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## UKRAINIAN REVIVAL THROUGH SPIRITUALITY: THE VIEWS OF BISHOP HRYHORIY KHOMYSHYN

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the article* is to analyse the views of Bishop Hryhoriy Khomyshyn on the national revival and state-building of the Ukrainian people. To examine the criticism of social vices, such as “spiritual anarchy” and moral degradation, which, according to Bishop Khomyshyn, were the main obstacles to independence. To investigate critical assessments of nationalism, radicalism, and Muscophilia in the context of the political struggle for Ukrainian statehood. **The research methodology** is based on the principles of historicism, systematicity, scientificity, as well as on the critical approach and general scientific and special methods of history and related sciences. **The scientific novelty** lies in the fact that an attempt was made to analyse the views emphasised by Bishop Hryhoriy Khomyshyn and the need for spiritual and cultural renewal of Ukrainians through Christian values and the leadership of the Catholic Church. Particular attention is paid to his reforms in the diocese of Stanislaviv, including the introduction of celibacy and the Gregorian calendar, as well as ideas for integration with Western European culture. **Conclusions** analysis Bishop Khomyshyn's social and educational initiatives, such as the Skala organisation, are aimed at shaping the moral and spiritual foundation of Ukrainian society. The activities of Hryhoriy Khomyshyn are presented as an attempt to create a unique model of state-building based on morality, Christian values and cultural identity.

**Key words:** Hryhoriy Khomyshyn, Greek Catholic Church, socio-political activity, Eastern Galicia, social transformations.

## УКРАЇНСЬКЕ ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ ЧЕРЕЗ ДУХОВНІСТЬ: ПОГЛЯДИ ЄПІСКОПА ГРИГОРІЯ ХОМИШИНА

**Анотація.** *Мета дослідження* – проаналізувати погляди єпископа Григорія Хомишина на національне відродження та державотворення українського народу. Розглянути критику суспільних вад, як-от «духовна анархія» та моральна деградація, які, на думку єпископа Хомишина, були головними перешкодами у відновленні незалежності. Дослідити критичні оцінки націоналізму, радикалізму й москвофільства в контексті політичної боротьби за українську державність. **Методологія дослідження** базується на принципах історизму, системності, науковості, а також на критичному підході та загальнонаукових і спеціальних методах історичної та суміжних наук. **Наукова новизна** полягає у спробі проаналізувати погляди, на яких наголошував єпископ Григорій Хомишин, та необхідність духовного й культурного оновлення українців через християнські цінності та керівництво Католицької церкви. Особливу увагу приділено його реформам у Станиславівській єпархії, зокрема впровадженню celibату та григоріанського календаря, а також ідеям щодо інтеграції із західноєвропейською культурою. **Висновки.** Аналіз соціально-просвітницьких ініціатив єпископа Хомишина, як-от організація «Скала», спрямований на формування морального й духовного підґрунтя українського суспільства. Діяльність Григорія Хомишина представлена як спроба створити унікальну модель державотворення, засновану на моральності, християнських цінностях та культурній ідентичності.

**Ключові слова:** Григорій Хомишин, Греко-католицька церква, соціально-політична діяльність, Східна Галичина, суспільні трансформації.

After the announcement of the restoration of the independence of the Ukrainian state, scholars opened up the possibility of an objective approach to covering those “white spots” of national history that were changed or suppressed during the Soviet era for various ideological reasons. Among the most interesting aspects are studies of the role and contribution of the Greek Catholic Church and its hierarchs to the process of establishing Ukrainian statehood and maintaining the identity of the Ukrainian people.

**Problem Statement** an example, among them is the personality of Bishop Ordinary Hryhorii Khomyshyn, who headed the diocese of Stanislaviv for over forty years. In Soviet historiography, he was portrayed as a Polish supporter, fascist, anti-communist, and reactionary. Nowadays, Bishop Hryhorii is seen as a Catholic extremist middle believer with a pro-Polish orientation. It should be borne in mind that Khomyshyn had his own beliefs about the founding of the Ukrainian state and that he was very concerned about the fate of his people, first as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later in Poland, and tried to find a way out of the difficult socio-political situation that arose.

**The purpose of the article** is to analyse the views of Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn on the state of Ukrainian society and its political prospects in the early twentieth century. To reveal the ideas of Bishop Stanislavivsky on the cultural, moral and spiritual revival of the Ukrainian people, as well as his vision of the role of the Latin rite in the formation of national identity and political development of the Ukrainian population of Eastern Galicia under the auspices of the GCC.

**Presentation of the main research material.** An important question that concerned the bishop was to understand the reasons why the Ukrainian people were the only ones in Europe deprived of their own state. Furthermore, how did the loss of what Ukrainians had possessed during the period of liberation efforts during the First World War come about? According to Hryhorii Khomyshyn, the answer should be sought not in ‘otherworldly factors’ or in the culprits of foreign countries, but in the Ukrainian people themselves, since the main trouble is the collapse of the system. The spiritual leader wrote: “Though we have not lacked great and talented men, though our people are endowed with such good qualities, their main misfortune is anarchy, which has prevented them from consolidating their state, equally in the times of the Cossack princes and ours. Countless enemies of our people exhausted themselves and passed away, but that one enemy – anarchy – remained” [1, p. 6].

According to Khomyshyn, Ukrainian society suffers from ‘spiritual haemophilia’ – internal decomposition, in the sense of not the day-to-day, but the spiritual [2, p. 60]. This results in the spiritual weakness of Ukrainians, which leads to the insufficient use of spiritual and moral values in their lives, and this has led to the emergence of atheism. And these factors, according to the bishop, contributed to the rapid spread of Muscophilia, radicalism and nationalism in Ukrainian society.

“I am horrified by the current situation – the mud is pouring out from all sides and I am very much afraid that the Russian people will not be lost in this mud...” [3, p. 22] – the bishop wrote in his letter to Oleksandr Barvinsky in 1908.

To counteract these destructive trends, it is necessary to conclude that the only guarantee of cultural progress for Ukrainians is the “Christianisation of society” under the leadership of the Catholic Church, which, according to Khomyshyn, is a church that transcends national boundaries.

“Do you, Mr Metsenas, think that we are a nation, or that we will be a nation? ... After my impression, which I have gained from almost thirty-two years of episcopacy, we are a rotten tree, which is not capable of being used for opal or material, only for dung. Only the power of Christ and the Catholic Church can revive us...” [2, p. 35] – the bishop sent these words to a prominent representative of cultural and political life, Osyp Nazaruk.

According to H. Khomyshyn, the people and the state are constructed and progress not through ideas, but through the continuous, complete self-sacrifice of the entire working population. Of particular importance in this idea of sacrifice is the clergy, who should help to illuminate and implement

this approach. However, married clergy cannot do this, as there is a separation between the ministers and their communion with the Divine. With this in mind, in 1920, the Stanislaviv diocese adopted the introduction of celibacy [4, p. 95].

In 1931, we see the publication of a pastoral letter from Hryhorii Khomyshyn 'On Byzantium', in which the bishop practically explains his actions related to the introduction of celibacy and the Gregorian calendar. He argues that it is a great failure that Ukrainians have adopted their faith from the East, rather than the Western European cultural environment. Ukrainians did not grow up in Rome, but in the atmosphere of Byzantium. And although the Byzantine Empire fell, the 'Byzantine spirit' remained, continuing its development in Russia, where it reached its peak under Bolshevism, causing the destruction of the spiritual life of an entire region and numerous peoples. Instead of the Church being a driving force in society and a leading force in the state, it became a "slave to secular power". This led to Caesaro-papism [1, p. 9]. Therefore, according to Bishop Hryhoriy Khomyshyn, Ukrainians should 'lean more towards the West than towards the East', given the peculiarities of language, psyche and culture that distinguish them from Russians. This makes it clear that moving away from the Eastern ritual is an important step, as this ritual already has Russian roots.

But at the same time, the Ukrainian people should "make a self-assessment", understanding where the root of their failures lies, and not "fall into the trap of rejection, national euphoria and demagoguery" [1, p. 7]. First of all, it is important to properly understand what true liberation means. According to H. Khomyshyn, liberation has two stages: "negative", which includes the struggle against oppression, and "positive", which concerns the maintenance and preservation of the achieved freedom. Ukrainians, as Khomyshyn sees it, tend to focus on the first stage, although in fact the second is more important. The main essence of the second stage is the readiness of Ukrainians for future liberation. This was expressed in his words as follows: "So that we are prepared for the moment when the clock of history strikes the hour of our state's birth. Woe to us if we are caught unprepared, because something even worse will happen to us, as it did at the end of the World War" [1, p. 31].

Bishop Khomyshyn accepts the view that the triad of factors that manifest power and play a significant role in the life of a nation includes military strength, financial status and spirituality. If Ukrainians at this stage do not have sufficient military or financial power for objective reasons, they can and should develop their spiritual power [1, p. 22]. This can be achieved through the establishment of new institutions, parish libraries, and various organisations based on the principles of Catholic ideology, such as youth associations. For example, on the instructions of Hryhorii Khomyshyn, in 1928, the Ukrainian Catholic Youth Association "Unity" was established, which aimed to strengthen among young people faith, morality, and attachment to the Ukrainian people and the Motherland [5, p. 5–15].

Bishop Hryhoriy promotes the development of the cultural and educational organisations "Prosvita" and "Ridna Shkola", serving as the head of the latter in Stanislaviv. Bishop Khomyshyn sees these leading Ukrainian cultural groups as playing a very important role for the nation, but at the same time points out the gradual deviation of these organisations from the right path, as they become "nests of radicalism", moral decay, even the peasant movement and Bolshevism [4, p. 19]. Finally, on 18 January 1930, Hryhorii Khomyshyn appealed to the leadership of the Main Directorate of Prosvita to stop its destructive activities. However, having received no response and having observed no improvements in the functioning of either Prosvita or the Ridna Shkola, which he considered a purely Catholic structure due to its connection with the clergy, he actually ceased cooperation with them [6, p. 7].

While Metropolitan A. Sheptytsky recognised the importance of fighting the hostile forces of the church that infiltrated the organisations "Prosvita", "Ridna Shkola", and the "Union of Ukrainian Women", Bishop H. Khomyshyn chose a different approach: he created new educational societies directly subordinated to the church. Thus, in 1934, a network of cultural and educational groups called

“Skala” was created, whose main task was to set up reading rooms and libraries in parishes and to promote the Catholic Action. However, there were constant conflicts between “Skala” and “Prosvita”, as evidenced by H. Khomyshyn himself in a letter he wrote to Osyp Nazaruk: “...no one fights the Catholic organisation “Skala” as ruthlessly and unethically as Prosvita” [2, p. 53].

In order to achieve meaningful success in state-building, Khomyshyn believes that it is important to understand what “true politics” means and why it differs from the “national palette” and impatience.

“We need to engage in truthful politics, which is not a wide mouth and strong larynx for demagogic shouting, nor quick feet for agitation. Truthful politics is great wisdom, comprehensive and intelligent orientation, the reign of reason and entertainment. Therefore, a sensible and realistic policy requires that we also ensure full loyalty to the state in which we now find ourselves” [1, p. 26]. According to Khomyshyn, the strategy of a patient and balanced policy in no way means giving up the dream of an independent state, since a people who refuse to do so essentially deny themselves. At the same time, it is impossible to build a state without proper preparation.

“A wise and real policy is not guided by the fantasy of the future, but does what finitude prescribes, what can be done now, under the given conditions, and what the present finite circumstances allow” [1, p. 31]. Thus, according to the bishop’s plan, Ukrainians will be ready when the time comes and the political situation allows them to stand up for their country. H. Khomyshyn notes: “Let’s imagine that one day the Poles, who are hated by Ukrainians, leave us and leave us alone. In a few hours, clouds of Bolsheviks will come from across the Zbruch River, lock our churches and turn them into houses of amusement or debauchery, shoot the clergy and intellectuals, send them to the Solovetsky Islands, and oppress the people...” [1, p. 28].

The Metropolitan believes that Poles treat Ukrainians as a less valuable people, that chauvinistic factors in Polish society seek to destroy Ukrainians, and that Poland does not fulfil its international obligations [4, p. 161]. However, he believes that the reaction of Ukrainians to such Polish behaviour should be appropriate. Ukrainians react in different ways: they may feel hopeless and refuse to develop further, or they may choose the extreme path of terror. Khomyshyn strongly rejects both methods, as he believes they provide a basis for further repression by the Poles. He understands the position of the nationalists and is not surprised that in conditions unfavourable to the Ukrainian people they use sabotage and create secret groups, but he still believes that their tactics are wrong. In his opinion, even if the activities of secret groups are carried out in the name of patriotism and the national idea, it still leads to immoral and sinful acts [1, p. 9]. And even if an independent Ukraine emerges from the struggle of far-right forces, Khomyshyn believes that such a state will not be able to develop freely. He argues that such a state would be persecuted by an ‘anarchic and conspiratorial regime’ that would be harmful to the state itself. “When it becomes a custom that a crime committed in the name of the people, or for the people and for their state is good and permissible, then the understanding and sense of true virtue and true morality will be lost..., then such a people or state will commit crimes against their own..., and then crimes will be considered heroic, because they will be committed in the name of Ukraine and for Ukraine” [7, p. 39].

Nationalism must be rejected because of its xenophobic and destructive nature, as it pits indigenous citizens against each other solely on the basis of their nationality. This approach hinders the possibility of creating a unified and consolidated state.

Undoubtedly, such views of the Ukrainian bishop, which he vigorously disseminated through the media, could not remain without reaction and opposition from the nationalist side. There is every reason to assume that Ukrainian nationalists intended to attack Hryhoriy Khomyshyn. This can be confirmed based on the content of a letter that Bishop Hryhorii sent to Metropolitan Sheptytsky on 2 May 1932. In this letter, he cited facts that could serve as evidence of a possible terrorist act and condemned Count Andrei for his overly loyal attitude towards extremists [8, p. 31].

According to H. Khomyshyn's ideas, nationalism should be able to exist, but it is a matter of 'constructive nationalism'. And 'constructive nationalism' is defined as the formation of institutions to support and renew the Ukrainian people as a whole. To this end, the bishop encouraged the emergence of various organisations, such as the UGA Society for the Disabled in Galicia, which operated mainly on funds received from church services. Various charitable projects were also carried out, such as the "Orphans and Catholic Education of Youth" (OCY), which contributed to the construction of orphanages and burial sites in various places in Stanisławów [9, p. 15]. It is worth noting that the active initiatives of Bishop Khomyshyn did not always find understanding and support from the Polish authorities, and therefore many of his ideas and projects remained unimplemented.

On 4 August 1925, under the support of Bishop Khomyshyn, the Ukrainian Christian Organisation (UCO) was founded, which pledged to unite the Catholic Christians of the Ukrainian people, regardless of their status or party affiliation. The organisation set itself the task of monitoring that political parties in their activities adhere to the foundations of Catholic ideology [10, p. 2]. At the same time, the UWO, which is characterised by its non-political orientation, intends to cooperate with those national structures and political parties that remain faithful to the Christian worldview platform. On 7 January 1926, the first issue of the newspaper 'Nova Zorya' was published, which became the official periodical of the Ukrainian Christian Home under the patronage of Hryhorii Khomyshyn.

As further events unfolded, it became apparent that none of the political parties, including the UNDO, on which certain hopes were initially placed, fulfilled the expectations of the original UCO leadership. As a result, on 24 September 1930, the Ukrainian Catholic People's Party (UCPP) was born, which in 1932 was renamed the Ukrainian People's Renewal. The UCNP, again with the succession of Hryhorii Khomyshyn, prioritised the task of renewing the Ukrainian people based on the principles of Catholic faith and morality, as only this could ensure the cultural order of the nation. Without such a "moral recovery", Khomyshyn believed that the future statehood of Ukraine remained unattainable [4, p. 176]. With the aim of preparing the foundations and foundations of the future state, the UCNP (UNO) was created to promote national-territorial autonomy, rather than immediate independence of Ukraine, at the initial stage [4, p. 177].

Bishop Khomyshyn, after losing faith in the political activities of Ukrainian cultural and educational groups, issued an order on 3 August 1937 prohibiting priests from participating in secular societies and organisations on the territory of his eparchy. He did not support the so-called "press agreement" between Ukrainian publications representing different political social positions.

Despite the fact that this "press agreement" was aimed at uniting the Ukrainian nation through mutual tolerant communication, cooperation and "balanced polemics", largely excluding ideological and political differences [11, p. 121]. Hryhorii Khomyshyn refused to allow representatives of Nova Zorya and Pravda to participate in this agreement, thus reinforcing his distance from social and political life.

The bishop loses faith in the ability of Ukrainians as a nation to create a state, expressing distrust in their readiness for spiritual revival. He sharply criticises them for refusing spiritual renewal, hence "suffering from spiritual incapacity" and displaying a certain kind of "mental deviation" that, in his opinion, leads to inevitable death. "It is very bitter to write my memoirs. I have the impression that I am writing an obituary over the grave of my people... I don't know if I could go on. Neither the Poles nor the Polish clergy, but we ourselves are destroying and will destroy our church, just as we destroyed our state..." [2, p. 3].

Thus, Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn had his own views on the formation of the Ukrainian state and developed a unique concept of state-building. However, for various reasons, both objective and subjective, this concept could not be implemented in practice. Hryhorii Khomyshyn believed that the Greek Catholic Church should become the main spiritual guide for Ukrainians, promoting

cultural, spiritual and moral revival. He saw the church as an important tool for overcoming the internal fragmentation of the Ukrainian people and forging a strong national identity. The bishop drew attention to internal anarchy and moral decay as the main problems of Ukrainian society. In his opinion, these factors were the causes of many social and political difficulties, including the lack of statehood.

Hryhoriy Khomyshyn supported the idea of national revival, but stressed the importance of “constructive nationalism”, which would promote the development of institutions, including charitable and cultural organisations, without using radical methods. He rejected the extremes of nationalism that lead to xenophobia and destructiveness.

Bishop Khomyshyn advocated for Ukraine's orientation towards Western European culture and Christian ideology rather than Byzantine, which, in his opinion, contributed to the decline of spirituality. He believed that it was important for Ukrainians to abandon Eastern ritual, as this would help them break the relationship with Russian culture and create their own national identity.

He sought to combine spiritual, cultural and political progress in the process of forming national statehood, and although many of his initiatives were not implemented, they remain an important stage in the development of Ukrainian national consciousness.

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