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WARSAW COUNCIL OF THE UKRAINIAN AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF 1944 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Abstract. *The purpose of the research* is to cover the causes, course and consequences of the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) in 1944 on the basis of the source base and historiographical work. **The methodology of the research** is based on the principles of historicism, systematization, scientificity, verification, authorial objectivity, moderate narrative constructivism, as well as the use of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization) and special historical (historical genetic, historical typological, historical systemic) methods. **The scientific novelty** of the obtained results is determined by the fact that for the first time in domestic and foreign historiography the key decisions of the UAOC Council of 1944 were analyzed, as well as the unpublished archival documents and materials, which were introduced into the scientific circulation. **The Conclusions.** Nine hierarchs took part in the work of the Warsaw Council of the

Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which established the Synod and adopted the Provisional Regulations on the Administration of the Church. The complexity of the Orthodox hierarchy position in exile was exacerbated by several objective circumstances. First of all, the external factors were unfavorable, which related to the German government. The UAOC episcopate in exile did not allow anybody to organize the Orthodox Ukrainians' church life, concentrated the clergy in one place artificially and forced inaction for more than a year and a half. According to documents, the German officials supported it in the struggle for leadership in the UAOC. Second of all, the Orthodox bishops' low level of education, who were often secular or inexperienced priests, was noticeable. Furthermore, there were diverse reasons, for example, constant internal disputes, different visions of the Church development ways outside Ukraine, interpersonal conflicts that provoked future divisions in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the diaspora. Third of all, the Warsaw Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in 1944 limited itself to the half-hearted decisions on its canonical status and postponed its settlement until the end of the war.

Key words: Orthodox Church, autocephaly, Council of Bishops, hierarchy.

ВАРШАВСЬКИЙ СОБОР УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ АВТОКЕФАЛЬНОЇ ПРАВОСЛАВНОЇ ЦЕРКВИ 1944 р. ТА ЙОГО НАСЛІДКИ

Анотація. Мета дослідження – на основі джерельної бази та історіографічного доробку висвітлити причини, перебіг і наслідки проведення Собору єпископів Української Автокефальної Православної Церкви (УАПЦ) в 1944 р. **Методологія дослідження** спирається на принципи історизму, системності, науковості, верифікації, авторської об'єктивності, поміркованого нарративного конструктивізму, а також на використання загальнонаукових (аналіз, синтез, узагальнення) та спеціально-історичних (історико-генетичний, історико-типологічний, історико-системний) методів. **Наукова новизна** одержаних результатів визначається тим, що вперше у вітчизняній і закордонній історіографії проаналізовано ключові рішення Собору УАПЦ 1944 р., а також упроваджено до наукового обігу неопубліковані архівні документи та матеріали. **Висновки.** У роботі Варшавського Собору УАПЦ взяли участь дев'ять ієрархів, котрі створили Синод й ухвалили Тимчасове положення про управління Церквою. Складність становища православної ієрархії в еміграції посилювалася кількома об'єктивними обставинами. По-перше, несприятливими були зовнішні фактори, пов'язані з німецькою владою. Понад півтора року перебування єпископату УАПЦ на еміграції вона не дозволяла йому займатися організацією церковного життя православних українців, штучно концентрувала духовенство в одному місці та примусовій бездіяльності. Як свідчать документи, німецькі урядовці підтримували його в боротьбі за лідерство в УАПЦ. По-друге, давався взнаки низький рівень освіти православних єпископів, які часто були світськими особами або недостатньо досвідченими священниками. Постійні внутрішні суперечки, різне бачення шляхів розвитку Церкви поза межами України, міжособистісні конфлікти провокували майбутні розколи в українському православ'ї в діаспорі. По-третє, Варшавський Собор єпископів УАПЦ 1944 р. обмежився половинчастими рішеннями щодо її канонічного статусу й відклав його урегулювання до завершення війни.

Ключові слова: Православна Церква, автокефалія, Собор єпископів, ієрархія.

The Problem Statement. The religious factor had a powerful influence not only on the spiritual life of Ukraine, but also on the Ukrainian nation-building and state-building processes. Such kind of infer can be made due to the evidence, in particular, the synchronicity of the intensification of the autocephalous movement in Orthodoxy and the national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people. During World War II, the Orthodox Church was persecuted by both the Communist and the Nazi totalitarian regimes severely. The Autocephaly, which was never officially proclaimed, was seen by the leaders of the National Church Movement as an instrument of the Ukrainian people's de-imperialization and spiritual liberation. The offensive operations of the Red Army and the expulsion of the invaders from Ukraine forced part of the Orthodox clergy, especially the episcopate, to evacuate to the West. The hierarchs,

who were forced to cooperate with the occupiers, were afraid of repression by the Soviet authorities rightly. At the same time, the German factors continued to view the Church as a potential means of moral and psychological influence on the Ukrainian population and the anti-communist propaganda instrument.

The Analysis of Sources and Recent Researches. The works written by I. Vlasovskiy, S. Savchuk and Y. Mulyk-Lutsyk, V. Pashchenko, O. Lysenko, Y. Voloshyn, V. Hordiyenko, N. Stokolos and Father Tymofiy Minenko and other authors were vital for the history of Orthodoxy study during the Second World War. The newly discovered source materials by the authors of this article make it possible to reveal in more detail the circumstances of the Warsaw Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in 1944.

The Publication's Purpose. The authors set out to highlight the preconditions, course and consequences of the Council.

The Main Material Statement. According to the sources of the occupation administration, as well as the Nazis decision, Warsaw became a place of the Orthodox clergy concentration from Ukraine, both autocephalous and autonomous (Raporty, 1987, p. 722, 751). At the same time, the Nazi authorities treated the emigrant bishops as the "government's guests" and planned to use them in the anti-Soviet propaganda (Sziling, 1988, p. 91). In addition, all of them, together with their relatives and friends, were under Metropolitan of Warsaw Dionysius Valedynsky's care. The total number of the Orthodox hierarchs from the East and their entourage was about 200 in June 1944. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church representatives were given the opportunity to use the central Metropolitan Cathedral of Saint Mary Magdalene in Prague for the worship, where the Ukrainian parish operated and was headed by Archpriest Pavel Pashchevskiy from Volyn. At the same time, the autonomists were offered a less prestigious cemetery church of Saint John Climacus in Wola district (Warsaw) (AAN, RGG, sygn. 430, p. 53; Heyer, 1953, p. 223). As a result, living together in Warsaw exacerbated the intra-church conflicts between Bishops, who had different political orientations, levels of education, and spirituality. In addition, most of them had great ambitions.

The first emigration Council of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, chaired by Metropolitan Polycarp Sikorskiy, was held in Warsaw from the 11th of March to the 8th of April in 1944. It was attended by nine hierarchs, who established the Synod and adopted the "Temporary Regulations on the Administration of the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church" (Vlasovsky, 1998, pp. 273–274; Smyrnov, 2019, p. 401).

Due to the newly discovered meetings' protocols, it was possible to reproduce the course of the Council and the decisions taken at it. During the first meeting on the 11th of March in 1944, Metropolitan Polycarp "sincerely called on all members of the Council to unite, show solidarity and avoid such statements that could bring unrest and damage the work of the Council" (AWMP, sygn. 1151-RII-6D). Obviously, such fears of the chairman were not unfounded, as during the subsequent meetings among the bishops various misunderstandings arose repeatedly. The technical secretaries' duties were performed by lawyer Ye. Tyravskiy, as well as priests Yu. Shumovskiy and B. Yakovkevych. On the same day, the Commissions were set up to draft a declaration to the authorities and a draft conciliar message. Two days later, the Council approved a draft declaration of the episcopate to the German authorities, authored by Bishops Mstyslav and Polycarp.

At the regular meeting of Bishops held on the 21st of March in 1944, the Council of Bishops presidium establishment issue was considered. Bishop Mstyslav suggested that Metropolitan Polycarp could be considered the future Council of Bishops Chairman, and

insisted on the need to elect a secretary of the Council from among the bishops, rather than the technical staff. The hierarchs agreed with the proposals and elected Archbishops Ihor and Hennadyi as the Council Vice-Presidents, and Bishop Plato as Secretary. Bishops Sylvester and Mstyslav drew attention to the importance of forming a Synod, which should consist of three bishops. It was decided to elect a commission consisting of Bishops Mstyslav, Sylvester and Plato to work out a detailed project for the organization of the Synod and the Chancellery of the Council. In addition, an important issue for him was the financial situation discussion concerning the evacuated Ukrainian clergy. As the participants of the meeting were aware of their inability to take care of all refugee clerics and members of their families, it was decided to ask the German authorities for help with housing, money, food, clothing and footwear. The preparation of a special memorial was entrusted to Archimandrite Dosipheus. The future chancellery of the Council was to register them, and “the future Synod will take care of assigning the evacuated clergy to pastoral work in the implementation of spiritual and religious care for the faithful, refugees from Ukraine, as well as hindering the clergy, who need better pastoral training” (AWMP, sygn. 1151-RII-6D).

At the same time, Bishop Mstyslav was instructed to work out a draft memorial to the German administration for the spiritual and religious care of the Ukrainian workers in Germany, which he did not develop for unknown reasons. In addition, during the meeting, the Bishop noted that “Warsaw does not seem to respond to the residence of Ukrainian Bishops: the lack of adequate facilities for bishops and their scattering throughout the city and the inability not only to send but also to attend services and other”. All members of the Council agreed with the above-mentioned opinion and decided to instruct Bishop Mstyslav to “start talks with the German authorities on the issue of changing the location of the Ukrainian episcopate, for which to issue him a letter of authority” (AWMP, sygn. 1151-RII-6D).

On the 23rd of March in 1944, Bishop Mstyslav announced that he had a conversation with the head of the church affairs department in the government of the Governor-General in Krakow, Dr. G. A. Wilden, who decided to consult with official Berlin and asked to write a letter from the UAOC to the authorities. The need for the resettlement of the clergy was also recognized by the Warsaw occupation authorities: “Given the various political and religious influences, Warsaw does not seem to be a proper place for the fugitive bishops. It would be more desirable to move the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church fugitive Bishops to a more remote place” (Raporty, 1987, p. 770). The Council approved and sent a memorial to the Governor-General requesting another location, such as Carlsbad, but the problem was not resolved (UHECA, UAOC records, box 2, folder 4). The Council also approved a draft memorial for the clergy’s financial aid, supplementing it with a request to facilitate communication with the evacuated clergy in the Governor-General’s Office and in Germany.

According to the protocol of Part 5 issued on the 24th of March in 1944, the Commission headed by Bishop Hennadyi proposed for consideration to the episcopate a draft of the conciliar archpastoral message “To the Reverend Clergy, Devout Monasticism and God-Loving Faithful in Ukraine and Beyond Ukraine” approvals were sent for approval to the German authorities to obtain permission for distribution (AWMP, sygn. 1151-RII-6D). In the appeal, the Council called on the faithful to be courageous and keep their faith in the face of a new Bolshevik offensive. “The destiny of the Cross, which has come to You again, our Long-suffering People, filled our hearts with sorrow, because we know that faith in God will again be the cause of persecution and persecution by atheist communists, which for 23 years they closed Your holy churches, turned them into clubs, theaters, cinemas, or even destroyed

them altogether; the relics of saints, insults and other Christian saints were publicly despised; all Christian shrines were abolished; they accused You of all kinds of infidel-blasphemous magazines-books, and forbade all kinds of religious publications; introduced anti-religious upbringing of young people, brutally persecuted all religiously inclined...”.

The Council of Bishops, continuing to take care of the clergy and being the faithful to the UAOC, called on them to pray with constant prayers “...merciful Lord, to stop punishing us for our iniquities...”, to be ready at the right time to defend Mother Ukraine, to gather around “...of its Ukrainian Church, which would unite the whole Ukrainian people into one with the concrete of spiritual unity”. In addition, the hierarchs asked not to believe the godless Bolshevik propaganda to ensure religious freedom, to inform the world community by all means about the threat posed by Communism to the Christian culture. The message ended up with the assurance that “...the Lord will not forget us to the end, that a miracle will happen and the Resurrection will come – Ukraine will be resurrected” (Zinkevych, Voronyn, 1987, pp. 765–769). It is symbolic that in the above-mentioned appeal, not a word was mentioned about A. Hitler or the German authorities, although without the occupying factors’ consent such messages did not appear. Probably, the pro-Nazi agitation of the Church was not so important for the Nazis as it was for the anti-communist agitation.

On the 25th of March, the Council of Bishops approved a draft memorial for the Orthodox refugees’ spiritual and religious care, prepared by Bishop Ihor. Addressing Governor-General H. Frank, the UAOC episcopate requested the following: “1. To allow the Ukrainian clergy to attend large gatherings of the Ukrainian refugees systematically to perform services and other religious services. 2. To assist the clergy in the means of communication. 3. To provide the Council of Bishops with information on the location of large clusters of the Ukrainian refugees” (UHECA, UAOC records, box 2, folder 4). However, the Nazi leaders were in no hurry to grant permission for the pastoral care of the Orthodox Ukrainians.

At the Council of Bishops, considerable attention was paid to the liturgical books’ translation and publication issues, the Ukrainian church songs revival, as well as the clergy education. The specially created commission was instructed to review the translations of the evening and early services, liturgy and other acts prepared by the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Warsaw.

In addition, a Statutory Commission consisting of Bishops Hennadiy, Sylvester, Mstyslav and Plato was set up to draft the UAOC Statute as a temporary act until the local Council was convened in case of return to Ukraine. At the meeting on the 30th of March, the Bishops continued to consider the drafts of the “Provisional Regulations on the Holy Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, the Synod and the Chancellery of the Holy Council”, developed by Bishops Mstyslav and Polycarp. It was decided that the Statutory Commission would work out and bring in a single version of the document for consideration. Apparently, there was initially only one project developed by Bishop Pereyaslavskiy, but it provoked a long discussion and apparently did not suit Metropolitan Polycarp. Taking advantage of M. Skrypyk’s absence due to illness, on the 4th of April P. Sikorskyi secured the adoption of his position. At the same time, there was a discussion among the Soborians about the correct usage of the word “autocephalous” in the name of the Church: “It was clarified that the Ukrainian Church actually has autocephaly and has been guided by this principle in its life, and later, when peace comes, with the help of God and the love of the Universal Orthodox Church it will legally enter the family of the Holy Autocephalous Churches as their full sister” (AWMP, sygn. 1151-RII-6D).

According to the “Provisional Regulations on the Administration of the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church”, the highest governing body of the local Council was the Council of Bishops, which consisted of all current bishops. The Metropolitan Administrator represented the UAOC in foreign relations and performed the duties provided for the first bishop of the region to the local Council. The executive body of the Council of Bishops was the Holy Synod, which consisted of the Metropolitan Administrator as the Council Chairman, his deputy, and three ruling Bishops, who were elected for one year. The Synod’s manager served as Secretary and Head of the Chancellery (UHECA, UAOC records, box 2, folder 4).

On the 6th of April in 1944, the people of Sobor approved the Council’s Easter message text, prepared by Bishops Ihor and Mstyslav. At the same meeting, the composition of the Synod as the executive body of the UAOC Council of Bishops was approved: Metropolitan Polycarp – Chairman, Archbishop – Hennadiy, Deputy Archbishops – Nikanor and Ihor, and Plato, who was later elected secretary. In addition, the participants of the Council expressed their gratitude to Metropolitan Dionysius and decided to commemorate his name by the bishops of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church during the services (AWMP, sygn. 1151-RII-6D).

Furthermore, Bishop Mstyslav Skrypnyk raised the issue concerning the status of vicar bishops and proposed to approve the granting of the title of archbishop to Bishops Mykhailo Khoroshyi and Hennadiy Shyprykevych at the end of the meeting. The Council decided that all Bishops should have the responsibilities of the rulers and responded positively to the second initiative. As a result, on the 8th of April in 1944, the Bishops completed their work by approving a draft memorial to the Governor-General concerning the spiritual and religious care of Ukrainian workers in Germany. After that, the Bishops together with the evacuated clergy celebrated a prayer of thanksgiving in Saint Mary Magdalene Cathedral.

As for the German authorities, they monitored the Orthodox Ukrainians’ life in Warsaw closely. A number of sources published by the Russian researcher M. Shkarovskyi clearly record the existence of two groups of bishops in the Church: Dionysius – Polycarp and Mstyslav. In particular, in a memorandum issued on the 15th of May in 1944, a German official wrote the following: “The opposition against Dionysius – Polycarp, led by Bishop Mstyslav, also seeks the independence and autonomy (autocephaly) of the Ukrainian Church. But it wants this in close agreement with the German government, as it expects the Ukrainian issue to be resolved only in Germany. Mstyslav believes that the issue of the canonical independent Ukrainian Church is of secondary importance. Moscow itself would have little reason to speak out with a canonical justification against the independence of the Ukrainian Church since at one time it also confronted Byzantium with a *fait accompli*. Only German consent is important in order to have the necessary support of the population. Mstyslav is sharply opposed to Moscow’s centralism, but advocates loyal communication with the Russian element in Ukraine” (Shkarovsky, 2003, pp. 106–107).

A note from the Ministry of the Occupied Eastern Regions on the organization and leadership of the UOC, issued on the 15th of May in 1944, described Metropolitan Dionysius’ church plans: “One of Dionysius’ previous reports to the ministry even suggested that the Moscow Patriarchate should be replaced by the Kyiv Patriarchate. So, there was also a desire for Orthodox unity, but with the center in Kyiv instead of Moscow. The fact that the Russian Dionysius “harnessed himself to the sleigh” of Ukrainian nationalism can be explained only by his personal ambition” (Shkarovsky, 2003, p. 106). As a result, the Metropolitan of Warsaw began to lose the favor of the German authorities, who decided to look for a replacement.

Hence, the documents from the German authorities suggested that in the struggle for leadership in the UAOC they supported Bishop Mstyslav, who easily found common ground with their government officials because he was “much more diplomatic and agile than Hilarion, he is easier to adapt to circumstances and knows the limits of what is possible”. His position in Moscow is clear. He is just as clearly in favor of the Ukrainians. For him, the only question is how to make Ukraine a respected member of the European community of nations over time. It is characteristic that Mstyslav would be more easily recognized by the Ukrainian bishops as head than by Hilarion”. In a report issued on the 16th of May in 1944, K. Rosenfelder, the head of the church policy group at the Ministry of the Occupied Eastern Regions, emphasized: “In my opinion, only Mstyslav Skrypnyk is suitable for leading the Ukrainian Church among Ukrainian bishops” (Shkarovsky, 2003, pp. 108, 111).

Metropolitan Hilarion Ohienko aroused less confidence in the Nazis and was seen only as a candidate for the post of head of the Orthodox Church in the Governor-General. “His ecclesiastical and political goal is to elevate Kyiv to a Ukrainian ecclesiastical metropolitanate headed by a patriarch ...”, German sources said – Hilarion also believes that the Orthodox Churches in the Governor-General’s Office, Belarus and Lithuania should be in canonical dependence on the Kyiv Metropolitan or Patriarch ... Hilarion’s appointment is expedient only if Ukraine pursues a policy of self-government in order to create further political autonomy, otherwise Hilarion will soon become unbearable. I consider it expedient to replace Dionysius in Warsaw with Hilarion at the right moment in order to tear him away from the Ukrainian soil”(Shkarovsky, 2003, pp. 107–108). According to M. Shkarovsky, the latter idea was received positively by the leadership of the Governor-General.

The apogee of the conflict between the two bishops, who competed for leadership in the Church, reflected in Metropolitan Polycarp’s letter to Bishop Mstyslav issued on the 31st of May in 1944. M. Skrypnyk was brought to court with a ban on worship and speaking on behalf of the UAOC (UHECA, Metropolitan Mstyslav papers box 1, folder 6). As Bishop Mstyslav enlisted the support of the German authorities, he did not recognize the canonical sanctions imposed by Metropolitan Polycarp. The Nazis made considerable efforts to quell the conflict of hierarchs, but they did not succeed for a long time. Only on the 20th of June, Bishop Pereyaslavskiyi, in the presence of other hierarchs, read a letter of apology for his incorrect statements to the administrator (UAA, MC, box 101, item 1966).

The UAOC episcopate attached great importance to establishing contacts with the Ecumenical Orthodoxy. Feeling responsible for the fate of the Orthodox Ukrainians in exile, on the 27th of April in 1944, the episcopate appealed to the leaders of the autocephalous Churches to “temporarily take over the spiritual care of our spiritual congregation within your Church”. It should be noted that the UAOC considered itself to be under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate through the Metropolitan of Warsaw and denied any interference in Ukrainian affairs by Moscow (UHECA, Metropolitan Nikanor papers, box 25, folder 1). Unfortunately, at that time the world Orthodox community ignored the above-mentioned appeals and was not ready to help the Ukrainian Church.

The resonant event was the reception on the 11th of May in 1944 by Governor-General H. Frank of 17 Orthodox bishops of autocephalous and autonomous orientation in the Wawel of Cracow. Traditionally, hierarchs declared their loyalty and gratitude to the German authorities for their assistance (Raporty, 1987, p. 786). In response, the Governor-General stressed the importance of the UOC for European culture and solemnly promised on behalf of Hitler protection from the Reich, emphasizing: “I accepted you, firmly believing in the

victory of the German Wehrmacht. You will return to your churches again” (Shkarovsky, 2007, p. 125).

Due to the rapid advance of the Soviet troops, the episcopate left Warsaw on the 29th of July. Owing to the efforts of Bishop Mstyslav, who was authorized by the administrator to “petition the German authorities to move the UAOC episcopate with its surroundings to another settlement”, the entire hierarchy and part of the clergy were evacuated through Krynica and Bratislava to Germany (UHECA, Metropolitan Mstyslav papers, box 1, folder 6).

Hence, the Bishops aspired to have a local Ukrainian Orthodox Church, constantly used the term “UAOC”, but did not dare to ask Metropolitan Dionysius to grant autocephaly. Given the realities of the German occupation, this seemed unlikely. Therefore, the bishops limited themselves to half-steps and postponed the settlement of the canonical status of the UAOC until the end of the war. Addressing the bishops on the 8th of April in 1944, the Metropolitan of Warsaw emphasized the importance of the patriarchal tomos of 1924 for the constitution of the UAOC: lands. The tomos, separating the Ukrainian Church from the constant claims of the church center in Moscow and connecting it – through me – with the whole Orthodox Ecumenical Church until the convening of the All-Ukrainian Local Council and the final canonical autocephaly of this Church, is the basic canonical act that already allows this Church to enjoy certain exclusive rights, and automatically de facto introduces the Ukrainian Church into the large family of autocephalous Orthodox Churches” (AWMP, sygn. 1151-RII-6D).

The Conclusions. In conclusion, we can say that the complexity of the Orthodox hierarchy position in exile was exacerbated by several objective circumstances. First of all, the external factors were unfavorable, which related to the German government. The UAOC episcopate in exile did not allow anybody to organize the Orthodox Ukrainians’ church life, concentrated the clergy in one place artificially and forced inaction for more than a year and a half. The most active participant in the First Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in exile was Bishop Mstyslav, who constantly initiated consideration of topical issues of the Church’s development. According to documents, the German officials supported it in the struggle for leadership in the UAOC. Second of all, the Orthodox bishops’ low level of education, who were often secular or inexperienced priests, was noticeable. Furthermore, there were diverse reasons, for example, constant internal disputes, different visions of the Church development ways outside Ukraine, interpersonal conflicts that provoked future divisions in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the diaspora. Third of all, the Warsaw Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in 1944 limited itself to the half-hearted decisions on its canonical status and postponed its settlement until the end of the war. The subsequent emigration councils of the UAOC in the second half of the 1940-ies needed to be studied in more detail.

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