

During the thousand years of Christianity in Ukraine various institutions were active in the spread of faith, the strengthening of religious convictions and contributed to the education and learning of the people. Among them were various lay groups and societies that in certain periods of Ukrainian history played an important role in Ukrainian religious and secular cultural affairs.

In the late Middle Ages, the west Ukrainian Halych-Volynian state disintegrated and its territory was absorbed by the Poles, Lithuanians, and Hungarians. The dominant Orthodox Church lost its state support and the protection of the ruling class. Thus, in the 15th and 16th centuries the population of Ukrainian lands was in a state of cultural decline. The Ukrainian (or Ruthenian) noble families mostly assimilated Polish culture and many abandoning the Orthodox cultural and religious milieu coverted to the Roman Catholic religion. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church thus deprived of its former patrons lost ground and was unable to compete effectively with the domininant Polish governing elite.

To counteract the steady decline of Ukrainian cultural and religious values a new and dynamic approach that would be tolerated by the Polish administration and the Catholic hierarchy was necessary. It was necessary to formulate an ideal or vision for the renewal of Ukrainian culture, to have an organizational structure which would fit within the system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and a new people with sufficient financial resources to accomplish the task.

Such a dynamic force was found in the organization of Ukrainian townspeople — the church brotherhoods (tserkovni bratstva) which in the latter part of the 16th and in the 17th centuries indicated the way and provided the resources for a cultural renewal of the whole Ukrainian society.

These brotherhoods had existed among the urban population of Kievan Rus since the twelfth century!. They were affiliated with a particular church and its members were mostly merchants, artisans and craftsmen banded together for their mutual protection with insurance and burial benefits for its members and for the upkeep and decoration of their church. They were an important part of the social life of their towns and were perceived as harmless by the Polish authorities. Thus, they were left alone to their devices; and by an expansion of their goals the brotherhoods evolved from parochial to regional and national organizations.

## The Vision:

The desire to change the desolate condition of their church and society in Ukraine was found in some individuals but the means to accomplish it diverged and the practical obstacles were many. Finally, the idea that only education will bring about dignity to the Ukrainian nation prevailed. One of the brothers, Iurii Rohatynets in his work **Perestoroha** (The Warning) succinctly stated: "Schools and public education were non-existent... because if they would have been educated then they would not have led us to such a catastrophe"...<sup>2</sup>

The view that education would save the Ukrainians was shared by in the 16th century by Prince Konstantyn Ostrozhkyi and the Stauropegian Brotherhood in Lviv and in the 17th century by Metropolitan Petro Mohyla and the Cossack hetmans Petro Sahaidachnyi, Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, Ivan Vyhovskyi, Ivan Samoilovych and Ivan Mazepa<sup>3</sup>. They established schools, or generously supported existing educational institutions either financially and by granting various privileges to them by their decrees.

## The Organization:

The organization which created a network of schools was the church brotherhoods. The most important one was in Lviv, the Assumption Stauropegian Brotherhood which in 1586 reformed its constitution and structure<sup>4</sup>. Along with three other key Stauropegian (or exempt from the jurisdiction of the local bishop) brotherhoods in Vilno, Lutsk and Kiev<sup>5</sup>, the Lviv brotherhood directed and coordinated the activities of other brotherhoods in Ukraine and Belorussia. The Lviv Brotherhood established a school, printing press, and hospital and was active in promoting and fighting for causes benefiting the whole community. Among its members were many patricians and merchants who lived inside Lviv and who had their stores in the center of Lviv (na rynku)<sup>6</sup>. Aiding it were members of three suburban brotherhoods outside Lviv city walls and a whole network of brotherhoods in western and northwestern Ukraine in Rohatyn. Drohobych, Vyshnia, Holohory, Iavoriv, Brest, Lublin, Bila Pidlaska and elsewhere<sup>7</sup>.

The members were divided into two categories. The "elder brothers," wealthier and more influential, were responsible for finances, management of the school, the printing shop and the bookstore, bookkeeping, and litigation with the city council. They also served as the representatives to regional dietines, the main Diet, presented petitions to the King or the palatine and corresponded with the nobility and the eastern patriarchs.

The "younger brothers" conducted the meetings of the local chapter, corresponded with other brotherhoods, organized local festivals (pyry), ran the hospital, decorated their church, maintained order at the members liturgies, christenings, funerals, and displayed the brotherhood flag at these events.

The brotherhoods established and maintained primary schools in Peremyshl. Komarno, Rohatyn, Halych, Brest, Zamosc, Lublin, Mezhybozh, Rivne, Dubno, Nemyriv, Pinsk<sup>9</sup>. Their secondary schools in Lviv, Vilno, Kiev and Lutsk were actually collegiums before the establishment of the Mohyla College (later Academy) in Kiev in 1632. They had their own constitution called **Poriadok Shkolnyi**<sup>10</sup> and taught the subjects of the classical "trivium" and "quadrivium". Four languages were taught: Greek, Latin, Old Slavonic and Ukrainian (**po rusky**). Also mathematics, geometry, astronomy, music and history. Instruction was provided in three levels and included the alphabet, grammar, dialectics, rhetoric and poetics<sup>11</sup>. The primary schools provided elementary instruction for admission to higher schools and basic skills for careers in the clerical and other fields.

The brotherhoods organized their printing shops to publish liturgical books, polemical tracts and school textbooks. The Lviv Brotherhood printing press alone published nearly 160,000 books during the years 1585-1727, of which 35,000 were grammars and primers used by schools<sup>12</sup>. Other brotherhood printing presses existed in Vilno and Lutsk and several peripathetic printing presses of this time began their career as brotherhood enterprises 13. The printing of books brought great profit to the brotherhoods and their agents travelled extensively to many fairs in Eastern Ukraine to sell their books. For example, in 1688, over a hundred books from the Lviv Stauropegian Brotherhood were sold at a fair in Kiev<sup>14</sup>. Other agents sold books in Lithuania, Muscovy, Moldavia, Wallachia, Hungary, Serbia, Macedonia, Greece and Palestine. The profits from the sales of books of the Lviv Brotherhood paid for the upkeep of their school, hospital, printing shop. and the wages of two priests, one deacon and a preacher of the brotherhood church and for the sustenance of several monks of the St. Onufrius monastery. 15

## Personnel:

Who were these people who directed the activities of this network of brotherhoods and coordinated their work with other social classes? From the registers of the Lviv Brotherhood we see many wealthy merchants such as Konstantyn Korniakt<sup>16</sup> who conducted trade with articles from the Levant such as silk, spices, wines, precious stones, and Oriental rugs; he became a