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**THE DESTRUCTION OF ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS OF CHYHYRYN DISTRICT IN THE 20-30s OF THE XX CENTURY**

*The issue of the destruction of ecclesiastical architecture in the 20 – 30s of the XX century on the example of Chyhyryn district of Cherkasy region is studied. The features of Soviet regime's religious policies in its early years are shown. The article focuses on the policy of repressions against the clergy of Chyhyryn district who disagreed with Soviet anti-religious policy.*

**Keywords:** dean, policy, Soviet power, priest, village, church.

**The statement of the problem.** The president of Ukrainian museum in New York city (USA) Titus Hewryk at the time rightly noted that “Ukrainian churches and bell towers, that decorated landscapes of Ukraine, are an integral part of cultural heritage of Ukrainians” [1, 3]. The vast majority of Ukrainian villages or cities had their architectural and spiritual grandeur – a temple. As a rule, it was placed on the maidan or other high place, so that the building could be seen from everywhere. It was the decoration of the settlement, was erected on the order and funds of residents, and sometimes some of patrons. It was in religious buildings that the construction talent of Ukrainian people revealed itself most clearly. These structures of Chyhyryn district were admired for their beauty, fitting into picturesque nature of the region. Here a significant number of them was built.

In the history of Ukraine ecclesiastical architecture was repeatedly exposed to destruction and dishonour. And the first decades of Soviet power, that is, the 20 – 30s years of the XX century, when Bolshevik-totalitarian regime consciously and cruelly destroyed religious buildings, thus executing its decree on the separation of church and state, were not an exception.

Such scientists as Ignatusha O., Cyrydon A., Pashchenko V., Perepelytsya A., Shuba O. [2] examined this problem indirectly, only in the all-Ukrainian excursus. However, we have tried to present the problem from our own point of view, considering the uninvestigation of this problem, raised by us.

**The aim of the article** is to reveal the issue of the destruction of ecclesiastical architecture in the 20 – 30s of XX century on the example of Chyhyryn district of Cherkasy region.

**The presentation of the basic material.** Soviet power from the very first days of its establishment in Ukraine led an open atheist anti-clerical policy. Spirituality and the church were declared enemies of the new government, which tried to limit the influence of the church on public life. Senior management required to pursue more active cultural, educational and propaganda-agitational work, “as

wide as possible pulling ... the entire Soviet community” in the initiation and support of the campaign for closing of churches [3, 81]. Following the instructions of the centre or resorting to the arbitrary actions, functionaries in places made up fictitious lists of those who as if demanded the closure of prayer buildings, or collected signatures of the population, resorting to threats, blackmail, arrests, etc. [4, 45], [5, 38 – 39]. And Chyhyryn district of Cherkasy region (according to current administrative-territorial division) was not an exception.

In 1923, in Chyhyryn city Soviet regime decided to close Chyhyryn Holy Trinity convent, known for its long history, which dates back to the era of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the hetman of Ukraine. During 1924 – 1925 its cult property was handed over to Cherkasy vicarial management, which, in its turn, appointed the part of the things of the convent to Cherkasy St. Nikolas cathedral. In 1927 Rafayila, the last Mother Superior of the convent, was killed (in 2000 thanks to the research of A. I. Perepelytsya, a scientist of NKS “Chyhyryn”, the burial of Mother Superior Rafayila, the remains of which would be canonized by the orthodox church, was found) [6, 2]. In 1933 only a foundation remained on the site of Chyhyryn Holy Trinity convent. One of the bells of the convent is now in the bell tower of Elias church in Subotiv village of Chyhyryn district [7, 81]. And the Holy Trinity cathedral, which was located on the territory of the convent, in the same year was dismantled.

In 1921, the church in Mordva village moved to the jurisdiction of UAOC and Ukrainian language services. At that time Serbyn Yakiv Petrovych was a priest there. In 1930, the temple of the Dormition of our Most Holy Mother of God of UAOC on the order of Bolshevik government was converted into a warehouse, and in 1932 the church itself burned down [8, 3–4].

In 30s of the XX century in Medvedivka village the whole complex of St. Nikolas monastery and St. Nikolas Cathedral (destroyed in 1931) were destroyed. By the way, this monastery was built as long ago as in 1795. The library of the monastery was burned, and the wood and stones were used for household needs [7, 85].

In those years St. Nikolas wooden church, built by Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the hetman of Ukraine, in Subotiv village, suffered dishonour and destruction. This tridental tribunned church was built in the best folk traditions of oak bars. It lasted until 1935. First, basswood carved iconostasis in it was broken and country club was made, and later the church itself was dismantled for firewood.

In 1934, Soviet authorities closed wooden St. Dormition church in the city of Chyhyryn, and its dean the father John Nikiforiv 25 March 1938 was arrested [9, 260, 263]. The same fate, according to archival data, befell Cathedral church of Exaltation of the Cross in Chyhyryn city, which in 1935 was closed and converted to the needs of “Zagotzerno”, and its dean the father Alexis Yerymovych 27 November 1937 on the basis of falsified evidence was sentenced to the Supreme penalty [10, 204–205].

In 1935, St. Nikolas church in Poludnivka village was closed. Its dean the father Anthony Byryak was arrested 4 November 1937 [9, 267–268]. In the same year the wooden church of the Intercession of Holy Virgin in Melnyky village was closed, and its dean the father Theodore Goncharenko was also subject to repression 16 November 1937 [9, 269, 271].

Concerning modern shrine of Ukraine – Elias church in Subotiv village, it also was not an exception in terms of abuse, but, fortunately, it was not destroyed. In the twentieth century Elias church was closed twice: in 1923 – 1941 it was turned to country club, and then to collective farm granary; in 1962 – 1990 it was burial vault museum of Bogdan Khmelnytsky, the hetman of Ukraine [11, 179].

As to St. Motrona convent in the village of Melnyky, in the late 20s of XX century, namely in 1929, all the property of the convent was confiscated by Soviet authorities and given to the newly established commune “Lenin testament”. The convent ceased to perform its direct function as long as in 1923 [12, 132]. Its religious and public buildings were destroyed. Only stone building of Holy Trinity church has survived. In the late 1980s St. Motrona Holy Trinity convent resumed its activities.

In general, on the territory of Cherkasy region from 1919 till 1969, Soviet authorities closed nearly 700 orthodox and five Old Believers’ churches, 10 catholic churches, nearly 60 synagogues, many of which were ruthlessly destroyed [13, 194].

**Conclusions.** The orthodoxy had the greatest impact among all religions on national development of Ukrainian people. In its spiritual space the ethnogenesis of Ukrainian nation took place, national and cultural life of Ukrainians was formed and developed. During its rule in Ukrainian lands the orthodoxy also has undergone significant evolutionary changes and transformed into a distinctive spiritual and cultural phenomenon.

Traditional Ukrainian public organization – the orthodox church, the only legal organization which didn’t fit into the frameworks of official ideology, felt the growing pressure of the state, that is quite evident from the above-mentioned material on the example of Chyhyryn district churches in the analyzed chronological period.

So, as you can see from the foregoing, during the 1920s, and especially the 1930s active destruction of religious sphere continued. The policy of the ruling party at that time was not only aimed at physical extermination of the clergy as a hostile class, as the bearer of unacceptable ideology for Bolshevism, but also at the elimination of the church as harmful formation, alien to proletarian ideas. The bloody massacre of the priests, the church leadership was organized. Nearly 2000 priests were arrested. In the second half of 1930s in Ukraine there was not a single parish with services in Ukrainian language. Thousands of representatives of other trends in Christianity and other religious confessions of Ukraine were killed as martyrs.

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### РУЙНАЦІЯ ЦЕРКОВНИХ АРХІТЕКТУРНИХ ПАМ'ЯТОК ЧИГИРИНЩИНИ В 20-30-Х РОКАХ ХХ СТОЛІТТЯ

*Вивчено питання нищення церковної архітектури у 20 – 30-ті роки ХХ століття на прикладі Чигиринського району Черкаської області. Показано особливості проведення радянською владою релігійної політики у перші роки становлення радянської влади. Акцентується увага на політиці репресій по відношенню до священнослужителів Чигиринщини, не згодних з радянською анти-релігійною політикою.*

**Ключові слова:** *настоятель, політика, радянська влада, священник, село, церква.*

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### РАЗРУШЕНИЕ ЦЕРКОВНЫХ АРХИТЕКТУРНЫХ ПАМЯТНИКОВ ЧИГИРИНЩИНЫ В 20-30-Х ГОДАХ ХХ ВЕКА

*Изучен вопрос уничтожения церковной архитектуры в 20 – 30-е годы ХХ века на примере Чигиринского района Черкасской области. Показаны особенности проведения советской властью религиозной политики в первые годы становления советской власти. Акцентируется внимание на политике репрессий по отношению к священнослужителям Чигиринщины, не согласным с советской антирелигиозной политикой.*

**Ключевые слова:** *настоятель, политика, советская власть, священник, село, церковь.*