



WUTHERIAN IMMIGRANT CHURCH GROUP, ALLEGHENY CITY  
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## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RUTHENIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES, 1884-1907

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**E**ARLY Ruthenian immigration to America was concentrated in Pennsylvania and consequently the Commonwealth became the center of gravity for the Ruthenian church. In 1884 the first Ruthenian missionary came to Shenandoah, and two decades later the first Ruthenian bishop established his residence in Philadelphia. This account will examine the development of the Ruthenian church in America from its difficult beginnings in 1884 to the naming of its first bishop.

The Ruthenians, who began their mass migration to the United States in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, came from the territories of present day western Ukraine—at the time under the political control of Austria-Hungary. Virtually all of those immigrants were Catholics of the Byzantine-Slavic Rite in communion with the Church of Rome.<sup>1</sup> They were generally known simply as “Ruthenians,” a term the Medieval Latin sources usually applied to the western groups of the Eastern Slavs. The name is a Latinization of Slavic *Rusini*, which is derived from Kievan *Rus*.<sup>2</sup> Since the end of the sixteenth century, the term has been used by the Papacy as a common name for “those peoples of the Byzantine Rite who inhabited a region of Europe situated roughly between Lithuania in the North and Carpathian mountains in the South.”<sup>3</sup>

With the rise of national consciousness in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the peoples of this region became generally

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<sup>1</sup>The Byzantine Rite is the name applied to the sum of the prescribed forms and laws developed and used by the Church of Constantinople (Byzantium) and later adopted by other areas affected by its Byzantine civilization. With the passage of time, the different groups of the Byzantine Rite developed particular rules and regulations independently from one another; consequently, different disciplines of the same Byzantine Rite emerged. Numerically, the discipline followed by the Ruthenians was the most important within the Byzantine Rite of the Roman Catholic Church, and most of the groups following this discipline used Church-Slavic as their language of worship—thus the term Byzantine-Slavic Rite.

<sup>2</sup>Oscar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization* (New York, 1952), 34.

<sup>3</sup>Victor J. Pospishil, *Interritual Canon Law Problems in the United States and Canada* (Chesapeake City, Md., 1955), 15.

known by names such as Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Rusins,<sup>4</sup> Carpatho-Russians, and Slovaks. The particular discipline of the Byzantine Rite that these people followed continued, however, to be referred to as *Ruthenian*.<sup>5</sup>

The early history of the Ruthenian church in the United States was largely the common history of the Ukrainian and Rusin immigrants. The early parishes were characterized by mixed congregations, presided over by priests from different sections of Austria-Hungary. The "umbrella" term Ruthenian will be used to cover the varied background of the immigrants involved. Since the national consciousness of many of the Ruthenians did not fully develop until about the time of World War I, the term *Ruthenian* was also the common appellation used in the American immigration records, adding to the confusion about the national origin of the immigrants listed. The term should not be used, therefore, in reference to contemporary national-political groupings. The national name *Ukrainian* is used by the descendants of the Ruthenian immigrants from Austrian-Galicia and Bukovina, while the name *Rusin* is acceptable to most of the descendants of the immigrants from Hungary's Transcarpathia.

Ruthenian immigrants began arriving from Austria-Hungary at least as early as the 1860s;<sup>6</sup> mass immigration, however, did not start until 1877 or 1878, when agents of Pennsylvania anthracite mining companies succeeded in recruiting strike-breakers from Transcar-

<sup>4</sup>Most of the American descendants of the Ruthenian immigrants from Transcarpathia in Hungary (the southern slopes of the Carpathian mountains) accept the name *Rusin*. Although the ancestors of the Transcarpathian Rusins were anthropologically and linguistically related to the ancestors of the Ukrainians, cultural and political differences have developed between their descendants because of the dissimilar socio-economic and political fortunes of the Rusins under Hungarian control and of the Ukrainians under Austrian rule. Since the Second World War, the territory of Transcarpathia (with the exception of the extreme western part which politically belongs to Czechoslovakia) has been a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

<sup>5</sup>The faithful of the Ruthenian discipline of the Byzantine Rite are often referred to as "Greek Catholics." Although technically correct, the term has proven to be very misleading in the United States and Canada, and therefore its use is not desirable. (Father Gregory Hrushka, who came to the United States in 1889 from Galicia, was one of the first to realize how misleading the term was and strongly recommended that it be dropped from use as early as 1893. See "Poznaimo sia," *Svoboda* [Jersey City], October 15, 1893, 1). It is often associated either with the Greek Orthodox or with the Greek nationality. The facts are that the members of the Ruthenian discipline are in communion with the church of Rome and they are neither of the Greek nationality nor do they use Greek as the liturgical language. Most of them used Church-Slavic as their language of worship.

<sup>6</sup>Julian Chupka, "Obrazky z Ameriky," *Svoboda*, March 19, 1896, 1-2. It is continued on pages 1-2 of the next two issues and provides interesting firsthand illustrations.

pathia and Slovakia<sup>7</sup> in Hungary for the most menial jobs.<sup>8</sup> Quickly the news spread to neighboring Lemkivschina in Austria's Galicia. Thus, it was from the economically-depressed mountainous border districts between Transcarpathia and Galicia—the villages of the Carpathian mountains—that the earliest mass Ruthenian immigration to the United States originated. Eastern Galicia and Bukovina did not contribute to this immigration until the 1890s,<sup>9</sup> and the Ukrainian immigration from the Russian empire remained relatively insignificant until World War I.<sup>10</sup> Based on Andrew J. Shipman's figures, there were close to 1,000 Ruthenians in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania alone in 1880; 20,000 in 1890; and 40,000 in 1900.<sup>11</sup>

The early Ruthenian immigrants were entirely of the peasant class. Their economic position was so hopeless, particularly in Galicia, that the tales of opportunities in America were sufficient to prompt the more adventurous among them to seek a way out of their predicament.<sup>12</sup> Thrust in unfamiliar and sometimes hostile surroundings, and lacking the leadership of educated people who might have made the period of transition less difficult, the immigrants yearned for their own familiar institutions—in particular their own church—which had been the center of their social life in Europe.

By the early 1880s, there were about sixty to seventy Ruthenian families in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania,<sup>13</sup> and it was these immigrants

<sup>7</sup>About one-third of the early Slovak immigrants were of the Ruthenian Rite according to P. V. Rovnianek, "The Slovaks in America," *Charities*, XIII (December 3, 1904), 240. Rovnianek was editor of a Slovak newspaper and an organizer of a national Slovak society.

<sup>8</sup>Far from weakening labor organization, the Ruthenians, along with other Slavic groups in the anthracite region, became an essential element in the establishment of unionism in the coal industry by the early 1900s. For an exposition of this thesis, see Victor Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike* (Notre Dame, 1968).

<sup>9</sup>Julian Bachynsky, *Ukrainska Immigratsia v Ziedynenykh Derzhavakh Ameryky* (Lvov, 1914), 88. This is a very valuable secondary source for the early history of the Ruthenian church in America.

<sup>10</sup>Immigration reports indicate that in the twelve fiscal years from 1899 to 1910, 98.2 percent of the Ruthenians admitted to the United States came from Austria-Hungary. See U. S. Senate, Reports of the Immigration Commission, *Dictionary of Races or Peoples, Doc. No. 662, 61st Cong., 3d Sess.* (Washington, D.C., 1911), IX, 118.

<sup>11</sup>Andrew J. Shipman, "Our Russian Catholics; the Greek Ruthenian Church in America," *The Messenger*, XLII (November, 1904), 575-576.

<sup>12</sup>For a useful discussion of economic and other causes of emigration, see John Ardan, "The Ruthenians in America," *Charities*, XIII, 246-252; U. S. Senate, Reports of the Immigration Commission, *Emigration Conditions in Europe, Doc. No. 748, 61st Cong., 3d Sess.* (Washington, D.C., 1911), XII, 361-384.

<sup>13</sup>K., *Istoria Pershoi Ruskoj Tserkvy v Shenandoah, Pa.,* *Pershy Rusko-Amerykansky Kalendar* ed. Nestor Dmytriv (Mount Carmel, Pa., 1897), 134. Hereafter cited *Pershy Kalendar*.

who in 1884 made the first attempt to obtain a priest from Europe. With the help of Carol Rice,<sup>14</sup> an immigrant from Lithuania, they sent a petition to the Ukrainian Metropolitan of Galicia, Sylvester Sembratovich, Archbishop of Lemberg (Lvov), for a priest to minister to their religious needs.<sup>15</sup> In a letter dated October 24, 1884,<sup>16</sup> Metropolitan Sembratovich (later Cardinal) informed the Shenandoah immigrants that he had appointed the Reverend John Voliansky, from the Archdiocese of Lemberg, as their missionary pastor. Voliansky, a Ukrainian, arrived in Shenandoah on December 10, 1884. As the first Ruthenian priest in the United States, he began the formal organization of the Ruthenian church.<sup>17</sup>

Father Voliansky's missionary work was by no means an easy task, as he indicated in his "Recollections from By-Gone Years."<sup>18</sup> Misunderstandings with Latin Rite hierarchy and clergy were, unfortunately, part of the problems facing him. After acquainting himself with the Ruthenian immigrants in Shenandoah, he immediately made a courtesy call on the archbishop of Philadelphia, the Most Reverend Patrick J. Ryan, who, Voliansky stated, had already been notified of his coming by the Polish priest in Shenandoah. The Archbishop's Vicar General, who received Father Voliansky, refused to accept his credentials and forbade him to perform his priestly functions, saying that there was no room for a married priest in America.<sup>19</sup> A similar reception was accorded Voliansky by the three pastors in Shenandoah.<sup>20</sup>

From Shenandoah, Voliansky cabled Metropolitan Sembratovich, informing him of his difficulties and stating that he would begin his

<sup>14</sup>The immigrants had come in contact with Rice at the banking and exchange agency he operated, where they frequently made arrangements for transmitting money to their relatives in Europe. From these business relations Rice learned of their religious needs and desires.

<sup>15</sup>The immigrants' letter was cited in "Pro Rusku emigratsiiu," *Svoboda*, October 10, 1894, 1.

<sup>16</sup>Letter of Metropolitan Sembratovich cited by Isidore Sochocky, "Ukrainska Katolytska Tserkva Vizantyisko-slovianskoho obriadu v ZDA," *Ukrainska Katolytska Mytropolia v Zluchenykh Derzhavakh Ameriky* (Philadelphia, 1959), 200-201.

<sup>17</sup>Until the arrival of their own priests and the organization of their own churches, the immigrants attended the Latin Rite churches, particularly those of their European neighbors such as the Poles, Slovaks, or Hungarians. Those who remained in the Latin churches eventually lost their national identity.

<sup>18</sup>John Voliansky, "Spomyny z davnykh lit," *Svoboda*, September 5, 1912, 4.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.* According to the Byzantine-Slavic Rite traditions, married as well as single men were ordained to the priesthood.

<sup>20</sup>Although it was true, as H. J. Heuser explained in his "Greek Catholics and Latin Priests," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, IV, (March, 1891), 195-196, that there was never an occasion nor the necessity for the American student of theology to familiarize himself with the usages of the Byzantine Rite prior to the arrival of the

priestly functions based on the jurisdiction given him by the Metropolitan. Receiving no prohibitive reply from his superior, Voliansky rented a hall on Main Street for the purpose of holding religious services.<sup>21</sup> Thus in Kern Hall the first Ruthenian Catholic service, Vespers, was celebrated on Wednesday evening, December 18, 1884, with young Gregory Dolny serving as Voliansky's first cantor. The temporary chapel in this hall was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>22</sup>

Early in 1885 the parishioners elected a committee to take charge of the church building program. To finance the project, each family was assessed ten dollars plus one dollar monthly dues; single persons were expected to contribute one-half that amount. Subsequently they purchased two lots on the north side of Center Street for \$700, and the construction of the church began in the spring. Before the building was completed, the roof collapsed, making extensive rebuilding necessary, delaying completion of the church until the fall of 1886, and raising the total cost to above \$20,000. On November 21, 1886, the first Byzantine-Slavic Rite Catholic Church in the United States, dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, was blessed by John Voliansky.

Father Voliansky's missionary work was not limited to Shenandoah alone. Within weeks after his arrival Voliansky was attending to the spiritual needs of immigrants living in nearby communities, such as Shamokin, Excelsior, and Hazleton. Although a great number of the immigrants settled in the coal regions of Pennsylvania, a substantial number were also found in other states. Realizing that he would need help, Voliansky petitioned Metropolitan Sembratovich for a priest to aid him. In March, 1887, the Reverend Zenon Liakhovich arrived to assist Voliansky, along with Vladimir Simenovich, a Ukrainian university student from

Ruthenians, it seems probable that a little more willingness in the beginning to understand each others problems would have helped to prevent more serious misunderstandings later on. Father Heuser, professor at St. Charles Seminary at Overbrook, Pennsylvania, and editor of the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, was one of the first Latin Rite priests to acquaint himself thoroughly with and write about the Ruthenian Catholics in America.

<sup>21</sup>For the first month or two Father Voliansky also rented two small rooms in this hall until more suitable living quarters were located in a house on Coal Street.

<sup>22</sup>The first child baptized in the chapel was Maria Marusyn, daughter of Michael and Anna Marusyn on December 25, 1884; the first marriage took place on January 5, 1885, between Michael Pringel and Maria Ivanko, children of John and Maria Pringel and Simeon and Dorothy Ivanko, from Saros, Hungary; the first funeral service was held for Maria Fedorczak, a child of Alexander and Maria Fedorczak from Ripky Sanok, Galicia, on January 25, 1885. See *St. Michael's Diamond Jubilee Book* (Shenandoah, Pa., 1959), 9 (unnumbered).

Lemberg, considered to have been the first educated Ruthenian laymen to settle in the United States. Until the church building program was completed in Kingston, Pennsylvania, Voliansky assigned Liakhovich to Shenandoah, while he set out on a protracted visitation of immigrant communities, ministering to their religious needs and organizing congregations and church committees for the building of future churches. He traveled throughout most of the important settlements from New York to Colorado.

On his return he again took up residence in Shenandoah, and Father Liakhovich moved to Kingston when the second Ruthenian church in the United States was completed. The untimely death of Liakhovich in Wilkes-Barre in November of 1887, however, left Voliansky alone again;<sup>23</sup> consequently, in the summer of 1888 he sent Simenovich to Galicia with a petition for a replacement. Before the year came to a close, Simenovich returned with a new assistant, the Reverend Constantine Andrukhovich, who made Kingston his residence. Within a year, however, primarily as a result of the continued misunderstandings with the Latin Rite hierarchy which by this time had reached serious proportions, Metropolitan Sembratovich recalled Voliansky to Galicia. A major bone of contention between the clergy of both rites was the marital status of the Ruthenian clergy and the Latin Rite hierarchy was unwilling to accept the situation.

By June, 1889, Father Voliansky returned to his native land after four and one-half years of pioneering work in the United States, during which time churches were built in Shenandoah, Kingston, Freeland, Olyphant, and Shamokin, Pennsylvania; and in Jersey City and Minneapolis. At the Shenandoah parish he organized the first fraternal brotherhood, that of St. Nicholas, on January 18, 1885; the first choir; the first reading room; and the first Ukrainian evening school in the United States. In addition, Voliansky founded the first Ukrainian newspaper, *Amerika*, which originally appeared on August 15, 1886. He was also the prime organizer of fraternal insurance companies and of the cooperative general stores which were founded for the benefit of the Ruthenian mine workers and their families.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup>Father Liakhovich was the first celibate Ukrainian priest in the United States. He was also the first Ukrainian priest to be buried on American soil—in St. Michael's Church Cemetery in Shenandoah.

<sup>24</sup>During the 1887-1888 coal strike riots in Shenandoah, only Father Voliansky, among Slavic priests, sympathized with and actively supported the striking Slavic mine workers. See, for example, Greene, *Slavic Community on Strike*, 87, 106-107.

Obviously, the recall of the very capable and energetic Father Voliansky was a serious loss to the Ruthenian church in America.<sup>25</sup> Father Voliansky returned for a brief period in 1890 in an attempt to clear up the misunderstandings that had developed in connection with the building programs in some parishes and with the operation of the cooperative stores. However, without succeeding in disentangling the mismanagement of his successor, the Reverend Andrukhovich, Voliansky returned to Europe, never to set foot on American soil again. The misunderstandings unfortunately led to serious internal conflicts which resulted in costly court proceedings lasting many years.

From 1889 on, Ruthenian priests began to arrive from Europe in greater numbers. By then the majority of them were coming from Transcarpathia rather than from Galicia. The arrival of so many new priests led not only to a great church building program but also to an unfortunate competition among priests and parishes.<sup>26</sup> The result was a series of scandals, in some instances leading to the organization of a second or even a third parish in the same community. In Hazleton, Pennsylvania, for example, there were three Ruthenian parishes, each with a priest and a church.<sup>27</sup> On more than one occasion these misunderstandings and conflicts had to be settled by the courts.

To understand the internal conflicts among the Ruthenian immigrants and their priests require knowledge of their native background. In the seventeenth century the old name *Ukraine* (borderland), which dates at least from the twelfth century, took on a special meaning when the eastern territories of modern Ukraine became the center of a new national life under the leadership of the Ukrainian Cossacks.<sup>28</sup> The Ukrainian literary revival of the nineteenth century accepted the name as representing its own national life. Con-

<sup>25</sup>*Shenandoah Evening Herald*, May 30, 1887, contains a brief biographical article on Voliansky.

<sup>26</sup>The first Ruthenian book published in the United States (an almanac for 1897) listed a total of twenty-nine priests in good standing, twenty-four of whom came from Transcarpathia and five from Galicia (*Pershy Kalendar* [1897], 168-169). They served a population estimated at 200,000. It should be noted that the Ruthenian immigration figures are inaccurate up to 1899, with many of the immigrants from Austria-Hungary listed as Austrians, Hungarians, Poles, Slovaks, and Russians.

<sup>27</sup>Bachynsky, *Ukrainska Immigratsia*, 290.

<sup>28</sup>The name *Ukraine* was popularized in the seventeenth century as a result of the Polish-Cossack wars in the 1640s and 1650s, and in particular, by Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan's *Description d'Ukraine* (first published in 1650) and a number of his maps.

sequently, with the end of the nineteenth century the words *Ukraine* and *Ukrainian* were being more and more widely used in Ukrainian and other literatures, pushing out other names, including the older traditional name of *Rus* and *Rusin* from the Kievan period. On the other hand, in the western areas of Ukraine, in Galicia and Transcarpathia, where political life differed from that in the east, the words *Rus* and *Rusin* (Latinized to Ruthenia and Ruthenian) were retained much longer. These lands were not in immediate danger of Russification, as were the Ukrainian lands in the east; consequently, there was no urgency to break with a name which was also claimed by the Russians. Further, the Austro-Hungarian government fought the use of the new name in their lands in order to prevent the Ruthenians in Galicia and Transcarpathia from associating themselves ethnically with the Ukrainians in the Russian Empire.<sup>29</sup>

Since the early immigrants came from Galicia and Transcarpathia, where the old name *Rusin* was commonly in use, there were two major groups in the United States. Each of these groups was further divided into various factions. The first group were immigrants from Galicia, who were subdivided into the "Ukrainians" and the "Moscophiles." The Ukrainians stood for the interest of the Ukrainian people as distinct from the Russians. They desired to develop the Ukrainian language, literature, and nationality along their own individual lines. The Moscophiles imitated all things Russian and looked toward Moscow as the seat of Slavic culture.<sup>30</sup> The second group were immigrants from Transcarpathia, among whom three distinct factions existed: (1) the Rusins who were sympathetic to the Hungarians; (2) those who claimed cultural communion with Russia; and finally, those who claimed cultural communion with the Ukrainians.<sup>31</sup> To a great extent the conflicts among these immigrants were inherited from the differences which were born in Europe.<sup>32</sup> The factional conflicts among the Ruthenian Catholics during their early years in America loosely paralleled, according to Andrew J.

<sup>29</sup>Sochocky, "Ukrainska Katolytska," 200.

<sup>30</sup>Shipman, "Greek Catholics in America," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, VI (1909), 749. See also his earlier essay in *The Messenger*, XLII (December, 1904), 664, for a variation of this division beginning in 1895. The Moscophile, or Russophile, movement was supported by many Russian leaders, and it became an expedient means of fostering Russian Pan Slavism and imperialism.

<sup>31</sup>Stephen C. Gulovich, "The Rusin Exarchate in the United States," *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, VI (October-December, 1946), 463. See also Shipman's essay in *The Messenger*, XLII (December, 1904), 664-665, for a substantially similar division.

<sup>32</sup>See, e.g., Bachynsky's useful summary, *Ukrainska Immigrantsia*, 431-432.

Shipman, the history of the Irish Catholics in the United States between 1815 and 1860.<sup>33</sup>

The differences between the Galician and the Transcarpathian immigrants, it would seem, were not insurmountable. After all, in the beginning the Galician immigrants were for the most part *Lemky*, the immediate neighbors of the Transcarpathians.<sup>34</sup> As a matter of fact, greater cooperation among them appeared to be in prospect when on February 14, 1892, as a result of the efforts of both Transcarpathian and Galician priests, a federation of the fraternal brotherhoods was organized in Wilkes-Barre. That organization, the Sojedenenje Greko-Kaftoliceskich Russkich Bratstv, began publishing its newspaper, the *Amerikansky Russky Viestnik* on March 17, 1892. (The organization and its paper is better known today by English names: The Greek Catholic Union and the *Greek Catholic Union Messenger*.) In spite of this, neither the Galician nor the Transcarpathian priests were prepared to display tact, patience, and understanding toward each other's faults. As a result of various misunderstandings, the Ukrainians from Galicia under the leadership of the Reverend John Konstankevich left the organization in 1893, and a second federation, the Rusky Narodny Soyuz, was formed in Shamokin on February 22, 1894. The newspaper *Svoboda* (Liberty), organized and published by the Reverend Gregory Hrushka in Jersey City, first appeared on September 15, 1893, and became the official organ of the Soyuz on May 30, 1894. From 1894 the conflicts between the Galicians and the Transcarpathians tended to increase, with each fraternal federation through its organ playing a major role. The Sojedenenje and its *Viestnik* represented the Transcarpathian pro-Hungarian faction, whereas the Soyuz and its organ the *Svoboda* represented the Galician Ukrainians. (The Soyuz is known today as the Ukrainsky Narodny Soyuz-The Ukrainian National Association.) Other organizations, newspapers, and publications followed, each representing some faction among the immigrants in America.

As a result of the bitter conflicts, the Ukrainian immigrants from Galicia began to organize separate parishes. The formation of their own parishes was not difficult. Between 1895 and 1898 seven young celibate priests imbued with the spirit of Ukrainian national revival

<sup>33</sup>Shipman, "Immigration to the United States," *A Memorial of Andrew J. Shipman*, ed. Conde B. Pallen (New York, 1916), 92. Shipman was one of the first American authors to become intimately acquainted with the problems of the Slavic immigrants.

<sup>34</sup>Galician *Lemkivschyna* was the territory on the northern slopes of the Carpathians, whereas Transcarpathia was the region on the southern slopes of the same mountains.

arrived from Galicia. While seminarians in Lemberg, they had formed themselves into the so-called "American Circle" with the hope of doing missionary work among the Ukrainian immigrants in America after their ordination. Their arrival signified a radical leadership which, in church matters, sought to work out problems in America through the principle of full democratization of church administration without hindrance from outside forces.<sup>35</sup> These "priest-radicals" were to play an unusually important role in the cultural and national development of the Ukrainian immigrants in the United States.<sup>36</sup>

The major problem facing the early Ruthenian priest was the lack of any official status for the Byzantine-Slavic Rite in the United States and the absence of any normal church organization. From the time of Father Voliansky's departure in 1889 an increasing number of priests continued to come to the United States with rights of jurisdiction from their bishops in Europe. Once in the United States, however, they frequently worked independently of one another and of the local Roman Catholic Ordinary, organizing parishes within the territorial limits of one or several Latin Rite dioceses. Naturally, this state of affairs led to internal confusion as well as to serious conflicts with the Latin bishops in whose diocesan territories the priests worked. The majority of the Latin hierarchy and clergy in the United States were unfamiliar with the usages of the Byzantine-Slavic Rite followed by the Ruthenians. Particularly foreign to Americans was the custom of a married clergy. The early Ukrainian and Rusin priests, in turn, partially due to their unfamiliarity with the English language, were unable properly to inform the Latin clergy of their Byzantine traditions. The result was often outright hostility on the part of individuals, which led to numerous misunderstandings. The Latin bishops felt that, in order to prevent the undermining of their own authority and the development of chaotic conditions, all priests in the United States must be celibate and subject to them—and they frequently petitioned the Holy See toward that end.

In an attempt to end the near-chaotic conditions, on October 1, 1890, the Holy See issued its first decree relative to the Ruthenian church in America. In accord with the new decree, newly arrived priests were to report to, receive their jurisdiction from, and remain

<sup>35</sup>See the brief discussions concerning these matters by Shipman, *The Messenger* (December, 1904), 664, and by Bachynsky, *Ukrainska Immigratsia*, 431-432.

<sup>36</sup>The term "priest-radicals" was the common derogatory name applied to these priests and their cohorts by the opposition. See, for example, *Amerikansky Russky Viestnik*, Munhall, Pa., March 7, 14, 21, 1902. Hereafter cited as *Viestnik*.

under the jurisdiction of the Latin Rite Ordinary in whose territory they had arranged to reside. Equally important was the requirement that the priests in America were to be celibate and that married ones were to be recalled to Europe.<sup>37</sup> The above decree, however, did not produce the desired effect; instead, it added to the difficulties between the two rites. Some of the Ruthenians read into the regulations an attempt to destroy the autonomy of their rite and to Latinize Ruthenian Catholics. Consequently, with the growth of radical leadership in the 1890s, many of the congregations chose to retain ownership of their churches and refused to sign them over to the Latin bishops, although, canonically speaking, all Ruthenian churches belonged *de jure* to the bishops in whose diocese they were located until 1907.<sup>38</sup> Thus, a troublesome situation developed in which the priests received their jurisdiction from the local bishop on the basis of the documents they carried from Europe; however, the bishops might not have legal ownership of the church to which they might wish to assign a particular priest. Hence, a priest assigned to a church owned by the congregation found himself in the difficult position of being responsible to two, often conflicting, authorities.

This situation of course, worsened the already serious internal disagreements among the immigrants—all to the detriment of the spiritual development of the Ruthenian church in the United States. Consequently, on October 29, 1890, twenty-eight days after the Papal decree regarding the Ruthenians, the first gathering of their clergy was held in Wilkes-Barre. Eight of the nine accredited Ruthenian priests in the United States decided to petition Rome that, in view of the difficulties between the rites, a Ruthenian Vicar General be appointed with authority over all Catholics of that rite in America.<sup>39</sup> In December, 1891, another important gathering of Ruthenian clergy met in Hazleton, where a memorandum regarding the position of their church in the United States was formulated and

<sup>37</sup>Cardinal Miescilaus Ledochowski, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of Faith for the Oriental rites, to Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, May 10, 1892, advising the bishops of the United States of the instructions addressed to the Ruthenian bishops in Austro-Hungary in 1890, *American Ecclesiastical Review*, VII, 66-67.

<sup>38</sup>The question of church ownership by the people was broached by the Reverend Nestor Dmytriv, the first of the "priest radicals" to arrive in the United States. See *Swoboda*, August 15, 1895, I.

<sup>39</sup>Heuser, 197-198 (footnote). Cardinal Ledochowski's letter, *American Ecclesiastical Review*, VII, 67, also makes specific reference to the petitions by some of the priests for permission to remain in the United States as well as to their seeking the establishment of an Apostolic Vicariate of their rite.

delivered to the Apostolic delegate by a committee headed by Father Nicephor Khanat. One result of this memorandum was the appointment of Khanat as the acting administrator the following year.<sup>40</sup> His position was mainly that of an intermediary between the Ruthenian priests and the Latin bishops as well as between the discordant factions among the Ruthenians themselves.

The factional conflicts among the priests were now reaching tragic proportions, with cliquish meetings becoming more numerous. Although Father Khanat continued his duties until 1896, his position was more nominal than real. The young "radical priests" from Galicia finally gave up hope of any cooperative action with the magyaryized priests from Transcarpathia.

Early in 1896 specific appeals and recommendations were made by these priests for the formation of their own church administrative organization which would control the priests and their activities, bring order to their church in America, and protect it from the Russophile propaganda of the Russian Orthodox Mission.<sup>41</sup> Finally, on May 30, 1901, clerical and lay delegates met in Shamokin and formed an association of the Ruthenian Church Congregations in the United States and Canada headed by a general committee of three priests and three laymen. The stated goal of the association was "to obtain good priests, to see that in every parish there be order, schools, choirs, reading rooms, and that the poorer chapels obtain the services of a priest at least from time to time, etc."<sup>42</sup> Upon request for a priest from newly organized congregations, the association's clerical committee of six members was to make appointments of priests arriving from Europe, who had to obtain their jurisdiction from the local Latin bishop.

Although only fifteen parishes and ten priests,<sup>43</sup> out of a total of about sixty churches and forty-four priests,<sup>44</sup> accepted the administration of this general committee (the Transcarpathian group soon began its own church organization), it was the first serious attempt to introduce lay control over the church, a principle which troubled the Ruthenian church in the United States for many years to come.

<sup>40</sup>Bachynsky, *Ukrainska Immigratsia*, 296.

<sup>41</sup>*Svoboda*, March 5, 1896, 1, also May 14, 1896, 1, illustrates the strong tone of these appeals.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, June 6, 1901, June 13, 1901, 2 and June 27, 1901, 2, provide additional information by the leading priests of the association.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, June 6, 1901, 2.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, February 21, 1901, 2.

The height of the movement was reached at the second convention held in Harrisburg on March 26, 1902. The official name of the association became the Ruthenian Church in America.<sup>45</sup> The characteristic element of this organization, which lasted until the arrival of the first bishop, was its radicalism toward the Latin bishops in particular and toward the hierarchy of the church in general.<sup>46</sup> The extreme views of some of the young radical priests even led to their excommunication and to court fights over churches.<sup>47</sup>

The internal conflicts and the misunderstandings with the hierarchy provided the Russian Orthodox Missionary Church, which was administered by bishops from San Francisco, an opportunity to disseminate beliefs among the Ruthenians. Because of the attitude of some of the Ruthenian priests the Russian Mission, beginning in 1891, succeeded in establishing itself on a large scale in the eastern states when individual priests and some of their congregations changed over to Orthodoxy. In March of 1891 the Transcarpathian priest Alexis Tovt (Toth) in Minneapolis together with 360 of his parishioners turned Orthodox, thus laying the foundation for mass conversions of Ruthenian Catholics in America to Russian Orthodoxy.<sup>48</sup> In December of 1896 the Reverend Hrushka of Jersey City became the first Galician priest to turn Orthodox and, after moving to Old Forge, Pennsylvania, drew the majority of its Ruthenian Catholic community to Orthodoxy.<sup>49</sup> Thus by the begin-

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, April 10, 1902, 2 and May 15, 1902, 4, contain an extended report of the convention's radical discussions and resolutions.

<sup>46</sup>The radical views of the association of the Ruthenian church in America toward Rome, Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky of Galicia, and toward the American hierarchy are well-illustrated in the association's booklet *Unia v Amerytsi* (New York, 1902). The Transcarpathian faction strongly opposed this association. See, for example, the *Viestnik* editorials, March 7, 14, 21, 1902.

<sup>47</sup>The outstanding example is the case of The Rev. John Ardan of Olyphant and his excommunication by Bishop Michael J. Hoban of Scranton by a letter dated February 22, 1902, following Ardan's strongly anti-Rome article entitled "Skazhim sobi pravdu v ochy," *Svoboda*, February 13, 1902, 2. Numerous reports on Ardan's excommunication and the court fight over the Olyphant Church are found in *Svoboda*, especially in the April to June issues of 1902. The *Viestnik* took the opposite view of these events from that of the *Svoboda*. See, for instance, *Viestnik* editorial, March 28, 1902, 4.

<sup>48</sup>According to Father Tovt's own story, cited in the official *Amerikanskii Pravoslavnyi Viestnik*, II (July 13, 1898), 619, because of his difficulties with Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, he petitioned the Russian Orthodox bishop in San Francisco and was received by Bishop Vladimir into the Russian Orthodox Church on March 25, 1891. Tovt became an energetic advocate of the Russian Orthodox Church among the Ruthenians in America and a bitter opponent of Catholicism. It is said that he was the cause of nearly 10,000 Ruthenian Catholics seceding to the Orthodox Church. (See Andrew J. Shipman, "Greek Orthodox Church in America," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, VI [1909], 772-773.) It should be added that most of the Ruthenian priests that passed into Orthodoxy eventually returned to Catholicism.

<sup>49</sup>Bachynsky, *Ukrainska Immigratsia*, 259.

ning of the twentieth century, the chief problem facing Ruthenian Catholic priests was to combat Russian Orthodox propaganda financed by the Tsarist government,<sup>50</sup> which saw the Ruthenian church in the United States as an important element of the Ukrainian movement.<sup>51</sup> The Russian mission's proselytizing brought considerable results. By the end of 1900, according to Ruthenian sources, the mission had succeeded in converting thirteen Ruthenian Catholic congregations and as many churches to Orthodoxy, with a total membership of 6,898 faithful, of whom 2,448 were from Galicia, and 4,450 from Transcarpathia.<sup>52</sup> Several years later an Orthodox cleric wrote that official figures indicated after eleven years of intensive labor only 8,930 Ruthenians had been brought into Orthodoxy, 5,074 Galicians and 3,856 Transcarpathians.<sup>53</sup> In the decades that followed, however, according to another Orthodox source, more than 225,000 Ruthenian Catholics became Orthodox.<sup>54</sup>

The seemingly unending differences with the Latin bishops and the resulting spread of the anti-Roman feeling among the radical priests, which reached its climax in 1902, also provided open opportunity for proselytizing by Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, and other Protestant groups.<sup>55</sup> For instance, in the first decade of the twentieth century Presbyterian congregations were established among Ruthenians in Pittsburgh, Newark, and New York, and a Baptist congregation was organized in Scranton.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup>The Russian Orthodox Mission was financed by the Tsarist government to the amount of \$75,000 annually. See, e.g., church historian Basil M. Bensen's *Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska, 1794-1967* (Toms River, N.J., n.d.), 59.

<sup>51</sup>Numerous articles in the Ukrainian newspaper *Svoboda*, particularly during 1901-1902, as well as in the official organ of the Russian mission, the *Amerikanskii Pravoslavnyi Viestnik* during 1896-1898, for instance, illustrate the bitterness of the struggle.

<sup>52</sup>*Unia v Amerytsi*, 20. The same figures are given by the Russian Orthodox *Kalendar Pravosl. obshch. Vzaimopomoshchi*, 1901, cited by A. Levkov in *Svoboda*, April 11, 1901, 4.

<sup>53</sup>Cited by Shipman, *The Messenger*, XLII (December, 1904), 672.

<sup>54</sup>Dmitry Grigorieff, "The Orthodox Church in America. From The Alaska Mission to Autocephaly," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 14 (1970), 202, citing P. Kochanik, *Yubileinyi Sbornik soyuza pravoslavnykh sviashchennikov v Amerike* (New York, 1936), 84-103.

<sup>55</sup>According to Frank J. Warne, *The Slav Invasion of the Mine Workers* (Philadelphia, 1904), 101-102, the Presbyterians were the most energetic in their colportage work among the Slavic immigrants at this time. The report of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church to the chairman of the Immigration Commission, New York, November 22, 1910, illustrates the extensiveness of the Presbyterian colportage work among the new immigrants, including the Ruthenians. See U. S. Senate, Reports of the Immigration Commission, *Statements by Societies Interested in Immigration, Doc. No. 764, 61st Cong., 3d. Sess., 1911, XXIII, 297-301.*

<sup>56</sup>Shipman, *Shipman Memorial*. 96-99.

The many serious problems facing the Ruthenian Catholics, and the numerous letters and memorandums sent to the authorities by the Transcarpathians requesting the appointment of a Vicar General or a Bishop steeped in the Hungarian tradition, caused the Holy See finally to take new action. Accordingly, on April 29, 1902, the Right Rev. Andrew Hodobay, Titular Abbot and Canon from the Diocese of Presov in Hungary, arrived in the United States as the "Apostolic Visitor" to Ruthenian Catholics.<sup>57</sup> Monsignor Hodobay's duties of overseeing all matters pertaining to the Ruthenian church in America, with the cooperation of Latin bishops, proved difficult to carry out because of the serious split between the Ukrainian and Rusin clergy, the new principle of lay control of the church, and the continued misunderstandings with the Latin bishops.

The Ruthenian church had by now reached considerable size and extent in the United States. In early 1904, according to Shipman, there were eighty Ruthenian churches in the United States, forty-eight of which were located in Pennsylvania; eight in New York; seven in Ohio, six in New Jersey; four in Connecticut; two each in Indiana and Colorado; and one each in Massachusetts, Illinois, and Missouri. While the majority of these churches were light, wooden buildings, there were also a few fine stone and brick structures costing between sixty and ninety thousand dollars. In view of the fact that they were supported and built by extremely poor people who had recently come to America, one has to be impressed by the accomplishments. Most of the churches had parochial schools (evening and Saturday) attached to them with some of the largest having 150 to 200 pupils.

To attend to the spiritual needs of the parishes, there were 75 Ruthenian priests. Their original dioceses were as follows:

Muncacs, Hungary	35 priests
Presov (Eperies), Hungary	14 priests
Lemberg (Lvov), Galicia	11 priests

<sup>57</sup>Early in 1901 there were rumors that the future apostolic visitor would be a Transcarpathian from Hungary. (*Svoboda* editorial, February 21, 1901, 2.) Seven months before Hodobay's arrival, the radical priests made it known that if the appointment of the future visitor was the result of the Hungarian government's influence, then they would have little faith in such an appointee. (*Svoboda*, September 19, 1901, 2.) Thus, the Galician priests strongly opposed Father Hodobay as the official visitor on the ground that his appointment had the full support of the Hungarian government which feared that the immigrants from Hungary would be swayed by the spirit of Ukrainian nationalism diffused by the radical priests from Galicia. (See *Unia v. Amerytsi*, 35-44.) On the other hand, the *Viestnik* editorial, April 17, 1902, 4, indicated obvious satisfaction with the appointment of Monsignor Hodobay.

Peremysl, Galicia	6 priests
Stanislav, Galicia	4 priests
Scranton, Pa.	2 priests

The remaining three priests were monks of the Order of St. Basil the Great, two of whom came from Presov and the third from Lemberg. Of the two priests that Shipman lists as originating from the diocese of Scranton, one was a former Greek Orthodox priest who was received into the Ruthenian church, the other had been ordained a priest according to the Latin Rite in Scranton, and by special permission was received into the Ruthenian rite.

These priests served a population of about 300,000, of whom roughly 100,000 came from Galicia and nearly 200,000 from Hungary. According to the most accurate available figures, almost one-half of them, about 148,000 lived in Pennsylvania. New York State followed with 32,500 Ruthenians; then came New Jersey with 27,500; Ohio, 20,500; Connecticut, 7,500; Illinois, 7,500; Missouri, 5,000; Colorado and Massachusetts, 4,000 each; Indiana, 3,500; and Minnesota, Dakota, Nebraska, and Montana with about 8,000 among them. Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, and Texas had an aggregate of about 7,000. The remainder were scattered through the southern and western states.<sup>58</sup>

In January, 1905, Father John Korotnoky, who was secretary to the Apostolic Visitor, Hodobay, completed a census wherein he stated that there were eighty-nine Ruthenian Catholic congregations and only sixty-eight priests. Of these congregations, eighty-three had their own church buildings, four had only chapels, and two held services in Latin churches. In addition, seventy-nine of the communities had parish homes, and sixty-nine provided some form of catechetical instructions to a total of about 7,000 children.<sup>59</sup> According to a 1905 almanac of the Sojedeninije, however, there were ninety-five congregations located in ten different states and sixty-

<sup>58</sup>Shipman, *The Messenger*, XLII (November, 1904), 576-579.

<sup>59</sup>Cited by Gulovich, "The Rusin Exarchate in the United States," 470. Father Hodobay's letters to the apostolic delegate contain additional statistics concerning the Byzantine Rite Catholics in the United States during 1904-1905. It is interesting to note the great discrepancy between Hodobay's estimate of the number of Byzantine-Slavic Rite Catholics in the different dioceses and those sent to the apostolic delegate by the dioceses concerned. Based on his own observations, Hodobay believed that individual parishes submitted greatly reduced statistics in order to keep down episcopal fees. See the specific illustrations in Ambrose Senyshyn, "The East in the West," *The Ark*, III (May, 1948), 96-98.

seven priests.<sup>60</sup> Although an obvious minor discrepancy exists between the three sources in the total number of congregations and priests due to differences in time of census, arrival and departure of priests, and the fluid condition of some of the congregations, they provide a very close approximation of the size and extent of the Ruthenian church during Hodobay's mission in the United States.

Shortly after his arrival, Monsignor Hodobay announced that a convocation of priests would be held in Brooklyn on May 21, 1902. The convention, which was to decide on local statutes for the church, proved to be ineffective since it was attended by only thirty-two priests from Muncacs and eight from Presov.<sup>61</sup> The Ukrainian priests were not included in this convocation nor in the succeeding one which was held in Scranton on July 22 and attended by only nineteen of the Transcarpathians.<sup>62</sup> The friendly relations which existed between the priests from Hungary and Father Hodobay upon his arrival quickly cooled and became increasingly hostile. A bitter conflict ensued with the Muncacs priests and the Sojedinenije leading the fight against Father Hodobay.<sup>63</sup> Increasingly, they looked upon Hodobay as an "exponent of Hungarian political interests"<sup>64</sup> rather than as an organizer of the church. In addition, since the majority of the Transcarpathian priests were from Muncacs and considered themselves "aristocratic," Hodobay's fault was that he was only a "plain priest from Presov."<sup>65</sup> At the same time his tendency toward pro-Magyarism and his slighting of the unfriendly Galician priests precluded the possibility of obtaining their support. Hodobay's use of the Magyar language in his correspondence with the Transcarpathian priests, as well as his great interest in expanding the number of Magyar congregations, was considered an indication of his tendency toward magyarization and so earned him the resentment of the priests from Galicia. They were not invited to either the Brooklyn or Scranton conventions and did not participate in the discussions to adopt statutes for the Ruthenian church in America.

The inability of Father Hodobay to gain and keep the support of

<sup>60</sup>*Kalendar Greko Katoliceskaho Sojedinenija, 1905* (Homestead, Pa., 1905), 160. Hereafter cited as *Kalendar Sojedinenija*.

<sup>61</sup>*Viestnik*, May 29, 1902, 2, which also summarizes the agenda of the convocation.

<sup>62</sup>*Svoboda*, August 7, 1902, 4.

<sup>63</sup>See, for example, *Viestnik*, July 10, 1902, 1; July 17, 2; July 24, 2; July 31, 2.

<sup>64</sup>M. J. Hanchin, "Istoria sojedinenija iz pervych lit," *Kalendar Sojedinenija, 1937*,

<sup>46</sup>Hanchin was former editor of the *Viestnik*.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

all the priests, and to effectively control their activities, made even more difficult his relations with the Latin bishops, who feared that chaotic conditions among the Ruthenian Catholics within their dioceses might lead to a deterioration of their episcopal authority.<sup>66</sup> Thus, Hodobay's mission to bring order to the Ruthenian church was doomed almost from the start.<sup>67</sup> As a result of increasing protests and complaints against Hodobay to the authorities in Europe, his mission finally ended with his recall in 1907.<sup>68</sup>

There is little doubt, however, that Father Hodobay's reports to Rome summarized the major factors contributing to the chaotic conditions among Ruthenian Catholics in the United States: (1) control of church and properties by laymen; (2) the scandalous means by which some priests tried to obtain and hold parishes; and (3) the almost general disregard for ecclesiastical authority.<sup>69</sup> On the basis of the insistence of the Ruthenian bishops in Europe, particularly of the most Reverend Count Andrew Sheptytsky, the Metropolitan of Galicia, as well as on the basis of the reports of the Rev. Hodobay and of the Apostolic Delegate in Washington,<sup>70</sup> Pope Pius X finally made a decision to name a bishop for the Ruthenians in America. On March 8, 1907, the Ruthenian church in the United States entered a new phase of its development with the appointment of the Right Rev. Monsignor Soter Ortynsky, a Ukrainian Basilian monk from Galicia, as its first Bishop in America. It was Bishop Ortynsky's task to bring about greater discipline within the church and build a strong foundation for its future development.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>66</sup>The correspondence between Monsignor Hodobay and the Latin bishops, in the archives of the Ukrainian Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia, provide clear illustrations of the complexity of the jurisdictional problems faced by Hodobay.

<sup>67</sup>Contributing further to the chaotic conditions during Father Hodobay's period was the continued arrival in greater numbers of married priests, contrary to regulations, for whom Hodobay was unable to obtain jurisdiction from the local Latin ordinaries.

<sup>68</sup>In addition to his official responsibilities relative to the Ruthenian Catholics, Monsignor Hodobay was often involved in the problems of other Eastern Rite Catholic groups in the United States.

<sup>69</sup>Gulovich, "The Rusin Exarchate in the United States," 474.

<sup>70</sup>Cardinal Gotti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of Faith for the Oriental Rites, to Father Hodobay, March 8, 1907; *Amerykansky Russky Kalendar, 1908* (Uzhgorod, Hungary, 1907), viii.

<sup>71</sup>For a discussion of the next stage in the history of the Ruthenian church see Bohdan P. Procko, "Soter Ortynsky: First Ruthenian Bishop in the United States, 1907-1916," *Catholic Historical Review*, LVIII (January, 1973), 513-533.