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LIQUIDATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE RENOVATIONIST CHURCH IN DONBASS AND PERSECUTIONS OF ITS CLERGY IN 1929–1937

During 1920s – 1930s the organized structures of the Orthodox Church throughout the USSR and Ukraine, in particular, were liquidated with a focus on implementing the anti-religious policy of the state by the purposeful measures of the Soviet party leadership. According to the results of the “Godless Five-Year Plan” (1932–1937), only one active parish remained in the Luhansk region prior to the beginning of the German-Soviet War (Forostiuk, 2004, p. 29), when the Nazi occupation power, given the centuries-old nature of the religiosity of the peoples of the Soviet Union made an attempt to use this factor to gain loyalty amongst the local population.

Nowadays, there is a widespread opinion about the exclusively provocative, inspired by the Soviet special services, nature of the emergence and activity of the Renovationist movement in the Orthodox Church, which became one of the key factors in the division of the latter, and afterwards, the subsequent destruction of the weakened, organizationally separated currents of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy. In return, avoiding the biasin understanding of the historical process, we believe that the Renovationist movement was a desperate attempt of the national church reformation, the ideological base of which was formed on the basis of a deep need to solve pressing issues of the Orthodox Church, and that the Renovationist clergy themselves suffered no less persecution than other organizations in the USSR.

The history of the Renovationist Synodal Church of Ukraine, and more so the problem of regulating state-church relations on the territory of Ukraine, are presented in the works of a number of national historians and religion scholars, in particular G. Bilan (Bilan, 2005), O. Boyko (Boyko, 2003), S. Zhilyuk (Zhilyuk, 2002), V. Pashchenko (Pashchenko, 1993), O. Ignatusha (Ignatusha, 2008), A. Kiridon (Pashchenko & Kiridon, 2004), O. Sagan (Sagan, 2004), O. Trigub (Trigub, 2009) etc. The first fundamental attempt to study the history of the organized Orthodox denominations in the Donbass is anexploration of a Lugansk legal expert and religion scholar O. Forostiuk (Forostiuk, 1999; 2000; 2004).

Foreign writings of the metropolitan historians Theodosius (Protsyuk) (Protsyuk, 2004) and Ioan (Snichev) (Snichev, 1993, 2013) still occupy a prominent place in the church historiography shedding light on the key events and providing a general description of the church movements in Ukraine, both of the interwar and the German occupation periodin particular. There are works dedicated to highlightingthe historical circumstances and personalities around the issue of heredity of the highest church authority, further institutionalization and activity of disparate Orthodox denominations, oppositional to the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate. Those are works of direct participants of the church dissidence in the USSR, such as L. Regelson "Tragedy of the Russian Church of 1917-1953" (Regelson, 2007), A. Levitin-Krasnov and V. Shavrov "Essays on the History of the Russian Church Troubles" (Levitin-Krasnov & Shavrov, 1996), containing quotations from unique documentary sources, information about the episcopate of different denominations and a description of individual personalities and events that took place, in particular, in Ukraine. An important source of the biographical information on the Renovationist clergy in the Soviet Union are the monographs of Russian researchers: archpriest V. Lavrynov (Lavrynov, 2007; 2017) and priest I. Solovyov (Solovyov, 2002). However, these works are marked by the conventions of confessional perception, they do not exhaust the completeness of the task we outlined and have inaccuracies, elimination of which requires introduction of additional new sources on the topic.

Therefore, the subject of the proposed study is the anti-religious measures of the Soviet authorities regarding the Renovationist church in the Donbas, which envisages solving following research tasks: firstly, to identify the ideological and socio-political reasons for the emergence of the Renovationist movement; secondly, to find out the circumstances of the closure of the key parishes in the region; thirdly, to trace the course of the persecutionsof the leading hierarchs andthe rest of the clergy of the local Renovationist eparchies. The chronological boundaries of the study cover the period from the beginning of the active phase of the anti-religious campaign in the USSR in 1929 to the abolition of the last eparchial administration of the Synodal Church in Donbass in 1937.

The article`s aim is to restore a picture of the liquidation of organized structures and persecutions against the key representatives of the Ukrainian Synodal Church in Donbass in 1929–1937 on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of historical sources and scientific literature.

The ideological design of the Renovationist movement in the Orthodox Church dates back to the Pre-Council Presence in 1906. However, since the first experience of open discussion of internal church problems, possible reforms and attempts to normalize parish life in accordance with the challenges of the era remained unrealized in the All-Russian Council in 1917 – 1918, in the community of the Orthodox Church formed a separate layer of scholarly church opposition, consisting mainly of representatives of ordinary

married clergy and professors of religious educational establishments, whose participation in the management of church affairs was minimal in accordance with the canonical norms in force.

The ideological basis of the institutional segregation of the Renovationist movement was formed by the famous Soviet party activist Lev Trotsky in March 1922. Experienced theorist L. Trotsky rightly noted that in the absence of reformation in the Russian Orthodox Church against the background of the formation of Soviet power gradually emerged loyal "Soviet" clergy movement, which was planned to be used to eliminate the power of the old-time episcopate and to conduct a reformation under the Soviet flag (Zapiska, 2004, p. 108). The organization of the church revolution was directly linked to the seizure of church valuables during the terrible famine in the country in 1921, which was creating the possibility of discrediting the episcopate. At the same time, L. Trotsky stressed that the Soviet clergy poses perhaps the greatest threat to the future of labor society, since it will have wide opportunities for entering the masses of people, which is why it was decided to create a sound theoretical and ideological base against the reformed Church (Zapiska, 2004, p. 108).

The fate of the Renovationist clergy was predetermined by its future patrons: upon reaching the church divide, seizing valuables and discrediting the highest hierarchy, the Renovationists had to share the fate of all enemies of the new political regime. Instead, in our view, representatives of the Renovationist clergy, saw in cooperation with the Soviet authorities their historic chance of carrying out church reforms, since the support of secular power had been an important factor in implementing church reforms since the time of the Ecumenical Councils.

A new active wave of anti-religious activities of the Soviet party and punitive agencies was carried out in parallel with the industrialization process under the First Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of USSR in 1928 – 1932, and began in January – April 1929. In 1932 by the Union of the Godlesswas declared the beginning of the “Godless Five–Year Plan” intended to "forget the name of God" in the USSR by May 1, 1937. Among the first victims of the new state policy in the field of religion wereeparchies of the loyal to the Soviet rule Synodal Church.

In 1929, local activists requested the closure of St. Nicholas and Kazan cathedrals in Lugansk, the Cathedral of Intercession in Starobilsk, and other key parishes of the Synodal Church in the Donbass. The NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) leadership had not yet allowed the large scale closure of the Synodal Church parishes, especially in the district centers, as it could have led to a collapse of the eparchial administrations and, as a consequence, early transition of the Renovationists from loyalty to hostility (Forostiuk, 2000, p. 130).

The leadership of the Synodal Church appealed to the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (hereinafter referred to as AUCEC) asking not

to close the Pokrovsky Cathedral of Starobilsk, as this could catastrophically affect the position of the denomination in the district (Forostiuk, 2000, p. 126). Besides, the condition of the vacant Renovationist Starobilskeparchy was since November 1928 perhaps the best in the territory of the former Donetsk province. On May 15, 1929, massive protests took place in Starobilsk over the closure of the antique Pokrovsky Cathedral. 400 people, led by the elder of the parish Mishunov, who gathered near the district administration house, demanded returning the church to them (Forostiuk, 2000, p. 128). However, despite the active efforts of the All-Ukrainian Synod, a unique monument of Slobozhanshchina architecture of the late 18th century, ancient Pokrovsky Cathedral, was closed that same year, and in 1933 it was blown up (Forostiuk, 1999, p. 78). Since 1930, the Starobilsk eparchial administration has been de facto abolished.

Officials of Bakhmut (later Artemivsk), the administrative center of Donetsk province, and later the Artemivsk district, where a large number of parishes were liquidated, including the leading communities of the local Synodal Church eparchy, were particularly fervent ineradicating the religion. In 1929, by the decision of the party and executive authorities, the Annunciation Church of the city was closed (Tatarinov & Ruban, 2017, p. 220), and in the autumn of 1931 the ancient Trinity Cathedral of the city, a monument of architecture of 18th century was closed “in public” (Ruban & Tatarinov, 2017, p. 51).

In the early 1930s, an active wave of liquidating communitiescovered the Stalinoeparchy. Relatively new however magnificent Transfiguration Cathedral (Stalino) and Trinity Cathedral (Makiyivka) were closed and subsequently destroyed.

On March 26, 1930, during the election campaign, the Mariupol City Council Presidium adopted Ordinance No. 1173 on the closure of Kharlampyev Cathedral with the subsequent use of the building as a radio node (Tatarinov & Ruban, 2017, p. 222). Meanwhile, the cathedra of the Mariupol Renovationist eparchy was relocated to the All-Holy Cemetery Church (Lavrynov, 2017, p. 481). In April 1937, the dome of Kharlampyev Cathedral was blown up, which was recorded on film by local activists (Tatarinov & Ruban, 2017, p. 223).

In Lugansk, on December 9, 1929, the Presidium of the City Council granted the request of 40500 workers for the closure of St. Nicholas Cathedral, and as soon as on December 13, this decision was approved by the Presidium of the AUCEC. On December 29, 1929, the church building was sealed and thereafter usedfor testing aircraft engines until its destruction in 1935 (Forostiuk, 1999, p. 20).

In 1935 the local authorities managed to find a formal reason for closing the Kazan Cathedral of the Lugansk eparchy. In May 1935, another anti-religious campaign was launched by the Union of the Godless, which called for an end to the "stalls selling religious dope in revolutionary order-

bearer Lugansk" (Forostiuk, 1999, p. 16). Anti-religious postcards were distributed in the city, and later on, the collection of signatures for the elimination of "obscurantist priestlyfocal points" began (Forostiuk, 1999, p. 16). By the decision of the Presidium of the Lugansk City Council of June 2, 1935, the agreement with the Kazan community was terminated, because by the time of celebration of May 1 the cathedral building was not whitewashed, the roof was not painted and the fence was not repaired. In October 1935 the Kazan Cathedral, the last powerful parish of the Synodal Church in action in the Luhansk district, was closed. In 1936, the Lugansk eparchy, shortly before renamed into the Voroshilovgrad eparchy, was liquidated and its last bishop – Metropolitan Anatoly (Sokolov) transferred to the Kostroma eparchy (Lavrynov, 2017, p. 107).

Due to the closure of Mariupol Harlampiyev Cathedral in January 1935, the local cathedra was moved to the All-Holy Cemetery Church. At the same time, the Mariupol eparchial administration was liquidated, and bishop Raphael (Prozorovsky), until the time of his arrest, was acting as the dean of the last Renovationist parish of the All-Holy Church, which became part of the Stalinoeparchy (Lavrynov, 2017, p. 481). In October 1935, the former dean of the Kazan Cathedral of the Lugansk eparchy, priest Arseniy Gusev, was transferred with the blessing of Joachim (Puhalsky), bishop of Stalino, to Mariupol All-Holy Church (Forostiuk, 2000, p. 136).

Almost all hierarchs and most clergy of the Synodal Church became victims of persecutions. On June 24, 1938, the first bishop of the Donetsk eparchy, metropolitan Andriy (Odintsov), who since 1936 had lived in retirement in Novomoskovsk, was arrested on charges of leading a counter-revolutionary organization of churchmen. On July 4, 1939, the 78-year-old hierarch was sentenced to 7 years in prison (Tereshchenko, 2009, p. 561). On February 9, 1938, by the resolution of the Troika of the NKVD Office of the USSR in the Voronezh region, the first bishop of Starobilsk (later Archbishop of Artemivsk), Alexander (Migulin), was sentenced to death (Lavrynov, 2017, p. 60). The verdict was executed on February 25, 1938. On May 8, 1938, by the resolution of the Troika Office of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR in the Kiev region, the long-time head of the Starobilsk eparchy, archbishop Meletii (Fomin), was sentenced to death. The sentence was enforced on May 16, 1938 in Kyiv (Rehabilitated, 2007, p. 149).

On September 28, 1937, by a resolution of the Troika of the NKVD Office of the USSR in the Odessa region on charges of counter-revolutionary activity, the long-time head of the eparchy of Mariupol, archbishop Ambrose (Nagorsky) was sentenced to 10 years in forced-labour camps (Trigub, 121, 2009). On October 10, 1937, by the resolution of the Troika of theNKVD Office of the Ukrainian SSR in the Donetsk region, the last archbishop of Mariupol, Raphael (Prozorovsky), was sentenced to death with the confiscation of property (Rehabilitated, 2009, p. 428).

The first bishop of Lugansk Yuriy (Prokopovich) was also arrested and died in prison afterwards (Martyrology, 1987, p. 1018). On April 15, 1938, by the decision of the Troika of the NKVD Office of the Ukrainian SSR in the Kharkiv region on charges of anti-Soviet activity directed against the measures of the party and the government, the last dean of the Kazan Cathedral of the Luhansk eparchy, priest Arsenii Gusev, was capitally convicted with the confiscation of the property (Rehabilitated, 2015, p. 567). January 11, 1940 the former bishop of Lugansk Vladimir Kovin was sent into exile to Krasnoyarsk region for 5 years by the Decree of the Special Meeting of the NKVD of the USSR for participation in the anti-Soviet organization's activities (Rehabilitated, 2014, p. 371).

At the end of 1937, the last in the Donbass was liquidated the eparchy of Stalino. The fate of the last archbishop of Stalino Joakim (Puchalsky) is unknown. He was retiredon December 14, 1937, however, by many scholars this date is considered to be the date of the hierarch's arrest (Lavrynov, 2017, p. 267; Tatarinov & Ruban, 2017, p. 215).

Therefore, in order to implement the anti-religious state policy of the Soviet authorities, all organized structures of the eparchies of the Synodal Church in Donbass were completely eliminated by active measures of the local party leadership. It is worth noting that the parishes and clergy of the Renovationist Synodal Church underwent significant destruction and as of today they constitute a wide layer of unjustly forgotten due to the denominational confrontations of the sufferers for faith in the bloody years of brutal persecution of the 1930s. As local party activists sought to eradicate the very mention of the historical continuity of Orthodoxy, reflected in numerous historical monuments of the region, priceless antiquechurches, monasteries and their sacristiesbecame atremendousvictim of the era of developed socialism in Donbass and some of them were forever lost to future generations.

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Рубан М. Ю. Ліквідація організаційної структури та репресії проти обновленської Церкви на Донбасі 1929 – 1937

У статті здійснено спробу дослідити обставини ліквідації організаційних структур та репресій проти духовенства Української Православної Автокефальної Синодальної (обновленської) Церкви. Визначено ідеологічні та соціально-політичні передумови виникнення обновленського руху на території колишньої Російської імперії. Простежено хід закриття ключових обновленських громад на Донбасі. Висвітлено обставини довкола репресій провідних ієрархів та представників рядового духовенства місцевих єпархій Синодальної Церкви.

Ключові слова: Православ'я, обновленський рух, Донбас, Українська Православна Автокефальна Синодальна Церква, антирелігійна політика, репресії.

Рубан Н. Ю. Ликвидация организационной структуры и репресии против духовенства обновленческой Церкви на Донбассе 1929–1937

В статье предпринята попытка исследовать обстоятельства ликвидации организационной структуры и репрессий против духовенства Украинской Православной Автокефальной Синодальной (обновленческой) Церкви. Определены идеологические и социально-

политические предпосылки возникновения обновленческого движения на территории бывшей Российской империи. Прослежен ход закрытия ключевых обновленческих общин на Донбассе. Освещены обстоятельства репрессий ведущих иерархов и представителей рядового духовенства местных епархий Синодальной Церкви.

Ключевые слова: Православие, обновленческое движение, Донбасс, Украинская Православная Автокефальная Синодальная Церковь, антирелигиозная политика, репрессии.

Ruban M. Y. Liquidation of the organizatinal structure of the Renovationist Church in Donbass and persecutions of its clergy in 1929 – 1937

The historical circumstancesof the organizational development of the Renovatonist movement in the Orthodox Church in Donbass still remains one of the less investigated pages of the Ukrainian Local Church history. Despite the fact thatthe problem of Ukrainian church history of the interwar period has been studied by many researchers, a large number of questions exist which require elaboration. Nowadays on the basis of the earlier unknown material it is possible to expand the general picture of the mentioned events. That`s why the main purpose of the article is to figure out the circumstances of the liquidation of the organizational structure of the Renovationist Church and persecution against its clergy in Donbass during the first decades of the Soviet rule in Ukraine.

The originality of the article involves an attempt to research the events of Donbass church history without traditional historicalclichés, and in this case all the trends of Ukrainian church life of that time should be considered. In our strong opinion, ignoring the deep needs of interecclesiastic life normalization led to a church split. With help of the atheistic government the Renovationist movement achieved its institutional organization. That was the main cause of the slow development pace of the reformationally oriented Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Synodal Church.

The fate of the Renovationist clergy was predetermined by its future patrons: upon reaching the church divide, seizing valuables and discrediting the higher hierarchy, the Renovationists had to share the fate of all enemies of the new political regime. Instead, the representatives of the Renovationist clergy saw in cooperation with the Soviet authorities their historic chance of implementing church reforms.

After the church division and fierce inter-denominational confrontation of the separate parts of Ukrainian Orthodoxy were reached, all organized structures of the eparchies of the Synodal Church in Donbass were liquidated. Today, the purged hierarchs and members of the ordinary clergy of the Renovationist Church make up a broad stratum of the unjustly forgotten as a result of the denominational strife of the sufferers for faith in the bloody years of brutal persecution of the 1930s.

In conclusion it`s worth mentioning that nowadays the researching of Donbass church history of the interwar period is complicated by the difficult political situation in the region. Unfortunately, the material of the Lugansk and Donetsk archives is unavailable for Ukrainian researches, but gradual actualization of this problem makes the strong prospects for its fast research in future.

Key words: Orthodoxy, Renovationistmovement, Donbass, Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Synodal Church, anti-religiouspolicy, persecution.

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