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**Roman Catholic Theological  
Education in Russia. Case of Roman  
Catholic Academy of St. Petersburg  
(1842-1918)**

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Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos  
President  
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**Abstract**

Several theological schools operated in the Russian empire at different times of the nineteenth century - Academy of Polotsk, University of Vilnius and the various diocesan seminaries. However, a special place among these educational institutions was held by the Roman Catholic Academy in the capital of the Russian Empire - St. Petersburg.

Catholic Academy in St. Petersburg, operating in the Orthodox tsar country, was from the very beginning torn by the confrontation of the demands and expectations of the Church's and the secular power apparatus. The purpose of a scientific institution, comparable in Russian law to university education, was to educate elitist, favoring the government priests. The officials expected that the Academy, located in close proximity to the imperial palaces and ministerial quarters, would abject and teach their students submissiveness and loyalty, if they wanted to do career in the Russian state. But, as often stated in the reports of the interior ministers and directors of the Department of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Internal Affairs the college did not meet the expectations and persisted in educating the priests the "wrong" way. Therefore, a significant number of pupils of the Academy were in exile in the depths of Russia.

The discrepancy between the evangelical and loyalist approach to the formation of the clergy within its walls was a permanent problem during its 76-year presence in St. Petersburg. In spite of many negative factors deforming the activities of the Academy - continuous inspections by the authorities, the interference in the curriculum, the charter, its financial dependence from the state, top-down appointments of rectors and professors, etc. - it retained its ecclesiastical, theological nature. This claim can be supported by the fact that within the walls of the university 71 bishops and diocesan administrators for Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Russia and Ukraine were educated.

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In the Russian Empire within the nineteenth century operated three Roman Catholic Academies – in Vilnius, Warsaw and St. Petersburg. Those were theological colleges created after the fall of the November Uprising in 1830-1831 and the liquidation of the Polish universities. In 1833 Roman Catholic Clerical Academy began to function in Vilnius and in 1835 such school was opened in Warsaw. Even though activity of the Academy in Vilnius was entirely supervised by the state it still aroused anxieties of tsarist authorities. In order to isolate the Academy from the influence of Polish society it was decided to move the college to St. Petersburg. As a result, in 1842 Roman Catholic Academy in St. Petersburg was founded.

Catholic Academy had to function in very difficult times for the Church. After the suppression of the Decembrists Uprising the new program based on the formula of “Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality” was accepted. The program was supposed to prevent all the movements and rebellions against the rightful government and Orthodoxy was to become the guarantee of peace. November Uprising, in which Catholic clergy were also involved, proved that Roman Catholic Church had supported and was still supporting Polish independence movements. Repressions against the Catholic Church started to take place. 191 catholic monasteries were dissolved in 1832. Education conducted by Catholic clergymen was transferred to Orthodox priests. Seminaries functioning outside the episcopal capital cities were closed and in the remaining ones limitations regarding the number of students were implemented. In 1842 consistories were reorganized and as a consequence, the bishops were practically deprived of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Church property was nationalized and so called fund bailing Roman Catholic Clergymen out was created. As a response to those Tsar’s actions Pope Gregory XVI delivered the allocution “Haerentem diu” about persecution of the Catholic Church in the Russian Empire. After the announcing the allocution Nicolas I began talks with the Holy See and two years later a concordat was signed.

Unfortunately, the concordat did not significantly improve the situation of the Church and secular authorities still tried to control it. Tsarist repressions became intensified after another bid for independence – January Uprising in 1863. A substantial number of priests and bishops were deported; a few hundred clergymen were exiled deep into Russia or to Siberia. Finally, Russia broke off the concordat (1866). In the framework of repression three dioceses were liquidated (Diocese of Kamyanets, Diocese of Podlachia and Diocese of Minsk), dissolution of Catholic parishes was commenced and a number of Catholic clergy was being reduced through the ban on joining orders and reorganisation of seminaries. Police supervision over the clergy was being unfolded, Russian language was being introduced to services and sermons and religious education was placed under official supervision.

The signed agreement between Russia and the Holy See in 1882 allowed for new nominations of bishops. The next step to improving the situation of the Church was the tolerant ukase from 1905. Conversion of faith was legalised and former Uniates were allowed to come back to the Roman

Catholic Church. Lecture of the religion at schools in one's mother tongues was possible since then and an amnesty for priests which were punished for ministries for Uniates was declared. Furthermore, greater possibilities of creating of new parishes, building and redecorating of churches arose. However, right and nationalist wing in III Russian Duma led to the return of the conservative policy which caused that in 1912 Card. Merry del Val handed the Russian Member of Parliament in Vatican memorandum of persecution of the Church in Russia. Similar memorandum the Russian side received in the following year. However, only World War I partly stopped persecution<sup>1</sup>.

After abdication of Nicolas II the Provisional Government seized power in the empire, as early as in April a Commission under the leadership S. A. Kotlarewski was formed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs for reviewing the laws concerning the Roman Catholic Church that were in force in Russia. The result of works of the Commission was the announcing the resolution of the Provisional Government on the amendment to the provisions in force with reference to the Roman Catholic Church in Russia<sup>2</sup>. Hopes of the Church for the development of the activity dashed with the rise to power of Bolsheviks (1917). In the following year under the decree of the separation of Church and State and decisions of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities - buildings and church properties passed to the management boards of local Councils.

In those outlined frames of the history of the Church in Russia Roman Catholic Academy operated in St. Petersburg for 76 years contending with the constant control and restrictions from secular authorities. The Academy was moved from Vilnius to the capital city of the empire in order to curb the influence of the Polish society on the formation of young clergymen. The purpose of the scientific institution, comparable in the Russian law to university education, was to educate elitist and favouring the government priests. According to the will of the tsar graduates of the Academy were supposed to become a separate caste among priests and with time to fill all higher positions in the church hierarchy. In the Russian Empire even an Orthodox religion, in particular an episcopate and the clergy, was treated as a constituent element of the clerical apparatus. The mentioned apparatus was educated for specific objectives and in the proper manner. It was supposed to secure internal political peace and the absolute system of power.

Graduates of the Catholic college, in accordance with the regulation of Minister of Internal Affairs A. G. Strogonov were supposed to make a breakthrough in the formation of the clergy and to fill elitist positions in structures of the church hierarchy thus removing the old, so unpopular with authorities, generation of priests. Authorities wanted the Roman Catholic Church to be favourable to them<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>See more: Лиценбергер, О. (2001). *Римско-католическая Церковь в России. История и правовое положение*. Саратов: ПАГС. [In Russian].

<sup>2</sup>Радван, М. (2003). *Католическая Церковь накануне революции 1917 года. Сборник документов*. Люблин: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL. [In Russian].

<sup>3</sup>Jogèla, V. (1997). *Vilniaus Romos katalikų dvasinè akademija 1833-1842 metais: organizacija ir veikla*. Vilnius: Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos. p. 215. [In Lithuanian].

Functioning of the Academy was governed by statute passed in 1833 for Vilnius Roman Catholic Academy and confirmed by the tsar in 1843. Statute governed, among others, the composition of the management board of the college, the selection of professors, accepting students, conferring university degrees, the supervision over the curriculum, discipline and finances. Every Mohylev archbishop was a superior of the college. The management board of the college was directly subordinate to the Ecclesiastical College and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In practice the power of the archbishop over the college was limited because neither he nor the management board could independently decide on school curriculum as each time he had to have consent of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to do so. The management board of the Academy also could not directly employ professors. First he had to introduce the candidates to the Department of Foreign Denominations and the Department pass it on to the Minister of Internal Affairs. The curriculum vitae of every candidate was checked in details. Secular authorities commenced the accumulation of information about a given person often by the local gendarmerie. The entire bureaucratic machine was involved in this procedure beginning from the local police officer through governors to the minister. The most important issue for authorities was a law-abidingness of the candidate. Within 76 years of the existence of the Academy 15 of its active or former professors were under police supervision, imprisoned or exiled for political reasons. Therefore, knowledge and competence were not a priority matter but the loyalty to the tsar. The consent for employing foreigners was also given unwillingly.

This procedure was in force exclusively towards clergymen. In case of employing the laity only an opinion of the Minister of Education was presented. On the matter of supporting students the archbishop could only intervene and ask for increasing the number of scholarships for the given diocese. In fact the Department determined this number and a minister approved. It was also a form of the repression applied with reference to some dioceses.

The minister was also able to remove the rector of the Academy from the office. Activity of Alexander Bereśniewicz (1823 - 1902) a bishop of Samogitia and the rector of the Academy provoke the anger of the minister. Bereśniewicz academically improved the college through employing outstanding professors. He obtained from the government consent to the departure of gifted students abroad. He tried, unfortunately to no effect, for retirement pensions for professors of the Academy. In February 1862 also the statute which limited the influence of the secular power in the Academy was passed. However, after severing relations between the Holy See and Russia in 1866 the power of the archbishop in the Academy was limited. Since then all changes in the school curriculum, in lectures and in the system of the upbringing were supposed to be addressed by the Ecclesiastical College for approval of the secular authorities, i.e. Minister of Internal Affairs and the tsar.

The report of the Minister of Internal Affairs which he introduced to the tsar stated that direction in which the college was developing under the rector's



supervision hadn't suited the government. The minister dismissed Rev. Bereśniewicz and appointed as a new rector Fr. Dominic Stacewicz (1808 - 1876) well-known for his loyalty to the government.

The new rector actively got down to giving the college the direction expected by authorities. First of all, Stacewicz concentrated on removing Polish language from the college. From now on all prayers were said in Latin, the same clerical conferences; however seminarians preached sermons in turns in Latin, Russian, Polish, French and German. But unfortunately at the same time the educational level of the college was also lowered because the Academy became "a place of games, rather than learning. [...] Students ate, drank, sang "God save the Emperor", played with the bookbinding and the like."<sup>1</sup>. In the days of his governments ministerial officers were regular guests at the college. No celebrations were held without their participation - beginning and finishing the academic year, examinations, holidays and church fairs.

In this period (1867) Roman Catholic Academy in Warsaw was closed. Since then to 1918 Roman Catholic Academy in St. Petersburg was the only higher Catholic theological college within the borders of the Russian Empire.

Only after the death of D. Stacewicz (5 VI 1876) when Simon Kozlovski was appointed the rector (1819 - 1899) the situation changed. Kozlovski, later Mohylev archbishop promoted the religious education through the publication of his books. He ordered the clergy to say catechismal sermons and to implement the religious education of children. An educational and moral level of clergymen was increased. So as the new rector he dismissed within one year professors appointed by Stacewicz, suppressed the idleness at the Academy, aroused the fondness for work and the piety. Along with professors he formulated the new statute of the Academy which came into being after the agreement between Vatican and the tsarist government (1882). Formation of clergymen became a purpose of the Academy. So the centre of gravity moved from the education of clerks to higher theological educating of the clergy. The academy was supposed to be subordinate to the Mohylev archbishop and a rector was to manage it directly with the participation of the management board and the senate of the Academy. Requirements concerning conferring university degrees were increased, a PhD degree in Canon Law was introduced. In matters which required the permission or the agreement of the government the archbishop should contact the Minister of Internal Affairs. Unfortunately in practice it wasn't respected.

Because of the nomination for the bishop of the diocese Lutsk - Zhitomir, rector Kozlovski left the Academy. After him Rev. F. A. Symon was appointed a rector and acted in the similar style as rector Kozlovski. He introduced the new coursebooks, set up the academy annual "Academia Caesarea Romano-Catholica Ecclesiastica Petropolitana" which appeared in the period from 1885 to 1915. He also established closer relations with the episcopate of the Kingdom of Poland. With the moment of the Symon's nomination the Academy began the activity outside its walls: professors, until

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<sup>1</sup>Wodzianowska, I. (2007). *Rzymskokatolicka Akademia Duchowna w Petersburgu. 1842-1918*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL. p. 85. [In Polish].

now limited to activity at the college started being active in social circles, ran the retreat, were chaplains of Petersburg shelters, prefects at schools. The positive attitude of the rector caused his deportation to Odessa (1897). However, his successor suffragan bishop of the Mohylev archdiocese Karol Niedziałkowski continued his actions. He cared about the selection of professors. He also obtained from the government the needed fund for enlarging and renovating the academic building. He enjoyed the great popularity with seminarists and aroused the fondness for work and studies.

Next rectors and Mohylev archbishops tried to make certain changes in functioning of the Academy. It was possible to do that at the beginning of the 20th century, after the tolerant ukase from 1905. Archbishop George Joseph Szembek (1851-1905), who defended the rights of the Roman Catholic Church in the empire, initiated a lot of reforms and next rectors conducted and widened them - Longin (Longinus) Żarnowiecki, Alexander Kakowski, Idzi (Giles) Radziszewski (1871 - 1922).

Archbishop J. Szembek many times paid attention of the minister to the need of conducting necessary changes in the functioning of the Academy. Above all the dependence of the college on decisions of secular authorities concerning appointing the chaplain, number of scholarships for specific dioceses, college curriculum, nominations of professors which approving lasted few months was suppose to be eliminated. He thought that matters of the internal organisation of the college, college curriculum, the selection of subjects and spiritual education of students should be entrusted exclusively to an ecclesiastical power, i.e. the archbishop. Low rates of remunerations of professors were supposed to be raised and the pension rights to which anyone employed in other higher schools was entitled granted to them. It was also necessary to increase the number of scholarships. Decisions as for sending candidates to the Academy should be taken without the participation of secular authorities. Gifted students should be able to continue the education abroad and in this matter an academic Senate should take decisions, again without the participation of secular authorities<sup>1</sup>.

After the next nomination of the rector of the Academy for the bishop of the diocese Lutsk - Zhitomir Rev. Alexander Kakowski became a rector. Kakowski took care of the running the college in the Catholic and Polish spirit. Kakowski joined the Academy when it was in the period of transformation. A number of reforms was initiated, some of them a previous rector brought into effect such as the new system of examinations, increasing the number of professors. There were plans to create the specializations, museums, e.g. archaeological, apologetic and expanding the library.

Most of the changes were made by the last rector of the college Rev. I. Radziszewski. Rector Radziszewski announced the new statute in 1915, additionally reforming the structure of college. Among others, the moral-legal and biblical-dogmatic sections were set up, a scope of lectures was increased

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<sup>1</sup>Wodzianowska, I. (2006). Potrzeby Kościoła katolickiego w imperium rosyjskim w świetle memoriału z 1904 roku metropolity mohylewskiego arcybiskupa Jerzego Szembeka. *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* 4: 71-95. [In Polish].

including among others the Catholic social teaching as well as requirements towards students writing a master's thesis and doctoral thesis were tightened, a mode of granting university degrees to external students was passed. As a result of the reform 15 institutes functioned in the Academy. Moreover, seminars of primary subjects were conducted on all courses. In 1918 the first students graduated specializations largely in the biblical-dogmatic section.

Academic and publishing achievements of the Academy weren't large. The most important achievement was the intellectual and moral formation of the alumni. The management board of the college had problems with filling the positions through the entire time of existence of the Academy in the Petersburg. Many academic teachers had only worked there for three up to five years. It was related to the low remuneration. Wages were usually about 30-50 % lower than in other research institutions in St. Petersburg. Moreover, it wasn't possible to get the national retirement pension. So clergymen weren't particularly interested in the longer work at the college. Apart from that episcopal nominations or appointing them rectors or inspectors of diocesan seminaries were often also a reason of resigning of priests from the college. In the period from 1845 to 1917 from professors of the Academy 8 rectors and 12 bishops were recruited, including 2 archbishops of Warsaw.

Most of the people employed in the Academy were in a young age. For 102 academic employees of the college - 32 in the moment the employment did not exceed 30 years of age. Part of them before taking up work at the college didn't have experience neither in the pastoral work, nor in didactics. 30 persons were academic teachers of diocesan seminars (Kaunas, Vilnius, Petersburg, Zhitomir, Wloclawek, Kamyanets-Podilsky, Warsaw, Kielce, Lublin, Sandomierz, Minsk), 17 worked only in the parish ministry. Only nine of clergymen studied at state universities (Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Vilnius, Warsaw, Riga, and Cracow). The laity in the 97% had a considerable teaching experience. They lectured on both state and private schools - most often as instructors or academic teachers of literature, as well as at colleges, among others St. Petersburg University and Orthodox Academy. The management board of the college tried to keep the best specialists even through prize money or extra charges to the remuneration.

Employing as well as dismissing professors was not always in the competence of the archbishop or the Senate of the Academy. Archbishop Fijałkowski at the request of the Minister of Internal Affairs Timaszew had to remove Rev. F. A. Symon from the college. For anti-state activity A. Wróblewski, A. Baranowski, J. Pranajtis, J. Cieplak were dismissed. The Minister of Internal Affairs dismissed also the rector Bereśniewicz.

Nevertheless, many incredible people worked at the college. Rector F. A. Symon was the most outstanding biblical scholar at the college. Rector S. M. Kozlovski issued the text of the Vulgate in the translation of J. Wujek along with the comment of G. S. Menochia and drew textbooks for the religion classes for children and teenagers as well as works popularizing church services. Bishop M. Wołonczewski dealt with translating religious books and texts of the Bible into Lithuanian language. In field of history needs to be

regarded as the specialist Rev. M. Godlewski (1872 - 1956) a researcher of St. Petersburg archives. Rector A. Kakowski, who was the first canonist in the Academy, printed a number of studies concerning synods and legislations and his successor Rev. Żongołłowicz from the scope of Canon Law and articles concerning the system of the Church in the Russian annexed territory.

Jerzy Matulewicz was an outstanding sociologist (1871 - 1927). He was also a restorer and the general of the Congregation of Marian Fathers, the founder of the congregation of The Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Handmaids of the Eucharistic Jesus, later he was a bishop of Vilnius. The Catholic social teaching was popularised by priest Alexander Woycicki (1878 - 1954). An exceptional scientist professor Daniil A. Chwolson (1819 - 1911) was a Hebrew instructor, an expert of Eastern tongues Rev. Justyn Pranajtis was named "an outstanding Hebraist amongst Russian scientific circles".

Professors joined the wide course of theological discussions. Rector Hołowiński brought up in one of his publications popular in this period subject matter concerning the attitude of philosophy to the faith and the role of the mind in the process of coming to faith. He also presented essential issues of fundamental theology, the need of the revelation and criteria of cognition it. His views almost literally covered with the learning of the future First Vatican Council. Other apologist - bishop K. Niedziałkowski - belonged to the most outstanding Polish writers polemicists. He was one of the precursors of studies of Catholic religion in Poland. In the history of the college also a rector I. Radziszewski was remembered as a specialist in religious studies. Rector Żarnowiecki, a remarkable liturgist, published a number of studies in history of liturgical vessels and ornaments of churches.

Attitude of the authorities and financial conditions of the Academy didn't allow for the wider scientific activity of its teaching staff. Moreover, frequent changes of professors in teacher's institutes didn't support the deeper specialization in the given subject and a short period of work at the college didn't also let to develop the scientific activity. The majority of professors confined themselves to drawing up the summary of lectures and coursebooks. Professors of the Academy published coursebooks from the biblical hermeneutics, introduction to the books of New Testament (A. Bagiński, A. Akko, F. A. Symon, S. Trzeciak); from the scope of homiletics (I. Hołowiński, A. Ważyński and A. Retke); patrology (A. Retke); of moral theology (I. Bałtruszys); dogmatic theology (Czesnys); pastoral theology (K. Dębiński); of the history of the Church which became popular coursebooks in seminaries of the Kingdom of Poland and the Russian Empire.

Apart from the scientific work academic teachers of the college conducted also wide charitable activity in St. Petersburg. They founded a few shelters and orphanages for children and shelters for women (Feliński, F. A. Symon, J. Pranajtis). They were managers and chaplains of shelters and orphanages. They were invited as retreat preachers and confessors, among others at a seminary, in procathedra, at the St Catherine Church, Company St Vincent a Paulo.

They built churches and opened chapels (W. Majewski, J. Cieplak). They also acted as parish priests by the St John the Baptist chapel which served the alumni of Corps of Pages and the diplomatic corps. They were priests in the nearby towns like Gatzyn, Krasny Forest, Teriokach. They built and founded churches in Olginie, Siwerskaja, Kołpinie near of Petersburg. Academic teachers of the college were also prefects of St. Petersburg and local schools, chaplains of schools and prisons<sup>1</sup>.

They were members of all sorts of societies and organizations, most often of the scientific, educational, national and charity profile. Professors also joined in the operations of nationalist movements - Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian. They cooperated with publishing companies, published books in vernaculars, and ran scientific-literary clubs at St. Petersburg colleges, awaking the national awareness in this way.

Employees and professors of the Academy played a major role in setting up the new centre of studies in the form of Catholic University in Lublin. At the beginning of 1918 in St. Petersburg an organizing committee of this University was founded.

Priests working in the Russian Empire have often regarded the work on moving closer the Church to the Orthodox Church as their obligation. Professors also developed activity among members of the Orthodox Church allowing for celebrating services in an Eastern Orthodox rite in their parishes, printing prayer books with explaining of Slav liturgy for their parishioners. Professors of the Academy participated in the First Council of Eastern Catholic Churches in 1917<sup>2</sup> which was chaired by the Greek Catholic archbishop Andrzej Szeptycki (1865-1944).

23 bishops came from the circle of professors of the Academy. There were Mohylev archbishops among them (I. Hołowiński, B. H. Kłopotowski, S. M. Kozlovski) and Warsaw archbishops (S. Feliński, A. Kakowski) and diocesan bishops (J. Iwaszkiewicz, J. Cieplak, A. Audziewicz, A. Bereśniewicz, K. Borowski, F. Buczys, K. Cyrtowt, C. Falkowski, M. Godlewski, K. Hryniewicki, W. Lipski, Z. Łoziński, J. Matulewicz, K. Niedziałkowski, F. A. Symon, I. Świrski, M. Wołonczewski, L. Żarnowiecki).

Thanks to incentives from professors students participated in the life of the local Church. Seminarists were full of enthusiasm for learning and the independent work. The studies were being completed in a number of self-educating clubs. Ones devoted themselves to the learning of foreign languages, others of philosophy, studied history and literature on private studies, extended knowledge of theological subjects. In self-learning groups students prepared readings and discussions. Such meetings were held during noon and evening recreations. Since students studied not only theology but also secular sciences, each of them was involved in a few clubs. Professors often chaired these meetings.

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<sup>1</sup>Шкаровский, М. & Н. Черепнина (1998). *Римско-католическая Церковь на Северо-западе России в 1917-1945 гг.* Санкт-Петербург: Нестор. [In Russian].

<sup>2</sup> Kołpiński, D. (1932). Początki katolicyzmu wschodniego obrządku w Rosji. In: *Kościół katolicki w Rosji. Materiały do jego historii i organizacji.* Warszawa: p. 24-34. [In Polish].

In spite of the constant supervision and the presence of ministerial officers at all celebrations and examinations at the Academy, the government was never pleased with direction and the atmosphere of this college. Professors of literature and Russian in conversations with the minister or the Department of Foreign Denominations director emphasized abilities and progress of seminarists in the learning and their loyalty towards the government. During these compulsory talks they never presented the moods prevailing at the Academy. What is characteristic is that nobody of lay professors betrayed that the part of lectures was held in Polish and that Polish literature was being lectured and Polish customs and traditions were being cultivated, which certainly didn't fit to the direction which the government tried to assign to the college.

Therefore, the Minister of Internal Affairs sent in 1850 classified order to all governors of the province to urgently pay attention to graduates of the Academy and ensure to file a report to him every month to what extent the priests in their enthusiasm can be harmful for the ruling religion.

Next minister Timaszew submitted in 1874 a letter to the rector in which he complained about inappropriate direction given to the Academy. Because of the fact that for the opposition to introduction Russian into additional services 28 graduates were punished. Part of them were dismissed from their posts, closed at monasteries and exiled them deep into Russia. Minister Durnowo in the letter to governors in 1884 again recommended to pay special attention for priests' behaviour and report directly to the ministry of all signs of the non law-abidingness among the clergy. The next minister in the letter to the rector in 1893 wrote about the great number of graduates punished for anti-government activity in the time from 1883 to 1893. In his opinion students received inappropriate directing and as a result a lot of them manifested fanaticism in their later action, intolerant attitude toward everything that was Russian and a tendency to disturb the established order.

At the Roman Catholic Academy studied above 1300 seminarists within 76 years. The majority of them passed the full course and got a degree. It was assumed that the moving of the Academy to the capital city would change its "wrong" direction and graduates of the college will fill all the important positions in dioceses. Therefore in 1844 the Ministry issued a regulation for bishops that "since then persons who had a university degree at the Roman Catholic Academy of St. Petersburg were only appointed to positions of parish priests of all parishes 1 and 2 classes and in all parishes of the capital city as well as religion teachers of all schools".

From analysed biographical entries of graduates of the Warsaw archdiocese, of the diocese of Lutsk-Zhitomir and Lublin it can be said that in most cases the decision of the ministry was carried out. However, it wasn't caused by the obedience but by the good of the Church. In the Zhitomir diocese every tenth graduate was punished with administrative punishment or exiled deep into Russia. Such attitude of clergymen wasn't certainly an aim of the secular authority and didn't serve its purposes.

Four rectors of the Academy in St. Petersburg came from the Zhitomyr diocese (I. Kłopotowski, K. Niedziałkowski, F. A. Symon, L. Żarnowiecki) and one of the Academy in Warsaw. The twelve graduates took positions of rectors of seminaries in the Zhitomyr, Lublin, Lutsk, Ołyka and Gniezno. 14 graduates from the academy were among academic personnel of the Warsaw and St. Petersburg Academies, Catholic University of Lublin and Stefan Batory University in Vilnius. Lectures at colleges in the Zhitomyr, Lublin, Kamieniec, Siedlce, Lutsk, and Minsk were carried out by 62 graduates. Several alumni (17) were inspectors, stewards at their colleges and at seminaries. In different period 47 persons were prefects of schools. 27 graduates worked at consistories. There were also prison chaplains among them, hospital chaplains, monastic chaplains, military chaplains and chaplains of seminars and the Academy as well as of charity plants.

In the Warsaw archdiocese until 1918 - closing the Academy - 61 master's degrees candidates of theology came back to work in the archdiocese. Seven future bishops came from their circle, three rectors of seminars (Łódź, Warsaw, of Jans Podlasie), professors of Roman Catholic Academy in St. Petersburg, Jagiellonian University in Cracow and Stefan Batory in Vilnius and well-known authors of numerous publications from the scope of aescetism and preaching (A. Chmielewski, A. Szlagowski), apologetics (C. Sokołowski, K. Tomczak), biblical studies (J. Archutowski, A. Szlagowski, A. Lipiński, T. Radkowski, S. Żelazowski), of Canon Law (A. Retke, F. Puchalski, S. Mystkowski, B. Wilanowski), of historical works (A. Tauer) and religious education (R. Archutowski, A. Kwieciński).

Secular authorities, in spite of their efforts, didn't manage to convert clergymen into loyal clerks. In the environment of the Academy two attempts to create or to renew the religious congregations were made. At first rector Hołowiński, who wanted to create congregation of secular priests associated with marriage ceremonies and the rule which was supposed to replace orders erased then in the empire, took such initiative. Unfortunately, the death of the archbishop paralysed this intention. The next attempt succeeded - restoration of the Congregation of Marian Fathers made by a blessed J. Matulewicz. Rev. Matulewicz along with professor Buczys formulated rules of the new gathering. Graduates were involved also in the formation of the Russian Eastern Catholic Church. They took part in the neo-unite action initiated by the Holy See in the period from 1923 to 1924. Among others bishop Z. Łoziński was a co-organizer of the Pinsk union conferences. Priests F. Abrantowicz, A. Niemancewicz and A. Cikoto became apostolic administrators and exarchs of Eastern Orthodox rite in Mandżuria and in Belarus.

Many academics joined in the operations of the Lithuanian and the Belorussian nationalist movements. They not only cooperated with newspapers and magazines but also established publishing companies, translated prayer books, delivered sermons in vernaculars. With their participation the first Belarussian religious organization was formed in St. Petersburg - Christian Democratic Union.

Many of them became bishops of dioceses created in 1925 and 1926. They had to organize the life and the pastoral work of dioceses from the very beginning like K. Połtarokas (Poniewież), R. Jałbrzykowski (Łomża), K. Śliwowski (Vladivostok), from Łoziński (Pińsk), J. Kukta (Koszedary). Overall, from the walls of Petersburg Alma Mater 56 bishops and 1 cardinal came out, two exarchs of an Eastern Orthodox rite and six apostolic administrators of the dioceses. Fourteen persons were canonized or their canonical process was opened, these are R. Archutowski, J. Cieplak, Z. Feliński, H. Kaczorowski, I. Kłopotowski, Z. Łoziński, J. Matulewicz, A. Nowowiejski, W. Owczarek, M. Piaseczyński, A. Rewera, K. Sykulski, L. Wetmański, A. Zawistowski.

The Roman Catholic Academy in St. Petersburg was not able to develop as a university when functioning under the full dependence on the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In most cases the authorities did not give their consent for employing fully qualified professors from foreign countries. Also the students for the long time were not allowed to study abroad. It turned out, that few which had luck to receive the consent for such studies - Symon, Godlewski, Radziszewski, Matulewicz, brought into effect quite a lot of ideas at once.

In official letters of rectors the same requests for new jobs, for enlarging of the building of the college, lecture rooms, library, and acquisition of books are repeated. The ministry deliberately reduced budget in order to increase budget of the Orthodox Academy also operating in St. Petersburg at the same time. When the number of all students of the Catholic Academy remained within the limits of 60 persons in Orthodox Academy studied 280. When at the Catholic college 16 academic teachers was employed at the same time at Orthodox Academy, six kilometres away, 47 university teachers had classes and at all four Orthodox colleges 165 professors were working<sup>1</sup>. The Catholic Academy could not independently settle and decide on fundamental issues because even the purchase of furniture and acquisition of books to the library fell under the outside supervision. The management of the Academy constantly struggled in the tangle of government regulations, ukases and suspicions that paralysed the free moral and intellectual formation of future ecclesiastical elites.

Starting from the 80s of the 19th century the college slowly improved its academic character. Two sides were interested in the issue of scientific level of St. Petersburg Alma Mater: the state and the Church. Against wishes of the church power every professorial appointment was dependent on the approval of the ministry. It enabled the government far-reaching intervention into the functioning of the Academy. The curriculum devoting disproportionately plenty of hours for the secular history of Russia, for literature and law, took the valuable time. The curriculum was supposed to serve in preparing clerks,

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<sup>1</sup>*Всеподданейший отчет обер-прокурора Святейшего Синода по ведомству православного исповедания за 1911-1912 годы (1913)*. С.Петербург: В синодальной типографии. р. 246-247. [In Russian].



knowing the Russian culture but not very acquainted with dogma, moral theology and history of the Church.

Nonetheless, the Academy tried to employ the staff and brought up graduates who understood their vocation and their role on lands remaining in the Russian sphere from 1772. Undoubtedly rectors were the most important figures of the St. Petersburg college, especially the first rector in St. Petersburg I. Hołowiński and later F. A. Symon and I. Radziszewski. Each of them added a lot of effort to keep the Academy on the appropriate university scientific level and to form in students the spirit of the mature moral responsibility for oneself and the Church.

In conditions of the absolute power of the state the Academy made everything in order to remain scientific and Catholic institution. In terms of the legal position of the Academy it is necessary to consider the entire policy of the Holy See towards Russia. In the view of repression, the dissolution of Greek Catholic Church Pope Gregory XVI, but especially Pius IX, stated before Russia unambiguous demands arising from theology and the Canon Law. Disputes concerned the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Collegium, correspondence between worshippers and Rome, of nomination of bishops, dissolution of monasteries, deportation of clergymen, activity of seminaries and Russian language in liturgy. And even though the majority of these demands was never settled positively Vatican was raising them less and less often, not seeing chances of effective decisions. Similarly with the Academy: in spite of the too far-reaching state intervention in its functioning Vatican didn't close it and wanted to keep it due to the needs of the Church. While the Academy, holding on established rules, continued its work without an excess of its demands.

The situation of the Roman Catholic Church in the Russian Empire was difficult and complicated. In the light of the Canon Law not all actions of authorities were canonical. However, priests had to honour tsarist decrees or other regulations of authorities and in case of the Academy to tolerate onerous inspections of ministerial officers. In practice, however, fulfilling requests of Russian authorities was depended on the clergy. The Academy within 76 years of its existing oscillated between the loyalty to the Church and the loyalism towards the tsarist government.

Roman Catholic Academy in St. Petersburg educated a substantial part of elites of Polish clergy of that time. The influence of the Academy was of paramount importance to the formation of the national and patriotic spirit among Polish priests. After all, within the walls of the Academy grew up not only saints but also national heroes. Rev. Stanisław Iszora - the first priest executed in Łukiszki by M. Murawjew and the chaplain of defenders of Warsaw in 1920 - Rev. Ignacy Skorupka, they both studied at the Academy. Not only gifted administrators, professors, bishops graduated the Academy, but also clergymen who were faithful to their own conscience all the way to suffering, the exile and death.