

Documents Regarding the Liquidation of the Greco-Catholic Church in Transcarpathia

The following is a translation from the original Russian of three documents pertaining to the Soviet liquidation of the Greco-Catholic Church in Transcarpathia. The original texts were first published in *Logos* 34 (1993), 639-50. The last two documents delineate the measures to be undertaken by the Russian Orthodox Church and the civil authorities respectively in the destruction of the Greco-Catholic Church. The archival references for the documents are: State Archives of the Russian Federation, St. Petersburg (formerly the Central State Archives of the October Revolution) Fond 6991/1/32, fols. 63-66; *ibid.*, fols. 67-70; and *ibid.*, fols. 73-74. Our thanks to Dr. Ivan Bilas of Ukraine for providing us with copies of these documents. The translation was done by Olenka Hanushevskaja-Galadza.



Memorandum

*Regarding the Uniate and Orthodox Churches of the
Transcarpathian Oblast' of the Ukrainian SSR.*

The year 1946 marked the 300th anniversary of the so-called Union of the Orthodox Church of the Transcarpathian Oblast' with Rome. In connection with this anniversary, the Pope of Rome issued a proclamation to the Uniate clergy of the Transcarpathian Oblast'.

According to statistical data from the 1941 census, the population of Transcarpathia numbered 667,561 people.

In 1941 the breakdown of the population according to religious affiliation was:

– Greco-Catholics	– 412,901	– 61.9%
	(Bishop Romzha claims it is 519,945)	
– Roman Catholics	– 39,818	– 6.0%
– Reformed	– 14,825	– 2.2%
– Evangelicals	– 1,858	– 0.2%
– Orthodox	– 114,659	– 17.2%
– Jews	– 80,598	– 12.1%
– Other faiths	– 2,842	– 0.4%

At the present time the population has increased and there have been some changes regarding religious affiliation. As of August 1, 1947, the Uniate Church in the Transcarpathian Oblast' has 375 churches (289 parishes) and 252 priests. It is the most influential Church in the Oblast'. The Orthodox Church has 175 churches and 135 priests.

Bishop Nestor reported that the clergy of the Orthodox Church is very poor as regards culture. Among the Orthodox clergy only two priests have a higher education, 35–40 have an intermediate one, and the rest have an elementary education [in the document the word “elementary” was crossed out and replaced with the word “higher” – ed.], while the clergy of the Uniate Church have higher theological and secular training.

Our assignment [that of the representatives of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Council of Ministers of the USSR – ed.] in the Sokolov and Ivanov Mission included elucidating the possibilities of executing the measures outlined regarding the liquidation of the Uniate Church of Transcarpathia and its relationship with the leaders of the Party and Soviet organs of Transcarpathia.

The relationship of local Soviet and Party organs became clear here, upon our arrival in Transcarpathia. Comrade Rimmer, Commissioner of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, informed us that the Transcarpathian Oblast' Executive

Committee took the decision of handing over to the Orthodox Church the building of the Uzhhorod Greco-Catholic Cathedral and the buildings belonging to it, including the residence of the Greco-Catholic Bishop, Romzha.

This measure was not foreseen by our plan; however, it was so important and necessary that we accepted it immediately, believing that the removal of the cathedral church and bishop's residence, and the transfer of these buildings to the Orthodox Church, would deal a second blow to the Uniate Church (the first blow being the removal of the monastery in the city of Mukachevo) and would bring disunity into the ranks of the Uniate clergy, causing some of them to consider converting to Orthodoxy.

From our point of view, the Transcarpathian Oblast' Executive Committee made the right decision, because the Orthodox Church and the faithful of the city of Uzhhorod do not have a church building other than a small chapel, while the Uniate Church in Uzhhorod possesses five large church buildings. If one were to take the cathedral church and give it to the Orthodox, who have been petitioning for this for a long time, the Uniates would still be left with four large church buildings. I find it necessary to propose to the Councils that they agree with the decision of the Transcarpathian Oblast' Executive Committee, and authorize the transfer of the Uzhhorod Greco-Catholic cathedral church for use by the Orthodox Church.

In discussions with the secretaries of the Oblast' Committee of the Communist (Bolshevik) Party of Ukraine, Comrades Tyrannize and Pinchuk (with the latter we discussed the issue four times), Comrades Chernetsky and Sokolov [representatives of the Ministry of State Security in the Transcarpathian Oblast' – ed.] and the oblast' procurator, Comrade Andrashko, to whom we presented our impressions regarding the Uniate churches, (while for Comrades Tyrannize, Pinchuk and Chernetsky we left copies of our legislative measures), – all of them except Andrashko found these acceptable and emphasized the indispensability of liquidating Roman papal influence in Transcarpathia, together with attitudes and activity of Uniate clergy hostile to the Soviet system related to that influence.