

Fighting for Memory: Clergy Repressed by the Soviet Union in the Transmission of the Sybir Memorial Museum

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Abstract:

The Polish Catholic Church rebelled against Russia as early as the 19th century. After the establishment of the Soviet Union, hostility between the Moscow authorities and Polish clergy increased even more. Polish priests serving in the Soviet Union were repressed already in the 1920s and 1930s. When the Red Army invaded Poland, the clergy were also among those most at risk of repression. The Sybir Memorial Museum (Poland) tells about the story of tsarist and Soviet repressions against Poles and other nations. Among the presented figures there are many priests, such as Fr. Bishop Jan Cieplak sentenced to death by the Soviets and Fr. Władysław Bukowiński, who, whether in prison, labour camp or exile, always provided spiritual service. After serving all his sentences, he remained in Kazakhstan voluntarily. In the paper, I will also describe other stories of repressed priests, which can be known in the Museum. The activities of the clergy members and the repressions against them are presented in the Sybir Memorial Museum in various forms. They have been commemorated at the permanent exhibition open to visitors; they are mentioned in publications and magazines published by the museum and on the international Internet portal Świat Sybiru (www.swiatsybiru.pl).

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