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**ORTHODOX EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AT SCHOOLS
OF VOLYN VOIVODSHIP (1921 – 1939)**

Abstract. *The purpose* of the research is to analyse religious education as an integral part of the Polish educational model comprehensively, to highlight the problem of maintaining religious tolerance regarding the confessional affiliation of schoolchildren, and to implement the didactic principles of religious education, spiritual and moral education in educational institutions. **The research methodology** consists of the comprehensive application of general scientific research methods – analysis and synthesis, objectivity, historicism, as well as special historical methods – historical and source studies, historical and comparative, historical and genetic, historical and typological, historical and systemic methods. **The scientific novelty** consists in the fact that for the first time, based on the analysis of a wide range of sources – two Constitutions of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, government decrees, school legislation, textbooks on the Law of God and the methodology of its teaching, Ukrainian Orthodox periodicals, memoirs, as well as the achievements of the Ukrainian and

foreign historiography, the peculiarities of teaching the basics of religious education at school and religious practices have been analysed. The principles of religious pedagogy and the requirements for the personnel of teachers of Law of God have been clarified. **Conclusions.** Thus, the study of the Orthodox religion at schools of Volyn Voivodeship contributed to the preservation of national identity, an important component of which was confessional memory. The Polish legislation in schools issues ensured the interests of all religious communities. In curricula religion was a mandatory school subject, and teaching the basics of Christian doctrine was entrusted to a person with theological education, mainly parish priests. The Volyn Eparchy and the Theological Seminary in Kremenets united the clergy and laity who worked on curricula, textbooks on Law of God, and teaching methods to ensure the educational process at schools properly. Religious practices played an important role, consolidating the acquired religious knowledge in students and contributing to the formation of moral and spiritual virtues and the observance of piety in everyday life. And yet, despite the declared religious tolerance, Polonization of education was clearly visible in Volyn due to the reduction of Orthodox institutions for training clergy, the increase in Polish and Utraquist schools, which was an integral part of the policy of assimilation of Catholic Poland.

Key words: Poland, Volyn Voivodeship, interwar period, school, religion teacher, Orthodox education, religious practices.

ПРАВОСЛАВНА ОСВІТА ТА РЕЛІГІЙНІ ПРАКТИКИ У ШКОЛАХ ВОЛИНСЬКОГО ВОЄВОДСТВА (1921 – 1939)

Анотація. Досліджено впровадження релігійних знань у шкільній освіті Другої Речі Посполитої. На прикладі Волинського воєводства проаналізовано зміст уроків релігії і методики її навчання дітей православного віросповідання, а також показано релігійні практики дотримання благочестя у шкільному та позашкільному середовищі. З'ясовано, які закони та нормативно-правові акти регламентували ставлення держави до релігії і забезпечували шкільне право навчатися основ християнства. **Мета роботи** полягає у комплексному аналізі релігійної освіти як складової частини польської освітньої моделі, висвітленні проблеми дотримання релігійної толерантності щодо конфесійної приналежності школярів, реалізації дидактичних принципів релігійного навчання й духовно-морального виховання у закладах освіти. **Методологія дослідження** полягає в комплексному застосуванні загальнонаукових методів дослідження – аналізу та синтезу, об'єктивності, історизму, а також спеціальних історичних – історико-джерелознавчого, історико-порівняльного, історико-генетичного, історико-типологічного та історико-системного методів. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше на підставі опрацювання широкого комплексу джерел – двох Конституцій Другої Речі Посполитої, урядових постанов, шкільного законодавства, підручників Закону Божого та методики його навчання, українських православних періодичних видань, мемуарів, а також здобутків української і зарубіжної історіографії проаналізовано особливості викладання основ релігійного вчення у шкільництві та релігійні практики. З'ясовано засади релігійної педагогіки і вимоги щодо кадрового педагогічного складу викладачів Закону Божого. **Висновки.** У Польській державі релігійна конфесійна освіта в шкільництві регламентувалася на законодавчому рівні, що вирізняло її серед європейських держав. Обов'язкові уроки релігії та релігійні практики формували знання і навички усвідомленого сприйняття віровчення й закладали в учнів духовні християнські цінності.

У Волинському воєводстві уроки православної релігії сприяли збереженню національної ідентичності в умовах асиміляційної політики польської католицької держави. Нагляд за викладанням релігії в школі здійснювали державні освітні та церковні інституції, до компетенції яких належало кадрове забезпечення викладання Закону Божого і нагляд за освітнім процесом. Автономія Православної церкви в Польщі сприяла національно-духовному піднесенню і вплинула на українізацію викладання релігії у волинському шкільництві. Водночас політика полонізації, реорганізація православних духовних закладів освіти, зменшення національних і запровадження утраквістичних шкіл викликали невдоволення національних меншин та спонукали до відстоювання своїх прав.

Ключові слова: Польща, Волинське воєводство, міжвоєнний період, школа, вчитель релігії, православна освіта, релігійні практики.

Problem Statement. Political leaders of the revived Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth declared the establishment of a democratic society, and the Constitutions of 1921 and 1935 guaranteed broad rights for national minorities, including freedom of religion. Unlike the USA and Western European countries with a secular nature of schooling – France, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, Germany, where religion lessons were optional or absent, and atheism was introduced in Soviet Ukraine, and at that time in Poland the formation of religious education was an integral part of the educational model during the interwar period (Uchytel, 1937a, p. 157). The curricula for all types of schools included hours for studying the basics of religion, depending on the confessional affiliation of students. Often, among the lists of teachers in educational institutions of Volyn Voivodeship, the surnames of priests of different confessions are also mentioned. For example, in a private vocational (professional) tailoring and linen school in Sarny, which was run by the “Union of Women’s Public Labour”, in 1937/38, the institution’s management concluded an employment contract with teachers of religion – Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Judaism (SAVR, f. 454, d. 2, c. 706, p. 3).

In Volyn Voivodeship, the Ukrainians, the Russians, the Czechs, the Belarusians, and some Poles professed Orthodoxy. The first census of 1921 showed that out of 1,437.9 thousand inhabitants of the region, 1,066.8 thousand were Orthodox Christians, of whom 975.5 thousand were the Ukrainians; 62.2 thousand – the Poles; 18.3 thousand – the Czechs; 9.2 thousand – the Russians; the Belarusians – 1.1 thousand and 0.2 thousand representatives of other nationalities. According to the second census of 1931, as a result of the population growth, the number of Orthodox believers increased, except for the Poles, whose number decreased threefold (Kęsik, 2004, pp. 62, 67).

The state policy of assimilation expanded the network of Utraquist institutions in Volyn, levelling national schooling. For example, in 1925 there were over 500 Ukrainian schools, while in 1938 there were only eight (Kęsik, 2001, p. 27). Given the integration processes and Polonization of national communities, contrary to the declarative statements of government officials, it was Orthodox religious school education that served as an important factor in preserving the national identity of students under the conditions of foreign statehood.

Review of Sources and Recent Research. The issues of education development in Western Ukrainian lands as part of the revived Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth have been covered by the Ukrainian and foreign researchers in scientific publications over the past decades. Nowadays, the focus should be on insufficiently studied issues of the educational process, one of which is the content of curricula and individual subjects, which retrospectively include competencies, knowledge, skills and abilities of students at that time and form the idea of worldview values. During the interwar period, in Western Ukraine religious education was a common phenomenon, that ensured the continuity of religious education traditions in Galicia and Volyn, which were part of different states until the beginning of the 20th century.

Religious education of the Ukrainians of the Greek Catholic faith of Eastern Galicia at the primary school of Austria-Hungary at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries is highlighted in the study of Lviv scholar N. Kolb (Kolb, 2018), and the activities of church-parish schools in Volyn during this period were substantiated by V. Pererva (Pererva, 2014). This issue was studied by V. Futala (Futala, 2017; Futala, 2023), O. Ruda and O. Pikh (Ruda, & Pikh, 2023), O. Demianiuk (Demianiuk, 2023). Volyn scholars O. Strilchuk and Ya. Yarosh (Strilchuk & Yarosh, 2021) analysed the national policy of the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which resulted in the persecution of the cultural and educational

society “Prosvita” in Volyn Voivodeship. The society defended the national culture and spirituality of the Ukrainians.

There should be also mentioned the research of I. Skakalska (Skakalska, 2015), dedicated to the educational work of Orthodox priests during the interwar period in Krements region mainly. The organization, moral and educational aspects of religious education at Ukrainian private schools of Volyn Voivodeship were studied by V. Dobrochynska (Dobrochynska, 2016, 2023), and in another study by V. Dobrochynska and O. Lenartovych (Dobrochynska & Lenartovych, 2024). Among school publications on the Ukrainian educational content, the textbook of Law of God and teaching methods authored by Archpriest A. Abramovych is also mentioned. Religious activity of this church figure in the field of Orthodoxy is presented in the study by V. Borshchevych (Borshchevych, 2004), and religious pedagogy of A. Abramovych was analysed by Lviv historian V. Kmet (Kmet, 2016).

Therefore, taking into account the lack of comprehensive studies on the issue under analysis, we focused on highlighting the religious nature of Polish schooling and clarifying the specifics of teaching religion, moral and religious education of Orthodox students in Volyn Voivodeship.

Purpose of the Research. The strategy of achieving the purpose is to conduct the analysis of the Polish legislation on the introduction of religious education at schools in Volyn Voivodeship; to highlight the teaching of the subject Law of God and religious practices of students who professed Orthodoxy; to substantiate the professional requirements for teachers of religion and specifics of their work.

Research Results. The national model of education in the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was discussed from the first days of its statehood. In 1919, in Warsaw the first educational congress (“Teachers’ Sejm”) supported the democratic nature of education, focusing on the religious education of students, which had been limited to religion lessons (Zashkilniak, & Krykun, 2002, p. 499) (*The term “lesson” was introduced in the territory of Western Ukraine in the autumn of 1939. During the interwar period, classroom activity was defined by the term “lecture”. – V. D.*). We cannot ignore the fact that on the eve of 1921, a public movement spread in Poland against the introduction of religion lectures at schools, as well as state support for financing such schools. A certain role was also played by the book written by W. Chrupka “On the Reform of Moral Education at Our School”, published by the Union of Professional Teachers of Polish Secondary Schools, in which the author criticized the religious nature of education sharply, because in his opinion, it contradicted the formation of a scientific worldview of young people (Uchytel, 1937a, p. 158).

The Polish society did not support such ideas, and in the adopted basic law of the state – the Constitution of March 17, 1921 – in Articles 110 and 111, religious tolerance was declared: citizens were guaranteed freedom of religion, and national minorities were guaranteed the establishment at their own expense of religious societies and schools with their native language of instruction and the practice of their religion. Article 120 stipulated the mandatory study of religion for students under the age of 18, while supervision of compliance with this provision was the responsibility of a religious centre and state school administration (Konstytucja, 1921, pp. 60, 62).

The new Constitution, Article 115, regulated the position of national minority churches, according to which Orthodox citizens of Poland were guided by their own laws after receiving the synodal canonical tomos from the Patriarch of Constantinople and the proclamation of autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland on September 17, 1925. The synodal canonical

tomos led to the separation of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church from the Moscow Patriarchate and the severance of ties with it. The supreme authority of the Orthodox Church in Poland was the Synod of Bishops headed by the Metropolitan, and five Orthodox Eparchies were formed (one of them was Volyn Eparchy with its centre in Kremenets), divided into deaneries and parishes (Konstytucja, 1935, p. 163).

As it is known, since the 1920s, the process of de-Russification of the Orthodox Church began in Poland, and later the national-church movement spread to education at the suggestion of Bishop (from 1923 – Metropolitan) Dionysius (Valedynsky) in 1922 and 1924. The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in Poland supported the introduction of the Ukrainian language in the church and educational institutions. The Kremenets Theological Seminary united the spiritual elite of Volyn – V. Bidnov, M. Kobryn, F. Kulchynsky and other figures who contributed to the Ukrainization of the church – publication of liturgical texts and church periodicals in the Ukrainian language, and also educated a new generation of priests with the Ukrainian worldview (Skakalska, 2015, p. 96, 97).

It should be noted that it was owing to Metropolitan Dionysius that in 1925 the Department of Orthodox Theology was established at the University of Warsaw – the main educational, scientific and theological centre of the Orthodox Church. The Warsaw Synodal Publishing House, as well as Volyn Eparchy, published textbooks on the Law of God, the Orthodox Catechism, and the Sacred History of the Old and New Testaments, which were used in the educational process. The clergy and secular Orthodox Professors – I. Ohienko, O. Lototsky, I. Vlasovsky, and the others – elaborated curricula and textbooks (Kmet, 2016).

Teachers of Law of God were entrusted with a high social mission in teaching religion, religious and moral education of virtuous citizens: “We have a great responsibility before God, citizenship, and the State for our work in the field of religious education, because, having sown good seeds, we will have good, strong, and long-lasting fruits that will give the State and citizenship religious, honest, and firm-minded citizens who will build their personal, family, and public lives on Christian foundations, and not on godlessness, immorality, and bestial cruelty” (Uchytel, 1937b, pp. 197–202). The Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education, in agreement with the religious authorities, determined professional qualifications for religion teachers at public and private schools (Ustawodawstwo, 1933, p. 172). Therefore, people with Master’s degree in Orthodox Theology from the University of Warsaw or foreign higher education institutions could teach Orthodox religion in secondary education institutions and teacher training seminaries after completing the diploma nostrification procedure and passing an exam in the Polish language. Due to the lack of a sufficient number of qualified theologians, attempts were made to fill this gap with religion teachers who met other requirements, for example, confirmed their professional qualifications by (in)completed studies at the Theological Seminary or Academy of the Russian Empire; who had at least two years of experience in catechetical practice in Poland; who passed a special exam on the basics of Orthodox doctrine and received permission from the state school department with the approval of the religious institution regarding suitability for teaching work (Rozporządzenie, 1929, pp. 687–688). Thus, the Volyn Eparchy and Volyn School Curatorium were the main institutions – spiritual and secular – responsible for organizing religious education at schools.

During the interwar period, in addition to the University of Warsaw, Orthodox theological education was obtained in secondary theological educational institutions – the Kremenets and Vilnius Orthodox Seminaries, which had been in a state of liquidation since the second half of

the 1930s. The local clergy, responding to the educational innovations of 1932, initiated the project to establish the Orthodox theological lyceum in Volyn at the Volyn Eparchy Synod on January 29–30, 1935. Since Volyn Orthodox Eparchy consisted of 689 parishes and was the largest in Poland, the issue of training priests was important. Using the “Main Principles of the Reform of Spiritual Secondary Education” of March 11, 1935, the state Orthodox Theological Lyceum was established instead of two seminaries (three years of study) in Warsaw, and the idea of establishing the Volyn Theological Lyceum was not implemented (V spravi pidhotovky, 1935, p. 310; Ukhvaly, 1935, p. 57). The Orthodox Lyceum in Warsaw began operating at the beginning of the 1938/39 academic year with Polish as the language of instruction, and only two hours of classes a week were conducted in Ukrainian there. As a researcher I. Skakalska notes, 12 students entered the lyceum after the exams, while the Kremenets Theological Seminary graduated its last seminarians from the mid-1930s to 1939 (Skakalska, 2015, p. 99).

Considering the above mentioned facts, we can conclude that there was some shortage in Law of God teachers at Volyn schools, especially at rural schools, because it was parish priests who taught religion there. By order of Volyn Voivodeship Government of January 21, 1930, commune officials were obliged to allocate funds to their budgets to pay for transportation of religion teachers who worked at several schools. Under such conditions, priests conducted 1–2 lectures per week, combining several classes into one group, without taking into account the age and psychological characteristics of the students’ development, which affected the quality of knowledge acquisition. There was shortage of Law of God teachers during the interwar period, as priests received the right to teach at schools by the bishop based on their qualifications and knowledge of Religious Pedagogy. At rural schools, the qualifications of teachers were often limited to psalmist courses. In addition, there were cases when the school management or school inspector, without the consent of the bishop (which was contrary to the law), dismissed a Religion teacher from work if the latter did not meet the pedagogical criteria (A.A., 1937a, pp. 236–237).

A number of issues of Religious Pedagogy were discussed in February of 1936 at a meeting of the Volyn Eparchy Synod with the participation of clergy, teachers, and public figures of the Petro Mohyla Society. The participants adopted a decision on improving religious education at schools: to teach Law of God in the Ukrainian language; to improve the educational values of the curriculum; to publish new textbooks adapted to the current curriculum; to prepare a methodological textbook on Law of God; to hold regular law-teaching conferences to discuss current problems. The issue of improving the material status of teachers was not ignored, in particular, increasing wages to PLN 1.50 per lecture hour, as well as publishing prayer books in the native language, approved by the translation commission at the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Warsaw (Volynske yeparkhialne zibrannia, 1936, pp. 165–166).

Religion teachers sought to form a stable understanding of the basics of Orthodoxy among students, using various methods and means. The main problem of teaching the basics of the Orthodox religion in Volyn Voivodeship was the lack of textbooks for secondary school students and methodological manuals for Religion teachers, while Roman Catholics were provided with a new illustrated textbook by V. Kalynowski. Religion teachers also mentioned the lack of visual sources for studying Biblical History and Geography (the maps of Palestine), religious rites (baptism, marriage, funeral, communion, confession, processions), which significantly complicated a teacher’s work (A.A., 1937a, p. 236).

Volyn Eparchy, in organizing religious education, in every way supported the teaching of Law of God and provided material assistance to educational institutions. In 1938, the spiritual

institution allocated 3,500 zlotys for the needs of the Rivne Private Ukrainian Gymnasium, 300 zlotys – for the Rivne I. Mazepa Private Elementary School, and 4,500 zlotys – for the Volyn Theological Seminary. Guided by the “Instructions for Parish Clergy on Catechizing Orthodox Youth” (Warsaw, 1932), in 1937 Eparchy announced a competition to prepare the Ukrainian-language textbook for the clergy on catechizing children of confessional age. A prize fund was established for the winners of the competition, and all materials were recommended to be sent to the Kremenets Theological Seminary (Ukhvaly, 1937, p. 114).

The textbook “The Law of God” for seventh-grade elementary schools turned out to be interesting for the analysis of educational content. It is based on general information about the Christian faith and the content of the books sacred to Christians – the Old and New Testaments. The didactic material is grouped into three sections – “On Faith” (the symbol of Faith is substantiated, the meaning of the seven Holy Sacraments – baptism, chrism, Eucharist (communion), repentance (confession), marriage, anointing with oil, priesthood, “On Hope” (prayer), “On Love” (for God and neighbour). A thorough analysis of the Ten Commandments of the Law of God was focused on instilling religious and spiritual values, because, as it is stated at the end of the textbook, in order knowledge about faith was not in vain, it must be applied in practice, in everyday life (Dobrochynska, 2022, p. 67; Pidruchnyk, 1934, p. 82).

The key issue in improving the teaching of the basics of the Christian religion was not only the training of professional staff, but also providing them with the necessary modern methodological literature, because in practice they used 10 outdated pre-war textbooks (A.A., 1937b, p. 335). The first textbook, “Methodology of Law of God”, for elementary school was prepared by the Volyn Archpriest Anastasii Abramovych, and the editor of the publication was the prominent Ukrainian historian of the Church, at that time the director of the Lutsk Ukrainian Private Gymnasium, Ivan Vlasovsky. In 1937, Volyn Eparchy approved the manuscript, which was published in Kremenets the following year. “The Methodology of the Law of God” is distinguished by a high level of requirements for the pedagogical work of the contemporary Law of God teacher, and the author calls the teaching of religion an art that has “... certain principles and rules that everyone who wants to devote himself to this work must know it. Just as a musician cannot be a good virtuoso and a musician without having firmly mastered the technical principles of music, so a teacher of Law of God cannot teach it well without knowing pedagogical and methodological principles and methods of teaching” (Abramovych, 1938, p. 2). The textbook consisted of two content parts – theoretical and practical, which contributed to the development and implementation of methodological and didactic principles in the process of teaching a religious course. In the first part, the author substantiated the main concepts, tasks and methods, educational aspects of teaching Law of God, problems of organizing and structuring classes and material. The second part contained the basics of teaching children Law of God: a prayer, biblical history, catechism, and a liturgical practice. It is important that, in addition to general theoretical concepts and provisions, the author offered sample teaching curricula at two-, three-, and four-grade schools (Kmet, 2016).

The Ukrainization of the church in Poland inspired the Ukrainian intelligentsia – priests, teachers, public and political figures – in the fight for their national rights. They were firmly aware that an important factor in the national education of youth is moral and religious education, which should be carried out in the Ukrainian language, as well as reading prayers: “...for when a person prays – with all his heart, soul and mind – he will be religious, he will be charitable, he will learn the dogma of faith in prayers, he will be a living being for the Church

of God, a prayer will evoke high spiritual emotions in him, will evoke love for God and the holy Church” (Kishkovskiy, 1937, p. 683; Uchytel, 1937b, p. 200). According to priests, a prayer in one’s native language “has greater power, it reveals more sincerity, spiritual and religious feeling than prayers in a foreign, incomprehensible language” (Sviashch. P. Ar-k., 1938, p. 406). One of the pedagogical techniques for studying prayers at school was their joint reading at the beginning of the lecture to create an elevated religious mood, as well as reciting prayers in the native language in the family circle, where Church Slavonic texts were mainly used.

The consolidation and improvement of theoretical knowledge obtained at religion lesson took place through religious practices, which activated students in the process of learning Law of God. Religious practices include participation in church services, children’s church choirs, folk religious traditions, customs associated with various church holidays, children’s performances of a religious and moral nature, conversations, organizing children’s holidays, and pilgrimages to local shrines. As I. Vlasovskiy emphasized, all this was an additional inexhaustible resource for awakening students’ activity in learning and educating religiosity (Vlasovskiy, 1938, pp. 20–25).

Participation of students in Orthodox services was a mandatory religious practice. As for the availability of visual sources on the issue under study, our attention was drawn to the photograph of Grade 7 students of Kovel Primary School No. 3, published in the magazine “Church and People” of that time, the caption to which states: “Almost 95% of people go to church, only those who have nothing to wear don’t come” (Fotohrafiiia uchniv, 1937, p. 252). Teachers also attended services together with the students. By the order of the Ministry of Education and Religion of March 19, 1938, Orthodox teachers were exempted (at their own request) from school classes on the days of the greatest Christian holidays – Christmas, St. Basil’s Day, Epiphany, and the Holy Trinity (Rozporiadzhennia, 1938, p. 372).

School religious education and religious practices evoked special spiritual emotions, which are often described in memoir literature – the memories of students and teachers, thus expanding our imagination. In particular, in the Rivne Ukrainian private gymnasium, classes began with a common prayer “Our Father” and ended with “Hail, Virgin Mary”. A daily practice after morning prayer was for the priest to read the text of the Gospel and deliver a sermon to the students. On Sundays, high school students attended services in the basement of the local Holy Resurrection Cathedral, where the service was held in Ukrainian, while in the cathedral it was held in Church Slavonic. This situation prompted the nationally conscious believers of Rivne to establish a high school church. In 1936, they bought a spacious one-story house and converted it into St. George Church. And since there was no other Ukrainian Orthodox church in Rivne, not only high school students and students of the Hetman Ivan Mazepa elementary school came there, but other townspeople came there as well (Dobrochynska, 2016, pp. 96–98).

A graduate of the Derman Ukrainian Private Girls’ Gymnasium, H. Knysh, recalling her school life, did not ignore religious practices: attending festive services, reading daily prayers in the classroom and dining room, a three-day summer pilgrimage trip to the Volyn shrine – the Holy Dormition Pochaiiv Lavra, as well as the joint participation of the gymnasium and monastery choirs in religious services (Hutsuliak, 1976, pp. 248, 252, 265). Despite efforts to maintain religious tolerance in education, it is important to note the existence of certain regulations by the Polish school authorities that restricted religious practices, in particular, prohibiting schoolchildren from singing in a church choir unless it was led by the school

principal. In view of this, the clergy appealed to the Ukrainian deputies of the Senate and the Sejm to speak out in defense of the religious education of Orthodox students, the freedom of which was ensured by the articles of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth Constitution (A.A., 1937a, p. 240).

The religious situation in Volyn Voivodeship worsened in the second half of the 1930s, when, as part of the revindication campaign, the Orthodox were forcibly “converted” to Catholicism. The “Polish State Policy Programme for Volyn”, submitted for approval to the Ministry of Internal Affairs by the Volyn voivode A. Hauke-Nowak, appointed in 1938, testified to a change in the course of state policy towards Polonization, in particular, the cessation of the Ukrainization of the Orthodox Church in Poland and the closure of schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction (Demianiuk, 2023, p. 15).

Conclusions. Thus, the study of the Orthodox religion at schools of Volyn Voivodeship contributed to the preservation of national identity, an important component of which was confessional memory. The Polish legislation in schools issues ensured the interests of all religious communities. In curricula religion was a mandatory school subject, and teaching the basics of Christian doctrine was entrusted to a person with theological education, mainly parish priests. The Volyn Eparchy and the Theological Seminary in Kremenets united the clergy and laity who worked on curricula, textbooks on Law of God, and teaching methods to ensure the educational process at schools properly. Religious practices played an important role, consolidating the acquired religious knowledge in students and contributing to the formation of moral and spiritual virtues and the observance of piety in everyday life. And yet, despite the declared religious tolerance, Polonization of education was clearly visible in Volyn due to the reduction of Orthodox institutions for training clergy, the increase in Polish and Utraquist schools, which was an integral part of the policy of assimilation of Catholic Poland.

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