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РЕЦЕНЗІЇ / REVIEWS

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THEY SUFFERED FOR THEIR FAITH

Monograph Review: Olitskyi V. Will Not Been Better of the Right (Repressions Against the Orthodox Church in Sumy Region in 1920s – 1930s Years): Monograph. Sumy: Trytoria, 2018. 242 p.

ВОНИ ПОСТРАЖДАЛИ ЗА ВІРУ

Рецензія на монографію: Оліцький В.О. Блаженні гнані за правду (репресії проти Православної церкви на Сумщині у 1920–1930-ті роки): монографія. Суми: Триторія, 2018. 242 с.

Integration of Ukraine into European socio-political institutions is accompanied by significant changes in social relations, including state-church ones. Combined with the reinterpretation of Soviet past, this actualizes the importance of study the experience of previous periods, including the 1920s and 1930s. The process of mass declassification of archival recording, including documents of the Soviet special services began in Ukraine together with the process of de-communization. This promotes the actualization of the repression of the 1920s and 1930s, particularly against the Orthodox Church. The study of this issue at the regional level, allows to establish the local government of repression, to explore the role of local authorities in this process. In addition, this problem shows the process of planting totalitarianism and its negative results. Today, the problem of state-church relations in Ukraine is also actualized by obtaining the Tomos of autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. And the complicated military-political situation of Ukraine, particularly the conflict with the Russian Federation, requires highlighting the negative Soviet past connected with the persecution of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

In this regard, the monograph of Ukrainian researcher V. Olytskyi «Blessed are expelled for the Truth», dedicated to the repressions against the Orthodox clergy in the 20 – 30th years of the 20th century, is considered to be relevant to both the scientific community and the general

public. Although geographically the study covers only the territory of the present Sumy region, it should not be perceived as those with purely regional (ethnographic) character. The phenomena and their causes, described by the author, are typical for the entire Ukraine of the studied period.

The work is carried out on the basis of a wide source base, which consists of various different sources by their nature: unpublished archival recording, including archival criminal cases, recording of cross examination of witnesses and documents from the archives of village councils and museums, collections of documents, materials of the time press. For his research, the author has attracted funds of ten Ukrainian archives. Having regard to the specifics of the topic, archival documents belong to the activities of various departments, both civil and law enforcement, which explains their dispersion in various archive offices. The processing of such a large number of sources has made it possible to more fully disclose the subject and to highlight objectively the events as well as draw the conclusions. A significant number of sources for scientific turnover was introduced for the first time. V. Olytskyi devoted considerable attention to the historiographic work of his predecessors, analyzing and using scientific achievements of both professional historians and ethnographers, who covered various aspects of repression. The historiographic analysis revealed the absence of a special study that would comprehensively and comprehensively reveal repressions against the Orthodox Church in Sumy region in the 1920 – 1930s and would determine their regional features.

A brief analysis of the regulatory legal act for the implementation of anti-Church policy, without overloading the reader with monotonous information, shows the evolution of Soviet legislation towards the formation of totalitarianism and preparing the ground for the implementation of large-scale repressive policy that would fit into Soviet legislation. Moreover, it is shown that certain segments of this policy, as well as the formation of the regulatory framework, occurred in accordance with the oral or written instructions of the first persons of the state.

The author managed to logically distribute the types of repression depending on the forms of oppression. Thus, he was able to show that the repression of the Soviet totalitarian regime against the Orthodox Church is not only the criminal persecution of the clergy and the destruction of churches, but they covered all the life spheres of society, displacing the Church from it. It is important to note that V. Olytskyi came to the conclusion that the elements of state policy, which, upon their individual consideration, are not reduced to repressive ones, still form repressive policies in a complex. After all, their ultimate goal was to destroy the Orthodox Church. In fact, this is discussed in the second chapter of the monograph «Political, ideological and economic oppression».

The author expresses a rather successful thesis that after winning the power, the Bolsheviks tried to gain a foothold, as fast as possible, and for this purpose it was necessary to control all spheres of life and, above all, ideological sphere. But here they faced opposition from the Orthodox Church, which, under the monarchist regime, controlled this sphere, functioning within the limits of the Russian monarchical formula «Orthodoxy. Autocracy. Nation». According to the old monarchical regime in the consequence, both the Bolsheviks and a part of the society were associated with the Orthodox Church. Therefore, it was necessary to oust her from public life. Here it is necessary to agree with the author, because today among scientists there is no exact number concerning the exempt assets even in Ukraine as a whole. At the same time, he found materials concerning the exempt of church property in certain points of the Sumy region, having counted the minimum amount of exempt church values in the region. The author noted that the main result of the campaign was not the loss of the Church's wealth, because the region had an agrarian character, and most of the temples were rural and were not wealthy. This campaign laid the foundation of a new accusation against

the clergy – concealing and opposing the exempt of church property, what in it's turn started a new stage in repression - the criminal prosecution of the clergy.

The monograph contains the facts of cooperation in one of the points of the Konotop district between the authorities and representatives of various Orthodox denominations, which made it possible to minimize the amount of exempt property. It is shown how, in the Romny district, the authorities used the confrontation between various Orthodox confessions, having achieved some of the best results in the country. V. Olytskyi defined the stages of temple's closure and the persecution of the regional clergy. An attempt was made not only to establish the number of closed temples, but also destroyed ones. The author asked the question, what purposes were church premises used for? It turned out that despite the declaration by the Soviet authorities of the critical need to close the temples with the aim of redeveloping them to social facilities, which in fact were mostly empty. For this purpose, protocols of citizens' meetings were falsified, administrative restrictions were carried out due to the restoring the parish activities, and the complaints of illegal actions of local authorities were ignored.

Speaking about the administrative and criminal prosecution of the clergy, the author clearly defined the periods of such prosecution and the characteristics of each of the periods. The number of arrested, convicted, executed clerics is given, the facts of deaths during the investigation are described. Archival criminal cases made it possible to calculate that the number of clergy, which was delayed by law enforcement agencies and NKVD bodies, reached 211 people, of which 60 were shot. The author submitted a list of bodies that issued convictions during the investigated period, provided data on the number of appeals filed and satisfied, the terms of imprisonment, age, nationality, education of the detainees. The facts of clerics' assassinations by Soviet activists are presented. However, the investigation notes that the numbers given are not final, cause some of the criminal cases could not be preserved, some were not found, and many representatives of the clergy and monks, especially during the period of Red Terror, were destroyed without documentary evidence.

For a fuller understanding of the illegality of priests' arrests, the author described in detail examples the falsification of criminal cases, testimony and torture of prisoners.

It is worthwhile to dwell on highlighting the resistance of the population to the anti-church policy of the Soviet government. The monograph shows that such resistance was permanent, resulting from time to time open riots or speeches. The number and scale of such speeches after the Holodomor of 1932 – 1933 is significantly reduced, but they still do not stop. This material is very relevant today, because it shows that Ukrainian society not only watched the repression, but they tried to fight them using the available means.

According to the scientific character, the work of V. Olytskyi is emphasized by the powerful scientific apparatus placed in the peer-reviewed publication. These are geographical and individual index, list of abbreviations and applications. A particular importance has the pointer of the repressed clergy, which contains not only brief biographical data, but also information on archival criminal cases of these persons (pp. 209–221).

The author's conclusions (p. 173–180) are formulated, in our opinion, convincingly and concretely. In general, V. Olytskyi's reviewed monograph «Blessed are expelled for the truth (repressions against the Orthodox Church in Sumy region in the 1920s – 1930s)» is a truly holistic, completed scientific work, that comprehensively reveals the problem. It is distinguished by the availability of factual material, original generalizations and conclusions of its author, deserve the attention of not only experts, but also a wide range of readers.

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