

THE UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE SOVIET STATE (1939-1950). By Bohdan R. Bociurkiw. Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1996. 310 pp. ISBN (cloth) 1895-5711-2 \$39.95.

This book is the product of a lifelong study of the history of the Ukrainian Catholic Church under Soviet rule by one of the most eminent scholars in the field. Its main focus is on the forcible suppression of the Greek Catholic Church by the Soviet authorities in 1945-1950, a topic that has generated an impressive literature, including both memoirs and research.

What are the new elements in the book's contribution to the subject? The list of archival sources includes an impressive amount of material from the formerly inaccessible Soviet depositories. Bociurkiw gained access to documents from the archives of the Greek Catholic Church that were confiscated by the Soviet authorities, the former KGB archive in Kyiv, and Communist Party and state archives in Moscow, Kyiv, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil, as well as materials pertaining to republican and oblast officials in charge of religious affairs. These and other materials, quoted abundantly in the book, have made it possible for Bociurkiw to produce the most authoritative study of the Soviet destruction of the Greek Catholic Church that has appeared to date.

The book provides an impressive amount of information on the preparation, logistics, and actual execution of the plan to destroy the church. It also documents the process of intimidation of the clergy, as well as the arrest and exile of Greek Catholic bishops, priests, monks, and nuns. Bociurkiw's archival findings present a unique opportunity to check the validity of studies of Soviet religious policy written in the West before 1991. The newly acquired KGB, party, and state documents prove "beyond reasonable doubt" what Bociurkiw and some of his colleagues claimed long ago: the "reunion" of the Greek Catholics with the Moscow Patriarchate was not voluntary, but was orchestrated by the state and conducted in a most brutal way by Stalin's secret police.

Bociurkiw's study persuasively links the actual process of the suppression of the Greek Catholic Church with two successive leaders of the USSR—Joseph Stalin, who signed the directive to suppress the church, and Nikita Khrushchev, then First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, who carried out the assignment. For the first time in the study of church-state relations in the USSR, Bociurkiw presents the reader with portraits of those Soviet secret police officials who were behind the scenes in the drama of the persecution and forcible suppression of organized religion in the USSR. One of them, whose career is detailed in the book, was Colonel Serhii Danylenko (Karin), mentioned in the memoirs of Metropolitan Vasyl' Lypkiv'skyi of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Danylenko was responsible for overseeing the destruction both of the Autocephalous Church in the 1920s and of the Greek Catholic Church in the 1940s.

Apart from this new and detailed information on the crucial role of the state in the suppression of the Greek Catholic Church, Bociurkiw's study sheds new light on a number of the most controversial aspects of the history of the suppression of the church. These include the church's relations with the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), the motives and role of the Initiative Group of the Greek Catholic Church for Reunion with the Orthodox Church led by Fr. Havryil Kostel'nyk, and, finally, the role of the Moscow Patriarchate in the suppression of the Greek Catholic Church.

Bociurkiw shows that although the church was closely linked with the Ukrainian political and cultural movement through its episcopate, clergy, and faithful, Soviet claims that the church leadership had closely cooperated with the anti-Soviet underground were little more than a propaganda slogan put forward as a pretext to destroy it. The directive signed by Stalin in March 1945 makes it clear that the plan to suppress the Greek Catholic Church was part of a larger Soviet assault on the Vatican and on Catholicism in general on the territory of the USSR, and not a campaign aimed specifically against the Ukrainian underground. Quite symptomatically, that is also the way in which the assault was interpreted by the anonymous author of the 1946 letter to the leaders of the underground—a document that Bociurkiw attributes to Kostel'nyk.

Bociurkiw draws attention to the fact that after the Red Army took Lviv in the summer of 1944, the church leadership actively sought a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet authorities and did nothing to provoke its forcible suppression. He quotes a pastoral letter by the bishop of Stanyslaviv (Ivano-Frankivsk), Hryhorii Khomyshyn, and two pastoral letters of the head of the church, Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj, issued between October 1944 and March 1945. All three letters called on the underground to desist from "arbitrary killings," and Slipyj also helped to organize a secret meeting between the Soviet military command and the leadership of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. None of this helped the church's cause or prevented the Soviet propaganda machine from accusing the church leadership of collaboration with the anti-Soviet underground. Bociurkiw concludes that "there is *nothing* the Greek Catholic Church could have done to avert its suppression by the Kremlin" (p. 235).

The church's attempts to establish a working relationship with the state contributed, at least in part, to the fact that there was no immediate reaction on the part of the underground to the arrests of church hierarchs in April 1945. Only in mid-1946 did the underground take a clearly negative stand against the suppression of the church and the "reunification" of its faithful with the Moscow Patriarchate. Soviet secret police reports show that initially some leaders of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army even welcomed these developments, planning to install their men in positions of influence in the Orthodox Church in eastern Ukraine. Such reasoning was made possible by strained relations between the underground and the leadership of the church in early 1945, as well as by nationalist ideology, which was skeptical in its attitude toward religion and

postulated as its goal the creation of an independent "united" Ukrainian state (with an inevitable majority of Orthodox believers). That factor also enabled Kostel'nyk to claim at the "reunification" Sobor of March 1946 that the "forest men" were all in favor of Orthodoxy. Characteristically, the underground never retaliated against the organizers of the "reunion" and refused to take responsibility for the assassinations of Kostel'nyk in 1948 and the anti-Catholic publicist Iaroslav Halan in 1950.

What were the motives of Kostel'nyk and other members of the Initiative Group? Bociurkiw comes to the conclusion that all of them, including Kostel'nyk, who was the leader of the pro-eastern faction in the church, were intimidated by the secret police and forced to join the group. He also points out that the death in November 1944 of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi, who was truly respected by Kostel'nyk, and his replacement as the head of the church by Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj, Kostel'nyk's old foe, may have contributed to the latter's decision to join the group. The rationale for the "reunion" that Kostel'nyk put forward in his private talks with priests and was presented in the anonymous letter to the underground, consisted of the following points: the Soviets had decided to suppress the church and would do so in any event; under such circumstances it was wrong for the clergy to abandon their flock, hence it was better to "reunite" with the Orthodox Church and thus prevent the influx of "Muscovite" priests into Galicia.

Bociurkiw's archival findings (Kostel'nyk's letters, as well as reports submitted by government and secret police officials) show that those were indeed among the true goals of Kostel'nyk's "conversion." To achieve them, Kostel'nyk insisted on the convocation of a special Sobor instead of oblast conferences, as had been suggested by the Moscow Patriarch, and on the consecration of new Orthodox bishops from among former Greek Catholics. Students of church-state relations in the USSR will be interested to learn that the Sobor of 8-10 March 1946, which concluded on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, was in fact arranged by government officials to take place between elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet and the start of spring sowing.

The Sobor was labelled an "operetta" by its participants and proclaimed uncanonical by the Ukrainian Catholic bishops in the West. But for Kostel'nyk it had a special meaning and was probably intended to set the seal on his "deal" with the authorities. That "deal" included the consecration of new bishops from among former Greek Catholics, the reduction of liturgical changes to a minimum, and the establishment of a theological seminary in Lviv. Kostel'nyk was also naïve enough to think that he and his supporters would be allowed to conduct a "modernization" of Orthodoxy in Ukraine. Little of this was ever realized, apparently contributing to Kostel'nyk's disillusionment with the "reunion" at the end of his life. It would appear that he was assassinated on orders of the Soviet secret police, which feared that the resistance movement would spirit Kostel'nyk to the West.

Bociurkiw analyzes the suppression of the Greek Catholic Church not only in relation to Soviet religious policy, but also in the broader context of Russian Orthodox attacks on Greek Catholics, starting with the partitions of Poland in the late eighteenth century. He also draws a parallel between the Lviv Sobor of 1946 and the 1839 Sobor in Vitsebsk, which suppressed the Greek Catholic (then Uniate) Church in central Ukraine and Belarus. At the same time, Bociurkiw rightly remarks that “in contrast to the tsarist ‘reunion’ campaigns, the Russian Orthodox Church played only a marginal role in the postwar assault on Greek Catholicism” (p. 237). One must agree with Bociurkiw that the Russian hierarchy generally had little choice but to follow Stalin’s orders. However, the absence of any condemnation of the 1946 Lviv Sobor on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate after its liberation from the communist “yoke” is striking.

Bociurkiw quotes a document according to which the Orthodox archbishop of Lviv, Makarii (Oksiiuk), warned authorities back in 1945 that Kostel’nyk wanted only a formal union of the Greek Catholic parishes with the Orthodox church, and that if given a chance he would revive an autocephalist movement in Ukraine. This was a prescient statement, as it was indeed the former Greek Catholic parishes in Galicia that formed the core of the revived Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in 1989. The “time bomb” set by Kostel’nyk actually went off.

Bociurkiw concludes his book with a paragraph on sources to which he did not have access, remarking with irony that the Vatican archives remained largely closed to him when those of the former Soviet secret police in Ukraine were opened to researchers. There is little doubt that more revelations about the history of the suppression of the Greek Catholic Church, based both on Western and former Soviet archives, will come to light, but it is highly unlikely that those new documents will challenge the principal conclusions of Bociurkiw’s study.

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