

ABOLITION OF THE AUTOCEPHALY OF THE GEORGIAN CHURCH AND ESTABLISHMENT OF RUSSIAN CHURCH RULE IN GEORGIA

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Abstract:

The peoples conquered by Russia differed from each other greatly in their level of development, language, culture, religion, tradition of statehood, etc. If some still lived a nomadic and patriarchal life, others, for example, Georgia, had a long tradition of statehood, independent culture, Christian civilization and a solid national identity. And this was not only in the past, although Georgia could not maintain its unity in the new era, but it did not lose its statehood. Georgian principalities - these small "Georgians" were separate state units and continued to exist until the active establishment of Russia in the South Caucasus. It is necessary to say that most of the peoples whose destiny was the colonial yoke of Russia, while being incorporated into the bosom of the Romanov empire, experienced the process of disintegration and were weakened due to civil wars, attacks of neighboring aggressive states or other factors.

Keywords: Autocephaly, Church of Georgia, Catholicos-Patriarch, Manifesto of 1801, Bagraions.

Main part

The 19th century began with the conquest of the South Caucasus by the Russian Empire, first it abolished the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti and annexed it, and then it approached Western Georgia and the Muslim administrative units of Iran ("Sakhano"). By repeatedly defeating Iran

and Ottomans, Russia cut off both of their legs from the region and became the complete master of this side. Russia invested great power, energy, human and financial resources in overcoming and conquering the North Caucasus Mountains in a long war that lasted more than three decades.

Historically, Russia had a large population. The government rightly used this factor in the process of acquiring new territories, widely resorting to colonization.

At the end of the 19th century, with the destruction of the royal throne of the Bagratians and the abolition of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom, Russia actually achieved its initial goal in the South Caucasus. For it, it was no longer important under what name Eastern Georgia would enter the empire. By now, the former kingdom was officially given the status of a province, that is, the land and water conquered beyond the Caucasus range and joined to the empire, in terms of administrative-territorial arrangement, were equaled to the central regions of Russia. As it is known, the Russian occupation regime established in Kartli-Kakheti was initially called the "Supreme Government of Georgia".

From the day of the abolition of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti and its declaration as a gubernia, the Georgian language was expelled from the management-board system and the sphere of justice in Eastern Georgia. The Russian administration has started to close the centers of education in Georgia - schools. At that time, the periodical press was still not published, therefore, Georgian not only lost the function of the state language, but also its use was extremely narrowed. The mother tongue was in danger of becoming a family language.

The same was repeated in Western Georgia after the conquest of the kingdom of Imereti and the destruction of the principalities' autonomies. This is how the process of Russification in our country began, which did not stop until the "tsar's" government was overthrown, moreover, it was actively carried out afterwards.

The church was an important tool of the colonial policy of autocracy, namely Russification. The Russian exarchs, clergy, theological seminary ministers and others sent to Georgia were also tasked with taking care of the implementation of the goals of the empire as military and civil officials. It is true that Georgia was an Orthodox country and the confession of the Georgian people agreed with the prevailing religion of the empire, but, nevertheless, there were many differences in the rules of the Georgian and Russian churches. The manifest of Alexander I of September 12, 1801 recognized the inviolability and inviolability of the Georgian Church, however, the Russian imperial authorities abolished the autocephaly of the Church of Iveria in 1811 and began to transform it into a Russian order.

Transferring worship services to the Russian typicon or trying to establish Slavic hymns in Georgian churches was the same measure of Russification as the expulsion of the native language from the system of government and justice, replacing Georgian surnames with Russian endings, and others.

The Georgian distinguished rank made its way into the Russian imperial elite relatively easily. Recruiting the aristocracy of the newly conquered country was also in Russia's interests in order to make it its socio-political pillar in the region. This goal was served by equalizing the rank of the Georgian nobility with the Russian landlords and maintaining their rank advantage, as well as the creation of the councils of noble deputies in 1803 in Tbilisi, and in 1851 in Kutaisi province, etc.

Russian rulers and hierarchs did not like Georgia, some even hated the country they ruled. Most of the court and administrative officials were bribers, robbers, thieves and adulterers. They not only discredited Russian statehood, but in general, they also presented the name of Russian people negatively in the eyes of Georgians. "It would also be considered a great favor if the Russian officials appointed in Georgia would at least meet the minimum demand, if they would love the work or the idea at least a little," wrote Ivane Javakhishvili. In 1802, Prince Pavle Tsitsianov, who was appointed as the chief ruler, addressed the deposed ruler of Georgia, Petre Kovalenski: "With your actions, you insulted the Georgians and forced them to hate the government so much that I even saw a violent wavering of their minds, who were attracted to the rule of the Russians."

The Russian exarchs were not far behind the secular authorities. They appropriated and took away from Georgia the great wealth of the church: precious icons, crosses, jewelry and others. According to Mikheil Tamarashvili's calculations, the Russian government took 137 million six hundred thousand manets (unit of money in Georgia at that time) of Georgian property from churches alone.

During the 117 years of Russian rule, Georgia replaced 20 high-ranking Russian officials. None of them was seriously interested in the lives of the Georgian people, their history and culture.

Russian officials felt insulted when they were introduced to the unique monuments and churches-monasteries of the ancient Georgian culture. Russian exarchs whitewashed the frescoed walls of the temples to hide the traces of their antiquity and impressiveness.

The educational policy of the empire in Georgia was based on colonial goals. Along with the training of the officials needed for the local administration of the school, he was responsible for providing assistance to the people.

The first Russian elementary school was founded in Tbilisi in 1802, but it was closed soon after, because the students could not master the foreign Russian language. In 1804, Tbilisi School of the Nobles was founded. This center of education was the only educational institution opened by the government in Georgia and the entire South Caucasus for a quarter of a century, although the treasury did not spend a single penny to maintain it.

The education system was completely put in the service of the autocracy. The government's anti-people educational course, as part of the colonial policy, was aimed at the assimilation of the peoples on the edge of the empire. Obviously, this policy had its theoreticians and

ideologues in the appropriate structures of the empire, who developed and refined the forms and methods of practical action.

Russia and the Kingdom of Kakheti have taken the first steps towards mutual relations. The mutual desire was equally strong, but the interests were radically different. The authorities of Kakheti demanded help and other assistance in preventing the predatory attacks of the mountaineers. Russia's goal was to seize Kakheti and then spread the same attitude to the whole of Georgia.

In the XVI-XVIII centuries, Georgian-Russian relations became particularly active. The visits of Russian ambassadors to Georgia became more frequent. They were followed by more than one clergy who were familiar with the traditions of the Georgian Church. They paid special attention to the Christian sanctuaries preserved in us. Correction of Georgian liturgical monuments according to Slavic has started. In 1781, when General Pavle Potemkin was appointed as the commander-in-chief of the troops of the Caucasus Line, his first task was to regulate the relationship with the Church, as well as with other Christian owners of Transcaucasia, and they also dictated the methods of dealing with them: And for starters.

In Georgian historiography, in general Georgian consciousness, with a few exceptions, Giorgievsky's treatise is considered a document signed between the two countries, which was generally acceptable and even desirable for Georgians. The politicians of that era, as well as those fighting for the return of independence in the later period, various political classes and parties, and imagine, even the largest part of today's thinking society thought so.

In this document, indeed, there are many words, phrases, promises and hopes for Georgians, but none of them, if we do not consider the objective results, have been implemented in life, therefore we, and we think, not only us, consider this agreement to be a great step. Georgia is on the way to losing its statehood.

Thus, with the mentioned treatise, the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti was put in such a situation that the abolition of the kingship here was a matter of time and Russia's specific interest.

Finally, on September 12, 1801, Alexander the First's manifest was published, addressed to all residents of Georgia.

On April 18, 1802, Alexander's manifest was read in Tbilisi, surrounded by Russian troops, in the Sioni Cathedral. A solemn silence fell in the crowded hall, some of them even put their hands on their swords, but it was clear that there was no point in resisting. Finally, the reading of the manifesto was followed by the oath of the nobles, Catholicos and nobles in the temple.

The next day, the same manifesto was read to representatives of the local diaspora in the Armenian church. As expected, this procedure was carried out here with excited shouts and applause.

Thus ended the conquest of Eastern Georgia by Russia, which started its actual annexation much earlier.

A new era has begun in the centuries-old history of Georgia.

On October 16, 1801, the mentioned manifest was read in the church of Sioni and the Armenian church in Tbilisi - Vanqi. In this regard, according to the instructions of the Russian officials, Arsen, the metropolitan of Tbilisi, performed the mass, and Anton II performed the prayer. Before that, in February 1801, Karl Knorring sent a request to Anton II to provide him with information on the following issues:

- 1) How many bishoprics are there in Georgia, who is their ruling high priest, who are the priestly religious leaders and what is their attitude towards the king's authority?
- 2) How many monasteries, cathedrals and parish churches are there in each episcopate, in what form and from where do they receive their living income, as well as monasteries and church servants?
- 3) To manage monasteries and churches, do the chief priests have a court with them, such as: dicastery, clerical administration or deanery. Who are present there, clerical and secular servants of the chancellery, what kind of salary do they have?
- 4) Where do clerics choose civil cases - in the ecclesiastical or civil court?
- 5) Is there the same rule for granting clerical titles in Georgia as in Russia? Is the clerical rank conferred by the population's election or by the clerical leadership?
- 6) Are there educational institutions for priests in episcopal dioceses, and if there are, where, what do they teach there and how do they exist?
- 7) In addition to the above, was it necessary to find out something else for the improvement of the situation of the Georgian clergy?

Anton II informed Karl Knorring everything in his extensive reply letter. At the beginning of the letter, he talks about the history of the ancient autocephalous church. The addressee was not satisfied with the answer, because he was most interested in the sources of income and finances of the Georgian Church. From this point of view, he considered the answer to be unsatisfactory and therefore addressed the same questions to the ruling bishops of individual dioceses.

Despite the numerous concessions of the Georgian clergy, the Russian government actively interfered in the affairs of the Georgian Church. In 1802, Karl Knorring asked Anton II again for information about the income. Antony was forced to provide these materials. The Catholicos-Patriarch was aware of the danger that awaited the Georgian Church, so he tried to maintain calmness and "benevolence". For example, the chief ruler Pavle Tsitsianov decided to relocate the members of the Bagrationi royal family to Russia, Anton II saved his mother, Queen Darejani, to leave her in Georgia. This was followed by Pavle Tsitsyanov's sharp reaction. Antony was forced to refuse to protect his mother.

The head ruler did not allow the Catholicos-patriarch to choose new priests. When the place of the bishop of Niqozi became vacant, Pavle Tsitsianov asked Anton to assign him to the monastery of the Principality of Mtskheta. He tried to reduce dioceses, especially through the voluntary resignation of bishops. Elderly priests often asked to retire. New bishops were no longer consecrated on the vacated cathedrals, and in this way dioceses were abolished.

The process of appropriating church lands began during the rule of the archbishop Ivane Gudovich. This was another step on the way to the independence of the Church of Georgia, as it weakened the material condition of the Church and made it dependent on the state.

Until the end of the 18th century, there were two independent churches in Georgia from the administrative point of view, the Catholic Churches of Kartli and Abkhazia. It is true that political unification of the country failed at that stage, but it became possible to ensure the unity of the church. Mitropolit Dositheos of Kutaisi, whom Solomon II conferred the Catholic status, refused this honor precisely for the purpose that the Church of Western Georgia would submit to the Catholicos of Mtskheta. Thus, by 1811, when the Russian Empire abolished the Catholicos of Mtskheta, the Catholicos of Abkhazia (western Georgia) were nominally under its control. That is why the first 45 exarchs, Varlam Eristavi, spent the so-called after the reforms, West Georgia was ordered to do the same. He did not succeed in this, because of this the rulers of the empire replaced him with Theophylacte Rusanov.

In June 1819, a rebellion broke out in Imereti, which, in fact, spread to all of Western Georgia. The situation became complicated and the government was forced to retreat. The exarch was taken out of Kutaisi accompanied by security. It was a victory for the rebels, but, unfortunately, it was temporary. The authorities decided to punish the leaders of the riots, which led to a renewal of the rebellion. The activity of metropolitans Dositheos Kutatheli and Ekvtime Genateli in the rebellion caused special irritation of the authorities appointed by the empire in Georgia, so the center decided to exile them to Russia.

The arrested priests were sent to Russia. Metropolitan Dositheos Kutateli passed out near Surami. According to one version, he was put in a sack, and according to the other version, he died from a severe beating. He has been buried in Ananur. Metropolitan Ekvtime Genateli was brought to St. Petersburg and presented to Emperor Alexander I, whom the high priest called "New Neron". After that, he was exiled to Svir Monastery, where he died on March 21, 1822.

In the end, the Russian authorities carried out "church reform" in Western Georgia - they abolished the priestly cathedrals, leaving three instead of nine (in Imereti, Guria and Odishi). Further changes were carried out by the government now more carefully and over a period of years.

Conclusion:

As a result of the annulment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church by Russia, not only the independence of the Church was disturbed, but the Georgian Church lost for centuries the position and place in society and the state that was traditional for it from the 4th century to the 19th century.

The Russian authorities confiscated all property, estates, houses, church peasants, and nobles from the Georgian Church. In the 50s of the 19th century, the property of the Georgian Church valued at 150 million golden maneti was transferred to the Russian state treasury, along with nearly half a million desetin (unit of area) of land.

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