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## **POLISH POLICE IN ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH AFTER UKRAINIAN-POLISH WAR OF 1918–1919**

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The article is the analysis of Polish police actions concerning the activity of Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and it contains many examples taken from the archival documents of police precincts and local law protecting authorities. The author used a number of facts to show the system of attitude of Polish policemen, politicians, prosecutors and activists to Ukrainian Church.

*Key words:* police, church, attitude, activity, actions.

After Polish invasion of 1919 and the taking of Western Ukrainian lands the relations between Polish authorities and Ukrainian society were far from ideal. Ukrainians did not accept Poland as their motherland and Polish representatives saw Ukrainian politicians as the ones who were always ready to rebel against the state, moreover former Ukrainian military established several organizations declaring either permanent war for independence or a new start of preparation for fighting against nations who occupied Ukrainian lands. Certainly there were numerous tries to establish peaceful relationship between Polish and Ukrainian communities but they were not successful<sup>1</sup>.

Thus from the point of view of Poland's politicians the situation in Western Ukraine needed special attention of not only police but also all the other security forces of Polish state. What is more, the work of Police, District Attorney's office, and State Defense concerned not only particular politicians or former Ukrainian military leaders but nearly all active persons of Ukrainian society which was a part of Poland's preventing policy in Western Ukrainian lands. That is why, many representatives of Ukrainian Churches which took part in active national life of those times were under surveillance.

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was one of the most influential people of the time and active philanthropist, culture and education supporter and charity activist. As he worked hard over the reconstruction of Ukrainian national life, shattered by the war, he became the object of police interest, the reasons of which were raised by Metropolitan's international activity and travels to Rome and other countries where he tried to convince many Europe's politicians to support Ukrainians of Galicia and other parts of Western Ukraine<sup>2</sup>. This was considered to be close to anti-state activity and the Metropolitan became the object of investigation as well. The travels of Sheptytsky were followed by Polish police and the investigators had to report directly to the Ministry of Internal

Affairs. Some police reports were also sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which shows how important this activity of the Metropolitan was considered to be. Some reports (like the one about the possible meeting of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky and French Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré) also contained the detailed description of the reaction and attitude of Ukrainian society to certain events and their prospective effects<sup>3</sup>.

The Metropolitan was also under keen police observation during his internal trips. For example his visit to the city of Zhovkva was followed by agents<sup>4</sup>.

As well as the Head of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church the other members of hierarchy and even country priests were under police supervision and pressure. The evidence of that is present not only in the reports of the police offices but also in sources like newspapers and magazines. Thus, on February 12, 1921 Galician newspaper “Український прапор” (“Ukrainian Flag”) wrote about the frequent arrests of Greek Catholic priests which led to the situation when there were districts with only two or three priests left. The newspaper also protested against the persecutions among Ukrainian theology students and police restrictions for the work of Lviv Seminary which led to its shutdown and building requisition<sup>5</sup>.

Many facts concerning police work against Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church can be found in protesting letters of father Petro Poniatyshyn who was Apostolic Administrator for Ukrainians in Chicago and took active part in supporting Ukrainian national and cultural life in western Ukrainian lands. He sent his protesting letters to many state offices in the USA asking them to make statements of protests against violations of the rights of Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Orthodox priests in Poland. He also sent a memorandum to US State Department where he informed it that Polish authorities had shut all three seminaries down and accommodated Polish soldiers there, that several hundreds of priests had been taken to prisons and eleven of them had died there of tortures, that many churches had been closed or turned into army premises. The results of his statements and memorandum were that the question of the violations of the rights of Ukrainian priests by police and army was raised at Paris peace conference<sup>6</sup>. In general, 612 priests were put into prisons after the coming of Polish army to Western Ukraine. After the protests of Ukrainian bishops and Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky and statements of British representatives many of Greek Catholic priests were released from prisons and camps although the pressing remained and police released an order for Metropoliotan Sheptytsky to avoid any contacts with Poland’s Head of State Marshal Pilsudsky<sup>7</sup>. Thus, under the pressure of police Sheptytsky could not finish his mission at Paris peace conference to convince Western leaders to recognize the right of Western Ukraine to create the state<sup>8</sup>.

After 1923 (the year of Entente’s final recognition of Western Ukrainian lands as a part of Polish Second Republic) the relationship between Ukrainian community and Polish state became different. The authorities stopped to widely use army in

their policy towards Ukrainians and the amount of arrests largely reduced although the police supervision in Western Ukraine was still high scaled.

Orthodox priests and hierarchy were also under police supervision during 1920s. The documents of those times abundantly contain the police officers' reports of investigations against priests who did not use state language (Polish) to fill in the church documents. In 1921 the delegates for Orthodox assembly were under police supervision too<sup>9</sup>.

There are also the examples of police authorities' demands to dismiss Ukrainian priests from their positions for anti-state actions, like, for example, the messes at Ukrainian military cemeteries where the soldiers of Ukrainian Galician Army were buried (father Pelykh of Radekhiv)<sup>10</sup>, the reminding about Ukrainian statehood in sermons (father Antonyshyn of Horodok)<sup>11</sup>, using Ukrainian language in parish registers (father Prukhnytsky of Lashky Zaviazany<sup>12</sup>, and many more.

During 1920-1930s the celebration of Ukrainian national holidays became the objects of keen police attention. The authorities considered these celebrations as the actions which raised the opponency towards Polish state. On the other hand, at these celebrations and meetings Ukrainian politicians many a time declared the major aim of their work - the restoration of Ukrainian statehood in Western Ukraine. Ukrainian MP's had to make special request to police to ask them to permit Ukrainian celebrations<sup>13</sup>. Some other actions of Ukrainian churches had to be permitted by police authorities, like, for example the action "Ukrainian Youth for the Christ", organized by Metropolitan Sheptytsky. After the permission was granted, the whole process of preparation and the course of the action were followed by police<sup>14</sup>.

In documents one can also find some minor reasons for starting cases against Greek Catholic or Orthodox priests like disrespect to Poland's Independence Day<sup>15</sup>, Poland's Constitution Day or using Ukrainian language in official documents<sup>16</sup>. There were also cases of prohibitions which were not connected with any political reasons and meant mostly to prove control over Ukrainian community in certain towns and villages. For example in the village of Birky Velyki during the local festival Polish police prohibited Ukrainian Catholic anthem, in Busk city authorities banned Ukrainian Catholic march, in Brody local representative Kachkowsky forbade Ukrainian religious fest with the help of police who closed any premises used for celebration<sup>17</sup>.

Ukrainian Greek Catholic Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky made several attempts to start negotiations concerning the rights of Ukrainian Catholic community in Poland but these attempts did not have any results. According to Polish historian Rychard Gorzecky, Ministry of Internal Affairs created several projects to raise the state of cooperation between Ukrainian community and the government but they were not released, nevertheless Metropolitan Sheptytsky tried to persuade Polish authorities to start implementing these projects but he did not have any success in it<sup>18</sup>.

During the Pacification of Western Ukrainian territories in 1930 the relationship between Poland's authorities and Ukrainian community became even worse. This also concerns the relations between Ukrainian Church and Police. There is much evidence in documents showing hard attitude of police towards Ukrainian priests and church organizations. Here are some examples: in the village of Prylbychi, Yavoriv district, policemen poured oil onto Ukrainian priest and strewed him with feathers; in Pidhaitsi policemen had been beating local priest for half an hour until he lost his consciousness; in Pochaikivtsi local priest suffered 30 hits of police rifle butt after which he was bayoneted 7 times, additionally one of the policemen tried to cut some letters on his forehead, all this was performed in front of his children. Cases of attacking Ukrainian priests were documented in Yavoriv, Zhuriv, Stavchany, Rohatyn, Cherche, Horodok etc. In several incidents police used the help of light cavalry<sup>19</sup>.

Ukrainian Orthodox Church was also under hard pressure. This especially concerns the territory of Kholmshchyna. Actually during all period between two World Wars, Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Poland suffered from shutdowns of churches and abolitions of parishes. Some of the Church's buildings were passed to Roman Catholic Church, others were locked out. In archives are several cases which can be stated as examples. Thus, in the village of Zakharove police ordered to destroy the church, which was built for the money collected from villagers; in the village of Khoroshynka local authorities ordered police to demolish Orthodox chapel; churches or other religious buildings were also destroyed in the villages of Bila Pidliaska, Kryliv, Koleshchytsi, and Pokrovky; in the village of Shebriashyn authorities demolished local Orthodox church which was built in 1184 and was very important for Ukrainian cultural heritage; seven more churches were closed and/or destroyed in the District of Bilhorod<sup>20</sup>.

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky was the one who strongly opposed Polish authorities in their policy concerning Orthodox churches in Kholmshchyna, though it was different religious confession. Ukrainians of other ethnic territories like Galicia and Volhynia protested against the shutdown of Churches; they were supported by Ukrainians of Canada Germany and USA. Nevertheless many religious buildings were being locked or destroyed until the beginning of the Second World War.

## ПОЛЬСЬКА ПОЛІЦІЯ У СТАВЛЕННІ ДО УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ГРЕКО-КАТОЛИЦЬКОЇ ЦЕРКВИ ПІСЛЯ УКРАЇНСЬКО-ПОЛЬСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ 1918–1919 РОКІВ

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У статті представлено аналіз дій польської поліції щодо діяльності Української Греко-Католицької Церкви. Робота містить багато прикладів, взятих в архівних документах поліцейських відділків та місцевих правоохоронних органів. Автор використав низку фактів, щоб показати систему ставлення польських поліцейських, політиків, прокурорів і активістів до української церкви.

*Ключові слова:* поліція, Українська Греко-Католицька Церква, ставлення, діяльність.

<sup>1</sup> Швагуляк М. З історії українсько-польських взаємин на передодні та під час німецько-польської війни 1939 року / М. Швагуляк // Польсько-українські студії. – Т. 1. - К.: “Либідь”, 1993. – С.236.

<sup>2</sup> Цвенгрош. Г. Апостольський престол і Митрополит Андрей Шептицький / Г. Цвенгрош. – Львів, 1991. – С. 8–20.

<sup>3</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 1, оп. 58, спр. 257.

<sup>4</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 109, оп.2, спр. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Марунчак М. Митрополит Андрей Шептицький на Заході 1920–1923 / М. Марунчак. – Вінніпег–Едмонтон, 1981. – С. 12–13.

<sup>6</sup> Верес. Р. Архів о.Петра Понятишина в Українським національним музею ім. д-ра Мирослава Семеновича в Чикаго / Р. Верес // Церковний календар-альманах. – Чикаго, 1975. – С. 132–133.

<sup>7</sup> Кривава книга. – Дрогобич, 1994. – С. 71–73.

<sup>8</sup> Генік М. Зрада Ради Амбасадорів. / М. Генік // Літопис Червоної Калини. – 1993. – Ч. 1–3. – С. 10–12.

<sup>9</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 1, оп. 14, спр. 1797.

<sup>10</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 1, оп. 14, спр. 2266.

<sup>11</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 1, оп. 14, спр. 2284.

<sup>12</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 1, оп. 14, спр. 1797.

<sup>13</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 1, оп. 14, спр. 2262.

<sup>14</sup> Нова зоря. – 1933. – 7 травня.

<sup>15</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 1. оп. 14, спр. 2261.

<sup>16</sup> ДАЛО. – Ф. 1. оп. 14, спр. 2261.

<sup>17</sup> Мета. – 1933. – Ч. 26.

<sup>18</sup> Гожецький Р. Митрополит Андрей Шептицький і національні проблеми / Р. Гожецький // Варшавські українознавчі зошити. – 1989. – Зошит 1. – С. 202.

<sup>19</sup> На вічну ганьбу твердині варварства в Європі. – Прага, 1931. – С. 38–54.

<sup>20</sup> Пастернак Є. Нарис історії Холмщини і Підляшшя. Новіші часи. / Є. Пастернак. – Вінніпег– Торонто, 1989. – С. 222–237.