

The Arrest and Imprisonment of Bishop Vasyl' Velychkovs'kyi, 1945-1955

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis concerns Blessed Vasył' Velychkovs'kyi's first arrest and imprisonment in the years 1945-1955. Based on the evidence in two volumes of SBU archival documents which were obtained in 2009 from the Kyiv SBU archives, it tells the story of his arrest, the investigation process, interrogation, trial and sentencing.

The thesis provides the reader with a short introduction to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and its clergy in Galicia. It describes how the Soviet government, after it invaded Galicia in 1939, began to persecute the Catholic population, which was unwilling to switch to Russian Orthodoxy. A close examination of the SBU archival documents proves Velychkovs'kyi's innocence and provides evidence of fabricated accusations, forced confessions, the use of physical and psychological abuse. These violations of criminal law and human rights were done in order to compel him to cooperate with the Soviet authorities. Velychkovs'kyi's treatment is an example of what many prisoners who died for their faith suffered. In most cases their life stories will never be told.

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## Introduction

### 1.1 Methodology

This thesis discusses Blessed Vasyl' Velychkovs'kyi's first arrest and his imprisonment in the years 1945-1955. Before the arrest he was a Redemptorist Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest and on 27 June 2001 he was recognized by the Catholic Church as a blessed martyr. The study examines his case in the context of the persecution of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine.

It is based on evidence obtained from the archival holdings of the Defence and Security Services of Ukraine (*Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrainy* -- SBU). In Ukraine this governmental organization has inherited the KGB archives.<sup>1</sup> Two volumes deal with different stages of Velychkovs'kyi's first arrest: the interrogation, investigation, accusation, and sentence. The thesis is the first study to make available this previously unknown documentation from the secret police archives.

This study examines what happened during the arrest and investigation, what the accusations were, how Velychkovs'kyi defended himself and how the case was conducted. The secret police documents demonstrate Velychkovs'kyi's innocence under Soviet law and shows the gross violations of human rights that occurred during his arrest, trial and sentencing. It was found that torture was used as a technique of interrogations. Moreover, forced confessions were interpreted as proof of his guilt.

On 27 September 2001 a shrine and a museum were established in Velychkovs'kyi's honour in Winnipeg, Canada. This has become a pilgrimage site for Greek Catholics and is

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<sup>1</sup> KGB -- Committee for State Security (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*) was the security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 until the state's collapse in 1991.

visited regularly by members of the Ukrainian community and many others. Visitors are interested in acquiring knowledge about Velychkovs'kyi's life especially about his arrest and imprisonment. This topic was selected due to the fact that very little is known about the arrest, not only in Canada but also in Ukraine. This thesis is, in fact, the first comprehensive study of Vasyl' Velychkovs'kyi's first arrest.

The inspiration to write the thesis came from working in the museum, collecting material and documenting Velychkovs'kyi's life. In the course of this study, from 2004 several trips to Ukraine museum's with the museum's director Father John Sianchuk and its coordinator Mary Jane Kalenchuk. These trips provided additional motivation to research, learn and write about the arrest story. I would like to thank them for helping me to gather materials and supporting me in the process of my writing.

## **1.2 Sources**

The two volumes of the first arrest are the primary source materials for this thesis. They were initially stored in the archives of the SBU in the city of Ternopil' under the number of 75156 FP and contain 447 pages. The volumes were obtained from the SBU archives in Kyiv, since upon request they were transferred from Ternopil' to the main SBU archive in Kyiv.

In addition to the two volumes, other archival materials were used, such as Velychkovs'kyi's autobiography, which was written in 1967, his letters of complaint about the arrest, his personal documents, letters, and collected newspaper articles relevant to his life. Interviews conducted from 2003 to 2012 with approximately 100 people who knew Velychkovs'kyi were also used in this study. All of these materials (copies of the archival sources and original tape recordings of the interviews) are now kept the Blessed Vasyl'

Velychkovs'kyi Shrine and Museum Archive, which is located in St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church, 250 Jefferson Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The following archives were visited: Archives of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy in Winnipeg, the Redemptorist Archives in Yorkton, the Central State Historical Archive in Kyiv (*Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Istorychnyi Arkhiv v Kyievi*), the Central National Historical Archive in L'viv and in Ternopil' (*Tsentral'nyi Natsional'nyi Istorychnyi Arkhiv Ukrainy v L'vovi i Ternopoli*), the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) Archives in Kyiv, Ternopil', and L'viv (*Arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrainy v Kyievi, Ternopoli i L'vovi*).

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church – a National Church**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Western Ukraine was under Austro-Hungarian rule, which allowed the development of the Ukrainian language and culture, and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. During that time the Church through educational programs, and the example set by its clergy and institution, became a vehicle for maintaining a vibrant Ukrainian identity in the predominately Polish urban society. After World War I, Western Ukraine found itself in the newly-formed Polish state. The Polish government began to discriminate against the Ukrainian language and culture and took steps to assimilate Ukrainians. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, under the leadership the highly revered Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi, promoted and defended the rights of Ukrainians to express their language and culture. As a result the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church assumed the role of a national church. It provided the country with many Ukrainian political leaders and saw itself as defending the Ukrainian nation and in particular its cultural rights

When World War II began, in accordance with the Hitler-Stalin pact, on 17 September 1939 the Soviet Union invaded Western Ukraine and on 22 September the Red Army entered the capital of Eastern Galicia L'viv. Due to the fact that Western Ukrainians felt tyrannized by Polish rule, the arrival of the Soviets was initially greeted by many as a liberation. However, the goal of the new regime was to Sovietize the territory, to remove opposition to its rule and win over the population. It initially removed the Polish intelligentsia through arrests and deportation, and announced that it would initiate a Ukrainization of education. In the second year, however, it began to arrest the Ukrainian intelligentsia and activists en masse.

The Soviet officials did not immediately liquidate the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. The government decided to take a slow and well-planned approach, since an instantaneous and open attack could have resulted in massive opposition from the entire population. At that time, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Galicia was headed by Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi. Besides a L'viv archeparchy, there were two suffragan eparchies, the Stanislaviv eparchy led by Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn and the Peremyshl' (Przemysl) led by Bishop Iosafat Kotsylovs'kyi.

In the Western Ukrainian territories occupied by the Red Army there were approximately 2,120 Greek Catholic parishes with about 2,030 priests serving over 3.1 million faithful. The L'viv Greek Catholic Theological Academy and the theological seminaries in L'viv, Przemysl, and Stanislaviv had a combined total of 475 students. There were also 29 monasteries with some 140 regular clergy and over 300 monks and 120 convents with over 820 nuns (Bociurkiw 1996, 33). At that time the Greek Catholic Church remained open to the public and priests were allowed to do their pastoral work. However, there was gradual and steady governmental pressure on the Church.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was the major surviving Ukrainian national institution in Galicia. Other Ukrainian religious, national, political, public and cultural organizations were liquidated by the state or absorbed into the Soviet institutional framework. In order to break the clergy's morale, confidence and its will to resist the state's intrusions, the new authorities undermined the Church's material base. One of the first measures against the Church was the confiscation of all Greek Catholic publishing and printing facilities:

“Twenty Greek Catholic newspapers, journals, [...] were shut down. Religious literature was removed from book stores and from public and school libraries and [...] destroyed”

(Doroshenko; quoted in Rudnyts'ka 1958, 238-239).

After that the government nationalized all educational institutions, depriving the Church and monastic orders of their network of private schools, seized the buildings housing the L'viv Greek Catholic Theological Academy and the major and minor seminaries in L'viv, Stanislaviv, and Przemyśl and banned all secular Ukrainian Catholic institutions and organizations. The authorities also seized all capital and commercial property held by Metropolitan Sheptyts'kyi, the church and monastic orders and proceeded to confiscate buildings housing monasteries and convents (Bociurkiw 1966, 35-36). Moreover, the Soviets “discontinued all state payments to the clergy imposing instead huge, discriminatory taxes on them” (Ibid. 1966, 37). In other words, even though the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church remained legal, Soviet rule created hardships for the clergy by confiscating practically everything that belonged to the Church. Moreover, all the Catholic clergy were labelled by the state as “socially unproductive” because they were not viewed as working to benefit the government. They were forced to have formal secular occupations (Ibid. 1996, 37).

Despite all the difficulties that were created for the Catholics, Metropolitan Sheptyts'kyi instructed the clergy and its faithful to obey the authorities and not to interfere in political and secular matters. It was important to remain at peace with the state so that the Church would remain open. At the same time the Metropolitan protested to the authorities against violations of the rights of the Church and its people and condemned the confiscation and suppression of monastic institutions. In March 1940, Sheptyts'kyi wrote in one of his messages to the authorities: “We [...] resolutely protest against the injustice and the heavy blow struck against our Church and our people” (LAV 1940, M. O. 64, 34; quoted in Bociurkiw 1966, 43).

The Metropolitan and the clergy tried to appease the authorities, but the Church and its leaders were also in opposition to the communist ideology and the Soviet state. In one of his letters Metropolitan Sheptyts'kyi wrote: "Communists are atheists, and in their program there is no point about which they are more sincere than ... the struggle against God ... [They practice] lies, deception, violence, terror, oppression of the poor, demoralization of children, debasement of women, destruction of the family, destruction of the peasantry and drive people to extreme poverty" (Metropolyt Sheptyts'kyi 1994, 275-6). Not only the Metropolitan but also most of the Catholic clergy and the population of Galicia share this view of communist supremacy.

Catholic leaders and clergy were considered by the Soviet authorities to be supporters of Ukrainian national aspirations. The authorities assumed that Catholic leaders were organizing anti-Soviet operations and were spreading calumny against the state by using their still legal church status.

The NKVD authorities believed that the Catholic hierarchy and clergy were actively involved with the OUN.<sup>2</sup> However, in reality the leadership of the Catholic Church strongly criticized and opposed this party's totalitarian views, its use of terror and political assassination and its treatment of religion as merely a political tool. The biggest problem that the Catholic Church had with the OUN was the fact that the OUN's leaders viewed the Church as a political party or institution and not as a religious community. Such a distorted meaning of the Church resulted in conflicts between the Catholic clergy and political leaders (Behen 2011; quoted in Zaitsev 2011, 136). The Church and nationalists held different ideals. The OUN held totalitarian principles, and valued the nation "above all," while the Catholic Church opposed totalitarian views and what it viewed as a "pagan" apotheosis of nation.

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<sup>2</sup> OUN -- the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsiia Ukrain's'kykh Natsionalistiv*). It was established in 1929 in Western Ukraine, and contested Polish and Soviet rule in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had been under the jurisdiction of Rome since its founding at the Union of Brest in 1596. In that year the majority of Orthodox bishops in Ukraine and Belarus (then part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) broke relations with the Patriarch of Constantinople, the leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and “recognized the primacy of the Pope in return for Polish promises of equality with the Roman Catholic Church and for papal guarantees that the Uniates would retain their Byzantine-Slavonic rite, the Church-Slavonic liturgical language, Eastern canon law, a married clergy, and administrative autonomy” (Bociurkiw 1996, 1). From that time the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was connected with the outside world, especially with Rome and Poland. The Muscovite state viewed the Union of Brest as the nation’s Polonization. Under Joseph Stalin, the goal of the Soviet regime was to disband the Union of Brest in Galicia and forcibly “reunite” the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church with the government-controlled Russian Orthodox Church.

It was convenient for the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs – the NKVD -- to legalize the Church for a short period of time.<sup>3</sup> That was done in order to spy on the Catholic clergy and to find evidence that the Church operated underground together with various groups of nationalists. The new authorities were able to monitor closely “the activities of the episcopate and clergy, probing for weaknesses in the Church’s internal defences and, in particular, its suspected links with the nationalist underground and anti-Soviet groups abroad. Constant secret police surveillance was instituted” (Biliak 1958, 415-416). The candidate that they found was a well know priest in L’viv, a professor of theology and philosophy Havryil Kostel’nyk. He was pressured to organize a national Greek Catholic Church that would be separate from Rome and at the same time would divide the faithful. However, despite the arrest of his youngest son in

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<sup>3</sup> The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (*Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*) or the NKVD, was a law enforcement agency of the Soviet Union. During the years of Joseph Stalin, it was associated with the Soviet secret police and was known for its political repression.

September 1940, he refused to collaborate with the NKVD. The state's plan to annihilate the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church by the hands of its clergy was not successful.

The new authorities continued collecting incriminating evidence against the Metropolitan, bishops, priests and lay people. Moreover, "through intimidating interviews, blackmail, arrests, physical and psychological terror, the police attempted to force clergy and laymen who had access to the bishops to become informers" (Bociurkiw 1996, 55). By the summer of 1941 "in L'viv alone eleven or twelve priests had been murdered or were missing; thirty-three had been imprisoned and/or deported to the east [...] and some 200,000 lay persons had been deported" (Ibid. 1996, 56). Arrests and repression spread fear among the Catholic clergy and the whole Catholic population. Bishop Khomyshyn wrote in August 1941: "I am still suffocating with terror and despair... In my eparchy, eight priests were imprisoned and deported; three were killed. The same fate would have befallen many other priests [...] I and my auxiliary bishop awaited imprisonment and deportation every night" (Khomyshyn's letter to Rotta; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996, 56).<sup>4</sup> At this point Sheptyts'kyi stated that "under the Bolsheviks all of us [Catholics] are as if sentenced to death; they [the Bolsheviks] do not conceal their desire to ruin and suppress Christianity, [to erase] its last traces" (Sheptyts'kyi's letter to Rotta, August 30, 1941; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996, 57).<sup>5</sup>

The Soviet regime intensified and continued to undermine the Church's social and cultural base. Communist activists spread anti-religious propaganda at lectures and discussions in schools through youth organizations and the mass media. The goal of the communists was to "train local antireligious cadres," who later could "retrain" the Catholic population as well as convert Uniates to Orthodoxy. However, the twenty-two months of Bolshevik rule evoked so

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<sup>4</sup> *Actes et documents* 424

<sup>5</sup> *Actes et documents*, 3, pt. 1, doc. 297, p.437

much hatred among the population that the Orthodox mission in Galicia did not thrive. After the outbreak of the German-Soviet War on 22 June 1941, the decimated Russian Orthodox Church still remained too weak to undertake a successful conversion campaign in Galicia (Bociurkiw 1996, 61). In short, during the Soviet rule of 1939-41 in Western Ukraine, the NKVD authorities failed to destroy the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and until the end of 1944 the repression of the Catholic clergy and population was not able to eliminate Church practices.

During the three years of German occupation “the Church had openly sided with the enemies of the Soviet system and supported the irredentist aspirations, if not all the methods, of the [...] Ukrainian nationalist movement” (Ibid. 1996, 64). In addition, in 1943 the Greek Catholic Church hierarchy had provided chaplains to “the volunteer Waffen SS division, Galizien, to fight against the Soviet armies” (Pan’kivs’kyi 1965, 224). During the German occupation, Metropolitan Sheptyts’kyi “had served as the patron and honorary president of an unofficial Ukrainian National Council and acted as the final arbiter and moral compass in Ukrainian politics” (Ibid. 1965, 29). Not only the Metropolitan but most of his clergy had intertwined religious and political roles. This was one reason why the Church was more vulnerable to Soviet attacks, especially when the Soviets returned to L’viv and the rest of Western Ukraine in 1944.

After the death of Andrei Sheptyts’kyi on 1 November 1944, Archbishop Iosyf Slipyj took over as Metropolitan. He was pressured by the Soviet government to help the regime to end the resistance and “to demonstrate his loyalty to the Church and to the regime by collaborating in its propaganda and anti-partisan campaigns” (Bociurkiw 1966, 86).

In mid-December 1944 Slipyj and his delegation went to Moscow to “discuss ‘normalization’ of the Church’s status in the USSR” (Ibid. 1966, 88). During the second meeting

of the delegation with Ivan Polianskii, who was the head of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (CARC) including the Greek Catholics, the latter said: “in the eyes of the Soviet law all religions are equal and all religious organizations [must] act within the framework of the legislation on cults existing in the country. Therefore, no exceptions will be made for the Greek Catholic Church and its requests – insofar as they are not contrary to law – will be satisfied” (Odintsov 1990; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996, 94). Moreover, the question of whether or not “the Uniate Church will be granted a permission to freely celebrate religious services within the USSR” received a positive response from Polians’kyi (Odintsov 1990; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996, 94). It was made clear to the delegation that the future state of the Church would depend on “its position on the Soviet struggle against the UPA; [...] the Church was requested to help persuade the Ukrainian Nationalists to surrender and lay down their arms in return for the government’s amnesty” (Bociurkiw 1996, 90).<sup>6</sup>

The real attack on the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the decision to proceed with the reunion of the Church with the Moscow patriarchate commenced in the spring of 1945. Stalin and Molotov ordered Georgii Karpov, who was appointed as the head of the NKVD’s secret department on religious affairs, to create so-called “instructions” dealing with an attack on the Catholic Church. On 14 March 1945, Stalin received from Karpov a ten-page document titled “Instruction No. 58.” Portions of that document pertained to the Greek Catholic Church in the USSR. It contained a plan and instructions that “aimed to liquidate the influence exerted by the totally Catholicized Uniate clergy and the transfer of believers to Orthodoxy” (Bilas 1977, 317).

The NKVD police continued to collect politically compromising evidence against the leaders and clergy of the Church. They were looking for something that could be associated with

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<sup>6</sup> UPA -- The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukrains’ka Povstans’ka Armia*) was a large and well organized Ukrainian nationalist military, whose goal was to establish an independent national state on Ukrainian ethnic territory.

betrayal, fascism and Ukrainian nationalism. Polians'kyi justified the Soviet attack on the Church in the following words: "The Greek Catholic Church [...] adopted a completely intolerable position in political terms and took the path of struggle against the Soviet authorities, actively supporting the anti-Soviet nationalist movement. In this connection measures have currently been taken aimed at the liquidation of influence by the totally Catholicized Uniate clergy and the transfer of believers to Orthodoxy" (Ibid. 1997, 321). In order to become loyal and worthy citizens, the Catholic clergy and congregations had to switch to the Russian Orthodox Church which was controlled by the government. That, for many, became the only path to salvation in both spiritual and political terms.

On 11 April 1945, members of the Catholic hierarchy were arrested including Metropolitan Slipyj, Bishops Charnets'kyi, Khomyshyn, Budka and Liatashevs'kyi. Many priests, deacons, seminarians and lay people were thrown into jail and the theological academy and seminaries were closed. The liquidation of Greek Catholic Church was conducted forcefully at this time.

After the arrest of the episcopate, the NKVD proceeded with the plan that had been provided by Karpov earlier that spring. One of the elements mentioned in the document "Instruction No 58" was to "organize within the Uniate Church an Initiative Group that should make a declaration about breaking with the Vatican and should call upon the Uniate clergy to convert to Orthodoxy" (Karpov's letter to Khrushchev, April 20, 1945; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996, 105).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, on 28 March 1945 an Initiative Group was organized with headquarters in Lviv. Havryil Kostel'nyk was chosen as the administrator of the L'viv archeparchy, Mykhailo Mel'nyk for Drohobych and Antonii Pel'vets'kyi for Stanislaviv. The secret agents and informers of the NKVD worked intensively to persuade members of the Greek Catholic clergy to

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<sup>7</sup> The original four-page letter is preserved in the TsDAHOU, *fond 1, opys 23, sprava 1638, fols. 97-100*

join the Initiative Group. The Catholic clergy was informed that the “accumulated charges of their past ‘anti-Soviet’ activities had been listed, leaving them with no doubt that unless they joined Kostel’nyk’s group, the charges could suffice to have them sentenced to lengthy terms in forced-labour camps and their families deported to Siberia” (Voronin’s report to Gruchetkii; quoted in *Ibid.* 1996, 130).<sup>8</sup> The Initiative Group had orders to conduct an inventory of parishes and monasteries and submit a list of priests and lay people who still refused to join the group and unite with the Russian Orthodox Church. The Soviet authorities were not prepared to tolerate the Catholic Church and those who refused to formally join the group were repressed if caught.

The Catholic clergy and population protested against the Initiative Group because according to Stalin’s Constitution, the freedom of religion and conscience was guaranteed and all people had a right to practice their faith as they had done for centuries (Bociurkiw 1996, 132). One of the documents in the SBU archives states that the freedom of religion guaranteed in the Constitution is being adhered to by the government and that the Catholic Church was not being liquidated and that only politics has been eliminated from the Church (Serdiuk 2006, 37).

A small number of Catholic clergy joined the Initiative Group voluntary but many others were forced to do so. According to the letter from Rev. Kostel’nyk to Patriarch Aleksii of Moscow on 3 October, 1945 “eight hundred priests had joined the Initiative Group; [...] fewer than fifty priests had joined the group out of conviction; the remainder had done so because ‘there was no other way out.’ Were it not for state pressure, under present circumstances even fifty priests could not have been found [who were] willing to demolish the Greek Catholic Church in order to transform it into an Orthodox one” (Bilas 1997; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996, 144). The NKVD threatened priests at gunpoint and through torture physically forced them to become a part of the Initiative Group. The Catholic clergy and its congregation in Western

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<sup>8</sup> DATO, *fond* R-3239, *opys* 2s, *sprava* 2, *fols.* 11, 19-20

Ukraine were in this way made to participate in the “reunion” campaign organized by Soviet military and NKVD units. By 1 January 1946, the Russian Orthodox Church was joined by 270 priests out of 328 from Drohobych oblast’, 230 out of 357 from L’viv oblast’, 188 out of 270 from Ternopil’ oblast’. In Western Ukraine as a whole 859 priests out of 1294 joined the Initiative Group (Yarots’kyi 2001, 460).

The Soviet government and the Initiative Group started to plan and prepare for the official liquidation of the Church. The next step toward the abolition of the Union of Brest and reunion with the Russian Orthodox Church was to organize a Greek Catholic Sobor, a formal council of bishops, church officials and lay delegates who had to represent the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. The council had to decide and vote upon the liquidation of the Church and its reunion with Orthodoxy. In order for the Sobor to be canonical, participation of Greek Catholic bishops was required. Because most of the Catholic bishops had been arrested and others refused to be part of such a Sobor, two new bishops were consecrated within the Initiative Group. The delegation of fifteen leaders of the Initiative group, including Kostel’nyk, came to Kyiv and on 22 February “the entire delegation carried out the ‘reunion’ ritual at the Kyivan Caves Lavra” (Bociurkiw 1997, 156). On 24 and 25 February 1946, Pel’vets’kyi became the new bishop of Stanislaviv and Mel’nyk took over the responsibilities of the Drohobych eparchy. However, they were consecrated not as Greek Catholic but as Russian Orthodox bishops.

The Sobor took place in L’viv in the Cathedral of St. George on 7-10 March 1946. Invitations were sent out to “227 clerical delegates and 22 lay guests” (Serdiuk 2006, 47). In order to avoid any possible problems, the Initiative Group and NKVD police collected information on every participant and chose only those who they thought had a positive attitude towards the reunion with Orthodoxy. Moreover, NKVD agents were responsible for preparing

the texts of the speeches during the Sobor for “thirty-two priests and 10 laymen” (Ibid. 2006, 48). The compulsory topics for the speeches were appeals to break away from the Vatican and join with the Orthodox Church and they laid emphasis on the fact that only the Soviet government could unite the Ukrainian people into one state (Ibid. 2006, 47). Delegates were kept isolated during the Sobor and were each under the supervision of a NKVD agent.

During the Sobor, Kostel’nyk presented to the priests who were delegates a draft resolution about the annulment of the Union of Brest and reunion with the Orthodox Church. The resolution was openly voted upon without a discussion and “by a spontaneous show of hands the ‘Sobor’ unanimously accepted these historical decisions” (Diiannia Soboru 1946, 16). The Sobor decided “to reject the decisions of the Brest Sobor of 1596, to liquidate the union, to break away from the Vatican and to return to our paternal, holy Orthodox faith and the Rus’ [Rus’ka] Orthodox Church” (Ibid. 1946, 127-80). The first day of the Sobor ended completed peacefully at 4:30 p.m. without arguments or oppositions from the delegates. Bociurkiw writes: “Six hours after it had begun, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had officially been abolished” (Bociurkiw 1996, 171).

Even though the Moscow patriarchate and Soviet government considered the Greek Catholic Sobor “fully canonical” and in their eyes the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had “ceased to exist,” the documents and chronicles of the Initiative Group that were published at the end of 1946 serve as evidence “for condemning the ‘Sobor’ and the entire ‘reunion’ operation as a gross violation of Catholic and Orthodox canon law and a manifest abuse of Soviet constitutional and statutory norms governing the status of religious communities in the USSR” (Bociurkiw 1996, 179).

First of all, the Sobor's canonical illegitimacy was evident due to the fact that it was secretly arranged and directed by bishops of another church -- not by the Greek Catholic hierarchy, but by the leaders of the Initiative Group who gained their authority from the government and were not freely appointed by Catholic bishops. Such an intervention was also prohibited by Soviet law. Moreover, before the Sobor took place, the leaders secretly joined Russian Orthodoxy. Also, these leaders appointed all the delegates who were then required to join the Initiative Group prior to the Sobor. Therefore, no Greek Catholic bishops participated in the Sobor. Instead, "it was attended and directed by secret Orthodox bishops and priests, who masqueraded as Greek Catholic priests until after the gathering 'voted' to break away from Rome and join the Moscow patriarchate" (Bociurkiw 1996, 181). This demonstrates the gathering's uncanonical nature. Bociurkiw called it a "conference of the Initiative Group" (Ibid. 1996, 165). According to him, it lacked the authority to decide "on the question of the Church's union with Rome or its 'reunion' with the Russian Orthodox Church" (Ibid. 1996, 182).

The organization and the process of the Sobor also violated Soviet constitutional and statutory norms concerning the relationship between the state and religious associations. Its government had no legal basis for recognizing the uncanonical Initiative Group as the "sole provisional church-administrative organ," or allowing it to transfer the Greek Catholic Church to the jurisdiction of a government agency [...], or for ordering the Initiative Group to report to the authorities all those clerics who had refused to recognize the group's jurisdiction (Diiannia Soboru 1946, 19-20). The Soviet regime accused the entire Greek Catholic Church of being a criminal, anti-Soviet organization and forced all its clergy and congregations to join Russian Orthodoxy, an act that was anti-constitutional and discriminatory. Not until 2 December 1980,

during the Sobor of bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Rome was the L'viv Sobor declared uncanonical and holding no legal status (Yarots'kyi 2001, 467).

## Biography

Vasyl' Velychkovs'kyi was born on 1 June 1903 in Stanislaviv (now Ivano-Frankivs'k) in Galicia (Halychyna), which was at the time under Austrian rule. His father, Volodymyr Velychkovs'kyi was a “zealous and holy priest” in the village of Shuparka (now Ternopil' region) (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 17). Velychkovs'kyi's mother, Anna was also descended from the priestly family of Teodorovych. Thus, Vasyl' was raised in a family in which the parents, children and household “assisted at the Divine Liturgy and received Holy Communion” on a daily basis (Ibid. 2002, 6). The spirit of prayer and devotion to the Church permeated the home and was passed on to Vasyl'.

When Vasyl' was eight years old he entered primary school in the village of Probizhnia, where his grandfather lived. After completing primary school in 1913, at the request of his parents, his grandfather brought him to the Institute of St. Josaphat in Buchach in Western Ukraine. However, World War I interrupted his studies. In 1918 at the age of fifteen he joined the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (*Sichovi Stril'tsi*), a military unit formed from former soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army which fought for Ukraine's independence. The struggle for independence was not successful: postwar treaties assigned Galicia and Volhynia to the newly created Polish state, while Eastern Ukraine fell under the Soviet rule.

In 1920 Vasyl' returned home, completed gymnasium (high school) and entered the Major Seminary in L'viv. He described seminary life as a return “to normal spiritual life – weekly confession, daily holy communion, meditation, chapel visits” (Ibid. 2002, 16). He felt that he was in the right place, a place in which divine love had been revealed to him and had set its roots deep into his being. Vasyl' described it as a love “for the best and the highest, for God and the salvation of souls” (Ibid. 2002, 17).

Vasyl' was ordained a deacon by Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi, the head of the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church in Galicia. At this time, he made a determined decision as he said, "to accept priesthood in the celibate state" (Ibid. 2002, 7). Accordingly in 1924 upon the advice from his aunt, Monica Polians'ka, a superior of Basilian Sisters, he entered the Redemptorist monastery in Holosko, near L'viv. Vasyl' refers to this event as to something "not earthly, not human, but heavenly and divine – the grace of a monastic vocation" (Ibid. 2002, 21). That year on 1 August he started his novitiate.

After completing his novitiate he worked for two years as a teacher in the so-called Juvenate, the gymnasium of the Redemptorist Fathers in Zbois'k, near L'viv. He taught different subjects, such as religion, Ukrainian language, the literature and history of Ukraine, world history and geography. In these years Vasyl' also joined the other fathers in missions and visited parishes in the villages and towns of Galicia.

On 9 October 1925 at the age of twenty-two he was ordained to the priesthood in the small monastery church in Zbois'k by Bishop Joseph Botsian, the Bishop of Luts'k. He celebrated his first Divine Liturgy in the village of Shuparka, where his father was a priest. In 1926 Fr. Vasyl' was sent for six months to Belgium by his provincial superior Fr. Joseph Schrijvers to visit Redemptorist monasteries and learn French. However, as soon as his gift as a preacher was recognized, from the summer of 1926 he was assigned to missions in Stanislaviv. Hundreds of people came to hear him preach. A witness, Liuda Levyts'ka, during her interview in 2012 told the following story: "Very often we liked to come to the church of the Redemptorist fathers because they always had nice sermons [...]. In fact Fr. Vasyl' Velychkovs'kyi always preached a great sermon; each sermon came from his heart. He was able to preach in a way that everyone was touched; everyone listened as though mesmerized by his words to the point that

people cried and he himself shed tears” (BVV, f.2, III, A, tape 1). Similar testimonies provide evidence that he was able to bring not only families, but whole villages and towns closer to the church.

Fr. Vasyl’ spent almost two years in the monastery in Stanislaviv. Near the end of 1927 he was assigned to the Volhynia region as a missionary. There he was based in Kovel’ among people who had moved from Galicia and among Orthodox faithful who wished to join the Greek Catholic Church. His missionary work in Volhynia was focused on converting the population to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Redemptorist priests and Fr. Vasyl’ regularly went to neighbouring villages and towns where the many settlers from Galicia had formed colonies. His work progressed so rapidly that in 1930 the large Redemptorist church of St. George was built in Kovel’. Soon afterwards a “large, multi-level monastery, with a large hall for gatherings of the faithful” was also constructed (Velychkovs’kyi 2002, 33). Fr. Vasyl’ was sensitive to the customs of the Eastern Orthodox and soon his parish grew to a thousand people (Ibid. 2002, 34).

Even though he worked to convert the Ukrainian Orthodox faithful and clergy to Catholicism, his relations with them were peaceful. However, he managed to acquire some enemies too. The reunion of the Orthodox in Volhynia with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was opposed primarily by Polish Catholics and the Polish government (Ibid. 2002, 35). The Polish government was not well disposed to the missionary success of Fr. Vasyl’ because his winning of Orthodox parishes to his Church hindered the Polonization of Ukrainian people in Volhynia. Therefore, the Polish police placed restrictions on his movements. It had quarantined Volhynia from Galicia. In the thirties it tried to prevent the flow of Ukrainian literature to the region, closed down branches of the Prosvita reading society and Ukrainian cooperatives, and

began settling Poles there. Eventually in 1935, Velychkovs'kyi's superiors deemed it prudent to recall him from Volhynia (Ibid. 2002, 35).

As a result, from 1935 until 1941 he found himself occupied again with missionary work in Stanislaviv. He went from village to village conducting two-week-long Redemptorist missions that usually ended with processions through the village. Hundreds, even thousands of faithful joined these. According to the Marian Calendar-Almanac that was compiled by Velychkovs'kyi, the Redemptorist fathers, including Fr. Vasyl' himself, were able to organize around 110 missions in the Stanislaviv archeparchy in the years 1935-38 (Velychkovs'kyi 1938, 88-94).

In 1938 Fr. Vasyl' was appointed as the superior of the monastery in Stanislaviv. At that time the planning of a large church dedicated to the Mother of God of Perpetual Help had begun. Over 120,000 zloty had been raised and almost all the materials had been bought (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 36). However, the outbreak of World War II prevented the building of the church.

The war began in September 1939 and Stanislaviv was occupied in that month by the Soviets who tried to force the Redemptorists out of their monastery and to transfer this property to the state (Ibid. 2002, 37). However, due to protests by the congregations, the priests continued to control the monastery. Despite the fact that the city at that time was occupied by the Soviet authorities, Fr. Vasyl' organized a celebration for the Feast Day of the Mother of God of Perpetual Help. He understood the danger of conducting such an event, but because it was an annual Feast Day, a tradition of the church, and because he felt that church customs and traditions should continue, he "assured the people that the festival [would] take place normally, as always" (Ibid. 2002, 37). Close to twenty thousand people joined the celebration and took part in the procession. The parade took up the full width of the street. Oncoming military vehicles had

to turn off. People lined both sides of the streets to view the parade. Fr. Vasyl' wore his *epitrakhil* (stole) and kept order. The priests carried the icon of the Mother of God of Perpetual Help, people carried many banners adorned with blue-and-yellow ribbons, and many boys who served as monitors wore blue-and-yellow arm bands (Ibid. 2002, 37). The celebration was successful and people lingered in the streets long afterward. Fr. Vasyl' was pleased with the event; he considered that it had been "well worth taking the responsibility upon [himself] and risking his life" (Ibid. 2002, 39).

A few days later he received a summons to appear in the NKVD office. Subsequently he received three similar letters, but burned them and did not show up at the required place. Eventually, an NKVD officer appeared at his door. Velychkovs'kyi was taken to the district bureau of the NKVD and accused of organizing an anti-Soviet demonstration at which yellow-an-blue, the colours of the pre-Soviet Ukrainian national flag (the republic of 1917-20), had been shown. Moreover, he was also accused of preaching against Soviet authorities. To be arrested by the NKVD in those days often meant never to return. However, after being interrogated and threatened he was released. The incident did not frighten him; he continued his work and did not change the way he celebrated liturgies or conducted missions.

The German-Soviet war broke out in June 1941 and within weeks Western Ukraine found itself under German occupation. In 1942 Metropolitan Sheptyts'kyi assigned Fr. Vasyl' to work in Kamianets' Podil's'kyi. The town needed a Greek Catholic priest to consecrate churches, hear confession, conduct baptisms and other services. However, a few days after arriving he was forced to leave. Fr. Vasyl' wrote in his autobiography that he was threatened by the German army which told him to depart within twenty-four hours, otherwise he could "expect the severest

of punishments: the firing squad” (Ibid. 2002, 48). As a result, he left Kamianets’ Podil’s’kyi for L’viv.

The German advance was turned back in 1943 and the Soviet troops began to approach L’viv. At that time, in the Redemptorist monastery in Ternopil’ there was no one to take care of the church and its parishioners. Therefore, in 1944 even though the Soviet Front was already on the outskirts of the city of Ternopil’, Fr. Vasyl’ volunteered to go there. He was appointed superior of the monastery. According to his autobiography when he arrived in Ternopil’ the whole city was shattered; there were Soviet tanks and corpses lying everywhere, and the threat of hunger was pervasive. In the middle of the street he saw a large, dead horse and “all around it [were] people with knives, [preparing] to cut off pieces of fresh horse meat, to boil it for food” (Velychkovs’kyi, 2002, 55). Many managed to escape but the elderly, the sick, the orphans were still in the city, frightened and left to observe the terrifying chaos. Fr. Vasyl’ conducted his pastoral work in these conditions, courageously visiting neighbouring towns and villages and trying to support people and to give them hope.

On 7 August 1945 when he was returning home from a mission, the NKVD surrounded the whole monastery and arrested him. During the interrogations he was offered freedom if he would leave the Catholic Church and subscribe to Orthodoxy. However, he quickly responded: “No. Never! Under any circumstances” (Ibid. 2002, 57). In Kyiv he was tortured in an NKVD prison. Accused of anti-Soviet propaganda, on 26 June 1946 he was sentenced to death by firing squad. For around two month he was kept on death row. There, he continued his pastoral work, teaching the catechism, hearing confessions, and preparing prisoners for their coming death. His sentence was changed to ten years in Soviet labour camps in Vorkuta, an infamous camp above the Arctic Circle.

For ten years he worked in labour camps, mostly in the coal mines, living in a harsh environment and miserable conditions. However, he remained enthusiastic and faithful to his convictions. He managed to organize his own “parish” in the barracks. People constantly came to have their confessions heard, to receive Holy Communion, to celebrate mass and religious holidays. In this way he spent ten years doing priestly work far from home.

On 9 June 1955 Fr. Vasyl’ was released and returned to L’viv where he settled in the centre of the city living in a small one bedroom apartment together with the owner, an elderly Polish woman, Anna Obach, and a Redemptorist brother Ireneus (Oleksa). Even though he had been released, the Ukrainian Catholic Church was banned. It had been liquidated and declared outside the law. He therefore had to fulfill his spiritual duties in secrecy (Ibid. 2002, 75). In this way he began working in the underground. His one bedroom apartment became a Catholic Church. People gathered there for confessions, prayers, to hear masses and receive Holy Communion. The faithful brought their children to be baptized and young couples received the sacrament of marriage in this secret church. Velychkovs’kyi also conducted theological studies with young people. In this manner he embraced everyone who wanted to remain faithful to the church.

In 1959 Rome appointed Fr. Vasyl’ as a bishop of the underground church. However, there were no bishops in Ukraine who could ordain him. In 1963 Metropolitan Iosyf Slipyj was released from prison to attend the Second Council in Rome. Prior to his departure, he wrote a letter saying: “I ask father Vasyl’ Velychkovs’kyi to come immediately [to Moscow]. I need his help. Tell him not to take anything with him so that he can take my unnecessary baggage” (BVV, f.2, III, A, doc. 3). On 4 February 1963 in a hotel room, Metropolitan Iosyf secretly ordained Velychkovs’kyi to the episcopacy. Even though this was a historical event for the Ukrainian

Catholic Church, there was no mass or any kind of service. The ordination remained a secret for a long time. The only memento from this event was a simple wooden walking stick given to Velychkovs'kyi by Metropolitan Slipyj. This walking stick substituted for the episcopal staff. Using this stick Metropolitan Slipyj passed on to father Vasyl' the authority of a Catholic bishop. At that time Fr. Vasyl' was the only Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishop in Ukraine who was not in prison and who could fulfill episcopal duties in secrecy.

Bishop Velychkovs'kyi understood how dangerous it was to accept the episcopal status. The NKVD tried to arrest all bishops because the latter had the right to ordain new priests, appoint nuns to monasteries and lead the church. Therefore, Velychkovs'kyi knew that he would be watched closely, interrogated and possibly arrested again. However, he took the responsibility on himself and sacrificed himself for his church and people. During the interview in 2005 Bishop Iulian Voronovs'kyi described Velychkovs'kyi as the "father of the underground church" and as an energetic, enthusiastic, and courageous bishop, who would do anything to keep the underground Catholic Church alive (BVV, f.2, III, C, tape 12). People called Velychkovs'kyi *dziadzio* (uncle) so as not to reveal his episcopal status and also because he was genuinely loved by people.

As soon as Bishop Vasyl' returned to L'viv, his small apartment became an episcopal cathedral of the underground Catholic Church. He not only worked at home but also continued to conduct missionary work and visit the homes of the faithful, often travelling to Ternopil' and the outskirts of the Ternopil' and L'viv regions.

The Catholic churches and monasteries had been confiscated and were used by the state as storage centres, warehouses or restaurants. Nuns and priests did not have a place to live and worship. Bishop Vasyl' began to buy houses for them and created so-called underground

monasteries. He placed a couple of sisters in each house, in this way enabling them to continue their monastic life. In 2004 Sister Seraphyma Salo said: “those monasteries really had strict monastic rules. We had a community life in which the rules, roles and services were strictly maintained” (BVV, f.2, III, B, tape 1). On 3 May 1967 according to the statistics that Bishop Vasyl’ sent to Rome concerning the Redemptorist Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in Ukraine, there were six underground monasteries for priests: three in L’viv and three in Zymna Voda near L’viv (BVV, f.1, I, A, doc. 21). He proudly announced that “it seemed as though [...] the Ukrainian territory of C.Ss.R. [Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer] would vanish but it survived the crises of its terrible illness, its trial and now with God’s care and with the perpetual help of Our Virgin Mother Mary it has become healthy, full of life and it is growing! [...] A good tree produces good fruit” (Ibid. doc. 21). Bishop Vasyl’ worked hard to re-establish his congregation. In 1967 “the Ukrainian territory of C.Ss.R. had 54 members: 34 priests, 13 brothers and 7 novices (4 priests, 1 deacon, 2 clerks)” (Ibid. doc. 21).

He not only ordained and brought new priests to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, but also worked closely with the Congregations of Saint Basil, the Studites and others. According to statistics from 1967 that Velychkovs’kyi managed to send to Rome, in Galicia and Transcarpathia there were around “150 eparchial priests, around 100 hieromonks and brothers of the Basilian Congregation, 62 Studites, [...] in 14 underground monasteries; there were around 240 Basilian Sisters and almost the same number of Sisters of Mercy and also a couple of smaller active female congregations. [...] 50 priests had returned from Orthodoxy, and 40 had received ordination in the underground” (Iarots’kyi 2001, 488). Bishop Vasyl’ succeeded in inspiring and bringing into the underground Catholic Church a new generation of young priests and nuns. During the interview in 2005 Nadia Kaspryshyn stated that Velychkovs’kyi

once said: “I am blessing the grounds of the whole Soviet Union for everyone who has strengths and is not afraid to go and preach! Go ahead and show to everyone that we exist, that we are indestructible, that we are alive, [...] that our underground church is living” (BVV, f.2, III, C, tape 15).

On 2 July 1964 Bishop Vasyl’ secretly ordained a new bishop, Volodymyr Sterniuk. In 1991 Sterniuk would bring the Ukrainian Catholic Church out of the underground. Bishop Iulian Voronovs’kyi in an interview conducted in 2005 stated that: “there were two colossal heroes, the first one [Velychkovs’kyi] was the one who started the underground church and the second [Sterniuk] was the one who carried the Church on his shoulders until the end of its persecution” (BVV, Ff.2, III, C, tape 12). The ordination was an act of foresight. Bishop Vasyl’ found a replacement for himself and, as Fr. Sapruha said, “provided a continuation of life for the underground church,” by giving it “a second breath and hope for the future” (BVV, f.2, III, C, tape 6A). The NKVD police tried their hardest to destroy the Church, but “they could not foresee that there would be such a hero as Velychkovs’kyi [...] that he would unite with Volodymyr who was a fearless bishop too” (Ibid. tape 6A). Bishop Vasyl’ found a replacement because he feared that he might be arrested again and the church would be left without a leader.

Even though Velychkovs’kyi was closely watched by the NKVD, his apartment in L’viv searched and he was often required to show up at the police’s offices for interrogations, he remained active. During her interview in 2004, Sister Anna Vynnyts’ka, a witness of the Church’s persecution, spoke of his courage. She said that “once he arranged recollections (a three day preaching session for faith renewal) at the Sister’s underground monastery in Zymna Voda for eight o’clock in the evening. Everyone was waiting for him. However, the sisters knew that in the morning of that same day he had been called to the police office for an interrogation.

*Dziadzio* [Bishop Vasyl'] went to the interrogation, came home, took his religious books and went to the sisters to give recollections" (BVV, f.2, III, B, tape 1). He was known as a fearless and at the same time a loving pastor, who was not afraid of being questioned by the NKVD, or of being restricted from performing his pastoral duties. He went to the interrogations and listened to the negative comments that the NKVD police made about Catholicism, which were said to try and convert him to Orthodoxy. Then, as soon as he left the building, he continued his work for the Church. Sister Mykolaia remembered Bishop Vasyl' saying: "this is why I am a priest, to protect the Church, my people and not be scared of being arrested. I came back from prison once and I know that I will go again" (BVV, f.2, III, B, tape 10). He said: "they will never leave me in peace, they will come to take my body [...] but not my soul" (BVV, f.2, III, B, tape 8).

On 27 January 1969 Bishop Vasyl' was again arrested. Sister Muza Solomon recalls being present at the arrest:

I came to visit a nun who worked for him. A strange man opened the door for me [...] It was an NKVD house search. [...] I had a letter from a nun asking for a priest to come and baptize some children and perform a wedding. The NKVD officer took the letter into his hands and asked: 'What is this?' I said that it was from my children. He threw it back into my bag. Then, I realized what the letter contained and I almost fainted. [...] I stood there frozen until they finished their house search. They handcuffed my *dziadzynchyk* [dear uncle] and began to take him away. As he passed by, he looked lovingly at me and with his hands tied behind his back, he blessed me. That was the last time I saw him (BVV, f.2, III, B, tape 3).

The NKVD also searched his apartment, where they found hundreds of holy cards, rosaries, crosses, religious books, liturgical items, and his episcopal vestments. They confiscated

all these items, which have been used as evidence of his anti-government work and anti-Soviet activity. One of the main reasons for his arrest was the manuscript of a book that he had written, which was entitled “The History of the Miraculous Icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help.” It was identified as an example of anti-Soviet propaganda. For all these “crimes” Bishop Vasyl’ received a sentence of three years imprisonment in a severe concentration camp in Komunars’k, which was located in Eastern Ukraine and at that time was used as a psychiatric hospital. Here he had undergone physical and mental torture. Drugs were administered to cause heart disease and destroy his nervous system; he was also tortured with electricity. However, the imprisonment did not break his resolve, though it destroyed him physically.

In 1972 he was released from prison and immediately exiled from Ukraine. He was not allowed to return to L’viv or see his family for the last time. Sister Iuliia Tverdohlib was able to see him before his departure. In 2005, she recalled this event as very emotional: “as I looked at him, I did not see a human being, I saw a skeleton, it was heart-breaking to see him in such a bad shape” (BVV, f.2, III, C, tape 21). Velychkovs’kyi was given a passport that expired in one year (issued on 19 January 1972), placed on the plane to Yugoslavia where his sister Vira Nikolich lived at the time. There was no visa in his passport, which meant that he was not able to return. Moreover, in his passport there was a line indicating that he was leaving to take up permanent residency overseas. Bishop Vasyl’ went to see his sister and then at the end of February 1972 came to Rome, where he visited Pope Paul VI and Metropolitan Iosyf Slipyj.

The Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Winnipeg, Maxim Hermaniuk, invited Bishop Vasyl’ to Canada. The latter arrived in Winnipeg on 15 June 1972 and for some time lived with the Metropolitan at the church’s chancery on Scotia Street. In one of his letters to his sister Vira, he wrote: “I cannot even find the right words to describe Metropolitan Maxim

[...] and to thank him enough for all his help and for his heart of gold!!! I cannot even explain how much I owe him. He is doing good things for me every step of the way. I live on the first floor; I have a big room [...]. There is water and a washroom, and a tiny room for clothing” (BVV, f.1, I, B, doc. 8). During his stay, he continued his pastoral work by visiting parishes in different provinces of Canada and the United States.

His health was ruined and after living in Canada only for one year he died on 30 June 1973. He was buried on 5 July in All Saints Cemetery in Winnipeg. On 27 June 2001 during his pastoral visit to Ukraine, Pope John Paul II beatified twenty-eight martyrs of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Velychkovs'kyi was one of them. After a year of preparation Velychkovs'kyi's relics were transferred from All Saints Cemetery to St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Winnipeg on 16-22 September 2002. The relics are enshrined in a chapel in St. Joseph's Church, where there is a small museum dedicated to his life.

In 1972, when Bishop Vasyl' visited Yugoslavia he mentioned to his nephew that he dreamed of returning to Ukraine where he suffered for his Church (BVV, f.2, III, A, tape 2). However, his relics are now located in Canada. Recognized by the Catholic Church as blessed and a martyr, Velychkovs'kyi has become an example of faithfulness and sacrifice not only for Ukrainian Catholics but also for many other communities.

## Chapter 2

### House Search and Arrest

The life and future of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy depended on their views concerning reunion with the Russian Orthodox Church. After the arrests of the Greek Catholic hierarchy and clergy on 11 April 1945 and the emergence of the Initiative Group on 28 March 1945, it was dangerous to openly remain Ukrainian Greek Catholic. Those who decided to keep their Catholic faith and remain loyal to the Church had to practice their religion carefully and in secret. However, the NKVD police and the government authorities worked to search out “recalcitrant” clergy who had been “blinded by the glory of the Roman Church” (Diiannia Soboru 1946, 135-6). They professed that their aim was to “open the eyes of [their] blind brothers” and help them to “return to the embraces of [their] own mother – the Russian Orthodox Church” (Bociurkiw 1996, 119). Some members of Catholic clergy who refused to betray their Church were hunted down and arrested. The arrests increased, especially after the emergence of the Initiative Group. The Redemptorist priest, Vasyl’ Velychkovs’kyi was one of the victims who suffered during this period.

While the Initiative Group was trying with the government’s help to bring the Catholic clergy to Orthodoxy, and while “the members of the NKVD in Ternopil’ pressured [Velychkovs’kyi] a couple of times to join the Russian Orthodox Church,” he continued to serve his people intensively as a superior of the Redemptorist monastery in Ternopil’ (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 269). Without his knowledge the Soviet authorities were collecting and documenting information about him that was connected to what they considered his anti-Soviet and nationalist activities. According to the NKVD document from 26 July 1945, in the Fourth Detachment of the NKVD department no. 2 in Ternopil’ oblast’ the substitute chief and senior lieutenant Boliuta

“examined the documents that had been forwarded to him about the criminal activities of Vasyl’ Velychkovs’kyi” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 8). The record of his illegal actions listed in the document are as follows:

While in the Kovel’ monastery from 1929 to 1934, Velychkovs’kyi was engaged in missionary work. He systematically gave anti-Soviet sermons in front of the public and distributed anti-Soviet literature among the faithful. He pursued the same activities in L’viv and Stanislaviv.

After the German occupation of the Western Ukraine, anti-Soviet, pro-Nazi literature was published under Velychkovs’kyi’s editing.

Under Velychkovs’kyi’s editing, the Marian Calendar for 1945 (*Mariivs’kyi kalendar za 1945 r.*)<sup>9</sup> published an expression of gratitude to the German occupants for the “liberation of Ukraine” from the Bolsheviks.

In July 1941 Velychkovs’kyi came to see Bishop Khomyshyn and offered to write a greeting for the nationalist newspaper in case the “Ukrainian nation” was proclaimed by the Banderites in L’viv. After that Khomyshyn and Liatashevs’kyi wrote such a greeting and placed it in the Stanislaviv newspaper *Samostiina Ukraina* (Independent Ukraine) (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 8).

All these actions were considered criminal. Therefore, the NKVD authorities of Ternopil’ oblast’ decided to conduct a house search and arrest Velychkovs’kyi.

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<sup>9</sup> According to the original copy of the Marian calendar it was published in 1942. Therefore, the person who collected the evidence for Velychkovs’kyi’s case made a mistake in the year of its publication.

According to Article 6 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR for 1926<sup>10</sup>, a “crime” was analogous to “a socially dangerous act,” which was defined as “any act or omission that is directed against the Soviet system or that violates the legal order established by the worker-peasant power during the period of transition to the communist system” (Berman 1966, 26). Any crime that was directed against the foundations of the Soviet system established in the USSR or its administrative organs was a political crime. The socially dangerous political crime was “considered to be the most dangerous”<sup>11</sup> because it “might have harmed the interests of the state or of the working people, even though the crime was not specifically directed against the interests of either” (Ibid. 1966, 26-27).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, Velychkovs’kyi was proclaimed by the authorities as a political criminal who had committed a socially dangerous act.

Velychkovs’kyi was “suspected of crimes under article 54-10, part 2 of the Ukrainian SSR Criminal Code” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 9). Article 54 of the Ukrainian SSR was analogous to article 58 of the RSFSR for 1926 and article 70 of the RSFSR for 1960. This article states the following:

Agitation and propaganda carried on for the purpose of subverting or weakening the Soviet Regime [...] or of committing particular, especially dangerous crimes against the state, or the circulation for the same purpose of slanderous fabrications which defame the Soviet state and social system, or the circulation or preparation or keeping, for the same

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<sup>10</sup> In 1926 criminal procedural law was set down in codes of criminal procedure which were recognized in each of the fifteen Union Republics of the USSR, including the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Even though the republics had their own codes of criminal procedure, according to Amnesty International “there was little difference in content between the codes of the different Union Republics” (Amnesty International, 9). Therefore, due to the fact that it was very hard to find the criminal procedural law of Ukrainian SSR, the codes that will be discussed in this thesis will be referred to the 1926 codes of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic), the largest of the Union Republics.

<sup>11</sup> Article 46 in RSFSR Criminal Codex Code for 1926

<sup>12</sup> Article 47a in RSFSR Criminal Codex Code for 1926

purpose, of literature of such content, shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term of six months to seven years, with or without additional exile for a term of two to five years, or by exile for a term of two to five years.

The same actions committed by a person previously convicted of especially dangerous crimes against the state or committed in wartime shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term of three to 10 years, with or without additional exile for a term of two to five years (Berman 1966, 180).

Article 58 was entitled under “Counterrevolutionary Crimes” which were directed against the foundations of the Soviet system. According to Harold Berman, an American legal scholar who was an expert in Soviet/Russian law, article 58-10 was “vague and sweeping” because the provisions on counterrevolutionary propaganda and agitation were unified in a single article. Charged with this article, Velychkovs’kyi was convicted of counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. To the authorities he was known as a political criminal and was labelled as “an enemy of the people [...] or [...] traitor to the Motherland” (Cohen 2011, 28). According to Stalinist ideology, the country was overfilled with secret enemies who were posing as loyal citizens and at the same time aimed to destroy the Soviet system and betray the nation to foreign powers. Such thoughts about the disloyalty of the Soviet citizens grew into a “national mania,” which systematically multiplied the number of victims (Ibid. 2011, 4). Therefore, the job of the NKVD was to find the suspicious individuals who could be accused of counterrevolutionary crimes punishable under article 58. This was quite easy because almost any type of action that was interpreted as suspicious could make one vulnerable to arrest.

Likely suspects under article 58 included: “active members of the church, members of religious sects [...] (anyone who in the past had [...] been involved in an anti-Soviet uprising”

(Conquest 1992, 257). According to Amnesty International, the infamous article was devised as a “class weapon” which gave the authorities the right to provide “blanket charges against anyone even remotely suspected of representing a threat to the survival of Bolshevik rule” (Amnesty International 1980, 7). Therefore, being a Catholic priest, a missionary, and acquaintance of Bishops Khomyshyn and Liatashevs’kyi, who were already arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda, Velychkovs’kyi was automatically labelled as a criminal.

Article 7 of the 1926 RSFSR Criminal Code stated: “with regard to persons who have committed socially dangerous acts or who represent a danger because of their connection with a criminal environment or because of their past activity, measures of social defence of a judicial-correction [...] shall be applied” (Berman 1966, 25). In order to arrest Velychkovs’kyi, it was enough for the authorities to know that he was connected with a criminal environment, was engaged in an activity which would seem socially dangerous. Therefore, according to this article he had not committed any actual crimes against the society. However, his arrest and punishment resulted from his association with the underground religious network, an association that was perceived as a social threat.

Velychkovs’kyi’s arrest took place on 6 August 1945, at the end of the day, when he returned from a mission and did not expect a visit from the NKVD. He did not have a chance to destroy, hide or pass on anything to anyone. The whole monastery was surrounded to ensure that he does not escape or oppose the arrest. Elinor Lipper, a former prisoner of the Soviet camps, was arrested in 1937 under the article 58. She stated that people suspected by the authorities of counterrevolutionary activities and who had committed no crime against the state, were nevertheless afraid even of the “unfamiliar sound on the stairs. They were innocent, [but] they tossed sleeplessly in their beds at night” (Lipper 1951, 4). The suspects trembled as they heard

the loud, harsh, insistent knocking which sounded like “the roll of thunder” (Ibid. 1951, 4).

Therefore, when the authorities came to arrest Velychkovs’kyi the first knock at the door was probably unexpected and put everyone living in the monastery into a state of terror.

The authorities summoned Velychkovs’kyi but he “sent [his] assistant to the parlour, and [himself] went out by the rear entrance into the garden orchard, where he crouched among the bushes. Through openings in the fence onto the street, he saw a heavy contingent of militia near the road” (Velychkovs’kyi 2002, 56). There were many armed State Security men.

Velychkovs’kyi continued the arrest story in his autobiography: “On the opposite side stood the fence surrounding the neighbour’s garden: perhaps I could scramble over there and escape – but could I be sure of that, and for how long? ... Ideas flashed through my head like lightning. What to do? Rosary in hand. A ‘Hail Mary’ ... And then a clear insight: return to the house and give yourself up – this will be best and most honourable. And so I did...” (Ibid. 2002, 57).

When Velychkovs’kyi saw the monastery surrounded by militia, he knew that there was no mistake; they had come for him, and he knew that he could not hide from them, because sooner or later they would find him. He was aware that his fate has been decided and that he could not make it any worse. Simply because he was accused of anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation from the moment he was taken by the authorities, Velychkovs’kyi was proclaimed “an enemy of the people.” The authorities perceived him as a national criminal who did not follow the government’s rules and spread anti-Soviet propaganda among the people. For this reason, the only way to punish him for his illegal actions was to remove him. Plans were made to arrest, interrogate him and then send him to Gulag.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a former prisoner of the Soviet prisons has suggested that those arrested unjustly often have the feeling of an instantaneous, shattering blow, an expulsion

from one state into another. The arrested people live a normal life and are attached to their everyday duties, family and friends. They pass by buildings, fences, and gates without realization what lies behind them, without knowing that there, next to them the Gulag begins: “And all of a sudden the fateful gate swings quickly open, and four white male hands, unaccustomed to physical labour but nonetheless strong and tenacious, grab us by the leg, arm, collar, cap, ear, and drag us in like a sack, and the gate behind us, the gate to our past life, is slammed shut once and for all” (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 4).

This resembles Velychkovs'kyi's experience. He worked in Ternopil' and in the neighbouring towns and villages, continued his everyday pastoral life, gave missions, preached and looked after his parishioners. He used to return home to the comfortable, safe monastery where he lived in his prayerful, monastic milieu with trusted people who shared his views. One day he returned to the monastery and his life instantly changed.

Velychkovs'kyi was declared a criminal, because, according to the authorities, he conducted anti-Soviet propaganda. However, such an accusation was only a pretext. The arrest was undertaken, as Velychkovs'kyi knew, to threaten and scare him before the authorities revealed the real reason. His life depended on whether he was prepared to join Russian Orthodoxy. He was aware that the only reason for his arrest was his status as a Catholic priest. At the time, widespread arrests were being conducted in order to eliminate the Catholic clergy and congregations. All these people were accused, in one way or another, because of their political and national views. Bociurkiw has written that the hierarchy of the Uniate Greek Catholic Church and its priests, monks and nuns were brought before the courts and sentenced “not for their religious convictions, but for criminal activities against the people,” the standard Soviet excuse for repressing religious leaders and activists (Bociurkiw 1996, 239). Therefore, when the

Soviet authorities unexpectedly showed up at the door of the monastery in which Velychkovs'kyi lived, he knew exactly why they had come to him.

The police operatives who came to arrest Velychkovs'kyi were probably both completely ignorant about the accusations that had been collected. The only thing they both knew was that he was a Catholic priest whom they had to compel through fear tactics to convert to Orthodoxy. The police operatives worked for the government and had to follow orders. Their work consisted not of logical thinking about the reasons for the arrest but solely of making arrests.

Velychkovs'kyi's arrest was the first part of the process. The arrest, as was usually the case, was followed by a house search. The NKVD operatives proceeded with the search after Velychkovs'kyi was caught. According to the document of the search protocol, on 6 August 1945 Lieutenant Vodol'ianov, an authorized person of the Ternopil' NKVD, in the presence of three other workers of the Ternopil' NKVD police and four witnesses, "on the basis of order no. ... [missing in text] performed a search in the Redemptorist monastery whose superior was Vasyl' Velychkovs'kyi and where he was arrested" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 22). During the search the following items were found and taken to the city's NKVD: "a broken Multiplex taping machine, coins of different sizes and a metal, copper cross with a chain, a box with religious pins, a book with different correspondence, sixteen notebooks with different notes, one large prayer book, three notepads with notes, and not more than two bundles of different correspondences" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 22-23). All these confiscated items were scrutinized by the NKVD authorities. The material was examined thoroughly for possible evidence of criminal activity. According to the search protocol, the victim was present at this search and there were no complaints by the arrested; to prove this, Velychkovs'kyi's signature was on the search

document. A casual reading of this document might lead one to think that the search procedures were correctly followed. However, if the document is examined carefully, and if the stories of the victim and witnesses are taken into account, some questions emerge in regards to the manner in which the house was conducted.

According to the interview obtained in 2004, Velychkovs'kyi's assistant, Brother Vasyl' Stets'ko, who lived with him in the monastery, opened the doors for the NKVD. The man who performed the search "piled up a lot of papers [...] and was tying them with a rope to the breaking point" (BVV, f.2, III, B, tape 5). Moreover, Stets'ko also mentioned that "whenever the Bolsheviks arrested someone, two witnesses were required, but here there was no one; I was there by myself but I did not have the courage to tell them that, because I was scared and was shaking in front of them like an aspen leaf" (Ibid. tape 5). Later the NKVD "placed all of it [papers] into a bag and put it into a car together with him [Velychkovs'kyi]" (Ibid. tape 5). That short description suggests that when the search took place Velychkovs'kyi was not present, and there were no witnesses except Stets'ko. As soon as Velychkovs'kyi came out from the garden all of the papers and letters had been already confiscated and placed together with him into a car, which they then took to the NKVD head office.

Moreover, Velychkovs'kyi writes in his autobiography that he was hiding in the garden and when he decided to surrender he was seized and "taken to a waiting automobile, then to NKVD headquarters" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 57). Later on he mentions that "together with [him], they brought along a sackful of his papers" (Ibid. 2002, 59). According to Velychkovs'kyi's autobiography, there was no time for him to be at the house search, because as soon as he came out from the garden he was caught and taken away. Also, he never describes the search. This might lead one to conclude that he was not there, although, since he wrote his

autobiography in 1967 (twenty-two years after the arrest), he might have missed that part of the arrest. However, taking into account the search descriptions of both Brother Vasyl' and Velychkovs'kyi, it seems likely that the papers were collected and placed into a bag without Velychkovs'kyi being present at the site. The search protocol was signed later not only by him but also by the corrupt witnesses.

There is one important element that is missing in the search protocol -- the order number. It might have been unavailable for the 6 August. This could be obvious, because the order for the arrest and search document was dated the 7 August. It stated: "Order no. 893 is presented by the chief of the Ternopil' region NKVD Baliute to arrest and conduct a house search of Vasyl' Velychkovs'kyi at the address: city Ternopil', street Ostrovs'koho, house 51" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 19). It is clear that the order for the search document had a number, but because the search was done one day earlier, it was not included. Therefore, when the security men came to arrest Velychkovs'kyi and search the monastery, he was not presented with the order for his arrest. In other words, the NKVD authorities came onto the property, surrounded the building with the militia, searched the house without the victim being present, took those belongings that they thought would be useful for the investigation, placed him into the car and took him to the NKVD head office -- all without any order or document.

Velychkovs'kyi continued his arrest story with the conversation that he had with the head of the NKVD when he was brought to the headquarters. He wrote:

The head of the NKVD asked me how I felt about the unification of our Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church. I replied, quite resolutely, that my thoughts about that were quite negative!... 'Ah yes. So you do, then, agree to be united with the Orthodox Church?' I respond: 'No, Never! Under any circumstances.' 'Think upon it

well, because your life is on the line here. Either you subscribe to Russian Orthodoxy – and you are immediately free to go home – or else you never leave here.’ ‘Your efforts are of no avail. Your words are useless. You are wasting your time. I have said NO once and for all; and you can shoot me, and kill me, but you shall get from me no other word.’ From the tone of my words, the NKVD deduced that my decision was resolute and irrevocable... He told me to leave the room, adding, ‘Tomorrow you will go on further’ (Velychkovs’kyi 2002, 57).

According to Velychkovs’kyi’s autobiography, the proposition to join the Russian Orthodox Church and to be rewarded with freedom was made after the arrest and house search on the 6 August. Velychkovs’kyi’s autobiography is not the only available written source in which he talks about this conversation with the head of the NKVD. In 1954, he wrote his first complaint letter to the Attorney-General of the USSR protesting against the false accusations, his arrest and imprisonment. In the letter he argued that “the chief of the Ternopil’ NKVD declared that if I would join the Moscow Patriarch, I would be immediately allowed to go home (because of absence of evidence for the arrest), but if I reject this, he must send me immediately to the regional NKVD” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 269). Moreover, when he was arrested for the second time in 1969 he wrote complaint letter number five, in which he also declared: “As soon as I was arrested in Ternopil’, at night the chief of the Ternopil’ NKVD asked me if I agreed to join Kostel’nyk’s group in L’viv and switch to Orthodox Church. If I chose to agree I would be free immediately, but if not I would be sent to Kyiv for further investigation” (BVV, f.2, II, E, vol.5, 299). Velychkovs’kyi mentioned this conversation several times: once in 1954, ten years after the actual arrest, then later in his autobiography, which he wrote in 1967 and finally in 1969. Velychkovs’kyi’s testimonies prove that he was falsely accused. This conversation was not

recorded and was not included into his case file as a formal document. Its purpose was not to help the investigation of his criminal activity but was done in the interest of the authorities. This conversation happened on the first day of Velychkovs'kyi's arrest and it already revealed that the whole process surrounding the arrest and accusation was not legitimate.

Anne Applebaum has suggested that the arrest, the house search, and the first meeting with the NKVD police were usually done in order to frighten the arrestee: "many former prisoners believe that their first few hours in captivity were deliberately designed to shock them, to render them incapable of coherent thought" (Applebaum 2003, 131). Moreover, as soon as the arrested person entered the prison the NKVD workers "did not see [the prisoner] as a human being! [The prisoner] has become an object" (Shikheeva-Gaister 1967, 101). However, Velychkovs'kyi was not afraid of arrest and did not agree with the proposition of the NKVD. He made it very clear that he would not betray his faith under any circumstance. After the conversation with the officer, he was left in the room. He later wrote: "How I passed the night, I know not, on a chair or on the floor; but nothing else happened in that room" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 57).

Having understood that Velychkovs'kyi would not subscribe to Orthodoxy under any circumstances, the next morning the authorities were "armed with files on [his] case" (Ibid. 2002, 58). The case file under Velychkovs'kyi's name, no. 2092/148465 was created and dated 7 August 1945. With the victim already under custody, the order for arrest document was created. Even though the document was included in his case file, as Velychkovs'kyi mentioned in his first complain letter, it was presented to him post-dated two weeks after he had already been kept under custody. Moreover, on the same day (7 August) a personal search was done and documented. His private documents and other things such as passport, birth, baptismal and

military certificates, medallion with the image of the Blessed Mary and money in the sum of 355 rubbles were found and confiscated.

The last document made on that same day and included in his case file was a record of his first interrogation. The interrogation was performed at the Fourth Detachment of NKVD department no. 2 in Ternopil' oblast' by chief Necheporenko. The document is two and a half pages long and consists of twenty-one questions. The first twenty questions were about his birth, education, occupation, family situation and others. These questions reveal that Velychkovs'kyi was a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest with an extensive theological education. The last question is the most interesting one. Necheporenko asked: "You are arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda; do you admit that you are guilty?" He answered: "No, I do not admit being guilty of anti-Soviet propaganda" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 39). At the end Velychkovs'kyi confirmed, by his signature, that the interrogation protocol was accurately recorded and that it was read to him aloud.

This first interrogation and refusal to join Orthodoxy determined Velychkovs'kyi's future. On the same day, two NKVD security men escorted him to the station and on the train to Chortkiv, because Ternopil', though it was the district centre, did not have its own jail. When he arrived in Chortkiv, "they threw [him] into the deep basement of some home which housed the KGB" and here, according to his autobiography, he stayed for close to six weeks without any formal investigation to prove his criminal accusations (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 58).

Velychkovs'kyi, still in a state of inner confusion, ready to explain, to argue and to struggle, was trapped in a place where he would spend a great deal of time without knowing how long he would be kept and without knowing the outcome of his imprisonment. This psychological technique was used by Soviet authorities to keep him in constant suspense, scare him and break his will. Lipper has suggested that "permanent uncertainty and complete

helplessness in the grip of a silent, uncanny power, produces in every prisoner exactly what it is expected to produce: fear” (Lipper 1951, 8). Such uncertainty was a form of torture and had an annihilating impact on Velychkovs’kyi.

In the first complaint letter, Velychkovs’kyi stated that during his stay in the basement at the city of Chortkiv “not a single protocol was recorded [...] because of the absence of evidence” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 19). Moreover, in his autobiography he wrote that “they did not even make a beginning [of the process], because they had no accusations, no incriminations, whatsoever” (Velychkovs’kyi 2002, 58). Keeping Velychkovs’kyi for over a month without starting the investigation was enough to wear him down, to make him anxious, fearful and sleepless. According to the Amnesty International: “By law, within one day of a person’s being taken into custody the investigating authority must inform the Procurator’s Office of the grounds and reason for detention, and the Procurator’s office must rule on the legality of the arrest within 24 hours after that” (Amnesty International 1980, 66). The NKVD authorities did not observe this practice. They broke the law not only by not informing Velychkovs’kyi about the reasons for his arrest but also by making him wait for this length of time without investigating his case. Therefore, the authorities did not obey the law but created their own rules. Moreover, Velychkovs’kyi was kept under custody even without significant evidence of his anti-Soviet propaganda activity. If he had been such a dangerous criminal, to the point that he had to be arrested, why was there not enough evidence to start the formal investigation? And if there was no evidence, then why was he arrested and charged with a criminal code?

The way in which the NKVD reasoned was cynical: “Just give us a person - and we’ll create the case!” (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 146). That suggests that in any case Velychkovs’kyi still would have been kept under custody as a criminal and all the needed proof would have been

created. According to Velychkovs'kyi's case file, on 11 August 1945 a document was produced concerning the coins that were confiscated during the house search. That was the last document before he was interrogated again on 18 September 1945, over a month later. That shows that while Velychkovs'kyi was in the NKVD basement, the authorities did not collect documents that could prove his criminal actions, search for witnesses who could justify his guilt, or document interrogations and protocols. The informal investigation involved only the victim himself and the Soviet authorities. Therefore, all the evidence of his criminal activity that was informally collected during that time was based either on his own account or on the testimonies of the police. The question arises: if the formal investigation did not proceed because of lack of evidence, then why did the authorities not look for it?

According to General Koshars'kyi, who wrote a report with the title "totally secret information" to the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, it was not compulsory to have proof or look for it in order to conduct the investigation of a criminal case. He stated that there was no attempt to prove the criminal activity of prisoners, or that they had violated Soviet law, but only "to look for a different pretext in order to 'simplify' the facts [...] and proceed with the investigation" (TsDAHO; quoted in Shapoval 1994, 51).<sup>13</sup> This statement underlines the fact that the investigators did not collect the evidence. The objective was to create false accusations in order to commence an investigation.

Borys Mirus, a young actor at that time, was arrested in 1949 and falsely accused of anti-Soviet agitation under article 54 of the Ukrainian SSR. He underwent the investigation in the same NKVD prison in Kyiv as Velychkovs'kyi. Moreover, both men later worked together in the same concentration camp in Vorkuta. Mirus referred to his investigation process as degradation. He said that he understood after his investigation that "the Bolshevik NKVD police

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<sup>13</sup> TsDAHO fond1, opys 16, sprava 68, ark.10-17

was degenerating even at this time: instead of working [the investigators] were just showing off, instead of using their intellect they used severe torture, instead of looking for the real criminals they pursued the victims. The finances and time were used pointlessly. The NKVD workers lost their professional skills and went through a moral degradation” (Mirus 2000, 97). Moreover, he added his opinion about the investigators. Mirus said: “this kind of uneducated blockhead puts on the desk pictures, books, old letters, [confiscated during the house search] [...] and conducts an investigation by swearing rudely” (Ibid. 2000, 98). It was not required that the investigators be educated people of broad culture and broad views. According to the qualitative composition of the procuracy staff in 1954 and 1955 “only 45.2 percent of the RSFSR procuracy employees had a higher legal education, 42.5 percent had only a rudimentary knowledge of law, and the rest had no legal education whatsoever” (Adler 2002, 92). Moreover, “only in May of 1955 [...] a degree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet stipulated that new procurators were required to have a higher legal education” (Ibid. 2002, 92). Until 1955 uneducated people who were not competent in the discipline of law were entrusted with deciding the fate of prisoners.

It was clear to the interrogators that the cases were fabricated. Nonetheless they continued writing depositions and kept on working. The investigators did this either because they forced themselves not to think about what they were doing, which means that they were destroying themselves as human beings, or because they accepted the fact that the person who gave them orders was always right.

Kost’ Turkalo, a former Soviet prisoner has suggested that it was quite normal for the investigators to accuse the prisoner without any evidence. He said that the investigators “did not even try to prove to the prisoner his controversial actions. It was the prisoner’s responsibility to justify himself and to prove that he did not commit the crime” (Turkalo 1963, 56). In fact, he

said that when the investigator entered the room the first thing he would say was: “I am listening to you” (Ibid. 1963, 65). The investigator expected to receive the needed information from the prisoner. During the first interrogation that Velychkovs’kyi had in the Ternopil’ NKVD headquarters, he denied the accusation of conducting anti-Soviet propaganda.

Velychkovs’kyi wrote in his first complaint letter that he was kept in the NKVD basement in Chortkiv because of his religion. He said “even here, I did not accept the proposition [of going] against my religious beliefs” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 269). This statement shows that the authorities continued to force him to switch to Orthodoxy. For more than a month, there was no formal investigation of Velychkovs’kyi’s criminal accusation, a fact that suggests that his case was fabricated and during that time he was persecuted because he refused to cooperate with the authorities. Usually the fabricated cases were accompanied by violence and torture: “The time allowed for an investigation was not used to unravel the crime but, in ninety-five cases out of a hundred, to exhaust, wear down, weaken and render helpless the defendant, so that he would want it to end at any cost” and would be ready to do, say, and sign everything that he was asked for (Sozhenitsyn 1974, 97). If Velychkovs’kyi was kept under custody because of his faith, then it would have made sense that the formal investigation of his criminal offences did not proceed and was not included in his case file.

After being tortured for more than a month, he was informed that he would be going to Kyiv. Early in the morning he was escorted by two guards to the train station and brought to the internal prison of the NKVD. Here he “was locked up in a solitary cell where [he] could hardly sit down because the closed door pressed in on [his] knees” (Velychkovs’kyi 2002, 58). Borys Mirus, spent a couple of month in the same internal NKVD prison in Kyiv as Velychkovs’kyi. He described the situation of being placed in such a small cell that looked like a closet or packing

case. In his book he wrote: “I was locked in a ‘box’ as they called it. There I could only sit, it was impossible to get up. It was torture to stay in such a box for three hours [...] but sometimes I had to stay there for the whole day. I could not stretch, my back was hurting and my chest was cramped, when I went to the investigator I was like a cripple” (Mirus 2000, 95). It was one of the Soviet investigation techniques. If the victim is locked in such a box for indefinite period of time, sometimes he or she loses hope and allows the interrogation to go according to the investigator’s plan. However, other individuals can become angry and insult the interrogator from the beginning and that might also lead to a slip of the tongue that could provide the investigator with information. It is unknown for how long Velychkovs’kyi was kept in the box but according to his autobiography, he was taken to a one-person cell on the same day. Therefore, he could have been placed into the box for a couple of hours only.

According to Velychkovs’kyi’s case file, on 18 September 1945, Major Maiorov from the fifth detachment of the NKVD investigation department in Kyiv received a request to lead the investigation of Velychkovs’kyi’s case. On the same day, chief Maiorov

familiarized himself with the materials of the investigation in case no. 2092/128465 and took into account that Velychkovs’kyi had sufficiently shown that over a couple of years he had been involved in conducting anti-Soviet, Uniate, Vatican politics. Being a monk-missionary of the Redemptorist monastery, he systematically organized missions and preached anti-Soviet sermons. He conducted all possible calumny against the politics of the party, the Soviet government, and the Soviet operations.

Living on the invaded territory, he was involved in the secrets of the Exarchate which was spreading Catholicism in the Soviet Union and personally went to Kamianets’-Podil’s’k oblast’ to propagate anti-Soviet ideology among the population of USSR. [...]

During the occupation of the Western Ukraine by German invaders, he edited anti-Soviet, pro-Nazi literature and together with the nationalists actively disseminated the idea of establishing an independent Ukraine (emphasis as seen in the original document) (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 40).

Based on such findings, Major Maiorov decided to inform Velychkovs'kyi of his criminal charges. Kost' Turkalo who was arrested three times because of anti-Soviet and political activities and also underwent interrogations has stated: "The deposition document was never, or for a long time was not presented to the arrested prisoner. He himself had to know why he was arrested and had to confess his guilt" (Turkalo 1963, 55). Therefore, finally after being under arrest for a month and a half, Velychkovs'kyi was formally accused and presented with the deposition of his guilt. The document was dated 18 September 1945 and signed by him. That suggests that Velychkovs'kyi was brought to the Kyiv prison on the same day.

This accusation document was the first document filed into his case file after 11 August 1945. For a month and a half, there had been no formal investigation of his criminal activity and the only documents that were in his case file were those with a list of his illegal actions, protocols about the house and personal search, the first interrogation in which he denied his anti-Soviet propaganda activity and the order for his arrest. Therefore, it is quite ironic that chief Maiorov, after familiarizing himself with these few documents, which provide no proof or evidence of Velychkovs'kyi's criminal activity, decided that there was enough information to charge him with the articles 54-1 "a" and 54-1.1. According to Velychkovs'kyi's case file, Maiorov had no grounds to present the victim with such accusations because they were not supported with facts.

Velychkovs'kyi's signature on the accusation document could have meant that he saw and read the information that the document contained. Borys Mirus remembers that one day, when he was in prison in Kyiv, he was brought to the chief who presented him with some documents to sign as proof that he saw and read them. They were the order for the arrest document and the accusation document. He signed them in the same way as Velychkovs'kyi did, but this does not mean that either of them knew or understood the meaning of the articles. Solzhenitsyn has pointed out that usually the true significance of the Criminal Code was not available to the victims. The Criminal Code was not available to most Soviet citizens. Furthermore, it was impossible to buy or obtain it from the library. The prisoners never saw it, held it in their hands, or even asked for it. It was unavailable because, reasoned the authorities, "your interest in the Code would be an extraordinary phenomenon: you must either be preparing to commit a crime or be trying to cover your tracks" (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 122). The Criminal Code was available only for "workers of the court and the Procuracy, for lawyers, for workers of the Ministry of International Affairs and for students and correspondence students of higher judicial institutions and intermediate level specialized courses" (Amnesty International 1980, 9). That suggests that the principle of the interrogation consisted in depriving the accused even of knowledge of the law. Solzhenitsyn stated that when the accused asked to see or read the Code, he was told: "You are not supposed to see it. It isn't written for you but for us. [...] I'll tell you what it says: these sections spell out exactly what you are guilty of. [...] at this point your signature doesn't mean that you agree with the indictment but that you've read it, that it's been presented to you" (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 122).

Without understanding what exactly he had been accused of and without a proper understanding of the Criminal Code that he had been charged with, Velychkovs'kyi was thrown

into an interrogation prison. This was a place where the authorities made their life-or-death (detention-or-execution) decision. Here Velychkovs'kyi awaited his fate – either a future destination within the Gulag or a death sentence.

While in the interrogation prison, Velychkovs'kyi was in a single cell for about a month. This is where his formal interrogations began. In his autobiography he describes the cell: it contained “an iron bed for one person, on top of which was a thin mattress. It had once been stuffed with straw, but now, through prolonged usage, the straw had been transformed into fine chaff. At night I attempted to sleep on this bed, in which the shredded straw sifted down through the iron rods on which I had to rest. Somehow I suffered [...] because there [...] was no other choice” (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 58-59).

The prisons did not seek to integrate the prisoners into society's life. Total isolation was designed to remove the prisoners from the surrounding world. Loneliness was one of the factors in the success of interrogations. In order to avoid the risk of receiving a bit of sympathy, advice, support from someone's smile or glance, the prisoner was kept alone. Isolation was designed to break the prisoner down and deprive him of contact with other inmates, “so that there is no one to keep his spirit up, so that the full force of the whole, vast, ramified apparatus is felt to be bearing down on him and him alone” (Solzhenitsyn 1968, 533-534). It was especially hard for those who were arrested for the first time. They had no knowledge of prison life, had no one to talk to, no one from whom to seek advice, or did not encounter others like themselves. Moreover, according to Mirus, the isolated prisoners were usually psychologically depressed. They felt as though “time stopped at the moment of their arrest [...] the hours became like month and the month like years; time existed only outside the metal bars and there was no time in prison. Prisoners felt themselves thrown out from the current of time” (Mirus, 2000, 108). It was

in this state that Velychkovs'kyi found himself when the formal investigation of his criminal case began and the interrogations were recorded.

## Chapter 3

### Investigation and Interrogations

The formal investigation of Velychkovs'kyi's criminal case began on 18 September 1945. The interrogations continued until 7 January 1946. During that time according to NKVD documents eleven interrogations took place that amounted to around fifty-two hours of questioning. Initially Major Maiorov was in charge of the investigation and Major Horiun took over after the second interrogation. The eleven interrogations were conducted to help the investigators determine Velychkovs'kyi's guilt and prove his anti-Soviet propagandistic activity.

On 18 September 1945, Velychkovs'kyi was brought from Chortkiv to Kyiv, late at night, at 11:00 p.m., Maiorov conducted the first interrogation. It is unknown how long it lasted. Although the time an interrogation began and finished had to be included in the interrogation document, this information was omitted. However, the minutes record three pages of interrogation, which suggests that if the interrogation began at 11:00 p.m. it was at least a couple of hours long and was completed during the night. The interrogations, the main work of "breaking" a prisoner, were usually conducted at night, because at this time an individual is more vulnerable. Torn from sleep, the prisoner lacks his normal daytime self-control and common sense. Therefore, Velychkovs'kyi's first interrogation was probably conducted at night. He had travelled to Kyiv by "a regular train coach filled to overflowing with people," in which there was "no room left even for standing" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 58). Today it is at least an eight hour trip and in those days it probably was much longer. Upon arrival, he was placed in a box for an indefinite period of time. Therefore, Velychkovs'kyi was exhausted, deprived of sleep and rest and still had to face his first formal interrogation in the Kyiv prison.

The interrogation began with the regular procedure of asking Velychkovs'kyi questions that revealed personal information. After that, there was one long question, which covered almost an entire page in the minutes and which contained five different accusations. It required a yes or no answer. The accusations were presented to him all at once and in the end he was asked if he admitted his guilt. Perhaps the investigator's intent was to bombard Velychkovs'kyi simultaneously with all the accusations, compiling everything into one long and complicated question. This method was used to frighten the accused, who was exhausted physically and psychologically. However, he did not give a simple answer. Like the question, his answer contained five parts, one for each accusation.

The first part of the question reads: "You are presented with the accusation that for many years you have been conducting anti-Soviet, Uniate, Vatican politics" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 43). Velychkovs'kyi answered: "I admit to being guilty, while at the Redemptorist monastery in Kovel', of systematically visiting the territories of Volhynia and conducting Uniate, Vatican politics. I organized Greek Catholic processions, aiming to get the churches open" [emphasis as seen in the original document] (Ibid. vol.1, 43). In this statement he admitted himself "guilty" only of conducting Uniate and Vatican politics, which was, of course, his responsibilities as a Greek Catholic Redemptorist priest. However, there was nothing in his actions or behaviour that could have been used to charge him with a criminal act.

The second part of the question stated that Velychkovs'kyi, "as a missionary of the Redemptorist monastery, systematically went to processions and preached anti-Soviet sermons, which contained all possible calumnies against the politics of the Party, the Soviet government and Soviet operations" (Ibid. vol.1, 43). To this accusation Velychkovs'kyi replied: "By conducting missions among the population, I preached sermons on different religious topics and

also allowed myself all possible sermons against the Soviet government and communist parties” [emphasis as seen in the original document] (Ibid. vol.1, 43). This represents the first time that he admitted to being guilty of anti-Soviet propaganda.

The third part of the question reads as follows: “Living on occupied territory, you were involved in the secret work of the exarchate, which was spreading Catholicism in the USSR and personally went to Kamianets’-Podil’s’k oblast’ to propagate anti-Soviet ideology among the population of USSR” (Ibid. vol.1, 43). Velychkovs’kyi responded: “I knew [...] about the existence of the exarchate on the territory of Galicia that was created to spread Catholicism in USSR. In 1941, some time in September by order of the monastery superior Joseph De Vokht and Sheptyts’kyi, I went to Kamianets’-Podil’s’k oblast’ to propagate anti-Soviet theories among the population of USSR. However, this trip was unsuccessful because the German invaders prohibited the work of spreading Catholicism in the USSR” [emphasis as seen in the original document] (Ibid. vol.1, 44). During the German invasion, it was considered a crime and disloyalty to the government and Soviet Union to be in any kind of contact with the Germans. Therefore, knowing that Velychkovs’kyi went to Kamianets’-Podil’s’k, which at that time was occupied by the Germans, the authorities assumed that he was working for the German occupation and went there to conduct anti-Soviet propaganda. According to the minutes, Velychkovs’kyi first answered that he went to Kamianets’-Podil’s’k to propagate anti-Soviet theories but later on stated that he had to leave the city because the Germans did not allow him to spread Catholicism. Therefore, if Velychkovs’kyi really came to Kamianets’-Podil’s’k to criticize the Soviet government it is unclear why he was forced to leave. This accusation was probably groundless, because he spent very little time in Kamianets’-Podil’s’k, certainly not enough to either propagate against the government or for the benefit of the Catholic Church.

Part four of the question stated: “In the period that Eastern Ukraine was overrun by German invaders you edited anti-Soviet pro-Nazi literature” (Ibid. vol.1, 43). Velychkovs’kyi firmly answered this part of the question. He said: “During the German invasion [...] I did not publish or edit any pro-Nazi literature and do not admit myself guilty” (Ibid. vol.1, 44).

The last, fifth part of the question was: “You actively worked together with the Ukrainian nationalists to establish an independent Ukraine” (Ibid. vol.1, 43). Velychkovs’kyi answered: “Even though I supported the idea that establishing ‘an independent Ukraine’ on a religious foundation was necessary, I did not have any connection with the Ukrainian nationalists” (Ibid. vol.1, 44). In short, Velychkovs’kyi admitted that he agreed with the ideas of the nationalists but rejected the fact that he worked with them.

Upon examining closely the minutes of the first interrogation, it is evident that most of Velychkovs’kyi’s answers were not definite. He fully accepted only the accusation about spreading calumny against the Soviet Union. This confession is highly suspicious. According to the last formal interrogation, held and recorded in Ternopil’ on 7 August, he firmly denied any such accusation. However, after waiting for more than a month for the formal investigation to begin, he decided to confess. This raises the issue of why he agreed to the accusation? What was the reason behind his sudden confession and admission on the first day of the formal investigation? It is possible that Velychkovs’kyi’s investigator physically pressured him to admit to the accusation.

In the period before 1937, physical beating of prisoners under interrogation was forbidden, but this instruction was not always followed. According to Harold Berman, Soviet law was unstable due to Stalin’s emphasis on the use of terror against political enemies and potential enemies. Berman states that “with the sharp increase in the severity of criminal sanctions,

especially for [...] counterrevolutionary crimes, Soviet criminal law [...] experienced a sharp decline in the stability of its provisions” (Berman 1966, 38). Stalin himself send out a memo to regional NKVD chiefs confirming that “from 1937 on in NKVD practice the use of physical pressure [on prisoners] was permitted by the Central Committee” and he considered this to be a “totally correct and humane method” (Jansen and Petrov; quoted in Applebaum 141).

Therefore, “interrogators were allowed to use violence and torture on an unlimited basis, at their own discretion, and in accordance with the demands of their work quotas and the amount of time they were given. The types of torture used were not regulated and every kind of ingenuity was permitted” (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 99). Any measures and means employed were considered good, since they have been used for the higher purpose of “re-educating” the individual. Lipper remembered how the investigation prison had been filled with horrifying sounds every evening. She wrote that the prisoners “listened to the steadily mounting shrieks and screams [...] the interrogators shouting curses at their victims. The voices of the prisoners could be distinguished only when they cried out in fear, pain, or despair” (Lipper 1951, 22).

Not until July 1956, was an article published by the Academy of Science’s Institute of State and Law arguing that “interrogators do not have the right to coerce confessions, and that verdicts based on confessions of guilt [...] were a ‘gross violation of socialist justice” (Rakhunov 1956, 34). Nikita Khrushchev publicly admitted in 1956 that under Stalin the way to get a prisoner to confess to crimes which he did not commit was to apply “physical methods of pressuring him, torture, bringing him to a state of unconsciousness, depriving him of judgment, taking away his human dignity. This was how ‘confessions’ were obtained” (Applebaum 2003, 140). However, until this time forced confessions were used to prove one’s guilt. Therefore, it

might be possible that Velychkovs'kyi was physically pressured by his investigators to admit the accusations.

Besides being physically pressured to confess, Velychkovs'kyi was tortured by starvation and sleep deprivation. These were some of the “simplest methods which [broke] the will and the character of the prisoner without leaving marks on his body [...] but [had] an enormous and even annihilating impact on the victim” (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 104). Night time interrogations and sleep deprivation were common methods of psychological pressure, an integral part of the system used by security forces: “It was a form of torture that became the universal method in the organs [...]. It was the cheapest possible method and did not require the posting of sentries. Sleep deprivation clouds the mind, undermines the will and [...] a person ceases to be himself, to be his own ‘I’” (Ibid. 1974, 112). This method of torture was designed to wear out the nerves, weaken the body, break resistance and force the prisoner to sign whatever is required. The prisoners who had undergone the interrogation were usually forbidden to sleep, lie down and even to close their eyes while seated. They were constantly awoken by guards and threatened with punishment if they failed to stay awake. This simple form of torture was known to prisoners as being put “on the conveyor” (Applebaum 2003, 141). Mirus has said that when they interrogated him, he was not allowed to sleep for almost six month. He wrote: “At 10:00 p.m. the guard would say that we could go to sleep. I would lay down, after half an hour I was taken to the investigator where the interrogation continued until 3:00 a.m. The investigator had a break but I was placed in the box. After the break, the interrogation continued until 5:30 a.m. As soon as I was brought back to the cell I fell on the bed but I was not able to fall asleep because at 6:00 a.m. there was a wakeup call and the guards did not allow me to sleep” (Mirus 2000, 100). Mirus referred to sleeplessness as one of the most exhausting and oppressive methods used.

Velychkovs'kyi was also deprived of sleep and was asked to sign the document confessing to his alleged crime.

Velychkovs'kyi's torture by sleeplessness was combined with the starvation technique that had become an additional integral element in the system of coercion and was universally applied to every prisoner. Turkalo had said that "in the morning and in the evening they gave hot water [...] and soup for lunch at 12:00 o'clock. The prisoners called the soup *balanda*. It was dirty hot water and on the bottom there was millet meal but in such a quantity that it could quickly and easily be counted. Also they gave 300 grams of bread" (Turkalo 1963, 35). Sometimes parcels from the family were allowed. However, if the prisoner refused to cooperate with the authorities, even that food was taken away.

Velychkovs'kyi's investigator not only forced him to confess to the accusations, he also recorded the answers of the interrogations in a way that benefited the investigation. At the end of each interrogation, the minutes were usually read to the accused, who signed them to signal agreement with everything written. The first interrogation protocol was signed by Velychkovs'kyi, but it is possible that the investigator did not record his exact words. Solzhenitsyn has stated that "the interrogator writes down the deposition himself, translating it into his own language" (Ibid. 1974, 120). The investigator knew what information he was looking for. He could catch a couple of phrases said by Velychkovs'kyi and then paraphrase them in a way that changed their meaning. In the protocol of the first interrogation it is quite evident what kind of information the investigator was interested in. Some parts of Velychkovs'kyi's answer were underlined in red, perhaps because they had the most value for his investigator. These are the underlined parts: "I admit to being guilty, while at the Redemptorist monastery in Kovel', of systematically visiting the territories of Volhynia and

conducting Uniate, Vatican politics [...] and also I allowed myself all possible sermons against Soviet government and communist parties [...] I went to Kamianets'-Podil's'k oblast' to propagate anti-Soviet theories [...] this trip was unsuccessful" [emphasis as seen in the original document] (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 44). It is evident that even though Velychkovs'kyi partially admitted the accusations, the investigator indeed had constructed his own version of Velychkovs'kyi's confession.

Mirus has shared the story of how his own investigation that has been conducted in a Kyiv NKVD prison. He states: "I am lying; it was not an investigation. An investigation is when the investigator is trying to discover the truth and does not demand from the prisoner confirmation of the version that he himself created. Even though the NKVD workers had the status of investigators, in reality they were not investigators. They dreamed up legends about their victims and did not care about the truth. That is exactly what happened with me. The investigators demanded that I confirm whatever they fantasized" (Mirus 2000, 96). When he refused to confess to the accusations, he was told by his investigators: "Fool, why are you being so stubborn? We will break you" (Ibid. 2000, 97). Keeping in mind that Velychkovs'kyi and Mirus were in the same prison in Kyiv and both were accused of anti-Soviet activity, it is very possible that Velychkovs'kyi was pressured or threatened to sign the protocol in the same way. His signature on the minutes of the interrogation constituted his "agreement" with the investigator's version of the confession. That is why the methods of examination were applied. Having reached the limits of his ability to resist, Velychkovs'kyi signed the protocol. However, his signature did not confirm his guilt; rather it served as proof of the infallibility of the methods of interrogation.

The second interrogation was conducted on 5 October 1945, more than two weeks after the first. It started at 11:15 a.m. and was completed at 16:15 p.m. During those five hours Maiorov recorded seven pages of minutes. There were seven questions and answers. The investigator took a historical approach. Velychkovs'kyi provided background information on the Redemptorist Order. He was asked why the Order had been established and what kind of Uniate work the Redemptorist fathers conducted. The questions were general and did not concentrate on Velychkovs'kyi. In contrast to the first interrogation, there were no charges; Maiorov sought information about the whole Redemptorist Order and their work.

During the second interrogation Velychkovs'kyi explained that the Redemptorist Order was established in Canada, to which country many Ukrainians from Galicia had emigrated. Later on Redepmtorists came to Ukraine and started their missionary work. They organized missions and spread Catholicism among the Orthodox population. Redemptorist fathers, including himself, usually preached sermons on different religious topics and “declared that the Catholic Church is the almighty Church which is trying to unite all Christians, including Orthodox, into one jurisdiction under the Pope” [emphasis as seen in the original document] (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 47). He also stated that Redemptorist priests continued their missionary work in 1941 during the German invasion. However, he had conducted missions in Volhynia from 1928 to 1934 and during the German occupation did not do any missionary work because, when sent by Sheptyts'kyi to do missions in Kamianets'-Podil's'k, his trip was unsuccessful. As in the first interrogation, Velychkovs'kyi repeated himself and assured the investigator that he had not been involved in missionary work during the German occupation.

The last question during the second interrogation was the following: “What was the anti-Soviet essence of Uniate Vatican politics?” (Ibid. vol.1, 51). Velychkovs'kyi responded:

“The anti-Soviet essence of Uniate Vatican politics was the attempt to spread an ideology hostile to the materialism, atheism and communism in the population of USSR” (Ibid. vol.1, 51). At the end of the interrogation, Maiorov had the testimony he required: that all the Redemptorist fathers were following Vatican Uniate politics by involving themselves in spreading Catholicism among the population of USSR, including during the German invasion. In other words, while spreading Catholicism they were speaking against the Soviet government. Maiorov waited to the very end to ask Velychkovs’kyi the most important question. The answer he obtained, either through consent or force, was treated as evidence proving that every Redemptorist involved in organizing missions was conducting Vatican politics and spreading calumny against the Soviet government. In this way, Velychkovs’kyi’s testimony served as evidence that he and all Redemptorists engaged in anti-Soviet propaganda.

The second protocol also had some phrases that were underlined in bold red: “Trying to bring the Orthodox population to Catholicism [...] under one jurisdiction of the Pope [...] spread the Uniate ideologies among Orthodox clergy [...] spread ideologies that worked against the materialism, atheism and communism in the population of USSR” [emphasis as seen in the original document] (Ibid. vol.1, 46-51). It is hard to say if these underlined phrases referred specifically to Velychkovs’kyi, or to the whole Redemptorist Order. Nevertheless, it is evident that the investigator had been picking through the information provided by Velychkovs’kyi, and chose what he found most valuable as proof of Velychkovs’kyi’s anti-Soviet activity.

Velychkovs’kyi had to wait for twenty-four days to be interrogated again. According to Eugenia Ginzburg, a former prisoner of the Soviet prisons, dragging out the investigation was done on purpose. She explains that the investigators “hope prison life will drive you crazy, so that in sheer desperation, you’ll sign any old nonsense” (Ginzburg 1967, 70). This method drains

the prisoner emotionally and physiologically, especially if between the interrogations the prisoner is placed in disorientating conditions. Usually the prisoners did not remain in the same atmosphere for a long time. In order for them not to get too comfortable or not to get accustomed to one particular environment they were transferred to different cells. As mentioned in the previous chapter, from 18 September 1945, Velychkovs'kyi spent a whole month in a single cell, where he was isolated and the conditions were extremely harsh. According to his autobiography, after a month of such misery he “was transferred to another cell, where there were three [prisoners] who slept on the floor” (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 59). This was a punishment cell that resembled a closet. Solzhenitsyn has described a similar cell as “the length of one human body and wide enough for three to lay packed tightly” (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 20). This kind of cell normally had enough space for three people to lie down on the floor on their sides. Once somebody's side became numb everyone had to wake up and turn over at the same time. However, sometimes the prisoners were forced to spend from three to five days in the punishment cell without moving their bodies. Occasionally the floors were covered with crushed straw and sometimes the prisoners have been forced to undress down to their underwear or even undershorts. The punishment cells were entirely unheated. Even though the corridors had radiators, it was not warm; the guards on duty walked in felt boots and padded jackets. The door had an observation hole the size of a postage stamp through which the light from the corridor entered. Therefore, the punishment cells were extremely cold and dark and only on the third day the prisoner was allowed to receive a bowl of hot gruel. It is unknown when exactly Velychkovs'kyi had been transferred to a punishment cell and for how long he had remained there. However, if he was brought to the Kyiv prison on 18 September and placed in a single cell

for about a month, it is possible that he was transferred to the punishment cell before his third interrogation which was at the end of October, 1945.

It is difficult to determine how often Velychkovs'kyi was interrogated. According to his case file, he waited almost an entire month for his third interrogation. One of the mechanisms of the investigation was to record an "acceptable" account when it was produced. In other words, the investigator would register only "convenient" information and could leave out anything that ran counter to his agenda. Therefore, in reality Velychkovs'kyi might have been interrogated many times but only the interrogations that met the investigator's expectations were recorded.

Velychkovs'kyi's third interrogation was on 30 October 1945. It was conducted by a new investigator, Horiun. One of the techniques used during the investigation was that of psychological contrast: two different investigators. One would shout and bully and the other would be friendly and gentle. Solzhenitsyn suggested that this worked very well because when the accused was physically violated and verbally abused, sometimes he would refuse to provide the required admission or information. However, switching the investigators could help to open up the accused. The victim "wanted to do everything to please the gentle one because of his different manner, even to the point of signing and confessing to things that had never happened" (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 104). Horiun was in charge of Velychkovs'kyi's case from this moment to the end. It is difficult to determine whether the new investigator was gentler or rougher than the previous one. However, it is obvious that by the fourth interrogation, his second official recorder meeting with Horiun, Velychkovs'kyi had confessed to more accusations and had provided his new investigator with more information than had been given to Maiorov.

The third interrogation started at 11:40 a.m. and finished at 1:35 p.m. The protocol was handwritten and had six recorded pages. The interrogation had only two questions but

Velychkovs'kyi provided extensive answers. This was the first question: "What kind of work did you do to spread Catholicism and bring the Orthodox population to the Greek-Catholic Church?" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 52). Velychkovs'kyi explained that from 1920 to 1927 much of the Galician Greek Catholic population moved to Volhynia in search of a better life. However, the Volhynian part of Ukraine was mainly Orthodox and people could not practice Catholicism. Therefore, in 1926 a Redemptorist monastery in Kovel' was organized by a Roman Catholic Bishop, Adol'f Shelenzek. He invited the Redemptorists to come to Volhynia in order to proselytize on behalf of Roman Catholicism among the Orthodox population, which had at one time been predominantly Greek Catholic. However, when the Redemptorists came, they started to convert the Orthodox population to their own Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and not to Roman Catholicism. Therefore, Bishop Shelenzek did not support Redemptorist activity in Volhynia. The monastery had around eight people of which four were missionary priests. Their main assignment was to strengthen the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church by gaining converts from the Orthodox population. Velychkovs'kyi also told his investigator that he, as a missionary priest, went to different regions of Volhynia in order to convert the Orthodox population to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. He was there until 1935.

The second question was the following: "When you were in Kovel' monastery, what kind of connections did you have with [...] Bishop Mykolai Charnets'kyi?" (Ibid. vol.1, 56). Velychkovs'kyi responded that they lived together in the same monastery and saw each other almost every day. They have been doing the same work. Both have been converting the Orthodox to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. However, they acted independently and conducted missions separately.

By comparison with his first answer, Velychkovs'kyi's second was less extensive. Perhaps he did not want to reveal too much information about Charnets'kyi, whom he knew very well. Both were Redemptorists; they had studied, worked and lived together. Moreover, Velychkovs'kyi knew that Bishop Charnets'kyi had been arrested on 11 April 1945, along with other Greek Catholic hierarchs. He was aware that Charnets'kyi was also undergoing interrogations and every piece of information could be turned against the Bishop.

The NKVD pressured victims to mention others who shared their views. Perhaps for Horiun the focus in Velychkovs'kyi's third interrogation was on the need to reveal names of people with whom he was acquainted. The answers made it clear that Velychkovs'kyi knew Bishops Shelenzek and Charnets'kyi. Having obtained these names, Horiun was able to plan his next interrogation.

The fourth interrogation was done two weeks later, on 14 November 1945. This interrogation had two parts with a break of five and a half hours in between. The first part started at 2:10 p.m. and finished at 4:20 p.m. During those two hours the investigator asked four questions and recorded two and a half handwritten pages. Even though the third interrogation have been conducted by the same investigator as the fourth, they seem to have been very different. During the third interrogation, the investigator asked questions to find out general information about his victim and the minutes gave the impression that Velychkovs'kyi was relaxed and provided long answers. However, interrogation number four was very different. From the beginning, Velychkovs'kyi was bombarded with questions and accusations about his anti-Soviet activities. This was the first question posed: "As a missionary in the Redemptorist monastery in Kovel' what kind of anti-Soviet work did you conduct among the population of Volhynia?" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 58). He answered: "I did missionary work and spreading

Catholicism in Volhynia. I was bringing Orthodox into the Greek Catholic Church and I conducted anti-Soviet propaganda. I used materials that were published in Polish pro-Nazi newspapers and also in newspapers such as *Pravda, Nova Zoria*, which were published by the Stanislaviv eparchy and which contained religious anti-Soviet calumny about life in Soviet Union. Also during prayers I conducted anti-Soviet propaganda, I encouraged the faithful to pray for those who were “persecuted by godless Bolsheviks” [emphasis as seen in the original document] (Ibid. vol.1, 58-59). From Velychkovs’kyi’s answer it is clear that he had two missions. One was to bring the population to Catholicism and the other was to agitate against the government by using ideas that he found in published newspapers. In other words, he did not write the articles and published them in newspapers; he read them and used them to develop his own ideas. His answer appears to show that he admitted to conducting anti-Soviet propaganda. This was now the third time that he confessed to the accusation. He made a similar admission during the first and second interrogation. Velychkovs’kyi was asked the same question repeatedly, which suggests that the investigator was not satisfied with his confession. Perhaps he wanted to hear more information, receive new details, and expand his victim’s admission. This technique of persistence worked, because every time Velychkovs’kyi was asked the same question, he added more facts. At first, Velychkovs’kyi admitted that only he conducted anti-Soviet propaganda, then he said that every Redemptorist agitated against the government, and now he stated that he read and used propagandistic newspapers in his sermons and encouraged people to pray for those who were persecuted by the Bolsheviks.

According to Ginsburg, the prisoners knew that “silence was golden, that [they] must reply only to direct questions, and then as briefly as possible” (Ginsburg 1967, 66). However, for some reason Velychkovs’kyi added new information even without being prompted. On top of

that he told his investigator facts that the latter could not prove. There was no evidence in the case file which would indicate that someone heard Velychkovs'kyi's sermons and could confirm that he used specific parts of the newspaper articles to speak out against the Soviet Union. Moreover, in his first complaint letter Velychkovs'kyi stated that "it is not true that as a missionary in Kovel' [...] I [...] systematically agitated people against communism, because a rigorous investigation failed to prove such accusation and did not find any witnesses" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 268). In other words, Velychkovs'kyi knew that his investigator did not have proof of his anti-Soviet activity. This raises the question of why he had willingly offered information that the investigator could not find?

First of all, it is possible that Velychkovs'kyi was forced to provide his investigator with such additions to his answers. Moreover, usually after the third or fourth interrogation, the prisoners became so drained physically and mentally that they would sign any papers placed in front of them, confess to anything that was needed in order to end the suffering. Velychkovs'kyi wrote in his autobiography that when the interrogations began his investigator shouted: "Confess! Admit your guilt!" When asked what he was supposed to confess, he was told: "You know what." Velychkovs'kyi writes: "We long suffered through such exchanges. The interrogator punished both himself and me. He threatened beatings, [...] he [...] yelled at me, pounding me with words" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 59).

The second question of the fourth interrogation was the following: "It is known that as a missionary in Volhynia you actively coordinated nationalist activities. Tell us about this in detail" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 59). Velychkovs'kyi responded: "No, I was not a Ukrainian nationalist and I did not do any nationalist work" (Ibid.vol.1, 59). The answer was short and firm, as when he was asked the same question during his first interrogation.

The third question: “You are not telling the truth. You are presented with the testimony of the former Catholic Bishop of Kovel’, Adol’f Shelenzhek from 12 March 1945, where he states that all monks of the Redemptorist monastery in Kovel’, including yourself spread nationalist ideas in Volhynia. Do you confirm Shelenzhek’s testimony?” (Ibid. vol.1, 59). Velychkovs’kyi replied: “Bishop Adol’f Shelenzhek is not telling the truth. Other monks from the Redemptorist monastery in Kovel’ and myself did not coordinate any kind of nationalist activity among the population” (Ibid. vol.1, 59). Velychkovs’kyi had already repeated twice that he was not involved in nationalist activities. Knowing that his investigator had some evidence from Bishop Shelenzhek about his nationalist activities, Velychkovs’kyi still refused to admit to the accusation. It is possible that he answered truthfully. However, there is also the possibility that Velychkovs’kyi did not believe that his investigator had evidence against him or that Shelenzhek’s testimony was given willingly. Ginzburg has described the investigators as “frightful liars” (Ginzburg 1967, 58). Velychkovs’kyi was no doubt aware that the investigators were people whom he should not trust or believe.

According to Solzhenitsyn, the testimonies and the interrogation protocols of other prisoners were also fabricated because the investigators worked on their victims in order to uncover more information, even if it did not pertain to them. The questions that the investigators asked were formulated in a way that the victim would unwillingly accuse or say something against another person or a group of people. Bishop Shelenzhek’s interrogation protocol was included in Velychkovs’kyi’s case file. Shelenzhek’s case was conducted by Maiorov, the investigator who had earlier been in charge of Velychkovs’kyi’s case. It is possible that the investigators were working together in order to help each other to find evidence among their

victims to prove their accusations. In this case, Maiorov was definitely aware of the questions he needed to ask in order to prove Velychkovs'kyi's nationalist activities.

This was the question that Shelenzhek was asked: "Tell me about the nationalist, anti-Soviet activity of the Uniate clergy." He answered:

During my numerous meetings with Roman Catholic priests of the L'viv eparchy, I was able to ascertain myself that all Ukrainian clergy from Galicia and clergy of the Greek Catholic Church were coordinating political actions that were directed to spreading Ukrainian nationalism. [...] I also had made such conclusions from the information that I was receiving about the activities of the Redemptorists. The monks of this order lived in Kovel' and they were mostly from Galicia [...]; they were spreading Ukrainian nationalist ideas. [...] Despite the fact that I do not have enough proven evidence about the nationalist anti-Soviet activity of the Uniate clergy who had Ukrainian nationality, all the objective analysis of facts concerning the developed nationalist movement in Western Ukraine convinced me that Uniate clergy was actively taking part in the activities of Ukrainian nationalists and in Bandera bands which were created to promote Ukrainian independence (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 135-136).

In his answer, Shelenzhek stated that all the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy from Galicia had been coordinating anti-Soviet nationalist activities. He did not mention specific people, but stereotypically estimated that everyone who has come from Galicia automatically was considered to be a nationalist. Therefore, because the Redemptorists who came to Volhynia were from Galicia, they were perceived as supporters and active participants of the nationalist movement. However, by providing his investigator with such conventionalized information, this

does not prove that Velychkovs'kyi was a nationalist. Shelenzhek did not talk about him specifically; he made a statement about the whole Redemptorist Order.

During the fourth interrogation, this was the fourth question that Velychkovs'kyi was asked: "In the period of German occupation did you live in the Redemptorist monastery in Kovel'?" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 60). He answered: "No, during the period of German occupation I did not live in the Redemptorist monastery in Kovel'. I left Kovel' in 1935-36 and after that I did not go there anymore" (Ibid. vol.1, 60). Velychkovs'kyi was telling the truth here, because during the time of German invasion he was sent by Metropolitan Sheptyts'kyi to work in Kamianets' Podil's'k. He had already mentioned this fact a couple of times. It is possible that Horiun had not carefully informed himself about the contents of previous minutes, or forgot this detail, or had his own reasons for repeating the same question.

During the interrogation, Bishop Shelenzhek provided his investigator with the information that "at the time of the German occupation Redemptorists from Kovel', under the direction of Velychkovs'kyi hung a portrait of Hitler in one of the main rooms of the monastery. When he went to the city of Rivne for a meeting about the Uniate Church, he conducted agitation among Ukrainian population about the establishment of an independent Ukraine" (Ibid. vol.1, 135). Since Velychkovs'kyi was not in Kovel' at that time, it is obvious that Shelenzhek either confused Velychkovs'kyi with somebody else or gave the wrong information to his investigator.

After this question and answer, the interrogation was interrupted by a break of five and a half hours. According to Borys Mirus, such interruptions were performed to allow the investigator to take a break from the hard work that he was doing, but the prisoner usually was placed into a box cell, where he would wait for the interrogation to resume. This was probably done because the victim was not cooperating, confessing, or providing the investigator with the

required information. Walter Ciszek, who was also arrested and interrogated as a political criminal stated that he was placed into a box for an hour or for the whole night and was told “to think over the questions and his answers, and decide whether or not he might be able to remember a few more details of the ‘truth’” (Ciszek 1964, 39). It is very possible that after refusing to admit to accusations of nationalism, Velychkovs’kyi was placed into a box cell for an indefinite period of time to force from him a testimony that would satisfy his investigator, while the latter was resting. Mirus stated that it was extremely hard to stay in the box for an hour. But if Velychkovs’kyi was there for the whole break, from 4:20 p.m. to 9:45 p.m., he was probably physically exhausted and would have looked forward to continuing the interrogation.

The second part of the fourth interrogation began at 9:45 p.m. and was completed at 2:05 a.m. During those four hours and twenty minutes Horiun managed to ask one question and record one page of protocol. Natalia Serdiuk, who has written a PhD thesis based on the KGB archival documents about the criminal cases against the Ukrainian Greek Catholic hierarchy arrested on 11 April 1945, found that according to the interrogations of Metropolitan Slipyj the protocols of interrogations lasting hours consisted of a couple of pages. She states: “The answers of the arrested were shorter than the investigator’s questions. There is nothing unusual in this because the investigator was always pressuring the Metropolitan to admit to anti-Soviet and nationalist accusations [...] which according to Soviet justice were qualified as the highest crime [...], the betrayal of Russia Motherland.” To accept such an accusation “meant to sign one’s own sentence to the firing squad” (Serdiuk 2013, 2). Moreover, taking into account that part of Slipyj’s investigation was conducted by Horiun, who has been described as “a terribly rude man and a simpleton,” it is obvious that Velychkovs’kyi’s interrogation protocol contained many

omissions (APSS; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996,117).<sup>14</sup> Perhaps, his refusal of the accusation of nationalism was the reason why the interrogation took so long, had only one question, and one page of protocol.

This was the question: “On 4 June 1945, [...] Bishop Charnets’kyi, as well as Bishop Shelenzhek, gave testimony that you as a missionary priest of the Redemptorist monastery in Kovel’ were actively conducting nationalist agitation by encouraging Greek Catholics to fight for Ukraine’s independence. Do you still intend to hide from the investigation the nationalist work that you were conducting?” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 60). Velychkovs’kyi very firmly repeated himself: “The testimony of Bishop Charnets’kyi is untrue, as is that of Bishop Shelenzhek; he is slandering me; I did not conduct any nationalist work. I have nothing else to add concerning this matter” (Ibid p. vol.1, 61). Velychkovs’kyi probably did not know what kind of testimony Charnets’kyi gave against him, therefore he refused to admit to the accusation of nationalism. Charnets’kyi’s interrogation was conducted on 4 June 1945. His investigator had a similar strategy as did the investigators of Velychkovs’kyi and Shelenzhek. First of all, he asked Charnets’kyi questions about the Redemptorist Order in general and their work among the people. As soon as he received the desired information, he asked Charnets’kyi to agree that all Redemptorists had conducted nationalist work and only after that he started asking questions about Velychkovs’kyi’s nationalist involvement. Charnets’kyi stated that he had been told that Velychkovs’kyi, like the other Redemptorists, “during his sermons openly coordinated nationalist agitation and encouraged Greek Catholics to fight for the establishment of Ukraine’s independence [...]. However, [he could] not state any concrete facts about [Velychkovs’kyi’s]

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<sup>14</sup> Slipyj, Metropolitan Iosyf. “Spomyny.” Typescript, 200 pp. Memoirs about metropolitan’s life up to his arrival in Rome in February 1963. Written at the Monastery of the Passionist Fathers in Nettuno, Italy in 1963-1964.

anti-Soviet nationalist work because a lot of time had passed [...] and he was not aware whether Velychkovs'kyi was a member of a nationalist organization” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 138-139). Charnets'kyi's answer, like Shelenzhek's, did not provide definite proof of Velychkovs'kyi's nationalist involvement. Charnets'kyi did not specify from whom he heard such information and was not able to state, as a fact, that Velychkovs'kyi was a nationalist.

Charnets'kyi also mentioned during his interrogation that “Velychkovs'kyi was spreading anti-Soviet literature that was published by the Greek Catholic Church among the faithful” (Ibid. vol.1, 138). He also said: “In 1941, after the German occupation [...] in Stanislaviv in the Redemptorist publication under Velychkovs'kyi's editing, a calendar appeared named the Marian calendar for the year 1942 [*Mariivs'kyi Kalendaryk na 1942 r.*]. On the last page of this calendar, there was an expression of gratitude to the German occupants for their help in releasing the Ukrainian nation from the Red horde” (Ibid. vol.1, 139). This calendar was found during Charnets'kyi's house search. It was presented to him and he confirmed that this was the calendar edited by Velychkovs'kyi, because “all the literature that was published by the Redemptorist publication was edited by Velychkovs'kyi” (Ibid. vol.1, 140).

Velychkovs'kyi's next interrogation was performed eleven days later, on 26 November 1945. It started at 13:55 p.m. and finished at 24:00 a.m. At the end of the protocol, it was stated that there was a five hour break from 17:00 p.m. until 22:00 p.m. However, in comparison with the fourth interrogation, which had also been interrupted by a break, the minutes of the fifth interrogation did not inform the reader after what specific question it interrupted, as was specified in the previous protocol. On the one hand, it makes the reader suspect that the interrogation did not have a break. However, on the other hand, Velychkovs'kyi's answers make it quite obvious that at first he denied any nationalist activity and later on he accepted the

accusation. Therefore, it is possible that during the break he was placed into the box cell again or was somehow “reminded” by his investigator about his nationalist activities and was forced to confess.

To the first two questions Velychkovs’kyi answered that he had not conducted any nationalist work and could not give any testimony about this matter. He also said: “I am not hiding anything from the investigators. I am telling the truth and I declare that I did not publish any anti-Soviet nationalist literature” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 62). Later on, he admitted that during the German occupation in 1941, he published the Marian calendar. However, he assured his investigator that it did not have anti-Soviet context and contained only information on religious topics. He has also denied Charnets’kyi’s testimony and did not agree with the fact that the calendar contained an expression of gratitude to the German invaders and calumny against the Soviet state. When it was presented to Velychkovs’kyi, he agreed that the particular calendar was the one that was published by him. He said: “I was the author and the person responsible for the calendar’s publication. [...] Yes, I was not telling the truth. In the calendar published by me [...] there are anti-Soviet expressions and words by the author such as: ‘The Ukrainian people express gratitude to God and to Blessed Mary for the liberation from the Red horde. The churches are being renovated and built, [...] crosses are being erected, the poor, the wounded and the heroic army is provided with help on the battle fields’ ...” (Ibid. vol.1, 64). Velychkovs’kyi added: “This anti-Soviet complaint was written by me in order to ask the population to contribute financially to the construction of the church in Stanislaviv dedicated to the Virgin Mary. I completely admit myself guilty of the anti-Soviet part that was included in the calendar” (Ibid. vol.1, 65-66).

When Charnets'kyi's testimony, Velychkovs'kyi's answers, and the text of the calendar are examined carefully, it is evident that Horiun interpreted the evidence that he collected in a way that supported his own ideas. During his interrogation, Charnets'kyi stated that the calendar was published by the Redemptorist Order that belonged to the Greek Catholic Church. Moreover, the second page of the calendar provides information on the publisher, which is given as: Publication of the Most Holy Redeemer (The Redemptorist Congregation). Also, Charnets'kyi did not say that the calendar had been published by Velychkovs'kyi. He repeated a couple of times that it had only been edited by him. However, when Horiun asked Velychkovs'kyi about the calendar, he made a minor change to Charnets'kyi's testimony. This is how he formulated the question: "The arrested [...] Charnets'kyi stated that the calendar was published by you [...]. Is this the calendar that you published?" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 64). Horiun did not mention anything about Velychkovs'kyi being editor of the calendar; he assumed that he was the one who published it. Therefore, when Velychkovs'kyi answered the question he not only admitted that he had included anti-Soviet statements in the calendar, but took upon himself the responsibility for the calendar's publication and its text. In other words he admitted to and became responsible for more than he was accused of.

However, even though Charnets'kyi stated that Velychkovs'kyi edited the calendar and the victim himself admitted that he published it, this did not mean that he in fact had done so. In the calendar there is nothing signed by Velychkovs'kyi and his name is not mentioned anywhere. Moreover, in his first complaint letter, Velychkovs'kyi stated: "It is not true that in Stanislaviv in 1941, I published the Marian pocket calendar of twenty pages, which had an anti-Soviet context and praised the occupation. It is true that such a calendar was published by the church group and that I was their superior. The calendar had one word in an anti-Soviet context and there was no

praise for the occupation. However, because I was not capable of remembering the names of people who worked on it and could not oppose the accusation because of my physical state - I was tortured - [...] I confessed and took all the charges upon myself” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 268). In Velychkovs’kyi’s second and fourth complaint letters, which he had written in 1965, he also stated: “during the period of my case investigation physical pressure was applied to me, causing me to confess. I could not walk by myself, I had memory losses, I was losing my consciousness, I was very sick. Because of my health situation and because of illegal methods that were used during the investigation, I was pressured to confess. I was forced to confess, to give testimony that I added anti-Soviet parts to the calendar. However, my testimony and my confession were not true, because I was forced into such confession” (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol.2, 5-6). His statements indicate that he has been pressured and physically forced to admit responsibility for the publication of the calendar and its anti-Soviet context.

The last page of the calendar proved to be the page that got Horiun’s attention. In his opinion the last page contained the anti-Soviet context. This is the sentence that was interpreted by Horiun as being pro-German: “The Ukrainian people express gratitude to God and to Blessed Mary for liberation from the Red horde” (Ibid. vol.2, 64). The investigator automatically assumed that because the calendar had been published in the same year as the Germans occupied the Western part of Ukraine, the expression of gratitude referred to them. However, the German occupation was not mentioned anywhere in the calendar. Therefore, the idea that the last page of the calendar referred to the Germans was just the investigator’s assumption and his own interpretation.

Velychkovs’kyi was a Redemptorist priest living in the monastery, and it is obvious that he would have praised and given thanks “to God and to Blessed Mary for the liberation from

the Red horde” and not to the German occupants (Ibid. vol.2, 64). Moreover, this was not a political but a religious calendar, and was published for a particular reason: “in order to ask the population to contribute financially to the construction of the church in Stanislaviv dedicated to the Blessed Mary” (Ibid. vol.2, 64). The part of the last page that was considered anti-Soviet consisted of two words: “Red horde.” It could be taken as a reference either to the Red Army or to the Soviet Union. Therefore, the accusation of anti-Sovietism was two-fold: for calumniating the Soviet State and for expressing gratitude to the Germans. The charge of anti-Sovietism was the interpretation of one person, the investigator. However, that was enough for Velychkovs’kyi at the time to fully accept all the charges.

More than twenty years after his arrest Velychkovs’kyi still remembered and was able to describe in his autobiography the interrogation about the Marian calendar. He wrote:

One night, the investigator fixes me with a glance, eyes shining, and blurts out: “... And now I will prove to you your anti-Soviet agitation!” He shows me a little pocket calendar printed in Stanislaviv during the German occupation, in which, after the calendar section, there was [...] a prayer of thanksgiving: “... we are grateful that God liberated us from the Red band... We ask, we pray, to Jesus and Mary, that they safeguard us from [...] the Red horde.” Those two words: *band* and *horde*. Nowhere, to be sure, [...] had I written this. But there was no escaping it: he manoeuvred me into tactically acknowledging, accepting the responsibility for the [prayer] – for those expressions (Velychkovs’kyi 2002, 59).

The autobiography was written a long time after the arrest, which is why he did not quote the exact passage in the calendar. However, his quotation is very close to the original. This statement

shows that Velychkovs'kyi was forced to confess that he has been responsible for adding the anti-Soviet part to the calendar.

Velychkovs'kyi had no choice but to confess to the accusations about the calendar. Mirus said: "I was advised by the investigator and by the experienced fellow prisoners to confess and sign the protocol because this was the only way to release myself from the tortures of NKVD investigators. There was no other way because no one had yet escaped from their hands and no one was released. They would put me in the grave either here, during the investigation, or would send me to torturers" (Mirus 2000, 101). Therefore, by confessing, Velychkovs'kyi was probably able to speed up the investigation and also escape from more persecution. This is evidently why after the fifth interrogation, the investigation started to proceed faster. Now, there were only a couple of days between interrogations.

For the first five interrogations, Horiun took his time and did not rush Velychkovs'kyi's case to court. According to the RSFSR Code of Criminal Procedure for 1926, a period of custody during the investigation of offences in criminal cases may not last longer than two months. Therefore, if Velychkovs'kyi's formal investigation began on 18 September 1945, then according to the law it had to be over by 18 November. However, by that time Horiun had only managed to conduct five interrogations and was not ready to pass Velychkovs'kyi's case to the court.

Horiun was aware from the beginning that by dragging out the investigation the way it was done, Velychkovs'kyi's case would not be completed on time. He was not in a hurry because he knew that this time-limit could be extended up to three months. According to Solzhenitsyn, if there were difficulties and more time was required to find enough evidence, or the victim did not cooperate, the prosecutor could be asked for several continuations, which were

never refused. Taking into account the investigator's need to raise work norms, his nights spent trying to find evidence, working "with voice and fist in the initial assault week of every interrogation," the interrogators probably had an interest in "dragging out the last days of every case as long as possible" (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 139). Therefore, the investigators usually took advantage of the postponements.

On 30 November 1945, Horiun sent a request to the USSR General of the NKVD prison in Kyiv asking for permission to extend the deadline of Velychkovs'kyi's case investigation. According to the request document, the investigation had to be completed by 7 December 1945. However, he wrote that "Velychkovs'kyi is hiding his nationalist work [...] and it is necessary to conduct a number of enquiries to uncover his nationalist activities [...], to document his anti-Soviet activity in the city where he previously worked and lived, to interrogate and conduct face-to-face interrogations with witnesses: Khomyshyn H., Liatashevs'kyi I., Boichuk A" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 173). Horiun asked for a one-month extension. He was hoping to have his investigation completed by 7 January 1946. In order to meet the deadline, the interrogations became more frequent.

Four days after the fifth interrogation, on 1 December 1946, Velychkovs'kyi was called for his sixth interrogation. It started at 1:35 p.m. According to the protocol, without any opposition or resistance, Velychkovs'kyi started to answer the first question and confessed to the accusation facing him. As soon as Horiun asked him to tell the investigation about the anti-Soviet demonstration that he conducted in Stanislaviv during the German invasion, Velychkovs'kyi provided all the needed information. He stated that on 2 August 1941, after the occupation of the city of Stanislaviv by the German army, he conducted a Thanksgiving celebration that was dedicated to the arrival of the German invaders and the proclamation of an

“independent Ukrainian state” by the nationalists. In order to prepare and conduct this celebration, at the end of July of that year, he asked permission from a representative of the city council. Upon approval, Velychkovs’kyi encouraged the faithful to attend by posting posters everywhere in the city and also in neighbouring villages. Moreover, he asked Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn to conduct a pontifical divine liturgy at the city square. The Bishop asked his assistant Bishop Ivan Liatashevs’kyi to conduct the liturgy. On the day of the celebration, at 10:00 a.m. under Velychkovs’kyi’s organization and supervision, there was a procession from the Redemptorist monastery to the city square. A lot of people came for the procession and some of them carried Ukrainian blue-and-yellow flags. Liatashevs’kyi and Velychkovs’kyi celebrated the liturgy and at the end Velychkovs’kyi preached an anti-Soviet sermon in which he “congratulated the people with liberation from the Red horde, [...] [he] said that they are standing on the new free path and all of this happened thanks to the German army” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 69). After the liturgy there was a procession from the city square back to the monastery.

This interrogation was completed at 16:50 p.m. During those three hours and twenty minutes, Velychkovs’kyi presented the whole story of his anti-Soviet and nationalist activity. He provided his investigator with details and it made his statement sound informative and truth worthy. Even though the question that Horiun asked referred only to his anti-Soviet activity, Velychkovs’kyi added information about his nationalist involvement. He stated that he organized the procession to honour the German army and had an anti-Soviet sermon at the end of the liturgy. Moreover, he also pointed out the fact that the procession was conducted to celebrate the proclamation of an “independent Ukrainian state” by the nationalists and at the celebration there were people with Ukrainian flags. One procession, Velychkovs’kyi indicated, celebrated two events: one was anti-Soviet and the other nationalist. By admitting that he organized and

conducted the procession, he agreed to both accusations. He confirmed that he conducted agitation against the government and was involved in supporting the nationalists. During the previous interrogations, Velychkovs'kyi did not accept the accusations of nationalism, but now for some reason, even without being asked, he started to provide information about his involvement.

Velychkovs'kyi willingly gave the testimony about the procession that he organized in August 1941. However, this was not the first time that he conducted a procession. As a priest and the superior of the Redemptorist Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Stanislaviv, it was obvious that he was in charge of all the celebrations in his parish. Moreover, it is normal for a priest to organize religious celebrations and processions. In his autobiography, Velychkovs'kyi told the story of one such procession organized by him in Stanislaviv in June 1940, in honour of the Feast Day of the Mother of God of Perpetual Help. The festival included an open-air celebration of the Divine Liturgy, a procession on the main streets of the city and a sermon upon return to the church. Close to twenty thousand people came to the large open area in front of the monastery and joined the celebration. After the mass, a parade formed. The priests carried the icon of the Mother of God of Perpetual Help; people carried many banners adorned with blue-and-yellow ribbons, and many boys who served as monitors wore blue-and-yellow arm bands (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 37). Despite the fact that the city at that time had been occupied by the Soviet authorities, Velychkovs'kyi assumed the responsibility of organizing and conducting this annual Feast Day celebration.

According to Velychkovs'kyi's autobiography this was a religious celebration that was filled with "prayerful exaltation" (Ibid. 2002, 39). Both celebrations, the one in 1940 and 1941 were very similar. However, during the interrogation, the celebration in 1941 was described by

Velychkovs'kyi not as a religious event but as political and nationalist. Even though he testified that the nationalists were present at the celebration, it does not mean that it was conducted for a nonreligious purpose. The fact that they carried banners with blue-and-yellow ribbons does not mean that Velychkovs'kyi ordered them to do so. Moreover, in his first complaint letter Velychkovs'kyi stated that the procession in 1941 and his sermon did not have an anti-Soviet context, and was not done to praise the occupants. This was strictly a religious event and a sermon without any anti-Soviet demonstration or nationalist greetings (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 263).

There is one very interesting aspect of Velychkovs'kyi's sixth interrogation. On 30 November 1945, one day before his sixth interrogation, Ivan Liatashevs'kyi and Bishop Khomyshyn were questioned by Horiun, who also was their investigator, and were asked to provide all the information known about Velychkovs'kyi. It was essential for the investigator to get information not only about the person who was interrogated but also to uncover others who could also be involved in some criminal activity. First of all, Liatashevs'kyi gave a full description of the procession that was organized by Velychkovs'kyi in Stanislaviv in 1941, with permission from Khomyshyn. As soon as Liatashevs'kyi's interrogation was completed, Horiun interrogated Khomyshyn for seven and a half hours and recorded a protocol that was only six handwritten pages long. It was a night-time interrogation and finished at 4:00 a.m. The whole interrogation was dedicated to discovering information about Velychkovs'kyi. Just like Liatashevs'kyi, Khomyshyn specified a lot of details about the procession. The next day, Velychkovs'kyi was interrogated by the same investigator and he willingly provided unrequired evidence that matched exactly the words of Liatashevs'kyi and Khomyshyn. He practically repeated their testimonies. Therefore, Liatashevs'kyi and Khomyshyn might have been asked to

give such testimonies about Velychkovs'kyi, while the latter might have been pressured to confirm the story and, as was often the case, “to provide the evidence from which the case against [him] would be constructed” (Applebaum 2003, 138). By giving the desired evidence that matched the witnesses’ testimonies and by confessing, Velychkovs'kyi helped the investigator to carry out his work and feel confident in its legitimacy. The confession was seen as proof of guilt. Robert Conquest had written that “the principle had become established that a confession was the best result obtainable. Those who could obtain it were to be considered successful operatives” (Conquest 1992, 130). Therefore, it was possible that Horiun after receiving the needed testimony from Liatashevs'kyi and Khomyshyn, demanded evidence, confession, and incrimination from Velychkovs'kyi.

In 1947, Stalin wrote a letter to Viktor Abakumov, a high level Soviet security services official in Spain. In it, he specifically noted that the primary task of an investigator was to try to get from the arrestee a “true and open confession, with the goal not only of establishing the guilt of the arrestee, but also of uncovering those to whom he was linked, as well as those directing his criminal activity and their enemy plans” (Hoover; quoted in Applebaum 2003, 139).<sup>15</sup> The fact that the nationalist part of Velychkovs'kyi's confession was forced from him becomes obvious during the next interrogation. Interrogation number seven was done on 4 December 1945. It was another night interrogation which started at 9:10 p.m. and ended at 1:15 a.m. During this interrogation Velychkovs'kyi kept denying his involvement with the nationalists and repeated several times that he “did not have any connection with Ukrainian nationalist organizations... and was not taking part in the administrative authorities that were organized by the nationalists during the German invasion” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 71). According to the protocol of the

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<sup>15</sup> Hoover, fond 89,18/12, reel I.994, Getty and Naumov, pp.530-37

previous interrogation, Velychkovs'kyi had confessed to conducting a nationalist procession. Nevertheless, now he claimed that the procession had only an anti-Soviet content.

Velychkovs'kyi was also presented with the testimony given by a witness, Avksentii Boichuk, who previously had been a rector of the Theological Seminary in Stanislaviv. Horiun wanted to prove to Velychkovs'kyi his nationalist involvement and quoted parts of Boichuk's testimony. Horiun said that according to Boichuk, Velychkovs'kyi "by being an advisor of the Ukrainian nationalist administrative authorities, took an active part in the organization" (Ibid. vol.1, 71). However, Velychkovs'kyi rejected the testimony given against him.

Boichuk's interrogation was added to Velychkovs'kyi's case file. It is known that Boichuk's interrogation was conducted on 3 December 1945, one day before Velychkovs'kyi's seventh interrogation, and it was done by the same investigator. It is evident that Horiun edited Boichuk's testimony and presented it to Velychkovs'kyi in his own words. Boichuk stated that in Stanislaviv, there was a form of "self-government organized by the Ukrainian nationalists in which Velychkovs'kyi took an active part" (Ibid. vol.1, 160). Boichuk did not mention that Velychkovs'kyi was an advisor of the nationalist political groups. This was Horiun's interpretation.

Moreover, in his testimony, Boichuk clearly assured his investigator about the impossibility of Velychkovs'kyi being a Ukrainian nationalist. He said: "Velychkovs'kyi is a monk and according to the monastic restrictions and orders, he does not have the right to be in the leadership of any governing authorities of the city, which are organized by the nationalists; therefore he is a *radianshchik* (a Soviet citizen) [emphasis as seen in the original document] (Ibid. vol.1, 160). By this statement, Boichuk not only showed that Velychkovs'kyi's procession was not planned as a nationalist demonstration, but at the same time indicated that he was not

and could not have been a member of a Ukrainian nationalist organization. However, this part of Boichuk's testimony was not taken into account.

Bishop Khomyshyn, during his interrogation on 21 May 1945, also stated that Velychkovs'kyi told him that "Ukrainian nationalists from Stanislaviv were asking him to join the city's self-government, but he answered that his monastic life did not allow him to do so" (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol.2, 42). Khomyshyn's statement also demonstrates that Velychkovs'kyi might have been a supporter of the nationalists but not a member of their organization.

Velychkovs'kyi was not able to be a member of a nationalist organization because he was prohibited from a membership by the Constitutions and Rules of the C.Ss.R. (The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer). According to Canon law, Redemptorist priests "shall bind themselves not to aspire, directly or indirectly, to any kind of dignity, benefice, or office outside the Congregation [...]. This must be observed with scrupulous exactness, under the gravest penalties and transgressors can even be expelled from the Congregation" (Murray 1939, 27). In order to be obedient and observe the rules, Velychkovs'kyi, while practicing his apostolic work had to do "nothing to transgress [the rules] but to try everything in order to satisfy and please them. Since by virtue of the Rule, [he] had no right to work outside the House without the permission of the Ordinaries" (Ibid. 1939, 171). This means that Velychkovs'kyi, or any other person who belonged to the Congregation, was forbidden from engaging in any other organization or performing any work that would be less of a benefit to the Church.

Also, for the sake of his congregation Velychkovs'kyi could not join a nationalist organization. Any political involvement could have placed his congregation in danger. He had to protect not only his order but also the faithful. Moreover, he had to "most carefully guard against giving even the least shadow of bad example" and to behave in a way that deserved "the

reputation and esteem of the people” (Ibid. 1939, 111). Velychkovs’kyi had to be a good role model and could not disappoint anyone by creating trouble for the Congregation.

Velychkovs’kyi would not allow himself to be part of the nationalists because he would not go against the opinions and directives of Metropolitan Sheptyts’kyi. The Metropolitan was known as a “religious leader and an ethnarch [leader of the nation].” He represented “not only the interests of the religious community but also of the whole Ukrainian population of Galicia” (Behen; quoted in Zaitsev 2011, 99). On 12 February 1923 Metropolitan Sheptyts’kyi wrote: “I always try not to support one party instead of another [...]. I have to be very careful not to upset anyone” (Mytropolyt Andrei 1999; quoted in Zaitsev 2011, 132). The Metropolitan was greatly involved in Ukrainian political life and supported the aspirations of the Ukrainian people to statehood. He was careful to avoid involvement with a particular political organization because it could have been interpreted as involvement of the Catholic Church with the nationalists.

According to the Constitution of C.S.S.R., Redemptorists had to be obedient to their ruling government, “so that it may be said of them that they have no will of their own, but that it is wholly in the hands of those who rule them” (Murray 1939, 28). Therefore, it is likely that Velychkovs’kyi, as an obedient Redemptorist and a follower of the Metropolitan’s ideas, would also prioritize the needs of the church. In other words, he would organize the celebration and the procession for the benefit of the church and not for the nationalists.

During the seventh interrogation not only Boichuk’s testimony was presented to Velychkovs’kyi but also statements of two more witnesses, Bishop Khomyshyn and Ivan Liatashevs’kyi. Both provided evidence of Velychkovs’kyi’s nationalist involvement and leadership. Even though during the interrogation in May 1945, Khomyshyn had stated that Velychkovs’kyi was not able to be politically active and refused the proposition from the

nationalists. When Khomyshyn was questioned on 30 November 1945, he changed his testimony and claimed that Velychkovs'kyi was an active nationalist. Because there was a gap of six months between the interrogations, it is possible that by November, Khomyshyn was more vulnerable to provide his investigator with the needed information.

According to Horiun, Khomyshyn said that in June 1941 Velychkovs'kyi advised Khomyshyn and his assistant Liatashevs'kyi to acknowledge the proclamation of Ukrainian independence by nationalists in Lviv by contributing an article to the newspaper Independent Ukraine (*Samostiina Ukraina*). Liatashevs'kyi gave the same testimony. However, Velychkovs'kyi denied both testimonies and said that he did not give any of such propositions to Khomyshyn or to Liatashevs'kyi.

At the end of November 1945, Liatashevs'kyi and Khomyshyn made statements about Velychkovs'kyi's idea of writing such an article. However, during the interrogation in May 1945, Khomyshyn gave a very different testimony about this matter. First, Khomyshyn said that the monk Pylypovych came to his house with the proposition to write an article for the newspaper. Then, Khomyshyn changed his statement and said that it was Velychkovs'kyi. However, when he was confronted with Liatashevs'kyi's testimony, Khomyshyn changed his statement again and said the following: "if Liatashevs'kyi is saying that it was Hryholyns'kyi [...] who came to me with that proposition, then I agree with his testimony because I know that he cannot lie. Therefore, I conclude that Velychkovs'kyi came to me first and then Hryholyns'ky. However, I myself do not remember this" (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol.2, 42). After reading this interrogation protocol it is very hard to understand who really came to Khomyshyn and who advised him to write and place such an article in the newspaper. However, he provided his investigator with the names of three people on whom this accusation could be pinned.

Therefore, it is possible that Horiun pressured Liatashevs'kyi and Khomyshyn to change their statements during the November interrogations.

In order to prove Velychkovs'kyi's involvement with the newspaper greeting, on 6 December 1945 Horiun organized a face-to-face interrogation with Khomyshyn. During the interrogation, Khomyshyn repeated his testimony about Velychkovs'kyi's proposition to write the greeting and also about the procession that he conducted in Stanislaviv in 1941. After hearing Khomyshyn's testimony, Velychkovs'kyi without any opposition agreed to everything that had been said. Therefore, it is possible that two days before, on 4 December, during the seventh interrogation, Velychkovs'kyi denied the testimony of Khomyshyn and Liatashevs'kyi about the greeting. The face-to-face interrogation with the witness reminded him of what had happened. However, it is also possible that when Velychkovs'kyi saw Khomyshyn, a seventy-eight-year-old bishop who had probably been exhausted from the interrogations and prison life to the point that he died in prison shortly after on 28 December 1945, Velychkovs'kyi supported his testimony in order to save Khomyshyn from any further interrogations.

It is also a possibility that Horiun forced Khomyshyn to give such testimony and/or demanded that Velychkovs'kyi confess to it. Borys Mirus also had a face-to-face interrogation. In his book he described the process. He said that "one of the investigator's proficiencies was the face-to-face confrontation with the witness who was being worked on by the investigator himself" (Mirus 2000, 100-101).

During the last part of the face-to-face confrontation, Khomyshyn added that "Velychkovs'kyi told him that we should not exclude nationalists from the church because they want to be with us and support our church" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 169). This suggests that Velychkovs'kyi wanted the church to be open to everyone and his parishioners who were

nationalists or had nationalist views were not excluded or discriminated because of their political involvement. However, Horiun interpreted this in his own way and asked: “Do you agree that you advised Khomyshyn to support the nationalists?” (Ibid. vol.1, 169). Velychkovs’kyi answered: “No, I did not give him any advice to support the nationalists; I told him that the nationalists want to be with us and we should not push them away from the church” (Ibid. vol.1, 169). This shows that Velychkovs’kyi had to be extremely alert during his interrogations because it was very easy to agree to a small detail that might have become potential evidence against his own case.

The newspaper greeting was published in Stanislaviv on 10 July 1941. This was the text of the greeting: “I bless the Ukrainian independent state. From the bottom of my soul I am thankful to our Lord for hearing our pleadings and prayers. I pray to God that the Ukrainian state might be based on God’s laws and provide happiness, prosperity, and a peaceful life to all Ukrainian citizens whatever their religious, national and social differences. Stanislaviv, 6 July 1941. [Signed by] + Bishop Hryhorii” (Samostiina Ukraina 1941, 3). Having read the greeting, one might interpret it as nationalistic, a praise to the nationalists for establishing an independent Ukraine. However, according to the Canon Law, the members of the Congregation were forbidden to write “in public newspapers or periodical reviews, on political questions, nor as a rule, on controversial subjects” (Murray 1939, 135). Therefore, this greeting could not have had a nationalistic context. Instead it could be interpreted as a religious greeting. Bishop Khomyshyn, who signed the greeting, has expressed his gratitude to God and prayed that the government would follow the principles of the Church. It was formulated as advice of unity and equality. Moreover, Oleksandr Zaitsev has stated that the Catholic Church has always been a carrier of universalism. In this Church, everyone “whatever their nationality, ethnicity, social status, or

gender [...] is more important than any kind of group identity” (Zaitsev 2011, 7). The Catholic Church has been neutral and conservative in order not to divide the population.

In Velychkovs’kyi’s first letter of complaint, he explained his view of why the greeting was published. He stated: “It is not true that I persuaded the Bishop of Stanislaviv [Khomyshyn] to place a greeting in the newspaper concerning the nationalist Ukrainian government in L’viv. The truth is that I answered that it would be beneficial to announce a blessing so that the government might be fair to every citizen despite its religious and national differences” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 268). Moreover, Velychkovs’kyi could not have praised the nationalist Ukrainian government because there had not been any nationalist government established. The Germans immediately arrested those who made the proclamation and never allowed any form of self-government or national statehood.

On 26 November 1965, twenty years after Velychkovs’kyi’s first arrest he wrote a second complaint letter. In it he tried to prove to the authorities that his arrest was based on false accusations. This complaint letter also had a section about the greeting. Velychkovs’kyi wrote: “Khomyshyn asked me if he should give a blessing for the Ukrainian nationalistic government in L’viv [...] and I answered that he could urge that the government be fair to everyone, whatever their nationality, religion and beliefs” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 91). Therefore, according to Velychkovs’kyi’s letters, Khomyshyn himself asked if he should have written a greeting and Velychkovs’kyi agreed to his idea.

On the evening of the day that the face-to-face interrogation was completed, 6 December 1945, Velychkovs’kyi had his eighth interrogation. Here his investigator accused him of coming to Khomyshyn with the proposition about the greeting not because it was his own idea but because it was an assignment given to him by the nationalists. However, Velychkovs’kyi

rejected this accusation and made it clear again that he has not been a member of a nationalist organization. He has only been a supporter of Ukraine's independence and gave Khomyshyn the idea about the greeting only to support the proclamation of Ukraine's independence.

Interrogation number nine lasted for three days, twenty-five hours and forty minutes. It was different from other interrogations because this one was not about Velychkovs'kyi. He was not questioned about his own case. Horiun wanted to know general information about the whole Redemptorist Order. This interrogation had two parts and two breaks. The first part lasted fifteen hours. It started on 11 December 1945, at 11:10 a.m., and it was interrupted on 12 December at 1:50 a.m. There was a break on 12 December, between 3:25 p.m. and 10:50. According to the five pages of a handwritten protocol, the first part of the interrogation consisted only of three question and answers. The first answer was short; Velychkovs'kyi informed his investigator that he had belonged to the Redemptorist order since 1924. In the second question, Horiun asked about the history of the Redemptorist Order. Velychkovs'kyi explained, just as he did during the earlier interrogations, the origin, duties, and work of the Redemptorists. In answer to the last question, Horiun wanted Velychkovs'kyi to provide information about the anti-Soviet activities of the Redemptorists. Velychkovs'kyi answered that by following the instructions that the Redemptorists obtained from the Vatican, they and the "whole Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church are organizing an active battle against the revolutionary regime, communist, and materialist conceptions. [...] Redemptorists are fighting to save the capitalist order" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 85). The Church treats the Soviet Union with hostility because "the Church is separated from the state, schools; it is deprived of economic and political privileges [...]; the confiscation of the Catholic premises and private properties also does not agree with the Church's views [...]. Therefore, the whole Catholic clergy has started to support all the forces of opposition fighting

against the Soviet state” (Ibid. vol.1, 86). After Velychkovs’kyi’s answer the interrogation was interrupted and he might have been placed into the box cell to wait for the second part.

The second part of the interrogation started on 12 December 1945 at 12:10 p.m. and was completed on 13 December at 2:15 a.m. There was also a break from 5:00 p.m. until 9:45 p.m. Velychkovs’kyi was interrogated for ten hours and twenty minutes. Horiun recorded seven and a half pages of protocol. As soon as the second part started, Horiun wanted Velychkovs’kyi to continue talking about the anti-Soviet activities of the Redemptorists. Velychkovs’kyi added some information about the Redemptorists publishing pamphlets and articles which had anti-Soviet agitation and that in the theological seminary in L’viv the priests agitating against the Soviet Union. All of this, he said, was done in accordance with instructions from the Vatican, especially when in 1930 Pope Pius XI published an “Encyclical on Godless Communism” in which he railed against the Soviet Union and its ideas.

Velychkovs’kyi was interrogated for more than twenty-five hours over three days. This was the longest interrogation during the investigation of his case. It gives an idea of how severe and exhausting the interrogations were. Cardinal Slipyj recalled in his autobiography: “I was taken to interrogations day and night so that I was literally falling off my feet and had to be supported when led to the investigating judge ... My investigation was conducted by Horiun, later the KGB chief in L’viv. [...] When I was already totally exhausted by interrogations, I was led to several colonels, who began terrorizing me [...]. Further attacks began, but they led nowhere because I was already fainting from weakness” (APSS; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996, 117).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Slipyj, Metropolitan Iosyf. “Spomyny.”

Velychkovs'kyi's ninth interrogation was probably one of the most difficult ones, not only because it was long, but also because he was asked to provide evidence about the crimes of the whole Redemptorist congregation. According to the Canon Law "BY FAR THE MOST GRIEVOUS [fault] would be committed by him who should dare to reveal to outsiders what is going on in the Congregation, and especially what might cause scandal or wonder, and also anything that in any way could harm either the whole Congregation, or any individual member of it, or might hinder some special affair, affecting the welfare of the Institute" (emphases as seen in the book) (Murray 1939, 183). Informing his interrogator about the anti-Soviet and nationalist activities of his whole congregation was extremely hard for Velychkovs'kyi.

The fact that this interrogation had not been about Velychkov'skyi's case and yet a great amount of time was devoted to it suggests that incrimination of the whole group of people was a lot more important than the crimes of one person. Perhaps the reason behind this interrogation was the collection of information that could have lead to the arrest of others or gather materials against the other prisoners.

Interrogation number ten was conducted on 17 December 1945. It started at 11:25 p.m. and was completed at 2:25 a.m. This interrogation was very similar to the previous one. Horiun wanted to know information about the anti-Soviet involvement of Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests and Redemptorists during the German invasion. Velychkovs'kyi provided some general information about the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy and immediately switched to his own case. He repeated again the story about his unsuccessful trip to Kamianets' Podil's'k. Even though Velychkovs'kyi has been interrogated for three hours, according to the protocol the interrogation was not very informative about anti-Soviet activities of the Catholic clergy and Redemptorists.

The eleventh interrogation was the last. It started on 7 January 1946 at 9:30 p.m. and was completed on 8 January 1946 at 2:00 p.m. with a break between 1:50 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. According to the extension document that Horiun asked for in November, 7 January was the last day to complete Velychkovs'kyi's case. This interrogation was undertaken to conclude and to sum up all the key points, accusations, and evidence against Velychkovs'kyi's criminal activity in order to prepare for the closing of the investigation. The first three questions were about the history and work of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy and Redemptorists and about their involvement in spreading Catholicism among the population in accordance with the Vatican's politics. Velychkovs'kyi provided historical facts about the Redemptorist congregation and their missionary work in Volhynia.

The fourth question was about the newspaper clipping that was found and confiscated in Velychkovs'kyi's papers during the house search back in August of 1945. The article was called Return to the Faith of Your Ancestors (*Vertaite do Viry Bat'kiv*). In this article, the author encouraged people to leave the Russian Orthodox Church and join the Uniate Church. During the interrogation, Horiun wanted to know why this article was in Velychkovs'kyi's possession. He answered that this article described the work that has been done by the Redemptorists in Volhynia. It was their mission to bring the Orthodox population to Catholicism. According to Horiun, this article was found during the house search back in August. The last interrogation is the only time he asked Velychkovs'kyi about it. Therefore, it could be that for Horiun this article did not have an anti-Soviet context, and that is why there were no further questions about it. It is also possible that Horiun have not had enough time to look for evidence and proof that this article was used by Velychkovs'kyi for anti-Soviet purposes.

Questions five to eight have been about the anti-Soviet activities of Redemptorists and Ukrainian Greek Catholic clergy. During the ninth interrogation, Velychkovs'kyi repeated his testimony about the anti-Soviet involvement of the whole Redemptorist Congregation. Moreover, he added that he himself did not agree with the government's regulations, completely supported the ideas that were written by Pope Pius XI in the Encyclical on Godless Communism and he talked about it during his sermons. It seems that Velychkovs'kyi was not hiding his negative attitude towards the Soviet Union, its rulers and policies. During most of his interrogations he did not reject the fact that he did not support the Soviet government; he shared his negative thoughts about it with others. In his autobiography he also expressed this opinion. He said: "we knew, from the newspapers and from witnesses who fled here, about the destruction and the burning of churches, crosses, icons; about the killing of bishops, priests; about the destruction of all religion. And I, according to my conscience, had to preach and to call the people to pray that God, by His powerful strength, would stem that wild, destructive force" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 40-41).

For question number nine, he again repeated the story about the procession he conducted in Stanislaviv in 1941 and mentioned that it had an anti-Soviet context. However, he again rejected the accusation that he was a nationalist. For the tenth and eleventh question, he retold the story about placing a greeting in the nationalist newspaper. Nevertheless, he did not agree that this was an assignment given to him by nationalists.

Velychkovs'kyi was then asked about the Marian calendar and its anti-Soviet context. He gave the same testimony as he did before and confirmed that he added to the calendar the anti-Soviet part. Because Velychkovs'kyi kept denying his nationalistic involvement, Horiun asked him to explain the nationalist style of the calendar's cover page. It had an icon of the

Mother of Perpetual Help and around it there was an image of the trident, which was the symbol of independent Ukraine as proclaimed in 1918. Velychkovs'kyi stated that after the German occupation and the proclamation of Ukraine's independence everything was performed in a nationalist style. He wanted to "bring the nationalists to the Church" and did not care about their nationalist involvement" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 123). Moreover, he agreed that it was a mistake to bring the nationalists to the Church by creating such a cover.

The investigation of Velychkovs'kyi's case started on 18 September 1945 and was completed on 7 January 1946. It took almost four month to build the case of his criminal activity. By the end of the investigation, Horiun was able to verify Velychkovs'kyi's anti-Soviet actions either by physically forcing him to admit to accusations or by making him confess willingly by providing fabricated evidence. Even though Velychkovs'kyi confessed a number of times and admitted himself guilty of organizing anti-Soviet propaganda, to the end he rejected the accusations of nationalism. Despite the difficulties he had to face during that four month of prison life, he had to be stronger than the interrogator and the whole investigative process. Velychkovs'kyi had to survive interrogations and still retain enough strength to face the court and then ten long years of hard labour in prison camps (Ibid. 1974, 94).

## Chapter 4

### Final Indictment and Sentence

Immediately after the eleventh interrogation, Horiun was prepared to close Velychkovs'kyi's case investigation. 8 January 1946 was the day on which he planned to wrap up the process and complete all the documents. One of the first documents done on that day was an arrestee form: a questionnaire about the arrested person that included Velychkovs'kyi's personal particulars, general information about him and his family, his identification details such as height, weight, and eye colour, his photograph, and the fingerprints of his right hand. This is how Mirus described the process of taking the fingerprints: "I was brought to the laboratory. Here they put ink on my hands and took prints of my hands and some fingers. I was told to undress and they checked my body for tattoos and scars – identifiable marks. [...] Then a photograph was taken of my face from the front and side" (Mirus 2000, 96). Mirus experienced this process immediately after his arrest but Velychkovs'kyi's form was not filled out until the investigation was completed. Even though Velychkovs'kyi's mug shot is black and white, it is very evident that during his case investigation he had been physically abused. His face was quite swollen; there was a large bruise around his left eye, and his right eyebrow had a couple of lesions that had started to heal. All these were the signs of beatings and physical torture.

The other document done on the same day (8 January 1946) was an order to destroy the items that were found during Velychkovs'kyi's house search. Horiun specified: "all the following papers [religious items and books, correspondences, and notepads] ... have no value and have no evidence for the investigation" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 33). The only two things that were saved and used as material evidence of Velychkovs'kyi's incriminating actions were the newspaper clipping "Return to the Faith of Your Ancestors" and the copy of the Marian

calendar. All the other items were destroyed on the same day. The items that belonged to Velychkovs'kyi, the things that he collected and used, especially the religious objects that he valued, were never been returned even though they were not incriminating. In 2005, during an interview Father Mykhailo Sabryha said that religious items and books in those times were “more important and more valuable than gold. It was real religious gold, which we did not have enough of. [Therefore], it was an extreme misfortune when they were confiscated” (BVV, f.2, III, C, tape 6A). Moreover, usually the religious items were never returned, even upon request. During an interview Sister Iustyna Tverdokhlib revealed that she wrote many letters and requests to the NKVD police offices to return confiscated religious items. Some of them were returned but most of items were not given back to their owners.

The other document, also dated 8 January 1946, was the protocol about the completion of Velychkovs'kyi's case investigation: “It informed [... him] that the investigation of his case had been completed and all the material had been send to the procurator” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 178). Velychkovs'kyi was asked if he “wished to add any information to his investigation file to which he replied that he had familiarized himself with the materials of his case and had nothing to add” (Ibid, 178). This statement suggests that he read, understood, and agreed to all the documents that were in his investigation case file, and there was nothing that he would like to correct, add, or oppose.

In the protocol about the completion of Velychkovs'kyi's case investigation, it has also been stated that his case could have been closed because there were no letters of complaints from him, which was supposed to indicate that he agreed to the way the investigation was conducted. However, according to Joseph Berger, a former Soviet prisoner, the reason that there were no complaint letters was often due to the fact that “no one had been allowed to protest or argue

about the evil doings of the state or even to refer to them. So a man who had been arrested, interrogated, tortured and then released was always made to sign a paper promising that he would not even reveal to anyone the fact that he had been arrested” (Berger 1971, 244). By reading Velychkovs’kyi’s case file, it is evident that he wrote his first complaint letter in 1954, after Stalin’s death. He had to wait for almost ten years to protest because before that date, complaining against the authorities or the government was seen a criminal act. It is possible that Velychkovs’kyi, just like other prisoners, was not aware of the right to protest.

According to Velychkovs’kyi’s case file, no documents were added to this protocol until May 1946. For more than four month, he had waited for the concluding denunciation. On 13 May 1946, Velychkovs’kyi was presented with the long awaited final indictment. This document consists of an account of the substance of the case, the evidence against the accused and a formal accusation. Usually, when the investigation was completed, the prisoner was presented with his case file. Sometimes it was the first time that he was able to see and read the protocols, documents, and incriminating evidence that was collected by the investigator. Even though the prisoner willingly signed the final denunciation, it did not necessarily mean that he had agreed to it.

Mirus also remembers signing his final indictment. His investigator told him: “Finally you have signed, you would be in jail anyways but because of your stubbornness I could not receive the rank of colonel [...] because of your unwillingness to sign I suffered some financial losses” (Mirus 2000, 101). The investigators worked so zealously on the cases of their prisoners and pressured them to sign the final verdict only because, for them the needed results meant an elevation of their personal standing.

Velychkovs'kyi's concluding indictment had a list of accusations. He was formally accused of conducting anti-Soviet propaganda by preaching sermons with an anti-Soviet content, organizing anti-Soviet organizations, supporting the anti-Soviet activities of the Ukrainian nationalists by writing greeting in a nationalist newspaper, organizing an anti-Soviet celebration in honour of the German occupants, and publishing anti-Soviet nationalist literature. The investigator had proof for all the charges listed above and most importantly the accused agreed to the accusations presented to him. Therefore, Horiun decided to send Velychkovs'kyi's case file and the final indictment to the procurator. He included Velychkovs'kyi's personal documents, which had been taken from him during the search on the first day of his arrival in the Kyiv prison, and the material evidence that has been collected during the investigation. The concluding indictment also had a list of people who had to appear in court. However, Horiun did not specify names of witnesses with whom he had interrogations concerning Velychkovs'kyi's criminal activities. Velychkovs'kyi was the only person who was listed.

As soon as all these documents have been sent to the procurator, it was the latter's task to establish among other things whether the preliminary investigation had been conducted "thoroughly, completely and objectively," whether there is a *corpus delicti* [a body of crime] and whether the accusation was based on the evidence accumulated (Amnesty International 1980, 69-70).<sup>17</sup> Upon the procurator's approval, the final indictment had to be submitted to the court.

On 30 May 1946, there was an injunction to review and send Velychkovs'kyi's case to the martial court of the NKVD in Kyiv. Later, on 6 June of that year it was handed to the district court in Kyiv. On 17 June, a meeting was organized in the district court, where the board confirmed the concluding indictment and arranged the court hearing.

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<sup>17</sup> RSFSR Code of Criminal Procedure, article 213.

On 26 June 1946, the closed in-court hearing for Velychkovs'kyi's case began at 5:00 p.m. at the district court in Kyiv on 15 Korolenko Street (vul. Korolenka 15), in room number 15. The attendants in the court room included the following: the judge, two lay people known as "people's assessors," the secretary, the prosecutor, the defence counsel, the defendant and the armed police escort guarding the defendant. Velychkovs'kyi was escorted to the room and introduced to the court. After that the judicial commission was announced.

According to Amnesty International, the Soviet court could acquit a defendant brought to trial for one of two reasons, either for political or religious activity. Usually the trials were organized not to "determine guilt or innocence, the correct application of the law or the proper degree of punishment" (Amnesty International 1980, 65). Instead, the trials served as a procedure to confirm the investigator's point of view about the accused.

Velychkovs'kyi had been tried for especially dangerous crimes against the state, anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. His court hearing was closed; the general public, friends and relatives were barred from entering. It is likely that the judicial commission declared Velychkovs'kyi's trial closed in order to prevent any kind of moral support from family and to prevent exposure to the public.

Even though the judge, people's assessors, the prosecutor, and his lawyer were present, Velychkovs'kyi had no one to defend him. According to Amnesty International, in similar cases the presiding judge "usually acted aggressively toward the defendant, treating him or her as guilty from the outset, systematically disrupting the defence and frequently making remarks hostile to the defendant's beliefs and associates" (Ibid. 1980, 76). Furthermore, people's assessors were of no help. They "do not have legal training [...] and] play virtually no role in political trials, but instead sit silently throughout the proceedings" (Ibid. 1980, 76). The question of

Velychkovs'kyi's guilt had probably been decided, because when Horiun submitted the final indictment, the prosecutor agreed to everything in it. Shelenzhek, Charnets'kyi, Khomyshyn and Liatashevs'kyi were the witnesses who had to be brought to the hearing. However, none of them appeared, because they had been sentenced and sent to concentration camps. The judicial commission decided to continue the hearing without the witnesses. In Velychkovs'kyi's first letter of appeal after the court sentencing, he stated: "During the trial there were no witnesses who could have been questioned. Therefore, the sentence was based on the investigation and my own testimonies" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 216). Due to the impossibility of bringing witnesses to the court hearing there was no one to confirm Velychkovs'kyi's criminal activities. However, for the judicial commission, the investigator's interpretation of the witnesses' testimonies, possibly fabricated documents, and protocols were enough to continue the hearing and to give the sentence.

According to Amnesty International, the accused person had the right to meet with a lawyer after the completion of the preliminary investigation. On 8 January 1946, Velychkovs'kyi was formally informed about the completion of his case investigation and signed this official document. Therefore, at that point Velychkovs'kyi had the right to meet with his lawyer, study the materials of the case, petition for additional investigation to be undertaken, for additional materials to be added to the case file, and for additional witnesses to be listed for testifying at the forthcoming trial (Amnesty International 1980, 69). However, Velychkovs'kyi probably was not aware of this and did not use the services of a lawyer. This indicates that Velychkovs'kyi, like other prisoners, was a victim of legal violations.

The hiding of legal rights from the prisoner raises a question. If Velychkovs'kyi's criminal activity was proven, why did Horiun prevent the meeting with his lawyer? Perhaps, he

was afraid that Velychkovs'kyi's lawyer might find something that would indicate the prisoner's innocence or reveal how the investigation was conducted, which could upset the prosecution's case or lead to an embarrassing confrontation at the trial.

Velychkovs'kyi was not aware that he could have a lawyer and was able to get help. He later recalled the time when he came to the court hearing and became aware of the fact that he was entitled to a lawyer's help. The conversation went as follows:

“This is my first time in a Soviet court. I do not know if I have the right to have my own lawyer.”

“Absolutely. Look, this is your lawyer.” And he is pointing out to me.

I laughed. “Strange. I see him sitting there, but I haven't yet heard him speak, and I haven't yet talked to him myself. So how is he to defend me?”

“Counsellor, is he telling the truth?”

“Yes. But when did I have time to speak with him?”

“Comrades, let us leave the room,” ... “let this be according to the law.” ... They all leave. [...] the few moments passed, and the judicial commission return (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 60).

It was, of course, against the law and unjust that Velychkovs'kyi came to the court without proper knowledge of his rights and that no one informed him that he was entitled to a lawyer. Even though it looked as though the court process was done according to Soviet law, in reality the lawyer was not there to defend Velychkovs'kyi; the lawyer's presence was a formality to make the court look official. Perhaps the intent was that Velychkovs'kyi would meet with the lawyer at the final stage, so that he would not be able to receive any help, support, advice, and so that the investigation, the court hearing, and the sentence would go as planned by the authorities.

Velychkovs'kyi and his lawyer met for the first time at the court hearing. It is obvious that during such a short meeting they could not discuss the case properly, make a plan of action or think about possibilities of how to change the situation. Moreover, there was not enough time for the lawyer to personally hear Velychkovs'kyi's testimonies. Therefore, the lawyer could not make proper judgments or understand if Velychkovs'kyi had been accused fairly.

According to Amnesty International, the trials of political dissenters were brief. They consisted of "reading of the indictment, the final summing up by the defence and prosecution, the last word of the defendant, and the reading of the court's judgment" (Amnesty International 1980, 77). This indicates the low quality of the trials, since only a short time was devoted to an actual examination of the evidence and the issues. This closely resembles Velychkovs'kyi's trial.

His trial began with the announcement of his final indictment to the judicial commission. After that Velychkovs'kyi was interrogated in court. This was his last interrogation and it determined his guilt and sentence. Six pages of handwritten protocol were recorded. Velychkovs'kyi's answers were recorded in the protocol but the questions that he was asked were not. This was his last chance to defend and explain himself, to speak up the truth in front of his investigator and the whole judicial commission. It was his last hope of a properly reviewed case and fair proceedings.

Velychkovs'kyi started the interrogation by informing the judicial commission that since 1924, he had been a member of a Catholic monastery that was under Vatican authority and that he was a missionary of the Catholic Church. He also stated that while he was a missionary, he had not conducted any anti-Soviet propaganda or agitation: "I said during the investigation that if according to the Soviet Union the Catholic Church is hostile, then all Catholics are anti-Soviet people" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 214). Velychkovs'kyi's statement suggests that the

authorities labelled the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church as an institution that saw the Soviet Union and its rulers as enemies of the people. Therefore, Velychkovs'kyi and every other Catholic or supporter of the Catholic Church had been stereotypically categorized as anti-Soviet.

In the final indictment Velychkovs'kyi was blamed for organizing the Confraternity of the Mother of Perpetual Help and for agitating the population against the Soviet Union. However, Velychkovs'kyi said that he has not been in charge of organizing any religious groups. They were organized by the people and were under supervision of the Bishop or the Superior. Velychkovs'kyi was only a member of the group and could vouch that the aim of the group, the monastery, and the church was to “support the religious spirit of the population [...] so that the families could pray and live in friendship and peace” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 16).

Velychkovs'kyi denied the accusation that he conducted a celebration and procession in Stanislaviv in honour of the German occupants. He said: “During the German occupation I was not a supporter of the Germans because I saw their cruelty, I hid Jewish and Red Army children in the monastery from them” (Ibid. vol.1, 216). Therefore, if Velychkovs'kyi referred to the Germans as providing “animal-like treatment” for the people, it made no sense for him to celebrate their arrival (Ibid.vol.1, 216). Velychkovs'kyi claimed that he advised the people to pray and to be grateful not because the Germans came and liberated the city of Stanislaviv from the Soviets; he was asking them to be thankful that the Redemptorist church remained free. He explained: “When the Soviet Army was in Stanislaviv it was ordered to close the church but after a massive protest of the population the chief procurator prohibited touching [the monastery] or the church” (Ibid. vol.1, 217). Velychkovs'kyi remembered this event and wrote about it in his autobiography: “In 1940, the local Soviet authorities wanted to force us out of our monastery, and take over the house for the state. We told the people. In a few days, the girls and the women

of the Confraternity of the Mother of Perpetual Help gathered several thousand signatures in protest against the expulsion of our priests, and took these signatures to the chief procurator, while a mass of people waited on the street for the result” (Velychkovs’kyi 2002, 37). At first the procurator refused the grievance but the people protested even more and said: “if you move in on our Fathers, then look out on the street: those people, and thousands of other people will all oppose you and shed our blood, and we will not allow it” (Ibid. 2002, 37). In the end the procurator accepted the grievance and the church and monastery remained open and safe. During the court interrogation, Velychkovs’kyi stated that the procession had no connection to the German occupants and has been organized to celebrate the chief procurator’s permission to keep the church free and open.

Perhaps, such a challenge to the Soviet state provoked the authorities and was interpreted as an anti-Soviet act. The Confraternity of the Mother of Perpetual Help was probably perceived as a group that went against the authorities by protesting and by collecting signatures from the inhabitants. This might have been one of the reasons why the authorities accused Velychkovs’kyi of organizing an anti-Soviet group and agitating people against the Soviet Union. Velychkovs’kyi continued to deny the accusation of giving anti-Soviet sermons. He stated: “we were prohibited by our Superior from giving a political content to our sermons” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 216). It was dangerous to interfere and combine pastoral work with political views. Therefore, the Greek Catholic clergy were instructed by Metropolitan Sheptyts’kyi to obey the authorities. In 1939, he issued a pastoral letter and gave the following instructions to the clergy of his archeparchy: “we will obey the authorities and comply with the laws [...] we will not interfere in politics and secular matters, but will not cease to work devotedly for Christ’s cause among our people” (LAV September-October 1939; quoted in

Bociurkiw 1996, 38).<sup>18</sup> It was important to remain at peace with the state so that the Church could remain open. Therefore, in 1940 Sheptyts'kyi once again reminded the clergy of the “danger and harm to their pastoral work that would result from their interference in politics, which would create for the pastor political opponents among the faithful” (LAV 1961; quoted in Bociurkiw 1996, 38).<sup>19</sup> Velychkovs'kyi was aware that he could not attempt in any way to influence the people in their political views. He knew that by incorporating politics into his sermons could put him and the faithful in danger.

Velychkovs'kyi also stated that the priests “had an assignment and responsibility to record all their sermons” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 217). Although the NKVD authorities have confiscated his sermons and closely examined them, they found little that could have been interpreted as political. The only time that Velychkovs'kyi admitted to using some anti-Soviet phrases was when in 1939 he “asked the faithful to pray for liberation, so that the Ukrainian people who live in the Soviet Union would be free and could pray freely,” and “so that the churches would be open, because at that time in the Soviet Union the churches were closing” (Ibid. vol. 1, 216). He continued: “It was known from the newspapers that the churches were closing and it was prohibited to pray” (Ibid. vol. 1, 217). From September 1939, when the Soviets invaded Western Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and its faithful suffered harsh treatment from the authorities. In response, the Catholic clergy and laity started to protect the Church by opposing the authorities. Velychkovs'kyi's motivation in asking people to pray was, therefore, not political opposition to the Soviet Union, but a desire that Catholics might continue to practice their faith.

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<sup>18</sup> *L'vivs'ki Arkhiieparkhiiial'ni Vidomosty*. Sheptyts'kyi's pastoral letter. Septeber-October 1939, M. O., no. 1,1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Pys'ma –poslannia Mytropolitya Andreia z Chasiv Bol'shevyts'koi Okupatsii (Yorkton, Sask., 1961), M. O. no.95, 75-6.

By comparing the interrogations during the investigation and the court interrogation it is evident that Velychkovs'kyi agreed to the accusation about writing the anti-Soviet calendar as well as opposing it. At the court interrogation Velychkovs'kyi said: "I admit that the calendar that was published was anti-Soviet" (Ibid. vol.1, 216). However, he immediately explained that "the words that were included in the calendar were widely used by most of the population, such as 'liberation from the Reds'" (Ibid. vol.1, 216). Therefore, he was suggesting that those anti-Soviet phrases were not harmful or criminal, because they were widely used in the society. Velychkovs'kyi also added: "I was the editor for the calendar, but in fact others composed it and I merely corrected it" (Ibid. vol.1, 217). This statement is not clear. It is hard to understand why Velychkovs'kyi agreed to be the editor and simultaneously stated that he had only corrected the calendar.

According to Velychkovs'kyi the conversation with his lawyer before the court hearing went as follows:

"I know your case. Do not acknowledge that you are responsible for the calendar. Deny it, and nothing terrible will happen to you."

"No, I cannot do that. I did not deny it before, during the preliminary hearing, so I won't deny it here, either" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 60).

His lawyer never met, talked to, or heard Velychkovs'kyi's side of the story, but still advised him to object to the accusation about the calendar. Perhaps after reading Velychkovs'kyi's case the lawyer became convinced of Velychkovs'kyi's innocence.

When the court interrogation was completed, the procurator concluded: "Just as during the previous investigation, the court investigation has completely proven Velychkovs'kyi's guilt under section 04 104 part II of the USSR Criminal Code. In deciding the sentence, please take

into account all the circumstances, especially that his anti-Soviet activity started in 1925 and became more severe during the war; choose the death by firing squad sentence” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 218-219). The procurator accused Velychkovs’kyi of conducting anti-Soviet propaganda for twenty years. It was the procurator’s assumption that because Velychkovs’kyi was ordained to the priesthood in 1925, he automatically became an enemy of the Soviet state, started to oppose the government and to agitate others to do the same. Therefore, it is evident that the procurator based Velychkovs’kyi’s sentence not only on the evidence collected by the investigator or the court investigation, but on his own interpretation of the facts. For him, the fact that Velychkovs’kyi was a Catholic priest was enough to establish his guilt and justify the highest possible sentence, death by firing squad.

The firing squad, which had become the common conclusion of Soviet trials during the Stalinist rule, represented a return to medieval standards of jurisprudence. Like medieval torturers, the Soviet interrogators, prosecutors, and judges agreed to kill the victim without absolute or even convincing evidence, satisfying themselves with only relative and approximate proofs of guilt.

Velychkovs’kyi’s lawyer spoke next. He said: “the crime has been proven but not fully, and for such a crime I think that the court should not even choose the sentence of long-term imprisonment” (Ibid. vol. 1, 219). This statement shows how unsure Velychkovs’kyi’s lawyer was. He agreed with the procurator that the crime was proven and that Velychkovs’kyi was guilty. Then he changed his opinion by saying that it had not been fully confirmed. Moreover, at the end, the lawyer suggested that for his crime, Velychkovs’kyi did not deserve to be imprisoned for a long period. The lawyer formulated his last statement very carefully. He tried to

please both the judicial commission and the accused. The lawyer first approved the procurator's decision and at the end cautiously disagreed with the sentence.

At the beginning of the court hearing, the lawyer had advised Velychkovs'kyi not to accept the accusation about the calendar. However, during the court investigation the lawyer did not oppose this accusation or question the proceedings. According to Amnesty International, Soviet defence lawyers in political trials were faced with overwhelming disadvantages in trying to defend their clients: "The courts almost invariably refuse to allow to develop any promising line of defence [...] or undertake serious examination of controversial elements of the charges or the evidence. The courts are liable to interpret any defence [...] of a political defendant as endorsement of the defendant's actions" (Amnesty International 1980, 74). Keeping in mind that the lawyers were required to remain obedient to Soviet rules and policies, they had little influence on the outcome of the trials. This explains the passiveness of Velychkovs'kyi's lawyer. He was not there to prove the innocence of the victim or to share his thoughts with the judicial commission about the calendar. The most that he could have done was to try to persuade the court to reduce the charges against the defendant or pass a more lenient sentence.

At the end of the court investigation it was Velychkovs'kyi's turn to speak. He said: "I do not agree that I conducted anti-Soviet propaganda; my only criminal action was publishing the calendar and that was my mistake. I ask the court not to punish me harshly" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 219). Velychkovs'kyi had tried to prove his innocence. However, at the end he accepted the accusation about the calendar.

Velychkovs'kyi confessed to the crime that he did not commit and probably thought less of himself for doing so, but he had hoped to receive a lenient sentence. However, the

sentence had robbed him of all hope, of any belief that the mistake of his arrest would soon be reversed.

After hearing Velychkovs'kyi's last words, the judicial commission met and then announced the sentence. This was the list of Velychkovs'kyi's criminal actions: advising Bishop Khomyshyn to write an article in the newspaper in order to support the nationalists, organizing a celebration for the German occupants, giving anti-Soviet sermons and writing anti-Soviet, nationalistic parts in the calendar. These illegal activities "were fully proven [...] by the testimonies of the witnesses such as Liatashevs'kyi and others. [...] Velychkovs'kyi himself did not object to the accusations and partially confessed" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 222). Therefore, "taking to account the status of the accused and the level of his criminal actions [...] the Regional Court sentences Velychkovs'kyi [...] on the basis of article 54-10 of USSR to the highest level of retribution by firing squad with the confiscation of all his possessions" (Ibid. vol. 1, 223).

The sentence was based not only on Velychkovs'kyi's criminal actions but also on his status as a Catholic priest. In his first letter of complaint Velychkovs'kyi stated: "after the investigation in prison in Kyiv, I was brought to the General where I was asked if I finally had decided to switch to the Moscow Patriarchy, because if not, then the trial would be difficult [...]. I answered that I would not step back from my faith and from my conscience" (Ibid. vol.1, 270). Velychkovs'kyi's statement indicates the real reason why the judicial commission found his actions so egregious that the only appropriate punishment would be execution.

Lipper believed that "it was always possible to find examining judges who would perform their ugly task" (Lipper 1951, 39). Examining judges knew just as well as the defendants what was going on. They knew the prisoners were innocent and they realized that

they have been condemning innocent people. It is quite ironic that the judicial commission believed that Velychkovs'kyi deserved to be shot for his criminal actions. The court judgment simply recites at length the contents of the final indictment. The court based its decision on the protocols of the interrogations, which were written by the investigator, and on the court investigation, which has not been supported by any witnesses and relied only on Velychkovs'kyi's testimonies. It is evident that Velychkovs'kyi's trial was merely a formality.

After examining the process of Velychkovs'kyi's trial one can agree with Applebaum's statement that prisoners "had no ordinary human rights, no right to a fair trial or even a fair hearing. They [...] knew that the NKVD's power was absolute, and that the state could dispose of them as it wished" (Applebaum 2003, 145). The investigation or the trial was not intended to be fair to Velychkovs'kyi. His execution was interpreted by the authorities as an act that could benefit the Soviet state. After the trial, Velychkovs'kyi was "led out to an automobile and driven back to the prison, but now to another cell and another section of the prison: death row" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 60).

## Chapter 5

### Death Row and Resentencing

After the court hearing, Velychkovs'kyi was informed that the sentence could be appealed for up to five days in all the courts of the USSR (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 223). He had an opportunity to appeal to a “higher court against the sentence of the court of first instance. This is known as “appeal by way of cassation” (Amnesty International 1980, 82). Having such a chance, Velychkovs'kyi started to write appeal letters and to protest against the harshness of his sentence.

His first appeal letter was written by his lawyer who signed it and submitted it to the judicial commission two days after the court hearing, on 28 June 1946. The letter stated: “This sentence is too harsh because [...] the investigation of my case was conducted superficially; therefore a lot of very important circumstances were eliminated” (Ibid. vol.1, 216).

Velychkovs'kyi believed that he did not deserve to be executed for the acts he had been accused of committing. He said in the appeal: “I am not a criminal who deserves to be punished by physical destruction” (Ibid. vol. 1, 217). In this letter Velychkovs'kyi asked for clemency and hoped that the judicial commission would reduce his sentence. Instead of execution, he asked for a long term of imprisonment.

According to Amnesty International, the “court appeal had the task of ‘verifying the legality and well-founded nature’ of the judgment of the court of first instance” (Amnesty International 1980, 83). On 5 July 1946, the judicial commission met. It reviewed Velychkov'skyi's criminal case according to the complaint letter received. However, it decided once again that Velychkovs'kyi had been given a correct and fair sentence, and his request was denied.

Velychkovs'kyi wrote a second appeal letter, this time by himself. In it he took a different approach. He not only tried to convince the judicial commission of his innocence but also provided information that he remained a good and loyal citizen who did many things for the benefit of the state. He began the letter by pleading: "Please, I am begging for a reduction, a cancellation of the unfair, excessive sentence" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 231). He continued the letter by maintaining his innocence:

I, as a priest and as a superior of the monastery in Stanislaviv and Ternopil', and as a missionary of the Greek-Catholic Church of the Western Region of Galicia, always preached without a political message and never against the Soviet Union. The proof can be found in:

1. All the manuscripts of my sermons and all my synopses from 1925 until 1945 that were taken during the house search and now are at the NKVD's possession.
2. All the witnesses. [He here provided their names and addresses] (Ibid. 232).

Velychkovs'kyi also included a list of the actions that showed his benevolence towards the Soviet Union. He stated that he risked his life because he hid Jewish children at the orphanage of the nuns in Ternopil' during the German occupation, in the years 1941-1944. Moreover, in 1945, the monastery of Ternopil' and he donated a large amount of money to support the Red Army. During 1944-1945, he personally donated twice, and collected money from the parishioners of Ternopil', which he donated to the wounded and sick soldiers of the Red Army. During the German occupation, he stayed in Ternopil' and despite the evacuation, encouraged the inhabitants not to leave the Soviet Union as the Germans recommended (Ibid. vol.1, 231-232).

In his fourth complaint letters written in 1969, Velychkovs'kyi explained his positive actions in more detail. He stated: "when during the occupation the Germans were ruthlessly and massively destroying the Jewish population of the city [Ternopil'], the Jewish people came and asked me to save them, especially their children. It was known that everyone who helped Jews would be punished by death. Despite the danger, I saved several dozen children and older Jews (BVV, f.2, II, E, vol. 5, 299). Velychkovs'kyi also described collecting and donating money to the Red Army: "When the city of Ternopil' was free and the people came to our big monastery church of the Holy Eucharist, I asked them to bring a donation to the church, as much as they could, to be given to the Red Cross of the Red Army. By the following Sunday many thousands of roubles had been collected and donated [...]. This was a thanksgiving gift for the courageous Red Army, who liberated us from the cruel German invasion (Ibid. vol. 5, 299). Velychkovs'kyi naively believed that the expression of such a positive attitude toward the Soviet Union would prompt the commission to believe that he was of potential benefit to the state.

In a sense, Velychkovs'kyi's approach was correct. He was proving to the judicial commission that even if he was guilty, he still did not deserve to be executed, because he could be useful to the state in the future. Velychkovs'kyi was hoping that his positive actions towards the Soviet Union would encourage the judicial commission to review his case and change his sentence. However, such positive actions did not always help the accused. According to Solzhenitsyn, the interrogator would respond to all the positive actions of the accused by saying that the latter "was not being tried for that! [...] Whatever good may have been done had nothing to do with the case" (Solzhenitsyn 1974, 123).

Velychkovs'kyi finished the second appeal letter with these words: "I anticipate a positive decision so that I, as a good citizen of our Motherland, can still be useful" (BVV, f.2, I,

A, vol. 1, 233). It is unknown when he wrote the second appeal letter. However, according to the law, he had five days after the court hearing 26 June 1946 to appeal. If the first appeal letter was written on 28 June 1946, then the second one had to be submitted by 1 July 1946. The judicial commission had a second meeting on 27 July 1946 and discussed Velychkovs'kyi's second appeal. The judicial commission made a decision, but because the document was classified as secret, the information was not released to Velychkovs'kyi. Perhaps, this was also part of the NKVD's plan and the method it used to increase the level of his sufferings and his fear of execution.

There is no documentation on when Velychkovs'kyi was brought to the death row cell. However, according to Amnesty International, the "convicted person's sentence comes into effect immediately after it had been considered on appeal. He or she must be sent from the investigation prison to the place where the sentence is to be served within 10 days" (Amnesty International 1980, 83). Therefore, Velychkovs'kyi had been transferred to the death row cell within ten days after his second appeal. Therefore, if it took him those five allowed days to write two appeals until 1 July 1946 and if according to the law, he was kept the next ten days in the investigation prison. Then he was brought to the death row cell on 11 July 1946. Keeping in mind that the judicial commission had their second meeting on 27 July, one month after Velychkovs'kyi started to appeal, this meant that he was transferred to death row without being informed about their decision.

In his autobiography, Velychkovs'kyi wrote that one evening he was brought to "the long corridor" of his new section: "We marched along, and paused before the final cell. [...] The cell was full. Everybody was lying down: it was night! They released me into the cell, and locked the door" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 61). For many prisoners this cell was the last stage not only of

their prison misery but also of their lives. It was a place in which prisoners could lose all hope while waiting to be executed. It was hard psychologically and emotionally for a prisoner to watch as one of them was called out for the last time and then to hear the gun being fired. Velychkovs'kyi recalls that it seemed as though the guards "had all agreed upon a certain arrangement. Every night they [...] threw in a prisoner, and removed one of the older ones" (Ibid. 2002, 62). This appears to have been one of the NKVD's methods of torturing prisoners. Each day the prisoner was terrified that it would be his turn to die. Lipper remembered the fear of prisoners while on death row. She wrote: "when a step sounded in the corridor, they looked away from one another. They looked away in deference to the fear of the others, which was there in the others' eyes, so naked and so terrible. They averted their gaze in order not to shame their cellmates. [...] And in between they listened, listened to the footsteps in the corridor. Listened and waited, day and night, for weeks and month" (Lipper 1951, 42-44). Velychkovs'kyi did not know for how long he would be on death row but he knew that his suffering had to eventually end.

He recalls that he "waited a long time for his turn to come" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 62). In his first complaint letter he stated that he "waited two month for the sentence to be carried out" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 269). In the second complaint letter he wrote that he was "on death row for three month" (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol. 2, 6). Therefore, if Velychkovs'kyi was transferred to death row within ten days after the court hearing on 26 June 1946, he would have been there until the end of August or beginning of September.

On the one hand, being on death row was emotionally draining for Velychkovs'kyi. On the other hand, however, he was able to recover physically from the harshness of interrogations and prison life. Here he was not interrogated or forced to confess to false accusations. Instead, he

was appreciated and valued because of his priestly status. Velychkovs'kyi remembered that when he came to death row, the cell leader noticed his beard and understood that he was a priest. The leader stood up and said: "Pick a place for yourself, and lie down to sleep. [...] [O]ut of respect for your position, we ask you to choose [a place] for yourself, and we will give you any place you want" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 61). During the investigation, Velychkovs'kyi had not heard a kind word from his investigator. Usually, prisoners were treated as objects. In the cell on death row he finally encountered some good people, who respected his status as a priest. The cell leader asked everyone to move away from the wall beneath the window, so that Velychkovs'kyi could have some privacy and enjoy the light coming from the window (Ibid. 2002, 61). According to Lipper, the prison cells were like mass tombs and there was no source of natural light because the windows were "not only barred but also masked with boards, so that [the prisoner] could never see anything but a small segment of the sky" (Lipper 1951, 7). Therefore, it was a privilege for Velychkovs'kyi to sleep by the window.

In comparison with prison life during the investigation, here he was not deprived of food: "the food we were allotted was more than adequate, since the cell which I occupied was designated for prisoners who were weakened in strength, and these were always provided with very nutritious and good food – for example, a thick boiled fish roe from fresh fish was often served" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 62).

Velychkovs'kyi was also allowed to receive parcels. According to Mirus, not every prisoner received them. Mirus did not receive packages from his family because the authorities knew him as someone "who had not been broken," who did not sign false protocols and did not confess (Mirus 2000, 103). Mirus received his parcel only when the investigation was finished, when he had signed the required protocol document concerning the investigation, and heard his

sentence in the prison corridor (Ibid. 2000, 103). Just like Mirus, Velychkovs'kyi started to receive parcels after the investigation was completed. The parcels were sent to him every week from an unknown person. Velychkovs'kyi deduced that they were from “some religious sister from a nearby monastery of women in the city” (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 62). The parcels were “always quite copious – various extraordinary fruits, meats, and sweet foods” (Ibid. 2002, 62).

According to Velychkovs'kyi's description of the food in the cell, it is evident that the prisoners were provided with nutritious food. However, it is hard to understand why this was done for supposed criminals who had been condemned by the court as enemies of the state. Furthermore, the quality of their health hardly mattered to the NKVD authorities. It is unlikely that the authorities felt pity for those awaiting the death sentence.

While Velychkovs'kyi was on death row waiting for his last day, he continued his priestly work. He spent time teaching, hearing confessions and praying, and clearly had a strong impact on the prisoners. He wrote in his autobiography: “the guard opened the door to let the prisoners take out the so-called ‘perfume pot’ ... Ordinarily, at that moment, there was much noisy activity, because almost everybody wanted to exit the cell to pick up a stray cigarette butt [...]. But now [...] there was a deep silence: all the men were on their knees” (Ibid. 2002, 61-62). Therefore, even though he was waiting for his turn to die, the cell on death row offered him a chance to spread comfort. He was able to recover physically by having enough sleep and food, emotionally by being among kind, courteous, and respectful people and by offering the prisoners spiritual confession and helping them to die in peace.

However, as Velychkovs'kyi himself put it, “all things eventually come to an end” (Ibid. 2002, 62). His turn came and he was called out. Turkalo has explained the procedure of a prisoner being called out from the cell to the firing squad: “[the guard] moved the metal piece

that was covering the small round hole in the doors, which was called a spy hole, and through which everything that was happening in the cell could be seen from the hallway, although from the cell it was not always visible that someone was watching; somebody's voice called out [...] 'Is here anyone who's surname starts with T?' Everyone whose surname started with 'T' had to say it out loud and when the surname of a right person came up, the latter was told to 'get ready with all [his] belongings'" (Turkalo 1963, 54). This description of what occurred is very similar to Velychkovs'kyi's account in his autobiography: "One night, before dawn, the cell door opened, and they call out, 'Anyone here whose name begins with V?' I responded with my name, and I heard the reply, 'Yes, good. You are to leave, with all your things.' I saw an officer and a few guards with automatic weapons, waiting" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 62-63). When he saw the guards and the weapons, he probably thought that he would be shot that day, and that the appeal letters written by him had not helped.

Velychkovs'kyi's autobiography continues: "I rose quickly and began packing. I distributed any food I had to those who needed it, because I knew that I would never return here. The rest of the things I packed, and then I stood up and said a few words of farewell: 'Dear brothers, some of you will certainly, one day, be set free from this prison. Then, I beg of you, when you meet anyone from Western Ukraine, tell them [...] the priest Velychkovs'kyi was shot, killed by a firing squad, for his Catholic Church, for his faith'" (Ibid. 2002, 63). His last words suggested that everyone in the cell knew the real reason of his execution.

Velychkovs'kyi wrote his fourth and last complaint letter in 1969, more than twenty years after his first arrest. In it he told the story of how in 1946 he lost his last chance of freedom:

After the trial, having been condemned to the highest punishment, that of death by firing squad, I was placed on death row in the Lukianivs'ka prison. After about two months, late at night, when the others were asleep, I was still standing and praying. I heard a very soft knock on the door. I looked and saw an open window in the door and a finger that beckoned me. I came and heard a voice: "Do you recognize me?" I saw the golden lapel and said: "No, I do not recognize you." "I am the one who came to you before your trial to question you and now I give you one last chance: sign to join Orthodoxy and immediately you can go home. I answered in the negative, that I had reconciled myself to this life, that my conscience was at peace and I would in no way become a betrayer. The window abruptly closed and the [...] temptation was overcome (BVV, f.2, II, E, vol. 5, 298).

This story proves that Velychkovs'kyi was not arrested, accused, and sentenced to die because of his disloyalty to the government, but because of his beliefs and his status as a priest of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

When Velychkovs'kyi's turn came, he was ready to die for his faith. As he was leaving the cell on death row he "looked for the last time upon these good people [the prisoners]" and said farewell not only to them but also to the Soviet prison and his life (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 63). After Velychkovs'kyi left the cell he was brought to the bureau for the "final process of examination, and the final signature! [...] Slowly, deliberately, in a dull voice, the questions were placed by the officials" (Ibid. 2002, 63). Here he was informed of the declaration and the decision that the judicial commission had made after his second appeal letter. The official stated: "Here is the response that has come from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, that your sentence to

the highest level of punishment by firing squad is to be changed to ten years of incarceration in prison” (Ibid. 2002, 63).

During the meeting on 27 July 1946, at which the judicial commission discussed Velychkovs’kyi’s second complaint letter, a decision had been made to commute the sentence. It stated that “according to the documents from the previous investigation and the court investigation which were supported by the witnesses and by the accused, Velychkovs’kyi’s guilt is proven. The court classified Velychkovs’kyi’s actions correctly but there was not sufficient basis to sentence him to a firing squad. Therefore, it has been decided to change Velychkovs’kyi’s sentence from the highest level of punishment by a firing squad to ten years of imprisonment and five years of deprivation of the electoral rights” (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 236). Therefore, it is evident that the judicial commission documented the decision to change the sentence on 27 July, one month after the court hearing, and that this decision had been kept secret. It is not known when Velychkovs’kyi found out about the commutation of the sentence. According to his case file, the document addressed to the chief of the prison exists about the change of sentence was sent on 3 September 1946. It is the last document of the first volume, which deals with Velychkovs’kyi’s first arrest and was classified as secret. Therefore, it is possible that when the prison chief was notified about the change, he ordered the prison guards to bring Velychkovs’kyi in so as to inform him of the new verdict. If Velychkovs’kyi was brought to the cell for his death row on 11 July 1946 and was there until 3 September, then he waited to be executed for 54 days.

There is no obvious reason why Velychkovs’kyi was kept on death row for so long. If the judicial commission had decided to change his sentence, why did they not send him to a Soviet labour camp right away? Why did they allow him to stay, take up space in the cell, eat their food

and rest? At the camps he could have been more “useful” to the state than he was on death row. For all of that time he could have worked in the mines and at least his labour would have benefitted the government.

Two explanations are possible. According to Applebaum, in 1942 the Gulag started to become an efficient economic machine: “The camps were becoming an important factor in wartime production and camp commanders had begun complaining about the large numbers of prisoners arriving at camp workplaces totally unfit to work. Starving, filthy, and deprived of exercise, they simply could not dig coal or cut trees at the pace required” (Applebaum 2003, 147). New interrogation orders had been issued, which demanded that prison bosses observe elementary health conditions, and limit the control that investigators had over prisoners’ daily lives. Therefore, it is possible that Velychkovs’kyi was allowed to rest, sleep and eat properly in order to recover and have enough strength to work at the camps.

It is not known if all the prisoners in the same cell on death row as Velychkovs’kyi had their sentence changed, but he mentions in his autobiography that he met one of his fellow prisoners on the way to the camp. That means that Velychkovs’kyi was not the only one who survived. Perhaps the cell on death row, in which he had been kept, was designed for prisoners who would later be sent to labour camps. Because of their unwillingness to cooperate with authorities, they might have been kept on death row as punishment or to get them to rethink their decisions. This could have been the second reason why Velychkovs’kyi stayed in the cell for so long after the judicial commission changed his sentence. The authorities were, perhaps, hoping that if he was kept there for a long time, he would break down and accept Orthodoxy. Moreover, the fact that the document was classified as secret also suggests that the decision was not revealed in order to make him anxious and in this way pressure him to reconsider their

proposition. However, after receiving a negative answer again, it became clear to the authorities that Velychkovs'kyi would not have changed his faith, even if killed.

Since the authorities admitted that they did not have the legal basis to execute him, but still wanted to remove him so that he would not practice Catholicism in Ukraine, the optimum solution was to send him to one of the Soviet camps. When he was informed about the change of the sentence, he laughed and said “if my first sentence is justified, then even life imprisonment is already a bonus. But if that first sentence is unjustified, then I deserve a full pardon” (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 63). After he found himself thrown into a cell for sentenced prisoners, he wrote that “within about a week,” he was already in a cell for regular prisoners, those who were to be sent to the Soviet camps (Ibid. 2002, 63). In a few days he was taken to the freight wagons by the prison van which was called “the Black Raven as the sinister vehicle is called in Russia” (Lipper 1951, 75). Mirus has described the process of banishment in more detail: “In the early morning an unusual noise began in Lukianivs'ka prison. We understood that it was the preparation for exile. All of a sudden the cell doors were opened and they started to call out people's last names according to the list [...]. Abruptly, like a blow, my last name was called out. [...] On the yard of the Lukianivs'ka prison there were a lot of jet-black cars, which took us to the far end of the Kyiv train station. While being yelled at by the inhuman NKVD men, we were brought to the freight wagons” (Mirus 2000, 105). Perhaps this was the way Velychkovs'kyi began his long journey “to some far, distant place” (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 63). According to Lipper it was not “customary in Soviet judicial practice to inform prisoners what camp they are being sent to” (Lipper 1951, 78). Therefore, Velychkovs'kyi, just like other prisoners, did not know where exactly he would serve his ten years of imprisonment.

Velychkovs'kyi's journey to the labour camps started in Kirov, where he stayed at a forest camp for two years. It is unknown exactly when he arrived there. However, in his autobiography Velychkovs'kyi wrote: "we travelled and travelled, all the way to Kirov. I no longer remember how much, how long, we travelled. In Ukraine, which we had left behind, it had been late autumn; but here, in Russia, it was already well into winter" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 66).

This was the first time he experienced life in concentration camps. It is hard to say what emotions were running through his head as he arrived. However, Mirus described his own first reaction. He says that he remembers clearly one very unusual scene when he arrived at his first camp: "We, the ones who had just come from the 'free' world, were standing on one side of the camp gates and on the other side there was a crowd of exhausted convicts in their black camp clothing waiting with interest for us, the newcomers, because among them they could often meet their friends and even family" (Mirus 2000, 116). The gates were like a dividing point. On one side were the people who had gone through the harsh Soviet prisons and were hoping for a better life in the camps. Exile to them seemed like a good ending. Mirus reports that he was happy when his life in prison was over: "Ahead of me were new experiences, new people, and new places" (Ibid. 2000, 105). However, having seen the exhausted convicts, who jealously scrutinized the newcomers and were thinking how lucky they were to come from home, Mirus probably asked himself whether life behind the barbed wires was better.

When Velychkovs'kyi arrived at his first concentrated camp he probably had similar thoughts. At that point any illusion or hope of his arrest being unfair was vanished. Here he was faced with reality, in front of him was a new life. He did not know what those ten years of imprisonment in the Soviet camps would bring.

## Chapter 6

### Journey to Rehabilitation

In 1953, immediately after Stalin's death, the first act of de-Stalinization began. Lavrentiy Beria, the chief of the Soviet security and secret police apparatus began making changes with astonishing speed. He announced on 4 April 1953 an amnesty for many prisoners in the Gulag. Beria emphasized that it was not a state necessity to continue to imprison such a large population when a "significant portion were convicted for crimes not presenting a serious danger for society" (Barnes 2011, 205). However, this amnesty was not applicable to political prisoners.

On 19 May 1954, the General procurator, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Chairman of the Committee for State Security (KGB) issued regulations for examining criminal cases of individuals who have been incarcerated in camp colonies, and prisons: "Their mandate included the reversing of decisions and complete rehabilitation of the accused [...] and the confirmation of prior refusals to re-examine decisions of cases" (Adler 2002, 86). The commissions were instructed to proceed on the basis of a prisoner's complaints registered with the Procuracy and the authorities of State Security. Therefore, the prisoners began to write letters explaining their cases and desperately sought to win the interest of bureaucrats in one of the many offices that could potentially offer salvation. Large crowds of petitioners assembled outside the Procurator's building in central Moscow, a flood of appeals were sent to the Party's headquarters and to the NKVD, and "the exodus from the Gulag grew" (Cohen 2011, 370).

During the ten years of his sentence, Velychkovs'kyi worked first in Kirov and then in Vorkuta. Near the end of his imprisonment in 1953 he was accused of being a member of a

political organization in the camp and as a result, he was thrown into the severe-regime prison in Vladimir, close to Moscow. Here, one of Velychkovs'kyi's fellow prisoners scrutinized his case very closely and suggested that he request a review of his sentence and file a grievance.

According to Amnesty International, "a possibility of altering the verdict or sentence is provided by the procedure of judicial review (known in Soviet Law as 'review by way of judicial supervision' [which has] broad authority to alter the verdict or sentence" (Amnesty International 1980, 83). Despite the fact that Velychkovs'kyi's sentence was coming to an end, he began to fight with the authorities for justice and for recognition of his innocence. He started to write letters pleading for a judicial review of his case.

He was given a chance to read and review the official statements on his sentence. He wrote: "I read for a long time in order to appropriate the contents and fix them in my mind; and then I went to my cell and immediately wrote out everything from memory and sent my grievance to Moscow" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 69). On 8 July 1954 Velychkovs'kyi wrote his first letter. This was his first chance to tell the truth about his unfair accusations, investigation, court hearing and sentencing. The letter was handwritten by him and was addressed to the Attorney General of USSR in Moscow. The first part of the letter was about the false accusation that he was a member of a political organization in the camp in Vorkuta. In the other part Velychkovs'kyi complained about his first arrest. He gave a detailed explanation of why he was falsely charged.

At the end of the letter Velychkovs'kyi wrote: "Everything that I said in this letter practically has no meaning to me because my sentence is coming to an end. I am writing this only to protest against the injustice of the previous regime and to prove the truth" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 270). He wrote this letter after nine years of imprisonment. He was not fighting to

reduce the sentence; he wanted the authorities to recognize that he had been falsely arrested, tried and sentenced.

On 22 September 1954 Velychkovs'kyi's case file was sent to the Kyiv Region Committee for a review. On the 27 October it was decided that "it is evident from the case documents that Velychkovs'kyi's criminal actions [...] were classified correctly and were proven by his own confessions and by the testimonies of the witnesses. Taking into account all the details and the high level of his criminal actions it was decided that there is no basis to change or eliminate Velychkovs'kyi's sentence" (BVV, f.2, I, A, vol. 1, 274). After he wrote the letter he was released from Vladimir prison and sent back to Vorkuta, where he has stayed until the end of his imprisonment.

Velychkovs'kyi was discharged from Soviet camps on 9 July 1955. He wrote: "I [was] summoned to the staff room. They [asked] me where I want to go, because my prison sentence terminates today, so by tomorrow I must abandon the camp, and get myself beyond the sentry gates. [...] So unexpectedly, suddenly, passed for me the ten years of my punishment – for this only offence; that I refused to renounce the Catholic Church" (Velychkovs'kyi 2002, 70).

As Velychkovs'kyi was released he continued to write letters. Once again he narrated his personal story. He had to write it in a way that would persuade officials that he would fit the profile of Soviet citizen once more and that his existing status as outcast was unjust. His second letter was written on 23 February 1965. Here he rejected the accusations about the anti-Soviet sermons and the Marian calendar. Velychkovs'kyi also provided some additional information about his loyalty to the Soviet state. He mentioned a name (Anisiia Girniak) of a witness who could prove that he saved Soviet children during the German occupation and donated money to the Red Army. He again complained about false accusations, unfair investigation, and his

sentence. He wrote: “I am protesting against the sentence that was given by the court in Kyiv in 1946 because the sentence was not pronounced according to the social law. I am asking for my rehabilitation” (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol. 2, 6).

The release from labour camp was not followed by a judicial rehabilitation. The camps did not issue rehabilitation certificates and the ex-prisoners had to apply for that status. Certificate of proof of rehabilitation has had a great deal of meaning in the Soviet system: “Rehabilitation became a sacred word; the rehabilitation certificate became a sacred document, and the rehabilitation status occupied a central place in mass consciousness” (Adler 2002, 178). Ex-prisoners who did not have the rehabilitation status were looked upon and treated as second-class citizens; they were constant reminders of the criminal nature of the system. Some had restricted job opportunities and experienced difficulties reintegrating into work and social community. Even though the prisoner was released from prison he was still viewed as a criminal by the society. Ex-prisoners used to say: “The mark has been removed, but the stain remains” (Cohen 2011, 79). In his second complaint letter Velychkovs’kyi demanded that his case be reviewed again but also requested rehabilitation so that he could re-assimilate into the normal Soviet life.

On 30 April 1965 Velychkovs’kyi’s complaint letter was submitted. A decision was made to check his case again. The authorities stated: “The statements that Velychkovs’kyi provided in his letter deserve attention and they need to be considered during the review of his case” (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol. 2, 3-4). An order was issued for Velychkovs’kyi to be questioned and all the testimonies by witnesses in his case and also those mentioned in his complaint letter to be reviewed.

In order to respond to Velychkov'skyi's complaint letter, the interrogations of witnesses such as Shelenzhuk, Boichuk, Liatashevs'kyi, Khomyshyn and Charnets'kyi was reviewed. However, no additional investigation was performed. Neither Velychkovs'kyi nor other witnesses were questioned about his case. The testimonies recorded in the protocols back in 1945 were the only evidence of Velychkovs'kyi's guilt. It was concluded that the decision by the judicial commission during the court hearing was correct and should not have been changed.

After he received a rejection of his second complaint letter, it was evident to Velychkovs'kyi that the judicial commission did not review his case accurately. Therefore, on 6 October 1965, he wrote his third complaint letter to Moscow. He began this letter by informing them about the denial of his previous request to review his case properly. He wrote that the rejection he received stated: "It was proven by the materials collected during the investigation that the accusations pertained to you [Velychkovs'kyi] were confirmed" (BVV, f.2, II, E, vol. 5,125). Velychkovs'kyi commented on this statement: "Yes, it was proven but in such a way that it was even shameful to send me a copy of the sentence regardless of my requests and law regulations" (Ibid. vol.5, 125). Amnesty International has pointed out that "according to law the convicted person must receive a copy of the court's judgement within three days of its being proclaimed" (Amnesty International 1980, 82). However, in 1965, almost twenty years after his sentence, Velychkovs'kyi was still waiting for a copy. This complaint letter was also rejected.

Velychkovs'kyi did not lose hope and on 29 November 1965 he complained for the fourth time about the sentence and the unwillingness to review his case properly. He wrote: "How can you call this a review if my case was read and it was concluded that I was sentenced correctly? [...] but the answer that was given should be argumentative and should be based on proof that was collected. [...] I cannot understand why the review was done without questioning

the person who was unfairly accused [...]. Why did the person who reviewed my case not call me in, not talk to me and not question me about the certain circumstances related to my case? [...] Why was a copy of the sentence not sent to me in spite of my requests and the legitimacy of my claim?" [emphasis as seen in the original document] (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol. 2, 90-91). At the end of the letter Velychkovs'kyi asked for another review of his case.

On 21 December 1965, a secret letter was written to the General of NKVD in Ternopil' region ordering an additional investigation of Velychkovs'kyi's case. On 17 January 1966 Anisiia Girniak was interrogated. Velychkovs'kyi provided her name in his second and fourth complaint letters in order to use her as a witness. First of all, she was asked about Velychkovs'kyi's criminal involvement against the Soviet Union and his anti-Soviet sermons. Girniak answered that she did not know about his criminal activities and that she never heard him speak against the government. She was also asked to inform the investigator about the fact that Velychkovs'kyi helped Soviet children. Girniak stated: "during the massive execution of Soviet inhabitants of the Jewish nationality in Ternopil', children were brought to our orphanage at night. [...] There were nineteen children whose parents were killed. Velychkovs'kyi knew about this. [...] He personally helped the orphanage financially and brought groceries" (Ibid. vol.2, 95). Girniak was also asked about the money that was donated by Velychkovs'kyi to the Red Army fund. However, she did not know anything about this matter.

In order to check if Velychkovs'kyi donated money to the Red Army fund a request letter was send to the Ternopil' archive and the fund's archive. Unfortunately, both archives stated that there was no record of a donation from Velychkovs'kyi. It is possible that the record was misplaced, or a donation was made under somebody else's name. As discussed in the previous chapter, donations from the Catholic parishes were collected for the Red Army fund by Joseph

Slipyj. Therefore, it is possible that Velychkovs'kyi's parish donated the money but his name was not recorded.

On 23 January 1966 the General of the Ternopil' region NKVD stated in his classified document: "I think that Velychkovs'kyi was sentenced correctly and there is no basis to review his case again" (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol. 2, 101). The official document rejecting Velychkovs'kyi's request was recorded on 31 January 1966. These were the concluding lines: "The review of Velychkovs'kyi's case should be stopped due to the absence of any basis for the protest. Velychkovs'kyi's complaint about his sentence and rehabilitation should remain unchanged" (Ibid. vol. 2, 109). On 15 February 1966 a copy of Velychkovs'kyi's sentence was send to him along with the rejection of his request to change the sentence and a refusal of his rehabilitation.

It took a long time for the Soviet authorities to grant rehabilitation to ex-prisoners and to restore the honour of innocent people who had suffered the consequences of Stalinist repression for crimes that they have not committed. The State was not ready "to deal with feelings of guilt, shame and disgrace as well as the dismaying culture shock of learning a dreadful political truth" (Adler 2002, 7). Therefore, the state was not able to acknowledge that Velychkovs'kyi, a former enemy of the people, was an innocent victim of repression because by doing so it would undermine its own legitimacy.

On 4 July 1968, Velychkovs'kyi's lawyer, Bardiakov, requested that his case be sent from Kyiv to the L'viv Regional Court so that he could closely familiarize himself with the case. Velychkovs'kyi' case was send to L'viv shortly after. However, because on 27 January 1969 Velychkovs'kyi was arrested for the second time, he was not able to work with his lawyer or to write any more complaint letters.

Anti-Soviet propaganda was one of the reasons for his second arrest. He received three years of punishment in Komynars'k, Eastern Ukraine, in a severe-regime prison that was used as a psychiatric hospital. On 2 October 1969 a few days after the court hearing for the second arrest, he wrote his fifth and last letter of complaint. In the first part of the letter he complained about his unfair sentencing at the second trial. The second part of the letter dealt with his first arrest.

After twenty-four years, he had received four denials of his requests for rehabilitation and had been arrested once again for anti-Soviet propaganda. However, he continued to believe that there would be someone who could help him overturn his first sentence. He complained about the unfair investigation and sentencing. He again explained the circumstances about the calendar. He also added that the authorities continuously wanted him to switch to the Russian Orthodox Church and his unwillingness to do so was the real reason for his first and second arrests. He finished his last letter by saying: “on the hundred-year Lenin jubilee I ask that my request be taken into consideration. Let our USSR and its justice shine in glory” (BVV, f.2, II, E, vol. 5, 299). His last complaint letter was also rejected.

During his second imprisonment Velychkovs'kyi did not write letters to the authorities. He died shortly after this second imprisonment. Unfortunately, he died without receiving acknowledgment that he had been falsely accused and sentenced for anti-Soviet propaganda. Despite his requests and complaints the Soviet authorities did not grant Velychkovs'kyi rehabilitation status. He was considered a criminal until 1991 when on 17 April the Law “On rehabilitation of the victims of political repressions in Ukraine” was adopted by the Supreme Council (*Verkhovna Rada*) of Ukraine. The purpose of the law was to “liquidate consequences of illegality that were committed on political grounds in relation to Ukrainian citizens,” and to “renew citizens’ rights, set compensation for illegal repressions and privileges to the

rehabilitated.” The rehabilitated were defined as persons who on political grounds had been “groundlessly charged by courts or underwent repression by extra-judicial bodies” for actions considered as counter-revolution crimes, who had been condemned for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, or for deliberately spreading fabrications that defamed the Soviet state” (Law of Ukraine, 1991).

The law aimed at rehabilitating all victims of political repressions who had been subjected to persecution since 1917. On 5 April 1994 Velychkovs’kyi was rehabilitated by the procurator of Ternopil’ region. It was stated that Velychkovs’kyi should be rehabilitated as a victim of political repressions in Ukraine, due to “the absence of evidence that could prove the validity of criminal responsibility of his actions” (BVV, f.2, I, B, vol. 2, 280). In this way Velychkovs’kyi finally obtained his rehabilitation. Unfortunately, however, the Soviet authorities did not admit their mistakes, not did they announce that he had been falsely arrested and accused. His innocence was only acknowledged by the new post-Soviet Ukrainian government and under its laws.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

Since the late nineteenth century, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had supported the Ukrainian national movement in Galicia. The Church and its leaders were actively involved in the political and social life of Galician population. Many of the clergy supported the struggle for Galician autonomy in the interwar period.

In 1946, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was officially banned by the USSR, and its clergy and faithful were forced to switch to the Russian Orthodox Church, which was controlled by the government. Those who refused to join Orthodoxy were convicted of anti-Soviet crimes, arrested, sentenced, imprisoned, sent to concentrated camps or killed.

Vasyl' Velychkovs'kyi, a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest of the Redemptorist order refused to subscribe to Orthodoxy. As a result, he was arrested on 7 August 1945 and accused of anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation. He underwent harsh interrogations during the investigation of his case, including physical and mental abuse and torture. At his trial he was denied a lawyer and there were no witnesses. The case was based only on the investigator's point of view, and the latter's interpretation of Velychkovs'kyi's testimonies, which had been forced from the prisoner. He was accused of conducting anti-Soviet propaganda by preaching against the government, by organizing an anti-Soviet procession in Stanislaviv (now Ivano-Frankivs'k), placing a nationalist greeting in a newspaper and publishing anti-Soviet views in a calendar. For these crimes, for which the investigator had little legal evidence, Velychkovs'kyi was sentenced to the firing squad. After waiting on death row for almost two months, he saw his sentence commuted to ten years of imprisonment in the labour camps of Siberia.

After Stalin's death in 1953, Velychkovs'kyi began to write letters of complaint and requests for a review of his case. In the period from 1954 to 1969 he wrote five letters, in which he protested against his arrest, imprisonment and the injustice of his trial and sentence. Furthermore, he asked to be rehabilitated. Even though his letters were taken into account and his case was reviewed, the authorities still believed that he had been sentenced correctly and did not grant him rehabilitation.

Velychkovs'kyi was proclaimed an enemy of the people and his actions were declared anti-social and harmful to state security. As a result, he was not rehabilitated in the Soviet period. For over twenty-five years he fought with Soviet authorities for justice by appealing, writing letters and complaining about the unfairness of the investigation, trial and sentence. He died in 1973 without proper acknowledgement of his innocence. However, when Ukraine proclaimed its independence, the new government recognized Velychkovs'kyi's incorruptibility and declared that his arrest, accusations, sentence, and imprisonment were not based on legal grounds.

The available evidence demonstrates the gross violations of Soviet legality and of human rights in this case. It also shows that the treatment of Velychkovs'kyi was part of the Soviet campaign to destroy the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

Appendix

The Title Page of the Case Investigation File

**МИНИСТЕРСТВО ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ**  
**16500-П**

**ДЕЛО №** \_\_\_\_\_

По обвинению Василий Владимирович

Имя \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_ г. В \_\_\_\_\_ томик  
Олчичево \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_ г. Том № 1

После судебного рассмотрения и вступления в силу настоящего дела, подает немедленному возвращению в \_\_\_\_\_

Передать находящиеся в производстве следственных дел, а также дела из архива дел в другие органы или органы МГБ, хотя бы и временно, провозится исключительным образом.

К делу должна быть приобщена \_\_\_\_\_

ОСНОВАНИЕ: Приказ НКВД, Прокуратуры и НКЮ Союза ССР № 03359 от 10.IV 1939 г.

Архив № 1840

Сделано в \_\_\_\_\_

**75456 фп**

**16500-П**

BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 1

Used with permission

An Instruction for the Arrest and a  
List of Collected Incriminating Evidence

26 July 1945

2

"СТЕБЕЛКА"  
НАЧАЛЬНИК УЧАСТКА ПО ТЕРНОПОЛЬСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ  
ГЕНЕРАЛ-МАЙОР  
(СТАРИЦКИЙ)  
"26" июля 1945 года

"САВИЦКОМЕР"  
"26" июля 1945 года

ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ  
на арест

"26" июля 1945 г. гор. Чортков.

Я, Зам. Начальника 4 Отделения 2 Отдела УНКГБ по Тернопольской области, Старший лейтенант - БОЛОГА Т.А. рассмотрев поступившие в УНКГБ материалы о преступной деятельности - ВЕЛИКОВСКОГО Василия Владимировича, 1903 года рождения, уроженца п. Станислава, украинца, гр-на СССР, беспартийного, с высшим духовным образованием, священника греко-католической церкви, п. Тернополя, проживающего в п. Тернополь, по ул. Островского дом № 51.

НАМЕЛ -

что ВЕЛИКОВСКИЙ находился с 1929 по 1934 г.г. в Ковальском монастыре редemptористов, занимался миссионерской работой, систематически выступал перед населением с антисоветскими проповедями и распространял среди верующих антисоветскую литературу. Такого же деятельность он проводил в г.г. Львове и Станиславе.

После оккупации, немцами Западной Украины, под редакцией ВЕЛИКОВСКОГО издавалась литература антисоветского протеста.

В издании под редакцией ВЕЛИКОВСКОГО "Львовском календаре за 1945 г." выражалась благодарность немецким оккупантам за "освобождение Украины" от большевиков.

В июле 1941 года ВЕЛИКОВСКИЙ явился к епископу ХОМЫНИНУ и предложил ему написать в местную националистическую газету приветствие по случаю провозглашения бандеровцами в г.г. Львове "Украинской державы", после чего ХОМЫНИН и ЛЯТЫШВСКИЙ было написано такое приветствие и помещено в Станиславской газете "Самостійна Україна".

На основании изложенного. -

ПОСТАНОВИЛ -

ВЕЛИКОВСКОГО Василия Владимировича, проживающего в п. Тернополе по ул. Островского дом № 51, подвергнуть аресту и обыску.

ЗАМ. НАЧАЛЬНИКА 4 ОТДЕЛЕНИЯ 2 ОТДЕЛА УНКГБ ПО ТЕРНОПОЛЬСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ  
СТ. ЛЕЙТЕНАНТ - БОЛОГА Т.А.

НАЧАЛЬНИК 2 ОТДЕЛА УНКГБ ПО ТЕРНОПОЛЬСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ  
ПОДПОМОЩНИК - БОЛОГА Т.А.

НАЧАЛЬНИК СЛЕД. ОТДЕЛА УНКГБ ПО ТЕРНОПОЛЬСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ  
ПОДПОМОЩНИК - БОЛОГА Т.А.

Согласен -

BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 8

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The Form of the Arrestee, Containing Photographs and Fingerprint

8 January 1946

Анкета заполнена 4 января 1946 года  
указать наименование тюрьмы или КПЗ  
Васильев Иван Иванович Киев  
Город, село, ж.-д. ст. Киев  
Кем сестра Иван Иванович Васильев  
должность, звание, фамилия  
Подпись Иван Иванович  
Место для фотокарточки арестованного  
  
Васильевский В.В. 1943 г.  
Степечаток указательного пальца  
правой руки  
(от одной кромки ногтя до другой)  
  
Личная подпись (арестованного) Иван Иванович

BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 13

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The Order for Arrest

7 August 1945

4

УРСР

**НАРОДНИЙ КОМІСАРІАТ ДЕРЖАВНОЇ БЕЗПЕКИ**

**ОРДЕР № 893**

„ 7 “ Август 1945 р.

Видано Дніпропетровським облуправлінням  
Народного Комісаріату Державної Безпеки

тов. Боліюте

на переведення ареста и обыска  
Величкового  
Василия  
Владимировича

Адреса Дніпропетровськ ул. Остров-  
ского 70м 51.

Начальник УНКДБ  
по Дніпропетровській області

ДОВІДКА арест прокурор світлиця

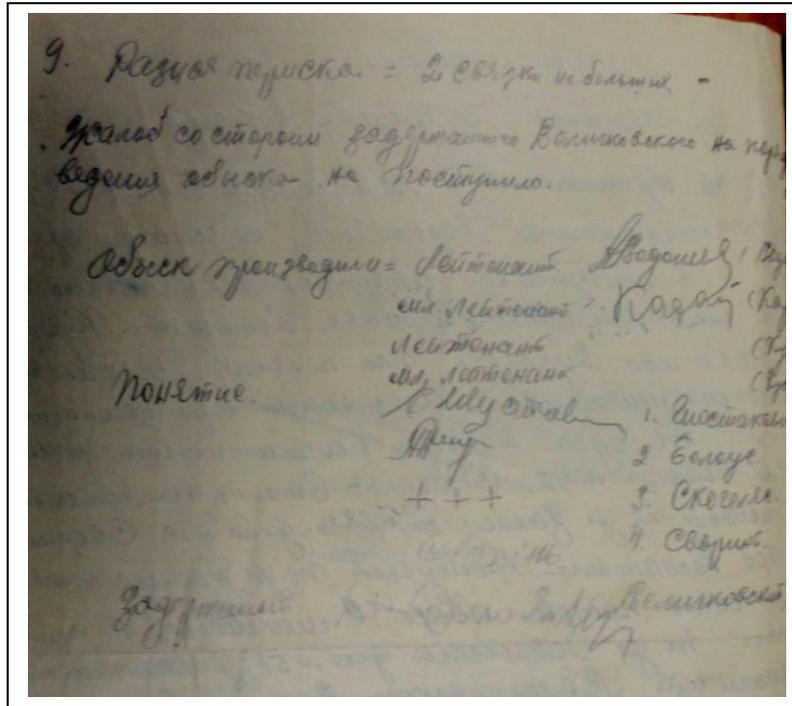
BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 19

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The House Search Protocol

Page 2

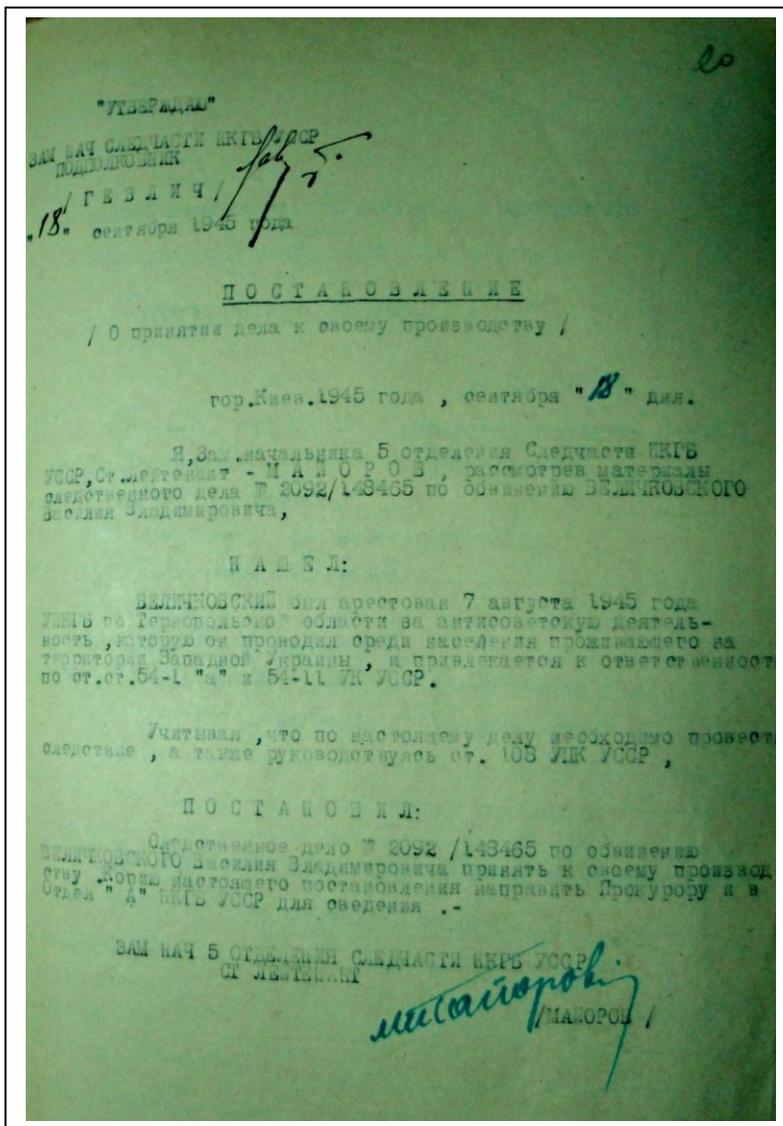


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The Prejudgment for Transferring Case to the Court  
to the NKVD Investigation Department in Kyiv

18 September 1945



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The Protocol of Interrogation #1  
at the NKVD Investigation Department in Kyiv

18 September 1945

Page 1

**ПРОТОКОЛ ДОПРОСА К ДЕЛУ №** \_\_\_\_\_ **24**

Допрос начал 18. сентября 1945 г. в 15 час. 10 мин.  
окончен 18. сентября 1945 г. в \_\_\_\_\_ час. \_\_\_\_\_ мин.

Занят № 5 администр. секс. гос. НКВД УССР Сив  
Малороб (должность, наименование органа, фамилия)  
допросил в качестве свидетеля

1. Фамилия, имя и отчество Ремизовича  
Владимир Владимирович

2. Год рожд. 1903 3. Место рожд. г.р. Спиритовка

4. Адрес г.р. Тернополь ул. Шевченкова 51

Парт. не принадлежит года, 6. Национал. украинск. Гражд. ССР

Паспорт или др. документы \_\_\_\_\_ (№ паспорта, №, серия, когда и кем выдан)

Образование Среднее специальное Фабрично-инженерное  
(когда и где учился, что закончил)

Профессия и специальность Специалист

Род занятий Находящийся в г.р. Успенской церкви в г.р. Тернополь  
(место службы и должности)

Состав семьи нет  
(указать степень родства, фамилию, имена, отчества, адреса и род занятий)

Социальное происхождение сын священника

Общест. и политич. деятельность в прошлом \_\_\_\_\_

Правительственные награды нет

Военное или специальное звание нет

Отношение к воинской повинности служил в воинской части по выбору.

Участие в Отечественной войне не участвовал  
(где, когда и в качестве кого)

Имеет ли ранения и контузии нет

8. Был ли на территории, оккупированной противником Кривополь на территории  
смушаровской комиссии захватывали в плен 1944 г.  
г.р. Тернополь  
(указать где, когда и что делал)

9. Участвовал ли в бандах, антисоветских организациях и восстаниях (где, когда) нет

10. Судимости нет  
(вс, когда, за что и на сколько осужден)

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An Extension Request for the Investigation

30 November 1945

Page 1

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"УТВЕРЖДАЮ"

НАЧАЛЬНИКА ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО КОМИССАРА ГОСБЕЗОПАСНОСТИ  
УССР, ГЕНЕРАЛ-МАЙОР

*С.И. ПЕЧКО*

« 30 » ноября 1945 года

ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ

/ О продлении срока ведения следствия и содержания  
под стражей /

гор. Киев, 1945 года, ноября « 30 » дня.

Я, Зам. начальника отделения Следственной  
Части НКГБ УССР, Капитан - ГОРДИН, рассмотрев материалы  
следственного дела №148465 по обвинению ВЕЛИЧКОВСКОГО  
Василия Владимировича по ст.ст. 54-1 "а" и 54-11 УК УССР,

И М Е Л:

ВЕЛИЧКОВСКИЙ арестован 7 августа 1945 года  
УНКГБ Тернопольской области по подозрению в связях с  
украинскими националистами и проведение антисоветской  
работы.

Следствием установлено, что ВЕЛИЧКОВСКИЙ являлся  
свидетелем - миссионером греко-католического монастыря  
"редemptористов" в г. Ковеле, по заданию Ватикана частот-  
раз"езжал по приходам Молнии, где проводил борьбу с пра-  
вославием и распространял католическую веру. Выступал с  
антисоветскими проповедями в которых возводил клевету на  
Коммунистическую партию и Советское государство.

В период немецкой оккупации ВЕЛИЧКОВСКИЙ, в  
конце 1941 года, велел в гор. Станиславе т.н. "Марийский  
календарь" антисоветского содержания в котором воспеивал  
фашистских оккупантов и выражал вражду к Советской власти.

По показаниям арестованного ЧАРНИЦКОГО И.А.  
ВЕЛИЧКОВСКИЙ в период оккупации проводил активную на-  
ционалистическую работу, призывал население к борьбе за  
"Самостоятельную Украину", выступал с националистическими  
речами. Однако свою националистическую работу ВЕЛИЧКОВ-  
СКИЙ отрицает.

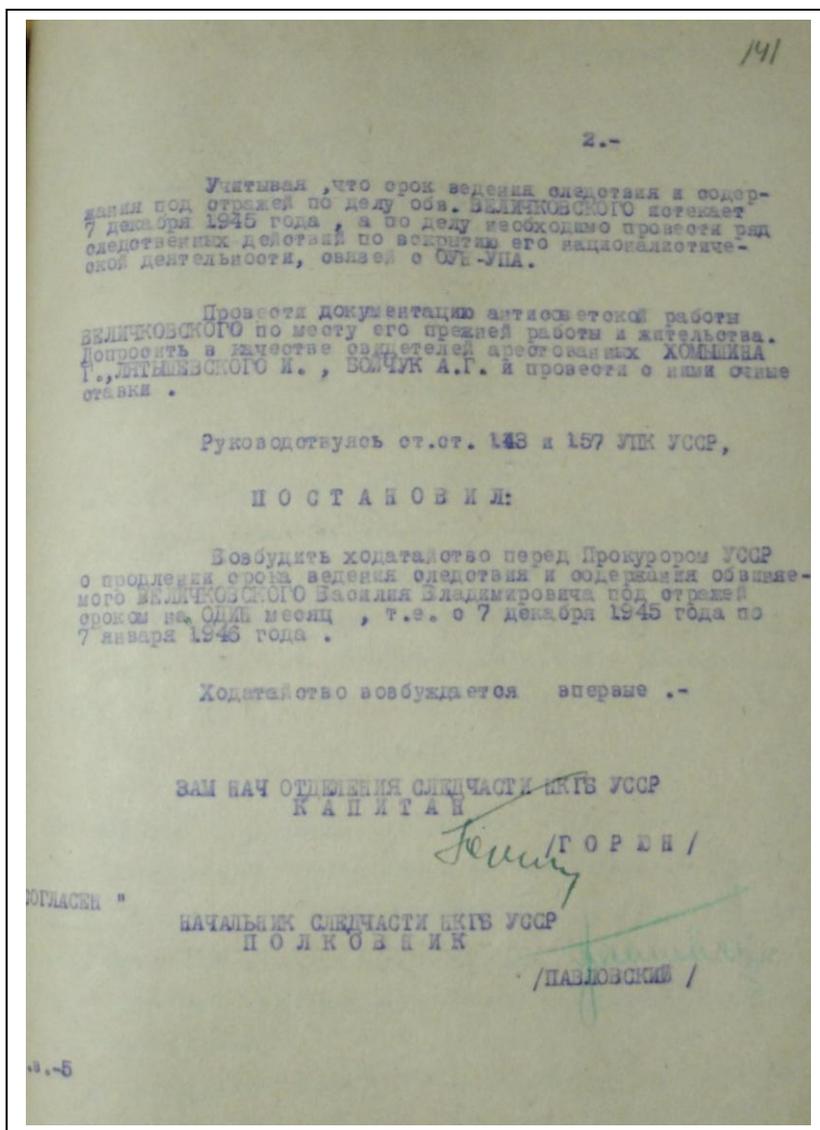
BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 172

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An Extension Request for the Investigation

30 November 1945

Page 2



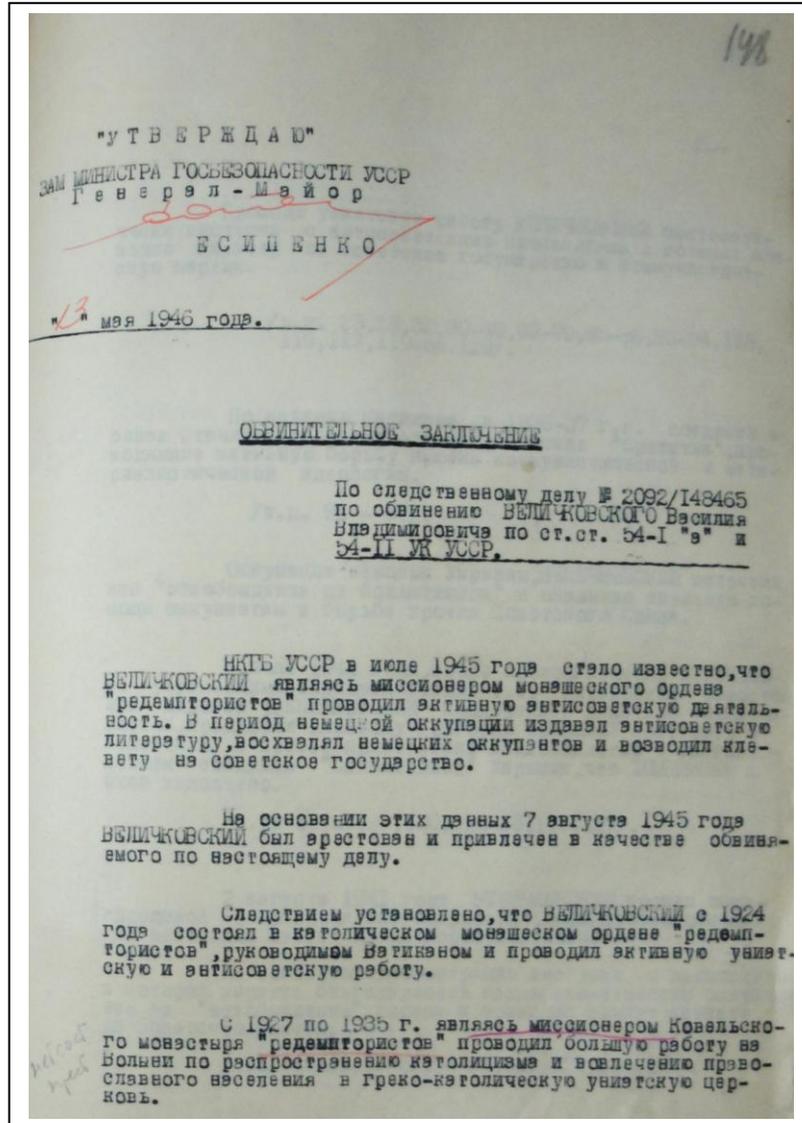
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The Final Indictment

23 May 1946

Page 1



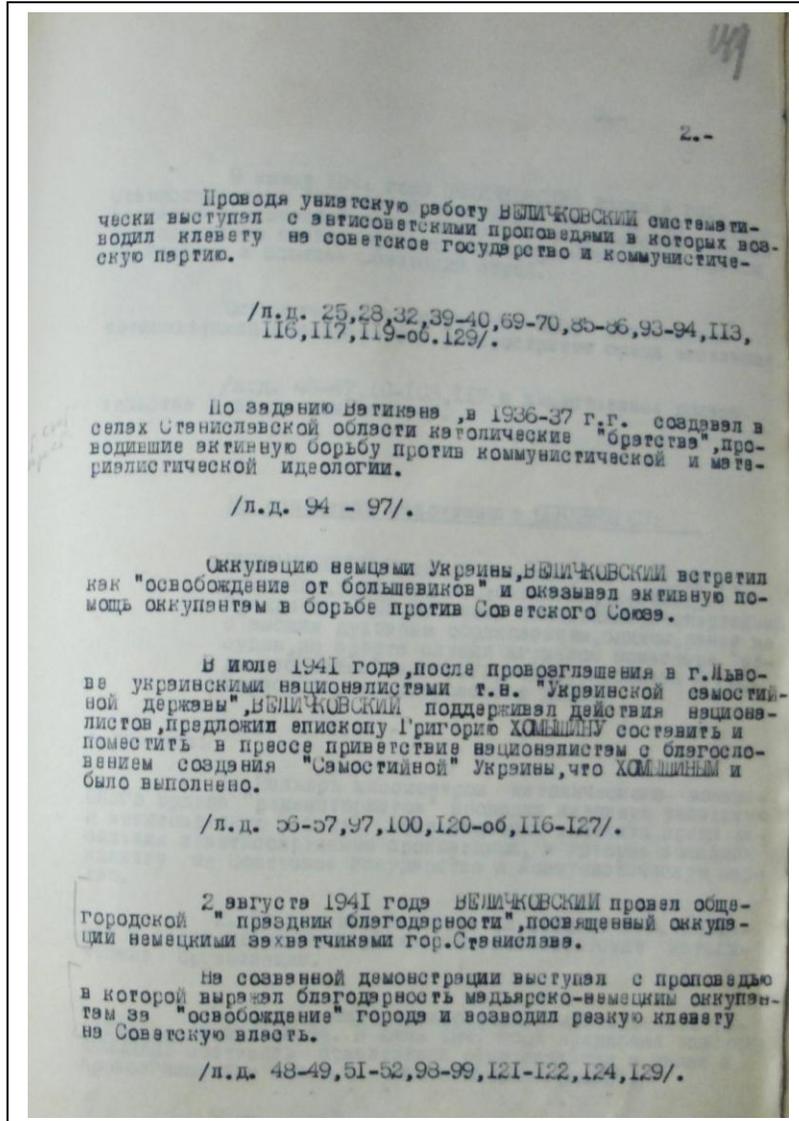
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The Final Indictment

23 May 1946

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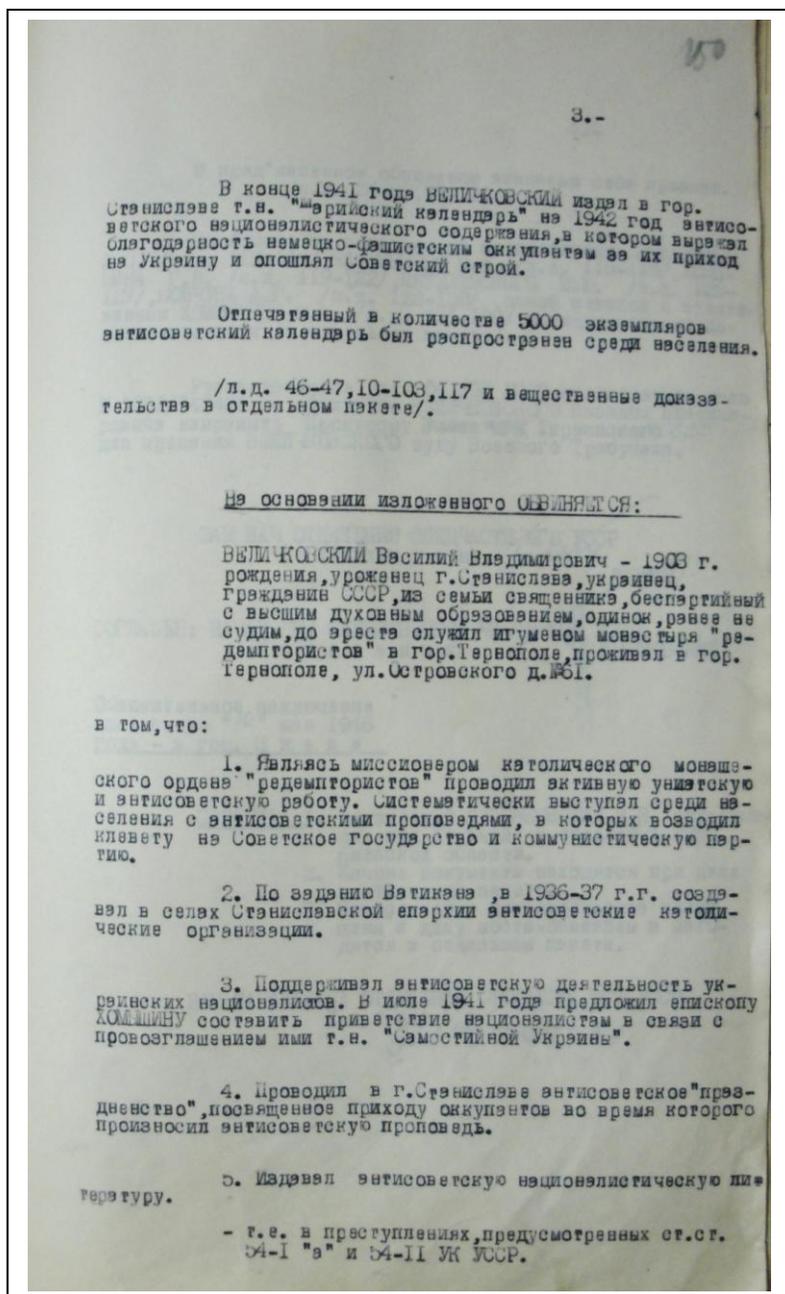
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# The Final Indictment

23 May 1946

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The Final Indictment

23 May 1946

Page 4

4.-

В пред'явленном обвинении вносимым себя признал.  
/л.д. 24-25,79-104/.

Изобличается поименными арестованных ~~МЕТСЕНКО~~  
А.С. /л.д. 113-115/, ЧАРЫШКОГО Н.А. /л.д. 116-118/, КОМИ-  
ЩЕНА Г.В. /л.д. 119-122/, МАТЛАНСКОГО В.В. /л.д. 123-  
127/, БОЛТУНА А.Г. /л.д. 128-130/, одной стеной с аресто-  
ванным КОМИЩЕНА Г.А. /л.д. 131-133/ и вещественными до-  
казательствами /в отдельном пакете/.

Руководствуясь ст.204 УИК УССР следственное дело  
№ 2032/148466 по обвинению ВЕЛИЧКОВСКОГО Василия Владими-  
ровича издать Прокурору ~~Велич~~ ~~МВД~~ Украинского ССР  
для передачи ВЕЛИЧКОВСКОМУ суду Военного Трибунала.

ЗАМ НАЧ ОТДЕЛЕНИЯ СЛЕДЧАСТИ МТБ УССР  
К а п и т а н *Белый* /О Р Д Н /

СОГЛАСЕН: НАЧАЛЬНИК СЛЕДСТВЕННОЙ ЧАСТИ МТБ УССР  
П о л к о в н и к *Давыдовский* /ДАВЫДОВСКИЙ/

Обвинительное заключение  
составлено "10" мая 1946  
ГОЛД - в ГОР. К И Р В В

СПРАВКА: 1. Обвиняемый ВЕЛИЧКОВСКИЙ В.В. содержи-  
тся под стражей в тюрьме № 1 УМВД  
Киевской области.  
2. Личные документы вносятся при деле  
в отдельном пакете.  
3. Вещественные доказательства приоб-  
щены и делу поступившим и вхо-  
дятся в отдельном пакете.

ЗАМ НАЧАЛЬНИКА ОТДЕЛЕНИЯ СЛЕДЧАСТИ МТБ УССР  
К а п и т а н *Белый* /О Р Д Н /

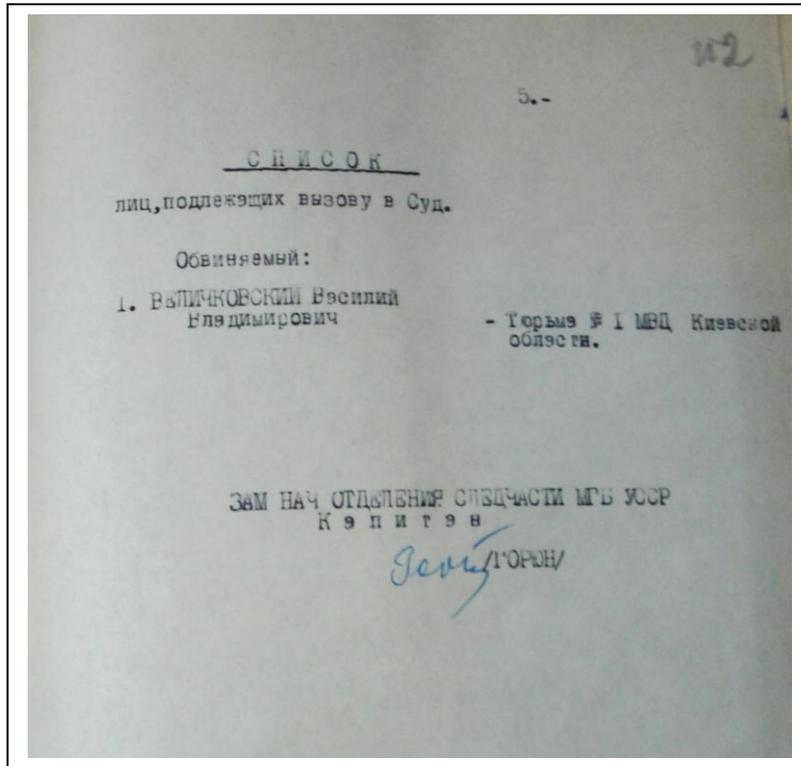
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The Final Indictment

23 May 1946

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Physical Evidence

Marian Calendar for 1942

*(Mariivs'kyi Kalendar za 1942 r.)*

Title Page



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Physical Evidence

Marian Calendar for 1942

*(Mariivs'kyi Kalendar za 1942 r.)*

The Publisher Page



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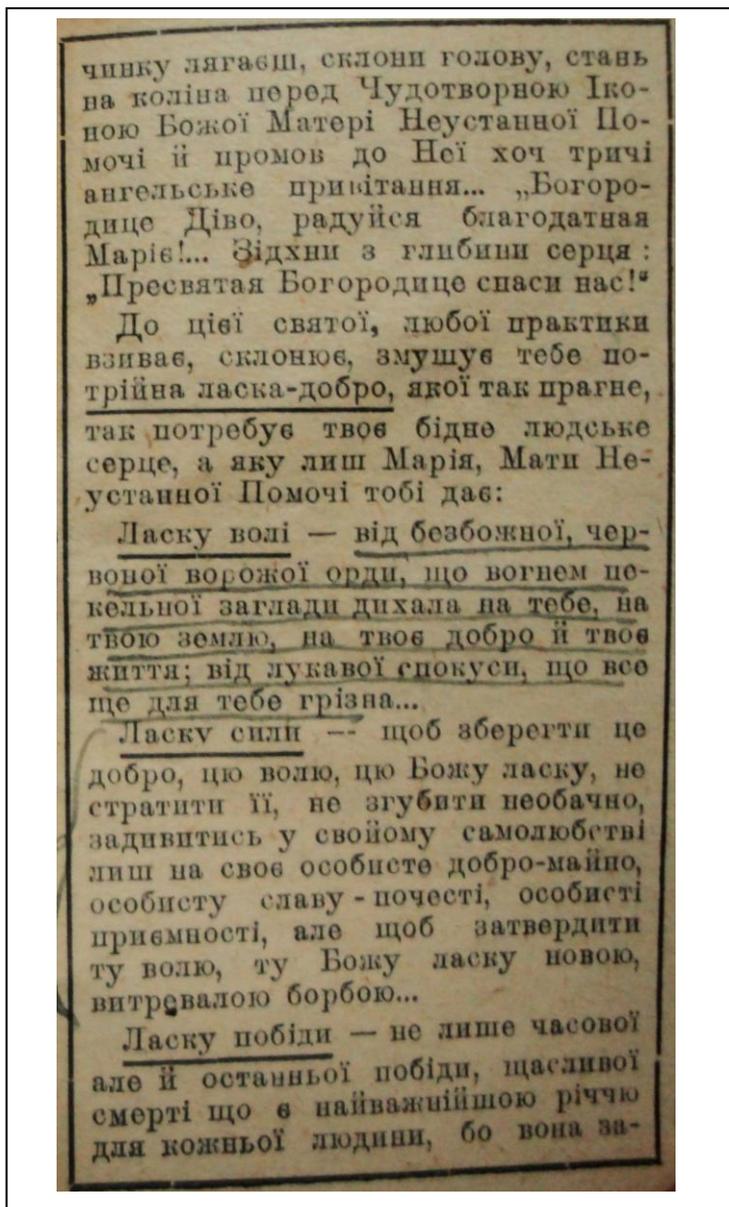
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## Physical Evidence

Extracted from the Marian Calendar for 1942

*(Mariivs'kyi Kalendar za 1942 r.)*

Contains the phrase “freedom from the godless, red, hostile horde...”



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The Prejudgment Allowing the Case to be Passed on to the Court

17 June 1946

157

У х в а л а

1946 року. Червень 17 днів Київський  
обласний суд в складі:  
Головуючого Бобриньова;  
членів суду: Євонітши Ган Козлової;  
При секретарі Гринишак.  
з участю прокурора Загворного.  
розглянувши в підготовчому засіданні  
кримінальну справу по обвинуваченню  
Величковського Василя Володимировича по сні 54-10711 кк.  
беручи на увагу, що по справі  
реєстраційно зібрано доказів з  
відданню до суду Величковського  
по сні 54-10711 кк ч. 1 б.  
Процесуальні порушення по справі  
невбачає, тому керуючись ст 2333 кк  
У х в а л и в і:  
обвинувальний висновок по справі  
затвердити. Величковського Василя  
Володимировича віддати до суду по  
сні 54-10711 кк. Справу заслухати за  
участю сторін і призначити до слу-  
хання на 27 червня року. Свідків виклика-  
ти в судові засідання зазначених в  
обвинувальному висновку.  
Винуватцям залишити поперед-  
ній зобов'язання під вартою.  
Головуючий Бобриньова.  
член суду: Козлова  
Слово

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The Sentence

26 June 1946

Page 1

Справа № \_\_\_\_\_ 165  
1946

## В И Р О К

Ім'ям української Радянської Соціалістичної Республіки  
1946 р. 26 числа дня 26

Хмельницької області суд

в складі:  
ГОЛОВИ: Федоренко  
НАРОДНИХ ЗАБИРАТЕЛІВ: Корнієнко і Бандура  
ПРИ СЕКРЕТАРІ: Вршмак

Почесність Прокурора: Задворний  
оборонця: Мироненко

вгладув: Закривач сферного суду справу за обвинуваченням  
Величковської Василія Владимировича 1903 року  
народження Уроженця 2. Євстафія Тернова  
жур Тернопіль України священник Олександр  
Іванович Іванович Олександрівна до Архієпископа  
Івановича Івановича монастиря "Редимитриєвського"  
жур Тернопіль підсудимий з 1945 року  
виправлений по ст. 54-10 ч. 1 к. к. С. Р.

Установлено: Районним  
судом і до судового слідства допрошено  
свідків на попередньому слідстві,  
допрошено підсудимого, при підсудимий  
Величковський з 1924 року союзник с. Кайдаки  
Івановича монастиря "Редимитриєвського"

BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 220

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The Sentence

26 June 1946

Page 2

с 1924 по 1937. Являясь миссионером Коллегии  
Монахов "редемптористов" проводил  
большую работу на Волыни по восстановлению  
Манастира Кайалыво и воеводине православных  
населения в Урско-католическую Унияскую  
церковь. Кроме проводимой воеводине  
работы по делу великопольскому  
Систематически Антин-советскую работу  
В 1941 году немцами проводилась в  
Украинских Националистиче т.н. "Украинская  
Самодельная держава", Великопольский по делу  
т.н. действовал Националистиче и пред  
т.н. стискою Коллегии составили  
и поименно в прессе при великопольском  
Националистиче, что и было сделано  
В 1941 году 2/ти по делу великопольскому  
Великопольский по делу обиде народская "Украинская  
Благодарности" поименно оккупационных  
немецких оккупационных т.н. Станислав  
и на составили демонстрация воеводине  
спросоведом в которой воеводине  
благодарности оккупационным за освобождение  
и введем вступил Ксавьеру на  
Славян с такими поименно т.н.  
свободы воеводине воеводине и ранней

BVV, f.2, I, A, vol.1, 221

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The Sentence

26 June 1946

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166  
Что и издается сам. подслушивая.  
В 1941 году подслушивая Великовская  
в городе Станиславе т. и.  
Марийский "Календарь" на 1942 год  
Амийсовская националистическая содер-  
жание в нем ополча советскую  
власть восточной Немецко-Финский  
журналист, таких Календарей было  
множество и распространено 5000 экз  
Великовская в своем наказании  
не издает свои умышленно также  
Викторовский след Свидетель Иришай  
К-р действительный подслушивая под-  
слушивается наказания свидетели  
Иришайский и др.  
на основании скандала обещу  
признает Викторовский Великовская  
проведения К-р Амийсовский Ири-  
шай советской Вилейки на Удонской  
всего лет т. е. в присутствии  
предусмотрено ст. 54-10 т. Уд.  
Викторовский присутствии следом в числе  
оказавшись  
Умийсовская может подслушивая  
Иришай советского и присутствии  
и руководителем ст. 296 Уд.

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Appeal #1

28 June 1946

Page 1

Судебную Коллегию по уголовным делам  
Верховного суда СССР  
Величковского Василия Владимировича  
Кассационная жалоба  
Приговором Киевского Обл. суда от  
26 [VI] - 46 года, я осужден по ст. 54-10 ч. 2 У.К.  
с высшей мере наказания - расстрелу.  
Приговор этой являющейся презбитайко су-  
добии по следующим основаниям:  
Предварительное следствие по моему де-  
лу проведено поспешно, поэтому у меня  
не было времени ознакомиться с делом из  
полного зрения следствия.  
При обыске у меня изъяты дневники за  
всё время моей службы, в которых изложена  
полностью вся моя пропаганда. Ни одного  
антисоветского выражения в этих пропо-  
ндах нет.  
Во время моего в суде не было допрошено  
ни одного свидетеля. Таким образом приго-  
вор основан лишь на материалах предва-  
рительного следствия и моих показаниях  
в суде.  
Я в суде признал себе виновным только  
в том, что при издании календаря в пер-  
од немецкой оккупации, я был угасителем

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Appeal # 1

28 June 1946

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о издании допустить в нём антимосковские выражения. Однако судом не учтено что такой календарь составлялся не мной а другим лицом.

Во всяком случае за это своё деяние я не заслуживаю расстрела.

Судом не учтено, что я до войны тоже служил настоящим монашеством, однако ни в чём предсудительном не был замечен.

Судом не учтено, что в период немецкой оккупации в нашей монашестве мы прятали многих действительных советских рабочников и спасли их от смерти.

Всё это говорит о том, что я не являюсь таким преступником в отношении которого требовалось бы только его физическое уничтожение.

На основании изложенного, прошу, приговор Киевского Обл. суда в отношении меня смягчить и избранную судом высшую меру наказания - расстрел заменить мне на лишение свободы.

По поручению Величковского  
28/VI-46. Киса Мирон

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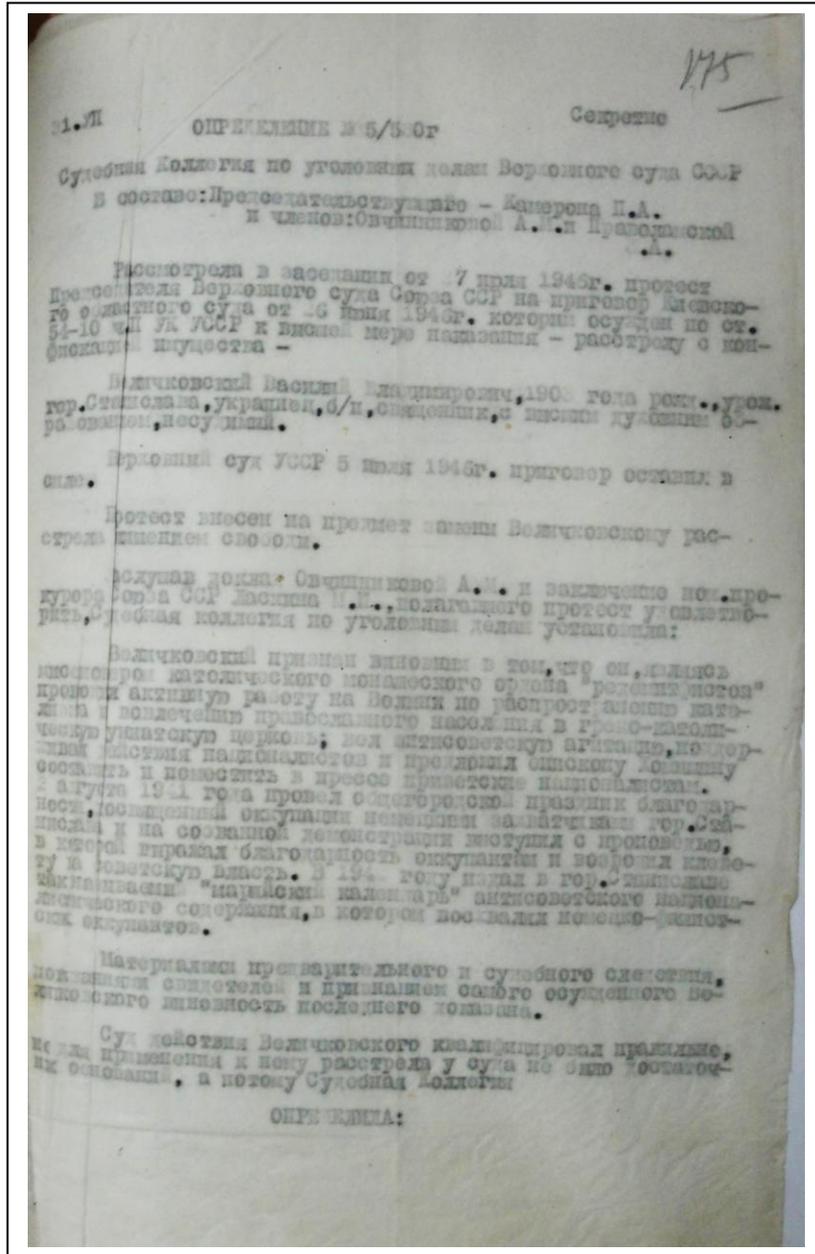
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An Order to Change the Death Sentence

to Ten Years of Imprisonment

31 July 1946

Page 1



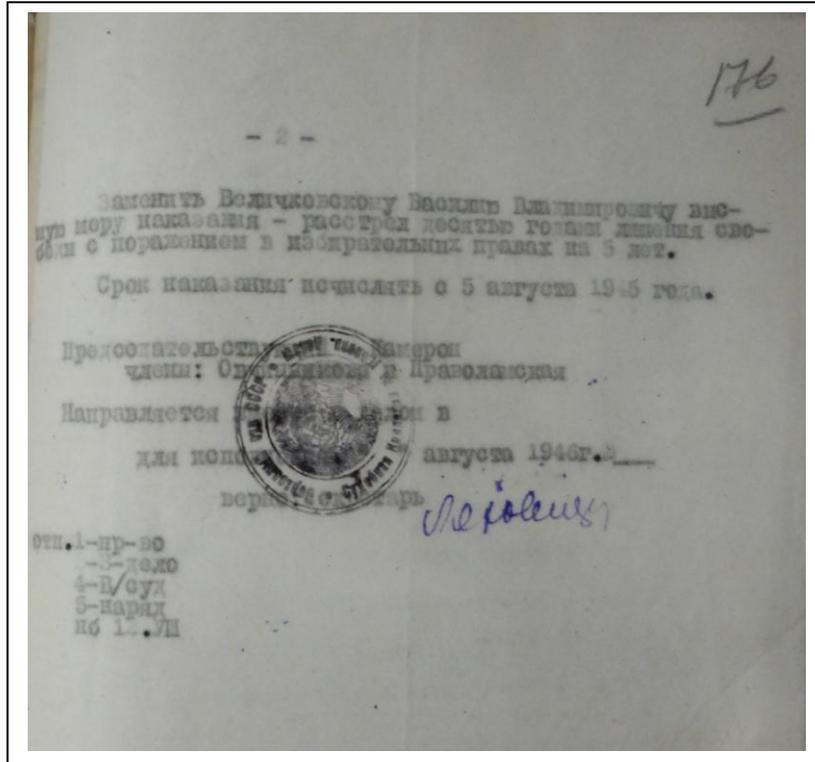
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An Order to Change the Death Sentence  
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31 July 1946

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Complaint Letter # 1

7 July 1954

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На основании изложенных протоколов следствия вынесен приговор...  
 1. В 1942 г. во время оккупации...  
 2. В последствии 23.VIII.1945 г. после тщательного обзора и изучения...  
 3. Во время...  
 4. Также во время...  
 5. После следствия в Киев...  
 6. И тогда самое после суда...  
 Вот это настоящее основание...  
 Все выше сказанное не имеет для меня по существу никакого значения, т.к. срок наказания идет к концу...  
 7.VII.1954г.

*[Handwritten signature]*

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Rehabilitation Document

5 April, 1994

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ЗАТВЕРДЖУЮ:  
Перший заступник прокурора Тернопільської області  
Державний радник юстиції 3 класу  
Б. В. Ференц  
5 . . . 04 . . . . . 1994 р.

**ЗАКЛЮЧЕННЯ**

Прізвище, ім'я, по батькові Величковский В.В.  
(прізвище, ініціали)

по матеріалах кримінальної справи (арх. №) 27159

Прізвище, ім'я, по батькові Величковский Василий Владимирович

місце народження 1903 г.р., г.Ивано-Франковск 1.Станислав

місце роботи і посада до арешту священник греко-католической церкви г.Тернополь

місце проживання до арешту г.Тернополь, ул.Островского, 51

Коли, яким органом, по яких статтях КК засуджений (репресований) в чому визнаний винним, змінився висновок по справі і як: приговором Киевского областного суда от 26 июня 1946 года по ст.54-10 ч.2 УК УССР к высшей мере наказания - расстрелу с конфискацией имущества.

Определением судебной коллегии по уголовным делам Верховного Суда СССР от 27 июля 1946 года приговор Киевского облсуда от 26 июня 1946 года изменен и определен Величковскому 10 лет лишения свободы.

Согласно приговору он признан виновным в том, что с 1924 года состоял в католическом монашеском ордене "редemptористов", с 1927 по 1935 год являлся миссионером Ковельского монастыря "редemptористов", проводил работу по распространению католицизма и вовлечению православного населения в греко-католическую униатскую церковь. В 1941 году 2 августа выступил с проповедью в которой выражал благодарность оккупантам и возводил клевету на советскую власть.

В материалах дела каких-либо доказательств участия Величковского в насильственных действиях не имеется.

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5 April, 1994

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Звільнений «09» липеня 19 55 р. Арештований «05» августа 19 45 р.

Утримувався під вартою в місяцях позбавлення волі, на примусовому лікуванні (потрібно підкріпити): 09 років 11 місяців 04 днів

Знаходився у в'язниці \_\_\_\_\_ років \_\_\_\_\_ місяців \_\_\_\_\_ днів

Відомості про репресованого і його родичів НЕ УСТАНОВЛЕНІ

На Величковского В.В. (п. і. по б.)

поширюється дія ст. 1 Закону України «Про реабілітацію жертв політичних репресій на Україні» від 17 квітня 1991 р. при отсутствии доказательств, подтверждающих обоснованность привлечения к уголовной ответственности за деяния, предусмотренные ст.2 Закона

Начальник слідчого відділення УСБУ по Тернопільській області підполковник [підпис] В. М. Староду

Ст. помічник прокурора Тернопільської області ст. радник юстиції [підпис] В. П. Гориньський

«30» 03 19 94 р.

Примітка: довідка про реабілітацію \_\_\_\_\_

« \_\_\_\_\_ » \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_ р. направлена \_\_\_\_\_

(родинні відносини, п. і. по б.)

за адресою \_\_\_\_\_

Підпис: Гаврилова [підпис]  
(включити)

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CARC -- Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults

C.Ss.R. --The Congregation of Priests of the Most Holy Redeemer

KGB -- Committee for State Security (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*)

NKVD -- The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*)

OUN -- The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsiia Ukrains'kykh Natsionalistiv*)

RSFSR -- The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (*Rossiiskaia Sovetskaia Federativnaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika*)

SBU -- The Security Service of Ukraine (*Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrainy*)

Ukrainian SSR -- The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

UPA -- The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiia*)

USSR -- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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ASBU. Arkhiv Sluzby Bezpeky Ukrainy (Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine). Kyiv.

BVVSMA. Blessed Vasyl Velychkovs'kyi Shrine and Museum Archives. 250 Jefferson Avenue, Winnipeg, MB.

DAI-FO. Derzhavnyi Arhiv Ivano-Frankivs'koi Oblasti (State Archive of Ivano-Frankivs'k Oblast). Ivano-Frankivs'k. In Bociurkiw, Bohdan, Rostyslav. 1996. *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939-1950)*. Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press.

DALO. Derzhavnyi Arhiv L'vivs'koi Oblasti (State Archive of L'viv Oblast). Lviv. In Bociurkiw, Bohdan, Rostyslav. 1996. *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939-1950)*. Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press.

DATO. Derzhavnyi Arhiv Ternopil's'koi Oblasti (State Archive of Ternopil' Oblast). Ternopil'. In Bociurkiw, Bohdan, Rostyslav. 1996. *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939-1950)*. Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press.

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- RYPА. Redepmtorists Yorkton Province Archives, 165 Catherine Street, Yorkton, SK.
- TDIAK. Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Istorychnyi Arkhiv v Kyevi. (Central State Historical Archive in Kyiv). Kyiv.
- TDIAL. Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Istorychnyi Arkhiv v L'vovi. (Central State Historical Archive in L'viv). L'viv.
- TDIAT. Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Istorychnyi Arkhiv v Ternopoli. (Central State Historical Archive in Ternopil'). Ternopil'.
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