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SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THE ROME-CATHOLIC HIGHER CLERGY IN GALICIA IN THE EARLY 1900's

*Суспільно-політичні орієнтації вищого римо-католицького
духовенства в Галичині на початку ХХ ст.*

У статті досліджено суспільно-політичні орієнтації вищого римо-католицького духовенства в Галичині на початку ХХ ст. З'ясовано, що в окреслений час відбулися значні соціальні потрясіння: придушення робітничих демонстрацій у Львові, селянські страйки 1902 р. тощо. Церква не могла залишити осторонь зазначених подій. Проаналізовано ідею утворення представниками духовенства і світської інтелігенції католицької організації, яка б посилила роль Римо-Католицької Церкви в суспільстві.

Ключові слова: Галичина, Римо-Католицька Церква, вище духовенство, християнська демократія, суспільно-християнський рух.

The article examines the socio-political orientations of the higher Roman Catholic clergy in Galicia in the early twentieth century. It was found that at the appointed time there were significant social upheavals: the suppression of workers' demonstrations in Lviv, the peasant strikes of 1902, etc. The church could not stay away from those events. In the article, we analyzed the idea of the establishment of a Catholic organization by representatives of the clergy and secular intelligentsia, which would strengthen the role of the Roman Catholic Church in society. In our study, we proved that the Church, on the one hand, tried to solve urgent social issues, on the other hand, to oppose Christian democracy to social democracy.

The newly established organization, the Catholic-Social Union (CSU), was apolitical and aimed to unite all parts of society in order to solve religious, social, economic, and educational problems. The CSU played an important role in the establishment of the Polish social and Christian movement in Galicia, especially in the Diocese of Przemyśl. Instead, the Catholic clergy tried to support the Poles in Galicia. In our article, we assessed the socio-political orientation of the higher Roman Catholic clergy in Galicia in the early 20th century. The principles of Christian democracy differed from the views of moderate democrats, as they recognized the supremacy of the lower strata of the population over the higher ones. The main tasks of the CSU were to strengthen Catholic principles in public, family, and personal life, as well as in the education of young people, improving social relations in the spirit of Christian justice, protection of national rights and interests.

Keywords: Galicia, Roman Catholic Church, higher clergy, Christian democracy, social-christian movement.

Problem statement. The political position of the high Roman Catholic clergy of Galicia was extremely active. The beginning of the 20th century witnessed significant social upheavals in Galicia, such as suppression of workers' demonstrations in Lviv, peasant strikes in 1902, etc. The church could not stay aside from those events. The article examines these processes.

Research analysis. There are many gaps in historical investigations of these events. In particular, the participation of the higher clergy in the political life of Galicia in the period is underresearched. The problem was previously scrutinized by G. Gzhybek (Grzybek, G. 2001), K. Turovski (Turowski, K. 1989), Dębowska (Dębowska, M. 1992), Z.Melnyk¹.

In particular, G. Gzhybek described the activities of Yu. Bilchevsky in the public life of Galicia in the early 20th century, emphasized his role in the founding and activities of the KSS, analyzed the role of the clergy in the formation of this organization (Grzybek, G. 2001).

J. Konefal in the article «Catholic-people's political organizations under Austrian rule at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries» analyzed the development of the social-Christian movement in Galicia. The parties and organizations formed after the proclamation of Leo XIII encyclical «Rerum Novarum» in 1891 made efforts to introduce the Christian principles of social, economic and political life of the region, sought to raise the level of education among the general public. The author praised the activities of the leaders of the Polish social-Christian movement, in particular J.Bilczewski, J.S.Pelchar, L.Valenga (Konefał, J. 1996).

Modern foreign historiography is characterized by both general works on the history of Galicia and works in which various aspects of the activities of the Pol-

¹ Melnyk Z. Catholic Churches and Mass Mobilization in Austrian Galicia: 1890–1914. DOI: 10.2870/95695

ish social-christian movement of the outlined period are revealed in detail. The peculiarity of the mentioned works is that they mainly focus on the formation of this movement, analysis of the functioning of individual parties and organizations of clerical direction, study of prominent figures, attitude to the national question, while the peculiarities of Ukrainian-Polish relations are almost not investigated.

Bishop Y. Bilchevsky met with the representatives of the clergy and secular intelligentsia in order to form a Catholic organization according to the German model. In particular, the meetings were attended by Archbishop Y. Teodorovich of the Lviv Armenian Catholic Church, the editor of the newspaper «Gazeta koscielna» A. Pekhnik, the head of the Catholic reader M. Tullie, the representative of the Catholic Society «Skala» I. Korzhenevsky, famous figures of the clerical direction of T. and V. Pilat (Grzybek, G. 2001, p. 15–19).

In his pastoral messages Y. Bilchevsky promoted Christian democracy, which was supposed to change existing social relations. In his encyclicals Pope Leo XIII contrasted Christian democracy to social-democracy which was an important step in the quest to resolve social problems. This movement was also called «popular Christian action». The term «popular Christian action» introduced by Pope Pius X. Y. Bilchevsky who believed that Christian democracy is an activity aimed at restoring equilibrium in society based on the principles of Christian justice. According to the Encyclical of Leo XIII «Graves de communi» («On the dangers for society») dated January 18, 1901, Christian democracy had to oppose socialism and do not set political goals¹. The principles of Christian democracy did not coincide with the views of moderate democrats, because they recognized supremacy of the lower strata of the population over the higher.

The development of the social-Christian movement could not take place without the existence of a centralized organization that would coordinate its activities. In March 1904, at the initiative of Lviv Archbishop Y. Bilchevsky, a Catholic-Social Union («Związek Katolicko-Społeczny») was created (Pekhnik, A. 1905, p. 209).

The purpose of the party was to work on improving social relations in Galicia on the basis of Christian values. According to Y. Bilchevsky, Catholic-Social Union (CSU) should be based on the principles and experience of the Catholic «Volksverein», which organized about 400 thousand Catholics in Germany in just a few years, thus initiating active actions of the church in public and political life². The union leadership was elected: MP T. Chensky — head, M. Tullie, M. Rostvovsky and A. Vesolinsky — his deputies³.

By uniting all segments of society the CSU declared its apolitical character. In addition to setting religious tasks, the CSU also executed social (formation of

¹ Bilczewski, J. W sprawie społecznej — list pasterski do duchowieństwa i wiernych. URL: <https://cutt.ly/4n8jRo9>

² Kursy społeczne we Lwowie // Ruch Chrześcijańsko-Społeczny. № 18. S. 410.

³ Związek Katolicko-Społeczny // Głos narodu. 1904. № 146. S. 1–2.

workers, peasant and craft associations), educational (establishing Catholic magazines and reading-houses), economic (support of Raiffeisen's cashiers, agricultural circles, national industry, etc.)¹ and other tasks.

It should be noted that the formation of a new group led to a lively interest among the political parties of Galicia. In particular, the «populists» were fairly negative towards the CSU. In their press agency «Przyjacieli Ludu» they repeatedly criticized the newly-formed organization. Thus, in the article «New Party» it was noted that, despite the declared apolitical character, the CSU was created to «keep the people dependent on Stańczycy (Polish conservative (national right) party that existed in Galicia from the late 1860's until 1918)»².

The main tasks of the CSU were to strengthen Catholic principles in social, family and personal life, as well as in the education of youth; improvement of social relations in the spirit of Christian justice; protection of national rights, interests, etc.

To achieve the goal, the CSU planned to carry out a number of activities, in particular, to support the construction of churches in villages and the teaching of catechism for children in extra-curricular time; support for recollections; fight against drunkenness, luxury, card-playing and usury; distribution of periodicals and books written from a religious point of view; creation of readings, vocational schools, shelters, hospitals, homes for the poor, as well as educational and correctional facilities for children from dysfunctional families; caring for orphans and disadvantaged people; support for emigrants who were looking for a job abroad.

According to the statute, a member of the CSU could become any Catholic regardless of sex and social status. His duty was to live and work according to the rules of the Catholic faith and in the national spirit; to pay annual membership fees. All members of the CSU had the right to vote at the meetings of their parish (Bilczewski, J. 1908a, s. 366).

The CSU consisted of parochial affiliates, headed by parish councils. They consisted of local priests, leaders of Catholic societies, etc. The Parish Council elected the chairman, his deputy, secretary and treasurer by the majority of votes. The meetings of each branch were to be called at least four times a year under the leadership of the chairman or his deputy.

At the head of the CSU was the diocesan council, elected once every three years. It elected the chairman and his deputies for the period and all decisions were taken by the majority of votes if at least one third of the council members were present (Bilczewski, J. 1908b, s. 371).

The main executive body of the CSU, according to the statute, was the diocesan committee. His functions included: assistance in organizing church parish

¹ List pasterski na Wielki Post R. 1906. O obowiązkach katolików w naszych czasach i o potrzebie organizacji katolickiej (Do odczytania z ambon w niedzielę Starozapustną 11 lutego 1906) / bp Józef Sebastian Pelczar. Przemysł. URL: <https://cutt.ly/An8jCdJ>

² Obłudnicy niedzielnia // Przyjaciel Ludu. 1904. № 22. S. 1–2.

meetings; control over their activities, etc. Also, in the statute it was noted that at liquidation of the CSU, its property would be transferred to regional centers and was intended for charity.

Y. Bilchevsky believed that the CSU was supposed to support the social-Christian movement in Galicia¹. Y. Bilchevsky invited all Catholics to participate in the CSU because he believed that it was necessary to create a strong organization with cells in each town and village of Galicia. The Union did not have to compete with existing social Catholic societies, but rather helped in their activities, in particular, in laying and supporting cheap dining rooms, people's reading houses, Raiffeisen cashiers, agricultural clubs etc. The work of the CSU had to be performed primarily by the laity.

Y. Bilchevsky distinguished three main blocks of tasks of the CSU: religious — protection and dissemination of Catholic principles in personal, family and social life; patriotic — distribution of national education; social — improvement of social relations of all strata of the population. The Metropolitan called for the establishment of the CSU cells, stressed the need for the appointment of responsible persons and the provision of funds. Y. Bilchevsky also presented the main responsibilities of the members of the CSU: to live in accordance with the teaching of the Church, to spread ideas of Christian justice, to promote the activity and development of CSU through «good deeds» in the parish and statutory contributions (Turowski, K. 1989, s. 365–366).

In pastoral messages, Y. Bilchevsky and Y. Pelchar called on their dioceses to join the ranks of the CSU. However, during the years 1904–1905, the number of its members was insignificant (Pechnik, A. 1905, s. 209)². In this regard, it was decided to modify the structure of the CSU. Instead of an organization that covered all of Galicia, local communities were created. Each parish formed a local community headed by a parish council, which delegated representatives to the diocesan council — the governing body of the diocesan union³. Such decentralization had some effect.

In such conditions, the clergy had to play a leading role in the formation of the CSU. For them, Y. Bilchevsky published a detailed instruction manual, according to which a local priest read out the “Pastoral letter for Great Lent on the need for self-sacrifice” during the sermon regarding social issues and the need for the formation of a Catholic organization (Krętosz, J. 2003, s. 208–209). The superior invited selected people, who supported the Church's doctrine, to his parish home, handed over the statute of the CSU and explained the way of founding a new center. In cities, where a risk of counteraction from socialists was high, Y. Bilchevsky recommended to send invitations by post. The total number of parish

¹ Z katolickiego ruchu społecznego // Przegląd powszechny. T. LXXXV. 1905. S. 454–456.

² Z katolickiego ruchu społecznego // Przegląd powszechny. T. LXXXV. 1905. S. 283–286; IV Konferencja księży dzikanów Przemyślu // Kronika Diecezji Przemyńskiej. 1905. S. 306.

³ Kursy społeczne we Lwowie // Ruch Chrześcijańsko-Społeczny. №. 18. S. 410–412.

councils should have been consisting of a local priest and Catholic associations' activists operating in the parish. The remaining members were elected by majority vote in agreement with the priest. In some parishes, the number of members of the council could be smaller, but the superior had to bring to it a local saint patron of the church, or its founder), public school teachers, mayor of the city or head of the village council. The council was supposed to represent all the strata of the population and village councils that were the part of the parish (Bilczewski, J. 1908b, s. 371–372).

The responsibilities of the parish council consisted of holding regular meetings (not fewer than four times a year), and its main task was to support the priest in his pastoral work, especially in charity and social events. The council and the superior jointly implemented a Christian social action. Each CSU cell required premises for meetings, lectures, etc. In addition, holding Catholic town's meetings was meant to prevent anti-religious agitation in the parish. The organization became especially popular in the Przemyśl diocese, which consisted of about 300 parishes.

In 1906, J. Pelchar published «The Pastoral Message for the Great Lent of 1906 on the duties of Catholics at present and on the need for a Catholic organization»¹. At the end of this document, the statute of the CSU was published, according to which the center of the society was Przemyśl, and its activities spread throughout the Przemyśl diocese. It should be noted that the statutory requirements did not differ, as previously stated by Y. Bilchevsky, though the CSU adopted clear political features and in 1906 took part in the elections already under their own political slogans. In 1911, the CSU had 150 thousand members in the Przemyśl diocese, with 101 reading houses and 93 agricultural circles².

At the same time, it should be noted that Bishop Y. Pelchar paid considerable attention to the Ukrainian question. He appealed to the community of historical tradition, emphasized the sanctity of the union, the merits of the Poles in the annexation of «Rus» to Western European civilization. According to him, the Ukrainians pushed the Poles out by building a political program on anti-Polish slogans. Y. S. Pelchar stressed that both sides should stop and realize that hatred could not be put into the foundation of the program. According to the bishop, only an alliance with the Poles opened the historic perspective to Ukrainians, because the Pan Russian version meant national suicide, and the desire for independence of the Ukrainian republic was utopia. «The Polish people and Rusins — summed up J. S. Pelchar, — the marriage created by the will of God and the work of centuries. Divorce between them is impossible; separation will harm both sides, more Rusins»³.

¹ List pasterski na Wielki Post R. 1906. O obowiązkach katolików w naszych czasach i o potrzebie organizacji katolickiej (Do odczytania z ambon w niedzielę Starozapustną 11 lutego 1906) / bp Józef Sebastian Pelczar. Przemyśl. URL: <https://cutt.ly/An8jCdJ>

² Z działalności Związku Katolicko-Społecznego w Przemyślu // Echo Przemyskie. 1911. №. 7. S. 1–2.

³ Stenograficzne Sprawozdania z Szóstego Sesijskiego Peryodu Sejmu Krajowego Królestwa Galicji i Lodomerji wraz z Wielkim Księstwem Krakowskim. 1903. S. 2478–2481. URL: <https://cutt.ly/Sn3En00>

Instead, until 1912 CSU was not popular in Lviv with virtually no parochial cells. In order to popularize the organization Y. Bilchevsky decided to reorganize the organization approving a new statute (Dębowska, M. 1992, s. 312–323). The updated organizing committee included: father P. Sapięga (head), rector of the seminary Yu.Gavozhevsky and S.Kh.Badeni (deputy), and also father A.Sokol'skiy (secretary). Fathers S.Shiedelsky and A.Vesolinsky were among the others as part of the executive division. The CSU secretariat was also updated and it became a key element in the success of the action. Secretary A.Shukalsky supervised the formation and development of the parish groups. In addition, a legal service was created at the secretariat (Tarnawski, M. 1924, s. 163). The CSU assisted in the activities of «Raiffeisen Cashiers» and agricultural circles. In order to popularize the CSU, the secretariat published notes in Galician and foreign press, and also established relations with similar organizations of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The work of the secretariat was financed by Y. Bilchevsky from his profit. To attract additional funds A.Shukalsky founded the trade department of the secretariat, which distributed, first of all, church objects. Y.Bilchevsky funded the construction of a separate building — the Catholic House, which was opened on January 29, 1911, in order to improve the work of the CSU. In addition to the CSU secretariat, the newspaper «Gazeta Niezalezna» was published. The CSU activity was interrupted by the beginning of the First World War.

The CSU played an important role in the formation of the Polish social and Christian movement in Galicia. Despite the fact that the CSU was officially an apolitical organization, its influence (especially in the Przemyśl diocese) was significant.

Thus, the Roman Catholic higher clergy tried to support the Poles in Galicia. They tried to strengthen their role in society by means of establishing economic, political, educational organizations. The principles of Christian democracy did not coincide with the views of moderate democrats, as they recognized the supremacy of the lower strata of the population over the higher ones. The main tasks of the CSU were to strengthen Catholic principles in public, family and personal life, as well as in the education of young people, improving social relations in the spirit of Christian justice, protection of national rights and interests.

In further research, it would be worthwhile to analyze the relationship between the higher Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic clergy in the political sphere in the early 20th century.

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