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## **TYOLOGY OF AUTOCEPHALOUS MOVEMENTS IN ORTHODOXY**

Anatolii Nikolaevich Leshchinsky<sup>1</sup>  
Yulia Dmitrievna Smirnova<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kazan Federal University, Communications anleshinsky@gmail.com.  
0000-0003-0137-0970

<sup>2</sup>Kazan Federal University, myphilosophy@mail.ru . 0000-0003-2766-7318

**Abstract:** *The article analyzes autocephalist movements. Their study is undertaken to solve the general problem of Ecumenical Orthodoxy unity preservation and to prevent conflicts and schisms in it. For the study, the authors use scientific methods and approaches, among which one of the main ones is dialectical. Movements are viewed as socially conditioned and historically objective phenomena undergoing constant changes. They reveal the attitude of the following states to the autocephalist movements of the Russian Orthodox Church: Russia, Georgia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine and the American continent. They presented the typology of autocephaly arising as a result of movements towards them. The typologization of movements was carried out for the first time in Russian religious studies. Recommendations for prevention and settlement of interchurch conflicts are given.*

**Keywords:** *Autocephaly, autocephalist movements, Russia, Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarchate of Constantinople, Tomos.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, autocephalist movements intensified in the Ecumenical (World) Orthodoxy. They express the desire of the parts of the Local Churches to obtain autocephaly - self-heading. Often, the granting process is delayed and turns into a conflict, in the resolution of which not only the representatives of churches but also state structures are involved. To prevent such relapses, it is necessary to study autocephalist movement in detail, which are characterized by diversity and their own characteristics. Based on the study of the Russian Orthodox Church and state relationship to autocephalist movements, the article presents the typology of autocephaly as the results of these movements. To study the relationship of the Russian

Orthodox Church and states to autocephalist movements, empirical material was analyzed, presented in the works of both Russian pre-revolutionary secular and church historians, and the historians of Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Also, they analyzed the documents that have been kept in the archives for a long time and have been published by now. These primarily include the materials from the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of 1917-1918, as well as the Definitions of subsequent Local and Bishops' Councils. For the typological and classification, they used the works of the professor-archpriest of the Kazan Theological Academy and the Kazan Imperial University A.V. Smirnov (1856-1933), as well as the materials of the scientific-practical conference on the topic "Classification of religions and typology of religious organizations" (Moscow, Lomonosov Moscow State University, March 20, 2008).

## METHODS

The research was carried out on the basis of the principle of historicism related to the method of dialectics; the method of historical retrospection in combination with the theory of social transformation and social phenomena, to which the church belongs. The applied structural-functional method and the comparison method made it possible to identify the diversity of autocephalist movements, and to typologize them.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the Russian Orthodox Church and state relationship to autocephalist movements, we propose the following typology of autocephaly:

1. Restored autocephalies. Such autocephalies existed in the history of autocephalist movements. It is enough to remember the Hellas, Serbian and Bulgarian churches. The study will be focused on the Georgian autocephaly. During the annexation of Georgia to the Russian Empire, it was reduced to the status of the exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church under the control of the state-church body - the Holy Governing Synod. The restoration of autocephaly took place in March 1917 immediately after the abdication of Nicholas II and the replacement of monarchical rule by the power of the Provisional Government. The new government and the Russian Church (its official representatives) reacted extremely negatively to such a proclamation, not sanctioned by them. They retained their previous rule of Georgian Orthodoxy. To resolve the current situation, an ordinary Professor of Petrograd University, V.N. Beneshevich, was sent to Georgia as the interim representative of the Provisional Government for the Georgian Church. The following fact should only be noted. In the instructions given to Beneševičh by the chief prosecutor of St. Synod, the following was noted: "1. The Catholicos is approved by the Supreme Power of the Russian Provisional Government ..." (Instructions to the Temporary Commissioner of the Provisional Government for the Georgian Church). The relations with Georgia and state-church relations have changed radically. Thus, the Georgian Church became independent. And since June 1918, the relations between the Georgian and Russian Orthodox Churches ceased until 1943.

2. Temporary autocephaly. In Russia, temporary autocephaly began to arise in 1918, that is, from the outbreak of the Civil War in the territories occupied by the White

Guard formations. The military governments maintained temporary structures that had lost ties with the church center and even managed them (Leshchinsky, 2019). During the first wave of Russian emigration abroad, a church organization was formed independently, which later became known as the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Having existed for several decades, in 2007 it was reunited with the Mother Church, and not without the participation of the post-Soviet state representatives, including the President of the Russian Federation.

3. New autocephaly. During the period under review, the Russian Orthodox Church was related to their establishment. In 1918, a new unitary state, Czechoslovakia, appeared in Europe. By that time, the religious situation in the country was very difficult. The associations of Catholics, Uniates, and Protestants operated. The Orthodox belonged to different jurisdictions, first, the Serbian Church (mainly Czechs), the Russian (Moscow Patriarchate), the Russian Abroad and several parishes of the Church of Constantinople. Such a striped line caused interfaith controversy. Under these conditions, an autocephalist movement began on the part of the Czech Orthodox. It took place peacefully, through meetings, negotiations, and the dialogues with interested parties. On June 27, 1945, the Orthodox delegation was received by the President E. Benes. At the meeting, they discussed the main issue of organizing the Czech Orthodox Church and obtaining autocephaly. The President noted that the issue is not political and the church is free in its structure. At the same time, he warned that it would be desirable "to support the great Eastern Russian Church" (Burega).

Negotiations began with the hierarchy of the Serbian and Russian Orthodox Churches. Already in October, the delegation from the Moscow Patriarchate, headed by Archbishop Photius (Topiro) of Orel and Bryansk, visited the Czech Republic. In the speech he uttered, he said the following in particular: "Due to the fact that some point to the desirability of autocephaly for the Czech Orthodox Church, I consider it is my duty to clarify that, in principle, every independent country has a potential right to the autocephaly of its Church" (5). The issue of autocephaly began to be discussed actively in both church and secular circles. The hierarchy interacted with the Government, in particular with the Office for Church Affairs. At one of its meetings, it was reported that the idea was also supported by the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR.

On December 8, 1951, the Czechoslovak Orthodox Church became autocephalous. On this day, the Church Council took place, at which the Act of the of autocephaly granting to the Czechoslovak Orthodox Church by the Russian Orthodox Church was read. However, for some time autocephaly was not recognized by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and several Greek churches of Ecumenical Orthodoxy. It was considered autonomous since 1923. And only on August 27, 1998, the Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople issued the "Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos on the Granting of Autocephaly to the Holy Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia".

The movement towards autocephaly in Poland was not simple and took place in a special way. Let us notice right away that it has become extremely socially conditioned and politicized.

At the beginning of the western territory loss by the Russian Empire, there were about 4 million Orthodox Christians in Poland, most of them Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, who were under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. After gaining independence, the Polish government put forward the idea of an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland, that is, its withdrawal from the jurisdiction of the Russian

Church. If you follow the canons and traditions, it was necessary to turn to it. However, negotiations began with the hierarchy of the Constantinople Patriarchate. Metropolitanate was proposed. Then, through diplomatic channels, they turned to the Patriarch Tikhon. His Holiness Vladyka proposed the exarchate as a transitional stage to autocephaly. He hinted that the Polish people should also take part in the movement towards it. Then the negotiations with Phanar continued. Thus, the representatives of the Polish government bought autocephaly for the Polish Church from the Patriarchs of Constantinople. The historian A.A. Chibisova encloses archival financial documents to a recently published article, which cite considerable sums spent by the Polish government for autocephaly provision (2).

At the end of 1924, the Patriarch of Constantinople gave his blessing for the autocephaly of the Polish Church. The following year, the corresponding Tomos was handed over to it. The Moscow Patriarchate saw this as an interference in his affairs, refused to recognize the autocephaly of the Polish Orthodox Church. Other churches have recognized it. Only in 1948, at the request of the Synod of Orthodox Bishops of Poland, the Moscow Patriarchate declared the Constantinople grant of autocephaly in 1924 invalid and issued its own Declaration of Autocephaly.

4. New autocephalies, not recognized by all in Ecumenical Orthodoxy. Nowadays, these include the Orthodox Church in America. Already during the nineteenth century the religious situation was characterized by a pronounced poly-confessionalism on the American continent, especially in the United States. First, thanks to the religious freedom declared by the state. From the turn of the XVIII-XIX centuries, the Russian Orthodox mission begins in Alaska and the adjacent islands, which later reached California. And by the twentieth century and then Orthodoxy spread throughout the continent. There were also jurisdictions for other churches of Ecumenical Orthodoxy, including Constantinople. The latter, after the past World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, lost most of its parishes in the former territories, especially in Turkey. In such conditions, the patriarchs turned their gaze to the Orthodox diasporas in the world, including America. Archbishop Meletius (the future patriarch Meletius IV) was sent there. He reunited the Greek parishes and formed the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in North America. And already after enthronement, he set the task of subordination to his jurisdiction not only Greek, but all Orthodox jurisdictions in North America. However, Meletius was not able to carry out the task.

The unification process was led by the Russian Orthodox Church on its canonical territory in America. Since the 1920-ies till the 1960-ies, its jurisdictions were in a fragmented state, and some were in a split. The Mother Church and the Metropolitan District, which was sometimes referred to as the Orthodox Church in America, had abnormal canonical relations to the beginning of the autocephalist movement.

At a bilateral meeting in March 1970, Metropolitan Irenaeus presented the petition addressed to Patriarch Alexy I for Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov), and then the chairman of the DECR of the Moscow Patriarchate. The petition said that the Russian Orthodox Church grant autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America. On April 13, 1970, the Patriarch Alexy I signed the Synodal Tomos on canonical grounds granting autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America. However, the new autocephalous church, which has existed for 50 years, has not received recognition yet by the Patriarchate of Constantinople and several Greek churches - it is considered autonomous. During the days before the signing of the Tomos, Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople and some primates of the Greek churches pointed out the illegality of

their actions in the letters to Patriarch Alexy I and then to Patriarch Pimen (Izvekov). By the way, the Russian Orthodox Church has enlisted the support of the party and state apparatus in this important matter. The Doctor of Historical Sciences O.Yu. Vasilieva notes that the actions of Patriarch Athenagor were discussed in the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Citing a fragment from a party document that the letter from Phanar "only demonstrated once again the intention of the Patriarch of Constantinople to establish the Orthodox Church in America under his jurisdiction without any canonical argumentation", the historian concludes: "The secular authorities understood the situation in their own way, but in the same vein as the church authorities" (6). The Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), which received the Tomos on January 5, 2019, is not recognized by all the churches of Ecumenical Orthodoxy. Without a doubt, the document can be called Porashenko-Bartholomewian.

Its main authors were the President of Ukraine P. Porashenko and the Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. The interchurch conflict that began at the end of the last century in Ukraine - the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church - continues.

5. Not recognized by all the churches of Ecumenical Orthodoxy. There are many of them, especially at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. The reasons are different - internal and external (socially determined). The associations position themselves with Orthodoxy, recognizing the Nicene-Constantinople Creed. However, having chosen self-heading in a non-canonical way, they do not fall under the jurisdiction of any Local Orthodox Church. Their geography is extensive: Russia, the Balkans, and the American continent.

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the autocephalist movement can be defined as the process in which any part of the Local Orthodox Church (Mother Church) seeks to gain independent leadership over its part, to become an independent autocephalous church. As the study shows, the process can drag on for many years, creating conflict situations. Even though autocephalist movements are internal church processes, the representatives from the secular environment often take part in them, right up to the power structures. The representatives of the latter do not always play a positive role in overcoming the conflict, but, on the contrary, aggravate it. In this respect, civil authorities should always remember the principle of religious association separation from the state, fixed in legislative acts (these states were discussed in our study). From a religious perspective, the intra-church reason for the emergence of autocephalist movements is also revealed. As you know, the church institution is characterized by conservatism. The canons by the provisions of which the churches of Ecumenical Orthodoxy are arranged, were approved at the Ecumenical Councils (4-8 centuries). However, the Church lives in a changing society and it cannot comply with all the approved rules. In the world of changing state borders, autocephalist movements arise most often. In this regard, there is a problem of approving the emerging autocephaly within the Ecumenical Orthodoxy. As can be seen from our research, the Patriarch of Constantinople (since ancient times referred to as "the first among equals") makes a claim to such a statement. The representatives of several Local Churches, including the Russian one, disagree with this. The problem of autocephaly approval must be solved without delay, otherwise difficulties will

constantly arise in resolving the issues of autocephalist movements. Finally, the most important thing is that the autocephalist movements did not reach interchurch conflicts. Much here depends on the decisions of the hierarchy of churches and the representatives of civil authorities, on their ability to conduct a dialogue.

## SUMMARY

Summarizing, let us say a few words about the future of autocephalist movements. However, this is one of the very difficult issues in church unity problem solution. The most important thing is that autocephalist movements do not reach interchurch conflicts. Much here depends on the decisions of the hierarchy of churches and the representatives of civil authorities, on their ability to conduct a dialogue.

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7. A.N. Leshchinsky was born on September 4, 1941 in Zagorsk, Mosc. region (Russia). He graduated from the Ivanovo State Pedagogical Institute. He is an expert in the philosophy of religion and religious studies. He works at ISFNiMK KFU, Professor of the Department of Religious Studies.
8. Yu.D. Smirnova was born on January 23, 1988 in the city of Cheboksary (Republic of Chuvashia). She graduated from Kazan Federal University, finished the postgraduate study at Kazan Federal University, the field of experience 09.00.14, PhD in Philosophy. She works at ISFNiMK KFU as the Senior Lecturer at the Department of Religious Studies. Research interests: politics of memory, religious anthropology, social philosophy.