunt. Neque enim latet quam gravia in eos damna ex aliorum defectione fuerint consecuta, quantaque adhuc ipsos oporteat ob suam in sancta unitate constantiam tolerare » (Harsiewicz, Annales, P. 910-915). Thirty-five years later, the great Pope Pius IX was encouraged and strengthened in his Roman conflict by the perseverance of the Ukrainian martyrs: « Sed acerbissimis inter (2), quibus undique premimur, angustiis Nos reficit ac recreat praeclarissimum et plane heroicum fortis et constantis animi spectaculum, nuperrime Deo, Angelis, et hominibus oblatum a Chelmensis Diocesis Ruthenis qui iniqua pseudoadministratores mandata reiicientes mala quaeque perpeti atque ipsam vitam in extremum discrimen maluerunt adduci, quam a vitae fidei iacturam

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(1) « What a perverse and fatal turn of events! Behold the tragic and unspeakable misfortunes which had befallen the Ruthenians! We confess that at first We could hardly bring Ourselves to believe the spread accounts of this tragedy... A strong love binds Us to that race of noble descendents whom craftiness could not deceive, whom threats could not cower, and whom bad examples could not lead astray, so that they've continued inseparably united to the Catholic Church. Nor is it an unknown fact that the religious errors of others have caused them great harm, and that they must continue to bear innumerable burdens because of their perseverance in their unity of the Church ».

(2) « Among the hardest trials, a source of great comfort to Us has been their heroic and outstanding example of their strong and intrepid constance, an example to which heaven and earth can testify, lately offered by the Ruthenians of the diocese of Kholm, who, rejecting the impious orders of the pseudo-administrator, preferred suffering and exposure of their very lives to renouncing of the faith of their fathers and the Catholic worship which they received from their forebears, and which they determined to preserve pure and unaltered forever ».

facere, et catholicos dimittere ritus, quos ipsi ab eorum maioribus receperunt et incorruptos ac illibatos se perpetuo servaturos conclamant » (13.V.1874: *Omnem sollicitudinem, Ad Archiep. Leopoltitanum*). Thus spoke the Roman Pontiffs of the martyrdom of the Church in the Ukraine, and thus they speak today. The words are not ours, nor are they dictated by any patriotic feeling. We wish to add nothing, but only to emphasize that 85 % of the Ukrainian people who fell under Russian rule have been forced into schism within the past hundred years by ceaseless pressure from bureaucracy, police and even the army.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the only part of the people that remained Catholic were those under Austrian rule in the ecclesiastical province of Lviv. But scarcely had the first World War moved the frontiers somewhat to the West, when even that part of the metropolis of Lviv, now ruled by the Russians, was subjected to oppression, and Metropolitan Sheptytskyj arrested and deported to Siberia under the accusation expressed in the following telegram from the Russian Staff: « Chief of Staff Maklakoff states that the Vatican is attempting to introduce the Union into Russia, with the help of the Uniate Metropolitan of Lviv, Count Sheptytskyj, who took part in the plans and activities of the Catholics in Rome.

« At Lviv Sheptytskyj is enrolling theological students for Russia; he has been secretly to Russia and has furnished documents to his Catholic priests, allowing them to celebrate in the Oriental Rite. The correspondence referring to the participation of Sheptytskyj and the Vatican in the development of the Unionist movement in Russia is concealed among the documents of the Metropolitan Curia at Lviv ». Thus, even in the twentieth century, after having completely destroyed Ukrainian Catholicism within its empire, Russia still feared those five millions of Ukrainian Catholics who had escaped, and profited by the conditions of war to destroy that last pillar of the bridge linking East with West. The work was still unfinished, however, when the Russia of the Czars fell a victim to Communism and its errors, leaving in that distant sector of Ukrainian Catholicism a painful record expressed in the words of Benedict XV: « It is with the deepest grief that we think of the Ruthenians, remembering their fair cities pillaged, quiet villages burnt to the ground,



the rich countryside crossed and re-crossed by armies fighting to the last. Our thoughts go out not only to the people, but to the ruined churches, the holy images shattered, the sacred vestments defiled, and worse than all, the heart-breaking thought that the Eucharistic species are trodden under foot by ignorant fanatics. We think of the horrors of famine, the inclement season, mortal sickness, frightful punishments dealt out, the imprisonment of which you, yourself, Venerable Brother (the Metropolitan), bear the scars even now, the slaughter of venerable priests, of aged non-combatants, weak women, and of the flower of youth, all alike guilty of showing attachment to their own rite.. » (AAS, XIII, 1921, P. 218, 24.II.1921). There we have the reason of all this violence: attachment to the rite, which is the bridge between the Orthodox faith and Catholicism.

In this condition of oft-repeated violence and martyrdom, the Ukrainian people and their Church entered upon the difficult period between the two wars. We know well enough what happened then. Eastern Ukraine, which had already been violently detached from the Holy See, passed through the purgatory of atheistic communism with its millions of victims and incalculable injuries to soul and body, so corrupted by the poison of atheism that in the course of twenty years it became a docile instrument against the Catholic Church. Western Ukraine, following a difficult path strewn with governmental vexations, had to defend its own ritual and national personality, instead of preparing itself for the trials yet to come.

In 1939 the hour of destiny struck for the Catholic Ukraine and the rest of Eastern and Central Europe. After the first interval of the years 1939-1941 and the brief though painful Nazi invasion and occupation, the Communist advance towards the West in the year 1945 brought with it the « Via Crucis » for what remained of Catholicism in the Ukraine. As so often before, the persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church accompanied the Russian march towards the West, which, being defensive in its origin, was unable to carry out its full destructive purpose against the western world, yet had time and space enough for revenge against Ukrainian Catholicism.

This last event brings our talks to a close. The blow to its ecclesiastical ambitions which Moscow received from Ukrainian

Catholicism has been forcibly repaid in our own day. The barrier has fallen and the subsequent blows have fallen upon the flank of Latin Catholicism in Poland, Hungary Czecho-slovakia, Lithuania, Rumania and other countries, so that we ourselves here present feel the pain of them more acutely perhaps than at any time during the Calvary of Ukraine. And today we can no longer deceive ourselves; no further doubt is possible as regards Russian ecclesiastical expansionism. Now that the Latin Catholics have been directly attacked, they can better understand the relentless fury of Moscow against Ukrainian Catholicism. Now it is the turn of the Latin world. In particular, it is the time for Catholic Poland and Czecho-slovakia to bear the brunt of the attack without being sheltered by the Eastern Catholics.

Perhaps we are too much inclined to leave deliverance from the present state of things solely in the hands of God. For the grace of God to work efficaciously, human collaboration is needed, especially if the evils which oppress us today are due to the actions of men. We are very ready to pray « fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra » but we often forget to collaborate so that the will of God may be done on the earth.

How many of us have asked ourselves, with regard to the persecution raging in Eastern Europe, « Why », so as to seek out the causes and remove them? Do we not more often ask — « how? how many victims? how many evils, ruins and calamities? » This fondness for figures will be of no help in insuring that tomorrow we ourselves may not be included in similar mathematical calculations.

It is, therefore, our duty to ask ourselves this fundamental question with sincerity, and to answer it with precision, so that our reply, influencing our daily life, will be our contribution (the only one possible today) towards the ending of the present evils.

Many, perhaps, have long ago placed this tragedy of a whole people among the events of the War, or the painful reprisals of the post-war period; perhaps they have even judged it by the principles invoked at the Nuremberg trials. Some, again, have referred it, conveniently enough, to the so-called exaggerated Ukrainian nationalism, which is said to be groundless and to have given no proofs of its existence, forgetting that none of them are without sin in that regard. Few have considered the tragedy of Catholic Ukraine in

the light of the history of the Church of Christ; to many have made use of it for propaganda and politics.

If it were not for the proof that our Common Father is with us in this tragic hour of trial, perhaps nothing would remain to us but the path of discouragement and despair from which there is no issue. But the Holy Father understands us and his latest Encyclical « *Orientalis Ecclesias* » gives the true answer to that « why » of the harsh and pitiless persecution of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. « Those people » the Holy Father says, « have suffered persecution for a long time and are in a most unhappy condition because many of them look towards Rome with ardent desire and immense love, and revere this Apostolic See as the center of the Christian religion and the infallible teacher of truth by the mandate of Jesus Christ ».

This authoritative testimony, and what we have given above as the true reply to the « why » of persecution in Ukraine, bring us to the very nature of Christianity and Catholicism in that country, the essence of which is to be the bridge that links separated brethren and a way to the fulfillment of the desire of Christ « *ut omnes unum sint* » so that the seemingly distant hope may become a reality as soon as possible, when in Christ's Church there shall be but « one fold and one Shepherd ».

This is the reason why all those who labor to that end will be persecuted by the forces of darkness, for whom that happy time will mark the ultimate defeat. To the Ukrainian people, among others, this labor was assigned by God and history, and before long it became, at one and the same time, its glory and its cross. With full trust in Divine Providence, we bear our cross, waiting and hoping for the day of the Church's glory and triumph, which will likewise be our own. « *Per crucem ad lucem* ».

(Delivered by Rev. A. G. Welykyj O.S.B.M., Vice Rector of Pontifical Ukrainian College at Rome, — during the Triduum for the persecuted Ukrainian and Rumanian Church. Rome, January 30, 1953).

## V

# **THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH IN UKRAINE**

**(by Msgr. G. Mojoli)**

Wherever Communism comes into power, Religion is persecuted. It could scarcely be otherwise, considering the diametrically opposed principles upon which they are based. And if in some countries persecution has not reached a climax, that is due to motives of prudence and tactical considerations; sooner or later, those motives will cease to exist.

After twenty-five years of persecution of the Orthodox Church in the USSR, the Communists realized that it could be used as an instrument of domination and oppression. In 1941, after the German attack upon the USSR, the Communists began to show favor to the Orthodox Church and even re-established the Patriarchate of Moscow and the Episcopate, with a view to winning the Orthodox masses for the defense of the country and deceiving the Allies with a pretended freedom of Religion. Having gained the complete subservience of the Orthodox Church, they might hope to secure it as an accomplice in the persecution of Catholicism, which was recognized as the chief obstacle to the advance of Communism in the world. If the present situation is prolonged for a number of years, Orthodoxy is destined to collapse of itself, since under Soviet rule the necessary elements are lacking, not only for the development, but even for the conservation of any religious idea.

The Second World War favored the advance of Communism only too much. One by one entire nations have fallen under the Bolshevik yoke, and for other nations, the danger still exists. A barrier of defense is being raised, but the subjugated peoples groan under oppression, sighing for the day of civil and religious freedom.

The first noble victim of anti-Catholic hatred was and is the Church in Ukraine which had the privilege of inaugurating the epoch of present-day catacombs. The Church of silence, as the Holy Father has appropriately named the Church which is suffering persecution in our day, first came into existence in the Ukraine, that noble nation whose history contains such shining pages of Catholic life and martyrdom. Silence came down upon the Catholics of Ukraine, to be broken only by the voice of the Holy Father who has made it the subject of the two Encyclicals, « *Orientalis Omnes* » of 23 December 1945, and the very recent « *Orientalis Ecclesias* » of 15 December last. While everyone speaks with emotion and admiration of the martyrdom of the Church in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia and China, little mention is made of the martyrdom still going on in the Ukraine and Rumania, where religious persecution has completely destroyed the outward organization of a flourishing Church..

Religious persecution in Ukraine falls into two periods: The first in the years 1939-41, during the twenty-two months of Russian occupation of Galicia; the second beginning in 1944, with the second occupation, and still going on. The first period paved the way for the second, and the events of 1939-41 explain what is happening now. The first persecution was marked by greater haste for the Soviet authorities. Knowing that the occupation might not last, accelerated its execution; whereas, during the second occupation, which received an official blessing from the Allies, the Communist chiefs acted with greater deliberation, carefully, calculating their moves, the more thoroughly to undermine the foundations of the Catholic Church. It must be noted that Russian Bolshevism, following in this point the policy of the Czars, directed its first blows against the Catholic Church of the Oriental rite, reserving the persecution of the Latin rite for a later period. The reason is that beside the Catholic Church of the Oriental rite there stood an Orthodox Church, which the Catholics of Oriental rite might be persuaded to join since it was of the same nationality and of the same rite, whereas the Latin Catholics, besides being of other nationalities, could not be induced to join a dissident Church.

When the Soviet armies began to move forward in Galicia after the Russo-German pact (September 1939), the Ukrainian Church

possessed three large dioceses: Lviv, Stanyslaviv and Peremyshl. an Apostolic Administration (Lemki), an Apostolic Visitor's residence (Volyn), eight bishops, an Apostolic Administrator, 3,500,000 people, and 2400 priests. Beside the secular clergy worked the Basilian Fathers, the Redemptorists, the Studits, the Basilian nuns, and the Sister Servants of the Immaculate Conception; in spite of local difficulties, the seminaries were full and the schools flourishing. The news that reached Rome was very distressing and foreshadowed sorrowful days for the Church. The great Metropolitan, Sheptytskyj, endeavored in accordance with his pastoral duty to keep the Holy See fully informed, and asked for instructions and special faculties. His first letter bears the date of the October 10, 1939. He wrote as follows: « The parishes are at the mercy of local committees, in which the revolutionary elements predominate. The monasteries seem doomed to inevitable suppression. Every means of subsistence is taken from them. The churches are confiscated and occupied. Catholic schools are closed and turned into schools of atheism ». Foreseeing that worse yet was to come, he asked with insistence to be given a Coadjutor with right of succession, and concluded with the following petition: « I humbly beg the Holy Father to give me his Apostolic and Fatherly blessing and to designate, delegate and appoint me to die for the Faith and the Church. We all understand our duty, and the enemies of God will be put to confusion ».

In response to the repeated request of the great Metropolitan, the Holy See nominated a Coadjutor in the person of the Most Reverend Joseph Slipyj, the Rector of the Theological Academy at Lviv. It is touching to read the precise terms of the communication addressed to the Metropolitan by His Eminence the Cardinal-Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church. Its language is somewhat veiled, to guard against possible indiscretions or difficulties. It bears the date of the November 27, 1939: « I received with deep emotion your letter of the October 10, 1939, and I thanked God for allowing it to reach me. All your sentiments are mine; all your anxieties are mine, as are also your hopes. Be comforted in the thought that, though far apart, we have but one soul. I reported all that you wrote to the Person whom we both venerate. The news caused him the greatest anxiety, and his response

was full of apostolic affection. He sends you his blessing, as a testimony of incomparable charity and a pledge of eternal life for you and for all those who pray and suffer with you. I enclose with this letter a list of extraordinary faculties. I am very happy to tell you that you may look upon your beloved disciple whom you have often mentioned to me with praise, as your Coadjutor and successor. You may carry out the necessary ceremony for making him so. The title of « Serre » is conferred upon your disciple ».

On November 26, 1939, Monsignor Sheptytskyj wrote in reply: « The Bishop of Serre has been consecrated in my Chapel; Monsignor Niceta and Monsignor Nicholas assisted and only the Chapter was present. He took the oath of fidelity and obedience to the Holy Father and his successor ». The letter went on to describe the situation created by the Bolsheviks: « A mad impulse to destroy, incredible disorder, indescribable confusion of powers, continual threats of death, requisitions, attempts of the secret police to enroll young men in its service, Russification of every school, prohibition of all religious teaching, snares of corruption set for youth, atheistic propaganda, the parody of a plebiscite, the setting up of a pseudo-parliament, the suppression of every monastery with confiscation of property, and the dispersion of all the monks and nuns, nationalization of commerce, confiscation of land and houses in the towns, every Catholic Institution suppressed and its goods confiscated, a wide spread of misery, arrests... every parish governed by a committee elected by the people. It depends on the greater or less extremism of the members, whether Catholic life can be carried on or not. In general, the people have shown the will to defend their Faith.

« In Lviv, the major and minor seminaries are confiscated, the Academy and the Theological Faculty suppressed. Social institutions created by the Catholics are destroyed. The clergy still work in the parishes, helped by the scattered religious; but some timorous priests have gone away in search of safety. Printing is forbidden: duplicating machines are used, but it is more and more difficult to communicate with the clergy and the faithful ».

In June, 1941 the Germans turned against the Russian and began the occupation of Galicia: further material and moral ruins were heaped upon those already existing. Monsignor Sheptytskyj

wrote as follows on the August 16, 1941: « All this time God has protected us almost miraculously. He has permitted our Church and our Nation to offer Him the martyrdom of many of the faithful. It seems beyond doubt that hatred for Christ and His Church was the chief motive of the persecution, and those upon whom it fell were convinced that they suffered for the Christian and Catholic



*Deported into Siberia...*

Faith. In my diocese the number of victims deported or killed exceeds 250,000.

« During the twenty-two months of their occupation, the Bolsheviks did not yet feel sufficiently sure of themselves to carry out all their plans. Only after the German attack (June 22, 1941) did they show their real purpose. Imprisoning all those they could capture, they massacred those already in prison. In the underground cells of the police quarters, 6000 murdered and mutilated corpses were found. Among those killed were eleven priests of my diocese. Other priests who were already in prison were miraculously saved. We ourselves were saved by a miracle: two days before the Com-



munists' retreat, fire broke out in five places in our house and in the cupola of the Church; it was providentially put out without firemen, or hoses, or sufficient water.

« In the first weeks of the Russian occupation, all the monasteries were closed and the Religious dispersed. The Bolsheviks tried to disorganize our Church by offering the rank of Metropolitan to a candidate who refused it..

« The attitude of the country people has been admirable. There has been a traitor here and there, but the vast majority has shown itself more Christian than could have been hoped.

« Communism has been the cause of a great re-awakening of Faith, and it serves as an argument for the truth of the Gospel we preach ».

In a further letter of November 7, 1941, we read: « The Bolshevik régime, which has lasted nearly two years, has almost completely ruined the well-being and the scanty wealth of our people.

« The number of victims deported to Siberia or to the shores of the White Sea, imprisoned or killed, is very large. Without precise statistics, which as yet are lacking, it is thought that the number from my diocese alone reaches 200,000, and for the whole country almost double that figure. The number of Priests murdered, or imprisoned in circumstances which make it probable that they are dead, is eleven or twelve in my diocese, and twenty in the diocese of Peremyshl. The Priests imprisoned or deported from my diocese number thirty-three.

« But the people, that is, the mass of the faithful who have been neither deported or imprisoned, have suffered greatly: forced labor, confiscations, exorbitant taxes, all the vexations that can be inflicted by a police-government which meddles in every department of life, and propagates atheism everywhere. Entire villages have been transported from one place to another

« The intellectuals in the towns have had trials of other kinds, equally great: continual arrests, inquisitions, inspection and confiscation of clothing and furniture. But these persecutions and this destruction of a material nature have been compensated by a most remarkable renewal of religious life. The Churches and confessionals are crowded, even by people who never went to

confession before, and among the boys and young men who received no religious instruction there is a splendid zeal to defend and preserve their religion.

« But the atheism propagated by the government and preached by the school masters does not fail to leave disastrous traces. The number of apostates among the young people has, thanks be to God, been very limited, because in order to attract them more successfully, they were admitted into the Komsomols without declarations that conscience would forbid. The clergy has tried to supply for the absence of Catechism by teaching in the churches, and it was a real consolation to see the children forming groups and coming eagerly to the instructions. There have been no formal and scandalous apostasies, but professors, teachers, writers, and artists kept out of the way of the Priests, who were practically outlawed. Priests were much more highly taxed, and had to pay property taxes which aimed at the ruin of the churches, but they were secretly helped by the faithful.

« To sum up, I hope that for the material ruins, which in many ways are devastating, we have been rewarded by the Infinite Mercy of God. We emerge from this hard trial, purified and confirmed in our holy Faith. We can say "Amen" to all that the Lord has done, and "Deo gratias" for all that He has given us ».

It must not be supposed that during the three years of German occupation of Galicia, 1941-44, the religious situation of the Ukrainian Church improved; every one knows the Nazi theories with regard to religion. If at times, it suited the German occupying authorities to behave with tolerance towards the Church, they must not for that reason be supposed to have wished it well. The bishops and parish priests who remained at their posts to protect and defend the faithful could not, in the nature of things, avoid all contact with the authorities, but that does not imply collaboration in the political field, much less in the military; that, of course, is quite clear.

In 1944, the situation was reversed. After their victory at Stalingrad, the Russians began their triumphant march towards the West, reoccupying Galicia on their way. All were in the greatest anxiety as to what would happen to the Church. The

Metropolitan Sheptytskyj, who for fifteen years had governed the Church from his armchair on account of his infirmities, was growing weaker and weaker, and the episcopal ministry of his Coadjutor continually met with interference. The Reverend Kostelnyk, who was to be the organizer of the schismatical movement, enjoyed great authority among the Ukrainian clergy and laity, as an ardent patriot and a learned man. He was also very energetic and a capable organizer. During the first invasion, the Russians tried in vain to win him over to their plans for destroying the Church, and ended by killing his son. At the second invasion, they were successful. He was a type of priest who carries out his official duties without any piety, and ready to do anything to keep out of trouble. Two of his sons had fought with the Germans, and therefore he and his family were liable to be deported to Siberia. Perhaps it was to save himself that he consented at the command of the Russians to organize a schismatical movement, betraying the Catholic Church and the Ukrainian nation. In 1948 he met death at the hands of the partisans, and the communists had the impudence to lay the blame on the Vatican.

On November 1, 1944, the venerated Monsignor Sheptytskyj died, after governing the Metropolitan See forty-four years. His death was the signal for persecution to begin. The Coadjutor Bishop, Monsignor Slipyj, entered at once upon his duties as Metropolitan. His first act was to inform Rome of the death of Monsignor Sheptytskyj. His letter bears the date of November 19, 1944, and was posted in the ordinary way. This is the only written document of his that we possess, and the last official act of the Ukrainian Church. After that comes silence. We quote it in full: « With great grief, I have to inform you that Monsignor Sheptytskyj, Archbishop and Metropolitan, departed from this life at Lviv on November 1, at 13:15 o'clock, after receiving the Sacraments. I ordered that mourning should be observed in the Metropolis from November 1 to 11 inclusive. Every day Masses were celebrated and prayers offered for the deceased. The body of the deceased was transferred at five in the afternoon on the 2 of November from the metropolitan domestic chapel to the Archcathedral church of Saint George. The burial took place on Sunday, November 5, in the Archcathedral Church. On that day I celebrated the Pontifical

High Mass with the following co-celebrants: Bishop Kotsylovskyj of Peremyshl, Charnetskyj of Volyn, Budka — Vicar General of Lviv, Lakota — Auxiliary of Peremyshl, Rev. Hradiuk — Provincial of Basilian Fathers, Rev. de Vogt — Vice Provincial of Redemptorist Fathers, Rev. Clement Sheptytskyj, Rev. Chorniak — Rector of seminary and others.

« In the Archcathedral church of St. George, Mass was celebrated according to the Latin rite by Monsignor Twardowski, Archbishop and Metropolitan of Latin rite of Lviv, and according to the Armenian rite by Monsignor Kajetanowicz, Capitular Vicar of the Armenian rite. Monsignor Baziak, Auxiliary Bishop of Lviv, of the Latin rite, was present at the funeral.

« After the funeral prayers, known as « the last embrace », I pronounced the farewell discourse in the Archcathedral square, on account of the immense numbers of the faithful. Then, with the consent of the Soviet government, the very long funeral procession was formed and traversed with great solemnity the streets of Mickiewicz, 3. of May, Legioni, Kopernyk, Sapiiha and Zacharjewicz, and returned to the Archcathedral church. About 150 priests took part in the procession, with 70 students of the theological Academy, 130 Seminarists and an immense crowd of the faithful. Thank God, everything was done in exemplary order. After the singing of the panichida, the body of the deceased was placed in the crypt beside the sarcophagus of Cardinal Silvester Sembratowych. The ceremonies and the funeral procession greatly edified the people ».

In the hopes of finding a *modus vivendi* with the occupying authorities, Monsignor Slipyj collected a sum of 100,000 rubles for the wounded and sent it to Moscow by a special commission, of which Kostelnyk was president. The mission did not produce the desired results. The Muscovite officials said explicitly that protection would be given to the Church only if the Ukrainian partisan movement were suppressed, and the Church was to help in this suppression. This was an impossible condition, for any bishop or priest who made an attempt in that direction would arouse violence and bloodshed. The declarations made by Monsignor Slipyj about the respect due to the life of others were considered insufficient. Harrassing measures were begun and every-

one realized that they were a preliminary to open persecution. This was at the beginning of 1945. On the April 6, 1945, appeared a libel entitled « with knife and cross »; it was spread abroad by every means, quoted by the radio, commented upon in lectures. It contained calumnies of unheard of violence against the deceased Metropolitan Sheptytskyj, attributing all his actions to unbridled ambition. This libel caused great consternation among the clergy and the faithful. Its appearance was the prologue of the tragedy. In fact, five days later, on April 11, 1945, all the five Ukrainian bishops residing at Lviv and Stanyslaviv were arrested: The Metropolitan, Monsignor Charnetskyj, Bishop Khomyshyn and Auxiliary Bishop Latyshewskyj. For a time Monsignor Kotsylowskyj Bishop of Peremyshl and his Auxiliary, Monsignor Lakota, residing west of the famous Curzon line which divided Poland from the USSR, were not yet arrested. Their tragedy was to take place later. The leading members of the clergy were also arrested, to bring about greater confusion among the clergy and the faithful. The leaders being removed, a committee of laymen was appointed in every parish to choose a priest among those who had accepted the government's conditions. Immense harm was done by the so-called Progressive Group, led by Kostelnyk, which, with the support of the whole police machinery, induced a number of priests to join the schism. Those who did not join were immediately arrested and deported, or obliged to flee and remain in hiding. While Kostelnyk was acting at Lviv, the apostate Melnyk carried on similar action in the diocese of Peremyshl and the apostate Pelvetskyj in the diocese of Stanyslaviv. A little later, Melnyk and Pelvetskyj were consecrated schismatic bishops, while the Russian schismatic Bishop Macarius took up residence in the metropolitan palace of Lviv. The ecclesiastical boundaries were modified. The archdiocese of Lviv became a simple diocese, the diocese of Peremyshl was replaced by that of Drohobych, and the diocese of Kolomyja was united with Stanyslaviv. This was done to make the boundaries of the dioceses coincide with those of the provinces, and the deaneries with the districts. Numerous convents were suppressed, a small part of the building being left to the religious, on condition that they sign a declaration renouncing the religious state; this gave them the right to obtain work as civilians. The imprisoned bishops were

tried and condemned to various penalties and to deportation, as accomplices of the Germans during the occupation; the well-known motive put forward by persecutors who will never confess that they act through hatred of Christ and the Church.

Meanwhile the Orthodox supreme hierarchy came into action, with public appeals to the Ukrainian Catholics to give up the Union and return to the « Mother Church ». The Patriarch Alexis of Moscow, Bishop Macarius of Lviv and Kostelnyk himself were the authors of these appeals. Kostelnyk also compiled and spread abroad an attack upon the Primacy of the Roman Pontiffs, using the trite arguments of Protestants and Orthodox so often refuted.

In spite of all these means of intimidation, three hundred priests had the courage to write a petition to Molotov, protesting against the action of the Progressive Group and asking for freedom to profess their own faith. But the intimidation continued and grew in violence and in duplicity. Little by little all the priests were placed before the alternative of joining the schismatic movement or giving up their positions to escape imprisonment. And giving up their positions, meant losing everything and going into hiding. Hundreds of priests were thus imprisoned or deported.

When the bishops had been condemned, and the priests who refused to yield were being removed, the famous Pseudo-Council of Lviv was held in March, 1946; 204 priests and 12 laymen took part in it. This event was meant to mark the official separation from Rome and union with Moscow. Union with Rome was violently condemned and attributed to coercion and political motives, while « the return to the Mother Church of Moscow » was declared to be spontaneous and natural. Lying could go no further! After the pretended Council, a delegation travelled to Moscow to offer submission to the Patriarch Alexis and the Soviet government. At the same time all the property of the Ukrainian Catholic Church passed to the schismatic church. Those who wished to remain Catholics could only do so in secret. Bishop Macarius of Lviv shortly afterwards published in his official bulletin a list of former Catholic priests who had passed over to the schism. One thousand one hundred eleven were named out of a total of 2, 303, but the list contained the names of priests already dead and of some who had signed with the reservation that they did not intend anything

against their conscience as Catholics. Even if the list substantially corresponded with the truth, it is a consoling thought that almost as many priests refused to yield and did not apostasize. If we inquire into the motives for the apostasy of so great a number of priests, we can find explanations for it, though without seeking to minimize its gravity: (1) The confusion of minds caused by the imprisonment of the whole Episcopate; (2) The complete disruption of all Catholic organization; (3) The draconian methods of the Soviet police; (4) The powerful support of the Orthodox Church in the campaign of intimidation; (5) The anxiety of the clergy (for the most part married) concerning the fate of their families, who would be destitute if they refused to yield; (6) The tales told to deceive the more ingenuous priests, especially in country districts.

From persons who left Galicia after these sad events, we learn that the Catholic faith has remained rooted in the hearts of the people, who try as far as they can to avoid showing themselves openly as schismatics, and secretly go to priests who have not betrayed the Church. There is significance in the phrase used on a postcard coming from Lviv: « We do not go to see George now, because George does not belong to us ». That is, we no longer attend the Cathedral of St. George because the schismatics have it.

While the Church was going through this tragedy in Ukraine, the work of destruction was carried on in Poland against the wretched remains of the diocese of Peremyshl and the Apostolic Administration of Lemki. According to the Russian-Polish agreement, the Ukrainians who remained to the west of the Curzon line were to be transferred to the USSR and the Poles in the USSR were to be transferred to Poland. This judgment of Solomon was carried out with violence and utter ruthlessness. Thus the Reverend Bishop of Peremyshl, Monsignor Kotsylowskyj, his Auxiliary, Monsignor Lakota, and other ecclesiastical leaders had to yield to force and were handed over to the Russians, sharing the sad fate of deportation with the other bishops. In the Ukrainian districts given to Poland, the people were torn from their houses and transferred to the east of the Curzon line; those who remained in Poland were widely scattered, so that it is impossible for them to practice their religion in their own rite.

In Sub-Carpathian Ukraine things took a very similar course. Soviet troops entered that territory in October, 1944. A month previously, Monsignor Romza had been consecrated as Bishop of Mukachiv, a very flourishing diocese of nearly half a million people, 281 parishes, 354 priests, 31 institutes, 85 seminarists, 8 convents. The Soviet authorities, to whom this territory was new, wished to gain the favor of the inhabitants and at first took great care not to give them offence; they therefore showed themselves friendly towards Monsignor Romza. Little by little, however, the religious situation changed: the schismatics came into action and occupied the Catholic churches, Catholic activities were hampered, the Bishop's protests passed unheeded, and open attacks began against himself and the clergy accusing them of pro-Nazism and pro-Fascism, while the Vatican and the Pope were declared enemies of Soviet Russia. The seminary was deprived of every means of subsistence. Priests were shut out of every career. Young people were prevented from attending the churches. The schismatic Bishop Nestor was sent from Moscow, and began to organize the schismatic church to the detriment of the Catholic one. Then, as in Galicia, tactics of violence were introduced, but the clergy, encouraged by the Bishop's example of firmness, seldom yielded. It became necessary to remove Monsignor Romza, and the intrepid Bishop lost his life in a pre-arranged collision. The road was then clear for the Russian steam-roller, and the Catholic diocese was completely destroyed.

In Slovakia there remained the diocese of Pryashiv, in which the great majority of the faithful are Ukrainians. It numbered 321,000 inhabitants, 241 parishes, 311 priests, 54 seminarists. The Russians had occupied this region in 1945, but had to leave it according to agreement as it was assigned to Czechoslovakia. The vicissitudes of the Catholic Church in that country are known to everyone, but the saddest fate was reserved for the diocese of Pryashiv. The government at Prague, obviously inspired by Moscow, dealt its most violent blow at this defenceless diocese, which had been governed for twenty-five years by the saintly bishop, Monsignor Gojdich, aided by Monsignor Hopko as Auxiliary. In February, 1949, the Minister Cepicka issued a declaration which foreshadowed



the attack. A few days later, the convents were searched and the religious expelled or imprisoned. In 1950 Moscow created three schismatic dioceses in Czechoslovakia, in preparation for the final assault on the diocese of Pryashiv; one of them had its headquarters in that very city, and a schismatic Russian, Alexis Dechtere, was consecrated Bishop of Pryashiv. The function was to have been carried out in Monsignor Gojdich's Cathedral, but he refused to allow it, and that was made the pretext for his arrest. A Synod was then convened which proclaimed the rupture with Rome and union with Moscow, repeating what had been done in Galicia and Rumania with no variation. The war against Catholic priests became more relentless. In January, 1951, Monsignor Gojdich was condemned after a monstrous trial for espionage and collusion with the enemies of the people, the customary motives for Communist condemnations. The Auxiliary Bishop, Monsignor Hopko, was also imprisoned. The schismatics could now take unopposed possession of the palace and the cathedral of Pryashiv, and of every one of its parishes.

The Ukrainian Church is now completely wrapped in silence. The news that has reached us since the above sad events has been extremely scanty; but the little that we have heard inspires our hearts with hopes for better days. The outward organization of the Ukrainian Church has been destroyed, but the faith reigns in the hearts of its people, as is proved by the following quotations:

The news of Monsignor Kotsylowskyj's death on November 17, 1947, reached us in this form: « Last autumn our Father died; as you know, he had a handsome beard and a fine staff. This sad news is now a certainty. He had offered his life as a holocaust. His cross and his bitter chalice are our glory and our pride. We mourn his death, but as Catholics we are comforted amidst our tears by the hope that by the grace of God his martyr's death will be a pledge of rebirth for our community, as in the time of Saint Josaphat ».

In 1949, a refugee from Galicia brought us this information: « The clergy that has remained faithful to Rome is more numerous than people think; many are imprisoned or deported to Siberia. Others are working as manual laborers or in factories, in hunger, cold and wretchedness. The clandestine apostolate is carried out

more and more. The moral condition of those who signed their adherence to the schism is pitiful and some have lost their reason. The common people hold firm to the faith. In some places no one goes near the schismatic church. Some go long distances to see a Catholic priest ».

The following was written from Slovakia last summer: « The sixty priests who apostasized from the Catholic Faith for various reasons, chiefly on account of their families, are very unpopular. I never thought that, with the grace of God, I should be able to endure such afflictions. You cannot imagine what a consolation it is to know that people are praying for us, that the very painful situation in which we are is meritorious before God. May the Lord grant us salvation and grace: the rest is nothing ».

More recent news brought by a trustworthy person tells us that the persecution of the Church in Ukraine reached its climax in 1952. Caricatures of the Holy Father are to be seen in the streets; at public meetings; the Pope and the Vatican are abused, and Catholic Priests called the Pope's spies. The number of priests of the Latin rite continues to lessen, and their task becomes harder every day. Archbishop Slipyj sent pastoral letters from Siberia from time to time, but when it came to the knowledge of the Soviet authorities, they increased his sentence to seventeen years of imprisonment. No one knows where he is at present. Many people declare that they are sure of possessing God in their hearts, and would lead good Christian lives if they were free to do so. Many of the people are baptized, but they are obliged, especially the students, to live like atheists. It is said that in the Orthodox seminaries at Leningrad and Odessa, they are taught how to combat the Christian religion!

The Ukrainian Catholics are now living under violent persecution. They, who in the past gave proof of their firm attachment to their Faith and to Rome, await with confidence the day of freedom and Christian peace. When that day comes, the blood of their martyrs and the sufferings of the whole people will be the brightest glory of their country, bound forever to Rome.

(Delivered by Msgr. G. Mojoli, Minutant of the Oriental Congregation, during the Triduum for the persecuted Ukrainian and Rumanian Church - Rome, February 1, 1953)

**Telegrams to and from His Holiness Pope Pius XII  
on the occasion of the Triduum for the persecuted brethren in Ukraine  
and Rumania - Rome, January 30 - February 1, 1953**

**His Holines Pope Pius XII  
Vatican City**

Ukrainians und Rumanians united in prayer for the persecuted brethren in the Fatherland raise reverent thoughts to Your Holiness thanking You for the Encyclical « *Orientalis Ecclesias* » in which by the Common Father the rights of their people have been defended. and implore Paternal Apostolic Benediction.

**Msgr. I. BUCHKO, *Bishop of Cadi*  
Msgr. L. TAUTU**

**From the Vatican City**

The homage and gratitude of the Ukrainians and Rumanians for the recent Encyclical, « *Orientalis Ecclesias* », was pleasing to His Holiness who renewing His wishes of Christian fortitude and liberty for His beloved oppressed sons, exhorts them to confident prayer and persevering Christian life while to all He sends from His Heart as a comfort and propitiation the implored Benediction.

**MONTINI, *Pro-Secretary***

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