

THE REVOLUTION OF THE WORLD'S VIEW: DESTRUCTION OF TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL VALUES OF THE WESTERN UKRAINIAN PEASANTRY IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE SOVIET TOTALITARISM IN 1939 – 1941

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Abstract. Social transformations, the rapid development of scientific and technological progress, the change of the ruling regimes pose many challenges to the modern citizen. An average person is often not ready to psychologically resist rapid changes, and tries to adapt to them in a different way. In terms of fleeting social changes, we can observe an increase of interest towards religion in certain categories of population, because in a faith in God, people are trying to find spiritual support, protection and answers to the challenges of the present time. In view of this, studies of the transformation of religious consciousness in the conditions of socio-political transformations acquire a special relevance.

Keywords: social and political transformations; the revolution of the world view; the religiosity of the population; Eastern Galicia; social mentality; everyday life

It should be noted that each political regime tries to introduce its own system of value orientations. Therefore, in the conditions of model changes of the state power, historical traditions, social mentality and everyday life of the population undergo transformations. A person always adapts to the new life conditions, because of the human nature. It cannot be affirmed that the values of communities can instantly, radically change, as if by a magic wand. The process of forming a new value system, mostly depends on the perception of some beliefs, ideas, visions, by the representatives of different generations and social strata.

A tradition plays an important place in the formation and maintenance of value orientation of social community. Actually, the tradition, in the conditions of social transformation, is almost the only unifying mechanism capable to resist destructive mechanisms. The valuable vacuum, which is formed as a result of the destruction of tradition, must necessarily be filled with new values. According to the sociologist

V. Burlachuk, "... the tradition is the social institution that supports the sustainability of a social life. In addition, due to the tradition, there is a self-identification of the individual and the social group answering the question: "who are we?", "what our group differs from other communities?", selecting facts of history, which become national symbols and facilitate the unification. The destruction of the usual circle of meanings and relationships makes a need to seek new sources of self-identification for the social group. That is why the power beforetime uses a tradition as a means of its legitimating (Burlachuk, 2004). "In our case, the spiritual tradition acts as a unifying component of the daily life of the rural population.

We propose to consider the influence of socio-political transformations on the change of religious consciousness on the example of the daily life of the peasants of Eastern Galicia during September of 1939 to June of 1941.

On September 17, in 1939, the territory of Eastern Galicia, which was a part of Poland, was captured by the units of the Red Army and was annexed to the Ukrainian SSR. In the same way, the local population fell under the authority of the Soviet totalitarian system that prevailed in the Soviet Union.

Despite the wide historiography of the question of incorporation of Western Ukrainian lands into the USSR, many humanitarian aspects of the "Sovietization" of the newly-affiliated territories remain beyond the attention of researchers. The reason for this is that for a long period of time, historical researches could not go beyond the precise ideological boundaries that prevailed among Soviet historians.

The purpose of the article is the study of the transformation of the traditional spiritual sphere of the daily life of the East-Galician peasantry under the influence of socio-political processes of 1939 – 1941.

Realization of the purpose of scientific publication predetermines the following tasks: analysis of the humanitarian policy of Soviet power in the territory of Eastern Galicia during 1939 – 1941; characteristics of the reaction of the clergy to the actions of the official authorities; an investigation of the Soviet power influence on the transformation of the spiritual life of the East-Galician peasantry.

The process of joining the Eastern Galicia into the Ukrainian SSR was accompanied by the general Sovietization of the land. Such a transformation has significantly affected the fate of many people, destroying the established way of life, breaking the traditions, etc.¹⁾ In such conditions, part of the rural population, mostly declassed elements and devices, welcomed socialist transformations, the other part, mostly supporters of radical Ukrainian nationalism, did not accept Soviet reality, the dominant majority of people took the expectant position and waited for recommendations from the church side.

Changes in the model of daily life proposed by the Soviet authorities in the newly-joined territories envisaged the establishment of a state monopoly on the entire humanitarian sphere. Subordinating practically all educational, scientific, cultural institutions, the authorities began spiritual transformation in order to form a new "Soviet" worldview of citizens.

The rural population of Eastern Galicia proposed to change traditional Christian values, to “Revolutionary Socialism.” Pseudo religion, which according to the definition of philosopher M. Berdiaiev, “... not economic or political doctrine, but faith contrary to the Christian faith ... The religion of socialism takes on the temptation to turn the stone into bread, the temptation of a socialist miracle” (Obolonskyi, 2002: 320). The new religion had its own doctrine, the “holy martyrs”. Criticism of dogma, led to excommunication from the “church”, with all inherent to the totalitarian ideology

Conversion to a new spiritual doctrine took place in a variety of methods and means. The press played the main role in this. In the first days, the occupation of Eastern Galicia by the Soviet troops, the official press was charged with anti-religious reports. In particular, in the newspaper Soviet Ukraine, in one of the articles, the author describes the anti-Soviet activity of the Roman Catholic priest from the village Mochyshchyna in Lviv region summarized, “From prayer to terrorist attack, this is the way of the governors of God on earth.”²⁾

Furthermore a whole army of various political leaders, authorized, agitators in all settlements almost every day held rallies, meetings, lectures, etc. People at first listened with curiosity to the speakers; later, the truth was, that the enthusiasm of locals to attend such events extinguished. During the rallies, agitators spread a huge amount of propaganda literature, newspapers and postcards. They didn’t forget about the portraits of the leaders of the party, which filled the facades of houses, and which filled up the administrative premises.

New authorities in villages began to organize libraries and hut-reading rooms for the purpose of carrying out cultural works. Where they acted, the book fund was revised, for the purpose of extracting anti-Soviet literature. The library asset was formed mostly from teachers and agronomists. In its duties, in addition to mass events, the systematic reading of Soviet newspapers and magazines aloud to local peasants, most of whom were illiterate was included.

In addition, in rural clubs, the consciousness of the common people was raised through the demonstration of film production. Sessions took place not only in stationary cinemas, but also with the help of mobile movie installations. In particular, in the region there were about 100 mobile movie installations that enabled to demonstrate the cinema show in the most remote villages. The film repertoire was for the most part revolutionary – “Shchors”, “Chapaev”, “Alexander Nevsky”, “Lenin in 1918”, “The deputy of the Baltic”, “Tactors”, “The rich bride”, “Karmelyuk”³⁾.

In addition to cinema sessions, various lectures took place in rural clubs, and discussions of the most important documents and directives of the Soviet regime were practiced. Especially their number increased before the elections to the authorities. People went to such events, just for the right to attend the Sunday service. In the end, the peasants who went to church, were attracted to heavy work in the woods, or charged higher taxes.

The authorities paid considerable attention to the activities of various professional and amateur choral, drama, choreographic and other circles. Through their

activities, art circles were supposed to complement the palette of methods of ideological influence on the population. In addition, members of the creative teams, along with teachers and local leaders, used participants as well as the crowd during various studies of the Stalin Constitution or statutes of the agricultural artel, lectures, rallies, etc.

Simple peasants are not very often volunteered to attend similar events. Often clubs practiced dancing for young people who were accompanied by a drink⁴⁾. It is interesting that the most active such actions were practiced during the posts and on Sunday.

The Soviet Union authorities focused on the system of education during the reform of the humanitarian sphere. It was in the field of education that a variety of forms of anti-religious propaganda were used.

An educational process has started since October 1939, with certain innovations. In the first place, icons and crucifixes were removed from the classrooms. Training plans have undergone some corrections. If the study of most academic disciplines was according to old plans, the religious objects and the objects of history of Poland were removed. Almost all subjects devoted partly to lectures on godlessness.

In order to retrain educational workers to work in the new ideological conditions, various meetings of teachers were convened under the auspices of the Political administration of the Ukrainian Front, as well as an openly branched network of advanced training courses. Sometimes the “methods” of retraining amazed with their cynicism and cruelty. For example, local teachers from the Rohatyn district of Stanislaviv region, were gathered for advanced training courses on the eve of Christmas and Easter. During courses, fasting and especially on “big Friday”, teachers were forced to consume meat dishes. Those who refused to participate in the meal were threatened to be dismissed from work and responded appropriately by law enforcement agencies.

This became a significant test for both children and teachers, most of whom were religious. Such training also affected the quality of knowledge. The effectiveness of studying in the Soviet school and evening educational courses is evidenced by the document of the Lviv Regional Military Commissariat, according to which only a small part of the recruits in June 1941 could read and write elementary, the rest remained illiterate.

Seeing the main enemy of Sovietization in religious communities, the main point of the policy of the Soviet totalitarian system was directed at church organizations and priests.

According to the decision of the agrarian declaration of the People's Assembly of Western Ukraine, all the church lands were nationalized⁵⁾. Church organizations and directly priests were forced to pay a variety of taxes⁶⁾. During the worships, the authorities stimulated anti-religious rallies and other propaganda campaigns. Young people were called not to marry and baptize newborns in the church. The

peasants, who went with children to the church, were scared of exportation to Siberia, and teachers of dismissal from work.

At the same time together with party and Soviet functionaries, the anti-religious activity was also performed by the NKVD officers. In particular, the high command recommended that the main focus of the activity should be directed towards “creating doubts” among religious people, in order to expose the counter-revolutionary activity of the ministers’ worship, with the aim of their compromising⁷⁾.

The Church through its leaders tried to save the influence made on religious people and also didn’t aggravate its relations with the new authorities. The Polish church, left without its leader Cardinal Hlonda, felt confused and oppressed. The ordinary Catholic priests, following their leader, abandoned their parishes⁸⁾. Actually, there were no Orthodox parishes in the territory of Eastern Galicia. In particular within Lviv region, in the autumn of 1939 there were five Orthodox churches and eight Orthodox priests (Baran & Tokarskyi, 2014: 229). The only, most organized and capable to resist the anti-religious policy of Soviet power by the church community, remained the Greek-Catholic Church headed by Metropolitan A. Sheptytskyi. Probably therefore, in the course of the anti-religious campaign, the leader of the Greek Catholics suffered the most. The Bolsheviks did not forget his message of August 3, 1936 to the religious, where, among other things, the Metropolitan noted: “Who helps the Communists in their work, even a purely political ..., he/she betrays the matter of the poor, patient and fair people in the whole world”⁹⁾.

In these socio-political conditions, the opinions of the rural population divided. The part of the community was subjected to agitation and became active supporters of innovations, the other group took a wait-and-see position and waited for who would win. The majority tried to adhere to the traditional spiritual life.

Sheptytskyi, were asking the paraphiliac priests to continue pastoral activity in order to appropriately prepare of the “good hosts” who could dedicate a child in the case of a lack of a priest, etc. Also, the priest recommended to obey the authorities and, at the same time, urged clerics not to take part in politics and secular affairs¹⁰⁾.

It is difficult to judge, whether the children realized the meaning of the message, but many cases of students’ refusals to listen to anti-religious propaganda at school were recorded. In addition, pupils refused to attend lessons, because teachers often talked about things that contradicted home-grown upbringing and what the church’s fathers taught.

Spiritual transformations eventually forced the spiritual leader of the Greek Catholic to address a letter to J. Stalin. Sheptytskyi warned the leader of the Bolsheviks that further: “... the propaganda of atheism in general, and in a special way in schools and the examination of youth is a great mistake of the Soviet authorities in our territory. First of all, it affects and frightens the people, tied to their faith, as the most important part of the national tradition is caused by the fact that the people especially broad masses of the peasantry do not have it”¹¹⁾.

The part of the local activists, mostly an antisocial element, succumbing to Soviet agitation, immediately approached the struggle with the church. Road crosses were destroyed in many villages, and crosses were removed on separate temples. The situation gained so much scope that the authorities were forced to resort to limiting the actions of the activists. In the autumn of 1939, the Central Committee of the Communist Party (B) issued a number of decrees, where recommended to local self-government bodies not to allow confiscation of church premises, other actions, to show vigilance and to take into account "the peculiarity of the situation in which they operate". In general, all actions regarding ministers of religious worship were to be approved with the central authorities of the Soviet power (Baran & Tokarskyi, 2014: 240).

The demolition of the traditional spirituality of the peasantry has led to the fact that many fellow-fighter and representatives of local government administration in the USSR with the Bolsheviks retreat in June 1941 were executed by local residents.

In preserving the spiritual values of the Galician peasantry in the conditions of Soviet totalitarianism, the Greek Catholic Church and its leader A. Sheptytskyi has a prominent role. Obviously, the peasant's worldview was in organic unity with the teaching of the Christian church. The rupture with the church tradition for the local people was perceived as a withdrawal from something original, without it there is no life. That is why the church occupied a special place in the spiritual life of the East-Galician village. In the end, it acted not only as a religious institution but also as a personification of the Ukrainian national spirit. That is why, describing the struggle of Soviet totalitarianism with the church, the Russian historian O. Obolonskyi stated: "In Russia, religion has always been closely linked with temporal power ... Therefore, when authority stopped to support and began to persecute it, religion, remaining without a usual support, collapsed ... In other countries that fell under communist rule, the church, in spite of its subjection to the Soviet model of repression, generally survived, because it obviously occupied another place in the national consciousness" (Obolonskyi, 2002: 302).

With a retreat from the territory of Eastern Galicia, the Bolsheviks in June 1941 the spiritual duties of the peasants did not stop. In a difficult confrontation with the Soviet totalitarianism and the spiritual outlook of the village, a brief calm before a big storm came.

NOTES

1. The Soviet State Security Institutions in 1939 – June 1941: documents of the Branch State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine, ed. by V. Danylenko, Kyiv 2009, p. 21.
2. Al. Orphan, Enemies in pompons and rice, "Soviet Ukraine" 1940, No. 159 (758) of July 12, p. 2
3. Kinofication of the villages of the region, "Free Ukraine" 1939, No. 42 (42) of November 13, p. 3

4. Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky: Life and activities. Documents and Materials 1899 – 1944, T. 2, book. 2, ed. A. Kravchuk, Lviv 1999, p. 907.
5. Declaration of the People's Assembly of Western Ukraine on the confiscation of landed estates, "Vilna Ukraina", 1939, No. 32 (32) of October 29, p. 1
6. Taxes and duties in the Galician village (end of the XVIII – the middle of the twentieth century), ed. P. Korinenko, Ternopil 2016, p. 121
7. Elimination of the UGCC (1939 – 1946). Documents of the Soviet bodies of state security. T. 1, ed. V. Serhiychuk, Kyiv 2006, p. 76 – 77.
8. Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky: Life and activities., p. 898.
9. A. Sheptytskyi, the clergy and faithful God's peace and the bishop's blessing, "Liberation Way" 1988, Kn. 3, p. 905 – 920.
10. A. Sheptytskyi, Pastoral Messages 1939-1944, Vol. 3, Lviv, 2010, p. 7
11. Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky: Life and activities. Documents and Materials 1899 – 1944, T. 2, book. 2, ed. A. Kravchuk, Lviv 1999, p. 903.

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