

Paavo Kontkanen and his Role in Normalization of Relations between the Russian and Finnish Orthodox Churches

S. S. Nikitin

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The interrelations of the Russian and Finnish Orthodox Churches in the 20th century are dramatic and poorly studied by Russian historians. This article, on the basis of materials from the State Archives of the Russian Federation and studies into church history translated from Finnish, attempts to evaluate the role of Dr. Paavo Kontkanen, an active member of the Finnish Archdiocese, in the relations between these two Churches. He exemplified a change in the attitude of the National Orthodox Church of Finland towards the Russian Church, historically kyriarchal, in the second half of the previous century. Dr. Paavo Kontkanen, being for a long time a member of the collegiate administrative body of the Finnish Archdiocese, the Church Administrative Council, with permission from Archbishop Herman (Aav) started negotiations with the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church on a private level. Having achieved understanding with the chairman of the Department of External Church Relations, Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), Kontkanen considered the possibility of reunification of the Finnish Church and the Russian Church only for a short period, before receiving the status of Autocephalous Local Church from Moscow. Kontkanen's actions enable to regard him as a conductor of Finland's ecclesiastical interests aimed at rapprochement with the Soviet Union. It can be proved by Kontkanen's close contacts with the President of Finland, Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, and his ability to defend interests of the "pro-Russian" part of the clergy and the Finnish Orthodox Church in the face of the state and the Church Council.

Keywords: Alexander (Karpin), Herman (Aav), Nicholas (Yarushevich), Pavel (Olmari), Paavo Kontkanen, Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, Finnish Orthodox Church, autocephaly, interchurch relations, jurisdictional status.

Пааво Контканен и его роль в нормализации отношений Русской и Финляндской православных церквей

С. С. Никитин

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Взаимоотношения Русской и Финляндской православных церквей в XX в. драматичны и в настоящее время малоизучены русскоязычными историками. В данной статье

Siluan (Sergey Sergeevich Nikitin) — Episcopus, PhD (Theology), St. Petersburg Theological Academy, 17, nab. Obvodnogo Canala, St. Petersburg, 191167, Russian Federation; rector@spbda.ru; f.siluan@mail.ru

Силуан (Сергей Сергеевич Никитин) — епископ, канд. богословия, Санкт-Петербургская духовная академия, Российская Федерация, 191167, Санкт-Петербург, наб. Обводного канала, 17; rector@spbda.ru; f.siluan@mail.ru

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на основании материалов из фондов Государственного архива Российской Федерации и переведенных с финского языка церковно-исторических исследований делается попытка максимального освещения роли активного члена Финляндской архиепископии доктора Пааво Контканена во взаимоотношениях двух Церквей. Данная личность представляет собой наглядный пример изменения отношения национальной Православной церкви Финляндии к исторически ей кириархальной Русской церкви во второй половине минувшего столетия. Остаются загадкой причины кардинальной смены после 1952 г. позиции Контканена в вопросе воссоединения Финляндской православной церкви с Московским патриархатом, хотя в послевоенные годы он являлся одним из идеологов категоричного противодействия включения Финляндии в область канонического влияния Русской православной церкви. Будучи долгое время членом коллегиального административного органа Финляндской архиепископии — церковного управления, Контканен, с согласия главы Церкви архиепископа Карельского и всей Финляндии Германа (Аава), на частном уровне начинает переговоры по поискам вариантов урегулирования взаимоотношений с руководством Московской патриархии. Достигнув понимания и расположения тогдашнего председателя Отдела внешних церковных связей митрополита Николая (Ярушевича), он видит возможным воссоединение Финляндской церкви с Русской только на краткий период перед получением ей от Москвы статуса автокефальной поместной церкви. Действия Контканена позволяют видеть в нем активного проводника внешнего курса правительства Финляндии в церковных кругах, направленного на сближение с Советским Союзом. Это подтверждается обнаруженными фактами близости Пааво с президентом Финляндии Урхо Калева Кекконеном. Благодаря дружеским отношениям с ним Контканен обладал возможностью отстаивать интересы «прорусской» части духовенства и мирян Финляндской православной церкви перед государством и церковным управлением.

Ключевые слова: Александр (Карпин), Герман (Аав), Николай (Ярушевич), Павел (Олмари), Пааво Контканен, Урхо Калева Кекконен, Финляндская православная церковь, автокефалия, межцерковные отношения, юрисдикционный статус.

At the end of the Continuation War, the Finnish Orthodox Church was the first to attempt to normalize official relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, which were somehow or other terminated in the 1920-1930s because of both internal and external lack of freedom of the Church in the Soviet Union, and to undertake a non-canonical transfer the Finnish Orthodox Church in 1923 under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Researchers do not fully understand whether the attempt to normalize inter-relations in 1945 was initiated by Archbishop Herman (Aav), the Head of the Finnish Orthodox Church at the time, , or whether it was a mutual decision of the collegial administrative body, the Church Council (Kirkkohallitus). However, on February 23, 1945, the newly elected Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy I (Simansky) received a congratulatory letter on the occasion of the election of Archbishop Herman, asking to pray for the Autonomous Finnish Church.

In a response letter, dated May 6, 1945, Alexy I made it clear that “it would be a true joy for me and our Russian Church if the canonical-liturgical communion between our Churches, broken after your Church left the Mother Church, would be restored. And Your Grace would make a historical contribution to the return of the Church of Finland to its Mother. I pray earnestly about this, and, fraternally kissing Your Eminence, I believe that

the Lord will help us with this”¹. Archbishop Herman had no choice but to start a dangerous game: on the one hand, relations with Moscow should not be worsened under the political circumstances of post-war Finland; on the other hand, there was a necessity to save the status quo of his Church.

Increasing pro-Soviet influence in Finland in 1945–1948 implied quick and painless inclusion of the Finnish Orthodox Church in the sphere of influence of the Moscow Patriarchate, as it successfully happened to the Polish Orthodox Church, the Orthodox campaigns of Czechoslovakia, the Patriarchal Exarchate in Western Europe².

However, a visit of Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod Gregory (Chukov) to Finland in late September–early October 1945, instead of appeasement and restoration of friendly communion between the Churches brought about a long-term personal dislike of the Finnish Episcopate to the Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church: it was regarded by the leadership of the Finnish Church as a direct illegal intrusion into its internal affairs.

It was caused by the rhetoric of Metropolitan Gregory during the meetings on October 3 with Archbishop of Kuopio (Karelia) and All Finland Herman (Aav) in Kuopio³ and on October 7 — with Bishop of Helsingfors Alexander (Karpin) in Helsinki⁴. The representative of the Russian Orthodox Church did not fully understand the scope of authority of his Finnish fellow bishops: according to the “Decree on the Finnish Orthodox Church”, they had only one vote at decision-making sessions of the Church Council. Until 1970, the Church Council consisted of five members: the archbishop of Karelia and All Finland was a chairman, the bishop of Helsingfors was an ex officio member, then there was a representative from the clergy, a representative from the parishioners and a legal secretary elected by the Synod (Kirkollishallitus)⁵.

Both the change of the domestic political course made by Finland in 1948 and the election of Archbishop and Exarch of North and South America Athenagoras (Spyrou) by the Patriarch of Constantinople (November 1, 1948), to whom as the head of the Kyriarchal Church the Finnish Orthodox Church was subordinated, enabled the Church Council to achieve the preservation of status quo of its Church. So, it had been still an Autonomous Church within the Patriarchate of Constantinople⁶.

From 1945 to 1957, the Finnish Orthodox Church was torn by disputes regarding its status; the clergy and parishioners were divided into three parties: supporters of the reunification with the Moscow Patriarchate, supporters of the preservation of the status of the Autonomous Church with subordination to Constantinople, and the party of those who were “playing a waiting game”. Although there were consistent supporters of a particular point of view, the majority still hesitated in their decision and under certain circumstances could have taken the opposite position.

¹ Pisma patriarkha Aleksii I v Sovet po delam Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi pri Sovete narodnykh komissarov — Sovete ministrov SSSR: v 2 t. T. 1: 1945–1953. Moscow, 2009. P. 54.

² *Shkarovskii M. V.* Konstantinopol'skaia i Russkaia Tserkvi v period velikikh potriasenii (1910–e–1950-e gg.). Moscow, 2019. P. 135.

³ Protokol besedy predstavitelia Patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rusi v Finliandii Vysokopreosviashchennishego mitropolita Leningradskogo i Novgorodskogo Grigoriia s Arkhiepiskopom Finliandskim Germanom (Aavom) po voprosu o vossoedinenii Finliandskoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi s mater'iu-tserkov'iu Rossiiskoi ot 3 oktiabria 1945 // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 1. D. 73. L. 183–188.

⁴ Zaiavlenie episkopa Gel'singfors'skogo Aleksandra // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 1. D. 73. L. 189.

⁵ *Skurat K. E.* Finliandskaia pravoslavnaia tserkov: for DECR // GARF. F. Op. 6. D. 4236. L. 212.

⁶ *Piiroinen P.* Konstantinopolin yhteydessä. Valamon luostari, Otavan Kirjapaino Oy, 2018. S. 233.

The normalization of relations between the Churches officially took place on May 30, 1957, when the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church decided to “recognize the status quo of the Finnish Autonomous Orthodox Church, a member of the Patriarchate of Constantinople” and “therefore to establish immediately canonical-liturgical communion between the two Churches”⁷.

Actually, inter-church relations began to transform only with the change of the leadership office of the Finnish Orthodox Church in 1960 and with the appointment of Bishop of Podolsk Nikodim (Rotov) as the head of the Department for External Church Relations (DECR). Metropolitan Krutitsky and Kolomensky Nicholas (Yarushevich), who was the DECR chairman at the time, played a crucial role in making this synodal decision. On the Finnish side, it was Doctor of Philosophy Paavo (Pavel) Kontkanen who became one of the key employees of Metropolitan Nicholas involved in the normalization of inter-church contacts.

Pavel Petrovich Kontkanen was born on March 16, 1905, in Eastern Finland, in Hammaslahti, where his father, a farmer from Liperi, moved to. After graduating from the lyceum in Joensuu in 1923, Pavel entered the University of Helsinki to study biology. As a student, he worked as an assistant at the faculty of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, took part in scientific expeditions to Estonia, the Netherlands and the USA⁸. In 1934, Kontkanen became a Candidate of Philosophy, and in 1951 received a degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

After the World War II, he served as a traveling teacher of the Law of God for one academic year and worked as a lecturer among migrants from the Karelian Isthmus. At the beginning of the academic year 1946, he became a teacher of Environmental Studies at the Joensuu Lyceum and during the same year married Anna Nikolaevna Karpina, the niece of Bishop of Helsingfors Alexander⁹. From 1947 to 1955 Kontkanen worked as a teacher of Natural History and Geography at a school of Lieksa.

Paavo Kontkanen became actively involved in the life of the Finnish Orthodox Church during the Winter War (1939–1940). Back then he served as the head of the Headquarters of the Military Directorate of Orthodox Church of East Karelia, carrying on negotiations and making decisions for the benefit of the Orthodox military priests¹⁰.

It is known that the conciliation between Paavo and Archbishop Herman (Aav) took place after Kontkanen railed against the article by a very dubious and questionable person — Peter Nortamo (a former Protestant preacher, later a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church) — in a daily Finnish newspaper “Uusi Suomi” (The New Finland). Nortamo accused the Primate of the Church of Finland of cheap politics and unwillingness to keep the promise made on October 3 to return immediately under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate¹¹. Kontkanen called Nortamo “a dangerous political intriguer who interferes into the formal discussion of the important issue — the reunification”¹². Herman (Aav) approved of it.

⁷ Reshenie Svyashchennogo Sinoda // Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii. 1957. No. 4. P. 12.

⁸ Piironen E. Sielunpaimena ja kirkonmiehia (Spiritual Fathers and Church Leaders). Joensuu, 1991. S. 59–60.

⁹ Ibid. S. 60.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Riikonen J. Kirkko politiikan syleilyssä: Suomen ortodoksisen arkkipiispakunnan ja Moskovan patriarkaatin välinen kanoninen erimielisyys 1945–1957. Joensuu, 2007. S. 124.

¹² Ibid. S. 125.

According to the official invitation of Patriarch Alexy I to Archbishop Herman, the negotiations on the reunification of the Churches were to begin in Moscow in August 1946. The composition of the Finnish delegation changed twice, and in its last version, Paavo Kontkanen and the reputable priest Alexander Ryttyläinen were to enter too. The Finnish historian Heikki Koukkunen wrote that “when they found out that it was planned not to discuss the reunion, but to decide on it, they refused to go”¹³.

The same year on November 27 Herman (Aav) sent a telegram to Cay Sundström, the Finnish ambassador in Moscow, in which he said that “the Priest Ryttyläinen and the Master Kontkanen have taken back their consent to be the members of the delegation as, in their opinion, there is no base for any successful negotiations. Since the delegation in its former composition had fallen apart, and I was not able to form a new one, unfortunately, I cannot fulfill the Patriarch’s invitation to come with the delegation to Moscow. The pro memoria of those who refused [to come] will be sent for transmission to the Patriarch by post”¹⁴. Paavo’s refusal provoked a cancellation of the whole trip in autumn 1946. After this Archbishop Herman for the first time notified the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the proposal coming from Moscow to reunite the Churches¹⁵.

A. V. Vedernikov, the editor of “Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii” (The Magazine of the Moscow Patriarchate), subsequently wrote: “In their [Kontkanen and Ryttyläinen’s] pro memoria, it was demagogically stated that “the unity with the Ecumenical Patriarch turned out to be beneficial for the Orthodox Church of Finland, which experienced a period of unprecedented internal growth and revitalization of spiritual life under the canonical patronage of this supreme authority”¹⁶.

In 1946, Paavo Kontkanen together with Archpriest Alexander Ryttyläinen acquired the status of prominent figures of the Finnish Orthodox Church who “categorically declared their reluctance to the idea of the reunification, considering it to be imposed by force”¹⁷. Most probably, due to this position, Kontkanen was elected at the meeting of the Synod in 1950 as a representative from the parishioners in the Church Council. Archpriest Ryttyläinen in his turn represented the clergy¹⁸.

As a member of the Church Council, Paavo carried on private correspondence with Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras I (Archbishop Herman was aware of it) regarding the return of the Orthodox Church of Finland under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate¹⁹. Kontkanen’s anti-Moscow position in a given period can be seen in the following example. On March 23, 1952, the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church sent a delegation of two archpriests to Finland: Tsvetkov P. I., the superior of the Moscow Church of Saint Elijah the Prophet in Cherkizovo, and Slavniitskiy M. V., the superior of the Leningrad Nikolskaya Bolsheokhtinskaya Church. The reason for this trip was to invite the Orthodox Episcopate of Finland to take part in a joint struggle for peace. However, Archbishop Herman, when the delegation visited him, refused to support the

¹³ Koukkunen H. Tuiskua ja tyventa: Suomen ortodoksinen kirkko 1918–1978. Heinavesi, 1982. S. 86.

¹⁴ Pis'ma patriarkha Aleksii I v Sovet po delam Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi... P.211.

¹⁵ Riikonen J. Kirkko politiikan syleilyssä. S. 311.

¹⁶ Vedernikov A. V. Gor'kie plody tserkovnogo razdeleniia // Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii. 1951. No. 12. P. 39.

¹⁷ Shevchenko T. I. Valaamskii monastyr' i stanovlenie Finliandskoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi (1917–1957 gg.). Moscow, 2012. P. 310.

¹⁸ Piironen E. Sielunpaimena ja kirkonmiehia. S. 60.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Stockholm appeal and peacekeeping arguing that “towards these matters the Ecumenical Orthodox Church is above all nationality and national interests of the people that make it up”²⁰. Paavo Kontkanen, together with Archpriest Alexander Ryttyläinen, as members of the Church Council, did not have a desire to meet with the delegation.

On May 9–12, 1952, at the Conference of All Churches and Religious Societies of the USSR for Peace in Zagorsk, there was Archpriest of the Orthodox Church of Finland Michael Miikkola²¹ who handed the so-called “Declaration of the Young Clergy of the Orthodox Church of Finland” to Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich). Being concerned about their future fate and not sure whether the course chosen by their leadership was right, as well as feeling afraid of the merger with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF), the clergy decided to begin negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate on the reunification, bypassing Archbishop Herman and the Church Council²².

As far as the reunification was concerned, it was suggested that the informal negotiations should be started as the official ones caused a huge resonance in Finnish society. The attempt at the reunification made in 1945 was considered to have been very unprepared and rude, and the formal signing of the obligations for the reunification by Archbishop Herman and Bishop Alexander was described as something that “only harmed themselves”²³.

Although the Moscow Patriarchate was the addressee of the Declaration, Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) was the first to read it. Moscow had already known that some of the Finnish clergy were not satisfied with the position of Archbishop Herman: Archpriests M. V. Slavniksiy and P. I. Tsvetkov reported on this topic at the end of March 1952²⁴. “The Declaration” was a confirmation of the change in negotiation tactics.

The Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church decided to send two delegations to Finland in 1953. The first one, led by Metropolitan Nicholas, was assigned the goal of meeting with Herman (Aav) and clarifying the possibility of canonical resolution of the relationship problem between the two Churches. The second one included Moscow Archpriest Igor Malyushitsky and Leningrad Priest Michael Chub (later, Bishop), who had been involved into international church affairs since 1952²⁵. They were supposed to build rapport with the initiators of “the Declaration”²⁶.

On this trip, Metropolitan Nicholas, in particular, “with the help of Archpriest Miikkola has to meet with Priest Elias (Erkki Elias) Piironen, the chairman of the Union of Orthodox Youth, with Dr. Paavo Kontkanen, a member of the Church Council, Priest Ioann Sukhola, the rector of the seminary, and with some other people in order to determine the recovery paths of canonical-liturgical communion between the Russian and the Finnish Orthodox Churches”²⁷. It is worth noting that Piironen and Kontkanen were

²⁰ Protoierei Aleksandr Medvedskii. O vozvrashchenii Finliandskoi tserkvi pod iurisdiksiiu Moskovskogo Patriarhata // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 121. L. 65.

²¹ Okonchanie raboty konferentsii tserkvei i religioznykh ob'edinenii v SSSR, posviashchennoi voprosu zashchity mira // Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii. 1952. No. 5. P. 17.

²² Spravka o Finliandskoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 121. L. 100.

²³ Ibid. L. 106.

²⁴ Ibid. L. 99.

²⁵ *Shkarovskii M. V. Mihail (Chub), arhiiepiskop* // Pravoslavnaia entsiklopediia. T. XLV. Moscow, 2017. P. 664.

²⁶ Spravka o Finliandskoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 121. L. 100.

²⁷ Ibid. L. 110.

close friends, the future Father of Iliyavo served as a staff officer during the Continuation War and was Paavo's subordinate in the Headquarters of the Military Directorate of the Orthodox Church²⁸.

Metropolitan Nicholas was entrusted introducing to the reunion supporters a special offer from the Moscow Patriarchate stating that the Russian Orthodox Church would accept the Orthodox Church of Finland in canonical-liturgical communion after it was no longer under the temporary jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. As a transitional stage to autocephaly, the Finnish Church was to return the autonomy granted by Patriarch Tikhon in 1921²⁹.

To achieve mutual understanding, all the above-mentioned figures of the Finnish Orthodox Church were to be invited to visit the Soviet Union and get acquainted with the life of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Kontkanen's attitude towards the issue of the reunification began to change by the end of 1952 when it became clear that Archbishop Herman and the Church Council decided to employ a wait-and-see tactics involving no active interfering of clergy and parishioners, aiming at resolving the long-term problem of inter-church relations. Paavo was well prepared for the arrival of Metropolitan Nicholas and, absolutely unexpectedly for the latter, took a pro-Moscow position on the peacemaking issue between the Churches. Since the way out of the canonical conflict "with the help of formal clerical means proved to be hopeless"³⁰, Kontkanen considered it to be his duty to find a solution to the dispute by accepting the proposal for autocephaly made by the Moscow Patriarchate back in 1948. A decision on this issue could be made at the meeting of the Synod in 1955.

At the meeting with Archpriest Igor Malyushitsky and Priest Michael Chub in Helsinki on July 25, 1953, Kontkanen raised the question of normalizing church relations. During the conversation, he noted great friendliness, patience and noble goals of the Russian Church when it proposed autocephaly to the Finnish Orthodox Church in 1948³¹. To prepare the reunification process, he offered to grant a permit to the representatives of the Valaam and Konevsky monasteries to participate in the meeting of the Synod and also to cancel the written obligations made by the Finnish Bishops to Metropolitan Gregory in October 1945. After this, the Church Council would have to ask the Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church for their recognition of the autocephaly of the Church of Finland in case it temporarily joined the Moscow Patriarchate. The final decision was to be taken by the Synod in 1955. It is a well-known fact that Paavo did not speak Russian, and Protodeacon Olli Bergman was his translator during the negotiations³².

Archpriest Malyushitsky and Priest Chub passed the information received from Kontkanen to Nicholas (Yarushevich) who came to Finland a few days later. The Metropolitan stayed in Finland from July 26 to August 11, and the most important moment of the trip was his meeting on August 9 in Helsinki with Paavo who proposed the following reunification project under the terms and conditions of autocephaly.

²⁸ Piironen E. Sielunpaimena ja kirkonmiehia. S. 60.

²⁹ Instruksiiia tserkovnoi delegatsii, napravliaiushcheisia v Finlyandiui // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D.121. L. 110.

³⁰ Riikonen J. Kirkko politiikan syleilyssä. S. 247.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

In September 1953 the Church Council was supposed to decide on sending a letter to Moscow with the following questions:

- Does the Russian Orthodox Church keep its promise of 1948 to grant autocephaly to the Finnish Orthodox Church?
- What is the Russian Orthodox Church's attitude towards the autonomy of the Finnish Orthodox Church during the transitional period from the reunification to autocephaly?
- Does the Russian Orthodox Church have any thoughts on the Russification of the Finnish Orthodox Church?

At that time the Church Council was to notify the Patriarchate of Constantinople of the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the Synod, in particular, of the return of the Finnish Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church. During 1954 the Churches had quite friendly correspondence with each other, following which the Patriarch of Moscow announced a decision to grant autocephaly. This became the basis of the preparatory work for the convocation of the Synod of the Finnish Orthodox Church in 1955, during which the Moscow Patriarchate's proposals to confirm autonomy and to grant autocephaly were to read out. The Church Council made a positive decision, which was announced to the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church attending the meeting. Paavo Kontkanen wrote: "If we get the autonomy in July, we will be happy to receive autocephaly by Christmas, it will be like a Christmas present for us"³³.

Once again Kontkanen set forth two necessary conditions before the start of the implementation of the plan: firstly, the representatives of the Valaam and Konevsky Orthodox monasteries should participate in the planned meetings of the Synod of the Finnish Orthodox Church; secondly, the Moscow Patriarchate had to give back Archbishop Herman (Aav) and Bishop Alexander (Karpin) their receipt of 1945 with a promise to return under the omophorion of the Moscow Patriarch. The first condition was immediately satisfied, but as for the receipts, the bishops found it necessary to hold back.

During the negotiations with Kontkanen, Metropolitan Nicholas expressed a concern that the Ecumenical Patriarchate was unlikely to recognize the autocephaly of the Finnish Orthodox Church if the number of its dioceses was fewer than four. The Church Council had already decided to form a third diocese, and there was a candidate for the post of the leading bishop, but the creation of the fourth one required some time and Metropolitan Nicholas had promised to give it. At the end of the conversation, Kontkanen stated his willingness to visit the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church³⁴.

In Kuopio, Metropolitan Nicholas met Archbishop Herman who immediately declared his support for Kontkanen's proposals: "May God grant us a possibility to pray together. Judging by your portraits in the magazines, I thought you are just as harsh as Gregory, but now I see a completely different face and find a brotherly soul in you"³⁵. "As he said it, he hugged me and cried"³⁶. noted Metropolitan Nicholas later. The Metropolitan himself wrote the following about the meeting with Herman: "Our long talk was very friendly and hearty. Saying goodbye, Archbishop Herman hugged me hotly, and we kissed

³³ Mitropolit Nikolai (Yarushevich). V Finliandii // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 121. L. 123.

³⁴ Ibid. L. 130.

³⁵ Ibid. L. 125.

³⁶ Ibid.

each other. He is an artist, and I admired the paintings of his brush. I took my leave of him with strong hope for an early restoration of our canonical-liturgical communion”³⁷.

The confidence of the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs in the success of the upcoming reunification was based on the letter from the Soviet Embassy in Finland № 496 dated October 26, 1953. It stated that at the latest meeting of Prime Minister Urho Kaleva Kekkonen and Dr. Kontkanen, the Finnish government expressed the following desire: “The upcoming negotiations of the two Churches should be as successful as the recent negotiations of the Soviet and Finnish statesmen”³⁸. But despite the high-quality and well-thought-out preparatory work, Paavo’s activities did not have any positive effect. The same year Hieromonk Pavel (Olmari), the editor-in-chief of the official press organ of the Finnish Orthodox Church “Aamun Koitto” (Morning Dawn), having read the article “Na kanonicheskiy put” (To the Canonical Path)³⁹ by Vedernikov N. A., requested the confirmation from the Church Council that the Church of Finland represented by some priests and Paavo Kontkanen had begun preparations for the reunification with the Moscow Patriarchate. The administration hastened to answer that the decision on this issue would be taken at the meeting of the Synod in 1955. Besides, Kontkanen added that he also did not plan any reunification but only sought paths of reconciliation⁴⁰.

The other members of the Church Council were not interested in Paavo’s bold project considering it to be one-sided and aimed primarily at the interests of Moscow. Although many clerics and parishioners privately supported the improvement of inter-church relations, the administration of the Union of Orthodox Youth, the chairman of the Karelian Union, Judge Simo Härkenen, and Hieromonk Pavel (Olmari) had a rather negative attitude towards the Moscow Patriarchate⁴¹. Among opponents to the reunion were archpriests Alexander Ryttyläinen and Ioann Sukhola, government adviser Antti Inkinen, Deacon Olli Bergman, the former attaché of the Finnish Embassy in Moscow. The supporters were priests John Uswamo, Michael Miikkola, Vladimir Tsvetkov and Arvi Karpov, parishioners Paavo Kontkanen and writer Tito Colliander⁴². Archbishop Herman’s shift in attitude towards the reunification is also very curious: back in January 1954, he gave several interviews arguing against the reunion⁴³. Kontkanen believed that the actual reason for such inconsistency was the fact the archbishop was “more Estonian than Finn” and had “Estonian emigrant sentiments in the manner of the deceased Metropolitan Alexander (Paulus)”⁴⁴.

Archpriest Ryttyläinen, a former Kontkanen’s associate, criticized him saying that Paavo, through his “dubious fuss”⁴⁵ was looking for contacts with the foreign church leaders. Father Alexander was amazed at how church bishops enabled the activities aiming to

³⁷ Mitropolit Nikolai (Yarushevich). V Finliandii. // Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii. 1953. No.9. P. 12.

³⁸ Predlozheniia Soveta po delam Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi po pis'mu Moskovskoi patriarkhii po voprosu Finliandskoi cerkvi ot 25 ianvaria 1956 // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 222. L. 108.

³⁹ Vedernikov A. V. Na kanonicheskiy put' // Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii. 1953. No. 10. P. 16–18.

⁴⁰ Riikonen J. Kirkko politiikan syleilyssä. S. 252.

⁴¹ Beseda 17 avgusta 1954 s doktorom Paavo Kontkanenom i sviashchennikom Erkki Pijronenom // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 147. L. 140.

⁴² Riikonen J. Kirkko politiikan syleilyssä. S. 265.

⁴³ Beseda 17 avgusta 1954 s doktorom Paavo Kontkanenom i sviashchennikom Erkki Pijronenom. L. 140.

⁴⁴ Ibid. L. 148.

⁴⁵ Riikonen J. Kirkko politiikan syleilyssä. S. 269.

overthrow the legal canonical status, and demanded to select only reliable members of the Church as the delegates for the upcoming Synod. For one reason or another, Paavo did not get enough votes during the Synod election of delegates and could only be content with the position of a reserve delegate⁴⁶. In response, Kontkanen noted that the Church should look up to the politicians who productively and effectively built relationships between Finland and the USSR⁴⁷.

In July 1954 Metropolitan Nicholas offered G. G. Karpov, the chairman of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, a list of the delegation members of the Finnish Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland invited to go to the Soviet Union. The preliminary date of their visit was August 9-31, 1954⁴⁸.

The delegation of nine people (seven Orthodox Christians — priests E. Piironen and Aare Surakka, P. Kontkanen, A. Denisov, F. Borodulin, G. Kulikov, G. Baronin — and two Lutherans — pastors Simo Keranto and Mauno Kullervo Mikonen) was led by Paavo Kontkanen. The guests visited Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev and Tbilisi, where they had an opportunity to get acquainted with the church life. Although the official canonical-liturgical communion between the Churches was not restored, Orthodox clergymen from Finland, judging by the photos published in church periodicals, took part in divine services in patriarchal churches⁴⁹.

During the trip from Helsinki to Leningrad, Kontkanen informed all Orthodox delegation about his negotiations with Metropolitan Nicholas and about the plan for reunification on the basis of granting autocephaly to the Finnish Orthodox Church. While having a conversation with Bishop of Luzhsk Michael (Chub), Paavo Kontkanen mentioned that before leaving he had met with Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, who approved of Kontkanen's initiative and expressed dissatisfaction with most of Church Council members. The Minister promised assistance and participation in conducting and developing the measures for the reunification with the Russian Orthodox Church, including a potential trip of the delegation to Constantinople in winter of 1955 to negotiate with Patriarch Athenagoras on the return of the Finnish Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate⁵⁰. It was assumed that this delegation would be led by Paavo Kontkanen. During the talk, Minister Kekkonen expressed his concern about the provision of autocephaly to the Church of Finland by the Russian Orthodox Church. He wondered "why Moscow was ready to give autocephaly, while, in his opinion, it would be enough to have autonomy in the jurisdiction of the Russian Church"⁵¹.

It is known that after the journey to the Soviet Union, Paavo Kontkanen came to the conclusion that the Finnish Orthodox Church should get complete autonomy or autocephaly⁵². Metropolitan Nicholas was aware of the tension concerning this question and realized that without concessions to the Finnish Orthodox Church, the reunification

⁴⁶ *Riikonen J.* Kirkko politiikan syleilyssa. S. 270.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Zernov M. V.* V gostiakh u Moskovskoi Patriarkhii // *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii.* 1954. No. 10. P. 18.

⁴⁹ *Vpechatlenie finskoi tserkovnoi delegatsii // Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii.* 1954. No. 10. P. 74.

⁵⁰ *Beseda mitropolita Nikolaia (Yarushevicha) s doktorom Paavo Kontkanen (Finliandiia, 28 avgusta 1954) // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 147. L. 149.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.* L. 149.

⁵² *Piironen E.* Sielunpaimena ja kirkonmiehia. S. 61.

would not ever take place. Even before the start of the meeting of the Synod in July 1955, he managed to meet with Kontkanen in Helsinki. During the conversation, Paavo assured the Metropolitan that he was still a friend of the Russian Orthodox Church, but mentioned that the situation in the Church of Finland was no longer in favor of the reunification. He supposed that at the upcoming meeting of the Synod several people would put forward an idea that the Church Council should continue studying the question of restoration of canonical-liturgical communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. Most delegates would gladly support such a proposal because it would not obligate anyone to anything.

Reverend Nicholas assured that the Russian Orthodox Church would not protest against the decision taken at the Synod meeting to return the Valaam and Konevsky monasteries under the jurisdiction of the Finnish Orthodox Church, but he foresaw the future inconvenience among the monks⁵³. The metropolitan offered not to make a final decision on the subordination of the monasteries to the Church of Finland until the Old Calendarist monks were taken to the Soviet Union. Until then, the Church Council could be instructed to keep up with the Moscow Patriarchate on the fate of the monasteries. Kontkanen accepted this promise with joy and asked whether the Russian Orthodox Church would lay claim to the monastic property. “No,” answered Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), “because of the duration of use by the Finnish Orthodox Church and for the reasons of legalisation of its belonging to the Church according to the Finnish state law”⁵⁴. The conversation ended with the question of what Kontkanen thought about the future relationship between the two Churches. The answer was sincere, “We do not know; it could hardly be anything specific, we are not ready for autocephaly”⁵⁵.

The plan for the reunification with the provision of autocephaly to the Finnish Orthodox Church fell through in front of their eyes, and then Metropolitan Nicholas proposed a new option: “I have a personal thought, look at it as if it is fully mine. What if the Supreme Church Council, to which the Synod, in your words, gives the authority to study the issue of relations with us taking into account all the illegality of the transition under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople at a given period from the point of view of the canons, ask on behalf of your Church forgiveness or apology from Mother of the Russian Church for this act? Then, in my personal opinion, the Russian Church could cover the past with love and recognize the status quo or, in other words, the autonomy under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and with this latter, it itself would have already negotiated on the illegality of its action. The prayer-canonical communion between our Churches would be then restored, we would exchange official delegations and together conduct divine services”⁵⁶.

Kontkanen was enthusiastic about this proposal that allowed to preserve everything the Finnish Orthodox Church had upheld since 1945. “The generosity and love of the Russian Orthodox Church, which it will show to the Orthodox Church of Finland in two matters — monasteries and recognition of the status quo — would be regarded by the official Church as a great gift of a great soul,” he wrote to Metropolitan Nicholas⁵⁷. Such

⁵³ Beseda mitropolita Nikolaia (Yarushevicha) s P.Kontkanenom (Hel'sinki, 26 iunia 1955) // GARE. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D.171. L. 176.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 177.

⁵⁵ Ibid. L. 178.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid. L. 179.

actions were supposed to change the mood of the clergy and parishioners who considered the Moscow Patriarchate to be the one “encroaching on the monasteries” property, impinging on their existence in general”⁵⁸.

To Kontkanen’s question of whether it was possible to communicate this proposal to Archbishop Herman, the answer was positive. The Church Council accepted the news of the Metropolitan Nicholas’s intentions with great joy. A change in the position of the leadership of the Finnish Orthodox Church on this issue was also facilitated by a new composition of the Church Council elected at the Synod in 1955. Archpriest Ioann Sukhola took the place of the unyielding Archpriest Ruttuläinen, and Simko Härkenen got the place of Kontkanen.

In 1955, the Synod unanimously decided that the Finnish Orthodox Church would continue to belong to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the plans for autocephaly would be postponed until better times. Archbishop Herman sent a letter with the decision of the Synod to Patriarch Alexy only on April 20, 1956. “The Synod decided on a unanimous basis to leave the canonical position of our Church unchanged as it was approved by the Patriarch of Constantinople Meletius in 1923”⁵⁹, he wrote in his letter, also expressing a desire to maintain friendly relations between the Churches.

The Church Council had already learnt from Kontkanen about the decision of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church dated April 30, 1957, and therefore were glad to welcome the Moscow Patriarchate’s delegation, which was supposed to seal synodal resolution with a divine service. The delegation included Metropolitan Nicholas himself and Archpriest Michael Slavnitskiy. Very little material about this visit has been preserved; mostly it can be seen in the GARF documents and the article “Radostnoye Sobytiye” (The Joyful Event) in the June 1957 issue of “Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarii”. It should be noted that in spring of that year, shortly before Metropolitan Nicholas’s visit, Prime Minister of Finland K. A. Fagerholm visited the USSR, and a month after the visit, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1953-1964) N. S. Khrushchev made a week-long trip to Finland calling the state a friend of the USSR and characterizing cooperation of Finland with Western states as positive one⁶⁰.

Although Paavo Kontkanen left the Church Council, he continued actively participating in the life of the Finnish Orthodox Church. In 1958, the Finnish Orthodox Church celebrated the 40th anniversary of its independent existence. On November 24, 1957, Bishop Pavel (Olmari) sent a letter to the Moscow Patriarchate to invite a delegation to take part in the anniversary celebrations on November 24–27, 1958. On November 4, A. S. Buyevsky sent to the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs a list of potential members of the delegation: Bishop of Pskov and Porkhovskiy Ioann (Razumov), Archpriest and Rector of the Moscow Theological Academy K. I. Ruzhitsky and Archpriest and Dean of the Patriarchal Parishes in Finland M. V. Slavnitskiy. However, it turned out that at the last moment the leadership of the Finnish Orthodox Church changed their minds to invite someone to this celebration, having decided to celebrate it very modestly for lack of funds. During the process of making this decision, Bishop Pavel (Olmari), left the meeting of the Church Council in protest and informed Paavo Kontkanen and Archpriest

⁵⁸ Beseda mitropolita Nikolaia (Yarushevicha) s P. Kontkanenom (Hel’sinki, 26 iunia 1955). L. 176.

⁵⁹ Pis’mo arhiepiskopa Germana (Aava) patriarkhu Aleksiu I ot 20 apreliia 1956 // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D. 194. L. 124.

⁶⁰ *Riikonen J.* Kirkko politiikan syleilyssä. S. 292.

Slavnitskiy about this; the latter immediately sent a report to the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate⁶¹. On 11 October 1957, in Tamminiemi, Kontkanen met with President Urho Kekkonen, passing on to him the information about the “ungrateful attitude of the Finnish Orthodox Church towards the Russian Orthodox Church”⁶² which was expressed in the decision to cancel the celebrations.

Paavo Kontkanen’s resentment was fully supported by the president, and he proposed the following option. Until November 26 the Church Council was to ask the Ministry of Education for 400-500 thousand Finnish markkas for celebrations. At the government session, the president promised to support the appropriation of this amount of the Finnish Orthodox Church. It was decided to invite representatives of both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Constantinople. During the meeting with Kekkonen, he presented Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) with the highest award of Finland — the Order of the White Rose of the I Class, and Archpriest Mikhail Slavnitskiy — with the Order of the Lion of Finland of the II Class. The representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was awarded with the order according to his position. The Church Council was also to award the guests with church orders⁶³. When Archbishop Herman was given a letter by Bishop Paul, containing Kekkonen’s recommendation about the mandatory participation of the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in the celebrations of the 40th independence anniversary, he was at first very surprised. Having learnt that this could not have been done without the participation of Kontkanen, he immediately calmed down and hastily ordered that preparation for the festivities should start.

On October 16, 1958, Herman (Aav) sent a letter to Patriarch Alexy with the following words: “On November 25 of this year by the order of the Church Council, dated September 9 and October 14, the Finnish Orthodox Church celebrates the 40th anniversary of its autonomy. These celebrations would be a good time for the response visit of the Russian Church delegation to Finland”⁶⁴. The delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate, consisting of Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) and Archpriest Mikhail Slavnitskiy, arrived in Kuopio on November 24. The celebrations began the next day with a festive prayer in St. Nicholas Cathedral; then several reports on theological and church-historical topics were presented. Archbishop Herman presented Metropolitan Nicholas with the Order of the Holy Lamb of the I Class. During his congratulatory speech the Metropolitan noted, in particular, that the “Autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland, spiritually nourished by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, sacredly preserves and by all means protects the purity of our Orthodox faith, takes thought for its spread to the hearts of parishioners and strengthens the bonds of love that unite all Local Orthodox Churches in one family”⁶⁵.

In his report for the Council on Russian Orthodox Church Affairs dated December 10, 1958, the Metropolitan described in detail what the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the independence of the Finnish Orthodox Church were like. He paid special atten-

⁶¹ Raport blagochinnogo Russkikh pravoslavnykh obshchin v Hel’sinki protoiereia Mikhaila Slavnitskogo mitropolitu Krutickomu i Kolomenskomu Nikolaiu (Yirushevichu) ot 22 oktiabria 1958 // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 249. L. 73.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Pis’mo arkhiepiskopa Germana (Aava) patriarhu Aleksiiu I ot 16 oktyabrya 1958 // GARF. F. R-6991. Op. 2. D. 249. L. 124.

⁶⁵ *Nicholas (Iarushevich), mitropolit. Tserkovnye torzhestva v Finliandii // Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii. 1959. No. 1. P. 62.*

tion to the fact that during the commemoration the representative of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Metropolitan of Melita Iakovos (Koukouzis), “an ambitious and tactless person”⁶⁶, who behaved too provocatively, gave everyone advice which drove mad even the meek Bishop Alexander (Karpin). To the delight of the Russian delegation, Urho Kekkonen awarded the hierarch of the Patriarchate of Constantinople with an order lower in ranking than the one given to Metropolitan Nicholas. In the report he also mentioned a small article in “Aamun Koitto”, in which, in particular, it was said that the Orthodox Finns “should not set the center of gravity in relations with the Russian Church, it would be better to move it to the Western Churches, which in social terms live as we do”⁶⁷.

A similar situation happened in 1965 when the administration of the Finnish Orthodox Church had to send another response invitation to the delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate, but again, on the ground of financial difficulties, eventually did not invite anyone. Having learnt about this, Paavo Kontkanen realized that the cause lay in “inertness, or perhaps also in the well-known reluctance of individuals”⁶⁸, and then again gave a helping hand, “I will talk to people where necessary and arrange everything on my own”⁶⁹.

From a conversation between Veikko Lopenen and Archpriest Kaznovetsky A. in August 1965, we learn that the Church Council was indeed increasingly cautious regarding the invitation from the Moscow Patriarchate. Kontkanen, on the other hand, “suggested that Archbishop Pavel should invite the chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate — Metropolitan Nicodemus, to Finland. The archbishop refused. Then Kontkanen, perhaps, with the president’s agreement, recommended that Martti Simojoki, the Lutheran Archbishop invite Metropolitan Nicodemus, who did it with pleasure”⁷⁰. The events of 1958 and 1965 confirm the affinity between Paavo Kontkanen’s and Urho Kalev Kekkonen’s positions and opinions, but we still have not had any detailed information.

As far as it is known, since 1953 Paavo Kontkanen had stuck to the idea of maintaining friendly relations between the Russian and Finnish Orthodox Churches, and attempts to change this course seriously bothered him. In December 1959, he informed the third secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Helsinki E. I. Golovanov that “a certain part of the Finnish clergy, in the context of the development of friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Finland, strive for deepening and extending friendly relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, but meet with the opposition from the head of the Church, Archbishop Herman, who cleaves to his principle of Finnish nationalism and hostile attitude towards the Russian Church”⁷¹.

It was he who said that at the meeting of the Synod in 1960, Archbishop Herman (Aav) would be asked to retire as he was very sick indeed and was not able to cope with his duties anymore. Bishop Pavel was seen as the only candidate to become a new archbishop:

⁶⁶ Telegramma episkopa Pavla (Olmari) mitropolitu Krutickomu i Kolomenskomu Nikolaiu (Iarushevichu) ot 06.11.1958 // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D. 249. L. 100.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Otchetnyi doklad o poezdke blagochinnogo Patriarshikh prikhodov protoiereia Evgeniia Ambartsumova v Finliandiiu s 7 po 27 oktyabria 1964 // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D. 559. L. 91.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Pis'mo protoiereia A. Kaznovetskogo v Otdel vneshnikh tserkovnykh snoshenii Moskovskoi patriarkhii ot 9 avgusta 1965 // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D. 599. L. 71.

⁷¹ *Golovanov E. I. Zapis' besedy s doktorom P. Kontkanenom, lektorom Hel'sinskogo universiteta*, ot 11 noiabria 1959 // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D. 278. L. 176.

“energetic and sane person, having no prejudice against the Russian Orthodox Church”⁷². It was expected that the composition of the Church Council would soon change too: Archpriest Ioann Sukhola and Simo Härkenen, who by all means tried “to slow down the establishment of friendly relations with the Moscow Patriarchate”⁷³, should give the way to more agreeable people.

According to Kontkanen — and it is a really important insight — all of the questions above were evidently highlighted not without the state’s intervention, namely the Agrarian Party, which made it clear to Archbishop Herman and the Church Council that they were not satisfied with “the Church’s lagging in the development of friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Finland”⁷⁴.

The question of the Finnish Orthodox Church as a national Orthodox Church remained quite acute in the second half of the 1960s, during the rule of Archbishop Paul (Olmari). There were both supporters of this point of view and opponents. At the time, Paavo Kontkanen had a critical attitude towards the national character of Orthodoxy in Finland and, in particular, claimed the following: “That small group of Christians (circa 61 thousand people), which comprises the Finnish Orthodox Church and the autonomous Archdiocese, must never forget its smallness as well as its features. It has never been the so-called National Church. It is useless to say such a nonsense. The Orthodox Christians by the majority of the population have been neither in Helsinki, nor in Finland. Perhaps, in tsarist times one could speak about “the national Churches” in the regions of Salmi and Suojärvi. But it is in the past already. The National Church, which registers marriages 90 % of which are contracted between orthodox members and non-believers or unorthodox ones, is a “parody” of the National Church. This should always be remembered by us, who belong to these 10 %”⁷⁵.

Regarding the increase and spread of the Greek liturgical traditions in the Finnish Orthodox Church in the second half of the 1960s, Paavo wrote: “Neither Byzantine (Constantinople — sorry, Istanbul), nor Greek and Alexandrian traditions guarantee the future of the Finnish Orthodox Church. From the outside, our church has become so Finnish that the Swedish part of the population of Finland should not forget that there are two official languages in our country. I hope, from the side of our Church it is only about the ignorance of our laws. The Synod of the Church, leastwise since 1925, has been in the hands of the Finns — or at least those, calling themselves Finns, and maybe even considering themselves Finns, maybe competent”⁷⁶.

In 1967 on the pages of “Aamun Koitto”, some controversy between the historian and professor Heikki Kirkinen and Paavo Kontkanen erupted. Kirkinen claimed that “everything, being Russian, has already become obsolete and needs to be replaced by Finnish and Greek”⁷⁷. In response, Kontkanen drafted an open letter to the Episcopate of the Finnish Orthodox Church with the following paragraphs:

⁷² Ibid. L. 177.

⁷³ Ibid. L. 176.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Pis'mo professora P.Kontkanena arhiepiskopu Pavlu (Olmari) i episkopu Aleksandru (Karpinu) // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 6. D. 141. L. 35.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Dokladnaia zapiska o tekushchem polozhenii v Pravoslavnoi tserkvi Finliandii i sobornom prikhode v Hel'sinki // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 6. D. 141. L. 30.

- the Finnish Orthodox Church should demonstrate and maintain a good attitude towards the Moscow Patriarchate;
- the Finnish Orthodox Church should strive for friendly relations with the Evangelical Lutheran Church;
- the church policy should keep up with the official foreign policy of Finland;
- the Finnish Orthodox Church should stay away from the “labyrinth of the church policy in the Middle East churches”⁷⁸;
- the Finnish Orthodox Church should be grateful to the Ecumenical Patriarch, but not be a “foreign policy toy” of this Patriarchate;
- both Karelians and non-Karelian members of the Church should participate in the ecumenical work of the Church.

Father Elias Piironen warmly wrote about the author of these paragraphs and his activities: “Paavo Kontkanen was known as an intelligent person, in whose words and speeches there were wisdom, humor, wittiness. His attitude to faith and especially to Orthodoxy was childishly warm, in secular life he respected church traditions”⁷⁹. It is known that after leaving the Church Council in Autumn 1955, Paavo got a job at the Zoological Museum of the University of Helsinki. In 1962, he became an adjunct lecturer of zoology and until 1972 he worked as an assistant professor at the University of Helsinki. In 1967, he held the post as the head of the Commission on Higher Theological Education for Orthodox students on the Faculty of Theology at the University of Helsinki. It was expected that in the coming years three professorial departments would be established: Orthodox Church History Department (1969); Orthodox Dogmatics Department (1971) and Orthodox Liturgics Department (1978)⁸⁰.

In addition to biology (entomology), Paavo was interested in the history of Orthodoxy: even before the war, he wrote a manuscript about the history of the Joensuu parish, and in 1958 he published the “Overview of the History of Orthodoxy in Karelia”⁸¹. Having been a member of the Church Council, Kontkanen devoted his life to the Lintul Monastery; and later, already in 1965, he discussed with the Lutheran Archbishop Martti Simojoki the question of raising funds for the construction of a temple in this monastery⁸². It is known that the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland donated 10 thousand Finnish markkas for these needs⁸³.

The modern Finnish historian Teuvo Laitila, describing Kontkanen’s diplomatic activity in bringing the Churches closer, pointed out, “Although the negotiations were not successful, the relations between the Finnish and Russian Churches improved, and it can be assumed that this was what the Russian Church wanted to achieve. At a time when

⁷⁸ Dokladnaia zapiska o tekushchem polozhenii v Pravoslavnoi tserkvi Finliandii i sobornom prikhode v Hel’sinki. L. 30.

⁷⁹ Piironen E. Sielunpaimena ja kirkonmiehia. S. 61.

⁸⁰ Additional travel report of archp. Evgeniy Ambartsumov to Finland from (February 7–25, 1967) // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 6. D. 141. L. 144.

⁸¹ Piironen E. Sielunpaimena ja kirkonmiehia. S. 60.

⁸² Report on the 6th Archpriest Evgeniy Ambartsumov’s trip to Finland on February 4–18, 1965 // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D. 559. L. 91.

⁸³ Report to the chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod Nicodemus (Rotov), from the Dean of the Patriarchal Parishes in Finland, Archpriest Evgeniy Ambartsumov, dated June 10, 1965 // GARF. F.R-6991. Op. 2. D. 599. L. 41.

Finland's foreign policy was determined by friendly relations with the Soviet Union, it was hardly possible to act in a different way"⁸⁴. Paavo Kontkanen died on January 29, 1976. He was buried next to his previously deceased wife in the Orthodox cemetery of Helsinki.

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