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## **Election of Bishop Bazyli (Doroszkiwicz) as the Metropolitan of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church as part of the religious policy of the Polish state**

### **Introduction**

One of the most important elements in the state policy towards the so-called minority churches, including the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (PAKP), was to influence the choice of its superiors. The Orthodox hierarchy, which was largely dependent on the state authorities applying various forms of pressure, was not able to take effective, beneficial actions from the Church's point of view (Bendza, 2006: 180-181). At the same time, during the whole period of the People's Republic of Poland, reform programmes in the Church were formulated, often inspired by the authorities. They were postulated both by the Church community (bishops, clergy) and laity. They often appeared during the appointment or dismissal of new metropolitans (they were to be an element of the authorities' pressure on both the clergy and the hierarchy). They concerned, among other things, the introduction of conciliar principles in its management, the strengthening of collegial bodies, changes in the training of the clergy, or the revival of publishing activities. Such a situation took place, among others, when the following Metropolitans were elected: Makary (Oksijuk) in 1951, Tymoteusz (Szretter) in 1961 and Stefan (Rudyk) in 1965 (Urban, 1996: 201; Mironowicz, 2005: 255; Dudra, 2015: 73-82). The new superiors were expected to be full of loyalty, closely cooperate and support the socio-political changes taking place. The rulers wanted controlled power in PAKP. It was seen as one of the elements used to discredit, in the propaganda aspect, the Roman Catholic Church and have a partner in the game against the Greek Catholic Church.

According to the regulations in force, the election of the heads of PAKP was to be held by the Election Council and the Pre-Election Assembly (President of the Republic of Poland, 1938; Council of Ministers, 1938). In fact, all the votes during the People's Republic of Poland took place at the Council of Bishops. They were aware of the greater possibility of influencing the appropriate decisions, beneficial for the authorities. The above actions were supposed to guarantee those in power a decisive influence on the

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Church's personnel. The aim was to minimize the influence of the clergy and the laity on its development (Urban, 1998: 94; Matwiejuk, 2007: 45-46). Generally, the entire process of choosing a metropolitan began at the Office for Religious Affairs (UdSW), which selected a candidate from among the bishops for this position, while acceptance was given at the Ministry of the Interior (MSW) and at the highest party level.

The aim of the article is to analyze the policy of the state authorities in the process of selecting Bishop Bazyli (Doroszkiewicz)<sup>1</sup> for the position of the PAKP Metropolitan. It indicates that the actions taken resulted from the implemented religious policy, which aimed at taking full control over the activities of the Orthodox Church in Poland<sup>2</sup>. The election of a superior appointed by the authorities was to fully guarantee the realization of tasks important from the point of view of the multilateral activity (internal and external) of the state. It was also supposed to influence, mainly in the propaganda aspect, the weakening of the position of the Roman Catholic Church. The latter aspect was an important factor determining the candidate's support.

In order to understand the problem, it is necessary to explain the concept of religious policy. In a broad sense, it defines the attitude of the state towards existing churches and religious associations. In the period of the People's Republic of Poland, the ideological and political conditions of religious policy promoting atheistic worldview were aimed at limiting the freedom of exercising religious functions by churches and religious associations. The aim was to deprive them of their organizational independence and to take full administrative supervision. They hoped for a rapid process of disappearing of religious beliefs and atheizing the society. For this reason, the permanent legal regulations which would be an obstacle to achieving the intended goal were avoided. Therefore, until 1989, the provisions of the law from the Second Polish Republic were partially preserved. In principle, the Church enjoyed full constitutional rights (among others, equality of citizens before the law, freedom of conscience and religion). However, the political practice was often different. In many cases, these principles were abandoned. There were restrictions on the Church as an institution and its followers. As Wiktor Wysoczański and Michał Pietrzak emphasize, the religious policy of the Polish People's Republic: "had two main premises: the first was the officially proclaimed and formally accepted ideology of Marxism-Leninism, and the second was the changing political

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<sup>1</sup> Włodzimierz Doroszkiewicz was born on March 15, 1914. In 1936, he graduated from the Orthodox Seminary in Vilnius. He was ordained a priest on April 17, 1938. During World War II, he served as a pastor in the parish of Michałów, initially as a vicar (1940-1943) and then as a parish priest (1943-1946). In the years 1946-1960, he was the parish priest in Gródek. On December 30, 1959, he took his religious vows in St. Onufry's Monastery in Jabłeczna, receiving the name Bazyli. On January 1, 1960 he was raised to archimandrite. On March 25, 1960, in the Cathedral of St. Mary Magdalene in Warsaw, the ceremony of the chirotony of the Archimandrite Bazyli took place. During the ceremony, he was given the title of Bishop of Bielsko, Vicar of the Warsaw-Bielsko Diocese. On May 5, 1961, he was elected Ordinary of the Diocese of Wrocław-Szczecin (Czykwin, 1998: 5).

<sup>2</sup> In this article, the following terms are used synonymously: Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church – Orthodox Church, bishop – hierarch.

conditions. They determined both the normative solutions of constitutions and laws and the practice of state bodies” (Wysoczański, Pietrzak, 1997: 19). In Ryszard Michalak’s view, the state’s religious policy is made up of the following: “a set of activities of a conceptual, programmatic and executive nature, undertaken by a homogeneous entity of administrative power or a complex entity of power (e.g., party-state) in relation to entities representing and creating religious life (religious associations and people)” (Michalak, 2014: 5).

### **The way to elect Bishop Bazyli as the Metropolitan**

Since the beginning of the 1960s, the Bishop Bazyli had already shown considerable ecclesiastical activity (it is not excluded that he was already seeking to become the Metropolitan at that time). This was manifested, among other things, by a complaint filed by the hierarchy against the election of Archbishop Timothy as the Metropolitan (he demanded that the authorities respect the 1938 Decree of the President of the Republic of Poland and convene the Election Council). The Hierarchy had a large number of supporters, both among the clergy and the faithful. At that time, there were even writings about the so-called Bazyli Group (it was supposed to include Father Aleksy Baranow, Father Waczesław Rafalski from Białystok, Father Antoni Dziewiatowski – Dean from Hajnówka, Father Mikołaj Strokowski – Secretary of the Curia in Białystok, and Father Mikołaj Niesłuchowski – Dean of Łódź) (Archives of Modern Records [hereinafter AAN], 1961, sign. 41/15, k. 1). This was noticed by the state authorities. In one of the documents, it was emphasized that “with appearances of obedience to the other bishops, for some time now he has been earning an opinion as the most convenient candidate for the Metropolitan” (Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance [hereinafter AIPN], 1962, BU 01283/1653, k. 88-92)<sup>3</sup>. It is difficult to determine whose initiative it was to direct the Memorial of the faithful of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church to the highest state authorities. It demanded, among other things, that the choice of a metropolitan should be made on the basis of the current legal regulations. It was proposed to exclude candidates who had been politically compromised in the past (cooperation with the Sanacja regime or the occupier). At the same time, it was demanded that a commission be set up to examine the finances of the Church, taking into account the purposefulness of the expenditures made (AIPN, 1962, BU 01283/1653, k. 86). According to the authorities, the situation of the PAKP in the first half of the 1960s aroused “serious concern”. In their opinion, it acted by force of inertia, without getting involved in the problems of social life, and its role in international relations was diminishing. At the same time, it was emphasized that this weakness was exploited by the Roman Cath-

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<sup>3</sup> However, during this period, Bishop Bazyli was characterized as a person “with little political or ecclesiastical experience, associated with the most devout groups in the church. For these reasons, he cannot be considered a candidate for a metropolitan” (AIPN, 1962, BU 01283/1653, k. 88-92).

olic Church, which took over the faithful and pursued an active policy (AAN, 1963, sign. 69/3, k. 121)<sup>4</sup>.

In the first half of the 1960s, the authorities, despite realizing the support of some clergy and laity, did not support Bishop Bazyli's candidacy for the position of the Metropolitan<sup>5</sup>. They feared potential conflicts against this background and the possibility of a permanent break-up. During this period, three factions were distinguished in PAKP: the pro-Catholic one (Archbishop Jerzy was in contact with Catholic hierarchs Michał Klepacz and Zygmunt Choromański), the pro-Moscow one (Bishop Bazyli) and the pro-State one (Archbishop Stefan)<sup>6</sup>. The decision was made to support Archbishop Stefan as a suitable person for the position of the Metropolitan (apart from loyalty, many years of experience in church work were emphasized). At the same time, Bishop Bazyli's candidacy was rejected, among other reasons, because of his alleged "Great Russian orientation" (Michalak, 2014: 123). It should be emphasized that throughout the whole period of People's Poland the authorities inspired and sustained disputes among hierarchs. All differences of opinion were used to strengthen divisions among them. A specific game was played to disintegrate the Council of Bishops and differentiate the hierarchs into 'reactionary' and 'progressive'.

The election of Archbishop Stefan to the position of the Metropolitan met with the reaction of Bishop Basil and his supporters. The Open Letters concerning the last elections were distributed. The letters were critical of Jerzy and Stefan as the hierarchs, while at the same time raising the merits of Bishop Bazyli. The so-called Bazyli Group also distributed leaflets against the hierarchs<sup>7</sup>. Orthodox Christians from Białystok (supporters of the election of Bishop Bazyli) also spoke out on the election of the Metropolitan. In an open letter to the bishops of PAKP (the letter was also addressed to UdSW and to the patriarch of Moscow, Alexei), Archbishops Jerzy ("an old person, tired of diseases") and Stefan (uneducated, tactless) emphasized the advantages of Bishop Bazyli ("a young person full of life energy and strength. A highly educated, eminent preacher, builder of several temples as a simple worker with a saw and axe in his hands. Very gentle, respected by all") (AIPN, 1963, BU 01283/1651, k. 173-174). The three hierarchs were compared to "three different worlds, which do not find a common language between them,

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<sup>4</sup> As examples were given the applications of the Roman Catholic Church submitted to the PWRN in Rzeszów for the return of the church after the Greek Catholic Church (AAN, 1963, sign. 69/3, k. 128).

<sup>5</sup> The state authorities had information that some priests (among others, Baranow and Rafalski) informed the Moscow Patriarchate about the internal situation in the Church, preparing the ground for the election of Bishop Bazyli as the Metropolitan (AAN, 1963, sign. 69/3, k. 121).

<sup>6</sup> Father Jerzy Klinger was also included in the pro-Catholic faction, and Father Mikołaj Niesłuchowski was included in the pro-Moscow faction representing the relations with the Patriarchate of Moscow (AIPN, 1963, BU 01283/1651, k. 135).

<sup>7</sup> Among other things, Archbishop Jerzy was described as "not yet an old man, but a man fully tired of five years of illness. Bitter, nervous, inaccessible and unavailable. There can be no question of leading a church"; and Archbishop Stefan "an old man with the face of a self-satisfied simpleton. Without education, very limited, difficult and tactless in relations" (AIPN, 1963, BU 01283/1651, k. 173-174).

neither plans nor coordination of actions” (AIPN, 1963, BU 01283/1651, k. 173-174). At the end, the rhetorical question was asked which of the hierarchs deserves to have authority over the Church. The supporters of Archbishop Stefan were also active. A letter of support was sent by the protodeacon priest Aleksy Mielnikow from Łódź<sup>8</sup>. Along with the prolonged crisis, secular church circles began to demand the participation of representatives of the faithful in the election of the Metropolitan. It was proposed to increase the participation of the laity in the life of the Church and to change the Decree of the President of the Republic of Poland of 1938. They were signaled in an unpublished article by Mikołaj Sendulski entitled *Remarks of the Parishioner* from 1964<sup>9</sup>. Some of the demands that were tried to be introduced were rejected by the state authorities. Among other things, they did not agree to the provisions concerning the scope of activity of the Metropolitan Council and the composition of the Election Council. Moreover, the chapters on military ministry and chaplaincy in hospitals and prisons were rejected. Once again UdSW did not agree to change the name of the church from PAKP to the Orthodox Autocephalous Church in the Polish People’s Republic (Dudra 2004: 40-41). In the opinion of the Security Service, the activity of Bishop Bazyli and priests gathered around him was politically harmful and required the intervention of state authorities. At the same time, it was pointed out that if it did not cease, preventive measures (including the removal of Bishop Bazyli from the Council of Bishops) would be necessary<sup>10</sup>.

The death of Metropolitan Stefan (March 26, 1969) created new opportunities for solutions in the leadership of the Orthodox Church. The state authorities were aware of this. The deceased Metropolitan did not meet their expectations. As early as the beginning of 1968, it was noticed that he was one of the most organizationally incompetent metropolitans who had performed this function so far (AAN, 1963, sign. 69/3, k. 129; AIPN, 1968, BU 01283/1659, k. 9). At the end of the 1960s, it was even considered to create the post of Bishop-Sufragan in Warsaw, who would practically head the Church on behalf of Metropolitan Stefan. Characterizing PAKP, it was emphasized that being: “the largest among the minority religious associations in the People’s Republic of Poland and having great opportunities, if not development, to stabilize its state in the present

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<sup>8</sup> Mielnikow pointed out that the most appropriate candidate would be Bishop Stefan of Białystok and Gdańsk: “He is an intelligent and talented man, he is able to arrange his co-existence not only with the clergy, but also with the Polish authorities, as well as with the Polish society [...]. Through the choice of the metropolitan mentioned for the position of the metropolitan, local scratches and particular personal games would cease” (AAN, 1964, sign. 68/3, k. 1).

<sup>9</sup> The article was not approved for printing due to the intervention of UdSW. Thus, it was made clear that the authorities would not count on the election of a metropolitan with the voice of an Orthodox layman (Urban, 1996: 98).

<sup>10</sup> The group in Bishop Bazyli’s faction was described as “a destructive activity consisting of nationalistic, devotional, and disarming elements [...]. These elements demanded that the authorities respect the 1938 decree and that metropolitan elections be held in accordance with that decree”; and furthermore, “the Bishop Bazyli is in favour of bringing a USSR bishop to the country who would be elected Metropolitan”. The function of metropolitan was to be taken over by Archbishop Borysiewicz of the USSR. It was realized that it was difficult to force Bishop Bazyli, as the youngest in the hierarchy (AIPN, 1963, BU 01283/1651, k. 181).

conditions, it has been in deep crisis for years due to the stagnation and unreliability of its leadership and feudal methods of governance” (AAN, 1969, sign. 131/391, k. 62). The Office for Religious Affairs even prepared a special report on his situation. It was planned that after the election of the new Metropolitan, members of the Metropolitan Control Commission will be elected and diocesan collegial bodies will be appointed. The National Council was also planned for 1971 (Mironowicz, 2005: 269). Due to the lack of source materials, it is difficult to determine why the above ideas were not fully realized.

After the death of Metropolitan Stefan, the Council of Bishops was formed by Bishop Jerzy (Ordinary of the Diocese of Łódź-Poznań) and at the same time acting as the Metropolitan, Bishop Nikanor (Ordinary of the Diocese of Białystok and Gdańsk) and Bishop Bazyli (Ordinary of the Diocese of Wrocław and Szczecin). The state authorities were concerned about the situation among the Orthodox hierarchs (Archive of the Orthodox Diocese of Wrocław and Szczecin [hereinafter APDWSz], 1969). There was even information that the Council of Bishops (November 11, 1969) passed secret resolutions (they were to concern, among other things, the election of a new head of the Church). There were fears of a “secret agreement” between Archbishop Jerzy (Korenistov) and Bishop Nikanor (Niesłuchowski) that would be directed against Bishop Bazyli. The hierarchs accused him of, among other things, polonization of the Church (creation of the Western rite) (AAN, 1969, sign. 139/35, k. 54).

At the end of the 1960s, the characteristics of Orthodox hierarchs were drawn up in UdSW. In the opinion of the authorities, the Orthodox bishops were:

in conflict with each other, they neglected a number of very important problems for the proper development and operation of the Church, and in particular the matter of preparing appropriate cadres of candidates for the bishop's post (the death of the Metropolitan or already one bishop creates a state of crisis) and supplementing the active episcopal cadre with up to 5-7 people in order to maintain the conditions for the autocephalous existence of PAKP. In a narrow circle of the episcopate (3-4 people), the president, the Metropolitan, almost always had an easily assembled opposition against himself (AAN, 1969, sign. 131/391, k. 62).

In fact, until the end of the People's Republic of Poland, efforts were made to ensure that the number of bishops corresponded to the number of dioceses. This was an unfavourable situation for the development of the PAKP and brought complications in the case of the sudden death of the bishop (such a situation occurred, among others, after the death of Bishop Michael in 1951; only in 1953 Bishop Stefan received this dignity). However, it was an excellent element of pressure on the Church authorities as well as on the clergy who were among the candidates for bishops (Dudra, 2019: 292).

At that time, it was the Ordinary of the Diocese of Wrocław and Szczecin that was the most serious candidate of UdSW for the position of the Metropolitan. In its opinion, the Council of Bishops was not a monolith. The internal breakdown was intensified by personal ambitions, the aspirations of individual bishops to take the Metropolitan throne. Once again, it was concluded that state factors should have a decisive in-

fluence on the election of the Metropolitan. At the same time, it was emphasized that none of the Metropolitan bishops who had been in office so far had managed to reorganize the Church or to improve its activities properly (Urban, 1996: 220-221). According to the authorities, the Orthodox Episcopate had long been divided. This was due, among other things, to differences in the place and role of PAKP in contemporary Poland. A weakening of cooperation between the leadership and the state authorities was also observed. Attention was paid to not undertaking works aimed at shaping the social-patriotic attitude of the clergy. It was emphasized that such a state of affairs is disturbing because of the ecumenical activity of the Roman Catholic Church. It became necessary to undertake political work of UdSW with its current leadership. As the main directions were pointed out the need to organize personnel matters by completing the composition of the episcopate and choosing a new metropolitan. It was also urgent to approve the new statute of the Church, which was to change the nature of its internal system (AIPN, 1969, BU 01283/1654, k. 133).

At the end of the 1960s, the authorities began to push for Bishop Bazyli's candidacy for the position of the Metropolitan. In a note from 1969, he was characterized as a hierarch representing the new generation in the episcopal environment, understanding the changes taking place in the modern world. An important argument was also the positive attitude towards the ecumenical movement, while representing a negative attitude towards the Roman Catholic Episcopate and its ecumenical policy. It was also pointed out that he is "the most politically mature bishop. He is an advocate of Polish and socialist *raison d'état* in his external activities" (AAN, 1969, sign. 139/35, k. 56)<sup>11</sup>.

In fact, the above characteristics were fundamentally different from the opinions formulated in the early 1960s. At the time, it was pointed out that "he lacked a school of political thinking". In the opinion of the Security Service, he was the leader of "a faction that was comprised of disruptive, nationalistic and devotional elements" (AAN, 1961, sign 41/15, k. 1)<sup>12</sup>. It was written that "he is a man of narrow-mindedness, representing a weak socio-political background [...]. He sees the future of the PAKP as closely and directly linked to the Moscow Patriarchate, with a certain degree of circumvention of state factors in the country. He is particularly connected with and distinguished by the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate" (AAN, 1963, sign. 69/3, k. 116.). In the later part of the characteristics, it was emphasized:

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<sup>11</sup> The characteristics of Bishop Bazyli emphasized that he is called a "rural, peasant bishop" for his democratism, accessibility in relations with the clergy and his followers. He is distinguished by his attachment to the Church, energy, efficiency and diligence (he can take the trowel and stand at the reconstruction or renovation of his temple, and if necessary sits behind the wheel of a car and drives to the farthest church). The hierarch himself repeatedly emphasized his loyalty to the state, claiming that he "accepts the socialist system in its entirety, and is even a socialist by conviction". He emphasized that "in his life, he sees only two goods: the State and the Church" (AAN, 1969, sign. 139/35, k. 56; see also: Krzysztofński, Sychowicz, 2008: 87).

<sup>12</sup> At the same time, it was pointed out that he was "liked by the faithful for his ease of getting around. Being still a parish priest, he was able to amuse people. Visiting the faithful on Christmas time, he took money only from the rich and often also gave it to the poor" (AAN, 1961, sign. 41/15, k. 1).

Among the majority of his followers, he has a reputation as a man of little intelligence, political ignorance and a career. He is inclined to primitive mysticism. He is the leader of a faction that strives for greater independence of PAKP from the state. The elements concentrated in this faction are not satisfied with the interference of the Confessions Office in the affairs of the Church and condemn the authorities' overly tolerant policy towards the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic churches. This faction is now the main centre of agitation for the election of Bishop Bazyli as the Metropolitan, since in this position he could impose his views on the rest of the hierarchy and on the faithful to a greater extent (AAN, 1963, sign. 69/3, k. 116).

Why did the authorities support Bishop Bazyli? Several elements were taken into account. First of all, the strongly emphasized negative attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church and the activities of Greek Catholic priests. Moreover, the hierarch in many official speeches was in line with the tone of party propaganda. He was visible in numerous messages and pastoral letters addressed to the clergy and the faithful of the diocese of Wrocław-Szczecin. It concerned, among others, the Polish-Soviet brotherhood:

The Soviet Soldier and the Polish Soldier went the hard and bloody way. The Soviet people paid a great price for our freedom because they gave away many, many thousands of their fallen sons. The cemeteries of the soldiers of the Polish Army and the Red Army are the most impressive evidence of the brotherhood of arms and common bloodshed (APDWSz, 1965),

the western and northern lands:

The lands where we live and which, as a result of the satisfaction of historical justice, have returned to the Motherland forever, soaked in the blood of our compatriots who followed the straight road at the side of the Soviet Army, bringing freedom and a new order to the homeland, they constitute an integral unity of our People's State (APDWSz, 1965),

or German revisionism

The West German Landsmanship rehabilitates, by all means the, executioners of our sister nations who dishonoured the good name of the German people with unknown cruelty in death camps [...]. They take off their red gloves from the hands of the torturers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Majdanek and put on and put on the white ones as a sign of their already innocence, because the crimes have been consigned to oblivion (APDWSz, 1965).

The practical expression of this was "opposing the anti-Polish and anti-socialist activity" of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and "shaping the opinions of the faithful in the spirit of active support and participation in the building of socialism" (Dudra, 2019: 282-283).

In his speeches, Bishop Bazyli also presented a new concept of PAKP functioning. As Ordinary of the Diocese of Wrocław and Szczecin, he allowed himself to criticize the Church authorities in Warsaw (among other things, he drew attention to the lack of understanding for the future of Orthodoxy in the western lands). In one of his letters, he rightly noticed: "After six years of my work, I have the impression that my diocese is some kind of blind or alien body for the whole Church. The conviction that the proper Church is Warsaw, Białystok and Bielsk Podlaski is still alive in the centre – the rest is temporary and uncertain" (AAN, 1968, sign. 139/33, k. 60). He accused the hierarchs



of too much conservatism and passivity. He pointed out that the bishops were to manage the Church and give it direction in fulfilling “its historical mission in the conditions of the new social system, which is socialism” (AAN, 1968, sign. 139/33, k. 60-62). He proposed far-reaching changes in the Church (among others, the reform of clergy education, change of the publishing system of the Metropolis). In his letter to UdSW, he stated: “The Church cannot be closed in itself, [it should] go out into Polish society and open its doors to it. History itself requires this. Since the Church has become autocephalous, it must take into account everything that constitutes its vital interest in order to fulfill the tasks of patriotism in the service of its Homeland and its Nation (AAN, 1968, sign. 139/33, k. 60-62). The tone of the letter was in harmony with the religious policy of the state, and many of the programmes concerning the functioning of the PAKP reported by Bishop Basil were partly related to his efforts to become the Metropolitan.

In the person of Bishop Bazyli, the state authorities noticed a good organizer and a committed pastor. The positive opinion was probably influenced by the cooperation of the hierarch with the Security Service. He was registered as secret collaborator “Włodzimierz” (Krzysztofński, Sychowicz, 2008: 91). Also, among the Orthodox clergy there were voices concerning the change of internal relations within the Church. This was pointed out, among others, by Father Aleksy Znosko (*de facto* opponent of the election of Bishop Bazyli to the position of the Metropolitan), stating that

the renewal [...] is to give the Church a national face, taking into account its national condition, to restore its former glory and to reach a level appropriate for the present. The reduction of, at least to some extent, external and internal autocratic and despotic practices, and thus the democratization of the relationship between the clergy and the faithful, a return to conciliarism and a retreat from castration, the deepest possible connection between the clergy and the faithful and the civic *raison d'état* and the fate of other peoples and of humanity as a whole (AAN, 1969, sign. 131/391, *The history of the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in independent Poland and its postulates*).

The renewal of the Church was seen, among other things, in the development of theological and general education of the clergy. In the opinion of the quoted Znosko, the following were among others the most important: “to develop and improve intra-church legal norms, unify and simplify the rules of liturgical rites, prepare new methods of recruiting candidates for the clergy, establish contacts with foreign countries and carry out preparatory work for the future General Council” (AAN, 1969, sign. 131/391, *The history of the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in independent Poland and its postulates*). In this rather general programme of changes, the general directions of PAKP development were defined. It is difficult to determine whose initiative they originated from (it cannot be ruled out that they were inspired by the authorities, for whom the appointment of the position of the head of the Church and the implementation of reforms in the direction accepted by state factors were important). The person who guaranteed such actions was supposed to be Bishop Bazyli.

As early as November 1969, UdSW, in agreement with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, accepted the election of Bishop Bazyli to the position of the Metropolitan (at the same time, it was agreed to supplement the composition of the PAKP episcopate by consecrating Father Aleksander Dubec as Bishop). At the same time, the Ministry of the Interior, through its regional services, probed the atmosphere prevailing in individual dioceses, related to the changes in the position of the Metropolitan (AIPN, 1969, BU 01283/1654, k. 137). In the autumn of 1969, instructions were sent out for meetings with the network of secret collaborators to discern the current situation regarding the election of the new Metropolitan (on the basis of the reports sent, it was concluded that this issue did not arouse much interest among the clergy and the faithful) (AIPN, 1969, BU 01283/1654, k. 142; k. 174-175). Before the election of the new Metropolitan, the security apparatus was perfectly aware of the prevailing mood. Finally, on January 24, 1970, Bishop Bazyli was elected to the vacant Metropolitan post. This election stabilized the issue of PAKP management. This allowed the process of normalizing its internal situation to begin. It was difficult and complicated. At the same time, after the election, the Ministry of Internal Affairs took steps to record the facts of the bishops and priests' unfavourable statements towards the Metropolitan and Metropolitan Curia. Information concerning the atmosphere in the Church was collected<sup>13</sup>. Metropolitan Bazyli did not have the support of the entire hierarchy and clergy. An attempt to silence the disputes related to his election was made by a memorandum prepared by Father Boris Szwarczopf (Dean of the Gdańsk District). It concerned mainly the economic situation, but in its conclusion the author called for cooperation with the new superior for the good of the Church and all the faithful (AAN, 1970, sign. 139/39, k. 200).

In the initial period, the situation of the new Metropolitan was complicated. Already the first decisions aroused a lot of controversy (among others, after Father Ihumen Sawa Hrycuniak was dismissed from the position of the Director of the Metropolitan Chancellery, the hierarch received a letter from the students of the boarding school, in which some of the faithful and a group of seminarians opposed the new nomination). In the first half of the 1970s, Security Service was informed about the ongoing struggle for influence in the Metropolitan environment (this concerned, among other things, nomina-

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<sup>13</sup> Among other things, the February 1970 information stated that the hierarchy "is popular and enjoys authority among the Orthodox clergy in the Białystok province. The clergy express their satisfaction with his election, because he is well-known for his conduct on the local territory, still from the period of his stay in the Białystok province". At the same time, it was emphasized that "the nomination of Bishop Bazyli as the Metropolitan took the clergy in the diocese of Białystok and Gdańsk to some extent, by surprise, as it was commonly believed that Bishop Nikanor would be elected as the Metropolitan. These assumptions resulted from the desire to get rid of Bishop Nikanor as inconvenient and strict towards the local priests". In the diocese of Warszawa-Bielsk, "it was believed that Archbishop Jerzy from Łódź would become the Metropolitan, and they did not count on Bishop Bazyli, but they are satisfied with Bazyli's election. The greatest satisfaction is that changes are to be made to the collegial management through the appointment of the Metropolitan Council". "The election of the new PAKP Metropolitan bishop Bazyli, the Orthodox clergy in the Olsztyn Province, was welcomed [...] by the Orthodox clergy as he is the only man who can do a lot for the Orthodox Church in Poland" (AIPN, 1970, BU 01283/1659, k. 172; k. 189).

tions for better-wealthier parishes or opportunities for foreign trips). There were even reports of a possible resignation of Basil from the position of the Metropolitan (the alleged candidate was to be Znosko after his ordination as bishop) (AIPN, 1972, BU 01283/1658, k. 61). However, the support of the authorities that the new Metropolitan had from the new government allowed him to retain his position.

## Conclusions

Despite the difficult and complex situation with the election of Bishop Bazyli, the personal crisis in the Church was averted. His appointment of as the Metropolitan brought relative stability and normalization of religious life (the hierarch held the office of Metropolitan until 1998). Above all, the development of an internal statute, which had lasted for many years, was completed (it was adopted at the Council of Bishops on February 26, 1970). According to its provisions, a new advisory institution was established in the form of the Metropolitan Congress of Deans. The confraternities, military ministry, chaplains in hospitals and prisons were not included. The statute generally limited the role of single-person organs for the benefit of the collegiate ones. However, it left the faithful little influence on the management of the Church (Winiarczyk-Kossakowska, 2004: 95-96). The adoption of the new statute was important because its lack allowed the authorities to interfere in internal Church affairs, put pressure on hierarchs, and block Church reforms and initiatives. The lack of precise regulations was used to disregard the ecclesiastical demands and possible protests by the local administration. Its adoption contributed to a clear definition of the Church's attitude to state authorities (Sawicki, 1999: 246).

The direction of further actions was also determined. In December 1970, the Council of Bishops passed the Regulations of the Metropolitan Control Commission of PAKP. Its task was to control the metropolitan budget, economic activity and all financial activities of the Church. The Commission was also to supervise official documentation, storage of historical objects and church utensils. On March 22, 1971, during the Metropolitan Meeting of Deans, important issues of economic nature were discussed (e.g. diocesan contributions, Social Fund). Issues related to ecclesiastical discipline, teaching religion to schoolchildren, the external and internal mission of the Church, and church publications were also discussed (Dudra, 2019: 285-286). The issue of reforms in the Orthodox Church was considered more broadly by Znosko. In his reflections, he referred to the conference in Geneva (1966) devoted to the role and cooperation of the Church and society. During the conference, it was emphasized that Christian Churches, if they do not want to be on the margins of life and close themselves in a pious ghetto, must rethink their attitude to the changing reality and the new social structures being formed. This issue appeared to be a problem of the social responsibility of the Churches, of their commitment and, in part, of taking responsibility and, above all, of defining their at-

titude towards the economic, social and political changes taking place in the modern world. This problem was also noticed in PAKP. Znosko rightly noticed that he needed a new perspective on the changing world. He pointed out that he did not follow the general progress of life and his needs. He pointed to the need to reform the inner life, the famous *aggiornamento* (adapting the Church to the contemporary conditions and requirements of life) of Pope John XXIII. The cleric stated that every community, including the Church, is made up of people. Thus, they are the element requiring reform (doctrinal, juridical, administrative) to adapt to a changing situation and are a logical correction of ecclesiology (Znosko, 1975: 134-137). This project was part of the attempt by the Metropolitan of Bazyli to change the governance of the Church in its early years.

The election of Bishop Bazyli as the Metropolitan ended a period of pressure by the state authorities to shape the PAKP's human resources policy at the highest level. After his death (February 11, 1998), the election of the new head of the PAKP took place in new political and legal realities.

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**Abstract:** The election of superiors in the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church was one of the key elements in the religious policy of the communist authorities. The new superiors were expected to be full of loyalty and closely cooperate and support the social and political changes taking place. The rulers wanted the bishops and the Orthodox clergy to take full control. The way to do this was to influence the selection of a suitable candidate for the position of a metropolitan. The choice of a superior appointed by the authorities was to fully guarantee the realization of tasks important from the point of view of the multilateral activity of the state.

**Keywords:** Bishop Bazyli (Doroszkiewicz), Orthodox Church, religious policy, Office for Religious Affairs

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