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**To the History of Orthodoxy in Ugrian Rus'
on the Eve of the WWI (Based on the Materials
of the American Newspaper "Svet")**

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***К истории православия в Угорской Руси накануне
Первой мировой войны
(по материалам американской газеты «Свьтъ»)***

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The "Svet" periodical was a newspaper for the Orthodox Rusins living in Brazil, Canada and the United States; later it became the official mouthpiece of the "Russian Orthodox Brotherhoods in America" (1900) and the Orthodox mutual aid societies in the United States (1901 – 1910). It was published in 1897 – 1914 in Old Forge, Bridgeport, Philadelphia, New York and other cities. During the period under discussion, the chief editor was Archpriest Benedict Turkevich.

The author studied the newspapers published within the period from January through to May 1914. Upon analyzing all the texts, the author found 17 reports, articles, proclamations and other materials, which in a greater or lesser extent related to the history of Orthodoxy in Ugrian Rus'. The editors used a large number of sources for publishing: the letters the newspaper received, the information of the Hungarian "Korrespondenz-Bureau", the articles from various European periodicals such as "Novoye Vremya" (New Times), "Russkoe Slovo" (Russian Word), "Neue Freie Presse", "Deutsch-Ungarische Korrespondenz", "Villag" etc.

The periodical followed the most important facts that were revealed during the hearing of witnesses. In the article titled "The Case of 94 Russ Ugri in the Hungarian Court. The Three Gone Insane", the editors

exposed cruelty and abuse “under the guise of judicial investigation and trial”. Those atrocities led to the fact that “the three accused fell into religious madness right during the trial”.

Dmitry Petrovci, a soldier of the Hungarian 66th Infantry Regiment in Mukachevo gave extremely important testimony at the trial. Prosecution accused him of allegedly saying: “The Russian Tsar will conquer the whole region as far as the White Tisza River, so we all have to convert to Orthodoxy”. Petrovci rejected the charges and said that in prison he had been forced to sign the Magyar protocols, but he did not know what was written in them.

In the article of February 26, 1914, the editors rebuked some periodicals because they “supposedly had not seen this and had not heard that”, referring to the judicial process. The Hungarian Parliament also ignored that serious problem. According to the newspaper, only A. Beskid, a deputy of the Hungarian Parliament, representing Priashevskaya Rus', submitted a request due to which the criminal proceedings against all the accused were suspended.

On March 5, 1914, the editors published the transcripts from a court hearing of the defendants who lived in Iza, the center of the Orthodox movement. Upon analyzing the statements of the accused, the author concluded that these statements had put the court in a very difficult position: the charges became irrelevant. Quoting the correspondent of the Hungarian newspaper “Villag”, the periodical published a conversation with one of the prisoners in the Maramorosh-Sighet prison. A farmer said that the priest Azarias threatened the Orthodox Christians as early as in 1912. At his request on January 4, 1913, a military unit came to Iza. Soldiers broke into the Orthodox Christians' houses, whipped men and did not even spare women and children. A lot of people sought refuge in the woods where frostbites damaged their hands and feet. The reporter, citing the “Novoe Vremya”, published a curious document that the gendarmes beat up the Russ Ugri who had refused to attend the Uniate church; this was done by order of the Uniate priest.

The information in the issue published on March 26, 1914, is very important for a researcher. The issue presented excerpts from the speeches of the prosecutor and the lawyers. The prosecutor laid the blame for converting Rusins to Orthodoxy on Mikhail Pogodin, Adolf Dobriansky, Ivan Naumovich, the brothers Gerovsky and Vladimir Bobrinsky. The arrival of Count V. Bobrinsky in Maramorosh-Sighet had a significant impact on the process. According to “Svet”, the Slavic circles considered Count Bobrinsky's mission as a national Slavic heroic deed in favor of the oppressed Russ Ugri.

On March 12, 1914, the newspaper announced the sentencing. The attitude of the editors towards this event was expressed in the title of the article: The Conviction of the Innocent. The journalist briefly outlined the verdict and paid quite a lot of attention to Father Alexis Kabaliuk. The main prisoner, Father Alexis, a Russian monk from Mount Athos, got four and a half years in prison. He was accused of carrying on propaganda under the guise of converting the Rusin peasantry to the Orthodox faith, but the idea allegedly was to separate them from the nationality of Austria-Hungary and drag them to Russia. On March 19, 1914, the newspaper published the names of everyone who was sentenced to prison.

Thus, the materials of the Rusin newspaper "Svet" of 1914, published in America, demonstrated in sufficient detail the causes, course and results of the proceedings instituted against the Orthodox Christians in Maramorosh-Sighet. The newspaper, using international periodicals, private sources and letters, revealed the policy of the Hungarian government towards the Rusin population.

Although the paper belonged to a Russophile trend and sympathized with the Orthodox movement, the editors were able to publish unbiased information. "Svet" is a valuable source for studying the history of Ugric Rus' (Transcarpathia) on the eve of World War I.

Keywords

Peasants, process, sentence, Orthodox, Rusins, article, Russ Ugri.