

Book Review:

Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939-1950)*. Edmonton/Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1996. 310pp.

This book by a well-respected specialist was published in the anniversary year 1996: 50 years since the suppression of Uniate church in Galicia, 400 years since the Union of Brest (1596) and 350 years since the Union of Uzhhorod (1646). Those longer anniversaries not only refer to Roman Catholic arrangements with Eastern Europe [see Roberson article], they were also markers in the history of Russian Orthodoxy, especially since the autocephaly and eventual acknowledgment of the Patriarchate of Moscow and All Russia, were responses to the 'reunion' efforts of the Vatican. Bociurkiw provides a twenty-seven page historical introduction, relying mainly on Ukrainian scholarship. This establishes the overall argument of the book, namely, that the religious and nationalities policy of Stalin toward the Uniates in the Western Ukraine followed the tsarist policies towards Uniates in the annexed territories. The primary focus of the book is to describe Soviet policy toward the Uniates during the initial occupation (1939-41) in order to show changes in policy by the Soviets after World War 2 and to make sense of the key figures within the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church who had earlier debated 'Easternizer' versus 'Latinizer' tendencies within their church.

The special scholarly contribution Bociurkiw achieved hereby, was to carefully reread many published sources in the light of newly accessible documents (both from Soviet archives and from his own ties to Ukrainian emigre collections). The result was a conscious effort to tell the story by avoiding both the "gross distortions" of Soviet publications, and without the "sentimentalism, exaggerations, or superficialities of emigre 'martyrology'".(p. x) Chapters 3 through 7 provide a detailed story of the Soviet reoccupation, the attack on the Church, the Lviv "Sobor" [author's style of citation] of 1946 with a reunion into Russian Orthodoxy manipulated by the NKVD, followed by the aftermath of forcible incorporation of the church into the Moscow Patriarchate, and the fate of arrested clergy and faithful. The death of Stalin and the return of clergy and faithful in the amnesties of 1956 made the longer illegal survival possible.

This then leads to a final "Epilogue" in which Bociurkiw draws conclusions relevant to the debate about the Uniates that has divided Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholics, conclusions which are intended largely to clear away false myths and false readings of past history, rather than to offer a Uniate ecumenical solution. Bociurkiw does acknowledge a deliberate effort to give the Uniates a voice (a long standing problem) but archives for Fr. Kostel'nyk, for the 1946 L'viv "Sobor", and the archives of the Russian Orthodox Church (particularly those relevant here) are still classified and make a full dealing with the past incomplete. The conclusions do note the outrage at suppression of the Uniates expressed by Catholics around the world, the silence of some and the public welcoming of the suppression by "most Orthodox Churches". Stalin's regime "perpetrated an 'ethnic ecclesicide' in order to wipe out all vestiges of Ukrainian independence..." and Bociurkiw showed how much the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church managed to resist

and eventually to survive. Here Bociurkiw qualifies the exaggerated martyrologies of the Ukrainian "migrants", proposing an agenda of careful study to determine how many succumbed to blackmail or terror, how many were arrested, how many perished, etc. in order to produce a "credible 'martyrology'", though he does note that the monastic orders had the fewest defectors, whether male or female.

Both text and footnotes (that sometimes dominate the page) make for fascinating reading and leave this reader with a better understanding, and with a disturbed sense of the complexities of issues that make an ecumenical koinonia so rare.

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