

Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939-1950)*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, Edmonton/Toronto 1996, pp. xvi + 310.

Dr. Bociurkiw is noted for his fine research and as the author of numerous studies regarding Soviet church-state relations. Presumably, he is himself a Greek Catholic. His study is one of the first complete accounts of his own ecclesiastical community during the first years of Soviet rule to appear after perestrojka. It reveals precious material until now carefully guarded in hermetically sealed Soviet archives. Since the author is describing the sufferings of his own local church, this necessarily implies both the advantage of being on the inside and the disadvantage of bias.

The author begins his account with a history of Greek Catholicism, on what is today Ukrainian and Belorussian territory, from the time of the Union of Brest until the first Soviet Occupation of Galicia (1939). Later chapters review first the Soviet Occupation and later the annexation of Galicia, the Soviet attack on Greek Catholicism, the *Reunion* of Greek Catholics with the Russian Orthodox Church, the fate of Greek Catholic clergy and faithful in the underground, the liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church in Soviet annexed *Transcarpathia* and a brief epilogue. His study is based principally upon primary sources including valuable archival (Soviet, Greek Catholic, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox) material.

The text is a veritable mine of information. It provides the reader with biographical information regarding both prominent Greek Catholics and the principal organisers of the *L'vov Sobor*: Gavriil Kostel'nik, Makarij (Oksijuk), Iosif Oksijuk, Sergej Danilenko. The information on Kostel'nik's motivation and personal character is especially welcome, coming as it does from direct interviews with the priest's surviving relatives and acquaintances. It offers a revealing psychological portrait of this controversial figure. Kostel'nik, however, was not born in Serbia, as the author informs us (26). In 1886, his native Bács-Bodrog county was located in the southern reaches of the Hungarian Kingdom.

Several details mentioned by the author are fascinating, appear for the first time and reveal that the compilation of this study was no casual effort. We learn of the requiem service celebrated for Szeptycki by the participants of the *L'vov Sobor*, naming the late Metropolitan as the precursor of Orthodoxy in Galicia, in a bid to win popular recognition (171). The history of

Kostel'nik's dealings with representatives of the Soviet State and the Russian Orthodox Church is thoroughly explored. His desire to keep liturgical and pastoral regulations under the new Orthodox hierarchy as close as possible to what they were in Greek Catholic times is duly noted. Bociurkiw informs us that initially the very word of *Russian* was avoided by members of the Initiative Group in order to avoid antagonising local Ukrainophile sentiment among the Galicians.

Of great interest, is the name of Orthodox priest and later archbishop Mark (Ivan) Hundiak (233) and the evidence regarding his letter smuggled by Canadian communists to Kostel'nik asking him whether he deemed it possible to spread the *Reunion* movement among Greek Catholic immigrants. Coincidentally, this reviewer's maternal family were at one time Hundiak's parishioners.

Unfortunately, ideological preoccupations colour much of the author's writing, beginning with and especially in the introduction. It seems, according to the author, that hostility toward the Greek Catholic Church is completely unmotivated and originates only with its enemies — principally the Russian Orthodox, Poles and Hungarians. As such, it is never even partially justified and it is a vain chore to search for even psychological and cultural reasons.

The author seems to have committed the fault of parochialism in choosing secondary sources. Why in listing references to the Union of Brest (1-2), does the author include, with one exception (Halecki), only Ukrainian sources, even among the Orthodox authors cited? Why does he include the series of talks by Velykyj (1), written without footnotes and meant for popular distribution on the air waves of Vatican Radio? Likewise there are several over-simplifications and popular misconceptions. The *Third Rome Theory* (2) was originally not a vehicle for Muscovite political expansion as is popularly believed, but rather an eschatological premise based on the imminent eschaton. This is clearly demonstrated by twentieth century German scholarship and received a classic exposition in Hildegard Schaeder, *Moskau das Dritte Rom* (Hamburg 1929).

The author's accusation of active collaboration on the part of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy in the destruction of the Greek Catholic Church is mostly based on supposition (the meeting between Stalin and his associates and Russian Orthodox hierarchs held on the eve of the arrests of the Greek Catholic bishops, 117-118) and cannot be proved since the relative archives, as the author himself admits, still remain closed to the public. The author should at least have compared his research with that of the Roman Catholic Ernst Suttner (*Die katholische Kirche in der Sowjetunion* (Würzburg 1992)). The latter exonerates Patriarch Aleksij of direct culpability in the Uniate tragedy. Rancour aside, the author's attitude toward the Moscow Patriarchate, could be a bit more charitable, remembering the almost total liquidation of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy and clergy before the Second World

War, their reduction to the status of Stalin's puppets and the humiliation of being forced to play an ignominious role on the stage of public opinion in order to survive in any way as a church. The issue of collaboration between Russian Orthodox hierarchs and the Soviet state apparatus has become a public scandal, but it was not at the root of the successive woes of the Greek Catholics. Stalinist terror and Marxist-Leninist atheism were. Had the highest authorities of the Moscow Patriarchate been ordered by Stalin to recognise the Greek Catholic Church they would have certainly complied without question. Both Greek Catholic Metropolitans Szeptycki and Slipyj attempted at first to search for a *modus-vivendi* with both the Soviet and German occupying forces, but were able to withdraw or prevented from continuing. In this way, they were able to preserve their personal integrity. This option was unfortunately not feasible for Patriarch Tichon and his successors. Completely sucked into the vortex of Soviet power and without Roman support, conditions and times were different and it is a moot question whether descending into the underground would have preserved Russian Orthodoxy for generations to come.

Technically, Galicia was not integrated into the *Soviet Russian Empire* (188), but rather into the Soviet Ukraine. In the Soviet Union, Russians were not the only ones in control of the government.

Regarding the destruction of the Greek Catholic Church in post-war Poland, the author forgets the terrorist activity of armed partisan bands in the Southeast (*banderovcy*), which acerbated the situation and turned Polish public opinion against the Ukrainians at the end of the war, as well as the direct participation of Ukrainian SS-men in the destruction of Polish religious houses during the war (the massacre of the Jesuit residence in Warsaw on Rakowiecka Street = compare Karol Sawicki, *Stos ofiarny* (Rzym 1976)). To speak of a Polish *insurrection* or *invasion* of L'vov (1918) seems at the least insensitive. Poles thought of the city as culturally and even politically their own for centuries, while the Ruthenian urban population was culturally and numerically less significant (compare Martin Pollack, *Nach Galizien. Von Chassiden, Huzulen, Polen und Ruthenen* (Wien 1984)).

Finally, the author accuses Jesuits of proselytising Ukrainian and Belorussian Orthodox peasants during the 1930's in the Polish *kresy* (39). Here, three corrections are in order. *Eastern-rite Jesuits* were not a *sub-order* even in the sense of the eastern rite branches of the Redemptorists or Salesians. They had bi-ritual faculties and belonged to a *Missio Orientalis*, under the Northern Polish provincial. Their status within the order was jurisdictionally, territorially and numerically limited (in 1938 they counted 49 members but only 14 priests). Secondly, most of the peasants, especially around the city of Pinsk, whom the author describes as *Ukrainian and Belorussian*, could not define their ethnic identity even when required to do so by census takers, considering themselves merely *local people* (*tutejši*). Lastly, the initiative for *proselytising activity among the Orthodox* (success was minimal:

during 1932 Jesuits noted the conversion of only 50 peasants) came neither from the Jesuits nor even from the Polish bishops, since it was the peasants themselves who approached the local Roman Catholic hierarch to request admission into the Roman Catholic Church, after having quarrelled with Orthodox Church leaders. Ironically, the same *proselytising* engaged in by the Jesuits is strongly censured by the author, but seen in an entirely different light, when Szeptycki later encourages his clergy to be ready to preach the Catholic faith in the *Great Ukraine ... the Kuban' and Caucasus ... Moscow and Tobol'sk ...* (48).

Bociurkiw's picture of church life in *Transcarpathia* does not take account of the large percentage (today as many as one third) of Hungarians or at least Magyarophones among the clergy and faithful. Significantly, it was they who remained most attached to the Catholic faith under persecution since they felt for linguistic, historical and cultural reasons no link with or desire to join Russia or the Orthodox Slavs. Their presence was large enough to warrant a special liturgy in Magyar to celebrate the *Reunion* (28.8.1949). The territory in question was rarely known as *Hungarian Rus'* while under Hungarian rule. The term was used only by local Ruthenians and in Russian publications, usually of Russophile bent. The area possessed no special status within the Hungarian Kingdom and was simply part of Hungary's Highlands (Fevidék), together with most of today's Slovakia. The toponym *Mukachiv* employed by the author would be difficult to locate on a standard map, since it is used only in Ukrainian immigrant circles. It appeared in Soviet days as Mukačevo (Mukachevo), on older maps in its Magyar form (Munkács) — both of which this author does not mention — while the contemporary standard seems to be Mukačeve. The author mentions one statistical report (1991) on the fate of the Greek Catholic clergy of this diocese, but fails to mention the more recent and very complete statistical survey which appeared in Hungary: Dániel Bendász, *Helytálás és tanúségtétel* (Ungvár/Budapest 1994).

Altogether, the author mentions but belittles the importance of the Russophile movement among nineteenth century Greek Catholic clergymen, who saw it as an alternative way of expressing their ethnicity. Some of their descendants, most of whom are members of the various Orthodox jurisdictions continue to do so. The presence of a significant number of Russophiles among Greek Catholic clergy and faithful made the transition to Orthodoxy for them less traumatic. Another aspect, likewise neglected by the author, was religious indifference or at least indifference to religious dogmas as long as the rites were still celebrated. Galicia was likewise rent by guerrilla fighting and its merciless suppression by the Soviet authorities contemporaneous to the suppression of the Greek Catholic Church. Families had links with fighters on both sides and feared reprisals, which could result from choosing sides in the religious struggle. A final factor was personal and sociological. Some families had quarrelled with Greek Catholic priests over personal and

economic matters and welcomed a change. After perestrojka, the reverse was true. Orthodox priests and faithful of Greek Catholic origin clashed with Orthodox church leaders on domestic and socio-political (collaboration with local state authorities!) issues and returned to the Greek Catholic flock. A relevant fact, omitted by the author, is that Bishop Romža himself was being trained as a missionary to Russia at the Roman Russicum before being called back home to Subcarpathian Rus'. He also failed to mention that the Russian Jesuit Viktor Novikov, whose name does appear in this study (48) claimed, according to his autobiography conserved in the Russicum archives, to have been appointed Exarch of Siberia by Szeptycki.

These criticisms are in no way meant to belittle the sufferings of the heroic Greek Catholics or to diminish the essential value of this book as a valid information source. The sufferings of a Christian of whatever persuasion, however, should not make him indifferent to the sufferings of his neighbour, even if he holds his neighbour partially responsible for his own hardships. Too often émigré historiography is little nuanced, painting history in garish tones of black and white, delineating heroes and villains, and failing to achieve credibility outside the narrow limits of the ethnic ghetto. Historiographical maturity begins when the historian, while not agreeing with his opponent, at least makes the attempt to understand his point of view. The author, himself, states as one of the aims of this study, his desire to depart from the usual pathos typical of this sort of historiography. Unfortunately, he only partially succeeds. Perhaps, another non-émigré Greek Catholic, speaking from within his local community, so terribly tried in the past, will succeed where he has failed.