

LUTSK-ZHYTOMYR ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR: CHARITABLE AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The activities of the Roman Catholic Church were an important factor in preserving and reviving the national identity of the Polish minority in Volyn under the conditions of the Russification and discriminatory policies of the Russian autocracy during the First World War. The Catholic clergy actively worked to aid the Polish population and refugees affected by the war. During the First World War, the Roman Catholic clergy of the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese, together with the majority of the Polish population in Ukraine, provided significant aid to war victims and refugees from the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia. Catholic churches collected funds for the affected Polish population, shelters were established, and care was provided for wounded soldiers. Roman Catholic priests became organizers and members of various societies and organizations that provided aid to the affected. The acquisition of democratic freedoms following the Russian February and Ukrainian national revolutions of 1917 contributed to the development of Polish national life, in which the clergy participated. The most important direction was the development of Polish education. Due to the efforts of Catholic priests, parish schools were opened in many provincial towns and villages. The Roman Catholic Church helped preserve the national identity of Poles in Ukraine and fought for their national rights. The Church became a decisive factor in countering assimilation processes, aiming to preserve the national identity and culture of the Polish population in the region, while also engaging in wide-ranging cultural and public activities.

Keywords: Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese, Roman Catholic Church, Right-Bank Ukraine, religion, First World War, charitable activities, socio-political life, education.

Introduction

In the Russian Empire during the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the Catholic Church was entirely dependent on Russian imperial structures and, for its involvement in the Polish national liberation movement, faced a series of administrative and religious restrictions and repressions against the clergy. The First World War forced societies in all countries to take a stance on participation and government policies during the war. Together with the majority

of the Polish population, the Catholic Church in Ukraine supported the tsarist authorities, engaged in charitable activities to support Poles affected by the war, and took an active socio-political position during the February democratic revolution of 1917.

The scientific research of Polish historians is characterized by an effort to prove the natural character of the resistance movement by Roman Catholic priests against the anti-Polish policies of the Russian autocracy, and they condemn the Russian authorities for oppressing Roman Catholics. However, Polish scholars have focused more on the activities of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, with only a few studies addressing issues related to the economic, socio-political, and cultural life of the Church in the Zhytomyr region. Overall, it is necessary to note the thorough and scientifically objective approach of most Polish researchers to the ethnoconfessional problems they studied.

The activities of the Catholic Church in Ukraine are presented in the memoirs of Teofil Skalsky,¹ who was the rector of St. Alexander's Church in Kyiv. Descriptions of Catholic churches and chapels are provided in the articles and memoirs of Zygmunt Andrzejowski. Interest in the activities of the Catholic Church in Ukraine increased among researchers in the 1990s and early 2000s. The organizational and legal status of the Catholic Church in Ukraine was analyzed in the works of Yuliia Khitrovska.² The general characteristics of the activities of the Catholic Church in Ukraine were provided by Volodymyr Osadchyi.³ The role of the Catholic Church in Vatican diplomacy was presented in the research of Maciej Mruz.⁴ However, the period of the Roman Catholic Church's activities in Ukraine during the First World War and the struggle for national independence has been insufficiently covered. The use of archival documents, contemporary press, and memoirs allows us to clarify the position of the Catholic Church in Ukraine during this period.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the socio-political and charitable activities of the Lutsk-Zhytomyr Roman Catholic diocese in 1914-1918 and to determine its influence on the Polish population in the region.

¹ T. Skalski. *Teror i cierpienie. Kościół katolicki na Ukrainie*. [Teror and suffering. Catholic church on Ukraine in Eastern Ukraine in the years 1832 – 1921], Kraków, 2008.

² Ю. Хитровська. “Організаційно-правове становище Римо-Католицької Церкви на Правобережній Україні.” [Organizational and legal status of the Roman Catholic Church in Right-Bank Ukraine]. *Сторінки історії*. 2010, № 30, 26-42.

³ В. Осадчий. *Католицька церква в Україні: історичний нарис*. [The Catholic Church in Ukraine: a historical sketch]. Луцьк: Luceoria Books, 2001.

⁴ M. Mróz. “Watykan i Ukraina w okresie kształtowania się systemu wersalskiego w latach 1918-1921.” [The Vatican and Ukraine during the period of the formation of the Versailles system in 1918-1921]. *Dzieje najnowsze*. 2004, XXXVI (1), 1–19.

Status of the Roman Catholic Church in Right-Bank Ukraine at the Beginning of the 20th Century

Since the annexation of Right-Bank Ukraine to the Russian Empire at the end of the 18th century, the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine sought to preserve Polish national identity under stateless conditions, supported Polish patriotic spirit, and contributed to the development of Polish education. In official statistics, Poles could be identified by their faith, as the number of Catholics with slight deviations practically equaled the number of Poles. Understanding the significance of the Catholic Church for Poles, the tsarist authorities established three Roman Catholic dioceses within the Russian Empire at the end of the 18th century. Catholics living in Ukrainian territories were divided among the dioceses to prevent their unification. Left-Bank Ukraine was part of the Mogilev Archdiocese with its center in St. Petersburg, while Volyn, Kyiv, and Podolia (from 1866) belonged to the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese. Southern Ukraine was part of the Tiraspol diocese with its center in Saratov.⁵

After the Polish uprisings of 1830-1831 and 1863-1864, the Catholic Church came under complete state control. In 1866, the Kamianets Catholic diocese was closed, and the churches under its jurisdiction were transferred to the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese. The Catholic chapter and consistory in Kamianets-Podilskyi ceased to exist. Simultaneously with the closure of the Catholic cathedral, the seminary, where 19 future Catholic priests were studying at the time, also ceased to exist.⁶

Secret circulars of the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued between 1865 and 1866 allowed the governor-general of the southwestern provinces to close Roman Catholic churches under the pretext of large groups of Catholics converting to Orthodoxy, suspend the activities of Catholic religious institutions if their existence was deemed harmful,⁷ and issue circulars ordering the baptism of children born to mixed marriages into Orthodoxy.⁸ Other directives prohibited singing

⁵ Ю. Хитровська. “Організаційно-правове становище Римо-Католицької Церкви на Правобережній Україні.” [Organizational and legal status of the Roman Catholic Church in Right-Bank Ukraine]. *Сторінки історії*. 2010, № 30, 28.

⁶ В. Малий. “Становище поляків на Поділлі у 30-90-і рр. XIX ст.” [The situation of Poles in Podolia in the 1930s-1990s]. *Поляки на Хмельниччині*, 1999, 201.

⁷ Державний архів Київської області (ДАКО). [State Archives of Kyiv Region (DAKO)]. Ф. 1260, оп. 3, спр. 856.

⁸ Державний архів Хмельницької області (ДАХМО). [State Archives of Khmelnytskyi Region (DAKhMO)]. Ф. 292, оп. 1, спр. 833, арк. 1.

in Polish during religious holidays,⁹ spreading prayers in Polish,¹⁰ and imposed supervision on the activities of priests with reporting requirements.¹¹

Restrictive measures against the Catholic Church caused tensions in diplomatic relations with the Roman Curia. From July 12, 1867, all relations of the Catholic clergy in the Russian Empire with the Vatican were conducted exclusively through the intermediary of the St. Petersburg Roman Catholic College or the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Relaxation came only at the beginning of the 20th century when the Pope, with the consent of the tsarist government, appointed a metropolitan for all Catholic churches in the Russian Empire. Bishops and vicars (suffragans) of each of the 12 operating Catholic dioceses in the empire were appointed by the Russian emperor with the approval of the papal throne. The governor-general, particularly of the right-bank provinces, influenced the appointment of priests to parishes and could dismiss or financially encourage them.¹²

Charitable Activities of the Roman Catholic Church during the First World War

At the beginning of the First World War, the authorities needed the loyalty of the population. Therefore, in early August 1914, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, addressed the Polish population with an appeal aimed at Poles in all divided parts of Poland, calling for the “unification of territory and the Polish population, free in its faith, language, and self-government under the rule of the Russian tsar.”¹³ This appeal was publicly and widely supported by most Poles in Ukraine, the Catholic Church, and several political parties led by the National Democrats (Endecja). Pro-Russian Poles justified the unity of the Polish and Russian peoples by their common Slavic origin.

The position of the Catholic Church softened because public support for the authorities facilitated the organization of the Polish community and its charitable activities. Several services were held in Catholic churches calling for support of the tsarist authorities in the war. On July 27, 1914, after the mass, Vice-Dean of the Zhytomyr Cathedral, Father Ignatius Dubowski, read two supreme manifestos announcing Germany’s and Austria-Hungary’s declaration of war on Russia.

⁹ ДАХМО. [ДАКхМО]. Ф. 292, оп. 1, спр. 871, арк. 1.

¹⁰ ДАХМО. [ДАКхМО]. Ф. 292, оп. 1, спр. 938, арк. 1-6.

¹¹ ДАХМО. [ДАКхМО]. Ф. 292, оп. 1, спр. 1054, арк. 1.

¹² Ю. Хитровська. “Організаційно-правове становище Римо-Католицької Церкви на Правобережній Україні.” [Organizational and legal status of the Roman Catholic Church in Right-Bank Ukraine]. *Сторінки історії*. 2010, № 30, 29.

¹³ „Biała Księga: farty i dokumenty z okresów dwóch wojen światowych.” [The White Book: fortunes and documents from the periods of two world wars]. Paryż, 1964, 12.

He then addressed the parishioners, urging them to “calmly go about their business in this difficult time for the Russian people and pray to God for victory for the Russian army.”¹⁴

The administrator of the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese, Prelate Antonin Bajewski, based on the tsar’s decree, addressed the clergy with a circular calling on the clergy of the diocese together with the people “to sincere prayer for God’s support and Russia’s victory and that of its allies in the war, the alleviation of all war troubles, and the attainment of the swiftest peace.”¹⁵ Solemn services were to be held every Sunday, as announced by Cathedral Canon Father Jan Zagurski during the service at the Zhytomyr Cathedral on August 3, 1914.¹⁶

Before the war, an imperial decree of 1912 prohibited collecting money for any purposes other than offerings made on Sundays and holidays. Violation of this decree entailed immediate dismissal from office.¹⁷ However, at the start of the war, the need for fundraising to support various categories of war-affected populations increased. By order of the Spiritual Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese instructed all churches in the diocese to collect donations to help wounded and sick soldiers. All collected funds were sent by the deaneries to local treasuries for transfer to the St. Petersburg office of the State Bank on a conditional current account of the Russian Red Cross.¹⁸

The Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese periodically received orders from higher institutions or requests from public organizations to organize collections in Catholic churches. For example, on the appeal of the Volyn and Zhytomyr archbishop, who headed the Committee for Assisting Wounded and Evacuated Soldiers, collection cups were placed in all churches on August 28, 1914, and September 19, 1914, to raise funds for equipping hospital beds for the wounded. The number of beds increased from 119 to 200.¹⁹

In November 1914, the first refugees from the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia appeared in Volyn. To support the population affected by military actions, a Committee was created to organize

¹⁴ “Местная жизнь.” [“Local Life”]. *Наша Волянь*, 1914, № 200, 3.

¹⁵ “Обращение к римско-католическому духовенству.” [Appeal to the Catholic Clergy]. *Жизнь Воляни*, 1914, № 196, 1.

¹⁶ “Торжественное молебствие в римско-католическом кафедральном соборе.” [Solemn service in the Roman Catholic Cathedral]. *Жизнь Воляни*, 1914, № 198, 3.

¹⁷ Ю. Хитровська. “Організаційно-правове становище Римо-Католицької Церкви на Правобережній Україні.” [Organizational and legal status of the Roman Catholic Church in Right-Bank Ukraine]. *Сторінки історії*. 2010, № 30, 29.

¹⁸ Державний архів Житомирської області (ДАЖО). [State Archives of Zhytomyr Region (DAZhO)]. Ф. 178, оп. 2, спр. 701, арк.5.

¹⁹ ДАЖО. [DAZhO]. Ф. 178, оп. 2, спр. 704, арк. 3, 5.

assistance. At the request of the Central Civil Committee (CCC) in Warsaw and with the permission of the Volyn governor, collections were organized in all churches for this cause.²⁰

Assistance to those affected by the war was also provided by the Committee of Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaevna. At the request of the head of the Committee to the director of the Department of Spiritual Affairs and by order of the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese, a collection of donations for the war-affected population was conducted in the diocese's churches from May 3 to May 10, 1915.²¹ By decision of the Synod and the appeal of the St. George's Committee, headed by His Imperial Highness Mikhail Alexandrovich, a solemn service and fundraising were conducted in November 1916 for the benefit of the war-affected St. George's Cavaliers and their families.²²

Roman Catholic charitable societies (RCCS) actively engaged in charitable activities to support victims and refugees from the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia. In Right-Bank Ukraine, they began registering after the democratic changes of the Russian revolution of 1905. In August 1906, societies emerged in Volyn in Zaslav, Kovel, Zhytomyr, and Rivne.²³ In Kyiv province, such societies were registered in Berdychiv on July 11, 1906, and in Zvenyhorod on April 15, 1907.²⁴ In Podolia province, permission was granted to open RCCS in Kamianets-Podilskyi and Proskuriv on March 8, 1907, Letychiv on August 24, 1907, and Vinnytsia on May 30, 1907.²⁵

In early October 1914, initial financial assistance to refugees from the Kingdom of Poland was provided by the Zhytomyr RCCS in the amount of 2,000 rubles from its main capital.²⁶ Special thanks were expressed to society members for a donation of 125 rubles.²⁷ The Society's Board allocated financial assistance to the Committee for Rapid Assistance to Wounded Soldiers in the amount of 100 rubles and to the Zhytomyr Committee for Rapid Assistance to Poor Families of Reservists in the amount of 50 rubles.²⁸

In addition to financial support, charitable societies provided various other services. The Zhytomyr RCCS offered assistance to the residents of Zhytomyr during difficult wartime by

²⁰ ДАЖО. [DAZhO]. Ф. 178, оп. 2, спр. 729, арк. 1.

²¹ ДАЖО. [DAZhO]. Ф. 178, оп. 2, спр. 796, арк. 3.

²² ДАЖО. [DAZhO]. Ф. 178, оп. 2, спр. 953, арк. 1.

²³ ДАЖО. [DAZhO]. Ф. 329, оп. 1, спр. 130, арк. 63.

²⁴ Центральний державний історичний архів, м. Київ. (ЦДІАК) [Central State Historical Archive, Kyiv. (CSIDAC)]. Ф. 442, оп. 636, спр. 647, арк. 531.

²⁵ Ibid., арк. 114.

²⁶ "К организации помощи беженцам." [Towards organizing assistance to refugees]. *Жизнь Волыни*, 1914, № 272, 3.

²⁷ "Местная жизнь." ["Local Life"]. *Наша Волынь*, 1914, № 274, 3.

²⁸ "Местная жизнь." ["Local Life"]. *Наша Волынь*, 1914, № 200, 3.

providing favorable services and donations. The society approached the city administration with a proposal to purchase firewood from the state forest. It also offered services for manufacturing furniture with a 10% discount for a surgical department with 200 beds.²⁹

Due to the defeat and retreat of Russian troops from Warsaw in June 1915, the number of refugees and evacuees from the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia increased. By order of the Synod, dioceses were instructed to create diocesan committees to arrange the livelihood of refugees.³⁰ In June 1915, a branch of the Committee for Assistance to Poor Polish Families Affected by the War was opened in Zhytomyr.³¹ After receiving permission from the Department of Spiritual Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in September 1915, the Rivne RCCS organized a children's shelter for refugee children who lost their parents.³² In Kamianets-Podilskyi, thanks to the efforts of the RCCS Board head, Father Jozef Orlovski, the society avoided actual closure. It supported existing institutions—a shelter, a housekeeping school, and a tea room—and also created new ones: a hospital for wounded soldiers and a shelter for children of war victims.³³

In September 1916, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in a letter to the State Duma, noted that Roman Catholic religious institutions had significant success in assisting wounded soldiers and refugees: collecting donations, creating, and maintaining lazarettos and labor houses.³⁴

Catholic priests actively participated in the creation of Polish organizations to assist the Polish population and refugees affected by military actions. They became members of the Boards of regional branches of the largest Polish organizations which operated in Ukrainian lands—the Polish Society for Aid to War Victims (PSAWV) and the Central Civil Committee (CCC). In particular, in Zhytomyr (Bishop Father Ignacy Dubowski, Father Leopold Schumann),³⁵ in Vinnytsia Dean Father Jan Levinski,³⁶ in Nizhyn parish priest Piotr Baranowski, in Bazaliia Father Jozef Pashinski.³⁷

²⁹ ДАЖО. [DAZhO]. Ф. 283, оп. 1, спр. 2, арк. 9.

³⁰ “Распоряжение святейшего Синода.” [Order of the Holy Synod]. *Жизнь Волыни*, 1915, № 228, 3.

³¹ Помощь землякам. [Helping fellow countrymen]. *Жизнь Волыни*, 1914, № 273, 3.

³² ДАЖО. [DAZhO]. Ф. 329, оп. 1, спр. 130, арк. 86.

³³ “Z życia prowicji. Kamieniec.” [From the Life of the Province. Kamieniets]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917 p. № 144, 2.

³⁴ “Pomoc kościoła katolickiego ofiarom wojny.” [Help from the Catholic Church for victims of war]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1916 p. № 257, 2.

³⁵ “Помощь поляков землякам.” [Helping fellow countrymen]. *Жизнь Волыни*, 1916, № 273, 3.

³⁶ “Z Życia prowicji. Winnica”. [From the Life of the Province. Vinnitsa]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 66, 2.

³⁷ “Z kolonii polskich.” [From the Polish colonies]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1915 p. № 130, 2.

Participation of Catholic Clergy in Socio-Political Life

The Polish intelligentsia actively participated in the socio-political life of the Russian Empire. In its appeal to the Poles, the tsarist government promised them territorial unification and autonomy under the tsar's rule. However, no real measures were taken in this direction, as the tsarist authorities feared strengthening the influence of Poles in the western part of the country. This issue was discussed by deputies of the State Duma and the Special Commission. In the context of lifting restrictions on Poles, Polish Duma deputies also raised the issue of granting the Catholic clergy the right to direct connection with the Roman Curia. However, at the Duma meeting in early 1916, Russian deputies did not support either the issue of autonomy or the establishment of relations with the Vatican. They believed that the Roman Curia had never been solely a religious institution but had always pursued political goals, thus ruling out direct relations with the Catholic clergy.³⁸

During the war, while fulfilling its function of affirming faith, the Catholic clergy, along with the intelligentsia, joined various public-political events and actions. The democratic changes following the 1917 revolution in Russia posed the task before the Polish population in Ukraine of defending and affirming national rights and restoring Polish statehood. In March 1917, a congress of Polish organizations was held in Kyiv, where a representative body of Poles in Ukraine—the Polish Executive Committee on Rus' (PECR)—was formed. Polish commissariats subordinate to PECR were created in the three southwestern provinces.³⁹ Clergy representatives were co-opted into PECR.⁴⁰ The Polish clergy actively supported all orders and measures carried out by PECR in Kyiv. Full support for all public, cultural, and educational initiatives of the Committee was assured by the vicar bishop of the Lutsk-Zhytomyr Roman Catholic Diocese, Father Michal Godlewski, who visited Kyiv in May 1917.⁴¹

Great enthusiasm among Poles was sparked by Russia's and the allied states' recognition of the unification of Poland and its independence. With gratitude for this decision, the Polish deputation in Zhytomyr addressed the commissar of the Provisional Government, deputy Borys

³⁸ "Об отмене ограничений." [On the lifting of restrictions]. *Жизнь Волыни*, 1916, № 56, 1.

³⁹ "Z życia prowincji. Winnica." [From the Life of the Province. Vinnitsa]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 66, 2.

⁴⁰ „Z Polskiego Komitetu Wykonawczego”. [From the Polish Executive Committee]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 72, 3.

⁴¹ "Приезд католического епископа." [Arrival of the Catholic Bishop]. *Трудовая Волынь*, 1917, № 44, 4.

Lelyavski. The deputation included the bishop of the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese, Father Ignacy Dubowski.⁴² On this occasion, solemn services were held in Zhytomyr and Uman.⁴³

In May 1917, the Polish community in Ukraine solemnly celebrated Polish Constitution Day. A solemn service was held in Zhytomyr.⁴⁴ In the town of Zviahel in Volyn, the flag of the gymnasium's student youth and the city's standard were consecrated in the church by the local dean, Father Aleksandr Kuchinski.⁴⁵ Since there was no church in the town of Haisyn in Podillia, a solemn mass was held on the veranda of the Polish library, conducted by the parish priest from the neighboring village of Kunia. In his speech, the Polish commissar noted that "the only thread that unites the Polish people is the Catholic religion."⁴⁶

In the towns and villages of the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese, solemn masses were held to commemorate other significant dates for the Polish people. In Kyiv, in July 1917, the memory of the heroes of the 1864 Polish uprising was honored. The service at St. Alexander's Church was conducted by the elderly priest-uprising participant, Canon Stanislaw Pomirski, who had returned after 45 years of exile.⁴⁷ In November 1917, in Zhytomyr, events were held in various districts to mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Tadeusz Kosciuszko. A solemn service in the cathedral with a sermon was conducted by Bishop Ignacy Dubowski.⁴⁸

The Catholic clergy sought to support the Polish population, especially in the war-affected frontline parishes. In the summer of 1917, the Lutsk-Zhytomyr Bishop Ignacy Dubowski visited Lutsk. He consecrated a chapel in the village of Rozhyshe, where the church had been destroyed. Traveling by car, he visited churches in several villages, addressing the congregation with kind words, urging them to "devote their efforts for the good of the fatherland and the church."⁴⁹

In November 1917, at the initiative of Bishop Ignacy Dubowski, a Polish weekly, *Tygodnik Kresowy*, began publication in Zhytomyr. The editorial article highlighted the significance of the

⁴² "Z życia prowicji. Żytomierz." [From the Life of the Province. Zhytomyr]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 81, 2.

⁴³ "Z życia prowicji. Humań." [From the Life of the Province. Human]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 80, 1.

⁴⁴ "Местная хроника." [Local Chronicle]. *Трудовая Волянь*, 1917, № 19, 3.

⁴⁵ "Z życia prowicji. Zviahel." [From the Life of the Province. Zviagel]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 106, 2.

⁴⁶ "Z życia prowicji. Hajsyn." [From the Life of the Province. Zviagel]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 123, 3.

⁴⁷ "Киевские поляки отметили память героев-повстанцев." [Kyiv Poles commemorate rebel heroes]. *Волинская речь*. 1917. № 50, 2.

⁴⁸ "Объявление." [Announcement]. *Трудовая Волянь*, 1917, № 237, 3.

⁴⁹ "Z życia prowicji. Łuck." [From the Life of the Province. Lutsk]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 136, 3.

church, which united all social strata of the Polish population, and called on them to consciously build their path in life.⁵⁰

Educational Activities of the Roman Catholic Clergy

One of the main areas of public activity of the Polish community after the democratic freedoms of 1917 was education. All Polish political forces, public organizations, and clergy participated in the development of Polish schooling in Ukraine.

The first Polish schools were established at churches at the start of World War I. A request to establish a parish school at St. Alexander's parish in Kyiv was approved in June 1915.⁵¹ In February 1916, at a parish assembly of St. Nicholas' Church, a decision was also made to organize a parish school. The school was organized by a group of Polish intellectuals, including Stanislaw Kopernitsky, Joachim Voloshynovsky, and others. Considering the modest resources available to the church, the parish priest, Father Jozef Zmigrodsky, appealed to the parishioners for financial support for the school.⁵²

In 1917, after the conditions were created for the educational activities of all national minorities, with the support of the Ukrainian Central Rada (UCR) and the unification of efforts of various Polish institutions, public organizations, and Catholic clergy, a fairly extensive network of Polish schools was established in Ukraine. In the provinces, most schools were created at churches, with the active participation of the Catholic clergy. Parish schools existed in the town of Bazalia in Volyn,⁵³ Bershad in Podolia,⁵⁴ and Novi Kostyantyniv in Kyiv province.⁵⁵

The bishop of Zhytomyr, Ignacy Dubowski, encouraged the Polish population to provide financial support and establish Polish schools. He donated 500 rubles to the local Polish school, 200 rubles to Polish public schools, 200 rubles to support Polish youth organizations, and 700 rubles to the Charity Society.⁵⁶ A significant educational event in Kyiv was the opening of higher

⁵⁰ "Zamiast prospektu." [Instead of an introduction]. *Tygodnik Kresowy*, 1917, № 1, 1.

⁵¹ "Kronika." [Chronicle]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1915, № 149, 3.

⁵² "Szkoła parafialna przy kościele Sw. Mikołaja w Kijowie." [School at the Church of St. Nicholas in Kiev]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1916, № 232, 3.

⁵³ "Z życia prowicji. Bazalia." [From the Life of the Province. Basalia]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 14, 3.

⁵⁴ "Z życia prowicji. Berszada." [From the Life of the Province. Basalia]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 35, 3.

⁵⁵ "Z życia prowicji. Humań." [From the Life of the Province. Human]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 80, 1.

⁵⁶ "Kronika prowincjonalna. Z Żytomierza." [Provincial Chronicle. From Zhytomyr]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 88, 3.

Polish academic courses in March 1917. On this occasion, a solemn service was held at St. Alexander's Church.⁵⁷

The events of late 1917 and early 1918 aggravated the political situation in Ukraine. The Bolsheviks' seizure of power in Russia in November 1917, the proclamation of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) and its independence at the beginning of 1918, the Bolshevik war against the UPR, and the replacement of the republican government by the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky significantly worsened the situation of the population in Ukraine. During this difficult time, Catholic priests remained in their parishes and continued to fulfill their spiritual duties.

Conclusions

Thus, during World War I and the revolutions of 1917, the Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese, which united the faithful of three provinces of Right-Bank Ukraine, like most of the Polish population in the empire, supported the tsarist government during the war. In the diocese's churches, collections were organized for various groups of the war-affected Polish population in response to the Department of Spiritual Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, appeals from state institutions and public organizations, and orders from the diocesan administrator. Charitable activities—including providing material assistance, establishing shelters, and maintaining hospital beds for the wounded—were carried out by Roman Catholic charitable societies.

Catholic priests actively engaged in socio-political activities. They became members of various Polish organizations providing aid to the affected Polish population and refugees, as well as participants in various events commemorating historical dates and events of the Polish nation. Most of the events began in the church with a solemn service. One of the main directions of public activity of Catholic priests was educational work. In many provincial towns and villages with predominantly Polish communities, parish schools were established through the efforts of the clergy. The Lutsk-Zhytomyr diocese became an active participant in Polish social and public life in Right-Bank Ukraine.

⁵⁷ "Dla dobra narodu—na pożytek kraju." [For the good of the nation—for the benefit of the country]. *Dziennik Kijowski*, 1917, № 77, 1.

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