

PhD Project

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Provisional title of project - Joseph Stalin and the Orthodox Church of Georgia

PhD doctoral program Advanced Theological Studies, Theological Studies (catholic)

Joseph Stalin was one of the most important persons of the 20th century and played a prominent role in development of Orthodoxy in the former Soviet Union. This project will examine Stalin's policies and their consequences for the Orthodox Church of Georgia, which was deeply affected by the Stalin era. Western scholars have usually neglected the history of the Orthodoxy Christianity in Georgia so this project will fill a noticeable gap in previous research.

This project will examine published sources and unpublished archival material (e.g., National Archive of Georgia; Central Archive of Contemporary History; Archive of Georgian Patriarchate; State Security Archive), summarize the results of previous research in non-Western European languages, and result in a monograph that presents the topic for the English-speaking research community. The project will interpret the results from this original research and summary of previous research in relation to the general church history and political history of the Stalin era (1923-1953). Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used and the material culture of the era will be taken into consideration when analysis the consequences of Stalin's policies towards the Orthodox Church in Georgia. A working hypothesis of this project is that Stalin's policies towards the Orthodox Church in Georgia were influenced by his own Georgian nationality and ecclesiastical education that set him apart from the other leaders of the Soviet Union.

The project will result in a monograph divided into three main parts: (a) Stalin's background and Orthodoxy in Georgia; (b) Stalin and the early Soviet attempts to suppress the Orthodox Church; and (c) Stalin and the new role of the Orthodox Church that developed from the WWII onwards.