

PHD program “History of Eastern-Central Europe”

**Preserving identity:
the clandestine Ukrainian Greek Catholics in the Soviet Union
(1946-1968)**

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Research interests: history of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in the XXth century, history of the Soviet Union, oral history, identity studies, anthropological history.

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After incorporation of Western Ukraine into the USSR, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) as a dominant national and religious institution in Galicia was officially abolished in 1946 through its forceful “re-union” with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). The majority of the clergy joined the ROC, whereas many “resistant Uniates” were sent to Gulag. Their return to Western Ukraine after the death of Stalin in 1953 made the formation of the clandestine UGCC possible.

The first objective of this project is to study the process of the Church’s liquidation from the perspective of the members of the Church, namely what motives led to a resolution of a part of the clergy and laity to resist the Soviet scenario of “re-union” with the ROC. Secondly, the accommodation to the Soviet reality as well as the legal and illegal forms of resistance are put into consideration. Thirdly, the impact of the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches on the specific Greek Catholic identity will be analyzed. Therefore, by taking into consideration both political and religious situation in Western Ukraine this project aims to define the factors which made the survival of the outlawed Church in Galicia under Soviet rule possible.

Key words: Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Church, identity, survival, resistance.