

**STRYNADKO I.T. THE VYZHNYTS'KA ORTHODOX COMMUNITY. – VYZHNYTSIA :
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*«At times it's easier to shed blood in one wave of enthusiasm,
than to execute duties for many years with difficulty,
to endure the human malice and hatred of enemies;
lack of trust from friends and lack of help from the closest relatives;
and, despite such a work, to accomplish your task to the end,
not waiting for the laurels for the victory
or rewards for the merit!»
(Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky)*

The events of the historic developments in our country went in the way that the processes of national self-identification were in the past and remain now closely linked to the development of the Ukrainian church. At important points of the Ukrainian history, which affected drastically the processes of state formation, the outline of strategic directions of development of culture and spirituality, the church community preserved national traditions and the language and became a factor in systemic changes.

As a well-known politician and publicist V. Lypynsky noted in his work «Religion and Church in the History of Ukraine», the church plays its important role as a consolidating factor not only during times when the nation fights for its statehood but also when it creates its state with all attributes. «We need it no less in the very process of struggle. To win, we must have not only the power of material, but above all the moral power»¹. Thanks to the tireless and sacrificial work of the Ukrainian church communities, which rallied around the conscious priests, the true fathers, we managed to protect the most important foundations of national existence from destruction. In view of this fact, it is impossible to overestimate the importance and value of studies that cover the history of church communities in the context of historical vicissitudes, cataclysms, national tragedies, disappointments and the stages of rebirth that the Ukrainian people had endured for centuries.

It is not a coincidence that Illia Todorovych Strynadko started studying this issue – the history of the Vyzhnytsia Church community, since the author himself is a socio-political and public figure known in Bukovyna and beyond its limits, an enlightener, a true ethnographer, a patriot, who has associated all his conscious life with love to Ukraine and tireless work for its sake.

Illia Strynadko was born on July 29, 1955 in the Bukovyna town of Vyzhnytsia to a devout Christian family. His father Todor was a committed Christian and an extremely merciful person. He inherited these features from his grandfather – the hieromonk Myron (secular name Maxymiuk), who served the Lord zealously first as a priest, and after the death of his wife he was a monk for 25 years. He was buried on July 22, 1951, on the territory of one of the most famous and most beautiful monasteries in Southern Bukovyna Sucevitsa in Romania. Even from very young years, Illia Strynadko was brought up in a quivering love for God, in the best traditions of Orthodoxy, which holds firmly the root and crown of the family tree. These fundamental things played a key role in shaping the personality of this outstanding person, his mentality, attitude, positioning himself in the future of adult life among the Bukovyna community.

This was especially important during times of doubts, when many Ukrainians stood at the crossroads and did not know what to do next, which way in their struggle to choose and how to get involved in the processes of building the Ukrainian statehood. These qualities are not less important today, in a very challenging period, when the Ukrainians lack unity, faith, perseverance and mutual understanding.

Illia Todorovych was involved in active public and political life of our region and of Ukraine in the late 1980's, taking part in a number of activities aimed at gaining and strengthening the independence of Ukraine, speaking on the pages of the district and regional press, fixing all important local events on videos. He joined the development of the All-Ukrainian Society «Prosvita» named after Taras Shevchenko, was a member of the Congress of National-Democratic Forces (1993), the Congress of Intellectuals (1995, 1998), the Constituent Congress «Movement for the people, for Ukraine» (1997), the National Forum for the

¹ Липинський В. Релігія і церква в історії України / В. Липинський. – К., 1993. – С. 24.

Unification of Democratic Forces (1999), the All-Ukrainian Association of Democratic Forces «Zlagoda» (1999, 2001), the All-Ukrainian Association «Svoboda» (2013, 2015, 2016). Illia Todorovych headed the district department of «Prosvita» for nine years. In 2001–2010 he was a member of the Board of the Association of Ukrainians in Greece «Crane Land». He took an active part in the actions of the Revolution of Dignity in Kyiv and Chernivtsi.

He was one of the organizers and participants in many local history conferences dedicated to the Guzul Land of Bukovyna. In addition, Illia Strynadko is a famous ethnographer, author of a number of essays devoted to the history of Bukovyna. He was awarded with high state honors.

It is impossible to consider the story of this remarkable person separately from the history of Vyzhnytsia Orthodox community, since they are closely intertwined. Illia's father Todor Strynadko was a member of the governing body of the Vyzhnytsia Church of the Holy Dormition (St. Michael's Church now) before it was closed by the Soviet authorities in 1962. Therefore, it was in this temple that his son Illia was baptized. In the priest's house, three Strynadko's children were baptized within a month from their birth: Todor (1981), Halyna (1983) and Myroslav (1984). Now Illia Strynadko takes care of the affairs of the local church community as a churchwarden of St. Michael's Church.

If you turned the pages of the past of the Vyzhnytsia Orthodox Church community, you would admit that it was quite complicated, it absorbed the entire contradictory course of events, consequences and influences of the Soviet calamities, but it was always imbued with the diligent service of people faithful to the church, to themselves and to the nation. It is no coincidence that the author used a considerable documentary basis of the turbulent past of the original Bukovynian corner of the Ukrainian land in his paper, presenting the activities of the local Orthodox community during different periods of its existence in the form of separate essays.

Among the contemporary local history editions on the town of Vyznitsia, the work by Illia Strynadko is distinguished not only by its considerable volume, but also by the fact that it carefully assembled, processed and, to a certain extent, systematized a large, relevant material from available domestic, Romanian-German-Polish-speaking professional historical studies, Austrian, Romanian and Soviet press, the funds of the Chernivtsi Regional Department of the

Security Service of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ukrainian People's House in Chernivtsi, district and departmental archives, current local office archives, Chernivtsi Museum of History and Jewish Culture of Bukovyna.

It is interesting to learn that I. Strynadko, referring to archival sources, argues that the Orthodox community of Lower Vyzhnytsia in 1867 built the Church of the Holy Dormition from soft materials, which burned down in 1909. In this place, a chapel with an altar and four main icons appeared, that were consecrated on May 22, 1910. And it was this chapel, and not the church (as indicated by some literary sources), that was disassembled and transported to the village Bagna (now the church of St. Paraskeva) in 1930. It was reassembled on the place of a wooden chapel, which was built in the cemetery in 1868.

The educational movement in Vyzhnytsia land, that the author described on the pages of his book using many archival documents was of a particular importance in the development of education, culture, etc. This is about the activities of the Ukrainian Education Society «Ruska Besida» and its affiliated reading centers, the «Ukrainian School» Association, the Vyzhnytsia Branch of the «Bukovyna Boyan» Association, which featured choirs and a theatre, Yu. Fedkovych Ukrainian People's House in Vyzhnytsia, Vyzhnytsia Ukrainian Royal State Gymnasium, School Assistance Society, Crypt «Anne of Moscow» in Vyznytsia and others. These were important centers of cultural and educational activity among peasants which formed their national consciousness, state ideology, played an important role in the formation of the Ukrainian nation in general.

The greatest attention of researchers and popularizers has always been drawn by the architecture and history of churches. The author of the book did not go over this important topic, as well as he touched the pages of the struggle of the clergy against alcoholism among the population, the problems of interethnic tolerance and the relationship between the clergy and the flock, the parish system. Documents, archival data, research, searches of the primary sources allow us to analyze state-church relations in the Soviet period, to evaluate many events and phenomena that took place in the church and public life of the region. The main task posed by the author is to make us rethink our past, draw conclusions based on new approaches and criteria.

It is interesting that the author of the book mentions Pavel Podolsky, the Authorized

Council for Religious Affairs in the Chernivtsi region, who, during meetings and individual appointments, liked to emphasize that «the issue of combating nationalism is closely linked to anti-religious work. Nationalism and religion are sisters of the whole blood. Both nationalist and religious vestiges are equally durable and harmful».

The clergy also fell into the millstones of history that destroyed everything connected with Ukrainian identity. This memorable book fixes the names of the spiritual mentors of the city and the surrounding villages, who died in the Second World War, as well as those who were deported in the postwar years with their whole families. It mentions for the first time the protopresbyter Teodor Semaniuk, graduates of the Vyzhnytsia Gymnasium – the protopresbyter Borys Ariychuk, the Archbishop Mykola Debrin, Archbishop Orest (secular name Onufrii Ivaniuk), Archpriest Doctor of Theology Vasyl Mardak, archpriest Yevfymii Trufyn and others. In the last section, «The Revival of the Ukrainian State and the Church», Illia Strynadko used his own experience as well, as he was not only a witness but also a participant in many events.

The political and religious components of Ukraine's life have been so closely interwoven that the confrontation in one of them can spread to another one, undermining the foundations of the safe development of the nation and the state. The unification of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy and the formation of the Unified Local Church will bring the faithful people of Ukraine into fundamentally new forms of existence. Only when we are united, we will be able to defeat both the external aggressor and the internal one- our complexes and passions – the author brings us to such a conclusion.

In general, I. Strynadko's book contains a large and valuable practical material that reproduces an objective picture of the functioning of the Orthodox community in different periods of life. We need to get rid of the vestiges and stereotypes of the past, which are still impending over many of us. This ethnographic work can be useful to historians, amateurs, publicists, students, ordinary readers - all those who are interested in the history of the Bukovyna land.

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