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DESTRUCTIVE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE XIX – EARLY XX CENTURY

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Abstract. This article discusses some issues related to the use of the concept of “destructive religious association” applied to the Russian legislation in the late XIX – early XX century. In the sphere of relations between the state and various religious associations in modern society, various issues arise that require a balanced approach. In this regard, it is appropriate to study the legal policy of the Russian Empire in relation to certain sects, Old Believers. In particular, the author analyzes the issues related to the use of the concepts “heresy”, “schism”, “Old Believers”, “sect” in the context of the corresponding historical period. Also, some attention is paid to the responsibility born by members of fanatical and especially harmful sects (according to the Code on Criminal and Correctional Punishments of 1845). In conclusion, the author examines the correlation of religious associations that are dangerous for the individual, society and the state, with fanatical sects and especially harmful sects.

Key words: destructive religious association, sectarianism, schism, fanatical sect, a particularly harmful sect, Skoptsy, Russian empire.

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ДЕСТРУКТИВНЫЕ РЕЛИГИОЗНЫЕ ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЯ В РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ ВТОРОЙ ПОЛОВИНЫ XIX – НАЧАЛА XX в.

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются некоторые вопросы, связанные с использованием понятия «деструктивное религиозное объединение» применительно к российскому законодательству конца XIX – начала XX в. В сфере взаимоотношений государства с различными религиозными объединениями в современном обществе возникают разнообразные вопросы, требующие взвешенного подхода. В этой связи целесообразным выступает изучение правовой политики Российской Империи в отношении тех или иных сект, старообрядческих толков. В частности, анализируются вопросы, связанные с использованием понятий «ересь», «раскол», «старообрядчество», «секта» применительно к соответствующему историческому периоду. Определенное внимание уделяется также ответственности, которую несли члены изуверных и особенно вредных сект (в том числе согласно Уложению о наказаниях уголовных и исправительных 1845 г.). В заключение исследуется соотношение религиозных объединений, опасных для личности, общества и государства, с изуверными сектами и особенно вредными сектами.

Ключевые слова: деструктивное религиозное объединение, сектантство, раскол, изуверная секта, особенно вредная секта, скопцы, Российская Империя.

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Introduction

The relevance of the study related to the legal policy regarding destructive religious associations, which was carried out in the second half of the XIX – early XX century in the Russian Empire, is due to several factors. Among them we can note the importance that religion as a whole has in human society; the ambiguity of assessments by scientists of the Federal Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations” of 1997¹; certain difficulties connected with countering religious (pseudo-religious) associations whose activities are associated with harming the individual, society, and the state. A.M. Bobrishchev-Pushkin pointed out the negative consequences for the state that arise from an unclear and incorrect understanding of the meaning of “sectarianism”. At the same time, it was emphasized that this is a direct consequence of the “system of silencing or biased coverage of actual facts”².

It should be said that it was the most interesting period of Russian history, starting from the second half of the XIX century and ending with the beginning of the XX century, within which a number of reforms were carried out, including those that affected the legislation on the “schism”. At the same time, it is necessary to analyze not only the measures of state coercion that were used against the Old Believers and sectarians, but also the list of acts considered as illegal, and the criteria based on the fact that the sects were divided, including more or less harmful ones.

Speaking about the scientific status of the problem under consideration, it should be noted that pre-revolutionary, as well as works related to the Soviet and modern periods, which concern Old Believers and sectarians are largely devoted to religious politics, “schism” or religious crimes in general. As for the issues related to the activities of the followers of the so-called fanatical teachings, especially harmful heresies, etc., they are not sufficiently touched upon.

Scientific literature devoted to the indicated issues is very often divided into three groups:

1) works that relate to the second half of the XIX – beginning of the XX century and are of interest due to the fact that they were written by contemporaries of the relevant social processes and phenomena. At the same time, most of the literature concerning religious sectarianism and Old Believers was created by representatives of the dominant church. A.I. Klibanov noted that in the works of “church authors who wrote a lot about sectarianism in the 80^s of the XIX century there were also elements of scientific research. The works of missionaries of the late XIX – early XX century (Aivazov, Butkevich, Kalnev, Skvortsov, etc.) are characterized by perversions and falsification of facts, unsubstantiated statements and slanderous fictions”³. In general the church-missionary literature reflects the views about the harmfulness of any religious sect, Old Believers’ consent or sense, oppositional to the dominant church and, therefore, harmful to society and the state. In addition, there are relatively few works written by so-called “departmental” authors (for example, N. Dingelstedt, P.I. Melnikov-Pechersky), which are also characterized by tendentiousness, although to a lesser extent than for church missionary literature. As for other authors who do not belong to these two categories (V.D. Bonch-Bruevich, A.S. Prugavin, etc.), it should be said that in the corresponding works different assessments of Old Believers and sectarianism were given (for example, the origin of the split was associated with the political protest of the people). It is also

possible to distinguish a kind of subgroup of works that are devoted to the research of various regulatory legal acts and law enforcement practice. It is also possible to distinguish a kind of subgroup of works that are devoted to the research of various regulatory legal acts and law enforcement practice⁴. It is also advisable to mention collections of government information and orders about Old Believers and sectarians⁵. However, these works deal with issues of religious tolerance, “sectarianism” or religious crimes in general, and only a small part of them are directly devoted to categories that can be identified with the term “destructive religious association”. An example is the article by A.K. Wulfert⁶, which dealt with a number of issues about responsibility for belonging to fanatical teachings according to the Criminal Code of 1903;

2) the works of the Soviet period researchers who studied religious policy in general and the legal status of Old Believers and sectarians, in particular, as well as the history of national law⁷. In general, in the works of this group, religious associations that were opposed to the dominant Orthodox Church (at least, those that existed before the reforms of Alexander II) were considered as a kind of democratic protest movements under a religious shell, which, in the course of adapting to existing conditions, gradually turned into churches with religious formalism and hierarchical structure. Again, most of these works are more general in nature and only touch on certain issues related to legal policy in relation to religious associations, which can be identified with destructive ones.

3) modern works concerning the legal policy implemented in relation to destructive religious associations. Within this group, we can also distinguish a fairly extensive subgroup of more general studies in the field of jurisprudence, religious studies, etc., but only some provisions address to the problems under consideration⁸. Another subgroup includes works concerning the formulation of the concept of “destructive religious association” or somewhat broader terms (“new religions”, “oppositional religiosity”, etc.), as well as studies of the activities of such religious associations⁹. However, these studies are more related to the second half of the XX – early XXI century, rather than the period of national history considered in our work. Finally, it is necessary to highlight a few works, the authors of which turned to the study of some issues concerning the responsibility that the followers of fanatical teachings, especially harmful sects, etc., bore in the Russian Empire¹⁰.

⁴ In particular, it includes the works: *Arsenyev K.K.* Freedom of conscience and religious tolerance: collection of articles. St. Petersburg, 1905; *Bobrishchev-Pushkin A.M.* Op. cit.; *Poznyshchev S.V.* Religious crimes from the point of view of religious freedom: to reform our legislation on religious crimes. M., 1906.

⁵ See, for example: Collection of government information about schismatics / comp. by V. Kelsiev. London, 1860. Iss. 1.

⁶ See: *Wulfert A.K.* On Article 96 of the new Criminal Code // Herald of the Law. 1904. Book 10. Pp. 255–259.

⁷ See, for example: *Klibanov A.I.* Op. cit.; *Klochkov V.V.* Law and religion (From the state religion in Russia to freedom of conscience in the USSR). M., 1982.

⁸ See, for example: *Kon R.M.* Introduction to Sectology. N. Novgorod, 2008; *Tikhonravov Yu. V.* Judicial Religious Studies: fundamental course: textbook. M., 1998.

⁹ See, for example: *Balagushkin E.G.* New religions as a sociocultural and ideological phenomenon // Social sciences and modernity. 1996. No. 5. Pp. 90–100; *Dvorkin A.L.* Sectology. Totalitarian sects: the experience of systematic research. 3rd ed., add. and rev. N. Novgorod, 2008.

¹⁰ See, for example: *Levin V.F.* The struggle of the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church with fanatical sectarian creeds (late XIX – early XX centuries) // Herald of the Catherine Institute. 2010. No. 2 (10). Pp. 82–85; *Rozenko S.V.* Criminal and legal struggle against sectarianism under the Code on Criminal and Correctional Punishments of 1845 // History of state and law. 2010. No. 8. Pp. 29–30.

¹ See: *Safonov A.A.* Legal regulation of the functioning of religious associations in Russia at the beginning of the XX century: abstract ... Doctor of Law. M., 2008. Pp. 3, 4.

² *Bobrishchev-Pushkin A.M.* The Court and sectarian dissenters. St. Petersburg, 1902. P. 50.

³ *Klibanov A.I.* The history of religious sectarianism in Russia (60^s of the XIX century – 1917). M., 1965. P. 15.

Research results

The author notes the variety of concepts used to designate religious associations whose activities are fraught with danger to the individual, society and the state ("totalitarian sect", "authoritarian religion", "apocalyptic cult", "heretical religion", etc.). Taking this into account, as a basis for a more complex terminological construction, the concept of "religious association", enshrined in the Federal Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" of 1997, is of interest.

In this law, this concept is defined as a voluntary association of citizens of the Russian Federation, other persons permanently and legally residing on the territory of the Russian Federation, formed for the purpose of joint confession and dissemination of faith and having signs corresponding to this purpose: religion, performing divine services, other religious rites and ceremonies, teaching religion and religious education of their followers¹¹. It seems that the existence of a legislative definition of the term "religious association" allows us to achieve a certain uniformity of the terminology used and makes its use more preferable in comparison with other similar terms, the definitions of which are absent in the current laws and regulations.

Turning to the concepts of "sect" and "cult", it is advisable to note the following. In a neutral religious understanding, these terms do not imply a religious association whose activities are associated with harm to the individual, society and the state. For example, I.B. Vorobyova offers the following definition of the concept "religious sect": "this is an association of people who have separated from any creed, or emerged on the basis of the adoption of an independent doctrine or religious-mystical experience of an individual; using a set of specific doctrinal ideas and cult practice as an instrument of influence on people; as a rule, carrying out its activities in opposition to the main religious traditions of the country"¹². At the same time, we should not exclude the fact that individual religious sects may belong to destructive religious associations. It seems inappropriate to use the terms "sect" and "cult" as the "core" of the concept denoting a religious association whose activities are associated with harm to the individual, society and the state (for example, "totalitarian sect"). This is due, in particular, to the ambiguity in the definition of these terms.

Thus, unlike terminological constructions that are created on the basis of concepts such as "cult" or "religious sect", the term "destructive religious association" is based on the legally defined category of "religious association", which contributes to its clearer definition. For example, it is noted that a number of signs and features of the so-called totalitarian sects, which are cited by various authors, are very vague, while others are not specific to these religious associations and do not contain indications of any harm to the individual, society or the state that comes from them (for example, having a leader, a single language). So, we can talk about the evaluative nature of a number of features of the concept of "totalitarian sect" (as well as synonyms of this concept), that lead to its vagueness and allow us to classify almost any "unwanted" religious association into this category.

It is necessary to say a few words about the concept of "religious association that encroaches on the personality and citizen rights", which was previously used in the article 239 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. In addition to those signs that were used in the construction of the corresponding corpus delicti (a religious association whose activities are associated with violence against citizens or otherwise causing harm to their health or with encouraging citizens to refuse to perform civic duties or to

commit other illegal actions¹³), there are other features of a religious association that give it an element of destructiveness.

Today, when formulating signs of a destructive religious association, it is advisable to refer to article 14 of the mentioned above Federal Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations", 1997, which specifies the grounds for the liquidation of a religious organization and a ban on the activities of a religious organization or religious group in court. For example, this law, along with other grounds for such a ban, calls coercion to destroy a family, forcing members and followers of a religious association and other persons to alienate their property in favor of a religious association. The required determination accuracy is achieved, first of all, by fixing the corresponding list of features in the law. At the same time, this list is more complete in comparison with the set of features that are reflected in article 239 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. Based on the foregoing, for use within this work, the following generalized definition of the term "destructive religious association" can be constructed, which allows us to abstract from modern realities and can be applied within the actualistic method in studying the legal policy of the Russian Empire in relation to religious associations, whose activities was regarded as dangerous for the individual, society and the state. We are talking about an association of individuals which was formed for the purpose of joint confession and dissemination of faith and having signs corresponding to this purpose, whose activity (due to the professed teachings) is associated with: violent change of the state system; violation of public security and public order; encroachment on the personality, rights and freedoms of citizens; forcing any persons to alienate their property in favor of a religious association; encouraging followers of a religious association to commit illegal actions. It should be noted that, taking into account the peculiarities of the religious policy of the Russian Empire, which was characterized by the monopoly position of one church, by the beginning of the studied period, all religious sects and Old Believers' concordances and interpretations were subjected to one or another legal restrictions or persecution, regardless of how harmful they were considered. Even after the publication of the decree "On strengthening the principles of religious tolerance" of April 17, 1905, "freedom of faith" was subjected to certain restrictions in the Russian Empire. In addition to the "primary and dominant Christian Orthodox Catholic faith of the Eastern confession", all other faiths that existed in pre-revolutionary Russia were divided into tolerant and intolerant. For example, S.V. Poznyshchev called the Roman Catholic, Jewish, Mohammedan confessions, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Augsburg, Armenian-Catholic, Armenian-Gregorian confessions of Karaites, Lamaists, pagans, as well as Old Believers and the teachings of non-religious sects as tolerant. The intolerant ones included fanatical teachings, in other words, belonging to which is connected with an encroachment on the life of one's own or others, or with the castration of oneself or others, or with clearly immoral actions¹⁴.

At the same time, in the Russian Empire the law mainly protected the dogmas of the dominant faith from misinterpretation. Thus, most of the relevant articles of the Code on Criminal and Correctional Punishments of August 15, 1845 were applied only to disseminators of schism, heresies among the Orthodox. The responsibility of the non-Orthodox came only for castrating or participating in other fanatical sects. In particular, cases were stipulated when non-Orthodox Christians (for example, Protestants) were to be held responsible for belonging to the scopic heresy.

In general, sectarianism within other religions was practically ignored by legislation. The following was noted on this issue: "legally,

¹¹ See: Federal Law No. 125-FZ dated 26.09.1997 (ed. 11.06.2021) "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" // SZ RF. 1997. No. 39, art. 4465.

¹² Vorobyova I.B. The term "sect" and its use in jurisprudence // Herald of the Saratov State Academy of Law. 2010. No. 3 (73). P. 162.

¹³ See: The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation of 13.06.1996 No. 63-FZ (as amended on 05.04.2021) // SZ RF. 1996. No. 25, art. 2954.

¹⁴ See: Poznyshchev S.V. Op. cit. Pp. 217, 218.

a sect becomes such when the religion is already defined from the dogmatic side". On this basis, pre-revolutionary researchers concluded that within the pagan beliefs, any "sect" can exist on a par with the main confession under the "general right of tribal faith". As for Judaism, the Charter of spiritual affairs of foreign confessions allowed the creation of a new sect with the permission of the administration after research, how this teaching differs from the ordinary one of the Jewish faith, and confirmation of its harmlessness to morality and public peace. In regard to Islam, this charter "foresaw" only the appearance among Muslims "harmful and intolerant interpretations and teachings or ill-intentioned disclosures" and prohibited the belonging of clerics "to government-prohibited societies or teachings", for example, to Muridism (this term was used in relation to the Sufi movement that in the 20–50s of the XIX century covered a significant part of the Caucasus and escalated military operations¹⁵). The legislation did not contain any further definitions. Based on the general meaning of the laws, it was assumed that no sects as part of Muslim societies in the Russian Empire were legally impossible, but in fact such sectarians were classified as Sunni or Shiite Muslims. Also, the legislation did not foresee the possibility of a sectarian movement among Buddhists¹⁶.

Attention should be paid to the correlation of the concepts of "heresy", "sect" and "schism" in relation to the realities of the second half of the XIX – early XX century. As for the first two concepts, we can talk about sects as a kind of religious associations and about certain creeds (which were professed by members of these associations), which were considered by the dominant church as heresies. Regarding the second and third concepts, it is appropriate to say that in relation to pre-revolutionary law, there are several points of view about the relationship of the terms "sect" and "schism". First, schism could be a more general concept than sectarianism ("schismatics of all sects"); secondly, schism could be considered as a kind of sectarianism in the broad sense of the word ("Old Believer sects are called schism"); and, thirdly, schism (Old Believers) and sectarianism itself could act as two independent categories. These concepts were reflected in laws and regulations and in the process of their implementation by the authorities of the Russian Empire. Thus, despite the fact that, based on the opinion of the State Council "On granting dissenters some civil rights and on the administration of spiritual demands", 1883, "the rights to conduct public worship and spiritual demands" were granted to both sectarians and Old Believers, "local authorities extended them only to Old Believers and still persecuted sectarians"¹⁷.

In the Russian Empire, different varieties of religious sects, Old Believers, etc. were distinguished. For example, according to the explanation of the Holy Synod on December 9, 1842, in order to "more accurately determine which of the schismatic sects and interpretations are recognized by the spiritual authorities as particularly contrary to the teaching of the Holy Church and in what order they follow one another according to the degree of their harm to the Orthodox faith", these religious associations were divided into: the most harmful sects, harmful sects and less harmful sects. Among the most harmful sects were the "khlystovschina", the Skoptsy, Molokans, Dukhobors, Judaizers and "bezpopovschinsky sects that reject marriage and prayer for the God"¹⁸.

Along with this, the term "especially harmful heresy" (respectively, "especially harmful sect") was used, which was used in the most highly approved opinion of the State Council of October 20, 1830 "On the Dukhobors, iconoclasts, Malakans, Judaizers and other heresies recognized as especially harmful"¹⁹. This term was used for quite a long time within the Criminal and Correctional Punishments Ordinance of 1845. Article 207 (numbering is given according to the original version) of this act contains the following wording: "Followers of sects called Dukhobors, Iconoclasts, Malakans, Judaizers, Skoptsy, as well as others belonging to heresies that are recognized by the established order for this purpose or will later be recognized as especially harmful..."²⁰. At the same time, there is a similarity between the list of especially harmful sects with the list of the most harmful sects. Later, during the reign of Alexander II, the criteria for classifying sects into two groups were discussed: more harmful and less harmful²¹.

In addition, it is necessary to pay attention to religious associations, called fanatical sects. According to the mentioned Code of 1845, these associations included those that preached: 1) the so-called clearly immoral actions; 2) self-harm; 3) encroachment on one's own life and on the lives of others (in general, it was said about belonging "to heresies, combined with ferocious fanaticism and fanatical encroachment on one's own life or others, or with unlawful vile actions"). Taking into account the indicated characteristics, the sect of the skoptsy and certain groups of Bespopov schismatics were considered to be fanatical²². Similar provisions were also applied in the later legislation of the Russian Empire that provided measures of legal responsibility for belonging to a schism or sect connected "with a fanatical encroachment on the life of one's own or others, or with the emasculation of oneself or others, or with clearly immoral actions"²³.

We emphasize that according to the Code of 1845, followers of especially harmful heresies (along with responsibility for other acts) were punished for "spreading their heresy and seducing others into it", moving to the city estate (in places prohibited by law for them). Persons who were members of fanatical sects were responsible for the very fact of belonging to such associations. It should be noted here that in the original version of the above-mentioned Code, spadonism also appeared in the list of especially harmful heresies and at the same time was regarded as an example of heresies connected "with ferocious fanaticism". The following possible explanation of this contradiction was proposed: to refer to fanatical sects not all persons who belonged to the spadonic teaching, but only those of its followers who castrated themselves or others²⁴. The need for a balanced approach in the study of relevant issues, in particular, is illustrated by the accusations of khlysts (Christ-believers) in "svalny sin" (promiscuous sexual intercourse), as well as various "fanatical" acts, the doubtfulness of which is due to a number of factors. Initially, confessions to the commission

¹⁹ See: The complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire. The second collection. Vol. V. Department II. St. Petersburg, 1831. No. 4010.

²⁰ See: *ibid.* Vol. XX. Department I. St. Petersburg, 1846. No. 19283.

²¹ Anderson V. Old Believers and Sectarianism: A Historical Sketch of Russian Religious Diversity. St. Petersburg, 1908. P. 237.

²² See: Highly approved Code of Criminal and Correctional Punishments of August 15, 1845 // The complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire. The second collection. Vol. XX. Department I. No. 19283; Russian legislation of the X–XX centuries. Vol. 6. Legislation of the first half of the XIX century. M., 1988. P. 340.

²³ See: Highly approved Criminal Code of March 22, 1903 // The complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire. The third collection. Vol. XXIII. Department I. St. Petersburg, 1905. No. 22704.

²⁴ See: The Code of Criminal and Correctional Punishments of 1885. Published by N.S. Tagantsev. 7th ed., rev. and supplement. St. Petersburg, 1892; Aleksandrov I.A. Code of Criminal and Correctional Sentences of 1845 on the liability of Skoptsy // Dilemmas Contemporaneos: Educación, Política y Valores. Special edition. 2019, December.

¹⁵ See: Encyclopedic Dictionary by F.A. Brockhaus and I.A. Efron. St. Petersburg, 1897. Vol. XX. P. 372.

¹⁶ See: Reisner M.A. The state and the believer: a collection of articles. St. Petersburg, 1905. Pp. 219, 220; Code of Laws of the Russian Empire: an unofficial edition in 5 books / ed. by I.D. Mordukhay-Boltovskiy. St. Petersburg, 1912. Book 3. Vol. VIII, part II–Vol. XI, part I.

¹⁷ Klochkov V.V. Op. cit. P. 79.

¹⁸ Overview of events of the Ministry of the Interior on the split from 1802 to 1881. Publication of the Department of General Affairs. St. Petersburg, 1903. Pp. 149–151.

of these acts, made by several khlysts within their trials in the first half of the XVIII century, were obtained under the influence of torture and later rejected by the “confessors” themselves²⁵. Of course, it is impossible to exclude any manifestations of sexual promiscuity within individual communities of Christ Believers. But at the same time, a well-founded opinion is put forward that the version about the sexual orgies of the Christ believers contradicts the psycho-physical nature of their cult (it is indicated that the effect of the so-called “spiritual joy”, which was achieved during the rejoicings, required the absorption of all human forces and would not be possible with their outflow into other channels)²⁶. For example, in the decision of The governing Senate in 1895 noted that the investigation did not receive any factual data about the existence of svalny sin (promiscuous sexual intercourse) among the Tarus khlysts, and the preaching of asceticism cannot be considered as the preaching of immoral acts²⁷.

Also noteworthy are the measures taken against the so-called Shtunda, which in 1894 was declared a more harmful sect, and shtundists were forbidden public prayer meetings. It should be noted that the terms “shtunda” and “shtundism” are “a conditional church-tendentious” name for a set of religiously formed movements that developed in the 60–70^s of the XIX century and were closely intertwined with Baptism. The term itself comes from the German word “stunde” (“hour”) and is associated with the allocation special hours for Bible study²⁸. The regulations of the Committee of Ministers and the corresponding circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of 1894 attributed the following signs to shtundism: non – recognition of any authorities; denial of all church rites and sacraments; preaching of socialist principles; denial of the oath and military service²⁹. However, in 1905, this regulation was canceled due to the religious reform, and the considerations that guided the Committee of Ministers when prohibiting the Stundists from public prayer meetings were, in fact, considered outdated.

Conclusions

Summarizing the above, we note that the use of the concept “destructive religious association” within the historical period under study is due to a certain inconsistency and ambiguity of the concepts used in pre-revolutionary law (especially harmful, harmful, fanatical sects, etc.). At the same time, the possibility of applying in this case such criteria of social danger of religious associations, which are not associated with the opposition of any “true” religion and false teachings, is essential. It should not be forgotten that the religious associations under study were transformed over time, for example, new sects were distinguished. Therefore, first of all, it seems relevant to focus on the main features inherent or at least attributed to these associations as a whole. Using the set of features formulated in the work, it is possible to identify destructive religious associations with fanatical sects (whose teachings were combined “with ferocious fanaticism”, etc.). The truly destructive (perhaps only at certain stages of existence) can be attributed to the folk of the Filippovites and pilgrims (runners), as well as the sect of the Skoptsy. The destructive nature of their activities was manifested in the preaching of self-destruction, the rejection of established state duties, the commission of castrations and the dissemination of relevant teachings. In addition, some small religious groups could arise, whose activities were destructive in nature. For example, the so-called “Tiraspol fanatics” (including 25 people) in 1897 buried themselves alive in the Kherson province. However, no

definite answer was given to the question of which sect, teaching or consent these persons belonged to (opinions were put forward according to which they were pilgrims or Popovtsy). At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish reliable facts about illegal activities carried out by such religious associations from false or dubious reports about ritual cannibalism in relation to the teachings of the Khlysts and the Skoptsy (the latter, as it is believed, stood out in the second half of the XVIII century from the sect of the Khlysts), about the strangulation of seriously ill, elderly pilgrims.

The question of whether this or that religious association, referred to as particularly harmful, harmful, etc. sects (shtundists, doukhobors, etc.), was destructive, it is advisable to discuss in relation to each such association separately. It is not necessary to identify heresies that were combined “with ferocious fanaticism”, on the one hand, and “especially harmful heresies”, on the other. In addition to the doctrines of Judaizers, Molokans, Dukhobors, Iconoclasts, and Skoptsy named in the original version of the Code on Criminal and Correctional Punishments of 1845, the teachings of the so-called “schismatics who do not accept and do not pray for the tsar” can be attributed to especially harmful heresies. Close to this group is the “most harmful” (according to the terminology used in the classification of 1842) sect of Khlysts, although some attempts were made to classify it as “fanatical”. The cases of the Samara District Court of 1889–1891 and 1910 can serve as an illustration of the latter judgment, within which it was discussed about the application of criminal legislation provisions against Khlysts (Christ Believers), which established responsibility for belonging to heresies connected with “anti-moral, vile actions”, etc.³⁰.

It is also necessary to take into account the fact that spadonism also appeared in the list of especially harmful heresies, and at the same time was considered as an example of heresies “combined with ferocious fanaticism”.

Legal norms were gradually formed, according to which the followers of especially harmful heresies (along with responsibility for other acts) were punished for seducing and spreading their beliefs (before the corresponding changes were made to the Code on penal and correctional punishments). Members of the fanatical sects were subject to punishment for their very belonging to these associations, and for the followers of the spadonism teaching, punishment was also provided for the emasculation of others and themselves.

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²⁵ See: The Kudrin trial with the essay “Catholicism in Russia”. M., 1900. Pp. 46–53.

²⁶ See: *Klibanov A.I.* Op. cit. Pp. 46, 47.

²⁷ See: *Bobrshchev-Pushkin A.M.* Op. cit. Pp. 134, 135.

²⁸ See: *Klibanov A.I.* Op. cit. Pp. 187, 188.

²⁹ See: *Skorov A.F.* The laws on dissenters and sectarians. M., 1903. Pp. 161–163.

³⁰ See: The Central State Archive of the Samara Region. Fund 8. Inventory 2. Vol. 1. Case 551. Sheet 510; Vol. 5. Case 8023e. Sheet 148.

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