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### **THE IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE ON THE POLISH POPULATION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE RIGHT-BANK UKRAINE IN THE LATE 18<sup>th</sup> — EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CT.**

***Вплив національної політики Російської імперії  
на становище польського населення та римо-католицької  
церкви в Правобережній Україні  
наприкінці XVIII — на початку XX ст.***

*Considering archival documents and specialized scientific literature, the author analyzes the national policy of the tsarist government and its impact on the Polish people and the Catholic Church in «South-Western Region» at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> — early 20<sup>th</sup> ct.*

Keywords: the Russian government, Right-Bank Ukraine, national policy, the Polish population, the Roman Catholic Church, the Russian Orthodox Church.

*Спираючись на архівні документи й матеріали та спеціальну наукову літературу, автор статті аналізує національну політику царського уряду та її вплив на становище польського населення та Римо-католицької церкви в «Південно-Західному краї» наприкінці XVIII — на початку XX ст.*

Ключові слова: російський уряд, Правобережна Україна, національна політика, польське населення, Римо-католицька церква, Російська православна церква.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the impact of the national policy of the Russian autocracy on the Polish people and the Roman Catholic Church in the Right-Bank Ukraine during the late 18<sup>th</sup> — early 20<sup>th</sup> ct. The author worked up and raised a wide range of archive documents and fundamental scientific works, including monographs of A. V. Shuba and O. O. Bakovetska, for this study.

The Russian Empire evolved and developed as a multiethnic state. The population census, held in 1897, showed that 146 peoples inhabited this country. Some of them were captured by Russia, others joined the empire voluntarily. The reason of the nonviolent accession of non-Russian peoples was a reliable protection that the empire could provide against aggressive neighbors was. The higher level of socio-economic and cultural development of the empire mattered in certain cases as well (Shuba, A. V. 1992).

The national question in the Russian state and the religious situation were closely connected. Pre-revolutionary Russia was heterogeneous in ethnic composition of the population and a multireligious country. The Orthodoxy coexisted with other religious groups in this state. The main part of them had been associated with the corresponding ethnic communities. Thus, the Russians, the Ukrainians and the Belarusians mainly professed Orthodoxy. The Poles and some of the Ukrainians and Belarusians were Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics. The peoples of the Volga region, Central Asia and of the main part of Caucasus region mostly preferred Islam. The Armenians and the Georgians had their own Churches. These Churches were Armenian-Gregorian and Georgian Orthodox. The Jews adhered to Judaism. There were also supporters of the Old Believers (Staroobryadnytstvo), and of the various kinds of Protestant and Orthodox sectarianism in addition.

National and religious affiliation significantly affected the civil rights of peoples. The largest nation in the pre-revolutionary period was Russian — 42,7% of

the total population of the empire, and the dominant religion — Orthodoxy (69,35% of all believers) (Shuba, A. V. 1992). Orthodox confession in Empire enjoyed absolute power and its rights. The tsarist government always supported the Russian Orthodox Church. Undermining of Orthodoxy was considered as an attack on the existing social and political order. The Russian Orthodox Church in its turn fully shared the policy of autocracy. The official religion supported chauvinism, preached the supremacy of the Russians over other peoples of the empire. It was the ideological exponent of the imperial national policy. The idea of Russian national exclusivity even got the religious explanations in Orthodox theology. It generated and reinforced national hostility to «foreigners» and «infidels» in the minds of believers.

Representatives of different philosophical trends were looking for a way out of «national impasse», trying to solve the problems of national development. However, neither Slavophile «protection» of society from bourgeois influence via the Orthodox religion, nor Westerners' worship of Europe brought tangible results. The attempts of artificial revival of Slavophile ideas by Gruntovnyky (A. A. Grigoriev, brothers M. M. and F. M. Dostoyevsky, M. Strakhovyy and others) and Neoslavophiles (M. Danilevsky and K. Leontiev) were unsuccessful. In the spirit of Slavophile they claimed that the «national soil» was the basis of the original development of Russia. The spiritual basis of this Russian identity, in their opinion, should be the «Russian idea», «Russian spirit», which was integral to the Orthodox religion, with its calls for humility and meekness. The Slavophiles' ideas of increased religious attraction of the Russian nation, its deep devotion to Orthodoxy were especially appreciated (Shuba, A. V. 1992).

Russian religious philosopher and mystic Vladimir Solovyov was interested in the problems of national development of the Russian empire and the relationship between peoples in this country. His attitude toward Slavophilism was ambiguous. Considering religion as an engine of social and cultural progress of peoples, the philosopher tried to use it to solve national problems, but chose a slightly different from the Slavophiles way. He defended the idea of the existence of such a feature of the Russian national character as its «universality», the ability to self-denial in the name of national fusion of Western and Eastern peace and reunification of the churches. He strongly rejected the Slavophile views on Catholicism and Protestantism as such religious movements, which are outside of true Christianity. In his opinion, all religious trends in the future of the universal Church would be equal. Soloviev believed that Christianity was indeed an «international» religion, despite all its diversities, national and ethnic characteristics. Nevertheless, his conception of the place and role of religion in the ethnic structure and national development was not entirely consistent. He often changed his attitude to

different religious and philosophical systems. Originally philosopher shared Slavophiles' ideas about the leading role of Orthodoxy in the development of civilization. Later he became interested in Catholicism, and at the end of his life even sympathized with Judaism proclaiming prayers for the welfare of the Jewish people in Hebrew (Shuba, A. V. 1992).

Soloviev's works became a powerful means of promoting Roman Catholicism in Russia. The Secret Life of Russian Catholics in the Empire began to acquire certain organizational forms for his direct participation. One of the most active Russian Catholics was Nikolai Tolstoy, son of Chief Chamberlain O. M. Tolstoy, who became a Catholic priest and because of spreading Roman Catholicism in the Russian state was twice arrested and even sentenced to expulsion. In the city Tver he met with Vladimir Solovyov and organized a secret congress of Russian Catholics of the Byzantine-Slavic rite. All of them were supporters of association of churches. Subsequently, a similar congress was held in Nizhny Novgorod. The police got to know about it really quickly and made a number of arrests. Specifically, the priest O. Zerchanynov was arrested. On April 17, 1905 the Russian monarch issued a decree on religious tolerance. In connection with the publication of this document, the hopes of association of Catholic and Orthodox churches strengthened. This idea was especially popular among the intelligentsia, the Orthodox clergy and nobility. In this historical period Byeloselsky Prince and Orthodox clergy (S. Veryha, I. Storozhev, O. Zerchanynov, E. Susalyev, O. Deybner, O. Yevreynov, A. Sypyahyn) passed to the Catholic religion. People who sincerely sought the union of the Orthodoxy and Vatican gathered round Soloviev (nephew of the late Vladimir Soloviev) in Moscow. In 1911 the Prime Minister P. Stolypin agreed to the establishment of the Catholic Church, in which the worship and ritual were the same as in the Orthodox one, but there were Catholic doctrine and its exarchate. In St. Petersburg and Moscow they created the communities of the church and opened its temples. In 1906 A. Zerchanynov founded the Catholic Church in the imperial capital. The Catholic press began to publish in the Russian language. However, the movement which aimed at uniting churches was stalled by World War II. At that time the tsarist authorities revoked the permission for the establishment of the Russian Catholic Church, the magazines «Faith and Life» and «Word of Truth» stopped publishing. Only after the overthrow of the monarchy in Russia and the establishment of the Provisional Government the activity of Russian Catholics enlivened again. In Petrograd from 29 to 31 of May, 1917 the representatives of the Catholic Church were gathered. The synod of this church was chaired by Andrew Sheptytsky. On August 8, 1917 the Provisional Government legalized its activities. The Exarch of the Russian Catholic Church was elected at this synod, and the Church approved its charter. The priest Leonid Fyodorov be-

came an Exarch and it was approved by the Vatican on May 1, 1921. But it is clear that the life of the church in the Bolshevik Russia was short (Danilov).

The Orthodox Church had a mission of preaching Christianity, spreading and propagating this religion among the «infidels». Its purpose was to help the royal government to put the non-Russian peoples not only into socio-economic, political, national, but also spiritual dependence on the ruling elite of the nation. V. Bonch-Bruевич wrote about this: «The guardians of Russian autocracy had an aim to approach all foreigners to the denominator called “Russian nation” and “Orthodoxy”» (Shuba, A. V. 1992).

Russification and Christianization were autocratic forms of forced assimilation policy of non-Russian peoples. Those who prefer to enjoy the fullness of civil rights in the Empire had to reject their native language, customs, religious preferences and adopt Orthodoxy. Documents in the Russian state were also issued taking into account the fact that the change of religion meant a change of nationality. Rites and sacraments of the former religions were invalid when a person became Orthodox. Thus, if the couple passed in Orthodoxy, they had to be baptized and married again. Children were also baptized together with parents. Newly minted Orthodox received certain benefits, including equal opportunities with the Russians in employment, admission to educational institutions, judicial mitigation of penalties, the temporary exemption from taxes and military service. They were provided with loans for house building or purchase of cattle and so on (Shuba, A. V. 1992).

A royal manifesto in 1903 on religious tolerance was an attempt to weaken the growing public dissatisfaction with the national policy of the autocracy. In 1905 under pressure from the society a royal decree on religious freedom was issued. It allowed a conversion to other religions, both Christian and non-Christian. It also provided mitigate intolerance, equated the rights of believers of different religions, giving them the right to work in the civil service, along with the Orthodox. However, the elimination of the religious and national hatred and intolerance by means of manifestos and decrees was not possible. Despite the expectations of the government, Orthodox position considerably weakened with the promulgation of the decree. The mass departure of Christians from the Orthodox faith forced the tsarist government to take measures to limit the decree on religious freedom. The age limit to enter another religion was introduced. Also the registration procedure of departure from Orthodoxy complicated. The propaganda of non-orthodox religions was banned under threat of imprisonment. In addition, the administrative practice in the field on non-Orthodox denominations remained old and also allowed control over the religious views of believers. Thus, the transition from the Orthodox religion to another one was possible only after a local

governor and a leadership of the diocese had reviewed the permission. Administrative and ecclesiastical authorities had to determine the cause of breaking with Orthodoxy before they allow it. They also had to take all possible measures to return the believer to the Orthodox religion (Shuba, A. V. 1992).

Less than six weeks from the date of publication of the decree on freedom of religion had passed and governors had been sent a circular from the Minister of Internal Affairs. It gave them the right to maintain the rules that regulated the former relationship between the state and the infidels. The manifesto and the decree proclaiming freedom of religion declared only formal freedom in the functioning of denominations. Orthodoxy remained the dominant religion in the country. Leaving this religion was still illegal from the official point of view, and the church considered such action as a «hard fall». The emperor and his associates also had to profess the Orthodox faith. The church continued to exhort their priests to use all possible measures for further spread of the orthodox doctrine, to counter religious errors, facilitate the return to Orthodoxy those who receded from it (Shuba, A. V. 1992).

After the defeat of the revolution of 1905–1907 the principles set out in the manifesto and the decree on religious freedom were revised. Clerical chauvinism, confessional and sectarian-ethnic hatred increased. The offensive against non-Orthodox religion intensified.

The unequal legal status of religious organizations in pre-revolutionary Russia could be explained largely due to the existence of national inequality in the state. The Russian Orthodox Church treated Christians and non-Christians, Orthodox and non-Orthodox in different ways. It was generally more tolerant to Christians than to the followers of religious sects and other religions which had more dogmatic and religious differences with the Orthodoxy. However, the ethnicity of believers had the most significant value in interfaith relations in pre-revolutionary Russia. Although Catholicism in its religious principles was closer to Orthodoxy than Lutheranism, intolerance towards Catholics in the Empire was manifested much stronger than towards Lutherans. The nature of communication between peoples (Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusians and Poles), followers of these religions, greatly influenced the relationship between Catholicism and Orthodox faith (Shuba, A. V. 1992). The presence of the Polish element in the Right-Bank Ukraine was appreciable. In the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries Poles took part in the colonization of the Ukrainian border, and even during the events of 1648–1657 when they were expelled from the Left Bank, they still managed to maintain control over the Right-bank area. This region was considered as an integral part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth even after it had joined the Russian Empire in 1795. A significant influence of the Polish element in the «South-Western Region», of

course, did not depend only on its size: in the mid-nineteenth century there were only 500 thousand of Poles there. Their share in the population of Ukraine fell from 10% in 1795 to 6,4% in 1909. The public weight of the Polish population in the Right Bank was primarily predetermined by the wealth and influence of its elite. In 1850 about 5000 Polish landowners owned 90% of land and 1,2 million of serfs in the region (Subtelny, O. 1991). However, despite the significant impact of the Poles in socio-economic life in Right-Bank Ukraine, the same discriminatory measures were applied to them, as well as to other non-Russian peoples. The Polish national liberation uprisings of 1830–1831 and especially of 1863–1864 significantly influenced the Russian National Ethnic Policy in the Right Bank. After the latter uprising tsarist policy acquired more reactionary character. Local officials at the order of the imperial capital began to seize Polish gentry estates if the owners participated in the uprising or had sympathy for its ideas. The campaign was carried out in order to «reduce the Polish influence» in the region. Polish institutions of education and culture, theaters, monasteries were closed. A number of restrictions on political and economic rights of the Polish population were introduced. In particular, communication in Polish could entail administrative liability. It particularly concerned officials of South Western Railway, who were considerably levied for such action. For example, the conductor Anton Spodulsky for the conversation with Polish passenger had to pay a fine of 25 rubles (Penalty for the usage..., 1886). Commercial signs in Polish were strictly prohibited (the first time such prohibition appears in the 30's of XIX century. (SAKR, fund 2, file 180, issue 256), then it repeated in 1865 (SAKR, fund 2, file 180, issue 256). Sale of primer-books (SAKR, fund 2, file 179, issue 839), publishing of books and magazines in Polish (SAKR, fund 2, issue 1375), teaching in this language were also subjects of the ban (SAKR, fund 347, file 1, issue 952.) No more than 10% of people of Polish origin were taken to educational establishments (SAKR, fund 2, file 179, issue 696). A special permission from Russian officials was needed to hold a ball (SAKR, fund 2, file 36, issue 47) or an evening of humor for the Poles (SAKR, fund 2, file 34, issue 47) and to organize a performance in Polish (SAKR, fund 2, file 40, issue 37). Thus, even an opera singer Elena Steklen had to ask the Russian authorities a permission to carry out the parts in Polish during her tour in Kiev, which took place in 1904 (SAKR, fund 2, file 40, issue 37). Along with positive decisions, sometimes Poles received refusal from the imperial officials. In particular, in 1898 Governor General refused a nobleman Vladislav Hulyanytskomu from Kiev province to stage performances in Polish (SAKR, fund 2, file 34, issue 47). In addition to the above-mentioned discriminatory measures, it was forbidden for Poles and for other non-Russian peoples to wear national and specific mourning clothes (SAKR, fund 2, file 179, issue 142).

Violation of this prohibition led to judicial responsibility. Thus, in 1864 Kyiv judge sentenced Edward Mikhaylovich, the Pole student of Kiev University, because of the photo portraying him in the Polish national dress (SAKR, fund 2, file 179, issue 173). In Right-Bank Institutions Polish officials were replaced by the ones of Russian origin (SAKR, fund 347, file 336, issue 798). It was forbidden to take Poles as secretaries of bailiffs and notaries (SAKR, fund 301, file 1, issue 1). In addition, representatives of Polish nationality also felt discrimination in the economic sphere. In particular, the Polish owners of estates had to pay an additional 5% of income tax (SAKR, fund 301, file 1, issue 653).

Poles felt discrimination also in the religious sphere. The Orthodox influence on Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine was closely linked with Russification. In particular, in 1842 Russian secretaries were attached to the consistories. Without the written consents of these secretaries any order of Catholic Bishops was not valid. In 1843 it was decided to teach in the Russian language at the seminaries. Since October 8, 1865 due to the decree of the Russian emperor, even the Catholic catechism study was in the Russian language. In order to fight Polish nationalism in 1868 the tsarist government ordered Roman Catholic parishes to move from the Polish language into Russian (Bakovetska, O. O. 2015).

The national question remained unresolved even after the revolution of 1905–1907, when the State Duma (Council) failed to adopt laws on civil rights of non-Russians and imperial power still ignored the demands of those peoples. Nevertheless, the revolution in 1905 led to the partial liberalization of political life. It was the response of the autocracy to outbreaks of national liberation movements. In 1905 a law, that partially liberalized anti-Polish policy, allowed the teaching of the Polish language at educational establishments. Similar restrictions concerning other national languages were also abolished.

However, after the defeat of the revolution the reaction came into action. The tsarist government, trying to take revenge for the forced temporary concessions in the period of revolutionary upsurge, enhanced chauvinistic sentiments in Russian society.

To sum everything up, the national policy of the Russian Empire had the assimilatory nature. The tsarist government sought to weaken the Polish influence particularly in the Right Bank Ukraine. That is why it strongly encouraged the presence of the Russian element in this region. It concerned management and bureaucratic, financial, educational and Orthodox spheres. It aimed to russify and weaken the position of the Roman Catholic Church in the region. The difference in the confession of faith greatly deepened the chasm that existed between the peoples of the Russian Empire. Multiculturalism and the existence of several religions with their close interweaving made pre-revolutionary Russia a tight knot of



confessional and ethnic differences. The differences in religions in pre-revolutionary Russia resulted in interconfessional intolerance and conflicts on religious grounds. Interreligious intolerance left its traces upon national communication. It came from ideological and religious spheres to everyday practice, negatively affecting the relationship between individuals and entire peoples, the development of ethnic processes in general. This particularly concerned the Polish population of South-West region, which professed Roman Catholicism. Finally, it all contributed to the death of empire as a state in 1917.

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Дело о прекращении приема в учебные заведения лиц польского происхождения свыше 10%. *Держархів Київської обл.*, ф. 2, оп. 179, спр. 696.

О дополнительной уплате 5% с налога с доходов с имений поляков. *Держархів Київської обл.*, ф. 301, оп. 1, спр. 653.

О замене чиновников-поляков чиновниками российского происхождения в учреждениях Киевской губернии. *Держархів Київської обл.*, ф. 347, оп. 336, спр. 798.

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Об аресте лиц, носящих одежду запрещенного покроя (национального, траурного), 13. *Держархів Київської обл.*, ф. 2, оп. 179, спр. 142.

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O zapreshhenii prodazhi bukvaraj na pol'skom jazyke. *Derzharkhiv Kyivskoi obl.*, f. 2, op. 179, spr. 839.

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