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THE QUESTION OF THE AUTOCEPHALOUS STATUS OF THE POLISH ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (1944-1948)

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Abstract

The process and stages of the acquisition of autocephaly by the Polish Orthodox Church are explored. The formation of a socialist model of public administration in Poland after the Second World War required the resolution of some problems, in particular the restoration of canonical communication between the Polish and Russian Orthodox Churches. The cause of the conflict between these Churches was the proclamation of the autocephaly of the Polish Orthodox Church by the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1924. The Soviet and Polish governments were interested in abolishing this *Tomos*. The state and church relations in the USSR provided for the establishment of strict control over the Russian Orthodox Church, which was turned into an instrument for solving the geopolitical problems of the Soviet government. The strengthening of the Moscow Patriarchate was a part of the struggle for the future structure of the postwar world, in which the USSR was to take the lead. Concerning the Polish government, the entry of the Polish Orthodox Church into the orbit of influence of the Moscow Patriarchate was a guarantee of its loyalty in all spheres of socialist construction, including the national question. The plans of the Soviet and Polish authorities to change the canonical status of the Polish Orthodox Church in Poland in the first stage (1944 - October 1947) aimed at abolishing autocephaly and subordinating it to the Moscow Patriarchate. In the second stage (November 1947 - June 1948), the Polish government decided to preserve the autocephalous status of the Church due to the strengthening of opposing forces. It was proposed to repeal the *Tomos* in 1924 and grant autocephaly by the Moscow Patriarchate. Strengthening the personnel potential of the Polish Orthodox Church with the Russian clergy provided for the removal from the office of Metropolitan Deonizii of Warsaw and his followers. The creation of a plan for the realization of these tasks and their implementation belonged to senior government officials; this indicates the political nature of the proclamation

of the *Tomos* in 1948 and the lack of its canonical justification. The resumption of canonical communication between the Churches contributed to the strengthening of the positions of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ecumenical Orthodoxy, which was soon reflected in the decisions of the Meeting of the Heads of the Orthodox Churches (July 1948) and directed against the Holy See and the world ecumenical movement.

Keywords: Orthodox Church in Poland, the Polish Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church, Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Deonizii, H. Swiatkowski, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Introduction

The issue of consolidation of Churches in global Orthodoxy became especially relevant on the eve of the Pan-Orthodox Council in 2016 and in connection with the provision granting autocephalous status to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine in 2019 by the Patriarch of Constantinople. Both events exacerbated the confrontation between the two centers of Orthodoxy—the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Moscow Patriarchate. Historical tradition, church canons, and real influence gave the Patriarchate of Constantinople the primacy among the Orthodox patriarchates, which is formally enshrined in the diptych (δίπτυχον) of the autocephalous Churches. The Moscow Patriarchate, with the political and financial support of the state, was trying to establish its dominant influence among the Orthodox Churches. For centuries, this institution had played an important role in the domestic and foreign policies of the Russian Empire and the USSR. The strengthening of the Moscow Patriarchate was linked to the Russian government's geopolitical plans, as the Church was used as an important channel for retransmitting a great power ideology in the subordinate territories.

One of the instruments of such influence is the autocephalous status that individual national Churches seek to obtain. In the 20th century, the Moscow Patriarchate has repeatedly tried to appropriate the right to grant autocephaly, which traditionally belonged to the Patriarch of Constantinople. A great example of this is the case of the Polish Orthodox Church (POC), in the history of which the question of the *Tomos* arose twice: in 1924 and 1948. Methods of removing the *Tomos* of Constantinople in 1924 testified to the gross interference of the Soviet and Polish governments in the affairs of the Church. The *Tomos* of 1924 pointed to the illegality of the subordination of the Kyiv metropolitanate to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686 and the violation of church canons. The review of the legitimacy of granting the *Tomos* to the POC in 1948 reveals that it was not only canonically, but also politically, motivated, that once again proved the perniciousness of the totalitarian practices of the Church's dependence on the state.

History clarifies the position of the POC in the postwar period, and elucidates the different approaches of the Constantinopolitan and Russian Churches to the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) sought to maintain its former position as the dominant denomination in Ukraine, which finds support among heads of state and government of the Russian Federation. However, this is a violation of the canonical order. Opposition to the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine damages the unity of the Ecumenical Orthodoxy and slows down the process of unification of the Orthodox in Ukraine. Nevertheless, the path to the autocephaly of the POC differs significantly from the path to the autocephaly by the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which highlights the importance of studying this precedent in the history of the Ecumenical Orthodoxy.

Existing Research and Theoretical Scope

The importance of religion and the Church in the social, political, cultural, and spiritual lives of people and countries encourages scholars to comprehensively study this phenomenon. In Ukrainian historiography, there are many studies about the problems of state and church relations, which prove the political component in the activities of the ROC. However, researchers focus on studying the role of the ROC in the context of Russian-Ukrainian relations and substantiate the de-Ukrainization of the Kyiv metropolitanate after its inclusion to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686.¹ The autocephalous structure of the POC in 1924 is considered by the authors of these explorations as created solely for granting an autocephalous system to the former dioceses of the Kyiv metropolitanate whose territory passed to Poland in terms of the Treaty of Riga in 1921.²

Activities of the Moscow Patriarchate in the field of international relations, in particular during the Second World War and the postwar period, with using the archival

¹*Історія релігії в Україні* (Київ: Знання, 1999). [*History of religion in Ukraine: in 10 vols*] Т. 4: *Православ'я в Україні* (К., 2001). [*Orthodoxies in Ukraine*]; Пащенко В. *Православна церква в тоталітарній державі. Україна 1940 – початок 1990-х років*. (Полтава: АСМІ, 2005). [*The Orthodox Church in a totalitarian state. Ukraine 1940 - early 1990s*]; Стоколос Н. *Конфесійно-етнічні трансформації в Україні (XIX – перша половина XX ст.)*. (Рівне: РІС КСУ – ППФ “Ліста-М”. 2003). [*Confessional and ethnic transformations in Ukraine (XIX - first half of the XX century)*].

²*Константинопольський патріархат в історії України: минуле, сучасне, майбутнє* (Київ: Київське Богоявленське Ставропігійне Братство, 2017). [*The Patriarchate of Constantinople in the history of Ukraine: past, present, future*].

documents of the State Archives of the Russian Federation and Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, were researched by Ella Bystrytska.³

The main aspects of the activity of the POC have been more fully studied by Polish researchers. In their works, the question of obtaining autocephaly in 1924 and 1948 is partially revealed, and church-state relations and interchurch relations, personnel policy in the Church, and other issues are analyzed.⁴ The topic of the use of the ROC in the foreign policy of the USSR is being actively studied by Russian researchers. They studied the international contacts of the ROC with the patriarchates of the Middle East, establishing connections with the Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe during and after the Second World War.⁵

The documents illustrate the significant degree of interference of state authorities in resolving church issues, a remarkable influence of domestic and foreign policy factors on the formation of approaches to the problem of Polish autocephaly, and the nature of relations between the ROC and POC.

³ Е. Бистрицька. *Східна політика Ватикану в контексті відносин Святого Престолу з Росією і СРСР (1878-1964 рр.)*. (Тернопіль: Підручники і посібники, 2009). [*Eastern policy of the Vatican in the context of the Holy See's relations with Russia and the USSR (1878-1964)*]; “Східні православні церкви у геополітичних планах Кремля (1945-1948 рр.)”. *Наукові записки Тернопільського державного педагогічного університету ім. В. Гнатюка. Серія: Історія. Тернопіль, 2010*. [“Eastern Orthodox Churches in the Kremlin’s Geopolitical Plans (1945-1948 рр.)”]; “Екуменічний рух 1940-х рр. і Російська Православна Церква: політичний аспект проблеми”. *Наукові записки Наукові записки Тернопільського державного педагогічного університету ім. В. Гнатюка. Серія: Історія. Тернопіль, 2017*. [“The Ecumenical Movement of the 1940s and the Russian Orthodox Church: The Political Aspect of the Problem”]; “Греко-католицька церква Словаччини: особливості ліквідації (друга половина 40-х–початок 50-х рр. XX ст.)”. *Наукові записки Наукові записки Тернопільського державного педагогічного університету ім. В. Гнатюка. Серія: Історія. Тернопіль, 2016* [“Greek Catholic Church of Slovakia: features of liquidation (the second half of the 40s – early 50s of the XX century)”].

⁴ Adamczuk L., Mironowicz A. *Kościół prawosławny w Polsce dawniej i dziś. Aneks statystyczny*. (Warszawa, 1993). [*The Orthodox Church in Poland in the past and today. Statistical annex*]; Bendza M. *Druga Droga Kościoła Prawosławnego w Polsce do autokefalii*. (Białystok, 2006). [The way of the Orthodox Church in Poland to autocephaly]; Mironowicz A. *Autokefalie Kościoła Prawosławnego w Polsce*. (Białystok, 2006). [*Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland*]; Железнякович С. *Яблочинский монастырь в межвоенный, военный и послевоенный периоды до наших дней 1918 – 1962*. (Варшава: Варшавская Православная Митрополия, 2009). [*Yablochinsky monastery in the interwar, war and post-war periods to the present day 1918-1962*]; Urban K. *Kościół prawosławny w Polsce 1945-1970*. (Kraków: Nomos, 1996). [*The Orthodox Church in Poland 1945- 1970*]. Urban K. *Kościół prawosławny w Polsce w latach 1944-1946*. (Kraków, 1998). [*The Orthodox Church in Poland 1944-1946*].

⁵ Васильева О. Ю. *Русская православная церковь в политике Советского государства в 1943-1948 гг.* (Moscow.: Ин-т рос. истории РАН, 2001). [*The Russian Orthodox Church in the policy of the Soviet state in 1943-1948*]; Волокитина Т., Мурашко Г., Носкова А. *Власть и церковь в Восточной Европе. 1944-1953 гг. Документы российских архивов: в 2 т.* (Moscow.: РОССПЭН, 2009). [*Power and Church in Eastern Europe. 1944-1953 Documents from Russian archives: in 2 volumes.*; Шкаровский М. В. *Русская Православная Церковь при Сталине и Хрущеве (Государственно-церковные отношения в СССР в 1939-1964 гг.)*. М.: Крутицкое Патриаршее Подворье: О-во любителей церковной истории, 1999. [*Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev (State-church relations in the USSR in 1939-1964)*].

The Autocephalous Status of the POC in the Political Plans of the Soviet Government (1943-1945)

In the final stage of the Second World War, the Grand Alliance coalition began negotiations on postwar world order. The Soviet government drew attention to the international relations of the ROC. This church was given an important role in the struggle to establish Soviet influence in Europe. In 1943, a controlling governmental body, The Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (CAROC), was established. It was headed by Colonel of State Security G. Karpov. In 1943, the CAROC developed and carried out measures to consolidate the Orthodox Churches of Eastern Europe around the Moscow Patriarchate: Bulgarian, Romanian, Albanian, and Serbian. The jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate was recognized by the Estonian and Czechoslovak Orthodox Churches.⁶ Relations between the ROC and the POC remained difficult. The ROC did not recognize the autocephalous status of the POC that the church received in 1924 from the Patriarch of Constantinople. In the *Tomos* of 1924, the patriarch condemned the act of transferring the Kyiv metropolitanate to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686 and declared it uncanonical. Consequently, the Russian hierarchs wanted to return the POC to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Documents from the State Archives of the Russian Federation show that the CAROC, under the leadership of G. Karpov, supported the desire of the hierarchs. In March 1945, the CAROC worked out a document, “Working Materials of the CAROC on the Situation of the Orthodox Church in Poland, the Proclamation of Autocephaly, the Possibility of the Transition of the Polish Orthodox Church to the Jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, and etc.” In the document, the possibility of subordinating the Polish dioceses to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate was analyzed.⁷ The Soviet government had information that “our Polish friends recognize the need for the POC to join the Moscow Patriarchate.”⁸ In the spring of 1945, before the surrender of Germany, the USSR Embassy in Warsaw began preparations for a dialogue between the POC and ROC.

Imposing the Soviet model of state-church relations in Poland, the CAROC took into account national religious peculiarities and was interested in quickly overcoming social and

⁶ Бистрицька Е. *Східна політика Ватикану в контексті відносин Святого Престолу з Росією і СРСР (1878-1964 рр.)*. (Тернопіль: Підручники і посібники, 2009), pp. 313-316. [*Eastern policy of the Vatican in the context of the Holy See's relations with Russia and the USSR (1878-1964)*].

⁷ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 16. Л. 51. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

⁸ Ibid., p. 89.

religious tensions in Polish society. Tension arose as a result of opposition to the ruling circles and intensified against the background of the growing confrontation with the USSR on the one hand, and the United States and Great Britain on the other. It had the effect of limiting the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, which led to the severance of the concordat with the Vatican in the fall of 1945. The next step of the Polish government was the introduction of civil marriages, divorce permits, and secular education. The new legislation provoked protests among believers. Therefore, by supporting the Polish government, the Soviet leadership in the field of church-religious relations carefully implemented its plans and sometimes refused to implement them quickly. Many issues were left to the national leadership and consulted at various levels.

The Position of the Polish Government on the Canonical Status of the POC

In June 1945, the Provisional Government of National Unity (PGNU) was formed in Poland. The leading position in the government and state bodies was taken by the Polish Workers' Party.⁹ One of the powerful areas of the Polish Workers' Party was propaganda and agitation, which involved experienced communists trained in the USSR.¹⁰ Socialist H. Swiatkowski (Świątkowski) was appointed as Minister of Justice in the PGNU. He positioned himself as anticlerical and a specialist in church law, and also advocated the separation of church and state, the legalization of civil marriage, and registration of births and deaths by public authorities.¹¹ His name appears in most documents related to the situation of church organizations in Poland.¹² The Minister of Justice repeatedly travelled to Moscow, where he met with G. Karpov and I. Polianskyi.¹³

At the end of 1945, H. Swiatkowski did not have a clear answer to the question of preserving or eliminating the autocephaly of the POC. This was reported by an adviser to the Soviet embassy.¹⁴ Until the middle of 1946, the Polish government supported the “accession

⁹Л. Зашкільняк, М. Крикун. *Історія Польщі: від найдавніших часів до наших днів*. (Львів: Львів. нац. ун-т імені Івана Франка, 2002, с. 525). [*History of Poland: from ancient times to the present day*]

¹⁰ Ibid., Л. 550.

¹¹Архив Внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ф. 0122. Оп. 27. П. 195. Д. 7. Л. 97 [Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation].

¹²Officially, religious affairs were handled by the Department of Cults which was part of the Ministry of Public Security, headed by Demenchuk. He consulted on certain issues with H. Swiatkowski.

¹³Ivan Polianskyi, Chairman of the Council for Religious Cults (supervised the activities of non-Orthodox organizations), Colonel of State Security.

¹⁴Архив Внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ф. 0122. Оп. 27. П. 196. Д. 8. Л. 88. [Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation].

of the POC to the Moscow Patriarchate” and planned to implement this act after the Sejm elections.¹⁵

During the 1946 election campaign, the position of the Polish government on the canonical status of the POC was finally formed. During the meeting on November 13, 1946, in Moscow with G. Karpov and I. Polianskyi, the Minister of Justice H. Swiatkowski expressed the principled position of the Polish government on the preservation of the autocephaly of the POC. Balancing between criticism from the opposition concerning their dependence on the USSR and persistent recommendations from Soviet officials, H. Swiatkowski proposed a compromise solution: to preserve the autocephalous status of the POC and strengthen its canonical connection with the Moscow Patriarchate. He proposed electing as the head of the POC “a bishop, a Russian by nationality, with a good theological education.” H. Swiatkowski stressed that the bishop elected by Patriarch Aleksii should leave the ROC and become a citizen of Poland.¹⁶

The Polish government’s arguments were convincing. These developments took place against the backdrop of a confrontation between the former allies of the anti-Hitler coalition, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain, and the Soviet Union’s accusations of planting pro-Soviet regimes in Eastern Europe. The abolition of the *Tomos* in 1924 and the subordination of the POC to the Moscow Patriarchate could be a further confirmation of the Soviet government harboring these intentions, as well as an exacerbation of the domestic political situation in Poland. For these reasons, the CAROC recommended that the Patriarch of Moscow withdraw the demand to eliminate the autocephaly of the POC.¹⁷ However, the CAROC believed that the issue of “the elimination of autocephaly in Poland remains open and depends entirely on further developments, in accordance with the views of the Polish government.”¹⁸

Metropolitan Deonizii of Warsaw and the Question of the Autocephalous Status of the POC

After the withdrawal of Nazi troops from Poland in June 1944, the head of POC, Metropolitan Deonizii (Waledynskyi) of Warsaw, and other bishops left their dioceses. Therefore, Bishop Tymofii (Hryhorii Shretter) of Kholm and Podlasie entered into a dialogue

¹⁵Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 51. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

¹⁶ Ibid., Л. 40.

¹⁷ Ibid., Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 149. Л. 110.

¹⁸ Ibid., Л. 139.

with the ROC. In the spring of 1945, he appealed to the Exarch of Ukraine, Bishop Ivan (Sokolov) of Kyiv and Galicia, to accept his diocese under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.¹⁹ On May 7, 1945, Bishop Tymofii visited the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw and announced that he wished to establish contact with Patriarch Aleksii of Moscow. The bishop assured that the decision to “liquidate the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church and join it to the ROC” is supported by Warsaw, Kholm and Podlasie, Krakow, and Lemko Orthodox eparchy.²⁰

After the capitulation of Germany in 1945, Metropolitan Deonizii returned to Warsaw. This deprived Bishop Tymofii of the authority of the head of the Church. The relations between the POC and ROC have been clarified by Metropolitan Deonizii. Unlike Bishop Tymofii, Metropolitan Deonizii sought to preserve the autocephaly of the Church and did not intend to renounce the received *Tomos* in 1924. In letters to Patriarch Aleksii, Metropolitan Deonizii called the POC a younger “sister church.”²¹

On January 26, 1946, Patriarch Aleksii proposed to Metropolitan Deonizii to renounce the autocephaly of the POC. Patriarch Aleksii considered that the *Tomos* of 1924 by the Patriarch of Constantinople was illegal.²² Moscow was preparing for the abolition of the *Tomos* in 1924 and the subordination of the POC to the Moscow Patriarchate. Under these conditions, the activities of Metropolitan Deonizii created unnecessary conflict situations and slowed down the resolution of that issue. Ambassador V. Lebediev unequivocally considered that “Deonizii is not a person to be relied on to establish relations between our Orthodox Church and the Polish one.”²³ He offered “Polish friends to advise ...to arrest Deonizii and deprive him of the authority of the head of the Polish Church, debunking him as a German agent.”²⁴

The imprisonment of Metropolitan Deonizii was supported by the leadership of the IV European Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the USSR²⁵. Unlike diplomats, G. Karpov did not focus on the “pro-fascist past of Deonizii and Tymofii.” He

¹⁹ Ibid., Ф. 6991. Оп.1. Д. 17. Л. 51.

²⁰ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 57-58. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

²¹ Ibid., Л. 89-90.

²² Ibid., Ф. 6991. Оп.1. Д. 149. Л. 110.

²³ Ibid., Л. 90, 262.

²⁴ Ibid., Л. 88 об.

²⁵ Due to the establishment of political regimes dependent on the USSR in Eastern Europe, Territorial Deptment were opened in the structure of the MFA of the USSR. IV European Department of the MFA dealt with the Soviet government’s policy in Poland and Czechoslovakia. There were other Departments, such as V European Department was involved in the implementation of Soviet policy in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, Cyprus.

considered it inexpedient to hold a trial of Metropolitan Deonizii. In that case, other hierarchs, including Bishop Tymofii, would be accused of collaborationism. On the contrary, G. Karpov proposed to use the compromising material to “force them to prepare the question of the accession of the POC to the Moscow Patriarchate and on their own initiative to raise that issue before the Moscow Patriarchate.”²⁶

The Polish government, however, believed that the fate of Metropolitan Deonizii and the preservation of the autocephalous status of the POC were unrelated. On November 13, 1946, at the meeting with G. Karpov and I. Polianskyi, H. Swiatkowski stated, that “The Polish government intends to bring Metropolitan Deonizii to justice for his connection with the Nazi occupiers and for his struggle against the USSR.”²⁷ According to him, the arrest of Metropolitan Deonizii would help relieve tensions between the POC and the ROC. At the same time, H. Swiatkowski stated the desire of the Polish government “after the arrest of Deonizii, the Patriarch of Moscow lifted the ban on the POC, restored canonical ties with it and recognized its right to autocephaly, and then singled out a bishop and put him at the head of the POC.”²⁸

Plans for Settling the Canonical Status of the Polish Orthodox Church

On January 19, 1947, parliamentary elections were held in Poland. Power remained in the hands of the Polish Workers’ Party, which took radical measures to suppress opposing forces during the Cold War. A campaign against the Vatican was launched in the church sector. The settlement of the issue around the POC also required concrete steps on the part of the Polish government. H. Swiatkowski set out his vision for resolving the conflict between the POC and the Moscow Patriarchate in a memorandum addressed to former Polish Prime Minister E. Osobka-Moravski. He analyzed the factual and legal situation of the POC, justified the need to preserve the autocephalous status of the Church and suggested ways to overcome the crisis.²⁹ H. Swiatkowski considered that the settlement of the canonical status of the Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe was an important factor in strengthening bilateral relations with the USSR. Moreover, even with the reduction of the number of

²⁶ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 129. Л. 286. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

²⁷ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 149. Л. 138. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

²⁸ Ibid., Л. 138.

²⁹ Ibid., Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 133-142.

Orthodox in Poland due to repatriation,³⁰ “the POC must play a positive role in the Polish state.”³¹ H. Swiatkowski substantiated the issue of Poland’s independence and the autocephalous status of the POC as indivisible. “There is no doubt that the question of autocephaly is the same question about independence,” he wrote.³² The issue of the canonical status of the POC was transferred to the political plane and required the participation of government forces in resolving that issue. The minister’s plan called for discussing two points: the recognition of the autocephalous status of the POC by the Moscow Patriarchate and the coordination of personnel transfers in that Church. After the coordination of those issues, it was provided to convene the All-Polish Council of the POC in order to elect its new head and approve the statute. Representatives of the Polish government and a delegation from the ROC were to take part in the Council. The final point of H. Swiatkowski’s plan was the approval of the decisions of the council by the Polish government that gave them legal force.³³

In March 1947, H. Swiatkowski presented a plan for the normalization of relations between the POC and the ROC to V. Yakovliev, Counselor at the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw. H. Swiatkowski also had a conversation about Metropolitan Deonizii. He argued that the presence of Metropolitan Deonizii at the head of the POC discredited the Orthodox among Poles in the view of his “criminal behavior during the occupation.” The Minister of Justice proposed a series of interrelated successive measures: 1) to initiate an appeal on behalf of the Polish Orthodox community to the government demanding the removal of Metropolitan Deonizii from the leadership of the Church as a collaborator and enemy of the Soviet Union; 2) Metropolitan Deonizii is to be summoned, intimidated with a court for cooperation with the occupiers, informed of the illegality of his election as a head of the POC, and offered retirement to a monastery by the representative of the Polish government;³⁴ 3) to create a temporary governing body of the POC among the clergy and the Orthodox

³⁰ On September 9, 1944, an “Agreement between the Government of the Ukrainian SSR and the Polish Committee for National Liberation on the evacuation of the Ukrainian population from the territory of Poland and Polish citizens from the territory of the Ukrainian SSR” was concluded in Lublin. The treaty provided an opportunity for Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Russians to leave the Ukrainian SSR and return to Poland Jews and Poles who, as of September 17, 1939, were citizens of the Polish state. The deportation of Ukrainians lasted from October 15, 1944 to May 6, 1947, and was mostly coercive and violent. During the action, 482,109 people (122,454 Ukrainian families) were relocated.

³¹ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 137-139. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

³² Ibid., Л. 141.

³³ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 142. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

³⁴ Opposite this text in the margins of the document is written by hand, probably G. Karpov: “The patriarch agrees 3/IV”.

community, which would initiate a delegation to the Moscow Patriarchate to discuss the canonicity of the Church and the appointment of a new head.³⁵

The persistence of H. Swiatkowski intensified the activities of G. Karpov's department. On April 17, 1947, he signed a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, K. Voroshylov, that reported on the plan of the Polish government to settle relations between the POC and ROC, as well as the position of Patriarch Aleksii on that issue. Patriarch Aleksii considered it expedient to grant autocephaly to the POC and to begin to discuss that problem with church delegates.³⁶ CAROC proposed to expedite the resolution of a certain range of issues and received the support of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.³⁷

Before long it turned out that a member of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party, a vice-minister of the Ministry of Public Security of Poland, W. Wolski (Antoni Jan Piwowarczyk), also had a plan to settle the situation of the POC. He was responsible for religious matters in the government. His proposals differed from the plan suggested by H. Swiatkowski and concerned the fate of Metropolitan Deonizii. According to the vice minister's opinion, Metropolitan Deonizii should have been placed under house arrest and imprisoned after his trial. As for the new head of the POC, in the absence of candidacy among the Polish Orthodox clergy, W. Wolski proposed to invite a bishop from Yugoslavia. He even contacted the Yugoslav embassy in Warsaw to promote this solution.³⁸

W. Wolski's plan was supported by the USSR ambassador to Poland, V. Lebediev. He considered that Metropolitan Deonizii should be "judged as a criminal." In May 1947, the ambassador voiced support for the reunification of the POC with the Moscow Patriarchate. Given the lack of unanimous support for the abolition of autocephaly by the Polish government, the Soviet ambassador proposed "to reunite through some transitional measures and do it without much fuss."³⁹

The announcement of the head of the IV European Department of the MFA of the USSR about the emergence of a new plan and the position of Ambassador V. Lebediev on the POC provoked an immediate reaction from G. Karpov. The next day, May 21, 1947, the chairman of the Council for the Affairs of the POC (CAPOC) stressed that the question of

³⁵ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 131-132. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

³⁶ Ibid., Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 149. Л. 238.

³⁷ Ibid., Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 157.

³⁸ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 158-159. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

³⁹ Ibid., Л. 159-160.

the reunification of the Polish and Russian churches was lifted in November 1946. H. Swiatkowski's plan was adopted, which was supported by the Polish government. On the issue of the new head of the POC, G. Karpov supported the candidacy of the Moscow Patriarchate. He was not a supporter of the severe punishment of Metropolitan Deonizii: "According to the Council, this issue should be resolved by the Polish government, but the arrest of Deonizii and his trial will probably provoke wide and negative reactions, especially since this is the first arrest in Orthodox Churches."⁴⁰

Practical Measures for the Abolition of the *Tomos* of Constantinople in 1924

At the end of July 1947, the CAROC prepared an official response to H. Swiatkowski and W. Wolski. This document was communicated to the leadership of the MFA of the USSR in order to coordinate actions in the church sector of Poland. The letter was of an informational and advisory nature, which took into account the plans of Polish officials, but in fact, it defined the sequence of actions and the role of each party in solving the problem: 1) to create a Polish Orthodox delegation to meet with Patriarch Aleksii; 2) the delegation would appeal to the Patriarch of Moscow to cancel the decision of the Synod of the ROC to ban the POC;⁴¹ 3) the Orthodox community of Poland would appeal to the Polish government to remove Metropolitan Deonizii from office in the Church "as a person who cooperated with the Germans;" 4) upon the appeal of the Polish public, the government would decide on the arrest of Metropolitan Deonizii and establish a temporary governing body of the POC; 5) the Temporary Governing Body of POC would send a delegation to the Moscow Patriarchate to discuss issues of its canonicity; 6) to try to avoid the arrest and trial of Metropolitan Deonizii, because it could cause a negative resonance in church circles: "...it would be appropriate for a representative of the Polish government to summon Deonizii and invite him to retire to a monastery."⁴²

During the implementation of that plan, the Polish government, represented by W. Wolski, invited Metropolitan Deonizii to resign. However, Metropolitan Deonizii refused. The investigative bodies collected substantial material about "Deonizii" cooperation with the German occupiers, about his attempts to create a single Orthodox church in the occupied

⁴⁰ Ibid., Л. 164.

⁴¹ This point was agreed with the patriarch, who no longer insisted on the unification of the Churches and agreed to recognize the autocephaly of the POC.

⁴² Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 17. Л. 170-171. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

territory with its center in Kyiv, about his appointment of priests to Anders' Army⁴³ without the consent of the Polish government in Warsaw, and etc."⁴⁴ According to the results of the investigation, the Polish government, on the basis of the decree "The state attitude to the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church" (1938) on April 6, 1948, removed Metropolitan Deonizii from the leadership of the POC. He was also accused of violation of the oath to the president. At the same time, a Temporary Board for the Administration (TBA) of POC was established, consisting of 7 people, including Bishop Tymofii. Taking into account the recommendations of G. Karpov, the Polish government did not plan to hold a trial of the Metropolitan. The monastery in Yablochyn was chosen as the place of his isolation.

The measures taken by the Polish government created the necessary conditions for resolving the inter-church conflict. In April, G. Karpov appealed to the MFA of the USSR with a request to ensure through the Embassy in Warsaw the appeal of the TBA of the POC to the Moscow Patriarchate to receive a Polish church delegation. G. Karpov pointed out that the consequence of that meeting would be: "recognition of autocephaly, which must be done before the meeting,⁴⁵ as this will ensure the presence of an independent national church at the meeting, in which we are interested (meaning the vote)."⁴⁶

Procedural issues of granting autocephaly to the POC were agreed upon at the intergovernmental level. Only one thing remained: to make formal arrangements between the hierarchs of the two Churches. G. Karpov's office sought absolute control over these events. On May 8, 1948, at his request, the MFA of the USSR even sent some information on the composition of the Polish church delegation with a brief description of each of its members.⁴⁷

On June 19, 1948, a Polish Orthodox delegation led by Bishop Tymofii arrived in Moscow. On June 21, the delegation was received by Patriarch Aleksii.⁴⁸ In the text it was said that the Polish Autonomous Church had addressed to the "Mother of the Russian

⁴³ August 14, 1941, in Moscow between the Supreme Command of the USSR and an agreement was signed by the Polish High Command, which provided for the creation of the Polish army in the USSR. It was planned that the Polish army together with the Red Army would take part in the fight against Hitler's troops. General Wladyslaw Anders was appointed commander of the army, which consisted mainly of deported Polish servicemen.,

⁴⁴ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 421. Л. 5. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

⁴⁵ It's about the All-Orthodox Meeting of the Heads of the Orthodox Churches, which was to take place from June 27 to July 11, 1948. The claims of the Moscow Patriarchate to ecumenical had a negative resonance in international and ecclesiastical circles. The press published articles about the ROC's close ties with the Soviet government.

⁴⁶ Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 421. Л. 8. [State Archives of the Russian Federation].

⁴⁷ Ibid., Ф. 6991. Оп. 1. Д. 621. Л. 5.

⁴⁸ *Журнал Московской патриархии*, 1948, № 7 (июль), с. 16. [Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate].

Church” which recognized the non-canonicity of the *Tomos* of the Patriarchate of Constantinople of November 13, 1924 (№ 4588) and asked the ROC to grant it an autocephalous status.⁴⁹ The next day, June 22, a meeting of the Synod of the ROC took place, at which a resolution on the independence of the POC was adopted. Among the points of that resolution were the following: “1. The Polish Church has renounced its non-canonical autocephaly, so the Holy Patriarch and the Holy Synod are now resuming canonical prayerful communication with it and giving it the right to full self-government. 2. After the Synod of Bishops of the ROC approved the autocephaly of the Polish Church, the POC elected the Head of its Church. Until now, the POC receives a system according to the canons for autocephaly.”⁵⁰ To strengthen the staff of the POC, on June 25, a member of the delegation, Archpriest Mykhailo (Kedrov), was elevated to the rank of Bishop of Wroclaw.⁵¹

In this way, the 25-year conflict between the Russian and Polish Churches was formally ended. The *Tomos* of 1924 was annulled without the consent of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Moscow Patriarchate established its influence over the POC. The POC officially distanced itself from Metropolitan Deonizii and informed the members of the Synod of the ROC about the cessation of prayer and liturgical communion with him and his followers, and the mention of his name as Primate.

The Moscow *Tomos* of 1948 solved another strategic task for the POC, which was set by the Soviet government and Orthodox hierarchs. In Moscow, at the Meeting of Heads of Orthodox Churches on July 8-11, 1948, the autocephalous POC was represented among eight others. The Polish delegation voted on all the resolutions proposed by the ROC: it supported the program to fight the Holy See and oppose the ecumenical movement.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ведерников А. “Внутреннее дело Польской Православной Церкви”. *Журнал Московской патриархии*. 1950. № 8 (август), pp. 40–48. [“Internal Affairs of the Polish Orthodox Church”. *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*].

⁵⁰ “Акт о воссоединении Польской Православной Церкви с Русской Православной Церковью и о даровании ей автокефалии”. *Журнал Московской патриархии*. 1950. № 8 (август), p. 44 [Act on the reunification of the Polish Orthodox Church with the Russian Orthodox Church and on the granting of autocephaly to it. *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*].

⁵¹ Журнал Московской патриархии. 1948. № 7 (июль), p. 12. [Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate]. 1948, № 7.

⁵² Бистрицька Е. “Східні православні церкви у геополітичних планах Кремля (1945 – 1948 рр.)”. Наукові записки Тернопільського національного педагогічного університету ім. В. Гнатюка. Серія: Історія. 2010. № 2, p. 245. [“Eastern Orthodox Churches in the Geopolitical Plans of the Kremlin (1945 - 1948)”. *Scientific notes of Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University of Ternopil*].

Conclusions

In the postwar period, the problem of the canonical status of the POC had a pronounced political character. The Soviet and Polish governments were interested in repealing the 1924 *Tomos* of Constantinople. The CAROC acted as a think tank and coordinator of the process of normalizing canonical relations between the Churches. One of the main tasks of the CAROC was to strengthen the international relations of the Moscow Patriarchate to ensure the retransmission of the Soviet system values to the countries of “people’s democracy” through church channels. To achieve this aim, a set of measures was formed to create loyalty of the POC to the Moscow Patriarchate. The agency headed by G. Karpov worked in cooperation with the MFA of the USSR, so the social, political, ecclesiastical and religious circumstances of Polish life were taken into account. Consequently, the original plan for the unification of the Churches was changed. The POC retained its autocephalous status, but with the annulment of the Constantinople *Tomos* of 1924, the Moscow *Tomos* of 1948 made it possible for the Moscow Patriarchate to establish control over the POC. The loyalty of the POC was guaranteed by appointments–removal from the office of Metropolitan Deonizii and the appointment of pro-Russian sympathizers to church positions. From the ecclesiastical and canonical point of view, obtaining autocephaly from the ROC contributed to the strengthening of the international authority of the Moscow Patriarchate. That was evidenced by the condemnation of the international activities of the Holy See and the ecumenical movement at the Meeting of Heads of Orthodox Churches in July 1948.

Regarding the Polish government, standardizing the activities of the POC, which united the predominantly Ukrainian national minority, was one of the most important political tasks. In introducing a socialist model of government, which provoked strong opposition from the parties, the Roman Catholic Church, and the general population, the Polish government sought to create a controlled ecclesiastical institution.

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