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DEVELOPMENT OF THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOXY IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE REVANCHIST POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AGAINST UKRAINE

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Abstract

The article analyzes the development of Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the context of the revenge policy of Russia against Ukraine at the turn of the 21st century. It is discovered that almost a quarter of a century of inactivity of the Ukrainian authorities and active anti-Ukrainian and anti-state actions of the Russian Orthodox Church and its Little-Russian branch the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate contributed to their introduction into the Ukrainian humanitarian space of fundamental ideas, dogmas, and postulates of the “Russian World,” which subsequently led to the occupation by Russia of Crimea and parts of Donbas and the so-called “Russian Spring” in 2014. It is shown that Russia’s armed and information aggression in early 2014 called into question the very existence of the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian nation, but thanks to the all-Ukrainian patriotic movement, including the stated policy and position of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, the enemy was stopped. It is proved that the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare led not only to temporary territorial losses, huge casualties, tragedies, etc., but also to the unification of Ukrainians, the creation of the Ukrainian political nation, and a significant consolidation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate. Russian aggression became a catalyst for the unity of pro-Ukrainian forces and contributed to the intensification of the process of creating the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Research on religious identification of representatives of the Ukrainian community has been carried out using the methods of individual questionnaire survey and included observation; the influence of the destructive

Russian factor on their religious self-identification has been traced. It is found that in the context of a full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Armed Forces, which began on February 24, 2022, Ukrainians united in the name of victory over the aggressor, so the patriotic believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate will have to make a final choice about whether or not to join the Orthodox Church of Ukraine not only to weaken the pro-Russian fifth column in Ukraine but to help resistance forces in liberating the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories.

Keywords: Ukraine, Ukrainians, Ukrainian Orthodoxy, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Russian Federation, Russian Orthodox Church, “Russian World.”

Introduction

In the context of the revanchist neo-imperial policy of the Russian Federation (hereinafter – RF) towards Ukraine and the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare, which has been going on for nine years, especially after February 24, 2022, when the full-scale invasion of the Russian Armed Forces from the north, east, and south of Ukraine began, the question arises about the very existence of Ukrainian statehood and the survival of Ukrainians as a unique ethnic community and political nation. Despite thousands killed, tens of thousands wounded and crippled physically and spiritually, and millions forcibly displaced, Ukraine and Ukrainians continue to deter Russian military, informational, spiritual, economic, diplomatic, and cultural aggression. One of the cornerstones of the existence of the Ukrainian independent unified state is the highly spiritual foundation of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, which originated on the banks of the Dnieper in the Golden-Domed Kyiv in the second half of the 9th century and since ancient times, in spite of all its ups and downs, has served Ukraine and Ukrainians by faith and truth.

In our investigation of the state of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, we try to objectively and thoughtfully analyze the important role of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in domestic ethnocultural, state-building, and nation-building processes, especially in the conditions of the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare; to comprehend the essence of modern Russian imperialism; to reveal the destructive activities in Ukraine of the Russian Orthodox Church (hereinafter–ROC) and its satellite–the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (hereinafter–UOC-MP); to characterize the criminal essence of the “Russian World”; to show the patriotic activity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (hereinafter–UOC-KP) and its significant role in the formation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (hereinafter–OCU).

The scientific novelty of the article consists in the development of current issues, which, despite a large number of publications on this topic, are still insufficiently studied and therefore require further unbiased studies.

The objective of the study is to analyze the development of Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the context of Russia's revenge policy against Ukraine at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve the following research tasks: to briefly analyze the level of scientific development of the topic; to show the active work of the UOC-KP in uniting Ukrainians in the conditions of the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare and the creation of the UOC; to reveal the place of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the consolidation of Ukrainians at the turn of the millennium.

Historiography of the Problem

The study of the critical role of the UOC-KP in the restoration, development, and protection of the Ukrainian state is becoming an important object of scientific research. Some aspects of this topical issue were analyzed by the following researchers: Yu. Boreiko,¹ O. Yeremieiev,² S. Zdioruk,³ S. Kahamlyk,⁴ A. Kolodnyi,⁵ V. Klos,⁶ V. Kryshchenko,⁷

¹ Ю. Бореико, *Православна ідентичність у сучасному українському суспільстві* Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів VI Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2016), с. 831–837. [*Orthodox identity in modern Ukrainian society* (Kyiv, 2016), pp. 831–837]

² О.С. Єремєєв, *Проблеми та перспективи становлення Української Помісної Православної Церкви на сучасному етапі розвитку українського суспільства* Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів V Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ 2015, Ч. 1.), с. 215–225. [*Problems and prospects of formation of the Ukrainian Local Orthodox Church at the present stage of development of Ukrainian society*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the V International Scientific Conference (Kyiv, 2015, Part 1.) p. 215–225.]

³ С. Здіорук, *Національна Церква та національна релігія як форми духовного самовираження етносу*. Релігія і нація в суспільному житті України й світу. (Київ: Наукова думка, 2006), с. 73–86. [*National Church and national religion as forms of spiritual self-expression of the ethnos*. Religion and nation in the public life of Ukraine and the world (Kyiv: scientific thought, 2006), pp. 73–86.]; В. М. Яблонський; С. І. Здіорук; В. В. Токман; В. В. Астаф'єв; О. Л.Валевський; С. О. Зубченко; А. Ю. Іщенко; О. М. Литвиненко, *Україна та проект «Русского Мира»*. Аналітична доповідь. (Київ, 2014), 95 с. [Ukraine and the project "Russian World". Analytical report. (Kyiv, 2014), 95 p]

⁴ С. Кагамлик, *Divide et impera*. Російський централізм як конфліктизаційний чинник для українського православ'я в ретроспективі та сучасних реаліях. Українознавчий альманах. (К.: «Міленіум», 2019, Випуск 25). С. 77–83. [*Divide et impera. Russian centralism as a factor of conflict for Ukrainian Orthodoxy in retrospect and modern realities*. Ukrainian Studies Almanac. (Kyiv: Millennium, 2019, Issue 25.), pp. 77–83]

⁵ А.Колодний, С. Здіорук, *Становлення національних церков як складової національного відродження* Релігійна свобода: історичне підґрунтя, правові основи і реалії сьогодення. (Київ, 1998), с. 43–49. [*Formation of national churches as part of the national revival*. Religious freedom: historical background, legal framework and realities of today. (Kyiv, 1998), pp. 43–49.]

⁶ В. Клош, Протоієрей. *Автокефалія Української Церкви: огляд від Хрещення до Синодального Томосу*. (Київ, 2019), 190 с. [*Archpriest. Autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church: an overview from Baptism to the Synodal Thomas*. (K., 2019), 190 p.]

⁷ В. Кришченко, *Світоглядна парадигма ХХ ст.: український внесок*. Українознавство. (2008, № 1), с. 76–82. [*Worldview paradigm of the twentieth century: the Ukrainian contribution*. Ukrainian Studies. (2008, № 1), pp. 76–82.]

P. Pavlenko,⁸ M. Piren,⁹ Ya. Potapenko,¹⁰ I. Prelovskaya,¹¹ O. Sahan,¹² O. Chyrkov,¹³ O. Shuba,¹⁴ and others. At the same time, the stated problem is still insufficiently studied and therefore needs further investigation.

Russia's Confrontation with Ukraine: The Destructive Role of the "Russian World"

The Russian state has existed in the format of an empire for three centuries. First, it was a feudal-capitalist, then a totalitarian-Soviet, and now an autocratic empire. During this time, Ukraine and Ukrainians were an important part of these imperial state formations. Even more, the military union of the Ukrainian Cossack-Hetman State under B. Khmelnytsky with the Moscow Empire, Muscovy under the leadership of Tsar Aleksey Mikhaylovich weakened the Commonwealth and later became an empire under Emperor Pyotr Alekseyevich.

It seemed that with the destruction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereinafter – the USSR), Russia would finally get rid of its imperial past and begin to develop as a democratic and legal state. But since Russia is de jure and de facto a multinational entity

⁸ П. Ю. Павленко, *Українська Православна Церква Московського Патріархату – епіцентр російського неоімперіалізму в Україні (погляд через призму війни на Донбасі)*. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів V Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2015, Ч. 1.), с. 162–171. [*Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate - the epicenter of Russian neo-imperialism in Ukraine (view through the prism of the war in Donbass)*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the V International Scientific Conference. (Kyiv, 2015, Part 1), pp. 162–171]

⁹ М. І. Пірен, *Роль духовних цінностей у формуванні громадянської позиції особистості в сучасному проблемному українському суспільстві*. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів V Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2015, Ч. 1), с. 172–180. [*The role of spiritual values in the formation of civic position of the individual in modern problematic Ukrainian society*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the V International Scientific Conference (Kyiv, 2015, Part 1), pp. 172–80]

¹⁰ Я. Потапенко, *П'ята російсько-українська війна: від майдану до східного фронту (підходи, оцінки, інтерпретації)*. (Переяслав-Хмельницький: Видавництво К С В, 2016), 304 с. [*The fifth Russian-Ukrainian war: from the Maidan to the Eastern Front (approaches, assessments, interpretations)*. (Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky: KS Publishing House, 2016), 304 p]

¹¹ І. Преловська, *Помісний Собор Української Православної Церкви 1-3 листопада 1991 року: передумови і наслідки*. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів VI Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2016), с. 429–439. [*Local Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church November 1-3, 1991: preconditions and consequences*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the VI International Scientific Conference. (Kyiv, 2016), pp. 429–439.]

¹² О.Н. Саган, *Національні прояви православ'я: український аспект*. (Київ: Світ Знань, 2001), 256 с. [*National manifestations of Orthodoxy: the Ukrainian aspect*. (Kyiv: World of Knowledge, 2001), 256 p.]; О. Н. Саган, *Суспільний запит на Помісну Церкву: проблеми, перспективи реалізації*. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів V Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2015, Ч. 1), с. 181–189. [*Public demand for the Local Church: problems, prospects for implementation*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the V International Scientific Conference. (Kyiv, 2015, Part 1), pp. 181-189]

¹³ О. Чирков, *Зміни релігійної ситуації у світлі тенденцій етнокультурного розвитку України (1985-2019)*. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів IX Міжнародної наукової конференції. – К., 2019. – С. 574–583. [*Changes in the religious situation in the light of trends in ethnocultural development of Ukraine (1985-2019)*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference. (Kyiv, 2019), pp. 574–583]

¹⁴ О. В. Шуба, *Релігія в етнонаціональному розвитку України (політологічний аналіз)*. (Київ, 1999), 222 с. [*Religion in the ethno-national development of Ukraine (political science analysis)* (Kyiv, 1999), 222 p]

with many large and small ethnic groups who would like to eventually get rid of the power of the metropolis, like, for example, the Chechens, Russia can only exist as an empire. Moreover, the Kremlin not only seeks to maintain its imperial status (two Chechen wars confirm this) but also to expand its territory, striving with all its might to return to the borders of the USSR in 1991. These aggressive intentions are realized by Moscow as a military effort (the Russian-Georgian war of 2008 and the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare, which began in 2014 and continues to this day) and with the help of the so-called “soft power”—the revanchist-imperial geopolitical doctrine of the “Russian World.”

In essence, the “Russian World” as a political and ideological concept is not an ordinary cultural project but a neo-imperial geopolitical ideological doctrine, which aims to theoretically substantiate and practically reincarnate RF as a superpower within the borders of the Russian Empire of 1914.¹⁵

According to S. Kahamlyk, modern Russian information aggression has infiltrated Ukrainian society, one of which was the project of the “Russian World,” interpreted by Russian neo-imperial ideologues as a special form of church unity.¹⁶ In this regard, Ya. Potapenko emphasized that in the context of this great geopolitical strategy, an important component being the concept of the “Russian World” as an “Orthodox civilization” that never really existed, the activity of the UOC-MP as a local branch of the ROC is partly reduced to instrumental and functional propaganda of anti-state and anti-Ukrainian ideas. It is a powerful resource of the Kremlin neo-imperialism and marginalization of all Ukrainians. Thus, the implementation of slogans of the “Russian World” intensified the practice of Russification of Ukraine during Yanukovich’s presidency, and today inhibits the processes of forming modern Ukrainian identity, and undermines trust in liberal democracy and Western civilization values.¹⁷

The Criminal Role of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Revanchist Policy of the Russian Federation against Ukraine

The Ukrainian National Revolution of the early 21st century muddled up all Putin’s plans, and he decided to finally close the so-called “Ukrainian question” by annexing Crimea and launching hostilities in eastern Ukraine.

¹⁵ Ю. Фігурний, «Русский мир» – важливий чинник агресії Російської Федерації супроти України й українців. Українознавство. (2016, № 3 (60)), с. 41. [“Russian World” is an important factor in the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and Ukrainians. Ukrainian Studies. (2016, № 3 (60)), p. 41.]

¹⁶ Кагамлик, Divide et impera. p. 81.

¹⁷ Потапенко. П’ята російсько-українська війна, p. 294.

According to P. Pavlenko, the annexation of Crimea, the formation of the so-called “DPR” (Donetsk People’s Republic) and “LPR” (Luhansk People’s Republic) are not only the products of the Kremlin propaganda of 2014. Russia had been preparing for their implementation for at least 10 years and quite thoroughly. At least since 2004–2005, there has been lively attention of the Russian media, including periodicals of the ROC and UOC-MP to Ukraine; in particular, they discuss thoughts about creating some “Novorossiya” and even “Donetsk People’s Republic;” the possibility of a civil war in Ukraine, on the one hand, and on the other—a war between Russia and Ukraine.¹⁸

In the end, these imperial plans came to fruition during the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare, O. Yeriemieiev notes. UOC-MP has never acknowledged Russian aggression as a military invasion of a foreign state. The acknowledgment or support by certain clergymen of the Russian annexation of Crimea and aggression in Donbas, both in the occupied territories and in other parts of Ukraine are not isolated incidents. Its representatives refused to honor the memory of Ukrainian soldiers killed in the east in the *Verkhovna Rada* in May 2015, and Bishop Banchenskyi Lonhin (Zhar), a vicar of Chernivtsi Diocese (until 2014 led by Metropolitan Onufrii), openly called the parishioners to sabotage mobilization in the face of Russian aggression, declaring the then leadership of Ukraine enemies of Orthodoxy and accusing Western countries of hostilities in Ukraine.¹⁹

The head of the UOC-MP, Metropolitan Onufrii, directed and coordinated all this anti-Ukrainian policy. Thus, in the summer of 2015, in one of his interviews, he emphasized that he considered the conflict in Donbas a “civil war,” and the events after the Revolution of Dignity reminded him of the civil war that followed the overthrow of the monarchy in Russia in 1917. At the same time, the head of the UOC-MP never mentioned Russian aggression against Ukraine, the occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbas by Russian troops as the cause of the conflict. As Metropolitan of the UOC-KP Yevstratii (Zoria) notes, from other interviews and statements, it is known that Metropolitan Onufrii believes that Ukrainians and Russians are “in fact one people” and Ukraine is part of the “Russian World.” From this thesis logically follows his view that independent Ukraine is not a state of the Ukrainian people but the fruit of the activities of “separatists” who broke away from the great-Russian integrity of the “South-Western region.” Therefore, Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, according to the head of the UOC-MP, is not an aggression but “the fight against separatists.” And if you look more

¹⁸ Павленко, *Українська Православна Церква Московського*, р. 163.

¹⁹ Єремєєв. *Проблеми та перспективи становлення*, pp. 218-220.

globally, it is in general the “protection of the Russian World from Western aggression” (USA and Europe). Thus, in the worldview that seems to be in the mind of Metropolitan Onufrii, Ukraine, as a completely independent state, is a product of the “Austrian Headquarters,” the “Washington Regional Committee,” and the “godless West,” created to fight the “Russian World” and “to enslave Russia.” Accordingly, unity with Russia is a cherished dream. After analyzing these statements of the head of the UOC-MP, Metropolitan Yevstratii draws the following conclusions: “...the metropolitan once again testified to the truth of his description made by Patriarch Filaret a year ago: ‘He is not a patriot of Ukraine.’” Now we can add: he is a collaborator of the “Russian World.”²⁰

Leaders of the UOC-MP speak pharisaically about their own patriotism, struggle for peace in Ukraine, call for an end to the war, but in fact, their real actions significantly increase the influence of the Kremlin’s revenge policy regarding religious conflicts in modern Ukraine and contribute to the defeat and disintegration of the Ukrainian state. That is why P. Pavlenko rightly notes that the UOC-MP in the person of Metropolitan Onufrii firstly, condemns only the war waged by Ukraine, defending its territory from Russian aggression, and secondly, advocates such a “peace” that would be beneficial for the RF. For it, the “just” and “sacred” is exclusively the war that Putin launched against Ukraine together with his ideological ally Patriarch Kirill. Thus, the scholar is convinced that the Ukrainian vector of the UOC-MP is out of line as it supports pro-Russian forces in Ukraine, thus helping to promote and implement Russia’s political interests in Ukraine.²¹

Thus, the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare was a great ordeal for the Ukrainian Orthodoxy, but the citizens of Ukraine realize who is who. Leaders of the UOC-MP avoided mentioning Russia as an aggressor, but on the contrary, constantly emphasized in the speeches to their parishioners and in speeches in the media that this was not an interstate conflict but a civil confrontation, a fratricidal war where “brother attacks the brother,” “Donbas must be heard,” and so on.

The Contribution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate to Ukrainian State-Building and Nation-Building

In contrast, from the first days of the armed confrontation, the leadership, clergy, and believers of the UOC-KP showed their civil position and defended the Ukrainian state. The

²⁰ *Архієпископ Євстратій (Зоря) Колаборант "руського мира". [Archbishop Eustratius (Zorya) Collaborator of the "Russian world"]* <http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/yevstratij/55a8de30a8c6d>

²¹ Павленко, *Українська Православна Церква Московського р.* 171.

most active took up arms, and many UOC-KP priests supported the volunteer movement and went to the front as chaplains. Eventually, the enemy was stopped, and the active phase of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation passed into a passive one. While the UOC-MP supported Russia's military and information aggression against Ukraine and Ukrainians, the UOC-KP mobilized all its forces to oppose the Russian aggressor and their puppets and helped stop the enemy offensive, end the so-called "Russian Spring," and curtail the "Novorossiia" project.

The undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare once again demonstrated to Ukrainians the importance of the religious factor in general and the importance of the existence in Ukraine of its own autocephalous Orthodox Church, which will be Ukrainian not in words, plaques, and official documents but primarily in its own actions, with a Ukrainian-centric essence and a willingness to act in the interests of the Ukrainian people.

Realizing the prime importance of the religious question, Russian secular and ecclesiastical leaders have long tried to deprive Ukrainians of their own Orthodox Church and convert them to the ROC. It was in 1686 that the Kyiv Metropolitanate was illegally subordinated to the ROC. That is why the ROC purposefully and persistently tried to completely destroy the Ukrainian-centric spirit in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy and to fully subdue it to Moscow and assimilate it.

However, with the rise of the Ukrainian state competition in the turbulent 20th century, Ukrainian Orthodoxy was also revived. Eventually, with the collapse of the USSR and the beginning of the building of the Ukrainian Independent Unified State, the renaissance of Ukrainian Orthodoxy began. In our opinion, the establishment of the UOC-KP in 1992 was an extremely important factor in the liberation of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy from the spiritual yoke of the ROC and the "Russian World."

The UOC-KP purposefully and systematically consolidated Ukrainians around the idea of creating an OCU (Orthodox Church of Ukraine). In the end, they received their first success. On October 11, 2018, the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople decided to grant autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodoxy. According to this final document, the Synodal Letter of 1686 on the temporary transfer to the ROC of the right to appoint Kyiv metropolitans was revoked. The most important thing is that from then on, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople declared his right and canonical territory of Ukraine, thus finally removing it from the jurisdiction of the ROC. According to this decision, the ROC not only finally loses Ukraine with its revenues and profits but also is being transformed from a leading Orthodox church organization into an ordinary one, and in the conditions of the undeclared

Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare, it is of great importance for Ukrainians, their consolidation, and final victory over the aggressor.²²

Creation and Development of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine

On December 15, 2018, the Unification Council of Bishops of the UOC-KP, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (hereinafter – the UAOC), and the UOC-MP took place in Kyiv, where Metropolitan Epiphanius was elected Primate of the OCU. The newly elected head received *Tomos* on January 6, 2019, from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and thus Ukraine finally regained its own sovereign autocephalous Ukrainian Church. It is significant that the Ecumenical Patriarch recognized as canonical all Orthodox church organizations in Ukraine - UOC-KP, UAOC, UOC-MP, thus assisting them in equal dialogue and consolidation, which ultimately contributed to the creation and development of the OCU²³.

Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and All Ukraine praised the role of Patriarch Bartholomew, noting that this was a courageous step of the Ecumenical Patriarch, who contributed to the creation of the OCU and helped to “carry out his saving ministry among the Ukrainian people as an integral part of the United, Holy, Conciliar, and Apostolic Church.”²⁴

The self-sufficient Ukrainian state must have its own autocephalous church, which will be an effective factor in the formation of a highly spiritual Christian Ukraine and the Ukrainian ethnocultural space. In this regard, O. Chyrkov emphasizes that for modern Ukrainian society, the main ethnocultural consequences of changes in the religious situation are as follows: 1) Ukrainian national religious organizations appeared, which include the majority of believers in Ukraine; 2) the Ukrainian language began a full-fledged function in the religious life; 3) the rites and traditions related to religious life, which were banned in the USSR or forgotten due to adverse socio-political circumstances, revived; 4) the OCU, formed on the basis of the UOC- KP, gained the highest canonical status in Ukraine; 5) the part of Ukrainian believers’

²² Ю. Фігурний, Розвиток Українського Православ'я на зламі тисячоліть: етнокультурні, державотворчі та націєтворчі аспекти. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів IX Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2019). с. 571-572. [*Development of Ukrainian Orthodoxy at the turn of the millennium: ethnocultural, state-building and nation-building aspects*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference. (Kyiv, 2019), pp. 571-572.]

²³ Ibid., p. 572

²⁴ Промова Блаженнішого Митрополита Київського і Всієї України Епіфанія на церемонії вручення шанованої нагороди *Athenagoras Human Right Award*. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів IX Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2019), с.11-12. [*Speech of His Beatitude Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine Epiphany at the Athenagoras Human Right Award ceremony*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference. (Kyiv, 2019), p.11-12]

communities that consider themselves belonging to the UOC-MP has decreased several times.²⁵

With the acquisition of the autocephalous statute, the UOC must purposefully unite Ukrainians. On this thorny path, it will be actively opposed by the UOC-MP, which remains a puppet in the hands of church hierarchs of the ROC and is, in essence, an agent of Russian influence in Ukraine. Understanding this, the Ukrainian government should have helped the OCU overcome Moscow's religious expansion, but for some reason, the 2019 government decree renaming the UOC-MP to the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine is not being implemented, and the newly elected establishment has resigned. However, some positive trends are already visible. Thus, at the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the restoration of the Ukrainian state in the summer of 2021, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew had a meeting with President of Ukraine V. Zelensky, during which they agreed on active cooperation aimed at further development of Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

The OCU should become the center of the unification of all pro-Ukrainian forces and purposefully continue to build the state and Ukraine-centric Church. In this regard, S. Kahamlyk notes that the historic act of granting the UOC by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of *Tomos* on autocephaly in early 2019 marked the end of the colonial state of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the beginning of a new, independent period in its history. Nevertheless, the unification process will not be easy: active transitions of religious communities to the newly formed OCU, and sharp opposition to the ROC, which does not want to lose its sphere of influence on Ukraine and therefore does not recognize the fact of *Tomos* autocephaly, as well as its Ukrainian branch of UOC-MP.²⁶

According to Archpriest V. Klos, it is thanks to all the fighters for freedom and independence that today we have the Ukrainian state and the OCU. It is only surprising that many of those who call themselves Ukrainians and even patriots of their land still hold on to the alien UOC-MP, which only calls itself Ukrainian but never was because it served and continues to follow instructions from the Kremlin.²⁷

²⁵ О. Чирков, *Зміни релігійної ситуації у світлі тенденцій етнокультурного розвитку України (1985-2019)*. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів IX Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2019), с. 582. [*Changes in the religious situation in the light of trends in ethnocultural development of Ukraine (1985-2019)*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference. (Kyiv, 2019), p. 582.]

²⁶ Кагамлик, *Divide et impera*. p. 81.

²⁷ В. Клоос, Протоієрей. *Автокефалія Української Церкви: огляд від Хрещення до Синодального Томосу*. (Київ, 2019), с. 182. [*Archpriest. Autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church: an overview from Baptism to the Synodal Thomas*. (K, 2019), p. 182]

Another important task for the leadership of the OCU is its recognition at the international level. In this regard, His Beatitude Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine Epiphanius emphasizes: “I also have a dream. The dream of a day when all Local Churches, without exception, will follow the canonical decision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and recognize our Local Orthodox Church of Ukraine as an equal Sister Church.”²⁸

Ukrainian Orthodoxy: A Sociological Dimension

In order to identify priority factors of national and cultural identification of the Ukrainian community and to clarify the impact of the destructive Russian factor on its national, ethnic, linguistic, religious self-identification, one of the authors, O. Semenova, conducted a study using questionnaire methods and included observation, which consists in immersing oneself in the research environment and studying the situation “from within”, i.e., in real conditions (2020). Two focus groups were formed to carry out the study: the first included residents of Kostiantynivka, Donetsk region, which was seized by Donetsk People’s Republic militants in April 2014, and in July of the same year during an anti-terrorist operation by the National Guard of Ukraine and military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine was released from them; the second group included representatives of Zakarpattia, Kyiv, Odesa, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhia, and Dnipropetrovsk regions of Ukraine. The sample included respondents of different age, gender, professional, ethnic, and linguistic characteristics. The selection of respondents was based on the “snowball” method when each respondent recommended a new participant in the study. The survey was conducted on the basis of developed questionnaires; previously, the respondents got acquainted with the Explanatory Note, which set out the main provisions of the study: its issues and relevance, purpose, and methods of obtaining information. The sample is unrepresentative, but the results of the survey are significant enough to understand the influence of the Russian factor on individual members of the Ukrainian religious community.²⁹

The results of the survey showed that none of the respondents of the first focus group considered the autonomous church an attribute of Ukrainian independence (33% answered

²⁸ Промова Блаженнішого Митрополита Київського і Всєї України Епіфанія на церемонії вручення шанованої нагороди *Athenagoras Human Right Award*. Православ'я в Україні: Збірник матеріалів IX Міжнародної наукової конференції. (Київ, 2019), с.13. [*Speech of His Beatitude Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine Epiphany at the Athenagoras Human Right Award ceremony*. Orthodoxy in Ukraine: Proceedings of the IX International Scientific Conference. (Kyiv, 2019), p. 13]

²⁹ О.Семенова, and М. Герасько. *Національно-культурна ідентичність українського суспільства у контексті сучасних гуманітарних викликів*. Українознавство. (2020, № 2), с. 132-133. [National and cultural identity of Ukrainian society in the context of modern humanitarian challenges. Ukrainian Studies. (2020, № 2), pp. 132-133].

negatively; 56% could not answer; 11% refrained from answering), while 77% of the second focus group provided a positive response, and 69% of them supported the provision of the *Tomos* on the autocephaly of the OCU. It should be mentioned that the priority of religious identity, among others, is determined by only one member of the first focus group (second place out of eight; for other participants it ranks seventh or is not specified at all).³⁰

The survey showed that the majority of respondents identify themselves with the Orthodox tradition (91%); 9% did not indicate their affiliation to denominations. As the main factors determining their religious identity, the respondents named religious values—82%, religious behavior—14%, religious knowledge—9%. Other factors also included historical ties and faith (4.5%), religious traditions of the region of residence (4.5%).³¹

Undoubtedly, religion has a significant consolidating potential, uniting people of different ethnicity, social status, education, and political preferences. Today, the Ukrainian religious community is faced with the use of the religious factor by Russia in its policy against Ukraine, which has a destructive impact on the humanitarian space of our state and poses a threat to its national security. Using the levers of influence on the ROC and through it on the UOC-MP, Kremlin propagandists cultivate the ideology of “fratricidal war” and “civil conflict,” thus denying the fact of Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine. Ideologists of the Moscow Patriarchate spread the idea of the existence of a single “truly canonical” church in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy—the UOC-MP, rejecting any alternatives to the ROC and monopolizing the religious space of Ukraine. Obtaining the *Tomos* by the OCU was an important step in recognition of Ukrainian church independence by world religious institutions.³²

According to the personal observations of L. Otroshko, the number of parishioners grew in the Ascension Church of Kozelets deanery of the OCU. Fewer and fewer Orthodox believers trust the UOC-MP, in particular its fables about the “divisive” nature of the Ukrainian autocephaly, which are still spread in Moscow’s churches. More and more believers are positive about *Tomos*. After all, by the recognition of the OCU as one of the 15 autocephalous Orthodox churches in the world, the Ecumenical Patriarchate put everything in place. At the regional level, the Ukrainian church is developing as it should. The educational mission of the Ukrainian church at the regional level plays a significant role in the ethnocultural development of the Ukrainian people. After all, according to the main law of the state, the people must be

³⁰ Ibid., p. 134.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 133-134.

³² Ibid., p. 134.

able to pray in Ukrainian in Ukrainian churches and know that the Ukrainian church prays primarily for Ukrainian church patriarchs, the Ukrainian army, and the people of Ukraine.

These testimonies are confirmed by all-Ukrainian opinion polls. In the summer of 2021, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (hereinafter – KIIS) conducted an all-Ukrainian opinion poll, “Religious self-identification of the population and attitudes towards the main churches of Ukraine: June 2021.” According to it, the vast majority of Ukrainians (73%) continue to consider themselves Orthodox. Another 9% consider themselves Greek Catholics, and 7% atheists. Among those who consider themselves Orthodox, the majority, 58% consider themselves members of the OCU. This figure has increased compared to June 2020 from 48% to 58%.³³

In turn, 25% consider themselves members of the UOC-MP (against 21.5% in June 2020). Additionally, 12% of such respondents consider themselves simply Orthodox, without specifying the Patriarchate (compared to 23% in June 2020). Among the three largest Churches in Ukraine, most respondents have a positive attitude towards the OCU: 52% of Ukrainians have a positive attitude to the OCU, 34% have a neutral attitude, and 9% have a negative attitude. At the same time, compared to June 2020, there are more people who are positive—the number increased from 42% in June 2020 to 52% in June 2021. At the same time, 24% of the population have a positive attitude to the UOC-MP (in June 2020—23%), neutral—37% (in June 2020—37%), and negative—35% (in June 2020—32%). Among the heads of the three largest Churches in Ukraine, most respondents have a positive attitude to Epiphanius: 45% of Ukrainians have a positive attitude to Epiphanius, 38% have a neutral attitude, and 6% have a negative attitude. At the same time, compared to June 2020, there were more positive people—the number increased from 34% in June 2020 to 45% in June 2021. At the same time, 20% have a positive attitude towards Onufrii (19% in June 2020), neutral—39% (in June 2020—36.5%), negative—29% (in June 2020—26%).³⁴

The establishment of the OCU and the granting of *Tomos* by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew contributed to the progressive development of Ukrainian Orthodoxy in general and the OCU in particular. This statement is confirmed by the results of the all-Ukrainian sociological survey of the KIIS.

³³ Релігійна самоідентифікація населення і ставлення до основних церков України: червень 2021 року. [Religious self-identification of the population and attitude to the main churches of Ukraine: June 2021] <http://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1052>.

³⁴ Ibid.

During the survey, respondents were also asked to compare the OCU and the UOC-MP by eight different characteristics, both positive and negative. Respondents had to answer which of these Churches best met a certain feature. More respondents compared the OCU with such characteristics as flexibility in responding to changes in society (54% believe that the OCU is more in line with this characteristic, compared to 14% who chose the UOC-MP), promoting the unification of society (53% vs. 13%), proximity to ordinary people (50% vs. 13%), assistance in the fight against COVID-19 (34% vs. 6%), independence from Ukrainian or foreign politicians, oligarchs (33% vs. 13%). On the other hand, more respondents associated the UOC-MP with such characteristics as dependence on foreign structures (35% vs. 24%, which named the OCU), attempts to destabilize the situation in Ukraine (42.5% vs. 21%), and corruption (38% vs. 8%).³⁵

If the previous government in the person of P. Poroshenko helped in every possible way the establishment of the OCU, V. Zelensky and his team somewhat distanced themselves from this positive process. Despite this, the number of believers and supporters of the OCU is steadily growing. This is primarily due to ordinary believers, the so-called “Orthodox.” It should be noted that ordinary Ukrainian citizens are gradually realizing the importance on their own, uncontrolled by ROC and the Kremlin national church for Ukraine and the Ukrainian political nation.

At the same time, the results of the all-Ukrainian poll of the KIIS indicate a slight (within the sociological error) increase in trust in the UOC-MP. It seemed that during the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare, which began in February 2014, the citizens of Ukraine should have already understood who is a friend and who is a foe. However, the powerful information war waged by Russia against Ukraine and the significant infusion of huge financial resources of pro-Russian oligarchs to maintain the reputation of the UOC-MP brings the Kremlin the desired dividends and significantly strengthens the pro-Russian lobby in the Ukrainian state.

Also, one should mention the significant conservatism of the religious consciousness of believers. For example, a student friend of one of the study’s authors, who lives in Zhytomyr, is a parishioner of the UOC-MP and a teacher, when asked by Yu. Fihurnyi about his attitude to the UOC and granting of autocephaly, responded that he treated its acquisition of the autocephalous status positively, but was not going to become its parishioner. “You see,” said the friend, “I met my future beloved wife in the UOC-MP cathedral, and she still works there.

³⁵ Ibid.

I am very used to the Church. If they adopt the unification decision at the highest level, I will gladly accept it, but for now, let everything remain the same.”

The Full-Scale Invasion of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Ukraine

However, on February 24, 2022, a different reality came to Ukraine and Ukrainians. The war knocked on the door of every family. Many things from the old life became unimportant. Only one goal became paramount—the elimination of the Russian occupiers and the liberation of all Ukrainian lands.

The ROC supports the so-called “special military operation in Ukraine.” The leadership of the UOC-MP is trying to distance itself from the aggressive and criminal actions of its patrons but is doing it quite unconvincingly.

On March 8-9, 2022, the Rating Sociological Group conducted a survey of the population of Ukraine under the age of 18 and older in all regions, except for the temporarily occupied territories of Crimea and Donbas. The sample is representative by age, sex, and type of settlement. Sample population: 1,200 respondents. The survey method is a telephone interview using a computer. With a 95% confidence level, the study’s representativeness error is not more than 2.8%. According to the survey, 63% of respondents support the idea of breaking ties between the UOC-MP and the ROC. Only 10% do not support this proposal, another 18% said they did not care, and 9% could not answer this question. It is notable that among the believers of the UOC-MP, more than half also support the severance of ties with the ROC; a quarter say that they do not care, and only 13% of them are against the division.³⁶

On April 6, 2022, the Rating Sociological Group conducted the Eighth National Survey “Ukraine in the Conditions of War.” The results of the poll showed that support for the idea of breaking ties between the UOC-MP and the ROC is growing. If at the beginning of March this opinion was supported by 63%, then at the beginning of April the number reached 74% and was completely rejected only by 7%. It is important to note that half of the respondents (51%) give the state the right to permanently ban the activities of the UOC-MP on the territory of Ukraine (the ban is supported by two thirds of the respondents from the west and only by 29% from the east). At the same time, 21% support the deprivation of benefits and the abolition of

³⁶ *Оцінка ситуації в Україні (8 – 9 березня 2022).* [Assessment of the situation in Ukraine (March 8-9, 2022)] https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/ocenka_situacii_v_ukraine_8-9_marta_2022.html

leases of church buildings. On the other hand, 20% are in favor of the non-interference of the Ukrainian state in the affairs of the church, most of them in the east (35%) and south (25%).³⁷ Thus, in addition to the fanatical supporters of V. Putin and Patriarch Kirill, who are convinced of the incapacity of the Ukrainian state and that the OCU is from the devil and not from God, many UOC-MP believers are law-abiding citizens of Ukraine and must be worked with consistently and purposefully.

In our opinion, such a balanced state policy, aimed primarily at the re-education of pro-Russian citizens, will eventually contribute to the final unification of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy, which will become a *fait accompli*, and the UOC-MP under the name ROC in Ukraine will take its place in Ukraine's religious life and will finally disappear like dew in the sun.

Currently, Ukraine and its citizens face two main challenges: the military—how quickly the Ukrainian Armed Forces will destroy Russian aggressors and liberate the temporarily occupied territories, and internal—whether Ukrainians will be able to finally dismantle the clan-oligarchic system and build a democratic, legal, spiritual, innovative, and prosperous Ukrainian Independent Unified State. That is why the stated position of the newly created OCU should promote the spiritual development of the Ukrainian people, the development of the Ukrainian political nation and Ukrainian civil society, the consolidation of Ukrainians in the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare, and the final victory over the enemy.

Conclusions

Thus, having analyzed the development of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the context of Russia's revenge policy against Ukraine at the turn of the 21st century, its positive impact on domestic ethnocultural, statehood, nation-building and challenges facing it at the beginning of the second millennium, we have come to the following conclusions. First, the Russian state has existed for three centuries in the format of an empire (feudal-capitalist, totalitarian-Soviet, and autocratic), and during all this time, Ukraine and Ukrainians have been an important component of these predatory state entities. Second, almost a quarter of a century of inactivity of the domestic authorities and active anti-Ukrainian and anti-state actions of the ROC and its Little-Russian branch of the UOC-MP contributed to their introduction into the Ukrainian humanitarian space of fundamental ideas, dogmas, and postulates of the "Russian World,"

³⁷ *Восьме загальнонаціональне опитування: Україна в умовах війни (6 квітня 2022)* [Eighth nationwide poll: Ukraine during the war (April 6, 2022)] https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/vosmoy_obschenacionalnyy_opros_ukraina_v_usloviyah_voyny_6_aprelya_2022.html

which subsequently led to the occupation by Russia of Crimea and part of Donbas and the so-called “Russian Spring” in 2014. Third, the armed and information aggression of the Russian Federation in early 2014 called into question the very existence of Ukrainian statehood and the Ukrainian nation, but thanks to the all-Ukrainian patriotic movement, including the stated policy and position of the UOC-KP, the enemy was stopped. Fourth, the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian hybrid warfare led not only to temporary territorial losses, huge casualties, tragedies, etc., but also to the unification of Ukrainians, the creation of a Ukrainian political nation, a significant strengthening of the UOC-KP, and a significant weakening of the UOC-MP. Fifth, the Russian armed information aggression became a catalyst for the unification of pro-Ukrainian forces and intensified the process of establishing the OCU. Sixth, the unification of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy will help weaken the ROC’s geopolitical ambitions and end its dominance in Eastern Christendom and significantly strengthen the position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Seventh, the combination of efforts of the Ukrainian authorities, civil society, and parishioners is extremely important for the development of the OCU. Eighth, the results of the study show that, among other types of identities, religious identity is of low importance in the system of respondents’ identities. Respondents from the eastern region of Ukraine did not answer positively to the need for an independent Ukrainian church; the majority of respondents from other regions of Ukraine perceived the autonomy of the OCU positively. Ninth, in the context of a full-scale invasion of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, which began on 24.02.2022, Ukrainians united in the name of victory over the aggressor, so the UOC-MP patriotic believers will have to make a final choice and join the OCU to not only weaken the pro-Russian fifth column in Ukraine but help resistance forces in liberation of the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territory. Tenth, the final victory over the Russian aggressor, in addition to military, geopolitical, diplomatic, political, economic, ethnocultural factors, will necessarily require the use of the sacred and spiritual factor—the creation of the OCU, unification of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, and strengthening of its national and patriotic state activity in the name of building a democratic, spiritual, legal, innovative, prosperous, and powerful Ukrainian Independent Unified State.

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