

**ORGANISATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
OF FUNCTIONING OF THE RIGHT-BANK
UKRAINE ORTHODOX BROTHERHOODS
FROM THE 1850S TO 1900S**

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ABSTRACT

Aim. This research aims to reveal the peculiarities of standardisation and organisational principles behind the functioning of Orthodox brotherhoods on the territory of Right-Bank Ukraine from the 1850s to the 1900s.

Methods. Methodologically, the authors of the work rely on the principles of novelty, objectivity, and historicism and employ general scientific methods (internal criticism of the sources, analysis, synthesis, generalisation).

Results. The study revealed that during the second half of the 19th century, the activity of Orthodox brotherhoods on the territories controlled by the Russian Empire was regulated by the law "Basic Rules for the Establishment of the Orthodox Church Brotherhoods," which regulated the prioritised tasks, membership and main vectors of their work. At the beginning of the 20th century, some changes occurred in the social-political life of the Russian Empire, which also affected the position of the Orthodox brotherhoods of Right-Bank Ukraine.

Conclusion. The church authorities devoted considerable efforts to revitalising and restoring the activity of the Orthodox brotherhoods at the beginning of the 20th century. In order to find new solutions to the situation, they discussed the further functioning of the fraternities at the congresses in which participated the representatives of the Orthodox brotherhoods of the western provinces of the Russian Empire. Thus, the church management controlled brotherhoods and channelled them into the required course of action.

Key words: Russian government, Orthodox fraternities, organisational foundations, charter

INTRODUCTION

The recovery of the activity of the Orthodox brotherhoods can be traced back to the period of the 1850s to the 1900s, which was due to the social-political circumstances that occurred in the Russian Empire at the time. The position of the Orthodox church was difficult; therefore, the Russian government aimed at increasing its role among the population of the Empire's western governorates. Precisely to avoid the growing influence of other religions on the territory of Right-Bank Ukraine, the government adopted the law on establishing Orthodox brotherhoods. Following the law, they were to implement clearly defined tasks and perform work in the areas permitted by secular and ecclesiastical authorities.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE PRIOR RESEARCH

The issue of establishing and developing the brotherhood movement in the Volynia Governorate was analysed by Oksana Sazhok (2013). Iryna Levchuk (2015) showed organisational bases of creation and activity of the orthodox brotherhood of Volyn. Viktoria Serhiienko (2013) studied the circumstances of first the establishment and then the supervision system of the Left-Bank Ukraine brotherhoods. The theme of the educational activity of Orthodox

brotherhoods in the religious life of Podillya Governorate is presented in the publications of Oksana Hryhoruk (2008) and Ihor Opria (2012). In foreign historiography, Russian in particular, there are works related to the historical developments of brotherhoods and their activity in different governorates of the Russian Empire. Notably, Vasilii Trofimenko (2010) depicted the activity of the brotherhoods in the north of Russia, while Fiodor Dorofieiev (2006) examined the stages of the endowment and activity of different brotherhoods in the 19th and 20th century on the territory of the Russian Empire. The Belarussian researcher Valiantsina Yanovska (2011) studied the process of brotherhoods' recovery in the Russian Empire during the second half of the 19th century and also pointed out the peculiarities of the formation of these organisations in the Minsk Eparchy. In Polish historiography, the researcher Antoni Mironowicz (2003) investigated the historical context of the brotherhoods' establishments on the territory of Poland. However, some particular aspects of the organisational normalisation and functioning of the Orthodox brotherhoods of Right-Bank Ukraine during the second half of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century were not the topic of scientific investigation, which presents an opportunity for further research. In the article, we analyse relatively unknown documents from the state archives as well as published materials and periodicals, which allow highlighting the process of regulating the activity of Orthodox brotherhoods on the territory of Right-Bank Ukraine in the mentioned period.

PRESENTATION OF THE MATERIAL

The establishment of the extensive network of Orthodox brotherhoods on the territory of the Russian Empire was not accidental; on the one hand, they were the successors of ancient traditions of Orthodox brotherhoods of the 16th century, which became a tool in suppressing the Roman Catholic Church.

The restoration of Orthodox brotherhoods actively began after the approval of the law "Basic Rules for the Establishment of the Orthodox Church Brotherhoods" on the 8th of May, 1864 by the Russian Government (CSHAU. F. 127. Op. 667. Spr. 499. P. 1).

Starting from 1864, the number of church brotherhoods was gradually increasing. Only in 1880, nearly 63 brotherhoods emerged in the Russian Empire (see *Russian Orthodoxy: Milestones in history*, 1989). Oleksandr Papkov (1900) stated that in the western governorates, as of January 1st, 1893, there were 159 brotherhoods with more than 27,642 members. They owned property worth more than 1,629,707 rubles and received annual profits of 803,963 rubles. We should mention that a significant number of them was on the territory of the Volyn Governorate, where 44 officially registered brotherhoods emerged from 1864 to 1914. In 1914, their number exceeded 700 (see *Epistle of the Holy Synod*, 1914, p. 241).

The state of the Orthodox church was complicated, and the question of supporting the Orthodox churches and schools was constantly addressed

at the authority meetings in the Office for Orthodox Clergy. For example, as it became known from the archive materials of the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, such meetings happened on the 14th of April and the 15th of June, 1863 and on the 18th of January, 1864. To maintain the Orthodox clergy of western governorates of the Russian Empire, eparchial Archie reuses were annually given 200,000 rubles from the government treasury. In particular, Vitebsk Governorate received 19,000 rubles, the Minsk – 27,000, the Vilnius – 15,000, the Kyiv – 30,000, the Podillia – 25,000 and the Volhynia – 30,000. For the sake of improving their material status, they were provided with building wood and land plots. Besides the help mentioned above, the parish funds were established, which served as the “special organisations of religious and secular persons for the constant guardianship on the development of parish churches and parishes in economic relation” (CSHAU. F. 192. Op. 1. Spr. 190. P. 141, 158).

Many church brotherhoods appeared at the beginning of the 20th century. Their establishment was due to the law of Russian emperor Nicholas II, “About Religious Toleration,” of the 17th of May, 1905. The law provoked great discontent among the Orthodox clergy because no reforms in the Russian Orthodox Church had been implemented, and it was not ready for the changes in governmental politics. For this exact reason, other dominating religions appeared to be in a better situation than Orthodoxy. Thus, the church hierarchs delegated the main tasks to the brotherhoods – to unite the Orthodox people with the purpose of “protecting their belief” and to maintain the dominant role of Orthodoxy in Russia (Sazhok, 2013, p. 41).

Moreover, the hierarchs expressed hope that the brotherhoods will “unite the best sons of the church. Such members of the brotherhood organisation in the villages and cities would become a powerful creative force, which could be controlled from the centre and would be close to the people. They would help the pastors strengthen pure faith and good morals in the parishes. The brotherhoods will protect the national upbringing of the younger generation of the villages. They will bring of new movement in the peasant world in the sphere of social and economic life” (CSHAU, F. 127. Op. 787. Spr. 182. P. 4). Acknowledging the moral decline observed in the villages, the governorate administration recognised the most expedient way to combat this situation and “a rational means of improving parish social life is the revival of Orthodox fraternities, reconciling their activities with the demands of life” (CSHAU, F. 127. Op. 787. Spr. 608. P. 6).

With the initiative of the Kyiv administration and approval of the Kyiv Metropolitan Antonii in 1909, the regulations for the brotherhoods of Kyiv, Podillya and Volyn Governorates were set. According to this document, the main tasks of the organisations were of religious-moral, educational and economic nature. In charge of the brotherhood was a Council, headed by a clergy person; others were the representatives mostly of secular administration. The village parish brotherhoods were related to the powiat brotherhood councils, which, for their part, reported to eparchial governorate brotherhoods. In the materials of the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, it is stated that the impor-

tance of the brotherhoods lied in “uniting secular management, namely the government and the clerical power,” which is why this circumstance served as a guarantee of their successful, and efficient activity. The above testified to the national importance of the activities of fraternities in order to improve the health of the village “with the purpose to heal the village” (CSHAU. F. 127. Op. 787. Spr. 182. P. 6).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the existing parish brotherhoods were reorganised; therefore, a new version of the regulations was proposed. The project stated that the brotherhoods should be responsible for increasing the Orthodox Christian education and morality in the parishes, monitoring the state of faith, and “helping eliminate the shortcomings of the religious and moral life of the faithful by their own example and explanations” (Draft, 1903, p. 581). They aimed at the eradication of alcoholism, debauchery, swearing, arguing and other unwelcome habits. Brotherhood members were assigned the task of monitoring the practices of the sects in the area and, by doing so, preventing the possibility of deviation from Orthodoxy. Apart from that, they had to report all critical events from the life of a sect and “the ways they seduce the orthodox” to the parish priest (Draft, 1903, p. 583). The fraternities had to worry about opening libraries and providing them with books of religious and moral content, buying and distributing anti-protestant books and pamphlets among the Orthodox population. The society members had to establish chapels and houses of prayer, which would be at a certain distance from the church settlements, where the priests could the liturgy or gave extra worship talks. The brotherhoods were supposed to take care of the poor and those with low income, as well as orphans and older people; they were to give help—money or clothes, food and shelter to those who converted from sects to Orthodoxy. Furthermore, a brotherhood had to find the premises for and to organise non-liturgical readings and public discussions for believers and sectarians. The council, consisting of four members chosen during the general meeting for the period of three years, and the priest, named the head, managed the organisation’s affairs. The fraternities spent money on building a temple, helping the needy, setting up charities, founding a school and the libraries, burying the dead, and distributing brochures and leaflets.

Consequently, the new regulations were almost no different from the previous ones. Education remained the priority, but more emphasis was also placed on missionary work. Therefore, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Right-Bank Ukraine brotherhoods, which ceased their activities in the late 19th century, restored and intensified their work. In particular, there were 29 of them in Volyn in 1901.

In 1908 in Minsk, the first Congress of “Western Russian” Orthodox brotherhoods gathered the region’s big brotherhoods. Its main task was establishing connections with central management, which is why Congress addressed Synod with the request of financing the publishing and educational activities of the brotherhoods (CSHAU, F. 127. Op. 787. Spr. 608. P. 1). As opposed to the earlier time, when Synod had paid attention only to separate

brotherhoods and had financed their annual subsidies, it was now interested in the prospects of developing the brotherhood movement as a phenomenon. However, one could notice delays in solving this matter, and only in October of 1909, the administration of Synod began to react to the requests of the Minsk Congress. Notably, it ordered collecting the information on the existing brotherhoods (Kazakov, 2015, p. 50). Thus, this was done in order to obtain information about the number of existing fraternities and their position in the region.

When the collected data was analysed, on the 27th of April, 1909, Synod approved the decision of the All-Russian Missionary Congress in Kyiv of the year 1908, which aimed to organize a general Congress that would discuss the events to enhance the position of Orthodox brotherhoods in society. Synod also approved the decision of the Congress concerning the revival of church brotherhoods in the western dioceses to prevent the conversion of Orthodox to Catholicism and sent a corresponding decree to the bishops (SAZhO, F. 1. Op. 50. Spr. 545. P. 137, 143).

We can state that holding a number of congresses was conditioned by the desire of the church leadership to strengthen and stimulate the emergence of new brotherhoods, which were to launch new battles against the spread of Catholic influence and Protestant movements.

The second Congress hosting the representatives of Orthodox brotherhoods of the Russian Empire's western provinces took place from 2 to the 5th of August 1909 in Vilno and discussed the implementation of the main brotherhood activities in the early 20th century. The most significant number of delegates for the Congress came from brotherhoods in the North-West region. The South-Western region was in the minority. These were the representatives from Volynia Governorate, and to be exact, from Zhytomyr Volodymyro-Vasylyvsk Brotherhood, Lutsk Khrestovozdvyzhensk Brotherhood, Ostroh Kyrylo-Mefodii Brotherhood and the Brotherhood of Ostroh Princes. The Congress addressed the most urgent questions related to the organisation of the brotherhoods and the search for ways to "unification of the activities of the brotherhoods of the Western region" The Congress included four sections: 1) creating the brotherhoods, 2) missionary activity, 3) education, and 4) economic work (Rules, 1909, p. 378). It was decided to treat central eparchial brotherhoods as the leading ones that would control parish fraternities. In addition, emphasis was placed on opening new brotherhoods in cities and villages, coordinating their activities with parish trustees, as these institutions performed similar tasks (Levitskiy, 1909). The Congress also considered the functioning of the central diocesan brotherhoods and their connection with their branches and individual parish brotherhoods. The organisational section of the Congress devised a plan for a structured network that would cover the entire Western region, which comprised the lower level – brotherhoods in each parish, the intermediate level – county brotherhoods, and the upper level – the eparchial brotherhood, where representatives of parish brotherhoods would meet to address critical issues. The eparchial brotherhoods, for their part, were the part

of "the general union of the brotherhoods of the Western region" (CSHAU, F. 127. Op. 782. Spr. 163. P. 44-46).

The church management decided to create quite a vast net of the brotherhoods on the territory of Right-Bank Ukraine, which testified to the desire of the church authorities to strictly control the management of these organisations.

As a result of the decisions, the main tasks for the future of the church brotherhoods were formulated. The participants decided to take all the possible measures to expand their activities and make every effort to open new brotherhoods in cities and villages; to unite brotherhoods with similar institutions in terms of tasks and functions, such as parish trustees and councils; to direct the activities of all brotherhoods of the Western region for material and spiritual assistance. The main thing on which the attention of those present was focused was to determine the vectors of the main activities of the fraternities. Particular attention was paid to the anti-Catholic mission (CSHAU, F. 127. Op. 782. Spr. 163, P. 47-48). In the missionary work, they planned to direct all efforts to the construction of Orthodox churches, support choral singing during services, revive the preaching work, and publish and distribute missionary content leaflets. The educational activity was to be further implemented by opening the brotherhood schools and orphanages, conducting out-of-service talks and public theological readings for the ordinary people, organizing the libraries (eparchial and rural), as well as spreading simple publicly available brochures and postcards of religious-social and patriotic contents. Also, this sphere of action included the arrangement of reading rooms, bookstores, central collections of manuals for public readings, and publishing committees.

The financial activity was treated separately; it aimed to support the Orthodox population of the region in household and economic-material terms. It was made to increase the level of well-being of the Orthodox population by opening different credit institutions of mutual assistance: credit unions, consumer stands, agricultural associations. This action provoked a lively discussion as some of the brothers stated that "the conversion to Catholicism often takes place on an economic basis" (Rules, 1909, p. 380). Therefore, they endowed a general brotherly foundation to carry out charitable work.

Concerning the Congress, Kostiantyn Levitskyi wrote that Orthodox Church suffered the persecutions from "Catholic-Polish clergy" and "a Russian man with a loss of faith, loses awareness of his nationality and is an enemy to the idea of the Russian nationhood" (Levitskiy, 1909, pp. 155-156).

Thus, it should be emphasised that the issue of restoring and stimulating the further work of Orthodox brotherhoods was in the field of view of both secular and ecclesiastical authorities. The Congress testified that the authorities were interested in reviving the Orthodox brotherhoods, focusing all their efforts on intensifying educational and missionary work (SAZhO, F. 1. Op. 43. Spr. 528. P. 6).

The secular authorities were to perform the work related to the implementation of approved decisions. Thus, in January 1914, Oleksii Ihnatiev, the

Governor of Podillia, presented a report to the Russian emperor with a request to accept the brotherhood under "high patronage," to which he received a positive response "to accept with pleasure and wish the rapid development of the brotherhoods". Mykola Maklakov, the Minister of Internal Affairs, stated that the eparchial brotherhoods started their activity with the powiat and parish departments, which defined their task of confronting hooliganism and alcoholism. The Interdepartmental Commission in 1913 drafted their statutes, which were accepted by the church administration. Giving a vital role to those organisations, the Minister stated that their activity is aimed at "healing the village from negative elements and raising the moral level of villagers, their economic welfare" (CSHAU, F. 442. Op. 712. Spr. 46. P. 88-89). He also offered the representatives of Podillya Governorate to contribute in all possible ways to the development of brotherhoods personally and through the subordinate township and rural governmental persons.

The intensification of efforts in this direction gave significant results: in 1914, the number of church brotherhoods in the Empire increased to 700, the vast majority of which operated in the western governorates of the Empire. However, the war of 1914–1918 prevented such widespread use of a new form of missionary-russification politics on the outskirts of the Empire (Zhyliuk, 1996). In such circumstances, the activity of the brotherhoods gradually started to decline.

CONCLUSION

Summing up, we can conclude that Orthodox brotherhoods were strictly controlled by the laws of the Russian Empire on the territory of Right-Bank Ukraine. The process of standardization and organisation of the church brotherhoods took place during the 1860s. Their versatile activity lasted until the end of the 90s of the 19th century. Then a certain decline in the activity of the brotherhoods occurred, and only at the beginning of the 20th century, the church management discussed the importance and necessity of establishing new church brotherhoods. As a result, during this period, the eparchial management of Volyn, Podillya and Kyiv Governorates produced new rules and model charters for their functioning. The main vectors of the brotherhoods' activity were discussed at the congresses of the representatives of the western governorates of the Russian Empire. As a result, a range of decisions was made, which aimed to intensify the diverse activity and contribute to establishing the new centres. Furthermore, understanding the importance of brotherhoods activity, Synod provided material assistance to support existing organisations. During the whole period of the brotherhoods' existence, the administrative and religious institutions strictly controlled their activity and directed it into the required course.

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