

## The summary

The Orthodox Church in the area of Biała Podlaska in the years 1918 – 1939.

The main aim of this dissertation is to introduce the situation of the Orthodox Church in the area of Biała Podlaska deanery in the years 1918-1939. The detailed research objectives are the reconstruction of structures and organization of the Orthodox Church after the World War I, taking the following into account: “bicieństwo” (the eviction), the condition of the Orthodox Churches (including the reclaiming of the looted goods) in the interwar period, the condition of the Orthodox priesthood and its relation with the state authorities, the reconstruction of the full-time and temporary parishes, the functioning of the monastery in Jabłeczna and the attempts of its liquidation by the state authorities.

The study of the given issues, is related to different types of difficulties. The essential problem is connected with the poor number of publications to analyze. The history of the Orthodoxy in Biała Podlaska deanery, as a separated territory of the Orthodox Church, has not been the subject of the research yet. Until now, there has been no analysis about it, either. However, it is possible to find the number of valuable information about the Biała Podlaska deanery in the scientific research by Hanna Dylągowa, Antoni Mironowicz, Andrzej Gil, Andrzej Poppe, Ludomir Bieńkowski, Kazimierz Chodyncki, Mirosława Papierzyńska-Turek, Wiktor Piotrowicz, Andrzej Chojnowski, Jerzy Langroda, Krzysztof Krasowski, Orest Kupraneć, the priest Serafim Żelaźniakowicz, the priest Grzegorz Sosna and Urszula Pawluczuk. The issue of the Orthodoxy in the years 1918-1939 in Lubelskie voivodeship is also described in works by Grzegorz Pelica, the priest Krzysztof Grzesiak, Grzegorz Kuprianowicz and Jan Kęsik. The most essential part of the research was the analysis of the sources, found in the state and church archives. They were mainly the acts taken from different archives, such as Archiwum Metropolii Prawosławnej (The Archive of the Orthodox Metropolis), Archiwum Diecezji Lubelsko-Chełmskiej (The Archive of the Lublin-Chełm Diocese), Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie (The State Archive in Lublin) and Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (The New Acts Archive in Warsaw). The attention is paid particularly to public correspondence, service notes, minutes, lists, records or secret reports.

The area of the Biała Podlaska deanery historically belonged to the Southern Podlasie region. Since the tenth century, there were two countries which competed for the territory: Poland and

the Kievan Rus. After the disintegration of the Grand Duchy of Kiev the area of the future deanery was under control of the Russian Duchy. However, after its downfall, the majority of the Southern Podlasie region became dependent on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1569, the certain part of the Southern Podlasie area was joined to Poland, and became the member of the newly created Podlaskie voivodeship. Both, most of the deaneries and Biała Podlaska stayed the part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. According to, the decision of the congress in Vienna, the majority of the Duchy of Warsaw, together with the Southern Podlasie region became the part of Poland, related to the Russian Empire. This situation lasted until 1915, and resulted in the serious consequences, as it comes to religious relations.

Until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Orthodox Church dominated in the Podlasie region. The situation changed in 1596 after the Union of Brest. It took one century to supersede the Orthodoxy from the Southern Podlasie territory and replace it with the Union. The only monastery which stayed faithful to the Orthodoxy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was in Jabłeczna. The religious policy about the Southern Podlasie region changed after 1815. The empire authorities supported the Orthodox religion until the very moment of the elimination of the Union in Poland, in 1875. This policy led to some serious conflicts. There were fights with the army in Pratulin and Drelów. The changes took place in religious relations together with establishing the tsarist edict of tolerance. The majority of the former Union followers took advantage of the situation and converted into Catholicism. The period of the World War I, especially the time of "bieżeństwo" in 1915, constituted a real disaster for the Orthodoxy and its followers in the Southern Podlasie area.

When Poland regained the independence in 1918, the Southern Podlasie territory was found to be the centre of the country, on the ethnically Polish borders. The legal and material situation of the Orthodox Church was not settled and it was treated as the enemy and there were differences between the state and the Orthodox Church. The legal situation was not even regulated by „Tymczasowe przepisy o stosunku rządu do Kościoła prawosławnego w Polsce” (‘Temporary regulations about the attitude of the government to the Orthodox Church’) (1922). The legal and material status was settled no sooner than in 1939. It happened after a great number of efforts and conflicts with some part of the Orthodox Church. As a result, the local authorities managed to introduce the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church, what meant the separation from the Moscow patriarchates. It took a lot of time to regulate the issues of establishing the Orthodox parishes, the way the Orthodox clergymen are called or endowed. It led to uncertainty and confusion and resulted in taking over the Orthodox Church estate in 1918.

The condition of the Orthodox Church in deanery was tragic. The majority of the followers stayed in the East and there were no clergymen. The Orthodox Churches were closed or taken over by the Catholic Church. Up to 1921, plenty of people came back to deanery as well as some of the clergymen, who tried to open the Orthodox Churches and restore the parishes. It was extremely difficult since the administrative authorities were extremely against the restoration. Nevertheless, it was possible to establish the parishes in Nosów, Kobyłany, Sławatycze and Zabłocie, and the Orthodox monastery in Jableczna, too. However, there was no effect of trying to create some other parishes.

The process of reclaiming the Orthodox Churches took place through the whole interwar period. In some cases, when it came to a sharp conflict about the temples, sometimes with the participation of the followers, the final decision was prolonged until the end of the twenties or eventhe beginnings of the thirties. At the end of the twenties, they managed to open the Orthodox Church in Bubel Stary, Gnojno, Zahorów, Miedzyleś, Kijowiec and Biała Podlaska. It was possible, thanks to the determination of the Orthodox followers and clergymen, as well as the restraint of the state authorities that were afraid of the escalation of the conflict.

In certain places, such as Bubel Stary or Kostomłoty, the conflicts were not mild in their course, and there were scuffles with the police andthe Byzantine-Slavic clergymen. Particularly violent reclaiming took place in 1938. The state authorities perceived the area of deanery as the territory to be deprived of any elements hostile to Poland, and that is why they treated extremely harshly the Orthodox clergymen and the followers. The Orthodox Churches in Biała Podlaska, Konstantynów, Zahorów (one Orthodox Church and five chapels), Miedzyleś, Kijowiec, Kostomłoty, Zabłocie were demolished. The Churches in Strzyżówka, Bubel Stary and Kodeń were closed.

The Orthodox people were not the homogeneous society when it comes to their national identity. In many cases, the Orthodox followers considered themselves as the inhabitants but at the same time keeping the language, religious and national difference. This behaviour was strongly dependent on the attitude, charisma or the authority of the given clergyman. As far as politics is concerned, it was more and more influenced by the Ukrainian, Belorussian and communist organizations. A great number of the Orthodox people were not interested in politics and represented pro-government mindset. The residents of Zabłocie parish stepped out as those who were for the Ukrainian nationalism. The similar tendencies were visible

in Kostomłoty borough, too. In the rest of the communes and parishes the attitude of the Orthodox followers was much more diversified.

1924 the final year when the shape of the parishes was established. It consisted of parishes and full-time subsidiaries, which were financed with the state money. It lasted up to 1939. The parishes were in Zabłocie, Nosów, Gnojno, Żerocin and in Kobylany. In the second half of the twenties, the Orthodox authorities decided to delegate the clergymen to serve in the given parishes. That way, the parishes and subsidiaries were established. The places can be found in Kodeń, Międzyzyleś, Zahorów, Bubeł Stary and in Biała Podlaska. However, they were never accepted by the state authorities, which liquidated all of them in 1938.

After 1921, the life of the clergymen began to stabilize. Most of them got the permission to stay in the temporary parishes. Being advertently observed by the authorities and kept under surveillance, they tried to legitimate their stay in parishes and obtain the approval of the state authorities. The number of the Orthodox clergymen in the Biała Podlaska deanery, in the discussed period, was smaller than before the World War I, however, it increased constantly in the twenties until the break out of the World War II. That number was never stable, probably because of the considerations but also due to the decision of the administrative authorities that imposed the cancellation of the clergyman. Between 1922-1923, there were eleven clergymen (together with the monastery in Jableczna) in the county. The social background and the national identity of the clerics varied significantly but they were similar to general characteristic of the Orthodox clergy in other parts of the country. Certainly, there was an attempt to combine the national identity of the given cleric with his social background. In the thirties, more and more clerics showed their positive attitude to the Ukrainian policy, whereas the smaller number of the clergymen were Moscowphiles and Russophiles. The priests, responsible for the Orthodox Churches, were relatively young and they spend their adulthood in a totally new political and state reality. There were only three clerics who came from the Biała Podlaska county – the priest Szymon Kamiński and two deacons Józef Skrzypiec from Kobylany and Włodzimierz Paternak from Pawłów Nowy.

The level of education of the Orthodox clergymen in the county was similar to the one in the whole country. The majority of them graduated from the Russian theological seminary, which was the equivalent of the secondary school level of education. It was, no sooner than in the thirties, when the first graduates of the Study Center of the Orthodox Theology at the Warsaw University appeared, they were university graduates of higher education level. The national

awareness of the clergy, as well as the territorial background, considerably influenced their attitude to Poland and their relations with the authorities, too. The older generation of priests that was brought up according to the Kievan Rus ideology, was hostile to Poland, whereas the younger generation was for the Ukrainian nationalism, which was considered by the authorities as distinctively dangerous. The percentage of the Russophil priests, systematically narrowed down. The state authorities considered the Orthodox clerics as inimical or even adverse to Poland. They were suspected of the lack of loyalty toward the newly reborn country. With reference to the great number of the clergymen it was not stated that they were disloyal regarding Poland, in many cases, they were characterized as indifferent. Some priests were acknowledged as loyal since they always celebrated solemn services on occasion of state holidays. The activity in the national Ukrainian movement and keeping in touch with its activists were perceived as particularly perilous. The majority of the Southern Podlasie priests, apart from some exceptions, were characterized as impassive toward the Ukrainian backgrounds.

The legal-organizational situation of the Orthodox monastery in the Second Polish Republic resulted from the state policy regarding the Orthodox Church. It pertained the monastery in Jabłeczna, as well. This Orthodox centre in Podlasie in the interwar period experienced the effects of "bieżeństwo", the trials of reclaiming, the transience of its legal situation, the uncertainty regarding its future, the lack of normalization of its financial issues. The state authorities and the Catholic Church strove for the liquidation of the monastery. It was treated as a strong anti-state centre. The existence and regular functioning of the monastery was not acknowledged and impeded by all means, for example the pilgrims were hindered to get to the church fair. The Orthodox authorities endeavoured to reconstruct the monastery. Since the beginning they had to defend, not only the Orthodox estate but also the existence of the church itself. Thanks to the monks efforts and the Orthodox authorities up to the thirties, they managed to normalize the material situation of the monastery, redecorate the buildings and standardize the issue of grounds and forests. The monastery was not officially acclaimed by the state authorities until 1939.

The Orthodox Church in the Biała Podlaska deanery in the years 1918-1939, faced the similar difficulties as the Orthodox Church in the whole the Second Polish Republic. It can be acknowledged that the functioning of the Orthodox Church at the area of the whole Lubelskie voivodeship, was distinctively impeded, since the state authorities refused the Orthodoxy in

the West of the Bug river, the right to exist. Although the great number of difficulties, they managed to reinstate the parish structures and the social status before 1915.

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