

## PHILOSOPHY

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### TOTALITARIAN PHENOMENON OF POWER AND ITS TYRES

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#### **Abstract**

The article analyzes totalitarian phenomenon of power through the understanding of power as a power – function. The functioning of power is carried out in the disciplinary space and is manifested mainly in two models (types) - the model of the monastery (traditional society) and the model of the exam (industrial and post-industrial society)

**Keywords:** totalitarianism, power-function, a disciplinary space, the model of monastery, the model of the exam, monetary totalitarianism

In the scientific literature it is generally accepted that the concept «totalitarianism» has negative connotations [1], includes an ideological structure, movement and a real political system [2]. Traditionally,

totalitarianism is reduced to "a comprehensive orderliness of society", identified with "full control over the individual by the authorities", "striving for a radical transformation of the entire social system in accordance with the revolutionary nature of social utopia, leaving no room for individual freedom and social contradictions" [2,p. 204, 208, 210]. Fascism and communism were considered to be the real embodiment of totalitarian systems (F. von Hayek, K. Popper, etc.). F. von Hayek opposed liberalism to socialism, considering that the basis of the rights and freedoms of an individual is an economic freedom. He opposed against the principles on which autonomous organizations live (factories, the army, for example) and transferring of these principles to the public life. It is inevitably resulted into the idea of a radical reorganization of society.

The logic of reasoning of the above authors is as follows. Totalitarianism is the reality of the twentieth century; it is a product of industrial society, associated with the practice of etatism, collectivist-mechanistic world outlook, alienation of an individual, the growth of rationality and orderliness in society. Marginal were social basis of the totalitarian system. Further. Civil society and independence of private life are being eliminated. In the political sphere the intergrowth of state and the single party is pointed out, there is no opposition. It creates the appearance through pseudo-democratic institutions of government of using people's support. The government operates through the apparatus of coercion with the help of mass terror. In the social sphere (social structure) there is a lumpenization of the population. In the economic sphere the characteristic features of totalitarianism concern etatization of economic life, the absence of private ownership, market relations, competition, etc. In the spiritual realm the only ideology dominates. The varieties of totalitarianism are usually classified as fascism (Italy), National Socialism (Germany) and Stalinism in the USSR [2, p. 207].

But if totalitarianism is a product of industrial society, to which system we can relate ruling of Calvin in the XVI-th century? The Geneva Republic under Calvin showed an example of such totalitarianism and total manipulation that those varieties of totalitarianism of the twentieth century were being paled. Christian world outlook forbade murder, but within the framework of religious ideology, the practice of the Jesuits allowed murder, all the churches blessed the war, executed heretics. Most clearly the totalitarian character of the religious ideology manifested itself during the period of Calvin's being at Geneva.

Calvin advocated the union of religion and politics. The duty of the church is the welfare of the state, and the state ensures the welfare of the church. Blasphemy should be punished as a civil crime. The ideal state is a

republic in which citizens elect aristocrats of the spirit who are able to rule a state in which power is distributed among the different members of the city magistrate which receives its powers from God. It is the duty of the magistrate to apply the law of God, understood through the sacred Scripture.

Under Calvin in Geneva, the Kingdom of God was turned into a torture chamber, dominance of theocracy. The disciplinary space of power was manifested in a "pure" form. Any violation of the rules was punished rigidly.

Especially Calvin fought against his "ideological" opponents-the Geneva Libertines, who advocated unlimited freedom of spirit, everything was allowed! Pierre Alu, a member of the small Council, an eminent citizen was imprisoned, tortured and taken barefoot along the streets for insulting Calvin. The first Martyr of libertine liberty Jacques Gruet was beheaded for plotting against Calvin. For the words "Thunder, still we come in the fields, nothing will happen to us!" one can execute, then punish with whips and expel. Children who ate pies on the church porch were punished with lashes. People were caught for extra food, fashion shoes, artful braiding of hair, for dancing or for what they watched dancing, etc. Calvin tried to establish "the Kingdom of God", goodness and justice, a paradise in Switzerland, using such measures [3].

We have another historical example. Under Bolsheviks in 1918 N. Berdyaev can deliver lectures on the topic: "Why I don't like communism?" In Soviet Russia it was tolerantly perceived prostitution, and the struggle with this phenomenon was carried out exclusively in terms of education and employment, associated with rising of educational and professional level. In December 1917 responsibility for homosexual relations was abolished. Responsibility for homosexuality was not foreseen in the criminal codes of 1922 and 1926. Until May 1928, there was no prohibition on drug trafficking. In fact, there was an indifferent attitude to drug using and drug trafficking as a social phenomenon. In the 1930s, the social rehabilitation of women engaged in prostitution is being curtailed. In relation to them the repressive policy is carried out. Criminal responsibility for homosexuality with a punishment of deprivation of liberty for a term from 3 to 8 years is introduced in 1934. In the same year criminal responsibility for planting of the poppy and Indian hemp has been established [4, p.36-37]. And how to agree with the statement that "historically the first and classical form of political totalitarianism was communism (socialism) of the Soviet type, which began with the "military-Communist system, being formed in general terms in 1918" [2, c.211].

There is a certain contradiction: on the one hand, totalitarianism is referred to as a political superstructure, and on the other, the influence of totalitarianism on all spheres of public life is emphasized. H. Arendt, one of the

first who started to study totalitarianism, believed that totalitarianism needs for "atomized and structureless mass", "... the Bolshevik methods have experienced an impact on the isolated mass man" [1, p. 425. 465]. Those who are familiar with the history of the Soviet period, this statement are at least surprising. It was well known that cell of social organization in the USSR was made by labor colltctivities with their principles of cooperation and mutual assistance.

The main types of totalitarianism include religious, political and informational (neo-totalitarianism) forms [5, 178-185]. In our opinion, such a typology is based on different grounds. The first type is associated with ideology; the second is determined by the political regime that has adopted the features of total politicization; the third is determined by the type of society – information, which has changed the means of control over the individual. This typology is difficult to accept.

So what is totalitarianism? It is known that the understanding of totalitarianism is carried out through the understanding of the concept «power". Naturally, there is a question of how to understand the power through which it is implemented? The idea of totalitarianism, totality actualizes the problem of the relationship between the individual and society, normative regulation, social control, coercion and violence, preservation of socio-cultural and national identity (in the context of globalization), stability and order, i.e. the functioning of the social system. In our view, to explain totalitarianism, understanding power in legally-political terms, authority is unconstructive. In addition to this structure, there are many disciplinary institutions of power, the sphere of privileges, illegality, (M. Foucault's term), social organizations, that ensures the functioning of power and guarantees its social and political stability through normative rationality. In this context M. Foucault's analytical scheme [6] explaining power in terms of power-function is the most optimal for understanding of totalitarianism as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Power-function is the intersection of different discourses: economic, legal, psychological, medical, moral, and linguistic. The functional approach to the power considers it as constantly operating and aspiring to the maximum efficiency in its essence - control. The social order exists due to the implementation of normative standards and adequate to motivational activity of the objects of power in the direction to conformism. Social control performs protective and stabilizing functions for reproduction of the dominant type of social relations. Power and power relations are substantive in their essence; arise due to the natural necessity of ordering, structuring, differentiation and preservation of the integrity of society. This thesis has been first argued by

Foucault. He introduced the concept «technology of power», the purpose of which was to locate and rank individuals in the space. Power gives rise to a new kind of stratification, ranking people in the social space, so we can talk about the power stratification. Power operates through the "function" and "power" categories. They are characterized by extreme abstraction and as they were independent from the specific content; embody the determination of power in its ability to determine any action. In its pure form, power-function is manifested in the panoptical space. The idea of the Panopticon was inspired by J. Bentham, who presented the architectural model of such composition, where each individual was seen but he did not see that he was being watched. The theoretical understanding of the Panopticon, in which power functions in the disciplinary space through obedience and supervision, was given by M. Foucault.

Panopticon, like no other form of power, symbolizes its meaning: multidimensional. On the one hand, the panoptical apparatus can be integrated into any social sphere - medicine, education, production. According to this apparatus, rigid classification of ranking depending on the abilities of each and the level of undertaken work is being made. It ensures the functioning of power from the inside, while its presence is subtle, elusive. Coupling of power-function in the panoptical apparatus is most effective and economical due to the closed and ranked measurement of space. The panoptical scheme works to strengthen social forces – to raise production, develop the economy, to spread education, to raise the level of public morality, all this is within the disciplinary space. On the other hand, Panopticon is a kind of lab, machine for performing experiments designed to change the behavior of individuals through drilling.

Power functions in space and manifests its strength through the technology of discipline. The power does not like open space with free, diffuse circulation of individuals. Each individual needs to be placed in order to be found and controlled: criminals depending on the nature of the crime, the ill – on the nature of the disease, the pupils in the class -on the behavior and achievements "[7, p. 216]. The power by itself cannot be found: it is not localized because of its diffusion. The diffuse nature of power, manifested through disciplinary technologies, connects the various spheres of social space into a single whole, through which the "soul and body" of individuals and collectivities pass. Power through functional relationships and diffuse distribution is amorphous, has no clear structure.

We use the functional approach for understanding of power and complete with a substrate approach designed to reveal and explain the content of power in different historical periods. Power in terms of this approach is

determined by the historical context. Power is universal; it functions so that it can be found in various socio-historical spaces. Power - function is monologue; its main conductor is the state and its institutions: the army, the prison, as well as traditions, customs, beliefs, value-normative standards.

Model of the monastery is a model (type) of disciplinary space (we use the terminology of M. Foucault), which is typical mainly for the traditional type of society. Disciplinary space is always a «space of cell". L. P. Karsavin noted that monastic orders were formed on the model of a military camp of the Roman type (the same ranking, hierarchical space with pyramidal supervision). The pre-Christian meaning of the word "asceticism" meant military training. The monastic order was conceived as a military detachment or school. The monk was a warrior, and his belt – a part of the Roman military form. The monastic obedience (Benedictine order) to the Abbey and the elder brothers, obedience and humility were the projection of military discipline. "The brotherhood seeking for God appears to Benedict in the form of a military detachment – schola. "We must establish a unit of divine service" – *Constituenda est ergo a nobis dominici schola serviti*. Therefore, the activity of the monk is "militare" to serve; and the Charter of the monastery means as "lex, subqua, militare vis", the law, inviolable and immutable as the immutable law of military discipline. "The Holy Charter" contains everything you need for a warrior of the Lord; this is the "Charter-mentor". And obedience by itself - the discipline of the monastery and the unlimited power of the Abbey turns the brotherhood into the army of Christ". [8, c.58].

The model of the military camp-the monastery is projected into other social cells of society – school, the various production enterprises. It should be noted that the idea of a utopian ideal state (Plato, Thomas Moore, T. Campanella, etc.) was based on the symbiosis of power- function in the disciplinary space and military experience, associated with the constant coercion, infinitely increasing drill and automatic obedience. Model of the monastery relates primarily to the traditional type of society. The most obvious function of power to supervise has developed in space of prison; Functioning of it within panoptism allows reinforcing punitive and supervisory functions through methods of securing, distribution, recording and registration. The disciplinary mechanism singles out punishment "according to the norm" and does not reduce to "traditional punishment according to the law". Thus, "normal" schools, "normal" army, standards in the production process and general health standards in medicine appear. Besides, the single ideology with mythological-religious dominant reigned in the traditional type of society. It introduced the idea of punishment and reward, vengeance, the totality of power,

the dictatorship of Holiness, justifying murder and violence. In social practice, "returning to the roots" meant the resumption of old traditions and customs, their unquestionable execution. Torture, reporting, confiscation of property, and public mockeries are not a complete list of punitive sanctions used in traditional society. At the hands of the Inquisition hundreds of thousands of people were killed. And even in democratic Athens "the unwritten law of tradition." was dominated. And although the "competition model" has been embedded in all spheres of public life in Athens and should be implemented publicly, after the victory it could be skinned from the defeated (the competition of Apollo and Marsyas), or to beat the offender in a dark alley way [9, c.32-33]. The ideology of traditional society was totalitarian in its basis (religious and political dictatorship), forming a "totalitarian consciousness".

What is the disciplinary dimension of power-function in XX - XXI centuries? O. V. Kharkhordin in his writing "To Denounce and Be a Hypocrite", using the genealogical description of M. Foucault, comes to very interesting conclusions in the analysis of the Soviet society. He noted that the model of the monastery, in which supervision was dominated through the excommunication of sins, followed by the practice of friendly exhortation and denunciation (according to the Charter of I. Volotsky), as a cell- network of power functioned in the USSR. So, in A. S. Makarenko's community everyone became the chief, at least for an hour – tyranny over himself, mediated by collectivity. Soviet schools, factories, army units, labor camps were built on the model of the monastery, in which the leaders of collectivity acted as the saints. Mass terror came at a time when there was a merger of the collectivity as a subject with self-criticism and the practice of denunciation and purges. Secret reporting, and even more open, was very common. There were informal groups of activists that held under their supervision the entire life of the collectivity and their members in all institutions and organizations [10, p.126-127, 132]. They have gained the immense power of the mafias. [11, p. 66]. Paradoxically, through the practice of denunciation under Stalin they learned to recognize a person in themselves, there was the cultivation of each person. In practice, it led to the manifestation of heroism, sacrifice, self-improvement [10, p. 288]. Under Stalin, social control was "sluggish and flabby"; there was no community, even forcibly united and mobilized. It was during the period of liberalization under Khrushchev and Brezhnev the pervasive system of social control prevailed, because party participation in justice and public affairs increased, which pushed for mass control over deviants. A well-balanced system of total surveillance has been put, which has been based on orderly and relatively peaceful surveillance over each other. In parallel with the introduction of normalizing surveillance, a

classification of preventive crimes was introduced – something that should be targeted by the preventive gaze. Khrushchev introduced a more severe punishment than Stalin. Under Stalin there was still a space of individual freedom, not submitted to the power discourse. People, even in the years of terror, could avoid the threat of repression by simply moving to another city, or by successfully ridiculing their prosecutors during self-criticism meetings, or by pointing the punishing sword of justice at their persecutors [10, c. 381-384]. A. Zinoviev also notes the weakness of social control under Stalin [11, p.35]. It was under Khrushchev’s ruling failure to inform the authorities about the impending crime (in the case of treason and banditry) was codified as a crime. Under Khrushchev, a growing number of guilty verdicts are growing. In the late 80-s of XX century, the soviet human being was particularly visible for the eye of the authorities. Penitentiary policy has been tightened since 1960. In the private life a human being should participate in the mutual humiliation of each other. Often there was a situation when in provinces local authorities began to oppress objectionable persons, there were "laws of its own”, it was necessary to go to Moscow to attain the truth. Under Khrushchev there was a merger of denunciation and excommunication, it was widespread.

Social cells-factories, institutes, collective farms, shops, schools performed functions of ideological and moral education of citizens, involving them in active life and exercising control over them. The party in this meaning was an element of the social structure, of the cell, which was a cell of the whole.

In the West, the social space of power also functions through cells-collectivities within the framework of the relations of the chief-subordinate, consent-coercion, but most importantly, that merciless robotic discipline dominates in them. All social relations in the West operate within the law of functioning of money as capital. Besides, the rationalized activity in collectivities with severe discipline fits into the disciplinary space of power. The appropriate duties and qualifications are required of the staff members. Between collectivities there is interpersonal competition. Endless tests and exams provoke the appearance of a general feeling of fear and uncertainty [12 p. 290]. In the Soviet Union, surveillance was also carried out through the collectivity. But in the West, surveillance acts differently, through hidden competition and violence of colleagues. In western cells business relations, “business dictatorship” dominates. Democracy, human rights, civil freedom is external compensation for the lack of them in the business life [13, p. 250,261]. According to A. Zinoviev, modern Western society is a society of monetary totalitarianism. Money becomes a universal and comprehensive means of



measuring, recording and calculating of human activities, institutions and enterprises, means of managing the economy, other spheres of public life, means of managing people [11, c.108].

Control over elections is increasing, censorship is becoming more sophisticated, brutal trends in the economic and political space of power are noted, and attention is focused on the growth of violence against the social body. Violence becomes part of the moral order, is included in the cultural process of routine, legitimization, normalization of social life.

The social space of power of the XX-XXI centuries is characterized by a tendency to increasing of rationalization in all aspects of society. A new paradigm of rationalization G. Ritzer identified by analogy with the fast-food restaurant - mcdonalization. The process of spreading the principles of fast-food has covered almost all spheres of society, both in the United States and around the world. Family, school, hospital, political power are likened to "big Mac", the content of which can be calculated, monitored, predicted, based on the results of polls, ratings, etc. Mcdonalization makes the disciplinary space of power more sophisticated, because more effective mechanisms of control of behavioral acts are forming. People are being turned into screw to be easy to manipulate. Mcdonalization of human relations leads to the suppression of individuality. The system of control is increasing in education – introduction of infinite tests. Initiative and creativity in education are neither encouraged nor required. Education “for obedience” is welcomed. Conformists are declared to be good. The general rule is the fact that those students successfully graduate from college who are subject to the actions of the control mechanisms [14, p. 23. 14-16,121-122, 322].

In politics, there is the most intense manipulation of public consciousness: politicians communicate with voters through TV and cyberspace, skillfully using advertising and carefully selecting the image. Functional-substrate measurement of power and power relations is carried out on the basis of unity of power and knowledge. Humanitarian reason turns out to be more skilled and sophisticated in the practice of supervision. Not by chance in the arsenal of the humanities the concepts "adaptation", "socialization", "social-oriented behavior," "role expectations", “group behavior," "group thinking", etc. are appearing.

The power in the functional space acts not from the top to the bottom, as in the case of its socio-political structuredness, but, on the contrary, from the bottom up to the top. Power is born from below. Thus, the arbitrariness of the king's power was often carried out not from above: relatives, neighbors, and colleagues showed vigilance on their own initiative to imprison the

troublemaker. Athenian democracy gave rise to a whole army of professional informers, false witnesses and blackmailers, often not out of fear but out of conscience, persecuting innocent citizens [9, c. 129]. Probably in the 30-ies in the Soviet Union thanks to the vigilance of neighbors, co-workers and "friends" a growing number of "enemies of the people" are increasing. To the Royal power in XY111 century, the "father of Nations" in the twentieth century and in modern Russia in XX1 to the President, the guarantor of the Constitution it is being referred as the latter, endowed with divine attributes, power, and immanent to "public service" in order to resolve family, neighborhood and professional conflicts.

A. Zinoviev noted that the Stalin period is a period of democracy, the power began from the bottom. Stalin's terror, mass repressions are the essence of the signs of democracy. The country was ruled by people from the lowest strata of the population – millions of people according to their way of life do not distinguish themselves from the controlled masses. Dilettantism of power contributed to the rise of corruption, decay of the top. This environment gave the highest percentage of repressed. The dilettante power needs to be controlled. When the party-state authorities have gained more or less respectable view, Stalinism has become obsolete. At the top are leaders, masses – down, between them there is a control mechanism. The levers of power are concentrated in the NKVD, the KGB, and the authorized persons of leader, numerous societies and unions. [13, c. 64-65]

The process of globalization has changed the panoptic nature of the power-function, inherent to it in XY11-X1X centuries. It has become more mobile. The Panopticon with its extensive staff of supervisors remained in the past. Power-function has become more elusive and flexible. Since "instability today is observed everywhere" (P. Bourdieu), there is a blurring of normative regulation. Unreliability becomes the basis for the construction of a global power hierarchy and basic methods of social control. The notion of a closed space becomes meaningless, begins to outlive itself as a limit of communication in connection with the growth of electronic media. It is possible to retain population using economic factors. The panoptical style of the working houses of the past, which served as a laboratory for the industrial society, ceased to be used even in prisons-laboratories of the globalizing society. Control forms are being changed. They include advanced technology including the computerization of the national deviant database system.

Disciplinary space in the twentieth century acquires the shape of an electronic eye of "big brother" and watches us in the streets, work, and shops. This trend continues in the post-industrial society. Incomes of citizens are

entered into computers; plastic cards allow you immediately to learn about all the movements, purchases, preferences. Correspondence and information distributed over the Internet can be easily controlled: it is available for viewing and control (the management of firms collects information about which sites are most often visited by their employees). Thus, the power is able to control the information, collect it, keep track of the behavior of controlled people and, if it is necessary, to use it. But, if dissidents appear, "science at the power" and their representatives - political technologists, scientists, state writers, engineers of "human souls" immediately come into force. They will make them as objects of study of «gaze of power», label them as «rebels», "extremists", "ultra communists". A total-integral system of power commits violence and thus loses the "meaning and source of meaning" of power. Elections turn into shows with pre-predicted results, though power-function hammers the idea of "free elections," and the language of election campaigns are clichés and stamps of TV hosts of popular talk shows. This is the phenomenon of the "Great censor" of the bourgeois society, so brilliantly studied by Foucault. There is less and less space for "national-ritual" and "artistic image" communication. Power-function determines and needs-pleasure («relax", "have fun") in accordance with advertising patterns: whom to love, whom to hate, whom to make a hero, etc. Power as a totality produces an individual, obedient and controlled from the point of view of hedonistic attitudes, because the "school of hedonistically sensual emancipation" also is controlled by power, hoping that a constant series of entertainment will not give an opportunity to pay attention to the actual state of things in society [15].

In our opinion, the substrate dimension of power-function is manifested mainly in the models «monastery" and "exam". As it was noted, the model of the monastery belongs to the traditional society. Model "exam" relates to industrial and postindustrial society. T. Adorno's and M. Horkheimer's works are devoted to criticism of the technological society [16], in which the system of total administration in the industrial society is analyzed. The instrumental rationality, which dominates in this type of society, can only constitute objects within the framework of established and non-reasoned projects on the basis of the principle of social functionality and utility. Hegel's statement - "all reality is reasonable" does not work in an industrial society, because the reason is not immanent to reality, it is not associated with the search for objective and universal truths, but is aimed at the one thing – to be only an instrument of social action, because everything for it is decided by the system itself, i.e. power. So the logic of domination of instrumental rationality made a person to be a screw in the system of production, the object of consumption of the

cultural industry, and the ideas acting as self-sufficient goals were transformed into "things", became an instrument of technology of domination over nature, society and human being. From the point of view of the authors of the critical theory, the management of society goes beyond the rational and takes the form of irrational in its essence, transforming into a system of total administration. For power-function it does not matter in what forms it exists - democratic, authoritarian, and totalitarian. Any power aspires to total ruling. The method "exam" used in modern society, locates individuals "in the documentary field" of school, medical, military codifications of behavior and achievements for one purpose: of their correction, classification, normalization, exclusion, etc. Method of the exam begins to spread throughout society. The ongoing rationalization of modern life dictates the emergence of new rules governing and ordering what to do within the system and what not to do. From staff members are required to have appropriate responsibilities and qualifications. Control and ranking of statuses is carried out through endless tests and exams "for compliance" causing "the emergence of a sense of fear and uncertainty"[12, p. 290]. The exam represents as a «normal view", allowing to classify and to pass sentence. Thanks to the exam, individuals become visible, they can be differentiated. In society exam plays the role of ritual, games, theatre performances in which a system of questions and answers there are and methods of grading and classification of their own. In the exams in the form of tests, interviews, you can see the "whole type of power", manipulation, its working "tiny scheme", which has spread in pedagogy, public service, psychiatry, the production process, in the recruitment of labor, etc. It turns out a continuous process of examination, which the individual is subjected to his/her whole life - from passing the test for "normality" in 6-7 years up to employment, as well regular medical examinations to verify compliance according to "health standards".

Thus, any power is totalitarian, no matter in which political regimes it exists. Totalitarian trends (McCarthyism) in the democratic US in the 50-ies and the liberalization of social life in Soviet Russia in the 20-ies were observed. In democratic Athens, any form of activity and life- crafts, ceremonies was subjected to the political dimension. Private person dropped out of the polis being in non polis one. A human, imposing himself to the polis as an independent political unit, is subjected to severe punishment: he is excommunicated from the polis for ten years or until the end of his life [9, c.41]. Only the form (type) of realization of totalitarian power (model of monastery or exam) and the nature of repressive methods are changing. They depend on the tasks set for the society. The era of art Nouveau set ambitious

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goals: for radical transformation of society (the USSR); the conquest of world domination (fascist Germany). Total mobilization of the population and tough repressive methods were required for these purposes.

In modern society, the importance of social control, which includes different ranges of action from psychological pressure, physical violence to economic coercion, is of the greatest importance, as it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain order and stability. The power uses the "creeping methods". Monetary totalitarianism is complemented by electronic total control. Naturally, there is a question about the resistance of power-function and its analysis in terms of development, the dynamics of the social system. But this is the topic of a particular study and a particular article.

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## HISTORY

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Shcheglov N.V.

### RESOLUTION OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF CLERGY AND LAITY 1917 THE ECCLESIASTICAL COURT

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#### **Abstract**

The article is devoted to the activity of the all-Russian Congress of clergy and laity, held from 1 to 12 June 1917 in Moscow. The Congress was preceded by the work of the local Council of 1917-1918 and in the number of delegates was the largest Cathedral phenomenon in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Congress addressed the issue of changing Church-state relations, as well as a wide range of Church-canonical and Church-practical issues, one of which was the creation of a Church court in the structure of the Russian Church.

**Keywords:** all-Russian Congress of clergy and laity, the ecclesiastical court, the local Council, the February revolution, the Holy Synod, the Ober-Procurator of the Synod.

Крушение российской монархии весной 1917 г. положило начало демократическим преобразованиям в стране, которые затронули важнейшие аспекты российской государственной и общественно-политической жизни. Изменение государственного строя стало фактическим завершением синодального устройства Русской Церкви, перед которой стояла задача выработки новых принципов церковно-государственных и внутрицерковных отношений [1].