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ORDERS FROM THE UKRAINIAN CLERGY TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION 1767–1774

The internal policy of the Russian autocracy during the period of educated absolutism became most vivid during the reign of Catherine II (1762–1796). One of its manifestations was a significant event in the social and political life of that time – 14 December, 1766. Catherine II issued a manifesto announcing the formation in Moscow of a Legislative Commission of elected representatives from various estates, that had to develop a new Statute to replace the long-outdated Council Constitution of 1649. The manifesto established the procedure for the election of deputies and the drawing up of Orders from voters for them. That event can be considered almost the most important among the events of the first years of Catherine II's reign. It is natural that the event of such a scale as the Legislative Commission for the creation of a draft of the new Constitution of 1767–1768, according to researchers, caused a huge international resonance and attracted the attention of the international community at that time¹.

In itself, the convening of the Commission to replace the outdated Constitution of 1649 was not original, because the predecessors of Catherine II were also aware of the inconsistency of the legal norms of the mid-17th century to the new conditions that required new legislative regulation. Since the beginning of the century, six Legislative Commissions, replacing each other, have been engaged in the drafting of the new Constitution almost without any results. However, the last one was completely different from the previous ones and belongs to the most representative institutions of this kind in terms of the composition of deputies, the order of its activities and the tasks it had to solve. Thus, a special “Order” was developed and issued, which the deputies had to be guided by when drawing up the new Constitution, and each deputy had to receive a written Order from his constituents outlining their needs.

¹ Myronchuk A. Legislative commission for the creation of a new «Constitution» of 1767–1768 in the European memoir and journalistic literature of the second half of the 18th century. // *Eminak*. 2018. № 2(1). P. 90–96.

The commission had a wide representation – nobles, burghers, Cossacks and free peasants from all corners of the empire were represented. The procedure for the election of deputies was also provided. Therefore, direct elections were expected among the nobles and burghers; the nobles had to send their one deputy from each district, the burghers – from each city, regardless of the number of people in it who have the right to vote. One deputy was elected from each central institution: the Senate, the Synod, the Collegiums and the capital offices.

Deputies from the Cossacks, from settled «foreigners» (peoples of the Volga region and Siberia) were also to be represented in the commission. Representation from the peasants was as follows: different categories of state peasants elected one deputy from each province; three-stage elections were established for free peasants who were not in serf dependence on landlords and the palace administration. Deputies were not sent by private property, as well as some other categories of peasants, as well as the clergy as a state in connection with the secularization that was unexpectedly carried out. Such an almost «universal» representative structure was supposed to demonstrate the participation of wide circles of the public in the development of the new code of laws.

Interest in the position of deputy was encouraged by a number of additional rights and privileges: their working time was paid, the prosecution of a deputy could only take place with the sanction of the monarch, and for committing crimes against deputies or their property, the order provided for a double punishment. Land property of deputies could be confiscated only for debts. The deputies themselves received a lifetime privilege in the form of exemption from the death penalty and corporal punishment².

The supreme authority carefully prepared the convening of the Commission, a guide was developed, which later received the name of the Great Order³, which was a compilative act, where out of 507 articles 408 were borrowed verbatim from Montesquieu, Beccaria, Bielefeld and Just. The development of the Order lasted about two years, and according to the creators, it was supposed to bring about a revolution, to start a «new era» not only in Russia, but also in all European states, and Russians under the guidance of new laws would have become the leaders of the entire civilized world. Although there were not enough reasons for that: the order declared autocracy as the best form of government for Russia, defended the ideas of absolutism, defended the privileges of the nobility, and the people were

2 Bagalei D. To the history of the Ekaterina commission for the drafting of a project of a new constitution // *Kievskaya starina*. Vol. 13. 1885. P. 1.

3 The order of her i.v. Ekaterina II, given by the commission for drawing up a draft of the new Constitution. St. Petersburg, 1907; PSZ T. 18. No. 12949. Supplements to the Order. Right there. № 13075, 13096.

hardly mentioned in the order. Only in passing was the conviction expressed that people could be enslaved only under conditions of extreme necessity, and that serfs should be protected from the abuses of landlord power. However, in general, the Order openly denied not only the need for immediate destruction, but also any softening of serfdom.

At the time of the convening of the Commission, the Hetmanate had its own laws and administration, so the question of the expediency of the participation of Ukrainian representatives in the codification of Russian laws or the reform of the imperial administration arose quite logically. The need for a new reform was not perceived by society, since the systematization of Ukrainian laws had already taken place in 1728–1743, and since 1763, the reform of the legal proceedings began to be implemented. However, since the new law had to be introduced in all regions of the empire, participation in the commission became necessary for Ukraine as well⁴. According to the general “Regulations on Elections”, Left Bank Ukraine, despite some peculiarities of its administrative and political system, had to participate in this electoral campaign on completely identical terms with other provinces. The management and control over the course of elections of deputies and drafting of “orders” was carried out there by the governor-general of the region P.A. Rumiantsev. He issued a special circular, targeting the future elected officials to do everything to “achieve general prosperity.”

The duty of informing the population of the Order on convening the commission was assigned to the Church. The Little Russian collegium, based on Rumyantsev’s report, decided to distribute printed copies of the Order so that “in all hundreds, villages, and hamlets ... they would be made public, and that no one would refuse the published manifestos out of ignorance”, and the bishops were instructed to reproduce those documents and sent to all sub-departmental churches, and priests were obliged to announce them three times on Sundays⁵.

Elections of deputies to work in the collegium were scheduled for March 1767⁶. At the time of the elections, social tension was felt in Hetman Oblast and Slobid Ukraine due to the fact that a series of measures for the final liquidation of Ukrainian autonomy were carried out at the initiative of the

4 Z. Kohut. Russian centralism and Ukrainian autonomy: liquidation of the Hetmanship 1760–1830. Kyiv: Osnovy, 1996. 317 p. P. 114.

5 Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine. F. 127. Op. 1020. Case 3793. Sh. 1–2.

6 See: Orders to Little Russian deputies. P. 187–188; Maksymovich G.A. Elections and orders in Little Russia to the Legislative Commission of 1767. Nezhin, 1917. P. 8–9.

autocracy. According to the plan of the supreme power, the involvement of Ukrainian voters in the work of the Legislative Commission was supposed to give the tsarist policy in Ukrainian lands the appearance of legitimacy. The president of the 2nd Little Russian Collegium P. Rumyantsev personally had to monitor the course of the election campaign to the Commission in the Hetman region. Voters were offered to approve for their candidates a typical Order with fairly moderate requirements for social reforms, which would not generally contradict the course of the autocracy to eliminate the hetman's power and the political autonomy of Left Bank Ukraine⁷.

During the elections of deputies and drafting of Orders to the Legislative Commission, social contradictions between different states were manifested. That was reflected in their Orders. As it was said, one of the innovations in the activities of the Commission became the Orders to deputies from the voters with a statement of proposals and needs, which the deputies had to submit to the General Assembly of the Commission in Moscow. Each deputy received one or more Orders from his constituents. Each state, putting forward social ideals, showed in them its basic needs and burdens, and asked for their satisfaction. The orders which were given by the voters to the deputies from Ukraine contained, in addition to constitutional issues, proposals on restoring the post of hetman, who would be elected through general elections, limit the wilfulness of Russian officials, and expand the rights of Ukrainian provinces in matters of internal administration. In general, the Orders are the most valuable source for characterizing the political development of the ideas that were the concern of the different states of the Hetmanate at that time. Most of the Orders were submitted by peasants with proposals for reducing taxes, with demands for a fair trial, the right to free trade, etc. Representatives of the merchants demanded the establishment of a monopoly on trade, a trade on equal terms with the nobles, as well as the attribution of the wealthiest peasants, who were engaged in trade, to the merchant class. The nobles spoke for the expansion of their privileges, as well as the creation of state courts⁸.

Only such states as Cossacks, burghers and state peasants received the right to participate in the preparation of orders to deputies in Ukraine. Other social

7 N.V. Shevchenko LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION 1767–1768 [Electronic resource] // Encyclopedia of the history of Ukraine: Volume 4: Ka-Com / Ed.: V. A. Smolii (chairman) and others. NAS of Ukraine. Institute of History of Ukraine. K.: Scientific Opinion, 2007. 528 p.: ill.. Access mode: http://www.history.org.ua/?termin=Komisiya_zakonodavcha

8 S. V. Maksymova, O. V. Chernii. Commission for Drafting the New Constitution (Catherine Commission) // Legal encyclopedia: [in 6 vols.] / ed. number Yu. S. Shemshuchenko (resp. ed.) [etc.] K. 2001: Ukrainian encyclopedia named after M. P. Bazhana, Volume 3. P. 176.

groups of the population and, above all, a huge mass of dependent peasants were deprived of such a right. However, there was another social state in Left Bank Ukraine, whose representatives actively participated in the preparation and drafting of their own orders, which later became one of the most important sources for studying social and legal realities in Ukraine. That social state was the clergy. Its participation in the work of the Commission is explained by the fact that it included a representative from the Holy Synod, who, on behalf of the government, was supposed to represent the Church at the assembly with his own points-requests from the clergy. "Old Believers" who lived in the Hetmanate were also to elect one deputy with an order⁹.

Following the publication of the Manifesto on 14 December 1766 convening the Commission, the Synod, after some debate, on 1 September 1767 ordered the Kyivan clergy to prepare a draft on the needs of the Ukrainian clergy and immediately submit it to the Synod. In this regard, the Kyiv Consistory carried out extensive preparatory work to identify materials that proved the previous rights, privileges, and liberties granted to the Orthodox Ukrainian Church, monasteries, churches, and the clergy in general by Russian, Lithuanian and Polish princes to Russian tsars. On the basis of the collected materials, a draft was drawn up, which was heard at the meetings of the Kyiv Consistory in February 1768, approved, signed by Metropolitan Arseny and all the highest hierarchs of the Kyiv diocese, and sent to the Synod on 4 March. Thus, a general response from the monks and white clergy was drawn up in the Kyiv diocese. In the other two dioceses, the white clergy discussed their needs separately from the black clergy and presented two draft points. The Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and the Mezhyhirsky Monastery also sent their demands to the Synod¹⁰.

In terms of its content, the Order from the Kyiv Diocese presented to the Synod was large and consisted of 74 points under the general title: «On granting the Little Russian clergy various kinds of «benefits» (i.e. profits) and returning to it those rights and privileges, liberties and freedoms that it enjoyed in former times». The entire order contained 4 sections: I – "On the benefits of the white clergy"; II – "On the possession of the monasteries of the Kyiv Diocese with property and other benefits"; III – «On the benefits belonging to the own episcopal person, the Kyiv consistory and the Academy»; IV – "On the general advantages

9 Kogut Z. Russian centralism and Ukrainian autonomy: liquidation of the Hetmanate 1760–1830. Kyiv: Osnovy, 1996. 317 p. P. 116.

10 See an order from the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. – DIA of Ukraine in Kyiv. F. 128. Op. 1 general. Sr. 344.

of the priestly and monastic rank of people”¹¹. This Order apparently reflects the views of all the clergy of the diocese and does not separate the needs of the parish clergy from the needs of the monasteries.

A detailed substantive analysis of all points-demands from the Kyiv Diocese testifies to its content and detail, because almost all the clergy were involved in the drafting of the points, who at a special meeting elected and sent their representatives to the council for final discussion and signing of the Order. In printed form, the points-orders from the Kyiv diocese occupy 127 pages in small compact print, while the points from the Pereyaslav, Chernihiv dioceses, Pechersk and Mezhyhirsky monasteries, although they contain 74 requirements, occupy only 37 pages¹².

In their Orders, the Ukrainian clergy seemed to sum up their «joint» life with Russia. Using the method of historical comparison, characterizing its position in the mid-60s of the 18th century, the clergy constantly mentions the «old orders», compares them with modern ones, drawing conclusions not in favor of the new. Believing that it is only possible to turn the wheel of history backwards with points-requests, the Ukrainian clergy naively asked to return the previous orders of the «old time», which meant the period from the Union of Lublin in 1569 to the middle of the 17th century. It was this «return to past times and old orders» that was put forward as the clergy’s program for the future.

Let’s take a closer look at the contents of the Clergy Order. Thus, the clergy begin presenting their points with references to major historical milestones that were particularly important for Ukraine. Such an event, according to the drafters of the Order, was the Union of Lublin in 1569, the subsequent charters of the Polish king Sigismund Augustus, which emphasized the rights, freedoms and privileges of the clergy; the Ukrainian people were equated in status with the population of the Kingdom of Poland and which declared the Lithuanian Statute as the main legal document¹³. Other decrees confirming the rights and freedoms of the Ukrainian people, issued by Moscow rulers from 1654 to 1763, are also mentioned.

Several strong autonomist tendencies were manifested in the Church Orders of the Clergy. The desire to revive the autonomous Ukrainian Church

11 Orlovsky P. Materials for the biography of Kyiv Metropolitan Arseniy Mohyliansky // Proceedings of the Kyiv Theological Academy. 1894. № 10. P. 316-321; His same. To the history of the Little Russian clergy // Kyiv. starina. 1896. Vol. 56. P. 50-54; Institute of manuscripts of the Central Scientific Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Folio 443/434 P. Ark. 176-179.

12 Orders to deputies from present seats to the Commission on the drafting of the draft of the New Constitution // Collection of RIO. T. 43. St. Petersburg, 1885. P. 433-560. (Further – Orders...)

13 Orders... P. 433.

was expressed by Metropolitan Arseniy Mohylyanskyi of Kyiv, who wanted to create an autonomous Orthodox Church for the Hetmanship with the center in Kyiv. Accordingly, the Kyiv Order contains a complete program of church autonomy: recognition of the metropolitan title «Metropolitan of Kyiv, Halych and all of Little Russia»; renewal of the custom, according to which the metropolitan was elected only from among Ukrainians; the transfer of jurisdiction over the Metropolitan of Kyiv from the Holy Synod to the College of Foreign Affairs; a reminder that the Chernihiv, Pereyaslav and other dioceses, as well as the Stauropygian monasteries, were also once under his patronage; the requirement that abbots be approved by the Metropolitan of Kyiv or bishops of dioceses, and not appointed directly by the Synod¹⁴.

One of the most important demands, with which the Ukrainian clergy came forward in the first paragraphs of the Order, was to certify their rights to the title of nobility. Two proofs were presented in this regard: firstly, the privileges of 1569 of the Polish king Sigismund Augustus and the Lithuanian Statute, which provided for the same punishment for insulting and dishonouring persons of the clergy as for the nobility. In addition, the hetman's universals were mentioned: B. Khmelnytskyi in 1649 and 1651, Yu. Khmelnytskyi in 1663, according to which it was determined that insulting «spiritual fathers and priests» should be «severely punished with death»¹⁵. In addition, the clergy of the Chernihiv diocese in their Orders appealed to the treaty of 1654, according to which the Ukrainian clergy was also granted the right to enjoy the privileges and freedoms of the nobility.

Secondly, the fact that in the eighteenth century the clergy, like the foreman, were in the civil service was also substantiated¹⁶. The clergy counted among their official duties: praying for the royal family, the authorities, and the whole society; performing state church ceremonies; performing folk rites and ceremonies; distributing the Holy Scriptures; teaching the people to know God; execution of state affairs and judicial proceedings by the clergy; and other services.¹⁷ Thus proving their rights to the title of nobility, the clergy expressed a desire that when the new Constitution was concluded, they would certainly be admitted to the title of nobility with all the benefits and privileges that came with it¹⁸.

14 Collection of the Imperial Russian Historical Society. 1885. Vol. 43. P. 504-511, articles 36, 37; P. 550, article 66; P. 508-510, articles 38, 39, 40; P. 510-511, articles 41, 42; p. 513, article 44].

15 Yakovleva T. Hetmanship in the second half of the 1750s of the 17th century: reasons and the beginning of the Ruin: [monograph] / T. Yakovleva. Kyiv: Osnovy, 1998. 447 p. P. 422.

16 Orders ... P. 434, 435, 546, 572, 576, 577.

17 Right there. P. 435, 594.

18 Right there. P. 436, 572, 576, 587.

Such a demand was caused by the fact that, despite the indirect legal confirmation of this provision in the law¹⁹, in practice the clergy significantly lost its position, «owing» both to government policy and as a result of retreating from its immediate direct duties, and in this regard, with the negative attitude of various states towards it.

A significant number of the clergy's points were related to the resolution of economic issues that had accumulated by this time. In the first place, there were demands for the cancellation of the order of 1728, which forbade churches and monasteries to acquire land by purchase and receiving by will²⁰, because as a result of the implementation of this order the material situation of the clergy deteriorated extremely²¹. In justifying this request, the clergy referred, first of all, to the confirmation by Empress Elizabeth Petrovna in her decrees of 1749 and 1751 (decrees on the election and approval of Hetman K. Razumovsky) of «all liberties, rights and privileges» to the Ukrainian people.²²

Having the sense of the coming secularization in Ukraine, naively believing that the government would still leave ownership to the Church, the black clergy especially emphasized in their points on preserving their previous right to own villages, arable and hay lands, mills, lakes and fisheries²³. And in order to stop numerous land disputes, the monasteries asked to define precisely the boundaries of their possessions with the marking of the boundaries on the map and binding with surveyors' seals so that there would be no legal disputes regarding the monastery lands²⁴. As we can see, through its orders, the Church sought not only to obtain confirming rights to the land, but also to consolidate these rights with thorough boundary documents and, in addition, to give it the right to increase its real estate at the expense of, first of all, Cossack lands. Undoubtedly, this was significantly different from the requirements of both the local administration and the Cossacks, because the local nobility spoke strongly in favor of the secularization of church land ownership.

In the same economic package of demands, the clergy declared about protecting the integrity of their possessions and securing them from possible theft. Here, the clergy, first of all, pointed to the painful decree of 1752, according to which part

19 The rights on which the Little Russian people are judged. Kyiv, 1879. P. 835.

20 Orders ... - P. 437, 477, 576, 594, 596.

21 Right there. P. 437-438, 478, 569.

22 Orders ... - P. 439, 478.

23 Right there. P. 561, 573, 591.

24 Right there. P. 489, 562.

of the church's inherited and acquired lands were given to immigrants without paying the church any remuneration²⁵. However, in the seventeenth century, the greatest blow to the land ownership of monasteries was inflicted by their own subordinate peasants. Thus, in the villages that belonged to churches and monasteries, peasants signed up for Cossack service, and the lands belonging to them, thus, fell out of the control of the church²⁶, and "the peasants, who remained, secretly sold their plots to the Cossacks"²⁷. The monasteries asked that all their lands, which «secretly» passed to the Cossacks, be returned, and the Cossacks themselves should be returned or removed altogether from the subordination of church possessions²⁸.

The next rather large economic problem raised by the clergy was the issue of freedom of distilling. The white clergy began to demand permission to engage in this trade and the cancellation of the prohibitive and offensive decrees (1757 and 1761) of Hetman K. Razumovsky. The black clergy, in turn, demanded that they be granted a monopoly on the production and sale of vodka in their domains²⁹. It should be noted here that the authors of the order from the Little Russian Collegium wrote in relation to the distilling industry: «... this trade has become... unlimited, so that in Hlukhiv alone, a town not very large, there are 166 taverns and... almost all churches have their own taverns under their name». Administrators proposed to limit the right to engage in distilling and grant it only to those who own at least 15 decytas of arable or other land³⁰.

Substantiating their rights to the title of nobility at the beginning of the Order, the clergy tried to achieve another important advantage for themselves – exemption from paying state taxes and performing duties that monastery peasants had to perform in the seventeenth century. Some of the duties, as the researchers point out, were carried out by the white clergy³¹.

In this regard, the Church's efforts were aimed at returning to the times of the second half of the seventeenth century, when the clergy, along with the gentry, were exempted by the hetman's authorities from paying state taxes and duties, and similar benefits were granted to peasants of church

25 Orders ... -P. 469.

26 Right there. P. 481, 561.

27 Right there. P. 481, 561.

28 Orders ... -P. 485, 562.

29 Right there. P. 485, 495, 563.

30 Right there. P. 228.

31 See: Lototskyi O. The social position of the white (secular) clergy in Ukraine and Russia in the eighteenth century // Notes of the Shevchenko Scientific Society. Vol. 21. Issue 1. 1898. P. 10-27.

landowners³². At first glance, the desire to exempt their subjects from paying state taxes and performing duties raised the clergy to the rank of defenders of the oppressed in the face of the power of the state machine. However, the real goals of this «patronage» were different – they were not even hidden, but openly emphasised: state taxes and duties for monastic peasants were so burdensome and heavy, and sometimes financially unfeasible, that in some years this led to massive escapes, as a result of which “a very small number of subjects reside in the monastery possessions, others have already completely emptied; monasteries suffer from this and are destroyed...”³³. Therefore, it was the fear of being left without workers and direct producers that forced the clergy to actively demand exemption from state taxes and duties for their peasants.

Anticipating new taxation and the government's desire to limit church land ownership, the clergy asked in the Order «not to carry out an audit that is not in keeping with local customs»³⁴. This refers to the Rumyantsev audit, during which the auditors not only described arable and hayfield land in detail but also demanded that the owners provide documentary evidence of ownership. In addition, the auditors examined in detail the number of crops, the profit generated by the property, the amount of forest land, the presence of local crafts, etc. Such an unusually thorough audit frightened not only the peasants, who rightly saw it, as they had done many times in previous years, as an attempt by the authorities to increase taxes, but also church landowners, who felt that after the audit was completed, an order for secularisation would be issued.

All the orders from the clergy contained another requirement, namely, they opposed any interference with the church judicial system and demanded that a representative of the clergy be present in a secular court when considering cases against persons under church jurisdiction; they insisted that the clergy and those under church jurisdiction be released from military quarters. This was the content of the requirements of the clergy set out in their Orders.

By the mid-60s of the 18th century there were changes in the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church. Just as Peter I, during his time, had opposed the conservative Russian clergy to “new” people from Ukraine in Church, Catherine

32 Orders ... P. 441, 469–470, 471–472, 474, 482–483, 491, 496–497, 562–565, 571, 574, 577.

33 Right there. P. 470–472.

34 Orders ... -P. 553–554.

II, using the contradictions between the Russian and Ukrainian clergy, sought to paralyse the opposition to the church hierarchy, which consisted almost entirely of Ukrainians, and began to promote Russian hierarchs, who had already graduated from the Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy, to the church administration. The most prominent places in the church leadership were occupied by Dmytro Sechenov, Gedeon Krynovskiy, Gavriil Petrov, Platon Levshin, Inokentiy Nechaev, Amrosii Podobedov, and others. They owed their rise to the state and were therefore ready to serve it with all their might.

After receiving the Orders from the Ukrainian clergy, the Synod studied them for a long time and carefully – from 12 May 1768 to 3 February 1769. During that time, all the points of the Orders from the Ukrainian clergy were divided into three categories:

I. The items that were approved and recommended for inclusion in the General Order from the Synod (these are items: from the Kyiv Diocese 1–9, 11–14, 51–52, 54–56, 61, 72; from the Chernihiv Diocese 1, 5, 8, 9–11, 19, 20, 22–24; from the Pereyaslav Diocese 1; from the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra 2, 5, 12, 16; from the Kyiv-Mezhihirsky Monastery 2, 6, 8).

II. The items that were approved by the Synod, however, were left to the discretion of the deputy from the Synod – Bishop of Tver Gavriil Petrov – to include them in the general order (these are points from the Kyiv Diocese 10, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 28, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 45, 47, 49, 58–60, 62, 68, 74; from Chernihiv Diocese 6, 7; from Pereyaslav Diocese 6; from Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra 3, 15).

III. The items that were rejected by the Synod. Those included the items that most outraged the members of the Synod with their bold attempts to separate the position of the Ukrainian clergy and, in particular, the status of the metropolitan ³⁵.

Thus, the Synod removed from the Order of the Ukrainian clergy the request items that contradicted the centralising policy of the tsar, everything that had at least some hint of independence for Ukraine. But all of this lost its significance because the position of the church, its rights and privileges did not become the subject of discussion at the Legislative Commission. As you know, due to the war with Turkey and some other circumstances, the Commission was closed, the requests-orders of the Ukrainian clergy did not go beyond the scope of discussion in the Synod, but they did not go into oblivion either. Over the next century, the request points were discussed

35 Telychenko I.V. Social needs and desires of Little Russians in the era of Catherine's Commission // *Kievskaya starina*. Vol. 30. 889. P. 183.

by the government, in the State Council, and gradually some of them were included in the Code of Laws of the Russian Empire.

An analysis of the main requirements of the Ukrainian clergy to the Legislative Commission of 1767–774 allows us to testify that it acted from two positions. On the one hand, they placed their hopes on the tsarist protectionist policy, seeking to obtain from the tsar a noble title with all the rights, benefits and privileges that flowed from it; to provide the clergy with strong guarantees of preserving their land tenure, protecting it from theft, and, moreover, the opportunity to increase their real estate at the expense of other estates, and to stop competition from the burghers and Cossacks in distilling, trade and crafts. In pursuit of the goal of making full use of the material and human resources of their possessions, the clergy relied on the authorities to help them resolve the peasant issue, attaching peasants to their land holdings and preventing their subjects from moving to other estates, including the Cossacks. The clergy also asked for the exemption of their peasants from state taxes and duties in order to use them more effectively within the fiefdoms.

On the other hand, in solving political issues, the clergy's aspirations were limited to the need to preserve the once traditional subordination to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, to grant the metropolitan the same rights and privileges in matters of internal administration. By that time, the subordination of the church to the state had become a fact. The church no longer opposed the state, its apparatus became part of the state apparatus, and clergy became «state officials in cassocks». The fate of the Ukrainian clergy was also already predetermined. The government's agenda included the secularisation of monastic land ownership on the Left Bank of Ukraine, and in this regard, the government was supported by a consensual Synod, local administration, Cossacks and petty bourgeois.

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